South Africa

Mega



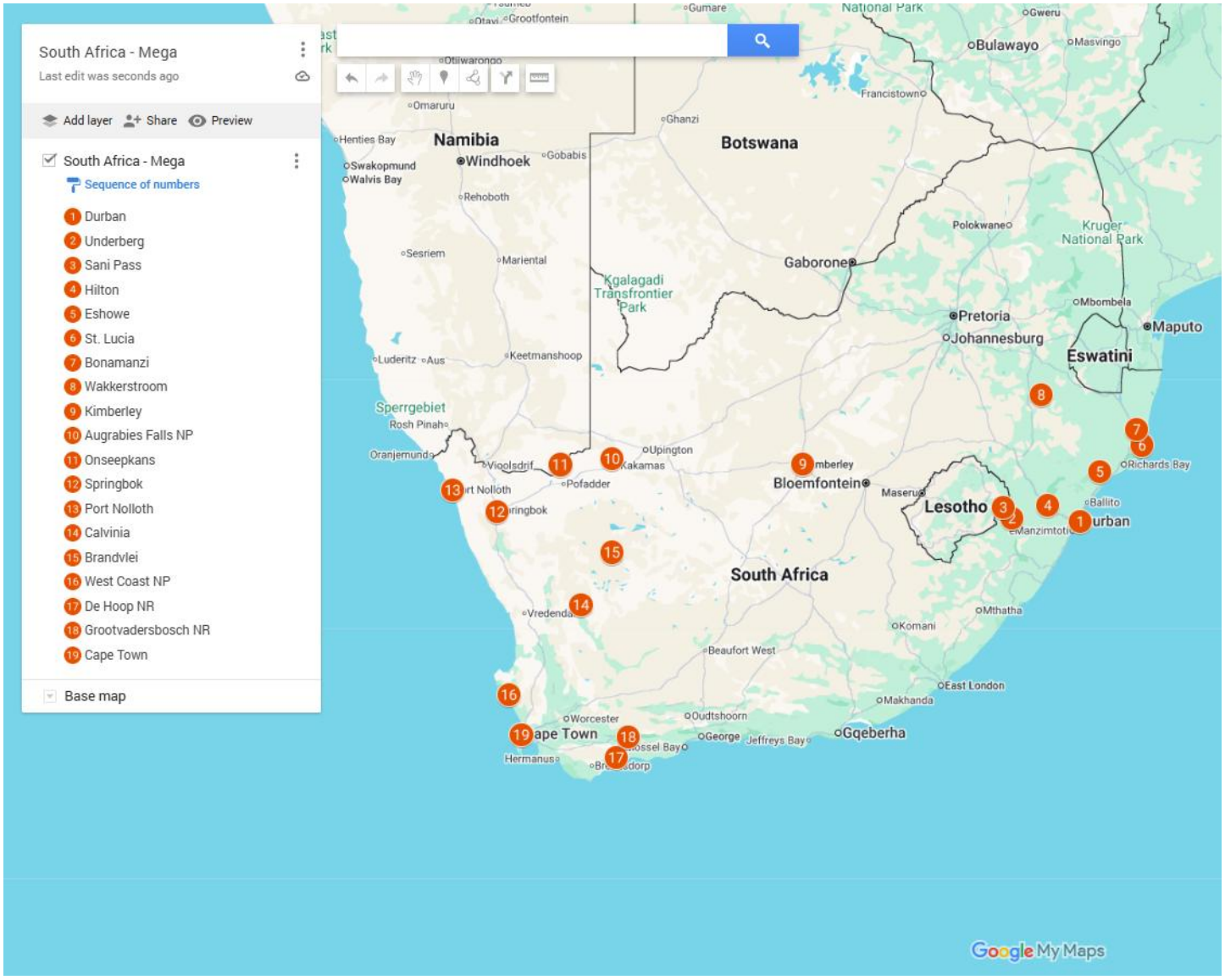
Cape Rockjumper by Adam Riley

South Africa has the highest number of endemic and near-endemic bird species of any country on the African continent. Some of these special birds such as Drakensberg Rockjumper and Blue Crane – are beautiful and charismatic; while others, including the Cinnamon-breasted and Knysna Warblers are less striking but range-restricted. To boot, South Africa is also home to two very impressive endemic families, the striking Rockjumpers and Sugarbirds.

The focus of this 22-day endemics mega-birding tour is to see as many of these South African endemic, breeding endemic and near-endemic species as possible. Every single one of the 99 birds falling into this category as well as most of the 78 species falling into the category of endemic or near-endemic to the southern African sub-region are targeted during the tour. Furthermore, we will seek out many other special and sought-after African species; and, in the course of this tour, we have the potential to rack up a very impressive bird list in terms of species numbers, rarities and great sightings. Mammals will likewise form a major focus of our attention, and we can expect to also find an incredible diversity of reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife. We invite you to join us on this exciting celebration of our endemic treasures during this ultimate South African mega-birding adventure!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Cape Town**
Day 2	**Cape Peninsula & surrounds**
Day 3	**Cape Town to De Hoop Nature Reserve**
Day 4	**Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve & De Hoop Nature Reserve**
Day 5	**De Hoop De Hoop Nature Reserve to Langebaan**
Day 6	**Langebaan to Calvinia via West Coast National Park**
Day 7	**Brandvlei & Calvinia**
Day 8	**Calvinia to Springbok via Porth Nolloth**
Day 9	**Springbok to Augrabies Falls National Park via Onseepkans**
Day 10	**Augrabies Falls National Park to Kimberley**
Day 11	**Kimberley area**
Day 12	**Kimberley to Wakkerstroom**
Day 13	**Wakkerstroom area**
Day 14	**Wakkerstroom to Mkuze Game Reserve area**
Day 15	**Mkuze Game Reserve area**
Day 16	**Mkuze Game Reserve area to St. Lucia**
Day 17	**St. Lucia to Eshowe**
Day 18	**Eshowe to Hilton**
Day 19	**Hilton to Underberg via the Karkloof**
Day 20	**Sani Pass & Lesotho**
Day 21	**Underberg to Durban**
Day 22	**Final departure**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Sequence of numbers
1 Durban
2 Underberg
3 Sani Pass
4 Hilton
5 Eshowe
6 St. Lucia
7 Bonamanzi
8 Wakkerstroom
9 Kimberley
10 Augrabies Falls NP
11 Onseepkans
12 Springbok
13 Port Nolloth
14 Calvinia
15 Brandvlei
16 West Coast NP
17 De Hoop NR
18 Grootvadersbosch NR
19 Cape Town
Base map
Namibia
Windhoek
Botswana
Gaborone
Pretoria
Johannesburg
Eswatini
Maputo
Bulawayo
Lesotho
Bloemfontein
South Africa
Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park
Kruger National Park
Sperrgebiet
Google My Maps

Birding sites in detail

Richmond area. The Richmond area has tracts of undisturbed montane grassland, a very rare habitat type nowadays due to the proliferation of exotic tree plantations. Here we will attempt to track down the stunning Blue Swallow, severely threatened due to habitat loss and undoubtedly our most elegant swallow. The birds regularly breed here in the summer months and our chances of finding this rare species are very good.



Southern Double-collared Sunbird by Wade Lee

Bulwer area. The Bulwer area has some large, remnant patches of Mistbelt forest. Here we will listen for the high-pitched screech of the 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.

Sani Pass & Lesotho. We'll spend the day travelling into the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho in search of a handful of highly localised, highland endemics. 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 family groups of 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 dazzling 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.



Ground Woodpecker by Clayton Burne

Atop the plateau, the steep slopes and rugged cliffs are replaced by gently undulating terrain and endless vistas of distant, blue mountains. 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, African Rock and Mountain Pipits, Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting prefer adjacent meadows. Several birds more typical of the Karoo, such as Grey Tit, Layard's Warbler, 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, Verreaux's Eagle, Jackal Buzzard,

Lanner Falcon, and White-necked Raven are regularly seen overhead, along with fast-flying flocks of African Black and Alpine Swifts. 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.



Drakensberg Rockjumper by Adam Riley

Karkloof. the Karkloof is a range of forested hills near Howick that is home to several 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.

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.

Dlinza Forest. The verdant Dlinza Forest is situated on the outskirts of Eshowe. Our targets here may not be endemic, but they are certainly very special. Spotted Ground Thrush, for instance, has a patchy distribution and is a very uncommon species throughout its range. We will also amble along the Dlinza canopy walkway to locate the very uncommon and sparsely distributed Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon.



Rudd's Apalis by Glen Valentine

Ngoye Forest. One of the most beautiful of Zululand's forests is the storied Ngoye forest. This majestic forest enjoys an important place in Zulu history and is a very important site for birders. This is the only place in the world where one can find the endemic subspecies of Green Barbet (Woodward's Barbet). The nearest place to spot the nominate race is hundreds of miles away in northern Mozambique and this, coupled with plumage and song differences, have led many to believe that this is a 'full' species. Ngoye is also a good site for Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Brown Scrub Robin, Southern Ground Hornbill, Grey-rumped Swallow, African Green Pigeon, and White-eared Barbet.

Mtunzini. The small town of Mtunzini looks down on a wonderful patch of coastal forest and a large plantation of Raffia palms. These palms are an intricate part of the life of the Palm-nut Vulture, and this represents the southern breeding limit of this species. Other target specials include Black-throated Wattle-eye and a chance for African Finfoot.

St. Lucia area. We'll bird a small patch of forest that flanks the St Lucia estuary, an excellent site for the regional endemics such as Woodward's Batis, Rudd's Apalis, Brown Scrub Robin and Livingstone's Turaco. Other birds to look out for here include the iridescent African Emerald Cuckoo, the scarce Southern Banded Snake Eagle, Lemon and Tambourine Doves, Grey Waxbill, Red-backed Mannikin, Narina Trogon and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird.



Green Barbet by Clayton Burne

Mkuze. 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, you can expect an excellent diversity of bird and mammal species in your days here. While we will take time to appreciate the overwhelming number of birds, we will concentrate particularly on finding the region's more localised specials. These include Eastern Nicator, Bearded Scrub Robin, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, Gorgeous Bushshrike and the stunning Pink-throated Twinspot. More widespread but none-the-less spectacular species that we will look for are Black-bellied Bustard with its strange, "cork-popping" display, the nomadic Senegal Lapwing and beautiful Narina Trogon.

One of the more exciting habitats for us here is the park's 'sand forest', a rare and localised dry forest severely threatened by development. This habitat is home to Neergaard's Sunbird, Rudd's Apalis, the rather bizarre looking Crested Guineafowl, and the strange African Broadbill with its unique circular display. One of Africa's smallest antelope, the tiny, habitat specific Suni, also occurs in Mkuze's sand forest but we would be fortunate to encounter one of these shy mammals.



Pink-throated Twinspot by Adam Riley

The ephemeral wetlands in the area can be very productive after good rains, and depending on the local conditions we may opt for some time at one of these 'pans' where we will search for Black Heron, Lesser Jacana, African Pygmy Goose and White-backed Duck.

While in Mkuze we will be sure to enjoy some 'bushveld' birding – an excellent habitat for raptors and 'flock' birding especially. Here we will be ever vigilant for the huge Crowned and Martial Eagles, Little Sparrowhawk, Grey Penduline Tit, Bushveld Pipit, White-fronted and Little Bee-eaters, White-crested Helmetshrike, Southern Black Tit, Burchell's Coucal,

Grey-headed and Orange-breasted Bushshrikes, White-throated Robin-Chat, Purple-banded and Marico Sunbirds, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow and if we are extremely lucky, the scarce and unpredictable Lemon-breasted Canary.



Livingstone's Turaco by Clayton Burne

Mkuze is also an excellent reserve to see some of Africa's classic mammals and species like Plains Zebra, Giraffe, Bushbuck, Common Duiker, handsome Nyala, impressive Greater Kudu, Chacma Baboon, Vervet, Common Wildebeest, Impala and White Rhinoceros are all likely to be encountered during our time here. Rarer species that we may be lucky to see include Cheetah, Leopard, Black Rhinoceros and African Elephant.

An evening walk and/or drive could produce African Wood Owl, Square-tailed and Fiery-necked Nightjars as well as small nocturnal mammals like Thick-tailed Greater Galago and White-tailed Mongoose.

Wakkerstroom. The grasslands and hills surrounding the small town of Wakkerstroom are a centre for avian endemism and are critical for the survival of several range-restricted species. We will make a full exploration of the grasslands and a highly productive marsh at the edge of town.

The marsh is a haven for waterbirds and offers the chance of several uncommon or localised species. Purple Heron, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, African Swamphen, South African Cliff Swallow, Levaillant's Cisticola and Cape Weaver are all regular, and we should also find African Snipe and the elusive African Rail. Rarely recorded species seen here on our previous trips include the secretive Baillon's Crake, Red-chested Flufftail and even Western Marsh and Montagu's Harriers.



Southern Bald Ibis by Adam Riley

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 some of the countries most threatened and range-restricted endemics, along with numerous other widespread but no less exciting species. These include Southern Bald Ibis, Blue Korhaan, White-bellied Bustard, Jackal Buzzard, the rare and localised Botha's and Rudd's Larks (see note at end of itinerary), Pink-billed, Eastern Long-billed and Eastern Clapper Larks, Ground Woodpecker, Ant-eating and Buff-streaked Chats, Sentinel Rock Thrush,

African Rock and Yellow-breasted Pipits, Cape Longclaw, Pied Starling, the spectacular Long-tailed Widowbird, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Quailfinch and Cape Canary. Red-winged Francolin is fairly common in the moist grasslands, and we may find them feeding at the roadside or sunning themselves at dawn. Small mammals occurring in the grasslands include Yellow Mongoose and the rare Cape Fox. One of the more interesting denizens of these grasslands is the curious Suricate, or Meerkat, immortalized in Disney's 'Lion King'. We have a good chance of finding family groups of these unusual yet delightful animals.



Blue Crane by Greg de Klerk

Wakkerstroom is justly famous as one of the best places in the world to see Amur Falcon on their wintering grounds. Having safely navigated their way from eastern Russia and northern China, most of the 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 1 000 Lesser Kestrels heading in to roost for the night.

Kimberley. Our lodge is located on a private safari lodge close to the fabled diamond mining town of Kimberley. Birding around our lodge could turn up a host of dry country species such as Ashy Tit, pretty Violet-eared Waxbill, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Eastern Clapper and Fawn-colored Larks, Gabar Goshawk, Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters, Pririt Batis, the stunning, Black-faced Waxbill and even a possibility for the nomadic Burchell's Courser.



Amur Falcon by Clayton Burne

In the evening we will head out on night drive to search for some of the more difficult nocturnal species of the area. The amazing Aardvark tops the list of targets in the area, while other highlights include the endearing Aardwolf, the rare Black-footed Cat, Cape Porcupine, African Wild Cat, South African Hedgehog, the unusual Springhare and even Zorilla. Night birds include Spotted Eagle-, Western Barn and Marsh Owls and the migratory Rufous-cheeked Nightjar. On previous night-drives here, we have recorded over 25 mammal species in a single evening! Night birds include Spotted Eagle-, Western Barn and Marsh Owls and the migratory Rufous-cheeked Nightjar.

Vaalbos National Park. This small national park to the north of Kimberley holds productive savanna and grassland habitat. Our primary purpose for visiting is to search for the near endemic Short-clawed Lark. Whislt we search for the lark, we are likely to come across Buffy Pipit, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Northern Black Korhaan and Eastern Clapper Lark.



Aardvark by Adam Walleyn

Augrabies Falls National Park. Augrabies Falls is part of a linear oasis in the desert formed by the mighty Orange River, South Africa's largest waterway which plunges over the 100m high Augrabies Falls, scouring an impressive gorge on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. The national park, centred on the falls, protects a range of bird-rich habitats, and we will search the riparian vegetation and dry acacia-filled watercourses for Red-necked Spurfowl (an isolated population well west of its usual range), Rosy-faced Lovebird, White-backed and Red-faced Mousebirds, Acacia Pied Barbet, Karoo Thrush, Black-chested Prinia, Pririt Batis, Dusky Sunbird, African Red-eyed Bulbul, the attractive, apricot-flanked Orange River White-eye and Black-throated Canary.

The apparently desolate, boulder-strewn landscapes away from the river are also well-worth exploring for Mountain Wheatear and Familiar Chat and, if we are lucky, Short-toed Rock Thrush. Although big game is not plentiful in this arid park, we should see the sure-footed Klipspringer and the unusual Dassie Rat, while Rock Hyraxes are numerous and can frequently be seen browsing fresh leaves atop flimsy acacia bushes! The highly localised, brightly coloured Augrabies Flat Lizard is also conspicuous along the walls of the gorge. We will be scanning the skies constantly, as the rocky gorges below the falls are home to Verreauxs' Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Kestrel, and large numbers of Alpine and the endemic Bradfield's Swifts.

Pofadder to Onseepkans. The gravel plains surrounding Pofadder are home to Sclater's, Karoo Long-billed and Stark's Larks. The immense communal nests of Sociable Weavers are also conspicuous on telephone poles in this area and these colonies frequently host "tenants" such as Pygmy Falcon and Red-headed Finch.



Cinnamon-breasted Warbler by Adam Riley

Travelling towards the border town of Onseepkans, we'll scan the gravel plains for Fawn-colored Lark, Burchell's Courser and Black-headed Canary.

The small town itself sits on the banks of the mighty Orange River, and in contrast to the barren plains we've passed through, here we'll find tall palm trees and irrigated farmland. This is one of the few sites in South Africa to host Rosy-faced Lovebird, whilst we

should also find Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters, Black-throated Canary, African Red-eyed Bulbul and Namaqua Warbler.

Aggenys. The red sand dunes around Aggenys are a good location for the dune form of Red Lark.

Goegap Nature Reserve. The rocky slopes and acacia lined watercourses give us great chances of finding many of the more difficult Karoo endemics. These include the highly localised Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Karoo Eremomela, Layard's and Chestnut-vented Warblers, Dusky Sunbird and Black-headed and (Damara) Canaries.



Karoo Eremomela by Clayton Burne

Port Nolloth. The diamond-mining town of Port Nolloth is a small town nestled near the Namibian border on South Africa's west coast. This area is famous for a single species of lark that is found only here and in the extreme south of Namibia: Barlow's Lark. Another endemic lark that is found in this low coastal scrub is the impressive Cape Long-billed Lark, an outrageous species with the longest bill of any Southern African lark. Cape Penduline Tit can also be found feeding while little groups move from bush to bush. The road that gives access to the Dune (Barlow's) Lark habitat runs up the Atlantic coastline; however, most of the road passes through restricted diamond areas, and no stopping is allowed except for the first few kilometres where we may alight from the vehicles. Along the coastline we could enjoy sightings of Crowned, Bank and Cape Cormorants, Kelp Gull, and the smart African Oystercatcher.

Calvinia area. The Calvinia area is part of the Karoo proper, with a whole host of special birds now possible on the desolate plains around town. These include Pririt Batis in taller vegetation, Karoo, and Spike-heeled Larks, Tractrac, Sickle-winged and Karoo Chats, Rufous-eared Warbler, Yellow and White-throated Canaries and Pale Chanting Goshawk. If very fortunate we may see the nomadic Ludwig's Bustard striding through the desolate plains. The usually dry river system that passes through the town will also form the focus of our attention, as the reedbeds here are home to the endemic Namaqua Warbler (assigned to a monotypic genus, *Phragmacia*).



Ludwig's Bustard by Adam Riley

We also have the opportunity of venturing out this evening in search of desert denizens such as Bat-eared and Cape Foxes, Wild Cat, the bizarre Aardwolf, and the strange, kangaroo-like Springhare. Nocturnal birds here include Spotted Eagle-Owl, Western Barn Owl, and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar.



Cape Sugarbird by Greg de Klerk

Brandvlei. The Brandvlei area is home to a number of scarce inhabitants. Upon leaving Calvinia we will keep a look out for flocks of Pale-winged Starlings. Three species of lark will be at the top of the hit-list, namely Red Lark, a striking and exceedingly range-restricted endemic, and the highly nomadic Sclater's and Stark's Larks. We also have a good chance of seeing Karoo Long-billed Lark and Black-eared and Grey-backed Sparrow-Larks. Some of the many star birds of the region include other nomadic species such as Burchell's Courser, while Grey Tit, Bokmakierie, Grey-backed Cisticola, Chat Flycatcher and Pririt Batis should be less of a challenge to find. We will also listen for the distinctive flight calls of Namaqua Sandgrouse and the strange, dawn croaking of the Karoo Korhaan, which will help us locate these cryptically coloured birds. Some wonderful non-endemic species are also bound to capture our attention and the magnificent Martial Eagle, Lanner Falcon, Kori Bustard and Double-banded Courser are all likely. Today is also our first chance at finding Dusky Sunbird, Tractrac Chat and Lark-like Bunting, while we will make a concerted effort to locate a party of elusive Karoo Eremomela.

Paleisheuwel. This is arguably the best site for the tricky Protea Canary. Other birds of interest here are White-backed Mousebird, Layard's and Chestnut-vented Warblers, the dainty Fairy Flycatcher, Acacia Pied Barbet and Mountain Wheatear.



Protea Canary by Clayton Burne

West Coast National Park. West Coast National Park which is host to the globally important wetland sites of the Berg River estuary and Langebaan Lagoon. Our quest will be dedicated mainly to locating larks. We will stop along the way to search for Cape Clapper Lark, a localised species that favours coastal vegetation called *strandveld*, which is stunted by the salty air from the icy Atlantic.

Large numbers of waders spend the northern winter here and we will scan for Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Greater Sand Plover, and Eurasian Curlew, as well as Kittlitz's and the localised Chestnut-banded Plovers. In addition to

the shorebirds, these areas also support large numbers of Greater and Lesser Flamingos, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler and numerous other waterfowl. The surrounding *strandveld* is home to Southern Black Korhaan, Grey-winged Francolin, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline Tit, Karoo Lark, Capped Wheatear, Fiscal Flycatcher, and the magnificent Black Harrier, surely one of the world's most attractive raptors.



Victorin's Warbler by Daniel Danckwerts

Overberg. Our drive through the wheat lands of the Overberg region takes us on a very scenic coastal route where we can enjoy breath-taking views of False Bay and the Indian Ocean. This area is home to several stunning birds, none more so than South Africa's national bird, the Blue Crane, which is occasionally seen here in very large flocks. Other exciting and noteworthy species we will keep an eye out for along the way include Cape (Agulhas) Long-billed Lark, Southern Black Korhaan and Denham's Bustard.

De Hoop Nature Reserve. The approach to the De Hoop Nature Reserve through a series of fallow wheat fields is the ideal place to search for Cape Clapper Lark and Southern Tchagra. The endemic Cape sub-species of Mountain Zebra are refreshingly common here and we may also encounter the shy Cape Grysbok. A nearby patch of woodland houses the most sought-after woodpecker in the country, Knysna Woodpecker. This rather secretive endemic can be very difficult to find - patience and a little luck will be needed to track it down. Further bonuses are the possibility for three honeyguide species, namely Greater and Lesser Honeyguides and Brown-backed Honeybird, as well as a chance for Hottentot Buttonquail.

Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve. The 250 hectares of extensive forest protected by this beautiful nature reserve harbours a wealth of species more characteristic of South Africa's eastern forests, many of which reach their western limit of their range here. Grootvadersbosch proudly boasts the Western Cape's richest diversity of birds and during our time here we'll explore the forest trails in search of some very desirable species such as the sensational Narina Trogon, the incredibly skulking and endemic Knysna Warbler, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, noisy, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Terrestrial Brownbul, Olive Bushshrike, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Olive Woodpecker and Grey Cuckooshrike and Victorin's Warbler. Several sought-after raptors also occur here, and these include the magnificent Crowned Eagle, endemic Forest Buzzard and if we are very lucky the possibility of African Cuckoo-Hawk.



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Greg de Klerk

Hottentots-Holland Mountains. The area of attractive Cape Fold mountains is a key area to search for one of South Africa's finest endemics, the handsome Cape Rockjumper. Though strikingly plumaged and conspicuous by their vocalizations, these charismatic birds possess an incredible ability to disappear amongst the boulders and we may have to be patient if we wish to enjoy prolonged sightings of these elusive creatures. Rock outcrops here also support Ground Woodpecker, White-necked Raven, and Cape Rock Thrush, whilst the thick mountain fynbos is the favoured habitat of Cape Siskin and the smart, endemic Victorin's Warbler.



Knysna Warbler by Clayton Burne

If we are very lucky, we may flush Hottentot Buttonquail underfoot or stumble upon a Cape Eagle-Owl at its daytime roost.

Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. This is an excellent site for several tough birds and will serve as a backup for us if we are still on the hunt for some of the Cape endemics. The scenic gardens protect a few great fynbos patches and forested ravines. Victorin's Warbler and Cape Siskin are found here, while more common species include Black Saw-wing, Malachite and Orange-breasted Sunbirds, and Brimstone Canary.

Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. Arguably the most beautiful set of gardens on the continent. This is an excellent site for Cape Spurfowl, Forest Canary, Cape Bulbul, Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, Cape Batis, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds and further chances for the delightful little Swee Waxbill. The dramatic backdrop of Table Mountain, coupled with the great birding, makes this a very memorable stop.

Cape of Good Hope National Park. This wonderful park showcases the most south-western point of the continent and is very popular amongst birders and general tourists alike. Here we should find the impressive Cape Grassbird, Bokmakierie and Cape Siskin. We will explore the network of roads to less visited parts of the reserve, visiting secluded coves and searching for the elusive (Cape) Mountain Zebra and (Bontebok) Blesbok antelope. In addition, we should see Common Eland and Chacma Baboon.



Cape Bulbul by Clayton Burne

Strandfontein Water Works. This is one of the best-known sites in the country for waterfowl and is always teeming with birds. Yellow-billed and Maccoa Ducks, Red-billed Teal, Southern Pochard, Black-necked Grebe, South African Shelduck, African Marsh Harrier and Levaillant's Cisticola are all regularly encountered here.

South Africa's endemic Rudd's and Botha's Larks have undergone dramatic population declines (>90%) in the past 10 years. To limit human disturbance of the remaining population, we will not drive or walk off roads in areas that either species is known to occur, nor use playback or flush lines. Our chances of seeing either species is very low, but should we happen to spot either from a safe distance, we will not use laser pointers or spend significant time in the area. Our decision making on the ground will be led by our local guides who are part of the research and conservation efforts to save the species.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Demanding & tiring tour. Designed for the dedicated lister & serious birder. Not suitable for dedicated or avid photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Very targeted birding. Several tricky endemic species, though most birding is in open habitat with limited forest birding.
Accommodation		Good to comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Walking & hiking mostly limited, over flattish ground. Some areas are uneven with rock/stone.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable vehicle. Some very long drives on both sealed & dirt roads. Some can be bumpy, others wet & muddy.
Photography		Good, but limited due to time.
Annoyances		Can be bright, dry & very hot in the west. Afternoon electrical storms & heavy rain in the north & east.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 22;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- 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 RBL 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.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- Our Mega tours are very fast-paced birding adventures designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. The focus of the tour is to see as many of the endemics and area specials as possible in our given time. To cover the necessary route to maximise the species list we therefore stay for only a single night at most sites.
- This tour is not suitable for novice birders or dedicated photographers.
- Exiting the vehicle is prohibited in all areas and parks that contain dangerous animals.
- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we must cover long distances 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 your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg for check in luggage and 8kg for hand luggage.
- For much of this tour you will be well away from medical facilities. It is essential that you let the Rockjumper office know in advance of the tour if you have any physical limitations or medical conditions.
- 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

The tour starts early on day 1, and you are thus required to arrive in country the previous day. The tour will mid-morning of day 22.

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.

Cape Town International Airport, Cape Town (IATA: CPT) and King Shaka International Airport, Durban (DUR) are the main international points of entry and exit for this tour. Either airport can also be easily reached via O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB.)

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.