



**MAMMAL AND BIRDING TOUR SOUTH AFRICA: AARDVARK
AND OTHER UNUSUAL DENIZENS OF THE KALAHARI**

19 – 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

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The bizarre Aardvark will hopefully be found on this trip.

The vast Kalahari area is semi-desert, where some very tough African mammals can be found relatively easily. Moreover, it has a lot of mammals (notably smaller ones) that are only very rarely seen anywhere else and most certainly are not found on your typical Serengeti or Kruger safari. We invite you on a spectacular African experience that you will not forget in a hurry.



*The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is one of the best places to find **Brown Hyaena**.*

Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

Days 1 – 4. Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

Today we transfer from Upington to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (3 hours), which encompasses three countries; South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana. Over the next few days, we will spend time in one of South Africa's most popular parks, where bird and particularly mammal sightings are normally exceptional. **Gemsbok, Springbok, Common Eland, and Red Hartebeest** can be seen in the open areas while **African Elephant** roams the dry riverbeds, searching for their next water source. The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is particularly well known for its big cat sightings, and here we can hope to find black-maned **Lion, Leopard, and Cheetah**, as well as some of the smaller, lesser-known felines such as **African Wild Cat** and **Caracal**. Other predators to keep an eye out for include **Common (Small-spotted) Genet, Cape and Bat-eared Foxes, Black-backed Jackal, Brown Hyaena, and Honey Badger**. Smaller mammals are also in abundance in the park and include small groups of **Meerkats** and **South African Ground Squirrels** as well as **Yellow Mongoose, Cape Hare, and Chacma Baboon**.

Birding in the park is also top-notch, with raptors being particularly abundant and obvious. On our drives through the park we should encounter **Lappet-faced Vulture**, **Pale Chanting** and **Gabar Goshawks**, **Greater Kestrel**, **Red-necked Falcon**, **Bateleur**, **Tawny** and **Martial Eagles**, **Brown** and **Black-chested Snake Eagles**, **Lanner Falcon**, and the diminutive **Pygmy Falcon**, which nests exclusively in massive **Sociable Weaver** nests. In the more open plains, we should find **Kori Bustard**, **Northern Black Korhaan**, **Burchell's** and **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Pink-billed** and **Eastern Clapper Larks**, **Ant-eating Chat**, and **Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark**. The dry river beds are a magnet for birdlife, and we will search these areas for **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Kalahari Scrub Robin**, **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Marico Flycatcher**, and **Ashy Tit**. The nocturnal life in the Kalahari can also be impressive, with **Western Barn Owl**, **Spotted Eagle-Owl**, **Southern White-faced Owl**, and **African Scops Owl** all present as well as the tiny **Pearl-spotted Owlet**, which is also active during the day. We will also join a night drive and two game drives in open-top safari vehicles during our time in the park, which should increase our chances of finding some of the rarer mammal species.

Overnight: Kgalagadi Lodge (just outside the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park)



*Raptors such as **Greater Kestrel** are common throughout the Kalahari.*

Day 5. Transfer to Kimberley area

After an early breakfast we will take the long (6.5 hours) drive to Kimberley, more specifically Marrick Safari, a large game farm, which will be our base for the next few days. We will join two night drives during our three-night stay here. On these night drives we will look for **Aardvark**, which has burrows quite close to the lodge and as a result has become fairly tame toward humans, relatively speaking. **Black-footed Cat** is also a major target here. These small cats are extremely rare; however, Marrick must rank as one of the best places to see them. We

might also encounter **Bat-eared Fox**, **Aardwolf**, **Southern African Hedgehog**, **Cape Porcupine**, and **Spring Hare**.

Overnight: Marrick Safaris



*Marrick Safaris offers us the chance of finding **South African Hedgehog**.*

Day 6. Kimberley area

After breakfast we head out to look for some more of our target species. **Black Wildebeest**, rated by some as the most stupid of all antelopes (due to their inquisitive nature), will be found with relative ease, along with **Giraffe**, **Common Eland** and **Gemsbok**, while **Caracal** will require some luck! Once again, we will spend some time on foot during the day, looking for small mammals, reptiles, and the likes. Birding can also be particularly rewarding, with **Blue Crane** often breeding on the farm and **Double-banded Courser** sometimes common. Other birds to see around the property include **Secretarybird**, **Bradfield's Swift**, **Pink-billed**, **Red-capped**, **Fawn-colored**, and **Spike-heeled Larks**, **Golden-tailed Woodpecker**, **Cape Penduline Tit**, **Quailfinch**, **Black-faced Waxbill**, and many **Lark-like Buntings**. After dinner we may go for our other night drive.

Overnight: Marrick Safaris

Day 7. Kimberley and Mokala National Park

This will be our last full day in the Kimberley area, which we'll spend for the most part in nearby Mokala National Park. This is a recently proclaimed South African national park, a truly splendid one, which holds, among many others, not only a large herd of **Roan Antelope** but also

Sable Antelope, Kudu, Black Wildebeest, Giraffe, Tsessebe, Steenbok, and Meerkat (Suricate). Birds to look for around the park include **Short-toed Rock Thrush, Red-crested Korhaan, Yellow Canary, Red-headed Finch, Buffy and Nicholson's Pipits, Long-tailed Paradise Whydah, Mountain Wheatear, Striped Kingfisher, and Shaft-tailed Whydah.** We might also briefly visit the Kimberley "Big Hole" for those that might want to catch a quick glimpse of the deepest human-made hole in the world.

Overnight: Marrick Safaris



*Cute **Meerkats** will be one of our targets at Marrick Safaris.*

Day 8. Departure

After some final mammal- and bird-viewing we make a short (half-an-hour) drive to Kimberley airport, where the tour concludes.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	8 days
Group size:	3 – 6
Dates:	19 – 26 September 2024 19 – 26 September 2025
Start:	Upington
End:	Kimberley
Prices:	R66,909 per person sharing, based on 3-8 participants (2024) R74,269 per person sharing, based on 3-8 participants (2025)
Single supplement:	R6,634 (2024) R7,363 (2025)

Price includes:

Meals
Accommodation
Entrance fees
Three night drives
Two open-top game drives
Guiding fees
All transport while on tour

Price excludes:

Local and international flights
Personal insurance
Drinks
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Personal expenses such as gifts