



PRIVATE SUBTROPICAL SOUTH AFRICA WINTER BIRDING TOUR REPORT

24 JUNE - 08 JULY 2025

By Dominic Rollinson



*Sugarbirds are endemic to southern Africa, and we enjoyed some fantastic views of **Gurney's Sugarbird** up the famed Sani Pass.*

Overview

This private tour for the client, Melanie, was designed to take in the best of eastern/subtropical South Africa during midwinter. We went from Johannesburg to the lowlands of Kruger National Park where we enjoyed four nights in this famous wildlife haven, before we made our way back into the montane grasslands, this time around Wakkerstroom. After a couple nights here looking for grassland specials, we made our way to Zululand where we birded sand forest, bushveld and wetlands around Lake St Lucia, before making our way south to Eshowe where we enjoyed forest specials in Dlinza, Entumeni and Ongoye Forests. Our final two nights were in the mighty Drakensberg Mountains where we braved extremely cold temperatures and enjoyed a highly successful day up Sani Pass.



Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon showed well at Dlinza Forest.

Melanie and I birded most days from dawn to dusk and racked up an impressive species list of exactly 400 bird species (5 heard only, 395 seen of which 391 were photographed). We had an incredibly productive and enjoyable two weeks around South Africa and missed very few of our targets. With this tour taking place in midwinter it meant that some birds were perhaps a little less accommodating than at the peak of their breeding season, however, we always persevered and generally found whatever it was we were looking for.

Highlights of our two-week birding tour are tough to pick out but below are some of the real standout species that we saw: **Swamp Nightjar**, **Knysna Turaco**, **Blue Korhaan**, **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **Buff-spotted Flufftail**, **Wattled Crane**, **Lesser Jacana**, **African Skimmer**, **Saddle-billed Stork**, **Rufous-bellied Heron**, **Bearded Vulture**, **Southern Banded Snake Eagle**, **Crowned Eagle**, **Black Harrier**, **Southern Ground Hornbill**, **Green Barbet**,

Mangrove Kingfisher, Ground Woodpecker, Cape Parrot, African Broadbill (voted bird of the trip), **Woodward's Batis, Drakensberg Rockjumper, Knysna Warbler, Bush Blackcap, Spotted and Orange Ground Thrushes, Neergaard's Sunbird, Pink-throated Twinspot, Yellow-breasted Pipit and Lemon-breasted Canary.**

Of course we did not ignore the many large and charismatic mammals seen and were pleased to find **Blue Monkey, Lion, Leopard, Meerkat, Spotted Hyena, White Rhinoceros, Klipspringer, African Buffalo, African Savanna Elephant and Southern Giraffe.**

A detailed daily account can be read below, and the full bird, mammal and reptile lists are located at the end of the report. More photos and details can be found in the eBird trip report, [here](#).



*Watching a **Leopard** relaxing in a tree is always a highlight.*

Detailed Report

Day 1, 24th June 2025. Johannesburg to Kruger, birding en route

I fetched Melanie from her accommodation in Johannesburg, adding **Karoo Thrush** on the hotel lawns, and we then started the long drive east towards the southern section of Kruger National Park. We made a stop shortly outside of Johannesburg at a roadside pan which held an interesting selection of waterfowl including **Southern Pochard, Cape Shoveler and Red-billed Teal** as well as **Little Grebe, Red-knobbed Coot and Common Moorhen**. In the nearby reedbeds and tall grass we further found **African Sacred Ibis, Black-headed Heron, Speckled Pigeon, Levallant's Cisticola, Southern Masked Weaver, African Stonechat, and Black-throated Canary.**

A quick fuel station stop to buy lunch included sightings of a few local mammals, which we hoped to find in the wild in Kruger, while we also added some new birds such as **Reed Cormorant**, **Grey-headed Gull**, **Cape Wagtail**, **Southern Red Bishop** and **Cape Sparrow**.

After our enjoyable - yet entirely unproductive on the birding front - lunch stop we pressed on to Kruger and eventually made it through Crocodile Bridge in the midafternoon and then spent a fun 90 minutes driving north to Lower Sabie, our base for the next two nights. We were somewhat rushed to make gate closing time at the rest camp but still managed to notch up **Crested Francolin**, **Swainson's Spurfowl**, **Red-crested Korhaan**, **White-crowned Lapwing**, **Grey Go-away-bird**, **Bateleur**, **White-backed Vulture**, **Lilac-breasted Roller**, **Burchell's Starling**, **Red-billed Oxpecker**, **Magpie Shrike** and a pair of huge **Kori Bustards**. On this drive we also found the first large mammals of the trip including **African Savanna Elephant**, **Impala**, **Kudu**, **Steenbok** and a bold **Spotted Hyena** which walked right past our vehicle.



Lilac-breasted Rollers, as always, were common and conspicuous in Kruger.

Once we had arrived at camp, we scanned the Sabie River from the restaurant deck and were excited to see a pair of **African Skimmers** flying upstream. This species became extinct as a breeder in South African many decades ago but has made an exciting return to southern Kruger in the last five years or so, with sightings now regular from the area! Other species seen here included **African Openbill**, **Yellow-billed Stork** and **Knob-billed Duck** as well as a few **African Savanna Elephant** mothers leading their calves across the river to end the day.

Day 2, 25th June 2025. Southern Kruger birding

After some early morning coffee we ensured we were out the gate as it opened and hadn't gone 50 meters from the gate when we saw a small pride of **Lions** – a great way to start the day. We didn't

hang around long though, as vehicles were starting to build up, and instead slowly started making our way south to Crocodile Bridge. Surprisingly the fog (fog, not mist) was very dense this morning and the birding was a little slow to start but as the light improved, we steadily started adding more and more birds. Some of the highlights along this stretch of road included **Swainson's** and **Natal Spurfowl**, **Crested Francolin**, **Southern Red-billed Hornbill**, **Burchell's Starling**, **Green-winged Pytilia**, **Blue Waxbill** and **Golden-breasted Bunting**. A quick stop at Ntandanyathi Hide had a very showy **White-throated Robin-Chat** as well as **Rattling Cisticola**, **Chinspot Batis**, **African Wattled Lapwing**, **Southern Black Tit** and **Black-crowned Tchagra**.



Burchell's Starlings were plentiful in southern Kruger.

We then moved to the nearby Duke Waterhole in the hope of finding Cheetah, which we unfortunately didn't have any luck with on this trip, but we did find **Pearl-spotted Owlet**, **Sabota Lark**, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** and a family of **Southern Ground Hornbills**. With our bellies starting to rumble we decided we should have breakfast sooner rather than later and carried on our way south to Crocodile Bridge, with an obliging male **Cardinal Woodpecker** seen en route.

Breakfast was had under the watchful eye of a male **Vervet Monkey**, with our delicious and varied field breakfasts to become a theme of the trip. After breakfast we took a walk around Crocodile Bridge rest camp and within a few minutes we had added **Black-headed Oriole**, **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **Yellow-breasted Apalis** and **Marico**, **White-bellied**, **Collared** and **Scarlet-chested Sunbirds**.

We then made our way west and drove along the Crocodile River towards Berg-en-dal rest camp which, despite the heat of the day, still proved very productive. Highlights along the drive included **Bateleur**, **Tawny Eagle**, **Gabar Goshawk** and a kettle of circling vultures which contained **White-backed**, **White-headed**, **Hooded** and **Cape Vultures**. Our late lunch was then enjoyed

from Gardenia Hide which was originally rather quiet, but we did eventually see **Water Thick-knee**, **Grey Go-away-bird**, **Crested Barbet**, **Sombre Greenbul**, **Spectacled Weaver** and **Red-billed Firefinch**.

With the afternoon starting to get away with us, we began our journey back towards camp, enjoying **Temminck's Courser** and **Crowned Lapwing** in an open area, with a pair of **African Hawk-Eagles** seen flying overhead. A little closer to Lower Sabie we found the trip's only **Double-banded Sandgrouse**. We ended the day at Sunset Dam just outside camp, which was very peaceful, and further added **Yellow-billed Stork**, **African Spoonbill** and a large group of **Common Hippopotamus**.



Temminck's Coursers in the open plains west of Crocodile Bridge were a welcome surprise.

Throughout the day we came across some interesting animals such as **Nile Crocodile**, **Rock Hyrax**, **Chacma Baboon**, **Smith's Bush Squirrel**, **Common Slender Mongoose**, **Spotted Hyena**, **Klipspringer**, alongside common species like **Impala**, **Blue Wildebeest**, **Steenbok**, **Waterbuck**, **Southern Bushbuck**, **Plains Zebra** and **Common Warthog**.

Day 3, 26th June 2025. Southern Kruger birding and wildlife viewing

After a full day in the vehicle yesterday, we decided it would be good to stretch our legs a bit and bird around Lower Sabie rest camp before breakfast. This turned out to be a good decision and we had a highly enjoyable couple hours of birding and added **Green Wood Hoopoe**, **Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill**, **Black-collared Barbet**, **Lesser Honeyguide**, **Brown-headed Parrot**, **Chinspot Batis**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Greater Blue-eared Starling**, **Ashy Flycatcher** and **Green-winged Pytilia**.



*Several **Brown-headed Parrots** put on a show for us in Lower Sabie rest camp.*

After breakfast we packed the vehicle and started making our way towards Skukuza rest camp. Not long after leaving camp we joined a queue of vehicles on the main road and knew there must be something exciting around and were not disappointed when Melanie spotted a **Leopard** sleeping in a nearby tree. Southern Kruger must rank as one of the best places to see Leopard and we fully enjoyed this sighting.

After this, the drive was fairly uneventful, except for a huge **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** just off the main road and we soon arrived at Tshokwane picnic spot for our lunch. Along this stretch of road we also encountered our first **Southern Giraffe**, with a few **Nyala** antelope seen closer to Skukuza. At Tshokwane we, annoyingly, could not find any Mourning Collared Doves today and there were not too many birds around during our lunch, however, we did see **White-headed** and **Hooded Vultures** overhead.

Once we had finished lunch, we did a long loop northwest of Tshokwane and slowly made our way towards Skukuza. Despite the hot temperatures for most of the loop we still encountered many interesting bird species such as **Red-crested Korhaan**, **Brown Snake Eagle**, **Common Scimitarbill**, **Bearded Woodpecker**, **Brown-headed Parrot**, **White-crested** and **Retz's Helmetshrike**, **White-crowned Shrike**, **Red-billed Oxpecker**, **Pale and Fiscal Flycatchers** and **Golden-breasted Bunting**.

It was then time to make our way to Skukuza with a distant **White Rhinoceros** being a nice sighting en route. After checking into our accommodation we took a quick walk around camp which further added **African Firefinch** and **White-browed Robin-Chat**, which unfortunately would not pose for photos just yet.

Day 4, 27th June 2025. Birding southwest Kruger

We again joined the 6 am queue at the gate, along with other keen wildlife enthusiasts eager to start their morning game drives. Once we were out the gate, we headed to the nearby Lake Panic bird hide where things were a little slow, however, we did find **Natal Spurfowl**, **Pied Kingfisher**, **Tawny-flanked Prinia** and **Red-faced Mousebird**.

With the sun having now properly risen, we took a long loop down to Pretoriuskop rest camp, which took us through riverine bush and then into broad-leaved woodlands interspersed with granite koppies. This drive proved to be very productive, with some of the standout species in the riverine section including **Marabou Stork**, **Lappet-faced Vulture**, **African Harrier-Hawk**, **Lizard Buzzard**, **African Grey Hornbill**, **Bearded Woodpecker**, **White-crested Helmetshrike**, **Magpie Shrike**, **Grey Tit-Flycatcher**, **Red-headed Weaver** and **Cut-throat Finch**. Once we got into the broad-leaved woodlands closer to Pretoriuskop the birding remained excellent and we further added **Red-crested Bustard**, **Dark Chanting Goshawk**, **Lizard Buzzard**, **Little Sparrowhawk** (brief sighting), **Yellow-bellied** and **Green-capped Eremomelas**, **Groundscraper Thrush**, **Pale Flycatcher** and the scarce **Bushveld Pipit**.



As always, African Savanna Elephants were numerous in Kruger.

Our delicious lunch was enjoyed at Pretoriuskop rest camp, which proved to be extremely birdy, and we were very distracted while we ate. A walk around the camp after lunch proved worthwhile as we had good looks at **Speckled Mousebird**, **Red-winged Starling**, **Red-headed Weaver** and **Southern Black Flycatcher**.

It was then time to hit the road again and we made our way back to Skukuza rest camp. Transport Dam added a pair of **Saddle-billed Storks**, however, we were unlucky to miss a Leopard by just a couple of minutes. The final new bird of the day was a **Purple Roller** spotted by Melanie. A

traditional South African braai (barbecue) was a great way to end another thoroughly enjoyable day in Kruger!

Day 5, 28th June 2025. Transfer to the grasslands of Wakkerstroom

With a long drive ahead of us today we decided to have a walk around camp before we hit the road. Things were a little quiet to start with, but then we found a good diversity of birds in the riverfront vegetation including **Purple-crested Turaco**, **African Green Pigeon**, **Burchell's Coucal**, **Southern Boubou**, **Terrestrial Brownbul**, **Ashy Flycatcher**, **Holub's Golden Weaver**, **Purple-banded Sunbird** and **African Pied Wagtail**.

After breakfast we packed up and made our way out of Kruger through the Phabeni gate (adding **Long-tailed Paradise Whydah**, **Black-winged Kite** and **Common Ostrich** en route). A quick stop at Phabeni gate further added **Orange-breasted Bushshrike**, **Kurrichane Thrush**, **Village Weaver**, **White-winged Widowbird** and our first **House Sparrows** of the trip!



*Numerous vulture species, such as this **White-backed Vulture**, were encountered in Kruger.*

The long drive to Wakkerstroom was mostly uneventful and unfortunately the usually reliable Bat Hawk stakeout near White River did not produce a sighting today, however, we did find **Amethyst Sunbird** and **Streaky-headed Seedeater**, as small consolation.

We got into Wakkerstroom in the late afternoon and made a brief stop on the bridge over the wetland on the edge of town, where we found **Purple Heron**, **African Swamphen**, **African Snipe** and **Fan-tailed Widowbird**. A **Marsh Mongoose** was an unexpected find in the wetland. The final bird of the day was a distant group of **Grey Crowned Cranes** as we were unloading the vehicle and settling into our accommodation.

Day 6, 29th June 2025. Montane grassland birding in Wakkerstroom

Today we would be guided by local bird guide, David Nkosi, who is one of the area's most knowledgeable birders and an immense help when trying to find the area's special birds. With temperatures very cold, we decided to head to the slightly lower elevations of Dirkiesdorp to begin our birding, where it was a little warmer. Soon after hitting the open plains we found a single **Black-winged Lapwing** as well as a group of four **White-bellied Bustards** and a couple **Yellow-breasted Pipits**. The bustards and pipits were our main target birds here, but it was great to also find **Southern Bald Ibis**, **Spike-heeled**, **Rufous-naped** and **Red-capped Larks**, **Wing-snapping Cisticola**, **Ant-eating Chat**, **Plain-backed Pipit** and **Cape Longclaw** in the area.



White-bellied Bustard showed well in the plains near to Dirkiesdorp.

We then took a long loop road back to Wakkerstroom which also proved to be very productive, with excellent sightings of **Black Sparrowhawk**, **Rock Kestrel**, **Red-throated Wryneck**, **Drakensberg Prinia**, **Rock-loving (Lazy) Cisticola**, **Cape Rock Thrush**, **Buff-streaked Chat**, **Mocking Cliff Chat**, **Nicholson's Pipit**, **Long-tailed Widowbird** and **Cape Bunting**.

After heading back through Wakkerstroom we made our way onto the Amersfoort Road north of town. Being close to the middle of the day, the birding was quite slow, but we still found **Maccoa Duck**, **South African Shelduck**, **Cape Shoveler** and **Great Crested Grebe** at a roadside dam. We scanned a vast wetland to try find the local pair of **Wattled Cranes**, but unfortunately, they were not around today, however we did find **Pied Starling**, **Capped Wheatear** and a small family of **Meerkat** in the general area. While making our way back to town, constantly scanning for **Blue Korhaan**, David spotted a pair of **Red-winged Francolin** on the side of the road, with **Blue Crane** and **Eastern Clapper Larks** playing along too. **Yellow Mongooses** were a constant feature of this drive too.

To finish our day's birding we headed southeast of town to look for the rare and localized Rudd's Lark. The odds were stacked against us in midwinter, when they are mostly silent and, despite a determined effort, we couldn't find any of these montane grassland specialists. We did, however, manage to find **Eastern Long-billed Lark** and several **Yellow-breasted Pipits**. This ended another fantastic day's birding and we eagerly discussed tomorrow's itinerary, when we would drop down into Zululand for a very different suite of birds (and warmer temperatures!).

Day 7, 30th June 2025. Transfer to Zululand, birding en route

Blue Korhaan was still on our target list this morning and so we set out early along the Amersfoort Road. It didn't take long before we struck gold and had a bird standing in the road, which then gave us a good look as it flew by us. We then headed back to the bridge over the wetland, where we managed to see **African Rail** (after only hearing them before) as well as a flyover **African Marsh Harrier**.

After a highly successful first couple of hours we then made our way out of Wakkerstroom and slowly started dropping in elevation as we made our way past eSwatini and into Zululand. The drive is always a bit hair-raising, with many coal trucks on the badly potholed road, and it was a relief to turn off the N2 and enjoy our lunch in prime Zululand bushveld. After lunch we slowly birded the gravel roads leading to our new lodge, which proved very productive. New birds included **Senegal Lapwing**, **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird**, **Rudd's Apalis**, **Brimstone Canary** and a large flock of range-restricted **Lemon-breasted Canaries**. A stop at a nearby dam further yielded **Osprey**, **Black Saw-wing** and **Wire-tailed Swallow**.



Lemon-breasted Canaries were numerous in the Hluhluwe area.

We ended the day with a walk in the sand forest around our lodge, which added **Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher**, **Square-tailed Drongo**, **Yellow-bellied Greenbul** and **Red-capped Robin-Chat**.

Day 8, 1st July 2025. Birding the greater Lake St Lucia area

As usual, we were out before dawn and made our way to a patch of sand forest in the hopes of finding a few very special and localized species. First up was African Broadbill and, despite hearing at least two birds displaying, we only managed glimpses of a bird as it zoomed through the understory. Thankfully, we had better success with **Southern Crested Guinea fowl**, **Green Malkoha**, **African Goshawk**, **Southern Yellow White-eye**, **Grey Sunbird** and the tricky **Neergaard's Sunbird**. Nearby we found two very accommodating **Pink-throated Twinspots** which showed very well for us.



*This juvenile male **Pink-throated Twinspot** posed perfectly for us.*

The rest of the morning was then spent birding some recently flooded wetlands near Nibela Peninsular (Lake St Lucia) which were teeming with birds including **White-faced** and **Fulvous Whistling Ducks**, **Knob-billed Duck**, **Blue-billed Teal**, **Southern Pochard**, **Kittlitz's Plover**, **Lesser and African Jacanas**, **Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Whiskered Tern**, **Greater and Lesser Flamingos**, **Black Heron**, **Little, Great and Yellow-billed Egrets**, **Goliath Heron**, **Great White** and **Pink-backed Pelicans**, **Malachite Kingfisher** and **Grey-rumped Swallow**. A nearby bay of Lake St Lucia further added **White-backed Duck**, **African Pygmy Goose** and **Caspian Tern**.

After lunch, we moved further north and birded the floodplains around Mpempe Pan, which did not add too much of interest, however, **Rufous-winged Cisticola** did show well. We ended an exceptional day of birding with a walk through the sand forest around our lodge, which added the final new bird of the day in the form of a very showy **Bearded Scrub Robin**.

Day 9, 2nd July 2025. Sand forest birding and transfer to St Lucia

This morning we had another crack at African Broadbill, which wasn't even calling this morning, and left the forest feeling a bit dejected as we knew this was our best chance at finding this tricky forest species.

We then went back to the Nibela Peninsular area in the hopes of finding Rosy-throated Longclaw, which also eluded us. The area was full of water, which meant most of the grassland on the edge of the wetland was flooded, which is where this species usually occurs. Thankfully, as with yesterday, there were many other waterbird distractions to keep us entertained, with **African Rail** (heard only) being a noteworthy addition, as they are unusual in the area.

It was then time for the trip's only sit-down breakfast, which certainly was a scrumptious one. While we waited for our breakfast, we entertained ourselves watching a **Senegal Lapwing** running around on the restaurant's lawns. We hadn't yet given up on Rosy-throated Longclaw and so decided to head to the nearby Hluhluwe River floodplain, where we spent a while walking the short grassland on the edge of some wetlands (ideal longclaw habitat) but unfortunately could still not find our target. Whilst searching for the longclaw, we found an assortment of waterbirds (similar to what we had seen earlier in the morning) as well as **Cape Teal** and **White-backed Duck**. The heavily grazed grasslands held small numbers of **Black-winged Lapwings** and a **Cape Longclaw**, which momentarily got us excited.



Black-winged Lapwings were seen whilst looking for Rosy-throated Longclaw.

Eventually we gave up on the longclaw and made our way to St Lucia. We drove through the Western Shores of Isimangaliso Wetland Park in the early afternoon and managed to add **Striped Kingfisher**, **White-eared Barbet** and **Orange-breasted Waxbill** on the drive.

We arrived in St Lucia in the early afternoon and after checking into our lovely accommodation headed back out and made our way down to the estuary mouth to see if there were many coastal birds around. As we drove through town, we were lucky enough to bump into a **Southern Banded Snake Eagle** which posed well for us – an unexpected bonus! We then undertook the walk down to the estuary mouth which did not yield much of interest, although **Greater Crested Tern**, **Eurasian Whimbrel** and **White-fronted Plover** were additions to the list. On our way back along the boardwalk we managed to scope a **Mangrove Kingfisher**, just before the sun disappeared below the horizon.



The rare Southern banded Snake Eagle in St Lucia.

Day 10, 3rd July 2025. Isimangaliso Wetland Park birding

Today we had the whole day set aside to bird within Isimangaliso Wetland Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This would also be our last realistic chance of finding the elusive Rosy-throated Longclaw. We left St Lucia early and were through the park gate soon after opening and headed straight to a loop where Rosy-throated Longclaw may be seen. Unfortunately, yet again we came up short, although we did get amazing views of its cousin, the **Yellow-throated Longclaw**. While birding in these coastal grasslands we also found **Croaking Cisticola** and the coastal forest patches held **Black-bellied Starling**, **Dark-backed Weaver**, **African Olive Pigeon** and **Trumpeter Hornbill**.

We then made our way back north through the park and lucked into a group of three **Yellow-billed Oxpeckers** feeding on a **Kudu** herd. The oxpeckers once used to breed in the province of

KwaZulu-Natal but were exterminated when cattle were dipped to remove ticks, and so it is encouraging to see this group of oxpeckers which are hopefully the start of their recolonization in the province!

We stopped at Cape Vidal for our breakfast, which was a very distracted affair, with **Woodward's Batis**, **Brown Scrub Robin**, **Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **Rudd's Apalis** and **Pink-throated Twinspot** all vying for our attention. A group of **Blue Monkeys** watched us quietly from some nearby trees, hoping for a gap to swoop in and steal our breakfast! Once we were done eating, we went for a walk around the camp and found **Green Twinspot** and **Grey Waxbill**.

Leaving Cape Vidal, we decided to do the grassland loop again in the hopes of finding **Rosy-throated Longclaw** which eventually obliged for us when a bird rose out of the grass and performed its aerial display until it was just a dot in the sky. Success at last!

We spent the remainder of the afternoon birding various loops and wetlands and managed to find **Martial Eagle**, **Africa Pygmy Goose**, **White-backed Duck**, **Rufous-bellied Heron** and **Yellow-billed Egret**. Forest patches held **Green Malkoha**, **Cardinal Woodpecker**, **Black Cuckooshrike**, **Olive Sunbird** and **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird**. We searched the park high and low for African Cuckoo-Hawk but had to eventually accept defeat with this tricky raptor.



*The Eastern Shores of Isimangaliso Wetland Park is a reliable bet for **Rufous-bellied Heron**.*

On the mammal front we had had another productive day as we had seen **Natal Red Duiker** and **African Buffalo**, improved our views of **White Rhinoceros** and even been charged by a family herd of **African Savanna Elephants**!

We left the park in the late afternoon and added **Crowned Hornbill** on the edge of town. The bridge over the estuary held **Southern Brown-throated Weavers**, and we ended the day at a stakeout where both **Swamp** and **Fiery-necked Nightjars** showed for us. Another busy and highly rewarding day of Zululand birding.

Day 11, 4th July 2025. St Lucia birding and transfer to Eshowe

There were still a few forest birds on our target list and so we headed to the iGwalagwala trail on the edge of town this morning for another bout of productive forest birding. Walking the trails we found **Narina Trogon**, **Buff-spotted Flufftail** (we managed to see a female bird and even photographed it!), **Rudd's Apalis** and, after quite a prolonged search, a trio of brightly colored **Livingstone's Turacos**. Another fun sighting this morning was a pair of **Red Bush Squirrels** as they scurried up some vines.

Around mid-morning we left St Lucia and headed south along the N2, stopping for **House Crow** as we went, until we arrived in Umlalazi Nature Reserve, just outside the coastal town of Mtunzini. Here we enjoyed lunch on the riverbank and were interrupted by an **African Finfoot** unexpectedly making its way across the river. After lunch we found **Red-faced Cisticola** as well as many **African Woolly-necked Storks** overhead. Soon after exiting the reserve we found a distant **Palm-nut Vulture** which eventually allowed us to approach quite closely.



Striped Pipit in the afternoon light in the hills around Ongoye Forest.

Next, we continued on our way and now headed inland to Ongoye Forest up in the hills overlooking Mtunzini. On the outskirts of the forest, we easily found **Striped Pipit** and then in the forest itself **Green Barbet** did not put up much of a fight (as it often does). We found the barbet much quicker

than expected so used the remaining light and headed to some nearby bushveld where **Eastern Nicator** and **Gorgeous Bushshrike** finally revealed themselves to us. Not done yet, we waited at a nearby stakeout for White-backed Night Heron, which occasionally feeds in a stream, but unfortunately it was elsewhere today, and we had to settle for a pair of distantly calling **Spotted Thick-knees**.

Day 12, 5th July 2025. Birding the forests of Eshowe

We decided we were not yet done with White-backed Night Heron and headed back to the same stakeout before dawn. This again yielded the same result, and we came back empty-handed.

Dlinza Forest, just after sunrise, was our next port of call and we headed straight to the tower where **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeons** duly performed for us at eye level. Back down on the forest floor we scoured the leaf litter for **Spotted Ground Thrush** and eventually had amazing looks at a particularly confiding individual after a bit of a search. Other special birds seen in the forest included **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, **Olive Woodpecker**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Cape Batis** and **Dark-backed Weaver**.



Spotted Ground Thrush eventually showed beautifully for us in Dlinza Forest.

At the nearby Entumeni Forest we eventually found **African Broadbill** and had amazing looks – at what ended up being voted ‘bird of the trip’ – as we watched it perform its bizarre display flight. Here, we also found **Yellow-streaked Greenbul**, **Southern Double-collared Sunbird** and heard **Crowned Eagle** displaying overhead, out of sight. The grasslands surrounding the reserve offered excellent birding, and today was no different as we added **Neddicky**, **Rock-loving Cisticola** and

Swee Waxbill. Unfortunately, **Southern Tchagra** would only make it onto the ‘heard only’ list, as it would not come in any closer to us.

Later that afternoon we ended the day birding some patches of bush in amongst sugarcane fields which sometimes hold **Black-throated Wattle-eye**. This unfortunately would not play along today, nevertheless, **African Yellow Warbler** was a satisfying consolation prize.

Day 13, 6th July 2025. Entumeni Forest birding and transfer to Drakensberg Mountains

This morning we had another go at Southern Tchagra on the edge of Entumeni Forest but unfortunately a very strong wind had picked up overnight and we had to accept defeat with the tchagra. A distant **Lanner Falcon** was seen overhead though. We then had our breakfast on the edge of Eshowe, where we found a pair of **Greater Double-collared Sunbirds**.

Moving south we stopped at Umhlanga Nature Reserve, where **Black-throated Wattle-eye** continued to elude us, and then made a lunchtime stop in Hillcrest where we saw **Black-and-white (Red-backed) Mannikin** but could not find its larger cousin, **Magpie Mannikin**. Here we also improved our looks of **Little Sparrowhawk**. Nearby we found a singing **Knysna Warbler** which eventually gave us glimpses of it as it crept through the undergrowth.



*The attractive **White-starred Robin** in Xumeni Forest.*

Continuing inland, we steadily gained in elevation and spent some of the late afternoon birding at Xumeni Forest, which further added **White-starred Robin**, **Knysna Turaco**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler** and the skulking **Barratt's Warbler**. We ended the day hoping for Cape Parrot to fly over at dusk but had to settle for our only **Spotted Eagle-Owl** of the trip, before we eventually made it into our accommodation in Himeville.

Day 14, 7th July 2025. Birding the Sani Pass and into Lesotho

Today was one of the most highly anticipated days of the trip as we would make our way up the famous Sani Pass and into the Kingdom of Lesotho. The local guide, Stuart McLean picked us up from our hotel in Himeville just as the sun was rising and we made our way towards the base of the pass. Here we birded some ponds which held **African Black Duck** and **Half-collared Kingfisher**, with **Olive Thrushes** showing well on the manicured lawns.

It was then time to slowly ascend the pass proper, and birding the lower stretches up until the South African border post added the likes of **Bearded** and **Cape Vultures**, **Ground Woodpecker**, **Lanner Falcon**, **Bokmakierie**, **White-necked Raven**, **Fairy Flycatcher**, **Wailing Cisticola**, **Buff-streaked Chat**, **Cape Bunting** and a couple of very showy **Gurney's Sugarbirds** (see the report's cover photo)! On these lower slopes we had good looks at **Rhebok**, an uncommon antelope species.

Once we had gotten through the first border post the gradient started to increase and the habitat changed to stunted montane vegetation. At the switchbacks we easily found **Drakensberg Rockjumper** and **Drakensberg Siskin**, two high altitude specialists, as well as **Karoo Prinia**, **Jackal Buzzard** and another **Bearded Vulture**. Just before the Lesotho border post we found a few of the cute **Sloggett's Vlei Rats** which kept us entertained in between bird sightings.



Drakensberg Rockjumper are easily seen up Sani Pass.

Once we were through the Lesotho border post (taking all of about two minutes to get through) we concentrated on a number of species occurring here at their most eastern extent. Although we couldn't find any Grey-winged Francolins, we had much better luck with **Sickle-winged Chat**, **Large-billed Lark**, **Sentinel Rock Thrush**, **Grey Tit**, **Mountain Chat** and **Yellow Canary**.

Having found just about all of our target birds we decided to descend the pass a bit earlier and bird some of the lower stretches to see if we could eke out any missing species. In Stuart's garden we quickly found a juvenile male **Greater Honeyguide**, which had eluded us up until this point. In some nearby fields and wetlands we found **Wattled**, **Blue** and **Grey Crowned Cranes** in the space of about 5 minutes as well as a few **Denham's Bustards**. This ended up a wonderful day's birding, with just one final day left to try see what else we could find.



Blue Cranes in the afternoon light around Himeville.

Day 15, 8th July 2025. Midlands birding and transfer to Durban

Melanie only needed to be in Durban in the late afternoon which meant we essentially had the full day to work our way down to the coast and mop up whatever birds we were still missing. We started the day with a predawn departure from Himeville to ensure we were in place at sunrise to wait for **Cape Parrots** to fly over at Marutswa Forest, which duly obliged.

Next up was Benvie Garden in the Karkloof where the owner, John, met us to show us around. Here, we had unbelievable views of **Orange Ground Thrushes** and **Chorister Robin-Chats**, as John called them. We enjoyed a good couple of hours in this beautiful and peaceful garden and also found **Knysna Turaco**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Cape Batis**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler**, **White-starred Robin**, **Black-and-white (Red-backed) Mannikin**, **Sweet Waxbill** and **Forest Canary**. A resident **Crowned Eagle** showed well for us in its nesting tree, we had only heard this up until this point. Soon after leaving the garden, we stopped in a small patch of indigenous forest which gave us great looks at a confiding **Bush Blackcap**, a bird we were getting worried we might have missed!



*Benvie Garden produced sensational views of **Orange Ground Thrush** (top) and **Chorister Robin-Chat**.*

For our final birding before moving down to Durban, we stopped at the Pietermaritzburg Botanical Garden where, after some work, we eventually found a pair of the hoped-for **Mountain Wagtails**, a great way to end the trip. Thanks, Melanie, for making this such an enjoyable trip and for your willingness to bird daily from dawn to dusk. I look forward to our western South Africa trip and I'm excited to see what other exciting birds and wildlife this trip will reveal for us!

Bird List - Following IOC Version 15.1 (July 2025)

Birds 'heard only' are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen.

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following the IUCN Red List: CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ostriches (Struthionidae)	
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
White-backed Duck	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>
African Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>
Blue-billed Teal	<i>Spatula hottentota</i>
Cape Shoveler	<i>Spatula smithii</i>
African Black Duck	<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
Maccoa Duck - EN	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
Guineafowl (Numididae)	
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Southern Crested Guineafowl	<i>Guttera edouardi</i>
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Crested Francolin	<i>Ortygornis sephaena</i>
Red-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila levaillantii</i>
Natal Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis natalensis</i>
Swainson's Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>
Nightjars (Caprimulgidae)	
Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>
Swamp Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus natalensis</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Turacos (Musophagidae)	
Grey Go-away-bird	<i>Crinifer concolor</i>
Purple-crested Turaco	<i>Gallirex porphyreolophus</i>
Livingstone's Turaco	<i>Tauraco livingstonii</i>
Knysna Turaco	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>
Bustards (Otididae)	
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Denham's Bustard	<i>Neotis denhami</i>
White-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>
Blue Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>
Red-crested Korhaan	<i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
Green Malkoha	<i>Ceuthmochares australis</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Sandgrouse (Pteroclididae)	
Double-banded Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles bicinctus</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon	<i>Columba delegorguei</i>
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Tambourine Dove (H)	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
African Green Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>
Finfoots (Heliornithidae)	
African Finfoot	<i>Podica senegalensis</i>
Flufftails & Forest Rails (Scolothruridae)	
Buff-spotted Flufftail	<i>Scolothrura elegans</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
African Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Black Crake	<i>Zapornia flavirostra</i>
Cranes (Gruidae)	
Grey Crowned Crane - EN	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
Wattled Crane - VU	<i>Grus carunculata</i>
Blue Crane - VU	<i>Grus paradisea</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>
Stone-curlews, Thick-knees (Burhinidae)	
Spotted Thick-knee (H)	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
White-crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>
Senegal Lapwing	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>
Black-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pecuarius</i>
White-fronted Plover	<i>Anarhynchus marginatus</i>
Jacanas (Jacanidae)	
Lesser Jacana	<i>Microparra capensis</i>
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Curlew Sandpiper - VU	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Courasers, Pratincoles (Glareolidae)	
Temminck's Courser	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
African Skimmer	<i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
African Openbill	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
African Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia microscelis</i>
Anhingas, Darters (Anhingidae)	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>
Cape Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Southern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Little Heron	<i>Butorides atricapilla</i>
Rufous-bellied Heron	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Ardea brachyrhyncha</i>
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Hamerkop (Scopidae)	
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
Secretarybird (Sagittariidae)	
Secretarybird - EN	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
Ospreys (Pandionidae)	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>
Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
White-headed Vulture - CR	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>
Lappet-faced Vulture - EN	<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>
Hooded Vulture - CR	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
White-backed Vulture - CR	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Cape Vulture - VU	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>
Bateleur - EN	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
Southern Banded Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus fasciolatus</i>
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Crowned Eagle	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Martial Eagle - EN	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Tawny Eagle - VU	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
African Hawk-Eagle	<i>Aquila spilogaster</i>
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>
Dark Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax metabates</i>
Lizard Buzzard	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>
Little Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza minulla</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Astur melanoleucus</i>
Black Harrier - EN	<i>Circus maurus</i>
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>
African Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	<i>Ketupa lactea</i>
Mousebirds (Coliidae)	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Trogons (Trogonidae)	
Narina Trogon	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Hoopoes (Upupidae)	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Wood Hoopoes (Phoeniculidae)	
Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
Ground Hornbills (Bucorvidae)	
Southern Ground Hornbill - VU	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>
Hornbills (Bucerotidae)	
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus rufirostris</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros alboterminatus</i>
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>
Rollers (Coraciidae)	
Purple Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>
Mangrove Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegaloides</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Half-collared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Bee-eaters (Meropidae)	
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>
African Barbets (Lybiidae)	
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>
Green Barbet	<i>Cryptolybia olivacea</i>
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird (H)	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>
Honeyguides (Indicatoridae)	
Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Red-throated Wryneck	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>
Ground Woodpecker	<i>Geocolaptes olivaceus</i>
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Bearded Woodpecker	<i>Chloropicus namaquus</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
African & New World Parrots (Psittacidae)	
Cape Parrot - VU	<i>Poicephalus robustus</i>
Brown-headed Parrot	<i>Poicephalus cryptoxanthus</i>
African & Green Broadbills (Calypomenidae)	
African Broadbill	<i>Smithornis capensis</i>
Wattle-eyes, Batises (Platysteiridae)	
Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Woodwards' Batis	<i>Batis fratrurn</i>
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>
Bushshrikes (Malaconotidae)	
Grey-headed Bushshrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
Orange-breasted Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus</i>
Gorgeous Bushshrike	<i>Telophorus viridis</i>
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Southern Tchagra (H)	<i>Tchagra tchagra</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Vangas & Allies (Vangidae)	
White-crested Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Retz's Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops retzii</i>
Cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae)	
Grey Cuckooshrike	<i>Cebilepyris caesius</i>
Black Cuckooshrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>
Figbirds, Old World Orioles, Piopios (Oriolidae)	
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Drongos (Dicruridae)	
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Monarchs (Monarchidae)	
Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher	<i>Trochocercus cyanomelas</i>
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Southern White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>
Magpie Shrike	<i>Lanius melanoleucus</i>
Southern Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Rockjumpers (Chaetopidae)	
Drakensberg Rockjumper	<i>Chaetops aurantius</i>
Fairy Flycatchers (Stenostiridae)	
Fairy Flycatcher	<i>Stenostira scita</i>
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger</i>
Grey Tit	<i>Melaniparus afer</i>
Penduline Tits (Remizidae)	
Grey Penduline Tit	<i>Anthoscopus caroli</i>
Nicators (Nicatoridae)	
Eastern Nicator	<i>Nicator gularis</i>
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Eastern Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda semitorquata</i>
Sabota Lark	<i>Calendulauda sabota</i>
Eastern Clapper Lark	<i>Corypha fasciolata</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Corypha africana</i>
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)	
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>
Yellow-streaked Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Grey-rumped Swallow	<i>Pseudhirundo griseopyga</i>
Banded Martin	<i>Neophedina cincta</i>
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Large Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Crombecs, African Warblers (Macrospenidae)	
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Leaf Warblers (Phylloscopidae)	
Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Iduna natalensis</i>
Grassbirds & Allies (Locustellidae)	
Knysna Warbler - VU	<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>
Barratt's Warbler	<i>Bradypterus barratti</i>
Little Rush Warbler (H)	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>
Rock-loving Cisticola	<i>Cisticola aberrans</i>
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Wailing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola lais</i>
Rufous-winged Cisticola	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Wing-snapping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>
Drakensberg Prinia	<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Rudd's Apalis	<i>Apalis ruddi</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flava</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Green-capped Eremomela	<i>Eremomela scotops</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Bush Blackcap - VU	<i>Sylvia nigricapillus</i>
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops virens</i>
Southern Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops anderssoni</i>
Laughingthrushes & Allies (Leiothrichidae)	
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Sugarbirds (Promeropidae)	
Gurney's Sugarbird	<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornises (Sturnidae)	
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Notopholia corusca</i>
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Greater Blue-eared Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>
Burchell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Oxpeckers (Buphagidae)	
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Spotted Ground Thrush - VU	<i>Geokichla guttata</i>
Orange Ground Thrush	<i>Geokichla gurneyi</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa</i>
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Kurichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Karoo Scrub Robin	<i>Tychaemon coryphoeus</i>
Brown Scrub Robin	<i>Tychaemon signata</i>
Bearded Scrub Robin	<i>Tychaemon quadrivirgata</i>
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Pale Flycatcher	<i>Agricola pallidus</i>
Grey Tit-Flycatcher	<i>Fraseria plumbea</i>
Ashy Flycatcher	<i>Fraseria caerulescens</i>
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Chorister Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>
Red-capped Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>
White-throated Robin-Chat	<i>Dessonornis humeralis</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>
Sentinel Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola explorator</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cape Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Buff-streaked Chat	<i>Campicoloides bifasciatus</i>
Sickle-winged Chat	<i>Emarginata sinuata</i>
Mocking Cliff Chat	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>
Ant-eating Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>
Mountain Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla monticola</i>
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)	
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>
Grey Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra veroxii</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>
Neergaard's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris neergaardi</i>
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris afer</i>
Marico Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>
Purple-banded Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris bifasciatus</i>
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris superciliaris</i>
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Weavers, Widowbirds (Ploceidae)	
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>
Eastern Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus subaureus</i>
Holub's Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>
Southern Brown-throated Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthopterus</i>
Lesser Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Dark-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
White-winged Widowbird	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estrildidae)	
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullata</i>
Black-and-white Mannikin	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>
Swee Waxbill	<i>Coccyzygia melanotis</i>
Green Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>
Grey Waxbill	<i>Glaucostrelda perreini</i>
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>
Orange-breasted Waxbill	<i>Amandava subflava</i>
Blue Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>
Pink-throated Twinspot	<i>Hypargos margaritatus</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Jameson's Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>
Indigobirds, Whydahs (Viduidae)	
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
Mountain Wagtail	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Rosy-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx ameliae</i>
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Nicholson's Pipit	<i>Anthus nicholsoni</i>
Plain-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>
Striped Pipit	<i>Anthus lineiventris</i>
African Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus crenatus</i>
Bushveld Pipit	<i>Anthus caffer</i>
Yellow-breasted Pipit - VU	<i>Anthus chloris</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Forest Canary	<i>Crithagra scotops</i>
Black-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra atrogularis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Lemon-breasted Canary	<i>Crithagra citrinipectus</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Crithagra mozambica</i>
Drakensberg Siskin	<i>Crithagra symonsi</i>
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>
Brimstone Canary	<i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>
Streaky-headed Seed eater	<i>Crithagra gularis</i>
Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>

Species Seen	395
Species heard only	5
Total species recorded	400

Mammal List – Following Mammalwatching.com (November 2024)

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following the IUCN Red List: EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common name	Scientific name
Elephants (Elephantidae)	
African Savanna Elephant - EN	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Hyraxes (Procaviidae)	
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)	
Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Squirrels (Sciuridae)	
Smith's Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Red Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus palliatus</i>
Old World Mice and Rats (Muridae)	
Sloggett's Vlei Rat	<i>Otomys sloggetti</i>
Felids (Felidae)	
Lion - VU	<i>Panthera leo</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Leopard - VU	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
Mongoose (Herpestidae)	
Marsh Mongoose	<i>Atilax paludinosus</i>
Yellow Mongoose	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Common Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>
Common Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>
Meerkat	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>
Hyaenas (Hyaenidae)	
Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>
Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae)	
White Rhinoceros	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>
Equines (Equidae)	
Plains Zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>
Bovids (Bovidae)	
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Natal Red Duiker	<i>Cephalophorus natalensis</i>
Blue Duiker	<i>Philantomba monticola</i>
Bush Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>
Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>
Rhebok	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>
Southern Reedbuck	<i>Redunca arundinum</i>
Cape Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>
Nyala	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>
Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Southern Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus sylvaticus</i>
Giraffes and Okapi (Giraffidae)	
Southern Giraffe	<i>Giraffa giraffa</i>
Suids (Suidae)	
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
Hippopotamuses (Hippopotamidae)	
Common Hippopotamus - VU	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Species seen:	35

Reptile List – Following Reptiles of the World (October 2023)

Common name	Scientific name
Crocodiles (Crocodylidae)	
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
Monitor Lizards (Varanidae)	
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>
Sand Snakes (Psammophiidae)	
Striped Skaapsteker	<i>Psammophylax tritaeniatus</i>
African Mud Turtles (Pelomedusidae)	
Helmeted Turtle	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>
Species seen:	4