ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

South Africa

Eastern South Africa II

27th January to 10th February 2023 (15 days)

Western Cape Extension II

10th February to 15th February 2023 (6 days)



Drakensberg Rockjumper by Adam Riley

The provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga on South Africa's eastern seaboard boast some of the country's finest birding as well as exceptional mammal viewing. An impressive 750+ bird species occur within the region, reflecting the incredible natural diversity of the area; and this, coupled with a modern infrastructure well suited to the needs of the modern traveller, makes birding here an absolute delight. From the classic African savanna of the world-renowned Kruger National Park and the teeming Zululand game reserves, to the endemic-rich mist-belt forests of the Natal Midlands and the lofty peaks of the magnificent Drakensberg, this tour of eastern South Africa offers the very best of southern African birding and game viewing!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

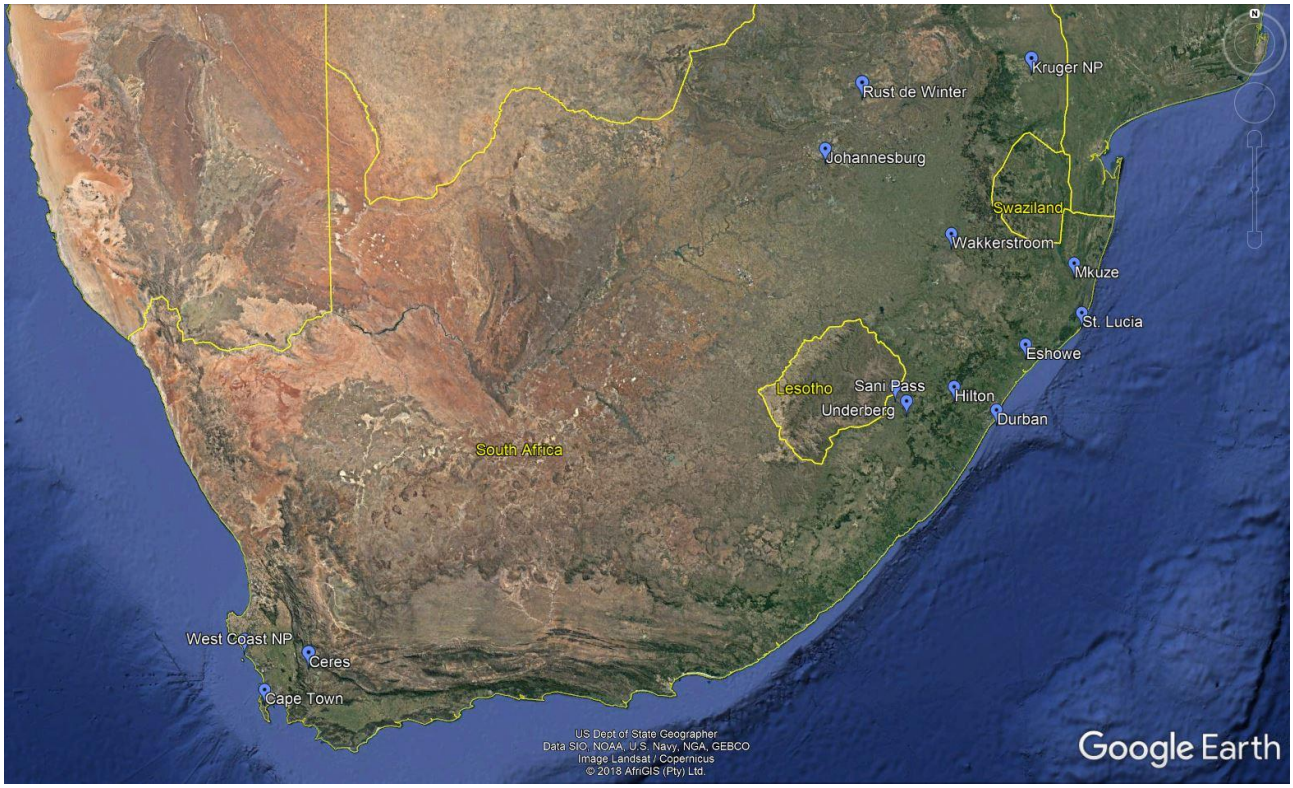
THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Arrival in Johannesburg**
Day 2	**Day trip to Rust de Winter area**
Day 3	**Johannesburg to Kruger National Park**
Days 4 & 5	**Kruger National Park**
Day 6	**Kruger National Park to Wakkerstroom**
Day 7	**Wakkerstroom area**
Day 8	**Wakkerstroom to Mkuze area**
Day 9	**Mkuze**
Day 10	**Mkuze area to St Lucia**
Day 11	**St Lucia and Isimangaliso Wetland Park**
Day 12	**St Lucia to Hilton via Dlinza Forest**
Day 13	**Hilton to Underberg**
Day 14	**Day trip to Sani Pass, Lesotho**
Day 15	**Underberg to Durban (and flight to Cape Town for Extension)**

CAPE EXTENSION

Day 1	**Arrival in Cape Town, visit Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens**
Day 2	**Seabird outing**
Day 3	**Cape Peninsula and surrounds**
Day 4	**Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park**
Day 5	**Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo**
Day 6	**Ceres to Cape Town**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



This itinerary covers different seasons. Please note the below notations:

***** **Summer migrants occurring between late October and early April.**
^ **Species that undergo distinct plumage changes, best viewed between November and March.**

THE TOUR IN DETAIL…

Day 1: Arrival in Johannesburg. After arriving at O.R. Tambo International Airport near the bustling metropolis of Johannesburg, you will transfer to our conveniently located guest lodge. As today is set aside as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time you wish. This evening we will then all get together over a delicious dinner to discuss our forthcoming plans and adventures.



White-throated Robin-Chat by Glen Valentine

Day 2: Day trip to Rust de Winter area. We will depart northwards early this morning for a day trip to the Rust de Winter area. For the remainder of the day, we will explore the rich bushveld on the well-known Zaagkuildrift road. Included in the bounty of bushveld specials are a host of delightful species typical of the dry west, most of which we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere.

Possible highlights along this fabulous road include the outrageous Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared and Black-faced Waxbills, Scaly-feathered Weaver and Red-headed Finch, as well as more widespread species including Abdim's Stork*, Gabar Goshawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Purple Roller, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Marico Flycatcher, Southern Pied and Arrow-marked Babblers, Groundscraper and Karoo Thrushes, Ashy Tit, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Cut-throat Finch, Great Sparrow, beautiful Green-winged Pytilia, Blue Waxbill, Red-billed Firefinch, White-winged Widowbird^, gorgeous Shaft-tailed Whydah^ and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.



Scaly-feathered Finch by Clayton Burne

Eventually we will reach the small village of Kgomo-Kgomo where the main road crosses an extensive floodplain (typically mid to late summer only). During such wet seasons, this can be an excellent area to locate specials such as Allen's Gallinule*, Lesser Moorhen*, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater* and Quailfinch. The surrounding grasslands and fields are often heavily grazed and this provides perfect habitat for Temminck's Courser, Greater Kestrel and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark. After a wonderful conclusion to our South African birding adventure, we then return to Johannesburg to our now familiar accommodations.

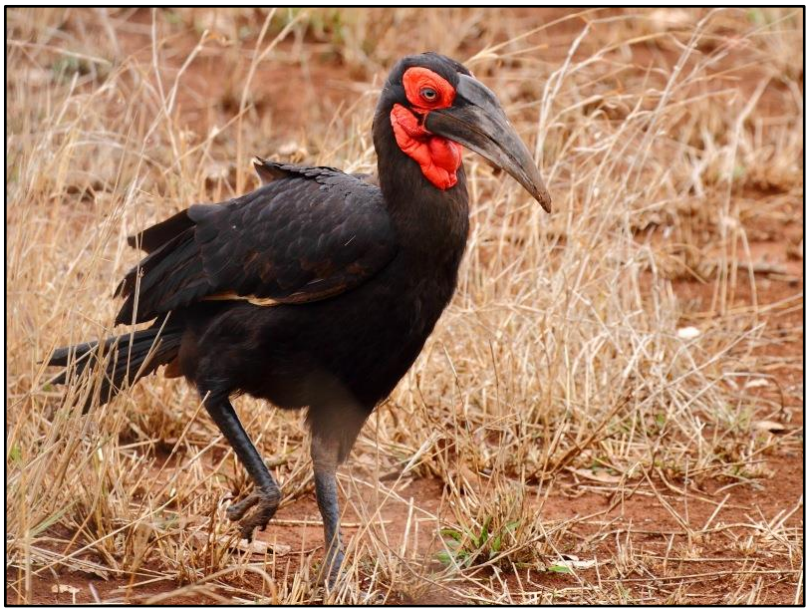
Day 3: Johannesburg to Kruger National Park. This morning we will say goodbye to 'Joburg" and continue our journey towards the incredible Kruger National Park birding en route when time allows.



Crimson-breasted Shrike by Adam Riley

Days 4 & 5: Kruger National Park. The Greater Kruger conservation area includes vast areas of adjacent Mozambique and is one of Africa's most famous parks. We will explore the superb road system in an attempt to locate big game, including the legendary "Big 5" – Lion, African Elephant, Leopard, African Buffalo and Rhinoceros. Kruger will be our best opportunity to watch these spectacular animals in their natural habitat and some of them we may encounter in very large numbers and at very close quarters. Other great African animals we have a chance of finding are Cheetah, African Wild Dog, Common Hippopotamus and a myriad of antelope and other mammals including Giraffe, Plains Zebra, Common Wildebeest, Greater Kudu, Impala, Klipspringer, Bushbuck, Common Warthog, Chacma Baboon, Vervet and Dwarf Mongoose.

The rich bushveld of the Kruger National Park will provide us with some of the most exciting and rewarding birding of the trip. Of special note here are species requiring vast areas of wilderness, namely Common Ostrich, Secretarybird, Kori Bustard – the world's heaviest flying bird, the incomparable Southern Ground Hornbill, Martial Eagle, Bateleur, Marabou and Saddle-billed Storks, and up to five species of vulture. The park is particularly well known for its large variety of raptors, including those over-wintering from the Palaearctic, and we hope to find Lesser Spotted*, Tawny* and Wahlberg's* Eagles, Dark Chanting and Gabar Goshawks, Shikra and Lizard Buzzard.



Southern Ground Hornbill by Glen Valentine

The bushveld biome is famous for its diversity of birdlife and included in this suite of fantastic species are Crested Francolin, Swainson's and Natal Spurfowls, Brown-headed Parrot, exquisite Lilac-breasted Roller, Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, Violet-backed Starling*, rare African Finfoot, Red-crested Korhaan, Black-bellied Bustard, White-crowned Lapwing, Southern Red-billed, Southern Yellow-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Southern White-crowned and Magpie Shrikes and Red-billed Oxpecker.

Other great birds we will look for

include the bizarre, monotypic Hamerkop, African Green Pigeon, Giant Kingfisher, multiple bee-eaters and cuckoos*, Red-faced Mousebird, African Hoopoe, Bennett's, Bearded and Golden-tailed Woodpeckers, Black-collared and Crested Barbets, Brown-crowned and Black-crowned Tchagras, Spotted and Ashy Flycatchers, Southern Black Tit, Sabota Lark, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, Wire-tailed, Red-breasted* and Mosque Swallows, Greater Blue-eared and Burchell's Starlings, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver^ and Spectacled Weaver, among many others!



Leopard by Greg de Klerk

An optional night drive through the park may encounter some of the rarer nocturnal mammals such as African Civet, Common and Central African Large-spotted Genets, Side-striped Jackal, the beautiful Serval, White-tailed Mongoose and Wild Cat, along with several species of owl and nightjar. These include Spotted and Verreaux's Eagle-Owls, African Scops and Southern White-faced Owls, and Square-tailed and Fiery-necked Nightjars.

Day 6: Kruger National Park to Wakkerstroom. We will spend the morning birding around our camp before bidding farewell to the splendours of Kruger. We then move inland to the highveld once again to the country village of Wakkerstroom for a two-night stay. This quaint village is surrounded by pristine upland grasslands rich in endemic birds, many of which are currently threatened by the ongoing destruction of their grassland habitat.

Day 7: Wakkerstroom area. Driving along the network of dirt roads radiating out from Wakkerstroom, we will explore the grasslands, rocky outcrops and gorges of this unique area in search of Southern Bald Ibis, Blue Crane, endemic Blue Korhaan, White-bellied and Denham's Bustards, Ground Woodpecker, Bokmakierie, the rare and localised Botha's and Rudd's Larks (the latter considered one of the world's most endangered larks), Pink-billed, Eastern Long-billed and Eastern Clapper Larks, Mountain Wheatear, Sentinel Rock Thrush, African Rock and Yellow-breasted Pipits, Pied Starling, Quailfinch and Cape Canary. Both Red-winged and Grey-winged Francolins occur in the moist grasslands and we may find coveys feeding at the roadside



Blue Cranes by Greg de Klerk

or sunning themselves at dawn.

Some of the fields in the area around Wakkerstroom support populations of the peculiar Black Wildebeest (also known by its less-used English name of White-tailed Gnu) and Blesbok, whilst smaller mammals occurring in the grasslands include Yellow Mongoose and the rare Cape Fox. One of the other interesting denizens of these grasslands is the curious Suricate, or Meerkat, immortalised in Walt Disney's 'Lion King'. We have a good chance of finding family groups of these unusual animals.



Southern Bald Ibis by Adam Riley

Wakkerstroom is justly famous as one of the best places in the world to see Amur Falcon*(November to March) on their wintering grounds. Having safely navigated their way from eastern Russia and northern China, the majority of the world's population ends up in south-eastern Africa. We can expect hundreds, if not thousands of these small falcons hawking over fields throughout the high-altitude grassland area. It is at dusk though, that the few tall trees in and around Wakkerstroom come alive, with up to 10 000 Amur Falcons and roughly 1000 Lesser Kestrels heading in to roost for the night.

Day 8: Wakkerstroom to Mkuze. We'll spend a few hours birding the highly productive Wakkerstroom marsh at the edge of town. This is a haven for waterbirds and offers the chance of a number of uncommon or localised species. Purple Heron, Little Bittern, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, African Marsh Harrier, African Swamphen, South African Cliff Swallow, Levaillant's Cisticola, Lesser Swamp and African Yellow Warblers, and Cape Weaver are all regular and, with a bit of luck, we may find African Snipe, Red-chested Flufftail and African Rail.

Thereafter, we will drive south to Mkuze, an area in northern KwaZulu-Natal that is home to a host of exciting specials and a handful of endemics. We will arrive in the mid to late afternoon for a two-night stay.



Blue Korhaan by Glen Valentine

The Mkuze area is one of the most productive birding hotspots in southern Africa and, with its wide variety of savanna, forest and wetland habitats, we can expect an excellent diversity of bird and mammal species in our days here.

While we will obviously take time to appreciate the overwhelming number of birds, we will concentrate particularly on finding the localised specials, including Eastern Nicator, Bearded Scrub Robin, Gorgeous

Bushshrike, Lemon-breasted Canary and the stunning Pink-throated Twinspot. More widespread species we will look for are Black-bellied Bustard, the nomadic Senegal Lapwing, beautiful Narina Trogon, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Terrestrial Brownbul, stunning Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Red-capped Robin-Chat and Golden-breasted Bunting.



Pink-throated Twinspot by Adam Riley

Day 9: Mkuze area. We will spend the whole day exploring the wonders of this area, searching the great diversity of habitats for its numerous species. One of the more exciting habitats for us here is sand forest, a rare and localized dry forest biome severely threatened by development. This habitat is home to Neergaard's Sunbird, Rudd's Apalis, funky Crested Guineafowl and the strange African Broadbill.

While in Mkuze we will be sure to enjoy some 'bushveld' birding – an excellent habitat for raptors and 'flock' birding. Here we will be ever-vigilant for the huge Crowned and Martial Eagles, Little Sparrowhawk, Striped Kingfisher, Grey Penduline Tit, Bushveld Pipit, White-fronted and Little Bee-eaters, Black Cuckooshrike, White-crested Helmetshrike, Grey-headed and Orange-breasted Bushshrikes, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Black-bellied Starling, Purple-banded and Marico Sunbirds and Green-winged Pytilia. If conditions permit, we will do a nightwalk or short drive this evening to look for owls, nightjars and small mammals. Thick-tailed Greater Galago and White-tailed Mongoose are often seen.

Day 10: Mkuze to St Lucia. We'll enjoy an early morning birding session around Mkuze, where we'll search for any species that we have missed. The verdant sand forest affords us additional opportunities for Narina Trogon, Gorgeous Bushshrike, Neergaard's Sunbird, Rudd's Apalis and Pink-throated Twinspot, with other possibilities including Tambourine Dove, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, African Yellow White-eye and Grey Sunbird.

Thereafter, we will make our way back to the main coastal road and down to the village of St. Lucia, nestled on the shores of an estuary of the same name and part of South Africa's first world heritage site and the largest estuarine system in Africa.



Woodward's Batis by Glen Valentine

If time allows, upon arrival in St Lucia we will take a drive to the nearby river mouth where we can obtain great views of Common Hippopotamus and Nile Crocodile lazing on the exposed sandbanks. We may also encounter several species of tern and waders here such as Caspian and Greater Crested Terns, White-fronted Plover and Water Thick-knee. The surrounding reedbeds often harbour reasonable numbers of nesting weavers that could include

Southern Brown-throated, Eastern Golden and Thick-billed Weavers.

Day 11: St Lucia and Isimangaliso Wetland Park. This morning we will make our way into the dune forest on the edge of St Lucia town – the dunes here are the world's second highest vegetated dunes! This rich forest supports an exciting variety of endemics and specials, including the beautiful (but tricky) Livingstone's Turaco, Green Malkoha, Woodward's Batis, Brown Scrub Robin, Dark-backed Weaver, Green Twinspot, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Red-backed Mannikin and shy Lemon Dove. Blue Monkey, Natal Red Duiker, Banded Mongoose and Red Bush Squirrel are possible mammal species that we may encounter. Other more widespread birds to keep our eyes peeled for are Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, White-eared Barbet, Lesser Honeyguide and Collared and Olive Sunbirds.



Narina Trogon by Adam Riley

We will also take some time to drive the road through the Eastern Shores section of Isimangaliso Wetland Park to Cape Vidal. The habitats we traverse include moist coastal grassland, wetlands and coastal forest, and this translates to a large number of potential new species! Some of the top birds we will search for in the grassland and forest mosaic include the scarce Southern Banded Snake Eagle, Crowned Eagle, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Rufous-winged and Croaking Cisticolas and Yellow-throated Longclaw, while in the tall coastal forest at Cape Vidal itself we will look for Green Twinspot, Woodward's Batis, Brown Scrub Robin, Livingstone's Turaco and Grey Waxbill.

The grasslands en route support populations of African Buffalo, White and Black Rhinoceroses, Southern Reedbuck, Warthog, Greater Kudu and Plains Zebra, while forested areas hold Natal Red Duiker and Blue Monkey. After our day exploring the park, we will make our way back to St Lucia.



Livingstone's Turaco by Clayton Burne

This evening we will head out on an exciting night drive, traversing the rarely driven tracks deep into the Eastern Shores section of Isimangaliso Wetland Park. An array of birds, mammals and reptiles await us, with previous tours finding the elusive Leopard, Serval, African Buffalo, secretive Bushpig, Spotted Hyena, Cape Porcupine, Side-striped Jackal, Thick-tailed Greater Galago, endemic Setaro's Dwarf and Flap-necked Chameleon and Peter's Epaulleted Fruit Bat. Nocturnal birding can be good, with decent chances of seeing the scarce Swamp Nightjar as well as Fiery-necked and Square-tailed Nightjar, while both Spotted Eagle-Owl and African Wood Owl are readily found.

Day 12: St Lucia to Hilton via Dlinza Forest and Mtunzini. Today we will depart early for Dlinza Forest near Eshowe. The beautiful forest reserve of Dlinza supports an avifauna combining both coastal and mistbelt bird species, and here we will search for African Goshawk, Crowned Eagle, the rare Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, Narina Trogon, Purple-crested Turaco, Crowned and noisy Trumpeter Hornbills, Common Square-tailed Drongo, Chorister Robin-Chat, Grey Cuckooshrike and the highly endangered Spotted Ground Thrush. We are likely to also be entertained by the diminutive and at times surprisingly confiding Blue Duiker, a tiny antelope species that feeds almost exclusively on fallen leaves. South Africa's only forest canopy walkway is situated here and we will spend most of our morning birding from this superb viewpoint.



Spotted Ground Thrush by Glen Valentine

If time allows we will make a quick stop in at the coastal town of Mtunzini where we hope to find Palm-nut Vulture and Black-throated Wattle-eye. Journeying south and then inland we will arrive in the small town of Hilton in the late afternoon.

Day 13: Hilton to Underberg. We commence our birding this morning in the Karkloof, a range of forested hills near Howick that is home to a number of uncommon and local birds restricted to Afro-montane forests. We will be searching for southern African endemics such as Forest Buzzard, Knysna Turaco, the highly endangered Cape Parrot, elusive Bush Blackcap, Barratt's Warbler, Olive Bushshrike, Swee Waxbill and Forest Canary, as well as many more widespread yet no less desirable birds including Long-crested Eagle, African Olive Pigeon, Olive Woodpecker, African Emerald Cuckoo, Black-headed Oriole, the uncommon Orange Ground Thrush, Cape Batis, White-starred Robin, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Red-backed Mannikin, Red-collared Widowbird^ and Brimstone Canary.



Cape Parrot by Glen Valentine

Further up the Karkloof range, we visit a pristine area of upland grassland where breeding Grey Crowned and Blue Cranes and, if we are lucky, Wattled Crane can sometimes be found. Black-winged Lapwing, Fan-tailed Grassbird and Cape Longclaw also occur here, but the star bird is undoubtedly the striking Buff-streaked Chat, an endemic wheatear that is striking both in appearance and song. Mammal possibilities include Mountain Reedbuck and the sleek Oribi antelope.

Next, we will head for the Richmond area where we will attempt to track down the stunning Blue Swallow*, undoubtedly our most elegant and severely threatened swallow. The birds regularly breed here in the summer months and our chances of finding this rare species are very good.



Buff-streaked Chat by Adam Riley

Continuing on we will pass through the dramatic Umkomaas River valley before arriving at a wonderfully lush patch of Mistbelt forest in the late afternoon. Here we will listen for the high-pitched screech of the similarly rare Cape Parrot and attempt to locate flocks as they make their way into the forest to roost. Other species to keep a look-out for include Black Saw-wing and Southern Double-collared Sunbird, with further chances for Knysna Turaco, Grey Cuckooshrike, White-starred Robin, Swee Waxbill and Forest Canary. We will then wind our way along a scenic country road to the small town of Underberg at the base of the majestic Drakensberg Mountains.

Day 14: Day trip up Sani Pass, Lesotho. Today we travel up into the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho in search of a handful of highly localised highland endemics. In order to do this, we will transfer to 4 x 4 vehicles and make our way up the rugged and spectacular Sani Pass, birding en route.

The grassy slopes and rocky outcrops on the ascent are home to the bizarre Ground Woodpecker, Drakensberg Prinia, African Yellow Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock Thrush and Yellow Bishop^, whilst stands of protea bushes support the impressive Gurney's Sugarbird (belonging to a family endemic to southern Africa) and Malachite and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. As we approach the crest of the escarpment, we will be scanning the rocky scree at the roadside for the stunning Drakensberg Rockjumper, African Rock Pipit, Sentinel Rock Thrush and Drakensberg Siskin.



Malachite Sunbird by Adam Riley

Atop the plateau, the steep slopes and rugged cliffs are replaced by gently undulating terrain and endless vistas of distant, blue mountains. Mountain Pipit*, Black Stork, African Black Duck and Southern Bald Ibis may be found alongside the mountain streams, whilst Grey-winged Francolin, Red-capped Lark, Sickle-winged Chat, Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting prefer adjacent meadows.

A number of birds more typical of the Karoo, such as Grey Tit, Layard's Warbler and Fairy Flycatcher, Large-billed Lark and Karoo Prinia reach the eastern limits of their range here in the Lesotho highlands. We will also keep a careful watch skywards as the endangered Cape Vulture, magnificent Bearded Vulture, Verreauxs' Eagle, Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon and White-necked Raven are regularly seen overhead. Other animals of particular interest atop the "Roof of Africa" are the approachable Sloggett's Vlei

Rat, endemic Drakensberg Crag Lizard and the colourful Southern Rock Agama.

Day 15: Underberg to Durban and onward flight. Today we depart early for Durban to connect with our onward flights, or else to Cape Town if you choose to do the Cape Extension.

Cape Extension



Cape Rockjumper (male) by Clayton Burne

Those who decide to do the Cape Extension will be treated to a feast of endemics and the remarkable beauty of the south-western Cape. The Mother City, Cape Town, widely considered one of the world's most beautiful cities, will be our base for the first three nights of the extension. From here we will range out to explore the varied ecosystems conveniently accessible from our comfortable accommodations. We will then make our way up the west coast where we will explore the dry country riches of the Tanqua Karoo to round off this unbeatable South African adventure.



Cape Sugarbird by Hugh Chittenden

Day 1: Arrival in Cape Town. We arrive in Cape Town in the early afternoon and begin our exploration of the picturesque Cape Peninsula at one of the local birding hotspots. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens lies on the slopes of Table Mountain and is home to a plethora of endemics restricted to the Macchia-like fynbos vegetation of the southern tip of Africa: Cape Spurfowl scurry across the lawns, the magnificent protea gardens are home to spectacular Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird, both of which are South African endemics, whilst Cape Bulbul, Olive Thrush, the

attractive Cape Grassbird, Karoo Prinia, Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou and Southern Double-collared Sunbird may be found in areas of denser cover.

We will watch out for African Goshawk and Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, which occasionally display above the indigenous forest that cloaks the slopes above the gardens. These forests are also home to African Olive Pigeon, Lemon Dove, Cape Batis and Forest Canary.



Cape Petrel by Adam Riley

Day 2: Seabird outing. The cold upwelling of the Benguela current off Cape Town supports a wealth of pelagic seabirds, with vast concentrations of albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters and prions gathering in the deeper water at the edge of the continental shelf. Birding is excellent year-round and we hope to see Indian Yellow-nosed, Atlantic Yellow-nosed, Shy and Black-browed Albatrosses, Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, Cape and White-chinned Petrels, Sooty Shearwater, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Antarctic Prion, Brown Skua and Cape Gannet. If we manage to locate one of the commercial fishing trawlers the birding can be truly spectacular, with a cloud of seabirds following in the wake of the vessel to feed on the fish offal. Once the excitement has subsided, we will carefully search through the thousands of birds present for rarities such as Wandering, Northern and Southern Royal Albatrosses and Spectacled Petrel. Cetaceans are almost always encountered and we have a good chance of seeing Bryde's and Southern Right Whales. It goes without saying that a day off the Cape is likely to be a highlight of any trip to South Africa!

If time permits and depending on how tired we are after the pelagic trip, we will have the option of visiting the nearby nature reserve of Jonkersdam. This picturesque little nature reserve situated between Simon's Town and Noordhoek protects a large tract of pristine fynbos habitat that harbours a number of fynbos endemics such as Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird and Cape Siskin, as well as other noteworthy species like Cape Grassbird, Malachite and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, Bokmakierie and Karoo Prinia.



Protea Canary by Clayton Burne

Please note: it is not unusual for the pelagic tour to be cancelled as a result of bad weather. Furthermore, the weather and ocean conditions off the Cape are extremely unpredictable, so our daily schedule will thus remain flexible to optimise our birding on both land and at sea.

Day 3: Cape Peninsula and surrounds. A diverse array of birding habitats is present around Cape Town and today we will visit a variety of sites, ranging from wetlands to

fynbos and marine shoreline.



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Adam Riley

Making our way early to the rugged Hottentots-Holland Mountains, we will search for one of South Africa's finest endemics: the handsome Cape Rockjumper. Though strikingly plumaged and conspicuous by their vocalisations, these charismatic birds possess an incredible ability to disappear amongst the boulders and we may have to be patient if we wish to enjoy long sightings of these elusive creatures. The thick mountain fynbos is the favoured habitat of Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Siskin and the beautiful, endemic Victorin's Warbler, while other species including Verreaux's Eagle, Grey-backed Cisticola and Ground Woodpecker are also found in the area. Chacma Baboon is fairly common here, but we will have to scan the rocky ridges carefully for the agile Klipspringer.

Whilst in Betty's Bay we will also visit the famous African Penguin colony at Stony Point. Here we will enjoy the spectacle of hundreds of penguins waddling about on the beach and rocks at extremely close range, which makes for superb photographic opportunities. We will also keep a lookout for the endemic African Oystercatcher along the adjacent rocky shoreline, and scan through the masses of nesting cormorants for all four species of South African coastal cormorants: Crowned, Bank, Cape and White-breasted.

After enjoying this spectacle, we will pay a visit to the nearby Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. A smaller version of Kirstenbosch, these beautifully appointed gardens support a wealth of fynbos specialties like Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird and Cape Siskin and is a particularly good site to see the skulking, endemic Victorin's Warbler. We are also likely to encounter a range of other noteworthy and eye-catching species like Cape and Brimstone Canaries, Karoo Prinia, Swee Waxbill, Cape Batis, Bar-throated Apalis, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Robin-Chat, African Dusky and Fiscal Flycatchers, Olive Thrush and Sombre Greenbul.



Rufous-eared Warbler by Clayton Burne

If time allows, we will spend the late afternoon at the productive Strandfontein Water Works. The network of settling ponds here usually supports large numbers of waterbirds of many different varieties and we are likely to encounter good numbers of Cape Shoveler, Cape Teal, Southern Pochard and Red-knobbed Coot, as well as Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Common Moorhen, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, Greater Crested Tern, Grey and Black-headed Herons, Yellow-billed

Duck and Red-billed Teal. If we are fortunate and depending upon the water levels of the pans, we may also find small numbers of Maccoa Duck, Hottentot Teal and South African Shelduck. The surrounding reedbeds harbour Lesser Swamp Warbler as well as Levaillant's Cisticola. In the late afternoon we will make our way back to our now-familiar and very comfortable accommodation on the Cape Peninsula.



Black Harrier by Adam Riley

Day 4: Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park. Our first site of interest today is the West Coast National Park. Although wader numbers are much reduced when compared to our summer months, we still will check the exposed banks of Langebaan Lagoon for lingering Eurasian Curlew*, Ruddy Turnstone*, Curlew Sandpiper* and resident Kittlitz's Plover. In addition to the shorebirds, these areas also support large numbers of Greater Flamingo, Pied Avocet and Cape Shoveler as well as smaller numbers of Lesser Flamingo, South African Shelduck and Cape Teal. The surrounding short, coastal vegetation – strandveld, is home to the endemic Southern Black Korhaan, Grey-winged Francolin, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline Tit, Karoo Lark, Capped Wheatear, Fiscal Flycatcher, Karoo Scrub Robin and the magnificent Black Harrier, surely one of the world's most attractive raptors. In the late afternoon we will make the drive through to the farming village of Ceres, gateway to the Tanqua Karoo.

Day 5: Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo. Just a short drive from the village of Ceres is the semi-arid, central plateau of South Africa known as the Karoo; a land of endless vistas and spectacular sunsets, renowned for its endemic larks, chats and canaries. We leave the famous fruit-growing valley of Ceres before reaching our first stop at Karoopoort, a narrow canyon that forms the gateway to the Succulent Karoo. Birds inhabiting the arid, rocky slopes and acacia-filled watercourses of this area include White-backed Mousebird, Acacia Pied Barbet, Mountain Wheatear, Layard's and Chestnut-vented Warblers, the dainty Fairy Flycatcher and Pririt Batis, whilst the adjacent reedbeds are home to the endemic Namaqua Warbler. One of the area's most charismatic birds is the highly localised Cinnamon-breasted Warbler. Though fairly vocal, this species is highly elusive and seeing it in its



Greater Flamingo by Adam Riley

habitat of jumbled boulders and rocky scree will require a combination of patience and perseverance.

Continuing northwards onto the open flats of the Karoo, we will watch the roadsides carefully for Karoo and Spike-heeled Larks, Tractrac, Sickle-winged and Karoo Chats, the elusive Karoo Eremomela, Rufous-eared Warbler and Yellow and White-throated Canaries. Pale Chanting Goshawk and Rock Kestrel perch conspicuously on any vantage points and, if we are lucky, we may find Booted Eagle or Lanner Falcon. We will also stop to listen for the distinctive flight calls of Namaqua Sandgrouse as well as look for the cryptically coloured Karoo Korhaan. If very fortunate, we may even see the nomadic Ludwig's Bustard striding through the desolate plains.

Day 6: Ceres to Cape Town and depart. This morning we have the opportunity to target one final endemic species, the range-restricted Protea Canary. This uncommon and local bird is fairly regularly seen on the high protea-clad mountain slopes above Ceres and we will spend time at key positions listening for its distinctive call. The moist gullies here also hold a few other endemics such as the skulking Victorin's Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Sugarbird and Bokmakierie. After our morning's birding we will then depart from Ceres for Cape Town International Airport, where the tour will conclude.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 15 for those on the main tour, and from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 for those on the Cape Extension;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Extra activities as mentioned in the itinerary; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY flights** (see above);
- Optional Night drive in Kruger National Park;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBT cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

Special Notes:

- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover long distances in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of yourself and your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- Exiting the vehicle is prohibited in all areas and parks that contain dangerous animals.
- Please note that the seas during the pelagic trips off the Cape can be rough and participants who opt for this pelagic must therefore bear this in mind. If you have any medical conditions or physical limitations relating to balance and mobility, please do let the RBT office know.
- The Cape Pelagic is weather dependent, and has a departure potential of around 60%. If we are unable to head out to sea, we will bird other localities on the Cape Peninsula.
- Crime is problematic in certain areas of South Africa. Exercise caution as you would for any big city where crime exists. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include ANY airfares. The tour will commence with an introductory dinner at our lodgings in Johannesburg on day 1. Please ensure that you arrive in advance of this time. The tour will conclude by midday at King Shaka International Airport, Durban on day 15.

The Cape Extension will depart from Cape Town International Airport in the early afternoon of day 1 after an internal flight from Durban. The tour will conclude by midday of day 6 at Cape Town International Airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB) is the main port of entry for international flights in South Africa and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. King Shaka International Airport, Durban (IATA: DUR) and Cape Town International Airport, Cape Town (IATA: CPT) are easily reached by many direct international flights or via an internal flight via Johannesburg. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**