South Africa

Eastern Comprehensive V

22nd September to 6th October 2023 (15 days)

Cape Extension V

6th October to 11th October 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!

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.

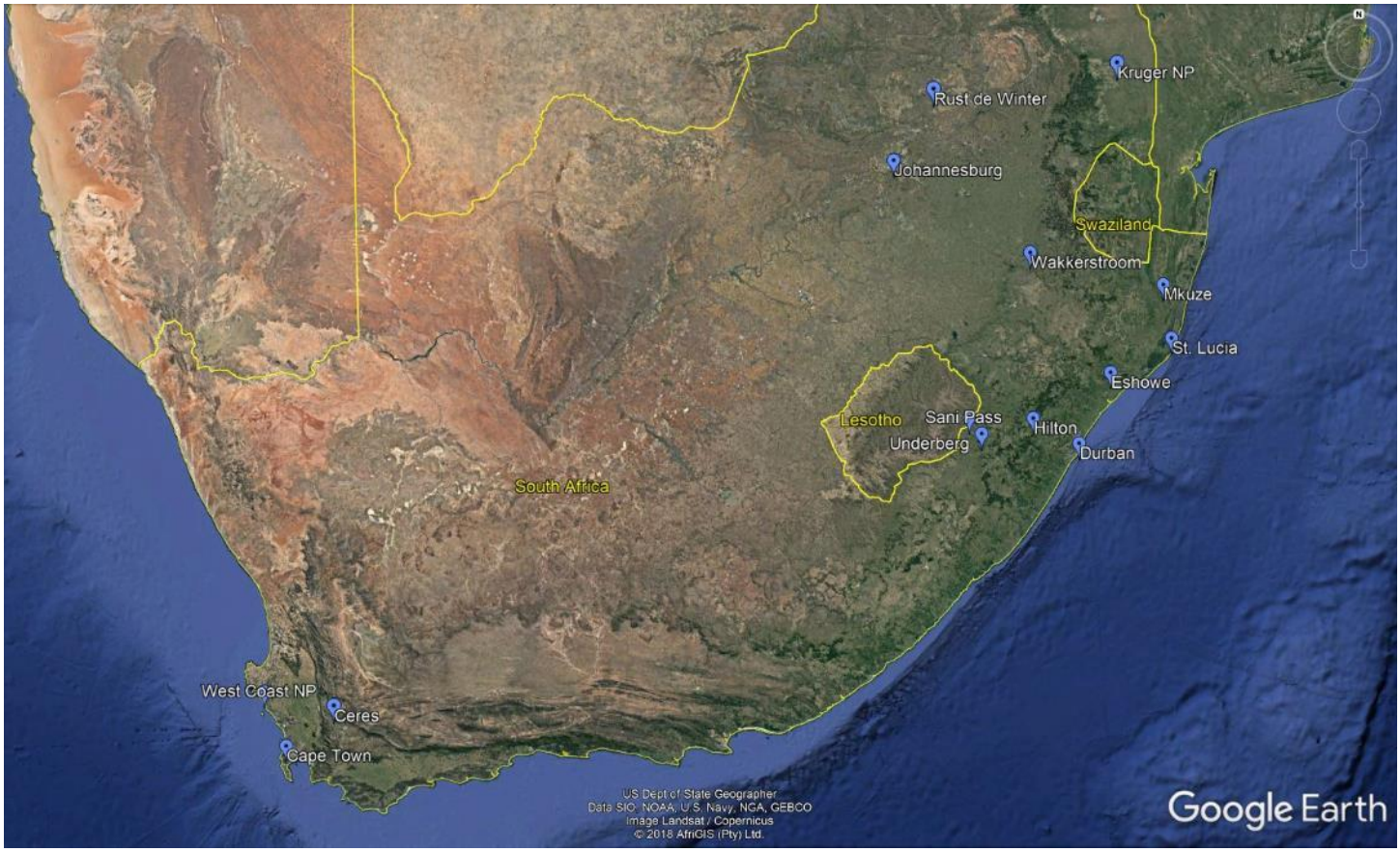
Itinerary & Map

Eastern Comprehensive

Day 1	**Arrival in Durban, transfer to Hilton**
Day 2	**Hilton to Underberg**
Day 3	**Sani Pass & Lesotho**
Day 4	**Underberg to St. Lucia via Dlinza Forest**
Day 5	**St. Lucia & Isimangaliso Wetland Park**
Day 6	**St. Lucia to Mkuze**
Day 7	**Mkuze**
Day 8	**Mkuze to Wakkerstroom**
Day 9	**Wakkerstroom**
Day 10	**Wakkerstroom to Kruger National Park**
Days 11 & 12	**Kruger National Park**
Day 13	**Kruger National Park to Johannesburg**
Day 14	**Day trip to Rust de Winter area**
Day 15	**Final departure**

Cape Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Cape Town**
Day 2	**Cape Pelagic**
Day 3	**Cape Peninsula**
Day 4	**Cape Town to Ceres via West Coast National Park**
Day 5	**Ceres & Tanqua Karoo**
Day 6	**Ceres to Cape Town and depart**



Birding sites in detail

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.



Scaly-feathered Finch by Clayton Burne

Rust de Winter. This area of rich bushveld is easily accessed via 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 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.

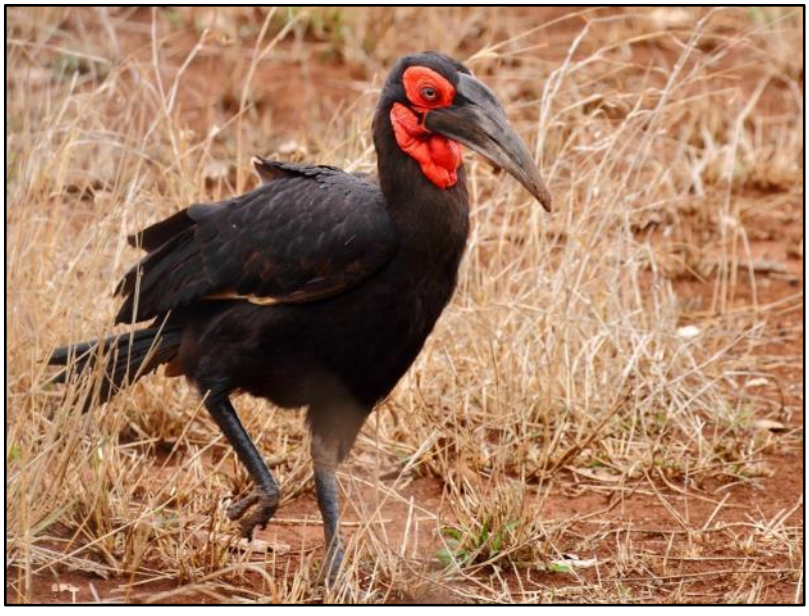
Kgomo-Kgomo. An extensive floodplain that typically has water only in mid to late summer only. When flooded, this can be an excellent area to locate specials such as Allen's Gallinule*, Lesser Moorhen*, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater* and Quailfinch. The surrounding grasslands and fields are often heavily grazed, and this provides perfect habitat for Temminck's Courser, Greater Kestrel and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark.



Crimson-breasted Shrike by Adam Riley

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.

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 a number of 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.

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 (the latter considered one of the world's most endangered larks), 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



Blue Cranes by Greg de Klerk

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.



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 only) 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 1 000 Lesser Kestrels* heading in to roost for the night.

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.

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.



Blue Korhaan by Glen Valentine

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.

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.



Pink-throated Twinspot by Adam Riley

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.

Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The dune forest on the edge of St Lucia town 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.

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.



Woodward's Batis by Glen Valentine

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.

We'll take a night drive on 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.



Narina Trogon by Adam Riley

Dlinza Forest. 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.

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.

Karkloof. The Karkloof is 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.

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.



Buff-streaked Chat by Adam Riley

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. 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 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.



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. 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. A number of 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.

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 Rockjumper by Clayton Burne

Cape Pelagic. 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.

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.*

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 Petrel by Adam Riley

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



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Adam Riley

Betty's Bay. We will 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.

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.

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, Blue-billed Teal and South African Shelduck. The surrounding reedbeds harbour Lesser Swamp Warbler as well as Levaillant's Cisticola.

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.



Black Harrier by Adam Riley

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.



Rufous-eared Warbler by Clayton Burne

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. Our first stop is likely to be 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 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.



Protea Canary by Clayton Burne

Ceres area. The surrounding protea-clad mountain slopes support the endemic, range-restricted Protea Canary. We'll spend some 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.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels and most mobility capabilities. Can be a little tiring due to travel distances.
Birding Ease		Undemanding, most species provide good visuals. A small number of scarce/rare species.
Accommodation		Good to comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Walking and hiking mostly limited and over flattish ground. Some areas are uneven with rock/stone.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable vehicle. Some long drives on both sealed and dirt roads. Some can be bumpy, others wet and muddy depending on season.
Photography		Good to very good. Some hides, mostly for mammal photography.
Annoyances		Potential for malaria (low risk), typical weather variability (seasonally dependent).

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 breakfast on day 15 for those on the Comprehensive tour, and from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 for those on the Western Cape Extension;
- 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 made 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.**

- 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.
- 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.
- The Cape Pelagic is weather dependent and has a departure potential of around 50%. If we are unable to head out to sea, we will bird other localities on the Cape Peninsula.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Eastern Comprehensive tour starts with a welcome dinner in the early evening of day 1 and concludes around mid-morning of day 15.

The Cape Extension depart Cape Town International Airport in the early afternoon of day 1 and concludes here by mid-day on day 6.

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.

O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB), 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.

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. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

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