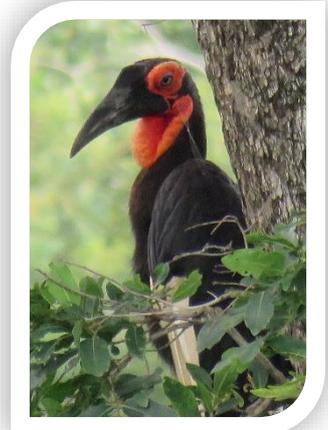




## **Namibia with a Touch of Zambia & Botswana**



**20 days / 19 nights**

**18 March to 06 April 2020**

**Guide: Errol de Beer or Justin Rhys Nicolau**

***SPECIAL PRICE FOR THIS CUSTOM TOUR:***

***ZAR 83,650***

***Single supplement ZAR 5900***



### **Overview**

This tour of contrasts will take us to three World Heritage sites, from the mighty Victoria Falls and the serene Okavango Delta Panhandle, to the arid expanses of the Namib Desert. We'll be treated to a vast array of endemic and desert-adapted birds of the dry west, a taste of the excellent shorebirding around Walvis Bay, incredible waterbirds in the Okavango Delta and the spectacular supporting cast of the African savannas. From Pel's Fishing-Owl to Dune Lark and Damara Tern, this tour offers some of the best birding in southern Africa. Namibia is also a photographer's dream, with wonderfully obliging birds, amazing scenery, and a great diversity of mammals, including Africa's famous Big Five.

## **Detailed Itinerary**

### **Day 1 – 18 March**

Your international flights will arrive in Livingstone from various destinations, usually via Johannesburg in South Africa, so please arrive in Johannesburg at least a day early. Most flights arrive in Livingstone just after lunch, which will allow us enough time to visit the mighty Victoria Falls. The native name, Mosi-oa-Tunya, means the smoke that thunders. We'll encounter our first birds here, possibly including the handsome Schalow's Turaco, the dowdy Terrestrial Brownbul or even a noisy family group of Yellow-breasted Apalis. Time permitting, we might also pop in at the local wastewater treatment plant which can turn up all kinds of things, including the likes of Dickinson's Kestrel, African Swamphen, African Rail, Zebra Waxbill and several species of waterfowl. From town we have a short drive to our lodge situated on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River.

O/N [Camp Nkwazi](#), Livingstone, Zambia

### **Day 2 – 19 March**

Today we'll head out very early to reach our destination at the crack of dawn. The Machile area is renowned for being one of the most accessible places in Zambia to see the near endemic Black-cheeked Lovebird. Our breakfast stop at a small wetland often produces Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Saddle-billed Stork, Hamerkop, Grey-rumped Swallow and numerous Meyer's Parrots, all while enjoying our packed breakfast. The Mopane woodland is a favorite among hole-nesting species such as Arnott's Chat, Mever's Starling, and African Grey Hornbill. Grassy areas often have Swainson's Francolin, Southern Ground Hornbill and the sought after Black Coucal. After several kilometres on a rough track, we'll finally get into the strike zone for the Lovebirds; stopping and listening will be our modus operandi to locate these little critters. We can also expect the likes of Bennet's Woodpecker, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike and White Helmetshrike. If all goes well, we should be done and dusted around lunch, which will enable us to get back to the lodge for some afternoon birding.

O/N [Camp Nkwazi](#), Livingstone, Zambia

### **Day 3 – 20 March**

We have a fairly busy day ahead of us, starting with some early morning birding near the lodge before breakfast. Our search will concentrate on Racket-tailed Roller, Miombo Barbet and Miombo Rock-Thrush, all three of these highly sought-after species occurring side-by-side not too far from our lodge. We'll return for breakfast and get on the road shortly thereafter, heading west to our next destination, Kasane in Botswana. Kasane is probably best known as the gateway to Chobe National Park with its incredible Elephant densities, and it is here that we will spend two nights exploring the park as well as the surrounding areas for bird and beast. The drive from Livingstone to Kasane should be a breeze until we get to the border post, which can sometimes take up to two hours to cross. This is especially true when one of the ferries that are used to cross the Zambezi here is out of service. Fortunately, there is a slim chance that the bridge that is still under construction might be completed before our arrival, and if that is the case, that would speed things up significantly. We should be in Kasane in time for lunch before checking into our lodge. The gardens here are very birdy and we've even found White-backed Night Heron roosting in the riverside vegetation on a few occasions, Trumpeter Hornbills are usually very vocal, and we hope to find the resident African Goshawk without too much effort.

O/N [Chobe Safari Lodge](#), Kasane, Botswana

### **Day 4 – 21 March**

We will depart for an early game drive in Chobe NP, where we should have no trouble locating numerous herds of Elephants. Some of the commoner antelope include Impala, Greater Kudu,

Waterbuck, Bushbuck and Steenbok, and with some luck we might even encounter the far rarer Sable and Roan Antelope. Big cat sightings are always far more unpredictable, but Lion are often seen, and the occasional Leopard might even put in a showing. Wild dog sightings have certainly increased but any encounter with this endangered predator should still be considered very special indeed. We'll also be on the lookout for special birds such as Stierling's Wren Warbler, Spotted Thick-knee, Bradfield's Hornbill and a whole host of raptor species. Back in town, birding the grounds of some of the lodges can be highly productive and we hope to find the likes of Copper Sunbird, Brown Firefinch, Collared Palm-Thrush and Retz's Helmet-shrike. A quick night drive on the outskirts of town might yield us the sought-after Pennant-winged Nightjar, sadly without its trademark "pennants" at this time of year. We'll also be hoping for another sought-after species, Bronze-winged Courser. After a full day we'll head back to the lodge for a well-deserved dinner.  
**O/N [Chobe Safari Lodge](#), Kasane, Botswana**

### **Day 5 – 22 March**

Another great day awaits as we explore Chobe NP, this time from a boat. The cruise up the river will provide memorable birding as we search for Saddle-billed Stork, Slaty Egret, African Skimmer and huge numbers of waterbirds. Again, we have a chance of spotting several game species coming down to the river for a drink, and we might even see Elephants crossing with only their trunks above the water. We'll return to the lodge for lunch before heading out again, entering the park a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. As we transit through the park to the border with Namibia, many good birding stops en-route will keep us on our toes with good chances for the likes of Lesser Jacana and Rufous-bellied Heron before getting to our lodge in the afternoon.

**O/N [Caprivi Houseboat Safaris Camp](#), Katimo Mulilo, Namibia**

### **Day 6 – 23 March**

A full day in this bird oasis awaits us as we will once again avail ourselves to a morning boat ride, where we should find the elusive African Finfoot and the cobalt blue Half-collared Kingfisher. Yellow-throated Leaflover has made the camp its home, a species first described for Southern Africa as recently as 5 years ago. Common further north, this southward range extension was certainly anticipated by some ornithologists. In the afternoon we'll go and explore some of the famous floodplains in the area in the hopes of finding Temminck's Courser, Black Coucal, Coppery-tailed Coucal and, with some luck, even Shelley's Sunbird.

**O/N [Caprivi Houseboat Safaris Camp](#), Katimo Mulilo, Namibia**

### **Day 7 – 24 March**

Early morning at the lodge can offer excellent birding, with the likes of Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Gabon Boubou, Horus Swift and Mariqua Sunbird all possible. We'll depart shortly after breakfast, stopping at several wetlands on the way out to try for African Openbill, Rufous-bellied Heron, Coppery-tailed Coucal and African Marsh-Harrier. Another fairly long drive will take us west across the Caprivi and into the Bwabwata National Park, where we cross the Kwando River, which is always worth a stop. Scanning the extensive floodplain from the bridge often produces birds such as Saddle-billed Stork and a variety of waterfowl. Continuing onward, we'll be on the lookout for raptors, with the likes of Dark Chanting-Goshawk, Lizard Buzzard, Martial Eagle, Bateleur and Brown Snake-Eagle often encountered.

**O/N [Mahango Lodge](#), Divundu, Namibia**

### **Day 8 – 25 March**

With just a short distance to travel to Shakawe in Botswana, will have time to bird the area around Divundu thoroughly before crossing the border. Birding around the lodge before breakfast should produce the likes of African Snipe, Hartlaub's Babbler, Grey-headed Bushshrike, and possibly the Luapula subspecies of the Winding Cisticola,. After breakfast we'll head into the Mahango Game

Reserve, a fabulous birding spot where one can bird the dry woodland that borders the extensive floodplains of the Kavango River and, of course, the floodplains themselves. The superb Crimson-breasted Gonolek calls Mahango its home, alongside birds such as Crested Barbet, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Broad-billed Roller and the African subspecies of the Eurasian Hoopoe. We also have another shot at Slaty Egret, African Spoonbill, Intermediate Egret and even the stately Wattled Crane here. Several big mammals occur here, and we are likely to bump into Elephant, African Buffalo, Hippopotamus, Roan Antelope, Sable Antelope and if we're lucky, even Lion. Another short stop just north of the park is usually a good stake-out for Rock Pratincole when the water levels are low enough to expose rocks. Time permitting, we could visit the Buffalo Camp section of Mahango where we could locate the likes of Black-faced Babbler and Bennet's Woodpecker before heading back into Botswana.

O/N [Drotsky's Cabins](#), Shakawe, Botswana

### **Day 9 – 26 March**

A full day exploring the Panhandle of the spectacular Okavango Delta awaits us! In the morning, by boat, we'll look for Pel's Fishing-Owl, Slaty Egret, White-backed Night-Heron, White-fronted Bee-eater and several species of kingfisher. Other good birds to look out for are Banded Snake-Eagle, Long-crested Eagle, Greater Swamp-Warbler, Chirping Cisticola, Little Rush-Warbler, Little Bittern and occasionally even Allen's Gallinule. Extensive woodland around the lodge usually holds Brown Firefinch, Retz's Helmetshrike and African Green-Pigeon, while drier woodland nearby usually has Bradfield's Hornbill and Black-faced Babbler. At dusk we'll try and locate African Barred Owlet as well as Fiery-necked Nightjar.

O/N [Drotsky's Cabins](#), Shakawe, Botswana

### **Day 10 – 27 March**

A fairly early departure will see us heading back into Namibia and then heading west again toward Rundu. We'll pass through some extensive areas of broad-leaved and Teak woodland where we'll have a good go at finding the likes of Souza's Shrike and Tinkling Cisticola and we could also encounter Green-capped Eremomela. Sharp-tailed Starlings are a bit of a hit-and-miss affair, but we'll keep our eyes peeled nonetheless. This is usually another good road for raptors, and we are sure to add to our ever-growing list. Depending on our time of arrival in Rundu, we might be able to squeeze in some afternoon birding at the local sewage works where several regional rarities have been recorded over the years and there is usually a nice surprise waiting.

O/N [Hakusembe River Lodge](#), Rundu, Namibia

### **Day 11 – 28 March**

Since we would have passed through prime habitat for Souza's Shrike, Rufous-bellied Tit and Sharp-tailed Starling during the heat on the previous day, we will have the morning hours available today to find what is arguably the trickiest trio of the trip, and we'll waste no time in getting to good habitat and hopefully the first birds. Several other good species occur; such as Dark-chanting Goshawk, Bateleur and we even have a new site for Black-faced Babbler nearby. The afternoon will again be spent at the local sewage works, on our last tour it turned up both African and Baillon's Crakes and many other good birds.

O/N [Hakusembe River Lodge](#), Rundu, Namibia

### **Day 12 – 29 March**

After an early morning coffee, we head out for some birding before breakfast. We could get lucky with the likes of Ovambo Sparrowhawk or Burnt-neck Eremomela. Our usual ritual of departure after breakfast will again prevail, with a short stop to look for Rufous-bellied Tit just outside the town of Rundu, en route to the amazing Etosha National Park. This is mostly a driving day with short birding stops on the way as we need to reach the park in time before gate closing time.

O/N [Namutoni Camp](#), Etosha National Park, Namibia,

### **Day 13 – 30 March**

On our first morning in one of Africa's great parks, we'll do a short game drive to a nearby waterhole before breakfast and hope to get our first taste of more typical Namibian avifauna as well as the chance of great big game sightings. Tawny Eagles are abundant, and several vulture species are present as well, including the magnificent Lappet-faced Vulture. Carp's Tit and White-crowned Shrike are often seen on the route to the main entrance gate; the latter are somewhat nomadic and unpredictable in occurrence. The diminutive Damara Dik-Dik, a curious small antelope, is very common around this area and should provide good photographic opportunities. After breakfast we'll be heading west to our next camp in Etosha; birding en route should hopefully produce chances at Burchell's, Temminck's and Double-banded Coursers. The stately Secretary-Bird is often seen, along with Kori Bustard, on this route, and we'll also have several chances to get closer to the Etosha Pan after which the park is named. Here we have a good chance for Chestnut-banded Plover. Note that the water levels in the pan can vary tremendously and while it is normally dry, wet years can produce a waterbird spectacle with thousands of flamingos and pelicans present. At camp we'll make full use of the chance to enjoy the floodlit waterhole, a feature shared by all the main camps in Etosha. We usually see Double-banded Sandgrouse coming in to drink just after dusk.

O/N [Halali Camp](#), Etosha National Park, Namibia.

### **Day 14 – 31 March**

Another full day in the park, we now head further west from the centre of the park. Before breakfast we'll look for some of the resident Owls around camp and hope to find African Scops and Southern White-faced owls. Before leaving camp we'll hopefully connect with Violet Woodhoopoe and Damara Red-billed Hornbill. The more open areas to the west usually harbour Double-banded Courser, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Gabar Goshawk and several species of lark. We should also encounter our first Sociable Weaver colonies and the possibility of finding a Pygmy Falcon sharing the Weaver's nests. We will focus much of our attention on the waterholes dotting the park that act as magnets for hundreds of mammals and birds, often followed by opportunistic predators, both avian and mammalian. Commonly encountered mammal species are Black-faced Impala, Red-Hartebeest, Elephant, Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Gemsbok and Springbok. Possible carnivores include Black-backed Jackal, Lion, African Wild Cat, Spotted Hyena and even Leopard and Cheetah. Some of the commoner birds here are Grey Go-away-bird, Cape Starling, Variable (White-bellied) Sunbird, Brubru and Cardinal Woodpecker. Rufous-eared Warbler occurs here as an isolated population.

O/N [Okaukuejo Camp](#), Etosha NP, Namibia.

### **Day 15 – 01 April**

Today we will transect into the far western part of Etosha, an area that for many years was off-limits to the public. At first, we will bird the area just north of Okaukuejo for birds such as Pink-billed and Spike-heeled Larks, White-quilled Bustard, Capped Wheatear and Pale Chanting-Goshawk before making our way to Dolomite camp for lunch. This camp is quite different from the other camps, offering such speciality birds as Hartlaub's Francolin, Ruppell's Parrot, Rockrunner, Short-toed Rock-Thrush and Violet Woodhoopoe. Commoner birds such as Black-fronted Bulbul and Red-headed Finch are easily seen in and around the camp

O/N [Hobater Lodge](#), Etosha NP, Namibia.

### **Day 16 – 02 April**

We'll enjoy an early morning search for our main quarry, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, a rather peculiar member of the francolin family and never an easy bird, as well as some general birding for the many other avian attractions around. We'll enjoy a hearty breakfast before getting packed and with

a long list of specialty birds in the bag, we'll tackle the drive to Kamanjab, where we will stay at another superb birding spot on the Namib Escarpment.

O/N [Hobaterre Lodge](#), Etosha NP,

### **Day 17 – 03 April**

Again birding around the lodge, early morning can be most rewarding, with Namibian specials such as White-tailed Shrike, Monteiro's Hornbill, Carp's Tit, Rockrunner, Hartlaubs' Francolin and Common Scimitarbill. Other commoner birds like Green-winged Pytilia, Black-faced Waxbill, Barred Wren-Warbler and Ashy Tit make up the supporting cast. We bid Kamanjab farewell as we head south towards the old mining town of Uis near Namibia's highest mountain, known as Brandberg (Burning Mountain). We are now well and truly entering the more arid parts of Namibia and will be on the lookout for Ruppell's and Ludwig's bustards, Benguella Lark, Stark's Lark and Bradfield's Swift, to name but a few.

O/N [White Lady Lodge](#), Brandberg area, Uis, Namibia.

### **Day 18 – 04 April**

Early morning birding around the lodge could produce the likes of Bearded Woodpecker, Grey-backed Cisticola and Layard's Tit-Babbler. After breakfast we'll head for the coast with some stops en-route for arguably Namibia's toughest endemic, Herero Chat and further on for Gray's Lark, Trac-Trac Chat and Karoo Eremomela. Pretty soon we catch our first glimpses of the Atlantic, providing it's a clear day of course, and the rolling fog that the west coast of Namibia is famous for hasn't decided to hide the ocean under its blanket. Time and weather permitting, we'll make some stops at various spots along the coast where we'll be on the lookout for African Oystercatcher, White-fronted Plovers, and - who knows - maybe even the likes of Sooty Shearwater or White-chinned Petrel.

O/N [Oyster Box Guest House](#), Walvis Bay, Namibia.

### **Day 19 – 05 April**

Our lodge is situated right on the Walvis Bay Lagoon and often has Orange River White-eye in the garden. Soon after breakfast we'll head inland again for our appointment with another Namibian endemic, Dune Lark. We'll find this bird at the base of some majestic red sand dunes. The area often holds a variety of other species such as Bokmakierie, Southern Fiscal and Dusky Sunbird. We should be back in town for lunch before heading to the Mile 2 Saltworks at Swakopmund where we will search for Cape, Bank and Crested Cormorants, in addition to Damara Tern and a plethora of shorebirds.

O/N [Oyster Box Guest House](#), Walvis Bay, Namibia.

### **Day 20 – 06 April**

This is our final morning in Namibia, and we will concentrate our efforts on the local salt works as well as the extensive bay where we will have another chance at Damara Tern as well as Hartlaub's Gull, Common Ringed Plover, Red-necked Phalarope and Bar-tailed Godwit. All too soon we'll have to head for the airport on the outskirts of Walvis Bay, from where you'll fly to Johannesburg for your connecting flights home.

## What's Included:

### Includes:

1. Vehicle
2. Fuel
3. All lodging
4. All meals
5. Full time bird guide
6. Meals and accommodation for tour leader/guide
7. Mineral water
8. All entrance fees

### Excludes:

1. Items of a personal nature
2. Any drinks besides mineral water
3. All optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary
4. All International Flights, Airport Taxes & Visa Costs. Johannesburg-Livingston and Windhoek-Johannesburg flights usually around \$150 USD each.
5. Travel and/or personal Insurance
6. Telephone calls
7. Laundry
8. Special gratuities

## Important Notes:

- Please note that the itinerary is subject to availability and no reservations have been made yet. Availability will determine the final itinerary and the costs will be adjusted accordingly.
- Prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations
- Please be aware that some of the birding areas mentioned in this itinerary are very remote and can become inaccessible due to bad weather, bush fires or poor road conditions. In these cases, the guide will change, substitute, or omit a particular spot at his/her discretion.
- Optional night drives are now possible from most camps in Etosha National Park for an additional fee and we encourage you to join at least one of these during the course of our stay in the park.
- Please note for smaller groups (3 or less) we will not use the safari vehicles pictured below for the obvious reason of cost. Instead we will use a standard high clearance vehicle with good visibility and a window seat per person, but no pop-up top.



Our safari vehicles (pictured above) have pop-up roofs that we keep open when driving off-highway and windows that slide down for quick bird viewing and photography.