



BirdLife South Africa Avitourism Division
Self Drive Itinerary

Birding Route Name: Mpumalanga Birding Route

Self Drive Itinerary Name: 6 Day Mpumalanga Highveld Trip

Habitats: Grasslands, forest and wetlands

Duration: 5 nights

Itinerary:

Night 1: Wakkerstroom Country Inn or Wetlands Country House

Night 2: Wakkerstroom Country Inn or Wetlands Country House

Night 3: Florence Guest House

Night 4: Florence Guest House

Night 5: Lakenvlei or Dullstroom Inn, Dullstroom

Distance covered: 630 km

Costs: Fuel – R300

Guide Costs – see recommended Guide Rates

Accommodation - Variable

Itinerary updated: November 2010

Day 1

Travel from Johannesburg to Wakkerstroom

Late morning and afternoon birding in the Wakkerstroom area

There are 4 hides situated around the wetland.

- The SASOL Flufftail Hide is situated just 500m from the BirdLife Centre.
- Crane Hide can be reached by driving past the BirdLife Centre and turning right towards the campsite and follow the signs.
- The Iain Drummond Hide can be reached by turning right towards Volksrust after leaving the BirdLife Centre. 800m along this road there is a turn-off to the right to 'De Oude Stasie'. Follow this dirt road for 2.6km and the hide is on the right.
- The Clive Beck Memorial Hide is located on the Amersfoort Road. To reach the hide, park at the Kruger Bridge and walk under bridge along the boardwalk.

Information on the Wakkerstroom area

The Wakkerstroom area is home to three highly endemic species restricted to South Africa's high altitude grasslands - Rudd's Lark, Botha's Lark and Yellow-breasted Pipit. A total of 13 bird species are endemic or nearly so to South Africa's Grassland Biome and nine of these can be found in the area.

Guides

Lucky Ngwenya

Lucky can be booked through email: wakkerstroom-centre@birdlife.org.za or contact 078 503 9754

Habitats

Habitats range from open grassland to mist belt forest, gorges and cliffs, with extensive wetland habitat in the form of vleis, pans and dams.

Specials

Yellow-breasted Pipit, Rudd's and Botha's Lark, Grey Crowned Crane, Blue Crane, Blue Korhaan, Denham's Bustard, Southern Bald Ibis, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Sentinel Rock-Thrush, Buff-streaked Chat, Bush Blackcap, Chorister Robin-Chat.

Overnight: Accommodation in Wakkerstroom

Wakkerstroom Country Inn

Situated on the square in the heart of the village, the Wakkerstroom Country Inn has 10 comfortable and stylishly decorated en-suite rooms and a lovely restaurant which is open 7 days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They also offer regular Gourmet Evenings which are not to be missed.

Contact

Dan & Paula Leahy

Tel: +27(0)17 730 0620

Email: stay@countryinn.co.za

Website: www.countryinn.co.za

Wetland Country House & Sheds

The Wetlands Country House & Sheds is set on six hectares of breathtaking grasslands and wetlands, within 100 metres of Martins Dam which feed the river that forms the boundary to the property.

Contact

Phillip & Rita Schoeman

Tel: +27(0)17 7300101

Email: wetlandscountryhouse@telkomsa.net

Website: www.wetlandscountryhouse.co.za

Distance covered: 300km

Day 2**Wakkerstroom and surrounds**

As many of the special birds in and around Wakkerstroom occur on privately owned land, which is not accessible to the general public, it is advisable to book a Community Bird Guide. The guides have the necessary permission to visit private farms and are experts at finding the specials.

The BirdLife South Africa guide, Lucky Ngwenya, can be booked through email: wakkerstroom-centre@birdlife.org.za or contact 078 503 9754

Overnight Wakkerstroom Country Inn

Distance covered: 50km

Day 3**Early morning birding in the Wakkerstroom area**

Afternoon: depart for Chrissiesmeer

Overnight Florence Guest House

Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, Bed and Breakfast and Self-catering options are offered on this charming Sandstone property. All the buildings and cottages are built from sandstone. Here you will find peace and tranquility between the 270 lakes and pans of Matotoland. Florence Guest Farm has got 3 cottages and 3 en suite bedrooms.

Contact

Ané Steinberg

Cell: +27 (0) 82 804 1771

Email: info@florence.co.za

Website: www.florence.co.za

Distance covered: 140km

Day 4**Early morning birding in the Chrissiesmeer area****Information on Chrissiesmeer area**

This area boasts many lakes and pans located within a 20km radius of the village. This area contains extensive interconnected and interdependent wetlands and peat lands. All birding is done from the roadside and specials include Blue Crane, Red-winged Francolin, Chestnut-banded Plover, Hottentot Teal, Cape Shoveler, Greater and Lesser Flamingo.

In summer, migratory waders can occur in large numbers with Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Ruff, Common Greenshank and Wood Sandpiper feeding alongside resident Black-winged Stilt

Guides

Self-guided

Habitats

Grassland and wetland.

Specials

Blue Crane, Red-winged Francolin, Chestnut-banded Plover, Hottentot Teal, Cape Shoveler, Greater and Lesser Flamingo

Overnight: Florence Guest House

Distance covered: 50km

Day 5: depart for Dullstroom

Information on the Dullstroom area

The quaint country village of Dullstroom peaks at over 2000 metres above sea level and is dominated by montane grassland, alpine heath, marshes, rocky slopes and outcrops. The area is particularly good for the grassland endemics.

Although much of the land is privately owned for trout fishing purposes, the quiet rural road network around Dullstroom provides an opportunity to record, amidst beautiful hills and marshy valleys, some of highveld specials.

Guides

Self-guided

Habitats

Habitats range from montane grassland to extensive wetlands and rocky outcrops. .

Specials

Southern Bald Ibis, Blue Crane, Wattled Crane, Grey Crowned Crane, Sentinel Rock-Thrush, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Buff-streaked Chat, Gurney's Sugarbird, Cape Vulture, Yellow-breasted Pipit and Cape Eagle Owl.

Overnight: Lakenvlei Forest Lodge

Lakenvlei Forest Lodge nestles amid lush forest vegetation and wetland. Twelve luxury chalets provide an exclusive haven for visitors to the lodge. Chalets include: Six 8-sleeper chalets, with two en-suite double bedrooms and a loft room sleeping four persons, and Six four-sleeper chalets, with one double en-suite bedroom and a loft room sleeping two persons

Dullstroom Inn

This is a family hotel situated in town with 11 en suite rooms (4 double, 5 single) including 2 family rooms and a well-known olde English pub with open hearth log fire.

For bookings for both of the above, contact

Dullstroom Accommodation
+27 (0)13 254-0020 or +27 (0)13 254-0251
info@dullstroom.co.za
www.dullstroom.co.za

Distance covered: 110km

Day 6**Birding in the Dullstroom area****Morning: Verloren Valei**

Verloren Valei nature reserve covers an area of 5 891 hectares, 14 kilometres north of Dullstroom. Situated in an area of high altitude grassland, Verloren Valei Nature Reserve contains more than thirty wetlands in near pristine state.

By appointment only.

Contact

Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
+27 (0) 13 254 0799

Afternoon: Visit the Dullstroom Bird of Prey & Rehabilitation Centre

The Dullstroom Bird Of Prey & Rehabilitation Centre was established with the aim of educating the public in order to promote an awareness of the raptor species and their plight as a growing endangered species. Hundreds of raptors are injured or killed annually by vehicles, fences, traps, powerlines and poisons. At the centre and with the help of a local vet, who has experience in handling raptors, the Centre is able to help dozens of these casualties each year. The Centre also runs a successful rehabilitation programme and to get a bird back into the wild is their ultimate goal.

Weather permitting, flights displays are performed twice daily at 10.30am and 2.30pm.

Contact

Mark Holder
+27 (0)72 378 8562
falconer@dullstroom.net
www.birdsofprey.co.za

Afternoon: return to Johannesburg

Distance covered: 280km

Tour Ends