

Birding Ecotours



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 exceptional 18-day birding adventure takes us through three different countries, offering a rich tapestry of breathtaking and varied landscapes. Our journey begins in the coastal Namib Desert at Walvis Bay, where towering dune fields (home to sought-after, localized near-endemics) meet rich lagoons teeming with flamingos, pelicans, shorebirds, and regional specials like **Damara Tern** and **Chestnut-banded Plover**. The Erongo 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 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 is one of the world's best places to see **Black Rhinoceros** and big cats, along with a good assortment of other African megafauna. It is also excellent for a fine 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 many 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, riparian forests, and woodlands in these parts support **Pel's Fishing Owl** (this is the world's most reliable area for this iconic species), **Rock Pratincole**, **White-backed Night Heron**, **African Finfoot**, **Slaty Egret**, **Southern Carmine Bee-eater**, and literally hundreds of other spectacular species. Finally, we bird around the impressive Victoria Falls for yet another rich assemblage of birds. We typically record 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.

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. Birding Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, and the Namib Desert

We ask that you arrive the previous day (Day 0) to ensure a travel buffer and to ensure we can spend the first day birding and targeting some of the area's near-endemic larks. If you only arrive on Day 1, you might miss some of the area's target species.



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

The first site we usually visit is the picturesque red sand dune habitat around the village of Rooibank, in the middle of the Namib Desert. Here we target the Namibian near-endemic **Dune Lark**, once considered a Namibian endemic but now treated as conspecific with Barlow's Lark. While looking for the larks, we will get the trip list rolling with **Bokmakierie**, **Greater Striped Swallow**, **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Cape Sparrow**, and other widespread species. Later in the morning, we usually search the plains around Swakopmund for **Gray's Lark**, a very pale Namib Desert special. We usually then head out into the Namib Desert to enjoy the bizarre **Welwitschia** plant, a long-lived, Namib Desert endemic, as well as the almost pure-white desert form of **Tractrac Chat**.

We spend two nights in Walvis Bay, right on the edge of the bay, renowned for its dazzling bird spectacles. Here, one may witness thousands of flamingos (both **Greater** and **Lesser Flamingos** in equal numbers), painting the lagoons pink, while Eurasian shorebirds arrive in seasonal waves and **Great White Pelicans** glide majestically across the water.

Overnight: Walvis Bay

Day 2. Coastal birding at Walvis Bay

Today we take a boat trip on Walvis Bay Lagoon that is focused mainly on marine mammals, such as **Afro-Australian Fur Seal**, **Common Bottlenose Dolphin**, the localized **Heaviside's Dolphin**, and sometimes **Humpback Whale**. Of course birds are never far away and on this trip we often see **Black** and **Damara Terns**, **Cape** and **Crowned Cormorants**, **Great White Pelican**, as well as pelagic species such as **White-chinned Petrel**, **Sooty Shearwater**, **Parasitic Jaeger**, and even the occasional **African Penguin**.



Damara Tern is found in small numbers around Walvis Bay.

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**, **African Oystercatcher**, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Cape Teal**, and an assortment of migrant shorebirds.

While in Walvis Bay, we will make sure we find **Orange River White-eyes** in the lush gardens around town; the Namibian coast being the only area for this species on this itinerary.

Overnight: Walvis Bay

Day 3. The Namib Escarpment via the Spitzkoppe

Heading inland and northward we start encountering some spectacular mountains. The Spitzkoppe (the “Matterhorn of Namibia”) in particular is a huge inselberg that rises abruptly from the desert plain. The flat surrounding areas of the Namib Desert are good for **Rüppell’s Korhaan**, **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Karoo Long-billed** and **Stark’s Larks** as well as the scarce and nomadic **Ludwig’s Bustard**. The lightly wooded mountain slopes are where we search for the enigmatic **Herero Chat**, **Pirit Batis**, **Rosy-faced Lovebird**, **Monteiro’s Hornbill**, **Layard’s Warbler**, and many others.

As we ascend into the Namib Escarpment within the rugged Erongo Mountains, the landscape shifts to dramatic rocky outcrops and boulder-strewn slopes. This habitat provides a stronghold for raptors, with **Verreaux’s Eagle** soaring overhead and **African Hawk-Eagle** often seen patrolling the cliffs. Amid the rocks and scrub, the delicate **Kirk’s Dik-dik**, a tiny antelope with large eyes, frequently makes an appearance, adding a touch of charm to the wilderness.

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 Erongo 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. Quite a number of brightly colored seedeaters also vie for attention around the lodge, such as **Black-faced Waxbill** and **Red-headed Finch**. We might also

see **Kaokoveld Slender Mongoose, Greater Kudu, (Hartmann's) Mountain Zebra**, or another mammal or two.

We will likely bird a nearby dry riverbed for another shot at **Rüppell's Parrot** in the afternoon and then bird the tall riparian forest for the likes of **Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Groundscraper Thrush, and Bearded Woodpecker**.

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



*The near-endemic **Monteiro's Hornbill** usually provides excellent views in the Namib Escarpment.*

Day 5. Bird and wildlife viewing in central Etosha National Park

Etosha is rightly considered one of Africa's finest game parks. During our time in this amazing park, we will partake in an open-top game drive which is always a lovely way to experience the area's birds and wildlife. This is prime mammal country, where **African Elephant, Black Rhinoceros**, large herds of **Springbok, Gemsbok, Plains Zebra**, and many other herbivores lurk. There are also predators and scavengers around too, such as, **Lion, Spotted Hyena, and Black-backed Jackal**, with **Cheetah, Leopard, and African Wild Cat** occasionally seen too.

Although we stop to look at mammal species, birding is still the main focus. **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. Etosha is one of the best sites for the handsome **Double-banded Courser**, with the scarcer **Burchell's** and **Temminck's Coursers** on our radar too. The unbelievably huge nests of **Sociable Weaver** are features of the area, sometimes with **Pygmy Falcon** taking up residence in the same nests.

Overnight: Okaukuejo Camp, central Etosha

Day 6. Bird and wildlife viewing in central Etosha National Park

We will have the full day in this impressive park to bird the open plains and various waterholes. We hope to find **Rufous-eared Warbler**, **Desert Cisticola**, **Cape Penduline Tit**, **Yellow Canary**, and an assortment of lark species, including **Eastern Clapper**, **Stark's**, **Sabota**, **Pink-billed**, and **Rufous-naped Larks**, 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



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

Day 7. Central to eastern Etosha National Park

Today we make our way from the central section of the park to the eastern edge. We will likely stop at Halali Rest Camp as we head through the park. This rest camp is an excellent place to find owls, and we often find the tiny **African Scops Owl**, and then also others such as the beautiful **Southern White-faced Owl** at their daytime roosts. Here, our key targets are **Bare-cheeked Babbler** and **Violet Wood Hoopoe**, with Halali being a reliable spot for these two Namibian near-endemics. Other commonly seen woodland species here include **White-crested Helmetshrike**, **Southern White-crowned Shrike**, **Southern Red-billed Hornbill** (often Damara x Southern hybrids) and occasionally **Shikra**.

As we continue farther east the bird species change gradually, and we hope to find **Secretarybird**, **Red-necked Falcon**, as well as the scarce duo of **Burchell's Courser** and **Caspian Plover**. Around our lodge we should see **Black-faced Babbler**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **White-**

browed Scrub Robin, Black-faced Waxbill, Bearded Woodpecker, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, and other widespread woodland species.

Overnight: Namutoni Gate area, eastern Etosha

Day 8. Full day in eastern Etosha National Park

We will have most of the day to enjoy the birds and wildlife of eastern Etosha. We will likely head up to the grasslands of Andoni Plains to look for **Blue Crane**, (a small, isolated population of this regal species exists in Etosha), **Pink-billed Lark, Eastern Clapper Lark, Burchell's Sandgrouse, and Burchell's Courser**. The dry woodlands in the area often host **Red-crested Korhaan, Southern Pied Babbler, Barred Wren-Warbler, and Violet-eared Waxbill**. In the late afternoon we will have some time to bird the woodlands around our lodge.

Overnight: Namutoni Gate area, eastern Etosha



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

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. We will likely arrive at our lodge in the late afternoon where the birding is very productive and we are likely to find a plethora of new birds for our trip list. Some of these might include **African Jacana, Yellow-billed Stork, African Openbill, Senegal Coucal, Black-collared Barbet, White-browed Robin-Chat, Woodland and Malachite Kingfishers, Hartlaub's Babbler, and Swamp Boubou**.

Overnight: Rundu area

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. En route, we will also bird the wetlands around Rundu for **Collared Pratincole**, **Blue-billed Teal**, **Greater Painted-snipe**, and perhaps even **Lesser Moorhen** and **Lesser Jacana**.

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**, **Mosque Swallow**, **Bradfield's Hornbill**, **Mourning Collared Dove**, **White-browed Robin-Chat**, **Swamp Boubou**, **Southern Yellow White-eye**, **Brown Firefinch**, and many others.

Overnight: Divundu area

Day 11. Divundu and Mahango birding

We spend the morning birding the tall woodlands east of Rundu which are home to some tricky birds, such as **Rufous-bellied Tit** (which can be very thin on the ground and tough to find) as well as **Sharp-tailed Starling** and **Souza's Shrike**; two tough birds of human-modified woodland. There is a plethora of other highly prized woodland birds to be found here, such as **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**, **White-breasted Cuckooshrike**, **African Golden Oriole**, **Green-capped Eremomela**, **Fawn-colored Lark**, **Tinkling Cisticola**, **Arnot's Chat** and many others.



*The range-restricted **Sharp-tailed Starling** is one of the prized denizens found in the tall woodlands of northeastern Namibia.*

We will likely spend the afternoon in the Mahango Game Reserve, enjoying birds such as **Long-toed Lapwing**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Wattled Crane**, **Swainson's Spurfowl**, **Slaty Egret**, **Martial Eagle**, **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker**, **Violet-eared Waxbill**, the oversized **Coppery-tailed Coucal**, several spectacular weavers with their bright yellow plumage and amazing nests, **Greater Painted-snipe**, and **Grey-rumped Swallow**. Here we are likely to 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**.

Overnight: Divundu area



The striking African Skimmer is regularly seen around the Okavango Panhandle.

Day 12. Into Botswana: the Okavango Panhandle

The Botswana border is only a short drive away. After crossing, we enter a more open, overgrazed habitat, which is, interestingly, the best place to see the localized **Bradfield's Hornbill**. At Drotsky's Cabins, **Hippopotamus** grunts echo at night as they graze around the lodge grounds — a reminder not to walk 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 while the liquid calls of **Swamp Boubou** and bubbling coucal calls add greatly to the atmosphere. While we sleep this evening, we may be lucky enough to hear the deep booming call of the legendary **Pel's Fishing Owl**, our target for the next day.

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 closely approach many birds and animals 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**, **Chirping Cisticola**, **Greater Swamp Warbler**, and **Southern Carmine Bee-eater**. We may also be lucky enough to encounter the rare, swamp-dwelling **Sitatunga** antelope.

In the nearby dry woodlands or lush riparian forests 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!

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 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 Nightjar**!

Overnight: Katima Mulilo

Day 15. Birding around Katima Mulilo

Today we will devote the day to explore the productive woodlands in far northeastern Namibia around Katima Mulilo. **Pale-throated Greenbul** 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, Green Wood Hoopoe, Broad-billed Roller, Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Trumpeter Hornbill, 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, Black-crowned Tchagra, Copper Sunbird, Striped Kingfisher, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Tropical Boubou, Flappet Lark, Jameson's Firefinch, Grey Penduline Tit, and Lizard Buzzard.**

Seasonal pans and floodplains 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



*We usually visit a spectacular **Southern Carmine Bee-eater** breeding colony on this tour.*

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 two 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 groups of the scarce **Southern Ground Hornbills** on the roadside, but don't expect much else on the transfer.

On our day around Victoria Falls we'll spend the morning on an open-top game drive at a nearby nature reserve where we hope to find the likes of **Hooded Vulture**, **Lizard Buzzard**, **Striped Kingfisher**, **Broad-billed Roller**, **African Golden Oriole**, **Jameson's Firefinch** and many others.

Of course, we'll 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 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**, and other species along the Zambezi River.

Overnight: Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe



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

Day 18. Departure

The tour comes to an end after breakfast, and no activities are included today, apart from an optional pre-breakfast birding walk. 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, assuming 4–8 participants (2026) R 186,271 per person sharing, assuming 4–8 participants (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 and conservation fees
All ground transport
Airport pick-up and drop-off (on Days 0/1 and 18, only)
Entrance fees to Victoria Falls
Boat trips on the Okavango River
Boat trip on the Zambezi River
Boat trip from Walvis Bay
Open-top game drive in Etosha National Park and near Victoria Falls

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](#))