

# Namibia's Butterflies

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

### Outline Itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Outbound flights
<b>Day 2</b>	Windhoek
<b>Day 3</b>	Erongo Mountains
<b>Day 4</b>	Spitzkoppe/Erongo Mountains
<b>Day 5 – 6</b>	Ghaub Nature Reserve
<b>Day 7 – 9</b>	Okavango River
<b>Day 10 – 12</b>	Waterberg
<b>Day 13 – 14</b>	Departure, arrive UK

### Departs

March – April

### Focus

Butterflies

### Grading

A.

### Dates and Prices

See website (tour code **NAM07**)

### Highlights

- Endemic species including Braine's Zulu and Namibian Acraea
- A rich selection of Namibia's 200+ butterfly species
- Diverse habitats with excellent flora
- An exciting range of birds, reptiles and mammals
- Travel in comfort with well-appointed hotels and transport throughout
- Guided by in-country experts



Citrus Swallowtail, Guineaowl & Pioneer Caper White



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## Introduction

Namibia, located in south-western Africa, is renowned for its stunning landscapes, diverse habitats, and unique biodiversity, including a remarkable variety of butterflies. The country's geography is defined by arid deserts, vast savannahs, rugged mountains, and coastal plains, creating distinct ecological zones that support a wide range of wildlife.

The Namib Desert, stretching along the Atlantic coastline, is one of the oldest deserts in the world. Its iconic sand dunes and gravel plains may appear barren, but they support specialised plants and animals adapted to extreme aridity. In contrast, the Kalahari Desert in eastern Namibia features semi-arid savannahs and grasslands, with pockets of woodland providing habitats for diverse species. The central plateau, with its rolling hills and valleys, forms the heart of Namibia, while the northern regions include wetter habitats such as the lush Caprivi Strip, a region rich in rivers and wetlands.

Namibia's varied habitats make it a haven for butterflies, with over 200 recorded species and six that are endemic. The Caprivi Strip, with its subtropical climate and abundant vegetation, supports species such as the strikingly colourful African Monarch (*Danaus chrysippus*) and the Citrus Swallowtail (*Papilio demodocus*). The savannahs and woodlands are home to butterflies like the Braine's Zulu (*Alaena brainei*), while desert specialists thrive in the Namib and Kalahari.

Butterflies play vital roles in Namibia's ecosystems as pollinators and indicators of environmental health. Conservation efforts, particularly in protected areas such as Ghaub Nature Reserve and the Namib-Naukluft Park, help preserve these delicate creatures.



Spitzkoppe

## Itinerary

*NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.*

### Day 1

### Fly to Namibia

Today we take an overnight flight from London to Johannesburg before an onward connection to Windhoek.

### Day 2

### Arrival Windhoek, transfer hotel

We arrive at our lovely Bushveld lodge late in the afternoon where we will relax, have a pleasant meal and recover from our journey.

### Days 3 – 4

### Erongo & Spitzkoppe



Fig Tree Blue © Braine

After breakfast, we'll set off on a 3-hour drive to our lodge in rugged granite kopjes of the Erongo Mountains. The habitat here is mostly pro-Namib such as Acacia scrub and granite inselberg and provides refuge for a rich diversity of wildlife. We will spend two days exploring various niches and butterflies we might find here include the endemic Namibian *Acraea* (*Acraea hypoleuca*). Other attractive species we may see here include Mimosa Sapphire (*Iolus mimosa*), Queen Purple Tip (*Colotis regina*),

Eastern Scarlet (*Axiocerses tjoane*), Fig Tree Blue (*Myrina silenus*), Zebra White (*Pinacopteryx eriphia*) and Pioneer Caper White (*Belenois aurota*). We will also visit the 2,000ft bald granite peaks of Spitzkoppe which rise dramatically out of the surrounding plain, forming a dramatic and beautiful landscape.

### Days 5 – 6

### Ghaub Nature Reserve

We depart early, driving north-east to our next lodge at the Ghaub Reserve, where the habitat type is known as Karstveld. The underlying limestone geology supports very different habitats to those further south, with the permeable rocks containing groundwater resulting in a much greener landscape. The grounds of the lodge are home to White Rhino, though some luck is needed to see them, and the diverse local flora supports a wealth of butterflies. We hope to see the endemic Braine's Zulu (*Alaena brainei*) here, alongside the familiar Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) and other gems such as Bowker's Marbled Sapphire (*Stugeta bowkeri*) and Purple-brown Hairstreak (*Hypolycaena philippus*). This site hosts a plethora of skippers and swifts, including Green-marbled Skipper (*Gomalia elma*), and *Papilio*s are represented by the Citrus Swallowtail. Of note, this was

the first site in southern Africa where the remains of an early hominid were found which dated back 13 million years.

## Days 7 – 9

## Okavango

Today we drive six hours to the north-east into the Caprivi Strip to our beautiful riverside lodge on the banks of the Okavango River. The area provides an outstanding habitat mosaic with outstanding diversity. These range from broad-leaved *Brachystegia* and riparian woodlands to vegetated dunes and ancient drainage lines with established *Acacia*, *Terminalia* and *Combretum* woodland and permanent rivers, swamps and floodplain areas. This is an iconic wildlife destination, and we will spend time exploring various sites around our lodge. We will be alert for Veined Swordtail (*Graphium leonidas*), Angola White Lady (*Graphium angolanus*) and various *Acraeas*. Key species in the marshy areas will be Marsh Telchinea (*Telchinia rahira*), Bushveld Charaxes (*Charaxes achaemenes*), Spotted Joker (*Byblia ilithyia*) and the gorgeous grey Guineafowl (*Hamanumida daedalus*). There will be many species here that we won't see further south, and we will be alert to the possibility that there will be new species for the area drifting from Angola in the north. The whole area is a wildlife paradise and iconic African game will be present.

## Days 10 – 12

## Waterberg

We depart the Okavango today and journey seven hours south and west to the Waterberg Wilderness Lodge. The Waterberg is a large sandstone plateau that has sandy Kalahari habitat on the top and well-established *Acacia* scrub and *Ficus* woodland around its edge. The sandstone mountain absorbs water and releases it throughout the year, giving the area its name. The area supports a rich diversity of flora that provide food plants and nectar for a varied butterfly fauna. Highlights here include Yellow



Striped Policeman © Braine

Pansy (*Junonia hierta*), various charaxes including Braine's Charaxes, many skippers including the stunning White-cloaked Skipper (*Leucochitonea levubu*), and several sapphires and blues including Braine's Straight-line Sapphire (*Iolaus silaris brainei*), Mimosa Sapphire (*Iolaus mimosae*), Brown Playboy (*Deudorix antalus*), Natal Silverline (*Cigaritis natalensis*), Silvery Silverline (*C. phanes*), and Ella's Silverline (*C. ella*). There are, of course, many more than can be listed here and a few days in this region will be a butterfly enthusiast's treat.

## Days 13 – 14

## Inbound flights

After a superb butterfly-filled tour in this wildlife-rich corner of Africa, we will make our way to Windhoek to catch our overnight return flight to London via Johannesburg.

## Tour Grading & Focus

Short easy walks. A few long drives are necessary to see the best habitats.

## Weather, Clothing & Equipment

March to April is the end of the wet season in Namibia. Rain is possible but not guaranteed and it is wise to bring a light water-proof layer. Daytime temperatures will be around 30°C and night-time temperatures will be comfortable high teens.

## What's Included

- Accommodation in comfortable lodges that includes breakfast and dinner
- Light lunch and refreshment during the daytime
- Ground transport in 4x4
- Expert guiding at all times

## Extending Your Holiday

We would be happy to assist in arranging extensions, should this be of interest. Please contact Dan Lay ([Dan@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:Dan@naturetrek.co.uk) or 01962 733051) for further information and/or make sure to stipulate any interest in a possible extension upon booking.

## How to Book Your Place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements at the time of booking.

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