

# ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA

## *Birds and Wine Tour in the Cape*

11 – 25 October 2008

### Trip Report



BULTENVERWACHTING WINE ESTATE

Leader: Peter Lawson (on behalf of Ornitholidays)

## Tour Summary

### Party List:

Robert and Pauline Blewitt of Carnforth, Lancashire  
Tony Chandler and Jill Bracey of London  
Arthur and Brenda Floyd of Bath, Somerset.  
Mike and Pam Reynolds of Clayhidon, Devon

### Guides:

Peter Lawson of Nelspruit, Mpumalanga  
Mariana Delport of Eversdale, Western Cape

### Photo acknowledgements:

Peter Lawson, Tony Chandler, Robert Blewitt, Arthur Floyd

### Total Distance Travelled:

1 990 kilometres

### Temperature Range:

5° C -30° C

### Total Birds Seen:

221

### Total Birds Heard Only:

5

### Total Mammals Seen:

20

### Total Reptiles Identified:

11

### Birds of the Trip:

Lemon Dove, Cape Rockjumper, Blue Crane, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Verreaux's Eagle with chick.

### Trip Report Compiled By:

Peter Lawson (Tour Leader) on behalf of Ornitholidays

### Note:

The species mentioned in the report are only some of the species seen at each locality. Please refer to detailed checklists at end of the report for all species seen on this specific tour.



## Trip Breakdown

### Day 1: Saturday, 11 October 2008 ~ Noordhoek

Route: Cape Town Airport to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. To Noordhoek after lunch. Kommetjie and Wildevoelwei late afternoon.

Weather: Sunny and pleasant, no wind.

Temperature range: 22°C max

### Day 2: Sunday, 12 October 2008 ~ Cape Peninsula/Noordhoek

Route: Strandfontein Water Treatment Works followed by Boulders Beach and in late afternoon, Jonkersdam hiking Trail.

Weather: Sunny most of day with light breeze.

Temperature range: 14° - 25°C

### Day 3: Monday, 13 October 2008 ~ Cape Peninsula/Noordhoek

Route: Cape Point in morning. Constantia for lunch and Buitenverwachting Wine Estate, followed by Constantia Greenbelt.

Weather: Cloudy and cool.

Temperature range: 16° - 22°C

### Day 4: Tuesday, 14 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

Route: Rooi Els, Vergelegen Wine Estate, lunch at Helderberg Nature Reserve, Boschendal Wine Estate, Franschhoek.

Weather: Mainly cloudy and cool. Windy.

Temperature range: 15° - 22°C

### Day 5: Wednesday, 15 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

Route: Franschhoek all day, with early walk past Huguenot Memorial. Haute Cabriere Wine Estate. Drive to Berg River Dam and Wemmershoek.

Weather: Partially cloudy and windy.

Temperature range: 15° - 24°C

### Day 6: Thursday, 16 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

Route: Paarl all day. Paarl Mountain Reserve, Landskroon Winery, lunch at The Goatshed at Fairview Wine Estate, Paarl Bird Sanctuary and return to Franschhoek.

Weather: Sunny and warm but windy at times.

Temperature range: 15° - 25°C

### Day 7: Friday, 17 October 2008 ~ McGregor

Route: Karoo Botanical Gardens at Worcester, lunch Kokerboom Restaurant. Conradie Family Vineyard in Nuy Valley. McGregor.

Weather: Sunny and warm, slight breeze at times.

Temperature range: 16° - 21°C

### Day 8: Saturday, 18 October 2008 ~ McGregor

Route: Montagu via Bonnievale. Drie Berge Wine Cellars. Lunch at Kloof Farm Stall. Robertson Water Treatment Works and return to McGregor.

Weather: Hot, slight breeze.

Temperature range: 16° - 30°C

### Day 9: Sunday, 19 October 2008 ~ McGregor

Route: Vrolijkheid Nature Reserve in morning. Dassieshoek Nature Reserve afternoon, with drive on Steenbokvlakte road late afternoon and return to McGregor.

Weather: Sunny and hot.

Temperature range: 15° - 30° C

### Day 10: Monday, 20 October 2008 ~ Ceres

Route: Jason's Hill Wine Estate in Slanghoek Valley. Lunch at Bergsig Wine Estate. Up Mitchell's Pass with stops. Ceres. Twin Dams late afternoon.

Weather: Sunny and warm, partially cloudy.

Temperature range: 15° - 28°C

Day 11: Tuesday, 21 October 2008 ~ Ceres

Route : Tulbagh all day with stop on Michell's Pass en route. Theuniskraal Wine Estate and return to Ceres late afternoon.

Weather: Sunny with partial cloud cover.

Temperature range : 13° - 23°C

Day 12: Wednesday, 22 October 2008 ~ Ceres

Route: Tankwa Karoo all day – Karoopoort – Skitterykloof – Eierkop.

Weather: Cold early morning, warm to hot later.

Temperature range: 5° - 27°C

Day 13: Thursday, 23 October 2008 ~ Langebaan

Route: Over Nuwekloof Pass, Sonquasdrif gravel road, through Riebeek Kasteel to Groote Post Winery. Lunch at Marmalade Cat in Darling and on to Langebaan.

Weather: Sunny with strong wind in afternoon.

Temperature range : 9° - 26°C

Day 14: Friday, 24 October 2008 ~ Langebaan

Route: West Coast National Park all day – Zeeberg hide, Geelbek hide, Tsaarsbank picnic area.

Weather: Sunny , strong wind (South Easter).

Temperature range: 12° - 24°C

Day 15: Saturday, 25 October 2008 ~ Departure

Route: Yzerfontein ,Blaaubergstrand, Meerendal Winery, Tygerberg Nature Reserve, Airport.

Weather: Sunny and hot with light breeze.

Temperature range: 15° - 30°C



## Trip Report

### Day 1: Saturday, 11 October 2008 – Noordhoek, Cape Peninsula

The BA59 flight from Heathrow arrived in Cape Town 20 minutes late, but we soon met up and saw the first bird of the trip, the introduced House Crow, whilst walking to our vehicles. There were others too before we left the airport and these included an Egyptian Goose flying over and two more introduced species, House Sparrow and Common Starling. At least we were getting the aliens out of the way at the start.

It was a beautiful calm and sunny day with a clear blue sky, unusual for the Cape Town area. We wasted little time and drove straight to Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens to enjoy the fine weather while it lasted. We had plenty of time to spare which was just as well as there was so much to see before we even left the entrance of these magnificent Gardens. The first was right in the car park as we left the vehicles. A calling African Goshawk was located perched in a tall tree and Mariana scoped it for all to have a good sighting. What a way to start.

We then moved through the entrance but no further for a while as we lined up on a calling Karoo Prinia, Cape White-eyes, a lovely Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Canaries, a very vocal Sombre Greenbul and a pair of Red-winged Starlings perched on the restaurant roof. There was still plenty more to see as we strolled further into the Gardens and the botany enthusiasts were in their element with so much to see and Mariana to identify flowering plants for them, such as the many species of Erica, Protea, Leucospermum, Mimetes and numerous others. Mariana was enjoying it too and gave some interesting botany lessons.

We made for a stake-out where a pair of Spotted Eagle-Owls regularly roost and nest and were not disappointed as one of the pair was found fast asleep in spite of the many cameras pointed at him. This was our second raptor of the morning but there were plenty more to come. In fact this first morning became the start of a 'raptor day' as we later added Black Sparrowhawk, African Harrier-Hawk, Rock Kestrel, Booted Eagle, Yellow-billed Kite, Black-shouldered Kite and Jackal Buzzard to the list.

There were plenty of other good birds too and they were all showing well for us. The superb weather had a lot to do with it I am sure. Endemics such as Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird, Forest Canary, Southern Boubou, Cape Bulbul and Cape Francolin were seen well. Others included Common Waxbill, numbers of confiding Helmeted Guineafowl and a real 'special', the scarce and normally shy Lemon Dove that walked about on the path in front of us, posing for photographs. There were many others too.

A substantial lunch was enjoyed before we left the Gardens and made straight for Noordhoek and Afton Grove Country Retreat, our excellent accommodation for the first three nights of the holiday. We checked into our spacious rooms at 14h30 and had some well-earned down time, much needed after the long flight and the exciting first morning in the 'fairest Cape'.

We met up again at 16h00 for an optional drive to nearby Kommetjie on the Atlantic coast. Although this was an optional outing, the adrenalin was still flowing fast after our morning at Kirstenbosch and no one stayed behind. The rocky shore at Kommetjie had plenty on offer for us and all four marine cormorant species were seen side by side on the same boulder. These were the large White-breasted Cormorant and the endemic Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorants. Nearby there were Cape and Hartlaub's Gulls as well as Common, Sandwich and Swift Terns. An African Darter drying its wings appeared out of place in this marine environment. African Black Oystercatcher was a good endemic to get and a tiny White-fronted Plover was discovered by the eagle-eyes amongst us. Some African Sacred Ibis flew over and we had our first good view of a Hadeda Ibis. We were to see many more later on the trip. A troop of Chacma Baboons were feeding on the pavement as we left Kommetjie and a couple had tiny babies. Our first mammal of the trip.

On our return drive to Afton Grove we came across a Spotted Thick-knee standing wide-eyed in a field. More photographs. As there was still time to spare we stopped at Wildevoelwei, a lake in a housing estate. Reed Cormorant completed the cormorants for us. Full house on our first day. Some Little Rush-Warblers were calling loudly from a stand of bulrush and eventually some showed well, with the help of Mariana's PDA. Cape Weavers nest building created some interest and good-looking Speckled Pigeons were on the roof of a house. Common Fiscal showed well and a bright green Malachite Sunbird resulted in exclamations of delight. A pair of White-necked Ravens were flying over the mountain as we left, whilst African Black and Alpine Swifts completed the new birds of the day.

Back at our accommodation we met in the lounge before dinner and Chris served up some enjoyable wines for us, courtesy of Ornitholidays, whilst we set about updating the log, a regular task at this time of day. Lovely home-cooking was prepared by Sylvia and staff and it was early to bed after a long and active day.

Birds of the Day: Malachite Sunbird, African Harrier-Hawk and Lemon Dove by popular vote.

### Day 2: Sunday, 12 October 2008 – Noordhoek, Cape Peninsula

Being the first full day of the holiday we had a leisurely early morning with breakfast at 8h00. Some were up early though and found birds in the garden such as African Dusky Flycatcher, Cape Canary, Cape Robin-Chat, Red-eyed Dove and Common Waxbill. After breakfast we drove along the False Bay shore and some had fleeting glimpses of Southern Right Whales. Our destination was the Strandfontein Water Treatment Works (alias the local sewage works). This extensive area is one of the best waterbird localities close to Cape Town and what Ornitholidays trip is complete without a visit to a sewage works?

Open fields on the access road gave us our first Zitting and Levillant's Cisticolas and the large Strandfontein ponds were full of birds. The first pond had about 100 Black-necked Grebes and White-backed Duck was a 'special' not often

seen in the Western Cape. There were only a few Great White Pelicans but one pond had large flocks of Greater Flamingo, superb in flight for the photographers amongst us. There was also a big flock of Pied Avocet and we called out a Lesser Swamp-Warbler from a reedbed. Some small Kittlitz's Plovers were a nice find and so was Purple Heron, Glossy Ibis, Cape Teal, Cape Shoveler, Southern Pochard, African Purple Swamphen and Water Thick-knee. A new mammal for our list was Small Grey Mongoose and they came into the track on a number of occasions. Driving out through the grassy fields again produced a number of Hirundines including Pearl-breasted Swallow, Greater Striped Swallow, Rock Martin and Brown-throated Martin.

We drove back into Simon's Town and into heavy Sunday traffic. When the weather is good on weekends there is a mass exodus from Cape Town by people taking advantage while it lasts. We had a lunch appointment at Boulders Beach Lodge but made it on time. The meal was good and it was fascinating having trilobites festooning the walls around us. A retired palaeontologist carved these prehistoric marine creatures from drift wood and they are magnificent.

After lunch we strolled along a pathway to the main breeding colony of African Penguins. There are only two mainland breeding colonies and this one is the largest. About 1000 pairs breed here annually but breeding was over at the time of our visit and only a few large young were present. Numbers of adults were in moult and looked a sorry sight as they stood around waiting for the process to finish and thus enable them to take to the water and hunt again. Those not in moult were fascinating to watch and their antics were so human. Walking back to the vehicles gave us another mammal for our list in the form of Rock Hyrax (or Dassie as they are locally known). Some were perched on large boulders enjoying the sunshine.

Our return drive to Afton Grove took us past the start of a hiking trail to Jonkersdam in the Table Mountain National Park. There was time for a short, but very scenic walk. The main target bird here was the localised Cape Siskin which was eventually found. Three sunbird species gave an excellent show. They were Malachite, Orange-breasted and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds.

The log was updated in the lounge again, with the help of some good wine of course. We went out for dinner this evening to a nearby farm complex. The restaurant was called Nags Head and the food and wine were good.

Birds of the Day: White-backed Duck and Kittlitz's Plover.

#### Day 3: Monday, 13 October 2008 ~Noordhoek, Cape Peninsula

Breakfast was at 07h00 this morning and then we departed for an excursion to Cape Point. We drove through Simon's Town again and this time there was little traffic. We stopped briefly to look at the statue of Just Nuisance, the Great Dane who befriended British sailors at the naval training base and earned the title of an Able Seaman. It is a touching and true story and Mariana and I related it for the group. We drove along the magnificent coastline and had sightings of Southern Right Whales and Cape Fur Seals on the way as well as a stunning sighting of a Cape Grassbird.

Shortly after entering the reserve there were Cape Sugarbirds on flowering *Leucospermum* bushes and we were delighted to see they were males with long tails. We had only seen females up to now. A comfort stop at the Visitors Centre produced a Common Ostrich pair for us. New for the list and the world's largest bird. Fiscal Flycatcher was also new for us here. A striking endemic Bontebok was another new mammal for our growing list. We turned off to Cape of Good Hope, the south western extremity of Africa, and saw Cape Bunting, Familiar Chat and a colourful Bokmakierie (a bush-shrike of sorts). Skeins of Cape Cormorants were flying low over the breakers and numbers of Cape Gannets were also seen offshore. Wildflowers were spectacular and were admired, identified and photographed by our botanists. Amongst the flowers was an Ostrich pair with tiny chicks, looking like clockwork toys.

On driving to the funicular station, which was to take us to Cape Point, one vehicle came across some Eland, the largest antelope in Africa. The rest of us caught up with this mammal later on the trip. Cape Point had stunning scenery and Cape Cormorants were nesting on the cliffs below us and photographed. "Pishing" brought out a flock of Cape Siskins and those of us who had poor sightings yesterday were able to see this scarce bird properly this time.

We left the reserve and drove down Ou Kaapse Weg (Old Cape Route) to the upmarket suburb of Constantia for our lunch appointment at Peddlars on the Bend, and very nice it was too. Nearby was the Buitenverwachting Wine Estate where we went for our first wine tasting and cellar tour of the trip. Herman the winemaker was somewhat hostile at first but then apologised saying he was under pressure and that "winemakers are naturally aggressive". Obviously he had had a bad day and we were the outlet, but he soon mellowed and conducted a good tour. The normal charge was waived too, in spite of seven of his best wines being sampled. The Dessert Wines were rated highly by our group. Later he showed us a Spotted Eagle-Owl nest in an old Oak Tree on the estate. It is a beautiful estate at the foot of Table Mountain, dating from 1796.



There was time before dusk to search for the shy and elusive Knysna Warbler along a stream in the nearby Constantia Greenbelt. We heard it once briefly but failed to get it out into the open, but we did have good views of Cape Batis in the process. We also heard the eerie call of a Buff-spotted Flufftail coming from dense vegetation. This is a rarity for this area but unfortunately we did not see it. Flufftails are notoriously secretive and seldom seen. Back to Afton Grove, bird list and another fine dinner prepared by Sylvia and her assistant. Then early to bed after another long but enjoyable day.

Birds of the Day: Cape Grassbird, Cape Batis and Common Ostrich with chicks.

#### Day 4: Tuesday, 14 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

Robert and Pauline were up early again and found African Paradise Flycatcher and the elusive Pin-tailed Whydah in the garden at last. That was not all though, a Cape Dwarf Chameleon was discovered which pleased Chris as he was under the impression this little reptile had disappeared from his garden completely.

We said fond farewells to our host and staff after breakfast and departed for our next destination. Our drive took us along the shores of False Bay again, but this time we skirted right around the bay and it was a very scenic drive indeed. A comfort stop at a petrol station on the way produced a reed-lined wetland that had dozens of brightly coloured Southern Red Bishops nest building and displaying to drab-looking females. There were also breeding Cape Weavers and we saw our first Yellow Bishop, also good-looking.

We turned off the motorway at Somerset West and took the coastal road to Rooi Els which hugged the rocky shoreline and was very scenic indeed. Both Cape and Sentinel Rock-Thrush were perched up on telephone wires and the latter is one of the Western Cape 'specials'. At Rooi Els we parked and walked along a gravel track with the sea to our right and a mountain as a back drop to our left. Our target bird was Cape Rock-jumper which we eventually found with some searching. It was half-way up the mountain slope and showed well, although a bit distant for photography but wonderful in the scope. We walked back to the cars, seeing Cape Grassbird, Familiar Chat, Cape Bunting, Grey-backed Cisticola and Neddicky.

We back-tracked to Somerset West and deviated to Vergelegen Wine Estate, historical, very scenic and beautiful old buildings, one of which is now a museum with all the original furniture. A grande piano was admired by Pam and the caretaker invited her to play for us. It was lovely. Some enormous Camphor Trees in the grounds were almost 300 years old and have been declared National Monuments. Six different wines were tasted and a 2006 Shiraz was voted the best.



Our next stop was Helderberg Nature Reserve for lunch and there was time afterwards for a short walk. A pond had Yellow-billed Duck, Red-knobbed Coot, Common Moorhen and Little Grebe, all looking for handouts. They were nice and close for the photographers, as were some Cape Francolin (Spurfowl) in the carpark and Fiscal Flycatcher too. Three enormous Leopard Tortoises were additions to our reptile list.

The well-known Boschendal Wine Estate was our final stop before Franschhoek where we were to stay for the next three nights. Wine tasting was in a lovely setting under an enormous old Oak Tree and it went down well. Five wines were tasted and two whites were voted best. Brown-throated Martins were flying around the carpark as we left. Then on to Franschhoek and check into comfortable rooms at Le Ballon Rouge in the historical and pleasant small town, where French Huguenots settled after escaping from France in 1688 to avoid persecution. They brought wine-making skills with them. The town nestles in a lovely valley at the foot of the Franschhoek Pass. Dinner this evening was at The Country Kitchen on the nearby Mont Rochelle Wine Estate and wine from their cellar was by courtesy of Ornitholidays.

Birds of the Day: Cape Rock-jumper and Southern Red Bishops in nesting display.

#### Day 5: Wednesday, 15 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

The day started with an early walk to the Huguenot Memorial and a nearby stream. Brimstone Canary showed well at the memorial and was new for some of the group. Verreaux's Eagle flew over and gave a good show as it turned for us to see it from all sides and there was another good display from an African Harrier-Hawk. We saw it in flight as well as perched. Then it was back to LeBallon Rouge for a great breakfast, followed by a bit of down time. Some used the rest period to do a spot of shopping and I heard talk of the discovery of a specialist shop that made home-made chocolates. I cannot remember seeing the results of this shopping excursion though.

There was wine tasting and a cellar tour after this at Haute Cabriere which is unique in that the cellar is completely underground in an old disused mine that had been converted extensively to serve the purpose it is now used for. Sunk into the Franschhoek mountainside, the underground cellar is entirely gravity-fed. Grapes are offloaded through the roof and channelled into fermentation tanks. Fermented juice is collected in barrels of French oak for maturation. All this without mechanical manipulation. Unique indeed. Chardonnay Pinot Noir is the speciality and received high marks from our own expert wine-tasters. This was a good tour, enjoyed by all and was followed by an excellent lunch at the small, intimate Café Antoinette at the Huguenot Memorial.

The afternoon was spent birding on the road to the new Berg River Dam and to nearby Wemmershoek. It was extremely windy though which made birding difficult. An African Fish-Eagle on a nest was nice to see. Booted Eagle was also in the same area and so was Jackal Buzzard and Black Sparrowhawk. Raptors enjoy the wind and so do Swifts. We saw African Black, White-rumped, Little and Alpine Swifts. Other good birds on this afternoon included delightful little Sweet Waxbills, Cape Batis and Black Saw-wing amongst others.

Dinner this evening was at French Connection and was good. The wine was Porcupine Ridge, red and white, by courtesy of Ornitholidays.

Bird of the Day: African Harrier-Hawk

#### Day 6: Thursday, 16 October 2008 ~ Franschhoek

Packed breakfasts were the order of the day and we departed early for Paarl to be in time for the best birding. Mariana knows the area well and she led us on back roads that resulted in a short-cut to the Paarl Mountain Reserve. We were the

only occupants of the picnic area as we ate our breakfast, apart from Streaky-headed Seedeaters nearby. Later we walked on trails further up the mountain and found a megatick at the top in the form of the rare and localised Protea Seedeater. They responded well to call-up and came into view for us. There were many flowering Proteas on our walk with lots of feeding Cape Sugarbirds. New for us was a lovely little pair of Bar-throated Apalis. As we walked down again a Klaas's Cuckoo was heard uttering its distinctive 2-note call from within a leafy oak. Try as we might we were unable to see it as its bright green plumage matched the fresh leaf-colour perfectly. Then it flew and we saw it in flight and followed to where it had landed again. Another challenge and again it was a flight sighting.

Our next port-of-call was a small family-run winery, Landskroon. We had it entirely to ourselves and received a warm welcome from Huguette who was a 5<sup>th</sup> generation family member. She introduced us to the young wine-maker, Abraham, who enthusiastically gave us a detailed cellar tour and then personally conducted the wine tasting. It was most interesting to see that the original storage tanks for red wine were made of concrete and some were still used today. The wine tasting was done on the verandah of the family home and there was a superb view across the vineyards to the mountains beyond. A remark overheard was that this winery received a 5-star rating. The wines were excellent too and a Pinotage, a Shiraz and a Port received top marks from some of our enthusiastic wine-tasters.

With some effort we bid Huguette and Abraham farewell and drove down the road to a larger and more commercial winery, Fairview, for a superb lunch of cheeses, home-made bread and fresh salads. This winery is well-known for goats milk cheese in addition to fine wine and our lunch was in the open next to the restaurant called The Goatshed. The goat enclosure has a unique tower with a spiral staircase for the goats to climb and windows where they enter and peep out for the photographers. Our lunch table overlooked the tower. After we had eaten far more than we should have and had a brief look at the winery (not a conducted tour) we left to spend the rest of the day birding.

The Paarl Bird Sanctuary (alias the local sewage works) is an excellent birding venue. New birds were many as we skirted the settling ponds. These included Grey-headed Gull, Three-banded Plover, African Spoonbill, Black Crake and Cape Sparrow amongst others. We made for a hide and a nice surprise in front of us was a small flock of White-faced Duck, which is a Western Cape rarity. Other birds seen from the hide were Great White Pelican, Cape Teal, Black-necked Grebe, Red-billed Teal, Cape Shoveler, Maccoa Duck and Spur-winged Goose plus more. Common and Curlew Sandpipers were also new birds, plus a brief glimpse of a Malachite Kingfisher for some. We caught up with this one properly a few days later. African Reed Warbler showed well for us too.

A heronry on an island on one of the ponds was a hive of activity. We parked and watched the coming and going of adult birds and hungry youngsters shouting for food until the sun started to dip in the west and it was time to head for home. The heronry had breeding African Spoonbills, Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Black-headed Herons, Reed Cormorants and African Darters.

Back in Franschhoek we updated the log, with an impressive list, on the verandah of Le Ballon Rouge and then strolled across to Reubens, our restaurant for dinner this evening. This restaurant has been voted as one of the top restaurants in the country, but we were not impressed and it was unbelievably expensive.

Birds of the Day: African Spoonbill, Black Crake, Protea Seed-eater

#### Day 7: Friday, 17 October 2008 ~ McGregor

Today we were heading north/west to the Little Karoo and a change of habitat, which consequently would mean new birds. Departure from Le Ballon Rouge was after an early breakfast and our first stop was at Worcester where we visited the Karoo Botanical Gardens. The rest of the morning was spent there and we virtually had it to ourselves. The gardens were very colourful with a great variety of Mesembryanthemaceae and other succulents in bloom. New birds included White-backed and Red-faced Mousebirds at last, Karoo Scrub-Robin, Chestnut-vented Titbabbler, Acacia Pied Barbet and exquisite little Fairy Flycatchers. Klaas's Cuckoo was heard again, but this time a bit of "pishing" brought it right out to perch on telephone wires for a stunning view. The colourful Bokmakierie gave us better sightings than previously as well.



Lunch was on the verandah of the Kokerboom Restaurant in the Gardens and it was good. Afterwards we turned off the N1 to the Nuy Valley and visited the Conradie Family Vineyards, yet another small private winery which we had to ourselves. This one practised biodiversity and supported conservation and eco-friendly farming. Their Journey of the Penguin selection had a touching story and some was purchased for later enjoyment. This was also the only cellar that provided snacks between tastings and a good selection too. Some of their wines had received awards and the 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon had a double gold medal and top marks from our experts as well.

At Robertson we turned off the main road to the small village of McGregor where we spent three most enjoyable nights at The Old Mill Lodge which had a country feel. It was more rustic than experienced so far and made a pleasant change. We were well looked after by Janie and Peter who had recently immigrated from Zimbabwe after their farm had been taken over, which is what happens in that country. They had brought some of their loyal staff with them and young Melody, being trained as a chef, was lovely, polite and very shy when introduced to our mottly group. The food at Old Mill Lodge was some of the best we had had so far.

Birds of the Day: Klaas's Cuckoo and Bokmakierie.

#### Day 8: Saturday, 18 October 2008 ~ McGregor

After a really good breakfast we left for a morning in the Montagu area and travelled on a gravel road via Bonnievale with plenty of birding stops on the way. One vehicle had close-ups of Karoo Long-billed Lark and Large-billed Lark but the rest of us caught up with these later. Numbers of Pale Chanting-Goshawks were perched on telephone poles along the route and numerous Common Ostrich looked right in the Karoo landscape. Cogmans Kloof Pass near Montagu had stunning scenery and a photo stop was made. We then headed for Drie Berge Wine Cellars where wine is bottled for various producers. They do not produce their own. An informal wine-tasting was conducted in Afrikaans and Mariana translated for us. Montagu is famous for sweet Muscadell which is entirely different to what we had sampled to date. Some was purchased to be enjoyed after dinner back at Old Mill Lodge.

Lunch was in the grounds of a delightful roadside store, Kloof Farm Stall. It was another fine meal and afterwards there was time for browsing and shopping in the well-stocked store. All sorts of delicious goodies were purchased as "pad kos" (food for the road) to be enjoyed on our travels to come.

Our return drive took the more direct route via Robertson and a short stop at the local water treatment works produced a pair of endemic South African Shelduck which was new for us. Mariana's vehicle hung back a bit longer than mine and they were rewarded with a Cape rarity in the form of a Little Sparrowhawk, perched in a Eucalyptus tree. Pamela miraculously spotted the small accipiter which was duly photographed by Robert for us to confirm i.d. later and to be sent to the Western Cape Rarities Committee to be displayed on their website. Brown-hooded Kingfisher was another scarce Western Cape bird seen by them.

Back at the lodge we had some down-time before an optional short drive to a roadside quarry in the hopes of finding Ground Woodpeckers. No luck on this one but we did see a fine pair of endemic Black Harriers, both in flight and perched on the ground. The log was later called on the lodge verandah and Pauline kept her eyes on the landscape hoping to see the Hamerkop she had missed when it flew over earlier. It was not to be seen again, although she did see many over the next few days. Once again an excellent dinner was prepared by Janie with the help of shy young Melody, and served by vivacious Monique.

Birds of the Day: Little Sparrowhawk and Black Harrier

#### Day 9: Sunday, 19 October 2008 ~ McGregor

An early start was made for the nearby Vrolijkheid Nature Reserve. Interesting was that there was no attendant at the entrance but a note made the request for the entrance fee to be deposited in a box. Honesty like that would not work in many places. Walking in typical Karoo habitat in the cool early morning was a lovely experience. We called up a Long-billed Lark that we took to be the Karoo species, but it was in fact Agulhas Long-billed Lark at the very extremity of its range. This was later confirmed by the ex warden of the park who is also an expert on larks. We also had a brief, but good close-up of Cape Long-billed Lark with its exceptionally long bill and greyish plumage. This bird was also at the very edge of its range. Amazing!

An exciting find was Rufous-eared Warbler, particularly for Arthur as it was a major target bird for him. Brenda missed it as she was checking the botany further back with Mariana, but she did catch up again later on the tour.

Janie and Peter met us in the picnic area with a superb picnic breakfast. We were hungry after our walk and there was heaps of food to tuck into. A pair of African Fish-Eagles displayed for us while we were enjoying our breakfast. Afterwards we walked in a different direction to a hide on a reservoir that was a bit too full to attract many birds.

Back at the lodge for a supposedly light lunch but we could help ourselves to as much or as little as we liked. Some down-time followed but Pauline and Robert were still active and walked to a nearby pond in the hopes of finding the elusive Hamerkop. Needless to say it was not there but they did find a Spotted Eagle-Owl chick and an attendant adult.

Later we drove through Robertson and to the Dassieshoek Nature Reserve in a beautiful mountain setting, but only to find the gate locked and no gate-keeper present. We were well within opening time according to the notice board at the gate. It was Sunday and no doubt the gate-keeper had better things to do. Welcome to Africa! We did at last catch up with Hamerkop for Pauline though and saw it on a few occasions.

We returned to McGregor and as there was a bit of time before dusk elected for a short drive on the Steenbokvlakte gravel road where a pair of Black Harriers gave us another good sighting. Finally log call and another fine dinner and good Cape wine to go with the pleasant company.

Birds of the Day: Spotted Eagle-Owl and Rufous-eared Warbler.

#### Day 10: Monday, 20 October 2008 ~ Ceres

Some were early risers by now and were up early for a stroll down to the pond to look at Pauline's Spotted Eagle-Owls once more and they were not disappointed. Then our last breakfast at Old Mill Lodge and sad departure. It had been a great stop and we could have easily spent longer there.

We retraced our route some of the way but then deviated to the beautiful Slanghoek Valley where we called in at Jason's Hill Winery to sample their wines. This private cellar is unique in that it has a young female wine maker, Ivy du Toit, who started at the age of 21 in 2001. The first wine she made was a Shiraz and in 2003 she received the Winemaker of the year award, followed by the first Woman Wine Maker of the Year 2004 award for the quality of her wine and for her vision and passion. Our group particularly liked the Pinotage 2007 and the Merlot 2007.

Our drive continued through stunning scenery, surrounded by tall mountains to another winery, Bergsig, but for lunch this time and not another tasting, although it was noted that a glass or two was enjoyed with the lunch to compliment the fine meal.

Not far from our lunch stop we drove up Michell's Pass where some stops were made to look for birds and admire the view. The fast-flowing Breë River was far below us and a Cape Clawless Otter was playing in the rapids on the first stop. The next stop produced a pair of African Black Duck, new for the list and another good find. Ceres, our next 3-night stop, was reached in good time and Louis showed us to our spacious rooms at the Village Guest House.

Later a visit was made to a lake, divided in two by the main road and thus known as Twin Dams. There were plenty of birds about and some Blue Cranes resulted in a fair bit of excitement. Rightly so for the National Bird of South Africa. Others new for the list included African Pipit, Capped Wheatear and Cape Longclaw. Then back to our lodgings to call the log before dinner. It was noted that a church clock opposite chimed every half hour and this caused concern that we may be kept awake, but it so turned out we were too tired for that each evening and slept soundly. Perhaps wine had something to do with it.

Bird of the Day : Blue Crane by popular vote.

#### Day 11: Tuesday, 21 October 2008 ~ Ceres

We left the guest house after breakfast on a days outing to Tulbagh, an historical town dating from 1699 when the area was first settled and then known as the Land of Waveren. More recently, in September 1969, Tulbagh experienced a massive earthquake in which 11 people were killed and a large part of the town was destroyed. Mariana grew up in the area on a farm with the wall of the Witsenberg Mountains as a backdrop to the family home. She was present during the earthquake and we experienced it too when she told us about the frightening ordeal.

On leaving Ceres we drove down Michell's Pass and stopped for a walk down to the Breë River. African Olive-Pigeon was new for us and gave us splendid views as they moved about in the riverine forest canopy, feeding on berries.



On reaching Tulbagh we drove through the lovely town and into the Berg River valley and to Theuniskraal Wine Estate, owned and run by family of Mariana. Here we met her sister and brother-in-law, Rosette and Kobus Jordaan and their lovely family. The wine-tasting, conducted by Kobus in person, was good and everyone agreed that without doubt the five wines tasted were the best selection tasted to date. Theuniskraal is famous for its Riesling which has received top international awards. An excellent lunch, with wine, was served in the family home and this was really special as we were treated as if we were part of the family. Rosette was an excellent hostess. The Theuniskraal experience turned out to be one of the nicest days of the trip.

There was more to experience as well as bio-diversity is practised on the estate and large sections of indigenous Renosterveld (a Fynbos habitat) and Riverine Forest are left intact and protected. We walked in these areas and had good birding and botany. Numerous wildflowers were identified by Mariana and photographed by the photographers amongst us. The Riverine Forest had a calling Tambourine Dove, but the dense and dark foliage prevented us from seeing this shy Cape rarity. Cape Batis showed well and a pair of Verreaux's Eagles were magnificent in flight. The migrant Steppe Buzzard was new for the list and another migrant, Common House Martin was seen for only the second time. The Cape is a long way south and migrants were just starting to arrive from their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere.

Before returning to Ceres, Mariana took us on a brief tour down Kerk Street in Tulbagh, where 32 of the town's loveliest dwellings have been restored since the earthquake. They form the largest concentration of national monuments in the country.

Calling of the log and dinner were earlier tonight as we needed a good rest before the early start and long day awaiting us tomorrow.

Bird of the Day: African Olive-Pigeon

#### Day 12: Wednesday, 22 October 2008 ~ Ceres

Today was purely a birding day with no wine-tastings,( but we did make up for it with dinner in the evening back at the guest house). An early start was made and we were all punctually in the vehicles ready to depart as the church clock struck 5h30. Our destination for the day was the arid Tanqua Karoo, a birding hotspot .It was cold in the early morning and partially overcast, so the sun took a while to weakly break through.

Our first stop was at Karoopoort where Namaqua Warbler was loudly rattling its call from a reedbed in a dry watercourse. It was difficult to see at first but then alighted on a fence in front of us when its call was played. An old farmhouse nearby was a national monument and had a Karoo Thrush, a recent split from Olive Thrush, in the famyard, along with other birds seen previously. A bit further along the almost deserted road we stopped again at a granite outcrop which was a known site for the scarce and elusive Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, but there was no sight nor sound of it. We did find Layard's Tit-Babbler and a Mountain Wheatear though. The warbler would have to wait for us to reach another site further on.

There had been good rains in this normally arid area a month or two prior to our visit and the Karoo landscape was lush and full of flowers. It looked wonderful and our botanists and photographers thought they were in heaven. Of course that was also good for birds and there was plenty to see. A flock of five Namaqua Sandgrouse at a road quarry was a nice find,

and a deviation onto a farm road got us the tiny Karoo Eremomela, Rufous-eared Warbler, Karoo Lark and Sickle-winged Chat. Later we added Karoo Chat, Tractrac Chat and Ant-eating Chat. We had a full house of chats on this trip. Raptors were abundant and included Pale Chanting-Goshawk, Jackal Buzzard, Booted Eagle, Greater Kestrel and about six others. A flock of colourful European Bee-eaters on telephone wires next to the road were splendid in this Karoo terrain.



We turned off to Skitterykloof and our second stake-out for Cinnamon-breasted Warbler in a narrow gorge and a single bird showed well. Typical of this species it was very active and rapidly hopped from boulder to boulder. Due to this, and to its cryptic colour, not everyone got onto it which was unfortunate and there was no second chance. Dusky Sunbird was nearby and a nest was discovered low down in a thorn bush. It looked so much like a spiders nest which was a cunning defence move by the sunbirds.

The substantial picnic brunch our guest house had packed for us was enjoyed in the shade of thorny Acacia karoo trees at Skitterykloof. The weather had warmed up considerably by now and the shade was most welcome. We were entertained by Fairy Flycatchers and Pririt Batis whilst eating and Southern Masked Weavers were looking for handouts. They were nesting nearby.

Before leaving this lovely spot we took a short walk up the valley. The rocky slopes on both sides of the gorge were lined with Aloe comosa, a scarce aloe restricted to this area. Some were in flower and had remarkably tall flower spikes. We then drove further north and turned onto the road to Sutherland, reputed to be the coldest place in South Africa with winter temperatures plummeting well below freezing. This we did not want to experience and only drove a short distance along the remote gravel road where the nomadic Black-eared Sparrowlark had been reported by another tour group recently. We were not disappointed and found numbers of this sought-after lark. Mariana had a hunch that another "special" and difficult to find bird, Karoo Korhaan, may be present a bit further north and she was absolutely right. We found three adults and a tiny chick, all wonderfully cryptic.

There were others new for the list on this excellent day as well. Some of these included Red-capped and Spike-heeled Larks as well as Grey-backed Sparrowlark and a single Cape Penduline-Tit which was seen by one bus only, but we all caught up with it later on the holiday. There was also Lark-like Bunting and a surprise Southern Grey-headed Sparrow.

It was a long day today, but a really good one. We arrived back at Village Guesthouse tired but happy. The lengthy log was updated and it was early to bed after dinner. The church bell was not even heard by any of us.

Birds of the Day: Karoo Korhaan, Namaqua Sandgrouse and Black-eared Sparrowlark.

#### Day 13: Thursday, 23 October 2008 ~ Langebaan

The vehicles were packed after breakfast and we left Ceres for our final destination, Langebaan on the West Coast. Once again our drive took us down Michell's Pass and then we turned off to traverse Nuwekloof Pass, yet another scenic mountainous pass. A stop was made at a river crossing which at long last produced a brilliant little Malachite Kingfisher perched below us for a short while. Also new for us here were numbers of Brown-throated Martins flying up and down the river. Nearby we found a pair of Horus Swifts at a site known by Mariana for this scarce and localised swift. In the same area there were Little and White-rumped Swifts which gave us an excellent opportunity to compare the three similar species.

We turned onto the Sonquasdrif gravel road to the small town of Riebeeck Kasteel and stopped at a donga (ditch) caused by soil erosion. Earth banks were ideal for hole-nesting birds and numbers of Brown-throated Martins and Pied Starlings were making use of this man-made nesting site. A single Banded Martin was perched on the side of the ditch and it turned out to be the only one of the trip. Before reaching Riebeeck Kasteel a Greater Honeyguide was heard calling from a stand of pine trees. With some difficulty we eventually managed to see it but it was not a good sighting.

We moved on through Malmesbury to Groote Post Winery on the remote Darling Hills Road. A comment was heard that it was amazing anyone could find this old, historical wine estate due to its remoteness. The wine-tasting presentation was done by pretty Michelle who was duly photographed during the process. Seven wines were tasted and a 2006 Noble Late Harvest – Chardonnay received a score of 9 out of 10 by the group. Leaving the winery we drove into the village of Darling where lunch had been booked at a quaint coffee shop, the "Marmalade Cat" and believe it or not there was a lovely ginger cat politely sitting on the corner of our table. Of course it was duly photographed. The lunch was enjoyable and so was the shopping for some.

One more stop was made before our destination and that was at the Tienie Versveld Wildflower Reserve. This small reserve is one of the best localities for the tiny Cloud Cisticola and we were not disappointed, in spite of a strong south-easterly blowing. This Cisticola species is unique in the Western Cape in that it has a streaked breast which is absent elsewhere in the country. No doubt it will be split one day. It also had the distinction of being the last of the five cisticola species we could get on this trip and we all now had the dreaded birding disease, "cisticolitis". Some Common Quail were calling from the damp grass and two were flushed by the botanising section of our group. Only sharp-eyed Pauline and Robert got onto them but they could at least go onto the list. Good views of Cape Longclaw were also obtained before it was time to depart.

Finally Langebaan was reached and we checked into the lovely Farmhouse Hotel, which was the original farmhouse in a now well-developed holiday town. It was built in 1860 and our rooms were spacious and well-appointed, with commanding views of the large tidal lagoon and the distant Saldanah Bay harbour. We received a warm welcome on arrival and were shown to

our rooms by little Leonie.

Once settled we still had time for some more birding and opted for an optional short drive to a nearby quarry, that has been a breeding-site for a pair of Verreaux's Eagles for a number of years. The empty nest was seen and then Mariana discovered the eagle pair perched on top of the man-made cliff. Scopes were set up for stunning views. Then Pauline found the recently fledged chick perched under a bush growing from the cliff face. What a way to end a wonderful day and the wine and dinner were also good.

Birds of the Day: Cloud Cisticola, Horus Swift and by popular vote, Verreaux's Eagle with chick.

#### Day 14: Friday, 24 October 2008 ~ Langebaan

The strong south-easterly wind was still blowing when we set out after an early breakfast for the West Coast National Park, which adjoins the town of Langebaan. This particular wind blows frequently in the Western Cape during the summer. It is known locally as the "Cape Doctor" as it clears the air of pollution and city smog from Cape Town. So in spite of being uncomfortable it does have its good uses.

The Steenberg hide in the reserve was reached at low tide and, although there were plenty of waders and shorebirds on the mud flats, birds were a bit distant. An incoming tide is necessary to bring feeding birds close to the shore. A bright pink flock of Lesser Flamingo was good to see and new for our list too. We moved further into the park to hopefully reach the Geelbek hide at the right time and our timing was spot on. Large flocks of Palearctic waders were moving closer to us, feeding frantically. New for us and in large numbers were Common Ringed Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, Sanderling, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, plus lesser numbers of Common Whimbrel, Marsh Sandpiper and a few Terek Sandpiper which is a scarce visitor to these shores. There were others too and some time was spent in the hide. It was pleasant to be sheltered from the strong wind.

The hide was left when a comfort stop was needed, but there was further delay when a large Mole Snake was seen at the edge of the road. It had recently sloughed and was bright and shiny with its new skin and was well and truly photographed. Other reptiles on this day included a good-looking fat Puff Adder and many Angulate Tortoises. Sadly we witnessed a second Puff Adder being run over by a speeding car.

Our hotel had packed an enormous picnic lunch for us which we ate in very windy conditions overlooking a choppy Atlantic Ocean. Numbers of Hartlaub's Gulls shared our lunch with us. A nice touch afterwards was when the vehicle windows were cleaned of salt spray by enthusiastic volunteers amongst the group. This is normally guides duty. Moving away from the shore we found a flock of six Cape Penduline-Tits moving about and feeding in low bushes, sheltered from the wind by a large sand dune. Later we had good sightings of African Marsh-Harriers and Black Harriers that were apparently enjoying the wind. Southern Black Korhaan had been avoiding us all day, probably due to sheltering from the wind. Mariana saved the day as she knew of a place where they could be, and sure enough they were present, both male and female. A good find as the last bird of the day. An amusing incident whilst in the Park was when Mariana got down on her knees to examine some tiny plants and some of our group did likewise. Some Muslim visitors drove by, stopped and reversed and too got down on their knees. After all it was a Friday.

Our final dinner was excellent and fine Cape wine was sponsored by Ornitholidays. A toast was drunk to Mike Witherick who sadly missed this excellent Birds and Wine tour. Whilst calling the log before dinner one of the hotel employees by the name of Smiley came on duty and when I introduced her to the group she said, "I have known Peter for about eight years", and then without a pause she excitedly announced, "and I am pregnant". You can imagine the hilarious comments and reaction from the group. No wonder she goes by the name of Smiley.

Birds of the Day: Cape Penduline-Tit and Southern Black Korhaan.

#### Day 15: Saturday, 25 October 2008 ~ Departure

We left the Farmhouse Hotel after breakfast and as we boarded the vehicles we were each handed a beautifully wrapped home-made chocolate. A nice touch from the management. It was sad to leave this lovely hotel with such pleasant staff, but unfortunately holidays have to end some time.

This was our last day and Chestnut-banded Plover was not yet on the list. Mariana had a stake-out at a gypsum mine at Yserfontein. They were known to frequent a salt pan on the mine property. Mariana knew the manager and a telephone call resulted in the gate being left open for us on the understanding we lock it on our departure. We got our lovely little target bird, although a bit distant, but not too bad through the scope.

The wind had dropped and it was a beautiful sunny day. What a pity it had to be the day of departure. A group photograph was needed so we drove to Blaauwbergstrand (Blue Mountain Beach) and the picture was taken on the beach with Table Mountain in the background across Table Bay. There was one last wine-tasting to experience, and to get everyone in a good mood before the long flight to London. Meerendal was the winery of our choice and the tasting was done in the shade of Oak Trees (a touch of England). Seven wines were tasted and high marks were given to a 2008 Chenin Blanc, a 2004 Merlot and a 2005 Shiraz. This was followed by a pleasant lunch on the verandah of the winery bistro.

There was no need to get to the airport yet as the flight would be late. We thus went to nearby Tygerberg Nature Reserve for a short stroll and to update the final log. There was yet another new bird to add to our extensive list as we saw a Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk in flight in the reserve. This trip had been excellent for raptors with a total of 17 species. A pair of enormous Leopard Tortoises with amorous intentions came 'galloping' by. The female was so intent on getting away from the smaller male that she ignored us completely and almost bowled us over trying to escape from her boyfriend.

Playing hard to get no doubt.

Fond farewells were said in the reserve car park as the two vehicles were parting at this stage. Four of us were flying to London and four were staying on for a few days longer. It had been a great tour and Mariana and I enjoyed it to the full, along with all participants.

Trip Total: 221

Bird of the Day: Chestnut-banded Plover.

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm at all times and for the good company which made our task an easy and enjoyable one. We were like one big, happy family. Also thank you to Pam for composing the Ornitholidays song which appears at the end of this report, and a special thank you to Robert, Arthur and Tony for contributing trip photographs we have used. Finally, this report would not be complete without special mention of Mariana. Her expertise on all natural history and Cape history and her enthusiasm and willingness to share with us had the effect of making us all fall in love with the ' Fairest Cape'. The botany list included in this report was compiled by Mariana.

I hope to see you all again on another Ornitholidays trip to another part of lovely South Africa in the not too distant future.

Peter Lawson

C/o Ornitholidays

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

No of Days Recorded

Number = how many days species were sighted

H = the species was heard only

Abundance Scale (max for one day)

1 = 1 – 4

2 = 5 – 9

3 = 10 – 99

4 = 100 – 999

5 = 1 000 plus

(E) = Endemic to Southern Africa, (NE) = Near Endemic to Southern Africa

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Common Ostrich	3	9	Struthio camelus
African Penguin (E)	3	2	Spheniscus demersus
Great Crested Grebe	1	3	Podiceps cristatus
Black-necked Grebe	3	5	Podiceps nigricollis
Little Grebe	2	11	Tachybaptus ruficollis
Great White Pelican	2	3	Pelecanus onocrotalus
Cape Gannet (E)	3	2	Morus capensis
White-breasted Cormorant	2	9	Phalacrocorax lucidus
Cape Cormorant (E)	4	5	Phalacrocorax capensis
Bank Cormorant (E)	2	2	Phalacrocorax neglectus
Reed Cormorant	2	8	Phalacrocorax africanus
Crowned Cormorant (E)	1	2	Phalacrocorax coronatus
African Darter	2	7	Anhinga rufa
Grey Heron	2	11	Ardea cinerea
Black-headed Heron	3	14	Ardea melanocephala
Purple Heron	1	4	Ardea purpurea
Little Egret	1	4	Egretta garzetta
Cattle Egret	3	12	Bubulcus ibis
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3	3	Nycticorax nycticorax
Hamerkop	1	4	Scopus umbretta
African Sacred Ibis	3	15	Threskiornis aethiopicus
Glossy Ibis	2	2	Plegadis falcinellus
Hadedda Ibis	2	14	Bostrychia hagedash
African Spoonbill	2	4	Platalea alba

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Greater Flamingo	3	2	Phoenicopterus ruber
Lesser Flamingo	3	2	Phoeniconaias minor
White-faced Duck	1	1	Dendrocygna viduata
White-backed Duck	2	1	Thalassomis leuconotus
Egyptian Goose	3	15	Alopochen aegyptiacus
South African Shelduck (E)	2	4	Tadoma cana
Yellow-billed Duck	2	10	Anas undulata
African Black Duck	1	2	Anas sparsa
Cape Teal	3	5	Anas capensis
Red-billed Teal	2	5	Anas erythrorhyncha
Cape Shoveler (E)	3	5	Anas smithii
Southern Pochard	3	3	Netta erythrophthalma
Spur-winged Goose	1	7	Plectropterus gambensis
Maccoa Duck	2	2	Oxyura maccoa
Yellow-billed Kite	2	11	Milvus aegyptius
Black-shouldered Kite	2	11	Elanus caeruleus
Verreaux's Eagle	1	4	Aquila verreauxii
Booted Eagle	2	9	Hieraetus pennatus
African Fish Eagle	1	5	Haliaeetus vocifer
Steppe Buzzard	1	4	Buteo buteo
Jackal Buzzard (E)	2	12	Buteo rufofuscus
Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk	1	1	Accipiter rufiventris
Little Sparrowhawk	1	1	Accipiter minullus
Black Sparrowhawk	1	5	Accipiter melanoleucus
African Goshawk	1	2	Accipiter tachiro
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk (NE)	2	5	Melierax canorus
African Marsh-Harrier	1	3	Circus ranivorus
Black Harrier (E)	2	4	Circus maurus
African Harrier-Hawk	1	2	Polyboroides typus
Lanner Falcon	1	1	Falco biarmicus
Rock Kestrel	2	15	Falco rupicolis
Greater Kestrel	1	1	Falco rupicoloides
Cape Francolin (E)	2	13	Ptemistes capensis
Common Quail	1	1	Coturnix coturnix
Helmeted Guineafowl	3	15	Numida meleagris
Blue Crane (E)	2	3	Anthropoides paradiseus
Black Crake	1	1	Amaurornis flavirostris
Buff-spotted Flufftail	H		Sarothrura elegans
African Purple Swamphen	1	1	Porphyrio madagascariensis
Common Moorhen	2	7	Gallinula chloropus
Red-knobbed Coot	5	14	Fulica cristata
Karoo Korhaan (E)	1	1	Eupodotis vigorsii
Southern Black Korhaan (E)	1	2	Eupodotis afra
African Black Oystercatcher (E)	2	4	Haematopus moquini
Common Ringed Plover	3	1	Charadrius hiaticula
White-fronted Plover	1	2	Charadrius marginatus
Chestnut-banded Plover	1	1	Charadrius pallidus
Kittlitz's Plover	2	4	Charadrius pecuarius
Three-banded Plover	1	4	Charadrius tricollaris
Grey Plover	2	1	Pluvialis squatarola
Crowned Lapwing	1	6	Vanellus coronatus
Blacksmith Lapwing	2	14	Vanellus armatus

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Ruddy Turnstone	2	1	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Terek Sandpiper	1	1	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
Common Sandpiper	1	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	1	1	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	1	5	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	5	2	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Little Stint	3	2	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Sanderling	4	2	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Ruff	3	1	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Common Whimbrel	1	1	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Pied Avocet	3	3	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Black-winged Stilt	3	8	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Spotted Thick-knee	1	3	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Water Thick-Knee	1	3	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Kelp Gull	4	7	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Grey-headed Gull	1	1	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>
Hartlaub's Gull (E)	3	5	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>
Caspian Tern	1	1	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Swift Tern	3	5	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Sandwich Tern	1	1	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Common Tern	1	1	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Namaqua Sandgrouse (NE)	1	1	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>
Rock Dove	3	8	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	3	14	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive-Pigeon	2	2	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Red-eyed Dove	2	15	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Cape Turtle-Dove	2	15	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	2	12	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Namaqua Dove	1	3	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Tambourine Dove	H		<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Lemon Dove	1	1	<i>Aplopelia larvata</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	H		<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo	1	4	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
Diderick Cuckoo	1	1	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Burchell's Coucal (NE)	H		<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
Spotted Eagle-Owl	1	5	<i>Bubo africanus</i>
African Black Swift	3	7	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
White-rumped Swift	2	8	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Horus Swift	1	1	<i>Apus horus</i>
Little Swift	3	8	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Alpine Swift	2	10	<i>Apus melba</i>
Speckled Mousebird	2	5	<i>Colius striatus</i>
White-backed Mousebird (E)	2	5	<i>Colius colius</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	2	7	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Pied Kingfisher	1	1	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	1	2	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	1	1	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
European Bee-eater	2	4	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
African Hoopoe	1	5	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet (NE)	2	2	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Greater Honeyguide	1	1	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Karoo Long-billed Lark	1	1	<i>Certhilauda subcoronata</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Cape Long-billed Lark (E)	1	1	<i>Certhilauda curvirostris</i>
Agulhas Long-billed Lark (E)	2	2	<i>Certhilauda brevirostris</i>
Karoo Lark (E)	2	2	<i>Certhilauda albescens</i>
Spike-heeled Lark	2	1	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Red-capped Lark	2	2	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Large-billed Lark (E)	2	5	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>
Grey-backed Sparrowlark (NE)	1	1	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>
Black-eared Sparrowlark (E)	2	1	<i>Eremopterix australis</i>
Barn Swallow	1	4	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	1	8	<i>Hirundo albicularis</i>
Pearl-breasted Swallow	1	4	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>
Greater Striped Swallow (E)	2	13	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>
Rock Martin	2	10	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Common House Martin	2	3	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Brown-throated Martin	3	3	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Banded Martin	1	1	<i>Riparia cincta</i>
Black Saw-wing	1	3	<i>Psalidoprocne holomelas</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	1	5	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Pied Crow	3	15	<i>Corvus albus</i>
House Crow	3	4	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
White-necked Raven	2	11	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Cape Penduline Tit (NE)	2	2	<i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>
Cape Bulbul (E)	3	15	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>
Sombre Greenbul	2	2	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Olive Thrush	1	6	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Karoo Thrush (E)	1	1	<i>Turdus smithi</i>
Cape Rock-Thrush (E)	1	3	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
Sentinel Rock-Thrush (E)	1	1	<i>Monticola explorator</i>
Mountain Wheatear (NE)	2	1	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>
Capped Wheatear	1	3	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	2	8	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>
Tractrac Chat (NE)	1	1	<i>Cercomela tractrac</i>
Sickle-winged Chat (E)	2	1	<i>Cercomela sinuata</i>
Karoo Chat (NE)	2	1	<i>Cercomela schlegelii</i>
Ant-eating Chat (E)	1	1	<i>Mymecocichla forficivora</i>
African Stonechat	2	5	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	2	13	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>
Cape Rock-Jumper (E)	1	1	<i>Chaetops frenatus</i>
Karoo Scrub-Robin (E)	3	6	<i>Erythropygia coryphoeus</i>
Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler (NE)	1	5	<i>Parisoma subcaeruleum</i>
Layard's Tit-babbler (E)	1	1	<i>Parisoma layardi</i>
African Reed-Warbler	1	4	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>
Lesser Swamp-Warbler	1	1	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
Little Rush-Warbler	1	3	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Knysna Warbler (E)	H		<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>
Victorin's Warbler (E)	H		<i>Bradypterus victorini</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	1	5	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Long-billed Crombec	1	4	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Karoo Eremomela (NE)	1	1	<i>Eremomela gregalis</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Warbler (E)	1	1	<i>Euryptila subcinnamomea</i>
Cape Grassbird (E)	1	2	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>
Zitting Cisticola	1	2	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>

COMMON NAME	Abundance Scale	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Cloud Cisticola	1	1	Cisticola textrix
Grey-backed Cisticola (NE)	2	10	Cisticola subbruficapillus
Levaillant's Cisticola	2	8	Cisticola tinniens
Neddicky	1	7	Cisticola fulvicapillus
Karoo Prinia (E)	3	15	Prinia maculosa
Namaqua Warbler (E)	1	1	Phragmacia substriata
Rufous-eared Warbler (E)	1	2	Malcorus pectoralis
African Dusky Flycatcher	1	5	Muscicapa adusta
Fiscal Flycatcher (E)	3	13	Sigelus silens
Cape Batis (E)	1	3	Batis capensis
Pirit Batis (NE)	1	1	Batis pririt
Fairy Flycatcher (E)	2	4	Stenostira scita
African Paradise Flycatcher	1	4	Terpsiphone viridis
Cape Wagtail	2	15	Motacilla capensis
African Pipit	3	4	Anthus cinnamomeus
Cape Longclaw (E)	1	4	Macronyx capensis
Common Fiscal	2	14	Lanius collaris
Southern Boubou (E)	1	1	Laniarius ferrugineus
Bokmakierie (E)	2	6	Telophorus zeylonus
Common Starling	4	15	Sturnus vulgaris
Pied Starling (E)	3	8	Spreo bicolor
Red-winged Starling	3	13	Onychognathus morio
Cape Sugarbird (E)	2	6	Promerops cafer
Malachite Sunbird	2	15	Nectarinia famosa
Orange-breasted Sunbird (E)	1	5	Nectarinia violacea
Southern Double-collared Sunbird (E)	2	11	Nectarinia chalybea
Dusky Sunbird (NE)	2	1	Nectarinia fusca
Cape White-eye (E)	3	14	Zosterops pallidus
House Sparrow	2	15	Passer domesticus
Cape Sparrow (NE)	3	9	Passer melanurus
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	1	1	Passer diffusus
Cape Weaver (E)	3	13	Ploceus capensis
Southern Masked-Weaver	2	10	Ploceus velatus
Southern Red Bishop	4	10	Euplectes orix
Yellow Bishop	2	9	Euplectes capensis
Common Waxbill	2	11	Estrilda astrild
Sweet Waxbill (E)	1	6	Estrilda melanotis
Pin-tailed Whydah	1	6	Vidua macroura
Common Chaffinch	H		Fringilla coelebs
Cape Canary	3	14	Serinus canicollis
Forest Canary (E)	1	1	Serinus scotops
Cape Siskin (E)	1	2	Pseudochloroptila totta
Brimstone Canary	1	4	Serinus sulphuratus
Yellow Canary (NE)	2	4	Serinus flaviventris
White-throated Canary (NE)	2	5	Serinus albogularis
Protea Seed-Eater (E)	1	1	Serinus leucopterus
Streaky-headed Seed-Eater	1	4	Serinus gularis
Cape Bunting (NE)	2	11	Emberiza capensis
Lark-like Bunting (NE)	1	1	Emberiza impetuani

### MAMMALS SEEN

COMMON NAME	Number of Days Seen	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Baboon, Chacma	6	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Bontebok	4	<i>Damaliscus dorcas dorcas</i>
Dassie, Rock (Hyrax)	5	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Eland	2	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>
Giraffe, Southern	1	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>
Hartebeest, Red	1	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Mongoose, Large Grey	1	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>
Mongoose, Small Grey	7	<i>Galerella pulverulenta</i>
Mongoose, Yellow	1	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Mouse, Pygmy	1	<i>Mus minutoides</i>
Mouse, Striped	3	<i>Rhodomys pumilio</i>
Otter, Cape Clawless	1	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>
Rat, Brant's Whistling	1	<i>Parotomys brantsii</i>
Seal, Cape Fur	2	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>
Springbok	2	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Squirrel, Grey	4	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>
Steenbok	1	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Whale, Southern Right	3	<i>Balaena glacialis</i>
Wildebeest, Blue	1	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Zebra, Burchell's	1	<i>Equus burchelli</i>

### REPTILES SEEN

Black Girdled Lizard  
 Karoo Girdled Lizard  
 Southern Rock Agama  
 Ground Agama  
 Cape Dwarf Chameleon  
 Mole Snake  
 Puff Adder  
 Leopard Tortoise  
 Angulate Tortoise  
 Parrot-beaked Tortoise  
 Marsh Terrapin

*Cordylus niger*  
*Cordylus polyzonus*  
*Agama atra*  
*Agama aculeate*  
*Bradypodion pumilio*  
*Pseudaspis cana*  
*Bitis arietans*  
*Geochelone pardalis*  
*Chersina angulata*  
*Homopus areolatus*  
*Pelomedusa subrufa*



### BOTANY CHECKLIST

<u>LOCALITY</u>	<u>BOTANICAL NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>
Kirstenbosch	<i>Liparia splendens</i>	Mountain Dahlia
	<i>Virgilia oroboides</i>	Keurboom
	<i>Protea cynaroides</i>	King Protea (SA National flower)
	<i>Polygala myrtifolia</i>	September Bush
	<i>Leucospemum formosum</i>	Silver-leaved Wheel-Pincussion
	<i>Leucospemum cordifolium</i>	Pincussion
	<i>Erica nana</i>	Dwarf Erica

	Erica verticillata	Erica
	Elegia capensis	Fountain Reed
	Thamnochortus insignis	Thatching Reed (used to thatch houses roofs)
Peninsula	Pelargonium cucullatum	Wild Malva (The pelargonium that was used to hybridise all the "geraniums" in the flower boxes overseas.)
	Pelargonium capitatum	Coastal Malva
	Diosma hirsuta	Wild Buchu
	Crassula fascicularis	Ruiksissie
	Carpobrotus edulis	Sour Fig (Edible, makes good jam)
	Adenandra uniflora	China Flower
	Arctotheca calendula	Cape Weed (very common daisy)
Rooiels	Leucadendron xanthoconus	Sickle-leaf Conebush
	Arctotis hirsuta	Gousblom
	Diastella thymelaoides ssp meridiana	Hangklip Silky-puff (Red Data book species: rare)
	Erepsia inclaudentis	Altydygie (Always open Mesemb.)
	Erica coccinea	Erica
Paarl / Franschoek	Lessertia frutescens	Cancer Bush (Medicinal use dates back to folkore medicine. Currently anti-AIDS treatment is being developed from this plant, and there is already a capsule on the market to boost one's immune system.)
	Watsonia borbonica	Pink Watsonia (popular garden plant)
	Satyrium coriifolium	Red Satyrium (Ground orchid)
	Corycium orobanchoides	Monks Hood orchid
	Erica plukenetii	Long-tubular erica, favoured by sunbirds
Karoo Desert Botanical Gardens	Hermannia grandiflora	Chinese Bells
	Abtosimum indivisum	Karoo Violet
	Aloe dichotoma	Quiver Tree (San hunters carried their arrows in the hollow stems of this aloe)
	Mesembryanthemums (several species)	Spectacular iridescent colours
McGregor / Montagu	Elyptropappus rhinocerotis	Rhino Bush. The most threatened vegetation type in SA. Only 3% of the original veld left, due to agriculture. Rhino Bush and its accompanying species of plants grow on very fertile soil, and only the most inaccessible areas that cannot be ploughed, are left unspoilt.
	Euphorbia mauritanica	Yellow Milkbush (Milky Latex that is excreted, is extremely poisonous.)
	Euphorbia burmannii	Steenbok Bush
	Gazania krebsiana	Gousblom
Ceres / Tulbagh	Ixia viridiflora	Green Ixia (endemic to Tulbagh)
	Ixia maculata	Ixia
	Lobostemon glaber	Eight-days-healing bush
	Pelargonium myrrhifolia	Fine leaved Pelargonium
	Hymenolepis crithmoides	False Karoo
	Echium plantagium	Patterson's Curse (Very spectacular, but highly invasive exotic from the Mediterranean, related to indigenous Lobostemon species of the Borage Family)
	Nemesia affinis	Nemesia
	Podocarpus latifolius	Yellowwood (South Africa's National Tree)
Tanqua Karoo	Eriocephalus ericoides	Wild Rosemary

	Bulbine frutescens	Snake Flower (Succulent leaves release a jelly which has medicinal properties. Very good for skin allergies and minor burns and cuts.)
	Eurystigma clavatum	Salt salad mesemb.
	Tylecodon paniculatus	Botterboom (Butter tree after the yellow fleshy trunks when cut through in length. In the olden days kids used these as sliding boards.)
West Coast NP / Darling / Yzerfontein	Apatesia helianthoides	Weskusvetkousie
	Romulea eximia	Darling froetang (Endemic to the Yzerfontein - Darling area)
	Omithogalum thyrsoides	Tjienkerintjie
	Harveya squamosa	Jakkalskos (Jackal food)
	Arctotis stoechadifolia	Kusgousblom ( Coastal Daisy)
	Wachendorfia paniculata	Butterfly Lily

## WINERY

### BUITENVERWACHTING

[buitenverwaching.com](http://buitenverwaching.com)

### VERGELEGEN

[www.vergelegen.co.za](http://www.vergelegen.co.za)

### BOSCHENDAL

[www.boschendalwines.com](http://www.boschendalwines.com)

### HAUTE CABRIERE (Pierre Jourdan)

[www.hautecabriere.com](http://www.hautecabriere.com)

### LANDSKROON

[www.landskroonwines.com](http://www.landskroonwines.com)

### CONRADIE FAMILY VINEYARDS

[www.conradie-vineyards.co.za](http://www.conradie-vineyards.co.za)

### DRIE BERGE CELLARS

[drieberge@lando.co.za](mailto:drieberge@lando.co.za)

## Wines tasted

Buiten Blanc (2008)  
 Sauvignon Blanc (2008)  
 Blanc de Noir (2008)  
 Meifort (2005)  
 Christine (2004)  
 Natural Sweet (2000)  
 Unnamed Sweet

Sauvignon Blanc (2008)  
 Chardonnay (2007)  
 Semillon (2006)  
 Mill Race (2005)  
 Shiraz (2006)  
 Cabernet Sauvignon (2005)

Sauvignon Blanc Grande Vin Blanc (2007/08)  
 Blanc de Noir (2008)  
 Le Bouquet (2008)  
 Lanoy (2006/2007)  
 Shiraz (2007)

PJ Brut  
 PJ Blanc de Blanc  
 PJ Cuvée Belle Rose  
 HC Chardonnay Pinot Noir  
 HC Pinot Noir  
 PJ Ratafia

Chenin Blanc Dry (2008)  
 Blanc de Noir Off-Dry (2008)  
 Pinotage (2006)  
 Shiraz (2006)  
 PdV Shiraz (2006)  
 Port (2004)

Chenin Blanc (2008)  
 Sauvignon Blanc (2008)  
 Chardonnay (2006)  
 Werdoux Semi-Sweet (2008)  
 Sweet Rosaline Perle Rose  
 Cabernet Sauvignon (2007)  
 Pinotage (2007)

Sauvignon Blanc  
 Ruby Cabernet/Merlot (2006)  
 Red Muscadel  
 White Muscadel  
 Medium Cream Sherry

JASON'S HILL

[www.jasonshill.com](http://www.jasonshill.com)

Chenin Blanc (2007)  
Chardonnay (2007) (wooded)  
Viognier (2007) (wooded)  
Rose (2007) (off-dry)  
Pinotage (2007)  
Merlot (2007)  
Shiraz (2006)  
Cabemet Sauvignon (2007)  
Ivy du Toit Pinotage (2002)

THEUNI SKRAAL

[www.theuniskraal.co.za](http://www.theuniskraal.co.za)

Riesling  
Semillon/Chardonnay  
Bouquet Blanc (sweet)  
Rose  
Prestige Red=Cabemet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet

GROOTE POST

[www.grootepost.co.za](http://www.grootepost.co.za)

Sauvignon Blanc (2008)  
Unwooded Chardonnay (2008)  
Pinot Noir (2007)  
The Old Man's Blend-1.5L (2007)  
Noble Late Harvest-Chardonnay (2006)  
Merlot (2007)  
The Old Man's Blend(2007) (Merlot/Cab.Sauvignon/Cab Franc)

MEERENDAL

[www.meerendal.co.za](http://www.meerendal.co.za)

Chenin Blanc (2007) (new release)  
Chardonnay (2006)  
Chenin Blanc Natural Sweet (2008)  
Sauvignon Blanc S/V (Barrel Fermented) (2006)  
Pinotage (2005)  
Merlot (2004)  
Shiraz (2005)

This list represents those birds and other animals, plus some of the wildflowers, as seen by party members of this tour. It also represents the wines tasted.