



In conjunction with



Presents:

SOUTH AFRICA BIRDING AND WILDLIFE SAFARI
Featuring the Kruger National Park, Escarpment and
highlands

1-10 October 2021



Lilac-breasted Roller abounds in the Kruger National Park

Join the Tucson Audubon Society in South Africa! We spend 10 days in one of South Africa's richest areas for birds, mammals and other wildlife, in one of the world's most famous game parks, the Kruger National Park. This massive park covers a vast area and is teeming with Africa's big (and small) mammals (including **African Elephant, Giraffe, Burchell's Zebra, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah** and all the others). The great thing for birders, though, is that it's full of easy to see, spectacular-looking species, such as several species each of roller, bee-eater, kingfisher, hornbill, vulture, owl, stork, etc. The park is full of birds of prey including the spectacular, colorful **Bateleur**, and there's also a good chance of finding **Secretarybird, Kori Bustard** (the world's heaviest flying bird), **Southern Ground Hornbill** (along with a plethora of other hornbill species), etc.



Lion, and with luck Leopard and Cheetah should be encountered on this tour

We don't spend all our time in the Kruger National Park. To the west of this famed game park, rises the Great Escarpment, which boasts quite a good number of very localized species, such as **Gurney's Sugarbird, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Knysna Turaco, Orange Ground-thrush** and numerous others. Ascending this escarpment onto the high-altitude plateau that covers a large proportion of South Africa, should reward us with a new suite of bird species. Last but not least, we spend a couple of days birding a site near Johannesburg that has quite a good number of Kalahari-type species, such as the dazzling **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, the dapper **Southern Pied Babbler, Violet-eared Waxbill** and a rich assortment of others.

Itinerary (10 days/9 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Johannesburg

We arrive in the high altitude city of Johannesburg (about a mile above sea level) and check into our accommodation which is about ten minutes' drive (assuming no rush hour traffic). Time-permitting, we might already be able to see some brilliant birds, which could include **Crested**

Barbet, Black-collared Barbet, African Hoopoe, Gray Go-away Bird, Fiscal Flycatcher, etc. We might also have time to visit a nearby bird sanctuary which has a rich assemblage of waterbirds, almost all of which will be new for your list if you haven't been to Africa before.

Overnight: Outlook Lodge near Johannesburg Airport

Day 2. Johannesburg to the highlands around Dullstroom

After some Johannesburg area birding, we can embark on our exciting journey eastwards. Our first birding venue is an area of beautiful rolling grasslands near the Great Escarpment. Here we hope to find **Malachite Sunbird, Gurney's Sugarbird, Cape Eagle-Owl, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Secretarybird, Blue Crane, Red-winged Francolin, Grey-winged Francolin** and many others. Mammal-wise, we may encounter some high altitude species such as **Oribi**, but a much greater diversity awaits us in Kruger.

Overnight: Linger Longer Country Retreat near Dullstroom



Malachite Sunbird is usually seen on this tour

Day 3. Great Escarpment birding

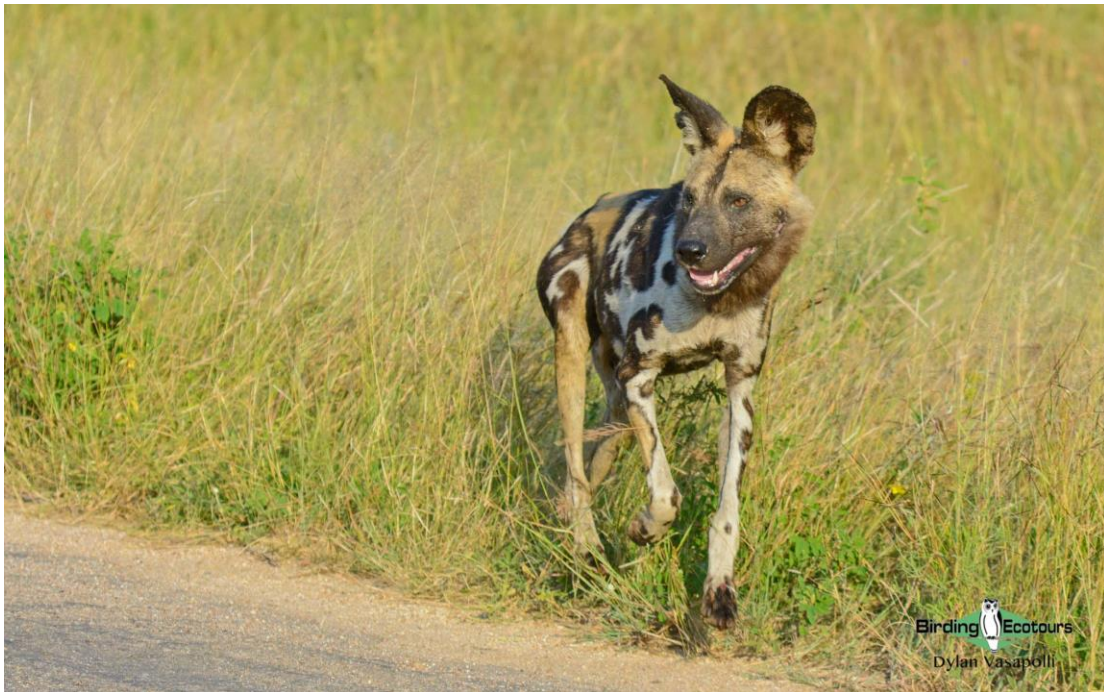
Today we'll start descending the mountainous Great Escarpment. We'll leave the rolling grasslands and find ourselves in an area with some beautiful evergreen forest inhabited by the stunningly beautiful and charismatic **Knysna Turaco, Chorister Robin-chat, Orange Ground-thrush, Narina Trogon, Sweet Waxbill**, perhaps **Southern Tchagra** and other jewels. En route, we'll stop at a site to look for one of the rarest birds in Africa, the small, fast, colorful **Taita Falcon**. Sometimes we also see **Cape Vulture, Mocking Cliff-chat** and other great birds here.

Overnight: the idyllic Mount Sheba Resort near Pilgrim's Rest

Days 4 – 8. Birds and Wildlife of the incredible Kruger National Park

Kruger is one of the most famous game parks on the planet. And rightly so. It covers a humongous area of low-altitude dry woodland and savanna. Not only is the park full of Africa's megafauna, but it also has a staggering diversity of birds, a disproportionate number of them easy to see, dazzlingly colorful (e.g. barbets, rollers, etc.) or just plain large (in the case of **Southern Ostrich**, **Kori Bustard**, all the storks, eagles and owls). There are a lot of weaver species in the park, usually bright yellow and black, but with some exceptions such as the incomparable **Red-headed Weaver**.

Animal-wise, some of the easier species to find include **Burchell's Zebra**, **Giraffe**, **Lion**, many antelope species, **African Elephant**, **African Buffalo**, etc. The guide will put in extra effort to try and locate the more difficult species such as both African rhino species, **Leopard**, **Cheetah**, smaller cats, **African Wild Dog**, etc.



A friendly-looking (but pet at your own risk!) **African Wild Dog**. They've become very rare

Overnight: we plan to spend three nights in Skukuza and two nights in Satara, both basic lodges right inside the Kruger National Park

Day 9. Transfer to a site for Kalahari type birds and a host of other species

Today we have a long drive (about six hours) to get to an area north of Johannesburg. This is, like Kruger, an incredibly bird-diverse area, but the good thing for us is that the birds are completely different from the ones in Kruger! So, we should add a really large number of beautiful species to our burgeoning list. We usually find the likes of **White-browed Sparrow-weaver**, **Northern Black Korhaan**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike** (the name says it all), brightly-colored waxbills, quite a number of very colorful bee-eaters, and a very rich variety of others.

Overnight: Zenzele River Lodge 1.5 hours' drive from Johannesburg airport



Scaly-feathered Finch: we often find these towards the end of our tour

Day 10. Final birding <https://www.birdingecotours.com/tipping-guidelines/> before departure

We'll spend the morning birding this amazing area. Time-permitting, we can visit some sites near Johannesburg airport before our flights depart. We recommend an evening flight tonight.

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: 10 days

Group size: 7

Dates: 1-10 October 2021

Start: Johannesburg

End: Johannesburg

Prices: R77,500 per person sharing

Single supplement: R8,100

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)

Kruger "conservation fee" and other entrance fees

Guide fees

All transport during the tour, including an open safari vehicle while in Kruger

Price excludes:

Flights – if you combine this with our Cape pre-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.



Bateleur, a colorful, acrobatic eagle that is still common in the Kruger National Park but now very rare outside of large game parks