



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Eastern South Africa

*3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009 (6 days)*



**Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader Glen Valentine**

### **Tour Summary:**

Our 6 day tour of eastern South Africa took us to three of the countries best birding sites. The quality and quantity of birds seen on this fast-paced tour was astounding and we managed to rack up a mammoth 311 species in 6 days!

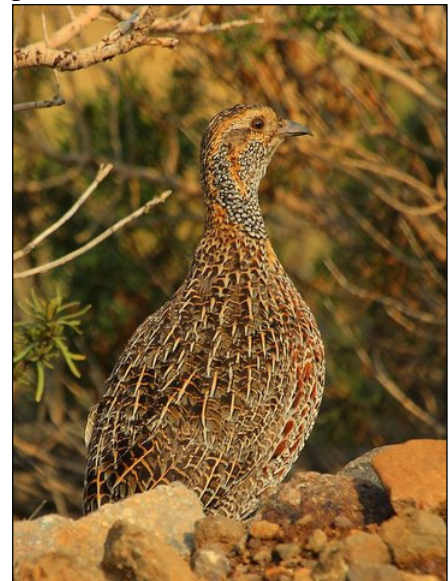
Starting in Potchefstroom we quickly made our way out of the city and into the countryside where rolling grasslands and agricultural fields dominate the landscape. It wasn't long before we picked up our first real specialty of the trip, a most unexpected Double-banded Courser right next to the road. Other interesting roadside birds that entertained us during the journey included Northern Black

Korhaan, Red-footed Falcon, African Black Duck, Swainson's Spurfowl, a juvenile Southern Bald Ibis feeding on a sports field and a host of showy widowbirds and bishops displaying over the lush green pastures in full breeding regalia. We finally arrived at our accommodation in the town of Underberg in the Natal Midlands, our base from where we would embark on the famous Sani Pass trip over the Drakensberg mountain range and into neighbouring Lesotho.



Up early the next morning and winding our way up the pass we made several worthwhile stops for noteworthy species such as stunning Greater Double-collared and Malachite Sunbirds, the striking Buff-streaked Chat, Streaky-headed Seed-eater, Drakensberg Prinia, melodious Cape Grassbird, gorgeous Bokmakierie, Red-throated Wryneck, the impressive Gurney's Sugarbird and Dark-capped Yellow Warbler. We were blown away when a Fantailed Grassbird popped up from a patch of rank vegetation and showed exceptionally well for an extended period – what a great bird! Also on the target list for the trip up were two tough endemics, Barratt's Warbler and Bush Blackcap,

both of which showed exceptionally well. As we neared the head of the pass we picked up a soaring Verreaux's Eagle and the first of many Drakensberg Siskin. The first few hundred meters in Lesotho saw us adding specialties like the colourful Sentinel Rock Thrush, Cape Bunting, Mountain Pipit, delicate Layard's and Fairy Warblers and robust Large-billed Lark. Continuing along the track towards Black Mountain we found our first of many beautiful and charismatic Drakensberg Rockjumpers. Soon afterwards we added Grey Tit, a very responsive Grey-winged Francolin and a small group of Karoo Prinia! With great views of all the areas target species under the belt we were afforded the luxury of heading back down the pass and spending the afternoon birding the streams, pans and grassland around Underberg. On our way down we bumped into a lovely male Cape Rock Thrush. The rest of the afternoon was spent driving around the network of dirt roads that meander through the picturesque hills and valleys of the Natal Midlands. Interesting species that we managed to encounter on this foray included the scarce Half-collared Kingfisher, South African Shelduck, White-backed Duck, Pale-crowned Cisticola and all three species of Southern African crane – the elegant Blue, superb Grey Crowned and rare Wattled – absolutely amazing! A great day and feeling extremely satisfied with our sightings thus far we enjoyed a scrumptious dinner and rested up for the long day to follow.



An early departure meant that we could give Marutswa, a small patch of mist-belt forest a go before hitting the road north. We arrived in early morning mist that shrouded the area but were soon reeling in the specials: Forest Canary, Olive Bushshrike, Yellow-throated Wood Warbler, Bar-throated Apalis, Collared and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds and Cape Batis were seen in mixed flocks and we located a stunning Orange Ground Thrush that showed well. Knysna Turaco put in an appearance on several occasions as did the dainty Dusky Flycatcher. We left Marutswa and headed north stopping at a reliable site for the critically endangered Blue Swallow, which put on an amazing performance for us as they flitted over the grassy hills, the males displaying as they did so with their extravagantly long tail streamers whispering in the breeze. We even had a pair perched on a fence right in front of us and so afforded magnificent scope views where the iridescent blue could be seen clearly. A splendid creature, which we were thrilled to see so well! After a lengthy drive we

arrived at the legendary Mkuze Game Reserve, undoubtedly one of South Africa's best reserves where we would spend the next two nights exploring the woodland, sand forest and wetlands within the park.



Mkuze is literally packed with birds and animals, several of which are very special indeed. The unique sand forest, harbouring many exciting and localized species, was our first target habitat. The dawn chorus was impressive and we managed to track down some great birds like Neergard's Sunbird, Eastern Nicator, Rudd's Apalis, Bearded Scrub Robin, stunning Pink-throated Twinspot and the shy and secretive Four-colored Bushshrike after much stalking and patience. Birding the broadleaf woodland and *acacia* habitats saw us adding a number of "bushveld" species to the list such as Greater Honeyguide, several species of woodpeckers and barbets,

Retz's and White Helmetsrikes, Southern Black Tit, Kurrichane Buttonquail in the road, beautiful Green-winged Pytilia and a most unexpected and wonderful sighting of the rare Lemon-breasted Canary. One of the greatest highlights of the trip came as we were driving along a fairly quiet stretch of road during the heat of the day. Upon rounding a corner we suddenly came across a magnificent adult Crowned Eagle right beside the road. The bird was so close that it flushed soon after we stopped but when we rounded the next corner there it was, about a hundred meters away sitting right in the open in a bare Fever Tree. What an incredible sighting of Africa's second largest raptor! The various small pans throughout the park held species such as Pink-backed and Great White Pelicans, Collared Pratincole and various species of breeding weavers. Mammals were also a priority on the trip and we were pleased to encounter such iconic African mammals as Nyala, Kudu, Giraffe, Burchell's Zebra, Hippopotamus, Warthog and Blue Wildebeest during our forays in Mkuze.



Alas, it was time to bid farewell to the riches of Mkuze and make our way inland towards the rolling grassland around the small town of Wakkerstroom, our final destination. On our way we found a few good species that broke the journey: Barrow's Korhaan and Denham's Bustard as well as African Marsh Harrier and a very cooperative African Rail at the wetland near town. The tiny area supports an exceptional number of endemic species and is without a doubt one of the world's endemic hotspots! We were itching to get out into the grasslands and begin searching for the many specialties and with a full morning at our disposal we were sure to pick up some great birds.

Soon after leaving our comfortable guest house we were enjoying scope views of Eastern Long-billed Lark and an adult Southern Bald Ibis on a rocky outcrop. A pair of Yellow-breasted Pipit was flushed while chasing down a covey of Red-winged Francolin. A pair of Common Quail also alighted from under our feet and we had good close views of Wing-snapping Cisticola on the ground, whilst Banded Martin quartered low over the grassland. A family group of Blue Korhaan put the car to a sudden, grinding halt - what a spectacular bird! Soon afterwards we found Mountain Wheatear, Buff-streaked Chat and the impressive Secretarybird as well as several pairs of Botha's Lark – one of South Africa's toughest endemics! After a terrific birding introduction to Wakkerstroom with a host of endemics already under the belt we headed back for a



After a terrific birding introduction to Wakkerstroom with a host of endemics already under the belt we headed back for a

hearty breakfast. We were soon out along the gravel roads once again, this time the main target was the unique Rudd's Lark, a scarce, localized endemic that shares a genus with an equally localized and bizarre species of lark endemic to Southern Ethiopia, called Sidamo Lark. We were treated to wonderful views of the lark as well as exquisite African Quail-Finch on the ground! Whilst walking a patch of good-looking grassland near a drainage line we were rewarded with views of Eastern Clapper and Pink-billed larks, Cloud Cisticola and Kurrichane Buttonquail. With most of the regions specialties seen well we returned to our guest house to pack for the journey back to Johannesburg and flights home, stopping on the way for South Africa's National bird, the elegant Blue Crane – A fitting way to end a wonderful trip around Eastern South Africa!

### **BIRD LIST (311 species)**

*Nomenclature and taxonomy follows IOC Birds of the World v 2.2.*

**E** = Endemic, **NE** = Near-endemic, **BE** = Breeding-endemic (These refer to birds in a South African context)

#### **Ostriches Struthionidae**

**(Common) Ostrich** *Struthio camelus*  
Several birds were seen on the drive from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

#### **Guineafowl Numididae**

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris*  
Recorded on most days during the tour.

**Crested Guineafowl** *Guttera pucherani*  
The “punk-rocker” of the birding kingdom! We saw these funky guineafowl on several occasions in Mkuze GR.

#### **Pheasants, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae**

**Grey-winged Francolin (E)** *Scleroptila afra*  
We had mind-blowing views of this intricately-patterned endemic in Lesotho.

**Red-winged Francolin** *Scleroptila levaillantii*  
A pair of these scarce grassland francolins was seen briefly at Wakkerstroom.

**Crested Francolin** *Dendroperdix sephaena*  
A common species in the lowlands of east Africa. We saw several birds during our stay in Mkuze GR.

**Swainson's Spurfowl (Francolin)** *Pternistis swainsonii*  
A single bird was encountered during the drive from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

*Note: Clements places all the above species in the Francolinus genus*

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*  
A pair was flushed in the grassland around Wakkerstroom.

#### **Ducks & Geese Anatidae**

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*  
This attractive duck was seen on a small pan near Underberg.

**White-backed Duck** *Thalassornis leuconotus*  
A single bird was seen on a small pan near Underberg.

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis*  
These large geese were seen on several occasions throughout the tour.

**Knob-billed (Comb) Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

This species was seen in flight at Mkuze GR.

Note: Clements lumps this species with Comb Duck *S. sylvicola* of South America calling it Comb Duck

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout the tour.

**South African Shelduck (NE)** *Tadorna cana*

This South African near-endemic was seen in fallow fields near Underberg and again on a pan near Wakkerstroom.

**African Black Duck** *Anas sparsa*

A pair of these rather scarce ducks was found on a river to the east of Potchefstroom.

**Yellow-billed Duck** *Anas undulata*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout the tour.

**Cape Shoveler** *Anas smithii*

Several birds were seen on a pan near Underberg with a further sighting in Wakkerstroom.

**Southern Pochard** *Netta erythrophthalma*

Small numbers were seen at scattered wetlands throughout the tour.

### Grebes Podicipedidae

**Little Grebe (Dabchick)** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Small numbers of this rather common bird were seen at several wetlands on tour.

### Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*

A small flock was seen on a pan en route from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

### Storks Ciconidae

**African Openbill** *Anastomus lamelligerus*

A single bird was seen in flight on the way to Mkuze GR.

### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

**(African) Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Fairly common at wetlands throughout the tour.

**Southern Bald Ibis (E)** *Geronticus calvus*

Our first sighting was of a juvenile bird on a sports field in the town of Bethlehem. We later had several stunning adults in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*

This noisy bird was recorded on every day of the tour.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

A single bird was seen at a small pan in Mkuze GR.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*

We first encountered this species en route from Potchefstroom to Underberg and then had another sighting in Mkuze GR.

### Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

A single male flew up right in front of us at the wetland at Wakkerstroom and then proceeded to call from the nearby reedbed.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Several were seen in Wakkerstroom.

**(Western) Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Commonly seen throughout the tour on most days.

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*

This grassland species was commonly recorded throughout the tour with highest numbers in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

A few birds were seen flying over the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

**(Western) Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

We recorded this species at several wetlands throughout the tour.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

This widespread species was seen on several occasions.

### Hamerkop Scopidae

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*

This bizarre looking species was seen in Mkuze GR.

### Pelicans Pelecanidae

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens*

Several birds were seen at their nesting colony in Mkuze GR.

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

A small flock was seen at a pan in Mkuze GR.

### Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae

**Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus*

Small numbers were seen at scattered wetlands throughout the tour.

**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

This large, widespread cormorant was first seen at a large river to the east of Potchefstroom with further sightings thereafter.

*Note: Clements treats this bird as a race of the Great Cormorant P. carbo*

*Note: Clements places this bird within the Phalacrocorax genus as P. capensis*

### Anhingas Anhingidae

**(African) Darter** *Anhinga rufa*

Small numbers were seen at wetlands throughout the tour.

### Secretarybird Sagittariidae

**Secretarybird** *Sagittarius serpentarius*

This unique raptor, in its own monotypic family, was scoped in the distance at Wakkerstroom.

### Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

**Black-winged (-shouldered) Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*

A common species recorded on most days of the tour.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Recorded in good numbers throughout the tour.

*Note: The subspecies we recorded, M. m. parasitus, is often split as Yellow-billed Kite.*

**Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)** *Gypaetus barbatus*

We saw at least five individuals during our day visit up Sani Pass.

**White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus*

This, the regions most widespread and numerous vulture, was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Cape Vulture (Griffon) (NE)** *Gyps coprotheres*

Several birds were seen soaring over us during our day visit up Sani Pass.

**White-headed Vulture** *Aegyptius occipitalis*

A pair of these scarce vultures was seen soaring overhead in Mkuze GR.

**Black-chested (-breasted) Snake Eagle** *Circaetus pectoralis*

We were fortunate to come across a magnificent adult in Mkuze GR.

**Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus*

This species was seen in flight in Mkuze GR.

**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus*

Another very unique and handsome raptor that was seen in flight in Mkuze GR.

**African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus*

Several of these birds were seen quartering the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus*

A widespread species that was seen on a few occasions during the trip.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

Two separate birds were seen during our stay in Mkuze GR.

**Common (Eurasian) Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

A common summer migrant that was seen on most days of the tour.

**Jackal Buzzard (NE)** *Buteo rufofuscus*

This boldly-patterned near-endemic was first seen during the Sani Pass trip and then later seen around Wakkerstroom.

**Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii*

This majestic raptor was seen in flight over the Drakensberg escarpment on the drive up Sani Pass.

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi*

A common migrant recorded on many occasions in Mkuze GR.

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis*

We enjoyed various sightings of this regal bird with the majority of sightings being along the roads on telephone poles.

**Crowned (Hawk-) Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

We were treated to the most outrageous views of this monstrous eagle in Mkuze GR – absolutely awesome!

### Caracaras, Falcons Falconidae

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

Small flocks were seen during the drive from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

**Rock (Eurasian) Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

This species was commonly seen throughout eastern South Africa.

**Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*

Several males and females were seen to the east of Potchefstroom on our first day of the tour.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*

We had a singleton in flight near Wakkerstroom.

### Bustards Otididae

**Denham's (Stanley) Bustard** *Neotis denhami*

This huge bustard was seen in flight near Underberg and in a field near Wakkerstroom.

**Barrow's Korhaan (White-bellied) (NE)** *Eupodotis barrowi*

Both male and female of this very attractive bustard were seen en route from Mkuze to Wakkerstroom.

**Blue Korhaan (E)**

*Eupodotis caerulescens*

This, one of South Africa's most sought after endemics was seen brilliantly in the Wakkerstroom area where several birds were seen on a few occasions.

**Northern Black Korhaan (White-quilled)**

*Afrotis afraoides*

This striking species was seen on many occasions on the drive from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

**Black-bellied Bustard**

*Lissotis (Eupodotis) melanogaster*

We had excellent views of two individuals in Mkuze GR.

**Flufftails Sarothruridae**

**Buff-spotted Flufftail**

*Sarothrura elegans*

This elusive and difficult-to-see species was unfortunately only heard in Himeville and in Marutswa Forest.

*Note: Clements places flufftails in the same family as rails, gallinules & coots.*

**Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**

**African Rail**

*Rallus caerulescens*

Brilliant views were obtained of a single bird preening in the open at the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

**African Swamphen**

*Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Several of these colourful birds were seen at the wetland at Wakkerstroom.

*Note: Clements lumps this species under Purple Swamphen P. porphyrio.*

**Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

A common bird, encountered at several wetland sites throughout the tour.

**Red-knobbed Coot**

*Fulica cristata*

As with the above species, good numbers were seen throughout the tour.

**Cranes Gruidae**

**(Grey) Crowned Crane**

*Balearica regulorum*

This exceptionally beautiful crane was seen in the Underberg and Wakkerstroom districts.

**Blue Crane (E)**

*Anthropoides paradisea*

One of the world's most beautiful and graceful birds! We had good views near Underberg and at Wakkerstroom.

**Wattled Crane**

*Grus carunculata*

After a lengthy search three of these endangered cranes were encountered in the Underberg area.

**Buttonquail Turnicidae**

**Kurrichane (Small) Buttonquail**

*Turnix sylvaticus*

We were very lucky to come across a male walking in the road in Mkuze GR.

**Thick-knees Burhinidae**

**Water Thick-knee**

*Burhinus vermiculatus*

Good, close views were had of this species in Mkuze GR.

**Spotted Thick-knee**

*Burhinus capensis*

A pair of these attractive birds was encountered in dry habitat in Mkuze GR.

**Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**

**Black-winged Stilt**

*Himantopus himantopus*

First recorded at Mkuze with a further sighting near Wakkerstroom.

**Pied Avocet**

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

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A small flock of these delicate waders were seen near Wakkerstroom.

### Plovers Charadriidae

**Blacksmith Lapwing (Plover)** *Vanellus armatus*

This common species was recorded on most days of the tour.

**Crowned Lapwing** *Vanellus coronatus*

Small numbers recorded on most days of the tour.

**(African) Wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus senegallus*

This striking lapwing was encountered on a few occasions.

### Jacanas Jacanidae

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus*

A few birds were seen at a pan in Mkuze GR.

### Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

A few birds were seen in Mkuze GR and near Wakkerstroom.

### Courser & Pratincoles Glareolidae

**Double-banded Courser** *Rhinoptilus africanus*

A very unexpected find! We picked one up right at the edge of its range to the east of Potchefstroom.

**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*

We had a small flock at a pan in Mkuze GR..

### Gulls & Terns Laridae

**Grey-hooded (headed) Gull** *Larus cirrocephalus*

A few birds were seen on the drive back to Johannesburg.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

Several birds were seen at a pan in Mkuze GR.

### Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

**Common (Rock) Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Recorded at various towns throughout the country.

**Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea*

This species was commonly seen in the town of Wakkerstroom.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Another widespread and common bird in South Africa, this large dove was seen at various localities.

**Ring-necked Dove** *Streptopelia capicola*

This widespread and common species was observed on most days of the tour.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*

The region's most commonly encountered *Streptopelia* dove, seen on many days of the tour.

**Emerald-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur chalcospilos*

A woodland species, it was commonly encountered in Mkuze GR.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*

A few birds were seen east of Potchefstroom.

**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calva*

A very colourful pigeon that was seen once in flight in Mkuze GR.

**Turacos Musophagidae**

- Knysna Turaco (E)** *Tauraco corythaix*  
 Brilliant views were obtained of this gorgeous endemic at Marutswa Forest.
- Purple-crested Turaco** *Tauraco porphyreolophus*  
 Another stunning and noisy species that was seen on several occasions in Mkuze GR.

**Cuckoos Cuculidae**

- White-browed Coucal** *Centropus supersiliosus*  
 A few individuals were seen in Mkuze GR.  
*Note: Clements lumps this species with Neumann's and White-browed Coucal as C. superciliosus*
- Dideric Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius*  
 This extremely vocal migrant was seen well in Mkuze GR.
- Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas*  
 Unfortunately this species was only heard in the distance on a few occasions in Mkuze GR.
- African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus*  
 This forest-dwelling cuckoo was heard on one occasion in Mkuze GR.
- Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus*  
 This migrant was commonly heard and seen on two occasions.
- Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius*  
 A commonly heard species that was also fairly regularly seen.

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae**

- Fiery-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus pectoralis*  
 This species was heard in Mkuze GR.

**Swifts Apodidae**

- African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*  
 This delicate, long-tailed swift was recorded in small numbers throughout the tour.
- Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*  
 A large swift that was seen on the first day of the trip.
- Common Swift** *Apus apus*  
 Several birds were seen during the drive from Potchefstroom to Underberg.
- African Black Swift** *Apus barbatus*  
 A few birds were seen east of Potchefstroom and in the Drakensberg area.  
*Note: Clements just calls this African Swift*
- Little Swift** *Apus affinis*  
 The most common swift of the region, it was seen regularly throughout the tour.
- Horus Swift** *Apus horus*  
 A small flock of these uncommon swifts was seen well on the way up Sani Pass.
- White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer*  
 This common migrant was seen regularly in small numbers throughout the tour.

**Mousebirds Coliidae**

- Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus*  
 This common mousebird was recorded at several localities during the trip.
- Red-faced Mousebird** *Urocolius indicus*  
 We had good sightings of this classic bushveld species in Mkuze GR.

**Trogons Trogonidae**

**Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina*  
 We heard this species in Marutswa Forest and in Mkuze GR.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

**Brown-hooded Kingfisher** *Halcyon albiventris*  
 A woodland kingfisher that was seen on a single occasion in Mkuze GR.

**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti*  
 This migratory kingfisher was commonly seen in Mkuze GR.

**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta*  
 This exceptionally beautiful species was seen very well in Mkuze GR.

**Half-collared Kingfisher** *Alcedo semitorquatta*  
 A really unexpected find! We had magical views of a single bird near Underberg.

**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima*  
 This large kingfisher was seen on many occasions in suitable habitat.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*  
 This, the world's most widespread kingfisher was found at various water bodies during the tour.

**Bee-eaters Meropidae**

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus*  
 A few birds were seen in Mkuze GR.

**White-fronted Bee-eater** *Merops bullockoides*  
 A single flock was seen flying over the road near Mkuze GR.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*  
 This beautiful species, a summer visitor to our region, was found on several days of the tour.

**Hoopoes Upupidae**

**African (Eurasian) Hoopoe** *Upupa africana*  
 Several birds were seen during the course of the tour with peak numbers in Mkuze GR.  
*Note: Clements lumps this species with Eurasian Hoopoe as Upupa epops*

**Wood Hoopoes Phoeniculidae**

**Green Wood Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus*  
 This very vocal bird was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*  
 A fairly regularly encountered species in Mkuze GR.

**Hornbills Bucerotidae**

**Crowned Hornbill** *Tockus alboterminatus*  
 This species was seen on one occasion in Mkuze GR.

**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill (NE)** *Tockus leucomelas*  
 This common species was seen in dry woodland in Mkuze GR.

**Trumpeter Hornbill** *Bycanistes bucinator*  
 A noisy and attractive hornbill that was seen on several occasions in Mkuze GR.  
*Note: Clements places this species under the genus Ceratogymna*

**Ground Hornbills Bucorvidae**

**Southern Ground Hornbill** *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

We had two birds soon after entering the Kruger NP and heard more near Bulwer in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

### Barbets Capitonidae

**Red-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus pusillus*

This extremely vocal species was seen well in Mkuze GR.

**(Acacia) Pied Barbet (NE)** *Tricholaema leucomelas*

Unfortunately this species was only heard in the distance in Mkuze GR.

*Note: Clements just calls this bird Pied Barbet*

**Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus*

A common and vocal barbet that was seen on several occasions.

**Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii*

This brightly patterned barbet was seen in Potchefstroom and heard on a few occasions in Mkuze GR.

### Honeyguides Indicatoridae

**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator minor*

Great views of this species were obtained in Mkuze GR.

### Woodpeckers Picidae

**Red-throated (Rufous-necked) Wryneck** *Jynx ruficollis*

A fairly scarce and attractive species that was seen on the way up Sani Pass.

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni*

The piercing calls of this woodpecker was heard regularly throughout Mkuze GR. We did manage good views on several occasions.

**Ground Woodpecker (E)** *Geocolaptes olivaceus*

Another one of South Africa's sought-after endemics. We had many views of this bold woodpecker during our day trip up Sani Pass.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicus fuscescens*

A commonly seen woodpecker in the bushveld areas of the country. We enjoyed several views in Mkuze GR.

**Bearded Woodpecker** *Dendropicus namaquus*

This is one of Africa's largest woodpeckers. Several pairs were seen in Mkuze GR.

### Wattle-eyes and Batises Platysteiridae

**Cape Batis (E)** *Batis capensis*

A really pretty little bird that was seen in Marutswa Forest.

**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor*

A common savannah species seen in Mkuze GR.

### Helmetshrikes Prionopidae

**White (-crested) Helmetshrike** *Prionops plumatus*

Several flocks were seen in Mkuze GR.

**Retz's Helmetshrike** *Prionops retzii*

A single flock of six was seen in Mkuze GR.

### Bushshrikes Malaconotidae

**Grey-headed Bushshrike** *Malaconotus blanchoti*

This large, stunning shrike was heard on several occasions and then finally seen in Mkuze GR.

**Olive Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus olivaceus*

This forest species was seen well in Marutswa Forest.

**Orange (Sulphur)-breasted Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus (Telophorus) sulfureopectus*

Another gorgeous species that was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Four-colored Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus quadricolor (Telophorus viridis)*

An arch skulker that was heard repeatedly but proved tough, as usual, to see. We did, however, after much perseverance, manage a good view of this gaudy bushshrike.

**Bokmakierie (NE)** *Telophorus zeylonus*

This very beautiful shrike was seen on a number of occasions on our Sani Pass day trip.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra australis*

A commonly seen bushveld bird. We had good views in Mkuze GR.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus*

A vocal and attractive species that was seen on many occasions in Mkuze GR.

**Black-backed Puffback** *Dryoscopus cubla*

Commonly recorded during the tour.

**Southern Boubou (E)** *Laniarius ferrugineus*

This very vocal species was first seen at most forested areas during the trip.

**Brubru** *Nilaus afer*

This rather attractive shrike was seen on a few occasions in Mkuze GR.

### Shrikes Laniidae

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

This Palaearctic migrant was encountered once at Wakkerstroom.

**Common Fiscal** *Lanius collaris*

This is a common bird throughout South Africa and was seen on almost every day of the tour.

### Orioles Oriolidae

**(African) Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus larvatus*

This black and gold beauty was heard and seen on a few occasions.

### Drongos Dicruridae

**Square-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus ludwigii*

A drongo that inhabits forested areas and was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*

One of the most commonly seen birds in the savannah areas. Seen regularly in Mkuze GR.

### Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae

**African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis*

A very showy species that was seen on several occasions in wooded habitats.

### Crows Corvidae

**Cape Crow** *Corvus capensis*

We had sightings in grassland habitat throughout the tour.

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*

This species was commonly seen throughout the trip.

**White-necked Raven** *Corvus albicollis*

A large, short-tailed corvid that was seen at higher altitudes in the Drakensberg area.

### Rockjumpers Chaetopidae

**Drakensberg Rockjumper (E)**

*Chaetops aurantius*

We enjoyed several sightings of this iconic endemic on our day up Sani Pass.

**Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae**

**Fairy Warbler (Flycatcher)**

*Stenostira scita*

This unique and lively endemic passerine was seen on many occasions during our day trip up Sani Pass.

**Tits Paridae**

**Southern Black Tit (NE)**

*Parus niger*

We saw this species throughout our stay in Mkuze GR.

**Grey Tit (E)**

*Parus afer*

We first heard and then tracked this species down in Lesotho.

*Note: Clements places these two birds in the genus Melaniparus.*

**Nicators Nicatoridae**

**Eastern Nicator**

*Nicator gularis*

A real specialty of the sand forest in Mkuze. We heard this species on many occasions and were able to obtain several good views as well.

**Larks Alaudidae**

**Rufous-naped Lark**

*Mirafra africana*

Small numbers were seen in the grasslands to the east of Potchefstroom.

**Flappet Lark**

*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*

We first heard the strange display call of this species and then found the calling bird in woodland in Mkuze GR.

**Eastern Clapper Lark**

*Mirafra fasciolata*

This species was heard and seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Sabota Lark**

*Mirafra sabota*

We had a few sightings in Mkuze GR.

*Note: Clements places this in the genus Calendulauda.*

**Rudd's Lark (E)**

*Heteromirafra ruddi*

One of South Africa's most localized and prized endemics! We found this species with little difficulty and obtained brilliant, close views.

**Eastern Long-billed Lark**

*Certhilauda semitorquata*

This large, endemic lark was seen well near Wakkerstroom.

**Spike-heeled Lark**

*Chersomanes albofasciata*

Several of these larks were seen in short, degraded grassland patches in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Red-capped Lark**

*Calandrella cinerea*

Good numbers were seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Pink-billed Lark (NE)**

*Spizocorys conirostris*

A pair was seen in flight in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Botha's Lark (E)**

*Spizocorys fringillaris*

An extremely localised endemic and one of the toughest of endemics to find. We had very good, repeat views of this sought-after species.

**Large-billed Lark (E)**

*Galerida magnirostris*

Several of these endemic larks were seen well in Lesotho during our day excursion up Sani Pass.

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae****Dark-capped (Common) Bulbul***Pycnonotus tricolor*

Recorded commonly throughout the trip.

*Note: Clements lumps this bird with Common, Somali and Dodson's Bulbul P. barbatus***Sombre Greenbul***Andropadus importunus*

A species that is far more often heard than seen, we did, however, have good views of this species in most forested areas.

**Yellow-bellied Greenbul***Chlorocichla flaviventris*

Small numbers were seen in Mkuze GR.

**Terrestrial Brownbul***Phyllastrephus terrestris*

A secretive species of dense tangles in forested areas. We had good views of several individuals in Marutswa Forest.

**Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae****Black Saw-wing***Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

We had sightings in the Natal midlands and Mkuze GR.

**Brown-throated (Plain) Martin***Riparia paludicola*

We had sightings at scattered areas throughout the trip.

**Banded Martin***Riparia cincta*

Small numbers recorded in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

A very common bird during the summer months that was seen daily.

**White-throated Swallow***Hirundo albigularis*

An attractive swallow, we had small numbers daily.

**Blue Swallow***Hirundo oatrocaerulea*

This critically endangered and extremely attractive species was seen at close quarters and for an extended period at a site in the Natal Midlands.

**Rock Martin***Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

This fast-flying species was seen in mountainous and rocky areas throughout the tour.

**Greater Striped Swallow***Cecropis cucullata*

An intra-African migrant, seen in the grassland areas during the tour.

**Lesser Striped Swallow***Cecropis abyssinica*

Recorded at lower elevations in eastern South Africa, with highest numbers in Mkuze GR.

**Red-breasted (Rufous-chested) Swallow***Cecropis semirufa*

A very attractive swallow that was seen in Mkuze GR.

**South African Cliff Swallow***Petrochelidon spilodera*

Good numbers were seen on several occasions in suitable habitat throughout the tour.

**Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae****Yellow-throated Wood (land) Warbler***Phylloscopus gracilirostris*

A small, lively and attractive species that was seen well in Marutswa Forest.

**Willow Warbler***Phylloscopus trochilus*

This palearctic migrant was seen on a single occasion in Mkuze GR.

**Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae****Lesser Swamp Warbler***Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

This species was heard calling in reedbeds in Mkuze GR and then finally seen at Wakkerstroom.

**African Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus baeticatus*

We heard and saw this species at Wakkerstroom.

**Dark-capped (African) Yellow Warbler** *Chloropeta natalensis*

We had two wonderful sightings on our way up Sani Pass.

### Grassbirds & Allies Megaluridae

**Fan-tailed Grassbird** *Schoenicola brevirostris*

An elusive and very difficult species to see! We were rewarded with unbeatable views on our way up Sani Pass.

**Little Rush (African Bush-) Warbler** *Bradypterus baboecala*

This skulking inhabitant of dense reedbeds was seen well in Wakkerstroom.

**Barratt's (African Scrub-) Warbler (NE)** *Bradypterus barratti*

We had good views of this exceptionally secretive species in riverine scrub on our day visit up Sani Pass.

### Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

**Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana*

This noisy and conspicuous species was found abundantly in Mkuze GR.

**Wailing Cisticola** *Cisticola lais*

A denizen of rocky hillsides, we found birds in the on our Sani Pass day trip and near Wakkerstroom.

**Levaillant's (Tinkling) Cisticola** *Cisticola tinniens*

A common cisticola recorded at many wetland locations throughout our tour.

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*

A commonly seen species throughout grassland habitats.

**Cloud Cisticola** *Cisticola textrix*

This species was commonly seen and heard east of Potchefstroom and in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Pale-crowned Cisticola** *Cisticola cinnamomeus*

One of the more attractive species that was seen near Wakkerstroom.

**Wing-snapping Cisticola** *Cisticola ayresii*

Another commonly-heard cisticola that was seen regularly in the Wakkerstroom area.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava*

This species was seen en route from Potchefstroom to Underberg and in Mkuze GR.

**Karoo Prinia (NE)** *Prinia maculosa*

A small group was finally encountered in Lesotho.

**Drakensberg Prinia (E)** *Prinia hypoxantha*

We had several noisy groups on our way up Sani Pass.

**Bar-throated Apalis** *Apalis thoracica*

We enjoyed good sightings of this species in Marutswa Forest.

**Rudd's Apalis (NE)** *Apalis ruddi*

This range-restricted near-endemic was found in Mkuze GR where we enjoyed brilliant views of a pair.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida*

We enjoyed several sightings of this species in Mkuze GR.

**Green-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brachyura*

A dweller of thick undergrowth, we had good views in Mkuze GR.

### Family Uncertain

**Cape Grassbird (E)** *Sphenoeacus afer*

A very attractive songster that was seen during our trip up Sani Pass.

**Long-billed (Cape) Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens*

We found this almost ‘tail-less’ bird in Mkuze GR.

### Babblers & Parrotbills Timaliidae

#### **Bush Blackcap (E)**

*Lioptilus nigricapillus*

One of South Africa’s most sought-after and attractive endemics! We had brilliant views on the way up Sani Pass and in Marutswa Forest.

### Sylviid Babblers Sylviidae

#### **Layard’s Warbler (NE)**

*Sylvia layardi*

We had a few pairs during our time in Lesotho.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae

#### **Cape White-eye (NE)**

*Zosterops pallidus*

We had many encounters with this common species during the tour.

*Note: Some authors split Cape White-eye into Cape (Z. virens) and Orange River White-eye (Z. pallidus). Clements does not follow this view.*

#### **African Yellow White-eye**

*Zosterops senegalensis*

A few birds were found in Mkuze GR.

### Sugarbirds Promeropidae

#### **Gurney’s Sugarbird (NE)**

*Promerops gurneyi*

A cracking near-endemic and one of the star birds of the Sani Pass excursion! We had encounters with several birds during our trip up the pass.

### Starlings Sturnidae

#### **Common Myna**

*Acridotheres tristis*

A species that was introduced to Durban in 1900, it continues to be common in and around urban centres of eastern South Africa.

#### **Common (European) Starling**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

Another introduced species, which was commonly seen in the town of Underberg.

#### **Black-bellied (Glossy-) Starling**

*Lamprotornis corruscus*

Small numbers were seen during our stay in Mkuze GR.

#### **Wattled Starling**

*Creatophora cinerea*

A single flock of juvenile birds was seen in Mkuze GR.

#### **Cape (Glossy-) Starling**

*Lamprotornis nitens*

This common and widespread starling was seen throughout the tour.

#### **(African) Pied Starling (E)**

*Spreo bicolor*

Good numbers of this endemic were seen in grasslands throughout Eastern South Africa.

#### **Violet-backed Starling**

*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

This absolutely gorgeous summer visitor was seen in Mkuze GR.

#### **Red-winged Starling**

*Onychognathus morio*

A species of mountainous areas that was seen on several occasions during the trip.

### Oxpeckers Buphagidae

#### **Red-billed Oxpecker**

*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

Small flocks were seen in Mkuze GR. We enjoyed exceptionally close views on one occasion when a flock was seen feeding on the backs of Giraffe.

### Thrushes & Allies Turdidae

**Orange Ground Thrush** *Zoothera gurneyi*

An arch skulker that was seen really well in Marutswa Forest.

**Olive Thrush** *Turdus olivaceus*

A species that was commonly seen in all forested habitats.

**(Karoo Thrush) (NE)** *Turdus smithii*

Sightings were had in gardens in Potchefstroom at the start of the tour.

*Note: Clements lumps this, Olive, Somali and Taita Thrushes as Olive Thrush (T. olivaceus).*

### Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

**Cape Robin-Chat** *Cossypha caffra*

This common garden bird was seen on numerous occasions throughout the tour.

**Red-capped Robin-Chat** *Cossypha natalensis*

After hearing this species in Marutswa Forest we finally saw it in Mkuze GR.

**Bearded Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata*

A very attractive species that was seen in Mkuze GR.

**White-browed (Red-backed) Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys*

A common bushveld species that was commonly seen in Mkuze GR.

**(African) Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*

A common grassland bird in South Africa, we had many sightings during the tour in Wakkerstroom and Natal Midlands.

**Buff-streaked (Bush) Chat (E)** *Saxicola bifasciata*

We enjoyed good views on the way up Sani Pass and near Wakkerstroom.

**Mountain Wheatear** *Oenanthe monticola*

A denizen of rocky areas, we had sightings near Wakkerstroom.

**Sickle-winged Chat (NE)** *Cercomela sinuata*

This near-endemic was common in Lesotho.

**(Southern) Ant-eating (er) Chat (NE)** *Myrmecocichla formicivora*

We had good numbers in the Wakkerstroom district with earlier sightings in the Natal Midlands.

**Cape Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola rupestris*

A single male was seen during our trip up Sani Pass.

**Sentinel Rock Thrush (NE)** *Monticola explorator*

This good-looking bird was seen well during our day trip up Sani Pass.

**Southern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina*

Another common species that was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Pale Flycatcher** *Bradornis pallidus*

Small numbers were encountered in Mkuze GR.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

This Palaearctic migrant was seen once in Mkuze GR.

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens*

We found this species in Mkuze GR.

**African Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta*

A flycatcher of forest and woodland, we had sightings at Marutswa Forest and in Mkuze GR.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher** *Myioparus plumbeus*

Several birds were encountered in Mkuze GR.

### Sunbirds Nectariniidae

- Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris*  
We had sightings of this tiny jewel of a bird at Marutswa Forest and in Mkuze GR.
- Amethyst Sunbird** *Chalcomitra amethystina*  
A few birds were encountered in the Natal Midlands.
- Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis*  
A stunning bird that was seen in Mkuze GR.
- Malachite Sunbird** *Nectarinia famosa*  
Several iridescent males were encountered during our trip up Sani Pass. An exquisite bird!
- Southern Double-collared Sunbird (NE)** *Cinnyris chalybeus*  
This gorgeous endemic was seen in Marutswa Forest.
- Neergard's Sunbird** *Cinnyris neergaardi*  
This scarce and localized sunbird was seen well in Mkuze GR.
- Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E)** *Cinnyris afra*  
Another highly attractive sunbird that was seen during our day trip up Sani Pass.
- Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird** *Cinnyris mariquensis*  
A few birds were seen in Mkuze GR.
- Purple-banded Sunbird** *Cinnyris bifasciatus*  
Unfortunately this species was only heard in Mkuze GR.
- White-bellied (-breasted) Sunbird** *Cinnyris talatala*  
A common sunbird of the bushveld where we had many sightings.

### Old World Sparrows Passeridae

- White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali*  
Several birds were seen east of Potchefstroom on our first day.
- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
This species was regularly recorded in urban centres around South Africa. It too, was introduced to the region.
- Cape Sparrow (NE)** *Passer melanurus*  
A very attractive but extremely common species throughout the country. We encountered large numbers in all urban areas.
- Southern Grey-headed Sparrow (NE)** *Passer diffusus*  
Small numbers were seen throughout the trip.
- Yellow-throated Petronia** *Gymnornis superciliaris*  
Mkuze GR produced several sightings of this species.  
*Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Petronia.*

### Weavers & Allies Ploceidae

- Thick-billed (Grosbeak) Weaver** *Amblyospiza albifrons*  
Seen in Mkuze GR where they were breeding in reedbeds along with other more gregarious weavers.
- Cape Weaver (E)** *Ploceus capensis*  
We found this endemic weaver on the drive up Sani Pass and in the Wakkerstroom area.
- Yellow (African Golden) Weaver** *Ploceus subaureus*  
A species confined to the east coast of Southern Africa, we saw small flocks in Mkuze GR.
- Lesser Masked Weaver** *Ploceus intermedius*  
Very close views were obtained of this species in Mkuze GR.
- Southern Masked Weaver** *Ploceus velatus*

Commonly recorded throughout the trip.

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*

Recorded regularly along the coastal plain.

**Dark-backed (Forest) Weaver** *Ploceus bicolor*

This beautiful weaver was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*

A small flock was encountered en route to Underberg on the first day of the trip.

**Southern Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix*

Recorded at most wetland sites throughout the tour.

**Yellow Bishop** *Euplectes capensis*

This jet black and gold species was seen on a few occasions in the Natal Midlands.

**Fan-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes axillaris*

Commonly recorded in grasslands throughout the trip.

**White-winged Widowbird** *Euplectes albonotatus*

Good numbers were seen in Mkuze GR.

**Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens*

A very showy bird that was seen in grasslands throughout the tour.

**Long-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes progne*

Another extremely bold and attractive species that was commonly seen in all high altitude grassland areas.

### Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

**Green-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia melba*

A gorgeous little finch that was seen in Mkuze GR.

**Pink-throated Twinspot** *Hypargos margaritatus*

Undoubtedly one of the regions most attractive and sought-after endemics, we had brilliant views of this secretive finch.

**Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonbleu)** *Uraeginthus angolensis*

This species was commonly recorded in small flocks in Mkuze GR.

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*

We had small flocks of this common species at various sites on tour.

**African Quail-Finch** *Ortygospiza fuscocrissa*

A pair was seen in flight en route to Underberg with further views on the ground at Wakkerstroom. A very smart bird indeed!

### Indigobirds & Whydahs Viduidae

**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura*

This aggressive little brood parasite was encountered in the Mkuze and Wakkerstroom areas.

**Long-tailed (Eastern) Paradise Whydah** *Vidua paradisaea*

A single male in transitional plumage was seen in Mkuze GR.

### Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis*

Regularly recorded in small numbers at most wetland locations during the tour.

**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp*

Several birds were seen in Mkuze GR.

**Cape (Orange-throated) Longclaw (NE)** *Macronyx capensis*

A very attractive species that was commonly seen in the Wakkerstroom area.

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Yellow-throated Longclaw</b>  | <i>Macronyx croceus</i>              |
| We encountered a pair in Mkuze GR.   |                                      |
| <b>African Pipit</b>   | <i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>            |
| The regions commonest pipit recorded at most localities.                   |                                      |
| <b>Mountain Pipit (BE)</b>   | <i>Anthus hoeschi</i>                |
| This summer visitor was seen in Lesotho during our day trip up Sani Pass.  |                                      |
| <b>Long-billed Pipit</b>   | <i>Anthus similis</i>                |
| A singleton was found during the drive up Sani Pass.                       |                                      |
| <b>African Rock (Yellow-tufted) Pipit</b>                                  | <i>Anthus crenatus</i>               |
| This species was heard in the distance in Lesotho.                         |                                      |
| <b>Yellow-breasted Pipit (E)</b>   | <i>Anthus (Hemimacronyx) chloris</i> |
| We had a pair of these brilliant yellow, endemic pipits near Wakkerstroom. |                                      |

### Finches Fringillidae

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Cape Canary</b>  | <i>Serinus canicollis</i>     |
| Small flocks were found in the Natal Midlands and other grassland areas.  |                               |
| <b>Forest Canary (E)</b>  | <i>Crithagra scotops</i>      |
| Brilliant views were had of this endemic at Marutswa Forest.  |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus</i>   |                               |
| <b>Black-throated Canary</b>  | <i>Crithagra atrogularis</i>  |
| A small flock of these canaries were encountered in the Wakkerstroom area.  |                               |
| <b>Lemon-breasted Canary (Seed-eater)</b>   | <i>Crithagra citrinipecta</i> |
| Two pairs were seen in Mkuze GR. This is a rare, localized and elusive species that is very seldom recorded in the reserve. |                               |
| <b>Yellow-fronted Canary</b>  | <i>Crithagra mozambica</i>    |
| A bushveld species that was seen in Mkuze GR.   |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus</i>   |                               |
| <b>Yellow Canary (NE)</b>   | <i>Crithagra flaviventris</i> |
| This bright golden canary was seen in Lesotho.  |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus</i>   |                               |
| <b>Brimstone Canary</b>   | <i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>   |
| We were lucky to find a single bird just outside Mkuze GR.  |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus</i>   |                               |
| <b>Streaky-headed Seedeater (NE)</b>  | <i>Crithagra gularis</i>      |
| We found this species on our way up Sani Pass.  |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Serinus</i>   |                               |
| <b>Drakensberg Siskin (E)</b>   | <i>Crithagra symonsi</i>      |
| Good numbers of this endemic siskin were seen during our day visit up the magnificent Sani Pass.                            |                               |
| <i>Note: Clements places this bird in the genus Pseudochloroptila</i>   |                               |

### Buntings Emberizidae

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Cape Bunting</b>  | <i>Emberiza capensis</i>     |
| Good numbers were encountered during our day trip up Sani Pass.            |                              |
| <b>Golden-breasted Bunting</b>   | <i>Emberiza flaviventris</i> |
| We had several of these very attractive birds during our stay in Mkuze GR. |                              |

### MAMMAL SPECIES LIST (24 species)

*Note: Names and taxonomical order of the land mammals follow that of 'The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals'; additional names are given in parenthesis and are likely to appear in other popular field guides.*

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### Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae

**Chacma Baboon** *Papio ursinus*

Small troops were encountered in a variety of habitats throughout the trip.

**Vervet Monkey** *Cercopithecus aethiops*

A common species, it was commonly seen in Mkuze GR.

### Bushbabies Loridae

**Thick-tailed Bush Baby (Greater Galago)** *Galago crassicaudatus*

This nocturnal primate was heard on both nights in Mkuze GR.

### Hares & Rabbits Leporidae

**Scrub Hare** *Lepus saxatilis*

We found a single hare in the Wakkerstroom area.

### Rats & Mice Cricetidae & Muroidea

**Sloggett's Ice Rat** *Otomys sloggetti*

Good numbers of these cute creatures were found in Lesotho during our day visit up the Sani Pass.

### Mustelids Mustelidae

**Spotted-necked Otter** *Lutra maculicollis*

This scarce mammal was seen near Underberg and at the large wetland near Wakkerstroom.

### Mongoose Herpestidae

**Slender Mongoose** *Herpestes sanguinea*

A few individuals were seen during the tour with our first sighting east of Potchefstroom.

**Yellow Mongoose** *Cynictis pencilata*

We had small numbers in the grasslands around Wakkerstroom.

**Suricate (Meerkat)** *Suricata suricatta*

We found family groups of this gregarious animal near Wakkerstroom.

### Hyraxes Procavidae

**Rock Hyrax (Dassie)** *Procavia capensis*

We had encounters with these strange-looking animals in the Drakensberg.

### Horses Equidae

**Common (Burchell's/Plains) Zebra** *Equus burchelli*

Small herds of these uniquely African mammals were seen in Mkuze GR.

### Hippopotamuses Hippopotamidae

**Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibius*

Several of these massive herbivores were seen in Mkuze GR.

### Pigs Suidae

**Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus*

Groups were found daily in Mkuze GR.

## Giraffes Giraffidae

**Giraffe***Giraffa camelopardalis*

One of Africa's iconic mammals! We had extremely close encounters of these regal giants in Mkuze GR.

## Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae

**Greater Kudu***Tragelaphus strepsiceros*

These magnificent antelope were seen in Mkuze GR.

**Nyala***Tragelaphus angasii*

We had regular and close sightings of this striking antelope in Mkuze GR.

**Common Reedbuck***Redunca arundinum*

A few mammals were seen near Underberg.

**Blue Wildebeest***Connochaetes taurinus*

Herds were commonly seen in Mkuze GR.

**Red Hartebeest***Alcelaphus buselaphus*

A herd was encountered in the grasslands en route to Underberg.

**Blesbok E***Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi*

A single herd was seen in high elevation grasslands east of Potchefstroom.

**Impala***Aepyceros melampus*

The commonest antelope in the game reserves of the east, we enjoyed many sightings of this attractive mammal in Mkuze GR.

**Springbok***Antidorcas marsupialis*

We found this, South Africa's national mammal, in grassland en route from Potchefstroom to Underberg.

**Red Duiker***Cephalophus natalensis*

This richly coloured antelope was found in the forests of Mkuze GR.

**Common (Grey) Duiker***Sylvicapra grimmia*

This, the commonest duiker in South Africa, was seen in small numbers in Mkuze GR.

## REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN SPECIES LIST (18 species)

**Leopard Tortoise***Geochelone pardalis***Marsh (Helmeted) Terrapin***Pelomedusa subrufa***Striped Skink***Mabuya striata***Drakensberg Crag Lizard (E)***Platysaurus broadleyi***Moreau's Tropical House Gecko***Hemidactylus mabouia*

Photo Credits: Blue Crane, Grey-winged Francolin, Fairy Warbler, Nyala (all by Glen Valentine), Gorgeous Bushshrike (by Hugh Chittenden) & Buff-streaked Chat (by Glen Valentine).

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