ITINERARY
SOUTHERN AFRICA SPECTACULAR
Kruger, Victoria Falls, Zambezi River, and Chobe
July 2 – 17, 2022

The majestic Martial Eagle is found in woodlands across much of southern Africa. We'll watch for this endangered species in Kruger National Park in South Africa. Photograph participant Randy Siebert.

We include here information for those interested in the 2022 Field Guides Southern Africa Spectacular tour:
- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the 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:
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, flight 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.

A brand new tour featuring incredible birding, game viewing and photographic opportunities in prime wildlife destinations across three southern African countries, South Africa, Zambia and Botswana.

The southern African sub-region offers some of the most diverse and prolific wildlife on the continent. It is home to the largest elephant, rhino and lion populations on the planet, and is home to close on 1000 bird species. On this exciting new addition to the Field Guides tours, we will concentrate on the large savannah and woodland habitats of the region but will also visit South Africa's great eastern escarpment with its forests and grassland and spend several days around two of the area's greatest tropical rivers, the Chobe and Zambezi. The itinerary includes visits to some iconic southern African destinations such as the Kruger National Park, the Blyde River Canyon, Botswana's Chobe National Park and the Victoria Falls one of the natural wonders of the World. As far as the wildlife is concerned, this tour will produce well over 50 mammal species including the much vaunted "Big 5" (Lion, Leopard, Rhino, Elephant and Cape Buffalo), plus a surprising variety of antelope, small carnivores and impressive numbers of Zebra and Giraffe. The tour should turn out a species list of well over 300 bird species, including most of the large terrestrial species such as Ostrich, Secretarybird, Kori Bustard and Southern Ground Hornbill, plus a variety of kingfishers, bee-eaters, rollers, barbets, sunbirds, hornbills, starlings and shrikes. The Zambezi and Chobe waterways provide some of the finest birding on the continent in terms of diversity and density. Our game viewing and birding activities will be conducted from open safari vehicles and flat-hulled boats which are both ideal for wildlife photography. Excellent field guides and other reference material make preparation and fieldwork a pleasure and you will be accompanied by an expert safari and bird guide from start to finish. Travelling between the three countries (South Africa, Zambia and Botswana) will be on local airlines and road transfer.

Elephant will form a "big" ingredient of this tour and we should see our first pachyderms on our first day in Kruger. This herd was photographed at the Sabie River near Skukuza Camp by guide Joe Grosel.

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which, for tours departing on or after March 1, 2022, includes a booster). Having a vaccinated group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated, including getting the booster**. Note too, that many travel destinations are or soon will be requiring proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may become a requirement for some travel destinations if they choose to declare that vaccinations do not last indefinitely. And having a booster means your risk is lowered and your travel plans and those of our group are less likely to be disrupted.

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.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING**: There are moderate amounts of rather easy walking on this tour (up to 2 miles per day), some of it on roads, some along lakeshores or on good trails, mostly around our lodgings.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**: We travel by mini-buses (fairly short distances) and safari vehicles and use small aluminum boats for travel in some parks. Participants should be able to step up and down 12-15 inches into safari vehicles (seats are elevated and reached via a series of steps) and be able to climb in and out of boats. Most safari vehicles have shade canopies but are open sided so long-sleeves and sun block will be required. In some safari areas the game drive vehicles have open tops. Hats and sun protection are therefore essential.
- **SAFETY IN THE PARKS**: While on drives and boat cruises in wildlife areas participants are absolutely safe as long as they follow the safety precautions as per instruction from the guides and tour leader. Most of the lodges are fenced and it is safe to walk around at these establishments. At the bush lodges which are not fenced there will always be a ranger on hand to escort you, particularly at night.
- **PACE**: When not travelling between destinations the pace in the safari areas is reasonably sedate. We generally start off with early coffee and a light breakfast (6:00 a.m.) before heading out. Snacks, fruit and drinks will always be available on the outings. We return to the lodges at around 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. for a full brunch. During the heat of the day we take things easy around the hotel and lodge grounds or have an optional siesta until high tea (cakes and beverages) served at around 3:00 p.m. The afternoon excursions sometimes continue until after dark, returning at around 7:00 p.m. Dinner is normally served at around 7:30 p.m.
- **WEATHER**: Temperatures will range from the low 50s at night to high 80s F during the day. Rain showers are not likely (dry season), but some early mornings and evenings can be chilly.
- **ELEVATION**: Near sea level to 4900 feet at Johannesburg.
- **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. This rotational system will also be employed on safari vehicles and boats. Everyone will have a “window seat” on the safari vehicles and boats but not necessary in the minivans.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS**: Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on several 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.

Southern Ground-Hornbill is one of the large terrestrial birds we’ll see in Kruger. Photograph by participant Randy Siebert.

Additional Information: Travel on this tour is easy with first-rate connecting flights and road transfers in comfortable minibuses on good paved roads. We will be travelling on gravel roads within the conservation areas and the going here will be unhurried pace, so no bumping and jarring. There are no long-distance road trips with the longest being 80 miles (130km) on a scenic route where there will be several stops at view points and birding sites. As most of areas that we will be visiting on this tour have free-roaming dangerous animals much of the birding and game viewing will be done from the safety of safari vehicles and aluminum boats. The majority of the birding on foot will be done within the safari camps and hotel grounds so there won't be any lengthy walks over difficult terrain.

Our lodgings are generally good and comfortable in the Kruger National Parks to quite luxurious in the private lodges. We will be staying in a combination of thatched bungalows, modern safari tents and comfortable hotel rooms all of which have en-suite facilities, tea/coffee stations, roof fans/air conditioning and open verandas. All the establishments have a 24-hour electricity supply but bring along a flashlight for when you have to walk between your chalet and restaurants at night. The unfenced lodges will always have rangers to escourt you to your rooms after dark.

The standards of food preparation and hygiene are excellent; days often begin with a huge breakfast, lunches are taken in small restaurants (and occasionally if the birding requires it, a packed lunch) and dinners are most frequently eaten in our lodges, or at camp restaurants in national parks. A great variety of beverages will be available and the South African wines are excellent value. The tour itinerary includes six one-night stays and four "two-nighters". At the lodges where we have a two day stay, the program will take on the typical safari mode, with early morning game viewing and birding activities, returning to the lodge for brunch followed by a "siesta" until afternoon tea, with another outing in the afternoon. In the private lodges, the afternoon excursions often return after dark to maximize our chances of picking up nocturnal species. In these cases, there will be time to freshen up before dinner.

Late July and early August equates to late winter in Southern Africa, and being a summer rainfall region, this is the driest time of the year. Johannesburg, at an altitude of 4900 ft. (1500m), has cold nights and brisk mornings with comfortable days averaging around 68 degrees F (20 degree Celsius). The Kruger region is much lower in altitude at around 980 ft. (300m) so the days are warm to hot, averaging at about 86F (30C) during the day and 68F (20C) at night. The temperatures around the Zambezi and Chobe rivers will be similar to Kruger, but early morning excursions on open vehicles and boats could still be nippy with the wind chill factor.

Please note that most of the areas that we'll be visiting on this tour fall within Malaria risk zones and although our tour takes place during the dry, winter season, it is advisable to take the necessary prophylactics.

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

Johannesburg – Although your stay in Johannesburg will be brief with limited birding time, there will be a fair number of species to be seen in the hotel grounds and around the airport. The Safari Club Lodge has well established, lush gardens that are home to the likes of Cape Robin-Chat, Karoo Thrush, Red-eyed Dove, Speckled Pigeon, Cape Starling, Dark-capped Bulbul, Southern Masked Weaver, Cape White-eye and Speckled Mousebird. The birdfeeders often attract a good assortment of seed eaters, including Red-headed Finch, Pin-tailed Whydah, Bronze Mannikin, Laughing Dove, Cape Sparrow, Grosbeak Weaver, and Southern Red Bishop, while "fly-overs" could include Sacred Ibis, Black-headed Heron, Grey-headed Gull, Pied Crow, and Rock Martin.

Kruger National Park — The habitats of this area include a mix of acacia savannah, broad-leaved, deciduous woodland, open savannah, riparian forest, granite inselbergs, and perennial rivers. We will spend three nights in the park itself and another two

days in a private reserve in the western buffer zone (an extension of the greater Kruger park in which private lodges are located). In the park we will explore the southern woodlands on the first two days before moving further north into the vast basalt plains and open savannah landscapes. The habitats in the western buffer zone are dominated by open woodland and “bushveld” bisected by large seasonal riverbeds. With over 300 resident and an additional 100 summer migrant species, the Kruger National Park offers an exceptional birding experience. It is home to most of the African flagship birds, including Martial Eagle, Bateleur, five vulture species, from the small Hooded to the huge Lappet-faced, Kori Bustard, Ostrich, Southern Ground-Hornbill, Saddle-billed Stork, and a good variety of the colorful bee-eaters, sunbirds, rollers, barbets, starlings, robin-chats, and kingfishers. 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, Spotted Hyaena, Wild Dog, and a whole array of antelope. Zebra, warthog and giraffe are fairly common here, while smaller critters in the form of monkeys, bush squirrels and mongooses are also widespread.

The eastern escarpment – The northern Drakensberg mountain range forms an immense escarpment that towers above the low lying plains of the Greater Kruger National Park. Habitats along the escarpment include towering sandstone cliffs, Afro-temperate forest in the gorges, perennial mountain streams and rivers, Afro-montane grassland on the high ground, and Protea shrubland near the escarpment drop-off. After leaving Kruger, we’ll take a scenic drive up the rugged sandstone slopes along a spectacular mountain pass, through tunnels that have been cut through the crags to the top of the escarpment. Several birding and scenic stops will be made along the 62 mile (100km) stretch of road on the edge of the escarpment appropriately called the “Panorama Route". The Blyde River Canyon is a prominent geological feature on the route. This predominantly red sandstone canyon is 18 miles (30 km) in length and is on average around 2450 feet (750 m) deep, with its deepest point being about 4500 feet (1380 m) below the escarpment. In the mountain habitats we may see soaring Verreaux’s Eagle, Rock Kestrel, Cape Vulture, Jackal Buzzard, or White-necked Raven. Smaller birds that should be seen around the view points are Cape Bunting, African Stonechat, Red-winged Starling, Familiar Chat, Lazy Cisticola and Mocking Cliff-Chat. Mammal species that frequent these rocky highlands include Mountain Reedbuck, Klipspringer (antelope), Rock Hyrax, and Chacma Baboon.

We’ll visit the amazing Victoria Falls on the border of Zimbabwe and Zambia. Photograph by guide Joe Grosel.

Victoria Falls – This natural wonder of the world is formed by the Zambezi River flowing over a 5600 foot (1700m) wide basalt wall and plummeting some 360 feet (110m) into a chasm below. The resulting blare and spray is what gives the Victoria Falls its local “Lozi” name *Mosi-oa-Tunya,* "The Smoke That Thunders". The waterfall is located on the border between the countries of Zimbabwe and Zambia. Habitats around the falls include rugged basalt cliffs, ‘rainforest’ (as a result of the spray and mist from the falls), riparian forest and teak woodlands. Some of the birds that we will be looking

out for in the forests and on the river above the falls are African Black Swift, Crowned and Trumpeter Hornbill, Meves's Starling, Schalow's Turaco, Rufous-bellied Heron, White-headed Lapwing, Meyer's Parrot, and many more.

Mambova Islands and the Zambezi River – The Zambezi is the longest (1600 miles, or 2,574km) east-flowing river in Africa, and the largest river flowing into the Indian Ocean from Africa. Some 43 miles (70km) upstream (west) of the Victoria Falls, and not far from where four African countries meet (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana), lie the Mambova Rapids and a cluster of tropical islands. The islands are formed by rocky dykes that cross the Zambezi River, breaking its flow from a single channel into several smaller waterways. The habitats in this area are a combination of papyrus beds, floodplains, riparian forest, teak and mopane woodlands, sandy riverbanks, and quiet backwaters. We will be doing most of our birding by boat here, with target species being Rock Pratincole, Yellow-billed Stork, African Skimmer, Long-toed lapwing, Little Bittern, Pygmy Goose, White-backed Night-Heron, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Swamp Boubou, and Lesser Jacana. On our walks on the Sekoma Island, we will look out for, amongst others, Brown Firefinch, White-browed Robin-chat, White-browed Coucal, Hartlaub's Babbler, and Holub's Golden Weaver.

The Coppery-tailed Coucal is a large cuckoo restricted to south-central Africa. We'll look for it along the Zambezi River. Photograph by participant Ken Havard.

The Chobe River and National Park – One of the most pristine rivers in Africa, the Chobe runs along Botswana's northern border, with Namibia's eastern Caprivi Strip to its north, before it joins the mighty Zambezi. The river's source is a series of swamplands in southeastern Angola and Namibia, but by the time it reaches the Chobe National Park it has become a broad, twisting mass of water that snakes its way through grassy floodplains, interspersed by a number of lush, green islands. This section of the river attracts an unbelievable density of game, including huge herds of elephant (which can often be seen crossing the river), as well as countless hippo and crocodile. The birdlife is extraordinary too, particularly in the wetter summer months. The wide banks and lush grass attract rare antelope such as Red Lechwe and Puku to the water's edge.

The Chobe National Park is Botswana's third largest, covering an area of 12,200 square miles (31'600 km²). We will be exploring its north-eastern section along the Chobe River, a major watering spot, especially in the dry season (May through October), for large breeding herds of elephant, as well as families of Giraffe, Sable Antelope, and Cape Buffalo. The park is probably best known for its spectacular elephant population; it contains an estimated 40,000, perhaps the highest elephant concentration in Africa. Birding is excellent here, with large numbers of African Fish Eagles, herons, including Goliath, Spoonbills, Openbills, various Ibis species, Marsh Harriers, Spur-winged Geese, and many other waterfowl species.

The largest member of the bustard family, the Kori is also reputed to be the world's heaviest flying bird. Pairs or family groups are often encountered on the savanah plains of central Kruger. Photograph by guide Joe Grosel.

Itinerary for Southern Africa Spectacular

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

Day 1, Sat, 2 Jul. Departure. South African Airways direct flights have always been good – comfortable, and the service outstanding. Please choose a flight that will arrive in Johannesburg by **Sunday, July 3.**

Day 2, Sun, 3 Jul. Arrival in Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport. After clearing Customs and Immigration in Johannesburg, proceed to the international arrivals lounge where a chauffeur from The Safari Club South Africa Lodge will be waiting to transfer you to the lodge (look out for your name on the whiteboards held up by the chauffeur). The lodge is only three miles from the airport. Your tour leader will meet you at the lodge on your arrival. *Night at The Safari Club SA.*

Day 3, Mon, 4 Jul. After breakfast, there will be time for our first bit of birding in the lodge grounds, where we hope to see a few endemics in the form of Cape Sparrow, Karoo Thrush, Cape White-eye, and Cape Weaver. From the Safari Club, we will be shuttled back to the OR Tambo airport and take a one-hour flight to Skukuza airport in the southern Kruger National Park. Skukuza is the main camp and headquarters for the park. The airport is about 10 miles from the camp so we will be transferred by open safari vehicle to our lodgings in the Skukuza Camp. Once settled into our lodgings, there will be time for lunch and a rest before head out for an afternoon of game viewing and birding onboard a very comfortable safari vehicle. This will be a fine opportunity to get acquainted with Kruger's widespread species, including Gray-go-away-Birds, Fork-tailed Drongos, Magpie Shrikes, and Arrow-marked Babblers, along with numerous starling, hornbill, spurfowl, and roller species. Dinner will be enjoyed in Kruger's finest restaurant. *Night at Skukuza Camp.*

Day 4, Tue, 5 Jul. We will take early morning and late afternoon drives, and enjoy some leisure birding in the beautiful grounds of Skukuza Camp in between. During the heat of the day, we can take in the views and wildlife of the tropical Sabie River from one of the many viewing areas along the camp perimeter and spend some time in a nearby bird hide which is well-known to most local bird photographers. While Skukuza provides an excellent base from which to encounter a wide veriety of mammals, the birdlife along the Sabie River and within the adjacent woodlands is just as interesting.

Resident bird species that we will be looking out for include Purple-crested Turaco, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Green Woodhoopoe, Southern White-crowned Shrike, African Green Pigeon, Red-crested Korhaan, Retz's Helmetshrike, and Natal Spurfowl. *Night at Skukuza Camp.*

African Green-Pigeons are easily located in fruiting trees and shrubs along Kruger's watercourses. This one is attracted by the fruit of the White Berry Bush (Flueggea virosa). Photograph by guide Joe Grosel.

Day 5, Wed, 6 Jul. Today we head to the vast basalt plains in central Kruger, first traveling along the riparian habitats of the Sabie River, stopping off at the Lower Sabie Camp for breakfast and a leg stretch before heading north. On the first leg of the day's journey, mammals preferring the wooded habitats should be seen. These include Greater Kudu, Waterbuck, Bushbuck, Nyala, and hopefully, Leopard. On the journey to Satara Camp, the vegetation progressively becomes more open and the typical plains game and birds should start appearing. We will be looking out for the likes of Ostrich, Kori Bustard, Secretarybird, and Ground Hornbill. Typical savannah mammals such as Blue Wildebeest, Common Zebra, and Impala should be plentiful. A light lunch will be taken at a tearoom en-route, and we should reach Satara Camp by mid-afternoon. The waterholes and natural springs in this region of the park are a hive of activity during the late winter when the bush is at its driest. Apart from elephant, buffalo and white rhino, zebra, giraffe and host of antelope species frequent these waterholes, while lion often lie in wait under a shady tree nearby. The Satara plains are also home to other large predators, including Cheetah and Spotted Hyeana. Some of the typical birds of this region include Red-billed Oxpecker, Brown-headed Parrot, Burchell's Coucal, Sabota Lark, Grey-headed Bush-Shrike, Burchell's Starling, Black-crowned Tchagra, and Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark. Large raptors are well represented here, with Bateleur, African Hawk-Eagle, Brown Snake-Eagle, and Tawny Eagle seen on most days. *One night in thatched rondawels (bungalows) in Satara Camp.*

Day 6, Thu, 7 Jul. This morning, we take an early drive further north to the Olifants River, traversing at least three major Kruger habitats. Birding from the bridge crossing the Olifants River is always rewarding, with probable sightings of Great Egret, Saddle-billed Stork, Greater Painted Snipe, White-fronted Plover, and a good selection of vultures that bathe in the shallow pools. This route is also good for the big cats and Spotted Hyeana. On returning to Satara camp, we'll have breakfast at the camp restaurant before leaving for the Thornybush Private Game Reserve (part of the Greater Kruger Conservancy), where we stay in a lovely private lodge. All drives here are in open safari vehicle and rangers are allowed to traverse off-road to get better views of the big-five mammals. The nights at Thornybush are usually filled with the sounds of nocturnal mammals and birds, with the territorial male lions dominating the chorus! *Night in a private lodge in the Thornybush Game Reserve.*

The Greater Kruger National Park is not only famous for its large mammals, it also boasts a impressive bird list. We'll watch for a Greater Painted Snipe when we bird along the Olifants River. Photograph by guide Terry Stevenson..

Day 7, Fri, 8 Jul. We start the day with the traditional safari style coffee and biscotti before setting out in search of Rhino, Leopard and Lion, three mammals for which this area is well known. The deciduous woodlands here are good for a great variety of passerines, including Southern White-crowned Shrike, Cape Penduline-Tit, Red-headed Weaver, White-browed Scrub-Robin, Chin-spot Batis, Black-backed Puffback, Ashy Flycatcher, Golden-breasted Bunting, and Black Cuckooshrike. During the heat of the day, we have the option of taking a nap or watching game come into the camp waterhole for a drink. This afternoon's excursion will extend beyond sunset with the intention of seeing some nocturnal species, including owls and nightjars. Mammals that are often seen here after dark include Large Spotted Genet, African Civet, Lesser Bushbaby, Scrub Hare, and African Porcupine. *Night in a private lodge in the Thornybush Game Reserve.*

Day 8, Sat, 9 Jul. After breakfast, we board a minibus and bid Thornybush, goodbye travelling westward towards the northern Drakensburg. Here, we take the aptly-named "Panorama Route", climbing some 4800 feet (1600m) to the crest of the great eastern escarpment. Several stops will be made along the route to take in the area's wonderful scenery and some its birdlife. Alpine Swift, Jackal Buzzard, Southern Fiscal, Rock Kestrel, Cape Bunting, Lazy Cisticola, Malachite Sunbird, and Verreaux's Eagle are just a few of the highland birds that we'll be searching for. Our day ends on the outskirts of the charming town of White River where we'll be staying at Oliver's Lodge, a grand manor surrounded by lakes, golfing fairways and pine plantations.

Day 9, Sun, 10 Jul. We will have a later start than usual as we enjoy a leisurely breakfast followed by a walk through the grounds. Some forest birds that are regularly seen on the neighboring golf course include Long-crested Eagle, Black Saw-wing, Chorister Robin-Chat, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, African Olive Pigeon, Purple-crested Turaco, and Cape Batis. At around midmorning, we'll pack up and take a short drive to the Kruger Mpumalanga Airport to take a 2-hour flight to the Town of Livingstone in Zambia. Once all the formalities are out of the way at the Livingstone Airport, we will be collected and transferred to the Avani Victoria Falls Resort located in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park and a stone's throw away from the wondrous Victoria Falls. After lunch in the hotel restaurant, the weary can have some downtime while the fervent can join Joe birding under the canopy of magnificent African Ebony trees that are a feature of this hotel. The final activity of the day will be a boat cruise on the Zambezi River, upstream of the falls. Giant Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Heron, Dickenson's Kestrel, African Darter, Black Crake, African Wattled Lapwing, and pods of grunting hippopotamus are just a few of the species to look forward to, but the highlight will surely be an unforgettable Zambezi sunset. *Night in the Avani Victoria Falls Resort.*

Dapper Long-toed Lapwings in their tuxedos are often seen in the flooded grasslands along the Zambezi River. Photograph by guide Joe Grosel.

Day 10, Mon, 11 Jul. We spend the morning at the Victoria Falls, experiencing the many ecosystems and micro-climates that are created by the falls, such as the rainforests, moss-covered basalt cliffs, rapids, and of course, the ever-present spray. Interesting life forms present here include very bold Yellow Baboon, the beautiful Chobe Bushbuck, noisy Trumpeter Hornbills, and the star of the show, Schalow's Turaco. After spending a couple of hours along the paved paths at the falls, we'll return to the hotel to freshen up and pack before being collected and transferred to the Sekute jetty (40 miles west of Livingstone) by bus. Here we board a very comfortable, flat-bottomed boat and take a slow cruise to the lovely Sekoma Island Lodge on the Zambezi River for a two night stay. Once we've settled into our furnished safari tents, there will be the customary afternoon tea and cake before experiencing another safari tradition, "sundowners" on a sandbank overlooking the Zambezi River. *Night in the Sekoma Island Lodge.*

Day 11, Tue, 12 Jul. Our day will start with a short walk on the island along a trail (not strenuous at all) looking for some of its avian charms, such as African Green Pigeon, Meyer's Parrot, African Yellow White-Eye, Violet-backed Starling, Spectacled Weaver, Brown Firefinch, and maybe, if we're lucky, Pel's Fishing Owl. The rest of the morning will be spent boating along the many channels of the Zambezi River, where we are sure to get some close-up views of Malachite Kingfisher, Luapula Cisticola, Greater Swamp-Warbler, Little Bee-eater, African Jacana, Swamp Boubou, Water Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover, Squacco Heron, and Long-tailed Cormorant. Over lunchtime, back in camp, we're sure to be entertained by the local troops of Banded Mongoose and Vervet Monkeys along with the very confiding Holub's Golden Weavers, Hartlaub's Babblers, and Yellow-bellied Greenbuls. On our final excursion for the day, we'll explore a water-lily inlet off the main Zambezi channel for Lesser Jacana and African Pygmy Goose. *Night in the Sekoma Island Lodge.*

Day 12, Wed, 13 Jul. After breakfast, we travel by boat and road to the Kazungula border post, and cross the Zambezi River into the country of Botswana, where, once through the border we'll be collected and taken to the nearby town of Kasane and the Mowana Safari Resort, situated on the banks of the Chobe River. The hotel, with its spreading gardens and golf course, is a haven for birds, with specialties including Collared Palm-Thrush, Coppery Sunbird, Cardinal Woodpecker, Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike, Mourning Collared Dove, and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. After lunch, a boat cruise up the Chobe River and into the national park will produce some very special sightings, since at this time of the day there will be many elephant, buffalo and other large beasts making their way down to the river for a drink or a swim. The much localised (in Botswana) Puku and Red Lechwe antelope will be seen, along with many Hippo, Nile Crocodile, and dozens of Elephant frolicking in the river. The grassy islands, floodplains and river banks that form part of this river system are home to Slaty Egret, White-fronted Bee-eater, Purple Heron, Wire-tailed Swallow, Whiskered Tern, Collared Pratincole, and African Skimmer. *Night in the Mowana Safari Resort.*

The Chobe River boat cruises offer excellent game viewing particularly in the dry season when large concentrations of Cape Buffalo and Elephant congregate along the shoreline and on the floodplains. The animals are completely at ease with the safari boats which provide an ideal base from which to watch and photograph them. Photograph by guide Joe Grosel.

Day 13, Thu, 14 Jul. After an early walk around the Mowana grounds, we are transferred by road through the Chobe National Park to the Chobe Elephant Camp (for a two-night stay), with its beautiful views of the Chobe River floodplain and Namibia's Caprivi Strip in the distance**.** This private lodge is situated in the north-western corner of the Chobe National Park and offers excellent game and bird viewing excursions in the teak woodlands and riparian strips along the Chobe River. The activities here consist of morning and afternoon game and birding drives, with a brunch, siesta and high tea in between. Our first afternoon drive will take us through some Acacia scrub on red alluvial soils, a habitat ideal for Giraffe, Impala, the diminutive Steenbok, and some nice birds including Marico Sunbird, Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver, White-browed Sparrow Weaver, Green-winged Pytilia, Long-billed Crombec, and Cut-throat Finch. African Wild (Cape Hunting) Dog, Bat-eared Fox, and Sable Antelope are also seen here on a fairly regular basis. *Night in the Chobe Elephant Camp.*

Day 14, Fri, 15 Jul. Chobe Elephant Camp. Today will be a day of relaxed birding and game viewing in various habitats in the Chobe National Park. We will be targeting the very sought-after Racket-tailed Roller in the teak woodlands, along with the likes of African Golden-Oriole, Golden-breasted Bunting, Amethyst Sunbird, Yellow-throated Petronia, Bradfield's Hornbill, Retz's Helmetshrike, and Stierling's Wren-Warbler. As we make our way down to the Chobe, we hope to find some big cats lying in wait for prey animals to come down for a drink. During our alfresco barbeque dinner we will be entertained by the lodge staff showcasing their vocal and dancing talents on our last night in Botswana. *Night in the Chobe Elephant Camp.*

Day 15, Sat, 16 Jul. After one final game drive and brunch, there will be time to freshen up before departing for the Kasane Airport. From here, we take a 2-hour flight back to Johannesburg, flying over Botswana's great Makgadigadi salt pans and the eastern rim of the Kalahari Desert. We will arrive in Johannesburg in good time to catch an evening flight back to the USA.

Day 16, Sun, 17 Jul. Arrive back in the USA.

About Your Guide

Jay VanderGaast was introduced to birding by his father, and his 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 at university and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the mosquito-infested arctic tundra watching ptarmigan do little other than occasionally getting eaten by Gyrfalcons soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he strapped on a backpack and a pair of bins and began roaming the world in search of birds.

His travels eventually led him to Costa Rica, where he stumbled into a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge. Amazed that he was actually getting paid to watch birds, he jealously guarded his position there for six years. His career with Field Guides coincided with the dawn of the new millennium (if you believe that began in 2000!), and since then he has guided more than 100 tours on several continents.

When he's not on tour, Jay's native habitat is his home near Montreal.

*"**Jay VanderGaast** was a delight to travel with…incredible at finding the birds and extremely helpful in getting us on the birds—which was much appreciated! ….he made the trip an exceptional experience which I will remember for the rest of my life." L.K., Costa Rica*

Visit https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/ for Jay's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: $16,325
DEPOSIT: $1625 per person
FINAL PAYMENT DUE: March 4, 2022
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional*): $1725
LIMIT: 8

Special Note: Tour fees may be subject to change due to the global economic effects of COVID-19.
We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Some of our tours may incur higher costs due to increases in currency exchange rate fluctuations or COVID-19 related fees imposed by countries and/or suppliers. Travel and hospitality companies all over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

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!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Our lodgings are generally good and comfortable in the Kruger National Parks, to quite luxurious in the private lodges. We will be staying in a combination of thatched bungalows, modern safari tents and comfortable hotel rooms, all of which have en-suite facilities, tea/coffee stations, ceiling fans/air conditioning and open verandas. All the establishments have a 24-hour electricity, but bring along a flashlight for when you have to walk between your chalet and restaurants at night. The unfenced lodges will always have rangers to escourt you to your rooms after dark.

The standards of food preparation and hygiene are excellent; days often begin with a huge breakfast, lunches are taken in small restaurants (and occasionally, if the birding requires it, a packed lunch) and dinners are most frequently at the lodge restaurant, or at camp restaurants in national parks. A great variety of beverages will be available and the South African wines are an excellent value. The tour itinerary includes six one-night stays and four 'two-nighters'. At the lodges where we have a two day stay, the program will take on the typical safari mode with early morning game viewing and

birding activities, returning to the lodge for brunch followed by a 'siesta' until afternoon tea, with another outing in the afternoon. In the private lodges, the afternoon excursions often return after dark to maximize our chances of picking up nocturnal species. In these cases, there will be time to freshen up before dinner.

DOCUMENTS: For South Africa - US citizens will need a current passport for travel to South Africa. No visa is required. We recommend the validity date of your passport extends six months beyond your return date home. South Africa requires two blank pages for their stamps each time you enter the country (on this tour we'll make two entries, so four pages will be required, at a minium) and as a precaution, it is best to have at least one blank page for all the countries you will visit or transit on this tour.

For Zambia – **US citizens will require a single entry visa for Zambia**. The fee is US $50. Visas can be purchased online through https://eservices.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/#/home or at the immigration desk at the Livingstone Airport. The visa fee must be paid in US dollars at the Livingstone Airport.

Please note that yellow fever certificates are only required if you are entering Zambia from a yellow fever endemic country so no need for one as we are travelling from South Africa. However if you have visited a yellow fever endemic country in the past six months it is advised to have your inoculation certificate with you at southern African border posts.

For Botswana – There are no visa requirements for entry into Botswana and passport requirements are the same as for entering South Africa.

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.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: 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 duffle and a carry-on. Wheeled duffles 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 **$16,325** for one person in double occupancy* from Johannesburg. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 14, all meals from breakfast on Day 3 through lunch on Day 15, all ground transportation, all flights within southern 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 **$1725**. 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).

*If you have a trusted friend, relative, or significant other with whom you wish to share a room on tour, please let us know and your tour manager will make that assignment. Field Guides is not currently pairing roommates who do not know

each other, and the single supplement will apply if you do not have a roommate. *Note:* There may be occasions on certain tours where singles won't be available at all hotels/lodges. If this is the case, your tour manager will let you know. You will be advised ahead of time who you will be rooming with and you will have the opportunity to connect with that person before the tour, if you would like.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact our office. 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 mail your **deposit of $1625** per person, or see our Payment Options at https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/ . **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by March 4, 2022. 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.**

Please note that if you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will require **proof of travel insurance**. 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: FOR 2022 TOURS: 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 and non-transferable. **FOR 2023 TOURS & BEYOND:** Note that beginning in 2023, the 50% refund period will become 179 to 90 days before departure, with no refund thereafter.

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 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. If you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will **require proof of travel insurance**. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a 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 information from us 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. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website

at https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/ and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

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 thru InsureMyTrip (https://www.insuremytrip.com/) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

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. 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.

NCP 7/2020

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