

# Windhoek to Victoria Falls Set-Departure

9<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Trip Report



*Above, clockwise from top left: Herero Chat, African Pygmy Goose, Cheetah & White-backed Night-Heron.*

Lawson's Birding, Wildlife and Custom Safaris  
P O Box 16849  
West Acres, Nelspruit  
Mpumalanga, South Africa 1211  
Tel : +27 13 741 2458  
Email : [info@lawsons-africa.co.za](mailto:info@lawsons-africa.co.za)  
Web : [www.lawsons-africa.co.za](http://www.lawsons-africa.co.za)

## Tour Summary

**Tour Participants:** William and Charlotte Byers, David and Elizabeth Hallam, Doug and Rosemary Stapleton, Paul and Elizabeth Davison

**Tour leaders:** Casper Badenhorst and John Davies

**Total Birds Seen:** 415

**Total Mammals Seen:** 46

**Birds of the Trip include:** Hartlaub's Spurfowl, African Pygmy Goose, White-backed Night-Heron, Secretarybird, European Honey Buzzard, Red-necked Buzzard, Ludwig's Bustard, Rüppell's Korhaan, African Finfoot, Allen's Gallinule, Lesser Moorhen, Lesser Jacana, Blue and Wattled Cranes, Chestnut-banded Plover, Great Knot, Damara Tern, Rüppell's Parrot, Schalow's Turaco, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Pel's Fishing Owl, Bradfield's Swift, Violet Wood-Hoopoe, Monteiro's Hornbill, White-tailed Shrike, Swamp Boubou, Carp's Tit, Dune Lark, Yellow-throated Leaf-Love, Rockrunner, Black-faced and Bare-cheeked Babblers, Herero Chat, Chestnut Weaver and Brown Firefinch.

**Photo Acknowledgements:** Thanks to Bill and Charlotte Byers for the photographs in this report.



*Above, clockwise from top left: Southern Ground Hornbill, Dune Lark, Wild Dogs & Yellow-throated Leaf-Love.*

## Trip Breakdown

### Day 1: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Windhoek

The group of eight travelers arrived on two flights and by 12:30pm we left the airport for the 30-minute drive to Windhoek. After lunch it was time to settle into our rooms at Arebbusch Lodge situated in the south of town. At 16:00 we drove down to Avis dam where Rock Martins flitted overhead and along the dam wall. Crimson-breasted Shrike, Familiar Chat, Pririt Batis, Scaly-feathered Finch, Black-chested Prinia and Red-chested Cuckoo were seen as well as Acacia Pied Barbet. It wasn't long before a thunderstorm started moving in and we did a quick walk back to the vehicles. On the way back we checked on a recent Bat Hawk sighting but as soon as we stopped the rain came down heavily and we had to move on. Arriving back at Arebbusch a flying-termites eruption attracted Wattled Starling, Southern Red Bishop, Black-throated Canary and Familiar Chat. The rain persisted and we retreated to our rooms before dinner.

**Route:** Arrival, Windhoek. Visit Avis dam.

**Weather:** Clear skies, 27°C. Afternoon thunderstorm.

**Birds seen:** 43

**Bird of the day:** Crimson-breasted Shrike

### Day 2: Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Namibgrens

Our morning started at 6:30 with a walk on the property at Arebbusch. The birds were out in force after the previous night's rain. Crimson-breasted Shrike, Common Scimitarbill, Green-winged Pytilia, Spotted Flycatcher, Paradise Flycatcher, Red-backed Shrike, White-backed Mousebird, Marico Sunbird, Bradfield's Swift and many others were seen. After a buffet breakfast we headed for the Daan Viljoen Nature Reserve but first took a detour via the Windhoek waterworks. Here we found African Shelduck, Black-crowned Nightheron, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Diederik Cuckoo, Marsh Warbler, White-winged Tern, African Swamphen and Darter, just to name a few. On route to the reserve we saw a European Honey Buzzard perched. Once we entered the nature reserve Violet-eared Waxbill, Monteiro's Hornbill, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Lilac-breasted Roller and Burnt-necked Eremomela, Alpine Swifts as well as several mammals like Blue Wildebeest, Oryx and Hartman's Zebra. Lunch was back in town before we headed south to Namibgrens on a very wet gravel road. As we drove away from Windhoek and the thunderstorm we had good sightings of Kori Bustard, Pale-chanting Goshawk, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Lesser Grey Shrike, Northern Black Korhaan and Lark-like Bunting. Animals seen were Black-backed Jackal, Caracal and Springbok. We arrived at Namibgrens at 18:00 and had time to freshen up before dinner. Dinner was a scrumptious home-cooked meal and dessert in the main farmhouse.

**Route:** Windhoek to Namibgrens

**Weather:** Fair weather in the morning, thunderstorm, in the afternoon

**Birds seen:** 110

**Bird of the day:** Monteiro's Hornbill

### Day 3: Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Swakopmund

We had an early start before sunrise and drove down to Spreetshoogte to see the sun rise over the incredible view down the pass into the vast barren flats. Our search for Herero Chat and other species were hampered by a cold howling wind which made it difficult to keep our binoculars steady and impossible to hear any birds. The coffee warmed us up as we enjoyed the view. A few birds showed on the drive back such as Sabota Lark, Bokmakierie, Karoo Scrub-robin and Dusky Sunbird. After breakfast at Namibgrens we did a short walk and got Rosy-faced Lovebird, Bradfield's Swift and Great Sparrow. On route to Walvisbay we had good sightings of Verreaux Eagle, Ludwig's Bustard (seen by Rosemary), Greater Kestrel as well as Greater Kudu, Gemsbok and Springbok. A detour to Solitare to pick up lunch snacks got us Ground Squirrel, Sociable Weaver and Pale-winged Starling. We made our lunch stop in the Gaub pass before crossing the vast barren flats as we drove east towards the ocean. The road improved as well as the temperature. As we arrived in Walvisbay late afternoon we drove directly to the lagoon which gave us some time to look at shorebirds. Greater Flamingo, Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Barred-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Common Tern and many Kelp and Hartlaub Gulls were seen. Just before we left the highlight of the day was seen when John spotted the Great Knot, almost to the spot where it was reported two weeks ago, a first report for Namibia. A half an

hour drive took us to Swakopmund and our accommodation where we were welcomed before freshening up for dinner at a beach restaurant.

**Route:** Namibgrens, Walvisbay, Swakopmund

**Weather:** Cool and windy in the morning, hot midday with light rain and cool in the afternoon

**Birds seen:** 71

**Bird of the day:** Great Knot

#### **Day 4: Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Swakopmund**

An early start at 6:15 took us past Walvisbay towards the first sand dunes east of town. After a cup of coffee and a rusk we walked a short distance across the dry Kuiseb River bed before hearing and then finding the Dune Lark perched on top of a bush on a dune. All of us got clear sightings and the bird did a circular display flight overhead. The weather was perfect. Back in Walvisbay we had breakfast before visiting the salt works along the esplanade and had great sightings of Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Little Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Chestnut-banded Plover, White-fronted Plover, Caspian-, Sandwich-, Large-crested- and Common Tern as well as Curlew Sandpiper and Cape Teal. Back in town along the lagoon three African Oystercatchers was seen on a sandbank with many Common Terns and Grey Plover. A drink on the pier gave us time to view Great White Pelicans and Cape Fur Seals as well as Cape Cormorant. Two brave birders continued on birding the coast while the rest of us had an hour rest at our accommodation in Swakopmund. Energized we took our last drive for the day north of town searching for Gray's Lark. They were very skittish but we managed to get some pics in the end. Tractrac Chat was nowhere to be found but we did manage to get White-breasted Cormorant, Cape Cormorant, a huge fly-by of Greater Flamingoes and two Damara Terns.

**Route:** Walvisbay, Rooibank, Swakopmund

**Weather:** Warm and fair

**Birds seen:** 55

**Bird of the day:** Dune Lark

#### **Day 5 & 6: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Erongo**

With packed breakfasts and a coffee basket we left Swakop at 6:30 and drove north-east out of town before heading north towards Spitzkoppe. Along the way we saw Tractrac Chat and several pairs of Rüppel's Korakaans. At Spitzkoppe we were extremely lucky as the Herero Chat was calling close by to where we parked and the guide found the bird within 10 minutes. On our drive to the Bushman paintings Monteiro's Hornbill and White-tailed Shrike showed. It took us around 1,5 hours to Erongo Wilderness Lodge. Around 15km before Omaruru we spotted a cloud of raptors circling above the road. As we got closer we saw that they were Yellow-billed Kites. From here and for the next 10 km thousands of kites were seen hawking what we believe were termites. A flock of Abdim's Storks were mixed into one of the flocks of kites. A spectacular sight! Arriving at Erongo we settled in our rooms before doing a birding walk at five o'clock. Some of the group decided to have a rest as it was 36°C in the shade. We managed to see a few birds but nothing new. From 18:30 most of us joined the lodge guide for a walk up a rocky outcrop with great views from the top. The sun set over the beautiful landscape as we sipped on Windhoek Lager and Gin and tonics. Eurasian Hobbies flew overhead and some of us managed to see Eurasian Golden Oriole, Cape- and Cinnamon-breasted Buntings as well as a Greater Spotted Cuckoo which flew by. Dinner was outside under a starry sky. Three Freckled Nightjars kept us entertained swooping over our heads hawking insect attracted by the spot light. On our full day at Erongo we went for a walk before dawn to listen for the calls of Hartlaub's Spurfowl. As soon as we heard the call we made our way up a steep trail until we managed to get views of two pairs. Three Damara Rockrunners were seen before we retraced our step downhill and back to the camp. Over breakfast Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Carp's Tit, Great Sparrow, Green-winged Pytilia and Dusky Sunbird visited the bird bath near the dining area. As it was getting warmer already we decided to have a resting day since we have been going non-stop each day up until now. We met again over lunch to catch up on our bird lists. At around 6pm those that wished to do so went to Omaruru in search of Rüppel's Parrot. On the way we saw White-tailed Shrike and Damara Red-billed Hornbill. At Omaruru we caught glimpses of two Parrots flying past then perched shortly before flying onwards. Purple Roller, Southern Pied Babbler and Ovambo Sparrowhawk were also seen.

**Route:** Swakopmund, Spitzkoppe, Erongo  
**Weather:** Warm, fair  
**Birds seen:** 48 / 47  
**Bird of the day:** 13<sup>th</sup> Herero Chat, 14<sup>th</sup> Hartlaub's Spurfowl

### **Day 7: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Okaukuejo**

An early morning walk at Erongo Wilderness Lodge gave us a better sight of Hartlaub's Spurfowl. Just outside the conservancy where the Omaruru River passes we went for a walk in the dry riverbed. Paradise Flycatchers were seen pestering a Pearl-spotted Owlet. Two Little Sparrowhawks flew across the river while a White-browed Scrub-robin was calling in the scrubs. As we arrived back at the lodge parking several Carp's Tits were seen as well as another Rockrunner and Cape Bunting. Breakfast back at the lodge was very entertaining as Lovebirds, Weavers, Sparrows, Starlings and Dassie Rat were visiting the bird bath on the rocks near our breakfast table. We left around 9am to Otjiwarongo. Along the road we saw Martial Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Marabou Stork, Common Buzzard and Abdim's Stork. At the town's waterworks we found Hottentot Teal, African Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, African Shelduck and Ruff. For lunch we stopped in Outjo before continuing to Etosha via Anderson gate. Our afternoon drive to camp got us Capped Wheatear, Greater Painted-snipe, Kori Bustard, several Lanner Falcons, Spike-healed and Pink-billed Larks, Northern Black Korhaan and Cape Crow to name a few birds while mammals seen were Burchell's Zebra, Angola Giraffe, Black-face Impala, Springbok, Gemsbok and Blue Wildebeest. Dinner was at seven where after a quick visit to the lit waterhole rewarded with two Barn Owls flying up and down the viewing area.

**Route:** Erongo, Okaukuejo  
**Weather:** Warm, fair  
**Birds seen:** 103  
**Bird of the day:** Greater Painted-snipe

### **Day 8: Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Halali**

Our morning drive took us a few kilometers east, backtracking part of the road we did yesterday. Three male lions were resting only a few meters from the road and the morning sun lit up their mane beautifully from the back. Further on we saw Pink-billed Lark, Red-capped Lark and more Capped Wheatears as well as the very light sub-species of Sabota Lark. A Cape Fox posed a couple of minutes for photographs next to the road before trotting off. Back at camp and after breakfast we did a walk in camp where Sociable Weavers, Purple Roller, African Hoopoe, Pied Crows, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Shikra and Brubru was seen and photographed. A Southern White-crowned Shrike was pulling a Mopani Moth apart on a branch a few feet from us and Cape Ground Squirrels were feeding on the lawn around the swimming pool. Our late morning drive took us north to Okondekwa. Double-banded Courser, Spike-heeled Lark, Grey- and Chestnut-backed Sparrowlarks, Ant-eating Chat, Bateleur, Lappet-faced Vulture, Banded Martin and Greater Kestrel showed well. Lunch was back at camp before driving east to Halali. It was an eventful afternoon with sightings of Blue Crane, Red-necked Falcon, Secretarybird, Red-headed Finches, Eastern Clapper Lark, Desert Cisticola, Violet-eared Waxbill and European Bee-eaters. We arrived at 18:30 at Halali. A Honeybadger passed close by the restaurant where we were having dinner and some of the group followed it and witnessed his garbage can problem-solving abilities.

**Route:** Okaukuejo to Halali  
**Weather:** Warm, fair  
**Birds seen:** 34  
**Bird of the day:** Red-necked Falcon

### **Day 9: Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Namutoni**

On our morning walk in camp, before breakfast, we got Violet Woodhoopoe, close-up views of a Shikra, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Damara Red-billed Hornbill and scores of Helmeted Guineafowl at the waterhole. After breakfast we packed our bags and drove first a bit west before retracing our tracks and then continuing west to Namutoni camp. Everyone enjoyed the vast views of the Etosha pans. We had a quick stop to appreciate the expanse and mirage of the pans. The drive was quiet but we did manage to see Double-banded Courser, Temminck's Courser, Secretarybird and Plain-backed Pipit. A Cheetah was having a rest in the shade and we

all had a good view of him before he flopped his head down for a sleep. We reached Namutoni by 13:00 and had a light lunch outside at the restaurant under the shade of Acacia trees. An hour or two later and after a well-deserved rest we left camp at 17:00. A Red-necked Falcon posed beautifully close to the road. Gemsbok were grazing fresh green grass. Two Elephant bulls covered in white mud walked past and a herd of giraffes created a photographic opportunity as they marched in a line across the pan. A Cheetah was spotted walking 300m away down at the Fischer's Pan. He suddenly changed direction and walked almost straight towards us. Very close to the road he got on top of a termite mound and everyone had the most incredible views as he slowly turned to survey the area for prey. Elated from the Cheetah sighting we returned to camp but not before a black-morph Ovambo Sparrowhawk was sighted a kilometer before we turned into camp at 19:30. Dinner was a buffet. Before we retired to our chalets we did the bird list.

**Route:** Halali to Namutoni

**Weather:** Warm, fair

**Birds seen:** 74

**Bird of the day:** Bare-cheeked Babbler

### **Day 10: Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Namutoni**

An early start to the day with breakfast at 6:15am. Driving north towards the Andoni Plains a male Lion crossed the road. Looking at his scarred face we concluded he was an interloper. Birds seen included Bateleur, European Honey Buzzard, a pair of Secretarybirds, African Spoonbill, Saddle-billed Stork, Marabou Stork, Dusk Lark, Lesser Jacana, Greater Painted-snipe and scores of Lesser Flamingos where the road crossed Fischer's pan to the north of camp. Our tally for Kori Bustards since we entered Etosha reached 98. We stopped on the edge of the Andoni Plains to have coffee and discovered lion and elephant tracks on the short road to the picnic site which had some having a good look around before getting out of the car. Lunch was in camp with a rest in the afternoon before driving out at 17:00. A Greater Painted-snipe stood feeding in a puddle next to the road. Elephants covered in the white-washed coloured mud from the pans grazed a distance away. Kalahari Scrub-robin, Ovambo Sparrowhawks, Scaly-feathered Weaver and a pair of Blue Cranes with two tiny chicks were some of the birds we saw on the drive. After dinner we visited the lit waterhole where a Vereaux's Eagle Owl was hunting on the ground around the waterhole before perching on a dead log in clear view. Another great day in Etosha!

**Route:** Numatoni

**Weather:** Warm, fair, slight breeze

**Birds seen:** 108

**Bird of the day:** Dusky Lark

### **Day 11: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Rundu**

The day was clear with open skies as we did our early morning walk in camp. An Icterine Warbler, Southern Pied Babbler and Black-backed Puffback were some species seen. Driving to the gate a Great Spotted Cuckoo and Jacobin's Cuckoo were feeding on hairy caterpillars in the same Acacia tree. We stopped at Tsumeb for lunch snacks and carried on towards Rundu stopping at a roadside picnic site for lunch. A Martial Eagle perched in a village on a fence pole and gave us great views and time for "birds in flight" photography as it took off sideways. Arriving at Rundu and Kaisosi River Lodge we had an hour break and then went out to bird the Rundu waterworks and wetland. African Snipe, African Crake, Little Bee-eaters, Greater Painted-snipe, Lesser Moorhen, Western Osprey, Long-toed Lapwing, several Marsh Owls and flocks of White-Faced Whistling Ducks, Hottentot Teal and Red-billed Teal were seen. A Red-footed Kestrel flew overhead as well as a Fulvous Duck and African Fish Eagle. A highlight for the guides were seeing a Red-necked Buzzard. A buffet dinner awaited us at the lodge and we ended the day completing our bird list in the lounge area.

**Route:** Numatoni to Rundu

**Weather:** Warm, fair

**Birds seen:** 112

**Bird of the day:** Marsh Owl

### **Day 12: Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Shakawe**

We left before sunrise to drive back through Rundu to a flooded area arriving there just after sunrise. At first we only got Long-toed Lapwing, African Quail Finch and Open-billed Stork as the area was only recently flooded and very few water-lilies were on the pans but soon we got species like Dwarf Bittern, Pygmy Goose, Lesser Jacana and Rufous-bellied Heron. As some of the group didn't join us on the early birding trip we met them back over breakfast at the lodge. Soon after we packed the vehicles and left for Shakawe. Making two birding stops on the road we managed to get Tinkling Cisticola due to John's excellent hearing and Lizard Buzzard, Pale Flycatcher and Southern Black Tit. One vehicle got stuck in sand and everyone joined in to push it out to firmer ground with much huffing and puffing in the midday heat. Vehicles were filled up in Divundu as we turned south to the Botswana border. A couple of Elephants, Tsessebe and Common Impala were seen along the main road through Mahango Game Reserve. The border crossing into Botswana was uneventful with only one other tourist at the post. Many Carmine Bee-eater, Magpie Shrikes and Lilac-breasted Rollers lined the electricity lines as we entered Shakawe. We were all a bit drained after a long hot day and chose to take a rest before dinner which was at 7:30 at Drotsky Cabins.

**Route:** Rundu to Shakawe

**Weather:** Warm, fair

**Birds seen:** 95

**Bird of the day:** Dwarf Bittern

### **Day 13: Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018, Shakawe**

On our full day we first had breakfast and then did a 3 hour boat trip on the Okavango River. Little-, Blue-cheeked and White-fronted Bee-eaters were hawking insects from the overhanging reeds. Malachite- and Pied Kingfishers were photographed on several occasions. Chirping Cisticola, Long-toed Lapwing, African Jacana, Lesser Jacana and Common Moorhen were seen all along the channels. Clear views of a pair of White-backed Night Herons as well as a pair of Pel's Fishing Owls were the highlights of the morning. The skipper turned the boat downstream and back to the lodge. Along the way a massive crocodile, a hippo and two African Fish Eagles were seen. Lunch was in Shakawe town. In the late afternoon a birding stroll to the lodge's campsite was at first quiet, when we reached the campsite we got Arrow-marked Babblers, Hartlaub's Babblers, White-browed Robin-chat, Green Pigeon, Swamp Boubou and Black Crake. The mozzies were out in full force and it was a 'swatting and slapping' birding walk to the campsite. Dinner was a buffet at the lodge. We retired to our room at around nine with a very cloudy sky and thunder rumbling in a distance.

**Route:** Shakawe

**Weather:** Warm, cloudy in afternoon

**Birds seen:** 89

**Bird of the day:** Pel's Fishing Owl

### **Day 14: Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018, Divundu**

As we woke up to a rainy morning we had to cancel the boat trip and opt for a slow roadside-birding drive to Divundu. Before crossing the border a stop near the river delivered Black Cuckoo, Pygmy Goose, Squacco Heron, Coppery-tailed Coucal and African Mourning Dove. After crossing the border back into Namibia we did a slow drive through Mahango on the main road. A pair of African Cuckoo Hawks with a juvenile were hunting, dropping occasionally down in the long grass. Tsetsebe, Impala, Giraffe and Zebra crossed the road. Arriving at Ndhovu Lodge via a very wet entrance road the workers pointed out a pair of Wood Owls roosting in a tree on the grounds. We manage to see their two juvenile chicks the following day as well. At 15:00 we drove into Mahango Game Reserve. Three sightings of Wattled Crane, Dwarf Bittern, Black Heron, Carmine Bee-eaters, African Fish Eagle and Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters were some of the species seen. Dinner was back at the lodge.

**Route:** Shakawe to Divundu

**Weather:** Warm, cloudy in afternoon

**Birds seen:** 140

**Bird of the day:** Wattled Crane

### **Day 15: Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018, Katima Mulilo**

Birding walk first thing in the morning around the flooded grasslands around camp. Laupula Cisticola, Greater Painted Snipe, Wattled Crane, Open-billed Stork, Meyer's Parrot and African Hoopoe showed well. A cooked breakfast got us ready for the long drive to Katima. Bradfield's Hornbill, Bateleur, Tawny Eagle and Shrika were seen on the way. The Protea Hotel provided us with a light lunch and we continue to the Zambezi floodplains and our lodge. We were picked up by boat at a camp and taken downstream arriving at 15:00 at the lodge which gave us an hour to unpack and settle in as the birding boat trip left at 16:00. A very relaxed drift upstream gave us views of White-crowned Lapwing, Allen's Gallinule, Lesser Jacana and Water Thick-knee as well as Nile Crocodile and a Hippo. Downstream took us through some flooded vegetation, providing Southern Red Bishop, Slaty Egret and a heronry of Cattle Egrets. We had time to freshen up before dinner. A splendid day.

**Route:** Divundu to Katima Mulilo

**Weather:** Cool to warm, intermitted rain, cloudy in afternoon

**Birds seen:** 102

**Bird of the day:** Slaty Egret

### **Day 16: Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Katima Mulilo**

A later than usual start with breakfast at 7:00 and a boat trip at 8:30 due to rain. Hippos, Malachite Kingfisher and Lesser Jacanas in good light close to the boat. A male African Jacana picked up his chick under his wing and ran across the water lilies to everyone's delight. Some of the group decided to return to the camp while the 'adventurous five' dared driving the muddy road to town where they found Yellow-throated Leavelove, Pygmy Kingfisher, Village Indigobird, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Cardinal Woodpecker and Wood Owl. A short drive down a dirt road just outside town got us Ret'z Helmeted Shrike, Green Woodhoopoe, Amethyst Sunbird, Bennet's Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Petronia and Cut-throat Finch. The rain was rolling in and we headed back to camp. As we jumped on the boat the rain came down heavily and we had to go slow until it lifted before making it back to the lodge. The afternoon walk around the lodge was cancelled as the area was now muddy and wet. Dinner was at seven before we headed back to our rooms after a wet and wonderful day on the Zambezi.

**Route:** Katima Mulilo

**Weather:** Cool to warm, intermitted rain

**Birds seen:** 113

**Bird of the day:** Yellow-throated Leaflove

### **Day 17: Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Victoria Falls**

It was raining as we woke up. It calmed to a drizzle over breakfast and we left soon after breakfast on our boat transfers from the lodge to the camp where our vehicles were parked. As the drizzle became stronger again we hunkered down and didn't see much. The drive back to the tar road was a slippery business but we managed to make it through. A nearby side road got us Grey-headed Kingfisher and African Crake, which only the birders in one vehicle saw. The drive to the Botswana border post took 45 minutes with some heavy intermitted rain. Crossing the border didn't take too long and a herd of Elephants were feeding just beyond the border. As we drove through Chobe Game Reserve a Wild Dog chased a young Kudu across the road. We stopped and heard the Kudu calling knowing the Wild Dog must have taken it down. Soon the bloodied Wild Dog came out of the bush and started howling in order to call the rest of the pack. Another six dogs came running down the road and greeted the blood covered dog before he lead them to the kill where they proceeded to feed on the Kudu. A very exciting and rare sighting taken in consideration the vast areas these dogs roam covers on their hunts. In Kasane we had lunch at a lodge where Collared Palm-thrush regularly occurs. To our surprise a bird was inside the restaurant and there was no need to search for it. The transfer company met us at the Kasane airport and drove us to the Zimbabwe border where we were met by five warthogs as we drove into the border post. With visas done the 45 minutes' drive to Victoria Falls was eventful with a herd of African Buffalo seen and several bull Elephants crossing the road, one even put up a threatening display. Two families of Ground Hornbills showed nicely and a Brown Snake Eagle perched on a dead tree. Arriving at the lodge at 16:00 we settled in and had some time to relax before dinner with views over the waterhole where Marabou Storks were standing around the water.

**Route:** Katima Mulilo to Victoria Falls  
**Weather:** Cool to warm, intermitted rain  
**Birds seen:** 56  
**Bird of the day:** Ground Hornbill

**Day 18: Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Victoria Falls**

It was an early start at 5:45am when we were picked up at the lodge and transferred down to the river for a breakfast and birding boat trip. As the overcast weather slowly lifted it became light enough to do birding. African Finfoot, Trumpeter Hornbill, Red-faced Cisticola, Grey-headed Parrot, White-browed Coucal and other waterbirds were seen over coffee, croissants, yoghurt and muesli which had us going back and forth between the breakfast table and the front of the boat. We were thankful that the rain held back for the rest of the morning allowing some to visit the craft market in town and others to attend the vulture feeding spectacle at the lodge at 13:00. Mid-afternoon we set off down to the Victoria Falls. The Zambezi was at its peak and roaring down into the gorge. The spray from the cascading water was blown high into the sky and drenched anyone coming near the edge of the gorge. We enjoyed the awesome views whenever possible through the mist. To make things more interesting it started raining but we still had a great time admiring the shear width and breadth of the falls. Returning to the lodge hot showers and drinks revived us from the cold soaked clothes and shoes. Dinner was at the boma. The buffet was a spread of salads, home-baked breads, a variety of game meats cooked over open fire and many desserts to choose from while traditional dancers entertained us. The evening ended with an interactive drum show which we all enjoyed.

**Route:** Victoria Falls  
**Weather:** Cool to warm, intermitted rain  
**Birds seen:** 81  
**Bird of the day:** African Finfoot

**Day 19: Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Departure**

A last birding walk on the lodge grounds before breakfast was joined by some of the group while the rest met us at 8:30 over breakfast. Purple-banded Sunbird, Red-headed Weaver, Bearded Scrub-robin, Retz's and White-crested Helmeted Shrikes, African Goshawk and African Golden Oriole were seen. The lodge transferred us to the airport at 10:30am for our flight to Johannesburg where we said our farewells after a very enjoyable trip.

**Route:** Victoria Falls to Johannesburg  
**Weather:** Cool to warm, intermitted rain  
**Birds seen:** 34  
**Bird of the day:** African Goshawk



*Above: on the way to Spitzkoppe.*