



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Namibia, Okavango and Victoria Falls

25th July to 11th August 2010



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Trip report compiled by: Glen Valentine

Tour Summary

From the vast, ochre dunes of the ancient Namib Desert and game-filled savannas of Etosha to the endless papyrus-lined channels of the idyllic Okavango Panhandle and thunderous Victoria Falls, our adventure through the Southern African countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zambia produced unrivalled vistas and mouth-watering birds and mammals in a land of awe and inspiration!



Beginning in Namibia's capital city, Windhoek, we started our birding at the nearby Avis Dam, which provided us with a great introduction to general Namibian birding. Here we enjoyed our first encounters with dry-country specials like the gorgeous Black-faced, Blue and Violet-eared Waxbills, Cape Penduline Tit, stunning Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Bearded Woodpecker, Mountain Wheatear, Chestnut-vented Warbler, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Acacia Pied Barbet, Pririt Batis, White-backed Mousebird sitting up preening in the early morning sunlight, the ever-present Pearl-spotted Owlet, Gabar Goshawk and fast-flying Bradfield's and Alpine Swifts to mention of few of the delightful species we managed to pick up here on our first morning. After a scrumptious lunch at a nearby restaurant in town we struck out for the Gammams Water Treatment Works, where the shallowly flooded and reed-fringed ponds held a multitude of exciting birds. South African Shelduck, Cape and Red-billed Teal, gaudy, chicken-like African Swamphen and the bizarre Hamerkop all entertained us during our short visit while the incomparably bright Crimson-breasted Shrike and retiring Red-billed Firefinch were found in the surrounding *Acacia* woodland. Many more common and widespread water associated species were also seen and we enjoyed good flight views of Osprey and African Harrier-Hawk overhead as the afternoon drew to a close. Returning back to town with a host of new species under the belt we went out to dinner at one of Namibia must-visit eateries – the famous Joe's Beerhouse for a superb meal!

We had a fair way to travel today but before hitting the road down south we ducked into the Daan Viljoen Game Reserve for a bit of local birding and a lovely array of classic African mammals. The reserve did not disappoint and we were soon oohing and aahing over the near-endemic Monteiro's Hornbill and spectacular male Short-toed Rock Thrush as well as our only Hartmann's Mountain Zebra of the trip. Other fabulous mammals that were seen well included the massive Eland, awesome Greater Kudu, Red Hartebeest, Warthog, stately Giraffe, Springbok, Blue Wildebeest and



impressive Gemsbok. Some of the other interesting birds that we found here included the scarce Barred Wren-Warbler, Brubru, Sabota Lark, Long-billed Pipit, miniscule Long-billed Crombec, vibrant Green-winged Pytilia and Golden-breasted Bunting. Leaving Daan Viljoen in the mid-morning we made a short lunch stop and vehicle swap before heading south into the remote countryside towards our destination, the Khomas Hochland, the gateway to the endless plains and vast red dunes of the Namib Desert. Our bus grinded to a sudden halt on several occasions during the drive as we spotted some excellent birds like Kori Bustard and Red-crested Korhaan as well as the magnificent Black Harrier, a rare and seldom



recorded raptor in Namibia. Upon arrival at our homely guest house we immediately picked up our target for the area, the range-restricted Karoo Chat, here at its northern-most point of distribution.

Next morning was crisp but clear and our short pre-breakfast walk around the farmhouse saw us picking up Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Common Waxbill and Dusky Sunbird. The day began warming up fairly quickly and by the time we left for Spreetshoogte Pass it was very pleasant indeed. We stopped near the top of the pass and began making our way slowly down the road, adding some very special birds along the way such as the near-endemic Rockrunner, Layard's Warbler, Grey-backed Cisticola, Lark-like Bunting, White-throated Canary, scarce and very tricky-to-find Herero Chat and brilliant eye-level views of a pair of



soaring Booted Eagle. As we exited the pass and dropped down onto the plains, the habitat began changing quite drastically, becoming more open and barren. Here, in this very inhospitable landscape we found the rare and endangered Ludwig's Bustard as well as Greater Kestrel, endemic Rüppell's Korhaan, low density and highly range-restricted Gray's and Stark's Larks, Double-banded Courser and Namaqua Sandgrouse. We finally arrived at the small coastal port of Walvis Bay in the late afternoon after a rather long and bumpy ride through the desert. The great vistas, mouth-watering birds and a scrumptious seafood dinner at The Raft more than made up for any discomforts during the drive.

A very early morning had us blazing out to the nearby dunes at Rooibank for Namibia's only true endemic, the highly localised Dune Lark – undoubtedly one of Namibia's top birds! Arriving at dawn we strolled out into the Kuiseb River valley, which is surrounded by tall red dunes, a spectacular setting for a morning's birding. A Bokmakierie started calling just as we left the vehicle and we soon managed to locate a pair of these delightful birds duetting in the morning glow. Cape Sparrows abounded and it wasn't long before we located the beautiful chorus of several Dune Larks from the surrounding dune scrub. After achieving fantastic views of this special bird we turned back to where we had parked to enjoy some hot tea, coffee and rusks. After a knockout breakfast back at our comfortable hotel in Walvis Bay, we made our way towards the Walvis Bay Saltworks,



stopping for Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, Greater Flamingo, Great White Pelican and Caspian and Swift Terns along the way. The saltworks yielded several new species such as White-fronted and the sought-after Chestnut-banded Plover as well as a host of more widespread waders and terns. The real prize, however, came in the form of three Damara Terns that flew past us and then proceeded to hunt in the tidal pools a few metres away. What an amazing way to end an excellent morning! The afternoon was spent marvelling at ancient *Welwitschia's* in the barren, gravel plains near

Swakopmund and searching successfully for Cape and Crowned Cormorants and the localised and dainty Orange River White-eye.

Leaving the coast we made our way inland to the Spitzkoppe, a massive granite inselberg that protrudes magnificently out of the surrounding desert. The area is famous amongst birders for being a very reliable site to see a number of Namibia's most sought-after endemics. With Herero Chat



already in the bag the pressure was essentially off and we could enjoy the scenery and host of other exciting new birds in the surrounding *Acacia* scrub and gravel plains. Noteworthy species included Karoo Long-billed Lark, impressive Verreaux's Eagle and White-tailed Shrike, a striking near-endemic that is actually a type of batis! Our picnic lunch stop en route to the Erongo Mountains (one of the oldest mountain ranges on earth) was enjoyed under massive Camelthorn trees in the dry Khan Riverbed with Violet Woodhoopoe, Damara Red-billed Hornbill, gaudy Crimson-breasted Shrike and a large troop of Chacma Baboon all around us. Our wonderful lodge snuggled into the granite outcrops of the ancient Erongo Mountains would be our homely base for the night.

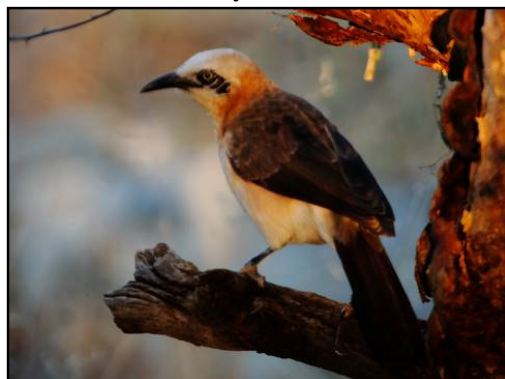


Erongo throbs with birds and we were blown away by the amazing variety of colourful avian gems that kept us entertained through breakfast. A small covey of the scarce and often difficult-to-find near-endemic Hartlaub's Spurfowl scurried around below the deck along with Rosy-faced Lovebird, Great Sparrow, Green-winged Pytilia, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow and Pale-winged Starling. Erongo also produced our only sighting of the range-restricted near-endemic Carp's Black Tit and we enjoyed our first Kirk's (Damara) Dik-dik of the trip, a tiny



dry-country antelope. Driving north of Erongo towards the world-renown Etosha National Park, we made a few short birding stops which produced another flock of noisy Violet Wood Hoopoe, a wonderful pair of the very special Rüppell's Parrot and a small flock of Bare-cheeked Babbler before arriving at Etosha in the late afternoon. We spent the evening at the floodlit Okaukuejo waterhole savouring the very memorable experience of seeing six Black Rhinoceros and two White Rhinoceros coming down to drink at the same time along with African Elephant and Giraffe!

Etosha yielded many incredible and memorable sightings during our stay, most notably several large prides of Lion, which included cubs, lions and lionesses of all different ages (a pride of 19 was our largest, and we enjoyed sightings of these regal beasts on three consecutive days!). Other highlights were massive herds of Burchell's Zebra, Springbok, Blue Wildebeest, Black-faced Impala and Giraffe, while smaller numbers of Eland, Gemsbok, Red Hartebeest and Greater Kudu were also regularly sighted. We had some fabulous encounters at the many waterholes scattered throughout the park. These sources of life are vital in the harsh semi-arid environment and attract a multitude of life; hundreds of canaries, waxbills, sparrows, queleas, weavers and doves come down to drink in a constant stream of activity, and these attract good numbers of small carnivores like Black-backed Jackal and Slender Mongoose. Raptors also favour the waterhole edges as they prey on the "easy-pickings" that swarm around these water sources, and we saw Red-necked and Lanner Falcons, Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Pale Chanting Goshawk and the scarce Ovambo Sparrowhawk in the vicinity of the waterholes. Huge flocks of Namaqua, Double-banded and Burchell's Sandgrouse coming into drink in was another major highlight of Etosha, as were the Southern White-faced,



African Scops and Verreaux's Eagle Owls that were encountered during the day! The expansive grassy plains to the north of Okaukuejo and Namutoni saw us adding Pink-billed, Spike-heeled, Eastern Clapper and Red-capped Larks as well as Double-banded Courser, Capped Wheatear, Ant-eating Chat and large numbers of Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark. Further nocturnal excursions to the camp waterholes at Okaukuejo and Halali produced some excellent mammals such as the crepuscular Leopard and Brown Hyaena.



Etosha was fantastic but the Caprivi Strip beckoned and it was time to drive north towards the Angolan and Zambian borders. Here the vegetation is lush with tall teak woodland, large *Phragmites* and papyrus reedbeds and riverine forest bordering the lazy Okavango River. A short stop at the Rundu Water Treatment Works yielded some tantalizing species and we enjoyed a host of new birds like Little Bittern, Hottentot Teal, Swamp Boubou, Senegal Coucal, Lesser Swamp Warbler and Bradfield's Hornbill. We headed further east along

the Golden Highway through the fabled Caprivi towards Botswana and the Okavango Panhandle where the Okavango River spreads out into the sandy Kalahari soils to form the staggeringly expansive floodplain of the Okavango Delta. This idyllic avian wonderland would be our base for the next two nights. We traversed the waterways by motorboat and were rewarded with some amazing sightings! Pel's Fishing Owl, one of the world's most sought-after birds, was seen on two separate occasions. Flocks of Retz's Helmetshrike, unobtrusive Lesser Honeyguide, small parties of Brown Firefinch, gaudy Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Little Sparrowhawk, flocks of Meyer's Parrot, African Barred Owllet and African Wood Owl, Bennett's Woodpecker, Swamp Boubou, bands of noisy Hartlaub's Babbler and scores of iridescent starlings entertained us during walks in the adjacent woodland. Cruising along the swampy waterways in a motorized boat was an absolute delight and we were rewarded with the rare and elusive White-backed Night Heron, close up views of one of Africa's iconic birds, the spectacular African Fish Eagle as well as Chirping Cisticola, Little Rush Warbler, a host of bee-eaters and kingfishers at close range, and a small group of playful Spotted-necked Otter which showed very well as they fed nearby.



Alas it was time to say farewell to our wonderful lodge in the fabulous Okavango Panhandle and make our way back into Namibia and through the Caprivi towards the far north-eastern town of Katima Mulilo for our last few nights in the country. En route we spent some time in the tiny game reserve of Mahango, situated on the floodplain of the Okavango River before it spreads out into the Panhandle of Botswana. This reserve always produces some good sightings and we were treated to good views of some of the region's special birds and mammals. Most notably we enjoyed good scope views of Slaty Egret, one of the Okavango's real treasures and on the mammal front we scored both Roan and Sable (two rare and exceptionally beautiful species of antelope) as well as Red Lechwe, Common Reedbuck and pods of Hippo patrolling the floodplain margins. Random stops in the eastern Caprivi yielded some quality new species like White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Southern Ground Hornbill, Greater Honeyguide, Grey Penduline Tit and Green-capped Eremomela before arriving at our destined lodge in the north-eastern Caprivi.





Here, towards the end of this fabulous tour, we relaxed and enjoyed some cold beverages on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River with hundreds of African Openbills soaring overhead and the odd pair of African Skimmer cruising by, which was an absolute pleasure! We did some birding around the grasslands and small wetlands that surround the lodge and picked up some nice birds including Long-toed and White-crowned Lapwings, Rufous-bellied Heron, Pink-backed Pelican, Rufous-naped Lark, Luapula Cisticola, African Marsh Harrier, scarce and easily over-looked Lesser Jacana and gorgeous Southern Carmine Bee-eater. In the evenings

the wonderful calls of Square-tailed Nightjar emanated through the crisp, clear and starry night, a perfect way to end our time in the awe-inspiring country of Namibia. Thereafter we headed across the border into neighbouring Zambia where we enjoyed the “Smoke that Thunders” – the magnificent and mighty Victoria Falls! The Zambezi was full and the falls was a sight to behold with tons of water gushing over every second – it did not disappoint! Our final morning was spent birding around the outskirts of the touristy town of Livingstone where we picked up our last batch of new birds for the trip – most notable were several sought-after species like Greater Painted Snipe, skulking African Rail, White-browed Coucal, Collared Palm Thrush and Dickinson’s Kestrel before heading off to the airport to connect with our international flights home.



What a fantastic time we had exploring the wonders of these three remarkable countries. We recorded all the possible endemics on the route, 367 species of birds and 49 species of mammals. What a fabulous tour!!!

Annotated List of Birds recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC List of Please cite: Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2006. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names, version 2.5, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Key: (E) = Endemic to Namibia and (NE) = Near-endemic to Namibia.

Total species recorded: 367

Ostrich Struthionidae

Common Ostrich

Struthio camelus

Common throughout the dry Namibian section of the tour and particularly widespread in Etosha National Park.

*NOTE: IOC now considers Common Ostrich and Somali Ostrich *S. molybdophanes* of dry East Africa, two distinct species.*

Guineafowl Numididae



Helmeted Guineafowl*Numida meleagris*

Seen in small groups at various scattered localities throughout the trip.

Pheasants, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae**Crested Francolin***Dendroperdix sephaena*

Several pairs were seen in Etosha National Park.

Hartlaub's Spurfowl (Francolin) (NE)*Pternistis hartlaubi*

One of Namibia's main target endemics, we were exceptionally lucky to have a covey feeding only metres away from our breakfast table at Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Francolinus and gives it the common name Hartlaub's Francolin.

Red-billed Spurfowl (Francolin)*Pternistis adspersus*

This attractive bird was seen in good numbers throughout the tour.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Francolinus and gives it the common name Red-billed Francolin.

Swainson's Spurfowl (Francolin)*Pternistis swainsonii*

We enjoyed several excellent views of this species in the Halali area of Etosha National Park.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Francolinus and gives it the common name Swainson's Francolin.

Ducks & Geese Anatidae**White-faced Whistling Duck***Dendrocygna viduata*

We found good numbers at various sites along the Okavango River.

Spur-winged Goose*Plectropterus gambensis*

This large goose was recorded in the Okavango Panhandle and in wetlands throughout the Caprivi Strip.

Knob-billed (Comb) Duck*Sarkidiornis melanotos*

A single male was seen flying overhead near Kalizo Lodge.

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptiacus*

This common goose was seen at many scattered localities throughout the tour.

South African Shelduck*Tadorna cana*

This handsome species was seen in good numbers at Gammams Sewage Works with further sightings at waterholes in Etosha National Park.

African Pygmy Goose*Nettapus auritus*

After a great deal of searching we finally found a pair on the Okavango River floodplain in Mahango GR with good numbers seen later on in the wetlands around Kalizo Lodge.

Cape Teal*Anas capensis*

An attractive teal, which was first seen commonly during the first half of the tour.

Cape Shoveler*Anas smithii*

Several birds were seen at scattered waterholes in Etosha National Park.

Red-billed Teal (Duck)*Anas erythrorhyncha*

This fairly common teal was observed at various localities throughout the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Red-billed Duck.

Hottentot Teal*Anas hottentota*

We enjoyed good views of this handsome species at Rundu Sewage Works and along the Okavango River near Rundu.

Southern Pochard*Netta erythrophthalma*

Two birds were encountered at a natural spring just outside the northern gate of Etosha NP.

Grebes Podicipedidae**Little Grebe***Tachybaptus ruficollis*

This common and widespread grebe was seen at a number of fresh-water localities.

Black-necked (Eared) Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Small groups of these birds was seen on settling ponds in the Walvis Bay Salt Works, most of which were in non-breeding plumage.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Eared Grebe.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Large numbers of these peculiar birds were seen at Walvis Bay lagoon.

Storks Ciconidae

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Small numbers were seen in the Okavango Panhandle and at scattered wetlands in the Caprivi Strip.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus*

First seen along the Okavango River and was later observed in large flocks near Kalizo.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

A single bird was seen flying in the distance in the late afternoon at Namibgrens.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

We had two sightings of this large, regal heron. Once in Etosha and another sighting near Katima Mulilo.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

This pied ibis was seen at Gammams Sewage Works and in Mahango GR.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Strangely a scarce bird on the route and we were fortunate to encounter a few individuals in the Okavango Panhandle.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Our only encounter with this species was of a small flock that flew over while birding around Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Bitterns & Herons Ardeidae

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Two birds were seen at the Rundu Sewage Works with a further sighting from our lodge overlooking the Okavango River near Rundu.

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus*

Good views were eventually obtained of this scarce and secretive species in the Okavango Panhandle.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

We encountered several individuals at various freshwater wetland localities.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

A fairly common heron that was seen on many occasions during the last part of the tour.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Fairly numerous at most wetlands in the north of Namibia and adjacent Botswana.

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris*

This uncommon and richly-colored heron was first seen from our lodge overlooking the Okavango River near Rundu with further sightings in the Panhandle, Mahango GR and in wetlands near Kalizo.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

This abundant and very widespread species was encountered on most days of the trip.



NOTE: The IOC splits Cattle Egret into 2 species, the nominate form Western Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret *E. coromanda*.

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

Another widespread heron that was found on almost every day of the trip.

Black-headed Heron*Ardea melanocephala*

This species was first seen at the Gammams Sewage Works with further sightings in grassy areas to the south of Windhoek and at the Livingstone Sewage Works on the final day of the tour.

Goliath Heron*Ardea purpurea*

This, the world's largest heron was seen at Mahango GR and near Kalizo Lodge.

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

This species was seen daily along the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Western Great Egret*Ardea albus*

This elegant egret was recorded on the floodplains of the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers.

NOTE: The IOC splits Great Egret into two species, the nominate form Western Great Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Great Egret *A. modesta*.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret*Egretta intermedia*

We found this species on a few occasions in wetlands along the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Slaty Egret*Egretta vinaceigula*

This can often be a very tricky species to find! Our first view was a flyby on the Okavango River near Rundu with a further sighting in the Mahango GR.

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Small numbers of this egret were seen along the Okavango and Zambezi River systems.

Hamerkop Scopidae**Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

We had many, wonderful encounters with this bizarre species during the trip.

Pelicans Pelecanidae**Great White Pelican***Pelecanus onocrotalus*

These huge birds were seen well at Avis Dam and in the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

Pink-backed Pelican*Pelecanus rufescens*

A single bird was seen in flight while on a boat trip down the Zambezi River.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae**Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant***Phalacrocorax africanus*

This species was encountered at most freshwater wetlands throughout the tour.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Long-tailed Cormorant.

Crowned Cormorant*Phalacrocorax coronatus*

We found a total of six birds along the cold Atlantic coastline between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund.

White-breasted (Great) Cormorant*Phalacrocorax lucidus*

Uncommonly recorded during the trip with our only sightings at Avis Dam, Daan Viljoen, Walvis Bay and along the Zambezi River.

NOTE: The IOC splits the white-breasted African subspecies into a full species from the widely distributed Great Cormorant *P. carbo*. Clements does not accept this split.

Cape Cormorant*Phalacrocorax capensis*

Large numbers of this coastal cormorant were seen in the Walvis Bay area.

Anhingae Anhingidae**African Darter***Anhinga melanogaster*

First sited at the Gammams Sewage works with further regular sightings along the Okavango River.



NOTE:

Secretarybird Sagittaridae**Secretarybird***Sagittarius serpentarius*

This elegant and unique species was seen on two occasions while driving in Etosha NP.

Ospreys Pandionidae**Western Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

A singleton was seen in flight at Gammams Sewage Works on the first afternoon of the trip.

Kites, Hawks, Eagles & Vultures Accipitridae**Black-winged (shouldered) Kite***Elanus caeruleus*

This widespread raptor was seen at many localities throughout the tour.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Black-shouldered Kite.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

This migrant was first recorded in the Kalizo area with further sightings around Livingstone.

NOTE: This race we observed during the tour is considered by some authorities to be a full species, namely: Yellow-billed Kite *M. m. aegyptius*.

African Fish Eagle*Haliaeetus vocifer*

This iconic African raptor was seen on numerous occasions along the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers in Northern Namibia and Botswana.

White-backed Vulture*Gyps africanus*

A widespread and common vulture in sub-Saharan Africa, it was seen on many occasions in Etosha and again in the Caprivi Strip.

Lappet-faced Vulture*Torgos tracheliotus*

This globally threatened species was first seen soaring over Avis Dam near Windhoek with further sightings at Etosha and near Rundu.

Black-chested (breasted) Snake Eagle*Circaetus pectoralis*

We enjoyed a total of six sightings of this smart raptor, mostly in flight with our first sighting coming from near the Erongo Mountains.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Black-breasted Snake-Eagle.

Brown Snake Eagle*Circaetus cinereus*

We had several sightings of this large, distinctive raptor with our first being near Erongo and later several being found in the Caprivi Strip of Northern Namibia.

Western Banded Snake Eagle*Circaetus cinerascens*

This smart species is rather uncommon, here at its southern distributional limit, and we enjoyed two fabulous sightings in the Eastern Caprivi.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Banded Snake Eagle.

Bateleur*Terathopius ecaudatus*

This stunning bird of prey was seen on numerous occasions in Etosha and the Caprivi region.

African Marsh-Harrier*Circus ranivorus*

We were fortunate to encounter this species on two separate occasions in the Kalizo area of the Eastern Caprivi.

Black Harrier*Circus Maurus*

This elegant and endangered raptor is rare in Namibia and we were exceptionally lucky to encounter a single adult male en route to Namib Grens in the Khomas Hochland south of Windhoek.

African Harrier-Hawk*Polyboroides typus*

Our first sighting was of a juvenile bird at the Gammams Sewage Works in Windhoek with a second sighting while in transit through the Eastern Caprivi.

Dark Chanting Goshawk*Melierax metabates*

We encountered a couple of individuals on the drive from Divundu to Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Caprivi.

Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus*

This attractive raptor was commonly recorded during the first half of our trip in the drier regions of Namibia.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*

We had several good sightings at various scattered localities during the trip.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Melierax.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Several sightings were enjoyed at waterholes throughout Etosha with a further encounter of a single bird in the Western Caprivi.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*

We enjoyed good scope views of a female near Xaro Lodge.

Ovambo (Ovampo) Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*

A single bird was seen in flight in Etosha National Park.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

Brilliant views were obtained of this scarce raptor near Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Caprivi.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

This large brown eagle was first found in Daan Viljoen GR with further sightings in Etosha NP and along the Caprivi Strip.

NOTE: The nominate form African Tawny Eagle A. r. rapax may be split from the Asian Tawny Eagle A. r. vindhiana.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

We were very fortunate to obtain fabulous flight views of a pair of these impressive eagles at the Spitzkoppe.

African Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster*

Flight views were obtained of a pair while in transit between Mushara Lodge and Grootfontein.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

A pair of these boldly-patterned eagles were seen soaring at eye-level upon descending Sreetshoogte Pass and was easily identified by the 'landing lights' present on the shoulders of the birds as they turned towards us. A second pair was encountered near the Spitzkoppe later in the trip.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

We enjoyed several encounters with this massive eagle, the heaviest in Africa, with a particularly memorable sighting of a singleton perched right next to the road eating on an unidentifiable "gamebird" in Etosha National Park – absolutely spectacular!

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

A single bird was seen on the boat trip on our journey back to Drotsky's Cabins from Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Falcons & Kestrels Falconidae

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus*

This miniscule falcon was seen in the Khomas Hochland during our long drive to Walvis Bay – a fortunate encounter and the only one of the trip.

Rock (Eurasian) Kestrel *Falco rupicolus*

This widespread species was seen every day of the first half of the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Eurasian Kestrel F. tinnunculus. The IOC splits Rock Kestrel F. rupicolus, which was the race we observed.

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*

A larger, more robust and scarcer kestrel than the latter, which was seen on a few occasions en route to Walvis Bay from Namib Grens as well as in Etosha.

Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickinsoni*



This beautiful and extremely scarce little raptor was seen well on the last morning of the tour near Livingstone.

Red-necked Falcon*Falco chicquera*

This uncommon and extremely attractive falcon was seen well on a few occasions during our time in Etosha NP.

African Hobby*Falco cuvierii*

This is an exceptionally uncommon raptor in Southern Africa and some of the group were extremely fortunate to find a single bird perched at the Okaukuejo Waterhole in Etosha NP. An exceptional record indeed!

Lanner Falcon*Falco biarmicus*

We managed to obtain brilliant point blank views of this large, fast-flying falcon after initial distant views in Etosha NP.

Bustards Otididae**Kori Bustard***Ardeotis kori*

Good numbers of these regal birds were recorded daily in Etosha National Park.

Ludwig's Bustard*Neotis ludwigii*

Just one of these handsome birds was spotted on the desert plains after our descent down the Spreetshoogte Pass. The population of this species has decreased dramatically over recent years and is of major concern.

Rüppell's Korhaan (Bustard) (NE)*Eupodotis rueppelli*

Small numbers of this attractive near-endemic were observed on the desert plains *en route* to Walvis Bay and in the Spitzkoppe area.

Red-crested Korhaan (Bustard)*Lophotis ruficrista*

This species was sighted on three occasions, our first encounter being en route to Namib Grens with the next two being just outside of and within Etosha NP.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Eupodotis and the scientific name is Eupodotis ruficrista.

Northern Black Korhaan (White-quilled Bustard) *Afrotis afraoides*

We enjoyed numerous good sightings of this beautifully-patterned bird almost daily in Etosha NP.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae**African Rail***Rallus caerulescens*

After hearing this species in dense reedbeds bordering the Kavango River near Rundu we finally obtained wonderful views of this attractive rail at the Livingstone Sewage Works on the last morning of the tour.

Black Crake*Amaurornis flavirostris*

This atypical crake (with regards to behavior) was recorded almost daily in marshy habitat throughout the Okavango and Zambezi River systems.

African (Purple) Swamphen*Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Apparently a Sewage works specialist as the Gamams, Rundu and Livingstone Treatment Works provided us with our only sightings of this brightly plumaged bird on tour.

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

This common and widespread species was recorded at most wetlands on tour.

Red-knobbed Coot*Fulica cristata*

This widespread and abundant species was only seen at the Gammams Sewage Works, Daan Viljoen GR and Rundu Sewage Works.

Thick-knees & Stone-Curlews Burhinidae**Water Thick-knee***Burhinus vermiculatus*

The Okavango Panhandle and Zambezi River provided us with views of this attractive, crepuscular bird.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*

We found this boldly-marked species while traversing the wetlands of Kalizo in the Eastern Caprivi.

Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Recorded first at Walvis Bay Lagoon and then at Rundu and Mahango GR.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Small numbers were seen at the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris*

This very attractive wetland species was recorded in the Okavango Panhandle, on the Mahango GR floodplain, at wetlands around Kalizo and at Livingstone Treatment Works.

Blacksmith Lapwing (Plover) *Vanellus armatus*

A common and widespread southern African lapwing, it was seen on most days of the trip.

White-crowned (headed) Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*

The sandbanks of the Zambezi River yielded good sightings of this handsome lapwing.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus*

This common dry west species was recorded on many days of the tour.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*

Our only sighting came in the form of a small flock seen flying over us near Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Wattled Lapwing.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Several of these non-breeding migrant waders were encountered in the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Black-bellied Plover.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

Our first sighting was of a single bird at Avis Dam. Thereafter we were treated to close-up scope views of these attractive waders at a natural spring to the north-east of Etosha.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

We recorded this striking little wader at scattered wetland sites during the tour.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

Large numbers of these aggressive little plovers were seen in the Walvis Bay area with a further encounter at a natural spring to the north-east of Etosha.

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*

The Walvis Bay Saltworks produced our only sightings of this attractive and localised wader.

Painted Snipes Rostratulidae

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

This secretive bird was seen at very close range when we located a single female at the Livingstone Sewage Works on the final morning of the trip.

Jacanas Jacaniidae

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis*

Excellent scope views were obtained of this tiny gem at a lily-covered oxbow lake in the Kalizo region of the eastern Caprivi.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*



This attractive species was found on a daily basis on the Okavango & Zambezi River systems. Our first encounter, however, was at Daan Viljoen GR.

Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

A few were seen on the tidal mudflats at Walvis Bay.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

First seen at Walvis Bay, we also had several sightings along the Kavango River and at Livingstone Sewage Works..

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Small numbers were seen at various wetland areas in Namibia and Botswana.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

A single bird was seen in Etosha NP during our stay there.

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

A couple of birds were encountered in the Walvis Bay Saltworks.

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

Large numbers of these shorebirds were recorded in the Walvis Bay Saltworks.

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

We found this species in small numbers at the Walvis Bay Saltworks and at Rundu Sewage Works.

Couriers & Pratincoles Glareolidae

Double-banded Courser

Rhinoptilus africanus

This attractive species was commonly recorded in Etosha National Park. Our first encounter was, however, in the Namib Desert at the Tropic of Capricorn.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Smutsornis.

Collared (Red-winged) Pratincole

Glareola pratincola

Small numbers were seen along the Kavango River near Rundu and in the Mahango GR.

Gulls, Terns, Skimmers Laridae

African Skimmer

Rynchops flavirostris

These stunning birds, which exhibit a unique feeding method, were recorded on the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers in flight and perched at close range.

Grey-(Gray) hooded Gull

Larus cirrocephalus

We recorded this bird at Walvis Bay and along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Gray-headed Gull.

Hartlaub's Gull (NE)

Larus hartlaubii

This southern African near endemic was seen in large numbers in the Walvis Bay area.

Kelp Gull

Larus dominicanus

Good numbers of this gull species seen in the Walvis Bay area.

NOTE: Recent work suggests that the Kelp Gull complex L. dominicanus may be split into as many as four species. The African form we observed has been proposed as Cape Gull L. vetula.

Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

We had good views of this large tern species while birding the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Hydroprogne.

Swift (Great Crested) Tern

Sterna bergii

The Walvis Bay Lagoon yielded multiple sightings of this tern species.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Thalasseus.

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

Several birds were sighted in a tern roost at the Walvis Bay Saltworks.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus, namely Thalasseus.

Damara Tern

Sterna balaenarum



This is the regions most sought-after tern species and we were exceptionally fortunate to find three birds in the Walvis Bay Lagoon area, two of which were in full breeding plumage!

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Small numbers were seen in a tern roost at the Walvis Bay Saltworks.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Namaqua Sandgrouse (NE) *Pterocles namaqua*

Our first sighting was of a pair in stunted vegetation at the Tropic of Capricorn with further sightings of good numbers in the Etosha NP.

Double-banded Sandgrouse (NE) *Pterocles bicinctus*

Flocks of these sandgrouse were seen drinking at dusk at Okaukuejo in Etosha, a truly memorable site indeed!

Burchell's Sandgrouse (NE) *Pterocles bicinctus*

We had fantastic sightings of this beautifully-patterned Kalahari specialist coming in to drink at a waterhole north of Namutoni. Further sightings were had of the species at the road-edge in Etosha with a last encounter at Kalizo, Eastern Caprivi.

Doves & Pigeons Collumbidae

Common (Rock) Pigeon *Columba livia*

This exotic species was seen in small numbers around human settlements during the first week of the tour.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*

We recorded this bird at dry, rocky locations during the first week of the tour with our best views at Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

Mourning Collared (African Mourning) Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*

This species was found in good numbers in the Kalizo area of Eastern Caprivi.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is African Mourning Dove.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

The moist woodland of northern Namibia and Botswana yielded repeated views of this common species.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*

This common and widespread species was recorded on almost every day of the tour.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Laughing Doves were also seen on most days of the tour.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*

This delicate woodland dove was recorded on most days in northern Namibia and Botswana.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

A common dry-country species, it was seen on most days during the tour.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*

The riverine forests along the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers yielded good sightings of these gorgeous birds. Our best encounters were at the fabulous Xaro Lodge!

Cockatoos, Parrots Psittacidae

Rosy-faced Lovebird (NE) *Agapornis roseicollis*

First recorded in the Khomas Hochland, we enjoyed further sightings at several sites in the Namib Desert, near Spitzkoppe and at Erongo Wilderness Lodge, where we had our best views.

Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*

This parrot was seen in North-eastern Namibia and adjacent Botswana on a few days with especially good views at Xaro Lodge.

Rüppell's (Rueppell's) Parrot (NE) *Poicephalus rueppellii*



After trying at several different sites we finally found a pair of these highly localised, endemic parrots just to the sound of Etosha's Anderson Gate.

Turacos Musophagidae

Grey Go-away-bird

Corythaixoides concolor

This distinctive, ubiquitous and noisy species was seen on almost every day of the tour.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Senegal Coucal

Centropus senegalensis

A single bird was seen well at the Rundu Sewage Works.

Coppery-tailed Coucal

Centropus cupreicaudus

We enjoyed numerous views (in flight and on the ground) of this large, swamp-dwelling, heavy-tailed coucal, which included sightings throughout the Okavango Panhandle and at the wetlands near Kalizo Lodge.

White-browed Coucal

Centropus superciliosus

This coucal was seen well at the Livingstone Sewage Works.

NOTE: Clements still lumps White-browed Coucal C. superciliosus with Burchell's Coucal C. burchelli which occurs in eastern southern Africa.

Barn Owls Tytonidae

Western Barn Owl

Tyto alba

This cosmopolitan species was sighted by some of the group to the south of Etosha's Anderson Gate with further birds being heard in Halali Camp, Etosha NP.

Typical Owls Strigidae

African Scops Owl

Otus senegalensis

We had close-up views of this master camouflage-artist in the Halali Camp in Etosha NP with more being heard at our lodge on the Kavango River near Rundu..

Southern White-faced Owl

Ptilopsis granti

Halali Camp provided us with a great sighting of this gorgeous owl.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl

Bubo lacteus

Good views were had of this massive owl at Okaukuejo, Etosha NP.

Pel's Fishing Owl

Scotopelia peli

A mega highlight of any visit to the Okavango Panhandle, we found a total of three roosting birds during our time spent in the area. The eerie calls of this beautiful and highly sought-after owl were also heard during our first night at Xaro.

African Wood Owl

Strix woodfordii

We had an excellent encounter with this superb owl at our lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Pearl-spotted Owlet

Glaucidium perlatum

Individual birds were recorded at scattered woodland sites during the tour, seen on many occasions with other passerines jumping around above its head.

African Barred Owlet

Glaucidium capense

We had excellent views of this species during both days at our lodge in the Okavango Panhandle, whilst we later heard this owl calling in the Kalizo area.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Fiery-necked Nightjar

Caprimulgus pectoralis

The wonderful call of this widespread, classic African species was heard most nights while in the moist "bushveld" areas of north-eastern Namibia and adjacent Botswana.

Freckled Nightjar

Caprimulgus tristigma



We obtained good views of a single bird at our lodge in the Erongo Mountains.

Square-tailed Nightjar*Caprimulgus fossii*

We had a superb encounter with a single bird at close range on the road at Kalizo Lodge with several more being seen hawking insects at dusk over the Zambezi River.

Swifts Apodidae**African Palm Swift***Cypsiurus parvus*

Present at most sites during the tour where there was suitable habitat.

Alpine Swift*Tachymarptis melba*

Easily identifiable by its large white belly patch, this large swift was recorded in mountainous areas during the first few days of the tour.

Bradfield's Swift (NE)*Apus bradfieldi*

This large brown swift was seen around Windhoek and again in the Erongo area.

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

A common and widespread swift, it was seen on most days of the tour.

Horus Swift*Apus horus*

Brilliant close views were enjoyed of this very uncommon and often elusive swift at the Zambezi River near Kalizo Lodge.

Mousebirds Coliidae**White-backed Mousebird (NE)***Colius colius*

First recorded at our guest house in Windhoek with further sightings at Avis Dam, during the drive en route to Namib Grens, on the drive to Walvis Bay and at the Spitzkoppe.

Red-faced Mousebird*Urocolius indicus*

This species was seen on a daily basis in north-eastern Namibia, Botswana and Zambia.

Rollers Coraciidae**Purple Roller***Coracias naevia*

These attractive birds were seen on several occasions with especially good views in Etosha NP.

Lilac-breasted Roller*Coracias caudata*

This quintessential African species was seen in good numbers throughout the tour with highest numbers in the north-eastern Caprivi.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Brown-hooded Kingfisher***Halcyon albiventris*

We encountered this species only once at the Zambezi River just east of Katima Mulilo.

Striped Kingfisher*Halcyon chelicuti*

A single bird was seen at the Zambezi Waterfront on the outskirts of Livingstone.

Malachite Kingfisher*Alcedo cristata*

Large numbers of these jewel-like birds were found along the Kavango River system.

Giant Kingfisher*Megaceryle maxima*

A vocal and boldly-marked kingfisher, it was recorded on the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

North-eastern Namibia and the Okavango Panhandle yielded numerous sightings of this common species.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater***Merops hirundineus*

This gorgeous bee-eater was first encountered on the telephone lines south of Etosha NP with further sightings in Etosha itself.



Little Bee-eater*Merops pusillus*

This good looking species was found daily along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers and adjacent areas.

White-fronted Bee-eater*Merops bullockoides*

Another stunning bee-eater, it was observed daily along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers in good numbers.

Southern Carmine Bee-eater*Merops nubicoides*

This drop-dead gorgeous bird was one of the major highlights of the tour! We managed to locate several individuals in the Okavango Panhandle and near Kalizo Lodge in the Eastern Caprivi that had just arrived back from their northerly wintering grounds.

Hoopoes Upupidae**African (Eurasian) Hoopoe***Upupa africana*

This classic species of the African savanna was seen on numerous occasions throughout the tour.

NOTE: The Hoopoe complex has had a confusing taxonomic history, with one to four species being recognized by various authorities. Clements splits the group into two forms, Madagascar U. marginalis and Eurasian U. e pops. The white-winged African forms are often split by other authorities as West African Hoopoe U. senegalensis with the fourth species being African Hoopoe U. africana (which we recorded). However, the most generally accepted treatment is that of three species, Madagascar, Eurasian and African.

Woodhoopoes Phoeniculidae**Green Wood Hoopoe***Phoeniculus purpureus*

This attractive species was regularly recorded in the riverine woodland along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Violet Wood Hoopoe (NE)*Phoeniculus damarensis*

We enjoyed excellent views of a flock of around 8 birds during the heat of the day in the Khan Riverbed near Omaruru. Further sightings included a pair in the campsite at Omaruru and a small flock near Halali Camp, Etosha NP.

NOTE: IOC recognises two distinct species of this form, namely: the nominate form in Namibia and Angola Violet Wood Hoopoe P. damarensis and the Kenyan form P. granti known as Grant's Wood Hoopoe.

Common Scimitarbill*Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*

Good numbers of these woodland birds were observed during the tour.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**Bradfield's Hornbill (NE)***Tockus bradfieldi*

We first picked up three birds at the Rundu Sewage Works with further sightings in the Caprivi near Mahango GR and in adjacent Botswana.

African Grey (Gray) Hornbill*Tockus nasutus*

This widespread species was regularly seen throughout the tour.

Monteiro's Hornbill (NE)*Tockus monteiri*

A near-endemic to Namibia, it was encountered for the first time at Daan Viljoen with further sightings en route from Erongo to Etosha.

Damara Red-billed Hornbill (NE)*Tockus erythrorhynchus*

First seen in Khan Riverbed, it was then observed in Etosha NP where certain birds show definite traits of both species.

NOTE: The Red-billed Hornbill complex has recently been split into several species, including the nominate T. erythrorhynchus and Damara Hornbill T. damarensis which occurs in Western Namibia. We observed both of these forms during the tour. The IOC, on which our checklist and trip report is based, accepts these splits.

Southern Red-billed Hornbill*Tockus rufirostris*

Good views were enjoyed in the eastern part of Etosha NP as well as the tall Mopane woodlands of the eastern Caprivi near Katima Mulilo.

NOTE: Please see the species above.



Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas*

Commonly sighted at most woodland sites during the tour.

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator*

We had good views of this noisy species on the outskirts of Livingstone, Zambia.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Ceratogymna.

Ground Hornbills Bucconidae**Southern Ground Hornbill** *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

These monstrous hornbills were encountered during our drive from Divundu to Katima Mulilo in the eastern Caprivi.

Barbets Capitonidae**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

Several of these attractive little barbets were seen and heard in mixed feeding flocks in the Teak woodlands to the east of Rundu in the western Caprivi.

Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas*

First seen around the Gammams Treatment Works, it was then found at many dry woodland sites throughout the tour.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*

The Okavango Panhandle produced several sightings of this striking species. It was also recorded at Kalizo.

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii*

This brightly coloured and smartly plumaged barbet was seen well at Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Honeyguides Indicatoridae**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor*

Honeyguides are always scarce and seeing any species in an 18 day trip is a bonus. Our first encounter with this species was at Xaro Lodge with further sightings at Victoria Falls and at the Waterfront on the outskirts of the Zambezi.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*

We were thrilled to find this species in a mixed flock in the eastern Caprivi en route to Katima Mulilo.

Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae**Bennett's Woodpecker** *Campethera bennettii*

After much searching in the Panhandle's dense woodlands we bumped into a pair right at our lodge! Thereafter we found another male in the mopane woodlands near Katima Mulilo.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni*

We had many close encounters of this noisy woodpecker throughout the moist woodlands of northern Namibia and adjacent Botswana.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*

This widespread African woodpecker was seen at scattered localities in the south and north of Namibia as well as in the Okavango Panhandle of Botswana. Our first sighting was in the late afternoon at Namib Grens.

Bearded Woodpecker *Dendropicus namaquus*

Our first views were of a male that perched up on a dead tree at Avis Dam. Thereafter we bumped into this species at the Khan River and at Xaro Lodge.

Wattle-eyes & Batises Platysteiridae

Chinspot Batis*Batis molitor*

We recorded this batis commonly in the tall woodlands of the Caprivi region where it was a standard species in most bird flocks.

Pirit Batis*Batis pririt*

This delightful species was found in dry *Acacia* woodland during the first week of the tour.

White-tailed Shrike (NE)*Lanioturdus torquatus*

A striking Namibian near-endemic, it was first located at the Spitzkoppe with further views in the Erongo Mountains.

Helmetshrikes Prionopidae**White-crested Helmetshrike***Prionops plumatus*

Small flocks of these noisy, charismatic birds were observed in the tall *teak* and *mopane* woodlands of the Caprivi Strip in northern Namibia.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is White Helmetshrike.

Retz's Helmetshrike*Prionops retzii*

Several small flocks of these very special birds were seen in woodlands of the Okavango Panhandle and the adjacent eastern Caprivi.

Bush-shrikes & Allies Malaconotidae**Grey-headed Bushshrike***Malaconotus blanchoti*

This can be a very tough bird to find on the route and we were fortunate to locate this large, gaudy shrike on two occasions in the Katima Mulilo/Kalizo area of the eastern Caprivi.

Orange-(Sulphur) breasted Bushshrike*Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus*

This beauty was seen in the woodlands of the Okavango Panhandle and adjacent Caprivi Strip..

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Telophorus and gives it the name Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike.

Bokmakierie*Telophorus zeylonus*

Excellent views were enjoyed in tall dune scrub at Rooibank, to the east of Walvis Bay.

Brown-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra australis*

This fairly secretive species was seen on a few occasions in mixed species flocks in woodlands throughout the trip.

Black-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra senegalus*

A single bird was sighted in dense *mopane* woodland in the Katima Mulilo area.

Black-backed Puffback*Dryoscopus cubla*

This was a commonly recorded species throughout the wooded areas of northern Namibia and Botswana.

Tropical Boubou*Laniarius aethiopicus*

We encountered this species on one occasion at the south-west of its range near Livingstone.

Swamp (Gabon) Boubou*Laniarius bicolor*

Rundu Treatment Ponds yielded the first sighting of this bird. Thereafter, it was seen on many occasions in the riparian vegetation alongside the Okavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Crimson-breasted Shrike (Gonolek)*Laniarius atrococcineus*

This absolutely stunning species was observed at most dry woodland sites with our first tantalizing encounter at Gammams Sewage Works.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Crimson-breasted Gonolek.

Brubru*Nilaus afer*

Small numbers of this shrike were seen in wooded areas throughout the tour.

NOTE: This previously monotypic genus might be split 4 ways: Northern Brubru N. afer, Black-browed Brubru N. nigritemporalis, Angola Brubru N. affinis and Southern Brubru N. brubru. Only the Southern Brubru occurs in Southern Africa. None of the leading taxonomies accept this view at present.



Cuckooshrikes *Campephagidae*

White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Coracina pectoralis*

We were very fortunate to encounter this scarce denizen of teak woodlands in a mixed flock in the eastern Caprivi.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*

We located this species on a few occasions in the Okavango Panhandle and adjacent eastern Caprivi.

Shrikes *Laniidae*

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus*

This striking, long-tailed shrike was seen on almost every day during the last week of the tour..

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Corvinella and the scientific name is Corvinella melanoleuca.

Southern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus anguitimens*

This striking species was plentiful in the Halali and Namutoni areas of Etosha NP.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is White-crowned Shrike.

Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*

We had frequent sightings during the first week on tour.

NOTE: The race which we observed during the tour is L. c. subcoronatus, an arid zone race that has a strong white supercilium.

Figbirds & Orioles *Oriolidae*

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

A single female bird was seen well in the Okavango Panhandle.

(African) Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*

This stunning bird was commonly recorded during the last week of the tour.

Drongos *Dicruridae*

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

This widespread African species was recorded on almost every day of the tour.

Crows *Corvidae*

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis*

This corvid was encountered regularly at various scattered localities during the tour..

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Scattered sightings of this common species where had on tour, initially seen over the golden grasslands of the Namib with further close up views in Etosha. A striking and very large crow!

Tits *Paridae*

Carp's Black Tit (NE) *Parus carpi*

We found this Namibian near-endemic at Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

NOTE: The Clements common name is Carp's Tit and he also places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Melaniparus.

Southern Black Tit *Parus niger*

The Teak woodlands to the east of Rundu produced regular sightings of this noisy and rather obtrusive species.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Melaniparus.

Ashy Tit *Parus cinerascens*

We had good views of this often tricky bird north of Namutoni in eastern Etosha with a further sighting near Katima Mulilo.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Melaniparus.



Penduline Tits Remizidae

Grey (African) Penduline Tit

Anthoscopus caroli

This tricky-to-find but rather widespread species was seen on one occasion in the western Caprivi.

Cape (Southern) Penduline Tit

Anthoscopus minutus

This lively and good-looking little tit was seen on two occasions. The first being a very confiding flock at Avis Dam and the second being a small group at Daan Viljoen GR.

Larks Alaudidae

Rufous-naped Lark

Mirafrā africana

After hearing this species we finally found one calling from the top of a low bush in the Kalizo area.

Eastern Clapper Lark

Mirafrā apiata

We were rewarded with several flight views of this scarce and rather secretive lark to the north of Etosha NP.

Fawn-coloured (colored) Lark

Mirafrā africanoides

Good views were had of this species to the north of Okaukuejo in western Etosha NP.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Calendulauda.

Sabota Lark

Mirafrā sabota

A regularly recorded lark during the first half of the tour, we had several good close sightings in Etosha.

NOTE: Some authorities consider the thick-billed form, Bradfield's Lark M. bradfieldi of Namibia a separate species. This is not widely accepted.

Karoo Long-billed Lark

Certhilauda subcoronata

A single bird was encountered near the Spitzkoppe at the northern limit of its range.

Dune Lark (E)

Certhilauda erythrochlamys

This subtly beautiful endemic is exceptionally localised and habitat specific. We enjoyed very good views of several birds at Rooibank to the east of Walvis Bay.

Spike-heeled Lark

Chersomanes albofasciata

Found in small groups, this social species was observed on the gravel plains in the Namib and also at various sites in Etosha NP.

Gray's Lark (NE)

Ammomanes grayi

This scarce and very well camouflaged desert endemic was found on the arid and partially vegetated plains en route to Walvis Bay.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Ammomanopsis.

Red-capped Lark

Calandrella cinerea

Our only sightings of this species were on arid grassy and gravel plains in Etosha NP..

NOTE: The African Red-capped Lark complex C. cinerea, was lumped within the Greater Short-toed Lark complex C. brachydactyla but is now considered distinct by most authorities. Several distinctive groupings have now been split off from Red-capped Lark, including Blanford's Lark of Ethiopia C. blanfordi.

Pink-billed Lark

Spizocorys conirostris

This localised and rather nomadic species was seen well on a few occasions in Etosha NP.

Stark's Lark (NE)

Eremalauda starki

This localised lark was also only encountered on one occasion when a pair was seen en route to Walvis Bay.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Spizocorys.

Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark

Eremopterix leucotis

A small flock was seen flying over us in Etosha NP.

Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark

Eremopterix verticalis

Good, regular sightings of this species were had in Etosha NP after initially seen on the plains of the Namib.



Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

African Red-eyed (Black-fronted) Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans*

This species was seen every day until we departed Mahango GR.

Dark-capped (Common) Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*

This widespread bulbul was seen daily from Rundu onwards.

NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognized as distinct species within the super-species Common Bulbul P. barbatus. The form that we saw in Southern Africa, P. tricolor has been split as Dark-capped Bulbul by the IOC authority.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

Small numbers of this attractive greenbul were observed daily during the last week of the tour.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*

This undergrowth skulker was seen well in the Okavango Panhandle.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*

Small flocks of these floodplain-associated swallows were found in the Okavango Panhandle and adjacent Caprivi Strip.

Brown-throated (Plain) Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Small numbers were noted in the vicinity of the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Plain Martin.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*

A single bird was encountered over the Kavango River in Botswana.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Pairs and individual birds were seen often along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

NOTE: This species complex may be split, based on the African nominate form that would become African Wire-tailed Swallow and the Asian Wire-tailed Swallow that would be H. filifera.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

This species was seen on a daily basis for the first week of the tour.

NOTE: This confusing polytypic complex is being reviewed for multi-species splitting. Within African populations, 3 potential species exist. The southern African nominate form H. f. fuligula remains Rock Martin, northern populations would become Red-throated Rock Martin H. pusilla. Palearctic birds become Pale Crag Martin H. obsoleta.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*

This swallow was seen daily from the Rundu area onwards, usually close to water.

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa*

An attractive large hirundine, it was observed on several occasions in Etosha NP and again in the eastern Caprivi.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Rufous-chested Swallow.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*

An elegant species that was seen alongside Red-breasted Swallows near Divundu in the eastern Caprivi.

South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera*

This was an unexpected find! We were extremely surprised when three birds came flying past us in the afternoon at Goas waterhole near Halali Camp, Etosha NP. Later on we had another flyby of a single bird near Namutoni Camp!

Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens*

This large, brown, swamp-dwelling warbler was seen in dense *phragmites* reeds on the edge of the Kavango River near Rundu. Later on in the trip we heard the species on several occasions in the Okavango Panhandle.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*



We saw this species well at the Rundu Treatment Works where its call was a distinctive background sound.

African Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus baeticatus*

Our first encounter with this species was at the Gammams Treatment works outside of Windhoek where a pair was seen exceptionally well in the late afternoon. Later on in the trip we also saw and heard this species at the Rundu Sewage Works.

Grassbirds & Allies Megaluridae**Little Rush (African Bush) Warbler***Bradypterus baboecala*

We heard and briefly saw this secretive species in dense *papyrus* in the Okavango Panhandle.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**Red-faced Cisticola***Cisticola erythropus*

A single bird was seen briefly on a few occasions as it responded to playback of its call at the Livingstone Sewage Works.

Rattling Cisticola*Cisticola chiniana*

We recorded this common species regularly in wooded habitats throughout the tour.

Grey-backed (Red-headed) Cisticola*Cisticola subruficapilla*

A pair of these birds was seen on the ascent up Spreetshoogte Pass.

Luapula (Winding) Cisticola*Cisticola luapula*

This smart looking cisticola was seen very well on a few occasions at the many wetlands near Kalizo Lodge in the eastern Caprivi.

NOTE: The Okavango-Zambian race of the widespread Winding Cisticola C. galactotes, has recently been accorded full species status as Luapula Cisticola C. luapula. Clements does not recognize this split.

Chirping Cisticola*Cisticola pipiens*

Small numbers of this Okavango specialist were observed in the reedbeds of the Panhandle. Their characteristic calls were a constant background noise throughout the panhandle.

Neddicky*Cisticola fulvicapilla*

At least 2 of these diminutive birds were found in the woodlands east of Divundu.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Piping Cisticola.

Zitting Cisticola*Cisticola juncidis*

A common species in moist grasslands around wetlands in the Kalizo area.

Desert Cisticola*Cisticola aridulus*

Etosha National Park produced regular sightings of this tiny cisticola.

Rufous-eared Warbler (NE)*Malcorus pectoralis*

We had good views of this attractive warbler on our drive from Okaukuejo to Halali camp in Etosha NP.

Tawny-flanked Prinia*Prinia subflava*

A commonly recorded species in the woodlands of the Caprivi.

Black-chested Prinia*Prinia flavicans*

This arid-zone species was regularly recorded during the first half of the tour with a single sighting further east in the Caprivi.

Yellow-breasted Apalis*Apalis flavida*

This small, canopy-dwelling species was first sighted in eastern Etosha with further sightings in the Caprivi.

Grey-(Green) backed Camaroptera*Camaroptera brevicaudata*

Avis Dam produced our first looks at this widespread species with further views on almost every day of the trip.

NOTE: The IOC now recognizes the nominate green-backed forms of this widespread African warbler as distinct from the grey-backed forms C. brevicaudata. We encountered the grey-backed form during our tour.

Barred Wren-Warbler*Calamonastes fasciolatus*

This very special and rather uncommon species was seen exceptionally well in Daan Viljoen GR.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

Avis Dam provided us with our first sightings of this species. Thereafter we had regular sightings throughout the first week of the trip.

Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis*

A small group was encountered at Avis Dam on the first morning of the tour.

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops*

This rather uncommon species was seen well when a small group were found in a mixed species flock in the western Caprivi woodlands.

Family Uncertain Incertidae Sedis

(Damara) Rockrunner (NE) *Achaetops pycnopygius*

This localised Namibian near-endemic was seen exceptionally well while traversing Spreetshoogte Pass.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to IOC, namely: Chaetops and the common name is Damara Rockjumper.

Long-billed (Cape) Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*

This short-tailed mite was regularly encountered in various woodland habitats on the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Cape Crombec.

Babblers Timaliidae

Black-faced Babbler (NE) *Turdoides melanops*

This scarce species was seen well when four birds were located at Mushara Lodge.

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii*

These noisy and gregarious babblers were encountered regularly throughout our time in the Okavango area.

Hartlaub's Babbler *Turdoides hartlaubii*

These babblers were seen on a daily basis from Rundu onwards until we reached Zambia.

Southern Pied Babbler *Turdoides bicolor*

We were fortunate to encounter three separate flocks of this striking species with sightings at Omaruru and in Etosha NP.

Bare-cheeked Babbler (NE) *Turdoides gymnogenys*

A flock of around six birds were located in the Mopane woodlands to the south of Etosha's Anderson Gate on our way from Erongo to Okaukuejo.

Sylviid Babblers Sylviidae

Chestnut (Rufous) -vented Warbler *Parisoma subcaeruleum*

This attractive species was a constant attendee of mixed species flocks throughout the south of Namibia.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Rufous-vented Warbler.

Layard's Warbler (NE) *Parisoma layardi*

We enjoyed very good views of this range-restricted species at Spreetshoogte Pass and at the Spitzkoppe.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Orange River White-eye *Zosterops pallidus*

After a small walk around suburban Walvis Bay we were rewarded with three separate groups of these tiny leaf-gleaners.

African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*

This bright yellow white-eye was seen daily in northern Namibia and adjacent Botswana.



Starlings Sturnidae

Wattled Starling

Creatophora cinerea

We encountered this highly gregarious starling in immense numbers at the Gammams and Rundu Sewage Works with further sightings throughout northern Namibia and Botswana.

Cape (Glossy) Starling

Lamprotornis nitens

This common species was recorded on most days of the tour.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Cape Glossy-Starling.

Greater Blue-eared (Glossy) Starling

Lamprotornis chalybaeus

Probably one of the most stunning southern African starlings, we had brilliant views of this species in the Okavango Panhandle region.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling.

Meves's (Glossy) Starling

Lamprotornis mevesii

As for the aforementioned species, this highly iridescent stunner was regularly seen in north-eastern Namibia and the Panhandle.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Meves' Glossy-Starling.

Burchell's (Glossy) Starling

Lamprotornis australis

We enjoyed regular sightings of this beautiful bird for most of the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Burchell's Glossy-Starling.

Violet-backed Starling

Cinnyricinclus leucogaster

These gorgeous birds were spotted in the Teak woodlands east of Rundu and again in Okavango Panhandle where we enjoyed our best sightings.

Red-winged Starling

Onychognathus morio

Small flocks flew over us while birding around Livingstone and during our visit to Victoria Falls.

Pale-winged Starling

Onychognathus nabeouroupe

This dry western species was first seen in Windhoek, followed by sightings in the Namib Desert, Spitzkoppe and the Erongo Mountains.

Oxpeckers Buphagidae

Yellow-billed Oxpecker

Buphagus africanus

We had good views of this species in the eastern Caprivi after initially only seeing a few birds flying high over us at Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Red-billed Oxpecker

Buphagus erythrorhynchus

A couple of birds were seen in flight amongst the latter species at Xaro Lodge.

Thrushes Turdidae

Groundscraper Thrush

Psophocichla litsipsirupa

We enjoyed superb views of this species at many widely scattered localities with our closest and most memorable sightings in Halali Camp, Etosha NP..

NOTE: Ethiopian Thrush *P. l. simensis* is considered a distinct species by several authorities.

Kurrichane Thrush

Turdus libonyanus

This woodland species was seen on several occasions in the Caprivi Strip of northern Namibia. Our first sighting was of a pair at N'Kwazi Lodge on the banks of the Kavango River near Rundu.

Chats & Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

White-browed Robin-Chat

Cossypha heuglini

An impressive songster and exceptionally good-looking bird, it was recorded in riverine vegetation along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers.

Collared Palm Thrush

Cichladusa arquata

We finally managed a sighting of this attractive thrush in dense palm/riparian woodland on the outskirts of Livingstone after some searching.

White-browed (Red-backed) Scrub Robin

Cercotrichas leucophrys



We had several sightings of this sombre-coloured robin from Etosha to Katima Mulilo with our best views near Halali, Etosha NP.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Red-backed Scrub-Robin. Furthermore, this widespread African complex is being reviewed for a 3-way split, the Southern African C. l. leucophrys group would remain as White-browed Scrub-Robin, the Central African C. l. zambesiana would become Red-backed Scrub-Robin and the Northern African C. l. leucoptera would become White-winged Scrub-Robin.

Kalahari Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas paena*

A subtly attractive species that was first seen at Avis Dam with further sightings at Namib Grens and south of Etosha NP.

Karoo Scrub Robin (NE) *Cercotrichas coryphaeus*

We had great views of this scrub robin in the gardens of Namib Grens.

Herero Chat (NE) *Namibornis herero*

One of the most highly desired of Namibia's near-endemics, we obtained unbeatable views of a pair upon descending Spreetshoogte Pass.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Several birds were spotted during our stay in the Okavango Panhandle and at Kalizo Lodge.

NOTE: Clements recognizes the split of African S. torquata and Common S. rubicola Stonechats (the latter a Palearctic species), which is not followed by all authorities. Further splitting may occur in both groups including the highland Ethiopian form S. t. albofasciata that may become Ethiopian Stonechat.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

A very attractive species that was bumped into north of Okaukuejo, Etosha NP.

Mountain Wheatear *Oenanthe monticola*

This near-endemic to southern Africa was regularly recorded during the first week of the tour.

Tractrac Chat *Cercomela tractrac*

On the barren gravel plains en route to Walvis Bay and near Swakopmund we encountered small numbers of this desert species.

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

Pairs were seen regularly during the first week of the tour.

Ant-eating (Southern Anteater) Chat *Myrmecocichla formicivora*

Several birds were seen on the barren grassy plains to the north of Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha NP.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Southern Anteater-Chat.

Short-toed Rock Thrush *Monticola brevipes*

Small numbers of this attractive species were seen at various sites during the first week of the tour.

Our first sightings were at Daan Viljoen GR.

NOTE: The South African isolate race M. b. pretoriae is sometimes split as Pretoria Rock Thrush.

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*

One of these delicate all-black flycatchers was observed in the woodland around Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Pale Flycatcher *Bradornis pallidus*

A pair was picked up in a loose mixed species flock in the eastern Caprivi.

Chat Flycatcher *Bradornis infuscatus*

This near-endemic to southern Africa was first found sitting on a telephone line en route to Walvis Bay with another encounter in central Etosha NP.

Marico (Mariqua) Flycatcher *Bradornis mariquensis*

A very common bird of dry acacia scrub throughout most of southern and central Namibia.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Mariqua Flycatcher.

Grey (Gray) Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*

A single bird was sighted at our lodge in the Okavango.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*

Small numbers of this small but beautiful sunbird were seen at our lodge in Botswana and in the eastern Caprivi.



Scarlet-chested Sunbird*Chalcomitra senegalensis*

This absolutely stunning species was seen at Avis Dam, Daan Viljoen and in the eastern Caprivi woodlands.

Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird*Cinnyris mariquensis*

Pairs and singletons were seen at scattered woodland sites during the tour.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Mariqua Sunbird. Secondly, some authorities split this complex into 2 full species, namely: the race C. m. suahelicus which occurs in East Africa would become Swahili Sunbird and the nominate form which would remain as Marico Sunbird.

White-bellied (breasted) Sunbird*Cinnyris talatala*

We encountered this species every day during our time in the Caprivi Strip and Botswana.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is White-breasted Sunbird.

Dusky Sunbird*Cinnyris fusca*

This common arid-zone species was found every day during the first week of the tour.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver***Plocepasser mahali*

This common species was seen throughout the drier woodland areas on the tour.

Sociable (Social) Weaver*Philetairus socius*

Small numbers of this southern African endemic were seen during the crossing of the Namib Desert from Windhoek to Walvis Bay, followed by numerous, close-up sightings in Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha NP.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Social Weaver.

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

This introduced species was found in urban areas during the first few days of the trip.

Great (Rufous) Sparrow*Passer motitensis*

A fairly large, good-looking sparrow, it was observed on numerous occasions in the dry west of Namibia with brilliant views at Erongo Wilderness.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Great Rufous Sparrow and some authorities including Clements split this African sparrow into five species. Shelley's Rufous Sparrow P. shelleyi occurs largely in Ethiopia, Great Rufous Sparrow P. motitensis occurs in Southern Africa, Kenya Rufous Sparrow P. rufocinctus occurs in East Africa, Kordofan Rufous Sparrow P. cordofanicus occurs in Sudan and Socotra Sparrow is endemic to Socotra.

Cape Sparrow*Passer melanurus*

First seen crossing the Namib Desert and then found in Walvis Bay and at Rooibank where hundreds were seen.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow*Passer diffusus*

This common southern African sparrow was commonly sighted on the tour.

NOTE: The Grey-headed Sparrow complex P. griseus has been split into five full species with the most southerly African form being classified as P. diffusus.

Yellow-throated Petronia*Gymnoris superciliaris*

The mopane woodlands of the eastern Caprivi Strip produced our only sighting of this bird.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to the IOC nomenclature, namely: Petronia.

Weavers & Widowbirds Ploceidae**Red-billed Buffalo Weaver***Bubalornis niger*

This gregarious species was seen well in eastern Etosha with further views near Katima Mulilo.

Scaly-feathered Weaver*Sporopipes squamifrons*

These delightful little birds were seen on two separate days in the dry west of Namibia.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Scaly Weaver.

Spectacled Weaver*Ploceus ocularis*

A single male was well seen by a few participants during a boat trip through the Okavango Panhandle.

African (Holub's) Golden Weaver*Ploceus xanthops*

We had great views of this large weaver on almost every day during the last week of the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Holub's Golden-Weaver.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus xanthopterus*

Several birds in non-breeding plumage were seen in *phragmites* reeds at the edge of the Kavango River near Rundu.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*

A few birds in non-breeding dress were encountered in eastern Etosha.

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*

The most common weaver of the trip, it was found in good numbers on most days.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

Small numbers were found around Kalizo Lodge in the eastern Caprivi.

Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus*

Just two non-breeding birds were found in eastern Etosha.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes melanotis*

Singles were picked out on two occasions in mixed feeding flocks in the Caprivi area.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

A widespread African species, it was seen on most days of the tour, with memorable views at waterholes in the Namutoni area when thousands came in to drink.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*

Small flocks of non-breeding birds were spotted in the Caprivi Strip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Red Bishop.

Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris*

A few birds in non-breeding plumage were picked up at the edge of wetlands near Kalizo Lodge.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*

This bright and extremely attractive little seed-eater was seen well on several occasions with the most memorable sighting being at Erongo Wilderness.

Red-headed Finch *Amadina erythrocephala*

Small numbers of this attractive finch were seen crossing the Namib with larger numbers being counted in Etosha NP.

Brown Firefinch *Lagonosticta nitidula*

This highly localised species was found in the Okavango Panhandle and in the Kalizo area.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*

We found this Firefinch feeding on a dirt track at the Gammams Sewage Works.

Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonbleu) *Uraeginthus angolensis*

Small numbers of these little gems were found in good numbers on most days of the trip.

NOTE: The Clements common name for this species is Blue-breasted Cordonbleu.

Violet-eared Waxbill *Uraeginthus granatina*

Dry thornveld at Avis Dam yielded our first sighting of this gorgeous bird, followed by excellent views on several occasions thereafter.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

Our first sighting was of a pair at Avis Dam with further sightings on a few occasions thereafter.

Black-faced (cheeked) Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos*

Small numbers of these beautiful, delicate arid-country waxbills were found during the first week of the tour, with our first sighting at Avis Dam.

Orange-breasted (Zebra) Waxbill *Amandava subflava*

Two separate flocks were found during the tour, one at Kalizo and the other at the Livingstone Sewage Works. Unfortunately the birds were seen briefly on both occasions.

Indigobirds & Whydahs Viduidae



Pin-tailed Whydah*Vidua macroura*

A few non-breeding birds were seen at Avis Dam on the first morning of the trip.

Shaft-tailed Whydah*Vidua regia*

Non-breeding birds were seen at Avis Dam and regularly at the waterholes in Etosha NP.

Long-tailed (Eastern) Paradise Whydah*Vidua paradisaea*

Two separate males were seen during the trip with one in Etosha NP and another near Livingstone.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae**Cape Wagtail***Motacilla capensis*

This common species was seen regularly at various small wetlands during the first week of the tour with another sighting later on in Botswana.

African Pied Wagtail*Motacilla aguimp*

These striking black-and-white birds were seen on most days along the Kavango & Zambezi Rivers.

African Pipit*Anthus cinnamomeus*

We recorded this species at several scattered localities throughout the tour with our first sighting being in Etosha.

NOTE: African pipit taxonomy is in disarray and much further research is required in the phylogeny of this grouping. Several forms which are considered subspecies are likely to become full species in their own rights and several new forms are surely still to be described.

Long-billed Pipit*Anthus similis*

We had good views of this rock-loving pipit at Avis Dam and Daan Viljoen GR.

Finches Fringillidae**Black-throated Canary***Crithagra atrogularis*

Large numbers of these gregarious birds were seen throughout Namibia with especially good sightings in Etosha at the many waterholes there.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to the IOC nomenclature, namely: Serinus. This species complex is sometimes split with the South African form remaining in the Black-throated Canary group as opposed to Reichenow's or Kenya Yellow-rumped Seed-eater S. reichenowi. Several endemic Ethiopian forms are sometimes lumped into the nominate S. atrogularis group including Yellow-throated Seed-eater S. flavigula, Salvadori's Seed-eater S. xantholaemus and Yellow-rumped Seed-eater S. xanthopygius.

Yellow-fronted Canary*Crithagra mozambica*

Usually a very common species; we only found a few birds in the woodlands to the east of Rundu.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to the IOC nomenclature, namely: Serinus.

Yellow Canary*Crithagra flaviventris*

This brightly-coloured dry-country species was surprisingly found on only one occasion in Etosha NP.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to the IOC nomenclature, namely: Serinus.

White-throated Canary*Crithagra albogularis*

This dry-country species was recorded at Spreetshoogte Pass and in Etosha NP.

NOTE: Clements places this species in a different genus to the IOC nomenclature, namely: Serinus.

Buntings Emberizidae**Lark-like Bunting***Emberiza impetuani*

Small numbers were seen throughout the dry plains of the Namib desert.

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting*Emberiza tahapisi*

This species was seen once in Etosha and again in the western Caprivi.

Cape Bunting*Emberiza capensis*

Small numbers of these rocky habitat birds were seen during the first week of the tour with especially good views at Erongo Wilderness.

Golden-breasted Bunting*Emberiza flaviventris*

This beauty was found at scattered localities on tour, with good views at Avis Dam, Daan Viljoen and in Etosha NP.

Annotated List of Mammals recorded

Taxonomy and nomenclature follows “The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals” by Jonathan Kingdon, Academic Press, 1997.

Total species recorded: 49

Rodents Rodentia

Single-striped Mouse

Lemniscomys rosalia

One of these little rodents was seen near Windhoek on our first day of the trip.

Acacia Rat

Thallomys paedulus

Two of these rats were found in the canopy of an *Acacia* at Namib Grens.

Dassie Rat Petromuridae

Dassie Rat

Petromys typicus

This unique species was seen scurrying around our lodge in the Erongo Mountains and provided close and intimate views.

Squirrels Sciuridae

South African Ground Squirrel

Xerus inauris

These gregarious critters, with their comical behaviour, and thick, bushy tails were seen on our drive through the Namib and later in Etosha NP.

Smith's Bush Squirrel

Paraxerus cepapi

Commonly sighted in the Caprivi and in the Okavango Panhandle.

Porcupines Hystricidae

Porcupine

Hystrix africaeaustralis

We were treated to fantastic views of at least two of these bizarre creatures at our lodge in the Erongo Mountains.

Hares & Rabbits Leporidae

Scrub Hare

Lepus saxatilis

One of these hares was seen in the evening on our way out of Etosha National Park.

Hyraxes Procavidae

Rock Hyrax

Procavia capensis

Our first hyrax encounter was at Avis Dam with further sightings thereafter on Spreetshoogte Pass, at the Spitzkoppe and in the Erongo Mountains.

Baboons & Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Chacma Baboon

Papio ursinus

Troops of these baboons were seen fairly regularly at various scattered localities with especially large troops in Mahango GR.

Vervet Monkey

Cercopithecus aethiops

Small numbers were seen daily in the Caprivi and Okavango Panhandle.



Bushbabies Loridae**Lesser Bush Baby***Galago moholi*

We were very fortunate to find this tiny, nocturnal species just as it became dusk at Ngepi Camp in the central Caprivi.

Dogs & Allies Canidae**Bat-eared Fox***Otocyon megalotis*

17 of these fantastic mammals were seen during our drive through the Namib Desert en route to Walvis Bay.

Black-backed Jackal*Canis mesomelas*

These scavengers were plentiful in Etosha NP.

Mustelids Mustelidae**Ratel (Honey Badger)***Mellivora capensis*

Some of the group was lucky to bump into one in Halali Camp, Etosha NP.

Cape Clawless Otter*Aonyx capensis*

A singleton was encountered at Kalizo Lodge.

Spotted-necked Otter*Lutra maculicollis*

We were very lucky to have brilliant, extended views of several of these comical creatures during boat trips in the Okavango Panhandle.

Mongoose Herpestidae**Black Mongoose**

This rare and exceptionally localised species was sighted in the Erongo Mountains.

Slender Mongoose*Herpestes sanguinea*

Singles were sighted in Etosha NP and near Kalizo in the eastern Caprivi.

Banded Mongoose*Mungos mungo*

These mongooses are always located in small to large groups and we enjoyed sightings in the Namutoni area of Etosha NP.

Hyaenas Hyenidae**Spotted Hyaena***Crocuta crocuta*

This large, nocturnal scavenger was heard yelping during the night at Ngepi Camp.

Brown Hyaena*Hyaena brunnea*

Some of the group was very fortunate to have a singleton come down to drink at night at the Okaukuejo waterhole.

Genets & Civets Viverridae**Small-spotted Genet***Genetta genetta*

Brilliant views were had in the evening at our lodge in the Erongo Mountains with a further encounter in the grounds of N'Kwazi Lodge on the banks of the Kavango River near Rundu.

Cats Felidae**Lion***Panthera leo*

All our sightings of the "king of the jungle" were had in Etosha. We recorded fairly large prides on three consecutive days in the park with the largest pride being 19 and included several very precious cubs.

Leopard*Panthera pardus*

Those that stayed up late to stake out the Halali waterhole were treated to views of this scarce, shy and crepuscular cat.

Elephants Elephantidae

African Elephant

Loxodonta africana

Good numbers were seen in Etosha NP, with further sightings in the Bwabwata National Park in the Caprivi Strip.

Horses Equidae

Burchell's Zebra

Equus burchellii

Etosha National Park yielded numerous sightings of this distinctly African species.

Hartmann's Mountain Zebra

Equus zebra zebra

We had good views of this near-endemic sub-species of the localised Mountain Zebra at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve.

Rhinoceroses Rhinocerotidae

Black Rhinoceros

Diceros bicornis

Waiting patiently in the evenings at the waterhole at Okaukuejo Camp proved fruitful as it produced close encounters with several of these large, powerful beasts.

White Rhinoceros

Ceratotherium simum

This is a very scarce species in Etosha NP and we were incredibly fortunate to have an outstanding view of a mother and young at the Okaukuejo waterhole one night.

Hippopotamuses Hippopotamidae

Hippopotamus

Hippopotamus amphibius

We found these massive, lazy creatures in the Okavango Panhandle and in the Mahango GR where several pods were encountered.

Pigs Suidae

Common Warthog

Phacochoerus africanus

Scattered sightings were had of these pigs throughout the trip with our first encounter in Daan Viljoen GR..

Giraffes Giraffidae

Giraffe

Giraffa camelopardalis

These regal mammals were seen on many different occasions with especially large numbers in Etosha.

Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae

Eland

Taurotragus oryx

This, the largest antelope in the world was seen on three occasions. Sightings were at Daan Viljoen GR and on consecutive days in Etosha.

Greater Kudu

Tragelaphus strepsiceros

These impressive animals were seen at most dry-country sites, with outstanding views in Etosha.

Bushbuck

Tragelaphus scriptus

Singles were sighted in riparian woodland along the Kavango River.

Gemsbok (Oryx)

Oryx gazelle

Another attractive antelope, it was recorded at throughout the Namib Desert and in Etosha NP.

Red Lechwe

Kobus leche



These richly-colored antelope were found on the floodplains of Mahango Game Reserve.

Sable Antelope*Hippotragus niger*

This is arguably the world's most handsome antelope and we were exceptionally lucky to have four separate sightings in Mahango GR.

Roan Antelope*Hippotragus equinus*

Another rare and handsome antelope, we only saw this species on one occasion in Mahango GR.

Common Reedbuck*Redunca arundinum*

Small numbers were recorded on the floodplain in Mahango GR

Blue Wildebeest*Connochaetes taurinus*

We observed them in good numbers in Etosha NP.

Red Hartebeest*Alcelaphus buselaphus*

Sightings were had in Daan Viljoen GR and Etosha NP.

Impala*Aepyceros melampus melampus*

Several small herds of this common and widespread antelope were spotted in Mahango GR.

Black-faced Impala*Aepyceros melampus petersi*

This race of Impala is (on our tour) found only in Etosha NP and we had good views of many herds.

Springbok*Antidorcas marsupialis*

An arid-zone antelope, it was seen on most days during the tour, but not after we departed Etosha National Park

Kirk's (Damara) Dik-Dik*Madoqua kirkii*

These delightful, diminutive antelope were seen in the Erongo Mountains and in the Namutoni area of Etosha NP. This race is sometimes split from Kirk's as Damara Dik-dik.

Steenbok*Raphicerus campestris*

This tiny antelope was seen in the Khomas Hochland as well as in Etosha NP.

Common (Grey) Duiker*Sylvicapra grimmia*

We found this species on one occasion in Etosha NP.

Seals Otariidae**Cape Fur Seal***Arctocephalus pusillus*

A singleton was seen mingling around in the Walvis Bay lagoon.

Annotated List of Reptiles recorded**Total species recorded: 10****Namibian Rock Agama***Agama planiceps*

Individuals and pairs were seen in dry, rocky areas during the first week of the tour.

Striped Skink*Mabuya striata*

This common and widespread reptile was observed on several occasions during the first week of the tour.

Kalahari Tree Skink*Mabuya spilogaster*

We encountered this species at Namutoni, Etosha NP.

Nile Crocodile*Crocodylus niloticus*

Small numbers of these ancient reptiles were seen along the Kavango River.

Nile Monitor*Varanus niloticus*

One of these large reptiles was seen plunging into the water from an over-hanging branch at our lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Marsh Terrapin*Pelomedusa subrufa*

We saw a handful of terrapins at waterholes in Etosha NP.

Black Mamba*Dendroaspis polylepis*

We were treated to fantastic views of this huge, highly venomous serpent near our lodge in the Okavango Panhandle.

Mozambique Spitting Cobra

Naja mossambica

One of these highly venomous snakes was spotted in Mahango GR but disappeared very quickly.

Turner's Thick-toed Gecko

Pachydactylus turneri

One of these brilliantly-patterned geckos was seen at our lodge in the Erongo Mountains.

Dwarf Gecko species

Lygodactylus sp.

Several of these tiny reptiles were seen at our lodge in the Panhandle.

Photo Credits: All photographs taken by Glen Valentine on this Namibia, Okavango and Victoria Falls tour. In order of appearance: African Fish Eagle, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Martial Eagle, Herero Chat, Namib scenery, Porcupine, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Bare-cheeked Babbler, African Elephant in Etosha, Lioness in Etosha, African Skimmer and Victoria Falls.

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