



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

South Africa

Kruger Park Bird & Wildlife Challenge 2019 - Magoebaskloof & Wakkerstroom Extension

15th to 19th February 2019 (5 days)



Narina Trogon by Leon Fouche

South Africa has the highest number of endemic and near-endemic bird species of any country on the African continent. South Africa also includes a wonderfully diverse range of habitats, with a number of these special birds found almost exclusively in the Afromontane forests that hug the eastern escarpment, and the moist upland grasslands and wetlands associated with this escarpment.

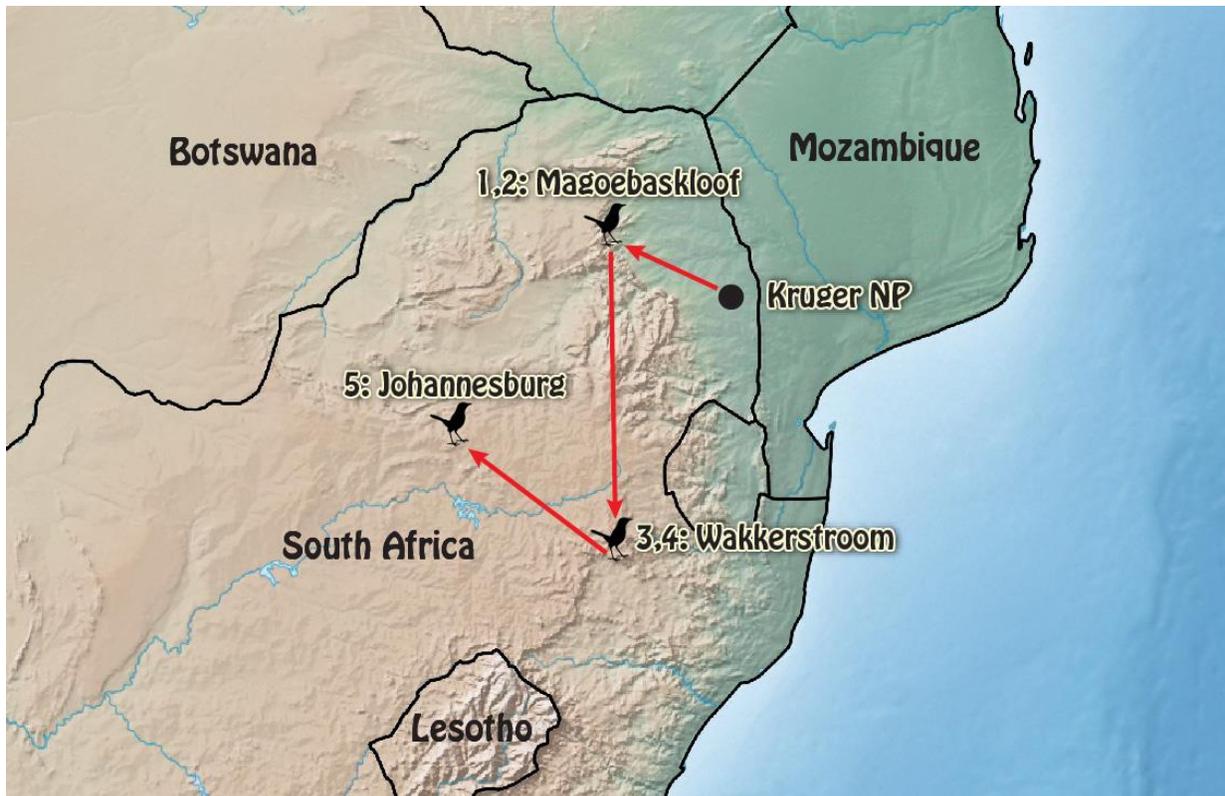
The focus of this 5-day birding tour is to see as many as possible of South Africa's endemic and near-endemic Afromontane forest, upland grassland and wetland-associated species (listed in bold in the itinerary below) in the areas visited. We will also seek out a number of other special and sought-after African species; in the course of this short tour, we have the potential to rack up an impressive bird list in terms of rarities, special birds and great sightings. We invite you to join us on this exciting celebration of the endemic and special birds of our Afromontane forests, upland grasslands and wetlands!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

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| Day 1 | Mopani Camp, Kruger to Magoebaskloof |
| Day 2 | Magoebaskloof |
| Day 3 | Magoebaskloof to Wakkerstroom |
| Day 4 | Wakkerstroom |
| Day 5 | Wakkerstroom to Johannesburg and depart |

TOUR ROUTE MAP...



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

Day 1: Mopani Camp, Kruger to Magoebaskloof. Following the final evening of the Kruger Park Bird & Wildlife Challenge, we will spend the morning birding around Mopani Camp before bidding farewell to the splendours of Kruger. We will then drive from Mopani Camp to Kurisa Moya Nature Lodge, Magoebaskloof, on the Northern Drakensberg Escarpment, where we will spend two nights.

This area enjoys high annual rainfall, resulting in lush Afromontane mistbelt forest and rolling montane grassland habitats. Most of the grasslands have unfortunately been lost to commercial plantations, but pristine patches of this habitat do however still occur in the area. The mistbelt forests around Magoebaskloof are amongst the most extensive in South Africa, providing arguably the finest Afromontane forest birding in the country. Kurisa Moya, which



Black-fronted Bushshrike by Adam Riley

boasts excellent on-site birding, straddles the Woodbush forest and the bushveld habitats on this Northern Drakensberg escarpment. The area is host to more than 250 bird species in five different habitats.



Orange Ground Thrush by Adam Riley

After our arrival at Kurisa Moya, afternoon birding in the indigenous forests in the area should produce Lemon Dove, **Chorister Robin-Chat**, Grey Cuckoo-Shrike, **Southern Boubou Shrike**, Sombre Greenbul and **Cape White-eye**, as well as a host of small seedeaters - Green Twinspot, **Swee Waxbill**, Red-backed Mannikin, African Firefinch and **Forest Canary**.



Day 2: Magoebaskloof. Woodbush Forest – the main focus of our birding today - hosts iconic species such as the endangered **Cape Parrot**, the splendid yet rare Black-fronted Bush-shrike, stunning Narina Trogon, diminutive Green Twinspot, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, **Knysna Turaco**, White-starred Robin, **Orange Ground Thrush**, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, skulking **Barratt's Warbler**, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Olive Woodpecker, **Chorister Robin-Chat**, Buff-spotted Flufftail, Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk and African Crowned Eagle. These forests can be very lively with bird activity and the key is to locate mixed feeding flocks. Other specials of the area



Cape Parrot by Stan Culley

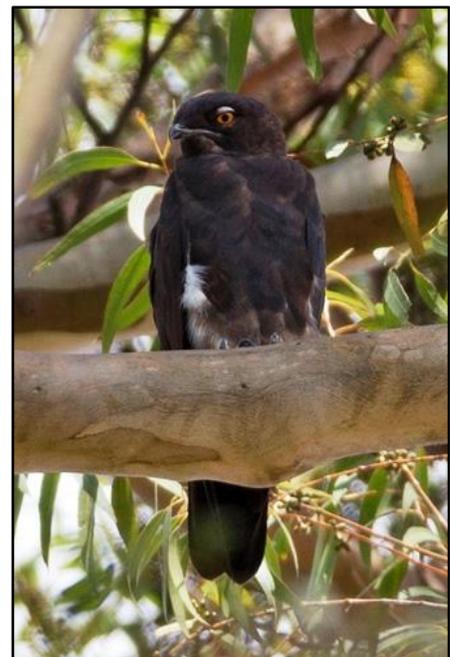


Barratt's Warbler by Hugh Chittenden

We will also visit the nearby town of Tzaneen and surrounds, where the town's famous Bat Hawk pair, as well as Broad-billed Roller, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, White-browed Robin-Chat, Kurrichane Thrush, Thick-billed and Holub's Golden Weavers and Magpie Mannikin (together with smaller Bronze Mannikin, for convenient comparison) are all possibilities.

Day 3: Magoebaskloof to Wakkerstroom. This morning we leave the diversity of the forests behind us and head inland and south to the pristine upland grasslands and hills surrounding the quaint highveld town of Wakkerstroom, where we will be based for the next two nights. These grasslands are a centre of avian endemism and are critical for the survival of several range-restricted species. We will fully explore the grasslands tomorrow, while this afternoon will be spent birding the highly productive Wakkerstroom marsh at the edge of town.

include the seldom-sighted Bat Hawk, **Forest Buzzard**, the exquisite little **Swee Waxbill**, Grey Cuckooshrike and **Forest Canary**.



Bat Hawk by Adam Riley



This is a haven for waterbirds and offers the chance of seeing a number of uncommon or localised species. Purple Heron, **South African Shelduck**, **Cape Shoveler**, African Swamphen, **South African Cliff Swallow**, Levillant's Cisticola and **Cape Weaver** are all regular, and we should also find African Snipe and the elusive African Rail. Rarely recorded species seen here on previous trips include the secretive Baillon's Crake, Red-chested Flufftail and also Western Marsh and Montagu's Harriers.



Southern Bald Ibis by Adam Riley

Day 4: Wakkerstroom area. Driving along the network of dirt roads radiating out from Wakkerstroom, we will explore the grasslands, rocky outcrops and gorges of this unique area in search of some of the South Africa's most threatened and range-restricted endemics, along with numerous other widespread but no less exciting species. These include **Blue** and Grey Crowned **Cranes**, **Southern Bald Ibis**, **Blue Korhaan**, White-bellied Bustard, **Jackal Buzzard**, vocal **Bokmakierie**, the rare and localised **Botha's** and **Rudd's Larks** (the latter considered one of the world's most endangered larks), **Pink-billed**,

Eastern Long-billed and **Eastern Clapper Larks**, **Ground Woodpecker**, **Ant-eating** and **Buff-streaked Chats**, **Sentinel Rock Thrush**, **African Rock** and **Yellow-breasted Pipits**, **Cape Longclaw**, **Pied Starling**, the spectacular Long-tailed Widowbird, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Quailfinch and **Cape Canary**. Red-winged and **Grey-winged Francolins** occur in the moist grasslands and we may find coveys feeding at the roadside or sunning themselves at dawn, while we also stand a good chance of seeing the stately Secretarybird.

Some of the farms in the area around Wakkerstroom support populations of the peculiar Black Wildebeest (also known by its less-used English name of White-tailed Gnu) and Blesbok, while small mammals occurring in the grasslands include Yellow Mongoose and the rare Cape Fox. One of the more interesting denizens of these grasslands is the curious Suricate, or Meerkat, immortalized in Disney's 'Lion King'. We have a good chance of finding family groups of these unusual yet delightful animals.



Botha's Lark by Markus Lilje



Wakkerstroom is justly famous as one of the best places in the world to see Amur Falcon on their wintering grounds. Having safely navigated their way from eastern Russia and northern China, the majority of the world's population ends up in south-eastern Africa. We can expect hundreds, if not thousands of these small falcons hawking over fields throughout the high-altitude grassland areas. It is at dusk though, that the few tall trees in and around Wakkerstroom come alive, with up to 10 000 Amur Falcons and an estimated 1 000 Lesser Kestrels heading in to roost for the night.



Amur Falcon by Clayton Burne



Ground Woodpecker by Clayton Burne

Day 5: Wakkerstroom to Johannesburg and depart. After some final morning birding in and around Wakkerstroom, we will drive to O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, where the tour will end.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

The prices for the Magoebaskloof & Wakkerstroom Extension are as follows:

- 1 participant = **ZAR 40 000** per person
- 2 participants = **ZAR 24 000** per person
- 3 participants = **ZAR 19 500** per person
- 4 participants = **ZAR 18 000** per person
- 5 participants = **ZAR 16 500** per person
- 6 participants = **ZAR 16 500** per person

The single supplement cost for this tour is **ZAR 900**

This includes:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 5;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;



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- Reserve entrance fees (as applicable);
 - All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- ANY flights;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement:

The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBT cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold (ZAR), and the actual cost in any other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
- c) These costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
- d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping:

As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does not include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

Special Notes:

- The focus of this tour is to see as many of the endemics and area specials as possible in our given time.
- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we have to cover long distances to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg for check in luggage and 8kg for hand luggage.
- For much of this tour you will be some distance from medical facilities. It is essential that you let the Rockjumper office know in advance of the tour if you have any physical limitations or medical conditions.
- Crime is problematic in certain areas of South Africa. Exercise caution as you would for any big city where crime exists. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:



This tour **does not** include **any** airfares. The tour will officially commence after breakfast at Mopani Camp, Kruger National Park on day 1 and will conclude by **mid to late afternoon on day 5** at O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office

FLIGHTS:

O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB) is the main port of entry for international flights into and out of South Africa and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

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