Eastern South Africa VII
23rd September to 7th October 2016
Western Cape Extension VII
7th to 12th October 2016

Trip report compiled by tour leader: Glen Valentine
Photo credits: All photographs taken by Glen Valentine on this or previous Rockjumper birding tours of South Africa.
Tour Summary:

Our seventh comprehensive tour of South Africa for the 2016 year kicked off in late September, on the outskirts of the bustling city of Johannesburg. After a delicious welcome dinner and a good night’s rest, we struck out early for our day’s birding destination, the bird-rich gravel road of Zaagkuildrift - about an hour’s drive north of Pretoria, one of South Africa’s three capital cities. After a quick coffee stop en route, we arrived at the open grassland at the start of the road just after dawn and were greeted by a displaying male Northern Black Korhaan! What a fabulous start to the trip! Soon afterwards, we watched the same bird in the scope as it strutted around the open grasslands trying to grasp the attention of a nearby female. We also picked up Rufous-naped Lark, Greater Kestrel, the impressive Magpie Shrike and African Wattled Lapwing before heading into the arid acacia savanna for which this area is most famous within the local birding community. The woodlands here teem with birds, especially during the summer months when the resident species are joined by a plethora of intra-African and Palearctic migrants. We got stuck into some good birding here and were soon obtaining views of specialities like White-throated Robin-Chat, Jameson’s Firefinch and Crimson-breasted Shrike, as well as more common but no less admirable species such as Grey Go-away-bird, Speckled and Red-faced Mousebirds, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Green Wood Hoopoe, Cardinal Woodpecker, Chinspot Batis, Black-backed Puffback, Cape and Burchell’s Starlings, White-bellied and Marico Sunbirds, African and Red-billed Firefinches, Long-billed Crombec and Chestnut-vented Warbler. A nearby wetland gave us our only Knob-billed Ducks of the trip, as well as Whiskered Tern, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, Squacco Heron, the regal African Fish Eagle and the well-camouflaged African Snipe. Continuing along the road, we bumped into coveys of Swainson’s Spurfowl and Crested Francolin, as well as Southern Red-billed, Southern Yellow-billed and African Grey Hornbills, the drab Neddicky, Black-chested Prinia, White-browed and Kalahari Scrub Robins, Marico Flycatcher, the stunning Green-winged Pytilia, Blue Waxbill, a roosting Spotted Thick-knee and several soaring Tawny Eagles.

We finally arrived at the sleepy village of Kgomo Kgomo in the late morning, with the outskirts of town yielding noteworthy species like Sabota Lark, several Scaly-feathered Weavers, a pair of nest-building Great Sparrows and the handsome Capped Wheatear. After a picnic lunch in the field, we continued the journey back towards the beginning of the road - with frequent stops along
the way turning up several more of the region’s dry savanna specialities, such as Burnt-necked Eremomela, Southern Pied Babbler, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver and a gorgeous pair of Black-faced Waxbills. After a superb first day’s birding in the country, we made our way back to our comfortable guest house for another tasty dinner and an introduction to a few South African staples: Pap (that Louis at least grew rather fond of!), Mango Atchar and Malva Pudding.

After a sit-down breakfast (quite a novelty on this rather fast-paced and on-the-go tour), we departed Kempton Park and Gauteng province and began the drive east towards the legendary Kruger National Park. Our journey took us across the open grasslands and agricultural lands of the “Highveld” where we encountered our first of many Long-tailed Widowbirds beginning to acquire their elaborate breeding plumage. At around midday, we arrived at the Abel Erasmus Pass where we enjoyed a pre-lunch birding session accompanied by Michael, the area’s local birding guide and he helped us get onto a number of good birds. Highlights included Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, a party of Southern Black Tit, a stunning pair of Purple-crested Turaco, Mocking Cliff Chat and a Mountain Wagtail in the nearby stream. Also in attendance were several Rock Martins, Red-winged Starlings, a White-necked Raven, several Alpine Swifts and a few Cape Vultures soaring overhead. After another picnic lunch, we continued the drive to Orpen Gate, our gateway to Kruger. A short stop for a female Saddle-billed Stork before the gate also yielded a juvenile African Goshawk in flight across the road. After checking in at the gate, we entered the park with much excitement and anticipation and we were not disappointed as we encountered an incredible number of great mammals and birds this afternoon between the gate and Satara camp.

A large herd of African Elephant surrounded the waterhole just after entering the park and we soon found herds of Plains Zebra, Impala, Common Wildebeest, Waterbuck, African Buffalo, Greater Kudu and the stately Giraffe. Family groups of Common Dwarf Mongoose scurried around and we also encountered several Slender Mongoosees, as well as our first Steenbok, Common Duiker, Nyala, Bushbuck, Vervet Monkey, Chacma Baboon and Common Warthogs of the trip. However, the undeniable highlight of the afternoon was the beautiful Leopard that we found just before arriving at Satara camp in the late afternoon. On the birding front, we also
saw our first of many typical Kruger birds like the brightly-coloured Purple and Lilac-breasted Rollers, Natal Spurfowl, Brown Snake Eagle, Gabar Goshawk (including an all-black, melanistic bird), a pair of Double-banded Sandgrouse, Common Scimitarbill, Black-headed Oriole, Arrow-marked Babbler and Red-billed Oxpecker.

The entire area around Satara, and all of Kruger, for that matter, was extremely dry – due to the largest drought since 1991. This, however, did not seem to effect the birding or mammal viewing and we still managed to find a wealth of great birds; while our mammal sightings were some of the best I’ve ever had!

With our fabulous driver and local guide, Dirk, and an open-air safari vehicle, we meandered along the network of roads in the area and by doing so, we found a number of noteworthy birds such as the handsome Bateleur, Wahlberg’s and Tawny Eagles, Shikra, the regal Kori Bustard, Red-crested Korhaan, Pearl-spotted Owlet, a pair of impressive Verreaux’s Eagle-Owls, several Marabou Storks in flight overhead, the charismatic African Hoopoe, Crested Barbet, Brown-headed Parrot, Red-breasted and Mosque Swallows, Wattled and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, Red-headed Weaver and an array of savanna hornbills. Mixed species flocks yielded the likes of the striking White-crested Helmetshrike, the beautiful Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Brubru, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Chinspot Batis, Burnt-necked Eremomela and Southern Black Flycatcher, while the few remaining watering points produced Striated and Grey Herons, Egyptian Goose, Three-banded Plover, Water Thick-knee, African Pied Wagtails, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Black Crake and Black-winged Stilt. We also encountered several carcases, some of which held large numbers of White-backed Vulture as well as a few of the much scarcer White-headed Vulture. A short amble around Satara camp also proved worthwhile and gave us a few good birds in the form of Bearded, Golden-tailed and Cardinal Woodpeckers, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Klaas’s Cuckoo, Mourning Collared Dove, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, a roosting African Scops Owl and Kurrichane Thrush.

Mammals were a major feature of the area and we were thrilled to find a Honey Badger during the mid-afternoon. We also encountered several Lion and one Spotted Hyena during our
day in the area and many of the species already seen during the previous afternoon’s drive from Orpen to Satara.

Our night drive was also a major highlight of the trip and did not disappoint! In fact, it was undoubtedly one of the best nocturnal excursions I’ve ever done in the park! It kicked off with a few Black-backed Jackals just outside of camp and soon afterwards, we spotted two Cape Porcupines scurrying across the barren savanna. The sightings kept coming, with a handsome White-tailed Mongoose that showed well right next to the vehicle, as well as both Common and South African Large-spotted Genets, African Civet, Scrub Hare and two huge and very impressive male Lions! Wow, what a fiesta! This wasn’t all though, as the best was yet to come when our spotlights picked up an Aardvark right next to the road that showed incredibly well at close range!

This was only my fifth sighting ever of this rarely seen mammal and my second in Kruger. To boot, this was only the second time ever that our experienced driver had seen this species in ten years of night drives out of Satara! We sure were lucky!

Departing the wonderful Satara area, we made our way south through the park, stopping in at Tshokwane picnic site where a cheeky Vervet Monkey decided to join Paul for breakfast. The journey down was reasonably quiet but we did enjoy good looks at a Brown-crowned Tchagra, Southern Boubou, the gorgeous Golden-breasted Bunting, two Martial Eagles, another Kori Bustard, several parties of the stately Southern Ground Hornbill, a Southern White-faced Owl on the nest and more of the same species seen yesterday. We arrived at the expansive Sabie River in the late morning where we added the unique Hamerkop, Woolly-necked Stork, Goliath Heron, White-crowned Lapwing, the spectacular African Paradise Flycatcher and a hooded Vulture overhead.

A lunch stop and short walk around the Skukuza Golf Club produced White-breasted and Reed Cormorants, African Darter, Purple Heron, African Jacana, Pied Kingfisher, White-fronted Bee-eater, Tawny-flanked Prinia, some close Common Waxbills and Bronze Mannikin. After lunch, we checked into our bungalows at Skukuza camp, said our goodbyes to Dirk, changed vehicles and headed out west in search of Wild Dogs and Cheetah that were eluding us. Unfortunately, our search was fruitless but we
did manage to find several extremely cooperative African Cuckoos sitting out in the open.

Our final morning in Kruger turned into an absolute cracker! It started with a very enjoyable stroll around Skukuza camp where we managed to obtain excellent views of a number of great birds that included the brilliant White-browed and White-throated Robin-Chats, African Green Pigeon, gaudy Purple-crested Turaco, Burchell’s Coucal, Terrestrial Brownbul, Sombre Greenbul, our only Willow Warbler of the trip, the buzzy little Green-backed Camaroptera, an African Goshawk soaring low overhead, the vociferous and attractive Black-collared Barbet, the superb Collared and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, Cape White-eye and Ashy Flycatcher. A party of Banded Mongoose was also encountered and some of us were very fortunate to glimpse a Cape Clawless Otter in the Sabie River. A Saddle-billed Stork occupied a sandbar in the Sabie River during breakfast and all of a sudden the African Buffalo that were hanging about started running, as did the Impala and then it became clear why. A huge, male Leopard suddenly appeared at the river’s edge and after sniffing around where the Impala once stood, he decided to flop out onto the sand in full view from the deck where we were enjoying a scrumptious breakfast at the edge of the river. After an amazing show, he then climbed up into a massive Fig tree and out of view. What a superb start to the morning! We then finished packing up and departed on the long drive down to Wakkerstroom, but our next two hours were still within the expansive wilderness of the Kruger National Park and we were again spoilt with some amazing sightings, most notably three separate Lion encounters, one of which was a mating pair right next to the road, as well as another Leopard that slinked off rather quickly into a jumble of rocks. Two massive White Rhinoceros were later seen just before we arrived at the Malelane Gate in the south-west of the park. A wonderful pair of Black-chested Snake Eagles soared overhead; while the adjacent Crocodile River revealed two new birds in the form of a Black Heron and two African Openbills. Kruger sure did produce an amazing array of superb sightings and what an amazing wilderness area it is!

The remainder of the drive to Wakkerstroom took us via the sugarcane, pine and eucalyptus plantations that sadly cover so much of eastern South Africa and eventually back onto the central plateau of the ‘Highveld’. We did make a brief stop for a Lizard Buzzard at the road-side and after a quick lunch stop in the small town of Carolina, we made our first scheduled stop at a seasonal pan near Ermelo. The pan was surprisingly full considering the incredible drought that the entire country was experiencing.
and did not hold much in the way of waterbirds other than large numbers of Red-knobbed Coot and Little Grebe but we did find our first Ant-eating Chat, Cape Longclaw, Pied Starling and African Stonechat of the trip, as well as our only sighting of Black-throated Canary.

A little further on, we stopped for a herd of Blesbok and a quick scan of the surrounding grasslands revealed a handsome male Blue Korhaan, one of South Africa’s most spectacular and sought-after endemics! A pair of Spike-heeled Lark also popped up and a Bokmakierie at the roadside just outside of Amersfoort was a lovely bonus and a great way to end off the day. We finally arrived at the rather quaint and sleepy town of Wakkerstroom in the early evening and after settling into our lovely rooms, we headed into town for a delicious and very private dinner.

We had an unbeatable day around the world-famous birding area of Wakkerstroom and, with the help of our excellent local guide, Lucky, we managed to see every single possible endemic and near-endemic bird species that the area has to offer. The list of specialties seen was truly impressive and included some of the most prized birds of the entire trip. We also encountered a number of other exciting but slightly more widespread species, as well as a few interesting mammals during our day’s exploration of the area.

The day began with a pre-breakfast excursion to a higher-lying area of grassland and rocky hills near town. Here we managed to find and obtain excellent views of Drakensberg Prinia, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Mountain Wheatear and the main target species: a stunning male Yellow-breasted Pipit in breeding plumage. A little further on, we encountered a massive flock of Grey Crowned Crane as well as four Blue Cranes, a juvenile Southern Bald Ibis, several Lanner Falcons and a magnificent pair of Secretarybird. A rocky hillside gave us the rare African Rock Pipit and Buff-streaked Chat, while a small lake produced White-backed Duck, Spur-winged Goose, Yellow-billed Duck and Southern Pochard. Larks are a feature of the Wakkerstroom grasslands and we got stuck into a bunch of representatives of this dominantly African family: Red-capped, Eastern Clapper, Botha’s, Pink-billed and Rudd’s Larks all showed extremely well. At a nearby pan, we enjoyed scope views of South African Shelduck, Cape Teal, Cape Shoveler, Maccoa Duck, Great Crested Grebe and two Greater Flamingos. A short drive east of town gave us our quarry: the scarce and localised Lazy Secretarybird - Wakkerstroom

Sentinel Rock Thrush - Wakkerstroom
Cisticola; while a late afternoon watch over the extensive wetland that dominates the edge of town revealed White-throated and South African Cliff Swallows, Levallant’s Cisticola, breeding plumage Cape, Southern Masked and Village Weavers and the exquisite Southern Red Bishop, as well as African Marsh Harrier. On the mammal front, Wakkerstroom gave us sightings of the endearing Meerkat, as well as several Yellow Mongooses and large herds of Blesbok.

At dusk we were thrilled to see a pair of Marsh Owl emerge from the dense reedbeds and fly over our heads, while a larger, heavier-chested owl with a different flight pattern but much further away and in dimmer light was almost certainly the rare African Grass Owl – sadly, I could not be one hundred percent sure, due to the distance and bad light involved. Exciting nonetheless, and that rounded off another superb day before tucking into another lovely dinner in town. After dinner, a few of us embarked on a short night drive out of town and although we didn’t see anything that spectacular, we did find a few nice things like a perched Spotted Eagle-Owl, a few Cape Hares and several unique Springhares.

Before departing the Wakkerstroom area, we spent the early morning at the wetland where we enjoyed a lovely, leisurely, sunny, crisp and bird-rich morning watching noteworthy species like African Rail, Little Bittern, Cape Reed, African Reed and Little Rush Warblers, African Swamphen, the dazzling Malachite Kingfisher and Grey-rumped Swallow. Several Red-chested Flufftails called tantalisingly close but were, unfortunately, still too far away to be lured into view. The grounds of our delightful guest house then gave us Black Saw-wing, African Yellow Warbler and Cape Robin-Chat before an extensive and seriously yummy breakfast. Sadly, it was time to leave Wakkerstroom, its superb birds and our friendly hosts and continue our journey east towards the coastal plain of KwaZulu-Natal where a whole different and exciting suite of birds awaited us. En route we stopped in an area of higher-altitude grasslands and scanned for bustards. Some spectacular full breeding plumage, male Long-tailed Widowbirds flopped over the grasslands in their elaborate display flights, while Wailing Cisticola and Ant-eating Chats sat up in the tall grass and on the surrounding fences. After intensive scanning, we finally managed to pick out a male Black-bellied Bustard before it was time to depart the area and carry on towards Piet Retief and down to Pongola for an on-the-go lunch that took a little longer than we hoped for.

In the late afternoon, we finally arrived on the coastal plain with a sudden change in habitat: a number of different acacia species, stunted palm savanna and our first Fever Trees dominating the

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**Rudd’s Lark - Wakkerstroom**

**Little Bittern - Wakkerstroom**
landscape. Unfortunately, the wind had picked up, a dense layer of clouds had rolled in and it began to rain lightly. We tried our luck at some late afternoon birding along a gravel track near the town of Hluhluwe but with the fading light and poor weather, it was useless and so we drove the remaining distance to our lodge in the Mkuze area, where we’d be based for the next two nights.

Our time in the Hluhluwe and Mkuze areas saw us visiting the birding hotspots of Mkuze Game Reserve and False Bay Park, as well as an early morning around our lodge on our final morning in the area. Together they gave us a fine array of eastern South African specialities. The sand forest habitat in Mkuze was a major focal point and turned up key species like the immaculate Pink-throated Twinspot, Rudd’s Apalis, the rare and elusive Neergaard’s Sunbird, Eastern Nicator, Bearded Scrub Robin and Four-colored Bushshrike, as well as other memorable highlights, such as Crested Guineafowl, several extremely confiding and approachable Red-chested Cuckoos, a Red-fronted Tinkerbird, the vociferous but rather furtive Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, the exquisite Collared, Amethyst, Scarlet-chested, Marico, Purple-banded, Grey and White-bellied Sunbirds, African Yellow White-eye and Black-bellied Starling. The nearly completely dry Nsumo Pan held the last remaining pod of Hippopotamus in the area, as well as a few Collared Pratincoles. Other noteworthy finds included a pair of beautiful Little Bee-eaters, nesting Golden-tailed Woodpecker, flocks of White-crested Helmetshrikes, the eye-catching African Paradise Flycatcher, a pair of Black Cuckooshrike, Pale Flycatcher and a surprise in the form of a regional rarity: a Green Sandpiper.

We also encountered a wide range of mammals, especially in Mkuze Game Reserve, that included an unexpected Spotted Hyena, Impala, Natal Red and Common Duikers, Common Wildebeest, Nyala, Bushbuck, Greater Kudu, Giraffe, Common Warthog, Plains Zebra, Vervet Monkey, Chacma Baboon and a single White Rhinoceros.

After leaving Hluhluwe, we made our way further south towards the coastal resort town of St. Lucia. We had the remainder of the afternoon to explore the nearby estuary as well as some of the surrounding coastal forest. At the estuary, we found Yellow-billed Stork, Pink-throated Pelican, Grey, Common Ringed and White-fronted Plovers, Whimbrel, Sanderling,
Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Caspian and Greater Crested Terns, Goliath Heron, Little Egret, African Fish Eagle, an unexpected Saddle-billed Stork, Thick-billed, Lesser Masked and Eastern Golden Weavers in the adjacent reedbeds and a handsome, fly-over Black Sparrowhawk amongst other more common species. The estuary also held several thriving Hippopotamus and some huge Nile Crocodiles, while a cursory look at a few forest edge sites gave us White-eared Barbet, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Square-tailed Drongo, Dark-backed Weaver, the very pretty Red-capped Robin-Chat and flight views of a Livingstone’s Turaco.

In the evening, a Thick-tailed Greater Galago hopped around and gave its loud, barking call from the tall trees in front of the rooms at our guest house on the forest edge; while a Hippopotamus grazed on the lush lawns of the garden. Africa at its best!

During our time at St. Lucia, we concentrated our efforts on the coastal forest that surrounds the town and also ventured into the Cape Vidal section of the extensive Isimangaliso Wetland Park. Our search around town for the area’s forest specialities produced the targets, despite the inclement weather that had rolled in and highlights included the scarce and localised Woodward’s Batis, Brown Scrub Robin, Trumpeter and Crowned Hornbills, Narina Trogon and Rudd’s Apalis. Cape Vidal produced more Collared Pratincoles, a singing Croaking Cisticola, several Green Twinspots and at dusk, Fiery-necked and Square-tailed Nightjars, while mammals included herds of African Buffalo, Common Wildebeest, Waterbuck, Natal Red Duiker, Red Bush Squirrel and Banded Mongoose.

We departed St. Lucia while it was still dark, and in the rain we continued south through Natal and slightly inland towards the town of Eshowe and the bird-rich forest fragment of Dlinza that protects a number of the region’s forest specialities. We arrived in the early morning and after a picnic breakfast and hot coffee, we entered the forest on our quest for some very special birds indeed. We first made our way onto the boardwalk and up to the top of the canopy tower from where we had a vantage point over most of the forest. Here we managed to obtain scope views of the brilliant African Emerald Cuckoo, African Olive Pigeon and several White-eared Barbets before heading back into the forest interior and along the network of forest trails.

Before long we’d found a massive mixed feeding flock that supported Olive Woodpecker, Narina...
Trogon, Bar-throated Apalis, an unexpected Grey-headed Bushshrike, Green Malkoha, Cape Batis, the beautiful Chorister Robin-Chat and Olive Sunbird. A Scaly-throated Honeyguide called tantalisingly close but could not be picked out from its dense, layered forest canopy habitat. A pair of the extremely patchily-distributed and highly sought-after Spotted Ground Thrush was later found feeding quietly in the leaf-litter on the forest floor and gave us crippling, walk-away views! A pair of tiny Blue Duiker then made for a fitting end to a fine morning.

After an excellent morning at Dlinza, we drove to the nearby coastal town of Mtunzini where we added Palm-nut Vulture and Black-throated Wattle-eye to the ever-growing list, before continuing south past Durban and inland towards Pietermaritzburg and Hilton where we spent the night at a comfortable guest house in the town of Hilton. Our journey, however, took us via Richmond and Roselands Nature Reserve that has been a breeding stronghold for Blue Swallow during the summer months for a number of years. We searched and scanned high and low but alas no swallows of any kind, which was rather strange indeed. We did, however, find a lovely flock of the scarce and nomadic Black-winged Lapwing in the montane grassland, which made the detour worthwhile. After a very long and tiring day, we departed Richmond for our guest house and after freshening up, we headed into town to a delightful Thai restaurant (recently voted one of South Africa’s top 100 restaurants!) for one of the best meals of the trip.

The next leg of our epic adventure took us up the nearby Karkloof mountain range to a private estate where we spent the early hours of the morning strolling around the extensive, manicured gardens and enjoying the array of superb birds that the area has to offer. We also made a few birding stops along the way to the gardens for species like Grey Crowned Crane, Fantailed Widowbird, Little Rush and African Yellow Warblers, Pale-crowned and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, Brimstone Canary and Long-crested Eagle.

Highlights in the forested gardens included a soaring Crowned Eagle, a fly-over African Harrier-Hawk, a pair of Black Sparrowhawks near their nest, several Orange Ground Thrush that is usually a very shy and scarce species but can be
particularly showy, confiding and frequent at this site, a friendlier Olive Woodpecker than at Dlinza, Grey Cuckooshrike, the dainty Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, splendid White-starred Robin, a ridiculously confiding Chorister Robin-Chat, the radiant Southern Double-collared and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds, African Dusky Flycatcher, another juvenile Green Twinspot and Forest Canary.

Our search for Wattled Crane sadly did not turn up the quarry and we’d have to leave that one for the Himeville area. We did, however, find a Buff-streaked Chat and Wing-snapping Cisticola during the search on our drive back to Howick, where we popped into a local restaurant for lunch, which was punctuated by a marvellous pair of the stately Blue Crane, South Africa’s national bird, as well as a soaring pair of impressive Jackal Buzzard and a responsive Olive Bushshrike.

After lunch, we embarked on the drive deeper into the Natal Midlands towards the town of Bulwer and the forest of Marutswa. We spent the remainder of the afternoon there and marvelled at several extremely showy and spectacular Knysna Turacos, a few singing Cape Grassbirds, Familiar Chat that hopped around in the parking area, Red-collared Widowbird and the pretty and endemic Swee Waxbill. However, the species that stole the show was undoubtedly the three Cape Parrots that flew in, squawking as they did so and then landed at the top of a bare tree at the forest edge in the gorgeous afternoon sunlight. The parrots then began preening and we watched and photographed them at length before eventually walking away from these endangered endemics. What an amazing experience! We left Marutswa on an all-time high and continued the drive towards the foothills of the towering Natal Drakensberg where we were based for the next two nights at a very comfortable guest house at the edge of the village of Himeville.

We woke up to a stunning morning with a magnificent view across the southern section of the mightily impressive Drakensberg mountain range and with much excitement and anticipation, met up with Stuart and Aldo and jumped into their four wheel drive vehicles to begin our Sani Pass day trip adventure. Our first stop of the morning was at the edge of town where the river and wetland environs gave us a wonderful surprise in the form of an African Black Duck, as well as Intermediate Egret, African Darter, Grey Crowned Crane, Giant Kingfisher and African Yellow Warbler. Thereafter, we made our way slightly inland to where Stuart and Aldo had a pair of Wattled Cranes with a chick staked out at a nearby farm dam. We were delighted with this.
unexpected news and upon arrival at the site, were immediately greeted by the pair of beautiful Wattled Cranes. Superb! After enjoying lengthy scope views of these elegant birds, we backtracked towards the start of the Sani Pass, picking up a lovely pair of Blue Cranes along the way, as well as a large group of Cape Vultures feeding on a carcass, a vocal Red-throated Wryneck and several Quailfinch in flight.

Almost immediately after starting along the Sani Pass road, we stopped for a long shot at the scarce Red-necked Spurfowl and were amazingly met with instant success. A little further on, we pulled over for our picnic breakfast in the field and were treated to great views of the rarely seen Brown-backed Honeybird, as well as Streaky-headed Seedeater, a bird that had thus far eluded us. Continuing up the pass, we added Cape Rock Thrush, the handsome and unique Ground Woodpecker, several Gurney’s Sugarbirds at flowering proteas and the exquisite Malachite and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. Barratt’s Warbler called and showed briefly in some dense herbage; while along the final switchbacks of the pass, before entering Lesotho, we managed to obtain views of a rather furtive Layard’s Warbler. Great spotting by Aldo produced a lovely male Drakensberg Siskin and we were also spoilt with the most sensationaly close and prolonged views of a cracking male Drakensberg Rockjumper that fed unperturbed below the road and quite literally almost hopped across our feet! Wow, what a morning!

After checking in at the very informal border post, we entered the country of Lesotho. The wind had picked up considerably by this time and it was definitely time to put on another layer or two! This also meant that we had our work cut out for us in Lesotho since the sweeping wind across this barren landscape would no doubt keep down the passerines. However, despite the less than ideal conditions, we still managed to rack up every single target speciality during our time on the plateau! Almost the first bird we laid eyes on at the border was a Sentinel Rock Thrush; while several very cute Sloggett’s Vlei Rats also occupied this area. A little further on, we found several Sickle-winged Chats, a Mountain Pipit, a few Large-billed Larks and a Southern Bald Ibis with superb sunlight on it that enhanced its brilliantly iridescent plumage. We then drove along the newly built road towards the Bearded Vulture nest at Black Mountain and were thrilled to find three adult birds on the nest! Awesome! We watched them in the scopes and were even treated to flight views of

Drakensberg Rockjumper - top of Sani Pass

Ground Woodpecker - Sani Pass
these majestic birds.

A roadside picnic lunch ensued, where we added Fairy Flycatcher to the ever-growing list of endemics and specialities. Stuart then took us to the territory of a pair of Karoo Scrub Robin, a rare bird in Lesotho that was only discovered in the country a few years ago, right at the eastern edge of its range. Fortunately, the birds obliged very nicely, as did Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting. We had to work a bit harder for Grey-winged Francolin and Grey Tit but we eventually managed to obtain decent flight views of the francolin and found the tit in the eleventh hour just before arriving at the Sani Top Chalet. Here we enjoyed the magnificent scenery across the edge of the escarpment and rounded off a truly magical day with a drink at the highest pub in Africa. In the late afternoon, we wound our way back down the pass and found a few mammals along the way such as Southern Reedbuck, Common Duiker, Chacma Baboon and Rock Hyrax. To end off the day, we stopped in at a local residence in town where a pair of Spotted Eagle-Owls had taken up residence and successfully raised a chick. The perfect way to end an unforgettable trip up Sani Pass!

Sadly our Eastern South Africa tour had drawn to a close and we bid farewell to Judy, Lyann and Louis upon arrival at Durban International Airport. The remainder of us then boarded our flight across the country to the city of Cape Town in the south-western corner of South Africa. Here we began our post-tour extension of the south-western Cape.

**Western Cape Extension**

We arrived in Cape Town and were greeted by a lovely, sunny afternoon and the perfect weather for a visit to the nearby Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. These beautiful gardens are nestled at the eastern base of Table Mountain with a fabulous view across much of Cape Town. A picturesque setting indeed and coupled with impeccably manicured gardens and some wonderful birds, it sure makes for a great introduction to the Cape and its unique flora and avifauna. Kirstenbosch is sunbird heaven and we were indulged by scores of Southern Double-collared and Orange-breasted Sunbirds; while the occasional Malachite Sunbird also put in an appearance. Cape Sugarbirds were also in attendance at the flowering *Proteas* that dominate...
the upper reaches of the gardens.

Sombre Greenbul and Cape Bulbul were particularly vocal and we also enjoyed views of now-familiar species like Southern Boubou, Common and Swee Waxbills, Olive Thrush, African Dusky Flycatcher, Red-winged Starling, Forest and Cape Canaries, Cape Robin-Chat and Cape Sparrow. Cape Spurfowl, Egyptian Goose and Helmeted Guineafowl cavorted on the lawns, while Rock Kestrels were seen darting by overhead and we also found a pair of Common Chaffinch. After a delightful afternoon of easy birding and photography around Kirstenbosch, we continued the drive south across the Cape Peninsula towards the coastal town of Simon’s Town and our wonderful guest house overlooking False Bay that would be our base for the next three nights.

We awoke the next morning to beautiful, clear skies and a slight breeze, perfect conditions for a pelagic trip! After meeting at the dock and running through a few safety formalities, we boarded the boat and set out across False Bay towards Cape Point and out into the cold, churning waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The trip out provided us with awe-inspiring views across the Peninsula, Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point. We also encountered our first African Penguins, Hartlaub’s and Kelp Gulls, Cape Gannets, Cape Cormorants and Subantarctic Skua during the trip out to the point. By this stage, the wind had picked up and some dense cloud cover had also materialised and we departed the peninsula for the open ocean and the continental shelf with a growing swell and chop. Even on a fine day like today, the ocean was rather rough with at least a three-meter swell. They don’t call it the Cape of Storms for nothing! Surprisingly, it took quite a while before we found our first albatross of the day and that came in the form of a Shy Albatross. Soon afterwards the shouts of Royal Albatross filled the air and a superb adult Northern Royal Albatross came cruising past us and provided excellent views of this endangered species and regional rarity. The numbers of seabirds then began picking up considerably and the sky was soon filled with dozens of White-chinned and Cape Petrels, Sooty and Great Shearwaters, Shy and Black-browed Albatrosses and Cape Gannets.

We reached the trawling grounds off Cape Canyon in the late morning and were blown away to find four separate trawlers, all of which had several thousand seabirds in their wake. The number of seabirds was truly mind-blowing and I cannot...
recall ever seeing so many seabirds on any previous Cape pelagic outing!

The majority of birds were made up of the already-mentioned species but we also found a number of exciting new species while working our way through the mass of birds. We puttered and rocked our way through the melee and soon picked out our first of several Black-bellied Storm Petrels amongst hundreds of Wilson’s Storm Petrels. A couple of Sabine’s Gulls put in an appearance, as did Common and Arctic Terns and we soon found our first Atlantic and Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses. Unusually large numbers of both Southern and Northern Giant Petrels were also present and we also managed to pick out two rarely recorded species off Cape waters: the spectacular Wandering Albatross (an adult and juvenile) and a Southern Fulmar (the first sighting off the Cape in three years!).

We left the amazing spectacle feeling a little over-whelmed but immensely satisfied with the experience and views of these wonderful seabirds. In the mid-afternoon, we began the journey back to Simon’s Town, adding Parasitic Jaeger, Bank and Crowned Cormorants and Cape Fur Seal along the way. We arrived at the dock in the late afternoon and those up for more birding headed out to the nearby Jonkersdam Nature Reserve where we enjoyed more views of Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, Cape Grassbird and Karoo Prinia. Wow, what an amazing day!

Our next full day around the Cape Peninsula saw us heading out east towards the towering Hottentots Holland Mountains that rise up almost vertically right from the edge of the ocean. Our main target species here was the Cape Rockjumper and these endemic gems did not disappoint as they afforded us amazing and prolonged views in their unique, jumbled boulder and fynbos habitat. We also found several obliging Cape Rock Thrushes here, as well as several Yellow Bishops in immaculate breeding plumage and more sunbirds and sugarbirds. Grey-backed Cisticola sang away from exposed perches, as did Cape Grassbird, Karoo Prinia, Cape Bunting and Cape Bulbul. After a successful early morning with almost perfect weather, we continued our journey east towards the small coastal town of Betty’s Bay where we visited the Stony Point African Penguin colony and the well-appointed and bird-rich botanical gardens of Harold Porter. Hundreds of African Penguins straddled the beach at Stony Point and made for superb photographic opportunities and we also enjoyed the multitude of cormorants,
comprising four different species: Cape (by far the most abundant), White-breasted (second most common), Crowned (rather scarce and threatened) and the critically endangered Bank Cormorant. African Oystercatchers also lay about the rocks; while Cape Wagtails flitted around the boardwalk. At Harold Porter, we traversed the rather small (at least in comparison to Kirstenbosch) and manageable gardens and found incredible numbers of Cape Sugarbirds and Orange-breasted and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds feeding on the abundant, flowering *Ericas* and *Proteas*. We also found our only Fiscal Flycatchers of the trip and were spoilt with even more views of the often elusive Swee Waxbill. Brimstone and Cape Canaries sang from the surrounding bushes, while a pair of Cape Batis flitted about the undergrowth. We managed to find several singing Victorin’s Warblers, a couple of which showed well but we had to work a lot harder for the other main target species here, the scarce and endemic Cape Siskin. Eventually, we found three siskins feeding quietly and unobtrusively at the edge of the gardens and they gave us good but fairly brief views before flying off. With all the target species for the area in the bag, we had time to head out to the prolific Strandfontein Sewage Works for some late afternoon birding. We found huge numbers of Cape Shoveler, Southern Pochard, Red-knobbed Coot and Cape Teal soon after entering the ponds and a little further on a massive flock of Greater Flamingo was encountered that also harboured a few Lesser Flamingos. Pied Avocet was also in attendance as were a couple of Red-billed Teal, Black-necked Grebe in full nuptials, Black-winged Stilt and Hartlaub’s Gull and after a bird-rich, scenically spectacular and thoroughly enjoyable day, we departed Strandfontein for the short drive back to Simon’s Town along the picturesque coastline to the comforts of our guest house for our final night there before heading up towards Ceres via the West Coast National Park.

Leaving Simon’s Town behind, we made our way back up the peninsula towards Cape Town and after skirting the city centre in the early morning before there was too much traffic, we were motoring our way up the west coast, past Robben Island and into the Darling area. We passed through vast stretches of Strandveld habitat that still had large areas of flowering plants at the end of the flower season, before arriving at the southern entrance to West Coast National Park. We pulled over for a roadside picnic breakfast soon after entering the park and were immediately surrounded by birds: White-backed Mousebirds, Cape Grassbird, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Yellow and White-
throated Canaries, Cape Robin-Chat, Karoo Scrub Robin, Karoo Prinia, Cape Bunting, Bokmakierie, Long-billed Crombec, Grey-backed Cisticola and Cape Sparrow were all present and sitting up at the tops of the bushes and singing their hearts out on a beautiful spring morning.

Further on, we encountered large numbers of Common Ostrich, with many of the sightings including a number of chicks of varying ages. We soon turned off the main track and almost immediately heard the distinctive calls of Karoo Larks that were soon found sitting on top of bushes and performing their parachute-like display flights. The loud, croaking calls of a male Southern Black Korhaan then echoed from further up the road so we drove on and soon found the bird in question standing in an open glade but rather far off the road. A short burst of call and it was straight in like a rocket, chest puffed out and croaking away. We ended up with amazing views of this individual and also found another magnificent male a little later in the day. This is certainly one of West Coast’s most prized birds and we were thrilled with our intimate encounters with this endemic bustard. A nearby waterhole held Cape Shoveler, African Spoonbill, Little Grebe, nesting Cape Weavers and Southern Red and Yellow Bishops, several singing Little Rush Warblers and an African Marsh Harrier that quartered low over the wetland, while the surrounding, low flowering bushes supported several pairs of brilliant Malachite Sunbirds. Continuing deeper into the reserve, we stopped for some close Rock Kestrels and found our first superb Black Harrier of the day, another West Coast speciality! The noteworthy species did not stop coming though as a short stop and leg stretch a little further on, in order to view some close Greater Flamingos, turned up the likes of Grey Tit, Banded Martin, Pied Starling and Bar-throated Apalis. After another superb morning in the glorious Cape, we found ourselves at the famous Geelbek Restaurant in the heart of the park for another sumptuous and hearty lunch. The afternoon was spent in the northern section of the park where the Seeberg hide produced an assortment of waders that included Grey, Kittlitz’s and White-fronted Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Sanderling, Curlew Sandpiper and hundreds of Common Terns, while the surrounding scrubby vegetation held a pair of Chestnut-vented Warbler. Mammals encountered during our day in the national park included Bontebok (the endemic and visually distinctive subspecies of Blesbok), Cape Grey Mongoose and Four-striped Grass Mouse, while a massive Puff Adder right in the road and Rufous-eared Warbler - Tankwa Karoo

Cinnamon-breasted Warbler - Tankwa Karoo
several Angulated Tortoises were wonderful bonuses too!

Alas, it was time to bid farewell to West Coast National Park and continue our journey east towards the town of Ceres, nestled at the edge of the Karoo and the Cape Fold Mountains. A beautiful and extremely scenic, fruit-growing area, this peaceful little town would be our base for the final two nights of this epic birding adventure around South Africa. Our drive to Ceres was not only very scenic but it also produced several great birds that included several pairs of Blue Crane, the only White Stork of the trip and a marvellous pair of impressive Verreaux’s Eagles.

Our last full day of the trip was spent in the Tankwa Karoo and despite the cold and windy weather that had rolled in overnight, we still managed to find most of the area’s specialities. Our first stop of the morning was in the Karoopoort Gorge where we pursued the endemic Namaqua Warbler that eventually showed quite well. Thereafter, we wound our way through the gorge and entered the Karoo proper where a picnic breakfast saw us entertained by several quality species like Pale Chanting Goshawk, Booted Eagle, Layard’s Warbler, Pririt Batis and Karoo Chat. As we continued deeper into the Karoo, the wind picked up and some dark clouds began rolling in. This made for some seriously challenging birding but we plugged away and managed to find Horus Swift, the beautiful Rufous-eared Warbler, European Bee-eater, Grey Tit, Spike-heeled and Karoo Larks, Pale-winged Starling, Mountain Wheatear, Whiter-throated Canary and a female Dusky Sunbird. The star of the day, however, came when the explosive song of the rare and endemic Cinnamon-breasted Warbler pierced the air from close-by and before long, we were watching three of these elusive and quite attractive birds at close range. The views were simply superb and I was delighted at this find since it has recently become a very tough bird to see in the Tankwa Karoo! A pair of Fairy Flycatchers flitted around in the trees above our lunch spot and the afternoon’s drive further north yielded a lovely male Namaqua Sandgrouse, several Tractrac and Sickle-winged Chats, Capped Wheatear and a brief and rather distant Karoo Eremomela. We rolled into our guest house in Ceres in the late afternoon, exhausted from a long, tiring, cold and windy day but rather delighted with our birding achievements. After a well-deserved hot shower, we enjoyed a final dinner together while reminiscing over our many memorable experiences over the past three weeks.

We woke up on our final morning to a crystal clear sky and awesome mountain scenery but a chilly three degrees Celsius and embarked on the short drive up into the mountains to the nearby Gydo Pass where we spent the first hour of the day before breakfast searching for the elusive Protea Seedeater. There was, unfortunately, no sign of the seedeater but we did enjoy final views of many iconic and now-familiar Cape fynbos endemics like Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird, as well as Streaky-headed Seedeater, Cape Grassbird, Cape Robin-Chat, Olive Thrush and Cape Canary.

After breakfast, we made our way south towards Worcester and then back west towards Cape Town International Airport where this highly memorable South African birding trip concluded.

Thank you to everyone for making this yet another highly enjoyable and successful Rockjumper birding tour of South Africa. I hope to see you all again soon.
ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDSRecorded (469 species - 464 seen and 5 heard)


**Key to abbreviations:**

E = South African Endemic, RE = Regional Endemic (Endemic to Southern Africa), RNE = Regional Near-Endemic (Near-Endemic to Southern Africa), BE = South African Breeding Endemic, H = Heard Only, I = Introduced

NP = National Park, GR = Game Reserve, BG = Botanical Garden, SW = Sewage Works, NR = Nature Reserve

**Common Ostrich Struthionidae**

*Common Ostrich*  *Struthio camelus*

These huge birds were seen well in Kruger NP and in West Coast NP.

**Swans, Geese & Ducks Anatidae**

*White-faced Whistling-Duck*  *Dendrocygna viduata*

Small numbers were seen at the St. Lucia Estuary.

*White-backed Ducks*  *Thalassornis leuconotus*

We managed to see these scarce ducks in the Wakkerstroom area.

*Spur-winged Goose*  *Plectropterus gambensis*

This large bird was seen on most days of the tour, especially around farmlands and dams.

*Knob-billed (Comb) Duck*  *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

A singleton was found at a wetland along the Zaagkuildrift Road.

*NOTE: Knob-billed Duck in Africa and Asia and Comb Duck in the Americas are now regarded as separate species.*

*Egyptian Goose*  *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

These common birds were seen on most days of the tour.

*South African Shelduck (RE)*  *Tadorna cana*

We had some great sightings around Wakkerstroom.

*Cape Teal*  *Anas capensis*

We saw many these birds at Strandfontein Sewage Works and a couple at Fickland Pan.

*African Black Duck*  *Anas sparsa*

We were very lucky to see one of these shy ducks on a river just outside Himeville.

*Yellow-billed Duck*  *Anas undulata*

This duck was commonly recorded at various wetlands during the tour.

*Cape Shoveler (RE)*  *Anas smithii*

We had good sightings around Wakkerstroom and throughout the Western Cape.

*Red-billed Teal (Duck)*  *Anas erythrorhyncha*

We had many sightings throughout the trip.

*Southern Pochard*  *Netta erythrophthalma*

Good numbers around Wakkerstroom and at Strandfontein Sewage Works.
Maccoa Duck
*Oxyura maccoa*
Several seen at Fickland Pan near Wakkerstroom.

**Guineafowl Numididae**

**Helmeted Guineafowl**
*Numida meleagris*
This pretty but common bird was seen on many occasions during the tour.

**Crested Guineafowl**
*Guttera pucherani*
Small numbers were seen well in the Hluhluwe and Mkhuze area.

**Pheasants & Partridges Phasianidae**

**Grey-winged Francolin (E)**
*Francolinus africanus*
Flight views were had of a pair in Lesotho.

**Crested Francolin**
*Dendroperdix sephaena*
Commonly seen in Kruger NP.

**Cape Spurfowl (Francolin) (RE)**
*Pternistis capensis*
Common and confiding throughout the Western Cape.

**Natal Spurfowl (Francolin) (RNE)**
*Pternistis natalensis*
These birds were seen daily in Kruger NP.

**Red-necked Spurfowl (Francolin)**
*Pternistis afer*
We had a lovely sighting during our day along the Sani Pass Road.

**Swainson’s Spurfowl (Francolin) (RNE)**
*Pternistis swainsonii*
We also saw these birds along the Zaagkuildrift Road and in Kruger NP.

**Common Quail (H)**
*Coturnix coturnix*
Two birds were heard calling in West Coast NP.

**Penguins Spheniscidae**

**African Penguin (RE)**
*Spheniscus demersus*
These popular birds were seen well and up close in large numbers at Stony Point Penguin Colony.

**Austral Storm Petrels Oceanitidae**

**Wilson’s Storm Petrel**
*Oceanites oceanicus*
Large numbers were seen during our pelagic trip out of Simon’s Town.

**Black-bellied Storm Petrel**
*Fregetta tropica*
Around 5 birds were seen around trawlers during our pelagic trip out of Simon’s Town.

**Albatrosses Diomedeidae**

**Wandering Albatross**
*Diomedea exulans*
Wonderful views were had of an adult and juvenile around the trawling grounds off the Cape.

**Northern Royal Albatross**
*Diomedea sanfordi*
A single adult showed very well during our Simon’s Town pelagic trip.

**Black-browed Albatross**
*Thalassarche melanophris*
Large numbers were seen on the pelagic trip.

**Shy Albatross**
*Thalassarche cauta*
The commonest albatross off the Cape and seen in large numbers.
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross \textit{Thalassarche chlorohynchos}
Good views were had of around 5 birds during our pelagic trip.

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross \textit{Thalassarche carteri}
Several birds were seen well during our pelagic outing.

**Shearwaters & Petrels \textit{Procellariidae}**

Southern Giant Petrel \textit{Macronectes giganteus}
Unusually large numbers were seen around the trawling grounds during our Simon’s Town pelagic outing.

Northern Giant Petrel \textit{Macronectes halli}
As with the previous species, we found an unusually large number of these massive petrels during our pelagic trip.

Southern Fulmar \textit{Fulmarus glacialoides}
Excellent, prolonged and repeat views were had of a single bird behind a trawler during our pelagic trip. This is now a very rare spring visitor to South Africa’s south coast.

Cape (Pintado) Petrel \textit{Daption capense}
Large numbers were seen during the pelagic trip.

White-chinned Petrel \textit{Procellaria aequinoctialis}
Hundreds of these petrels were encountered during the pelagic trip.

**Sooty Shearwater** \textit{Puffinus griseus}
Fair numbers were sighted during the Simon’s Town pelagic trip.

**Great Shearwater** \textit{Puffinus gravis}
Good numbers of these attractive seabirds were seen on the passage of the Cape during the pelagic trip.

**Grebes \textit{Podicipedidae}**

Little Grebe (Dabchick) \textit{Tachybaptus ruficollis}
Several seen throughout the tour.

Great Crested Grebe \textit{Podiceps cristatus}
Four seen on Fickland Pan.

Black-necked (Eared) Grebe \textit{Podiceps nigricollis}
Three of these handsome grebes in full breeding plumage were seen at Strandfontein Sewage Works.

**Flamingos \textit{Phoenicopteridae}**

Greater Flamingo \textit{Phoenicopterus roseus}
We saw two of these graceful birds at Fickland Pan and later in massive numbers at Strandfontein SW and at West Coast NP.

Lesser Flamingo \textit{Phoeniconaias minor}
Smaller numbers were seen with the latter species at Strandfontein and West Coast.

**Storks \textit{Ciconidae}**

Yellow-billed Stork \textit{Mycteria ibis}
Small numbers were found in the St. Lucia area.

African Openbill \textit{Anastomus lamelligerus}
Two were seen on the Crocodile River upon leaving Kruger.
Woolly-necked Stork  
*Ciconia episcopus*

Seen on four days in the east.

White Stork  
*Ciconia ciconia*

Our only sighting of the trip was of a single bird during the drive between West Coast NP and Ceres.

Saddle-billed Stork  
*Epippiorhynchus senegalensis*

Sightings of singletons were had in the Kruger area and at St. Lucia.

Marabou Stork  
*Leptoptilos crumenifer*

Two separate soaring birds were found in Kruger.

Ibises & Spoonbills  *Threskiornithidae*

African Sacred Ibis  
*Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Southern Bald Ibis (E)  
*Geronticus calvus*

A juvenile and small flock were encountered around Wakkerstroom, while another three were seen in Lesotho.

Hadada Ibis  
*Bostrychia hagedash*

One of the features of the tour! These charismatic and adaptive birds were seen and heard almost daily.

Glossy Ibis  
*Plegadis falcinellus*

Two were seen along the Zaagkuildrift road with another sighting in the Western Cape.

African Spoonbill  
*Platalea alba*

Several sightings were had.

Bitterns & Herons  *Ardeidae*

Little Bittern  
*Ixobrychus minutus*

Superb flight views of a male, and perched views of a female at Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Black-crowned Night Heron  
*Nycticorax nycticorax*

A single adult was seen at the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Striated (Green-backed) Heron  
*Butorides striata*

Three sightings were had in Kruger NP.

Squacco Heron  
*Ardeola ralloides*

First seen along the Zaagkuildrift road and again at Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Western Cattle Egret  
*Bubulcus ibis*

We had regular sightings of these gregarious birds throughout the tour.

Grey Heron  
*Ardea cinerea*

Recorded at wetlands on almost every day of the tour.

Black-headed Heron  
*Ardea melanocephala*

We had regular sightings of these birds in grasslands during the tour.

Goliath Heron  
*Ardea goliath*

Small numbers of this huge heron were seen in Kruger and at St. Lucia.

Purple Heron  
*Ardea purpurea*

Singletons were seen at Wakkerstroom, Mkhuze and St. Lucia.

(Western) Great Egret  
*Ardea alba*

These large egrets were seen occasionally in the east.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret  
*Egretta intermedia*

Singletons were seen at Wakkerstroom and at Himeville.
Black Heron (Egret)  
\textit{Egretta Ardesiaca}  
A real surprise to see one at the Crocodile River upon exiting Kruger!  

Little Egret  
\textit{Egretta garzetta}  
Small numbers were seen in the east.

**Hamerkop Scopidae**  
\textit{Scopus umbretta}  
This distinctive species was surprisingly only seen on one occasion at the Sabie River in Kruger.

**Pelecans Pelecanidae**  

Great White Pelican  
\textit{Pelecanus onocrotalus}  
Large numbers were seen while driving north of Cape Town towards West Coast NP.  

Pink-backed Pelican  
\textit{Pelecanus rufescens}  
Small numbers were encountered at the St Lucia Estuary.

**Gannets Sulidae**  

Cape Gannet (BE)  
\textit{Morus capensis}  
Hundreds were seen during our Cape pelagic trip.

**Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae**  

Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant  
\textit{Phalacrocorax africanus}  
This common wetland bird was seen on several days of the tour.  

Crowned Cormorant (RE)  
\textit{Phalacrocorax coronatus}  
We had a great sighting of a few individuals in Simons Town harbour and at Stony Point.  

Bank Cormorant (RE)  
\textit{Phalacrocorax neglectus}  
We had great sightings of this endangered species at Stony Point.

White-breasted (Great) Cormorant  
\textit{Phalacrocorax lucidus}  
\textit{NOTE: IOC now splits White-breasted Cormorant from Great Cormorant.}  
This large cormorant was seen well in both freshwater and marine habitats.  

Cape Cormorant (BE)  
\textit{Leucocarbo capensis}  
This marine species was abundant off the Western Cape coastline.

**Anhingas & Darters Anhingidae**  

African Darter  
\textit{Anhinga rufa}  
This snake-like bird was seen in Kruger and near Himeville.

**Secretarybird Sagittariidae**  

Secretarybird  
\textit{Sagittarius serpentarius}  
We were fortunate to have had two separate sightings of this impressive but declining bird in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**  

Black-winged Kite  
\textit{Elanus caeruleus}  
This striking raptor was seen on many occasions from the roadside.
African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)  
*Polyboroides typus*

A single bird was seen in flight in the Karkloof.

Palm-nut Vulture  
*Gypohierax angolensis*

Two soaring birds were seen at Mtunzini.

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)  
*Gypaetus barbatus*

Three of these magnificent raptors were seen at the nest in Lesotho and later in flight. Awesome!

Hooded Vulture  
*Necrosyrtes monachus*

A singleton was seen briefly in flight near the Sabie River in Kruger.

White-backed Vulture  
*Gyps africanus*

Fair numbers were seen daily in Kruger and also in Mkhuze.

Cape Vulture (RE)  
*Gyps coprotheres*

First seen in flight over the Abel Erasmus Pass and later we enjoyed scope views of several perched birds near Himeville.

White-headed Vulture  
*Trigonocephalus occipitalis*

We were lucky to see two of these scarce vultures in Kruger NP.

Black-chested Snake Eagle  
*Circaetus pectoralis*

A pair was seen in flight at Malelane Gate upon exiting Kruger.

Brown Snake Eagle  
*Circaetus cinereus*

Small numbers were seen daily in Kruger.

Bateleur  
*Terathopius ecaudatus*

This beautiful bird of prey was seen on many occasions in Kruger NP.

Crowned Eagle  
*Stephanoaetus coronatus*

We saw this magnificent bird of prey calling in flight over Benvie in the Karkloof.

Martial Eagle  
*Polemaetus bellicosus*

This handsome raptor was seen in Kruger and again in Mkhuze GR.

Long-crested Eagle  
*Lophaetus occipitalis*

A few birds were seen en route to Kruger and again in the Natal Midlands.

Wahlberg's Eagle  
*Hieraaetus wahlbergi*

Small numbers were seen on consecutive days in Kruger.

Booted Eagle  
*Hieraaetus wahlbergi*

Two soaring pale phase birds were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

Tawny Eagle  
*Aquila rapax*

Commonly seen in Kruger with another sighting in Mkhuze GR.

Verreaux’s Eagle  
*Aquila verreauxii*

We were fortunate to have seen a pair soaring alongside the road during the drive to Ceres.

Lizard Buzzard  
*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

One bird was encountered next to the road during the drive from Kruger to Barberton.

Gabar Goshawk  
*Micronisus gabar*

One normal phase and another melanistic morph bird were seen during our first afternoon in Kruger.

Pale Chanting Goshawk  
*Melierax canorus*

Around six of these striking raptors were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

African Goshawk  
*Accipiter tachiro*

A juvenile was seen in flight just outside Orpen Gate and another soaring bird showed very well over Skukuza Restcamp in Kruger.

Shikra  
*Accipiter badius*

Good views of singletons in Kruger and in Mkhuze GR.
Black Sparrowhawk  *Accipiter melanoleucus*
Excellent flight views of one over St. Lucia Estuary and another pair seen near the nest in the Karkloof.

African Marsh Harrier  *Circus ranivorus*
One seen at Wakkerstroom and another in the West Coast NP.

Black Harrier (RE)  *Circus maurus*
Superb views of two separate males in West Coast NP.

Yellow-billed Kite  *Milvus aegyptius*
This was the most common bird of prey on the tour.
*NOTE: IOC now splits Yellow-billed Kite from Black Kite.*

African Fish Eagle  *Haliaeetus vocifer*
This handsome eagle was seen well on a few occasions in the east and west of the country.

Common Buzzard  *Buteo buteo*
A single bird was seen en route from Wakkerstroom to Mkhuze.
*NOTE: IOC splits Common Buzzard into several species.*

Jackal Buzzard (RE)  *Buteo rufofuscus*
Small numbers of these well-patterned and endemic buzzards were seen in the Natal Midlands and the Drakensberg.

### Bustards  *Otididae*

Kori Bustard  *Ardeotis kori*
We were fortunate to have had two separate encounters in the Kruger National Park.

Denham’s (Stanley’s) Bustard  *Neotis denhami*
A single bird was seen briefly in flight at the edge of Marutswa Forest.

Blue Korhaan (Bustard) (E)  *Eupodotis caerulescens*
We had a great sighting between Amersfoort and Volksrust.

Red-crested Korhaan (Bustard) (RNE)  *Lophotis ruficrista*
Several sightings were had in Kruger NP.

Southern Black Korhaan (Bustard) (E)  *Afrotis afra*
Amazingly close views were had of two separate males in West Coast NP.

Northern Black Korhaan (Bustard) (RE)  *Afrotis afraoides*
A male was seen in display flight and then scoped in the open along the Zaagkuildrift Rd. A female was also later seen.

Black-bellied Bustard  *Lissotis melanogaster*
A male was scoped at length near Dirkiesdorp, while another male was later seen in full display flight in Cape Vidal.

### Flufftails  *Sarothruridae*

Red-chested Flufftail (H)  *Sarothruridae rufa*
Several birds were heard calling at the wetland in Wakkerstroom but always too far to be lured in.

### Rails, Crakes & Coots  *Rallidae*

African Rail  *Rallus caerulescens*
We had some great views in Wakkerstroom.

Black Crake  *Amaurornis flavirostra*
We saw these common and confiding crakes at scattered wetlands throughout the tour.
African (Purple) Swamphen  
*Porphyrio madagascariensis*
These gaudy “swamp chickens” were seen around Wakkerstroom.  
*NOTE: IOC now splits Purple Swamphen into several species.*

**Common Moorhen**  
*Gallinula chloropus*
Seen at several water-bodies.

**Red-knobbed Coot**  
*Fulica cristata*
Commonly seen in large numbers throughout the tour.

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**Cranes Gruidae**

**Grey Crowned Crane**  
*Balearica regulorum*
Excellent views of large flocks were enjoyed around Wakkerstroom, in the Karkloof and around Himeville.

**Blue Crane (RE)**  
*Grus paradisea*
We had good sightings of South Africa’s national bird near Wakkerstroom, in the Karkloof, around Himeville and again near Ceres.

**Wattled Crane**  
*Grus carunculata*
We were very fortunate to see a pair near Himeville!

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**Thick-knees Burhinidae**

**Water Thick-knee (Dikkop)**  
*Burhinus vermiculatus*
We saw few of these birds in Kruger National Park and at St Lucia.

**Spotted Thick-knee (Dikkop)**  
*Burhinus capensis*
A single bird was spotted roosting underneath a bush along the Zaagkuildrift road.

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**Oystercatchers Haematopididae**

**African (Black) Oystercatcher (RE)**  
*Haematopus moquini*
Several were seen around the Western Cape.

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**Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**

**Black-winged Stilt**  
*Himantopus himantopus*
This tall wader was occasionally seen during both legs of the tour.

**Pied Avocet**  
*Recurvirostra avosetta*
This elegant wader showed well at the Strandfontein SW where at least a hundred were found.

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**Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**

**Blacksmith Lapwing**  
*Vanellus armatus*
Seen almost daily!

**White-crowned Lapwing**  
*Vanellus albiceps*
A pair showed well along the Sabie River.

**Black-winged Lapwing**  
*Vanellus melanopterus*
We were thrilled to find a large flock of these scarce and nomadic lapwings in grassland near Richmond.

**Crowned Lapwing**  
*Vanellus coronatus*
We had regular sightings of these birds during the tour.

**African Wattled Lapwing**  
*Vanellus senegallus*
Seen at scattered localities on six dates.
Grey (Black-bellied) Plover
We saw a few individuals in the West Coast National Park and a bird in almost full breeding plumage at St. Lucia.

Common Ringed Plover
Small numbers were seen at St. Lucia.

Kittlitz’s Plover
Several birds showed well at Seeberg Hide in West Coast NP.

Three-banded Plover
This pretty plover was seen on six consecutive days in the Kruger and northern Natal areas.

White-fronted Plover
A single bird was seen at St. Lucia with several more at West Coast NP.

African Jacana
Several seen at Zaagkuildrift and a few more in Kruger.

African Snipe
This unique wader was seen very well and on several occasions at the large wetland at Wakkerstroom.

Bar-tailed Godwit
Several seen at St. Lucia and again in West Coast NP.

Whimbrel
Two seen at St. Lucia Estuary and more seen later on in West Coast NP.

Common Greenshank
Seen on three dates in the east.

Green Sandpiper
A vagrant to South Africa! We were delighted to find one at Kumahlala Hide in Mkuze GR.

Wood Sandpiper
Seen almost daily throughout the east.

Common Sandpiper
A couple were seen in Kruger and at St. Lucia.

Sanderling
Large numbers were seen at St. Lucia and in the West Coast NP.

Little Stint
Small numbers seen at scattered wetlands.

Curlew Sandpiper
Large numbers at St Lucia and again in the West Coast NP.

Ruff
Small numbers at Zaagkuildrift and St. Lucia.

Collared Pratincole
Fabulous, close views were had of these great birds at Nsumo Pan, Mkuze GR and in Cape Vidal.
**Gulls, Terns & Skimmers  Laridae**

**Sabine’s Gull**  
*Xema sabini*
A couple were seen on the pelagic outing out of Simon’s Town.

**Grey-headed Gull**  
*Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*
At least six birds were seen in flight over the Sunrock Guest House in Kempton Park.

**Hartlaub’s Gull (RE)**  
*Chroicocephalus hartlaubii*
These gulls were plentiful along the Western Cape coastline.

**Kelp Gull (RE)**  
*Larus dominicanus*
Large numbers were seen around the Cape Peninsula.

**Caspian Tern**  
*Thalasseus bergii*
Several of these large terns were seen at St. Lucia and at West Coast NP.

**Kelp Gull (RE)**  
*Larus dominicanus*
Large numbers were seen around the Cape Peninsula.

**Caspian Tern**  
*Sterna caspia*
These gulls were plentiful along the Western Cape coastline.

**Common Tern**  
*Sterna hirundo*
A couple were seen off the Cape and again in West Coast NP.

**Arctic Tern**  
*Sterna paradisaea*
A few of these pelagic terns were seen out at sea off Cape Point.

**Whiskered Tern**  
*Chlidonias hybrida*
A singleton was found at a wetland along the Zaagkuildrift road.

**Skuas & Jaegers  Stercorariidae**

**Brown (Antarctic) Skua**  
*Stercorarius antarcticus*
Three birds were seen during the pelagic trip.

**Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)**  
*Stercorarius parasiticus*
A singleton was seen during the pelagic trip.

**Sandgrouse  Pteroclidae**

**Namaqua Sandgrouse (RNE)**  
*Pterocles namaqua*
A male was found after extensive searching in the Tankwa Karoo.

**Double-banded Sandgrouse (RNE)**  
*Pterocles bicinctus*
Superb views of three birds were had in Kruger.

**Pigeons & Doves  Columbidae**

**Rock Dove (Pigeon) (I)**  
*Columba livia*
Commonly throughout human habitation.

**Speckled Pigeon**  
*Columba guinea*
This handsome pigeon was seen on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

**African Olive (Rameron) Pigeon**  
*Columba arquatrix*
Excellent views were had from the canopy tower at Dlinza.

**Mourning Collared Dove**  
*Streptopelia decipiens*
Several seen around Satara camp in Kruger.

**Red-eyed Dove**  
*Streptopelia semitorquata*
This large dove was commonly recorded in Natal and in the Cape.

**Ring-necked (Cape Turtle) Dove**  
*Streptopelia capicola*
These doves were seen regularly throughout the tour.
Laughing Dove  
_ Streptopelia senegalensis 
Abundant in the east.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove  
_ Turtur chalcospilos 
This pretty dove showed well in Kruger NP and Mkhuze GR.

Tambourine Dove  
_ Turtur tympanistria 
One flashed across the road during the drive to St. Lucia.

African Green Pigeon  
_ Treron calvus 
Excellent views were had in Kruger.

Turacos  Musophagidae

Livingstone’s Turaco  
_ Tauraco livingstonii 
A bit of a struggle this trip due to the lousy weather in St. Lucia. We did, however, manage to obtain decent flight views of one bird at Eden Park campsite.

Knysna Turaco (E)  
_ Tauraco corythaix 
Good numbers and superb views were achieved of this superb endemic at Marutswa Forest.

Purple-crested Turaco  
_ Tauraco porphyreolophus 
This colourful species showed well in Kruger and Mkhuze.

Grey Go-away-bird  
_ Corythaixoides concolor 
This very common bird was seen along the Zaagkuildrift Road, in Kruger NP and Mkhuze GR.

Cuckoos  Cuculidae

Burchell’s Coucal  
_ Centropus superciliosus 
We had a single sighting in Kruger NP.

Green Malkoha  
_ Ceuthmochares australis 
Singletons showed briefly in the St. Lucia and Dlinza areas.

Klaas’s Cuckoo  
_ Chrysococcyx klaas 
Good views were had in Kruger.

African Emerald Cuckoo  
_ Chrysococcyx cupreus 
Good scope views were had of two males in Dlinza Forest.

Red-chested Cuckoo  
_ Cuculus solitaries 
Amazing views were had in Mkhuze GR.

African Cuckoo  
_ Cuculus gularis 
Unusually good views were had in Kruger.

Typical Owls  Strigidae

African Scops Owl  
_ Otus senegalensis 
We had a great view of one in Satara, Kruger National Park.

Southern White-faced Owl  
_ Ptilopsis granti 
We saw part of a bird on the nest in Kruger.

Spotted Eagle-Owl  
_ Bubo africanus 
a singleton was seen really well on a night drive at Wakkerstroom and another was seen with a chick in Himeville.

Verreaux’s (Giant) Eagle-Owl  
_ Bubo lacteus 
Two separate and excellent sightings were had in Kruger NP.

Pearl-spotted Owlet  
_ Glaucidium perlatum 
Several good views were had in Kruger.
Marsh Owl  
Asio capensis  
A pair showed well as they flew overhead at dusk at the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

**Nightjars & Allies Caprimulgidae**

Fiery-necked Nightjar  
Caprimulgus pectoralis  
A male showed very well in the spotlight at St. Lucia.

Square-tailed (Mozambique/Gabon) Nightjar  
Caprimulgus fossii  
Good but brief views were had of a fly-by male at St. Lucia.

**Swifts Apodidae**

African Palm Swift  
Cypsiurus parvus  
Seen on most days in the east.

Alpine Swift  
Tachymarptis melba  
Small numbers seen in the east and west.

African Black Swift  
Apus barbatus  
A single bird showed well at Wakkerstroom.

Little Swift  
Apus affinis  
Small numbers were seen most days in the east.

Horus Swift  
Apus horus  
We were delighted to encounter a single bird that showed well in the Tankwa Karoo. A scarce bird in South Africa!

White-rumped Swift  
Apus caffer  
This bird was seen regularly throughout the tour.

**Mousebirds Coliidae**

Speckled Mousebird  
Colius striatus  
Several sightings were had.

White-backed Mousebird (RNE)  
Colius colius  
We had several sightings in the West Coast NP.

Red-faced Mousebird  
Urocolius indicus  
These vocal mousebirds were seen on many occasions in the east.

**Trogons Trogonidae**

Narina Trogon  
Apaloderma narina  
This stunner was seen incredibly well on a few occasions in the St. Lucia and Dlinza areas.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

Purple (Rufous-crowned) Roller  
Coracias naevius  
Several of these beauties were encountered in Kruger.

Lilac-breasted Roller  
Coracias caudatus  
Fair numbers were found in Kruger.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

Brown-hooded Kingfisher  
Halcyon albiventris  
Seen on four dates.
Malachite Kingfisher  *Corythornis cristatus*
This striking kingfisher was seen on our last morning at Wakkerstroom.

Giant Kingfisher  *Megaceryle maxima*
We saw this huge kingfisher at Himeville and again in flight over the N1 hi-way near Cape Town!

Pied Kingfisher  *Ceryle rudis*
We had regular sightings of this kingfisher during the tour.

### Bee-eaters  *Meropidae*

**Little Bee-eater**  *Merops pusillus*
This little beauty was seen in Mkhuze and Cape Vidal.

**White-fronted Bee-eater**  *Merops bullockoides*
We had several sightings in Kruger NP.

**European Bee-eater**  *Merops apiaster*
Two birds were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

### Hoopoes  *Upupidae*

**African Hoopoe**  *Upupa africana*
Small numbers were seen in Kruger and at the edge of Marutswa Forest.

### Wood Hoopoes  *Phoeniculidae*

**Green (Red-billed) Wood Hoopoe**  *Phoeniculus purpureus*
Small flocks were seen along the Zaagkuildrift Rd and in Kruger.

**Common Scimitarbill**  *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*
Several sightings were had in Kruger and in Mkhuze GR.

### Ground Hornbills  *Bucorvidae*

**Southern Ground Hornbill**  *Bucorvis leadbeateri*
We had several excellent views of small groups in Kruger NP.

### Hornbills  *Bucerotidae*

**Southern Red-billed Hornbill**  *Tockus rufirostris*
We had regular views of these hornbills along the Zaagkuildrift road and saw plenty in Kruger NP.

**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill (RNE)**  *Tockus leucomelas*
These hornbills were seen along the Zaagkuildrift road and in Kruger NP.

**Crowned Hornbill**  *Tockus alboterminatus*
We finally found a pair in the St Lucia area.

**African Grey Hornbill**  *Tockus nasutus*
These hornbills were seen on several occasions in Kruger NP.

**Trumpeter Hornbill**  *Bycanistes bucinator*
Excellent views were had of a single bird in Sugarloaf campsite, St. Lucia area.

### Barbets  *Ramphastidae*

**White-eared Barbet**  *Stactolaema leucotis*
Amazingly large numbers of these barbets were found in the St. Lucia area.
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird  
*Pogoniulus bilineatus*

Several excellent views were had along the Natal coast.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird  
*Pogoniulus pusillus*

Superb scope views were had of a singing bird in Mkhuze GR with another surprise find at the edge of Marutswa Forest.

Acacia Pied Barbet  
*Tricholaema leucomelas*

A single bird called and then showed well at Kumasinga Hide in Mkhuze GR.

Black-collared Barbet  
*Lybius torquatus*

This handsome barbet was seen regularly in Kruger.

Crested Barbet  
*Trachyphonus vaillantii*

Singletons were seen on five dates in the east.

**Honeyguides  Indicatoridae**

Brown-backed Honeybird (Wahlberg’s/Sharp-billed Honeyguide)  
*Prodotiscus regulus*

Excellent views were had of this rarely seen species during our trip up Sani Pass.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide (H)  
*Indicator variegatus*

Unfortunately just heard at Dlinza and Benvie despite our best efforts to see the calling individuals.

**Woodpeckers & Allies  Picidae**

Red-throated Wryneck  
*Jynx ruficollis*

We had good sightings of several birds along the Sani Pass and near Himeville.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker  
*Campethera abingoni*

A few sightings were had in Kruger, Mkhuze and around St. Lucia.

Ground Woodpecker (E)  
*Geocolaptes olivaceus*

We have had some great sightings on the Sani Pass.

Cardinal Woodpecker  
*Dendropicos fuscens*

This small woodpecker was seen on several occasions throughout the tour.

Bearded Woodpecker  
*Dendropicos namaquus*

Two sightings were had of this impressive woodpecker in Kruger.

Olive Woodpecker  
*Dendropicos griseocephalus*

Brief views were initially had in Dlinza Forest with better and longer views later enjoyed in the Karkloof.

**Falcons & Caracaras  Falconidae**

Rock (Common/Eurasian) Kestrel  
*Falco rupiculous*

We saw this small bird of prey on the Sani Pass and again throughout the Western Cape.

*NOTE: IOC splits Rock Kestrel from Common Kestrel, as do most authorities.*

Greater Kestrel  
*Falco rupicoloides*

A single bird was a good find along the initial stretch of the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

Lanner Falcon  
*Falco biarmicus*

Five separate sightings were had on four dates of the tour in the east.

**Parrots  Psittacidae**

Cape (Grey-headed/Brown-necked) Parrot (E)  
*Poicephalus robustus*

Three of these endangered and endemic parrots were seen in flight and then perched up in gorgeous afternoon light at the forest edge of Marutswa Forest.
NOTE: Cape Parrot is sometimes lumped with Brown-necked or Grey-headed Parrots. IOC splits Cape from the other two forms.

**Brown-headed Parrot**
*Poicephalus crytpoxanthus*

We had a couple of great sightings in Kruger NP.

**Wattle-eyes and Batises  Platysteiridae**

**Cape Batis (RE)**
*Batis capensis*

This lovely little bird was seen at Dlinza, on the Sani Pass Road and in Harold Porter BG.

**Woodward’s Batis (RNE)**
*Batis fratrum*

A total of three of these scarce and localised birds were seen very well in the St. Lucia area.

**Chinspot Batis**
*Batis molitor*

This bushveld inhabitant was seen well on the Zaagkuildrift Road and in Kruger NP.

**Prit Batis (RNE)**
*Batis Pririt*

A single male showed well at the treetops in the Tankwa Karoo.

**Black-throated Wattle-eye**
*Platysteira peltata*

Superb views were had of a gorgeous male at Mtunzini.

**Helmetshrikes and Allies**

**White-crested Helmetshrike**
*Prionops plumatus*

We managed to see these noisy, gregarious and attractive birds well in Kruger NP and Mkuze GR.

**Bushshrikes & Allies  Malaconotidae**

**Grey-headed Bushshrike**
*Malaconotus blanchoti*

A brief sighting was had of this large bushshrike in Dlinza Forest.

**Olive Bushshrike (RNE)**
*Chlorophoneus olivaceus*

After only hearing and having brief views in Dlinza Forest we managed to coax one out for good flight views in the Karkloof.

**Orange-breasted Bushshrike**
*Chlorophoneus sulphureopectus*

This vocal species was seen well in Kruger NP and Mkuze GR.

**Four-colored (Gorgeous) Bushshrike**
*Telephorus quadricolor*

An excellent sighting was had at Kumasinga Hide in Mkhuze GR.

**Bokmakierie (RNE)**
*Telophorus zeylonus*

This very attractive bushshrike was seen a couple of times during both legs of the trip.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra**
*Tchagra australis*

Excellent views were had on one occasion in Kruger NP.

**Black-crowned Tchagra (H)**
*Tchagra senegalus*

Unfortunately only heard in the distance on one occasion in Kruger NP.

**Black-backed Puffback**
*Dryoscopus cubla*

We had regular sightings of this inquisitive bird on tour.

**Southern Boubou (RE)**
*Laniarius ferrugineus*

Another favorite! We enjoyed many sightings and became very familiar with its call throughout the trip.

**Crimson-breasted Shrike (RNE)**
*Laniarius atrococcineus*

This brilliant bird was seen along Zaagkuildrift Rd.

**Brubru**
*Nilaus afer*

Several good views were had in the savanna areas.
**Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae**

**Grey Cuckooshrike**  
Coracina caesia  
A single bird showed briefly in Dlinza Forest but we later had close views of a pair in the Karkloof.

**Black Cuckooshrike**  
Campephaga flava  
A male popped up briefly in Kruger but we later had excellent views of a pair in Mkhuze GR.

**Shrikes Laniidae**

**Magpie (Long-tailed) Shrike**  
Urolestes melanoleucus  
This large shrike was seen frequently during the first few days of tour.

**Southern White-crowned Shrike**  
Eurocephalus anguitimens  
A loose group of six birds showed well on a single occasion in Kruger.

**Southern (Common) Fiscal (Shrike)**  
Lanius collaris  
This common species was recorded on most days of the tour.

**Figbirds, Orioles Oriolidae**

**Black-headed Oriole**  
Oriolus larvatus  
We managed to see this species on many occasions in the east.

**Drongos Dicruridae**

**Square-tailed Drongo**  
Dicrurus ludwigii  
This forest species was seen well in the forests of Mkhuze, False Bay, St. Lucia and Dlinza.

**Fork-tailed Drongo**  
Dicrurus adsimilis  
Commonly seen on most days of the eastern part of the tour.

**Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae**

**Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher**  
Trochocercus cyanomelas  
We managed to get a good sighting on the Umkumbi Lodge property.

**African Paradise Flycatcher**  
Terpsiphone viridis  
Males and females were seen sporadically during the eastern part of the trip.

**Crows & Jays Corvidae**

**Cape Crow**  
Corvus capensis  
Seen on 7 dates.

**Pied Crow**  
Corvus albus  
Very common, especially in the west of the country.

**White-necked Raven**  
Corvus albicollis  
This large and impressive corvid was seen well in the Natal Midlands, Drakensberg and Western Cape.

**Rockjumpers Chaetopidae**

**Cape Rockjumper (E)**  
Chaetops frenatus  
Excellent views were enjoyed of a male, female and two juveniles at Rooi Els.

**Drakensberg (Orange-breasted) Rockjumper (E)**  
Chaetops aurantius  
We had an unbelievably close and unforgettable view of a male of this quintessential South African species on our way up Sani Pass. The bird almost hopped right onto Aldo’s boot!
Fairy Flycatchers  Stenostiridae
Fairy Flycatcher (RE)  Stenostira scita
Excellent views of one in Lesotho with a further two pairs in the Tankwa Karoo.

Tits  Paridae
Southern Black Tit  Melaniparus niger
Commonly seen and heard throughout the east.
(Southern) Grey Tit (RE)  Melaniparus afer
We finally found a pair in Lesotho after much searching. Another three sightings were had during our time in West Coast NP and in the Tankwa Karoo.

Nicators  Nicatoridae
Eastern (Yellow-spotted) Nicator  Nicator gularis
This lovely vocal bird was seen at Umkhumbi Lodge after no luck the previous day in Mkhuze GR.

Larks  Alaudidae
Spike-heeled Lark (RNE)  Chersomanes albofasciata
We had good views of these social larks near Wakkerstroom and in the Tankwa Karoo.
Eastern Long-billed Lark (E)  Certhilauda semitorquata
We had lengthy looks at this species near Wakkerstroom.
Sabota Lark (RNE)  Mirafra sabota
One close sighting near Kgomo Kgomo and another in Kruger.
Karoo Lark (E)  Certhilauda albescens
A few were seen in West Coast NP with more in the Tankwa Karoo.
Rudd's Lark (E)  Heteromirafra ruddi
We had excellent views of this critically endangered lark in the Wakkerstroom area.
Eastern Clapper Lark (RE)  Mirafra fasciolata
Good flight views were had of this tricky species north of Wakkerstroom.
Rufous-naped Lark  Mirafra africana
This vocal lark was seen at the beginning of Zaagkuildrift Road and was also heard later in the trip.
Botha's Lark (E)  Spizocorys fringillaris
We managed to obtain fantastic views of this tiny and extremely scarce and habitat-specific lark near Wakkerstroom.
Pink-billed Lark (RNE)  Spizocorys conirostris
Excellent views were had of a small flock at Fickland Pan near Wakkerstroom.
Large-billed Lark (E)  Galerida magnirostris
We had good views of this lark in Lesotho and also heard one singing in the Tankwa Karoo.
Red-capped Lark  Calandrella cinerea
This pretty lark was common around Wakkerstroom and also seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

Bulbs  Pycnonotidae
Cape Bulbul (E)  Pycnonotus capensis
This endemic bulbul was seen on most days in the Western Cape.
Dark-capped (Common) Bulbul  Pycnonotus tricolor
Seen daily in the east.
NOTE: Dark-capped Bulbul’s sometimes lumped with the widespread Common Bulbul.
Sombre Greenbul  \textit{Andropadus importunus}  
This vocal species was seen well in forested habitat throughout the trip.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul  \textit{Chlorocichla flaviventris}  
This species gave us some great views in the Mkhuze and St. Lucia areas.

Terrestrial Brownbul  \textit{Phyllastrephus terrestris}  
First seen in Kruger, we later had several sightings along the Natal north-coast.

**Swallows & Martins  \textit{Hirundinidae}**

**Black Saw-wing  \textit{Psalidoprocne pristoptera}**  
These smart swallows were seen on several occasions in both the east and west.

**Grey-rumped Swallow  \textit{Pseudhirundo griseopyga}**  
A surprise sighting of one over the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

**Brown-throated (Plain) Martin  \textit{Riparia paludicola}**  
Seen on a few occasions at wetlands.

**Banded Martin  \textit{Riparia cincta}**  
Excellent views of two in West Coast NP.

**Barn Swallow  \textit{Hirundo rustica}**  
We saw this migrant in the St. Lucia area.

**White-throated Swallow  \textit{Hirundo albigularis}**  
A handsome bird that was seen throughout the tour.

**Wire-tailed Swallow  \textit{Hirundo smithii}**  
Another good-looking swallow that was seen regularly in the east.

**Rock Martin  \textit{Ptyonoprogne fuligula}**  
This brown martin was seen en route to Kruger and again in the Sani Pass area and often in the Western Cape.

**Greater Striped Swallow  \textit{Cecropis cucullata}**  
We saw this lovely swallow on a good number of occasions during the tour.

**Lesser Striped Swallow  \textit{Cecropis abyssinica}**  
We had regular sightings if this species during the eastern section of the tour.

**Red-breasted Swallow  \textit{Cecropis semirufa}**  
Pairs were seen on 7 dates of the tour.

**Mosque Swallow  \textit{Cecropis senegalensis}**  
Three birds showed well in central Kruger.

**South African Cliff Swallow (BE)  \textit{Petrochelidon spilodera}**  
These lovely swallows were seen well in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Crombecs & African Warblers  \textit{Macropsphenidae}**

**Cape Grassbird (RE)  \textit{Sphenoeacus afer}**  
This vocal bird was seen well at Marutswa, along Sani Pass and in the Western Cape.

**Long-billed (Cape) Crombec  \textit{Sylvietta rufescens}**  
This short-tailed passerine was seen well throughout the eastern savanna and again in the Western Cape.

**Victorin's Warbler (E)  \textit{Cryptillas victorini}**  
After a bit of hard work, we managed to see this often difficult and skulking, endemic warbler in Harold Porter BG. Also heard on Gydo Pass.
Leaf Warblers & Allies  Phylloscopidae

Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler  *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*
This pretty little forest warbler was seen very well at Benvie.

Willow Warbler  *Phylloscopus trochilus*
A single bird popped up in Skukuza camp in Kruger.

Reed Warblers & Allies  Acrocephalidae

Lesser Swamp (Cape Reed) Warbler  *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*
We had good sightings in Wakkerstroom and heard at other localities.

African Reed (Marsh) Warbler  *Acrocephalus baeticatus*
This warbler showed well at the Wakkerstroom wetland.

African (Dark-capped) Yellow Warbler  *Iduna natalensis*
We had some good sightings in Wakkerstroom and in the Natal Midlands.

Grassbirds and Allies  Locustellidae

Little Rush (African Sedge) Warbler  *Bradypterus baboecala*
We had a good sighting in Wakkerstroom and again in the Karkloof.

Barrat’s Warbler (RE)  *Bradypterus barratti*
We managed to coax out two individuals along the Sani Pass road.

Cisticolas & Allies  Cisticolidae

Red-faced Cisticola (H)  *Cisticola erythrops*
This species was heard from Skukuza Camp in Kruger.

Lazy Cisticola  *Cisticola aberrans*
Good views were had of this tricky species near Wakkerstroom.

Rattling Cisticola  *Cisticola chiniana*
This common Cisticola was seen in bushveld and scrubby vegetation throughout the east.

Grey-backed Cisticola (RNE)  *Cisticola subruficapilla*
Commonly seen throughout the Western Cape.

Wailing Cisticola  *Cisticola lais*
Seen near Wakkerstroom and in the Natal Midlands.

Levaillant’s Cisticola  *Cisticola tinniens*
Seen in reedbeds in the east and west.

Croaking Cisticola  *Cisticola natalensis*
Seen and heard “croaking” in Cape Vidal.

Neddicky  *Cisticola fulvicapilla*
A couple were seen along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

Zitting (Fan-tailed) Cisticola  *Cisticola juncidis*
This tiny cisticola was seen near Himeville.

Pale-crowned Cisticola  *Cisticola cinnamomeus*
A singing bird was seen in rank grassland on the way up the Karkloof.

Wing-snapping (Ayre’s) Cisticola (RE)  *Cisticola ayresii*
Heard and seen near Wakkerstroom and in the Karkloof.

Tawny-flanked Prinia  *Prinia subflava*
Commonly seen in savanna throughout the east.
Black-chested Prinia  
*Prinia flavicans*
Some good sightings were had along the Zaagkuildrift Road.

Karoo Prinia (RE)  
*Prinia maculosa*
These lovely little birds were abundant in the Western Cape.

Drakensberg Prinia (E)  
*Prinia hypoxantha*
First seen near Wakkerstroom and later in the Natal Midlands.

Namaqua Warbler (Prinia) (RE)  
*Phragmacia substriata*
A pair showed well in Karoopoort, Tankwa Karoo.

Bar-throated Apalis  
*Apalis thoracica*
This attractive species was seen in mid-altitude forest in Natal and again in the Western Cape.

Rudd’s Apalis (RE)  
*Apalis ruddi*
We found this speciality in Mkhuze GR and in the St. Lucia area.

Yellow-breasted Apalis  
*Apalis flavida*
We had great sightings in Kruger NP and in Northern Natal.

Rufous-eared Warbler (RE)  
*Malcorus pectoralis*
We had several great views of this neat little bird in the Tankwa Karoo.

Green-backed Camaroptera  
*Camaroptera brachyura*
Commonly seen and heard in Kruger NP and St Lucia. The grey-backed subspecies was heard and seen briefly along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

NOTE: Some authorities recognize two species: Green-backed and Grey-backed Camaropteras respectively.

Cinnamon-breasted (Kopje) Warbler (RE)  
*Euryptila subcinnamomea*
Amazing views were had of three birds at Katbakkies in the Tankwa Karoo.

Karoo Eremomela (RE)  
*Eremomela gregalis*
We only managed brief and distant views of this scarce species in the Tankwa Karoo due to the terribly windy conditions.

Burnt-necked Eremomela  
*Eremomela usticollis*
We had fantastic look at these birds on several occasions in acacia savanna along the Zaagkuildrift Rd, in Kruger and in Mkhuze GR.

### Babblers & Parrotbills  _Timaliidae_

**Arrow-marked Babbler**  
*Turdoides jardineii*
These noisy birds were commonly seen throughout the east.

**Southern Pied Babbler (RNE)**  
*Turdoides bicolor*
We were fortunate to finally find a group of these handsome birds along Zaagkuildrift Road.

### Sylviid Babblers  _Sylviidae_

**Chestnut-vented Warbler (Tit-Babbler) (RNE)**  
*Sylvia subcaerulea*
We had some good views of this vocal bird along the Zaagkuildrift Road and in West Coast NP.

**Layard’s Warbler (Tit-Babbler) (RE)**  
*Sylvia layardi*
This warbler was seen well in Lesotho and again briefly in the Tankwa Karoo.

### White-eyes  _Zosteropidae_

**Cape White-eye (RE)**  
*Zosterops capensis*
These little birds were recorded at scattered locations throughout the tour.

**African Yellow White-eye**  
*Zosterops senegalensis*
We saw this species in the Hluhluwe/St Lucia area.
**Sugarbirds & Allies Promeropidae**

**Cape Sugarbird (E)** *Promerops cafer*
This spectacular Fynbos endemic was seen well on many occasions throughout the Western Cape.

**Gurney's Sugarbird (RE)** *Promerops gurneyi*
We had some great sightings of these fantastic birds on the Sani Pass.

**Starlings Sturnidae**

**Common Myna (I)** *Acridotheres tristis*
This invasive exotic was seen on a number of occasions in urban and semi-urban settings during the tour.

**Common (European) Starling (I)** *Sturnus vulgaris*
This, also an alien, was commonly seen in the Western Cape.

**Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea*
We had several sightings in Kruger NP.

**Black-bellied Starling** *Lamprotornis corrucus*
Found commonly in the forests around the Mkhuze and St Lucia areas.

**Cape Starling (RNE)** *Lamprotornis nitens*
This colourful bird was seen daily during the first half of the tour.

**Greater Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*
We had good views of this spectacular species in Kruger NP.

**Burchell’s Starling (RNE)** *Lamprotornis australis*
This large starling was seen well along the Zaagkuildrift Road and Kruger NP.

**Pied Starling (E)** *Lamprotornis bicolor*
We had sightings of this endemic throughout the interior and west of the country.

**Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio*
This starling was frequently encountered throughout the trip.

**Pale-winged Starling (RNE)** *Onychognathus nabouroup*
We were very fortunate to encounter pairs and small flocks around Katbakkies in the Tankwa Karoo. A scarce species this far south!

**Oxpeckers Buphagidae**

**Red-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*
This oxpecker was seen in association with large game in Kruger NP and Mkuze Game Reserve.

**Thrushes Turdidae**

**Orange Ground Thrush** *Geokichla gurneyi*
Excellent views were had of several birds in the Benvie Gardens.

**Spotted Ground Thrush** *Geokichla guttata*
Incredible, close up views of a pair was enjoyed in Dlinza Forest.

**Kurrichane Thrush** *Turdus libonyana*
A couple of these savanna thrushes were seen in Kruger.

**Olive Thrush (RE)** *Turdus olivaceus*
Seen in the Karkloof, at Kirstenbosch BG and on Gydo Pass.

**Karoo Thrush (RE)** *Turdus smithii*
Our guest house in Johannesburg provided good sightings of this endemic.
Chats & Old World Flycatchers  

Muscicapidae

**Karoo Scrub Robin (E)**  
*Cercotrichas coryphaeus*
First seen in Lesotho, we later encountered good numbers in West Coast NP and in the Tankwa Karoo.

**Bearded Scrub Robin**  
*Cercotrichas quadririvirgata*
Excellent views were had around Mantuma Camp, Mkhuze GR.

**Kalahari Scrub Robin**  
*Cercotrichas paean*
This lovely bird was seen well along the Zaagkuildrift road.

**White-browed Scrub Robin**  
*Cercotrichas leucophrys*
We saw this vocal robin in savanna throughout the east.

**Brown Scrub Robin (E)**  
*Cercotrichas signata*
A single bird showed well at St. Lucia.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Fan-tailed Flycatcher)**  
*Myioparus plumbeus*
These lovely flycatchers were seen on three occasions in the east.

**Southern Black Flycatcher**  
*Melaenornis pammelania*
Several sightings were had in the east.

**Pale (Mouse-colored/Pallid) Flycatcher**  
*Melaenornis pallidus*
A pair showed well in Mkhuze GR.

**Marico Flycatcher (RNE)**  
*Bradornis mariquensis*
This Flycatcher was commonly seen along the Zaagkuildrift road.

**Fiscal Flycatcher (RE)**  
*Sigelus silens*
Excellent views of a pair in Harold Porter BG.

**Ashy Flycatcher**  
*Muscicap a caerulescens*
Several sightings were had in Kruger and northern Natal.

**African Dusky Flycatcher**  
*Muscicapa adusta*
Commonly seen in the Natal Midlands and at Kistenbosch and Harold Porter BG’s.

**Cape Robin-Chat**  
*Cossypha caffra*
We had regular sightings of this species, especially in the Western Cape.

**White-throated Robin-Chat (RE)**  
*Cossypha humelaris*
This endemic was seen well along the Zaagkuildrift Rd, in Kruger NP and in Mkhuze GR.

**White-browed (Heuglin’s) Robin-Chat**  
*Cossypha heuglini*
Excellent views of two in Skukuza Camp, KNP.

**Red-capped (Natal) Robin-Chat**  
*Cossypha natalensis*
This stunner was seen well in Hluhluwe and St Lucia areas.

**Chorister Robin-Chat (E)**  
*Cossypha dichroa*
This vocal bird was seen well in Dlinza Forest and in Benvie Gardens.

**White-starred Robin**  
*Pogonocichla stellata*
We were fortunate to see a lovely adult in Benvie Gardens.

**Cape Rock Thrush (E)**  
*Monticola rupestris*
Heard on the Abel Erasmus Pass and then seen on our way up Sani Pass and at Rooiels.

**Sentinel Rock Thrush (E)**  
*Monticola explorator*
This lovely endemic was seen at Wakkerstroom and in Lesotho.

**African Stonechat**  
*Saxicola torquatus*
We saw this bird in open country throughout the tour.

**Buff-streaked Chat (E)**  
*Saxicola bifasciata*
This handsome species was seen well at Wakkerstroom, the Karkloof and on Sani Pass.
Sickle-winged Chat (RE)  
*Cercomela sinuata*
This endemic chat was seen commonly in Lesotho with a few more in the Tankwa Karoo.

Karoo Chat (RNE)  
*Cercomela schlegelii*
Good numbers were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

Tractrac Chat (RNE)  
*Cercomela tractrac*
We had a few sightings in the Tankwa Karoo.

Mocking Cliff Chat  
*Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*
Lovely views of a male and female at the Abel Erasmus Pass en route to Kruger.

(Southern Ant-eater) Ant-eating Chat (RNE)  
*Myrmecocichla formicivora*
Abundant around Wakkerstroom and also seen in the Midlands.

Mountain Wheatear (RNE)  
*Oenanthe monticola*
Sightings were had at Wakkerstroom, up Sani Pass and in the Tankwa Karoo.

Capped Wheatear  
*Oenanthe pileata*
This handsome species was seen near Kgomo Kgomo and again around Wakkerstroom and in the Tankwa Karoo.

Familiar Chat  
*Cercomela familiaris*
Seen at Marutswa, up Sani Pass and in the Western Cape.

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**Sunbirds & Spiderhunters  Nectariniidae**

Collared Sunbird  
*Hedydipna collaris*
This tiny sunbird was seen well in Kruger and in Natal.

Orange-breasted Sunbird (E)  
*Anthobaphes violacea*
We had many great views in the Western Cape.

(Eastern) Olive Sunbird  
*Cyanomitra olivacea*
This vocal sunbird was seen well at St Lucia and Dlinza Forest.

NOTE: Olive Sunbird’s sometimes split into two species: Eastern Olive Sunbird and Western Olive Sunbird.

Grey (Mouse-colored) Sunbird  
*Cyanomitra veroxii*
Several were seen at False Bay, around St. Lucia and in Dlinza Forest.

Amethyst (Black) Sunbird  
*Chalcomitra amethystina*
First seen at Wakkerstroom and later in Mkhuze and the Natal Midlands.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird  
*Chalcomitra senegalensis*
This spectacular sunbird was seen in Kruger NP and in northern Natal.

Malachite Sunbird  
*Nectarinia famosa*
This superb sunbird was seen around Wakkerstroom, on the Sani Pass and throughout the Western Cape.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird (E)  
*Cinnyris chalybeus*
Several seen in the Karkloof with many sightings in the Western Cape.

Neergaard’s Sunbird (RE)  
*Cinnyris neergaardi*
This rare and localised sunbird was seen extremely well on two occasions in Mkhuze GR.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E)  
*Cinnyris afer*
First seen at Benvie and then very well up Sani Pass.

Marico Sunbird  
*Cinnyris mariquensis*
Sporadic sightings were had in the eastern savanna.

Purple-banded Sunbird  
*Cinnyris bifasciatus*
This striking sunbird was abundant in the Hluhluwe/St Lucia areas.

White-bellied Sunbird  
*Cinnyris talatala*
This busy sunbird was seen on most days in the east.
Dusky Sunbird (RNE)  
*Cinnyris fuscus*
A female showed well enough to identify in the Tankwa Karoo.

### Old World Sparrows  Passeridae

**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver**  
*Plocepasser mahali*
This species was seen along the Zaagkuildrift Road, near its eastern distribution limit.

**House Sparrow**  
*Passer domesticus*
Commonly seen in association with human habitation, across the country.

**Great Sparrow (RNE)**  
*Passer motitensis*
A lovely pair was watched nest-building at length near Kgomo Kgomo.

**Cape Sparrow (RNE)**  
*Passer melanurus*
This attractive sparrow was seen regularly throughout the tour.

**Southern Grey-headed Sparrow**  
*Passer diffusus*
Seen on most days in the east.

**Yellow-throated Petronia (Sparrow)**  
*Gymnoris superciliaris*
Small numbers were seen in Mkhuze GR.

### Weavers & Allies  Ploceidae

**Red-billed Buffalo Weaver**  
*Bubalornis niger*
Seen daily in small numbers in central Kruger NP with several nesting in Satara camp.

**Scaly-feathered Weaver (Finch) (RNE)**  
*Sporopipes squamifrons*
This lovely little bird was seen right at the eastern edge of their range along the Zaagkuildrift Road.

**Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak)**  
*Amblyospiza albifrons*
This weaver was first seen in Kruger and then again around St Lucia.

**Spectacled Weaver**  
*Ploceus ocularis*
Pairs were seen around St. Lucia.

**Cape Weaver (E)**  
*Ploceus capensis*
We found this endemic around Wakkerstrooom and in the Western Cape.

**Eastern Golden (African Yellow) Weaver**  
*Ploceus subaureus*
These bright yellow birds were common in the St Lucia area.

**Lesser Masked Weaver**  
*Ploceus intermedius*
Several sightings were had around St. Lucia.

**Southern Masked Weaver**  
*Ploceus velatus*
Seen on Zaagkuildrift Rd and around Wakkerstrooom.

**Village (Spotted-backed) Weaver**  
*Ploceus cucullatus*
Good numbers were seen throughout the east.

**Dark-backed (Forest) Weaver**  
*Ploceus bicolor*
This forest-dwelling weaver was seen daily in northern Natal.

**Red-headed Weaver**  
*Anaplectes rubriceps*
A single bird appeared near Satara, KNP.

**Red-billed Quelea**  
*Quelea Quelea*
Surprisingly only three birds were seen along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

**Southern Red Bishop**  
*Euplectes orix*
We had many sightings of this beautiful bird during the tour.
**Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widowbird)**  
*Euplectes capensis*  
This brightly-coloured species was first seen around Wakkerstroom with further sightings in the Natal Midlands and throughout the Western Cape.

**Fan-tailed (Red-shouldered) Widowbird**  
*Euplectes ardens*  
Small numbers were seen in the Natal Midlands.

**Red-collared Widowbird**  
*Euplectes ardens*  
A small flock was seen at the edge of Marutswa Forest.

**Long-tailed Widowbird**  
*Euplectes progne*  
Large numbers of these striking birds were encountered in grassland areas throughout eastern South Africa.

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**Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae**

**Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch)**  
*Pytilia melba*  
This beautiful bird was seen on the Zaagkuildrift Road as well as in Kruger NP.

**Red-headed Finch (RNE)**  
*Amadina erythrocephala*  
These dry-country finches were seen at the feeders at our guest house in Kempton Park.

**Green Twinspot**  
*Mandingoa nitidula*  
Excellent views were had of four juveniles at Cape Vidal and another juvenile was later seen at Benvie.

**Pink-throated Twinspot (RE)**  
*Hypargos margaritatus*  
Amazing views were had of these stunners on two occasions in Mkuze GR.

**Red-billed Firefinch**  
*Lagonosticta senegala*  
Commonly seen along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

**African (Blue-billed) Firefinch**  
*Lagonosticta rubricata*  
Excellent views were had of a close female along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

**Jameson’s Firefinch**  
*Lagonosticta rhodopareia*  
We were fortunate to have had a pair of these scarce firefinches along the Zaagkuildrift Road and at the Abel Erasmus Pass.

**Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonbleu)**  
*Uraeginthus angolensis*  
This beauty was seen regularly throughout the eastern savanna.

**Swee Waxbill (E)**  
*Estrilda melanotis*  
This lovely endemic was encountered unusually regularly this trip with sightings in the Karkloof, Marutswa and Kirstenbosch and Harold Porter BG’s in the Cape.

**Common Waxbill**  
*Estrilda astrild*  
We had scattered sightings across the country.

**Black-faced Waxbill**  
*Estrilda erythronotos*  
A pair of these gorgeous waxbills were found along the Zaagkuildrift Rd.

**(African) Quailfinch**  
*Ortygospiza atricolor*  
Flight views were had of four birds near Himeville.  
*NOTE: Quailfinch is sometimes split into three species.*

**Bronze Mannikin**  
*Lonchura cucullata*  
Seen on four dates in the east.

**Red-backed Mannikin**  
*Lonchura nigriceps*  
We were fortunate to see two of these scarce mannikins at Benvie in the Karkloof.
**Indigobirds  Viduidae**

*Vidua macroura*

We had many sightings of this eye-catching species throughout the trip.

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**Wagtails & Pipits  Motacillidae**

*Cape Wagtail*  
*Motacilla capensis*

Commonly seen throughout the country.

*Mountain Wagtail*  
*Motacilla clara*

One showed well at the Abel Erasmus Pass with a further brief sighting at Benvie.

*African Pied Wagtail*  
*Motacilla aguimp*

We had many sightings of this bird during the first half of the tour.

*Cape Longclaw (RE)*  
*Macronyx capensis*

We had good sightings near Wakkerstroom and in the Karkloof.

*African Pipit*  
*Anthus cinnamomeus*

Small numbers were seen most days in the east.

*Moutain Pipit*  
*Anthus hoeschi*

Excellent views were had of two of these range-restricted migrants in Lesotho.

*Long-billed Pipit*  
*Anthus hoeschi*

Three of these widespread pipits were seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

*African Rock Pipit (E)*  
*Anthus crenatus*

Superb views were had of this rare endemic near Wakkerstroom.

*Yellow-breasted Pipit (E)*  
*Anthus chloris*

Wonderful views were had of a stunning male near Wakkerstroom.

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**Finches & Allies  Fringillidae**

*Common Chaffinch (I)*  
*Fringilla coelebs*

A pair was seen in Kirstenbosch BG.

*Forest Canary (E)*  
*Crithagra scotops*

Large numbers were seen in Benvie Gardens and Marutswa Forest with further sightings in Kirstenbosch BG.

*Black-throated Canary (RNE)*  
*Crithagra atroalba*

A single bird was seen north of Carolina, en route to Wakkerstroom.

*Yellow-fronted (-eyed) Canary*  
*Crithagra mozambica*

We had regular sightings of these canaries during the eastern half of the tour.

*Cape Siskin (E)*  
*Crithagra totta*

After a fairly extensive search, we finally found three birds in Harold Porter BG.

*Drakensberg Siskin (E)*  
*Crithagra symonsi*

This endemic was seen in fair numbers on Sani Pass and in Lesotho.

*Yellow Canary (RNE)*  
*Crithagra flaviventris*

First seen in Lesotho and then in West Coast NP and the Tankwa Karoo.

*Brimstone (Bully) Canary*  
*Crithagra sulphurata*

Good views were had of singletons in the Karkloof, on Sani Pass and at Harold Porter BG.

*Streaky-headed Seedeater (Canary) (RNE)*  
*Crithagra gularis*

Two birds were seen briefly at Marutswa while good views were later had on Sani Pass.

*White-throated Canary (RNE)*  
*Crithagra albogularis*

Large numbers were seen in West Coast NP and in the Tankwa Karoo.

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Cape Canary  
*Serinus canicollis*
First seen at Wakkerstroom and then later found in large numbers in the Natal Midlands and throughout the Western Cape.

**Bunting Emberizidae**

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting  
*Emberiza tahapisi*
Our only sighting of the trip was of a single bird on the Abel Erasmus Pass.

Cape Bunting (RNE)  
*Emberiza capensis*
First seen in Lesotho and later in the Western Cape.

Golden-breasted Bunting  
*Emberiza flaviventris*
Pairs of these stunners were seen in Kruger and Mkhuze.

**Annotated List of Mammal Species recorded**


**Total species seen: 57 species**

**Wolves, Coyote, Foxes, Jackals Canidae**

Black-backed Jackal  
*Canus mesomelas*
A total of five were encountered during our time in Kruger.

**Cats Felidae**

Lion  
*Panthera leo*
Several good, close sightings of both males and females were enjoyed during our time in Kruger.

Leopard  
*Panthera pardus*
An amazing four separate sightings were had of these usually shy and rarely seen cats during our stay in Kruger.

**Mongooses Herpestridae**

Yellow Mongoose  
*Cynictis penicillata*
Good numbers were seen around Wakkerstroom.

Common Dwarf Mongoose  
*Helogale parvula*
Cute groups of these mongooses were seen in Kruger.

Cape (Small) Grey Mongoose (RE)  
*Galerella pulverulenta*
Two brief sightings were had in the Western Cape.

Slender Mongoose  
*Herpestes sanguineus*
Several sightings were had in Kruger.

White-tailed Mongoose  
*Ichneumia albicauda*
A lovely sighting was had of this huge and nocturnal mongoose on our Satara night drive.

Banded Mongoose  
*Mungos mungo*
One seen in Skukuza camp in Kruger and another group was encountered at St. Lucia.

Meerkat (Suricate)  
*Suricata suricatta*
At least 20 of these endearing mammals were seen around Wakkerstroom.
**Hyaenas Hyaenidae**

Spotted Hyaena  
_Crocuta crocuta_
One sighting was had in Kruger with another one in Mkhuze.

**Weasels, Skunks, Otters Mustelidae**

African (Cape) Clawless Otter  
_Aonyx capensis_
A huge surprise with a sighting of this huge otter in the Sabie River in front of Skukuz Camp.

Honey Badger  
_Mellivora capensis_
A major highlight! One of these rarely seen mammals was encountered just north of Satara in Kruger and showed at close range for an extended period.

**Sea Lions Otariidae**

Afro-Australian (Cape) Fur Seal  
_Arctocephalus pusillus_
Several were seen along Western Cape coastline.

**Vivets, Genets Viverridae**

African Civet  
_Civettictis civetta_
This nocturnal species was seen very well on our Satara night drive in Kruger.

Common (Small-spotted) Genet  
_Genetta genetta_
Great looks at two on our Satara night drive.

South African Large-spotted (Blotched/Large-spotted) Genet (NE)  
_Genetta tigrina_
Excellent views of one on our Satara night drive.

**Cattle, Antelopes, Sheep, Goats Bovidae**

Impala  
_Aepyceros melampus_
This was a common antelope in Kruger NP and Mkuze GR.

Springbok  
_Antidorcas marsupialis_
A few of these dry western antelope were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

Natal Red Duiker  
_Cephalophus natalensis_
This richly-coloured mammal was seen well in the Hluhluwe and St Lucia areas.

Common (Blue) Wildebeest (Gnu)  
_Connochaetes taurinus_
We encountered this odd animal regularly in Kruger NP and the Zululand reserves.

Blesbok (Bontebok) (E)  
_Damaliscus pygargus_
We saw a few of these endemic antelope in the grasslands around Wakkerstroom and again in the Natal Midlands. The endemic and visually distinctive western Cape subspecies, sometimes split as Bontebok, was also seen in the distance in West Coast NP.

(Common/Southern) Waterbuck  
_Kobus ellipsiprymnus_
Daily sightings were had in Kruger. A few more were seen in Cape Vidal.

Klipspringer  
_Oreotragus oreotragus_
A trip favourite! These amazing antelope, translated as “rockjumpers” were seen on a few occasions on rocky outcrops in Kruger.

Gemsbok (Oryx)  
_Oryx gazella_
Two of these elegant antelope were seen in the Tankwa Karoo.

Blue Duiker  
_Philantomba monticola_
We enjoyed good views of two of these tiny mammals in the Dlinza Forest.
Steenbok | *Raphicerus campestris*
We saw these small antelope daily in Kruger National Park.

Southern Reedbuck | *Redunca arundinum*
Several herds were seen around Himeville and on Sani Pass.

Mountain Reedbuck | *Redunca fulvorufula*
An ewe was seen near Wakkerstroom while a herd was later seen in the Karkloof.

Common (Grey/Bush) Duiker | *Sylvicapra grimmia*
We had a few sightings in Kruger NP, in Mkhuze GR and again on Sani Pass.

African (Cape) Buffalo | *Syncerus caffer*
Large numbers were encountered in Kruger and in Cape Vidal.

Nyala | *Tragelaphus angasii*
This beautiful antelope was seen in Kruger NP and then commonly in Mkhuze GR where it is the most abundant antelope.

Bushbuck | *Tragelaphus scriptus*
We had a couple of sightings of these confiding individuals in Kruger NP and around St. Lucia.

Greater Kudu | *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*
This regal antelope was seen very well in Kruger NP and again in Mkhuze GR.

Giraffes | *Giraffa camelopardalis*
(Southern) Giraffe
We enjoyed multiple sightings of this unique creature in Kruger NP and again in Mkhuze GR.

Hippopotami | *Hippopotamus amphibius*
Hippopotamus
Small numbers were seen in Kruger, Mkhuze and St. Lucia.

Pigs | *Phacochoerus africanus*
Common Warthog
Another favourite that was seen a few times in Kruger and in Northern Natal.

Hyraxes | *Procavia capensis*
Rock Hyrax (Dassie)
One of these cute mammals was seen on the Abel Erasmus Pass with further sightings on Sani Pass and in the Western Cape.

Hares & Rabbits | *Lepus capensis*
Cape Hare
Four of these grassland hares were seen during our Wakkerstroom night drive.

Scrub Hare | *Lepus saxatilis*
Several were seen on our Satara night drive in Kruger.

Zebras | *Equus quagga burchelli*
Plains (Burchell's/Common) Zebra
Large numbers were seen throughout the east.
**Rhinoceroses  Rhinocerotidae**

White (Square-lipped) Rhinoceros  *Ceratotherium simum*
Three of these regal mammals were seen in Kruger with a further sighting in Mkhuze GR.

**Baboons & Monkeys  Cercopithecidae**

Blue (Sykes’s/Samango) Monkey  *Cercopithecus mitis*
We had one of these monkeys at Cape Vidal.

Vervet (Monkey)  *Cercopithecus aethiops*
This was a commonly encountered primate throughout the east of the country.

Chacma Baboon  *Papio ursinus*
We saw baboons on numerous occasions in Kruger NP and in the Western Cape.

**Galagos  Galagidae**

Southern Lesser (Senegal) Galago (Bushbaby)  *Galago moholi*
Amazingly we found two of these nocturnal primates roosting in a dense acacia tree in Kruger.

Thick-tailed Greater Galago (Bushbaby)  *Otolemur crassicaudatus*
Singletons of these cute and noisy nocturnal mammals were seen at Umkhumbi Lodge and in St. Lucia.

**Elephants  Elephantidae**

African Elephant  *Loxodonota africana*
Good numbers were seen in Kruger NP.

**Old Word Prcupines  Hystricidae**

Cape Porcupine  *Hystrix africaeaustralis*
We were fortunate to have had two of these nocturnal mammals on our Satara night drive.

**Springhares  Pedetidae**

Springhare  *Pedetes capensis*
Several of these unique mammals were seen on our Wakkerstroom night drive.

**Rats & Mice  Cricetidae & Muridea**

White-tailed Mouse  *Mystromys albicaudatus*
A singleton was seen during our Wakkerstroom night drive.

Sloggett’s Vlei (Ice) Rat  *Otomys sloggetti*
This rodent was seen at the top of Sani Pass, in Lesotho.

Four-striped Grass Mouse  *Rhabdomys pumilio*
A few of these mice were seen scurrying around in West Coast National Park’s strandveld habitat.

**Squirrels  Sciuridae**

Smith's Bush (Southern Tree) Squirrel  *Paraxerus cepapi*
A couple were seen in Kruger NP.

Red Bush (Forest) Squirrel  *Paraxerus palliates*
We saw these squirrels in the forests in St Lucia.

Grey Squirrel (I)  *Sciurus carolinensis*
This cute but introduced squirrel was seen in Kirstenbosch BG.
Aardvarks  Orycteropodidae

Aardvark  Orycteropus afer
Probably the mammal highlight of the trip! We were incredibly lucky to have seen this rare and highly sought-after mammal on our Satara night drive in Kruger! This was only my fifth sighting ever and my second in Kruger! Fantastic!

Annotated List of Reptiles

Total species seen: 13 species

**Crocodiles and Relatives  Crocodylidae**

Nile Crocodile  Crocodylus niloticus
We had some fantastic views of these large reptiles in Kruger NP and St Lucia Estuary.

**Agamas  Agamidae**

Southern Tree Agama  Acanthocercus atricollis
Several of these colourful lizards were seen in Kruger NP.

**Chameleons  Chamaeleonidae**

Flap-neck Chameleon  Chamaeleo dilepis
We were fortunate to have seen this species during our Kruger night drive.

**Colubrid Snakes  Colubridae**

Cross-barred (Crossed) Whip Snake  Psammophis crucifer
AA very lucky find! One was seen in the road on our drive up Sani Pass.

**Spinytail Lizards  Cordylidae**

Cape Girdled Lizard  Cordylus cordylus
We saw this lovely lizard in the Western Cape.

Drakensberg Crag Lizard  Cordylus melanotus
A few of these reptiles were seen during our Sani Pass day trip.

**Geckos  Gekkonidae**

(Tropical) House Gecko  Hemidactylus mabouia
Seen at several of the lodges and guest houses during the tour.

**Skinks  Scincidae**

African Striped Skink  Trachylepis striata
A few were found in the camps in Kruger.

**Monitor Lizards  Varanidae**

Savannah (Rock) Monitor  Varanus exanthematicus
Our first sighting was of one along the Zaagkuildrift Rd. We later had a few sightings in Kruger.
Vipers Viperidae

Bittis arietans

Puff Adder

A massive individual was seen sprawled out in the road in West Coast NP. A very impressive and highly venomous snake!

Afro-American Sideneck Turtles Pelomedusidae

Pelomedusa subrufa

Helmeted Turtle (Terrapin)

One seen in Kruger and more in Mkhuze GR.

Tortoises Testudinidae

Chersina angulate

Angulated Tortoise

At least 30 of these localized tortoises were seen during our day in West Coast NP.

Stigmochelys pardalis

Leopard Tortoise

A singleton was seen in Kruger.

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