

ITINERARY  
**SOUTH AFRICA**  
*October 3-25, 2019*



*The Yellow-billed Hornbill is endemic to southern Africa, including the region around Kruger National Park in South Africa. We'll get a chance to see these and many other near-endemics on our tour. Photograph by participant Kathleen John.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides South Africa tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

*Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:*

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site).
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

**E**nd point to a continent, South Africa is a meeting ground of east and west, both at sea and on land. This rich assemblage of faunal elements has been supplemented by the evolution of many distinctive forms in the islands of subtropical habitat at the tip of this tropical continent—rockjumpers, sugarbirds, and a host of distinctive bustards, larks, rock-thrushes, chats, scrub-robins, and sunbirds. Add to these many more typical African birds, such as raptors, hornbills, barbets, mousebirds, bushshrikes, weavers, and bishops, and one has a great birding trip.

Our newly revised itinerary gives us an even better opportunity to see as many of the South African endemics as possible in three weeks, and also many wonderful opportunities to enjoy an even greater diversity of scenery and habitats. Many of the endemics we'll be looking for are extremely localized, and we'll be accompanied by an expert local birder throughout the tour. Excellent field guides and other reference material make preparation and fieldwork a pleasure.

Our itinerary includes thorough coverage of the Tanqua Karoo aridlands, the Cape Region (plus the potential of a pelagic boat trip off Cape Town), the magnificent Drakensberg Mountains, KwaZulu-Natal, the endemic rich high altitude grasslands at Wakkerstroom, and the world famous Kruger National Park. An additional draw of the tour is the unique and spectacular flora for which South Africa is famous – the *Fynbos* in the southern Cape is smallest of the world's six floral kingdoms.

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** Travel in South Africa is easy. The roads are very good and the creature comforts adequate to very good; you should, however, be aware that although there is now less driving than previously, several long drives are still necessary to get to some of the best birding spots. Our lodgings are occasionally simple though comfortable in the remote rural towns, while larger and more comfortable elsewhere. As for the food, the standards of preparation and hygiene are excellent; meals often begin with a huge breakfast, lunches are taken in small restaurants (and occasionally if the birding requires it, at a fast food place), dinners are most frequently eaten in our hotels, or at nearby restaurants. We also frequently get rave reviews of the quality-to-price ratio of South African wine.

Based on our experience from previous trips, we believe we offer a tour that is both comprehensive and comfortable, maximizing our time with South Africa's unique species *and* with its most interesting and productive habitats. Most stays are for one or two nights, and a fair amount of time is spent traveling from one spot to the next.

In terms of physical activity, this is a fairly easy trip, with most walks being relatively short and easy, though on occasion, we need to walk up or down fairly steep grades to find several of the pipits, rockjumpers, rock-thrushes, or others. On our day to Lesotho we will drive to and then walk around (on gently undulating ground) at 10,000 feet. During our three-night stay near Cape Town, we will hopefully take a one-day pelagic tour, perhaps traveling 30 miles beyond the Cape of Good Hope. The seas in this area have varied from very calm (rarely), to fairly rough (more typical), and very rough (twice). We appreciate that not everyone enjoys pelagic trips, and for those wanting to do something else, a trip to Cape Town or perhaps the Botanical Gardens (not included in the tour fee) can easily be arranged through our hotel.



*Birding in South Africa is not strenuous, although we do several hikes. Here, a recent Field Guides group birds near Polokwane. Photograph by participant Cathy Douglas.*

While we will visit many wild and beautiful spots, birding in South Africa is in several ways similar to North America rather than to East or West Africa. The roads are excellent and we stay in conventional hotels in conventional farmland, ranchland, or cities. The landscape has been substantially altered by humans; vast stretches of South Africa are fenced and used for intensive agriculture and modern ranching, so South Africa does not offer the “wilderness experience” of the Masai Mara, for example. Native mammals are correspondingly scarce and mostly confined to reserves, where populations of many species are being re-established. There is, on the bright side, a growing conservation ethic in South Africa, and we do still see a substantial number of wild species of mammals. **Furthermore, this is one of the very few specialized birding tours that includes time in Kruger National Park, so we’ll have the opportunity to see more of Africa’s fabulous big game than what many other tours offer.** Many of the bird species we’ll seek are quite local, and



the itinerary is structured in such a way that we move from area to area primarily in search of them. The results on our past tours have been excellent. All of our tours here have found a very high percentage of the possible species—endemics in particular, frequently with more than 100 endemic forms. As on any tour, we will be prepared to miss a few, as our itinerary is economically planned. Because we bird mostly in open habitats, everyone on the tour sees an even higher percentage of the total list than is usual on tours to more forested areas. The trip list should be well over 450 species, and even for birders who have traveled in East and West Africa, a third of the species seen will be new. If you haven't been to Africa before, every day will offer great birding challenges and rewards!

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with your guide.

## About the Birding Areas



**The Cape District**—Globally speaking, the comparatively small region of south-west Africa comprises one of the six floral regions of the entire world, supporting more than 7000 species of plants, more than half of them endemic. Much of the area is known as “the Karoo”, which stretches from the Namib and Kalahari Deserts in the north to the Cape in the south. Drier in the north than the south, it is generally a land of low rainfall, and even that rainfall is highly erratic, leading to nomadic behavior on the part of many birds. We will encounter *Fynbos* and *Protea*-rich scrubland in several variations around Ceres, Calvinia and Lambert's Bay, as well as near Cape Town itself. We will take it as we find it, enjoying the diverse landforms in the region while searching for the many bird species special to the area, including Cape Francolin, Black Harrier, Black Bustard, Burchell's Courser, White-backed Mousebird, Cape Batis, a wealth of larks, including Cape

Clapper, Cape (Long-billed), Karoo, Red, Stark's, Sclater's, and Sabota, along with Gray-backed Sparrow-Lark. We'll also seek Fairy Flycatcher, Cape Bulbul, Cape Sugarbird, Yellow-rumped Eremomela, Karoo and Tractrac chats, Karoo Scrub-Robin, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Victorin's Scrub-Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Siskin, and the rare Protea Canary. Rocky regions also support a few specialized birds – like Kopje Warbler, Cape Rock-Thrush and Pale-winged Starling, and we'll make special effort to see Cape Rockjumper.

The Cape also means the Atlantic Ocean meeting the Indian Ocean. The cold, rich Benguela Current is home to the endemic Jackass Penguin, Cape, Bank, and Crowned cormorants, Cape Gannet, Hartlaub's Gull, and African Oystercatcher; we will visit coastal areas, including breeding colonies, in pursuit of these. We will also allocate one day for a pelagic trip. Weather permitting (always a HUGE factor here), we should see a variety of large tubenoses, including several albatrosses and giant-petrels, and, if we can find operating trawlers within reasonable distance of land, the spectacle may be incredible, with thousands of birds milling around in pursuit of scraps. In most years, weather has permitted us to run a boat trip on this tour but this cannot be guaranteed.

**KwaZulu-Natal**—For the purpose of simplicity, we will divide this into four main areas, each with spectacular scenery and an amazing diversity of birdlife.

*The Drakensberg:* The dramatic ramparts of the Drakensberg, South Africa's highest mountains, are one of the scenic highlights of the trip. Using 4WD vehicles, we will climb a rocky road to elevations above 10,000 feet in Lesotho. Specialized birds are many, and we will investigate rocky areas for endemics such as Drakensberg Rockjumper, Ground Woodpecker, and Sentinal Rock-Thrush. We'll also investigate any flowering protea bushes for the rare and erratic Gurney's Sugarbird, and keep our eyes on the sky for Lammergeier and the endangered Cape Griffon. Other specialties include Sickle-winged and the beautiful Buff-streaked chats, Mountain Pipit, and Drakensberg Siskin.

**Forests:** Only a tiny portion of South Africa is covered by forest, and much of that has been destroyed. We will visit several patches of both lowland and montane forest during our time in KwaZulu Natal, including Bulwer, Dlinza, and St. Lucia. Possibilities range from such classic African species as Crowned Hawk-Eagle, Trumpeter Hornbill, Narina Trogon, and White-starred Robin, to the more localized Knysna and Livingstone's turacos, Bush Blackcap, Spotted Ground Thrush, Brown Scrub-Robin, Woodward's and Cape batises, and Forest Canary.

**Grasslands:** This is another habitat greatly altered by humans. We will visit areas still supporting native grasses around Wakkerstroom in pursuit of several range-restricted landbirds such as Yellow-breasted Pipit, and Botha's and Rudd's larks, along with impressive numbers of Long-tailed Widowbirds. These grasslands and adjoining wetlands are also home to some spectacular non-passerines, including Jackal Buzzard, Blue Bustard, Wattled, Blue, and Gray Crowned- cranes, and the endangered Southern Bald Ibis.

**Acacia veld, woodland, and moist savanna:** The southern edge of these habitats occurs in the more tropical reaches of KwaZulu-Natal. The habitats and avifauna share much with eastern Africa, but there are also some distinctive birds, including White-throated Robin-Chat, Rudd's Apalis, Neergaard's Sunbird, and Pink-throated Twinspot. In Mkuzi Game Reserve we will also have a rich assortment of mammals; White Rhinoceros is usually obvious, as is the attractive and endemic Nyala, and we may also see Common Giraffe, Hippopotamus, Gray Duiker, Blue Wildebeest, Impala, Greater Kudu, and Burchell's Zebra.



*The Cape Batis is a small insectivore endemic to southern Africa. They seem to be quite adaptable to various vegetation types and we should be able to see them at several points on the tour. Photograph by participant Cathy Douglas.*

**The North; Kruger National Park to Magoebaskloof and Polokwane**—The varied habitats of this area include a mix of acacia woodland, grassland, seasonal pools, and a mist-belt forest. We'll start with two days in the world famous Kruger National Park, where in addition to a vast and varied avifauna, we have excellent chances to see more of Africa's famed big game, perhaps including Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Giraffe, Hunting Dog, and a whole array of antelope. Birds should include Natal Francolin, several species of vulture from the small Hooded to the huge Lappet-faced, Bateleur, Martial Eagle, Red-crested Bustard, Double-banded Sandgrouse, Gray Go-away-bird, Southern Ground-hornbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, White Helmetshrike, Gray Tit-Flycatcher, Kurrichane Thrush, Red-billed Oxpecker, Golden-breasted Bunting, and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver. In the drier acacia scrub areas of the north we hope for Burnt-necked Eremomela, Burchell's Glossy-Starling, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, and Violet-eared Waxbill. This is also the habitat for the stunning Crimson-breasted Gonolek—a brilliant red and black bushshrike. South Africa is well known for its large number of endemic larks, but none is more localized (and rarely seen on any tour) than Short-clawed Lark; we'll be making a special effort to find this bird.

Finally, in the mist forests of Magoebaskloof, we hope for Brown-necked (Cape) Parrot, Knysna Turaco, Chorister Robin-Chat, Orange Ground-Thrush, and Barratt's Warbler—a super skulker, even by *Bradypterus* standards.





*The Red-billed Oxpecker is a common companion of large mammals throughout much of South Africa. We'll undoubtedly see them in Kruger National Park. Photograph by participant Kathleen John.*

## Itinerary for South Africa

**Note:** This day-by-day itinerary is based on current air schedules; if schedules change, some modifications may be in order.

**Day 1, Thu, 3 Oct. Departure.** In the past, South African Air direct flights have been comfortable and the service outstanding. Please choose a flight that will arrive in Johannesburg by **Friday, October 4**.

**Day 2, Fri, 4 Oct. Arrival in Johannesburg.** After clearing Customs and Immigration in Johannesburg, please use the shuttle bus and transfer to the Birchwood Executive Hotel about 5 miles from the airport. The transfers are free of charge and the clearly marked shuttle bus, which operates between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., can be found outside terminal 2A (International Arrivals) at the designated Hotel "pick up" and "drop off" points immediately behind the Intercontinental Hotel. If you are arriving outside these times, please take a taxi to the hotel. Night at the Birchwood Executive Hotel.

**Day 3, Sat, 5 Oct. Fly to Cape Town and on to Ceres.** We'll take the morning flight to Cape Town and then drive north to Ceres, birding along the way. We'll have to be flexible depending on the flight times, but should have plenty time for birding around Ceres in the afternoon. A visit to a nearby lake may provide Long-tailed Cormorant, Hadada and Sacred ibis, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler, Cape Teal, African Swamphen, Crowned Lapwing, and Pied and Malachite kingfishers. While in the surrounding farmland and scrub, we may see Cape Francolin, Helmeted Guineafowl, White-throated and Greater Striped swallows, Cape Wagtail, Cape Bulbul, Olive Thrush, Red-headed Cisticola, Karoo Prinia, Cape Robin-Chat, Mountain Wheatear, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Malachite and Southern Double-collared sunbirds, Cape White-eye, Southern Fiscal, African Pied Starling, Cape Weaver, Southern Masked-Weaver, and Red Bishop. Night at Village Guest House, Ceres.

**Days 4-5, Sun-Mon, 6-7 Oct. To Calvinia; the Tanqua Karoo and Brandvlei.** We will spend these two days to the north of Ceres, birding a series of rocky mountains, hills, and vast area of unique South African semi-arid country known as the Tanqua Karoo. Birding here varies from year to year depending on the amount of (or lack of) rainfall, but no matter what, we'll be looking for Verreaux's Eagle, Pale Chanting-Goshawk, Ludwig's, Karoo and Black bustards, Double-banded and Burchell's courser's, Namaqua Sandgrouse, White-backed Mousebird, Greater Kestrel, Pririt Batis, and an assemblage of larks that includes Karoo, Karoo Long-billed, Spike-heeled, Stark's and Sclater's, and the extremely localized Red Lark. Other birds include Fairy Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped (Karoo) Eremomela, Layard's and Rufous-vented

warblers, Rufous-eared Warbler, Chat Flycatcher, Karoo and Tractrac chats, Southern Anteater-Chat, Pale-winged Starling, Lark-like Bunting, and White-throated, Yellow and Black-headed canaries. At dry tributaries with reeds, we'll stop to look for the very local Namaqua Prinia, and on rocky hills we'll look for Kopje Warbler. Nights at Hantam House, Calvinia.

**Day 6, Tue, 8 Oct. To Lambert's Bay.** Today we head west to Lambert's Bay on the Atlantic coast, with plenty time for birding along the way. We'll be especially looking for any of the dry-country birds that we may have missed in the previous few days, and also spend some time in a well vegetated kloof (canyon) where Protea Canary (one of the most difficult endemics) can be found.

We expect to arrive at Lambert's Bay in time to spend a couple of hours at a spectacular seabird colony, with thousands of Cape Gannets, along with Cape and Crowned cormorants, Hartlaub's and Kelp (Cape) gulls, Great Crested Terns, and our first chance for African Oystercatcher. Night Lambert's Bay Hotel.

**Day 7, Wed, 9 Oct. The Southwest Cape and Cape Town.** This morning, after some early birding just outside Lambert's Bay, where Eastern Clapper and Cape larks can be found, we'll have breakfast and then head south, stopping for a variety of water birds as we head to West Coast National Park. Here, our main target is the striking endemic Black Harrier. It should be a beautiful and busy day, and we expect to arrive at our hotel near Cape Town in the early evening. Night at Quayside Hotel in Simonstown.



*Penguins are a favorite of many birders, and we'll have a chance to see a colony of endemic African Penguins near Cape Town. Photograph by participant Ken Havard.*

**Days 8-9, Thu-Fri, 10-11 Oct. The Cape area and Pelagic.** Two full days in the southwest Cape provide an opportunity to explore all the major habitats of the area. Cape Town itself can be a great experience. Set beneath Table Mountain, this modern city has excellent scenery, reason enough for a visit here.

Our schedule will be flexible with the goal of reaching all the best birding areas in the region. Weather permitting, we'll take a pelagic trip. The timing of our birding will be adjusted according to weather conditions but will include:

*Pelagic trip.* As all seabird watchers know, out on the water anything (or nothing) can happen. However, on a good day, a pelagic out of Cape Town is hard to beat. Soon after leaving port we should see Cape Gannets, White-chinned Petrels, and Brown Skuas. Black-browed and White-capped albatrosses should start appearing, and we may see a few Yellow-nosed (two subspecies, perhaps soon to be split) and Wandering, too. Wilson's Storm-Petrels are common, while Greater and Sooty shearwaters can occur together with lesser numbers of Cape Petrel and, (if lucky), Northern and



Southern giant-petrels. Those not wishing to go on the bounding main will have a day at leisure on their own. The options include R & R, or arranging a visit to the famous Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens, or any of several museums.

*The False Bay area.* We'll bird several habitats easily accessible from Cape Town: fynbos and *Protea* vegetation, rocky mountain outcrops, boulder-strewn beaches, estuaries, and saltmarsh. On land, we may encounter Verreaux's Eagle, Blue Crane, Cape Rock-Thrush, Cape Rockjumper, Cape Grassbird, Victorin's Scrub-Warbler, Levillant's Cisticola, Fiscal Flycatcher, Southern Boubou, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted, Malachite, and Southern Double-collared sunbirds, Yellow Bishop, and Cape Siskin. Various headlands in the area may produce local endemics like Bank Cormorant, or uncommon species such as Sabine's Gull, while wetlands can hold great numbers of waterfowl and waders, including Maccoa Duck. Nights at Quayside Hotel in Simonstown.

**Day 10, Sat, 12 Oct. To Durban and on to the Drakensburg.** After taking a morning flight from Cape Town to Durban (on the coast of KwaZulu-Natal), we'll work our way inland towards the famous Drakensburg Escarpment. We'll stop along the way at Howick Falls where flocks of African and Alpine swifts can usually be seen, and perhaps a Peregrine, or Crowned Eagle. Night at Cedar Garden in Underberg.



*The unusual Ground Woodpecker is endemic to the country of South Africa; we'll look for it when we visit the Sani Pass in Lesotho. Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.*

**Day 11, Sun, 13 Oct. The Sani Pass and Lesotho.**

For many visitors, today is one of the most fabulous of the whole tour, with gorgeous scenery and lots of new and exciting birds. We'll begin after breakfast, traveling by 4WD vehicles as we leave the farmlands behind and climb the twisty road through boulder strewn hillsides, *Protea* woodland (great for Gurney's Sugarbird), and on to the Afro-alpine grasslands at 9000 feet. Along the way, we'll make many stops as we search for Bald Ibis, Cape Griffon, Jackal Buzzard, Lammergeier, Ground Woodpecker, Bush Blackcap, Drakensburg Rockjumper, Sickle-winged and Buff-streaked chats, Cape and Sentinel rock-thrushes, Mountain and Yellow-tufted (Rock) pipits, Drakensburg Prinia, and Drakensburg Siskin. In order to enter Lesotho, one must have one's PASSPORT, and we will all help remind each other to bring that critical document along for this day trip. This is our one high-elevation day of the tour, spending part of the day at 9000-10,000 feet (3000m). Night at Cedar Garden in Underberg.

**Day 12, Mon, 14 Oct. To Bulwer, Mtunzini and on to Eshowe.**

Today we return towards the coast, but will stop first at Bulwer Forest where new birds may include Long-crested Eagle, Rameron Pigeon, Lemon Dove, Knysna Turaco, Red-chested, Black, and

African Emerald cuckoos, Narina Trogon, Crowned Hornbill, Olive Woodpecker, the endangered Brown-necked (Cape) Parrot, Gray Cuckooshrike, African Black-headed Oriole, Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler, Bar-throated Apalis, Tawny-flanked Prinia, another chance for Bush Blackcap, Orange Ground-Thrush, Black-bellied Glossy-Starling, Collared Sunbird, Sweet Waxbill, and Forest Canary. In the afternoon we'll stop at Mtunzini (the best site in South Africa for Palmnut Vulture) and then continue to inland to Eshowe where we'll spend one night. Night at Birds of Paradise Guesthouse, Eshowe.

**Day 13, Tue, 15 Oct. Dlinza Forest and St. Lucia.** We'll spend time this morning birding in the Dlinza Forest, where our target species include Delegorgue's Pigeon, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Spotted Ground-Thrush, and Green-backed Twinspot. We'll then continue north along the coast road and east to the coastal town of St. Lucia. Night at Elephant Lake Hotel, Saint Lucia.

**Day 14, Wed, 16 Oct. Saint Lucia area and on to Mkuzi.** We'll be out early to walk in the nearby dune forest where we'll be looking for several of the less common endemics, including Brown Scrub-Robin, Woodward's Batis, and Rudd's

Apalis. It's a very birdy area, and in addition to the above, we hope to see Crested Guineafowl, Klaas's Cuckoo, Yellowbill, Livingstone's Turaco, Trumpeter Hornbill, White-eared Barbet (right in the hotel grounds), Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Bulbul, Terrestrial Brownbul, Red-capped Robin-chat, Southern Boubou, Ashy Flycatcher, Mouse-colored and Purple-banded sunbirds, and Forest Weaver. The lakes and estuary of the Saint Lucia system seasonally hold large numbers of waterbirds, and we expect to see many of these, possibly including both Pink-backed and Great White pelicans, Black Crake, Yellow-billed and Woolly-necked storks, and a variety of migrant shorebirds. In the afternoon, we drive still further north to our lodge near the famous Mkuzi Game Reserve. Night near Mkuzi.



*We had a great view of this Yellow-billed Stork on last year's South Africa tour. Photograph by participant Cathy Douglas.*

**Day 15, Thu, 17 Oct. Mkuzi Game Reserve.** After early breakfast we'll drive to the Mkuzi Game Reserve, an amazingly rich area of grassland, acacia, and riverine forest, seasonal pans, and marshes. Birds are numerous, from Goliath Heron in the marshes, to Lappet-faced Vulture, Bateleur, and Wahlberg's Eagle overhead. We will concentrate on particular woodlands in which we can see Purple-crested Turaco, African Barred Owlet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Four-colored Bushshrike (shy), Gray Tit-Flycatcher, (Eastern) Bearded Scrub-Robin, White-throated Robin-Chat, Kurrichane Thrush, Eastern Nicator, Neergaard's Sunbird, and Pink-throated Twinspot—to mention but a few. We'll also be especially on the lookout for mammals, including White Rhinoceros and Nyala. Night near Mkuzi.

**Days 16-17, Fri-Sat, 18-19 Oct. To Wakkerstroom – the high altitude grasslands.** Today we'll drive north and west, climbing through the rich farming country to Wakkerstroom, right in the heart of these threatened high altitude grasslands. Here several uncommon endemics can be found, either on the less-developed farms or in the marshy vleis unsuited to commercial development. We'll be looking for Blue Bustard, Yellow-breasted Pipit, and Botha's, Pink-billed, and Rudd's larks (tough, tough, and tough), and once again we'll have further chances for Blue Crane and the threatened Bald Ibis. Other species of note can include Red-winged Francolin, White-bellied (Barrow's) Bustard, Marsh Owl, Black-winged and Wattled lapwings, Ground Woodpecker, Banded Martin, South African and White-throated swallows, Buff-streaked Chat, Wing-snapping and Tinkling cisticolas, African Yellow Warbler, and spectacular Long-tailed Widowbirds. Nights in Wakkerstroom.

**Day 18, Sun, 20 Oct. To Kruger.** Today is largely a travel day as we drive north to Kruger National Park, where we expect to arrive around mid-afternoon – with time for a few hours birding and undoubtedly seeing some of the areas famed big game. Night at Berg-en-dal in Kruger NP.



**Day 19, Mon, 21 Oct. Kruger National Park.** Covering over 19,000 square kilometers, Kruger is a fabulous park. It was first set aside as protected land in 1903 and has been officially protected since 1926. During a full day in the park, we'll slowly drive the trails and take walks in the extensive lodge grounds.

The variety of birds and mammals which can be seen is enormous, with typical species in the wetlands including White-faced Whistling-Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, Spur-winged and Egyptian geese, Gray Heron, Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, African Jacana, Blacksmith Plover, and a variety of migrant Palearctic shorebirds. Along the rivers we may see African Fish-Eagle and White-headed Lapwing, while in the grassveld and bushveld (veld is pronounced 'felt' and means 'lands'), we'll hope for Common Ostrich, Natal Francolin, Hooded, White-backed, and Lappet-faced vultures, Kori Bustard, Purple-crested Turaco, African Green-Pigeon, Red-faced Mousebird, Rufous-crowned and Lilac-breasted rollers, Horus Swift, Flappet and Sabota larks, Arrow-marked Babbler, Cape Crombec, Black-backed Puffback, White Helmetshrike, Burchell's Glossy-Starling, Amethyst and White-breasted sunbirds, and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver. Of course, it's also a wonderful area for mammals, too, with Lion, African Elephant, Black and White rhinos, Common Giraffe, Burchell's Zebra, Hippopotamus, and a variety of antelopes and gazelles all possible. Night at Satara Rest Camp in Kruger NP.



*We should see Brown-headed Parrots, like this one, in Kruger National Park. The related endangered Brown-necked (Cape) Parrot is more difficult to find, but we will seek them to the west near Polokwane.  
Photograph by participant Sally Marrone.*

**Day 20, Tue, 22 Oct. To Magoebaskloof.** Today we'll leave Kruger behind and drive to Magoebaskloof in the northern Drakensburg. Along the way we'll stop at Tzaneen where scrubby vegetation around the town can provide Spotted Thick-knee, Dideric Cuckoo, Broad-billed Roller, White Helmetshrike, Gray-headed Bushshrike, Black Cuckooshrike, Gray-rumped Swallow, African Penduline-tit, Red-faced Cisticola, Green-capped Eremomela, Holub's Golden-Weaver, and Magpie Mannikin. Night at Magoebaskloof Hotel.

**Day 21, Wed, 23 Oct. Magoesbaskloof and Polokwane.** We'll be out early this morning birding the nearby mist-belt forest - by far our best chance for the endangered Brown-necked (Cape) Parrot. It's also a great place to get better views of some forest skulkers that may have only been seen briefly before, such as Knysna Turaco, Olive Woodpecker, Orange Ground-Thrush, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Olive Bushshrike, White-starred Robin, Chorister Robin-Chat (its rich and wonderful voice will certainly be heard, but obtaining good views can be another matter), Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler, the skulking Barratt's Warbler, and both Southern and Greater Double-collared sunbirds. We'll then drive west to Polokwane Game Reserve, a very birdy spot with a wonderful mix of acacia bush country and grassland. We hope to see many of the following: Swainson's Francolin, White-browed (Burchell's)

Coucal, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Green Woodhoopoe, Southern Yellow-billed, Southern Red-billed, and African Gray hornbills, Gray Go-Away-Bird, Crested Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, Bennett's Woodpecker, Mariqua Flycatcher, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Southern Pied-Babbler, Groundscraper Thrush, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Short-clawed Lark, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, and the gorgeous Violet-eared Waxbill. Night at Grin Court, Polokwane.

**Day 22, Thu, 24 Oct. Return to Johannesburg and connections home.** We'll return to the Polokwane Reserve this morning before heading to OR Tambo Airport near Johannesburg for your evening flights home. Or, for those who wish, an additional night in Johannesburg can be arranged (not included in the tour fee). **Please note: do not book an out-bound departure leaving Johannesburg before 8:00 p.m.**

**Day 23, Fri, 25 Oct. Arrive in USA.**

## About Your Guides

**Joe Grosel** was born and grew up in the far-northern parts of South Africa. From a young age he demonstrated a passion for the natural world around him, developing extraordinary observation and bush skills, such that at the age of thirteen he was asked to lead a walking safari in the Limpopo River valley. Joe has a master's degree in ornithology and is currently working on his doctoral dissertation on the savannah larks of Southern Africa.

Joe has experience in a range of wildlife related disciplines—ecological research in the Kruger National Park, game capture and translocation, field guide training, management of large private game reserves, and environmental management for local government. Because of his love for the Limpopo Province and its great avian diversity, he has been instrumental in establishing birding routes, bird clubs, and birdwatching sites throughout the province. Joe and his wife, Lisa, live near the city of Polokwane, from where they run an ecological consulting company and conduct birding and other eco-tours. He has designed and led birding tours across southern Africa for over twenty years and still enjoys every excursion as much as his clients do.

*“Joe Grosel is an excellent guide: incredibly knowledgeable about natural history, the birds, the culture. He's funny, engaging, tireless, really cares about his clients' experience.”*  
S. C. Namibia & Botswana

**Jesse Fagan** (a.k.a. the Motmot or just "Mot") has been passionate about birds since his teens, when he had an encounter with a flying Pileated Woodpecker. He has birded extensively throughout North America and in 2016 published the [Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) with co-author Oliver Komar and illustrators Robert Dean and Peter Burke. In addition, Mot has experience in many other areas of Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time.

Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru with his wife, Rocio.

*“Jesse is a fantastic guide. He really knows calls, infinitely patient in getting everyone on the difficult birds, fun to be with.”* L. F.  
Colombia: Bogota, the Magdalena Valley, and Santa Marta.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for complete tour schedules for Joe and Jesse; just click on their photos.

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$9275 from Johannesburg (includes flights within South Africa)

**DEPOSIT:** \$925 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** June 5, 2019

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$700

**LIMIT:** 12

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**DOCUMENTS:** US citizens will need a current passport for travel to South Africa. We recommend the validity date of your passport extend six months beyond your return date home. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the South African consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. **South Africa requires 2 blank pages for their stamp each time you enter the country.** As a precaution, it is best to have at least one blank page for all other countries you will visit or transit.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please choose a flight to South Africa that will arrive in Johannesburg on (or before) Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to



join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

*Please also note, we ask you to limit your baggage to one medium size soft duffel and a carry-on. Wheeled duffels are allowed, but please **do not bring suitcases** (including soft-sided ones) as these will not pack well and will **have to be left in Johannesburg throughout the whole tour.***

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is **\$9275** for one person in double occupancy from Johannesburg. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 21, all meals from breakfast on Day 3 through lunch on Day 22, all ground transportation, all flights within South Africa, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee **does not include your airfare to and from South Africa**, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$700**. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$925** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by June 5, 2019. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. **Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii.** We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance with InsureMyTrip ([www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com)) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

**THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.**

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