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

These areas of southern Africa, with their great mammal herds still intact and an impressive variety of birdlife, provide a glimpse of Africa as it was fifty years ago. Elephant and Lion are common, Black Rhino and Cheetah still occur, and the bird species include such spectulars as Goliath Heron, Slaty Egret, Saddle-billed Stork, African Pygmy-goose, Secretary Bird, Martial Eagle, Blue Crane, Kori Bustard, Black Korhaan, Pel’s Fishing-Owl, Carmine Bee-eater, Monteiro’s Hornbill, Bare-cheeked...
Namibia, Botswana & Zambia, Page 2

**Babbler, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared Waxbill, plus an endemic thrush in every habitat. Photographic opportunities are excellent and ample time is taken for photography. This is an altogether incredible slice of Africa!**

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

**Participants registering for Namibia, Botswana and Zambia by May 1, 2019 will receive a discount of $1,000.**

**August 24-25, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg; Charter to Huab Conservation Area.** Participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 24 and arrive in Johannesburg on August 25 in time to connect to the 10:00 a.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 8145, which is scheduled to arrive in Walvis Bay at 12:15 p.m. (subject to change). Upon arrival and clearing customs, you’ll be met by our local agent and transferred to Swakopmund to join Geoff Lockwood and your fellow participants on a private charter flight to Huab Conservation Area where we’ll begin our exploration of one of the more memorable and unique locations of the trip.

Participants are strongly encouraged to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group by choosing to arrive into Johannesburg or Walvis Bay on August 24 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

**NIGHT (August 25): Huab Lodge, Huab**

**August 26-27, Days 3-4: Huab Conservation Area.** At Huab you may awaken to the frantic calls of the Red-billed Francolin competing with guineafowl and the vociferous White-browed Sparrow-Weavers. An early morning walk along rocky ridges will provide an opportunity to look for Hartlaub’s Francolin, a pair of which may be caught sunning themselves and raucously proclaiming their territory from a prominent position. A Rockrunner may join them and add his warbling melody, while a couple of White-tailed Shrikes fuss around nearby. Additionally, we might catch long views of Monteiro’s Hornbill gliding from tree to tree.

Monteiro’s Hornbill (photo by Geoff Lockwood)
We’ll return to camp for a hearty breakfast before a drive where we hope to see Verreaux’s Eagles, Augur Buzzard, Rock Kestrels, Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Pale-winged Starlings, Speckled Pigeons, Southern White-faced Owl, and Black Storks. We might be able to spot Carp’s Black Tit, Bare-cheeked Babbler, and Crimson-breasted Gonolek (Shrike) when we return to the lodge for lunch.

In addition, there are a variety of waxbills near the lodge, as well as sparrow-weavers and the Gray Go-away-bird. In the afternoon, we’ll drive upriver into a completely different country of plains and dramatic granite kopjes. Here we hope to see Violet Woodhoopoe, African Hoopoe, Gabar Goshawk, and White-browed Sparrow-Weavers. The Pygmy Falcon could be spotted, looking like a sparrow-weaver at first glance, until binoculars pick out the striking raptor features. We may also see the Short-toed Rock-Thrush, African Palm-swifts, Red-faced Mousebirds, and Red-crested Korhaans. On the way back to camp, as it gets dark, a Verreaux’s Eagle-Owl may sit out in the open anticipating his nocturnal activity. We’ll return to the lodge at dusk, in time to see the emergence of a few bats, or the appearance of a Freckled Nightjar enjoying the residual heat of its rocky perch. By this time, the barking geckos start up their evening conversation back and forth across the night.

NIGHTS: Huab Lodge, Huab

August 28, Day 5: Okaukuejo Area; Western Side of Etosha National Park. We depart this morning on a long drive to the Okaukuejo area in the western portion of Etosha National Park, typically reaching the park in time for a late lunch. After settling in, we will bird around camp, spending time observing the procession of game and birds coming to drink at the waterhole next to camp. The scenes at the waterholes in Etosha are so incredible that they should not be seen hurriedly. Typically, we will spend the better part of each morning at one waterhole, returning to camp for lunch and a break before an afternoon game drive. The turnover of animals is phenomenal, as various species have a favorite time to drink. It may be like this scenario from a past tour:
“Just as we arrived a lioness was walking away from the waterhole to join other members of her pride sleeping under a tree. A Tawny Eagle perched atop another tree and soon afterward forty guineafowl came to drink. Minutes later a herd of over a hundred Zebra appeared from our right. Soon the lead Zebra were up to their knees in the water as thirsty members of the herd pressed in from all sides. Suddenly, a Lanner Falcon swooped past and caught a dove. A little later Gemsbok, Wildebeest, and Black-faced Impala moved in to drink. Finally, a pair of Greater Kudu approached the water with extreme caution, but just as they started to drink, one of the Lions raised its head and the Kudu bolted.”

The Okaukuejo area is drier than eastern parts of the park. Arid shortgrass plains border the pan, but most of the area is covered in acacia scrub. Gemsbok, Steenbok, Bat-eared Fox, and Yellow Mongoose are animals seen more frequently here, and the birds include Lappet-faced Vulture, Pale Chanting-Goshawk, Bateleur, Double-banded Sandgrouse (they drink at dusk at the camp waterhole), Double-banded Courser, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, larks, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Barred Bush-Warbler, Chat Flycatcher, Red-headed Finch, and Yellow Canary. The immense, almost unbelievable nests of the Social Weaver can be seen in this area, and Shikras and Gabar Goshawks are often seen dashing through the hordes of seed-eating birds. Night-time viewing at the floodlit waterhole at the edge of camp is justifiably famous and sightings of all the major mammals are possible.

August 29, Day 6: Western Side of Etosha National Park. We will spend the day continuing to explore the western side of Etosha, visiting a number of waterholes in search of the immense variety of birds and animals that occur in this region. Among the special birds on the plains are the Ostrich, Blue Crane (one of the most elegant members of that stately family), Kori Bustard, the handsome White-winged Black Bustard or Korhaan, Secretary Bird, Greater
Kestrel, Double-banded Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Cape Rook, Gray-backed Sparrow-Lark, Anteater-Chat, and the gorgeous Violet-eared Waxbill. We have another chance to enjoy the variety of mammals coming in to drink at the floodlit waterhole on the edge of camp.

**NIGHT: Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha National Park**

**August 30, Day 7: Central and Eastern Etosha.** Today we will head east through Etosha, calling at a number of new waterholes before reaching the central camp—Halali. Moving from west to east in Etosha, the rainfall increases and the woodland becomes more extensive and varied; the animal and birdlife are also somewhat different. The central area around Halali is characterized by dense mopane woodland and offers a number of new bird species including rollers, shrikes, hornbills and owls.

**NIGHT: Halali Camp, Etosha National Park**

**August 31, Day 8: Namutoni Area.** After a walk around camp, we will continue heading east through Etosha towards Namutoni—spending time at a number of waterholes en route. In addition to the constant procession of mammals at the waterholes, the birdlife is especially diverse and conspicuous in the Namutoni region. Burchell’s Sandgrouse drink at the waterholes mid-morning, large raptors like the Martial Eagle and Black-breasted Snake-Eagle are sighted regularly, and Crested and Swainson’s francolins skulk in the thickets. The grounds of the camp are great for small birds and a typical mixed-flock might include the Acacia Pied Barbet, Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Brubru, Marico Sunbird, and Blue Waxbill. Other birds of this region include Red-necked Falcon, Kori and Red-crested Bustards, Meyer’s Parrot, Common Scimitar-bill, White-crowned Shrike, Rattling Cisticola, and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver.
NIGHT: Namutoni Camp, Etosha National Park

**September 1, Day 9: Namutoni Area.** We will continue to explore the eastern side of Etosha, visiting some of the tall woodland growing on the deep red Kalahari sands, and spending time at the various waterholes in this region. Predators are common, and we will search for Leopard, Lion and possibly even Cheetah in this area. Birds—including near-endemics such as Burchell’s Sandgrouse, and Fawn-colored and Eastern Clapper larks—are also targets during our exploration of this fascinating part of Etosha.

NIGHT: Namutoni Camp, Etosha National Park

**September 2, Day 10: To Nxamaseri.** This morning, we will travel to Nxamaseri Lodge on the banks of the Okavango River in far northwestern Botswana. After a charter flight to a bush strip near Bagani in Namibia’s Caprivi Strip, we will complete our trip to the lodge by road and boat—driving through the majestic baobab woodland and floodplains of the Mahango Nature Reserve en route. Both birding and game-viewing are spectacular in this reserve and excitement levels are usually extremely high by the time we reach Nxamaseri. Fed by rains in the Angola highlands, the Okavango River drains into a vast shallow basin in the Kalahari, never reaching the sea. Clumps of palms dot the islands of higher ground, tall trees line the riverbank, and dry brush is entered just back from the water. Amidst this variety of habitats are found most of the African waterbirds and a number of rarely-seen species such as Pel’s Fishing-Owl, Rufous-bellied Heron, Black and Slaty egrets, African Pygmy-goose, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Bradfield’s Hornbill, Swamp (Gabon) Boubou, and many smaller birds. **Note: this is a long travel day—with a charter flight, a game drive, a road transfer and a short boat trip before we reach Nxamaseri.**

NIGHT: Nxamaseri Island Lodge, Ncamasere

**September 3-4, Days 11-12: Nxamaseri Island Lodge.** We have two full days to enjoy the birder’s paradise that is the “Panhandle” region of the Okavango Delta. The camp resounds with bird song from before dawn to well after dark. Banks along the river attract many hole-nesters, including colonies of White-fronted Bee-eaters; plus Giant, Pied, and Malachite Kingfishers; Little Bee-eater; and Pallid [Brown-throated] Sand Martins. The fruiting trees in the stretches of riverine forest bring in flocks of glossy-starlings, Gray Go-away-birds and Meyer’s Parrots. The calls of three species of barbet are often heard (including the colorful Black-collared), and passerines roam through the trees in mixed-flocks.

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

We may find a sandbar with nesting African Skimmers, or a group of colorful Southern Carmine

Bee-eaters scouting for a suitable place to start excavating their nests. Hippos and crocodiles plunge into the river at our approach and late in the afternoon we may catch a glimpse of the strange Sitatunga, a swamp-dwelling antelope.
Nxamaseri is located close to the Tsodilo Hills World Heritage Site—home to over 4,000 individual rock paintings dating back, in some cases, over three thousand years. Our lodge offers an optional half-day visit to this intriguing site and, depending on the level of interest in the group, individual participants, or possibly the whole group may opt for this excursion. **Note:** In cases where only part of the group is interested in making this excursion, the leader will remain with the majority.

**NIGHTS:** Nxamaseri Island Lodge, Ncamasere

**September 5, Day 13: Nxamaseri to Xakanaxa Camp.** After breakfast we’ll travel into the heart of the Okavango Delta. From the air we will see the immense size of this wilderness, one of the largest bodies of pure water in the world. We land at Xakanaxa Camp, situated amidst a variety of habitats from inundated grassland to park-like groves of big acacias, apple-leaf, and mopane trees. A small river flowing near the camp attracts both mammals and birds, including the rare Slaty Egret and the Saddle-billed Stork, Spur-winged Goose, Long-toed Plover, and the endangered Wattled Crane.

**NIGHT:** Xakanaxa Camp, Moremi Game Reserve

**September 6, Day 14: Xakanaxa Camp.** We have a full day to explore the environs of Xakanaxa. The numbers of game animals in this area vary a great deal, but usually present are such water-loving antelope as Red Lechwe Waterbuck and Reedbuck. We will explore the mosaic of woodland, grassland and floodplain habitats from open game-drive vehicles, enjoying the great variety of herons, egrets, waterfowl, kingfishers, swallows and other avian inhabitants found here. Elephant sightings are typically excellent and cats are also well represented. Sightings of Lion, Leopard and even Cheetah are possible.

Leopard (photo by Geoff Lockwood)

**NIGHT:** Xakanaxa Camp, Moremi Game Reserve
September 7, Day 15: Xakanaxa to Livingstone. This morning, after a short game drive, we fly to Kasane to clear immigration and then fly to Livingstone in Zambia. After settling in to our hotel, we will visit the world-famous Victoria Falls. These falls have rightly been considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and we will spend some time appreciating the immense spectacle of the Zambezi River plunging 300 feet into the gorge below. The continual spray from the falls has created a verdant rainforest and we will undoubtedly find some interesting birds here. These may include Trumpeter and Crowned hornbills; Schalow’s Turaco; Bearded Scrub-Robin; African Paradise-Flycatcher; Yellow-breasted Apalis; various sunbirds including Amethyst, Collared and Purple-banded; Black-backed Puffback; Tropical Boubou; and Red-winged Starling. Livingstone is also one of the meccas for purchasing traditional African art and crafts, and we will have time to browse through the markets, which offer a wide range of carvings (in both wood and stone), kitchen utensils and basket-ware.

NIGHT: Royal Livingstone, Livingstone

September 8, Day 16: Livingstone Area. We will have all day to explore this fascinating area and our activities will include a boat ride above the Falls, where we have the opportunity to visit some of the islands nestled in the Zambezi River. Here we may find Malachite, Pied, Giant and, if we are lucky, the scarce Half-collared kingfishers; White-headed (crowned) Lapwing; the gorgeous Rock Pratincole; and if we are very fortunate, Pel’s Fishing-Owl or an African Finfoot.

In the afternoon we will visit Mosi oya Tunya National Park, located on the banks of the Zambezi River above the Falls. The area is generally good for many of the small seedeaters, as well as raptors and many bush birds. On past tours it has given us stunning views of the usually secretive Collared Palm-Thrush. It also gives us a good chance of sighting White Rhino. Depending on conditions, we may visit the Livingstone Sewage Works, an excellent birding destination with Greater Painted-Snipe, Lesser Moorhen and Lesser Jacana usually in residence.

NIGHT: Royal Livingstone, Livingstone

**September 9-10, Days 17-18: Livingstone to Johannesburg; Departure for Home.** On our last morning, we will again visit the Falls to enjoy the spectacular rainbows created by the spray flung up by the torrents, and to look for any of the local specials that we might have missed. After a leisurely breakfast and check-out, we will enjoy the birding from the sundowner deck on the river in front of the hotel until our transfer to the airport for the 1:00 p.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 49 to Johannesburg, which is scheduled to arrive at 2:40 p.m. (subject to change.). This schedule allows participants to connect to various overnight flights, which will arrive at their destination on the morning of September 10 in time for homeward connections.
NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP
AUGUST 21-25, 2019

August 21-22, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg. All participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 21, which arrive in Johannesburg on August 22 in time to connect to the 10:00 a.m. departure of South African Airways Flight 8145 to Walvis Bay, which is scheduled to arrive at 12:15 p.m. (subject to change).

Upon arrival, we’ll be met by our local agent and bird the extensive Kuiseb Delta region in search of the endemic Dune Lark and other desert species before transferring to our hotel in Swakopmund. The bush along the Kuiseb Delta is home to species such as Dusky Sunbird, Cape Sparrow and White-backed Mousebird as well as Spotted Eagle-Owls.

Participants are strongly encouraged to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group by choosing to arrive into Johannesburg on August 21 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT (August 22): Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 23-24, Days 3-4: Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. We have two full days to bird the local area including Walvis Bay, the two large salt works located on the coast, and the gravel plains north of Swakopmund. Our targets will include endemic and near endemics such as Cape and Bank cormorants, African Black Oystercatcher, Hartlaub’s Gull, South African Shelduck and Damara Tern. Large tern roosts are often found in the area and we will search these for rarities such as Royal Tern amongst the more numerous Common, Arctic and Black terns.
We can also expect numbers of Greater and Lesser flamingos, and Great White Pelicans, as well as a host of shorebirds. Our trip coincides with the arrival of large numbers of waders from the northern hemisphere and Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwits, amongst others, are all likely. The area is home to between 90 and 95% of the world population of the gorgeous Chestnut-banded Plovers and also regularly attracts vagrant shorebirds. Almost anything is possible, even familiar American species such as Baird’s and White-rumped sandpipers.

Away from the bays, estuaries and lagoons on the coast, we will be searching for the near-endemic Gray’s Lark—this unusual passerine has adopted nocturnal displays, possibly to avoid the searing daytime heat in summer. Tractrac Chats and the nomadic Burchell’s Courser are other possibilities in these apparently lifeless plains.

NIGHTS: Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

August 25, Day 5: Swakop River; Charter to Huab Conservation Area. After breakfast, we will bird the mouth of the Swakop River. In the late morning or early afternoon, we will fly by private charter to Huab Conservation Area along with any newly arriving tour participants and begin the Namibia, Botswana & Zambia tour.

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

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

TOUR SIZE: Both sections will be limited to 6 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Participants registering for Namibia, Botswana and Zambia by May 1, 2019 will receive a discount of $1,000.

The fee for Namibia, Botswana & Zambia is $16,495 ($15,495 with discount) per person in double occupancy from Walvis Bay, Namibia (tour ends in Livingstone, Zambia). The fee includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 17; all lodging as stated in the itinerary; internal charter flights; ground transportation; tipping; park entrance fees; and services of the tour leader. The tour fee does NOT include roundtrip airfare between your home and Walvis Bay and return from Livingstone; visas; entrance and departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is $1,955. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip is $2,945 per person in double occupancy from Walvis Bay, Namibia. The fee includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 5; all lodging as stated in the itinerary; ground
transportation; tipping; park entrance fees; and services of the tour leader. The tour fee does NOT include roundtrip airfare between your home and Walvis Bay; entrance and departure taxes; alcoholic beverages; special gratuities; phone calls; laundry; or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the Namibia: Walvis Bay Pre-Trip is $130. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for either of these tours, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit is $500 per person per tour. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with American Express, MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: Initial tour deposits may be made by American Express, MasterCard, Visa, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

For the main tour, a second deposit of $2,000 per person will be due 180 days prior to departure and apply towards the final balance. Full payment is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

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

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Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.

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

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

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

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

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

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Resolutions as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most highly regarded travel insurance programs available. Critical benefits of Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; medical evacuation and rescue services from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available but must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause (must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit). Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com/ventbird; or click the Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™ logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make whatever air reservations you desire including stopovers in Europe, business or first class reservations, etc. from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.

**BAGGAGE LIMITS:** All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage to forty-four pounds total per person, packed in soft, crushable bags that will fit into the charter aircraft we will be using. Luggage pods on the aircraft are restricted in size and also have small hatch-openings. Hard-shelled/ framed baggage is therefore not suitable.
A small day pack containing your binoculars, water, sunglasses, sunscreen etc. as well as a small camera (not a SLR camera with long telephoto lenses) can be carried in addition to the 44 lb. luggage limit.

Anyone intending to bring along large quantities of photographic equipment will need to notify VENT well in advance and, if necessary, pay a weight surcharge for all charter flights. (See also the section on PHOTOGRAPHY.)

It is important to note that the above restrictions are meant for your safety and that of the rest of the group and that pilots have the right to refuse to load luggage which exceeds given weight allowances.

**CLIMATE:** August marks the end of winter in Africa, and although the days are usually dry and sunny, there is a chance of very cold and windy conditions. Expect mostly sunny and mild weather with the extremes ranging from day-time highs of ninety degrees to early-morning lows of twenty-eight degrees. Frost is still a possibility on parts of this tour! Early mornings on the coastal pre-tour are often marked by cold, clammy fog but this usually burns off by mid-morning. We may experience dry, dusty conditions on part of the tour—particularly in Etosha, and people who are sensitive should bring a bandana or dust mask as a precaution.

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

**CURRENCY:** South African Rand (R) in Namibia, Pula in Botswana, and Kwacha in Zambia. USD cash is best converted to Rands in Johannesburg (for Namibia) but can be used in Swakopmund and Livingstone. Note that Namibian $ are not accepted outside of Namibia and given that Rands are legal tender (at a rate of 1:1) you should not convert US$ to N$. USD cash can also be used in Botswana lodges, but rates are generally unfavorable. Visa and Master Card are widely accepted while American Express has limited use.

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure with a sufficient number of blank pages is required for United States citizens for all four countries visited on this tour. A visa is NOT required for U.S. citizens traveling to South Africa or Botswana. A tourist visa is not currently required by US citizens for travel to Namibia, providing their stay is shorter than 90 days.

A visa IS required for United States citizens traveling to Zambia. As of this writing, these can be acquired upon arrival for a fee of $50 (subject to change) which can be paid for in cash – preferably US$ (no travelers checks), or by certain credit cards – (Visa, MasterCard, Maestro and American Express are currently accepted). For further information, you may contact the Zambian Embassy or Travel Document Systems (www.traveldocs.com on the web or 888-874-5100 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement.

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

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). Your leader will have a spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. Other items to bring should include a good pocket flashlight or headlamp (lighting in many of the camps is rather low and you will need a good flashlight/ headlamp to complete your checklist each evening), hat, sunscreen, moisturizing lotion and chapstick, a small quantity of insect repellent, a washcloth and soap, all of your camera needs including batteries, personal medications, an alarm clock, and a water bottle. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.
INTERNET ACCESS: Expect Wi-Fi to be available at all hotels and lodges except Nxamaseri and Xakanaka (limited service.)

PHOTOGRAPHY: Whilst photographic opportunities on this trip are exceptional and every effort will be made to allow participants to take great photos or videos, this is not a personal photographic tour! Keen photographers need to recognize and acknowledge the interests of all other participants and understand that the leader may intervene should photography interfere unduly with the enjoyment of the tour by other participants. As on all tours, a measure of give-and-take is needed to ensure that everyone enjoys their tour.

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

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B.

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

MISC: Taxes: Namibia - none; Zambia - $20 – (currently included in the cost of the air ticket). All taxes and conditions subject to change without notice. Electricity: 220/240 volts. Note that South Africa, Namibia and Botswana use a plug socket with three round pins and participants will need an adapter (Type M) in the countries visited on this tour. Language: English and other local dialects Time: 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Birds:


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


**Mammals:**

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


**General Social, Historical and Geographical Background:**


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


**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on October 31, 2018 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.