

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA

Highveld and Kruger Birding Tour

3rd – 17th February 2007



Blyde River Canyon

Leader: Peter Lawson (on behalf of Ornitholidays)

Tour Summary

Tour Participants:
Peter and Kay Nadin
Stan and June Perry
Adrian and Sheila Wells

Photo acknowledgements:
Peter Lawson

Total Distance Travelled:
2 026 kilometres

Temperature Range:
13° - 35° Celsius

Total Birds Seen:
342

Total Birds Heard Only:
10

Total Mammals Seen:
46

Total Reptiles Identified:
19

Total Butterflies Identified:
11

Trip Report Compiled By:
Peter Lawson (Tour Leader) on behalf of Omitholidays

Note:
The species mentioned in the report are only some of the species seen at each locality. Please refer to detailed checklists at end of the report for all species seen on this specific tour.

Trip Breakdown

Day 1: Saturday, 3rd February 2007 ~ Dullstroom

Route: Arrive Johannesburg and drive to Dullstroom

Distance: 265 kms

Weather: Partially cloudy, but mainly sunny. Thunderstorm in Dullstroom.

Temperature range: 19° - 24°C

Day 2: Sunday, 4th February 2007 ~ Dullstroom

Route: Dullstroom all day with drives along the De Berg and Kruisfontein roads.

Distance: 100 kms

Weather: Sunny and clear

Temperature range: 17° - 26°C

Day 3: Monday, 5th February 2007 ~ Mount Sheba

Route: Dullstroom to Mount Sheba via Lydenburg, Misty Mountain and Pilgrim's Rest

Distance: 185 kms

Weather: Misty early morning, partially cloudy but mainly sunny and warm

Temperature range: 17° - 25°C

Day 4: Tuesday, 6th February 2007 ~ Blyde River Canyon

Route: Mount Sheba to Blyde Canyon via Vaalhoek Road and Bourkes Luck Potholes

Distance: 86 kms

Weather: Cool early morning at Mount Sheba but sunny and hot the rest of the day

Temperature range: 17° - 30°C

Day 5: Wednesday, 7th February 2007 ~ Blyde River Canyon

Route: Blyde Canyon area all day with visits to various view sites

Distance: 20 kms

Weather: Cool to warm and pleasant

Temperature range: 20° - 26° C

Day 6: Thursday, 8th February 2007 ~ Satara, Kruger National Park

Route: Blyde Canyon to Satara via Able Erasmus Pass and Strydom Tunnel. Entered Kruger at Orpen Gate

Distance: 150 kms

Weather: Hot and sunny

Temperature range: 21° - 35° C

Day 7: Friday, 9th February 2007 ~ Satara, Kruger National Park

Route: Satara area

Distance: 60 kms

Weather: Hot but partially cloudy at times

Temperature range: 25° - 32° C

Day 8: Saturday, 10th February 2007 ~ Skukuza, Kruger National Park

Route: Satara to Skukuza with lunch at Tshokwane

Distance: 100 kms

Weather: Partially cloudy but cleared later. Hot and sunny

Temperature range: 24° - 35° C

Day 9: Sunday, 11th February 2007 ~ Skukuza, Kruger National Park

Route: Skukuza area with a visit to Lake Panic Hide and board walk, and drive along Sabie River

Distance: 60 kms

Weather: Sunny and hot

Temperature range: 25° - 36° C

Day 10: Monday, 12th February 2007 ~ Mvubu Game Lodge, Pongola Game Reserve

Route: Skukuza to Mvubu via Lower Sabie, Crocodile Bridge and eastern Swaziland

Distance: 360 kms

Weather: Cloudy and cooler than past few days

Temperature range: 22° - 30° C

Day 11: Tuesday, 13th February 2007 ~ Mvubu Game Lodge, Pongola Game Reserve

Route: Pongola Game Reserve all day with a boat ride on Lake Jozini

Distance: 0 kms

Weather: Pleasant to mild and warm

Temperature range: 21° - 27° C

Day 12: Wednesday, 14th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

Route: Pongola Game Reserve to Wakkerstroom. Afternoon drive on Amersfoort road.

Distance: 210 kms

Weather: Sunny and warm in Pongola area but cooler in Wakkerstroom

Temperature range: 20° - 28°C

Day 13: Thursday, 15th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

Route: Wakkerstroom area all day

Distance: 60 kms

Weather: Sunny and mild

Temperature range: 13° - 26°C

Day 14: Friday, 16th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

Route: Full day Wakkerstroom area with a drive on the gravel Volksrust road and to Fickland Pan

Distance: 50 kms

Weather: Cool early morning, but then sunny and warm

Temperature range: 11° - 28° C

Day 15: Saturday, 17th February 2007 ~ Departure

Route: Wakkerstroom to Johannesburg Airport via Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve

Distance: 320 kms

Weather: Sunny and hot

Temperature range: 15° - 30° C

Trip Report

Saturday, 3rd February 2007 ~ Dullstroom

Virgin flight VS601 from Heathrow landed in Johannesburg at 06h34 but it took a long time for guests to arrive in the terminal. We left the airport at 09h00. Good birding on the way with Amur Falcons, Black-shouldered Kite, Long-tailed Widowbird, Hadedda Ibis, Cattle Egret as roadside birds before our first deviation and stop and Olifantsfontein. There were plenty of Southern Pochard, lots of White-winged Terns, some Grey-headed Gulls, White-breasted and Reed Cormorants, Sacred and Glossy Ibis. Weeds along the edge had displaying Yellow-crowned and Red Bishops.

We called in to Ultra City for a comfort stop and early lunch of toasted sandwiches and chips at Steers, followed by a walk at the back of the buildings. Cape Sparrow, Fan-tailed Widowbirds and a single White-winged Widowbird were present. A Cloud Cisticola with nesting material was spotted on tall grass stems (target bird for Stan). Lovely perched Greater-striped Swallows, as well as Levillant's and Zitting Cisticolas.

We deviated at Wonderfontein to the pans which were rather full but one had Hottentot Teal, Spurwing Goose, Whiskered Tern, Cape Shoveler and a collection of waders and juvenile Ringed Plover. The pan on the opposite side of the road had a pair of White-backed Duck and Great Crested Grebe. We finally turned off the N4 through Belfast and to Dullstroom, with a few stops on the way for Mountain Wheatear, Long-crested Eagle, dozens of Amur Falcons and Steppe Buzzards on telegraph poles.

We arrived at Dullstroom Inn at 15h30 just before a thunderstorm which stopped play for the rest of the day. We made a few brief attempts of a walk around the village after the storm, but small showers kept on stopping us. We did, however, add Grey-headed Sparrow, Eastern Bronze-winged Pigeon, Red-eyed Dove, Speckled Mousebird and a very vocal Willow Warbler in front of the hotel.

Dinner at the rather noisy Duck & Trout as there was a rugby match on TV with Cheetahs beating the Stormers. An early night was had by all.

Bird of the Day: White-backed Duck

Sunday, 4th February 2007 ~ Dullstroom

We woke early to a beautiful mild morning with not a cloud in the sky. We met at 06h30 and drove north before turning west on the De Berg road. Our first stop was just around the corner from the hotel at the municipal dam where we saw two African Black Duck, a single Yellow-billed Duck and Cape Wagtail. Many stops were made before the De Berg road for African Pipit, Drakensberg Prinia, Cape Longclaw and Red-collared Widowbird. Birds were plentiful on the gravel road and thus we did not get very far before it was time to return for breakfast. Some of the good sightings included African Wattled Plover, Southern Bald Ibis, Gurney's Sugarbird on proteas close to the road. June spotted a Denham's Bustard on top of a ridge which caused some excitement. Later on we had two more. A Secretarybird gave a brief view for some only.

After breakfast we drove on the Kruisfontein road as cranes were reported, but no luck. Birding was much quieter on this route, but flowers were good and we photographed Candelabra Lilies and River Lilies.

Lunch was at La Afrika, a new restaurant with a true African flavour. Service and food were excellent. We all had a rest period until 16h30 and returned to the De Berg road. The scenery was stunning and the birding good. Buff-streaked Chat showed well in the scope.

Dinner at Fibs down the road from the hotel ~ good food, good wine!

Bird of the Day: Denham's Bustard

Monday, 5th February 2007 ~ Mount Sheba

We had packed and left Dullstroom by 06h30. There was thick mist around so it was a slow drive to Lydenburg. However, the mist cleared as we got closer to Lydenburg and a few short stops were made. One was for a pair of Spotted Thick-knees with two tiny chicks. A calling Rufous-naped Lark was located on telephone wires. Plenty of Amur Falcons and Steppe Buzzards were seen once again. In Lydenburg we searched for White-browed Sparrow-weavers in a new suburb. We only had a short

look at one. (They nested here for years but it seems they have now almost disappeared as many new houses are being built) A pair of Groundscraper Thrush on the roof of a house showed well. Then as we were leaving the site an African Goshawk calling brought us to an abrupt halt. It was a lovely male perched up high in a tall tree and it filled the scope.

Long Tom Pass had lovely scenery and a pair of White-necked Ravens on a telephone pole right next to us. Nearby we saw 31 Amur Falcons side by side on the wire ~ a spectacular sight.

Breakfast was at Misty Mountain Chalets near the foot of the pass. We ate an excellent breakfast out on the patio accompanied by Cape White-eye and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. At one stage June and Stan had a brief glimpse of a Knysna Turaco as it flew with scarlet wings into a dense tree and disappeared. After breakfast we strolled around the spacious grounds of the lodge and picked up Amethyst Sunbird, Dusky Flycatcher, Speckled Mousebird and not much more. Birding was quiet.

We drove past the Long Tom cannon (a relic from the Anglo Boer war) and into the town of Sabie where we deviated for some birding. We picked up breeding Thick-billed Weavers, Bronze Mannikin, Cape Weaver, European Bee-eaters, Yellow-fronted Canary, Fork-tailed Drongo and a lovely Black-headed Oriole.

We continued to Pilgrim's Rest (an historical village from the gold rush period in the late 1880's) and had lunch in the garden at Pilgrim's Pantry, whilst being entertained by a male Pin-tailed Whydah fussing over a couple of females. Later we stopped at a picnic spot next to the Blyde River and June saw the only Mountain Wagtail of the trip. We continued our drive up the steep Robber's Pass and turned left on a dirt track at the top. At one point a stop was made at a field of pink Nerine, a spectacular sight. We checked into our luxurious rooms and after a short break walked in the hotel grounds and to the start of the forest. Birds were quiet but we did find Cape Batis and Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler in the forest and the garden had Familiar Chat, Rock Martin and Greater Striped Swallow whilst a Cape Robin-Chat hopped around on the lawn outside our chalets and a pair of Southern Grey-headed Sparrows were nesting in a hollow branch of a tree.

Bird of the Day: African Goshawk

Tuesday, 6th February 2007 ~ Blyde River Canyon

We met at 06h30 for a walk in the lush evergreen forest at Mount Sheba. A large herd of Eland (Africa's largest antelope) was grazing on the mountain slope opposite. It was cool and pleasant with no wind ~ conditions that should be perfect for birding but we had to work hard to get the specials that we saw. As we entered the forest a Chorister Robin-Chat was there to greet us but did not stay long. Terrestrial Brownbuls were chattering on the forest floor and we enticed them out for a brief look. Lemon Dove played hard-to-get but then we saw one walking on the track ahead. We stood dead still and this lovely shy dove actually walked towards us. Narina Trogons were silent so we attempted to lure them out with call imitation and a splendid male silently flew in to show off his scarlet chest. Later we had an excellent view of another in a different spot. An Olive Woodpecker was heard tapping and we eventually got it, as well as stiff necks from looking directly upwards. Samango Monkeys were periodically heard but we did not see this rare primate. A little further along the track an Orange Ground-Thrush was seen on the ground as the name implies. Normally this sought-after thrush is difficult to see, but ours gave us a stunning sighting. Yellow-streaked Greenbul called deep in the forest and eventually responded to playback to demonstrate its feeding habit of flicking one wing at a time to lure insects out from under the bark. The soft call of a Grey Cuckooshrike was heard and we located it high in the canopy. Stiff necks again! The lovely forest was full of butterflies, including the large Emperor Swallowtail and the botany was also interesting, with Clivias, flowering Streptocarpus and Impatiens, plus the epiphytic Carrot-top Fern. We finished our pleasant walk with an excellent buffet breakfast in Hackett's Restaurant at the hotel.

After breakfast we departed and drove the gravel road to Bourke's Luck Potholes. Golden Weaver was new for us on this road and we also came to grips with a calling Neddicky, high on a telephone wire, plus Wailing Cisticola, European Bee-eater and some others. However, Southern Tchagra remained hidden in spite of calling loudly and had to go on the list as "heard only".

It was hot at Bourke's Luck but the unique potholes, formed by the swirling Treur and Blyde Rivers over millions of years, made up for it. Lazy Cisticola gave us a good sighting and even stayed by when

tourists walked by. There was also Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and a pair of lovely Mocking Cliff-Chats that repeatedly disappeared in cracks and crevices to escape the hot sunshine. A Lanner Falcon came flying low towards us down the gorge for a cracking sighting but one of us missed it due to concentrating on landscape photography. Lunch was toasted sandwiches and potato chips accompanied by African Pied and Cape Wagtails.

We continued to the Aventura resort and checked into our spacious rooms. A break was welcome and a late afternoon walk in the large grounds by some of us gave us a good sighting of the lovely endemic White-throated Robin-Chat, plus Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, African Paradise Flycatcher, Streaky-headed Seedeater, Black-collared Barbet and others new for the list. Dinner was an excellent buffet and the log was updated in one of our spacious chalets.

Bird of the Day: Narina Trogon

Wednesday, 7th February 2007 ~ Blyde River Canyon

An early walk before breakfast in the lodge grounds gave us some new birds for the list, including a well-hidden Green-backed Heron, a juvenile Red-chested Cuckoo that caused a bit of confusion at first, some high-flying Alpine Swifts, Lesser Striped Swallow, Southern Black Tit, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Long-billed Crombec, Black-backed Puffback, and a confiding little Green-backed Cameroptera. There were others we had seen before as well. Walking back to our rooms after breakfast we passed a troop of baboons that were probably working their way to the accommodation looking for open windows to raid. To be fair to them though, they were feeding naturally on vegetation when we saw them.

Later we visited various viewsites over the 26 kilometre canyon which is the third largest in the world and spectacular to say the least, with the Blyde River some 800 metres below us. One of the viewsites had a young Verreaux's Eagle flying below us, which was then chased by two Wahlberg's Eagles ~ a spectacular sight. There was a Jackal Buzzard at another and Rock Kestrels on telephone poles as we drove between the viewsites. Scenic photos were taken and curios purchased from stall holders in the parking areas.

Bird of the Day: Verreaux's Eagle

Thursday, 8th February 2007 ~ Satara, Kruger National Park

We left the Aventura Resort after another scrumptious buffet breakfast and headed for Able Erasmus Pass and the Strydom Tunnel cutting through the majestic Drakensberg Mountains like a gateway to the Lowveld. On the way we had some exciting birding. First there was a bright green Diderick Cuckoo perched on a fence, followed a short while later by a splendid male Cuckoo Finch. This nomadic brood parasite is seldom seen. Then in a newly ploughed field there were both White and Abdim's Storks and a single Black Stork nearby for comparison. Later in the day we also had a Woolly-necked Stork and numbers of ugly Marabou Storks, making five stork species in one day. A perched Brown Snake-Eagle was another good find. We nearly missed it as it was on the opposite side of the road from the feeding White and Abdim's Storks.

Shortly before the tunnel we stopped at a curio stall and met up with Michael, a local curio seller who has become guardian of a pair of rare Taita Falcons breeding annually on a high cliff next to his stall. Michael gave us detailed directions to see one of the pair perched on a high ledge. We trained scopes on the tiny raptor and agreed we would have had great difficulty finding it without the help of Michael. He was rewarded with a tip and some curio purchases from his stall.

After passing through the tunnel we stopped to view a breeding colony of endemic Cape Vultures on a high cliff of the Drakensberg. It was a distant view but dozens of vultures could be seen flying above and below the site. We were able to train scopes on them and could then make out the pale colouring of this large vulture.

Lunch was at the Cotton Club near Klaserie to the trilling call of Woodland Kingfishers but we only saw this bright blue kingfisher the following day. The enormous Kruger National Park (the size of Wales) was entered at Orpen Gate in the central section, but before we got there a stop and u-turn was made for a large bull Elephant at the side of the road.

Once in Kruger, both birds and mammals necessitated frequent stops and it took us the rest of the afternoon to reach Satara, our overnight stop. Mammals included Impala, Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Southern Giraffe, African Buffalo and Hippopotamus at Nsemeni Dam. Birds included Senegal Lapwing, Comb Duck, White-backed and Lappet-faced Vultures, Martial Eagle, Bateleur and migrant Steppe and Lesser Spotted Eagles. Also our first wild Ostrich and colourful birds such as Lilac-breasted and Purple Rollers and the bizarre Yellow-billed, Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills. In addition there was a bright yellow Eurasian Golden Oriole, plenty of Burchell's Starlings, Long-tailed Paradise Whydahs in flight and small pretty's such as Blue Waxbill and Green-winged Pytilia amongst others.

The log was updated on the restaurant verandah accompanied by insects determined to land in wine glasses.

Bird of the Day: Taita Falcon

Friday, 9th February 2007 ~ Satara, Kruger National Park

We started the day with an early drive before breakfast and took the S100 gravel road eastwards. We had not gone far before a lovely pair of large Red-breasted Swallows presented themselves. Shortly thereafter we came across a pair of Mosque Swallows for comparison. This is a good bird to get at the very southern edge of its range. A perched Martial Eagle showed well and a family of Southern Ground Hornbill fed next to us. Numbers of Hooded Vultures were perched on trees and not far from this spot we came across a Lioness and a couple of sub-adults lying under some trees. This caused excitement as they were the first lions seen by Sheila and Adrian who had not been to Africa before.

Other new birds before breakfast were Little Bee-eaters hawking insects from a low bush, a Giant Kingfisher seemingly far from water, Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove, a Lesser Honeyguide, Crested Barbet, African Green Pigeons, Red-faced Cisticola, Yellow-throated Longclaw and a beautiful Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike plus a few more.

Breakfast was shared with an African Mourning Dove and then we drove north-east on the S90. Being late morning and hot there was not much activity but we did find a huge Kori Bustard striding the savanna. A Secretarybird was also seen with its mate a little further away. Mammals included some fine Greater Kudu, a few tiny Steenbok and a group of Common Waterbuck complete with rings on their hind quarters. Back to Satara for siesta time during which a tiny African Scops-Owl was found fast asleep with its back to the trunk of a tree. When the group came to see it later is opened one eye to look at us.

Later we drove to Nsemeni Dam and enjoyed watching the hippos and some huge crocodiles, as well as dozens of White-faced Ducks, Comb Duck, Water Thick-knee, African Jacana, some waders and fine pair of Great Spotted Cuckoo that landed on a fallen tree right in front of us.

We were booked on a night drive with a dedicated vehicle just for us and Saul as our driver/guide. He has worked with many Ornitholidays tours and knows our needs. Thus it was early dinner and we departed on the drive at 8pm, and what a fantastic drive it was. The first nocturnal mammal picked up by the spotlights was an African Wildcat that stood gazing at us for a good while. Then we added Large-spotted Genet, Serval, Black-backed Jackal, Scrub Hare, Spotted Hyaena and White-tailed Mongoose. We even picked up Tomb Bats in the spotlight, their white underparts showing clearly. At one stage we had a large bull Elephant feeding calmly next to us and then Saul found a Spotted Bush Snake in a tree and we failed to work out how he managed to spot it. Shortly thereafter we had another reptile crossing the road – an African Rock Python which caused some excitement. Nocturnal birds were scarce but we did have a superb sighting of Bronze-winged Courser, which was a target bird for Stanley. We also had a single Fiery-necked Nightjar in the road, although briefly. Both Spotted and Water Thick-knees were seen as well as Crowned Lapwing. We returned to Satara at about 10.30 pm, tired but happy.

Bird of the Day: Southern Ground Hornbill

Saturday, 10th February 2007 ~ Skukuza, Kruger National Park

As we had a late night yesterday we did not have the usual early start, but breakfasted at 07h00 and departed south for Skukuza for our next two nights in Kruger. Our first Tawny Eagle of the trip was seen not far from Satara and also a magnificent Martial Eagle which was voted "bird of the day". New

birds started flowing as we continued south and these included Jacobin Cuckoo, European Roller, White-browed Scrub-Robin, Village Indigobird, Golden-breasted Bunting and other reasonably common birds but missed until now. More rare was an Olive-tree Warbler that responded to playback. Lunch was at Tshokwane accompanied by Greater Blue-eared Starlings and an African Mourning Dove further south in its range than expected. There were waterbirds at various spots as well and some were new to the list.

Arrival at Skukuza was mid-afternoon and a rest period was called for as it was very hot. Our thatched rondavels had fruiting Sausage Trees outside which created sufficient interest to photograph. Later a stroll around the spacious lodging area and along the Sabie River produced more new birds, including some lovely Red-backed Mannikins, Purple-crested Turaco and a better sighting of African Green Pigeons feeding on a fruiting wild fig tree. A large troop of Banded Mongoose and Vervet Monkeys caused amusement as they railed rubbish bins. There were monkeys sitting on chairs on one verandah as if they were the rightful occupants. There were also hippos and crocodiles in the river and some Bushbuck on the bank.

Bird of the Day: Martial Eagle

Sunday, 11th February 2007 ~ Skukuza, Kruger National Park

Before breakfast we drove to the Lake Panic hide nearby. On the way we met up with a friendly game ranger who told us there were Spotted Hyaenas in the road ahead. They were on both sides of the road which was convenient for passengers at each window of our vehicle. We had stunning close up views before they departed to their den in the heat of the day.

We turned off on a gravel road and in a densely vegetated drainage line a raptor was spotted – probably by “hawk-eye” June. On inspection it turned out to be a Black Sparrowhawk which was a target bird for Stanley. Other vehicles approached and on enquiring what we were looking at it was disturbed and took off but most of us had good views.

At the hide there were African Jacanas on lily pads in front of us, Water Thick-knees on the shore, a sleepy Black-crowned Night Heron in a tree opposite, Green-backed Heron, African Pied Wagtail and Pied Kingfisher on a fallen tree trunk in front of us and Common Waxbills in nearby sedges. Some Egyptian Geese waddled through the long grass to the water and a hippo strolled out of the undergrowth after his night out. There were crocodiles on the far bank and a Grey Heron flew in to catch a Woodland Mouse as it swam for cover across some open water. We eventually dragged ourselves away and returned to Skukuza for a well earned breakfast.

Later we drove down the picturesque Sabie River, searching every inlet for elusive African Finfoots, but we were out of luck. We did get other birds though which included a pair of African Black Duck, Goliath Heron (the world's largest heron), Malachite Kingfisher, Sombre Greenbul (at last) plus others. At one point another tour vehicle apologised for interrupting our birding and told us about two Lions on a deviation ahead. We forgot about birding and went to the spot and what a stunning sighting we had. One was black-maned and the other golden, and they were well matured. At one stage one of them walked straight towards us and crossed the road in front of our vehicle, so close it almost touched it.

We returned to Skukuza for lunch whilst watching dozens of roosting Epauletted Fruit Bats in the thatch roof above us. Some clutched babies peering out from under a folded wing.

We rested in the heat of the day and in the late afternoon visited the boardwalk. Although it was a pleasant short stroll there were not many birds around, no doubt it was still too hot. We did add Ashy Flycatcher and Southern Black Flycatcher to the list though and on our drive afterwards we found a Brubru and eventually we all managed to see it.

Bird of the Day: Black Sparrowhawk

Monday, 12th February 2007 ~ Pongola Game Reserve

We left Skukuza early and drove to Lower Sabie where we had breakfast. There were hippos in the river and some enormous crocodiles as well as plenty of birds. We thus spent some time after breakfast scanning the shoreline and sand banks. A couple of White-crowned Lapwings caused some excitement as this was a target bird. They were distant but scoped were used. A confiding Woodland

Kingfisher sat next to us as we viewed the lapwings. Also in the river there was a Goliath Heron, Black Stork, Yellow-billed Egret, lots of Marabou Storks, Comb Duck, Black Crane, African Jacana and African Fish Eagle amongst others.

We bought ingredients for a picnic lunch and drove on a gravel road to Crocodile Bridge where we left Kruger, but not before superb sightings of Zebra, Giraffe, Buffalo, Elephant and other mammals. We also saw some Ostrich for the second time on the trip.

Border formalities on entering Swaziland went smoothly and we had not driven far before a Dusky Indigobird was seen on telephone wires at a roundabout. This was a target bird by some and it flew before everyone had seen it. As it had not gone far we chased it by driving around the roundabout and did this a number of times. Anyone watching us would have wondered about the sanity of the driver, but we eventually did get onto it.

There were Striped Kingfishers on transmission lines as we drove through Swaziland, which necessitated more U-turns, but otherwise the drive was uneventful apart from missing a turn-off at one stage due to the lack of a signboard. At the border post there was a bit of a delay due to the arrival of a tourist coach getting there before us. Eventually we arrived in the Pongola game reserve and immediately saw a White Rhinoceros and calf, which caused some excitement as we had missed them in Kruger. A little further we came across another pair, also with a calf. These sightings made up for the long, tiring drive. Before reaching our lodge we also saw Warthog, Impala and some lovely Nyala. This good looking antelope was also new for the list.

Our accommodation was superb, very spacious and had stunning views from high above the Pongola River. Dinner that night was al fresco around a log fire with other guests. We were entertained beforehand by the kitchen staff singing in Zulu. It was lovely and the food was excellent as well.

Bird of the Day: White-crowned Lapwing

Tuesday, 13th February 2007 ~ Pongola Game Reserve

Wake up at 06h00, tea/coffee followed by a boat ride on Lake Jozini. The boat ("Osprey"), was a flat-bottomed barge and very steady, with an elevated viewing deck. We had not gone far when an Allen's Gallinule flew from some marsh grass for a brief sighting. Later we saw lots more, including a couple perched up on reeds. Great Reed-Warbler was calling but remained hidden. We saw Little Bittern, White-breasted Cormorants, lots of White-faced Ducks, African Fish Eagle, African Jacana and plenty more. The highlight though was a Peregrine Falcon chasing off a Eurasian Hobby and then flushing a warbler from the reeds, which it caught in front of us. Probably the Great Reed Warbler which we failed to see. We also had an Osprey (not our boat) before returning for breakfast. It was an excellent outing and the scenery was also stunning and some hippos confronted us but our skipper gave them space to calm them down.

The long break after breakfast was enjoyed as Mvubu is a wonderful place for total relaxation.

Our afternoon drive was also good, although a little hair-raising for some with the steep terrain and rough tracks. More raptors were seen and these included a young African Crowned Eagle, Lanner Falcon, Shikra and African Harrier-Hawk. We attempted to call up a skulking Gorgeous Bush-Shrike but it would not show itself, although it kept on calling. We did get a more obliging Acacia Pied Barbet though and also Black Cuckooshrike, Southern Carmine Bee-eater for the last time, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Kurrichane Thrush, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Black-crowned Tchagra, an obliging flock of White-crested Helmet-Shrikes, flocks of Red-billed Quelea, Jameson's Firefinch, Golden-breasted Bunting and others. We also saw some White Rhinoceros again, some stately Greater Kudu, handsome Nyala, plus Warthogs with young.

Bird of the Day: Peregrine catching a warbler

Wednesday, 14th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

We left Mvubu after breakfast and drove straight to Wakkerstroom. As this area is at high altitude it was very much cooler than we had experienced the past few days. We arrived in time for lunch which we had in a coffee shop around the corner from Wakkerstroom Country Inn, where we stayed for the final three nights of the tour.

After checking into our hotel and a short break we visited the Wetland Reserve bordering onto the town. There were hundreds of Red-knobbed Coots, lots of Yellow-billed Ducks, a small group of South African Shelduck, a pair of Hottentot Teal, African Sacred Ibis, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, African Purple Swamphen, plus dozens of bizarre Long-tailed Widowbirds. There were also many Whiskered Terns in breeding plumage and a few White-winged Terns. In one corner of the wetland a pair of stately Grey Crowned Cranes were teaching two chicks how to feed – a wonderful sight!

We dragged ourselves away from the wetland and drove up the Amersfoort road to where we had been told of a pair of Blue Cranes tendering a well-grown chick. We found them exactly in the right place and watched them for some time before we had to leave. The fences and telephone wires had dozens of Amur Falcons and many were flying over the fields as well.

On the return drive we stopped at a group of Meerkats (Suricates) standing upright in the evening sunlight outside their den. Nearby a pair of Yellow Mongoose were also looking at us. They usually share the same burrows amicably.

Birds of the Day: Grey-crowned and Blue Cranes

Thursday, 15th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

We left the hotel at 06h30 and drove up the mountain towards Paulpietersburg to look for endemic Yellow-breasted Pipit. This lovely pipit only occurs at this high elevation. A group of German birders followed us to the stake-out. We walked slowly and quietly over the field examining every bird that flew up. Most were African Pipits, plus Cape Longclaw, Spike-heeled Lark and Red-capped Lark. There were also many Wing-snapping Cisticolas, some of which gave us good sightings. Eventually we found the pipit we wanted and the yellow underparts showed well. This bird represented number 4000 for Stan and he was delighted. Wine on Stan tonight!

We returned to the hotel before breakfast and then drove out on the Newcastle road in search of Ground Woodpecker but they were not at home. The scenery was stunning though and we had Buff-streaked Chats, breeding Horus Swifts, South African Cliff-Swallow, Cape Robin-Chat, and others seen previously. Cape Rock-Thrush and some young Sentinel Rock-Thrush were found on the return drive, as well as Ant-eating Chats. A group of two female and one male Mountain Reedbuck next to the Slang River was a nice mammal find. There were also Rock Hyraxes sunning themselves on boulders.

Lunch was at a different coffee shop to yesterday. It was tasty but took a while to prepare. A rest followed and we then drove to a stake-out known to us for the normally shy and elusive Bush Blackcap. We played one note of its melodious sound and were almost attacked by a pair that shot out of dense cover. The male sat in the open and sang for us. On the return drive we watched our Meerkat family again and then stopped briefly where the road crossed the wetland. Amongst numerous coots was a pale bird that resembled an avocet, but on looking through binoculars we could not believe what we were looking at. A way out-of-range rare vagrant to South Africa and a first for the province ~ Red Phalarope. A lifer for the leader which seems to happen regularly on Ornitholidays tours.

Post Script: On the weekend after our departure the bird was still present and the wetland was lined with birders and scopes from up-country. All accommodation in Wakkerstroom was booked out. We should have had commission for causing a "twitch".

Birds of the Day: Bush Blackcap and Red Phalarope

Friday, 16th February 2007 ~ Wakkerstroom

We had a 06h30 start and drove across the wetland (the phalarope was still present), up the Amersfoort road and turned left on the Volksrust road. Denham' Bustard was seen again for the third time and we located distant Blue Korhaans by hearing them call. Scopes were trained on them. The usual Amur Falcons were in abundance again. We walked in fields searching for Rudd's and Botha's Larks without success. The breeding season was over and they were silent and not displaying. To find them in long grass was like looking for a needle in a haystack. We did have good sightings of Southern Bald Ibis though. We returned for breakfast and then spent time around the village where we located a singing Bokmakierie.

Lunch was at the same coffee shop as yesterday and in the afternoon we drove to Fickland Pan and enjoyed scoping the waterbirds present. There were Great Crested Grebe, Cape Shoveler, Maccoa Duck and some waders and other waterbirds. At one stage we heard Blue Cranes and four flew slowly by followed by another two later. It was a spectacular site. Grey Crowned Cranes were seen in a field as we left the pan. Our return drive was on a scenic circuit and as dusk was approaching there were hundreds of Red-capped larks in the track plus many bishops and widowbirds. Then we came across a small pair of larks feeding at the side of the track very close to us. They turned out to be Botha's Larks - a major target and one we had been searching for earlier in the day.

There were spectacular clouds building up over Wakkerstroom at dusk and we thought a huge storm was on the way, but they disappeared and the drought persisted.

Birds of the Day: Denham's Bustard and Botha's Lark

Saturday, 17th February 2007 ~ Departure

Breakfast was at 07h00 and we left soon afterwards. Roadside birding was at speed but we did get a fair list. As usual there were hundreds of Amur Falcons but they started to thin out closer to Johannesburg. We made it to Suikerbosrand Nature reserve in good time and indulged in "elevenses" whilst looking at Fiscal Flycatcher and Red-eyed Bulbul, both new for the list.

The scenic drive that followed was quiet at first, apart from numerous Mountain Wheatears and a host of cisticolas and a few others. As we drove down into the thornveld area we started to see both new birds and mammals. The latter included Black Wildebeest, Springbok and Red Hartebeest. New birds for the list whilst in this lovely reserve were Red-footed Falcon, Karoo Thrush (split from Olive Thrush), Black-chested Prinia, Cape Bunting and Yellow Canary, plus the two mentioned earlier.

A picnic lunch was enjoyed in the shade of Acacia trees before we left the reserve and we made it to the airport with time to spare. Being a Saturday there was no traffic to contend with.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all for being such pleasant company and for your wonderful enthusiasm, in spite of the heat. Also for your assistance in finding birds and mammals. There was some excellent birding which made it so much easier for me when I was concentrating on driving, particularly on rough roads. I hope to see you all back again on another Ornitholidays trip to a different part of beautiful South Africa.

Crocodile River, Dullstroom

Birds

No of Days Recorded Number = how many days species were sighted

H = the species was heard only

Abundance Scale (maximum for one day)

1 = 1 – 4

2 = 5 – 9

3 = 10 – 99

4 = 100 – 999

(E) = Endemic to South Africa, (NE) = Near Endemic to South Africa

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Common Ostrich	1	2	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Great Crested Grebe	3	2	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Little Grebe (Dabchick)	3	6	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
White-breasted Cormorant	2	3	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>
Reed Cormorant	3	10	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
Grey Heron	1	10	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	1	8	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	2	4	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron	3	3	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Great (White) Egret	1	2	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	2	6	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Cattle Egret	4	10	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
(Common) Squacco Heron	2	1	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Green-backed Heron	3	4	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	3	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Little Bittern	1	2	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>
Hamerkop	2	9	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
White Stork	3	6	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Black Stork	1	2	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Abdim's Stork	2	1	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	1	3	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Marabou Stork	3	6	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>
African Sacred Ibis	3	5	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Southern Bald Ibis (E)	3	4	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>
Glossy Ibis	2	1	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Hadedda Ibis	3	15	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
African Spoonbill	1	3	<i>Platalea alba</i>
White-faced Duck	4	3	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
White-backed Duck	1	1	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>
Egyptian Goose	3	10	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
South African Shelbuck (E)	2	3	<i>Tadorna cana</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	4	6	<i>Anas undulata</i>
African Black Duck	1	2	<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Cape Teal	1	1	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Hottentot Teal	2	2	<i>Anas hottentota</i>
Cape Shoveler (E)	3	2	<i>Anas smithii</i>
Southern Pochard	3	1	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
Comb (Knob-billed) Duck	2	4	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Spur-winged Goose	3	7	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Maccoa Duck	2	1	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
Secretarybird	1	3	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
Hooded Vulture	2	2	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
Cape Vulture (E)	4	1	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>
(African) White-backed Vulture	3	6	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Lappet-faced Vulture	1	2	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>
White-headed Vulture	1	1	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Yellow-billed Kite	2	7	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	2	9	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
European Honey Buzzard	1	1	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Verreaux's Eagle	1	1	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
Tawny Eagle	3	3	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
Steppe Eagle	2	3	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Lesser Spotted Eagle	3	3	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>
Wahlberg's Eagle	2	6	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>
Long-crested Eagle	1	2	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Martial Eagle	1	4	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
African Crowned Eagle	1	1	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Brown Snake-Eagle	1	3	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Bateleur	2	6	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
African Fish Eagle	1	2	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Steppe Buzzard	3	10	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Jackal Buzzard (E)	2	7	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Little Sparrowhawk	1	2	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>
Black Sparrowhawk	1	1	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>
Shikra (Little Banded Goshawk)	1	1	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
African Goshawk	1	2	<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>
Montagu's Harrier	1	1	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogone)	1	1	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Osprey	1	1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Lanner Falcon	1	2	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Eurasian (European) Hobby	1	2	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Taita Falcon	1	1	<i>Falco fasciinucha</i>
Red-footed Falcon	1	1	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>
Amur (Easter Red-footed) Falcon	4	11	<i>Falco amurensis</i>
Rock Kestrel	2	5	<i>Falco rupicolis</i>
Crested Francolin	1	4	<i>Peliperdix sephaena</i>
Red-winged Francolin	2	1	<i>Scleroptila levaillantii</i>
Natal Francolin (NE)	2	7	<i>Pternistes natalensis</i>
Swainson's Spurfowl (Francolin) (NE)	2	4	<i>Pternistes swainsonii</i>
Common Quail		1H	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	3	9	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Blue Crane (E)	2	2	<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>
Grey (Southern) Crowned Crane	2	2	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
African Rail		1H	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>
Black Crane	2	6	<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>
Allen's (Lesser) Gallinule	3	1	<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>
African Purple Swamphen (Purple Gallinule)	1	2	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Common Moorhen	1	5	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	4	6	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Kori Bustard	1	1	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Denham's (Stanley's) Bustard	2	4	<i>Neotis denhami</i>
Blue Korhaan (E)	1	1	<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>
African Jacana	3	5	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Common Ringed Plover	1	1	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Three-banded Plover	2	7	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Crowned Lapwing (Plover)	2	5	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Senegal Lapwing (Lesser Black-winged Plover)	1	1	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing (Plover)	3	13	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
White-crowned Lapwing (Plover)	1	1	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>
African Wattled Lapwing (Plover)	2	3	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Common Sandpiper	1	6	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>

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Wood Sandpiper	2	7	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	1	1	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	1	2	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	3	1	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Little Stint	2	3	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Ruff	1	2	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
African (Ethiopian) Snipe	2	1	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>
Red Phalarope	1	2	<i>Phalaropus fulicaria</i>
Black-winged Stilt	2	3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Spotted Thick-knee (Dikkop)	1	6	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Water Thick-Knee (Dikko p)	2	5	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Bronze-winged Courser	1	1	<i>Rhinoptilus chalcopterus</i>
Grey-headed Gull	2	1	<i>Larus cirricephalus</i>
Whiskered Tern	3	5	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>
White-winged Tern	3	3	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	2	4	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled (Rock) Pigeon	4	6	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive-Pigeon (Rame ron Pigeon)	1	3	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Red-eyed Dove	2	8	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
African Mourning Dove	2	3	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>
Cape Turtle-Dove	4	14	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	3	13	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Emerald-spotted (Greenspotted) Wood-Dove	1	4	<i>Turtur chalcopilos</i>
Tambourine Dove	1	1	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Lemon (Cinnamon) Dove	1	1	<i>Aplopelia larvata</i>
African Green-Pigeon	3	4	<i>Treron calva</i>
Brown-headed Parrot	2	2	<i>Poicephalus cryptoxanthus</i>
Knysna Turaco (Lourie) (E)	1	1	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>
Purple-crested Turaco (Lourie)	1	5	<i>Tauraco porphyreolophus</i>
Grey Go-away-bird (Lourie)	2	7	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	1	1	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
Black Cuckoo	1	1	<i>Cuculus clamorus</i>
Great Spotted Cuckoo	1	1	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Levaillant's (Striped) Cuckoo	1	2	<i>Clamator levaillantii</i>
Jacobin Cuckoo	1	2	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
Diderick Cuckoo	1	4	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Burchell's Coucal (NE)	1	5	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
African Scops-Owl	1	1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>
Fiery-necked Nightjar	1	1	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>
African Black Swift	3	5	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
White-rumped Swift	3	8	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Horus Swift	1	2	<i>Apus horus</i>
Little Swift	3	7	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Alpine Swift	1	1	<i>Apus melba</i>
African Palm Swift	3	3	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Speckled Mousebird	3	9	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	1	4	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Narina Trogon	1	1	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Pied Kingfisher	2	6	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Giant Kingfisher	1	1	<i>Ceryle maxima</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	2	5	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>
Woodland Kingfisher	3	5	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	2	4	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Striped Kingfisher	1	2	<i>Halcyon cheilicuti</i>
European Bee-eater	3	6	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	3	5	<i>Merops nubicoides</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
White-fronted Bee-eater	2	1	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>
Little Bee-eater	1	1	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
European Roller	2	2	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	3	7	<i>Coracias caudata</i>
Purple Roller	1	3	<i>Coracias naevia</i>
African Hoopoe	1	5	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Green (Redbilled) Wood-Hoopoe	2	3	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Common (Greater) Scimitarbill	1	1	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
African Grey Hornbill	2	5	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Red-billed Hornbill	2	4	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	3	6	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Southern Ground-Hornbill	1	1	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>
Black-collared Barbet	1	8	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet (NE)	1	1	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinker bird (Tinker Barbet)	1	3	<i>Pogonius chrysoconus</i>
Crested Barbet	2	5	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	1	1	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Bennett's Woodpecker	1	2	<i>Campethera bennettii</i>
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	2	3	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Red Woodpecker	1	1	<i>Dendropicus namaquus</i>
Olive Woodpecker	1	1	<i>Dendropicus griseacephalus</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	2	5	<i>Mirafra africana</i>
Flappet Lark		1H	<i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>
Sabota Lark (NE)	1	3	<i>Mirafra sabota</i>
Spike-heeled Lark	1	2	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Red-capped Lark	3	2	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Botha's Lark	1	1	<i>Spirocorys fringillaris</i>
Barn (European) Swallow	4	15	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	2	6	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	2	4	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Red-breasted Swallow	2	2	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>
Mosque Swallow	1	3	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>
Greater Striped Swallow (E)	3	10	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	2	4	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>
South African Cliff-Swallow (E)	2	4	<i>Hirundo spilodera</i>
Rock Martin	3	5	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Common House Martin	2	5	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Brown-throated Martin	2	2	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Banded Martin	2	4	<i>Riparia cincta</i>
Black Cuckooshrike	1	1	<i>Campephaga flava</i>
Grey Cuckooshrike	1	1	<i>Coracina caesia</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	2	8	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Eurasian (European) Golden Oriole	1	1	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
(Eastern) Black-headed Oriole	1	1	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Cape (Black) Crow	2	7	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	1	2	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	1	2	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Southern Black Tit	2	3	<i>Parus niger</i>
Arrow-marked Babbler	3	5	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Bush Blackcap (E)	1	1	<i>Lioptilus nigricapillus</i>
African Red-eyed Bulbul (NE)	1	1	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>
Dark-capped (Black-eyed) Bulbul	3	12	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Terrestrial Brownbul (Bulbul)	1	1	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>
Yellow-streaked Greenbul (Bulbul)	1	1	<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>
Sombre Greenbul (Bulbul)	1	1	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Eastern (Yellow-potted) Nicator	1	1	<i>Nicator gularis</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Kurrichane Thrush	1	1	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>
Karoo Thrush	1	1	<i>Turdus smithii</i>
Orange Ground-Thrush	1	1	<i>Zoothera gurneyi</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	1	2	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa</i>
Cape Rock-Thrush (E)	1	3	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
Sentinel Rock-Thrush (E)	1	1	<i>Monticola explorator</i>
Mountain Wheatear (Chat) (NE)	3	3	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>
Buff-streaked Chat (E)	2	3	<i>Oenanthe bifasciata</i>
Familiar Chat	3	6	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>
Mocking Cliff-Chat	1	6	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>
(Southern) Ant-eating Chat (E)	3	4	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>
African (Common) Stonechat	3	9	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Chorister Robin-Chat (Robin) (E)	1	1	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat (Heuglin's Robin)	1	2	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Red-capped Robin-Chat (Natal Robin)	1	1	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>
Cape Robin-Chat (Robin)	2	4	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>
(African) White-throated Robin-Chat (Robin) (E)	1	5	<i>Cossypha humeralis</i>
White-starred (Starred) Robin		1H	<i>Pogonochla stellata</i>
White-browed Scrub-Robin (Robin)	1	1	<i>Erythropygia leucophrys</i>
Icterine Warbler	1	1	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>
Olive-tree Warbler	1	1	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>
Great Reed-Warbler		2H	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
African (Marsh) Reed-Warbler	1	1	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>
(European) Marsh-Warbler		1H	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
(Cape Reed) Lesser Swamp-Warbler		1H	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
(African Sedge) Little Rush-Warbler	1	1	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Willow Warbler	2	5	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler	1	2	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapillus</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	1	1	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	1	2	<i>Apalis flavida</i>
Long-billed Crombec	1	2	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	1	1	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera (Bleating Warbler)	1	3	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Cape Grassbird (E)	1	1	<i>Sphenoecus afer</i>
Zitting (Fan-tailed) Cisticola	3	10	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Cloud Cisticola	3	2	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>
Wing-snapping (Ayrès') Cisticola	3	3	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
Pale-crowned Cisticola (NE)	1	2	<i>Cisticola cinnamomeus</i>
Wailing Cisticola	2	4	<i>Cisticola lais</i>
Rattling Cisticola	3	7	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Red-faced Cisticola	1	2	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola	3	7	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Croaking Cisticola		1H	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Lazy Cisticola	2	5	<i>Cisticola aberrans</i>
Neddicky	1	4	<i>Cisticola fulvicapillus</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	1	4	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Black-chested Prinia (NE)	1	1	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>
Drakensberg Prinia (E)	2	2	<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	3	11	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	1	1	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Ashy (Bluegrey) Flycatcher	1	1	<i>Muscicapa caerulescens</i>
Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Fan-tailed Flycatcher)	1	1	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>
Southern Black Flycatcher	1	2	<i>Melaenornis pammelina</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher (E)	1	1	<i>Sigelus silens</i>
Cape Batis (E)	1	1	<i>Batis capensis</i>
Chin-spot Batis	1	5	<i>Batis molitor</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
African Paradise Flycatcher	2	7	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
African Pied Wagtail	2	6	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Mountain (Longtailed) Wagtail	1	1	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
Cape Wagtail	3	9	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
African (Grassveld) Pipit	3	5	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Long-billed Pipit	2	1	<i>Anthus similis</i>
Yellow-breasted Pipit (E)	1	1	<i>Hemimacronyx chloris</i>
Cape (Orangethroated) Longclaw (E)	3	6	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw	1	1	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	1	1	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Common Fiscal (Fiscal Shrike)	3	11	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Red-backed Shrike	3	8	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Magpie (African Longtailed) Shrike	2	3	<i>Lanius souzae</i>
Southern Boubou (E)	1	1	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Black-backed Puffback	1	5	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Brubru	1	1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Southern Tchagra (E)		1H	<i>Tchagra tchagra</i>
Brown-crowned (Threestreaked) Tchagra	1	2	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	1	2	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>
Bokmakierie (E)	1	2	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
Gorgeous Bush-Shrike		2H	<i>Telophorus quadricolor</i>
Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike	1	1	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>
Grey-headed Bush-Shrike	1	1	<i>Malacotus blanchoti</i>
White-crested (White) Helmet-Shrike	2	1	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Common (Indian) Myna	4	8	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
(African) Pied Starling (E)	4	5	<i>Spreo bicolor</i>
Wattled Starling	3	4	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Violet-backed (Plumcoloured) Starling	1	3	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Burchell's Starling	3	5	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Cape Glossy Starling	2	6	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Greater Blue-eared Starling	2	4	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>
Red-winged Starling	2	9	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Red-billed Oxpecker	3	6	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Gurney's Sugarbird (E)	1	1	<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>
Malachite Sunbird	1	3	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Marico Sunbird	1	2	<i>Nectarinia mariquensis</i>
Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E)	2	4	<i>Nectarinia afra</i>
White-bellied Sunbird	1	1	<i>Nectarinia talatala</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	1	1	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>
Amethyst (African Black) Sunbird	1	2	<i>Nectarinia amethystina</i>
Cape White-eye (E)	3	7	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	2	2	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	1	1	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
House Sparrow	2	8	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Cape Sparrow (NE)	2	3	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	2	9	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
Thick-billed Weaver	2	4	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Spectacled Weaver	1	2	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Village (Spottedbacked) Weaver	2	3	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Cape Weaver (E)	2	6	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>
Southern Masked-Weaver	2	7	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Lesser Masked-Weaver	3	3	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Golden Weaver	1	1	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>
Cuckoo Finch	1	1	<i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>
Red-billed Quelea	4	4	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Southern Red Bishop	3	10	<i>Euplectes orix</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Yellow-crowned (Golden) Bishop	3	6	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
Yellow Bishop (Yellowrumped Widow)	1	2	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird (Redshouldered Widow)	2	5	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
White-winged Widowbird (Widow)	2	7	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
Red-collared Widowbird (Widow)	3	6	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Long-tailed Widowbird (Widow)	4	6	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch)	1	3	<i>Pytilia melba</i>
African (Bluebilled) Firefinch		1H	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Jameson's Firefinch	1	4	<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>
Blue Waxbill	2	8	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Common Waxbill	2	6	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
African Quailfinch	1	1	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>
Bronze Mannikin	1	1	<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>
Red-backed Mannikin	1	1	<i>Spermestes nigriceps</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	3	12	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Long-tailed (Eas tern) Paradise-Whydah	2	2	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Dusky Indigobird (Black Widowfinch)	1	1	<i>Vidua funerea</i>
Village Indigobird (Steelblue Widowfinch)	2	2	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>
Yellow-fronted (Yelloweyed) Canary	3	9	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
Cape Canary	3	4	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Yellow Canary (NE)	2	1	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>
Streaky-headed Seed-Eater (Canary)	1	3	<i>Serinus gularis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	1	2	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>
Cape Bunting (NE)	1	1	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Cinnamon-breasted (Rock) Bunting	2	5	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>
TOTAL BIRDS SEEN	352		

Mammals

COMMON NAME	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Baboon, Chacma	8	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Bat, Epauletted Fruit	2	<i>Epomophorus crypturus</i>
Bat, Tomb	1	<i>Taphozous mautitianus</i>
Blesbok	5	<i>Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi</i>
Buffalo	4	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>
Bushbuck	5	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>
Cat, African Wild	1	<i>Felis lybica</i>
Dassie, Rock (Hyrax)	3	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Duiker, Common	3	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Eland	1	<i>Tragelaphus oryx</i>
Elephant, African	4	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Genet, Large Spotted	1	<i>Genetta tigrina</i>
Giraffe, Southern	6	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>
Hare, Scrub	2	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Hartebeest, Red	1	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Hippopotamus	6	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Hyaena, Spotted	2	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>
Impala, Common	7	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>
Jackal, Black-backed	1	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>
Kudu, Greater	5	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Lion	3	<i>Panthera leo</i>
Mongoose, Banded	3	<i>Mungos mungo</i>
Mongoose, Dwarf	1	<i>Helogale parvula (undulate)</i>
Mongoose, Slender	1	<i>Galerella sanguinea</i>
Mongoose, White-tailed	1	<i>Ichneumia albicauda</i>
Mongoose, Yellow	4	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Monkey, Samango	1	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>
Monkey, Vervet	8	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>
Mouse, Woodland	1	<i>Grammomys dolichurus</i>
Nyala	2	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>
Oribi	1	<i>Ourebia ourebi</i>
Rat, Vlei	1	<i>Otomys angoniensis</i>
Reedbuck, Mountain	2	<i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>
Rhebok, Grey	1	<i>Pala capreolus</i>
Rhinoceros, White	2	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>
Serval	1	<i>Felis serval</i>
Shrew, Rock Elephant	1	<i>Elephantulus myurus</i>
Springbok	3	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Squirrel, Tree	3	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Steenbok	3	<i>Raphiceros campestris</i>
Suricate (Meerkat)	3	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>
Warthog	7	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
Waterbuck, Common	3	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>
Wildebeest, Black	3	<i>Connochaetes gnou</i>
Wildebeest, Blue	5	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Zebra, Burchell's	10	<i>Equus burchelli</i>
TOTAL MAMMALS SEEN	46	

Reptiles

Drakensberg Crag Lizard	<i>Pseudocordylus melanotus</i>
Striped Skink	<i>Mabuya striata</i>
Common Flat Lizard	<i>Platysaurus intermedius</i>
Sekukhune Flat Lizard	<i>Platysaurus orientalis</i>
Rainbow Skink	<i>Mabuya quinquetaeniata</i>
Southern Tree Agama	<i>Acanthocercus atricollis</i>
Peter's Ground Agama	<i>Agama armata</i>
Cape Dwarf Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus capensis</i>
Moreau's Tropical House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus capensis</i>
Water Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
Flap-neck Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo dilepis</i>
Leopard Tortoise	<i>Geochelone pardalis</i>
Serrated Hinged Terrapin	<i>Pelusios sinuatus</i>
Marsh Terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>
Spotted Bush Snake	<i>Philothamnus semivariatus</i>
Boomslang	<i>Dispholidus typus</i>
Southern African Python	<i>Python natalensis</i>

Butterflies

Emperor Swallowtail	<i>Papilio ophidicephalus</i>
Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demodocus</i>
Mocker Swallowtail	<i>Papilio dardanus</i>
African Monarch	<i>Danaus chryippus</i>
Brown-veined White	<i>Belenois aurota</i>
Yellow Pansy	<i>Junonia hierta</i>
Guineafowl	<i>Hamanumida daedalus</i>
Spotted Joker	<i>Byblia ilithyia</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
African Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias electo</i>
Marsh Commodore	<i>Precis ceryne</i>