



In conjunction with



Presents:

SOUTH AFRICA: CAPE TOWN AND PELAGIC PRE-TRIP

**Featuring the Cape Peninsula, fynbos endemics,
Southern Right Whales, the Karoo and more**

24 September – October 1, 2021



African Penguin can be seen near Simonstown on this tour

Pre-trip: Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula, the West Coast National Park and the Karoo

The Western Cape ranks as the most important endemic bird area on the entire African continent! It is truly essential because of its sheer number of endemics. Pelagic trips off Cape Town also rank as amongst the finest in the world with at least four albatross species, several petrels including the stunning Pintado, penguins, shearwaters and many more on the rich trawling grounds near where two oceans, Indian and Atlantic, meet.

The Cape is also a spectacularly scenic area, with rugged Cape Fold Mountains that plunge down to the sea, white sand beaches, sea cliffs on the Cape Peninsula, and beautiful vineyards. Southern Right Whales close inshore plus a lot of other mammals, sometimes spectacular carpets of flowers and the most plant-diverse biome on earth are further major attractions that are easily seen and appreciated.

Our tour is eight days long, with a major focus of locating almost all the endemics of this province, spending time in each strategic ecosystem – the fynbos, Namaqualand, Karoo and temperate forest. We will amass an impressive list including many pelagic and other seabirds, and as always, an amazing overall experience.



Cape Rockjumper

Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Cape Town

You will be met at Cape Town International Airport and transferred to your accommodation for the evening. Time-permitting, we may already start birding today, possibly Intaka Island, Rietvlei or Rondevlei. Here we look for Great White Pelican, Greater Flamingo, a host of shorebirds, Cape Teal, Maccoa Duck and many other waterfowl, Little Bittern and many other herons, three grebe species, Old World Painted Snipe, African Snipe, four species of reed-associated warbler and other waterbirds. We should also find good numbers of terrestrial endemics including Spotted Prinia, Cape Bulbul and the endemic Jackal Buzzard. Overnight in Cape Town or the South Peninsula

Day 2. Pelagic trip (or Cape Peninsula and False Bay birding)

After an early breakfast, we embark on a pelagic trip (weather-permitting; otherwise Cape Peninsula and False Bay birding) departing from Simonstown, where we find African Penguin, and travelling 30-50 km out to sea. En route, we pass magnificent Cape Point – really spectacular when seen from the sea. Our first pelagic species are usually Sooty Shearwater and White-chinned Petrel, with the occasional Spectacled Petrel, followed soon by sometimes both species of Giant Petrel. Further out, a minimum of four albatross species, Pintado and other petrels, several storm petrels (two species are usually common), shearwaters and many others are observed. We almost always find at least one trawler, and it is around these fishing boats that huge congregations of albatrosses and other seabirds create an amazing spectacle. We also often encounter marine mammals such as Bryde's Whales on these pelagics. Overnight in Cape Town or the South Peninsula



Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross is one of at least four albatross species we usually see

Day 3. Cape Peninsula and False Bay birding (or pelagic trip if postponed due to the weather)

We begin our Cape Peninsula birding at the Constantia Greenbelt, where the most strategic species is the endangered, localized, skulking Knysna Warbler. This warbler has a really beautiful song, but is rather drab in appearance. While looking for this bird, we may find Buff-spotted Flufftail (with luck), African Olive (Rameron) Pigeon, Red-chested Cuckoo, the attractive Cape Batis and other good birds. After about an hour birding here, we visit the nearby Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, one of the most beautiful places anywhere, and full of birds. Here it is usually easy to find important fynbos endemics such as Orange-breasted Sunbird and Cape Sugarbird, while Cape Francolin, Southern Boubou, Cape Canary, Brimstone Canary, Cape Thrush, Cape Robin-chat, Sweet Waxbill (with luck) and a whole host of other quality birds entertain us. Many raptors are possible here and at other sites we visit – including Verreaux's (Black) Eagle, several exciting accipiters, Jackal Buzzard (endemic), Forest Buzzard (endemic), Peregrine Falcon, Rock (Common) Kestrel and others.

After birding Kirstenbosch, we depart for Rooiels. To get to this village, we traverse one of the most scenic drives in South Africa along the False Bay coast. First we drive parallel to an extremely long white beach bordering the "Cape Flats" that separate the mountainous Cape Peninsula from the inland Cape Fold mountain ranges. Then we reach an area where impressive mountains meet the sea to begin a truly stunning marine drive, where Southern Right Whales come close inshore to calf.. The main target bird at Rooiels is the charismatic and localized Cape Rockjumper; we should also find Cape Siskin, Cape Rock-thrush and many more. On our return to the Cape Peninsula, time-permitting (else later in the itinerary) we bird the superb Strandfontein Bird Sanctuary for a plethora of herons, reed-associated warblers, waterfowl, shorebirds, African Black Oystercatcher, African Purple Swamphen, Great White Pelican, Greater Flamingo African Marsh Harrier and (as usual) many others. Overnight in Cape Town or the South Peninsula.

Day 4. West Coast birding

Today we begin an exciting birding journey northwards from Cape Town. We look for Black Harrier, Chestnut-banded Plover, Cape Penduline Tit, Cape Clapper Lark, Cape Long-billed Lark, Grey-wing Francolin, Southern Black Korhaan and other specialties in addition to a tremendous shorebird spectacle. Langebaan Lagoon is one of Africa's most important shorebird stopover sites, and there are hides (blinds) from which to observe the spectacle. We may also find Osprey, African Fish Eagle and many others. Overnight in Langebaan.

Day 5. Cederberg Mountains and the Karoo

Today we head inland over the magnificent Cederberg Mountain Range. On the way, we have an excellent chance of locating the scarce Protea Canary. At the summit, we have a second chance for Cape Rockjumper on the off-chances that it was missed at Rooiels. We may also find Ground Woodpecker, European Bee-eater and other spectacular species. We head to the eastern (rain-

shadow) side of the mountains to get to the famed (amongst birders) Karoo. Here, almost every species encountered is endemic, so it makes spectacularly exciting birding for any birder who has never visited this particular semi-desert. Overnight in the Karoo



Cape Sugarbird

Day 6. The endemic-rich Tanqua Karoo

A full day of Karoo birding. The findings here include Cinnamon-breasted Warbler (a truly bizarre rock crevice skulker), Namaqua Warbler, the lovely Rufous-eared Warbler, Black-headed Canary, White-throated Canary, Fairy Flycatcher, Southern Grey Tit, Karoo Chat, Sickle-winged Chat, Tractrac Chat, Karoo Lark, Karoo Long-billed Lark, Spike-heeled Lark, Large-billed Lark, Karoo Eremomela, Pririt Batis, Burchell's Courser, Double-banded Courser, Ludwig's Bustard, Karoo Korhaan, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Namaqua Dove and many others. Overnight in the Karoo

Day 7. Cape Town

We spend time birding at Paarl en route for fynbos species and waterbirds we are still missing. A night back on the Cape Peninsula will give us time to find some of the Cape's more difficult species. Overnight in Cape Town or the South Peninsula



Orange-breasted Sunbird is common in the *fynbos* vegetation

Day 8. Final Cape birding before flying to Johannesburg for the main trip

We have final Cape birding before we catch our 2-hour flight to Johannesburg to start the next trip (or you can fly home today)

Please note that this itinerary is a guide only and might be changed depending on accommodation availability, local updates as to conditions in certain areas, etc.

Duration:	8 days
Group size:	7
Dates:	24 September - 1 October 2021
Start:	Cape Town
End:	Cape Town
Prices:	R55,915 per person sharing
Single supplement:	R6,145

Price includes:

Accommodation

Meals

Unlimited bottled water is provided in the vehicle (which you're welcome to take at night as well but more pricey bottled water bought at restaurants is for your account)

Entrance fees

Guide fees

All ground transport during the tour

Price excludes:

Flights – if you combine this with our Kruger trip, we can book a Johannesburg/Cape Town flight for you (usually around R2,000 per person)

Travel insurance (vital to have)

Drinks

Gratuities (see <https://www.birdingecotours.com/tipping-guidelines/>)

Laundry

Gifts and other items of a personal nature

How to book: to make a booking, you can kindly go to <https://www.birdingecotours.com/make-a-booking/> or e-mail info@birdingecotours.com. We will then also inform you how to pay your 25 % deposit to firm up your booking. Most people pay this by mailing a check at the prevailing exchange rate (which we'll give you) to our Ohio office (which we'll also give you details of when we get your e-mail or online booking). The 75 % balance is due two months before the trip starts.