

NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

AUGUST 9 – 25, 2008

NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP

AUGUST 6 – 10, 2008

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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

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August 6-7, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg. All participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 6, which arrive in Johannesburg on August 7 in time to connect to the 11:30 a.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 1701 to Walvis Bay (subject to change). Upon arrival, we'll be met by our local agent and transferred to our hotel in Swakopmund. The remainder of the afternoon will be spent birding the local saltworks and inland desert areas.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Johannesburg or Walvis Bay on August 6 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT (August 7): Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 8-9, Days 3-4: Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. We have two full days to bird the local area including Walvis Bay, Sandwich Lagoon and the dune fields of the Kuiseb Delta. 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 Whit, and possibly also Pink-backed 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 endemic Dune Lark as well as 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. The bush along the Kuiseb Delta is home to species such as Dusky Sunbird, Cape Sparrow and White-backed Mousebird as well as Spotted Eagle-Owls.

NIGHTS: Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 10, 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 (see TRANSPORTATION FROM WALVIS BAY AND WINDHOEK TO HUAB section below).

NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

AUGUST 9 – 25, 2008

August 9-10, 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 9 and arrive in Johannesburg on August 10 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 transported to Huab Conservation Area (see TRANSPORTATION FROM WALVIS BAY AND WINDHOEK TO HUAB section below). 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 9 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT (August 10): Huab Lodge

August 11-12, 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. 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 and a pair of Green-backed Pytilia 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, palm-swifts, Red-faced Mousebirds, and Red-crested Korhaans. On the way back to camp, as it gets dark, a Giant 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 13, 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 14, 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 Black 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 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 15, Day 7: To Namutoni. Before leaving Halali we'll take a short walk to the top of a nearby rocky hill, one of the few vantage points in this flat terrain. Strange moringa trees grow around the top, and here we may find the very local Bare-cheeked Babbler and Violet Woodhoopoe, plus White 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 16, 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 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 17, Day 9: To Shakawe. After breakfast, we depart by chartered aircraft for Shakawe Fishing Camp, on the banks of the Okavango River in far northwestern Botswana. We will land at a bush strip near Bagani in Namibia's Caprivi Strip and will complete our trip to Shakawe by road—driving through the majestic Baobab woodland and floodplain of the Mahango 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 Shakawe Lodge. Fed by rains in the Angola highlands, the Okavango River drains into a vast shallow basin in the Kalahari, never reaching the sea but instead backwaters. 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 Egret, African Pygmy-goose, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Bradfield's Hornbill, Swamp Boubou, and many smaller birds.

NIGHT: Shakawe Fishing Camp, Botswana

August 18-19, Days 10-11: Shakawe. We have two full days to enjoy the birder's paradise of Shakawe. The camp resounds with bird song from the first cry of the fish-eagle before dawn to the last hoot of the wood-owl well after dark. High banks along the river attract many hole-nesters, including a large colony of White-fronted Bee-eaters; plus Giant, Pied, and Malachite kingfishers; Little Bee-eater; and African Sand Martins. The fruiting trees of the riverine forest bring in flocks of glossy-starlings, Gray Loeries, and Meyer's Parrots. The calls of three species of barbet are heard (including the colorful Black-collared), passerines roam the trees in mixed-flocks, and on past tours we have seen the very local Brown Firefinch right by the dining room. For years a Wire-tailed Swallow has nested just over the doorway into the bar, with a Lesser Striped-Swallow nesting in the rear of the same building.

Shakawe is also notable for its night birds. African Wood-Owl, Barred Owlet, and Fiery-necked Nightjar are found right in camp, but the most sought after owl here is the huge Pel's Fishing-Owl, a magnificent bird that feeds on fish caught by night. On past tours, we had excellent looks at this rare bird on an evening boat trip. Boat trips up

and down the river will enable us to see a fantastic array of waterbirds. Every bend of the river seems to have 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 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: Shakawe Fishing Camp, Botswana

August 20, Day 12: Shakawe to Okavango Delta. After a final morning at Shakawe 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. 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 21, Day 13: Xakanaxa Camp. We have a full day to explore the environs of Xakanaxa. This region is the last stronghold of the Red Lechwe. The number of game animals in this area varies a great deal, but 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 in this beautiful area.

NIGHT: Xakanaxa Camp, Botswana

August 22, 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 300ft. into the gorge below. The continual spray from the falls has created a verdant rainforest and we will undoubtedly find some interesting birds here which may include Trumpeter and Crowned hornbills; Schalow's Turaco; the stunning African Emerald-Cuckoo; 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 23, 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 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 the only chance of sighting White Rhino on the tour. Both Northern and Southern Gray-headed sparrows, a recent taxonomic split, can be found together in the town of Livingstone.

NIGHT: Royal Livingstone, Livingstone

August 24-25, Days 16-17: Livingstone to Johannesburg; Departure for Home. The Livingstone Sewage Works is also an excellent birding destination and Greater Painted-Snipe, Lesser Moorhen and Lesser Jacana are usually in residence and the reedbeds support populations of skulking Red-faced Cisticola, African Bush-Warbler and Lesser Swamp-Warbler. Depending on local conditions, we may pay a brief visit on the way to the airport for our flight to South Africa. After a final morning in Livingstone, we'll transfer to the airport in time for the 1:00 p.m. departure of British Airways Flight 6292 to Johannesburg, which is scheduled to arrive at 2:40 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 25 in time for homeward connections.

TOUR LEADER: Geoff Lockwood along with local leaders who are 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 and Zambia (main tour) is **\$12,495** 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 **\$1560**. 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. This does not cover nor guarantee single accommodations at Shakawe Fishing Camp. However, your preference will be noted and accommodated if possible at no additional cost.

The fee for the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip is **\$2195** 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 **\$245**. 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.

TRANSPORTATION FROM WALVIS BAY AND WINDHOEK TO HUAB: On August 10, these transfers will likely be via charter aircraft. However, due to the high cost of this service and based on the amount

of main tour participants choosing to join the Walvis Bay Pre-Trip, VENT reserves the right to surcharge and/or make alternative transportation arrangements from either departure point.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for each tour part 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 **\$2000** 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: 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.

TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE: Application forms 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 to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. 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. Contact the VENT office prior to registration for details.**

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 bags so that it will fit into the charter aircraft we will be using.

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 thirty five degrees. Frost is still a possibility on parts of this tour!

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. Dress is informal at all camps and lodges. Laundry service is available at Huab, Namutoni, Shakawe, 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 unfavourable. American Express, Diners Club, and Visa are widely accepted while Master Card 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 (see below).

IMPORTANT: Our Zambia-based tour operator provides an arrival list of all those booked into the Royal Livingstone to immigration authorities at the Livingstone airport who then waive any visa requirements. All tour participants who are U.S. citizens and provide VENT with current passport information will NOT have to obtain a Zambian Visa prior to the tour.

Non-U.S. citizens should contact the nearest consulates or embassies of the countries visited during the tour 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 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.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC 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 Departure tax (included in the price of your 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 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.

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:

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.

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