

# SOUTH AFRICA

29<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024



Between 29<sup>th</sup> July-8<sup>th</sup> August 2024, myself and my wife, Laura, visited South Africa. This was a trip we had been hoping to do for several years, and reflecting on it, it completely defied expectations. The trip was split into two – we spent four nights in the city of Cape Town exploring the nearby sites, before flying into Hoedspruit for five nights at Tangala Safari Lodge in Thornybush Nature Reserve. Whilst Laura is not a birder, she was just as keen as me to go on safari, and see as many animals as possible, and whilst I was of the same opinion, I was also keen to see as much birdlife as possible too, and the destination we chose did not disappoint on either front! The country was stunning, the food was beautiful and the trip on the whole was outstanding. I have written up a day-by-day account to try and outline the trip in detail, and also describe what we saw on each day. As an avid birder, special attention was paid to the birdlife, but the Big 5 mammals were a top target of ours too, plus any other bonuses along the way. An outline of our trip is detailed below:

Trip Itinerary	
30 <sup>th</sup> July	Arrive in Cape Town, explore Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront
31 <sup>st</sup> July	Day trip to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Day trip to Cape Point, Cape of Good Hope and Boulders Beach
2 <sup>nd</sup> August	Tour of wine regions east of Cape Town
3 <sup>rd</sup> August	Fly to Hoedspruit, five nights at Tangala Safari Camp
8 <sup>th</sup> August	Fly to Mauritius for four nights via Johannesburg

**Day-by-Day Account** (new birds highlighted in **red**, other wildlife highlighted in **blue**).

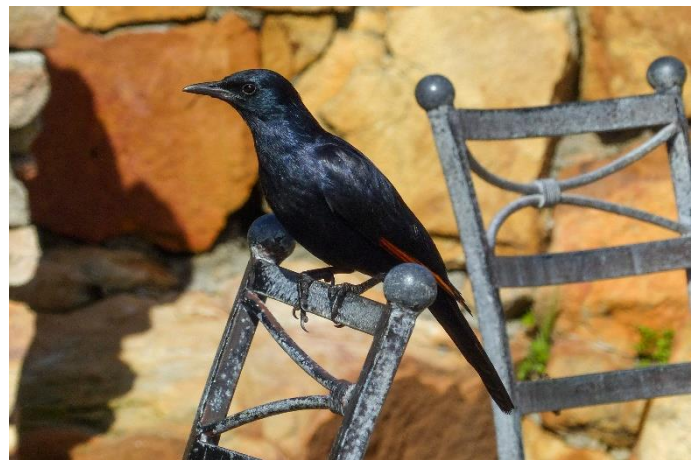
## Day 1 – 30<sup>th</sup> July

After a very long 20 hours of travelling from Newcastle, via a stop off in Dubai, we touched down in Cape Town mid-afternoon. We quickly sorted out our luggage and located our transfer to our apartment for the next four nights, just on the outskirts of the famous V&A Waterfront, comfortably within walking distance of the bars and restaurants. Having never been to Africa before, I was incredibly excited to start looking at some birds, as I presumed even the commonest ones would be new for me – I wasn't wrong and started racking up lifers as soon as we left the airport! **Red-winged Starling** was the first tick of the trip, with a small group feeding on the ground just outside the arrival gate. A couple of familiar faces were present too in **House Sparrow** and **Feral Pigeon**. The journey to our accommodation was only 20 minutes, but I observed a few new birds on the way, the most visible was **Hartlaub's Gull**, which turned out to be very common throughout the Western Cape. Other incidental sightings included a pair of **Pied Crow**, and several **African Sacred Ibis** on a roadside pool.

We arrived at our apartment and took in the stunning view overlooking the V&A Waterfront from the balcony. **Hartlaub's Gull** was common here, with several birds visible on the water, as were small numbers of **Kelp Gull**. We headed into the V&A itself for an explore, a stunning tourist destination, with a plethora of bars and restaurants. Whilst walking round, I came across a few more lifers in **Olive Thrush**, **Cape Wagtail**, **Reed Cormorant** and a lovely showy pair of **Cape White-eye**. **Red-winged Starling**, **House Sparrow** and **Feral Pigeon** were the commonest species here and subsequently encountered daily.



*Cape White-eye*



*Red-winged Starling*

## Day 2 – 31<sup>st</sup> July

The plan for Day 2 was a day trip to the world-famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, so we started the day early with some breakfast on the balcony overlooking the marina. It was a productive half-hour, and I picked up three lifers. A very approachable pair of **Red-eyed Dove** joined us for breakfast, and four **Speckled Pigeon** were visible with a group of **Feral Pigeon**, along with a single **Laughing Dove**. More scanning revealed a group of **House Sparrows** feeding on the ground, and I was very pleased to find a pair of **Cape Sparrow** in with them, our only sighting of this species on the trip. The pair of **Cape White-eye** were feeding in the trees just below our balcony again. Following breakfast, we headed to the V&A Waterfront to pick up our bus to take us to the gardens. The birding was interesting, again seeing species such as **Cape Wagtail**, **Reed Cormorant**, **Olive Thrush** and a smashing male **Cape Robin-Chat** was singing in the middle of the market square! The ever-present



**Red-winged Starling** and **Hartlaub's Gull** were in attendance in good numbers, along with c15 **Kelp Gull**.



*Red-eyed Dove*



*Cape Sparrow*

We were soon on the bus and heading south towards the gardens. A few incidental sightings on the journey included **Pied Crow**, **African Sacred Ibis** and as we travelled round the south-east side of Table Mountain, a **Jackal Buzzard** soared overhead. We arrived at the gardens and quickly made our way to the start of the trail. For someone who has never birded mainland Africa before, this place is a fantastic introduction, as there weren't mind-blowing numbers of birds, but more than enough to keep the interest, most of which were new species for me. That said, the first birds we encountered were familiar to me – **Egyptian Goose** was a common sight throughout the park, as was **Helmeted Guineafowl**. The lifers soon started to fall however, with one of the commonest being **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**, a stunning species which we bumped into several times throughout our visit – I estimated that we probably saw c25 individuals. Another common bird was **Hadada Ibis** which was seen frequently feeding on the grass at close range. **Cape Spurfowl** was the next to show, walking fearlessly on the paths seeking food from the tourists – again we kept bumping into these birds, and saw 10+. Getting into the heart of the gardens, and in amongst the trees, I started to see lots more passerines, two common species here were **Cape Robin-Chat** and **Cape White-eye**, but I also picked up several new species such as **Cape Bulbul**, **African Dusky Flycatcher**, **Karoo Prinia** and **Sombre Greenbul**. I had done some research before visiting, and two birds I was keen to see were Spotted Eagle-Owl, and Cape Sugarbird – sadly, despite searching, I failed to pick up either, but I did connect with flocks of 30 **Forest Canary** and 10 **Speckled Mousebird** at the far end of the park whilst failing to see the Sugarbird. Other species of interest seen here that we had seen previously were **Olive Thrush**, **African Sacred Ibis**, **Speckled Pigeon** and **Cape Wagtail**. I would recommend a visit here if you're coming to Cape Town, and with how dense some of the vegetation is, I can imagine you would encounter different species on every visit.

We explored the gardens for around four hours, then with the heat of the day starting to intensify, and the previous day travelling catching up with us, we headed back to Cape Town for evening meal and an early night, conscious of another big day planned for tomorrow. The route back took us via Hout Bay, and although we only observed from the top of the bus, **Hartlaub's Gull** was evidently present in their hundreds on the beach, along with c50 **Kelp Gull**. With not a lot else to report from the journey back, that concluded the day.





*African Dusky Flycatcher*



*Hadada Ibis*



*Southern Double-collared Sunbird*



*Cape Spurfwowl*

### Day 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> August

We had another big day planned for today, and one that I was very much looking forward to – we had booked a full day tour of the peninsula to the south of Cape Town, incorporating Cape Point, Cape of Good Hope, and Boulders Beach. It was another early start, heading into the V&A Waterfront before dawn to pick up a quick breakfast before heading for the bus. The usual suspects were in attendance at the waterfront as we had breakfast, as well as a group of eight **Cape Canary** which was a slightly unexpected sighting.

It wasn't long before we were on our way to our first stop – Cape Point lighthouse. The journey was around 45 minutes, through some lovely scenic countryside, but it wasn't until we got within a few miles of Cape Point that I clapped eyes on a major target for the day, a small gathering of three **Common Ostrich** right by the road; as we approached the parking area for the lighthouse, there were another two **Ostriches** on the plains, as well as six **Helmeted Guineafowl**. The heat was already quite intense, so the walk up to the lighthouse was sadly unproductive for much in the way of passerines, but the habitat looked great, and I should imagine it's a fantastic place for migration at the right time of year. Nevertheless, I still saw **Karoo Prinia**, three **Cape White-eye**, four **Cape Robin-Chat** and a single **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**. A flock of **Hadada Ibis** flew straight overhead here, and seemingly out to sea. We descended again and went to the café for lunch. In the seating area outside, there was the familiar gathering of **Red-winged Starling** and **House Sparrow** seeking titbits from the tourists, but with them were two species of a bit more interest – a female **Southern Boubou** and a pair of **Cape Bunting**, nice to get two lifers showing so well.





*Cape Bunting*

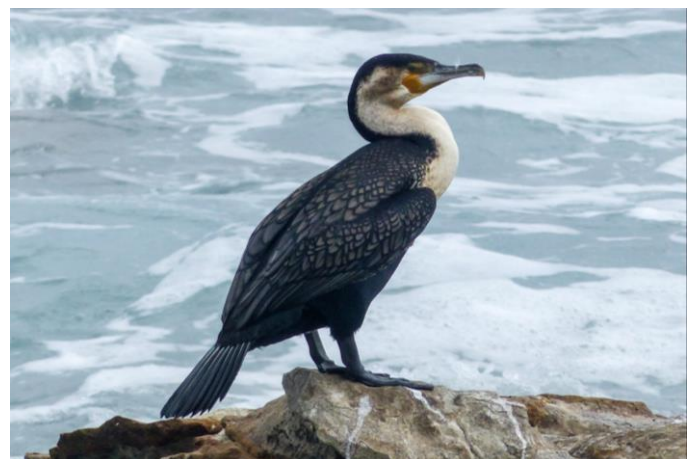


*Common Ostrich*

After lunch, we walked from Cape Point to the Cape of Good Hope, about a 45-minute hike. Just before we started, our guide pointed out a **Common Eland** walking through the dense vegetation ahead of us. The walk took us through some cracking habitat, and I started to see a few more birds. **Cape Robin-Chat** was again common, and a single **Familiar Chat** was beside the path. There seemed to be a lot of birds on the move – I had another flock of **Hadada Ibis** overhead, plus 28 **Egyptian Geese** and five **African Sacred Ibis** heading south. A **Red Kestrel** was hunting the hillside, and a pair of **White-necked Raven** were patrolling the cliffs. As we got closer to the Cape of Good Hope, I started to notice more seabirds appearing, and I stopped to scan; it was quickly evident that the large colony of **Cape Cormorant** was visible, with hundreds on the cliffs, and I estimated there was somewhere in the region of 3,000 flying around offshore – what a spectacle! There were much smaller numbers of **White-breasted Cormorant** in amongst them too, probably 50 birds. We continued walking towards the point, and once at the highest point, I had a scan over the sea – I had read that this is a premium seawatching spot, and often turns up several species of shearwater, petrels and albatrosses. On this particular day however, it was very disappointing, and there wasn't much moving at all, although I did record five **Cape Gannet** heading south close inshore. Other than countless numbers of **Cape Cormorant**, the sea was very quiet indeed, possibly due to the time of day.



*Crowned Cormorant*



*White-breasted Cormorant*

We began the descent to the parking area, making a couple of stops to scan the landscape. I could see another group of six **Common Ostrich** from here, and a party of ten **Helmeted Guinea fowl**. The parking area itself was great, with some exposed rocks just offshore playing host to hundreds of **Cape Fur Seals**, as well as many seabirds, including four species of cormorant – the aforementioned **Cape** and **White-breasted**, but also three **Bank Cormorant** and six **Crowned Cormorant**. In the half an



hour I stood watching the shoreline, a total of 12 **Greater Crested Tern** flew past just over the rocks, and singles of **Little Egret** and **Grey Heron** fished in the rockpools.

We soon moved on to our final leg of the day trip, to visit the **African Penguin** colony at Boulders Beach. Having never seen wild penguins anywhere before, this was the highest 'must-do' on my list, and it didn't disappoint – we saw c100 birds of all ages, just feet away from the boardwalk. It was very busy and touristy, but it was worth it! A pair of **African Oystercatcher** were on the shoreline here too, which was a species I had missed at Cape of Good Hope, so was pleased to see it here. Seabirds were present here too in small numbers with **Cape Cormorant** again common, and four **Greater Crested Tern** flew over. The most numerous species by far here was **Kelp Gull**, and we had c500 birds in the air together at one stage. Once we'd had our fill with the penguins, we made our way back to the visitor's centre, but not before getting some very close views of the local **Rock Hyrax** posing for the visitors! Whilst Laura had a look at the souvenirs in the shop, I got my eye on some interesting-looking habitat just off the boardwalk which contained a few passerines. **Cape White-eye** was again the commonest bird, although a flock of 15 **Cape Canary** were seen well too. The highlight, however, was a group of five **Red-faced Mousebird** which was another well-received lifer.

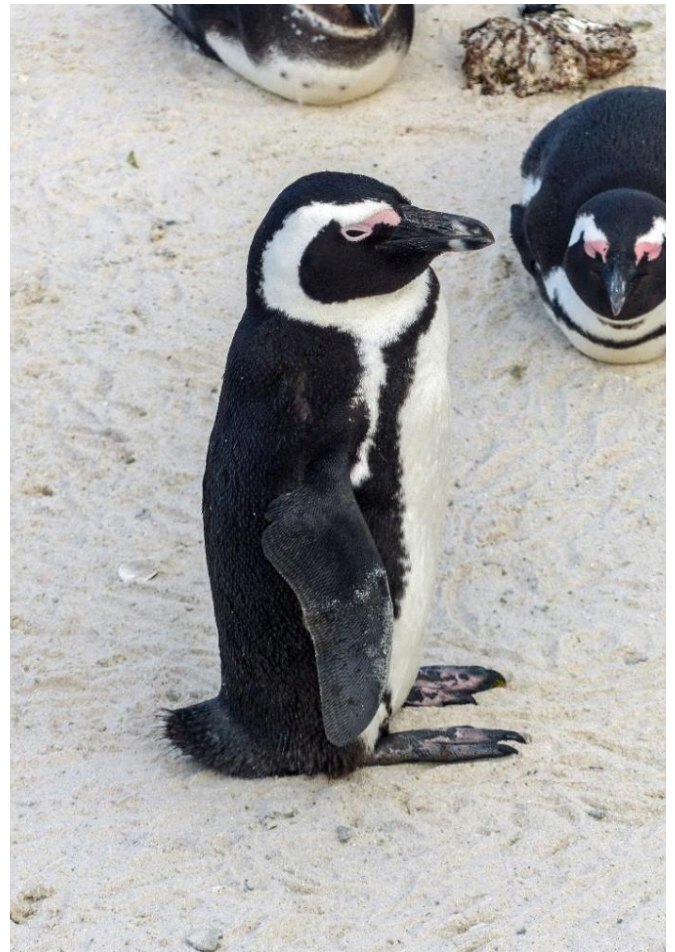
By this time, the day was coming to a close, and we headed back to the bus to take us back to Cape Town. It had been a brilliant day, and we got back to the apartment around 6pm, just as the sun was starting to drop.



*Rock Hyrax*



*Common Eland*



*African Penguin*





*The view from the parking area looking towards Cape Point lighthouse*

#### Day 4 – 2<sup>nd</sup> August

We opted for something different on Day 4 and went down the tourist route – the ‘3 Region Wine Tour’, stopping at three different wineries, all set in the countryside east of Cape Town. Of course, I took my bins and camera as any birder would, just in case! It was another early start, and we got on the coach just as dawn was breaking. A quick breakfast later, we were on our way out east. Our first destination was the wine region of Stellenbosch, a journey of around an hour from Cape Town. The view from the coach was surprisingly productive on the bird front, and I saw lots of new species for the trip, including a few lifers. We drove through some good wetland habitat, where large numbers of **Red-knobbed Coot** were present on the larger water bodies, as well as a single **Greater Flamingo** and a brief fly-by of a single **Yellow-billed Duck** was a welcome sight. A few **Western Cattle Egret** were evident here, as well as c10 **African Sacred Ibis**, and small numbers of **Hadada Ibis** and **Egyptian Geese**. It was more of the same for a while, but as we got closer to Stellenbosch, the landscape changed into farmland, and a few different species started to appear. I picked up my first **Blacksmith Lapwing** of the trip at the roadside, and as we stopped at some traffic lights, in a roadside field was one of my most ‘hoped-for’ birds – **Blue Crane**! Totally unexpected as I felt it was very unlikely that I would manage to catch up with one, but luck was on my side, a smashing lifer. Arriving at the first winery at Stellenbosch, a few birds were evident around the parking area such as **Cape Wagtail**, **Pied Crow**, **Cape Robin-Chat**, and a very welcome **Fiscal Flycatcher**. There was not much else to report from a wildlife point of view, but the wine was great!

The next winery we went to in the town of Franschhoek was quite urban in comparison to the previous one, and the birdlife was scarce however, as we made our way to the final winery in Paarl, the habitat quickly became rural farmland, and the birding was brilliant. We stopped the coach for a touristy stop, and my birding hat was quickly applied. I got eyes on a raptor being mobbed by a **Pied Crow** which, as



it came closer, became evident that it was an **African Harrier-Hawk**, which ended up right overhead. A **Southern Fiscal** was seen here too hunting from the roadside power lines. The landscape looked great for birding, with farmland on one side of the road, and wild grassland on the other. I picked up several more good birds as we made our way to the final winery including two separate **Black-winged Kites** hunting at the roadside, as well as a **Jackal Buzzard**, several **Helmeted Guineafowl** and a flock of 20+ **Spur-winged Geese**. We arrived at the winery and did our tour, before coming back into the parking area awaiting the bus to take us back to Cape Town. The birding here whilst we waited was great as well, with lots of birds coming into the bushes surrounding the winery to feed, including **Cape Bulbul**, a pair of **Cape Sparrow**, several **Cape White-eye** and a flock of **Cape Canary**. The most significant bird for me however, were a pair of **Southern Masked Weaver** that came down to feed in the car park – smashing birds! A group of 10-15 **Alpine Swift** fed overhead as we made our way onto the coach to head back as the sun began to drop. By the time we got back to our apartment, it was dark, and with an early flight booked to take us on to the next part of our trip, the curtain came down on our time exploring the Western Cape. What a fantastic place, well worth including into a trip to South Africa, and doubtless there is so much more to see than we managed to fit in.

### Day 5 – 3<sup>rd</sup> August

We had an early start and made our way to Cape Town airport before dawn – following a pleasant, short flight, we touched down in Hoedspruit just after midday. Upon landing, even just around the airport, I found the landscape stunning. The scenery looked completely wild and untouched, and felt like ‘real’ Africa! Before we had even disembarked the plane, I had noted my first lifer of this leg of the trip – several **Fork-tailed Drongo** were flycatching beside the runway as we taxied to the terminal. This species ended up being extremely common and seen in good numbers daily. A quick, flawless transition later, and we were on our way to the safari lodge. The transfer in itself felt like a safari, as the driver was very chatty and knowledgeable, stopping for any animals that we encountered. In the hour journey, we had great views of **Giraffes**, **Chacma Baboons**, **Vervet Monkeys** and several groups of **Impala** and **Scrub Hares**. As we turned off the main road, we entered Thornybush Nature Reserve and began making our way slowly through the bush towards our camp. Several bird species soon became evident, and I was able to get good views of some new species from the car. Both **Red-billed** and **Yellow-billed Hornbill** were present, and it soon became apparent that they were everywhere!



*Burchell's Starling*



*Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill*

**Fork-tailed Drongo** was again seen regularly, and a handful of **Cape Turtle Dove** were at the roadside. We soon arrived at the camp and were greeted by the friendly team of staff. We were also greeted by a pair of **Natal Spurfowl** wandering around the camp when we arrived, and a small group



of **Burchell's Starling** sharing lunch with the other guests. The best bird seen in the camp today though, was a stunning **White-throated Robin-Chat** that posed not 10 feet away from where we were sitting whilst we got our induction. We had a quick bite to eat, before immediately heading out on our first game drive.

It's no exaggeration to say that the experience of the first game drive was utterly mind-blowing – I didn't know where to look, and when I looked one way, I felt I was missing something behind me! For a birder, the combination of new birds, and the African mammals was the most exciting wildlife experience I'd ever had. Starting with the birds, I racked up 15 lifers in the three hours we were out, the first of which I immediately recognised – a stunning **Lilac-breasted Roller** perched up right outside the camp, a bird I had dreamt of seeing for years, what a start! We stopped the vehicle shortly after for our driver to investigate some potential 'big cat' tracks, so I took the chance to scan a mixed flock of smaller birds feeding beside the road. It was a mixture of **Blue Waxbill** and **Southern Grey-headed Sparrow**, two species that, thereafter, were encountered very frequently daily. A handful of **Rattling Cisticola** and **Tawny-flanked Prinia** were in the roadside scrub – again, subsequently seen daily. We continued to follow the tracks (our driver kept us in suspense as to what we were following), and we soon came to our first waterhole. We stopped here, and to my wife's delight, it was full of **Hippos**! We pulled round to get a closer view of the animals, and a few more birds started to become obvious on the shoreline – **Three-banded Plover** and **Blacksmith Lapwing** were both common throughout the reserve, and we first encountered them on this leg of the trip here, along with a pair of **Crowned Lapwing** and a party of **Crested Francolin**. An **African Palm Swift** whizzed around overhead too. As we got closer to the **Hippos** on our left, it became obvious that they were playing host to a party of five **Red-billed Oxpeckers** – another famous African species that I had been looking forward to seeing. I glanced towards the other side of the track and connected with the unmistakable shape and sound of a group of **Grey Go-away-bird**, which came in to check us out, resulting in getting fantastic views. As if that wasn't enough, looking on the track ahead of us, there was a feeding party of small birds, which on closer inspection, turned out to contain a pair of **Emerald-spotted Wood Dove** as well as both **Cape Starling** and **Burchell's Starling** amongst a large group of **Blue Waxbill**.



*Grey Go-away-bird*



*Blue Waxbill*

I literally didn't know where to look, with lifers in all directions! We kept moving along the track, and it wasn't long before we came to another sudden stop, with both our driver and spotter staring intently into nearby bushes. We waited in suspense, before the driver pulled forward slightly, and we were met with the unmistakable view of a **Leopard**! Our first encounter of one of the big 5, and although it was largely obscured, the experience was breathtaking. It amazed me just how good the spotter was, and



even when it had been pointed out, the Leopard remained incredibly well hidden. We left the animal in peace as dusk approached, and began an eventful drive back...

As it began to get dark, we started a slow drive back towards the camp, but not before our spotter pulled out a huge torch, and as we drove along, he was frantically scanning the bushes on both sides of the road. To my absolute amazement, he called a sudden halt to the vehicle and shone the torch in the direction of a bare tree – staring back at us was a stunning **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl**! We watched the bird for about 10 minutes, before heading back towards camp. Even then, the birding wasn't finished, as shortly afterwards, the driver slammed the brakes on again, and sitting in the middle of the road were two **Fiery-necked Nightjar** – sadly, they didn't hang around long, but what an unbelievably lucky encounter, not once but twice. A truly astonishing few hours, that completely defied any expectations that we had for our first game drive. We were suitably exhausted when we got back to camp and turned in for the night.

### Day 6 – 4<sup>th</sup> August

Our first full day on safari, and we were woken by the staff at 5am, before heading out on the morning game drive, still under the cover of darkness. Fittingly wrapped up in our winter gear, we braved the freezing darkness and headed out. As the sun just started to rise, we were brought to an abrupt halt and found ourselves face-to-face with our first **White Rhino** of the trip, right beside the track! Stunning views were had of our second 'Big 5' species, before we quickly made our way back towards the area where we had enjoyed the Leopard the previous evening. With the sun up, it soon became clear that the **Leopard** was still present, exactly where we left it. We enjoyed watching the big cat again for the next 20 minutes or so, despite it being largely obscured and in the shade, but we couldn't complain!



*Leopard – our first encounter with one of the 'Big 5'*



*White Rhino*

In between watching the Leopard, I turned my attention to the birds in the surrounding area. A group of 50+ **Blue Waxbill** were feeding in the roadside bushes, this time accompanied by several **Tawny-flanked Prinia**, **Rattling Cisticola** and 20+ **Yellow-fronted Canary**. A pair of **Southern Black Tit** showed well here too, as well as a tremendous **Crested Barbet** right beside the vehicle.

We moved on to allow other parties to view the Leopard and made our way to an open area to stop for our morning coffee. This allowed us 20 minutes to stretch our legs, and of course, I took the opportunity to search for birds! These moments proved to be very precious, as it is rather tough to identify many of the smaller birds whilst on the game drives, and they are often just glimpses as you drive past. I took full advantage of the opportunity on this occasion, and several new species were found here including **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **White-crowned Shrike** and **Dark-capped Bulbul**.



Also, my first **Tawny Eagle** of the trip soared overhead, and a nearby dead tree played host to both **Bearded Woodpecker** and **Cardinal Woodpecker**, as well as a **Long-billed Crombec**, plus our first **Tree Squirrel** of the trip. As I was photographing the Woodpeckers, I spotted a movement in the undergrowth heading our way – it was a **Spotted Hyena** which proceeded to trot right past us without a care in the world!



*Cardinal Woodpecker*



*Spotted Hyena*

A very productive stop indeed, and after we had enjoyed our surroundings for a while, a call came through on the radio, and we were whisked away swiftly. The next sight that greeted us was real bucket list stuff – after a few minutes, we grinded to a sudden halt as a huge male **Lion** was sat snoozing in the middle of the road! It was absolutely incredible to see such a magnificent animal in the wild, especially so relaxed, and so close. We enjoyed it for around half an hour, but as they so often do, it continued to sleep the whole time, so we left it in peace. The excitement didn't stop there however, and as we made our way slowly back to camp, we were again stopped in our tracks, this time by our first herd of **African Elephants** crashing through the bush. Again, truly remarkable and incredible to see these animals in their natural habitat. No matter how many times we saw Elephants during the trip, they were always mesmerising – we really could have watched them go about their business all day. We had been on safari for less than 24 hours, and four of the 'Big 5' were comfortably in the bag! Moving on for a final time, as we headed back to get some breakfast, we made it back to the entrance of the camp and as we just turned into the driveway, what looked like a dark fox-like animal ran right across our path and stopped to investigate us – it was a **Black-backed Jackal**! I felt incredibly privileged to have seen one, as it wasn't on our radar at all. The ranger told us that they are often very secretive, and also rare within the reserve, so to have seen one so well was a privilege indeed. What a morning...



*Black-backed Jackal*



*African Elephants*



We arrived back in camp at 9:30am for our breakfast and weren't due to go back out for our next drive until 3:30pm, so I took the chance to enjoy my first prolonged period of birding around the camp, not really knowing what to expect – I wasn't disappointed, the birding was fab! I had a quick breakfast in the company of **White-throated Robin-Chat** and **Burchell's Starling** before going on a wander. Over the course of the next couple of hours, I followed a feeding group of small passerines, studying them all closely, and racked up a further nine new birds. In the feeding group, I had singles of **Black-backed Puffback**, **Yellow-breasted Apalis** and **Red-headed Weaver**, as well as pairs of **Red-billed Firefinch** and **Chinspot Batis**. Whilst wandering, I bumped into a few familiar faces in **Dark-capped Bulbul**, **Long-billed Crombec** and the ever-present two species of **Hornbill**. I also enjoyed views of some groups of ground-feeding birds such as **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Arrow-marked Babbler**, **Bearded Scrub Robin** and a stunning male **Golden-breasted Bunting**.



*Red-headed Weaver*



*Terrestrial Brownbul*

Following lunch, we headed back out for our evening game drive. Again, the drive was spectacular, as we searched the landscape for the 'Big 5' mammals. I was starting to get familiar with several bird species as I began to establish which ones were going to be seen commonly. Aside from the regular faces, we saw three **White-crowned Shrike**, three **Crested Barbet**, two **Crowned Lapwing** and a single **Three-banded Plover**. The most spectacular bird we saw, and one that I was desperate to catch up with was the stunning **Magpie Shrike**, albeit distant on this occasion. As we waited at a watering hole towards dusk, a **Yellow-billed Stork** flew over our heads, which made for another lifer. **Crocodiles** were seen around water bodies frequently, and a herd of **African Elephants** were bathing here too, which was absolutely stunning as the sun set behind them.



*Southern Red-billed Hornbill*



*Yellow-fronted Canary*



## Day 7 – 5<sup>th</sup> August

Another cold, early start, and we headed out for our morning drive. This time around, our driver and spotter had formulated a plan. We decided to head north from the camp, which was an area that we had not yet been to, in the hope of finding a herd of African Buffalo – the last of the ‘Big 5’ mammals we had not yet seen. I was looking forward to it, not just to try and complete the mammal ‘set’, but also to explore a new area. The landscape looked great as we followed the trail, trying to locate the herd. A pair of **White-backed Vulture** were sitting on top of a nest right next to the track, which we got great views of as we stopped to observe them. Shortly after, our driver turned the vehicle off the track, and headed straight into the bush – moments later, we were presented with the sight of 50+ **African Buffalo**. It was spectacular to see these impressive animals, and even better that it meant we had completed the ‘Big 5’! What was equally entertaining too, was the sight of 40+ **Red-billed Oxpecker** and 10+ **Fork-tailed Drongo** in very close proximity to the animals, picking up flies. I also managed to find two **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** amongst the group, which I was delighted to see as I gather this is a species in decline. Following the excitement, we got a message on the radio of a family party of **Lions** that had been found very near our location. A quick drive later, and we were quickly in the company of the group – two males, two Lionesses and four small cubs. Again, bucket list stuff! We felt privileged to be in the company of these animals, an unbelievable experience. To see these magnificent animals so close to the vehicle, so relaxed by our presence too, was breathtaking. We watched the animals here for about 30 minutes, before it was time to head back for some breakfast. Some birds of note here were six **Southern Black Tit**, three **White-crowned Shrike**, a **Long-billed Crombec**, an adult **Bateleur** circling overhead, and a **Brown-headed Kingfisher** which perched up briefly in the bushes, before darting away.



*Oxpeckers on a Buffalo – Red-billed (left), Yellow-billed (right)*



*Fork-tailed Drongo*



*Crocodile*



*African Buffalo*



Fired up by the previous day, after a quick breakfast, I was very keen to have another wander around the camp, in the hope of picking up some new birds and get a feel for the species that were in the camp regularly. A few familiar faces were observed easily, including a mixed group of four **Natal Spurfowl** and seven **Crested Francolin**. There appeared to be more small passerines around the camp than on the previous day, so I positioned myself where I could observe a tight feeding flock. A pair of **Chinspot Batis** were the most visible, flycatching in the open, as was a single **Yellow-breasted Apalis**. Rather flightier were two **Long-billed Crombec**, a **Black-backed Puffback** and a particularly elusive **Ashy Flycatcher** which eventually gave itself up to get a positive ID. There seemed to be higher numbers of ground feeders too, including at least five **White-throated Robin-Chat**, two **Bearded Scrub-Robin**, and more significantly for me, three **White-browed Scrub-Robin** which I hadn't observed any previous days. The best birds of my wander however, came shortly afterwards as I made my way into a more open area – a pair of **Brown-headed Parrot** were feeding happily out in the open. Again, this was a species I was mega keen to see, so to get them in the camp was fantastic! Other new species for my 'camp list' were pairs of **Crested Barbet** and **Crested Lapwing**, a **Bearded Woodpecker** and a flyover **Tawny Eagle**.



*Chinspot Batis*



*Brown-headed Parrot*



*Crested Barbet*



*Dark-capped Bulbul*

The evening safari was again busy on the bird front, the best of which came shortly after we left the camp – a female **Red-crested Korhaan** right beside the track. This was another species I was keen to see, as it has its rather limited range in Southern Africa. However, this was the only new bird I recorded on this particular game drive, although there were a few species of note such as three **African Palm Swift** hawking overhead, a **Yellow-billed Stork** on a roadside waterbody, two **Brown-crowned Tchagra** and three **Golden-breasted Bunting** amongst a group of **Southern Grey-headed Sparrow**.





*Male Lion keeping an eye on the pride*



*One of several Lion cubs seen*



*Brown-crowned Tchagra*

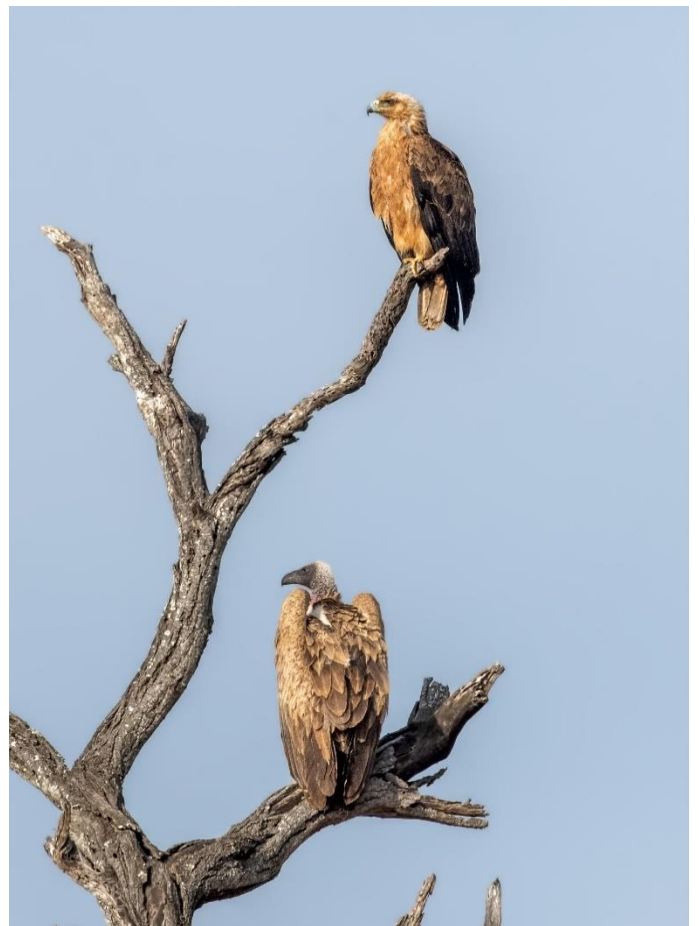


*Blacksmith Lapwing*

## Day 8 – 6<sup>th</sup> August

Another early morning on the cards, and the daily routine was back underway. With new guests coming and going from the camp all the time, naturally the new guests are keen to see the 'Big 5' mammals as soon as possible. On this particular morning, we had several new guests with us, so our driver formulated a plan to try and connect with as many of the sought-after mammals as possible. As it turned out, this meant we visited a few new areas, and as a result, new birds!

The morning was lovely, calm and sunny conditions made for great viewing, and as we made our way into the bush searching for big cats, it felt very 'birdy'! Two of the more obvious species of note were an **African Hoopoe** that flew over the vehicle, and a tight group of six **White-crested Helmetshrike** feeding beside the track. The raptors were out in force too, making the most of the morning sun.



*Tawny Eagle (top) with White-backed Vulture (bottom)*



Singles of **Bateleur**, **White-backed Vulture** and **Dark-chanting Goshawk** were all watching on intently, as well as no less than four **Tawny Eagle**. The usual smaller birds were all in attendance, but my attention was soon drawn to a group of **Crested Barbet** at the top of a nearby tree, and to my surprise, there was a **Common Scimitarbill** with them! Such a unique-looking species, and one I was more than happy to connect with. My fifth and final lifer of the drive came in the form of a single **Purple Roller** beside the track as we drove past – it was good to compare this species to the several **Lilac-breasted Roller** seen on the same morning. On the mammal front, it was another morning to remember, with very special views of two of the 'Big 5'. Shortly after leaving the camp, we were brought to a stop at the sight of 10+ **African Elephants** knocking over some small trees beside the track, whilst a pair of **Giraffes** watched on intently. We watched the animals for a while, before our driver got a message on the radio, and we went on our way – this time down a track we had not been down before. We arrived at an empty riverbed, and the off-road tyre spikes were applied. After a few hundred metres, we stopped and were told to look up to the right. An extraordinary sight was waiting for us – a gorgeous **Leopard** was snoozing halfway up a large tree, completely in full view! By far our best views of this species, and such a privilege to see one so well.



*Leopard – what a view!*



*Zebras (plus Red-billed Oxpecker!)*



*Giraffe*



The usual routine followed, and after breakfast I headed out with the camera to see what I could find in the camp. Today was a lot hotter than previous days, and the camp felt a lot quieter on the bird front than it had done yesterday. The highly visible species were still going about their business, and I got some great looks at the group of **Crested Francolin** which, to my surprise, were also playing host to a **Swainson's Spurfowl** which was an unexpected addition. The resident **Yellow-breasted Apalis** showed particularly well that morning, and posed nicely for a few photos, as did an **Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove** which was most welcome as they had usually just been seen flying off the road whilst on the game drives. Other than that, it was mostly the same as prior days however, over lunch I got my eye on a hirundine over the camp, which turned out to be a **Red-breasted Swallow**, and a distant **Red-crested Korhaan** was seen distantly on the plains from here.



*Crested Francolin*



*Swainson's Spurfowl*



*Yellow-throated Apalis*



*Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove*

The evening drive soon followed, and although it was much of the same of the bird front again, every drive was unique, and the highlight this time was a **Little Sparrowhawk** out hunting, that gave us a really close fly-by. Other avian highlights were another female **Red-crested Korhaan**, a pair of **Southern Black Tit**, and some great looks at a close group of **Arrow-marked Babbler**. The mammals were again in good order, and we stumbled upon a mother and calf beside the track, which to my delight turned out to be **Black Rhinos**! A super rare species nowadays, and a real privilege to see, especially so unexpectedly. We got some great views of **Giraffes** beside the road here too, as well as a herd of **Blue Wildebeest** which were surprisingly not all that common. Groups of **Hippos** in all the large waterbodies were always great value, and we saw a lot more species of 'prey item' than we had done previously including **Zebra**, **Nyala**, **Greater Kudu** and **Common Warthog**.





*Lilac-breasted Roller*



*Arrow-marked Babbler*

## Day 9 – 7<sup>th</sup> August

Sadly, our final full day on safari. Another fab morning drive was in store for us however, and the bird life was more varied than ever! The three-hour morning drive produced another three new birds for me, as well as some species that we had only seen once previously. A few incidental highlights as we drove around looking for the big mammals included six **White-crested Helmetshrike**, **Brown-headed Kingfisher**, a pair of **Common Scimitarbill**, **African Hoopoe**, a feeding flock of **African Palm Swift** and a **Swainson's Spurfowl**. As for the lifers, we bumped into a single **Burchell's Coucal** and a stunning group of four **Black-collared Barbet** – two species that we only encountered on occasion. The major highlight for me however, was a magnificent **Martial Eagle** sitting in a roadside tree, giving unbelievable views as it let us photograph it at close range – fantastic stuff!



*Juvenile Martial Eagle*

The mammals were a little in short supply on this morning, but all the usual herbivores were out and about, and shortly after sunrise, we came across an adult and juvenile **White Rhino** close to the track going about their business. Several **Crocodiles** were sunbathing on the edge of the water bodies.

Arriving back at the camp at 09:30, I took the chance to wander round again, unfortunately my last chance to do so. Some good species were on offer on this day, including the **Swainson's Spurfowl** from the previous day. A **Common Scimitarbill** was here too, plus two **Lesser Striped Swallow** were hawking near the entrance. The standout highlight though, was getting some fantastic views of three **Magpie Shrike**, my first encounter of them in the camp itself, and some great views to boot.



The local **White-throated Robin-Chat** offered up some brilliant views too as it looked for crumbs around the kitchen area, along with the opportunistic **Vervet Monkeys**.



*White-throated Robin-Chat*



*Magpie Shrike*

At 3:30pm, we headed out on our final evening safari. It was another calm and sunny evening, and the raptors were out in good numbers again. We saw no less than 12 **White-backed Vulture**, five **Tawny Eagle** and an adult **Bateleur**. Soon after, I saw my third **Red-crested Korhaan** in as many days, plus a minimum of 10 **Grey Go-away-bird** and five **White-crowned Shrike**. On the mammal front, we had a clear goal in mind, as there had been one animal in particular that had eluded us previously, and with the knowledge that we were leaving tomorrow, the pressure was on to connect. As they had been all week, the spotter and driver were exceptional, and we were soon watching our target – a pack of **African Wild Dogs**. We followed them as they trotted down the track in front of us, before all settling in the long grass, affording great views for the next half an hour. I really enjoyed watching these animals, and the way they interacted with each other whilst searching for food was fascinating. We moved on and soon came across another herd of **African Elephants** which we stopped to admire, and as we did, we got our eyes on a small group of animals running in and out of a muddy mound, from a distance they looked to be ferret-like animals, but as we investigated further, they turned out to be **Dwarf Mongooses**. Another unexpected sighting, not one we had in our minds for the trip at all, and this was our only encounter of them, just reiterating the fact that no two safaris are the same!



*Dwarf Mongoose*



*African Wild Dog*



With two bonus new mammals seen and enjoyed, the light was just starting to go, and as we continued on, I kept my eyes out for any interesting birds that may have been active pre-dusk. We then came across a flooded area that was largely obscured through the bushes. Lifting my bins, I could see there was a **Grey Heron** fishing, and as the vehicle moved forward slightly, I couldn't believe what I was looking at... a pair of **Saddle-billed Stork** came into view!! One of my absolute most wanted for the trip, and they had appeared on our last night! We quickly made our way down the track, pulling up alongside the water, where the Storks continued to stand and watch us, giving unbelievable views. The guests and staff alike on the vehicle were delighted to see them, as they very rare birds in this part of the country – what an ending!



*Saddle-billed Storks – epic!*

## Day 10 – 8<sup>th</sup> August

Sadly, our last day of the trip. We had our final early start, and with it being our last game drive, our driver opted again to take us to a new area of the reserve. I was super excited by this as I felt this was my final chance to get some 'last-minute' lifers. The drive did not disappoint, and as we explored the new area, a handful of big mammals were obvious, including two **White Rhino**, a family party of **Giraffes** and a large group of **Greater Kudu**. Not to mention, I was picking up lots of birds! A family party of **Bateleur** was memorable, especially when one of the adult birds began circling right overhead. A pair of **White-backed Vulture** and a **Dark-chanting Goshawk** kept the raptor theme going, and a few species that we saw that I had found to be scarce were singles of **Brown-headed Kingfisher**, **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **Common Scimitarbill** and pairs of **Magpie Shrike** and **African Hoopoe**. The headline birds however, were four new species for me – the first of which was quite a sight, a group of 12 **Green Wood Hoopoe** flying between the trees. My other three lifers were all pretty



brief, but exciting to connect with all the same – singles of **White-bellied Sunbird**, **African Grey Hornbill** and **Green-winged Pytilia** were all seen whilst on the move, and all too fleeting really, but connecting with four lifers on the final drive just summed up how amazing this place was. It had been a mind-blowing few days – an experience like no other. We headed back to the camp for the last time, before catching our transfer back to Eastgate Airport.



*Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill*



*Bateleur*

However, even then, the excitement had not finished! Eastgate Airport is incredibly small, with just a single café and shop, and an outdoor ‘waiting lounge’ where you can eat your food in the company of the local **Vervet Monkeys**. We were sat in this area waiting for our flight, and as I was totting up my list of new birds, I got my eye on a feeding flock in the tall trees above the seating area. There wasn’t a huge number of birds, but the variety was amazing, and I couldn’t believe my luck – there were pairs of **Brubru**, **Green-backed Camaroptera**, **Chinspot Batis**, **Southern Black Tit** and **Long-billed Crombec** as well as singles of **Grey Penduline Tit**, **Black-backed Puffback** and **Yellow-breasted Apalis**. I was certainly not expecting to pick up any new birds at the airport, let alone three in the same feeding flock! Shortly afterwards, we boarded our plane to Johannesburg and bid farewell to the South African plains. An utterly unforgettable trip, which completely defied any expectations that we had – I have no doubt we’ll be back soon!



*Vervet Monkey*



*Greater Kudu*

Touching down in Johannesburg, I had one final plan up my sleeve for a new bird, and I had connected before we had even disembarked – a group of **Common Myna** feeding on the grass beside the runway! A grand total of 112 new birds since touching down in Cape Town 10 days ago...



## Birds – Classified List

<b>Common Ostrich</b> <i>Struthio camelus</i>	Total of 11 seen around Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Spur-winged Goose</b> <i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	c20 in roadside fields around Paarl.
<b>Egyptian Goose</b> <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Very common around Western Cape, and singles seen daily on safaris.
<b>Yellow-billed Duck</b> <i>Anas undulata</i>	One seen on roadside pond between Cape Town and Stellenbosch.
<b>Helmeted Guineafowl</b> <i>Numida meleagris</i>	Fairly common around Western Cape.
<b>Crested Francolin</b> <i>Ortygornis sephaena</i>	Very common on safaris and seen daily around camp.
<b>Cape Spurfowl</b> <i>Pternistis capensis</i>	10 seen around Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Natal Spurfowl</b> <i>Pternistis natalensis</i>	3-4 birds seen daily around safari camp.
<b>Swainson's Spurfowl</b> <i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>	Scarce – single bird seen on safaris, and another in camp.
<b>Fiery-necked Nightjar</b> <i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	Two seen on the road after dark on evening safari on 3 <sup>rd</sup> August.
<b>African Palm Swift</b> <i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	Small numbers seen on three occasions on safaris.
<b>Alpine Swift</b> <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	c10 seen at Paarl.
<b>Grey Go-away-bird</b> <i>Crinifer concolor</i>	Small numbers seen daily on safaris and within camp.
<b>Red-crested Korhaan</b> <i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>	Single birds seen on three occasions on safaris, as well as a single seen from the camp.
<b>Burchell's Coucal</b> <i>Centropus burchellii</i>	A single bird seen on the morning safari on 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Rock Dove</b> <i>Columba livia</i>	Very common around Western Cape, seen daily.
<b>Speckled Pigeon</b> <i>Columba guinea</i>	Fairly common around Western Cape, small numbers seen daily.
<b>Red-eyed Dove</b> <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	Very common around Western Cape, seen daily.
<b>Ring-necked Dove</b> <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	Very common on safaris and in camp, seen daily.
<b>Laughing Dove</b> <i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	Single seen at V&A Waterfront, and two on safaris.
<b>Emerald-spotted Wood Dove</b> <i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	Numerous seen daily on safaris, and once seen in camp.
<b>Red-knobbed Coot</b> <i>Fulica cristata</i>	Common on large waterbodies around Western Cape.
<b>Blue Crane</b> <i>Grus paradisea</i>	Single bird seen in roadside field between Cape Town and Stellenbosch.
<b>Greater Flamingo</b> <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	One seen on roadside pond between Cape Town and Stellenbosch.
<b>African Oystercatcher</b> <i>Haematopus moquini</i>	Two seen at Boulders Beach.
<b>Three-banded Plover</b> <i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	Seen regularly in small numbers on numerous safaris.
<b>Blacksmith Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	Pairs seen daily around water bodies on safaris; also seen near Stellenbosch.
<b>Crowned Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	Small numbers seen on safaris, often in single pairs.
<b>Greater Crested Tern</b> <i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	12 seen at Cape of Good Hope, and four at Boulders Beach.
<b>Hartlaub's Gull</b> <i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>	Very common at the coast around Western Cape.
<b>Kelp Gull</b> <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	Fairly common around Western Cape, especially at Boulders Beach where there was 500+.
<b>African Penguin</b> <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	100+ in colony at Boulders Beach.
<b>Yellow-billed Stork</b> <i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Single birds seen on two occasions on evening safaris.



<b>Saddle-billed Stork</b> <i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	Two seen on the evening safari on 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Cape Gannet</b> <i>Morus capensis</i>	Five seen flying past Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Reed Cormorant</b> <i>Microcarbo africanus</i>	Small numbers seen at V&A Waterfront and Stellenbosch.
<b>Crowned Cormorant</b> <i>Microcarbo coronatus</i>	Six on rocks beside car park at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Bank Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	Three on rocks beside car park at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Cape Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	Huge numbers at Cape of Good Hope, probably c3000.
<b>White-breasted Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	55 at Cape of Good Hope, between the cliffs and rocks.
<b>African Sacred Ibis</b> <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	Seen daily around Western Cape.
<b>Hadada Ibis</b> <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	Pretty common around Western Cape, especially at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens where 15 were seen.
<b>Little Egret</b> <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Two singles seen – one at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and one at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Western Cattle Egret</b> <i>Ardea ibis</i>	17 seen in total around Stellenbosch and Paarl.
<b>Grey Heron</b> <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Singles seen on safaris and at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Black-winged Kite</b> <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Two seen hunting along the road at Paarl.
<b>African Harrier-Hawk</b> <i>Polyboroides typus</i>	Single bird seen at Paarl.
<b>White-backed Vulture</b> <i>Gyps africanus</i>	Encountered daily on safaris, including 12 seen on the evening of 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Bateleur</b> <i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	Five seen in total on safaris, including a family party of three birds on the morning of 8 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Martial Eagle</b> <i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Juvenile seen on evening safari on 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Tawny Eagle</b> <i>Aquila rapax</i>	Seen in small numbers daily on safaris, and once seen from the camp.
<b>Dark Chanting Goshawk</b> <i>Melierax metabates</i>	Single birds seen on two occasions on safaris.
<b>Little Sparrowhawk</b> <i>Tachyspiza minulla</i>	Single bird seen on the evening safari on 6 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Jackal Buzzard</b> <i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	Single birds seen on two occasions around Western Cape.
<b>Verreaux's Eagle-Owl</b> <i>Ketupa lactea</i>	Single bird seen on evening safari on 3 <sup>rd</sup> August.
<b>Speckled Mousebird</b> <i>Colius striatus</i>	10 seen at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Red-faced Mousebird</b> <i>Urocolius indicus</i>	Party of five seen at Boulders Beach.
<b>African Hoopoe</b> <i>Upupa africana</i>	Four birds seen in total on safaris.
<b>Green Wood Hoopoe</b> <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	A party of 12 seen on morning safari on 8 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Common Scimitarbill</b> <i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	Five birds seen in total – four on safaris and one in camp.
<b>Southern Red-billed Hornbill</b> <i>Tockus rufirostris</i>	Very common on safaris and in camp.
<b>Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill</b> <i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	Very common on safaris and in camp.
<b>African Grey Hornbill</b> <i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>	Single bird seen on morning safari on 8 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Purple Roller</b> <i>Coracias naevius</i>	Single bird seen on morning safari on 6 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Lilac-breasted Roller</b> <i>Coracias caudatus</i>	Small numbers seen daily on safaris and in camp.
<b>Brown-hooded Kingfisher</b> <i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	Three birds seen in total on safaris.
<b>Crested Barbet</b> <i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>	Small numbers seen daily on safaris, and once in camp.
<b>Black-collared Barbet</b> <i>Lybius torquatus</i>	A party of four seen on the morning safari on 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Bearded Woodpecker</b> <i>Chloropicus namaquus</i>	One on morning safari on 4 <sup>th</sup> August, and once seen in camp.
<b>Cardinal Woodpecker</b> <i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	Single bird seen on morning safari on 4 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Rock Kestrel</b> <i>Falco rupicolus</i>	Two single birds seen – one at Cape of Good Hope, and one from safari camp.



<b>Brown-headed Parrot</b> <i>Poicephalus cryptoxanthus</i>	A pair seen in camp on 5 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Chinspot Batis</b> <i>Batis molitor</i>	A pair seen daily in camp, and a pair at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Brown-crowned Tchagra</b> <i>Tchagra australis</i>	Four birds identified as this species on safaris, plus three other Tchagra sp. that were also probably this species.
<b>Black-backed Puffback</b> <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	Seen daily in camp, plus a single at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Southern Boubou</b> <i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	One seen at Cape Point, and one seen in safari camp.
<b>Brubru</b> <i>Nilaus afer</i>	A pair seen at Eastgate Airport.
<b>White-crested Helmetshrike</b> <i>Prionops plumatus</i>	Several small groups seen on safaris.
<b>Fork-tailed Drongo</b> <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	Very common on safaris, especially around herbivores.
<b>Southern White-crowned Shrike</b> <i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>	1-5 seen daily on safaris.
<b>Magpie Shrike</b> <i>Lanius melanoleucus</i>	Small numbers seen on safaris, plus three together in camp.
<b>Southern Fiscal</b> <i>Lanius collaris</i>	One seen at the roadside at Stellenbosch.
<b>Pied Crow</b> <i>Corvus albus</i>	Seen regularly around Western Cape.
<b>White-necked Raven</b> <i>Corvus albicollis</i>	A pair seen at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Southern Black Tit</b> <i>Melaniparus niger</i>	Seen daily in good numbers on safaris.
<b>Grey Penduline Tit</b> <i>Anthoscopus caroli</i>	One seen at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Sombre Greenbul</b> <i>Andropadus importunus</i>	One seen at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Terrestrial Brownbul</b> <i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	Four seen in safari camp on 4 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Dark-capped Bulbul</b> <i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>	Seen daily on safaris and in camp.
<b>Cape Bulbul</b> <i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	Three at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and one at Paarl.
<b>Lesser Striped Swallow</b> <i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>	Two seen from safari camp on 7 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Red-breasted Swallow</b> <i>Cecropis semirufa</i>	One seen from safari camp on 6 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Long-billed Crombec</b> <i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	Seen in small numbers daily on safaris and in camp.
<b>Rattling Cisticola</b> <i>Cisticola chiniana</i>	Commonly seen daily on all safaris.
<b>Tawny-flanked Prinia</b> <i>Prinia subflava</i>	2-6 seen daily on all safaris.
<b>Karoo Prinia</b> <i>Prinia maculosa</i>	Three singles seen at various sites around Western Cape.
<b>Yellow-breasted Apalis</b> <i>Apalis flavida</i>	One seen daily in camp, plus a single at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Green-backed Camaroptera</b> <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	A pair seen at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Cape White-eye</b> <i>Zosterops virens</i>	Common around Western Cape, especially in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens where 30+ were seen.
<b>Arrow-marked Babbler</b> <i>Turdoides jardineii</i>	Seen in small numbers both on safaris and in camp.
<b>Common Myna</b> <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	The final tick of the trip – common in Johannesburg!
<b>Common Starling</b> <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Seen regularly around Western Cape.
<b>Cape Starling</b> <i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	Seen daily on safaris and in camp in good numbers.
<b>Burchell's Starling</b> <i>Lamprotornis australis</i>	Very common both on safaris and in camp.
<b>Red-winged Starling</b> <i>Onychognathus morio</i>	Very common in all areas around Western Cape.
<b>Yellow-billed Oxpecker</b> <i>Buphagus africanus</i>	Two seen with Red-billed Oxpeckers on morning safari on 5 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Red-billed Oxpecker</b> <i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	Very common around herbivores, seen daily on safaris and from camp.
<b>Olive Thrush</b> <i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	Six seen in total – three at V&A Waterfront, and three at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Bearded Scrub Robin</b> <i>Cercotrichas quadrivirgata</i>	1-4 seen daily in safari camp.
<b>White-browed Scrub Robin</b> <i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	1-5 seen daily both on safaris and in camp.



<b>Ashy Flycatcher</b> <i>Fraseria caerulescens</i>	Single seen in safari camp on 5 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Fiscal Flycatcher</b> <i>Sigelus silens</i>	Single bird seen at Stellenbosch.
<b>African Dusky Flycatcher</b> <i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	Five seen in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>White-throated Robin-Chat</b> <i>Dessonornis humeralis</i>	1-5 seen daily in safari camp.
<b>Cape Robin-Chat</b> <i>Dessonornis caffer</i>	Seen daily in Western Cape including 15 at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Familiar Chat</b> <i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>	Single bird seen at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Southern Double-collared Sunbird</b> <i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>	Common at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, plus a single seen at Cape Point.
<b>White-bellied Sunbird</b> <i>Cinnyris talatala</i>	One seen on morning safari on 8 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Cape Sparrow</b> <i>Passer melanurus</i>	Only four birds seen – pairs at V&A Waterfront and Paarl.
<b>Southern Grey-headed Sparrow</b> <i>Passer diffusus</i>	Common on safaris and around camp.
<b>House Sparrow</b> <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Very common around Western Cape.
<b>Southern Masked Weaver</b> <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	A pair seen at Paarl.
<b>Red-headed Weaver</b> <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	One seen in safari camp on 4 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Blue Waxbill</b> <i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	Very common on safaris and around camp.
<b>Green-winged Pytilia</b> <i>Pytilia melba</i>	Single bird seen on morning safari on 8 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Red-billed Firefinch</b> <i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	A pair seen in safari camp on 4 <sup>th</sup> August.
<b>Cape Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla capensis</i>	3-4 birds seen daily around Western Cape.
<b>Forest Canary</b> <i>Crithagra scotops</i>	c30 seen in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
<b>Yellow-fronted Canary</b> <i>Crithagra mozambica</i>	Very common on safaris and around camp.
<b>Cape Canary</b> <i>Serinus canicollis</i>	Small flocks seen regularly around Western Cape.
<b>Cape Bunting</b> <i>Emberiza capensis</i>	A pair seen at Cape Point.
<b>Golden-breasted Bunting</b> <i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	1-3 seen daily on safaris and in camp.

## Mammals – Classified List

<b>Rock Hyrax</b>	One seen near visitor's centre at Boulders Beach.
<b>African Elephant</b>	Several herds seen daily on safaris, always breathtaking!
<b>Scrub Hare</b>	Common and widespread.
<b>Tree Squirrel</b>	Seen regularly on safaris and at Eastgate Airport.
<b>Chacma Baboon</b>	Seen most days around the camp, and on safaris.
<b>Vervet Monkey</b>	Common and widespread, especially easy at Eastgate Airport café!
<b>Lion</b>	Seen daily, including several adult males and family parties.
<b>Leopard</b>	Two different animals seen on a number of occasions.
<b>Spotted Hyena</b>	Heard frequently through the night, but only two individuals seen on safaris.
<b>Dwarf Mongoose</b>	A group of six seen at the roadside on one occasion.
<b>Black-backed Jackal</b>	One seen near camp on one occasion.
<b>African Wild Dog</b>	A single pack of 10+ animals seen on one occasion.
<b>Cape Fur Seal</b>	Large colony seen at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Common Zebra</b>	Seen regularly in camp and on safaris.
<b>Black Rhinoceros</b>	Very lucky encounter – a mother and calf seen on one occasion.
<b>White Rhinoceros</b>	We were lucky to see these well most days on safaris.
<b>Common Warthog</b>	Singles seen most days in camp and on safaris.
<b>Hippopotamus</b>	Commonly seen in and around large waterbodies.
<b>African Buffalo</b>	A large herd of 50+ seen on two consecutive days.
<b>Nyala</b>	Very common, seen daily within the camp and on safaris.
<b>Greater Kudu</b>	Several large herds seen in camp and on safaris.
<b>Common Eland</b>	One seen at Cape of Good Hope.
<b>Impala</b>	Very common and widespread.
<b>Common Waterbuck</b>	Small numbers seen on safaris on most days.
<b>Blue Wildebeest</b>	Several herds seen in camp and on safaris.
<b>Common Duiker</b>	Singles seen daily on safaris.
<b>Southern Giraffe</b>	Seen daily, but in fairly small numbers.