

Namibia

Elements of Eden

A Greentours Trip Report

9th November to 25th November 2007

Led by Steve Braine and Phil Benstead

Trip report written by Phil Benstead

Day 1 Friday 9th November departure

We all gathered at Gatwick in the evening for our overnight flight. The flight left on time and most of us slept through the best part of it.

Day 2 Saturday 10th November arrival and the sewage farm

We awoke somewhat bleary-eyed for breakfast on the plane and did not have to wait long before we landed at Windhoek airport. Walking along the tarmac to Arrivals, we noted a few South African cliff-swallows – the only ones of the trip. Picking up our bags we headed out into Namibia and met up with Steve. After a lengthy wait whilst we all changed money we were on our way to our hotel in the town centre. Our first Cape glossy starlings and lappet-faced vultures were spotted. The airport is the only flat bit of ground for miles and is about 40km out of town. We soon covered the ground though, taking in the rolling landscape of red hills and scarps covered in acacia scrub en route. We quickly settle into our rooms in the hotel and head out for lunch and a spot of birding. Lunch is a lengthy affair but it is good to relax in the shade. Citrus butterflies occasionally fly through the garden. Afterwards we head for the sewage farm.

The sewage farm is full of interesting birds. We spot many waders including the stately blacksmith plover, the curious three-banded plover and a few more familiar birds such as common and wood sandpiper and the diminutive little stint. A huge African fish-eagle perches in a nearby tree. A Gabar goshawk flies through with two fork-tailed drongos in hot pursuit. On the ponds we see large numbers of red-billed teal and smaller numbers of South African shelduck, little grebe and red-knobbed coot. A green-backed heron flies past and searching the pondside trees reveals a number of black-crowned night herons. All around we hear the calls of recently arrived European bee-eaters and African marsh warblers chunter on the reedbeds. It is not all birds though; we spot our first dragonflies including the impressive blue basker (*Urothemis edwardsii*) and the vagrant emperor (*Hemianax epiptiger*). Dragging ourselves away we head back to the hotel for an early dinner and some much-needed sleep. As we drive out of

the sewage compound we stop briefly to look at Namaqua dove (tiny), Cape wagtail and black-throated canary. Just before dinner we gather in the small but leafy garden and watch a succession of alpine and Bradfield's swifts zooming overhead – a nice end to the day.

Day 3 Sunday 11th November drive to Waterberg

A pleasant late start saw us all convening for a huge and tasty breakfast at 0730. Some of us were up and about before then and saw a few birds in the garden. Swifts were very evident overhead and we got good looks at the Bradfield's and also watched African palm, alpine, little and white-rumped. Not bad. White-browed sparrow-weavers buzzed over and our first grey go-away-bird sat up nicely amongst the white-backed mousebirds.

After breakfast we took to the bus and we drove to Waterberg. The four-hour journey was broken early on by a comfort break at a petrol station and whilst here we saw a cardinal woodpecker and some burnt-neck eromomelas. Driving on through miles upon miles of arrow-straight roads we watched the acacia scrub flash by. Our first chacma baboon and warthogs appeared by the roadside. Pylons and wires held a variety of raptors including our first black-breasted snake eagle. White-backed vultures soared out of their roosts as the day warmed up. A lone red hartebeest stood in the shade of a tree by the road. We stopped for nothing but knew we would have a chance to look at these animals further along the way. Evidence of the first rains of the season was evident, a small wild pomegranate was flowering yellow and a few Albucca lilies were popping up. Our first brown-veined white was sucked in through one of the windows and examined.

Pulling up at the reserve reception, Steve soon sorted out our rooms, whilst we watched an entertaining gang of banded mongooses and then we drove up the hill to quickly settle in before lunch. Outside the chalets loads of brown-veined whites were parked on the lawn and here we saw our first zebra (butterfly!) and black-bordered yellow. An African hawk-eagle swooped low overhead and Rob and Christine reported a yellow mongoose fossicking about at the back of their chalet. Lunch was a solid affair, the plate-sized schnitzels being especially impressive.

After lunch we split into two teams. One went with Phil by jeep up onto the plateau and the remainder stayed down below with Steve. Phil's team had a wonderful time with Linus the guide, who insisted we would see nothing and then showed us a succession of excellent mammals. Many mammals were seen from the three hides we visited that overlooked waterholes and salt licks. The roll call was impressive. We saw two black rhinos, one in the bush, which looked rather menacing as it faced us before charging off in the other direction. The other was watched at leisure as dusk fell from one of the hides. Various antelopes were spotted during the session starting with the diminutive steinbuck and progressing through kudu, roan, sable and finally the huge knee-clicking eland. Occasional jackals sauntered around and towering over all we saw about ten giraffe. We were still enjoying all this as dusk fell and the double-banded sandgrouse arrived to jostle with a good-sized herd of Cape buffalo at the drinking spot. The weird calls of the sandgrouse echoed in our ears as we trudged back to the jeep for the drive home. One new mammal was added to the list on the way back – a pair

of scrub hares. The night birds were out too and we had good views of (and heard) rufous-cheeked nightjar and saw an immature Verreaux's eagle owl very well too.

The others were slightly concerned about us when we got back so late, so we headed straight to dinner. They had done very well with the birds around the campsite and chalets and were looking forward to their big chance on the plateau tomorrow. After dinner we went for a short walk picking up a rather shy African porcupine before Phil's spotlight battery gave up the ghost. A great day.

Day 4 Monday 12th November Waterberg Plateau Park

This morning we took the short walk down to breakfast at 0630. En route we spotted more red-billed francolin, a pair of Rueppell's parrots feeding in a fruiting tree and more burnt-neck eromomela. Walking up the hill at the start of our attempt on the scarp saw us admiring a fine Kirk's dikdik. Steve looked about and found a twig, which this species had anointed with a waxy pheromone from its preorbital gland! We also found a bagworm larval case hanging in a tree.

The walk up to the base of the scarp was very good for butterflies but was fairly hard going. Most of us made it all the way round and were rewarded with views of a couple of scarce butterflies (*Acraea neboule* and the Michelle's blue). The bird people were pleased to see a fine rockrunner and get to hear its beautiful melodic song at close range. Hartlaub's francolin called in the distance. In amongst the jumble of rock numerous southern rock dassies (rock hyrax) were sunning themselves. Overhead cruised their arch-enemy the Verreaux's or black eagle. Walking back round to the chalets the heat became oppressive and things started to quieten down. We headed for the shade of our chalets for a lengthy siesta period, picking up a rather flighty group of violet wood-hoopoes on the way.

We went for a wander around the campsite and had good views of incubating crimson-breasted shrike and a singing Marico sunbird. What held our attention for longest though was the gang of banded mongooses that were alternately lazing on the lawn and energetically digging up scorpions and other delicacies. Heading back to the HQ area we eventually waved off the frustrated plateau team and we took the bus up the hill. We walked a short trail in the late afternoon, finally catching up with the male purple tip butterfly (we had seen the orange-tipped females earlier in the day – but they just look like male orange tips). We had prolonged views of the violet wood hoopoes feeding in a nearby tree and just as we were about to turn for home found a close pearl-spotted owlet that demanded some photographic time.

Over dinner we learnt that the plateau team had raced up to a waterhole and staked it out. Over time a succession of mammals visited and they succeeded in seeing most of the stuff that the previous team had recorded. The missing mammal was giraffe and a highlight for them was a black rhino female with a very small youngster. They also got views of a crested francolin. Phil was disappointed to discover his battery was dead but this did not stop the team finding their own South African galago on their way back up the hill from dinner. We had superb views of this highly vocal individual as it bounced around from branch to branch in nearby trees.

Day 5 Tuesday 13th November transfer to Halali (Etosha)

A huge travel day today, so we hit the breakfast buffet early and headed off out of the park. After one hour we stopped at Otjiwarongo for essential supplies. Margaret tracked down her favourite 'Fruit fancies' in the nearby supermarket and these together with biltong fortified us through the long journey. Kilometre after kilometre on straight roads through acacia scrub followed. After we left Waterberg the bird and mammal activity dropped away. After a while though we noticed that the habitat was getting drier and then we climbed over a scarp and we noticed a complete change of geology and vegetation. The swollen-trunked moringa trees were immediately different from anything we had seen previously. Termite hills went from a deep lateritic red colour to almost white. We made a pit stop at Tsumeb briefly and then continued on. We finally arrived at Mokuti Lodge (just outside the Park gates) at 1 o'clock, in time for a pleasant light lunch. The gardens held some feral bontebok and looked very good for birds.

During lunch a succession of new birds presented themselves and Christine who was sitting in a prime location kept us up to date with the goings on. It did not take long before the bird we really all wanted to see arrived! The black-faced babbler was somewhat under-whelming for many but is a localised and quite scarce species. Other birds were more colourful and we had fantastic views of crimson-breasted shrike and our first brubru. A short walk around with Steve at the helm soon secured emerald-spotted wood-dove and good views of black-faced waxbill. Phil was pleased to find *Crocothemis sanguinolenta* on the ornamental pond, but had to dodge the random lawn sprinklers to get photos.

Entering the park, we quickly 'popped' our top and immediately saw the first of the many giraffes that live in Etosha. Although under a slight time constraint – we had to get to Halali by dusk – we still had plenty of time to visit a number of waterholes and stop whenever we saw something good. Steve took us to a top spot for blue crane and sure enough there were a fine pair in residence, although the water did not look like it would last much longer. At all the waterholes we had to familiarise ourselves with a host of new birds. The violet-eared waxbills went down well. Cape sparrow was appreciated but the subtle lark-like bunting received fairly short shrift. Larks appeared, first up was red-capped lark, then we found a group of Stark's larks and finally as mopane started to figure in the scrubby woodland we found our first Sabota larks.

Mammals were the stars though, at each waterhole we watched a variety of species. Giraffes drank alongside the stately kori bustard. Black-faced impala and springbok drank side by side allowing comparison. Our first Burchell's zebra appeared and were to be common from here on in. Roadside sightings provided us with at least five spotted hyena and just before Halali we stopped for four lions relaxing under some trees. Superb and a great introduction to the park. As we settled in we all looked forward to dinner and another five days in Etosha.

After dinner we headed to the nearby waterhole and had great views of two black rhino, another spotted hyena and a very good Verreaux's eagle owl. Linda and Chris stayed up till past eleven and were rewarded with a large group of noisy elephants.

Day 6 Wednesday 14th November Halali area (Etosha)

A 0530 breakfast was a shock but ensured that we were all in the bus and waiting patiently for the gate to open at six. We headed straight to Goias waterhole and sat there watching animals come and go for two and a half hours. A good selection of ungulates drifted in over the time we were there. Large numbers of zebra, wildebeest, black-faced impala and springbok were evident. Birds were legion. Several yellow canaries added colour. Amongst the commoner grey-backed sparrow-larks was the occasional chestnut-backed sparrow-lark. Lark-like buntings were simply everywhere and small bushes were draped with small flocks of Cape sparrow, great sparrow or red-billed quelea. A cinnamon-chested bunting showed occasionally and a pair of Cape teal were our first too. With the sun just reaching the yard-arm we started to hear the bubbling call of the first incoming Namaqua sandgrouse. At the peak of the rush-hour we had small flocks of 15-20 around the pool at any one time. Excellent stuff. A pair of Gabar goshawks hunted around us, and one of them caught and ate a hapless lark-like bunting in front of us.

Moving on we drove down into the dry lake bed to look at the grim looking salt-pan desert, totally devoid of life. The pan fills shallowly on only rare occasions, although low-lying parts of it to the north and east usually have water on an annual basis. We stopped at a group of lappet-faced vulture, probably on a cheetah kill. White-crowned shrikes sat up nicely for us and we got great views of the drab little desert cisticola. Before we knew it though it was time to return for lunch. Steve found us a fantastic white-faced scops-owl just near the restaurant, which quickly became the most photographed bird of the trip. A classic. Snoozing in the midday heat nearby were more white-crowned shrike and a Damara hornbill.

Most rested through the afternoon siesta before heading out in the bus for a cruise around a few waterholes. We aimed for Rietfontain an excellent waterhole, but kept having to stop for things. First up was a fine greater kestrel – all rufous bars and a fierce expression – sitting on top of some elephant dung and sallying out after prey. Next Gill spotted some superb Burchell's couriers and nearby we also found about ten Caspian plovers. Great stuff. Another stop for some photogenic zebras was quiet enough until Nicky spotted a superb agama (*Agama etoshae*) feeding near the track – endemic to the park no less and our first 'ice cream moment' of the trip. We all got great 'scope views of this little stunner. Hectic stuff and we must have driven all of five kilometres!

Driving to the waterhole we only had short time to enjoy it but found plenty of new things. Very little came into drink but the waterhole was buzzing with activity. Steve spotted a surprise grey plover, hidden away. Our first Hottentot teal was a hit. Basking on rocks scattered around the pool were our first marsh terrapins. A black-headed heron and a single cattle egret looked out of place. Namaqua sandgrouse flew in to drink and looked spectacular in the evening sunlight. Driving back to beat the gate we stopped very briefly for a very close spotted hyena and again for our first yellow mongoose. The waterhole after dinner produced a fine old elephant – complete with leaky trunk that could be heard drinking from 500 metres (sounded like a giant frog on a moped). The Verreaux's eagle owl was again present and Steve pointed out the tiny Microptera bats hunting overhead. The garden produced another bushbaby and a number of scrub hares. Another great day.

Day 7 Thursday 15th November Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)

Today, armed with packed lunches we travelled east to search the Andoni Plains north of Namutoni. Driving continuously we lumbered on past various distractions until we got to the waterhole at Tsumkor. Here we found three bachelor lions loafing in the shade and causing great consternation to a variety of grazing animals as they tramped in to drink. New birds here included our first greenshank.

Taking the road north we reached the wide Andoni Plains and parked up by a small waterhole. Here we had eleven blue crane and it was standing room only at the waterhole, with many animals drinking straight from the artesian well pipe. In amongst the legs of the zebra, oryx and wildebeest we watched the Namaqua sandgrouse and various larks coming to drink. Larks here included the numerous red-capped, the occasional Stark's and (best of all) the tiny pink-billed. In nearby grassland Steve found us a single Eastern clapper lark, which we watched at close range as it picked around in the short, dry turf.

Driving on we searched the plain in vain for the elusive secretarybird but did turn up a few splendid magpie shrikes. Stopping at a toilet compound we all got out to 'stretch our legs'. Whilst here we greatly enjoyed being able to poke around and soon came up with a nice Ovambo tree skink and managed a few good birds too in the shape of an excellent acacia pied barbet and a briefly glimpsed African barred warbler. After this short break we drove around the pan edge still searching for secretarybird until we got back to Tsumkor for our lunch. There seemed little going on but we elected to stay and whilst we ate our lunch we watched the waders picking around the edge and a few oryx drinking quietly. Suddenly Steve announced the arrival of a secretarybird and sure enough one flew in and landed gracefully on unfeasibly long legs and proceeded to drink. What a result. Victory snatched from the jaws of defeat.

We stopped on the way home at Namutoni for fuel and took the chance to look around the white-washed fort and buy drinks and ice cream. Nearby the waterhole produced three more bachelor lions, stretched out in the shade. We stopped for some very close ostriches and were amazed to see 15-20 small stripy youngsters running around underneath the adults. At Goias (nearer to home) a number of interesting raptors were found. Two lanners were perched here giving great views and around the pool were two recently arrived steppe eagles, perched alongside the resident bataleur. From here we headed home arriving after a long day in the field with a little time to freshen up before walking down to the waterhole. Pre- and post-dinner sessions here produced wonderful views of drinking elephants and short-toed rock thrush and spotted dikkop. The lucky few were able to watch a pair of bin-raiding ratels (honey badger) as they did their rounds of the camp.

Day 8 Friday 16th November transfer to Okaukuejo (Etosha)

This morning saw us getting up for a late breakfast. Phil wandered around from dawn and watched the white-faced owls bathing under the sprinklers before going to roost. Nearby a superb pair of African scops-owls posed for photos low down in a tree. A saunter down the waterhole revealed no mammals but the first familiar chat and some nice short-toed rock

thrushes. After breakfast we left for the slow drive Okaukuejo. We stopped as usual at various waterholes, gathering information from other tourists. We spent some time trying to track down the elusive cheetah but sadly without success. We did chance upon a non-breeding group of teenage lions loafing next to the track. One of the young males looked ready to charge and was very twitchy.

Whilst searching for cheetah Steve called a halt and pointed out a dozing Cape fox at the entrance to his burrow. Superb 'scope views were obtained – a great mammal. Driving on we worked hard – finding last night's lion kill being finished off by a pack of jackals. A rufous-eared warbler was flushed from the side of the road but could not be relocated. At the last waterhole a huge, lone male elephant stood in the water and sprayed itself from head to toe in ashy grey alkaline mud – quite a sight.

Eventually we arrived at Okaukuejo and after a short wait we were installed in our rooms and off to lunch. A siesta, or waterhole watch, followed and then it was out into the field once more. Those watching the hot and dusty waterhole were rewarded with the first shaft-tailed whydahs of the trip and a host of other thirsty small birds. Steve took us out on a hot and dusty drive around Okaukuejo. The water holes were quiet but we found a few new things to look at. Common fiscal was seen well and became almost numerous. A huge martial eagle was found perched by the road and looked imperiously at us before flying away on broad wings. Not one but two Cape hares were located, sheltering from the sun under roadside bushes. Korhaans were everywhere and we got good views of both. The last waterhole produced an excellent second-year male pallid harrier – which sat on the edge of the artificial tank and dodged the jackals whilst drinking.

Dinner was followed by a stint at the waterhole which produced the by now normal elephants and rhinos. Large groups of double-banded sandgrouse came in to drink at sunset.

Day 9 Saturday 17th November Okandeka (Etosha)

A six o'clock breakfast was a late start for us after the past few days. Leaving at 0630 we headed north to Okandeka. The viewpoint at Wolfsnes had a single tree, which contained spotted flycatcher, red-backed shrike and willow warbler. A close secretarybird allowed us a prolonged photographic session with this incredible bird. We watched several attempts at stamping various creatures into submission, including an ambitious one on a Cape hare! The waterhole at Okandeka was heaving with small birds and the occasional late sandgrouse by the time we got there. The huge numbers of birds had attracted several birds of prey and we counted 7 lanner, a peregrine, a male pallid harrier and a pale chanting goshawk. Drinking from the waterhole itself was a superb female Ludwig's bustard. Nearby two female lions lounged under a tree that was full to the brim with red-headed finches. We stopped along the way for a number of yellow mongooses and also found a gang of banded mongooses. A good morning.

After lunch and a siesta we set out again towards Oliphantsbad. This time Steve was successful in pulling in a rufous-eared warbler, which sat up and gave fantastic views. A smart bird and worth the effort put in to finding it. Our next target was following up a sighting of a marsh owl

– one of the more elusive birds in Etosha. Steve unerringly found the tree but we could not find the bird. From the back of the bus Chris piped up that she could see a dead bird and, like a bad dream, it turned out to be the marsh owl face down in the dust. Presumably it had been hit by a vehicle in the night and succumbed during the heat of the day. The rest of our drive was rather quiet, we visited two waterholes to no effect. Rain clouds gathered and we had to shut up the bus briefly as light rain fell. The cloudscapes were much admired and photographed. The wet season looked imminent.

After dinner we looked at a fine flap-neck chameleon that Margaret had found in a tree near the swimming pool and then went on to look at some excellent thick-toed geckos.

Day 10 Sunday 18th November Okandeka and Okaukuejo area

After an early breakfast we wandered around the grounds for fifteen minutes and bagged a few new birds – ashy tit was elusive, as was a female golden oriole. Most caught up with chestnut-vented tit-babbler and brubru here. Taking to the bus we headed out to Okandeka to try and get there earlier than yesterday. We managed this as we failed to find any significant distractions along the way. The waterhole was bursting with life. Huge numbers of lark-like buntings were drifting in and out of the waterhole. Lanners hunted in packs, just five today, and at one point all could be watched feeding on individual, hapless buntings. A female pallid harrier cruised about. An opportunistic black-headed heron ate four buntings right in front of us. A quick jab then a thorough dunking to ease their one-way journey. It was chaos. After an hour large groups of sandgrouse starting flying in and their calls filled the air. Superb stuff and we spent plenty of time taking in this amazing spectacle. Travelling back to Okaukuejo we had a quick pit-stop before heading to the waterhole at Ombika. Things had quietened down by now though and we added little of note. The exception was a splendid immature martial eagle perched by the roadside, many photographs were taken before it drifted back out of range.

After lunch and a siesta many of us went for a short walk around the grounds searching for pygmy falcon. We found a recently occupied nest hole in the colony of a stack of sociable weavers but the bird remained elusive. We did get good views of many of the small bird species that inhabit the Okaukuejo compound. A ‘highlight’ was good views of the rather drab yellow-bellied eromomela (a bird that struggles to live up to its rather exciting name). The start of the walk was a bit dusty and windy and at one point it looked like it might rain but then things calmed down. The waterhole was very quiet, two distant tawny eagles and a single marsh terrapin were examined in detail through the ‘scope.

An after dinner stake-out at the waterhole produced white and black rhino (the former an introduction to the park) as well as spotted hyena and Verreaux’s eagle owl

Day 11 Monday 19th November transfer to Hobatere

Wow, what a day! Where to start? I want to shout “WE SAW A LEOPARD!” but better start at the beginning, I guess. We got up as usual for a six o’clock breakfast, having already loaded

our bags onto the bus. Breakfast over and water and snacks purchased we started on the bumpy 220 km journey. Any worries about this journey being hot, tedious and uncomfortable were soon dispelled. Our first stop was for a fine female pygmy falcon, the target of yesterday's afternoon walk - result. It was a very cool morning and this ensured plenty of mammal activity. A Cape fox loped along beside the bus and stopped to look at us. Next Steve spotted three male lions that were relaxing on a flat plain. They started walking in and Raymond swiftly positioned us for the best photo opportunities. They all filed past at well-spaced intervals passing just yards away. Fabulous. Four bat-eared foxes were spotted lounging around under roadside trees, although they soon ran off when confronted by an admiring bus-load of people.

We stopped briefly at a waterhole on the western limit of normal tourist traffic. Here we watched fascinated as a wily black-backed jackal caught bunting after bunting by leaping up onto the wall of the dam. He must have caught seven birds whilst we watched and of course all the victims were once again the numerous and hapless lark-like bunting. Also here we had good numbers of Burchell's sandgrouse – a new bird for most of us.

Driving on into the 'special permit' zone we kept seeing mammals. A pair of honey badgers or ratel slunk across the road and we got good but brief views from the bus. The best was to come though when Steve called another stop and pointed out the head of a female leopard poking out from a burrow in a termite mound. She obviously had small young in the burrow as she was reluctant to leave the area and we had absolutely superb views. After half an hour we dragged ourselves away and continued on our journey. Other notable sightings included our first mountain zebra (seen together with Burchell's at one waterhole) and a large herd of elephant. A huge, handsome male sable was an escapee from a nearby captive breeding facility but no less attractive for that. En route we stopped for a pit-stop at the defunct game processing factory inside the park, complete with a gantry big enough to hang a bull elephant on! Suitably refreshed we drove on eventually reaching Hobatere at about 2 o'clock in time for a late lunch.

After lunch Steve dropped us off at the nearby waterhole for a leisurely session. A small group of five lions had killed a kudu earlier but had then been driven off the kill by a large herd of elephants. As we arrived at Hobatere the elephants could be seen packing their trunks and heading off into the hills. We hoped therefore that the lions would come down again to feed whilst we watched patiently. As if this grisly tableau was not enough, during the hunt the lions had knocked another kudu into the waterhole and there it sat close to the corpse of its butchered comrade. Whether it was injured or not we could not tell, but it sat there chewing the cud and refusing to budge as the lions one by one trooped down out of the rocks and stared at it from close range. The group consisted of a fine black-maned male (XV), an adult female and their three cubs. The cubs amused themselves amongst the hordes of oryx and springbok before getting down to the business of feeding on the kudu. As a sand storm blew in the adults too began to feed and Steve came down again to pick us up for dinner. A great day but it was not over.

After dinner we headed out on a night drive searching for the elusive and much-wanted aardvaark. No sign of that little critter but we were not disappointed with the drive. First up was the first of many spring-hares. It stood grazing quietly until suddenly galvanised into action and bounding off like a mini-kangaroo. Great stuff. During the drive we had great views

of common genet and had a distant African wildcat and the quickest view of a spotted eagle owl. Not bad for starters and we all looked forward to the next night drive. Many of us slept fitfully overnight as the lions roared in the garden.

Day 12 Tuesday 20th November Hobatere

Dawn saw us gathering for tea and biscuits before driving out for a short walk up a rocky valley. Good to be walking again and birding was much easier as a result. We all caught up with Carp's tit and Margaret and Richard were pleased to catch up with short-toed rock thrush. The elusive Hartlaub's francolin remained just that but the walk was not without its highlights. Steve showed us the resurrection bush (*Myrothamnus flabellifolius*); a dry scrubby fragrant plant that looked dead but when immersed in water back at the lodge – it burst into life! We found some day geckos on the rock faces of the gullies. Phil fished for a relative of the trap door spider, eventually enticing it out into the open for all to see. Steve showed us our first white-tailed shrike and just as we were leaving found us an excellent little dassie rat sitting on a rock ledge. After the walk breakfast was very welcome. Vultures gathered overhead as we waited to go down to the hide overlooking the waterhole for a two hour session before lunch. This session was quiet because two lions were lying around.

After a fine lunch and a break we met up for afternoon tea. Just before we set out the rain poured down, 19mm in as many minutes. Dragonflies appeared from nowhere and Phil netted an evening skimmer (*Tholymis tillarga*) before the rain came down. Seeing rain on this scale was wonderful and exciting – we had seen so many distressed and thin animals we appreciated it all the more. Steve had promised exciting things if it rained and sure enough when we were able to get going on our afternoon drive we found this to be true. In the soaked sand of the dry riverbeds we watched frogs emerge in front of our very eyes. Giant millipedes appeared from nowhere. A marsh just half an hour old already had ovipositing globe skimmers flying over it! The lion cubs appeared, their soaked coats dark with rain and perfectly camouflaged against the wet earth. They mucked about and entertained us with their antics for some time. We drove slowly down to the tree house and here Steve and Martin pulled a superb African rock python from the pumphouse and showed it off to us. Driving back we checked out a nice Verreaux's eagle owl and when we got back to the lodge a superb *Anax tristis* was cruising about. Dinner was once again very pleasant – the food at Hobatere was voted the best of the trip.

The night drive failed yet again to produce the now mythical aardvaark but we did not mind as the consolation prize was a superb female leopard. We watched her for about two minutes at close range and it was wonderful. We also saw many more spring hares and had excellent views of common genet. Another good session. We wrapped it up by going down to the pool to photograph marbled rubber frogs – which were excellent.

Day 13 Wednesday 21st November transfer to Erongo via Welwitschia!

A long day could not be avoided if we wanted to get anywhere today! We said a sad farewell to Hobatere and Steve's family and employees. We really had enjoyed our stay. Driving off we

sat back and enjoyed some of the best scenery of the trip, constantly changing geology and habitat and some impressive massifs (including the imposing Brandberg mountain) were fascinating. Naturally we stopped for things along the way. Before lunch we bagged good views of black-chested snake-eagle, some excellent olive bee-eaters and our first klipspringer. Our main destination today, and our only real chance to stretch our legs was the Petrified Forest near Khorixas. There were plenty of Welwitschia along the road just before we got there and a pair of Rueppell's korhaan sheltering under a roadside bush. The team took a guided walk around the fossils and it was here that they had close encounters with the ancient proto-conifer, the famous Welwitschia. We took lunch here at a thatched shelter and enjoyed brief views of our first mountain wheatear before driving on again.

Kilometre after kilometre of dirt road unwound in front of us. We stopped near Uis to search for Herero chat but could not rustle one up. A fuel stop at Uis allowed some shopping opportunities in a frontier style supermarket – flour by the 25kg sack, poison and traps all nestling alongside the biscuits, nuts and ice creams that attracted our attention. We drove on past the huge tin mine and eventually after an epic bus ride reached the Erongo Wilderness Lodge our overnight accommodation. Nestled in amongst a pile of granite hills, it was a pleasant spot. As we settled in the rockrunners sang around the tents and rock dassies sat atop nearby rocks and stared implacably at us as if shocked to see how the neighbourhood was deteriorating.

Before dinner we chased a few freckled nightjars around the rocks and during dinner a superb porcupine visited us. We all went to bed tired after a long day and slept well in the cool air.

Day 14 Thursday 22nd November transfer to Walvis Bay

Our day started cold and early when we met up at six o'clock for a short walk before breakfast. Our target was the Hartlaub's francolin and we eventually found some calling on a distant ridge. Not good views but better than nothing. We walked up onto the side of the bare granite hill and hunted some more but the birds were determined to stay hidden. But we did find other species and got good views of the stunning white-tailed shrike and rockrunners were everywhere. Around the restaurant at breakfast we found green-winged pytilia and best of all a pair of Cape buntings. Rock dassies, dassie rats and even a western rock sengi (elephant shrew) were scampering about on the rocks. With great reluctance we got aboard the bus and left this idyllic spot.

The bus journey to Swakopmund took us back into the dry desert and onto the coast. We stopped once for a karoo chat and again to stretch our legs and hunt for reptiles. We found an excellent common Namib day gecko under a stone and it scurried about taking refuge under our shoes and proved rather difficult to photograph.

By the time we reached Swakopmund it was time for lunch and a wicked south-westerly wind was blowing. We had lunch at a hotel close to the beach, in the garden we found our first Orange River white-eyes and had good views of dusky sunbird. After we had eaten we nipped down to the nearby jetty to look at our first seabirds. Here we found four species of cormorant (yes four) and a selection of gulls and terns. Offshore a pomarine skua headed south. Heading

onwards we searched the dry desert near the saltworks and quickly found a small flock of Gray's lark. The saltworks was full of birds. The guano platforms groaned under the weight of cormorants and pelicans. Flamingos strutted about and we added greatly to the wader list. But it was time to get to the hotel and check in. Driving between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay we passed the incredible dunes, sand blew from the beach and over the road in front of us, it was not difficult to see how these monsters are created.

Checking in and getting settled we soon found ourselves walking the nearby esplanade in Walvis Bay. The wind was incredibly strong and cooling and we soon found ourselves wearing hats and coats despite the sun. The waders along the esplanade were plentiful and included white-fronted, grey and ringed plover, curlew sandpiper and whimbrel. Out in the bay thousands of terns foraged. Great place.

Day 15 Friday 23rd November Rooibank and Walvis Bay area

Today we headed out to the back of the dunes at Rooibank for what turned out to be quite a lengthy visit. Our target here was Namibia's only true endemic bird, the dune lark. It took us just half an hour to find the bird and after a skittish phase the birds eventually settled down to give very good views. Whilst here we also spent some time chasing reptiles. Desert lizards were everywhere but getting photographs of these sand racers was another thing. Tracks and trails revealed a great deal about the denizens of the dunes and we soon found ourselves identifying gerbil tracks and elephant shrew tracks. One track had us baffled, so we consulted Steve and we were informed that it was a burrowing skink trail. Finding a fresh trail Steve dived on it like a bird of prey and shovelling up a huge double handful of sand unearthed the beast itself. As the sand fell we could see the legless lizard tumbling to the ground and he was swiftly captured for a brief modelling session. Extraordinary.

That should have been the end of a short visit but turning the bus round we got spectacularly bogged in the sand. All our efforts to get the bus out only resulted in the bus getting deeper in the sand. After an hour we relaxed and called a big tow truck in to the rescue. Sheltering under a very spiny *Prosopis* that cast good shade we waited patiently. Unfortunately the truck went to the wrong place (!) and it was two hours before it found us. But eventually the big truck winched us out and we were on our way back to Walvis Bay for a late lunch.

After a great lunch in a German bakery/café we headed down the salt pans to see what we could find. On the way we stopped for a very photogenic band of Caspian terns perched on the pans right by the road. Other highlights included huge numbers of chestnut-banded plovers, nine red-necked phalaropes and a single marsh sandpiper. The huge numbers of Cape teal, avocet, black-winged stilt and curlew sandpiper were also notable. The pans were a great end to the day and we headed for home and a slap-up feed at the Raft restaurant, out in the lagoon. It was our last dinner together but we still had a long day ahead of us in the morrow and so retired at a sensible time.

Day 16 Saturday 24th November Walvis Bay and transfer to
Windhoek

The last morning dawned chilly and we wrapped up warm for our 7 o'clock boat ride with the Mola Mola men. We were soon installed on the boat and introduced to Eddy our guide/skipper. He took us out towards the mouth of the bay and we did not get far before our first visitor shot alongside and onto the ramp at the back of the boat. A sub-adult male Cape fur seal no less. We cleared the blankets from the central seating area and opened the gate at the back of the boat and in he came. The boat now became a floating petting zoo as this large but docile animal let us pat, poke and prod it. We all marvelled at the thick fur, silly ears and curious nails which emerged from halfway down the flippers.

Driving on with the seal in the deckhouse with Eddy we cruised along looking for cetaceans. We quickly found a pod of bottle-nosed dolphins and stayed with them for half an hour, occasionally speeding up to get them to ride in the wake of the boat. Excellent stuff. Cruising on we went to the seal colony at the bay mouth and here we had a huge surprise. Amongst the thriving colony of fur seals we found a huge female elephant seal. This individual has been visiting to moult for two months every year for the last few years and was a massive (literally) and unexpected addition to the mammal list. It totally dwarfed the surrounding fur seals. At the mouth we also bumped into some serious seabirds but sadly did not have time to go further out. Some sooty shearwaters flew close by and white-chinned petrels appeared in the distance.

Continuing on our circuit of the bay we watched various fishing boats unload their catches – including some huge yellow-finned tuna. We visited the guano platforms and finally ended up in the lee of a mole, in a graveyard of redundant fishing boats. Here the oysters and the sparkling wine was produced and we had breakfast. The oysters went down surprisingly well, but a gannet ate most of them. A short ride took us back to our waiting bus and the long journey to Gatwick airport and home began. The bus journey was broken by lunch and comfort breaks and after what seemed like an eternity we arrived at Windhoek. Here we dropped off Steve and bid our farewells and then headed out of town to the airport.

Day 17 Sunday 25th November arrival at Gatwick

Fly, fly, fly and more fly then we landed, said our goodbyes and headed off to our various destinations.

Systematic List Number 1 Mammals

The taxonomy and nomenclature is taken from ‘The Kingdon field guide to African mammals’ by Kingdon (1997). Species in square brackets were recorded by noting signs or are introductions. The following is a summary of the itinerary.

10 th November	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
11 th November	to Waterberg and the plateau
12 th November	Waterberg and the plateau
13 th November	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
14 th November	Halali area (Etosha)
15 th November	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
16 th November	Halali to Okaukuejo
17 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
18 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
19 th November	transfer to Hobatere
20 th November	Hobatere
21 st November	transfer to Erongo
22 nd November	transfer to Swakopmund
23 rd November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
24 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

Bottle-nosed dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Large group encountered on boat in Walvis Bay
Cape fur seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>	Huge numbers in the colonies on the point in Walvis Bay (from boat).
Southern elephant seal	<i>Mirounga leonina</i>	A massive rock-like female moulting in the colony on the Point in Walvis Bay – the surprise mammal of the trip for many.
Chacma baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	Widespread. Memorably searching the bins every morning at Waterberg.
South African galago	<i>Galago moholi</i>	Waterberg – single seen very well on the way back from the restaurant one night. Etosha – single at Halali.
Western rock sengi	<i>Elephantulus rupestris</i>	This little elephant shrew was seen well at Erongo and identified by a combination of habitat and range.
Scrub hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers.
Cape hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Etosha – several seen well, but tricky to identify.
Bush squirrel	<i>Funisciurus congicus</i>	Etosha – several.
Striped tree squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>	Hobatere – single.
South African ground squirrel	<i>Geosciurus inauris</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Dassie rat	<i>Petromys typicus</i>	Singles at Hobatere and Erongo.
African porcupine	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	Waterberg (singles on both nights). Superb views of one at Erongo feeding outside the restaurant..
Black-backed jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Widespread and common. An individual watched hunting buntings at one of the waterholes at Etosha was very entertaining.
Cape fox	<i>Vulpes charma</i>	Etosha – single dozing in entrance to burrow during day. Another seen well during the early morning as we left the park..
Bat-eared fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	Etosha – four seen on the last morning.
Ratel	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	Etosha – pair at Halali doing the bins one night. Two more seen as we drove out of the park on the last day.
Slender mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguinea</i>	Waterberg – several seen.
Dwarf mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	W
Yellow mongoose	<i>Cynictis pencilata</i>	Etosha – noted in small numbers almost daily.
Banded mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – always entertaining.
Spotted hyaena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Etosha – almost daily.

Common genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Hobaterere – seen well on both night drives.
Wild cat	<i>Felis sylvestrus</i>	Single seen distantly at Hobaterere.
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Etosha – seen most days in small numbers – invariably loafing around during the day. At Hobaterere we watched a family group eating a recently captured kudu.
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	A female on the last day in Etosha, gave prolonged views. Another female at night at Hobaterere was a brief but spectacular sighting.
[Southern African hedgehog]	<i>Atelerix frontalis</i>	Hobaterere – several ‘peeled’ skins below an old Verreaux’s eagle-owl nest.
Southern rock dassie	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Waterberg – abundant in the rocky jumble below the escarpment. Common at Erongo and glimpsed at Hobaterere.
African elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Etosha – noted daily, especially at the compound waterholes. A large group at Hobaterere when we arrived were not seen subsequently.
Common zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>	Etosha – very abundant.
Mountain zebra	<i>Equus zebra</i>	Seen in the extreme western part of Etosha on the last day (with common zebra) and also at Hobaterere.
Black rhinoceros	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – frequently encountered at waterholes at night. Occasionally seen out in the bush.
[White rhinoceros]	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	Single at Okaukuejo waterhole on last night. Introduced to Etosha.
Common warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Widespread
Giraffe	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobaterere.
[African buffalo]	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	Waterberg – present on the plateau where it has been introduced from the Caprivi Strip.
Eland	<i>Tauro tragus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobaterere.
Greater kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobaterere.
Steinbuck	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – encountered daily in small numbers.
Klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>	Two in transit between Hobaterere and Erongo – one of which was seen very well.
Kirk’s dikdik	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	Waterberg – present in small numbers around the chalets and restaurant.
Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Widespread and common.
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
[Bontebok/blesbok]	<i>Damaliscus dorcas</i>	We had a blesbok (subspecies <i>phillipsi</i>) on the plateau at Waterberg where it was an escape from a game farm. We got a chance to see bontebok (subspecies <i>dorcas</i>) at Mokuti Lodge – where it was an introduced lawnmower.
Kongoni (red hartebeest)	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	en route to Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers, not daily.
Brindled wildebeeste	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Etosha
Roan antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	Waterberg – small numbers up on the plateau where it was successfully re-introduced.
Sable antelope	<i>Hippotragus niger</i>	Waterberg – small numbers up on the plateau where it was successfully re-introduced.
Southern oryx	<i>Oryx gazella</i>	Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobaterere.

Systematic List Number 2

Birds

The taxonomy and nomenclature is taken 'Birds of Southern Africa' by Sinclair, Hockey & Tarboten (2002). Square brackets indicate species that were heard only, or recorded through sign, feather or corpse!

10 th November	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm	
11 th November	to Waterberg and the plateau	
12 th November	Waterberg and the plateau	
13 th November	transfer to Etosha (Halali)	
14 th November	Halali area (Etosha)	
15 th November	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)	
16 th November	Halali to Okaukuejo	
17 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
18 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
19 th November	transfer to Hobatere	
20 th November	Hobatere	
21 st November	transfer to Erongo	
22 nd November	transfer to Swakopmund	
23 rd November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area	
24 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek	
Common ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Widespread (often seen in small numbers whilst travelling), seen often and well at Etosha.
Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Widespread on suitable freshwater pools.
White-chinned petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	Single from boat in Walvis Bay.
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	Several on the boat trip.
Great white pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	coastal sites
Cape gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	coastal sites
White-breasted cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	Windhoek and coastal sites.
Cape cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	coastal sites
Bank cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	Swakopmund (7 birds)
Reed cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	Recorded in small numbers at Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Crowned cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax coronatus</i>	Swakopmund – small numbers.
African darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	Single at Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Black-headed heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single) and Etosha (small numbers).
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Scattered records.
Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and a few other wet or coastal locations.
Cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha – small numbers.
Squacco heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Green-backed heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha – singles.
Black-crowned night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single).
Marabou stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Scattered records, mostly Etosha.
Greater flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	coastal areas
Lesser flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	coastal areas
Egyptian goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	widespread.
South African shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Cape teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	Etosha, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay (huge numbers on the saltworks).
Hottentot teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	Etosha (single)

Red-billed teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha.
Secretarybird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Etosha only. A single flew in to drink at Tsumkor waterhole in the east of the park and another was seen on the road to Okandeka.
White-backed vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	widespread
Lappet-faced vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	Windhoek airport, Etosha
Yellow-billed kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>	Etosha – odd singles.
Black-shouldered kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha – small numbers.
Verreaux's eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	Waterberg – single along escarpment.
Tawny eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Steppe eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	Etosha – two birds together at one of the waterholes.
Wahlberg's eagle	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	en route to Waterberg
African hawk-eagle	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	Waterberg – pair and immature observed frequently and well.
Martial eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Etosha – two adults and an immature were seen during our stay.
Brown snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	widespread
Black-chested snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	Only seen well on the road to Erongo.
Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	en route to Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers daily.
African fish-eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	Windhoek sewage farm (single).
Steppe buzzard	<i>Buteo vulpinus</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Augur buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>	Hobatere (single)
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Gabar goshawk	<i>Melierax gabar</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha
Southern pale chanting goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>	en route to Waterberg, Etosha
Pallid harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Etosha
Peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Etosha, single resident minor hunting over waterhole at Okandeka.
Lanner falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – provided a lot of entertainment amongst the lark-like buntings.
Rock kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolis</i>	widespread
Greater kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily. Others seen elsewhere!
Lesser kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Etosha – two birds only.
Pygmy falcon	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>	Single female on last day at Etosha.
Crested francolin	<i>Peliperdix sephaena</i>	Single at Waterberg.
Red-billed francolin	<i>Pternistes adspersus</i>	Waterberg and Hobatere.
Hartlaub's francolin	<i>Pternistes hartlaubi</i>	[Waterberg], [Hobatere] and Erongo. Only seen at long range at latter site.
Helmeted guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Blue crane	<i>Anthropoides paradisea</i>	Etosha (a total of thirteen birds recorded).
Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Red-knobbed coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Kori bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	Etosha, Hobatere – noted in small numbers daily.
Ludwig's bustard	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>	Etosha – two birds in total, including a female on both visits to Okandeka.
Ruppell's korhaan	<i>Eupodotis rueppellii</i>	Small numbers in area around Petrified Forest and Uis area.
Red-crested korhaan	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – always harder to find than the next species.
Northern black korhaan	<i>Eupodotis afroides</i>	Etosha – small numebrs daily.
African jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single)

Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	coastal sites - small numbers
White-fronted plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	coastal sites – often large numbers
Chestnut-banded plover	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>	Walvis Bay saltworks – huge numbers.
Kittlitz's plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	Etosha – small numbers on a few days.
Three-banded plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha – small numbers
Caspian plover	<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	Etosha (10 birds near Halali).
Grey plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Etosha (single), coastal sites.
Crowned lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers daily.
Blacksmith lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha
Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	coastal areas
Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha
Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha.
Marsh sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Singles at Etosha and Walvis Bay.
Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Etosha (single), coastal areas
Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	coastal areas, where very common.
Little stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha and coastal sites – small numbers.
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	coastal areas (common)
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Etosha and coastal areas.
Bar-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	coastal areas – small numbers.
Common whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	coastal areas – small numbers
Pied avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Walvis Bay – large numbers.
Black-winged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	en route to Waterberg and large numbers at Walvis Bay saltworks.
Spotted thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers.
Burchell's courser	<i>Cursorius rufus</i>	Etosha (at least six birds on stony plain just before turn-off to Halali).
Double-banded courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	Etosha
Red-necked phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Nine at the saltworks at Walvis Bay.
Parasitic jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Three from boat in Walvis Bay.
Pomarine jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Walvis Bay (singles from the jetty and the boat).
Grey-headed gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	coastal areas – scarce.
Hartlaub's gull	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	coastal areas – large numbers.
Cape gull	<i>Larus vetula</i>	coastal areas – common.
Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	coastal areas – small numbers.
Swift tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	coastal sites – common.
Sandwich tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	coastal areas – small numbers.
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	coastal areas – large numbers.
Damara tern	<i>Sterna balaenarum</i>	Small numbers in coastal areas.
Namaqua sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>	Etosha and Hobatere – seen in large numbers at waterholes. Some in the dunes at Rooibank.
Burchell's sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles burchelli</i>	Many on last day at Etosha at waterholes in the western part of the park.
Double-banded sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles bicinctus</i>	Waterberg – at waterholes on plateau at dusk. Also at Etosha and Hobatere.
Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Windhoek and other towns
Speckled pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	Waterberg, Hobatere
Cape turtle-dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	ubiquitous.
Laughing dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	widespread.
Namaqua dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg
Emerald-spotted wood-dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	Etosha – small numbers at eastern end, where it is hard to find usually.
Ruppell's parrot	<i>Poicephalus rueppellii</i>	Waterberg and Hobatere – small numbers.
Rosy-faced lovebird	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>	widespread
Grey go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Erongo
African cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>	Etosha

Black cuckoo [Levaillant's cuckoo]	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>	en route to Erongo Heard at Hobatere.
Jacobin cuckoo [Klaas's cuckoo]	<i>Oxylophus levaillantii</i>	en route to Waterberg, en route to Etosha [Erongo]
[Diderick cuckoo]	<i>Oxylophus jacobinus</i>	[Hobatere]
[Barn owl]	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	[Erongo]
African scops-owl	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	Etosha (Halali) – pair found roosting during the day. Very vocal at Hobatere.
Southern white-faced scops-owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Etosha (Halali) – pair found roosting during the day and seen on all three days.
Pearl-spotted owl	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Spotted eagle-owl	<i>Ptilopus granti</i>	Single glimpsed at Hobatere.
Giant eagle-owl	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	Juvenile up on the plateau at Waterberg. Adults seen frequently at Etosha and Hobatere.
[Marsh owl]	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	A recently dead bird found at the roadside in Etosha. Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Rufous-cheeked nightjar	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	A single nightjar glimpsed at Waterberg was probably this species. Seen and heard at Erongo.
Freckled nightjar	<i>Asio capensis</i>	widespread.
Common swift	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Hobatere.
Bradfield's swift	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Etosha.
White-rumped swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	widespread.
Little swift	<i>Apus bradfieldi</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Hobatere.
Alpine swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	widespread.
African palm-swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Hobatere.
White-backed mousebird	<i>Apus melba</i>	widespread.
Red-faced mousebird	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	Windhoek, Erongo and odd birds elsewhere.
European bee-eater	<i>Colius colius</i>	A few noted whilst travelling but never seen well. widespread.
Olive bee-eater	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>	Seen at Hobatere and en route to Erongo.
Swallow-tailed bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Lilac-breasted roller	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	en route to Waterberg (single)
Purple roller	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
African hoopoe	<i>Coracias caudata</i>	Widespread in small numbers.
Violet wood-hoopoe	<i>Coracias naevia</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Common scimitarbill	<i>Upupa africana</i>	Etosha and Hobatere.
African grey hornbill	<i>Phoeniculus damarensis</i>	Etosha
Damara hornbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Southern yellow-billed hornbill	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	Etosha
Monteiro's hornbill	<i>Tockus damarensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Acacia pied barbet	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Golden-tailed woodpecker	<i>Tockus monteiri</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg and Erongo – small numbers.
Cardinal woodpecker	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	[Waterberg], Etosha and Hobatere
Monotonous lark	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>	Waterberg (single).
Rufous-naped lark	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	En route to Waterberg and in Etosha.
Eastern clapper lark	<i>Mirafra passerina</i>	Etosha (very poor views of one in flight).
Fawn-coloured lark	<i>Mirafra africana</i>	Etosha
Sabota lark	<i>Mirafra fasciolata</i>	Etosha – single on Andoni Plain, seen well.
Dune lark	<i>Mirafra africanoides</i>	Etosha
Spike-heeled lark	<i>Mirafra sabota</i>	Etosha
Pink-billed lark	<i>Certhilauda erythrochlamys</i>	Rooibank – two seen well.
Red-capped lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	Etosha
Stark's lark	<i>Spizocorys conirostris</i>	Etosha – good numbers on the Andoni Plains.
Gray's lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	Etosha
Chestnut-backed sparrowlark	<i>Eremalauda starki</i>	Etosha
	<i>Ammomanes grayi</i>	Swakopmund – single flock seen well but tragically briefly.
	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>	Etosha – very small numbers.

Grey-backed sparrowlark	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>	Etosha – large numbers.
Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	widespread.
White-throated swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	Only seen at Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Pearl-breasted swallow	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and around Uis.
Red-breasted swallow	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Greater striped swallow	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	widespread.
Lesser striped swallow	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	Only recorded at Waterberg.
South African cliff-swallow	<i>Hirundo spilodera</i>	Only seen at Windhoek airport on arrival.
Rock martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	Scattered records.
Common house-martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Waterberg and Windhoek – scarce.
Banded martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Etosha – small numbers on the plains.
Fork-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	Widespread.
Eurasian golden oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Etosha – two females.
Cape crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	En route to Etosha
Pied crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Ashy tit	<i>Parus cinerascens</i>	Widespread.
Carp's tit	<i>Parus carpi</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Black-faced babbler	<i>Turdoides melanops</i>	Etosha (family group at Mokuti Lodge on first day).
Bare-cheeked babbler	<i>Turdoides gymnogenys</i>	Hobatere – nice flock in the garden one lunch time.
African red-eyed bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	Very widespread and common.
Groundscraper thrush	<i>Psophocichla litsipsirupa</i>	Widespread.
Short-toed rock-thrush	<i>Monticola brevipes</i>	Common in dry rocky areas.
Mountain wheatear	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>	Seen around Uis and en route to and from Swakopmund.
Capped wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	Etosha – singles recorded on three dates.
Familiar chat	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	Common in dry rocky areas.
Karoo chat	<i>Cercomela schlegelii</i>	Seen en route to and from Swakopmund.
Ant-eating chat	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>	Etosha – small numbers, almost daily.
White-browed scrub-robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	Waterberg only – small numbers.
Kalahari scrub-robin	<i>Cercotrichas paena</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Chestnut-vented tit-babbler	<i>Parisoma subcaeruleum</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
African reed-warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Walvis Bay. More often heard than seen.
Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Recorded on two dates.
Long-billed crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Yellow-bellied eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>	Etosha, Hobatere and Erongo – small numbers.
Burnt-necked eremomela	<i>Eremomela isticollis</i>	en route to and at Waterberg
Rufous-eared warbler	<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>	Single in Etosha. A trip highlight for some.
Grey-backed camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>	Ubiquitous
African wren-warbler	<i>Calamonastes fasciolatus</i>	Etosha (single at Andoni Plains rest area).
Rockrunner	<i>Achaetops pycnopygius</i>	Waterberg, Hobatere and Erongo. More often heard than seen – a melodic songster.
[Zitting cisticola]	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	[Etosha]
Desert cisticola	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>	Etosha
Rattling cisticola	<i>Cisticola chinianus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha and Hobatere – in small numbers.
Black-chested prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>	Etosha
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Widespread.
Marico flycatcher	<i>Bradornis mariquensis</i>	Widespread.
Chat flycatcher	<i>Bradornis infuscatus</i>	Etosha (almost daily in small numbers).
Pirit batis	<i>Batis pririt</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
African paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	Waterberg only.
Cape wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and coastal areas.
African pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	Scattered records.

Buffy pipit	<i>Anthus vaalensis</i>	Etosha – two at Okaukuejo in the compound.
Lesser grey shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	Widespread.
Common fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	Etosha (small numbers) and a few elsewhere.
Red-backed shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Widespread.
Magpie shrike	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>	Etosha
Crimson-breasted shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	Widespread.
Black-backed puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	Widespread.
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	Widespread.
Brown-crowned tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>	Scattered records, never seen well.
[Bokmakierie]	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	[Rooibank]
White-tailed shrike	<i>Lanioturdus torquatus</i>	En route to, and at Erongo.
Southern white-crowned shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitemens</i>	Widespread.
Wattled starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	Windhoek only.
Burchell's starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Meves's starling	<i>Lamprotornis mevesii</i>	Hobaterre
Cape glossy starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	Widespread and common.
Pale-winged starling	<i>Onychognathus naboroupp</i>	Waterberg and the Petrified Forest.
Marico sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Windhoek.
White-bellied sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>	Waterberg only.
Dusky sunbird	<i>Cinnyris fusca</i>	Etosha and Erongo.
Scarlet-chested sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	Windhoek and Waterberg only.
Orange River white-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	coastal sites, mostly hotel gardens.
Red-billed buffalo-weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>	Etosha
White-browed sparrow-weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg, Etosha
Sociable weaver	<i>Philetairus socius</i>	Etosha
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	towns
Great sparrow	<i>Passer motitensis</i>	Etosha and Hobaterre.
Cape sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	Etosha – a recent colonist.
Southern grey-headed sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Scaly-feathered finch	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>	Dry areas
Chestnut weaver	<i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>	Etosha
Southern masked-weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
Lesser masked-weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Waterberg – small numbers in with southerners.
Red-billed quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Etosha and Hobaterre.
Southern red bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Green-winged pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	Erongo – small numbers.
Blue waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Violet-eared waxbill	<i>Granatina granatina</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Common waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	Coastal sites, mostly hotel gardens.
Black-faced waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>	Widespread.
African quail finch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	Etosha – small group on one day.
Red-headed finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	Etosha – huge numbers.
Shaft-tailed whydah	<i>Vidua regia</i>	Etosha and Hobaterre – small numbers at waterholes.
Black-throated canary	<i>Serinus atrogularis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Waterberg
Yellow canary	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha – common
Golden-breasted bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	Etosha – small numbers on two days.
Cape bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	Erongo (pair)
Cinnamon-breasted bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	Etosha and Hobaterre.
Lark-like bunting	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>	Dry areas – vast numbers at Etosha, especially in the Okandeka area.

Systematic List Number 3 Butterflies

The taxonomy and nomenclature is taken 'Pennington's butterflies of Southern Africa' by Pennington (1994).

10 th November	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
11 th November	to Waterberg and the plateau
12 th November	Waterberg and the plateau
13 th November	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
14 th November	Halali area (Etosha)
15 th November	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
16 th November	Halali to Okaukuejo
17 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
18 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
19 th November	transfer to Hobatere
20 th November	Hobatere
21 st November	transfer to Erongo
22 nd November	transfer to Swakopmund
23 rd November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
24 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

African monarch	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	Widespread.
Wandering donkey acraea	<i>Acraea neoboule</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere
Braine's charaxis	<i>Charaxes brainei</i>	Waterberg
Common diadem	<i>Hypolimnas misippus</i>	Etosha
Yellow pansy	<i>Precis hiertasebrenae</i>	Widespread
Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	Hobatere
Straight-line sapphire	<i>Iolous silarus brainei</i>	Waterberg
Bush scarlet	<i>Axiocerses amanga</i>	Waterberg
Michelle's blue	<i>Lepidochrysops michellei</i>	Waterberg
African vagrant	<i>Catopsilia florella</i>	Hobatere and widespread along roads.
Zebra white	<i>Penacopteryx eriphia</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Broad-bordered grass yellow	<i>Eurema brigitta</i>	Waterberg
Veined orange	<i>Calotis vesta mutans</i>	Etosha
Queen purpletip	<i>Calotis regina</i>	Waterberg
Smoky orangetip	<i>Calotis evippe</i>	Waterberg
Brown-veined white	<i>Belenois aurota</i>	Waterberg and Etosha.
Common dotted border	<i>Mylothros agathina</i>	Waterberg
Citrus swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>	Windhoek, Etosha
Angolan white lady	<i>Graphium angolanus</i>	Etosha – an unusual record as far from suitable breeding habitat.

Systematic List Number 4 Amphibians and Reptiles

The taxonomy and nomenclature is taken 'Field Guide to snakes and other reptiles of Southern Africa' by Branch (1998).

10 th November	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
11 th November	to Waterberg and the plateau
12 th November	Waterberg and the plateau
13 th November	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
14 th November	Halali area (Etosha)
15 th November	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
16 th November	Halali to Okaukuejo
17 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
18 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
19 th November	transfer to Hobatere
20 th November	Hobatere
21 st November	transfer to Erongo
22 nd November	transfer to Swakopmund
23 rd November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
24 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

Common rain frog	<i>Breviceps adpersus</i>	An amazingly rapid emergence after the rain at Hobatere.
Marbled rubber frog	<i>Phrynomantis annectans</i>	In the swimming pools at Hobatere and Erongo.
Namibian rock agama	<i>Agama planiceps</i>	Windhoek, Hobatere
Etosha agama	<i>Agama etoshae</i>	Etosha
Flap-neck chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo dilepis</i>	Etosha, Hobatere
Cape thick-toed gecko	<i>Pachydactylis capensis</i>	Etosha
Common Namib day gecko	<i>Rhoptropis afer</i>	Seen in the desert en route to Swakopmund.
Kaokoveld Namib day gecko	<i>Rhoptropus biporosus</i>	Hobatere – garden only
Bradfield's Namib day gecko	<i>Rhoptropus bradfieldi</i>	Hobatere – in dry gullies.
Desert lizard spp.	<i>Pedioplanas</i> spp.	Animals seen at the Petrified Forest and Rooibank were different species but remain unidentified at the moment. Rooibank – single dug out in the dunes.
Fitzsimmons' burrowing skink	<i>Typhlacontias brevipes</i>	
Striped skink	<i>Mabuya striata</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Variable skink	<i>Mabuya varia</i>	Etosha, Hobatere
Ovambo tree skink	<i>Mabuya binotata</i>	Etosha, Hobatere
Leopard sand snake	<i>Psammophis brevirostris leopardinis</i>	Etosha
Marsh terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>	Etosha

Systematic List Number 5 Odonata

10 th November	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm	
11 th November	to Waterberg and the plateau	
12 th November	Waterberg and the plateau	
13 th November	transfer to Etosha (Halali)	
14 th November	Halali area (Etosha)	
15 th November	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)	
16 th November	Halali to Okaukuejo	
17 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
18 th November	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
19 th November	transfer to Hobatere	
20 th November	Hobatere	
21 st November	transfer to Erongo	
22 nd November	transfer to Swakopmund	
23 rd November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area	
24 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek	
Black emperor	<i>Anax tristis</i>	Hobatere – after the rain one appeared as if by magic in the garden at dusk.
Vagrant emperor	<i>Hemianax epipliger</i>	Several at Windhoek Sewage Farm. Etosha
	<i>Diplacodes lefebvrei</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
	<i>Trithemis kirbyi</i>	Several at lunch stop on last day just outside Usakos.
Blue basker	<i>Urothemis edwardsii</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
	<i>Crocothemis sanguinolenta</i>	Mokuti Lodge (Etosha)
Julia skimmer	<i>Orthetrum julia</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha
	<i>Orthetrum brachiale</i>	Waterberg
Red-veined darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm
Globe skimmer	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Waterberg and Hobatere.
Evening skimmer	<i>Tholymis tillarga</i>	Hobatere – single netted in the garden just before the rain came.