



**WESTERN CAPE CUSTOM TOUR: AGULHAS PLAINS AND GARDEN ROUTE
TRIP REPORT AUGUST 17-20, 2016**

By Justin Nicolau



Knysna Turaco (photo John Tinkler)

ITINERARY

Date	Location	Overnight
17 August 2016	Cape Town	Breede River
18 August 2016	Garden Route	Wilderness
19 August 2016	Garden Route	Wilderness
20 August 2016	Garden Route	Cape Town

Day 1: 17 August 2016

This trip commenced rather late in the afternoon due to delayed arrivals from further north. Wasting little time, though, the rental car was packed and shot out from the parking lot to start the 3.5-hour journey up the coastline towards the Breede River mouth, where we would be spending our first evening. While navigating our way out of Cape Town we encountered **Hartlaub's** and **Kelp Gulls**, **Common Starling** in brilliant breeding plumage, **House Sparrow**, **African Spoonbill**, **Spur-winged** and **Egyptian Geese**, **Little Egret**, **Black-headed Heron**, **Hadada Ibis**, and a number of others.



Little Egret

Crossing over Sir Lowry's Pass and leaving the peninsula behind us, we picked up species such as **White-necked Raven**, **Jackal Buzzard**, **Yellow Bishop**, **Pied Starling**, **Southern Red Bishop**, and **Southern Fiscal**. We then entered the picturesque landscape of the Overberg, where the mosaic of colorful agricultural lands produced **Cape Spurfowl**, **Blacksmith Lapwing**, **Helmeted Guineafowl**, **Lanner Falcon**, **African Sacred Ibis**, **Grey** and **Purple Herons**, and great numbers of the stately **Blue Crane**, South Africa's national bird. Arriving at the lodge for the most delightful of dinners, we enjoyed refreshing craft beers and freshly-caught fish while being serenaded by **Fiery-necked Nightjar** and a lone **Spotted Eagle-Owl**.



Grey Heron

Day 2: 18 August 2016

Waking up predawn on the banks of the Breede River was a spectacle on its own, until the sun rose and warmed up the surrounding vegetation. A hive of activity ensued, and shortly we were ticking off countless species while eating breakfast. We had **Cape Weaver**, **Streaky-headed Seedeater**, **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**, **Fiscal Flycatcher**, **Cape Robin-Chat**, **Red-eyed Dove**, **Common Waxbill**, **Pin-tailed Whydah**, **Southern Boubou**, **Southern Grey-headed Sparrow**, **Speckled Mousebird**, and a few others, all within minutes of one another. Stomachs eventually filled, we commenced on a short walk around the gardens, where we added **Caspian Tern**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Red-knobbed Coot**, **Reed** and **White-breasted Cormorants**, **African Hoopoe**, **Cape Bunting**, and **Karoo Prinia**, among others.



Southern Double-collared Sunbird

Packing up, we headed north again to bird the diminishing Renosterveld habitat of the Agulhas plains. Here we enjoyed countless new species such as **Malachite Sunbird**, **Cape Sugarbird**, **Pale Chanting Goshawk**, **Cape Grassbird**, **Large-billed Lark**, **Denham's Bustard**, and a good number of the range-restricted **Agulhas Long-billed Lark** before we pushed on toward the forests of the east coast.



Agulhas Long-billed Lark

Arriving in Wilderness in the rain, we were still greeted by a host of species attending the lodge grounds, which included highlights such as **Lemon Dove**, **Southern Boubou**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Cape Bulbul**, **Forest Canary**, and the eye-boggling **Knysna Turaco**, which put on quite the performance, flashing its red flight feathers at it moved from tree to tree.

Day 3: 19 August 2016

Up bright and early, we headed off for a short walk prior to breakfast. It wasn't long and we had picked up **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**, **Cape White-eye**, **African Dusky Flycatcher**, **Fork-tailed Drongo**, **Red-necked Spurfowl**, and a pair of the sought-after **Knysna Woodpecker**, which we spent a good amount of time watching before returning to have breakfast. We arrived to feeders full of **Olive Thrush**, **Chorister Robin-Chat**, **Southern Boubou**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Red-eyed Dove**, **Lemon Dove**, **Common Waxbill**, **Forest Canary**, **Knysna Turaco**, and the diminutive jewels known better as **Swee Waxbill**. A number of other species came in during the course of our meal, allowing for wonderful photographic opportunities.



Swee Waxbill (photo John Tinkler)

Picking up lunch we ventured to another forest patch not far from town, where we enjoyed chacma baboon, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Olive Woodpecker**, **White-starred Robin**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler**, **Forest Buzzard**, and a number of others after we had ventured towards the local wetlands, where we found **Burchell's Coucal**, **Brown-throated Martin**, **Little Rush** and **Lesser Swamp Warblers**, **Common Moorhen**, **White-backed Duck**, **Southern Pochard**, **Greater Flamingo**, **African Rail**, **Black Crake**, and splendid views of a notorious skulker, the **Red-chested Flufftail**. Another fantastic day spent on the Garden Route!



Red-chested Flufftail (photo Andrew de Klerk)

Day 4: 20 August 2016

Today marked our last, and we started it with a predawn walk around town, where we picked up the usual garden birds we were well accounted with, but we also managed saturating views of **Knysna Warbler** and great views of **White-starred Robin** and **Olive Bushshrike**. Back at the lodge we were surrounded once again with a very active bird feeder keeping us highly entertained before we bid Wilderness farewell and headed out to start our five-hour return leg to Cape Town. Along the roadside we had countless **Blue Cranes**, a full house of corvids, and the addition of **Booted Eagle** and **African Harrier Hawk**.



Blue Crane (photo Stephen Hammer)

Arriving with time to spare we headed for the local sewage treatment works, a mosaic of ponds and sand dune habitats, which provided for some really good birding. First off we managed to lay eyes on **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**, a first of its kind for southern Africa and a bird which had been drawing much attention to itself for the few days it had been present in the area. Entering the sewage works itself, we picked up large numbers of waterfowl such as **Cape Teal**, **Southern Pochard**, **Maccoa Duck**, **Spur-winged Goose**, **Egyptian Goose**, and other water species like **Pied Avocet**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Glossy Ibis**, and **Hartlaub's** and **Kelp Gulls**, as well as **Levaillant's Cisticola**, **African Marsh Harrier**, and a large number of **Greater Flamingos** in and among the commoner species. With time running out, we headed for the hotel, at which we parted ways after a really successful introduction to the Western Cape Province of South Africa.



Greater Flamingo (photo Stephen Hammer)

AGULHAS PLAINS AND GARDEN ROUTE BIRD LIST AUGUST 2016		
Bold = country endemic Status: NT = Near-threatened, VU = Vulnerable, EN = Endangered		
Common Name (IOC 6.3)	Scientific Name (IOC 6.3)	Trip
	ANSERIFORMES	
Ducks, Geese and Swans	Anatidae	
White-backed Duck	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>	1
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	1
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	1

Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	1
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	1
Cape Shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>	1
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	1
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	1
Maccoa Duck - NT	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	1
	GALLIFORMES	
<u>Guineafowl</u>	<u>Numididae</u>	
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	1
<u>Pheasants and allies</u>	<u>Phasianidae</u>	
Cape Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>	1
Red-necked Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis afer</i>	1
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	H
	PODICIPEDIFORMES	
<u>Grebes</u>	<u>Podicipedidae</u>	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	1
	PHOENICOPTERIFORMES	
<u>Flamingos</u>	<u>Phoenicopteridae</u>	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	1
	PELECANIFORMES	
<u>Ibises, Spoonbills</u>	<u>Threskiornithidae</u>	
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	1
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	1
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	1
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	1
<u>Hérons, Bitterns</u>	<u>Ardeidae</u>	
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	1
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	1
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	1
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1
	SULIFORMES	
<u>Cormorants, Shags</u>	<u>Phalacrocoracidae</u>	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>	1
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	1
Cape Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	1
<u>Anhingas, Darters</u>	<u>Anhingidae</u>	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	1
	ACCIPITRIFORMES	
<u>Kites, Hawks and Eagles</u>	<u>Accipitridae</u>	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	1

African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	1
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>	1
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	1
African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	1
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1
Forest Buzzard	<i>Buteo trizonatus</i>	1
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	1
	OTIDIFORMES	
<u>Bustards</u>	<u>Otididae</u>	
Denham's Bustard - NT	<i>Neotis denhami</i>	1
Southern Black Korhaan - V	<i>Afrotis afra</i>	H
	GRUIFORMES	
<u>Flufftails</u>	<u>Sarothruridae</u>	
Red-chested Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura rufa</i>	1
<u>Rails, Crakes and Coots</u>	<u>Rallidae</u>	
African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>	1
Black Crake	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>	1
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	1
<u>Cranes</u>	<u>Gruidae</u>	
Blue Crane - VU	<i>Grus paradisea</i>	1
	CHARADRIIFORMES	
<u>Stone-curlews, Thick-knees</u>	<u>Burhinidae</u>	
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	H
<u>Oystercatchers</u>	<u>Haematopodidae</u>	
African Oystercatcher - NT	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	1
<u>Stilts, Avocets</u>	<u>Recurvirostridae</u>	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	1
<u>Plovers</u>	<u>Charadriidae</u>	
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	1
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	1
White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	1
<u>Sandpipers, Snipes</u>	<u>Scolopacidae</u>	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1
<u>Gulls, Terns and Skimmers</u>	<u>Laridae</u>	
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>	1
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	1
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	1
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	1
	COLUMBIFORMES	
<u>Pigeons, Doves</u>	<u>Columbidae</u>	

Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	1
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	1
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>	1
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	1
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	1
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	1
	MUSOPHAGIFORMES	
<u>Turacos</u>	<u>Musophagidae</u>	
Knysna Turaco	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>	1
	CUCULIFORMES	
<u>Cuckoos</u>	<u>Cuculidae</u>	
Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>	1
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	H
	STRIGIFORMES	
<u>Owls</u>	<u>Strigidae</u>	
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	H
	CAPRIMULGIFORMES	
<u>Nightjars</u>	<u>Caprimulgidae</u>	
Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	H
	APODIFORMES	
<u>Swifts</u>	<u>Apodidae</u>	
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	1
	COLIIFORMES	
<u>Mousebirds</u>	<u>Coliidae</u>	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	1
	CORACIIFORMES	
<u>Kingfishers</u>	<u>Alcedinidae</u>	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	1
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>	1
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	1
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1
	BUCEROTIFORMES	
<u>Hoopoes</u>	<u>Upupidae</u>	
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	1
	PICIFORMES	
<u>Honeyguides</u>	<u>Indicatoridae</u>	
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>	H
<u>Woodpeckers</u>	<u>Picidae</u>	
Knysna Woodpecker - NT	<i>Campethera notata</i>	1
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	1
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>	1
	FALCONIFORMES	

<u>Caracaras, Falcons</u>	<u>Falconidae</u>	
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>	1
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	1
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1
	<u>PASSERIFORMES</u>	
<u>Wattle-eyes, Batises</u>	<u>Platysteiridae</u>	
Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>	1
<u>Bushshrikes</u>	<u>Malaconotidae</u>	
Olive Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus olivaceus</i>	1
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	1
Southern Tchagra	<i>Tchagra tchagra</i>	1
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	1
Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	1
<u>Cuckooshrikes</u>	<u>Campephagidae</u>	
Grey Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina caesia</i>	1
<u>Shrikes</u>	<u>Laniidae</u>	
Southern Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	1
<u>Figbirds, Orioles</u>	<u>Oriolidae</u>	
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	1
<u>Drongos</u>	<u>Dicruridae</u>	
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	1
<u>Crows, Jays</u>	<u>Corvidae</u>	
Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	1
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	1
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	1
<u>Larks</u>	<u>Alaudidae</u>	
Agulhas Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda brevirostris</i>	1
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>	1
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	1
<u>Bulbuls</u>	<u>Pycnonotidae</u>	
Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	1
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>	1
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	1
<u>Swallows, Martins</u>	<u>Hirundinidae</u>	
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	1
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	1
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>	1
<u>Crombecs, African Warblers</u>	<u>Macrospenidae</u>	
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>	1
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	1
<u>Leaf Warblers and allies</u>	<u>Phylloscopidae</u>	
Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>	1

<u>Reed Warblers and allies</u>	<u>Acrocephalidae</u>	
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	1
<u>Grassbirds and allies</u>	<u>Locustellidae</u>	
Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>	1
<u>Knysna Warbler - VU</u>	<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>	1
<u>Cisticolas and allies</u>	<u>Cisticolidae</u>	
Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapilla</i>	1
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	1
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>	1
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>	1
<u>White-eyes</u>	<u>Zosteropidae</u>	
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops virens</i>	1
<u>Sugarbirds</u>	<u>Promeropidae</u>	
<u>Cape Sugarbird</u>	<i>Promerops cafer</i>	1
<u>Starlings, Rhabdornis</u>	<u>Sturnidae</u>	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Notopholia corrusca</i>	1
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>	1
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	1
<u>Thrushes</u>	<u>Turdidae</u>	
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	1
<u>Chats, Old World Flycatchers</u>	<u>Muscicapidae</u>	
Karoo Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas coryphoeus</i>	1
Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, vagrant	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	1
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis silens</i>	1
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	1
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	1
Chorister Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>	1
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>	1
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	1
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	1
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>	1
<u>Sunbirds</u>	<u>Nectariniidae</u>	
Grey Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra veroxii</i>	1
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>	1
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>	1
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris afer</i>	1
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	1
<u>Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches</u>	<u>Passeridae</u>	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	1
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	1

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	1
<u>Weavers, Widowbirds</u>	<u>Ploceidae</u>	
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	1
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	1
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	1
<u>Waxbills, Munias and allies</u>	<u>Estrildidae</u>	
Sweet Waxbill	<i>Coccyzygia melanotis</i>	1
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	1
<u>Indigobirds, Whydahs</u>	<u>Viduidae</u>	
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	1
<u>Wagtails, Pipits</u>	<u>Motacillidae</u>	
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	1
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>	1
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	1
<u>Finches</u>	<u>Fringillidae</u>	
Forest Canary	<i>Crithagra scotops</i>	1
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	1
Brimstone Canary	<i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>	1
Streaky-headed Seedeater	<i>Crithagra gularis</i>	1
White-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>	1
<u>Buntings</u>	<u>Emberizidae</u>	
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	1
TOTAL		148