

Sandwich Bird Tours



WESTERN NAMIBIA OCTOBER 2013

Saturday October 19th

After two weeks in South Africa and Kruger, John Brooks, Jim Law, Roger Bird and myself flew into Windhoek from Johannesburg. It was an uneventful journey and our taxi was waiting to take us to River Crossing, a lodge some 25 minutes from the airport on the outskirts of the capital.

The lodge is set in the hills covered in dry thorny scrub which holds quite a few species of bird. The late afternoon produced a couple of Carp's Tits outside my chalet, a pair of Monteiro's Hornbills and a number of Familiar Chats, Cape Starlings, Greater Striped Swallows and a Kudu.

Sunday October 20th

I returned to the airport after breakfast to meet up with Morten who had flown in from Norway via Amsterdam. He arrived safely but his luggage didn't. We returned to the lodge, had some lunch before going back to the airport to see if his luggage had arrived and to meet Val who had flown in from London. Val arrived but still no luggage for Morten. We settled into our rooms and despite the number of airport trips quite a few birds were seen by the group today including Mountain Wheatears, Wattled Starlings, a lovely party of Violet-eared Waxbills, male and female Short-toed Rockthrushes, Acacia

Pied Barbet and Morten and I had two Black eagles, 2 Tawny Eagles and an African Hawk Eagle. In the early evening Bradfield Swifts poured out of the mountains and across our accommodation. An Oryx made an appearance too.

Neil, our guide from Safariwise, arrived in time for dinner. It was good to meet up again.

Monday October 21st

We met pre breakfast and searched for Orange River Francolin four of which were duly found. A new bird for all of us. We returned to the lodge for breakfast and had to wait for lost luggage to be delivered to the lodge. We eventually left the lodge at around 10 am and drove to Avis Dam to do our first birding walk. Birds seen included White-backed Mousebird and a few other bits and pieces.

We left Avis Dam around 12:00 and drove to our lunch destination, Hotel Tule. After lunch we visited the Gammams water treatment plant and saw Red-knobbed Coots, Black-shouldered Kite, some Purple Swampheens and a nice group of 23 White Pelicans.

We arrived at our destination, Daan Viljoen Game Park and after we settled into our accommodation, which is situated on the banks of the Daan Viljoen Dam and very comfortable, we did a short walk before we had a shower. Birds seen included African Spoonbill, Black crane, and Verreaux's Eagle Owl. A solitary Eland was seen too. A short walk and a tasty dinner before an early night.



Tuesday October 22nd

We met at 6:30 for a short walk and saw some Lesser Masked Weavers, an Alpine Swift and more or less the same birds we had seen last night. A family party of Banded Mongoose shot across the road and into a pipe only to disappear from there.

We departed Daan Viljoen after breakfast and drove south and west to the Namib Desert Lodge arriving late afternoon. Birds seen along the way included Herero chat, which is not an easy bird to get, Lappet-faced Vulture, Long-billed Pipit, Fawn-coloured Lark, and finally Pygmy Falcon which had eluded us last year, and a couple of Ruppell's Korhaan, The habitat of the desert and the views here were becoming quite spectacular.

Wednesday October 23rd

We had breakfast at 6:30 before departing around 7:30 to drive to Sossusvlei. En route we saw more Ruppell's Korhaans, Ostrich, Gemsbok and Springbok. We searched and found Dune Lark before we continued our drive down the alley of dunes within this sea of sand. The landscape here is some of the best one could wish for.

We saw Burchell's Courser, Double banded Courser, Ludwig's Bustard, Greater Kestrel, Cape Sparrow, House Sparrow, Pied Crow, Cape Crow, Common Fiscal, Familiar Chat, Rock Martin, Red eyed Bulbul, Rufous eared Warbler, Black chested Prinia, Sabota, Stark's and Dune Lark. We returned to the lodge just after 14:00 and had lunch. After lunch we all relaxed in and around the lodge and its gardens before we met again at 18:00 to do our checklist followed by dinner. A fantastic day and a place I certainly will want to return to.

One of the experiences today was to release an Oryx which had become trapped in a wire fence. I don't suppose the farmer would have been very pleased us cutting two strands of wire but the Oryx was happy although by the way he ran off after trying to spear us with his horns you would not have thought so. It made us feel a lot better anyway despite the dangers of horns and hooves.



Thursday October 24th

We had breakfast at 06:15 and departed towards the Skeleton Coast seeing Lanner, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Trac Trac Chat, Chat Flycatcher, Karoo Long-billed Lark on the way. We had our first sighting of Mountain Zebra too.

The highlight of this morning was the sighting of two cub Cheetahs out in the open. They were quite distant and as soon as we got out of the van and tried to get a little closer they shot off into the hills. Good but distant views.

We arrived at Walvis Bay in time for lunch and were amazed at the sheer number of birds that were either wintering here or passing through. Curlew Sandpipers were here in their thousands as were Little Stints and the place turned pink with Greater and Lesser Flamingos in uncountable numbers. Hartlaub and Grey-headed Gulls, Sandwich, Caspian, Common and Crested Terns and more Cormorants, mostly Crowned but also White-breasted, than you can shake a stick at. White-fronted and Chestnut-banded Plovers provided us with great views and the best species of all was the Damara Tern, a couple of which were feeding just by the side of the road. A spectacular place to say the least.

The Atlantic Villa in Swakopmund was a very clean and modern hotel with great views out to sea, Dinner in a restaurant called "the Wreck" was very nice too even if the food was not a little filling.

Friday October 25th

We left Swakopmund and drove towards Walvis Bay again. We birded around the lagoon as well as Paaltjies but the birds were much as yesterday although it was obvious that Bar-tailed Godwits had arrived in some numbers overnight. Cape Cormorants were added to the list and Sooty Shearwaters were noted flying south and clearly on migration. A Black-headed Gull was of some note and Orange-River White-eyes were discovered in some palm trees in gardens along the beach.

We visited mile 4 salt works in the afternoon looking for larks. Five Gray's Larks were found, the speciality of the area, some Stark's, Red-capped and Grey-backed Sparrow Larks too. Eleven Black Oystercatchers were seen on the rocks.

Again a lovely dinner this evening as the sun set over the sea.

Saturday October 26th

Today we did a short pelagic. This is not really the place to do pelagic, but still we had some interesting sightings. The Benguela or Heavyside Dolphins were new to all while the birds included Sooty Shearwaters, White-chinned Petrels, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Cape Gannets, Pomarine Skuas, a couple of Sabine's Gulls and three African Penguins.

Thousands of Cape Fur Seals including the one that entered the boat while we were

going along quite some way out, and back on the quay, some White Pelicans and a surprise Terek Sandpiper. We returned early afternoon and rested for most of the rest of the day although some went out for a walk.



Sunday October 27th

We departed Swakopmund at 08:00 and drove north along the Skeleton Coast and stopped at a shipwreck. We were lucky to witness a mass migration of terns, hundreds of thousands of birds flying south and managed to identify Black and Common Terns amongst them. Cormorants too were in just unimaginable numbers. We continued our drive north and stopped at Henties Bay to do our last shopping before going east into the desert and Damaraland.

We had lunch in Uis and continued to our final destination, Twyfelfontein Country Lodge and arrived around 17:00. We saw our first Elephant tracks and dung en route, but no Elephants. Birds noted however were Greater Kestrel, Shikra, African Hawk Eagle, Karoo Chat and some Red-headed Finches.

As we arrived at the lodge we saw a couple of African Hawk Eagles sitting in a small pond under a tree. Not often one gets such great views. We settled into our rooms and had a nice buffet dinner before another early night.

Monday October 28th

Breakfast started at 6:30 after which we left on our morning excursion to look for the desert adapted elephants at 07:30. On our way to the Huab River bed we saw our first Benguela Long-billed Lark and had great views. We eventually found the herd of Elephants and spent quite some time with them as they grazed in the river bed. A couple of Pearl-spotted Owlets gave great views too.

We returned to our lodge for lunch and met again at 16:00 to visit the nearby World heritage site of Twyfelfontein. Lovely view of a pair of Veraux's Eagles as we walked to the engravings. We returned to our lodge, had a shower and met to do our checklist at 19:00 in the restaurant where to our amusement a truly, but clearly quite tame, African Wild Cat wandered round the guests. It was by no means bothered by the flashlights of the cameras.

The Elephants here rely on water pumped up from boreholes in the local villages at this time of year. One of the villages we drove by actually has no water supply but most

houses had sky television. The Damaraland girl we met, who spoke perfect English, told us that she liked living in the “wild” and that sky TV prevented her from getting bored in the evenings. During the day she was a guide at the engravings and often had to walk 7 km to work in the mornings.

Tuesday October 29th

We had breakfast at 07:00 and departed our lodge just after 08:00. En route to Etosha. On the way we visited the Petrified forest and had great views of another Herero Chat whilst having a cup of tea. This place is covered with Welwitschias, but apart from their age it was difficult to get excited about them.

We stopped in Kamanjab for lunch and had several birds in the garden including Bare cheeked Babbler, Monteiro's Hornbill, Great Sparrow, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, Southern Masked Weaver, Pirit Batis, Cape Glossy Starling and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill.

After lunch we proceeded to Etosha National Park and after entering the park we visited two waterholes seeing, Black Rhino, Hartman's Mountain Zebra, Burchell's Zebra, Greater Kudu, Springbok, Gemsbok, Southern Giraffe, Black- faced Impala and Elephant. We arrived at Dolomite camp and booked into our rooms before meeting again at 18:30 for a sundowner and to do our daily checklist before dinner.

Other good birds today were Damara Hornbill, White-tailed Shrikes, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Northern Black-bellied Korhaan, Double-banded Courser and Double-banded Sandgrouse.



Wednesday October 30th

We had breakfast at 07:00 before going on our first game drive. En-route to our first waterhole we saw two Black Rhinos, Black-chested Snake-eagle, Fawn-coloured Lark and Verreaux's Eagle Owl. Both species of Zebra, Gemsbok, Springbok, Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Red Hartebeest were seen at several waterholes as well as Elephants. We returned to the lodge for lunch and a siesta during the hottest part of the day and left again at 16:00 for our afternoon game drive. Birds seen included: Ant-eating Chat, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Burchell's Sandgrouse and Crimson-breasted Bushshrike.

Thursday October 31st

We met up on the dolomite hill between the rooms just after 06:00. Some people were lucky enough to almost walk into a bull Giraffe that had made its way up the hill during the evening. I am not quite sure who got the biggest fright, the Giraffe or the group! We called and saw three Hartlaub's Spurfowl before proceeding to breakfast. We had breakfast at 06:30, settled our bills and departed around 07:30. En route to Okaukuejo we saw two more Black Rhinos as well as a Rhino that came to drink at a waterhole. Hundreds of sandgrouse flew in to drink at several of the waterholes. We saw a pride of 11 Lions plus cubs at a waterhole and hundreds of animals stood waiting for their turn to drink at the far end of the waterhole. A herd of around 100 Eland was seen, hundreds of Wildebeest and Zebra, Springbok, Gemsbok, Kudu, Giraffe, Elephants, Red Hartebeest, Ostriches and Vultures. An exceptional day's gameviewing.

Birds seen today included Larklike Bunting, Black-throated Canary, Red-crested Korhaan, Kori Bustard, Violet Wood Hoopoe, Pink-billed Lark and Bateleur.

We arrived at Halali in the mid afternoon around 16:00 and checked into our rooms. We found last year's African Scops Owl in the same tree before retiring to our accommodation. We met up again at 18:30 to go to the waterhole before dinner. Black Rhino and 7 Elephants arrived for their evening drink and Double-banded Sandgrouse came in at dusk. It was nice to be back again at what I thought was my favourite place last year.



Friday November 1st

Early morning departure after meeting for coffee at 06:05. The game drive delivered two new bird species for our list, Cape Shoveler and Spotted Thick-knee as well as a new mammal in the form of a Spotted Hyaena. We returned to camp for breakfast before doing another drive in the opposite direction. Nothing new was recorded and so we drove back for lunch and met again at 16:30 to visit the waterhole in the camp for a last time. Violet-eared Waxbills were nice to see again.

Birds seen today were much the same but Cinnamon-breasted Bunting was added to the list.

Saturday November 2nd

Again, we met up early and loaded our bags at 06:00 before having breakfast and departing for our drive out of Etosha Park and on to Erindi Private reserve. We saw two separate Black Rhino, two more Spotted Hyaenas and the usual mammals on our way out of the park. En route we noted a Damara Dik Dik and a nice Tawny Eagle.

We arrived at Erindi at 12:30 despite stopping for a puncture and had lunch overlooking the waterhole. Lunch was a little delayed by seven Wild Dogs in front of the lodge, several Hippos and a couple of Waterbuck.

Three eagles flew over together and photographs proved them to be Steppe, Lesser Spotted and Tawny, clearly all migrants just arriving. Marabou Storks were present and quite a few Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures put in an appearance.

The afternoon game drive was a huge success with great views of a female Cheetah, more Hippos and Mountain Zebra.

Red-crested Korhaans displaying was great to see as they tumbled out of the sky, African Pipit and European Swift were added to the list.

Once back at the lodge we freshened up before dinner and we were pleasantly surprised by a great show of wildlife. Three White Rhinos, Hippos, a dozen Elephants two Spotted Hyaenas, Eland, Waterbuck and Warthog all visiting the waterhole. What a fantastic place and we were not doing it justice by staying only one night.

Sunday November 3rd

Coffee and a quick snack at 06:00 before going on our last game drive. Again we scored with a beautiful bruiser of an adult male Lion, White Rhino with calf and a Caracal shot across the road. Two White-tailed Shrikes were good to see too.

We returned to the lodge, showered and dressed for our flight back to the UK before having our last great breakfast.

We drove back to Windhoek, said goodbye to Morten who was flying later and to Neil

and thanked him for yet another great holiday.

Well done Neil and SafariWise.

Neil Macleod - SafariWise
John van der Dol - Sandwich Bird Tours
November 2013

BIRD LIST

1. Common Ostrich
2. Orange River Francolin
3. Hartlaub's Spurfowl
4. Red-billed Spurfowl
5. Helmeted Guineafowl
6. Red-billed Duck
7. South African Shelduck
8. Egyptian Goose
9. Cape Teal
10. Hottentot Teal
11. Cape Shoveler
12. Acacia Pied Barbet
13. Monteiro's Hornbill
14. Red-billed Hornbill
15. Damara Hornbill
16. Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
17. African Grey Hornbill
18. African Hoopoe
19. Violet Wood-Hoopoe
20. Common Scimitarbill
21. Lilac-breasted Roller
22. Little Bee-eater
23. Swallow-tailed Bee-eater
24. Madagascar (Olive) Bee-eater
25. European Bee-eater
26. White-backed Mousebird
27. Red-faced Mousebird
28. African Cuckoo
29. Ruppell's Parrot
30. Rosy-faced Lovebird
31. African Palm Swift
32. Alpine Swift
33. Common Swift
34. Bradfield's Swift
35. Little Swift

36. White-rumped Swift
37. Grey Go-away-bird
38. African cops Owl
39. Verreaux's Eagle Owl
40. Pearl-spotted Owlet
41. Speckled Pigeon
42. Laughing Dove
43. Ring-necked Dove
44. Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove
45. Namaqua Dove
46. Rock Dove
47. Ludwig's Bustard
48. Kori Bustard
49. Red-crested Bustard
50. Northern Black Korhaan
51. Ruppell's Bustard
52. Black Crake
53. African Purple Swamphen
54. Common Moorhen
55. Red-knobbed Coot
56. Namaqua Sandgrouse
57. Double-banded Sandgrouse
58. Burchell's Sandgrouse
59. Bar-tailed Godwit
60. Whimbrel
61. Greenshank
62. Marsh Sandpiper
63. Terek Sandpiper
64. Wood Sandpiper
65. Common Sandpiper
66. Curlew Sandpiper
67. Turnstone
68. Sanderling
69. Little Stint
70. Ruff
71. Red-necked Phalarope
72. African Jacana
73. Spotted Thick-knee
74. Black-winged Stilt
75. Avocet
76. Grey Plover
77. Black Oystercatcher
78. Common Ringed Plover
79. Kittlitz's Plover
80. Three-banded Plover

81. Chestnut-banded Plover
82. White-fronted Plover
83. Blacksmith Lapwing
84. African Wattled Lapwing
85. Crowned Lapwing
86. Double-banded Courser
87. Burchell's Courser
88. Pomarine Shua
89. Kelp Gull
90. Grey-headed Gull
91. Hartlaub's Gull
92. Black-headed Gull
93. Sabine's Gull
94. Caspian Tern
95. Crested Tern
96. Sandwich Tern
97. Common Tern
98. Damara Tern
99. Black Tern
100. Cape Gannet
101. Black-shouldered Kite
102. African Fish Eagle
103. White-backed Vulture
104. Lappet-faced Vulture
105. Black-chested Snake Eagle
106. Bateleur
107. Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk
108. Shikra
109. Common Buzzard
110. Steppe Eagle
111. Tawny Eagle
112. Lesser Spotted Eagle
113. Verreaux's Eagle
114. African Hawk Eagle
115. Martial Eagle
116. Rock Kestrel
117. Greater Kestrel
118. Pygmy Falcon
119. Lanner Falcon
120. Little Grebe
121. Black-necked Grebe
122. African Darter
123. Reed Cormorant
124. White-breasted Cormorant
125. Bank Cormorant

126. Crowned Cormorant
127. Cape Cormorant
128. Little Egret
129. Grey Heron
130. Black-headed Heron
131. Cattle Egret
132. Hamerkop
133. Greater Flamingo
134. Lesser Flamingo
135. African Sacred Ibis
136. African Spoonbill
137. White Pelican
138. Marabou Stork
139. African Penguin
140. Wilson's Storm Petrel
141. White-chinned Petrel
142. Sooty Shearwater
143. Fork-tailed Drongo
144. Brubru
145. Crimson-breasted Shrike
146. Bokmakierie
147. White-tailed Shrike
148. Pirit Batis
149. Cape Crow
150. Pied Crow
151. Common Fiscal
152. Southern White-crowned Shrike
153. Carp's Tit
154. Banded Martin
155. Barn Swallow
156. Pearl-breasted Swallow
157. Greater Striped Swallow
158. Rufous-chested Swallow
159. Rock Martin
160. African Red-eyed Bulbul
161. Long-billed Crombec
162. Yellow-bellied Eremomela
163. Burnt-necked Eremomela
164. African Reed Warbler
165. Lesser Swamp Warbler (heard only)
166. Willow Warbler
167. Rufous-eared Warbler
168. Bare-cheeked Babbler
169. Barred Wren-Warbler
170. Orange River White-eye

171. Tawny-flanked Prinia
172. Black-chested Prinia
173. Sabota Lark
174. Benguela Long-billed Lark
175. Karoo Long-billed Lark
176. Fawn-coloured Lark
177. Dune Lark
178. Gray's Lark
179. Spike-heeled Lark
180. Red-capped Lark
181. Stark's Lark
182. Pink-billed Lark
183. Grey-backed Sparrowlark
184. Short-toed Rock-Thrush
185. Groundscraper Thrush
186. Chat Flycatcher
187. Marico Flycatcher
188. White-browed Scrub-Robin
189. Kalahari Scrub-Robin
190. Herero Chat
191. Mountain Wheater
192. Capped Wheatear
193. Karoo Chat
194. Tractrac Chat
195. Familiar Chat
196. Ant-eating Chat
197. Pale-winged Starling
198. Cape Glossy Starling
199. Burchell's Starling
200. Wattled Starling
201. Scarlet-chested Sunbird
202. Dusky Sunbird
203. Marico Sunbird
204. Scaly Weaver
205. White-browed Sparrow-Weaver
206. Sociable Weaver
207. Lesser Masked Weaver
208. Southern Masked Weaver
209. Chestnut Weaver
210. Red-billed Quelea
211. Southern Red Bishop
212. Red-headed Finch
213. Black-faced Waxbill
214. Common Waxbill
215. Violet-eared Waxbill

- 216. Blue-breasted Cordonblue
- 217. Green-winged Pytilia
- 218. Pin-tailed Whydah
- 219. House Sparrow
- 220. Great Sparrow
- 221. Southern-Grey-headed Sparrow
- 222. Cape Wagtail
- 223. African Pipit
- 224. Long-billed Pipit
- 225. Black-throated Canary
- 226. Yellow Canary
- 227. White-throated Canary
- 228. Lark-like Bunting
- 229. Cinnamon-breasted Bunting
- 230. Cape Bunting
- 231. Golden-breasted Bunting



MAMMAL LIST



Hartmann's Mountain Zebra



Burchell's Zebra

1. African Elephant
2. African Wild Cat
3. African Wild Dog
4. Banded Mongoose
5. Benguela (Heavyside) Dolphin
6. Black Rhinoceros
7. Black-backed Jackal

8. Black-faced Impala
9. Blue Wildebeest
10. Burchell's Zebra
11. Cape Eland
12. Cape Fur Seal
13. Caracal
14. Chacma Baboon
15. Cheetah
16. Damaraland Dik Dik
17. Dassie Rat
18. Gemsbok (Oryx)
19. Giraffe
20. Greater Kudu
21. Ground Squirrel
22. Hartmann's Mountain Zebra
23. Hippopotamus
24. Honey Badger
25. Lion
26. Red Hartebeest
27. Rock Hyrax
28. Slender Mongoose
29. Spotted Hyena
30. Springbok
31. Steenbok
32. Tree Squirrel
33. Warthog
34. Yellow Mongoose

