



Naturetrek 3 Countries 2016 (27 February to 12 March)

Group participants

Phillip Morris: fil.morris@hotmail.co.uk

Lisa Morris: lisa.morris4747@gmail.com / liz@lizworld.com

Michael Marshall: mikemarshall36@gmail.com

Melvern Horner: melhorner@btinternet.com

Linda Kelly: llkelly13@yahoo.com / llkelley@mac.com

John Harrison: johnharrison610@virginmedia.com

Katherine Spry: k.spry@outlook.com

Anthony Morin: admorin@localdial.com

Guide: Mark Hays – swimnamibia@hotmail.com / mark@safariwise.com.na

Saturday 27th of February

After meeting the group at Windhoek airport it was straight onto the long road to Waterberg to make sure we arrive before dark. Check in was done by 19:20 and some of the group opted to take a nice slow stroll down the mountain to our restaurant for the evening. Everybody enjoyed a meal and it was off to bed to ensure a good night's sleep after a long day for some of the group. Mammals seen: Giraffe, Chacma baboon, Gemsbok, Common Impala and Black faced Impala, Warthog and Damara Dik Dik, Banded mongoose and even a small spotted gannet was seen by a lucky few and a bush baby as well

Today no bird list was done but we need to mention a few sightings; Tawny Eagle, Yellow billed Kite, Black shoulder Kite, Wahl bergs eagle, Pale chanting goshawk, Yellow crowned bishop, Red back shrike, Lesser grey headed shrike, Fiscal shrike, European beaters, Little beaters, Go away bird and Shaft tailed whydah, African Hoopoe, Short toed rock thrush, White browed scrub robin, Grey headed sparrow weaver, Southern masked weavers building their nests outside the breakfast room, some the group also see Grey hornbill, Crimson breasted shrike, we also hear black cuckoo

Distance travelled: 320km

Sunday 28th February

Today we had a early morning walk along the footpath below the Waterberg Plato and had reasonable views of the Hartlaub's spur fowl and Rock runner which was very close but wasn't showing itself well enough for a photograph. During the walk down to the breakfast room we see: Pale winged starling, Acacia pied barbet, White bellied and Marico sunbirds, Black backed puff back Rosy faced lovebirds, Alpine swift, Cape glossy starlings, red billed spur fowl, Go away birds, Violet wood hoopoe, Marico and White bellied sunbirds, Dedericks cuckoo and Rueppels parrot, African hawk eagle to mention a few.

The drive from Waterberg to Etosha was also very productive along the way we saw Grey hornbill, Pale chanting goshawk, Barn swallow, Rufous naped lark, Steppe buzzard, Violet eared and blue waxbills and Black throated canary and great views of paradise flycatcher in the gardens of Ombinda lodge.

In the Park along the way to Halai we saw plenty of Zebra, Springbok, Blue wildebeest, Steenbok, giraffe and 4 lions relaxing under an acacia tree. We also saw Marsh terrapin and during the drive the first two rows in the car managed to catch a glimpse of one of the little five: an elephant shrew running across the road on the afternoon drive. Birds seen along the way were a beautiful pair of blue crane, a male Kori Bustard displaying along the road, northern black Koran, Grey backed sparrow lark, Lark like bunting, Three banded plover, Pied avocet, red billed teal, Knob billed duck, Wood sandpiper, a flock of Abdims stork, Ruff, dabchick, Cattle egret, Sabota lark, African pipit so a very productive day with close to 100 species seen.

Distance travelled: 350km

Monday 29th of Feb

We meet for a early morning coffee and muffins at Halai breakfast room round 6.25am and head out of the camp. Within the first ten minutes of our drive we spot, Gabar Goshawk, Monotonous lark, Shaft tailed whydah, Black crows, Lanner Falcon, greater Kestrel, White browed sparrow weaver, Dusky sunbirds, Black chested prinia, Wood sandpiper, Blue crane, African jacana Yellow billed kite, Southern pied babblers when suddenly out of nowhere we see a lion couple very close to the road which set the cameras rolling, soon after that we got some spectacular views of our first black rhino out in the open and followed by herds of Zebra, Wildebeest, Springbok and a lone red hartebeest on the plains of Etosha. Back at the Camp we get fantastic photographs and views of barn owl and African scoops owl very near to our breakfast table.

Praying mantis, Termites, Millipedes, tree squirrels, ground squirrel, black backed jackal are also amongst our sightings.

Our second drive starts at 11.00am and was also productive as we see: Red headed finch, Hottentots and red billed teal, black winged stilt, red knob coot, brown snake eagle, black necked grebe, Ground scraper thrush, Common greenshank, Egyptian geese with chicks, Ostrich, European bee-eaters, Barn swallows, African Pipit, Violet eared waxbill, Green winged pytilia, Grey back sparrow lark with chick crossing the road, juvenile Lanner falcons, pink billed lark, lark like bunting, yellow canary, Kalahari scrub robin

The late afternoon outing didn't disappoint when we see large flocks of Lanner Falcon, Abdims stork and Wattle starlings, Greater Kestrel, Lesser kestrel, Three banded plover, Kori bustard, Chestnut weavers, Cape glossy starling, 2 pairs of Blue crane one with a chick they other pair with 2 eggs on the nest, Lesser grey and Fiscal shrike, Black throated canary, Scaly feathered finch, Blacksmith lapwing, Namaqua sandgrouse, Yellow and Grey hornbill Mammals came up with some real specials when we saw great views of Lions, Cheetah, Black Rhino, a family bat eared foxes, Yellow Mongoose, Steenbok, Burchells Zebra dust bathing, Wildebeest, Red hartebeest, Black faced Impala, Giraffe and Black backed jackal . Also a praying mantis, Leopard tortoise and a bull frog were seen. The after dinner walk through the camp this evening throw up another highlight...small spotted genet!

Distance travelled: 220km

Tuesday 1st of March

This morning we opt for another early morning drive before breakfast and we see: Yellow bellied eremomala, Chestnut weaver, Southern pale chanting goshawk, Double banded courser our first one for the trip, European bee eaters, Red headed finches, Sabota Lark, red capped lark, African pipit, Kori bustard, Secretary birds, Black crow, Lanner falcon, Red footed falcon, White browed sparrow weaver, Grey backed sparrow lark, Shaft tailed whydah, Red billed buffalo weavers, Cape glossy starlings, Wattle starlings, Namaqua sandgrouse, Wood sandpiper, the late morning drive to Fort Namutoni was a rather quiet affair with Tawny eagle, Northern black korhaan, Rufous napped and Red capped lark, Crowned lapwing, Pale chanting goshawk, Greenshank, Rock kestrel, African palm swift, European swallow, Eurasian hobby. The afternoon outing was really productive with a lot of new birds being seen: Steppe

eagle, Greater flamingo, South African Shellduck, Secretary bird, Little sparrow hawk, Swainson`s spur fowl, Black Crake, Common Moorhen, Kitlitz plover, Crowned Lapwing, Little stint, Double banded courser, ruff, Black winged pratincole, Emerald spotted wood dove, Pirit batis. Mammals and reptiles seen today include: Springbok, Striped skink, yellow mongoose, Oryx, Red hartebeest, Blue wildebeest, Burchells zebra, African elephant, Etosha agama, Black rhino, Marsh terrapin, Cheetah, Damara Dik Dik, Ground squirrel, Tree squirrel and Blesbok.

Distance travelled: 250km

Wednesday 2nd of March

At first light at 6.15am we do a walk in the gardens of the lodge and see: Terrestrial Brown bulbul, Glossy starling, Go away bird, Grey Sparrow, Fork tailed drongo, Pearl spotted owlet and a Walberg`s fruit bat

Our early morning drive in the park was very productive with good views of: Jacobin cuckoo, Grey and Yellow billed hornbill, Kori bustard, Cape turtle dove, Lesser Kestrel, Rock kestrel, Cape glossy starlings, Lilac breasted roller, the midday drive produces a woolly neck stork and at the lunch break we see a African oriole in the gardens of the lodge. Our afternoon drive brings us a Grey heron, Great egret, South African Shellduck, White backed and lappet faced vulture, African jacana, Wattled lapwing, Little stint, Palm swift, Red faced mousebird, Brubru, Icterine Warbler, Rattling cisticola, Brown-crowned tchagra, Burchell`s starling and Marico sunbird to name a few onto the list.

On the reptile and mammal front things are a bit slow today with an Kudu bull, Zebra herd, Oryx, Springbok, Slender mongoose, Impala and Wildebeest making up the bulk of the mammals we also so Leopard tortoise

Distance travelled 195km

Thursday 3rd of March

This morning our garden walk at Mokuti Lodge is fairly quiet but we get glimpses of Red eyed and Terrestrial Bulbuls, Grey headed sparrow, Grey go away bird, Red billed Hornbills, Blue waxbills, Glossy Starlings, Black backed Puffback, Grey backed Camaroptera, Southern masked weavers, Fork tailed drongo, Puff back and Crimson breasted shrike. A lone Common duiker was also seen in the undergrowth and on departure an Etosha agama made it onto the reptile list for a second time.

The long transfer to Kaisosi was very productive with a Brown snake eagle, Carmine, Swallow tail and European bee eaters, Chestnut weavers, Long tailed whydah, Lesser grey shrike Pale chanting goshawk, African and Black cuckoo, Red faced mouse bird, Grey, red and yellow hornbill, Monotonous lark seen along the way. The group opted to take a river cruise at the lodge and we had wonderful views from the boat onto the Kavango river with: Open billed stork, Pied and Malachite kingfishers, Green backed heron, African darter, Reed cormorant, Village weavers, Red bishops, African jacana, Fulvous whistling duck, Southern pochard, African pygmy geese, Hammerkop, Common sandpiper, Hartlaubs babblers, Black crane, Red eyed dove, White faced duck and African fish eagle being spotted amongst the many wetland birds.

Distance travelled: 350km

Friday 4th of March

This morning we start our day with an early morning walk around the Kaisosi Lodge grounds and we find the following birds: African palm swift, Black eyed bulbul, Pied crow, White faced duck, Terrestrial Brown bul, Green back heron, Little egret, Kurrichane Thrush, Hartlaubs Babbler, Yellow white eye, Swamp boubou, Pygmy goose, Black crane, Red eyed dove, African mourning dove, Red faced mouse bird, Senegal coucal, Red billed teal, Pied kingfisher, Village weavers, Village Indigo bird, Paradise Flycatcher to name a few. We depart after a hearty breakfast and travel north east to Divundu and on route we see: Steppe Buzzard, Black kite, Little Sparrow hawk, Meyer's parrot, Magpie shrike, Lilac breasted roller, Violet Woodhoopoe, Thick billed and Golden weaver, Striped kingfisher, Carmine bee eater, Cardinal woodpecker, Red breasted swallow, White browed robin chat, Garden warbler, Marico flycatcher, Meves starling, Crimson breasted shrike, Scarlet chested sunbird, Cinnamon breasted bunting. Just before we entered the grounds of the Mahango lodge a big Hippopotamus greeted our arrival at the gates.....ohh yes and we almost ran over a flap neck chameleon along the way too!

Distance travelled: 220km

Saturday 5th of March

Today we enjoy an early breakfast and head straight for the Botswana border to go in search of the Pel's fishing owl on the Kavango river. Before breakfast the first new birds are being registered; Levillant's Cuckoo and Collard Sunbird, after breakfast we drive through to the Mohembo border into Botswana and spend a lovely day out on the river with lots of birds making it onto the list for the first time; Squacco heron, Little Bittern, Black Kite, Greater swamp warbler, Lesser reed warbler, African Marsh Harrier, Water thick knee, Pel's Fishing owl, White fronted bee eater, White browed coucal, Coppery tailed coucal are amongst the new comers, we also managed to see a African harrier hawk with its youngster into, Red billed quelea, Golden tailed woodpecker, Grey rumped swallow, Greater and Lesser striped swallow, Bateleur, Brown throated martin, Southern black tit, Black collard barbet, Tawny flanked prinia, Chirping cisticola, Greater blue eared starling, Yellow billed oxpecker, Fan tailed and white winged widow bird, Spectacled and golden weaver and Pin and broad tailed whydahs' are amongst our sightings today. Mammals seen in Mahango park today were: Burchells zebra, Common Impala, Greater Kudu, Hippo, Common duiker and Giraffe.

Distance travelled: 150km

Sunday 6th of March

It's a sunny day and we get to enjoy our breakfast on the river by taking a breakfast cruise along the Okavango River. Prior to our breakfast cruise the early morning walk was very productive and the post cruise game drive in the morning and afternoon was enjoyed by all as it produced quite a few nice photo opportunities. We saw the following birds: Crested barbet, Brown Fire finch, Dwarf bittern, Yellow egret, Grey hooded kingfisher, African green pigeon, Red billed oxpecker, Goliath heron, Wattle crane, White

crowned lapwing, Black headed gull, Luapula cisticola, Miombo starling, the mammals today in the park showed well and Elephant, Roan, Giraffe, Chacma Baboons, Burchells Zebra, Cape Buffalo, Red Letchwe, Common Impala, Wildebeest, Greater Kudu, Bush buck and Vervet monkeys are all amongst our sightings in the park. Amongst the comments today were that it was a great day for game and bird viewing.

Distance travelled: 100km

Monday 7th of March

Today we travel further north towards Katima Mulilo, we take in a pre breakfast walk and find for the first time the Collard sunbird and Yellow bellied Greenbul to kick start the day. Other birds seen today include: Luapula cisticola, Little and cattle egret, Grey hornbill, Spur winged goose, Tawny eagle, White faced whistling duck, Pied and woodland kingfisher, Pin tailed whydah, Bateleur, Black kite, Black crane, African paradise flycatcher, Icterine warbler, Brown fire finch, Blue waxbill, House sparrow, Wahlberg`s eagle, Red crested korhaan, African jacana, Meyer`s parrot, Pied crow, Lesser grey shrike, Meves starling, Yellow and red oxpeckers, House sparrow, Darter and Reed cormorant. Unfortunately after lunch we had planned a nice long walk for the group to find the Shallows Turaco on the banks of the Zambezi River but the rain beat us and we had to make a haste retreat to the bar instead! Mammals seen on route today were Chacma baboon and a big herd of Africa elephants. Tonight`s dinner menu includes a choice of meats or a tasty Zambezi bream.

Distance travelled 350km

Tuesday 8th of March

Another fine day after the yesterday afternoons walk was rained out. We start by taking a early morning walk around the Hotels gardens and campsite along the river and have the good fortune to get sensational views of Schallow`s Turaco and African Finfoot 2mins walk from our rooms. Other species seen are: Levillant`s cuckoo, Ashy, Spotted and Paradise flycatcher, Grey go away bird, Cattle egret, Bronze Mannikin, Tawny flanked prinia, Common and Blue waxbill, Yellow fronted tinkerbird, Violet woodhoopoe, Barn swallow, African palm swift and Yellow bellied greenbul

The drive from Katima Mulilo to Kasane in Botswana is very eventful indeed as we do multiple stops along the way to capture images of the following: Martial eagle, Red hornbill, Miombo and Sharp tailed starling, Wahlberg`s eagle, Ground hornbill, Amur falcon, Steppe buzzard, Black kite and White browed sparrow weaver. The afternoon drive around the Kasane public park area and sewerage works produce some wonderful sights to cap off a sensational day for us. We see Slaty egret, Red billed fire finch, Yellow wagtail, Kitlitz and Three banded plover, Spur winged goose, Water thick knee, Marabou storks, Hammerkop, Black winged stilt, Grey headed gull, Marsh, Wood and Common sandpiper, Greenshank, Knob billed duck, Ruff and Egyptian goose to mention a few. Not everyone did the nature drive around town as a few opted to do a game drive to the Chobe national park. Mammals seen today were: Elephants, Sable antelope, Chacma baboon, Common Impala, Waterbuck and Warthog.

This was by far the best day for the birding group due to the fact that we got such great views of so many special bird and mammals.

Distance travelled 220km

Wednesday 9th of March

This morning we go on an early morning boat cruise to find more special birds on the Chobe River. Our river guide of the morning was Michael who really went out of his way to ensure good views of everything we saw. We see Long toed and White crowned lapwing, malachite and Pied kingfisher, African Fish eagle, Reed cormorant, African jacana, Open billed stork, Black heron, Slaty egret, Purple heron, White faced and Fulvous ducks, Red bill teal, Cattle, Little Intermediate and Great white egret, Common sandpiper, Ruff, Spur winged and Egyptian goose, Yellow wagtail, African Pipit, Black heron and Marsh harrier.

The mid morning activity involved a short drive along the river to the Mowana Lodge gardens where we find the following: Collard Palm thrush, Paradise flycatcher, African Oriole, Northern grey headed sparrow weavers, African palm swift, Blue waxbill, Forked tailed drongo, Giant and brown hooded kingfisher, Hartlaubs and Arrow marked babblers, Tropical bou bou, Lesser masked weaver, Greater honey guide, Shallows Turaco and Giant kingfisher. The afternoon boat cruise was also very exciting with a few new species being sighted: Allen's Gallinule, African swamp hen and Black crowned night heron, we also see Red bishop, Water thick knee, Grey headed gulls, African fish eagle, Pied kingfisher, Blue cheeked bee eaters and Purple heron to name a few.

Mammals seen today on the Chobe river cruises were: Red Letchwe, Cape buffalo, Hippopotamus, Chacma baboons, Vervet monkeys, Greater kudu, Common Impala, African elephant and reptiles seen are water monitor and very well fed Nile crocodiles.

Distance travelled 50km

Thursday 10th of March

We are on the way to Camp Nkwasi in Livingstone, Zambia today but before departing Kasane in Botswana a few of the group opt to take a last game drive into Chobe NP and a couple of early morning walkers take in a garden stroll to find the following: Willow and Icterine warbler, Pied and Giant kingfisher, Red and grey hornbill, House sparrow, Northern Grey headed sparrow weaver, Orange breasted bushrike, Black backed puff back, Fork tailed drongo, White browed Robin chat, Laughing dove, Blue waxbill, Pied wagtail, Squacco heron, Ashy flycatcher, Dark capped bulbul, Jacobin cuckoo, Jameson Fire finch, Golden weaver, Black collard barbet, Golden tailed woodpecker, Arrow marked babblers, Barn swallow and African palm swift.

The border crossing was an eventful affair with a ferry ride and the usual animated border crossing personnel. It was raining quite heavily for the rest of the afternoon and we decided after we had lunch at the Livingstone waterfront that we pay the Livingstone museum a visit and postpone the Vic Falls excursion till tomorrow in the hope for more favorable weather. On the way to Camp Nkwasi we see Violet backed starling, African Oriole, Trumpeter hornbill, Hadeada Ibis and White crested helmet shrike. The

early morning game drive produced a first for the trip a Puku and of course the usual suspects like Giraffe, Buffalo, Hippo, Impala and Elephant are all present in the park including Lions which made for a very satisfying days viewing all round. To top it all off tonight we celebrated Linda`s birthday in style with a very yummy cake after our Zambezi bream dinner.

Distance travelled: 180 km

Friday 11th of March

Finally a rain free morning has arrived and we have a early breakfast and immediately head towards to Livingstone to enjoy a day of activities, a few of the group decide to go for a game drivers others take in a scenic flight and even enjoy a micro light flight over the mighty Vic Falls. We have our lunch at the Royal Livingstone Hotel on the banks of the Zambezi river overlooking the Falls and prior to that take in the beautiful Falls themselves on foot with a few Chacma baboons in to toe to keep us company during the walk. The plan was to enjoy our last afternoon on the river with a cruise but we got rained out in the late afternoon so it has been postponed to the early morning, on day of departure. Four new trip bird species are seen at the Livingstone sewage works this morning: Sedge warbler, Black headed heron, African rail and Red winged starlings are seen at the Falls as well, other birds seen today include: Collard barbet, Hadeada Ibis, Red billed hornbill, Long tailed whydah, Steppe buzzard, Allen`s gallinule, African swamp hen, Miombo starling, White fronted bee eaters, Pied kingfisher, Village weavers, African darter, Reed cormorant, Grey backed camaroptera, African oriole, Thick billed weaver, Dark capped bulbul to name but a few.

PS: Tony stayed behind at Camp Nkwasi today whilst the rest of the group went onto to enjoy other activities in Livingstone; during his time spent in the gardens at Nkwasi Tony was accompanied by the lodges bird guide and they saw Chinspot batis and Emerald cuckoo which I have added to our trip list.

Mammals seen today are: Southern giraffe, Impala, Chacma baboons, White rhino, Burchells Zebra, Warthog. The group is also fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of a Puff adder crossing the road whilst heading back to camp from Livingstone.

Distance travelled: 100km

Saturday 12th of March

Today is departure day but before we have our breakfast we are on the river by boat one last time to enjoy the Zambezi River and its surroundings. We still keep adding to our bird list this morning by seeing for the first time: Half collard kingfisher, Dickenson`s kestrel and Yellow breasted apalis. Other birds seen today were: Thick billed and Village weaver, Scarlet chested sunbird, Tawny flanked prinia, Water thick knee, Emerald spotted wood dove, Trumpeter hornbill, African Finfoot, Tropical Boubou to mention a few.

After breakfast we load our bags and head for the airport in Livingstone where we say our goodbyes and the majority of the group departs for Johannesburg at 14:00.

