



**NAMIBIA, OKAVANGO AND VICTORIA FALLS
BIRDING ADVENTURE**

02 - 19 NOVEMBER 2026

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*The cute **White-tailed Shrike** is a sought-after Namibian near-endemic.*

This is a truly marvelous 2.5-week birding adventure, during which we sample three different countries and spectacular, diverse scenery. We start in the coastal Namib Desert with its impressive dune fields (inhabited by some desirable, localized near-endemics) and lagoons filled with flamingos, pelicans, shorebirds, and some really localized species such as **Damara Tern** and **Chestnut-banded Plover**. The mountains of the beautiful Namib Escarpment are next on our itinerary, and here we search for **Rosy-faced Lovebird**, **Herero Chat**, **Rockrunner**, **Monteiro's Hornbill**, **Damara Red-billed Hornbill**, the incomparable, batis-like (although largely terrestrial) **White-tailed Shrike**, and other charismatic species of northern Namibia.

Eventually we leave the desert and enter the grassland, savanna, and woodland of one of Africa's greatest game parks, Etosha National Park. This must surely be one of the world's best places for seeing **Black Rhinoceros** and big cats, along with all the other African megafauna. It is also excellent for a good range of very special birds, such as Namibia's dazzling national bird, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, the world's heaviest flying bird, **Kori Bustard**, the diminutive **Pygmy Falcon**, and stacks more.



*Etosha National Park is full of game, and is an especially good area to see **Black Rhinoceros**.*

After Etosha, we head into an incredibly bird-diverse tropical corner of Namibia, the Kavango East and Zambezi Regions (formerly the Caprivi Strip), and the adjacent panhandle of the Okavango Delta, which falls just within the borders of Botswana. The magnificent wetlands and woodlands in these parts support **Pel's Fishing Owl** (this is the world's most reliable place for this monster), **White-backed Night Heron**, **Slaty Egret**, **Southern Carmine Bee-eater**, and literally hundreds of other species, a rather large proportion of them spectacular. Finally, we bird around the impressive Victoria Falls for yet another rich assemblage of birds.

This birding tour covers a vast area and a huge range of habitats, from the coastal deserts to the land of big rivers. While Namibian distances are large, we minimize driving time and maximize birding time by starting in Walvis Bay, Namibia, and ending in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

This tour can be combined with our premium **Comprehensive Subtropical/Eastern South Africa Birding Tour** which precedes this tour, for a 35-day Southern African adventure and even, preceding that, our **Best of Cape Town and Beyond Birding Tour** for an even longer, 42-day Southern African mega tour. Another possibility is to combine it with our **Best of Madagascar: 14-day Birding and Wildlife** tour.

Itinerary (18 days, 17 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Walvis Bay and coastal desert birding

Our birding guide fetches you from Walvis Bay airport, and we immediately start birding. The first site we usually visit is the picturesque red sand dune habitat across a (usually) dry riverbed around the village of Rooibank, right in the middle of the Namib Desert. A Namibian near-endemic, **Dune Lark** (formerly a Namibian endemic until it was lumped with Barlow's Lark which also occurs in South Africa), is the main target here, but we often also find the almost pure-white desert form of **Tractrac Chat**. Our accommodation for two nights is at a place where one can sometimes literally see thousands of flamingos (usually about half-half **Greater** and **Lesser Flamingos**), migratory shorebirds from Eurasia, **Great White Pelican**, and all the rest.

Overnight: Walvis Bay



Dune Lark, a Namibian near-endemic, should be seen around Walvis Bay.

Day 2. Walvis Bay Lagoon, Swakopmund, and other areas

We will likely spend the early morning either looking for **Dune Lark** nearby (depending on the previous day's itinerary) or for **Gray's Lark**, a very pale Namib Desert near-endemic, in the Swakopmund area. We will then spend much time birding the Walvis Bay Lagoon and salt works which has some of Africa's finest wader watching/shorebirding, with masses of Palearctic migrants usually around. Among our waterbird targets, will be **Chestnut-banded Plover**, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Black Tern** and the diminutive **Damara Tern**.

Overnight: Walvis Bay

Day 3. The Namib Escarpment via the Spitzkoppe (the "Matterhorn of Namibia")

Heading inland and northward we start encountering some spectacular mountains. The Spitzkoppe in particular is a huge inselberg that rises abruptly from the desert plain. The flat surrounding areas are good for **Burchell's Courser**, **Rüppell's Korhaan**, **Ludwig's Bustard**, a number of localized lark species such as **Karoo Long-billed Lark**, etc. The mountains themselves are where we search for the enigmatic **Herero Chat**, noisy little flocks of **Rosy-faced Lovebirds**, a couple of hornbill species that are basically restricted to the Namib and adjacent arid habitats, **Bradfield's Swift**, and many others.

The rocky areas near Omaruru offer some great habitat for watching hunting raptors, including **Verreaux's Eagle** and **African Hawk-Eagle** as well as **Augur Buzzard**. A diminutive antelope, **Kirk's Dik-dik**, is often encountered in the area.

Overnight: Ai-Aiba – The Rock Painting Lodge, Omaruru



*Another Namib Desert special we'll search for on this tour, **Rüppell's Korhaan**.*

Day 4. Birding the Namib Escarpment

Today we have the full day to continue birding the mountains of central Namibia. **White-tailed Shrike, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Rüppell's Parrot**, and **Rockrunner** are four of the superstars of the show – all of them are very localized (occurring only in Namibia and a small part of Angola) and full of personality, not to mention striking-looking. Quite a number of brightly-colored seedeaters also vie for attention around the lodge.

We will likely bird a dry riverbed for another shot at **Rüppell's Parrot** in the afternoon and then bird the general area. We might, if we're lucky, also see **Kaokoveld Slender Mongoose, Greater Kudu, Hartmann's Mountain Zebra**, or another mammal or two.

Overnight: Ai-Aiba – The Rock Painting Lodge, Omaruru



*The stunning **Rosy-faced Lovebird** usually provides excellent views in the Namib Escarpment.*

Day 5. Etosha National Park: birds and mammals

Etosha justifiably is rated as one of the best game parks in Africa. During our time in this amazing park, we will partake in an open-top game drive which is always a great way to experience the area's birds and wildlife. This is big (and small) mammal country, where **African Elephant, Black Rhinoceros**, large herds of **Springbok, Gemsbok, Plains Zebra, Blue Wildebeest**, and many other herbivores lurk, meaning (excitingly) that there are also relatively high densities of predators and scavengers, such as **Cheetah, Lion, Leopard, African Wildcat, Spotted Hyena, Black-backed Jackal**, etc.

Although we stop to look at all the mammal species, birding is still the main focus. An isolated population of South Africa's national bird, the beautiful **Blue Crane**, inhabits Etosha. **Kori**

Bustard and its smaller relative, **Northern Black Korhaan**, are both common. **Secretarybird** and an absolute stack of raptors and vultures are always much in evidence. This is one of the best places in southern Africa for owls, and we often find the tiny **African Scops Owl**, the giant **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl**, and then also others such as the beautiful **Southern White-faced Owl** at their daytime roosts (usually in Halali Camp, where we sometimes stop for lunch on one of the days). Etosha must be one of the few sites where one has to kick **Double-banded Courser** from one's feet. The unbelievably huge nests of **Sociable Weaver** are features of some areas, sometimes with **Pygmy Falcon** taking up residence in the same nests.

Overnight: Okaukuejo Camp, central Etosha



*We'll search for the scarce **Burchell's Courser** in Etosha National Park.*

Day 6. Bird and wildlife viewing in Etosha National Park

We will have the full day in this impressive park birding the open plains and various waterholes. We hope to find a multitude of **Lark** species, including **Eastern Clapper**, **Stark's**, **Sabota**, **Pink-billed**, **Fawn-colored**, and **Rufous-naped**, as well as larger and more brightly colored species such as **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Gabar Goshawk**, **Greater Kestrel**, **Lappet-faced Vulture**, and **Namaqua Sandgrouse**.

Overnight: Okaukuejo Camp, central Etosha

Day 7. Central to eastern Etosha National Park

Today we make our way from the central section of the park to the eastern edge. As we head farther east the bird species change gradually, and we hope to find **Blue Crane**, **Secretarybird**, **Red-**

necked Falcon, Burchell's Courser, and Caspian Plover among the usual suspects. Around Mokuti Lodge we should see **Black-faced Babbler, Crimson-breasted Shrike, White-browed Scrub Robin, Black-faced Waxbill, Bearded Woodpecker, Pearl-spotted Owlet**, and other woodland species.

Overnight: Namutoni Gate area, eastern Etosha



Etosha National Park is one of Africa's great game parks, and is a major highlight on the tour!

Day 8. Full day in eastern Etosha National Park

We will have the full day to enjoy the birds and wildlife of eastern Etosha today. We will likely head up to the grasslands of Andoni Plains to look for **Blue Crane, Pink-billed Lark, Eastern Clapper Lark, and Burchell's Courser**, while also having some time to bird the woodlands around our lodge for **Black-faced Babbler** and many others.

Overnight: Namutoni Gate area, eastern Etosha

Day 9. Transfer to and birding around Rundu

As we continue eastward the landscape becomes less arid, and today we start seeing some well-developed woodlands for the first time during our tour. The tall woodlands east of Rundu are home to some tricky birds, such as **Rufous-bellied Tit** (which can be very thin on the ground and tough to find). **Sharp-tailed Starling** (along with the more common but also more spectacularly plumaged **Greater Blue-eared Starling**) and **Souza's Shrike** are two tough birds of human-modified woodland sometimes in poor condition. There is a plethora of other great birds to be found here, both woodland birds and waterbirds, such as cuckooshrikes, orioles, **Green-capped**

Eremomela, Tinkling Cisticola, Swamp Boubou, Dwarf Bittern, Rufous-bellied Heron, and a rich assemblage of others.

We will also bird the wetlands around Rundu for **Collared Pratincole, White-backed Duck, Baillon's Crake, Greater Painted-snipe**, and perhaps even **Lesser Moorhen** and **Lesser Jacana**.

Overnight: Rundu area



*The relatively large **Cinnamon-breasted Tit** is one of the prized denizens found in the tall woodlands of northeastern Namibia.*

Day 10. Into northeastern Namibia

After some early-morning birding we will make the relatively short transfer to the Mahango area, which is incredibly biodiverse. We will have another shot at **Souza's Shrike, Sharp-tailed Starling**, and **Cinnamon-breasted Tit** as we head east through the tall woodlands. We stay at a lodge near the tiny but impressively diverse Mahango Game Reserve, a protected area within Bwabwata National Park. Species to look for around the lodge include **Meyer's Parrot, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, African Golden Oriole, White-browed Robin-Chat, Brown Firefinch**, and many others.

Overnight: Divundu area

Day 11. Mahango birding

We spend the day in the Mahango Game Reserve, enjoying birds such as **Rock Pratincole** and any of the birds mentioned for the previous day that we may have missed. Here we also add a great many new birds to our list, along with new mammals. **African Buffalo** occurs here but not in

Etosha, and this is also one of the best places in the world to find the rare **Roan Antelope** and **Sable Antelope**. **Wattled Crane**, **Slaty Egret**, **Western Banded Snake Eagle**, **Tinkling Cisticola**, the oversized **Coppery-tailed Coucal**, several spectacular weavers with their bright yellow plumage and amazing nests, **Greater Painted-snipe**, and **Grey-rumped Swallow** are just a few of the many birds we're likely to encounter at Mahango.

Overnight: Divundu area



African Skimmer is regular around the Okavango Panhandle.

Day 12. Into Botswana: the Okavango Panhandle

The Botswana border is only a short drive away. After crossing it one immediately enters a more open, overgrazed habitat, which is, interestingly, the best place to see the localized **Bradfield's Hornbill**. At Drotsky's Cabins the loud grunts of **Hippopotamus** startle you as you fall asleep in your cabins; while in the water during the day, they do lurk around the lodge grounds at night eating grass – it's not advisable to walk around after dark, as this is Africa's most dangerous animal. The lodge grounds are a haven for birdlife, and we can expect to find **Hartlaub's Babbler**, **White-browed Coucal**, and **Meves's Starling**, with **African Barred Owlet** in the nearby woodlands. **Brown Firefinch** and its more common cousins, **Red-billed Firefinch** and **Blue Waxbill**, often feed on the lawns. The liquid calls of **Swamp Boubou** and coucals add greatly to the atmosphere.

Overnight: Drotsky's Cabins, Shakawe, Botswana

Day 13. A full day in Botswana

We spend a lot of time birding by boat today as we slowly cruise the upper panhandle of the Okavango Delta. This day is usually excellent for photography, as we are able to approach many birds and animals really close from the boat, and highlights include **Pel's Fishing Owl**, **Slaty Egret**, **White-backed Night Heron**, **African Skimmer**, **African Pygmy Goose**, **Long-toed Lapwing**, **Coppery-tailed Coucal**, and **Southern Carmine Bee-eater**. We may also be lucky enough to encounter the rare, swamp-dwelling **Sitatunga** antelope.

In the nearby woodlands we hope to find **African Barred Owlet**, **Narina Trogon**, **Retz's Helmetshrike**, **Grey-headed Kingfisher**, **African Golden Oriole**, and **Crested Francolin**, among others.

Overnight: Drotsky's Cabins, Shakawe, Botswana



*The Okavango Delta is surely the best place in the world to find **Pel's Fishing Owl** – we stand a good chance of finding one on this tour!*

Day 14. Back into Namibia and continuing east

We continue birding the wetlands and woodlands of this bird-rich corner of Namibia. We spend two nights on the banks of the Zambezi River, from where we can do boat trips and birding/game drives. A late-afternoon boat trip along the Zambezi is extremely productive and usually produces great sightings of **African Finfoot**, **White-backed Night Heron**, **Half-collared Kingfisher**, **White-crowned Lapwing**, **African Skimmer**, and **Rock Pratincole**. We often head out this evening to look for night birds such as **African Wood** and **Western Barn Owls** and a host of **Nightjars** including **Fiery-necked**, **Square-tailed**, and the spectacular **Pennant-winged**!

Overnight: Katima Mulilo

Day 15. Birding around Katima Mulilo

Today we have the full day to explore the productive woodlands in the far-northeastern Namibia. **Yellow-throated Leaflove** was discovered as a breeding bird on the Namibia/Zambia border (the Namibian side) in 2015, hundreds of miles south of its previously known range, and is one of today's targets. **Olive Woodpecker**, **Schalow's Turaco**, and **Western Banded Snake Eagle** all occur in the riparian vegetation along the banks of the Zambezi River.

In the surrounding woodlands we search for **Racket-tailed Roller**, **Arnot's Chat**, **Copper Sunbird**, **Striped Kingfisher**, **Grey-headed Bushshrike**, **Grey Penduline Tit**, **Wood Pipit**, and **Lizard Buzzard**.

Seasonal pans in the area are explored for **Blue-billed Teal**, **Rosy-throated Longclaw**, **White-backed Duck**, **Lesser Jacana**, **Rufous-bellied Heron**, **Luapula Cisticola**, and perhaps even **Black Coucal**.

Overnight: Katima Mulilo



*The spectacular **Pennant-winged Nightjar** can be seen breeding around Katima Mulilo.*

Days 16 – 17. Into Zimbabwe and birding Victoria Falls

After some final early morning birding around Katima Mulilo we transfer east, ultimately bound for Victoria Falls, in Zimbabwe. We have several border crossings to negotiate, and we anticipate reaching Victoria Falls only in the mid-afternoon of Day 16 – mostly a travel day. As we head further east we will pass through more broad-leaved woodland, occasionally seeing small roving groups of the scarce **Southern Ground Hornbills** on the roadside, but don't expect much else on the transfer.

Once arrived and settled, we spend some time admiring Victoria Falls, 'the smoke that thunders', but it's important to note that the whole area has spectacularly rich birdlife, so we'll add a lot of

good new birds to our list near the end of the tour. Birding around the busy town, along the grounds of our lodge, is extremely productive with regular sightings of **Collared Palm Thrush**, **Natal Spurfowl**, **Bearded Scrub Robin**, **Schalow's Turaco**, **Western Banded Snake Eagle**, **Trumpeter Hornbill**, **Olive Woodpecker**, **Broad-billed Roller**, and other species along the Zambezi River.

We usually find close to 400 bird species on this tour of varied habitats – and we also get one of the highest mammal lists of any of our tours on this transect.

Overnight: Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe



Racket-tailed Roller can be seen in the woodlands found in the final week of the tour.

Day 18. Departure

The tour comes to an end after breakfast, and no activities are included today. You are welcome to depart Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe at your leisure.

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 guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration:	18 days
Limit:	3 – 8
Dates:	02 – 19 November 2026 02 – 19 November 2027
Start:	Walvis Bay, Namibia
End:	Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
Prices:	R 167, 812 per person sharing (2026) R 186, 271 per person sharing (2027)
Single supplements:	R 22,400 (2026) R 24,864 (2027)

Price includes:

All accommodation
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 18)
Unlimited bottled water
Expert tour leader
All entrance & conservation fees
All ground transport
Airport pick-up and drop-off (on Days 1 and 18, only)
Entrance fees to Victoria Falls
Boat ride on the Okavango River
Boat trip along the Zambezi River
Open-top game drive in Etosha National Park

Price excludes:

International/domestic flights (to Walvis Bay/from Victoria Falls)
Visas
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls,
etc. Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))