

ITINERARY
SOUTH AFRICA
October 3-25, 2026



South Africa is home to a number of endemics, including the two species of sugarbirds. The Cape Sugarbird occurs in the far southern fynbos, where it feeds on nectar from proteas and other plants. Photograph by participant Robert McNab.

We include here information for those interested in the 2026 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

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- 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 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

End 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 is enhanced 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-robin, 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, 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.

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.

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 400 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!



The Knysna Turaco is a South African endemic found in a strip of evergreen forests in the eastern part of the country. We'll have a couple of chances to see this colorful bird. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace:

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of rather easy walking (up to 4 miles per day), some of it on roads, some along lakeshores or on good trails. In the Drakensberg Mountains and in Wakkerstroom, we sometimes walk short distances on rocky terrain with slightly steep grade.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We regularly drive long distances on this tour, and on several days we have very long drives, though usually on decent roads. Participants should be able to step up 10-12 inches into and out of our vehicles.
- **PACE:** After breakfast (set for 5:30-6:30 a.m., sometimes earlier), we will bird until lunch time. We sometimes have boxed breakfasts or lunches to extend our time in the field (or when traveling). We sometimes have an after-lunch break at the lodge, but normally we bird after lunch or else continue traveling to our next destination.
- **ELEVATION:** We will reach an elevation of 10,000 feet on the day we visit Lesotho.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 50s at night to high 80s F during the day. Rain showers are a possibility.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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.



We'll be birding in many different habitats, including desert, coastlines, savanna and forests. Here, a Field Guides group is intent on a bird in the forest near St. Lucia. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

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 Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Siskin, and the rare *Protea* Canary. Rocky regions also support a few specialized birds – like Cinnamon-breasted 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 African 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.

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 Drakensburg Rockjumper, Ground Woodpecker, and Sentinel 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 Bearded Vulture 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 Tropic, and White-starred Robin, to the more localized Knysna and Livingstone's turacos, Bush Blackcap, Spotted Ground Thrush, Brown Scrub-Robin, Woodwards' 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, 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.

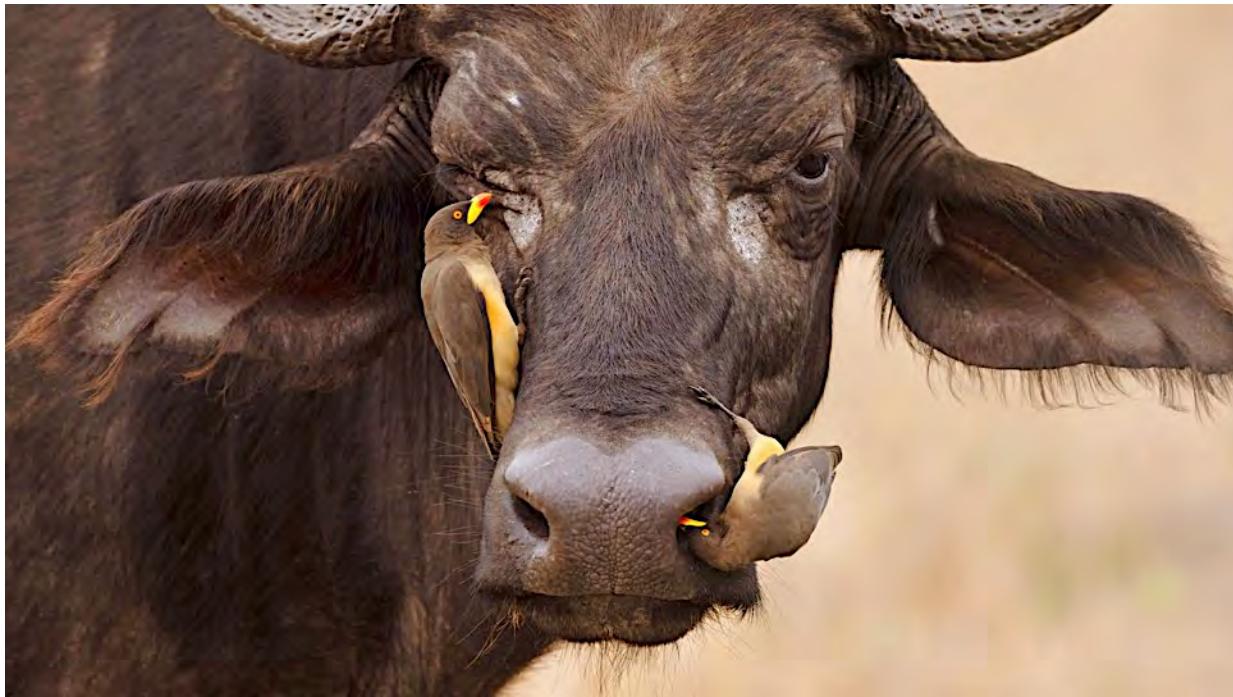
Acacia veld, woodland, and moist savanna: The southern edge of these habitats occurs in the more tropical reaches of KwaZulu-Natal. The habitats and avifauna share much with eastern Africa, but there are also some distinctive birds, including White-throated Robin-Chat, Rudd's Apalis, Neergaard's Sunbird, and Pink-throated Twinspot. In Mkuzi Game Reserve we will also have a rich assortment of mammals; White Rhinoceros is possible, 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 well-named Long-tailed Widowbird is a grassland dweller. The male's extremely long tail is present only in the breeding season, and is used as an advertisement to attract females. Photograph by participant Paul Beerman.

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, Wild 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 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 Cape Parrot, Knysna Turaco, Chorister Robin-Chat, Orange Ground-Thrush, and Barratt's Warbler—a super skulker, even by *Bradypterus* standards.



Although South Africa doesn't have as many wild roaming native animals as some places in Africa, there are still places where one can see what the country looked like before it was colonized. We'll visit Kruger National Park to see herds of Cape Buffalo with their attendant Yellow-billed Oxpeckers, and many other iconic African animals.

Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Itinerary for South Africa

Note: The itinerary is based on current air schedules; if they change, minor modifications may be necessary.

Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 3-4 Oct. Travel to Cape Town. Please choose a flight arriving in Cape Town by Day 2. South African Airways has historically offered comfortable direct service. After clearing Customs and Immigration, you'll be met and transferred to our hotel. Night Cape Town.

Day 3, Mon, 5 Oct. The Cape 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, Levaillant's Cisticola, Fiscal Flycatcher, Southern Boubou, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted, Malachite, and Southern Double-collared sunbirds, Yellow Bishop, and Cape Siskin. Coastal headlands may yield endemics like Bank Cormorant, while wetlands support numbers of waterfowl and waders, including Maccoa Duck. Night in the Cape Town area.

Day 4, Tue, 6 Oct. Cape Town to Ceres. We'll bird in the morning around Cape Town, then drive north to Ceres, birding along the way. A wetland stop 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 Spurfowl, 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 Ceres.

Days 5-6, Wed-Thu, 7-8 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 Slater's, and the extremely

localized Red Lark. Other birds include Fairy Flycatcher, Karoo Eremomela, Layard's and Chestnut-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 Warbler, and on rocky hills we'll look for Kopje Warbler. Nights in Calvinia.



The Karoo region is semi-desert, and features a suite of endemic birds adapted to these conditions. Among them are a number of larks, chats and other small birds, such as this Karoo Lark. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 7, Fri, 9 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. 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.

Day 8, Sat, 10 Oct. The Southwest Cape and Cape Town. This morning we will spend our time birding our way towards West Coast National Park, with stops along the way for species we may have missed, and perhaps a visit to an estuary for waterbirds. At West Coast, our main target is the striking endemic Black Harrier, but the landscape and supporting case of birds, plants, and butterflies is worthwhile in and of itself! It should be a beautiful and busy day, and we expect to arrive at our hotel near Cape Town in the early evening. Night Cape Town area.

Day 9, Sun, 11 Oct. The Cape area. We will make a visit to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens with additional chances for Lemon Dove, Forest Canary, and Cape Siskin. In the afternoon, we will make a visit to the local sewage ponds for various waterfowl and wetland birds. Night in Cape Town area.

Day 10, Mon, 12 Oct. To Durban and on to the Drakensburg. After a morning flight from Cape Town to Durban (on the coast of KwaZulu-Natal), we'll head inland towards the famous Drakensburg Escarpment. Night at Underberg.

Day 11, Tue, 13 Oct. The Sani Pass and Lesotho. For many visitors, today is one of the most fabulous of the 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 of Sani Pass, *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 Southern Bald Ibis, Cape Griffon, Jackal Buzzard, Bearded Vulture, Ground Woodpecker, Bush Blackcap, Drakensburg Rockjumper, Sickle-winged and Buff-streaked chats, Cape and Sentinel rock-thrushes, Mountain, Yellow-tufted (African Rock), and Nicholson's pipits, Drakensberg Prinia, and Drakensberg Siskin. 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 Underberg.



When we visit the highlands of Lesotho, we'll watch for the Southern Bald Ibis and other high-elevation birds.
Photograph by participants David and Judy Smith.

Day 12, Wed, 14 Oct. To Bulwer, Mtunzini and on to Eshowe. Today we return toward the coast, potentially birding a forest patch along the way, where new birds may include Long-crested Eagle, Rameron Pigeon, Lemon Dove, Knysna Turaco, Red-chested, Black, and African Emerald cuckoos, Narina Trogan, Crowned Hornbill, Olive Woodpecker, the endangered 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 Starling, Collared Sunbird, and Forest Canary. After lunch, as we continue east along the coast we'll stop at Mtunzini, the best site in South Africa for Palmnut Vulture and many other species, and then continue inland to Eshowe where we'll spend one night. Night at Eshowe.

Day 13, Thu, 15 Oct. Dlinza Forest and St. Lucia. This morning we'll bird in the Dlinza Forest, targeting 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, opportunistically birding en route. Night at St Lucia.

Day 14, Fri, 16 Oct. St. Lucia area and on to Mkuzi. We'll be out early to walk in the nearby dune forest for 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 Eastern 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 St 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 further north to our lodge near the famous Mkuzi Game Reserve. Night near Mkuzi.

Day 15, Sat, 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 Owl, 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.



In the grassland near Wakkerstroom, we'll look for the rare Yellow-breasted Pipit.
Photograph by participant Kevin Watson..

Days 16-17, Sun-Mon, 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, 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, Tue, 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, Wed, 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 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, 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.

Day 20, Thu, 22 Oct. To Magoebaskloof. Today we'll leave Kruger behind and drive to Magoebaskloof in the northern Drakensburg. Night at Magoebaskloof.



*Near Polokwane we'll visit a game reserve, where we'll see birds such as these Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills.
Photograph by participant Robert McNab.*

Day 21, Fri, 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 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 (and mammaly) spot with a wonderful mix of acacia bush country and grassland. We hope to see many of the following: Swainson's Spurfowl, 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, Marico Flycatcher, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Groundscraper Thrush, Burnt-necked Eremomela, the range restricted Short-clawed Lark, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, and the gorgeous Violet-eared Waxbill. Night at Polokwane.

Day 22, Sat, 24 Oct. Drive to Johannesburg and connections home. We'll return to the Polokwane Reserve this morning before heading to OR Tambo Airport near Johannesburg for evening flights home. Or, for those who wish, an additional night in Johannesburg can be arranged (not included in the tour fee). **Please do not book departure flights from Johannesburg before 7:00 p.m.**

Day 23, Sun, 25 Oct. Arrive in USA.

About Your Guides

Tarry Butcher was born and raised in Namibia, where his interest in birds was kindled at an early age. He spent much of his childhood exploring the vast open areas of the dry Namibian wilderness, where his love for birds and animals grew. His interest in and knowledge of wildlife in general, and birds in particular, drew him inevitably to a career in guiding. That interest was further developed during his studies in Game Ranch Management in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, and he undertook additional travels to explore different areas of South Africa in search of new birds in different habitats.

After working as a Naturalist-Guide in the region for eight years, Tarry made the jump to guiding birding groups in both Namibia and South Africa, with his past experience as a solid base. He has also traveled to other parts of Africa, where he has always been keen to learn about new birds. Tarry's easy-going nature, his sense of humor, hosting, and logistical skills, and his yearning for adventure, coupled with his passion for sharing his love of nature with people of all ages, make him an excellent guide.

In recent years, Tarry worked as a driver/guide on Field Guides tours under Terry Stevenson's leadership, and during fall 2022 he co-led three additional Field Guides tours to South Africa and Namibia with Field Guides veterans Megan Edwards Crewe, Marcelo Padua, and Doug Gochfeld, who with their groups found him to be a delightful and knowledgeable guide and traveling companion, as we think you will too. Tarry lives in Pretoria, South Africa.

Jay VanderGaast's obsession with birds was evident by age seven when he memorized the plates in Peterson's eastern field guide. He went on to earn a B.S. in biology and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the buggy arctic tundra soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he began roaming the world in search of birds. His travels led him to Costa Rica, where he stumbled into a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge.

Jay joined Field Guides in 2000, and since then he has guided more than 100 tours on several continents. He lives near Montreal.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for tour schedules for all of our guides; just click on a photo.

Financial Information

FEE: \$12,395 from Cape Town (includes internal flight within South Africa)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$925

DEPOSIT: \$1,250 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: April 6, 2026

LIMIT: 10*

*We've reduced the tour limit to 10 clients with two leaders to provide more space in vehicles and a more comfortable travel experience. Although this change increased the cost, we believe the added comfort is well worth it!

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: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A current passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date, and have **sufficient blank pages**. South Africa requires two pages per entry (or transit),

"Tarry Butcher's knowledge, enthusiasm, demeanor and sense of humor made this special trip one of the best ever! We really enjoyed being in the field with Tarry. Not only is he great at spotting birds and recognizing their sounds but he's good at getting others to see the birds as well. He is unfailingly patient and always helpful. He is the kind of guide we've come to expect from Field Guides. We would love to go on another trip with him." S.E. & R.B., NAMIBIA & BOTSWANA

"Jay is an excellent tour leader who keeps everyone as happy as possible, knows the birds and knows very well how to defer to local guides when necessary." K.W. Thailand

plus at least one page for each other country on your itinerary. Amendment and endorsement pages are not acceptable for entry stamps. Depending on routing, you may need 10 or more blank pages, so please plan ahead, as a new passport may take several weeks to process.

U.S. travelers connecting in Europe or the United Kingdom may need an **Electronic Travel Authorization**:

- Europe: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/index_en
- United Kingdom: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>

Citizens of other countries should check with the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins in Cape Town and ends in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Arrival: Cape Town (CPT) on or before October 4.

Departure: Johannesburg (JNB) on October 24, after 7 p.m.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

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.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$12,395 for one person in double occupancy from Cape Town.

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 Cape Town and from Johannesburg, 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 is \$925 for those requesting a single room. 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, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of \$1250 per person, see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by April 6, 2026.** We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 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.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (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 that 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 airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

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 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. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible 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.

Rev. 1/25peg; 10/25 JFF; peg1/26