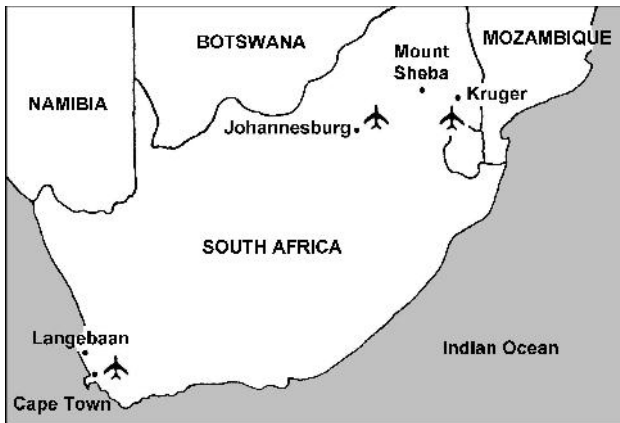


SOUTH AFRICA

the Cape to Kruger – a classic itinerary



South Africa is a land of contrasts with an incredible diversity of natural habitats, ranging from arid deserts to moist forests; rugged mountains encircling open grasslands; woodland of various types; wetlands; and the unique Cape floral kingdom. South Africa has a high standard of accommodation, fine restaurants, excellent roads and a great number of national and provincial parks and private game reserves.

Our tour starts in Cape Town at the southern tip of the African continent. We stay for three nights on the Cape Peninsula and experience the best of the many birding hotspots in this stunningly scenic region. We then move north for two nights at Langebaan, adjoining the magnificent West Coast National Park, which encircles a ten mile long tidal lagoon.

We then fly direct from Cape Town to the world famous Kruger National Park. Here we stay for four glorious nights. Kruger is well known as the home of the "Big Five": lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino. We will also encounter a lot more exciting mammals and numerous brightly coloured birds.

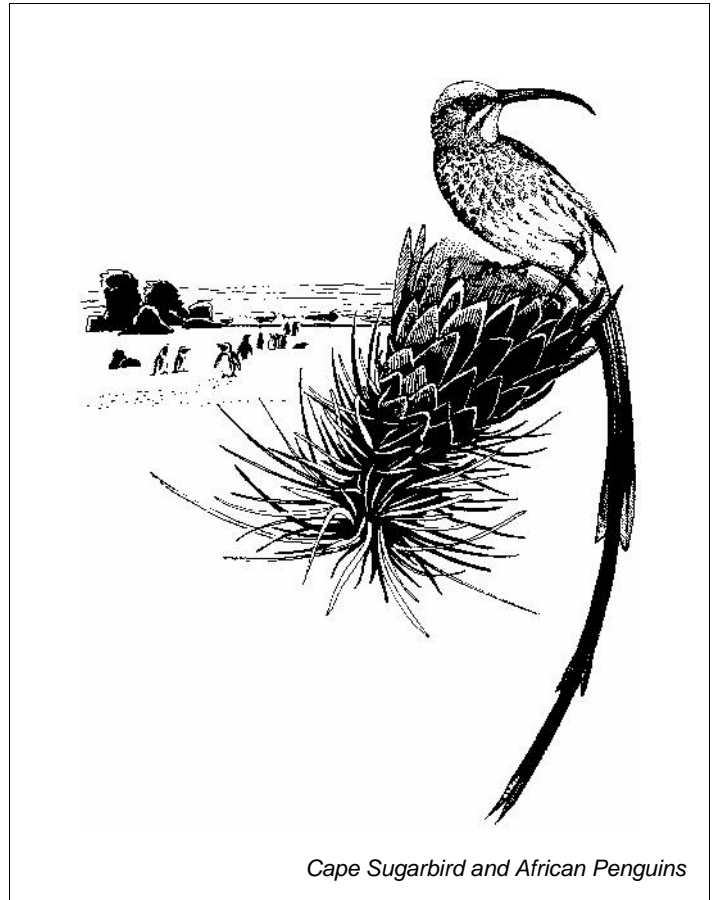
Finally, we will drive a short distance west to Mount Sheba, for our final three nights. Offering easy access to superb Afromontane forest and montane grassland, Mount Sheba is a lovely place to end the tour. Orange Ground-thrush, White-starred Robin, Narina Trogon and Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher are amongst the exotic birds that are found here.

ITINERARY

THE CAPE PENINSULA

Having arrived in Cape Town in the evening, we will transfer straight to Simon's Town on the Cape Peninsula, a lovely seaside town with Royal Navy origins. Our base for the next three nights, the Whale View Manor Guesthouse, is right by the beach, with beautiful views across False Bay. Our guide, Patrick, lives in Simon's Town and knows just where to find the area's special birds.

On our first morning we will visit Kirstenbosch. These world famous botanical gardens nestle below the steep slopes of Table Mountain and are a wonderful venue for a relaxing stroll, with pleasing landscapes and spectacular indigenous plants. These in turn attract numerous birds such as Orange-breasted Sunbird, Malachite Sunbird and Cape Sugarbird. Common birds include Cape Bulbul, Cape Batis, Olive Thrush, Cape White-eye, Karoo Prinia, Hadada Ibis, Dusky Flycatcher, Cape Turtle Dove and Cape Spurfowl. Red-



Cape Sugarbird and African Penguins

chested Cuckoo and Spotted Eagle Owl should be present and Black Saw-wing Swallow flies low over the valleys.

Later in the day we will head back to Simon's Town and visit Boulders Beach, where there is a large breeding colony of African Penguins. You will be able to see and photograph these birds at very close range. Other birds found here include Swift Tern, African Black Oystercatcher and Cape Cormorant, while Rock Hyrax scamper across the boulders.

The next day we will drive round False Bay, to Rooi-Elis and Betty's Bay. This spectacular stretch of coast is a great place to see Southern Right Whales, which come close inshore to breed at this time of year. The endemic Cape Rockjumper is a speciality of the area, and while looking for it we may also come across Victorin's Scrub-warbler, Ground Woodpecker, Cape Robin-chat, Cape Siskin and Cape Rock-thrush. In the afternoon we will visit False Bay Environmental Park, where a whole range of new species await us. White Pelican, Greater

Flamingo, Cape Teal, Red-billed Teal, Cape Shoveler and Yellow-billed Duck are found on the pans. Levaiant's Cisticola is the commonest warbler, and we may also see Little Rush-warbler and Lesser Swamp-warbler.

LANGEBAAAN AND WEST COAST NATIONAL PARK

On day four we will make an early visit to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, before the tourist buses arrive. This iconic site is worth a visit for the scenery alone, but we will also be alert for the beautiful Cape Grassbird, as well as Ostrich, Jackal Buzzard, Grey-backed Cisticola and Cape Bunting. Offshore we may see Cape Gannets and White-chinned Petrel, while if there have been onshore winds we might even glimpse a distant Shy Albatross. Mammals on the Cape include Mountain Zebra, Eland and the rare endemic Bontebok. Later in the morning we will head north up the coast to Langebaan, our home for the next two nights.

Most of our time here will be spent in the West Coast National Park. The enormous tidal lagoon in the park is an internationally recognised birding hotspot. Thousands of migrant waders converge on this site after their long flight from breeding grounds in the Arctic. There will be familiar birds such as Whimbrel, Red Knot, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint, alongside less familiar Marsh Sandpiper, Kittlitz's Plover and Three-banded Plover. The scarce Chestnut-banded Plover should also be found at one site. Southern Black Korhaan may be seen displaying, while the area is an important site for the beautiful Black Harrier. In the scrub there are numerous Bokmakieries and smaller numbers of Karoo Scrub-robins, plus Cape Weaver, Yellow Bishop and White-throated Canary.

From Langebaan, we will also visit Lambert's Bay, home to thousands of pairs of Cape Gannets. We can watch them at point blank range, alongside numerous Cape Fur Seals.

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

On day six we will drive to Cape Town, and take a direct flight into the mighty Kruger National Park. The park is the size of Wales and has the greatest diversity of animal life of any national park worldwide. Our time in the park is split between two camps, Skukuza and Notten's Camp. The former is located near the Kruger Gate, and is perfectly situated for finding a range of mammals and birds. The latter is one of the original private camps and offers an unsurpassed safari experience, with guides who are able to find us most, and maybe all, of the big five. We can see the beautiful Purple-crested Lourie, Brown-headed Parrot, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Eastern Black-headed Oriole, Little Sparrowhawk, Orange-breasted Bush-shrike, Woodland Kingfisher, Lilac-breasted Roller, Yellow-billed Hornbill, African Green Pigeon, Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling and Scarlet-chested Sunbird. Large birds include Martial Eagle, Southern Ground Hornbill, Saddle-billed Stork, White-headed and Lappet-faced Vultures and Secretarybird. From a hide by Lake Panic we should see Giant and Malachite Kingfishers, plus the energetic Black Crake and a lot of activity from a colony of Spotted-backed Weavers.

Mammals include White Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Greater Kudu, Plains Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Cape Buffalo, Hippopotamus, African Elephant, Bushbuck, Lion and, if we are lucky, African Wild Dog and Cheetah. Spotlighting at night may reveal a Spotted Hyena or Leopard. Around the camps we may find Greater Bushbaby, Honey Badger and Small Spotted Genet.

MOUNT SHEBA AND DULLSTROOM

After four superb days and nights of safari activities we will leave Kruger and head west, into the northern Drakensberg range. Staying at the Mount Sheba resort for three nights, we will have Afromontane forest on our doorstep. We will look for

the beautiful Orange Ground-thrush, as well as Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Barratt's Warbler, Olive Woodpecker, White-starred Robin, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Narina Trogon, Knysna Turaco and Emerald Cuckoo. Bush Blackcap is another speciality, but can be difficult. Protea bushes hold Gurney's Sugarbirds and Drakensberg Prinias.

After the challenges of forest birding, the open country grassland and rocky bluffs of the Dullstroom area offer an easier experience. Buff-streaked Chats and Sentinel Rock-thrush perch up like wheatears, and we will scan the open country for Black-winged Lapwing, Southern Bald Ibis, Wattled Crane, Blue Crane and Denham's Bustard.

Two full days in the area will give us ample time to do it justice. Finally, after lunch on day 13 we will drive to Johannesburg, arriving in time for our evening flight home.

CLIMATE AND PACE

We can expect dry, sunny weather in the Cape. Kruger is likely to be hotter, with a chance of short sharp showers. The cooler temperatures and early wildlife activity mean that we must rise early to make the most of the opportunities available. Basic fitness is all that is required. There will be very little uphill walking, done at a sensible pace. We also have one early start to get to Cape Town airport on day six.

ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

Full-board accommodation is provided, with three nights at the Whale View Manor Guesthouse, Simon's Town, two nights at the Farmhouse Hotel, Langebaan, two nights in chalets at the Skukuza Camp in Kruger, two nights in chalets at Notten's Camp, Sabi Sands (Kruger), and three nights at the Mount Sheba Resort. All are of a good standard and all rooms have an en suite bathroom. Lunch will normally be at the hotel restaurant, but occasionally we will take a picnic.

PRICE INCLUDES

All birdwatching excursions with expert leader and local guide, full-board accommodation (starting with breakfast on 15th, ending with lunch on 26th), soft drinks at meal times, bottled water throughout, transport throughout by minibus, all safari activities, reserve entrance fees, domestic flight and international flights.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Travel insurance. Personal items, alcoholic drinks, laundry.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Return flight from most UK airports to Cape Town, returning from Johannesburg (both via Amsterdam) using the scheduled services of KLM. Outbound flight departs early morning, return flight arrives back mid-afternoon.

13 nights including one overnight flight:	14th to 27th November 2015
Principal leader:	Paul Willoughby
Local guide:	Patrick Cardwell
Maximum group size:	12 clients with one leader and a local guide
Cost with discount (if you book before 1st August 2015):	£3990 per person sharing (£540 single supplement)
Full Cost:	£4140 per person sharing
Deposit:	£600 per person

