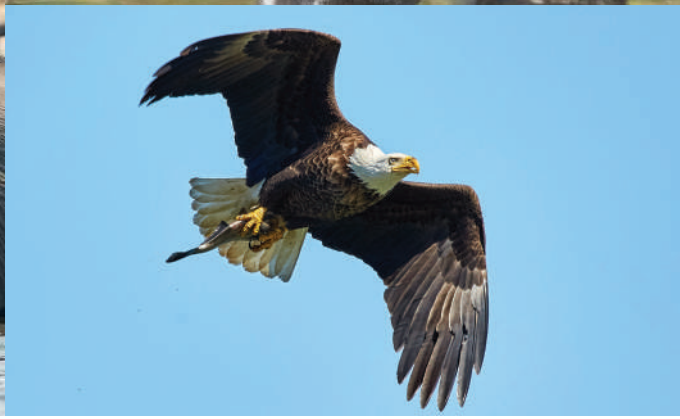

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ANIMAL BOOKLET

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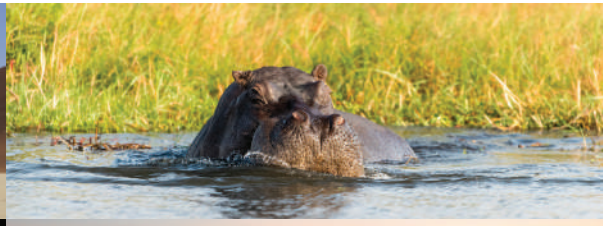
LEISURE

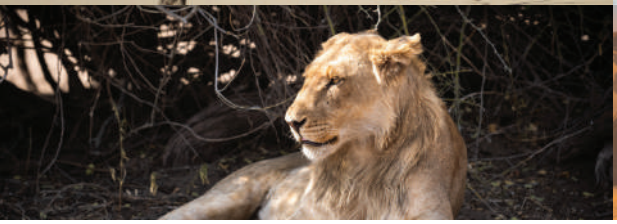
CHOBE WATER VILLAS ZAMBEZI

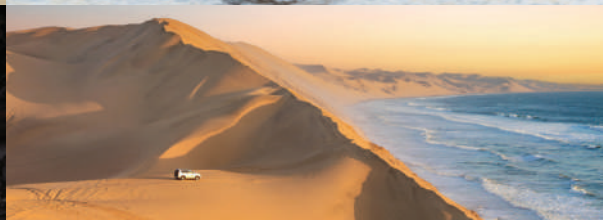
NAMIBIA

THROUGH OUR EYES

At OL Leisure, we believe in creating experiences that reflect the heart and soul of Namibia—its vast landscapes, wildlife and the warmth of its people. "Namibia Through Our Eyes" is our promise to showcase this country in a way that is authentic, caring and passionate, ensuring that every luxurious moment resonates with the true spirit of Namibia.







THE FORMIDABLE ANIMALS OF CHOBE WATER VILLAS ZAMBEZI

Captivating wildlife. Chobe Water Villas is situated in the heart of one of Africa's most diverse wildlife regions. These remarkable animals not only vary in size, habitat and behaviour but each one also offers its own unique wonder. From magnificent elephants and majestic lions to the vibrant carmine bee-eater and secretive pangolin, this book invites you to explore the incredible diversity of wildlife that calls this extraordinary landscape home.

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MAMMALS

Mammals are among the most adaptable animals on the planet. They include humans and all other animals that are warm-blooded, have backbones (vertebrates) and hair. Mammals feed their young with milk and have a better developed brain than other types of animals. Mammals are incredibly diverse and share four traits. They all have hair, mammary glands, a hinged jaw and three tiny middle ear bones. Most have specialised teeth and movable external ears.

Blue Wildebeest

The blue wildebeest is a large blue-black antelope found on short-grass plains and in light woodland. Both sexes have horns and breeding herds are led by the most dominant bull. Other bulls live in bachelor herds or in solitude. They are grazers and are often seen in plains with zebras. The blue wildebeest is mostly active during the morning and the late afternoon, with the hottest hours of the day being spent resting. Wildebeest usually rest close to others of their kind and move about in loose aggregations.

African Buffalo

The african buffalo can reach 700 - 900 kg in weight, up to 340 cm in length and stands 1.3 - 1.5 m tall. African buffalos also exhibit symbiotic associations with birds, such as oxpeckers, which pick off and eat lice, ticks, fleas and other parasites. African buffalos are tough creatures and are thus able to live and flourish in many habitats — from semi-arid bushland to coastal savannahs and lowland rainforests — as long as they are close to a water source.

Tsessebe

They are reputed to be the fastest antelope in Africa and can reportedly reach speeds of up to 80 km/h with their deceptive bouncing run. They are identifiable by their sloping backs, dark brown colouring with a distinct iridescent purplish sheen and outward curving, widely set horns.

Impala

The Impala is one of the most common and most graceful of all Africa's antelopes. Herds offer protection from predators, such as lions. An alert impala will emit a sharp alarm call that sends the entire herd into flight and a fleeing impala is no easy prey. Impalas have unique brush-like tufts of black hair that cover a scent gland located just above the heel on each hind leg. The female is similar to the male but does not have horns. The male's graceful lyre-shaped horns are about 40 to 90 cm long.

Steenbok

The Steenbok is a diminutive, highly territorial antelope. They are seen solitarily, in pairs or occasionally a lone female with single offspring. The males have short, straight horns and the females are hornless. It is a selective browser, choosing actively growing nutritious shoots from herbs and low shrubs. The steenbok is widespread throughout the Chobe region as it can live without access to water and does not need to drink. It is preyed on by medium-sized predators, e.g. cheetah, leopard, African wild dog and occasionally taken by a martial eagle or a python.

Puku

This is a medium-sized, golden-coloured antelope which appears more thickset and uniformly coloured than the Impala. They occur only in small numbers in or close to floodplains of the Chobe River. They are also found near the Zambezi, Kafue and South Luangwa Rivers. Only males have horns. They move in all-male groups or groups made up of one male with a few females.

Red Lechwe

In southern africa, the Red Lechwe is found only in the Okavango swamps in Botswana and the Linyanti Swamps of the panhandle of the Zambezi region, Namibia. This animal is adapted to a habitat of marshlands, swamps and shallowly inundated floodplains of up to 50 cm deep. The lechwe is one of only three antelopes known to form breeding arenas with a high population density. Lechwes enter water to feed on aquatic grasses, an abundant resource underutilised by most other herbivores. They also graze the grasses that spring up as floodwaters recede.

Waterbuck

Waterbucks are never far from permanent water sources. They are easily identified by a conspicuous white ring which encircles the dark rump. They also have white patches above the eyes, around the nose and mouth and on the throat. Only the males have horns. These large antelopes drink water daily and also prefer the nutritious grasses that grow along river edges and on floodplains. They are more water-dependent than domestic cattle and must remain close to a water source. Fortunately, this habitat furnishes these antelopes with a year-round source of food.

Reedbuck

The reedbuck is usually seen in long grass near water. Old males are permanently territorial and generally live with a single female, preventing contact with rival males. Their alarm call is a distinctive short sharp whistle, which they emit when disturbed. The reedbuck is distinguished by a round glandular spot below each ear and curved horns (on males only) that point forward. They emerge to graze in the open, mainly at night, although in a protected environment they become more active during the day. Their build, with well-developed hindquarters, is adapted for quick starts and high bounds but not for sustained rapid flight.

Bushbuck

Only male bushbucks have horns. They are usually 25 - 50 cm long with a single twist at the bottom. The bushbuck is the only solitary, non-territorial antelope in Africa. Bushbucks always follow the same paths through the bush and under-growth. The bushbuck inhabits areas of dense vegetation near bodies of water and feeds mainly on the leaves of shrubs and small trees.

Greater Kudu

Kudus are noted for their jumping abilities and can clear fences up to 3 m comfortably. Kudus are easily recognised by their long, spiral horns. The horns (in males only) can reach 183 cm in length, making two twists. The kudu is among the loudest antelopes, producing a gruff, barking call used for communication.

Sitatunga

Sitatunga are related to the bushbuck and kudu, with whom they share spiral twisted horns and body stripes, but they have a hunched appearance, a dark shaggy coat and a narrow face. They live almost permanently in water and have evolved splayed hooves to allow them to move easily in mud. Sitatungas are non-territorial with overlapping home ranges, yet they are largely solitary. Two or three females with calves, often accompanied by a male, are the largest herds likely to be seen.

Sable Antelope

The sable antelope is a rotund, barrel-chested antelope with a short neck and a long face. Among its distinctive features are its long horns, which can grow up to 100 - 165 cm in length. The ringed horns rise vertically, then sweep backwards in a pronounced curve. The young males are most vulnerable to predators during their transition to a bachelor male herd.

Roan Antelope

A roan's vocalisation is an unusual whistle. Roan antelope are brave animals. If threatened by a predator, including lions, they will confront it using their scimitar-shaped horns. When the herd gets too large, it divides into smaller groups of cows and their young. These groups will form new herds, each led by a single adult bull.

Plains Zebra

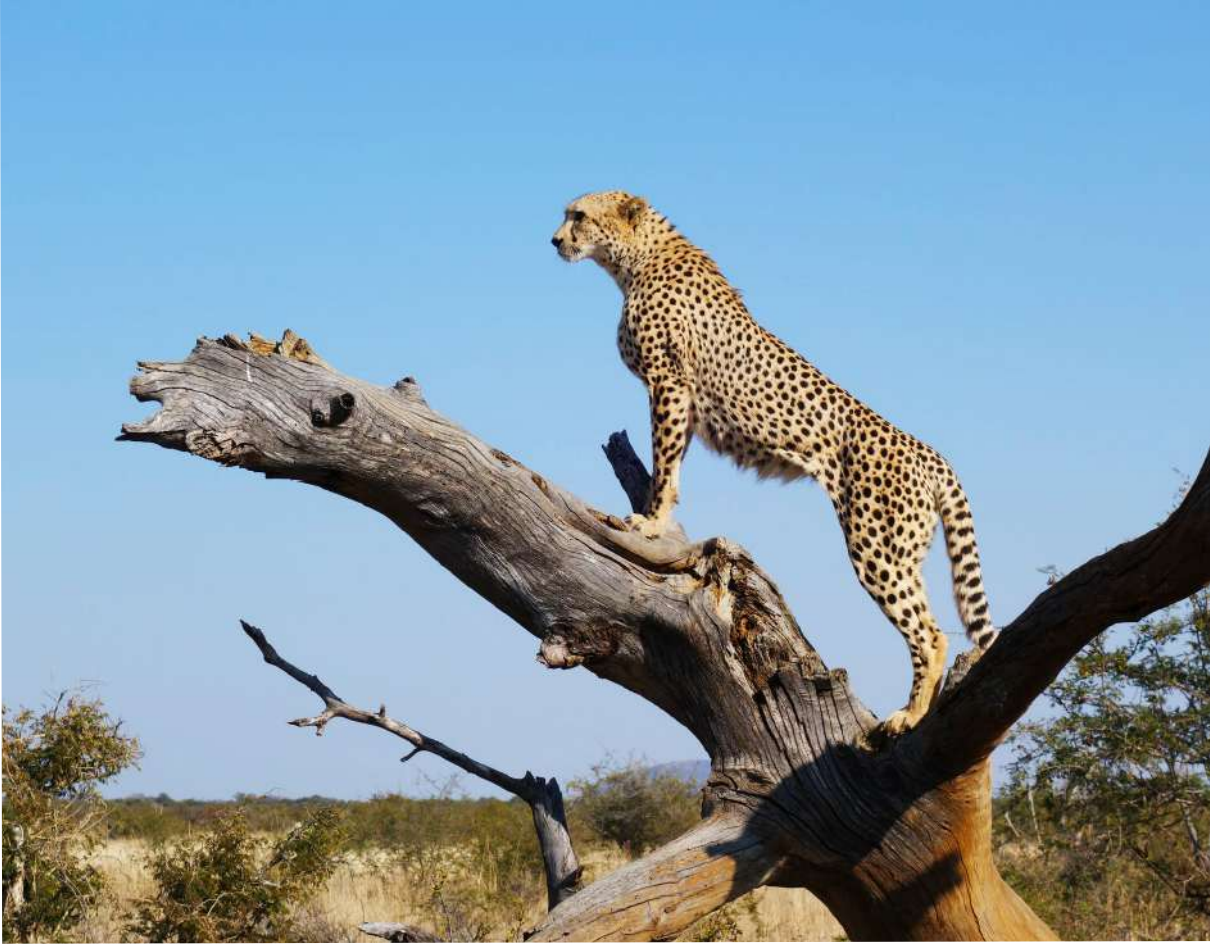
Zebras are very fast-moving animals and can reach speeds of up to 65 km/h when galloping across the plains. This is just fast enough to outpace predators such as lions. Foals can run with the herd within a few hours of birth. Zebras have very good hearing and eyesight, which helps them stay clear of predators such as lions, hyenas and cheetahs. If one zebra spots a predator, it lets out a sharp two-syllable call. The young and female zebras run, while the males trail behind to defend them. If an individual is attacked, others circle around to help protect it from predators.

Giraffe

They can run as fast as 56 km/h over short distances or cruise at 16 km/h over longer distances. Giraffes only need to drink water once every few days. They spend most of their lives standing upright. Even during sleep and birth, they remain on their feet. They even sleep and give birth while standing. The giraffe's height standing upright. Even during sleep and birth, they remain on their feet. for predators across the wide expanse of the African savannah. Giraffes eat most of the time and, like cows, regurgitate food and chew it as cud.

Lion

African lions are the most social of all big cats and live together in groups called prides. A pride consists of about 15 lions. Male lions defend the pride's territory while females do most of the hunting. Despite this, the males will always eat first. An adult lion's coat is yellow-gold and juveniles have some light spots that disappear with age. As the males grow older, they typically boast manes that surround their head.



Cheetah

The cheetah is a large spotted cat found on plains and in open woodland. It is also the fastest land mammal, credited with short-distance speeds of around 110 km/h. They are generally not able to sprint for more than 300 m. They have small heads and black “tear mark” lines on the muzzle.
They are also equipped with a long, white-tipped tail for balance and non-retractable claws for greater grip during sprints.

Leopard

Leopards are highly solitary and spend most of their time alone. They maintain defined territories and leave scratches on trees, urine scent marks and droppings to warn other leopards to stay away. Males and females will cross one another's territories, but only to mate. The animal takes to water readily and is a good swimmer. Their vocalizations vary, including a series of harsh coughs, throaty growls and deep purring sounds.

Black-Backed Jackal

Fossil deposits have revealed that the black-backed jackal is one of the oldest known dog species. black-backed jackals are highly vocal. Best known for their high-pitched calls - often heard in the early evening, when one individual answers another until an unearthly chorus builds up.

Aardwolf

It is the smallest member of the hyena family. They have strong jaws and canine teeth, but their cheek teeth are reduced to flattened pegs used for eating insects. Aardwolf primarily use their canines for fighting and defence. The shy, mainly nocturnal Aardwolf lives on the arid plains of Africa. It has sturdy shoulders, longer front than hind legs and long guard hairs instead of erectile hairs along the length of the back.

Spotted Hyena

Spotted hyenas are the largest of all living hyenas that live today. Their body build is vaguely bear-like. Though Spotted hyenas are capable of digesting bones and skins, they fail to completely digest hooves, horns and hair of their prey. Spotted hyenas are famed scavengers and often dine on the leftovers of other predators but these hardy beasts are also skilled hunters that will take down wildebeest or antelope. They also kill and eat birds, lizards, snakes and insects.

African Painted Wolf (Wild Dog)

Wild dogs can reach speeds of over 70 km/h. Even though they are much smaller than lions and leopards, wild dogs have a higher success rate when it comes to killing prey. They hunt at dawn and work together as a team to bring down much larger animals, including antelope and wildebeest.

African Wildcat

Although African wildcats are listed as common and widespread in Africa, their genetic integrity is threatened by interbreeding with domestic and feral cats. It is quite rare to come across a purebred African wildcat. The African wildcat is a solitary nocturnal hunter that preys mainly on birds and small mammals. Mating generally occurs early in the year and a litter of two to five kittens is born about 56 days later.

Elephant

This massive creature eats 250 – 300 kg of grass and plant material per day and excretes up to 150 kg of dung every day. During the dry seasons, some rhinoceros have been known to feed on the dung of elephants to increase their nutrient intake. Elephants use their trunks to pick up objects, trumpet warnings, greet other elephants or suck up water for drinking or bathing, among other purposes. The African elephant is the largest of all elephant species and weighs up to eight tonnes.

Hippopotamus

The name Hippopotamus comes from the Ancient Greek "river horse". They are only territorial while in the water. An adult hippopotamus needs to resurface every 3 to 5 minutes to breathe. Despite its stocky shape and short legs, it can easily outrun most humans. hippopotami spend up to 16 hours a day submerged in rivers and lakes to keep their massive bodies cool under the hot African sun. Hippos also bask on the shoreline and secrete an oily red substance, which gave rise to the myth that they sweat blood. The liquid is actually a skin moisturiser and sunblock that may also provide protection against germs.

Warthog

Males have two pairs of warts on their face while females only possess a single, smaller pair. When fleeing possible danger, they hold their tails upright as a sign for others in the sounder (family group) to follow. They feed on grasses and plants and also use their snouts to dig for roots or bulbs. When water is available, warthogs will seek it and often submerge to cool down. They will also wallow in mud for the same purpose — and to gain relief from insects.

Banded Mongoose

Banded mongoose can be seen eating ticks off warthogs. This is known as a "symbiotic relationship." The Banded mongoose is known to stand up to lions when they are confronted and threatened. This sturdy mongoose has a large head, small ears, short, muscular limbs and a long tail, almost as long as the rest of the body. Banded mongooses live in mixed-sex groups of 7–40 individuals with an average of around 20 individuals. Groups sleep together at night in underground dens, often abandoned termite mounds and change dens frequently.

Dwarf Mongoose

These little carnivores have a diet ranging from beetle larvae and termites to scorpions, snakes and rodents. If they spot any predator, they give out alarm calls to let the rest of the family know they must seek cover. They produce distinct alarm calls for different predators.

Ground Squirrel

Strictly diurnal (active during the day), they only emerge once it is warm and after a day of foraging and sunbathing, they disappear into their burrows half an hour before sunset. The ground squirrel will eat almost any vegetation, including dry sticks when conditions become harsh.

Tree Squirrel

Like most other squirrels, except flying squirrels, tree squirrels are diurnal, which means they are only active during the day. They have acute vision and can spot danger from a distance. These are gregarious animals, participating in social grooming and common scent markings to strengthen their social bonds.

Striped Polecat (Zorilla)

The zorilla is carnivorous and feeds on invertebrates, small rodents, birds, reptiles and eggs. Like skunks, the zorilla may emit a strong-smelling liquid from its anal glands when threatened.
On occasion they will play dead to avoid the attention of predators. zorillas are mostly nocturnal, making them even more elusive.

Small Spotted Genet

Genets have retractable claws adapted to climbing and catching prey. Their diet can include small mammals, especially rodents, shrews and bats as well as birds and their eggs, frogs, millipedes, centipedes, scorpions and various fruits. The common genet has a mane that stretches from the shoulders to the tail.

African Civet

The African civet has 40 sharp teeth that are used for catching prey. Its diet includes fruit and various vegetation, insects, eggs, birds, reptiles and small mammals. The African civet is active both on the ground and in the trees. It is also an excellent swimmer.

Clawless Otter

The African clawless otter has long fingers without claws on the front feet and webbed hind feet. Its diet consists of frogs, fish, worms and crabs. The African clawless otter is the second largest freshwater otter species. It is characterised by partly webbed and clawless feet, from which their name is derived. Though mostly solitary animals, African clawless otters will live in neighbouring territories of family groups with up to five individuals. Each individual maintains its own range within that territory, generally keeping to itself unless seeking a mate.

Spotted-Necked Otter

This is the smallest of Africa's otters. It has webbing between all its toes, claws on all digits of its fore and hind feet and a long tail. Spotted-necked otters feed primarily on fish, typically less than 20 cm in length, but also eat frogs and small crustaceans, especially when fish are in short supply. They normally hunt alone, except when mothers are training their young and shelter them through the night in short burrows, rock crevices or patches of dense vegetation. Otters fear losing their family members and thus hold each other's hands while sleeping or relaxing, to avoid drifting away in the water.

Vervet Monkey

Vervet monkeys live in closely knit territorial troops of 15 - 20 animals. The most common vocalisations are alarms or annoyance chutters and squeals - particularly by juveniles at night. These clever monkeys are known to steal food right under the observer's nose.

Chacma Baboon

The chacma baboon is gregarious and lives in troops numbering between 10 - 200. The chacma baboon is perhaps the longest species of monkey, with males measuring 50–115 cm in body length and 45–84 cm in tail length. Within a troop, adult males form a dominance hierarchy that is established and maintained by fighting and aggression. Male ranking is unstable because young males emigrate between troops and high ranking males frequently lose their status to younger immigrants. In contrast, females remain in their natal groups and form strong hierarchies that transcend generations.

Porcupine

Some porcupines have up to 30 000 quills on their body. Porcupines are nocturnal, sleeping during the day and becoming active in the evening. They use their strong feet and curved claws to climb trees. Porcupines have soft hair, but on their back, sides and tail, it is usually mixed with sharp quills. These quills typically lie flat until a porcupine is threatened, then rise up as a persuasive deterrent.

Aardvark

An aardvark can eat up to 60 000 ants and termites in one night, using its 30 cm-long sticky tongue. Their spoon-shaped claws as strong as steel and are used to rip into extremely hard ground and termite mounds. They are nocturnal and travel up to 16 km every night, foraging for food.

Pangolin (Scaly Anteater)

This is the only mammal in the world to be covered from head to toe in keratin scales (the same as human fingernails). The name pangolin is derived from the Malay word "pengguling", which means "rolling up" as a self-defence mechanism. With no teeth and unable to chew, insects are broken up by stones and keratin spines located inside their stomachs.

Peters' Epauletted Fruit Bat

Their diet consists largely of very ripe soft-fleshed, pulpy fruits. There are abundant African myths surrounding bats. Beliefs include the bat as being an evil bringer of disease, a spirit of illness, a spirit of the dead wandering the earth and haunting the living or a kidnapper of unwary travellers. The name "Peters's epauletted fruit bat" is a combination of its specific scientific description and its discoverer. "Epauletted" refers to the distinctive white fur on the shoulders of the males, covering a glandular pouch that expands during displays. The "fruit bat" part indicates its diet. Finally, "Peters' " is in honour of Wilhelm Peters, the German naturalist who described the species in 1852.

REPTILES

Reptiles are air-breathing vertebrates covered in special skin made up of scales, bony plates or a combination of both. These include crocodiles, snakes, lizards, turtles and tortoises. Reptiles regularly shed the outer layer of their skin. Their metabolism depends largely on the temperature of their environment. Unlike birds and mammals, reptiles do not maintain a constant internal body temperature. Without fur or feathers for insulation, they cannot stay warm on a cold day and without sweat glands or the ability to pant, they cannot cool off on a hot day. Instead, they move into the sun or into the shade as needed. During cooler parts of the year they become inactive. Due to their slow metabolism and heat-seeking behaviour, reptiles are cold-blooded.

Southern African Python

The southern African python can reach up to 5 m. These beautiful marked constrictors are protected and are fairly widespread throughout Botswana and Namibia. They have a form of heat-sensitive pits on their upper lip, which they use to detect warm-blooded prey in complete darkness. They are predators of large birds, hares, monkeys and small antelopes and they prefer habitats near water.

Leopard Tortoise

The most common and largest tortoise in Chobe, the leopard tortoise derives its name from the markings on the carapace (shell), which resemble the rosettes of a leopard. It is diurnal and frequently seen, especially during spring when males are actively looking for females to mate with. Tortoises are vegetarian and wander widely. Their home ranges in excess of 80 hectares and large specimens may reach 75 cm in length and weigh up to 40 kg.

Water Monitor

The water monitor is one of the most striking members of the reptile family and is second in size only to the Nile crocodile. Including the tail, large adults can reach lengths of up to 2.5 m. They are very capable swimmers and have long been known to cross sizeable bodies of water. Although usually found close to water, these monitors are not water dependent and will actively forage for food on land, travelling large distances from water if necessary.

Crocodile

The crocodile is one of the oldest species on Earth, predating the dinosaurs. So how did they survive the fate of the dinosaurs? The answer probably lies in their metabolism. It can slow its functions down to such an they can go without food for more than two years and still survive. The size of the prey depends mostly on the size of the crocodile. Young hatchlings generally feed on smaller prey, preferring small fish, frogs, insects and small aquatic invertebrates before taking on larger fish, amphibians and small reptiles.

AMPHIBIANS

Amphibians are small vertebrates that need water or a moist environment to survive. The species in this group include frogs, toads, salamanders and newts. They can breathe and absorb water through their exceptionally thin skin. Amphibians also have special skin glands that produce useful proteins. Some transport water, oxygen and carbon dioxide either into or out of the body. Others fight bacteria or fungal infections. And at least one gland — in each species — is used for defence. Like reptiles, amphibians are cold-blooded. Due to their special skin, they require very specific living conditions. Too much sun can damage their cells and too much wind can dry their skin and dehydrate the animal.

Flap-Necked Chameleon

A legendary lizard uniquely adapted to its arboreal (living in trees) lifestyle. It has opposing toes and a prehensile (able to grasp) tail for gripping branches and it changes colour to match surroundings. It is insectivorous and can move its turret-like eyes independently to locate prey or or align them for binocular vision, an essential adaptation for capturing prey by rapidly flicking out its long, sticky tongue. This is an essential prerequisite for it to capture its prey by rapidly flicking out its long, sticky tongue to catch the food item. Although regarded with fear and superstition by local communities, it is completely harmless.

Angolan Reed Frog

These minute, jewel-like frogs are found in the Linyanti and Chobe River system. They occur in a variety of colour forms and prefer permanent waterbodies. They are seen during the day when basking in the sun. These climbing frogs have adhesive pads at the tip of their fingers and toes and easily cling to vegetation above water. During summer nights the males call competitively and inflate their throat pouches to attract females. The call is a bell-like tinkling. This species is the most common frog in Chobe.

BIRDS

Birds are vertebrate animals adapted for flight. Birds are warm-blooded vertebrates and are the only animals with feathers. Although all birds have wings, a few species cannot fly. Many can also run, jump, swim and dive. They are found worldwide and in all habitats. Everything about the anatomy of a bird reflects its ability to fly.

The wings, for example, are shaped to create lift. The leading edge is thicker than the back edge and they are covered in feathers that narrow to a point. Airplane wings are modelled after birds. They use their beaks to grab and swallow food. Even the way a bird reproduces is related to flight. Instead of carrying the extra weight of developing young inside their bodies, they lay eggs and incubate them in a nest.

Great White Pelican

The great white pelican, one of the world's largest flying birds is found in the shallow swamps of Africa. Each pelican needs about 1.2 kg of fish every day. These magnificent, graceful fliers can fly continuously for a whole day and night, covering distances of up to 483 km without stopping. The great white pelican is highly sociable and often forms large flocks. It is well adapted for aquatic life. Its short, strong legs and webbed feet allow it to propel efficiently through water.

Purple Heron

The purple heron inhabits wetlands such as swamps, reedbeds, rice fields and lake shores. Purple herons often nest alongside other heron species, such as the grey heron, in groups that typically do not exceed 50 pairs. However, a colony of 1 000 pairs has been recorded. Purple herons are colonial breeders and build a bulky nest out of dead reeds or sticks close to the water's edge, usually among reeds or in dense vegetation.

African Scops-Owl

They are also known as whitefaced owls. When these owls are disturbed during the day, they can elongate their bodies and lean sideways, which will help them resemble the branches on which they roost. It is a bird of scrub and bush territory and often uses ground nest sites for breeding. When roosting in daylight, this species closes its eyes and extends its ear tufts to give the impression of a tree branch, allowing it to blend in and avoid detection. Pairs sometimes roost together.

Pearl-Spotted Owlet

These are "earless" owls. They have been recorded to hunt laughing doves, weighing up to 200 g - an achievement considering the owl only weighs around 85 g. The pearl-spotted owlet is a common and easily seen bird in open woodland and savannah. It nests in tree cavities, often using disused barbet nests, laying 2 - 4 eggs. This species often hunts by day and can be readily located by the small birds that mob it while it perches in a tree.

Bronze Mannikin

The bronze mannikin is a small estrildid finch that breeds in much of Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. The bronze mannikin is one of the smallest munia species. It feeds on a variety of seeds. Insects may be taken during the breeding season, when their requirement for protein is higher.

Cattle Egret

True to their name, cattle egrets often associate with cows and other large farm animals, waiting to catch insects or frogs disturbed by the animals' movements. Cattle egrets follow large animals or machines and eat invertebrates stirred up from the ground. They are also attracted to smoke from long distances, taking advantage of insects fleeing a fire.

Reed Cormorant

The reed cormorant / long-tailed cormorant, also known as the long-tailed cormorant, is a member of the cormorant family, Phalacrocoracidae. It feeds on aquatic preys, caught by pursuing them underwater. It is monogamous and usually a colonial breeder, often nesting with other water birds. The reed cormorant can dive to considerable depths but typically feeds in shallow water, frequently bringing prey to the surface. Their diet consists of a wide variety of fish. It breeds on freshwater wetlands or quiet coasts.

Spur-Winged Goose

The spur-winged goose is a common resident that forms large flocks in non-breeding seasons. They live in large inland waters, dams, floodplains and adjacent cultivated lands. They feed on plant material, especially grass shoots, aquatic plants and seeds. They are monogamous and their nests are in dense cover near water.

Egyptian Goose

Egyptian geese are common and abundant residents with widespread movements. They have become a menace to crop farmers. They can be found anywhere - inland water, estuaries and cultivated fields. Their diet consists mainly of vegetables, especially grass shoots, rhizomes and tubers. They are monogamous and their nests are on the ground or in old stick nests of other species such as Hamerkop and Pied Crow.

African Darter

These coastal birds have colonised to inland waters. The original ancestor of cormorants seems to have been a fresh-water bird, judging from the habitats of the most ancient lineage. They can be found around the world, except for the central Pacific islands. All are fish-eaters, dining on small eels, fish and even water snakes.

The African Marsh Harrier

The adult African marsh harrier measures 45–50 cm in length and is mostly brown with pale streaking on the head, breast and forewing and reddish-brown on the thighs and belly. Males and females are similar, unlike most harriers. They are usually silent but have a high-pitched, two-note display call. The African marsh harrier has a varied diet which includes small mammals and adult birds, fledglings, lizards, frogs and large insects.

African Skimmer

African skimmers fly in lines over calm waters and dip their lower mandibles in the water to feed. When the mandible touches a fish, the skimmer snaps its beak shut. They feed mostly at dawn and dusk and have excellent night vision. The colonies typically consist of less than 50 pairs and each pair lays 2 - 3 eggs in a scrape in the sand.

White-Backed Vulture

The white-backed vulture is the most common vulture in the Chobe National Park. It is regarded as vulnerable due to declining populations. The white-backed vulture is a Chobe resident, but with long distant movements. They are normally found in the savannah woodland and bushveld. They are primarily scavengers of carcasses. This bird usually makes silent squeals, hisses and grunts around the carcasses. They are monogamous and create stick platform nests most often placed on crowns of a thorn tree.

Hooted Vulture

An uncommon resident, the hooted vulture is regarded as vulnerable in southern Africa. They are normally solitary birds. The hooted vulture favours woodland, but is now confined mainly to game reserves. This bird of prey is primarily a scavenger of carcasses. They are usually silent and monogamous. Their nests are stick platforms placed under the canopy of well-foliaged trees.

Bateleur

The bateleur is mostly found in protected areas and is listed as vulnerable in southern Africa. They are Chobe residents and are largely sedentary. They can be found in open and closed woodlands and in semi-arid regions. They feed on small mammals, birds and reptiles. Bateleurs are generally silent and monogamous. Their nests are stick platforms placed below a canopy in large trees.

Hamerkop

The hamerkop is a peculiar bird in a family of its own. Usually seen standing in shallow water, occasionally foot-stirring to frighten fish and frogs into revealing themselves. It has a strange "false mounting" behaviour where one individual stands on the back of another, emitting a shirking call. Its enormous, oven-like nests can be seen in large trees along the Linyanti and Chobe Rivers - these nests are sought after by barn owls, verraux's eagle owls and Egyptian geese for nesting.

Tawny Eagle

These eagles are fairly common in protected areas and are regarded as vulnerable residents. are usually seen alone or in pairs. They favour savannah woodland and prey on mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, fish and insects. Tawny eagles are also scavengers of carcasses and are known to engage in kleptoparasitism, stealing food from other eagles, storks and hornbills. They are monogamous and often place their nest on top of the canopy of a tree.

Fish Eagle

African fish eagles are kleptoparasites that frequently steal prey from other species. Incidentally, fish are not the only item on the fish eagle's menu. Other prey includes ducks, terrapins, crocodiles and small waterfowls. It catches fish with a graceful, shallow plunge to the water's surface, but it will also eat birds, reptiles and carrion. It tosses its head backwards while making a loud penetrating call known as one of the most distinctive bird sounds of Africa.

Little Bee-Eater

The little bee-eater is a local common resident and is nomadic during the non-breeding season. They are not highly sociable and are usually found in pairs or small family groups. The pairs remain together all year round. The little bee-eater mostly catch flying insects taken on the wing, especially bees and wasps. They can be seen mainly near water and woodlands.

Blue-Cheeked Bee-Eater

The blue-cheeked bee-eater feeds primarily on bees, as its name indicates, though it also hunts other flying insects. It is named for the distinctive blue stripes above and below its eyes, though these markings can fade to appear more white than blue when the plumage becomes worn.

A common Palaearctic non-breeding migrant, the blue-cheeked bee-eater typically arrives in mid-October with peak numbers occurring in early November. These birds generally depart by late March, though some individuals may linger until April or occasionally May.

This bird is highly gregarious and lives in flocks of about 20 or more. It lives communally shoulder to shoulder, mostly in thorny or leafy trees. The blue-cheeked bee-eater prefers moist woodlands and avoids very arid areas. They favour margins of lake shores and estuaries.

European Bee-Eater

This bird is common and widespread. It ranks among the most abundant non-breeding Palaearctic migrants visiting the region. The European bee-eater arrives mainly in October and departs in March or early April. They are highly gregarious and often live in flocks of 20 - 100. Their habitat consists of a wide range of woodlands and shrublands. They catch predominantly bees, wasps, flying ants and termites.

White-Fronted Bee-Eater

The white-fronted bee-eater is a common local resident that moves around locally during the non-breeding season. It is gregarious, forming small groups that may aggregate into larger flocks. They are usually associated with river banks along watercourses in dry woodlands. Their food is exclusively flying insects that include beetles, flies, dragonflies, moths and butterflies, but especially honeybees.

Böhm's Bee-Eater

The Böhms are a rare vagrant south of the Zambezi River (Chobe River). They are normally found in pairs or small flocks. Their habitat is open woodland especially margins of riparian forest. Their food is predominantly bees but also many other flying insects including flies, beetles and butterflies.

Böhm's bee-eater, scientifically known as Merops boehmi, is named in honour of the German zoologist Richard Böhm.

Carmine Bee-Eater

These brightly distinct birds' diet consists primarily of bees and other flying insects and their major hunting strategy involves hawking flying insects from their perch. Perches may include branches of vegetation or even the backs of large animals. They roost communally in trees or reedbeds and disperse widely during the day. They nest at the end of 1–2 m long burrows in earthen banks, where they lay between 2 - 5 eggs.

Saddle-Billed Stork

The saddle-billed stork is an uncommon resident and is listed as endangered in southern Africa. They are sedentary but nomadic during droughts. They can be seen alone or in pairs along the large river systems, lake margins and wetlands. Their diet consists mainly of fish, amphibians (frogs), reptiles, small mammals, birds, crustaceans and aquatic insects. The stork is monogamous and tends to build large platform nests on the top of a tree in full sunlight, usually near water.

Woolly-Necked Stork

These storks are generally uncommon, however, both resident and migrant occur. There is normally an influx of non-breeding migrants recorded during summer in Namibia and Botswana. Their habitat consists of wetlands, river margins and adjacent cultivation and estuaries. They mainly feed on large insects, frogs, crabs, molluscs and some fish. The nest is placed high in well-foliaged trees, usually over swampy ground. They are generally silent but produce raucous calls at their nests.

Yellow-Billed Stork

A large aquatic stork that wades in shallows, stirring water with its feet. This drives small fish towards its highly sensitive bill, which snaps shut in milliseconds as soon as it detects prey by touch alone. Common at drying lagoons where fish are trapped, it nests colonially on trees at the Kasane Rapids during early summer, one of the few known breeding sites in Botswana.

Marabou Stork

This stork is an omnivorous scavenger which feeds on fish and frogs along the Linyanti and Chobe Rivers as well as carrion at predator kills or refuse at the Kasane rubbish dump. Large numbers congregate at locust and corn cricket outbreaks and at quelea roosts and breeding sites. The resident population is supplemented by intra-African migrants during summer. It regularly defecates on its legs to keep cool. The gular sac of a Marabou stork is a large, fleshy, inflatable throat pouch used for communication and thermoregulation. During the breeding season, it becomes more conspicuous and is inflated during courtship rituals. The sac further serves as a resonator, allowing the bird to make a guttural croaking sound. It may also help the bird to cool down.

Woodland Kingfisher

An unmistakable bird, recognised by its red upper and black lower mandibles. This is an intra-African migrant, found in the Chobe woodlands during summer as it is a dryland kingfisher. It feeds on insects (not fish) and nests in cavities in trees (rather than riverbanks), which is typical of the terrestrial kingfishers. A noisy bird, its trilling “chit chirrrrr” call is heard day and night.

Giant Kingfisher

The largest kingfisher in Africa, with charcoal upper parts, white spots and variable amounts of rich chestnut on the breast in the males and on the belly in females. The reddish brown colouring on the female's belly extends to the underwings which is easily visible when the bird is in flight. This kingfisher uses a favoured perch from which to dive for fish, although it also hovers occasionally.

Pied Kingfisher

The medium-sized pied kingfisher is a resident aquatic kingfisher that is found in pairs and small family groups along the Linyanti and Chobe Rivers. The male has a double-breasted band while the female only has a single band. They fish from a perch or by energetic hovering, plunge-diving into water with a resounding splash to grasp small fish between upper and lower mandibles. They then perch before swallowing the fish headfirst.

Grey-Headed Kingfisher

The grey-headed kingfisher is uncommon outside the period from September to May. They are usually found in singles or in pairs. Their habitat is mature woodland and mostly near water, although they are not dependent on aquatic habitats. They eat insects, particularly grasshoppers and also small lizards and mice - they rarely consume frogs and fish. The grey-headed kingfisheris an intra-African breeding migrant.

Malachite Kingfisher

Malachite kingfishers are typically seen near water, perched on reeds or branches. After detecting its prey, it flies down to the water to capture it. It then returns to its perch and often beats the prey before it is swallowed, head first if it is a fish. Small groups occur in savannah and farmland, where they require large wild mammals and domestic stock to forage on. They clamber agilely over host mammals, gleaning ticks, mite and other ectoparasites.

Wattled Crane

The wattled crane is an uncommon and rare resident that is listed globally as vulnerable. They are found in the Okavango as well as the Chobe areas alongside dams, marshes and pans. Omnivorous, feeding mainly on vegetable matter that is stripped off the stems with an upward motion of the bill. Their carnivorous food includes small aquatic snails, fish and frogs. They are monogamous and build their nests into a mound of aquatic vegetation usually placed in shallow water.

Lesser Jacana

Uncommon through most of the region except in the Okavango Delta and the Linyanti and Chobe Rivers, the lesser jacana is a resident, but nomadic in response to water levels and availability of floating vegetation. They are usually in pairs or small groups and are frequently found around water lilies in shallow waters. They eat aquatic insects and are monogamous. Their nests are small floating platforms of aquatic vegetation and incubation is shared by both sexes.

African Jacana

These jacanas are widespread and abundant residents. They are highly nomadic in response to water fluctuations and can be found in pairs or loose flocks. The African jacana favours water surfaces covered with water lilies and mostly feeds primarily on aquatic insects and their larvae. They create nests on a sodden platform built on floating vegetation. As polyandrous birds, the males incubate and take over all parental duties once eggs are laid.

Grey-Headed Parrot

These parrots are widespread and common residents. They are also nomadic in non-breeding season when searching for food. They are often spotted in large trees, including Baobabs. They enjoy primary kernels of unripe fruits such as Nyala-tree, Marula, corkwoods and terminalias or cluster leaf trees and also fresh fruit flesh. The parrot builds its nest high in the tree cavities.

Bradfield's Hornbill

These birds are generally uncommon and their habitat is tall, broad-leaved woodland on sandy soils. They eat a wide range of insects, some small vertebrates, fruit and seeds. In dry seasons, they descend to the ground to dig amongst leaf litter and herbivore dung in search of food. They are monogamous. The female usually seals herself in a natural tree cavity leaving vertical feeding slits. They form flocks in dry seasons, sometimes in the company of the African grey hornbill.

Southern Yellow-Billed Hornbill

These hornbills are a common resident and are found in various parts of southern Africa, including Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa. During the non-breeding season, they are typically seen in pairs or small family groups. Their habitat is a wide range of savannahs and includes closed woodlands. Hornbills consume insects, small animals and reptiles, along with fruits and seeds. Often monogamous, the female seals herself in a natural tree cavity, leaving a narrow vertical feeding slit.

African Grey Hornbill

The African grey hornbill is a locally common resident, found in woodlands, often Miombo. Its diet includes insects, small animals and seeds. They are monogamous. The female seals herself in a natural tree cavity or crevice in rocks while the male incubates and takes over all parental duties once the eggs are laid.

Southern Red-Billed Hornbill

These common residents, Its diet includes insects, small animals and seeds. open woodland, are normally in pairs or in small flocks.They feed mainly on insects and small mammals, but rarely seeds and fruit. Often monogamous, the female seals herself in a natural tree cavity.

Southern Ground Hornbill

Listed as vulnerable, the southern ground hornbill is generally an uncommon resident. Highly territorial and monogamous, they are usually found in groups of 3 to 5 birds. They feed on small mammals and reptiles. They are often persecuted for breaking house or car windows when hammering at their own reflections in territorial aggression. Nests are usually in a tree cavity, sometimes in a crevice on a rock face or on an old stick nest. These nests are lined with leaves and grass and have an open entrance.

African Spoonbill

The distinct, spatulated beak gives the African spoonbill its name. It hunts for fish and aquatic invertebrates in the shallows by feel-swinging the sensitive spoon-shaped bill tip through the water until it touches its prey. These birds congregate in significant numbers along the Chobe River and nest at Kasane Rapids, but are known to be nomadic in response to water levels.

Yellow-Billed Kite

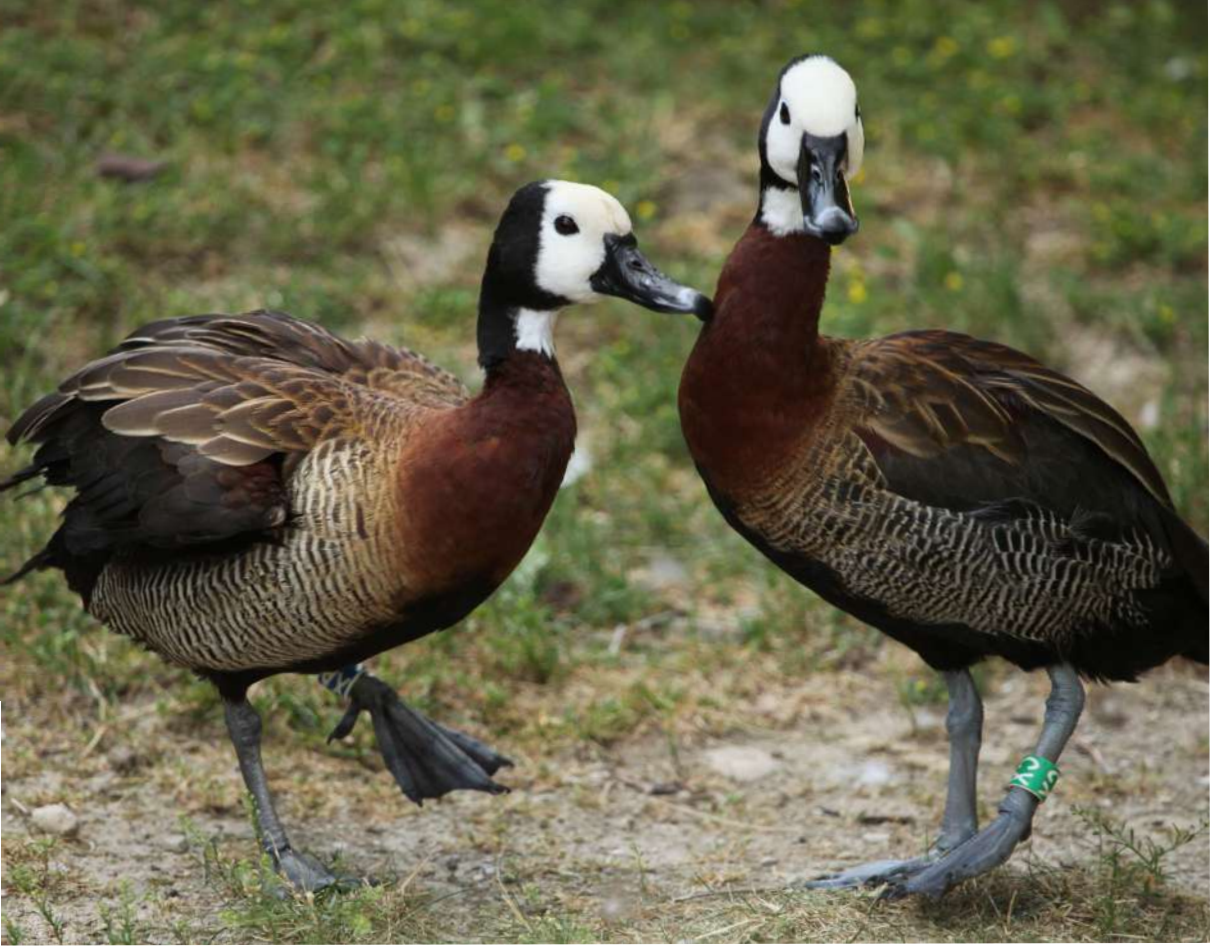
Most birds are intra-African breeding migrants, arriving July to August and departing February to March (some as late as April). Non-breeding season occurs between December and April. The yellow-billed kites can be found in woodland habitats. They eat a wide range of animal and insect prey, much of it scavenged. They are monogamous, very shy and secretive when breeding. Their nests are usually placed in a thick foliaged tree.

Red-Billed Oxpecker

An example of a mutualistic relationship is that of the oxpecker with larger mammals such as rhinoceros and zebras. Oxpeckers land on larger mammals and feed on ticks and other parasites that live on their skin. The oxpeckers gain a reliable source of food, while the mammals benefit from effective pest control.

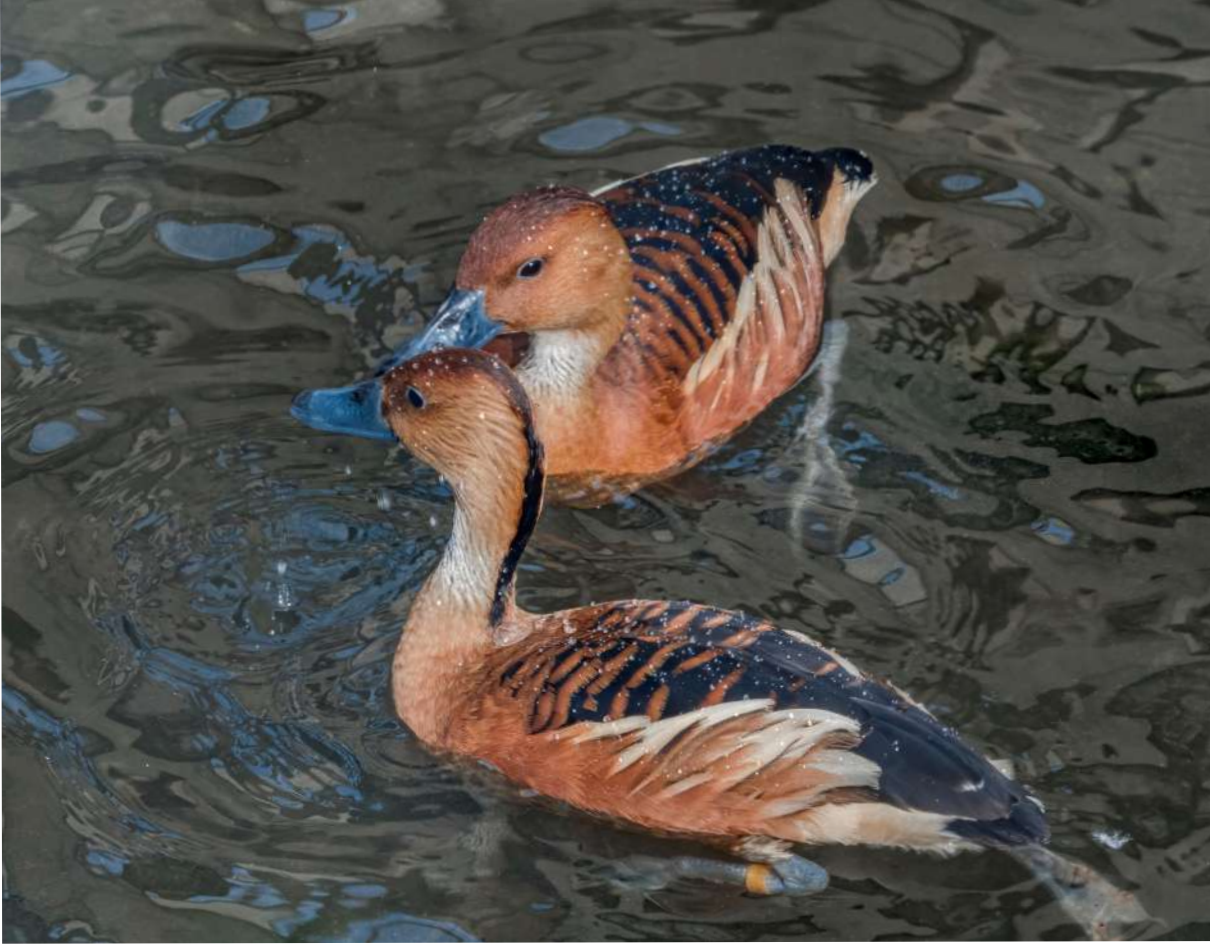
Knob-Billed Duck

An intra-African partial migrant, these ducks are fairly common in the Linyanti and Chobe River region. Being nomadic, they often undertake extensive movements and live in marshes and temporary pans in savannahs and floodplains. Their diet consists of grass seeds, water lily fruits, leaves and aquatic insects. These polygynous birds nest in tree cavities and also on top of old hamerkop nests.



White-Faced Whistling Duck

Highly nomadic, the white-faced whistling duck is a common resident but gregarious in non-breeding seasons. It is typically found in inland waters, especially those with extensive shallows and emergent vegetation. Its diet includes aquatic vegetation, seeds, tubers, insects and molluscs.They are monogamous and hide their nests well in waterside grasses or edges.



Fulvous Whistling Duck

This duck is an uncommon to fairly common resident. It is highly nomadic and a breeding migrant in some areas and becomes gregarious in the non-breeding season. These birds inhabit inland water bodies, especially where there is abundant aquatic vegetation. The species consumes aquatic plant matter, vegetation and insects. Fulvous whistling ducks are monogamous. The birds construct well-concealed nests in long grass near water.

Laughing Dove

The laughing dove is a mediums-sized bird, characterised by its rufous breast with black mottling. When the throat is puffed out during courtship, this necklace becomes accentuated. Unlike some other doves in Chobe, it lacks a black collar on the hind neck. They are widespread throughout the area in dry woodland, where loose aggregations may be seen foraging for seeds on the ground. As its name states, it has a pleasant, soothing, chuckling call.

Namaqua Dove

The Namaqua dove is a widespread and common resident that is highly nomadic and occurs singly, in pairs or in small loose flocks. This species can be seen in semi-arid, arid savannah and dry shrublands. The birds are occasionally found in broadleaved woodland. Namaqua doves feed almost exclusively on tiny seeds of grasses, sedges and weeds. The species is monogamous. The nest is a frail platform of twigs and rootlets built by both sexes and is usually in a low down shrub.

Emerald-Spotted Wood Dove

This small woodland dove is characterised by iridescent green wing-spots. Solitary and easily overlooked, its call is a familiar sound of the bushveld. They mostly eat seeds, herbs and grasses along with termites and fruit. Their nest is a small flimsy platform of twigs and rootlets usually placed 2 - 3 m high on a lateral thorn branch and is sometimes re-used for successive clutches. The species is monogamous.

African Hoopoe

The African hoopoe has short legs, a long bill, an erectile crest and a distinct rufous. The bill and crest have the appearance of a traditional hand-axe. The English name is derived from its “hoop-hoop” call. A breeding resident, it nests in natural tree cavities in woodlands throughout Chobe and is usually seen in pairs.

Grey-Backed Sparrow-Lark

The grey-backed sparrow-lark is near-endemic to Namibia's arid regions. It is often seen in large flocks. Males stand out with their striking black-and-white heads and scalloped grey-brown wings. Females wear a more subdued streaked plumage with dark belly patches. It is a highly social bird and thrives in open dry habitats.

Chestnut-Backed Sparrow-Lark

The chestnut-backed sparrow-lark is a small, finch-like resident and nomadic lark. The striking male has a black head with bold white ear patches and a chestnut back. The streaky female shows geographic variation but always bears a dark belly patch. They are found in flocks of up to 50, inhabiting open grasslands, arid savannahs and recently burnt areas. They shuffle along bare patches to forage for seeds and insects.

Lesser Striped Swallow

The lesser striped swallow is a common resident and intra-African breeding migrant, favouring habitats near water. Smaller and darker than its greatercounterpart it has bold black streaking on white underparts, a chestnut-coloured head and a beautiful blue wingspan. Pairs and small groups forage over grasslands and woodlands with a strong swallow-like flight. The female has shorter tail streamers while juveniles appear duller. Its call is a descending nasal “zeh-zeh-zeh”.

Greater Striped Swallow

The greater striped swallow is often mistaken for the lesser striped swallow due to its similar appearance. The greater striped swallow is larger with finer streaks and a subtler orange tint to its face. Its habitats range from grassland, light-wooded savannahs, semi-arid Karoo to fynbos. It migrates to Namibia in late August for breeding and is unlikely to be spotted during the winter.

Wire-Tailed Swallow

This aquatic species of swallow is found along large rivers and floodplains in Namibia. Grasslands, open woodlands and forest edges are popular foraging grounds. Its appearance is distinctive with two long, thin feathers on its outer tails. Females are noted to have shorter tails. It is not known to gather in large flocks, , instead occurring in small groups, pairs or singly.

White-Throated Swallow

This swallow is found near wetlands, specifically rivers and other bodies of open water. Common foraging grounds are grasslands, light woodland and floodplains where it can be spotted in pairs or small groups. It has a small reddish-brown patch on its forehead and a steel-blue breast band that connects to a white throat patch. During its migration it passes over the Kalahari and Namib Deserts.

Arrow-Marked Babbler

This species of babbler is most common in the southern African region. It typically inhabits thickets or stretches of denser vegetation. It has distinctive bright yellow eyes that are rimmed with a brownish-red. White diagnostic arrow marks are found on its neck, throat and breast. Breeding occurs throughout the year, with peak activity around October–November.

Hartlaub's Babbler

Hartlaub's babbler is an easily identifiable species of babbler as it is the only one in the region with a white rump. Other distinctive characteristics include orange-red eyes and a noisy 'kwek-kwek-kwek' call. It is found near swamps in the Okavango Delta in groups of 5-15 birds. Breeding occurs mainly during the wet seasons.

Banded Martin

The banded martin is a small grey-brown bird with a band across its chest and a pale mark above the eye. It is found in open grassland and cultivated or cleared land. It roosts in reeds and other vegetation as well as vacated Aardvark burrows. In Namibia its most frequent sightings occurs in the Zambezi region.

Sand Martin

This small and compact swallow has mainly white underparts and a brown breast band. It is easily distinguishable from the banded martin as it is much smaller with darker underwings. It has narrow, pointed wings and a shallow-forked tail. In southern Africa it occurs in diverse habitats but is primarily attracted to areas surrounding bodies of fresh water.

Brown-Throated Martin

The brown-throated martin is found in the wetlands of the Zambezi region of Namibia. It is seen frequently near bodies of water like dams, sewage works and large rivers. It is a small grey-brown bird with a white belly, though some individuals may show brown. It can be distinguished from swallows of the same size by its relative plainness and smaller size.

Blue Waxbill

The blue waxbill is a small powder-blue-faced bird with a grey belly in females and a blue belly in males. It is very rarely seen in the northern parts of Namibia. Its habitat consists of near-dry woodland, savannah and garden areas. Focusing on areas with a high availability of surface water is more likely to result in a sighting.

Violet-Eared Waxbill

The violet-eared waxbill is a reclusive, vibrantly coloured, long-tailed. It has violet cheeks, a chestnut-coloured body and a blue rump. Due to its extraordinary appearance it is unlikely to be mistaken for any other species. It is a resident of acacia woodland, dry thickets savannah and can be observed in pairs year-round.

Common Waxbill

This tiny grey-brown waxbill has a red eye stripe, red bill and pinkish underbelly. Juvenile members of this species have a darker bill. It is spotted sporadically across Namibia along river lines or in towns near unnaturally lush vegetation. Its flight call is a high-pitched "pink-pink".

Black-Faced Waxbill

The black-faced waxbill is a large grey-and-red bird with a bold black face. It has barred wings and a long black tail. Females of the same species are duller with a grey vent. Large populations are seen in central Namibia near the Okavango. It is commonly found amongst arid thornveld and possesses a short, high-pitched "chulowee" as a call.

Jameson's Firefinch

The Jameson's firefinch is a small pinkish waxbill with a grey-blue bill and a black undertail. In Namibia it is usually spotted along the Kunene River in the northwestern region of the country. Its habitat varies from grassy areas with thickets to arid savannah and vegetation adjacent to rivers or streams.

Red-Billed Firefinch

The red-billed firefinch is a common resident and local nomad in semi-arid woodlands, often near water or in gardens. It is identified by its red bill, yellow eye-ring and pinkish-brown plumage. The male has a rosy head and underparts, while the female is duller with only hints of pink. Pairs and small flocks forage on the ground for seeds retreating to trees when alarmed. Its song is a melodic ‘sweet er-urrrrrr’ and it also gives sharp "vut-vut" calls. This species is a frequent brood host for Village Indigobirds.

Brown Firefinch

The brown firefinch is known as the dullest firefinch as it lacks the signature red or pink of others in its species. Instead it dons a grey-brown rump. Other characteristics include a pale grey bill and pinkish legs. Males have a large red patch on their faces while females have only a faint pink wash. It is a common resident of the Okavango and Zambezi regions of Namibia and inhabits thickets, woodland and riparian forests close to wetlands. It has a high-pitched chattering song.

African Swamphen

The African swamphen is a large, predominantly sedentary, bird. It has a preference for freshwater, slow-flowing rivers, seasonally flooded wetlands, marshes and swamps. In direct light it has a beautiful purple-green-and-blue colouring. Other features include red feet and bill and a white undertail. Its call is loud and trumpeting.

Allen's Gallinule

This large purple-green bird has similar colouration to the purple swamphen. However it is slimmer with a much smaller bill. It has a red bill and feet, a blue forehead shield and a white undertail. Its habitat consists of freshwater marshes, rice fields, floodplains, reed beds and wetlands with thick vegetation. Sightings extend as far as coastal Namibia.

Black Crake

The black crake is a small, pudgy, plain black bird with a bright yellow bill. Other characteristics include its red eyes and legs. Juveniles of this species are browner with duller legs and bills. Found in southern Namibia along the course of the Orange River it inhabits the edges of swamps and other water bodies. It has a distinctively wheezing, bubbling and chattering call.

Lesser Moorhen

The lesser moorhen is a small, secretive bird more reclusive than the common moorhen. It has subtly yellow legs and a mostly yellow bill. Its white flank markings are less prominent. Juveniles display a warm, sandy-brown plumage. It prefers secluded, seasonal wetlands and emits a distinctive series of hollow clucking calls.

Common Sandpiper

The common sandpiper is a small, slender wader with olive-brown upperparts and a distinctive white shoulder spur. Its flight is characterised by rapid wingbeats and short glides revealing a bold white wing bar and dark rump. Often solitary it frequents river marshes and coastal edges emitting a sharp ‘ti-ti-ti’ call.

Three-Banded Plover

The three-banded plover is a small, active wader identified by its two black breast bands and bold white forehead. Preferring freshwater and brackish wetlands it forages along shorelines pecking at insects in mud and shallow water. When alarmed it emits sharp "kreet" or "weet-weet" calls while taking flight.

Long-Toed Lapwing

The long-toed lapwing is a striking wetland bird with bold black-and-white plumage, long red legs and distinctive elongated toes. Its white face contrasts sharply with a black breast band while its wings display extensive white patches in flight. Preferring marshes with floating vegetation, it is typically seen alone or in pairs. Its call consists of rapid, high-pitched ticking notes.

Blacksmith Lapwing

The blacksmith lapwing is a striking wetland bird with bold black, white and grey plumage. Other features include a distinctive white crown and black face. Its characteristic metallic "tink-tink-tink" call echoes across wetlands, flooded grasslands and even urban areas. It commonly breeds in solitary pairs but forms flocks when not nesting.

White-Crowned Lapwing

The white-crowned lapwing is distinguished by its grey-and-white head, long yellow wattles and bold black-and-white wing pattern in flight. It prefers sandbanks along large rivers and aggressively defends its territory with loud "kriiip" calls. It breeds on exposed riverbanks from July to November, protecting its nest from intruders.

Wattled Lapwing

The wattled lapwing is a distinctive wader with long yellow facial wattles. It is found across Sub-Saharan Africa except in rainforests and arid zones. Common in grasslands it feeds on insects and seeds and is either alone or seen in pairs. It thrives in Namibia's Okavango Delta.

Fork-Tailed Drongo

The fork-tailed drongo is a glossy black bird with red eyes and a forked tail often seen perched upright near woodlands and savannahs. It follows large mammals to catch insects, delivering a repertoire of harsh mechanical calls. When in sunlight it reveals its iridescent blue-green plumage. Half its length is its dramatic forked tail.

Black-Chested Snake Eagle

The black-chested snake eagle is a stocky, dark brown raptor with barred underparts and distinctive yellow eyes. It prefers forest edges and woodlands near water and perches motionless for long periods before striking at prey. It has an eerie "whaaat ho-ho-ho-haaa" gulping call.

Martial Eagle

The martial eagle is Africa's largest eagle. It is a powerful, broad-winged predator with a distinctive short crest. Adults show dark brown upperparts while juveniles appear paler with barred flight feathers. This vulnerable species soars over savannahs and semi-deserts hunting mammals, birds and reptiles with an incredible six-kilometre vision. It thrives in protected areas and adapts to nesting on power lines in treeless regions.

Little Bittern

The little bittern is a tiny, secretive heron that blends perfectly with reed beds in freshwater marshes. It has a rich buffy plumage and a black cap. It is most often spotted in flight at dawn or dusk where its pale upper wing panels flash as it moves over vegetation. Males show a dark greenish-black back while females are streaked.

Ruff

The ruff is a distinctive medium-sized wader with highly variable plumage. Breeding males sport elaborate neck ruffs in black, white or reddish hues. It is found in wetlands across southern Africa during migration and favours shallow waters. It has a drooped bill and scaly upperparts and showcases diagnostic white rump patches in flight.

Common Greenshank

The common greenshank is a long-legged wader with greyish plumage, greenish legs and a distinctive slightly upturned bill. Found along coastal estuaries and inland wetlands throughout southern Africa, it prefers shallow waters where it forages. It is recognised by its mellow "tewtewtew" call and the bold white stripe visible on its back in flight.

Southern-Masked-Weaver

The southern-masked weaver is a common resident of southern Africa's savannahs and semi-arid regions. Breeding males sport a distinctive black face mask and plain green back. Females appear duller with buffy-yellow underparts. These social birds build intricate woven nests in trees near water, often forming noisy colonies.

Lesser Masked-Weaver

The lesser masked-weaver is a small bird with striking whitish eyes and slate-grey legs. Males sport a dramatic black mask. Females and non-breeding males showcase a washed yellow underside, pale eyes and blue-grey legs. These social birds thrive in riverine thickets and savannahs, building messy colonial nests and gathering in noisy, wandering flocks.

African Golden Weaver

African golden weaver is a large, striking bird with bright yellow plumage and pale eyes. It is found along river systems. Males sport vibrant orange chins and yellow heads while females show more subdued colours. It builds its nests in riverine woodlands and has a distinctive "chichi-chichi-chichi-squirr ski-wee" as a call.

Red-Billed Buffalo Weaver

The red-billed buffalo weaver thrives in dry savannahs and woodlands. Males stand out with their chocolate-brown plumage, bright red bills and striking white wing patches visible in flight. Females show paler streaked underparts with distinctive white throat markings. These social birds create electronic-like buzzing calls while building massive communal nests in large trees.

White-Browed Sparrow-Weaver

The white-browed sparrow-weaver is a chunky social bird common in Namibia's acacia savannahs and dry woodlands. Adults sport bold white eyebrows and wingbars, contrasting with dark brown plumage. Juveniles have pinkish-brown bills. Their metallic "cheeoop-preeoo-chop" songs echo through the thorn trees where it builds untidy communal nests.

Red-Headed Weaver

The red-headed weaver is a widespread resident in broadleaf woodlands and moist savannahs across Africa. The breeding male is unmistakable with its bright red head and slender orange-red bill. The female and non-breeding male are plainer with pale underparts. Pairs forage actively in mixed-species flocks, probing leaves and branches for insects. They are easily identified by their high-pitched insect-like calls. The female builds a neat kidney-shaped nest with a side entrance, often suspended from a thin branch.

Yellow-Crowned Bishop

Found in wet grasslands and reed beds the yellow-crowned bishop is Africa's smallest bishop species. During breeding season males transform into striking golden puffballs, sporting black bellies and bright yellow crowns. Females remain streaky brown with white eyebrows. These tiny birds produce an unusual repertoire of sounds. From high-pitched "ts'ee" calls to buzzing notes and hissing songs during courtship displays. It nests colonially in flooded grasses, with males appearing almost spherical when fluffed up to impress their mates.

Southern Red Bishop

The southern red wwbishop inhabits wetlands and riverine areas where breeding males display striking red plumage with black masks and underparts. Females and non-breeding males appear as streaky brown sparrows with buff eyebrows. These small weavers form breeding colonies in reed beds producing buzzing songs and nasal calls. During non-breeding seasons it disperses into drier scrublands.

Red-Billed Quelea

The red-billed quelea thrives across Namibia's savannahs and farmlands forming massive, nomadic flocks that can number in the millions. Breeding males develop black facial masks with rosy or buff-coloured washes. Non-breeding birds show streaked brown plumage with distinctive red bills. These prolific seed-eaters build woven grass nests in thorn trees. Their tendency to form large, destructive flocks that decimate crops has earned them the nickname "feathered locust."

Pin-Tailed Whydah

The pin-tailed whydah inhabits Namibia's savannahs, gardens and farmlands. Breeding males display striking black-and-white plumage with dramatic tail streamers. Non-breeding birds show striped heads and orange-pink bills. It is known as a brood parasite and lays eggs in waxbill nests.

Shaft-Tailed Whydah

The shaft-tailed whydah is found across dry Acacia savannahs where breeding males display striking black-and-buff plumage with elongated tail feathers. Females and non-breeding males show streaked brown plumage with orange-pink bills. This brood parasite mimics the songs of its host, the violet-eared waxbill, while foraging in flocks for seeds.

Long-Tailed Paradise Whydah

The long-tailed paradise whydah inhabits Namibia's Acacia woodlands. Males display chestnut and black plumage with golden-yellow napes. Non-breeding birds show striped black-and-white heads. These brood parasites mimic green-winged pytilia calls and forage for seeds in small flocks.

Yellow-Billed Oxpecker

The yellow-billed oxpecker frequents Namibia's northern regions. This olive-brown bird has a distinctive red-tipped yellow bill and pale rump. Unlike the red-billed oxpecker it lacks eye wattles. It evolved to cling to large mammals while feeding on ticks and other parasites.

Greater Blue-Eared Starling

The greater blue-eared starling inhabits northern Namibia. This glossy blue-green bird shows distinctive dark ear patches and violet-blue flanks. Its nasal "squuee-aar" calls accompany flocks foraging for fruit and insects, sometimes gathering by the hundreds at fruit trees.

Cape Glossy Starling

The cape starling is common throughout Namibia except in the southern Namib Desert. It is a glossy blue-green bird lacking ear patches and appearing more uniform than other starlings. Its rolling "turrreaau" calls accompany small flocks foraging for insects and fruit in savannahs, gardens and woodland areas.

Burchell’s Starling

Burchell’s Starling inhabits northern Namibia’s savannahs including the Okavango region. This large iridescent blue-green bird shows purple-tinged plumage with barred wings and a distinctive rounded tail. Its throaty "mreeow" calls accompany flocks foraging for insects near thorn trees and picnic sites.

Violet-Backed Starling

The violet-backed starling frequents Namibia's woodlands and riverine forests. Males display striking amethyst plumage contrasting with white underparts. Females show brown-streaked upperparts with white bellies. This small starling produces buzzy "cheez-i-werrr" calls while feeding on fruits and insects. It serves as key seed disperser for mistletoe plants.

Meves's Starling

Meves's starling inhabits northern Namibia's woodlands including the Okavango and the Zambezi Strip. This iridescent bird displays blue-purple plumage with an exceptionally long graduated tail. While ground-foraging, its flocks produce chattering calls as they feed on insects disturbed by elephants and fruits from white Acacia trees.

Wattled Starling

The wattled starling appears erratically across Namibia's grasslands and savannahs. It is often seen in massive, nomadic flocks. Breeding males develop striking black facial wattles and bare yellow skin. Females and non-breeding males show pale grey plumage. These communal nesters produce wheezy hisses as they forage for insects in open areas.

Zitting Cisticola

The zitting cisticola is a small, streaky brown bird commonly found in Namibia's grasslands and wetlands. It is recognised by its rufous rump and distinctive tail spots. Males perform undulating flights while emitting repetitive "zit" calls. This species favours damp areas with tall grass clumps for nesting.

Rattling Cisticola

The rattling cisticola thrives throughout Namibia's savannahs and bushveld, where its distinctive "che-che-che-CHRRRR" song echoes from shrub tops. This large cisticola shows a rufous cap and streaked back, often mobbing predators from exposed perches. It favours woodland and scrub habitats across the country.

Tinkling Cisticola

The tinkling cisticola inhabits northern Namibia's Kalahari woodlands. It has a bright rufous crown and pale supercilium that distinguishes it from similar species. This shy bird produces distinctive "weeet" calls followed by high-pitched trills while foraging mouse-like through scrub. It favours semi-arid broadleaf woodlands with sandy soils.

Red-Faced Cisticola

The red-faced cisticola frequents Namibia's riverine thickets and wetlands. Its plain grey-brown plumage contrasts with distinctive rufous facial markings. Males produce a unique descending whistle which is answered by the female "zidit" calls. It frequently hides in dense vegetation near water.

Lesser Swamp Warbler

The lesser swamp warbler inhabits Namibia's wetlands along the Kunene River, Etosha and Zambezi regions. This slender-billed bird shows olive-brown upperparts and frequently sings complex musical trills from reed bed perches. Unlike secretive marsh warblers, it often forages openly near waterlines for insects.

African Reed Warbler

The african reed warbler frequents Namibia's riverine vegetation particularly along the Orange River and Fish River Canyon. This small brown warbler shows rufous-washed underparts. It produces repetitive churring, songs sometimes mimicking other birds. It favours reed beds and scrub near watercourses across the country.

Great Reed Warbler

The great reed warbler is a rare Palaearctic migrant, occasionally spotted in Namibia's wetlands during winter. This large warbler has a heavy bill and distinctive pale eyebrow. It is often seen crashing through reed beds. Its loud "karra-karra-karra" song contrasts with its high-pitched "krrrrr"calls.

Marico Sunbird

The marico sunbird inhabits Namibia's dry woodlands from the central regions to the Zambezi Strip. Males display iridescent green plumage with distinctive maroon and blue breast bands. Females show streaked yellow underparts. Their energetic "tyip" calls accompany them as they feed from Acacia and Jacaranda flowers.

White-Bellied Sunbird

The white-bellied sunbird thrives in northern Namibia's woodlands including Etosha and the Zambezi region. Males display iridescent green plumage with a purple breast band and a white belly. Females show grey-brown upperparts. It is found in singles, pairs and small groups across its woodland habitat.

Collared Sunbird

The collared sunbird appears in Namibia's Zambezi strip where this tiny bird flits through woodlands sporting its metallic-green plumage. Males show a narrow purple breast band while females display yellow throats. It is frequently seen in pairs and feeds on fruit nectar and insects.

Scarlet-Chested Sunbird

The scarlet-chested sunbird is found in Namibia's woodlands and gardens. Males display striking black plumage with iridescent, scarlet breasts. Females show mottled grey-olive colouring with distinctive pale eyebrows. Its loud "cheeup" whistles accompany its nectar-feeding across savannahs. Some populations migrate from arid areas seasonally.

Collared Pratincole

The collared pratincole is an elegant, long-winged bird that hunts insects in flight. Adults show warm grey-brown plumage with a distinctive buffy throat collar and red-based bill. Juveniles appear greyer with scalloped feathers. This agile flier favours wetlands and floodplains. It is abundant in the Okavango–Chobe floodplain region.

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