



SOUTH AFRICA SPECIALITIES TOUR REPORT 2023

17 November - 10 December

BY SIMON MITCHELL

The 2023 Birdquest to South Africa continued our long run of successful trips to this classic birding destination. We saw a whole host of fantastic birds, including over 134 Birdquest 'diamond birds' – species with restricted ranges rarely encountered on any other tour itinerary.

Our tour began in the spectacular fynbos-clad mountains of the Western Cape extending where boulder-covered peaks drop precipitously all the way down to rocky beaches home to nesting penguins and cormorants. Here some extra effort at stakeout sites meant that on top a 'clean sweep' of the whole suite of 'usual' localised species such as Cape Rockjumper, Victorin's Warbler, Cape Bunting and Cape Sugarbird we were also able to gain view of some of the most seldom-seen species such as Fynbos Buttonquail and Cape Eagle-owl. Escarpment forests at Grootvadersbosch provided us with excellent views of Kynsna Warbler, Forest Canary, Olive Bushshrike and Narina Trogon as well as the briefest glimpse of an uncooperative Kynsna Woodpecker.

From the Cape we headed inland where mountain passes thick with Protea held amazingly performative Protea Canaries, before giving way to drier boulder-strewn landscapes further East where Cinnamon-breasted Warblers, Pale-winged Starlings and Nicholson's Pipit all showed well. Eventually these hills dropped down onto the flat ultra-arid plateau of the Karoo and wildflower-carpeted Namaqualand deserts where a wonderful selection of often tricky and nomadic lark species performed well contributing to a total of over 23 on the entire trip. These included excellent views of the likes of Cape Clapper, Karoo, Red, Dune (Barlow's), Stark's and even Sclater's Larks.

Next, we transferred from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Here, more excellent birding awaited us just outside the city. Northern Black Korhaans, Orange River Francolins, Melodious and Short-clawed Larks stood out amongst a dazzling array of grassland and acacia thicket species. East of Polokwane we birded sub-montane forested valleys around Magoebaskloof where White-starred Robins, Chorister Robin-chats and Orange Ground Thrushes fed inconspicuously on the forest floors. A variety of Greenbuls, Flycatchers and Sunbirds buzzed around in the hotel grounds, whilst Barratt's Warblers blasted their high-volume songs from the roadside verges- eventually brief but good views. Classic savannah and acacia-scrub landscapes in Pokowane and Mkuze held a community of bushveld species as well as spectacular mammals including Elephants, Giraffes and African Wild Dogs. We also picked out Pink-throated Twinspots and Neergaard's Sunbird. Closer to the coast, tropical forests around St Lucia produced close encounters with Woodward's Batis and Rudd's Apalis, whose ranges just creep into South Africa from neighboring Mozambique.

From the coast we headed back up into the highlands, calling for an overnight stop and thrilling dawn visit to the Dlinza

forest, where we gained 'walk-away' views of a singing Spotted Ground Thrush and Scaly-throated Honeyguide. Soon after, we climbed through high altitude flat grasslands around Howick and Pietermaritzburg where we found Wattled Cranes feeding in the damp pastures and Blue Swallows hawking over highland watersheds. The next morning we headed higher still, winding our way up the Sani Pass into Lesotho, to round off the trip with the full gamut of Drakensburg endemics, including good views of Drakensburg Rockjumper. We gained particularly good views of the trio of range-restricted Pipits (Mountain, Yellow-tufted and Short-tailed) as well as other charismatic species including Lammergeier, Cape Vulture, Buff-streaked Chat, African Yellow Warbler, Half-collared Kingfisher and Fan-tailed Grassbird. Some final exploration close to our accommodation before departing for Durban produced a final highlight of the trip in the form of a responsive Buff-spotted Flufftail as well as nearby African Black Duck and Pale-crowned Cisticola.

Our tour began in the spectacular foothills of table mountain, where a walk around the cool mist-belt forests gave us our first taste of South African birding. Cape Siskins, Olive Thrush, Cape Grassbirds and Sweet Waxbills were among the star attractions as we picked up a good variety of typical cape woodland species. Good views of Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk were also a highlight.

We then made our way to the Hottentot Holland mountains. We focused our efforts at Sir Lowry's Pass – a site famous for the both its spectacular scenery and very special birds. Setting off through the fynbos-covered slopes in extremely windy conditions we still managed to pick up a good selection of excellent numbers of Cape Sugarbirds and Orange-breasted Sunbirds flitting between the flowering bushes. Not long after we spotted our first Grey-backed Cisticolas and although the bird were somewhat flighty, gained further good views of a flocks of Cape Siskins as they flicked amongst the rocky outcrops. Heading lower down the slopes we soon heard the distinctive song of one of our key target species – a Victorin's Warbler. Fortunately the bird was extremely co-operative and we soon gained sensational views down to just a few feet. Cape Rockjumpers and Cape Rock Thrushes were also co-operative and perching out repeatedly on the giant boulders along the ridge. Walking through the low Fynbos in a group here also gave us a hoped-for but not expected bonus of two Fynbos Buttonquails – perhaps the most seldom-seen Cape endemic – which flushed from right under our feet.

After lunch we visited Strandfontein Sewage Works. Here we found an excellent variety of new species. Along the and grassy sides of the lagoons we located, Cape Sparrows, Cape Wagtails, Cape Francolin, Cape Longclaw and Levalliant's Cisticola as well as good views of Little Rush Warbler. On the pools an excellent variety of waterbirds were present including Cape Teal, Southern Pochard, Yellow-billed Duck, Southern Pochard and Egyptian Goose. Amongst these we also found Little, Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes and a handful Maccua Duck – the only ones of the trip. Other waterbirds included Purple, Grey and Black-headed Heron, Sacred and Glossy Ibis, and Greater Flamingo. Red-knobbed Coots were present in some numbers, and along the reedy edges we picked up Common Moorhen and African Swamphen. Gulls and Terns included several Greater Crested, Sandwich and Caspian Terns and Cape, Hartlaub's and Grey-headed Gulls.

The following day we headed up towards West Coast Nation Park. The weather gradually worsening throughout the day making for a rather wet and blustery affair. However, we were still able to pick up a number of good birds as we made our way up through the fynbos and grasslands of the West coast. The first highlight was our first Black Harrier of the trip – a striking near-adult male which showed at close range. Shortly after, we encountered our first Karoo Scrub-Robins, a skulky Chesnut-vented Warbler and a responsive pair of Grey-winged Francolins. A second stop just further up the road produced Thick-billed Larks and our first Cape Longclaws as well as 'on-the-deck' views of Cloud Cisticola. We then continued into West Coast N.P where a good selection of birds were found despite increasingly tricky conditions. The mud flats in particular produced good numbers of Whimbrel, Grey Plover, Curlew, Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover and Curlew Sandpiper as well as a few Marsh Sandpiper and Greenshank.

Fortunately the rain and worst of the wind had abated by the morning of 21st as we headed towards the East side of False Bay. Rockjumpers and Cape Buntings, Cape Sugarbirds gave improved views around the small oceanside village of Rooi-Els. We then continued to Betty's Bay where a wonderful parade of African Penguins waddled around at close range. As well as watching these often comic birds interact a few metres away, we also systematically picked our way through the roosting Cormorants species until we were confident we'd all seen Bank, Cape and Crowned roosting together.

During an afternoon call at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens we encountered a number of woodland species, including African Crested Flycatcher, African Paradise Flycatcher, Cape Batis, Olive Thrush, Cape Canary and Fiscal Flycatcher. After a quick dinner, we headed to an evening stakeout with the hopes of finding the rather difficult Cape Eagle Owl. With the nominate 'capensis' sub-species often treated as a full species, we were keen to try and gain views such a difficult species found only in rather inaccessible landscapes. Our gamble paid off and shortly after dusk an adult and juvenile appeared on the ridge just over a hundred metres above us.

The next day we again headed out from our hotel near Cape Town very early we made our way towards the Swellendam area. Shortly after passing through Bredasdorp we began birding the grasslands in earnest. Numerous Red-capped Larks, African Stonechats and Capped Wheatears flicked along the fence lines, whilst several Large-billed Larks were found in the open fields. Thicker vegetation held our first Karoo Scrub-Robins as well as large mixed flocks of Southern Masked Weavers and Southern Red Bishops. Continuing along the dirt roads we located our first group of Cape Vulture in a roadside field. Continuing to De Hoop NR, we found good numbers of African Black, Alpine Swifts and even a single Horus Swift amongst masses of White-rumped and Little Swifts. The grounds of our state-looking former wagon-house accommodation also added avian interest at dusk. As we unpacked the luggage a pair of Spotted Eagle Owls hooted to one another and showed well, flying between isolated trees in the landscaped garden.

The 22nd saw us spend a second day exploring De Hoop NR and the surrounding grasslands. We found a number of our target species for the area, including 'Aqualhas' (Cape) Long-billed Lark, Eurasian Hobby, Denham's Buzzard, Secretarybird, Blue Crane and good views of Northern Black Korhaan. The star birds however, were a pair of Southern Tchagra. Although the birds initially gave us the run around, popping up for only a few seconds at time, we eventually gained good views.

We were up early again the next morning, moving on to visit a large patch of mist-belt forest along the escarpment at Grootvadersbosch. Several Forest Canaries were on the fringes of the forest were our first sighting and a number Greater Double-collared Sunbirds showed well. A number of Cape Batis and Blue-mantled Crested Flycatchers were also seen well. Olive Woodpeckers performed well close to the track and we eventually picked out a few Yellow-throated Woodland Warblers amongst the large flocks of Cape White-eyes. A Knysna Warbler gave uncharacteristic and continuous views at close range and a Forest Buzzard showed well above the canopy.

Moving up on to the escarpment we made an evening call at a spectacular, protea-filled valley above Calvinia. Here we were entertained by the jangling song of Protea Canaries which showed well in the evening sunshine. A handful of Malachite Sunbirds, Cape Sugarbirds and a singing Cape Rock-thrush.

Heading out with packed breakfasts through the desert, we soon started picking up our first specialist birds of the Karoo. Spike-heeled Larks showed well and our first Pale Chanting Goshawks and Booted Eagles, were stationed on telegraph poles above the road. Despite the sharp gravel road giving us some 'tyre issues' we were able to make our way to a deep rocky valley for breakfast, intending to spend an extended period searching a Cinnamon-breasted Warbler. However, a pair almost immediately plummeted down from the ridge above and began performing at close range. The area proved excellent for the likes of Fairy Flycatcher, Nicholson's Pipit, Layard's Warbler and Pale-winged Starling. To our surprise, a small marsh here also held both a newly fledged clutch of Pied Harrier and a pair of calling Red-chested Flufftails, one of which even gave us brief views in flight as it flushed from the marsh.

We continued north as the day heated up, picking out both Black-eared Sparrowlarks and Greater Kestrel as new birds for the trip. By a minor road turning we quickly spotted a small flock of Karoo Eremomelas picking along the sparsely vegetated fence lines as well as a number of boisterous Red-eared Warblers. Further north still, we continued to find more Karoo species. As the afternoon cooled our first Namaqua Sandgrouse flew into an irrigated cattle tank, whilst Karoo Larks, Tractrac Chats and Familiar Chats also entertained.

The following morning we headed further north towards Brandvlei we continuing to accrue new species as we went. Lark-like Bunting and Long-billed Crombec proved common and we stopped to enjoy good views of Namaqua Sandgrouse. Another rapid roadside stop came when a long Kori Bustard flew over the vehicles and landed a couple of hundred meters from the roadside, only for our luck to double when a single Ludwig's Bustard followed it only a minute or so later.

We enjoyed our packed breakfast at a river washout, where we picked up a whole suite of excellent birds including Karoo Scrub-robin, Namaqua Warbler, African Reed Warbler, Karoo Scrub-robin and Chat Flycatcher. European Bee-eaters and a selection of larks, including Karoo Long-billed, (Bradfield's) Large-billed and Spike-heeled also showed throughout the morning, although we were unable to quickly locate any Sclater's. Heading back to our accommodation for a late lunch (and a rest following many consecutive 5am starts!) we first called in at a road bridge which harboured not only nesting Little and White-rumped Swifts, but also a colony of over 40 South African Cliff Swallows!

Re-commencing our northward odyssey shortly after dawn on 26th we departed Calvinia making roadside stops from more bustards (Southern Black and Karoo Korhaans as well as some closer Ludwig's Bustards) as we went. A large acacia-fringed drainage also held our first Acacia Pied Barbets and a confiding Pririt Batis among a good selection of Weavers, Bishops and Buntings. Shortly after we made our main breakfast stop of the morning at an impressive area of glacial pavement. Here, we found Cape Clapper Larks giving their mechanical displays right next to the roadside. Much improved views of a singing Chestnut-vented Warbler also followed as well as our first clear sightings of Wattled Starlings and Karoo Thrush.

Using the heat of the day to press further North still, we decided the evening's weather would be conducive to searching for our target species around Port Nolloth. We began scouring the dunes north of town for the highly restricted Barlow's form of Dune Lark (sometimes treated as a separate species), which is found there. Just as we were preparing to give up a distant bird gave snatch of song. We soon able to track this down to its source and found a pair including a displaying male which sang above our heads. Almost simultaneously we also located our first Grey Tit of the trip which fed quietly in the small dune scrub patches. A search for Damara Terns in the area was ultimately fruitless, but we did encounter a good number of other Terns and Shorebirds, including our first Ruff of the trip.

Another early morning meant another key target species – one which this time proved relaxingly easy. Our stakeout in the Koa Dunes provided excellent view of Red Lark. We also found Sociable Weavers, Scaly-feather Weavers, a showy Pygmy Falcon, large flocks of Grey-backed Sparrowlarks, Chat Flycatcher, Black-chested Snake-eagle, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Karoo Prinia plenty of Lark-like Buntings and large numbers of White-throated Canaries. That afternoon we headed to the Goenap Nature Reserve where we located a number of Grey Tits, as well as several groups of the endangered Hartmann's Zebra. At our accommodation in Springbok, a small flock of Orange-flanked White-eyes came down to drink from the fountain, whilst an African Red-eyed (Black-fronted) Bulbul showed around the scrubby gardens.

Another very early start to avoid the desert heat saw us pack up the vehicles and head toward Pofadder before dawn. This proved a worthwhile move as we were easily in position before activity reduced later in the morning. We encountered numerous Stark's, Fawn-coloured, Spike-heeled and Large-billed Larks as well our first Cape Penduline Tits and Dusky Sunbird. Still lacking any sightings of Sclater's Larks we decided to head south on a slightly more off-the-beaten-track route through the Karoo. This provided →Verreaux's Eagles circling over the road and we picked out a handful of Bradfield's Swifts. A very showy Karoo Korhaan in the middle of nowhere was a highlight as were our first Yellow Canaries.

In the early afternoon we decided to take a gamble at a likely looking roadside tank, hoping that some larks may be visiting amongst the groups of Yellow Canary and Cape Sparrow we could see. After thirty minutes or so of watching we had almost run out of available time when a Scalter's Lark suddenly appear on the tank only 30m from the road. This individual proved to be the vanguard of at least fifteen or more birds which proceed to give excellent views over the next twenty minutes. Thrilled with our 'last chance' addition of such a restricted-range and nomadic species we pressed on to our accommodation in Clanwilliam.

After a more leisurely breakfast in Clanwilliam, we headed South for our connecting flight from Cape Town to Johannesburg, eventually arriving at our accommodation in Heidelberg after dark. An African Fish-eagle seen en route was our first of the trip and probably constituted the best bird of the day. We were out early again the next morning however, this time heading out to grasslands around Suikersbosrand.

→→This excellent small game reserve on the fringes of the vast urban conurbations of Johannesburg and Pretoria offered us some absolutely excellent morning birding- and we found over 80 species in under three hours. As this was our first day in the Guateng this included a number of fairly widespread species including Cape Starling, Diederik Cuckoo, Green Woodhoopoe, African Snipe, Black-collared Barbet, Crested Barbet, , Banded Martin, Long-tailed Widowbird, Red-collared Widowbird, Wattled Lapwing, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow but also a number of trickier birds including White-backed Duck, Lesser Honeyguide, Red-throated Wryneck, Ashy Tit and Mocking Cliff Chat. The stars of the morning however were at least two Southern Black Korhaans (White-quilled Bustard) which flew over us giving their impressive display!

We next called at a small area over ever-shrinking unimproved grasslands around the small town of Devon. Here a pair of Orange River Francolins showed well as did two families of Spotted Thicknees and a couple of Swainson's Spurfowl. Nearby we picked up a good selection of birds on a roadside pan, including African Spoonbill, Squacco Heron, Fan-tailed Widowbird and a near-stratospheric Wing-snapping Cisticola. The latter eventually plummeted earthwards to give somewhat improved views perched atop the grass sward.

After lunch, our final stop of the day was near Verana, where with some concerted effort, we eventually tracked down a couple of singing Melodious Larks. We were impressed by the species' 'Skylark turned to 11' song given continuously in flight an including mimicry of many of the commoner African grasslands species we had heard throughout the day. This area also produced our first Yellow-crowned Bishops, Magpie Shrike, Rufous-naped Lark, Desert Cisticola and Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting. With some serious mileage yet to cover we soon continued are journey North to our accommodation down in the Afromontane forests around Magoebaskloof.

Our first birding of the day was in the immediate environs of our accommodation at Magoebaskloof. Several Barratt's Warblers were blasting their song and we soon managed reasonable views of one individual, whilst a squadron of Cape Parrots squawked noisily overhead. Next, we ventured into the forest interior, where brief views of White-starred Robin, Chorister Robin Chat and Orange Ground Thrush were had along the narrow trails. Not to be deterred we headed out to a more open area where an small dirt road cut through good native forest, where we focused much of our efforts for the rest of the day. Improved views of Orange Ground Thrush were accompanied by sightings of Sombre Greenbul, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Olive Bushshrike, Black-fronted Bushshrike, Forest Canary, Olive Pigeon, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Violet-backed Starling, Red-backed Shrike, Black-and-white Mannikin and Knysna Turaco.

After our day in the forests we returned to acacia thickets and grasslands at Polokwane in search of yet another tricky and range-restricted lark species – this time Short-clawed. An extremely productive morning where the birds just kept coming added an impressive tally to our ever-growing trip list. Notable new birds included: Shelley's Francolin, Crested Francolin, Marabou Stork, Grey Go-away-bird, White-backed Vulture, African Harrier-Hawk, White-breasted Sunbird, Black-chested Snake-eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Black Cuckooshrike, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, Red-backed Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Willow Warbler, Groundscraper Thrush, Marico Sunbird, Marico Flycatcher, Kalahari Scrub-robin, Red-backed Scrub-robin, Violet-eared Waxbill, Southern Cordon-bleu and Golden-breasted Bunting. However, with the morning rolling we still hadn't found our key target species: Fawn-coloured Larks – despite plenty of singing. Just as we were about to give up on our very last potential site the distant notes of a lark drifted across the grassland. Sure enough – tracking the sound to its source a couple of hundred metres away we picked out a single Short-clawed singing atop a small acacia. Talk about a last minute save!

From Polokwane we returned Southwards, heading to the town of Wakkerstroom. Here we targeted two more highlight range restricted and endangered larks; Botha's and Rudd's. Beginning before 6am we first called at two stakeout sites for White-bellied and then Black-bellied Bustards, finding each with minimal searching. We called for breakfast at a tiny patch of thick scrub along a steep slope. A singing Red-chested Cuckoo here have us a couple of close flybys, whilst an African Black-headed Oriole perched out well. We gained excellent views of bush Blackcap, but a Rock-loving (Lazy Cisticola) singing higher on the ridge remained out of view.

After breakfast we continued to make our way through the grasslands. A flooded stream produced a variety of waterbirds including Whiskered Tern, more White-back Ducks and a Goliath Heron. Working through an area of very heavily grazed grassland on a dry hillside we eventually gained scope views of a single Rudd's Lark as well as flushing a handful of Red-capped Larks and a couple of Common Quail. Numerous other stops over a wide area allowed us to connect with some of the other low density species of the area – Eastern Long-billed Larks showed well on a rocky slope, whilst our local guide Lucky picked out a displaying Yellow-breasted Pipit from the moving vehicle! Fortunately the bird proceeded to make several repeat flights, allowing for excellent views.

Through the afternoon we continued to make more stops, picking up several Cuckoo-finch (Parasitic Weaver), Sentinel Rock-thrush, Eastern Clapper Lark, Diderick Cuckoo and a distant group of Blue Korhaans. In the last couple of hours of daylight we formed another line to scour an area of re-growing formerly burnt grassland for more Larks. This time we managed to locate several flighty Quail-finches and a group of Pink-billed Lark. Despite the height and density of the sward making birds extremely tough to detect on the ground, we were eventually able to attain good scope views of the latter. After dark our return journey was also productive, with an unexpected but brief Marsh Owl flying past the vehicles and a much more accommodating African Grass Owl which the whole group managed to see.

Our last birding at Wakkerstroom took place the next day, when we visited the impressive wetland just outside town before leaving. Here we picked up the likes of Black-crowned Night-heron, Little Bittern and Malachite Kingfisher, as well as hearing a chorus of Red-chested Flufftails singing tantalizingly close to the edge of the marsh.

From Wakkerstroom it was another few hours' drive to our lunch stop and check-in at Mkuze. This left us with a few hours in the afternoon to visit the park up to dusk. Birding from the car produced a number of good new birds including Southern Crested Guineafowl, Bearded Woodpecker, White Helmetshrike, Black-crowned and Brown-crowned Tchagras and Emerald-spotted Wood-dove. Leaving from the distant Ophansi gate, we also attempted some owling along the river, although only succeeded in hearing African Wood Owl.

The following morning we were back in Mkuze game reserve for the whole day. Tallying over 100 species, we focused on locating some of the more localised regional endemics. Much of the morning was spent around the Kumasinga Hide, where new birds included Rudd's Apalis, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Jacobin Cuckoo, Burchell's Coucal, Dark-chanting Goshawk, Common Scimitarbill, Trumpeter Hornbill, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Black-backed Puffback, Sulphur-breasted, Four-coloured and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, African Penduline Tit, Green-backed Camaroptera, White-winged Widowbird, Grosbeak Weaver, Eastern Paradise-Whydah, Purple Indigobird and Pink-throated Twinspot. During the course of the morning we also had the opportunity to see several groups of Elephants come in to drink at the small pool allowing us to watch them interacting just few metres away.

–

Over lunch we found more new birds around the main reception area. These included White-breasted, Purple-banded and eventually Neergaard's Sunbird. In the afternoon we birded around the Nsumo Pan, where Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters fed along the lake edges and large numbers of African Darters roosted. Lilac-breasted Roller, Black-bellied Starling and Brown-throated Weaver, Grey Tit-flycatcher and Southern Black Flycatcher were all in the surrounding woodlands. The biggest highlight of the day however, when we spotted a pair of Wild Dogs resting in the roadside scrub. It transpired the duo were part of a large pack of fourteen individuals which we gained incredible views of, watching for the next hour.

From Mkuze we moved on towards St. Lucia, where the coastal forests were even larger and more verdant than anything we had encountered earlier in the trip. En route we called at a number of freshwater pans where African Pygmy Goose and Knob-billed Duck were both found. Another call at some bushy grassland lined with ilala palm where we found several small groups of Lemon-breasted Canary as well as a singing White-throated Robin-chat.

Arriving in St Lucia, we had enough time for a brief walk around one of the forest trails before returning for our evening meal. With improved weather the next morning we set out early. African Green Pigeon, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Purple-crowned Turaco, Brown-hooded Kingfisher and White-eared Barbet were seen before we even hit the forest proper. Here we found the Turacos were mainly Livingstone's, also finding a number of target species including Green Malkoha, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Rudd's Apalis, Woodward's Batis, Square-tailed Drongo and Brown Scrub-robin. A number of Red-capped Robin-chats were particularly obliging.

Departing St Lucia we had time stop off at a site for Red-winged Cisticola before heading up into the highlands once again. A carefully positioned overnight stop at Eshowe meant we were able to visit the Dlinza forest from dawn the following morning. Here we spent most of the early part of the day looking for a difficult target species: Spotted Ground Thrush. After a lot of persistence we were eventually able to locate a single male singing high up in the canopy. Carefully positioning the telescope in the only available viewing window meant using a rotation system where the whole group were able to gain excellent views. A couple of bonus birds also presented themselves at Dlinza in the form of much improved views of Chorister Robin-chat and a very responsive Scaly-throated Honeyguide which buzzed around our heads.

From Eshowe we headed up through the Karkloof calling in to find Wattled Cranes feeding serenely in an area of damp sward. Higher still we headed over the Hela-hela pass to one of the very few remaining sites where Blue Swallows are still present. Not long after arrival we found three birds hawking back and forth over the lush grass, grabbing insects on the wing against an orange evening sky. With more distance yet to cover we arrived at our accommodation near Himeville just in time for a late dinner.

The 9th saw us make our uphill pilgrimage towards Lesotho through the winding roads of Sani Pass. The day started well with Half-collared and Giant Kingfishers showing well in the lowest reaches of the pass. Fairly calm conditions made for a fantastic day in the field. Climbing uphill, more stops were made for Bush Blackcap and Buff-streaked Chats both performing brilliantly. Continuing further up the pass we gained good views of our first and Streak-headed Seedeater and Fan-tailed Grassbird, as well as Cape and Sentinel Rock-thrush. A skulky Barratt's Warbler showed briefly, but closely along the road and Gurney's Sugarbird zipped between flowering Proteas – this species favoured nectar-source.

Winding further up the pass we soon located a group of performing Drakensburg Rockjumpers, with both a male and female good views. Drakensburg Siskins also performed well just below the Lesthotan border post. Heading over the pass we were soon greeted by our first Pika-like Slogett's Ice Rats. Stopping for lunch, the wind continued to blow, but we were still able to admire an adult flying in an landing Lammergeier on its cliff-side nest. A Yellow-tufted Pipit performed astonishingly well in song. Walking a section of mountainside sagebrush we had little trouble finding several Mountain Pipit, which also showed well. A brace of Black-headed Canaries also showed well – a species we had missed good views of in the Karoo.

A few more enjoyable stops on the way back down included views of Short-tailed Pipit and Common Quail. However worsening weather in the late afternoon meant we decided not to extend our final full days birding late into the evening. Despite poor weather continuing the following morning there was a respite in the worst of the rain at dawn. This allowed us to explore the hotel grounds, gaining incredible views of a Buff-spotted Flufftail as well as calling at the grasslands around Pevensey, where we finally tracked down both African Black Duck and Pale-crowned Cisticola. With worsening weather and traffic as we approached Durban we felt we'd been very lucky to have had such excellent conditions throughout the majority of our memorable trip. As we said our goodbyes at Durban airport we all agreed that both in terms of group camaraderie and the birds we'd seen that this year's South Africa tour had been especially fun and superlative trip!

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1st Buff-spotted Flufftail

2nd Sclater's Lark

3rd Cape Eagle-Owl

4th Cape Rockjumper

5th Pink-throated Twinspot

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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P.(Eds) **2023. IOC World Bird List (v13.2)** (this was the current version when the checklist for the tour report was created).

BIRDS

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

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Several at Suikerbosrand, a few elsewhere.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* A few at Strandfontein.

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

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

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Two at Mpempe Pan

South African Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna cana* Small numbers encountered throughout. 40+ at Karkloof

African Pygmy Goose ◊ *Nettapus auratus* Six or more on a roadside pool near Mpempe Pan

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* Over 800 at Strandfontein Sewage Works, smaller numbers elsewhere.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* On the river at Sani Pass and Pevensy Levels.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* Common on wetlands throughout, 200 at Strandfontien the maximum.

Cape Shoveler \diamond *Anas smithii* Small numbers at several wetland sites, including 150 at Strandfontein.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* Fifty were at Strandfontien sewage works and one at Wakkerstroom.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* Small numbers Standfontein, Mpempe Pan and Wakkerstroom.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Decent numbers at Strandfontien sewage works and at Wakkerstroom.

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* A few seen well at Strandfontien sewage works.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Common throughout, except in the driest parts of the Karoo.

Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani* Two groups of ~10 in Mkuze, a similar number in St Lucia

Grey-winged Francolin \diamond *Scleroptila afra* Endemic. Two showed well near West Coast N.P.

Cape Spurfowl \diamond *Pternistis capensis* Relatively common and seen daily in the Western Cape.

Shelley's Francolin *Scleroptila shelleyi* A couple in Polokwane GR.

Orange River Francolin \diamond *Scleroptila gutturalis* Four at Devon grasslands.

Southern Crested Francolin \diamond *Dendroperdix sephaena* Groups at Polokwane and Mkuze

Swainson's Spurfowl *Pternistis swainsonii* One at Devon grasslands and a couple elsewhere.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Flushed from the grasslands of Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass

African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* 150+ at Betty's Bay.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* A handful seen off Paternoster.

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

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Several on the vlei at De Hoop NR.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* A total of 30+ at Strandfontien Sewage Works.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roses* Several large flocks recorded, including 200+ at Strandfontien.

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

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Singles at Magoebaskloof and Polokwane – many seen en route nr Durban

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* Double figures at Sani Pass, a few flocks elsewhere

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

Southern Bald Ibis \diamond *Geronticus calvus* Twenty or more around Wakkerstroom, also at Sani Pass.

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

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* A few around Strandfontien, smaller numbers at Wakkerstroom.

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

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A handful a Wakkerstroom.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* One or two around the marshes at Wakkerstroom and elsewhere.

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

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

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* One at Wakkerstroom

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Strandfontein.and Suikersbosrand

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

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Only seen in the Kwazulu-Natal with a handful around Mkuze and St Lucia

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* A handful around Devon grasslands and Wakkerstroom Marsh

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Several individuals from from widely scattered sites.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* Best seen on Nsumo Pan, Mkuze

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Four seen well at Strandfontein.

Cape Gannet ♦ *Morus capensis* A few offshore from Paternoster

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* At freshwater bwetlands throughout.

Crowned Cormorant ♦ *Microcarbo coronatus* Thirty or more at Betty's Bay. Also seen on the Pelagic trip.

Bank Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax neglectus* About 35 at Betty's Bay.

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

Cape Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax capensis* About 400 around Betty's Bay, common offshore elsewhere.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* One en route in the Western Cape and another at Wakkerstroom.

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* Five seen including a couple near De Hoop and other at Polokwane.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* One at De Hoop.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Common on grasslands throughout.

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* Seen at Polokwane and near Hela-hela pass.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* A singleton during our lunch stop at Richard's Bay.

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) *Gypaetus barbatus* Three at Sani Pass, including around nesting crag.

Cape Vulture ♦ *Gyps coprotheres* Six East of Bredasdorp and one at Sani Pass.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* A handful around Polokwane and Mkuze

Black-chested Snake Eagle (B-breasted S E) *Circaetus pectoralis* One was in the South of Calvinia.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* First seen at Magoebaskloof, one or two elsewhere

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* A few in the Karoo

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* Common in Mkuze

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* Two in Polokane

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* Two near Langebaan. Another showed well near Clanwilliam

Pale Chanting Goshawk (Southern C G) *Melierax canorus* A total of 8 recorded in the Karoo.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* Two in Polokwane

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* One in Mkuze

Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus* Common in the Karoo

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* Seen at Cecilia Forest, heard a few other spots

Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris* One over Cecilia Forest

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* One near Buffeljagsrivier, another over Suikersbosrand

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* One in West Coast NP and four around Wakkerstroom.

Black Harrier ♦ *Circus maurus* Double figures between De Hoop, Darling and Skitterykloof.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Single figures almost every day. Fifty or more around Creighton.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocoder* Five singles, including a pair at Strandfontein.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* Scattered singles throughout

Forest Buzzard ♦ *Buteo trizonatus* Endemic. One at Grootvadersbosch.

Jackal Buzzard ♦ *Buteo rufofuscus* Common in grassland areas, with over 35 seen in total.

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* One flew over just South of Brandvlei

Denham's Bustard (Stanley's B) *Neotis denhami* A total of 3 were seen between Bredasdorp and De Hoop NR.

Ludwig's Bustard *Neotis ludwigii* A handful around Calvinia and Brandvlei.

Barrow's Bustard ♦ (White-bellied Korhaan) *Eupodotis [senegalensis] barrowii* Two near Amersfoot.

Blue Korhaan ♦ *Eupodotis caerulea* Endemic. Three seen well near Wakkerstroom.

Karoo Korhaan ♦ *Eupodotis vigorsii* Several near De Hoop and a couple of single in the Karoo.

Southern Black Korhaan ♦ *Afrotis afra* Endemic. Two near De Hoop, other West of Calvinia

Northern Black Korhaan ♦ *Afrotis afroides* At least 4 seen well at Suikersbosrand N. R. ♦

Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melanogaster* One near Amersfoot

Buff-spotted Flufftail ♦ *Sarothrura elegans* Heard distantly Magoebaskloof, seen well at Sani Pass.

Red-chested Flufftail ♦ *Sarothrura rufa* Seen briefly at Skitterykloof and heard at Wakkerstroom marsh.

Rail (African W Rail) *Rallus caeruleus* Heard only at Wakkerstroom.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Heard from marshes at Wakkerstroom and Mkuze

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

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Many at Standfontien, a few at De Hoop NR, several at Wakkerstroom.

Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) *Fulica cristata* Fairly common around the Cape, 50+ at Strandfontien.

Grey Crowned Crane ♦ *Balearica regulorum* Small numbers around the Pevensy Road and Wakkerstroom.

Wattled Crane ♦ *Grus carunculata* A pair at the Karkloof Conservancy.

Blue Crane ♦ *Grus paradisea* About 60 at the Agulhas grasslands and small numbers elsewhere.

Hottentot Buttonquail *Turnix hottentottus* Two flushed at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Water Thick-knee (Water Dikkop) *Burhinus vermiculatus* Heard only at De Hoop.

Spotted Thick-knee (Spotted Dikkop) *Burhinus capensis* One nr Grootvaderbosch, seen well in Devon grasslands.

African Oystercatcher ♦ (African Black O) *Haematopus moquini* Several groups on Western Cape coast, max 5.

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

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Scarcer than the former, recorded from Strandfontein, Port Nolloth.

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

Black-winged Lapwing (B-w Plover) *Vanellus melanopterus* A few around Wakkerstroom.

Senegal Lapwing *Vanellus lugubris* Three in Mkuze showed well

Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus* Ones and twos throughout, but 20+ at De Hoop NR.

African Wattled Lapwing (A W Plover) *Vanellus senegallus* A total of 3 at Suikerbosrand.

Grey Plover (Black-b Plover) *Pluvialis squatarola* A couple near Paternoster

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Singles Paternoster and near Mpempe Pan.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Scattered pairs throughout.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* Two near De Hoop NR and a few in the Karkloof.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* A handful around Paternoster and Port Nolloth.

African Snipe (Ethiopian S) *Gallinago nigripennis* A single at Suikerbosrand.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A couple at Paternoster and Port Nolloth.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Decent numbers at West Coast N.P

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Forty or more at Strandfontein, two at West Coast N.P.

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

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Two at Strandfontien a couple at Port Nolloth.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* One at West Coast N.P.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* A few bird amongst other waders at West Coast N.P.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* A few at Strandfontien and De Hoop, 100+ at West Coast N.P.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* A handful at Port Nolloth..

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* At least 5 at Strandfontien and 1 at Betty's Bay

Hartlaub's Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii* Common along the Western Cape coast, 2000+ at Strandfontien.

Cape Gull ♦ *Larus [dominicanus] vetula* Common along the Cape coast; 500+ breeding around Strandfontien

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Small numbers in the Western Cape.

Greater Crested Tern (Swift T) *Thalasseus bergii* Moderate numbers, often double figures in Western Cape.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Several off Betty's Bay

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Hundreds around the False Bay area including 900+ roosting at Roo-Els

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Fairly common on freshwater marshes, 50+ at Mpempe Pan.

Namaqua Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles namaqua* 3000+ coming to drink just outside Brandvlei; 60+

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

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common throughout.

African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* Plenty at Grootvadersbosch.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Small numbers throughout

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

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

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Small numbers in the Karoo

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* Common in Mkuze

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata* One at Grootvadersbosch.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* One at St Lucia

Knysna Turaco ♦ *Tauraco corythaix* Endemic. Seen well at Magoebaskloof.

Livingstone's Turaco *Tauraco livingstonii* Eight or more at St Lucia

Purple-crested Turaco *Tauraco porphyreolophus* One at Ghost Mt Inn, a few at St Lucia

Grey Go-away-Bird *Corythaixoides concolor* One in Polokwane

Burchell's Coucal ♦ *Centropus burchellii* Seen well in Mkuze

Green Malkoha *Ceuthmochares australis* Eventually seen well in St Lucia

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* One showed well in Mkuze

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* Several seen and heard, most notably at Wakkerstroom

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Seen Grootvadersbosch, heard elsewhere.

Black Cuckoo (H) *Cuculus clamosus* Heard Polokwane, Wakkerstroom, Mkuze

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* Seen near Amersfoot and heard in a couple of other spots.

African Grass Owl *Tyto capensis* One showed well by torchlight just North of Wakkerstroom

Cape Eagle-Owl *Bubo capensis* A stake-out near Betty's Bay paid off with good views.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* Two showed in our accommodation grounds at Buffeljagsrivier

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Heard only at Mkuze.

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis* One seen briefly North of Wakkerstroom.

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Seen near Betty's Bay and heard at Mkuze.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* Small numbers throughout including a dozen or more at Wakkerstroom.

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi* A couple seen in the Northernmost part of the Karoo near Pofadder.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* The commonest swift species, with double figures most days and 60+ at De Hoop N.R.

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

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* Single figures at Sir Lowry's Pass, Skitterykloof and Himeville.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Several around Sani Pass Hotel, and a few others elsewhere.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* The most widespread mousebird, with a maximum of c8 around De Hoop N.R.

White-backed Mousebird ♦ *Colius colius* A total of 50 birds recorded from drier and Karoo habitats.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* A flock showed well at Nieuwoudtville

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* A pair showed well in Grootvadersbosch, heard elsewhere.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* One Mkuze

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* One, Mkuze

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* One or two at various freshwater marshes.

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata* A couple at the base of Sani Pass showed well

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* One along the river at Sani Pass

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* Common in Kwazulu-Natal.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* Several in Mkuze

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* At least three showed well in Mkuze

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Ghost Mt Inn and Mkuze

Little Bee-Eater *Merops pusillus* Common in Mkuze

Blue-cheeked Bee-Eater *Merops persicus* Around Mpempe Pan and Mkuze giving excellent views

European Bee-Eater *Merops apiaster* Very common around Brandvlei, a few elsewhere.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* Scattered singletons including De Hoop.

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Two in Mkuze

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* One seen Mkuze

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas* A few in Polokwane and Mkuze

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes buccinator* Common around Mkuze

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* A few in Mkuze

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* One seen Mkuze

White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis* Ghost Mt Inn and Mkuze

Acacia Pied Barbet (Pied B) *Tricholaema leucomelas* A few in the Karoo.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* A few at various sites in Kwazulu-Natal.

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii* A at Suikersbosrand Nature Reserve and Polokwane.

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis* One showed well at Suikersbosrand Nature Reserve.

Knysna Woodpecker ♦ *Campethera notata* Endemic. One heard only at Grootvadersbosch.

Ground Woodpecker ♦ *Geocolaptes olivaceus* Endemic. A total of 8 at Sani Pass.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* A few in Grootvadersbosch and De Hoop

Bearded Woodpecker *Dendropicos namaquus* One in Mkuze

Olive Woodpecker *Dendropicos griseocephalus* Common in Grootvadersbosch.

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* Two different singles, just South of Pofadder.

Rock Kestrel *Falco rupicolus* Common along the Western Cape.

Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K) *Falco rupicoloides* Several seen well in Karoo.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* At Howick Falls and near Brandvlei.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* One over the road near De Hoop was an unusual record for the area.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* Numerous singles, particularly on drives through the Karoo

Lovebird sp. *Agapornis sp.* A flock of Fischer's-type hybrids on the edge of Howick.

Cape Parrot ♦ *Poicephalus robustus* Endemic. A dozen flew over at Magoebaskloof early morning.

Cape Batis ♦ *Batis capensis* First seen around Harold Porter Botanical Garden and De Hoop N.R.

Woodward's Batis ♦ *Batis fratrum* One showed well in St Lucia

Chin-spot Batis *Batis molitor* Seen at a few sites – best views at Mkuze.

Black-throated Wattle-Eye *Platysteira peltate* One at St Lucia showed well

Pirit Batis ♦ *Batis pririt* Two seen near Calvinia.

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus* A couple of flocks at Mkuze

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* A brief single in Mkuze

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* One gave rather frustrating views in Magoebaskloof.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* One showed well at Mpempe Pan

Four-colored Bushshrike *Telophorus quadricolor* A couple seen well in Mkuze

Olive Bushshrike ♦ *Chlorophoneus olivaceus* Several heard and two seen at Grootvadersbosch.

Bokmakierie ♦ *Telophorus zeylonus* Small numbers throughout.

Southern Tchagra ♦ *Tchagra tchagra* Endemic. A pair showed well, albeit briefly, at De Hoop N.R.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* At least a couple in Mkuze

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* A few in Mkuze

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Common in Mkuze and St Lucia

Southern Boubou ♦ *Laniarius ferrugineus* A total of more than twenty, best seen at St Lucia

Crimson-breasted Shrike *Laniarius atrococcineus* One in Polokwane

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Several singles in acacia scrub throughout, best seen Suikerbosrand

Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia* Common in Grootvadersbosch and Magoebaskloof.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* Seen well in Mkuze

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* Several near Verana.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* A total of 10+ from multiple sites.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* Two in Polowane.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* Small numbers throughout; at least 15 at De Hoop N.R.

Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus* A few at Wakkerstroom and Mkuze.

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* Common in St Lucia.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Small numbers throughout, though particularly common round Wakkerstroom.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas* Harold Porter and Grootvadersbosch amongst others.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Seen at Harold Porter and Grootvadersbosch amongst others.

Cape Crow (Cape R) *Corvus capensis* Common around farmland in the Western Cape.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Seen daily, particularly common around Wakkerstroom.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* Common in highland areas

Cape Rockjumper ♦ *Chaetops frenatus* Endemic. A few at Sir Lowry's Pass and a showy group at Roo-Els.

Drakensberg Rockjumper ♦ *Chaetops aurantius* Endemic. Superb views of several at Sani Pass.

Fairy Flycatcher ♦ *Stenostira scita* One at Skitterykloof.

Ashy Tit *Melaniparus cinerascens* A couple showed well in Suikerbosrand.

Southern Black Tit ♦ *Melaniparus niger* Seen well in Mkuze.

Grey Tit ♦ (Southern G T) *Melaniparus afer* First seen at Port Nolloth, also .

Grey Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli* A single group in Mkuze

Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus* A couple of close, but frustratingly brief encounters near Pofadder.

Eastern Nicator *Nicator gularis* Heard at St Lucia.

Spike-heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* Common in the Karoo and around Wakkerstroom.

Short-clawed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda chuana* Endemic. A single singing bird eventually located in Polokwane.

Karoo Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda subcoronata* Common in the Karoo with at least 10 seen.

Eastern Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda semitorquata* Endemic. Two eventually found north of Wakkerstroom.

Cape Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda curvirostris* Endemic. Two showed well near Paternost.

Agulhas Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda brevirostris* Endemic. 10+ on the Agulhas grasslands near De Hoop

Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix verticalis* Common in Northern Karoo, particularly at Koa Dunes.

Black-eared Sparrowlark ♦ *Eremopterix australis* A few mobile birds in the Karoo.

Sabota Lark *Calendulauda sabota* Small numbers in Karoo and elsewhere.

Fawn-colored Lark *Calendulauda africanoides* Common in Polokwane

Karoo Lark ♦ *Calendulauda albescens* Endemic. A couple showed well not far South of Calvinia.

Red Lark ♦ *Calendulauda burra* Two showed well at a stakeout near Brandvlei

Barlow's (Dune) Lark *Calendulauda barlowi* A displaying pair just north of Port Nolloth.

Rudd's Lark ♦ *Heteromirafr ruddi* Endemic. Two birds seen at well our stake out near Wakkerstroom.

Pink-billed Lark ♦ *Spizocorys conirostris* Four or five near Wakkerstroom, seen well.

Sabota Lark ♦ *Mirafr sabota* One or two birds of the form *naevia* (Bradfield's Lark) in the Karoo.

Eastern Clapper Lark *Mirafr fasciolata* Two showed well to the North of Wakkerstroom

Cape Clapper Lark ♦ *Mirafr apiata* Endemic. Several displaying over grasslands at Nieuwoutdville.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana* Several in the areas around Amersfoot. Suikerbosrand and Devon grasslands.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Heard only in Mkuze

Melodious Lark ♦ *Mirafra cheniana* A couple in song flight at Verana grasslands

Sclater's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys sclateri* Found in a totally new spot, where 15+ came to drink North of Kliprand

Stark's Lark *Spizocorys starki* Several along roads South of Pofadder.

Large-billed Lark ♦ (Southern Thick-b Lark) *Galerida magnirostris* Common throughout the grassland of the Cape.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* Common in grasslands throughout.

African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* A few around Spingbok.

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

Dark-capped Bulbul (Black-eyed B) *Pycnonotus tricolor* Fairly common at sites nr Durban and Johannesburg.

Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus importunus* Common in forested areas throughout.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* A few seen in Mkuze.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Seen well at Grootvadersbosch and Magoebaskloof

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* Fairly common in Magoebaskloof.

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* The commonest swallow, seen almost daily. Ten at West Coast N.P

Blue Swallow ♦ *Hirundo atrocaerulea* At least three showed well near Hela-hela Pass.

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* Small numbers in the Western Cape.

Greater Striped Swallow *Cecropis cucullata* Good numbers throughout, 20+ at De Hoop N.R

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica* Forty or more nesting on the river bridge at Hela-hela Pass.

South African Cliff Swallow ♦ *Hirundo spilodera* Common in the Karoo and in most high-altitude grassland.

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* Small numbers over grasslands in the East.

Rock Martin (African R M) *Hirundo fuligula* Sighted on several days. Ten or more at West Coast N.P and Sani Pass.

Brown-throated Martin (Plain M) *Riparia paludicola* Small numbers most days.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A flock of 10+ around Mpempe Pan.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* A dozen or so around Wakkerstroom.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* A surprise total of over 30 from around Sani Pass Hotel.

Black Saw-wing (B S-w Swallow) *Psalidoprocne holomelaena* Forty individuals scattered across several sites.

Cape Grassbird ♦ (African G) *Sphenoeacus afer* Common throughout the Western Cape.

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* Several singles in the Karoo.

Victorin's Warbler ♦ *Cryptillas victorini* One showed well and a couple more heard at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla* A dozen at Grootvadersbosch and Magoebaskloof.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* A couple seen in Polokwane and Mkuze

Lesser Swamp Warbler (Cape R Warbler) *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Seen at Strandfontein and West Coast N.P

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* One at Ghost Mt Inn.

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus* A migrant at Brandvlei and 3 breeding birds at Skitterykloof.

African Yellow Warbler (Dark-capped Y W) *Iduna natalensis* Two at the base of Sani Pass.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* Seen well at Strandfontein. Several heard.

Knysna Warbler ♦ *Bradypterus sylvaticus* Endemic. With persistence one was seen near Grootvadersbosch.

Barratt's Warbler ◊ *Bradypterus barratti* Seen at Magoebaskloof and Sani Pass.

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Schoenicola brevirostris* One in lower reaches of Sani Pass.

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

Lazy Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans* Heard only at Wakkerstroom.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* Common in Polokwane

Rufous-winged Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes* A pair en route from St Lucia to Eshowe.

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

Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens* Thirty or so noted from wetlands across the country.

Neddicky (Piping C) *Cisticola fulvicapilla* Five recorded in grassland areas.

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

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* A few around Verana grasslands

Cloud Cisticola ◊ (Tink-tink C) *Cisticola textrix* Seen well at our stakeout near Darling, and around Sani Pass.

Pale-crowned Cisticola ◊ *Cisticola cinnamomeus* Two in breeding plumage a Pevensy.

Wing-snapping Cisticola (Ayre's C) *Cisticola ayresii* Several at Devon grassland and Wakkerstroom.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* A couple in Mkuze.

Black-chested Prinia *Prinia flavicans* Four seen in the Karoo.

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

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

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

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

Rudd's Apalis *Apalis ruddi* A couple at Mkuze and common around St Lucia.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava* Pairs in Polokwane, Mkuze and St Lucia.

Rufous-eared Warbler ◊ *Malcorus pectoralis* A total of 4 recorded in the Karoo.

Green-backed Camaroptera (G-b Bleating Warbler) *Camaroptera brachyura* Common; Mkuze and St Lucia.

Barred Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes fasciolatus* Heard only in Polokwane.

Cinnamon-breasted Warbler *Euryptila subcinnamomea* An obliging pair at Skitterykloof.

Karoo Eremomela *Eremomela gregalis* Two sightings in the Karoo, some at the P2550 and one near Pofadder

Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis* A pair in Polokwane

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* A family group at Mpempe Pan

Bush Blackcap ◊ *Lioptilus nigricapillus* Excellent views at Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.

Chestnut-vented Warbler (Common Tit babbler) *Sylvia subcaerulea* Six in West Coast N. P.

Layard's Warbler ◊ (L Tit-babbler) *Sylvia layardi* Two found at our last possible site at Sani Pass.

Cape White-eye ◊ *Zosterops virens* Common around the Cape.

Orange River White-eye ◊ *Zosterops pallidus* Several unexpected flocks found between Brandvlei and Kenhardt.

African Yellow White-Eye *Zosterops senegalensis* Seen briefly at St Lucia.

Cape Sugarbird ◊ *Promerops cafer* Endemic. Common in fynbos around the Western Cape, 20+ at Sir Lowrys Pass.

Gurney's Sugarbird ◊ *Promerops gurneyi* Excellent views of 2 at Sani Pass.

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

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

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* One at De Hoop N.R

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

Cape Starling (Cape G S) *Lamprotornis nitens* Two at Constantina Mistbelts.

Pied Starling ♢ (African P S) *Lamprotornis bicolor* Fairly common throughout, 50 at De Hoop N.R.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Common throughout.

Pale-winged Starling *Onychognathus nabouroup* A pair at Skitterykloof and also just South of Springbok.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* A few each in Polokwane and Mkuze

Spotted Ground Thrush *Geokichla guttata* Three including a singing bird seen well in Dlinza Forest.

Groundscraper Thrush *Turdus litsitsirupa* Two showed well in Polokwane.

Orange Thrush *Zoothera gurney* A handful showed well in Magoebaskloof.

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

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* A couple at Ghost Mt Inn and one in Mkuze.

Karoo Thrush *Turdus smithi* Seen well at Nieuwoudtville and a couple of other spots.

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

Kalahari Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas paena* Two showed well in Polokwane

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Seen well in Polokwane and Mkuze

Brown Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas signata* One seen late afternoon at St Lucia

Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus* A couple showed well in Mkuze

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina* A pair at Nsumo Pan, Mkuze

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus* One in Mkuze late afternoon.

Chat Flycatcher *Melaenornis infuscatus* Multiple birds seen in Karoo.

Marico Flycatcher *Melaenornis mariquensis* Common in Polokwane

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Plenty of migrants in Polokwane.

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* A pair showed well in St Lucia.

Fiscal Flycatcher ♢ *Melaenornis silens* Ten across from other scattered localities in the Western Cape.

African Dusky Flycatcher (Dusky F) *Muscicapa adusta* Common in forested areas including 4 at Grootvadersbosch

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

White-throated Robin-Chat *Cossypha humeralis* Best seen en route to St Lucia

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* One in the grounds of Ghost Mt Inn.

Red-capped Robin-Chat (Natal R) *Cossypha natalensis* Common around St Lucia.

Chorister Robin-Chat ♢ (C Robin) *Cossypha dichroa* Endemic. Common in Magoebaskloof and

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* A few at Magoebaskloof.

Cape Rock Thrush ♢ *Monticola rupestris* Endemic. Only one; at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Sentinel Rock Thrush ♢ *Monticola explorator* Endemic. Three at Sani Pass.

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

Buff-streaked Chat ♢ *Campicoloides bifasciatus* Endemic. Two at Sani Pass.

Sickle-winged Chat ♢ *Emarginata sinuata* Endemic. Some at Paternoster, Brandvlei and 10 around Sani Pass.

Karoo Chat ♦ *Emarginata schlegelii* Several near Brandvlei and several along the P2250.

Tractrac Chat ♦ *Emarginata tractrac* Fifteen or more north of Brandvlei.

Mocking Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* A showy pair were at Suikerbosrand.

Ant-eating Chat ♦ (Southern Anteater Chat) *Myrmecocichla formicivora* First seen in Karoo.

Mountain Wheatear (Mountain C) *Myrmecocichla monticola* Two at Sani Pass and 2 at Wakkerstroom.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* Fairly common in the Western Cape.

Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C) *Oenanthe familiaris* Common around the Karoo and Wakkerstroom.

Dusky Sunbird *Cinnyris fuscus* A couple just outside Pofadder.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* Common around St Lucia.

Orange-breasted Sunbird ♦ *Anthobaphes violacea* Endemic. Plenty in fynbos habitats, including Sir Lowry's Pass.

Eastern Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* Common in St Lucia.

Grey Sunbird *Cyanomitra veroxii* One at St Lucia.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystine* Small numbers in several spots.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* A few seen around Mkuze and St Lucia

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa* Common in fynbos and upland areas, including 15 or more at Sani Pass.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird ♦ (Lesser D-c S) *Cinnyris chalybeus* Endemic. Common in Western Cape.

Neergaard's Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris neergaardi* A single male showed well in Mkuze.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris afer* Endemic. Commonest at Grootvadersbosch

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* A few at Polokwane.

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* Fairly common in Mkuze and St Lucia.

White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* Several showed well at Mkuze, a few seen elsewhere.

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* A couple on the fringes of Brandvlei.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Present around several areas of development sometimes in double figures.

Cape Sparrow ♦ *Passer melanurus* Common in open habitats throughout, 30 near near Wakkerstroom.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffuses* Small numbers in scrubby and grassland areas throughout.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Gymnoris superciliaris* Common in Mkuze, a few seen at Wakkerstroom and Polokwane.

Scaly-feathered Weaver *Sporopipes squamifrons* Common in Northern Karoo.

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* Small numbers seen around Mkuze and St Lucia.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* Small number at several sites in the East.

Cape Weaver *Ploceus capensis* Common throughout the Western Cape.

Eastern Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus* Common around St Lucia.

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* A couple showed well around Magoebaskloof.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus xanthopterus* A couple of pairs nesting at Nsumo Pan, Mkuze.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Several breeding birds in Mkuze.

Southern Masked Weaver (Masked W) *Ploceus velatus* A few around Wakkerstroom.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* About 25 totalled around Wakkerstroom.

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor* A few in Mkuze and Magoebaskloof.

Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius* Forty or so a few kilometers south of Kenhardt.

Scaly-feathered Finch *Sporopipes squamifrons* Two came in to drink near Kenhardt.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* A few flocks of fifty or so birds around Creighton and Wakkerstroom.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Small flocks or colonies seen on several occasions in the Western Cape.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* A few around Verana grasslands and Wakkerstroom

Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widow) *Euplectes capensis* Forty or fifty seen in total, common around Darling.

Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered W) *Euplectes axillaris* Several in grassland around the Karkloof.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus* Several in Mkuze showed well.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens* Two seen in grassland near Wakkerstroom.

Long-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes progne* Several double figure groups around Wakkerstroom and Suikersbosrand.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* A few skulky birds in Mkuze

Pink-throated Twinspot *Hypargos margaritatus* Two separate groups in Mkuze, one of which showed very well.

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* Several in Mkuze.

Violet-eared Waxbill *Uraeginthus granatinus* Two showed well in Polokwane.

Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos* A couple of singles showed well in the St Lucia area.

Sweet Waxbill ♦ *Coccyzygia melanotis* Endemic. Only three seen – at Cecilia Forest.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Small flocks in several locations and 40 at the base of Sani Pass.

Quailfinch (African Q) *Ortygospiza atricollis* A total of 20 or so around Wakkerstroom were all fly-overs.

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* Fifteen or more at Wakkerstroom and a few others elsewhere..

Red-backed Mannikin *Lonchura nigriceps* Twenty or so at Magoebaskloof.

Purple Indigobird *Vidua purpurascens* One in Mkuze.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Two near Grootvadersbosch and 50+ at Suikersbosrand.

Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* One seen en route, just South of Polokwane. Leader-only.

Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* One at Mkuze

Cuckoo-Finch *Anomalospiza imberbis* A few around Wakkerstroom.

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Seen daily in single figures except in the Karoo.

Cape Longclaw ♦ *Macronyx capensis* Endemic. Wakkerstroom and a few other scattered pairs elsewhere.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* A couple

African Pipit (Grassveld P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* Small numbers from several grassland areas.

Mountain Pipit ♦ *Anthus hoeschi* Endemic. Eight found at Sani Pass

Nicholson's Pipit *Anthus [similis]* One seen on the Aguhlas grasslands.

African Rock Pipit ♦ (Yellow-tufted P) *Anthus crenatus* Endemic. One was located and showed well at Sani Pass.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* A few in De Hoop

Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus* Several holding territories above the Sani Pass Hotel.

Yellow-breasted Pipit ♦ *Hemimacronyx chloris* Endemic. One seen well near Wakkerstroom.

Forest Canary ♦ *Crithagra scotops* Endemic. Recorded in small numbers at Grootvadersbosch etc

Lemon-breasted Canary ♦ *Crithagra citrinpectus* Several small groups found en route to St Lucia.

Cape Siskin ♦ *Crithagra totta* Endemic. Plenty at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Drakensberg Siskin ♦ *Crithagra symonsi* Endemic. At least 25 recorded at Sani Pass.

Yellow Canary ♦ *Crithagra flaviventris* Common in the Western Cape and Karoo.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* Small numbers in Western Cape.

Brimstone Canary (Bully C) *Crithagra sulphurata* Small numbers in the Western Cape

Streaky-headed Seedeater ♦ (S-h Canary) *Crithagra gularis* Six at Sani Pass several elsewhere.

White-throated Canary ♦ *Crithagra albobularis* Fairly common Karoo; double figures at several spots.

Protea Canary ♦ (P Seedeater) *Crithagra leucoptera* Endemic. One seen well at a site near Clanwilliam.

Cape Canary ♦ *Serinus canicollis* Small numbers throughout.

Black-headed Canary ♦ *Serinus alario* A pair at Sani Pass.

Lark-like Bunting ♦ *Emberiza impetuani* Common north of Calvinia, with over 30 recorded.

Cape Bunting ♦ *Emberiza capensis* Small numbers around the Western Cape, Sani Pass etc.

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* A couple showed well around the Verana grasslands.

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* A few in Polokwane and Mkuze.

MAMMALS

African Savannah Elephant *Loxodonta africana* Several in Mkuze showing a few metres from the hide

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

Bush Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia* Singles at Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.

Nyala *Tragelaphus angasii* Very common in Mkuze

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* A handful in Mkuze

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* Several in Nsumo Pan, Mkuze

Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat) *Cynictis penicillata* Several around De Hoop and Bredasdorp.

Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon* One near De Hoop.

Small Grey Mongoose *Galerella pulverulenta* One at South African border post, Sani Pass

Common Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus* One at Betty's Bay.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* Seen in Mkuze.

Suricate (Meerkat) *Suricata suricatta* Twenty or more near Wakkerstroom.

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* A few singles including De Hoop, Suikerbosrand and Hela-hela pass.

African Wild Dog *Lycan pictus* An awesome group of 14 watched for over an hour in Mkuze

Cape Fur Seal (Afro-Australian F S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* A few on the coast.

Plains Zebra *Equus burchelli* Plenty in Mkuze, a couple elsewhere

Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* Good numbers in De Hoop NR with Hartmann's subspecies seen in Goegap NR

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Several seen well in Mkuze

Impala *Aepyceros melampus* Hundreds in Mkuze, a few elsewhere

Spingbok *Antidorcas buselaphusan* Small herds in several places, particularly around De Hoop NR.

Suni *Nesotragus moschatus* At least two seen well in Mkuze

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* A couple high up in Skitterykloof valley.

Rhebok *Pelea capreolus* A few scattered singles, and 3 together near Wakkerstroom.

Steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* Double figures around De Hoop.

- Bontebok (Blesbok) *Damaliscus dorcas*** A few around De Hoop and others around Wakkerstroom.
- Common Duiker (Grey Duiker) *Sylvicapra grimmia*** Scatter singles from several locations.
- Grysbok (Cape G) *Raphicerus melanotis*** One near De Hoop N.R.
- Grey Rhebok (Vaal R) *Pelea capreolus*** Two or three seen at Sani Pass.
- Common Reedbuck *Redunca arundinum*** Several around Sani Pass
- Eland *Taurotragus oryx*** A few in West Coast N. P.
- Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus*** Twenty or more in Mkuze.
- Black Wildebeest *Connochaetes gnou*** A small group just South of Wakkerstroom.
- Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus*** A few groups around the Western Cape and Wakkerstroom.
- Vervet Monkey (Vervet) *Cercopithecus aethiops*** A few around Mkuze and St Lucia.
- Samango Monkey (Diademed Guenon) *Cercopithecus mitis*** Ten or so Magoebaskloof.
- Sloggett's Rat (Ice Rat) *Otomys sloggetti*** A few in the higher reaches of Sani Pass.
- Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*** One crossing the road on the Cape peninsular.
- Red Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus palliatus*** A couple seen well in Mkuze
- South African Ground Squirrel *Xerus inauris*** Fairly common in the Karoo, including just North of Brandvlei.
- Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*** Several widely scattered sightings including an obliging daylight individual near Brandvlei



Yellow-tufted Pipit (image by Simon Mitchell)



Yellow-breasted Pipit (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Wild Dog (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Wild Dog (image by Simon Mitchell)



Red-capped Robin-Chat (image by Simon Mitchell)



Swee Waxbill (image by Simon Mitchell)



Victorin's Warbler (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Wattled Lapwing (image by Simon Mitchell)



Rudd's Apalis (image by Simon Mitchell)



Sclater's Lark (image by Alec Gillespie)



White-throated Robin (image by Simon Mitchell)



Southern Crested Guineafowl (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Pygmy Goose (image by Simon Mitchell)



Purple-banded Sunbird (image by Simon Mitchell)



Protea Canary (image by Simon Mitchell)



Pink-throated Twinspot (image by Simon Mitchell)



Mountain Pipit (image by Simon Mitchell)



Mountain Zebra (image by Simon Mitchell)



Northern Black Korhaan (image by Simon Mitchell)



Orange River Francolin (image by Simon Mitchell)



Jacobin Cuckoo (image by Simon Mitchell)



Greater Striped Swallow (image by Simon Mitchell)



Ground Woodpecker (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Elephant (image by Simon Mitchell)



Cape Sugarbird (image by Simon Mitchell)



Buff-spotted Flufftail (image by Simon Mitchell)



Cinnamon-breasted Warbler (image by Simon Mitchell)



Bush Blackcap (image by Simon Mitchell)



Cuckoo-finch (image by Simon Mitchell)



Cape Eagle-Owl (image by Alec Gillespie)



Diederik Cuckoo (image by Simon Mitchell)



Cape Grassbird (image by Simon Mitchell)



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (image by Simon Mitchell)



Blue Cranes (image by Simon Mitchell)



Bearded Woodpecker (image by Simon Mitchell)



African Yellow Warbler (image by Simon Mitchell)