



Greater Double-collared Sunbirds showed extremely well at Grootvadersbosch (Simon Mitchell)

SOUTH AFRICA

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For many wildlife enthusiasts South Africa conjures images of large mammals and Kruger National Park. However, it also has a fantastic variety of birds to offer, many of them endemic. Our tour took us from the spectacular fynbos-clad mountains of the Western Cape extending where snow-tipped peaks drop precipitously all the way down to rocky beaches home to nesting penguins and cormorants. We visited to the extreme dry of the Karoo desert home to a wonderful selection of often tricky and nomadic lark species and the spectacular forested mist-belts and gorges. High altitude passes into Lesotho contrasted with flat high-altitude plateaus and marshes around Wakkerstroom and with each location new birds abounded.

The 2014 Birdquest to South Africa continued our long run of successful trips to this classic birding destination. We saw a whole host of fantastic birds, including Southern Bald Ibis, Lammergeier, Black Harrier, Red-winged Francolin, Blue and Wattled Cranes, six species of bustard, Cape Parrot, African Grass Owl, Knysna Woodpecker, African Broadbill, no less than 18 species of lark, including all four possible

species of Long-billed Lark, Blue Swallow, three endemic tits, Bush Blackcap, Orange Ground Thrushes a plethora of chats, both Rockjumpers, Namaqua Warbler, Barratt's, Knysna and Victorin's Warblers (all of which showed well), Karoo Eremomela, Yellow-tufted and Yellow-breasted Pipits, Olive Bush-shrike, Southern Tchagra, both sugarbirds, Cape and Drakensburg Siskins, Black-headed and Protea Canaries. On the mammal front highlights were the expected of Southern Right Whales (which performed sensationally) as well as Cape Porcupine and African Wildcat



The spectacular view from Sir Lowry's Pass over False Bay (Simon Mitchell)

Having met for our evening meal the previous night we were all assembled early the next morning to head out on our pelagic from Simonstown Quay. With the winds having eased we were pleased to find we would be going at all - since the previous forecasts had meant we wouldn't be guaranteed a departure. As we passed Cape Point we began to note our first White-chinned Petrels and Shy Albatross of the trip and noted a single Southern Giant Petrel. Continuing South we headed to the area we hoped to encounter trawlers pulling in their catch. For South African pelagic this can be a 'make or break' as often thousands of seabirds gather around trawlers whilst they may be at relatively low densities on the open sea. After an hour or so of powering across the waves we breathed a sigh of relief as our first trawler appeared as a speck on the horizon.

As we pulled adjacent the trawler a mass of birds greeted us, soon after a second trawler arrived nearby, with the two eventually intersecting their paths, producing an even greater spectacle of birds. At least 3000 White-chinned Petrels, together with over 800 Pintado (Cape) Petrels swarmed all around us, together with around 500 Shy Albatross, 75 Black-browed Albatross, 15 Sooty Shearwater, 80 Wilson's Storm Petrels, 3 Northern Giant and 7 Southern Giant Petrels (as well as another 15 or so unidentified Giant Petrel sp.). Amongst the melee we also managed to pick up a few more species, with singles of Great Shearwater, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross and best of all, both Northern and Southern Royal Albatrosses!

Heading back to dry land we all agreed it had been an excellent day. There was even enough time to pick up several additional species as we approached land (Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorants, Cape and

Hartlaub's Gulls, African Black Oystercatcher). A brief stop on a hilly fynbos-covered pass near our hotel on our return produced our first Cape Robin-chats, Cape Sugarbirds, Cape Bunting, Rock Kestrel and a brief glimpse of a group of Cape Siskin, which we hoped to improve on later in the trip.



A Shy Albatrosses squabbles with Southern Giant Petrel for a trawler-caught squid. (Simon Mitchell)

After lunch we made our way to Strandfontein Sewage Works. Here we found an excellent variety of new species. Along the and grassy sides of the lagoons we located, Cape Sparrows, Cape Wagtails, Cape Francolin, Cape Longclaw and Levalliant's Cisticola as well as hearing Little Rush Warbler. on the pools an excellent variety of waterbirds were present including Cape Teal, Southern Pochard, Yellow-billed Duck, Southern Pochard and Egyptian Goose. Amongst these we also found Little, Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes and a single Maccoa Duck - the only one of the trip. Other waterbirds included Purple, Grey and Black-headed Heron, Sacred and Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Black-crowned Night Heron, Purple Heron, Grey Heron and Black-headed Heron. Red-knobbed Coots were present in some numbers, and along the reedy edges we picked up Common Moorhen and African Swamphens. One a shallower pool, we also noted a few shorebirds, including Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Turnstone and Greenshank. Roosting Gulls and Terns included several Greater Crested, Sandwich and Caspian Terns and Cape, Hartlaub's and Grey-headed Gulls.

Setting off early we made our way up into the Hottentot Holland mountains. We focussed our efforts at Sir Lowry's Pass - a site famous for the both its spectacular scenery and very special birds. Setting off through the fynbos-covered slopes, we soon encountered good numbers of Cape Sugarbirds flitting between the flowering bushes. Not long after we spotted our first Grey-backed Cisticolas and although the bird were somewhat flighty, gained reasonable view of a flock of Cape Siskins as they flicked amongst the rocky outcrops.

Heading lower down the slopes we soon heard the distinctive song of one of our key target species - a Victorin's Warbler. Fortunately the bird was extremely co-operative and we soon gained sensational views down to just a few feet. Continuing our walk along the outcrops we listened intently for the song of our other target bird - Cape Rockjumper. Just as we reached the furthest point of our walk we heard a distant snatch of song. Scoping up a distant blob on a rock spire gave a sense of elation - a Rockjumper! Gradually edging



Victorin's Warbler eventually performed wonderfully. (Simon Mitchell)

closer to the bird we eventually gained close views of a pair which performed extremely well. Our return walk included good view of Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock-thrush and Familiar Chat.



African Penguins and Cape Batis were among the highlights at Betty's Bay. (Simon Mitchell)

Our next port of call was at Betty's Bay. Here we visited another African Penguin colony, where as well as watching large numbers of penguins splashing in the surf, we also got improved views of Bank, Crowned and Cape Cormorants sat on the rocks. Several African Black Oystercatchers were feeding along the beach. Next we called in at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. Although dull conditions meant forest birding was difficult we did pick up several interesting new species including our first Cape Batis, Fiscal Flycatcher, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher and Olive Thrush. Overhead our only Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk of the trip was very high up, but could be identified from photos.

Heading out from our hotel near Cape Town very early we made our way towards the Swellendam area and the close by De Hoop Nature Reserve. Shortly after passing through Bredasdorp we began birding the grasslands in earnest. Numerous Red-capped Larks, African Stonechats and Capped Wheatears flicked along the fence lines, whilst several Large-billed Larks were found in the open fields. We soon located our first group of Karoo Korhaan in a roadside field. However, we were almost immediately distracted from them when a smart male Denham's Bustard flew overhead. By the end of the day we had amassed rather impressive totals of 4 and 8 birds for the respective species.

Continuing into De Hoop Nature reserve we headed down to the shallower end of coastal vlei (a shallow naturally formed water body just inside the dunes. This held good numbers of waterfowl including Cape Shoveler and a few South African Shelduck.



Spotted Thick-knees showed well at De Hoop N.R. (Simon Mitchell)

Our next priority was to find the sometimes tricky Cape Clapper Lark. After some persistence in a staked out area we all gained good views of the bird (here of the subspecies, proposed as a perhaps a separate species). Continuing to the scrub around the deeper sections of the vlei we came across our first Klaas's Cuckoo. Good numbers of swifts fed overhead here, including several African Black Swifts and a few Horus Swifts which we picked out amongst the mass of White-rumped and Little. Two Water Thick-knee flushed from the water's edge and shortly after a pair of Spotted Thick-knee performed extremely well in a rocky open area nearby.

The star find of the afternoon was connecting with a single Southern Tchagra. Unfortunately the bird went to ground very quickly after the initial sighting, although most of the group managed reasonable views. Also seen were good numbers of Great Crested Grebes on the water, and a few Cape Batis and Common Waxbills around the fringes.

Moving on to a different area of De Hoop we gained much improved views of our earlier distant Cape Vulture. Also in there are were several much closer Denham's Bustards and a pair of confiding Agulhas Long-billed Larks. As we left to De Hoop to head to our accommodation a Black Sparrowhawk showed well in a close Eucalyptus tree several Spotted Eagle Owls were present along the roadside telegraph poles as dusk fell.



Cardinal Woodpeckers can be extremely tame. (Simon Mitchell)

Having succeeded in seeing all the key species at De Hoop and the Agulhas grasslands the previous day we decided to visit a large patch of mist-belt forest along the escarpment. This proved to be an excellent move, and during the course of the morning we encountered a number of species which were not seen anywhere else on the trip. Several Forest Canaries were on the fringes of the forest were are first sighting. Calm and sunny conditions prevailed which allowed us to track down several difficult denizens of the submontane woodland. Several Greater Double-collared Sunbird showed wonderfully as we made our way further into the reserve. A number of Cape Batis and Blue-mantled Crested Flycatchers were also seen well. A pair of Terrestrial Bulbuls appeared briefly along the side of the track, but provided only composite views through the vegetation. Soon we heard the song of one of our key target species: an Olive Bush-shrike. Attempts to

draw the bird in were initially met with frustratingly brief glimpses, but eventually we all gained excellent views of this colourful Southern African endemic.

Continuing deeper into the thickly vegetated valleys we heard our first of several Knysna Warblers. For the next couple of hours we tried to gain views of three different birds. With only brief glimpses we began to think this ace ultra-skulker had defeated us. We decided on one last attempt by leaving the tape in the middle of open patch which we could look down on - a tactic borrowed from searches for Flufftails and Grasswrens in other parts of the world. It paid off when the cryptic little *Bradyptera* hopped out and sang right out in the open in response! Another excellent sighting came when we spotted a Forest Buzzard calling and circling over an open patch above the trees!

Moving on from the forests we made a relaxing stop for lunch where Black Saw-wings flittered past outside and a showy Cardinal Woodpecker repeatedly picked at one of the fence-posts in the café's garden. On our way to way back to came town we stopped tourists in Fishhoek with their cameras pointed out to see. Setting our scopes up we could see a Southern Right Whale, much closer than the previous individuals, out in the bay. Noticing it was heading towards the end of the harbour breakwater, we headed that way in the hope of improving our views. Arriving at the harbour we hurried down the breakwater in time to be treated to a majestic performance of this incredible fifty tonne animal hauling itself half clear of the water and smashing back down sending spray in all directions - and all within about thirty metres of where we stood! At dinner that evening the 'bird of the day' was declared, in no uncertain terms, to have been a whale!



This Southern Right Whale repeatedly breaching was one of the highlights of the whole trip . (Simon Mitchell)

Setting out early from Cape Town, we arrived at the grasslands near Darling just after dawn. Here coastal fynbos gave way to flowering grasslands, with fields variously coloured yellow, lilac or white depending on the predominant species. Our first Southern Black Korhaan was a male which gave a sudden alarm / display flight before circling around and landing back in the long grass it had taken off from. Shortly after we heard the distinctive display of Cape Clapper Larks and soon located one of the birds - noting is more rufous, more patterned back indicative of the *apiata* rather than *marjoriae* subspecies we had seen in the Agulhas grasslands. Continuing through the grasslands we passed gaudy Southern Red Bishops, Cape Weavers,

White-throated Swallows. A pair of Blue Cranes close to the roadside performed wonderfully and even gave a short bout of display! Soon after we called at our stake-out for Cloud Cisticola. Befitting its name several birds were singing from invisibly high in the sky as we arrived. However, after a short walk into the fields we also located a trio of birds which chased one-another low across the grassland, at least one of which paused for long enough to give good views.



Southern Black Korhaan, Bokmakierie and Blue Crane all showed well during our morning near Darling (Simon Mitchell)

Next we moved to an area of salt pans in search of Chestnut-banded Plover. Although we couldn't find any several other species of both African and newly arrived Palearctic waders were present. Most numerous among these were Curlew Sandpipers, but we also found good numbers of Little Stint and Greenshank. Additionally good numbers of Grey, Ringed, Kittlitz's, White-fronted and Three-banded Plover were seen.



The dapper White-throated Swallow was common throughout the tour. (Simon Mitchell)

Before checking in at our hotel we called in at another area of fields north of Langebaan. Here we soon found the key staked-out species we were hoping for. Several Sickle-winged Chats competed for our attention with a single male Grey-backed Sparrowlark and after a brief search we located at least two Cape Long-billed Larks.

In the evening we called in at a site near Langebaan where a pair of breeding Verreaux's Eagles showed well. Continuing to West Coast National Park we searched in vain for Cape Penduline Tits, but did locate several Karoo Prinia, Grey-backed Cisticola

We spent the early part of the day in West Coast National Park. Given the wind and rain we spent the first hour searching for wetland species over an excellent hide overlooking a small pool. As the wind gradually calmed we found both Lesser Swamp and Little Rush Warblers as well as at least two African Black Crakes. Our first Southern Masked Weaver collected nesting material just outside the hide.

For the rest of the morning we split our time between searching for the remaining fynbos species we hadn't encountered and scoping across the mudflats, scanning through the Palearctic waders. The scrub was alive with Southern Double-collared and Malachite Sunbirds, Karoo Prinias, Brimstone and White-throated Canaries, Cape Robin-chats and Karoo Scrub-robins, but other species required rather more effort. We eventually located a couple of Chestnut-vented Tit-babblers, which performed well. Two close fly-over Southern Black Korhaans were welcome bonus. Along the mudflats we picked up a similar selection of waterbirds to those seen the previous day, the notable exception being our first Sanderling and far greater numbers of Whimbrel (at least 30 birds). Frustratingly it seemed that many of the Palearctic migrants had not yet arrived.

From Calvinia we headed further North towards the towns of Brandvlei and Kenhart. As dawn broke the grey light turned golden and revealed a parched landscape not dissimilar to North American Sage-brush. Small stunned shrubs dotted every couple of meters extended as the eye could see. En route a Southern Black Korhaan exploded from the nearby scrub and Ludwig's Bustard powered across the skyline at some distance. During the day we made several stops in likely habitat for a number of species. In the thickets areas of karoo scrub we found a single Red Lark, Black-chested Prinia, Red-cheeked Warbler and Karoo Chat whilst sparser areas harboured good numbers of Tractrac Chat, Karoo Long-billed Lark as well as at least a couple of the 'Bradfield's' form of Sabota Lark - a taxon sometimes treated as a separate species.



We had extremely good numbers and views of Namaqua Sandgrouse in the Karoo this year. (Simon Mitchell)

In the dried out washes the denser thickets held several Namaqua Warblers (an exceptionally Prinia-like species) as well as African Reed Warbler, Fairy Flycatcher and our first Pirit Batis. An early returning Willow Warbler was something of a surprise. Nearby an even more amazing discovery occurred when Tom spotted 'a small brown bird' only a couple of meters from where we had pulled the vehicle off the road - a male Namaqua Sandgrouse tending three eggs!

As the day wore on we checked a number of 'dams' created to provide water for livestock. Although these provided good numbers of Lark-like Buntings, White-throated, Brimstone and Yellow Canaries, we could not find our most difficult target of Sclater's Lark. Waiting at the Northern-most tanks did however, produce a two very unexpected visitors in the shape of a brief pair of Scaly-feathered Finches. A number of raptors were present on the roadside posts including several Southern Chanting Goshawks, a single Greater Kestrel and a Black-chested Snake-eagle. In the late evening we found another showy group of Karoo Korhaans which seem relatively unconcerned by our presence.

In order to make the most of our final day in the Karoo we set off well before dawn. Heading South from Calvinia we timed our departure to arrive in another productive area at dawn. This tactic soon paid off and

we were soon working to pick out other species from the Tractrac and Familiar Chats. Our third group of Karoo Korhaans for the trip walked nonchalantly past the vehicle.



Three different groups of Karoo Korhaan were seen – allowing some excellent views. (Simon Mitchell)

For breakfast we stopped in an large drainage where the occasional water supported a substantial thicket. Here huge numbers of Namaqua Sandgrouse were coming down to drink and we estimated that we'd seen over 400 during the course of the morning! The thicket also supported a number of other species including Pririt Batis, both Malachite and Double-collared Sunbirds and a single male Dusky Sunbird, which was kind enough to pause for thirty seconds on a flowering bush close to the vehicle.

Having witnessed a Karoo Eremomela evaporate before our eyes just before breakfast (seen by the leader only), it was great relief when a group of four birds flicked around in the roadside drainage for just long enough for the whole group to gain reasonable views, before, as typical for the species, disappearing off across the shrub-studded desert. Continuing further south we spent an extending period searching a rocky pass for Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, but unfortunately heard no response from these increasing shy birds, and with time running short to reach the airport we unfortunately had to leave empty handed. However, we picked up a few good species here, including a showy Acacia Pied Barbet, which ranked among the birds of the trip for some people. Arriving back in Cape Town late afternoon we then flew to Durban for the next leg of our trip.

After staying just South of Durban we headed toward Oribi Pass as quickly as we could the following morning. We arrived in what was apparently the nick of time. The low cloud hand previous day's rain had just began to lift and a large variety of species were feeding on a hatch of Lacewings over the burnt open areas. Immediately upon arrival we encountered wonderful view of our first Crowned and Trumpeter Hornbills as the swooped up into the air to catch the lethargic insect in flight. Amongst them our first Black-bellied and a number of Red-winged Starling were even more agile. Through the din of different bird sounds we picked out the distinctive sound of a calling Knysna Woodpecker. A couple of attempts at playback seemed to illicit no real response, with the birds continuing to call, with unexplained invisibility, at close proximity. After a brief

interruption from an excellent and showy quartet of Knysna Turaco, we resumed our search, and quickly pinned down a pair of calling Knysna Woodpeckers at very close quarters.

Continuing down the winding roads into the impressive forested gorge we found a number of new species, including brief Chorister and Natal Robin-chats, a number of Dark-backed Weavers and our first Green-backed Cameropteras. Working hard to located additional species, we eventually eked out a few more species, including our first Collared Sunbirds of the trip and a single Red-fronted Tinkerbird. Just as we were about to continue our journey North, Adie spotted movement at the side to the road - a Brown Scrub-robin! Unfortunately the bird immediately went to ground and despite a patient wait we couldn't relocate it. Again as we had almost returned to the vehicles we paused - the Scrub-robin was singing the the tree above us! After some careful reposition of the telescope we were all able to gain good views of the bird - singing from higher in the canopy than any of us had every witnessed a Scrub-robin do so before!



Knysna Woodpecker was a key target bird at Oribi Gorge, but Brown-hooded Kingfisher was an unexpected bonus. (Simon Mitchell

The last day of September saw us make our way up towards Lesotho through the winding roads of Sani Pass. The increasingly blustery condition and early time of year made conditions very challenging, but in the end our guides, working together, rose to the challenge. We began on the lower stretches of the pass where stops for Bush Blackcap and Barrat's Warbler yielded only brief snatches of song from rather unresponsive birds. Continuing further up the pass we gained good views of our first Ground Woodpeckers and Buff-streaked Chats, as well as our first Sentinel Rock-thrush. However, it was bad news for those hoping for the normally expected Sugarbird double, since not a single Gurney's Sugarbird had been recorded in the pass since at least June and we couldn't even locate any patches of flowering Protea flowers - this species favoured nectar-source.

Winding further up the pass the wind began to pick up to the point of where most birds were keeping low. However we still picked up several pairs of Drakensburg Siskins and a trio of Grey-winged Francolins. Even more satisfying was a single Southern Grey Tit - a species which we had narrowly missed in the Karoo.



Drakensburg Rockjumper and Ground Woodpecker both performed well at Sani Pass. (Simon Mitchell)

Stopping for lunch, the wind continued to blow, but we were still able to admire an adult Lammergeier on its cliff-side nest. After much effort we finally lured our first Drakensburg Rockjumpers into view, and despite the blowy conditions were able to tempt a Yellow-tufted Pipit into song for long enough to locate it with the scope and allow good views for the whole group. We were even less confident of finding Mountain Pipit, with the earliest ever date at this location being just 3 days earlier than our visit. However, with three guides splitting off in different directions we were in luck when Aldo flushed a bird which the whole group was eventually able to view well, running over open ground.

A few more enjoyable stops on the way back down included a very showy Sentinal Rock-thrush near the Top Chalet, a roadside Red-throated Wryneck and a rather difficult (but eventually visible) Barrat's Warbler toward the bottom of the pass.

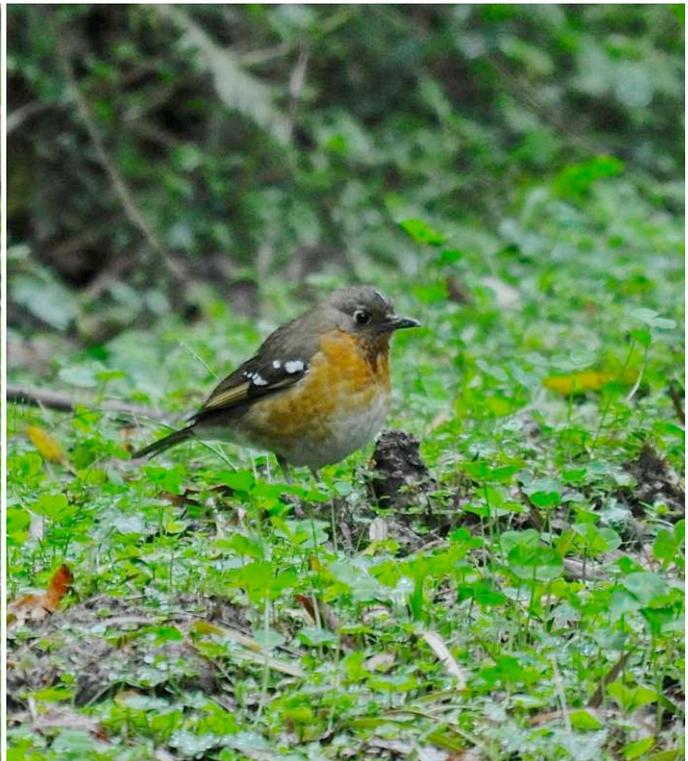
Following our successful day at Sani Pass we headed lower down the slopes to some remaining fragments of mist belt forest. We arrived before dawn at Marusa Indigenous Forest, where despite the weather we witnessed two good flybys from a pair of Cape Parrots - an extremely hard-to-find species in the area. A cold wind in exactly the wrong direction meant much of the rest of the site was 'blown-out' so we opted to switch to a larger and more sheltered forest fragment nearby. This proved to be an excellent move and, despite the wind and at times heavy rain, we accrued a good number of difficult forest species, including African Crowned Eagle, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Thick-billed Weaver, Chorister Robin-chat, Olive Woodpecker, Forest Canary, an all-too-brief Narina Trogon and two showy Orange Ground-thrushes, which fed right out on the path!

After this we briefly re-visited areas around the town of Creighton. An opportunistic stop was made when we spotted a large patch of flowering proteas on a roadside escarpment. After just a few minutes of careful scanning we located our hoped-for target species - a Gurney's Sugarbird. Outside Sani Pass (where the species had recently been absent for the first winter in many years) this species is difficult to find reliable locations for, so we were extremely pleased with our grip-back! Continuing through the agricultural fields we located our only Pale-crowned Cisticola of the trip, together with a number of Long-tailed Widowbirds, several species of swallow (although we couldn't relocate the Blue Swallows from two days previous) and a cat which ostensibly looked and behaved like an African Wild Cat!

As we made our way back towards our accommodation a brief stop in Himeville produced an unexpected third Lammergeier as well a number of low-flying Alpine Swifts which zoomed right past our heads, and a single Black-hooded Oriole. We finished the day at the bottom of Sani Pass where several tame Cape Rock Thrushes and Buff-streaked Chats were wonderfully entertaining and the fields towards Pevensey, where among the highlights were our first Southern Bald Ibises.

Having recorded the great majority of target species in the Underberg area we tried an alternative approach by heading to the grasslands and mist-belt forests around Howick. This proved to be an excellent course of action, allowing us to catch up with a few species which hadn't yet returned to the higher altitudes to breed.

In the early morning at Howick Falls we picked up a pair of Mountain Wagtail and several Bronze Mannikins. Next we made a short call at the nearby Umgeni Game Reserve where the highlight was several displaying widowbirds, including showy males of both Fan-tailed and Red-collared. Next we continued to an area of forest where a number of excellent species were seen well. Amazingly we repeated our close-quarters encounters with Orange Ground-thrushes along the road, and even managed the same with a Chorister Robin-chat. The highlight however came when we found not one, but two Bush Blackcaps feeding close to the roadside - a species we had tried for extensively without success on previous days. Soon after we continued to a small private farm where even better views of Chorister Robin-chat were had, together with our first Red-backed Mannikins. Finally we headed a little further through the grasslands where we came upon a pair of the extremely localised Wattled Cranes feeding with a pair of Southern Crowned Cranes. An additional bonus came in the form of a pair of showy Black-winged Lapwings by the roadside - the only encounter with this species during the trip.



Chorister Robin-chat and Orange Ground-thrush are both typically denizen of dark forest, but showed well in the dull weather!. (Simon Mitchell)

Following our morning birding we headed directly to Wakkerstroom in time for a wholesome home-cooked meal at our traditionally-decorated hotel.

The next day we awoke to a very cold and murky day in the Wakkerstroom area. As we met up with our local guide a cold mistle was blowing right across the landscape, making even opening the van windows a rather invigorating experience! Not to be scuppered by some very British weather we headed to lower ground

where visibility was markedly better. This paid off as we soon located a single female Barrow's Korhaan hunkered down at a staked-out spot. A single Yellow-breasted Pipit spotted en route was an excellent bonus and another target species seen well.

After breakfast the weather gradually cleared (although the wind remained cool throughout the day). This worked to our advantage however, as a good level of bird activity continued throughout. From the vehicle we picked up several Southern Bald Ibises and African Cliff Swallows, before a group of Blue Korhaans were found sauntering alongside the road. Next we headed further on for a number of target larks and, through a combination of persistence and the knowledge of our local guide, we gradually gained good views of all our target species. One-by-one our stops produced Rufous-naped, Eastern Long-billed, Botha's, Pink-billed, Eastern Clapper and finally Rudd's Larks, each species favouring small patches of specific habitat seemingly endless plains. Other bonuses including another showy Yellow-breasted Pipit, a few African Quail-finches and a pair of African Wattled Lapwing.



Southern Bald Ibis at Wakkerstroom. (Simon Mitchell)

Having seen almost all the specialists of Wakkerstroom's high-altitude grasslands our final morning was an opportunity to explore the marshes immediately adjacent town at a relaxed pace. As dawn broke and the mist lifted across the 'mill-pond' still lakes and reed beds we found our first African Water Rail amongst a variety of waterbirds; African Gallinule, Red-knobbed Coot, Squacco Heron, Black-crowned Night-heron, African Snipe. Duck included a good raft of Southern Pochard as well as our first Hottentot Teal. A group of otters played in the water right below us, before heading out through the culvert under the road.

A short-walk to one of the nearby hides produced a brief Giant Kingfisher and looping around through the lush grassland near town we found our final target species for the area - a confident Red-winged Francolin.

After breakfast we began heading for the airport. Having made good time there we were able to squeeze in a quick call at Suikersbosrand Nature Reserve where we gained views of White-backed Duck, Neddicky, Black-chested Prinia and our only Crested Barbet and Karoo Thrushes of the trip! Heading on to the OR

Tambo International we all agreed it had been a fantastically productive trip and we'd done incredibly well in seeing almost all of South Africa's endemic birdlife as well as its spectacular scenery and friendly people.



The wonderfully birdy Wakkerstroom Wetland Reserve held a host of species we hadn't encountered previously. (Simon Mitchell)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species). Species marked ++ have a taxonomic or status note in the latter section. Species seen only on the coastal section of the trip are marked with a numeral (I) and those seen only on the second section are marked with numerals (II), species bearing neither symbol were seen on both legs of the trip.

Common Ostrich ++ *Struthio camelus* Wild birds were seen at De Hoop NR and West Coast National Park.

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* One was present on a roadside lake just South of Clanwilliam.

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus* Several South of Clanwilliam and a couple at Suikerbosrand NR.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Absent from the Karoo, but good numbers elsewhere; 40 at De Hoop.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Common throughout damp grassland areas.

South African Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna cana* Small numbers encountered throughout, including 15 near Eigerkop.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* Over 150 at Strandfontein Sewage Works, smaller numbers elsewhere.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* Three on the river just South of Creighton and one along a stream near Calvinia.
Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* Common on wetlands throughout, 30 at Strandfontien the maximum.
Cape Shoveler ◊ *Anas smithii* Small numbers at several wetland sites, including 30 at De Hoop NR.
Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* Five were at Strandfontien sewage works and two at near Himeville.
Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* At least three were present on the marshes at Wakkerstroom.
Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Decent numbers at Strandfontien sewage works and at Wakkerstroom.
Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* One was seen well at Strandfontien sewage works.
Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Common throughout, except in the driest parts of the Karoo.
Grey-winged Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila afra* Two showed extremely well at Sani Pass.
Red-winged Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila levaillantii* One showed fantastically on our final morning near Wakkerstroom.



The only Red-winged Francolin of the trip eventually showed exceptionally well. (Simon Mitchell)

Cape Spurfowl ◊ *Pternistis capensis* Relatively common and seen daily in the Western Cape.
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* At least 6 heard in the Western Cape, and one seen by one lucky tour member.
African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* A few seen outside the main colony at Simonstown and 500+ at Betty's Bay.
Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* At least 75 were seen on the pre-tour pelagic extension.
Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* Over 500 were seen on the pelagic.
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross ◊ ++ *Thalassarche carteri* A single bird on the pelagic trip performed very well.
Northern Royal Albatross ◊ *Diomedea sanfordi* One seen during the pelagic.
Southern Royal Albatross ◊ *Diomedea epomophora* One showed well during the Cape Town pelagic.



Black-browed (harassing a Cape Gannet), Southern Royal (bottom left) and Indian Yellow-nosed (bottom right) Albatrosses all showed exceptionally well (Simon Mitchell)

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* Three seen well on the pelagic.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* At least 7 birds were around the trawling grounds during the pelagic.

Cape Petrel (Pintado P) *Daption capense* Over 700 were present around the trawlers during our pelagic.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Over 3000 seen during the pelagic.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* At least 15 were present around the trawling grounds.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* A single bird seen during our pelagic.

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* Over 80 were attracted to the trawlers during our pelagic trip.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Good numbers on wetland areas, including at least 40 at Strandfontein.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A single a Strandfontein and over 60 on the vlei at De Hoop NR.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Two were at Strandfontein Sewage Works.

Greater Flamingo ++ *Phoenicopterus roses* Several large flocks recorded, including 2000+ at West Coast NP.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* Smaller numbers than the former, although at least 200 at West Coast NP.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Common in all except the driest and high-altitude areas.

Southern Bald Ibis ◊ *Geronticus calvus* Five above the border at Sani Pass and 15 each day around Wakkerstroom.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Double figures were recorded almost every day.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Ten each at Strandfontien, Veldriff and Wakkerstroom.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* A total of four scattered singletons.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Five at Strandfontien and 30+ at Wakkerstroom.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* At least one at Strandfontien.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* At least three were noted around the marshes at Wakkerstroom.

Western Cattle Egret ++ *Bubulcus ibis* Flocks of 10 - 30 at a number of locations, mostly whilst driving.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers throughout the Western Cape.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* One at Strandfontien and one at Wakkerstroom.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* At total of about 30 or so recorded from grasslands across the country.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Only three singles, from West Coast NP and the Karkloof.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Three individuals **recorded** from widely scattered sites.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Singles in Cape Town on 21st and near Calvinia and Wakkerstroom.

Cape Gannet ◊ *Morus capensis* Thousands recorded during our pelagic trip and a few offshore near West Coast NP

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* At wetlands throughout, including over 40 near Clanwilliam

Crowned Cormorant ◊ *Microcarbo coronatus* Two as Simonstown Harbour and 4 at Betty's Bay.

Bank Cormorant ◊ *Phalacrocorax neglectus* About 25 near Simonstown and 35 at Betty's Bay.

White-breasted Cormorant ++ *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Good numbers along the Western Cape and a few inland.

Cape Cormorant ◊ *Phalacrocorax capensis* About 200 around Simonstown and 350 at Betty's Bay.

African Darter ++ *Anhinga rufa* A total of 6, including 3 near Clanwilliam.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A total of about 25 birds recorded from widely scattered locations.

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* Singles at Oribi Gorge and the upper and lower sections of Sani Pass.

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) *Gypaetus barbatus* Two singles at Sani Pass and another loner over Himeville.

Cape Vulture ◊ *Gyps coprotheres* At least 35 around De Hoop NR and two singles around Sani Pass.

Black-chested Snake Eagle ++ (B-breasted S E) *Circaetus pectoralis* One was in the Karoo not far from Kenhardt.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus* One at Xumeni Forest and another heard at Benvie Farm.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* A total of 8 seen; 3 in the fields around Creighton.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* Singles near Clanwilliam and along the P2250.



Denham's Bustard and Blue Korhaan were among a total of 6 Bustard species on the trip! (Simon Mitchell)

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* Two seen rather well near Langebaan.

Pale Chanting Goshawk ++ (Southern C G) *Melierax canorus* A total of 4 recorded in the Karoo.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* Singles at Grootvadersbosch, Oribi Gorge and heard at Benvie Farm.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* One showed well at Oribi Gorge.

Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk (Red-breasted S) *Accipiter rufiventris* One over at Betty's Bay.

Black Sparrowhawk (Great S) *Accipiter melanoleucus* Two singles at De Hoop NR and another at The Karkloof.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* At least five, including two in West Coast NP.

Black Harrier ◊ *Circus maurus* A total of 9 birds recorded from De Hoop NR, West Coast NP and Wakkerstroom.

Yellow-billed Kite ++ *Milvus aegyptius* Single figures almost every day.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocoder* Three around De Hoop and one near Grootvadersbosch.

Common Buzzard ++ *Buteo buteo* One near De Hoop NR and another at the Karkloof.

Forest Buzzard ◊ ++ *Buteo trizonatus* A calling bird eventually showed well over Grootvadersbosch.

Jackal Buzzard ◊ *Buteo rufufuscus* Common in grassland areas, with over 20 seen in total.

Denham's Bustard (Stanley's B) *Neotis denhami* A total of 8 were seen in the grasslands around De Hoop NR

Ludwig's Bustard *Neotis ludwigii* One flew over between Calvinia and Brandvlei.

Barrow's Bustard ◊ ++ (B Korhaan) *Eupodotis [senegalensis] barrowii* A flyover and showy female at Amersfoot.

Blue Korhaan ◊ *Eupodotis caerulescens* Four seen well near Wakkerstroom.

Karoo Korhaan ◊ *Eupodotis vigorsii* Four near De Hoop and groups of three near Kenhardt and on the P2250.

Southern Black Korhaan ◊ *Afrotis afra* A total of 4 around West Coast N.P and a single bird in the Karoo.

African Rail (African W Rail) *Rallus caerulescens* Three, possibly four birds showed well at Wakkerstroom.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Two on a small pool at West Coast NP.

African Swamphen ++ (A P Gall.) *Porphyrio madagascariensis* Two at Strandfontien, several at Wakkerstroom.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Singles at Standfontien and De Hoop NR, several at Wakkerstroom.

Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) *Fulica cristata* Perhaps the commonest waterbird, 400+ at Strandfontien.

Grey Crowned Crane ◊ *Balearica regulorum* A few at Creighton and Himeville, 126 on the Pevensy Road.

Blue Crane ◊ *Grus paradisea* About 75 at the Agualas grasslands and another 40 or so en route back to Cape Town.



Black-winged Lapwings were found right by the roadside in the Karkloof area. (Simon Mitchell).

Wattled Crane ◊ *Grus carunculata* A showy pair at the Karkloof, not far from Benvie Farm.

Water Thick-knee (Water Dikkop) *Burhinus vermiculatus* Two flushed at De Hoop and 6+ near Darling.

Spotted Thick-knee (Spotted Dikkop) *Burhinus capensis* Two at De Hoop showed well, 4+ near Darling.

African Oystercatcher ◊ (African Black O) *Haematopus moquini* Several groups on Western Cape coast, max 15.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Fairly common around wetland habitats throughout.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Scarcer than the former, recorded from five sites, max 25 at Standfontien.

Blacksmith Lapwing (B Plover) *Vanellus armatus* Common in all except the driest and high-altitude areas.

Black-winged Lapwing (B-w Plover) *Vanellus melanopterus* Two with young at the Karkloof.

Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus* Ones and twos throughout, but 25+ at De Hoop NR.

African Wattled Lapwing (A W Plover) *Vanellus senegallus* Groups of 2 and 4 at Wakkerstroom.

Grey Plover (Black-b Plover) *Pluvialis squatarola* Over 80 at Veldriff salt pans and 20+ at West Coast N.P.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Fifteen at Veldriff and 5 at West Coast N.P.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Around 25 at Veldriff, scattered pairs elsewhere.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* Two near De Hoop NR and one at Veldriff.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* At least 8 at Veldriff and 20 or more on the high tide at West Coast.

African Snipe (Ethiopian S) *Gallinago nigripennis* A total of about 5 singletons in the Wakkerstroom area.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* Forty or more around Veldriff salt pans.

Eurasian Whimbrel ++ *Numenius phaeopus* Four at Veldriff and 20 at West Coast N.P.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers at Strandfontien, Veldriff and West Coast N.P.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Three or four on the fresh marshes at Wakkerstroom.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* One was heard along the vlei at De Hoop N.R.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Two at Strandfontien and a further 2 at Betty's Bay.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* A single bird amongst other waders on the mudflats at West Coast N.P.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* A few at Strandfontien and De Hoop, double figures each day at West Coast N.P.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* The commonest wader, with 300 at West Coast N.P on 26th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* One on the marsh at Wakkerstroom on the final morning.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* At least 5 at Strandfontien and a few singles elsewhere.

Hartlaub's Gull ◊ *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii* Common along the Western Cape coast, 250+ at Strandfontien.

Cape Gull ◊ ++ *Larus [dominicanus] vetula* Common along the Cape coast; 200+ breeding around Strandfontien

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Small numbers in the Western Cape including 10+ at De Hoop N.R.

Greater Crested Tern (Swift T) *Thalasseus bergii* Perhaps the commonest of the coastal terns, 20+ on the pelagic



Subantarctic Skua stealing a squid from the trawl nets. (Simon Mitchell).

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* One from the pelagic and others at Strandfontien and West Coast N.P.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Fifteen or so in West Coast N.P.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* Six during the pelagic and 20+ in West Coast N.P.

Subantarctic Skua (Brown S, Antarctic S) *Catharacta antarctica* Six seen during our pelagic from Cape Town.

Namaqua Sandgrouse ◊ *Pterocles namaqua* Five or so around Brandvlei, 20 at Kenhardt, 400+ along the P2250.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral P) *Columba livia* Available.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common throughout.

African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* At least 5 seen in forest around the Karkloof.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Heard on several occasions but only seen well in the Umgeni Valley.

Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle D) *Streptopelia capicola* Common throughout, 200+ near Calvinia.

Laughing Dove (Palm D) *Spilopelia senegalensis* Odd birds scattered throughout, mainly around towns.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Two came to drink at a puddle along the P2250.

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata* Two at Grootvadersbosch and singles at Xumeni and Oribi Gorge.

Knysna Turaco ◊ ++ *Tauraco corythaix* Up to 15 at Oribi Gorge, some of which showed extremely well.

Diederik Cuckoo (H) *Chrysococcyx caprius* One heard along the P2250.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* One showed well at Oribi Gorge and another heard near Darling.

Red-chested Cuckoo (H) *Cuculus solitarius* One heard near Bredasdorp and another calling at Grootvadersbosch.

African Grass Owl ◊ *Tyto capensis* An excellent record of one which showed well near Creighton.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* Four or more seen on the way back from De Hoop N.R.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* Ten or so around De Hoop N.R and a couple over Grootvadersbosch.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* The commonest swift species, with double figures most days and 45+ at De Hoop N.R.



Little Swifts were common throughout. (Simon Mitchell)

Horus Swift *Apus horus* At least 3 were picked out amongst mixed flocks of swifts at De Hoop N.R.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* Double figures at several locations, though consistently scarcer than *A. affinis*

Alpine Swift *Tachymartia melba* Two at Sir Lowry's Pass, 5 at Skitterykloof and 10 around Himeville.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Ten each at Skitterykloof and the Karkloof with a few others elsewhere.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* The commonest mousebird, with a maximum of c20 around De Hoop N.R.

White-backed Mousebird ◊ *Colius colius* A total of 7 birds recorded from drier and Karoo habitats.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* Ten at De Hoop and at least one at West Coast N.P.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* Heard at Grootvadersbosch and Umgeni Valley, seen briefly at Xumeni Forest.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* One flew downstream at a roadside stop between south of Calvinia.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* Singles near the Karkloof and at Wakkerstroom.



A rather wet Trumpeter Hornbill after heavy rain at Oribi Gorge N.R. (Simon Mitchell)

- Brown-hooded Kingfisher** *Halcyon albiventris* One at Oribi Gorge and another nearby
- Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Twenty-five or more at Veldriff with a few scattered singles elsewhere.
- European Bee-Eater** *Merops apiaster* Ten along the roadside near Darling, a few ones and twos elsewhere.
- African Hoopoe ++** *Upupa africana* Five singles; with the best views coming on our final day at Wakkerstroom.
- Crowned Hornbill** *Tockus alboterminatus* Six at Oribi Gorge N.R.
- Trumpeter Hornbill** ◊ *Bycanistes bucinator* Ten at Oribi Gorge N.R.
- Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* One near Amersfoot and another along the roadside en route to Jo'berg.
- Red-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus pusillus* One eventually showed well at Oribi Gorge N.R.
- Acacia Pied Barbet (Pied B)** *Tricholaema leucomelas* Seen well at Skitterykloof and heard at a few other locations.
- Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii* One showed well at Suikersbosrand Nature Reserve.
- Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* A male in surprisingly open habitat near Darling.
- Scaly-throated Honeyguide (H)** *Indicator variegatus* One heard very clearly at Benvie Farm couldn't be located.
- Red-throated Wryneck** *Jynx ruficollis* Four in the Sani Pass / Himeville area.
- Knysna Woodpecker** ◊ *Campethera notata* At least four (including two seen well) at Oribi Gorge N.R.
- Ground Woodpecker** ◊ *Geocolaptes olivaceus* A total of 7 at Sani Pass and one near Underberg.
- Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicus fuscescens* One at our lunchtime stop near Grootvadersbosch showed well.
- Olive Woodpecker** *Dendropicus griseocephalus* Two showed well in the Xumeni Forest.
- Rock Kestrel ++** *Falco rupicolus* Common along the Western Cape, with at least 15 individuals seen.
- Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K)** *Falco rupicoloides* One seen between Brandvlei and Kenhardt.
- Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* Singles along the P2250 and near Creighton.
- Lanner Falcon (Lanner)** *Falco biarmicus* First noted at De Hoop (two individuals) and further 5 seen elsewhere.
- Cape Parrot** ◊ *Poicephalus robustus* A pair made to flybys at Marujtsa Forest shortly after dawn.

Cape Batis ◊ *Batis capensis* Seen at 6 different sites, including 10 at De Hoop N.R.
Pririt Batis ◊ *Batis pririt* Seen between Brandvlei and Kenhardt and along the P2250.
Olive Bushshrike ◊ *Chlorophoneus olivaceus* Several heard and one seen at Grootvadersbosch, another at Oribi.
Grey-headed Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus blanchoti* One or more seen at Oribi Gorge.
Bokmakierie ◊ *Telophorus zeylonus* Small numbers throughout, maximum 15 at De Hoop N.R.
Southern Tchagra ◊ *Tchagra tchagra* One showed well, albeit too briefly for some at De Hoop N.R.
Southern Boubou ◊ *Laniarius ferrugineus* Small numbers throughout; at least 15 at De Hoop N.R.
Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia* One seen and others heard at Xumeni Forest.
Southern Fiscal ++ *Lanius collaris* Seen almost daily and double figures recorded at a number of sites.
Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus* One in Himeville was the only bird of the trip.
Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Small numbers throughout, though particularly common round Wakkerstroom.



Karoo (top-left, Simon Mitchell), Agulhas (top right, Mark Kirk) Cape (bottom left, Simon Mitchell) and Eastern (bottom right, Simon Mitchell) Long-billed are all subtly but distinctly different

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Four at Oribi Gorge N.R and 5+ in the Wakkerstroom area.
House Crow *Corvus splendens* Two seen from the vehicle on the outskirts of Cape Town.

Cape Crow (Cape R) *Corvus capensis* Thirty or more around De Hoop N.R and 50+ along the Pevensy Road.
Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Seen daily, particularly common around Wakkerstroom.
White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* Twenty or more scattered individuals, particularly from highland areas.
Cape Rockjumper ♦ ***Chaetops frenatus*** Two showed extremely well at Sir Lowry's Pass.
Drakensberg Rockjumper ♦ ***Chaetops aurantius*** Two eventually seen well in windy conditions at Sani Pass.
Fairy Flycatcher ♦ ***Stenostira scita*** Two just South of Clanwilliam and singles near Kendhardt and at Skitterykloof.
Southern Black Tit ♦ ***Melaniparus niger*** Singles at Marjutsa and Umgeni Forests.
Grey Tit ♦ ++ (Southern G T) ***Melaniparus afer*** One seen well at Sani Pass.
Spike-heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* Common in the Karoo and around Wakkerstroom.
Karoo Long-billed Lark ♦ ++ ***Certhilauda subcoronata*** Common in the Karoo with at least 12 seen.
Eastern Long-billed Lark ♦ ++ ***Certhilauda semitorquata*** Two eventually found north of Wakkerstroom.
Cape Long-billed Lark ♦ ++ ***Certhilauda curvirostris*** Three of four showed well near Paternost.
Agulhas Long-billed Lark ♦ ++ ***Certhilauda brevirostris*** One on the Agulhas grasslands near De Hoop N.R
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark ♦ ***Eremopterix verticalis*** A couple at Paternost and several along the P2250.
Black-eared Sparrowlark ♦ ***Eremopterix australis*** At least one male seen in flight near Brandvlei.
Karoo Lark ♦ ***Calendulauda albescens*** Several around the P2250.
Red Lark ♦ ***Calendulauda burra*** One eventually showed fairly well near Brandvlei.
Rudd's Lark ♦ ***Heteromirafra ruddi*** Two birds seen at the our stakeout near Wakkerstroom.
Pink-billed Lark ♦ ***Spizocorys conirostris*** Four or five north of Wakkerstroom, including two very confiding birds.



Rudd's (left) and Pink-billed Lark (right) are both threatened by habitat loss. (Simon Mitchell)

Botha's Lark ♦ ***Spizocorys fringillaris*** Three together were found at a stakeout North of Wakkerstroom.
Sabota Lark ♦ ++ ***Mirafra sabota*** Four or five birds of the form *naevia* (Bradfield's Lark) in the Karoo.
Eastern Clapper Lark ++ ***Mirafra fasciolata*** Two showed well to the North of Wakkerstroom
Agulhas Clapper Lark ♦ ++ ***Mirafra [apiata] marjoriae*** One in De Hoop N.R and a second bird heard nearby.
Cape Clapper Lark ♦ ++ ***Mirafra apiata*** Two or three over the grasslands near Darling.
Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana* Several in the areas around Amersfoot.
Large-billed Lark ♦ (Southern Thick-b Lark) ***Galerida magnirostris*** Common throughout the grassland of the Cape.
Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* Common in grasslands throughout.
African Red-eyed Bulbul ♦ ***Pycnonotus nigricans*** Four near Brandvlei in the Karoo.



The vista looking up Sani Pass. (Simon Mitchell).

- Cape Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus capensis* Common throughout the Western Cape.
- Dark-capped Bulbul ++ (Black-eyed B)** *Pycnonotus tricolor* Fairly common at sites nr Durban and Johannesburg.
- Sombre Greenbul** *Andropadus importunus* A few at Constantina mistbelts and other forests in the Western Cape.
- Terrestrial Brownbul** *Phyllastrephus terrestris* A couple at Grootvadersbosch and one at Oribi Gorge.
- White-throated Swallow** *Hirundo albigularis* The commonest swallow, seen almost daily. Ten at West Coast N.P
- Blue Swallow** ◊ *Hirundo atrocaerulea* One, possibly two in the fields around Creighton.
- Pearl-breasted Swallow** *Hirundo dimidiata* A pair at De Hoop N.R were the only ones seen.
- Greater Striped Swallow** *Cecropis cucullata* Small numbers throughout, 15 at De Hoop N.R
- Lesser Striped Swallow** *Hirundo abyssinica* At least 15 showed well around Creighton.
- South African Cliff Swallow** ◊ *Hirundo spilodera* Common in the Karoo and in most high-altitude grassland.
- Rock Martin (African R M)** *Hirundo fuligula* Sighted on several days. Ten or more at West Coast N.P and Sani Pass.
- Brown-throated Martin (Plain M)** *Riparia paludicola* Over 30 recorded at Creighton, small numbers at other sites.
- Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta* A total of 6 recorded from widely scattered sites.
- Black Saw-wing (B S-w Swallow) ++** *Psalidoprocne holomelaena* Eight individuals scattered across several sites.
- Cape Grassbird** ◊ (African G) *Sphenoeacus afer* A total of 8, including 4 at Sir Lowry's Pass.
- Long-billed Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens* Singles at Betty's Bay and West Coast N.P
- Victorin's Warbler** ◊ *Cryptillas victorini* One showed well at Sir Lowry's Pass and one heard at Grootvadersbosch.
- Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler** *Phylloscopus ruficapilla* Seen at Oribi, Umgeni and Grootvadersbosch
- Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Single at Brandvlei and Sani Pass.
- Lesser Swamp Warbler (Cape R Warbler)** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Heard at Strandfontein, 2 in West Coast N.P
- African Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus baeticatus* At least 6 at Brandvlei and one heard at Skitterykloof.
- African Yellow Warbler (Dark-capped Y W)** *Iduna natalensis* Two at the base of Sani Pass.
- Little Rush Warbler** *Bradypterus baboecala* Two at Strandfontien and at least 3 in West Coast N.P
- Knysna Warbler** ◊ *Bradypterus sylvaticus* Eventually seen well at Grootvadersbosch, with 6+ individuals recorded.

Barratt's Warbler ◊ *Bradypterus barratti* One seen and a couple of others heard at Sani Pass.

Grey-backed Cisticola ◊ (Red-headed C) *Cisticola subruficapilla* Small numbers throughout the Western Cape.

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais* Four seen around Sani Pass.

Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens* A dozen noted from wetlands across the country.

Neddicky (Piping C) *Cisticola fulvicapilla* One near Capri and another at Oribi Gorge.

Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed W) *Cisticola juncidis* Three recorded from the Aguhlas grasslands.

Cloud Cisticola ◊ (Tink-tink C) *Cisticola textrix* Six or more were seen at our stakeout near Darling.

Pale-crowned Cisticola ◊ ++ *Cisticola cinnamomeus* One near Creighton on 1st was frustratingly distant.

Wing-snapping Cisticola (Ayre's C) *Cisticola ayresii* Several around the grasslands at

Black-chested Prinia *Prinia flavicans* One briefly in the Karoo and another at Suikersbosrand N.R.

Karoo Prinia ◊ (Spotted P) *Prinia maculosa* Common around the Western Cape and Karoo.

Drakensberg Prinia ◊ ++ *Prinia hypoxantha* At least two at the base of Sani Pass.

Namaqua Warbler ◊ (N Prinia) *Phragmacia substriata* Six birds in dried out washes around Brandvlei.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracic* Small numbers throughout, including ten or more at West Coast N.P.

Rufous-eared Warbler ◊ *Malcorus pectoralis* A total of 7 recorded in the Karoo.

Green-backed Camaroptera ++ (G-b Bleating Warbler) *Camaroptera brachyura* Singles at Oribi Gorge, Umgeni.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* Two sightings of single birds in the Karoo.

Karoo Eremomela ◊ *Eremomela gregalis* A total of 4 eventually seen well along the P2250.

Bush Blackcap ◊ *Lioptilus nigricapillus* Two showed well at Umgeni.



Umgeni For5est was our last chance for Bush Blackcap – fortunately two birds performed well (Simon Mitchell).

Chestnut-vented Warbler (Common Tit babbler) *Sylvia subcaerulea* Two in West Coast, 2 en route to Calvinia.

Layard's Warbler ◊ (L Tit-babbler) *Sylvia layardi* One near Clanwilliam, at least 6 in the Karoo.

Cape Sugarbird ◊ *Promerops cafer* Common in fynbos habitats around the Western Cape, 40+ at Sir Lowrys Pass.

Gurney's Sugarbird ◊ *Promerops gurneyi* One juvenile found near Creighton after much searching.

Common Myna (Indian M) *Acridotheres tristis* Double figures around Durban and urban areas in the East.

Common Starling (European S) *Sturnus vulgaris* Common.

Black-bellied Starling (B-b Glossy S) *Notopholia corrusca* Ten at Oribi Gorge N.R.

Cape Starling (Cape G S) *Lamprotornis nitens* Singles at De Hoop and at Wakkerstroom.

Pied Starling ◊ (African P S) *Lamprotornis bicolor* Fairly common throughout, 60 at Wakkerstroom on 3rd.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Common throughout.

Orange Thrush *Zoothera gurney* Two at Xumeni Forest showed well and another seen at Umgeni.

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus* Common throughout extending as far north as Wakkerstroom.

Karoo Thrush ++ *Turdus smithi* Two or three were seen at Suikersbosrand.

Karoo Scrub Robin ◊ (Karoo R) ++ *Cercotrichas coryphoeus* Common throughout the Karoo and in West Coast N.P

Brown Scrub Robin ◊ *Erythropygia signata* One was tacked down at Oribi Gorge N.R

Chat Flycatcher ◊ *Melaenornis infuscatus* At least a dozen seen during our time in the Karoo.

Fiscal Flycatcher ◊ *Melaenornis silens* Ten at De Hoop N.R. and another 7 from other scattered localities.

African Dusky Flycatcher (Dusky F) *Muscicapa adusta* Common in forested areas; 6 at Constantina the maximum.

Cape Robin-Chat (Cape Robin) *Cossypha caffra* Abundant in all but the Karoo and high altitudes at Sani Pass.

Red-capped Robin-Chat (Natal R) *Cossypha natalensis* One briefly at Oribi Gorge N.R.

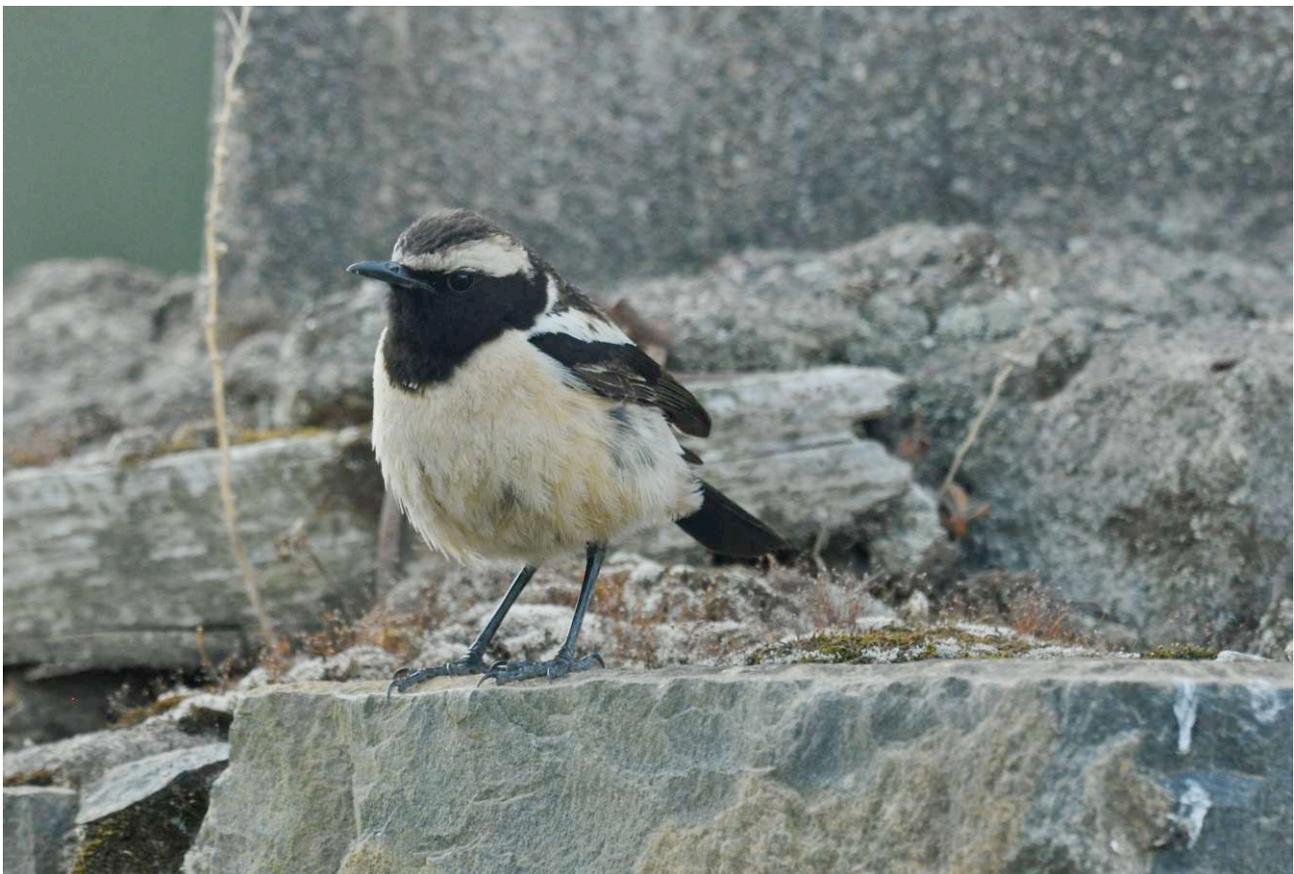
Chorister Robin-Chat ◊ (C Robin) *Cossypha dichroa* Two at Oribi, 1 at Xumeni and 2 at Benvie Farm.

Cape Rock Thrush ◊ *Monticola rupestris* Three at Sir Lowry's Pass, 2 at Sani Pass and 4 near Wakkerstroom.

Sentinel Rock Thrush ◊ *Monticola explorator* Three at Sani Pass and another 3 near Amersfoot.

African Stonechat ++ *Saxicola torquatus* Double figures daily around Sani Pass and Wakkerstroom.

Buff-streaked Chat ◊ *Campicoloides bifasciatus* A total of 10 recorded from around Sani Pass.



Buff-streaked Chats are extremely wheatear-like (Simon Mitchell).

Sickle-winged Chat ◊ *Emarginata sinuata* Eight or so tallied in the Karoo and at least 15 around Sani Pass.

Karoo Chat ◊ *Emarginata schlegelii* Five near Brandvlei and similar numbers along the P2250.

Tractrac Chat ◊ *Emarginata tractrac* Fifteen or more along the P2250 and a few near Brandvlei.

Ant-eating Chat ◊ ++ (Southern Anteater Chat) *Myrmecocichla formicivora* Near Himeville and Wakkerstroom.

Mountain Wheatear (Mountain C) *Myrmecocichla monticola* Two en route to Calvinia and 2 at Skitterykloof.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* Common in the Western Cape with 10 at De Hoop the maximum.

Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C) *Oenanthe familiaris* A total of 13 from widely scattered localities.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* Six at Oribi Gorge and 3 near Howick.



Several Collared Sunbirds were seen near Howick (Simon Mitchell)

- Orange-breasted Sunbird** ◊ *Anthobaphes violacea* About 20 in fynbos habitats, including 10 at Sir Lowry's Pass.
- Eastern Olive Sunbird ++** *Cyanomitra olivacea* Three at Oribi Gorge N.R.
- Amethyst Sunbird** *Chalcomitra amethystina* One near Darling and 10 or so around Howick.
- Malachite Sunbird** *Nectarinia famosa* Common in upland areas, including 25 or more at Sani Pass.
- Southern Double-collared Sunbird** ◊ (Lesser D-c S) *Cinnyris chalybeus* Common around the Western Cape.
- Greater Double-collared Sunbird** ◊ *Cinnyris afer* Eight at Grootvadersbosch and 2 at Sani Pass.
- Dusky Sunbird** *Cinnyris fuscus* One showed well but briefly along the P2250.
- White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali* A couple on the fringes of Brandvlei.
- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Present around several areas of development sometimes in double figures.
- Cape Sparrow** ◊ *Passer melanurus* Fairly common in open habitats throughout, 30 near in fields near Wakkerstroom.
- Southern Grey-headed Sparrow ++** *Passer diffuses* Several around lower parts of Sani Pass and Wakkerstroom.
- Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W)** *Amblyospiza albifrons* Singles at Xumeni and near Howick.
- Cape Weaver** ◊ *Ploceus capensis* Common except in the Karoo, 40 totalled during our morning around Darling.
- Southern Masked Weaver (Masked W)** *Ploceus velatus* Four in West Coast N.P and a few around Wakkerstroom.
- Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus* About 25 totalled around Wakkerstroom.
- Sociable Weaver** *Philetairus socius* Forty or so a few kilometers south of Kenhardt.
- Scaly-feathered Finch** *Sporopipes squamifrons* Two came in to drink briefly near Kenhardt.
- Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea* A few flocks of fifty or so birds around Creighton and Wakkerstroom.
- Southern Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix* Small flocks or colonies seen on several occasions in the Western Cape.
- Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widow)** *Euplectes capensis* Forty or fifty seen in total, common around Darling.
- Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered W)** *Euplectes axillaris* Ten or so in grassland near Howick.
- Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens* Six seen in grasslands near Howick.
- Long-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes progne* Several small groups around Wakkerstroom and 200+ on 3rd.
- African Firefinch (Blue-billed F)** *Lagonosticta rubricata* One briefly on the fringes of Marjutsa Forest.
- Swee Waxbill** ◊ *Coccyzygia melanotis* A total of 40 or so in small flocks across most forest patches.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Small flocks in several locations and 40 at the base of Sani Pass.
Quailfinch (African Q) *Ortygospiza atricollis* A total of 8 or so around Wakkerstroom were all fly-overs.
Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* Several at Howick and around Benvie Farm.
Red-backed Mannikin ++ (Rufous-b M, Brown-b M) *Lonchura nigriceps* Five or so seen at Benvie Farm.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Two near Grootvadersbosch and 10+ at Creighton.



Although common, Cape Weavers are one of the smarter, more unique looking species of the family. (Simon Mitchell).

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Seen daily in single figures except in the Karoo.
Mountain Wagtail (Long-tailed W) *Motacilla clara* Two were on the falls at Howick.
Cape Longclaw ◊ *Macronyx capensis* Common around Wakkerstroom and a few other scattered pairs elsewhere.
African Pipit ++ (Grassveld P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* Small numbers from several grassland areas.
Mountain Pipit ◊ *Anthus hoeschi* Two eventually found after much persistence at Sani Pass.
Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* Six seen around the Aguhlas grasslands.
African Rock Pipit ◊ (Yellow-tufted P) *Anthus crenatus* One was located and showed well at Sani Pass.
Yellow-breasted Pipit ◊ *Hemimacronyx chloris* Singles seen well near Amersfoot and Wakkerstroom.
Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Three at Constantina and a single bird at Betty's Bay.
Forest Canary ◊ *Crithagra scotops* Recorded in small numbers at Grootvadersbosch and Marjutsa Forests.
Cape Siskin ◊ *Crithagra totta* Two at the pass South of Capri and at least four briefly at Sir Lowry's Pass.
Drakensberg Siskin ◊ *Crithagra symonsi* At least 25 recorded at Sani Pass.
Yellow Canary ◊ *Crithagra flaviventris* Common in the Western Cape and Karoo.
Brimstone Canary (Bully C) *Crithagra sulphurata* Small numbers between West Coast N.P and Clanwilliam.
Streaky-headed Seedeater ◊ (S-h Canary) *Crithagra gularis* Two at Sani Pass and one near Creighton.
White-throated Canary ◊ *Crithagra albogularis* Fairly common in the Karoo with double figures at several spots.
Protea Canary ◊ (P Seedeater) *Crithagra leucoptera* At least two seen well at a site near Clanwilliam.
Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis* Small numbers throughout.
Black-headed Canary ◊ *Serinus alario* Three in West Coast N.P was a surprising location.
Lark-like Bunting ◊ *Emberiza impetuani* Common north of Calvinia, with over 30 recorded.
Cape Bunting ◊ *Emberiza capensis* Small numbers around the Western Cape, Sani Pass and Wakkerstroom.



Flowers and rain in the Karoo. (Simon Mitchell)



Cape Fur Seal at Fishhoek. (Simon Mitchell).

MAMMALS

Sloggett's Rat (Ice Rat) *Otomys sloggetti* A few in the higher reaches of Sani Pass.

Striped Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio* A couple in West Coast N.P

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* Small numbers at Constantina.

Cape Porcupine *Hyrix africaeaustralis* One on the road pre-dawn just South of Cape Town

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* At least a couple at De Hoop N.R

Rock Dassie (Cape D, Cape R Hyrax) *Procavia capensis* Not uncommon in rocky areas and kopjes.

Cape Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* Several at De Hoop N.R.

Bontebok ++ (Blesbok) *Damaliscus dorcas* A few around De Hoop and others around Wakkerstroom.

Common Duiker (Grey Duiker) *Sylvicapra grimmia* Scatter singles from several locations.

Grysbok (Cape G) *Raphicerus melanotis* One near De Hoop N.R.

Grey Rhebok (Vaal R) *Pelea capreolus* A couple in De Hoop N.R.

Mountain Reedbuck *Redunca fulvorufula* Several around Creighton.

African Wild Cat ++ *Felis lybica* A cat, ostensibly this species seen near Creighton, domestic varieties not ruled out.

Cape Clawless Otter (African C O) *Aonyx capensis* Two or three at Wakkerstroom showed very well.



Slogget's Rat was actually rather cute, with it's Pikka-like snub snout. (Simon Mitchell)

Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat) *Cynictis penicillata* One at De Hoop N.R, a few at Wakkerstroom.

Large Grey Mongoose (Egyptian M) *Herpestes ichneumon* One showed fairly well near Capri.

Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea* One at Wakkerstroom.

Small Grey Mongoose *Galerella pulverulenta* One near Grootvadersbosch.

Chacma Baboon ++ *Papio ursinus* A few groups around the Western Cape and Wakkerstroom.

Vervet Monkey (Vervet) *Cercopithecus aethiops* Twenty at Oribi Gorge N.R.

Samango Monkey (Diademmed Guenon) *Cercopithecus mitis* Ten or so at Oribi Gorge N.R

Cape Fur Seal (Afro-Australian F S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* Sixty or more during the pelagic, a few on the coast.

Southern Right Whale ++ *Balaena australis* Two near Hermanaus and a mother an calf close off Fish Hoek.



Young Cape Mountain Zebra at De Hoop N.R. (Simon Mitchell)

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2012. IOC World Bird Names (v2.11). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

BIRDS

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus*

Formerly, the name Ostrich was used for this species, but it has been re-named following the splitting off of the northeast African form *molybdophanes* under the name Somali Ostrich.

Wandering (or Snowy) Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

The Wandering Albatross superspecies comprises four or five closely related allospecies which are difficult and sometimes impossible to identify at sea.

Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*

The Shy Albatross superspecies comprises three or four closely related allospecies: Chatham Albatross *T. eremita* (an exceptionally rare vagrant to South African waters); Salvin's Albatross *T. salvini* (a rare visitor to South African waters) and Shy Albatross *T. cauta*. The latter comprises two similar forms, the nominate *cauta* which breeds in Tasmania and ; White-capped Albatross *D. [c.] steadi* which breeds in New Zealand. Some authors have treated these forms as separate species, though they are extremely difficult to identify at sea. Recoveries suggest that most if not all White-capped/Shy Albatrosses occurring off the Cape are White-capped Albatrosses.

Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

and **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross** *Thalassarche carteri*

Some authors lump Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross in Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross using the name Yellow-nosed Albatross for the enlarged species.

Spectacled Petrel *Procellaria conspicillata*

Some authors lump this distinctive form in White-chinned Petrel *P. aequinoctialis*.

Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

The IOC lump Cory's Shearwater *C. borealis* in this species using the name Cory's Shearwater for the enlarged species. A proposed split of the two forms is currently under consideration by the IOC.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Some authors lump this species in American (or Caribbean) Flamingo *P. ruber* of the New World using the name Greater Flamingo for the enlarged species.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Some authors use the name Cattle Egret for this species, but it has been renamed following the splitting off of the eastern (Asian) form *coromandus* under the name Eastern Cattle Egret.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

The form concerned is often lumped in Great Cormorant *P. carbo*.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

This form is sometimes lumped in Oriental Darter *A. melanogaster*, with the name Darter being used for the enlarged species.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Some authors lump Eastern Osprey *P. crsitus* in this species using the name Osprey for the enlarged species.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

This form is often lumped in Black Kite *Milvus migrans*. The latter could occur on the tour and may have been overlooked in the past.

Black-chested (-breasted) Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*

This species was formerly sometimes lumped in Short-toed Eagle *C. gallicus*.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Some authors split off the form concerned as a separate species: Steppe Buzzard *B. vulpinus*.

Forest Buzzard *Buteo trizonatus*

Some authors lump this species in Mountain Buzzard *B. oreophilus* (of East Africa) with either the name Mountain Buzzard (in East Africa) or Forest Buzzard (in Southern Africa) being used for the enlarged species.

(Southern) Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus*

Eastern (Pale) Chanting Goshawk *M. poliopterus* of East Africa (which does not occur in southern Africa) is sometimes lumped in this species, with the name Pale Chanting Goshawk being used for the enlarged species.

Barrow's Bustard (or Korhaan) *Eupodotis [senegalensis] barrowii*

The IOC treat this form as a subspecies of White-bellied Bustard *E. senegalensis*. However, the phylogeny of *Eupodotis* bustards remains uncertain and further work is needed. We have treated it as an allospecies as it is a likely future split.

African (Purple) Swamphen (Gallinule) *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Some authors lump this species in Purple Swamphen *P. porphyrio*.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The IOC lump Hudsonian Whimbrel *P. hudsonius* in this species, using the name Whimbrel for the enlarged species, though Hudsonian Whimbrel is a proposed IOC split.

Cape Gull *Larus [dominicanus] vetula*

The IOC treat this form as a subspecies of Kelp Gull *L. dominicanus*.

Knysna Turaco (Lourie) *Tauraco corythaix*

This species is sometimes lumped in Green Turaco *T. persa*.

Rock Kestrel *Falco rupicolis*

The form concerned is treated as a separate species: Rock Kestrel *F. rupicolis* by the IOC. Sinclair et al. Do not commit themselves to the exact taxonomic status of this form.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana*

This form is often lumped in Eurasian Hoopoe *U. epops*, with the name Hoopoe being used for the enlarged species.

Cape Clapper Lark *Mirafra apiata*

Formerly many authors lumped this species with Eastern Clapper Lark *M. fasciolata* and Agulhas Clapper Lark *M. marjoriae*, using the name Clapper Lark *M. fasciolata* for the enlarged species. However, the IOC now consider the two forms *M. apiata* and *M. marjoriae* a separate species *M. apiata*

Agulhas Clapper Lark *Mirafra [apiata] marjoriae*

The IOC currently consider this taxa part of Cape Clapper Lark *M. apiata*

Sabota Lark *Mirafra sabota*

The thick-billed form occurring in western Cape Province and western Namibia is sometimes split off as a separate species: Bradfield's Lark *M. naevia*.

Cape Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda curvirostris*

This species (which is found in western Cape Province) was formerly known as Long-billed Lark but has been renamed following the splitting off of Aghulas Long-billed Lark *C. brevirostris* (in southern Cape Province), Eastern Long-billed Lark *C. semitorquata* (in eastern South Africa - KwaZulu Natal and Transvaal), Benguela Long-billed Lark *C. benguelensis* (not possible on this tour, occurs in Namibia and Angola) and Karoo Long-billed Lark *C. subcoronata* (in the karoo).

Aghulas Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda brevirostris*

See the note for Cape Lark.

Eastern Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda semitorquata*

See the note for Cape Lark.

Black Saw-wing (Swallow) *Psalidoprocne holomelaena*

This form is sometimes lumped in Blue Saw-wing Swallow, *P. pristoptera*, with the name Black Saw-wing being for the enlarged species.

(Southern) Grey Tit *Parus afer*

The Grey Tit of East Africa (*P. thruppi*, also known as Somali Tit) is sometimes lumped in this species, with the name Grey Tit being used for the enlarged species.

Dark-capped (or Black-eyed) Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*

This form is often lumped in Common Bulbul *P. barbatus*.

Karoo Thrush *Turdus smithi*

Most authors lump this form in Olive thrush *T. olivaceus*.

Southern Anteating Chat *Myrmecocichla formicivora*

The name Anteating Chat is sometimes used for this species but it is better known as Southern Anteating Chat to differentiate it from Northern Anteating Chat *M. aethiops*.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Common Stonechat *M. rubicola* and Siberian Stonechat *S. maura* are often lumped in this species with the name Common Stonechat being used for the enlarged species.

Karoo Scrub Robin ◊ (Karoo R) ++ *Cercotrichas coryphoeus*

It has recently been suggested that, due to behavioural difference and the young being born covered in down, that this species may better be treated as a separate genus to *Cercotrichas*.

Green-backed Camaroptera (or Bleating Warbler) *Camaroptera brachyura*

Grey-backed Camaroptera (or Bleating Warbler) *C. brevicaudata*, is sometimes lumped in this form with the name Bleating Warbler being used for the enlarged species.

Pale-crowned Cisticola *Cisticola cinnamomeus*

The form concerned is sometimes lumped in Pectoral-patch Cisticola *C. brunnescens* with either the name Pale-crowned (in Southern Africa) or Pectoral-patch (in Eastern Africa) Cisticola being used for the enlarged species.

Drakensberg Prinia *Prinia hypoxantha*

This form is sometimes lumped in Karoo Prinia *P. maculosa*, with the name Spotted Prinia being used for the enlarged species.

African (or Grassveld) Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*

This form (along with various other forms) was formerly sometimes lumped in Australasian Pipit *A. novaeseelandiae*, with the name Richard's Pipit then being used for the enlarged species.

Common Fiscal (Shrike) *Lanius collaris*

The north-western form (which shows a whitish supercilium) may in future be split off as a separate species: Latakoo Fiscal *L. subcoronatus*.

Eastern Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea*

Formerly, Western Olive Sunbird *C. obscura* was lumped into this species with the name Olive Sunbird being used for the enlarged species.

Cape White-eye *Zosterops virens*

This form is often lumped in Orange River White-eye *Z. pallidus*, with the name Cape White-eye being used for the enlarged species.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus*

This form was formerly lumped in Grey-headed Sparrow *P. griseus*.

Red-backed (Rufous-b or Brown-b M) Mannikin *Lonchura nigriceps*

This form is often lumped in Black-and-white Mannikin *L. bicolor* with either the name Red-backed (in Southern Africa) or Black-and-white (in Eastern Africa) Mannikin being used for the enlarged species.

MAMMALS

Bontebok *Damaliscus dorcus*

The two forms concerned, Blesbok and Bontebok, are sometimes split off as separate species.

African Wild Cat *Felis lybica*

This form is sometimes lumped in (Eurasian) Wild Cat *F. sylvestris*.

Chacma Baboon *Papio cynocephalus*

The form concerned, *ursinus*, is sometimes split off as a separate species using the same English name, Chacma Baboon. The name Yellow Baboon is then used for the residual *P. cynocephalus*.

Southern Right Whale *Balaena australis*

The form concerned is sometimes lumped in Northern Right Whale *B. glacialis* with the name Black Right Whale being used for the enlarged species.



Black-bellied Starling at Oribi Gorge NR. (Simon Mitchell)

APPENDIX 1 - TOP 5 BIRDS OF THE TRIP

1 Blue Crane

2 African Paradise Flycatcher

3 Knysna Turaco

4 Drakensburg Rockjumper

5= Namaqua Sandgrouse, Spotted Thick-knee, Grey-crowned Crane, Buff-streaked Chat, Bush Blackcap



Cape Rockjumper – one of the birds of the trip. (Simon Mitchell)