

Tour Report

Wonders of Namibia: A Photographic Safari

16 September – 1 October 2025

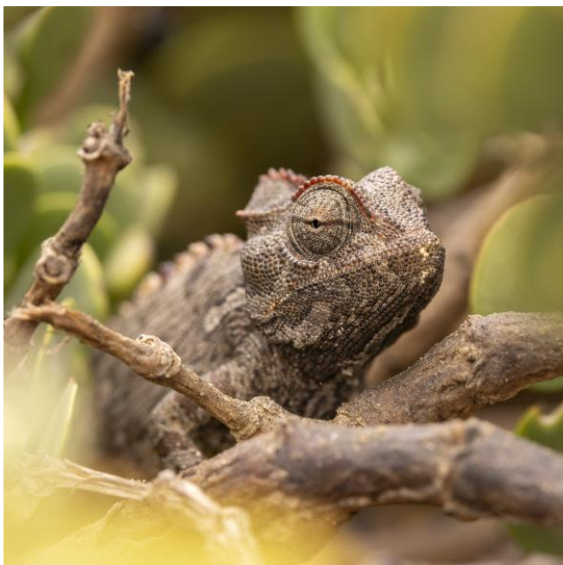
Elephant



Brown hyena pup



Namaqua Chameleon



Lion



Compiled by Emma Healey

Tour Leaders: Emma Healey
Local guide: Brian
Photos by Emma Healey (unless stated)

Sunday/ Monday 14&15 September 2025

Day 1/2:

We arrived this morning in Windhoek and after a long queue at customs, we were off to pick up the rest of the group. We were quickly united and after a brief coffee stop, it was off to our first lodge – Okonjima. The drive took around two hours and we arrived just after 14:00 for some lunch.

This afternoon we went out for our first game drive in the 22,000-hectare property with our guide, Opari. We drove along to a lovely spot overlooking a huge escarpment area. Opari was tracking one of the collared leopards as we had heard that one had been spotted nearby. We were joined by white tailed shrikes and were then visited by a small troop of chacma baboons. From our vantage point, we could see wildebeest, kudu, impalas and springbok grazing.

We drove down on to the plains, where we passed shy steenbok and a herd of red hartebeest in the grass close to all the grazing herbivores who then ran through the plains.



We drove to the waterhole and as we stopped, we realised that Vamos, a beautiful female leopard, was lying on the raised bank by the car.



Unfortunately she had a collar, so we were trying to get some images where you couldn't see it and as she moved around, we noticed that she was distracted by something behind us. Opari looked in his mirror and a brown hyena was perched atop the bank, walking down and crossing behind our vehicle.

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We turned the vehicle and followed the hyena, who was highlighted by some stunning late afternoon sunlight, before going into the grass and lying down.



As we watched to see if it would get up again, another one came out of the bushes and walked towards it! For a few wonderful minutes, we watched them walking through the grass and then after disappearing into the bushes, they reappeared heading towards the water. Unfortunately by this point the sun had gone in, but it was fantastic to watch them walking and resting, uninhibited and not at all bothered by our presence.



We had a quick drink close to the waterhole as we watched them, before making our way back for dinner.

Tuesday 16 September 2025

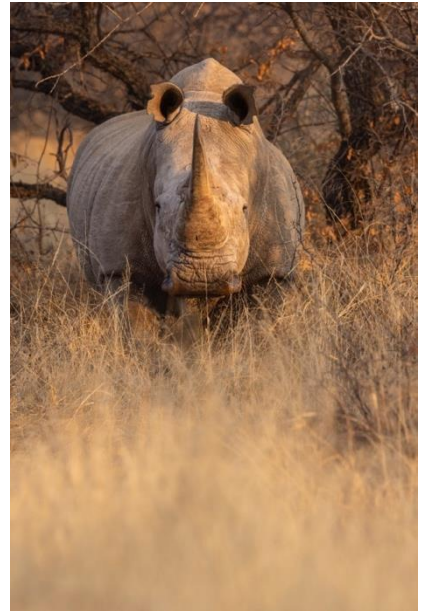
Day 3:

This morning, we left at 6:15, slightly earlier than normal to try and make the most of the sunrise. We drove into the reserve and quickly came across a brown hyena drinking from one of the man-made water holes. We followed it, but unfortunately it went straight into the bush so we had to carry on as it was too dense to follow. We drove slightly further as the sun appeared over the horizon, trying to find something to shoot in front of it to make the most of it. Unfortunately, a couple of shy steenboks were all

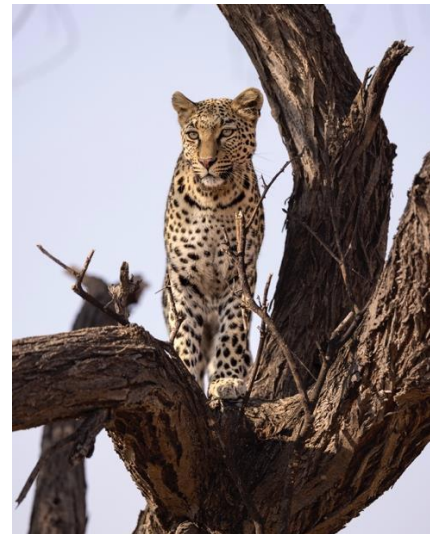
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we could see, but we had a message from the rhino trackers that they found some close to where we were, so we drove towards them. After a couple of minutes, we came around a corner to find them nibbling on some bushes by the road. We saw the first male in the open and then quickly found the second one, his brother, crossing the road. Initially they went and hid in the dry riverbed which was difficult to access but luckily for us they fairly quickly crossed the road and started to tussle in the open behind a tree. We watched them for a while enjoying the bushes and with one of them resting on the termite mound.



They were obviously quite tired as one lay down as the other one was resting on the mound so after a while we decided we would carry on and see what else was about. As we turned the corner, our driver Opari spotted leopard sitting in the corner of the road. We took a few shots of her looking at us and then she walked down the road into the dry riverbed, coming up to where the rhinos were. There was then a really interesting interaction where she could obviously smell the rhinos and they were very aware that she was there, so we watched to see their behaviour. The rhinos chased her off and she continued to walk parallel to the road for a while before jumping in a tree to get a better view of what was around and then jumped down to go and find some breakfast.



Our guide said her name was Tisa which means “you’re mine” and she’s around two years old. She was very small and she looked quite young. She did have a collar which was quite obvious but it was wonderful to see her walking in such a relaxed way.

On our way back to camp, we drove past a small acacia tree and there was a juvenile Verreaux’s eagle owl sitting in the low branches. Unfortunately, as we tried to get closer to get an unrestricted view it flew off so we went to the tree it had gone to, but unfortunately, it was quite tricky to get a good angle. Still, it’s always good to see them in the daytime. We also made a couple of little stops for a pale chanting goshawk and swallow-tailed bee-eaters before the light got too harsh.

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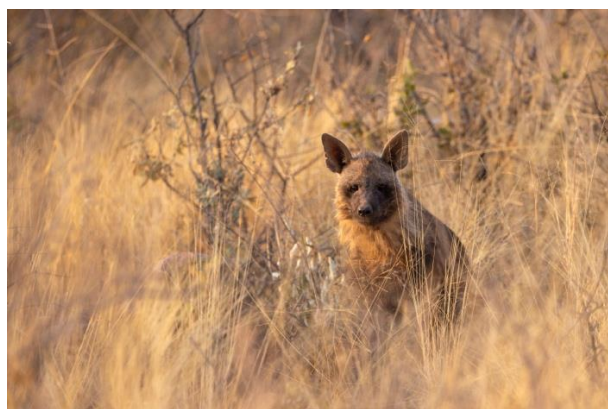


During the lunch break, there was plenty to see around the lodge, whether it was warthogs or sand lizards visiting the waterhole by the main area or butterflies and birds in the trees around camp.



After a rest, we left again for our afternoon drive at around 16:00. We drove into the reserve, passing a lovely herd of kudu, some sandgrouse, korhaans and common quails that kept hopping out of the grass and into the undergrowth.

The aim of the afternoon was to visit a brown hyena den that Opari knew about but we knew it wouldn't be active until close to sunset so we drove around the reserve, making our way there later on. On the way up the rocky roads towards the den, we came across one brown hyena in the road walking towards us in gorgeous light. It moved off into the scrub so we carried on. Soon after we saw another ahead of us on the road, but it ran away from us so was obviously more skittish. We continued slowly and, in the end, found that it had left the road and was waiting a safe distance back in the rocks for us to pass.



We went to the den, where one of the sub adult cubs was lying asleep. It sat up a few times to see what we were up to then went back to its resting position. Soon afterwards, an adult hyena approached and

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greeted the sleeping one. Not long after that - a third appeared! Opari thought perhaps it was the mother and two older cubs. They played and greeted each other briefly before making their way in front of us on to the road and then approaching inquisitively. In the end they went around us, crossing the dam that has been built to create a water hole and went to drink. The light was poor but we managed to get a few final shots with lovely reflections before heading back to camp. On our way we ran into another hyena and a couple of scrub hares before arriving back at camp for dinner.



Wednesday 17 September 2025

Day 4

This morning we decided to drive to a different hyena den, where Opari had heard there were young cubs (about 6 weeks old) but they hadn't been seen yet. There was no sign of mum or cubs, so we sat for an hour or so but then decided to move on as there was no activity. The area was beautiful, with lots of tall grass and long open areas along the bush line. We drove past a group of three oryx and some shy kudus, including a baby. Then came upon a large male rhino eating, who was very relaxed.



As well as the ungulates enjoying the grass, there was good bush coverage and a large number of red billed quelea flying in huge flocks around the area.

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We drove to a viewpoint to check activity at a waterhole, but there was not much going on. Suddenly we spotted a tawny eagle eating a dove and it flew closer to where we were, so we had a good view for a while, before heading back to camp. On our way, we found a black winged kite, which was eating a rodent on a low branch – it was a successful hunting morning for the birds! Just before we arrived back, we passed the herd of giraffe and they had a tiny baby, that Opari thought was only a few days old.



This afternoon we started again at the hyena den, but there was still no activity so we drove towards the nearby den by the dam, where we had been yesterday. As we arrived, we came across the white rhino we had seen earlier lying by the water - he'd obviously been for a dip as he had mud on his side to make him look two toned. We went up on to the dam wall, but there was no sign of hyenas around the den, so we drove along the road for a while in case they were further down. We found a swallow-tailed bee-eater and another tawny eagle enjoying the afternoon sun, but not much else so we drove back towards the den.



We came across one hyena in the road but she kept on walking up into the rocks. As we passed the den, there was one out but lying hidden. We checked on the rhino and he was up, so we drove round and watched him drink from the waterhole and then he walked backwards, bothered by something, and as

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he did, we spotted a brown hyena pop up at the top of the ridge. The hyena walked along the damn, behind the rhino – what a duo! It went down to the water and drank before disappearing, presumably off to start hunting for dinner.



We decided it was time to return to the first den, where we were hoping the cubs would come out. As we approached, we saw that the mother had returned to the den which was a very good sign. We arrived and she was sleeping in the shade of the bush and luckily we didn't have to wait too long as after about 10 minutes a pair of ears appeared above the sandy wall of the den and soon after a cub emerged and started to approach the Mum.



They greeted each other and then the cub continued to play and amuse itself while Mum slept. It took quite a while for the second cub to emerge, but in the end it did and we spent a joyful hour and a half watching the cubs playing together, interacting with Mum and generally having fun.



As we were about to leave because the sun had gone down, we spotted another hyena coming towards us on the road. It looked like she had seen the other three who were by this point resting in the road so she went in a wide circle approaching from the side. Mum was aware of her presence and was keeping

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an eye on the intruder, so the consensus was that it was unlikely that anything would happen to harm the cubs. We returned to the lodge for dinner.



Thursday 18 September 2025

Day 5

This morning we went towards the area where we'd seen Vamos the leopard and the brown hyenas on the first evening. We passed a lot of plains zebra, wildebeest and kori bustards en route, and an oryx that uncharacteristically posed for us. A yellow billed hornbill flew up from the ground into the low branch of a tree with a huge grasshopper in its bill, so it was entertaining watching it try and figure out the best way to eat it!



We continued looking for Vamos as Opari said she had a cub in the mountains, so we thought it was worth a try. There was no sign of her near the waterhole, so we went to the mountain to look at her cave, but unfortunately we still had no luck. We sat for a few minutes watching a big troop of chacma baboons messing around on the rocks and trees as the top of the mountain. After a while, we continued up the hill through the valley, where we found a scrub robin singing atop a bush, a kori bustard crossing the plains.

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As we were returning to camp, we stopped for some very cooperative mountain zebras posing in the grass. We passed by two black backed jackals heading the other way and just before the car park we came upon a beautiful ground agama basking in the morning sun on the top of a termite mound.



After a quick breakfast, it was time to grab our things and make our way north to Onguma, our next camp. We arrived and went straight for lunch on arrival and had some time to settle in and explore the area before our first activity.

Later this afternoon, we met Gordon, our guide for the next few days, and went out on our first sundowner drive in the reserve. Out on the open plains, we came across a pair of secretary birds kicking the grass to encourage the insects out, and along with another vehicle, we discovered some lions sleeping nearby.

The lions began walking towards us and Gordon suggested they were likely to be heading to the nearest waterhole, which was at the Fort. We drove towards it and luckily were in the perfect spot on the road when they walked towards us and crossed towards the water. We were able to get some lovely images of them. There were five cubs in total, three were five months old and two were four months old.

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Thankfully the Fort team were happy with us coming into the lodge and using the terrace to view and photograph the lions at the waterhole, so we spent some time there before heading off for sundowners, during which we were visited by jackals and sand grouse.



It must have been the day for jackals as we also had them visit the camp waterhole over dinner.

Friday 19 September 2025

Day 6

This morning we went out with Brian for our first drive in Etosha NP. On our way up the main road, we passed an elephant bathing in a waterhole with some lovely green surroundings.



We started at Klein Namutoni, the closest waterhole and as we arrived, we came across a beautiful cheetah running away from three jackals at the waterhole in the beautiful morning light. Unfortunately it

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didn't hang around, but ran off into the bush, likely to find somewhere to shelter for the day. It was lovely to see, even if briefly, as they are not seen very often.



Other than our first sightings of black faced impalas grazing, there was nothing of note on the loop and unfortunately we just missed two leopards at the waterhole so we continued on. As ever, the waterholes were full of a variety of animals drinking and bathing. A large herd of kudu, along with zebra and an elephant were bathing in Tsubeb waterhole surrounded by a number of birds, including black winged stilts, and impala.



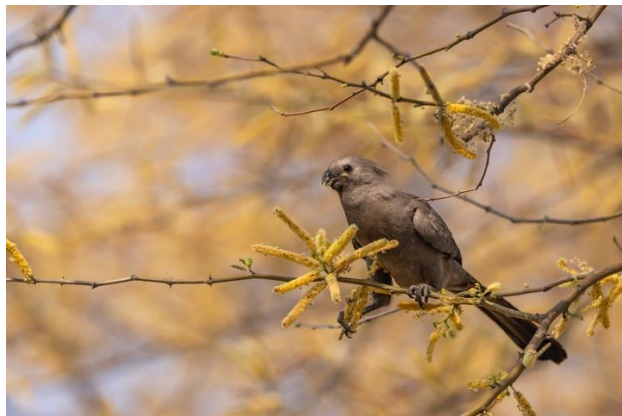
We heard reports of two large male lions at 'Stink water' so we drove there, but they were fast asleep by the road and didn't move. We made a quick stop at a waterhole on the way back, where we had a lovely springbok and a large male elephant walking straight towards us.

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There was a large group of elephants dustbathing and drinking at the waterhole by Namutoni, but the light was quite harsh by this point so we went back to camp. During the lunch break, there is always plenty to see around the grounds. As the light was quite bright today, it was a good opportunity for some black and white silhouettes, and today we played with some of the dragonflies around the waterhole, as well as some of the go away birds enjoying the flowers in the trees around camp.



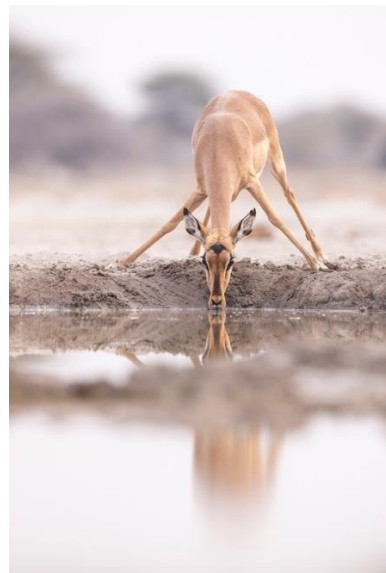
This afternoon was our first session in the Onkolo hide. As we arrived, there were two elephants at the waterhole, which was also a lot fuller this year and had some grass growing.

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A couple of giraffe, kudu, zebra and impala follow quickly along with said couple of other warthog families.



We were treated to a steady stream of visits throughout the afternoon, with go away birds and blacksmith lapwings being present throughout. A couple of giraffes approached and managed to drink, giving us some lovely photo opportunities as they licked their lips afterwards. We tried some colour and some black and white, something we can do when we have a good chunk of time in the hide.

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Some smaller birds visited, including guinea fowl, red billed spurfowl and a number of different waxbills, pytillas and red eyed bulbuls.



A family of warthogs and a herd of kudu carefully approached and drank, and we observed a Kori bustard wait a long time to finally feel brave enough to drink some water.



As the light was fading, we were visited by a scrub hare, who bounded in from our left, had a quick drink and then ran off again.



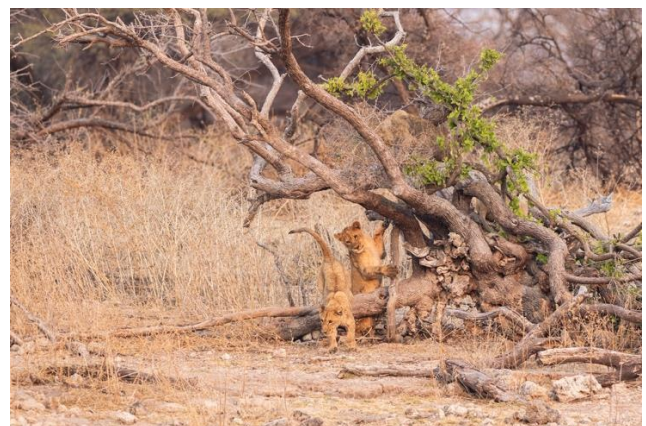
Saturday 20 September 2025

Day 7

This morning, we had an early breakfast and then went out with Gordon on a morning drive in the reserve. Some lions had been spotted early on by the fence line, so we made our way towards that area and came across a male coming out of the bush and onto the open. He walked across the plain and we drove around towards the tented camp, where he seemed to be heading, and managed to find him as he came out of the bushes briefly.



We continued towards the tented camp, where we found the females and the cubs drinking and then playing on tree stumps, so we went into the tented camp and watched from the terrace for a few minutes.



We heard reports that two white rhinos, that had recently been relocated here, and were close to the tented camp, so we drove to find them. We found the two males - Hendrick and Cornelius - and were

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able to spend quite a bit of time watching them grazing and walking close to us, before we made our way back to camp for a break and lunch.



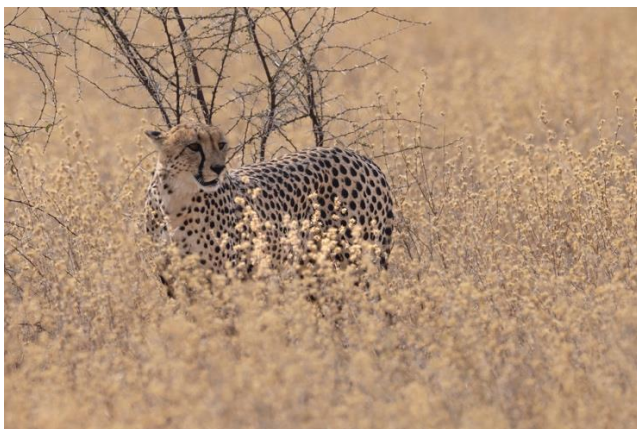
As we arrived back at camp, we spotted a lone banded mongoose running around close to reception. A few of us followed it and watched it explore, digging by the path, and it was successful, digging up a huge beetle and eating it.



This afternoon we went out again for an afternoon drive with Gordon in Etosha NP. As we were leaving camp, we were able to photograph some yellow billed hornbills enjoying the shade and a Bennett's woodpecker hopping around the tree next to the vehicle, so we were able to grab a couple of shots before we left.



We heard that there was a female lion with a kill in a bush so we drove towards the area, but could see a huge number of vehicles gathered around her. We managed a quick look, but there was no clear view for photographs, so we decided to move on. We also heard about three cheetah brothers lying in the grass about 20 minutes away, so we decided to make our way there in case they moved. Unfortunately, there were also several vehicles on the road by the cheetah, but there was very little movement so after a while most of them left. One of the cheetah boys raised his head and sat up, but then lay back down. Reports came through about two leopards not too far away, so we gave it a few more minutes to see if the cheetahs got up, but they didn't, so we went towards Namutoni but missed them so we returned to the cheetahs for the final time just in case. We had another couple of brief views, but the light started to dim, so we made our way back to the gate.



On our way back, we came upon a huge herd of elephants crossing the road and we were treated to some brief dust bathing before they went into the bush, disturbing the lioness with the kill as they entered, but we had to leave them to it and go to the gate before sunset.

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Sunday 21 September 2025

Day 8

This morning, after breakfast, we were back in the hide for our morning session. A large flock of guinea fowl started us off, and then a herd of black-faced impala and zebra came to drink.



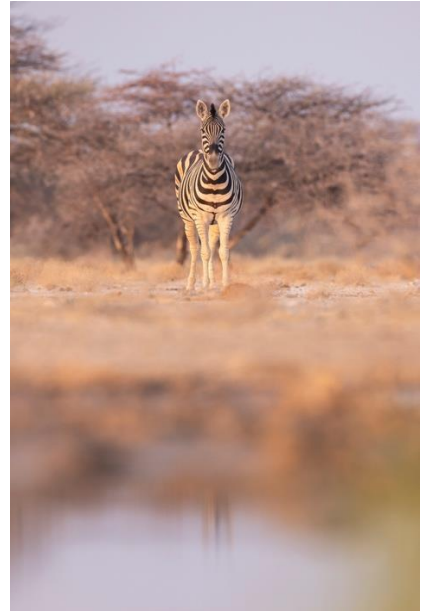
Some of the impala were play fighting, giving us some lovely opportunities for images.



A couple of giraffes came to the waterhole to drink. Before they approached the waterhole, we were able to use some of the bushes for foreground. Two kori bustards were then circling the water, with some lovely reflections in the morning light.

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It took the giraffes some time to finally drink, but they did along with some warthogs, zebra and a white-backed vulture.



As well as the usual waxbills, blacksmith lapwings and other small birds, there was plenty to see and photograph before we made our way back to camp to prepare for our departure to Ongava.

It was set to be a long, hot drive across Etosha today to get to Ongava. We made a quick stop at Klein Namutoni, but there wasn't much around as a large herd of eland was just leaving the area. We found a couple of lovely rock agamas by the waterhole before we left.



We made a quick stop at Namutoni to grab some drinks and snacks. As we were stopped, Brian mentioned that sometimes a pearl-spotted owl is seen in the area so we started to search the trees and we managed to find it for a couple of quick images before it flew off into a much higher tree.



We stopped at some waterholes along the way through the park, where there was a lovely mix of elephants, impala and kudu at most of them. As it was such a hot day, many of them were dust bathing, drinking and enjoying the water. At the last waterhole, there was a huge herd of elephants going to and from the water and interacting with each other.



We had seen a newborn springbok the day before, close to where the cheetah brothers were, so we were really pleased when we saw it again, that it had survived the night and was still with mum. We also made a quick stop for an African hoopoe, which flew in front of us, then came to rest in a mopani tree, hiding from the sun.

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We arrived at Ongava Lodge late afternoon, in good time for some sunset photography around the lodge. It's a great time to photograph the rock hyrax living around the rock piles, and we had an additional treat with a pair of klipspringers, close to the rooms.



There is a fantastic variety of rocks and trees around the lodge, providing a number of opportunities for wildlife that live there, including the rock hyrax and different species of skink.



After the sun had set, we sat down for dinner and not long after, a black rhino appeared at the waterhole. A couple of us went down for a closer view.

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Monday 22 September 2025

Day 9

This morning we went for our first outing with Ronny into Etosha. It's always interesting to note the differences in the landscape and how that affects the sightings. We started on the reserve for sunrise, but it was quiet, so after stopping for some impala, we made our way to the gate as soon as the sun was up. There was a call to say that there were some mating lions at the waterhole. As we arrived, we saw them walk towards a bush and lie down, so we waited and after around 45 minutes, they got up, mated quickly and then lay down again, so we decided it was time to move on!

In the bushes close to the vehicle, some butterflies were eating the flowers and a couple of grey hornbills flew over, stopping briefly.



As we were driving along one of the detour roads (to avoid roadworks), we were given a heads-up that a spotted eagle owl was sleeping by a fallen weaver nest. Even when we found the weaver nest, we couldn't see the owl, but in the end we managed to identify it right inside the nest. Amazing camouflage!

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As we were stopped there, we watched and photographed some lovely butterflies, including brown-veined whites and acreas and a tiny black-chested prinia making the most of the insects!



Further along the road, we found a lone oryx posing beautifully in the grass, a korhaan and an ostrich, which both seemed to be playing hide and seek!





We went to Okaukuejo camp for a break and to see if there was any activity at the ground squirrel burrows and/or the waterhole. It was quite bright by this time, so the light was tricky but it was lovely to have some playful squirrels posing and there was a large herd of oryx, springbok and a white-winged tern among other things at the waterhole.

We had breakfast and some special rhino biscuits as it was International Rhino Day, so we celebrated with coffee, biscuits and a boxed breakfast before making our way back to camp.

We left slightly earlier this afternoon, as there is always a celebration on Rhino Day due to all the fantastic conservation being done at Ongava. We went to Andersson's camp for a presentation and celebration of all the team's efforts before starting our afternoon drive. A lovely white-bellied sunbird was posing outside the lodge, so we spent a few minutes photographing it before heading off.



We drove around the reserve, but we were blocked by a bull elephant and had to choose another route. We came out into the open and found him and another male dust bathing and eating the vegetation as the light was getting very nice. Slightly further on, we came across a large tower of giraffes who seemed to be enjoying the late afternoon sunshine.

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As we were looking for somewhere to stop for sundowners, we spotted a mother white rhino with a young calf, only a few months old, so we went in that direction. The sun had already gone down, so the light was difficult, but we stopped and had our sundowners at the edge of the grassy plain where they were grazing. It was a fantastic way to end International Rhino Day!



Tuesday 23 September 2025

Day 10

A few of us had heard some lions calling during the night and early this morning, so we went on a hunt. As we left, we had a call from camp to say that there was lion at the waterhole, so we flew around towards the waterhole, but he had already walked into the bush. We found him walking down a trail and positioned ourselves so that he might walk towards us, but, as cats are prone to doing, he lay down in the shade.

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We continued to drive around the tracks, but nothing seemed keen to pose for any photos. We passed a number of kudu, springbok, a herd of very shy eland and some oryx but we couldn't find any more lions and there were no rhinos visible. We stopped for a while with a group of four bull elephants, watching as they ate and dusted themselves before going to the waterhole. While we stopped there to watch them, we found a lovely rock agama resting on top of a fallen tree.



As we arrived back at camp, there was a large herd of elephants at the waterhole by the lodge, a lovely sighting either from the terrace or from the hide.



During the lunch break, some of us photographed the rock hyrax and a bearded woodpecker around the lodge.

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The rock hyrax put on a very good show, with one yawning, which made it look like it belonged in a horror movie (!) and a couple of dassie rats popped out as well for a bit of variety.



This afternoon we went out in the reserve along the boundary road, alongside the fence to Etosha. It didn't seem like there was much going on, but we soon received a report of a lion close by so we went towards it. It was a large male, who was sleeping by the road. We waited for a while as he slept and as the sun lowered, he woke up and walked right past our vehicle. As he opened his eyes, we could see that one was badly damaged, which was likely from a fight.



We heard reports of two white rhinos, so we drove to the waterhole where Ronny thought they may be going and saw them coming out of the bush. The sun had already set, so photography was tricky, so a few of us tried some panning, which was the best option in the situation and it's nice to try something a little different.



We stopped for some brief sundowners, but as it was getting quite dark we made our way back to the lodge. As we were coming down the road, we realised there was a large breeding herd of elephants in front of us, as well as in the grass on either side of the road. We stopped the vehicle and turned off the lights to see if they would move off, but they were interested in us so they started to approach. Luckily after a while, they realised we were not a threat and not very interesting, so they went off into the bushes and we were able to pass and make our way back for dinner.

On the way back, we had very brief glimpses of a honey badger and a bushy-tailed mongoose.

During dinner, we were treated to views of a crash of black rhinos at the waterhole and visits from a mix of black and white rhinos during the evening.

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Wednesday 24 September 2025

Day 11

Those who were keen decided to start the morning at the hide at 06:15 ish, while it was still dark. Initially, there was a good mix of sandgrouse and guinea fowl, and as the light improved, more guinea fowl came. At around 08:10, the birds started alarming and two lionesses appeared and drank for ten minutes or so before heading off to lie in the shade. It looked like they had eaten recently, as they had blood stains around their mouths. It almost takes your breath away being so close to big cats and them not being bothered by your presence. What a treat.



We came up for breakfast and then some more excitement - someone had found the elusive black rock hyrax that we'd been told about, so some of us went and photographed it.

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We spent some more time with the rock hyrax, the chameleon and some birds, including the short-toed rock thrush until we left at 09:45.



We arrived at Safarihoek at around 12 noon and were conscious of the smoke in the area. A huge fire had started the day before, slightly north of the property so the smoke was visible, but luckily the fire was being kept outside the reserve.

After some tea at around 16:00 we went for a drive in the reserve with Richard, our guide. The smoke was quite visible, making the sky quite interesting, if a little eerie. As we were driving along looking for wildlife, we suddenly noticed a male lion fast asleep on his back by a tree.



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We drove to a waterhole, where a tower of giraffes was enjoying the vegetation. After driving a little further round, we turned and Richard noticed the giraffes all looking in one direction, so we went over and a male lion was drinking at the waterhole, with a jackal in hot pursuit.



We followed him over the dam wall, got in front of him briefly and watched him go out onto the plains where he lay down for some time in the open, observing everything around him.



There were a large number of giraffes around the area and we saw a number of jackals, so we thought lions must be around. The male was still asleep in the open so we made our way back towards some giraffes in the open, to try and take some images with the sun setting behind them. We saw some lioness tracks so they were somewhere nearby and as we came down the road, a herd of wildebeest and springbok raced past us, so we realised they were trying to hunt. We drove around the tall grass and luckily, we found them and had a couple of lovely portrait opportunities before they set their sights on some wildebeest, so we left them to hunt and made our way back to camp.

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Thursday 25 September 2025

Day 12

This morning, we started at the hide at sunrise. We had a sunrise visit from a giraffe, followed by a couple of kudu and lots of guinea fowl. In the bush next to the hide, we had some lovely visits from small birds, including a golden-breasted bunting in lovely morning light.



We left the hide as a male lion was closeby and we managed to get ahead of him to get some images of him walking towards us. After he went into the bush, we stopped briefly for a yellow mongoose that was standing on its back legs to see what was going on.

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Driving back to the hide, we stopped briefly for a pair of kestrels flying between trees. It looked like a parent and sub adult practicing flying.



We spent some time back in the hide, and although the light was quite bright, we focused on birds in flight, like the Namaqua dove and an agama under the hide, before making our way back to the lodge.



This afternoon, we drove through some of the more dense bush, where we stumbled upon a black rhino bull hidden in the bushes. We stayed with him for around half an hour in case he decided to come out into the open. Unfortunately, he didn't come out, but we were very honoured that he stayed close to us for so long rather than running away.

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We came across a ground squirrel burrow when we came into the open, so we tried to get out and take some ground level shots, but unfortunately they were much more nervous than the ones at Okaukuejo and they disappeared under ground, so we drove back to the lodge enjoying the beautiful sunset.



Friday 26 September 2025

Day 13

It was our last morning at Safarihoek, so we decided to meet at breakfast at around 07:00 to leave at around 08:00. As we arrived for breakfast, we saw some elephants at the waterhole, and as we watched, two lions walked to the waterhole. We were considering whether or not to try to get down to the hide when Richard appeared. As we looked, another five lions were walking to the water, so we decided to hop into the vehicle and make our way down. We were able to grab some lovely shots of them drinking with gorgeous reflections.

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As they left the water, they started to walk through the bush, so we followed them for a few minutes, trying to get some images of them walking towards us through the grass, until we had to head back to the lodge.



We left the lodge at just gone 08:00, with some lovely singing from the team, to head south to Malansrus. Once we'd settled in, we went out on an afternoon elephant tracking drive in the Ugab River. We drove to where the herd of elephants had been seen over the past few days, making a stop en route to see some of the Welwitschia plants on the rock piles.



After a quick stop, we continued until we found the herd of elephants in the riverbed. The herd has 34 elephants, with six bulls and the rest all females and young. The herd had two babies, one seven months old and one 12 months old. They have adapted to eat succulent trees so that they don't need water for three days. We found a couple of elephants eating, but the sun was too strong, so we carried on to find the rest of the herd.

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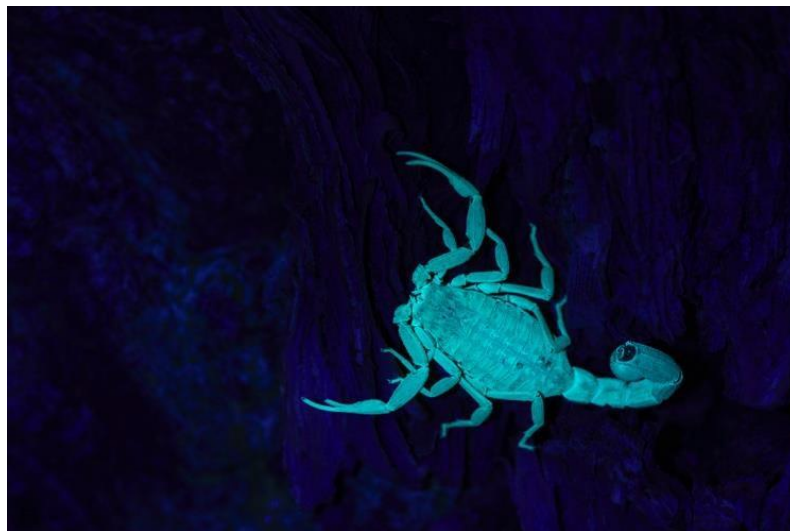
We came upon some of the female elephants in the riverbed, including a grandma, mum and baby and then as we continued, more and more became visible either along the riverbed or close to it, enjoying the succulent trees and grasses.



We were given some fantastic opportunities as the light improved, and we had two adolescents fighting and then finished with two babies playing in the sand as the sun went down. Leaving them as the light dimmed, we made our way back to camp for dinner.



After dark, with a UV light, we went in search of scorpions and found a couple of small ones on the ground, as well as larger ones in the trees.



Day 14

We left after breakfast and drove south along the Skeleton Coast. On our way, we crossed the bridge over the Ugab River, which is the border to Skeleton Coast, and it had some water in it! This is the first time we had seen water here in the last three years - usually elephants have to dig about a metre to get any water. There have been such good rains this year and it has made the area beautiful and green.



We made our way through the desert for around four hours before our first stop at Cape Cross to see the largest colony of Cape fur seals. It's a huge colony, and as we were watching the seals enjoying the water and the shade, a jackal suddenly appeared and made its way through the colony looking for any pups showing weakness, so there was a lot of defensive action by the adults.

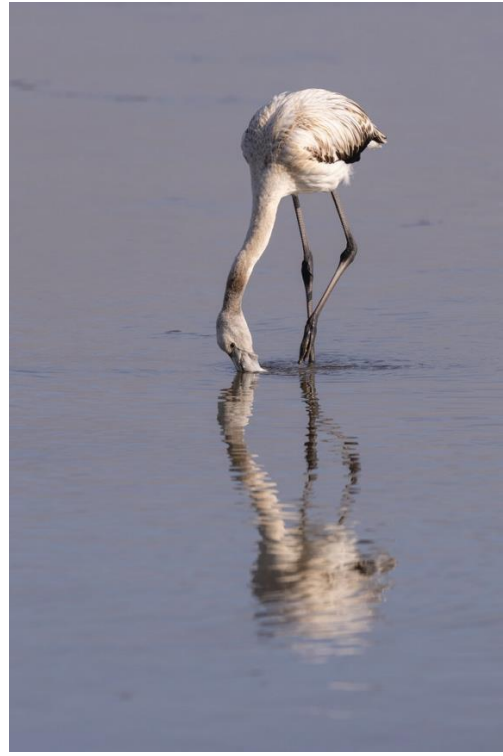


After leaving the colony, we stopped for some lunch by the salt mines, having a walk into the rock piles to look for and photograph some geckos, before continuing we arrived in Swakopmund at around 15:30 with some time to explore before dinner.



Day 15

This morning, we were collected and taken to Walvis Bay, where we met our drivers for the Sandwich Harbour tour. Our first stop was the lagoon, where the greater flamingos were gathered, eating algae from the shallow water.



We watched them for a while, enjoying them eating, interacting and with some lovely reflections.



Driving from Walvis Bay, we left the road and started along the sand, where we entered Namib Naukluft National Park, the biggest in Namibia. The park runs along the coast and it's where the dunes meet the sea. We drove along the coast for some of the trip before making our way more inland to enjoy the dramatic landscapes of the dunes. Even the sand itself is of great interest, with a huge range of colours including bright red from garnet and black from magnetite.



We visited various viewpoints for different vistas, and enjoyed some wildlife that was walking through the sand. Ostriches are regularly seen in the area, but we were very lucky and came upon a family of mum, dad and some very new babies walking through the dunes. For many of us, it was the first time seeing a couple with babies, and it was a real treat seeing them walking through the dunes.



We also passed some oryx, springbok and a pale chanting goshawk. One of our more exciting finds, when we were looking for a shovel-nosed lizard that had disappeared into the Nara bush, was a Nara cricket, endemic to Namib Naukluft National Park, which was munching on a flower by the edge of the bush.



Sandwich Bay was an island first. HMS Sandwich was the name of the ship.

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Sandwich viewpoint and lunch in the lagoon/bay. Sandy Horizons viewpoint and Kodak view.

Monday 29 September 2025

Day 16

This morning, we were picked up by our two private guides, Andrew and JJ (Johannes), to head out on our living desert tour. We made our way through Swakopmund, which was shrouded in thick morning fog, to the start of the dunes, where they gave us an introduction to the Namib Desert - the oldest desert in the world. It's 2000km long and up to 150km wide, and it's filled with wildlife that unexpectedly thrives there.

Our first find was a Namaqua chameleon, nestled in a bush and then a beautiful Palmato gecko that unexpectedly sat very still for us in the morning mist.



Andrew then managed to find a shovel-nosed lizard, which was running around a fair bit at first, but then calmed down, sat still for us and posed on a dune. We drove around through the dunes, passing a number of tok tokkies running up the dunes.



Unfortunately, there was no sign of sidewinder snakes but we stopped for some lovely views of the dunes and as we neared the end of the tour, we came across another Namaqua chameleon walking across the sand towards the shelter of some bushes. Luckily, we were able to capture some lovely images of it with the surrounding landscapes before moving on to the end of the tour, where a trac trac chat perched and posed.

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One of the most common things you see throughout the drive is tok tokkies, which multiply, and as the sun heats up, more and more are seen running up and across the dunes.



We returned to town, where we met Brian and went for some lunch at the Village Café, before setting off to our final destination of Okapuka, around four hours away. We arrived some time before sunset, with some time to explore before dinner and make the most of the late afternoon light.



Tuesday 30 September 2025

Day 17

This morning, we went out on an early morning drive in Okapuka with JP. There is a different mix of wildlife, particularly antelopes, so we were pleased to see a herd of eland, which we hadn't seen yet.

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There were lots of babies! Large numbers of oryx, springbok and southern giraffe made an appearance. They were quite shy, so tended to run away when we got close, but lovely to see them. In the protected area, we came across good numbers of southern giraffes and some of the resident white rhinos, including two sisters and a couple of young ones.



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