

Namibia

Elements of Eden

A Greentours Trip Report

22nd October to 7th November 2008

Lead by Phil Benstead & Orlando Haraseb

Trip report written by Phil Benstead

Day 1 Wednesday 22nd October departure

We all gathered at Gatwick in the evening for our overnight flight. The flight departed on time and was spent drowsing fitfully by most of us.

Day 2 Thursday 23rd October arrival and the sewage farm

The flight touched down on schedule and we were soon outside under an overcast sky. Despite the weather the dry grass smell of southern Africa enveloped us. The airstrip produced its usual crop of swifts and swallows and then we were plunged into Immigration and baggage reclaim. Soon though we were outside meeting up with Orlando and making our way to the vehicle. The 40 km drive into town flashed by in daze and we spotted a few interesting birds and even a kudu. The hotel quickly had us installed in our rooms and we could humanise ourselves with a quick shower and change of clothes.

Orlando picked us up again after an hour and took us into town for lunch (or breakfast) at the Craft Market. Afterwards we hit the banks to change money and visit an excellent book shop. Shopping completed we head to the Sewage Farm. It was overcast and cool in the wind and wildlife activity was a bit below par. Dragonflies were almost non-existent although we did get good views of a single *Rhyothemis semihyalina*. Birds too were in rather short supply but we managed to see a number of species that we were not to see elsewhere on the trip. We get great views of the African marsh warblers that abound at this site. Rattling and zitting cisticolas were our first introduction to this confusing group of birds. Black-crowned night-herons snoozed in trees. A variety of wildfowl included everything from the familiar little grebe to the antediluvian African darter. An African jacana went down well as he tripped about and bullied smaller waders. Around the primary treatment area a couple of white-throated swallows were evident and we all

enjoyed the spectacle of hundreds of wattled starlings rotating around on the spreader arms. On the way home we made a 'grockle' stop to look at the meteorites in town and then got back in time to take it easy before an early dinner. It had been a long two days for many of us.

Day 3 Friday 24th October drive to Waterberg

We opt for a leisurely start to the day and have breakfast at 0730. Again the skies are overcast and we have had some rain overnight. Bird activity is still low as a result but we manage a few new birds including alpine swift. Leaving Windhoek (and its many beautiful flowering jacaranda trees) behind us we quickly get out from under the clouds as we drive north. We stop frequently during our journey to look at roadside birds including our first Damara hornbills, a splendid tawny eagle, the beautiful purple roller and others. Occasional stretches of roadside are littered with spikes of the attractive Albuca lily, a harbinger of the coming rainy season, and we had to stop to examine them. Phil finds a long-billed crombec nest complete with irate parents who scold us from cover. Our first purple-tip (butterfly) spent a short period of time trapped in the vehicle. Eventually we just had to push on to get to Waterberg for lunch and ignore the many additional sights along the way.

As Orlando checked in at reception on arrival we were kept busy with a succession of birds including grey go-away birds and our first Burchell's starlings and southern grey-headed sparrows. Climbing the steps to the restaurant we find a lovely striped skink on the stonework. Over lunch we are entertained by a gang of nine banded mongooses and a collection of birds that includes Marico sunbird, our first black-backed puffback, some splendid southern masked weavers, grey-backed camaroptera and yellow-bellied eromomelas.

In the afternoon after the worst of the heat has dissipated we head down the road on a gentle ramble which produces plenty of things to look at. We are enchanted by a family party of black mongoose. The young approach us to very close range and even peer point-blank into the lens of Orlando's mobile phone. Nearby we also enjoy great views of our first white-browed scrub-robin. Other highlights include the incredibly large flightless female 'strandloper' locusts, good views of Rueppel's parrot, flight views of rosy-faced lovebird, an obliging African hawk-eagle, another dragonfly for the list (*Trithemis kirbyii*) and a fantastic sunset which lit up the walls of the escarpment beautifully. Arriving back at our accommodation we were greeted by the graceful Kirk's dikdik, which occupied every lawn and in some places were joined by scrub hares.

Walking down to dinner we kept our eyes peeled but nothing obvious was apparent. On the way back though we really tried hard but were equally unsuccessful. Typically as Phil and Orlando trudged back to the staff quarters they quickly find a large male kudu (which was as quiet as a mouse), a shy African porcupine and a spotted eagle-owl standing on a dead rodent!!

Day 4 Saturday 25th October Waterberg Plateau Park

The pre-breakfast walk this morning takes us down to the main gate and we spend 45 minutes here looking at a variety of animals. We are greeted by a noisy pair of crested francolin and whilst we are watching these our first slender mongoose skulks by. Also here we get our first views of the big-eared steenbock, a solitary gazelle of thick acacia scrub. Small birds are evident and the dawn air is filled with birdsong that Orlando navigates us through. Pretty blue waxbills play hard to get but Marico sunbirds twitter from exposed perches in a far more obliging manner. Our first herd of helmeted guineafowl troop past and yellow-billed hornbills appear in the tops of nearby trees. A quick check of the campsite reveals little activity so we head for breakfast.

After breakfast we head out to walk some of the trails below, and leading up to, the base of the escarpment. Butterflies are a feature of this walking session and include a breathtaking Charaxes, the wonderfully named wandering donkey acraea and several other species that await identification. Orlando points out a large hole – the home of a huge baboon spider, Phil tries fishing for it but only draws the monster close to the opening on one occasion and cannot tease it out into the open. The walk is good for reptiles too and we see our first bushveldt lizard and several very well camouflaged Waterberg sand lizards – the latter endemic to the red sandstone areas of the plateau. At the base of the scarp we bump into our first rock hyraxes as they lounge around on the rocks. On the cliff face we find an active grey hornbill nest, which is regularly visited by the male. Overhead rock kestrel and African hawk-eagles soar. As the temperature climbs we head down and after a short rest head for lunch.

Over lunch we admire yet again the active weaver colony, with its busy males all trying to attract females their particular nest. Butterflies are obvious today and the sprinklers bring in some great mud-puddling species including the unbelievable queen violet-tip and the speckled sulphur tip. Also here our first blue Orthetrum dragonfly – chrysostigma.

After a short break we transfer down to the HQ to take a park vehicle and guide on to the plateau. The drive along the main road is at a snail's pace and we stop frequently for new birds. We see plenty including red-crested korhaan, Monteiro's hornbill and a lovely acacia pied barbet. Eventually we turn from the main road and take the track up onto the plateau. As we climb we stop to look at a pair of splendid Verreaux's eagles. Here the habitat changes markedly. The substrate is deep sand for the most part, with occasional sandstone outcrops. Finding animals is tricky in the dense scrub but we have waterholes to check.

Unbelievably although we have time to check three waterholes, none have any attending mammals. We do slightly better later on though when we find a big male sable, about 15 giraffe, warhog, a pair of common duiker and a handful of eland. As dusk falls we enjoy the spectacle of double-banded sandgrouse arriving to drink and eventually drive out flushing nightjars and owls from the road as we go. After dinner Phil finds a South African galago feeding near the vehicle and we get reasonable views of this skittish little bush-baby. A short nightwalk up around the accommodation produces nothing, although Phil and Orlando have another galago on the way back to their rooms.

Day 5 Sunday 26th October transfer to Halali (Etosha)

An early and rainy start sees us off and away by 0730. The road north takes us through some great scenery and then on through cattle ranching country and even into cropped land near Grootfontein. At the start of the drive near Waterberg we stop many times for birds including our first Swainson's francolins, a brown snake-eagle and later a black-breasted snake-eagle. We break our journey by visiting the impressive 70 tonne Hoba meteorite, a huge chunk of iron and nickel. In the garden we see our first African monarch butterfly nectaring on flowers. We break our journey again by visiting Tsumeb for a quick shopping session.

Arriving at the gate of Etosha NP we take lunch at a nearby lodge and enjoy the gardens. The insects are great with a re-modelled pond providing plenty of action for the dragonfly enthusiasts (mostly common libellulids but including two new damselflies *Ceriagrion glabrum* and *Azuragrion nigradorsum*) and a number of butterflies are evident including more wandering donkey acraea and a splendid common dotted border. Birds are obliging here too and we enjoy watching a pair of bearded woodpeckers and an African paradise flycatcher. Our first amphibian is an exciting event – a juvenile eastern olive toad hopping about in the flowerbeds.

Driving into the park we 'pop our top' and Etosha weaves its magic. Soon we are watching our first black-faced impalas, spingbok are everywhere and steenbok become a common roadside sight. Before Orlando pays our park fees at Namutoni we nip into the waterhole here and are greeted by a big gang of lappet-faced and white-backed vultures which have been feeding on an antelope carcass. The waterhole itself is being visited by zebra and giraffe and the cameras click away.

Paperwork done we head on further into the park. Elephants make themselves obvious by hanging around along the road and we have a close encounter with a large herd of females and young. Last stop before check-in at Halali is the nearby Goias waterhole. Here we see a vagrant lesser jacana, a very relaxed spotted hyaena and our first wildebeeste. Our first kori bustard is fabulous, hanging in the shade with a springbok it just looked massive.

After dinner we were supposed to do our checklists and then walk down the waterhole but a lightning strike on the generator puts paid to both activities just as we were starting.

Day 6 Monday 27th October Halali area (Etosha)

A dawn start sees us at the breakfast table and raring to get out into the park. We have a great morning first visiting Rietfontein and then taking the long drive out to Okerfontein. The first waterhole (Rietfontein) produces some great mammals including another family group of elephants. African cuckoo and ruff are new birds here and we see large flocks of black-throated canary and red-headed finch coming in to drink.

The drive to Okerfontein is punctuated by many stops to look at new animals (red hartebeeste springs to mind) and photograph the regulars in good light. We stop briefly at Etosha viewpoint out on the salt pan and get out to stretch our legs and enjoy the mirages. Orlando's attempt to organise an oryx poo spitting contest sadly falls on deaf ears.

Just before Okerfontein we find some rapidly dwindling water in the salt pan left over from the last very wet rainy season. Here we get very distant views of great white pelicans and both flamingoes. Okerfontein contains a large bull elephant, playfully splattering himself with cooling mud and a huge number of grey herons. The drive back is punctuated by yet more stops that include looks at red-capped and Sabota lark and best of all our first lion. The lioness is stretched out under a tree showing very poorly, so we earmark the site for investigation first thing in the afternoon session.

After another groaning buffet lunch spread some of us visit the local African scops-owls in the garden and find them in classic poses, very well camouflaged indeed. We then take a longish break before heading back out with Orlando at 1530. We check out the lioness from the morning but if anything it is even more of a bum view so we quickly move on! Goas waterhole is our next destination. Here we find yesterday's spotted hyaena lounging in the shallows again, two lovely painted snipe and get great views of a number of golden-breasted buntings.

Phil's decision to check out the seldom used Rhino Drive on our way home is fully vindicated when about halfway round Susan calmly spots a fantastic male leopard two metres in from the edge of the road. We carefully reverse back and get stunning views from three metres. He tires of us quickly and looks at us in rather an accusatory fashion before crossing the road in front of the vehicle and walking off. The van is abuzz as we all compare photographs and congratulate Susan. Good one.

We arrive back at Halali in time to wander down to the waterhole for a dusk session before dinner. It starts quietly with just four impala drinking quietly. After half an hour our first black rhino walks in to shot and as dusk falls huge numbers of double-banded sandgrouse arrive, a pair of giant eagle-owls flies in and finally a noisy herd of about twenty elephants arrive and totally dominate proceedings. We leave as rufous-cheeked nightjars start hawking over the pool and darkness settles over the scene. After dinner Susan and Megs return and see four lions lounging by the waterhole.

Day 7 Tuesday 28th October Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)

If yesterday was the day of the leopard then today was the day of the lion. We leave after an early breakfast and start on the long drive east to Namutoni and the Andoni Plain. Our first stop is for a seriously young steenbok, still wobbly on his legs and rather interested in us, much to his mother's consternation. The cameras clicked and everyone said "aaah".

A little further on we find a few vehicles parked up watching a pair of lions, a great male and female at close range and only concealed by a few wisps of grass, this was more like it. The cameras clicked and everyone said “ooh”.

We stopped many times and eventually took the road to Andoni rather late, but what are you going to do? The waterhole on the plain was fantastic with 13 lions lounging by it and as we watched 18 blue cranes flew low over the plain and landed in front of us. The cameras clicked and everyone said “Magic!” Around us red-capped and pink-billed larks sheltered in any shade they could find.

The day was warming up nicely so we headed back to Namutoni for lunch. Afterwards we walked to the waterhole and watched a skulky black crane and a pair of blue cranes. The lawn holds a host of *Colotis vestans mutans* butterflies but how to photograph them without treading on the grass... Dragging ourselves away we take to the car for a quick visit to the Twee Palms waterhole. This is more like a quagmire and contains a number of zebra and two bull elephants wading about. From here we make our slow way home, getting incredible views of a female lion on the side of the road before she stalks off after a big male kudu. A big favourite during this session though is the family party of South African ground squirrels that we find. The half-grown young entertain us for five minutes before our apparent rapt attention draws other vehicles and the animals go underground to avoid the disturbance.

Getting back we take a quick tour with the security guard to see a splendid white-face scops-owl in the garden and then have an early dinner. The waterhole watchers report a big herd of elephant during the evening, some of them harassing a tiny steenbok.

Day 8 Wednesday 29th October transfer to Okaukuejo

Well if the day before yesterday was the day of the leopard... and yesterday was the day of the lion... then today mercifully was the day of the cheetah. Yes, we did it, we broke the curse of Benstead, more will no doubt follow in due course. Anyhow I digress. The day starts as usual with an early breakfast and we pack and leave in good time. The drive west is punctuated by many stops as usual.

Our first stop produces two new species of courser when we locate both Temminck's and Burchell's courser feeding together on an arid plain. Also here we see more South African ground squirrels and Phil spots the first yellow mongoose of the trip (more will hopefully follow).

At Salvadoria we find four fat lionesses that have just made a meal of a zebra. We spot a small cub stretched out in the grass, but sadly it is dead, it's sibling appears later and mews to it and tries to wake it. The cameras fall silent and we all stifle sobs. A little further on we are put on to two cheetahs lying under a distant acacia. Even with the scope this is a distant view but everyone has to start somewhere. What a result – in three full days we had managed both leopard and cheetah and some 30-odd lions. We were feeling pleased with ourselves.

The rest of the journey passed fairly uneventfully. Two great new birds though were spike-heeled lark and rufous-eared warbler. We saw three of the latter in the scrubby sueda flatlands – a charismatic little bird. The last waterhole before Okaukuejo was full of larks and oryx and we hoped for more on our next visit. Lunch and check-in beckons and we quickly make ourselves very comfortable in our new surroundings.

The afternoon session takes us out to Aus and back via Nebrownii. Early highlights include two ground agamas and a pair of spotted thick-knee. We see plenty of mammals at the waterholes we visit and enjoy many photographic opportunities including a close northern black korhaan. After dinner and checklists we take a short walk before the waterhole session to look for geckos. Curiously we find a number of slugs but no reptiles.

Day 9 Thursday 30th October Okandeka (Etosha)

The morning session today is interrupted by frequent light rain showers and stays cool throughout. We head north to Okandeka, en route we enjoy more views of secretary bird, an excellent capped wheatear and our first good views of yellow mongoose (as it excavated a roadside scorpion burrow). Okandeka is hooching with Namaqua sandgrouse and a pride of lions are loafing nearby. A fine male pallid harrier quarters the grassland around the edge of the pan.

Driving on Orlando shows us an adolescent male lion under a tree and we marvel at the many huge sociable weaver colonies. Common fiscals appear on nearby tree tops. A quick look at the waterholes near Okaukuejo produced two more male lions, and one makes a half-hearted effort to stalk some oryx. We return for lunch and a crowded waterhole at Okaukuejo.

The afternoon session is typically quiet but we enjoy some splendid sightings whilst working the area towards the Anderson gate. Just after leaving Okaukuejo we see a wall of rain approaching us down the road and quickly pull down the pop-top and batten down the hatches. The shower is short-lived luckily. The waterholes we visit are eerily quiet. Easily the best highlight is a close encounter with one of the Newbrownii male lions as he sits five metres from the edge of the car park area. Eventually four lions depart as the sun drops and the patient grazing animals pile into the waterhole after a day of waiting for a drink.

After dinner we watch the waterhole and Phil spots an African wild cat, pearl-spotted owlets are vocal and dashing about and a barn owl sails past. Later on up to seven rhinos are reported, including one infant.

Day 10 Friday 31st October Okaukuejo area

Today we go for one last morning drive around the Okaukuejo area, getting to Rietfontein (near Halali). It is a very hot day and we only stop for the best of the best. Memorable events include finally catching up with one of the 'white' elephants at Nebrownii and a splendid encounter with a

female lion at Salvadora. When we arrived at Salvadora we noticed the animals were spooked and would not go near the water – a huge backlog of animals had built up on the high ground. Eventually a springbok led the way down and others followed. After five minutes the peace and tranquillity was shattered by the lion which roared out of a tiny patch of rushes near the water but failed to catch anything.

On our return journey we dropped in again at Salvadora and were surprised to find that the animals were back down drinking at the waterhole. Forewarned we scanned the rushes and sure enough the female lion was there. We had ample time to get our cameras set up before she charged out again, straight at us and scattering zebra and springbok, but once again she missed out on any reward. Great photos though.

We elected to spend some time in camp in the afternoon, we meet up at 1630 and take a short walk around the compound. The area around the ecological centre is fantastic for butterflies and we watch veined oranges, queen purpletips and other orangetips in amongst the hordes of brown-veined whites. Citrus swallowtails and monarchs dashed about. An acacia pied barbet put in a brief appearance. Walking the edge we photograph the wandering donkey acraea.

The night patrol reports more of the same at the waterhole, with one lion and a diverse mix of grazers. A pair of giant eagle owls are present throughout the night.

Day 11 Saturday 1st November transfer to Hobatere

Dawn sees the giant eagle owls still in the tree by the waterhole. After breakfast we say our goodbyes, especially to Alex our slightly off-beat waiter. The long drive out of the park via the western Galton Gate is a great adventure. We totally fail to see any of the small mammals we are missing up to this point but the drive is not without excitement. We check out the unusual grove of moringa trees down on the savanna. Normally a tree associated with rocky hillsides they grow here on the flatland, the elephant grazing pressure is huge though and some have been fenced in.

Further on we take lunch at the old elephant processing station and then rattle on down the road. We find plenty of waterholes jam-packed with game. At one we watch an interminable struggle between two male warthogs. We never see the end and leave with both opponents tired and bloody from their exertions. At another waterhole we find three splendid white-headed vultures – always a tricky bird to find at Etosha. Mountain zebras start to appear as we get towards the gate and the landscape breaks up into low rocky hills and ridges. From the gate it is a short distance to Hobatere Lodge and our new home.

After settling in Martin takes us out on a pleasant game drive through some fantastic countryside. The two hours to dusk produces some great sightings. A pair of klippspringer trip about on a rocky ridge giving great scope views. Martin jumps out to capture a beautiful flap-neck chameleon and later points out a dozing rock monitor and a huge Ovambo tree skink.

After dinner we head out for a night drive and quickly add bat-eared fox to the mammal list. Common genet and spring hare follow suit over the next hour. All the above are great mammals, but the spring hares steal the show as they hop around like mini-kangaroos in the dark. We also see a big dark-maned lion who roars intermittently through the night right by the lodge.

Day 12 Sunday 2nd November Hobatere

Today we get a lie-in, meeting up at 0645 for tea and biscuits before a walk out with Martin. The walk takes us up the road and then loops through the low hills and back to the Lodge. Martin identifies the many tracks on the road and these include many of the species we saw during the night-drive as well as African wild cat. Martin tells us about many of the plants during the walk and shows us the resurrection plant. We take pieces back with us for experimental purposes (and sure enough when immersed in water the dry brown twigs sprout greenery as if by magic). The scenery is fabulous and as we walk through rocky jumbles we find numerous rock hyraxes and even the occasional dassie rat. An easy highlight is a splendid klippspringer male that poses on tip-toes on a nearby ridgetop against a bright blue sky. Superb. Birds are evident and we all catch up with white-tailed shrike and get great views near the Lodge of olive bee-eater, Rueppell's parrot and rosy-faced lovebird.

After a much-needed breakfast we elect to stay in camp and the hard-working team pull out a great sighting from the hide by the swimming pool. This hide overlooks a small waterhole and whilst there they watched oryx drinking. A movement further off warned the team of the arrival of two serious looking lionesses and sure enough they go into hunting mode. One circles round to lurk and the other creeps in. The creeper charges sending the oryx into the arms of the waiting lurker. Job done. The din was enormous and alerts everyone at the Lodge to the drama (except your correspondent who exhausted from fighting 'Orlando's flu' had fallen fast asleep).

The afternoon game drive with Martin is another enjoyable affair. We bump along in the jeep on a different route to yesterday, stopping to look at stuff of interest. Going through a shady gorge we flush out three Hartlaub's francolins, which give good views as they hop from crag to crag and out of sight. A pair of southern white-faced scops-owls are much admired. We find a poorly baby giraffe, injured in a predator attack it looks very sorry for itself. Soaring overhead a single adult Verreaux's eagle is a bonus and its presence activates the local pair of bateleurs. On a grassy plain Martin shows us the active nest of a pair of secretary birds, at least one adult is present. As the sun sets on a grassy plain dotted with large termite hills we daydream of aardvark...

The night drive takes place after a splendid BBQ. We head into a rocky mopane covered area tonight and get some great views of things. We see a total of three African wildcats all at close range and a nice genet that behaves well too. Three bat-eared foxes appear briefly but otherwise it is a quiet drive.

Day 13 Monday 3rd November transfer to Erongo via Welwitschia!

This morning sees the return of a freshly scrubbed Orlando, looking rested and fit after his day off. An early breakfast sees us off in good time for the long drive to the Erongo mountains. We naturally have plenty of stops planned and totally fail to get to the next lodge at the time we stated! First stop, after some snack shopping in Kamanjab, is just west of Xhorixas where we stop for a large group of Welwitschia plants. Photos are taken, the male and females admired and Orlando filled us in on the discovery and biology of these impressive plants. New birds en route include pearl-breasted swallow and ashy tit.

Before lunch we squeeze in a visit to the petroglyphs at Twyfelfontein. Overhead our fourth Verreaux's eagle soars as our diminutive guide Sylvia takes us on a whistle-stop tour of the lower rock engravings. Fascinating stuff and we are soon happily identifying images of animals carved into the rock 1000s of year ago. Birds are present, although Phil's occasional identifications go largely un-noticed, such is the interest in the cultural aspects. New birds at this site though include mountain wheatear, lark-like bunting (at last!), Cape bunting and white-throated canary. We take lunch at a nearby campsite in the shade and then press on.

Our hopes of reaching Erongo in time for a tour of the cave paintings are dashed when Orlando spots some desert-adapted elephants walking towards a roadside waterhole. This is the holy grail of elephant sightings and we had just chanced upon them. Orlando positions the vehicle by the waterhole just before their arrival and we pop the top and get down to some photography. The group consists of females and young and consists of twelve animals. One youngster is very tiny and has to stand on its hind legs to get its trunk into the water of the dam. Always a pleasure and a huge surprise to see these resourceful beasts featured on so many wildlife programmes.

Driving on we finally arrive after a long drive on dirt roads at Erongo. The scenery en route has been stunning (table-top mountains, the impressive bulk of the Brandenburg, eroded granite formations of unbelievable beauty) but we are still unprepared for the setting we find the Lodge in. It is fantastic. Hyrax bounce around the walkways to our comfortable, fully furnished tents as we settle in.

Day 14 Tuesday 4th November Erongo to Walvis Bay

We meet up at 0600 for the short drive to Paula's Cave to view the rock paintings. Birds sing, the sun shines, all is well. The scenery en route is fantastic and as we climb the short distance to the cave we have time to admire it at length. The cave is tunnel-shaped and shallow, just inside the overhang we find some incredibly moving rock art. It goes rather quiet as we photograph and digest the many images on show. Unlike the art at Twyfelfontein there are plenty of human images here, with hunters, dancers and even swimmers drawn on the wall alongside the prey species important to the bushmen long ago.

Driving back for breakfast we spot our first rockrunner (at last!). Breakfast provides plenty of photographic opportunities from the restaurant, with a succession of birds including rosy-faced lovebird and Hartlaub's francolin. Rock dassies bask in the morning sun as we pack up the trailer and take to the road again.

The drive to Swakopmund is punctuated by a few stops. We see karoo chat as soon as the vegetation gets really sparse and from then on the landscape starts to take on an 'other-worldly' kind of feel. We near the coast in perfect time for lunch and head to a nearby hotel. After ordering we check out the garden finding Cape sparrow, common waxbill and Orange River white-eye.

Lunch done we brave the surprisingly chilly wind and look for birds on the nearby saltworks. Near the sea we find a pan with a good number of birds. Waders are present in good numbers and we quickly find the splendid white-fronted plover, amongst the hordes of more familiar species. There are huge numbers of common terns present roosting on the pans and amongst them we find crested terns and a single Damara tern. Lesser and greater flamingoes appear at close range in small numbers. Driving to the sea we search in vain for black oystercatcher. Offshore the odd Cape gannet and Arctic skua cruise by. Finally we head for the hotel and check-in.

After dinner at the Raft some of us head out to Dune 7 for a quick nightwalk. It is very cool, rather windy and not much happens until Megs finds us a superb web-footed gecko – a strange and beautiful little thing. We see little other signs of life although a jackal is searching for picnic scraps and a roosting lesser grey shrike is disturbed a few times. We head home well satisfied with our brief session.

Day 15 Wednesday 5th November Walvis Bay and Rooibank

Phil heads out the door just after dawn for some solo wader spotting. The bay is heaving with birds as usual and several new birds are spotted. The stars without doubt are 13 black oystercatchers feeding avidly on a sandbank.

After breakfast we all walk to the Mola Mola office nearby (more shopping) to check in for our boat trip. We then walk the equally short distance to the jetty and climb aboard our boat. Our skipper Sonelle gave us an excellent trip and we enjoy ourselves immensely. We potter around the bay spotting stuff. Arctic skuas harass terns. Sooty shearwaters whizz past. The odd white-chinned petrel bobs on the sea or lumbers past. The Cape fur-seal show takes place with a succession of individuals of varying sizes shooting on board at odd moments. We feed pelicans and cormorants before the bucket is empty. All this is great but we came for cetaceans and we are not disappointed. Off the seal colony and point we find a huge pod of 70-odd Heaviside's dolphins. They bow-ride and jump around us for 15-20 minutes before we are called away by the promise of a leatherback turtle. We fail to connect with this but cannot grumble after a spectacular dolphin session. That just leaves the oysters and white wine and then it is back to shore and more lunch.

After lunch we head out to Dune 7 (photographs) and then on to Rooibank. Here we wander around in the dry riverbed of the Kuiseb, against a stunning backdrop of distant dunes. The

tenebrionid beetles that scuttle the dunes were great hits. Tracks and trails in the sand include the wandering marks made by underground burrowing-skinks. We try to catch one but our efforts all fail. We also found a few Inara melons on their spiky plants. One of our targets was the dune lark but the breezy weather meant that although we occasionally heard one, it always managed to give us the slip. Wedge-snouted lizards scuttle rapidly away and take patience to photograph. As the shadows lengthen we take more photographs of the dunes and stop again at Dune 7 on the way home. Two Grey's larks fly speedily in front of the car but fail to stop.

We drive to Swakopmund for a good dinner at the Tug. This takes so long that we decide against any further nocturnal activity.

Day 16 Thursday 6th November Walvis Bay, Von Bach Dam and transfer to Windhoek

Three of us join Orlando early in the morning for a drive through the saltworks up to the beach. The saltworks finally give up a single marsh sandpiper and a single chestnut-breasted plover and the pans close to the road are covered in birds. Orlando pays for a momentary lack of concentration on the beach and we get stuck fast in the sand. He is well versed in extraction techniques though and gets all the jacks and stuff out and sets to work. We leave him to it largely and enjoy the beach. Phil hunts for whales in vain but picks up some great seabirds passing close inshore. It is chilly in the light breeze and we are all glad when Orlando triumphantly drives the car off and we get to breakfast bang on time.

The rest of the day is spent travelling back to Windhoek. We stop briefly to pick up a packed lunch at Usakos.

We eat lunch at von Bach Dam in the rain. This depresses insect activity but the site looks fantastic for dragonflies and butterflies. Break over we head for Windhoek and a shower before the flight. We say our goodbyes to Orlando and head onwards on our journey home. We do our last checklist session at the airport, which along with foraging for food and changing money effectively reduces our wait time to zero. The flight leaves on time and is tedious but uneventful.

Day 17 Friday 7th November arrival at Gatwick

We all arrive after a great trip, loads of mammals, some fantastic wildlife moments and a very special team to share it with.

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.

23 rd October	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm	
24 th October	to Waterberg and the plateau	
25 th October	Waterberg and the plateau	
26 th October	transfer to Etosha (Halali)	
27 th October	Halali area (Etosha)	
28 th October	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)	
29 th October	Halali to Okaukuejo	
30 th October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
31 st October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area	
1 st November	transfer to Hobatere	
2 nd November	Hobatere	
3 rd November	transfer to Erongo	
4 th November	transfer to Swakopmund	
5 th November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area	
6 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek	
Chacma baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	Widespread in the hills. Memorably searching the bins and checking car doors every morning at Waterberg.
South African galago	<i>Galago moholi</i>	Waterberg – two seen very well on the way back from the restaurant one night.
Western rock sengi	<i>Elephantulus rupestris</i>	This little elephant shrew was seen poorly at Erongo and identified by a combination of habitat and range.
Scrub hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers.
South African ground squirrel	<i>Geosciurus inauris</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha, Hobatere.
Congo rope squirrel	<i>Funisciurus congicus</i>	Etosha – several.
Smith's bush squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>	Hobatere – small numbers.
Spring hare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>	Small numbers seen on the night drives at Hobatere.
African porcupine	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	Waterberg (single on one night). Brief views of one at Erongo feeding outside the restaurant.
Four-striped mouse	<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>	Colony at the picnic area in the west of Etosha on the last day.
Dassie rat	<i>Petromys typicus</i>	Single at Hobatere and common at Erongo.
Black-backed jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Widespread and common.
Bat-eared fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	Hobatere – small numbers on both night drives.
Slender mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguinea</i>	Waterberg – several seen.
Black mongoose	<i>Herpestes nigrata</i>	Family party at Waterberg, included some remarkably fearless youngsters.
Yellow mongoose	<i>Cynictis pencilata</i>	Etosha – noted in small numbers around Okaukuejo.
Banded mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – always entertaining.

Spotted hyaena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Etosha – up to 8 daily.
Common genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Hobaterere – seen on both night drives. One seen very well indeed. One visited the restaurant feeding station at Erongo.
Cheetah	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Two at Etosha – a distant view.
Wild cat	<i>Felis sylvestrus</i>	Single seen well at Okaukuejo (Etosha) by Phil. Luckily the rest of the team scored too with three on the last night drive at Hobaterere.
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Etosha – seen most days in small numbers (although 17 on our second day was a good total) – invariably loafing around during the day, but a single lioness watched hunting (unsuccessfully) by a waterhole on one day. At Hobaterere some of the group watched a pair of lionesses capturing and killing an oryx right by the lodge!
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	A male on the first full day in Etosha, gave superb views at close range.
Southern rock dassie	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Waterberg – abundant in the rocky jumble below the escarpment. Common at Hobaterere and Erongo.
African elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Etosha – noted daily, especially at the compound waterholes. Plenty of sign at Hobaterere but not seen. Desert-adapted group encountered near Twyfelfontein – superb.
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>	Etosha – frequently encountered at waterholes, especially at night.
Common warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Widespread
Giraffe	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobaterere.
Greater kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobaterere.
Eland	<i>Taurotragus</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Bush duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	Waterberg Plateau (2).
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – encountered daily in small numbers.
Klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>	A several at Hobaterere (one male seen very well), also a pair with a youngster at Erongo.
Kirk's dikdik	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	Waterberg – present in small numbers around the chalets and restaurant. Pair at Erongo.
Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Widespread and common.
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Etosha – common in the east, small numbers elsewhere.
[Bontebok]	<i>Damaliscus dorcas</i>	We got a chance to see bontebok (subspecies dorcas) at Mokuti Lodge – where it was an introduced lawnmower.
Kongoni (red hartebeest)	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	Etosha – small numbers, almost daily.
Brindled wildebeeste	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Sable antelope	<i>Hippotragus niger</i>	Waterberg – single male up on the plateau where it was successfully re-introduced.

Southern oryx *Oryx gazella*
Heaviside's dolphin *Cephalorhynchus heavisidii*
Cape fur seal *Arctocephalus pusillus*

Frequently encountered in parks and at Hobatere.
Large group encountered from boat in Walvis Bay
Huge numbers in the colonies on the point in
Walvis Bay (from boat). Also a regular super-
numerary on board during the boat trip.

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!

23 rd October	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
24 th October	to Waterberg and the plateau
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27 th October	Halali area (Etosha)
28 th October	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
29 th October	Halali to Okaukuejo
30 th October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
31 st October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
1 st November	transfer to Hobatere
2 nd November	Hobatere
3 rd November	transfer to Erongo
4 th November	transfer to Swakopmund
5 th November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
6 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.
Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Small numbers at Swakopmund saltworks.
White-chinned petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	Several from boat in Walvis Bay. Also seen on sea-watch from Pjaalties.
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	Many on the boat trip. Also seen on sea-watch from Pjaalties.
Great white pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	Etosha and coastal sites.
Cape gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	coastal sites
White-breasted cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	coastal sites
Cape cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	coastal sites
Reed cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	Recorded in small numbers at Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
African darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	Two at Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Black-headed heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only (two).
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Scattered records, large numbers at Etosha this year.
Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Etosha and coastal sites – small numbers.
Cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha – small numbers.
Squacco heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Naumutoni (Etosha).
Green-backed heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single).
Black-crowned night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	Windhoek (two).
Marabou stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Recorded on just one date at Etosha.
Greater flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	Etosha and coastal areas

Lesser flamingo	<i>Phoenicopus minor</i>	coastal areas
Egyptian goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	widespread
South African shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single).
Cape shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>	Single female at Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Cape teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	Etosha, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay.
Hottentot teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	Small numbers at Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Red-billed teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha.
Southern pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	Single female at Etosha.
Secretarybird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Etosha only, where small numbers nearly every day.
White-backed vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Pair at nest at Hobatere.
[Cape vulture]	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	Widespread but scarce this year.
Lappet-faced vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	Several birds showing some of the features of this very threatened species noted at Etosha, feeding on a carcass. These birds show blue and blue-red basal patches either side of the neck and some had blue hind neck patches.
White-headed vulture	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	Windhoek airport and Etosha.
Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Three on the way out of Etosha on the last day in the park. Fantastic.
Black-shouldered kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm (single).
Verreaux's eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	widespread – small numbers.
Tawny eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Waterberg – pair along escarpment. Single adults at Hobatere, Twyfelfontein and Erongo.
African hawk-eagle	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	Singles en route to Waterberg and near Windhoek.
Brown snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Black-chested snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	Waterberg – pair observed on one date.
Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	Recorded on two dates only.
Steppe buzzard	<i>Buteo vulpinus</i>	Small numbers throughout.
Augur buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>	Etosha – small numbers, almost daily. Pair at Hobatere.
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Windhoek sewage farm (single).
Gabar goshawk	<i>Melierax gabar</i>	Hobatere (single briefly).
Southern pale chanting goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>	Single at Windhoek.
Pallid harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers, almost daily.
Lanner falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	Widespread roadside bird in acacia scrub woodland.
Rock kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolis</i>	Etosha – single male at Okandeka.
Greater kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Red-necked falcon	<i>Falco chicquera</i>	widespread
Red-footed falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily. Others seen elsewhere!
Crested francolin	<i>Peliperdix sephaena</i>	A total of three recorded in Etosha.
Red-billed francolin	<i>Pternistes adspersus</i>	Single immature on two days near Halali (Etosha).
Swainson's francolin	<i>Pternistes swainsonii</i>	Pair at Waterberg.
Hartlaub's francolin	<i>Pternistes hartlaubi</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
		Recorded in small numbers at Waterberg and around Halali (Etosha).
		[Waterberg], Hobatere (3 seen well) and Erongo (from the breakfast table).

Helmeted guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	widespread
Blue crane	<i>Anthropoides paradisea</i>	Etosha (a total of 21 birds recorded in the east of the park on one day).
Black crake	<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>	Single at Namutoni (Etosha).
Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Namutoni (Etosha).
Red-knobbed coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Namutoni (Etosha).
Kori bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	Etosha and Hobatere – noted in small numbers daily.
Ludwig's bustard	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>	Etosha – just a single male this year (Nebrownii).
Red-crested korhaan	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>	widespread
Northern black korhaan	<i>Eupodotis afraoides</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
African jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	Single at Windhoek Sewage Farm on the first day and three at von Bach Dam on the last day.
Lesser jacana	<i>Microparra capensis</i>	Single wayward individual at Goas waterhole (Etosha) on two days. The surprise bird of the trip.
Great painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	Two or three at Goas waterhole (Etosha) on most visits.
African black oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	Thirteen on the sandflats at Walvis Bay one morning.
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 – single. Usually present in larger numbers but we could not find them this year.
Kittlitz's plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	Etosha – small numbers on a few days.
Three-banded plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only.
Grey plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	coastal sites
Crowned lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha, Hobatere – small numbers daily.
Blacksmith lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	En route to and at Etosha
Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	coastal areas
Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and Etosha.
Marsh sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Single at Walvis Bay.
Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Etosha (odd singles), coastal areas
Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	coastal areas, where very common.
Little stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	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>	Small numbers at Etosha and large numbers at saltworks on coast.
Spotted thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	Etosha and Hobatere – small numbers. Nest with two eggs found at latter.
Burchell's courser	<i>Cursorius rufus</i>	Etosha (at least nine birds in total, recorded on two days).
Temminck's courser	<i>Cursorius teminckii</i>	Single in with a small group of Burchell's near Halali (Etosha).

Double-banded courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	Etosha – small numbers daily.
Red-necked phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Single at the saltworks at Walvis Bay.
Parasitic jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Single Swakopmund amongst the terns offshore. Three from boat in Walvis Bay.
Pomarine skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Single pale phase bird from boat in Walvis Bay.
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>	Very small numbers in coastal areas.
Black tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	About 150 birds feeding off the point and seal colony on the boat trip in Walvis Bay.
Namaqua sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>	Etosha and Hobatere – seen in large numbers at waterholes.
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, Hobatere and Erongo.
Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Windhoek and other towns.
Speckled pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	Waterberg, Hobatere and Erongo.
Cape turtle-dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	ubiquitous.
Laughing dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	widespread.
Namaqua dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	widespread.
Emerald-spotted wood-dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	Etosha – single at one of the eastern waterholes. Heard at Mokuti Lodge garden.
Rueppell's parrot	<i>Poicephalus rueppellii</i>	Waterberg and Hobatere – small numbers.
Rosy-faced lovebird	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>	Waterberg, Hobatere and Erongo.
Grey go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Erongo.
African cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>	Etosha and Hobatere.
Jacobin cuckoo	<i>Oxylophus jacobinus</i>	Single in the west of Etosha on the last day.
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	[Waterberg], single at Okaukuejo at night.
African scops-owl	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	Etosha (Halali) – pair found roosting during the day, vocal at night. Very vocal at Hobatere and one roosting by the restaurant.
Southern white-faced scops-owl	<i>Ptilopusus granti</i>	Etosha (Halali) – single found roosting during the day. Pair seen well during the day at Hobatere.
Pearl-spotted owl	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	[Waterberg], Etosha (vocal and obliging pair at Okaukuejo) and [Hobatere].
Spotted eagle-owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	Singles at Waterberg on both nights. Heard at Erongo.
Giant eagle-owl	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	Adults seen frequently at night at the waterholes at Halali and Okaukuejo (Etosha).
Rufous-cheeked nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Freckled nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>	A single heard at Waterberg. Seen and heard at Erongo.
Common swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Only just arriving, seen on a couple of days only.

Bradfield's swift	<i>Apus bradfieldi</i>	Windhoek and Waterberg.
White-rumped swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	Waterberg only, probably overlooked.
Little swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	widespread
Alpine swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	Windhoek and Waterberg.
African palm-swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	widespread
White-backed mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>	Windhoek, Erongo and odd birds elsewhere.
Red-faced mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>	Two in hotel garden in Swakopmund.
European bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	widespread
Blue-cheeked bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	Noted on the plateau at Waterberg.
Olive bee-eater	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>	Seen only at Hobatere. Breeding in the rubbish dump.
Swallow-tailed bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere – small numbers.
Purple roller	<i>Coracias naevia</i>	widespread
African hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	Widespread in small numbers.
Violet wood-hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus damarensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere – small numbers.
Common scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	Etosha and [Erongo].
African grey hornbill	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	widespread
Damara hornbill	<i>Tockus damarensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Southern yellow-billed hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers.
Monteiro's hornbill	<i>Tockus monteiri</i>	Waterberg, Etosha, Hobatere and Erongo – small numbers.
Acacia pied barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere – small numbers.
Golden-tailed woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>	Hobatere – adult and recently fledged young seen separately.
Bearded woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>	Pair in garden at Mokuti (Etosha).
Rufous-naped lark	<i>Mirafraga africana</i>	Windhoek
Fawn-coloured lark	<i>Mirafraga africanoides</i>	Etosha
Sabota lark	<i>Mirafraga sabota</i>	Etosha
[Dune lark]	<i>Certhilauda erythrochlamys</i>	Rooibank – heard only this year.
Spike-heeled lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	Etosha
Pink-billed lark	<i>Spizocorys conirostris</i>	Etosha – small numbers throughout.
Red-capped lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	Etosha
Gray's lark	<i>Ammomanes grayi</i>	En route to Rooibank – two seen badly.
Chestnut-backed sparrowlark	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>	Etosha – single male.
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>	Just south of Hobatere (2).
Red-breasted swallow	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Greater striped swallow	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	widespread
Rock martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	Scattered records.
Banded martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Etosha – small numbers on the plains.
Fork-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	Widespread.
African golden oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>	Single female in Etosha.
Eurasian golden oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Etosha – two in garden at Okaukuejo.
Cape crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	Etosha – small numbers.

Pied crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Etosha – small numbers.
Ashy tit	<i>Parus cinerascens</i>	Only in Erongo area this year.
Carp's tit	<i>Parus carpi</i>	Waterberg, Etosha, Hobatere and Erongo.
Southern pied babbler	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>	Several in a party en route to Etosha on Day 4.
Bare-cheeked babbler	<i>Turdoides gymnogenys</i>	Hobatere – small numbers.
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 Twyfelfontein and en route to and from Swakopmund.
Capped wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	Etosha – singles recorded on two 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 on two days.
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>	widespread – small numbers.
African reed-warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm only. More often heard than seen.
Long-billed crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers. Nest found en route to Waterberg on Day 2.
Yellow-bellied eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha, Hobatere and Erongo – small numbers.
Burnt-necked eremomela	<i>Eremomela usticollis</i>	Single at Windhoek Sewage Farm. Also noted en route to and at Waterberg.
Rufous-eared warbler	<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>	Four in Etosha on two days.
Grey-backed camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>	Ubiquitous.
Rockrunner	<i>Achaetops pycnopygius</i>	[Waterberg], [Hobatere] and finally seen well at Erongo.
Zitting cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm.
Desert cisticola	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>	Waterberg and Etosha
Rattling cisticola	<i>Cisticola chinianus</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Etosha and Hobatere – in small numbers.
Black-chested prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>	Etosha
Marico flycatcher	<i>Bradornis mariquensis</i>	Widespread.
Chat flycatcher	<i>Bradornis infuscatus</i>	Single en route to Etosha. Etosha (almost daily in small numbers).
Pririt batis	<i>Batis pririt</i>	Waterberg – small numbers.
African paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	Single in Mokuti Lodge garden (Etosha).
Cape wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and coastal areas.
African pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	Scattered records.
Lesser grey shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	Single roosting individual at Dune 7 at night. More on drive to Windhoek on last day.
Common fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	Etosha (small numbers) and a few elsewhere.
Crimson-breasted shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	widespread
Black-backed puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	widespread
[Brubru]	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	[Etosha], [Hobatere].
Black-crowned tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>	Single at Waterberg.

Brown-crowned tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>	Waterberg (1).
White helmet-shrike	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>	Two between Namutoni and Halali (Etosha).
White-tailed shrike	<i>Lanioturdus torquatus</i>	Hobatere – small numbers.
Southern white-crowned shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>	Widespread.
Wattled starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	Windhoek, Okaukuejo (Etosha) and von Bach Dam.
Burchell's starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Meves's starling	<i>Lamprotornis mevesii</i>	Hobatere.
Cape glossy starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	Widespread and common.
Pale-winged starling	<i>Onychognathus nabouroup</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg, Twyfelfontein and Erongo.
Marico sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere.
Dusky sunbird	<i>Cinnyris fusca</i>	widespread.
Orange River white-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	coastal sites, mostly hotel gardens.
Red-billed buffalo-weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>	Etosha (just three at Namutoni). Comon at Hobatere and small numbers at Erongo.
White-browed sparrow-weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	Widespread away from coast.
Sociable weaver	<i>Philetairus socius</i>	Etosha
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	towns
Great sparrow	<i>Passer motitensis</i>	Etosha and Hobatere.
Cape sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	coastal sites.
Southern grey-headed sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	Waterberg, Etosha, Hobatere
Scaly-feathered finch	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>	dry areas
Chestnut weaver	<i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>	Waterberg (3), Etosha, Hobatere.
Southern masked-weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	widespread.
Red-billed quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Etosha and Hobatere.
Green-winged pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	Waterberg, meteorite site – small numbers.
Blue waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	Waterberg, Etosha – small numbers daily.
Violet-eared waxbill	<i>Granatina granatina</i>	Etosha – small numbers almost daily.
Common waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrilid</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm and coastal sites, mostly hotel gardens.
Black-faced waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>	Widespread.
African quail finch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	Etosha – eight on one day (Andoni).
Red-headed finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	Etosha – huge numbers.
Pin-tailed whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Several, including one good male, at Windoek Sewage Farm.
Shaft-tailed whydah	<i>Vidua regia</i>	Waterberg and Etosha – small numbers at waterholes.
Black-throated canary	<i>Serinus atrogularis</i>	Windhoek Sewage Farm, Waterberg, Etosha.
Yellow canary	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>	Single en route to Erongo.
Golden-breasted bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	Waterberg – single on plateau. Etosha and Hobatere – small numbers.
Cape bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	Twyfelfontein (pair)
Cinnamon-breasted bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	Hobatere and Erongo.
Lark-like bunting	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>	Only at Twyfelfontein this year.

Escapes
Budgerigar

Melopsittacus undulatus

Les found a single 'domestic blue' individual at Walvis Bay by hotel.

Systematic List Number 3 Butterflies

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

23 rd October	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
24 th October	to Waterberg and the plateau
25 th October	Waterberg and the plateau
26 th October	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
27 th October	Halali area (Etosha)
28 th October	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
29 th October	Halali to Okaukuejo
30 th October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
31 st October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
1 st November	transfer to Hobatere
2 nd November	Hobatere
3 rd November	transfer to Erongo
4 th November	transfer to Swakopmund
5 th November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
6 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

African monarch	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	Widespread.
Wandering donkey <i>acraea</i>	<i>Acraea neoboule</i>	Waterberg, Etosha and Hobatere
Braine's charaxes	<i>Charaxes brainei</i>	Waterberg
Yellow pansy	<i>Precis hierta cebrene</i>	widespread
Brown playboy	<i>Deudorix antalus</i>	Single nectaring in garden at Hobatere.
'Common blue' group	<i>Leptotes piritous</i> agg.	Waterberg – one of this difficult group photographed here (you have to dissect genitalia to id...).
Henning's black-eye	<i>Leptomyrina henningi</i>	Waterberg
Velvet-spotted blue	<i>Azonus ubaldus</i>	Waterberg
Topaz-spotted blue	<i>Azonus jesous</i>	Photographed at von Bach Dam on last day.
Zebra white	<i>Pinacopteryx eriphia</i>	Waterberg, Etosha
Broad-bordered grass yellow	<i>Eurema brigitta</i>	Waterberg
Veined orange	<i>Colotis vesta mutans</i>	Etosha
Queen purpletip	<i>Colotis regina</i>	Waterberg and Etosha.
Kalahari orange tip	<i>Colotis lais</i>	Photographed at Okaukuejo (Etosha).
Speckled sulphur tip	<i>Colotis agoye</i>	Single female at Waterberg.
Common orange tip	<i>Colotis evenina</i>	Photographed at Okaukuejo (Etosha).
Small orange tip	<i>Colotis evagore</i>	Photographed at Okaukuejo (Etosha).
Brown-veined white	<i>Belenois aurota</i>	widespread
Common dotted border	<i>Mylothros agathina</i>	Waterberg
Citrus swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>	Windhoek, Waterberg, Etosha
Green-marbled sandman	<i>Gomalia elma</i>	Single at Waterberg.

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).

23 rd October	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
24 th October	to Waterberg and the plateau
25 th October	Waterberg and the plateau
26 th October	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
27 th October	Halali area (Etosha)
28 th October	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
29 th October	Halali to Okaukuejo
30 th October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
31 st October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
1 st November	transfer to Hobatere
2 nd November	Hobatere
3 rd November	transfer to Erongo
4 th November	transfer to Swakopmund
5 th November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
6 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

Marsh terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>	Etosha – waterholes.
Puff adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	A splendid, large individual photographed in an outdoor toilet in the west of Etosha on the last day in the park.
Wedge-snouted desert lizard	<i>Meroles cuneirostris</i>	The speedy lizard in the dunes at Rooibank.
[Fitzsimmons' burrowing skink]	<i>Typhlacontias brevipes</i>	Rooibank – lots of tracks in the dunes.
Striped skink	<i>Mabuya striata</i>	Waterberg, meteorite site, Etosha
Variable skink	<i>Mabuya varia</i>	Etosha, Hobatere
Ovambo tree skink	<i>Mabuya binotata</i>	Etosha, Hobatere
Bushveld lizard	<i>Heliobolus lugubris</i>	Single at Waterberg.
Namaqua sand lizard	<i>Pedioplanus namaquensis</i>	Single at Twyfelfontein.
Waterberg sand lizard	<i>Pedioplanus rubens</i>	Two below the scarp at Waterberg – endemic to the park.
Rock monitor	<i>Varanus albigularis</i>	Single on the first game drive at Hobatere.
Namibian rock agama	<i>Agama planiceps</i>	Hobatere – common, easy to photograph in the garden. Also at Erongo and von Bach.
Ground agama	<i>Agama aculeata</i>	Etosha (2 – near Halali).
Flap-neck chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo dilepis</i>	Hobatere (single on first game drive).
African flat gecko	<i>Afroedura africana</i>	Several in restaurant at Erongo.
Cape thick-toed gecko	<i>Pachydactylus capensis</i>	Hobatere (single in garden).
Velvety thick-toed gecko	<i>Pachydactylus bicolor</i>	Single at Waterberg, flushed into one of the chalets.
Web-footed gecko	<i>Palmatogecko rangei</i>	Single superb individual found near Dune 7 (Walvis Bay) on a night walk.
Kaokoveld Namib day gecko	<i>Rhoptropus biporosus</i>	Hobatere – garden only
Bradfield's Namib day gecko	<i>Rhoptropus bradfieldi</i>	Hobatere – in dry gullies.
Western olive toad	<i>Bufo poweri</i>	Single juvenile at Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).
Marbled rubber frog	<i>Phrynomantis annectans</i>	In the swimming pools at Hobatere and Erongo.

Systematic List Number 5 Odonata

23 rd October	arrival and Windhoek Sewage Farm
24 th October	to Waterberg and the plateau
25 th October	Waterberg and the plateau
26 th October	transfer to Etosha (Halali)
27 th October	Halali area (Etosha)
28 th October	Halali to Andoni Plains (Etosha)
29 th October	Halali to Okaukuejo
30 th October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
31 st October	Okandeka and Okaukuejo area
1 st November	transfer to Hobatere
2 nd November	Hobatere
3 rd November	transfer to Erongo
4 th November	transfer to Swakopmund
5 th November	Rooibank and Walvis Bay area
6 th November	boat trip and transfer to Windhoek

Swamp bluet	<i>Africallagma glaucum</i>	Single at Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).
Common orange	<i>Ceriagrion glabrum</i>	Small numbers at Mokuti Lodge and Namutoni (Etosha).
Common bluetail	<i>Ischnura senegalensis</i>	Single at Namutoni (Etosha). Also at von Bach Dam.
Common hooktail	<i>Paragomphus genei</i>	Single noted at Etosha on one of the waterholes.
Phantom flutterer	<i>Rhyothemis semihyalina</i>	Single at Windhoek Sewage Farm was the only dragonfly encountered there during overcast conditions.
Keyhole glider	<i>Tramea basilaris</i>	Single at Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).
Blue basker	<i>Urothemis edwardsii</i>	Etosha (single).
Slender skimmer	<i>Orthetrum trinacria</i>	Single at Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).
Epulette skimmer	<i>Orthetrum chrysostigma</i>	Waterberg, Etosha.
Strong skimmer	<i>Orthetrum brachiale</i>	Etosha
Globe skimmer	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	widespread
Black percher	<i>Diplacodes lefebvrii</i>	Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).
Rock dropwing	<i>Trithemis kirbyii</i>	widespread
Violet dropwing	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>	Etosha
Broad scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>	Mokuti Lodge (Etosha).