



COMPREHENSIVE SOUTH AFRICA: CUSTOM TRIP REPORT

31 OCTOBER – 20 NOVEMBER

By Dylan Vasapoli



Gurney's Sugarbird was one of the top specials found on the trip.

Overview

This three-week customized tour took in essentially the main birding routes of South Africa, beginning in the fynbos-dominated Western Cape before transiting to the endemic-rich Northern Cape, where we spent time in both the Namaqualand and Bushmanland regions. We moved to the largest city in the country, Johannesburg, where we enjoyed some good highveld birding in a mix of grassland and bushveld. Wakkerstroom saw us focus on some more montane-grassland birding before transiting to the incredibly biodiverse Zululand, where we spent time around Mkhuze Game Reserve, Hluhluwe, St Lucia, and Eshowe. Our last leg saw us heading to the scenic Oribi Gorge area before ending in the Drakensberg proper, this time around Underberg, where we birded the stunning Sani Pass into Lesotho.



*The localized **Melodious Lark** was one of many larks seen on the trip.*

This tour was designed targeting various species, which drew the bulk of our focus, which meant that we didn't spend much, if any, time trying for some of the typically more common and widespread species. Concerning our target species we did extremely well, finding virtually all of the feasible targets, with only a few dips despite some trying and difficult conditions. A lot is owed to the time of year, with many birds in their breeding periods and therefore vocal and conspicuous. Some of the top targets seen included **Orange River Francolin, Southern Bald Ibis, Southern Banded Snake Eagle, Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, Buff-spotted and Red-chested Flufftails, Karoo and Blue Korhaans, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Swamp Nightjar, Brown-backed Honeybird, Knysna Woodpecker, Olive and Gorgeous Bushshrikes, Melodious, Rudd's, Botha's, Red, Stark's, Sclater's, Barlow's, and Cape Clapper Larks, Black-eared Sparrow-Lark, Bush Blackcap, Drakensberg Rockjumper, Spotted Ground Thrush, Cinnamon-breasted and Knysna Warblers, Tinkling Cisticola, Rudd's Apalis, Woodward's Batis, Gurney's Sugarbird, Neergaard's Sunbird, Bushveld, Yellow-breasted, and Mountain Pipits,**

Pink-throated Twinspot, Cape Siskin, and Protea Canary. Beside these targets we did also enjoy a host of other difficult and prized birds with too many to list.

Mammals weren't ignored on the trip, and although we didn't visit any of the more prominent big game reserves we did well with many of the smaller mammals, including enjoying an incredible night drive in the Northern Cape. We rounded up our bird list at 495 species seen plus an additional six species heard only, with 49 mammals seen as well.

Detailed Report

Day 1, 31 October 2019. Arrival in Cape Town and local birding

Following our arrival at Cape Town International Airport we made the short transfer to our comfortable B&B, where we checked in, dropped our bags, and got all our birding gear out and ready before taking off to the nearby Cecilia Forest, where we spent the afternoon. The area was quite birdy as we slowly worked our way along the mountain paths. The open spaces gave up specials like **Cape Bulbul, Cape Grassbird, Cape Robin-Chat, Malachite** and **Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, Swee Waxbill, and Cape Siskin**, while the denser sections yielded **African Dusky Flycatcher, Fork-tailed Drongo, and Cape White-eye**. Our main goal was to keep an eye to the sky, and we were rewarded with a flyby of **Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk** along with the likes of **African Olive Pigeon, Common Buzzard, and White-necked Raven**. Following a good walk and a great introduction to the Cape species we called it a day and enjoyed a fine dinner.

Day 2, 1 November 2019. Pelagic trip from Hout Bay

After finally having been giving the all-clear to head out on our pelagic trip late the previous afternoon yesterday, we convened at Hout Bay harbor early in the morning before setting off into the deep. We picked up a trawler working some 40 nautical miles off the coast and headed toward it. We made good progress and ran into a mixed pod of **Long-beaked Common** and **Dusky Dolphins**. They were incredibly obliging, riding the bow and surfing in the wake and all-around giving us a good show. This activity also brought in some birds, which included the likes of **White-chinned Petrel** and **Great and Sooty Shearwaters** – which would be the most numerous birds we'd encounter on the day. A few **Parasitic Jaegers** were also seen harassing **Common Terns** for their catch. As we continued our way toward the trawler we ran into our first **Shy Albatross** along with a few **Cape Petrels** and a **Northern Giant Petrel**. Eventually we picked up the trawler on the horizon and were soon within its wake. We spent some time working through the masses of birds in the wake and also enjoyed the incredible spectacle of watching the boat reel the nets in, which drew all the birds into a frenzy. The number of birds present was immense, and we enjoyed good looks at the likes of **Shy, Black-browed, Atlantic Yellow-nosed, and Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**, both **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels, White-chinned** and **Cape Petrels, Sooty** and **Great Shearwaters, Wilson's** and a few **European Storm Petrels, Brown Skua, Sabine's Gull, and Arctic Tern**. Following our time enjoying the pelagic birds we had to reluctantly make our way back to shore. The ride was relatively uneventful, and nothing new was noted. We stopped off at Seal Island to enjoy a large number of **Cape Fur Seals** and were surprised with a vagrant **Southern Elephant Seal** present among them. The rocks in the area also gave us good views of **Crowned, Bank, Cape, and White-breasted Cormorants**. Once we were back on

land we made a beeline to the Cape Point section of Table Mountain National Park, where a vagrant King Penguin had appeared a few days earlier. Sadly we were moments too late to see it, as the bird had been relocated to a secluded section due to increased human pressure. A quick walk in the surrounding fynbos scrub gave up **Cape Grassbird**, **Cape Bunting**, and **Cape Bulbul**, while a flowering stand of Proteas held **Cape Sugarbird**, **Malachite**, **Orange-breasted**, and **Southern Double-collared Sunbirds**. A few **Cape Mountain Zebras** rounded off our time in the park before we retired for dinner after a good but long day out.



*We had good looks at **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross** on our pelagic outing.*

Day 3, 2 November 2019. Birding Sir Lowry's Pass, Rooi-Els, and surroundings

Following a good rest we were up early once more, and we headed to the other side of False Bay in search of a variety of Cape fynbos specials. Before heading out our morning coffee and biscuits were interrupted by a lovely **Forest Canary** at the feeder, and following a quick bite to eat on the way we soon found ourselves at a windy Sir Lowry's Pass. We set out to explore the mountain paths and initially worked the lower slopes for Striped Flufftail and Victorin's Warbler. With the wind blowing through the area birding was very difficult, but we somehow successfully managed to lure in a confiding **Victorin's Warbler** that showed well, but the flufftail remained elusive. Cape Rockjumper was the next target, and while working the area we picked up a few other birds like **Grey Heron**, **White-rumped** and **Little Swifts**, **Barn**, **Greater Striped**, and **White-throated Swallows**, **Karoo Prinia**, **Cape Grassbird**, **Cape Sugarbird**, **Orange-breasted Sunbird**, **Cape Siskin**, and **Cape Canary**. As the day progressed the wind only got stronger, and at one stage we were barely able to stand upright in the immensely strong-blowing wind. We decided to cut our losses here and try another area with hopefully less wind. We made our way to the scenic village of Rooi-Els, where we hoped to find Cape Rockjumper, but again we were greeted with intense wind. We worked the area for a little while before retiring for a lunch break (and a wind break). A few birds were seen here, including **White-necked Raven**, **Rock Kestrel**, **Cape Rock Thrush**, **Rock Martin**, **Grey-backed Cisticola**, **Neddicky**, **Yellow Bishop**, **Orange-breasted Sunbird**,

Cape Bunting, and numbers of **Cape Siskin**. **Ground Woodpecker** was heard but remained unseen. Then we headed to Betty's Bay, where we had lunch with views of the resident **African Penguins** at the Stony Point penguin colony. We enjoyed the penguins along with a hunting **Sandwich Tern** and a small covey of **Cape Spurrows** before returning to Rooi-Els to try once more for the rockjumper. Much to our dismay the wind hadn't subsided and was just as intense as ever. We slowly worked the area, but again came up short but noting many of the species we had found earlier in the day. Having had our fill of the wind we called it a day and headed home after a tough day out. A wonderful meal was the perfect end to the day as we prepared to move to our next destination tomorrow.



*The colorful **Orange-breasted Sunbird** is always a highlight!*

Day 4, 3 November 2019. Transfer from Cape Town to Springbok, birding en-route

With the bulk of the day going to be spent traveling to Springbok in the Northern Cape, we tried to maximize as much time as we could out of the car, walking. Our morning was spent birding the lodge gardens and Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden before breakfast. It was a productive session, and we picked up **Red-eyed Dove**, **African Olive Pigeon**, **African Goshawk**, **Black Sparrowhawk**, **Olive Thrush**, **Cape Batis**, **Sweet Waxbill**, a surprising **Bronze Mannikin** (which is a rare bird in the area), **Forest** and **Brimstone Canaries**, and **Cape Sugarbird**. Following breakfast we made our way to the Paarl area, where we set about locating the often-difficult-to-find **Protea Canary**. Fortunately we didn't have to wait too long and enjoyed great and prolonged views of a confident individual. A stunning **Black Harrier** was a surprise in the area as well. With birding done for the morning we made the long haul up the west coast. Our first real birding stop was near Kamieskroon, where we veered off into the mountains. We had some excellent birding, and our primary target, **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler**, was all too easily in the bag at our first stop. We enjoyed excellent views over some time of this feisty and tricky bird, much to our delight. The mountains also held a number of other species, and we found **Pale Chanting Goshawk**, **Layard's Warbler**, **Black-headed Canary**, **Pale-winged Starling**, and

Lark-like Bunting. The surrounding plains gave up **White-backed Mousebird, Karoo Lark, Karoo** and **Ant-eating Chats, Cape Starling,** and **White-throated Canary.** With the afternoon winding down we called it a day and made our way to Springbok, where we settled in for the evening.

Day 5, 4 November 2019. Birding Port Nolloth, Springbok and surrounds.

We had an early start as we made our way to the coast at Port Nolloth, where we'd spend the morning searching for a wide array of species. Our first port of call en route was to search for **Karoo Eremomela**, but we could only manage hearing them some distance away – no views. A few **Namaqua Sandgrouse** flew overhead calling, and numbers of **Rock** and **Greater Kestrels, Pale Chanting Goshawks, Common Buzzards,** and **Pied** and **Cape Crows** littered the roadside wires. Upon arriving at the small coastal town of Port Nolloth a quick search of the harbor area yielded **Hartlaub's** and **Kelp Gulls, Cape** and **Crowned Cormorants,** and **White-fronted Plover,** but the sea was quite choppy, which made searching for Heaviside's Dolphin difficult. We soon pressed on to our penultimate area, north of town, where we'd try for the range-restricted Barlow's Lark. Present here at the southern end of their range, these birds have been known to hybridize with the closely related Karoo Lark, which occurs around the town itself – meaning one has to head well clear of the town to find 'pure' **Barlow's Lark.** We arrived on site, and as soon as we stepped out of the car we heard our target calling close-by. A quick scan revealed it perched atop some of the bushes, and we enjoyed good, lengthy scope views of this prized species. No sooner had we put our binoculars down when a **Yellow-bellied Eremomela** popped up, followed by a party of the snazzy **Cape Penduline Tits** and a few **Rufous-eared Warblers.** It was all a bit too easy! One of our last remaining targets, **Cape Long-billed Lark,** then piped up, and some patient scanning revealed an individual perched atop a rise, calling away.



Barlow's Lark was one of the many excellent and prized species seen today!

We then spent some time searching in vain for Tractrac Chat but did manage to add **Capped Wheatear** and **Karoo Scrub Robin** to the list, along with a frustrating **Damara Tern** that flew right over us, calling loudly, but somehow went by unseen. Another scan of the coast added **South African Shelduck** and **Ruddy Turnstone** before we started making our way back to Springbok. The wind had picked up and made birding difficult. We kept on trying for **Karoo Eremomela**, and briefly found a small group, but they disappeared before we could get onto them properly. **Karoo Lark** was about the only other bird seen. We returned to Springbok, took a break over the hot early afternoon, and resumed birding later in the afternoon with a trip to Goegap Nature Reserve. The reserve's closing times were quite early (4 p.m.), allowing us just under an hour to get in, bird, and get out. We still did extremely well and picked up a slew of specials, such as **Pirit Batis**, **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Layard's Warbler**, **Dusky Sunbird**, **Pale-winged** and **Cape Starlings**, **White-backed Mousebird**, and our main target, **Karoo Eremomela**. With only a few minutes left before the gate closed, at our last stop, we picked up a lively group of the eremomelas and enjoyed great views of them as they busily went about their business. The rest of our afternoon was spent birding outside the reserve, and we enjoyed a wealth of activity despite the wind. A large group of around 10 **Ludwig's Bustards** was the highlight, but we also enjoyed **Jackal Buzzard**, **Bokmakierie**, **Mountain Wheatear**, **Ant-eating** and **Karoo Chats**, **Spike-heeled Lark**, **Yellow** and **White-throated Canaries**, and another group of **Karoo Eremomelas**. Another great day under the belt, ending with a fantastic meal!

Day 6, 5 November 2019. Birding Koa Dunes, Pofadder, and surroundings

With only a short distance to our next destination, Pofadder, we basically had the morning free to try to clean up on any missed species. So far this was only Cape Clapper Lark in the area, and we headed straight to a nearby site. We had worked this area the previous day, but in the hot, windy midday conditions we had missed it, and as soon as we stepped out of the car we heard a **Cape Clapper Lark** calling. In no time we were enjoying great views of this beautifully marked species. A few other birds present in the area included **European Bee-eater**, **Bokmakierie**, and **Karoo Scrub Robin**. A quick breakfast followed before we gathered our things and headed off towards Aggeneys and the Koa Dunes. **Red Lark** was our main target here, but sadly the wind was already quite strong by the time we arrived, and we only had brief views a few times of an individual, leaving us wanting more. A plethora of **Grey-backed Sparrow-Larks** along with **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Fawn-colored Lark**, **Yellow-bellied Eremomela**, **Rufous-eared Warbler**, **Red-headed Finch**, **Chat Flycatcher**, **Scaly-feathered Weaver**, and **Sociable Weaver** kept us entertained, however. We made our way onward to Pofadder via some backroads, which were quiet in the hot and windy conditions. We picked up a group of calling **Karoo Korhaans**, and in our bid to find them we instead found a cooperative group of **Stark's Larks** – a tough, nomadic bird, which can be very unpredictable – a big bonus! The korhaans, though, went unseen. We checked into our accommodation and had lunch and a bit of a rest before heading out once again. It was quiet initially, but gradually the activity picked up, and we enjoyed a wonderful afternoon birding, filled with some great sightings and species. Top of the pile went to sublime views of a few groups of **Karoo Korhaans** – duetting in the open very close to us, along with a pair of the highly prized **Sclater's Lark** that came to a water trough to drink. Other species included great views of **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Pale Chanting Goshawk**, **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Spike-heeled Lark**, **Yellow-bellied Eremomela**, **Black-chested Prinia**, **Ant-eating**, **Karoo**, and **Tractrac Chats**, **Dusky Sunbird**, **Yellow Canary**, and **Lark-like Bunting**. Following dinner we headed out on a night drive to see what mammals we could find, and despite the persistent heavy wind we

had another excellent session. It took us a while to find our first mammal, but after that they came in regularly. Highlights were sightings of **Zorilla**, **Common Genet**, **Cape Fox**, and numbers of **Bat-eared Foxes**, while we also saw many **Spring Hares** along with **Steenbok** and **Scrub Hare**. We enjoyed a good night's sleep after another successful day.



*Close sightings of **Karoo Korhaan** were one of the major highlights of the day!*

Day 7, 6 November 2019. Birding Pofadder, Onseepkans, and surroundings

We had a full day at our disposal in the Pofadder area, and we started it with a brief stint in the gardens before an early breakfast. This was great, and we found our targets in quick succession, namely **Orange River White-eye** and **Karoo Thrush**. A number of other species were also around and included **African Red-eyed Bulbul**, **White-backed Mousebird**, **African Palm Swift**, and **Southern Masked Weaver**. While getting ready for a morning drive we picked up a few **Bradfield's Swifts** flying low overhead and enjoyed excellent views of these large swifts. Our drive got off to a great start, when we stopped to look at a **Karoo Long-billed Lark** next to the road and a male **Black-eared Sparrow-Lark** flying across just in front of us and settling nearby. We headed to where it had landed and began searching. We found the bird moving around and soon discovered a large flock of these unpredictable and nomadic birds feeding in the area. We spent some time watching them and managed to get many great views of this prized species. With the main target for the morning out of the way the pressure was off, and we could enjoy the rest of the drive. Birding was great, and we saw birds on a regular basis, including **Pygmy Falcon**, **Karoo Korhaan**, **Ludwig's Bustard**, **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Namaqua Dove**, **Rock Kestrel**, **Rock Martin**, **Chat Flycatcher**, **Karoo and Tractrac Chats**, **Stark's**, **Spike-heeled**, and **Karoo Long-billed Larks**, **Sociable Weaver**, and **Yellow Canary**. A farm dam held **Black-winged Stilt**, **Kittlitz's Plover**, **Blacksmith Lapwing**, and **Egyptian Goose**, and we also spent a bit of time with a curious **Meerkat** family. Other mammals seen included **Springbok**, **Steenbok**, and **South African Ground Squirrel**.

We had some rest over lunch and got going in the afternoon again with a drive to Onseepkans on the Orange River. It was incredibly windy at the river, but we set about finding our targets. Our first stop failed to produce the hoped-for Rosy-faced Lovebird, but we did find a plethora of other species including **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **African Red-eyed Bulbul**, **Mountain Wheatear**, **Southern Masked Weaver**, **Dusky Sunbird**, and **Black-throated Canary**. A scan of the river gave us **Grey Heron**, **Little Egret**, **Reed Cormorant**, **African Darter**, and **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**. As we were about to move on the characteristic call of **Namaqua Warbler** started, and we were soon reveling in close-up views of these feisty birds. **African Reed Warbler** and **Orange River White-eye** were also seen here. We continued our search for our sole remaining target, the lovebird, for some time, and eventually picked up on a calling **Rosy-faced Lovebird** that came whizzing by overhead. Needless to say, we wanted more. It took some time, but we eventually managed to get a far better fly-by view, but the perched view was still lacking. We briefly saw a bird perched, but it soon disappeared. As we were about to give up a small group came flying by overhead and landed in a tree in front of us. After a quick scramble we had our perched views, at long last, and enjoyed lengthy scope views of a stunning **Rosy-faced Lovebird**. We returned to Pofadder for the evening after another successful day in the field.



*A pair of the charismatic **Pygmy Falcon** showed well!*

Day 8, 7 November 2019. Transfer to Upington and flight to Johannesburg

Another travel day awaited us today as we would make our way to Upington and then catch a flight to Johannesburg, but we did our best to maximize the time we had available. We made a quick early morning run to the Koa Dunes to try for Red Lark again. We were greeted by a lovely, cool, and still morning. Not much was moving around, but we did enjoy good views of **Fawn-colored Lark** and **Scaly-feathered Weaver** and encountered an **African Wild Cat** strolling through the dunes, unaware of us. Before long it became aware of us, though, and quickly ran for cover and disappeared out of sight. What a sighting! It took a bit of time, but we did eventually could watch a **Red Lark** as it sang from the top of a bush for a short time. We worked the area a bit longer but

soon had to stop to make our way back to Pofadder, where we gathered our things and then began the drive to Upington. The drive went smoothly, we made good time, completed all the formalities at the airport, and enjoyed a quick and smooth flight to Johannesburg. From here we traveled to the south side of the city, where we checked into our B&B before heading off for an afternoon of birding. Our first port of call was on the outskirts of Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve. Here we tried for **Melodious Lark** among others. It was a bit breezy, but after some work we were rewarded with good looks at this tricky species! The grasslands here held many other species, and we also found **South African Cliff Swallow**, **Cape Longclaw**, **Capped Wheatear**, **Levaillant's** and **Desert Cisticolas**, **African Stonechat**, **Fan-tailed** and **Long-tailed Widowbirds**, **Quailfinch**, **Common Waxbill**, and **Southern Red Bishop**. Then we made our way to a nearby woodland area, where we spend the rest of the day and enjoyed some fine birding. One of our main targets was **Brown-backed Honeybird**, and we enjoyed good looks on a few occasions with little effort, much to our delight. Other species seen here included **Diederik Cuckoo**, **Red-faced Mousebird**, **Green Wood Hoopoe**, **Cardinal Woodpecker**, **Kalahari Scrub Robin**, **Wailing Cisticola**, **Chestnut-vented Warbler**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Fiscal Flycatcher**, and **Red-collared Widowbird**, among other more common species. As night fell our other main target, **Rufous-cheeked Nightjar**, began to call, and we enjoyed good looks at a few individuals as they flew around us closely, landing only briefly. A surprise **Fiery-necked Nightjar** then started calling, and we enjoyed good looks at this species as well – two nightjars at the same spot! A great dinner rounded off a productive travel day.

Day 9, 8 November 2019. Birding DeTweedespruit, Rust de Winter and surrounds.

We had an early start as we drove to the northeast of Pretoria, where we'd spend the bulk of the day before returning to our lodge. Our first birding area was the DeTweedespruit Conservancy, where we focused on Tinkling Cisticola among others. A pair of confiding **Great Spotted Cuckoos** welcomed us to the area and gave us great views before we got into the prime area for **Tinkling Cisticola**. In no time we were reveling in great looks at this rather handsome cisticola, which showed well for us. As luck would have it, the wind did seem to be following us around, and we had a breezy morning as we worked various sites around the area, but we still managed to enjoy some excellent birding. The more-open, broad-leaved woodland patches gave us **Cardinal Woodpecker**, **Groundscraper Thrush**, **Pearl-breasted Swallow**, **Rufous-naped Lark**, **Long-billed Crombec**, **Violet-backed Starling**, **Buffy Pipit**, **Amethyst Sunbird**, **Yellow-throated Petronia**, **Golden-breasted Bunting**, **Yellow-fronted Canary**, and **Streaky-headed Seedeater**. Working the rockier areas yielded **Black-chested Snake** and **Wahlberg's Eagles**, **Greater Honeyguide**, **Arrow-marked Babbler**, **Chinspot Batis**, **Lesser Striped Swallow**, **Black-crowned Tchagra**, and **White-bellied Sunbird**. We made our way northward to the Rust de Winter area via a stop en route, which was immensely productive despite the latish hour and now sweltering heat. Our main quarry, **Bushveld Pipit**, showed well, perched quietly in the lower strata of some trees, while the surrounding area was seemingly alive with birds, delivering **Chinspot Batis**, **Brubru**, **Black-backed Puffback**, **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **Grey-headed Bushshrike**, **Sabota Lark**, **Long-billed Crombec**, **Neddicky**, **Willow Warbler**, and **White-browed Scrub Robin** among others. A short drive farther saw us within the Rust de Winter area proper, where we'd focus on the dry acacia thornveld that dominates the area. Again, despite the late hour and the now really intense heat, we enjoyed excellent birding throughout our stay here, until we were worn out and decided to call it a day. Our highlights included a number of **Pearl-spotted Owlets**, giving us great views, along with feisty **Burnt-necked Eremomelas**, dapper **Southern Pied**

Babblers, a showy **Bennett's Woodpecker**, and rather glorious **Marico Sunbirds**. Other species seen included **Grey Go-away-bird**, **Burchell's Coucal**, **African Grey**, **Southern Red-billed**, and **Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills**, **Brown-hooded Kingfisher**, **White-fronted Bee-eater**, **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**, **Lesser Honeyguide**, **Crimson-breasted** and **Magpie Shrikes**, **Grey-backed Camaroptera**, **Rattling Cisticola**, **Burchell's Starling**, and **Red-billed Buffalo Weaver**. Following another great outing we took the rest of the afternoon off to catch up on some much-needed rest.



*The dapper **Golden-breasted Bunting** was one of many highlights during the day.*

Day 10, 9 November 2019. Birding Alberton and transfer to Wakkerstroom

Another travel day awaited us as we would ultimately make our way to Wakkerstroom, one of the country's premier grassland birding areas, but we made the most of the early morning by birding a grassland and wetland patch near to our lodge. Despite our optimism it was a windy morning once again, but the birding was still pretty good. One of our main targets, **Orange River Francolin**, showed well early on as a small covey scuttled around through the short grass, much to our delight. We then went in search of **Eastern Clapper Lark**, with which we struggled. We saw an individual briefly, but it soon disappeared, and despite intensive searching we just couldn't relocate it. We eventually cut our losses here and headed to the wetland area. **Cloud Cisticola** showed well on the drive, and once we arrived at the wetland one of our main targets, **African Snipe**, was soon found and enjoyed at length. The wetland was buzzing with birds, and as we worked our way around it we enjoyed the likes of **Red-billed Teal**, **Yellow-billed Duck**, **Egyptian** and **Spur-winged Geese**, **Grey Heron**, **Glossy** and **African Sacred Ibis**, **Three-banded Plover**, **Ruff**, **Little Stint**, **Wood**, and **Marsh Sandpipers**, **Lesser Swamp Warbler**, **Levaillant's Cisticola**, and **Orange-breasted Waxbill** among others. We headed up to another section of the grassland for more birding, but it was relatively quiet with the persistent wind. Other species seen on our morning foray included **Northern Black Korhaan**, **Swainson's Spurfowl**, **Crowned Lapwing**, **Spotted Thick-knee**, **Cape Longclaw**, **Spike-heeled Lark**, **Capped Wheatear**, and

Long-tailed Widowbird. Following breakfast we gathered our things, checked out of the lodge, and started the journey to Wakkerstroom. A stop at a dam en route was welcome and we enjoyed more excellent birding, with large numbers of birds present. Seen were **Greater Flamingo, Glossy Ibis, Cape Shoveler, Cape, Red-billed,** and **Hottentot Teals, Southern Pochard, Maccoa Duck, White-faced and Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Little and Black-necked Grebes, African Swamphen, Common Moorhen, Common Greenshank, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Grey-headed Gull, and Brown-throated Martin** among others. The journey to Wakkerstroom was smooth, and we arrived at our comfortable lodge in the early afternoon. With the clouds building up and rapidly darkening we headed out to try our luck but were soon in the midst of a large storm. Fortunately the main system passed by quickly, and we were able to get a bit of birding in, enjoying the likes of **African Marsh Harrier, Black-collared Barbet, Speckled Mousebird, Bokmakierie, Common House Martin, South African Cliff Swallow, Eastern Long-billed and Red-capped Larks, African Pipit, Pied Starling, and Village Weaver.** Sadly the conditions began to worsen again with a stiff wind and more rain, and we called it a day and made our way back to our lodge, where we warmed up in front of the fire. The rain continued and put our attempts at owling on ice.

Day 11, 10 November 2019. Birding Wakkerstroom

Following an evening filled with thunder and rain we awoke somewhat tentatively, not knowing what the weather conditions were going to be, and were pleasantly surprised to find no rain and sunlight peeking through the clouds. This fortunately held firm throughout the morning. We collected our local guide for the morning, Norman, and started birding. Our first stop was for **Yellow-breasted Pipit**, and when we arrived on site we immediately heard our quarry - a few moments later, and we were enjoying excellent scope views of this desirable species as it moved through the low grass. We continued, now heading for a site for Rudd's Lark, but were waylaid by good birds en route. **Blue Crane, Blue Korhaan, and Black-winged Lapwing** all showed well, while **Pale-crowned Cisticola** only gave us brief views and left us wanting more. We arrived at the site, and soon after setting off we found a pair of **Rudd's Larks** busily collecting nesting material. We spent a short while watching these rare and highly localized birds go about their business before leaving them in peace and having breakfast. Next we searched for **Botha's Lark**, which proved difficult with an extensive search needed before we eventually found a single bird. Once we had found it, though, we enjoyed excellent views as it casually approached us, showing off all its finer qualities before moving on. We slowly continued, searching for more species, and did well connecting with the likes of **Grey Crowned Crane, Southern Bald Ibis, and Eastern Clapper Lark** before we returned to town and headed for lunch. Some of the other species seen during our morning escapade included **Secretarybird, Lanner Falcon, Jackal Buzzard, Red-throated Wryneck, Spike-heeled and Red-capped Larks, Cloud and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, Banded Martin, Pied Starling, Yellow-crowned Bishop and Black-throated Canary** among others. We also enjoyed a number of smaller mammals, finding a few groups of **Meerkats** (Suricates) along with **Slender Mongoose** and numbers of **Yellow Mongoose**. Following lunch we said our farewell to Norman, thanked him for a truly amazing mornings' birding, and had a brief rest. We reconvened later in the afternoon, and with the wind having picked up from a stiff breeze to the very strong torrent it was now we opted for a shorter loop drive than what we had initially planned. It was slow going most of the time, but despite the really strong wind we did well and managed to eke out a few more targets, namely **Buff-streaked Chat** and **Sentinel Rock Thrush**. A number of other species were also seen and included **White-backed**

Duck, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, African Spoonbill, African Marsh Harrier, Lanner Falcon, Mountain Wheatear, Malachite Sunbird, Cape Weaver, and Fan-tailed Widowbird. We arrived back in town in the late afternoon, following another great day, and rounded off the day with another excellent meal before an intense storm rolled in, putting aside our plans for owling tonight as well.



*The range-restricted **Botha's Lark** is one of the top specials of the Wakkerstroom area.*

Day 12, 11 November 2019. Birding Wakkerstroom, and transfer to Hluhluwe

Following one of the most intense storms I've ever experienced during last evening we woke to a beautifully still morning, free to target a few wetland birds. First was **Red-chested Flufftail**, and we were able to coax an individual into the open for some good looks, much to our delight and relief. Despite this 'pygmy-crake' being reasonably common it is always tough to lay eyes on. **African Rail** was next and proved a bit trickier, but we still did eventually prevail, enjoying great views of this well-marked railid. The wetlands were alive with birds, and in addition to the above we also saw **Hottentot Teal, Cape Shoveler, Black Crake, African Swamphen, African Snipe, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, South African Shelduck, Glossy Ibis, Lesser Swamp and African Reed Warblers, and Levillant's Cisticola**. A quick search for **Pale-crowned Cisticola** was successful, and we found an individual with minimal effort, which stayed around for some views, before we headed back to the lodge and took a short walk before breakfast. This again was really productive and produced **African Hoopoe, Speckled Mousebird, Black-collared Barbet, Drakensberg Prinia, African Yellow Warbler, Cape Robin-Chat, Cape Canary, Red-billed Quelea, and Cape, Village, and Southern Masked Weavers**. Following breakfast we gathered our things, packed, and began the long journey toward Hluhluwe, where we'd spend the next few days as a base for exploring the area. We checked into our comfortable lodge before setting off on our afternoon birding outing. The nearby Mpempe Pan was our focal point for exploring the open plains, the pan, and lala palm thickets. Despite the heavy wind the birds were out in full force after the recent rains, and a large flock of **Collared Pratincoles** greeted us on arrival. We spent some

time watching them, and scanning through them yielded a few of the rare **Caspian Plovers** along with **Senegal Lapwing**, **Ruff**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, and **Common Ringed Plover**. The pan had quite a bit of water and a number of birds, including **Yellow-billed Stork**, **Great White Pelican**, **African Spoonbill**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Little Stint**, **Red-billed Teal**, **White-faced Whistling Duck**, and **Little Egret** among others. Just as we were about to call it a day we found our main target, **Lemon-breasted Canary**, and enjoyed some good views of a large flock perched atop some trees. After having our fill we did eventually return to the lodge and settled in for another great evening.

Day 13, 12 November 2019. Birding Mkhuze Game Reserve and surroundings

In short, this day was nothing but exceptional – just one of those truly remarkable days! We again had had another storm-and-rain-filled evening and woke to steady rain, which, very fortunately, began to subside as we loaded up and made our way to the legendary Mkhuze Game Reserve, where we would spend the day. A quick stop at Muzi Pan on our way started things with a plethora of wetland birds, namely, **Pink-backed Pelican**, **African Openbill**, **Goliath and Squacco Herons**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Lesser Flamingo**, **Hottentot, Cape, and Red-billed Teals**, **Spur-winged Goose**, **Knob-billed Duck**, **White-winged Tern**, **Thick-billed Weaver**, and a plethora of waders/shorebirds including **Curlew**, **Marsh**, and **Wood Sandpipers** and **African Snipe**. We pulled ourselves away and continued to the reserve proper. While completing the formalities we ran into one of our targets, the dainty **Grey Penduline Tit** – a small group of which were noisily feeding in a tree. We continued to the picnic site on the large Nsumo Pan, where we had our breakfast and enjoyed birding out of the car. This area was alive with birds, and we spent a good while birding here, notching up many of the above-mentioned waterbirds along with others such as **Western Osprey**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Striated Heron**, **Little Egret**, **African Swamphen**, **Water Thick-knee**, **Common Sandpiper**, and **Pied Kingfisher**. The wooded areas held **Trumpeter Hornbill**, **Common Scimitarbill**, **Golden-tailed Woodpecker**, **Red-fronted Tinkerbird**, **Gorgeous and Orange-breasted Bushshrikes**, **Common Square-tailed Drongo**, **Ashy Flycatcher**, **Green-backed Camaroptera**, **Eastern Nicator**, **Rudd's and Yellow-breasted Apalises**, **Black-bellied and Violet-backed Starlings**, **Spectacled, Dark-backed, and Lesser Masked Weavers**, and **Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow (Petronia)**. We slowly worked our way to the Kumasinga Hide, where we spent some time. But, perhaps due to all the recent rains and water all over, the hide was on the slow side with not much activity. The surrounding woodlands, however, produced two of our main targets for the day, the difficult **Neergaard's Sunbird** and the gaudy **Pink-throated Twin-spot**. We picked up the sunbird's faint call, and it took a little while to track it down, but we were eventually rewarded with excellent views of this species! The twin-spots too showed well after a bit of effort on our part and even perched long enough for us to get the scope on them and enjoy all their finer features. Other species seen in the area included **Black-bellied Bustard**, **African Green Pigeon**, **Purple-crested Turaco**, **Crested Barbet**, **Wire-tailed Swallow**, **Sabota Lark**, **Kurrichane Thrush**, **Black Cuckooshrike**, **Southern Black Flycatcher**, **Grey Tit-Flycatcher**, **Red-billed Oxpecker**, **Blue Waxbill**, and **Marico Sunbird**. We slowly birded until our lunch spot, at another hide, which too was on the slow side with minimal activity. With time marching on we gradually started making our way back to the gate but were waylaid by a last surge of activity, which gave us **Black-chested Snake Eagle**, **Wahlberg's and Martial Eagles**, **Senegal Lapwing**, **Red-chested and Black Cuckoos**, **Striped Kingfisher**, and **Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill**. A lone **African Elephant** bull was, however, the highlight of the afternoon as we enjoyed good looks before he told us that enough was enough

and it was time for us to go! Throughout the day we found many other species, which included **Crested Guineafowl**, **Burchell's Coucal**, **Diederik Cuckoo**, **European Bee-eater**, **Lilac-breasted Roller**, **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Chinspot Batis**, **Black-backed Puffback**, **Black-crowned Tchagra**, and **African Pied Wagtail** among others. We also enjoyed a few additional mammals, including **Nyala**, **Impala**, **Plains Zebra**, **Common Warthog**, **Greater Kudu**, and **Hippopotamus**. We made our way back to the lodge, where we settled in for the evening, following a great day with nearly 150 bird species!



The scarce Neergaard's Sunbird was one of our targets at Mkhuze Game Reserve.

Day 14, 13 November 2019. Birding Hluhluwe and transfer to St Lucia

With only a minor travel day in store for us today we had the morning available to bird and explore around our lodge and the entire property. We again seemed to strike it lucky with the weather, with a steady flow of rain during the night but clearing just before we got going. We slowly worked our way around the network of trails crisscrossing the property and enjoyed some excellent birding. The undisputed highlight was a gaudy male **African Emerald Cuckoo** that showed exceptionally well, leaving us in awe of its incredible beauty – the best view to date I've had of this species! The birds were many, and we enjoyed the likes of **African Harrier-Hawk**, **African Goshawk**, **Narina Trogon**, **African Hoopoe**, **Green Wood Hoopoe**, **Bearded** and **White-browed Scrub Robins**, **Red-capped Robin-Chat**, **Rudd's** and **Yellow-breasted Apalises**, **Pale** and **Southern Black Flycatchers**, **White-bellied**, **Grey**, **Purple-banded**, and **Collared Sunbirds** and **Golden-breasted Bunting**. We also enjoyed a few mammals, including **Giraffe**, **Plains Zebra**, **Impala**, and **Natal Red Duiker**. Following breakfast we gathered our things, checked out, and made our way to St Lucia via the western shores of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. Sadly there was a stiff wind blowing by the time we arrived at the area, and our drive through the western shores was on the slow side. We stopped at a few points en route and managed to eke out a few birds, top of which went to a few **African Cuckoo-Hawks**, which showed really well, along with an incredibly confiding male **Narina Trogon**, which sat almost above us. Other species seen included **Collared**

Pratincole, European Bee-eater, Rufous-winged Cisticola, and Olive Sunbird. We also picked up a number of mammals during our time here, including **Bushbuck, Nyala, Blue Wildebeest, Plains Zebra, Southern Reedbuck, and Waterbuck.** We left the reserve and checked into our comfortable B&B in town before taking a short break, after which we headed to the estuary area, where we'd explore the mudflats. The stiff wind from earlier had now picked up into near gale-force winds that were ripping through the coastal dunes as we approached the mudflats. We arrived at the site and began to work the area, but it was tough going with the strong wind. We did well, though, and managed to pick up **Greater Sand Plover, Grey Plover, Common Ringed, White-fronted,** and a few vagrant **Chestnut-banded Plovers,** immense numbers of **Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stint, Marsh and Terek Sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied Avocet, and Black-winged Stilt.** Perhaps the most impressive sight was a large flock of both **Lesser and Greater Flamingos** numbering well into the hundreds. A scan of a large tern roost yielded **Common, Little, and Caspian Terns** among many **Greater Crested Terns** before another vagrant, this time a **Sooty Tern,** flew in and sat for a little while before disappearing again. Other birds present around the estuary were **Pink-backed Pelican, Yellow-billed Stork, African Spoonbill, and Southern Brown-throated Weaver.** Having had our fill of the wind we called it a day and settled in for the evening, which was topped off by a pod of **Hippopotamuses** walking around town on our way back from dinner.



We had glorious looks at the stunning African Emerald Cuckoo.

Day 15, 14 November 2019. Birding the iSimangaliso Wetland Park

We woke with a sense of uncertainty, as the weather prediction for the day was poor, but we were greeted only by a light drizzle, which soon abated, much to our delight. We made our way into the eastern shores of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, where we spent the morning slowly exploring the area. For the most part the weather held, although we did have the occasional short rain burst, but all of our time out of the vehicle walking around was fortunately dry. The birding was really good this morning, and we did well with our targets, finding almost all of the possible ones. First

was **Brown Scrub Robin**, which we found at our first point of trying – enjoying good scope views as this handsome bird called from deep within the forest. We went on to see further individuals as the day progressed. **Grey Waxbill** was next, and we picked up the soft call of this species and soon found the bird busily moving about in a bush – it popped out into the open, giving all but Art good views before moving on. We kept working for further individual, and eventually found a small group, which gave us good views feeding around Cape Vidal! **Woodward's Batis** took a bit of time to track down – we heard a number of individuals calling, but all were rather uncooperative until our walk around Cape Vidal produced an incredibly confiding pair that showed exceptionally well.



*We enjoyed excellent looks at the scarce **African Cuckoo-Hawk**.*

Our last target finally made an appearance, **Southern Banded Snake Eagle**. We had searched all their known haunts and perches during the morning period, and were on our way back, at almost the last reliable spot, when we picked up an individual perched on a roadside pole. We enjoyed great and prolonged looks at this enigmatic bird before making our way out the reserve and to lunch. Other birds seen during our morning outing included **Crested Guineafowl**, **Tambourine Dove**, **Livingstone's Turaco**, **Burchell's Coucal**, **Green Malkoha**, **Klaas's** and **Red-chested Cuckoos**, **Woolly-necked Stork**, **African Cuckoo-Hawk**, **Black-chested Snake Eagle**, **Crowned** and **Trumpeter Hornbills**, **Little** and **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters**, **White-eared Barbet**, **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird**, **Gorgeous Bushshrike**, **Rufous-naped Lark**, **Rufous-winged** and **Croaking Cisticolas**, **Red-breasted Swallow**, **Yellow-bellied Greenbul**, **Scarlet-chested** and **Purple-banded Sunbirds**, **Dark-backed** and **Thick-billed Weavers**, and **Fan-tailed Widowbird** among others. We also enjoyed a similar suite of mammals to yesterday's, including **Red Bush Squirrel**, **Samango Monkey**, **Natal Red Duiker**, **Bushbuck**, **African Buffalo**, **Blue Wildebeest**, **Waterbuck**, **Southern Reedbuck**, **Plains Zebra**, and **Common Warthog**. We decided to take the rest of the day off following lunch, as a steady rain was coming down and we were unlikely to see too much that we hadn't seen already. We had a slight lull in the rain when time came for

dinner, which held until we were finished, and a quick attempt at **Swamp Nightjar** produced the goods. We enjoyed some good views of this difficult bird before retiring for the day.

Day 16, 15 November 2019. Birding St Lucia and transfer to Eshowe, birding en route

We woke to overcast but dry conditions, but unfortunately a rather heavy wind. For our morning session we headed to the nearby iGwalagwala Forest Trail on the outskirts of town. One of our main targets was **Buff-spotted Flufftail**, and as soon as we stepped out of the car we heard one calling. We could hardly believe our luck, got into position, and attempted to call it in. After a patient wait we were rewarded with brief, but good views of a male as it popped out of the vegetation to look around! An excellent start to the morning! We then started exploring the trail, and despite the wind there were a fair number of birds moving around, but as the wind began to get even worse the activity quickly dried up, and we called it a morning and headed to breakfast. We had a few other minor targets, but the only one that we found was **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, of which we had two sightings, but both brief and leaving us wanting more. Other birds found during our walk included **Crested Guineafowl**, **Tambourine Dove**, **African Green Pigeon**, **Narina Trogon**, **White-eared Barbet**, **Southern Boubou**, **Orange-breasted** and **Gorgeous Bushshrikes**, **Common Square-tailed Drongo**, **Eastern Nicator**, **Black Saw-wing**, **Yellow-bellied Greenbul**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Violet-backed** and **Black-bellied Starlings**, **Brown Scrub Robin**, **Red-capped Robin-Chat**, **Olive** and **Purple-banded Sunbirds**, **Eastern Golden** and **Dark-backed Weavers**, and one of our other highlights, **Green Twinspot** – the latter was a male showed well for us. Following breakfast we gathered our things and began the short trip to Eshowe. We made a detour via Mtunzini to look for Red-headed Quelea in the reedbeds and grasslands fringing the river, but the intense wind made this impossible, but the few birds we saw included a surprise **Southern Banded Snake Eagle** along with **Trumpeter Hornbill** and **Woolly-necked Stork**. We made our way to Ongoye Forest, where we tried for Green Barbet but were greeted with equally miserable conditions, along with showers of rain. We persisted for a little while, but with virtually no birds to show for our efforts we gave up and made our way toward Eshowe, where we'd spend the evening. Shortly after our arrival the rain seemed to set in more steadily, and we called it a day.

Day 17, 16 November 2019. Birding Eshowe and transfer to Oribi Gorge

We began the day at the nearby Dlinza Forest Reserve, where we walked some of the trails going through the forest and spent some time on the canopy tower and the aerial boardwalk. We had a mixed morning. We found **Spotted Ground Thrush**, one of our biggest targets, reasonably early and enjoyed great looks at this well-marked species, with little else to show. Our stint on the tower was halted by a rain shower, and with the conditions gradually worsening we decided to head for an early breakfast. On our way out of the reserve we encountered **Chorister Robin-Chat**, a bird that we had heard many times but of which we had not yet managed to get decent views. Following breakfast we packed and made our way back to the forest, as conditions were much better now. The area was bustling with activity, and we headed straight for the boardwalk/tower. We spent a while atop, scanning for **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon**, but we had to be content with hearing an individual call every so often. Other birds around included **Narina Trogon**, **Trumpeter Hornbill**, **Red-chested Cuckoo**, **Cape White-eye**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Ashy Flycatcher**, **Black-bellied Starling**, and **Black Sparrowhawk**, while **Olive Bushshrike** also remained unseen despite being heard at a number of places. The dainty **Blue Duiker** was also seen at close quarters. We eventually called time here and began the trip to our next destination, Oribi Gorge, but via a few birding stops.

The first was at the Sappi wetlands near Stanger, but with the high water levels there was not too much around. But we enjoyed **Hottentot Teal**, **Black Crake**, **African Jacana**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Little Rush Warbler**, and **Sand Martin** among a few others. A short way farther down along the coast, near Southbroom, was our next port of call, where we searched for the scarce, endemic **Knysna Warbler**. We spent a while working a patch of forest without a hint of the bird, and we were just about to give up and try again another day when we heard an individual call. We got into position to see it and soon picked up the movement of the bird deep within a thicket. The warbler didn't move around too much, and we were able to enjoy extended scope views of it as it called away. Along with the warbler the area was quite busy, and we also enjoyed **Knysna Turaco**, **Black-headed Oriole**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Olive Sunbird**, and **Common Square-tailed Drongo** among others. After our successful afternoon we continued to Oribi Gorge, where we checked into our comfortable lodge with absolutely incredible views over the river below.



*We had many excellent sightings of **Narina Trogon** during the tour.*

Day 18, 17 November 2019. Birding the Oribi Gorge and Lake Eland Game Reserve

With many birds calling from the valley below us we had to force ourselves away from our glorious lodge as we headed for the Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve, where we'd try primarily for the tricky Knysna Woodpecker. We began working the area near the river, slowly moving along, intently listening all the while, but after a concerted effort we left empty-handed and headed a bit farther up the gorge. The area was alive with birds, and while our search for the woodpecker continued we enjoyed **African Harrier-Hawk**, **Little Sparrowhawk**, **African Olive Pigeon**, **Knysna Turaco**, **Narina Trogon**, **Green Wood Hoopoe**, **Common Scimitarbill**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Black-bellied Starling**, **Common Square-tailed Drongo**, **Bar-throated Apalis**, **Cape Batis**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler**, and **Brown Scrub Robin** among others. All of a sudden we saw a woodpecker perched on a dead snag, and as soon as we got our binoculars onto it we confirmed it as our target, **Knysna Woodpecker**. Sadly the bird disappeared, leaving us wanting

more, but after quick burst of playback the bird came right back, giving us excellent and prolonged, close views of this tricky endemic. Successful we made our way back to our lodge for breakfast, apparently just in time before some weather rolled in.



*The sought-after **Knysna Woodpecker** was one of our targets in the Oribi area.*

After breakfast the weather again cleared up, and with a poor prediction for later in the day we decided to head out again to maximize our time of good weather. While getting ready to head to Lake Eland Game Reserve we heard an **Olive Bushshrike** call (another one of our targets), quickly abandoned the car, and went in search of it. Within no time we enjoyed great views of a pair of this handsome species, one of which was the rare olive morph, the other the buff morph. **Mocking Cliff Chat, Southern Black Flycatcher, Amethyst and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds, African Firefinch, and Bronze Mannikin** kept us entertained here too. We eventually were off to the nearby Lake Eland Nature Reserve. The weather fortunately held firm during our time traversing this wonderful reserve, and we covered the full network of roads running through it. Birding was excellent and made for slow travel at times with so much activity, but during our short time in the reserve we enjoyed **Hamerkop, Cape Vulture, Long-crested and Crowned (on the nest) Eagles, Jackal Buzzard, Black and Klaas's Cuckoos, African Black Swift, Half-collared, African Pygmy, and Giant Kingfishers, Eurasian Hobby, Lanner and Peregrine Falcons, Lazy and Wailing Cisticolas, Eastern Golden and Cape Weavers, Mountain Wagtail, Buffy and Striped Pipits, and Cape Longclaw** along with a host of others. We also saw a good sampling of the mammals present in the reserve, namely **Blue Wildebeest, Plains Zebra, Common Eland, Blesbok, Impala, Springbok, Giraffe, and Common Warthog**. We returned to our comfortable lodge for the rest of the afternoon after another successful day in the field.

Day 19, 18 November 2019. Birding Oribi and transfer to Underberg, birding en route

We began the day a bit more sedately after yesterday's success, with a leisurely stroll around the lodge grounds before breakfast. There were a number of birds around, of which the majority were

species we'd seen a number of times already, but also the likes of **Alpine** and **African Black Swifts**, **Cape Rock Thrush**, **Striped Pipit**, **Mocking Cliff Chat**, and **Swee Waxbill** – species we'd seen only a handful of times before. After warming up over breakfast we gathered our things packed up, and drove to Harding, a known stakeout for the regionally rare and Vulnerable (IUCN) **Blue Swallow**. A backroad near the village provided us with some prime montane grassland, where we searched for the swallow – of which only around 30 pairs are estimated to remain in the country. We started scanning the grasslands but were soon distracted by a large number of **Cape Vultures** feeding on a dead cow. A nearby pair of **Grey Crowned Cranes** were also moving about, before we eventually found a trio of **Blue Swallows**. We spent some time watching them, albeit distantly, as they worked the valleys before moving toward the Ingeli mountain range. Our additional two big targets were **Bush Blackcap** and **Barratt's Warbler**, and we arrived on site and immediately heard the warbler. While we were still getting out of the car a nearby **Bush Blackcap** started calling as well, and with little effort we were soon rewarded with excellent views of **Bush Blackcap** – one of the prized South African endemics. After having had our fill of this species we turned to tracking down **Barratt's Warbler**, which was actually calling all over the area. Fortunately, we didn't need to work too hard either, successfully managing to lure one individual from cover and enjoying prolonged and excellent views of this cryptic skulker.



Bush Blackcap is a sought-after South African endemic and showed well for us.

With our targets all having been seen we could enjoy the area and went to see what else was around. It turned out to be a stunning walk, with us finding a large proportion of the remaining montane forest birds possible. **Orange Ground Thrush** showed well, singing up in the canopy, while **White-starred Robin** flitted around lower down in the undergrowth. An **Olive Woodpecker** perched briefly for us to enjoy, while lively **Yellow-throated Woodland Warblers** proved tricky to track down. Other birds noted here included **Forest Buzzard**, **Long-crested Eagle**, **Knysna Turaco**, **Bar-throated Apalis**, **Olive Thrush**, and **Collared Sunbird** among others. Our time came to continue, and we resumed the drive to our ultimate destination,

Underberg. A few species were noted on the drive, such as **Secretarybird**, **White-necked Raven**, **Grey Crowned Crane**, and **African Spoonbill**, and before long we were checking into our comfortable lodge in the foothills of the Drakensberg. We took an afternoon drive around the property, but a big storm was moving through the area with a cold wind and rain hampering the afternoon somewhat before we eventually decided to call it a day and settled in for the evening. Some of the birds present here included **Secretarybird**, **Grey Crowned Crane**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Bokmakierie**, **Yellow Bishop**, and **Cape Canary**. An evening attempt for owls sadly didn't produce any, but a calling **Striped Flufftail** was a good find. We retired early, filled with anticipation for our day up in the mountains tomorrow.

Day 20, 19 November 2019. Birding the Sani Pass

We awoke to a wonderful, clear morning and met up with Stuart, who would take us up the Sani Pass and into Lesotho for the day. We slowly birded our way up the lower parts of the pass, before the South African border, searching for various birds and being very successful. **Red-winged Francolin** showed first, along with **Horus Swift**, **Ground Woodpecker**, **Gurney's Sugarbird**, and, after a bit of searching, **Short-tailed Pipit**. After some persistence we ended up with stunning views of the **Short-tailed Pipit** perched on the ground – something that one almost never sees! The South African border post was buzzing with avian life, and we spent a while enjoying the numerous **Gurney's Sugarbirds** and **Malachite** and **Greater Double-collared Sunbirds** feeding on the flowering aloes. Some of the other species seen in the lower elevations included **Cape Rock Thrush**, **Cape Grassbird**, and **Drakensberg Prinia**. Before long we found ourselves on the famous switchbacks at the upper reaches of the pass, and right on cue we picked up the resident **Drakensberg Rockjumper** and **Drakensberg Siskin**, enjoying excellent and prolonged views of both. As soon as we arrived at the top plateau we picked up **Mountain Pipit**, **Sickle-winged Chat**, and **Sentinel Rock Thrush**, and continuing deeper into Lesotho and searching various sections of the Karoo scrub delivered **Large-billed Lark**, **Grey Tit**, **Layard's Warbler**, **Fairy Flycatcher**, **Yellow Canary**, and **Karoo Prinia** along with more **Mountain Pipits** and **Sickle-winged Chats** – both of which proved to be quite prolific in the area. We then made our way to a **Bearded Vulture** nest, from which a now large chick had just fledged in the last days. While patiently waiting for the vultures to show we picked up the often-tricky **African Rock Pipit** and enjoyed some close views before it disappeared into the scrub. Following lunch we did eventually see our long-awaited **Bearded Vulture** and enjoyed some good scope views of a pair of adults perched on the rocky cliffs. A number of **Cape Vultures** were also present in the area. One bird that had been eluding us up to this point was **Grey-winged Francolin**, and, despite the wind, which was near gale-force strength now and certainly did hamper things, with lots of persistence we managed to find a few **Grey-winged Francolins**, which fortunately showed well. We made our way back down the pass, and birded some areas near Himeville for a little while before eventually retiring for the day. Our primary target was **Wattled Crane**, and we found a pair with a youngster fairly quickly sitting in a farm field. We enjoyed some good scope views of these rare birds and also found **White Stork**, **Grey Crowned Crane**, **Long-tailed Widowbird**, and more. Our last stop produced two owl species, **Western Barn Owl** and **Spotted Eagle-Owl** on their day roosts, capping off another excellent day that had been our last full day of birding on the tour. During the course of the day we also saw many other species, which included **Red-necked Spurfowl**, **African Marsh Harrier**, **Brown-backed Honeybird**, **Red-throated Wryneck**, **White-necked Raven**, **Wailing Cisticola**, **Mountain Wheatear**, and **Cape Bunting**. We also enjoyed mammals such as **Grey Rhebok** and

Sloggett's Vlei Rat. A fitting last dinner of the tour was an excellent, traditional South African braai, completing a wonderful day and indeed an excellent tour.

Day 21, 20 November 2019. Transfer to Johannesburg and departure

We spent the last morning of the tour at leisure around our comfortable lodge, enjoying a few last birds and a wonderful breakfast, before making our way back to Johannesburg. We met up with some friends for tea and snacks en route, which broke the otherwise long drive, but we arrived in good time following a smooth drive and said our farewells at the airport as this great tour came to an end.



Our day on the legendary Sani Pass was one of the standout tour highlights.

I just want to thank Art and Alicia for being great company and excellent clients on this comprehensive South Africa tour. We had a great many special sightings thanks to sticking it out in some trying conditions at times (that damn wind!) and found virtually all of our main target species, with the ultimate highlights probably coming from the fascinating environment of the Northern Cape (Namaqualand and Bushmanland) and our wonderful day on the Sani Pass and into the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. Here's looking forward to the next one!

Bird List - Following IOC (9.2)

Birds 'heard only' are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen.

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following BirdLife International: EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened. South African endemics are bolded.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ostriches (Struthionidae)	
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Guineafowl (Numididae)	
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Crested Guineafowl	<i>Guttera pucherani</i>
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Grey-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila afra</i>
Red-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila levaillantii</i>
Orange River Francolin	<i>Scleroptila gutturalis</i>
Crested Francolin	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>
Cape Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>
Red-necked Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis afer</i>
Swainson's Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>
Common Quail (H)	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
White-backed Duck	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>
Hottentot Teal	<i>Spatula hottentota</i>
Cape Shoveler	<i>Spatula smithii</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Maccoa Duck - VU	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
Nightjars (Caprimulgidae)	
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>
Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>
Swamp Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus natalensis</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
Bradfield's Swift	<i>Apus bradfieldi</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Horus Swift	<i>Apus horus</i>
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Turacos (Musophagidae)	
Livingstone's Turaco	<i>Tauraco livingstonii</i>
Knysna Turaco	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>
Purple-crested Turaco	<i>Tauraco porphyreolophus</i>
Grey Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>
Bustards (Otididae)	
Ludwig's Bustard - EN	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>
Blue Korhaan - NT	<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>
Karoo Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis vigorsii</i>
Northern Black Korhaan	<i>Afrotis afraoides</i>
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
Green Malkoha	<i>Ceuthmochares australis</i>
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Diederik Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Sandgrouse (Pteroclididae)	
Namaqua Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon (H)	<i>Columba delegorguei</i>
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>
African Green Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>
Flufftails (Sarothruridae)	
Buff-spotted Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura elegans</i>
Red-chested Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura rufa</i>
Striped Flufftail (H)	<i>Sarothrura affinis</i>
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>
Black Crake	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>
African Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Cranes (Gruidae)	
Grey Crowned Crane - EN	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
Wattled Crane - VU	<i>Grus carunculata</i>
Blue Crane - VU	<i>Grus paradisea</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	

Common Name	Scientific Name
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Lesser Flamingo - NT	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>
Stone-curlews, Thick-knees (Burhinidae)	
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Oystercatchers (Haematopodidae)	
African Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Senegal Lapwing	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>
Black-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>
Chestnut-banded Plover - NT	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>
Caspian Plover	<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>
Jacanas (Jacanidae)	
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	
Bar-tailed Godwit - NT	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Curlew Sandpiper - NT	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Courasers, Pratincoles (Glareolidae)	
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Damara Tern - VU (H)	<i>Sternula balaenarum</i>
Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Skuas (Stercorariidae)	
Brown Skua	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>
Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Penguins (Spheniscidae)	
African Penguin - EN	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>
Austral Storm Petrels (Oceanitidae)	
Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>
Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross - EN	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross - EN	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>
Northern Storm Petrels (Hydrobatidae)	
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>
Petrels, Shearwaters, Diving Petrels (Procellariidae)	
Southern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>
Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>
Cape Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>
White-chinned Petrel - VU	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>
Sooty Shearwater - NT	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>
Great Shearwater	<i>Ardenna gravis</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
African Openbill	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>
Woolly-necked Stork - VU	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Gannets, Boobies (Sulidae)	
Cape Gannet - EN	<i>Morus capensis</i>
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>
Crowned Cormorant - NT	<i>Microcarbo coronatus</i>
Bank Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>
Cape Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>
Anhingas, Darters (Anhingidae)	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Southern Bald Ibis - VU	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Hamerkop (Scopidae)	
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
Secretarybird (Sagittariidae)	
Secretarybird - VU	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
Ospreys (Pandionidae)	
Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>
Bearded Vulture - NT	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
African Cuckoo-Hawk	<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>
Cape Vulture - EN	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>
Southern Banded Snake Eagle - NT	<i>Circaetus fasciolatus</i>
Bateleur - NT	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
Crowned Eagle - NT	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Martial Eagle - VU	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus wahlbergi</i>
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>
African Goshawk	<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>
Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter rufiventris</i>
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>
Black Harrier - EN	<i>Circus maurus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Forest Buzzard - NT	<i>Buteo trizonatus</i>
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Barn Owls (Tytonidae)	
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Mousebirds (Coliidae)	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
White-backed Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Trogon (Trogonidae)	
Narina Trogon	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Hoopoes (Upupidae)	
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Wood Hoopoes (Phoeniculidae)	
Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
Hornbills (Bucerotidae)	
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus rufirostris</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros alboterminatus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>
Rollers (Coraciidae)	
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>
African Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>
Half-collared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Bee-eaters (Meropidae)	
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
African Barbets (Lybiidae)	
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>
Honeyguides (Indicatoridae)	
Brown-backed Honeybird	<i>Prodotiscus regulus</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Red-throated Wryneck	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>
Bennett's Woodpecker	<i>Campethera bennettii</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Knysna Woodpecker - NT	<i>Campethera notata</i>
Ground Woodpecker - NT (H)	<i>Geocolaptes olivaceus</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Pygmy Falcon	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>
Greater Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Old World Parrots (Psittaculidae)	
Rosy-faced Lovebird	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>
Wattle-eyes, Batises (Platysteiridae)	
Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>
Woodward's Batis	<i>Batis fratrum</i>
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>
Pirit Batis	<i>Batis pririt</i>
Bushshrikes (Malaconotidae)	
Grey-headed Bushshrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
Olive Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus olivaceus</i>
Orange-breasted Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus</i>
Gorgeous Bushshrike	<i>Telophorus viridis</i>
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Crimson-breasted Shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae)	
Grey Cuckooshrike	<i>Ceblepyris caesius</i>
Black Cuckooshrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Magpie Shrike	<i>Urolestes melanoleucus</i>
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Southern Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Figbirds, Orioles, Turnagra (Oriolidae)	
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Drongos (Dicruridae)	
Common Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Monarchs (Monarchidae)	
Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher	<i>Trochocercus cyanomelas</i>
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Rockjumpers (Chaetopidae)	
Drakensberg Rockjumper - NT	<i>Chaetops aurantius</i>
Fairy Flycatchers (Stenostiridae)	
Fairy Flycatcher	<i>Stenostira scita</i>
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger</i>
Grey Tit	<i>Melaniparus afer</i>
Penduline Tits (Remizidae)	
Grey Penduline Tit	<i>Anthoscopus caroli</i>
Cape Penduline Tit	<i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>
Nicators (Nicatoridae)	
Eastern Nicator	<i>Nicator gularis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Karoo Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda subcoronata</i>
Eastern Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda semitorquata</i>
Cape Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda curvirostris</i>
Black-eared Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix australis</i>
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>
Sabota Lark	<i>Calendulauda sabota</i>
Fawn-colored Lark	<i>Calendulauda africanoides</i>
Karoo Lark	<i>Calendulauda albescens</i>
Red Lark - VU	<i>Calendulauda burra</i>
Barlow's Lark	<i>Calendulauda barlowi</i>
Rudd's Lark - EN	<i>Heteromirafra ruddi</i>
Eastern Clapper Lark	<i>Mirafra fasciolata</i>
Cape Clapper Lark	<i>Mirafra apiata</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Mirafra africana</i>
Melodious Lark	<i>Mirafra cheniana</i>
Sclater's Lark - NT	<i>Spizocorys sclateri</i>
Stark's Lark	<i>Spizocorys starki</i>
Botha's Lark - EN	<i>Spizocorys fringillaris</i>
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)	
African Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>
Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>
Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Blue Swallow - VU	<i>Hirundo atrocaerulea</i>
Pearl-breasted Swallow	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Greater Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis cucullata</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>
Red-breasted Swallow	<i>Cecropis semirufa</i>
South African Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon spilodera</i>
Crombecs, African Warblers (Macrosphenidae)	
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Victorin's Warbler	<i>Cryptillas victorini</i>
Leaf Warblers & Allies (Phylloscopidae)	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
African Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Iduna natalensis</i>
Grassbirds & Allies (Locustellidae)	
Knysna Warbler - VU	<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>
Barratt's Warbler	<i>Bradypterus barratti</i>
Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Lazy Cisticola	<i>Cisticola aberrans</i>
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Tinkling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola rufilatus</i>
Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapilla</i>
Wailing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola lais</i>
Rufous-winged Cisticola	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Desert Cisticola	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Cloud Cisticola	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>
Pale-crowned Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cinnamomeus</i>
Wing-snapping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Black-chested Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>
Drakensberg Prinia	<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>
Namaqua Warbler	<i>Phragmacia substriata</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Rudd's Apalis	<i>Apalis ruddi</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flavida</i>
Rufous-eared Warbler	<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Warbler	<i>Euryptila subcinnamomea</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Karoo Eremomela	<i>Eremomela gregalis</i>
Burnt-necked Eremomela	<i>Eremomela usticollis</i>
Laughingthrushes & Allies (Leiothrichidae)	
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Southern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Bush Blackcap - VU	<i>Lioptilus nigricapillus</i>
Chestnut-vented Warbler	<i>Sylvia subcoerulea</i>
Layard's Warbler	<i>Sylvia layardi</i>
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Orange River White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops virens</i>
Sugarbirds (Promeropidae)	
Cape Sugarbird	<i>Promerops cafer</i>
Gurney's Sugarbird - NT	<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornis (Sturnidae)	

Common Name	Scientific Name
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Notopholia corusca</i>
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Burchell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Pale-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus nabouroup</i>
Oxpeckers (Buphagidae)	
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorynchus</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Orange Ground Thrush	<i>Geokichla gurneyi</i>
Spotted Ground Thrush - EN	<i>Geokichla guttata</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa</i>
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Karoo Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas coryphoeus</i>
Bearded Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas quadrivirgata</i>
Kalahari Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas paena</i>
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Brown Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas signata</i>
Grey Tit-Flycatcher	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>
Pale Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pallidus</i>
Chat Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis infuscatus</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis silens</i>
Ashy Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa caerulescens</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>
White-throated Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha humeralis</i>
Red-capped Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>
Chorister Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>
Cape Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
Sentinel Rock Thrush - NT	<i>Monticola explorator</i>
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Buff-streaked Chat	<i>Campicoloides bifasciatus</i>
Sickle-winged Chat	<i>Emarginata sinuata</i>
Karoo Chat	<i>Emarginata schlegelii</i>
Tractrac Chat	<i>Emarginata tractrac</i>
Mocking Cliff Chat	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>
Ant-eating Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>
Mountain Wheatear	<i>Myrmecocichla monticola</i>
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)	
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
Orange-breasted Sunbird	<i>Anthobaphes violacea</i>
Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>
Grey Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra veroxii</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>
Neergaard's Sunbird - NT	<i>Cinnyris neergaardi</i>
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris afer</i>
Marico Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>
Purple-banded Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris bifasciatus</i>
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>
Dusky Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris fuscus</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris superciliaris</i>
Weavers, Widowbirds (Ploceidae)	
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Sociable Weaver	<i>Philetairus socius</i>
Scaly-feathered Weaver	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>
Eastern Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus subaureus</i>
Southern Brown-throated Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthopterus</i>
Lesser Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Dark-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Yellow-crowned Bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estrildidae)	
Red-headed Finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>
Green Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>
Pink-throated Twinspot	<i>Hypargos margaritatus</i>
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Blue Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Sweet Waxbill	<i>Coccyzygia melanotis</i>
Grey Waxbill	<i>Estrilda perreini</i>
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Orange-breasted Waxbill	<i>Amandava subflava</i>
Quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>
Indigobirds, Whydahs (Viduidae)	
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
Mountain Wagtail	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Mountain Pipit - NT	<i>Anthus hoeschi</i>
Nicholson's Pipit	<i>Anthus nicholsoni</i>
Buffy Pipit	<i>Anthus vaalensis</i>
Striped Pipit	<i>Anthus lineiventris</i>
African Rock Pipit - NT	<i>Anthus crenatus</i>
Short-tailed Pipit	<i>Anthus brachyurus</i>
Bushveld Pipit	<i>Anthus caffer</i>
Yellow-breasted Pipit - VU	<i>Anthus chloris</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Common Chaffinch (H)	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Forest Canary	<i>Crithagra scotops</i>
Black-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra atrogularis</i>
Lemon-breasted Canary	<i>Crithagra citrinipectus</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Crithagra mozambica</i>
Cape Siskin	<i>Crithagra totta</i>
Drakensberg Siskin	<i>Crithagra symonsi</i>
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>
Brimstone Canary	<i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>
Streaky-headed Seedeater	<i>Crithagra gularis</i>
White-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>
Protea Canary - NT	<i>Crithagra leucoptera</i>
Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Black-headed Canary	<i>Serinus alario</i>
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Lark-like Bunting	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>
Total seen	495
Total heard	6
Total recorded	501

Mammal List

Common name	Scientific name
Hyraxes (Procaviidae)	
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Elephants (Elephantidae)	
African Elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Bushbabies, Galagos (Galagidae)	
Thick-tailed Greater Galago	<i>Otolemur crassicaudatus</i>
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)	
Samango Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis labiatus</i>
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Squirrels, Chipmunks, Marmots, Prairie Dogs (Sciuridae)	
Red Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus palliatus</i>
South African Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus inauris</i>
Old World Rodents (Muridae)	
Sloggett's Vlei Rat	<i>Otomys sloggetti</i>
Springhares (Pedetidae)	
Spring Hare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>
Rabbits, Hares (Leporidae)	
Cape Scrub Hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Cats (Felidae)	
African Wild Cat	<i>Felis silvestris lybica</i>
Civets, Genets, Linsangs and allies (Viverridae)	
Common Genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>
Mongoose (Herpestidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Yellow Mongoose	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Egyptian Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>
Cape Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>
Common Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>
Meerkat	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>
Canids (Canidae)	
Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>
Cape Fox	<i>Vulpes chama</i>
Eared Seals (Otariidae)	
Cape Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus</i>
Earless Seals (Phocidae)	
Southern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga leonina</i>
Mustelids (Mustelidae)	
Zorilla	<i>Ictonyx striatus</i>
Horses, Asses, Zebras (Equidae)	
Plains Zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>
Cape Mountain Zebra	<i>Equus zebra zebra</i>
Hogs, Pigs (Suidae)	
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
Hippopotamuses (Hippopotamidae)	
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Giraffes, Okapis (Giraffidae)	
Giraffe	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>
Bovids (Bovidae)	
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>
Hartebeest	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Natal Red Duiker	<i>Cephalophus natalensis</i>
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus taurinus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Tsessebe	<i>Damaliscus lunatus lunatus</i>
Blesbok	<i>Damaliscus pygargus phillipsi</i>
Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>
Grey Rhebok	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>
Blue Duiker	<i>Philantomba monticola</i>
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Southern Reedbuck	<i>Redunca arundinum</i>
Mountain Reedbuck	<i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>
African Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>
Nyala	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>
Common Eland	<i>Tragelaphus oryx</i>
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>
Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Oceanic Dolphins (Delphinidae)	
Long-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus capensis</i>
Dusky Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i>
Total seen	49