



Trip Report  
20 July - 7 August 2025





**Arrival day** for Peter and Martina into Namibia.

While paying for parking we had a fly over of Alpine and African Palm Swift to start proceedings. Along the way to our accommodation for the night we spotted Chacma Baboon and Monterio’s Hornbill. Rosy-faced Lovebirds greeted us on arrival which left us with big smiles as this was one target we had just discussed on the drive from the airport. The afternoon was spent at Avis Dam - highlights from this leisurely Sunday bird were an early season Osprey then Bradfields, African Palm and Alpine Swift, Monterio’s Hornbill, Groundscraper Thrush, Great Egret, White-breasted and Reed Cormorant, Three-banded and Kittlitz’s Plover, Little Grebe, Maccoa Duck, Common Moorhen, Pirit Batis, Violet-eared Waxbill, Cape Wagtail and Red-headed Finch.





## Day 2: Windhoek to Walvis Bay

Today was a travel day through the Khomashochland mountains west, towards the coast. The highlights of the day were sightings of Kudu, Gemsbok, Springbok, Chacma Baboon and two separate sightings of Klipspringer. Bird highlights included Nicholson's Pipit, Pearl-spotted Owlet, White-backed Vultures, Black-chested Snake Eagle, White-tailed Shrike, Sabota Lark, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Burchell's Courser, Marico and Chat Flycatcher, Trac Trac Chat, Mountain Wheatear, a sighting of our smallest falcon in Africa - the Pygmy Falcon, Yellow-bellied Eremomela at lunch. Once we had made our way into the Namib desert we enjoyed connecting to Ruppell's Korhaan sightings and one particular pair of Korhaan with a Gray's Lark hawking invertebrates while following the small bustards through the desert. An interesting behaviour to see between two of our near endemics.

Peter Eriksson





Day 3: **Walvis Bay**

We managed to view a pair of Orange River White Eye in the gardens just at sunrise. Afterwards, we had thirty minutes to bird around the lagoon and picked up Common Greenshank, White-fronted and Grey Plover, Caspian and Greater-crested Tern before heading to our morning catamaran cruise. Whilst on board we managed good views of Great White Pelican, Kelp and Hartlaub's Gull, Wilson's Storm Petrel and two juvenile Cape Gannet. The mammal highlights apart from the few hundred Cape Fur Seals at Pelican Point were a pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphin and no more than three sightings of Humpback Whale. Too much fun forced us to enjoy some fresh Walvis Bay oysters and sparkling wine (Tim enjoyed a coke zero on the rocks). It was then decided to head straight out to check the edge of the water treatment plant just outside of town and we picked up Pearl-breasted and White-throated Swallow, Brown-throated Martin as well as some new waterfowl to the list. Red-billed, Cape and Blue-billed Teal, Cape Shoveler, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Purple Swamphen, Little and Black-necked Grebe jumped into the growing list before we headed deeper into the hyper arid desert in search of an enigmatic species only found in the great namib sand sea - the Dune Lark. We had multiple views of this specialist Lark species and had a good close up looks of its food sources of various metamorphosis stages including the Namib Dune Ant and various Darkling beetle species, both of which form the important water intake for the Lark via their metabolic water. On returning to Walvis Bay for the golden hour, we added thousands of both Greater and Lesser Flamingo, a couple of Chestnut-banded Plover and hundreds of Cape Cormorant flying overhead back to roost, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper to the list before the light vanished, replaced by a chilling south westerly wind. Dinner was enjoyed tonight at a fresh seafood restaurant which was very tasty indeed.



#### Day 4: Walvis Bay to Erongo Mountains

We tried another Orange River White-eye shoot in Swakopmund which also gave us views of Crowned Cormorant, Common Reed Warbler, Cape Sparrow and Helmeted Guineafowl before we headed east towards Spitzkoppe. We picked up Rufous-eared Warbler, Karoo Eremomela and had another good view of Gray's Lark before picking up some more desert birds like Karoo Chat, Karoo-long billed and Stark's Lark, Grey-backed Sparrow Lark just before arriving at the great granite monolith. Our goal was to get a near endemic Herero Chat but we quickly got side tracked with Layard's Warbler and another near endemic - Carp's Tit. So we decided to have a bite of lunch. Our lunch stop birding really did impress with White-throated Canary, African Red-eyed BulBul, Pale-winged Starling and the Tits and Warbler hanging around for photos. Eventually we spotted a Herero Chat on a low branch scouting for insects in a drainage line which gave great views. We added quickly in this area to the overall list with White-backed Mousebird, Ashy Tit, Dusky Sunbird, Lark-like and Cape Bunting, Pririt Batis all showing well for photos. Making our way into the Erongo mountains we had multiple views of White-tailed Shrike, various doves, Lanner Falcon, Gabar Goshawk, Monterio's Hornbill and another Pearl-spotted Owlet. Our small evening stroll gave us Barred-wren Warbler, Green-winged Pytilia, Blue Waxbill and the African Red-eyed Bulbuls alarmed so much we had no choice but to investigate - giving us yet another Pearl-spotted Owlet. At dusk we heard the Freckled Nightjar calling all over the lodge area and viewed it a few times flying overhead - what a beautiful evening call to serenade us the entire evening.

The big highlight at dinner apart from our second owl species for the trip - a Western Barn Owl flying overhead, screeching, was a male Leopard who came to drink at the small floodlit waterhole during the main course.







Peter Eriksson





## Day 5: Erongo Mountains to Etosha National Park

Early in the morning we picked up on Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Verreaux's Eagle, Monteiro's Hornbill and amazing views at breakfast of Rosy-faced Lovebird, Pale-winged Starling and a Dassie Rat. Passing through Omaruru we tried a few spots in the riverbed which yielded two quick fly overs of Rüppels Parrot. We did get good views of Violet Woodhoopoe in the middle of the small town, White-browed Scrub-robin, Brubru, Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, Gabar Goshawk and Burnt-necked Eremomela before lunch. On our way up towards the Etosha National Park we encountered a busy, in the bird sense, bridge. It gave us a smorgasbord of species including a first view of Cape Penduline-tit, Violet-eared and Blue Waxbill, Large Rock Martin, Little Swift, Grey-backed Camopertera, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Barred Wren-Warbler, Rattling Cisticola, Rufous Vented-Warbler to name a few. We entered the national park and ticked off a Tawny Eagle, Pied and Cape Crow, Springbok, Black-faced Impala, Kudu, Burchell Zebra, Giraffe and Black Rhino before we checked in. The waterhole that evening was at its best as a pride of five lions lazed around before eventually drinking some water at the same time as some rhinoceros - some of the magic this park can give you at night. We also added Egyptian Goose and Spotted Thick-Knee at the floodlit waterhole.









Day 6: Etosha National Park

Pygmy Falcon, Desert Cisticola, Ant-eating Chat, Red-capped Lark, Spike-heeled Lark, Grey and Chestnut-backed Lark, Double-banded Courser. At lunch we were interrupted by a Cardinal Woodpecker call - so we followed it up to add to the growing list. After lunch we birded around camp and the waterhole before heading out again into the park. We managed to see our first Secretary Bird. In the middle of the Mopane woodland we sat patiently at a waterhole with our first Glossy Ibis when suddenly a herd of approximately 40 elephants paced to the water.



Peter Eriksson









Day 7: Etosha National Park

We moved to the centre of the park today and picked up a few more bird species including Red-necked Falcon and Pririt Batis. The windy conditions made it a slower morning than normal but we more than made up for it in the afternoon. We managed to bird around Goas waterhole and encountered a single lioness, who came for a drink, all thanks to the wildlife alarm calls. At night we had the most productive Owl session of the trip with excellent views of African Scops Owl, White-faced Owl, Barn Owl and Pearl-spotted Owlet.





## Day 8: Etosha National Park

We decided to leave early and found ourselves with some spare time before the gates opened. a group of Bare-cheeked Babbler were awake too and started mobbing a pair of White-faced Owl in the tree right above our vehicle. A very exciting start to the day. It got better - we caught word of a sighting of one of the mammal targets for the trip and managed a sighting of two Leopard cubs with remains of a kill in a close by tree. To make it better we enjoyed the one and half year olds for 45 minutes without any other car. The golden sun warmed their rosette coats as they straddled the broken trunks of an old camel thorn tree. Afterwards we picked up a few elephant bulls and one female Cheetah walking through the open plains adjacent to the the Etosha pan. We arrived for lunch in Namutomi before birding around the gardens picking up Village Indigobird, Red-headed and Red-billed Buffalo Weaver to name a few. We decided that afternoon to target Blue Crane and some more lark speices around Andoni in the north east of the park. We had a fly over of 8 Cranes and managed to see waders at the waterhole including Ruff, Little Stint and Chestnut-banded Plover. Arriving at our next accommodation just before sunset we spotted some Damara Dik-Dik.









## Day 9: Etosha National Park

We spent the morning in the Onkolo hide that produced good birding photographic opportunities for Blue, Violet-eared and Black-faced Waxbills, Green-winged Pytilia, Meyer's Parrot, Blacksmith Lapwings and a quick view of two Cut-throat Finch. After a late breakfast we managed to locate a group of Black-faced Babbler who were mobbing something in the tree thickets. On further investigation we saw their target which was a Small Spotted Genet sleeping in the tree. Within the woodland we viewed Little Sparrowhawk, White-crested Helmetshrike, White-bellied Sunbird, Crimson-breasted Shrike and Martina spotted a group of Lesser Galago high up in the trees. We went back into the park for the afternoon and returned to camp at sunset - we had a fly over of Fiery-necked Nightjar while three Elephant bulls rustled in the bushes around the car at the entrance gate of the camp - a great way to end another excellent day.





## Day 10: Etosha National Park to Rundu

Our journey today moved us north east towards the Okavango river. On the way we had to locate a target that we had not managed during our time in central Namibia and managed to tick Rockrunner off in some very tricky, windy conditions. We found some pools of water on the floodplains just south of the Okavango river which added some new species to the list now that we were 400 or so kilometres north. African Pygmy Geese, Greater Blue-eared Starling, African Jacana, African Openbill, Rufous-bellied Heron, African-wattled Lapwing, Great Egret to name a few. We had to cut the fun sort and moved to Taranga Safari Lodge to give us time to locate the Ross's Turaco. On arrival the first call we could hear was an Ashy Flycatcher which we viewed before checking in. We added a lot to the list but the highlight was definitely the Turaco that gave us many fly overs and views.





## Day 11: Rundu to Botswana

It was a nippy evening and we woke up to a fresh morning with fog over the Okavango river. We added Wire-tailed Swallow, African Pied Wagtail and Pied Kingfisher before having breakfast. We had an hour or so walk around the gardens of the lodge which gave us Purple-banded Sunbird, Southern White Eye, Yellow-breasted Apalis but we could not pick up on the Ross's Turaco again. At some flooded wetland pools we picked up White-backed, Comb and White-faced Whistling Duck, Southern Pochard, many African Jacana, African-wattled Lapwing, Rufous-bellied Heron, Lesser-striped Swallow, African Hoopoe and Western Cattle Egret.

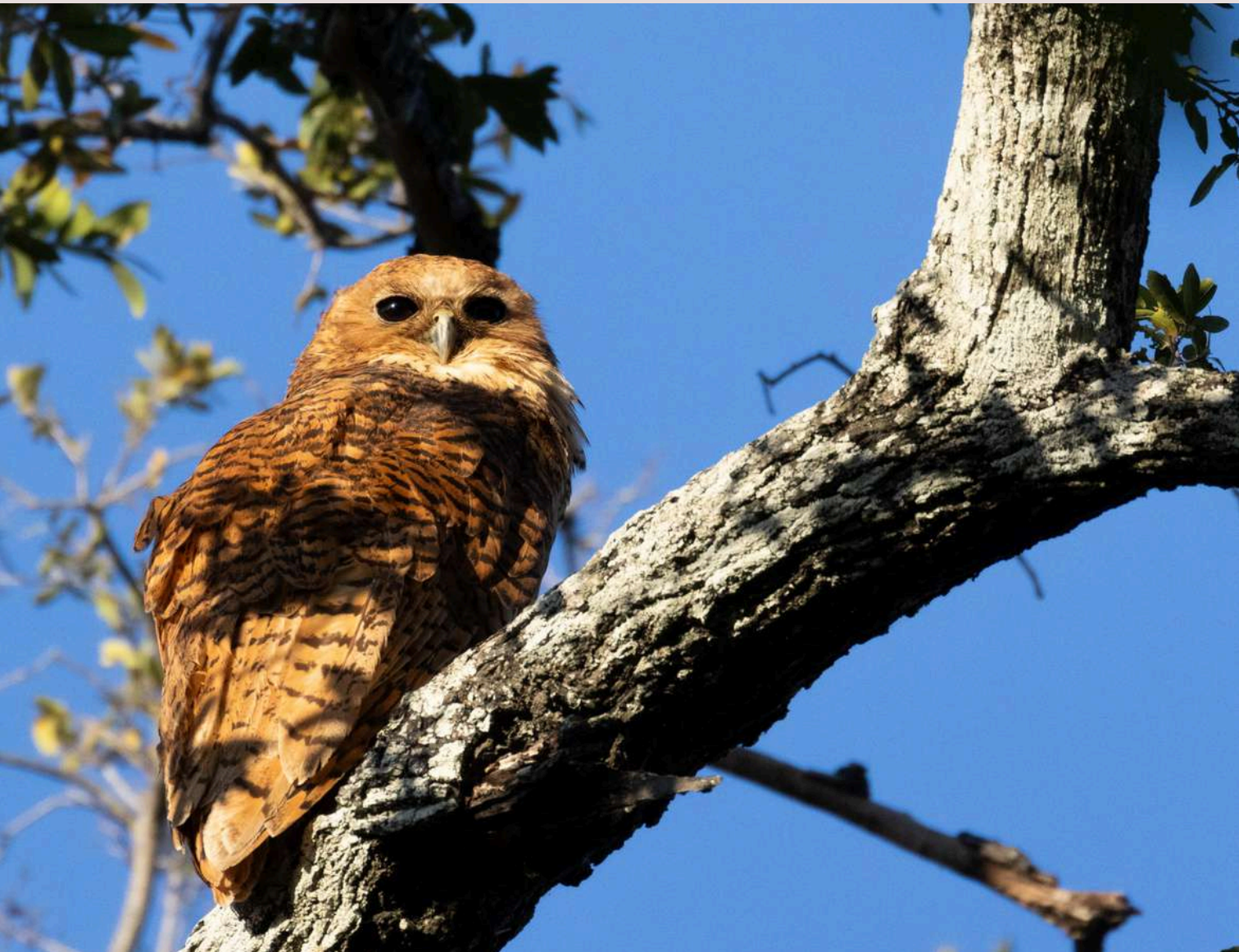
Later on in the day we spent some time in some mixed miombo woodland and had a great sighting of five Souza's Shrike, many Pale Flycatcher and Fawn-coloured Lark, Southern Black Tit before time caught up with us to make it to the Mohembo border to cross into Botswana and catch our boat transfer into Xaro Lodge. Along the way into Botswana we had our first view of Magpie Shrikes.





Day 12: **Botswana**

A beautiful chorus started early by the White-browed Robin-Chat, improved by Greater Swamp Warbler, Little Rush Warbler, Chirping Cisticola, Hadada Ibis. Multiple types of Heron flying up and down the waterwater of the Okavango delta. We started walking from camp just at sunrise and came across Swamp Nightjar, Holoub's Golden Weaver, Green Wood Hoopoe and a fantastic sighting of Pel's Fishing Owl. We headed back for breakfast before jumping on the boat to explore further. Wattled Crane flew over the boat to start off proceedings! What a treat. Giant, Pied and Malachite Kingfisher gave us great photos. Other lovely birds encountered were Goliath, Black, and Rufous-bellied Heron, Little, Yellow-billed and Great Egret, White-fronted Bee-eater, African Fish Eagle, African Marsh Harrier, Chirping Cisticola, White-backed Night and Black crowned Night Heron. We birded around the garden after lunch to pick up Red-billed and Brown Firefinch, Marico Sunbird, African-barred Owlet, Black-collared Barbet. We also saw Bushbuck, Nile Monitor Lizard and Peter's Epauletted Bat. Our afternoon boat trip produced African Snipe and Yellow-billed Oxpecker.





## Day 13: Botswana to Mahangu

In the morning we went on another walk to try to get visuals of Greater Swamp Warbler with no luck. We did get another Wattled Crane fly over before picking up the usual birds around camp which totalled 47 in just under an hour. After our boat transfer we got back into our vehicle and headed to the border to enter back into Namibia. Before the border we picked up Red-billed Oxpecker and Magpie Shrike. Once we were in Namibia we had lunch inside the Mahangu National Park and viewed Buffalo, Red Letchwe, Common Reedbuck, Elephant, Kudu and Giraffe. We went back into the national park and did the river loop to pick up better photos of some species including Little Bee-eater, Purple Heron, African and Plain-backed Pipit, Wattled Crane and Spur-winged Goose. Along the way were many Hippo, Nile Crocodiles, Vervet Monkey, Baboon, Common Impala and Tsessebe. At night we viewed a pair of African Wood Owl and Square-tailed Nightjar.







Day 14: **Mahangu**

This morning we decided to leave early and be inside the park at sunrise and on the way we saw African Snipe displaying in the marshland. It was a great choice to go early as we found three lions before sunrise. We proceeded to follow them down the road for kilometres - only us and the large cats. After an hour and a half they sat down to sun themselves and we moved on. Such a special sighting and arguably our most favourite cat sighting because of the private and intimate view we had of them. We then managed to see the Yellow morph Crimson-breasted Shrike, Black-faced babbler, Tawny Eagle, Orange-breasted Bushshrike and Yellow-fronted Canary. White-backed, White-headed and Lappet-faced Vulture also soared onto the list. In the afternoon we took a boat cruise and picked up Greater-painted Snipe, Black Heron, Wattled Crane, common Sandpiper, Goliath Heron to name a few. At night we tried for Marsh Owl to no end but we did see Lesser Galago.







Day 15: **Mahangu to Katima Mulilo**

Today we had a few targets for the region which we gave a good go with Sharp-tailed Starling, Rufous-bellied Tit, Racket-tailed Roller and Southern Ground Hornbill all in the bag by lunch. At the Kwando river we stopped for a stretch break and added Grey-rumped Swallow, Lesser and Greater Striped Swallow, Little Swallow and Chinspot Batis to the list. We arrived late afternoon into camp and decided to head out to a lagoon to have a crack at finding Lesser Jacana - to no avail. That evening we were greeted by Schalow’s Turaco and another African Wood Owl. We enjoyed an ice cold beer and shower before dinner.





## Day 16: Katima Mulilo

African Wood Owl greeted us before sunrise at the lodge and after breakfast we got some shots of a Schalow's Turaco before going to view the Pale-throated Greenbuls (Yellow-throated Leafloves) and also picked up Collared Sunbird, African Golden Oriole, African Finfoot and a Wood Duck. We then went to explore the wetlands on the banks of the Zambezi river which gave us Bearded Scrub-Robin, Retz's Helmetshrike, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Red-billed Firefinch, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Black-collared Barbet, Trumpeter Hornbill and Southern Black Tit. In the afternoon we did a boat cruise on the Zambezi to target African Finfoot which thanks to Curt from Camp Turaco we found quite quickly. After a slow approach the Finfoots produced a wonderful sighting of a female and an immature. Along the way we heard the droning song of the Grey-headed Bushshrike but could not manage a view of the bird. Other species included Giant, Pied and malachite Kingfisher, Hamerkop, White-fronted Bee-eater, Little Sparrowhawk, White-crowned Lapwing and at dusk - African Skimmers hunting.









Day 17: Katima Mulilo to Zimbabwe

This day was also going to be a big one with two borders to cross - but WHAT an incredible day it was. We had an early departure from Katima to make the Ngoma border post crossing. We picked up Southern Ground Hornbill again before having a private boat cruise on the Chobe River in Kasane, Botswana. Birds were everywhere, lenses panning and tilting, shutters snapping. The memory cards filled up with the most amazing photo opportunities of birds in flight for the trip. The big target was Slaty Egret which we eventually found - other species included Kingfishers, African Fish Eagle hunting White-faced Whistling Duck chicks. Purple, Black, Goliath, Rufous-bellied Heron, Collared Pratincole, Egrets, Cormorants, Long-toed lapwing. Buffalo herds, Elephant herds, Giraffe drinking at waters edge and massive Nile Crocodiles added to the day’s viewings. We enjoyed lunch alongside the Chobe river before heading to Kazangula and into Zimbabwe. We decided to go to Victoria Falls for the golden hours before checking in which was really well worth it including a magic view of a Trumpeter Hornbill flying through the mist of Mosi-a-toya (smoke that thunders) from the Zambian to Zimbabwean side of the Falls.







Day 18: **Zimbabwe**

We went on an early morning boat cruise on the Zambezi that produced White-backed Night Heron, African Skimmer, Hooded Vulture, Cut-throat Finch, Spectacled Weaver, White-fronted Bee-eaters and African Finfoot. We decided after our late breakfast to head into the Zambezi National Park to explore the Mopane Woodland and river loops for the rest of the day. We had great sightings of Collared Palm Thrush, African Golden Oriole, Bee-eaters, Meyer's Parrot, Red-winged Starling, Southern Black Tit, a lot of Elephant, Giraffe, Kudu, Waterbuck and Cut-throat Finch. We arrived back to the hotel to give the gardens one last scan and gained Arrow-marked Babbler, Amethyst, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Black-headed Oriole and African Yellow White-eye before the sun set.









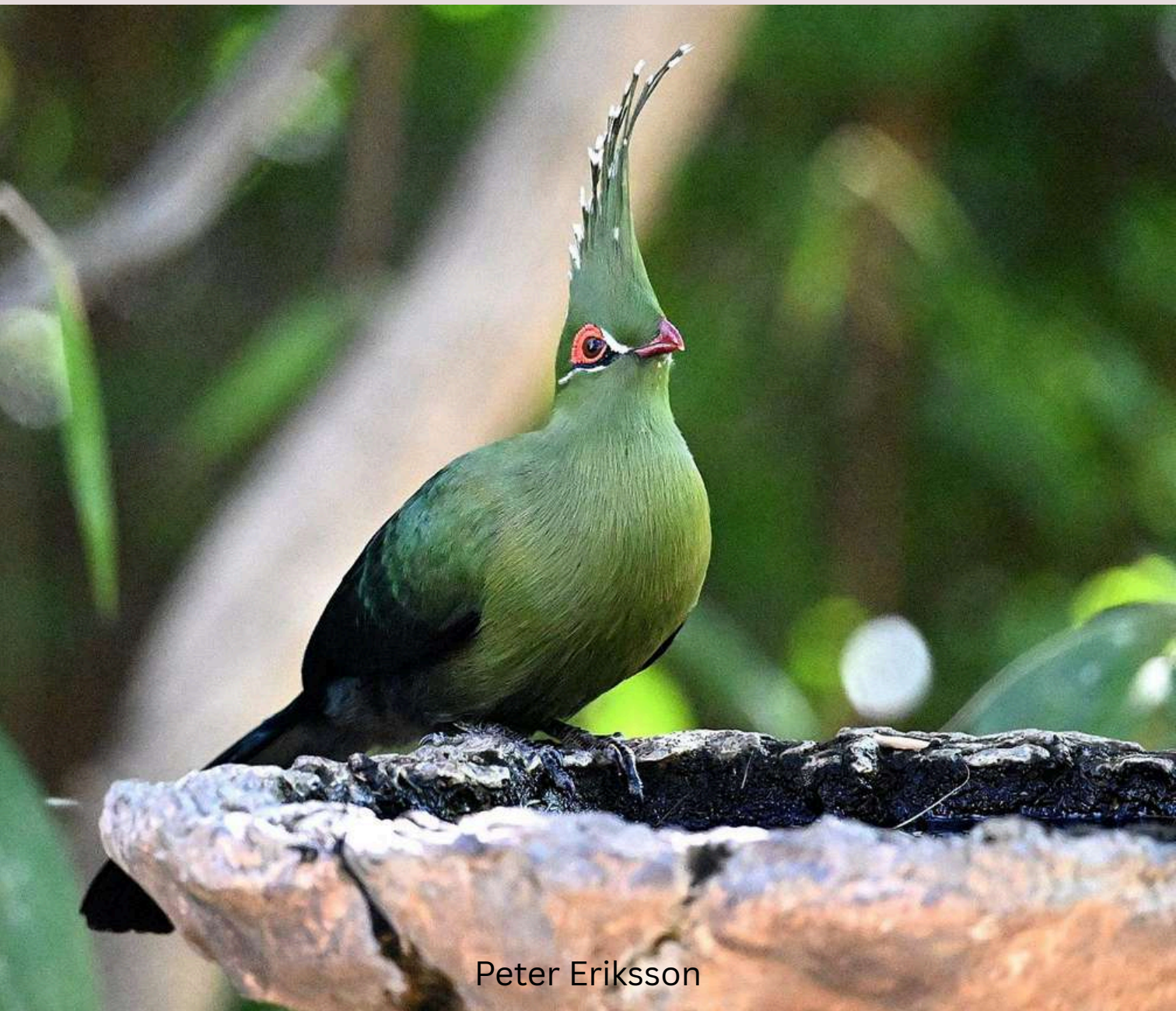


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## Day 19: **Departure Day**

In conclusion the total bird list ended on 354 species with some favourites being Souza's Shrike, Pel's Fishing Owl, Herero Chat, Cape Gannet, Hartluab's Spurfowl, Secretarybird, African Finfoot and the Yellow morph Crimson-breasted Shrike. The mammal highlights were tough to choose from but did include Humpback Whale in Walvis Bay, the two Leopard cubs in Etosha National Park, the three Lions in Mahangu National Park and Lesser Galagos on Onguma Private Reserve.







Peter Eriksson



Text & photos by Timothy Smith