



Cape Rockjumper | © Martin Benadie

(Note: All images used to illustrate this tour report were taken on the actual 2018 tour).

ULTIMATE SOUTH AFRICA

9 NOVEMBER – 3 DECEMBER 2018

LEADER: MARTIN BENADIE

The **2018 Birdquest Ultimate South Africa** tour was simply phenomenal! The southern tip of Africa is an outstanding birding destination and this tour delivered, with an amazingly high proportion of the targets (the hoped for endemics, regional endemics and specialties) being not only found, but also seen remarkably well. An incredible 529 bird species were seen on this trip (with a few more heard only) – a remarkable feat considering the Cape pelagic did not run owing adverse weather. The mammals also put in a good showing with 54 species observed, many of these also only rarely seen.

Top birds included the fantastic Pink-throated Twinspot, confiding Victorin's and Barratt's Warblers, magical Blue Swallows, the stunning Drakensberg Rockjumper, which along with its close relative the Cape Rockjumper, and the two sugarbirds (Cape and Gurney's Sugarbirds), are all truly iconic species. Other memorable specials included the graceful Black Harrier, Green Barbet, the trio of wonderful cranes, Bokmakierie, Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Karoo Eremomela and seven superb species of bustard. Colour was added by showy Rosy-faced Lovebird, vivid Gorgeous Bushshrike, Ground Woodpecker and three species of splendid turacos, elegance by Buff-streaked Chat, comedy by African Penguin and rarity by Rudd's Lark and Taita Falcon. South Africa is well represented with the *Alaudidae* family as we saw 18 species of lark in what has to be the lark capital of the world. The great thing was that we saw them all well enough for all to appreciate their subtle differences. This of course just highlights a fraction of the wonderful and varied bird life encountered overall. But it wasn't just the birds. We also notched up an impressive

mammal list, including rarities such as Aardvark, Southern African Hedgehog and Aardwolf, enjoyed varied and wonderful scenery throughout, and all this whilst making the most of the excellent roads, accommodation and restaurants. South Africa is certainly a world-class birding destination with a quiet, rural atmosphere over much of the country.



Orange-breasted Sunbird | © Martin Benadie

Day 01: 09 November

Started the tour with a morning walk right from Sacred Mountain Lodge in Noordhoek. This was just perfect to ease into things and we tallied a good number of species on our pre-breakfast wander. Notable sightings included Malachite Sunbird, White-rumped Swift, Red-eyed Dove, Cape White-eye, Cape Canary, Greater Striped Swallow, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Hadedda Ibis, Helmeted Guineafowl, Southern Fiscal, Cape Bulbul, Cape Weaver, African Sacred Ibis, Egyptian Goose, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Pin-tailed Whydah, and Olive Thrush.

After breakfast we headed to the acclaimed Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, set in the foothills of Table Mountain that dominates the city, where we spent the rest of the morning. This was very relaxed birding on foot, and being a Friday was relatively quiet from a visitor perspective. During our time here we notched up a great number of species too including the likes of African Harrier Hawk, Little Swift, Red-winged Starling, Rock Martin, White-necked Raven, Forest Canary, Cape Bulbul, Cape Spurfowl, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Sweet Waxbill, Karoo Prinia, Alpine Swift, African Black Swift, Sombre Greenbul, African Dusky Flycatcher, a confiding Lemon Dove, Spotted Eagle-Owl, Cape Batis and our first showy Cape Sugarbirds.

The afternoon was spent birding the wetlands and settling ponds of the Strandfontein Sewage Works, an internationally renowned bird sanctuary. This was a great way to finish off the day and our list was bolstered considerably with Zitting Cisticola, Little Rush Warbler, Spur-winged Goose, Black-shouldered Kite, Common Greenshank, Kelp Gull, Cape Shoveler, Yellow-billed Duck, Brown-throated Martin, Common Waxbill, South African Shelduck, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Kittlitz's Plover, African Pipit, Caspian Tern, Great White Pelican, Marsh Sandpiper, Little Stint, Ruff, Water Thick-knee, Cape Sparrow, Red-billed Teal, Glossy Ibis, Red-knobbed Coot, Black-winged Stilt, White-breasted Cormorant, Hartlaub's Gull, Swift Tern, Sandwich Tern, Speckled Pigeon, Pied Avocet, Greater Flamingo, Lesser Flamingo, Southern Pochard, Purple Heron, Maccoa Duck, Cape Teal, Hottentot Teal, Western Cattle Egret, Black-headed Heron, Common Moorhen, Little Grebe, Whiskered Tern, Yellow-billed Kite, Cape Turtle Dove, White-throated Swallow, Grey Heron, African Spoonbill, White-faced Whistling Duck, African Swampphen and Levallant's Cisticola.



Cape Sugarbird, Cape Spurfowl, Lemon Dove | © Martin Benadie

Day 02: 10 November

Unfortunately our Cape pelagic trip scheduled today did not run due to strong winds. This necessitated a 'Plan B' and we headed up the West Coast for the day, which proved to be very productive. Our plan was to initially bird the coastal *strandveld* within West Coast National Park, but unfortunately this park was also closed until mid-day due to a mountain bike event! 'Plan C' was then initiated and we then birded very productive strandveld and wetland habitat north of Langebaan along the Atlantic coast. Our first stops in the morning had us quickly list Bokmakierie, Rock Kestrel, Capped Wheatear, Karoo Scrub-Robin, Pied Starling, African Stonechat, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Yellow Bishop, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Grey-backed Cisticola, several pale-phase Booted Eagle and Blue Crane.

Enjoyable birding sessions were had in various coastal strandveld patches and wheatlands tallying the likes of displaying Karoo Lark, Sickle-winged Chat, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline-Tit, White-backed Mousebird, White-throated Canary, Cape Bunting, Cape Long-billed Lark and Large-billed Lark. Off the coast we saw Cape Gannets and Common Tern in good numbers. The late afternoon saw us visiting the Berg River Estuary near

Velddrift. New records here were Common Whimbrel, Curlew Sandpiper, Southern Masked Weaver, Red-necked Phalarope, White-fronted Plover, Chestnut-banded Plover, Black-necked Grebe, European Bee-eater and Common Sandpiper. On our way back to Cape Town we had the most amazing views of Black Harrier – quartering right next to the vehicle!



Chestnut-banded Plover, Booted Eagle, Karoo Lark | © Martin Benadie

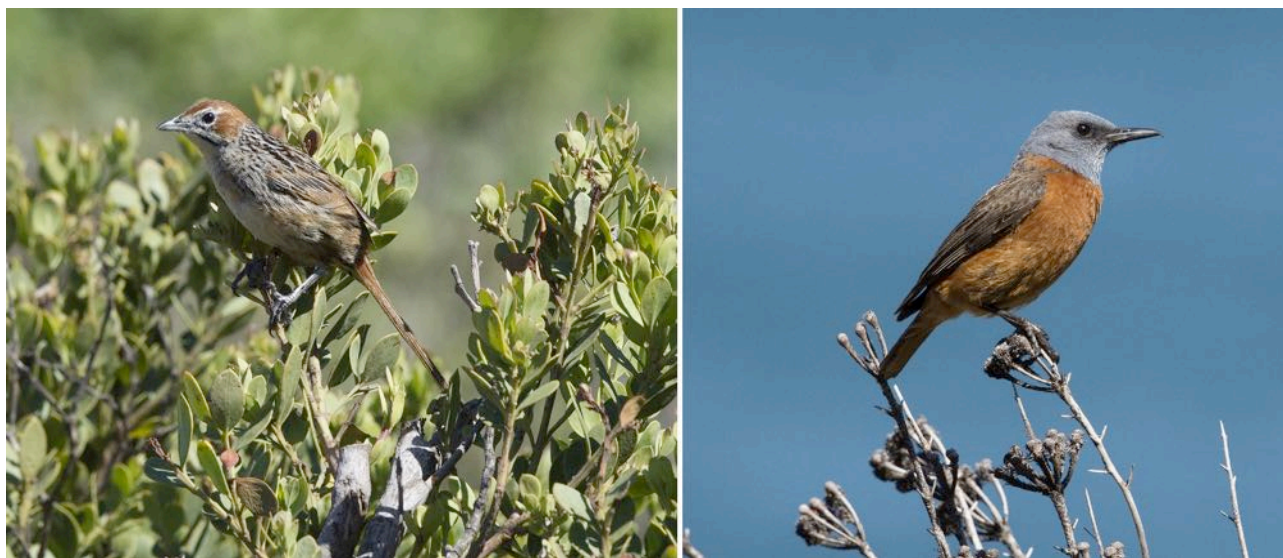
Day 03: 11 November

This morning we explored the Hottentots Holland Mountains, a dramatically rugged, windswept range which receives the brunt of the southeasterly gales that are so frequent in the Cape. Our first stop was the quiet hamlet of Rooiels set in a dramatic scene where huge boulders protect delicate fynbos flora and meets the icy-blue Atlantic coast. Our key target here was the iconic Cape Rockjumper, which we thankfully saw well! A side cast of other exciting endemics noted here included Fiscal Flycatcher, Cape Rock Thrush, Cape Siskin, Ground Woodpecker, Cape Grassbird, Cape Sugarbird and Grey-backed Cisticola.

We then stopped in the quaint coastal town of Betty's Bay, and visited the Stony Point Nature Reserve which harbours a large mainland colony of African Penguins. A boardwalk takes one through the colony and we

spent some time here just observing their antics. The colony lies on the site of the old *Waaygat* Whaling Station, which was used to harvest and process whale meat in the early to mid-1900s. Stony Point is also an excellent site for seeing South Africa's marine cormorants. We saw nesting Bank Cormorant and a few Crowned Cormorant here together with loads of Cape and White-breasted Cormorants. African Oystercatcher were also seen on the rocky shoreline here.

Harold Porter Botanical Gardens is just as picturesque as Kirstenbosch and was a wonderful spot for some lunch and another obligatory stroll in awe-inspiring scenery. This secluded garden (which mixes cultivated fynbos gardens with pristine natural fynbos) is set between mountain and sea, within the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. New here was Black Saw-wing and Giant Kingfisher. After another full day we took the scenic drive all along False Bay back to Noordhoek.



Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock Thrush | © Martin Benadie

Day 04: 12 November

We left Noordhoek at 04:30am in order to get to Grootvadersbosch Forest Reserve early enough, arriving here around 08:30. From Cape Town the drive takes one through the Overberg where the landscape is dominated by endless wheat and canola fields with ribbons of remnant *renosterveld* in between. Here we saw our first stately Blue Cranes and Denham's Bustard and dainty Neddicky before arriving at the forest where we stayed until early afternoon. Here we picked up Victorin's Warbler, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Forest Canary, Olive Bushshrike, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher and African Olive Pigeon. The very shy and cryptic Knysna Warbler required a bit more work to see and we all eventually got good views of this species. Other exciting birds tallied here included Knysna Woodpecker, Olive Woodpecker, Southern Boubou, and African Paradise Flycatcher. Grootvadersbosch comprises 250ha of forest, the most precious in the southwestern Cape and largest remaining example in the Langeberg. The fynbos above the forest was recently ravaged by a serious fire but we still managed to get into the reserve as the only guests allowed in on the day!

From Grootvadersbosch we birded the Suurbraak area back to Buffelsjagsrivier and the Agulhas plains towards Malgas. The late afternoon was enjoyed in the Agulhas wheatlands and patches of remnant indigenous vegetation where we marvelled at more Blue Cranes, Karoo Korhaan, Red-billed Teal, Jackal Buzzard, a covey of Grey-winged Francolin, Cape Crow, Yellow Canary, Red-capped Lark, Capped Wheatear and several displaying Cape Clapper Lark. African Black Duck was seen along a wooded stream back towards Swellendam.

Day 05: 13 November

Another early start (as most days) to make the most of the exciting birding on offer. Initially we birded a mosaic of Overberg wheatlands (surprisingly productive), indigenous strips of low scrub-like *renosterveld* and small wetlands. The birding was really pumping and new birds included Large-billed Lark, Common Quail, Long-billed Crombec, Grey-backed Cisticola, Acacia Pied Barbet, Agulhas Long-billed Lark and Namaqua Dove. Karoo Scrub Robin was also seen as well as huge numbers of Southern Red Bishop, Southern Masked Weaver and Cape Weaver.

Another birding spot on our radar today was the scenic and productive De Hoop Nature Reserve which we birded for most of the morning to make the most of what was on offer here. Upon arrival, this wonderful reserve stretched out ahead of us, all the way to the wild Atlantic Ocean, and we had the morning to explore the vleis, pans, restioid grasslands and thickets. Here we enjoyed Southern Tchagra amongst the likes of Common Ostrich, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Red-faced Mousebird, obliging Bokmakierie, Wood Sandpiper, White-throated Canary, Blue Crane and Pied Starling. The large wetland in De Hoop was very productive for waterbirds too including Great Crested Grebe, Cape Teal, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Hamerkop, South African Shelduck, African Fish Eagle and African Darter amongst others.

A detour was then made to Struisbaai to visit a small breeding colony of Damara Tern resident at this time of year. Luckily we managed to see two birds really in very windy conditions! Another stunning adult Black Harrier was also seen in the area here. Lunch was enjoyed at Agulhas, the most southern tip in Africa, before the long drive to Wellington where we arrived early evening.



Victorin's Warbler, Damara Tern, Bokmakierie, Southern Tchagra | © Martin Benadie

Day 06: 14 November

First up today was a visit to the Tienie Versveld Wildflower Reserve, slightly west of Darling, which we birded for just over an hour. Here we saw the streaky nominate form of Cloud Cisticola, Cape Longclaw, Blue Crane, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Levillant's Cisticola, White-throated Swallow, Greater Striped Swallow, Cape Spurfowl, Great White Pelican and displaying Large-billed Lark as some of the highlights.

West Coast National Park was where we spent most of the day birding the coastal *strandveld* which dominates the landscape here, the picturesque Langebaan Lagoon and a small freshwater wetland. Species recorded at this locality were Karoo Scrub Robin, Cape Penduline Tit, Cape Bunting, Cape Bulbul, Southern

Black Korhaan, Grey Plover, Common Ringed Plover, Hartlaub's Gull, White-fronted Plover, African Oystercatcher, Eurasian Curlew, Lesser Crested Tern, Caspian Tern, Black Harrier and Karoo Prinia.

Day 07: 15 November

We departed Langebaan early and drove via Velddrift again to our first birding stop – a secluded gorge in the Clanwilliam area. Here we enjoyed great views of the localised Protea Canary as well as Long-billed Crombec, Fairy Flycatcher, Layard's Tit-Babbler, Familiar Chat, Streaky-headed Seedeater and Mountain Wheatear. Adrian also spotted a small Klipspringer (rock-loving antelope) here which was a good find!

A picnic style lunch was enjoyed to get out of the hot sun a bit and we then birded along back roads through the Cedarberg Mountains to Calvinia in the Karoo. Several birding stops were had and new birds for the afternoon session included Black-headed Canary, Ant-eating Chat, Grey-backed Sparrowlark, Karoo Chat, Dusky Sunbird and our first stunning Pale Chanting Goshawk.

The late afternoon was spent exploring the environs in and around Calvinia itself and enjoyed Namaqua Warbler, African Reed Warbler, several Ludwig's Bustard, Rufous-eared Warbler, Karoo Lark and a number of other species already seen. Dinner was an authentic three-course South African meal that went down really well after an enjoyable day's birding.



Protea Canary, Karoo Scrub-Robin | © Martin Benadie

Day 08: 16 November

A pre-breakfast trip to the nearby Akkerendam Nature Reserve was first up on the day. This was a stunning birding setting, with the backdrop of the Hantam Mountains, situated just outside Calvinia. Here we saw Rufous-eared Warbler and Black-headed Canary again and a large dam had several waterbird species, the most notable being Maccoa Duck. After a delicious traditional South African breakfast back at the Hantam House we headed up to the Brandvlei area for rest of the day taking in various birding spots to the north and east of this small, idiosyncratic, town. This starkly beautiful northern Karoo region where arid, stony plains are bisected by sandy wadis dotted with thorn trees, give rise to shimmering mirages during the heat of the day. These harsh landscapes hold some very interesting endemics and near-endemics and we recorded South African Cliff Swallow, Greater Kestrel, Sabota Lark, Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark, Spike-heeled Lark, Lark-like Bunting, Black-chested Snake-Eagle, Double-banded Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Karoo Long-billed Lark, Tractrac Chat and Karoo Korhaan as some of the species. One of our biggest targets was Sclater's Lark and thankfully we picked up a few birds late afternoon coming into drink at a small water point. A definite highlight of the day after a hard search!

Day 09: 17 November

We continued our Karoo birding experience taking in another back road north of Calvinia, up to Loeriesfontein and onto Springbok via the Kamies Mountains. It was a long driving day but still managed productive roadside birding in some incredible landscapes and scenery, before arriving in Springbok late afternoon.

New species tallied for the day were Acacia Pied Barbet, two flocks of Black-eared Sparrow-Lark, Pirit Batis, Martial Eagle, Pale-winged Starling, Karoo Eremomela, cracking Verreaux's Eagle and Cinnamon-breasted Warbler. A number of these are tough, localised Karoo targets so happiness all around!



Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Karoo Eremomela, Sclater's Lark | © Martin Benadie

Day 10: 18 November

After an early breakfast we set out to explore the Port Nolloth area to the north of Springbok, right on the coast. We had a few localised targets here. We also travelled further north of town to find the localised Barlow's Lark which we also saw very well in the end. We also enjoyed good further views of Tractrac Chat, Dusky Sunbird, Capped Wheatear, South African Shelduck, Ruddy Turnstone, Hartlaub's Gull and Crowned Cormorant.

Day 11: 19 November

First light saw us heading for the ancient Koa River red dune system near Aggenys, arriving while it was still cool. In the still morning air, we soon picked up the rattling call of Red Lark and enjoyed good views of in the end together with Fawn-coloured Lark, Namaqua Sandgrouse and cute Scaly-feathered Finches.

We then birded the area around Pofadder. Huge Sociable Weaver nests were seen, nesting on both trees and telephone poles. A sight to behold. Beyond Poffadder we picked up Red-headed Finch and had great views of very confiding Stark's Lark, a real nomad. It was then decided to take a slight detour to the Onseepkans border with Namibia along the Orange River. Here we managed to find several Rosy-faced

Lovebird (essentially at the southern extremity of their range and a good bird for South Africa) together with Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, African Palm Swift, Red-eyed Dove, Orange River White-eye, Karoo Thrush, Pale-winged Starling, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Acacia Pied Barbet, Dusky Sunbird, White-backed Mousebird, African Reed Warbler, Bokmakierie, Martial Eagle, Black-throated Canary, Black-chested Prinia, Malachite Kingfisher and Mountain Wheatear. Lanner Falcon was another good sighting on drive back to the N14.

From here we still had a way to go and arrived at the magical Augrabies Falls National Park in the early afternoon. At the Augrabies Falls the river is forced through a dramatic series of gorges where, as well as the falls themselves, there are turbulent, boiling rapids over a distance of several kilometres. The strip of cultivation on either side of the river is rich and luxuriant but just a short distance away begins a stark and arid landscape.

Tired of the vehicle we all opted for a walk around camp late afternoon which was highly productive for Spotted Flycatcher, Fiscal Flycatcher, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Pirit Batis, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Common Scimitarbill, an out-of-range Ashy Flycatcher, Speckled Pigeon, Cape Glossy Starling, Karoo Thrush, Crested Barbet, Black-throated Canary and African Red-eyed Bulbul. Yellow and Cape Grey Mongoose and Rock Hyrax were also very visible around camp.



Orange River White-eye, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Stark's Lark, Rosy-faced Lovebird | © Martin Benadie

Day 12: 20 November

First thing, another birding walk was taken around camp and the various viewpoints of the Falls before a good breakfast and hitting the road. On our pre-breakfast jaunt, African Pied Wagtail, White-rumped Swift, Little Swift, African Palm Swift, Alpine Swift, Rock Martin, Hamerkop, Ashy Tit, White-throated Canary, Lesser Honeyguide, Long-billed Crombec, Black-chested Prinia and Brubru were all seen. Searching through large flocks of swifts feeding over the falls we eventually had good views of several Bradfield's Swift in the end.

Today saw us continue north-eastwards towards the Kimberley area. It was another long drive day via Upington and Campbell but with surprisingly good roadside birding necessitating frequent stops, thankfully along mostly quiet roads. Class sightings on the day were Booted Eagle, Pygmy Falcon, Verreaux's Eagle, Northern Black Korhaan, Goliath Heron, Rock Kestrel and a pair of Short-toed Rock Thrush. A picnic lunch was enjoyed en route where we saw our first Common Scimitarbill.

We arrived at Marrick Game Farm on the outskirts of Kimberley late afternoon – enough time to settle in, have a good dinner and then set out on a night drive on the property. This was to be an incredible drive for mammals in particular! Good views were had of Aardvark, Aardwolf, Southern African Hedgehog, African Wild Cat, Bat-eared Fox, loads of Springhare and Cape Porcupine. Brief views were also had of Rufous-cheeked Nightjar.

Day 13: 21 November

The early morning was spent exploring the Marrick property at leisure, birding drives interspersed with short walks and visiting a few well-placed hides. We racked up some great sightings as a result.

Star birds seen at Marrick included Kalahari Scrub Robin, Yellow Canary, African Hoopoe, Fiscal Flycatcher, Cape Sparrow, Common Scimitarbill, Crowned Lapwing, Double-banded Courser, Spotted Thick-knee, Northern Black Korhaan, Pririt Batis, Acacia Pied Barbet, Brubru, Black-chested Prinia, Chestnut-vented Titbabbler, Marico Flycatcher, Plain-backed Pipit, Red-headed Finch, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Grey-backed Sparrow-lark, Eastern Clapper Lark, Desert Cisticola, Spike-heeled Lark, Blue Crane, Pink-billed Lark, White-backed Vulture, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Chat Flycatcher, Rufous-eared Warbler, Ashy Tit and Neddicky.

Mammal viewing was also enjoyable here with Black Wildebeest, Springbok, South African Ground Squirrel and Southern Giraffe amongst diurnal species seen.

After brunch at Marrick we set out for the nearby Mokala National Park. Here we enjoyed views of species seen such as Short-toed Rock-Thrush (on route), Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Ant-eating Chat, Common Ostrich, Greater Kestrel, Chat Flycatcher, Scaly-feathered Finch, Gabar Goshawk, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater catching locusts, Desert Cisticola, Plain-backed Pipit, Spike-heeled Lark, Northern Black Korhaan and Banded Martin. The mammal viewing was very productive here too and we saw several species not seen elsewhere on the trip such as majestic Roan and Sable antelope, Tsessebe and Red Hartebeest together with healthy numbers of Black Wildebeest and Springbok. It was a very pleasant visit albeit in quite hot and windy conditions.



Pink-billed Lark, Double-banded Courser | © Martin Benadie

Day 14: 22 November

We left Marrick rather early again to make the most of the drive to the outskirts of the Johannesburg metropole. Bradfield's Swift was seen again over Kimberley as we passed through the city. We had a long journey ahead of us today. We took a more indirect route however with the odd detour adding species like Red-breasted Swallow, Lesser Kestrel, Secretarybird, Long-tailed Widowbird, Orange River Francolin, Helmeted Guineafowl, Zitting Cisticola, Eastern Clapper Lark, Red-billed Quelea, Pin-tailed Whydah, Grey-headed Gull and South African Cliff Swallow. We stayed in comfortable lodge just outside Heidelberg and after checking in we tried some last birding for the day in an area nearby Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve where we saw Orange-breasted Waxbill as most notable find.



Orange River Francolin | © Martin Benadie

Day 15: 23 November

Not wanting to be stuck in morning traffic we left Heidelberg early again and quickly stopped in again at Suikerbosrand. Nothing new was around so we continued on, birding broad-leaved and acacia woodland mosaics just north of Pretoria. The morning birding was just incredible with overall diversity picking up significantly in the east of the country.

New for us were Crested Francolin, Diederik Cuckoo, Southern Black Tit, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Dark-capped Bulbul, Black-backed Puffback, White-bellied Sunbird, Black-crowned Tchagra, Grey Go-away-bird, Jameson's Firefinch, Green Wood Hoopoe, Lesser Striped Swallow, Chinspot Batis, Black-collared Barbet,

Tawny-flanked Prinia and White-throated Robin-Chat. Moving deeper into the secluded Seringveld Conservancy, dominated by broad-leaved woodland, we also added Yellow-fronted Canary, African Grey Hornbill, Amethyst Sunbird, Neddicky, African Hoopoe, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, White-fronted Bee-eater and confiding Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. Moving into acacia and riverine woodland around Pienaarsrivier we also connected with Woodland Kingfisher, Bennett's Woodpecker (great find!), Striated Heron, Giant Kingfisher, Kurrichane Thrush, Marico Sunbird, African Wattled Lapwing, Magpie Shrike, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Wahlberg's Eagle, Jacobin Cuckoo, African Black Duck, Southern Pied Babbler, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Golden-breasted Bunting, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, Lilac-breasted Roller and Burchell's Starling.

We had to pull ourselves away mid-morning as still wanted to also allow some time to bird the equally productive Polokwane Nature Reserve.

The afternoon was spent exploring the dry acacia woodland of Polokwane Nature Reserve for added species diversity on the day which included Black-faced Waxbill, Violet-eared Waxbill, Arrow-marked Babbler, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Lesser Striped Swallow, Chinspot Batis, Marico Sunbird, Rattling Cisticola, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Ashy Tit, Green-winged Pytilia, Groundscraper Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Red-backed Shrike, Great Sparrow, Bearded Woodpecker, Magpie Shrike and Natal Spurfowl amongst others. From Polokwane we essentially drove to Magoebaskloof Hotel via Haenertsburg, arriving early evening in misty conditions.



Burnt-necked Eremomela, Southern Pied Babbler | © Martin Benadie

Day 16: 24 November

There was a lot on the cards today necessitating an early start as per normal to explore the immediate area for the day. The lush and misty Afromontane forests around Magoebaskloof mark the northern edge of the range for several Southern African endemics. Today we were accompanied by local guide, Paul Nkhumane. The forest was alive with birdsong early morning and we worked away at the species on offer. The birding was very good and birds recorded were Spectacled Weaver, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Square-tailed Drongo, Orange Ground Thrush, African Emerald Cuckoo, Cape Parrot (brief flight views only unfortunately), Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Knysna Turaco, Olive Bushshrike, Grey Cuckooshrike, Bar-throated Apalis, Narina Trogon, Black-fronted Bushshrike, Olive Thrush, Cape Batis and Sweet Waxbill. A real bonus was finding some foraging Abdim's Stork in a field being ploughed. The localised Magpie Mannikin as well as the shy Forest Buzzard was later seen and a stop at the picturesque Debengeni Falls added Mountain Wagtail and White-starred Robin. Striped Pipit was also seen in the area as was Long-crested Eagle and good views of a perched African Goshawk was enjoyed on the forest edge. Dropping to lower altitudes, we then birded the arid Mamabola rural grasslands back towards Polokwane. Here we added the localised Short-clawed Lark and Mocking Cliff-Chat. Popping into the indigenous forest and grasslands at Kurisa Moya we managed insanely good views of Lemon Dove and Red-backed Mannikin. From here we headed back to Magoebaskloof Hotel and called it a day.



Orange Ground Thrush, Black-fronted Bushshrike | © Martin Benadie

Day 17: 25 November

We left Magoebaskloof straight after breakfast and hit the road. Dropping in altitude again, we were able to do some brief birding around the lush town of Tzaneen for the likes of Holub's Golden Weaver and Purple-crested Turaco, Green-backed Camaroptera and White-browed Robin-Chat. We then did a slight detour to visit a Bat Hawk nesting/roosting site, where one bird showed well, before undertaking a very scenic drive skirting the Drakensberg escarpment (where Red-headed Weaver was a nice addition) before making an extended stop at the Abel Erasmus Pass. Our objective here was to find the highly localised Taita Falcon. Eventually, one bird swooped in and perched on a ledge high above us allowing protracted scope views! What a bird. Thanks must also go to the keen eyes and great company of local craft seller and falcon custodian, Micheal Kumako, who assisted us greatly in finding these star birds! Another great endemic seen was Cape Vulture and we also saw a displaying African Crowned Eagle here and a flock of Southern Bald Ibis in the nearby vicinity.

From here we essentially continued the long drive to Wakkerstroom doing some productive birding at the wetland in town late afternoon we saw species such as African Rail, Grey Crowned Crane. Fan-tailed Widowbird and African Snipe. We enjoyed a first-class dinner at Forellenhof Guest Farm on the outskirts of town after checking in.

Day 18: 26 November

We spent a productive day exploring the high-altitude grasslands and wetlands surrounding Wakkerstroom with a specific list of targets. We were joined by local guide, Lucky, traveling in just about every direction from this strategically placed town. It was a long day, but a successful one as we tracked down nearly all of our targets including Yellow-breasted Pipit, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Red-throated Wryneck, White-bellied Bustard, Southern Bald Ibis, Wing-snapping Cisticola, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Drakensberg Prinia, Black Sparrowhawk, the Critically Endangered Rudd's Lark, Botha's Lark, Quailfinch, Red-winged Francolin and Pale-crowned Cisticola. The grasslands here were also resplendent with many displaying Long-tailed Widowbirds putting in quite a show.



Rudd's Lark, Botha's Lark | © Martin Benadie

Day 19: 27 November

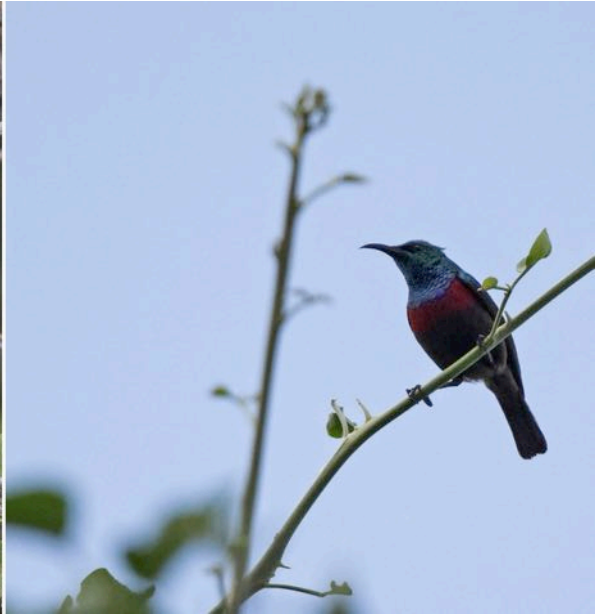
A pre-breakfast trip took us out to another area in the district where African Rock Pipit, Buff-streaked Chat, Mountain Wheatear, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Wailing Cisticola and Long-billed Pipit was seen well with White-backed Duck also added.

We then headed onto Mkuze via Piet Retief and Pongola, arriving at the comfortable Ghost Mountain Inn late afternoon. Along the way we had a flock of soaring Marabou Stork. A walk was enjoyed on the hotel grounds that also has access to a productive wetland. The exquisite African Pygmy-Goose was seen as well as White-eared Barbet, Purple-banded Sunbird, African Pied Wagtail, Yellow Weaver, Thick-billed Weaver, Southern Black Tit, African Paradise Flycatcher, Golden-tailed Woodpecker and Scarlet-chested Sunbird.

Day 20: 28 November

Our full day in Mkuze Game Reserve proved to be very successful and one of the highlights of the entire trip. The Kwazulu-Natal province is very productive for birding and the bird-rich *bushveld*, lakes and papyrus swamps of Mkuze is one of the top birding spots in the country. We were at the reserve gate when it opened at 5am in order to make the most of what Mkuze had to offer. The birding was simply staggering on the day due to habitat variety of acacia and terminalia woodlands interspersed with small tracts of dense sand forest. We made sure to try spend sufficient time in all these various habitat types.

Working the various areas of the reserve we logged Yellow-throated Longclaw, Grey Sunbird, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, White-browed Scrub Robin, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Pink-throated Twinspot, Chinspot Batis, Red-chested Cuckoo, Yellow-throated Petronia, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Violet-backed Starling, Woolly-necked Stork, Neergaard's Sunbird, White-backed Vulture, Crested Guinea fowl, White-crested Helmetshrike, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Grey Penduline Tit, Wahlberg's Eagle, Black Cuckooshrike, Eurasian Hobby, Purple-banded Sunbird, Blue Waxbill, Cape Starling, Red-billed Firefinch, Knob-billed Duck, Rattling Cisticola, Red-faced Mousebird, Red-eyed Dove, Purple-crested Turaco, Thick-billed Weaver, Lesser Masked Weaver, Kurrichane Thrush, Bearded Scrub Robin, Brubru, Red-breasted Swallow, Long-billed Crombec, Crested Barbet, Black-bellied Starling, Black-backed Puffback, Cape Turtle Dove, Little Bee-eater, Trumpeter Hornbill, Dark-backed Weaver, Sombre Greenbul, Lilac-breasted Roller, African Hoopoe, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Icterine Warbler, Sabota Lark and Marico Sunbird. On the drive out of the park we also added Long-tailed Paradise Whydah, Village Weaver and Dusky Indigobird was another great record.



Pink-throated Twinspot, Neergard's Sunbird | © Martin Benadie

Mammal viewing was also exciting on the day and quite varied with Nyala, Giraffe, Blue Wildebeest, Burchell's Zebra, Common Warthog and Vervet Monkey all seen well.

Day 21: 29 November

We decided upon another early morning visit to Mkuze which was just as productive as the day before and which we birded for the whole morning again. More good views of species seen the previous day and further new species logged such as Flappet Lark, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Gorgeous Bushshrike, Rufous-naped Lark, Black-crowned Tchagra, Golden-breasted Bunting, Terrestrial Brownbul, Black-collared Barbet, Crowned Hornbill, Black Cuckoo, Wire-tailed Swallow and Collared Sunbird. Retz's Helmetshrike, Striped Kingfisher, Rudd's Apalis, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, White-throated Robin-Chat and Grey Tit-Flycatcher were also seen as well as great views of a pair of Pink-throated Twinspot again.

A large wetland just outside Mkuze had Yellow-billed Stork and Black Heron. We then headed to the western shores of iSimangaliso Wetland Park where we spent some time, adding the likes of Lemon-breasted Canary, Collared Pratincole, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Marsh Sandpiper and Black-winged Lapwing.

We then made our way towards the forested holiday town of St. Lucia where we spent the late afternoon birding around town itself. Great sightings for the afternoon included a breeding colony of Southern Brown-throated Weaver and Livingstone's Turaco as we checked in to the guesthouse.

Day 22: 30 November

We opened the birding today with exploration of several trails around St. Lucia which was interspersed with a breakfast stop. The estuary and coastal forests at St Lucia are another top birding spot in the country and we saw the likes of Crowned Hornbill, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Olive Sunbird, Trumpeter Hornbill, Dark-backed Weaver, Woodward's Batis, Square-tailed Drongo, Green-backed Camaroptera, Grey Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Grey Waxbill, Red-capped Robin-Chat, African Pied Wagtail, Livingstone's Turaco, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Green Malkoha, Purple-banded Sunbird, African Green Pigeon, Black Saw-wing, Collared Sunbird and White-eared Barbet. We finally also tracked down an Eastern Nicator after some dedicated searching for this skulking species.

At the mouth we added Rufous-winged Cisticola, White-faced Whistling Duck, Yellow Weaver, Brimstone Canary, Black-winged Stilt, Common Greenshank, Common Waxbill, Pied Kingfisher, Sandwich Tern, Marsh Sandpiper, Gull-billed Tern (South African rarity), Little Tern, Greater Flamingo, African Oystercatcher, Grey Heron, Little Stint, Bar-tailed Godwit, Yellow-billed Stork, Yellow-billed Duck, Pied Avocet, Grey Plover, Swift Tern, White-fronted Plover, Curlew Sandpiper and Common Ringed Plover.

After breakfast we headed into the eastern shores of iSimangaliso Wetland Park up to Cape Vidal where we finally tracked down Brown Scrub Robin. This area was also good for mammals such as Common Warthog, Cape Buffalo, Burchell's Zebra, Chacma Baboon, Common Waterbuck, Southern Reedbuck, Hippopotamus

and Samongo (Blue) Monkey amongst others. From St. Lucia we travelled down the N2 towards Eshowe, arriving early evening.

Day 23: 01 December

Early morning had us at the nearby Dlinza Forest, in the company of local guide and friend Sakhamuzi Mhlongo. Our key target here was the localised Spotted Ground-Thrush, which has become a lot harder to find in recent years. Luckily we saw one bird very well! Around Dlinza we also enjoyed African Green Pigeon, Terrestrial Brownbul, Chorister Robin-Chat and Red-backed Mannikin.

From Eshowe, we headed onto another forest locality. Ngoye is a relict 3,900 hectare forest patch in the rolling hills of KwaZulu-Natal is the only place in southern Africa to see Green Barbet. Here we worked hard for this highly localised barbet and eventually had great views of one bird! Easily, another star bird of the trip. Whilst looking for the barbet we were also distracted by Grey Cuckooshrike and Olive Woodpecker.

From Ngoye we visited a wetland where we managed to locate several African Pygmy Goose, White-backed Duck, Southern Pochard, Rufous-winged Cisticola, Whiskered Tern, Purple Heron and African Jacana. From Eshowe we bade farewell to Sakha and then undertook the drive to the Underberg area of the Drakensberg, arriving, you guessed it, early evening!

Day 24: 02 December

The following day was our day to explore the high Drakensberg and enter the Kingdom of Lesotho. The rough road still (currently) necessitates four wheel drive, and so we were picked up by our knowledgeable guide, Stuart Mclean, and professionally led from one bird to the next! Highlights were numerous on the day including Gurney's Sugarbird and confiding Ground Woodpecker, Bush Blackcap, Long-billed Pipit, Wailing Cisticola, Broad-tailed Warbler, Cape Rock Thrush, Long-crested Eagle, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Malachite Sunbird, Buff-streaked Chat, Cape Longclaw, Bokmakierie, Cape Grassbird, Quailfinch, fleeting Broad-tailed Warbler, Barratt's Warbler, Jackal Buzzard, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, Cape Crow, Drakensberg Prinia as well as Horus Swift. We also tried an area for Short-tailed Pipit, flushing one bird in the end. Continuing on up, we climbed the sinuous and rocky road towards the pass and here we found the absolutely delightful Drakensburg Rockjumper and Drakensberg Siskin. We continued on into Lesotho, where the road suddenly turned into a perfectly smooth tarmac road. Sloggett's Rats dived in and out of their holes at the border post, and pretty soon we found the other birds we were after, enjoying great views of specialities such as Mountain Pipit, Sickie-winged Chat, Grey Tit, Fairy Flycatcher, Karoo Prinia, Layard's Tit-Babbler, Cape Bunting and Sentinel Rock Thrush. Three Lammergeiers were also seen.

After a fine picnic lunch we headed back down again. In the late afternoon, Stuart took us around the Himeville district with a breeding pair of localised Wattled Crane being seen as well as at least two rarely seen Cuckoofinches. The closing acts for the day went to a pair of roosting Barn Owls which Stuart showed us, Red-necked Spurfowls and Black-headed Oriole.



Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, Drakensberg Rockjumper, Drakensberg Prinia, Drakensberg Siskin | © Adrian Hayward

Day 25: 03 December

The last day of the tour suddenly arrived. A pre-brakfast walk was undertaken but conditions were rather misty. A pair of displaying Brown-backed Honeybirds and Jacobin Cuckoo were notable highlights. After our last breakfast, we started our journey back to Durban. Just before Himeville a stop was made for a female Amur Falcon, probably one of the first arrivals for the season in area.

From here we drove via the scenic Hella Hella Pass to Highover Nature Reserve where we spent the rest of the morning. Here we found several Blue Swallow, flushed several Common Quail and saw Cape Vulture overhead.

Then we basically drove back to Durban and King Shaka Airport via Richmond bringing this action-packed tour to an unfortunate end. We had covered a total driving distance close to 10,000km! A last lunch was enjoyed together before checking in for our respective flights back home.



Bat Hawk | © Martin Benadie

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

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

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

Conservation threat categories and information is taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

(EW) = Extinct in the wild, (CR) = Critically Endangered, (EN) = Endangered, (VU) = Vulnerable, (NT) = Near Threatened, (DD) = Data Deficient.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.2)**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra (www.igoterra.com) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* Seen at widespread sites – those in locales such as West Coast NP, De Hoop NR, and Mokala NP most tickable [*australis*].

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Two at Strandfontein; largest numbers at Mkhuze and St. Lucia

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus* Several seen well on a small wetland near Wakkerstroom [nominate], as well as in Eshowe area [*leuconotus*].

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Many seen, especially in fields in the Overberg district [*niger*].

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Abundant and widespread. First seen around Cape Town.

South African Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna cana* Good numbers seen. First seen well at Strandfontein.

African Pygmy Goose ◊ *Nettapus auritus* Several seen at wetland in Eshowe area, also at Ghost Mountain Inn.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* Fairly common in the Cape area.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* Two birds first seen close to Swellendam.

Mallard (introduced) *Anas platyrhynchos* A feral bird in Table View area, Cape Town.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [undulata].

Cape Shoveler ◊ *Anas smithii* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhynchos* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* Five birds seen at Strandfontein, also in KwaZulu-Natal.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Seen a few times, the first at Strandfontein, Cape Town.

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* (NT) First seen at Strandfontein, Cape Town.

Helmeted Guinea fowl *Numida meleagris* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [coronatus].

Crested Guinea fowl ◊ *Guttera pucherani* A few seen well in Mkuze Game Reserve and St. Lucia [edouardi].

Coqui Francolin (H) *Peliperdix coqui* One bird heard north of Pretoria [coqui].

Orange River Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila gutturalis* Small covey seen north of Dealesville [levalliantoides].

Grey-winged Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila afra* Seen in Swellendam area towards Malgas.

Red-winged Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila levallantii* Great views of a covey in the Wakkerstroom area [levallantii].

Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena* Seen well, the first north of Pretoria [sephaena].

Cape Spur fowl ◊ *Pternistis capensis* Common and widespread in the Southern Cape. First seen at Kirstenbosch.

Natal Spur fowl ◊ *Pternistis natalensis* Seen a few times. The first north of Pretoria [natalensis].

Red-necked Spur fowl *Pternistis afer* A pair seen in Himeville area [castaneiventer].

Swainson's Spur fowl ◊ *Pternistis swainsonii* A few seen, the first at north of Dealesville [swainsonii].

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* First seen driving to De Hoop; seen well in flight at Highover Nature Reserve [africana].

African Penguin ◊ *Spheniscus demersus* (EN) Great views of the colony at Stony Point, Betty's Bay.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [capensis].

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A couple near Cape Town then very good numbers at De Hoop [infuscatus].

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Seen a few times, the first at Velddrift [gurneyi].

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Common with good numbers at many sites. First seen around Cape Town.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) Seen well at several sites. First seen at Strandfontein.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* A few seen in the Mkuze Game Reserve area.

Abdim's Stork ♦ *Ciconia abdimii* A few seen in the Magoebaskloof area.

Woolly-necked Stork (African Woollyneck) *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* A few in the east; first at Mkuze.

European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* A flock seen in the east [nominate].

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* c6 seen circling around Pongola Nature Reserve.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

Southern Bald Ibis ♦ *Geronticus calvus* (VU) Great views of good numbers around Wakkerstroom.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Common, noisy and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [nominate].

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Seen at several wetland sites, the first around Cape Town.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* First seen around Cape Town and plenty more in the east of the country.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* First around Cape Town. Several birds seen at Wakkerstroom [nycticorax].

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* Seen north of Pretoria [atricapilla].

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Reasonable numbers in the east [paludivaga].

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [nominate].

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen around Cape Town [nominate].

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* A smart grassland species first seen on the Cape Peninsula.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* Just one seen, along the Orange River.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A few at several wetlands, the first at Strandfontein [nominate].

Great Egret *Ardea alba* A few seen in the east [melanorhynchos].

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Solitary birds seen, mostly in the east [nominate].

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Several solitary birds seen throughout trip [nominate].

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Seen in the Cape Town area at Strandfontein.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* Good numbers seen around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Cape Gannet ♦ *Morus capensis* (VU) Good numbers seen offshore along the Cape West Coast.

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus* Widespread at many wetlands, first on route to Kimberley [nominate].

Crowned Cormorant ♦ *Microcarbo coronatus* (NT) Small numbers at isolated localities along the Cape West Coast.

Bank Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax neglectus* (EN) c10 seen at the colony at Stony Point, Betty's Bay.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [lucidus].

Cape Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax capensis* (EN) 1000s on the Cape coast; great looks at the colony at Stony Point.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* Small numbers at several sites, a majority in the east [nominate].

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* (VU) First west of Kimberley also in Wakkerstroom area.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Widespread with small numbers at many sites [nominate].

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* Small numbers seen, first in Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) *Gypaetus barbatus* (NT) Three birds seen in Lesotho [meridionalis].

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* One bird recorded, in Magoebaskloof area.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* (CR) Good numbers see around Marrick and Mkuze.

Cape Vulture ♦ *Gyps coprotheres* (EN) Several around the Abel Erasmus Pass, and a few others at Sani Pass and Highover.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* Few birds seen, first south of Brandvlei.

Southern Banded Snake-Eagle ♦ *Circaetus fasciolatus* One bird seen north of St.Lucia.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) One seen in Mkuze.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* Great views of one close to a nest near to Tzaneen [anderssoni].

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* (VU) Two birds seen in Karoo.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarine* One bird seen in Mkuze.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* Several seen in the east of the country, the first around Magoebaskloof.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* Few seen in the east.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* A few along the Cape West Coast and Karoo.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* Solitary bird in Mkuze area [nominate].

Verreaux's (or Black) Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* Pair first seen in Kamies Mountains south of Springbok.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* One bird seen at Mokala [nominate].

Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus* Small numbers of this striking raptor seen, first near Calvinia. [argentior], [canorus].

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* A few heard, and one seen at Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* Single bird seen in St.Lucia area [nominate].

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* One seen in Wakkerstroom district [nominate].

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* A few at wetlands in the southwest and one at the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

Black Harrier ♦ *Circus maurus* (VU) Great views near Melkbosstrand and further north along the Cape West Coast.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Common and widespread [parasitus].

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* A few seen, the first around Augrabies Falls.

Common (or Steppe) Buzzard *Buteo buteo* Common and widespread in small numbers [vulpinus].

Forest Buzzard *Buteo trizonatus* One bird seen in Magoebaskloof area.

Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus* Fairly common, especially in the southwest, with many great views.

Ludwig's Bustard ♦ *Neotis ludwigii* (EN) Several seen in the Karoo; first in Calvinia area.

Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami* (NT) c8 around Grootvadersbosch-De Hoop area [stanleyi].

White-bellied Bustard ♦ *Eupodotis senegalensis* Two seen near Dirkiesdoop, Wakkerstroom [barrowii].

Blue Korhaan *Eupodotis caerulescens* (NT) A group seen in Wakkerstroom area.

Karoo Korhaan ♦ *Eupodotis vigorsii* Seen very well a number of times, the first in Overberg area [nominate].

Southern Black Korhaan ♦ *Afrotis afra* (VU) A few seen in West Coast NP.

Northern Black Korhaan ♦ *Afrotis afraoides* Plenty seen well in the Northern Cape and Marrick [nominate].

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens* Several seen in Wakkerstroom area.

Black Crake *Amouromis flavirostra* A few seen, first in Tzaneen area.

African Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyria* First at Strandfontein and several at Wakkerstroom [madagascariensis].

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Decent numbers at several sites. First seen around Cape Town [meridionalis].

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* Common at several wetlands. First seen around Cape Town.

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* (EN) Plenty in the east, especially Wakkerstroom/Himeville [nominate].

Blue Crane ♦ *Grus paradisea* (VU) Common in the Overberg, with many great views; also in Wakkerstroom area.

Wattled Crane ♦ *Grus carunculata* (VU) Excellent views of a family of three in Himeville district.

Water Thick-Knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* A pair seen at Strandfontein and a few seen at Mkuze [nominate].

Spotted Thick-Knee *Burhinus capensis* Several seen, the first in Cape Town area [nominate].

African Oystercatcher ♦ *Haematopus moquini* (NT) Several seen in the southwest, the first at False Bay.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Widespread with good numbers at many sites [nominate].

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Seen at a number of sites, the biggest numbers at Strandfontein.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* Widespread with good numbers at many sites. First around Cape Town.

Black-winged Lapwing *Vanellus melanopterus* c10 seen in grassy plain along western shores of IsiMangaliso [minor].

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. [nominate].

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* First seen around Suikerbosrand; others later in the trip [lateralis].

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A few seen in West Coast National Park and St Lucia [nominate].

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* One bird in West Coast National Park [pamirensis].

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* First at West Coast NP, also in Velddrift and St Lucia [tundrae].

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Small numbers at several sites. First seen at Strandfontein.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* Small numbers at several sites. First seen at Strandfontein [nominate].

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* A few seen with best views in West Coast NP [nominate] and St. Lucia [arenaceus].

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus* (NT) c20 seen well at Velddrift [nominate].

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* (LO) Solitary bird seen at small wetland in Eshowe area.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Good numbers in Mkuze.

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis* Several at Wakkerstroom [nominate].

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* First seen in Velddrift area, also West Coast National Park [nominate].

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Single bird in West Coast National Park [orientalis].

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* (NT) First seen at West Coast National Park. Single bird seen at St Lucia [taymyrensis].

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Just a few seen, the first at Strandfontein.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Good numbers seen at several sites, the first at Strandfontein.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Several seen, the first at De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Just a couple of sightings, the first at Velddrift.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Several in West Coast National Park, also along coast in Port Nolloth area [nominate].

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Seen at several sites, the biggest number being at Velddrift.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (NT) Seen well, good numbers at Velddrift and West Coast National Park.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Several in West Coast National Park.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Highest count was c10 at Velddrift.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Two birds seen at Velddrift.

Double-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus* Few seen well at Brandvlei [nominate] and Marrick Game Farm [granti].

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* A few seen at western shores of St. Lucia [fuelleborni].

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* First c10 at Strandfontein, also St Lucia [poiocephalus].

Hartlaub's Gull *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii* Very common in the southwest. First seen in Cape Town.

Kelp (or Cape) Gull ♦ *Larus dominicanus* Very common in the southwest. First seen in Cape Town [vetula].

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Just a few seen, the first at Strandfontein.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Fairly common in the southwest, first seen at Strandfontein [nominate].

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* One bird in West Coast National Park [nominate].

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Good numbers in the southwest, first seen at Strandfontein [nominate].

Damara Tern ♦ *Sternula balaenarum* (VU) Brilliant views of two birds at Struisbaai. Very localised in South Africa.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Single bird at St. Lucia.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Good numbers seen along the Cape West Coast [tibetana].

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Plenty seen with biggest numbers at Mkuze [delalandii].

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* One bird seen at St Lucia.

Brown Skua *Catharacta Antarctica* One bird noted offshore at Betty's Bay.

Namaqua Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles namaqua* Many great views; biggest numbers in the Calvinia/Brandvlei areas.

Rock Dove (Feral) *Columba livia* 'feral'.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common and widespread [phaeonota].

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix* Flock of c5 seen feeding in tree near Grootvadersbosch the first.

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata* Great views at Kirstenbosch and Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* Two forms seen: nominate, first around the Cape and *tropica* in the east.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Fairly common and widespread. First in the Cape Town area [nominate].

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* Good numbers in Mkuze GR.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* Few sightings around Magoebaskloof and St. Lucia.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Several seen well at various sites [nominate].

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* Few birds at Mkuze GR and Dlinza [delalandii].

Livingstone's Turaco ♦ *Tauraco livingstonii* Excellent views of a few at St Lucia [cabanis].

Knysna Turaco ♦ *Tauraco corythaix* See note.

Purple-crested Turaco *Tauraco porphyreolophus* Particularly good views in Mkuze [nominate].

Grey Go-away-Bird *Corythaixoides concolor* c10 seen north of Pretoria and in Polokwane area [bechuanae].

Burchell's Coucal ♦ *Centropus burchellii* Few seen well in the Mkuze area [nominate].

Green Malkoha *Ceuthmochares australis* One seen at St. Lucia.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* Excellent views of one north of Pretoria.

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii* Two birds north of Pretoria

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* A good number seen and heard, the first at Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* A few heard and great views of one bird at Mkuze.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* Two seen well in Magoebaskloof area.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* A few heard and few seen well at Mkuze and Himeville [nominate].

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* Plenty heard and a few seen, the best sighting at Himeville.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* Two in Himeville area [afinis].

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* Seen north of Pretoria and Polokwane Nature Reserve [licua].

African Wood Owl (H) *Strix woodfordii* Heard at St. Lucia.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* Two seen well at Kirstenbosch [nominate].

Rufous-cheeked Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus rufigena* One bird at Marrick GR on night drive [nominate].

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Common in the north and east [*celer*] after the first at Augrabies Falls NP [*myochrous*].

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* Fairly common and widespread. First seen over Kirstenbosch [*africanus*].

Common Swift *Apus apus* A few in West Coast National Park [*pekinensis*].

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* Great views of 50+ above Kirstenbosch, also at Rooi Els [nominate].

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi* Few birds at Augrabies Falls, c50 near Kimberley. [*deserticola*].

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [*affinis*-group].

Horus Swift *Apus horus* Great views of three birds along lower reaches of Sani Pass [nominate].

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen around Cape Town.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* Two forms: nominate first around the Cape; *minor* first at Magoebaskloof.

White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius* Two forms: nominate widespread; *damarensis* around Springbok, Onseepkans.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* First seen in West Coast National Park [nominate], Good numbers in Mkuze [*transvaalensis*].

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* One seen at Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* Seen north of Pretoria and in Mkuze [nominate].

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* A handful seen, the first in the Grootvadersbosch area [*albiventris*]; *vociferans* around Wakkerstroom.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* c3 seen in Mkuze [nominate].

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* One bird seen north of Pretoria [*cyanoleuca*].

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* A total of three seen, the first along the Orange River [nominate].

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* A few seen, the first at Harold Porter Gardens [nominate].

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A few seen at several sites, the first at Velddrift [nominate].

Swallow-tailed Bee-Eater *Merops hirundineus* Several seen well, the first at Onseepkans [nominate].

Little Bee-Eater *Merops pusillus* Just a handful seen around the Mkuze GR and Polokwane [*meridionalis*].

White-fronted Bee-Eater *Merops bullockoides* Seen well north of Pretoria.

Blue-cheeked Bee-Eater *Merops persicus* Good numbers of migrants at Mkuze and St Lucia [nominate].

European Bee-Eater *Merops apiaster* Good numbers in several areas, the first north of Cape Town.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen north of Cape Town.

Green (or Red-billed) Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* A few seen, the first north of Pretoria [*marwitzi*].

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* A handful seen, the first around Marrick [nominate]; *schalowi* in the east.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill ♦ *Tockus leucomelas* Seen north of Pretoria, and near Polokwane [nominate].

Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Singles seen at Mkuze GR and St Lucia.

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* One bird north of Johannesburg [*epirhinus*].

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* Good numbers in the eastern forests. First seen in Mkuze GR.

White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis* Good views of a few around St Lucia and Mkuze [nominate].

Green Barbet *Cryptolybia (Stactolaema) olivacea* Only one bird seen at Ngoye Forest [*woodwardi*].

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* A few heard and a couple seen at St Lucia [nominate].

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* Just one seen, at Mkuze [nominate].

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* A couple seen north of Pretoria [*extoni*].

Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas* Several seen well, the first in the Karoo [nominate]; *centralis* at Polokwane NR, *affinis* at Mkuze.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* A few seen well, the first north of Pretoria [nominate].

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii* A few seen, the first in Augrabies [nominate].

Brown-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* A pair displaying was seen in Himeville area [nominate].

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* One seen well at Augrabies [nominate].

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* (H) Heard only in Marrick area.

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis* Excellent views in Wakkerstroom [nominate].

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* Excellent views at Augrabies [*anderssoni*] and Mkuze [*constricta*].

Knysna Woodpecker *Camethera notata* One bird seen at Grootvadersbosch.

Ground Woodpecker ♦ *Geocolaptes olivaceus* First in the Cape [*olivaceus*], but best views in Lesotho [*prometheus*].

Bearded Woodpecker *Chloropicus namaquus* The first north of Pretoria, also at Mkuze [*coalescens*].

Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii* Great find of one bird north of Pretoria [nominate].

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Two forms: nominate in the south; *intermedius* in the east.

Olive Woodpecker *Dendropicos griseocephalus* First seen in Grootvadersbosch, also Magoebaskloof and Ngoye [nominate].

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* Two seen on drive from Augrabies to Kimberley.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* 10 seen on the drive from Kimberley to Johannesburg.

Common (Rock) Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen around Cape Town [*rupicolus*].

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides* Good numbers in drier areas of the Cape. First seen north of Calvinia [nominate].

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* One bird seen in Himeville area.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* One bird at Mkuze [nominate].

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* Just two seen with best views on drive from Onseepkans to Kakamas [nominate].

Taita Falcon ♦ *Falco fasciinucha* (VU) Good views of a perched bird at the Abel Erasmus Pass.

Cape Parrot ♦ *Poicephalus robustus* One bird in flight in the fog at Magoebaskloof.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula kramera* Introduced – 5 birds seen in Mkuze area by Dave.

Rosy-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis* A few birds seen at Onseepkans [nominate].

Cape Batis ♦ *Batis capensis* Two forms: nominate around Cape Town; *hollidayi* at Magoebaskloof.

Woodward's Batis ♦ *Batis fratum* Brilliant views of 4 birds at St Lucia.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor* A few seen at Polokwane NR [*palliditergum*] and Mkuze GR [nominate].

Pririt Batis ♦ *Batis pririt* Several seen very well, the first north of Calvinia towards Loeriesfontein [nominate]; *affinis* at Onseepkans and Augrabies.

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* Pair seen at St. Lucia [nominate].

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus* A couple of entertaining flocks at Mkuze GR [*poliocephalus*].

Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii* A flock of five birds seen in Mkuze GR [*tricolor*].

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malakonotus blanchoti* Two seen well north of Pretoria [*hypopyrrhus*].

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* Two birds seen at Magoebaskloof [*sandgroundi*].

Olive Bushshrike ♦ *Chlorophoneus olivaceus* Seen well at Grootvadersbosch and Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* First at Polokwane, a few seen in the Mkuze and St Lucia areas [*similis*].

Gorgeous Bushshrike *Telophorus viridis* Great views of this skulking stunner in Mkuze GR [*quadricolor*].

Bokmakierie ♦ *Telophorus zeylonus* Two forms: nominate first at Langebaan; *thermophilus* in Port Nolloth.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* Seen well at Polokwane [*damarensis*] and Mkuze GR [nominate].

Southern Tchagra ♦ *Tchagra tchagra* At least three at De Hoop [nominate].

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* One seen well north of Pretoria [*kalahari*]. Also Mkuze [*orientalis*].

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Plenty seen well, especially at the Mkuze GR and St Lucia [*hamatus*]; north of Pretoria [*okavangensis*].

Southern Boubou ♦ *Laniarius ferrugineus* First seen well at Kirstenbosch BG [nominate] and a few others seen during the tour at Mkuze [*tongensis*], Himeville area [*natalensis*], and north of Pretoria [*transvaalensis*].

Crimson-breasted Shrike ♦ *Laniarius atrococcineus* Brilliant views at Marrick, also Polokwane.

Brubru *Nilais afer* Just a few seen. The first at Augrabies [*brubru*]. Also Polokwane NR [*solivagus*] and Mkuze [*miombensis*].

Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia* Solitary birds at Grootvadersbosch, Magoebaskloof and Ngoye [nominate].

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* First north of Pretoria, also Mkuze.

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* North of Pretoria and Polokwane Nature Reserve [nominate].

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* Common summer migrant in the east.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* See note.

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus* Two birds seen in Himeville area [nominate].

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* Several seen around Magoebaskloof, Mkuze GR and St Lucia [nominate].

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Small numbers at several sites. Nominate in Grootvadersbosch; *apivorus* in Marrick area; *fugax* in Polokwane area.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas* See note.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Widespread, with small numbers at many sites: *granti* at Kirstenbosch; *plumbeiceps* in the north-east.

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis* Most common in the Overberg and Wakkerstroom. Also in Himeville area [nominate].

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* Widespread; small numbers at many sites, especially in the south and west.

Cape Rockjumper ♦ *Chaetops frenatus* Good views of two birds at Rooi Els.

Drakensberg Rockjumper ♦ *Chaetops aurantius* Brilliant views of six birds along Sani Pass.

Fairy Flycatcher ♦ *Stenostira scita* Seen well in Clanwilliam area, Karoo [nominate] and in Lesotho [*rudebecki*].

Southern Black Tit ♦ *Melaniparus niger* First north of Pretoria [*xanthostomus*], plenty more around the Mkuze and St Lucia [nominate].

Ashy Tit ♦ *Melaniparus cinerascens* Two seen well at Augrabies Falls NP, others in Polokwane area [nominate].

Grey Tit ♦ *Melaniparus afer* Two forms: brilliant views of *arens* the first just outside Langebaan [nominate]; also in Lesotho [*arens*].

Grey Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli* A few seen very well in Mkuze GR [*hellmayri*].

Cape Penduline Tit ♦ *Anthoscopus* See note.

Eastern Nicator *Nicator gularis* One bird seen in St. Lucia.

Spike-heeled Lark ♦ *Chersomanes albofasciata* First seen near around Brandvlei [*garrula*]; *albofasciata* at Marrick; *alticola* at Wakkerstroom.

Short-clawed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda chuana* Brilliant views of two birds in the Mamobola grasslands, near Polokwane.

Karoo Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda subcoronata* Several seen well. First noted near to Brandvlei [nominate]; *bradshawii* around Aggenys.

Eastern Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda semitorquata* Several great looks in the Wakkerstroom area [*transvaalensis*]; *semitorquata* in Sani Pass area.

Cape Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda curvirostris* See note.

Agulhas Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda brevirostris* Excellent views of a few in the Overberg, near De Hoop.

Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark ♦ *Eremopterix verticalis* Widespread in the southwest. First near Brandvlei [nominate]; *damarensis* at Marrick.

Black-eared Sparrow-Lark ♦ *Eremopterix australis* Two flocks of this classy endemic in Loeriesfontein area.

Sabota Lark ♦ *Calendulauda sabota* See note.

Fawn-coloured Lark *Calendulauda africanoides* First seen in Aggeneys area, also in Mokala area [nominate].

Karoo Lark ♦ *Calendulauda albescens* First seen north of Langebaan [nominate] and seen at few sites subsequently: *guttata* in the Karoo; *codea* in Port Nolloth area.

Red Lark ♦ *Calendulauda burra* (VU) See note.

Barlow's Lark *Calendulauda barlowi* See note.

Rudd's Lark ♦ *Heteromirafra ruddi* (VU) Superb views of one near Fickland Pan, Wakkerstroom.

Eastern Clapper Lark *Mirafra fasciolata* Excellent views of sev. at Marrick GF and at a few other spots [nominate].

Cape Clapper Lark ♦ *Mirafra apiata* Agulhas Clapper [*marjoriae*] seen well near De Hoop.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana* Common in the northern half of the tour. First seen northeast of Dealesville [*transvaalensis*]; nominate at Mkuze.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Few birds seen performing aerial display in Mkuze GR.

Sclater's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys sclateri* (NT) Great views of several coming to drink at a small waterpoint near Brandvlei.

Stark's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys starki* Several birds seen west of Pofadder [*gregaria*].

Botha's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys fringillaris* Three birds seen in Wakkerstroom area.

Pink-billed Lark ♦ *Spizocorys conirostris* Two birds only seen at Marrick [nominate].

Large-billed Lark ♦ *Galerida magnirostris* Reasonably common. First seen in Darling area [*sedentaria*] and also then in Lesotho [*harei*].

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* Common and widespread. First noted in Darling area [nominate]; *nivenae* around Wakkerstroom.

African Red-eyed Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus nigricans* In the Springok, Augrabies [nominate], and Kimberley areas [*superior*].

Cape Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus capensis* Common around the Western Cape.

Common (Dark-capped) Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* First north of Pretoria, then common in the east [*layardi*].

Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus importunus* Fairly common. First at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens [nominate].

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* A few, mostly around the Mkuze GR and St Lucia [nominate].

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris* First in Grootvadersbosch [nominate]; also Mkuze GR and St Lucia [*intermedius*].

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* A few seen at Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Black Saw-Wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera* Seen at several sites. First at Harold Porter [*holomelas*].

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola* Good numbers seen at several sites, often near to water [nominate].

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* Best views and biggest numbers were in the Wakkerstroom area [nominate].

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common and widespread: nominate in Western Cape, *gutturalis* at Mkuze.

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* A cracking swallow seen very well at several sites.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Few seen in the Mkuze area [nominate].

Blue Swallow ◇ *Hirundo atrocaerulea* (VU) Great views of four birds at Highover.

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* Plenty in the De Hoop area and a few north of Cape Town [nominate].

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Two forms: nominate widespread; *pretoriae* at the Abel Erasmus Pass.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Two birds seen in Mkuze area in mixed swallow flocks [nominate].

Greater Striped Swallow *Cecropis cucullata* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First near Cape Town.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Fairly common in the east. First seen north of Pretoria [*unitatis*].

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* First north of Kimberley; a few in the east, especially at Mkuze [nominate].

South African Cliff Swallow ◇ *Petrochelidon spilodera* First in Brandvlei area, big numbers around Wakkerstroom.

Cape Grassbird ◇ *Sphenoeacus afer* A smart bird, first seen at Rooi Els [nominate]. Also Sani Pass area [*intermedius*] and Magoebaskloof [*natalensis*].

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* Small numbers at a few sites, the first in De Hoop area [*diverga*], nominate at Augrabies, *pallida* at Mkuze, and *flecki* at Polokwane.

Victorin's Warbler ◇ *Cryptillas victorini* Brilliant views of a showy bird in Grootvadersbosch area.

Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla* Grootvadersbosch [*voelckeri*] and Magoebaskloof [nominate].

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Common visitor in the east.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* First around Cape Town, another in Wakkserstroom [nominate].

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus* Fairly common. First seen in Calvinia area [*baeticatus*]; also *suahelicus* at Mkuze and *hallae* at Onseepkans.

African Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis* Seen at Sani Pass [nominate].

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* One bird seen in Mkuze.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* Seen at Strandfontein [nominate], *transvaalensis* at Wakkerstroom.

Knysna Warbler ◇ *Bradypterus sylvaticus* (VU) Good views at Grootvadersbosch [nominate].

Barratt's Warbler ◇ *Bradypterus barratti* Excellent views at Magoebaskloof [nominate] and Sani Pass [*cathkinensis*].

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Schoenicola brevirostris* Views for Dave only in Sani Pass area.

Lazy Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola aberrans* Good views at Kurisa Moya [nominate].

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* Common in the east. First seen in Polokwane area [nominate], Mkuze [*campestris*].

Grey-backed Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola subruficapilla* Fairly common in the Cape, first in Langebaan area [nominate], *namaqua* in Karoo.

Wailing Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola lais* Seen in Wakkerstroom area and on Sani Pass [nominate].

Rufous-winged Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola galactotes* Excellent views of one at St. Lucia [nominate].

Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens* Two forms: *elegans* around the Cape; nominate largely in the east.

Neddicky *Cisticola fulvicapilla* A few seen, the first at Grootvadersbosch [*silberbaueri*]. Also *ruficapilla* in Marrick area, *dexter* north of Pretoria and nominate in Himeville area.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen, the first at Strandfontein [*terrestris*].

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* A few seen at Marrick and Mokala [*kalahari*].

Cloud Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola textrix* See note.

Pale-crowned Cisticola ◇ *Cisticola cinnamomeus* Great views of one near to Wakkerstroom [*egregius*].

Wing-snapping Cisticola *Cisticola ayresii* Several seen near to Wakkerstroom [nominate].

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Quite common in the east. First seen around Pretoria [*affinis*], Mkuze [*pondoensis*].

Black-chested Prinia ◇ *Prinia flavicans* Just a few seen, the first seen well at Augrabies [nominate], *nubilosa* in Polokwane area.

Karoo Prinia ◇ *Prinia maculosa* Common in the south and west. First seen at Kirstenbosch [nominate], *psammophila* in Karoo and *exultans* in Lesotho.

Drakensberg Prinia ◇ *Prinia hypoxantha* A few seen well at Magoebaskloof, Wakkersroom and Sani Pass.

Namaqua Warbler ◇ *Phragmacia substriata* Great views around Calvinia [nominate], *confinis* heard at Augrabies.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica* First at Grootvadersbosch [*griseopyga*]; more seen at other forested sites.

Rudd's Apalis ◇ *Apalis ruddi* Great views of this localized speciality at Mkuze GR [*fumosa*].

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava* A few seen well around the Mkuze GR and St Lucia [*neglecta*].

Rufous-eared Warbler ◇ *Malcorus pectoralis* Several good views of this cracker, the first in Brandvlei area [nominate], *ocularis* around Port Nolloth.

Green-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura* Common, by voice in the east. Best views in Mkuze GR [constans].

Barred Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes fasciolatus* One seen briefly in Polokwane NR [euophilus].

Cinnamon-breasted Warbler ◇ *Euryptila subcinnamomea* Excellent views south of Springbok.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* Few seen in Brandvlei area [saturation].

Karoo Eremomela ◇ *Eremomela gregalis* Great views of flock near Loeriesfontein [nominate].

Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis* Nice views of at least four in Polokwane area [nominate].

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* Four birds seen in Polokwane NR [nominate].

Southern Pied Babbler ◇ *Turdoides bicolor* Six birds seen in dry acacia area north of Pretoria.

Bush Blackcap ◇ *Lioptilus nigricapillus* (NT) Brilliant views of several birds along Sani Pass.

Chestnut-vented Warbler *Sylvia subcoerulea* Several seen – the first along the Cape West Coast [nominate], *orpheana* in Polokwane NR.

Layard's Warbler ◇ *Sylvia layardi* A few seen south of Clanwilliam [nominate] and in Lesotho [barnes].

Cape White-eye *Zosterops virens* See note.

Orange River White-Eye ◇ *Zosterops pallidus* Best views of this distinctive species were at Onseepkans, also Augrabies.

Cape Sugarbird ◇ *Promerops cafer* Many great views around the Cape; the first at Kirstenbosch, also Rooi Els and De Hoop.

Gurney's Sugarbird ◇ *Promerops gurneyi* Great views below the Sani Pass [nominate].

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* Introduced vermin. Common in the east [nominate].

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Introduced vermin. Common in the south [nominate].

Black-bellied Starling *Notopholia corrusca* Fairly common in the east, especially around Mkuze GR and St Lucia.

Cape Starling *Lamprotornis nitens* A good number seen after the first at Augrabies Falls NP.

Burchell's Starling *Lamprotornis australis* A few seen well north of Pretoria.

Pied Starling *Lamprotornis bicolor* Pretty common and widespread. First seen north of Cape Town.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Plenty. Many good looks, especially at Mkuze GR [verreauxi].

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Fairly common and widespread, first in the Cape Town area [nominate].

Pale-winged Starling ◇ *Onychognathus nabouroup* Best views were around Augrabies NP.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* Several at Mkuze GR and St Lucia.

Orange Ground Thrush ◇ *Geokichla gurneyi* One bird showed well at Magoebaskloof [disruptans].

Spotted Ground Thrush ◇ *Geokichla guttata* (EN) Good views of one bird at Dlinza Forest [nominate].

Groundscraper Thrush *Turdus litsitsirupa* One north of Pretoria, also Polokwane Nature Reserve [nominate].

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* Small numbers seen in the east. First at Polokwane [nominate].

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus* Small numbers in the southwest and in the eastern forests. First at Kirstenbosch [nominate], also Magoebaskloof [transvaalensis], and *pondoensis* in Himeville area.

Karoo Thrush ◇ *Turdus smithi* Great looks at Augrabies Falls NP and around Kimberley.

Karoo Scrub Robin ◇ *Cercotrichas coryphoeus* Two forms: nominate inland; *cinerea* along the West Coast.

Bearded Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata* Great looks at two or more in Mkuze GR [nominate].

Kalahari Scrub Robin ◇ *Cercotrichas paena* Several seen, best views were at Marrick [nominate].

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Several around Mkuze [nominate].

Brown Scrub Robin ◇ *Cercotrichas signata* Great views of two birds at St Lucia [tongensis].

Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus* First north of Pretoria [catoleuca], also Mkuze [orientalis].

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina* First north of Pretoria [ater].

Pale Flycatcher *Meleanornis pallidus* Few seen in Mkuze [sibilans].

Chat Flycatcher ◇ *Melaenornis infuscatus* Several in the arid Karoo. First seen on the journey to Brandvlei [nominate], *seimundi* at Marrick and *namaquensis* on route to Onseepkans.

Marico Flycatcher ◇ *Melaenornis mariquensis* Seen at Marrick GF and Polokwane [nominate].

Fiscal Flycatcher ◇ *Melaenornis silens* Several seen, the first at Rooi Els [nominate], also *lawsoni* around Augrabies.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Migrant. Several seen, the first at Augrabies Falls NP [nominate].

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* Bizarre record of one at Augrabies. Typically, more easterly range [impavida].

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* Two forms: nominate in the south; *fuscula* in the east.

Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen around Cape Town [nominate], *namaquensis* around Augrabies.

White-throated Robin-Chat ♦ *Cossypha humeralis* Brilliant views of one at Mkuze GR.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* Just one seen in Tzaneen area [nominate].

Red-capped (Natal) Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* A few seen at St Lucia; some confiding individuals [nominate].

Chorister Robin-Chat ♦ *Cossypha dichroa* See note.

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* Two seen at Magoebaskloof [*transvaalensis*].

Cape Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola rupestris* A few seen at Rooi Els, and a few below Sani Pass.

Sentinel Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola explorator* See note.

Short-toed Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola brevipes* Great views of two birds between Groblershoop to Kimberley [nominate].

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Several at a number of sites, the first north of Cape Town.

Buff-streaked Chat ♦ *Campicoloides bifasciatus* Seen at Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass area.

Sickle-winged Chat ♦ *Emarginata sinuata* Two forms seen: nominate north of Langebaan; *hypernephela* in Lesotho.

Karoo Chat ♦ *Emarginata schlegelii* Common in the arid Karoo. First seen on the journey to Calvinia [*pollux*], also *namaquensis* in Port Nolloth area.

Tractrac Chat ♦ *Emarginata tractrac* Good numbers around Calvinia, Brandvlei and near Port Nolloth [*nebulosa*].

Mocking Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* Two seen in the Magoebaskloof area [nominate].

Ant-eating Chat ♦ *Myrmecocichla formicivora* Common at several sites, particularly at Marrick and Wakkerstroom.

Mountain Wheatear ♦ *Myrmecocichla monticola* Several seen well, first south of Clanwilliam [nominate].

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* Common in a few areas, first north of Cape Town [nominate], *neseri* around Pofadder.

Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris* Several seen, the first at Rooi Els [nominate], also *galtoni* in Springbok area, *hellmayri* at Mkuze and *actuosa* at Sani Pass.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* Mkuze GR and St Lucia [*zuluensis*].

Orange-breasted Sunbird ♦ *Anthobaphes violacea* Another stunner, only seen well at Kirstembosch on this trip.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* Several seen well at St Lucia [*olivacina*- Eastern].

Grey (Mouse-coloured) Sunbird *Cyanomitra veroxii* Great views of a few around Mkuze [*fischeri*] and St Lucia [nominate].

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina* Several seen well, the first at Grootvadersbosch [nominate].

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* A real cracker, seen well at Mkuze and in Tzaneen area [*gutturalis*].

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa* Plenty seen well. First at Kirstenbosch [nominate].

Southern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris chalybeus* Plenty. Particularly showy in Kirstenbosch BG [nominate].

Neergaard's Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris neergaardi* (NT) Brilliant views of one bird at Mkuze GR.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris afer* Just a few seen, the first at Grootvadersbosch.

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* At least two seen well at Polokwane NR, also Mkuze [nominate].

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* Many seen well at Mkuze GR [*microrhynchus*].

White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* Just a few. First north of Pretoria and a few around Mkuze.

Dusky Sunbird *Cinnyris fuscus* Some great views, especially near Springbok and at Augrabies NP [nominate].

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* Many; first at Marrick GR, also around Polokwane [nominate].

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* A few seen north of Pretoria in arid thornveld [nominate].

Sociable Weaver ♦ *Philetairus socius* Hundreds seen well at some impressive nests, especially around Pofadder.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Common and widespread [nominate].

Great Sparrow ♦ *Passer motitensis* One bird seen in Polokwane Nature Reserve [*subsolanus*].

Cape Sparrow ♦ *Passer melanurus* Common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area [nominate], also Port Nolloth area [*damarensis*] and *vicinus* in Sani Pass area.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus* Common in the east, but first in the Cape Town area [*stygiceps*].

Yellow-throated Petronia *Gymnoris superciliaris* Only seen well in Mkuze [*flavigula*].

Scaly-feathered Weaver ♦ *Sporopipes squamifrons* Common in the Northern Cape. First near Aggenys [nominate].

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* Several seen with best views in the St Lucia area [nominate].

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* Only few seen, best views in Magoebaskloof area [nominate].

Cape Weaver ♦ *Ploceus capensis* Seen well at many sites, first around Kirstenbosch.

Eastern Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus* Plenty around Mkuze and St Lucia [nominate].

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* Two birds seen around Tzaneen.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver ♦ *Ploceus xanthopterus* Close-up views of nesting birds at St Lucia [marleyi].

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Seen well at a few sites in the east [cabanisii].

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* Fairly common and widespread. First seen in the Cape Town area.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* Few nesting colonies in Mkuze area [spilonotus].

Dark-backed (Forest) Weaver *Ploceus bicolor* Small numbers at Mkuze, St Lucia [stictifrons] and Dlinza Forest [nominate].

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* A few nesting birds seen between Tzaneen and Abel Erasmus Pass.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Plenty seen. Most common in the east [lathamii].

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Very common and widespread on tour – west to east.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis* Small numbers at several sites. First seen north of Cape Town [nominate], *crassirostris* around Magoebaskloof and *approximans* in Sani Pass area.

Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris* Plenty seen in the east, the first in Wakkerstroom area [nominate].

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus* Only a few seen [nominate].

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens* Few seen in the east, the first at Tzaneen [nominate].

Long-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes progne* Loads of great views. Stunning birds in breeding plumage [nominate].

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* Several seen in Polokwane area [nominate].

Red-headed Finch ♦ *Amadina erythrocephala* Best views were at a waterhole in Marrick GR.

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula* Brief views of a few birds in St. Lucia and Ngoye areas.

Pink-throated Twinspot ♦ *Hypargos margaritatus* Brilliant views of a male and female of this stunner at Mkuze GR.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Good views obtained in Mkuze [rendalli].

African Firefinch (Blue-billed F) *Lagonostica rubricata* Three birds seen in Magoebaskloof area [nominate].

Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonostica rhodopareia* One bird seen north of Pretoria [jamesoni].

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* Good numbers in the east. First seen near Polokwane [niassensis].

Violet-eared Waxbill ♦ *Granatina granatina* A pair at Polokwane NR.

Sweet Waxbill ♦ *Coccyzygia melanotis* Great views at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Grey (black-tailed) Waxbill *Estrilda perreini* Only one bird seen in St. Lucia area [incana].

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Common – west [nominate] to east [tenebridorsa].

Black-faced Waxbill ♦ *Estrilda erythronotos* Seen well at Polokwane [nominate].

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava* c10 in small flock seen in Suikerbosrand area [clarkei].

(African) Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* Seen in Wakkerstroom area and at Suikerbosrand [digressa].

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata* First seen in the Polokwane area [scutata].

Black-and-white (Red-backed) Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor* Seen in Magoebaskloof area [nigriceps].

Magpie Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides* Great views of several birds near Tzaneen.

Dusky Indigobird *Vidua funerea* Eight birds in small flock seen in Mkuze area. Few males coming into breeding plumage as well [nominate].

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Plenty in the east, although first seen at Noordhoek.

Shaft-tailed Whydah ♦ *Vidua regia* (LO) Brief views of one male at Polokwane.

Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* A few birds in the Mkuze area.

Cuckoo-finch (Parasitic Weaver) *Anomalospiza imberbis* Two birds seen well in Himeville area. Scarce [imberbis].

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Widespread with small numbers at many sites. First seen in Cape Town [nominate].

Mountain Wagtail (Long-tailed W) *Motacilla clara* One seen well at Debengeni Falls, Magoebaskloof [torrentium].

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Two forms: nominate first seen at Augrabies Falls; *vidua* near Tzaneen.

Cape Longclaw ♦ *Macronyx capensis* Two forms: nominate in the southwest; *colletti* at Wakkerstroom.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* Several seen in St Lucia area [vulturinus].

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus* Widespread with small numbers at many sites: *rufuloides* along the Cape West Coast, *bocagii* around Dealesville and interior.

Mountain Pipit ♦ *Anthus hoeschi* Great views of a few in Lesotho above the Sani Pass.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* Good views at Sani Pass and Wakkerstroom [petricolus].

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* One bird seen on Marrick GF [nominate].

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris* One seen well in Magoebaskloof area [nominate].

African Rock Pipit ♦ *Anthus crenatus* Great views near to Wakkerstroom.

Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus* Flushed one bird in the lower reaches of Sani Pass [nominate].

Yellow-breasted Pipit ♦ *Hemimacronyx chloris* (VU) Brilliant views of a couple near to Wakkerstroom.

Common Chaffinch (introduced) *Fringilla coelebs* Several around Noordhoek, Cape Town.

Forest Canary ♦ *Crithagra scotops* Particularly good views in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens [*umbrosa*], also Magoebaskloof [*kirbyi*].

Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis* First seen at Onseepkans and Augrabies [*deserti*], also Marrick, Polokwane [*atrogularis*] and Wakkerstroom areas [*impigra*].

Lemon-breasted Canary ♦ *Crithagra citrinpectus* Great views of several along eastern shores of iSimangaliso.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* First seen in the Pretoria area [nominate], also *granti* in Mkuze.

Cape Siskin ♦ *Crithagra totta* Seen very well at Rooi Els.

Drakensberg Siskin ♦ *Crithagra symonsi* Great views of at least 10 in Lesotho above the Sani Pass.

Yellow Canary ♦ *Crithagra flaviventris* First seen north of Cape Town [nominate], also Marrick [*marshalli*] and Lesotho [*guillarmodi*].

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata* Kirstenbosch [nominate], St. Lucia [*wilsoni*].

Streaky-headed Seedeater ♦ *Crithagra gularis* Good views of several sites, the first south of Clanwilliam .

White-throated Canary ♦ *Crithagra albogularis* Quite a few seen well, the first at West Coast NP [nominate], also *sordahliae* at Augrabies.

Protea Canary ♦ *Crithagra leucoptera* Great views of a couple south of Clanwilliam.

Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis* Fairly common and widespread. First seen at Kirstenbosch [nominate], *thompsonae* at Magoebaskloof.

Black-headed Canary *Serinus alario* Great views in Karoo, notably around Calvinia [nominate].

Lark-like Bunting ♦ *Emberiza impetواني* Very common in the Northern Cape. First seen in the Brandvlei area [*sloggetti*].

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* Few seen north of Pretoria [nominate].

Cape Bunting ♦ *Emberiza capensis* Good numbers at several sites: nominate around Cape Town, *basutoensis* at Sani Pass, and *reidi* in Wakkerstroom area.

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* Just a couple seen near Polokwane and Mkuze [nominate].



Agulhas Long-billed Lark | © Martin Benadie

MAMMALS

With most of the country fenced off as large farms or wildlife ranches/conservancies, the seasonal migration of larger mammal species is no longer possible as it would have been in earlier times. In many areas, game species have also been reintroduced (although they would have occurred in these areas historically) for ecotourism or stocked for commercial (hunting) reasons. The list below represents the truly wild mammals seen on this tour:

Striped Mouse (Four-striped Grass Mouse) *Rhabdomys pumilio* A few seen.

Bush Vlei Rat (Karoo Bush Rat) *Otomys unisulcatus* One seen along West Coast.

Brant's Whistling Rat *Parotomys brantsii* One seen well outside Port Nolloth.

Sloggett's Rat (Ice Rat) *Otomys sloggetti* A few 'ice rats' in Lesotho.

Southern African Hedgehog *Atelerix frontalis* One seen on night drive at Marrick.

Ground Squirrel (Cape Ground S) *Xerus inauris* Several seen.

Red Squirrel (Red Bush S) *Paraxerus palliatus* One seen at St Lucia.

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* A few around Cape Town.
South African Porcupine *Hystrix africaeaustralis* Several seen at Marrick GF and in arid interior.
Springhare *Pedetes capensi* Numerous seen at Marrick GF.
Cape Hare *Lepus capensis* A few seen at Marrick GR.
Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* Prefers scrubbiest areas to the previous species. Widespread.
Rock Dassie (Cape D, Cape R Hyrax) *Procavia capensis* Very confiding at Stony Point and Augrabies Falls NP.
Cape Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* Fantastic views at De Hoop.
Burchell's (Plains) Zebra *Equus [quagga] burchelli* Plenty seen around Mkuze GR and St Lucia.
Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibious* Good numbers seen around St Lucia.
Warthog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus* Plenty seen around Marrick, Polokwane and Mkuze GR.
Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* Plenty seen in Mkuze GR.
Black Wildebeest (White-tailed Gnu) *Conochaetes gnou* A herd at Marrick GF and Mokala.
Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu) *Connochaetes taurinus* Several seen around Polokwane NR and Mkuze GR.
Bontebok *Damaliscus [pygargus] pygargus* This attractive antelope was seen well at De Hoop.
Blesbok *Damaliscus [pygargus] phillipsi* Herd seen at Mokala.
Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger* c10 seen at Mokala
Roan Antelope *Hippotragus equinus* c8 seen at Mokala
Natal Red Duiker *Cephalophus natalensis* Seen well at St Lucia.
Common Duiker (Grey Duiker) *Sylvicapra grimmia* Several seen.
Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* Seen at many sites. Some stocked, some wild.
Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* A few seen, first south of Clanwilliam.
Steenbok (Steinbok) *Raphicerus campestris* Several seen at many sites.
Impala *Aepyceros melampus* Most seen were around Polokwane NR, Mkuze GR and St Lucia.
Hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus* Small herd seen at Mokala.
Grey Rhebok (Vaal R) *Pelea capreolus* A few seen, especially in the large fields in the Overberg.
Gemsbok (Oryx) *Oryx gazella* c30 at Mokala.
Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* Several at St.Lucia.
Kudu (Greater Kudu) *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* Several seen at Marrick and St. Lucia.
Nyala *Tragelaphus angasii* Many of these attractive antelopes seen well in Mkuze.
Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus* Few seen at St Lucia.
Eland *Taurotragus oryx* Good numbers at De Hoop, also Himeville area.
Reedbuck (Common R) *Redunca arundinum* A few seen in Himeville district and St. Lucia.
African (Cape) Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* A large heard seen at St. Lucia.
Aardwolf *Proteles cristata* Several seen incredibly well on night drive in Marrick GF at a den site.
Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* A few on the night drives at Marrick GF, also Poafadder area.
Wild Cat *Felis silvestris* One seen on night drive at Marrick.
Suricate (Meerkat) *Suricata suricatta* Seen in Marrick area and at Wakkerstroom.
Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat) *Cynictis penicillata* Quite a few seen, the first around Langebaan.
Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea* One at Wakkerstroom and a couple at Mkuze.
Small Grey (Cape Grey) Mongoose *Galerella (Herpestes) pulverulenta* Several seen, the first at Kirstenbosch.
Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* Plenty seen, the first around Rooi Els.
Vervet Monkey (Vervet) *Cercopithecus aethiops* Good numbers seen, the first at Augrabies Falls.
Samango Monkey (Diademed Guenon) *Cercopithecus mitis* Several seen at Magoebaskloof, also Cape Vidal.
Aardvark *Orycteropus afer* Great views on night drive at Marrick GF.
Cape Fur Seal (Afro-Australian F S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* One seen offshore at Rooi Els.
Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* Pod of c10 seen in False Bay, Cape Town.
Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis* A few seen offshore along the West Coast.



Aardwolf, Southern African Hedgehog, Porcupine, Aardvark | © **Adrian Hayward**



Bat-eared Fox, Black Wildebeest | © Martin Benadie

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). 2018. IOC World Bird Names v8.2. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Knysna Turaco *Tauraco corythaix*

In the north, several of the form *phoebus* were seen around Magoebaskloof.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris*

The nominate form was common in the south and was first seen in the Cape Town area whilst the form *pyrrhostictus* was the form found in the east.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas*

We saw two forms of this distinctive flycatcher. The form *cyanomelas* was seen well at Grootvadersbosch, whilst in the east, the form *segregus* was noted at Magoebaskloof.

Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus*

The form *gigi* was seen very well along West Coast, whilst the nominate form was seen well at Marrick Game Farm.

Cape Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda curvirostris*

The form *falcirostris* was reasonably common in the Port Nolloth area while *curvirostris* was seen along the Cape West Coast.

Sabota Lark *Calendulauda sabota*

We saw three distinctive forms. The large-billed form, *bradfieldi* that was first seen near to Brandvlei. The nominate *sabota* group was seen in Dealesville area while *suffusca* was seen in Mkuze.

Red Lark *Calendulauda burra*

Splendid red form seen in the Aggenys area.

Barlow's Lark *Calendulauda barlowi*

Few birds seen north of Port Nolloth.

This now treated as Dune Lark (Coastal) *Calendulauda erythrochlamys patae* by HBW.

Cloud Cisticola *Cisticola textrix*

We saw two forms of this tiny species. They look quite different but sound pretty similar. In the Cape, we saw the streaky nominate form very well near to De Hoop and again at the Tiene Versveld Wildflower Reserve. In the east, the unstreaked form *major* was seen.

Cape White-eye *Zosterops virens*

The form *capensis* was common for much of the tour and was first seen at Noordhoek. In the east, the much brighter nominate form was quite common.

Chorister Robin-Chat *Cossypha dichroa*

Two forms: Good views of a few of the form *mimica* in the end at Magoebaskloof and then the nominate form *dichroa* was seen well at Dlinza Forest, Eshowe.

Sentinel Rock Thrush *Monticola explorator*

Two forms: At Wakkerstroom we saw a male of the nominate form whilst in Lesotho we had great views of several of *tenebriformis*.



African Dusky Flycatcher, Cloud Cisticola (streaked form), Cape Robin Chat, Bar-throated Apalis | © Martin Benadie