

Namibia

Central and Northern parts

10-27 Apr 2019



Participants: Arden Anderson and Pieter Vrey (text and images)

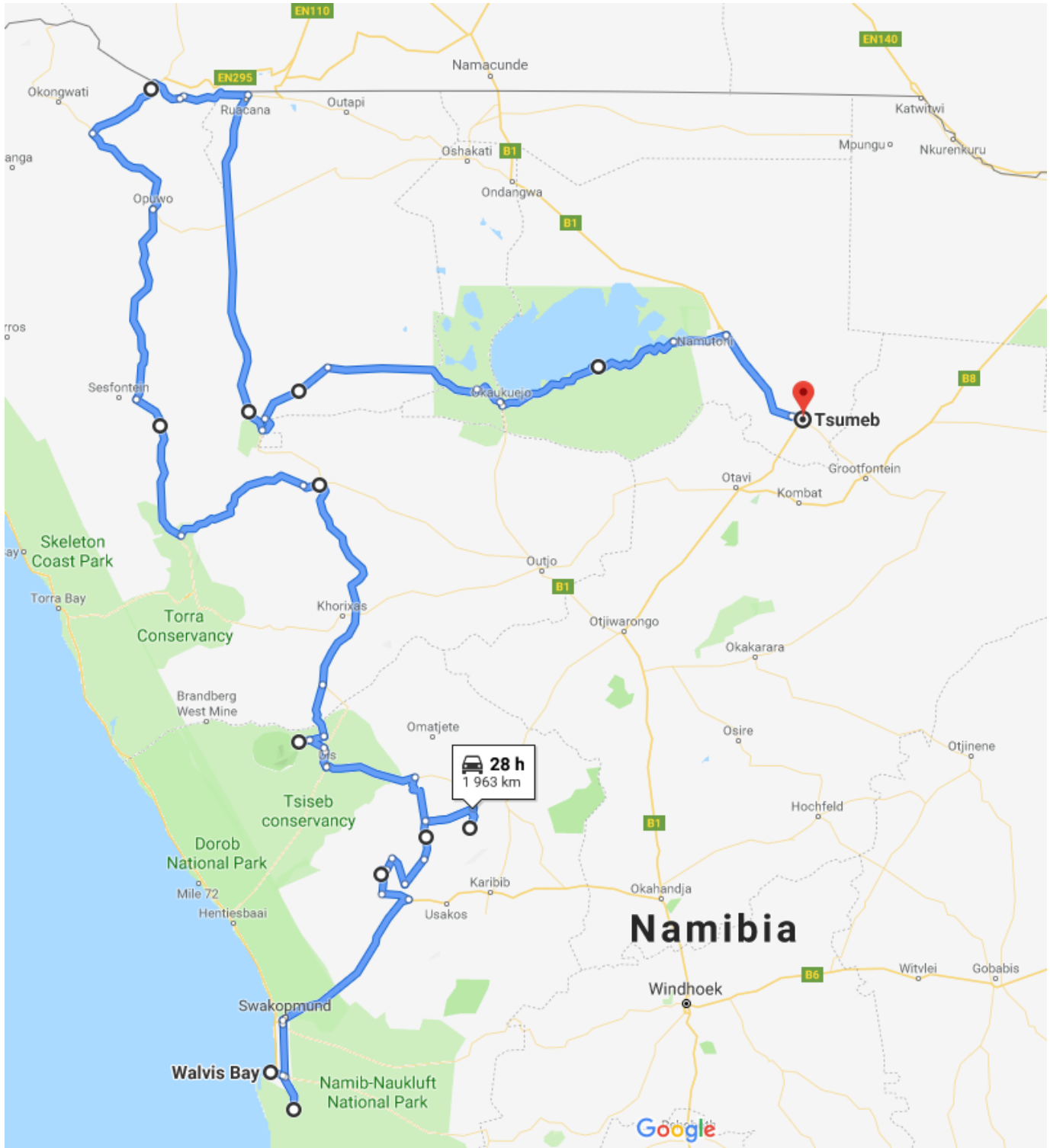
Preamble

I met Arden back in 2014 on a trip to Manu National Park in Peru and we remained in occasional contact since then. In 2018 he contacted me for advice on a trip to southern Africa. When he confirmed his plans for Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe in Jan 2019, he invited me along for the central and northern sections of Namibia as I mentioned previously that these would be new areas for me. I was able to arrange leave for a little over two weeks and in the ensuing months, Arden and I fixed logistics and accommodation. Arden was to travel from the US at the end of March to initially spend some time in southern Namibia and I would join him on the morning of 10 April in Walvis Bay from where we would head for Spitzkoppe, Erongo, Brandberg, Kaokoveld, Kunene and Etosha.

Arden had a nice long target list. Having birded Namibia several times before, mine was much shorter, but also considerably harder. I had a list of thirteen (southern African) lifers that were possible: Dune lark, Herero chat, Hartlaub's spurfowl, Violet wood hoopoe, Bare-cheeked babbler, Black-faced babbler, Chestnut weaver, Cinderella waxbill, Angola cave-chat, Grey kestrel, Olive bee-eater, Three-banded courser and Yellow-throated sandgrouse.

Arden's timing was partly to avoid the searing summer months, so we knew that a fair number of migrants would be gone already; winter plumage and lack of breeding displays/calling would make some

resident species harder as well. Still, having spent time in the area in summer before, I knew how unpleasant it could be and since we both agreed to camp as much as possible to save costs, avoiding summer was a bit of a no-brainer.



Our planned route: Starting in Walvis Bay we would try for Dune lark at Roobank, spend a little time at the Walvis Bay lagoon, then two nights in Spitzkoppe, four in Erongo, one night each in Brandberg and Grootberg areas before reaching the Kunene. Four nights between Kunene River Lodge and Ruacana before finishing off with four nights in Etosha

9 April

Thankfully, my habit of getting ready and starting to pack several days before such a big trip, proved useful. On 08 Apr, Namibia Airlines contacted me to inform me that my 10 Apr morning flight to Walvis Bay has been cancelled. How bloody annoying. There were no other flights available that would get me there at a similar time on the same date, since most alternatives went via Windhoek as opposed to a direct flight from Johannesburg. I played with a few alternatives, including actually driving up to Windhoek and leaving my car with family there, but in the end, the best solution was to take off an extra day on 09 Apr and take a flight via Windhoek that would get me to Walvis Bay in the afternoon of 09 Apr. This meant that we could start very early on 10 Apr instead of later in the morning as per the original flight schedule. I managed to get the extra day's leave approved and quickly delegated a few other things before making sure I've got everything packed. On 9 April I then drove to OR Tambo airport, took the 11:10 Air Namibia flight to Windhoek and connected with an Air Namibia flight to Walvis Bay at 14:30. Since Air Namibia was unable to get me to my destination as per my original flights, they did offer me a night's accommodation in Walvis Bay and I gladly accepted. However, despite receiving confirmation that this was booked on 08 Apr, no-one in Walvis Bay airport knew about this when I arrived – it took them two hours to sort this out and since I also refused to pay for any transport into town, they eventually agreed to drop me off at the hotel when the airport closed at 5pm. By this time, Arden and I had already spoken on the phone and agreed to meet up at my hotel as soon as I've settled in. It was fantastic seeing an old friend after almost five years and it was with enthusiastic excitement that we discussed plans for the next morning. We had dinner at the hotel restaurant and agreed that Arden would pick me up at around 6am the next morning.



Curlew sandpiper in almost full breeding plumage

10 April

Arden had rented a single-cab 4x4 (he used a third-party agent but the vehicle was supplied by Britz - <https://www.britz.co.za/>) which was fully equipped for an extended road trip in southern Africa. It had a roof-top tent, sleeping bags and pillows, an extended fuel tank, water tank, crockery and cutlery, gas stove and most importantly, a small box fridge. Over the next few weeks, this little fridge would prove to be the best feature of this vehicle! The single front cabin was perhaps a

little cramped considering it had to house two birders, cameras, binoculars, four field guides, snacks, water etc. We also both had several electronic devices that needed to be charged while we were driving so we had a bit of a crow's nest of wires snaking in the space between us.

I barely waited for two minutes outside the hotel before Arden arrived. I had taken out the minimum items needed for the day and tossed my backpack and other things in the back. Earlier research on the SABAP2 website (<http://sabap2.adu.org.za/>), indicated that Rooibank, a small settlement south east of

Walvis Bay has good reporting rates for Dune lark – this would be my first target for the trip and as Arden has not seen it yet either, it was worth spending some time there. The drive to Rooibank was uneventful but a heavy fog, typical of Walvis Bay, had crept in during the night, and visibility was awful. Having never been in this area before, I had no idea where to go. We saw two people standing in front of a fenced-up area after we turned off the main gravel road, but they seemed to indicate that this area was off-limits. We didn't want to leave the car anywhere too obvious, so we backtracked a little and eventually parked the car behind what appeared to be a little school at -23.172726, 14.646343. We couldn't see more than about 30m ahead of us but I had downloaded offline maps from Google earlier so we simply headed south towards the band of dunes flanking the Kuiseb river bed. It was probably a kilometer or so that we slogged through damp sand before reaching the dunes. Despite the cold and damp conditions, we started hearing birds and soon recorded our first ticks: Bokmakierie, Cape sparrow, Lark-like bunting, Southern fiscal and White-throated canary. We turned east to follow the bottom edge of the dunes, stopped to listen often and occasionally played back the song for Dune lark. There was no response though. Possibly partly due to the weather conditions, and partly being outside breeding season, this turned into my first dip – not a great way to start a trip. To be honest though, I never really expected to find it easily at this time of year, so when we left about an hour later, I wasn't too disappointed. Picking up a Common scimitarbill, a pair of Ashy tits and a small group of Gray's larks also helped to alleviate the disappointment.

By the time we got back to Walvis Bay, the fog had started to clear. We drove around the lagoon and the salt works to look for Damara tern and although unsuccessful with this one too, we added a number of water birds including Lesser and Greater flamingoes, Grey, White-fronted, Common ringed and Chestnut-banded plovers, Curlew sandpiper, Little stint, Ruff, Sanderling, Common greenshank, Common, Sandwich and White-winged terns, Great white pelican and Cape teal. Just before noon we headed back to Walvis Bay and stopped at Dunes mall (-22.958266, 14.521716) to buy provisions for the next few days – it would be several days before we had access to a shop again in Omaruru. The sun was hot as we exited the mall and headed north to Swakopmund. We had a quick drive past the Mile 4 salt works to look for Damara tern but dipped here too, so set our sights east to Spitzkoppe. The tar road to the turn-off (-21.979428, 15.360308) is excellent but the gravel D1918 and then D3716 to the entrance is properly corrugated and can do with a grading. We arrived just before 4pm, paid for two nights camping and then drove to the western campsites, picking up Pale-winged starling, Bokmakierie, Grey go-away-bird and Mountain wheatear along the way. Campsites 10 and 11 were apparently in a good area to look for Herero chat so when we found campsite 10 open, we parked and annexed the site. It was pretty hot and the water and drink mixes we put into the fridge earlier were extremely welcome. With the sun a little less potent around 5pm, we took a walk around the immediate area and got good views of Rosy-faced lovebird, Dusky sunbird, a pair of soaring Verreaux's eagles, Cape bunting, Rock martin, Monteiro's hornbill, Long-billed crombec and Pririt batis. As we started getting our beds and dinner ready, one of the local guides/rangers walked up to us to offer a night walk excursion to look for leopard. He only wanted R70 so we agreed that he can come back after our dinner. He was rather surprised to see me set up my groundsheet and sleeping bag out in the open and warned me about the many dangers lurking about at night. I promised him that if a leopard came to eat me during the night, I'd set up my tent the next night.

The guide was back just as we finished up dinner and took us on a walk to a puddle of water collected in a hollow on the slopes of Sugarloaf peak. I don't think Arden or I really expected to see a leopard but it

was a pleasant walk nonetheless and our guide was happy to tell many stories of the area. Back in camp I checked my sleeping bag for snakes and scorpions before lying down to gawk at the beautiful starry sky.



Sunrise from the western campsites at Spitzkoppe

11 Apr 2019

I slept OK and although I had no troubles from any of the many predators our guide warned me about, I was rather surprised to pick up a couple of mosquito bites. Perhaps there were some more rock hollows with standing water nearby... This at least was a good reason to put up a tent.

We ate breakfast with the sun still below the horizon and then took an extensive walk around the whole western section of the reserve. Our main target was Herero chat but we happily ticked all the other birds too: White-tailed shrike, Layard's and Chestnut-vented tit-babblers (warblers), Sabota lark, White-throated canary and Speckled pigeon were all new for us in the reserve. We were back in camp just after 10m without seeing Herero chat so we decided to take a drive around the outside edge of the reserve. This produced Rüppell's korhaan, Chat flycatcher, Rock kestrel, Trac-trac chat and Namaqua dove. Back in the reserve we drove towards the eastern part where we found another overhanging rock to sit under for lunch. In this section we added Common scimitarbill, Yellow-bellied eremomela, White-browed sparrow-weaver and Black-chested prinia, but still no Herero chat. At the camp office, it was apparently possible to get a guide to help look for Herero chat so late afternoon we visited the office to arrange for such a trip early next morning and then took a shower at the communal facilities just behind the office, before returning to our campsite and starting dinner.

12 April

My tent kept the mosquitoes at bay and I slept well, although it was a little bit hotter inside the tent. We got up just before dawn, had breakfast and drove over to the office where we were meant to start at 8am. Our guide was a little late but while we were waiting, I saw a Black-faced waxbill perching on the office roof briefly. When the guide arrived, we followed him on his quadbike to a section of the reserve in the east that was inaccessible to self-drivers. We came to a small parking area and walked into a rocky plain with the Pontok mountains



Southern fiscal (western race)

rising to the west and some rocky outcrops close by. Within a few minutes our guide picked up a call of Herero chat and some minutes later we located it. It was far-off though and we spent the next half an hour continuously following two very skittish birds and never managed to get very close. We had reasonably good views but truly awful pictures – good enough for the tick though. Thanking our guide and his expertise, we left Spitzkoppe still well before noon and headed for the Erongo massif.

It was pointless driving back to the B2 tar road so we zig-zagged our way east along the D3716, D1930, D1927, D2306 before finally turning onto the D2315 to enter the Erongo conservancy. Along the way we



Damara ground squirrel

saw Capped wheatear, Black-chested snake eagle, Alpine swift, Scaly-feathered finch (weaver), Marico flycatcher, Swallow-tailed bee-eater and Pale chanting goshawk. Once inside the conservancy we slowed down a bit to bird the road more thoroughly and added Acacia pied barbet and Dusky sunbird as new trip birds. It was after 1pm already as we turned south on the D2316 (-21.460570, 15.753275) to head to our camp for the next two nights at Erongo Plateau Camp on the farm Eileen. We reached the campsites around 13:30 – there were just four of them, but each had a little

corrugated iron awning, dustbin, tap and barbecue area with a small communal ablution block only about 50m away. It was very hot and again the cooled water and drinks coming from our fridge were extremely welcome. We had a late lunch and spent most of the afternoon moving our chairs to keep up with the shade cast by the awning. Later in the afternoon we did a short loop walk that climbed up a ridge behind us. Barred wren-warblers were quite conspicuous here and Arden even managed a few pictures of one. While getting dinner ready, a thunderstorm brewing around the mountains together with the setting sun created excellent light for photography. A few drops made it to our campsite but there was nothing to get worried about.

13 April

An 8km trail led off the trail we did yesterday and we were keen on doing this early morning before it got too hot. We wolfed down our breakfast and were walking by the time the sun peered above the horizon. Not long into our walk, I played a Pearl-spotted owlet call which instantly attracted Pririt batis, Long-billed crombec, Dusky sunbird and amazingly, a pair of Herero chats! These were much more personable than the pair at Spitzkoppe and the early morning light provided great photo opportunities.



Herero chat

Further on, the sun quickly became hot and by 08:00 we were sweating already. Another Pearl-spotted owlet call delivered us a Common scimitarbill, Brubru and Cardinal woodpecker, but after this, things started to get quiet. Although easy to follow, the trail appeared to have more rocks on it than off it and walking started becoming uncomfortable. A tiny dry creek produced a Crimson-breasted shrike, an actual Pearl-spotted owlet and a Familiar chat but we had reached a point where we were quite keen to get off our feet and into the shade. By 10am we had

made it back to camp with another few species added, but it was now really hot (mid-30s) and I don't know about Arden's feet, but mine were killing me. For the next two hours we just sat in the shade and eventually made lunch. By early afternoon we had recovered enough to venture out again, but this time in the car – we drove out of the farm property and then turned left (south), deeper into the Erongo mountains. Good birds seen along the way included Ovambo sparrowhawk, Violet-eared waxbill, Ashy tit, Long-tailed paradise whydah, more White-tailed shrikes and our first Southern yellow-billed hornbill.

Later, another thunderstorm did wet the ground around the camp a little but it didn't last very long. As it died away, and the sun reached for the western horizon, birds appeared again, including a stunning pair of Violet-eared waxbills and another equally impressive pair of Herero chats! In our campsite! We were very close to where we saw the pair this morning, so chances are good they were the same individuals. I did wonder why we bothered looking for them at Spitzkoppe though. After dinner we decided to do a bit of spotlighting and drove back down towards the D2315. We saw a couple of Cape

hares and a Large spotted genet but apart from hearing another Pearl-spotted owlet call, nothing else. On the way back to camp we got accosted by a very excited farmer, telling us (not asking) that we're poaching. Only when we spoke calmly to him and explained what we were doing and that we were their guests, did he quiet down. It did put a bit of a damper on the rest of the evening though and by the next morning, we were keen to get out of there.



Cardinal woodpecker



Great sparrow

14 April

In 2017, Nicola (my wife) and I identified a granite spur close to the D2315 where we hoped to find Hartlaub's spurfowl. Although we didn't find any then, we had a pair of very cooperative Rockrunners, so I convinced Arden it was worth a pre-dawn start to stake out spurfowl and Rockrunner at this spot.

We arrived (it's the rocky spur west of the road at -21.491022, 15.747561) just before 7am and started climbing up the ridge. We stopped frequently and played calls for both Hartlaub's spurfowl and Rockrunner several times but had absolutely zero response. Birds we did see included Red-billed spurfowl, Crimson-breasted shrike, Red-headed finch, a pair of Rock kestrels, Pale-winged starlings and African red-eyed bulbuls. But not a peep from our target birds. With our next camp just a few kilometres down the road at Camp Mara (-21.448216, 15.866985), we decided to make a quick run to Omaruru to fill up fuel and buy some food. We birded slowly on the way to and back from Omaruru, adding Black-backed puffback, White-browed scrub robin (un-streaked *ovamboensis* race), Black-chested prinia, Short-toed rock-thrush, African hawk-eagle, Lesser grey shrike and just outside the town, African palm swift. We drove into Camp Mara's grounds just before noon and after settling payment with the German owner, annexed a lovely shady spot in the camp terrain. It was again blazingly hot, and we did not feel guilty spending the bulk of the afternoon under the tree. It was quite productive birding from under the

tree anyway and Arden added his first Damara red-billed hornbill followed soon after by my second lifer for the trip – a small flock of Violet wood hoopoes! Grey-backed camaroptera, White-backed mousebird, Blue waxbill, Southern grey-headed sparrow and Southern masked weaver were all seen from our campsite. Later afternoon we strolled down the Omaruru river for a short distance, discovering a couple of stagnant pools along the way, but it was as quiet as a cemetery. Later that evening we did pick up calls of African scops owl and Western barn owl that were both welcome additions to our growing list.



Rosy-faced lovebird



Damara red-billed hornbill

15 April

When we checked in yesterday, Camp Mara's owner (Ecki) described how some birding friends of his saw Hartlaub's spurfowl more than once in the rocky areas immediately south of the D2315, literally just opposite Camp Mara's entrance road. Based on this advice, we decided to take a walk out there pre-dawn and stake it out. By 06:45 we had positioned ourselves on a large boulder right next to the road, listening intently for the raggedy, high-pitched calls we've only heard on playback so far. And then it came! The sun had not risen yet so on this (eastern) side of the rocky outcrops, the light was still very poor, but the calls echoing off the granite was unmistakable. Rushing a little further down the road, we tried to pinpoint where the calls were coming from and then noticed some movement right against the skyline – they were on top of the ridge! It was way too far to photograph but as we watched them through the bins we could just see them as they were calling and were completely satisfied with a 100% identification. This was a big one! A well-known birder in South Africa told me just a few months ago that he's been in this area nine times before and although he's heard the spurfowl several times, he's never actually seen one. Highly chuffed, we walked back to Camp Mara, had a quick breakfast and then went to sit on the verandah at the farm house where Ecki puts out fruit and bird seed every morning. We watched in awe as hundreds of birds came to grab a bite to eat. Most numerous and noisy were the Rosy-faced lovebirds but there were also Shaft-tailed

whydahs, Blue waxbills, Southern grey-headed sparrows, Speckled pigeons, Monteiro's, Damara red-billed and Southern yellow-billed hornbills, Cape starlings and Ring-necked doves.

We left Camp Mara around 10am. We literally had to drive just across the road to Erongo Wilderness Lodge where we had one night's (very expensive) accommodation. This is apparently the best place to see Hartlaub's spurfowl so we decided to bite the bullet and pay for one night here. You can't access the reception and camp itself with a sedan vehicle and even in our 4x4, it took some careful maneuvering to climb the short but steep granite rock leading to reception. Of course, we were too early for check-in but the open-air restaurant provided shade and good photographing opportunity so we spent the rest of the morning here as it had now become too hot to walk around. By noon we were able to access our luxury tent, so we sat outside the tent under some expansive shade and ate lunch. Just before 4pm we went on a walk towards the east, ticking Stark's lark, Lark-like bunting and Arden's first Carp's tit. We were back at the reception just before 5pm to start an afternoon guided walk. If we knew the purpose of this walk was really a sundowner trip for the other rich guests, we probably would not have done it – there was precious little interest in the wildlife around us. We did see a stunning pair of Verreaux's eagles soaring in beautiful pre-dusk light and a couple of Rock kestrels, so not a complete waste. Dinner was included in the price and very tasty. A couple of Freckled nightjars also came to roost on the exposed rock immediately above the dining area and was a nice way to end our daily list.



Female Green-winged pytilia



Monteiro's hornbill



Splashes of vivid colour in the desert – Rosy-faced lovebirds coming in for the seed put out by Camp Mara's owner

16 April

With Hartlaub's spurfowl ticked, our focus shifted slightly. We still wanted to get better views of the spurfowl if possible, but we still needed Rockrunner as well. Seeing that the guided walks are not really geared to birding, we decided to give the early morning guided walk a skip and left our tent before dawn to walk the trails into the rocky hills. Only about ten minutes after leaving the tent we found a well-placed pile of boulders to sit on and scan the surroundings. Barely five minutes later a loud call had us looking at Hartlaub's spurfowl again – this time much closer! There were several males and females but the light was as bad as it was yesterday and although our views were really good this time, the photos still left a lot to be desired. Rockrunners were nowhere to be found though. We walked back towards camp, scrambling around the boulders above the tent and then towards the rocky outcrop where we had the sundowners yesterday. Nothing. Back to the spurfowl spot and beyond, climbing high into another boulder field, every now and again trying playback. Nothing. By 08:30 the sun had made an appearance above the rocky ridges and we gave up, walked back to camp and sat down for a sumptuous breakfast.

Another bird we still have not seen was Rüppell's parrot. Based on advice from one of the guides at the lodge, we left just after 10am and made our way back to the D2315 and turned right towards Omaruru and then found a hidden parking spot where the road came right up against the Omaruru river bed. We spent another 30-40 minutes scouring the river bed for parrots but got nothing. With a fair distance to drive to Brandberg still, we left by 11am and headed west on the D2315, adding just a couple more birds to the Erongo trip list: Purple roller and Temminck's courser.



Hartlaub's spurfowl in very poor light



Temminck's courser

We drove to Uis via Okombahe and then out towards Brandberg itself on the D2359. The section of the C35 between Uis and the turnoff onto the D2359 was particularly badly corrugated and by the time we slowed down for some birding, my back was pretty sore from the constant battering. It didn't take us too long to start finding larks and we had decent views of both Stark's and Benguela long-billed lark. Apart from these, a few Gray's larks and a couple of Rüppell's korhaans, there wasn't much else between the turn-off and the Brandberg White Lady Lodge (-21.021422, 14.682982) which we reached at about 3pm. The lodge is right on the banks of the Ugab river bed so they're able to tap in to a fair amount of groundwater that they use to maintain a desert garden. The moisture attracts a lot of birds and we were able to add Cape sparrow, Pale-winged starling, White-browed sparrow-weaver, Speckled pigeon, Laughing dove, Southern grey-headed sparrow, Cape starling and Fork-tailed drongo in just a few minutes. After checking in we drove towards the camping area and took some time to find a spot with some decent shade. The campsites all had a dustbin, barbecue grid and a tap but were very dusty and not all of them had good shade. The ablution facilities were quite basic but still adequate.

It was blazingly hot, so we parked ourselves in the shade at our campsite and waited out the heat. Arden spotted a group of birds flitting in some scrub about 50m away, behaving much like babblers. Knowing that this camp is a good spot for Bare-cheeked babbler we braved the sun and went to inspect the area. And sure enough – it was a small party of four Bare-cheeked babblers! We spent a good twenty minutes crawling around some dense scrub to try and get good pictures of these very pretty birds but only managed some average shots.



Bare-cheeked babbler

By 5pm we reckoned that we could venture out for a longer walk and we swished through the sand towards a scorched rocky hill immediately next to the camp's main reception area. With Rockrunner still on our wish list, we were becoming slightly desperate – this rocky hill did not look like particularly good habitat for them but we gave it a try anyway. The only things we found though were Mountain wheatear, Namaqua sandgrouse and Rosy-faced lovebird. Later that night I did also hear Pearl-spotted owl, Freckled nightjar and African scops owl.



Red-billed spurfowl



Dusty sunrise at White Lady Lodge camp ground

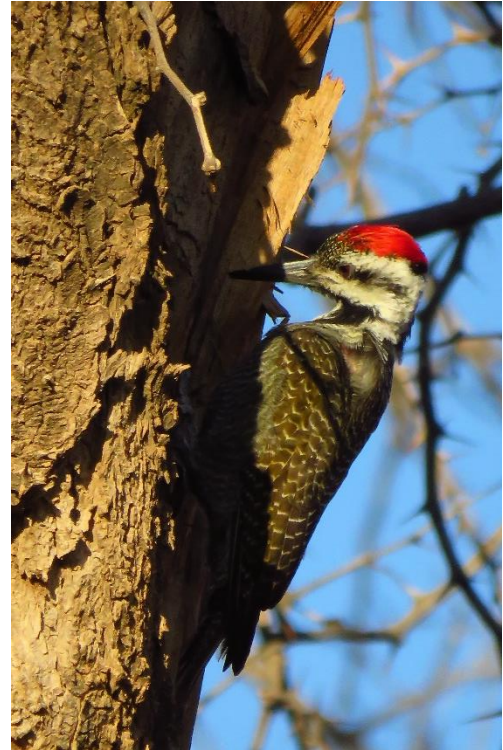
17 April

An early walk around the same rocky hill added nothing but a Bokmakierie but the gardens at reception produced Dusky sunbird and Cape wagtail. Bigger trees along the river bed edge produced a small flock of Violet wood hoopoes but it was a Bearded woodpecker haunted by a Lesser honeyguide that proved more entertaining. The scrub under the trees supported Familiar chat and Lark-like bunting and we also got a good view of a Little sparrowhawk. By 9am we were on our way again.

On the maps it looked like a long way around if we were to retrace our steps back to the C35, but a road showing very clearly on Google maps running next to the Ugab river and joining up with the D2319 seemed to cut a lot of distance. Not knowing anything about this road, we did stop at reception to ask, and they said yes, it's no problem to drive. Perhaps we should've asked more details. Let's just say that it definitely is a very pretty section of road/track but you need a high-clearance 4x4 and some skill/experience as well as a sense of adventure to tackle this section. Since we did have the 4x4 and Arden did have the skills and experience, we managed to complete the track in one piece but the 19-odd kilometres took us well over an hour to do – it most likely would've been faster to retrace our steps.

The D2319 was a proper road but poorly maintained so the 26kms to where it joined the C35 again wasn't particularly pleasant. The C35 was better though and we made

good progress here, reaching Kamanjab at lunch time. From Kamanjab, on the advice from my uncle living in Windhoek, we had planned to drive through the Kaokoveld instead of sticking to the C35 to reach the Kunene – this looked like a much more interesting road. However, since no-one we met was prepared to vouch for the quality of the roads in the Kaokoveld, we decided to stick to the C43, instead of the D3705 that runs a little further west. But we still had one more night before going further north, so from Kamanjab we turned west on the C40 and headed to our overnight stop at Hoda campsite which is owned/managed by Grootberg lodge. The campsite is located at -19.731895, 14.306605 – it's just off the C40, dead-easy to locate and a really stunning area. The landscape is dotted with rocky outcrops and boulders and individual campsites use these very effectively to create little shelters that each has a sink and water on tap, a donkey boiler, an open-air shower and toilet and a little verandah to sit under during the heat of the day. It was still boiling hot when we arrived around 4pm but we quickly ticked Red-crested korhaan, Southern pied babbler, Dusky sunbird, African red-eyed bulbul, Rock martin and Black-chested prinia around our campsite. Just after 5pm we took a walk towards some of the outcrops to look for Rockrunner again. Yet again though, this proved unsuccessful and I started to suspect that outside breeding season they are impossible to find. Adding little else, we returned to camp just after 6pm and settled in for the night. Freckled nightjar was heard again early evening.



Bearded woodpecker



Our campsite at Hoda

18 April

As pretty much our last-ditch effort for Rockrunner, we walked around the rocky outcrops once more, starting before sunrise. Our luck did not improve but we did see African hoopoe, Little swift, Chestnut-vented tit-babbler, Green-winged pytilia, Short-toed rock-thrush, Pririt batis, White-tailed shrike, Violet-backed starling, Pygmy falcon and Yellow-bellied eremomela. Just before 9am we were on the road again, first descending down a beautiful pass before reaching Palmwag and turning onto the C43. Now we were in the Kaokoveld proper and this area obviously does not see a lot of people. The landscape was stark, but mountainous and truly beautiful – I'd happily drive this road again. I must add though that despite the C43 being a "C" class road, it's certainly not of the same quality as elsewhere in the country and a section going up a valley north of Warmquelle (around -18.949442, 13.756155) crosses a very rocky riverbed several times – a low sedan will probably get through this but not without potentially serious bumps and bruises. It is a very long road though and by the time we reached Opuwo, we were tired – it was also blisteringly hot outside and probably pushing over the mid-30s.

In Opuwo we started seeing Himba people walking around in traditional dress – they are the subject of many photographs of this area due to their striking facial features and decorations they wear. Opuwo itself is not a particularly pleasant looking place so we drove about ten kilometres beyond the town until we found a tree providing some shade where we pulled over for a late lunch.

We reached Kunene River Lodge around 4pm. We had booked three nights here to explore the area thoroughly and increase our chances of finding the local specialties. We could've camped here too, but I was very worried about the heat/humidity along the river and as they were not quite as expensive as the Erongo Wilderness Lodge, Arden also agreed that we can stay in one of the air-conditioned rooms. This turned out to be a good idea – over the next three days we reached mid-30s in temperature every day along with high humidity. I've had worse in other places in the world, but this was still well above my threshold of tolerance.

Late afternoon we emerged from our extremely pleasant room to go for a birding walk. The lodge's grounds itself are lush with tall riparian trees, grassy gardens and a dense bushy fence. Bordering the lodge, they also have a "birding area" that's essentially a fenced area of about 300 x 50m along the river's edge where there are more large trees, dense scrub underneath, a small bird bath, but in particular, lots of grass that they deliberately allow to seed – this is loved by waxbills and finches. It being late in the day though, we decided to first walk east on the road to have the sun at our backs. Despite the heat and time of the day, birding was good: we saw Red-necked spurfowl, Namaqua dove, Violet-backed starling, Yellow-billed oxpecker, African grey hornbill, Southern white-crowned shrike, Bennett's woodpecker (un-speckled *capricorni* race) and Meves's starling. With the sun becoming less potent, we turned around, walked back to the lodge grounds and explored the "birding area", adding Grey-backed camaroptera, Blue waxbill, Swamp boubou, Jameson's firefinch and Rosy-faced lovebird. None of the specialties though.

Breakfasts and dinners are included in the rack rates so by 7pm we were enjoying a very pleasant meal on the deck overlooking the river. Upon an earlier request, the lodge's manager came to chat to us during dinner. We were hoping to plan an excursion to the Zebra mountains to look for Angola cave chat, something the lodge has been offering for the last few years since they were discovered there in 2011. The manager informed us that the cave chats have not been seen on the last three trips they've done to the mountains and he doesn't want to waste our money to go look for it. But since a very large

proportion of their market consists of birders looking for the cave chat, he plans to go and search for them at a few other locations he has in mind and he'll take us along for free. This sounded like a good idea so we agreed. The manager wasn't available the next day though so we therefore planned to do this the day after. With a plan in place, we went to bed.

19 April

Breakfast only started at 8am but we were on the restaurant's deck before sunrise as the locals guaranteed that Rufous-tailed palm-thrush would come out early in the morning. Sure enough, just after logging our first Yellow-bellied greenbul for the trip, out popped an inquisitive Rufous-tailed palm-thrush! Lifer number five for me! Pre-dawn light was miserable for photographs though, so we hoped we'd get another opportunity. With this first one in the bag, we walked over to the birding area and just birded from the road, since most of the long, seeding grass was literally right next to the fence. We heard Pearl-spotted owlet and saw an African hoopoe but then I noticed a few small birds actively feeding on the grass seeds. They looked awfully much like Grey waxbills (which do not occur) and I instantly realized they were Cinderella waxbills! Got them! With such an evocative name, this has been very high on my list of must-see birds for many years – the Herero chat and Hartlaub's spurfowl were exciting sightings too but this was the first sighting of the trip (and there were no others) that produced goosebumps on my arms – quite an achievement in this heat and humidity!



Grey kestrel



Cinderella waxbill

Ecstatic to add two lifers before breakfast, we sashayed back to the lodge for breakfast before returning to the birding area. We located the waxbills again and were able to take slightly better pictures (they kept in the middle and lower parts of the grass making clear photos near impossible). A stunning Holub's golden weaver posed nicely and we added our first White-tailed shrike for the area. I had a quick glimpse of a Rüppell's parrot flying past but Arden missed it so this one remained on our wanted list. I then heard a bee-eater call that sounded vaguely familiar. Looking higher we saw one flying in the distance over the lodge grounds and thinking that it might be Olive bee-eater, we rushed back to the lodge grounds. We struggled initially but eventually located one again and when it came to perch on one

of the high exposed branches, we could confirm it was indeed an Olive bee-eater. Lifer number three for the day!

The morning had now become too hot to walk so we got in the car and birded the road along the river. About 10kms from camp I saw something sitting in a dead tree – it looked like a small raptor but we had to drive almost past it to try and get a slightly better angle to view it properly. When I got my bins on it, it was obviously a raptor – completely grey, clear yellow feet, yellow base of the bill and large yellow rings around they eyes – it was a Grey kestrel! Not a full lifer for either of us but this was the first time I've seen one in southern Africa and was on my wanted list from the start – so that made it four target birds before noon!



Olive bee-eater

We continued east along the river, stopping where the road crossed a dry river bed (-17.425477, 13.941641), less than a kilometer from where we saw the Grey kestrel. Most of the land between the road and the river is private and fenced in but at this river bed, it was open all the way to the Kunene and only fenced on either side of the sandy bed. There was some tall riparian woodland here and we were able to add a Water thick-knee sitting on Kunene shore, more Olive bee-eaters overhead and a stunning African golden oriole. Further along the road, a stagnant pool produced our first Wood sandpiper for the trip. With lunch in mind, we returned to the lodge and enjoyed our chilled room in the mid-day heat.

Another late afternoon walk produced a Groundscraper thrush, Bare-cheeked babblers, Red-billed buffalo-weaver, Double-banded sandgrouse, Damara red-billed hornbill and Southern grey-headed sparrow. At dinner the lodge manager proudly came to tell us that he's found Angola cave chat.

Apparently, it was spotted near the rapids during their sunset cruise from which they have just returned. We were very happy to hear this although admittedly somewhat skeptical – it's a major change in habitat from where they have been seen before. However, he offered to drive us around to this spot very early the next morning at no charge and see if we could relocate it.

20 April

We left the lodge well before sunrise and ended up arriving at the rapids too early to bird. We waited for first light to start a short walk and scramble up some rock bands in the river. We stayed in this spot probably for about forty minutes and although we added some Egyptian geese, Hamerkop, African pied wagtail, Little egret, African fish eagle, Wire-tailed swallow and Rock kestrel, there certainly were no

cave chats around. The manager had another one or two potential locations he wanted to investigate so we left the rapids to go check these out. Rather inconveniently, we ran out of petrol after just ten minutes' driving and pumping fuel across from the spare tank seemed to make little difference. The manager decided that we must return to the lodge so the workers arriving at 8am can fill up the tank properly – he promised to then take us out again after breakfast. Breakfast was pretty good, but when we located the manager afterwards, he informed us that he now had some urgent task to do and cannot take us anymore. Instead, he drew us a map of how to get to a good location to look for Rüppell's parrot. Somewhat miffed that we had now pretty much no chance anymore of finding the cave chat, we followed his map (which was in fact very accurate) and reached a gully with some running water. To reach this spot, turn off (south) the D3700 at -17.420571, 13.933864 and follow the indistinct track, past a couple of cattle enclosures, turning slightly right after the last one at -17.423259, 13.933252. Follow the tracks through a couple of ditches until you see a local's house and enclosure in front, then follow the tracks up the hill to the left (south) and park at -17.427765, 13.929746. From here you should then see the green grass in the gully to the west. In the baking heat, this fresh water is obviously a big attraction to man and beast alike and the birding was good. As we walked upstream, we saw Ashy flycatcher, Yellow-billed oxpecker, Southern yellow-billed hornbill, Three-banded plover, Reed cormorant, Violet-backed starling, African golden oriole, Carp's tit, Cinderella waxbill, Black-backed puffback, Black-chested prinia, White-bellied sunbird and a suspected Verreaux's eagle-owl (we scared it up and was unable to locate it again). Spending about an hour and a half here was hard and hot work and eventually we decided to turn around without seeing a parrot. On the way back though, just about a hundred metres from the spot where we entered the gully, I heard a very brief screech that sounded parrot-like. With the abundance of Rosy-faced lovebirds in the area it could've been anything so I decided to play a quick burst of Rüppell's parrot calls. The response was instantaneous – a bird flashed above us to the opposite edge of the gully but now we saw where it landed, and Arden could see it properly for the first time. It was indeed a Rüppell's parrot. Very happy that this spot paid off we returned to the lodge to have lunch in our room. With no more chances to go look for cave chat in the Zebra mountains where they've always been seen, we decided to do a sunset cruise that afternoon as a last ditch, desperate effort.

The cruise was very relaxing. We did not see any cave chats and by now I was rather cynical about the whole thing. We did however add Goliath heron, Little bee-eater, Cardinal woodpecker, Acacia pied barbet, Blacksmith lapwing, Pied kingfisher, Brown-throated martin, Red-billed spurfowl, African mourning dove and Striated heron to our list for the Kunene region. We enjoyed our last dinner very much, despite the disappointment of missing the cave chat and started thinking about our plans for the next leg.



Best picture I could manage of Rufous-tailed palm thrush



Bennett's woodpecker

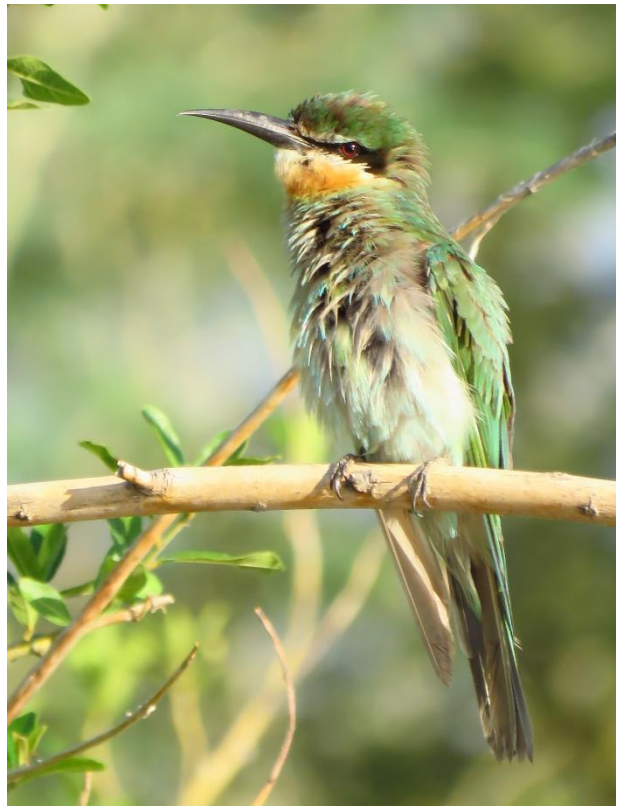
21 April

Before breakfast we made one last turn at the birding area and once again managed to see a few Cinderella waxbills. We left the lodge not long after breakfast and took a slow birding drive east along the Kunene towards Ruacana. The distance is about 70kms overall and the road is in excellent condition, thanks to the Chinese. We reached Ruacana around 11am and visited our accommodation ([Ruacana guesthouse](#)) to see where it was. As expected our room was not ready yet so we asked some advice on where to do shopping – the best place we found was a Shoprite in the settlement called Oshifo (-17.434221, 14.430786) which is on the eastern side of the C35, about 15kms from Ruacana Guesthouse. During my research for the area I noted that Onesi dam, about 40kms further east of Ruacana, looked good for some water birds and when I heard that Three-banded courser has been seen in that area, I thought it a good idea to visit. With supplies stocked, we headed out towards Onesi with the plan of having lunch somewhere on the dam's edge. It was unfortunately hugely disappointing. The dam is not really accessible anywhere along its western shore – there were scores of small farms along the edge with a few tracks running towards the dam in between fences but virtually all of these looked rather private and we didn't want to trespass on private property. The little bits of the dam we did see showed little promise as the shallow edges were full of people and cattle. There was nowhere to park the car out of sight to have lunch so we turned around and drove back to Ruacana Guesthouse. The rest of the afternoon we sat out the heat – our room had air-conditioning but even at its lowest temperature and highest fan speed it made zero difference. When we left around 16:30 to visit Ruacana falls, it actually seemed cooler outside than inside the room. It was about 22kms back along the D3700 to get to the Hippo pools campsite which is described in the Southern African Birdfinder. The campsite and trails along the river as well as dry stream beds south of the Kunene are apparently good places to find most

of the area's specials. Honestly though, Hippo pools campsite is a dump. Literally. There were two large groups of locals having parties, empty bottles, plastic and other rubbish all over the campsite, people swimming immediately behind the No Swimming sign, the ablution facilities were shocking, and all the taps were dry. You would not have been able to pay me enough to stay here and I was really glad for our hot accommodation in Ruacana. Since we had to pay R10 entrance fee we did spend about thirty minutes birding the area but ticked nothing new or interesting. We were on our way back to Ruacana before 6pm. Earlier we had ordered dinner to be delivered and was surprised at the huge meal we were brought – we ended up saving half of it for our next dinner.



Yellow-billed oxpecker



Another Olive bee-eater



Late afternoon light on the Kunene river, standing in Angola

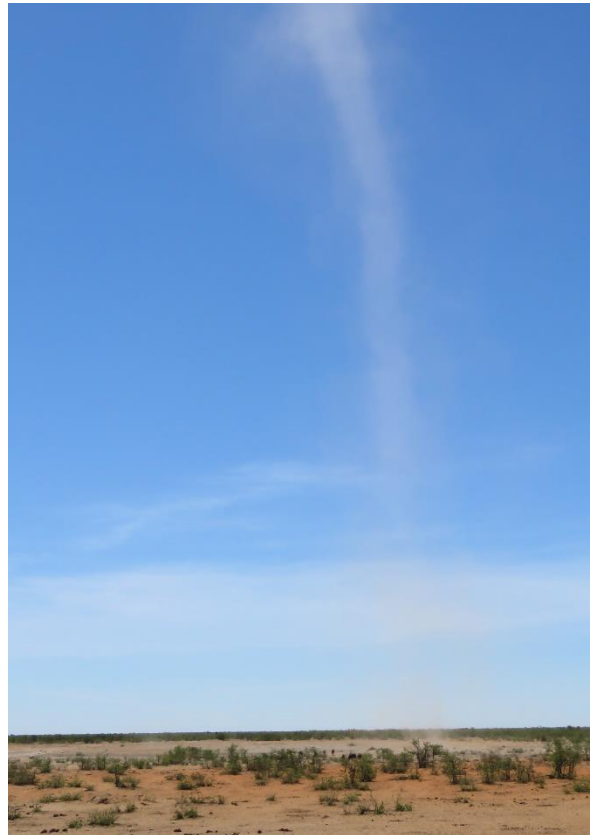
22 April

Arden made our bookings for the Etosha section of our trip but struggled to find place at all the camps except Halali. He did manage to get us two nights at the Taleni Etosha Village camp just outside Okaukuejo. This meant we had a very long day ahead of us, considering we were planning on entering the park at Galton gate on the western extreme of the park. We left Ruacana just before dawn and reached Galton gate around 09:30. This was where we learned about the complete ban on plastic bags in the park and was asked to empty all our plastic bags, including the ones that held our food, straight into the back of the car and discard the bags in a bin nearby. A noble idea but I strongly suspect this all gets dumped in a hole just on the other side of the road. Considering the sorry state of the reception area and typical African red-tape needed to enter, my cynicism easily overcame my optimism.

Our birding in Etosha got underway with a fair number of common species, with Double-banded sandgrouse, Short-toed rock-thrush, Black-chested snake eagle and Southern pied babbler probably the most interesting. By the time we reached Olifantsrus camp, about half-way towards Okaukuejo, we had notched up 30-odd bird species but also added new mammals for the trip, including Common warthog, Burchell's (Plains) zebra, Greater kudu, Red hartebeest and Blue wildebeest. It was hot and dusty and near 1pm already so we had lunch at one of the shaded picnic tables before paying a quick visit to the hide – there wasn't much to see. Further east we saw Rock kestrel, several Northern black korhaans, Grey-backed sparrowlark, Red-capped lark and both Burchell's and Double-banded courser. Near Okaukuejo we added Chat flycatcher, Greater kestrel and our first of many Kori bustards before exiting the park early evening to drive the short distance to Taleni. Taleni is a fantastic place. Their campsites are secluded, spacious, each having a verandah, barbecue area, tap and private bathroom with hot water shower, sink and toilet. The cost was also very reasonable and apparently they had WiFi available at reception (we never bothered with it).



Double-banded courser



Dust devil dancing across the Etosha plains

23 April

Expecting the queues at the park's entrance gate to be long, we were up and getting ready before 6am. In quick succession we heard Pearl-spotted owl, Western barn and Spotted eagle owls. The queues at the gate were indeed long and very disorganized with lots of people walking up from behind to skip the queue. Once the gates opened and we got a piece of paper stamped, we then had to stop again by reception in Okaukuejo camp to pay the entrance fee – a ridiculous arrangement and waste of time.

Our aim today was to focus on larks on the gravel plains north of Okaukuejo. Red-capped lark and Grey-backed sparrowlark were first on the list, soon followed by Spike-heeled and Fawn-coloured larks. It took us a bit longer to positively identify Pink-billed lark but we got good views of several to be sure. Capped wheatears were common and so were Namaqua sandgrouse and both Double-banded and Burchell's coursers. We returned to Okaukuejo to have lunch under a big tree next to the swimming pool before venturing east into the dusty heat. On the C38 close to the pan we saw some more coursers, Greater kestrel and Yellow-bellied eremomela before looping back towards the camp. At the bottom end of this loop we saw our first Chestnut-backed sparrowlark which we've searching for all day without success. On our way out of the park and with a low sun providing beautiful light, we came across a cracking Red-necked falcon. Good mammals for the day included several lions hanging out at a culvert, another Black-backed jackal, Slender mongoose and most of the other antelope species.



Burchell's coursers



Pygmy falcon



Red-necked falcon



Spike-heeled lark

24 April

Knowing now what to expect at the gate, we got up half an hour earlier and arrived as the fourth car at the gate. Today the power was off though so they couldn't give us the computer-generated permits needed and this caused some delays yet again. At Okaukuejo the power was off as well so they asked that we sort it out before we exit the park.

Having already cleaned up on the larks, we turned into the morning sun and birded along the C35 close to the pan towards Halali. New birds (for the park) that we saw, included Red-billed buffalo-weaver, Brubru, Lizard buzzard, Egyptian goose, Little grebe, African harrier-hawk, Three-banded plover and Cape teal. We reached Halali by lunch time and it was stinking hot. Since we were hoping to get at least one night drive in at the park to look for nocturnal birds, we asked about this at reception. I nearly fell over when they told us it's going to cost R750 per person – that's more than double what they charge for night drives in Kruger back in South Africa! But we were there and chances were it was going to be a long time before I get to Etosha again so reluctantly I handed over the cash. Getting sight of the campsites at Halali did not improve my mood much. These were just dusty open patches with a few scrawny mopani trees that provide zero shade. Our designated campsite did have a power connection and a barbecue grid, but we seemed to be the only campsite without a tap. The ablution facilities were old, with broken tiles, grime, soap scum, cobwebs and dirt evident all over – one toilet and a basin didn't work either. This was certainly the worst campsite we stayed at on the entire trip. Considering it was also the most expensive, at R300 pp per night, I'd be very hard pressed to return.



A sepia-toned version of the view across the vast expanse of the main Etosha pan

We ate lunch at the campsite, sort of trying to cringe behind our mopani tree's trunk to get out of the sun. The only consolation was the ice-cold drinks and water out of the car's little fridge. Since there was nowhere pleasant to wait out the heat of the afternoon, we left again after lunch and drove a loop east of Halali. This did produce a few new birds for the park including Lilac-breasted roller, Marabou stork, Chestnut-banded plover (right on the pan), African hoopoe, African fish eagle, Ruff, Red-billed teal and Black-winged stilt. As the sun headed for the western horizon, we returned to Halali and paid a visit to the waterhole viewpoint on the edge of the camp. This was a decent viewing spot, perhaps not ideal in the late afternoon as you looked directly into the sun, but there were elephants, kudu, zebra, impala and a few other mammals that came in to drink. We also saw Little swifts flying overhead. At 8pm we reported at reception for our night drive. Apart from a few water thick-knees, we added no birds whatsoever and it was clear our driver/guide wouldn't know the difference between a Three-banded and Bronze-winged courser anyway. We did get good looks at Black rhino, hyena and a stunning little African wild cat that walked right up to the vehicle when we stopped, but the driver/guide and his

assistant's lack of skills/training showed when we spotted a stripy wolf-like creature slinking off into the shadows. They had no idea what it was and only after they consulted the crudely drawn pictures that are part of the Etosha map booklet (rather than a proper field guide), they decided it was an Aardwolf. So at least we added a few interesting mammals to our list but neither of us cared to pay R750 again for another night drive.



Grey-backed camaroptera



African wildcat

25 April

This was our last full day in the park and we started off at the waterhole in Halali camp. With the sun hidden behind the big hill at the camp, even well after sunrise, this was much more pleasant, and we watched rhino, elephant, zebra and kudu coming to drink, got fantastic views of a very tame Grey-backed camaroptera barely a metre from us and added a couple of Golden-breasted buntings at the water's edge. Around 8am we first drove east into the sun, visited a couple of waterholes and then turned south and west again. New birds seen were Shikra, Cardinal woodpecker, Long-billed crombec, Violet-eared waxbill, Kalahari scrub-robin (lifer for Arden), Crimson-breasted shrike, Tinkling cisticola, Buffy pipit and Temminck's courser. We visited some more waterholes where we got a pair of Tawny eagles and a Lanner falcon dive-bombing and scattering a large flock of Helmeted guineafowl. Back at camp, and after dinner, we spent a good two hours at the floodlit waterhole watching some more elephant and rhino as well as a pair of Rufous-cheeked nightjars.

26 April

Leaving Halali camp early, we skirted the pan eastwards, visiting several waterholes along the way. We had good sightings of plenty Kori bustards and lots of Double-banded, Burchell's and Temminck's coursers. A pair of Double-banded coursers with an extremely well-camouflaged chick, right next to the road, kept us entertained for a good ten minutes. New birds included Swainson's spurfowl, Ovambo sparrowhawk, a single White-backed vulture, Grey-headed gull, and when we reached the much nicer looking campsite at Namutoni, Red-faced mousebird, Wattled starling and Blue waxbill. Most of Namutoni's campsites have grass and the larger trees provide ample shade. Each campsite also had a

barbecue grid, tap and power point – a far nicer place to camp than Halali. After lunch we drove the big loop around Fisher pan, north east of Namutoni, but this was bone dry, dusty and hot and we added nothing new. We finally left the park around 2pm and headed for Tsumeb.

Overall, Etosha was a little disappointing. Perhaps I just had set way too high expectations. The internal roads were by and large, very badly corrugated and this made driving at a slow pace really awful. It's therefore understandable that everybody else were driving much faster (often above the speed limit though) but I got the feeling that we must have been the only birders in the park – everyone else were literally speeding in between sightings of lion and elephant with precious little regard for everything in between – kind of the same experience we had in the Indian reserves some years ago. Their haste often left us coughing in clouds of dust as we tried to look at birds along the way. The red tape needed to get into the park was somewhat annoying and time-wasting as well but what really got me was how much they charged for poor accommodation/facilities/experiences. The waterholes were nice; on average, better than the ones in Kruger National Park, and being able to watch game at the flood-lit waterholes at the camps were great too. But paying as much as we did for a rather average night drive and the depressing campsites at Halali, I don't see myself returning to Etosha anytime soon.

In Tsumeb, we easily found our accommodation, [Tsumeb Backpackers](#) at -19.253812, 17.720312 and checked in. The room was a little on the small side, but the beds very comfy, the shower hot, the WiFi decent, the air-conditioner worked and they did laundry for R60 a load. This was the end of my trip and while Arden still had five weeks to roam Namibia and Botswana, I was to catch a bus the next morning to Windhoek where I would stay the night with my aunt and uncle before my flight back to Johannesburg. We spent the rest of the afternoon re-packing and cleaning, then went for what we hoped would be a decent meal at the Dros restaurant in town but turned out to be rather unimpressive.



Burchell's (Plains) zebra



Halali water hole

27-28 April

When I booked a bus ticket on Intercape Mainliner, the bus was meant to arrive around 6am, but before I left for Namibia, the schedule changed, and it now departed two hours earlier. We were therefore both a bit bleary-eyed waking up around 03:15 to pack the last few things. Arden dropped me off at the pick-up point at the Engen gas station (-19.251644, 17.712149) where the bus arrived promptly just before 4am. I said a fond goodbye to Arden – he was going to end his entire expedition to southern Africa with a couple of weeks in South Africa and would spend a few nights at our place before and after his travel there.

The 6-hour bus trip was uneventful and not uncomfortable and just after 10am, my uncle picked me up in Windhoek. Thanks to the good WiFi at Tsumeb Backpackers, I managed to download my email and by chance saw an email from Air Namibia saying that my return flight has also been cancelled and I've been re-booked automatically on a much earlier flight on the Sunday morning. I'd hate to think what would've happened if I didn't have a chance to download or read my email. Perhaps they did try to call me to re-book but we had virtually zero signal most of the time and there were no missed calls or messages on my phone. Super annoying. Especially since I now had to ask my aunt and uncle to get up before 4am to take me to the airport. The fact that the new flight was over an hour late did not improve my dim view of Air Namibia but at least I did make it home on the same day as originally planned.

Some tips for newbies to Namibia

South African rand is pegged at 1:1 with the Namibian dollar and widely accepted – you'll get change in Namibian dollars though

Credit cards (MasterCard and Visa) are accepted at most larger stores in the bigger towns and most fuel stations as well, but make sure you carry enough cash – power outages render the card machines useless.

Be careful with flights to Namibia – the Namibian population is very small compared to other countries so the market for flights is limited. This means that even international flights are often cancelled if they're unable to fill them up. Leave a day or two on either side of your trip as a buffer for such inconveniences.

It still gets quite hot in mid to late April (over 30°C every day) but the nights are certainly cooler and make camping an affordable option at this time of year. At Kunene River Lodge though, I was extremely thankful for the air-conditioned room – it's worth the extra cost.

When doing long road trips and especially when you aim to venture even just a little of the main roads, make certain you have plenty water and fuel.

Bird list

X – seen, H – heard only

Red shaded species – southern African endemics

Green shaded species – southern African near-endemics

Common name	Latin name	10-Apr-19	11-Apr-19	12-Apr-19	13-Apr-19	14-Apr-19	15-Apr-19	16-Apr-19	17-Apr-19	18-Apr-19	19-Apr-19	20-Apr-19	21-Apr-19	22-Apr-19	23-Apr-19	24-Apr-19	25-Apr-19	26-Apr-19
STRUTHIONIFORMES: Struthionidae																		
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>													X	X	X	X	X
ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae																		
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>							X				X				X	X	X
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>							X							X	X	X	
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	X														X	X	
Cape Shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>	X																
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>							X								X		
GALLIFORMES: Numididae																		
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>					X								X	X	X	X	X
GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae																		
Crested Francolin	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>													X				
Hartlaub's Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis hartlaubi</i>						X	X										
Red-billed Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis adspersus</i>			X		X		X				X			X	X	X	X
Red-necked Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis afer</i>									X								
Swainson's Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>						X											X
PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae																		
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>															X	X	
PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: Phoenicopteridae																		
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	X																
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>	X																
CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae																		
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>															X	X	X
PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae																		
Striated (Green-backed) heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>											X						
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>												X					
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X											X					

Common name	Latin name	10-Apr-19	11-Apr-19	12-Apr-19	13-Apr-19	14-Apr-19	15-Apr-19	16-Apr-19	17-Apr-19	18-Apr-19	19-Apr-19	20-Apr-19	21-Apr-19	22-Apr-19	23-Apr-19	24-Apr-19	25-Apr-19	26-Apr-19
Black-headed Heron	Ardea melanocephala														X			
Goliath Heron	Ardea goliath											X						
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	X										X	X	X				
PELECANIFORMES: Scopidae																		
Hamerkop	Scopus umbretta											X						
PELECANIFORMES: Pelecanidae																		
Great White Pelican	Pelecanus onocrotalus	X																
SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae																		
Reed Cormorant	Microcarbo africanus											X						
Crowned Cormorant	Microcarbo coronatus	X																
ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae																		
Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus													X	X	X	X	
African Harrier-Hawk	Polyboroides typus															X		
White-backed Vulture	Gyps africanus																	X
Black-chested Snake Eagle	Circaetus pectoralis			X										X				
Brown Snake Eagle	Circaetus cinereus					X												
Bateleur	Terathopius ecaudatus														X	X	X	X
Tawny Eagle	Aquila rapax																X	X
Verreaux's Eagle	Aquila verreauxii	X	X				X											
African Hawk-Eagle	Aquila spilogaster					X												
Lizard Buzzard	Kaupifalco monogrammicus															X		
Gabar Goshawk	Micronisus gabar						X	X							X			
Pale Chanting Goshawk	Melierax canorus	X		X											X	X	X	X
Shikra	Accipiter badius																X	
Little Sparrowhawk	Accipiter minullus								X									
Ovambo Sparrowhawk	Accipiter ovampensis				X													X
African Fish Eagle	Haliaeetus vocifer											X				X		
OTIDIFORMES: Otididae																		
Kori Bustard	Ardeotis kori													X	X	X	X	X
Rüppell's Korhaan	Eupodotis rueppellii		X					X	X									
Red-crested Korhaan	Lophotis ruficrista			X		X			X					X		X		

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Golden-tailed Woodpecker	Campethera abingoni										X							
Cardinal Woodpecker	Dendropicos fuscescens				X							X					X	
Bearded Woodpecker	Dendropicos namaquus								X									
FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae																		
Pygmy Falcon	Polihierax semitorquatus									X					X			
Rock Kestrel	Falco rupicolus		X	X		X	X					X		X				
Greater Kestrel	Falco rupicoloides													X	X	X		X
Grey Kestrel	Falco ardosiaceus										X							
Red-necked Falcon	Falco chicquera														X	X		
Lanner Falcon	Falco biarmicus																X	
PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae																		
Rosy-faced Lovebird	Agapornis roseicollis	X	X	X		X		X		X			X					
Rüppell's Parrot	Poicephalus rueppellii										X	X						
PASSERIFORMES: Platysteiridae																		
Pririt Batis	Batis pririt	X	X	X	X	X				X								
White-tailed Shrike	Lanioturdus torquatus		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X				
PASSERIFORMES: Prionopidae																		
White-crested Helmetshrike	Prionops plumatus												X				X	X
PASSERIFORMES: Malaconotidae																		
Bokmakierie	Telophorus zeylonus	X	X						X									
Black-backed Puffback	Dryoscopus cubla					X						X						
Swamp Boubou	Laniarius bicolor									X	X		X					
Crimson-breasted Shrike	Laniarius atrococcineus				X	X		X									X	
Brubru	Nilaus afer				X					X						X		
PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae																		
Southern White-crowned Shrike	Eurocephalus anguitimens						X			X					X		X	X
Lesser Grey Shrike	Lanius minor					X									X		X	
Southern Fiscal	Lanius collaris	X	X	X				X					X	X	X			X
PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae																		
African Golden Oriole	Oriolus auratus										X	X						
PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae																		

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Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicurus adsimilis					X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae																		
African Paradise Flycatcher	Terpsiphone viridis										X							
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae																		
Cape Crow	Corvus capensis													X	X	X	X	
Pied Crow	Corvus albus													X	X	X	X	
PASSERIFORMES: Paridae																		
Carp's Tit	Parus carpi						X					X						
Ashy Tit	Parus cinerascens	X			X			X										
PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae																		
Spike-heeled Lark	Chersomanes albofasciata														X	X	X	
Gray's Lark	Ammomanopsis grayi	X						X										
Benguela Long-billed Lark	Certhilauda benguelensis							X										
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark	Eremopterix leucotis														X			
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark	Eremopterix verticalis							X						X	X	X		X
Sabota Lark	Calendulauda sabota		X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	X	X
Fawn-colored Lark	Calendulauda africanoides														X			
Stark's Lark	Spizocorys starki							X	X						X	X	X	X
Pink-billed Lark	Spizocorys conirostris														X			
Red-capped Lark	Calandrella cinerea													X	X	X	X	X
PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae																		
African Red-eyed Bulbul	Pycnonotus nigricans	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	Chlorocichla flaviventris										X		X					
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae																		
Brown-throated Martin	Riparia paludicola											X						
Wire-tailed Swallow	Hirundo smithii											X						
Rock Martin	Ptyonoprogne fuligula	X	X	X	X	X		X	X									
PASSERIFORMES: Macrosphenidae																		
Long-billed Crombec	Sylvietta rufescens	X		X	X								X					X
PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae																		
Lesser Swamp Warbler	Acrocephalus gracilirostris												X					

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PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae																		
Tinkling Cisticola	Cisticola rufilatus																X	
Rufous-eared Warbler	Malcorus pectoralis														X			
Black-chested Prinia	Prinia flavicans		X		X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X		
Grey-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptera brevicaudata					X	X	X		X	X		X				X	
Barred Wren-Warbler	Calamonastes fasciolatus			X		X	X											
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	Eremomela icteropygialis		X	X						X					X	X	X	X
PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae																		
Southern Pied Babbler	Turdoides bicolor								X					X				
Bare-cheeked Babbler	Turdoides gymnogenys							X			X				X			
PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae																		
Chestnut-vented Warbler	Sylvia subcaerulea		X					X		X					X			
Layard's Warbler	Sylvia layardi		X															
PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae																		
Wattled Starling	Creatophora cinerea																	X
Cape Starling	Lamprotornis nitens			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Greater Blue-eared Starling	Lamprotornis chalybaeus															X	X	X
Meves's Starling	Lamprotornis mevesii									X	X		X					
Violet-backed Starling	Cinnyricinclus leucogaster									X		X						
Pale-winged Starling	Onychognathus nabouroup	X	X		X	X	X	X	X									
PASSERIFORMES: Buphagidae																		
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	Buphagus africanus									X		X						
PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae																		
Groundscraper Thrush	Turdus litsitsirupa										X	X	X		X			
PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae																		
Kalahari Scrub Robin	Erythropygia paena																X	
White-browed Scrub Robin	Erythropygia leucophrys					X												
Chat Flycatcher	Bradornis infuscatus		X	X	X									X	X	X		X
Marico Flycatcher	Bradornis mariquensis			X	X	X		X						X	X	X	X	X
Ashy Flycatcher	Muscicapa caeruleascens											X						
Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush	Cichladusa ruficauda										X							

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Short-toed Rock Thrush	Monticola brevipes					X				X				X				
Karoo Chat	Emarginata schlegelii								X									
Tractrac Chat	Emarginata tractrac		X	X														
Ant-eating Chat	Myrmecocichla formicivora												X	X				
Mountain Wheatear	Myrmecocichla monticola	X	X				X	X	X									
Capped Wheatear	Oenanthe pileata			X											X	X	X	
Familiar Chat	Oenanthe familiaris				X		X		X				X					
Herero Chat	Namibornis herero			X	X													
PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae																		
White-bellied Sunbird	Cinnyris talatala											X						
Dusky Sunbird	Cinnyris fuscus	X	X	X	X				X									
PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae																		
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	Plocepasser mahali		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X		X
Sociable Weaver	Philetairus socius													X	X			
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	X																
Great Sparrow	Passer motitensis			X		X			X					X	X		X	X
Cape Sparrow	Passer melanurus	X						X										
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	Passer diffusus					X		X			X				X		X	
PASSERIFORMES: Ploceidae																		
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	Bubalornis niger										X					X		X
Scaly-feathered Weaver	Sporopipes squamifrons			X		X		X						X	X		X	X
Holub's (African) Golden Weaver	Ploceus xanthops										X	X						
Southern Masked Weaver	Ploceus velatus					X				X			X	X		X		X
Red-billed Quelea	Quelea quelea													X			X	
PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae																		
Green-winged Pytilia	Pytilia melba			X		X				X								
Red-headed Finch	Amadina erythrocephala				X	X		X						X	X	X	X	X
Red-billed Firefinch	Lagonosticta senegala										X							
Jameson's Firefinch	Lagonosticta rhodopareia									X								
Blue Waxbill	Uraeginthus angolensis					X				X			X					X
Violet-eared Waxbill	Uraeginthus granatina				X						X						X	

Mammal list

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MACROSCELIDEA: Macroscelididae																		
Bushveld Elephant Shrew	Elephantulus intufi	X	X							X								
HYRACOIDEA: Procaviidae																		
Rock Hyrax	Procavia capensis			X	X		X	X	X									
PROBOSCIDEA: Elephantidae																		
African Bush Elephant	Loxodonta africana													X		X	X	
PRIMATES: Cercopithecidae																		
Malbrouck	Chlorocebus cynosuros									X	X	X	X					
Chacma Baboon	Papio ursinus					X			X									X
RODENTIA: Sciuridae																		
South African Ground Squirrel	Xerus inauris					X			X					X	X			
Damara Ground Squirrel	Xerus princeps	X	X															
Congo Rope Squirrel	Funisciurus congicus									X	X	X						
RODENTIA: Petromuridae																		
Dassie Rat	Petromus typicus						X	X										
LAGOMORPHA: Leporidae																		
Cape Hare	Lepus capensis				X	X										X		
CARNIVORA: Felidae																		
Wildcat	Felis silvestris															X		
Lion	Panthera leo														X	X	X	X
CARNIVORA: Viverridae																		
Cape Genet	Genetta tigrina				X													
CARNIVORA: Herpestidae																		
Yellow Mongoose	Cynictis penicillata															X		
Black mongoose	Galerella nigrata				X													
Slender Mongoose	Galerella sanguinea														X			
Banded Mongoose	Mungos mungo																	X
CARNIVORA: Hyaenidae																		
Spotted Hyena	Crocuta crocuta															X		X
Aardwolf	Proteles cristata															X		

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CARNIVORA: Canidae																		
Black-backed Jackal	Canis mesomelas				X										X	X	X	
PERISSODACTYLA: Equidae																		
Burchell's Zebra	Equus burchellii													X	X	X	X	X
Mountain Zebra	Equus zebra				X													
PERISSODACTYLA: Rhinocerotidae																		
Black Rhinoceros	Diceros bicornis															X	X	X
ARTIODACTYLA: Suidae																		
Common Warthog	Phacochoerus africanus													X				
ARTIODACTYLA: Giraffidae																		
Giraffe	Giraffa camelopardalis			X										X	X	X	X	X
ARTIODACTYLA: Bovidae																		
Impala	Aepyceros melampus													X		X	X	X
Red Hartebeest	Alcelaphus caama													X				
Blue Wildebeest	Connochaetes taurinus													X	X	X	X	X
Springbok	Antidorcas marsupialis			X	X			X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Kirk's Dikdik	Madoqua kirkii					X	X							X				X
Klipspringer	Oreotragus oreotragus	X	X															
Steenbok	Raphicerus campestris					X	X									X		
Greater Kudu	Tragelaphus strepsiceros													X				X
Gemsbok	Oryx gazella			X		X	X							X	X			