

A *CHEEPERS!* **AFRICA**

BEST OF NAMIBIA

with a pinch of Botswana

16 days / 15 nights

February 12 – 27, 2024

August 30 – September 14, 2024

ZAR 82,500 (US \$4853 at 17:1 exchange rate)

ZAR 6900 single supplement (US \$406)

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.



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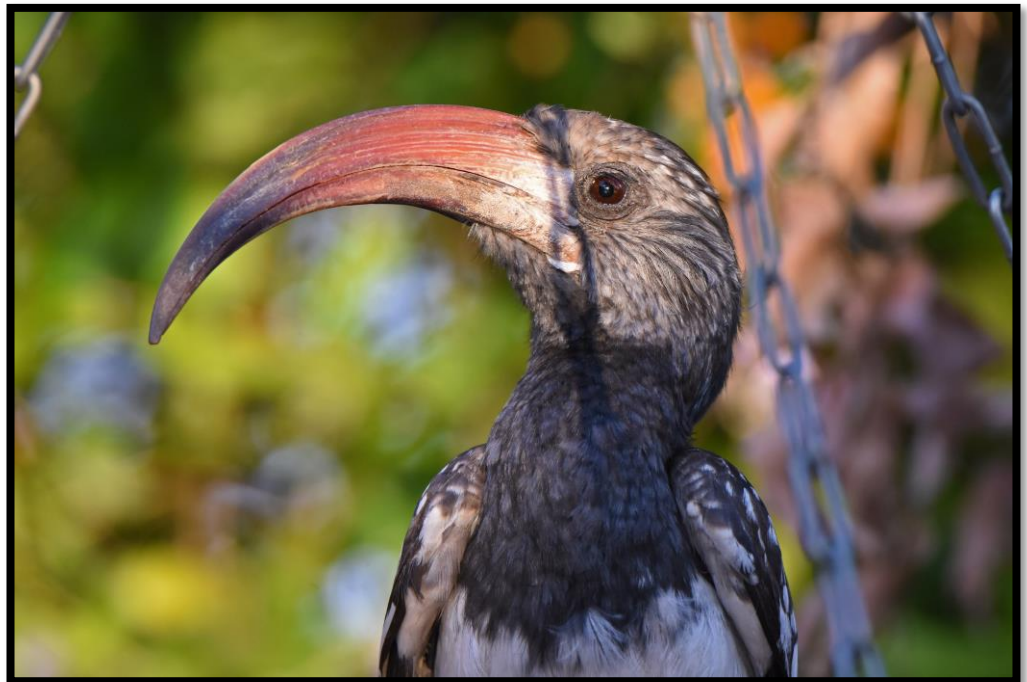


DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 - Your International flights will arrive in Windhoek today from various destinations and usually via Johannesburg in South Africa. Most flights arrive just after lunch, which will allow us enough time to reach Daan Viljoen Game Reserve where we will spend our first two nights.

O/N Daan Viljoen Game Reserve (D)

Day 2 - Daan Viljoen Game Reserve, situated in the rugged Khomas Hochland Mountains, offers outstanding dry-country birding, and we could soon find such specialties as Rockrunner, Barred Wren-warbler and Monteiro's Hornbill. Augeigas Dam is often good for the likes of South African Shelduck and Maccoa Duck and various waders. Birds that are particularly common here and often perch on the roofs of the chalets include Mountain Wheatear,



Short-toed Rock-Thrush and Pale-winged Starling while Red-billed Spurfowl, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Great Sparrow, Long-billed Pipit and White-browed Sparrow-Weaver feed on the lawns. Other common birds include Ashy Tit, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Violet-eared Waxbill, Cape Bunting and Bearded Woodpecker. The reserve hosts a healthy ungulate population with the likes of Eland, Gemsbok, Greater Kudu and Hartmann's Mountain Zebra all likely to be seen.

O/N Daan Viljoen Game Reserve (BLD)

Day 3 - Early morning birding around the lodge could produce Bearded Woodpecker, Grey-backed Cisticola and Layard's Tit-Babbler, to name a few. Soon after breakfast we'll be on the road and heading straight for the coast with some essential stops en-route. In short order, we'll 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

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weather permitting, we'll make some stops at various spots along the coast where we'll be on the lookout for African Black Oystercatcher, White-fronted and Grey Plovers and perhaps even the likes of Sooty Shearwater or White-chinned Petrel.

O/N Walvis Bay (BLD)

Day 4 - Our lodge is situated right on the Walvis Bay Lagoon and often has Orange River White-eye, now an accepted split by Clements, 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 and the more energetic among us might opt to climb to the top of one of these dunes - Believe me, it's tougher than it looks. The area often holds a variety of other species such as Bokmakierie, Common Fiscal, TracTrac Chat 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 Gray's Lark, Cape, Bank and Crested Cormorants, Damara Tern and a whole plethora of shorebirds.

O/N Walvis Bay (BLD)

Day 5 - This is our final morning in Walvis Bay, 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 Red-necked Phalarope, Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Hartlaub's Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit and Sanderling before breakfast. We bid Walvis Bay farewell as we head north towards the old mining town of Uis near Namibia's highest mountain, known as Brandberg (Burning Mountain). We will be on the lookout for Ruppel's Korhaan, Ludwig's Bustard, Benguella Long-billed Lark, Stark's Lark and Bradfield's Swift, to name but a few of the specialties in this area. At dinner we'll make a point of looking for the resident Freckled Nightjars that are often seen hunting around the flood lights.

O/N Brandberg area, Uis (BLD)

Day 6 - Up at the crack of dawn, we'll have coffee before heading out to find what is arguably Namibia's toughest endemic, Herero Chat. Heading back to the lodge for breakfast we'll be hoping to find the likes of Double-banded Courser and perhaps a raptor or two. The Brandberg area is also home to the Desert Elephant, not a different species as such but a desert-adapted race

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of the African Elephant, that we hope to find on our visit to this area. All too soon we leave Brandberg behind as we head to our next destination on the banks of the ephemeral Huab River.

O/N Khorixas area (BLD)

Day 7 – A full day at this birding mecca and we’ll have lots to keep ourselves busy with today as we look for one of our main targets, Hartlaub’s Spurfowl, in the granite hills. Madagascar (Olive) Bee-eaters might still be around during our visit; they usually depart around mid-April. Other good birds to look out for include Ruppell’s Parrot, Violet Woodhoopoe, Monteiro’s Hornbill, Carp’s Tit, Bare-cheeked Babbler and White-tailed Shrike. Both the scenery and birds here lend themselves to photography, and anyone with a camera will be hard pressed not to get a good photo or two.

O/N Khorixas area (BLD)



Day 8 – After a bit of birding before breakfast, we’ll set our sights on one of Africa’s great game parks, Etosha. En route we should hopefully encounter the diminutive Pygmy Falcon before arriving at the park. Time permitting, we’ll drive a few side roads once in the park where we might encounter our first big game. The park is home to a good number of larger predators such as Lion, Leopard and Cheetah. We’ll reach camp in the afternoon and, after settling in, we’ll head

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to a nearby waterhole. We hope to find some raptor action along the way and we'll be on the lookout for the likes of Kori Bustard, Double-banded Courser and possibly even Temminck's or Burchell's Coursers, the latter being more common in dry years. After dinner we'll spend some time at the floodlit waterhole, where we often see Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Square-tailed and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar and occasionally even Marsh Owl. Black Rhino are often spotted coming in to quench their thirst alongside many other nocturnal mammals.

O/N Etosha NP (BLD)



Day 9 – The more open areas in the western part of the park usually harbour Double-banded Courser, Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark, Gabar Goshawk and several species of Lark. We'll pay particular attention to the short grasslands near the airstrip where we hope to encounter Stark's, Pink-billed and Spike-heeled Lark. We should also encounter our first Sociable Weaver colonies and perhaps luck into a Pygmy Falcon who often shares the Weavers' nests. We will focus much of our attention on the multitude of waterholes that dot the park which act as magnets for hundreds of mammals and birds that come to quench their thirst, often followed by the ever opportunistic predators, both avian and mammalian. Commonly encountered mammal species are Common Zebra, 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 to look out for are Grey Go-away-bird, Cape Glossy Starling, White-bellied Sunbird, Brubru and Cardinal Woodpecker. A more sought-after bird, occurring here as an isolated population, is Rufous-eared Warbler, and we hope to add this desirable tick to our list today as we make our way east to Halali Camp.

O/N Etosha NP (BLD)

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Day 10 – Another full day in the park, we now head further east 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, Southern White-faced Scops and sometimes even Barn Owl. Before leaving camp we'll hopefully connect with Violet Woodhoopoe, Damara Hornbill and Bare-cheeked Babbler. Birding en-route should hopefully produce more chances at Burchell's, Temminck's and Double-banded Coursers, the latter usually more common further west in the park. The stately Secretarybird is often seen, along with Kori Bustard, along this route. We'll also have several chances to get closer to the Etosha Pan, for which the park is named, where 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 Flamingoes 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 Etosha NP (BLD)

Day 11 – Mostly a driving day but, time permitting, we'll do a bit of a detour and exit the park at



King Nehale gate to the north, allowing us to bird the Andoni Plains where we often see the isolated population of Blue Crane which occur only in this part of Namibia. Either way, we'll have our lunch stop at Roy's Camp where we hope to find the near-endemic Black-faced Babbler, but be warned - they can remain elusive at times. From here the landscape changes to taller and more moist woodland as we head toward the town of Rundu. We'll make a quick stop at the local sewage works where we invariably turn up something good. The likes of Spotted and Baillon's Crake have been spotted in the past, and several species of duck are possible as well as an array of migrant waders. As

light fades we'll drive the short distance to our lodge, nestled on the banks of the Kavango River with Angola on the opposite shore.

O/N Rundu (BLD)

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Day 12 – A fairly early departure will see us heading even further east. 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 area offers us another shot at Rufous-bellied Tit as well. This is usually a good road for raptors, and we are sure to add to our ever-growing list. We'll make sure we're at the border post in good time as we cross into Botswana for two nights to visit the panhandle of the world-famous Okavango Delta. Time permitting, we'll do some birding around camp after everyone has settled in.

O/N Shakawe, Botswana (BLD)

Day 13 – A full day exploring the Panhandle of the spectacular Okavango Delta by boat awaits us. We'll pay particular attention to our target species, which include Pel's Fishing Owl, Slaty Egret, White-backed Night-Heron, White-fronted Bee-eater and several species of Kingfisher. Other good birds to look for are Western 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, Swamp Boubou, Retz's Helmetshrike and African Green Pigeon. 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 Shakawe, Botswana (BLD)



Day 14 – We have a very short hop to our next destination today, which is back in Namibia. Luckily the border crossing here is never busy, and we should be through in a breeze. 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 Shrike calls Mahango its home, alongside birds such as Crested Barbet, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Broad-billed Roller and African Hoopoe. We also have another shot at Slaty

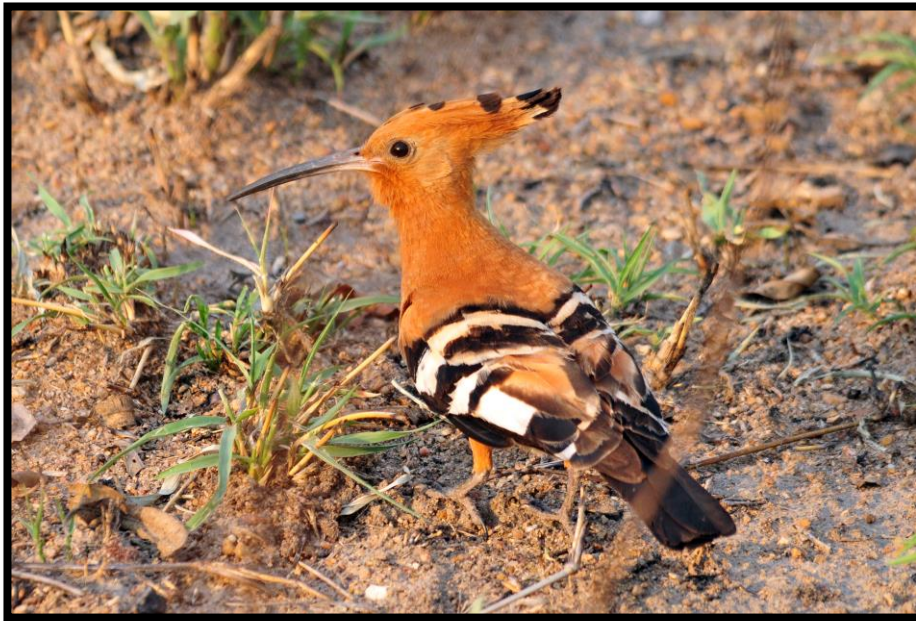
Egret, African Spoonbill, Intermediate Egret and even the stately Wattled Crane here. Several big mammals occur here and we are likely to bump into Elephant, African Buffalo, Hippopotamus, Roan Antelope, Sable Antelope and, if we're really lucky, Lion. Another short stop just north of

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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 to the lodge.

O/N Divundu (BLD)

Day 15 - A fairly long drive will take us east across the Caprivi and into the Bwabwata National Park. We will 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. As we continue, we'll be on the lookout for raptors in particular, with the likes of



Dark Chanting Goshawk, Lizard Buzzard, Martial Eagle, Bateleur and Brown Snake-Eagle often encountered. We should arrive at our lodge in good time to explore the rich riverine woodlands that often yield Schalow's Turaco, Yellow-throated Leaflove and, on the river itself, African Finfoot and Malachite Kingfisher.

O/N Katimo Mulilo (BLD)

Day 16 - Our final day in Namibia, we'll be up early to bird the lodge grounds and hope to add a few final species to our list before heading to the airport in Katimo Mulilo for a short flight back to Windhoek, from where everyone will connect with their flights back to Johannesburg and onward to their international destinations.

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THE ABOVE INCLUDES

1. All ground transportation
2. All lodging
3. All meals as indicated
4. Full time bird guide/ tour leader
5. Bottled water
6. All entrance fees
7. The domestic flight from Katimo Mulilo to Windhoek

EXCLUDES

1. Items of a personal nature
2. Any drinks besides bottled water
3. Optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary
4. International flights, Airport Taxes & Visa Costs
5. Travel and/or personal insurance
6. Telephone calls
7. Laundry
8. Gratuities



TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- ~ Deposit of \$750 is required with registration
- ~ Balance is due 4 months prior to the start date.
- ~ Checks should be made payable to *Cheepers! Birding on a Budget* and mailed with the registration form to:

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget
Post Office Box 385
Spring Valley, OH 45370

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Cancellation must be made in writing (email or snail mail)
More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit
Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit
Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit
If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

Trip insurance is recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

<http://www.insuremytrip.com>

http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.



QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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Spring Valley, OH 45370

IMPORTANT NOTE

We may be forced to change or alter the itinerary at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.