



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

South Africa **Kruger Park Bird & Wildlife Challenge 2019 -** **Wakkerstroom Extension** *15th to 17th February 2019 (3 days)*



Grey Crowned Crane by David Hoddinott

South Africa has the highest number of endemic and near-endemic bird species of any country on the African continent. Some of these special birds – such as Blue Crane – are beautiful and charismatic;

while others, including the endangered Rudd's and Botha's Larks, are less striking but highly range-restricted.

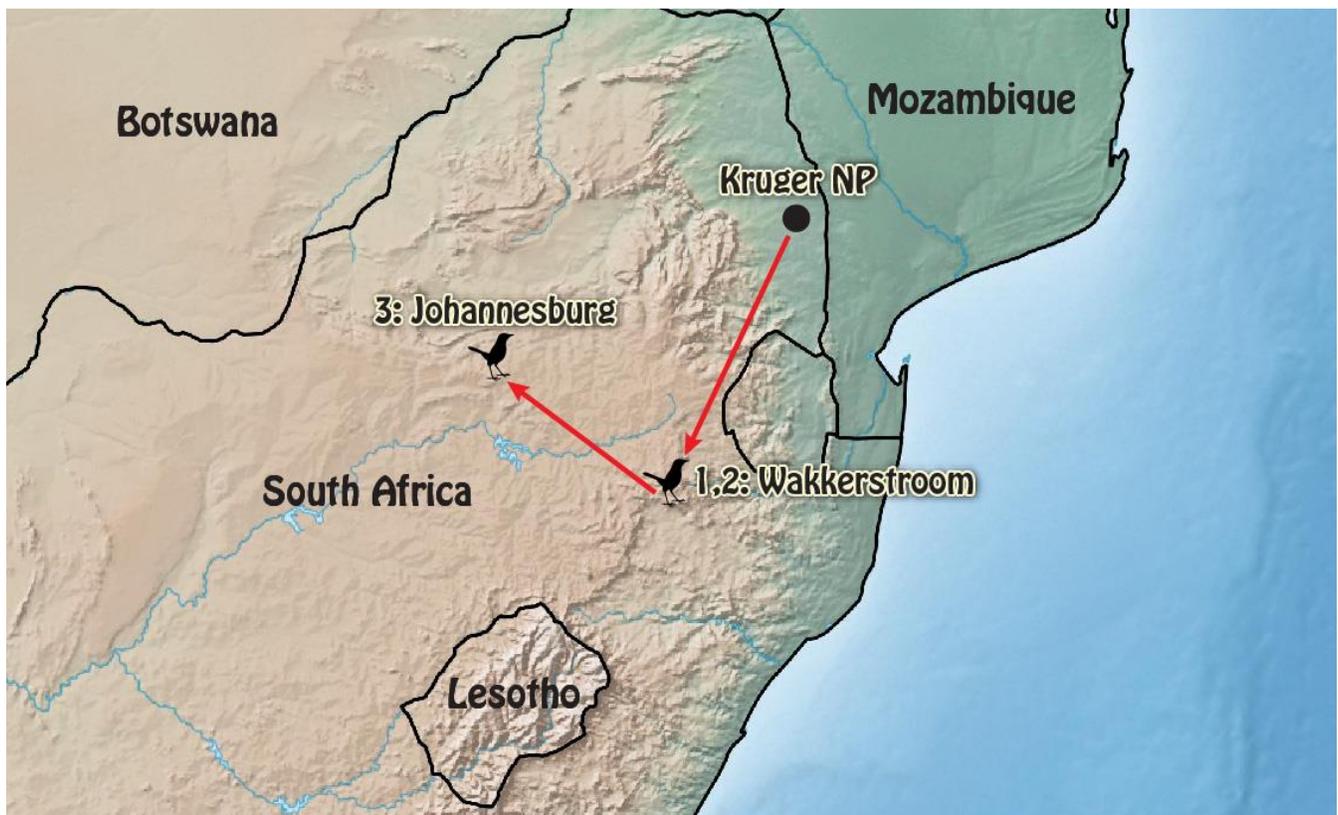
The focus of this 3-day tour is to see these and as many as possible of the other South African endemic and near-endemic species (listed in bold in the itinerary below) in the Wakkerstroom area. We will also however seek out a number of other special and sought-after species; the area's stunning scenery will serve as a wonderful backdrop to some great sightings. This short tour should also produce some interesting mammals, together with a diverse array of reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife. We invite you to join us in celebrating some of the endemic treasures that this important high-altitude area has to offer!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	Mopani Camp, Kruger to Wakkerstroom
Day 2	Wakkerstroom
Day 3	Wakkerstroom to Johannesburg and depart

TOUR ROUTE MAP...



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...



Southern Bald Ibis by Adam Rilev

Day 1: Mopani Camp, Kruger to Wakkerstroom. 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 then head inland 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. 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**, Levaillant'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.

Day 2: 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**,



Ground Woodpecker by Clayton Burne

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





Botha's Lark by Markus Lilje

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.

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



Amur Falcon by Clayton Burne

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.



Bokmakierie by Clayton Burne

Day 3: Wakkerstroom to Johannesburg and depart. After some final early morning birding in Wakkerstroom we will drive to O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, where the tour will end.



GROUP SIZE:

This tour is limited to a maximum of 6 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

The prices for the Wakkerstroom Extension are as follows:

- 1 participant = **ZAR 23 000** per person sharing
- 2 participants = **ZAR 13 250** per person sharing
- 3 participants = **ZAR 10 500** per person sharing
- 4 participants = **ZAR 9 750** per person sharing
- 5 participants = **ZAR 9 000** per person sharing
- 6 participants = **ZAR 9 000** per person sharing

Single Supplement: ZAR 500

This includes:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on 3;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees (as applicable); and
- 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 on day 1 of the tour at the end of the Kruger Park Birds & Wildlife Challenge and will conclude by mid to late afternoon on day 3 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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