Faike & Cox Trip Report
Arid North West South Africa
1st to 5th August 2015 (5 days)

Male Coqui Francolin by Heinz Ortmann

Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader: Heinz Ortmann
Tour Summary

This short private tour was focussed on finding some of South Africa’s more unusual small mammals as well as a variety of birds found in the dry and arid habitats that were covered. The four days produced over 160 bird species including regional megas such as Pygmy Falcon, Sociable Weaver and Burchell’s Courser! However it was the diversity and rare status of some of the mammals that were seen that would be remembered as the ultimate highlights. A staggering 42 species of mammal were seen during this short trip which included the weird and wonderful Aardvark, shy and retiring Aardwolf and the beautiful Black-footed Cat! Certainly a tour that would be remembered for a long time!

The short nature of this tour and the distances that needed to be covered resulted in two of our days largely being travel days. Heading out of Johannesburg on the first morning, we saw several species common to the surrounding agricultural areas, including Helmeted Guineafowl, Egyptian Goose, Black-headed Heron, Grey-headed Gulls, Speckled Pigeon, Red-eyed and Ring-necked Doves as well as mixed flocks of weavers and bishops that included good views of non-breeding Long-tailed Widowbirds. The vegetation soon began to change to an Acacia dominated open woodland with some areas showing beautiful red sand not dissimilar to the Kalahari, lying to the north and west. A brief roadside stop produced wonderful views of Crowned Lapwing, Northern Black Korhaan, Spike-heeled Lark, African Pipit and the often difficult to find Orange River Francolin! Further roadside sightings included raptors such as Black-winged Kite, Pale Chanting Goshawk and White-backed Vulture as we neared Kimberley. We made another roadside stop close to our accommodation in the late afternoon. This proved extremely fruitful with great views of Short-toed Rock Thrush, Chat and Fiscal Flycatcher, Black-crowned Tchagra, small groups of Scaly-feathered Weavers, African Hoopoe and Cape Longclaw. We arrived at Marrick Safari Lodge and having settled in, we went out for a short walk in the early evening. Bird activity was fairly good with our first views of Crimson-breasted Shrike, superb views of a male Priit Batis, Acacia Pied Barbet, Chestnut-vented Warbler, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Ant-eating Chat, Long-billed Crombec and Marico Flycatcher. Mammals that were seen included Yellow Mongoose, Impala and Common Zebra.

After supper, we embarked on what would prove to be an incredibly successful night drive. We had good views of a Marsh Owl and three Spotted Eagle-Owls. The mammal viewing was simply phenomenal with Cape and Bat-eared Fox, Black-backed Jackal, Porcupine, African Wild Cat and
Black-footed Cat, Springhare, Striped Mouse, Scrub and Cape Hare as well as the beautiful Smith’s Red Rock Hare, all seen in our two hours on the drive! The undoubted highlight of the evening though, would have to be seeing an Aardvark! This most unusual creature was seen incredibly well as it almost sprinted across the open plains, in search of a termite mound to dig up. A sight we would cherish for a long time!

The following morning we headed off for a day of exploring the nearby Mokala National Park. En route we found a beautiful Sable Antelope as well as good views of Roan. A few stops for birding along the way produced great views of Yellow Canary, White-backed Mousebird, Black-chested Prinia and the lovely little Rufous-eared Warbler. The park itself has some beautiful scenery with habitat mostly comprising of typical Kalahari thornveld interspersed with some lovely rocky hillsides, in certain areas. Large mammals seen included Giraffe, Eland, Greater Kudu, Tsessebe, Impala, Steenbok, Black and Blue Wildebeest and some great views of Gemsbok and Red Hartebeest. Birds ranged from the world’s heaviest flying bird, the Kori Bustard, to our smallest bird, the Cape Penduline Tit. We also had fantastic views of two separate Pygmy Falcons and several Sociable Weaver nests. Green-winged Pytilia, Blue and Violet-eared Waxbills, Red-headed Finch, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Orange-river White-Eye, Fairy Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Namaqua Dove and Ostrich were some of the other specials seen.

We left the park in the late afternoon in beautiful dusky sunlight that provided a golden tinge to the surrounding countryside. A stop to look at a Sabota Lark produced arguably the sighting of the tour. A rather bewildered looking Aardwolf popped its head up and bolted off to the apparent safety of a termite mound where it later gained enough courage to slowly pop its head up again! A superb sighting indeed! Other highlights seen as we made our way back to our accommodation included a pair of Double-banded Courser, Black Sparrowhawk, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Red-billed Quelea and a superb sighting of a family of Meerkats, with South African Ground Squirrels in attendance, absorbing the last rays of afternoon sunlight a few metres off the road!

The night drive again procured many of the same species as the previous evening with some added extras such as Spotted Thick-knee, Karoo Bush Rat and a tiny Large Eared Field Mouse.

After a good breakfast and finding the local Cape Robin-Chat in our lodge gardens we made our way on the long journey north to Pilanesberg National Park. A quick stop at the large dam just outside Kimberley had thousands of Lesser Flamingos and, to the delight of the tour participants, a group of thirty Greater Flamingos also present. Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, South African Shelduck and Yellow-billed Duck were present in good numbers with the highlight being 24 Maccoa Ducks in amongst a raft of Little
and Black-necked Grebes! Wattled, Cape and Pied Starlings as well as a Buffy Pipit were found in adjacent grassland. There was not much chance for birding en route but we did manage to find some great birds including Greater Kestrel and two species of coursers! The pair of Burchell’s Courser was seen after having stopped in the hope of finding sparrow-larks, a great bonus sighting! Even more bizarre would be the sighting of two Temminck’s Coursers on a tiny strip of burnt grassland as we entered one of the towns en route to Pilanesberg. They seemed totally unperturbed by all the passing traffic. Having arrived at Pilanesberg National Park we decided on a short drive into the park in the late afternoon. Slightly different broad-leaved woodland, for the most part, is what greeted us upon our arrival. The large Mankwe Dam had Reed and White-breasted Cormorant, African Snipe, Pied Avocet, African Darter, Grey Heron, Black-winged Stilt, Three-banded Plover, Pied Kingfisher and Great Egret to name but a few. Lesser Striped and Pearl-breasted Swallows with Brown-throated Martins were seen hawking insects over the grassland around the water. Springbok, Common Zebra, Common Waterbuck and several other antelope species were seen well and we had our first encounter with the majestic African Elephant at a small waterhole. Typical woodland birds such as African Grey, Southern Yellow-billed and Southern Red-billed Hornbills, White-browed Scrub Robin, Groundscraper Thrush, White-throated Robin-Chat, Rufous-naped and Flappet Lark were all seen well. We laso had our first views of a group of White-crested Helmet-shrikes, Red-faced Mousebirds, Magpie Shrikes and Chinspot Batis. Having had a long day we made our way to our rooms after supper for a well deserved night’s rest.

The next day was a full day to explore the park. The general drought that South Africa had been experiencing was also in evidence in Pilanesberg. Bird activity was particularly quiet and animals were largely restricted to more nutrient rich grass areas, close to water. A small dam near to camp provided us with super views not only of the group of Hippopotamus but also a pair of the scarce African Black Duck and a group of White-faced Whistling Duck. Other notable sightings on the day included a group of five Tsessebe antelope whilst a mother Cheetah and her three large cubs lazed under the shade of a small Acacia nearby! A truly special sight of these endangered big cats. We did also manage to find a single lioness at a kill and had further super views of African Elephant throughout the day. One particular encounter we are likely to remember for a long time was the difficulty in safely negotiating ourselves back to the safety of our vehicle from the one hide whilst a rather large bull elephant was feeding on a tree very closeby!
Bird highlights included fantastic views of four Coqui Francolin in the early morning, a Lilacbrested Roller bizarrely perching on a giraffe carcass and good views of a female Giant Kingfisher. A bit of birding around the campsite in the late morning also produced several great sightings. We watched as a Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird dug its nest cavity in a dead branch, observed beautiful Crimson-breasted Shrike, Kurrichane and Groundscraper Thrushes in a single view and were treated to other neat birds such as Bearded Woodpecker, Southern Black Tit and Burnt-neck Eremomela. Flowering trees had Marico, White-bellied and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds whilst Crested Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Black-backed Puffback, Brubru, Golden-breasted Bunting and Streaky-headed Seedeaters were all seen in mixed flocks through the day. This really was a great day to end off with in Pilanesberg.

On the last day we left early for Johannesburg where we ended this fabulous short trip and the guests made their way onto further special experiences in Uganda!

Annotated List of Birds recorded

BIRD LIST (162 species of which 3 heard only)

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the bird species list follows that of IOC (International Ornithological congress), Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2013; Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (version 3.5) with Clements names and taxonomy following version 6.8. Names in square brackets represent names given by IOC and omitted by Clements whereas names in round brackets represent names given by Clements and omitted by IOC. Names without square or round brackets represent the name given by both IOC and Clements. A notes section can be found where notably distinctive subspecies or races are concerned and where the taxonomy of a species differs between Clements and IOC.

KEY: E = South African endemic; RE = regional endemic; RNE = regional near-endemic
NR = National Reserve; NP = National Park; BG = Botanical Gardens; GR = Game Reserve, SW = Sewage Works

Ostriches Struthionidae

Struthio camelus

The world’s largest bird species, we had good views in the Kimberley area, Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Note: Clements lumps this species with Somali Ostrich S. molybdophanes as Ostrich S. camelus.

Guineafowl Numididae

Numida meleagris

A common species seen on every day of the tour.

Pheasants & Allies Phasianidae

Note: Clements places all the below species in the Francolinus genus

Peliperdix coqui

We had incredible luck with four birds seen very well in Pilanesberg NP.

Scleropitla gutturalis

This tricky species was seen well en route to Marrick on day one of the tour.

Dendroperdix sephaena

Seen well on both days in Pilanesberg NP.

Pternistis natalensis

This large spurfowl was common in Pilanesberg NP.

Pternistis swainsonii

We had great views of this species in Pilanesberg NP.
**Ducks & Geese Anatidae**

**White-faced Whistling Duck**  *Dendrocygna viduata*
A usually common duck that we found only on one day in Pilanesberg NP.

**Egyptian Goose**  *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
Encountered on almost every day of the tour.

**South African Shelduck (RE)**  *Tadorna cana*
After initially finding this species near Mokala we had further good views of four birds en route to Pilanesberg NP.

**Yellow-billed Duck**  *Anas undulate*
Common in Pilanesberg NP.

**Maccoa Duck**  *Oxyura maccoa*
We had the good fortune of finding as many as 24 of these special ducks on a pan outside Kimberley.

**Grebes Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe**  *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Found on most of the larger waterbodies in Pilanesberg NP.

**Black-necked (Eared) Grebe**  *Podiceps nigricollis*
A few of these birds were present in Pilanesberg NP.

**Flamingos Phoenicopteridae**

**Greater Flamingo**  *Phoenicopterus roseus*
A small group of this species was found amongst several thousand Lesser Flamingos at a pan outside Kimberley.

**Lesser Flamingo**  *Phoeniconaias minor*
Several thousand birds were found at a single pan outside Kimberley.

**Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**

**[African] Sacred Ibis**  *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
This species was seen on most days of the tour.

**Hada Ibis**  *Bostrychia hagedash*
This noisy ibis was seen en route to Marrick on day one and again on our travels from Marrick to Pilanesberg.

**Glossy Ibis**  *Plegadis falcinellus*
As with the above species this slenderly built ibis was seen on both travel days.

**Heron, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae**

**Striated Heron**  *Butorides striata*
We had good views of a single bird in Pilanesberg NP.

**[Western] Cattle Egret**  *Bubulcus ibis*
A common species seen throughout the tour.

**Grey Heron**  *Ardea cinerea*
This widespread large heron was seen at various wetlands during the tour.

**Black-headed Heron**  *Ardea melanocephala*
Seen at various locations and unlike the previous species it was generally found away from water.

**[Western] Great Egret**  *Ardea alba*
Seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

**Little Egret**  *Egretta garzetta*
A single bird was seen well on our last day in Pilanesberg NP.

**Hamerkop Scopidae**

**Hamerkop**  *Scopus umbretta*
This peculiar bird was encountered on both of our days in Pilanesberg NP.

**Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae**

**Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant**  *Microcarbo africanus*
South Africa’s common freshwater cormorant was seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

**White-breasted (Great) Cormorant**  *Phalacrocorax lucidus*
This much larger cormorant was found in Pilanesberg NP.

*Note: Clements treats this sub-Saharan bird as a race of the Great Cormorant P. carbo.*

**Anhingas Anhingidae**

**African Darter**  *Anhinga rufa*
This snake-like bird was encountered in Pilanesberg NP.

*Note: The resident African form P. rufa is sometimes lumped with the Asian P. melanogaster and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses this treatment of lumping these forms.*

**Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**

**Black-winged (shouldered) Kite**  *Elanus caeruleus*
This small raptor was encountered on every day of the tour.

**White-backed Vulture**  *Gyps africanus*
We had distant views of this vulture outside Kimberley.

**Pale Chanting Goshawk (RNE)**  *Melierax canorus*
This beautiful raptor was seen well in the more arid areas such as Mokala NP on this tour.

**Black Sparrowhawk (Goshawk)**  *Accipiter melanoleucus*
This large accipiter was seen briefly, near Mokala NP in flight.

**African Fish Eagle**  *Haliaeetus vocifer*
Seen well on most days in Kruger NP.

**Bustards Otididae**

**Kori Bustard**  *Ardeotis kori*
The world’s heaviest flying bird was seen well with two individuals found in Mokala NP.

**Northern Black Korhaan (RNE)**  *Afrotis afraoides*
A common bustard around Kimberley and in Mokala NP with several good sightings.

**Thick-knees Burhinidae**

**Spotted Thick-knee**  *Burhinus capensis*
This species was seen on a night drive at Marrick.

**Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**

**Black-winged Stilt**  *Himantopus*
See at Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

**Pied Avocet**  *Recurvirostra avosetta*
We had distant but good views of these stunning birds at Pilanesberg NP.

**Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**

**Blacksmith Lapwing**  *Vanellus armatus*
A common water-associated species seen on most days of the tour.

**Crowned Lapwing**  *Vanellus coronatus*
The common lapwing species seen on every day of the tour.

**Three-banded Plover**  *Charadrius tricollaris*
This little plover was seen well at Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

**Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae**

**African Snipe**  
*Gallinago nigripennis*  
A total of five birds were seen at a wetland en route to Pilanesberg NP from Marrick.

**Courser & Pratincoles Glareolidae**

**Burchell’s Courser (NE)**  
*Cursorius rufus*  
Certainly the luckiest sighting as we found two birds just outside Kimberley having stopped to look for larks.

**Temminck’s Courser**  
*Cursorius temminckii*  
An incredible sighting of a pair right next to the road en route to Pilanesberg NP. This sighting meant that we had seen three species of courser in less than 24 hours!!

**Double-banded Courser**  
*Rhinoptilus africanus*  
Usually mostly seen at night we had the good fortune of finding two birds in the late afternoon just outside Mokala NP.

**Sandgrouse Pteroclidae**

**Namaqua Sandgrouse**  
*Pterocles namaqua*  
Three birds were flushed and seen in flight at Mokala NP.

**Doves & Pigeons Columbidae**

**Rock Dove**  
*Columba livia*  
This introduced species was encountered in urban areas on this tour.

**Speckled Pigeon**  
*Columba guinea*  
Encountered at Mt Sheba, Wakkerstroom, Howick and Himeville.

**Red-eyed Dove**  
*Streptopelia semitorquata*  
Seen on day one en route to Marrick in the agricultural areas outside Johannesburg.

**Ring-necked Dove**  
*Streptopelia capicola*  
A common sight on all days of the tour.

**Laughing Dove**  
*Streptopelia senegalensis*  
Another common and widespread dove.

**Namaqua Dove**  
*Oena capensis*  
Three of these stunning small doves were seen in Mokala NP and again en route to Pilanesberg NP just outside the boundary of Marrick Safari Lodge.

**Turacos Musophagidae**

**Grey Go-away-bird**  
*Corythaixoides concolor*  
This peculiar looking bird was regularly encountered in Pilanesberg NP.

**Owls Strigidae**

**Spotted Eagle Owl**  
*Bubo africanus*  
This large owl was seen on several occasions during our two night drives at Marrick.

**Marsh Owl**  
*Asio capensis*  
We had the good fortune of finding this species on one of our night drives at Marrick and again on two occasions in Pilanesberg NP!

**Swifts Apodidae**

**African Palm Swift**  
*Cypsiurus parvus*
These slender-built all brown swifts were seen regularly in Pilanesberg NP.

**Mousebirds Coliidae**

- **White-backed Mousebird (RNE)**
  Colius
  We had great views of this delightful mousebird just outside and in Mokala NP.
- **Red-faced Mousebird**
  Urocolius indicus
  Seen regularly in Pilanesberg NP.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

- **Lilac-breasted Roller**
  Coracias caudatus
  Surprisingly we only managed to find this normally common bird on the last in Pilanesberg NP but were treated to fantastic views!

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

- **Brown-hooded Kingfisher**
  Halcyon albiventris
  The common bushveld kingfisher species we saw this bird well in Pilanesberg NP.
- **Giant Kingfisher**
  Megaceryle maxima
  A male of our largest kingfisher species was seen well in Pilanesberg NP.
- **Pied Kingfisher**
  Ceryle rudis
  We had great views of this species on both days in Pilanesberg NP.

**Bee-eaters Meropidae**

- **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**
  Merops hirundineus
  This arid country bee-eater was seen on the roost on both of our night drives at Marrick as well as being seen well hawking insects in karroid vegetation outside Mokala NP.

**Hoopoes Upupidae**

- **African (Eurasian) Hoopoe**
  Upupa africana
  We had great views of this odd bird in Pilanesberg NP and earlier in the tour en route to Marrick.
  Note: Clements lumps this species with Eurasian Hoopoe as Upupa epops.

**Hornbills Bucerotidae**

- **African Grey Hornbill**
  Tockus nasutus
  This species was seen fairly often in Pilanesberg NP.
- **[Southern] Red-billed Hornbill**
  Tockus rufirostris
  Common in Pilanesberg NP.
- **Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill (RNE)**
  Tockus leucomelas
  Even more common than the previous species in Pilanesberg NP.

**Barbets Capitonidae**

- **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**
  Pogoniulus chrysoconus
  Great views of this species were had at its nest site in Pilanesberg NP.
- **Acacia Pied Barbet (RNE)**
  Tricholaema leucomelas
  We had good views of this barbet at our accommodation at Marrick and in Mokala NP.
- **Crested Barbet**
  Trachyphonus vaillantii
  This barbet was seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

**Honeyguides Indicatoridae**

- **Greater Honeyguide**
  Indicator indicator
Unfortunately this species was only heard at Mokala NP.

### Woodpeckers Picidae

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker**  
*Campethera abingoni*  
A male was seen well in Pilanesberg NP at the main camp.

**Bearded Woodpecker**  
*Dendropicos namaquus*  
We had great views of a male near to the area where we saw the previous species in Pilanesberg NP.

### Falcons Falconidae

**Pygmy Falcon**  
*Polihierax semitorquatus*  
This tiny raptor was seen exceptionally well with great views of first a male and subsequently a female in Mokala NP.

**Greater Kestrel**  
*Falco rupicoloides*  
A single bird was seen distantly en route to Pilanesberg NP from Marrick.

### Wattle-eyes and Batises Platysteiridae

**Chinspot Batis**  
*Batis molitor*  
The common bushveld batis was seen regularly in Pilanesberg NP.

**Pririt Batis (RNE)**  
*Batis pririt*  
Excellent views of a male were had at our accommodation on the first afternoon at Marrick.

### Helmetshrikes Prionopidae

**White[-crested] Helmetshrike**  
*Prionops plumatus*  
A small group of these shrikes was seen in Pilanesberg NP.

### Bushshrikes Malaconotidae

**Black-crowned Tchagra**  
*Tchagra senegalus*  
A vocal bushveld species that was seen briefly on day one near Marrick.

**Black-backed Puffback**  
*Dryoscopus cubla*  
We had good views of a female on our last day in Pilanesberg NP.

**Crimson-breasted Shrike (RNE)**  
*Laniarius atrococcimeus*  
A beautiful bird seen very well in the main camp at Pilanesberg NP and also near Marrick.

**Brubru**  
*Nilaus afer*  
Seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

### Shrikes Laniidae

**Magpie Shrike**  
*Urolestes melanoleuca*  
We were spoilt with great views of small groups of these striking shrikes on both days in Pilanesberg NP.  
*Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Corvinella*

**Southern (Common) Fiscal**  
*Lanius collaris*  
A common species seen on almost every day of the tour.  
*NOTE: The IOC recently split the widespread Common Fiscal, L. collaris, into Southern (the species we recorded) and Northern (L. humeralis) Fiscals. Clements does not accept this split.*

### Drongos Dicuridae

**Fork-tailed Drongo**  
*Dicrurus adsimilis*  
Seen regularly on every day of the tour.

### Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae
**Pied Crow** (*Corvus albus*)
A species encountered on every day of the tour.

**Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae**

**Fairy Flycatcher (E)** (*Stenostira scita*)
We had great sightings of this dainty flycatcher in Mokala NP and later again in Pilanesberg NP.

**Tits Paridae**

**Southern Black Tit** (*Melaniparus niger*)
This noisy species was observed on one occasion in Pilanesberg NP.

**Penduline Tits Remizidae**

**Cape Penduline Tit (RNE)** (*Anthoscopus minutes*)
Two of these tiny birds were seen amongst a mixed species flock in Mokala NP.

**Larks Alaudidae**

**Rufous-naped Lark** (*Mirafra africana*)
This large lark was seen well on a number of occasions in Pilanesberg NP.

**Flappet Lark** (*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*)
Seen well, including displaying birds, in Pilanesberg NP.

**Sabota Lark (RNE)** (*Mirafra sabota*)
This common bushveld lark was seen well in Pilanesberg NP and Mokala NP.

**Spike-heeled Lark (RNE)** (*Chersomanes albofasciata*)
The most common lark in the drier areas around Marrick and near Kimberley.

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**

**African Red-eyed Bulbul (RNE)** (*Pycnonotus nigricans*)
Seen well and often in Mokala NP and en route from Marrick to Pilanesberg NP.

**Dark-capped (Common) Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus tricolour*)
This common species was seen regularly in Pilanesberg NP where it almost entirely replaces the previous species.

*Note: Clements lumps this bird with Common, Somali and Dodson’s Bulbul as Common Bulbul P. barbatus*

**Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**

**Brown-throated (Plain) Martin** (*Riparia paludicola*)
We had good views of this species in Mokala NP and en route to Pilanesberg NP.

**Pearl-breasted Swallow** (*Hirundo dimidiata*)
This stunning blue and white swallow was seen often in Pilanesberg NP.

**Lesser Striped Swallow** (*Cecropis abyssinica*)
Common in Pilanesberg NP.

**Crombecs & African Warblers Macrosphenidae**

**Long-billed (Cape) Crombec** (*Sylvietta rufescens*)
This odd-looking bird was seen well at Marrick and Pilanesberg NP.

**Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**

**Black-chested Prinia (RNE)** (*Prinia flavicans*)
A common sight seen on every day of the tour.

**Yellow-bellied Eremomela** (*Eremomela icteropygialis*)
Five of these small birds were seen together in Mokala NP.  
**Burnt-neck[ed] Eremomela**  
*Eremomela usticollis*  
We managed a good sighting of this species in Pilanesberg NP.  
**Rufous-eared warbler**  
*Malcorus pectoralis*  
A stunning little bird seen well just outside Mokala NP.

**Laughingthrushes Timaliidae**

**Arrow-marked Babbler**  
*Turdoides jardineii*  
Surprisingly this species was only heard in Pilanesberg NP.

**Sylviid Babblers Sylvidae**

**Chestnut-vented Warbler (RNE)**  
*Sylvia subcaerulea*  
A neat little bird that we managed to find at Marrick, Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

**White-eyes Zosteropidae**

**Cape White-eye (RE)**  
*Zosterops capensis*  
Seen well in Pilanesberg NP.  
*NOTE: Clements lumps this species with the Orange River White-eye Z. pallidus as Cape White-eye Z. pallidus.*

**Orange River White-eye (RE)**  
*Zosterops pallidus*  
This recent split was seen well in Mokala NP.

**Starlings Sturnidae**

**Common Myna**  
*Acridotheres tristis*  
This invasive species was seen near Pilanesberg NP in urban areas.

**Wattled Starling**  
*Creatophora cinerea*  
A nomadic species that we encountered en route to Marrick and in Mokala NP in small flocks.

**Cape (Glossy-) Starling**  
*Lamprotnoris nitens*  
A common sight throughout the tour.

**(African) Pied Starling (E)**  
*Lamprotnoris bicolor*  
Good numbers of this endemic were seen in the drier areas around Kimberley and en route to Pilanesberg NP.  
*Note: Clements places this in the genus Spreo*  
**Red-winged Starling**  
*Onychognathus morio*  
Seen on the last day in Pilanesberg NP.

**Oxpeckers Buphagidae**

**Red-billed Oxpecker**  
*Buphagus erythrorhynchos*  
We found two birds on one of the days in Pilanesberg NP.

**Thrushes & Allies Turdidae**

**Groundscraper Thrush**  
*Psophocichla litsitsirupa*  
A beautiful thrush which we saw particularly well on two occasions in Pilanesberg NP.

**Kurrichane Thrush**  
*Turdus libonya*  
Seen well in the main camp area in Pilanesberg NP.

**Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

**Cape Robin-Chat**  
*Cossypha caffra*  
Seen at our accommodation at Marrick.
White-throated Robin-Chat (RE)  *Cossypha humeralis*
A stunning endemic seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

White-browed Scrub Robin  *Erythropygia leucophrys*
A common sight in the woodland areas of Pilanesberg NP.

Kalahari Scrub Robin (RNE)  *Erythropygia paean*
We had great views of this species near Marrick, at Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

[African] Stonechat  *Saxicola torquatus*
Seen a few times in the more open grassland in Pilanesberg and en route to the park.
*Note: Clements calls this species Stonechat and lumps it with Eurasian and Siberian Stonechats.*

Capped Wheatear  *Oenanthe pileata*
We had good views of this species on the open short grass plains of Pilanesberg NP.

Familiar Chat  *Oenanthe familiaris*
The typical ‘double wing flipping obsessive compulsive disorder bird’ was encountered at Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Short-toed Rock Thrush (RE)  *Monticola brevipes*
Initially seen just outside Marrick we subsequently saw several females and finally one male in Mokala NP.
We had great views of several birds in Wakkerstroom.

Southern Black Flycatcher  *Melaenornis pammelaina*
Often tricky to tell apart from the larger Fork-tailed Drongo we saw this bird well on our last day in Pilanesberg NP.

Chat Flycatcher (RNE)  *Bradornis infuscatus*
A large all brown flycatcher of the more arid regions of South Africa it was seen around Marrick and Mokala NP.

Marico Flycatcher (RNE)  *Bradornis mariquensis*
The most commonly encountered flycatcher on this particular tour and was seen every day.

Fiscal Flycatcher (RE)  *Sigelus silens*
A constant presence in the more arid areas on the first three days of the tour.

**Sunbirds Nectariniidae**

Scarlet-chested Sunbird  *Chalcomitra senegalensis*
We had good views of a stunning male in Pilanesberg NP.

Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird  *Cinnyris mariquensis*
A good sighting of a male was had on the last day in Pilanesberg NP.

White-bellied (breasted) Sunbird  *Cinnyris talatala*
Fairly common with several views on one day in Pilanesberg NP.

**Old World Sparrows Passeridae**

White-browed Sparrow Weaver  *Plocepasser mahali*
This colonial species was encountered regularly around Marrick and in Mokala NP.

Sociable Weaver (RE)  *Philetairus socius*
First seen just outside Mokala NP with subsequent sightings of several nests and groups of birds in the national park.

House Sparrow  *Passer domesticus*
This non-native invasive was seen on our travel days in urban areas.

Cape Sparrow (RNE)  *Passer melanurus*
A good-looking sparrow found in the drier regions near Marrick and Mokala NP.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow  *Passer diffusus*
A common sight in Mokala NP and later in Pilanesberg NP as well.

Yellow-throated Petronia  *Gymnoris superciliaris*
We had the good fortune of seeing this unobtrusive species on our last day in Pilanesberg NP.
Weavers & Allies Ploceidae

Scaly-feathered Weaver (RNE)  *Sporopipes squamifrons*
Small groups of these lovely little weavers were seen near Marrick and in Mokala NP.

Lesser Masked Weaver  *Ploceus intermedius*
A small weaver seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

Southern Masked Weaver  *Ploceus velatus*
More common than the previous species in Pilanesberg NP, also seen en route to Marrick on day one.

Red-billed Quelea  *Quelea quelea*
Small flocks of this species were seen on several occasions in the areas around Marrick and Mokala NP.

Long-tailed Widowbird  *Euplectes progne*
Non-breeding birds of this diagnostic species were seen en route to Johannesburg.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Green-winged Pytilia  *Pytilia melba*
This super little finch was seen well on several occasions in Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Red-headed Finch (RNE)  *Amadina erythrocephala*
This large finch was present in the Kimberley area and Mokala NP.

Red-billed Firefinch  *Lagonostica senegal*
Seen well in Pilanesberg NP.

Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonbleu)  *Uraeginthus angolensis*
The common arid waxbill species seen well in Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Violet-eared Waxbill (RNE)  *Uraeginthus granatinus*
A spectacular finch seen at Mokala NP and both days in Pilanesberg NP.

Common Waxbill  *Estrilda astrild*
Oddly only heard and not seen on this tour.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Cape Wagtail  *Motacilla capensis*
A ‘travel day’ bird seen en route to Marrick and again en route to Pilanesberg NP.

African Pied Wagtail  *Motacilla aguimp*
Seen on several occasions in Pilanesberg NP.

Cape (Orange-throated) Longclaw (RE)  *Macronyx capensis*
Seen only on the first day en route to Marrick in open grassland.

African Pipit  *Anthus cinnamomeus*
Seen on almost every day of the tour.

Buffy Pipit  *Anthus vaalensis*
A single bird was seen en route to Pilanesberg NP in short grassland.

Plain-backed Pipit  *Anthus leucophrys*
Several birds were seen in short and recently burnt grass in Pilanesberg NP.

Finches Fringillidae

Black-throated Canary  *Crithagra atrogularis*
The common canary of this tour seen on all days except at Mokala NP.

Yellow-fronted Canary  *Crithagra mozambica*
Seen well on the last day in Pilanesberg NP.

Yellow Canary (RNE)  *Crithagra flaviventris*
A common sight on the first two days around Marrick and at Mokala NP.

*Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus.*

Streaky-headed Seedeater  *Crithagra gularis*
This canary lacking any yellow was seen on the last day in Pilanesberg NP.
Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus.

**Buntings Emberizidae**  
*Emberiza tahapisi*

**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting**  
Seen well in Mokala NP.

**Golden-breasted Bunting**  
*Emberiza flaviventris*
This striking bunting was seen very well in Pilanesberg NP.

**MAMMAL SPECIES LIST** (42 species)

*Note: Names and taxanomical order of the land mammals follow that of 'The Kingdom Field Guide to African Mammals'; additional names are given in parenthesis and are likely to appear in other popular field guides.*

**Baboons & Monkeys**  
*Papio ursinus*

**Chacma Baboon**  
Seen well in Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

**Vervet Monkey**  
*Cercopithecus aethiops*
Common in Pilanesberg NP.

**Hares & Rabbits**  
*Lepus saxatilis*

**Scrub Hare**  
Seen on both night drives at Marrick and again in Pilanesberg NP in the main camp area.

**Cape Hare**  
*Lepus capensis*
We found four of these hares on the first night drive at Marrick.

**Smith’s Red Rock Hare**  
*Pronolagus rupestris*
This special hare species was encountered on both nights at Marrick with a total of four individuals seen.

**South African Ground Squirrel**  
*Xerus inauris*
This large terrestrial squirrel was encountered regularly around Mokala NP and en route to Pilanesberg NP.

**Springhare**  
*Pedetes capensis*
Common on both night drives at Marrick.

**Porcupines**  
*Hystrix africaeaustralis*

**Cape Porcupine**  
Two of these unusual creatures were seen on the first night drive at Marrick.

**Rats & Mice**  
*Parotomys brantsii*

**Brant’s Whistling Rat**  
Unusually seen at night at Marrick on the first evening.

**Karoo bush Rat**  
*Rhabdomys pumilio*
A single individual was seen at Marrick.
Dogs & Allies Canidae

Black-backed Jackal
Canis mesomelas
A total of three individuals over the two nights at Marrick were seen with a subsequent sighting in the late afternoon of one adult in Pilanesberg NP.

Cape Fox
Vulpes chama
We had a very distant view of one of these foxes at Marrick.

Bat-eared Fox
Otocyon megalotis
A common sight on both night drives at Marrick with over twenty individuals seen over the course of the two night drives.

Mongooses Herpestidae

Slender Mongoose
Herpestes sanguinea
Three separate sightings of this solitary mongoose species were had at Pilanesberg NP.

Yellow Mongoose
Cynictis penicillata
Several of these mongoose were seen on our travel days and just outside Mokala NP near to the Meerkat burrow.

Suricate
Suricata suricatta
A family group was found sunning themselves in the late afternoon sun just outside Mokala NP.

Hyaenas Hyaenidae

Aardwolf
Proteles cristata
A sighting that will not be easily forgotten! We had incredible views of one Aardwolf in beautiful late afternoon light outside Mokala NP having stopped to look at a Sabota Lark!

Cats Felidae

African Wild Cat
Felis sylvestris
This widespread but threatened species was seen well on the first night drive at Marrick. Later in the tour we found another individual at Pilanesberg NP.

Black-footed Cat
Felis nigripes
Another lifer for the guide! We saw this difficult to find species on both night drives at Marrick.

Cheetah
Acinonyx jubatus
We had the privilege of observing an adult female and her three almost fully grown cubs lazing under an Acacia in Pilanesberg NP.

Lion
Panthera leo
Another bonus sighting with a single female seen at a wildebeest carcass in Pilanesberg NP.

Aardvark Orycteropodidae

Aardvark
Orycteropus afer
Mammal lifer number three for the guide!! This most unusual creature was seen on the first night at Marrick. It is safe to say that everyone was in awe of its peculiarity and how quickly it moved across the landscape. A definite highlight (one of so many!).

Elephants Elephantidae

African Elephant
Loxodonta Africana
Some great sightings of these majestic beasts were had at Pilanesberg NP. The highlight had to be an adult bull quietly browsing next to the car at one of the hides, which made for an interesting experience getting back to the vehicle safely!
Zebras Equidae

Common (Burchell's/Plains) Zebra
Equus quagga
A common sight throughout the tour.

Rhinoceroses Rhinocerotidae

White (Square-lipped) Rhinoceros
Ceratotherium simum
We saw eight of these prehistoric creatures on our final day in Pilanesberg NP.

Hippopotamuses Hippopotamidae

Hippopotamus
amphibious
Seen well at various waterbodies in Pilanesberg NP.

Pigs Suidae

Common Warthog
Phacochoerus africanus
Seen on every day of the tour.

Giraffes Giraffidae

Giraffe
Giraffa camelopardalis
Seen well first at Mokala NP and subsequently on several occasions at Pilanesberg NP.

Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae

Eland
Taurotragus oryx
Three of these large antelope were seen at Mokala NP.

Sable
Hippotragus niger
One of these majestic antelope was seen in a conservancy outside Mokala NP.

Roan
Hippotragus equines
Three beautiful individuals were seen in a conservancy outside Mokala NP with a herd numbering about 14 also seen but in a swamp prior to a game auction.

Greater Kudu
Tragelaphus strepsiceros
This stunning spiral-horned antelope was seen well at Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Common Waterbuck
Kobus ellipsiprymnus
Another antelope seen well at both Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Springbok
Antidorcas marsupialis
Seen at Mokala NP, en route to Pilanesberg NP and again several times in Pilanesberg NP.

Black Wildebeest (White-tailed Gnu)
Connochaetes gnou
We had fantastic views of this animal at Mokala NP.

Blue Wildebeest
Connochaetes taurinus
Seen at several locations including Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Red Hartebeest
Alcelaphus buselaphus
This arid region antelope was common in Mokala NP and seen again at Pilanesberg NP.

Blesbok (E)
Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi
Several of these were seen outside Mokala NP in areas away from the camps for the game auction.

Tsessebe
Damaliscus lunatus
Seen well at Mokala NP with five more seen not far from the Cheetah at Pilanesberg NP.

Impala
Aepyceros melampus
Common in Mokala NP and Pilanesberg NP.

Steenbok
Raphicerus campestris
These dainty antelope were seen on several occasions from Mokala NP to Pilanesberg NP.
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