

ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA & BOTSWANA
Limpopo & Tuli

22 November – 06 December 2010



Leader: Martin Benadie

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A Personal Diary

Monday 22 November ~ Depart London

The group departs from London.

Tuesday 23rd November ~ Nylsvley

The group arrived at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on schedule. After collecting their luggage and meeting up with me, we headed north out of the city through Tshwane (Pretoria) on the Great North Road (N1). A deviation was made at Pienaars River to view some birds typical of the arid western bushveld. A farm dam was literally humming with waterbirds like Black Heron, Yellow-billed Egret, Little Grebe, Glossy Ibis, Whiskered Tern and White-faced Duck. The acacia thornveld and open savannah grasslands yielded good finds such as Northern Black Korhaan, Sabota Lark, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Desert Cisticola, Black-chested Prinia, Marico Flycatcher, Plain-backed Pipit, Magpie Shrike, Brown-crowned Tchagra, White-browed Sparrow-weaver, Lesser Grey Shrike and Black-throated Canary amongst many others.

Lunch was enjoyed in the tranquil gardens of Tshukudu Lodge in the Dinokeng Conservancy. Our meal was often interrupted by birds such as Wire-tailed Swallow, a nesting pair African Paradise Flycatcher, Marico Sunbird and a noisy Lesser Masked Weaver colony. We then pushed on to Nylsvley, taking in more birding on quiet gravel back roads via the impressive Kranskop (Modimolle) Mountain. The group enjoyed consistent sightings of exciting birds, with all members of the party spotting new birds for the list here, there and everywhere! Needless to say progress was slow, and our vehicle was often drawn to a halt. Memorable birds on this afternoon session included Secretarybird, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Diderick Cuckoo, Red-faced Mousebird, European and White-fronted Bee-eaters, our first of many Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills, Southern Boubou, the vivid Violet-backed Starling, Scaly-feathered Finch, African Rail and Golden-breasted Bunting to mention a few of the 108 recorded species on the day! We arrived in the late afternoon at the peaceful Dinonyane Lodge situated in close proximity to Nylsvley Nature Reserve – an important floodplain in South Africa. After an enjoyable dinner with the very hospitable new owners of the lodge, the group retired fairly early after a great first day.

Wednesday 24th November ~ Nylsvley

The following morning we met up bright and early for a pre-breakfast walk in the expansive gardens of Dinonyane and the surrounding natural bush. A highly vocal Red-chested Cuckoo perched very obligingly for all to see. A Black-collared Barbet was found nesting in a tree, African Green Pigeon was feeding in the gardens, a noisy flock of Green Wood-hoopoes made themselves known, and the piping whistles of African Grey Hornbill led us to this interesting bird. Other morning additions to the list included Black Cuckooshrike, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Lesser Striped Swallow, Black-headed Oriole, Kurrichane Thrush, Willow Warbler, Village Weaver, Lesser Honeyguide, Red-headed Weaver and White-browed Scrub-Robin.

After breakfast we drove into the nearby Nylsvley Nature Reserve itself. The flooded grasslands here are a haven for all forms of waterbirds with an exciting bird community found in the bushveld and broad-leaved woodland habitats surrounding the vlei (marsh). The reserve also harbours an exciting complement of large mammals to spice up the birding along the way! Bird sightings were plentiful and varied on the walk to and from the Jacana Hide including: Purple Heron, Hamerkop, African Harrier-hawk lazily flying overhead, Crested Francolin, African Purple Swamphen, Squacco Heron, Black Crake, Pied Kingfisher, Lesser Swamp-Warbler and African Jacana of course! As the weather was cool a further mid-morning stroll was undertaken in the reserve through pretty acacia thornveld with many seasonal pans and across an open grassy plain. Mammals enjoyed on foot included Southern Giraffe, Roan Antelope, Tsessebe, Burchell's Zebra, Impala and Warthog. It was wonderful to enjoy the sights and sounds of the African bush in this manner. Birds seen on this walk included two stunning courting African Pygmy-Kingfishers, Wood Sandpiper, African Snipe, Red-

breasted Swallow, Burchell's Starling and Orange-breasted Bush-shrike. Just as we got close to our vehicle again another calling bird would lead us off the trail again! Our only sighting of the shy African Wren-Warbler was seem like this and the incessant chatter of various bird species drew our attention to a Pearl-spotted Owllet being mobbed by the likes of Burnt-necked Eremomela, Chinspot Batis and Black-backed Puffback.

Lunch and a siesta was taken back at the lodge gardens (some just nodding off in the chairs on their veranda), with another floodplain section, named Vogelfontein, explored by the group in the late afternoon. The myriad meandering channels and flooded grasslands here can be birded in elevated hides and walking along banks making our afternoon stint a pleasant and soothing affair. White-backed and Yellow-billed Ducks, Southern Pochard, African Stonechat, Greater Striped Swallow, Levallant's Cisticola, large flocks of colourful Southern Red Bishop, Black-crowned Night-Heron and Cape Longclaw were some of the afternoon additions to the epic day. Dinner, a traditional South African *braai* (barbeque) was enjoyed back at Dinoyane Lodge ending our very pleasant stay here in grand fashion.

Thursday 25th November ~ Soutpansberg

A morning drive was undertaken to a different eco-region of Nylsvley Reserve, targeting broad-leaved *Burkea* and *Terminalia* woodland with a dissimilar bird community to the acacia areas. A perched Wahlberg's Eagle, African Cuckoo, Woodland Kingfisher and the stunning White-throated Robin-Chat were notable sightings. Unfortunately the targeted species such as Green-capped Eremomela, Bushveld Pipit and African Cuckoo Hawk evaded us. A mammal highlight of the morning was that of the reclusive Bushpig with piglets usually only seen at night!

After breakfast back at the lodge, we bade farewell and headed further north on the N1. A detour was made at the Ranch Hotel, just before Polokwane, to collect our lunch packs to enjoy later in the day. The particular elevation of this area results in birds we will not see elsewhere on this itinerary so a walk was undertaken around the hotel grounds. Star birds recorded here included the likes of Fiscal Flycatcher, Cape Robin-Chat, Bar-throated Apalis, Amethyst Sunbird, Karoo Thrush, Cape Sparrow, Streaky-headed Seed-eater and a great sighting of Common Scimitarbill. On exiting the Ranch Hotel one travels through some acacia scrub, part of the hotel grounds, where we added Brubru, Red-billed Oxpecker riding on the backs of Impala, and our first Yellow-billed Kite.

Lunch at Polokwane Bird Sanctuary added many waterbird species already seen including Red-billed Teal, a surprise African Goshawk (only seen by Andrew), Ruff, Ashy Tit, African Reed-Warbler, Black-cheeked Waxbill, African Pied Wagtail, Pied Avocet and Black-winged Stilt. After lunch we continued ever northwards towards Albasini Dam which is surrounded by a nature reserve and poised in the foothills of the Soutpansberg Mountains. We stayed at the pretty Shiluvvari Lodge directly overlooking Albasini – the perfect base for exploring this diverse birding region. We arrived pretty late, so most retired to their rooms to get ready for dinner whilst others took a quick last stroll in the fading light. The cuisine at Shiluvvari Lodge was some of the best on the entire tour, and we enjoyed out first of many delicious meals here.

Friday 26th November ~ Soutpansberg

After a cup of tea, coffee and biscuits in the rooms, we met up with local bird guide Samson Malaudzi, to visit some of his local birding hotspots. Our first stop was at Tshivahazwaulu Dam, which was covered in pretty water lilies. In no time we found our first big target of the morning – the stunning African Pygmy-Goose. Walking along the dam wall we added the likes of breeding Golden Weaver, Allen's Gallinule and Yellow Bishop. We next visited the Thoyoyandou Botanical Gardens where we enjoyed our breakfast packs before setting out on a walk. The gardens mainly conserve moist upland forest and here we added the prized Blue-spotted Wood-Dove (only reliable locale for this species in South Africa) after quite some effort. We were well-rewarded in the end and our perseverance paid off. Other good birds seen here included Tambourine Dove, Gorgeous Bush-Shrike, the dazzling Pink-throated Twinspot, Terrestrial Brownbul, Sombre Greenbul and Red-capped Robin-Chat.

Before heading back to Shiluvvari we deviated to Roodewal Forest, a tropical patch of riverine forest close to the source of the Luvuvhu River. The time of day was against us but we still managed to add two Narina Trogons here making it well worth it, while Eastern Nicator called tantalizingly in the dense thickets but would go down on the evening list as heard only unfortunately. Lunch was enjoyed back at Shiluvvari followed by a break and afternoon boat trip on Albasini Dam. Birding by boat is always a relaxing affair and we added many new birds to the group list with breaking into too much of a sweat! Sightings were varied from White-

breasted Cormorant, African Black Duck, Common Sandpiper, mammoth Nile Crocodiles basking on the banks, White-winged Tern and White-browed Robin-Chat to Croaking Cisticola, Thick-billed Weaver, Little Rush-Warbler, Zitting Cisticola and displaying Yellow-throated Longclaw. A fast-flying Eurasian Hobby put in a performance for us at dusk, ending another perfect day.

Saturday 27th November ~ Mapungubwe

After a customary early morning cup of coffee, we met up for an early-morning walk around Shiluvu itself with an interesting range of habitats in-and-around the lodge grounds. On Albasini Dam were the likes of African Darter, Purple Heron and Great Egret, while on the grassy fringe we picked up Cape Grassbird, Red-faced Cisticola, Yellow Bishop, Red-collared Widowbird and African Pied Wagtail. In the indigenous lodge gardens species such as Black Sparrowhawk, Purple-crested Turaco, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Green-backed Camaroptera, Neddicky, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Southern Black Flycatcher, White-browed Robin-Chat, Greater Double-collared and Collared Sunbirds, Spectacled Weaver, African Firefinch and Cape Batis were found. Another sumptuous breakfast was enjoyed before we headed north again. On route to Makhado (Louis Trichardt) a deviation was made to the tranquil Muirhead Dams with its small patch of adjoining indigenous forest. From a small hide we enjoyed more close-up views of African Pygmy-Goose, African Jacana and Black Crake as well as Red-capped Robin-Chat.

Once back on the N1 motorway we crossed over the Soutpansberg Mountains and onto Musina – the most northerly town in South Africa. Our most noteworthy pre-lunch stop was at the Strydom Tunnels viewpoint where we could safely bird the rocky cliffs of the area. It was here that we found an elegant male Cape Rock-Thrush at the northern extremity of its range, amongst the more common Mocking Cliff-Chat and a majestic Verreaux's Eagle. Other notable roadside birds included an African Hawk-Eagle pair and Purple Roller. After enjoying a break and lunch at a restaurant in Musina itself we head north a little further and, just before the Zimbabwe border, headed west onto Mapungubwe National Park. This road was extremely scenic with large baobab trees dotting the surrounds. One huge specimen was right next to the road, and in flower to boot, so a quick stop was made to take a closer look.

Our final destination for the day was the lovely Mopane Bush Lodge in the exclusive Mapesu Nature Reserve – a stunning and luxurious safari camp nestled amongst mopane woodland a short distance from Mapungubwe National Park itself. This camp would prove to be the ideal base for the exploration of the immediate area and we all enjoyed the stay here immensely. After settling in and acquainting ourselves with lodge-life a short walk was undertaken. Conditions were quite hot and birdlife not too active apart from the likes of Yellow-fronted Canary and Southern Grey-headed Sparrow so we headed back to camp to get ready for dinner.

Sunday 28th November ~ Mapungubwe

Owing to the time of year, the group opted for an early morning start with a packed brunch so we could make the most of the cooler morning conditions in Mapungubwe National Park. The intention was to be at the Park gates as they opened. On our drive out of Mopane Bush Lodge, we spotted some Amur Falcons roosting in a dead tree. Driving to the main gate of the park we just had to stop for a large flock of endemic Red-headed Finches adorning a bush just like decorations on a Christmas tree! Waiting for the staff to open the main gate for us, a nearby baobab tree was frenetic with early morning bird activity. Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers chatted vociferously as they added sticks to their immense thorny nests, a Jacobin Cuckoo perched for us, and a dazzling male Red-headed Weaver made an appearance too.

On the first leg of the drive in the park we found a very vocal Red-crested Korhaan and Fawn-coloured Lark also singing atop a bush. Mapungubwe has to be one of southern Africa's most beautiful parks. The park comprises characteristic sandstone outcrops interspersing open savannah at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers – an exciting blend of habitats for a large number of bird and mammal species. From a cultural aspect, Mapungubwe is just as interesting – it thrived as a sophisticated trading centre from around 1220 to 1300. It was home to an advanced culture of people for the time – what is thought to be the ancestors of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Our first stop in the park was a birder-friendly elevated boardwalk through rich riparian woodland with its towering trees all around us. This provided easy birding for species such as Meyer's Parrot, Woodland Kingfisher, White-fronted Bee-eater, Broad-billed Roller, Bearded Woodpecker, Retz's Helmet-Shrike and noisy groups of Meve's Starling. The boardwalk culminates in a small hide right on the river where we added Common Greenshank, Ruff and Common Sandpiper. Brunch was enjoyed at a picnic site in the park before

taking a stroll to the various viewpoints overlooking the confluence of the Limpopo and the Shashe itself. Sitting quietly, gazing out at the immensity of the scene, was a wondrous time for inner reflection. The rivers were scoped for birds such as African Openbill and we kept a beady eye overhead for any soaring raptors and added Brown Snake-Eagle and Rock Martin. Southern Black Tit gleaned the trees for insects and we got nice views of Long-billed Crombec.

A light lunch was enjoyed back at Mopane Bush Lodge itself, after which we could all retire to our air-conditioned rooms, which was very welcome owing the high temperatures on the day. Birds easily seen around the lodge included Southern White-crowned Shrike, Kurrichane Thrush and White-crested Helmet-Shrike. Mike and Pam's siesta was interspersed with trying to photograph many of these species that tried to avoid the mid-day heat and were right on their verandah! A late afternoon drive was again undertaken through another scenic part of the park down to the Limpopo River. Kori Bustard, Common Ostrich, African Fish-Eagle, Natal Francolin, Three-banded Plover, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Eurasian Golden Oriole and Chinspot Batis were some of the notable afternoon sightings.

Mammals on the day included Chacma Baboon, Bushbuck, Rock Hyrax, Gemsbok, Red Hartebeest, Klipspringer, Greater Kudu, Banded Mongoose, Blue Wildebeest and Burchell's Zebra. Although we saw very fresh elephant tracks we would have to wait another day to see these amazing pachyderms. Dinner this evening was a novel affair – individual tables were set for us in the camp *boma* around a customary African campfire; a trip cuisine highlight for many of us.

Monday 29th November ~ Mapungubwe

Now in a routine we all made our way to the main area for a dawn cup of coffee before setting out to the renowned *Den Staat* Wetlands. Once a working fish farm this is a magnet for all sorts of waterbirds attracted to the network of dams and canals. Not as well maintained as it once was, this is still an amazing spot to spend a morning's birding. We added an overwhelming array of new bird species to the list here. These were varied and included Yellow-billed Stork, White-fronted Plover, African Spoonbill, White-backed Duck, Comb Duck, Lanner Falcon, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Whiskered Tern, Giant Kingfisher, Lesser Swamp-Warbler and African Purple Swamphen,

Exploring the various pans we finally found one where the water levels were just right for both wader and other waterbird species. Here we found Common Ringed Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Yellow Wagtail, Cape Teal, Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Pratincole, and a large flock of White-winged Tern. It was also here that we picked up a southern Africa mega in the form of a Pacific Golden Plover as well as an amazing sighting of a Water Mongoose – contender for mammal of the trip as it is a species often not seen. Thanks to the scope we could get nice views of both. The rather oppressive heat experienced over the last couple of days was thankfully broken by a large thunderstorm over our siesta period. This helped to bring down afternoon temperatures considerably which we all appreciated. A late afternoon drive was undertaken through a rather wet western section of Mapungubwe beyond Den Staat. Lanner Falcon, Greater Kestrel, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Green-winged Pytilia and Red-billed Quelea all gave obliging views. At one stage we also came across a huge flock of Barn Swallows, probably feeding on an insect emergence after the rains. Based on the sheer numbers it was quite a spectacle to see. In the early evening we returned to Mopane.

Tuesday 30th November ~ Tuli Game Reserve - Botswana

On our last morning at Mopane Bush Lodge, the camp manager Andrew Rae, took us to another section of the Limpopo River at Weide Farm as a last morning activity here. Our primary goal was to find a Collared Palm-Thrush pair that had been breeding on one of the farm's expansive gardens the last few seasons. Shortly after arriving at the farm, the bird's distinctive call was heard and upon scanning the palm trees we found a pair actively nest building in the upper palm leaves. This is a very localized bird in South Africa and we were all excited to add it to our trip list! A flock of Red-backed Mannikins also flew past and taking a short stroll along the river yielded good views of Tropical Boubou, African Green-Pigeon and Red-chested Cuckoo again. Heading back to the lodge for breakfast a surprise flock of Orange-breasted Waxbill was located in some fallow lands – another great addition to our ever-growing birdlist! After breakfast and loading up all our luggage we headed for the border post of Pontdrift for the crossing into Botswana's Tuli Block area. We had some time to kill before our pick-up time so birded Western Mapungubwe again – this time around Limpopo Forest Tented Camp that did not have many guests in camp. Following the good rains of the previous day, the birdlife was very busy all over the place.

Notable additions included Cut-throat Finch, and good sightings of other small passerines such as Common Waxbill, and Red-billed Firefinch as well as White-winged Widowbird, Red-billed Hornbill and Marico Sunbird. We also had our first run-in with a breeding herd of Elephants that blocked the track in front of us. This would be a species we would see a lot of in the coming days. While stretching legs around Limpopo Tented Camp itself, Pam opted simply to stay at the vehicle. This proved a good decision as she was 'visited' by a range of bird species – many affording her some nice photographic opportunities. The border crossing into Botswana was simple and uneventful. We were met by Stuart Quinn of Tuli Wilderness Trails for our road transfer to his camp. On the drive we managed to find Monotonous Lark, loads of Scaly-feathered Finch, Great Sparrow and another good view of Secretarybird.

The simple Serolo Safari Camp would be our home for the next few days. It is scenically located along the shady floodplain of the Limpopo River under a grove of shady riverine trees including the magnificent mashatu and tall apple-leaf trees. All our meals were personally catered by Stuart's wife Annelien, and the camp was booked 'sole use' just for our group. A late afternoon drive was taken from the camp to see what was about. Birding and mammal viewing was quite slow but we did manage to add Martial and Lesser Spotted Eagles, Bateleur, Namaqua Dove, Grey-headed Kingfisher, African Hoopoe, Grey-headed Bush-Shrike and Retz's Helmet-shrike. Some of the mammals seen on the day included Scrub Hare, Impala, Vervet Monkey, Steenbok, Warthog and Common Waterbuck.

Wednesday 1st – Thursday 2nd December ~ Tuli Game Reserve - Botswana

The days were spent exploring the Tuli Wilderness area mostly on morning and afternoon game drives. One activity in particular that we all enjoyed was the scenic drive to a prominent sandstone outcrop known as Eagle Rock. The open plains areas leading to it were good for bird species such as Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark, African Pipit, Ostrich and Kori Bustard. These plains areas were also the most productive for mammals such as Black-backed Jackal, Eland, various antelope species and Burchell's Zebra. Although we saw fresh Lion tracks, this cat species eluded us over our stay. Flashes of white in an acacia thornveld area turned out to be a foraging flock of Southern Pied Babblers and a Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah was seen performing its peculiar 'step-up' flight action. Before getting to Eagle Rock we had an experience of different kind however. Our vehicle got stuck good and proper and we had to be towed out of by another safari vehicle. In the end, the delay was not too long and was seen in good humour and a chance to meet some environmental students who helped dig out our vehicle. The last stretch to the outcrop was undertaken on foot – a perfect chance to do some birding from another perspective. Kalahari Scrub-Robins sang from the tops of scrub, Golden-breasted Buntings showed off for us, a Rock Kestrel was identified and a Crimson-breasted Shrikes added vibrance to the surrounds. Reaching the lower reaches of the slope we observed a breeding herd of Elephants coming our way. Sitting quietly we watched the herd for a while before heading on. It was a magical experience to simply watch them feed and gently move past us – totally oblivious to our presence. Once atop Eagle Rock we got grand views of the surrounding area while Common Flat Lizards were sunning themselves. It was also an excellent vantage for raptors such as Lesser Spotted and Verreaux's Eagles and Steppe Buzzard.

Drives along the Limpopo yielded further bird species such as Bennett's Woodpecker, Great Spotted Cuckoo, nesting White-backed Vulture and Gabar Goshawk. The hot mid-day period was spent back at camp. Common bird species encountered here over our stay included African Mourning Dove, Crested Barbet, a nesting Ashy Flycatcher in the roof of the main dining area, Grey-backed Camaroptera and African Paradise Flycatcher. During dinner one evening a Verreaux's Eagle paid a visit to the small floodlit waterhole right at camp. One particular walk along the Limpopo River was also memorable. Walking under huge trees along the river's age-old banks was a privileged experience as gave us a chance to add birds such as the endangered Saddle-billed Stork, Black Kite, a fast-flying Peregrine Falcon, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Lesser Honeyguide trying to parasitise a Black-collared Barbet's nest, and Cardinal Woodpecker. A Pearl-spotted Owlet was also very obliging for photographs. Nightjar species seen after dark on drives as we returned to camp included the common Rufous-cheeked Nightjar and one sighting of Fiery-necked. Three-banded Courser would unfortunately only go down as heard only due to our local guide being reluctant to follow up on the calls as were having sundowners one evening! *C'est la vie* as they say...

Friday 3rd December 2010 ~ Magoebaskloof

Our last morning at Tuli Wilderness dawned bright and early as usual. A last short walk was done right from camp before breakfast. Stuart returned us to our parked vehicle at Pondrift after which we drove via the quirky town of Alldays onto Makhado. A stop was made for a Pale Chanting Goshawk and for a Lizard Buzzard – both species perched prominently on roadside telephone poles. Lunch was enjoyed at a quiet coffee

shop and art gallery in the backstreets of Makhado before we pushed onto Magoebaskloof. On route, it was decided to make a detour to Agatha Forest as a pair of Bat Hawks nest here and this was a big target bird for Andrew, missed on many previous Africa travels! The pressure was on. It could not have been easier however and two birds were found, perched in plain view for us. We took some time to enjoy the sighting of these special birds, even setting up the tripod.

Afternoon tea and scones was enjoyed in celebration of our good luck at the luxurious Coach House nearby Agatha. Brimming with history, the Coach House is on the site of the original staging post and hotel used by travellers in the feverish gold rush days of the late 19th century. The hotel nestles atop a spur looking over the verdant Letsitele Valley and the dramatic splendour of the Drakensberg Mountains. It was a nice spot just to take a break from driving and tick some 'garden birds'. These included the likes of Cape Robin-Chat, Southern Double-collared Sunbird and Cape White-Eye. In the late afternoon we arrived at the pretty Magoebaskloof Hotel, where we would spend the last two nights of this tour. The main thrust of our birding efforts were in the forests of the region, especially Woodbush Forest.

Saturday 4th December ~ Magoebaskloof

We had a full day to enjoy the area. Heavy rain overnight had us all a little worried but luckily it cleared somewhat by morning. A brief pre-breakfast walk in the hotel grounds was very productive for species such as African Emerald Cuckoo, African Olive Pigeon, Greater Striped Swallow, Square-tailed Drongo, White-necked Raven and African Dusky Flycatcher. At breakfast we joined up with local guide, Paul Nkhumane, who would accompany us on the morning birding session. First up was Woodbush Forest which we birded in various areas. New bird species were whittled away with consistent fashion including key species such as Knysna Turaco, Olive Woodpecker, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Olive Thrush, Chorister Robin-Chat, Barrat's Warbler, Black-fronted Bush-Shrike, Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler and Olive Bush-Shrike.

A stop was also made at Debengeni Waterfall at the lower reaches of Woodbush. It's a pretty spectacular waterfall tumbling into natural pools. We arrived just as the heavens opened again but luckily it did not last long so could still explore the area. Mike was lucky to see a White-starred Robin, and the stunning Mountain Wagtail was found fairly easily. The real surprise here was that of a Grey Wagtail though, again pretty rare in southern Africa. Local guide Paul was beaming ear-to-ear as it was a lifer for him! Our last destination on the morning stint was to the tropical small town of Tzaneen. Many of the gardens in town sport phenomenal birdlife and one in particular was visited, that of a quaint retirement village with expansive indigenous gardens. We had another target bird in mind – that of Magpie Mannikin, another species with a rather limited distribution in South Africa. We birded the village along its periphery with not too much luck apart from Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird until some sweet talking with the locals got us in the gardens themselves! The various garden bird feeders were mostly being visited by Bronze Mannikins but a very territorial Pin-tailed Whydah was chasing everything else off. Eventually we located a nice flock of Magpie Mannikins with their very distinct, far more robust bills. Mission accomplished! After some bonding with the locals we headed back to the hotel for lunch and a break. The late afternoon was enjoyed in the upper grassland reaches of the small nearby village of Haenertsburg. New for us here were the likes of Drakensberg Prinia and Wailing Cisticola. Our last dinner together was enjoyed back at the hotel with species checklists tallied up for the day afterwards.

Sunday 5th December ~ Magoebaskloof to Johannesburg

Magoebaskloof was entrenched in heavy mist in the morning. Mike and Pam decided to take it easy, while Andrew and I went to try again for Cape Parrot which had been mysteriously absent the previous day. The mist proved too thick however and we returned for breakfast unsuccessful. Can't win them all I suppose. After breakfast we thought to take a packed lunch and spend the last morning at the nearby Polokwane Nature Reserve. Being at a much lower elevation we arrived at the reserve gate with near-perfect viewing conditions and a cool, overcast sky. We managed to add numerous new bird species here, the top one probably being the endemic and range-restricted Short-clawed Lark. Other good ticks were Coqui Francolin, Black Cuckoo, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Desert Cisticola and Fiscal Flycatcher last seen in the Polokwane area. The reserve also allowed some last mammal viewing opportunities. Lunch was enjoyed at the reserve picnic site before starting our journey back to Johannesburg. The drive was uneventful with rain at times but we arrived back at OR Tambo International with plenty of time to spare to check for the group's return flight.

Monday 6th December ~ Arrival in London

Acknowledgements

I would just like to thank you all for joining me on this special Ornitholidays Limpopo trip and hope that you all had a good time! I certainly did. Thanks also to Pam for allowing me to use her photos in this report.

Martin Benadie
Ornitholidays
29 Straight Mile
Romsey
Hampshire
SO51 9BB
Tel: 01794 519445
info@ornitholidays.co.uk

August 2011

Birds of the Trip:

Narina Trogon
Pacific Golden Plover
Amur Falcon
Collared Palm-Thrush
Pink-throated Twinspot
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove
Barn Swallow (massive numbers)
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater
African Pygmy-Goose
Retz's Helmet-Shrike
Cape Rock-Thrush
Southern Pied Babbler
Magpie Mannikin
Bat Hawk
Short-clawed Lark
Grey Wagtail
Black-fronted Bush-Shrike
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk

Mammals of the Trip:

Bushpig with piglets
Water Mongoose
Roan Antelope
African Elephant
Klipspringer
Samango (Blue) Monkey
Southern Giraffe
Burchell's Zebra

Itinerary and Weather

23 November	Nylsvley Hot and sunny 30°C
24 November	Nylsvley Cool, cloudy 24°C
25 November	Soutpansberg Partly cloudy 26°C
26 November	Soutpansberg Overcast, drizzly in morning, clearing in afternoon 24°C
27 November	Mapungubwe Fine, sunny 27°C
28 November	Mapungubwe Hot sunny 40°C
29 November	Mapungubwe Sunny, afternoon thundershowers 41°C
30 November	Tuli Game Reserve – Botswana Cool, partly cloudy 23
01 December	Tuli Game Reserve – Botswana Hot, sunny 40°C
02 December	Tuli Game Reserve – Botswana Hot, sunny 42°C
03 December	Magoebaskloof Mild, sunny 28°C
04 December	Magoebaskloof Mostly sunny with some rain mid-morning 27°C
05 December	Magoebaskloof to Johannesburg Partly cloudy with rain at times 29°C

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

COMMON NAME	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Common Ostrich		X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Little Grebe	X		X	X	X		X							<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
White-breasted Cormorant			X	X	X							X		<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>
Reed Cormorant	X	X	X	X	X		X							<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
African Darter				X	X		X							<i>Anhinga rufa</i>
Grey Heron	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	X	X	X	X	X							X		<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron				X			X							<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron		X	X	X	X		X							<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Great (White) Egret	X	X	X	X	X		X							<i>Casmerodiusa albus</i>
Little Egret	X			X	X		X	X		X				<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	X						X							<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Black Heron	X						X							<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Cattle Egret	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Squacco Heron		X		X			X							<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Green-backed Heron	X					X								<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron		X					X							<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Hamerkop		X	X				X	X				X		<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
African Openbill						X								<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>
Saddle-billed Stork										X				<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Marabou Stork							X							<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>
Yellow-billed Stork							X							<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
African Sacred Ibis	X		X				X							<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Glossy Ibis	X						X							<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Hadeda Ibis	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
African Spoonbill							X							<i>Platalea alba</i>
White-faced Duck	X	X	X	X	X		X							<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
White-backed Duck		X		X			X							<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>
Egyptian Goose	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Yellow-billed Duck		X	X									X		<i>Anas undulata</i>
African Black Duck				X										<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Hottentot Teal		X					X							<i>Anas hottentota</i>
Red-billed Teal			X				X							<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Cape Teal							X							<i>Anas capensis</i>
Southern Pochard		X	X											<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
African Pygmy-Goose				X	X									<i>Nettapus auritus</i>
Comb Duck							X	X	X					<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Spur-winged Goose	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Secretarybird	X							X						<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
White-backed Vulture						X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Black Kite											X			<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Yellow-billed Kite			X	X										<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	X	X	X		X		X	X					X	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Bat Hawk												X		<i>Macheiramphus alcinus</i>
Verreaux's Eagle					X				X					<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
Lesser Spotted Eagle									X	X				<i>Aquila pomarina</i>
Wahlberg's Eagle			X	X			X							<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>
African Hawk-Eagle					X	X				X	X			<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>
Long-crested Eagle					X							X		<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Martial Eagle								X	X	X				<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Brown Snake-Eagle					X		X							<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	X	X					X							<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Bateleur								X	X	X				<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
African Fish Eagle	X	X	X			X	X			X				<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Steppe Buzzard	X		X	X	X				X		X	X		<i>Buteo buteo</i>

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Lizard Buzzard											X			<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>
Black Sparrowhawk					X									<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>
African Goshawk			X											<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>
Gabar Goshawk										X			X	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk (NE)											X			<i>Melierax canorus</i>
Dark Chanting Goshawk							X							<i>Melierax metabates</i>
African Harrier-Hawk		X								X				<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Peregrine Falcon											X			<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Lanner Falcon							X							<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Eurasian Hobby			X	X										<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Amur Falcon						X	X	X						<i>Falco amurensis</i>
Rock Kestrel									X					<i>Falco rupicolis</i>
Greater Kestrel							X	X						<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>
Coqui Francolin													X	<i>Peliperdix coqui</i>
Crested Francolin		X		X				X						<i>Peliperdix sephaena</i>
Shelley's Francolin													H	<i>Scleroptila shelleyi</i>
Natal Francolin (NE)	X		X			X	X	X	X	X				<i>Pternistes natalensis</i>
Swainson's Spurfowl (NE)	X	X	X				X		X	X			X	<i>Pternistes swainsonii</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Crested Guineafowl			X	X										<i>Guttera pucherani</i>
African Rail	X													<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>
Black Crake	X	X	X	X	X		X							<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>
African Purple Swamphen		X					X							<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Allen's Gallinule				X										<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>
Common Moorhen	X	X	X	X			X							<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot		X												<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Kori Bustard							X		X	X	X			<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Red-crested Korhaan							X							<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>
Northern Black Korhaan (E)	X													<i>Eupodotis afraoides</i>
African Jacana	X	X	X	X	X		X							<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Pacific Golden Plover							X							<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
Common Ringed Plover							X							<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
White-fronted Plover							X							<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover							X							<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>
Three-banded Plover			X			X	X	X						<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Crowned Lapwing	X	X	X				X	X	X	X			X	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Common Sandpiper				X		X	X							<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Wood Sandpiper		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Marsh Sandpiper							X							<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	X			X		X	X	X		X				<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Curlew Sandpiper							X							<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Little Stint							X							<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Ruff	X		X			X	X		X					<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
African Snipe		X												<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>
Pied Avocet			X											<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Black-winged Stilt			X			X	X							<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Water Thick-Knee							X							<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Three-banded Courser									H					<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>
Black-winged Pratincole							X							<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>
Whiskered Tern	X						X							<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>
White-winged Tern				X			X							<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Burchell's Sandgrouse (NE)									X					<i>Pterocles burchelli</i>
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)			X			X								<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	X													<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive-Pigeon												X		<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Red-eyed Dove			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
African Mourning Dove								X	X	X				<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>

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Cape Turtle-Dove	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Namaqua Dove						X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Oena capensis</i>
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove				X										<i>Turtur afer</i>
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove				X				X						<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Tambourine Dove				X										<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Lemon Dove												H		<i>Aplopelia larvata</i>
African Green-Pigeon		X						X	X	X				<i>Treron calva</i>
Meyer's Parrot						X	X		X		X			<i>Poicephalus myeri</i>
Knysna Turaco (E)												X		<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>
Purple-crested Turaco					X									<i>Tauraco porphyreolophus</i>
Grey Go-away-bird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>
African Cuckoo			X											<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	X	X						X						<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
Black Cuckoo													X	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>
Great Spotted Cuckoo										X				<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Jacobin Cuckoo					X	X		X	X	X	X			<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo												X		<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo		H											H	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
Diderick Cuckoo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Burchell's Coucal (NE)	X	X		X			X		X					<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
African Wood-Owl			H											<i>Strix woodfordii</i>
African Scops-Owl								H	H		H			<i>Otus senegalensis</i>
Pearl-spotted Owlet		X								X				<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl									X					<i>Bubo lacteus</i>
Fiery-necked Nightjar										X				<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar									X	X				<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>
Common Swift									X					<i>Apus apus</i>
African Black Swift					X									<i>Apus barbatus</i>
White-rumped Swift	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Little Swift	X	X	X	X		X								<i>Apus affinis</i>
African Palm Swift	X	X	X	X	X			X		X		X	X	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Speckled Mousebird			X	X	X		X	X					X	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	X						X	X	X	X			X	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Narina Trogon				X								X		<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Pied Kingfisher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Giant Kingfisher							X							<i>Ceryle maxima</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	X			X			X							<i>Alcedo cristata</i>
African Pygmy Kingfisher		X	X											<i>Ispidina picta</i>
Woodland Kingfisher	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>
Brown-hooded Kingfisher		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Grey-headed Kingfisher								X						<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>
Striped Kingfisher			X		X									<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>
European Bee-eater	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater							X							<i>Merops persicus</i>
White-fronted Bee-eater	X					X	X	X		X	X			<i>Merops bullockoides</i>
Little Bee-eater	X	X					X	X						<i>Merops pusillus</i>
European Roller					X	X	X				X			<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Coracias caudata</i>
Purple Roller					X	X	X	X	X	X				<i>Coracias naevia</i>
Broad-billed Roller						X		X		X				<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>
African Hoopoe			X		X	X	X	X		X			X	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Green Wood-Hoopoe	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X				<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Common Scimitarbill			X		X									<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
African Grey Hornbill		X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Red-billed Hornbill		X				X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Black-collared Barbet		X		X						X		X		<i>Lybius torquatus</i>

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Acacia Pied Barbet (NE)													X	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird		X		X								X		<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Crested Barbet		X	X			X		X	X	X	X			<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>
Greater Honeyguide		H						H						<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Scaly-throated Honeyguide				H										<i>Indicator variegatus</i>
Lesser Honeyguide		X								X				<i>Indicator minor</i>
Bennett's Woodpecker										X				<i>Campethera bennettii</i>
Golden-tailed Woodpecker						X		X						<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker					X			X	X				X	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Bearded Woodpecker						X		X						<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>
Olive Woodpecker												X		<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>
Monotonous Lark (NE)								X			X			<i>Mirafrapa passerina</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	X	X	X	X	X								X	<i>Mirafrapa africana</i>
Fawn-coloured Lark						X								<i>Mirafrapa africanoides</i>
Sabota Lark (NE)	X				X	X	X		X	X	X			<i>Mirafrapa sabota</i>
Short-clawed Lark (E)													X	<i>Certhilauda chuana</i>
Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark								X	X	X				<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>
Barn Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	X	X	X											<i>Hirundo albicularis</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	X			X	X									<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Pearl-breasted Swallow													X	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>
Red-breasted Swallow	X	X	X											<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>
Greater Striped Swallow (E)		X	X									X		<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>
Rock Martin		X	X		X	X	X		X					<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Common House Martin								X						<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Sand Martin								X						<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Brown-throated Martin		X												<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Black Saw-wing												X		<i>Psaldoprocne holomelas</i>
Black Cuckooshrike		X												<i>Campephaga flava</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Square-tailed Drongo												X		<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Eurasian Golden Oriole						X								<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
Black-headed Oriole		X						X						<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Pied Crow			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	<i>Corvus albus</i>
Ashy Tit (E)			X											<i>Parus cinerascens</i>
Southern Black Tit						X		X			X			<i>Parus niger</i>
Arrow-marked Babbler	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Southern Pied Babbler (NE)									X	X				<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>
Dark-capped Bulbul	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Terrestrial Brownbul				X										<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>
Yellow-streaked Greenbul												X		<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>
Sombre Greenbul				X								X		<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Yellow-bellied Greenbul				X	X			X	X					<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>
Eastern Nicator				H										<i>Nicator gularis</i>
Kurrichane Thrush	X	X	X		X		X	X					X	<i>Turdus libonyanus</i>
Olive Thrush												X		<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Karoo Thrush (E)			X											<i>Turdus smithii</i>
Collared Palm-Thrush								X						<i>Cichladusa arquata</i>
Orange Ground-Thrush												H		<i>Zoothera gurneyi</i>
Groundscraper Thrush		X	X			X							X	<i>Turdus litsipsirupa</i>
Cape Rock-Thrush (E)					X									<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
Familiar Chat						X			X	X				<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>
Mocking Cliff-Chat					X	X	X	X	X					<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>
African Stonechat	X	X	X	X	X									<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Chorister Robin-Chat (E)												X		<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat				X	X			X			X			<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Red-capped Robin-Chat				X	X									<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>

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Cape Robin-Chat			X								X	X		<i>Cossypha caffra</i>
White-throated Robin-Chat (E)			X		X									<i>Cossypha humeralis</i>
White-starred Robin												X		<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>
White-browed Scrub-Robin		X	X		X			X	X				X	<i>Erythropygia leucophrys</i>
Kalahari Scrub-Robin (NE)									X	X			X	<i>Erythropygia paena</i>
Bearded Scrub-Robin					H									<i>Erythropygia quadrivirgata</i>
Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler (NE)	X		X										X	<i>Parisoma subcaeruleum</i>
African Reed-Warbler			X											<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>
Lesser Swamp-Warbler		X					X							<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
Little Rush-Warbler				X										<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Barratt's Warbler (E)												X		<i>Bradypterus barratti</i>
Willow Warbler		X	X	X	X	X	X							<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler												X		<i>Phylloscopus ruficapillus</i>
Bar-throated Apalis			X	X								X		<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis					X									<i>Apalis flavida</i>
Long-billed Crombec		X		X	X								X	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Burnt-necked Eremomela	X	X												<i>Eremomela usticollis</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera					X									<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera		X				X					X			<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>
African Wren-Warbler (NE)		X												<i>Calamonastes fasciolata</i>
Cape Grassbird (E)					X								X	<i>Sphenoecus afer</i>
Zitting Cisticola	X	X		X	X		X	X		X				<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Desert Cisticola	X												X	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Wailing Cisticola												X		<i>Cisticola lais</i>
Rattling Cisticola	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Red-faced Cisticola					X									<i>Cisticola erythropis</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola		X	X		X								X	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Croaking Cisticola				X										<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Neddicky	X				X									<i>Cisticola fulvicapillus</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Black-chested Prinia (NE)	X	X								X				<i>Prinia flavicans</i>
Drakensberg Prinia (E)												X		<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher												X		<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Ashy Flycatcher								X	X	X	X			<i>Muscicapa caerulescens</i>
Grey Tit-Flycatcher											X			<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>
Southern Black Flycatcher	X	X	X		X			X			X			<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>
Marico Flycatcher (NE)	X	X				X		X					X	<i>Melaenornis mariquensis</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher (E)			X										X	<i>Sigelus silens</i>
Cape Batis (E)					X								X	<i>Batis capensis</i>
Chin-spot Batis		X	X			X								<i>Batis molitor</i>
Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher													H	<i>Trochocercus cyanomelas</i>
African Paradise Flycatcher	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X		<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
African Pied Wagtail			X	X	X							X		<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Mountain Wagtail												X		<i>Motacilla clara</i>
Cape Wagtail	X		X	X	X									<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
Yellow Wagtail							X							<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail												X		<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
African Pipit				X			X	X						<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Plain-backed Pipit	X													<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>
Cape Longclaw (E)		X	X											<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw				X	X									<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Common Fiscal	X		X		X								X	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Red-backed Shrike	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Magpie Shrike	X	X	X					X						<i>Lanius souzai</i>
Southern Boubou (E)	X		X	X									X	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Tropical Boubou								X						<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>

COMMON NAME	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Crimson-breasted Shrike (NE)	X	X							X					<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>
Black-backed Puffback		X	X			X		X	X	X		X		<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Brubru			X										X	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	X					X		X					X	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra		H												<i>Tchagra senegala</i>
Gorgeous Bush-Shrike				X										<i>Telophorus quadricolor</i>
Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike		X												<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>
Black-fronted Bush-Shrike												X		<i>Telophorus nigrifrons</i>
Olive Bush-Shrike												X		<i>Telophorus olivaceus</i>
Grey-headed Bush-Shrike								X						<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
White-crested Helmet-Shrike					X	X		X		X				<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Retz's Helmet-Shrike						X		X						<i>Prionops retzii</i>
Southern White-crowned Shrike (NE)					X	X	X	X						<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>
Common Myna	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Wattled Starling		X						X	X	X				<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Violet-backed Starling	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Burchell's Starling (NE)	X	X	X											<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Meves's Starling (NE)						X		X	X	X	X			<i>Lamprotornis mevesii</i>
Cape Glossy Starling	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Red-winged Starling		X			X	X			X			X		<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Red-billed Oxpecker		X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Marico Sunbird	X	X	X					X					X	<i>Nectarinia mariquensis</i>
Southern Double-collared Sunbird (E)											X	X		<i>Nectarinia chalybea</i>
Greater Double-collared Sunbird (E)					X						X	X		<i>Nectarinia afra</i>
White-bellied Sunbird		X	X		X									<i>Nectarinia talatala</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird				X	X							X		<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>
Amethyst Sunbird			X	X							X			<i>Nectarinia amethystina</i>
Collared Sunbird				X	X									<i>Anthreptes collaris</i>
Cape White-eye (E)	X	X	X	X	X						X	X		<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver					X	X		X	X	X	X	X		<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	X	X	X			X		X	X		X		X	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
House Sparrow	X	X	X		X	X		X			X			<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Great Sparrow								X					X	<i>Passer motitensis</i>
Cape Sparrow (NE)			X					X						<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
Yellow-throated Petronia			H											<i>Petronia superciliaris</i>
Scaly-feathered Finch (NE)	X							X	X				X	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>
Thick-billed Weaver				X										<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Spectacled Weaver				X	X									<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Village Weaver		X	X											<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Southern Masked-Weaver	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Lesser Masked-Weaver	X		X			X	X							<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Golden Weaver				X										<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>
Red-headed Weaver		X				X		X						<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>
Red-billed Quelea	X		X				X	X	X	X				<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Southern Red Bishop	X	X	X	X			X	X					X	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Yellow Bishop			X	X	X						X	X		<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
White-winged Widowbird	X	X		X				X			X			<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
Red-collared Widowbird				X	X						X			<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Green-winged Pytilia							X	X						<i>Pytilia melba</i>
African Firefinch				X	X							X		<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Jameson's Firefinch		X						X						<i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>
Red-billed Firefinch						X		X	X	X				<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
Blue Waxbill	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Common Waxbill		X	X	X	X	X	X	X						<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Black-faced Waxbill			X										X	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>
Orange-breasted Waxbill								X						<i>Amandava subflava</i>
Pink-throated Twinspot				X										<i>Hypargos margaritatus</i>

COMMON NAME	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Cut-throat Finch								X	X					<i>Amadina fasciata</i>
Red-headed Finch (NE)						X								<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>
Bronze Mannikin	X	X		X				X				X		<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>
Red-backed Mannikin								X						<i>Spermestes nigriceps</i>
Magpie Mannikin												X		<i>Lonchura fringilloides</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	X	X	X	X	X							X		<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Shaft-tailed Whydah (NE)							X							<i>Vidua regia</i>
Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah									X	X			X	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	X	X	X	X	X									<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
Black-throated Canary	X								X	X				<i>Serinus atrogularis</i>
Cape Canary												X		<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Streaky-headed Seed-Eater			X											<i>Serinus gularis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	X		X						X					<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting		X				X							X	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>

MAMMALS	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	01-Dec	02-Dec	03-Dec	04-Dec	05-Dec	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Baboon, Chacma			X		X			X	X	X	X			<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Blesbok			X											<i>Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi</i>
Bushbuck		X	X			X		X		X				<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>
Bushpig			X											<i>Potamochoerus porcus</i>
Dassie, Rock (Yellow-spotted)						X								<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>
Duiker, Common	X			X										<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Duiker, Red				X										<i>Cephalophus natalensis</i>
Eland			X						X					<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>
Elephant, African								X	X	X	X			<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Gemsbok (Oryx)						X								<i>Oryx gazella</i>
Giraffe, Southern	X	X	X											<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>
Hare, Scrub		X	X			X	X	X	X	X				<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Hartebeest, Red						X	X							<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Hippopotamus				X										<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Impala	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>
Jackal, Black-backed									X	X				<i>Canis mesomelas</i>
Klipspringer						X								<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>
Kudu, Greater						X	X	X	X	X				<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Mongoose, Banded						X		X		X				<i>Mungos mungo</i>
Mongoose, Slender				X	X				X	X				<i>Galerella sanguinea</i>
Mongoose, Water							X							<i>Atilax paludinosus</i>
Monkey, Samango												X		<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>
Monkey, Vervet	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>
Reedbuck, Common		X												<i>Redunca arundinum</i>
Roan Antelope		X												<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>
Squirrel, Tree	X					X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Steenbok								X	X	X				<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Tsessebe		X	X											<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>
Warthog	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X			<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
Bushpig			X							X				<i>Potamochoerus porcus</i>
Waterbuck, Common		X	X				X	X		X				<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>
Wildebeest, Blue		X				X	X		X	X				<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Zebra, Burchell's		X	X			X			X		X			<i>Equus burchelli</i>

This list represents those birds and other animals as seen by party members of this tour.



Chacma Baboon, Kori Bustard, Red-billed Hornbill, Crested Barbet, Observing elephant on foot, Don-Dwala dragonfly.



White-fronted Bee-eater, Atop Eagle Rock, Burchell's Zebra, Steenbok, Limpopo River, Common Flat Lizard.

Front Cover: Confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers All photographs © Pam Reynolds and Martin Benadie