Naturetrek, Three countries safari 2013

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Group participants:

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“ No road is long with good company ”
2 March

Met the group at the airport and we departed at 15:00 driving to Waterberg and arriving just after 19:00.
Dinner is at 20:00 and we decided not to do a checklist for today as we had a travelling day. We did see Chacma Baboons, Banded Mongoose, Damara Dik Dik, Greater Kudu, Gemsbok, Warthog and several bird species. We saw a spiral of vultures which included several White backed, two Cape and at least one Lapped faced Vulture as well as our first Marabou Storks. Other raptors seen were Tawny Eagle, Black chested snake Eagle, Common Buzzard, Pale chanting Goshawk, and Yellow billed Kites.

320km’s. Eurasian Bee eaters and Eurasian Rollers were seen along the roadside.

3 March

We meet pre breakfast at 06:30 and search for Hartlaub's Spurfowl and Damara Rockrunner and have great views of both species. We walk to breakfast and see Chacma Baboons, Damara Dik Dik and Banded Mongoose. From the veranda at breakfast we see Pearl spotted Owlet, Rufus crowned Roller, Burnt necked Eremomela, Marico Sunbirds. We depart our rooms for our journey to Etosha National Park at 09:00. En route we saw our first Crimson breasted Shrikes, Common Scimitarbill, Black faced Waxbill, Bearded Woodpecker, Lilac breasted Roller, Eurasian Roller, Rufus crowned Roller, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Common Buzzard, Southern Grey headed Sparrow, Lesser grey Shrike, Red backed Shrike. We visited the water works in Otjiwarongo where we saw African Swamphen, Egyptian Geese, South african Shelduck, Red billed Teal, White faced Duck, Cape Shoveler, Cape Teal, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Little Stint, Cattle Egrets, Grey Heron, Three banded Plover, Blacksmith Lapwing, African Jacana, Shaft tailed Wydah. We enter Etosha National Park at 15:00 and see our first Springbok, Black faced Impala, Burchell’s Zebra as well as Greater Kudu, Southern Giraffe, Steenbok, Gemsbok, Red Hartebeest, Blue Wildebeest and Black backed Jackal. We stop off for a leg stretch at Okaukuejo waterhole and see lots of Zebra as well as Verreaux’s Eagle Owl.
Other birds seen on the road to Halali included : Rufus eared Warbler, Spike heeled Lark, Sabota Lark, African Pipit, Northern black Korhaan, Secretary birds, Kori bustard, African harrier Hawk, Lanner Falcon, Southern grey headed Sparrow. We arrive at Halali camp just after 19:00 during a great African thundershower. We also saw a Horned adder as well as Marsh Terrapin.

340 km’s.

4 March

We meet at 06:40 and go on an early morning game drive at sunrise and return for breakfast at 08:00. Pre breakfast we have wonderful views of two Barn owls roosting in a Mopane tree together and we see a Little Sparrowhawk. We do a game drive at 09:00 and return to Halali camp for lunch. We see Kori Bustard, two separate sightings of Blue Cranes, one pair with a young chick and then just
a pair. Red necked Falcon, Pale chanting Goshawk, Yellow billed Kites, Shikra, Lapped faced Vulture is seen as well as Violet eared Waxbill, Black faced Waxbill, Grey Hornbill, Red billed Hornbill, Red capped Lark Sabota Lark, Chat Flycatcher, Eurasian Bee eater, Lilac breasted, Rufus crowned and Eurasian rollers, Sabota Lark, Grey backed sparrow Lark, Larklike Bunting, Marico Flycatcher, Dusky Sunbird, Desert Cisticola, Fantailed warbler.

We meet at 16:00 for our next game drive and see Violet Woodhoopoe and Red Billed Hornbill as we leave camp. Damara Hornbill, Southern yellow billed, Grey Hornbills, Lanner Falcon, Tawny Eagle, Secretary birds, White crested Helmet shrikes, African Jacana, Wood Sandpiper, Red billed Teal, Egyptian Geese were seen together with Long billed Crombec, Yellow bellied Eremomela, Marico Flycatcher, Sabota Lark, Red capped Lark. We also had excellent views of two separate Black Rhino, Southern Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Blue Wildebeest, Steenbok, Springbok, Red Hartebeest and returned to camp at 19:00. We had dinner shortly after our arrival but had a quick visit to the waterhole where we added House Martin, Alpine Swift and Brown throated Martin to our list. 140 km's.

5 March

Breakfast at 07:00 and we depart on an all day game drive towards the East of the park at 08:00. A long day's game drive delivered some new species of birds as well as great views of most of the mammals. We saw a breeding herd of elephants, Black Rhino, Greater Kudu, Springbok, Steenbok, Blue Wildebeest, Red Hartebeest, Black backed Jackals, Southern Giraffe and Burchell’s Zebra. Birds seen included Chestnut Weavers, Western Red footed Falcons, Lanner Falcon, Yellow billed Kites, Bataleur, Tawny Eagle, Secretary bird, Lapped faced Vulture, Kittlitz’s Plover, Three banded Plover, Crowned Lapwing, Blacksmith Lapwing, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Ruff, Red billed Teal, South African Shelduck, Egyptian Geese, Cape Teal, Cape Shoveller, Dabchick, Greater and Lesser Flamingo’s, Black winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Red knobbed Koot, Common Moorhen, Little Stint, Southern Grey headed Sparrow, Violet eared Waxbill, Wattled, Violet backed and Cape glossy Starlings, Yellow billed, Grey, Damara and Red billed Hornbills, Dusky, Red capped, Sabota and Rufus naped Larks, Marico Flycatcher, Green winged Pytilia, Marico Sunbird, Dusky Sunbird, African Pipit, Lesser grey Shrike, Southern white crowned Shrike, Red backed Shrike, Red headed Finch.

We returned to Halali camp just after 17:00 and met at 18:30 to do our list followed by dinner and another visit to the waterhole for some delivered more elephants, Black Rhino as well as 3 Hyenas. A Marsh Owl was also seen. 220 km’s.

6 March

We have breakfast at 07:00 and depart Halai at 08:00 and head East towards Namutoni where we have lunch. Birds seen today include Tawny Eagle, Bataleur, African harrier Hawk, Pale chanting Goshawk, Red footed Falcon, Lanner Falcon, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Eurasian Hobby, Common Kestrel, Greater Kestrel, Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Barn Owl, Southern white faced Owl,

We left the park at 16:30 and arrived at !Uris lodge just after 18:00. We all meet at 19:30 to do our list and had dinner. We saw our first Puff adder a few kilometres before arriving at the lodge and we all got out of the vehicle to have a very good look at this amazing snake.

Mammals today included more than two hundred Southern Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Black faced Impala, Blue Wildebeest, Red Hartebeest, Black backed Jackal, Springbok, Steenbok, Banded Mongoose, Burchell’s Zebra.

240 km’s

7 March

We meet at 07:00 to do a short pre breakfast walk in the gardens and have breakfast at 07:30, departing at 08:30. We visit one of the old copper mines that was hand dug by the ancient San people to look for a possible Spotted eagle Owl but did not find anything. The early morning walk delivered Southern white crowned Shrikes, Bare cheeked Babblers, Marico, Scarlet chested and White bellied Sunbirds, Southern grey headed Sparrows, Chestnut weavers, Common Scimitarbill, Greater spotted Cuckoo, Acacia pied Barbets, Cape Glossy and Wattled Starlings, Shaft tailed and Long tailed Paradise Wydah, Cinnamon breasteded Bunting, Larklike Bunting, Crimson breasteded Shrike, Yellow billed and Grey Hornbills. A visit to the Tsumeb Sewage works included views of cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Squaco Heron, Common Moorhen, Dabchick, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Ruff, Little Stints, Red billed Teal and Cape Teal.

At our lunch stop we saw Black faced Babblers, Crimson breasteded Shrike, Cape and Wattled Starlings, African palm Swift, Southern grey headed Sparrows, Marico Sunbird. We continued our journey North to Kaisosi River Lodge and saw Woodland and Striped Kingfishers, Pale and dark chanting Goshawks, Tawny and Brown snake Eagles, White backed and White headed Vultures, Rufus crowned, Eurasian and Lilac breasteded Rollers as well as Barn Swallows. En route to the lodge we had a very quick visit at the Rundu sewage plant and new birds added to our list included Black Crake, Hottentot Teal. We arrived at our lodge just after 16:00 and got together for a short walk on the grounds before we meet at 19:00 to do our checklist on the wooden deck overlooking the Kavango River. We added Village Weaver, Red eyed Dove, Comb billed Duck, Spurwinged Goose, Tinkling Cisticola to our list.

350 km’s
8 March

We meet on the wooden deck just before 07:00 and have our breakfast. Hartlaub’s Babbler and Swamp Boubou, Pygmy Goose is added to our list whilst having breakfast. We leave the lodge at 08:30 and drive via the “ponds” back to Rundu and see Red Bishop, Meve’s long tailed Starling, Grey headed Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Hottentot Teal, Ruff, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Red billed Teal, Three banded Plover, Little and Southern carmine Bee eaters, Cape Glossy and Greater blue eared Starlings, Barn Swallow, Osprey, Mosque Swallow. En route to our next destination we see Common Buzzard, Dark chanting Goshawk, Cuckoo Hawk, Diederick’s Cuckoo, Fork tailed Drongo, Golden Weaver, White browed sparrow Weaver. We arrive at Mahangu Lodge at 13:00 and have lunch on the deck overlooking the Okovango River but see White fronted Plover and Long toed Lapwing, Collared Pratincole just before arriving at the lodge. We see Brown snake Eagle, Golden Weaver, Spectacled Weaver, White browed robin Chat from the deck. The group has a siesta and we meet back on the deck for a short bird walk before going out on a boat trip on the Okavango River that everybody in the group opted for as an extra activity. We see Nile Crocodile, Water monitor, Hippo, Cape Buffalo and Blue cheeked bee eaters, White fronted bee eaters, Little bee eaters, Black crowned night Heron, Allan’s Gallinule, African Jacana, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, Pygmy Goose, Water thick knee, African Darter, Long tailed Cormorants, Village Weavers, Spectacled weaver, Striated heron, Hammerkop, White faced Duck, Coppery tailed Coucal, White browed Coucal, Green wood Hoopoe, Wire tailed Swallow, Lesser striped swallow. Other birds seen today included: Black faced Babbler, Hartlaub’s Babbler, African Stonechat, Terrestrial Brownbul, Willow Warbler, Grey backed Cameroptera, Tawny flanked Prinia, Ashy Flycatcher, African paradise Flycatcher, African pied Wagtail, African Pipit, Swamp Boubou, Black backed Puffback, Brown crowned Tchagra, Greater blue eared Starling, Marico, Scarlet chested and Purple banded Sunbirds, White winged widow Bird. 230 Km’s

9 March

Breakfast on the wooden deck at 07:00 and we observe Pygmy Goose, Pied Kingfisher, Mourning Dove, Laughing Dove, Red eyed Dove, Arrow marked Babblers and Hartlaub’s Babblers before we go out to Mahangu park on our morning drive at 08:00. Collared Pratincole, African Jacana, Mosque Swallows, Barn Swallows, Open billed Stork, White backed Vulture, Hooded Vulture, Spurwinged Goose, Pygmy Goose, Black Heron, Great white Egret, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, African harrier Hawk, Crested Barbet, Spotted Flycatcher, Southern Black Tit, Blue Waxbill, Southern and Northern grey headed Sparrows, Little, Blue cheeked, Southern Carmine, White fronted and Eurasian Bee eaters, Magpie Shrike, Goliath heron. Mammals on the morning drive included Cape Buffalo, Hippo, Bushbuck, Impala, Warthog, Red Lechwe, Greater Kudu, Chacma Baboons. We have lunch at 12:45 and go out on our afternoon game drive at 15:30, but meet on the deck to do a short walk from 15:00. Great views of Black Crake, Brown Firefinch, Terrestrial Brownbul, Spectacled Weaver, White browed robin.
Chat, Dark capped Bulbul, Black collared Barbet amongst others. Our afternoon drive back into the park delivered Cape Buffalo, Roan Antelope, Greater Kudu, Impala, Chacma Baboons, Vervet Monkeys, Elephants, Burchell’s Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Red Lechwe, Reed Buck and an excellent view of a rather large leopard!

African harrier Hawk, Bateleur, Brown snake eagle, African Goshawk, African fish eagle, Common Buzzard were amongst the raptors seen. Goliath Heron, Great white Egret, Squaco Heron, Striated heron, Black Heron, Burchell’s Starling, Wattled Starling, Meve’s Long tailed Starling, Greater blue eared Starling, Cape Glossy Starling, Acacia pied Barbet, Black collared Barbet, Golden Weaver, Grey backed Cameroptera, Green winged Pytillia, Crimson breasted Shrike, 4 species of Bee eaters, White browed sparrow Weaver, Red headed Weaver, Blacksmith Lapwing, Fork tailed Drongo, Rufus naped Lark, Southern yellow billed Hornbill, Grey Hornbill, African Jacana, Pygmy Goose, African and Buffy Pipits, Shaft tailed Wydah. We also had a very close encounter with an African Rock Python whilst it was crossing the road in the park and afforded the whole group excellent views of this magnificent creature.

80 Km’s

10 March

We meet on the deck at 07:00 for a pre breakfast walk before having breakfast at 07:30 and departing the lodge around 08:30. We manage to add three new bird species on the morning walk : Ground Hornbill, Pale Flycatcher and Chinspot Batis. Leaving Mahangu Lodge we add Lesser jacana, Yellow fronted Tinkerbird and Grey rumped Swallow. We leave Namibia and enter Botswana and drive to Drotsky’s Cabins where we have lunch and leave our vehicle before we are taken to our overnight accommodation by boat. En route we see Bateleur, Brown snake Eagle, Tawny Eagle, White backed Vultures, Black chested snake Eagle, African Goshawk, Thick billed Roller, Lilac breasted Roller. During lunch we add Yellow bellied greenbul and Orange breasted Bush Shrike to our list. We take a boat transfer to our overnight accommodation at Xaru Lodge and see Cattle Egrets, Little, Blue cheeked and White fronted Bee eaters, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, Brown throated Weaver, Wire tailed Swallow, African Jacana, Eurasian Hobby, Yellow and Red billed Oxpeckers, Magpie Shrike, Redc backed Shrike, Lesser striped swallow and the usual 5 dove species. We arrive at the lodge at 15:15 and meet for Tea at 16:00 before we go for a walk on the Island in search for the elusive Pel’s fishing Owl. Birds seen on the walk : Pel’s Owl, Spotted eagle Owl, Golden tailed Woodpecker, Nedicky, Giant Kingfisher, Hartlaub’s Babbler, Hammerkop, Black shouldered Kite Green Wood hoopoe, Green Pigeon. Mammals today included Vervet Monkey, Cape Buffalo, Impala and Reed Buck. We meet at 19:00 to do our list and have dinner. After dinner we call Wood owl and have good views.

60 Km’s
11 March

A pre breakfast walk delivers White backed night Heron, Common Waxbill that are new for the list. We leave by boat at around 09:30 and add Greater swamp Warbler and see African Jacana, Cattle Egret, Golden Weaver, Spectacled Weaver, Black shouldered Kite, Yellow billed Kite. Other birds seen today included: Red billed and jameson's Firefinch, Blue Waxbill, Black backed Puffback, Dark capped Bulbul, Pied, Malachite, Giant, Grey headed and Brown hooded and Woodland Kingfishers. We arrive at our accommodation around 16:30, check into our rooms and do a walk in the perimeter of the lodge. Dinner and the checklist at 19:00.

375 Km’s

12 March

A pre breakfast walk at 06:30 around the lodge grounds and we see : Giant Kingfisher, Collared Sunbird, Pied Kingfisher, Woodland and Brown hooded Kingfisher, Black backed Puffback, Thick billed Weaver, Striated Heron, Hammerkop, Open billed Stork, Southern grey headed sparrow, Golden Weaver, African green pigeon, Red eyed, Laughing and Cape Turtle Doves. We have breakfast and again go out looking for the Schalow’s Turaco with no success, but see Yellow fronted Tinkerbird, Black collared Barbet. We leave the lodge at around 09:00 and drive to another location to look for Schalow’s Turaco and we all have excellent views of two birds. We continue our drive to Botswana and see a number of birds including: White rumped Swift, Dickinson’s Kestrel, African barred Owl, Greater painted Snipe, Bennet’s Woodpecker, Southern Ground Hornbill, Southern yellow billed Hornbill, Grey and Red billed Hornbills, Burchell’s Starling, Lilac breasted Roller, Magpie Shrike, Bateleur, Wahlberg’s Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Common Buzzard, Yellow billed Kite, Black shouldered Kite, African fish Eagle, Eurasian, Southern carmine, Little and Blue cheeked Bee eaters. Elephants, Common Duiker, Slender Mongoose and tree squirrels are seen. We arrive at Chobe Safari Lodge for lunch and have our lunch overlooking the Chobe River. We check into our rooms and meet again at 14:30 for a short walk through the lodge gardens and property and see White browed robin Chat, Terrestrial Brownbul, Tropical Boubou, Southern red Bishop, Martial eagle, Dark capped Bulbul, Warthog and water monitor. The group gets together at 16:00 for an afternoon nature drive and we also visit the sewage works. We see Impala, Chacma Baboons, Waterbuck, Elephants and Warthog. Birds seen included: Marabou Storks, Black shouldered Kite, Intermediate Egret, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Com billed Duck, Red billed Teal, Egyptian Geese, Cape Shoveller, Three banded Plover, Ruff, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Marico Sunbird, Village indigo Bird, Lesser masked Weaver, Long tailed paradise Wydah, White browed sparrow Weaver, Red billed buffalo Weaver, Brown hooded Kingfisher, Southern grey headed Sparrow, Laughing, Cape turtle, Red eyed and Namaqua Doves, Blacksmith Crowned and White crowned Lapwing, Golden Weaver, Red billed Firefinch, Blue Waxbill. We return to the Lodge just after 18:00 and meet to do our checklist at 19:00 followed by dinner.

130 Km’s
13 March

We meet on the riverfront at 06:30 and do a short walk before breakfast and go out on a boat into Chobe National Park at 07:30. New bird species seen: Half collared Kingfisher, Yellow Bishop, Luapula Cisticola, Yellow Wagtail, Sacred Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Cape and Pied Wagtails, Water Thick knee. Other birds seen include: African Fish Eagle, White backed Vulture, Bateleur, Yellow billed Kite, Pygmy Goose, Comb billed Duck, Long tailed Cormorant, Squaco Heron, African Jacana, Little Egret, Black Egret, Great white Egret, African Darter, Open billed Stork, Giant Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Grey headed Kingfisher and Brown hooded Kingfisher, Eurasian, Little, Blue cheeked and Southern carmine Bee eaters, Common and Woos Sandpipers. We return to our lodge and do a short drive to look for and find Bronze Mannikin, Collared palm Thrush, Red faced Cisticola and Cardinal Woodpecker, Yellow fronted Tinkerbird, Collared Sunbird, Red billed and Brown Firefinch, Blue Waxbill, Terrestrial Brownbul, White browed robin Chat, African paradise Flycatcher, Willow Warbler, Dark capped Bulbul, Marabou Stork and see a brief view of a Black Mamba. We return to our lodge for lunch and meet at 14:30 for a short walk around the lodge before we go out on our afternoon boat activity into the park at 15:00. We add three new bird species this afternoon, Yellow breasted Apalis, Chirping Cisticola and Black headed Heron. We also see a Boomslang up close. Mammals seen this afternoon include: More than 150 elephants, Greater Kudu, Impala, Vervet Monkey, Chacma Baboon, Banded Mongoose, Southern Giraffe and Puku. Other birds seen were Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Great white Egret, Black Egret, Squaco Heron, Striated Heron, Egyptian Goose, Pygmy Goose, Comb billed Duck, Giant, Pied, Grey headed, Brown hooded and Malachite Kingfishers, African fish Eagle, Bateleur, White backed Vulture, African Goshawk, Yellow, Cape and Pied wagtails, Water thick Knee, Three banded Plover, Blacksmith and White crowned Lapwings, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Red and Yellow Bishops, Luapula Cisticola, African Stonechat, African Darter, Long tailed Cormorant.

A wonderful day viewing the animals and birds that this park has to offer from our exclusive boat.

We meet at the usual 19:00 to do our list and have dinner.

A few nautical miles on the Chobe River

14 March

We have breakfast at 07:00 and depart for Livingstone at 08:30. We leave Botswana and cross the mighty Zambezi River via a pontoon into Zambia and arrive at Livingstone for lunch at the Waterfront. New birds for the day are Purple Heron, House Sparrow, Grey headed bush Shrike, Grey tit Flycatcher, African black Swift and Red winged Starlings. We drive to the Victoria Falls at 16:00 and en route see a herd of more than 40 Elephants along the road. A great volume of water at the falls but we do see some good views of the edge as well as a wonderful rainbow. We return to the lodge at 18:00 and meet at 19:00 to do our checklist and have dinner on the banks of the Maramba River.

110 Km’s
15 March

We depart our lodge at 06:40 and drive to the Waterfront where we board our boat for a morning river cruise. New birds this morning are Lesser Honeyguide, Hadeda Ibis, Levaillant's Cuckoo and Trumpeter Hornbill. We also see: Open billed Stork, Tropical Boubou, Three banded Plover, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Pygmy, Egyptian, Comb billed and Spurwinged Geese, Glossy and Sacred Ibis, Golden and Village Weavers, Diederick's Cuckoo, Red eyed and Cape Turtle Doves, Hammerkop, Hooded Vulture, African Fishe Eagle, Blue Waxbill, Black collared Barbet, Eurasian Swallow, Wire tailed swallow, African palm Swift, Giant, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers. We see several good views of Hippo, Chacma baboons and Bushbuck before returning to our lodge for a late breakfast and depart the lodge again at 11:00 for a visit to the local “ponds” and see two new species, African Crake as well as Pin tailed Wydah. We then drove onwards to a lovely spot overlooking the Batoka gorge below the falls. Here we see four new bird species, Purple Indigobird, Verreaux’s Eagle, Mocking cliff Chat and Black crowned Tchagra. Other birds seen include: Hooded Vulture, Malachite and Brown hooded Kingfishers, Golden and Village Weavers, Violet backed Starling, Red winged Starling, Rock Martin, Long billed Crombec, Thick billed Weaver, Willow Warbler, Familiar Chat, Little and African black Swifts, Dark capped Bulbul, Southern grey headed Sparrow, White browed sparrow Weaver, Cinnamon breasteated Bunting, Blue waxbill. We return to the lodge at 16:00 and relax for the rest of the day before we meet again at 19:00 to do our list and to have our last dinner together.

40 Km’s

16 March

Some of the group meet at 06:30 on the deck overlooking the Maramba River hoping to see the African Finfoot with no success. We see and add one last species to our list ….. the elusive Red chested Cuckoo! Some casual birding after breakfast and we leave the lodge for the airport at 11:00.

After travelling for 2635 Kilometres we saw a total of 350 bird species were seen on the safari plus 36 Mammal species and 20 Reptile species.

Thank you to the group for making the safari very enjoyable, full of adventure, fun and excitement!