SOUTH AFRICA

Kruger & Drakensberg

Mon 4th-Sat 16th Feb 2019



Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Diederik Cuckoo• Monotonous Lark • Lesser Masked Weaver • Swainson's Spurfowl • Kori Bustard • Leopard. © Joe Grosel/Limosa

Report compiled by tour leader: Joe Grosel

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Tour Leader: Joe Grosel

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After arriving on an overnight flight from Heathrow the tour participants met their guide at OR Tambo Airport. Johannesburg and soon started the journey south to the Free State Province and the Golden Gate Highlands National Park. The first bird seen after leaving the airport was an African Darter flying across the motorway outside the airport. A good one to start things off. At a lunch stop near the town of Villiers along the N3 highway we picked up some nice birds in the parking lot and gardens including Grey-headed Gull (the only one of the trip), Southern Masked Weaver, Speckled Pigeon, Cape White-eye, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Southern Red Bishop and Cape Wagtail. After lunch we turned onto a secondary road heading to the towns of Reitz and Bethlehem, where our travelling speed was reduced allowing for good roadside birding along the farmlands. The likes of Amur Falcon, Black-headed Heron, Common Buzzard, Northern Black Korhaan, Helmeted Guineafowl, Southern Red Bishop, Long-tailed Widowbird (displaying males) were seen while travelling and a stop overlooking a farm dam produced Red-knobbed Coot. Pied Avocet. Yellow-billed Duck. Black-winged Stilt, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, White-faced Whistling Duck and Cape (Orange-throated) Longclaw. After travelling through the attractive grasslands and sandstone hills of Clarens in the Eastern Free State we entered the Golden Gate National Park. Once we had settled into our hotel accommodation there was time for a quick walk around the grounds. Here we had great views of African Pied Starling, Red-throated Wryneck, Cape Weaver, Greater-striped Swallow, Alpine and African Black Swift, Red-winged Starling, Olive Thrush and Cape Robin-Chat.

Day two started off with an early breakfast before heading up into the higher altitudes of the Drakensberg Mountain Range which saw us travelling eastward through the green grasslands and hills of the Golden Gate National Park and then via the more densely populated area of Qwagwa. A guick stop at a hide where carcasses are put out for vultures gave us great views of a group of eight Cape Griffon, White-necked Ravens, Cape Bunting and two Black-backed Jackal. Other mammals seen whilst driving through the park were Blesbok, Plains Zebra, Springbok, Rhebok, Eland, Red Hartebeest and the endemic Black Wildebeest. At the end of a rather challenging rocky road, we arrived at the base of Sentinel Peak (at an altitude of about 2600 masl) where we set about searching for one of the day's target birds and a true Drakensberg speciality - the Drakensberg Rockjumper. After about 20 minutes, a pair was located bounding across the basalt scree below the mountain pass. Other birds seen here were Cape Canary, Rock Kestrel, Familiar Chat, Sentinel Rock Thrush and two very special raptors: a Black Harrier foraging below and Lammergeier soaring way above. A light lunch was enjoyed at a mountain top hotel before we started the descent and the return journey to Golden Gate. At a spot aptly named Protea Corner we took a walk to the edge of a wooded ravine overlooking some rocky habitat and a grove of flowering Protea roupelliae. Here we were entertained by the likes of Gurney's Sugarbird, Malachite Sunbird, Cape Rock Thrush, Southern Fiscal, Buff-streaked Chat and Ground Woodpecker. The final birding stop of the day was at the Langtoon Dam not far from our hotel where we had good views of African Black Duck, Levaillant's Cisticola, Red-collared Widowbird, Jackal Buzzard and **Reed Cormorant.**

A pre-breakfast birding excursion to a wooded gorge proved to be very productive. Whilst in the company of a troop of Chacma Baboons, we had wonderful views of a few regional endemics in the form of Drakensberg Prinia, Bush Blackcap and Cape Grassbird. Then after breakfast we packed up and headed for our next destination, Wakkerstroom. Just before leaving the national park we had a walk around the grounds of an openair Basotho museum and saw Fiscal Flycatcher, Ant-eating Chat, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Horus Swift and Speckled Mousebird. At the hamlet of Verkykerskop we collected a packed lunch which we enjoyed at the impressive Witkoppen Nature Lodge whilst watching herds of Black Wildebeest, Springbok and Blesbok. Noteworthy birds seen in this area included Pin-tailed Whydah, Diderick Cuckoo, Banded Martin, Southern Bald Ibis, Yellow-crowned Bishop performing 'bumble-bee' display flights and a pair of Crowned Cranes with three very young chicks. On the final leg of our journey, at least four Denham's Bustard were seen and just before checking into our charming Wakkerstroom B&B, we spent some quality time birding from the bridge crossing the local marsh. Here we saw Glossy Ibis, African Snipe, Three-banded Plover, African Swamphen, South African Cliff Swallow, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Black Crake and African Marsh Harrier to name but a few.

The next morning we were met by a local bird guide who took us to various private farms and community sites around Wakkerstroom. First on the agenda was a pre-breakfast drive to a community farming area east of Wakkerstroom where we picked up, amongst others, **White-bellied Bustard, Fan-tailed Widowbird, Blackwinged Lapwing** and **Wing-snapping Cisticola.** Then along some hilly farm roads to the south of

Wakkerstroom we were fortunate to come across the very localised and normally 'tricky-to find' Yellow-breasted Pipit sitting in the road in front of our vehicle! Two other noteworthy birds seen on this stretch were Eastern Long-billed Lark and Red-winged Francolin. The rest of the day was spent exploring some favourite birding sites to the north of Wakkerstroom. Along the way we had smashing views of Blue Bustard, Pale-crowned Cisticola, Blue Crane, Spur-winged Goose, Mountain Wheatear and a Red-footed Falcon amongst hundreds of Amurs. In this area we also had several sightings of two very endearing small mammals in the form of Yellow Mongoose and a family of Meerkats. A picnic lunch was taken in a field overlooking a large body of water called Fickland Pan, where Maccoa Duck, Southern Pochard and Cape Teal were seen in the company of hundreds of Red Knobbed Coot. Today was a 'larky day' with no less than six species recorded. These included Spike-heeled, Pink-billed, Rufous-naped, Red-capped and lastly the critically endangered Rudd's Lark which we were very 'lucky' to see from the vehicle just before we were about to set off on what could have been a long search for it on foot. Back in Wakkerstroom the last hour of daylight was spent at the local wetland were we added African Reed Warbler, Lesser Swamp Warbler and Little Rush Warbler to the day's considerable bird list. The day ended with another superb dinner at another of Wakkerstroom's eccentric little restaurants.

Day five had a long drive to Kruger in store so a few participants opted to have a lie-in rather than do the early excursion to the south-west of Wakkerstroom. Those that did make the outing got to see some nice birds including Black-collared Barbet, African Quail Finch, Lanner Falcon, Bokmakierie, Zitting Cisticola and more Blue Cranes and Denham's Bustard. After another delightful breakfast at our B&B in the presence of the garden birds which included Village Weavers, Amethyst Sunbirds, Speckled Mousebirds, Cape Starlings and Black-headed Orioles it was time to bid Wakkerstroom farewell and head on to the Kruger National Park. This journey would take us through the towns of Ermelo, Chrissiesmeer, Carolina, Machadodorp, Bombela (Nelspruit) and finally Malelane. En route there were hundreds of roadside Amur Falcons along with other raptors including Black-shouldered Kite, Common Buzzard, Long-crested Eagle and a much sought-after Secretarybird foraging in grassland near Carolina. Kruger's Malelane Gate was reached by late afternoon and the long journey was soon forgotten as the group spotted some fine birds and mammals from the high-water bridge which crosses the Crocodile River (Kruger's southern boundary). There were **Hippo** and a few large **Nile** Crocodiles lying about in the shallows while Water Thick-knee, Goliath, Grey and Striated Heron, Common and Wood Sandpiper, Pied, Woodland and Malachite Kingfisher and African Pied Wagtail went about their business along the water's edge. The final leg of the journey took us from Malelane Gate to Skukuza Camp some 70 kilometres north. Along the way we had fabulous views of large mammals, including Elephant, White Rhino, Cape Buffalo, Plains Zebra and a nice variety of antelope such as Impala, Greater Kudu and Steenbok. Many of Kruger's widespread but iconic birds such as Magpie Shrike, Burchell's Starling, Crowned Lapwing, Lilac-breasted Roller, African Cuckoo, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Grey Goaway-bird, Crested Francolin and the bizarre Southern Ground Hornbill were also seen. Not to be outshone by the residents, some of the common Palaearctic visitors such as European Bee-eater. Spotted Flycatcher. Common Cuckoo, Red-backed Shrike and European Roller also showed well. Skukuza was reached just before the official gate closing time of 18h30.

Early on our first full day in Kruger we were met by a knowledgable guide in his open-sided, safari vehicle in which we were to do all our travelling in Kruger for the next three days. No sooner had we set off on our first short drive of the day when we started spotting large raptors with Wahlberg's, Tawny and Lesser-Spotted Eagles along with African Hawk-Eagle, Bateleur and Brown Snake-Eagle. We also had some well-hidden Lion and a most magnificent young male Leopard in a large Marula Tree. After breakfast we spent some time at 'Lake Panic' bird hide outside Skukuza which gave the photographers in the group some wonderful photo opportunities with the likes of African Fish Eagle, Striated Heron, Malachite Kingfisher, Black Crake, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Lesser Masked Weaver and a brooding African Jacana all showing well within a few yards of the hide. Then it was back to Skukuza for a well-earned siesta. In the late afternoon we enjoyed another short drive along one of the loops to the north of Skukuza. Mammals seen on this excursion included Giraffe, Warthog, Nyala, Dwarf Mongoose, Chacma Baboon and Vervet Monkey which alerted us to the presence of yet another leopard. This time a large male lying up on a distant sandbank along the Sand River. Significant birds seen on this late afternoon outing were Green Woodhoopoe, Jacobin (Pied) Cuckoo, White-winged Widowbird, Monotonous Lark, Retz's Helmetshrike, Common Scimitarbill, Common Buttonquail, Southern Red-billed Hornbill and Chinspot Batis.

The next day we set off early but were delayed somewhat by a few 'early birds' that showed up in the camp as we were about to leave. So a few extra minutes were set aside to view **Bearded Scrub Robin**, **Yellow-bellied Greenbul**, **Terrestrial Brownbul** and a stunning **Gorgeous Bushshrike**. When we did eventually set off it was to start our journey to Satara Camp, located within Kruger's vast basalt plains. Our route first took us along the very productive Sabie River to Lower Sabie Camp where we had breakfast. Along this stretch we encountered

Southern Carmine Bee-eater, African Grey Hornbill, White-crowned Lapwing, Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Woolly-necked and Yellow-billed Stork, Southern Boubou, Sombre Greenbul, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, White-browed Scrub Robin and Red-billed Buffalo Weaver. From Lower Sabie Camp where we had breakfast, we crossed the Sabie River and headed north over the Nkumbe Hills and onto the plains. At the Nkumbe viewing point we spotted our 'compulsory' six mammal species before moving on to get an ice-cream at the Tshokwane Picnic site. Interesting birds seen along this stretch included Yellow-throated Longclaw, Southern Ostrich, Croaking Cisticola, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Arrow-marked Babbler, Knob-billed Duck and Red-breasted Swallow. Mammal highlights were large concentrations of Elephant, more White Rhino, many Waterbuck and Giraffe and a Spotted Hyaena. Satara was reached by late afternoon and following an early dinner we hit the sack after a long, hot but very rewarding day.

An early morning drive across the open plains northward to the Olifants River produced many memorable sightings including large concentrations of Zebra, Blue Wildebeest and Impala amidst vast numbers of White Stork feeding on locusts on the grassy plains. At the Olifants River a Giraffe carcass attracted several Spotted Hyaena along with Yellow-billed Kite, White-backed, Hooded, Cape and Lappet-faced Vultures. Breakfast was taken at the cliff top Olifants Camp which overlooks the wide plains of the Olifants River below. With elephant breeding herds dotted along this mighty river for as far as the eye could see was a scene that will linger in the minds of the observers for many years to come. Some good birds were seen on this morning excursion including wonderful, close views of Kori Bustard along with Saddle-billed Stork, White-headed Vulture, Sabota and Dusky Lark, Emerald-Spotted Wood-Dove, Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah, Lesser Grey Shrike and many Marabou Stork also feasting on locusts alongside their counterparts visiting from Europe. After bidding our comfortable wildlife viewing vehicle farewell, we had a siesta and took a short afternoon drive before taking an early dinner and embarking on a night drive in one of the park safari vehicles. Highlights of the drive were seeing many Square-tailed Nightjars, a beautiful Southern White-faced Owl, several Small-spotted Genets, a single Large-spotted Genet, a Spotted Hyaena and a lone male Lion.

Our final morning in Kruger saw us take another early drive from Satara Camp during which we added Goldenbreasted Bunting, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark, Black-chested Snake Eagle, Black-crowned Tchagra, Yellow-billed Oxpecker and Red-crested Korhaan to our already impressive Kruger bird list. A quick walk around Satara Camp after breakfast was a hot and humid affair but did produce some great birds in the form of Marico and White-bellied Sunbirds, Brubru, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Icterine Warbler, Mourning Collared Dove, Yellow-fronted Canary, Crested Barbet and Brown-headed Parrot. The park was exited via the Orpen gate but not before we had superb views of a pack of 17 African Wild Dogs frolicking around a waterhole plus another top predator in the form of a soaring Martial Eagle. After leaving the park we briefly headed up into Limpopo Province, stopping off at a tea garden on the banks of the Blyde River for lunch where we had great views of Mountain Wagtail. Then on the way up the eastern escarpment we hit a massive thunderstorm which lasted for over an hour. So alas our stop-off at the spectacular Abel Erasmus Pass to look for the resident Taita Falcons was pretty much washed out. The last leg of the day's journey took us through more mountain scenery before reaching the Mount Sheba Hotel situated amongst Afro-montane forest in very wet and foggy conditions.

The soaking, misty weather had continued into the following day so after breakfast it was decided to drive to lower altitudes where there would be better birding conditions. So off we went to Ohrigstad valley where two birding stops in mixed Acacia woodland produced some excellent birds with the most notable species being African Paradise Flycatcher, White-throated Robin-Chat, Cardinal Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Black Cuckooshrike and Green-backed Camaroptera. There was also a nice one for the Limpopo Province in the form of Bokmakierie while on a small field outside the town of Ohrigstad we had over a hundred Abdim's Storks. This excitement was followed by a scenic road trip along the aptly-named Panorama Route which takes one along the edge of the impressive Blyde River Canyon. We stopped off at the dramatic 'Three Rondavels' view point where some curio shopping was done and Mocking Cliff Chat and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting were observed at close quarters. In the town of Graskop we enjoyed its famous Pancakes for lunch, after which we paid the quaint tourist town of Pilgrims Rest a brief visit. Back at the hotel we had our last dinner of the tour and celebrated Joyce's birthday and Valentine's Day in fine style.

Sadly we had reached the last day of the tour and still the mist shrouded the forested escarpment. Before breakfast we did however do some birding from the entrance port outside reception. Here we spotted a number of forest birds through the mist as they desperately foraged in the soggy shrubbery. We managed to spot Chorister Robin-Chat, Dusky Flycatcher, Cape Batis, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Grey Cuckooshrike, Natal Spurfowl, Southern Double-collared Sunbird and Olive Bushshrike plus a troop of very wet Samango (Blue) Monkeys. Then once packed up we headed along the bumpy track that leads out of the reserve to the main road and started the drive back to Johannesburg via the town of Dullstroom. With the widespread rain

disrupting our chances of any birding stops along the way, we pushed on to our lunch spot near the town of Witbank before we had one more dip at finding new birds at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary near the town of Springs. A fairly quick visit here gave us several good species with the new additions being **Black-chested Prinia**, **Brown-throated Martin**, **Hottentot Teal**, **Greater Flamingo** and **Burchell's Coucal**. We then took our final road journey through the rain and traffic to reach OR Tambo International Airport in the late afternoon in good time to say our goodbyes and for everyone to do their flight 'check-ins'.

Annotated List of Species Recorded

(A total of 344 (9 heard only) birds, 45 mammals and 18 reptile species were recorded on this tour.)

BIRDS

Common Ostrich Struthio camelus seen well in central KNP

White-faced Whistling Duck Dendrocygna viduata classic tropical ducks seen in KNP

White-backed Duck Thalassornis leuconotus seen at a wetland near Wakkerstroom

Spur-winged Goose Plectropterus gambensis seen around Wakkerstroom

Knob-billed Duck Sarkidiornis melanotos several seen in the KNP

Egyptian Goose Alopochen aegyptiaca seen almost daily

South African Shelduck Tadorna cana fairly common in the Wakkerstroom area

Hottentot Teal Spatula hottentota great views of this small teal at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Cape Shoveler Spatula smithii seen on pans around Wakkerstroom and at Marievale BS

African Black Duck Anas sparsa a single sighting in the Golden Gate NP

Yellow-billed Duck Anas undulata common in the Drakensberg and around Wakkerstroom

Cape Teal Anas capensis seen on Fickland Pan near Wakkerstroom

Red-billed Teal Anas erythrorhyncha seen in Wakkerstroom and in Kruger

Southern Pochard Netta erythrophthalma seen in wetlands around Wakkerstroom & Marievale

Maccoa Duck Oxyura maccoa several seen at Fickland Pan near Wakkerstroom

Helmeted Guineafowl Numida meleagris this iconic African bird was regularly encountered

Coqui Francolin Peliperdix coqui one seen crossing the road in Kruger

Red-winged Francolin Scleroptila levaillantii a great sighting of a male calling near Wakkerstroom

Crested Francolin Dendroperdix sephaena quite common in Kruger

Natal Spurfowl *Pternistis natalensis* seen regularly common in Kruger and again at Mount Sheba **Swainson's Spurfowl** *Pternistis swainsonii* very common in Kruger, also seen around Wakkerstroom

Harlequin Quail Coturnix delegorquei often heard and seen once crossing the road in Kruger

Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis often seen on water bodies throughout

Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus roseus seen nicely at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Yellow-billed Stork Mycteria ibis several seen in Kruger

African Openbill Anastomus lamelligerus two seen on the Olifants River in Kruger

Black Stork Ciconia nigra seen well in KNP

Abdim's Stork Ciconia abdimii over a hundred birds seen in a field near Ohrigstad

Woolly-necked Stork Ciconia episcopus seen in the KNP

White Stork Ciconia ciconia common throughout, particularly in Kruger

Saddle-billed Stork Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis a few sightings in KNP

Marabou Stork Leptoptilos crumenifer great views in Kruger

African Sacred Ibis Threskiornis aethiopicus common throughout the highlands

Southern Bald Ibis Geronticus calvus seen very well in the highlands

Hadada Ibis Bostrychia hagedash seen and heard almost daily

Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus seen around Wakkerstroom and at Marievale

African Spoonbill Platalea alba seen on several occasions

Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus a single bird seen flying over a dam in Golden Gate

Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax seen at the Wakkerstroom wetlands

Striated Heron Butorides striata small numbers in Kruger

Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides seen in Wakkerstroom and Kruger

Western Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis common and widespread throughout

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea small numbers on wetlands throughout

Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala common in the Drakensberg and Wakkerstroom areas

Goliath Heron Ardea goliath seen in the Kruger National Park

Great Egret Ardea alba seen in the Kruger National Park

Intermediate Egret Ardea intermedia encountered around Wakkerstroom and Marievale BS

Little Egret Egretta garzetta several sightings in Kruger

Hamerkop Scopus umbretta good sightings in Kruger

Reed Cormorant Microcarbo africanus small numbers on wetlands throughout

White-breasted Cormorant Phalacrocorax lucidus seen around Wakkerstroom

African Darter Anhinga rufa seen in Johannesburg and Kruger

Secretarybird Sagittarius serpentarius first seen near the town of Carolina and again in Kruger

Black-winged Kite Elanus caeruleus common roadside raptor seen throughout

African Harrier-Hawk Polyboroides typus several sightings of this unusual raptor

Bearded Vulture Gypaetus barbatus a single bird soaring near the Sentinel peak in the Drakensberg

Hooded Vulture Necrosyrtes monachus seen well in Kruger

White-backed Vulture Gyps africanus good numbers in Kruger

Cape Vulture Gyps coprotheres seen well from a hide in the Golden Gate park and again in Kruger

White-headed Vulture Trigonoceps occipitalis had good views of this handsome vulture in Kruger

Lappet-faced Vulture Torgos tracheliotos this massive bird was seen in Kruger

Black-chested Snake Eagle Circaetus pectoralis great views of one in Kruger

Brown Snake Eagle Circaetus cinereus several sightings in Kruger

Bateleur Terathopius ecaudatus a fairly common sight in Kruger

Martial Eagle Polemaetus bellicosus a single sighting in Kruger

Long-crested Eagle Lophaetus occipitalis this distinctive raptor was seen near Golden Gate and Ohrigstad

Lesser Spotted Eagle Clanga pomarina very common around quelea breeding colonies in Kruger

Wahlberg's Eagle Hieraaetus wahlbergi seen well in Kruger

Booted Eagle Hieraaetus pennatus two sightings of soaring birds in Kruger

Tawny Eagle Aquila rapax several seen very well in Kruger

African Hawk-Eagle Aquila spilogaster a few sightings in Kruger

Shikra Accipiter badius a brief sighting of a flying bird in Kruger

Black Sparrowhawk Accipiter melanoleucus a bird seen flying over the Wakkerstroom marsh

African Marsh Harrier Circus ranivorus seen over the marshes of Wakkerstroom

Black Harrier Circus maurus a great sighting of an adult bird foraging near the Sentinel peak, Drakensberg

Yellow-billed Kite Milvus aegyptius common in Kruger

African Fish Eagle Haliaeetus vocifer several sightings in Kruger

'Steppe' Common Buzzard Buteo buteo vulpinus numerous sightings throughout

Jackal Buzzard Buteo rufofuscus fairly common in high-lying areas

Kori Bustard Ardeotis kori seen very well in the KNP

Denham's Bustard Neotis denhami great views near Memel and Wakkerstroom

White-bellied Bustard Eupodotis senegalensis seen well east of Wakkerstroom

Blue Korhaan Eupodotis caerulescens two sightings north of Wakkerstroom

Red-crested Korhaan Lophotis ruficrista seen verv well in KNP

Northern Black Korhaan Afrotis afraoides brief views of a individual near Villiers en-route to Golden Gate

Red-chested Flufftail Sarothrura rufa heard only - at the Wakkerstroom marsh

African Rail Rallus caerulescens heard only - at the Wakkerstroom wetland

Black Crake Amaurornis flavirostra seen very well at the Wakkerstroom marsh and again in Kruger

African Swamphen Porphyrio madagascariensis seen in the Wakkerstroom marshes

Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus several sightings in upland wetlands

Red-knobbed Coot Fulica cristata common in the Drakensberg, Wakkerstroom and Marievale

Grey Crowned Crane Balearica regulorum good sightings near Verkykerskop and Wakkerstroom

Blue Crane Grus paradisea several seen in the Wakkerstroom area

Common Buttonquail Turnix sylvaticus brief views in Kruger

Water Thick-knee Burhinus vermiculatus seen very well in Kruger

Spotted Thick-knee Burhinus capensis a good sighting east of Wakkerstroom

Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus several sightings around Wakkerstroom and Kruger

Pied Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta a few seen on a pan near Villiers en-route to Golden Gate

Blacksmith Lapwing Vanellus armatus common near water throughout

White-crowned Lapwing Vanellus albiceps seen near Lower Sabie in the KNP

Black-winged Lapwing Vanellus melanopterus several birds seen around Wakkerstroom

Crowned Lapwing Vanellus coronatus small numbers in dry grassland throughout

African Wattled Lapwing Vanellus senegallus a few seen in the highlands

Three-banded Plover Charadrius tricollaris small numbers on wetlands at Wakkerstroom and Kruger

African Jacana Actophilornis africanus a few seen well in Kruger

Curlew Sandpiper Calidris ferruginea distant views of a small flock feeding in a pan near Villiers

African Snipe Gallinago nigripennis good sightings at the Wakkerstroom marsh

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos small numbers in Kruger

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola numerous sightings throughout

Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia seen near Verkykerskop and in Kruger

Grey-headed Gull Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus a single bird seen at our lunch stop near Villiers on day-1

Whiskered Tern Chlidonias hybrida several breeding birds seen at highland pans

White-winged Tern Chlidonias leucopterus a brief sighting of two birds near the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Rock Dove Columba livia small numbers in a few towns

Speckled Pigeon Columba guinea common in high-lying regions

African Olive Pigeon Columba arquatrix brief views for some in the mist at Mount Sheba Hotel

Mourning Collared Dove Streptopelia decipiens common around Satara Camp in Kruger

Red-eyed Dove Streptopelia semitorquata common in the eastern regions

Ring-necked Dove Streptopelia capicola common and widespread throughout

Laughing Dove Spilopelia senegalensis common and widespread throughout

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove Turtur chalcospilos seen in the KNP

Namaqua Dove Oena capensis seen well in Kruger

African Green Pigeon Treron calvus seen in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

Purple-crested Turaco Tauraco porphyreolophus seen in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

Grey Go-away-bird Corythaixoides concolor common in Kruger

Burchell's Coucal Centropus burchellii one briefly seen at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Levaillant's Cuckoo Clamator levaillantii great sightings of this large cuckoo in Kruger

Jacobin Cuckoo Clamator jacobinus several sightings in Kruger

Diederik Cuckoo Chrysococcyx caprius seen very well on several occasions

Klaas's Cuckoo Chrysococcyx klaas heard only - in Kruger

Black Cuckoo Cuculus clamosus good flight views in Kruger

Red-chested Cuckoo Cuculus solitarius heard only - at Golden Gate and Kruger

African Cuckoo Cuculus gularis two good sightings in Kruger

Common Cuckoo Cuculus canorus several sightings in Kruger

Western Barn Owl Tyto alba two birds seen at its roost at the Lower Sabie restaurant

Southern White-faced Owl Ptilopsis granti great views of a bird on the night drive near Satara camp, Kruger

Verreaux's Eagle Owl Bubo lacteus a single sighting in Kruger

African Wood Owl Strix woodfordii heard only - by some at Mount Sheba Hotel

Square-tailed Nightjar Caprimulgus fossii several seen on the night drive in Kruger

African Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus seen on a number of occasions

Alpine Swift Tachymarptis melba flocks in the highlands

Common Swift Apus apus large aggregations in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

African Black Swift Apus barbatus seen well at the Golden Gate National Park

Little Swift Apus affinis common around bridges and in towns

Horus Swift Apus horus seen once at the Golden Gate Hotel

White-rumped Swift Apus caffer common throughout, mainly Kruger

Speckled Mousebird Colius striatus good views in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

Red-faced Mousebird Urocolius indicus seen in the KNP

Purple Roller Coracias naevius seen in KNP

Lilac-breasted Roller Coracias caudatus fairly common in Kruger

European Roller Coracias garrulus very common throughout Kruger

Brown-hooded Kingfisher Halcyon albiventris seen at the Blyde River lunch stop - Moholoholo Ya Mati

Woodland Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis common summer visitor in Kruger

Malachite Kingfisher Corythornis cristatus seen very well on a few occasions

Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis seen very well on a few occasions

Little Bee-eater Merops pusillus briefly seen in Kruger

European Bee-eater Merops apiaster seen almost daily

Southern Carmine Bee-eater Merops nubicoides seen very well in Kruger

African Hoopoe Upupa africana good views in Kruger camps

Green Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus a few sightings in Kruger

Common Scimitarbill Rhinopomastus cyanomelas seen well in Kruger

Southern Ground Hornbill Bucorvus leadbeateri great close-up views in Kruger

Southern Red-billed Hornbill Tockus rufirostris fairly common in Kruger

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill Tockus leucomelas common in Kruger

African Grey Hornbill Lophoceros nasutus a few sightings in Kruger

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird Pogoniulus bilineatus heard only - at the Moholoholo Ya Mati tea garden

Acacia Pied Barbet Tricholaema leucomelas seen well near Ohrigstad

Black-collared Barbet Lybius torquatus seen on a few occasions

Crested Barbet Trachyphonus vaillantii seen well in Satara Camp, Kruger

Lesser Honeyguide Indicator minor brief views of a bird in Satara Camp, Kruger

Red-throated Wryneck Jynx ruficollis great views in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

Ground Woodpecker Geocolaptes olivaceus good sightings near Golden Gate

Bearded Woodpecker Chloropicus namaguus heard only - in Kruger

Cardinal Woodpecker Dendropicos fuscescens seen very well near Ohrigstad

Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni a few seen near Verkykerskop

Rock Kestrel Falco rupicolus seen near the Sentinel peak in the Drakensberg

Greater Kestrel Falco rupicoloides an unusual sighting at the Witsieshoek Lodge in the Drakensberg

Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus a single bird seen outside Wakkerstroom

Amur Falcon Falco amurensis abundant throughout the highlands

Lanner Falcon Falco biarmicus seen on two occasions - Golden Gate and Ohrigstad

Brown-headed Parrot Poicephalus cryptoxanthus seen well in Satara Camp, Kruger

Cape Batis Batis capensis seen at the Mount Sheba Hotel

Chinspot Batis Batis molitor seen well in Kruger

Grey-headed Bushshrike Malaconotus blanchoti seen well in Kruger

Olive Bushshrike Chlorophoneus olivaceus seen at Mount Sheba

Orange-breasted Bushshrike Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus heard only - in Kruger

Gorgeous Bushshrike Telophorus viridis great views in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

Bokmakierie Telophorus zevlonus seen at Golden Gate. Wakkerstroom and Ohrigstad

Brown-crowned Tchagra Tchagra australis seen very well in Kruger and near Ohrigstad

Black-crowned Tchagra Tchagra senegalus seen well in Kruger

Black-backed Puffback Dryoscopus cubla seen well in Kruger

Southern Boubou Laniarius ferrugineus seen along the Sabie River in Kruger

Brubru Nilaus afer seen well in Satara camp in Kruger

White-crested Helmetshrike Prionops plumatus brief views for some from a hide near Skukuza, Kruger

Retz's Helmetshrike Prionops retzii seen very well near Skukuza, Kruger

Grey Cuckooshrike Coracina caesia seen at Mt Sheba Hotel

Black Cuckooshrike Campephaga flava good views near Ohrigstad

Magpie Shrike Urolestes melanoleucus common in Kruger

Southern White-crowned Shrike Eurocephalus anguitimens seen at the Malelane Gate in Kruger

Red-backed Shrike Lanius collurio very common throughout Kruger

Lesser Grey Shrike Lanius minor several seen north of Satara camp, Kruger

Southern Fiscal Lanius collaris common everywhere except Kruger

Black-headed Oriole Oriolus larvatus good sightings in Wakkerstroom and Kruger

Fork-tailed Drongo Dicrurus adsimilis common in Kruger

African Paradise Flycatcher Terpsiphone viridis seen well near Ohrigstad

Cape Crow Corvus capensis common in the highlands

White-necked Raven Corvus albicollis seen well in the Drakensberg

Drakensberg Rockjumper *Chaetops aurantius* great views in the Drakensberg near the Sentinel Peak **Southern Black Tit** *Melaniparus niger* seen by some at a view-point north of Lower Sabie Camp, Kruger

Spike-heeled Lark Chersomanes albofasciata seen well near Wakkerstroom

Eastern Long-billed Lark Certhilauda semitorquata good views of this large lark near Wakkerstroom

Dusky Lark Pinarocorys nigricans great views of this migratory lark in Kruger

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark Eremopterix leucotis seen well in the Kruger National Park

Sabota Lark Calendulauda sabota fairly common in KNP

Rudd's Lark Heteromirafra ruddi a single bird seen at Fickland Pan near Wakkerstroom

Rufous-naped Lark Mirafra africana seen well near Wakkerstroom and in Kruger

Monotonous Lark Mirafra passerina great views of displaying males in Kruger

Pink-billed Lark Spizocorys conirostris this nomadic species was seen very well near Wakkerstroom

Red-capped Lark Calandrella cinerea good views near Wakkerstroom

African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* seen well in Golden Gate

Dark-capped Bulbul Pycnonotus tricolor common, especially in Kruger

Sombre Greenbul Andropadus importunus seen well in Kruger

Yellow-bellied Greenbul Chlorocichla flaviventris seen in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

Terrestrial Brownbul Phyllastrephus terrestris seen at Skukuza Camp and at Mount Sheba

Yellow-streaked Greenbul Phyllastrephus flavostriatus brief views at Mount Sheba Hotel

Brown-throated Martin Riparia paludicola a few at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Banded Martin Riparia cincta fairly common in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

Barn Swallow Hirundo rustica seen on every day of the tour

White-throated Swallow Hirundo albigularis common near streams and marshes in the highlands

Wire-tailed Swallow Hirundo smithii seen along large rivers in Kruger

Rock Martin Ptyonoprogne fuligula small number at rocky cliffs in the highlands

Common House Martin Delichon urbicum a few seen in Ohrigstad town

Greater Striped Swallow Cecropis cucullata common in high-lying areas

Lesser Striped Swallow Cecropis abyssinica seen well in Kruger

Red-breasted Swallow Cecropis semirufa good views of this large swallow in Kruger

South African Cliff Swallow Petrochelidon spilodera seen at the bridge over the Wakkerstroom wetlands

Cape Grassbird Sphenoeacus afer seen well in the Golden Gate National Park

Long-billed Crombec Sylvietta rufescens good views in Kruger

Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus seen on several occasions throughout

Lesser Swamp Warbler Acrocephalus gracilirostris great views at the Wakkerstroom wetland

Great Reed Warbler Acrocephalus arundinaceus seen in a reed bed at the Tshokwane picnic site in Kruger

African Reed Warbler Acrocephalus baeticatus seen at the Wakkerstroom marsh

Marsh Warbler Acrocephalus palustris good close-up views in a dense thicket in Satara Camp in Kruger

Olive-tree Warbler Hippolais olivetorum heard only - north of Satara in the Kruger National Park

Icterine Warbler Hippolais icterina great views in Satara Camp, Kruger

Little Rush Warbler Bradypterus baboecala seen in the Wakkerstroom marsh

Red-faced Cisticola Cisticola erythrops seen well in Kruger

Rattling Cisticola Cisticola chiniana common in Kruger

Levaillant's Cisticola Cisticola tinniens regular in highland wetlands

Croaking Cisticola Cisticola natalensis a single sighting in Kruger

Zitting Cisticola Cisticola juncidis seen in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

Cloud Cisticola Cisticola textrix seen in Golden Gate

Pale-crowned Cisticola Cisticola cinnamomeus seen well north of Wakkerstroom

Wing-snapping Cisticola Cisticola ayresii seen near Fickland Pan, Wakkerstroom

Tawny-flanked Prinia Prinia subflava common in Kruger

Black-chested Prinia Prinia flavicans This small bird was seen at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary

Drakensberg Prinia Prinia hypoxantha seen in Golden Gate NP

Bar-throated Apalis Apalis thoracica seen well at Mount Sheba

Yellow-breasted Apalis Apalis flavida great views near Ohrigstad

Green-backed Camaroptera Camaroptera brachyura seen near Ohrigstad

Stierling's Wren-Warbler Calamonastes stierlingi seen briefly in the Kruger National Park

Burnt-necked Eremomela Eremomela usticollis hear only - Kruger National park

Arrow-marked Babbler Turdoides jardineii seen several times in Kruger

Bush Blackcap Lioptilus nigricapillus seen very well at Golden Gate

Cape White-eye Zosterops virens quite common throughout

Gurney's Sugarbird Promerops gurneyi seen on flowering Proteas in Golden Gate and near Mount Sheba

Common Myna Acridotheres tristis common in highland towns

Wattled Starling Creatophora cinerea several sightings in Kruger

Cape Starling Lamprotornis nitens common in Kruger

Greater Blue-eared Starling Lamprotornis chalybaeus good sightings in Satara Camp, Kruger

Burchell's Starling Lamprotornis australis fairly common in Kruger

Pied Starling Lamprotornis bicolor very common in the highlands, often on road edges

Violet-backed Starling Cinnyricinclus leucogaster a few sightings in Kruger

Red-winged Starling Onychognathus morio common throughout

Yellow-billed Oxpecker Buphagus africanus a single sighting of a bird on a Giraffe in Kruger

Red-billed Oxpecker Buphagus erythrorynchus common in the KNP

Olive Thrush Turdus olivaceus seen well at Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

Bearded Scrub Robin Cercotrichas quadrivirgata seen well in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

White-browed Scrub Robin Cercotrichas leucophrys seen and often heard in Kruger

Southern Black Flycatcher Melaenornis pammelaina seen in Pilgrim's Rest town near Mount Sheba

Fiscal Flycatcher Melaenornis silens seen well at Golden Gate National Park

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata fairly common migrant in Kruger

African Dusky Flycatcher Muscicapa adusta seen well at Mount Sheba

Cape Robin-Chat Cossypha caffra common in thickets throughout the highlands

White-browed Robin-Chat Cossypha heuglini seen well in Lower Sabie Camp, Kruger

Chorister Robin-Chat Cossypha dichroa good views in the Mount Sheba Hotel gardens

Cape Rock Thrush Monticola rupestris seen well in the Golden Gate National Park

Sentinel Rock Thrush *Monticola explorator* good views in the Drakensberg

African Stonechat Saxicola torquatus common in the highlands

Buff-streaked Chat *Campicoloides bifasciatus* handsome endemic seen in Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom **Mocking Cliff Chat** *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* seen near in the Kruger and in the Blyde River Canyon

Ant-eating Chat Myrmecocichla formicivora quite common in highland grasslands

Mountain Wheatear Myrmecocichla monticola scattered sightings in rocky areas in the high country

Familiar Chat Oenanthe familiaris fairly common in the highlands

Collared Sunbird Hedydipna collaris seen well in Skukuza Camp, Kruger

Amethyst Sunbird Chalcomitra amethystina seen in Wakkerstroom

Malachite Sunbird Nectarinia famosa many good views in Golden Gate

Southern Double-collared Sunbird Cinnyris chalybeus seen in the gardens of Mount Sheba Hotel

Marico Sunbird Cinnyris mariquensis seen well in Satara Camp, Kruger

White-bellied Sunbird Cinnyris talatala good views in Satara Camp, Kruger

House Sparrow Passer domesticus common near human habitation throughout, even in Kruger camps

Cape Sparrow Passer melanurus fairly common in the highlands

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow Passer diffusus widespread in small numbers, particularly in the Kruger

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver Bubalornis niger common in Kruger with many large nests seen

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver Plocepasser mahali seen en-route to Golden Gate and again in Ohrigstad

Thick-billed Weaver Amblyospiza albifrons seen once at its nest in the Moholoholo Ya Mati tea garden

Spectacled Weaver Ploceus ocularis seen well in Satara Camp, Kruger

Cape Weaver Ploceus capensis common in the highlands

Lesser Masked Weaver Ploceus intermedius good sightings from the hide near Skukuza, Kruger

Southern Masked Weaver Ploceus velatus fairly common throughout

Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus common in the Kruger and seen well in Wakkerstroom

Red-billed Quelea Quelea quelea abundant in Kruger

Yellow-crowned Bishop Euplectes afer common over grassy pans in the highlands

Southern Red Bishop Euplectes orix common throughout

Yellow Bishop Euplectes capensis seen by some in Golden Gate

Fan-tailed Widowbird Euplectes axillaris seen at Golden Gate and Wakkerstroom

White-winged Widowbird Euplectes albonotatus fairly common in Kruger and around Ohrigstad

Red-collared Widowbird Euplectes ardens seen well in Golden Gate

Long-tailed Widowbird Euplectes progne spectacular displays in the upland grasslands

Green-winged Pytilia Pytilia melba brief views in Kruger

Red-headed Finch Amadina erythrocephala a few seen on a fence near Wakkerstroom

Red-billed Firefinch Lagonosticta senegala seen by some in Satara Camp, Kruger

Blue Waxbill Uraeginthus angolensis a few good sightings in Kruger

Common Waxbill Estrilda astrild seen near Verkykerskop and Wakkerstroom

Quailfinch Ortygospiza atricollis great views of this secretive finch near Wakkerstroom

Village Indigobird Vidua chalybeata seen very well in Skukuza Camp, KNP

Purple Indigobird Vidua purpurascens good views near Skukuza, Kruger

Pin-tailed Whydah Vidua macroura fairly common in the highlands

Long-tailed Paradise Whydah Vidua paradisaea several sightings in Kruger

Cape Wagtail Motacilla capensis quite common in the highlands

Mountain Wagtail Motacilla clara good views on the Blyde River

African Pied Wagtail Motacilla aguimp seen along the rivers in Kruger

Cape Longclaw Macronyx capensis this smart bird at times very common in highland grasslands

Yellow-throated Longclaw Macronyx croceus seen very well in southern Kruger

African Pipit Anthus cinnamomeus very common in highland grasslands

Long-billed Pipit Anthus similis brief views for some in the Drakensberg

Yellow-breasted Pipit Anthus chloris seen very well, sitting in the road near Wakkerstroom

Black-throated Canary Crithagra atrogularis seen near Villiers en-route to Golden Gate

Yellow-fronted Canary Crithagra mozambica seen in Kruger

Streaky-headed Seedeater *Crithagra gularis* briefly seen by some in the Golden Gate National Park **Cape Canary** *Serinus canicollis* common in the highlands

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting Emberiza tahapisi seen in Kruger and at the Blyde River Canyon

Cape Bunting Emberiza capensis great close-up views at the Vulture hide in the Golden Gate NP

Golden-breasted Bunting Emberiza flaviventris great views of a pair at a small waterhole in Kruger

MAMMALS

Rock Hyrax Procavia capensis Seen well near the Sentinel Peak in the Drakensberg
African Savanna Elephant Loxodonta africana Large numbers seen throughout Kruger
Thick-tailed Greater Galago Otolemur crassicaudatus Heard only - in Skukuza Camp KNP
Chacma Baboon Papio ursinus Frequently seen in the Drakensberg and Kruger
Vervet Monkey Chlorocebus pygeruthrus Multiple sightings in and around Kruger
Blue Monkey Cercopithecus mitis Seen on the final morning on tour at Mount Sheba Hotel
Smith's Bush Squirrel Paraxerus cepapi Quite common in the Kruger National Park
Spectacled Dormouse Graphiurus ocularis A baby was found that had fallen out of a thatched roof in
Skukuza. KNP

Scrub Hare Lepus saxatilis Seen on a night drive near Satara Camp, KNP

Peters'/Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus crypturus/wahlbergi* Heard only - Skukuza Camp KNP **Egyptian Free-tailed Bat** *Tadarida aegyptiaca* Good views of a colony in the Olifants River Bridge, KNP **Leopard** *Panthera pardus* A great sighting of a young male in a tree near Skukuza Camp, KNP **Lion** *Panthera leo* Two sightings in the Kruger National Park

Common/Small-spotted Genet Genetta genetta At least three seen on a night drive near Satara Camp, KNP Blotched/Large-spotted Genet aZ`Z`AQ qqwa§1AGenetta tigrina One seen on the night drive out of Satara Camp, KNP

Spotted Hyaena Crocuta crocuta Great sightings and vocalizations in Kruger

Yellow Mongoose Cynictis penicillata Fairly common around Wakkerstroom

Common Slender Mongoose Herpestes sanguinea Brief views in the Kruger National Park

Meerkat Suricata suricata Several sightings around Wakkerstroom

Common Dwarf Mongoose Helogale parvula At least three sightings in the Kruger National Park

Black-backed Jackal Canis mesomelas Several sightings in Golden Gate and Kruger NP

African Wild Dog Lycaon pictus A great sighting of a pack of 17 dogs west of Satara, KNP

African Clawless Otter Aonyx capensis A single animal seen at the Wakkerstroom wetland

Plains Zebra Equus quagga Seen in Golden Gate, Witkoppen Reserve and a few hundred in Kruger

White Rhinoceros Ceratotherium simum At least five good sightings in Kruger

Common Warthog Phacochoerus africanus A number of sightings in Kruger

Common Hippopotamus Hippopotamus amphibius Fine views in and out of the water in Kruger

Giraffe Giraffa camelopardalis Numerous sightings in Kruger

African Buffalo Syncerus caffer Seen well in Kruger

Nyala Tragelaphus angasi A good sighting in Kruger

Cape Bushbuck Tragelaphus scriptus Seen well along the Sabie River in Kruger

Greater Kudu Tragelaphus strepsiceros Seen well in Kruger

Eland Taurotragus orvx Lovely views of this large antelope in the Golden Gate National Park

Common Impala Aepyceros melampus Almost abundant in Kruger

Steenbok Raphicerus campestris Good sightings in Kruger

Cape Springbok Antidorcas marsupialis Seen in Golden Gate and Witkoppen

Southern Reedbuck Redunca arundinum A single sighting near the Witkoppen reserve, Free State

Mountain Reedbuck Redunca fulvorufula Seen in Golden Gate and in the hills south of Wakkerstroom

Common Waterbuck Kobus ellipsiprymnus Nice views of this handsome antelope in Kruger

Rhebok Pelea capreolus A small herd seen in Golden Gate NP

Red Hartebeest Alcephalus caama Seen well in the Golden Gate National Park

Blesbok Damaliscus phillipsi Numerous sightings in the high country

White-tailed Gnu (Black Wildebeest) Connochaetes gnou Sightings of this endemic species in Golden Gate and Witkoppen

Blue Wildebeest Connochaetes taurinus Good numbers seen in Kruger

Bush Duiker Sylvicapra grimmia Seen on a night drive in Kruger