South Africa

Best of Cape & Kruger

Zimbabwe – Victoria Falls Extension



Cape Rockjumper by Clayton Burne

Beginning in the beautiful and scenically spectacular Western Cape, we will spend our first few days of the tour exploring the varied ecosystems of the Cape Peninsula and surrounds, most notably the Cape fynbos with its feast of endemics. We will then make our way up the West Coast with its teeming coastal wetlands and strandveld habitat, and from there we venture slightly inland to explore the dry country riches of the Tanqua Karoo. Thereafter we will fly to the bird- and game-rich north-eastern lowlands where the world-renowned Kruger National Park is situated. Here we will enjoy several days in this spectacular reserve enjoying the classic African savanna and the many superb birds and mammals associated with this massive conservation area. This tour of South Africa's Western Cape and the Kruger National Park offers some of the very best birding and game-viewing in Africa and is suitable for both hard-core birders and more general nature enthusiasts alike!

Our Victoria Falls Extension takes us to the world-famous falls, rightly considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. We will also enjoy fantastic birding at our lodge overlooking the Zambezi River floodplain. We will have ample time to explore this wilderness with drives in our open safari vehicles and sunset cruises on the massive river in search of our targets. Okavango delta specials reach their eastern limit here and targets on

this brief yet thoroughly recommended adventure include Slaty Egret, Rufous-bellied Heron, the huge Coppery-tailed Coucal, Hartlaub's Babbler, White-crowned Lapwing, Swamp Nightjar, Racket-tailed Roller, Rock Pratincole, Schalow's Turaco, Bradfield's Hornbill, and the rare Shelley's Sunbird.

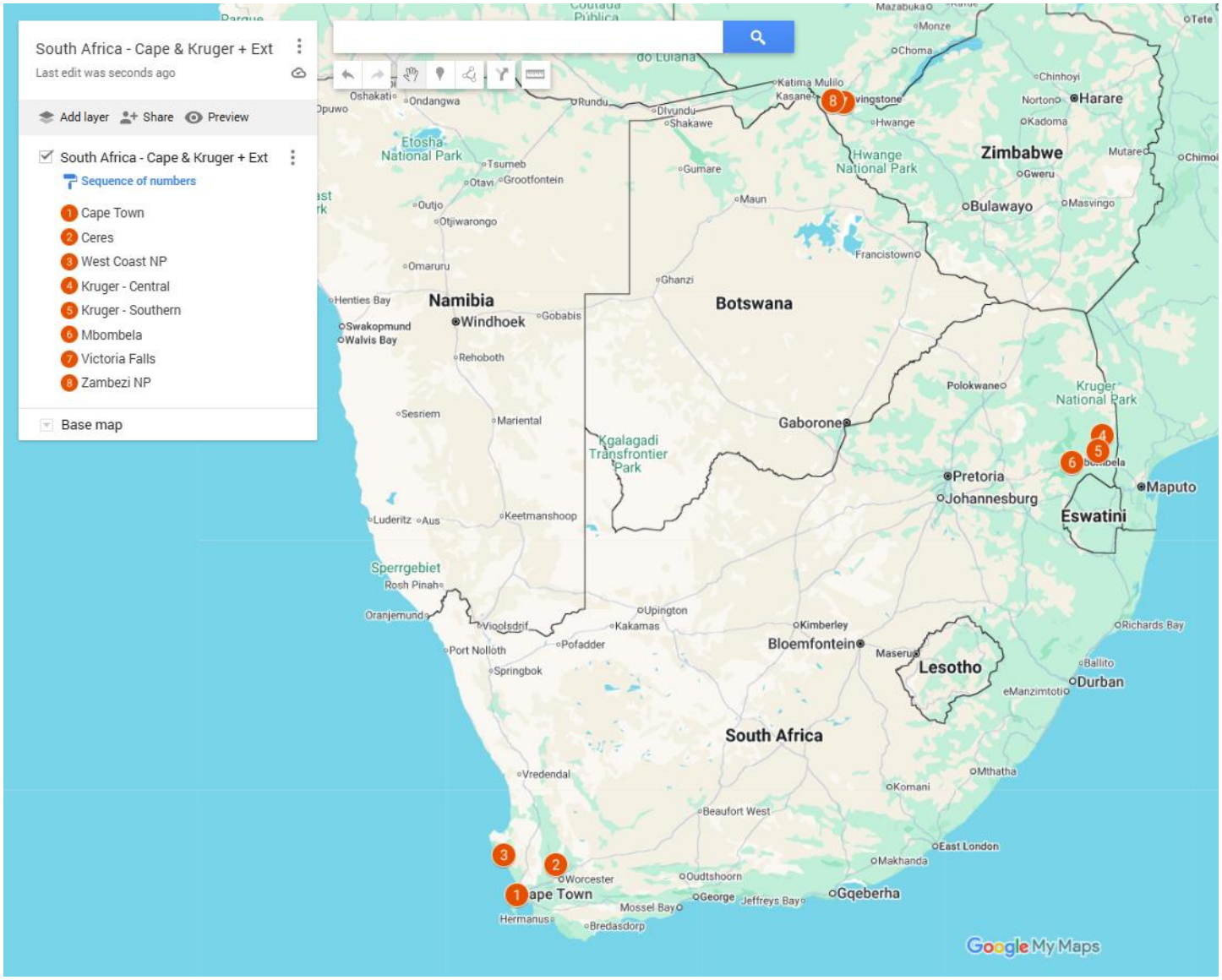
Itinerary & Map

Cape & Kruger

Day 1	**Cape Town area (Kirstenbosch Gardens/Strandfontein)**
Day 2	**Cape Peninsula**
Day 3	**Cape Town to Ceres via West Coast National Park**
Day 4	**Ceres & Tanqua Karoo**
Day 5	**Ceres to Cape Town, flight to Kruger National Park**
Days 6 & 7	**Central Kruger National Park**
Days 8 & 9	**Southern Kruger National Park**
Day 10	**Kruger National Park to Mbombela & depart**

Victoria Falls Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Victoria Falls**
Days 2 & 3	**Zambezi National Park**
Day 4	**Zambezi National Park to Victoria Falls & depart**


South Africa - Cape & Kruger + Ext
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South Africa - Cape & Kruger + Ext
Sequence of numbers
1 Cape Town
2 Ceres
3 West Coast NP
4 Kruger - Central
5 Kruger - Southern
6 Mbombela
7 Victoria Falls
8 Zambezi NP
Base map
Namibia
Windhoek
Botswana
Gaborone
Zimbabwe
Harare
Bulawayo
Pretoria
Johannesburg
Eswatini
Maputo
Lesotho
Bloemfontein
South Africa
Durban
Cape Town
Google My Maps

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.**

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.



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Adam Riley

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.

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.



Black Harrier 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.



Bokmakierie by Clayton Burne

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.

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.



Lion by Adam Riley

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.

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.

Kruger National Park. The Greater Kruger conservation area incorporates vast areas of adjacent Mozambique and Zimbabwe and forms one of the largest reserves on earth. It is also one of Africa's most diverse parks, protecting a huge variety of wildlife. We'll visit a number of sites and camps in the central and southern part of the park.

The central part of the park is dominated by open grassy plains and sparsely vegetated woodlands. The birding and game viewing in this region is excellent with many bird species attending mixed flocks, particularly in acacia dominated woodland. In fact, the acacia savanna that dominates most of the Kruger National Park contains one of the highest densities of birds of any habitat type in the world! This, coupled with the immense variety of game that we will endeavour to see, ensures a truly unforgettable African experience.



Southern Ground Hornbill by Glen Valentine

We will bird the rich bushveld and grasslands of the park, which are particularly productive for a number of special species. These include Kori Bustard – the world's heaviest flying bird, the magnificent Martial Eagle, Bateleur, Marabou Stork and the impressive Secretarybird, one of the world's great avian gems. Further specialties that we will search for in the woodland areas include the lovely Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, African Grey Hornbill, Southern White-crowned and Magpie Shrikes, Red-billed Oxpecker riding on the backs of big game, Bennett's Woodpecker, African Hoopoe, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, Burchell's Starling, Mourning Collared Dove, Brown-headed Parrot, Red-crested

Korhaan, Southern Black Tit, miniscule Grey Penduline Tit, noisy Green Wood Hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Acacia Pied Barbet, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Sabota Lark, Mosque Swallow, Black Cuckooshrike, Kurrichane and Groundscraper Thrushes, eye-catching White-throated Robin-Chat, melodic White-browed Scrub Robin, Burnt-necked and Yellow-bellied Eremomelas, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, Black-crowned and Brown-crowned Tchagras, Brubru, dazzling Violet-backed Starling* and Golden-breasted Bunting.

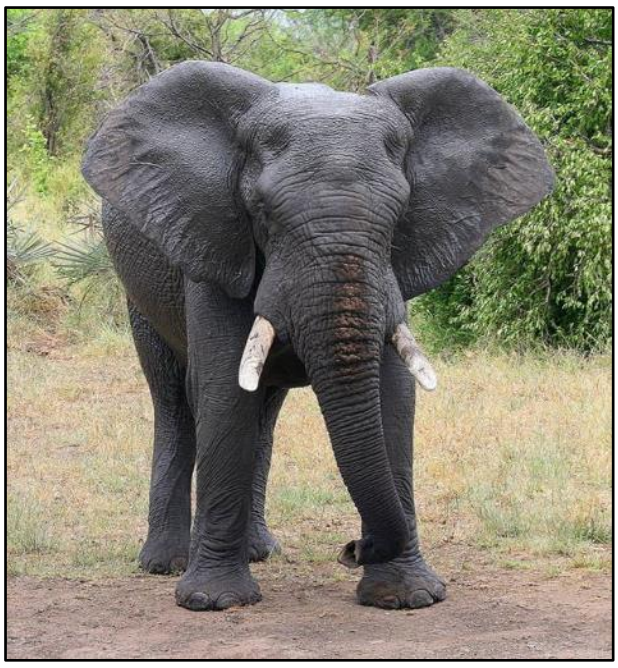


Verreaux's Eagle-Owls by Glen Valentine

The sweet grasses in the Satara area are also excellent for large herds of grazing mammals such as Common Wildebeest, Plains Zebra and Impala. These huge herds in turn support a healthy population of predators and Satara is particularly well known for this. In fact, we have an excellent chance of finding Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Spotted Hyena and the very scarce and highly threatened African Wild (Painted) Dog in this area. High densities of other game include Southern Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Klipspringer, Bushbuck, Warthog, Chacma Baboon, Vervet and Dwarf Mongoose, to name just a few.

Aside from the many mammals, we'll be seeking Black-bellied Bustard, Crested and the rare Shelley's and Coqui Francolins, Swainson's and Natal Spurfowls, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, European* and Purple Rollers, Yellow-throated Longclaw and with luck, the erratic and nomadic Temminck's Courser and Senegal Lapwing. Summer visitors to these grasslands also include the scarce Pallid* and Montagu's* Harriers, while rocky outcrops might yield Mocking Cliff Chat, Red-winged Starling and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. In the late afternoon pairs of boldly patterned and crepuscular Double-banded Sandgrouse come to the edges of the road to feed, before making their way down to watering holes at dusk to drink.

The denser bushveld, woodlands and gallery forest of the southern section of the park are host to one of the most mouth-watering species that we hope to find, the majestic Southern Ground Hornbill that is often seen striding around in small groups. We will certainly be treated to many encounters with the gaudy Lilac-breasted Roller. Raptors are numerous throughout the reserve and we will no doubt enjoy sightings of the striking Bateleur as well as Tawny* and Wahlberg's* Eagles, Hooded, White-headed, White-backed and huge Lappet-faced Vultures, and the handsome African Fish Eagle, while other possibilities include Shikra, Lizard Buzzard, Gabar and Dark Chanting Goshawks, the scarce but extremely attractive African Cuckoo-Hawk, Black-chested and Brown Snake Eagles, Lesser Spotted*, Steppe*, Crowned and Booted Eagles, African Hawk-Eagle, African Harrier Hawk and Amur Falcon*.



African Elephant by Keith Valentine

This area is also famous for regular sightings of the rare African Wild Dog, while we stand an excellent chance of finding the endangered White Rhinoceros and with exceptional luck, its

rarer cousin, the Black Rhinoceros. It is also arguably the best area in the park to see the crepuscular Leopard, certainly one of the world's best-looking cats! In addition, we should encounter Lion, Spotted Hyena, Black-backed Jackal, large herds of African Elephant lounging in the Sabi River, herds of African Buffalo, Waterbuck, the beautiful Bushbuck and pods of Hippopotami. The persistent troops of playful Chacma Baboon and Vervet will keep us entertained during the heat of the day.



African Wild Dog Pups by Greg de Klerk

Scouring the riverine woodland and thickets along the Sabi River, we hope to encounter Bennett's, Golden-tailed, Bearded and Cardinal Woodpeckers, Ashy Flycatcher, gorgeous White-browed and Red-capped Robin-Chats, Terrestrial Brownbul, Yellow-bellied and Sombre Greenbuls, African, Jameson's and Red-billed Firefinches, superb Green-winged Pytilia, Red-faced Cisticola and Southern Boubou. The large riparian trees lining the rivers provide perfect nesting sites for weavers, which are extremely well represented in the park and include Southern^ and Lesser Masked^, Village^, Spectacled and Thick-billed. We should also find African Green Pigeon with its lovely, mournful, liquid call, the tiny Little Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, gaudy Purple-crested Turaco, Red-headed Weaver^, Black-headed Oriole, the showy African Paradise Flycatcher*, Arrow-marked Babbler, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Green-backed Camaroptera, iridescent Collared, Marico, White-bellied, Amethyst and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, and the vocal Black-collared and Crested Barbets.

Noisy flocks of White-crested Helmetshrike are regularly encountered and we will also be on the lookout for the much rarer Retz's Helmetshrike along with its seldom-seen host, the rare and much sought-after Thick-billed Cuckoo*.

The park's numerous large rivers and wetlands harbour a number of exciting water-associated birds and we will be on the lookout for the massive Goliath Heron, stately and severely threatened Saddle-billed Stork as well as the more common Woolly-necked and Yellow-billed Storks, African Spoonbill, the unique and monotypic Hamerkop, Wire-tailed and Grey-rumped Swallows, White-crowed Lapwing and if we are lucky, the rare African Finfoot or unpredictable Greater Painted-snipe.



Leopard by Greg de Klerk

**There will be opportunities for optional sunset drives. Success on these sunset drives here varies greatly, but the list of possibilities is rather impressive and includes a good number of owls and nightjars, as well as Bronze-winged Courser, both Common and Central African Large-spotted Genets, Southern Lesser and

Thick-tailed Greater Galagos, White-tailed Mongoose, African Savannah Hare, the incomparable Cape Porcupine, African Wild Cat, African Civet, Serval and Spotted Hyena – besides the Big 5!

Victoria Falls. Rightly considered to be one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, the falls are a spectacular curtain of cataracts formed by the mighty Zambezi River, as it plunges thunderously into the gorge 300 feet below. Never far from its earth-moving grumble, we shall scan the river islands for roosting Rock Pratincoles, while a search of the small patch of 'rain forest' (formed by the falls' perpetual spray) may turn up such tropical species as Trumpeter Hornbill, Schalow's Turaco, the attractive African Emerald Cuckoo, the vocal White-browed Robin-Chat and attractive and melodic Collared Palm Thrush.



Schalow's Turacos by Adam Riley

Zambezi National Park. During our time here, we will embark on boat trips along the Zambezi River and games drives into the surrounding Zambezi National Park and private concessions.

Drifting along slowly, soaking in the wonderful sights and sounds of the African wilderness, we will be on the lookout for the many avian specialties that inhabit this bird-rich area. While meandering through the floodplain dominated by Papyrus beds, Phragmites reeds and flooded grass and sedge we hope to find Rufous-bellied Heron, the elusive and localized Slaty Egret, Collared Pratincole, White-crowned and Long-toed Lapwings, Allen's Gallinule, Lesser Moorhen, the miniscule Lesser Jacana, gigantic Coppery-tailed Coucal, Luapula and Chirping Cisticolas, Greater and Lesser Swamp Warblers, the boldly-coloured African Pygmy Goose and with some luck Rosy-throated Longclaw, Wattled Crane, the scarce and nocturnal White-backed Night Heron and much-desired Pel's Fishing Owl.

Swamp Boubou, Collared Palm Thrush, Brown Firefinch, Senegal Coucal and Hartlaub's Babbler can be seen right around the lodge and favour riverside thickets. Areas of more open water and sandbanks along the river are home to migratory African Skimmers* that make their way down from central Africa to breed here in summer.



Pel's Fishing Owl by Adam Riley

During our rewarding and relaxing boat trips we may also encounter an array of exciting mammals that could include Giraffe, Plains Zebra, Impala, Greater Kudu, Hippopotamus and herds of muscular African Buffalo and giant African Elephant. Troops of Vervet and Chacma Baboons roam playfully in the riverine woodland, and we may even encounter Cape Clawless and Spotted-necked Otters feeding in the river. We can also expect to see good numbers of impressive Nile Crocodile basking in the sun on the sand banks.

At dusk we'll enjoy sundowners from our deck with incredible views, as birds begin to move around between their feeding and roosting grounds. We might also encounter a Bat Hawk hunting overhead or perhaps African Hobby.

During our stay we will also take a night-drive in the hopes of seeing Common and Central African Large-spotted Genets, White-tailed Mongoose, Springhare, Wild Cat, Southern Lesser Galago and African Savanna Hare, amongst many other rarer species like Serval, Side-striped Jackal, African Civet, Cape Porcupine, Striped Polecat (Zorilla), Honey Badger (Ratel) and Selous' Mongoose. Several species of owl and nightjar are also possible including the rare Swamp Nightjar, which may be found on the floodplain itself, as well as African Wood Owl and the tiny African Barred Owlet.



Rock Pratincole by Markus Lilje

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Undemanding, perfectly suited for all birding / wildlife interest levels and most mobility capabilities.
Birding Ease		Undemanding, most species provide good visuals. A small number of scarce / tricky species.
Accommodation		Good to comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Walking and hiking quite limited. Mostly over flattish ground, some areas are uneven with rock/stone. Lodge gardens.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable vehicle. Closed minibus style vehicle in the Cape, changing to typical Africa open safari vehicle in Kruger & Victoria Falls.
Photography		Very good to excellent.
Annoyances		Potential for malaria (low risk).

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 lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 10 of the Cape & Kruger tour;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 4 of the Victoria Falls 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 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.**

- 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.
- Winter and Autumn in southern Africa provide variable weather conditions. The Western Cape receives a few Atlantic storms every winter that cause rough seas, wet weather and windy, cold conditions. In the east, clear sunny skies are the norm, with mornings and evenings getting cold – especially on open game drive vehicles.
- 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 Cape & Kruger begins in the early to mid-morning of day 1 in Cape Town, kindly arrive the prior day. The tour concludes around mid-morning of day 10 in Mbombela.

The Victoria Falls Extension departs from Victoria Falls in the early afternoon of day 1 and concludes here around mi-morning of day 4.

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 Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (IATA: MQP) are the main international points of entry and exit for this tour. O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB) is the main gateway airport into South Africa.

Victoria Falls Airport (IATA: VFA) is serviced by a small number of International Airlines (Airlink, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways and South African Airways), most of whom travel via Johannesburg and Mbombela.

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.