

NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

AUGUST 11-27, 2012

NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP

AUGUST 8-12, 2012

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Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia—these little-known countries offer some of the greatest wildlife viewing on the African continent. They are huge in size and sparsely populated, with large areas little disturbed by man. We will divide our time between them, contrasting the arid hills and plains of Namibia with the lush swamps and woodland of Botswana's Okavango Delta region. We will focus on two major areas: Etosha National Park and the Okavango Delta. The tour ends in Livingstone, Zambia, affording participants the opportunity to see Victoria Falls, a roaring wall of water that is one of the great sights of Africa.

These areas of southern Africa, with their great mammal herds still intact and an impressive variety of birdlife, provide a glimpse of Africa as it was fifty years ago. Elephant and lion are common, black rhino and cheetah still occur, and the bird species include such spectaculars as Goliath Heron, Slaty Egret, Saddle-billed Stork, African Pygmy-goose, Secretary Bird, Martial Eagle, Blue Crane, Kori Bustard, Black Korhaan, Pel's Fishing-Owl, Carmine Bee-eater, Monteiro's Hornbill, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared Waxbill, plus an endemic thrush in every habitat. Photographic opportunities are excellent and ample time is taken for photography. This is an altogether incredible slice of Africa!

The coastal strip of Namibia is regarded as one of the oldest, and most arid, desert regions in the world—the Namib Desert; and is characterized by a surprising number of uniquely adapted plant and animal species. On the optional pre-trip, we will explore this fascinating region and look for many of the endemic species that manage to survive in such a harsh environment. Swakopmund, our base for this pre-trip, has a strong German colonial history and character dating back to the days of German South West Africa.

NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP

AUGUST 8-12, 2012

August 8-9, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg. All participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 8, which arrive in Johannesburg on August 9 in time to connect to the 11:30 a.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 1701 to Walvis Bay, which is scheduled to arrive at 12:45 p.m. (subject to change).

Upon arrival, we'll be met by our local agent and will bird the extensive Kuiseb Delta region in search of the endemic Dune Lark and other desert species before transferring to our hotel in Swakopmund. The bush along the

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Kuiseb Delta is home to species such as Dusky Sunbird, Cape Sparrow and White-backed Mousebird as well as Spotted Eagle-Owls.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Johannesburg or Walvis Bay on August 8 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT (August 9): Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 10-11, Days 3-4: Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. We have two full days to bird the local area including Walvis Bay, the two large salt works located on the coast, and the gravel plains north of Swakopmund. Our targets will include endemic and near endemics such as Cape and Bank cormorants, African Black Oystercatcher, Hartlaub's Gull, South African Shelduck and Damara Tern. Large tern roosts are found in the area and we will search these for rarities such as Royal Tern amongst the more numerous Common, Arctic and Black terns. We can also expect numbers of Greater and Lesser flamingos, Great White Pelicans, as well as a host of shorebirds. Our trip coincides with the arrival of large numbers of waders from the northern hemisphere and Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwits, amongst others, are all likely. The area is home to between 90 and 95% of the world population of the gorgeous Chestnut-banded Plovers and also regularly attracts vagrant shorebirds. Almost anything is possible, even familiar American species such as Baird's and White-rumped sandpipers.

Away from the bays, estuaries and lagoons on the coast, we will be searching for the near-endemic Gray's Lark—this unusual passerine has adopted nocturnal displays, possibly to avoid predation by the dashing Red-necked Falcons that hunt over this area. Tractrac Chats and the nomadic Burchell's Courser are other possibilities in these apparently lifeless plains.

NIGHTS: Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 12, Day 5: Swakop River; Charter to Huab Conservation Area. After breakfast, we will bird the mouth of the Swakop River. In the late morning or early afternoon, we will fly by private charter to Huab Conservation Area where we will meet any newly arriving tour participants and begin the Namibia, Botswana & Zambia tour.

NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA **AUGUST 11-27, 2012**

August 11-12, Days 1-2: Travel to Windhoek via Johannesburg; Charter to Huab Conservation Area. Participants not continuing from the Pre-Trip will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 11 and arrive in Johannesburg on August 12 in time to connect to the 1:20 p.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 76, which is scheduled to arrive in Windhoek at 2:20 p.m. (subject to change). Upon arrival and clearing customs, you'll be met by our local agent and escorted to a private charter flight to Huab Conservation Area. After meeting Geoff Lockwood and any participants continuing from the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip, we'll begin our exploration of one of the more memorable and unique areas of the trip.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Johannesburg or Windhoek on August 11 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT (August 12): Huab Lodge

August 13-14, Days 3-4: Huab Conservation Area. At Huab you may awaken to the frantic calls of the Red-billed Francolin competing with guineafowl and the vociferous White-browed Sparrow-Weavers. An early morning walk along rocky ridges will provide an opportunity to look for Hartlaub's Francolin, a pair of which may

be caught sunning themselves and raucously proclaiming their territory from a prominent position. A Rockrunner may join them and add his warbling melody, while a couple of White-tailed Shrikes fuss around nearby. Additionally, we might catch long views of Monteiro's Hornbill gliding from tree to tree. We'll return to camp for a hearty breakfast before a drive downriver where we hope to see Verreaux's Eagles, Augur Buzzard, Rock Kestrels, Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Pale-winged Starlings, Speckled Pigeons, White-faced Owl, and Black Storks. We might be able to spot Carp's Black Tit, Bare-cheeked Babbler, and Crimson-breasted Shrike when we return to the lodge for lunch.

In addition, there are a variety of waxbills near the lodge, as well as sparrow-weavers and the Gray Go-away-bird. In the afternoon, we'll drive upriver into a completely different country of plains and dramatic granite kopjes. Here we hope to see Violet Woodhoopoes, African Hoopoe, Gabar Goshawk, and White-browed Sparrow-Weavers. The Pygmy Falcon could be spotted, looking like a sparrow-weaver at first glance, until binoculars pick out the striking raptor features. We may also see the Short-toed Rock-Thrush, African Palm-swifts, Red-faced Mousebirds, and Red-crested Korhaans. On the way back to camp, as it gets dark, a Verreaux's Eagle-Owl may sit out in the open anticipating his nocturnal activity. We'll return to the lodge in time to experience the hoards of Double-banded Sandgrouse coming in for their evening sip and gossip, which is the impression their overwhelming musical warblings create. An occasional bat may swoop for a sip, taking turns with a nightjar. By this time, the barking geckos start up their evening conversation back and forth across the night.

NIGHTS: Huab Lodge

August 15, Day 5: Drive to Okaukuejo Area. We depart this morning for the Okaukuejo area of Etosha National Park. The scenes at the waterholes in Etosha are so incredible that they should not be seen hurriedly. Typically we will spend the better part of a morning at one waterhole, returning to camp for lunch and a break before an afternoon game drive. The turnover of animals is phenomenal, as various species have a favorite time to drink. It may be like this scenario from a past tour:

“Just as we arrived a lioness was walking away from the waterhole to join other members of her pride sleeping under a tree. A Tawny Eagle perched atop another tree and soon afterward forty guineafowl came to drink. Minutes later a herd of over a hundred zebra appeared from our right. Soon the lead zebra were up to their knees in the water as thirsty members of the herd pressed in from all sides. Suddenly, a Lanner Falcon swooped past and caught a dove. A little later gemsbok, wildebeest, and black-faced impala moved in to drink. Finally, a pair of greater kudu approached the water with extreme caution, but just as they started to drink, one of the lions raised its head and the kudu bolted.”

The Okaukuejo area is drier than eastern parts of the park. Arid shortgrass plains border the pan, but most of the area is covered in acacia scrub. Gemsbok, steenbok, bat-eared fox, and yellow mongoose are animals seen more frequently here, and the birds include Lappet-faced Vulture, Pale Chanting-Goshawk, Bateleur, Double-banded Sandgrouse (they drink at dusk at the camp waterhole), Yellow-billed Hornbill, larks, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Barred Bush-Warbler, Chat Flycatcher, Red-headed Finch, and Yellow Canary. The immense, almost unbelievable nests of the Social Weaver can be seen in this area, and Shikras and Gabar Goshawks are often seen dashing through the hordes of seed-eating birds.

NIGHT: Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha National Park

August 16, Day 6: To Halali. After breakfast we'll head for Halali in the central-southern part of the park. As we drive across the grasslands, we will see herds of springbok and wildebeest and encounter a variety of other wildlife. Stops will be made at several springs, and as always at Etosha, photographic opportunities are excellent. Among the special birds on the plains are the Ostrich, Blue Crane (one of the most elegant members of that stately family), Kori Bustard, the handsome White-winged Black Bustard or Korhaan, Secretary Bird, Greater Kestrel, Double-banded Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Cape Rook, Gray-backed Sparrow-Lark, Anteater-Chat, and the gorgeous Violet-eared Waxbill. Halali is the most wooded of the Etosha camps, set in

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a grove of leafy mopane trees, and we'll arrive in time to bird or simply relax. Pearl-spotted Owlet and White-faced Scops-Owl are often heard here at night.

NIGHT: Halali Camp, Etosha National Park

August 17, Day 7: To Namutoni. Before leaving Halali we'll bird around camp looking for the resident African and Southern White-faced scops-owls, as well as the localised Bare-cheeked Babbler and Violet Woodhoopoe. Other species possible include White-crested Helmetshrike, and Golden-breasted Bunting.

Moving from west to east in Etosha, the rainfall increases and the woodland becomes more extensive and varied; the animal and birdlife are also somewhat different. The waterholes near Namutoni are some of the best in the world for seeing lots of greater kudu, one of the most handsome antelope. Also found here is the tiny dik-dik, one of the smallest antelope. Giraffe, warthog, elephant, and the endangered black-faced impala are common in the woodlands, and many plains animals move through seasonally.

NIGHT: Namutoni, Etosha National Park

August 18, Day 8: Namutoni Area. We'll spend a full day observing the wildlife of the Namutoni area, the richest part of the park. In addition to the constant procession of mammals at the waterholes, the birdlife is especially diverse and conspicuous. Spotted Sandgrouse drink at the waterholes mid-morning, large raptors like the Martial Eagle and Black-breasted Snake-Eagle are sighted regularly, and Crested and Swainson's francolins skulk in the thickets. The grounds of the camp are great for the small birds and a typical mixed-flock might include the Acacia Pied Barbet, Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Brubru, Marico Sunbird, and Blue Waxbill. Other birds of this region include Red-necked Falcon, Kori and Red or Buff-crested bustards, Meyer's Parrot, Common Scimitar-bill, White-crowned Shrike, Rattling Cisticola, and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver.

NIGHT: Namutoni, Etosha National Park

August 19, Day 9: To Nxamaseri. After breakfast we will take an early chartered flight to Nxamaseri Lodge on the banks of the Okavango River in far northwestern Botswana. After landing at a bush strip near Bagani in Namibia's Caprivi Strip, we will complete our trip to the lodge by road—driving through the majestic baobab woodland and floodplains of the Mahangu Nature Reserve en route. Both birding and game-viewing are spectacular in this reserve and excitement levels are usually extremely high by the time we reach Nxamaseri. Fed by rains in the Angola highlands, the Okavango River drains into a vast shallow basin in the Kalahari, never reaching the sea. Clumps of palms dot the islands of higher ground, tall trees line the riverbank, and dry brush is entered just back from the water. Amidst this variety of habitats are found most of the African waterbirds and a number of rarely-seen species such as Pel's Fishing-Owl, Rufous-bellied Heron, Black and Slaty egrets, African Pygmy-goose, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Bradfield's Hornbill, Swamp Boubou, and many smaller birds.

NIGHT: Nxamaseri Lodge, Botswana

August 20-21, Days 10-11: Nxamaseri Lodge. We have two full days to enjoy the birder's paradise that is the "Panhandle" region of the Okavango Delta. The camp resounds with bird song from before dawn to well after dark. High banks along the river attract many hole-nesters, including colonies of White-fronted Bee-eaters; plus Giant, Pied, and Malachite kingfishers; Little Bee-eater; and Pallid [Brown-throated] Sand Martins. The fruiting trees in the stretches of riverine forest bring in flocks of glossy-starlings, Gray Go-away-birds and Meyer's Parrots. The calls of three species of barbet are often heard (including the colorful Black-collared), and passerines roam through the trees in mixed-flocks.

Pride of place amongst Okavango birds must go to the huge Pel's Fishing-Owl - a magnificent bird that feeds on fish caught by night. We will search for this species around camp, and also on our boat trips out on the river. These will enable us to see a fantastic array of waterbirds, with every bend of the river seeming to offer a new surprise.

We may find a sandbar with nesting African Skimmers, a bank crowded with White-faced Whistling-Ducks or a nesting colony of colorful Southern Carmine Bee-eaters. Hippos and crocodiles plunge into the river at our approach and late in the afternoon we may catch a glimpse of the strange sitatunga, a swamp-dwelling antelope.

NIGHTS: Nxamaseri Lodge, Botswana

August 22, Day 12: Nxamaseri to Okavango Delta. After a final morning at Nxamaseri, we'll fly right into the heart of the Okavango Delta. From the air we will see the immense size of this wilderness, one of the largest bodies of pure water in the world. We land at Xakanaxa Camp, situated amidst a variety of habitats from inundated grassland to park-like groves of big acacias, apple-leaf, and mopane trees. A small river flowing near the camp attracts both mammals and birds, including the rare Slaty Egret and the Saddle-billed Stork, Spur-winged Goose, Long-toed Plover, and the endangered Wattled Crane.

NIGHT: Xakanaxa Camp, Botswana

August 23, Day 13: Xakanaxa Camp. We have a full day to explore the environs of Xakanaxa. This region is the stronghold of the red lechwe. The numbers of game animals in this area vary a great deal, but usually present are such water-loving antelope as the waterbuck and reedbuck. We will explore the mosaic of woodland, grassland and floodplain habitats in this area from open game-drive vehicles, enjoying the great variety of herons, egrets, waterfowl, kingfishers, swallows and other avian inhabitants found here. Elephant sightings are typically excellent and cats are also well represented. Sightings of lion, leopard and even cheetah are possible.

NIGHT: Xakanaxa Camp, Botswana

August 24, Day 14: Xakanaxa to Livingstone. This morning, after clearing customs at Kasane, we fly to Zambia and travel to Livingstone. After settling in to our hotel, we will visit the world famous Victoria Falls. These falls have rightly been considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and we will spend some time appreciating the immense spectacle of the Zambezi River plunging 300 feet into the gorge below. The continual spray from the falls has created a verdant rainforest and we will undoubtedly find some interesting birds here. These may include Trumpeter and Crowned hornbills; Schalow's Turaco; Bearded Scrub-Robin; African Paradise-Flycatcher; Yellow-breasted Apalis; various sunbirds including Amethyst, Collared and Purple-banded; Black-backed Puffback; Tropical Boubou and Red-winged Starling. Livingstone is also one of the meccas for purchasing traditional African art and crafts, and we will have time to browse through the markets, which offer a wide range of carvings (in both wood and stone), kitchen utensils and basket-ware.

NIGHT: Royal Livingstone, Livingstone

August 25, Day 15: Livingstone Area. We will have all day to explore this fascinating area and our activities may include a boat ride above the Falls, where we have the opportunity to visit some of the islands nestled in the Zambezi River. Here we may find Malachite, Pied, Giant and, if we are lucky, the scarce Half-collared kingfishers; White-headed (crowned) Lapwing and the gorgeous Rock Pratincole; and if we are very fortunate, Pel's Fishing-Owl or an African Finfoot.

In the afternoon we may visit the Mosi oya Tunya National Park located on the banks of the Zambezi River above the falls. The area is generally good for many of the small seedeaters, as well as raptors and many bush birds. On past tours it has given us stunning views of the usually secretive Collared Palm-Thrush. It also gives us a good chance of sighting white rhino on the tour. Depending on conditions, we may visit the Livingstone Sewage Works, an excellent birding destination with Greater Painted-Snipe, Lesser Moorhen and Lesser Jacana usually in residence. The reedbeds usually support populations of skulking Red-faced Cisticola, African Bush-Warbler and Lesser Swamp-Warbler.

NIGHT: Royal Livingstone, Livingstone

August 26-27, Days 16-17: Livingstone to Johannesburg; Departure for Home. On our last morning, we will again visit the falls to enjoy the spectacular rainbows created by the spray flung up by the torrents, and to look for any of the local specials that we might have missed. After a leisurely breakfast and check-out, we will enjoy the birding from the sundowner deck on the river in front of the hotel until our transfer to the airport before the 1:15 p.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 49 to Johannesburg, which is scheduled to arrive at 3:00 p.m. (subject to change). This schedule allows participants to connect to various overnight flights, which will arrive at their destination on the morning of August 27 in time for homeward connections.

TOUR LEADER: Geoff Lockwood along with local guides familiar with the wildlife and birds of their area

Geoff Lockwood's interest and involvement with birds dates back to his early years at school and forms part of a wider interest in the biodiversity of the Southern African sub-region. After leaving school, he began a career as a bird artist, illustrator, and author. In 1981, he published *Garden Birds of Southern Africa* and later also contributed half the illustrations to the 5th and 6th editions of *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa*. Geoff is currently based at the Delta Environmental Centre in Johannesburg where he acts as part-time manager and education officer, working to instill an environmental ethos in teachers and school groups that visit the Centre. For the past 30 years he has been involved with local birding organizations and has served on the Council of the Southern African Ornithological Society—now BirdLife South Africa, for most of that time. He travels widely in the region, presenting lectures, talks, and courses on bird identification, ecology, and behavior, and is also involved in the training of local bird guides as part of a BLSA initiative to give communities a vested interest in the conservation of their local birds. With 870 species listed within southern Africa, Geoff is amongst the region's top birders. He has led tours to many destinations in Southern and Central Africa, as well as Kenya and Israel.

TOUR SIZE: Each section will be limited to 7 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Namibia, Botswana & Zambia (main tour) is **\$12,895** per person in double occupancy from Windhoek, Namibia (tour ends in Livingstone, Zambia). The fee includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16; all lodging as stated in the itinerary; internal charter flights; ground transportation; tipping; park entrance fees; and services of the tour leader. The tour fee does NOT include roundtrip airfare between your home and Windhoek and return from Livingstone; entrance and departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Namibia, Botswana and Zambia (main tour) is **\$2150**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip is **\$2595** per person in double occupancy from Walvis Bay, Namibia. The fee includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 5; all lodging as stated in the itinerary; ground transportation; tipping; park entrance fees; and services of the tour leader. The tour fee does NOT include roundtrip airfare between your home and Walvis Bay; entrance and departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip is **\$165**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

TOUR REGISTRATION FOR NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA (MAIN TOUR): To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made

with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

A second deposit of **\$2,000** per person will be due 180 days prior to departure and apply towards the balance of the main tour. Full payment of the tour fees for both tours is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA (MAIN TOUR): Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 180 days or more before the departure date, any monies paid less **\$500** is refundable. If cancellation is made between 180 and 120 days before the departure date, the total deposit to date less **\$1000** is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before the departure date, no refund is available. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.*

If you cancel:

180 days or more before departure
Between 180 and 120 days before departure
Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Any monies paid less the \$500 deposit
Total deposit to date less \$1000
No refund available.

TOUR REGISTRATION FOR NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP: To register for this pre-trip, please contact the VENT office. The deposit is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP: Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

If you cancel:

120 days or more before departure date
Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$250*
No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE: A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make whatever air reservations you desire including stopovers in Europe, business or first class reservations, etc. from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE LIMITS: All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage to **twenty-five pounds** total per person (including carry-on items), packed in soft crushable bags so that it will fit into the charter aircraft we will be using. Weight allowances are set for safety in taking off from short bush airstrips. Please do not exceed these!

CLIMATE: August marks the end of winter in Africa, and although the days are usually dry and sunny, there is a chance of very cold and windy conditions. Expect mostly sunny and mild weather with the extremes ranging from day-time highs of ninety degrees to early-morning lows of twenty-eight degrees. Frost is still a possibility on parts of this tour! Early mornings on the coastal pre-tour are often marked by cold, clammy fog but this usually burns off by mid-morning.

CLOTHING: Lightweight field clothing will be sufficient in most cases. For part of the tour, we will be using an open-sided game viewing vehicle. Participants should bring warm clothing—hats, gloves and, in particular, a windbreaker for the possibly cold mornings (see CLIMATE above). Layers that can be put on (or shed) as needed are recommended. Sneakers and/or walking shoes will suffice, as there is very little walking on this tour; hiking boots are not needed. No rain gear should be necessary (although damp, foggy mornings are possible on the coastal pre-tour). Dress is informal at all camps and lodges. Laundry service is available at Huab, Namutoni (by arrangement), Nxamaseri, Xakanaxa and in Livingstone.

CURRENCY: South African Rand (R) in Namibia, Pula in Botswana, and Kwacha in Zambia. USD traveler’s checks and cash are best converted to Rands in Johannesburg (for Namibia), but can be used in Swakopmund and Livingstone. USD cash can also be used in Botswana lodges, but rates are generally unfavorable. Visa and Master Card are widely accepted while American Express has limited use.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure with a sufficient number of blank pages is required for United States citizens for all four countries visited on this tour. A visa is NOT required for U.S. citizens traveling to South Africa or Botswana. A visa IS required for travel to Namibia and is only obtainable upon arrival in Namibia.

A visa IS required for United States citizens traveling to Zambia. As of this writing, these can be acquired upon arrival for a fee of \$50 (subject to change) which must be paid for in cash – preferably US\$ (no Travelers Cheques or credit cards accepted and no facilities for conversion at the airport!). For further information, you may contact

the Zambian Embassy or Pinnacle Travel Document Systems (www.traveldocs.com on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement.

Non-U.S. citizens should contact their nearest consulates or embassies for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra digital storage media or film, etc.). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items to bring should include a pocket flashlight or headlamp, hat, sunscreen, moisturizing lotion and chapstick, a small quantity of insect repellent, a washcloth and soap, all of your film and camera needs including batteries, personal medications, an alarm clock, and a canteen or water bottle. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

HEALTH: Medical facilities are good in the urban areas and adequate in rural. Sanitary conditions are generally good at all stops on this tour and foodstuffs including salads, fruits, etc. are safe to eat. Tap water is safe in urban areas, but if in doubt, stick with pre-packaged or boiled drinks. Overall standards of hygiene in the safari camps and hotels are good. Although no vaccinations are required, it is recommended that your yellow fever, hepatitis, and tetanus protection be current. Malaria is present, including the chloroquine-resistant strain.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B. Currently (2011), South Africa requires a yellow fever inoculation certificate for visitors returning from Zambia and it is advisable to ensure you have a valid certificate for this tour.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

MISC: Taxes: Namibia - none; Zambia - \$20 – (currently included in the cost of the air ticket).
All taxes and conditions subject to change without notice.
Electricity: 220/240 volts. Note that South Africa, Namibia and Botswana use a plug socket with three **round** pins and that the adaptors sold in the USA for Africa do not work in these countries.
Language: English and other local dialects
Time: 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

Birds:

Allan, David. *A Photographic Guide to Birds of Prey of Southern, Central and East Africa*. London: New Holland Publishers, 1996.

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Kemp, Allan and Meg. *Sasol Birds of Prey of Africa and its Islands*. London: New Holland Publishers, 1998.

Maclean, Gordon Lindsay, John Voelcker Bird Book Fund. *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa*. 6th ed. Cape Town, 1993. This is more of a Handbook, with extended information on behavior, breeding, diet etc.

Newman, Kenneth. *Newman's Birds of Southern Africa*. Cape Town: New Holland/ Struik Publishers, 2002.

Sinclair, Ian, Phil Hockey and Warwick Tarboton. *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa*. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Struik Publishers, 2002.

Mammals:

Apps, P. *Smithers' Mammals of Southern Africa – a field guide*. Struik Publishers

Estes, Richard Despard. *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals*. University of California Press.

Kingdon, Jonathan. *The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals*. Academic Press/ Russel Friedman Books.

Stuart, C. and T. *Field Guide to the Mammals of Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

General Social, Historical and Geographical Background:

Bannister, Anthony and Peter Johnson. *Africa's Harsh Paradise: Namibia*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

Bannister, Anthony and Peter Johnson. *Okavango: Sea of Land, Land of Water*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

Marshall, Elizabeth. *The Harmless People*. (Revised edition). Vintage Books: October, 1989.

Michener, James. *The Covenant*. (Reissue) Fawcett Books: 1987.

Owens, Mark and Delia. *Cry of the Kalahari*. Mariner Books.

Ross, Karen. *Jewel of the Kalahari – Okavango*. Southern Book Publishers/BBC Books.

TIPPING: As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

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exchange rates in effect on November 28, 2011 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.