



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## South Africa

### Eastern South Africa I

*5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 (14 days)*

### & Western Cape Extension I

*18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 (6 days)*



Drakensberg Rockjumper by Adam Riley

*The provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga on South Africa's eastern seaboard boast some of the country's finest birding and exceptional mammal viewing. An impressive 750 plus species of bird occur in the region, reflecting the wonderful natural diversity of the area; and this, coupled with a modern infrastructure well suited to the needs of the modern traveller, makes birding here an absolute delight. From the classic African savanna of the world-renowned Kruger National Park and the teeming Zululand game reserves, to the endemic-rich mist-belt forests of the Natal Midlands and the lofty peaks of the magnificent Drakensberg, this tour of Eastern South Africa offers the very best of African birding and game viewing.*

**THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...****DETAILS**

<b>Tour Dates</b>	<b>Eastern South Africa I</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 (14 days)</b>
	<b>Cape Extension I</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 (6 days)</b>
<b>Tour Price</b>	<b>Eastern South Africa I</b>	US\$4,230 * £2,920 * €3,310 * <b>ZAR31,800</b> per person sharing (see below) (Tour price fixed in <b>ZAR</b> , other rates subject to exchange rate fluctuations)
	<b>Cape Extension I</b>	US\$1,830 * £1,260 * €1,430 * <b>ZAR13,800</b> per person sharing (see below) US\$146 approximate cost of domestic flights (Tour price fixed in <b>ZAR</b> , other rates subject to exchange rate fluctuations)
<b>Tour Size</b>	<b>Limited to 6 participants and 1 RBT leader</b>	

**THE ITINERARY**

<b>5<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Johannesburg to Rust-De-Winter</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Rust-De-Winter to Kruger National Park</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> &amp; 8<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Kruger National Park</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Kruger National Park to Wakkerstroom</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Wakkerstroom area</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Wakkerstroom to Mkuze area</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Mkuze</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Mkuze area to St Lucia</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>St Lucia and Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>St Lucia to Hilton via Dlinza Forest</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Hilton to Underberg</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Day trip to Sani Pass, Lesotho</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Underberg to Durban (and flight to Cape Town for Extension)</b>

**WESTERN CAPE EXTENSION**

<b>18<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Arrival in Cape Town</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Seabird outing</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>The Cape Peninsula</b>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> February</b>	<b>Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park</b>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> February</b>	<b>Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> February</b>	<b>Ceres to Cape Town</b>



### THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

**Day 1, 5<sup>th</sup> February: Johannesburg to Rust-De-Winter.** After meeting in the bustling metropolis of Johannesburg, we transfer northwards to the Rust-De-Winter area. For the remainder of the day we will explore the rich bushveld on the well-known Zaagkuil drift road. Included in the bounty of bushveld specials are a host of delightful species typical of the dry west, most of which we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere. Possible highlights along this fabulous road include the outrageous Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared and Black-faced Waxbills, Scaly-feathered Weaver and Red-headed Finch as well as more widespread species like Abdim's Stork, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Purple and European Rollers, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Marico Flycatcher, Common Whitethroat, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes, Pied Babbler, Groundscraper and the recently split Karoo Thrushes, Ashy Tit, White-browed Sparrow Weaver, Cut-throat Finch, Great Sparrow, gorgeous Shaft-tailed Whydah and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. Eventually we will reach the small village of Kgomo-Kgomo where the main road crosses an extensive floodplain. During wet seasons, when conditions are right, this can be an excellent area to locate specials such as Allen's Gallinule, Lesser Moorhen, Pallid and Montagu's Harriers, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Yellow Wagtail and African Quail-Finch. The surrounding grasslands and fields are often heavily grazed and this provides perfect habitat for Temminck's Courser, Greater Kestrel and Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark. After a wonderful introduction to South African birding we then travel to our nearby accommodations where we will enjoy a delicious welcome dinner.



**Day 2, 6<sup>th</sup> February: Rust-De-Winter to Kruger National Park.** We will make an early start for some final birding in the Rust-De-Winter area before we continue our journey towards the Kruger National Park. En route to our destination in the park we will make a stop to look for Taita Falcon. Rugged cliff faces, which are home to a resident pair of rare Taita Falcon, dominate this extremely scenic site – certainly the most accessible site for this difficult species. This stake-out may also yield sightings of Cape Vulture, Verreaux's Eagle, White-necked Raven, Mocking Cliff Chat and Striped Pipit, while a small forest stream nearby is a good place to look for the smart Mountain Wagtail. Thereafter we will transfer to the world-renowned Kruger National Park, where we will be based for the next three nights.



**Days 3 & 4, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> February: Kruger National Park.** The Greater Kruger conservation area includes vast areas of adjacent Mozambique and is one of Africa's most famous parks. We will explore the superb road system in an attempt to locate big game, including the legendary "Big 5" - Lion, African Elephant, Leopard, African Buffalo and White Rhinoceros. Kruger will be our best opportunity to watch these spectacular animals in their natural habitat and some of them we may encounter in very large numbers and at very close quarters. Other highly sought-after animals we have a chance of



finding are Cheetah, African Wild Dog, Hippopotamus and a myriad of antelope and other mammals including Giraffe, Common Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Greater Kudu, Impala, Klipspringer, Bushbuck, Warthog, Chacma Baboon, Vervet Monkey and Dwarf Mongoose.

The rich bushveld of the Kruger National Park will provide us with some of the most exciting and rewarding birding of the trip. Of special note here are species requiring vast areas of wilderness, namely Common Ostrich, Kori Bustard – the world's heaviest flying bird – the incomparable Southern Ground Hornbill, Martial Eagle, Bateleur, Marabou and Saddle-billed Storks and up to five species of vulture. The park is particularly well known for its large variety of raptors, including those over-wintering from the Palaearctic, and we hope to find Lesser Spotted, Tawny and Wahlberg's Eagles, Dark Chanting and Gabar Goshawks, Shikra and Lizard Buzzard. The bushveld biome is famous for its diversity of birdlife and included in this suite of fantastic birds are Crested Francolin, Swainson's and Natal Spurrow, Brown-headed Parrot, Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, Violet-backed Starling, rare African Finfoot, Red-crested Korhaan, White-crowned Lapwing, Southern Red-billed, Southern Yellow-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Southern White-crowned and Magpie Shrikes and Red-billed Oxpecker.



We will do at least one night drive in the park to explore for nocturnal birds and mammals. Success on night drives varies greatly, but the list of possibilities is rather impressive and includes Spotted and Verreaux's Eagle-Owls, Barn, Marsh and Southern White-faced Owls, Pearl-spotted and African Barred Owlets, Square-tailed and Fiery-necked Nightjars, Bronze-winged Courser, both Large and Small Spotted Genets, Lesser and Greater Galagos, African Wild Cat, African Civet, Serval, Cape Porcupine and Spotted Hyena – besides the Big 5!

**Day 5, 9<sup>th</sup> February: Kruger National Park to Wakkerstroom.** We will spend our morning birding around our camp before bidding farewell to the splendours of Kruger. We then move inland to the Highveld once again to the country village of Wakkerstroom for a two-night stay. This quaint village is surrounded by pristine upland grasslands rich in endemic birds, many of which are currently threatened by the ongoing destruction of their grassland habitat.

We will arrive in time to spend the afternoon birding the highly productive Wakkerstroom marsh at the edge of town. This is a haven for waterbirds and offers the chance of a number of uncommon or localised species. Purple Heron, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, African Swamphen, South African Cliff Swallow, Levaillant's Cisticola, Lesser Swamp Warbler and Cape Weaver are all regular and, with luck, we may find African Snipe and African Rail. Rarely recorded species seen here on our previous trips include the elusive Baillon's Crake and Red-chested Flufftail.



**Day 6, 10<sup>th</sup> February: Wakkerstroom area.** Driving along the network of dirt roads radiating out from Wakkerstroom, we will explore the grasslands, rocky outcrops and gorges of this unique area in search of Southern Bald Ibis, Blue Crane, endemic Blue and Barrow's Korhaans, Ground Woodpecker, the rare and localised Botha's and Rudd's Larks (the latter considered one of the world's most endangered



larks), Pink-billed, and the recently split Eastern Long-billed and Eastern Clapper Larks, Mountain Wheatear, Sentinel Rock Thrush, African Rock and Yellow-breasted Pipits, African Pied Starling, Yellow-crowned Bishop, African Quail-Finch and Cape Canary. Both Red-winged and Grey-winged Francolins are fairly common in the moist grasslands and we may find coveys feeding at the roadside or sunning themselves at dawn.

Some of the farms in the area around Wakkerstroom support populations of the peculiar Black Wildebeest (also known by its less-used English name of White-tailed Gnu) and Blesbok, whilst smaller mammals occurring in the grasslands include Yellow Mongoose and the rare Cape Fox. One of the other interesting denizens of these grasslands is the curious Suricate, or Meerkat, immortalised in Walt Disney's 'Lion King'. We have a good chance of finding family groups of these unusual animals.

**Day 7, 11<sup>th</sup> February: Wakkerstroom to Mkuze.**

After some final early morning birding in Wakkerstroom we will drive south to Mkuze, an area in northern Kwazulu-Natal that is home to a host of exciting specials and a handful of endemics. We will arrive in the mid to late afternoon for a two-night stay.

The Mkuze area is one of the most productive birding hotspots in Southern Africa and, with its wide variety of savanna, forest and wetland habitats, we can expect an excellent diversity of bird and mammal species in our days here. While we will obviously take time to appreciate the overwhelming number of birds, we will concentrate particularly on finding the localised specials, including Eastern Nicator, Bearded Scrub Robin, Four-coloured (Gorgeous) Bushshrike and the stunning Pink-throated Twinspot. More widespread but none-the-less spectacular species we will look for are Black-bellied Bustard, with its strange, "cork-popping" display, the nomadic Senegal Lapwing and beautiful Narina Trogon.



**Day 8, 12<sup>th</sup> February: Mkuze area.** We will spend the whole day exploring the wonders of this area, searching the great diversity of habitats for its numerous species. One of the more exciting habitats for us here is Sand Forest, a rare and localized dry forest severely threatened by development. This habitat is home to Neergaard's Sunbird, Rudd's Apalis, Crested Guineafowl and the strange African Broadbill.

The ephemeral wetlands in the area can be very productive after good rains; depending on the local conditions we may opt for some time at one of these 'pans', where we will search for Black Heron, Lesser Jacana, African Pygmy Goose and White-backed Duck.



While in Mkuze we will be sure to enjoy some 'bushveld' birding – an excellent habitat for raptors and 'flock' birding. Here we will be ever vigilant for the huge Crowned and Martial Eagles, Little Sparrowhawk, Grey Penduline Tit, Bushveld Pipit, White-fronted and Little Bee-eaters, White-crested Helmetshrike, Grey-headed and Orange-breasted Bushshrikes, and Purple-banded and Marico Sunbirds.

If conditions permit we will do a nightwalk this evening to look for owls, nightjars and small mammals (Greater Galago and White-tailed Mongoose are often seen).



**Day 9, 13<sup>th</sup> February: Mkuze to St Lucia.** After a final early morning's birding in the Mkuze area, we will make our way back to the main coastal road and down to the village of St. Lucia, nestled on the shores of a lake of the same name and part of a world heritage site. If time allows, we will take a drive to the nearby river mouth where we can obtain great views of Hippopotamus and Nile Crocodile lazing on the exposed sandbanks.

**Day 10, 14<sup>th</sup> February: St Lucia and Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve.** This morning we will make our way into the dune forest on the edge of St Lucia town – the dunes here are the world's highest vegetated dunes! This rich forest supports an exciting variety of endemics and specials, including the beautiful Livingstone's Turaco, Woodward's Batis, Brown Scrub Robin, Green Twinspot, Red-backed Mannikin and Lemon Dove. Samango Monkey, Red Duiker, Banded Mongoose and Red Forest Squirrel are possible mammal species that we may encounter.



After breakfast we will then make our way into Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve. The dedicated staff members at Hluhluwe-Imfolozi are credited with saving the White Rhinoceros from extinction, and today these primeval-looking animals are regularly encountered here lazing under trees, grazing or indulging in a refreshing mud bath! The rolling hills and verdant woodlands are also home to other familiar species of big game and we may encounter African Elephant, African Buffalo, Black Rhinoceros, Lion or even Leopard, Cheetah and Wild Dog if we are very lucky. The park's predators support a healthy population of large scavenging birds and we hope to see Lappet-faced and White-headed Vultures, Tawny Eagle and the handsome Bateleur, as well as other raptors such as the unique Secretarybird and two species of snake eagle. Bird flocks are often encountered and rich with species including Brubru, Crested Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Southern Black Tit, Black-backed Puffback and Greater Scimitarbill. After a full day exploring the park we will make our way back to St Lucia.

**Day 11, 15<sup>th</sup> February: St Lucia to Hilton via Dlinza Forest and Mtunzini.** Today we will depart early for Dlinza Forest near Eshowe. The beautiful forest reserve of Dlinza supports an avifauna combining both coastal and mistbelt bird species, and here we will search for African Goshawk, the rare Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, Narina Trogon, Purple-crested Turaco, Crowned and noisy Trumpeter Hornbills, Square-tailed Drongo, Chorister Robin-Chat, Grey Cuckooshrike and the highly endangered Spotted Ground Thrush. South Africa's only forest canopy walkway is situated here and we will spend most of our morning birding from this superb viewpoint.



Journeying south and then inland we will arrive in the small town of Hilton in the late afternoon.

**Day 12, 16<sup>th</sup> February: Hilton to Underberg.** We commence our birding this morning in the Karkloof, a range of forested hills near Howick that is home to a number of uncommon and local birds restricted to Afro-montane forests. We will be searching for southern African endemics such



as Forest Buzzard, Knysna Turaco, the highly endangered and endemic Cape Parrot, the elusive Bush Blackcap – one of South Africa’s most sought-after endemics – Barratt’s Warbler, Olive Bushshrike, Sweet Waxbill and Forest Canary, as well as many more widespread yet no less spectacular birds including African Olive Pigeon, Olive Woodpecker, the uncommon Orange Ground Thrush, White-starred Robin and Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler.

Further up the Karkloof range, we visit a pristine area of upland grassland where breeding Grey Crowned and Blue Cranes and, if we are lucky, Wattled Crane can sometimes be found. Black-winged Lapwing and Cape Longclaw also occur here, but the star bird is undoubtedly the striking Buff-streaked Chat, an endemic wheatear that is breathtaking both in appearance and song. Mammal possibilities include Mountain Reedbuck and the sleek Oribi antelope.



Next we will head for the Richmond area where we will attempt to track down the stunning Blue Swallow, undoubtedly our most elegant and severely threatened swallow. The birds regularly breed here in the summer months and our chances of finding this rare species are very good. Continuing on we will pass through the dramatic Umkomaas River valley before arriving at a wonderfully lush patch of Mistbelt forest in the late afternoon. Here we will listen for the high pitched screech of the similarly rare Cape Parrot and attempt to locate flocks as they make their way into the forest to roost. We then wind our way on a scenic country road to the small town of Underberg at the base of the majestic Drakensberg Mountains.

**Day 13, 17<sup>th</sup> February: Day trip up Sani Pass, Lesotho.** Today we travel up into the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho in search of a handful of highly localised, highland endemics. In order to do this we will transfer to 4 x 4 vehicles and make our way up the rugged and spectacular Sani Pass, birding *en route*. The grassy slopes and rocky outcrops on the ascent are home to the bizarre Ground Woodpecker, Cape Rock Thrush and Yellow Bishop, whilst stands of *Protea* bushes support the impressive Gurney’s Sugarbird (belonging to a family endemic to Southern Africa) and dazzling Malachite and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. As we approach the crest of the Escarpment we will be scanning the rocky scree at the roadside for the stunning Drakensberg Rockjumper, African Rock Pipit, Sentinel Rock Thrush and Drakensberg Siskin.

Atop the plateau, the steep slopes and rugged cliffs are replaced by gently undulating terrain and endless vistas of distant, blue mountains. Black Stork, African Black Duck and Southern Bald Ibis may be found alongside the mountain streams, whilst Grey-winged Francolin, Red-capped Lark, Sickie-winged Chat, African and Mountain Pipits, Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting prefer adjacent meadows. A number of birds more typical of the Karoo, such as Grey Tit, Layard’s and Fairy Warblers, Large-billed Lark and Karoo Prinia reach the eastern limits of their range here in the Lesotho highlands. We will also keep a careful watch skywards as the endangered Cape Vulture, magnificent Bearded Vulture, Verreaux’s Eagle, Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon and White-necked Raven are regularly seen overhead. Other animals of particular interest atop the “Roof of Africa” are the



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approachable Ice Rat, endemic Drakensberg Crag Lizard and the colourful Southern Rock Agama.

**Day 14, 18<sup>th</sup> February: Underberg to Durban and onward flight.** Today we depart early for Durban to connect with our onward flights to Johannesburg, or else to Cape Town if you choose to do the Cape Extension.

## Western Cape Extension I

### 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 (6 days)



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Adam Riley

*Those who decide to do the Cape Extension will be treated to a feast of endemics and the remarkable beauty of the South Western Cape. The Mother City, Cape Town, widely considered one of the world's most beautiful cities, will be our base for the first three nights of the extension. From here we will range out to explore the varied ecosystems conveniently accessible from our comfortable accommodations. We will then make our way up the West Coast where we will explore the dry country riches of the Tanqua Karoo to round off this unbeatable South African adventure.*



**Day 1, 18<sup>th</sup> February: Arrival in Cape Town.** We arrive in Cape Town in the early afternoon and begin our exploration of the picturesque Cape Peninsula at one of the local birding hotspots. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens lies on the slopes of Table Mountain and is home to a plethora of endemics restricted to the Macchia-like *fynbos* vegetation of the southern tip of Africa: Cape

Spurfowl scurry across the lawns, the magnificent *Protea* gardens are home to spectacular Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird, both of which are South African endemics, whilst Cape Bulbul, Olive Thrush, the attractive Cape Grassbird, Karoo Prinia, Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou and Southern Double-collared Sunbird may be found in areas of denser cover. We will watch out for African Goshawk and Rufous-



breasted Sparrowhawk, which occasionally display above the indigenous forest that cloaks the slopes above the gardens. These forests are also home to African Olive Pigeon, Lemon Dove, Cape Batis and Forest Canary.

**Day 2, 19<sup>th</sup> February: Seabird outing.** The cold upwelling of the Benguela current off Cape Town supports a wealth of pelagic seabirds, with vast concentrations of albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters and prions gathering in the deeper water at the edge of the continental shelf. Birding is excellent year-round and we hope to see Shy, Black-browed and both Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, White-chinned Petrel, Sooty, Great, Manx and Cory's Shearwaters, Wilson's and European Storm Petrels, Cape Gannet and Parasitic Jaeger. If we manage to locate one of the commercial fishing trawlers the birding can be truly spectacular, with a cloud of seabirds following in the wake of the vessel to feed on the fish offal. Once the excitement has subsided, we will carefully search through the thousands of birds present for rarities such as Wandering Albatross and Spectacled Petrel. Cetaceans are almost always encountered and we have a good chance of seeing Bryde's Whale and Dusky Dolphin. It goes without saying that a day off the Cape is likely to be a highlight of any trip to South Africa!



Whilst in False Bay we will also visit the famous African Penguin colony, watch for the endemic African Oystercatcher along the adjacent rocky shoreline, and scan the offshore islets for their breeding populations of Crowned, Bank and Cape Cormorants.

**Please note: it is not unusual for the pelagic tour to be cancelled as a result of bad weather. Furthermore, the weather and ocean conditions off the Cape are extremely unpredictable, so our daily schedule will thus remain flexible to optimise our birding on both land and at sea.**

**Day 3, 20<sup>th</sup> February: The Cape Peninsula.** A diverse array of birding habitats are present around Cape Town and today we will visit a variety of sites, ranging from wetlands to *fynbos* and marine shoreline. Making our way early to the rugged Hottentots-Holland Mountains, we will search for one of South Africa's finest endemics: the handsome Cape Rockjumper. Though strikingly plumaged and conspicuous by their vocalisations, these charismatic birds possess an incredible ability to disappear amongst the boulders and we may have to be patient if we wish to enjoy long sightings of these elusive creatures. The thick mountain *fynbos* is the favoured habitat of Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Siskin and the beautiful, endemic Victorin's Warbler, while other species including Verreaux's Eagle, Grey-backed Cisticola and Ground Woodpecker are also found in the area.



Chacma Baboon is fairly common here, but we will have to scan the rocky ridges carefully for the agile Klipspringer.

After enjoying this spectacle we travel to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. This wonderful park showcases the most south-western point of the continent and is very popular amongst birders and more general tourists alike. Here we should again find the enigmatic Cape Sugarbird and the stunning Orange-breasted Sunbird, and perhaps the impressive Black Harrier, Grey-winged Francolin, Cape Grassbird and Cape Siskin. We will explore the



network of roads to less visited parts of the reserve, visiting secluded coves and searching for the elusive Cape Mountain Zebra and Bontebok antelope. In addition we could also find Eland, the largest antelope in the world. If time allows we will spend the rest of the day at the productive Strandfontein Water Works.

**Day 4, 21<sup>st</sup> February: Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park.**

Our first site of interest today is the West Coast National Park. Large numbers of waders spend the northern winter here and we will check the exposed banks of Langebaan Lagoon for Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Greater Sand Plover and Eurasian Curlew, as well as Kittlitz's and the localised Chestnut-banded Plovers. In addition to the shorebirds, these areas also support large numbers of Greater and Lesser Flamingos, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler and other waterfowl. The surrounding short, coastal vegetation (*Strandveld*) is home to the endemic Southern Black Korhaan, Grey-winged Francolin, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline Tit, Karoo Lark, Capped Wheatear, Fiscal Flycatcher and the magnificent Black Harrier, surely one of the world's most attractive raptors. In the late afternoon we will make the drive through to the farming village of Ceres, gateway to the Tanqua Karoo.



**Day 5, 22<sup>nd</sup> February: Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo.** Just a short drive from the village of Ceres is the semi-arid, central plateau of South Africa known as the Karoo; a land of endless vistas and spectacular sunsets, renowned for its endemic larks, chats and canaries. We leave the famous fruit-growing valley of Ceres before reaching our first stop at Karoopoort, a narrow canyon that forms the gateway to the Succulent Karoo. Birds inhabiting the arid, rocky slopes and *acacia*-filled watercourses of this area include White-backed Mousebird, Acacia Pied Barbet, Mountain Wheatear, Layard's and Chestnut-vented Warblers, the dainty Fairy Warbler and Pirit Batis, whilst the adjacent reedbeds are home to the endemic Namaqua Warbler. One of the area's most charismatic birds is the highly localised Cinnamon-breasted Warbler. Though fairly vocal, this species is highly elusive and seeing it in its habitat of jumbled boulders and rocky scree will require a combination of patience and perseverance.

Continuing northwards onto the open flats of the Karoo, we will watch the roadsides carefully for Karoo and Spike-heeled Larks, Tractrac, Sickle-winged and Karoo Chats, the elusive Karoo Eremomela, Rufous-eared Warbler and Yellow and White-throated Canaries. Pale Chanting Goshawk and Rock Kestrel perch conspicuously on any vantage points and, if we are lucky, we may find Booted Eagle or Lanner Falcon. We will also stop to listen for the distinctive flight calls of Namaqua Sandgrouse and the strange, croaking of the Karoo Korhaan, which may help us to locate these cryptically coloured birds. If very fortunate we may even see the nomadic Ludwig's Bustard striding through the desolate plains.



**Day 6, 23<sup>rd</sup> February: Ceres to Cape Town and depart.** This morning we depart from Ceres for Cape Town International Airport where the tour will conclude.



**GROUP SIZE:**

This main tour and extension is limited to 6 participants & 1 Rockjumper leader.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

The fee for the **Eastern South Africa** tour is US\$4,230 \* £2,920 \* €3,310 \* **ZAR31,800** per person sharing and for the **Cape Extension** is US\$1,830 \* £1,260 \* €1,430 \* **ZAR13,800** per person sharing. (**Please note:** The price for the Cape Extension does **NOT** include the domestic flight from Durban to Cape Town. As a general guideline, we suggest you budget +/- **US\$150** per person. RBT can book this flight on your behalf.)

A single supplement costs for the **Eastern South Africa** tour and the **Cape Extension** are **US\$350** and **US\$120** respectively and will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBT cannot provide you with a rooming partner although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**This includes:**

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 14 for those on the main tour, and from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 for those on the Cape Extension;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Extra activities as mentioned in the itinerary; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

**The tour fee does not include:**

- Visa fees;
- **ANY flights** (see above);
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we now quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold (South African Rands), and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 3 months before the tour.) Single supplement rates have been converted to US\$ but are also subject to exchange rate movements.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration (a minimum of 6 paying participants) a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

**Tipping:**

As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does not include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.



**Special Notes:**

- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover long distances in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg for check in luggage and 8kg for hand luggage.
- A related issue is that in all areas that contain potentially dangerous animals, you are confined to the vehicle and are, quite understandably, not allowed to exit.
- Please note that the seas during the pelagic trips off the Cape can be rough and participants who opt for this pelagic must therefore bear this in mind. If you have any medical conditions or physical limitations relating to balance and mobility please do let the RBT office know.
- Crime is problematic in certain areas of South Africa. Exercise caution as you would for any big city where crime exists. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour **does not** include ANY airfares. The tour will depart from OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg) on day 1 no later than **9am**; kindly arrive in advance of this time on this day or arrive the day before. Further meeting details in this regard will be forwarded to you in due course. The tour will conclude by **12 noon** at Durban International Airport on day 14. For those doing the Cape Extension the tour will conclude by **12 noon** on day 6 at Cape Town International Airport. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**

Johannesburg is the main port of entry for international flights in South Africa and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. We have the capacity to advise you on the best route according to your preferences, but your local travel agent will best be able to book these flights for you. We can, however, book the domestic flight from Durban to Cape Town for the Cape Extension. If you would like further assistance kindly contact the Rockjumper office, we have a full-time in-house travel consultant that will happily help you plan your route. **However, please DO NOT book your international flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

**Photos credits in order of appearance:** Violet-eared Waxbill (J. Rossouw), Leopard (L. Fouche), Southern Bald Ibis (H. Chittenden), Blue Crane (S. Davis), Pink-throated Twinspot (D. Hoddinott), White-crested Helmetshrike (L. Fouche), Woodward's Batis (H. Chittenden), Spotted Ground Thrush (M. Lilje), Bush Blackcap (A. Riley), Malachite Sunbird (H. Chittenden), Orange-breasted Sunbird & Bokmakierie (A. Riley), African Oystercatcher (M. Lilje), Victorin's Warbler (H. Chittenden), Black Harrier (M. Lilje) & Karoo Korhaan (G. Valentine).

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