

South Africa - Kruger & Drakensberg

Tuesday 28 October – Thursday 13 November 2008

Leaders:

Mark & Jean Caulton
Mike Read

Daily Diary:

Tuesday 28 October

Departure from Heathrow

We all met in good time at the South Africa Airways check in desk and were soon whiling away the time in the departure area. Rain had set in after our arrival at Terminal 1 but we really took little notice of it – we were just pleased to be heading towards what we hoped would be sunshine. However as we sat on the ‘plane some time later, we could see ice running down the outside of the window! It soon became apparent that we had received more than just rain. There had been a severe drop in the temperature and the aircrafts’ wings were frozen up (like many more at Heathrow). After waiting about an hour for the de-icing machine to arrive, we were somewhat relieved that at 7.15p.m. We were ‘pushed back’ and 15 minutes later we were airborne and beginning the flight towards Johannesburg a mere 75 minutes late.

Wednesday 29 October

Phalaborwa & the Kruger to Letaba Camp

Partly overcast & 15°C at J'burg, some cloud & 26°C at Kruger.

Arrived just 45 minutes late at Johannesburg and after clearing customs, we made our way to the departure lounge for Phalaborwa. From here we were able to see a few birds and these included Palm & Little Swifts, a Cattle Egret plucking insects from a gantry, Crag Martin and Red-winged Starling. Our onward flight left and landed on time and at Phalaborwa were soon greeted by our local guides, Mark and Jean Caulton.

Our drive into the Kruger National Park was studded with frequent stops to view various wildlife too numerous to list fully (a feature throughout the tour!) but a few of the highlights were as follows:

Whalberg’s Eagle on a nest and 2 more later, numerous Magpie Shrikes, Bearded Woodpecker, Lilac-breasted and Purple Rollers, Chin-spot Batis, Yellow-billed Hornbills, African Fish Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Saddle-billed, Woolly-necked and Marabou Storks and Helmeted Guineafowl. Mammals were represented by Warthogs, Elephants, Chacma Baboons, Impalas and a couple of resting male Lions amongst other things.

After settling into our lodges, we took a walk around camp with Mark. Bushbucks were plentiful as were birds and many were very tame. Highlights of this walk were Greater Blue-eared Starlings, African Green Pigeon, Lesser Masked Weaver (with its pale eye), Speckled Mousebird, Crested Barbet and a few Tree Squirrels. As we gained views over the Letaba River more wildlife could be seen including Marabou Stork, Little Egret, Blacksmith Plover, Water Thick-knee, Long-tailed Cormorant, Three-banded Plover, 3 Buffalos, more Impalas, a Nile Crocodile and just before we headed back an Elephant and a Collared Pratincole were seen. After dinner at the camp restaurant, we headed to our accommodaton for a well earned nights’ sleep.

Thursday 30 October

Letaba Camp, Tzendze Loop etc in Kruger, night drive

Overcast and a little rain but clearing by 9am then hot, perhaps 35° or more.

After an early breakfast, we left Letaba Camp at 6 a.m. for our first game drive. Early starts are essential for game and bird viewing here as the temperature soon climbs and the wildlife rests in shady places often where we cannot go. Beside the Letaba River we were soon adding species with water birds being to the fore.

These included African Jacana, African Fish Eagle, Spur-winged & Egyptian Goose, Little Egret, Goliath Heron and Lesser Striped Swallow. Other good birds were Long-billed Crombec, Black-backed Puffback, Green Woodhoopoe, Helmeted Guineafowl, Blue-billed Firefinch, Crested & Swainson's Francolin, Violet-backed Starling and African Paradise Flycatcher. Mammals encountered along this part were Chacma Baboons, Impalas and Vervet Monkeys.

At Letaba Bridge we were able to stop and get out of the vehicle, one of the only places you can do this in Kruger National Park. Many birds were immediately apparent and at times we did not know which way to look! Three Pied Kingfishers perched above a backwater which held Black Crakes, Black-winged Stilts and a Wood Sandpiper while in other areas there were Common Sandpiper, Greenshank, Ruff, Three-banded and White-fronted Plovers. A Great Egret flew past and 2 or 3 White-fronted Plovers were seeking insects across towards the far bank.

Driving onwards from here the wildlife continued to impress with numerous groups of Impalas and Elephants, frequent lone Steenboks and a good group of threatening-looking African Buffalos. The birding continued to be good as well with highlights being Tawny Eagle, Golden-breasted Bunting, Red-eyed Dove, Cape Turtle Dove, Saddle-billed Stork, Red-crested Korhaan and a family group of 2 adult and one fully grown young Ground Hornbills.

After a brief pause at Makhadzi where we saw a Brown-headed Parrot, we drove to the start of the Tzendze Loop and began another interlude of wildlife watching. The first birds could hardly be missed as there were two male and three juvenile/female Ostriches. A couple of Double-banded Sandgrouse flew up from beside the track and immediately flopped down in long grass a short distance away never to be seen again! Blue Waxbills, White-crowned Shrikes and a Bateleur were all seen, as were at least 7 Giraffes. Bird-of-the-drive had to be the Pearl Spotted Owlet that put in a brief appearance. As we left the 'Loop' we took a slight detour and found a few Elephants and Burchell's Zebras drinking from a water supply and afterwards the Elephants wandered to the mud hole nearby and indulged in a communal mud bath.

More Elephants, a Slender Mongoose and a female Tsessebe with a small calf in tow were seen as we made our way to Makhadzi for our picnic lunch. During this stop we added Blue Waxbills, Brown-hooded Kingfisher and Yellow-fronted Canary to the list. From here we drove back towards our Letaba accommodation and another pause at Letaba Bridge added Green-winged Pytilia and African Fish Eagle. After a rest in our rooms or individual walks around camp, we enjoyed an early barbecue before embarking on a night drive. Searchlights managed to pick up a good range of wildlife including a roosting African Fish Eagle as well as Spring Hare, Hippo, a pair of Lions, Common/Small-spotted Genet, Scrub Hare and 3 Nightjars which included 2 species namely Fiery-necked and Square-tailed. This completed our wildlife for the day and we returned to camp.

Friday 31 October

Letaba, Olifants & Satara Camps

Even hotter than yesterday (perhaps 37° C)

We took an early breakfast and by 6 a.m. we were fully packed and heading for a new location, Satara Camp. We began with a drive beside the Letaba River where we saw the usual 2 Lions from the previous evening, lots of Impalas as well as a good range of birds. These included African Jacanas, Black-winged Stilt, Glossy Ibis, Cattle Egret, Squacco Heron, Black Crake, Wood Sandpiper and White-faced Whistling Duck. Also seen here were a few Giraffes and Hippos.

Onwards from here we saw lots of wildlife before we reached Olifants Camp. These included Natal and Crested Francolins, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Jameson's Firefinch, Black-crowned Tchagra, African Openbill, African Spoonbill, White-browed Scrub Robin, 2 African Hawk Eagles, Bateleur, Sabota Larks and Lilac-breasted Roller. Mammals were Baboons, Impalas and Zebras. A break at Olifants Camp had us enjoying fine views over the Olifants River and numerous birds too. An adult African Fish Eagle caught a good-sized fish and landed on an island to feed. It was soon joined by two youngsters with which it was happy to share its meal. However, less expected was the Hamerkop that seemed to be dicing with death as it tried to steal part of the eagles' meal. Numerous Hippos lay in the river's deeper pools and a group of Waterbucks crossed nervously on to an island to feed. They were obviously aware that there were Crocodiles in the river too! Red-winged Starlings, White-crowned Lapwings and a Gymnogene completed our visit so we headed onwards.

During the journey to Satara Camp we saw many birds and highlights included White-fronted and European Bee-eaters, Red-breasted Swallows, White-backed Vultures, Pin-tailed Whydah, Red-billed Queleas, Ground Hornbills, Burchell's Starlings, Lilac-breasted and Purple Rollers, Brown Snake Eagle and about 120 Chestnut-backed Finchlarks. Mammals noted were Impalas, Zebras, Blue Wildebeest, Hyena, a resting male Lion, Elephants, White Rhino and a number of Giraffes. We arrived at Satara camp at about 12.30 and had lunch half an hour later. During lunch there were plenty of birds to be seen and these included Greater Blue-eared and Burchell's Starlings, at least 8 Grey Go-away-birds, Ground-scraper Thrush, African Hoopoe, Yellow-billed Hornbill, Chinspot Batis, Brubru and Red-billed Buffalo Weaver.

After resting during the hottest part of the afternoon, we went out at 4 p.m. for a game drive and as we left Satara, we paused to view an African Scops Owl by the camp's reception area. Outside camp, mammals seen included Giraffe, Waterbuck, Greater Kudu, Zebra, Steenbok, Warthogs wallowing in a mud pool and a lone male Lion. Birds were plentiful too with 3 Ground Hornbills, Pale Flycatcher, White-crowned Shrikes, Little Swifts, African Fish Eagle and an adult Martial Eagle. After a fine buffet meal in the camp's restaurant, we all seemed rather keen on an early night.

Saturday 1 November Various locations close to Satara Camp including a dusk drive

Hot with temperatures reaching perhaps 38° C

We began with an early departure from camp at 5 a.m. Soon we were encountering lots of wildlife within a short distance of camp. Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bush Shrikes were both heard, a Giant Kingfisher and a group of Elephants were soon on the list and then we saw a Lappet-faced Vulture and Bateleur. Other birds noted during the early part of the drive included Brown-headed Parrot, Cardinal Woodpecker, African Hoopoe, 3 or 4 Scimitar-bills, Swainson's and Crested Francolins, Green Woodhoopoe and Burchell's Starling. We then found a Giraffe that had probably been killed a few days earlier by Lions. Here a group of about 15 White-backed Vultures and a couple of Cape Vultures were feeding while others waited in trees nearby. Overhead a few Mosque Swallows were feeding on insects. Moving on from here we added Red-crested Korhaan, 2 Crowned Plovers, African Fish Eagle, Wattled Starling, Hammerkop, Arrow-marked Babbler, Green Pigeon and Whalberg's Eagle to the bird list while mammals included Greater Kudus, Burchell's Zebras and Warthogs.

At the Judzani Dam there were many Hippos and Nile Crocodiles in and beside the water and a group of Baboons were feeding beside the safer parts of the water. The water proved attractive to a good range of birds and these included Egyptian & Spur-winged Geese, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilts, Three-banded Plover, African Jacanas, Black Crake, Saddle-billed Stork and a Kori Bustard that came down to drink.

We then set off along another dusty track and were soon seeing much more wildlife. At a river crossing there were at least 11 Hippos in the deeper water and as we left this spot, a Natal Francolin walked down the track towards us. Three male Buffalos looked threatening as we drove past but still a group of Red-billed Oxpeckers were hitching a ride with them. A group of Waterbucks were seen, as were many small herds of Impalas. Other birds seen here included Bateleur and a Martial Eagle. When we reached the N'wanetsi picnic site, Jean was already there and had much of our picnic breakfast laid out on the table. The smell of bacon, eggs and mushrooms added greatly to the experience of being in the African bush but before we began the meal, we were able to walk a short distance up the hill and take in the view over the nearby river. Grey Heron and Saddle-billed Stork stood in the only remaining pool of water and in bushes close to our viewpoint we saw a male Mocking Cliff Chat. We kept watch as we ate our breakfast and added Yellow-bellied Greenbul, White-bellied Sunbird, Black-backed Puffback and Acacia Pied Barbet to the bird list while the only mammal species seen was Banded Mongoose. Just before we left, a Booted Eagle flew past.

We gradually made our way back towards Satara Camp as the temperature was now becoming a trifle hot! Beside a pool a group of 9 lions were resting in the shade and strangely enough, there was little else about. Lilac-breasted & Purple Rollers, Ostrich, Little Swifts, Black-breasted Snake Eagle and a couple of close Warthogs were seen but by 10 a.m. we were back at Satara. An hour later we took a short stroll in camp and found birds in rather short supply. However we did see a Maurico Sunbird, Grey-headed & Orange-breasted Bush Shrikes and a Black-headed Oriole but the best sighting of this walk had to be the Giant Kingfisher that was trying to make a meal of a baby terrapin!!

We rested until lunch then at 4.30 p.m. we took a brief stroll and almost immediately had brief views of a

passing Little Sparrowhawk. A few other common species were seen but it was soon time to return to our lodges and to take an early evening meal in preparation for our night drive.

As with our previous venture into the African night, there was an air of anticipation as we boarded the vehicle and set off into the darkness. A brief drive in one direction from camp had us shining the searchlights into a gully where 3 Lionesses and 2 well grown cubs were resting. In the other direction from camp we were soon seeing Elephant, Grey Duiker, Impala, Wildebeest and a Porcupine. Further on a Scrub Hare was crouched under a bush and 2 White Rhinos bumped off into the darkness. At the furthest point from camp, a male Lion was lying in the road and as we approached it strolled off to the left however as lights were swept around, a further 10 Lions were seen to the right of the road. We turned around a short distance further on and as we came back past the lions, we were surprised to see a Black-backed Jackal close to the big cats. However, a young male Lion took exception to its presence and soon chased it away. Along a slight detour on our return route we encountered a couple of Common Genets, some Burchell's Zebras and a cat that our driver identified as a cheetah. However, all of the group felt there was something not right about this identification and later consultation with the books confirmed it to have been a Serval.

Sunday 2 November

Satara Camp to Pretoriuskop

Cool early with rapidly increasing temperatures

Left Satara at 4.30 a.m. and a few kilometres down the road we encountered the same group of 5 Lions that we had seen first during the previous evening's game drive. A short distance along the Sweni Loop road we encountered 3 more Lions, a male and 2 females then, as we returned towards the tarred road, just 100 metres beyond the lions were 2 male Cheetahs lying in the road. Eventually they moved off nervously through the gully obviously aware of at least the scent of the larger cats nearby. As we journeyed onwards Steenboks, Warthogs, Greater Kudus, Giraffes and Elephants were often encountered, as were many birds. These included Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Bearded Woodpecker, Little and White-rumped Swifts. All this and more by 6 a.m.! Continuing onwards we came across Martial Eagle, a group of about a dozen Banded Mongoose, Greater Kudus, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, European Bee-eaters, Vervet Monkeys, a lone male Nyala, a Black Rhino and a lost baby Elephant. The usual Bateleur was seen in flight, a couple of Crowned Lapwings and at least 8 Giraffes were added by the time we reached our next stop.

M'zithi Pool proved very productive with 2 male Lions drinking and resting by the water tank. Saddle-billed Storks, Cattle Egrets and African Spoonbills were immediately obvious nearby while Greenshank, 4 Wood Sandpipers and a Ruff were found and identified. A Marsh Sandpiper was feeding busily close to a more-or-less stationary Three-banded Plover, 2 Grey Herons stood around and a Hippo was submerged with just a little of its back showing.

From here we travelled on to Tshokwani to meet Jean who already had our breakfast laid out on one of the picnic tables. After replenishing our energy reserves we did a little birding in the area and added some interesting species. These included Yellow-breasted Apalis, Southern Boubou, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Green-backed Cameroptera, Orange-breasted Bush-shrike and Southern Black Tit. Our onwards journey took us past a few rocky outcrops and at one of these a Klipspringer was resting on the top of a huge boulder. A Mocking Cliff Chat was also seen here.

Greater Kudu, Buffalo and Impala were all encountered during the onward journey while the birds included White-crested and Retz's Helmet-shrikes, Red-breasted Swallow and a fine Tawny Eagle. Around the shop and other buildings at Skukuza there were plenty of Black-headed Bulbuls and other common birds including a Cattle Egret that was standing on the head of one of the 5 Cape Buffalos that were taking a cooling rest in the nearby river. Just along from this a Striated Heron stalked in the shallows. Later, as we approached our new accommodation at Pretoriuskop, we encountered a group of 12 or more Sable antelopes in a forested area. We paused to watch these but unfortunately other traffic parked too close to them and they soon ran off.

After settling in and resting through the hottest part of the day, we gathered for a walk at 4 p.m. During this brief stroll we managed to find a good selection of birds including Purple-crested Touraco, Southern Black Flycatcher, Green Wood-hoopoe, Golden-tailed and 2 Cardinal Woodpeckers, Black-collared Barbet, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Red-headed Weaver and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird. We then took a short drive around the Fayi Loop and the first animals found were a few Giraffes. Further on at a small stream crossing there was a Greater Painted Snipe and a Black Crake and a stop later produced a good view of a Brown Snake Eagle and numerous Dung Beetles making collections at a Rhino midden. About 300 metres along the road

we encountered the supplier of such a bounteous supply of food for the beetles, a White Rhino and to complete the good sightings we were able to view 2 large, fledged young Spotted Eagle Owls.

Monday 3 November

Pretoriuskop to Misty Mountain

Coolish to begin but warming rapidly; a little cooler in the mountains, thunder storm late on

We set out for a game drive at 4.30 a.m. and soon found a couple of Black Rhinos in the gloomy light. Further on we found Greater Kudus, Waterbucks and Zebras and the birds included Lilac-breasted Roller, White-crowned Helmet Shrike, Steppe Eagle and Lizard Buzzard. A water hole proved even more productive with African Fish Eagle, Common & Wood Sandpipers, Blacksmith & Three-banded Plovers, Greenshank, 4 Water Thick-knee, Pin-tailed Wydah and a few more Burchell's Zebras. Onwards from here we had 2 sightings of Brown Snake Eagle, a Little Sparrowhawk, 2 Green Wood-hoopoes, Grey Duiker, Rufous-naped Lark and a Tawny-flanked Prinia. Our final good sighting of the drive was to watch 4 Ground Hornbills rummaging through a Rhino midden in the hope of finding dung beetles; just the sort of thing you want to watch immediately before you head back for breakfast!!

After breakfast we took a stroll around Pretoriuskop grounds and found a few good birds and these included Brown-headed Parrot, Red-cested Cuckoo, Purple-banded & Violet-backed Sunbirds, African Paradise Flycatcher and Black-collared Barbet as well as passing African Hawk Eagle and 2 Whalberg's Eagles.

We departed a little after 9 a.m. and were soon seeing 4 more Ground Hornbills, a number of European Bee-eaters, 3 Greater Kudus and 3 Warthogs. Soon we were overlooking Mestel Pool where another African Fish Eagle was watching over proceedings. Five Elephants were splashing about beyond the eagle and a similar quantity of Hippos included a fairly small youngster. Other notable sightings were White-breasted Cormorant and Striated Heron. Just along the road from here we were able to see a Black-bellied Korhaan at very close quarters.

Moving towards the exit of Kruger National Park we added another Brown Snake Eagle to the day's list as well as 2 new species namely Striped Kingfisher and Little Bee-eater. By 10.50 a.m. we had left the Park and on the way towards the village of Hazytown we glimpsed a Black-shoulder Kite and had slightly more prolonged views of Yellow-billed Kite, Peregrine and a couple of Steppe Buzzards.

We arrived at Misty Mountain Lodge in time for lunch on the veranda with super views over the surrounding hills. An African Olive Pigeon proved elusive but was seen by most of the group while House Martins and African Black Swifts hawked for insects overhead. Just before our rooms were ready we were able to take a walk in the grounds and here we found African Pied & Cape Wagtails, Red-winged Starlings, Cape Batis, Greater & Lesser Double-collared Sunbirds and a few Cape White-eyes. Having settled into our rooms we set out at 4 p.m. for a slightly longer walk. A Karoo Thrush was our first find then a Red-eyed Dove dashed past. Sweet Waxbills and Red-backed Manakins were feeding on grass seeds and an Olive Bush-Shrike proved elusive but was eventually seen by a few of the group. Lesser-striped Swallows and a Dusky Flycatcher were more easily seen and up the hill we found Wailing Cisticola and a pair of Malachite Sunbirds. As we returned to the lower ground, a passing Red-chested Cuckoo completed our birding for the day.

As we headed to the bar area (where else?!) to fill in our list for the day, a huge thunderstorm set in and the display of lightning was quite spectacular.

Tuesday 4 November

Misty Mountain & Wakkerstroom

Mist and light drizzle to begin, low cloud and much cooler through most of the day

A brief walk before breakfast produced good views of Cape Robin-chat, Karoo Thrush and Chorister Robin-chat as well as a pair of Dusky Flycatchers that seemed to be nest building. A Southern Boubou proved very elusive but was glimpsed by some of the group and also noted were both Southern and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. Birding while holding umbrellas proved a little difficult so we decided to take a slightly earlier breakfast than planned.

The start of the drive to Wakkerstroom took us over high ground where the low cloud made driving difficult and wildlife was few and far between. However, we did see a distant small group of Giraffes on a game

reserve and birds like Pied Crow, Cape Black Crow and Grey Heron. 5 Spur-winged Geese perched in a tree provided an unexpected sight and we also saw common species like Hadadah Ibis and Helmeted Guineafowl. As we pulled into a service station in Belfast for a break and refreshments, Pied Starlings seemed numerous in the area, as did Indian Mynas. Onwards from here we noted Black-shouldered Kite, Long-tailed Widowbirds, occasional Steppe Buzzards, Barn Swallows, Common Fiscals and a group of African Sacred Ibises feeding in a wetter area of fields.

After a pause for lunch in Ermelo, we continued our journey and as we were stopped at some road works, a Red-throated Wryneck hopped into view. As we drove, birds included another Black-shouldered Kite, 2 Southern Bald Ibises and a few Cattle Egrets. Then we stopped to view the birds at a pond and here we were amazed at the quantity of breeding birds. There were hundreds of pairs of Cattle Egrets along with many nests of Long-tailed Cormorants and Black-headed Herons. Cape and Village Weavers were also present in good numbers and also there were African Spoonbill, Yellow-billed Duck, White-faced Duck, Little Grebe, Whiskered Tern and 5 species of Swallows and Martins. THE sighting here had to be the three Cape Clawless Otters that visited a fallen log out in the water. They clambered out and climbed over each other and then went diving for food. An excellent experience to see these lovely ceatures.

Wednesday 5 November

Wakkerstroom area

Overcast for most of the day

Close to our accommodation there were a few birds to be seen as we went to and from breakfast and these included Speckled Pigeons, Common Fiscal, Rock Martin and Bokmakierie. Soon we were heading out for a drive around local roads and before we left the town area we saw a Spotted Thick-knee and Long-tailed Widowbird. As we passed the wetland area we paused to look at the birds on view anthese included Pied Kingfisher, Ruff, African Snipe, African Rail, African Swamphen (Gallinule) and 2 species of Sandpiper namely Common and Wood. Further along the roads we encountered many displaying Long-tailed Widowbirds as well as many African Pipits and Orange-throated Longlaws. White-throated Swallows posed on roadside wires as did occasional African Stonechats and then we found a somewhat distant group of 5 Blue Korhaans. A couple of groups of Blesboks moved away at our approach and 3 Yellow Mongoose did exceptionally good impersonations of short-legged foxes! Other species noted over the next few kilometres included Ant-eating Chat, Mountain Wheatear, Spike-heeled Lark and Dideric Cuckoo.

A turning to the right took us past a dry stone wall where a Rock Hyrax put in a brief appearance and a short distance after that, 2 Secretary Birds were seen in a low-lying field. Further along, a scan of the surrounding fields produced good views of 19 Blue Cranes and 9 Grey Crowned Cranes as well as Red-capped Lark, Wing-snapping Cisticola (obviously flying round in circles now due to one damaged wing?!!) and another Blue Korhaan. This latter bird was being chased by a couple of dogs from the local dwellings. During our journey back towards town we saw a few more birds but the biggest prize was the group of a dozen or more Meerkats that ran off and mostly hid in a longer grass area.

We were back at our accommodation by 11.30 and after lunch a little later, we took a walk to the hide overlooking the pool in the famous Wakkeestroom Wetland. Birds seen at this location included 2 or 3 Black-crowned Night-herons, Cattle, Intermediate & Little Egrets, at least 30 Blacksmith Lapwings, Reed & White-breasted Cormorants, African Reed Warbler, White-throated & African Cliff Swallows, African Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbills, African Swamphen, African Rail, Hottentot Teal, Black Stork and much more besides.

On a later drive we saw a couple of African Wattled Lapwings close to Wakkeestroom and then at the Slang River we had numerous good finds including African Black Duck, Buff-streaked Chats, Ground Woodpeckers that were nesting beside the road, Cape Wagtails beside the river, Cape Robin Chat and African Rock Pipit. This completed our outings for the day and as we headed back towards town, we saw at least 3 Black-winged Kites close to the road.

Thursday 6 November

Wakkerstroom to Hluhluwe

Warm & overcast, evening thunderstorm at Hluhluwe.

Before we began our journey we saw the usual pair of Bokmakieries close to the accommodation. Also in the area was a Black-winged Kite perched on overhead cables. We arrived at the entrance to Hluhluwe by

lunch time but during the journey we did see a number of good birds including Pied Starlings, Common Fiscals, 2 Bald Ibis, 2 White Stork, a few Steppe Buzzards and Yellow-billed Kites, Pied Crows and an African Marsh Harrier. During lunch there were lots of Little Swifts around the park buildings and many gave exceptionally close encounters if you headed for their main nesting building, the loos!

Soon we were heading off into the Game Park and almost immediately found Nyala and 3 White Rhinos. A Brown-crowned Tchagra gave very brief views and a group of Red-collared Widowbirds was close to the track and more visible than the Tchagra. The rest of the journey to Hilltop Camp had plenty of interest including Rattling and Croaking Cisticolas, Barn Swallows, another White Rhino, a group of Baboons, Striped and Brown-hooded Kingfishers, African Firefinch, Southern Tchagra, Jacobin Cuckoo as well as good groups of Zebras and Giraffes. Two more White Rhinos and a pair of Purple-crested Louries were seen just before we reached Hilltop Camp and soon we were heading to our lodges.

After settling in, we took a brief walk around but birds were in very short supply. They seemed to know more about the coming weather than us as after seeing just Yellow-billed Kite and Red-winged Starlings, we had to return to our accommodation to shelter from a thunder storm that set in. This cleared before dinner after which we settled in for another good night's sleep.

Friday 7 November

Hluhluwe game drives

Overcast for most of the day with some drizzle

After an early breakfast we set off at 6.30 a.m. on our first game drive of the day. Just outside camp we saw an adult and well grown young White Rhino and a little further on we encountered Woolly-necked Stork and Yellow-billed Kite. An Eastern Nicator proved typically elusive but we did see a few Yellow-throated Petronias along the way. Calling Gorgeous Bush Shrikes caught Mark's attention and soon we had good views of three of these lovely birds. As we drove onwards a few Emerald-spotted Wood Doves flew up from the track and an African Hoopoe fed beside the road. Fork-tailed Drongos were, as usual, to be seen very frequently and we also noticed Crested Guineafowl and 3 fine male Nyala. A pair of African Pygmy Kingfishers seemed to be excavating a nest in a small trackside bank whilst a larger member of the family, a Brown-hooded Kingfisher called nearby. Perhaps it too was trying to attract a mate so that they could also nest at this convenient location. Southern Black Tit, White-browed Scrub Robin and Golden-tailed Woodpecker were all seen before we reached the Thiyeni Hide where we took a walk down the fenced walkway to the hide itself. Here we saw Purple-crested Touracos and had really close views of Lesser-striped Swallows that were obviously nesting beneath the hide. Unfortunately there was very little water in front of the hide so there was little other wildlife to be seen however we did look at the rhino 'itching post' that, judging by its polished appearance, had been used by countless generations of rhinos.

Driving onwards from here we encountered a rather unusual occurrence. Right on the trackside a female Black-bellied Bustard was giving what seemed to be a mating type display. Her wings were spread and lowered and she was moving from side to side much in the fashion that a courting male would do – but this was a female. Suddenly we saw that it was not a courtship display but a distraction display; and the cause of all of this was a Mongoose that just may have been robbing her nest or attacking her chicks or at least trying to! We hoped the Bustard had been successful in its attempt to draw the animal away from whatever held its interest. At a small waterhole further along there were a couple of Three-banded Plovers and 3 Warthogs as well as a Marsh Terrapin that seemed to be setting off to waters anew. Another White Rhino was seen in the distance and then we saw White-backed Vultures and a Tawny Eagle, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Rufous-naped Lark, Village Weavers, Zitting, Rattling and Croaking Cisticolas as well as larger mammals like Blue Wildebeest, Buffalo and Elephant. Other birds noted during the rest of this drive included Red-chested Cuckoo, Hadadah Ibis, Bateleur, Crowned Hornbill, African Pied Wagtail, Striated Heron, African Hoopoe, Greater Honeyguide, Olive Thrush and African Cuckoo-Hawk while the other mammals seen were Burchell's Zebras and Nyala. The only other species of interest that we found was a Nile Monitor, which was crossing the track at one point.

We returned to Hilltop Camp and had the opportunity to visit the museum or just wander close to the accommodation in search of birds. After relaxing for a while we set off on a game drive that began just before nightfall and continued well into the darkness. The wildlife we encountered included in excess of 140 Buffalo, as well as Pied Crow, Yellow-billed Kite, Red Duiker, Nyala, Crested Guineafowl, Waterbuck, Blue Wildebeest, Giraffes, Egyptian Goose with 7 young, some Impalas, at least a dozen Nightjars which included

both Fiery-necked and Square-tailed, probably 3 Common Genets, 2 Water Thick-knees and 2 Scrub Hares. We then returned to camp for a slightly late dinner and then we all headed off for a well earned nights sleep.

Saturday 8 November

Hluhluwe and Umfolozi and then to St Lucia

Generally overcast & cool with a little rain especially at the coast.

We began the day with a leisurely pre breakfast stroll around the camp area beginning at about 06.30. Species encountered included Olive Sunbird, Terrestrial Brownbul, Green-backed Camaroptera, Samango Monkeys, Bushbuck, Bearded Scrub Robin, Red-capped Robin-chat and African Paradise Flycatcher. However, as light rain had begun, we returned to our cabins, had breakfast and by 08.15 we were leaving for a game drive through Hluhluwe and Umfolozi before setting off in the direction of the coast.

A Steppe Buzzard was our first sighting but then we saw a Lioness lying close to the track. We watched for a while and eventually she got to her feet and began walking parallel to the road. We immediately noticed that following a respectful distance behind her was a male Lion. Eventually they both crossed the trail in front of us and disappeared into thick scrub. Heading onwards from here we found further wildlife of interest and this included Burchell's Coucal, Tawny Eagle, Giraffes, Wildebeest, Zebras, Buffalos, Yellow-billed Kite, Striped Kingfisher, Black-bellied Bustard in display flight, Grey Duiker, White Rhino and White-backed Vultures.

We passed beneath a major road and were then in Umfolozi Game Reserve where the wildlife watching was just as good. We began here with a 'yellow' theme, as the first three birds we saw were Yellow-throated Petronia, Yellow-billed Kite and Yellow-fronted Canary. A little further on we paused to view a few Buffalos and also saw Lesser-striped and Barn Swallows, Speckled Mousebird and Crowned Hornbills. Onwards from here we added Greater Kudu, Burchall's Zebra and Coucal, Scimitarbill, Trumpeter Hornbill, Woolly-necked Stork, Black-bellied Bustard, 2 distant and 3 closer White Rhinos, Nyala, Hyena and Warthog. Also seen were Black-collared and Accacia Pied Barbets, Golden-breasted Bunting and Cape Starling. During lunch we were able to leave the vehicle at a picnic site but had to remain vigilant for wildlife which could easily come walking (or even stalking!) past at any moment. However, our watchfulness paid off as we saw a few things here including 2 Whalberg's Eagles and a number of White-backed Vultures.

It was now time to begin the journey out of Umfolozi and head towards St Lucia however the good watching continued all the way to the tarred road. Sightings included Brown-hooded Kingfisher, more White-backed Vultures, 3 close White Rhinos, half a dozen White-crested Helmetshrikes, an Elephant crossing the Umfolozi River and an adult White-fronted Bee-eater that was occasionally bringing food to a well grown youngster.

The road drive to St Lucia produced little of interest but once settled at our new accommodation, we spent a little time at the estuary just outside of town. Yellow Weavers were frequent in the riverside reed beds and beyond there were at least 5 Hippos to be seen. Ringed Plover, Turnstone and Wood Sandpipers were all familiar species but also present were Blacksmith Plovers, Curlew Sandpipers, Marsh Sandpiper and White-fronted Plover among the waders and the ducks were represented by Yellow-billed and White-faced Whistling Duck. A couple of Caspian Terns flew around, Grey-headed Gulls stood on a sandbank and a Goliath Heron stood in the shallows. A couple of Pied Kingfishers hovering over the water, an African Fish Eagle was perched on a dead tree and both Great and Little Egrets seemed to complete the scene. However one more species of wader was eventually located and this was the first ever Knot noted on a *Travelling Naturalist* tour to this region. We completed the day with a fine meal in a restaurant in town.

Sunday 9 November

St Lucia Wetland Park

Cloudy with a little light rain a.m. a little clearer p.m.

We began the day with a pre breakfast walk to the nearby forest reserve; a fascinating remnant of the coastal forests that used to cover much of the coast hereabouts. The wildlife was excellent too with plenty of new

birds to be found though some of them proved a little elusive. White-eared Barbets and Black-bellied Starlings were seen as we assembled in the garden and then along the road we added Lesser Kestrel, Palm Swift and Green Malkoha. Unfortunately we only had brief, unsatisfactory views of this latter bird but later we did have excellent views of what is usually a very elusive species. On entering the forest itself, birds came thick and fast with the following all being noted throughout the walk:- Spectacled Weaver, Black Saw-wing, Southern Boubou, Livingstone's Touraco, Trumpeter Hornbill, Eastern Nicator, Black-backed Puffback, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Red-eyed Dove, Brown Scrub Robin, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Thick-billed Weaver, African Fish Eagle (heard), Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher and Square-tailed Drongo.

After breakfast back at the hotel we took another walk in the same forest though we did enter the trees at a different location. This also produced many good sightings including Eastern Olive Sunbird, Rudd's Apalis, Woodward's Batis, Yellow-browed Apalis, Cape White-eye, Trumpeter Hornbill and a few mammals including Red Duiker, Red Sun Squirrel, Nyala and a group of Vervet Monkeys. As we approached the riverbank we were reminded of how many dangerous creatures there were in the area as we passed a memorial stone to mark where a young lady had been killed by a crocodile. We certainly kept our eyes open as we neared the water! There were a few Crocs on an island where two Water Thick-knees were standing. Little and Great Egrets waded nervously in the water but the best find here was a pair of Black-throated Wattle-eye which a *Travelling Naturalist* tour had not noted before.

After returning to the hotel briefly we set off for a drive in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve. Mammals came thick and fast once we were inside the reserve and these included Zebra, Greater Kudu, Waterbuck, Blue Wildebeest, Warthog and Vervet Monkey. Birds were plentiful too with Striped and Brown-hooded Kingfishers on roadside wires, Yellow-billed Kites patrolling the skies and both Fan-tailed Widowbirds and Pin-tailed Whydahs in the grassland. Reedbuck, Bushbuck and Red Duiker were also seen before we left the main roadway and turned on to a dirt road. Along this track we soon found Burchall's Coucal and Little Bee-eater perched on roadside vegetation while a Jackal Buzzard circled overhead. Further on, masses of Barn Swallows were taking advantage of a termite hatch. Hundreds of these birds were concentrated in an area half the size of a football pitch. How they did not fly into each other was a mystery! Also making use of this abundant food supply were half a dozen Woolly-necked Storks that were milling around in the long grass pecking here and there to ensure that the swallows did not get all of the protein while in the air with the swallows were 5 Yellow-billed Kites. Within a patch of woodland we glimpsed a Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher while in a more open area, a juvenile Banded Snake Eagle was perched in the top of a dead tree.

As we approached the beach area we stopped at a parking area for our picnic lunch where Samango Monkeys seemed intent on stealing some of our meal. They were unsuccessful! Here we also saw another Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher and this time we obtained excellent views. Lunch completed, we walked down the road to the beach area where we found a few good birds in the wooded area. These included Tawny-flanked Prinia and Green Twinspot while the mammals were represented by Samango and Vervet Monkeys and a few Banded Mongoose. Birds were somewhat scarce out on the beach itself but we did manage good views of a couple of Cape Wagtails, a few Grey-headed Gulls and a White-fronted Plover.

The start of the return journey produced a fine Crowned Eagle as well as numerous sightings of Greater Kudu, Waterbuck and Reedbuck but then we were taken to a platform that had excellent views over a shallow wetland. Birds were plentiful here with numerous waders feeding at the waters edge. These included Wood and Curlew Sandpipers, Ruff, Greenshank, Black-winged Stilt, Little Stint, Ringed and Blacksmith Plovers. An Osprey flew into view, dived in and caught a fish and flew off without any harassment from an African Fish Eagle that was presumably too full to give chase. In the distance we could see groups of Greater Flamingos and African White Pelicans as well as a scattering of Grey Herons, Little & Great Egrets and a couple of Saddle-billed Storks. Other wildlife noted here included a good number of Hippos and at least a couple of dozen Crocodiles.

From here we headed back to St Lucia and a few of the group went to the nearby estuary again. Here we saw more Crocs along with a fair selection of waders, Grey-headed Gulls, Yellow-billed Stork, as well as Caspian and Swift Terns. This completed our watching for the day and we returned to the hotel for a rest before we headed into town for a fine evening meal.

Clear and warm a.m. clouding up and a little rain p.m.

We left St Lucia at 7.30 a.m. and began the journey to Durban. We noted a few species of birds including Cattle Egrets, 3 Long-crested Eagles, Common Fiscals, Woolly-necked Storks, Pied Crows and a Steppe Buzzard. However, it was not until we reached the Umgeni River mouth that we started to see a few new species. These were Common Tern, Kelp Gull and Bronze Manakin but there was also a good 'supporting cast' with Swift Tern, Grey-headed Gull, Marsh Sandpiper, Grey and Goliath Herons, Sacred Ibis, Black-collared Barbet and Red-eyed Dove. From here we drove to the Durban Botanical Gardens where Palm Swifts and African Paradise Flycatchers were nesting in the palms, Red Bishops, Village, Southern Masked and Thick-billed Weavers were nesting in the low vegetation around the lake while the taller trees held Pink-backed Pelicans, Black-headed Herons, Sacred Ibises and African Spoonbills. Other birds noted here included lots of Egyptian Geese, Olive Sunbirds and many Hadada Ibises. A couple of the latter species even came and scrounged some lunch from us at the Durban WI café in the grounds!

After lunch we began the journey towards the Drakensburg Mountains but with a short detour to Scottsburg to enable the photographers to get some close shots of Village/Spotted-back Weavers nest building and displaying. At this location we also saw a few Red-winged Starlings and some more Yellow-billed Kites. From here we journeyed onwards and saw many of the usual species on the way but a brief pause at a small church produced one new species namely a Lesser Honeyguide. Here we also saw a Southern Black Tit and 2 Black-headed Orioles.

As we neared Himeville the views to the mountains were quite spectacular so we paused for a few minutes so that the photographers could get some pictures and the rest could just soak up the atmosphere. At the edge of town there were a few lakes where we could see plenty of Red-knobbed Coots and other species noted as we approached the accommodation included Jackal Buzzards, Long-crested Eagles and African Olive Pigeons. Once settled in, we assembled for a fine evening meal and instructions for our adventure to the mountains the following day.

Tuesday 11 November

Sani Pass to Lesotho & back

Virtually cloudless to begin the day, some cloud by lunchtime then rain later.

Today we were to be taken in two four-wheel-drive vehicles up and over the Sani Pass and into the 'roof of Africa', Lesotho, a country entirely above 3000 feet in altitude. We set off after an early breakfast and just beyond the far end of town we had our first good sighting, 30 or more Grey Crowned Cranes feeding in a field. Once on to the Sani Pass road we had to negotiate a few pieces of rough track where road works were taking place but this seemed tame compared with what was to follow! However, we did not pass up the opportunity of looking at good birds as we went and this was emphasised when we paused beside a golf course and found Jackal Buzzard, Long-crested Eagle, White-necked Ravens and a quantity of Sacred Ibises roosting in a couple of trees. Here we also added Cape Robin Chat, 2 Red-throated Wrynecks, Drakensberg Prinia, Streaky-headed Seed-eater, Common Quail (calling), and two species of Cuckoo, Red-chested and Black. Further on we paused again and located Olive Thrush and Bush Blackcap and we also heard a Dark-capped Yellow Warbler. Climbing to a higher altitude we found numerous Proteas where the birds included Ground Woodpecker, Buff-streaked Robin Chat, Malachite Sunbird and Gurney's Sugarbird.

We reached the South Africa border post at 9.30 and after a brief stop, we continued to climb through the spectacular scenery of this World Heritage Site. After a while we paused for a coffee and during this break we were able to see a couple of Drakensberg Siskins, Bokmakierie, Rock Martins and a Southern Rock Agama. After negotiating many more hairpin bends on this bumpy track, we reached the top of the Pass at 2873 metres above sea level and here we visited the Lesotho border post to have our passports stamped. On across the plateau from here we came across a few Sickle-winged Chats and Sloggett's Ice Rats and a lone Black-headed Heron. We then paused to look at a Mountain Pipit and Large-billed Lark when a close Jackal Buzzard and 2 distant Lanner Falcons flew past. We then found a few other birds including Sentinel Rock Thrush, Cape Bunting and a few Cape Vultures before our first Lammergeier hove into view. We all obtained reasonable views of this latter bird before heading on into a long, winding valley where we would eventually have lunch. During the gentle descent we continued to find good birds including Layard's Tit-babbler, Rock Jumper, Ground Woodpeckers and Grey-winged Francolin.

Our lunch stop had good views across the valley to an occupied Lammergeiers nest. Through telescopes we could clearly see an adult bird on the nest feeding a well-grown chick. We continued to observe this feeding

while we fed but as we completed our lunches, so did the Lammergeier chick. The adult bird took off from the nest and landed on a cliff where it joined a 2 or 3-year old youngster that we had not seen. The adult seemed to take exception to the presence of this extra individual and chased it off. We were given exceptional views as these two birds indulged in some fantastic flying right above our heads. On more than one occasion the adult flipped itself upside down before stooping towards the juvenile. Wow! Other species noted in our lunch area were Grey Tits, Malachite Sunbird and a Fairy Flycatcher.

Soon we began the journey back towards the border post at the top of the pass. We saw many of the same birds as on the way out but perhaps worthy of special mention are the Ground Woodpeckers that were perched up very close to the roadside and the Rock Jumpers that we spent some time watching. At the latter location a Spotted Skaapsteker snake was also seen. At a small village we took the opportunity to briefly visit a small hut and had time to chat with the occupant (via our guide as interpreter). To see how these people lived in such basic accommodation and with such a rudimentary existence was quite humbling. Their bread was quite tasty too!

We then headed back towards the top of the pass but just before crossing back into South Africa, we took the time to visit the Sani Top Chalet, the highest pub in Africa at 2874 metres, a whole metre higher than the top of the pass! After refreshing ourselves with hot chocolates, Lesotho beer and the like we began the descent around the 27 hairpin bends and back towards Himeville with just a couple of brief stops on the way. Unfortunately we were unable to see the hoped-for Dark-capped Yellow Warbler but we did hear it singing again. Also we stopped to view a couple of Baboons and a Bar-throated Apalis and a Barrat's Warbler hopped out into view. This completed our watching for the day and we made a fairly hasty journey back to our accommodation and were soon enjoying another of Jean's fine meals.

Wednesday 12 November

Around Himeville area & departure to Durban airport

Mostly overcast but warm

After breakfast we took time to walk near the accommodation where some good birds were seen. These included African Paradise Flycatcher, Cape Robin Chat, Woolly-necked Stork, White-necked Raven, Long-tailed Widowbird, Common Fiscal, Southern Boubou and a good quantity of Cape Vultures. Mammals seen were both Common and Mountain Reedbuck. After packing our baggage into the minibus for the final time, we set off for a drive along some tracks close to Himeville prior to our departure for Durban. There were a few Blesboks and 3 Black Wildebeest in a field at the edge of town; were they wild or part of a captive breeding programme? On to some dirt roads we came across African Spoonbill, 4 Grey Crowned Cranes and 23 Bald Ibises and we could also hear a few calling Common Quails. Further on we came to a couple of ponds where there were plenty of birds to be seen. These included Little Grebe, Great, Intermediate & Little Egrets, White-breasted & Long-tailed Cormorants, Southern Pochard, White-backed Ducks, Cape Shoveler, South African Shelduck and a couple of Malachite Kingfishers.

After a little more birding in the area we set off for Durban and made a stop at Howick where there was a good viewpoint overlooking Howick Falls. Egyptian Geese were on the river far below us and the air was full of Alpine and African Black Swifts. Also present were a couple of White-necked Ravens. We then went back into town for lunch and sat in the shade of a lovey tree while we waited for our food to be prepared. Every so often a pair of Hadada Ibis would land on a nearby roof and indulge in some loud calling and then some ritualised preening. They were obviously preparing to nest nearby.

Onwards from here we called into the Darvill Bird Sanctuary and eventually found a good selection of waterbirds in particular. Waders were quite plentiful and included Black-winged Stilts, Three-banded, Blacksmith & Kittlitz's Plovers, African Snipe and a good quantity of Ruffs. At the waters edge there were Common Moorhens and a Black Crake while many Red-knobbed Coots fed more openly. Ducks noted were Hottentot & Red-billed Teal while smaller birds were represented by Lesser Swamp & African Reed Warblers and Levaillant's Cisticola. From here it was a simple drive to Durban airport where we arrived in plenty of time for the flight to Johannesburg and then the overnight flight home to the UK. We bade farewell and thank you to Mark and were soon in the departure lounge ready for our first flight. Everything went smoothly and soon after our arrival at Jo'burg, we boarded the overnight flight homewards.

Thursday 13 November

Arrival at Heathrow

The flight was very smooth with only a little turbulence close to 2 or 3 lightning storms during the night. Once at Heathrow, we cleared customs with no problems, collected our luggage and headed our separate ways home.

Species Lists:

BIRDS:

OSTRICHES Struthionidae

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* 5 on 30th & 1 on 1st in Kruger NP

GUINEAFOWL Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Seen in good numbers on each of the first 10 days.
Crested Guineafowl *Guttera puckerling* Just seen on 7th & 8th in Hluhluwe NP

PHEASANTS & Allies Phasianidae

Grey-winged Francolin *Scleroptila africanus* At least 3 seen in Lesotho on 11th
Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena* Just seen on 30th & 1st in Kruger NP
Natal Spurrow *Pternistis natelensis* Commonly seen every day from 29th to 2nd in Kruger NP
Swainson's Spurrow *Pternistis swainsonii* Noted every day from 30th to 3rd
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Heard calling close to Himeville on 11th & 12th

WILDFOWL Anatidae

Wh-faced Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Seen on 7 days in a wide variety of locations
White-backed Duck *Th'sornis leuconotus* Just seen close to Himeville on 12th
Spur-winged Goose *Pl'terus gambensis* Noted on 9 days in small numbers
Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus* Seen every day except 8th
South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana* Just seen on lakes near Himeville on 12th
African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* A single bird seen on the Slang River on 5th
Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* Many seen 4th, 5th & 6th at Wakkeestroom and in other locations on 8th, 9th & 12th
Cape Shoveler *Anas smithii* Seen on 4th, 5th & 6th at Wakkeestroom and on 12th close to Himeville
Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhynchos* Just seen on the final day at Darvill Bird Sanctuary
Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* Seen on 4th & 5th at Wakkeestroom and on 12th at Darville Bird Sanctuary
Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Seen on 4th, 5th & 6th at Wakkeestroom and on 12th at Darvill Bird Sanctuary

GREBES Podicipedidae

Little Grebe *Tchybaps ruficollis* Seen on 4th, 5th & 6th at Wakkeestroom and at Darvill Bird Sanctuary on 12th

FLAMINGOS Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Ph'nicopterus roseus* A Good quantity seen on 9th at the St Lucia Wetland Reserve

STORKS Ciconiidae

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* Just a single bird seen at the St Lucia estuary on 9th
African Openbill Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus* Just a single bird seen on 31st between Letaba and Olifants
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* 1 on 5th and 2 on 8th at Wakkeestroom and Umfolozi respectively
Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Seen on 4 consecutive days from 7th and on 12th with the most interesting sighting being a group feeding on emerging termites on 9th
White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* Just 2 seen during the journey towards Hluhluwe on 6th
Saddle-billed Stork *Eph'hynchus s'galensis* Small numbers seen in Kruger on 5 days and also seen on 9th at the St Lucia Wetland Reserve
Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* Seen on 6 consecutive days from 29th then not noted again

IBISES & SPOONBILLS Threskiornithidae

African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Southern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>
Hadedda Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>

Good numbers seen on the way to Wakkeestroom on 4th then a single bird seen the following day and a few more noted on 10th & 11th
 First seen on 4th on the way to Wakkeestrom and then noted on a further 2 days
 Seen every day
 One possibly seen on 29th at Johannesburg airport and 1 well seen on 31st by the Letaba River
 Small numbers seen on 8 days

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNES Ardeidae

Bl-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>

A few seen at Wakkeestroom on 4th, 5th & 6th
 Single individuals seen on 2nd, 3rd, 6th & 7th
 1 on 31st by the Letaba River then another seen at the Durban Botanical Gardens on 10th
 Noted on 11 days of the tour; the most frequently encountered heron species with large numbers seen some days.
 Small numbers seen on 10 days
 Seen on 3 days near Wakkeestrom and also in Durban on 10th, Lesotho on 11th & at Darville Bird Sanctuary on 12th
 1 on 30th by the Letaba River then seen again on 8th & 10th
 Just a single bird seen at Wakkeestrom by one member of the group
 Seen on 30th by the Letaba River then seen on 4 of the final 5 African days of the tour
 Seen on 4th, 5th & 6th at Wakkeestrom and on 12th close to Himeville
 Noted on 10 days in small numbers

HAMERKOP Scopidae

Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
----------	------------------------

Seen on 4 days plus an unoccupied nest on 7th. The most interesting observation had to be the bird that approached an adult African Fish Eagle that was feeding 2 fledged young with a fish it had just caught. The Hammerkop was trying to steal some of the meal!!

PELICANS Pelicanidae

(Great) White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>

A flock of at least 40 seen on 9th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve
 A couple of pairs were perched in trees in the Durban Botanical Gardens on 10th

CORMORANTS Phalacrocoracidae

Reed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
Wh-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>

Seen on 7 days of the tour
 Seen on 6 days of the tour mostly close to the coastal area

FALCONS Falconidae

Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Taita Falcon	<i>Falco fascinate</i>

A single bird was seen at St Lucia on 9th
 2 heard calling then seen in the distance on the Drakensburg Plateau on 11th

KITES, HAWKS AND EAGLES Accipitridae

Secretary Bird	<i>S'tarius serpentarius</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
African Cuckoo-hawk (Baza)	<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>

2 seen near Wakkeestroom on 5th
 At least 3 close to St Lucia on 9th.
 1 near Hilltop camp on 7th.
 Seen on 3 successive days from 3rd near Wakkeestroom and a single bird seen on 11th near Himeville.

The Travelling Naturalist

Kruger & Drakensberg, Oct - Nov 08 Trip Report

Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus parasiticus</i>	Seen every day except 11 th .
African Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	Noted on 8 days.
Lammergeier (Beard Vult)	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	2 or 3 seen on the Drakensburg plateau and then 3 seen close to the nest site in Lesotho on 11 th .
African Wh-backed Vult	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Seen on each of the first 6 days and also on 7 th and 8 th .
Cape (Griffon) Vulture	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	2 on 1 st beside a Giraffe carcass, at least 7 on 11 th and a fair number on 12 th in the Drakensburg.
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	Just one or two seen in flight on 1 st .
Bl-chestd Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	A single bird seen in Kruger NP on 1 st .
Brown Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinerius</i>	1 on 31 st , 1 on 2 nd and 3 on 3 rd all in Kruger NP
S'th Banded Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus fasciolatus</i>	A juvenile seen on 9 th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Bateleur	<i>T'opius ecaudatus</i>	Seen on each of the first 6 days and also noted on 7 th in Hluhluwe.
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	Seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th in the Wakkeestroom area.
Af Harrier-Hawk(G'gene)	<i>P'boroides radiatus</i>	Just a single bird seen at Olifants Camp on 31 st .
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Meliterax gabar</i>	A single bird seen on 2 nd close to Satara Camp.
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	A single bird seen in Kruger on 2 nd .
Little Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>	1 on 1 st & 1 on 3 rd at Satara & on the way to Misty Mountain respectively.
Lizard Buzzard	<i>K'falco monogrammicus</i>	1 close to Pretoriuskop on 3 rd .
Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo vulpine</i>	Seen on 3 rd , 4 th and 7 consecutive days from 6 th .
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	Seen on 3 days from 9 th with really good views in the Drakensberg on 11 th .
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Seen on 29 th , 30 th & 2 nd in Kruger and on 8 th & 9 th near St Lucia.
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	A single bird flying off into the forest on 3 rd in Kruger NP was probably this species.
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	Small numbers seen on 6 days in widely separated locations.
African Hawk-Eagle	<i>Hieraeetus s'gaster</i>	2 on 31 st on the way to Olifants and 1 at Pretoriuskop on 3 rd .
Martial Eagle	<i>P'maetus bellicosus</i>	2 on 31 st , 1 on 1 st and 2 on 2 nd in Kruger NP and 1 on 9 th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	1 on 3 rd at Misty Mountain then not seen again until 10 th & 11 th near Himeville.
African Crowned Eagle	<i>St'noaetus coronatus</i>	Just a single sighting on 9 th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
BUSTARDS <i>Otididae</i>		
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	Just a single bird drinking at a water hole near Satara on 1 st .
Blue Korhaan	<i>E'dotis carelessness</i>	A single bird as we approached Wakkeestroom on 4 th and then at least 11 in the general area the following day.
Red-crested Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>	Singles seen on 29 th , 30 th & 1 st in Kruger NP
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>E'dotis melanogaster</i>	1 at Mestel pool on 3 rd , also seen on 7 th & 8 th .
RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS <i>Rallidae</i>		
African Rail	<i>Rallus carelessness</i>	Single birds seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th at the Wakkeestroom wetland reserve
Black Crake	<i>Am'rnis flavirostris</i>	Seen on 4 days from 30 th in Kruger NP and a single bird on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary.
African Swamphen	<i>P'rio madagascariensis</i>	Seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th at Wakkeestroom.
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2 beside the Letaba river on 29 th then seen in the Wakkeestroom wetlands on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th and also seen close to Himeville on 11 th & 12 th .
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	Common at Wakkeestroom on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th . Also noted on 10 th & 12 th .
CRANES <i>Gruidae</i>		
Grey/Southern Crowned Crane	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	2 on 4 th & 9 on 5 th near Wakkeestroom and at least 32 on 11 th near Himeville where a couple were seen the

Blue Crane	<i>Grus paradisea</i>	following day. 19 individuals well seen near Wakkeestroom on 5 th .
THICK-KNEES Burhinidae		
Water Thick-knee/Dikkop	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	Seen on 29 th & 30 th close to Letaba. At least 4 on 3 rd close to Pretoriuskop, then 2 on 7 th & 2 on 9 th . Just a single bird seen on a side street in Wakkeestroom.
Sptd Thick-knee/Dikkop	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	
STILTS & AVOCETS Recurvirostridae		
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Seen on 8 days with the most being on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary.
PLOVERS & LAPWINGS Charadriidae		
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	Seen every day except 7 th .
White-crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	2 on 31 st below Olifants Camp.
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	2 each on 1 st , 2 nd & 5 th .
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>	2 on 5 th close to Wakkeestroom wetland.
(Common) Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Noted on 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia.
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	Just a single bird on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary..
Three-banded Plover	<i>Ch'drius tricollaris</i>	Small numbers seen on 7 days.
White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	1 on 30 th beside the Letaba river and also seen on 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia.
PAINTED-SNIPES Rostratulidae		
Greater Painted-Snipe	<i>R'tula benghalensis</i>	1 on 2 nd around the Fayi Loop close to Pretoriuskop.
JACANAS Jacanidae		
African Jacana	<i>Act'ornis africanus</i>	Seen on 4 successive days from 30 th .
SANDPIPERS Scolopacidae		
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>	1 on 4 th & at least 2 on 5 th at Wakkeestroom and 2 on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary.
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnantly</i>	1 on 2 nd at M'zithi Dam, then seen on 8 th & 10 th at St Lucia.
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Small numbers seen on 4 days in widely separated locations.
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Seen on 9 days with the most being at least 20 at Darville on 12 th .
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Single birds noted on 30 th , 31 st , 3 rd & 5 th .
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Just seen on 8 th & 9 th on the estuary at St Lucia.
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Just a single bird seen close to St Lucia on 8 th . The first sighting of this species by a Travelling Naturalist group.
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	4 or 5 seen on 8 th at the estuary at St Lucia.
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	A good number on the estuary at St Lucia on 8 th & 9 th and a few at Darville on 12 th .
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginous</i>	Noted on 8 th & 9 th close to St Lucia.
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Seen on 30 th , 2 nd 5 th , 8 th & 9 th in small numbers, then at least 40 at Darville on 12 th .
COURSERS & PRATINCOLES Glareolidae		
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	1 on 29 th and 2 on 30 th close to Letaba Camp.
GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS Laridae		
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	A fair quantity seen at the Umgeni river mouth, Durban on 10 th .
Grey-hooded Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	Seen on 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia and 10 th at Umgeni river mouth.
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	1 on 8 th and 3 on 9 th at St Lucia.
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	A few seen at the Umgeni river mouth on 10 th .
Swift/Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Seen on 9 th at St Lucia and on 10 th at the Umgeni river mouth.
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	A few seen on 10 th at the Umgeni river mouth.
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	Just a single bird seen on 4 th as we approached Wakkeestroom.

SANDGROUSE Pteroclididae

Double-banded S'grouse *Pterocles bisechs*

2 flew up from the trackside and then promptly disappeared into long grass close to Letaba on 30th.

PIGEONS & DOVES Columbidae

Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*
 Speckled (Rock) Pigeon *Columba guinea*
 Afrn Olive/Rameron Pign *Columba arquatrix*
 African Mourning Dove *St'opelia decipiens*
 Red-eyed Dove *St'opelia s'torquata*
 Ring-nkd/Cape Trtl Dove *Streptopelia capicola*
 Laughing Dove *St'opelia s'galensis*

Noted on 29th, 4th, 8th & 10th.
 First seen on 4th at Wakkeestroom, then noted on a further 7 days.
 1 on 3rd at Misty Mountain, then seen on 10th & 12th near Himeville.
 Noted on the first 6 days in South Africa and also on 12th
 Noted on 8 days.
 Seen on 7 days.
 Seen on 29th, 30th & 31st close to Letaba and then not noted again until 8th.
 Seen on 3 days from 31st near Satara and then on 7th & 8th in Hluhluwe.
 Just a single bird seen on 31st after our vist to Olifants.
 Seen on 29th, 30th, 1st & 3rd and yes it is a pigeon not a parrot!

Emerald-spotd WoodDove *Turtur chalcospilos*

Seen on 3 days from 31st near Satara and then on 7th & 8th in Hluhluwe.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Just a single bird seen on 31st after our vist to Olifants.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calva*

Seen on 29th, 30th, 1st & 3rd and yes it is a pigeon not a parrot!

PARROTS Psittacidae

Brown-headed Parrot *P'phalus cr'oxanthus*

Single birds on 30th, 1st & 3rd.

TURACOS Musophagidae

L'stone's Turaco/Lourie *Tauraco livingstonii*
 Purple-crested Turaco/Lourie *Musophaga p'yreolopha*

Seen on 9th & heard on 10th at St Lucia.

Grey Go-away Bird/Lourie *C'aixoides concolor*

BOB was seen in good numbers every day from 30th - 3rd.

CUCKOOS Cuculidae

Burchell's Coucal *Centropus burchelli*

Heard on 6th in Hluhluwe then seen on 8th in Umfolozi NP and on 9th in the St Lucia wetland reserve.

Green Malkhoa/
 Yellowbilled Coucal *Ceuthmochares aerus*

Good views obtained of this elusive species on 9th at St Lucia.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Oxylophus jacobinus*
 Diderick Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

Just a single bird seen on 6th in Hluhluwe.
 1 seen and another heard on 5th not far from Wakkeestroom and also seen on 11th on the way to the Sani Pass.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*

2 on 11th on the way to the Sani Pass and also seen on 12th close to Himeville.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

1 on 3rd at Pretoriuskop, heard on 7th in Hluhluwe, then seen 10th, 11th & 12th close to Himeville.

OWLS Strigidae

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*

Heard in the evening on 29th, then seen on 31st & 1st at Satara Camp.

Spotted Eagle-owl *Bubo africanus*

2 juveniles on 2nd around the Fayi Loop close to Pretoriuskop.

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*

1 on 30th close to Letaba and 1 on 1st in Satara Camp.

NIGHTJARS Caprimulgidae

Fiery-necked Nightjar *C'mulgus pectoralis*
 Square-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii*

A few seen on 30th & 7th during our night drives.
 A few seen on 30th & 7th during our night drives.

SWIFTS Apodidae

African Palm-swift *Cypsiurus parvus*
 Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Noted on 11 days of the tour.
 Seen on 3rd at Misty Mountain and on 12th at Howick Falls.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

Seen on 3 successive days from 3rd, on 11th in

Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	Lesotho and on 12 th at Howick Falls.
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	Seen every day except 5 th & 9 th .
		A few seen on 2 nd close to Satara Camp.
MOUSEBIRDS Coliidae		
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	Seen every day except 1 st & 5 th .
ROLLERS Coraciidae		
Purple/Rufous-crowned Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>	Seen on 29 th , 31 st , 1 st & 2 nd in Kruger NP
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudata</i>	Seen on first six days in Kruger NP
KINGFISHERS Alcedinidae		
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	Small numbers seen on 7 days of the tour.
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	1 on 3 rd was our first, then seen on 6 th , 8 th & 9 th .
Afr'n Pygmy-kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>	A pair seen excavating a nest on 7 th in Hluhluwe.
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	A single bird on 6 th at Wakkeestroom and 2 on 12 th beside a lake close to Himeville.
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle maxima</i>	1 close to Satara Camp on 1 st , then another later that day at Setara Camp was feeding on a baby Terrapin!
		Another single bird was seen on 4 th at Wakkeestroom.
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	3 on 30 th beside the Letaba River and at least 2 on 8 th close to St Lucia.
BEE-EATERS Meropidae		
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	Single birds seen on 3 rd & 9 th .
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>	2 on 29 th , 4 on 30 th & 1 on 31 st close to Letaba and 2 on 8 th beside the Umfolozi river.
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Seen on 29 th and then 5 successive days from 31 st .
HOPOES Upupidae		
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa Africana</i>	Seen on 8 days with the best views being at Satara Camp.
WOODHOPOES Phoeniculidae		
Green/Red-billed Wood-hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	1 on 30 th close to Letaba was our first, then seen on a further 4 days.
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rh'mastus cyanomelas</i>	3 on 1 st close to Satara and 2 on 8 th in Umfolozi NP.
HORNBILLS Bucerotidae		
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Tockus alboterminatus</i>	Seen on 7 th , 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia.
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Tokus nasutus</i>	Noted on 4 successive days from 29 th and also on 3 rd .
Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tokus erythrorhynchus</i>	Seen on 6 successive days from 29 th in Kruger NP.
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	Noted on 7 successive days from 29 th .
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>	Seen on 8 th & 9 th and heard on 10 th at St Lucia.
GROUND HORNBILLS Bucorvidae		
Southern Grnd Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	5 on 30 th and 5 on 31 st in Kruger NP close to Letaba and then 8 seen on 3rd close to Pretoriuskop.
TOUCANS AND BARBETS Ramphastidae		
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>	Seen on 9 th in the grounds of our hotel at St Lucia.
Ylw-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>	Seen during the pre-breakfast walk at St Lucia on 9 th .
Yellow-frtd Tinkerbird	<i>P'niulus chrysoconus</i>	Seen on 2 nd & 3 rd at Pretoriuskop.
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tr'olaema leucomelas</i>	1 on 1 st at Satara and also seen on 8 th in Umfolozi NP
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>	Seen on 2 nd & 3 rd at Pretoriuskop and on 8 th , 9 th & 10 th at St Lucia.
Crested Barbet	<i>Tr'phonus vaillantii</i>	Seen on six consecutive days from 29 th .

HONEYGUIDES Indicatoridae

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*
Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*

1 seen during the journey to Himeville on 10th.
1 seen briefly in Hluhluwe on 7th and another heard calling there on 8th.

WOODPECKERS Picidae

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis*
Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni*
Ground Woodpecker *Geocolaptes olivaceus*
Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscens*
Bearded Woodpecker *Dendropicos namaquus*

1 on 4th on the way to Wakkeestroom and 2 on 11th on the way to the Sani Pass.
First seen on 2nd at Tshokwani and then seen on a further 2 days.
Seen on 5th near the Slang River and well seen in Lesotho on 11th.
Seen on 3 consecutive days from 1st.
Seen on 29th and 3 consecutive days from 1st.

WATTLE-EYES Platysteiridae

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata*
Cape Batis *Batis capensis*
Woodwards's Batis *Batis fratum*
Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*

2 at St Lucia on 9th was the first record for Travelling Naturalist in this region.
A single bird seen at Misty Mountain on 3rd was the first record for Travelling Naturalist in this region.
2 on 9th in the woodlands at St Lucia.
Noted on 29th, 31st, 1st and 2nd.

HELMETSHRIKES & ALLIES Prionopidae

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus*
Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii*
Grey-headed Bush-shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*
Olive Bush-shrike *Telophorus olivaceus*
Orange-bird Bush-shrike *T'rus sulfureopectus*
Four-coloured Gorgeous Bush-shrike *C'phoneus quadricolor*
Bokmakierie *Telophorus zealous*
Southern Tchagra *Tchagra tchagra*
Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*
Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*
Southern Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus*
Brubru *Nilais afer*

This species, usually seen in small groups, was noted on 31st, 2nd, 3rd & 8th.
Seen as we approached Skukuza on 2nd.
Just noted on 1st at Satara Camp.
1 glimpsed at Misty Mountain on 3rd.
1 on 30th and also seen on 1st & 2nd.
3 well seen on 7th in Hluhluwe and other birds were heard on 9th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Seen on 5th & 6th at Wakkeestroom, and on 11th & 12th near Himeville.
Just seen on 6th as we arrived at Hluhluwe.
Seen on 31st by the Letaba River and on 6th in Hluhluwe.
Encountered in small numbers on 7 days of the tour.
First seen on 2nd, then noted on another 5 days.
Just noted on 30th around the Tzendze Loop and on 31st at Satara.

SHRIKES Laniidae

Magpie Shrike *C'nella melanoleuca*
Southern White-crowned Shrike *E'phalus anguitimens*
Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*

Very commonly seen on 7 consecutive days from 29th, then not seen again.
A small group seen during an afternoon game drive close to Satara Camp on 31st.
First seen on 4th then frequently encountered every day after that except 9th.

ORIOLES Oriolidae

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*

Noted on 4 consecutive days from 31st with the best views on 1st in Satara Camp. Also heard on 7th and 2 were seen on 10th on the way to Himeville.

DRONGOS Dicruridae

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*
Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

Small numbers seen on 3 consecutive days from 8th.
Seen every day except 5th.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS Monarchidae

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Tr'cercus cyanomelas*

1 worked for in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve was eventually glimpsed but then later on 9th 1 visited us during our lunch!

Afn Paradise F'catcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	First noted on 30 th at Letaba Camp and also seen on 3 rd , 8 th , 10 th & 12 th .
JAYS & CROWS Corvidae		
Cape (Black) Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	Noted on 4 th , 5 th , 6 th , 11 th & 12 th . The first was a single bird close to the Letaba River on 31 st , then noted on a further 6 days from 4 th . Just seen close to the Drakensberg on 10 th , 11 th & 12 th .
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	
ROCKJUMPERS Chaetopidae		
Drakensberg Rock-jumper	<i>Chaetops aurantius</i>	Great views of this striking bird in Lesotho on 11 th .
TITS Paridae		
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger</i>	1 on 1 st & 2 nd , 2 on 7 th and 1 on 10 th . A pair seen while we had lunch in Lesotho on 11 th .
Southern Grey Tit	<i>Melaniparus afer</i>	
SWALLOWS & MARTINS Hirundinidae		
Black Saw-wing	<i>P'procne pristopectera</i>	A few seen over the woodland reserve at St Lucia on 9 th .
Grey-rumped Swallow	<i>P'hirundo griseopyga</i>	Just seen on 30 th during an early drive from Letaba Camp.
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	Seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th in the Wakkeestroom area and then seen on 12 th around Himeville.
Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Just seen on 4 th & 5 th near Wakkeestroom.
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Noted every day except 5 th in good numbers.
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	Seen on 4 th & 5 th near Wakkeestroom and on 11 th & 12 th near Himeville.
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>	A few seen in Wakkeestroom on 5 th then not noted again until 11 th close to the Sani Pass.
(Common) House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	A few seen at Johannesburg Airport on 29 th and then noted at Misty Mountain on 3 rd .
Greater Striped Swallow	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	Seen in the Wakkeestroom area on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th , then up in the mountains on 11 th & 12 th .
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	Seen on 5 consecutive days from 30 th and on 6 days from 5 th .
Redbreasted Swallow	<i>Cecropis semirufa</i>	This large member of the family was seen on 4 consecutive days from 31 st and also on 9 th .
Mosque Swallow	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	A few seen hawking for insects close to a dead Giraffe on 1 st .
South African Cliff-swallow	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>	Seen on 5 consecutive days from 4 th .
LARKS Alaudidae		
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Miraфра Africana</i>	2 on 29 th on the way to Letaba Camp were our first, then noted on a further 5 days during the tour.
Sabota Lark	<i>Miraфра sabota</i>	Quite a number seen on 31 st during the drive from Letaba to Satara Camp but then not seen again.
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Ch'manes albofasciata</i>	A fair number seen on the plains close to Wakkeestroom on 5 th .
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	First noted on 4 th as we approached Wakkeestroom and also seen on 11 th in Lesotho.
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>	Just a couple seen high on the Drakensberg Plateau on 11 th .
Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark/ Finch Lark	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>	At least 150 seen on the way to Satara Camp on 31 st . A most unusual sighting as this species is normally glimpsed in small numbers deep in the grass but these were perched up quite openly.
CISTICOLAS & ALLIES Cisticolidae		
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>	Just noted on 2 nd close to Satara Camp.
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chinianus</i>	The most frequently encountered cisticola; recorded on 6 days.
Wailing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola lais</i>	Seen on 3 rd at Misty Mountain and on 11 th in

Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	Lesotho. Seen at Letaba Bridge on 30 th and at Darville Bird Sanctuary on 12 th .
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>	Heard on 6 th in Hluhluwe where the species was seen the following day.
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	At least 4 seen briefly in Hluhluwe on 7 th .
Cloud Cisticola	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>	Heard on 31 st during the drive to Satara and then seen on 5 th near Wakkeestroom.
Wing-snapping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>	1 seen briefly by one or two people on 5 th during our full days drive around the Wakkeestroom area.
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	Noted on 3 rd close to Pretoriuskop and then seen again on 9 th at the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Karoo (Spotted) Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>	Seen on 11 th high in the Drakensberg.
Drakensberg Prinia	<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>	Seen on 11 th high in the Drakensberg.
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>	Just seen in the valley as we returned from the Sani Pass on 11 th .
Rudd's Apalis	<i>Apalis ruddi</i>	Just seen in the forest at St Lucia on 9 th .
Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flavida</i>	Seen on 2 nd and 3 rd at Pretoriuskop and on 9 th in the forest at St Lucia.
Green-backd Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	Seen on 2 nd close to Satara then on 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia.
FAMILY UNCERTAIN – Incertae sedis		
Fairy Warbler/Fairy Flycatcher	<i>Stenostira scita</i>	Seen at a couple of paces high in the Lesotho mountains on 11 th .
BULBULS Pycnonotidae		
Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>	Seen every day except 5 th .
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunes</i>	Heard on 6 th & 8 th at Hluhluwe.
Yellow-bell'd Greenbul	<i>Ch'ichla flaviventris</i>	1 on 1 st at Satara and on 9 th in St Lucia.
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Ph'trephus terrestris</i>	Seen on 8 th at Hilltop Camp and on 9 th at St Lucia.
FAMILY UNCERTAIN Intertae sedis		
Eastern Nicator	<i>Nicator gularis</i>	Seen on 7 th at Hluhluwe and on 9 th at St Lucia.
OLD WORLD WARBLERS Sylviidae		
Little Rush/ African Sedge) Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>	Seen on 5 th at Wakkeestroom.
Barratt's Warbler	<i>Bradypterus barratti</i>	Seen in the valley below the Sani Pass on 11 th .
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>	Just noted on 11 th on the way to and from Lesotho.
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Ac'lus gracilirostris</i>	Seen on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary
African Reed-Warbler	<i>Ac'lus baeticatus</i>	Noted on 5 th & 6 th at Wakkeestroom and on 12 th at Darville Bird Sanctuary.
Dark-capt'd Yell. Warbler	<i>Chloropeta natalensis</i>	Just heard on 11 th in the valley below the Sani Pass.
Yell.-bellied Eremomela	<i>E'la icteropygiali</i>	Seen on 29 th as we entered Kruger NP for the first time and also seen the following day.
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	Seen on 30 th , 31 st and 2 nd in Kruger NP and on 6 th at Hluhluwe.
Layard's Tit-babbler	<i>Parisoma layardi</i>	Just noted high in the mountains of Lesotho on 11 th .
BABLERS & PARROTBILLS Timaliidae		
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>	Seen on 6 consecutive days from 30 th .
Bush Blackcap	<i>L'hus nigricapillus</i>	One or two seen in the valley below the Sani Pass on 11 th .
SUGARBIRDS Promeropidae		
Gurney's Sugarbird	<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>	3 or 4 seen on Protea bushes on the way up to the Sani Pass on 11 th .
WHITE-EYES Zosteropidae		
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallid us</i>	Seen in good numbers on 3 rd & 4 th at Misty Mountain, then noted on 8 th , 9 th & 11 th .
STARLINGS Sturnidae		
Common/Indian Myna	<i>Ac'theries tristis</i>	This introduced species was noted on 7 days especially close to human habitation.
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	A single bird was seen on 30 th close to Letaba camp and then noted on a further 3 days.

Cape (Glossy) Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	This colourful bird was seen on the first 2 days in Africa and also on 6 th , 8 th & 9 th .
Greater Blue-eared (Glossy) Starling	<i>L'tornis chalybaeus</i>	Noted on the first 6 African days particularly around our accommodation.
Burchell's Starling	<i>L'tornis australis</i>	Seen on 31 st & 1 st particularly at Satara Camp
Black-bellied Starling	<i>L'tornis corruscus</i>	Seen on 9 th & 10 th close to St Lucia in particular.
Violet-backed Starling	<i>C'cinclus leucogaster</i>	A female seen on 30 th close to Letaba Camp was followed by sightings on a further 5 days including some superb looking males.
African Pied Starling	<i>Spreo bicolour</i>	First seen on 4 th at Belfast and then seen at other locations later that day and on the next 2 days.
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	Seen on 10 days of the tour.
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>B. erythrorynchus</i>	Noted on the first six days of the tour and from 6 th – 8 th feeding on ticks on various mammals.
THRUSHES Turdidae		
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsurupa</i>	Good views obtained at Letaba and Satara Camps from 30 th – 2 nd .
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus Livonian</i>	Mostly seen at Letaba and Satara Camps on the first 6 African days of the tour.
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	First seen on 7 th in Hluhluwe and then seen on 11 th & 12 th at Himeville.
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>	Just seen at Misty Mountain on 3 rd & 4 th .
CHATS, OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS Saxicolidae		
Cape Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	Seen on 4 th at Misty Mountain on 5 th near the Slang River and on 11 th & 12 th at Himeville.
White-browed Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	Seen on 31 st & heard on 3 rd .
Red-capped Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	Seen on 5 consecutive days from 6 th .
Chorister Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha dichora</i>	Just noted on 4 th at Misty Mountain.
Bearded Scrub-robin	<i>C'chas quadrivirgata</i>	Just seen on 8 th at Hilltop Camp.
Brown Scrub-robin	<i>Cercotrichas signata</i>	Seen on 9 th & 10 th at St Lucia.
Wh.-browed Scrub-robin	<i>C'chas leucophrys</i>	Seen on 31 st on our way to Olifants and the seen on 7 th & 8 th in Hluhluwe.
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	Seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th near Wakkeestroom and during journeys on 10 th , 11 th & 12 th .
Buff-streaked Chat	<i>Oenanthe bifasciata</i>	A pair seen on 5 th at the Slang River and then seen on 11 th on the way to the Sani Pass.
Mountain Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>	Just noted on 5 th a few kilometres from Wakkeestroom.
Sickle-winged Chat	<i>Cercomela sinuate</i>	Quite a number seen on the Drakensberg Plateau and beyond on 11 th .
(Southern) Anteating Chat	<i>M'ichla formicivora</i>	A few seen on 5 th in the Wakkeestroom area.
Mocking Cliff-Chat	<i>T'olea c'meiventris</i>	Seen on 1 st at N'wanetsi picnic area during breakfast and glimpsed the following day near Kopje as we drove towards Pretoriuskop.
Sentinel Rock-thrush	<i>Monticola exploratory</i>	Perhaps half a dozen seen on high ground in Lesotho on 11 th .
Southern Blk Flycatcher	<i>M'nornis pammelaina</i>	Seen on 7 th in Hluhluwe and on 11 th on the way to the Sani Pass.
Pale/Mouse-coloured Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis pallid us</i>	A single bird seen on 31 st close to Satara Camp.
African Dusky F'catcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	1 on 3 rd and 2 on 4 th at Misty Mountain.
SUNBIRDS Nectariniidae		
Collared Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes collaris</i>	Seen during our second forest walk at St Lucia on 9 th .
Eastern Olive Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia olivacea</i>	Seen at Hilltop Camp on 8 th and at St Lucia on 9 th & 10 th .
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>N. senegalensis</i>	Just a single sighting on 8 th at St Lucia.
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	A pair seen on 3 rd at Misty Mountain and another pair seen on 11 th during our picnic lunch in Lesotho.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia chalybea</i>	Seen on 3 rd & 4 th at Misty Mountain.
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia afra</i>	Seen on 3 rd & 4 th at Misty Mountain and on 11 th on our way to Sani Pass.
Marico Sunbird	<i>Nectarina mariquensis</i>	At least 4 seen on 1 st close to Satara Camp.
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia talatala</i>	1 on 30 th , 1 on 1 st , 2 on 2 nd and 1 on 3 rd in various locations.
OLD WORLD SPARROWS Passeridae		
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Noted on 11 days of the tour.
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	2 on 29 th at Johannesburg Airport and also seen on 11 th during our visit to the Drakensberg Mountains.
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffuses</i>	Seen on 9 days of the tour.
Yellow-throated Petronia	<i>P'nia superciliaris</i>	Seen on 7 th & 8 th in Hluhluwe.
WEAVERS & WIDOWBIRDS Ploceidae		
Red-billed Buffalo-weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>	Just seen on 31 st & 1 st at Satara Camp.
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Am'spiza albatross</i>	Seen on 9 th & 10 th at St Lucia.
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>	Seen on 2 nd , 4 th , 9 th & 10 th in various locations, especially at St Lucia on the latter 2 days.
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	Seen on 4 th & 5 th at Wakkeestroom and on 11 th & 12 th close to Himeville.
Yellow Weaver	<i>Ploceus subaureus</i>	Seen on 8 th & 9 th at the river estuary in St Lucia.
Lesser Masked-weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>	Seen on the first 3 African days of the tour in Kruger NP and on 5 th at Wakkeestroom.
Vill/Spot. Backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	The most commonly seen weaver with sightings on 8 days from 2 nd .
Dark-bckd/Forest Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>	Just seen on 9 th in the forest at St Lucia.
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	Just seen on 30 th at Letaba and 2 nd at Satara.
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Small numbers seen on 31 st , 1 st & 3 rd of a species that is the worlds most numerous bird.
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	Seen on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th near Wakkeestroom on 10 th in Durban Botanical Gardens and on 12 th at Durville Bird Sanctuary.
Yellow Bishop/ Yellow-rumped Widow	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	A single bird seen by one lucky member of the group on 10 th .
Fan-tailed/Red-shouldered Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>	Seen on 5 th & 6 th at Wakkeestroom, on 9 th near St Lucia and on 12 th at Darville.
White-winged Widowbird	<i>E. albonotatus</i>	Seen on 7 th & 8 th in Hluhluwe/Unfolozi.
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>	Just seen on 6 th in Hluhluwe.
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>	Noted on 5 days, with the most sightings being on 4 th , 5 th & 6 th near Wakkeestroom.
WAXBILLS MUNIAS & allies Estrildidae		
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	Seen on 30 th at Letaba Bridge and then a female on 1 st close to Satara.
Green(-backed) Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>	Just seen on 9 th in the beach area in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
African/Blue-billed Firefinch	<i>L. rubricata</i>	Just seen in Hluhluwe on 6 th .
Jameson's Firefinch	<i>L. rhodopareia</i>	A lucky sighting on 31 st on the way to Olifants from Letaba.
Blue Waxbill	<i>U'thus angolensis</i>	Seen on 6 days in small numbers particularly around Letaba and Satara camps in the Kruger NP.
Swee Waxbill	<i>Estrilda melanotis</i>	Just noted on 3 rd during a walk at Misty Mountain.
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrid</i>	Seen on 30 th , 5 th & 11 th in various locations.
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	Just a single bird seen briefly on 10 th as we watched birds on the Umgeni estuary.
Red-backed Mannikin	<i>Lonchura nigriceps</i>	A few seen during a walk at Misty Mountain on 3 rd .
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Noted on 10 days of the tour.

WAGTAILS & PIPITS Motacillidae

Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Cape/Orange-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-thr. Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
African/Grassveld Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Mountain Pipit	<i>Anthus hoeschi</i>
Bushveld Pipit	<i>Anthus caffer</i>
African Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus crenatus</i>

Noted on 8 days of the tour beginning at Johannesburg Airport on 29th.
 Noted on 10 days of the tour.
 Just seen on 5th near Wakkeestroom where the species was relatively common.
 Seen on 7th & 8th in Hluhluwe NP
 Seen on 5th & 6th near Wakkeestroom.
 Just a single bird seen on 11th on the Drakensberg Plateau.
 1 or 2 seen on 30th during drives from Letaba Camp.
 A single bird was seen at the Slang River on 5th and we also saw them in the mountains of Lesotho on 11th.

FINCHES & Allies Fringillidae

Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
Yellow Canary	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>
Streaky-headed Seed-eater	<i>Serinus gularis</i>
Drakensberg Siskin	<i>Serinus symonsi</i>

Seen on 5th near Wakkeestroom and on 10th & 11th close to Himeville.
 Noted on 10 days of the tour.
 Just seen on 11th during our visit to Lesotho.
 Seen on 2 or 3 locations on 11th on the journey towards the Sani Pass.
 3 or 4 seen during a coffee break just below the Sani Pass on 11th.

BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & allies Emberizidae

Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>

A couple seen in Lesotho on 11th.
 Seen on 30th, 31st, 2nd, 8th & 11th in various locations.

MAMMALS

MAMMALIA

RABBITS & HARES - Leporidae

Scrub Hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
------------	------------------------

2 during each of the night drives on 30th, 1st & 7th and also seen during the day on 4th.

SQUIRRELS Sciuridae

Smith's Bush/Safrican Tree Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Red Bush/Red-bellied Coast Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus palliates</i>

Seen in small numbers on 29th, 30th, 1st, 2nd & 3rd.

Just a single individual seen on 9th in the woodland at St Lucia.

MICE, RATS,VOLES & GERBILS Muridae

Sloggett's Ice-Rat	<i>Otomys sloggetti</i>
--------------------	-------------------------

Quite a few seen in Lesotho on 11th.

PORCUPINES Hystricidae

South African Crested Porcupine	<i>Hystrix africae-australis</i>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------

1 seen on a night drive on 1st was a new species for Travelling Naturalist in the region.

SPRING-HARE Pedetidae

Spring Hare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>
-------------	-------------------------

Just a single individual seen during the night drive at Leaba on 30th.

OTTERS Lutrinae

Cape Clawless Otter	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>
---------------------	-----------------------

3 seen in a lake on the way to Wakkeestroom on 4th was a Travelling Naturalist sighting of this species.

GENETS & CIVETS Viverridae

Common/Small-sptd Genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>
-------------------------	------------------------

Seen during night drives on 30th (1), 1st (2) and 7th (3). It is possible that one or two of these animals were in fact Cape or Large Spotted Genets.

CATS Felidae

Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>
--------	---------------------------

During a night drive from Satara on 1st a spotted cat was seen to run off and was immediately identified by our driver as a Cheetah but on reflection all of the group agreed that it was probably a Cerval.

Cheetah	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	2 presumed males were seen fairly close to Satara Camp on 2 nd and we were surprised at how close they were to some Lions.
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Noted on each of the first five African days with especially good numbers during our night drive on 1 st . Also seen on 8 th in Hluhluwe.
MONGOOSEES Herpestidae		
Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	Seen on 30 th , 31 st , 3 rd , 6 th & 7 th .
Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	Seen on 3 successive days from 1st in Kruger NP including an odd one or two around our accommodation.
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	About a dozen on 31 st by the Letaba River, then at least 30 on 2 nd , and finally noted on 9 th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Suricate/Meerkat	<i>Suricata suricata</i>	A group of at least a dozen seen not far from Wakkeestroom on 5 th .
Yellow Mongoose	<i>Cynictis pencilata</i>	A few seen near Wakkeestroom on 5 th .
HYENAS Hyaenidae		
Spotted Hyaena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Single individuals seen on 31 st during the journey from Olifants to Satara and on 8 th in Umfolozi.
DOGS & allies Canidae		
Black-backed Jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	1 seen on 1 st during our night drive from Satara and also heard calling in the darkness on 11 th at Himeville.
OLD WORLD FRUIT-BATS Pteropodidae		
Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat	<i>Epomorphorus wahlbergi</i>	Good numbers seen roosting under thatched roofs at Skukuza on 2 nd .
SHEATH-TAILED BATS Emballonuridae		
Mauritian Tomb Bat	<i>Taphozous Mauritanus</i>	Seen leaving their roosting boxes at Letaba Camp on 30 th .
GALAGOS & LORISES Loridae		
Thick-tailed (Greater) Galago/Bushbaby	<i>O'mur crassicaudatus</i>	Heard on 7 th at Hilltop Camp but unfortunately not seen.
OLD WORLD MONKEYS Cercopithecidae		
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	Seen in various locations on seven days.
Samango/Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>	Seen on 8 th during the pre breakfast walk at Hilltop Camp and also seen the following day in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve.
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chl'bus pygerythrus</i>	Noted on 12 days of the tour.
PIGS Suidae		
Warthog	<i>P'choerus aethiopicus</i>	Small numbers seen in widely separated locations on 9 days.
HIPPOTAMUSES Hippopotamidae		
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippo. Amphibious</i>	We started with half a dozen on 29 th on our way to Letaba Camp and encountered this species on a further four days in Kruger NP and also on 8 th & 9 th at St Lucia.
GIRAFFES Giraffidae		
Giraffe	<i>Gir. Camelopardalis</i>	Seen on 10 of the first 11 days of the tour.
CATTLE, ANTELOPE, SHEEP & GOATS Bovidae		
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Seen on five successive days from 30 th in Kruger NP
Klipspringer	<i>O. oreotragus</i>	Just a single animal seen resting on a kopi on 2 nd on the way to Pretoriuskop.
African Buffalo	<i>Synceros caffer</i>	Commonly seen on 10 days of the tour.
Nyala	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>	A single animal seen on 2 nd not far from Satara and then noted on 6 th , 7 th , 8 th & 9 th .

Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	Common around some of the camps in Kruger on five days and also seen on 8 th , 9 th & 10 th close to St Lucia.
Greater Kudu	<i>T. strepsiceros</i>	Seen on five successive days from 30 th and also on 8 th & 9 th in Hluhluwe/Umfolozi and St Lucia Wetland Reserve respectively.
Sable	<i>Hippotragus niger</i>	A group of about 15 were seen on 2 nd as we neared Pretoriuskop and a male was seen in this general area on 3 rd . This is the first time a Travelling Naturalist group has recorded his species.
Southern Reedbuck	<i>Redunca aluminium</i>	Seen on 9 th in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve and on 12 th during the pre breakfast walk at Himeville.
Mountain Reedbuck	<i>Redunca flavourful</i>	Five seen high up in the mountains as we returned from the Sani Pass on 11 th and then also seen close to Himeville on 12 th .
Common Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	Noted on 4 consecutive days from 31 st and also on 7 th 8 th & 9 th .
Black Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes gnou</i>	3 individuals possibly captive seen near Himeville on 12 th .
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Seen on 4 consecutive days from 31 st and also on 7 th , 8 th & 9 th .
Tsessebe	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	A female with a fairly small youngster seen on 30 th close to Makhadzi.
Blesbok	<i>D. dorcas phillipsi</i>	3 on 4 th and at least 40 on 5 th near Wakkeestroom and also seen on 12 th near Himeville.
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Seen on 10 days.
Natal/Forest Duiker	<i>C. natalensis</i>	Seen on 7 th , 8 th & 9 th in Hluhluwe, Umfolozi and the St Lucia Wetland Reserve respectively.
Bush/Common Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	Seen on 3 consecutive days from 1 st and also on 8 th , 9 th & 12 th .
HORSES Equidae		
Burchell's/Plains Zebra	<i>Equus burchellii</i>	Noted on 10 days of the tour.
RHINOCEROSSES Rhinocerotidae		
White Rhinoceros	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	A few seen in Kruger on 4 days from 31 st but more seen from 6 th in Hluhluwe, Umfolozi and in the St Lucia Wetland Reserve on 9 th .
Black Rhinoceros	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>	Just a single sighting on 2 nd not far from Satara Camp.
HYRAXES Procaviidae		
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Just noted on 5 th close to Wakkeestroom.
ELEPHANTS Elephantidae		
African Savanna Elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	We started well with 23 on 29 th and saw the species on a further 7 days of the tour.

The following species from various other groups were also recorded during the tour

REPTILES Reptilia

Leopard Tortoise	<i>Geochelone pardalis</i>
Serrated Hinged T'pin	<i>Pelusius sinuatus</i>
Southern/Blue-headed Tree Agama	<i>Agama atricollis</i>
Rock Agama	
Five-lined/ Rainbow Sink	<i>Mabuya quinq'niata</i>
Striped Skink	
Drakensberg Crag Lizard	<i>Pseudocordylus sp.</i>
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus ruloticus</i>
Spotted Skaapsteker	
Reed Snake	
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
Marsh Terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>

AMPHIBIANS Amphibia

Russet backed sand frog

Red toad

BUTTERFLIES Lepidoptera

SWALLOWTAILS & allies Papilionidae

Citrus Swallowtail *Papilio demodocus*

WHITES, YELLOWS & SULPHURS Peridae

Scarlet tip *Colotis danae*

Meadow White *Pontia helice*

African Clouded Yellow

BRUSH-FOOTED BUTTERFLIES Nymphalidae

MONARCHS & allies

Plain tiger/Lesser wanderer/

African Monarch *Danaus chrysippus*

VAESSIDS & smaller Fritillaries - subf Nymphalinae

Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*

DAMSELFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES

Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*

Banded Groundling *Br'themis leucosticta*

Broad Scarlet (darter) *Crocothemis erythraea*

Violet Dropwing *Trithemis annulata*

OTHER SELECTED INSECTS Insecta

Dung Beetle (black)

Dung Beetle (green)

(CMR) Blister Beetle

Light Brown Praying Mantis

Luminous Green Praying Mantis

Giant Pill Millipede

Red winged Grasshopper

Short horned Green Grasshopper

Short horned Blue & Red Grasshopper

With 356 bird species and just one short of 50 mammal species seen during this tour, South Africa is certainly an amazing place to visit. Our guides took us to a wide range of habitats and locations and all of this certainly helped to increase the quantities of species we saw. Despite the fact that this is nowhere near our first visit to the area it was great to get a number of new species for Travelling Naturalist.

The scenery was spectacular especially on the day that we drove into Lesotho via the Sani Pass and the weather provided a few exciting moments too, especially on the two evenings that we had thunder and lightening storms. This was after all the beginning of the rainy season and what a spectacular start it made!

To try and pick out any special wildlife moments would be futile. There were so many great species or memorable moments that to list them would take up further pages. And I am sure each participant would have rated something different to everyone else as their special moment. Suffice to say we had a great time in a wonderful country.

Mike Read, December 2008

© The Travelling Naturalist, 2008