



**QUINTESSENTIAL NAMIBIA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE
PHOTO TOUR**

08 - 18 SEPTEMBER 2023



The Crimson-breasted Shrike epitomizes the splendid contrasts that await in Namibia.

Experience the Namib in all its splendor – the oldest desert in the world with towering red dunes. The essence of Namibia is encapsulated in this wondrous photographic exploration, which takes in all the ‘must-dos’, namely Sossusvlei, the Skeleton Coast, and the game-filled plains and waterholes of Etosha National Park.

The ideal experience, and one we boldly strive for, is to combine visiting the world’s remaining wilderness areas with that of special-interest wildlife photography. Our photographic guides are all highly qualified naturalists and experienced photographers themselves, and we specialize in birds, mammals, and of course the unique landscapes and cultures experienced along the way. Key to getting exceptional images is an intimate knowledge of wildlife subjects and their behavior, and our guides will go that extra mile for you to get that perfect shot. That said, the wildlife is never put under any undue stress and will be respected at all times.



Lesser Flamingos should entertain us on the coast.

All photo tours are uniquely crafted to maximize wildlife viewing opportunities but will also be an excellent learning experience, catering for photographic participants of all skill levels.

This Quintessential Namibia ****SQ TOUR**** is not your typical Birding Ecotours offering. It rather is an example of an exciting new line of ultimate photographic journeys to the planet’s most unspoiled wilderness areas. Everything on these tours is of an exceptional standard – from the birding and wildlife photographic opportunities to flying over amazing landscapes by light aircraft to the luxurious safari camps themselves. Due to the specialized nature of these tours please email us for a ‘seasonal quotation’.

This Quintessential Namibia Birding and Wildlife Photo Tour can be combined with our preceding **Kenya Birding and Photo Tour**. This tour will offer a host of new bird and wildlife photographic opportunities in an entirely different environment. Our similar, yet sufficiently different **Namibia and Botswana Birding and Photo Tour** directly follows this high-end offering – taking in different areas of Namibia with their own unique birds and wildlife, along with combining a visit to the panhandle of the Okavango Delta. And following this, is our **South Africa – Western Cape to Kruger Birding and Photo Tour**, which is another complimentary tour, offering a whole set of new and unique species with excellent photographic opportunities throughout!

Itinerary (11 days/10 nights)

Days 1 – 2. Little Kulala Camp, Kulala Wilderness Reserve, Sossusvlei

Upon arrival in Windhoek the group will be met by our representative and assisted with the charter flight to our first camp, Little Kulala Camp, for two nights. The camp is located within the arid Namib Desert on the 37,000-hectare private Kulala Wilderness Reserve and close to the iconic dunes of Sossusvlei, by virtue of having a private gate into the park. A waterhole in front of the main building provides the opportunity to see **Gemsbok** (Southern Oryx), **Springbok**, **Bat-eared Fox**, **Aardwolf**, **Common Ostrich**, and **Black-backed Jackal**. **Spotted Hyaena** can be heard at night. The Namib, a vast sea of red sand dunes, is one of the most arid deserts in the world.



*A **Gemsbok** (Southern Oryx), the national mammal of Namibia, watches over the Namib Desert.*

The morning of Day 2 will see us take an early morning excursion into the Sossusvlei section of the Namib-Naukluft National Park and its incredible dunes, which will afford excellent photographic opportunities. The big target bird will be **Dune Lark**, Namibia's only endemic, and mammals photographable against a unique dune backdrop could include **Cape Fox**, **Gemsbok**, **Springbok**, and possibly even **Cheetah** if we are very fortunate. The gravel plains here are also good for species such as **Burchell's Courser**, **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Greater Kestrel**, **Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark**, **Stark's Lark**, and **Ludwig's Bustard**. We will enjoy our packed breakfast in the shady Tsauchab River, where we will no doubt be entertained by **Dusky Sunbird**, **Scaly-feathered Weaver**, **Chestnut-vented Warbler**, and **White-throated Canary**, among others. One can also climb to the top of Dune 45 to obtain another perspective of this fascinating area. Lunch will be enjoyed back at Little Kulala Camp, while in the late afternoon we will be taking in the splendor of Kulala Wilderness Reserve itself on a scenic nature drive.

Little Kulala Camp comprises a reception, lounge, bar, dining room, library, wine cellar, curio shop, and veranda.



Sociable Weavers build massive nests, and are a regular feature throughout Namibia.

Days 3 – 4. Swakopmund

We depart from Sossusvlei via a highly scenic charter flight over awe-inspiring dunes, rugged topography, and a scenic coastline to Swakopmund, where we will stay for two nights. This flight will afford a wonderful opportunity for aerial photography. Swakopmund is unique for its Bavarian architecture and desolate Atlantic coastline, which affords ample opportunities to put your wide-angle lenses to use in and around town. A visit will also be made to the famous lagoon at Walvis Bay and its salt pans, where large numbers of waterbirds gather, with both **Lesser** and **Greater Flamingos** in big numbers. Palearctic waders are also well represented here, including **Bar-tailed**

Godwit, Sanderling, Curlew Sandpiper, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, and Little Stint. Among them should also be **Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, and Red-necked Phalarope.** Key species to find here include the localized **Damara Tern** and the pretty **Chestnut-banded Plover.**

We will overnight at the comfortable Cornerstone Guest House, situated in Swakopmund.



Delightful Chestnut-banded Plovers are a target in Walvis Bay.



A dramatic sunset over Greater Flamingos in the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

Days 5 – 7. Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp

Today the group will travel, again by charter flight, from Swakopmund to Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp for a three-night stay. Flanked to the east and west by rugged hills, the camp looks out over stunning, starkly beautiful scenery. It is scenically located in a broad valley at the confluence of two tributaries of the Hoanib River in the northern part of the private Palmwag Concession. Its location thus straddles the Palmwag area and the iconic Skeleton Coast National Park in one of the most remote areas of the Kaokoveld.

Photographic highlights here include one of the greatest concentrations of desert-adapted **African Elephant** and **Lion**, and the renowned Skeleton Coast itself, of course. Nature drives will be taken along the ephemeral Hoanib River as well as to several freshwater springs, which support healthy populations of desert-adapted wildlife such as **Hartmann's Mountain Zebra**, **Southern Giraffe**, **Gemsbok**, and **Springbok**. There are also good birding opportunities in this area, including **Monteiro's Hornbill**, **Rüppell's Korhaan**, **Booted Eagle**, and **Benguela Long-billed Lark**, among many others. Another memorable highlight is sure to be the scenic flight over the Skeleton Coast. This full-day excursion showcases the rugged coastline with its seal colonies and shipwrecks. To reach the coast one flies over massive dune fields, the Auses Spring, and the Hoanib floodplains.

The exclusive Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp is only accessible by light aircraft and consists of only seven twin-bedded tents and one family unit, each comprising stylish en suite bedrooms with shaded outdoors decks. This camp offers guests all the luxuries and amenities for an unforgettable stay.



*We will search for the unique **Hartmann's Mountain Zebra**.*



The near-endemic Monteiro's Hornbill usually offer excellent photographic opportunities.

Days 8 – 10. Ongava Tented Camp, Ongava Game Reserve, Etosha National Park

We then transfer to the final camp of our journey, Ongava Tented Camp adjacent to Etosha National Park, for the last three nights. The 30,000-hectare (74,129-acre) private Ongava Game Reserve is found on the southern boundary of Etosha National Park, which is Namibia's premier wildlife destination; it provides an abundance of game viewing regardless of season. Photographic activities will comprise nature drives on Ongava Game Reserve itself as well as into the game-rich plains of adjoining Etosha National Park with its network of photography-friendly waterholes, which always plays center stage to some sort of wildlife spectacle.

Ongava Game Reserve features almost all of the characteristic wildlife of the area, with plains game such as **Springbok, Gemsbok, Common Wildebeest, Plains Zebra, Red Hartebeest, Southern Giraffe, Common Eland**, and the endemic **Black-faced Impala**, while Etosha itself has **African Elephant** and **Black and White Rhinoceros** to add to the list. In Etosha large herds of plains game concentrate around the waterholes, making for exciting wildlife viewing. Predators include **Lion, Leopard** (for the lucky), **Spotted Hyaena**, and **Black-backed Jackal**.

Birdlife within the Ongava Game Reserve is prolific, with over 340 species to be seen. Specials like **Short-toed Rock Thrush, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Violet Wood Hoopoe, Carp's Tit, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Red-necked Falcon, White-tailed Shrike, Sociable Weaver** with its enormous communal nests, the miniature **Pygmy Falcon**, and the brilliantly colored **Crimson-breasted Shrike** are found here. In Etosha National Park, on the open plains towards the Okondeka waterhole, **Namaqua Sandgrouse, Double-banded Courser**, and **Pink-billed Lark** can be seen. Acacia thickets harbor **Yellow-bellied Eremomela** and **Acacia Pied Barbet**. Others include the immense **Kori Bustard** and raptors like **Greater Kestrel, Lanner Falcon**, and **Pale Chanting Goshawk** in abundance.

We will stay in an intimate safari camp discreetly hidden on Ongava Game Reserve. Intense wildlife sightings in and around the camp are possible thanks to its popular waterhole.



*The ghost-like **Pale Chanting Goshawk** are photogenic subjects in the thornveld of Etosha.*



*Etosha is arguably the best place on earth to photograph **Black Rhinoceros!***

Day 11. Departure

We return to Windhoek, where we then connect for our return flight to Johannesburg to make connecting international flights.

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:	11 days
Group Size:	2 – 6
Dates:	08 – 18 September 2023
Start:	Windhoek, Namibia
End:	Windhoek, Namibia

This is a premier, all-inclusive trip. Please ask about the price, which depends on group size and other factors.