



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

South African Mega Birding Tour

2nd to 25th October 2009



Drakensberg Rockjumper on Sani Pass by Thomas Schall

Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader David Hoddinott

Tour Summary

Our record breaking trip total of 523 species in 24 days reflects the immense birding potential of South Africa. Whilst the focus of the tour was certainly the rich assemblage of Southern African endemics, we did not neglect the amazing diversity of mammals. Participants were treated to an amazing 142 out of a possible 148 South African endemics, regional endemics and regional near-endemics on our route, with other highlights including stunning views of Buff-spotted Flufftail, all 10 South African Bustards, Southern Fulmar, 40 species of raptors including the mega Taita Falcon, nomadic Burchell's Courser, Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, Southern Ground Hornbill, localized Green (Woodward's) Barbet, all 4 Honeyguides, 24 Lark species, all 6 Thrushes and all 14 Sunbirds. Some of the mammalian highlights included an impressive 59 species (without visiting Kruger National Park!), fantastic Aardvark, superb views of Aardwolf and Springhare as well as Heaviside's Dolphin and Southern Right, Humpbacked and Bryde's Whales.

After leaving a bustling Johannesburg we headed north-east to Polokwane (situated in the Limpopo Province), the start of an unbeatable Mega endemic birding tour. Our first full day was mainly a travel day but comfort stops along the route produced several smart birds such as our only Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird of the trip, White-winged Widowbird and the magnificent Northern Black Korhaan whilst in a traffic jam. A short walk near our comfortable lodge produced memorable sightings of Little Sparrowhawk, a pair of cryptic Spotted Thick-knee and Greater Honeyguide.

Up early the next morning in search of our key target, the endemic Short-clawed Lark, we were soon enjoying great views of Cape Penduline Tit, a flock of Wattled Starling, groups of tiny Scaly-feathered Weaver and Short-clawed Lark, even before entering Polokwane Game Reserve. Making our way into the Reserve we picked up some great birds including Natal Spurfowl, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, and unbelievably confiding Crimson-breasted Shrike on several occasions, Ashy Tit, a pair of Groundscraper Thrush, dazzling Marico and White-bellied Sunbirds and a lone Jameson's Firefinch.

Whilst birding around the forested slopes of Magoebaskloof we found a magnificent pair of Crowned Eagle, Scaly-throated Honeyguide being fed by a pair of Olive Woodpeckers – the honeyguide even mimicking the woodpecker a couple of times, stunning ruddy form of Olive Bushshrike, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, the dainty Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler and a pair of Chorister Robin-Chats that flitted all around us and finally landed to allow us all great views. During breakfast we were entertained by a large flock of the adorable Sweet Waxbill.



With a healthy list of endemics already under our belts we headed off on the long drive south. We couldn't resist stopping for a Giant Kingfisher perched alongside the road. This stop was remarkable as we added one new species after another, totalling a dozen new species in as many minutes. This included stunning scope views of an adult African Goshawk, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler and African Golden Weaver. Further on we watched three brilliant male Red-headed Weavers at their newly constructed nests and then stopped to search for Taita Falcon – South Africa's rarest breeding bird. A tantalizing wait ensued as yet another half hour went by and we decided that we had to leave after a maximum two hour wait. Whilst waiting, we were entertained by many Cape Vultures overhead, flocks of Red-winged Starlings, a pair of Cape Rock Thrush and delightful Mocking Cliff Chats. With just three minutes remaining before our time was up, in flew a superb male falcon who took over the incubating duties and the female promptly sat up allowing us great scope views. So with high spirits we set off for Lydenburg only to be hampered by vehicle

problems when our bus came to a grinding halt right in front of a brake and clutch shop where our clutch was quickly repaired. While waiting for a backup vehicle to arrive we enjoyed some marvellous sightings; first a flock of low flying Alpine Swift, then a handsome Thick-billed Weaver and finally a resplendent male Violet-backed Starling – can you believe it the only one of the tour – its funny how things work out! Soon we were on our way to the highveld grasslands of Wakkerstroom.

An early morning start saw us exploring the network of roads through these beautiful rolling grasslands. Our first birding spot produced notable sightings of Yellow-breasted Pipit, a pair of Red-winged Francolins right next to the road, Eastern Long-billed Lark calling from a boulder strewn ridge and several majestic male Long-tailed Widowbirds in full breeding plumage. A visit to the nearby marsh yielded a host of wetland species including Little Bittern, African Rail and scope views of Little Rush Warbler. Nearby we were entertained by a calling Red-throated Wryneck and a pair of the delightful endemic Bokmakierie. After a hearty breakfast we went in search of more specialties of the area and were soon ticking a covey of Grey-winged Francolin, splendid Southern Bald Ibis, unique Secretarybird, Denham's and Black-bellied Bustards and Barrow's and Blue Korhaans, Rudd's and Pink-billed Larks and after a concerted effort Botha's Lark. A further visit to the marsh produced a super African Grass Owl and a pair of Spot-necked Otter. With such beautiful surroundings and magnificent birding it was hard to leave but we weren't quite done yet and quickly found another elusive endemic African Rock Pipit and striking Buff-streaked Chats.

Travelling to Zululand we stopped off at Pongola Dam to enjoy some bushveld species and were rewarded with sightings of Lappet-faced Vulture, Southern Red-billed Hornbill, a flock of Red-billed Buffalo Weaver and numerous mammals including Warthog, Giraffe and a wonderful seven White Rhinoceros.



Our stay near Hluhluwe was most enjoyable, around our comfortable lodge set in superb sand forest, we picked up the quaint Crested Guineafowl who always appear like they're having a bad hair day, scope views of a stunning male Four-colored Bushshrike unusually showing well for all, tiny Grey Penduline Tit, endemic Rudd's Apalis, Grey Sunbird, lovely Grey Waxbill and delightful Pink-throated Twinspot. An excursion to the birding mecca that is Mkuzi Game Reserve and the nearby Muzi Pan was extremely fruitful with numerous great sightings including a pair of African Pygmy Goose, nesting Pink-backed Pelican, Collared Pratincole, elusive Green Malkoha showing well, catemeral Pearl-spotted

Owlet, cute Red-fronted Tinkerbird and Bearded Scrub Robin. Amazingly we managed to find a splendid male Neergaard's Sunbird in the heat of the day, African Golden Weaver nesting and a pair of unexpected Retz's Helmetshrike.

Continuing south to St.Lucia we picked up the localized Lemon-breasted Canary and an impressive Bateleur en route. With recent rains the St.Lucia area was lush and green and many species were in breeding plumage and seen nest building. Our birding forays through the gardens, forest trails, estuary and Lake St.Lucia itself produced wonderful sightings including many Goliath Heron, the striking Saddle-billed Stork, sought after Southern Banded Snake Eagle, retiring Woodward's Batis, smart Black-throated Wattle-eye, Red-capped Robin-Chats hopping around the campsite, Brown Scrub Robin and elusive Green-backed Twinspot. Apart from the fantastic birding we also enjoyed watching massive Crocodiles and Hippopotamus lazing on a sandbar at the estuary.

Leaving the coast we headed inland to the beautiful Ngoye Forest picking up a superb adult Palmnut Vulture and Grey-rumped Swallow en route and after lunch we quickly found Green (Woodward's) Barbet which often proves rather elusive. We had been particularly fortunate with good weather and this continued at Dhlinda Forest where two male Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeons, confiding Narina Trogon, dazzling Emerald Cuckoo, very vocal Red-chested Cuckoo and shy

Spotted Ground Thrush were added. After enjoying a delicious breakfast in the forest we made our way to the Drakensberg.

The predictions of bad weather for our day up Sani Pass never materialized and so we were treated to a memorable day's birding whilst enjoying the spectacular scenery. This was one of those rare trips where everything just seemed to fall into place and one new bird appeared after another. We were soon enjoying magnificent Malachite Sunbird feeding on *Watsonias*, Ground Woodpecker, a comical sight of a tailless Fan-tailed Grassbird trying to display, Layard's Warbler, soaring Lammergeier, Mountain Pipit, Drakensberg Siskin and the highly sought-after Drakensberg Rockjumper bounding from rock to rock for all to see. Whilst taking a break to enjoy a welcome cup of hot chocolate at the highest pub in Africa we were treated to great views of the cute Sloggett's Ice Rat. This wrapped up an outstanding day and we descended the Pass to enjoy the night at our lovely lodge near Underberg.

An early start saw us heading for a patch of mistbelt forest. Just before entering the forest we found a recently arrived migrant Black Cuckoo which gave great scope views. Having not seen Bush Blackcap the day before there was a little tension in the air, however we were soon watching not one but four Bush Blackcaps and a pair of beautiful Orange Ground Thrush. This was followed by a pair of Knysna Turaco nonchalantly feeding in a fruiting tree giving simply amazing views and a shy Lemon Dove which showed briefly. Making our way back to Hilton we came to an abrupt stop for a family group of Ground Hornbills at the roadside; a totally unexpected sighting and another highlight of the trip. Next we found a pair of Blue Swallows, literally with just a few minutes to spare before the mist rolled in and visibility was reduced to a few metres. We proceeded to Hilton for our final night's stay in eastern South Africa.



Shortly before making our way to Durban for our flight to Cape Town we stopped at a local patch of forest and were rewarded with a memorable morning's birding with the cherry on the top being superb views of Buff-spotted Flufftail. Our delayed flight meant that we enjoyed a relaxed lunch at the airport, the timing of which was perfect as no sooner had we finished lunch our flight was ready and we boarded our flight to Cape Town. From here we made our way to the Overberg enjoying flocks of Blue Cranes in the fading light over the golden wheat fields.

We enjoyed a most memorable stay at a wonderful lodge near De Hoop Nature Reserve. Our pre-breakfast walk was particularly productive as it was literally teeming with birds in every direction. With reluctance we dragged ourselves away to enjoy a delicious breakfast and then headed into the picturesque De Hoop Nature Reserve. En route we found a dozen Cape Vultures attending a carcass, Denham's Bustards displaying on several occasions, the elusive Southern Tchagra, an Agulhas Long-billed Lark with its funny display flight – really showing off and the dainty Pearl-breasted Swallows collecting nesting material.

Returning to Cape Town we stopped in the Hottentots Holland Mountains and were greeted by a pair of Cape Siskin on arrival, shortly followed by a family group of magnificent Cape Rockjumper and Cape Sugarbirds attending flowering *proteas* nearby.

Due to inclement weather we were unable to do the pelagic the following day however we had a backup day which meant that we could enjoy the Cape Peninsula first. An early morning outing yielded the endemic Victorin's Warbler before continuing onto the impressive Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. Whilst enjoying these magnificent gardens we found a very confiding Spotted Eagle-Owl, gorgeous Orange-breasted Sunbird and a hunting Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk. After lunch we visited Strandfontein Bird Sanctuary which did not disappoint with numerous sightings of many wetland species including a pair of White-backed Duck, our only sighting of the trip.

Our pelagic trip was superb as we had only just left Cape Point when we came across a trawler with thousands of birds in its wake! Suddenly we were surrounded by seabirds including

many beautiful Shy Albatrosses, several Black-browed Albatrosses, a fleeting Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross, both Southern and Northern Giant Petrels really close allowing good views of diagnostic features, hundreds of striking Cape Petrel and Wilson's Storm Petrels plus a bonus in the form of an unexpected Southern Fulmar. Whales were in particular evidence and we recorded no less than three species including stunning views of many Southern Wright Whales. After the pelagic we enjoyed time at the wonderful African Penguin colony and then spent the remainder of the afternoon in the Cape of Good Hope National Park, rounding off another great day!

Travelling north we visited West Coast National Park and enjoyed a feast of Cape endemics including several sightings of the handsome Black Harrier and a male Southern Black Korhaan at the roadside giving superb views. A nearby saltworks produced the sought after Chestnut-banded Plover and flocks of Lesser Flamingos. Cape Long-billed Lark and the difficult Cape Clapper Lark showed well nearby.

Making our way to Calvinia we stopped en route to search for the tricky endemic Protea Canary which kindly obliged and gave outstanding scope views for all. Continuing, we watched a magnificent pair of Verreaux's Eagles soaring at eye-level, a pair of beautiful European Bee-eater in fresh plumage, several striding Ludwig's Bustard, a pair of displaying Blue Crane close to the roadside, Namaqua Warbler and elusive Karoo Eremomela.

An early morning visit to the nearby Akkerendam Nature Reserve was unusually quiet but we did pick up a smart Booted Eagle and Karoo Long-billed Lark. En route to Brandvlei we found a pair of Karoo Korhaan with chicks (what a sight) and a large colony of South African Cliff Swallows. Later, we had a spot of good fortune as we came across the very nomadic Black-eared Sparrowlarks and Black-headed Canaries coming down to a water trough to drink – our only sightings of these two species. Despite the very hot and arid conditions in Brandvlei we found numerous specials including the lovely Namaqua Sandgrouse, Pririt Batis, Tractrac Chat and a host of larks including Red and Sclater's.



Travelling west towards Springbok we found an impressive Marial Eagle at the roadside, smart Pygmy Falcon, colonial Sociable Weavers at their enormous nests, a large migratory Peregrine Falcon of the race *calidus*, a pair of Kori Bustard, elusive Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Orange River White-eye and Black-throated Canary – not bad for a travel day! From our base at Springbok we explored the remote north western tip of South Africa. Our main target, the localized, endemic Barlow's Lark proved easy to find, affording us extra time to visit Alexander Bay on the border of Namibia where we found good numbers of Lesser

Flamingo and Pied Avocet. We enjoyed lunch in the coastal town of Port Nolloth and found Bradfield's Swift and Crowned Cormorant nearby before making our way back to Springbok. On our return we located a small flock of Damara Canary (often split off from Black-headed Canary). The following day we travelled east to Augrabies Falls National Park. We enjoyed a wonderful variety of birds in the lush camp grounds including very confiding Pale-winged Starlings, Pied Barbet, Common Scimitarbill, Lesser Honeyguide and migrant Spotted Flycatcher. A brazen Small Grey Mongoose showed very well and did not seem perturbed by our presence at all. We took time out to enjoy the wonderful Augrabies Falls before making our way to Kimberley, our final destination of the tour. En route we found a pair of the highly nomadic Burchell's Courser.

Our time spent in the Kimberley area was particularly productive. We explored the areas of stunning highveld grasslands and bushveld finding a superb covey of Orange River Francolin, Tawny Eagle, Red-crested Korhaan (our tenth and final SA bustard species), African Cuckoo, Fawn-colored and displaying Eastern Clapper Larks, Desert and Cloud Cisticolas, Short-toed Rock Thrush, gaudy Violet-eared Waxbill and localized Kimberley Pipit. Our record breaking bird turned out to be Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. We also embarked on a fabulous night drive finding a host of

mammals including the bizarre Springhare, Porcupine, Aardwolf, Bat-eared Fox and Aardvark (seen on the last three Mega tours) plus great views of Rufous-cheeked Nightjar.

On returning to Johannesburg for our flights home we picked up several Chestnut-backed Sparrowlarks. This ended a highly successful and enjoyable Mega South Africa tour!

Annotated List of Birds recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC 2.2 List of: Gill, F. and Wright, M. August 2009. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Total species recorded: 523 (516 seen and 7 heard)

E = South African Endemic, **RE** = Regional Endemic to Southern Africa, **RNE** = Regional Near Endemic.

BE = Breeding Endemic, Brackets indicate Clements [omissions] and (changes)

Ostrich Struthionidae

[Common] Ostrich

Struthio camelus

We had wonderful sightings of many throughout the tour including several family groups with tiny chicks. We had sightings in Polokwane GR, on game farms in the Kimberley area and in West Coast NP.

NOTE: some authorities regard the subspecies S. c. molybdophanes of dry East Africa as a distinct species: Somali Ostrich. The form we observed would remain with the nominate Common Ostrich S. camelus. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Guineafowl Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Recorded on most days of the tour being especially common in Eastern South Africa

NOTE: The nominate N. m. meleagris Helmeted Guineafowl, is sometimes regarded as distinct from the western (N. m. galeata) West African Guineafowl and the southern, which we recorded, (N. m. mitrata) Tufted Guineafowl. Clements does not as yet recognise these splits.

Crested Guineafowl

Guttera pucherani

We recorded up to eight birds daily in the Hluhluwe area.

NOTE: The West African form is sometimes split off as Western Crested Guineafowl (G. edouardi). Clements does not accept this split.

Pheasants & Partridges Phasianidae

Grey-winged Francolin (E)

Scleroptila afra

We had wonderful views of a covey of five near Wakkerstroom and a further three near De Hoop NR.

Red-winged Francolin

Scleroptila levaillantii

We had incredible scope views of a pair alongside the road near Wakkerstroom.

Orange River Francolin (RNE)

Scleroptila levaillantoides

We had amazing views of four of this difficult species in the Kimberley area.

Crested Francolin

Dendroperdix sephaena

We enjoyed great views of three in Polokwane GR

NOTE: The subspecies F.s.rovuma of Coastal SE Africa is sometimes considered by authorities to be a separate species, Kirk's Francolin. This split is not currently accepted by Clements.

Cape Spurfowl (RE)

Pternistis capensis

We enjoyed numerous sightings in West Coast NP.

Natal Spurfowl (RNE)

Pternistis natalensis

We had good but brief views of four in Polokwane GR.

Red-necked Spurfowl*Pternistis afer*

We heard this species at Marutswa Forest.

Swainson's Spurfowl (RNE)*Pternistis swainsonii*

First seen in Polokwane GR with further sightings in the Wakkerstroom area

Common Quail*Coturnix coturnix*

We heard several calling near West Coast National Park.

Swans, Geese & Ducks Anatidae**White-faced Whistling-Duck***Dendrocygna viduata*

Seen at Muzi Pan, Pongola Reserve and in the Kimberley area

White-backed Duck*Thalassornis leuconotus*

A pair was seen at Strandfontein Bird Sanctuary. A scarce species in South Africa

Spur-winged Goose*Plectropterus gambensis*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout South Africa, with peak numbers of eighty at Muzi Pan

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout South Africa

South African Shelduck (RE)*Tadorna cana*

This attractive species was recorded at several sites in the Cape Province including peak numbers of thirty in Kimberley.

African Pygmy Goose*Nettapus auritus*

A pair of these attractive birds was seen well at Muzi Pan.

Cape Teal*Anas capensis*

Seen at several sites including peak numbers of four hundred at Strandfontein

African Black Duck*Anas sparsa*

One of these shy duck's was seen near Sani Pass.

Mallard*Anas platyrhynchos*

We had good but brief views of four near De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Yellow-billed Duck*Anas undulata*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout South Africa, with highest numbers of forty at Wakkerstroom

Cape Shoveler (RE)*Anas smithii*

This regional endemic was encountered at several wetlands including peak numbers of sixty at Strandfontein.

Red-billed Teal*Anas erythrorhyncha*

Recorded at many wetlands throughout the tour with peak numbers of five hundred in Kimberley

Hottentot Teal*Anas hottentota*

Three were seen at Wakkerstroom with a further flock of forty at Darvill Bird Sanctuary.

Southern Pochard*Netta erythrophthalma*

Forty were seen at Strandfontein and thirty at Wakkerstroom.

Maccoa Duck*Oxyura maccoa*

A dozen of these "stiff tails" were seen at Strandfontein.

Penguins Spheniscidae**Jackass (African) Penguin (RE)***Spheniscus demersus*

About sixty were seen at the Boulders colony on the Cape Peninsula, one of the many highlights of the trip!

Albatrosses Diomedidae**Black-browed Albatross***Thalassarche melanophrys*

We had superb views of twenty during the Cape pelagic boat trip.

Shy Albatross*Thalassarche cauta*

At least two hundred were seen during the Cape pelagic boat trip including stunning close views of many.

[Atlantic] Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

One was seen during our pelagic boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

NOTE: Some authorities split the Yellow-nosed Albatross into the Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross T. chlororhynchos, the nominate form, and the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross T. carteri. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Petrels & Shearwaters Procellariidae

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*

We had great views of two sitting on the water during our Pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*

We had wonderful views of one during our Pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Southern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialoides*

We had wonderful views of one during the Pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Cape Petrel *Daption capense*

What a fabulous bird! We enjoyed numerous sightings during our Pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

We had superb views of two hundred during our sea-watching boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

NOTE: The circumpolar White-chinned Petrel (P.a.aequinoctialis) is regarded by many authorities as a separate species from the endangered Spectacled Petrel (P.a.conspicillata), which breeds only on the Inaccessible Islands. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

We had good views of ten during our sea-watching boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Great(er) Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

Up to fifty of these smart birds were seen during our sea-watching boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Storm Petrels Hydrobatidae

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

At least ten of these tiny seabirds were seen during our sea-watching boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe (Dabchick) *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Seen regularly at wetlands throughout the tour

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

We had good views of eight in De Hoop NR and three at Standfontein.

Black-necked (Eared) Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Up to two hundred were seen at Strandfontein.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Up to five hundred were seen at Standfontein with scattered sightings elsewhere.

NOTE: The Greater Flamingo (P. roseus) and the Caribbean Flamingo (P. ruber) are now considered monotypic species according to Clements.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*

Several thousand birds were seen together at Kamfers Dam near Kimberley and a further sixty at Velddrift.

Storks Ciconiidae

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Small numbers were seen at Pongola NR and at Muzi Pan.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

We enjoyed several sightings in the St.Lucia area.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

One was seen in a recently burnt field near Wakkerstroom.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

We had great scope views of a pair with juvenile at Lake St.Lucia.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

[African] Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout South Africa

NOTE: The Malagasy T. e. bernieri and Aldabran T. e. abbotti are sometimes split off as Madagascar White Ibis (T. bernieri)

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

We had excellent looks at this impressive species in Lesotho and again at Wakkerstroom.

Hadada Ibis (Hadedda) *Bostrychia hagedash*

This noisy bird was recorded nearly daily at all locations throughout eastern South Africa.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Small numbers were seen at Strandfontein with further sightings at Muzi Pan and peak numbers of fifteen near Kimberley.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Recorded at many wetlands throughout, including a peak count of forty three at Alexander Bay

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

One male was seen very well in Wakkerstroom.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

We enjoyed good views of several at Wakkerstroom.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

We had good views of one near Sani Pass, a bird well out of its normal range.

[Western] Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Commonly recorded throughout South Africa

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret (E. coromanda). This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Commonly seen in small numbers at wetland habitats throughout the tour

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

This is typically a grassland species where grasshoppers, one of its favourite foods, can be found.

Commonly recorded throughout South Africa

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

Several were seen at Muzi Pan and Lake St. Lucia.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Seen at Muzi Pan and St.Lucia

NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands A. p. bournei is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

[Western] Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Commonly seen at wetlands in KwaZulu Natal

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World A. a. egretta which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Several birds were recorded at Wakkerstroom.

NOTE: This group may be split into 3 species, the Africa Yellow-billed Egret (E. brachyrhyncha) (the form we recorded), Plumed Egret (E. plumifera) and the nominate Intermediate Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Recorded at wetlands throughout the tour

NOTE: Clements lumps Little, Western Reef (*E. gularis*) and Madagascar's Dimorphic (*E. dimorpha*) Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.

Hamerkop Scopidae

Hamerkop

Scopus umbretta

This unusual bird, placed in its own family, was first seen near Hluhluwe with further sightings along the Orange River.

Pelicans Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican

Pelecanus onocrotalus

A flock of forty was seen at Lake St.Lucia with further sightings in De Hoop NR and at Strandfontein.

Pink-backed Pelican

Pelecanus rufescens

We had great scope views of thirty at Ensumo Pan, Mkhuze GR.

Gannets Sulidae

Cape Gannet (BE)

Morus capensis

Up to fifty were seen during our sea watching boat trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae

Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax africanus

Recorded on many days at almost all wetlands sites in eastern South Africa

Crowned Cormorant (RE)

Phalacrocorax coronatus

Our first sighting was of a single bird near Cape Town with further sightings of ten near Port Nolloth.

Bank Cormorant (RE)

Phalacrocorax neglectus

Up to thirty were seen nesting on a large boulder near the Cape Peninsula and several more at Port Nolloth.

White-breasted (Great) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax lucidus

This common species was seen at most wetland sites on tour, both at the coast and inland.

NOTE: The white-breasted African subspecies of the widely distributed Great Cormorant *P. carbo* is sometimes considered a different species: *P. lucidus*.

Cape Cormorant (BE)

Phalacrocorax capensis

This is the common saltwater cormorant around the Cape and we saw up to a three hundred birds roosting on rocks on the Cape Peninsula and again along the coast at Port Nolloth.

Anhingas & Darters Anhingidae

[African] Darter

Anhinga melanogaster (rufa)

Small numbers were seen at scattered wetlands throughout South Africa.

NOTE: The resident African form *P. rufa* is sometimes lumped with the Asian *P. melanogaster* and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms.

Secretarybird Sagittariidae

Secretarybird

Sagittarius serpentarius

We were ecstatic to have awesome views of two at Wakkerstroom and a further one near Velddrift. This amazing bird is by no means a guaranteed sighting on any trip in Southern Africa and always a lucky find.

Ospreys Pandionidae

[Western] Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

We had good views of one at Velddrift, a great find by Mary.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**African Cuckoo-Hawk***Aviceda cuculoides*

We had brief views of one near the St.Lucia estuary.

Black-winged Kite*Elanus caeruleus*

Seen throughout South Africa on virtually every day of the tour

NOTE: Clements has split the two species Black-winged Kite (Elanus caeruleus) of the Old World and White-tailed Kite (Elanus leucurus) of the New World. This split is not universally accepted.

Black (Yellow-billed) Kite*Milvus migrans*

Recorded on most days at most sites throughout the tour, we saw good numbers in Zululand often up to ten birds daily.

NOTE: This locally breeding form of the Black Kite M. migrans is considered by most authorities as a distinct species, Yellow-billed Kite M. parasitus.

African Fish Eagle*Haliaeetus vocifer*

The call of this familiar species is the signature sound of the African wild. We had wonderful sightings of six at Lake St.Lucia with scattered sightings elsewhere.

Palmnut Vulture*Gypohierax angolensis*

A single of these stunning birds was found in the Ralphia Palms at Mtunzini.

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)*Gypaetus barbatus*

We were fortunate to see at least three different individuals of these world-class raptors at Sani Pass.

White-backed Vulture*Gyps africanus*

A couple were seen in Mkhuzo GR and a further two near Kimberley.

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

We had wonderful views of thirty in the Drakensberg Mountain range, a further three on Sani Pass and an incredible sighting of a dozen at a carcass near De Hoop Nature Reserve.

Lappet-faced Vulture*Aegyptius tracheliotus*

We had good but distant views of one in Pongola Nature Reserve.

Black-chested Snake Eagle*Circaetus pectoralis*

Our first sighting was in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park with a further sighting of one near Brandvlei.

Brown Snake Eagle*Circaetus cinereus*

Our first sighting was great views of one near Magoebaskloof with further sightings in Mkuzi Game Reserve and a final sighting at Marutswa Forest.

Southern Banded (Fasciated) Snake Eagle*Circaetus fasciolatus*

Two of these scarce raptors were seen exceptionally well near Cape Vidal.

Bateleur*Terathopius ecaudatus*

We had an awesome sighting of a male near Hluhluwe. One of the world's most beautiful raptors!

African Marsh Harrier*Circus ranivorus*

Our first sighting was of two in Wakkerstroom with a further sighting of two in West Coast NP.

Black Harrier (RE)*Circus maurus*

This spectacular raptor was seen well in West Coast NP. We enjoyed five sightings during our day in the area.

African Harrier-Hawk*Polyboroides typus*

Our first good sighting was of one in Dhlinda Forest with a final great sighting of one at Constantia Nek.

Pale Chanting Goshawk (RNE)*Melierax canorus*

We had many sightings throughout the dry Western areas of South Africa, including peak numbers of twelve en route from Port Nolloth to Springbok.

Gabar Goshawk*Micronisus gabar*

Our first sighting was of a melanistic bird in Polokwane GR with a further sighting near Kimberley.

African Goshawk*Accipiter tachiro*

We had crippling scope views of one near Magoebaskloof, another at a nest on the Cape Peninsula and a few soaring on several occasions making their distinctive clicking call.

NOTE: The West African forms are sometimes separated as Red-chested Goshawk (*A. tousseneli*).

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*

We had magnificent scope views of a wonderful pair in Polokwane.

Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris*

This is a rather uncommon raptor in South Africa and we were lucky to get brief views of one in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*

This very powerful forest dwelling *Accipiter* was first seen near De Hoop Nature Reserve with a further sighting en route from Langebaan to Paleisheuwel.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

We enjoyed a good sighting of this handsome raptor near Mkhuze Game Reserve.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

We had good views of our first one near Underberg and a further three near Calvinia.

Jackal Buzzard (RE) *Buteo rufofuscus*

First recorded in Wakkerstroom and encountered regularly thereafter, a handsome endemic indeed!

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

Our first sighting was of one flying near Hluhluwe and later we enjoyed another sighting near Kimberley.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

Our first sighting was en route from Paleisheuwel to Calvinia where we enjoyed amazing views of a pair with further sightings in Augrabies Falls National Park.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*

We found at least six birds in Mkhuze Game Reserve.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

We had great views of one in Springbok and another near Nieuwoudtville.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

We had wonderful views of an adult and juvenile near Kenhardt.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

We enjoyed many sightings of this regal bird with the bulk of the sightings coming from the Kwazulu-Natal Midlands.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

We had superb scope views of a pair in Magoebaskloof.

Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus*

We had a great sighting of one near Kenhardt.

Rock (Eurasian/Common) Kestrel *Falco rupicolus*

Frequently recorded in Western South Africa

NOTE: Clements has not split the distinctive Rock Kestrel *F.t.rupicolus* we observed, which he lumps as a subspecies of the Eurasian Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*. Many authorities accept this split.

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*

Regularly encountered around Brandvlei, Port Nolloth and Springbok with a peak count of forty seven during the drive from Port Nolloth to Springbok

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

We enjoyed our first sighting of this powerful *Falco* near Brandvlei with further sightings at Port Nolloth.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

We had fantastic scope views of one near Kenhardt.

Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha*

We enjoyed excellent scope views of this rare raptor during the drive from Polokwane to Johannesburg.

Bustards Otididae**Kori Bustard***Ardeotis kori*

We had awesome views of two near Pofadder and a further four en route to Kimberley.

Ludwig's Bustard (RNE)*Neotis ludwigii*

We had numerous excellent sightings with a peak count of sixteen near Nieuwoudtville.

Denham's (Stanley) Bustard*Neotis denhami*

Our first sighting was of one at Wakkerstroom with a further eight of these wonderful birds seen near the De Hoop NR, many of which were males performing their impressive display to attract a mate.

Barrow's Korhaan (White-bellied Bustard) (E) *Eupodotis barrowii*

One female was seen well in the Wakkerstroom area.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split from White-bellied Bustard, Eupodotis senegalensis. Clements does not accept this split.

Blue Korhaan (E)*Eupodotis caerulescens*

We saw up to eight of these smart birds in the Wakkerstroom area.

Karoo Korhaan (RE)*Eupodotis vigorsii*

We had an amazing six during the drive from Calvinia to Brandvlei including a pair with tiny chick.

Red-crested Korhaan (RNE)*Lophotis ruficrista*

We heard one calling near Kimberley and after a concerted effort were finally rewarded with cracking scope views of a male, a great find by George.

[Southern] Black Korhaan (E)*Afrotis afra*

We had great views of one in West Coast NP, certainly one of the world's most striking bustards.

NOTE: Although formally lumped, Clements has now split the two forms; the localized Black Bustard, E.afra of the SW Cape and the more widespread White-quilled Bustard E.afraoides.

Northern Black Korhaan (NE)*Afrotis afraoides*

We enjoyed regular sightings of this species in display flights around the Kimberley area.

Black-bellied Bustard (Korhaan)*Lissotis melanogaster*

We had a great sighting of one near Wakkerstroom.

Flufftails Sarothruridae**Buff-spotted Flufftail***Sarothrura elegans*

We had fantastic views of a female in Doreen Clark NR.

Red-chested Flufftail*Sarothrura rufa*

A bird more often heard than seen. One was heard calling at Wakkerstroom marsh.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae**African (~Water/Cape) Rail***Rallus caerulescens*

We had superb views of one at Wakkerstroom.

Black Crake*Amaurornis flavirostra*

We had good views of three at Darvill Bird Sanctuary.

African Swamphen*Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Up to ten of these huge rallids were seen daily in Wakkerstroom

NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognised as distinct species. The form we recorded would then become African Swamphen (P. madagascariensis.) Other forms to be recognised may include Indian Swamphen (P. poliocephalus,) Philippine Swamphen (P. pulverulentus) and Eastern Swamphen (P. melanotus).

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Seen commonly at Darvill and Strandfontein Bird Sanctuaries

Red-knobbed Coot*Fulica cristata*

As with the above species, good numbers were seen throughout the tour including a peak count of five hundred at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Cranes Gruidae

Grey Crowned Crane*Balearica regulorum*

This exceptionally beautiful crane is also the regions' most frequently encountered. We had small flocks in the Natal Midlands and Drakensberg areas.

NOTE: This southern form is sometimes lumped with Black Crowned Crane B. pavonina of West Africa.

Blue Crane (RE)*Anthropoides paradisea*

We had good numbers of this wonderfully elegant bird. Peak numbers of one hundred were seen in the De Hoop area. The national bird of South Africa gave us immense pleasure as we were treated to courtship displays and numerous birds heard bugling across the grasslands.

Buttonquail Turnicidae**Kurrichane Buttonquail***Turnix sylvaticus*

We had brief views of one crossing the road near Wakkerstroom.

Thick-knees Burhinidae**Water Thick-knee (Dikkop)***Burhinus vermiculatus*

We had good scope views of a pair in Mkhuze GR and another near St Lucia.

Spotted Thick-knee (Dikkop)*Burhinus capensis*

Our first sighting was of a wonderful pair near Polokwane with further sightings near Kimberley.

Oystercatchers Haematopididae**African (Black) Oystercatcher (E)***Haematopus moquini*

With a population of only 4800 it is fortunate that this species is commonly seen in most of the Western Cape. We encountered small numbers at a variety of coastal sites on the Cape Peninsula.

Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

Small numbers were encountered fairly regularly on wetlands in both the east and west with our highest number of two hundred at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Pied Avocet*Recurvirostra avosetta*

Our first sightings were at Strandfontein with further encounters of peak numbers of forty at both Velddrift and Alexander Bay.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**Blacksmith Lapwing***Vanellus armatus*

Recorded almost daily at nearly all wetlands throughout South Africa

Senegal Lapwing*Vanellus lugubris*

We had a brief sighting of three flying off the airstrip in Mkhuze GR.

Black-winged Lapwing*Vanellus melanopterus*

We had distant views of one in Wakkerstroom and a further two flying over Marutswa Forest.

Crowned Lapwing*Vanellus coronatus*

Recorded at scattered sites throughout the tour

[African] Wattled Lapwing*Vanellus senegallus*

We encountered small numbers in the Wakkerstroom area.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover*Pluvialis squatarola*

Our first sighting was of twenty on the Breede River and at least fifty were seen in West Coast NP.

Common Ringed Plover*Charadrius hiaticula*

We enjoyed good sightings of twenty at Velddrift with scattered sightings elsewhere.

Kittlitz's Plover*Charadrius pecuarius*

First seen at Wakkerstroom with peak numbers of twenty at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley

Three-banded Plover*Charadrius tricollaris*

A widespread and fairly common species, we enjoyed several sightings including peak numbers of ten at Darvill Bird Sanctuary.

White-fronted Plover*Charadrius marginatus*

Small numbers were seen at Lake St.Lucia with further sightings at Velddrift and along the beach at Port Nolloth.

Chestnut-banded Plover*Charadrius pallidus*

We had good views of two at Velddrift.

Jacanas Jacanidae**African Jacana***Actophilornis africanus*

Small numbers were seen in Pongola NR and at Muzi Pan.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae**African (Ethiopian) Snipe***Gallinago nigripennis*

We had good views of two at the Wakkerstroom wetland.

Bar-tailed Godwit*Limosa lapponica*

Our first sighting was of three on the Breede River with a further sighting of two in West Coast NP.

Whimbrel*Numenius phaeopus*

We had good views of one hundred in West Coast NP.

Eurasian Curlew*Numenius arquata*

A single bird was seen in West Coast NP.

Marsh Sandpiper*Tringa stagnatilis*

We had good views of one at Wakkerstroom, another in West Coast NP and finally ten at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common at most coastal sites, we found peak numbers of forty at Lake St Lucia.

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

We observed peak numbers of twenty at Darvill Bird Sanctuary with scattered sightings elsewhere.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Small numbers were seen in the St Lucia area.

Ruddy Turnstone*Arenaria interpres*

We recorded ten in the West Coast NP and several more at Port Nolloth.

Red Knot*Calidris canutus*

Six were seen in the West Coast NP.

Sanderling*Calidris alba*

Forty were seen in West Coast NP and a further twenty at Port Nolloth.

Little Stint*Calidris minuta*

Up to one hundred were seen in the West Coast NP with a further sighting of three hundred at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Curlew Sandpiper*Calidris ferruginea*

Recorded in large numbers in West Coast NP and at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley

Ruff*Philomachus pugnax*

Small numbers seen at scattered sites including fifty at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Courasers & Pratincoles Glareolidae**Burchell's Courser (RNE)***Cursorius rufus*

We had awesome views of a pair with juvenile near Pofadder and a further pair near Kimberley.

Double-banded Courser*Rhinoptilus africanus*

We had good views of up to eight daily in the Kimberley area.

Collared (Red-winged) Pratincole*Glareola pratincola*

We had good scope views of two at Muzi Pan.

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae**Sabine's Gull***Xema sabini*

We found a total of fifty of these smart birds during the pelagic sea birding trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Grey-hooded Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*

Twenty were seen around Johannesburg with further sightings of up to twenty daily at Lake St Lucia.

Hartlaub's Gull (RE) *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii*

Good numbers were seen daily around the Cape Peninsula.

Kelp Gull (NE) *Larus dominicanus*

Commonly recorded along the southern and Western Coast of South Africa, we estimated conservative counts of eight hundred along the Cape Town coast.

NOTE: Recent work suggests that the Kelp Gull complex L. dominicanus may be split into as many as four species, the form we saw would become Cape Gull L. vetula which breeds in South Africa. These splits are not yet accepted.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

We had great views of several at St Lucia and a further four at Velddrift.

Swift Tern *Sterna bergii*

Up to fifty were seen on the Cape Peninsula.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Up to sixty were seen in the Cape of Good Hope NP.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

A large flock of three hundred were seen in the Cape of Good Hope NP.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

One was seen on Muzi Pan and later a flock of thirty were seen at an ephemeral pan near Kimberley.

Skuas Stercorariidae

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus*

We had phenomenal encounters with this species during our pelagic sea birding trip. One individual was seen hovering at arms length away on several occasions.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

We had good views of four during the pelagic sea birding trip.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Namaqua Sandgrouse (RNE) *Pterocles namaqua*

Small numbers were seen daily around Brandvlei and peak numbers of one hundred and fifty at a waterhole near Pofadder.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Common Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Common in urban centres throughout

Speckled (Rock) Pigeon *Columba guinea*

Commonly recorded in urban centres in the Cape and Highveld

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

We had good views of a flock of eighteen en route from Underberg to Bulwer and a further great sighting of three at Constantia Nek.

Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba delegorguei*

We had amazing scope views of two males in Dhlinda Forest.

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata*

We had brief views of one at Marutswa Forest. This shy bird is seldom seen well.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Widespread and common in South Africa, peak numbers of ten were seen around Johannesburg.

Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle-Dove) *Streptopelia capicola*

Widespread and common throughout Southern Africa, found in more open and drier country than the previous species.

Laughing (Palm) Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Commonly encountered at most locations on tour

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*

We had great views of up to twenty daily in Mkhuze GR.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*

We had good scope views of one at St Lucia.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Small numbers recorded daily in more open and drier country in Western SA.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*

We enjoyed good looks at eight birds in St. Lucia, a great find by Bob.

Turacos Musophagidae

Livingstone's Turaco *Tauraco livingstonii*

We had great views of six of these smart birds in the dune forest at St Lucia.

Knysna Turaco (E) *Tauraco corythaix*

We had brief views of two in Magoebaskloof and were later treated to magnificent views of two at Marutswa Forest.

Note: This species used to be lumped under the Green Turaco (T. persa), now split into four full species the others being Knysna Turaco (T. corythaix), Livingstone's Turaco (T. livingstonii) and Schalow's Turaco (T. schalowi).

Purple-crested Turaco *Tauraco porphyreolophus*

This attractive species was first seen near Hluhluwe with further sightings at Dhlinda.

Grey Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides concolor*

This species was seen very well in Polokwane GR on several occasions.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*

We had good views of two at Muzi Pan and another en route to Ngoye Forest.

NOTE: IOC and Clements do not recognise the split of the southern dark-browed Burchell's Coucal C. burchelli which we observed from the northerly White-browed Coucal C. superciliosus.

Green Malkoha (Yellowbill) *Ceuthmochares aereus*

We had amazing scope views of one near Mkhuze GR.

Dideric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

We had great scope views of a stunning male near Underberg and a further one near Kimberley.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*

We had wonderful views of a male in Mkuzi GR and another in Doreen Clark NR.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

We had cracking views of a dazzling male in Dhlinda Forest, a great find by Dixie and a further sighting in Doreen Clark NR.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*

We had great scope views of one at Marutswa Forest.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

After mere glimpses of one at Magoebaskloof we were finally rewarded with fantastic scope views of a calling bird in Dhlinda Forest.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*

We had superb views of two in Dronfield Nature Reserve, Kimberley.

Old World Owls Tytonidae

African Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*

We had fantastic views of one at dusk at Wakkerstroom.

Typical Owls Strigidae**Spotted Eagle-Owl***Bubo africanus*

We had great views of one at a day roost in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

NOTE: Clements splits the northern, dark-eyed form Greyish Eagle-Owl (B.cinereascens) from the more southerly yellow-eyed Spotted Eagle-Owl B. africanus. This split is not widely accepted.

African Wood Owl*Strix woodfordii*

A pair was seen very well at St Lucia during our night drive.

Pearl-spotted Owlet*Glaucidium perlatum*

One of these smart birds was seen in Mkhuze GR.

Nightjars & Allies Caprimulgidae**Rufous-cheeked Nightjar***Caprimulgus rufigena*

We had superb views of one during our night drive near Kimberley.

Fiery-necked Nightjar*Caprimulgus pectoralis*

We heard several calling near Hluhluwe.

Swifts Apodidae**African Palm Swift***Cypsiurus parvus*

Recorded at widely scattered sites throughout the tour

Alpine Swift*Tachymarptis melba*

We found peak numbers of fifty daily in Augrabies Falls NP with scattered sightings elsewhere.

African [Black] Swift*Apus barbatus*

We had a magnificent sighting of one hundred and fifty at Strandfontein.

NOTE: The Fernando Po Swift (A.sladeniae) is often separated by authorities as a distinctive species from the much more widespread African Black Swift (Apus barbatus) that we observed. Clements does not currently recognize this split.

Bradfield's Swift (RNE)*Apus bradfieldi*

We had wonderful views of forty near Port Nolloth and several more near Kimberley.

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

Recorded at widely scattered sites throughout the tour

White-rumped Swift*Apus caffer*

A summer breeding visitor seen at scattered sites throughout the tour.

Mousebirds Coliidae**Speckled Mousebird***Colius striatus*

Recorded almost daily on the eastern leg of the tour

White-backed Mousebird (RNE)*Colius colius*

First recorded in West Coast NP with further sightings in Augrabies Falls NP

Red-faced Mousebird*Urocolius indicus*

We had good sightings of this classic bushveld species in Polokwane and Mkhuze GR's.

Trogons Trogonidae**Narina Trogon***Apaloderma narina*

Our first sighting was of one in Magoebaskloof with further sightings of a stunning male in Dhlhiza Forest.

Rollers Coraciidae**Lilac-breasted Roller***Coracias caudatus*

This absolutely beautiful bird was seen exceptionally well in Mkhuze GR.

NOTE: The Ethiopian C. c. lorti might be split as Blue-breasted Roller.

Broad-billed Roller*Eurystomus glaucurus*

This recently arrived inter-African migrant was seen at Mkhuze GR.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Brown-hooded Kingfisher***Halcyon albiventris*

Our first sighting was of one in Polokwane and peak numbers of six at St.Lucia.

Striped Kingfisher*Halcyon chelicuti*

We found one in Polokwane GR and another in Mkhuze GR.

African Pygmy Kingfisher*Ispidina picta*

We had great views of a pair in Mkhuze GR.

Malachite Kingfisher*Alcedo cristata*

We encountered this cadescent little gem near Wakkerstroom and again at St Lucia.

Giant Kingfisher*Megaceryle maxima*

We had superb views of a female near Magoebaskloof.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

This, the world's most widespread kingfisher, is common throughout South Africa. Peak numbers of four were seen at Mkhuze GR.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Little Bee-eater***Merops pusillus*

We had good views of two in Mkhuze GR.

European Bee-eater*Merops apiaster*

Small numbers were seen daily in the Brandvlei, Calvinia and Kimberley areas.

Hoopoes Upupidae**African (Eurasian) Hoopoe***Upupa africana*

This stunning bird was recorded at scattered sites throughout the tour. Peak numbers of six were seen in the Kimberley area.

NOTE: The Hoopoe complex has had a confusing taxonomic history, with one to four species being recognised by various authorities. Clements splits the group into two forms, Madagascar (U. marginalis) and Eurasian U. epops. The white-winged African form is often split by other authorities as West African Hoopoe (U. senegalensis) with the fourth species, the one we observed, being African Hoopoe (U. africana). However, the most generally accepted treatment is that of three species, Madagascar, Eurasian and African.

Wood Hoopoes Phoeniculidae**Green (Red-billed) Wood Hoopoe***Phoeniculus purpureus*

A flock of five of these cackling beauties was seen in Polokwane GR and a further pair in Mkhuze GR.

Common Scimitarbill*Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*

We enjoyed fabulous views of a pair in Polokwane GR and another in Augrabies Falls NP.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**Crowned Hornbill***Tockus alboterminatus*

We had wonderful views of three at St.Lucia.

[Southern] Red-billed Hornbill*Tockus rufirostris*

We had a great sighting of one in Pongola NR, a great find by Lisa.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill (RNE)*Tockus leucomelas*

Recorded in small numbers in Polokwane and Mkhuze GR's

Trumpeter Hornbill*Bycanistes bucinator*

This odd sounding Hornbill, resembling something of a wailing baby, was seen at St.Lucia and Mkhuze GR.

Ground Hornbills Bucorvidae**Southern Ground Hornbill***Bucorvus leadbeateri*

We had amazing views of three at the roadside en route from Bulwer to Richmond. This was certainly one of the most unexpected sightings of the tour and a real highlight!

Barbets Ramphastidae

White-eared Barbet

Stactolaema leucotis

Several were seen at Dhlinda Forest and St Lucia.

Green (Woodward's) Barbet

Stactolaema olivacea

We enjoyed excellent looks at one in Ngoye Forest. Extremely localised in Southern Africa.

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus bilineatus

Several were seen in Dhlinda Forest and at St Lucia.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus pusillus

A very vocal bird of the eastern region, we saw a single bird in Mkhuzo GR.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus chrysoconus

We had great views of one en route from Johannesburg to Polokwane.

[Acacia] Pied Barbet (RNE)

Tricholaema leucomelas

Our first sighting was incredible scope views of one near De Hoop NR with further sightings in Au-grabies NP.

Black-collared Barbet

Lybius torquatus

Small numbers were seen daily at Polokwane GR and St Lucia.

Crested Barbet

Trachyphonus vaillantii

A very brightly patterned and rather handsome Barbet, we saw several in Polokwane GR and a further two in Au-grabies Falls NP.

Honeyguides Indicatoridae

Brown-backed Honeybird

Prodotiscus regulus

We had good views of two in display flight near Tala Ranch. A scarce species.

Lesser Honeyguide

Indicator minor

One was seen near Hluhluwe, another in Mkhuzo GR and finally our best views of two in Au-grabies NP.

NOTE: The Thick-billed Honeyguide (I. conirostris) of West and Central Africa forms a superspecies with the more widespread Lesser Honeyguide (I. minor), which we observed during our tour. This taxonomic split is recognized by Clements.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide

Indicator variegatus

We had amazing views of a pair of olive woodpeckers feeding a juvenile. The honeyguide was mimicking the woodpeckers call and we watched them interacting for several minutes, a great sighting!

Greater Honeyguide

Indicator indicator

We had fantastic scope views of one in Polokwane. This is the only honey guide that actually guides interested parties to honey.

Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae

Red-throated Wryneck

Jynx ruficollis

We enjoyed great views of one near Wakkerstroom and another near Sani Pass.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker

Campethera abingoni

After hearing this species on several occasions we were finally rewarded with good views of a pair in St Lucia and a final sighting of one near Kimberley.

Ground Woodpecker (E)

Geocolaptes olivaceus

Excellent views were had of this stunning endemic at Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.

Cardinal Woodpecker

Dendropicos fuscescens

We had a great sighting of a male near Tala Ranch and a pair in De Hoop NR.

Bearded Woodpecker

Dendropicos namaquus

We had brief views of one in Pongola NR.

Olive Woodpecker*Dendropicos griseocephalus*

We had great views of a pair feeding a scaly-throated honeyguide in Magoebaskloof and further sightings in Dhlinda Forest and Himeville.

Wattle-eyes and Batises Platysteiridae**Cape Batis (RE)***Batis capensis*

Small numbers of this endearing little bird were noted in most forested habitats. We enjoyed good sightings in Magoebaskloof, Dhlinda and Marutswa Forest and at Boulders – Cape Peninsula.

NOTE: Cape Batis is divided by Clements into seven subspecies, two of which are regarded by African authorities as separate species, Malawi Batis B.dimorpha and Reichenow's Batis B.reichenowi.

Woodward's Batis (RNE)*Batis fratrum*

This scarce batis was found calling at St Lucia and we enjoyed excellent views of a stunning pair.

Chin-spot Batis*Batis molitor*

Seen in Polokwane and Mkhuzi GR's

Pririt Batis (RNE)*Batis pririt*

A pair of this dry country species was seen well near Brandvlei.

Black-throated Wattle-eye*Platysteira peltata*

We had great views of a male at St Lucia.

Helmetshrikes Prionopidae**Retz's Helmetshrike***Prionops retzii*

A pair was seen in Mkhuzi GR, very unexpected and a superb sighting.

Bushshrikes & Allies Malaconotidae**Olive Bushshrike (RNE)***Chlorophoneus olivaceus*

We found a stunning adult of the ruddy form in Magoebaskloof and a juvenile in St Lucia.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike*Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus*

This critter is a regular inhabitant of the bushveld biome. We had awesome views of one in Mkhuzi GR.

Four-colored Bushshrike*Chlorophoneus quadricolor*

This candescent gem is incredibly difficult to see well and some of us only glimpsed one at Magoebaskloof, however we eventually had stonking good looks at a superb male near Hluhluwe. Far more often heard than seen

NOTE: This species is currently lumped by Clements with Perrin's Bush-Shrike (T.q.viridis) of N Angola to S Congo and NW Zambia. Most authorities regard these birds as separate species.

Bokmakierie (RNE)*Telophorus zeylonus*

This very beautiful Bush Shrike was first seen near Wakkerstroom with many further sightings.

Brown-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra australis*

We had good views of one en route from Johannesburg to Polokwane.

Southern Tchagra (E)*Tchagra tchagra*

We enjoyed superb views of one in De Hoop NR.

Black-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra senegalus*

A single bird was scoped, en route to Ngoye Forest.

NOTE: Moroccan Tchagra T. s. cucullata of northwest Africa may be split from the nominate form which we recorded in South Africa. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Black-backed Puffback*Dryoscopus cubla*

This is a fairly common shrike and we had many sightings in wooded habitat throughout the east.

Southern Boubou (RE)*Laniarius ferrugineus*

This very conspicuous songster was first seen en route from Johannesburg to Polokwane with further sightings in the Natal Midlands.

Crimson-breasted Shrike (RNE)*Laniarius atrococcineus*

We were captivated by eight of these strikingly plumaged birds in Polokwane GR and a further one near Kimberley.

Brubru*Nilaus afer*

We found two in Polokwane GR, a further two in Mkhuze GR and a couple near Kimberley. This is a signature bushveld species that often associates with flocks.

NOTE: This previously monotypic genus might be split 4 ways: Northern Brubru N. afer, Black-browed Brubru (N. nigritemporalis), Angola Brubru (N. affinis) and Southern Brubru (N. brubru). Only the Southern Brubru occurs in South Africa. Clements does not as yet recognise these splits.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae**Grey Cuckooshrike***Coracina caesia*

Our first sighting was great views of one in Magoebaskloof and a further one in Dhlinda forest.

Black Cuckooshrike*Campephaga flava*

We saw a male with yellow “shoulder” patches near Hluhluwe.

Shrikes Laniidae**Magpie (Long-tailed) Shrike***Urolestes melanoleucus*

This wonderfully clad bird sports an elegant tail and is refreshingly vocal and was seen in Polokwane GR and Pongola NR.

Common Fiscal (Shrike)*Lanius collaris*

This is a common bird throughout South Africa and was seen on almost every day of the tour. We also observed the South Western sub-species subcoronatus in Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: The form L. marwitzi is sometimes split off as Uhehe Fiscal occurring in Tanzania.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae**(African) Black-headed Oriole***Oriolus larvatus*

We had a great sighting of two in Polokwane GR.

Drongos Dicruridae**Square-tailed Drongo***Dicrurus ludwigii*

We had good views of a couple in Magoebaskloof and several more in St.Lucia.

Fork-tailed Drongo*Dicrurus adsimilis*

We recorded this species almost daily at most sites visited in eastern South Africa.

NOTE: Older versions of Clements lump the forest dwelling Velvet-mantled Drongo (D. modestus) of East and West Africa within Fork-tailed Drongo D. adsimilis but the split has been recognized in recent Clements updates as well as by most other authorities.

Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae**Blue-mantled (African) Crested Flycatcher***Trochocercus cyanomelas*

This very restless species was observed very well near Hluhluwe and again in Dhlinda Forest.

African Paradise Flycatcher*Terpsiphone viridis*

We found a superb male near Wakkerstroom and another at Constantia Nek.

NOTE: The northern races of this widespread African species which includes the nominate form are likely to be separated from the southern races which would become Grey-headed Paradise-Flycatcher (T. plumbeiceps). Beside plumage and distributional differences, only the northern forms display polymorphism in males. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Crows & Jays Corvidae**House Crow***Corvus splendens*

Several of these introduced birds were seen near Cape Town International Airport.

Cape (Black) Crow*Corvus capensis*

First recorded near Wakkerstroom and seen almost daily thereafter.

Pied Crow*Corvus albus*

Seen at most sites throughout the tour our first birds were seen in Johannesburg.

White-necked Raven*Corvus albicollis*

A Corvid that prefers mountainous areas, was first recorded near Magoebaskloof. Our highest totals were of twenty near Nieuwoudtville.

Rockjumpers Chaetopidae

Cape Rockjumper (E) *Chaetops frenatus*

We enjoyed excellent looks as this attractive endemic bounced around on boulders in the Hottentots Holland Mountains.

Drakensberg Rock-jumper (E) *Chaetops aurantius*

Easier to see than its congener, this is a remarkable attractive bird! We had three birds on that wonderful day up Sani Pass.

Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae

Fairy Flycatcher (RE) *Stenostira scita*

We enjoyed fantastic sightings of two on Sani Pass.

Tits Paridae

Southern Black Tit *Parus niger*

Our first two were seen at Abel Erasmus pass and we enjoyed further sightings in Mkhuze GR.

Ashy Tit (RE) *Parus cinerascens*

We had good sightings of two in Polokwane GR with a further sighting in Augrabies Falls NP.

Grey Tit (RE) *Parus afer*

We had good views of a pair near Sani Pass and a further three near Port Nolloth.

Penduline Tits Remizidae

Grey (African) Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli*

One of the smallest birds on the continent, we had superb views of one near Hluhluwe.

Cape (Southern) Penduline Tit (RNE) *Anthoscopus minutus*

We enjoyed excellent scope views of a pair near Polokwane.

Nicators Nicatoridae

Eastern Nicator *Nicator gularis*

We heard several near Hluhluwe.

Larks Alaudidae

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*

We had good views of one in Polokwane GR and a further two at St Lucia.

NOTE: The Rufous-naped Lark is divided by Clements into twenty-three subspecies throughout most of Africa. We observed both M.a.africana in S. Natal.

Cape Clapper Lark (E) *Mirafra apiata*

We enjoyed excellent views of two doing their display flight near Langebaan.

NOTE: This species may be split into as many as three species, Cape Clapper Lark, M.apiata the one we observed, Eastern Clapper Lark, M.fasciolata and Agulhas Clapper Lark, M.marjoriae. The latter species is not yet widely accepted.

Eastern Clapper Lark (RNE) *Mirafra fasciolata*

We enjoyed great views of many displaying in the Kimberley area.

NOTE: See above species.

Fawn-colored Lark *Mirafra africanoides*

We had good views of several en route from Augrabies to Kimberley.

Sabota Lark (RNE) *Mirafra sabota*

A single was seen in Polokwane GR and we observed two of the thick-billed western form during the drive from Augrabies to Kimberley.

NOTE: Some authorities consider the thickbilled form, Bradfield's Lark M. bradfieldi of Western Southern Africa a separate species. This is not widely accepted.

- Rudd's Lark (E)** *Heteromiraфра ruddi*
We had a great sighting of this exceptionally localised endemic in the Wakkerstroom area.
- Karoo Long-billed Lark (RE)** *Certhilauda subcoronata*
We enjoyed good sightings of two near Calvinia.
- Eastern Long-billed Lark (E)** *Certhilauda semitorquata*
We had great views of one in Wakkerstroom.
- Cape Long-billed Lark (E)** *Certhilauda curvirostris*
A pair was seen exceptionally well near Langebaan.
- Aghulas Long-billed Lark (E)** *Certhilauda brevirostris*
One was seen displaying in the De Hoop area.
- Short-clawed Lark (RE)** *Certhilauda chuana*
We had superb looks at two of this scarce species near Polokwane.
- Karoo Lark (E)** *Certhilauda albescens*
We had good views of two near Calvinia.
- Barlow's Lark (RE)** *Certhilauda barlowi*
We enjoyed great views of five north of Port Nolloth.
- Red (Ferruginous) Lark (E)** *Certhilauda burra*
Two of these scarce birds were seen very well at Brandvlei.
- Spike-heeled Lark (RNE)** *Chersomanes albofasciata*
Good numbers were seen at Wakkerstroom and in the Kimberley area.
NOTE: The Tanzanian isolate C. a. beesleyi is considered a separate species by some authorities, Beesley's Lark
- Red-capped Lark** *Calandrella cinerea*
At least twenty were seen in the Wakkerstroom area with scattered sightings elsewhere.
NOTE: The African Red-capped Lark complex (C. cinerea) was lumped within the Greater Short-toed Lark complex (C. brachydactyla) but is now considered distinct by most authorities. Several distinctive groupings have now been split off from Red-capped Lark, including Blanford's Lark of Ethiopia (C. blanfordi).
- Pink-billed Lark (RNE)** *Spizocorys conirostris*
We had a great sighting of two birds in the Wakkerstroom area.
- Botha's Lark (E)** *Spizocorys fringillaris*
After a concerted effort we were finally rewarded with fantastic scope views of this tricky and localized species in Wakkerstroom.
- Sclater's Lark (RE)** *Spizocorys scalteri*
After an extensive search we were rewarded with great sightings near Brandvlei.
- Stark's Lark (RNE)** *Eremalauda starki*
We enjoyed cracking scope views of one near Pofadder, a difficult nomadic species.
- Large-billed Lark (E)** *Galerida magnirostris*
Our first sighting was of two on Sani Pass with further sightings at Velddrift and in the Kimberley area.
- Black-eared Sparrow-Lark (RE)** *Eremopterix australis*
We enjoyed great looks at small flocks in the Calvinia area.
- Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucotis*
We had good scope views of two en route from Kimberley to Johannesburg.
- Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark (RNE)** *Eremopterix verticalis*
We recorded small numbers in the Pofadder area.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

- African Red-eyed (Black-fronted) Bulbul (RNE)** *Pycnonotus nigricans*
Our first sightings were in Springbok and later large numbers were seen in Augrabies Falls NP.
- Cape Bulbul (E)** *Pycnonotus capensis*
We saw this species daily in the Western Cape. Peak numbers of thirty were seen near De Hoop NR.
- Dark-capped (Common, Black-eyed) Bulbul** *Pycnonotus tricolor*

Recorded daily at virtually all locations visited in eastern Southern Africa with daily tallies occasionally in excess of twenty birds

NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognised as distinct species within the super-species Common Bulbul P. barbatus. The form that we saw in South Africa, P. tricolor has been split as Dark-capped Bulbul by some authorities. Clements does not recognize this split.

Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus importunus*

A bird that is far more often heard than seen and encountered over much of the country, we enjoyed great views of several in Magoebaskloof.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

We enjoyed wonderful views of three near our lodge in Hluhluwe with further sightings in St Lucia.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*

Seen at Mkhuze and Doreen Clark NR

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus*

We enjoyed great views of several at Magoebaskloof.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Black Saw-wing (Swallow) *Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

We enjoyed sightings at Magoebaskloof, Mkhuze GR and St Lucia.

NOTE: The sawwing complex, which occurs throughout Africa, has recently been lumped into a single species by Clements. The exception is the Fanti Sawwing (P.obscura), which occurs from Senegambia to E Nigeria and SW Cameroon.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*

We had good views of two during the drive from Mtunzini to Ngoye Forest.

Brown-throated (Plain) Martin *Riparia paludicola*

We encountered a large flock of two hundred at Darvill Bird Sanctuary and a further flock of fifty at Alexander Bay.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*

Small numbers were seen at Wakkerstroom.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Up to thirty were seen in Mkhuze GR with scattered sightings elsewhere.

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

A very smart looking swallow indeed, six seen daily at Wakkerstroom with scattered sightings elsewhere.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Another very handsome bird, our first sighting was of one at Muzi Pan with a further sighting at St.Lucia.

NOTE: This species complex is likely to be split based on the African nominate form that would become African Wire-tailed Swallow and the Asian Wire-tailed Swallow that would be H. filifera. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*

After a nervous wait we were finally rewarded with a pair near Richmond.

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*

We had good looks at four in the De Hoop area.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

The bulk of our sightings came from the Cape where small numbers were observed in rocky habitats. Peak numbers of twenty were seen in Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: This confusing polytypic complex is being reviewed for multi-species splitting. Within the African populations, three potential species exist. The southern African nominate form P. f. fuligula would remain as Rock Martin and the more northern populations would become Red-throated Rock Martin (P. pusilla). Palearctic birds would become Pale Crag Martin (P. obsolete). Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.

Greater Striped Swallow (BE) *Cecropis cucullata*

An intra-African migrant, seen at most high altitude grassland sites in the east and at lower altitudes in the Western Cape was first recorded near Johannesburg on the first day of the tour.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*

Recorded daily at all lower elevation locations visited in eastern South Africa, with highest numbers of ten recorded at Mkhuze GR.

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

We had great sightings of this massive swallow in the Polokwane and Mkhuze areas.

South African Cliff Swallow (BE) *Petrochelidon spilodera*

We had wonderful sightings of a flock of one hundred near Brandvlei with further sightings in the Kimberley area.

Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae

Yellow-throated Wood[land] Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*

Undoubtedly one of the most striking birds in its genus, we saw one in Magoebaskloof and another in Marutswa Forest.

Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

We enjoyed superb views of three in Wakkerstroom.

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

We had cracking views of one en route to Polokwane and a further great sighting of one in Augrabies NP.

NOTE: Clements currently recognizes six subspecies of A.baeticatus. The confusing taxonomy of this species is still under debate, particularly in regards to A.b.cinnamomeus (Cinnamon Reed Warbler) and A.b.avicenniae (Mangrove Reed Warbler).

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

We had great views of two near Magoebaskloof and a further one near Sani Pass.

Grassbirds & Allies Megaluridae

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Schoenicola brevirostris*

We had good views of a tailless bird at Sani Pass. It was seen calling and trying to display without its tail a funny sight indeed.

Little Rush (African Bush) Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

This is a skulking tenant of reedbeds that seldom shows itself well. We had superb scope views of one at Wakkerstroom.

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

A confiding individual showed exceptionally well on Sani Pass.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

One was seen well at Darvill Bird Sanctuary.

NOTE: Lepe Cisticola (C.e.lepe) found in Angola is often regarded as a separate species from Red-faced Cisticola. This split is not accepted by Clements.

Lazy (Rock-loving) Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans*

We had good views of two near Tala Ranch.

NOTE: The Southern African Lazy Cisticola, C.aberrans is often split from Rock-loving Cisticola, C.emini. Clements does not accept this split.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*

Recorded in small numbers in Polokwane and Mkhuze GR's

Grey-backed (Red-headed) Cisticola (RNE) *Cisticola subruficapilla*

The common cisticola in the Western Cape and seen daily in small numbers

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais*

A denizen of rocky hillsides, we saw two during our day up Sani Pass.

NOTE: This species is often split from Lynes Cisticola C. l. distincta, which occurs in East Africa.

Rufous-winged Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes*

One was recorded at the St Lucia estuary.

NOTE: This species is often split from Winding Cisticola, *C.marginatus*.

Levaillant's (Tinkling) Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens*

A common cisticola recorded at many wetland locations throughout South Africa. We had good views at Darvill Bird Sanctuary.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*

We had wonderful views of two at St Lucia.

Neddicky (Piping Cisticola) *Cisticola fulvicapilla*

We had wonderful sightings of one in Polokwane GR and a further two in the Kimberley area.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus*

We had awesome views of two near Kimberley.

Cloud Cisticola *Cisticola textrix*

Two were seen in Wakkerstroom and a further one showed particularly well near Kimberley.

Pale-crowned Cisticola (RE) *Cisticola cinnamomeus*

One was heard at St Lucia.

Rufous-eared Warbler (RE) *Malcorus pectoralis*

We had excellent looks at several of these beautiful birds in the Calvinia area.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

This feisty little warbler was recorded near Polokwane.

Black-chested Prinia (RNE) *Prinia flavicans*

We had wonderful views of three en route to Polokwane.

Karoo Prinia (RE) *Prinia maculosa*

This replaces the above species in the Western Cape and small numbers were noted on all days in that region.

NOTE: This species used to be lumped with Drakensberg Prinia (*P hypoxantha*) as Spotted Prinia but is now considered a separate species by most authorities including Clements.

Drakensberg Prinia (E) *Prinia hypoxantha*

We had great views of two near Magoebaskloof.

NOTE: Refer above Karoo Prinia.

Namaqua Warbler (Prinia) (RE) *Phragmacia substriata*

Good views of one bird were had near Nieuwoudtville and a further one in Augrabies Falls NP.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica*

We enjoyed great sightings in Magoebaskloof and Doreen Clark NR.

NOTE: Forms of Bar-throated Apalis are split by some African authorities as Namuli Apalis (*A. lynesii*), which is endemic to Mt. Namuli in N. Mozambique, Taita Apalis (*A. fuscigularis*) found only in the Taita Hills of SE Kenya, and Yellow-throated Apalis (*A. flavigularis*), which is endemic to S. Malawi. There is likely to be further splitting of this group.

Rudd's Apalis (RE) *Apalis ruddi*

This range-restricted endemic is fairly common in Maputaland. We had great views of several near Hluhluwe and one in Mkhuze GR.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

We enjoyed several sightings around Hluhluwe, Mkhuze and St Lucia.

NOTE: This widespread polytypic African species is likely to be split into three or more species. Clements does not as yet recognise any split. The form we recorded would remain in the nominate grouping.

Green-backed Camaroptera (Bleating Warbler) *Camaroptera brachyura*

A dweller of thick undergrowth, we had several sightings near Hluhluwe and in Mkhuze GR.

NOTE: Most authorities now recognise the nominate green-backed forms of this widespread African warbler as distinct from the grey-backed forms *C. brevicaudata*. Clements still lumps these two groups.

Cinnamon-breasted Warbler (RE) *Euryptila subcinnamomea*

We had excellent scope views of this often unobtrusive endemic near Springbok.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

We enjoyed a great sighting of one en route to Brandvlei.

Karoo (Yellow-rumped) Eremomela (RE) *Eremomela gregalis*

We had magnificent views of one near Calvinia and a further two near Brandvlei.

Burnt-neck Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis*

We had good views of one en route from Johannesburg to Polokwane.

Family Uncertain Incertae Sedis

- Cape Grassbird (RE)** *Sphenoeacus afer*
 First seen near Magoebaskloof with further sightings at Sani Pass and De Hoop NR
- Long-billed (Cape) Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens*
 Small numbers were seen in Brandvlei and Port Nolloth with a further sighting in Mkhuze GR.
- Victorin's (Scrub-)Warbler (E)** *Cryptillas victorini*
 We had fair views of this attractive endemic at Rooi Els.

Babblers & Parrotbills Timaliidae

- Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii*
 We saw a flock of four en route to Polokwane with a further sighting of two in Polokwane GR.
- Bush Blackcap (E)** *Lioptilus nigricapillus*
 We had superb views of three at Marutswa Forest.

Sylviid Babblers Sylviidae

- Chestnut-vented Warbler (RNE)** *Sylvia subcaerulea*
 Several were seen en route to Polokwane with further sightings of up to six in the Kimberley area.
- Layard's Warbler (RE)** *Sylvia layardi*
 Two birds were seen on Sani Pass and several more in the Springbok area.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

- Cape White-eye (RE)** *Zosterops pallidus*
 We had many encounters in Eastern South Africa with peak numbers of ten during our time in the forests of Magoebaskloof.
NOTE: This species has recently been split into a further species, Orange River White-eye Z.capensis, which occurs in Western Southern Africa, and further splitting may still occur.
- [Orange River White-eye] (RE)** *Zosterops capensis*
 Our first sighting was of several in Kakamas with further sightings of up to fifty daily in Augrabies NP.
NOTE: Refer to previous species.
- African Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis*
 We were fortunate to see two near Hluhluwe.

Sugarbirds & Allies Promeropidae

- Cape Sugarbird (E)** *Promerops cafer*
 We had wonderful views of ten near Sir Lowry's Pass and several in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.
- Gurney's Sugarbird (RE)** *Promerops gurneyi*
 We enjoyed stunning close views of one of these magnificent and unique nectivores on *Proteas* at Sani Pass.

Starlings Sturnidae

- Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*
 Commonly seen around urban centres in the east, introduced to Durban in 1900
- Common (European) Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
 Another attractive but none the less unwanted alien. Our first birds were seen at Darvill Bird Sanctuary with many further sightings around Cape Town. It was introduced in the late 1800s.
- Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea*
 We enjoyed great views of up to twenty near Polokwane GR.
- Black-bellied (Glossy-)Starling** *Lamprotornis corruscus*

This species seldom strays far inland; we had occasional sightings at Dhlinda, St Lucia and Mkhuzi.

Cape (Glossy-)Starling (RNE) *Lamprotornis nitens*

One of the more widespread species, first recorded en route to Polokwane.

(African) Pied Starling (E) *Spreo bicolor*

Good numbers of this common endemic were seen throughout the tour. Our first sightings were of fifty in the Wakkerstroom area.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

We had cracking scope views of a male in Lydenburg, the only sighting of the tour.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*

Recorded at most sites throughout South Africa, often in association with man. Peak numbers of eighty were seen at Abel Erasmus Pass with further sightings in the Natal Midlands and Wakkerstroom.

Pale-winged Starling (RNE) *Onychognathus naboroupp*

A bird of mountainous areas we recorded large numbers in Au-grabies Falls NP.

Oxpeckers Buphagidae

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

A species that can be found feeding on ticks and other parasites associated with mammals. We recorded small numbers in Pongola NR and Mkhuzi GR.

Thrushes Turdidae

Orange Ground Thrush *Zoothera gurneyi*

We had stunning views of two of these elusive and rather handsome birds at Marutswa Forest.

Spotted Ground Thrush *Zoothera guttata*

We had wonderful views of two in Dhlinda Forest.

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsipsirupa*

After only a brief sighting of one en route to Polokwane we were treated to fabulous views of a pair in Polokwane GR.

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyanus*

We had superb views of three en route to Polokwane.

Olive Thrush (RE) *Turdus olivaceus*

We enjoyed several sightings in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands including three near Sani Pass.

NOTE: This polytypic species complex may be split into many as ten different species, and several are already generally accepted eg Taita Thrush (T. helleri). The main north/south split is likely to be in Tanzania with the northern birds becoming Northern Olive Thrush (T. abyssinicus) and the nominate form being called Southern Olive Thrush. Karoo Thrush (T. smithi) occurring in Western South Africa has recently been split from the nominate group. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

[Karoo Thrush] (RE) *Turdus smithi*

We enjoyed good views of three in Au-grabies Falls NP.

Chats & Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*

We had wonderful views of two at Magoebaskloof.

Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra*

A fairly common garden species; we had sightings in Kimberley, Western Cape and the KZN Midlands.

White-throated Robin-Chat (E) *Cossypha humeralis*

We had wonderful views of two en route to Polokwane and a further two in Mkhuzi GR.

Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis*

Several of these stunning birds were seen at St Lucia and Mkhuzi.

Chorister Robin-Chat (E) *Cossypha dichroa*

We had excellent views of two at Magoebaskloof and another in Dhlinda Forest.

- Bearded Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata*
We had cracking scope views of one in Mkhuze GR.
- Brown Scrub Robin (RE)** *Cercotrichas signata*
One was seen exceptionally well at St Lucia.
- White-browed (Red-backed) Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys*
Small numbers were seen daily near Hluhluwe and in Mkhuze GR.
NOTE: This widespread African complex is being reviewed for a 3-way split, the Southern African C. l. leucophrys group would remain as White-browed Scrub-Robin, the Central African (C. l. zambesiana) would become Red-backed Scrub-Robin and the Northern African (C. l. leucoptera) would become White-winged Scrub-Robin. Clements does not as yet recognise these splits.
- Kalahari Scrub Robin (RNE)** *Cercotrichas paena*
Seen en route to Polokwane with further sightings of six in the Kimberley area
- Karoo Scrub Robin (E)** *Cercotrichas coryphaeus*
Seen in small numbers throughout the Cape Province
- African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*
Commonly seen throughout with sightings in the Northern Cape, the Midlands and Wakkerstroom
NOTE: Clements does not recognise the split of African (S. torquata) and Common (S. rubicola) Stonechats (the latter a Palearctic species), which is not followed by all authorities. Further splitting may occur in both groups including the highland Ethiopian form (S. t. albofasciata) that may become Ethiopian Stonechat.
- Buff-streaked (Bush)Chat (E)** *Saxicola bifasciata*
This stunning endemic was seen at Wakkerstroom and Sani Pass.
- Capped Wheatear** *Oenanthe pileata*
Commonly recorded around De Hoop NR and the wheatlands of Langebaan
- Mountain Wheatear (RNE)** *Oenanthe monticola*
Our first sighting was of one in Wakkerstroom, this attractive species that was commonly seen around rocky areas in the Northern Cape.
- Sickle-winged Chat (RE)** *Cercomela sinuata*
We had great views of six at Sani Pass with further sightings near Calvinia.
- Karoo Chat (RNE)** *Cercomela schlegelii*
We enjoyed good views of several in the Calvinia and Brandvlei areas.
- Tractrac Chat (RNE)** *Cercomela tractrac*
We found three in the Brandvlei area.
- Familiar Chat** *Cercomela familiaris*
A widespread species recorded at Sani Pass, De Hoop, Brandvlei, Springbok and Augrabies Falls NP.
- (Southern) Ant-eating Chat (RNE)** *Myrmecocichla formicivora*
An attractive species with prominent white wings and a dark body was commonly seen in the Cape Province.
- Mocking Cliff Chat** *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*
Three were seen well at Abel Erasmus Pass and a further one near Hluhluwe.
- Cape Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola rupestris*
We had a wonderful pair at Abel Erasmus Pass and a further four at Sani Pass.
- Sentinel Rock Thrush (E)** *Monticola explorer*
We had wonderful views of a pair at Wakkerstroom and ten on our day up Sani Pass.
- Short-toed Rock Thrush (RE)** *Monticola brevipes*
We had great scope views of one in the Kimberley area.
- Southern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina*
We had wonderful views of a pair in St.Lucia.
- Pale Flycatcher** *Bradornis pallidus*
One bird was seen in Mkhuze GR.
- Chat Flycatcher (RNE)** *Bradornis infuscatus*
This arid country bird was recorded around Calvinia and Brandvlei.
- Marico (Mariqua) Flycatcher (RNE)** *Bradornis mariquensis*

Several birds were seen in the Polokwane area.

Fiscal Flycatcher (RE)

Sigelus silens

First seen around Polokwane with further sightings near Kimberley

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

We had great scope views of one in Augrabies Falls NP.

Ashy Flycatcher

Muscicapa caerulescens

We enjoyed a great sighting of two at St Lucia.

African Dusky Flycatcher

Muscicapa adusta

A flycatcher of forest and woodland, single birds seen at several sites including Sani Pass

Grey Tit-Flycatcher

Myioparus plumbeus

We found two in Mkhuze GR. This rather endearing species is often observed actively fanning its tail.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae

Collared Sunbird

Hedydipna collaris

Small numbers were seen at Mkhuze GR and St Lucia.

Orange-breasted Sunbird (E)

Anthobaphes violacea

This attractive species was seen at Sir Lowry's Pass and in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

(Eastern) Olive Sunbird

Cyanomitra olivacea

We had good views of one in St Lucia and another at Dhlinda Forest.

NOTE: The Olive Sunbird species complex has been split into two full species by Clements and some other authorities, namely the nominate Eastern Olive-Sunbird C. olivacea and the form in East and West Africa, Western Olive Sunbird (C. obscura). There has been a review of this split and several authorities are in doubt of the validity, which is based upon the presence, or lack there-of, of pectoral tufts in the females of the various subspecies within the complex.

Grey (Mouse-colored) Sunbird

Cyanomitra veroxii

We enjoyed wonderful views of this coastal forest species near Hluhluwe.

Amethyst (African Black) Sunbird

Chalcomitra amethystina

This stunning sunbird was seen exceptionally well near Polokwane with further sightings elsewhere.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird

Chalcomitra senegalensis

We had great sightings of this breathtaking beauty in Mkhuze GR.

Malachite Sunbird

Nectarinia famosa

This stunning species was seen very well at Sani Pass.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird (E)

Cinnyris chalybeus

First recorded at Magoebaskloof with further sightings throughout the Cape Peninsula

Neergaard's Sunbird (RE)

Cinnyris neergaardi

We got very lucky with this elusive species managing to find a stunning male in Mkhuze GR.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E)

Cinnyris afer

We enjoyed a wonderful sighting of a stunning male on the lower slopes of Sani Pass.

NOTE: Disjunct populations of Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird (C. ludovicensis) occurring in Malawi and Angola and Rwenzori Double-collared Sunbird (C. stuhlmanni) of the Albertine Rift are sometimes lumped with Greater Double-collared Sunbird (C. afer). A further unnamed form from NE Zambia still requires allocation. Clements currently recognizes this species (C. afer) as separate and distinct, found only in the Cape Province east to the great Fish River.

Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird

Cinnyris mariquensis

We found two in the Polokwane area.

NOTE: Some authorities split this complex into 2 full species. The C. m. suahelicus which occurs in East Africa would become Swahili Sunbird as opposed to the nominate form which would remain as Mariqua Sunbird. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Purple-banded Sunbird

Cinnyris bifasciatus

We found many birds in the Hluhluwe and Mkhuze areas.

NOTE: The form N. e. tsavoensis of Kenya is sometimes split off as Tsavo Purple-banded Sunbird.

White-bellied(breasted) Sunbird

Cinnyris talatala

Seen very well on several occasions in Polokwane GR

Dusky Sunbird*Cinnyris fuscus*

This dry country species was recorded in good numbers in Augrabies Falls NP.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver***Plocepasser mahali*

Recorded at Polokwane and in the Kimberley area. Their scruffy nests are easily noticeable.

Sociable (Social) Weaver (RE)*Philetairus socius*

One cannot help notice the large colonial nests often attached to telephone lines in the most arid of areas. We first recorded this species en route from Brandvlei to Kenhardt with further sightings near Pofadder.

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

Widespread and common in urban areas throughout South Africa

Cape Sparrow (RNE)*Passer melanurus*

Certainly our smartest sparrow, first seen in Johannesburg and commonly recorded throughout the Cape and at Sani Pass.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow*Passer diffusus*

Seen in small numbers in Polokwane GR and Augrabies Falls NP

NOTE: The Grey-headed Sparrow complex P. griseus has been split into five full species with the South African form being given the name P. diffusus.

Yellow-throated Petronia (Sparrow)*Gymnoris superciliaris*

We had great views of two in Mkhuze GR.

Weavers & Allies Ploceidae**Red-billed Buffalo Weaver***Bubalornis niger*

We had wonderful views of five in Pongola NR.

Scaly[-feathered] Weaver (RNE)*Sporopipes squamifrons*

First recorded near Polokwane with further sightings around Kimberley

Thick-billed (Grosbeak) Weaver*Amblyospiza albifrons*

We had great views of several in St.Lucia and Dhliza Forest.

Spectacled Weaver*Ploceus ocularis*

We enjoyed a good sighting of two in Polokwane.

Cape Weaver (E)*Ploceus capensis*

This fairly common endemic was first seen at Magoebaskloof with further sightings throughout the Cape Province, Sani Pass and Wakkerstroom.

Yellow (African Golden) Weaver*Ploceus subaureus*

Small numbers were seen daily at St.Lucia.

African (Holub's) Golden Weaver*Ploceus xanthops*

We had great views of one near Magoebaskloof and a further pair in Mkhuze GR.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver*Ploceus xanthopterus*

After an extensive search we were rewarded with a superb male at St Lucia.

Lesser Masked Weaver*Ploceus intermedius*

Small numbers were recorded in Mkhuze GR and at St Lucia.

Southern Masked Weaver*Ploceus velatus*

A commonly recorded species in Kimberley and Polokwane

NOTE: African Masked Weaver P. velatus is sometimes split into the nominate Southern Masked Weaver which we recorded and the more northerly occurring Vitelline Masked-Weaver P. vitellinus.

Village Weaver*Ploceus cucullatus*

Commonly recorded daily in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands

Dark-backed (Forest) Weaver*Ploceus bicolor*

We had our first sighting near Hluhluwe with further sightings at Mkhuze GR and Dhliza Forest.

Red-headed Weaver*Anaplectes melanotis*

We enjoyed wonderful views of three males during the drive from Magoebaskloof to Wakkerstroom.

Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Small flocks were seen en route to Polokwane.	
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Recorded at several sites throughout the tour	
Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widow)	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
This species, humorously resembling a large bumblebee, was seen at several sites with peak numbers of six at De Hoop NR.	
Fan-tailed (Red-shouldered) Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
This <i>Euplectes</i> is regularly encountered in the grasslands of the east. Small numbers were seen at St.Lucia and Underberg.	
White-winged Widowbird	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
We had great views of two en route from Johannesburg to Polokwane.	
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
We enjoyed good views of fifteen near Eshowe.	
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
First recorded en route to Polokwane with further sightings of up to twenty daily at Wakkerstroom	

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>
We had brief views of two near Hluhluwe and a further one near Kimberley.	
Red-headed Finch (RNE)	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>
We had wonderful views of a male en route to Polokwane with further sightings of twenty at our lodge near Kimberley.	
Green(-backed) Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>
We had fair views of one at Magoebaskloof and a couple at St.Lucia.	
Pink-throated Twinspot (RE)	<i>Hypargos margaritatus</i>
We enjoyed these fantastically patterned birds near Hluhluwe. This species is very localised being entirely restricted to sand forest in north-eastern South Africa and adjacent Mozambique.	
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
We had wonderful views of three near Polokwane and one in Mkhuze GR.	
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
We had incredible views of two pairs at Magoebaskloof.	
Jameson's Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>
We had great views of a male in Polokwane GR.	
Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonbleu)	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Small flocks of these smart birds were seen in Polokwane and Mkhuze GR's.	
Violet-eared Waxbill (RNE)	<i>Uraeginthus granatinus</i>
Five of these stunning seed-eaters were seen in the Kimberley area.	
Grey (Black-tailed) Waxbill	<i>Estrilda perreini</i>
We had superb views of a pair near Hluhluwe, a tricky species.	
Swee Waxbill (Black-faced Swee) (E)	<i>Estrilda melanotis</i>
These are absolutely gorgeous little waxbills and we were fortunate to enjoy magic sightings of forty in Magoebaskloof and a further sighting of four in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.	
NOTE: Yellow-bellied Waxbill (East African Swee) <i>Estrilda quartinia</i> is sometimes lumped with the South African Swee Waxbill <i>E. melanotis</i> .	
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
A waxbill often associated with wetlands. Seen at scattered localities including a small flock at Marutswa	
Black-faced(cheeked) Waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>
We had great views of eight in Polokwane GR and a further six near Kimberley.	
African Quail-Finch	<i>Ortygospiza fuscocrissa</i>
Small numbers were seen flying over near Wakkerstroom.	

NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the South African form would remain African Quailfinch and the highland Ethiopian isolate would become Ethiopian Quailfinch (*O. fuscocrissa*.)

Bronze Mannikin (Munia) *Lonchura cucullata*

We had great views of a flock of eight in St Lucia.

Red-backed Mannikin (Munia) *Lonchura nigriceps*

Up to fifteen of these beautiful little seedeaters were seen in Magoebaskloof.

Indigobirds Viduidae

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

Small numbers of this aggressive little brood parasite were encountered at several sites.

Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia*

We found two drinking at a waterhole in Polokwane GR and a further on in Kimberley.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

Regularly recorded at most wetland locations throughout South Africa

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Seen in small numbers at several sites including one at Augrabies Falls NP

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

Recorded at higher elevation grasslands, up to a dozen were seen daily in the Wakkerstroom area.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*

Recorded at lower elevation grassland locations, we found small numbers in Mkuze GR, St Lucia and near Hluhluwe.

African (Grassveld) Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*

Regularly recorded at most grassland locations throughout Southern Africa

NOTE: African pipit taxonomy is in disarray and much further research is required in the phylogeny of this grouping. Several forms which are considered subspecies are likely to become full species in their own right and several new forms are surely still to be described. The identification of two new species of pipits from an urban hockey field in Kimberley, South Africa, provides an excellent illustration regarding how little is known about African pipits and how little attention has been paid to them.

Mountain Pipit (BE) *Anthus hoeschi*

We had good views of two during our day up Sani Pass.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

We enjoyed a good sighting of one at Sani Pass.

Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis*

We found one near Kimberley.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*

We had good views of five near Kimberley.

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*

We heard one calling on Abel Erasmus Pass.

African Rock (Yellow-tufted) Pipit (E) *Anthus crenatus*

We had wonderful scope views of one near Wakkerstroom.

Kimberley Pipit (RE) *Anthus pseudosimilis*

We were very fortunate to find two of these very localised birds in the Kimberley area.

Yellow-breasted Pipit (E) *Anthus chloris*

Excellent scope looks were had of this rare grassland endemic at Wakkerstroom.

Finches & Allies Fringillidae

[Common] Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

We had good views of two at Constantia Nek.

Cape Canary (RE) *Serinus canicollis*

Typically encountered at higher elevation sites in the east, we had small flocks in the south-western Cape and Natal Midlands. Peak numbers of fifteen in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the nominate southern group would remain as Cape Canary and the form which occurs in East Africa would become Yellow-crowned Canary (*S. flavivertex*.) Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Forest Canary (E) *Crithagra scotops*

This uncommon endemic was seen very well in Magoebaskloof.

Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis*

We had great looks at one in Kakamas.

Lemon-breasted Canary (RNE) *Crithagra citrinipecta*

We had wonderful views of two near Hluhluwe.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica*

This is a common bird at lower elevations in both urban and wild areas in the east.

Yellow Canary (RNE) *Crithagra flaviventris*

Recorded widely throughout the Cape Province

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata*

Two birds were recorded at St.Lucia.

White-throated Canary (RNE) *Crithagra albogularis*

Recorded around Brandvlei, Calvinia and Langebaan

Streaky-headed Seedeater (RNE) *Crithagra gularis*

Our first sightings was of two in Magoebaskloof with further sightings of two near Underberg and two near De Hoop NR.

Protea Canary (E) *Crithagra leucoptera*

One of these scarce and elusive seedeaters was found at a gorge near Clanwilliam.

Cape Siskin (E) *Crithagra totta*

We found two of these elusive birds at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Drakensberg Siskin (E) *Crithagra symonsi*

We had at least six birds on our explorations at the top of Sani Pass in the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

Black-headed Canary (RE) *Crithagra alario*

We had good views of five near Calvinia.

NOTE: Clements splits Damara Canary, *C.leucolaema* from Black-headed Canary. We found seven Damara Canaries in Springbok.

Buntings Emberizidae

Lark-like Bunting (RNE) *Emberiza impetuani*

Recorded in the arid western areas of South Africa where our first birds were seen near Calvinia.

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

We had good but brief views of one near Kimberley. This species turned out to be the record breaker.

Cape Bunting (RNE) *Emberiza capensis*

A fairly common species recorded throughout the tour in rocky habitats. First recorded at Wakkerstroom

NOTE: Clements has recently elevated the former Cape Bunting subspecies *E.c.vincenti* of central Malawi to E Zambia to full species status, Vincent's Bunting (*E.vincenti*).

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*

Small numbers of this brilliantly plumaged bird were seen in acacia bushveld at Mkhuze GR.

MAMMAL SPECIES LIST (59 species)

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

Elephant-shrews Macroscelididea

Smith's Rock Elephant-shrew *Elephantulus myurus*

We had great scope views of one at Springbok.

Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit-Bat *Epomophorus wahlbergi*

We had great views of twenty in Mkhuze GR.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus*

This species is fairly common in wilder parts of Southern Africa, occasionally encountered close to human habitation. First seen at Abel Erasmus Pass and later we had a wonderful experience watching forty descending the gorge at the Nieuwoudtville waterfall.

Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus aethiops*

Common and seen at most localities in eastern South Africa with good numbers in all game reserves

Samango (Blue) Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis*

This scarce forest primate was seen very well at Magoebaskloof.

Hares & Rabbits Leporidae

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*

We had good views of eight on our night drive near Kimberley.

Smith's Red Rock Hare *Pronolagus rupestris*

We had awesome views of one in Springbok.

Squirrels Sciuridae

South African Ground Squirrel *Geosciurus inauris*

We had great sightings of up to twenty in the Kimberley area.

Red Forest Squirrel *Paraxerus palliatus*

Four were seen at St.Lucia.

Tree Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi*

We had amazing views of one en route to Polokwane.

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

One of these exotic squirrels was seen near Constantia in the Cape.

Springhares Pedetidae

Springhare *Pedetes capensis*

Up to twenty of these endearing mammals were seen during our night drive near Kimberley.

Porcupines Hystricidae

Porcupine *Hystrix africaeaustralis*

We found one of these nocturnal creatures during a night drive near Kimberley.

Rat-like Rodents Muroidea

Striped Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio*

We had wonderful views of two at Magoebaskloof.

Sloggett's Ice Rat *Otomys sloggetti*

We had at least twenty of these engaging rodents around Sani Top Hotel and on the barren plains in Lesotho.

Dogs & Allies Canidae

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*

We had a great sighting of one during our night drive near Kimberley.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis*

Six of these cuddly critters were seen on our night drive near Kimberley.

Mustelids Mustelidae

Spot-necked Otter *Lutra maculicollis*
We had wonderful views of two at Wakkerstroom.

Mongoose Herpestidae

Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea*
One was seen at Wakkerstroom.

Small Grey Mongoose *Herpestes pulverulenta*
One was seen briefly at Strandfontein with further great sightings of two in Augrabies Falls NP.

Large Grey Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon*
We had good views of one running across the road en route from Langebaan to Paleisheuwel.

Yellow Mongoose *Cynictis penicillata*
We enjoyed many sightings at Kimberley, Springbok and Wakkerstroom.

Suricate (Meerkat) *Suricata suricatta*
Forty of these delightful creatures were seen at Wakkerstroom and several more near Port Nolloth.

Aardvark Orycteropodidae

Aardvark *Orycteropus afer*
We had good views of one during our night drive near Kimberley.

Hyraxes Procaviidae

Rock Hyrax (Dassie) *Procavia capensis*
An animal of rocky terrain our first sightings were at Sani Pass with further sightings at Springbok.

Zebras Equidae

Common (Burchell's/Plains) Zebra *Equus quagga*
The unmistakable striped horse of the African savannah, we enjoyed sightings at Kimberley and Mkhuze.

Cape Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra zebra*
We had great views of several in De Hoop NR.

Rhinoceroses Rhinocerotidae

Square-lipped (White) Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*
We had excellent sightings of seven at Pongola NR and five in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

Hippopotamuses Hippopotamidae

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*
Recorded at St Lucia and Mkhuze GR

Pigs Suidae

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*
We enjoyed sightings of several in Pongola NR, Mkhuze and Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

Giraffes Giraffidae

Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis*
Good close looks at twenty in Pongola NR and several in Mkhuze GR.

Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae

Eland *Taurotragus oryx*

We found four in Polokwane GR, forty were seen during our time in De Hoop NR and a further three in Cape of Good Hope NR.

Greater Kudu*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*

These magnificent antelope were seen briefly in Polokwane GR with great sightings in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

Nyala*Tragelaphus angasii*

This striking antelope is endemic to this part of KwaZulu Natal and Southern Mozambique. We had plentiful sightings in Mkhuze GR.

Bushbuck*Tragelaphus scriptus*

We had superb views of six at St Lucia.

Roan Antelope*Hippotragus equinus*

We had great views of two in Dronfield NR, Kimberley.

Sable Antelope*Hippotragus niger*

We had a great sighting of five near Kimberley.

Gemsbok (Southern Oryx)*Oryx gazella*

We had great views of four near West Coast NP and a further fifteen near Kimberley.

Common Waterbuck*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*

This large and oddly marked antelope was seen in Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

Southern (Common) Reedbuck*Redunca arundinum*

We found two in Pongola NR and a further three near Underberg.

Grey Rhebok*Pelea capreolus*

We had great looks at eight in the grasslands of Wakkerstroom.

Black Wildebeest*Connochaetes gnou*

We had a wonderful herd of fifty near Kimberley.

Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu)*Connochaetes taurinus*

This mammal was frequently encountered in Polokwane GR's and Pongola NR.

Red Hartebeest*Alcelaphus buselaphus*

Recorded in small numbers near Kimberley

Blesbok*Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi*

Small numbers were seen in Wakkerstroom.

Bontebok*Damaliscus dorcas pygargus*

Twenty were seen in the De Hoop area.

Tsessebe*Damaliscus lunatus*

Small numbers were seen in Polokwane GR. The fastest antelope.

Impala*Aepyceros melampus*

Commonly encountered in Mkhuze and Polokwane GR's

Springbok*Antidorcas marsupialis*

This attractive gazelle was seen frequently in grassland habitats in the Cape Province.

Klipspringer*Oreotragus oreotragus*

We enjoyed good scope views of one at Sir Lowry's Pass.

Steenbok*Raphicerus campestris*

These dainty antelope, famed for their habit of burying their dung, were observed at Kimberley, Brandvlei and Calvinia.

Blue Duiker*Cephalophus monticola*

We had amazing views of several at Dhlinza Forest.

Red Duiker*Cephalophus natalensis*

This stunning dwarf antelope, a rich chestnut in colour, was seen on several occasions at St.Lucia.

Bush (Common/Grey) Duiker*Sylvicapra grimmia*

This, the commonest duiker in South Africa, was seen at several sites with good views of one near Kimberley and another in Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

Fur Seals Otariidae

Cape Fur Seal*Arctocephalus pusillus*

This cold-water dweller was seen in the icy waters off the Cape Peninsula.

Pleated Whales Balaenopteridae**Bryde's Whale***Balaenoptera Edeni*

We had good but brief views of one during the pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Hump-backed Whale*Megaptera novaeangliae*

We had great views of one during our pelagic trip off the Cape Peninsula.

Right Whales Balaenidae**Southern Right Whale***Eubalaena australis*

We had amazing views of ten off the Cape Peninsula, some only a few metres from shore.

Dolphins Delphinidae**Heaviside's Dolphin***Cephalorhynchus heavisidii*

We had good views of four in a bay near Port Nolloth, their distinctive fin shape was obvious.

REPTILE SPECIES LIST**Leopard Tortoise***Geochelone pardalis*

We had great views of one in De Hoop NR and another near Kimberley.

Angulate Tortoise*Chersina angulata*

We had great views of four in West Coast NP.

Marsh Terrapin*Pelomedusa subrufa*

We had good views of twenty in Mkhuzi GR.

Puffadder*Bitis arietans*

We had wonderful views of a stunning adult in De Hoop NR.

Cape Cobra*Naja nivea*

We had good but brief views of one in Kimberley.

Black Spitting Cobra*Naja nigricollis woodi*

We had great views of one near Kimberley.

Striped Skink*Mabuya striata*

One was seen at Magoebaskloof.

Southern Tree Agama*Agama atricollis*

Small numbers were seen in Augrabies Falls NP.

Moreau's Tropical House Gecko*Hemidactylus mabouia*

Several were seen in St. Lucia.

Setaro's Dwarf Chameleon*Bradypodion setaroi*

We had wonderful views of one in St. Lucia.

Nile Crocodile*Crocodylus niloticus*

We had great views of fifteen at St. Lucia.

AMPHIBIAN SPECIES LIST**Bush Squeaker***Arthroleptis wahlbergi*

We had great views of one in Dhlhiza Forest.

Guttural Toad*Bufo gutturalis*

One was seen in Hilton and another in Mkhuzi GR.

Photo Credits: Blue Crane, Southern Ground Hornbill, Southern Bald Ibis and Namaqua Sandgrouse all these photos taken during the tour by Lisa Thurston

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