

SOUTH AFRICA

8th–21st December 2006

Trip report compiled by Keith Valentine



Cape Eagle Owl: Keith Valentine

Tour participants: Peter & Eileen Knight
Philip & Lucy Delve
Akiniko & Satomi Kawai

Tour leader: Keith Valentine

Top Ten Birds:

1. Verreaux's Eagle
2. Burchell's Courser
3. Cape Eagle Owl
4. Greater Double-collared Sunbird
5. Black Harrier
6. Cape Rockjumper
7. Ludwig's Bustard
8. Cape Gannet
9. Blue Crane
10. African Penguin



Orange-breasted Sunbird & African Penguin: Keith Valentine

Tour summary

This incredibly successful exploration of some of South Africa's lesser visited regions was extremely enjoyable and with a superb, energetic group the experience was truly memorable. The weather throughout the tour was very pleasant and definitely aided us in finding an incredible total of 62 endemics and a further 31 near-endemics to boot. Our only disappointment was being unable to get out to sea because of high offshore winds.

Beginning in Cape Town we immediately struck out for the nearby Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. The gardens cover the lower slopes of Table Mountain and are undoubtedly one of the best in the world, always making for an excellent visit and a great way to start any tour. Special and interesting species that were easily found during our stroll included African Harrier Hawk, Spotted Eagle Owl, Cape Bulbul, Karoo Prinia, Cape Batis, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Cape White-eye, spectacular Cape Sugarbird and Chaffinch. Later on in the afternoon we made our way to Noordhoek and settled into our very pleasant accommodations. The evening was spent at Kommetjie, a lovely village on the Atlantic side of Cape Town where we enjoyed a number of endemics in the form of Bank and Crowned Cormorant, African Oystercatcher and Hartlaub's Gull.

Today was going to be our day out at sea however with the high winds that were blowing offshore a decision was made to try and rather go out the following day but with the winds continuing to gust the weather had the final say and we unfortunately never even made it to the harbour. The two days that we had in the vicinity of Cape Town allowed us to visit a number of beautiful sites which gave us some stunning species. On day one we made a morning excursion out to the nearby Jonkershoek Mountains where Cape Rock Thrush, Red-headed Cisticola, dazzling Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Bunting and the tricky to find Cape Siskin delighted us. Cape Point National Park and its amazing scenery did not disappoint and seeing Ostrich at the sea was certainly a novelty. A Peregrine Falcon and Southern Boubou were found at Cape Point and we enjoyed a covey of Cape Francolin at one of the secluded bays. A number of mammals were also found in the Park and included the highly-localized Bontebok, Rock Hyrax, Small Gray Mongoose, Chacma Baboon and Cape Fur Seal. In the afternoon we made a quick stop at the African Penguin colony at Boulders Beach where they thrilled us with their antics. The evening was spent at Strandfontein where a variety of waterbirds were located and included Eared and Great Crested Grebe, large flocks of Greater Flamingo, South African Shelduck, Cape Teal, Cape Shoveler, Southern Pochard, Maccoa Duck and African Marsh Harrier.

Our second full day in the Cape Town area saw us visiting Rooiels, situated on the east side of False Bay below the impressive Hottentot's Holland Range and Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve, a lovely spot situated on Paarl Rock overlooking the vineyards in the picturesque town of Paarl. Rooiels is always great and without a doubt the number one spot to try and find the elusive Cape Rockjumper. We enjoyed fabulous views of this species at close range without any difficulty and also located Ground Woodpecker, Piping Cisticola and Cape Grassbird. An undoubted highlight was also finding a Bryde's Whale fairly close to shore in False Bay. At Paarl Mountain we came up trumps with a couple of very special birds. First place undoubtedly went to the pair of Cape Eagle Owl that was seen at point blank range during the day! The single Brown-backed/Wahlberg's Honeyguide was also very good, especially for the area. Other exciting species were Fiscal Flycatcher, impressive Malachite Sunbird, delicate Sweet Waxbill, Brimstone Canary and Streaky-headed Seed-eater.

The following day saw us heading east via the town of Swellendam to the De Hoop Nature Reserve situated on the Cape's south coast. A number of excellent birds were located on the drive which took us through the wheat fields and remaining patches of Renosterveld and Strandveld scrub. Highlights for the day included Jackal Buzzard, an incredible 70 odd Blue Crane, a pair of the scarce Karoo Bustard, a total of nine Denham's/Stanley's Bustard, Giant Kingfisher, the highly localized Agulhas Long-billed, Red-capped and Large-billed Lark, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Cloud Cisticola, Karoo Scrub-Robin and the stunning Bokmakierie. Notable mammals included Gray Duiker, Cape Grysbok and Yellow Mongoose, while one of the members of the group found a Cape Golden Mole at our accommodation in Noordhoek just before departure.

Today we spent the morning exploring De Hoop and in particular trying to locate a number of special endemics which we succeeded in doing. The four mega birds that occupied the most part of our attentions were the spectacular Black Harrier, Agulhas Clapper Lark, Southern Tchagra and Knysna Woodpecker all of which were seen well. Other birds found were Cape Vulture, African Fish Eagle, Water Thick-knee, Cardinal Woodpecker, Orange-throated Longclaw and White-throated Canary. Good mammals included further sightings of Bontebok together with the huge Eland, Cape Hare and Gray Rhebok. In the afternoon we headed on to the inland forests of Grootvadersbos to the north of Swellendam where a night excursion saw us getting exceptional sightings of a pair of African Wood Owl.

An exciting day was spent in Grootvadersbos and the various trails through this forest gave us a large variety of the special birds. Rameron Pigeon, Red-chested Cuckoo, beautiful Narina Trogon, Olive Woodpecker, the incredibly skulky Victorin's and Knysna Warblers, dainty Yellow-throated Wood-Warbler, shy Olive Bushshrike, African Crested Flycatcher and Forest Canary all rounded off a great day. In the afternoon we travelled further inland towards the edge of the Karoo and settled into our comfortable accommodations in the small fruit growing town of Ceres.

Leaving Ceres early in the morning we began our exciting foray into the Karoo, a stunning habitat with many scarce, special and localized species which we had amazing success in locating. Our drive today took us into the scenic Tanqua Karoo and then north with an overnight stop at Calvinia, one of the Karoo's larger towns. We began our Karoo leg with a blast as a number of very special endemic species were located today and included Namaqua Sandgrouse, White-backed Mousebird, Pied Barbet, Karoo Lark, Gray-backed Sparrowlark, Namaqua and Rufous-eared Warbler, Yellow-rumped/Karoo Eremomela, Layard's Tit-babbler, Fairy Flycatcher, Sickle-wing, Karoo, Southern Ant-eating and Tractrac Chat, Pririt Batis, Gray Tit, Southern Penduline-Tit and Lark-like Bunting. A good number of raptors were also on show and included Pale Chanting Goshawk, Booted and Martial Eagle, Greater Kestrel and Lanner Falcon.

Today we continued north towards Bushmanland and the tiny town of Brandvlei in the heart of the Karoo. The specials continued to roll in and we enjoyed Double-banded Courser, a host of larks including the scarce Ferruginous/Red and Sclater's Lark and Black-eared Sparrowlark. Other larks included Sabota, Karoo Long-billed and Spike-heeled were also noted, while Chat Flycatcher and South African Cliff Swallow were a few more of the specials seen on the day.

We then moved on toward our northern most point on the trip, the spectacular Augrabies Falls National Park for a two night stay. Just north of Brandvlei we located our first mega for the day in the form of a group of Ludwig's Bustard, followed by a Secretarybird. Arriving at Augrabies in the late afternoon we took a short stroll around the camp and quickly chalked up the targets that included Hamerkop, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Black-fronted Bulbul, Black-chested Prinia, Ashy Tit, Rufous-vented Titbabbler, Dusky Sunbird, Orange River White-eye, Brubru, Pale-winged Starling and Scaly and Social Weaver. We also spent a fair amount of time gazing at the spectacle of the Augrabies Falls. Our full day spent in the Park was highly memorable as we managed to locate the bird of the trip in the form of Black/Verreaux's Eagle. A total of seven were seen with some incredible flybys and beautifully perched birds on show. Other specials for the trip included the scarce Cinnamon-breasted/Kopje Warbler, which showed amazingly well and wouldn't stop calling from its prominent rocky perch at the edge of one of the gorges. African Black Duck, delightful Pygmy Falcon, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and Mountain Wheatear were also located. A number of mammals were also found in the park with Ground Squirrel, Large Gray Mongoose, Klipspringer, Vervet Monkey, Gemsbok, Scrub Hare, Springbok and Giraffe all seen well.

Having seen a large selection of the Karoo birds already today was going to be a real target birding day. It was with our targets set that we struck out west towards an area of dunes where our search would be for the red form of Ferruginous/Red Lark. We had great success in locating this species when a total of four birds were found performing for us at close range. We also managed to find a single Fawn-colored Lark in the same area. Backtracking a little we made our way towards the Namibian border at Onseepkrans to search for the only population of Rosy-faced Lovebird in South Africa, which we successfully located. The biggest highlight however came in the form of a pair of Burchell's Courser that were located right next the road. This species is without a doubt the most frequently missed and tricky Karoo endemic to find as it is highly nomadic, cryptically camouflaged and with numbers declining throughout its range. The day was finished off when two White-quilled Bustard were found on our drive towards the town of Springbok where we spent the night.

Our travels today took us to the far and seldom visited north western border of South Africa, more specifically to a place known as Port Nolloth. The area to the north of the town and just over the border into Namibia is the only known area for a newly described species of lark known as Barlow's. We arrived at the site early and in no time at all had success in locating the Barlow's Lark and the other special for the area, Cape Long-billed Lark. A stop at a large salt pan produced the goods when we located a dozen Damara Tern in breeding plumage. Our long drive south saw us arriving in the coastal town of Lambert's Bay in the late afternoon. Bird Island was teeming with birds and with the huge numbers of Cape Gannet being present this provided for a great spectacle.

Continuing south our first stop for the morning was at Paleisheuvel, just south of Clanwilliam where our target bird, the scarce Protea Canary was waiting for us in the gorge and a total of eight birds were seen. The Berg River Estuary is an important wintering area for a large number of migrant waders. The birding was very interesting as we located no less than three national rarities in the form of Common Redshank, Red-necked Phalarope

and Black Tern. Other interesting species were Lesser Flamingo, Chestnut-banded Plover and Caspian Tern.

Today was departure day however first a stop for the morning at the wonderful West Coast National Park. We finished off an awesome trip in fine style with some great endemic species that included Black Bustard, no less than eight Black Harrier and Gray-winged Francolin.

BIRD SPECIES LIST

E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, BE = Breeding-endemic

Ostrich – Struthionidae

Ostrich

Struthio camelus

Easily located in Cape NP, De Hoop NR and West Coast NP.

NOTE: some authorities regard the subspecies S. c. molybdophanes of dry East Africa as a distinct species: Somali Ostrich. The form we observed would remain with the nominate Common Ostrich S. camelus. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Penguins – Spheniscidae

Jackass (African) Penguin (NE)

Spheniscus demersus

Good numbers of two hundred plus were encountered at the Boulders colony on the Cape Peninsula. This is one of only two mainland colonies of this species.

Grebes – Podicipedidae

Little Grebe (Dabchick)

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Widespread and recorded at Strandfontein Ponds and De Hoop NR.

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

This large grebe was found at Strandfontein Ponds and De Hoop NR.

Eared (Black-necked) Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

First sighting was at the Strandfontein Ponds, with a further sighting at the salt pans at Velddrif.

Pelicans – Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican

Pelecanus onocrotalus

Widespread and easily located at Strandfontein Ponds, De Hoop NR, Velddrif and on the West Coast.

Boobies and Gannets – Sulidae

Cape Gannet (BE)

Morus capensis

This is a common bird around the Cape Peninsula and we recorded fair numbers from the shore. Our most memorable viewings was watching the huge colony at Bird Island, Lambert's Bay where extreme close ups of these fabulous birds were enjoyed.

Cormorants & Shags – Phalacrocoracidae

Great (White-breasted) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo (lucidus)

Commonly seen at all water bodies throughout.

NOTE: The white-breasted African subspecies of the widely distributed Great Cormorant P. carbo is sometimes considered a different species: P. lucidus.

Cape Cormorant (BE)

Phalacrocorax capensis

This is the common saltwater cormorant around the Cape and we saw good numbers on the shoreline.

Bank Cormorant (E)

Phalacrocorax neglectus

This saltwater cormorant was encountered at Kommetjie and at its breeding rock in False Bay where a pair was found.

Long-tailed (Reed) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax africanus

Common and recorded on many days at almost all wetland sites.

Crowned Cormorant (NE)

Phalacrocorax coronatus

Good views were had of 6 birds at Kommetjie and again good numbers were found at Lambert's Bay.

Anhinga & Darter – Anhingidae

(African) Darter

Anhinga melanogaster (rufa)

Scarce in the Cape, we found 1 at a pond just outside Ceres.

NOTE: The resident African form P. rufa is sometimes lumped with the Asian P. melanogaster and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns – Ardeidae]

Gray Heron

Ardea cinerea

Seen at most localities throughout the region.

Black-headed Heron

Ardea melanocephala

This is typically a grassland species where grasshoppers, one of its favourite foods, can be found. Commonly recorded throughout.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

This sleek heron was found at the wetland in De Hoop NR.

NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands A. p. bournei is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

Great (White) Egret

Ardea alba

We had our first sightings of this common Egret at Dullstroom. The bird was seen regularly in the eastern part of the country.

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World A. a. egretta which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret

Egretta intermedia

First seen in the Dullstroom district and again at the wetland in Wakkerstroom.

NOTE: This group may be split into 3 species, the Africa Yellow-billed Egret (E. brachyrhyncha) (the form we recorded), Plumed Egret (E. plumifera) and the nominate Intermediate Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Recorded at a few widespread wetland areas.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little, Western Reef (E. gularis) and Madagascar's Dimorphic (E. dimorpha) Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Commonly recorded throughout. Seen almost every day.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret (E. coromanda). This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Black-crowned Night-Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax*

A single bird was found in the Cape Point NP and a further 3 were located at De Hoop NR.

Hamerkop – Scopidae**Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

This unusual bird, placed in its own family, was seen at Augrabies Falls NP.

Ibises & Spoonbills – Threskiornithidae**Sacred Ibis***Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout the Cape.

NOTE: The Malagasy T. e. bernieri and Aldabran T. e. abbotti are sometimes split off as Madagascar White Ibis (T. bernieri)

Hadada Ibis (Hadedada)*Bostrychia hagedash*

This noisy bird was recorded at all locations throughout the Western Cape Province.

Glossy Ibis*Plegadis falcinellus*

Our only sighting was at the Strandfontein Ponds.

African Spoonbill*Platalea alba*

At least 10 of these unique birds were found at the wetland in De Hoop NR and a further individual was found just outside Ceres.

Flamingos – Phoenicopteridae**Greater Flamingo***Phoenicopterus ruber*

Easily located in large numbers at Strandfontein Ponds and again at Velddrif.

NOTE: The Greater Flamingo (P. roseus) and the Caribbean Flamingo (P. ruber) are now considered monotypic species according to Clements.

Lesser Flamingo*Phoenicopterus minor*

Fair numbers were located at the Velddrif saltworks.

Swans, Geese & Ducks – Anatidae**Egyptian Goose***Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Commonly recorded at wetlands throughout.

South African Shelduck (E)*Tadorna cana*

Small numbers of birds were noted at Strandfontein, a small wetland outside Ceres and at a wetland just outside Clanwilliam.

Spur-winged Goose*Plectropterus gambensis*

Easily located at a few wetlands at De Hoop NR and in the Ceres area.

African Black Duck*Anas sparsa*

A duck that favours the major, fast flowing rivers and quiet streams in the country. We were fortunate to find two along the Orange River at Augrabies Falls NP.

Cape Teal*Anas capensis*

Good numbers were found at Strandfontein Ponds and later on at the Cerebos Saltworks in Velddrif.

Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Easily seen at Strandfontein and Ceres.	
Red-billed Duck (Teal)	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Easily recorded at Strandfontein and Ceres.	
Cape Shoveler (NE)	<i>Anas smithii</i>
This near endemic was encountered at Strandfontein and at Ceres.	
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
Only found at the Strandfontein Ponds.	
Maccoa Duck	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
A beautiful duck that was seen only at the Strandfontein Ponds.	

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures – Accipitridae

Black-shouldered (-winged) Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Recorded on a number of days on the tour. A common and widespread species of open country.	
<i>NOTE: Clements has split the two species Black-shouldered Kite (Elanus caeruleus) of the Old World and White-tailed Kite (Elanus leucurus) of the New World. This split is not universally accepted.</i>	
Black (Yellow-billed) Kite	<i>Milvus [migrans] parasitus</i>
Recorded on many days at most sites throughout the tour.	
<i>NOTE: This locally breeding form of the Black Kite M. migrans is considered by most authorities as a distinct species, M. parasitus.</i>	
African Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
A single bird located at De Hoop NR was the only time that this beautiful species was seen on the tour.	
Cape Griffon (Vulture) (BE)	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>
We had a total of four soaring close to the breeding colony at Potberg.	
African Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>
Singles were found at Strandfontein, De Hoop NR and West Coast NP.	
Black Harrier (E)	<i>Circus maurus</i>
A great looking harrier and definitely one of the star birds of the trip. Our first looks were in De Hoop NR however we really got to grips with them in West Coast National Park where a total of 8 were seen.	
African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
A single bird in flight was located at Kirstenbosch BG.	
Pale Chanting-Goshawk (NE)	<i>Melierax canorus</i>
The open Karoo allowed us to really enjoy this fine raptor as we located them daily.	
Eurasian (Steppe) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
A summer migrant to the region, we recorded them at almost every locality.	
<i>NOTE: Steppe buzzard (B.b.vulpinus) is sometimes considered distinct from the nominate Eurasian Buzzard B.buteo.</i>	
Jackal Buzzard (E)	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
This endemic was regularly encountered in higher lying areas and parts of the Karoo	
Verreaux's (Black) Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
This stunning raptor was seen brilliantly in the gorges of the Orange River at Augrabies Falls NP. A total of 7 birds were enjoyed in a single day that included many great flybys and perched birds that were viewed at length through the scope.	
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
A total of 3 birds were seen on 3 consecutive days while driving in the Karoo.	
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
A single bird was located on our first day in the Karoo to the north of Ceres.	

Secretarybird – Sagittariidae

Secretary-bird

Sagittarius serpentarius

A single bird was found to the north of Brandvlei in typical Karoo scrub.

Falcons & Caracaras – Falconidae

Pygmy Falcon

Polihierax semitorquatus

A total of 3 birds were found on two consecutive days while at Augrabies Falls NP and near Aggenys

Eurasian (Rock/Common) Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Very common and seen on every day of the tour.

NOTE: Clements has not split the distinctive Rock Kestrel F.t.rupicolis we observed, which he lumps as a subspecies of the Eurasian Kestrel. Many authorities accept this split.

Greater Kestrel

Falco rupicoloides

This species was seen on a few occasions at widespread localities throughout the Karoo.

Lanner Falcon

Falco biarmicus

Our only sighting was from the roadside when a single bird was seen on our entry into the Karoo.

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

A single bird was found right at Cape Point inside the NP.

Pheasants & Partridges – Phasianidae

Gray-winged Francolin (E)

Francolinus africanus

We managed excellent looks at this tricky to find species with a covey of 3 birds in West Coast NP.

Cape Francolin (E)

Pternistes capensis

Commonly found throughout the Cape at various widespread localities.

Guineafowl – Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Recorded on most days of the tour. A very common and conspicuous bird.

NOTE: The nominate N. m. meleagris Helmeted Guineafowl, is sometimes regarded as distinct from the western (N. m. galeata) West African Guineafowl and the southern, which we recorded, (N. m. mitrata) Tufted Guineafowl. Clements does not as yet recognise these splits.

Cranes – Gruidae

Blue Crane (E)

Anthropoides paradisea

An extremely elegant crane, which was first encountered in the wheat fields around Swellendam. We enjoyed further sightings through the Karoo and on the West Coast.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots – Rallidae

Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

This species was seen at Strandfontein Ponds.

Red-knobbed Coot

Fulica cristata

Good numbers were seen throughout the tour at most wetland localities.

Bustards – Otididae

Stanley (Denham's) Bustard

Neotis denhami

Another striking species of bustard. We managed to see this species in the wheat fields and Renosterveld south of Swellendam where a total of 9 were seen.

Ludwig's Bustard (NE)

Neotis ludwigii

Fantastic views were had of this nomadic Karoo special when a group was found very close to the road just north of Brandvlei.

Karoo Bustard (E)

Eupodotis vigorsii

First located in a wheat field to the south of Swellendam, we found a further 13 birds during our time in the Karoo around Calvinia and Brandvlei.

Black Bustard (Southern Black Korhaan) (E)

Eupodotis afra

We got great views of a pair at the Seeberg lookout in West Coast NP.

NOTE: Although formally lumped, Clements has now split the two forms; the localized Black Bustard of the SW Cape and the more widespread White-quilled Bustard E. afraoides.

White-quilled Bustard (Northern Black Korhaan)

Eupodotis afraoides

A pair were located at the side of the road while driving from Aggenys to Springbok in the Northern Cape.

Oystercatchers – Haematopodidae

African (Black) Oystercatcher (E)

Haematopus moquini

With a population of only 4800 it is fortunate that this species is commonly seen in most of the Western Cape. We found them at Kommetjie and Cape Point NP.

Stilts & Avocets – Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Small numbers were encountered fairly regularly on wetlands throughout.

Pied Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

Large numbers were seen at Strandfontein Ponds and again at Velddrif.

Thick-knees – Burhinidae

Water Thick-knee (Dikkop)

Burhinus vermiculatus

Two birds found at De Hoop NR were the only ones seen on the tour.

Spotted Thick-knee (Dikkop)

Burhinus capensis

A single was found in West Coast NP.

Courser & Pratincoles – Glareolidae

Burchell's Courser (NE)

Cursorius rufus

One of the most prized birds to be found in the Karoo. This species was seen to the north of Pofadder when a pair was located near the roadside.

Double-banded Courser

Rhinoptilus africanus

A single bird was found on stony ground to the east of Brandvlei.

Plovers & Lapwings – Charadriidae

- Blacksmith Plover (Lapwing)** *Vanellus armatus*
Recorded almost daily at nearly all wetlands throughout.
- Crowned Lapwing (Plover)** *Vanellus coronatus*
Encountered on most days at widely scattered localities throughout.
- Black-bellied (Gray) Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
Good numbers were found at the large coastal wetlands and lagoons at Velddrif and West Coast NP.
- Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*
This species was seen at Velddrif.
- Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius*
Easily found at the edge of the salt works at Velddrif.
- Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris*
This species was noted at Velddrif.
- White-fronted Plover** *Charadrius marginatus*
Common along the coast at Port Nolloth, Velddrif and West Coast NP.
- Chestnut-banded Plover (NE)** *Charadrius pallidus*
We enjoyed a single of these beautiful and endearing shorebirds at the Cerebos salt works in Velddrif.

Sandpipers & Allies – Scolopacidae

- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
Small numbers were seen at Velddrif and West Coast.
- Common Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
Easily seen at Velddrif and on the mudflats at Langebaan Lagoon in the West Coast NP.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
An amazing 10 birds were found at the De Plaat mudflats at Velddrif along the Berg River.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
Singles were found at Strandfontein, Velddrif and at West Coast NP.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
This species is a national rarity and was picked up along the Berg River at the De Plaat mudflats in Velddrif.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
Small numbers were regularly encountered at Strandfontein, Velddrif and West Coast NP.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
This species was located at Velddrif.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*
15 birds were found in non-breeding plumage at West Coast NP.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
A very pale wader in non breeding plumage and one that is often associated with South Africa's coastline. We found a total of five at West Coast NP.
- Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
One of South Africa's most frequently encountered waders. Seen at Velddrif and in West Coast NP.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*
Seen at Velddrif and West Coast NP.
- Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
7 were found along the Berg River at Velddrif.

Red-necked Phalarope*Phalaropus lobatus*

This species is a national rarity. We found a small group of 4 birds at a saltpan in Velddrif.

Skuas & Gulls – Laridae**Kelp (Cape) Gull (NE)***Larus [dominicanus] vetula*

Commonly recorded along the southern and western Coast of South Africa. We estimated counts of over one hundred on some days .

NOTE: Recent work suggests that the Kelp Gull complex L. dominicanus may be split into as many as four species, the form we saw would become Cape Gull L. vetula which breeds in South Africa.

Gray-headed Gull*Larus cirrocephalus*

A scarce species in the Western Cape. We found 2 birds at Lambert's Bay.

Hartlaub's Gull (E)*Larus hartlaubii*

Good numbers, in the hundreds, were seen around the Cape Peninsula.

Terns – Sternidae**Caspian Tern***Sterna caspia*

A total of 4 were found along the Berg River at Velddrif.

Sandwich Tern*Sterna sandvicensis*

Commonly seen at all coastal sites.

Greater Crested (Swift) Tern*Sterna bergii*

Commonly seen at most coastal sites.

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

Good numbers were found along the coastline throughout.

Damara Tern*Sterna balaenarum*

A scarce breeder around the western part of the South African coastline. We were fortunate to locate a dozen birds at a salt pan outside Port Nolloth.

Whiskered Tern*Chlidonias hybridus*

This species was found along the Berg River at Velddrif.

White-winged Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus*

Another inland species that was encountered at Velddrif.

Black Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus*

This species is a South African rarity and was located in amongst a large flock of White-winged Tern.

Sandgrouse – Pteroclididae**Namaqua Sandgrouse (NE)***Pterocles namaqua*

A stunning bird of the arid west and a master of camouflage, we had good numbers throughout the Karoo.

Doves & Pigeons – Columbidae**Rock Pigeon***Columba livia*

Common in urban centres throughout.

Speckled (Rock) Pigeon*Columba guinea*

Commonly and recorded on every day of the trip.

Rameron Pigeon (African Olive-Pigeon)*Columba arquatrix*

Our only sighting was in the large forest of Grootvadersbos.

- Laughing (Palm) Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*
Commonly encountered and seen on many days of the tour.
- Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*
Widespread and common on the peninsula.
- Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle-Dove)** *Streptopelia capicola*
Widespread and common throughout, found in more open and drier country than the previous species.
- Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*
Commonly encountered throughout the Karoo.

Parrots & Allies – Psittacidae

- Rosy-faced Lovebird (NE)** *Agapornis roseicollis*
A highly localized species in South Africa. We managed to find a single bird at the Namibia/South Africa border post at Onseepkrans.

Cuckoos – Cuculidae

- Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius*
A single bird was found at Grootvadersbos forest.
- Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas*
A single bird was heard calling at Grootvadersbos.

Typical Owls – Strigidae

- Cape Eagle-Owl** *Otus senegalensis*
A very scarce species of remote localities and thus infrequently recorded. We had the most incredible views of a pair at close range at Paarl Mountain NR.
- Spotted Eagle-Owl** *Bubo africanus*
A single bird was found at a day roost in Kirstenbosch BG with another 2 birds seen on the night drive in Augrabies Falls NP.
NOTE: Clements splits the northern, dark-eyed form Grayish Eagle-Owl (B.cinerascens) from the more southerly yellow-eyed Spotted Eagle-Owl B. africanus. This split is not widely accepted.
- African Wood-Owl** *Strix woodfordii*
This is one of the few species of forest owls to be found in South Africa and we had very special views of a confiding pair at Grootvadersbos during the evening.

Swifts – Apodidae

- Common Swift** *Apus apus*
Large groups were seen at Velddrif and West Coast NP.
- African (Black) Swift** *Apus barbatus*
This species was located in the Agulhas area of the Cape.
NOTE: The Fernando Po Swift (A.sladeniae) is often separated by authorities as a distinctive species from the much more widespread Black Swift (A barbatus) which we observed several times during our tour. Clements does not currently recognize this split.
- Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*
A seriously large species of swift. We good views at widely scattered localities throughout the Karoo.
- African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*
This species was only found on the Namibia/South Africa border post.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

A widespread species that was regularly located throughout.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

This species was seen regularly in small numbers throughout the Karoo.

Mousebirds – Coliidae

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

Recorded regularly on the peninsula.

White-backed Mousebird (NE) *Colius colius*

This species was commonly seen throughout the dry areas of the Karoo.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*

This species was only encountered in the Agulhas area and at the Onseepkrans border post.

Trogons – Trogonidae

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

An outrageously beautiful species. We managed to find a single bird at Grootvadersbos forest.

Kingfishers – Alcedinidae

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

We encountered this candescent little gem on one occasion in the Agulhas region of the Cape

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*

This species was seen twice on the tour. One bird was seen at Grootvadersbos forest and another in the Agulhas area just south of Swellendam.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*

This very large species was found near a small dam in the Sir Lowries Pass area.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

This, the world's most widespread kingfisher was found on the peninsula and at Velddrif.

Bee-eaters – Meropidae

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A beautiful species and a summer visitor to our area. Small groups were seen in the Karoo.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*

This stunning species was only encountered once at Augrabies Falls NP when a pair of birds were seen in acacia woodland.

Hoopoes – Upupidae

Eurasian (African) Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

A striking species. Seen at Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: The Hoopoe complex has had a confusing taxonomic history, with one to four species being recognised by various authorities. Clements splits the group into two forms, Madagascar (U. marginalis) and Eurasian U. epops. The white-winged African form is often split by other authorities as West African Hoopoe (U. senegalensis) with the fourth species, the one we observed, being African Hoopoe (U. africana). However, the most generally accepted treatment is that of three species, Madagascar, Eurasian and African.

Barbets – Capitonidae

(Acacia) Pied Barbet (NE)

Tricholaema leucomelas

This species was located at Augrabies Falls NP and again at Paleisheuwel.

Honeyguides – Indicatoridae

Sharp-billed (Wahlberg's) Honeyguide

Prodotiscus regulus

A scarce bird in the Cape and generally uncommon throughout its range. We found a single bird in proteas in Paarl Mountain NR.

Woodpeckers & Allies – Picidae

Ground Woodpecker (E)

Geocolaptes olivaceus

This extraordinary species is largely confined to mountainous regions and we found 4 birds at Rooiels on the Cape Peninsula.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker

Campethera abingoni

A pair of birds were found in the camp at Augrabies Falls NP.

Knysna Woodpecker (E)

Campethera notata

This is one of the regions more seldom encountered endemics as it is largely found in areas not visited on most birding trips. We managed to find a single bird in the De Hoop NR.

Cardinal Woodpecker

Dendropicos fuscescens

A tiny species of woodpecker. 3 birds were seen at De Hoop NR.

Larks – Alaudidae

Agulhas Clapper Lark (E)

Mirafra fasciolata

2 birds were seen calling and displaying in the Renosterveld around our accommodation at Buchu Bush Camp outside De Hoop NR.

Sabota Lark (NE)

Mirafra sabota

A lark with a very bold, white supercilium, we enjoyed 2 sightings of the large-billed western race *bradfieldi* at Brandvlei and at Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: Some authorities consider the thickbilled form, Bradfield's Lark M. bradfieldi of Western Southern Africa a separate species. This is not widely accepted.

Fawn-coloured Lark (NE)

Mirafra africanoides

This species was only found at the red dune fields around Aggenys.

Ferruginous (Red) Lark (E)

Calendulauda burra

This species has an incredibly small range and we were fortunate to locate both color forms, the brown form at Brandvlei and the stunning red form at the red dunes near Aggenys.

Karoo Lark (E)

Certhilauda albescens

8 of these rather boldly marked larks were seen from the main road in the Tanqua Karoo area.

Barlow's Lark (E)

Certhilauda barlowi

This species has an amazingly small and restricted range being confined to a tiny area along the Atlantic coast in north west South Africa and south west Namibia. We found a total of 5 birds just north of Port Nolloth which is the bird's southern limit.

Cape Long-billed Lark (E)

Certhilauda curvirostris

This extremely long-billed species has a great presence about it and we enjoyed 5 birds on the Strandveld north of Port Nolloth on the Atlantic coast.

Agulhas Long-billed Lark (E)*Certhilauda brevirostris*

A highly localized species, which was seen on three occasions in Renosterveld south of Swellendam. The birds were easily located by their calls.

Karoo Long-billed Lark (E)*Certhilauda subcoronata*

This species was commonly encountered in the Karoo in the Calvinia and Brandvlei areas

Spike-heeled Lark (NE)*Chersomanes albofasciata*

Commonly seen throughout the Karoo from Calvinia north.

NOTE: The Tanzanian isolate C. a. beesleyi is considered a separate species by some authorities, Beesley's Lark

Gray-backed Sparrowlark (NE)*Eremopterix verticalis*

A nomadic species and we noted them twice on the trip. First just south of Calvinia and again in Bushmanland.

Black-eared Sparrowlark (E)*Eremopterix australis*

Highly sort after and extremely nomadic, we were fortunate to have great views of a large flock of 50 odd birds just north of Calvinia in the heart of the Karoo.

Red-capped Lark*Calandrella cinerea*

This species is widespread throughout the Karoo.

NOTE: The African Red-capped Lark complex (C. cinerea) was lumped within the Greater Short-toed Lark complex (C. brachydactyla) but is now considered distinct by most authorities. Several distinctive groupings have now been split off from Red-capped Lark, including Blanford's Lark of Ethiopia (C. blanfordi).

Sclater's Lark (E)*Spizocorys sclateri*

One of the most prized Karoo birds. After much scanning of gravel plains and searching of water points we were eventually rewarded when we found 3 birds coming in to drink at a water hole to the east of Brandvlei.

Large-billed (Southern Thick-billed) Lark (E) *Galerida magirostris*

First seen in the Agulhas area, we later had more sighting throughout the Karoo.

Swallows – Hirundinidae

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin*Riparia paludicola*

We found a group of 20 odd birds at a small pan just south of Clanwilliam on the west coast.

Rock Martin*Hirundo fuligula*

Common and widespread throughout the Cape Province.

NOTE: This confusing polytypic complex is being reviewed for multi-species splitting. Within the African populations, three potential species exist. The southern African nominate form H. f. fuligula would remain as Rock Martin and the more northern populations would become Red-throated Rock Martin (H. pusilla). Palearctic birds would become Pale Crag Martin (H. obsolete). Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.

Barn (Eurasian) Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

An extremely common bird during the summer months, we saw them every day at every locality.

NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is found throughout the world and generally regarded as a single species. Some authorities agree that the Old World H.rustica should be split from the New World H.r.erythrogaster. Also, there is an isolated population in the Egyptian delta (H.r.savignii) that some authorities regard as a separate species, the Egyptian Swallow.

White-throated Swallow*Hirundo albigularis*

A very smart looking swallow indeed, we enjoyed sightings of this species from the sites visited in and around the peninsula.

Pearl-breasted Swallow*Hirundo dimidiata*

An uncommon species and found only at De Hoop NR.

Greater Striped-Swallow (BE)*Hirundo cucullata*

An intra-African migrant, seen throughout the region.

South African Cliff-Swallow (NE)*Hirundo spilodera*

A summer visitor to the region. We had at least 100 birds at a known nesting site between Brandvlei and Calvinia.

Black Sawwing (Swallow)*Psalidoprocne holomelas*

The only time this species was encountered was at Grootvadersbos forest.

NOTE: The sawwing complex, which occurs throughout Africa, has recently been lumped into a single species by Clements. The exception is the Fanti Sawwing (P.obscura), which occurs from Senegambia to E Nigeria and SW Cameroon.

Wagtails & Pipits – Motacillidae**African Pied Wagtail***Motacilla aguimp*

Birds were found along the Orange River in Augrabies Falls NP.

Cape Wagtail*Motacilla capensis*

Regularly recorded at most wetland locations throughout the region.

Orange-throated (Cape) Longclaw (E)*Macronyx capensis*

A single bird was found in the Agulhas region.

Plain-backed Pipit*Anthus leucophrys*

This species was seen once in the Agulhas area.

African (Grassveld) Pipit*Anthus cinnamomeus*

This species was seen on a few occasions at widespread localities throughout.

NOTE: African pipit taxonomy is in disarray and much further research is required in the phylogeny of this grouping. Several forms which are considered subspecies are likely to become full species in their own right and several new forms are surely still to be described. The identification of two new species of pipits from an urban hockey field in Kimberley, South Africa, provides an excellent illustration regarding how little is known about African pipits and how little attention has been paid to them.

Bulbuls – Pycnonotidae**Black-fronted Bulbul (NE)***Pycnonotus nigricans*

Good numbers were found at Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognised as distinct species within the super-species Common Bulbul P. barbatus. The form that we saw in South Africa, P. tricolor has been split as Dark-capped Bulbul by some authorities. Clements does not recognize this split.

Cape Bulbul (E)*Pycnonotus capensis*

We saw this bird fairly regularly in the Western Cape.

Sombre Greenbul (Bulbul)*Andropadus importunus*

A bird that is far more often heard with its' shouts of 'Willie' than seen but encountered over much of the peninsula and Agulhas regions.

Terrestrial Brownbul (Bulbul)*Phyllastrephus terrestris*

This species was only found in the forested area of Grootvadersbos.

Thrushes & Allies – Turdidae**Cape Rock-Thrush (E)***Monticola rupestris*

A good looker that was only encountered once at the Jonkerhoek mountains above Noordhoek on the Cape Peninsula.

(Southern) Olive Thrush*Turdus olivaceus*

We enjoyed sightings on the peninsula and at the forested Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: This polytypic species complex may be split into many as ten different species, and several are already generally accepted eg Taita Thrush (T. helleri). The main north/south split is likely to be in Tanzania with the northern birds becoming Northern Olive Thrush (T. abyssinicus) and the nominate form being called Southern Olive Thrush. Karoo Thrush (T. smithi) occurring in Western South Africa has recently been split from the nominate group. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Cape Rockjumper (E)*Chaetops frenatus*

A stunning species confined to the Cape Fold Mountains. We easily located a pair at Rooiels which were watched for a number of minutes at close range.

Cisticolas & Allies – Cisticolidae**Tinkling (Levaillant's) Cisticola***Cisticola tinniens*

This species was located at the wetland outside Ceres and again along the Berg River at Velddrif.

Piping Cisticola (Neddicky)*Cisticola fulvicapillus*

This species was commonly seen at Rooiels and in the Agulhas region.

Red-headed (Gray-backed) Cisticola (E)*Cisticola subruficapillus*

Commonly encountered on the peninsula and in the Agulhas area.

Cloud Cisticola*Cisticola cinnamomeus*

A pair was seen in Renosterveld in the Agulhas region after they were easily located by their distinctive calls.

Black-chested Prinia (NE)*Prinia flavicans*

This feisty little warbler was recorded regularly in scrubby habitat in Augrabies Falls NP.

Karoo Prinia (E)*Prinia maculosa*

Common in the Western Cape and good numbers were noted on almost every day in that region.

NOTE: This species used to be lumped with Drakensberg Prinia (P hypoxantha) as Spotted Prinia but is now considered a separate species by most authorities including Clements.

Namaqua Prinia (Warbler) (E)*Phragmacia substriata*

Another very feisty little bird. We found single birds on two occasions, once in a dry riverbed in the Tanqua Karoo and again at Augrabies Falls NP.

Rufous-eared Warbler (E)*Malcorus pectoralis*

We had excellent looks at a number of these beautiful little birds in the plains of the Karoo around Calvinia and Brandvlei.

Bar-throated Apalis*Apalis thoracica*

We enjoyed sightings of them in the Agulhas area and at Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: Forms of Bar-throated Apalis are split by some African authorities as Namuli Apalis (A. lynesi), which is endemic to Mt. Namuli in N. Mozambique, Taita Apalis (A. fuscicularis) found only in the Taita Hills of SE Kenya, and Yellow-throated Apalis (A. flavigularis), which is endemic to S. Malawi. There is likely to be further splitting of this group.

Kopje (Cinnamon-breasted) Warbler (E)*Euryptila subcinnamomea*

Generally an uncommon species that is very tricky to locate and see well. We had good luck with this bird and found them twice in Augrabies Falls NP.

Old World Warblers – Sylviidae**Knysna Scrub-Warbler (E)***Bradypterus sylvaticus*

This is an incredible skulker and very uncommon throughout its range, we had brief but clear views of this bird in Grootvadersbos where it was first located by its distinctive song.

Victorin's Scrub-Warbler (E)*Bradypterus victorini*

This is another extreme skulker and a very difficult bird to get a view of, after much looking and peering into thick fynbos we managed views of 2 birds at Grootvadersbos.

Cape Grassbird (E)*Sphenoeacus afer*

Small numbers of these lovely warblers were seen at Rooiels and at De Hoop NR.

African Reed-Warbler*Acrocephalus baeticatus*

A number were located at scattered localities throughout the Karoo in drainage lines and other wet areas.

- Fairy Warbler (Flycatcher) (E)** *Stenostira scita*
Five of these delicate little birds were encountered on our first day in the Tanqua Karoo and then again at Paleisheuvel south of Clanwilliam.
- Yellow-bellied Eremomela** *Eremomela icteropygialis*
Much more common and widespread than the next species and we enjoyed sightings of small groups on several days while in the Karoo.
- Yellow-rumped (Karoo) Eremomela (E)** *Eremomela gregalis*
A low density species that is endemic to the Karoo. We found a single bird foraging in low bushes at the base of 'egghead' mountain in the Tankwa Karoo.
- Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*
A single bird was found at De Hoop NR.
- Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler** *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*
Undoubtedly one of the most striking birds in its genus, we had great looks at a single bird in Grootvadersbos.
- Layard's Warbler (Tit-babbler) (E)** *Parisoma layardi*
Generally uncommon, we had good views in the Tanqua Karoo and again at Paleisheuvel.
- Rufous-vented Warbler (Tit-babbler) (NE)** *Parisoma subcaeruleum*
A bird that often gives its presence away by its call. We found them at Augrabies Falls NP and at Paleisheuvel.

Old World Flycatchers – Muscicapidae

- Chat Flycatcher (NE)** *Bradornis infuscatus*
We had good views of this rather plain flycatcher in the northern parts of the Karoo.
- Fiscal Flycatcher (E)** *Sigelus silens*
Commonly recorded at widely scattered localities throughout the region.
- Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
A common summer visitor to the region that was found at Augrabies Falls NP.
- African Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta*
A flycatcher of forest and woodland, we had sightings in the forests at Paarl Mountain and Grootvadersbos.
- Cape Robin-Chat** *Cossypha caffra*
A common garden species; we had many sightings throughout.
- Karoo Scrub-Robin (E)** *Cercotrichas coryphoeus*
Easily located throughout the Karoo.
- African Stonechat** *Saxicola axillaris*
A common bird in South Africa that was seen in the Agulhas area and on the West Coast.
NOTE: Clements recognises the split of African (S. torquata) and Common (S. rubicola) Stonechats (the latter a Palearctic species), which is not followed by all authorities. Further splitting may occur in both groups including the highland Ethiopian form (S. t. albofasciata) that may become Ethiopian Stonechat.
- Mountain Wheatear (Chat) (NE)** *Oenanthe monticola*
Excellent looks were had in the Karoo and especially in Augrabies Falls NP.
- Capped Wheatear** *Oenanthe pileata*
A handsome species that was seen in the Agulhas area.
- Sicklewing (Sickle-winged) Chat (E)** *Cercomela sinuata*
Scarce in the Karoo where we had a single pair in the Tanqua area.
- Karoo Chat (E)** *Cercomela schlegelii*
We enjoyed good views many birds in the Karoo.
- Tractrac Chat (E)** *Cercomela tractrac*

Similar to the previous species however told by the amount of white on the rump, we had good numbers throughout the Karoo.

Familiar Chat

Cercomela familiaris

Located at widespread localities, first seen at Rooiels on the Cape Peninsula.

Southern Anteater-Chat (E)

Myrmecocichla formicivora

We enjoyed good views throughout the northern parts of the Karoo.

Wattle-eyes and Batises – Platysteiridae

Cape Batis (E)

Batis capensis

First seen at Kirstenbosch and was later seen at Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: Cape Batis is divided by Clements into seven subspecies, two of which are regarded by African authorities as separate species, Malawi Batis B.dimorpha and Reichenow's Batis B.reichenowi.

Pirit Batis (NE)

Batis pririt

This dry country batis was located in the Tanqua Karoo, at Augrabies Falls NP and again at Paleisheuvel.

Monarch Flycatchers – Monarchidae

African (Blue-mantled) Crested-Flycatcher

Trochocercus cyanomelas

This very restless species was seen very well at Grootvadersbos where 3 birds were located.

African Paradise-Flycatcher

Terpsiphone viridis

A truly stunning bird with its outrageously long orange tail feathers. This bird was found to be fairly common in the South Western Cape.

NOTE: The northern races of this widespread African species which includes the nominate form are likely to be separated from the southern races which would become Gray-headed Paradise-Flycatcher (T. plumbeiceps). Beside plumage and distributional differences, only the northern forms display polymorphism in males. Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Tits – Paridae

Ashy Tit (NE)

Parus cinerascens

A single bird was observed in the camp at Augrabies Falls NP.

Gray Tit (E)

Parus afer

A bird associated with the scrubby bushes in drier areas, we found a single pair in the Tanqua Karoo.

Penduline Tits – Remizidae

Southern (Cape) Penduline Tit (NE)

Anthoscopus minutus

A bird that occurs at low densities throughout its range, we had good looks at a pair in the Tanqua Karoo.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters – Nectariniidae

Orange-breasted Sunbird (E)

Anthobaphes violacea

These beautiful sunbirds were found in the fynbos areas around the Cape Peninsula.

Amethyst (African Black) Sunbird

Chalcomitra amethystina

This all black sunbird was seen once on the trip at our accommodations at Grootvadersbos.

Malachite Sunbird

Nectarinia famosa

Our first birds were seen at Paarl Mountain with further sightings at scattered localities, our sightings included many candescent males.

Southern Double-collared Sunbird (E) *Cinnyris chalybea*

Commonly recorded on the Cape Peninsula.

Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E) *Cinnyris afer*

Brilliant views were had of this stunning species at a flowering tree at our accommodations at Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: Disjunct populations of Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird (C.ludovicensis) occurring in Malawi and Angola and Rwenzori Double-collared Sunbird (C.stuhlmanni) of the Albertine Rift are sometimes lumped with Greater Double-collared Sunbird (C.afer). A further unnamed form from NE Zambia still requires allocation. Clements currently recognizes this species (C.afer) as separate and distinct, found only in the Cape Province east to the great Fish River.

Dusky Sunbird (NE) *Cinnyris fusca*

Two pairs were located at Augrabies Falls NP.

White-eyes – Zosteropidae

Cape (Pale) White-eye (E) *Zosterops virens*

We had had many encounters with this very common species in the Western Cape.

NOTE: This species has recently been split into a further species, Orange River White-eye (Z. pallidus), which occurs in Western Southern Africa, and further splitting may still occur.

Orange River White-eye (E) *Zosterops pallidus*

This species was noted at Augrabies Falls NP and replaces the previous species here.

Sugarbirds – Promeropidae

Cape Sugarbird (E) *Promerops cafer*

We had good numbers of this species in the Rooiels area and at Cape Point NP.

Shrikes Laniidae

Common Fiscal (Shrike) *Lanius collaris*

This is a common bird throughout the region and was seen on almost every day of the tour.

NOTE: The form L. marwitzi is sometimes split off as Uhehe Fiscal occurring in East Africa.

Bushshrikes & Allies – Malaconotidae

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

A pair of these attractive birds were found at the camp in Augrabies Falls NP.

NOTE: This previously monotypic genus might be split 4 ways: Northern Brubru (N. afer), Black-browed Brubru (N. nigritemporalis), Angola Brubru (N. affinis) and Southern Brubru (N. brubru). Only the Southern Brubru occurs in South Africa. Clements does not as yet recognise these splits.

Southern Tchagra (E) *Tchagra tchagra*

Two birds were found at the camp in De Hoop NR.

Southern Boubou (E) *Laniarius ferrugineus*

This is a very conspicuous songster and was heard and seen in the Southern Cape.

Bokmakierie (NE) *Telophorus zeylonus*

This very beautiful Bushshrike was seen at several sites in the Cape.

Olive Bushshrike (E) *Telophorus olivaceus*

This beautiful species was seen on a single occasion in Grootvadersbos forest.

Drongos – Dicruridae

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

Recorded in the Agulhas area and around Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: Older versions of Clements lump the forest dwelling Velvet-mantled Drongo (D. modestus) of East and West Africa within Fork-tailed Drongo (D. adsimilis) but the split has been recognized in recent Clements updates as well as by most other authorities.

Crows, Jays & Magpies – Corvidae

- House Crow** *Corvus splendens*
Several of these introduced birds were seen in the area around Cape Town International Airport.
- Cape (Black) Crow** *Corvus capensis*
Easily seen throughout the Karoo.
- Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*
Very common and widespread throughout.
- White-necked Raven** *Corvus albicollis*
This species was commonly seen throughout the area.

Starlings – Sturnidae

- European (Common) Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
An unwanted alien. Too common around the Cape Peninsula.
- Cape (Red-shouldered) Glossy-Starling (NE)** *Lamprotornis nitens*
Our only birds were found at Augrabies Falls NP.
- African Pied Starling (E)** *Spreo bicolor*
Good numbers of this common endemic throughout the Cape.
- Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio*
Prefers rocky areas and was commonly sighted around the peninsula.
- Pale-winged Starling (NE)** *Onychognathus naboroupp*
This species was easily located at Augrabies Falls NP.

Old World Sparrows – Passeridae

- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
Widespread and common in urban areas throughout.
- Cape Sparrow (Mossie) (NE)** *Passer melanurus*
Certainly our smartest sparrow and a near endemic to boot, we had sightings throughout the Cape.
- Southern Gray-headed Sparrow (Cape Sparrow) (NE)** *Passer diffusus*
3 birds were seen at Augrabies Falls NP.
NOTE: The Gray-headed Sparrow complex (P. griseus) has been split into five full species with the South African form being given the name (P. diffuses).

Weavers & Allies – Ploceidae

- Scaly Weaver (NE)** *Sporopipes squamifrons*
This delicate species was easily found in the Kalahari type habitat in Augrabies Falls NP.
- Social Weaver (E)** *Phileitairus socius*
This species is incredibly gregarious and their huge nests were in evidence everywhere in the northern part of the Cape where they were easily seen.
- Cape Weaver (E)** *Ploceus capensis*
Commonly seen in the Western Cape.

African (Southern) Masked-Weaver

Ploceus velatus

Commonly encountered throughout the Karoo.

NOTE: African Masked Weaver (P. velatus) is now split into the nominate Southern Masked Weaver which we recorded and the more northerly occurring Vitelline Masked-Weaver(P. vitellinus).

(Southern) Red Bishop

Euplectes orix

Bright and striking in the summer when breeding..

Yellow Bishop (Yellow-rumped Widow)

Euplectes capensis

This species, humorously resembling a large bumblebee, was seen throughout the South Western Cape and at West Coast NP.

Waxbills & Allies – Estrildidae

Swee Waxbill (Black-faced Swee) (E)

Estrilda melanotis

This attractive estrildid was seen very well at Paarl Mountain and again at Grootvadersbos.

NOTE: Yellow-bellied Waxbill (East African Swee) Estrilda quartinia is sometimes lumped with the South African Swee Waxbill E. melanotis.

Common Waxbill

Estrilda astrild

Seen twice on the tour, once outside Ceres and again at Augrabies Falls NP.

Indigobirds – Viduidae

Pin-tailed Whydah

Vidua macroura

Seen well at Paarl Mountain and again at Grootvadersbos.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies – Fringillidae

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

A beautiful bird though an introduced species to the Cape, we found a single bird at Kirstenbosch BG.

Cape Canary

Serinus canicollis

Seen a number of times on the peninsula and Aghulhas areas.

NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the nominate southern group would remain as Cape Canary and the form which occurs in East Africa would become Yellow-crowned Canary (S. flaviventris.) Clements does not as yet recognise this split.

Forest Canary (E)

Serinus scotops

This uncommon endemic was seen well in the Grootvadersbos forest.

Yellow Canary (NE)

Serinus flaviventris

Common and widespread throughout the Cape Province.

Brimstone Canary

Serinus sulphuratus

4 birds seen on Paarl Mountain were the only ones of the trip.

White-throated Canary (NE)

Serinus albogularis

Commonly encountered throughout the Karoo.

Streaky-headed Seedeater (Canary) (NE)

Serinus gularis

Seen first at Paarl Mountain NR and again at Grootvadersbos.

Protea Canary (E)

Serinus leucopterus

Scarce and local, we were elated at finding 8 birds at a known site in Paleisheuvel just south of Clanwilliam after missing the species at Paarl Mountain NR.

Cape Siskin (E)

Pseudochloroptila totta

A single group of 6 were found at the Jonkershoek Mountains just above Noordhoek on the Cape Peninsula.

Buntings – Emberizidae

Cape Bunting

Emberiza capensis

Common and widespread throughout.

NOTE: Clements has recently elevated the former Cape Bunting subspecies E.c.vincenti of central Malawi to E Zambia to full species status, Vincent's Bunting (E.vincenti).

Larklike Bunting (NE)

Emberiza impetواني

An irruptive species that is highly nomadic, we found small groups through the central Karoo.

MAMMAL SPECIES LIST

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the land mammals follow that of 'The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals'; additional names are given in parenthesis and are likely to appear other popular field guides.

Golden Moles – Chrysochloridae

Cape Golden Mole

Chrysochloris capensis

A single was sighted in the garden of our accommodation in Noordhoek.

Groove-toothed Rats – Otomyinae

Brant's Whistling Rat (E)

Parotomys brantsii

This species was very common in the Strandveld in and around Port Nolloth.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys – Cercopithecidae

Chacma Baboon

Papio ursinus

This species is fairly common in wilder parts of the region, commonly seen at widely scattered localities throughout.

Vervet Monkey

Cercopithecus aethiops

A small group of 4 were found at Augrabies Falls NP.

Hares & Rabbits – Leporidae

Scrub Hare

Lepus saxatilis

We had good views on our night drive in Augrabies Falls NP.

Cape Hare

Lepus capensis

Easily seen in De Hoop NR and around Brandvlei

Squirrels – Sciuridae

Ground Squirrel (NE)

Geosciurus inauris

Commonly seen at Augrabies Falls NP.

Mongoose – Herpestidae

Small Gray Mongoose (E)

Herpestes pulverulenta

The only time that this species was sighted was in Cape Point NP.

Yellow Mongoose

Cynictis penicillata

Seen at De Hoop NR and again at Augrabies Falls NP

Suricate(Meerkat) (NE) *Suricata suricatta*

Wonderful critters and always a joy to watch we found a group between Brandvlei and Calvinia.

Hyaxes – Procavidae

Rock Hyrax (Dassie) *Procavia capensis*

We had encounters with these odd beasts at Cape Point NP and again at Augrabies Falls NP.

Giraffes – Giraffidae

Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis*

We had a couple on our night drive in Augrabies Falls NP.

Bovids & Horned Ungulates – Bovidae

Eland *Taurotragus oryx*

We had a large on the plains in De Hoop NR.

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus*

This beautiful species was well seen At Augrabies Falls NP when at least 15 were encountered during our time there.

Gemsbok (NE) *Oryx gazella*

We enjoyed good looks at this stately antelope in Augrabies Falls NP.

Gray Rhebok (E) *Pelea capreolus*

We had 5 of these slender antelope in the De Hoop NR.

Bontebok (E) *Damaliscus dorcas*

This species is highly localized and at one stage threatened with extinction. We found them in Cape Point NP and De Hoop NR.

Springbok (NE) *Antidorcas marsupialis*

South Africa's national mammal and easily recorded throughout the Karoo.

Steenbuck (Steenbok) *Raphicerus campestris*

These dainty antelope, famed for their habit of burying their dung, were observed in the Karoo and Augrabies Falls NP.

Cape Grysbok (E) *Raphicerus melanotis*

This antelope is endemic to the southern Cape and we were fortunate enough to get a couple of sightings in De Hoop NR.

Bush (Common/Gray) Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia*

This, the commonest duiker in South Africa, was seen on one occasion at De Hoop NR.

Fur Seals – Otariidae

Cape Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus*

This cold-water dweller was seen in the icy waters of the Cape.

Pleated Whales – Balaenopteridae

Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera edeni*

We had good views of a single in False Bay. The distinctive blow was obvious in the identification of the species.