



**KALAHARI MAMMAL EXTRAVAGANZA**  
**with optional 6-day Kgalagadi pre-trip**

**2 - 9 APRIL 2018**



**Aardvark** is one of our targets on this trip.

The vast Kalahari area is semi-desert, where some very tough African mammals can be found relatively easily. Moreover, it has a lot of mammals (notably smaller ones) that are only very rarely seen anywhere else and most certainly are not found on your typical Serengeti or Kruger safari. We invite you on a spectacular African experience that you will not forget in a hurry.

This ‘Birding Tour Kalahari’ adventure can be combined with our **Drakensberg and Zululand Mammal and Bird Extravaganza 2018** (April 10 – 18 2018). You can join either tour independently, but we strongly recommend doing both. Doing both tours means you will sample two African habitats that are absolutely poles apart.

## Main Kalahari trip

*Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.*

### Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

#### Day 1. Transfer to Witsand Nature Reserve

Today we fly to Upington from Johannesburg, and transfer to Witsand Nature Reserve, commonly known as Witsand Kalahari and part of the “Roaring Kalahari Route” (2 ½ hours). **Aardvark**, **ground pangolin**, and **black-footed cat** occur here, and with luck we might catch a glimpse of one of them on our first night drive.

#### Day 2. Witsand Nature Reserve

Here at Witsand Nature Reserve game drives with some good birding (three species of sandgrouse occur here) are the order of the day. We will spend some time on foot, looking for **elephant shrew**, **mole rat**, **yellow mongoose**, **Cape hare**, and other small mammals. Later in the afternoon we will concentrate our efforts on the “Brulsand” (which translates to “roaring sand”) area, because this is a known **ground pangolin** haunt. Whichever way we look at it, **ground pangolin** will be our biggest challenge on this trip, as even in their known haunts they remain difficult to find.

#### Day 3. Witsand Nature Reserve

**Ground pangolin**, if not yet found, will still be our main target, although we might also encounter **gemsbok**, **red hartebeest**, **springbok**, and **common duiker**. From a birding point of view, we can look forward to seeing **Pygmy Falcon**, **Sociable Weaver**, **Kori Bustard**, and **Crimson-breasted Shrike**.

#### Day 4. Transfer to Kimberley

After breakfast we head for Kimberley, and more specifically Marrick Safari, a large game farm, which will be our base camp for the next few days. On our first night we will look for **aardvark**, which has burrows quite close to the lodge and as a result has become fairly tame toward humans, relatively speaking. We might also encounter **bat-eared fox** and **aardwolf**, both of which are quite common here.

**Day 5. Kimberley**

After breakfast we head out to look for some more of our target species. **Black wildebeest**, rated by some as the most stupid of all antelope (due to their inquisitive nature), will be found with relative ease. **Giraffe, common eland, gemsbok, and caracal** are other possibilities. Once again we will spend some time on foot during the day, looking for small mammals, reptiles and the likes. Birding can be particularly rewarding, with **Blue Crane** often breeding on the farm and **Double-banded Courser** sometimes common. After dinner we go on a night drive either at Marrick or Benfontein, which might yield **aardvark, aardwolf, Southern African hedgehog, gerbil mouse, and spring hare**.

**Day 6. Kimberley**

Benfontein Game Farm (11,300 ha) is a particularly good area for **black-footed cat**, and **black wildebeest** occurs here as well. We will spend a fair amount of time on this farm, which belongs to the De Beers Group. Dronfeld, another of the De Beers farms, is also an option, and there are a number of other great birding sites around Kimberley. Night excursions can be arranged, and **cape fox** is possible, although it is quite scarce here. We might also visit some caves in Griekwastad, where we can study a number of **bat** species.

**Day 7. Kimberley**

This will be our last day in the Kimberley area, which we'll spend for the most part in nearby Mokala National Park. This is a recently proclaimed South African national park, a truly splendid one, which holds, among many others, not only a large herd of **roan antelope** but also **sable antelope, black wildebeest, giraffe, tsessebe, aardwolf, bat-eared fox, and meerkat** (suricate), as well as many spectacular birds, among them six lark species. We might also briefly visit the Kimberley "Big Hole" for those that might want to catch a quick glimpse of the deepest human-made hole in the world. Another night excursion may be on the cards as well, depending on what species we still need.

**Day 8. Departure**

After some final mammal-viewing we do a short (half-an-hour) drive to Kimberley airport, from where we'll fly to Johannesburg.

**Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park pre-trip**

Please note that a 6-day pre-trip to the massive (twice the size of Kruger!) Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is possible – here you have a good chance of seeing **lion, leopard, and cheetah**, as well as many other animals and some unique birds. This is a massive national park of open semi-desert habitat (unlike Kruger or Hluhluwe), making game-viewing easy. It is scenically stunning and one of the few African parks where migration of animals such as **common eland** is undisturbed by either fencing or the small size of the park.

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| <b>Duration:</b>   | 8 or 13 days   |
| <b>Group size:</b> | 4 – 8 (rarely 9)   |
| <b>Date:</b>       | main tour: April 2 – 9, 2018<br>Kgalagadi pre-trip: March 28 – April 2, 2018 |
| <b>Start:</b>      | Johannesburg   |
| <b>End:</b>        | Johannesburg   |

**Price for the main tour:** R40,987 per person sharing, single supplement R4,785

**Price for the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park pre-trip:** R31,888 per person sharing, single supplement R4,059

**Price includes:**

Meals

Accommodation

Entrance fees

Activities mentioned in the itinerary

Guiding fees

All transport while on tour

**Price excludes:**

Local and international flights

Personal insurance

Drinks

Tips

Laundry

Personal expenses such as gifts