



TOUR REPORT
BOTSWANA & ZIMBABWE
23RD NOVEMBER – 11TH DECEMBER 2022

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WEDNESDAY 23RD NOVEMBER

Our epic adventure in Southern Africa kicked off this evening at London Heathrow airport, where we met up ready for the overnight British Airways flight to Johannesburg.

THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER – *Sunshine, 31C*

Arriving into Johannesburg just before 8am local time, we had plenty of time to clear customs, collect our bags and be ready in departures to check back in for our Air Botswana flight on to Maun. Johannesburg airport was pretty quiet so we had more time than we needed, then on top of that there were only fourteen people on our onward flight so the check in and security took about five minutes! After watching our first trip birds around the terminal – **Little Swifts** - we eventually set off for Botswana on time, and flew north for almost two hours across miles upon miles of uninhabited savannah which stretched as far as the eye could see. Suddenly the Thamalakane River loomed into view and we dropped into Maun, where we would be staying overnight before our bush flight to Shakawe tomorrow. It was roasting hot as we headed out to the car park and joined our waiting vehicle to transfer the short distance to the hotel. A stop to change some money on the way added our first **Black-capped Bulbul** and **African Palm Swift**.

After checking in and having an hour and a half to gather ourselves after the long journey (and to let the day cool off) we headed out for our first birding walk, along the river close to the hotel. There were plenty of birds to be seen, and even right around the cabins we notched **Grey Go-Away Bird**, **Golden Weaver**, Red-eyed, Laughing and Ring-necked Doves and a pair of superb **Black-collared Barbets**. We took a walk out from the front of the hotel, where a pair of **Swamp Boubou** showed really well in the thickets around the parking area, and an African Hoopoe was feeding on the ground under some overhanging trees. Walking along the edge of the Thamalakane River new birds came thick and fast – **Purple Heron**, **Squacco Heron**, **African Openbill**, **White-faced Duck**, **African Jacana**, **Magpie Shrike** and both Pied and **Woodland Kingfishers**. The shallow lily-filled waters were full of **Reed Cormorants** and we saw at least six **African Pygmy Geese** too – real stunners! **Tawny-flanked Prinia**, **Black-crowned Bulbul**, **Red-faced Mousebird**, **Jacobin Cuckoo**, **White-browed Robin-Chat**, **Black-throated Waxbill**, **Black Crake** and **Hartlaub's Babbler** were also seen. Ending the day on the bridge looking down the river, we saw a **Levaillant's Cuckoo** at close range, and then a **Senegal Coucal**. The highlight though – two **Hippopotamus** frolicking around in the river channel!

FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER – *Warm and sunny, 30C*

We had a quick mooch down to the bridge again before breakfast, to see what was about – more of the same species as yesterday evening were noted, with the addition of a Lilac-breasted Roller posing by the hotel entrance! After breakfast we packed up and left for Maun airport, where we would take a 50 minute flight north over the Okavango Delta to Shakawe. Even waiting in the domestic departures lounge we added three new birds – **Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers** were nesting outside, and we also saw **Southern Masked Weaver** and Speckled Pigeon. The flight across the delta was fantastic, with unbroken views for miles and miles of firstly dry savannah and then increasingly, we could see more water. It is still early in the season with water levels just rising through the delta, but by the time we got up to the 'pan handle' a watery world lay beneath us! Shakawe airstrip was just a small thatched hut with no personnel, but we added **Crowned Lapwing**, **Little Bee-eater** and **Shaft-tailed Whydah** (a breeding male) at the edge of the airstrip. It was a fifteen minute drive from here to the Xaro Lodge reception on the banks of the river, where a quick refreshment stop and check-in (complete with a stonking **Crested Barbet** in the trees above!) preceded our walk down to the small pier for the boat. **Cape Wagtail**, Cattle Egret and Common Sandpiper were all seen as we boarded, for the short and very fast ride down to the lodge. Even at this speed we marvelled at

some super wildlife (which we would get to see at a slower pace later on) such as **African Fish Eagle**, **Goliath Heron**, **Giant Kingfisher** and several large **Crocodiles** – one of which was eyeing up a flock of White-faced Ducks on the bank!



Violet-backed Starling welcoming us at Xaro Lodge

Xaro Lodge was one of those places where, as soon as we approached it, we knew we were going to wish we were here for longer! A friendly welcome saw us quickly bedded into our cabins, set among mature gardens overlooking the river and back by savannah woodland behind. A **Violet-backed Starling** interrupted our welcome meeting with ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ at its impossibly iridescent purple feathers, but there was more to come! Even in the heat of midday the lodge grounds were full of birds – **White-fronted Bee-eaters** sallied from the overhanging bushes along the waterside, and various weavers were building their nests including **Brown-throated Weaver** which was new for us. **Woodland Kingfisher**, **African Grey Hornbill**, **Black-collared Barbet**, Spotted Flycatcher, **Collared Sunbird** and **Meve’s Starling** were among the highlights. After a lovely lunch, two woodpeckers were added – a pair of **Bearded Woodpeckers** working high in a tree above the restaurant, and a **Bennet’s Woodpecker**, being very obliging on the ground feeding on ants.

After lunch we were joined by our guide Tom who kicked off by showing us a roosting African Wood Owl at the back of the cabins. This was followed by a three hour boat trip along the Cubango River and its tributaries which took us through miles of papyrus swamp and brought us an absolute shed load of wonderful birds! **African Fish Eagle** were common and often extremely photogenic, while various sizes of **Crocodile** included one monster floating in the river ahead of us! We passed bustling colonies of **Brown-throated Martins**, watched **Goliath Heron** striding past two **African Skimmer** on a small island, and had numerous close encounters with herons – including the sought-after **White-backed Night Heron**. **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**, **Wattled Lapwing**, **Lesser Swamp Warbler**, **Mosque Swallow**, **Fan-tailed Widow**, **African Purple Swamp-hen** and many, many more were seen. Landing for a short walk we managed good views of **Coppery-tailed Coucal** and a **Diderick Cuckoo** – one

which we had thus far heard several times but not seen. Long-toed Lapwings were plentiful on this open grass area which also hosted dozens of **Collared Pratincoles**. A **Hammerkop** (we'd seen a nest earlier), **African Stonechat**, **African Snipe**, Malachite and **Giant Kingfishers** and **African Openbill** Storks rounded off a roll-call which was really too big to list. Back at the lodge in time for a gorgeous sunset, we enjoyed a cold beer around the campfire followed by a sumptuous meal – complete with the not-so-distant yowls of **Brown Hyena** while we ate!

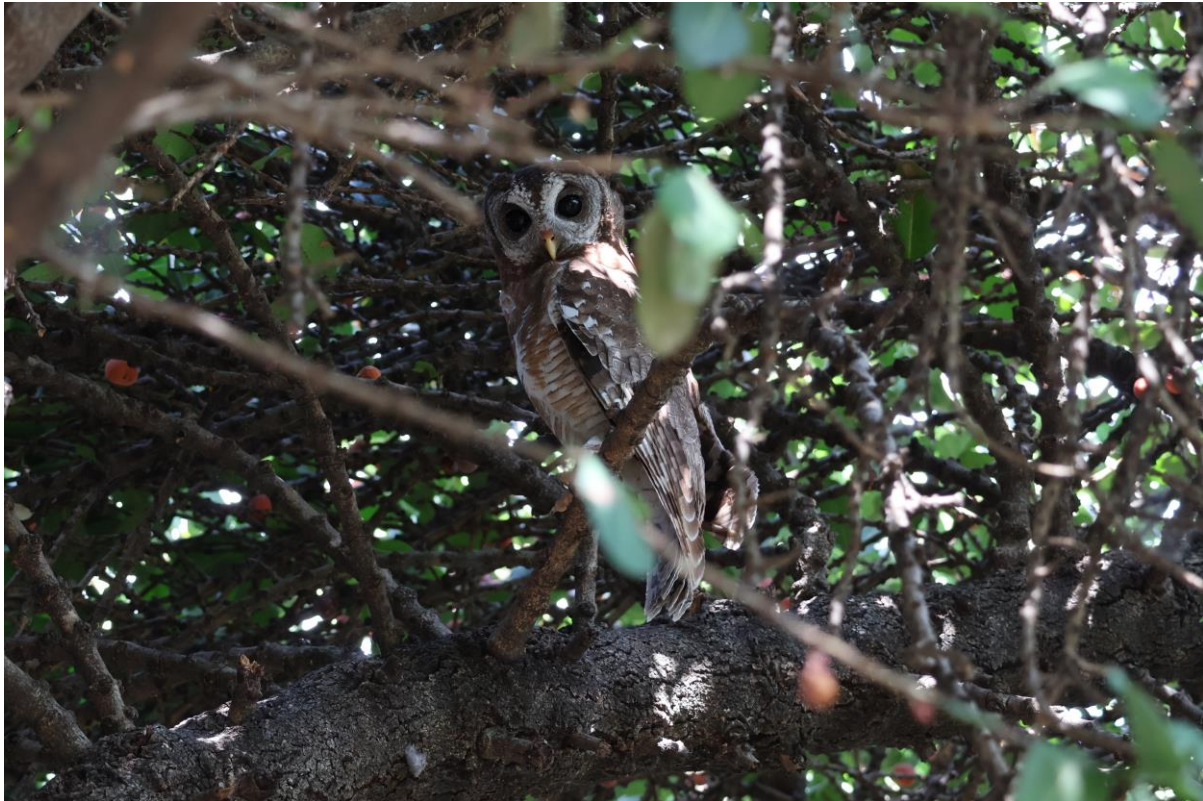


Bennett's Woodpecker

SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER – *Overcast day with rain in the afternoon, 24C*

We rose early this morning to meet up with Tom for a two hour bush walk. It was lovely and cool and there was lots of bird activity among the acacia scrub and baobab trees, most of which consisted of various weavers, Dark-capped Bulbuls and Hartlaub's Babblers! We soon started adding variety though with both **Black-collared Barbet** and the spectacular **Crested Barbet** seen again, **White-fronted Bee-eaters**, **Bennett's Woodpecker**, and best of all two **Red-billed Oxpeckers** hanging around some donkeys. The piercing shriek of a parrot alerted us to the presence of several **Meyer's Parrots** feeding in the canopy of a fruiting tree, and while they were initially hard to see we did eventually have great scope views of them. A delightful parrot with blue rump and yellow shoulder patches. A flock of oxpeckers then wheeled in from a height and landed in the top of a big tree, but not the same as before – these were **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** and one we would no doubt see more of once we headed onto the safari leg of the trip. We searched in vain for Pel's Fishing Owl at some usual haunts, and Tom had another spotter out looking on our behalf too, but we couldn't find any – this being the real speciality of this leg of our trip. Lilac-breasted and **Broad-billed Rollers**, **Diderick Cuckoo**, **Meve's Starling** and a **Marabou Stork** circling the camp rounded things off before breakfast

– though we shouldn't forget to mention that we also got close but partly obscured views of two **African Elephants** in the bush too!



African Wood Owl roosting in the lodge grounds

We had time to birdwatch on our own around the grounds before lunch, and we went back for seconds on the roosting **African Wood Owl** which was in the same spot as yesterday. We found a large flowering tree which was proving attractive to lots of small birds, noting four Willow Warblers and a couple of **Lesser Honeyguides**, plus **Grey-backed Camaroptera**. Checking the papyrus-fringed channel beneath the cabins gave us good views of **Brown Firefinch**, **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** and some of the **Thick-billed Weavers** which were nesting there. We also had more opportunities to photograph the dazzling **Violet-backed Starlings** and **Woodland Kingfishers** which were obviously nesting somewhere about the grounds, and there were three **Wire-tailed Swallows** by the boat jetty. Rain arrived and curtailed our birding any further for the moment, so we enjoyed a leisurely lunch prior to our 3.30pm boat tour.

The afternoon would entail another boat trip, this time heading back in the direction of Shakawe. It was overcast and drizzling as we set out, but developed into a beautiful evening with simply stunning light. We saw several repeats of birds seen yesterday – **Black Crake**, **Green-backed Heron**, **Water Thick-knee**, **Wattled Lapwing**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Hammerkop** and more. Kingfishers and Bee-eaters were the riverside showstoppers though – we enjoyed point blank views of Pied, Malachite and **Giant Kingfishers** in perfect light, and sailed alongside two bustling colonies of **White-fronted Bee-eaters**. Their European cousins, the spectacular **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**, have just arrived here to make the Okavango papyrus swamps their winter home and we had simply stunning views in that 'golden hour' of evening light, perching on reeds right alongside the boat. A short woodland walk to try again, unsuccessfully, for the Pel's Fishing Owl failed to take the shine off a superb few hours on the water. We headed back through clouds of hundreds of hirundines gathering to roost (including the distinctly large **Banded Martin**) and had close encounters with **Hippopotamus** and three elegant **African Skimmers**. Simply brilliant!



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater along the Cubango River

SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER – *Overcast with heavy rain showers and strong winds across the delta, 23C*

The schedule for our flight to Xakhanaxa was released yesterday afternoon and so we knew we had about three hours birding time around Xaro this morning, before heading off to the airport around 10am. We met with Tom again for a pre-breakfast bush walk around the property, to see if we could add some new species. There were more great views of species that were starting to become familiar, such as **Crested Barbet**, **Diderick Cuckoo**, **Woodland Kingfisher**, and the various starlings, weavers and **Hartlaub's Babblers**. **Broad-billed Rollers** were discovered to be nesting in a hole by the bar area, and our old friend the **Violet-backed Starling** dazzled us again too! Wandering through the scrub Tom suddenly turned to us with a massive grin on his face – we weren't sure what was going on but as we joined him, two massive birds flew out of a tree just ahead of us – **Pel's Fishing Owls**! We thought we had lost our chance with this key target bird but thankfully not! They flew only a short distance, but split up so we kept an eye on one, which looped upward into the canopy of a large tree. Edging slowly closer, we were able to put a scope on the bird and get some brilliant views. It relaxed a bit and we were able to move closer still, giving everyone the fantastic close ups of this wonderful bird that we had hoped for. Heading back towards the lodge, there was one more treat in store, as a **Fiery-necked Nightjar** flushed up from under our feet and again, only flew a short distance. We were fortunate enough to locate the bird on the ground again, and put a scope onto it as it peered through slit-eyes and relied on its remarkable camouflage. Two fabulous birds to round off our stay here!

At 10am, we left the lodge by boat and headed back north along the Cubango River to the Xaro jetty. We saw Common Swift along the way, and had some close views of **Collared Pratincoles**, plus a fly-by **Southern Carmine Bee-eater**. Around the jetty were **Malachite Kingfisher**, **Cape Wagtail**, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** and a new bird for the trip – **Namaqua Dove**. We still had plenty of time before our flight, so Rony drove us up to the impressive new Okavango road bridge. Arriving at the airstrip, a **Gabar Goshawk** greeted us perched on a wire, and the **Crowned Lapwings** were seen again,

scurrying at the edge of the runway. Our plan arrived, and we departed on time – though despite the benign weather here, our pilot advised us that storms were developing in the delta area and it might be a bumpy flight. As we reached Xakhanaxa airstrip, gateway to our mobile safari starting in Moremi Game Reserve, it was clear the wind had increased and as we made our approach, strong cross winds rendered a landing impossible. We circled away and went north to try and land at another strip, in order for the wind to subside. This was just as bad though, and we couldn't land here either! We were starting to get nervous – we didn't want to end up back in Shakawe, or even Maun! Our pilot headed back to our original landing site and had another go, this time masterfully touching us safely down to meet with our friends from Letaka safaris and our guide Bate who was waiting for us.



Pel's Fishing Owl – our main target species for the first leg of the tour

After loading the Toyota truck that would be our best friend for the next ten days or so, we headed off along sand tracks towards the Moremi park entrance – we saw our first **Comb Duck, Helmeted Guineafowl, Cape Glossy Starling** and **Saddle-billed Stork** (a young bird) as we approached. In side the park, we had about three hours birding/driving to reach our mobile camp which had been set up ahead of us. We wound our way through mopane woodland, noting lots of new birds such as **Striped Kingfisher, Lesser Grey Shrike, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Arnott's Chat, African Golden Oriole** and **White-crested Helmet-shrike**. More good views of **Meyer's Parrots** were had too, plus some brilliant views of **Southern Carmine Bee-eaters** which were swooping down from their canopy perches.

As we headed out more into the open savannah, **White-backed Vulture** and **Brown Snake-eagle** were seen, along with our first confiding herds of Impala, which would be the most frequently encountered herbivore of this part of the trip. Open country birds such as **Swainson's Spurfowl, White-browed Scrub-robin** and **Red-billed Francolin** were seen, and we also got up close and personal with **Burchell's Starling**, another **Lesser Grey Shrike** and lots of Magpie Shrikes. A **Eurasian**

Hobby flashed by – a scarce bird here - and as we started to pass swampy areas and open pools, lots of waterbirds included our first Intermediate Egrets.



Hippopotamus in Moremi Game Reserve

Game started to appear in greater numbers and diversity, and all of it incredibly close and confiding! **Greater Kudu, Bushbuck, Tsessebe, Waterbuck** and the gorgeous **Red Lechwe** were all seen, and **African Elephants** began to appear too.



Red Lechwe – the flagship herbivore of Moremi

It was once we'd crossed the 3rd bridge and through the next park gateway onto open savannah, that a more classic African safari scene unfolded in front of us – herds of **Burchell's Zebra** and **Blue Wildebeest** grazing in their droves, and all bathed in the now perfect evening light. We didn't know where to look! Both **Side-striped and Dark-backed Jackals** were seen, the latter with cubs right next to the track, and we had more close Elephant views (including a mum and baby), and our first **Warthogs**. Birds were everywhere too, with a pair of **Double-banded Sandgrouse** next to our vehicle being particularly good. Just before we reached camp, we drove through a herd of **Buffalo**, grazing away among the bush. Such impressive and powerful animals when seen up close. We turned up a track into some woodland and there was our camp, with our team of DB, KK and Life waiting to greet us with a tray of drinks! Our outlook was across a lagoon full of **Hippopotamus**, with herds of **Red Lechwe** grazing and flocks of waterbirds flying in and out, all viewed against the backdrop of an African sunset around our roaring campfire. What a place! A **Lion** roared as we enjoyed a pre-dinner drink – we were going to love this place!



Zebra by the third bridge gate in Moremi

MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER – *Sunny spells and dry, 25C*

Our camp wake-up call was at 5am this morning, and we rendezvoused at half past for coffee and breakfast overlooking the lagoon. The Hippos were pretty vocal, splashing around in 'their' pool, and the area was thick with waterbirds including our first **African Spoonbill**. Setting out just after 6am, we headed around the edge of the lagoon and off into the park, driving various tracks through bush, mopane woodland and open savannah – to be honest, none of us apart from Bait had a clue where we were in relation to the camp! Our truck took the terrain in its stride and provided the perfect viewing platform, allowing close-up and uninterrupted views of our targets. Birds were very active in the early morning and we saw **Buffy Pipit**, **Red-billed Hornbill**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **White-browed Sparrow-weaver**, Lesser Grey and **Red-backed Shrikes** and many others were seen. It was the various waterholes that provided real birding interest though, with one in particular warranting some scoping time! Familiar waders on their wintering grounds included Ruff, Greenshank, Little

Stint and...a **Ringed Plover**! Bait had never seen one here before, so initially viewed our ID with some scepticism until he'd seen it in the scope! The more typical **Three-banded Plover** was also present, along with the diminutive **Kittlitz's Plover** and a good hand of migrant **Marsh Sandpipers**, looking wonderfully delicate as they picked along the shoreline. We also saw the gorgeous **Hottentot Teal** and somewhat more vulgar **Spur-winged Goose**, while **Impala** and **Wildebeest** grazed in the background. Various small birds included **Pin-tailed Whydah**, **Rufous-naped Lark** and both **African** and **Plain-backed Pipits**, again all seen at stupidly close range.



Blue Wildebeest, Moremi Game Reserve

Up ahead, a strange booming call was heard and Bait told us that it was the **Southern Ground Hornbill** calling – sure enough as we rounded the next lot of scrub, there were two of these incredible-looking birds striding across the grassland, one carrying a frog in its beak! After spending a while with these we continued on, seeing our first **Southern Giraffe** and enjoying more views of **Warthog**, **Waterbuck** and a spectacular pair of **Tawny Eagles** perched low on a dead tree by a small watering hole. All of a sudden Bait casually turned off the track and we started driving through rank grass and sage among scattered bushes and trees, going totally off piste. We didn't really think anything of it until the truck came to a gentle stop and there under a small tree no more than ten metres away, was a pride of **Lions**!! We enjoyed an amazing time watching and photographing this magnificent animal – nine girls in this pride including two cubs, and all incredibly relaxed, intent and – full! They had apparently killed a buffalo the previous day. After we'd had our fill, we set off back to the 'main' track and saw some vultures on a dead tree up ahead. A **Spotted Hyena** then appeared and we realised the remains of the kill must be close – indeed the Hyena began dragging the carcass around! This fearsome and powerful looking animal really did look a creature not to be messed with, but because it was a lone animal it was actually quite nervous and walked off as we approached. There wasn't much left of the buffalo by now – just the skull, horns and skeleton basically! Returning to camp for lunch, we saw an **African Hawk-eagle**, had more close views of **Southern Carmine Bee-eaters**, and an amazing encounter with a mother and baby **Elephant** which walked right past our

truck, really relaxed and feeding away. So many magical moments in just one morning, it was a bit mind-bending!



Wattled Crane – a real Okavango speciality

After lunch we had a siesta and then recovered at 3.30pm for high tea before our afternoon game drive back through the park. As we drove out along the narrow sandy track through the bush, we noticed a lot of hirundines and Common Swifts feeding low over the bushes and soon realised a hatch of winged termites was taking place. Lots of other small birds were arriving to snatch themselves a high-protein snack too, the pick of were **White-crested Helmet-Shrike** and **Jameson's Firefinch**. The radio then crackled into life and it was BD, who had just passed us on the track in the big truck not five minutes previously. A quiet conversation took place with Bait who then turned to inform us that BD had just found a **Leopard** while on his way to the park entrance for provisions!



Male Leopard at dusk, Moremi Game Reserve

We headed off as quick as we could and arrived minutes later to find him parked up, along with another truck that had been close at hand. The **Leopard** – a massive male – was lying in the shade under some bushes and my word, what a spectacular animal! We watched him for a while until he yawned, stood up and stretched and then moved to a shadier spot out of view. We repositioned our truck and now we were right next to him. To be so close to this magnificent animal, look into its eyes and see every marking on its immaculate coat, was quite something. We left him dozing in peace and continued on. One of the absolute highlights of this safari thus far was the fact that there were so few other visitors here, due to a combination of strict regulation of numbers by the park authority but also that this was the low season here in Botswana due to the onset of the rains. It meant in hundreds of square miles of park there were hardly any other vehicles, quite unlike the rugby scrum now encountered in the Kenyan parks.



Black-backed Jackal carrying a dead congener!

We drove on, enjoying more close views of **Zebra, Elephant, Wildebeest** and **Red Lechwe**, before coming across the same family of **Black-backed Jackals** we had seen the previous day. The mother came running in carrying a leg, which we thought was of a young Impala! After dropping this at the den, she returned towards where the kill was obviously stashed and so we parked and waited for her to return. The cubs were inquisitive, coming right up to the vehicle, but the mother remained aloof and seemed reluctant to return to her kill. We didn't realise that this was because it was actually quite close to the track, as suddenly she dashed in and grabbed it before running off – not an Impala at all, but another Jackal!! Bait had never seen this before, but reminded us that as scavengers, Jackals are very opportunistic animals. We were then treated to a sandgrouse double act with firstly a pair of **Double-banded Sandgrouse**, and then two dust-bathing **Burchell's Sandgrouse** both ridiculously close to our truck and in the golden glow of evening light.

On a nearby waterhole, some nervous Lechwe alerted us to a big **Crocodile** hauled out and it seemed to be making its way towards a smaller one feeding on something dead on the shoreline. Clearly, whatever the remains were, they didn't belong to the small croc and the bigger one chased it into the water with much menace and splashing, eventually driving it out onto land where it walked off to another pond, being mobbed by **Water Thick-knees**! After this episode, we had about half an hour left before the 7pm park curfew and so returned to where we had seen the male **Leopard**, in case he had woken up and was getting ready to hunt. As we approached the area, the

Leopard casually walked across the track in front of our truck! He nonchalantly wandered into the sage bush, but we had already seen that a small mixed herd of **Zebra**, **Wildebeest** and **Reedbuck** were feeding just on the other side of the thicket and they clearly had no idea the Leopard was there. Were we about to witness a kill?! Sure enough the **Leopard** slinked out of view into hunting mode and we remained on edge – suddenly all the herbivores charged off in a panic and we knew the **Leopard** had tried to strike – a lone Reedbuck which peeled off and bombed past us was the likely target, as the other animals there would have been too large. With the hunt over, we found the **Leopard** again just chilling among the sage bushes and had one last magical moment with him as he sniffed the air in the direction of the herbivores, the last golden rays of sunlight tickling the backs of his ears. WHAT, an amazing experience! Back to camp then for beers around the campfire and another superb meal cooked by Life.



Burchell's Sandgrouse pair

TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER – *Clear and sunny, 28C*

A hotter day today but with a cooling breeze, saw us rise again at normal 'camp time' of 5am, ready for breakfast and coffee before setting off at 6am. A fairly relaxed start to the morning was spent watching the large herbivores on the open plain towards the park gate – **Zebra**, **Elephant**, **Wildebeest**, **Red Lechwe** and **Waterbuck**. **Lilac-breasted Rollers** were very photogenic in the morning sunshine and we also saw **Red-capped** and **Rufous-naped Lark**, **Rattling Cisticola** and **Red-backed Shrike**. We crossed the 3rd bridge and made for the north-east section of the park, where a large lagoon complex would provide some excellent birding. Passing through some scattered woodland, a birding stop produced good views of **Grey-backed Camaroptera**, **Bearded Woodpecker**, **Meyer's Parrots** feeding on the fruits of the sausage tree and a superb male **African Paradise Flycatcher**. A **Southern Giraffe**, the first of a three seen in this area, greeted us as we approached the lagoon area, and we could see lots of **Collared Pratincoles** along the sandy shoreline. As we approached closer, we realised that 'lots' actually translated into something a bit more special than that – a breeding colony of at least 500 birds!!! We spent an hour here watching them, calling and

flying right past our truck and landing often only a few feet away. An **African Skimmer** also had two chicks here, and we also had **African Spoonbill** feeding within metres of us. We ended up staying here so long we had tea break here as well – just in time for two **Wattled Cranes** to fly majestically by.



Collared Pratincole, one of 500 birds at a breeding colony

Winding our way back out through the bush we had close views of several birds including Woodland Kingfisher, **African Stonechat**, **White-browed Sparrow-Weaver**, **Emerald-spotted Wood-dove** and best of all, a gorgeous **Dickenson's Kestrel** which is something of an Okavango speciality. Several small pools yielded waders with Ruffs being most common, followed by Greenshank, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Little Stint**, **Kittlitz's Plover** and **Three-banded Plover**. Two **Warthogs** were mud-bathing in one of the pools, and gave us probably our best views so far of these characterful creatures. Another truck stopped and after the usual exchange between guides in Setswana, we ambled on armed with news that a male **Lion** had been in the area. We soon found some **Zebra** looking very alert and nervous, staring intently towards a scattered area of low bushes. We circled the area and sure enough there was a magnificent mature male **Lion**, resting in the shade with a very full belly, panting away in the heat of the day. Another spine-tingling encounter with one of the big cats and we were starting to wonder, with ten days still ahead of us, what there might be left to see!

In the afternoon we enjoyed a leisurely game drive around the southern end of the park, starting first at a couple of productive water holes where we had been seeing good numbers of wading birds over recent days. In particular, we had superb close views of **Marsh Sandpipers**, often cheek-by-jowl with Wood Sandpiper and Greenshank for comparison. The Ringed Plover was still about (!) and we had more good views of **Three-banded Plovers** too. The usual assortment of grazing herbivores, Warthog and **Black-backed Jackals** were also seen, and we began to notice large numbers of Swifts

feeding over the distant forest – actually tens of thousands of birds! As we headed nearer we realised there was a layer of larger birds below the swifts, which were clearly falcons of some sort. As we approached, they started peeling off and bombing towards us, flashing over our truck and hawking insects over the bushes and trees. They were in fact all **Amur Falcons**, hundreds of them, and with that wonderful late afternoon light we could see their bright white underwing coverts clearly. Lots of other raptors were on the move too, including **White-headed Vulture**, **Tawny Eagle** and a single **Red-necked Falcon**. All in all, quite a sight.



African Skimmer

Next we reached an area of acacia scrub where we parked up and disembarked for some more birding. We had seen relatively few sunbirds on the trip so far, so we were delighted to find a bush full comprising of two species – **Marico Sunbird** (the most common one here) and a single young male **Amethyst Sunbird**. We also saw **Marico Flycatcher** here, plus the delightful **Chinspot Batis** and a couple of migrant **Icterine Warblers** feeding in the canopy. On our way back along the road we found **Burchell's Sandgrouse**, **Coppery-tailed Coucal** and a lovely pair of **Spotted Thick-knee** just as the light was going. There was one more surprise in store though, as a **lioness** was snoozing on the sandy track into our camp as we approached, and we had to drive around her! This drove home just how 'in amongst' everything we were, and in fact as we sat at the dinner table, a male **Lion** walked past just behind our campfire! We could hear two males roaring to each other as darkness fell – quite a spine-tingling way to end the day.

WEDNESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER – *Hot and sunny day, 33C*

A travelling day today as we moved camps, around 100km north-east to Kwhai. This meant a long time in the truck but to be honest, it certainly didn't feel arduous as we were enjoying fantastic wildlife moments all the way. As well as the usual game seen on our way through Moremi, we had a lovely close encounter with a mother **Elephant** and calf, and had some nice close up birds including a young **Tawny Eagle** perched sentinel, and small pools full of waders and herons. An adult Tawny

Eagle was also seen. Perched high in the top of a leafy tree and clearly being mobbed by small birds. Closer inspection revealed a pair of **African Paradise Flycatchers**, clearly nesting nearby, were intent on driving the massive eagle away, which they eventually succeeded with! As we exited the park gate we had superb views of **Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starlings** and **Southern Ground Hornbills**, the latter hunting grasshoppers right beside the track.



Tawny Eagle – a sandy morph immature

We drive on through beautiful Mopane forest, seeing a troop of **Chacma Baboons**, **Golden-breasted Bunting**, **Slaty Egret**, **Giraffes** and having a bit of fun pulling some stranded Germans on a self-drive out of the mud – they'd been digging for two hours so were quite pleased to see us! Soon we were entering drier country with open grass plains, and lots of grazing herbivores especially **Imapala**, and **Red Lechwe** around the few remaining pools. This was the **Moremi-Kwai** part of the reserve and quite a different landscape. A pair of **Namaqua Doves** fed on the track in front of our truck but in fact **Moremi** had one last hurrah for us before we were to exit the park and cross the bridge into **Kwai** proper. First two **Serval** were spotted, under a shady bush some way off the track. We all saw them briefly slinking off into the grass but then as we drove around for better views, they had completely melted away. Barely a mile on, and **Bate** pulled out an unbelievable spot of two male **Cheetah**, snoozing in the shade under some trees some distance away. As with all the big cats so far, we were able to pull the truck right up to them and spend some time watching them at close quarters. They soon began to yawn and stretch, and **Bate** said they were getting ready to go off to hunt. Sure enough he was right, and these two brothers walked off across the grassland, pausing briefly to lookout from a termite mound, before continuing on to the edge of the Mopane forest. To see such beautiful animals up close was truly a highlight of what had been an amazing trip so far.

The day, as ever, wasn't quite done. Next up was a tree full of **Southern Carmine Bee-eaters** in the evening sunshine. Lots of other birds were around too, with **Chinspot Batis**, **Brubru**, **Red-billed Firefinch** and a female **Long-tailed Paradise Whydah** seen too. Meeting another truck, we heard about a **Leopard** on our route and soon we were parked next to its tree – a female animal this time, sitting in the classic pose with long tail hanging down. It was keeping a close eye on a mother **Impala** and fawn grazing a short distance away, but was clearly also very interested in something over its

other shoulder. We only discovered what this was as we went to drive off – two male **Lion** were sleeping under the bushes below it and we could actually park up and see both them and the **Leopard** at the same time! Absolute madness! From here we finally crossed the bridge into Kwhai village, and in fact it was quite odd to see settlement and people (sparse as it was) after our time in the bush. We wound our way through more quite dense woodland and eventually reached our camp, which the lads had spent the afternoon setting up in another super spot.



Cheetahs – two brothers heading off to hunt in the late afternoon

THURSDAY 1ST DECEMBER – *Hot and sunny, 38C*

Our hottest day of the trip so far, but a relaxing one after our very long day yesterday. We had an hours lie-in, with the wake up call at 6am! This was because we were doing a river trip this morning on dug-out canoes or mokoro (though these days they were in fact fibreglass!) which started at 7.30am, a short drive from our camp. On the way out we noted our first **Arrow-marked Babbler** around camp and then a **Pearl-spotted Owlet** which flashed across the track as we drove out (we had heard this species, along with **African Scops Owl**, calling around camp last night). Reaching the river our makoko crew met us and we were soon gliding off silently, in three canoes of two plus 'driver', to enjoy a relaxing couple of hours among the water-lillies and riparian wildlife. We didn't see a huge amount that was new, but had superb close views of what we did see – African Jacana, Open-billed Stork, African Darter, Pied Kingfisher, African Fish Eagle, **African Hawk-eagle**, Black Crake, Woodland Kingfisher and lots of nervous **African Pygmy Geese**. Breaking ashore for tea and coffee, a superb **Verraux's Eagle Owl** stared down at us from its daytime roost, clutching a francolin in its talons! **Black-backed Puffback** and **Black-throated Canary** were a couple of new species for us seen in the trees around too. Punting our way back to land, we re-joined Bate and began to head back to camp for lunch, birding along the way. We saw a couple of superb birds, the best being **Groundscraper Thrush** which flushed across the track and then gave great views feeding on the ground. We also found **Yellow-throated Petronia**, **White-crested Helmet-shrike**, **Red-headed Weaver** and finished with more good views of **Arrow-marked Babbler**.



Verraux's Eagle Owl with francolin prey

After a superb lunch cooked up by Life, we had a couple of hours snoozing around camp in the heat of the day (and crikey it was now hot!) before a protracted afternoon session and night drive combined. It was a little quiet in the bush as we drove around looking mainly for birds but we did see a couple of really nice new species in **Crowned Francolin** and **Kori Bustard**. The latter was a tremendous view in the early evening sunshine of the worlds heaviest flying bird wandering sedately across our path.



Kori Bustard – the World's heaviest flying bird

Next we encountered a large group of **Elephants** with several babies, and were able to watch and photograph their feeding activities at close quarters. As the sun began to set, we parked by the Khwai river and enjoyed a G&T to the sounds of the African bush and with the aid of our telescopes, watched Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn appearing in the sky – the latter particularly fabulous as its rings were clearly visible through the scope. It was now dark enough to start our night drive back towards camp, which was pretty quiet apart from the fantastic **Spring Hares** – a kangaroo-like rodent which bounds along on its enormous back legs! There were two nocturnal surprises in store though with the first just as we were approaching camp. The lamp picked up some eyeshine and then we could see two large ears peeking out of the grass – it was a **Caracal**!! This, our fifth cat species of the tour, was undoubtedly the most rarely seen and we were very privileged to get binocular views showing those elongated ear tips before it slinked off into the grass. Back at camp, the **African Scops Owl** was calling again and this time everyone had a good view with the aid of a light. A great end to yet another exhilarating day!



Elephants with babies, Khwai concession 1st December

FRIDAY 2ND DECEMBER – *Hot and sunny, 35C*

We were back to a 5am wake-up this morning to head out and explore the main game-drive area of the Khwai concession. A quiet start saw us enjoying good views of many now familiar species from the vehicle, such as the ever-present Lilac-breasted Roller, Fork-tailed Drongo, Little Bee-eater and others. **White-crowned Shrike** was seen, a species only glimpsed for the first time yesterday, and we had several good views of **Tawny-flanked Prinia** too. Finding an open area with short grass and scattered acacias where it was safe to walk for a bit, we found a **Pearl-spotted Owlet** perched up on a dead tree, and had our first **Rufous-bellied Heron** flying over – a range-restricted species we had missed out on thus far. A coffee stop by the river in the company of a bathing Elephant also brought us scope views of **Black Cuckoo**, which was an elusive species we had heard many times but not yet managed to see. As we headed off again, we noticed large numbers of vultures gathering in the sky. Parking up, we had two **Hooded Vultures** up and then several **White-backed Vultures** began

breaking off and cruising in low right over us. Clearly something was happening as we realised they were perching up on dead trees behind us, and we figured there must be a kill somewhere nearby. A drive around the scrubby bushes located a half-eaten Impala, surely the work of a Leopard and perhaps the animal was still about since the vultures were reluctant to come down. **Tawny Eagle** came in to join the throng and we had sensational views of an adult perched up, while a smart **Bataleur** flew past too. It was great to see all these impressive birds of prey up close, and maybe we would return later to check what was happening around the kill. Other highlights of the morning included watching the activities of the industrious **Dung Beetle**, magnificent overhead views of **Black-chested Snake-Eagle**, and a tree full of male **Amur Falcons**.



White-backed Vulture

After lunch today we set out for another late afternoon/evening combined game and night drive around the Khwai area. We didn't see a huge amount during the daylight section (though there were lots of **Elephants**, **Giraffe** and other herbivores about and we saw several large raptors too) but things came to life after our 'sundowner'. An **African Rock Python** slithered into view and posed for us, our first snake of the trip. Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** then flew in as dusk fell and as we set off on our lamping session, a Spotted Hyena crossed our path in the distance almost right away. A **Lesser Bushbaby** was a very cute addition to our burgeoning list (34 species and counting!) of mammals and a little further on, we found a Nightjar resting on the ground. The identification of nightjars here is not straightforward without seeing the spread wings and tail, but thankfully with a good photo we were able to work this one out later on – it was a **Square-tailed Nightjar**. The good sightings kept coming with more **Spring Hares** bounding along in the light beam, and then a superb **Verraux's Eagle Owl** perched on a dead branch beside the track. The narrow track through the forest leading back to our camp was productive once again at the end of the drive, with a **Pearl-spotted Owlet** perched up on a low branch, and then just as we turned into camp, a **Barn Owl** posed for us! A great session!

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER – *Baking hot day, 39C*

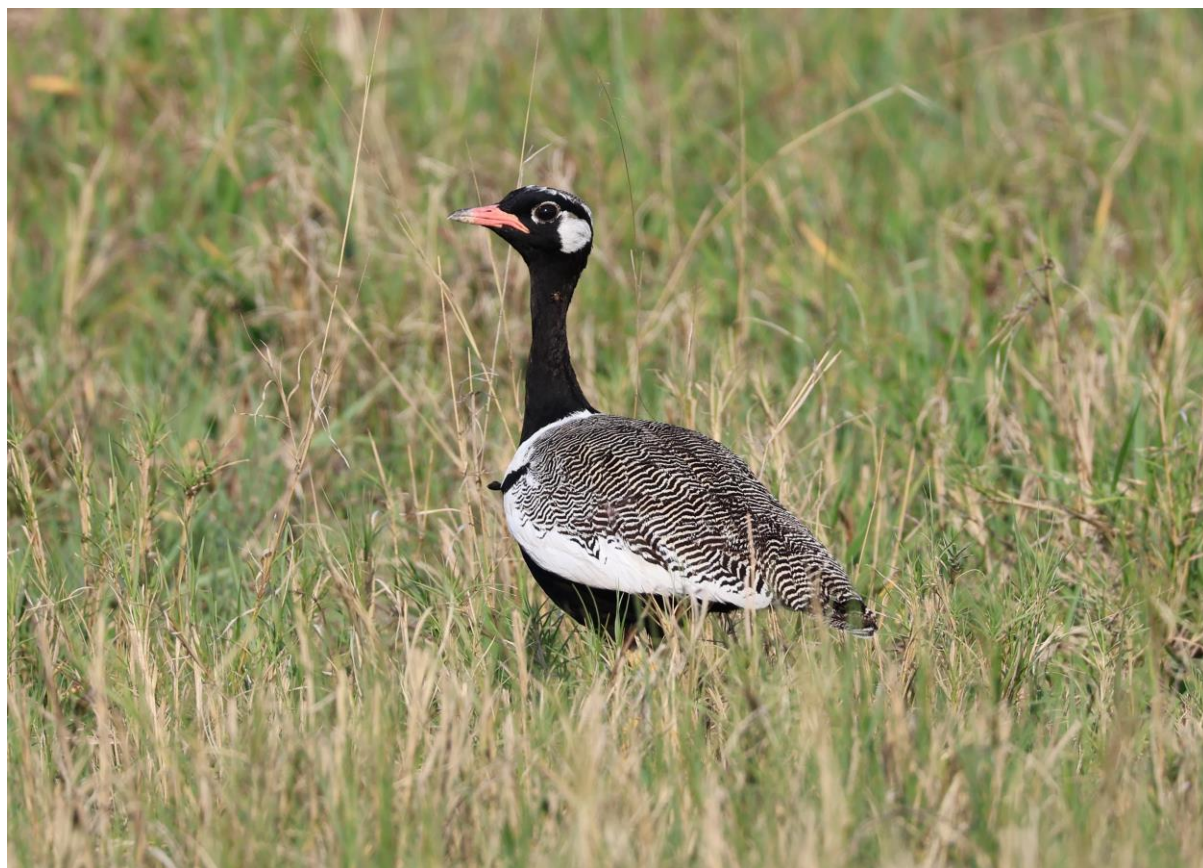
Another travelling day for us today saw us leave the lads packing up the camp as we setted out for the game drive area for another scoot around before embarking on the 100km drive north to Savuti which would be our next base. Lots of **Elephants** were seen including a large group coming down to the river to drink, but the undoubted highlight was a young female **Leopard** spotted walking through the long grass. She was very obliging, and not bothered by us at all as she went about her early morning business. We watched her checking out the bushes and standing up and sniffing, so she was presumably on heat and looking for a mate. Only a small animal with an especially small head compared to the huge male we saw earlier in the trip, she walked right past our truck so close we could hardly get her in the optics! Eventually she slinked off into thick cover, sending the guineafowl scattering up into the air as she went – another top sighting.



Young female Leopard out and about in Khwai concession

Leaving Khwai behind we continued north towards the Mababe depression, seeing plenty of raptors such as **Tawny Eagle**, **Bataleur**, **Black-chested Snake-eagle** and **Amur Falcon** along the way. Passing the Chobe National Park entrance gate we then drove through the Mababe depression, a vast area of grass plains looking quite different to the bushy country we had been in so far – indeed this looked more like the classic Serengeti scene with large numbers of grazing herbivores scattered across the plain – **Wildebeest**, **Elephant**, **Impala**, **Zebra** and **Giraffe**. A female **Lion** was snoozing in the shade by the some bushes, and the various water holes were full of herons and ducks – including our first **Black-headed Heron**. More good roadside bird sightings included **Red-billed Quelea**, **White-crowned Shrike**, **Bradfield's Hornbill** and even a **Common Buttonquail** which scurried ahead of us on the track before flushing into long grass and disappearing. The **Golden-breasted Bunting** remained elusive and hard to see, while **Southern Carmine Bee-eaters** gave no such problems, perching alongside our truck. Eventually we left the depression and continued on a long, straight sand road through low scrub for many tens of kilometres. It was baking hot and even the breeze flowing through the open truck was boiling! We didn't stop now for Elephants and Giraffes but

instead ploughed on, covering good ground in time for a lunch stop beneath the shade of apple-leaf trees. A siesta here was very welcome, before we had a final push to reach our next base in Savuti.

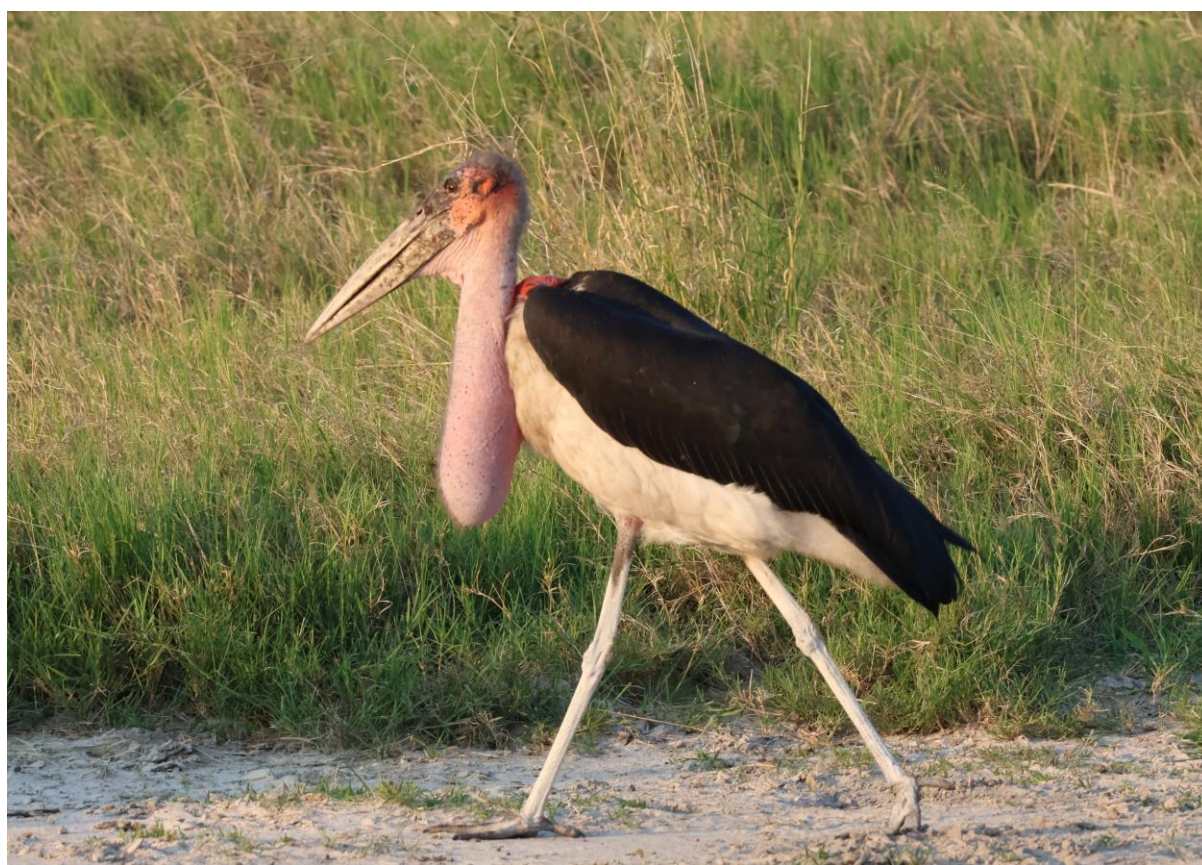


Northern Black Korhaan, Savuti Marsh

Common Ostrich and Steenbok (a small, normally solitary antelope) were roadside highlights as we continued into the heart of the now dried-out Savuti marsh, a huge open grassland area which was absolutely full of birds. Zitting Cisticola were everywhere and we were constantly flushing **African Pipits** and **Rufous-naped Larks** off the track ahead – plus two more **Common Buttonquails**. As the ‘golden hour’ descended a male **Pallid Harrier** ghosted by on the hunt, quickly followed by the first of three male **Montagu’s Harriers**. A termite hatch was clearly happening on a massive scale across the whole area, and the sky was full of hawking **Collared Pratincoles**, **Amur Falcons**, our first **Lesser Kestrels** and many other species. Storks were also taking advantage of the feast, with the huge **Marabou** feeding in small groups, snatching the termites as they attempted to make their maiden flight. **Kori Bustard**, **Red-crested Korhaan**, **Black-bellied Bustard** and **Northern Black Korhaan** were all seen too – the last two performing their displays at point-black range.

It was one of those evenings when we didn’t want daylight to end as there was just so much to see. As we navigated around the woodland edge we were flushing groups of **Tawny Eagles** in fours and fives at a time, from just feet in front of our truck. Many would perch on dead branches by the side of the track allowing for quite ridiculous views of these impressive birds! **Woolly-necked Storks** were in on the action too, and as we entered an open marshy area (water is pumped from underground sources to create artificial waterholes and small marshy areas for the benefit of wildlife, since the marsh dried up in 2015) a huge flock of migrant **Abdim’s Storks** came in and began feeding around our truck. We were all a bit blown away, not least because amid all the brilliant birding we had seen in excess of 80 **Elephants** in this area as well! Just as the last embers of daylight descended, we found two male **Lions** resting under some bushes with a closely guarded female. We were five

minutes past the parks 7pm curfew now so had to make haste to reach camp, nestled among the Kalahari Apple-leaf trees at the edge of the now dried up Savuti river.



Marabou catching Termites

SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER – *Hot and sunny, 39C*

Considering we were supposed to be into the rainy season, we had actually only had one day of rain on the trip so far, which was the day we flew into Xahkanaxa in the windy weather. Since then it had largely been cloudless and hot, and today continued in that same vein. We knew after last night's wildlife bonanza that the early morning in Savuti was going to be special, but in fact it produced perhaps our best morning drive of the trip so far. All was fairly quiet as we wound our way out through the woodland, to the small open area with pools where we had seen so much last night. Everything seemed to have gone though, with about a dozen **Tawny Eagles** and a few **Marabou** resting in the nearby dead trees. We chatted to another safari vehicle, just as a Martial Eagle flew down and tried to nail a guineafowl! It missed, but perched up on top of a tree for good scope views. Checking the various pools revealed lots of **Hottentot** and **Red-billed Teal**, Wood Sandpipers and **Kittlitz's Plovers**, but as we rounded some bushes to check the last pool we were confronted with the jaw-dropping sight of a pack of **African Wild Dog**, coming down for a drink! For several folk in the group who had done East African safaris before, this had been their number one target for the trip. Botswana is perhaps the best country in which to see them, as they have declined so dramatically across most of their range. Having their pups and a fixed den during June and July, this was not the easiest month to see them as they roamed a massive area, so we were incredibly lucky and privileged to have this early morning moment with them as they splashed about and rolled in the grass. Seven dogs in total, only two of which were pups – down from an original litter of eight. Bate told us that they have a very poor survival rate due to predation by Leopards and Lions. Suddenly their ears all pricked at once and their demeanour totally changed – they had spotted an Impala across the far side, a lone male animal. They went into stalk mode but clearly weren't quite

at the races, perhaps already being well fed, and the Impala sprang off leaving the dogs to look on. Eventually, after a second attempt at another Impala, they all headed off into the bush – just mega!



African Wild Dogs in Savuti

The rest of the morning couldn't really live up to the first part but we still had some nice close sightings of many birds around the various pools. At one, a hundred **Collared Pratincoles** were resting and a beautiful female **Amur Falcon** came down to drink. We found a **Curlew Sandpiper**, and then better still a pair of **Greater Painted Snipe** which showed incredibly well out in the open. We also spent a while watching the activities of **Comb Ducks**, noting for the first time the amazing iridescent sheen on the males. Lots of bee-eaters and shrikes, more larks and pipits, and huge numbers of **White-backed Vultures** hanging around a long-dead Elephant were some other morning highlights before we headed back to a hot and sultry camp.

Our evening session had yet more delights in store as we toured around the rocky outcrops, bush and watering holes of Savuti. A family of **Banded Mongoose** gave super close views by the side of the truck, and various pools held more waders and ducks including some more excellent views of **Greater Painted Snipe**. In the distance over the grassland we could see masses of birds hawking for emerging termites – many hundreds in fact – and interestingly they appeared to be mostly rollers. We headed off for a better look and thankfully a sandy track got us around the right side for the light. We were surprised to find that most of the birds were in fact **European Rollers**, presumably a migratory flock drawn down by the termites. There were Lilac-breasted Rollers too, allowing for some side-by-side mid-air comparisons. Lots of other birds were taking advantage such as **Wattled Starling**, **Amur Falcon** and **Bradfield's Hornbill** – an absolutely mesmerising sight! Reaching another watering hole, we noticed seven pratincoles resting at the far side and immediately they looked different. All appeared to be juveniles, with faint scaling on the upperparts caused by pale feather fringes, and quite a mottled, scaly throat and breast. They completely lacked any evidence of the coloured throat patch of adults and had no red at all on the bill – we were wary of how similar juveniles of Collared and Black-winged could be, but having seen an awful lot of Collared on the trip

we had not seen any exhibiting this suite of features. Sure enough when a kite flushed them for a fly-around, they lacked a white trailing edge to the wing and instead of rufous underwing coverts, they were dark. Our first **Black-winged Pratincoles** and superb views to boot! Nearby bushes around the pool held another nice new bird for us in the form of two **Green-winged Pytilia**, a cracking little finch with bright green wings and striped flanks.



European Roller chasing termites, Savuti

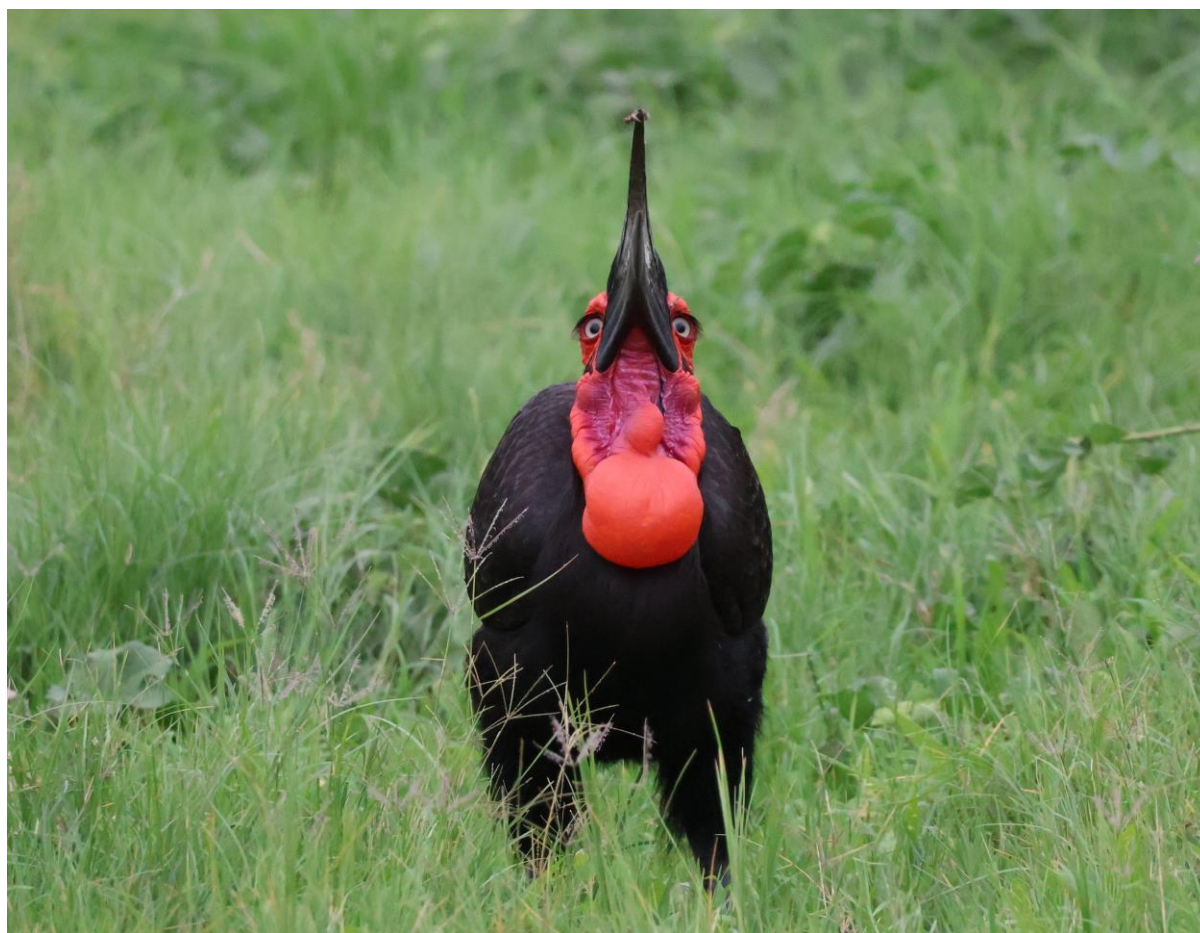
Our route back to camp at sunset produced a couple more mammal highlights, with **Yellow Mongoose** and a wonderful family of **Bat-eared Foxes** being two new mammal additions for us. The foxes had a den with five small pups, and so were hanging around and showing really well for us. At the other end of the scale, we caught up with the 'two brothers' again as we neared home – two male **Lions** with a female paired to the dominant male. They weren't very far from our camp as the crow flies, and as we sat around the fire having a beer we could hear them roaring, and the elephants trumpeting, as darkness fell. The **Lions** roared on well into the night, providing quite a soundtrack!



Bat-eared Fox

MONDAY 5TH DECEMBER – *Overcast with rain showers in morning, 20C*

A big contrast to yesterday, we actually needed coats on at first thing this morning! We headed out to explore the dried up area which formerly made up Savuti marsh – now a huge grassland expanse much favoured by grazing herbivores and open-country birds. We stopped by the three **Lions** on our way out, with the male mating with the female as we arrived – she didn't look overly impressed! Leaving them to it, we stumbled on a group of **Southern Ground Hornbills**, giving their amazing deep resonant calls to one another as they foraged through the long grass. Two new birds for the list followed in an un-co-operative **Whalberg's Eagle**, and three more obliging **Quailfinch** which landed on the track in front of our truck. We saw another **Bat-eared Fox** too, and a couple of small flocks of **Lesser Kestrels** which were hovering over the grassland and perching in various dead trees in between. One was successfully mugged by the smaller but more aggressive **Amur Falcon**, and to complete the scene one or two male **Montagu's Harriers** were floating around.



Southern Ground Hornbill

Before we reached our coffee stop location we had superb close views of **Northern Black Korhaans**, and then passed another pool where a big flock of pratincoles erupted in unison, having previously been perfectly camouflaged against the muddy shore. We had the light with us and could immediately see the flock comprised both species, with several **Black-winged Pratincoles** scattered in among their Collared cousins. The same pool held double figures of **Kittlitz's Plovers**, a **Marsh Sandpiper** and a large flock of Ruff too. A very tame **Yellow-billed Hornbill** joined us for coffee, and then we started making our way back to camp via the elephant carcass where we had seen lots of vultures yesterday. There seemed to be even more birds present today, and among the hordes of **White-backed Vultures** we saw a smart **White-headed Vulture** which flew up from the carcass and perched on a dead tree. There was no sign of our main target though – the rarer Lappet-faced

Vulture, which we had still to see on the trip. Another truck arrived and after an exchange, decided to go off road slightly to allow its passengers a view of the kill. We decided to hold back and see if they flushed any other vultures up. They duly did, and right away we spotted a much larger, darker bird perched up among the white-backs – it was a **Lappet-faced Vulture**! We had good scope views of this immense and grotesque looking bird, before it was flushed by the equally beautiful Marabou and flew off! We could just see the carcass through the bushes, and three **Hooded Vultures** were feeding there giving four species for the morning! On our way back for lunch, we came across only our second herd of **Buffalo** of the trip, a **Jacobin Cuckoo** and two **Great-spotted Cuckoos** which flew past our vehicle calling loudly – another great morning!



Lappet-faced Vulture with White-backed Vultures, Savuti

After another excellent lunch prepared by our brilliant camp crew, we headed back out for the evening session and right away bumped into a herd of Elephants heading towards one of the water holes to drink. We parked up to watch them and what followed was quite simply the most staggering of wildlife spectacles. Over the next half an hour, in the region of 200 Elephants came through, stopping to drink, bathe and spray mud, quarrelling and trumpeting, and munching as they went. We were right in amongst them and couldn't easily move off until the whole herd had passed, which took quite some while. At one point we were completely surrounded but other than the odd inquisitive young bull, or curious baby which was quickly shepherded back into line by mum, they largely ignored us. None of us had ever seen anything like it, but there was more as they entered the bushes and trees behind the waterhole and clearly became very agitated. We guessed what might have happened – the three brothers were most probably sleeping inside there! We drove to the far side to the next open area, and sure enough one of the impressive male Lions was sauntering off to a new resting place with his two brothers, having been flushed out by the elephants. A second watering hole was holding the elephants up for more frolicking around – the younger ones simply seemed to be just enjoying themselves.

Our original plan for the afternoon had been to visit one of the rocky outcrops, where Bate knew of some ancient rock paintings which we were keen to see. As we approached the area, a chat-like passerine flicked up into a bare bush in front of the truck, then dashed across the track. We made a

flippant comment that ‘it looked like a Redstart’ but assumed it must be something else. As we rounded the corner it popped back into view, displaying its palled plumage and contrasting bright orangey-red tail – it was a Redstart! With only a few Botswanan records, this was a real rarity. Thankfully after all the afternoons excitement, there was still time to climb up to view the paintings – only small, but still impressive and clearly depicting elephant, antelope and what looked like an ibex. In a small cave adjacent to the paintings, we could hear a lot of high-pitched squeaking and so went to check it out with a torch – the cave was absolutely brim-full of bats! After some deliberation over the field guide we settled on Egyptian Free-tailed Bat. Back to camp then in time for a timely shower, beer and dinner.



Elephant bath time in Savuti

TUESDAY 6TH DECEMBER – *Cooler overcast day with heavy rain and winds. 20C*

With some 160km to cover between camps, today was our longest travelling day in distance though actually, because the tracks were rather better than on our last travel day, and some of the journey was even on a paved road, it didn’t feel too bad. As usual we started with a drive around locally, waiting to hear that our camp team had departed to let them get ahead before we started north ourselves. Amazingly as we drove into the open area where we’d chanced on the pack of seven **African Wild Dogs** two days ago, they appeared again from the bush and this time came to drink right next to our vehicle. These wonderful and endangered animals have certainly been a trip highlight but these views were just magical, being right in amongst the pack. They set off with their distinctive gait, ears pricked back and following Impala off into the bush – so lucky for us to see them again!

We saw the mating pair of Lions again as we made our way off across the marsh, also picking up a superb **Lanner Falcon**, and enjoying more views of the increasingly common **Shaft-tailed Whydah** plus a family of **Black-backed Jackals**. After passing Savuti airstrip, we then connected with a long, straight, sandy track which we drove for the next two hours until we reached the exit gate for the

park, where we broke for coffee. Birds seen along this route included **Neddicky, Long-billed Crombec, White-bellied Sunbird**, lots of **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters, Wahlberg's Eagle, Red-crested Korhaan** and **White-crested Helmet-Shrike**. The next two hours followed the same sand road, all the way to a small village at Kachikau where we stopped for lunch by a small craft shop which allowed some of us to pick up some local souvenirs. We had driven a lot of this route through heavy rain but now it was warm and muggy as we turned onto the tarmac road following close to the Namibian border. A vast floodplain grazed by cattle, mixed with **Zebra** and **Hippopotamus**, stretched out as far as the eye could see. Several roadside stops produced more new birds, including **African Harrier-Hawk, Purple Roller, Tropical Boubou** and the gorgeous **Orange-breasted Bush-shrike**. After about 35km we turned off again back onto a sand road, and stopped to check in at the Chobe National Park gate.



African Wild Dog – part of the same pack of 7 in Savuti

Even this brief stop produced more birds – In fact probably the bird of the day, when Keith spotted a cracking **African Barred Owlet** roosting outside the toilets! A singing **Kurrichane Thrush** was also enjoyed, and then once in the park we were looking across a vast floodplain to Namibia on the other side of the river. Here there were lots of waterbirds, with a flock of 100 **Collared Pratincoles** and two **Glossy Ibis** being noteworthy. This part of the park was really heavily grazed and eroded, and we counted over forty **Giraffe** in one relatively small stretch, plus we could see herds of Zebra and masses of Impala too. Small birds included a plethora of **Red-backed Shrikes**, which were everywhere, a couple of **Green-winged Pytilia, Marico Flycatcher, Jacobin Cuckoo, Common Cuckoo, Double-banded Sandgrouse** and **Spotted Thick-knee**. Soon we arrived at our final camp site in the forest, and once again enjoyed our sundowner beer to the backdrop of roaring Lions.



African Barred Owlet at the Chobe gate

WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER – *Overcast and cool with rain showers, 18C*

Our coolest day of the trip so far – it was a jumpers and coats sort of morning! Our morning drive covered a relatively small area of Ihaha reserve in Chobe National Park, bordering the Chobe river which forms the border with neighbouring Namibia. It was very much a birding sort of morning, with lots of small birds in particular to be seen. Top among these was the **Red-backed Shrike**, wintering in the open bushy habitat in extraordinary numbers – we must have seen somewhere between 50-70 individuals during the morning. Lots of small seedeating birds included **Shaft-tailed Whydah**, **Long-tailed Paradise Whydah**, **Green-winged Pytilia**, **Black-throated Canary** and **Scaly-feathered Finch**, while we also had glimpses of **Black-crowned Tchagra** and better views of **Black-backed Puffback**. All along our route were lots of Bee-eaters, predominantly Southern Carmine and Blue-cheeked, and these were frequently perching up right next to our vehicle. Of course mammals were also in evidence though it was mainly grazing herbivores such as **Impala**, **Kudu** and **Elephant**, though the most numerous was **Giraffe** with dozens seen.

Most of our drive followed close to the Chobe river and various subsidiary pools, so waterbirds were very much in evidence with a large variety of species seen including **Glossy ibis**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Openbill Storks**, **Saddle-billed Stork** and various waders and ducks. Pick of the waterbirds though was a species we'd been searching for all trip – the diminutive **Lesser Jacana**. Bate expertly spotted one walking on floating weed at the edge of the river and we all had some good scope views. Other bits and pieces on the way back included **White-browed Scrub-robin**, **Speckled Pigeon** and our best views yet of **Grey-backed Camaroptera** right next to the truck.

After lunch heavy rain and thunder descended for our siesta time, but it had cleared away to blue sky by high tea and our usual 4pm departure for the afternoon session. We again focussed primarily on birds around Ihaha but first up was a wonderful troop of **Chacma baboons** just at the entrance road to our camp, including a couple of newborn babies. We watched their antics for a while, the youngsters behaving just like naughty children while up a tree 100m away, three sentinels stood

guard for danger. Lots of nice birds were seen during the drive, with several pockets of activity bringing lots of sightings of species like **Swamp Boubou**, **Green-winged Pytilia**, **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **Black-throated Canary** and scores more **Red-backed Shrikes**. **African Pied Wagtail**, **Jameson's Firefinch** and **Shikra** were examples of species we had not seen since the start of the trip, while an **Osprey** was a list addition. The Chobe river again produced ample opportunity to see a plethora of waterbirds, plus grazing herds of **Zebra**. It was with a heavy heart that we made our way back to camp for the last time, as we would be leaving our camp-team tomorrow after 11 nights in their company. We all had dinner together and listened to the sounds of the night for the last time – an **African Scops Owl** was calling, and our log was interrupted by a **Spotted Hyena** howling really close to camp.



Chacma Baboon baby chilling out in Chobe National Park

THURSDAY 8TH DECMEBER – *Overcast all day, 23C*

A travelling day today as we packed up and left camp, bidding farewell to KK, Badisa and Life who had looked after us so well over the last 12 days. We had a two hour drive to get to Kasane, on the banks of the Chobe river and close to the border with Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We didn't really stop much along the way, and even then arrived a little late for our scheduled boat trip along the frontier river. This was a lovely relaxing and bird-filled couple of hours, with some superb species seen including many – such as **White-fronted Bee-eater**, **African Snipe**, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Whiskered Tern**, **Black Heron** and **Goliath Heron** – that we had not seen since the beginning of the tour. There were new species on offer too of course, starting with our top target which was the dazzlingly beautiful **Half-collared Kingfisher**. We had good views of this plus a bonus **Brown-hooded Kingfisher** too for good measure. Among the terns, careful scrutiny revealed a juvenile **White-winged Tern**, which was extremely similar to the similarly plumaged Whiskered but for it's more petite and long-winged shape, dark carpal bar and more extensive dark cap. Among the rushes and papyrus, we found another target bird which we had missed earlier in the trip – **Luapula Cisticola**.

Back at the lodge we enjoyed a sumptuous lunch, before saying farewell to Bate and joining up with a new bus and driver who would transfer us the short distance to the Zimbabwean border. Here we enjoyed a painless transit across where a local tour company were waiting to collect us and transfer us further on to Victoria Falls, around one hour away.



Half-collared Kingfisher along the Chobe River

Arriving at our luxurious accommodation in Victoria Falls, was a bit of a shock after 11 nights under canvas! We took the opportunity to have a relaxed check in and then headed up the observation tower, which looked across the Zambezi River to Zambia, with the spray of Victoria Falls itself rising in the distance. The hotel garden had lots of flowering trees which were attracting many birds, especially sunbirds, and we quickly added yet more new species. **Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Yellow-fronted Canary, Bronze Mannikin, Red-winged Starling, African Yellow White-eye** and **Pied Crow** were all duly ticked off, but there were great views too of some species we had seen previously such as **Amethyst Sunbird, Marico Sunbird, Violet-backed Starling** and **Black-collared Barbet**. An early night was on the cards for all after a long day.

FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER – *Overcast morning, then prolonged heavy rain, 24C*

This morning was our time for exploration of the falls, and we had arranged a local birding guide to collect us from our hotel for half a day in the forest overlooking the falls gorge. We set off at the rather leisurely time of 0730 and were soon in the park, wandering through the lush woodland and seeing our first **White-browed Robin-Chats** and **Tropical Boubou**. Starting at the west end by the so called devils cataract, we worked our way east along the 16 different viewpoints overlooking different parts of the falls and birding as we went. The first part was fairly quiet, but careful checking of the rocks and branches in the Zambezi River yielded the first of three top target birds we had here – the **Rock Pratincole**. Distant, but with good views through the scope, we then went on to see a further three including some views of them flying around a perching a bit closer on rocks at the top

of the falls. Next target to fall was the spectacular **Trumpeter Hornbill**, which in typical fashion came flying over the falls gorge with its impressive casqued bill clearly visible. Reaching the eastern end, the falls were much drier (November and December are when the falls are at their driest which actually makes viewing them easier as there's less spray) with some sections completely dry, but still the view along the gorge with the spray creating a rainbow was impressive. Lots of hirundines were flying around hawking above the falls, including our first House Martins of the trip. Nearing the bridge, we then encountered the last of our three targets – the incredibly range-restricted **Schalow's Turaco**. This gorgeous bird perched out nicely for everyone to get a scope view before it flew past us flashing its crimson wings, perching again and calling before disappearing into thick canopy foliage. An Emerald Cuckoo then appeared, singing just above our heads – wow! Other small birds seen on the walk included **Red-faced Cisticola**, Willow Warbler, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **Spectacled Weaver**, Tawny-flanked Prinia and best of all, the impressive **Grey-headed Bush-shrike**. 7 new trip birds for us this morning taking our trip past 290 in total.



Victoria Falls, looking into Zambia from Zimbabwe

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
29	Cisticola Chirping	<i>Cisticola pipiens</i>				▪													
30	Cisticola Luapula	<i>Cisticola luapula</i>																▪	
31	Cisticola Rattling	<i>Cisticola chinianus</i>						▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
32	Cisticola Red-faced	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>																	▪
33	Cisticola Zitting	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>					▪	▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪			
34	Coot Red-knobbed	<i>Fulica cristata</i>																	
35	Cormorant Reed	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪
36	Coucal Coppery-tailed	<i>Centropus cupreicaudus</i>			▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪								
37	Coucal Senegal	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>		▪										▪		▪			
38	Coucal White-browed	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>						▪								▪			
39	Crake Black	<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>		▪	▪	▪		▪	▪		▪							▪	
40	Crane Wattled	<i>Grus carunculatus</i>					▪	▪	▪	▪									
41	Crombec Long-billed	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>						▪		▪			▪			▪	▪		
42	Crow Pied	<i>Corvus albus</i>																▪	▪
43	Cuckoo African Emerald	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>																	▪
44	Cuckoo Black	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>							H			▪	H						
45	Cuckoo Common	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>											▪			▪	▪		
46	Cuckoo Diderick	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>			▪	▪	▪												H
47	Cuckoo Great Spotted	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>													▪				
48	Cuckoo Jacobin	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>		▪											▪	▪			
49	Cuckoo Klaas's	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>												▪					
50	Cuckoo Levallant's	<i>Clamator levallantii</i>		▪						▪	▪						▪	▪	
51	Cuckoo Red-chested	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>																	H
52	Cuckooshrike Black	<i>Campephaga flava</i>										▪							
53	Darter African	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪
54	Dove Cape Turtle-	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
55	Dove Emerald-spotted Wood-	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>			▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		▪	▪			▪	▪		
56	Dove Laughing	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>		▪	▪	▪	▪								▪			▪	▪

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
57	Dove Mourning African	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>		■															
58	Dove Namaqua	<i>Oena capensis</i>					■		■	■		■	■	■	■	■		■	
59	Dove Red-eyed	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
60	Drongo Fork-tailed	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>		■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
61	Duck Comb	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>					■	■	■			■		■	■	■			
62	Duck White-faced	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
63	Duck Yellow-billed	<i>Anas undulata</i>						■											
64	Eagle African Fish-	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	
65	Eagle African Hawk-	<i>Hieraetus spilogaster</i>						■		■	■	■							
66	Eagle Black-chested Snake-	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>										■	■						
67	Eagle Brown Snake-	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>					■			■		■	■		■				
68	Eagle Martial	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>												■					
69	Eagle Tawny	<i>Aquila rapax</i>						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
70	Eagle Wahlberg's	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>													■	■	■		
71	Egret Cattle	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>			■		■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
72	Egret Great	<i>Egretta alba</i>		■			■	■	■	■	■		■			■	■	■	
73	Egret Little	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■
74	Egret Slaty	<i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>					■	■	■	■									
75	Egret Yellow-billed	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■					■	
76	Falcon Amur	<i>Falco amurensis</i>							■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
77	Falcon Lanner	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>														■			
78	Falcon Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>													■				
79	Falcon Red-necked	<i>Falco chicquera</i>							■								■		
80	Finch Scaly-feathered	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>												■	■		■		
81	Firefinch Brown	<i>Lagonosticta nitidula</i>				■													
82	Firefinch Jameson's	<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>						■									■		
83	Firefinch Red-billed	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>								■		■							
84	Flycatcher African Paradise-	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>							■	■	■						■	■	■

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
85	Flycatcher Marico	<i>Bradornis mariquensis</i>							■						■	■			
86	Flycatcher Spotted	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			■		■		■		■	■				■	■		
87	Francolin Crested	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>									■			■	■	■	■	■	
88	Francolin Red-billed	<i>Pternistis adspersus</i>				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
89	Gallinule Allen's	<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>						■											
90	Go-away-bird Grey	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
91	Goose African Pygmy-	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>		■				■	■		■	■							
92	Goose Egyptian	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
93	Goose Spur-winged	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
94	Goshawk Gabar	<i>Melierax gabar</i>					■	■	■			■	■						
95	Grebe Little	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			■						■	■	■	■	■				
96	Greenbul Yellow-bellied	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>															■		
97	Greenshank Common	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			■			■	■	■			■	■		■	■	■	
98	Guineafowl Helmeted	<i>Numida meleagris</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
99	Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■				■	■	
100	Harrier African Marsh-	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>			■	■	■	■								■	■	■	
101	Harrier Montagu's	<i>Circus pygargus</i>											■		■				
102	Harrier Pallid	<i>Circus macrourus</i>											■				■		
103	Hawk African Harrier-	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>														■			
104	Helmet-Shrike White-crested	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>					■	■		■	■	■	■			■			
105	Heron Black	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>					■	■									■	■	
106	Heron Black-crowned Night-	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			■							■						■	
107	Heron Black-headed	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>											■						
108	Heron Goliath	<i>Ardea goliath</i>			■	■		■		■						■	■	■	
109	Heron Green-backed	<i>Butorides striatus</i>			■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■					■	■
110	Heron Grey	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		■			■	■	■	■			■			■	■	■	
111	Heron Purple	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		■	■				■									■	
112	Heron Rufous-bellied	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>										■							

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
113	Heron Squacco	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	
114	Heron White-backed Night-	<i>Gorsachius leuconotus</i>			■														
115	Hobby Eurasian	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>					■					■	■			■			
116	Honeyguide Lesser	<i>Indicator minor</i>				■													
117	Hoopoe African	<i>Upupa africana</i>		■		■	■			■	■	■				■	■	■	
118	Hornbill African Grey	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	
119	Hornbill Bradfield's	<i>Tockus bradfieldi</i>											■	■					
120	Hornbill Red-billed	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
121	Hornbill Southern Ground-	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>						■	H	■					■			■	
122	Hornbill Southern Yellow-billed	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>					■				■	■	■	■	■	■			
123	Hornbill Trumpeter	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>																	■
124	Ibis African Sacred	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>					■	■	■	■			■	■			■	■	■
125	Ibis Glossy	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		■												■	■	■	
126	Ibis Hadedda	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>			■	■			■									■	
127	Jacana African	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
128	Jacana Lesser	<i>Microparra capensis</i>															■		
129	Kestrel Dickinson's	<i>Falco dickinsoni</i>							■										
130	Kestrel Lesser	<i>Falco naumanni</i>											■	■	■				
131	Kingfisher Brown-hooded	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>																■	
132	Kingfisher Giant	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>			■	■													
133	Kingfisher Grey-headed	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>													■			■	
134	Kingfisher Half-collared	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>																■	
135	Kingfisher Malachite	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>			■	■	■	■										■	
136	Kingfisher Pied	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■
137	Kingfisher Striped	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>					■												
138	Kingfisher Woodland	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■					
139	Kite Black-shouldered	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>																	
140	Kite Yellow-billed	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
141	Korhaan Northern Black	<i>Eupodotis afraoides</i>											▪		▪				
142	Korhaan Red-crested	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>							H				▪	▪		▪			
143	Lapwing African Wattled	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>			▪	▪												▪	
144	Lapwing Blacksmith	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
145	Lapwing Crowned	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>			▪		▪						▪	▪	▪	▪			
146	Lapwing Long-toed	<i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>			▪		▪	▪	▪	▪			▪					▪	
147	Lark Fawn-coloured	<i>Calendulauda africanoides</i>														▪			
148	Lark Red-capped	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>						▪						▪					
149	Lark Rufous-naped	<i>Mirafr africana</i>						▪	▪	▪			▪	▪	▪				
150	Longclaw Rosy-throated	<i>Macronyx ameliae</i>											▪		H				
151	Mannikin Bronze	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>																▪	
152	Martin Banded	<i>Riparia cincta</i>				▪	▪	▪	▪	▪									
153	Martin Brown-throated	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>			▪	▪	▪												
154	Martin Common House-	<i>Delichon urbica</i>																	▪
155	Martin Sand	<i>Riparia riparia</i>															▪		
156	Moorhen Common	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		▪	▪	▪													
157	Mousebird Red-faced	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>		▪		▪	▪									▪	▪	▪	▪
158	Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapillus</i>														▪			
159	Nightjar Fiery-necked	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>					▪												
160	Nightjar Square-tailed	<i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>										▪							
161	Openbill African	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>		▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	
162	Oriole African Golden	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>					▪			▪	▪	▪				▪			
163	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>															▪		
164	Ostrich Common	<i>Struthio camelus</i>								▪			▪		▪				
165	Owl African Scops-	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>							H	H	▪	H					H		
166	Owl African Wood-	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>			▪	▪													
167	Owl Barn	<i>Tyto alba</i>										▪							
168	Owl Pel's Fishing-	<i>Scotopelia peli</i>					▪												

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
169	Owl Verreaux's Eagle-	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>									▪	▪							
170	Owlet African Barred	<i>Glaucidium capense</i>										H				▪			
171	Owlet Pearl-spotted	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>									▪	▪	▪						
172	Oxpecker Red-billed	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>				▪	▪	▪		▪		▪	▪				▪	▪	
173	Oxpecker Yellow-billed	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>				▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		▪		▪	▪	▪	▪		
174	Parrot Meyer's	<i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>				▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	H	H	▪			
175	Pelican Pink-backed	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>				▪	▪		▪										
176	Petronia Yellow-throated	<i>Petronia superciliaris</i>								▪	▪						▪		
177	Pigeon African Green-	<i>Treron calva</i>				▪	▪												
178	Pigeon Speckled	<i>Columba guinea</i>			▪												▪		
179	Pipit African	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>						▪		▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
180	Pipit Buffy	<i>Anthus vaalensis</i>						▪											
181	Pipit Plain-backed	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>						▪	▪										
182	Plover Common Ringed	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>						▪	▪					▪		▪			
183	Plover Kittlitz's	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>						▪	▪				▪	▪	▪				
184	Plover Three-banded	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>						▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪				
185	Pratincole Black-winged	<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>												▪	▪		▪		
186	Pratincole Collared	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>			▪		▪	▪	▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
187	Pratincole Rock	<i>Glareola nuchalis</i>																	▪
188	Prinia Tawny-flanked	<i>Prinia subflava</i>		▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	H		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		▪	▪
189	Puffback Black-backed	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>									▪	▪			▪	▪	▪		▪
190	Pytilia Green-winged	<i>Pytilia melba</i>												▪		▪	▪	▪	
191	Quailfinch African	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>													▪				
192	Quelea Red-billed	<i>Quelea quelea</i>							▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
193	Robin White-browed Scrub-	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>					▪	▪							▪		▪		
194	Robin-Chat White-browed	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>		▪		▪	▪	▪										▪	▪
195	Roller Broad-billed	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>			▪	▪	▪		▪	▪	▪	▪				▪	▪		
196	Roller European	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>												▪					

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
197	Roller Lilac-breasted	<i>Coracias caudata</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
198	Roller Purple	<i>Coracias naevia</i>														■			
199	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>			■			■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
200	Sandgrouse Burchell's	<i>Pterocles burchelli</i>						■	■	■									
201	Sandgrouse Double-banded	<i>Pterocles bicinctus</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■		
202	Sandpiper Common	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■
203	Sandpiper Curlew	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>												■					
204	Sandpiper Marsh	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>						■	■	■					■				
205	Sandpiper Wood	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■
206	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>		■													■	■	
207	Shrike Crimson-breasted	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>						■	H										
208	Shrike Grey-headed Bush-	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>																	■
209	Shrike Lesser Grey	<i>Lanius minor</i>					■			■			■	■	■	■			
210	Shrike Magpie	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>		■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
211	Shrike Orange-breasted Bush-	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>				H	H									■	H		
212	Shrike Red-backed	<i>Lanius collurio</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
213	Shrike Southern White-crowned	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>									■	■	■		■				
214	Skimmer African	<i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>			■	■			■										
215	Snipe African	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>			■													■	
216	Snipe Greater Painted-	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>												■					
217	Sparrow House	<i>Passer domesticus</i>																■	
218	Sparrow Southern Grey-headed	<i>Passer diffusus</i>			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
219	Sparrow-Weaver White-browed	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>						■	■	■		■					■		
220	Spoonbill African	<i>Platalea alba</i>						■	■	■				■	■	■	■	■	
221	Spurfowl Swainson's	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
222	Starling Burchell's	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>		■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
223	Starling Cape Glossy	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>					■						■	■			■		
224	Starling Greater Blue-eared	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>					■			■					■	■	■		

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
225	Starling Meves's	<i>Lamprotornis mevesii</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
226	Starling Red-winged	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>																■	■
227	Starling Violet-backed	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>			■	■											■	■	■
228	Starling Wattled	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>												■	■	■	■		
229	Stilt Black-winged	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
230	Stint Little	<i>Calidris minuta</i>						■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■			
231	Stonechat African	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>			■	■			■									■	
232	Stork Abdim's	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>											■	■	■				
233	Stork Marabou	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>				■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■			
234	Stork Saddle-billed	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>					■	■	■	■	■						■		
235	Stork Woolly-necked	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>					■						■	■	■	■			
236	Stork Yellow-billed	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>					■	■	■	■							■		
237	Sunbird Amethyst	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>							■							■		■	■
238	Sunbird Collared	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>			■														
239	Sunbird Marico	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>							■	■						■		■	
240	Sunbird Scarlet-chested	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>																■	■
241	Sunbird White-bellied	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>														■	■		
242	Swallow Barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
243	Swallow Lesser Striped	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>			■														
244	Swallow Mosque	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>			■	■													
245	Swallow Red-breasted	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>						■		■						■			
246	Swallow White-throated	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>		■															
247	Swallow Wire-tailed	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>				■	■											■	
248	Swamphen African Purple	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>			■	■												■	
249	Swift African Palm-	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>		■	■		■	■	■		■							■	■
250	Swift Common	<i>Apus apus</i>					■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■		■
251	Swift Little	<i>Apus affinis</i>		■															■
252	Tchagra Black-crowned	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>					H	■									■		

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
253	Tchagra Brown-crowned	<i>Tchagra australis</i>								■							■		
254	Teal Hottentot	<i>Anas hottentota</i>					■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■		
255	Teal Red-billed	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>						■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	
256	Tern Whiskered	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>			■	■		■										■	
257	Tern White-winged	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>																■	
258	Thick-knee Spotted	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>							■	■	■		■		■	■			
259	Thick-knee Water	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>			■	■		■	■		■	■	■	■			■		
260	Thrush Groundscraper	<i>Psophocichla litsipsirupa</i>									■								
261	Thrush Kurrichane	<i>Turdus libyanus</i>				■	■									■	■		
262	Tinkerbird Yellow-fronted	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>																■	
263	Tit Southern Black	<i>Parus niger</i>				■	■			■						■	■		
264	Turaco Schalow's	<i>Tauraco schalowi</i>																	■
265	Vulture Hooded	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>										■	■		■				■
266	Vulture Lappet-faced	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>													■				
267	Vulture White-backed	<i>Gyps africanus</i>					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■
268	Vulture White-headed	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>					■	■	■	■					■	■			
269	Wagtail African Pied	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>				■											■		■
270	Wagtail Cape	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>			■		■		■										
271	Warbler Icterine	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>							■							■			
272	Warbler Lesser Swamp-	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>			■														
273	Warbler Willow	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				■							H			■			■
274	Waxbill Black-faced	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>		■															
275	Waxbill Blue	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>		■	■		■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
276	Waxbill Common	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>				■		■											
277	Weaver Golden	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>		■	■	■	■											■	
278	Weaver Red-billed Buffalo-	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
279	Weaver Red-headed	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>									■	■	■		■	■			
280	Weaver Southern Brown-throat	<i>Ploceus xanthopterus</i>			■	■	■											■	

#	Common Name	Scientific name		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
281	Weaver Southern Masked-	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>			■	■	■						■		■	■			
282	Weaver Spectacled	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>					■											■	■
283	Weaver Thick-billed	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>			■	■	■											■	
284	Weaver Village	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>				■				■						■		■	
285	Wheatear Capped	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>								■								■	
286	White-eye African Yellow	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>																■	■
287	Whydah Long-tailed Paradise-	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>								■			■			■	■	■	
288	Whydah Pin-tailed	<i>Vidua macroura</i>					■	■	■	■			■						
289	Whydah Shaft-tailed	<i>Vidua regia</i>			■									■	■	■	■		
290	Widowbird Fan-tailed	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>			■													■	
291	Wood-Hoopoe Green	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	
292	Woodpecker Bearded	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>			■		■		■			■							
293	Woodpecker Bennett's	<i>Campethera bennettii</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■					
294	Woodpecker Cardinal	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>										■							
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																			
295	Common Redstart														■				
296	Common Myna				■	■										■		■	
#	MAMMALS			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Bushbuck				■	■	■												
2	Brown Hyena				H														
3	Peter's Epauletted Fruit Bat				■	■													
4	African Elephant					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
5	Hippopotamus				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■		■	

#	MAMMALS		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6	Tree Squirrel			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	
7	Vervet Monkey			■		■		■	■						■			
8	Side-striped Jackal					■		■										
9	Black-backed Jackal					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■	
10	Blue Wildebeest					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
11	Tsessebe					■	■	■			■	■		■				
12	Impala					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
13	African Buffalo					■								■				
14	Greater Kudu					■			■				■	■	■	■		
15	Water Buck					■			■	■	■				■			
16	Red Lechwe					■	■	■	■		■							
17	Warthog					■	■	■	■			■			■		■	
18	Burchell's Zebra					■	■	■	■			■	■		■	■	■	
19	Leopard						■		■			■						
20	Lion						■	■	■			■	■	■	■			
21	Spotted Hyena						■				■					H		
22	Reedbuck						■											
23	Southern Giraffe						■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
24	Chacma Baboon						■	■	■	■					■	■	■	
25	Banded Mongoose							■			■		■		■	■	■	
26	Cheetah								■									
27	Serval								■									
28	Slender Mongoose								■	■					■	■		
29	Scrub Hare								■	■	■							
30	Egyptian Slit-faced Bat								■									
31	Caracal									■								
32	Dwarf Mongoose									■	■		■	■				
33	Spring Hare									■	■							
34	Lesser Bushbaby										■							

35	Steenbok													■	■	■	■			
36	Yellow Mongoose														■					
37	African Wild Dog														■		■			
38	Bat-eared Fox														■	■				
39	Egyptain Free-tailed Bat															■				