



**WEST COAST DAY TRIP, CUSTOM TOUR
17 JANUARY 2018**

By Dominic Rollinson



Red necked Phalarope, winter plumage (© Teddy Llovet)

Highlights: Chestnut-banded Plover, Red-necked Phalarope, Cape Spurfowl, Southern Black Korhaan, Blue Crane, African Oystercatcher, Eurasian Curlew, Large-billed Lark, and Cape Bulbul.

Today I guided Ian and Simon from Scotland up the west coast. They were not after any species in particular but rather wanted to enjoy the day out and see how many species we could see in the day.

Leaving Camps Bay at 6:30 we made our way up the west coast with the first destination being the Darling Hills Road for a few farmland/strandveld species. It did not take too long for two male **Southern Black Korhaans** to show themselves. There was obviously a territorial dispute between the two, as they were producing their raucous display call approximately 20 meters apart. We had good views of eight **Blue Cranes** in the nearby wheat fields, with a single small chick also present. Commoner species seen along the road included **Capped Wheatear**, **Rock Kestrel**, **Lanner Falcon**, **Pearl-breasted Swallow**, **Pied Starling**, **Bokmakierie**, **Cape Weaver**, and **Cape Sparrow**. Just around the corner we stopped at a small wetland, where we saw **African Marsh Harrier**, **Cape Bulbul**, **Namaqua Dove**, **Yellow Bishop**, **White-backed Mousebird**, and **Fiscal Flycatcher**, as well as **Cape** and **Brimstone Canaries**.



Blue Crane (photo Stephen Hammer)

We then moved further north to some salt works outside of Velddrif to add a few waders to the day list. Here we had great views of many attractive **Chestnut-banded Plovers** as well as the regular Palearctic waders, including **Common Greenshank**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Little Stint**, **Common Ringed** and **Kittlitz's Plovers**, and **Ruff**. We were lucky enough to find the single **Red-necked Phalarope** that has been at these salt works for at least the last two years now! A number of **Terns** were seen around the pans including **Caspian**, **Swift**, and **Sandwich**. All three southern African Grebes (**Great Crested**, **Black-necked**, and **Little**) were seen in the same pan

alongside **Cape Teals**, with good numbers of **Greater Flamingos** around too. **Pied Kingfishers** were seen unsuccessfully hunting for fish in a few of the pans. The fields surrounding the salt works had **Red-capped** and **Large-billed Larks** and **African Stonechat**, with many **Common Swifts** seen overhead.



Black-necked Grebe (© Andreas Trepte)

Our next stop was the West Coast National Park, where we enjoyed our lunch at the Abrahamskraal waterhole. Unfortunately, as the wind was blowing strongly, there were not many seedeaters coming to drink. We did, however, come across **African Spoonbill**, **Yellow-billed Duck**, and **Red-knobbed Coot** in the small waterhole. **Karoo Prinia** and **Yellow Canary** were seen in the nearby scrub. **White-throated Swallows** were nesting within the bird hide and allowed for some close-up views.

We then moved to the northern section of the park, where we visited the bird hide at Seeberg. Both **Lesser** and **Greater Flamingos** were present, while new waders for the day included **Grey** and **White-fronted Plovers**, **Common Whimbrel**, **Eurasian Curlew**, and **African Oystercatcher**. There was a large number of **Common Terns** around as well as one **Little Tern**. In the nearby scrub we found **Grey-backed Cisticola** and **Cape Robin-Chat**.

The drive back to Cape Town did not produce too much of interest besides a few **Jackal Buzzards** and the odd **Black-winged Kite**. We finished a fun day out with a species list of 91, which we were pleased with, considering the very hot conditions.