

SOUTH AFRICA SPECIALITIES TOUR REPORT

2025

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Andrew Stainthorpe and Mark Beaman

What can one say!! The 2025 Birdquest tour to South Africa just keeps producing excellent birds, wildlife and spectacular scenery! The trip delivered again with 519 birds seen and 5 heard only, giving us a total 524 bird species recorded including a 159 Birdquest Diamond Birds (species with restricted ranges rarely encountered on any other tour itinerary) plus a host of three star species and five write-in species. Although primarily a birding tour we also enjoyed 54 different mammal species.

The tour started off in the scenic city of Cape Town with its world famous mountain and scenic coastal views. A pelagic trip out of Houtbay set the tone for the trip with a host of good pelagic species, before moving up to the West Coast where we explored the rewarding scrubby Stranveld vegetation and a local Salt works, producing a good selection of wanted species. No tour to the Western Cape would be complete without a visit to the rugged Hottentots Holland Mountains and the seabird colonies along this spectacular stretch of coastline. Heading over the mountains we ventured into the monoculture agricultural fields of the Overberg region, also known as the Agulhas plains, and visited some of the local coastal reserves with their crystal clear estuaries and their Lowland Fynbos habitats.

It was then up to the most southerly indigenous forests of South Africa – Grootvadersbosch and its moist mountain Fynbos, which produced some much-wanted endemic birds before heading over the Langeberg mountains to the fruit producing area of Ceres. Ceres being the gateway to the Tankwa Karoo, an area of semi-desert with long dusty roads, but an area which can produce some stunning birding and it did!! The next few days were spent exploring the Tankwa Karoo, Bushmanland and Namaqualand with their scattered low bush stony plains, dry drainage lines, arid mountain ranges and the occasional dune fields. This area holds one of the highest Lark diversity regions in the world and with some work produced all the regional species!! A visit to Lambert's Bay and its Gannet breeding island was also on the cards before driving down to Cape Town again to catch our flight to the Eastern side of South Africa.

Starting off in the Highveld Grasslands it was noticeably greener and far more active with birds than the previous section of the tour and it did not take long before we started connecting with new species, whilst the almost daily thunderstorms produced some interesting scenarios! The grasslands produce some good birds before moving up into the bushveld and the indigenous forests of Magoebaskloof where rain and mist played havoc with the birding but we did manage to scratch out a few of the main target species!! A long day's driving saw us arriving in the Wakkerstroom area with its grasslands and wetlands and good diversity of endemic birds before moving down into the humid sub-tropical bushveld of Mkuze and the coastal village of St Lucia. This area also produced some awesome birds albeit with a little more effort!! From the coast we moved up and inland to the forests around Eshowe and the Midlands of Natal before finally arriving at the spectacular Drakensberg with its mountain passes and breathtaking views, here too the birds performed well and gave us some outstanding sightings! Our final morning saw us driving down to King Shaka International Airport where this awesome tour came to an end and everyone went onto their next adventure.

The tour started off in Houtbay with an evening meal where everyone had the opportunity to meet each other and discuss the upcoming tour before an early start the next morning (one of the latest on the tour!!) to head out into the cold Atlantic ocean for our pelagic trip. Setting off from the harbour the excitement was noticeable as we headed out. It was not long before we started recording birds with the likes of Sandwich and Common Terns, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gull, Crowned and Cape Cormorant and a few Afro-Australian Fur Seal and this was before we had even left the harbour!! Continuing out to sea it was fairly quiet on the birding front with the exception of a few Common Terns and a stunning Sabine's Gull, when all of a sudden the boat slowed due to one of the engines deciding it had had enough

and stopped working!!! We then crawled back to the harbor to change boats, but this did mean that we got to do a second trip and as they say everything happens for a reason! Heading back out we had an excellent sighting of a young Humpback Whale playing in the kelp, a massive Ocean Sunfish (Mola-mola) and a few sleeping seals. Eventually our first of four trawlers was picked up and we made our way towards it and the birdlife increased almost instantaneously with our first albatross – Shy Albatross followed shortly by Atlantic Yellow-nosed, Black-browed and lastly Indian Yellow-nosed! With a supporting cast of White-chinned Petrel, Arctic Skua, Sooty, Cory's and Great Shearwater, Northern and eventually a Southern Giant Petrel, with highlights being two late Pintado and 2 stunning Spectacled Petrels! Eventually we had to leave the trawlers and make our way back, and on the return journey we were fortunate to pick up a Manx Shearwater, what a start to the tour and the sheer number of birds behind the trawlers was mind blowing in itself!!

Being on the Southern tip of Africa the wind is consistent, just varying from day to day. With a prediction of stronger winds later in the day we left Houtbay early to arrive at Rooiels just after sunrise. A walk along the road which runs parallel to the steep and rugged Hottentot Holland Mountains and the edge of False Bay not only produces some amazing scenery but some exceptional birding. Today would be no different with amazing sightings of Cape Bunting, Grey-backed Cisticola, Cape Rock Thrush, Streaky-headed Seedeater, the stunning Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Grassbird, Cape Sugarbird, Cape Siskin, the attractive Cape Rockjumper and the smart Ground Woodpecker were all seen on our walk, with some young Cape Rockjumpers getting up close and personal with the group and truly mind blowing experiences for a bird that at times can be elusive. Following on from Rooiels we went to one of only two mainland colonies of African Penguin at Stoney Point Nature Reserve where we had some stunning sightings, as well as a full set of marine cormorants, namely Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorants. Great (White-breasted) Cormorant were also present as well as Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, African Oystercatcher and some Southern Ground Agama and the attractive Cape Girdle Lizard. After a quick stop for lunch in Pringle Bay we headed to Macassar Water Treatment works and the Eersterivier estuary for a change in scenery and here we quickly added a host of species with the likes of Lesser Flamingo, Yellow-billed Duck, Cape Teal, Common, Caspian, Greater Crested and Sandwich Tern, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Common Sandpiper, Three-banded Plover, Cape Canary and the highlight bird was a visiting Baird's Sandpiper! With the wind picking up we headed to the Strandfontein Water Treatment Works where we could use the vehicles as a mobile hide to try and stay out of the wind. Here to we added a whole lot of birds with the following being added: Fulvous Whistling Duck, a lone female Maccoa Duck, Spur-winged Goose, Southern Pochard, a few Cape Shoveler, Red-billed Teal, Greater Flamingo, Purple Swamphen, Common Greenshank, Whiskered Tern, the impressive Great White Pelican, Reed Cormorant (giving us a clean sweep of all of South Africa's Cormorant in a day!!), all 3 Grebe species – Little, Great Crested and the smart Black-necked! With time running out we headed back to Houtbay to end off a fantastic day.

As with the previous day we left Cape Town early the following morning to arrive at our first birding stop before the wind gained any momentum in the Coastal Stranveld. We started picking birds almost immediately with Bokmakierie, Cape Grassbird, Karoo Scrub Robin, Karoo Prinia, Grey-backed Cisticola, Chestnut-vented Warbler, Cape Bulbul and a stunning endemic Black Harrier. A distant sighting of a bird and a little bush strolling we eventually all had a great sighting of Cape Clapper Lark! First Lark of the tour, with the tour producing a total of 21 species! A short drive up the road produced Southern Black Korhaan, Cape Spurfowl, Wattled Starling, Rock Kestrel, Cape Longclaw, Spotted Thick-knee and the attractive Capped Wheatear before arriving at the West Coast National Park. Driving through the park we added Common Ostrich, White-backed Mousebird, Bar-throated Apalis and the attractive Southern Double-collard Sunbird, Yellow Canary and Cape Sparrow. A stop at Abramskraal hide produced amazing sightings of White-throated Swallow which had bred in the hide, with the chicks sitting between us! The hide also produced Namaqua Dove, Cape Weaver, Lesser Swamp Warbler, African Spoonbill and Red-knobbed Coot. Continuing on we had an amazing sighting of a Cape Dune Mole-Rat, a species that spends its time underground and the only evidence of their presence is the mole heaps one sees everywhere. Pushing on we had a quick stop at Geelbek but unfortunately the tide was in so we headed up to Seeberg vantage point and added distant Grey-wing Francolin before a stop at the Seeberg Hide but with the tide up and the wind pumping we didn't stay long but added a visiting European Oystercatcher, White-fronted Plover, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Kittlitz's Plover, Sanderling and Little Stint before moving off. Working our way up towards Velddrift and a local salt works we added a Blue Crane and Large-billed Lark with a roosting Western Barn Owl and Black-crowned Heron also being added. The salt works proved to be productive, with us adding Chestnut-banded Plover, Little Tern, Red-necked Phalarope, Wood Sandpiper and Ruff. A relaxed lunch also brought in a few birds with Common Hoopoe, Yellow Canary, Greater Striped Swallow and the attractive Common Waxbill moving around the gardens. Before returning to Cape Town for an early night we encountered a large Mole Snake.

Getting up at 03h00 is not the most pleasant experience but worth it at the end of the day when we had the opportunity to connect with some good birds on a private farm. An early morning walk in some short Fynbos produced a brief but good view of a the seldom seen

Fynbos Buttonquail with a supporting cast of Denham's Bustard, Black Harrier, Jackal Buzzard, Karoo Prinia, Cape Sugarbird and the dazzling Malachite Sunbird. After a packed breakfast we headed off to De Mond Nature Reserve, with its crystal clear water and white sandy shores one could be mistaken for thinking you were on a tropical island somewhere. Searching for our main target the diminutive Damara Tern we enjoyed sightings of numerous waders in the form of Common Greenshank, African Oystercatcher, Eurasian Curlew and Whimbrel, White-fronted Plover, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Terek Sandpiper, Greater Sand Plover and Common Ringed Plover before locating 26 roosting Damara Terns which later took to the air and started cruising the estuary, what a stunning little bird! Returning to the car park we added Water Thick-knee, Fiscal Flycatcher, Southern Boubou and Bar-throated Apalis before heading off to have lunch. After a good lunch we headed out into the agriculture fields of the rolling Agulhas plains. Adding about a 100 stunning Blue Crane (South Africa's National Bird), African Marsh Harrier, Lanner Falcon, Nicholson's Pipit, the Agulhas form of Cape Long-billed Lark (once treated as a separate species), numerous Red-capped and Large-billed Lark, a brief sighting of a Cloud Cisticola, good numbers of Pied Starling and Capped Wheatear before arriving in the late evening at our lovely guest house where a pair of Spotted Eagle Owls had three chicks.

Another early start saw us heading to De Hoop Nature Reserve for the morning with two very tricky target species on our radar. Before arriving at the reserve we added Karoo Korhaan, Cape Spurfowl, Denham's Bustard, a smart Bat-eared Fox and about 20 Blue Crane. Once in the reserve we started searching for Southern Tchagra and the often elusive Knysna Woodpecker, fortunately the Southern Tchagra showed itself relatively quickly but the Woodpecker would give us a run around. Whilst searching for the Woodpecker we had further views of Grey-winged Francolin, Bokmakierie, Spotted Thick-knee, African Fish Eagle, Common Hoopoe, Red-faced Mousebird, Acacia Pied Barbet, Southern Boubou, Black Saw-wing, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Sombre Greenbul and Cape Robin-Chat. Whilst searching we added a few mammals with the likes of Rock Hyrax, the attractive Mountain Zebra (Cape), the smart looking Bontebok, Cape Grey and Yellow Mongoose. Whilst waiting for lunch Mark took a stroll and finally managed to locate a male Knysna Woodpecker which we all managed to see, what a relief and it made lunch that much sweeter! Taking the longer route up to Grootvadersbosch we added Cape Vulture, numerous Jackal and Common Buzzard. A short afternoon walk didn't produce much but some were lucky enough to see Fiery-necked Nightjar whilst walking back to their rooms.

Heading into the indigenous mist-belt forests of Grootvadersbosch early the next morning produced some good birds with Forest Canary, Greater Double-collard Sunbird, Lemon Dove, African Olive Pigeon, Forest Buzzard, Red-chested Cuckoo all being seen before we moved up into the mountain Fynbos and connected with the smart Victorin's Warbler, Cape Sugarbird and the gorgeous Orange-breasted Sunbird. It was then back into the forest to search for our next target – the Knysna Warbler! This sulking drab bird only gave us fleeting views as it moved between the heavy fern lined water course. After a good breakfast we hit the road again and made our way down to Paarl for a quick look around. With the temperature climbing into the mid 30's it was going to be a struggle to locate our next target species – Protea Canary. We did add the attractive Swee Waxbill to our list before moving up to Ceres and its Protea covered pass. Our canary remained out of sight despite some serious effort, as the sun started setting we made our way back down to Ceres for the night.

Another early morning start with packed breakfasts in hand saw us leaving before sunrise to make our way to the gateway of the Tankwa Karoo, a barren stretch of countryside, but an area that has the potential to produce some amazing birds and it sure did produce! A quick stop and walk near some boulder strewn hillsides produced the much sort after Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Mountain Wheatear, Karoo Chat, Layard's Warbler, the smart Southern Double-collard Sunbird, the attractive Rufous-eared Warbler and Yellow-bellied Eremomela. Continuing down the bumpy, dusty road we added Pale Chanting Goshawk, Booted Eagle, Karoo Lark, Sickle-winged Chat and eventually the smart Karoo Eremomela. A quick stop at a vegetated river crossing had us adding Chestnut-vented Warbler, the attractive Pirit Batis, brief Namaqua Warbler, White-throated Canary and the active Fairy Flycatcher before stopping for a deserved lunch. After lunch with the temperature continuing to climb, we continued the long road to Calvina.

Yet another pre-dawn drive saw us heading north of Calvina to the small town of Brandvlei and here a stop at a river crossing gave us better views of Namaqua Warbler and we added Black-chested Prinia, Orange River White-eye, Common Reed Warbler and nest building Southern Masked Weavers. Continuing along the road we had good views of Namaqua Dove, Double-banded Courser, Northern Black Korhaan, White-backed Mousebird, European Bee-eater, Chat Flycatcher, Spike-heeled and Sabota Lark, whilst a stop at a quarry with water in it added Dusky Sunbird and the attractive Namaqua Sandgrouse with about eighty birds coming in to drink, with some of the males belly wetting – a special adaption in the males belly feathers that allows them to carry water to their chicks which could be up to 60 kilometers away. A few stops at various water reservoirs produced drinking Yellow and White-throated Canary, the plain looking Lark-like

Bunting, Grey-backed and Black-eared Sparrow-Lark and our main target bird Sclater's Lark! Turning around and heading back to Calvina we added Karoo Long-billed Lark, with further sightings of Rufous-eared Warbler, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Bokmakierie and Greater Flamingo before arriving back at our accommodation. After dinner a few of us went out for a night drive which didn't produce much except for Steenbok and a few Cape Hares.

The following morning saw us pop into a local reserve by the name of Akkerendam for a little pre breakfast birding and here we enjoyed our first Pale-winged Starling sighting and further sightings of South African Shelduck, Cape Spurrow, Black-necked Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Bokmakierie, Karoo Prinia, Grey-backed Cisticola, Karoo Scrub Robin, Karoo Chat, Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting. Heading in North Westerly direction we left Calvina and made our way up to Springbok via Loeriesfontein and Kliprand picking up Black-headed Canary, Karoo Thrush, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Jackal Buzzard, Acacia Pied Barbet, the smart Greater Kestrel, Grey Tit, Rufous-eared Warbler and Orange River White-eye before arriving at our guest house. Whilst unpacking the vehicles we enjoyed a sighting of African Red-eyed Bulbul.

Another 03h00 departure saw us heading towards Poffadder to be at the Koa Dunes by sunrise to enjoy another great day of birding. A quick breakfast stop saw us adding Scaly-feathered Weaver, Sociable Weaver and enjoying further sightings of displaying Northern Black Korhaan, Yellow Canary and the nomadic Lark-like Bunting. At the dunes themselves we enjoyed excellent views of displaying Red Lark and then added Fawn-coloured Lark to our growing list. Taking the back road to Poffadder we had an excellent sighting of a Spotted Eagle Owl with chicks on a nest in a Sociable Weavers nest, whilst further along the road we had sightings of Namaqua Sandgrouse, the much desired Burchell's Courser (two pairs with young), brief sighting of Stark's Lark, Greater Kestrel, Spike-heeled Lark, Trac-trac Chat, Pale-winged Starling, Chat Flycatcher, Sickle-winged Chat, Ant-eating Chat, Yellow and White-throated Canary. On the mammal front we added the rock loving Klipspringer, Kudu, Steenbok and Springbok before arriving in Poffadder. After the break we headed out to some water reservoirs and enjoyed sightings of Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark, Black-headed Canary (the Damara form), the attractive Red-headed Finch and Cape Sparrows. On the return trip we finally caught up with the highly nomadic Ludwig's Bustard and enjoyed further views of Karoo and Northern Black Korhaan. With the sun setting we were fortunate to catch up with an active Secretarybird which finally joined a second bird in a nest. What a stunning way to end a long day with us finally reaching our guest house well after dark.

At Port Nolleth we had a successful outing by having great sightings of Karoo and Dune (Barlow's) Lark and Cape Penduline Tit, and enjoyed further sightings of Cape Long-billed Lark. At the meeting point we added Bradfield's Swift before proceeding down to Clanwilliam for a lovely lunch at a local farm venue before heading out to try and locate our bogey bird Protea Canary! Walking along a track we were finding all sorts of canaries – Yellow, Brimstone, White-throated, Cape and Black-headed before we finally found a lone Protea Canary which gave us fantastic views. Whilst the local Rock Hyrax had to keep a sharp eye out as an adult and juvenile Verreaux's Eagle flew around the ridges. It was then time to head to our lovely accommodation.

An early breakfast at the guest house was just what the doctor had ordered! After breakfast we made our way down to Lambert's Bay and the breeding Gannet colony at Bird Island. What a treat it was to watch thousands of Cape Gannets going about their business, the noise of the birds was just next level and added to the fantastic experience. We also enjoyed further sightings of Common, Sandwich and Greater Crested Tern, Kelp and Hartlaub's Gull, African Oyster-catcher, White-fronted Plover, Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorant. Time was starting to catch us as we had to leave to continue down to Cape Town to catch our flight to Johannesburg and the start of the eastern half of the tour.

The western section of the tour was fantastic as we got the majority of our target species and enjoyed some amazing scenery as well as some good mammals along the way. What would the following days offer?

With the prediction of rain we headed out early with a packed breakfast (a theme for this tour) to search for one of our two main target species for the day, Orange River Francolin. Starting off in some mixed grassland we were soon picking up new birds for the tour with the impressive Long-tailed Widowbird, White-faced Whistling Duck, the bizarre looking Hamerkop, Swainson's Spurrow, Crowned Lapwing, African Darter and Common Bulbul. We then proceeded to the diverse Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve which produced good but common birds straight away with the likes of Fan-tailed and Red-collared Widowbird, Pied Starling, numerous singing Rufous-naped Lark, African Stonechat, Yellow-crowned Bishop, African Wattled Lapwing, and Pin-tailed Whydah. A stop at the reserves administration office added great birds like White-browed Sparrow, Red-faced Mousebird, Black-collared Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, the smart looking Red-throated Wryneck, Cape Starling, Spotted Flycatcher and Fiscal Flycatcher. With a thunderstorm approaching and creating the most amazing cloud formations it was decided not to continue on into the reserve but to rather work our way back to the entrance gate picking up Diederik

Cuckoo. As we left the reserve, two francolin were seen on the side of the road and they turned out to be the target – Orange River Francolin, what a stroke of luck! With rain starting to fall we made our way towards the Verena grasslands. Heading up a badly washed dirt road we encountered a few singing Rufous-naped Lark, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and Red-backed Shrike before arriving at an area of grassland. We were fortunate as literally as we started looking for our second target, the Melodious Lark, a bird started displaying in front of us with a second bird joining in, what luck as these birds can be difficult to locate! Having a good look at the birds we had time to do a detour to try and get some dry bushland birding in. En route to the Zaagkuil drift road we picked up Long-crested Eagle, Brown Snake Eagle with a snake, Woodland Kingfisher, Burchell's Starling, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, White-bellied Sunbird, Blue Waxbill, the attractive Lilac-breasted Roller and African Grey Hornbill. Passing through some heavy thunder showers we arrived at the Zaagkuil drift road which was wet and slippery in places. But the detour here proved to be a good one as picked up a few birds that we would not see on the trip again with the likes of Levallant's Cuckoo, Southern Pied Babbler, Brown-backed Honeybird and Southern Red-billed Hornbill. First along the road also included Burchell's Coucal, Kalahari Scrub Robin, White-winged Widowbird, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Natal Spurfowl, Little Bee-eater, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Cardinal Woodpecker and Grey Go-away Bird. With more rain heading our way and still some distance to drive we headed on towards Magoebaskloof Hotel, passing again through some torrential rain before arriving in the mist at the hotel.

We woke the following morning to rain and misty conditions which were not ideal for bird watching! With breakfast packs and the guidance of our local guide (Paul) we decided to head towards Tzaneen which was at a much lower elevation. After a short coffee break the rain finally stopped and we managed to start birding. With the cloud low it kept the aerial feeders low as well and we enjoyed sightings of Little, White-rumped and African Palm Swift, Barn, White-throated, Red-breasted, Greater and Lesser Striped Swallow all being seen during the day. A stop in town added the stunning Purple-crested Turaco, the vocal Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Lesser Honeyguide, Kurrichane Thrush, Red-faced Cisticola, Tawny-flanked Prinia, the attractive Violet-backed Starling, Holub's Golden Weaver, Dusky and Village Indigobird, Magpie and Bronze Mannikin, not a bad start! Continuing on in the area and surrounds we added Bat Hawk, Bearded Woodpecker, African Pied Wagtail, Striped and Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Tambourine Dove, Lizard Buzzard, Black Sparrowhawk, Crowned Eagle on a nest with a chick, Yellow-throated Longclaw, White-fronted Bee-eater and Southern Black Flycatcher. We eventually moved up to mist-belt forest of Woodbush, where the weather remained dull with mist and a fine drizzle but we did manage to connect with some great birds like the gorgeous Knysna Turaco, Olive Woodpecker, Olive and the much sort after Black-fronted Bushshrike, Grey Cuckooshrike, a stunning male African Emerald Cuckoo, Southern Boubou, Cape Batis, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Yellow-streaked and Sombre Greenbul, and the smart little Black-and-white Mannikin. With time against us we headed up to a patch of degraded open bushveld where we enjoyed incredible views of a displaying Short-clawed Lark as well as further views of White-browed Sparrow-weaver, Kalahari Scrub Robin and Scaly-feathered Finch before pushing onto Polokwane Game Reserve. This reserve consists of mainly arid bushveld and a short drive around the reserve produced Common Ostrich, Natal and Swainson's Spurfowl, Grey Go-away-bird, Diederik, Black and Red-chested Cuckoo, Marabou Stork, Little Heron, Marico Sunbird, the diurnal Pearl-spotted Owlet, Marico Flycatcher, Common Scimitarbill, Pied Kingfisher, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Ashy Tit, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Blue, Violet-eared and Black-faced Waxbill, the short tailed Long-billed Crombec, Black-chested Prinia and Red-billed Oxpecker. What an incredible day considering the weather, with us recording over 140 species!!

With a long day of driving ahead of us, we moved from the mist-belt forest along the escarpment to the vibrant grasslands of Wakkerstroom. En-route we made a few stops to enjoy the smart Red-headed Weaver, Jacobin Cuckoo, Striped Pipit, Mocking Cliff Chat, White-necked Raven, Peregrine Falcon, the stunning and rare Blue Swallow, Cape Rock Thrush, the bumble-bee like Yellow-crowned Bishop, Gurney's Sugarbird, Cape Vulture, Banded Martin, South African Cliff Swallow and a Spotted Eagle Owl before eventually arriving in the early evening in the small town of Wakkerstroom.

Out early we birded the local wetland picking up Yellow-billed Duck, South African Shelduck, Little Grebe, Purple Swamphen, Purple and Squacco Heron, a pair of Little Bittern, Levallant's Cisticola and Little Rush Warbler. We then collected our local guide (Lucky) and continued into the surrounding mountainous grasslands and enjoyed sightings of Southern Bald Ibis, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Cape Longclaw, Pied Starling, Buff-streaked Chat, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Wailing, Pale-crowned and Wing-snapping Cisticola, Grey-winged Francolin, Mountain Chat, the iridescent male Malachite Sunbird, Fan-tailed, Red-collard and Long-tailed Widowbirds all showing off their splendid summer plumage and aerial displays. Whilst enjoying our packed breakfast we added a lovely African Rock Pipit and a few more Cape Bunting. It was then down the hill to some old agricultural fields where we enjoyed a great sighting of White-bellied Bustard with a supporting cast of Crowned Lapwing, South African Cliff Swallow, Rufous-naped Lark and African Pipit. Heading on further we stopped at a small patch of indigenous forest and added African Yellow Warbler and the attractive endemic

Bush Blackcap before catching up with a pair of the endangered Wattled Crane. It was then back up the hill for lunch in Wakkerstroom, whilst the clouds kept building in the background. After a quick lunch we headed out towards an area known as Daggakraal and en-route enjoyed sightings of Blue Korhaan, Blue and Grey-crowned Cranes, African Marsh Harrier and loads of displaying Long-tailed Widowbirds. A couple of walks had us connecting with Black-rumped Buttonquail, Common Quail and a displaying Eastern Clapper Lark before the threatening thunderstorms caused the light to start worsening. Heading back in the dark we added a perched Spotted Eagle Owl, a Marsh Owl and a pair of African Grass Owl before the rain started, which caused the roads to become wet and slippery.

Rain continued on and off during the previous night, heading out in the morning we stopped at the wetland again and enjoyed many of the same birds as the day before but added a delightful Malachite Kingfisher, Southern Pochard and a couple more African Marsh Harriers whilst we waited for the roads to dry a little. We headed down to Mkuze with the rain following us all the way down, by the time we got to Ghost Mountain Inn the rain had become a torrential downpour and put an end to any birding that afternoon. So an early dinner and early to bed would mean that we would be bright eyed and bushy-tailed for the next exciting day of the trip.

Driving to the Mkuze Game Reserve we needed to take it easy as the road was still a little slippery from the rain from the day before and one of the streams was flowing over the road, fortunately we could cross it and arrived at the gate as it opened. Admin completed we headed into the reserve and started enjoying birds like Southern Crested Guinea fowl, Black and Jacobin Cuckoo, Black and Brown-crowned Tchagra, Rattling Cisticola, Burchell's Coucal, Sabota Lark, Yellow-fronted Canary, the smart Golden-breasted Bunting, Green-winged Pytilia, Yellow-throated Longclaw and White-throated Robin Chat and Red-backed Shrike before arriving at the camp site (Mantuma). Here we took a walk around the camp grounds and enjoyed views of Chinspot Batis, Yellow-breasted Apalis, displaying African Goshawk, Pale Flycatcher, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Golden-tailed and Cardinal Woodpecker, a calling Eastern Nicator, Black-backed Puffback, Black-headed Oriole, Trumpeter Hornbill, Striped Kingfisher and Black-collared Barbet. It was then onto Kumasinga hide where fleeting glimpses were had of Pink-throated Twinspot en-route and at the hide we enjoyed views of Purple-crested Turaco, Green Woodhoopoe, Crowned Hornbill, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, Lesser Masked Weavers, Wire-tailed Swallows, Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow, Purple-banded and White-bellied Sunbird, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Grey and Common Waxbill. It was then back to the main camp for lunch and en-route we had a sighting of Africa's top predator with three Lions walking across the road, we also added White-crested Helmetshrike on a nest with chicks, Rudd's Apalis, Ashy Flycatcher, Gorgeous Bushshrike, White-browed Scrub Robin and Wahlberg's Eagle in the camp grounds and whilst relaxing under the trees at the local take-away we had sightings of Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Brubru, Mocking Cliff Chat, White-backed Vulture and Black-bellied Starling. After lunch we headed down to Nsumo Pan with the wind picking up and the skies darkening we enjoyed views of Tawny Eagle, Pink-backed Pelican, Yellow-billed Stork, Black-winged Stilt, African Jacana, Common Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper, African Darter, Goliath Heron, African Fish Eagle, Crested Francolin and Natal Spur fowl before the heavens opened up again. Being concerned about water levels on the river crossings we made a hasty retreat back to the hotel. During the day we also enjoyed some good mammal sightings with Impala, Blue Wildebeest, Plains Zebra (Burchell's), Southern Giraffe, Warthog, Cape Buffalo, Nyala, Vervet Monkey and Chacma Baboon all been seen during the day.

With the rain clearing over night we headed into Mkuze Game Reserve again the following morning and enjoyed a sighting of a White Rhino, a species that has come under tremendous pressure due to poaching for its horn before arriving at Kumasinga Hide, this time we finally had great views of Pink-throated Twinspot, Bearded Scrub Robin, Crested Francolin, Marico, White-bellied, Purple-banded and finally Neergaard's Sunbird before moving across to Kumahlala hide. En-route we had sightings of African Woolly-necked Stork, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Broad-billed Roller, Little Bee-eater, Jacobin Cuckoo, Tambourine and Emerald-spotted Wood Dove and at the hide Grey Penduline Tit before heading back to Mantuma where we had improved sightings of Eastern Nicator and added Southern Black Tit, Klaas's Cuckoo, Grey-headed Bushshrike and further sightings of Pink-throated Twinspot. With a long day ahead of us we exited the Game Reserve and en-route had an excellent sighting of Great Spotted Cuckoo before arrival at a Musi pan. Here we enjoyed views of African Jacana, Purple Swamphen, Wood Sandpiper, Glossy Ibis, Great White and Pink-backed Pelican, Black and Squacco Heron, Yellow-billed Egret, European and Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Rufous-winged Cisticola and Eastern Golden Weaver. Stopping at Mpempe pan we added Senegal Lapwing and Collared Pratincole before stopping in Hluhluwe for a quick lunch break. We continued on towards St Lucia with a stop to look for the difficult Lemon-breasted Canary, which we finally found after a little work. Arriving in St Lucia we enjoyed a good meal before settling into our accommodation but not before adding the smart African Wood Owl to our list.

Some of us had a very early morning as we headed out to look for some nocturnal birds, which didn't play ball but we did see some Water Thick-knees. Picking the rest of the group up we headed into the forest around St Lucia and it wasn't long before we started

picking up some really good birds with the likes of the smart and vocal Livingstone's Turaco, Square-tailed Drongo, Bleating Camaroptera, the skulking Green Malkoha, White-eared and Black-collared Barbet, the vocal Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Dark-backed Forest Weaver, Narina Trogon, Rudd's Apalis, the iridescent Violet-backed Starling, Crowned Hornbill, Southern Banded Snake, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Spectacled Weaver and Collard, Olive and Grey Sunbirds. Whilst our main target species remained out of sight! We eventually heard Woodward's Batis and a lot of searching in the dense tree tops eventually revealed three birds, which eventually came right down and offered excellent close range views. Next was Brown Scrub Robin which also gave us the run around until we eventually managed a great sighting, whilst a small wetland nearby produced White-backed Duck, Black Crake, the smart little African Pygmy Goose, whilst Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters flitted around the wetland. Happy with the morning's birding we enjoyed a relaxed lunch in town before heading off, with a quick stop at the bridge over the estuary where Southern Brown-throated, Thick-billed, Lesser Masked and Eastern Golden Weavers gave us a good showing around their nests. Heading on towards Eshowe we had a quick stop in at Mtunzini and in the late afternoon light enjoyed a sighting of the local Palm-nut Vultures before arriving in the early evening at our Guest House in Eshowe.

Another early start with a packed breakfast saw us picking up our local guide (Junior) before taking a walk up to the Dlinza aerial boardwalk and its viewing tower where we enjoyed views of Grey Cuckooshrike, African Olive and Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon. From the boardwalk we headed into the forest searching, listening for Spotted Ground Thrush which we eventually picked up but unfortunately not by all as the bird flew off. We then headed to another section of the forest where we had another sighting with everyone getting great views of this range restricted species! It was then on to Ongoye Forest for a quick stop to again pick up another very range restricted species, the Green Barbet!! We enjoyed a pair of these lovely birds before heading out of the forests and into some coastal grassland. Getting out and forming a line and walking in a patch of grassland produced our next target species for the day – Swamp Nightjar!! A short way off we scanned grassland which produced a write-in species in the form of 2 Black Coucal with a support cast of Fan-tailed Widowbird, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Rufous-winged Cisticola. We then dropped Junior off and made the long drive up to the Kwazulu-Natal Midlands which was made even longer by two vehicle accidents along the way and a massive hailstorm which brought traffic to a grinding halt. We finally arrived at Benvie Gardens to search for Orange Ground Thrush with rain eventually pushing us into the vehicles. Sitting it out for a while the rain lightened up and there in the open an Orange Ground Thrush put on an excellent display with everyone getting stunning views! We took a back road to Sani Hotel where we picked up two Red-necked Spurfowl before arriving at the hotel. Yet another fantastic day of birding despite the long drives and the weather.

Our penultimate day arrived and the excitement of heading up the famous Sani Pass, which leads one on some rough roads with spectacular scenery before arriving in the small mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. This bird rich area didn't disappoint and it seldom does as we started off with an incredible sighting of the difficult to find Buff-spotted Flufftail a bird that is often heard and not seen, Olive Thrush, African Yellow Warbler, Malachite Kingfisher and a Spotted-necked Otter. Continuing on we added Giant Kingfisher, Malachite Sunbird, the skulking Barratt's Warbler, Cape Rock Thrush and Yellow Bishop before stopping for our breakfast and a warm cup of coffee. Here we were joined by a relaxed Buff-streaked Chat who was happy to share our breakfast with us. A couple of stops up the pass added Gurney's Sugarbird, Ground Woodpecker, Short-tailed Pipit, Fan-tailed Grassbird, Red-collared Widowbird, Drakensberg Prinia and on the switch-backs a female Drakensberg Rockjumper and Drakensberg Siskin's, Sentinel Rock Thrush and Cape Sparrow at the Lesotho border. Once the paperwork was completed we headed into Lesotho and here we enjoyed Sickle-winged Chat, Mountain Pipit, Grey Tit, Large-billed Lark, Southern Bald Ibis and a bone-dropping Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier), Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting before a lovely lunch break. Heading back we added the endemic Maluti River Frog and Sloggett's Vlei Rat (ice Rat) before enjoying a sighting of a male Drakensberg Rockjumper as we descended back down the pass – what an incredible day!!

You would think on your final morning you would enjoy a relaxed breakfast and an easy drive to the airport, well you would be wrong!! Leaving before sunrise, we headed down to a small patch of mist-belt forest, waiting in the mist and early morning light, with ears straining, eyes scanning the gaps in the mist, waiting! Then a screech in the distance, coming closer and then just as a gap opened up three Cape Parrot's flew past, what a relief as we had missed them in the forest at Magoebaskloof due to heavy rain and thick fog. Happy with the sighting we moved further down the hill to the grasslands around Midmar Dam but this was cut short due to poor road conditions. From here we headed down to Doreen Clark Nature Reserve in Hilton, another small patch of mist-belt forest. Walking on the very slippery trails we finally added Chorister Robin-Chat and the smart White-starred Robin before heading down to Mdloti. A quick scan around a small water body produced our last birds of the trip before, unfortunately no new ones as we headed to King Shaka International Airport where this fantastic trip came to an end.

7614 Kilometers later, with many early mornings and long days we said our goodbyes. We all agreed that it had been a fantastic trip that exceeded everyone's expectations; both in terms of number of birds and the quality of sightings. Thank you to all the participants for not only a great tour but for the new friendships created by the shared passion of bird watching!

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1st Spectacled Petrel

2nd Cape Rockjumper

3rd Orange Ground Thrush, Pink Twinspot, Knysna Woodpecker and Buff-spotted Flufftail

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 **AviList v2025** (AviList Core Team 2025. *AviList: The Global Avian Checklist, v2025*), this was the current version when the checklist for the tour report was created.

BIRDS

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* Wild birds were seen at West Coast National Park and various other birds on private reserves around the Cape and Mpumalanga.

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus* A few birds seen around the St Lucia wetlands.

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* A few of these attractive ducks were seen in the Suikerbosrand area and a few around the Mkuze area.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* A pair was seen at Strandfontein.

African Pygmy Goose ◊ *Nettapus auritus* A few birds seen around the St Lucia area.

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* Female bird was seen at Strandfontein.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* This large goose was seen in good numbers across the tour, especially in the Agulhas area.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Seen almost on a daily basis across the tour.

South African Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna cana* A few birds seen in the Tankwa Karoo, Akkerendam Nature Reserve and around the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* 5 Birds were seen flying across the road between Tzaneen and Strydom Tunnel Pass.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* A few birds around Strandfontein and again at Wakkerstroom.

Cape Shoveler ◊ *Spatula smithii* Large numbers at Strandfontein and a few around the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulate* Good numbers at Strandfontein and a few others across the eastern side of the tour.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* Large numbers were seen at Strandfontein and a few others around the Tankwa Karoo.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* A few were seen around Strandfontein and en-route to De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Good numbers of this game bird were seen across the tour, especially in the Agulhas area.

Southern Crested Guineafowl *Guttera edouardi* A few of these attractive birds were seen around Mkuze Game Reserve and St Lucia.

Grey-winged Francolin *◊ Scleroptila afra* Distant sighting in the West Coast National Park, but a much better sighting in De Hoop Nature Reserve!

Orange River Francolin *◊ Scleroptila gutturalis* After a little searching we found a pair on the entrance road to Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve.

Crested Francolin *◊ Ortygomis sephaena* Excellent sighting of a bird at Kumasinga Hide almost walking over us!

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* A few birds flushed at close range in the Wakkerstroom area.

Cape Spurfowl *◊ Pternistis capensis* We had good numbers around the Western Cape.

Natal Spurfowl *◊ Pternistis natalensis* First birds recorded on the Zaagkuil drift road with further sightings in Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserve

Swainson's Spurfowl *Pternistis swainsonii* Good numbers were seen in the bushveld regions of the tour especially in Polokwane Game Reserve.

Red-necked Spurfowl *Pternistis afer* Two birds saw en-route to Sani Hotel in the Dargle Valley.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* Seen in good numbers at Strandfontein Water Treatment Works.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roses* The larger of the two species was seen in large numbers around Strandfontein and Kliphoeck Salt Works.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Largest numbers were seen at Strandfontein and various other water bodies across the tour.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A few birds were seen at Strandfontein and De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Good numbers of this attractive bird were seen at Strandfontein.

Grey Go-away-Bird *Crinifer concolor* A few birds seen on the Zaagkuil drift road and in Polokwane Game Reserve.

Purple-crested Turaco *Gallirex porphyreolophus* Birds seen around Tzaneen and again in Mkuze Game Reserve

Livingstone's Turaco *Tauraco livingstonii* A few birds seen around St Lucia.

Knysna Turaco *◊ Tauraco corythaix* A bird was seen in the mist at Magoebaskloof.

Ludwig's Bustard *Neotis ludwigii* After some serious searching 5 birds were seen near Poffadder.

Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami* Birds were seen around the Agulhas region and 1 in Wakkerstroom area.

Blue Korhaan *◊ Eupodotis caerulescens* Three birds were seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

White-bellied Korhaan Bustard *◊ Eupodotis [senegalensis] barrowii* Three birds were seen in the Dirkiesdrop area near Wakkerstroom.

Karoo Korhaan *◊ Eupodotis vigorsii* Birds seen en-route to De Hoop Nature Reserve and again around Poffadder.

Southern Black Korhaan *◊ Afrotis afra* Birds seen en-route to the West Coast National Park.

Northern Black Korhaan *◊ Afrotis afroides* A few birds were see near Brandvlei and around Koa Dunes, displaying.

Burchell's Coucal *◊ Centropus burchellii* First seen on the Zaagkuil drift road and again around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* Two of these smart summer visitors were seen in wet grassland near Mtunzini.

Green Malkoha *Ceuthmochares australis* Three birds seen around St Lucia.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* Two birds flew over and then one perched close by in a tree after exciting Mkuze Game Reserve.

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii* Single bird was seen on the Zaagkuil drift Road.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* A few birds seen in Mkuze Game Reserve including a black form one.

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* First seen in Suikerbosrand and then a few more after that.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Single bird was seen in Mantuma camp in Mkuze Game Reserve.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* Stunning male bird seen in Magoebaskloof.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* Seen in Polokwane Game Reserve and again in Mkuze Game Reserve

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* One bird was seen in Grootvadersbosch and again in Polokwane Game Reserve.

Namaqua Sandgrouse *Pterocles Namaqua* 80+ seen at a road side quarry near the Sak River – Brandvlei

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Common across the tour, especially around towns.

Lemon Dove *Aplopelia larvata* One at Grootvadersbosch and heard at Dlinza and St Lucia.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* Common throughout the tour.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Small numbers seen almost daily across the tour.

Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba delegorguei* A couple of birds seen from the tower at Dlinza Forest.

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix* Good numbers at Grootvadersbosch and a few at Magoebaskloof and Dlinza Forest.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Common throughout the tour, with big numbers around the Agulhas region.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba [livia] var. domestica* Common especially around towns and cities.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Small numbers were seen in the more arid areas of the tour.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* A couple of birds seen in Tzaneen, Mkuze Game Reserve and St Lucia.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* Common in around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* A few birds around Wakkerstroom.

Wattled Crane *Grus carunculata* Two birds were seen near Wakkerstroom.

Blue Crane *Grus paradise* South Africa's National bird was seen in good numbers (100+) in the Agulhas region and again in the Wakkerstroom area.

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans* Excellent sighting of this hard to see bird was had on the way up Sani Pass.

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens* This bird was unfortunately only heard and not seen.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A few birds were seen around Strandfontein and later in the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* Seen in large numbers at various water bodies across the tour up to 500 birds seen in De Hoop Nature Reserve

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio [porphyrio] madagascaniensis* Birds were first seen at Strandfontein and then later around Wakkerstroom, Mkuze and St Lucia.

Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra* This attractive crake was seen at a pan near St Lucia.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* These birds were first seen on the Darling Hills road and later again along the Zaagkuil drift Road.

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* A pair was first seen in De Mond Nature Reserve and later again on an early drive around St Lucia.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* This attractive bird was seen in good numbers at the Macassar and Strandfontein Water Treatment Works.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Largest numbers were seen at Strandfontein with numerous birds been seen at other water bodies across the western side of the tour.

African Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* This smart bird was first seen at Stony Point Nature Reserve with good numbers also seen in the West Coast National Park.

European Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* A vagrant bird to South Africa! We had a single bird at Seeberg Hide in the West Coast National Park.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Good numbers were had in the West Coast National and later around the De Mond estuary.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* This smart little Plover was seen in large numbers around Macassar, Kliphoek Salt Works and De Mond estuary.

Three-banded Plover *Thinornis tricoloris* Never seen in large numbers, but various sightings across the tour mainly around fresh water bodies.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* Good numbers were seen across the tour.

Senegal Lapwing *Vanellus lugubris* A small group of these uncommon Lapwing were seen at Mpempe Pan.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus* Seen on a number of occasions across the tour mainly in agricultural fields and grasslands.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* This attractive Lapwing was first seen around Suikerbosrand and later along the Zaagkuil drift Road and the Wakkerstroom area.

Greater Sand Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultia* An uncommon bird in South Africa with two birds been seen at De Mond Nature Reserve.

Kittlitz's Plover *Anarhynchus pecuarius* Seen mainly on the western half of the tour, with good numbers at the Kliphoek Salt Works.

Chestnut-banded Plover *Anarhynchus pallidus* Good numbers of this uncommon wader were had at the Kliphoek Salt Works.

White-fronted Plover *Anarhynchus marginatus* This smart little bird was seen in good numbers at the Kliphoek Salt Works, De Mond Nature Reserve and a single bird at Bird Island.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* This long-toed lily trotting bird was seen only seen on the Eastern side of the tour with good numbers around various pans in the Mkuze area.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A single bird was seen at De Mond Nature Reserve.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Two birds were seen at the De Mond Nature Reserve.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* A small group was seen in the West Coast National Park and in the De Mond Nature Reserve.

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis* This bird was unfortunately only heard and not seen.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* A few birds were seen on the estuary at De Mond Nature Reserve.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Four birds were seen on the Eersterivier Estuary at Macassar Water Treatment Works.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* A single bird was seen at the Kliphoek Salt Works.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* A single bird was seen at a pan in the Mkuze Game Reserve.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Singletons were seen at Kliphoek Salt Works and Musi Pan.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Singletons too two birds were seen at Strandfontein, Kliphoek, De Mond Nature Reserve, Tankwa Karoo and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Three birds were seen at the Kliphoek Salt Works.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* First birds were seen at Macassar and then in good numbers at Kliphoek Salt Works and De Mond Nature Reserve.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* First birds were seen at Macassar and then at Kliphoek Salt Works and good numbers at De Mond Nature Reserve.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* Only the 20th ever record of this rare visiting wader was had on the Eersterivier Estuary at Macassar Water Treatment Works.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Good numbers of these small waders were had at Macassar, Kliphoek Salt Works and De Mond Nature Reserve.

Black-rumped Buttonquail *Turnix nanus* A single bird was heard then flushed on a walk in the Daggakraal grasslands,

Fynbos Buttonquail *Turnix hottentottus* This incredible uncommon bird was flushed in some short Fynbos on the Sandberg Nature Reserve.

Double-banded Courser *Smitsormis africanus* A single bird was seen in the Brandvlei area unfortunately not by all.

Burchell's Courser *Cursorius rufus* This much sort after bird was seen in the Poffadder area where we enjoyed watching two pairs catching prey and feeding their youngsters.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* We were fortunate to pick-up a single bird on the Mpempe wetland.

Parasitic Jaeger(Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus* Two birds were seen on our pelagic trip off Houtbay.

Brown Skua (Subantarctic S) *Stercorarius antarcticus* Five birds seen.

Damara Tern ♦ *Sternula balaenarum* Good numbers of this small tern were had at De Mond and a few at Port Nolloth.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Eight birds were seen at Kliphoek Salt Works.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* First birds seen at Macassar with further birds seen at Kliphoek Salt Works and De Mond Nature Reserve.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid* First sightings were had at Strandfontein with further sightings in the Tankwa Karoo and around Wakkerstroom.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Good numbers of these Terns were had at various sites across the Western Cape.

Greater Crested Tern (Swift T) *Thalasseus bergii* This larger Tern was also seen at a number of the coastal sites along the Western side of the tour.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* The most common Tern seen on the tour especially along the coastal sights.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini* This stunning bird was seen in good numbers whilst on the pelagic trip.

Hartlaub's Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii* Good numbers of this endemic gull were had along the western half of the tour.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Only a handful of these birds were seen with the highest numbers around Bird Island.

Kelp Gull (Cape G) *Larus [dominicanus] vetula* This large gull was seen in large numbers across the coastal areas on the western half of the tour.

African Penguin ♦ (Jackass P) *Spheniscus demersus* This awesome little bird was seen well at the Stony Point Nature Reserve, one of two mainland breeding sites in South Africa.

Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche chlororhynchos* 200+ Birds seen on our pelagic trip.

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche carteri* Only a handful of these albatross were seen on our pelagic trip.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* Good numbers were had on the pelagic trip mainly around the trawlers.

Shy Albatross (White-capped A) *Thalassarche [cauta] steadi* Our first albatross of the pelagic trip with up to 400 birds being seen on the day.

Pintado Petrel (Cape P) *Daption capense* We had 2 of these really smart birds on our pelagic Trip.

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* We were fortunate to have one of these large birds on the pelagic trip.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* Seen in much larger numbers with up to 30 birds being seen on the day.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Among our first true pelagic species seen on the trip with a 100+ birds being seen.

Spectacled Petrel ♦ *Procellaria conspicillata* What a stunning bird! We were fortunate to have 2 of these birds on our pelagic trip. Bird of the trip!

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis* 3 Of these summer visitors were seen on the pelagic trip.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* Good numbers were seen on the pelagic trip with up to 200 birds being seen.

Great Shearwater *Ardenna gravis* This attractive bird was seen in good numbers on the pelagic trip.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* A single bird was seen on the way back to the harbor.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Ten birds seen in the Polokwane Game Reserve.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* A single bird was seen at a pan in Mkuze Game Reserve.

African Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia microscelis* A few were seen flying around Mkuze Nature Reserve.

Cape Gannet ♦ *Morus capensis* What a fantastic experience at Bird Island where thousands of these birds were seen!

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* Seen in good numbers around Musi Pan in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Crowned Cormorant ♦ *Microcarbo coronatus* Seen breeding at Stony Point Nature Reserve and again at Bird Island.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* This fresh water cormorant was seen a various water bodies across the tour.

Bank Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax neglectus* This endangered bird was seen at Stony Point and again at Bird Island.

Cape Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax capensis* The most numerous cormorant on the tour with large numbers been seen along the coast.

Great Cormorant (White-breasted C) *Phalacrocorax [carbo] lucidus* Largest numbers seen around Strandfontein with numerous birds at other sites across the tour.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* This attractive Ibis was first seen in good numbers at Strandfontein and again at Kliphoek Salt Works.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* This raucous bird was seen on an almost daily base across the tour.

Southern Bald Ibis ♦ *Geronticus calvus* This attractive endemic Ibis was seen around Wakkerstroom and late in Lesotho.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* Numerous birds were seen at various water bodies across the tour.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Large numbers were seen at Macassar and Strandfontein and fairly regularly across the tour.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* This bizarre looking bird was first seen near Suikerbosrand.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* First seen at Strandfontein and later in Mkuze.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* A few birds seen around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Little Bittern *Botaurus minutus* Pair perform well at Wakkerstroom.

Black Heron (B Egret) *Egretta ardesiaca* A bird performing its characteristic “umbrella” hunting technique was seen at Musi pan.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Breeding birds on nests were seen at Kliphoek Salt Works.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A single roosting bird was seen in the gardens at Kliphoek Salt Works.

Little Heron *Butorides atricapilla* A single bird was seen at a small water body in Polokwane Game Reserve.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* First seen in Wakkerstroom and later in larger numbers at Musi pan.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Single bird seen in the West Coast National Park.

Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha* Three birds seen at Musi pan.

Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis* Good numbers seen across the tour.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* First seen at Wakkerstroom and again the Mkuze area.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* This dryland heron was seen fairly regularly across the tour.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* Our largest heron was seen at Nsumo Pan in Mkuze and again later at St Lucia.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Seen fairly regularly around water bodies across the tour.

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Only seen by a few people at our accommodation near Grootvadersbosch.

Swamp Nightjar (Natal N) *Caprimulgus natalensis* A single bird was flushed from some moist grassland near Mtunzini.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Good numbers seen, mainly in the latter half of the tour.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* This large swift was seen in good numbers en-route to Ceres and again en-route to Wakkerstroom.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* The most common swift seen with good numbers across the tour.

Horus Swift *Apus horus* Three birds were seen around the Verena grasslands, unfortunately not by all.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Another common swift seen in good numbers across the tour especially on the eastern half of the tour.

Bradfield's Swift ♦ *Apus bradfieldi* A few were seen flying around a mountain side near Steinkopf.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* A few birds were seen en-route to Ceres.

Common Swift (European S) *Apus apus* This visiting bird was seen en-route to Polokwane around the Zaagkuil drift road.

African Grass Owl ♦ *Tyto capensis* We were fortunate to see two birds on the way back to Wakkerstroom.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* A roosting bird was seen in the gardens at Kliphoek Salt Works.

Pearl-spotted Owlet (P-s Owl) *Glaucidium perlatum* This diurnal owlet was seen in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis* A couple of birds seen over two days around Wakkerstroom.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* Numerous sightings were had across the tour with the best being near Poffadder with a bird on a nest with young chicks.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Two adults and a chick were seen in St Lucia.

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* This monotypic species was seen well near Poffadder.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A fishing bird was seen at the De Mond estuary.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Seen in good numbers across the tour.

African Harrier-Hawk (A Gymnogone) *Polyboroides typus* This attractive raptor was seen at various sites across the tour.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* A pair was seen in the palm nut forests at Mtunzini.

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) *Gypaetus barbatus* A bird was seen dropping a bone whilst in Lesotho.

White-backed Vulture (African W-b V) *Gyps africanus* A few birds were seen around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Cape Vulture ◊ *Gyps coprotheres* A couple of birds were seen well in the Potberg section of De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Southern Banded Snake Eagle ◊ *Circaetus fasciolatus* A bird was seen flying over the forest in St Lucia.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* A bird with a snake was seen en-route to Zaagkuil drift.

Crowned Eagle (African C E) *Stephanoaetus coronatus* A bird with a chick on a nest was seen in the Tzaneen area.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* A few birds seen perched on posts along the roads around Tzaneen and en-route to Wakkerstroom.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina* Single bird seen flying around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraetus wahlbergi* A few birds were seen flying around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* Two birds in the Tankwa Karoo.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* Two pairs in the Mkuze Game Reserve.

Verreaux's Eagle (Black E) *Aquila verreauxii* An adult and juvenile seen flying over a valley near Clanwilliam.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* Single bird at a well known nest site near Tzaneen.

Pale Chanting Goshawk (Southern P C G) *Melierax canorus* This attractive raptor was seen well in the Tankwa Karoo.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* A single bird in Tzaneen.

African Goshawk *Aerospiza tachiro* A displaying bird was observed at Mantuma camp in Mkuze.

Black Sparrowhawk (Great S) *Astur melanoleucus* A single bird in Tzaneen and later en-route to Eshowe.

Black Harrier ◊ *Circus maurus* This smart and endangered raptor was seen well on a couple of occasions in the Cape.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* A few sightings, the best being around Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Black Kite (Yellow-billed K) *Milvus [migrans] aegyptius* A well spread raptor which was seen well across the tour.

African Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga vocifer* This iconic species was seen well in the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Jackal Buzzard ◊ *Buteo rufofuscus* Good numbers were seen across the tour of this smart raptor.

Forest Buzzard ◊ *Buteo trizonatus* Two birds seen in the Grootvadersbosch forest.

Common Buzzard (Steppe B) *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* Another common raptor seen well across the tour.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* Good numbers seen, mainly across the eastern side of the tour.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* As with the above species, seen well across the tour.

White-backed Mousebird ♦ *Colius colius* This attractive bird was seen well in the West Coast National Park.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* A really smart bird! Seen well in the forests at St Lucia.

Common Hoopoe (African H) *Upupa [epops] africana* Seen sporadically across the tour.

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Singletons seen in Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Green Wood Hoopoe (Red-billed W) *Phoeniculus purpureus* Two birds seen at Kumasinga Hide in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Two birds seen in Mkuze Game Reserve and again in St Lucia.

African Grey Hornbill (Grey H) *Lophoceros nasutus* Two birds seen en-route to Zaagkuildrift.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill ♦ *Tockus leucomelas* A few birds along the Zaagkuildrift road.

Southern Red-billed Hornbill ♦ *Tockus rufirostris* A single bird along the Zaagkuildrift road.

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* This raucous species was recorded around Mkuze and St Lucia

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* An attractive roller, seen in Mkuze Game Reserve

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* Singletons en-route to Zaagkuildrift and Wakkerstroom.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides* Birds recorded in the Tzaneen area.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* A bird on the Zaagkuildrift road and a few around Mkuze Game Reserve.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* Our first bee-eater on the tour with good numbers around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* An attractive bird seen well around Musi and Mpempe Pans and St Lucia.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Singletons in Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* This large kingfisher was seen along the river en-route to Sani Pass.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Singletons in Polokwane, Wakkerstroom and Mkuze.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* This attractive kingfisher was recorded en-route to Zaagkuildrift, Tzaneen and en-route to Wakkerstroom in the bushveld regions.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* A few seen around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* Good numbers around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii* Heard more often than seen but finally caught up with three birds in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Green Barbet *Cryptolybia olivacea* A pair were seen at their nesting hole in Ongoye Forest.

White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis* Good looks were had in St Lucia of this attractive bird.

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird (Golden-r Tinker Barbet) *Pogoniulus bilineatus* A few birds were seen around St Lucia where their vocalization often drew attention to them.

Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird (R-f Tinker Barbet) *Pogoniulus pusillus* Single birds seen whilst have lunch at the Rhino-dino in Mkuze.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird (Y-f Tinker Barbet) *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* A pair were seen at our first stop in Tzaneen.

Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas* Good looks were had of this smart barbet in De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* Seen and heard regularly on the eastern half of the tour.

Brown-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* A single bird was seen on the Zaagkuil drift road.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* Birds seen in the Tzaneen area.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegates* Unfortunately this bird was only heard in Grootvadersbosch and Dlinza forest and not seen.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* A bird was seen in Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve.

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis* Our first bird was Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve with further good sightings in Wakkerstroom and Midmar Dam Nature Reserve.

Ground Woodpecker ♦ ***Geocolaptes olivaceus*** This stunning bird was first seen on our walk at Rooiels and then later again in Lesotho.

Knysna Woodpecker ♦ ***Campethera notata*** This endemic sure gave us a hard time before a male bird finally revealing it's self in the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* Good sightings around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Bearded Woodpecker *Chloropicus namaquus* Single bird seen in the Tzaneen area.

Olive Woodpecker *Dendropicos griseocephalus* Excellent sighting of this forest woodpecker was had in the Woodbush forest.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* An excellent of two of these small woodpeckers feeding was had in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K) *Falco rupicoloides* This smart bird was seen in good numbers en-route to Springbok and in the Poffadder area.

Rock Kestrel *Falco rupicolus* Regular sightings were had across the tour.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* A single bird was had perched at the Strydom Tunnel en-route to Wakkerstroom.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* A single bird was seen being harassed by Pied Crows en-route to Swellendam.

Cape Parrot ♦ ***Poicephalus robustus*** A sighting of four birds were had of this endemic parrot on our final day!

Grey Cuckooshrike *Cebilepyris caesius* Seen well in Woodbush and Dlinza forest.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Heard more than seen, but a few guests managed to see it whilst in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Black-crowned Tchagra (B-headed T) *Tchagra senegalus* Birds seen in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* Also only seen in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Tchagra ♦ ***Tchagra tchagra*** This lovely endemic bird was seen well in the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* A single bird was seen in Mantuma camp in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Seen well in the latter half of the tour with good sightings in Mkuze and St Lucia.

Bokmakierie ♦ ***Telophorus zeylonus*** This striking shrike was seen in good numbers across the tour with good sightings at West Coast National Park and Wakkerstroom.

Gorgeous Bushshrike (Four-coloured B) *Telophorus [viridis] quadricolor* Another bird that is more often heard than seen, but we did manage a couple of sightings around the Mkuze Game Reserve.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Another gorgeous shrike that was seen well in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Olive Bushshrike ♦ ***Chlorophoneus olivaceus*** An excellent sighting was had of a bird in the Woodbush forest.

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* A stunning and hard to see bird and we had a great sighting of a bird in the Woodbush forest,

Southern Boubou ♦ *Laniarius ferrugineus* Good sightings were had in the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Crimson-breasted Shrike ♦ *Laniarius atrococcineus* This striking shrike was seen well along the Zaagkuil drift road and again in the Polokwane Game Reserve.

Cape Batis ♦ *Batis capensis* Good sightings were had in Grootvadersbosch forest and again later in Doreen Clark Nature Reserve.

Woodwards' Batis ♦ *Batis fratrum* Good sightings of 3 birds was eventually had in St Lucia.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor* Sightings were had along the Zaagkuil drift road and later in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Pririt Batis ♦ *Batis pririt* A stunning little bird that was seen well in a drainage line en-route to Calvina.

White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus* WE enjoyed a sighting of a group of birds with chicks in a nest whilst in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus* Mkuze Game reserve produced a few sightings of this lovely bird.

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* This vocal bird that was seen well in St Lucia.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Seen in good numbers across the tour.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher (Blue-m F) *Trochocercus cyanomelas* A single bird was seen in the Grootvadersbosch forest, unfortunately not by all.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* A few sightings of single birds were had with the best view in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* This long-tailed shrike was seen well in the Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* One of the more common birds seen, almost daily across the tour.

Southern Fiscal (Latakoo F) *Lanius [collaris] subcoronatus* A brief sighting of one was had on the Sak River bridge.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* A summer visitor to Southern Africa and we enjoyed numerous sightings mainly in the Mkuze area.

Cape Crow (C Rook) *Corvus capensis* A fairly common sighting in the Cape regions as well as around Wakkerstroom.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* This smart Raven was seen well with the best sighting of a pair at the Strydom Tunnel.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Seen well across the tour with large numbers in arid areas.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Unfortunately only seen by the guides when dropping off the rental vehicles in Cape Town.

Cape Rockjumper ♦ *Chaetops frenatus* Stunning views were had of two groups of these smart endemic birds along our walk at Rooiels with one bird hopping around our feet!!

Drakensberg Rockjumper ♦ (Orange-breasted R) *Chaetops aurantius* Another stunning endemic that was seen well on Sani Pass.

Fairy Flycatcher ♦ *Stenostira scita* A gorgeous little bird that was seen well in the Tankwa Karoo.

Grey Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli* A couple of birds were seen well at the Kumahlala hide in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Cape Penduline Tit ♦ *Anthoscopus minutus* A good sighting of birds were had near Port Nolloth.

Southern Black Tit ♦ *Melaniparus niger* A pair showed well in the Mantuma camp grounds.

Ashy Tit ♦ *Melaniparus cinerascens* Good views in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Grey Tit (Southern G T) *Melaniparus afer* Whilst en-route to Springbok we enjoyed great views of these birds.

Spike-heeled Lark ♦ *Chersomanes albofasciata* This short-tailed Lark was seen well in the Tankwa Karoo and Bushmanland.

Short-clawed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda chuana* This range restricted Lark was enjoyed around the Mamabolo plains near Polokwane.

Karoo Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda subcoronata* Good numbers were had in the Poffadder area.

Eastern Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda semitorquata* The Wakkerstroom area produced a number of these Larks.

Cape Long-billed Lark ♦ *Certhilauda curvirostris* We enjoyed a handful of these Larks in the Port Nolloth area.

Cape Long-billed Lark ♦ (Agulhas L-b L) *Certhilauda [curvirostris] brevirostris* Once considered a separate species, we had good looks at two birds near Potberg.

Black-eared Sparrow-Lark ♦ (B-e Finchlark) *Eremopterix australis* A few birds were seen coming in to drink at water reservoirs in the Brandvlei and Poffadder area.

Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark ♦ (G-b Finchlark) *Eremopterix verticalis* Good numbers recorded at water reservoirs in the Poffadder area.

Sabota Lark ♦ *Calendulauda sabota* The large billed form was seen well around Brandvlei and the smaller form in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Fawn-colored Lark *Calendulauda africanoides* Singing bird was had near Koa Dunes.

Karoo Lark ♦ *Calendulauda albescens* First seen in the Tankwa Karoo (*albescens* – brown form) and later along the coast (*karruensis* – red form) near Port Nolloth.

Red Lark ♦ *Calendulauda burra* Excellent views were had of a displaying bird in the Koa Dunes.

Dune Lark (Barlow's Lark) *Calendulauda [erythrochlamys] barlowi* A few birds were recorded in the Port Nolloth area.

Melodious Lark ♦ *Mirafra cheniana* A displaying bird was seen in the Verena grasslands where it was joined by a second bird.

Cape Clapper Lark ♦ *Corypha apiata* Good views were had whilst walking in some Stranveld bush en-route to the West Coast National Park.

Eastern Clapper Lark ♦ *Corypha fasciolata* A single bird performed well in the Daggakraal area.

Rufous-naped Lark *Corypha africana* This vocal Lark was seen well in Suikerbosrand, Verena Grasslands and Midmar Dam Nature Reserve.

Stark's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys starki* Unfortunately only a brief and distant sighting of this highly nomadic Lark was had near Poffadder.

Sclater's Lark ♦ *Spizocorys sclateri* This highly sort after Lark was seen well at a farm reservoir near Brandvlei where they were coming in to drink.

Large-billed Lark ♦ (Southern Thick-b L) *Galerida magirostris* Good sightings especially in the Agulhas area.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* One of the more common Larks, often seen feeding in or next to roads.

Eastern Nicator (Yellow-spotted N) *Nicator gularis* One of those birds that is heard more often than seen, after initial brief sightings we finally enjoyed good views of a young bird in Mantuma Camp.

Cape Grassbird ♦ *Sphenoecus afer* This endemic was seen well at Rooiels and later again in the Drakensberg (Sani Pass).

Victorin's Warbler ♦ *Cryptillas victorini* This striking and sort after endemic was seen well in some Mountain Fynbos at Grootvadersbosch.

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* This short-tailed bird was seen well in the Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* An excellent sighting was had of a bird as we entered the Tankwa Karoo.

Karoo Eremomela ♦ *Eremomela gregalis* A small group was picked up as they work their way through some salt bushes en-route to Calvinia.

Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis* A brief but good sighting was had of a bird in the Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Namaqua Warbler ♦ (N Prinia) *Phragmacia substriata* After initial brief views we enjoyed extended views over the Sak River near Brandvlei.

Bleating Camaroptera (Grey-backed Camaroptera) *Camaroptera [brachyura] brevicaudata* Often heard calling from the thick undergrowth, we had good sightings around St Lucia.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica* Our first sightings came in the West Coast National Park with a few others along the tour.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* More of a bushveld species we had good views around the Mkuze Game Reserve.

Rudd's Apalis ♦ *Apalis ruddi* Excellent views of this range restricted species were had in the Mkuze Game Reserve and St Lucia.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Good views were had in the Tzaneen area,

Black-chested Prinia ♦ *Prinia flavicans* Excellent views of side arid species were had over the Sak River near Brandvlei.

Karoo Prinia ♦ (Spotted P) *Prinia maculosa* This endemic was seen well across the western section of the tour.

Drakensberg Prinia ♦ *Prinia hypoxantha* Excellent sightings of this smart bird were had in the Sani Pass area.

Cinnamon-breasted Warbler ♦ *Euryptila subcinnamomea* Another sort-after species, with excellent views on our entrance to the Tankwa Karoo.

Rufous-eared Warbler ♦ *Malcorus pectoralis* This striking little bird was seen well across the more arid areas of the Tankwa Karoo and Bushmanland.

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops* Good views were had in Tzaneen.

Rock-loving Cisticola ♦ *Cisticola aberrans* A single bird was seen well in the New Agatha Forest area.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* This vocal species was seen in good numbers around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Grey-backed Cisticola ♦ *Cisticola subruficapilla* An endemic bird that was seen well on our walk around Rooiels with a few other sightings in the Cape.

Wailing Cisticola ♦ *Cisticola lais* Good numbers around Wakkerstroom and on Sani Pass.

Rufous-winged Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes* We had a few good sightings, with first being at Musi Pan and then a few more in the Moyeni grasslands.

Levaillant's Cisticola (Tinkling C) *Cisticola tinniens* This dark-backed Cisticola was seen well across the tour mainly in wetlands.

Neddicky (Piping C) *Cisticola fulvicapilla* This plain bird was seen well around Rooiels and later en-route to Calvinia.

Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed C) *Cisticola juncidis* A few sightings were had across the tour with our first being Strandfontein.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* A displaying bird was first heard and then seen at height near the Koa Dunes.

Cloud Cisticola ♦ (Tink-tink C) *Cisticola textrix* A brief sighting was had of a bird perched on a fence line en-route to De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Pale-crowned Cisticola ♦ *Cisticola cinnamomeus* We had a great sighting of these uncommon Cisticola in the Wakkerstroom area.

Wing-snapping Cisticola (Ayres's C) *Cisticola ayresii* Numerous sightings were enjoyed in the Wakkerstroom area.

African Yellow Warbler (Dark-capped Y W) *Iduna natalensis* Great views were had in the Wakkerstroom area and again later on Sani Pass.

Common Reed Warbler (African R W) *Acrocephalus [scirpaceus] baeticatus* A couple of birds were first heard calling before being seen on the Sak River near Brandvlei.

Lesser Swamp Warbler (Cape Reed W) *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Often heard in the wetland reedbeds across the tour, with good sightings in Wakkerstroom.

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Catriscus brevirostris* Excellent sightings were had en-route to Sani Pass.

Knysna Warbler ◊ *Bradypterus sylvaticus* A super skulker often heard and always difficult to find in thick undergrowth was briefly as it crossed an open patch in Grootvadersbosch Forest.

Barratt's Warbler ◊ *Bradypterus barratti* Another skulking bird which remained frustrating out of sight in Woodbush Forest finally showed briefly along Sani Pass.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* Again more often heard than seen, but we did get some great views in the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristopectera* This all black bird was recorded in De Hoop Nature reserve in good numbers.

Banded Martin *Neophedina cincta* Seen well in the Wakkerstroom area.

Brown-throated Martin (Plain M) *Riparia paludicola* Recorded in good numbers across the tour.

Large Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Good numbers recorded during the tour especially around rocky ridges.

Blue Swallow ◊ *Hirundo atrocaerulea* An Endangered bird in South Africa and we were fortunate to see 3 birds en-route to Wakkerstroom.

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* A few birds seen in the De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Good sighting at Kumasinga hide in Mkuze Game Reserve

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* This attractive bird was seen well around the Cape, mainly around water.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* A common summer visitor recorded almost daily across the tour.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* A good numbers around Mkuze Game Reserve and St Lucia.

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* Our best sightings were had around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Greater Striped Swallow *Cecropis cucullata* Seen well across the tour.

South African Cliff Swallow ◊ *Petrochelidon spilodera* Good numbers of this smart bird in the Wakkerstroom area.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* A migratory bird with a few seen in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler (Y-t Warbler) *Phylloscopus ruficapilla* A single bird was seen in the Woodbush Forest.

Sombre Greenbul (S Bulbul) *Andropadus importunus* A number of sightings with the best being in Woodbush and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* Seen well especially around Mkuze Game Reserve and St Lucia.

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* A couple recorded in Woodbush.

Terrestrial Brownbul (T Bulbul) *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Birds seen on the iGwalagwala trail in St Lucia.

African Red-eyed Bulbul ◊ (Dark-fronted B) *Pycnonotus nigricans* A few birds seen around the Springbok area.

Cape Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus capensis* Common on the western half of the tour especially around the coastal areas.

Common Bulbul (Dark-capped B) *Pycnonotus [barbatus] tricolor* Seen daily on the eastern half of the tour.

Bush Blackcap ♦ *Sylvia nigricapillus* A stunning endemic bird that was seen well in the Wakkerstroom area.

Layard's Warbler ♦ *Curruca layardi* A single bird was seen as we entered the Tankwa Karoo.

Chestnut-vented Warbler (C-v Titbabbler) *Curruca subcoerulea* First seen in the Tankwa Karoo and later in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Orange River White-eye ♦ *Zosterops pallidus* Small group on the Sak River near Brandvlei.

Cape White-eye ♦ *Zosterops virens* Seen well across the tour.

Southern Pied Babbler *Turdoides bicolor* A stunning bird that was seen well on the Zaagkuildrift road (A write-in species).

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythroryncha* Good numbers seen in Mkuze Game Reserve, often on mammals.

Common Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris* Seen in large numbers, mainly on the western half of the tour.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* A small group saw well en-route to the West Coast National Park.

Common Myna (I) *Acridotheres tristis* An introduced species that is spreading rapidly across the country with good numbers seen daily on the latter half of the tour.

Violet-backed Starling (Amethyst S) *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* What a striking bird! Recorded in good numbers around Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Pale-winged Starling ♦ *Onychognathus nabouroup* Recorded in Akkerendam Nature Reserve and around Poffadder.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Seen in good numbers across the tour.

Black-bellied Starling (B-b Glossy S) *Notopholia corusca* We had a few sighting around Mkuze and St Lucia.

Burchell's Starling *Lamprotornis australis* This large Starling was recorded mainly on the Zaagkuildrift road.

Cape Starling (C Glossy S) *Lamprotornis nitens* Recorded in good numbers across the eastern half of the tour.

Pied Starling ♦ (African P S) *Lamprotornis bicolor* A widespread species that we encountered across the tour.

Spotted Ground Thrush ♦ (Spotted T) *Geokichla guttata* Two birds in Dlinza Forest.

Orange Ground Thrush ♦ (Orange T) *Geokichla gurneyi* An excellent sighting of a bird in Benvie Garden.

Karoo Thrush ♦ *Turdus smithi* A few seen en-route to Springbok.

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus* Seen well in the Grootvadersbosch Forest.

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* Seen in the Tzaneen area and again in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Karoo Scrub Robin ♦ (K Robin) *Tychaedon coryphoeus* Seen well and almost daily on the western half of the tour.

Brown Scrub Robin ♦ (B Robin) *Tychaedon signata* With a bit of work we finally enjoyed good views of a bird in St Lucia.

Bearded Scrub Robin ♦ (Eastern B R) *Tychaedon quadrivirgata* Excellent sighting at Kumasinga hide in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Kalahari Scrub Robin ♦ (K Robin) *Cercotrichas paena* A couple of birds were seen on the Zaagkuildrift road and the following day en-route to Mamabolo Plains.

White-browed Scrub Robin (W-b Robin) *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Seen well in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Chat Flycatcher ♦ *Agricola infuscatus* This large dull flycatcher was seen well in the Brandvlei and Poffadder areas.

Pale Flycatcher (Mouse-coloured F) *Agricola pallidus* A couple of birds seen in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Fraseria plumbea* Only seen by a few in Mantuma Camp in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Ashy Flycatcher (Blue-grey F) *Fraseria caerulescens* A bird was seen in Mantuma Camp, unfortunately not by all.

Fiscal Flycatcher ♦ *Sigelus silens* Seen well around De Mond and De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina* Seen at various sites but the best views were had in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Marico Flycatcher ♦ *Bradornis mariquensis* Good numbers in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* Seen in Grootvadersbosch forest and in the Tzaneen area.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* This visiting bird was seen in numerous spots but the best sightings coming from the Mkuze Game Reserve.

White-starred Robin (Starred R) *Pogonocichla stellata* Stunning close-up views of a bird in the Doreen Clark Nature Reserve.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* Unfortunately this bird was only heard and not seen at Ghost Mountain Inn.

Red-capped Robin-Chat (Natal R) *Cossypha natalensis* Seen well in the St Lucia area.

Chorister Robin-Chat ♦ (C Robin) *Cossypha dichroa* Bird seen well on our last morning in Doreen Clark Nature Reserve.

Cape Robin-Chat (Cape Robin) *Dessonornis caffer* Seen in good numbers across the tour.

White-throated Robin-Chat ♦ (African W-t Robin) *Dessonornis humeralis* This smart bird was seen well in Mkuze Game Reserve

Sentinel Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola explorator* Seen well around Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.

Cape Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola rupestris* Good views were had at Rooiels and on Sani Pass.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Seen in good numbers across the tour especially in the Wakkerstroom area.

Buff-streaked Chat ♦ *Campicoloides bifasciatus* Seen well in the Wakkerstroom area with a bird joining us for breakfast on Sani Pass.

Sickle-winged Chat ♦ *Emarginata sinuata* First seen in the Tankwa Karoo and then again on Sani Pass.

Karoo Chat ♦ *Emarginata schlegelii* A variable species that was recorded in the Tankwa Karoo and Bushmanland especially around the Poffadder area.

Tractrac Chat ♦ *Emarginata tractrac* Sightings were had around the Poffadder area of this pale Chat.

Mocking Cliff Chat (Mocking Chat, Cliff Chat) *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* Excellent sighting of a pair at Strydom Tunnel and again of a female bird in Mantuma Camp.

Ant-eating Chat ♦ (Southern Anteater C) *Myrmecocichla formicivora* Good numbers in Bushmanland especially around the Koa Dunes.

Mountain Chat ♦ (M Wheatear) *Myrmecocichla monticola* Good views were had in the Tankwa Karoo and again in the Wakkerstroom area.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* This striking bird was seen well in the Agulhas region.

Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C) *Oenanthe familiaris* This rather plain Chat was seen well on our walk around Rooiels.

Cape Sugarbird ♦ *Promerops cafer* An endemic bird that was seen well in the Cape with excellent sightings around Rooiels.

Gurney's Sugarbird ♦ *Promerops gurneyi* A single bird seen en-route to Wakkerstroom and again on the Protea bushes along the Sani Pass road.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* This little Sunbird was seen well around St Lucia.

Orange-breasted Sunbird ♦ ***Anthobaphes violacea*** This stunning endemic Sunbird was seen really well around Rooiels and again around Grootvadersbosch.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* Seen well in St Lucia.

Grey Sunbird (Mouse-coloured S) *Cyanomitra veroxii* Another Sunbird seen well around St Lucia.

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa* This gorgeous bird was seen well around Rooiels with a few other sightings across the tour

Amethyst Sunbird (African Black S) *Chalcomitra amethystina* Unfortunately this bird was only heard and not seen in the New Agatha Forest.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Yet another stunning bird and we had great sightings of them in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird ♦ **(Lesser D-c S) *Cinnyris chalybeus*** Good numbers recorded in the western section of the tour.

Neergaard's Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris neergaardi*** A sighting of a female bird was had near Kumasinga hide.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris afer*** A few birds were seen around Grootvadersbosch Forest and again on Sani Pass.

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* First bird on the Zaagkuil drift road with further sightings in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* Yet another beautiful bird that was seen well in the St Lucia area.

White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* Good sightings were had around St Lucia.

Dusky Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris fuscus*** Two seen in The Brandvlei area.

Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W) *Amblyospiza albifrons* A few birds were seen around Mkuze and St Lucia.

Scaly-feathered Weaver ♦ ***Sporopipes squamifrons*** A lovely little Weaver that was seen well around the Koa Dunes and again later in the Polokwane area.

Sociable Weaver ♦ ***Philetairus socius*** With its massive nest we had good views around the Poffadder area.

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* Good numbers seen around Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* This communal nester was seen well en-route to Zaagkuil drift.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* A few birds seen around Mkuze and St Lucia.

Cape Weaver ♦ ***Ploceus capensis*** The most numerous Weaver seen in the Cape.

Eastern Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus* Birds seen well around Mkuze and St Lucia.

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* This pale eyed golden Weaver was seen around the Tzaneen area.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver ♦ ***Ploceus xanthopterus*** Excellent sighting of breeding birds was had at the St Lucia bridge.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* A good sighting of these smaller masked weavers was had at Kumasinga hide in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* Numerous sightings were had across the tour.

Village Weaver (Spotted-backed W) *Ploceus cucullatus* A large weaver first seen en-route to Magoebaskloof.

Dark-backed Weaver (Forest W) *Ploceus bicolor* This forest dwelling species was seen well in the forest at St Lucia.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Africa's most numerous birds was seen well in the Potberg area and again in good numbers around the Mkuze area.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Another attractive bird when in breeding plumage was seen well across the tour.

Yellow-crowned Bishop (Golden B) *Euplectes afer* This smart little bird was seen well in the Wakkerstroom area.

Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widow) *Euplectes capensis* First seen along our walk at Rooiels with good numbers there after mainly in the Cape.

White-winged Widowbird (W-w Widow) *Euplectes albonotatus* Seen well along the Zaagkuil drift road.

Red-collared Widowbird (R-c Widow) *Euplectes ardens* Excellent sightings of birds around the Highveld grasslands and wetlands around Wakkerstroom.

Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered Widow) *Euplectes axillaris* Good numbers in the grasslands and wetlands from Suikerbosrand to Wakkerstroom.

Long-tailed Widowbird (L-t Widow) *Euplectes progne* Displaying males were seen well from Suikerbosrand to Wakkerstroom.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* A stunning male bird was seen near its nest en-route to Wakkerstroom.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Seen well in the latter half of the tour.

Village Indigobird (Steelblue Widowfinch) *Vidua chalybeata* A write in species with 3 birds being seen in the Tzaneen area.

Dusky Indigobird (Black Widowfinch) *Vidua funerea* Good numbers seen around Tzaneen.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata* Seen well in the Tzaneen area and again later in the Mkuze area.

Magpie Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides* This large Mannikin was seen well in Tzaneen.

Black-and-white Mannikin (Red-backed M) *Spermestes [bicolor] nigriceps* Seen in the pine plantations en-route to Woodbush forest.

Swee Waxbill ♢ *Coccygia melanotis* A stunning bird that was seen well in the Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve.

Green Twinspot (G-backed T) *Mandingoa nitidula* This gorgeous bird was unfortunately only heard and not seen in St Lucia.

Black-faced Waxbill *Brunhilda erythronotos* This stunning waxbill was unfortunately only seen by a few people in Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Grey Waxbill (Lavender W) *Glaucostrelda perreini* A single bird was seen briefly at Kumasinga hide in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* One of the more common waxbills which was seen well across the tour.

Red-headed Finch ♢ *Amadina erythrocephala* A sighting of a few birds coming into drink was had in the Poffadder area.

Violet-eared Waxbill ♢ *Granatina granatina* This striking little bird was seen in Polokwane Game Reserve.

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* This smart bird was seen well in a few places but the best being in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) *Pytilia melba* Two birds seen well in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Pink-throated Twinspot ♢ *Hypargos margaritatus* What a stunning little bird with excellent views around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Only seen by one of the guests on our last day of the tour.

Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow (African Y-t S) *Gymnoris superciliaris* Seen well around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus* Seen mainly on the latter half of the tour with good sightings around Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Cape Sparrow ♦ *Passer melanurus* This smart looking sparrow was seen well across the tour.

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus* Common around cities and towns.

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Seen almost daily on the tour.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Seen well in the latter half of the tour.

Yellow-breasted Pipit ♦ *Hemimacronyx chloris* Excellent sighting of a displaying bird was had in the Wakkerstroom area.

Cape Longclaw ♦ (Orange-throated L) *Macronyx capensis* This attractive bird was seen well in the Wakkerstroom area and again later around Midmar dam.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* Great sightings were had in Tzaneen and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Mountain Pipit ♦ *Anthus hoeschi* A summer visitor and we had a great sighting of a bird in the Lesotho highlands.

Nicholson's Pipit *Anthus nicholsoni* Two singletons were had, with one en-route from De Mond and the other in Akkerendam Nature Reserve.

African Pipit (Grassveld P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* This common pipit was seen often across the tour with good numbers in the Wakkerstroom area.

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris* A bird was seen at the Strydom Tunnel en-route to Wakkerstroom.

African Rock Pipit ♦ (Yellow-tufted P) *Anthus crenatus* A singing bird joined us for breakfast the Wakkerstroom area.

Short-tailed Pipit ♦ *Anthus brachyurus* This small grassland pipit was seen along the Sani Pass road.

Yellow-fronted Canary (Y-eyed C) *Crithagra mozambica* Seen in good numbers in the bushveld areas of the tour especially around Mkuze.

Forest Canary ♦ *Crithagra scotops* We enjoyed a great sighting of these smart canaries at the entrance to Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve

Lemon-breasted Canary ♦ *Crithagra citrinipectus* After some searching, we finally had a good sighting of this attractive canary.

Brimstone Canary (Bully C) *Crithagra sulphurata* A single bird was seen in Grootvadersbosch and a handful later in the Kransvlei valley.

Yellow Canary ♦ *Crithagra flaviventris* Good sightings were mainly had on the western half of the tour, with a few birds in Lesotho as well.

White-throated Canary ♦ *Crithagra albogularis* Starting in the Tankwa Karoo and the more arid areas of the tour, we had many good sightings of these smart birds.

Protea Canary ♦ (P Seedeater) *Crithagra leucoptera* Causing a lot of stress for the guides, we eventually had a great sighting of this endemic bird in the Kransvlei valley south of Clanwilliam.

Streaky-headed Seedeater ♦ *Crithagra gularis* Two birds seen on our walk at Rooiels and in the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve.

Cape Siskin ♦ *Crithagra totta* An endemic bird which was seen well on our walk at Rooiels.

Drakensberg Siskin ♦ *Crithagra symonsi* We had great sightings of these birds on a day trip up into Lesotho.

Black-headed Canary ♦ (Damara) *Serinus [alario] leucolaemus* Once considered a separate species! We had some great sightings at two small reservoirs in the Poffadder area.

Black-headed Canary ♦ *Serinus [alario] alario* This nomadic canary was seen in good numbers en-route to Springbok.

Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis* Various sightings across the tour, with the first birds at Macassar and the last birds on Sani Pass.

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* A stunning little bird! First seen in Polokwane Game Reserve and again later in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Cape Bunting ♦ *Emberiza capensis* This smart bird was seen at various sites across the tour from Rooiels to Sani Pass.

Lark-like Bunting ♦ *Emberiza impetuani* Large numbers of these rather plain birds were had at various water bodies across Bushmanland.

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* A single bird was seen alongside the road in the Verena grassland.

MAMMALS

Cape Dune Mole-rat *Bathyergus suillus* This large sub-terrain species was seen walking around during the day in the West Coast National Park, highly unusual!!

Rock Hyrax (Cape D, Cape R Hyrax) *Procavia capensis* Seen well at a few sightings, but first seen at Rooiels.

Lion *Panthera leo* Three were seen crossing the road in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat) *Cynictis penicillata* Mainly singletons seen on the Darling Hills road, De Hoop Nature Reserve and in the Poffadder area.

Cape Grey Mongoose (Small G M) *Herpestes pulverulentus* We had a few sightings of this small mongoose with the best being in De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Common Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus* Brief sightings were had of animals running across roads, mainly on the eastern half of the tour.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* A very brief sighting of an animal crossing the road in St Lucia.

Meerkat (Suricate) *Suricata suricata* A charismatic species with a small family group was seen near Poffadder.

Black-backed Jackal *Lupulella mesomeias* Two of these largely persecuted canids were seen near Springbok.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* A well spotted individual was seen on the road to De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Afro-Australian Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus* A few of these were seen on the pelagic trip resting in the water with their flippers in the air to assist with thermo-regulation and lots at Bird Island.

African Clawless Otter *Aonyx capensis* An excellent sighting of two was had in the Wakkerstroom Wetland.

Spotted-necked Otter *Hydriectis maculicolins* A brief sighting was had of an animal at a small dam on the Sani Pass road.

Plains Zebra (Burchell's Z) *Equus [quagga] burchelli* Most of the good sightings were in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* A few animals were seen along the road in the Bontebok National Park and then further excellent sightings were had in De Hoop Nature Reserve.

White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* A single animal was seen in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* We had good sightings in and around Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Giraffe *Giraffa giraffe* We had good sightings of the tallest mammal in Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Impala *Aepyceros melampus* This common antelope was seen well in Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserve.

Hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus* This strange looking antelope was seen Suikerbosrand Game Reserve and later again in Midmar Game Reserve.

Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* South Africa's National Animal was seen on numerous occasions across the tour.

Natal Red Duiker *Cephalophus natalensis* This striking little antelope was seen well around St Lucia.

Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu) *Connochaetes taurinus* Often referred to as the clown of the bushveld! We had great sightings in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Black Wildebeest (White-tailed Gnu) *Connochaetes gnou* This striking endemic bovid was seen well just outside of Wakkerstroom.

Bontebok (Blesbok) *Dameliscus [pygargus] phillipsi* Once treated as a separate species, now lumped. It was mainly seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

Bontebok (Bontebok) *Dameliscus [pygargus] pygargus* This attractive species was seen well in De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger* This incredible smart antelope was initially seen on a private estate near Wakkerstroom and again later in the Polokwane Nature Reserve.

Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* This large antelope was seen well around St Lucia.

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* We had a good sighting of these rock loving antelope en-route to Poffadder.

Gemsbok (Oryx) *Oryx gazelle* This smart antelope (Namibia's National Animal) was seen well en-route to Calvina.

Rhebok (Vaal R) *Pelea capreolus* A small group was seen well en-route to De Hoop Game Reserve.

Blue Duiker *Philantomba monticola* This diminutive antelope was seen well on our walk around Dlinza Forest.

Steenbok (Steinbok) *Raphicerus campestris* Well recorded across the Western Cape with the highest numbers being in the agricultural fields of the Agulhas region.

Cape Grysbok *Raphicerus melanotis* This uncommon antelope was flushed whilst walking in the Sandberg Nature Reserve.

Southern Reedbuck (Common R) *Redunca arundinum* A lovely male was seen in the Thurlow section of Midmar Nature Reserve.

Bush Duiker (Grey Duiker) *Sylvicapra grimmia* Seen at various sites across the tour but never seldom more than 2 animals together.

Cape Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* Captive bred animals (but free roaming) were seen near Wakkerstroom and later wild animals in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Nyala *Tragelaphus angasii* An attractive antelope of the spiral horned family was recorded in Polokwane and Mkuze Game Reserves.

Common Eland *Tragelaphus oryx* This large antelope was seen on a few occasions firstly en-route to the Zaagkuildrift road and then again en-route to Wakkerstroom.

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* A number of these elegant antelope were seen in the Poffadder area and again later in Mkuze Game Reserve.

Southern Bushbuck *Tragelaphus sylvaticus* A stunning male was seen in Grootvadersbosch.

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibious* Two were seen grazing on the lawns on our early morning drive in St Lucia.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* Had a really good sighting of a youngster playing in the kelp on our pelagic trip.

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis* A huge pod was seen off the coast on the way to Rooiels.

Vervet Monkey *Chlorocebus pygerrhus* These smaller primates were only seen on the eastern half of the tour, almost daily.

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* These large primates were seen sporadically across the tour.

Cape Hare *Lepus capensis* A few of these hare were seen early morning en-route to De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* A couple were seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

Red Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus palliatus* This good looking squirrel was seen well in the forests around St Lucia.

Eastern Grey Squirrel (introduced) *Sciurus carolinensis* One was seen whilst travelling around Cape Town.

South African Ground Squirrel (Cape Ground S) *Xerus inauris* We had a few in the Poffadder area and one in the Wakkerstroom area.

Sloggett's Vlei Rat (Ice Rat) *Otomys sloggetti* Two of these highland rat were seen whilst on our way out of Lesotho near the broader post.

Karoo Vlei Rat (Karoo Bush R) *Otomys unisulcatus* This plump little rat was seen in good numbers in the Tankwa Karoo.

Xeric Four-striped Grass Rat (Four-striped Grass Mouse) *Rhabdomys pumilio* A few singletons seen, with one at Sandberg Nature Reserve and the other one joining us for breakfast at De Hoop Nature Reserve.