

Tourism Press Release

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First Substantiated recording of Ross's Turaco in Namibia - Extremely Rare Bird Sighting recorded in the Kavango Region at n'Taranga Village, west of Rundu

On the advent of the summer birding season in southern Africa, a few international birding enthusiasts on visit to Namibia have last week been rewarded with a unique and extremely rare sighting of **Ross's Turaco** (*Musophaga rossae*) also known as the "Rooikuifloerie" at **Taranga Safari Lodge** situated 35 kilometers west of Rundu on the banks of the Okavango River.

The violet-purple bodied bird with a large yellow frontal shield and a very distinctive crimson crest is a rare vagrant to southern Africa - previously recorded only from within the Okavango Delta Botswana and Zimbabwe/Zambia border. Previous records in Namibia from the Zambezi region (Caprivi) were unsubstantiated.

The rare bird is not proven to breed in southern Africa and is found in isolated populations in Gabon, Cameroon, Sudan and Uganda. It's habitat is evergreen and riverine forests. Mr. Terry Butcher, specialist ornithology guide from **Ultimate Safaris**, made the discovery at **Taranga Safari Lodge** whilst guiding international enthusiasts through Namibia a week ago.

Once birding web sites recorded the sighting, it caused unprecedented interest from birders across southern Africa with specialists and enthusiasts flying into Namibia and arriving on short notice from as far as Johannesburg and Cape Town, eager to add the bird to their personal list of sightings.

Ms Daniela Robberts, Marketing Manager of Taranga Safari, a classic tented safari lodge in the Rundu area, commented: "We are extremely happy to add the Ross's Turaco to our already impressive list of local bird sightings. Taranga Safari Lodge has for years worked extremely hard to create a natural and safe environment for birds on the banks of the Okavango river. Apart from the well-known African Fish Eagle, African Jacana, various Kingfishers, other rare and significant important sightings at Taranga Safari Lodge includes the African Pygmy Goose, African Cuckoo Hawk, Lesser Jacana, Gull-billed Tern, Hartlaub's Babbler, African Skimmer and Spotted Flycatcher".

Mr. David Hoddinott, a keen birding enthusiast from South Africa, logged his sighting of Ross's Turaco last week and made the photos available for publication. More than 100 bird species have been identified at Taranga Safari Lodge over the past few years since its establishment. More information can be sourced from info@taranganamibia.com

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