

Namibia, 9 March - 25 March 2019

We both came back from this trip saying it was one of the most enjoyable and successful we've done: Namibia has varied and beautiful landscapes, great weather, excellent hospitality, and a feeling of ease and safety everywhere we went. The birding was outstanding, and the number and variety of animals we saw was way beyond expectation.

We flew with Qatar Air from London Gatwick via Doha, which seemed to be the cheapest, and hired a 4x4 from African Tracks, who were excellent. When Sarah and I go travelling we like to do our own thing - book our own flights and accommodation and, if possible, self-drive - cutting down on cost and allowing us to go where we want and at our own pace. Namibia is brilliant for self-driving as the roads are quiet, well-signposted and the car hire companies are geared up for tourists' needs. One company in particular - Cardboard Box, a local Namibian company - will arrange the whole package including car and accommodation; their website is crammed full of information about places to see and stay, and even covers birds. We got a quote from them a couple of years ago but in the end decided to self-book using some of their recommendations and some cheaper ones from the internet. Cardboard Box were still happy to arrange our car hire.

Saturday 9 March: Windhoek

Our flight was fine, we actually managed to get some sleep on the plane, and we were met by African Tracks at Windhoek airport. Once we'd got a SIM for Sarah's iPhone Dennis drove us to their base in town, where we collected our double-cab Toyota Hilux, complete with 2 spare wheels, a double fuel tank, canisters for spare fuel and water, spade, tyre pressure gauge, hand pump, and a satellite phone which we'd hired as a safety precaution. All the hire cars we saw were equipped like this, and many also sported tents and axes - whether for use or for show we weren't sure.

A half-hour drive up the B1 towards Okahandja took us to the Immanuel Wilderness Lodge, where we stayed two nights. Birding started immediately, with white-browed scrub-robin, red-backed shrike and **sabota lark** from our room and **black-chested prinia**, **Marico flycatcher**, blue waxbill and Marico sunbird on the way to the main lodge. At the waterhole and bird feeders we added **white-browed sparrow-weaver**, **red-headed finch**, **black-throated canary**, **shaft-tailed whydah** and **long-tailed paradise whydah**. This proved to be a great place to stay, where the German owners and their staff made us feel completely at home, and where we had the best food of the trip. The grounds - mainly acacia scrub with some ornamental garden - aren't extensive but we found during our stays that they support an amazing variety and number of birds, including several we didn't encounter elsewhere: **acacia pied barbet**, **groundscraper thrush**, **short-toed rock thrush**, **chestnut-vented tit-babbler**, **pirit batis**, **southern red bishop** and **black-faced waxbill**.



Long-tailed paradise whydah, Immanuel Wilderness Lodge



Black-faced waxbills, Immanuel Wilderness Lodge

Sunday 10 March: Daan Viljoen and Windhoek

We'd allowed ourselves a 'free day' to acclimatise, and Stephan and Sabine at the Lodge advised us to go Daan Viljoen National Park. We walked to the dam (which was totally dry) and drove the game viewing drive, but didn't see as much as we'd hoped, the star birds being **crimson-breasted shrike**, **swallow-tailed bee-eater**, brown-crowned tchagra and a couple of **violet-eared waxbills**.

Back at the Lodge we had time to enjoy the lovely pool, watch the animals (springbok and impala) being fed, and add to our ever-growing bird list.

Monday 11 March: Drive Windhoek - Sesriem via Klein Aub and Rietoog

Today was the first of our long drives, so we set off early. Once we turned off the B1 at Reheboth we were on dirt roads, which soon became deserted - we seem to have taken a less fashionable route than other tourists. We'd researched a couple of possible places for lunch near Rietoog, but one was miles off the road and the other didn't seem to exist, so lunch that day consisted of a couple of pieces of fruit we'd filched from breakfast and a packet of crisps, eaten in the car! A **Ludwig's bustard** walked across the road near Klein Aub and we saw an immature **pale chanting goshawk** and a secretary bird near Rietoog. As we approached Sesriem there were lots of trees with large and conspicuous thatched constructions - these turned out to be the amazing communal nests of **sociable weavers**.

Arriving at Sesriem in the mid-afternoon, we pulled into the Desert Quiver Camp and had a look round. I'm always surprised how many birds there are in desert areas, often concentrated around habitations, and this was no exception. **Pale-winged starlings**, Cape sparrows and sociable weavers were abundant and there were also several **mountain wheatears**. Scanning the distant grassland around the camp we counted about 20 southern oryx and a blue wildebeest.



Blue wildebeest, Desert Quiver Camp, Sesriem



Mountain wheatear, Desert Quiver Camp, Sesriem

Each unit at the camp had its own outdoor kitchen but we'd booked to have our meals at Sossusvlei Lodge, the camp's big sister a couple of miles down the road. Our first meal that evening was pretty chaotic: there were hundreds of guests all clamouring for food and drink and we had a job to get served. The buffet-style cold starters were nice.

Tuesday 12 March: Sossusvlei and Sesriem

It's actually a long drive from Sesriem, where all the accommodation is, down to Sossusvlei Pan where the big red dunes are. So we were very pleased to find that the road between the two is tarmacked. It's a fine sight as you drive into the huge valley with red dunes on either side, with the occasional oryx watching you with their Eeyore expression. Birds along

the road were another pale chanting goshawk - a proper grey adult this time - a pair of **Ruppell's korhaans**, and a few pied crows and pale-winged starlings. There were loads of Cape sparrows and a familiar chat at the main car park, and more Cape sparrows and sociable weavers at the car park for 4x4s, which we'd taken the jeep shuttle to. Amazing to see so many people around here after seeing virtually no-one the day before, but the human pressure hadn't spoiled the beauty of the site and there were no buildings other than a couple of makeshift toilet huts.

After a siesta in our air-conditioned camp unit we drove to have a quick look at Sesriem Canyon and bought some things at the well-stocked Sesriem Store.

Wednesday 13 March: Drive Sesriem - Langstrand via Solitaire and Walvis Bay

Another early start as we had an even longer journey to do - 410 km, estimated at 6-8 hours' driving. But actually once we'd left the worst corrugations at Sesriem behind, we found we were able to cruise comfortably at 60-80 kph and only needed to slow down for bends, blind summits, and on the rare occasions when there was another vehicle in sight (invariably other tourists, probably doing the same route as us). Also of course for animals, which included a black-backed jackal, some wildebeest and springboks, plenty of oryx and, when we'd given up looking out for them, hundreds of mountain zebras on both sides of the road - rather distant but obvious from their strikingly striped hindquarters. Birds included three more Ruppell's korhaans, several ostriches, a couple of cinnamon-breasted buntings, **greater and rock kestrels**, a **karoo chat** and about 20 **Namaqua sandgrouse**.

Our pitstop research paid off much better this time, giving us great coffee and cakes at the Solitaire Bakery (bizarrely funky for somewhere so remote) and, even more bizarrely, a light lunch on a fabulous shaded terrace overlooking the desert at the Rostock Ritz Desert Camp a few km further north, where we were welcomed like VIPs by a bejewelled lady in evening dress, who didn't seem at all disappointed when we said we only wanted a toasted sandwich and a Sprite each. After that we didn't see much bird, animal, or human life, until we reached the coast at Walvis Bay.

Our accommodation in Langstrand (roughly half-way between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund) for the next four nights was an excellent self-catering apartment with a sea view. The first thing we noticed as we walked down to the beach was the strong, cold English Channel-like wind - a bit of a shock to the system after the heat of the desert. In the fading light I was pleased to see that there were plenty of gulls (kelp and Hartlaub's) and waders (whimbrel, grey plover, turnstone) on the beach and also plenty of **Cape gannets**, terns, and cormorants out at sea, with the occasional skua harassing the terns.

Thursday 14 March: Langstrand and Walvis Bay

This was going to be a quiet day, spent locally, but it turned out to be a great one for birds. Walking along the beach from the apartment a rock kestrel hanging around in the gardens gave better views than the day before and I had a chance to check out the gulls, terns and waders properly. The terns were mainly great crested (swift) and common but included quite a few Sandwich; the waders included black oystercatchers and, to my delight, **white-fronted plovers**. Cape gannets passed by constantly offshore, but they were eclipsed by lines of tens of thousands of Cape cormorants heading north, presumably out of their Walvis Bay roost. We saw huge flights of them each morning, and again returning south each afternoon. Also a few of our barn swallows rushing northwards along the beach each morning.

Langstrand is a very modern assembly of concrete seaside holiday and weekend homes for wealthy white Namibians, characterised by high security systems and not much activity - the only social hub is the petrol station shop at the north end. But our apartment was very comfortable, with a spectacular ocean view, and it gave us a few days' break from the more hectic days. We were worried there might not be enough to do there but actually there's plenty, and we could easily have filled up another couple of days. Just watching the common birds near the apartment was quite fun - always plenty of Cape wagtails, a few speckled pigeons, and a bunch of common waxbills as well as the birds on the beach - and there was always some interest in and over the ocean including dusky dolphins (distantly) and Cape fur seals (much closer in).



White-fronted plover, Langstrand



Cape teal, curlew sandpiper and little stint, Walvis Bay salt works

In the afternoon we went to Walvis Bay for a look at the waterbirds. Pulling into one of the car parks overlooking the bay we witnessed an amazing - but presumably everyday - spectacle: hundreds of greater flamingos, 150+ **lesser flamingos**, loads of curlew sandpiper, grey plover, sanderling, a bar-tailed godwit, no doubt other waders, and a tame and tail-less **emerald-spotted wood dove** in the car park. Small groups of **great white pelicans** were constantly flying overhead. Moving on to the salt works we paused for the volunteer guide at the entrance to advise us of the safe route to take, and headed into this huge, busy industrial site which is also somehow a bird reserve. We stopped in a few safe places to admire flocks of flamingos, black-winged stilts, avocets, curlew sandpipers, sanderlings and **Cape teal**. Amongst a bunch of ringed plover were some **chestnut-banded plovers**. Further on, more huge flocks of waders, a clump of great white pelicans and a couple of splendid Caspian terns. Further on still, to the causeway where we decided our brains couldn't take any more of this, **Damara terns** were feeding over a pool, often crossing the road in front of us, with some black terns. This was meant to be an exploratory visit but we decided there wasn't much need to return - we'd cleaned up!

Friday 15 March: Langstrand and Swakop River Valley

Today we headed inland from Swakopmund to check out the Swakop River valley and Moon Landscape area. We'd been advised to get a permit from the NWR office in Swakopmund, which was free, although I'm not sure that was entirely necessary for the places we visited. Our first stop out of town was at a scrappy puddle on the otherwise dry river, where we noticed some swifts hawking. These were mostly **white-rumped swifts**, possibly Bradfield's too but I couldn't be sure. Around the edge, amongst the litter and debris, were Cape teal, white-fronted plovers (*or were they Kittlitz's? I should have looked more carefully*), curlew sandpiper, blacksmith plovers, and even a flamingo.

As we headed inland, following a marked trail with markers as described on our permit leaflet, it got much hotter, drier and more barren, although there is life in the form of desert plants and lichens sustained by the frequent fog from the ocean. At a viewpoint to admire the 'Moon Landscape' a friendly **tractrac chat** hopped out to greet visitors. Near here a road drops down into the Swakop valley, where we turned into the Goanikontes Oasis café. Another surprising place, where we had good food while watching birds at the water fountain, including a couple of **Orange River white-eyes**.

Saturday 16 March: Langstrand and Swakopmund

After a walk along the beach I headed into the dunes inland to see what I could find. It was pretty quiet, as expected, but I managed to track down a group of **red-capped larks**. A distantly-viewed clump of green vegetation turned out to be a patch of reed, supporting a small colony of **African reed warblers**. After lunch we went back to Swakopmund, supposedly for shopping but all the shops there close on Saturday afternoons - a strange policy as there were plenty of tourists hanging around in cafes and restaurants, surely prime targets for retail?

Sunday 17 March: Drive Langstrand - Twyfelfontein via Uis

The drive to Uis was uneventful, except that we saw our first coastal fog: we were lucky that this hadn't spoiled our time in Langstrand. In Uis, a mining town, we headed for the Cactus and Coffee Café in Daureb Isib campsite, which was a great place to eat and rest in the shade. There were a few birds in the lovely grounds, including a **scarlet-chested sunbird**. Further on, another pair of Ruppell's korhaans rested under a tree. We arrived mid-afternoon at Camp Kipwe in Twyfelfontein.



Tractrac chat, 'Moon Landscape', Swakop River Valley



Ruppell's korhaan, near Uis

Standards are pretty high in this 'camp', where all the guest space is in thatched buildings cleverly built into the landscape. While receiving the guest spiel I couldn't help noticing a variety of birds coming to the little fountain and pool next to the lounge area. Laughing doves, Cape turtle doves, African red-eyed bulbuls, Cape glossy starlings, Cape sparrows, red-headed finches, southern masked weavers, **lark-like buntings** and **violet-backed starlings** were frequent visitors. Southern yellow-billed hornbills, grey go-away birds, mountain wheatears, familiar chats, rock martins and **dark dusky sunbirds** were also seen around the camp and on an evening stroll to the gate Sarah noticed some **rosy-faced lovebirds** next to the track. Even without the birds, I would have loved this place, with its open-air bathrooms and fabulous setting among the red boulders of Damaraland.



Southern yellow-billed hornbill, Camp Kipwe, Twyfelfontein



Rosy-faced lovebirds, Camp Kipwe, Twyfelfontein

Monday 18 March: Twyfelfontein elephant safari and rock engravings

We joined a German family on a safari drive to look for desert elephants. Our driver, Matthew, stopped to show us welwitschia plants and some more Ruppell's korhaans, then we had a bit of fun tracking the herd, which had gone some distance from their favoured dry river valley, then back over the mountains to the valley. Watching the playful young elephants in the shade of the towering mopane trees was a great experience, enhanced by coffee and cakes beside the jeep. There were plenty of birds moving through the canopy forest along the river including **African grey hornbills**, a **Damara hornbill**, willow warbler and spotted flycatcher. We heard bare-cheeked babblers here but couldn't see them (I trusted Matthew on this, he knew his bird calls).

In the afternoon we did another tour to see the 'organ pipes' (pillars of basalt in a valley) and the interesting rock engravings of animals and birds at the former Twyfelfontein farm. These engravings, some showing each animal with their footprint, were made by the first settlers of southern Africa up to 6,000 years ago and include images of korhaans, seals and penguins - proving the artists lived nomadically.



Desert elephants, nr Twyfelfontein



Matthew explaining the rock engravings at Twyfelfontein

Tuesday 19 March: Drive Twyfelfontein - Okakuejo via Khorixas and Outjo

The drive northwards towards Etosha was straightforward. We spotted three more Ruppell's korhaans on the way to Khorixas, and stopped briefly at the Rest Camp there for a drink before heading on to Eldorado Guest Farm, outside Andersson's Gate into Etosha National Park. This was one of the more affordable places we'd booked and it lacked the luxury of Camp Kipwe - especially as the power went off at 10.00 pm - but the surrounding busy farm was good for birds. There were large enclosures of cattle and goats, one of which had a group of Namaqua sandgrouse resting in it (annoyingly, a farm vehicle flushed them before I could get a photo). Rough ground nearby supported a big mixed flock of shaft-tailed whydahs, black-throated canaries, southern grey-headed sparrows, **red-billed queleas**, and also a couple of **great sparrows**. A lesser grey shrike hung out nearby and I had my first confirmed sightings of **Namaqua doves** and **African pipits** here. The flower borders around the accommodation units were teeming with Monarch and other butterflies, and some kind of hummingbird hawk-moth.

Wednesday 20 March: Drive Okakuejo - Onguma through Etosha National Park

We were through the park gates early and found ourselves watching a bat-eared fox, a group of spotted hyenas and plenty of other animals before we'd even got our permit at Okakuejo Camp. From here we followed a route via various recommended waterholes, emerging at Von Lindequist gate. This was an amazing day for birds and animals - far better than we'd expected. Below are just some of the highlights from each of the places we stopped at:

- *Gazeb and area* - Northern black korhaan, double-banded courser, grey-backed sparrow-lark, chestnut-backed sparrow-lark
- *Gemsbokvlakte and area* - South African ground squirrels, yellow mongoose, steenbok, Temminck's courser, Namaqua sandgrouse, greater kestrel, chat flycatcher
- *Ondongab* - kudu, martial eagle, swallow-tailed bee-eaters
- *Sueda* - lions (10), black-backed jackals, white-backed vultures, steppe buzzard
- *Salvadora* - secretary bird, kori bustard, ostriches, pale chanting goshawk
- *Halali rest camp* - Cape glossy starlings, African grey hornbills, red-billed hornbills, Monteiro's hornbill
- *Goas* - lion, kori bustard, South African shelduck, waders.

The list underplays the vast numbers of common animals all along the route; springboks, zebras and wildebeest were the most numerous, but also plenty of oryx, giraffes, kudus and impalas. This year's wet season had been so dry that the animals and birds seemed to be concentrated around the waterholes, and needed to drink throughout the day.



Double-banded courser, near Gazeb, Etosha



Kori bustard, Tsumcor, Etosha

Our accommodation for the next three nights was the excellent Etosha Aoba Lodge in the Onguma Game Reserve, adjacent to the eastern side of Etosha National Park. This was as comfortable as Camp Kipwe, and our thatched hut was deep in acacia forest with a bird-bath outside where we watched a common duiker drinking that evening. Walking back from the lodge after our evening meal, we noticed a galago (bushbaby) leaping about by the path light.

Thursday 21 March: Etosha and Onguma game drives

We'd booked a morning game drive in Etosha and a 'sundowner' game drive in Onguma. In Etosha, Eric took us to various waterholes near Namutoni, highlights as below:

- *Klein Namutoni* - Temminck's courser, three-banded plover, blacksmith plover, **African spoonbill**
- *Namutoni* - kori bustard
- *Chudob* - spotted hyena, black-backed jackal, lark-like buntings, red-billed queleas, **gabar goshawk**
- *Tsumcor* - elephants (2), black rhino, kori bustard, shaft-tailed whydah, long-tailed paradise-whydah, red-billed quelea, emerald-spotted wood-dove, Namaqua dove
- *Near Stinkwater* - lions (2)
- *Namutoni camp* - banded mongoose, Cape glossy starling, Namaqua dove, black/Abdim's stork overhead.

The commonest roadside birds from the jeep seemed to be Cape turtle dove, red-billed spurfowl, helmeted guineafowl, lilac-breasted roller, fork-tailed drongo, lesser grey shrike, European bee-eater, African grey hornbill and grey go-away bird, plus various birds of prey that I couldn't identify at speed.

Back at Aoba Lodge we enjoyed birding round our hut: green-winged pytilia, long-billed crombec, golden-breasted bunting, emerald-spotted wood-dove, violet-eared waxbill, willow warbler and **white-crested helmetshrikes**,



Green-winged pytilia at our bird-bath, Etosha Aoba Lodge



Northern black korhaan, Fischer's Pan, Etosha

For our evening sundowner drive Eric found us a leopard tortoise, Damara dik-diks, and roosting white-backed vultures before taking us to the reserve's main waterhole where we saw **tawny eagle**, **scimitarbill** and African hoopoe. Nearby a cheetah mother and her two cubs were resting beside a termite mound, and we spotted a distant family of lions.

Friday 22 March: Etosha National Park

We had a full day to explore the park on our own. Etosha is easy to self-drive in, and the waterholes aren't very far apart. Eric had given us some advice the day before about which ones might be worth a look, so we headed for Fischer's Pan (completely dry) and then north up the eastern end of Etosha Pan (the same), before returning to some of the places near Namutoni. It was great to be able to focus on the birds - you can't really do this on a group drive unless the others are interested - and we also saw unbelievable numbers of animals, especially in the heat of the afternoon. Highlights included:

- *Fisher's Pan drive* - African grey hornbills, ostriches, black-shouldered kite
- *Twee Palms* - South African shelduck, gabar goshawk (2)
- *Aroe* -Northern black korhaan (2), ant-eating chat, **red-necked falcon**
- *Klein Okavi* - swallow-tailed bee-eater, red-headed finches, blue waxbill, Namaqua dove, lark-like buntings
- *Tsumcor* - eland (3), lark-like buntings, emerald-spotted wood-dove, red-headed finches, kori bustard
- *Etosha Pan drive/Stinkwater* - European bee-eaters (10), **banded martins**, **Southern pied babblers**, lesser grey shrikes (12+ here!)
- *Andoni toilet enclosure* - crested francolin
- *Andoni* - warthogs, South African shelduck (c20), little stint (c60), Cape teal (20+), **Kittlitz's plover (5)**, **blue crane (30+)**, red-capped larks, lappet-faced vulture, bateleur, cattle egrets
- *Namutoni camp* - Cape glossy starlings, **wattled starlings**
- *Koinachas* - giraffes (20+), kori bustards, blacksmith plover, moorhen sp, **augur buzzard**
- *Kalkheuwel* - elephants (6), black rhino (1), warthogs, blacksmith plover
- *Chudob* - giraffes (27), spotted hyena, black-throated canaries, Namaqua dove, wattled starling



Andoni waterhole: our in-car picnic site. The flock of waders in the sky was mostly little stints

After lunch at Andoni the waterholes near Namutoni seemed to have even more zebras, wildebeest and springboks than before. And surely giraffes aren't supposed to go round in herds? All pretty astonishing. We were back at the lodge by late afternoon with our brains reeling from the sights, sounds and smells of nature, able to pore over our photos and relax watching the dik-diks and squirrels at our bird-bath while enjoying a sundowner.



Blue cranes and wildebeest, Andoni waterhole, Etosha



Springboks, zebras, impala and giraffes, Chudob, Etosha

Saturday 23 March: Drive Onguma - Otjiwarango via Tsumeb

Despite this being basically a driving day we added some good things to the list in the morning: a **grey-backed camaroptera** and a **dark chanting goshawk**, both at our bird-bath, and a **purple roller** beside the road in Onguma. As we headed south towards Tsumeb the commonest roadside birds were still lilac-breasted rollers, Cape glossy starlings, African grey hornbills, fork-tailed drongos and lesser grey shrikes. Probably some European bee-eaters as well, but I didn't stop to check. We found a decent café in Tsumeb for lunch (Sindano Court) and carried on to our overnight stop at the Lion's Den, outside Otjiwarango. This place was another inexpensive place - no air conditioning here, and it was virtually birdless - but it served its purpose of breaking the journey to Windhoek.



Purple roller, Onguma Game Reserve



White-tailed shrike, Erongo Wilderness Lodge

Sunday 24 March: Drive Otjiwarango - Windhoek via Omaruru and Erongo

Birds of prey were the main feature along the road to Omaruru: black kites, tawny eagle, martial eagle and rock kestrel. Also warthogs, loads of them, feeding in the roadside verges where there was more grass than inside the fences, and another black-backed jackal, uncountable suicidal guineafowl, plenty of red-billed spurfowl and even a kori bustard.

Erongo was an unplanned detour, and we weren't sure about access arrangements. At the gate into the park we were allowed through OK but the guy didn't speak much English, so we drove on and turned into the entrance to Erongo Wilderness Lodge, hoping to get some information there. The road stopped at the base of a lump of bare rock which looked rather risky. If we just parked and walked we would be on private land, if we walked outside the Lodge it would be along an open road in the heat. While we were deciding what to do a **white-tailed shrike** came to check us out, which in a way provided the answer: cut our losses and press on to our lodge in Windhoek, where we were sure of a welcome.

It was great to be back at Immanuel Wilderness Lodge for our final night. We saw the same birds as before, including acacia pied barbet, Marico flycatcher, Marico sunbird, black-faced and blue waxbills, but the food was even better!

Monday 25 March: Drive Windhoek - Windhoek airport

One last bird treat before we left: a male **short-toed rock thrush** outside the restaurant. While I was watching this, Sarah photographed another outside our room.

We took the car back to the African Tracks place and they drove us to the airport for our flight back to London Gatwick via Doha.

Conclusion

We both agreed this had been one of our best recent holidays. We loved the country, the scenery was amazing, the wildlife even more so. Everyone was friendly and helpful, the driving was easy, accommodation was generally excellent, and away from the coast the weather was perfect - warm in the mornings and evenings, hot (mid-30s) in the afternoons. We were conscious of our privilege - life isn't easy for everyone and we did see evidence of real poverty, particularly around the fringes of towns, but we got the impression people are proud to be Namibian and that the country is trying to improve things for ordinary people. Hopefully our tourist dollars will have helped in some way.

Incidentally, the Namibian currency - Namibian dollars - is a closed currency but everywhere takes South African rand, to which the national currency is pegged. So we took cash in the form of rand and put rand onto our Post Office Travel Money card. We paid for most things using this card, and also used it to get cash from ATMs. We had to take cash to pay for Eldorado Guest Farm and Lion's Den, because they didn't have card machines; the petrol stations now take card payments.

The lodges and camps in the game reserves (except Etosha) are generally fairly up-market and aren't cheap, so to stay in Twyfelfontein, Erongo, Onguma or Waterberg does require a bit of an outlay. These places generally provide the whole package including food and game drives, and from our experience do it very well. The places in Etosha Park are different, they are government-run and more affordable but we understand the quality is not so good. Away from the popular tourist areas there are places that provide excellent value for money. Compared to the UK, petrol/diesel is cheap, as are food and drink, park entrance fees, and other expenses.

I think anyone visiting Namibia would have a great time, but for birders it's a brilliant country. New birds kept on coming right to the end of the trip, and our final total was 159 species, of which 81 were new to me (shown in **bold**), plus another 26 I had not seen in southern Africa. Our mammal list totalled 30 species, with 13 new.

Birds seen in Namibia, 9 - 25 March 2019

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Cape gannet	-	-	Constantly in view off Langstrand	-	-	-
Great white pelican	-	-	c50 Walvis Bay 1 Langstrand (Pelican Point)	-	-	-
Greater flamingo	-	-	c1,000 Walvis Bay 1 Langstrand 1 Swakop river crossing	-	-	-
Lesser flamingo	-	-	c200 Walvis Bay	-	-	-
White-breasted (great) cormorant	-	-	3 Langstrand	-	-	-
Cape cormorant	-	-	c10,000 Langstrand	-	-	-
Little egret	-	-	1 Langstrand 10+ Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Cattle egret	-	-	-	-	2 Andoni	-
Little grebe	-	-	-	-	3 Goas	-
Egyptian goose	-	-	-	-	Small numbers Homob, Goas and Andoni	-
South African shelduck	-	-	-	-	2 Goas 1 Twee Palms c20 Andoni	-
Cape teal	-	-	c500 Walvis Bay salt works 5 Swakop river crossing	-	1 Salvadoria c10 Andoni	-
Bateleur	-	-	-	-	1 Andoni	-
Martial eagle	-	-	-	-	1 Ondongab	1 nr Kalkfeld
Tawny eagle	-	-	-	-	1 Onguma	1 nr Kalkfeld
Black kite	-	-	-	-	-	1 nr Outjo 4 nr Kalkfeld
Augur buzzard	-	-	-	-	1 Koinachas	-
Steppe (common) buzzard	-	-	-	-	1 Sueda	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Black-shouldered kite	-	-	-	-	1 Fischer's Pan	-
Pale chanting goshawk	-	1 Sossusvlei valley	-	-	Several incl at Salvadora, Fischer's Pan, Onguma etc	1 nr Klein Aub
Dark chanting goshawk	-	-	-	-	1 Etosha Aoba Lodge, Onguma	-
Gabar goshawk	-	-	-	-	1 Chudob (black phase) 2 Twee Palms (1 black, 1 pale)	-
Red-necked falcon	-	-	-	-	1 Aroe	-
Rock kestrel	-	1+ nr Solitaire	1 Langstrand	1 Camp Kipwe 2 nr Khorixas	1+	1 Uis 1 nr Omaruru
Greater kestrel	-	1 nr Solitaire	-	-	1 Gembokvlakte	-
Ostrich	-	2 Sesriem 12+ nr Solitaire 8 Rostock Ritz	-	-	Several Etosha	-
Helmeted guineafowl	20+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	2+ Sesriem	2 Swakopmund	Several	Abundant	Very abundant Kalkfeld - Omaruru
Crested francolin	-	-	-	-	2 Andoni toilet enclosure	-
Red-billed spurfowl	6+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 7+ Daan Viljoen Park	-	-	Several	Abundant	12+ Eldorado Guest farm, nr Okakuejo Abundant Kalkfeld-Omaruru
Blue crane	-	-	-	-	c30 Andoni	-
Secretarybird	-	-	-	-	1 Salvadora	1 nr Rietoog
Kori bustard	-	-	-	-	1 Salvadora 1 Goas 2 Koinachas 3 Tsumcor	1 nr Kalkfeld
Ludwig's bustard	-	-	-	-	-	1 nr Rietoog
Red-crested korhaan	-	-	-	-	2 Stinkwater	-
Northern black korhaan	-	-	-	-	1 Gazeb 2 nr Aroe	-
Ruppell's korhaan	-	2 Sossusvlei valley 2 hd Desert Quiver Camp 3 nr Solitaire	-	3 Twyfelfontein	-	2 N of Uis
Black-winged stilt	-	-	c100 Walvis Bay salt works	-	4 Goas 2 Andoni	-
Avocet	-	-	20+ Walvis Bay salt works	-	-	-
African (black) oystercatcher	-	-	c20 Langstrand/ Pelican Point	-	-	-
Temminck's courser	-	-	-	-	1 Gembokvlakte 1 Klein Namutoni	-
Double-banded courser	-	-	-	-	1 nr Gazeb	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Blacksmith plover	-	-	-	-	2-3 at Sueda, Salvadora, Goas, Klein Namutoni and Andoni 2 Onguma	-
Crowned plover	-	-	-	4 Twyfelfontein	-	2 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Grey plover	-	-	2+ Langstrand 10+ Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Kittlitz's plover	-	-	-	-	5 Andoni	-
White-fronted plover	-	-	3 Langstrand 2+ Walvis Bay salt works 5 Swakop River crossing	-	-	-
Chestnut-banded plover	-	-	4+ Walvis Bay salt works	-	-	-
Ringed plover	-	-	10+ Walvis Bay salt works	-	-	-
Three-banded plover	-	-	-	-	1 Klein Namutoni	-
Whimbrel	-	-	2 Langstrand 4+ Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Bar-tailed godwit	-	-	1 Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Greenshank	-	-	4 Langstrand c20 Walvis Bay salt works	-	1 Goas 1 Onguma	-
Wood sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1 Goas 1 Onguma	-
Ruff	-	-	-	-	1 Andoni	-
Turnstone	-	-	60+ Langstrand 20+ Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Sanderling	-	-	c20 Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Curlew sandpiper	-	-	c1,000 Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Little stint	-	-	10+ Walvis Bay salt works	-	c100 Andoni	-
Arctic skua	-	-	5+ Langstrand	-	-	-
Kelp gull	-	-	c200 Langstrand/ Pelican Point Several Walvis Bay and Swakopmund	-	-	-
Hartlaub's gull	-	-	c500 Langstrand/ Pelican Point	-	-	-
Caspian tern	-	-	2 Walvis Bay salt works	-	-	-
Great crested (swift) tern	-	-	c200 Langstrand/ Pelican Point	-	-	-
Sandwich tern	-	-	20+ Langstrand/ Pelican Point	-	-	-
Common tern	-	-	20+ Langstrand/ Pelican Point	-	-	-
Damara tern	-	-	4+ Walvis Bay salt works 1 Swakopmund - Henties Bay	-	-	-
Black tern	-	-	3+ Walvis Bay salt works	-	-	-
Namaqua sandgrouse	-	c20 nr Solitaire	-	-	2 nr Gembokvlakte	4 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Speckled pigeon	15+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	3+ Langstrand	-	-	-
Rock dove/feral pigeon	1 Windhoek Airport c10 Windhoek	-	Several Langstrand	-	-	-
Cape turtle dove	-	1 Desert Quiver Camp	-	Common e.g. 8+ Camp Kipwe	Abundant Etosha and Onguma	5+ Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Laughing dove	8+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 4+ Daan Viljoen	-	1 Langstrand 6 Goanikontes Oasis	Common e.g. 10+ Camp Kipwe	Abundant Etosha and Onguma	Common generally
Emerald-spotted wood dove	-	-	1 Walvis Bay	-	2 Tsumcor 1 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Namaqua dove	-	-	(1 probable Goanikontes Oasis)	-	Several at various sites	3 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Rosy-faced lovebird	-	-	-	3 Camp Kipwe	-	-
Grey go-away bird	-	-	-	2 Camp Kipwe	Common Etosha and Onguma	1 Eldorado Guest Farm
Little swift	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge c100 over Windhoek	-	-	-	-	-
White-rumped swift	-	-	4+ Swakop River Crossing	-	-	-
African palm swift	5+ Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	-	2 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
(Unidentified swift)	-	-	(3+ Swakop River Crossing)	-	(Several Etosha)	-
European bee-eater	1 over Windhoek	-	-	-	c10 nr Klein Okavi c10 Etosha Pan/ Stinkwater	1 Omaruru
Swallow-tailed bee-eater	1 Daan Viljoen Park	-	-	-	5+ Ondongab 1 Klein Okavi	-
Lilac-breasted roller	-	-	-	-	Common Etosha and Onguma	Several Onguma - Tsumeb
Purple roller	-	-	-	-	2 Onguma	-
African grey hornbill	-	-	-	1 Twyfelfontein river valley	Abundant Etosha and Onguma, groups of up to 20 seen	Several Onguma - Tsumeb
Southern yellow-billed hornbill	-	-	-	3+ Camp Kipwe	5 Onguma	-
Southern red-billed hornbill	-	-	-	-	Several Etosha i 1 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Damara hornbill	-	-	-	1 Twyfelfontein river valley	-	-
Monteiro's hornbill	-	-	-	-	1 Halali camp	-
Common scimitarbill	-	-	-	-	1 Onguma	-
African hoopoe	-	-	-	-	1 Onguma	-
Acacia pied barbet	1+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Red-capped lark	-	-	6+ dunes behind Langstrand	-	2+ Andoni	-
Sabota lark	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 1 Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	-	-
Chestnut-backed sparrow-lark	-	-	-	-	4+ nr Gabez	-
Grey-backed sparrow-lark	-	-	-	-	6+ Gabez	-
Barb swallow	-	-	c10 Langstrand each day c10 Walvis Bay	-	-	-
Banded martin	-	-	-	-	3+ Fischer's Pan	-
Rock martin	1+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	1+ Desert Quiver Camp	-	2 Camp Kipwe	-	-
Fork-tailed drongo	2 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge				Common Etosha and Onguma	1 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo Common Etosha - Windhoek
Pied crow	3 Windhoek	8+ Sossusvlei valley c10 Sesriem - Walvis Bay	4 Swakop River valley	3 nr Camp Kipwe	-	-
Cape crow	-	1 nr Solitaire	-	-	Several Etosha	-
Southern pied babbler	-	-	-	-	2+ nr Stinkwater	-
(Bare-cheeked babbler)	-	-	-	(heard Twyfelfontein river valley)	-	-
African red-eyed bulbul	4+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	2 Sossusvlei Lodge 1 Rostock Ritz	-	6+ Camp Kipwe	Abundant Etosha and Onguma	Common generally
Groundscraper thrush	2+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Short-toed rock thrush	2 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Familiar chat	2+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	1 Sossusvlei Pan 1 Rostock Ritz	3 Goanikontes Oasis	-	-	1 Daureb Isib Camp, Uis
Karoo chat	-	1 nr Solitaire	-	-	-	-
Tractrac chat	-	-	1 'Moon Landscape' viewpoint over Swakop river	-	-	-
Ant-eating chat	-	-	-	-	1 Fischer's Pan	-
Mountain wheatear	-	4+ Desert Quiver Camp 1 Sossusvlei gate Several roadside	-	2+ Camp Kipwe Several Twyfelfontein	-	-
White-browed scrub robin	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Long-billed crombec	-	-	-	-	1 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Chestnut-vented tit-babbler	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Willow warbler	-	-	-	1 Twyfelfontein river valley	1 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
African reed warbler	-	-	4+ dunes behind Langstrand	-	-	-
Black-chested prinia	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Grey-backed camaroptera	-	-	-	-	1 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Chat flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1 nr Gembokvlakte	-
Marico flycatcher	3+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	2+ Etosha	-
Spotted flycatcher	2+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 1 Daan Viljoen	-	1 Goanikontes Oasis	1 Twyfelfontein river valley	-	1 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo 1 Lion's Den, Otjiwarango
African paradise flycatcher	-	-	-	-	2 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Pirit batis	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
White-tailed shrike	-	-	-	-	-	1 Erongo Wilderness Lodge
Orange River white-eye	-	-	2 Goanikontes Oasis	-	-	-
Cape wagtail	-	-	c20 Langstrand Several Walvis Bay	-	-	-
African pipit	-	-	-	-	-	1 Eldorado Guest Farm
Red-backed shrike	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 2 Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	1 Etosha	1 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Lesser grey shrike	Several between airport and city	1 Desert Quiver Camp	-	-	Common Etosha (20+) Several Onguma	1 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo Common Etosha - Windhoek
White-crested helmet-shrike	-	-	-	-	2 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Crimson-breasted shrike	2 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 1 Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	-	-
Brown-crowned tchagra	1 Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	-	-
Cape glossy starling	-	-	-	6+ Camp Kipwe Several Twyfelfontein	c10 Halali Camp c20 Namutoni Camp	Common Etosha - Tsumeb
Violet-backed starling	-	-	-	2 Camp Kipwe	-	-
Pale-winged starling	-	c20 Desert Quiver Camp Several Sossusvlei Several Solitaire	-	10+ Camp Kipwe	-	-
Wattled starling	-	-	-	-	c10 Namutoni Camp 1 Chudob	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Scarlet-chested sunbird	-	1 nr Klein Aub	-	-	-	1 Daureb Isib Camp, Uis
Marico sunbird	8+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Dusky sunbird	-	-	-	2 Camp Kipwe	-	-
Great sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	2 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Cape sparrow	-	c10 Desert Quiver Camp Common Sossusvlei and Sesriem	Common Langstrand	Several Camp Kipwe and Twyfelfontein	-	-
House sparrow	1 Windhoek	4+ Solitaire	2+ Langstrand 4+ Goanikontes Oasis	-	-	-
Southern grey-headed sparrow	6+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	2 Chudob	Several Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
White-browed sparrow-weaver	3+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge 8 Daan Viljoen	Common roadside	-	Several Camp Kipwe	2 Etosha 1 Onguma	Common around Rietoog and Klein Aub
Sociable weaver	-	c30 Desert Quiver Camp 10+ Sesriem 10+ Sossusvlei Several Solitaire	-	-	-	Nests commonly seen in Namib-Naukluft Park and occasionally elsewhere
Southern masked weaver	3+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	6+ Camp Kipwe	-	-
Red-billed quelea	-	-	-	-	Common Etosha at various waterholes	20+ Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Southern red bishop	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Shaft-tailed whydah	3 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	4+ Tsumcor	20+ Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Long-tailed paradise whydah	3 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	4+ Tsumcor	-
Red-headed finch	3+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	4+ Camp Kipwe	c50 Klein Okavi	6+ Khorixas Rest Camp
Blue waxbill	5+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	1 Klein Okavi	-
Violet-eared waxbill	2+ Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	2 Etosha Aoba Lodge	1 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Common waxbill	-	-	12 Langstrand 6+ Goanikontes Oasis Sev Swakopmund	-	-	-
Black-faced waxbill	2 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	-	-
Green-winged pytilia	-	-	-	-	2 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Black-throated canary	6+ Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	Common at various waterholes in Etosha	c100 Eldorado Guest Farm, nr Okakuejo
Lark-like bunting	-	-	-	2 Camp Kipwe Several Twyfelfontein	Common at various waterholes in Etosha	-
Cinnamon-breasted bunting	1 Daan Viljoen	Several nr Solitaire	-	-	4 Chudob	-
Golden-breasted bunting	1 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge	-	-	-	2 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-

Mammals seen in Namibia, 9 - 25 March 2019

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Southern lesser galago (bushbaby)	-	-	-	-	2+ Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Savanna (chacma) baboon	c8 nr Windhoek	-	-	-	-	c8 nr Reheboth 6+ nr Outjo
Plains zebra	-	-	-	-	Common (500+) Etosha	-
Hartmann's mountain zebra	-	100+ N of Solitaire	-	-	-	-
Black rhino	-	-	-	-	1 Tsumcor 1 Kalkheuwel	-
Warthog	-	-	-	-	Several Etosha	c50 Otjiwarango - Omaruru
Giraffe	2 Daan Viljoen	-	-	-	50+ Etosha 3+ Onguma	-
Eland	-	-	-	-	3 Tsumcor	-
Kudu	-	-	-	-	20+ Etosha	-
Southern oryx (gemsbok)	-	c50 Sesriem/Sossusvlei c20 Sesriem - Walvis Bay	-	-	50+ Etosha	-
Blue wildebeest	-	1 Desert Quiver Camp 1 nr Solitaire	-	-	Common (300+) Etosha	-
Red hartebeest	-	-	-	-	1 Springbokfontein, Etosha	-
Impala	(2 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge - captive?)	-	-	-	Fairly common (50+) Etosha	-
Springbok	(c20 Immanuel Wilderness Lodge - captive?)	3 Desert Quiver Camp	-	c10 Twyfelfontein	Very common (1,000+) Etosha	-
Damara dik-dik	-	-	-	-	4+ Etosha 3+ Onguma	-
Steenbok	-	-	-	-	1 nr Okakuejo	-

	Windhoek area	Sesriem/Sossusvlei and the Namib-Naukluft Park	Walvis Bay - Swakopmund and inland	Twyfelfontein and Damaraland	Etosha and Onguma	Elsewhere
Common (grey) duiker	-	-	-	-	Several Etosha 3+ Etosha Aoba Lodge	2 Otjiwarango - Omaruru
African elephant	-	-	-	7 Twyfelfontein	2 Tsumcor 1 nr Andoni 6 Kalkheuwel	-
Bat-eared fox	-	-	-	-	1 nr Andersson's Gate	-
Black-backed jackal	-	1 Sesriem	-	1 Twyfelfontein	4 Sueda 4 Chudob	1 nr Omaruru
Banded mongoose	-	-	-	-	3 Namutoni Camp c20 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
Yellow mongoose	-				1 nr Gembokvlakte	1 nr Rietoog 2 Otjiwarango - Omaruru
Spotted hyena	-	-	-	-	6 nr Andersson's Gate 4 Chudob	-
Cheetah	-	-	-	-	3 Onguma	-
Lion	-	-	-	-	10 Sueda 1 Goas 2 nr Stinkwater 3 Onguma	-
Tree squirrel	-	-	-	-	1 Halali Camp c20 Etosha Aoba Lodge	-
South African ground squirrel	-	-	-	-	c50 nr Gembokvlakte	-
Cape hare	-	1 Desert Quiver Camp	-	-	-	-
Cape fur seal	-	-	4+ Langstrand	-	-	-
Dusky dolphin	-	-	10+ Langstrand	-	-	-

Geoff Upton, Southern England