



**FALSE BAY DAY TRIP, CUSTOM TOUR
20 OCTOBER 2017**

By Dominic Rollinson



Cape Rockjumper (photo Andre Stapelberg)

Highlights: Bank and Crowned Cormorants, African Oystercatcher, Verreaux's Eagle, African Penguin, Cape Spurfowl, Cape Rockjumper, Cape Bulbul, Victorin's Warbler, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird, Cape Siskin

Today I showed Jay and Sandy from the United States around some of the top birding spots along the eastern shores of False Bay to the east of Cape Town.

After fetching them early in town we made our way to the small town of Rooiels, which was our first birding destination of the day. The main target here was **Cape Rockjumper**, which took a bit of time to locate, but we eventually had good views of a male and female. On the rocky slopes we also came across **White-necked Raven**, **Familiar Chat**, **Cape Bunting**, **Cape Siskin**, and **Grey-backed Cisticola**, while a **Peregrine Falcon** was seen hunting overhead. We heard a number of **Ground Woodpeckers** high up on the slopes but unfortunately could not get any visuals.

We moved into some nearby fynbos, where we managed decent views of the notoriously difficult skulker **Victorin's Warbler** as well as **Cape Grassbird**, **Yellow Bishop**, **Karoo Prinia**, **Cape Bulbul**, **Cape Sugarbird**, and **Orange-breasted Sunbird**. We were lucky enough to watch a **Verreaux's Eagle** as it was hunting low down on the ridge above us, presumably after its main prey Rock Hyrax.



Victorin's Warbler (photo John Tinkler)

After having done well in the mountain fynbos we headed to the coast at Stony Point in Betty's Bay. Many comical **African Penguins** were seen here, most in heavy moult and thus restricted to the land until they finish moulting. We also saw **White-breasted**, **Cape**, **Crowned**, and **Bank**

Cormorant breeding on the nearby rocks. A small tern roost contained **Greater Crested** and **Sandwich Terns** as well as a few **Hartlaub's Gulls**, and we managed to see the attractive **African Oystercatcher** patrolling the rocks nearby for mussels.

After moving to the picturesque Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens we wandered around its well-maintained grounds. Here we added **Fiscal Flycatcher**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **African Dusky Flycatcher**, **Olive Thrush**, **Sombre Greenbul**, **Cape Batis**, **Cape Robin-Chat**, **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**, and **Olive Woodpecker**. After birding we enjoyed a delicious meal at the Red Disa restaurant on the edge of the garden.



African Paradise Flycatcher

After lunch we headed back west toward Cape Town and decided to have a couple of hours birding the Strandfontein Sewage Works, one of the best birding destinations near Cape Town. On entering the area we were surrounded by masses of waterfowl, and soon we picked up **Yellow-billed** and **Maccoa Ducks**, **Cape Shoveler**, **Cape Teal**, and **Southern Pochard**. Waders were also in abundance and included **Common Greenshank**, **Marsh** and **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Little Stint**, and **Ruff**, as well as **Common Ringed** and **Kittlitz's Plover**. Exploring the many pans further yielded **Greater Flamingo**, **Great White Pelican**, **Glossy Ibis**, **White-throated Swallow**, **Cape Spurfowl**, and a single **African Marsh Harrier** quartering low above the reedbeds. Just outside of Strandfontein we came across the alien **House Crow**, which was our last new species for the day.

We finished a thoroughly enjoyable day with a species count of 91 with many new species for Jay and Sandy.