

This week we conclude this series to walk you through our adventures on the Complete Namibia Tour that I ran from the middle of April 2023. We traveled north from Sossusvlei to Walvis Bay where we'd spend two days photographing the flamingoes and other shore birds. Walvis Bay

was refreshingly cool after the unseasonably hot days we'd spent in Sossusvlei.



### Flamingo "Furisode" Kimono

This first photo of a flamingo landing reminds me of a young Japanese girl wearing a "Furisode" Kimono, like the ones they might wear at their coming-óf-ağe ceremony, as it's a bit more flamboyant than the more subdued colors that a lady of slightly more advanced years might where. I was initially annoyed that I didn't get much of the reflection, but this image grew on me, and I do like the amount of detail that we can see in the bird because it takes up more of the frame.

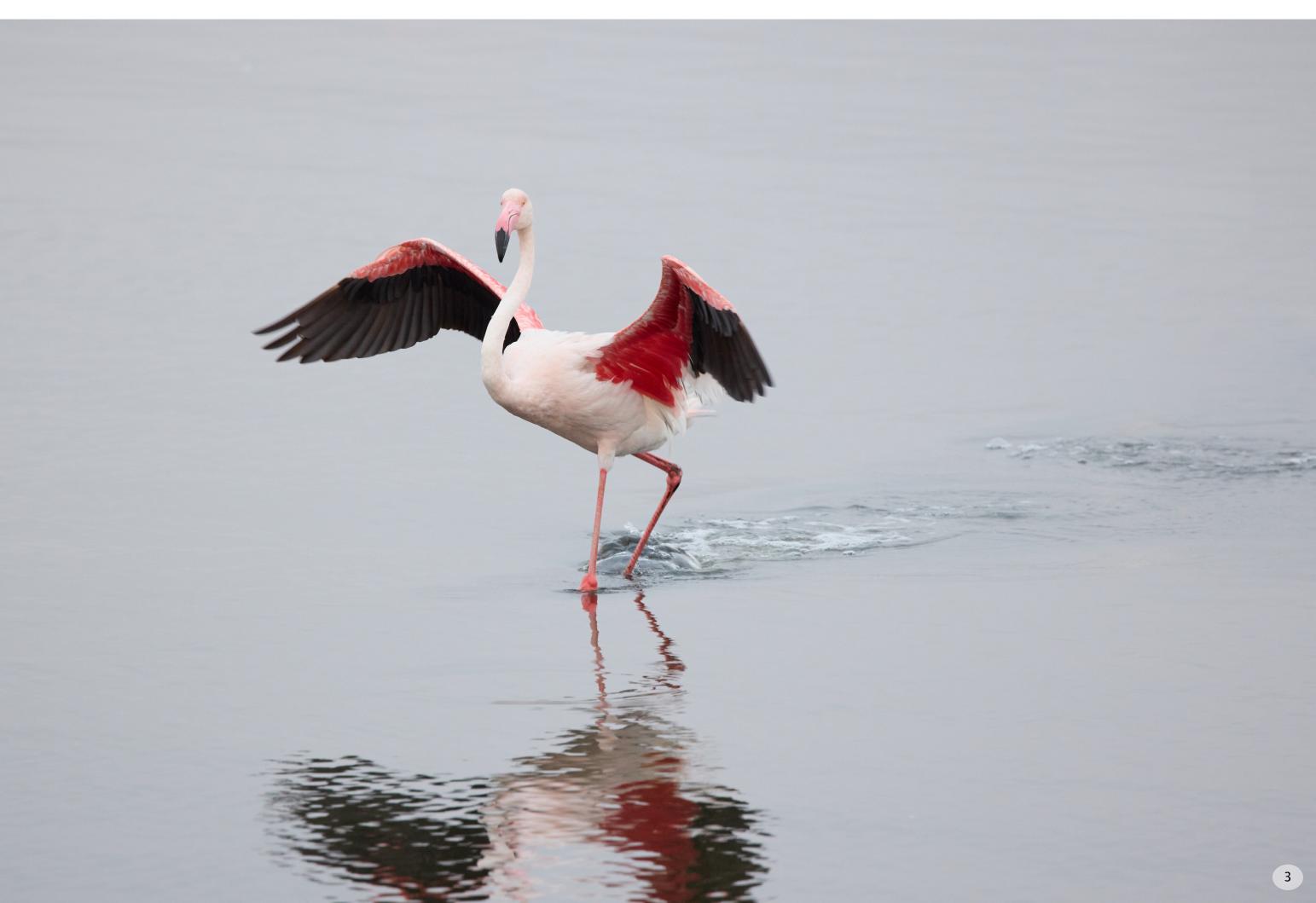
## Flamingo Sunset

The highlight of the Walvis Bay visit is getting a chance to get the flamingoes at sunset, as you can see in this next image (following page). To ensure that there is water covering entire the foreground I go down the beach past the mud flats, and get my camera right down to water level, and shoot using my articulated screen. This makes it more difficult to shoot, but if you keep your eye on the digital level and ensure that you are

focusing on the flamingos it can be a beautiful shot. I'm still hoping for a perfect heart with two heads from flamingos at some point, but I haven't bagged that one yet.

#### The Zeila

The following morning went traveled North again to photograph the Himba people in their town and on the way, made a stop at the Zeila shipwreck (pages 6, 7). I often look for something to put in the foreground and rarely find it, but this year I was relatively happy to see some kelp lying on the beach, so I included that, as you can see here.



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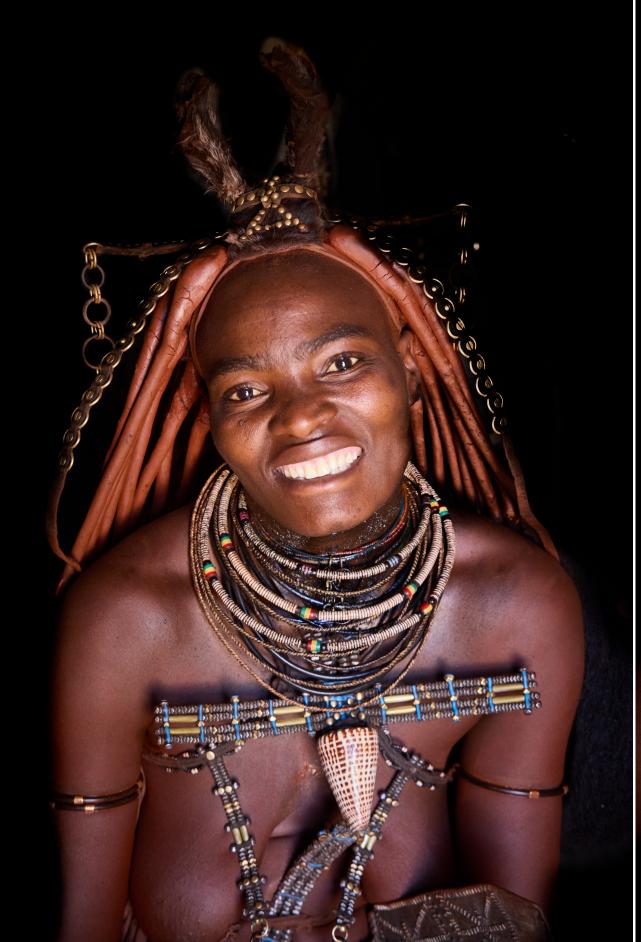


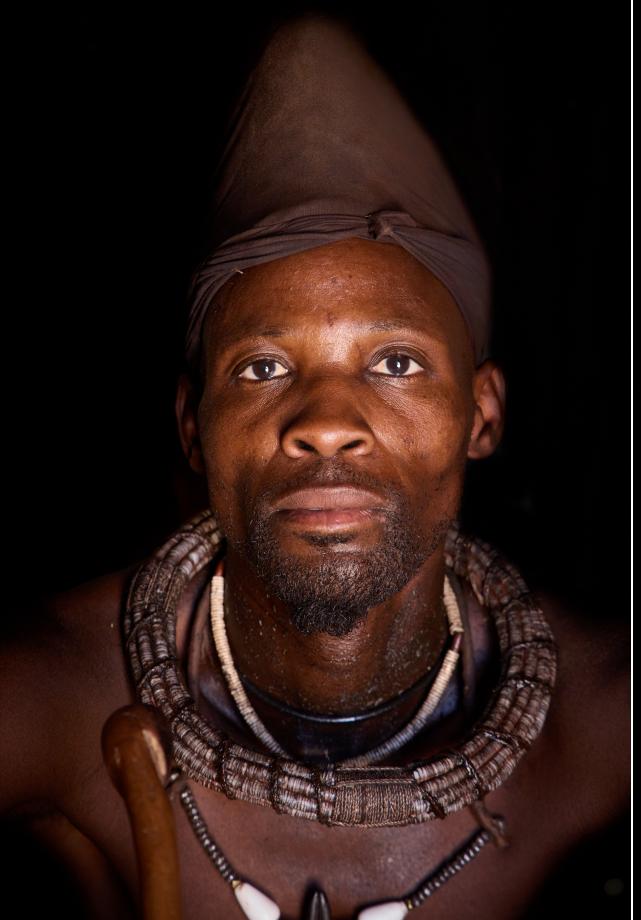
We had a bit of a shock when we got to the Himba village where they have been every year that I have visited for the last eleven years. As a semi-nomadic people I knew that there was always the risk that they would not be there, and this year, they were not. They may have moved on because of the lack of rain at the end of last year, although the valley was relatively green when we got there because of the late rains we'd seen.

I have people looking for the settlement, and we will hopefully be able to visit them during my upcoming trip, assuming they didn't move because they had become tired of people turning up to photograph them, and that is a distinct possibility, as I know

that few other visitors treat them the way we do and the way they should. There was a ray of hope when we drove into Sesfontein a little later in the day, and we noticed a sign in English that read "Traditional Himba Village." As I'm sure you just imagined, though, it was a pretty nasty tourist trap. There were a number of Himba people there, and

they were very nice, but it was a far cry from the settlement I've always visited. There was no sense of them living there, and the flies were unbearable. We made a number of images, some of which were nice, but I'm hoping we don't have to return on my upcoming trip. Here are the three images that I selected from our visit.









The rest of the photos from the tour were shot inside the Etosha National Park. As I've prepared for this episode, I realized that I wasn't going to be able to finish this with just ten more photos, and I really want to wrap up this series before traveling again, so we'll push the number of images a little, and keep storming through, continuing with what I feel is a relatively minimalist photo of an Oryx half-submerged in a waterhole. Waterholes can be busy places, so I was pleased to be able to get this without other animals encroaching on the scene.

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**Elephant Procession** The reason I was not able to get the number of images down to just ten was that some of the scenes were saw this year, like this next image, seemed to have an almost biblical scale to them. I was torn between this and an earlier image when we saw this heard of elephants come through the trees in the distance, but I love how we can see the whole extended family of elephants here, including their children, making their way across the plain to the waterhole.









#### Etosha Waterhole

Another almost biblical scene here, with four huge bull-elephants at a waterhole, springbok in the distance, and the Etosha pan even further back. This is another stitch of three or four images, so the details at 100% is fascinating. I'll try to print this one out large when I get some time.

# Lilac-Breasted Roller in Flight

I was pretty happy with this shot of a Lilac-Breasted Roller as it took flight from a tree that we'd parked by. These are beautiful birds and a lot of fun to shoot as a group, because people start to get tired of waiting for them to fly and all sorts of banter starts to fly around the vehicle.





### Black-Faced Impala

Here is another stitched panorama of another section of the Black-Faced Impala feeding in the same long grass. I'm really enjoying being able to quickly and accurately stitch images together right there in Capture One Pro and get a DNG file so I can continue to work with all the benefits of a raw format image.

# Strutting Secretary Bird

Here is a Secretary Bird strutting its stuff through the grasses of Eastern Etosha National Park (following page). I remember photographing one of these in the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo years ago and never would have thought I'd be fortunate enough to visit Africa and photograph them in the wild like this. Such a beautiful bird.



#### Giraffe with Etosha Sunset

OK, so after that sprint through all of the images I wanted to share from Etosha, here (pages 30, 31) is one of the last images I shot on this tour, and a fitting ending image for the series. We had literally minutes left before we had to leave the park, as you are not allowed to be in there after sundown, but we saw the sun poking through the clouds which are not common at this time of year, and we found a few giraffes that we may be able to place in the scene and raced over. We were able to position our vehicle in a way that enabled us to make this photograph.

As usual, at the end of the trip I went around the table with a digital recorder and received some lovely comments from our guests, which I'd like to play you now.

Please listen with the audio player at the top of the blog post to find out what the guests said about their experiences.

OK, so we'll start to wrap it up there for this episode and series. I'll be off the air again for a further few weeks as I travel on the second Namibia tour. When I get back I'll try to present a shorter series only showing work that was different to this, so we should be able to move on relatively quickly. If you are considering joining me on a future Namibia tour, my 2024 trip may be my last visit, so please get your ducks in a row, and visit my tours page for details.







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