



BOTSWANA AND ZIMBABWE
NOVEMBER 16TH TO DECEMBER 4TH 2024

Days one & two: Saturday, November 16th and Sunday November 17th: travelling days

The overnight flight from T5 to Johannesburg was uneventful. In fact, it arrived slightly earlier than scheduled. Having stayed in Africa after the productive Oriole Birding *Western Cape Tour* (see website for the trip report) Neil was waiting for the incoming group of five people in Johannesburg arrivals hall. Having done a dry run of check-in for the Maun flight yesterday, it was an easy task to check-in again for the flight to Botswana and relax.

The Maun flight was virtually empty. It was also a tad bumpy, but after a couple of hours, we landed at a very dry Maun, where we were met by our friendly shuttle bus driver. Check-in at the lodge was fairly straight forward and our chalets were very comfortable.

Having settled in at 3.00pm, three of us decided to have a very gentle birdwatch around the lodge grounds, whilst two others went for a swim and another had a deserved rest after a very long journey (a day and a half!).

The birders were rewarded with sightings of Lanner Falcons, a lovely pair of Swamp Boubous (right outside Neil's room!), an obliging African Hoopoe and a few more bits and bobs to get the list started.

After a rest, the whole group reconvened for the first evening meal of our adventure before retiring to bed early to prepare for yet another flight tomorrow morning.

Monday, November 18th: "big enough for Christmas"

A dawn chorus of Swamp Boubou, Red-eyed and Ring-necked Doves and African Hoopoe opened the day before breakfast. After that, we were shuttled to Maun airport for our flight to Shakawe. We were helped by an extremely friendly and helpful Mackair representative. An hour's flight over a bone dry looking part of Botswana brought us to greener looking habitats around Shakawe.

Thomas, from Xaro Lodge, met us for the short drive to the River Okavango (seeing Southern Carmine Bee-eaters along the way), where we caught a boat on the Cubango River. Twenty minutes later, after some amazing river birding, (three species off Bee-eater, Goliath and Purple Herons, African Skimmers, etc.), we moored up at what looked like paradise!



Goliath Heron

Scott gave us a warm welcome and an introductory talk before showing us to our chalets. We each had a river view, complete with Goliath Heron hiding in the papyrus! Most people had a wander round the amazing grounds, where we could easily see Black-collared Barbet, Broad-billed Roller, Red-faced Mousebird and a flyover Fish Eagle.

The lodge staff cooked us up some very tasty chicken wraps for lunch, after which we continued birding from the various viewpoints near the main bar. Cake and coffee arrived at 2.30pm, which set us up nicely for our afternoon boat trip.

Three hours flew by, as Thomas expertly steered us along the river. Four species of bee-eater graced our afternoon, along with four Fish Eagles, three species of heron, Black Crane, Nile Crocodiles, Nile Monitor Lizards and lots of waders, etc. At one point, while we were watching a Spur-winged Goose, Sally declared that this bird was “definitely big enough for Christmas!”

We returned at 6.00pm with an hour to spare before dinner Al fresco. Xaro Lodge blew our minds, really, and we couldn't wait until tomorrow's excursions!



Pel's Fishing Owl

Tuesday November 19th: Pel-ates before breakfast.

Most of us were awake with the dawn chorus around our chalets in the fabulous grounds of Xaro Lodge. Neil was particularly pleased with the low grunt of Pel's Fishing Owl outside his room!

Everyone met Thomas in the dining area for coffee at 6.30am and then he led us on a walk through the grounds of the lodge. Several piles of elephant dung reminded us that potentially dangerous animals could be lurking round every corner!

The walk produced several Diederick Cuckoos, Marico Sunbirds, Meyer's Parrots, Woodland Kingfishers and quite a few other decent birds. The undoubted highlight was a perched Pel's Fishing Owl staring down at us from a huge tree. WHAT A BIRD!!

We had a delicious breakfast at 8.30am before retiring to our rooms for a siesta, as the heat built up, though some went for a swim in the pool.

A general gathering took place in the bar before lunch at 1.00pm. More down time was spent relaxing or gently strolling around the grounds near the lounge. This produced a Bennett's Woodpecker, a handful of Green Woodhoopoes, a pair of frisky Wahlberg's Skinks, and a noisy Bush Squirrel.

After profiteroles and coffee, we boarded our boat at 3.00pm and headed along the Cubango River. There were plenty of Blacksmith Lapwings, Collared Pratincoles and several Fish Eagles to check out. Nile Crocodiles and Hippopotamuses gently floated in the river as we motored by. Thomas suddenly drew us to a halt: he had spotted several large grey shapes among the tall papyrus plants. Yes, we were watching our first elephants of the trip. We spent quite a while admiring them rip out large papyrus plants with their trunks!

Further along the river, we moored up and took a walk across a field full of pratincoles, Long-toed Lapwings and Fan-tailed Widowbirds. Our goal was a pool full of purple lilies, where Thomas picked out a Lesser Jacana on the lily pads.

Our return boat journey saw us watching the small herd of elephants again, this time much closer to the river's edge. We could now see a couple of youngsters with the huge adults: what a treat!

We were back at the lodge at 6.15pm, where we could wonder at the size of the Hippopotamus in the water by our chalets! We ate a lovely dinner at 7.00pm before compiling the day's bird and wildlife log.

Wednesday, November 20th: 4 out of 5 ain't bad

We were in the dining area at 5.45am, ready for a coffee before boarding our boat at 6.30am. Virtually the first bird we saw was a White-backed Night Heron, which nearly took Hilary's head off as it flew by!

The rest of the boat trip was extremely productive; Wattled Lapwings, Hippopotamuses, Nile Crocodiles, herons and egrets, etc. were seen before breakfast back at the lodge at 8.30am. We lounged around in between birdwatching before packing.

We left our chalets at 11.00am, followed by more relaxation and easy birding from the lounge area. Black-collared Barbets, Karoo Thrushes and Hartlaub's Babbler showed very well.

Our boat back to the road left at 1.50pm, where we saw the usual suspects along the riverbanks. Two cars ferried us to the air strip, where we boarded a small plane for the 3.30pm flight to Xakanaxa. One hour later, we were met by Bait – our safari guide for the remainder of the tour - in an impressive looking safari vehicle. After handing us our own personal water canteens, we drove through the Moremi Game Reserve to our tents.

We arrived at 7.00pm, later than planned due to the amazing animals we saw along the way. Eight well-grown Lion cubs were loafing by the track, which we watched for thirty minutes. Many Hippopotamuses wallowed in the numerous pools but the icing on the cake came when we had to stop to watch a Leopard chilling out on the main track! We had the Big Cat to ourselves for quite a while before we were joined by a couple of other vehicles. If you've been to Kenya or Tanzania, you can imagine how many jeeps would have turned up! On the drive, we had seen four out of the 'Big Five' (and Rhinos were not possible here.)!

At the camp, we were greeted by loud cheers from our wonderful team of three staff who were to look after us Royally for the rest of the safari. We settled in for a 'sundowner' by the fire before dinner at 7.45pm. The action wasn't over, though, as a roaring Lion then padded through camp (paying no attention to us whatsoever: he had Lady Lions on his mind)!

After a lovely dinner, we compiled the bird and mammal log accompanied by many moths drawn in by our torchlight. The stars in a crystal-clear sky were also amazing! From our tents, we could hear one or two Hippopotamuses munching the grass on the camp's lawns. With the Lion still roaring in the distance, it was a magical soundscape to drift off to sleep to.



Leopard

Thursday, November 21st: going to the dogs

We were awoken by a friendly voice at 5.00am - “knock knock” - and fresh hot water for a wash. Breakfast was taken in the open dining tent overlooking the lagoon, complete with mischievous Hippos! We left with Bait in the safari vehicle at 6.15am.

A slow drive along banks of shallow pools provided us with superb views of many birds such as Squacco Heron, Slaty Egret, Black Heron, ducks, geese and waders. Nervous Red Letchwes roamed the open areas, with Lilac-breasted Rollers and Magpie Shrikes perched in the bushes. Despite the early hour, the heat was enough to bring Yellow-billed Kites and Hooded Vultures into the air.

Bait received a message over his radio and the pace of the drive suddenly increased: we were on a mission! Twenty minutes later, we caught up with a small pack of Wild Dogs lolloping along the track!!

They set a good pace, as they covered ground trying to find something to eat. The temperature was now rising quickly and the dogs gave up the search and settled into the shade of a low bush next to our vehicle. Their race was run until later in the day when temperatures would allow for another hunt. This pack looked very hungry!

As we were driving away, Bait noticed a feather on the ground, looked up and declared that a

Verreaux's Eagle Owl was on the branch above us. "How did I miss that?" was his reaction, while ours was "How on earth did he find that?!"



African Wild Dog

We travelled back the way we had come and parked by a tree with an open view all around us. Tea, coffee and juice suddenly appeared out of the cool box! African Fish Eagles, Lilac-breasted Rollers and delightful Banded Groundling dragonflies joined us for the rest stop. The drive back to camp saw more of the same, but we had better views of Yellow-billed Storks and African Spoonbills. A couple of Warthogs were a welcome addition to our tally of mammals. Back at camp at 11.30am, we were greeted by the team with iced tea. After a quick wash, we were eating another very tasty meal prepared in our camp. It was now very hot indeed, so we went our separate ways to try and stay cool. A couple of hours later, a rainstorm blew in helping our task. It went as quickly as it arrived. We gathered in the dining tent at 4.00pm for cake and coffee. At 5.00pm, Bait drove us out again. We again scanned the local watering holes, where Black Heron was perhaps the star turn. Squacco, Goliath and Purple Herons showed well, as did a nice array of waders. A very pleasant evening out around Moremi ended with us watching a huge, lioness with a full stomach zonked out in the shade of a small bush. Gin and tonics followed for us, as we parked up by a lake to watch the orange sun go down. Perfect! . Our evening meal was at 7.30pm: another tasty effort from our support team. We had to give a munching Hippo a wide berth on the way back to the tents!

Friday, November 22nd: making a very special memory.

We were awoken at 5.00am once more, followed by breakfast at 5.30am. We were away into the Moremi Reserve with Bait at 6.15am.

Another slow drive along the shores of marsh (waders, African Jacanas, nervous Letchwe, etc). It was noticeable that we were not seeing any warblers. Bait explained that it had been so dry in the reserve that Elephants had eaten all the long grass and reeds around the pools, meaning there was no habitat left for the warblers!

Suddenly, a line of stately Giraffes ambled across the plain in front of us. We continued the drive to see four young lions and a lioness on a Buffalo kill. They looked tired out but very full!!! The Hooded Vultures were having to be very patient for their turn on the kill.



Lions

We stopped for coffee before continuing. Five Wattled Cranes were very welcome, as were the charismatic Warthogs. We saw plenty of Impalas, several with very young foals. We returned to camp for an early lunch at 11.30am before retiring to tents during the heat of the day (showers, sleep, read, etc).

Amazing carrot cake and coffee was served at 4.00pm before we headed out again. It wasn't long before we were experiencing an amazing spectacle. About 150 African Elephants were strolling through the marsh just a few feet in front of us.

We sat silently as 'Eles' of all sizes filed past our position in the vehicle. We remained spellbound as a seemingly endless parade of pachyderms very quietly passed us by. Some of the mighty beasts had a closer look at us and one youngster even staged a mock charge - more of a petulant stamp of the feet and a trumpet, really. After they had passed us by, we

remembered to breathe! Utterly magical.

The evening hadn't finished with us yet, though. Bait received news that a Leopard had been found fifteen minutes away. We soon pulled up under the correct Sausage Tree and watched the female cat do what cats do best: snooze while draped over a thick branch.

The night ended with a sundowner by an orange back-lit pool, a superb dinner back at camp - all cooked in a 'bush oven' - and an extensive wildlife log. What a very special day, indeed.

Saturday, November 23rd: bridge over the River Khwai

It was pack and move day today. The usual friendly voice woke us up at 5.00am, though the Hippos, Lions and Hyaenas had woken some of the group earlier. It was a dawn chorus with a difference, that's for sure!

After breakfast, the whole camp was taken down, our luggage loaded onto the roof of the safari vehicle, and we were away at 6.15am. A check of the usual marshy pools produced the usual suspects. We slowly drove out of the Moremi Reserve, seeing Double-banded Sandgrouse, Warthogs and Southern Ground Hornbills, etc. We came across an area of open grassland. Neil was hoping for larks and pipits but Bait decided to find us more Lions!



This time, these two beasts were full grown males, who approached the track and flopped down to rest on a large termite mound. Like all our previous Lions, they were in peak fitness. Time

pressed on, so we left the lads to doze. We had a boat to catch...

We did, however, find the time to stop for a coffee and leg stretch while watching Tawny Eagles, Bataleurs, African Fish Eagles and Yellow-billed Kites soaring above us. We drove on, seeing many birds and mammals on the drive. We crossed a rickety bridge over the River Khwai and soon pulled up by the river a bit further on. Waiting for us were three friendly gentlemen, complete with three canoes!

They paddled us along the choking river - invasive plants were clogging many channels in The Delta - where we had very good views of Openbill Storks, African Jacanas, a Black Cuckoo and some tiny Long Reed Frogs! However, it was extremely hot, so it was a relief to return to dry land. We found that Bait had laid out some chairs and a delicious lunch! It was now siesta time in the heat of the day. An African Cuckoo joined us, as did hundreds of Barn Swallow.

We continued the drive to the next camp at 2.45pm. We entered the Chobi River Reserve and drove along the arrow-straight, sandy 'road' through Mopane forest. Giraffes and Elephants wandered hither and thither and we also picked up new birds: Golden-breasted Bunting was perhaps the highlight among more Southern Ground Hornbills, Cape Starling, Red-billed Hornbill, Yellow-billed Kite and Wattled Starlings.

We turned off the main track onto a narrower side track and headed for the Tshaa Camp in the Mababe private game reserve. We could see our tents through the trees and our back-up team gave us the traditional riotous welcome.

There was time for a shower and to settle into our tents before dinner al fresco. New camp: same amazing food!

Sunday, November 24th: everyday's a skull day

Our well-trained group were up, breakfasted and away in the safari vehicle by 6.15am. In the first hour, Bait showed us the skulls of several beasts including Elephant, Giraffe and Lion. He explained how they had all died of natural causes, probably as a result of drought. Curiously, the Lion skull was perched atop a small bush.

We did see some live animals as well, of course! Elephants, Giraffes, Impalas, Buffalo and our first Kudus of the trip. Birds included Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Woolly-necked Stork, Crimson-breasted Bush Shrike, Red-crested Korhaan, African Oriole - rather aptly! - Violet-backed Starling, three Tawny Eagles, a Wahlberg's Eagle and loads of hornbills. We returned to camp for another delicious lunch.

A storm was coming in and the temperature was cooling, allowing most of us to have a satisfying siesta. Our afternoon departure was delayed by the thunderstorm and heavy rain but the lemon drizzle cake and coffee kept us busy. We finally set off at 5.00pm. The rain never really stopped but a few birds were trying to dry out on tall, bare branches. A wet African Cuckoo Hawk had us scratching our heads momentarily but a displaying Red-crested Korhaan caused no ID problems.

The game drive morphed into a night drive. Bait avidly shone his bright torch on bushes, trees and on the ground but failed to find any eyeshine. The rain was keeping owls, nightjars and predators in hiding.

We returned to camp for dinner at 8.00pm - more or less a Sunday dinner - followed by the bird log. Interruptions came in the form of an African Scops Owl, while a Lion roared very close, just across the river. The sound echoed around our camp: awesome! We could also hear Hippos and Hyenas with a Verreaux's Eagle Owl joining in for good measure.

Monday, November 25th: a walk on the wild side.

As usual, we were away by 6.15am, eager to see what goodies this cloudy morning would bring. The Chobi River saw us watching the usual Spur-winged Geese, Blacksmith Lapwings and Impalas. A Wahlburg's Eagle and two African Hawk Eagles were perched in dead treetops and

the Red-billed Hornbills were very active.

This morning was one with a difference, though. Bate had planned a walk in the bush for us. After strict instructions from our guide, we set off in single file passing lots of fresh Elephant droppings along the way.

An African Fish Eagle flapped over and a few Red-billed Hornbills escorted us, as did many Brown-veined White butterflies. We walked for an hour but didn't see any animals at all, though kept checking all around in case evasive action was necessary. It was an interesting new perspective for us.

We stopped for coffee by the river. What a peaceful 'coffee shop'. On the return drive, we found a magnificent Martial Eagle perched in full view.



Martial Eagle

Lunch was back in camp at 11.30am, followed by a siesta. Most of the group were soon back in the shade of the dining tent with chairs facing the river. We were entertained by a huge troupe of Chacma Baboons moving across the opposite bank. At one point they spooked when a Goliath Heron flew along the river.

As usual, high tea was served at 4.00pm. We could get used to this lifestyle! We set off at 4.45pm, with Bate promising us another go at the night drive being as yesterday had been a wash out.

There was plenty of bird life after last night's rain, with Red-billed Hornbills seemingly in even greater numbers. Blue Waxbills, Southern Grey-headed Sparrows, African Hoopoes and Wattled Starlings were busy and showy. As we headed for our sundowner spot, we found a perched raptor. We manoeuvred for a better view and it turned out to be our second Martial Eagle of the day!

Bate parked up on a mound overlooking a marsh and the bush. The orange sunset was

brehtaking; the perfect backdrop for our G&Ts. As the sun disappeared, it was time to start the night drive. An African Savanna Hare was a good start, but then Bate spotlit a Genet sniffing around a bush. We had great, prolonged views. A Flap-necked Chameleon came next, sat in a tree overhanging the road. The final treat came when several South African Springhares hopped into view, looking for all the world like mini kangaroos!



After an extremely successful night drive - including Elephants, Giraffes and Impalas - we returned to camp for dinner at 8.00pm. The icing on the cake - literally - came when the superb support team produced a chocolate cake, complete with candles, to celebrate Kay's Xth (shhhh) birthday. It had been a wonderful day.

Tuesday, November 26th: angry birds

We were breakfasted, packed and away by 6.30am, ready for the long drive to our next camp in Savuti. The thing is, a long drive in Botswana turns into an eleven hour game drive, so its no big deal!

Elephants and Giraffes saw us off from Mababe. It wasn't long before a flock of angry birds drew our attention to a small tree by the road. They were clearly upset about something hiding in there. Sharp-eyed Bait soon found the culprit: a Black Mamba snake trying to look innocent! We watched for a while, as the Mamba gradually climbed higher in the tree. The starlings, hornbills and drongos kept up the aggro but the snake didn't seem that bothered. With such a deadly snake, the birds were keeping a respectful distance from their enemy. We left the scene before the denouement unfolded in its own good time.

We drove through a forest, seeing Levillant's Cuckoos, Lesser Grey Shrikes, Black-throated Canaries and Lilac-breasted Rollers. Suddenly, the scenery changed and we were greeted with a vast area of open plain with some open areas of wet mud and water; the recent rain had

worked it's magic.

The pools held a few Little Grebes, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper and Red-billed Teal. In the distance, we could see Warthogs, Wildebeest, and our first Ostriches of the trip. We spent quite a lot of time watching a large group of male Elephants eating and having mud baths. It was a memorable scene.

We next drove along the main track. It was a tad unpleasant, to be honest, especially for Bait in the driving seat! The wind was blowing a gale straight into our faces and we were receiving a free sand blasting.

Bait turned off to an official stretching point, where we set up for lunch. An unusual vista was provided by a large gaggle of storks and vultures around a dead Elephant. Thankfully, we were far enough away not to be able to smell the scene but it was a visceral experience nevertheless. Quite a few White-backed Vultures and one or two Lappet-faced Vultures tucked in with relish, fighting with Marabou Storks. One or two Black-backed Jackals tried to nick their share.

After a siesta, we continued our journey through more forest. Again, the habitat opened out to another vast grassland. The first sighting was of a delightful family of Bat-eared Foxes, which entertained us for half an hour, quickly followed by Northern Black Korhaans.

We drove along the tracks. Korhaans were seemingly croaking from every available termite mound, interspersed with Black-bellied Bustards. Animals included the usual suspects and a new one antelope for us: Tsessebe.



Black-bellied Bustard

Pipits and larks distracted the hardcore birders among the group, but Rosy-throated Longclaw was much appreciated by everyone.

Bait received news of a Leopard towards our camp, but we paused to appreciate Lesser Kestrel and a dashing Amur Falcon on the journey.

The Leopard was extremely comfortable on a thick branch. Its head was resting on a huge front paw. The rest of its legs were draped over the branch. It was a brilliant end to a long journey. We pulled up at our camp at 6.00pm to the usual riotous welcome from 'The A Team'. Time for a shower and to remove sand from crevices where there shouldn't be any. We gathered round the fire in the camp for a gin and a chat before dinner and the bird log.

Wednesday, November 27th: the circle of life

We knew the drill. Up at 5, breakfast at 5.30 and away at 6.15am. Bait slowly drove us to a nearby water hole. Egyptian Geese dominated and we scattered a few Impalas hither and thither. We then stumbled across a rare sight: a shaggy Brown Hyaena trotted out of the bush and slowly walked in front of us. A rare treat!

We crossed to the open savanna, where we spent ages watching a large family of Black-backed Jackals playing in the early morning sun. The healthy looking seven pups were practise fighting and lazing in the sun. Our next family sighting came when a large group of Banded Mongoose passed by on a foraging hunt.

Out on the savanna, we came across the grizzly scene of the famous Marsh Pride of Lions (as seen on TV) tucking into a Cape Buffalo they had brought down last night. Or should I say TWO Buffalos! The heat was already rising. This was ideal for the vultures, eagles, kites and storks, that were soaring towards the lion kills.

The pace quickened as we headed towards another man-made watering hole. Holy Moly: there were 18 Wild Dogs taking a drink and sniffing around a Kudu skull! As other safari vehicles arrived, the Wild Dogs lazily trotted into the bush and away. Another magical memory made this morning.

We next found Green-winged Pytilias and Blue Waxbills collected seed under the trees but bird activity was definitely dropping off dramatically. After paying the Marsh Pride another visit, we started back to camp. However, we came across a Tsessebe giving birth. We watched as two hooves appeared from the back end but the mother appeared to be having trouble completing the task. This was quintessential Africa: watching the birth of one animal after witnessing the end of an old Buffalo at the paws of a Pride of Lions.

We returned to camp for lunch at 11.45am. After a siesta in the heat, we regrouped in the dining tent in dribs and drabs from 3.15pm. Cake was at 4.00pm, as usual. We set off at 5.00pm. It was very hot, still, and birdlife was at a minimum.

A Yellow Mongoose eating a tasty bug, and a small herd of Roan Antelope was a pleasure to see. We continued to our sundowner spot along a rocky outcrop. Red-eyed Bulbul and Black-crowned Tchagra showed well but not as well as a fluffed-up Kori Bustard standing by the track. The sunset was spectacular, though the bruise-coloured clouds were full of rain.

Dinner was taken in the camp at 7.30pm, followed by the bird and mammal log.

Thursday, 28th November: Elephant graveyard

We awoke to the sound of a Lion roaring in the distance. Yep, we were still in Botswana! After breakfast, we drove along the dried up river bed. There hasn't been water in the River Chobi since 2014! The area was very 'birdy', though.

It was pleasing to see that Amur Falcons had arrived, as six or seven swept on the updraft along a rocky ridge. One even perched in a dead tree close to the van. African Golden Orioles chased each other around the treetops and our ever-present friends the Lilac-breasted Rollers seemingly inhabited every dead snag.

We drove to the open area we had christened the Elephant graveyard, where Marabou Storks and White-backed Vultures were still picking the bones of a large Elephant, the one we had seen a couple of days earlier. We watched a Black-backed Jackal bury a piece of meat for later consumption. Several more elephant and buffalo carcasses were dotted around.

Out on the Savanna, we came across a Black-bellied Bustard right by the track, which treated us to a highly amusing display. A Pallid Harrier drifted by while we were scanning for Secretarybirds.

A bit further into the drive, we watched a handsome male Lion lying next to a female. Daily Mail readers looked away in disgust as the Lions mated four times in half an hour! A van pulled up next to us. The inhabitants were wearing rain ponchos! We had missed the morning's rains but benefitted from the bird and animal migration it had brought.



Baboons

As well as the Amur Falcons, Blacksmith Lapwings were arriving. The real surprise was a Whiskered Tern flying over the bone-dry Elephant graveyard! Try as we might, we couldn't find a Secretarybird among the Zebra, Wildebeest, Tsessebe and Giraffes.

We had lunch back at camp at 11.45am, just as the sun broke through for the first time in the morning. Siesta time, as the heat increased. After banana muffins and coffee at 4.00pm, we set off at 5.00pm. Bait took us along the same route as this morning, which was much quieter. Lots of Impalas scattered away and we finally had good views of Green-winged Pytilia, but bird life didn't pick up until we hit the plains.

Kori and Black-bellied Bustards strutted their stuff and a couple of Northern Black Korhaans croaked from atop termite mounds. We stopped for our sundowner under a magnificent Baobab Tree. Just after we left the site, we found a big male Lion trotting towards the Baobab! It plodded on and walked right past our van.

Dinner in camp was at 7.30pm: excellent beef stew, followed by the log and a bit of idle chatter. Another brilliant day!

Friday, November 29th: Impala for breakfast

We were up at 5 as usual. Today was different, though, as we were upping camp and moving north again. As the 'A Team' were dismantling the tents, Bait drove us around the usual local sites before we started the long journey.

It was great to spend time with the families we had grown used to. The Banded Mongooses busily hunted for food, while the Black-backed Jackals followed their parents around. Yellow-billed Kites pinched food from the Jackals, while Tawny Eagles stole that food from the kites! We were driving through the bush, when we met a safari vehicle reversing back along the track. The guide had seen a Wild Dog on the prowl with the pack following behind. He had lost them all in the thick bushes.

Bait soon saw the lone dog, quickly followed by the others. Suddenly, the pack accelerated left and we followed. We then came across a gruesome scene. Whereas Lions and Leopards suffocate prey before eating, dogs have no such mechanism to kill. They hunt, bring down an animal, in this case an Impala (maybe the one we found limping last night?), and begin eating. It is a nasty death, but entirely a natural one. We came across the whole pack greedily feeding on the Impala. The noise from the munching, squabbling dogs was incredible. Within 20 mins there was nothing left of the antelope apart from a few bones. Nature in tooth and claw!

We saw all the usual birds and animals before we headed out of the park on a very long and very bumpy road. Later, we stopped at a 'coffee shop' overlooking a fresh water hole. The highlights included two large dung beetles and a gorgeous Black Emperor dragonfly. We left Chobe Reserve and continued on the unpleasant track.

We stopped for lunch under the shade of a roadside tree, but still the new birds kept coming. A gorgeous male Orange-breasted Bush Shrike was tempted into our shady tree. We continued along an actual tarmac road!

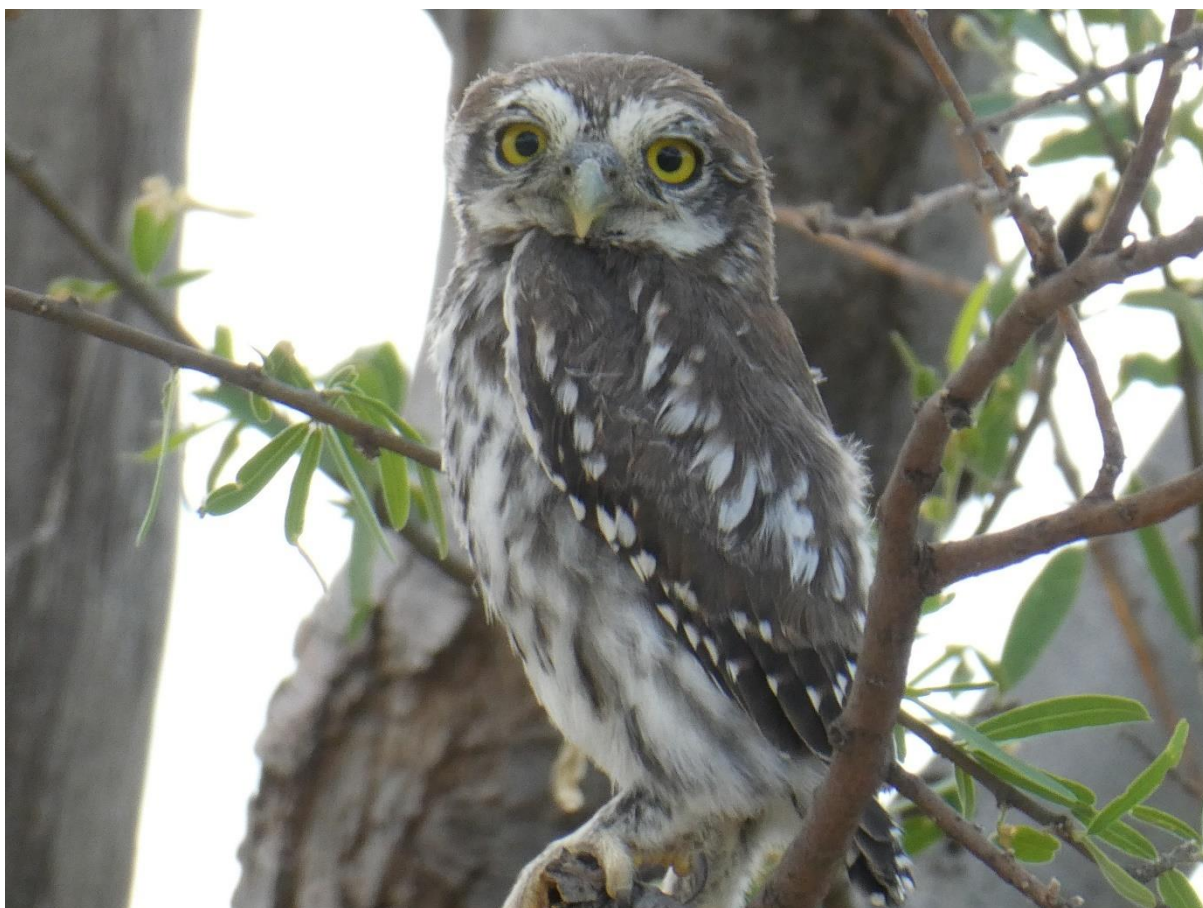
However, as we re-entered the Chobe Reserve further ahead, we had to stop and change the tyre. It had developed a slow puncture; best to change now rather than in a place where wild animals might be lurking.

The latter part of the drive produced many Yellow-billed Kites, an African Harrier Hawk, a pair of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings, a Sable Antelope and a Common Duiker.

We reached camp at 6.15pm. The bucket showers were ready with fresh water, with plenty of time to freshen up before dinner. Our meal was at 7.30pm - the usual superb standard - followed by our bird and wildlife log by torchlight. We had seen plenty of birds and mammals despite it being a long travelling day.

Saturday, November 30th: Lions cancel sundowner.

Several of us heard owly noises during the early morning. The culprit was revealed at dawn at breakfast as an African Barred Owlet, which stared down at us and begged us to take its picture. How could we refuse?



Pearl-spotted Owlet

We headed out at 6.00am and drove along tracks through bush. There were many Spotted Flycatchers and shrikes. Yellow-billed Kites were already active. The bush was pretty quiet, so we opted for a coffee stop. Yellow-throated Petronia and White-bellied Sunbird joined us. We drove along the banks of the Chobe River, with the flatlands of Namibia just the other side of the water. We were now back in the realm of Spur-winged Geese, with Ruff, Blacksmiths and a Black Heron mixed in.

Bait spotted a van parked just off the bank, so took us to join them. We were treated to a Lioness sat under a thick bush. She rolled over to reveal a tiny cub suckling. And then there was another! We had never seen such young, vulnerable cubs.

The Lioness padded off - presumably to hunt - causing panic among a nearby herd of Impala. The cubs staggered about in the shade of the thick bush their mum had chosen as a sanctuary. We returned to the camp for lunch at 11.45am. We were then treated to a tour of the camp 'kitchen', where chef had produced so many wonderful meals and bread and cakes to die for. This guy truly was a magician in his 'Bush Oven'.

After the siesta and chocolate muffins, we set off on our afternoon game drive. Birding activity was quite active. One riverside tree provided nearly twenty species, including Terrestrial Greenbul, White-fronted Bee-eaters, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Willow Warblers, Holub's Golden Weavers, etc. A couple of Hippos dived into the river by the side of us. Further along the riverbank, we stopped to let a herd of Elephants cross the track to get to the river to bathe and drink.

On the way to our sundowner, we came across a pride of lazing Lions. We watched them for half an hour, by which time we missed our date with a G&T and the sunset. No matter, we toasted their health before dinner. What a great end to the day!

Before dinner, we said a well-deserved thank you to the amazing team who had looked after us

perfectly on our camping adventure. Nothing was too much trouble for them and despite the long hours they worked, remained resolutely cheerful and helpful.

Sunday, December 1st: another country

It wasn't a Lion roaring that greeted us pre-dawn this morning but a growling female Leopard calling to attract a mate!

After breakfast, we said farewell to our amazing 'A Team' as they packed up our camp for the very last time.

Bait took us on our traditional morning game drive, which was pretty quiet. Things livened up as we drove alongside the Chobe River. We found a new mammal in the shape of a Puku – a range restricted antelope. The usual waterbirds were seen and the murmur of maybe 5,000 Black-winged Pratincoles regularly took to the air in Namibia (it was hard to imagine that this species is classed as Near Threatened by the IUCN!

Bait then said it was time to head off; we had a boat to catch. As we were leaving Chobe Reserve, we came across a pack of Wild Dogs scoffing an Impala! We had been extremely lucky to see so many of these iconic- threatened - animals.

We quickly reached Kasane, where we gave way to a family of Warthogs crossing the road on Main Street (three hoglets and Mum). Next to them in the verge was a band of foraging Banded Mongooses.

In the town, we said a sad farewell to our trusty safari vehicle and boarded a small boat with Bait and Chakwi, the local guide.

We headed out onto the Chobe River but soon came to a stop to watch a gorgeous Half-collared Kingfisher and some Black-crowned Night Herons on the bank. We continued up the river and found an excellent wet marsh. Bait spotted a crane creeping through the grass close to the bank. With better views, we worked out that it was a juvenile Striped Crane. A huge Hippo was munching away in the marsh with a Black Heron, Slaty Egret and Rufous-bellied Heron following in its wake (among many other birds). A couple of Luapula Cisticolas were very welcome, as were our first Yellow Wagtails of the trip.

After 2.5 hours on the boat, we docked again. It was a sad time, as it was here that Bait left us. What a fantastic guy and guide!

We transferred to a minibus and were soon at the Botswana border leaving the country. We then crossed into Zimbabwe with no help at all from a rather rude immigration officer. Yet another driver greeted us with ice water bottles for our 60 min drive to Shongwe Lookout Lodge. We passed through Teak bushland but saw very little in the way of wildlife (well it was the height of the heat of the day).

Our accommodation was wonderful. We went straight for lunch in the outdoor dining area by the pool. We spent the afternoon at leisure, catching up on messages, family, sleep and proper showers and toilets after our camping experience!

Before dinner, we all climbed the tower to admire the view. Trumpeter Hornbills flew in to feed from the fruiting palm tree in the lodge grounds. Dinner was a very tasty affair.

Monday, December 2nd: Fall guys

Some emerged for breakfast at what seemed like the late hour of 7.00am compared with the last few days. By then, others had climbed the tower and got Scarlet-chested Sunbird under their belts.

Kenias, the local guide who had transferred us from Botswana to the lodge yesterday, picked us all up at 8.00am and drove us the short distance to Victoria Falls. Having been in the wilderness for a fair few days, it came as a bit of a shock to the system to see crowds of people and a lot of commercial outlets!

Kenias gave us an introductory talk about this UNESCO Heritage Site (incongruously sponsored by Victoria Falls Gin) and showed us the route we would be taking. All the while this was going

on, we could hear the thunder of the Falls (local name Mosi-oa-Tunya, which means Thundering Smoke).

Our first views of the waterfall drew breaths of wonder, but we kept one eye in the trees for birds, especially Schalow's Turaco. From various viewpoints, we saw Hooded Vultures, Black-collared Barbet, Yellow-bellied Bulbuls, Terrestrial Brownbills and gorgeous Collared Sunbirds.

The Falls changed from every viewpoint and many photos were taken. It took us to Viewpoint 8 until Sally saw a large bird fly into the tree above us. A grunting call confirmed it was the turaco, so the search of the top branches was on.

Everyone eventually had decent views of this charismatic bird, though it remained active and flighty high above. We even managed to show the bird to several interested tourists just here for the Falls.

Regular showers from the spray were most welcome, as the heat was rising rapidly. We walked to the very end viewpoint, where the water had virtually dried up. We decided against abseiling down the side of the steep drop and returned to the car park. We failed to find any Rock Pratincoles, which was a shame, but Victoria Falls had been a spectacular sight to see.

We returned to the lodge for lunch at 12.30pm. Siesta time was spent relaxing, packing – we fly home tomorrow! – and/or swimming in the inviting pool.

Everyone climbed the tower for cocktails at 5.30pm. The Trumpeter Hornbills came in to feed on fruiting trees again later, as we watched the spray from The Falls in the distance.

Our last evening meal together was at 6.30pm and we reminisced about the amazing birds and mammals we had seen on this amazing trip.

Tuesday & Wednesday December 3rd & 4th: homeward bound

Breakfast was taken at a leisurely pace, before we packed and vacated our lovely rooms. There was still time for a bit of relaxation in the bar or a swim in the inviting pool. However, it was soon time to be picked up to start our long journey home.

Kenias drove us to Victoria Falls airport, twenty minutes away from our hotel. We checked in and then caught the flight to Johannesburg. We had to collect our bags in South Africa and then check in again for the flight to Heathrow. Everything was going fine until we started the short taxi along Jo'burg's runway.

The Captain interrupted our preparations for the overnight flight: there was a medical emergency onboard and medics were on their way. After a delay, we taxied back to the gate to allow the sick passenger to be taken off the plane. The taxiing meant we had to refuel before we could resume the flight! All in all, the delay cost us 90 minutes. After that, it was an uneventful night before landing in London. However, our luggage took well over an hour to arrive on the carousel, which made for a tedious end to such a memorable trip. At least it wasn't one of the group who was the sick passenger!

A huge thank you to Hilary, Neelam, Andy, Sally and Kay for making this such an enjoyable trip. All of our excellent guides and back-up team played a huge part, of course, but the birds and wildlife definitely did a lot of the heavy lifting! 😊

Birds seen (267 species in order of IOC v14.2)

Blue highlight = Heard only

Red highlight = Endemic

Purple highlight = Leader only

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	IUCN STATUS
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus australis</i>	LC
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	LC
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	LC
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis niger</i>	LC
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	LC
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	LC
African Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>	LC
Blue-billed Teal	<i>Spatula hottentota</i>	LC
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	LC
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris papillosus</i>	LC
Crested Francolin	<i>Ortygornis sephaena sephaena</i>	LC
Red-billed Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis adspersus</i>	LC
Swainson's Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>	LC
Square-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus fossii welwitschii</i>	LC
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus hyphaenes</i>	LC
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus pekinensis</i>	LC
Grey Go-away-bird	<i>Crinifer concolor bechuanae</i>	LC
Schalow's Turaco	<i>Tauraco schalowi marungensis(?)</i>	LC
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori kori</i>	NT
Red-crested Korhaan	<i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>	LC
Northern Black Korhaan	<i>Afrotis afraoides etoschae</i>	LC
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster notophila</i>	LC
Senegal Coucal	<i>Centropus senegalensis flecki</i>	LC
Coppery-tailed Coucal	<i>Centropus cupreicordus cupreicordus</i>	LC
Levaillant's Cuckoo	<i>Clamator levaillantii</i>	LC
Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus pica</i>	LC
Diederick Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	LC
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	LC
Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus clamosus</i>	LC
African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>	LC
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus (ssp ?)</i>	LC
Double-banded Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles bicinctus bicinctus</i>	LC
Burchell's Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles burchelli</i>	LC
Rock Dove/ Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	LC
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea phaeonota</i>	LC
Mourning Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens ambigua</i>	LC
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	LC
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola damarensis</i>	LC
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis senegalensis</i>	LC
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcopilos</i>	LC
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis capensis</i>	LC
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus meridionalis</i>	LC
African Swamphe	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>	LC
Black Crake	<i>Zapornia flavorostra</i>	LC
Striped Crake	<i>Aenigmatolimnas marginalis</i>	LC

Wattled Crane	<i>Grus carunculata</i>	VU
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis capensis</i>	LC
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis (capensis?)</i>	LC
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus vermiculatus</i>	LC
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	LC
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	LC
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula tundrae</i>	LC
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris tricollaris</i>	LC
Long-toed lapwing	<i>Vanellus crassirostris leucopterus</i>	LC
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	LC
White-crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	LC
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus coronatus</i>	LC
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus lateralis</i>	LC
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pecuarius</i>	LC
Lesser Jacana	<i>Microparra capensis</i>	LC
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	LC
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis angolensis</i>	LC
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	LC
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	LC
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	LC
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	LC
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	LC
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba alba</i>	LC
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	LC
Black-winged Pratincole	<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	NT
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola fuelliborni</i>	LC
African Skimmer	<i>Rhynchops flavirostris</i>	LC
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida delalandii</i>	LC
African Openbill	<i>Anastomas lamelligerus lamelligerus</i>	LC
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>	LC
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	LC
Saddle-billed Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	LC
African Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia microscelis</i>	LC
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa rufa</i>	LC
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus africanus</i>	LC
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	LC
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash hagedash</i>	LC
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	LC
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	LC
Little Bittern	<i>Botaurus minutus payesii</i>	LC
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>	LC
Slaty Egret	<i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>	VU
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	LC
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta garzetta</i>	LC
White-backed Night Heron	<i>Caltherodius leuconotus</i>	LC
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata atricapilla</i>	LC
Rufous-bellied Heron	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>	LC
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	LC
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba melanorhynchos</i>	LC
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Ardea brachyrhyncha</i>	LC
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	LC

Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea cinerea</i>	LC
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea purpurea</i>	LC
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	LC
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>	LC
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta umbretta</i>	LC
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	LC
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus caeruleus</i>	LC
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus typus</i>	LC
African Cuckoo-Hawk	<i>Aviceda cuculoides verreauxii</i>	LC
Hooded Vulture	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	CR
White-backed Vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	CR
White-headed Vulture	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	CR
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotos tracheliotos</i>	EN
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	LC
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	LC
Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	EN
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	EN
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus wahlbergi</i>	LC
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax rapax</i>	VU
African Hawk-Eagle	<i>Aquila spilogaster</i>	LC
Gabar Goshawk (dark & pale morphs)	<i>Micronisus gabar gabar</i>	LC
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	LC
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	NT
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	LC
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius parasitus</i>	LC
African Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>	LC
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>	LC
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba poensis</i>	LC
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum licua</i>	LC
African Barred Owlet	<i>Glaucidium capense ngamiense</i>	LC
African Scops Owl	<i>Otus senegalensis senegalensis</i>	LC
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	<i>Ketupa lactea</i>	LC
Pel's Fishing Owl	<i>Scotopelia peli</i>	LC
Red-faced Mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus (transvaalensis?)</i>	LC
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	LC
Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus angolensis</i>	LC
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas cyanomelas</i>	LC
Southern Ground Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	VU
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus rufirostris</i>	??
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas leucomelas</i>	LC
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus epirhinus</i>	LC
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes buccinator</i>	LC
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus caudatus</i>	LC
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus garrulus</i>	LC
Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus suahelicus</i>	LC
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris orientalis</i>	LC
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti chelicuti</i>	LC
Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis cyanoleuca</i>	LC
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus cristatus</i>	LC
Half-collared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>	LC
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima maxima</i>	LC

Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis rudis</i>	LC
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus hirundineus</i>	LC
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus argutus</i>	LC
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>	LC
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus (chrysocercus?)</i>	LC
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	LC
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	<i>Merops nubicoides</i>	LC
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii vaillantii</i>	LC
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus bocagie</i>	LC
Bennett's Woodpecker	<i>Campethera bennettii capricorni</i>	LC
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni abingoni</i>	LC
Bearded Woodpecker	<i>Chloropicus namaquus namaquus</i>	LC
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens loandae</i>	LC
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	LC
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>	LC
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo subbuteo</i>	LC
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus biarmicus</i>	LC
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus minor</i>	LC
Meyer's Parrot	<i>Poicephalus meyeri transvaalensis</i>	LC
Orange-breasted Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus similis</i>	LC
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis (rhodesiensis?)</i>	LC
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra segalus kalahari</i>	LC
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla okavangensis</i>	LC
Tropical Boubou	<i>Laniarius major mossambicus</i>	LC
Swamp Boubou	<i>Laniarius bicolor stricturus</i>	LC
Crimson-breasted Shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	LC
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer brubru</i>	LC
White-crested Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops plumatus talacoma</i>	LC
African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus (ssp?)</i>	LC
Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	LC
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis apivorus</i>	LC
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis plumbeiceps</i>	LC
Southern White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens anguitimens</i>	LC
Magpie Shrike	<i>Lanius melanoleucus melanoleucus</i>	LC
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	LC
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	LC
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	LC
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger xanthostomus</i>	LC
Fawn-coloured Lark	<i>Calendulauda africanoides makarikari</i>	LC
Flappet Lark	<i>Amirafa rufocinnamomea mababiensis</i>	LC
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Corypha africana griseus</i>	LC
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calendrella cinerea surator</i>	LC
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris occidentalis</i>	LC
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris rhodesiae</i>	LC
African Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans nigricans</i>	LC
Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor (layardi & tricolor?)</i>	LC
Banded Martin	<i>Neophedina cincta xerica</i>	LC
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola paludicola</i>	LC
Large Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula (anderssoni?)</i>	LC
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica rustica</i>	LC
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii smithii</i>	LC

Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica (ampliformis?)</i>	LC
Red-breasted Swallow	<i>Cecropis semirufa semirufa</i>	LC
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens flecki</i>	LC
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus (yakutensis?)</i>	LC
Greater Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus rufescens ansorgei</i>	LC
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana smithersi</i>	LC
Luapula Cisticola	<i>Cisticola luapula</i>	LC
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis terrestris</i>	LC
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava affinis & bechuanae</i>	LC
Black-chested Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans nubilosa</i>	LC
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata sharpie</i>	LC
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii tamalakanei</i>	LC
Southern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>	LC
Hartlaub's Babbler	<i>Turdoides hartlaubii griseosquamata</i>	LC
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis tristis</i>	LC
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	LC
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	LC
Greater Blue-eared Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus nordmanni</i>	LC
Meve's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis mevesii mevesii</i>	LC
Burchell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>	LC
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster verreauxi</i>	LC
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio morio</i>	LC
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus africanus</i>	LC
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	LC
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa pauciguttatus</i>	LC
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana verreauxii</i>	LC
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys ovamboensis</i>	LC
Grey Tit-Flycatcher	<i>Fraseria plumbea catoleuca</i>	LC
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina (diabolicus?)</i>	LC
Marico Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis mariquensis mariquensis</i>	LC
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata (ssp?)</i>	LC
White-browed Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini heuglini</i>	LC
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus stonei</i>	LC
Arnot's Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla arnotti arnotti</i>	LC
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata livingstonii</i>	LC
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris zambesiana</i>	LC
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis saturator</i>	LC
Marico Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis mariquensis</i>	LC
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>	LC
Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris superciliaris rufitergum (& flavigula?)</i>	LC
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus diffusus</i>	LC
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger niger</i>	LC
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali pectoralis</i>	LC
Scaly-feathered Weaver	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons fuligescens</i>	LC
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons maxima</i>	LC
Holub's Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	LC
Southern Brown-throated Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthopterus castaneigula</i>	LC
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	LC
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea lathamii</i>	LC
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris bocagei</i>	LC
Violet-eared Waxbill	<i>Granatina granatina</i>	LC

Blue Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis niassensis</i>	LC
Green-winged pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba melba</i>	LC
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala rendalli</i>	LC
Jameson's Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia jamesoni</i>	LC
Brown Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta nitidula</i>	LC
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	LC
Shaft-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua regia</i>	LC
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>	LC
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava (and ????)</i>	LC
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis simplissima</i>	LC
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp vidua</i>	LC
Rosy-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx ameliae altanus</i>	LC
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus grotei & bocagii</i>	LC
Plain-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus leucophrys tephridorsus</i>	LC
Black-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra atrogularis semideserti</i>	LC
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Crithagra mozambica vansonii</i>	LC
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi nivenorum</i>	LC
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris kalaharica</i>	LC

MAMMALS (39 SPECIES IN ORDER OF LYNX EDICIONES MAMMALS OF THE WORLD)

African Savanna Elephant	<i>Loxodonta Africana</i>	EN
Southern Lesser Galago	<i>Galago moholi</i>	LC
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus griseipes</i>	LC
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus pygerythrus</i>	LC
African Savanna Hare	<i>Lepus victoriae (whytei?)</i>	LC
Southern African Springhare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>	LC
Smith's Bush Squirrel (Tree)	<i>Paraxerus cepapi chobiensis</i>	LC
Peter's Epauletted Fruit Bat	<i>Epomophorus crypturus</i>	LC
Common Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	VU
Southern Giraffe	<i>Giraffa giraffa angolensis</i>	NR*
Cape Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	NT
Chobe Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus ornatus</i>	NR*
Zambezi Sitatunga	<i>Tragelaphus selousi</i>	NR*
Zambezi Kudu	<i>Strepsiceros zambesiensis</i>	NR*
Common Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	LC
Steenbok	<i>Ramphiceros campestris steinhardti</i>	LC
Red Lechwe	<i>Kobus leche</i>	NT
Puku	<i>Kobus vardonii</i>	NT
Ellipsen Waterbuck (Common)	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymus</i>	LC
Roan Antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	LC
Southern Sable Antelope	<i>Hippotragus niger niger</i>	NR*
Western Tsessebe	<i>Damalsicus lunatus</i>	LC
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	LC
Bush Duiker (Common)	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia splendidula</i>	LC
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus sundevallii</i>	LC
Plains Zebra	<i>Equus quagga chapmanni</i>	NT
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus pardus</i>	VU
Lion	<i>Panthera leo melanochaita</i>	VU

Common Genet	<i>Genetta genetta pulchra</i>	LC
Yellow Mongoose	<i>Cynictis penicillata bradfieldi</i>	LC
Common Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	LC
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	LC
Common Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula (mimetra?)</i>	LC
Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	LC
Brown Hyena	<i>Hyaena brunnea</i>	NT
Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis megalotis</i>	LC
Side-striped Jackal	<i>Lupueella adjustus</i>	LC
Black-backed Jackal	<i>Lupueella mesomelas mesomelas</i>	LC
African Wild Dog	<i>Lycaon pictus</i>	EN

*IUCN do not recognize these recent splits as species. Several authorities do, including Lynx Edicions' *Handbook of the Mammals of the World*

BUTTERFLIES (in order of *Butterflies of South Africa* by S. Woodhall)

African Plain Tiger	<i>Danaus chrysippus orientis</i>	LC
African Yellow Pansy	<i>Junonia hierta cebrene</i>	LC
Brown-veined (Pioneer) White	<i>Belenois aurota aurota</i>	LC
Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus demodocus</i>	LC
Cream-striped Owl moth	<i>Cyligramma latona</i>	

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	LC
Nile (Water) Monitor Lizard	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	LC
Rock Monitor Lizard	<i>Varanus albigularis</i>	LC
Ground Agama	<i>Agama aculeata</i>	LC
Leopard Tortoise	<i>Stigmochelys pardalis</i>	LC
Wahlberg's Striped Skink	<i>Trachylepis wahlbergii</i>	
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans arietans</i>	LC
Black Mamba	<i>Dendroaspis polylepis</i>	LC
Southern African Rock Python	<i>Python natalensis</i>	LC
Yellow-bellied Sand Snake	<i>Psammophis subtaeniatus</i>	LC
Flap-necked Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo dilepis dilepis</i>	LC
African Bullfrog	<i>Pyxicephalus adspersus</i>	LC
Long Reed Frog	<i>Hyperolius nasutus</i>	LC
Garman's (Olive) Toad	<i>Sclerophrys garmani</i>	LC
Speckled-bellied Grass Frog	<i>Ptychadena subpunctata</i>	

MISCELLANEOUS BEASTIES AND CRITTERS

Eastern Bark Scorpion	<i>Uroplectes vittatus</i>	
Black Emperor dragonfly	<i>Anax tristis</i>	LC
Banded Groundling	<i>Brachythemis leucosticte</i>	LC
The bright green dung beetles	<i>Gymnopleurus virens</i>	
Velvet Mite	<i>Trombididae</i> species	

SELECTIVE PLANT LIST

Kalahari Apple-leaf	<i>Philenoptera (Lonchocarpus) nelsii</i>	LC
Shepherd's Tree	<i>Boscia albitrunca</i>	LC
African Baobab Tree	<i>Adansonia digitata</i>	NR
Mopane Tree	<i>Colophospermum mopane</i>	LC
'Sausage Tree'	<i>Kigelia africana</i>	LC
'Rain Tree'	<i>Philenoptera violacea</i>	LC
'Wild Cucumber'	<i>Cucumis africanus</i>	
African Spider Lily	<i>Lapeirousia odoratissima</i>	
Flame Lily	<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	LC
Poison Onion	<i>Dipcadi glaucum</i>	
Devil's Claw	<i>Harpagophytum procumbens</i>	

IUCN Classifications:

NR = Not Recognised

LC = Least Concern

NT = Near Threatened

VU = Vulnerable

EN = Endangered

CR = Critically Endangered

EW = Extinct in the Wild

EX = Extinct

FURTHER READING:

IOC: <https://www.worldbirdnames.org/new/>

Also check out The Birds of the World website from Cornell Lab:

<https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/home#:~:text=Birds%20of%20the%20World%20is,Every%20bird%20has%20a%20story.>

IUCN: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>



Southern Carmine Bee-eater





Brown Hyena



Crested Francolin



White-browed Scrub-Robin

