



# Naturalist Journeys Ultimate Botswana: Wildlife Safari and Birding

## Naturalist Journeys BOTSWANA TOUR SPECIES LIST September 10 - October 3, 2021

**Peg Abbott, guide, with Ewan Masson in Moremi Game Reserve and Maun, Laskey, Pangolin Voyager along the Chobe River, Charles Mutumba at Kasane and Thomas at Xaro.**

A 24-day journey with six participants: Nina, Dylan, Dee, Alan, Brenda and Jim

**Trip List compiled by Peg Abbott**

### ABBREVIATIONS

GR = Game Reserve

NP = National Park

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I) = introduced species

(# in header – number of species per family

(#) in species line, number of days seen of the 21 days we tallied daily. The Xaro Location has one master list noted as Xaro (cumulative for three days) + (# of days out of 21)

### LOCATIONS:

Sept. 10 -11 - Day 1,2 Xaro and Okavango Delta (cumulative list)

Sept. 12 - 13 - Day 4 ESP (Ewan, Sallie Patrick Masson) farm, the Thamalakane River and Maun

Sept. 14-16 - Day 5,6,7 Xini Camp, Moremi GR

Sept. 17-20 – Day 8,9,10 Khwai Camp Moremi GR

Sept. 21-23 - Day 11,12,13 Nxai Pan NP

Sept. 24-26 - Day 14, 15,16 Pangolin Lodge and Chobe NP

Sept. 27-29 - Day 17, 18,19 Chobe River from the Pangolin Voyager

Sept. 30, Oct. 1 and 2 - Day 20, 21, 22 Selinda Private Concession

Oct. 3 - Day 24 Maun and morning Thamalakane River walk before departures

**Summary:** 2021 was a year of good rains for Botswana and the bird life seemed abundant throughout our journey. As one would expect there were water birds in profusion in the Okavango Delta with 16 species of herons, but in this wet year it was even more so with a few nice surprises resulting like seeing the first White-backed Ducks in five years. We also had the normally good numbers of bee-eaters, kingfishers and rollers so iconic to Africa. Highlights included having three sightings of the often-missed Small Buttonquail including two that were out along an open road ahead of us in the early morning. Gray-crowned Crane was unexpected and wonderful to see, a pair using the islands of the Chobe River alongside myriad Elephants, and we had wonderful looks at Wattled Crane as well. Temminck's Courser at Nxai Pan and Caspian Plover at Selinda were nice finds. Seventeen species of raptors and seven owls kept us on our toes. The mammal realm was also very good to us, with

awesome action from Elephants on land and in the river, a Wildcat sighting alerted by noisy guineafowl, numerous Giraffe, Lions mating, tending young and feeding on a kill. A Leopard sprawled over a spectacular tree limb at Selinda will be a life memory for all watching, especially having only three quiet vehicles to watch it. We spent 24 glorious days away from other cares of the world, immersed in African wildlife, landscapes and birds and everywhere we went the lodge staff members were so grateful we had ventured out to stay with them. Knitting the world back together through travel felt most rewarding!

## **BIRDS: 269 Species Recorded in 75 families**

### **OSTRICHES: Struthionidae (1)**

**Common Ostrich** *Struthio camelus*— (7) We found this elegant species in Moremi GR, finding a few individuals. But we had our best viewing with numerous sightings while at Nxai Pan NP. Memorable was seeing a group of males and females that included at least seven young chicks, such a contrast between their small size and the massive adults. We watched one lone male come in warily to the Kwando waterhole after Lions had recently left, alert but poised, it seemed like a fashion model navigating the runway one step at a time. We also had one sighting while at Selinda.

### **DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (8)**

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*— (Xaro+16) Very common this year, often in numbers of 20-30 or more each day. Seen in high number in the Delta at Xaro, and then almost daily along any waterway with the exception of our days at Nxai Pan. Present at Maun on the Thamalakane River, widespread in Moremi GR, numerous along the Chobe, and there in small numbers at Selinda.

**White-backed Duck** *Thalassornis leuconotus*— (1) A new species this year for our Botswana tours, we were surprised to find them in good number this season in Maun where along the Thamalakane River they were present in small groups. They must have bred there this year as one pair had three good-sized young. Two years ago, the Thamalakane River was almost totally dry for many miles, this year it was flowing well with lush greenery framing it along the full length of the Maun area. Waterbirds were in good number and on this day we saw at least 13 individual White-backed Ducks much to Peg's surprise.

**Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos*— (4) Another species that was more common in this wet year than years past, we saw this species in transitional plumage, with males acquiring their namesake knobs. All sightings were in Moremi GR.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*— (17) Common throughout the trip except for Xaro and Nxai Pan, we saw a few pair with goslings but mostly sightings were of adults paired up or in groups with as many as ten. Two perched together in a large Mopane tree early one morning in Moremi, calling in unison, were memorable. Present in Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis*— (12) This large conspicuous goose was easy to spot this year, at Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda. They occurred in pairs or small groups.

**African Pygmy-Goose** *Nettion auritus*— (3) We first saw this beautiful species in Maun among water lilies growing in profusion on stretches of the Thamalakane River. We had a few in well-watered areas of Moremi GR. Dee hoped for better looks and lucked out with some very close sightings our final morning in Maun, back along the river. The water was high and lily numbers were not as high either from Elephant feeding or high water, but with effort they were there and we found them.

**Blue-billed Duck (Hottentot Teal)** *Anas hottentota*— (2) Peg spied one a long way off in Moremi GR but with luck we had them closer at one of the larger lagoons we stopped for tea at later that day. At Chobe we had four individuals simming among the more numerous Red-billed Ducks at the Kasane Sewage lagoons.

**Red-billed Duck** *Anas erythroryncha*— (9) Quite a bit more numerous this year than previous, our high count was at the Kasane Sewage lagoon where over 20 were feeding. They were seen Moremi GR, Chobe and then one individual was seen at one of the waterholes with vegetation around it at Selinda.

### **GUINEAFOWL: Numididae (1)**

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris*— (17) Seen in good number, some days 50+ at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and along the Chobe. They were not seen at Xaro or on our days in Selinda.

### **PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (3)**

**Red-billed Francolin** *Pternistis adspersus*— (Xaro+17) This was the most numerous of the three species of francolin we encountered; we ran into groups of adults and well-developed young almost everywhere. First seen at Xaro, we then had them at Maun, on both the ESP farm and the Thamalakane River, daily at Moremi GR, infrequent but present at Nxai Pan and Chobe, and then numerous when in Selinda including broods actively feeding all around the camp.

**Swainson's Francolin** *Pternistis swainsonii*— (9) We first picked up a few individuals once or twice a day in Moremi GR. They were not at Nxai Pan, but we had them regularly in Chobe, and also at Selinda.

**Crested Francolin** *Francolinus sephaena*— (5) Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and very good looks around camp while at Selinda. This species piercing calls were a good alert to look for them. We found them less frequently than others, but widespread.

### **Grebes Podicipedidae (1)**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*— (5) We miss this species some years, but this year they were present in all the lagoons of size in Moremi GR. Males were in bright plumage. At Chobe they were seen at Kasane at the Sewage Lagoons, courting and calling, at least 30 individuals. On our final walk early morning at Maun, we spied them tending good-sized young with striped heads – almost the size of their busy parents feeding them.

### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (8)**

(1) **Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*— (2) Seen only in Kasane, in town.

**Mourning Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens*— (2) Seen only at Maun, on either end of our trip, at the farm and along the Thamalakane River in small numbers. Its distinctive call is a good alert on this species.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*— (14) This large and darker dove was widespread, but most frequent within the regular sightings of Ring-necked Doves at Maun, Moremi GR, and on our days within range of the Chobe River.

**Ring-necked Dove** *Streptopelia capicola*— (21) Abundant and everywhere! They were not as vocal this year as in many, but were numerous at waterholes, often coming down to the river or pond edge to drink in gregarious gatherings. Seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*— (10) This small and colorful dove was seen most frequently in wooded terrain, seen on all days at Moremi GR, then absent from our eBird lists until a return to Mopane habitat at Selinda.

**Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove** *Turtur chalcospilos*— (Xaro+15) This small dove with lovely markings was recorded at a wide variety of locations, often seen solo or in small numbers as we drove about. They were very regular at Moremi GR, and then less so at Nxai Pan NP but still present. Along the Chobe we got beautiful views of them drinking down on the river shoreline particularly in the Serondela area of our second mooring on the houseboat. At Selinda they were noted but not as common as in Moremi.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*— (14) The fast flight of this gorgeous dove frustrated our photographers as they would often dash off the road margin or river path before our cameras could capture them. Seen in pairs or small groups throughout the trip in open or lightly wooded habitat, they did not frequent the river at Chobe. Seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and Selinda.

**African Green-Pigeon** *Treron calvus*— (Xaro only) Seen only in the lush fig tree habitat along the water at Xaro Lodge in the Okavango Delta.

### **SANDGROUSE: Pteroclididae (2)**

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**Double-banded Sandgrouse** *Pterocles bicinctus*— (6) Seen as we explored, they liked to use the deep sand in the road tracks to rest and we often caused them to jump up as we traveled. Seen in small groups or pairs at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, at Moremi GR, and again at the end of our stay at Selinda.

**Burchell's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles burchelli*— (3) We had a surprise sighting of two while at Moremi GR, and then as expected we saw large numbers coming and going to the waterholes at Nxai Pan NP. They were just stunning in flight but were a bit elusive for photos as they had a fresh water hole they frequented we could not get an angle on for that iconic shot – we certainly tried!

#### **BUSTARDS: Otididae (4)**

**Kori Bustard** *Ardeotis kori*— (6) This stately and elegant species commanded our attention first at Moremi GR where we saw it from our camp at Xini one day both morning and afternoon. But it was at Nxai Pan NP that we got to see them regularly, on average 8-12 per game drive, often in pairs feeding in sight of each other. We watched a pair near the airstrip also at Selinda in lovely morning light.

**Red-crested Bustard** *Eupodotis ruficristata*— (8) This intricately marked bustard was the most common that we encountered at Moremi GR on one day, on all of our days while at the more arid terrain of Nxai Pan NP, and perhaps in anticipation of the rains to come soon, at Selinda we witnessed a couple of displays. These display flights were lightning quick and not repeated so you had to be fast to see them – unlike the White-quilled that spiraled slowly down singing loudly.

**White-quilled Bustard** *Eupodotis afroides*— (4) Excellent views of this handsome if not oddly-marked species were best at Nxai Pan NP. Memorable was a sundowner location where we watched two males in a vocal chase scene followed by seeing a third go up to the sky and descend calling, legs dangling in its display. We hoped to witness it again and photograph that behavior but this was the only occurrence.

**Black-bellied Bustard** *Lissotis melanogaster*— (1) Seen only in the open grass shrubland of Selinda. We had found one in the grassland area there but it was upstaged by a simultaneous sighting of the Secretarybird pair bringing sticks up to the top of a shrub as they warily prepared their nest for the season.

#### **TURACOS: Musophagidae (1)**

**Gray Go-away-bird** *Corythaixoides concolor*— (Xaro+11) This large species was gregarious and often feeding in the tree canopy. First encountered at Xaro, we had repeated and good views while at the farm. We heard them and saw them one day at Moremi, We watched them take flower buds along the Chobe River. We saw them regularly there at Chobe, and again daily at Selinda – the nasal, loud mewing call which gives them their name is notable.

#### **CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae (3)**

**Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis*— (4) Smaller and lacking the black edging to the feathers between the wings, this species was best confirmed when watched in flight between its landings. We found one at Maun, were able to distinguish several individuals from our boats on the Chobe and we passed one regularly coming and going to our camp while at Selinda. Not nearly as common or widespread as the Coppery-tailed.

**Coppery-tailed Coucal** *Centropus cupreicaudus*— (Xaro+14) Ubiquitous except at Nxai Pan where the habitat is likely too arid for them. We found them a lot in lush reeds and grasses along the river margins at Maun's Thamalakane River, at various spots in Moremi GR, very regularly along the Chobe River, and they were seen commonly at Selinda.

**White-browed Coucal** *Centropus superciliosus*— (5) We always noted this species when seen as they were not common. They seemed to like wooded edge habitat where we saw them at Moremi GR, and at Chobe we saw what was probably the same individual as we regularly passed Chobe Lodge down river from Kasane town.

#### **NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: Caprimulgidae (2)**

**Fiery-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus pectoralis*— (13) While we heard them almost nightly at the farm in Maun, at Moremi GR and from the walkways at our Nxai Pan lodge, it was only on the night drives at Selinda that we got to see them in the spotlight as they liked to rest on the roads. We did not hear them from Chobe.

**Square-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus fossii*— (4) HO Heard two night at Nxai Pan calling from the waterhole area and then again from the house boat at our second mooring in the Serondela Section of the Chobe River.

### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (2)**

**African Swift** *Apus barbatus*— (2) Seen only in flight at Maun, visible from the main roads and river.

**African Palm-Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*—(17) This species seemed far more numerous this year, perhaps in response to more widespread water being available. We saw them in small groups often around palm trees, their agile flight notable. Found at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and at Selinda.

### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (6)**

**Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*— (3) Seen twice at Maun along the Thamalakane River and then we had several individuals at the Kasane Sewage lagoons on our walk there.

**Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata*— (1) Seen only on our first afternoon river drive in Maun in a pool along the Thamalakane River.

**Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni* (1) Namibia: Chobe – Two individuals seen in the lily pad lagoons on the Namibian side of the Chobe River, spotted by Brenda and seen in lovely morning light. We were able to get good photographs of this regional specialty.

**African Swamphen** *Porphyrio madagascariensis*— (1) Namibia: Chobe area, we found them in the same Namibian lily lagoon at the lagoon opening to the main water channel. It strutted about, showing off its white undertail and rich colors.

**Black Crane** *Zapornia flavirostra*— (8) We first saw this species on our river drive the afternoon Peg arrived in Maun. In Moremi GR this species was quite common, and we found it almost daily at the various lagoons and especially in water areas along the Khwai River. From the bridge at the north gate guard station we saw four at one time. In Chobe they were not numerous but present. They were infrequent but present on the Chobe in quieter lagoons or pools off the main river channel.

### **CRANES: Gruidae (2)**

**Wattled Crane** *Buggeranus carunculatus*— (4) What a stunning creature. We expected to find them in Moremi GR where we did get to see one pair regularly in reeds along the river. But it was a surprise to find one right across from our boat mooring on the houseboat stay along the Chobe, it was a lone individual strutting about and then flying in beautiful morning light.

**Gray Crowned Crane** *Balearica regulorum* — (1) While common in East Africa, this species is a rare sighting in Botswana, and we were lucky to find a lovely pair that we watched for some time on one of the islands in Chobe River, so elegant. We were watching Elephants swim across a channel over to a small island when our attention was drawn away to them.

### **THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae (2)**

**Water Thick-knee** *Burhinus vermiculatus*— (Xaro+13) Seen very regularly in appropriate wetland or river edge habitat, at Xaro, Maun, Moremi GR, Chobe, and at Selinda. We heard their descending loud call a lot and often had them flying back and forth across the river to the smaller islands while at Chobe. We mostly saw them in pairs but occasionally we would see six or more in a group.

**Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis*— (1) Nxai Pan, three were first spotted by Nina as we drove through the arid country of the park, we then found a group of seven quite close near to South Campground. Jim saw a Black-backed Jackal eyeing the group but as they blend in perfectly when roosting – they were aware of the jackal and we hoped they would not become that morning's prey.

### **STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (2)**

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*— (13) Other than Blacksmith Plover probably the most regularly sighted shorebird, present in slower moving water be it lagoons or pools or bends of the river. Our highest numbers were in Moremi GR, along the Chobe, and at Selinda, while in Nxai pan we had just a few individuals at the main waterhole.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* — (1) One lone individual was seen in with a larger group of stilts at the Kasane Sewage lagoons, not a typical species on our route, the first for us in our five years of visiting.

### **LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS: Charadriidae (8)**

**Long-toed Lapwing** *Vanellus crassirostris*— (10) The most aquatic oriented of the lapwings we saw, they were common where reeds and rushes were lush along the streams and river islands in Moremi GR, and Chobe.

**Blacksmith Lapwing** *Vanellus armatus*— (Xaro+21) Vocal and ever present in both upland and wetland habitat, though most common along river channels. Many had either nests or small chicks making them especially vocal. We watched one determined pair dive bomb an African Spoonbill and then a Baboon along the Chobe. Recorded at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

**White-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus albiceps*— (5) Seen only along the Chobe River, we saw them regularly feeding on the shorter grass margins and sand banks of the river. They seemed territorial as we witnessed chase scenes regularly. This species is losing ground in Botswana, where it used to be present in the Okavango Delta including the Limpopo river, now its stronghold seems to be the Chobe River. It nests in the sand bank areas, but with Elephant densities so high and their frequent movements, nesting success may be dicey.

**Crowned Lapwing** *Vanellus coronatus*— (Xaro+11) Widespread in Botswana, we found them typically along the road and two-track margins. They were usually away from water and for us were most numerous at Nxai Pan where groups of 15 were not uncommon. Seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus senegallus*— (1) Thanks to Laxley our guide from the Pangolin Voyager houseboat, we found them on a sandy stretch of river he knew them to frequent, and there a group of a five posed pretty nicely for us to view.

**Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius*— (1) Nxai Pan NP at the waterhole on the back side, where Nina spotted a lone individual that we all found in time as it moved away from the water margin. Its seemed very tiny against the legs of Giraffe, Kudu and Impala.

**Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris*— (4) Dee spotted our first individual on a morning safari drive from Chobe, where we saw them on several days, typically lone individuals at small pools or river margins such as Elephant Bay. We had one individual at an open muddy waterhole that we'd pass coming to and from the airstrip at Selinda.

**Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* — (1) Four individuals were spotted by Peg in Selinda, in a grassland area we also found Secretarybird in. We were fairly close and got photos to document his unusual sighting, in non-breeding plumage as to be expected. They are typically in more arid areas of the country when found. Our tour in 2010 noted them in a remote part of Nxai Pan but we've not seen them since.

### **PAINTED-SNIPES: Rostratulidae (1)**

**Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*— (2) A tour first, we found this species twice! The first was at Maun along the Thamalakane River, we had found and were watching a "regular" snipe when Peg spied and called out another with this beautifully-patterned back. Not all got good looks that time so we were very happy when we encountered two others at a stop where high water was over the road and precluded us from getting to lagoons to the north and west in Moremi GR. The Okavango is thought to be a stronghold for the species in Botswana but this was the first year we encountered them.

### **JACANAS: Jacanidae (2)**

**Lesser Jacana** *Microparra capensis*— (1) We found them only in Maun in lily habitat along the Thamalakane River this year, amazing as in 2019 this stretch was totally dry. We did not find them in Moremi, perhaps as there was

so much water, some of the traditional lily areas seemed to be unavailable for us to get to. A favorite food of Elephants, this lily habitat may also be declining as herd numbers grow.

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus*— (Xaro+19) Ubiquitous, wherever there is water we found them. Seen at Xaro, Maun along the Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda. Absent from arid Nxai Pan.

#### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (7)**

**Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*— (4) Seen only in Moremi GR where we found them regularly at various waterholes and lagoons.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*— (1) Peg found one Selinda, a lone individual seen in one of the drier waterholes, a migrant probably just arriving. We laughed as we saw it going to the airstrip, at the same pool going back two vehicles had clients with cameras pointed its way and we thought, “wow, other birders” before seeing two regal male Lions bedded under a shrub not far from the bird.

**African Snipe** *Gallinago nigripennis*— (1) Seen only at Maun, one individual along the Thamalakane River on our first afternoon river drive.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*— (Xaro+8) Common – most often as a lone individual. First seen at Xaro, then on one day at Moremi GR, most days while at Chobe, and a few sightings Selinda. We also had one on our final outing to the river at Maun.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*— (8) Seen as lone individuals at water holes in Moremi GR, in small pools off the Chobe River and at waterholes and river bends at Selinda, often lone birds and not common.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*— (5) Seen in appropriate wetland habitat, usually lone individuals and not common. Seen mainly while at Moremi GR and then infrequent at Chobe and Selinda.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*— (6) More common than Marsh or Greenshank, and seen at times with multiple individuals at Maun on the Thamalakane River, and at Moremi GR and Chobe.

#### **BUTTONQUAILS: Turnicidae (1)**

**Small Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus*— (2) Nice to have multiple sightings this year of this elusive species in Moremi GR. They were always quick, but with lush grass they seemed more possible and one time two were out on the road track long enough for us to photograph them.

#### **COURSERS AND PRATINCOLES: Glareolidae (4)**

**Temminck’s Courser** *Cursorius temminckii*— (3) Right near camp, we encountered this species as we drove in and out of camp at Nxai Pan NP. We got good looks and were pleased on day 3 to see two individuals together whereas the first days we noted just one. This species is a breeding resident in Botswana but moves around and this was a first sighting for our route in the five trips we’ve made.

**Double-banded Courser** *Smutsonia africanus*— (1) Peg spotted this little beauty alongside the road coming back from the waterhole to brunch in Nxai Pan NP, our only sighting of the trip but a very cooperative bird so all that wanted to got good photographs.

**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*— (9) It was not until the second day at Moremi GR that we found a few individuals in the afternoon, both Peg and Ewan were wondering where they were as often towards sunset they fly in good numbers around our vehicles. We did then see them regularly and along the Chobe River where we had numbers in the 10+ range on several outings.

**Rock Pratincole** *Glareola nuchalis*— (3) Chobe, seen on rocks in the rapids above the immigration center for Namibia, in good number (10+), calling and several were paired up.

#### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (5)**

**Gray-hooded Gull** *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*— (3) Seen on three days along the Chobe in small number, a beautifully marked gull. We saw them perched on sand beaches and in flight.

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*— (1) Seen on one afternoon along the Chobe, flying close to the boat with Elephants all around cavorting in the water we wanted to photograph, the terns got little attention but were noted.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*— (1) Seen just one afternoon flying over one of the lagoons we visited in Xini, Moremi GR.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*— (1) Dee and Laxley spied this species close to the boat as we loaded up our gear for the day one morning from the houseboat on the Chobe.

**African Skimmer** *Rynchops flavirostris*— (Xaro+7) First encountered at Xaro, in Chobe they were seen daily. This is nesting season on the sand beaches and between boats, buffaloes and Elephants there is always a lot to stir them up. We saw both large and small chicks and some fabulous acrobatic flying. This was a major photo challenge for our group and we got ample opportunity with this graceful species to practice our flight shots.

#### **STORKS: Ciconiidae (4)**

**African Openbill** *Anastomus lamelligerus*— (Xaro+8) The group had a few views of this unusual stork as it hunted for crabs, other invertebrates and fish at Xaro, Moremi GR, and most commonly with groups of up to 100+ on the Chobe.

**Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*— (7) This elegant species commanded our attention along lush river corridors and at waterholes in Moremi GR, and at Selinda.

**Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumenifer*— (11) We watched these “undertakers” at carcasses, and resting along river margins at Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis*— (12) This beauty was a favorite despite being common. We loved to capture their essence in the golden light of morning and dusk while at Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda. The pink feather linings of breeding individuals were stunning.

#### **ANHINGAS: Anhingidae (1)**

**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa*— (Xaro+16) Common and widespread, we often found them sunning with wings open, and we watched them feed at Xaro, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

#### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (2)**

**Long-tailed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus*— (15) One of the most regularly encountered species of our trip, in good number throughout our days at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*— (5) Seen locally only on the Chobe, first seen up by the rapids roosting on rocks near the stork and heron rookery, but then also found downriver on some of the larger sandbar islands. We watched them flutter their large gular pouches, quite comical at times!

#### **PELICANS: Pelecanidae (2)**

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*— (4) We first encountered this species in Moremi GR with over 20 at one pond drying down igniting chaotic feeding. We then saw them again on the Chobe where small groups were seen flying overhead of our houseboat mooring the first night on the river was a nice welcome; we’d also seen one very rust-colored individual likely taking on a hue from the water that was odd.

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens*— (5) Seen at water holes in Moremi GR, and then along slower moving channels and pools along the Chobe.

#### **HAMMERKOP: Scopidae (1)**

**Hammerkop** *Scopus umbretta*— (12) One of the trip favorites, we always paused when finding them, with their queer shaped heads and animated feeding style in Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda. Nests were not active but we saw many large ones – massive stick piles lodged in the trees.

#### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (16)**

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*— (1) Namibia: Chobe, an excellent spot by Jim in the reeds. It was perched with its head up bittern-style in lush reed beds mixed with papyrus, and we had quick views of it perched, then in flight.

**Gray Heron** *Ardea cinerea*— (17) Common, with scattered individuals seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*— (8) We saw this species at the larger waterhole in Nxai Pan NP, and then found them nesting near the rapids and rookery on the Chobe.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath*— (Xaro+9) This regal giant always commanded our attention. Most often seen as individuals except in the big river areas at Khwai where we found small groups. Seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, and Chobe.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*— (Xaro+9) Perhaps the most beautiful of the herons, we watched and recorded them at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, and Chobe.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*— (16) Quite common, we encountered them most days while in Moremi GR. On the Chobe we found several with black bills common to the African race, a few were also seen along river corridors at Selinda.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia*— (10) Common but one needs to pay attention to find them apart from the other egrets, they are widespread and seen a few at a time at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*— (Xaro+14) Common, seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Slaty Egret** *Egretta vinaceigula*— (8) A specialty of the region, we found them one or two at a time along the rivers at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda. At Selinda we saw a juvenile with lighter, somewhat stiped plumage near an adult.

**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*— (7) More local than the Slaty, we found them in Moremi GR and Chobe where several times we had groups feeding. The tenting style of feeding behavior was seen several times.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*— (Xaro+15) Common, they often were with buffaloes and other ungulates at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*— (Xaro+14) At early morning and dusk light this one was a favorite of our photographers. Seen in the reeds at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris*— (4) We found a couple while at Moremi GR, then again at the Chobe, where one was seen near the small village past our second boat mooring. We watched it for some time as we tried to photograph Luapula Cisticolas but it stayed just beyond a comfortable camera reach.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*— (13) This year this species was notably more common, and seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*— (4) We found a few at Moremi GR, and then again on the Chobe where they are quite common. Our most memorable was one we rescued from certain death as it got caught in fishing line and was hanging upside down from low branches with its head in the water. With quick work and Jim's essential handy knife we freed it and watched with smiles as it flew away.

**White-backed Night-Heron** *Gorsachius leuconotus*— (2) A regional specialty, we found them while on the Chobe, seen along the banks in a shaded refuge quite close to the Pangolin dock, another upstream of immigration and we had a third sighting in dense vegetation along the bank by our second mooring.

#### **Ibis and Spoonbills: Threskiornithidae (4)**

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*— (Xaro+8) This iridescent beauty was encountered throughout our journey, often lone individuals were seen feeding alongside African Openbill, or small groups were encountered flying to roosts at day's end. Seen at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, and Chobe.

**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*— (12) Common and seen regularly, often in small groups feeding, and in with the feeding frenzies we witnessed at Moremi GR at the dry down pools where fish were concentrated. We found them regularly feeding in mud and sand flats along the Chobe.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*— (5) We were often alerted to this species by their call, uttered in the same cadence as their name. Uncommon at Moremi GR, Chobe and at Maun.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*— (10) Quite common, we loved to watch them feeding – swooping the water and mud with great strokes of that queer bill. A drama with a pair of Blacksmith Plover protecting their chicks and dive bombing one was memorable in Chobe. We saw highest numbers at Moremi GR in the many scattered dry-down ponds.

#### **Secretary-bird: Sagittariidae (1)**

**Secretary-bird** *Sagittarius serpentarius*— (1) Not common in Botswana, two were seen by those in one vehicle while at Selinda, where two were spotted constructing a nest at a distance, they were quite wary as it was the initial stage of construction.

#### **HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (17)**

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*— (Xaro+6) First seen while at Xaro, we had sightings on four days while in Moremi GR, and then one day along the Chobe. Their hovering flight was distinctive.

**Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos*— (4) We encountered this impressive raptor on carcasses at Selinda, and we found a nest not far from the larger waterhole at Nxai Pan NP.

**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus*—(6) Seen mainly on carcasses, in lone or small numbers when encountered alongside the far more numerous White-backed Vultures at Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus*— (15) Widespread, we saw them on thermals and searching for food as well as on carcasses at Maun, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus*— (10) We saw this raptor on many days, both adult males and females as well as juveniles. We saw them all days while at Moremi GR, two days while at Nxai Pan and then at Selinda we found three perched together on one game drive as well as flying birds on others.

**Brown Snake-Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus*— (3) Moremi GR – we saw probably the same individual coming and going from our camp at Xini in Moremi Game Reserve, and then a different individual in the Khwai area in the Mopane.

**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus*— (1) No at all common this year, we had one very distant and quick sighting while at Nxai Pan NP.

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*— (1) One sighting of a perched bird, seen well on a morning game drive in Moremi GR.

**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax*— (5) Great views of this majestic raptor, seen near carcasses and often aligned with groups of vultures, we found them in Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and while at Selinda.

**African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster*— (5) Our first sighting was two birds, one on a nest that we would pass on subsequent days at Moremi GR near Xini, then another we found in the vicinity of the Khwai gate. One group in a vehicle at Selinda encountered them again on a morning game drive.

**Dark Chanting-Goshawk** *Melierax metabates*— (1) Chobe, a lone individual was spotted when we heard a bird commotion that alerted us to its presence while driving through Kasane Game Reserve in teak forest.

**Pale Chanting-Goshawk** *Melierax canorus*— (3) This was a fairly common raptor at Nxai Pan NP, we saw them flying and perched and enjoyed their agility.

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*— (1) We had an incredible view of one hunting a group of White Helmetshrikes in a lone shrub, unsuccessfully but with determination at Nxai Pan NP. It made repeated hops and short flights but never connected with its targets.

**African Marsh-Harrier** *Circus ranivorus*— (2) Not as common this year as in most, we had a flying bird put on a good show at Nxai Pan NP and then saw another working an open area of the Serondela section of the Chobe River while on the houseboat portion of our trip.

**Little Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter minullus*— (1) One flew in chasing an African Black-headed Oriole with determination and calling, in the high trees surrounding Selinda Explorers Camp our final day.

**Black Kite (Yellow-billed)** *Milvus migrans*— (Xaro+17) Just arriving back for summer, we saw them regularly at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe and Selinda.

**African Fish-Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer*—(Xaro+17) Very common, vocal and iconic. We enjoyed them a lot, watching a full-sized youngster navigate logs along the Chobe River before taking flight was memorable. We often saw pairs looking quite regal with their full white bibs, and we watched them fish and fly from perches, trying to capture flight shots kept our photographers busy at Xaro, Moremi GR, Chobe, Selinda and Maun.

#### **OWLS: Strigidae (7)**

**African Scops-Owl** *Otus senegalensis*— (6) They were at both camps we used in Moremi GR, and one night Peg drew them into view with short playback – no prowling very far at night with lions around so they have to cooperate to come in to view. At Selinda where we heard it early our second morning as we headed out for the game drive.

**Southern White-faced Owl** *Ptilopsis granti*— (1) A fabulous find at Nxai Pan NP, spotted by Dee who spied a family group of this impressive species, roosting in a tree. They were in dense branches but we got awesome looks, a rare find in the daytime!

**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** *Bubo lacteus*— (3) All of our sightings this year were from Selinda. We found this beautiful BIG owl several times, twice with spotlighting and then twice in one day, first a pair calling to each other uncharacteristically in the daylight, probably excited by a catch of a Red-billed Francolin and second a bird on a nest with a small chick. It was using the platform of a large Red-billed Buffalo Weaver nest, not with much shade, so actively brooding these vulnerable young.

**Pel's Fishing-Owl** *Scotopelia peli*— (Xaro only) Seen by the group at Xaro, at least two individuals seen very well with a possible youngster as well.

**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum*— (6) While heard regularly we did not find them perched in the daytime as we do most years. We did hear them at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, near our camps in Moremi GR, and at Selinda. We had one fly into a stop we made to admire a big baobab tree while in Moremi that gave us quick views.

**African Barred-Owlet** *Glaucidium capense*— (2) Moremi GR, heard one evening heading back to camp, then Patrick found and alerted us to a family group of three right in our camp so we all had good views during the day.

**African Wood-Owl** *Strix woodfordii*— (2) HO at the ESP Farm in Maun, and at Moremi GR we had one returning to our first camp, also HO.

#### **MOUSEBIRDS: Coliidae (1)**

**Red-faced Mousebird** *Urocolius indicus*— (7) Fairly common, comical to watch feeding, we saw them in Mopane and other woodland vegetation at Moremi GR, and along the Chobe and at Maun.

#### **HOOPOES: Upupidae (1)**

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*— (Xaro+9) As usual, everyone was taken with this handsomely patterned species and delighted when it would raise its head plume. Widespread, encountered at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Selinda and Maun.

#### **WOODHOOPES: Phoeniculidae (2)**

**Green Woodhoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus*— (Xaro+3) Alerted often by their calls, the “giggling ladies” were seen in small groups at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, and the Moremi GR.

**Common Scimitar-bill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*— (5) We encountered this species often with mixed flocks of other birds, seen at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, then our best views were in the South Campground at Nxai Pan NP where one was gleaning insects in low shrubs and highly visible, giving great up close views for our photographers as well.

#### **GROUND-HORN BILLS: Bucorvidae (1)**

**Southern Ground-Hornbill** *Bucorvus leadbeateri*— (5) This impressive species was encountered on four days while at Moremi GR, and on one sighting they flew, giving us quite a show with their outstretched huge wings. Normally

we watch them strut along feeding in grasses within sight of each other. We found them again in grassy areas at Selinda.

#### **HORNBILLS: Bucerotidae (4)**

**Bradfield's Hornbill** *Lophoceros bradfieldi*— (2) Ewan spotted the first one our final morning driving to the airstrip, giving us one more species for the Moremi GR section of our trip. We then had one in the quiet Serondela section of the Chobe while on the houseboat.

**African Gray Hornbill** *Lophoceros nasutus*— (13) Common throughout but in much smaller number than Southern Red-billed. Pairs were calling back and forth getting ready to nest presumably at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan and Selinda.

**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill** *Tockus leucomelas*— (14) Seen regularly in small numbers, widespread at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and Selinda.

**Southern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus rufirostris*— (14) Other than at Nxai Pan, we had them abundantly and joked if we could have a dollar for everyone seen we'd pay for our trip. At Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda they were very numerous, 50+ seen each day.

#### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (6)**

**Half-collared Kingfisher** *Alcedo semitorquata*— (3) We found this very special species at two different areas along the Chobe River bank, a lush section between the lodges and Pangolin dock and the rocky area just past Namibia's immigration. We had wonderful views though often quick and got some photographs. New this year for our route, we were glad to find this gem-colored beauty.

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus*— (Xaro+5) Specific to reedy riverine areas, we first encountered this beauty at Xaro where the habitat is plentiful. Peg spied one near the Khwai gate at Moremi GR, then along the Chobe they became quite common. We stopped to watch and photograph them often and they obliged us with nice long sessions of being perched, watching for prey.

**Brown-hooded Kingfisher** *Halcyon albiventris*— (4) We found several pairs along the Chobe, particularly near our second houseboat mooring.

**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti*— (1) We had just one sighting, on the day we moved from Xini to Khwai, in the Mopane forest at Moremi GR.

**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima*— (Xaro+ 6) We were pretty impressed by this very large kingfisher. We saw them at Xaro and at one Sundowner time at a waterhole we had a flyover in Moremi GR. But it was at Chobe we could find them regularly, up by the rocky area above the lodges and then a family group in the Serondela area across from our houseboat was memorable. The young were begging, adults working hard and we were able to catch images of them with fish in their giant beaks.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*— (Xaro+18) Very common. Endlessly entertaining, often hovering over us in flight, we saw and heard them everywhere except arid Nxai Pan. Seen Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda.

#### **BEE-EATERS: Meropidae (4)**

**White-fronted Bee-eater** *Merops bullockoides*— (Xaro+2) This species likes the river areas and we found them readily at Xaro and Chobe. At Chobe they were nesting, going in and out of holes in the riverbanks with food for their young.

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus*— (Xaro+13) Perhaps the most common of its clan, we found them at Xaro, Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, and Selinda. When we found one we often found 3-6 in the adjacent area.

**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus*— (11) This beautifully colored bee-eater was encountered in the woodlands of Moremi GR, the drier forests of Nxai Pan NP, one afternoon along the Chobe, and we got looks one more afternoon while at Selinda. Not as common as the others, we enjoyed trying to photograph and find them.

**Southern Carmine Bee-eater** *Merops nubicoides*— (Xaro+10) Dee had hopes of seeing one on the back of a Kori Bustard as on the field guide cover, but we had to be content with them showing off their brilliant colors in flight,

perched on reeds of the riverine edge, or at times using Elephant dung piles for raised perch view. Seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, Chobe and Selinda, this was a favorite species for many.

### **ROLLERS: Coraciidae (3)**

**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus*— ( Xaro+17) Iconic to many parts of Africa, this bird is always a show stopper and our photographers, especially Nina who nailed it, wanted that perfect flight shot so we got a lot of chances to view them. Seen throughout at Xaro Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, Selinda, most often several individuals per day.

**Racket-tailed Roller** *Coracias spatulatus* — (1) Charles our local birding guide while at Pangolin Lodge helped us to find them in the dry teak forest of Chobe Game Reserve, an incredible sighting with at least three individuals, making a lot of noise as they flew tree to tree, one had a large red larvae held in its beak that it would not let go of, even while calling. A life bird for Peg and a great find for all.

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus*— (1) Selinda, Peg spied one by her tent during the mid-day break, a migrant likely just arriving. With luck it stayed in a tall Rain tree, occasionally taking flight so we had time to go get the others to come and see. Just arriving back for the southern hemisphere summer.

### **AFRICAN BARBETS: Lybiidae (2)**

**Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii*— (Xaro+8) The group had very good looks at a pair in camp at Xaro, then in Moremi GR we had them at our Xini Camp hanging around the kitchen area hoping for some scraps as they had a nest in the campsite area. We found another pair working a nesthole on the Chobe in a cavity nest in a snag hanging over the water.

**Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus*— (Xaro+3) This impressive species likes the big shade trees, we found it in the camp area at Xaro, at Cresta Mowana Lodge and once from the river at Chobe.

### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (3)**

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Chloropicus fuscescens*— (2) We had really good looks of one in the South Campground while on our tea break at Nxai Pan NP, and later we found one on our walk at the Sewage Lagoons near Kasane while in the Chobe region.

**Bearded Woodpecker** *Chloropicus namaquus*— (3) We had good looks at this species in our camp at Khwai in Moremi GR that was quite tame and then Peg and Dee found one at close range on our last morning walk along the river in Maun.

**Bennett's Woodpecker** *Campethera bennettii*— (3) Not common, but we had very good looks at one feeding near the ground in Moremi GR, another quick sighting there and then good looks again in Selinda.

### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (2)**

**Dickinson's Kestrel** *Falco dickinsoni*— (3) A pair was using a tall dead palm tree for a nest that we passed often so we got good looks while in Moremi GR, though these were our only individuals encountered.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*— (2) Nxai Pan NP – wonderful views of a pair perched not far from the waterhole as we left for an afternoon game drive. Peg had also seen one the day previous pick up a Capped Wheatear just off the lounge area of the lodge.

### **PARROTS: Psittacidae (1)**

**Meyer's Parrot** *Poicephalus meyeri*— (Xaro+9) What a beautiful species with their turquoise rumps in flight. We saw them well at Xaro, especially at the Tsidillo Hills where they were coming down for water. We had them fly by in Maun, along the Thamalakane River, regularly in Moremi GR, and at Chobe. In Selinda they were feeding low on fruiting shrubs but they never allowed us to get very close.

### **OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae (1)**

**African Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus larvatus*— (2) Seen in our camp at Selinda only, a lovely species.

### **WATTLE-EYES AND BATIS: Platysteiridae (1)**

**Chin-spot Batis** *Batis molitor*— (2) Maun, seen on the farm walk with Ewan, and then at one spot in Moremi GR, we heard them so noted there as HO.

### **VANGAS AND HELMETSHRIKES: Vangidae (2)**

**White Helmetshrike** *Prionops plumatus*— (7) We enjoyed this species a lot. We would pass groups of them in the Mopane, busy feeding and moving around while in Moremi GR, most often just past the Khwai Gate. We got a great insight into how agile they were as they eluded a determined Gabar Goshawk in a battle atop a lone shrub in Nxai Pan. We found them on our walk at the Sewage Ponds in Kasane, in Chobe and a final time at Selinda in the wooded areas.

**Retz's Helmetshrike** *Prionops retzii*— (1) LO, Ewan spied a couple of these in the picnic area of the Khwai gate as we were off on the bridge and he was fixing lunch, we could not relocate them.

### **BUSHSHRIKES: Malaconotidae (8)**

**Brubru** *Nilaus afer*— (2) Nxai Pan NP, seen at the South Campground where we took coffee breaks.

**Black-backed Puffback** *Dryoscopus cubla*— (9) We often found them when we took time to walk at rest stops or in our camps at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and Chobe, typically paired.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus*— (6) The more common of the two Chagra species, we had views in Moremi GR, and Selinda feeding low in shrubbery.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra australis*— (2) Uncommon, we had chance encounters with them while in Chobe, and at Selinda.

**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius major*— (2) Chobe, seen at the boat dock at close range – thankfully calling to alert our attention.

**Gabon Boubou** *Laniarius bicolor*— (9) First seen at Moremi GR when we were watching Wild Dogs, then seen fairly regularly including at Chobe where they overlap with Tropicals. Seen in the garden of Rivernest Lodge in Maun too.

**Crimson-breasted Gonolek** *Laniarius atrococcineus*— (6) A favorite for several, this gaudy species was seen often when in Mopane, at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP and Selinda.

**Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike** *Telophorus sulfureopectus*— (1) Chobe, (HO) heard only though we tried hard to spot it in a very thick Jackelberry tree along the bank across from our houseboat mooring.

### **DRONGOS: Dicruridae (1)**

**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*— (21) Common and widespread, noted at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

### **SHRIKES: Laniidae (2)**

**Magpie Shrike** *Corvinella melanoleuca*— (14) While common we thoroughly enjoyed seeing the small groups, often 2-10 individuals at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda. Their black and white pattern caused a startle effect as they flew.

**White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus anguitimens*— (5) Not common, but present at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, and at Moremi GR in small numbers, and more commonly while at Nxai Pan NP.

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (2)**

**Cape Crow** *Corvus capensis*— (3) Nxai Pan NP One individual perched up on a termite mound near the fresh water hole we parked at to watch Elephants and other mammals, spotted by Nina.

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*— (6) Maun town, Nxai Pan NP, good looks at the South Campground at our tea stops, also in Kasane town.

### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (1)**

**Southern Black-Tit** *Melaniparus niger*— (1) Seen only at Selinda, a lone individual seen in a “bird party” of Southern Cordonblue and other species, poking and probing the blooms of an open-grown white flowering shrub quite common in the area.

### **LARKS: Alaudidae (6)**

**Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucotis*— (3) Fairly common and in good number at the larger waterhole, and near the camp waterhole at Nxai Pan NP.

**Gray-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix verticalis*— (2) Seen at both waterholes and on some arid area stops while at Nxai Pan NP.

**Sabota Lark** *Calendulauda sabota*— (3) We studied a fresh-plumaged individual at the camp waterhole while at Nxai Pan NP and then found them out and about in small number in that park.

**Fawn-colored Lark** *Calendulauda africanoides*— (1) Just a lone individual seen Nxai Pan NP.

**Rufous-naped Lark** *Mirafra africana*— (2) Nxai Pan NP, and then at Selinda – both times a quick drive by sighting as it sang its characteristic song, perched up in an open area.

**Red-capped Lark** *Calandrella cinerea*— (3) Seen very well at the large waterhole at Nxai Pan NP and flocks of 25 plus seen in the grasslands there.

### **AFRICAN WARBLERS: Macrosphenidae (1)**

**Cape Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens*— (5) Vocal, this nuthatch like species was observed in Maun, along the Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, and in the woodland areas of Selinda.

### **CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae (10)**

**Yellow-bellied Eremomela** *Eremomela icteropygialis*— (2) Seen typically as pairs in shrubs at Maun, the Thamalakane River, Moremi GR at Xini good views while at the camp.

**Stierling's Wren Warbler** *Calamonastes stierlingi* — (1) Moremi Game Reserve, seen with local guide Charles at a specific area he knew of where grass grew thick under a patch of teak forest. Another life bird for Peg as well as others of the group and a most cooperative one, we even got a few photos.

**Green-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brachyura*— (18) One of the most common small birds of the trip, its call alerted us to the species, often to other birds as well at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida*— (1) Seen in Moremi GR, a pair.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava*— (Xaro+5) Chobe, very good views on our walk at the local Kasane Sewage Lagoons, then at Selinda, seen as one of the species of a small flock scolding a skulking Wildcat.

**Black-chested Prinia** *Prinia flavicans*— (5) Vocal, when we'd stop by shrubby areas often noted while at Moremi GR, and Nxai Pan NP.

**Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana*— (11) The most common, or perhaps easiest to see and identify cisticola at Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe, and Selinda.

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*— (6) Seen and heard in grassy areas of Moremi GR, often several individuals calling.

**Desert Cisticola** *Cisticola aridulus*— (6) We found them in grassy habitats of Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP where they were in our camp, and at Selinda.

**Luapula Cisticola** *Cisticola luapula* — (Xaro+3) On reedy river margins, we found them perched up at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, and at Chobe, best views in the quiet reed-rich areas.

### **REED-WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae (2)**

**Lesser Swamp-Warbler** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*— (1) Found in the Namibia lily lagoon at Chobe, heard calling then spotted.

**Greater Swamp-Warbler** *Acrocephalus rufescens*— (Xaro only) Seen by the group at Xaro while on the boat excursion.

### **GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Locustellidae (1)**

**Little Rush-Warbler** *Bradypterus baboecala*— (1) We made an effort to find this species in the Namibia lily lagoon where we had them vocal and present on the Chobe.

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (7)**

**Plain Martin** *Riparia paludicola*— (1) Chobe only, seen in a river area with a tall cut bank of exposed soils.

**Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta*— (6) Seen as flying groups while in the woodlands of Maun, in lush areas of the Thamalakane River, and at Moremi GR, and Chobe.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii*— (Xaro+7) Very common along the Chobe, also seen along the Thamalakane River of Maun.

**Greater Striped-Swallow** *Cecropias cucullata*— (Xaro only) Seen by the group while at Xaro Lodge with local guide Thomas.

**Lesser Striped-Swallow** *Cecropias abyssinica*— (3) Lovely views of this confiding species at Maun, the Thamalakane River, and Moremi GR.

**Common House-Martin** *Delichon urbicum*— (2) Seen when we'd stop for long-viewing, probably more common than noted in Moremi GR.

**Gray-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*— (1) A few individuals noted at one sundowner stop when we had ample time to scan and view at Moremi GR.

### **BULBULS: Pycnonotidae (4)**

**Yellow-bellied Greenbul** *Chlorocichla flaviventris*— (4) We had repeated good views, a pair at a time along the Chobe while at Chobe.

**Terrestrial Brownbul** *Phyllastrephus terrestris* — (2) Good looks along the Chobe, pairs.

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*— (10) Seen often at rest stops, flocks attracted into water features at Moremi GR, Chobe, and Selinda, also seen around the lodges.

**Black-fronted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus nigricans*—(Xaro+4) More local than Common Bulbul, we found them infrequently at Moremi GR, and while at Nxai Pan NP, also by our B and B in Maun.

### **SYLVIID WARBLERS: Sylviidae (1)**

**Chestnut (Rufous)-vented Warbler** *Sylvia subcaerulea*— (3) Best views of this small songbird were right at our camp in Nxai Pan NP where a couple of them were never too far from the kitchen scraps.

### **WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae (1)**

**African Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis*— (1) Very quick views of two individuals in a flock by our houseboat in a line of trees along the river at Chobe.

### **LAUGHINGTHRUSHES AND ALLIES: Leiothrichidae (3)**

**Hartlaub's Babbler** *Turdoides hartlaubii*— (Xaro+4) Vocal and common at Moremi GR, Selinda in the woodlands and at Maun.

**Southern Pied-Babbler** *Turdoides bicolor*— (4) This handsome species was seen on the farm at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, in small numbers at Moremi GR, in our Camp by the kitchen at Nxai Pan NP.

**Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii*— (Xaro+12) Very common, seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, at the lodges at Chobe where we walked with local guide Charles and at Selinda. Vocal and social.

### **OXPECKERS: Buphagidae (2)**

**Red-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*— (17) Common, heard in flight and seen on many different animals at Maun, along the Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP feeding on Kudu at the waterhole and at Selinda.

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus*— (7) Less common than Red-billed, seen mainly while exploring Moremi GR and then encountered on two days at Chobe.

### **STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (7)**

**Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea*— (6) While not common, when encountered we saw them in good number. Seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR and then on our return to Maun, where we saw a few at close range.

**Violet-backed Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* — (1) Identified by a photo taken by Dee, a mystery bird for a time on a high tree at Chobe Lodge downriver from Kasane, a lush oasis along the river.

**Burchell's Starling** *Lamprotornis australis*— (Xaro+11) Common to abundant at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR and Selinda .

**Meves's Starling** *Lamprotornis mevesii*— (11) More common in the woodland areas, seen in flocks at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR and Selinda, often vocal.

**Greater Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*— (12) Seen on two days only at Moremi GR, they became numerous and common along the Chobe and at Selinda.

**Cape Starling** *Lamprotornis nitens*— (4) We enjoyed this electric-colored jewel at Moremi GR, and in Nxai Pan NP.

(1) **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* — (1) Seen at the Kasane Sewage Lagoons, at least four, not common in this area but we photographed them.

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (2)**

**Groundscraper Thrush** *Psophocichla litsitsirupa*— (1) Good views of one in the two-track road near the Hippo Pools at Moremi GR.

**Kurrichane Thrush** *Turdus libonyana*— (Xaro+4) Seen at Xaro, Moremi GR, and Chobe, usually one or two individuals.

### **OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae (10)**

**Mariqua Flycatcher** *Bradornis mariquensis*— (5) This very common flycatcher was often perched in view as we explored a variety of terrain. Seen at Maun, and then very common at Nxai Pan NP

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens*— (Xaro+1) One individual seen along the row of Jackelberry trees across from our houseboat on the Chobe

**Southern Black-Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina*— (1) Quick views only from Maun in the scrub between Camp and the Thamalakane River, the only view of the trip.

**Kalahari Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas paeon*— (2) Seen on two days of the trip, both at Nxai Pan where its much at home in the arid Kalahari terrain.

**Red-backed Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys*— (3) Seen in woodland at the rest stop at Nxai Pan and then on the final morning walk at Maun.

**White-browed Robin-Chat** *Cossypha heuglini*— (6) HO in Moremi GR but seen or heard daily while in Chobe.

**Collared Palm-Thrush** *Cichladusa arquata*— (2) Our morning wake up call at the Pangolin Lodge, we also found them at Mowana Lodge walking with local guide Charles Motumba.

**African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*— (4) Seen on four days – two in Moremi GR and then two along the Chobe. In both locations they would perch atop rushes in clear view.

**Arnot's Chat (White-headed Black-Chat)** *Myrmecocichla arnotti*— (3) A Mopane habitat species, we found them crossing Moremi GR and again in Selinda in similar woodland habitat. Great views, each time a pair, and in Selinda several pairs a day.

**Capped Wheatear** *Oenanthe pileata*— (5) A gorgeous species, we loved seeing them perch on Elephant skulls and dung piles, quite common as we explored Nxai Pan NP.

### **SUNBIRDS: Nectariniidae (4)**

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris*— (1) Seen in flowering shrubs at the Immigration station as we waited for our Covid test results in Kasane.

**Amethyst Sunbird** *Chalcomitra amethystina*— (3) Seen on one day in Moremi GR and then two days while on the Chobe in flowering trees. One was distant but posed well for photos.

**Mariqua Sunbird** *Cinnyris bifasciatus*— (4) The sunbird we encountered the most, this species is widespread and was seen in Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Chobe and Maun.

**White-breasted Sunbird** *Cinnyris talatala*— (1) Seen one morning in the Serondela section of Chobe from our houseboat mooring. A lone individual.

### **WEAVERS: Ploceidae (13)**

**Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver** *Bubalornis niger*— (12) Common and frequent, seen around their huge nests fixing them up, feeding. Highly social. Widespread, seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR and Selinda in wooded habitat.

**Scaly Weaver** *Sporopipes squamifrons*— (3) Social, seen in small groups while in Nxai Pan NP.

**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali*— (13) Widespread, common, vocal and often near their hanging ball nests at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Kasane, and Selinda.

**Red-headed Weaver** *Anaplectes rubriceps*— (4) Seen on three days in Moremi GR but best views by Chobe Lodge downstream from Kasane – great views on shore from our boat.

**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularius*— (3) Seen along the Chobe from the river.

**Holub's Golden-Weaver** *Ploceus xanthops*— (Xaro+2) Seen along the Chobe, a bright pair working on a nest upstream from the boat launch. And then seen our final day in Maun.

**Southern Brown-throated Weaver** *Ploceus xanthopterus*— (2) Seen at the Lily Lagoon in Namibia on the Chobe and then again while at the second mooring of our houseboat.

**Lesser Masked-Weaver** *Ploceus intermedius*— (1) Seen building nests in good number at the Kasane Sewage Lagoons.

**Southern Masked-Weaver** *Ploceus velatus*— (6) Widespread and common.

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*— (3) Seen only in Selinda, there quite common.

**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*— (15) Widespread and abundant, large flocks encountered frequently. At Moremi we saw literal clouds of them at dawn and dusk coming and going to roosts. Seen at all locations.

**Fan-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes axillaris*— (1) Seen in rushes lining the Chobe, non-breeding individuals.

**Thick-billed Weaver** *Amblyospiza albifrons* — (1) A male seen near its unique nest in the Lily Lagoon of Namibia.

### **WAXBILLS: Estrildidae (10)**

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*— (1) One group seen along the Chobe, not far from the boat launch

**Black-faced Waxbill** *Estrilda erythronotos*— (1) Best seen at Judy's feeders at the ESP farm stay in Maun.

**Southern Cordonbleu** *Uraeginthus angolensis*— (18) Very common, the most common smaller songbird we'd encounter throughout the stay, at all locations.

**Violet-eared Waxbill** *Granatina granatina*— (5) A real beauty, seen at Judy's feeders at the ESP farm at Maun, and then daily while in Nxai Pan NP.

**Green-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia melba*— (4) A beautiful species, looking like its painted, seen well at the ESP farm, then in the South Campground at Nxai Pan, at Pangolin Lodge before our flight to Selinda and on our final walk at Maun.

**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala*— (Xaro+3) Seen in small numbers, at Xaro, Moremi GR, Selinda and Maun.

**Brown Firefinch** *Lagonosticta nitidula*— (2) A regional specialty seen well on two days while in Moremi GR.

**Jameson's Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*— (Xaro+3) Seen at Xaro and then in good number and close range at the Kasane Sewage Lagoon. Found also on the Chobe and at Selinda, a pair at a time

**Red-headed Finch** *Amadina erythrocephala*— (1) Seen at the big waterhole at Nxai Pan, good views.

**Quailfinch** *Ortygospiza atricollis*— (1) Seen very well at close range, two, at Moremi GR.

### **INDIGOBIRDS AND WHYDAHS: Viduidae (1)**

**Eastern Paradise Whydah** *Vidua paradisaea* — (2) Non-breeding birds seen in small flocks on the walk on the ESP farm Maun, and on the walk the final morning at Maun over to the Thamalakane River, a flock in the road margin.

### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (3)**

**Great Rufous Sparrow** *Passer motitensis*— (2) More common this year, seen several times while in Nxai Pan NP in small flocks and as pairs.

**Southern Gray-headed Sparrow** *Passer diffusus*— (12) Common and widespread, seen at Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP, Kasane, Chobe and Selinda.

**Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow (Petronia)** *Petronia superciliosus*— (4) Fairly non-descript, with attention we picked them up two days at Moremi GR, one day on the Chobe and one day at Selinda. Shrubby habitat, small flocks.

### **WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae (5)**

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis*— (4) seen once in Moremi GR at a lagoon, then on three other days along the Type equation here. Chobe in vegetated banks for the river islands.

**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp*— (5) Seen daily, individuals here and there along the riverbanks and grassy flats among herbivores feeding on river islands of Chobe.

**African Pipit** *Anthus cinnamomeus*— (9) Maun, Thamalakane River, Moremi GR

**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys*— (1) One individual fed in front of us along the river at one of our sundowner stops, time enough for inspection.

**Buffy Pipit** *Anthus vaalensis*— (6) Fairly common and widespread, seen on the Thamalakane River, in Moremi GR and on two days while in Chobe.

### **FINCHES: Fringillidae (2)**

**Black-throated Canary** *Serinus atrogularis*— (2) Seen at the big waterhole in Nxai Pan and then we had very good views of good numbers at the Kasane Sewage Lagoons.

**Yellow Canary** *Serinus flaviventris*— (4) Seen all days while in Nxai Pan NP, coming in to the waterholes and at varied spots on our game drives, most often a pair.

### **OLD WORLD BUNTINGS: Emberizidae (1)**

**Golden-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza flaviventris*— (13) While common and widespread, this small songbird was a showstopper for us at all locations.

### **MAMMALS (36 species recorded):**

**African Elephant** *Loxodonta africana*— (18) Widespread

**Chacma Baboon** *Papio ursinus*— (13) Widespread

**Southern Lesser Galago (Bushbaby)** *Galago moholi*—(1) at the ESP farm, feeding at night

**Vervet Monkey** *Chlorocebus pygerythrus*—(3) Widespread

**Scrub Hare** *Lepus saxatilis*— (4) Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP

**Lion** *Panthera leo*—(13) Widespread, a big year for sightings

**Leopard** *Panthera pardus*— (2 sightings and one heard near camp)

**Serval** *Leptailurus serval* — (1) Early dawn sighting at Selinda

**African Wildcat** *Felis silvestris lybica*— (2) Nxai Pan NP and Selinda

**Banded Mongoose** *Mungos mungo*— (4) Moremi GR and Chobe

**Dwarf Mongoose** *Helogale parvula*— (3) Moremi GR and Selinda

**Slender Mongoose** *Galerella sanguine*—(5) Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP and Selinda

**Spotted Hyena** *Crocuta crocuta*—(3) Moremi GR, Nxai Pan and best views near a carcass at Selinda  
**Black-backed Jackal** *Canis mesomelas*— (7) Moremi GR, but most common and well-seen at Nxai Pan NP  
**Bat-eared Fox** *Otocyon megalotis*— (6) Nxai Pan NP at a possible den (at same place each day) and later at Selinda on night drives  
**African Wild Dog** *Lycaon pictus*— (3) Great views while at Moremi GR  
**Honey Badger** *Mellivora capensis*— (2) Moremi GR and Selinda  
**Burchell's Zebra** *Equus quagga burchellii*— (10) Widespread  
**Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus*— (16) Widespread  
**Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibious*— (17) Widespread  
**(Southern Reticulated) Giraffe** *Giraffa camelopardalis*— (12) Widespread  
**Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu)** *Connochaetes taurinus*— (11) Widespread  
**Tsessebe** *Damaliscus lunatus*— (8) Moremi and Selinda  
**Springbok** *Antidorcas marsupialis*— (4) Nxai Pan NP, very common here  
**Steenbok** *Raphicerus campestris*—(10) Widespread, but always individuals or pairs  
**African Buffalo** *Syncerus caffer*—(13) Widespread  
**Greater Kudu** *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*—(14) Widespread  
**Sable Antelope** *Hippotragus niger*—(3) Moremi GR, Chobe  
**Roan Antelope** *Hippotragus equinus*—(1) Moremi GR  
**Impala** *Aepyceros melampus*—(19) Widespread  
**Waterbuck** *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*—(14) Widespread  
**Puku** *Kobus vardonii*—(4) Chobe, a local species in Botswana, coming over from the east  
**Red Lechwe** *Kobus leche*—(12) Widespread except Nxai Pan  
**Southern Reedbuck** *Redunca arundinum*—(4) Thamalakane River and Moremi GR  
**Smith's Bush Squirrel** *Paraxerus cepapi*—(14) Widespread  
**Spring Hare** *Pedetes capensis*—(1) Selinda, seen on night drive

#### REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (6 species recorded):

**Nile Monitor Lizard** *Varanus niloticus*— (3) Seen on several occasions, flicking its tongue out as it crawled along the river banks in search of prey.  
**Southern Tree Agama** *Acanthocercus atricollis*— (2) Nxai Pan  
**Wahlberg's Striped Skink** *Trachylepis wahlbergii*—(3) Moremi GR, Nxai Pan NP  
**Nile Crocodile** *Crocodylus niloticus*—(13) Widespread  
**African Leopard Tortoise** *Stigmochelys pardalis*— (1) Nxai Pan, Jim spent time with one by his tent  
**Painted Reed Frog** *Hyperolius marmoratus*—Moremi GR – (3) HO lovely sound at night from the lagoon at Xini, known also as Bell Frog locally.