

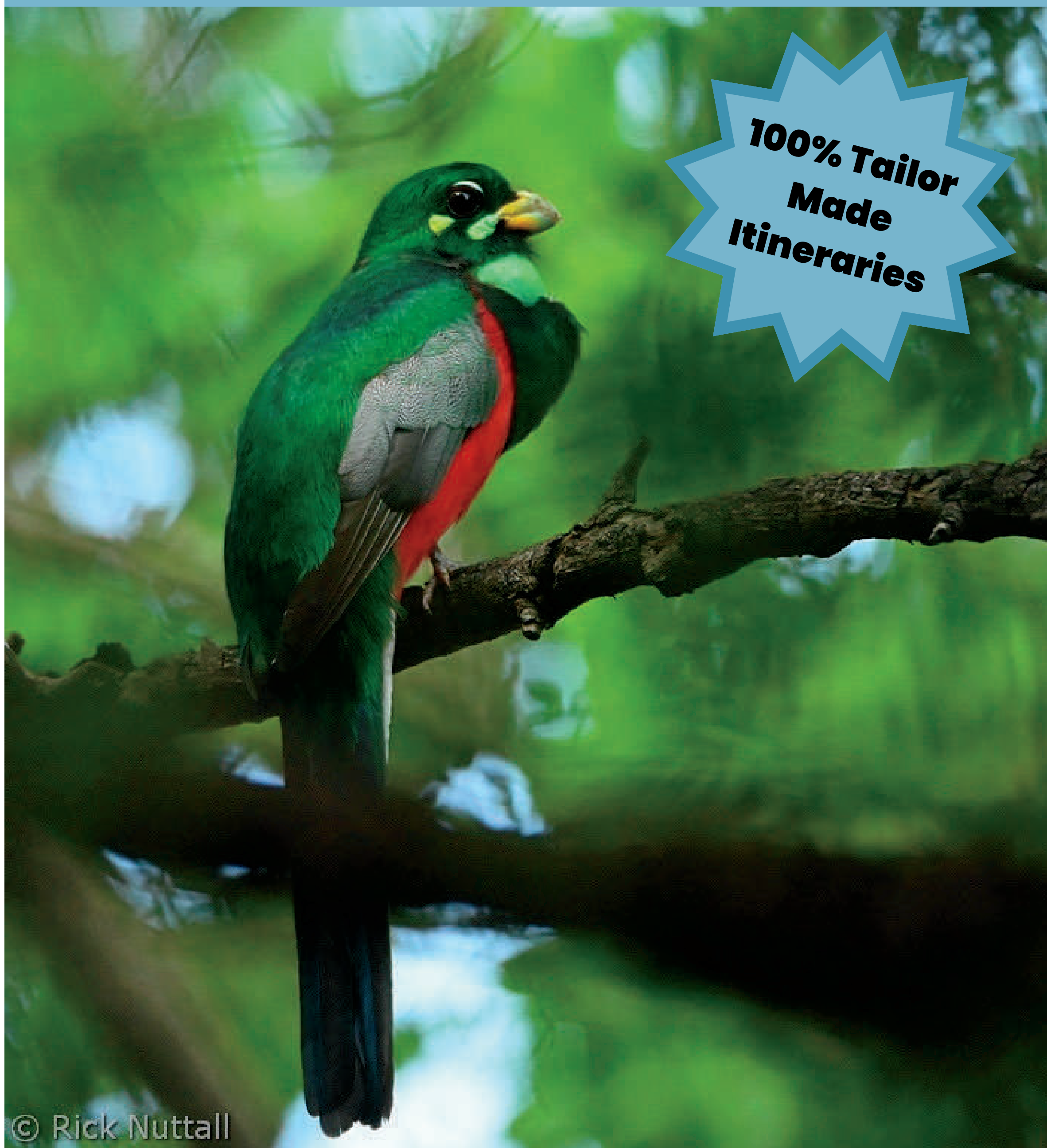
KHOISAN KAROO
CONSERVANCY

BIRDS OF A FEATHER:

Grassland safaris, rivers,
mountains & forests birding tour

SOUTHERN SKY
ADVENTURES

AFRICA...IN YOUR WILDEST DREAMS.



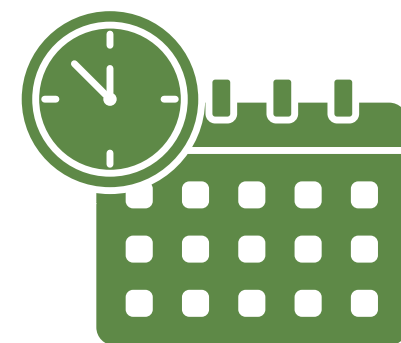
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14 Days / 13 Nights



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This 14-day tour begins in Bloemfontein, situated in the grasslands of South Africa’s central interior. After Bloemfontein it takes us to the picturesque high-altitude grasslands, rivers and mountains of the north-eastern Cape Province, followed by moving south-east to the lush forests and valleys around Hogsback in the Amathole Mountains. From here the tour moves to the renowned “Big 5” Addo Elephant National Park. This park offers some of the most spectacular elephant viewing in the world, as well as a number of other mammals, many birds and interesting insects in the characteristic Albany Thicket vegetation which is dominated by the succulent ‘spekboom’. The next stop is the Mountain Zebra National Park, near Cradock, characterised by drier mountains, hillsides and valleys set in the Karoo. The Park incorporates elements of the Nama-Karoo, Grassland and Thicket biomes, with their associated fauna and flora. Here the mammal highlight is the more than 1000 Cape Mountain Zebra after which the park is named. Lion, Cheetah and Spotted Hyena have been reintroduced and a healthy population of Cape Buffalo is also present. The final destination of this tour is an absolute gem in the central Karoo - the Khoisan Karoo Conservancy. They offer not only exceptional Karoo birding and stunning night skies, but also an immersive Karoo experience that includes top class hospitality, home-cooked cuisine, and night drives to search for elusive nocturnal mammals – the “Shy 5” -. The tour ends back in Bloemfontein, from where either the **Coastal Feathers: Cape Town & surrounds birding extension** or **Safari Feathers: Kruger National Park birding extension** departs.



African cuisine



Breathtaking views



Extraordinary birding



Expert guide: Rick Nuttall

Day 1

After our 1-hour flight from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport and arrival at Bram Fischer International Airport in Bloemfontein, we commence our 5-hour drive to the little hamlet of Rhodes, high in the Drakensberg Mountains of the Eastern Cape, bordering the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. The scenery in this area is spectacular and we should encounter a number of very special birds in these mountain areas. These might include the Cape- and Bearded Vultures, Wattled, Blue and Grey Crowned Cranes, Ground Woodpecker, Orange-breasted Rockjumper, Drakensberg Prinia, Drakensberg Siskin and Mountain Pipit (in summer). Overnight in the village of Rhodes.

Day to Day

Day 2

Today will be spent further exploring the amazing scenery and birdlife of this region. Weather permitting, we will traverse the scenic Naude's Nek Pass to find some of the local 'specials' such as Cape- and Bearded Vultures, Southern Bald Ibis, Ground Woodpecker, Orange-breasted Rockjumper, Drakensberg Siskin and Mountain Pipit. The descent to the village of Maclear offers opportunities for two more endemics – Grey-winged Francolin and the handsome Gurney's Sugarbird, often seen perched on roadside protea bushes. We'll also be looking out for Wattled Cranes in this area. We return to Rhodes where we overnight.

Day 3

After breakfast we head south-west towards the Amathole Mountains and the village of Hogsback. During our two days here, we will explore some of the extensive patches of indigenous Afromontane forest interspersed with commercial pine and Eucalypt plantations, as well as the truly spectacular landscape with high peaks, ravines, rocky cliffs, rolling montane grasslands and picturesque waterfalls. The Amathole forest complex is home to some very special birds, including the highly threatened endemic Cape Parrot, which will be on the top of our wish list. Other 'specials' include Knysna Turaco, Narina Trogon, Knysna and Olive Woodpecker, African Olive Pigeon, African Emerald Cuckoo, Klaas' Cuckoo, Orange Ground Thrush, Bush Blackcap, Chorister Robin-Chat, White -starred Robin, Brown Scrub Robin.

Day 4

We continue to explore the greater Hogsback area, trying to find as many of the special birds that occur here. We will also experience the hospitality and culinary delights on offer. Along rocky slopes at higher altitudes, we will be on the lookout for Ground Woodpecker, Buff-streaked Chat and Sentinel Rock-Thrush. We'll also search the montane grasslands for the handsome, endemic Black Harrier, Denham's Bustard, Grey Crowned- and Blue cranes, and Black-winged Lapwing. Flowering Proteas in the grasslands may produce both Gurney's and Cape Sugarbird - this is the only area in South Africa where these two striking endemics may be found occurring together. A few more special birds to look out for include: Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Woodland-warbler, Olive Bush-shrike and Cape Batis.

Day 5

We leave the mountains and forests of Hogsback after breakfast for a 3.5 hour drive to Addo Elephant National Park, located in the dense valley bushveld of the Sundays River region of the Eastern Cape, not far from the Indian Ocean. Here we will spend the next 3 nights. Proclaimed in 1931, the original park held a mere 11 African Elephants; today it is home to more than 450 Elephants, Lion, Black Rhino, Cape Buffalo, numerous antelope and other game species, as well as a unique dung beetle, found almost exclusively here. The expanded 360 000 hectare Addo Elephant National Park includes the Alexandria Forest, Woody Cape along the coast, as well as nearby coastal islands that are home to the world's largest breeding population of Cape Gannets and second largest breeding population of African Penguins.

Day 6

We will explore as much of the greater Addo Elephant National Park as possible in search of the myriad of bird and mammal species that occur here. Addo boasts an incredibly diverse bird fauna, with almost 450 species occurring in the expanded park. The dense spekboom thickets of the main tourist areas are interspersed with open grassy areas and wooded valleys, while closer to the coast, climax indigenous Yellowwood and coastal forests occur.

Day 7

With Addo Elephant National Park being such a birders paradise, you might want to be on the lookout for some of these special birds: Cape Robin-Chat, Karoo Scrub Robin, Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou, Southern Tchagra, Bar-throated Apalis and Cape Bunting, as well as Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Fiscal Flycatcher, Fork-tailed Drongo, Spectacled Weaver, Malachite and Greater Double-collared Sunbird. They are commonly encountered around the main rest camp. Alexandria Forest is home to a number of special species, including Knysna Turaco, the stunning Narina Trogon, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Chorister Robin-Chat and Dark-backed Weaver. Denham's Bustard and Black-winged Lapwing occur in the coastal grasslands near Alexandria Forest.

Day 8

We leave Addo during the morning and drive the 2.5 hours to Mountain Zebra National Park, 20 km south-west of the historic town of Cradock. The 1712 hectare Mountain Zebra National Park was proclaimed in 1937 to protect a small herd of the endangered Cape Mountain Zebra that still survived in the area; this founder population consisted of 17 zebra donated by local farmers. The Park's Cape Mountain Zebra herd now numbers more than 350 animals. Following expansion of the Park in the early 2000s, Black Rhino, Cape Buffalo and more recently, Cheetah were also introduced to the Park.



Day 9

We will divide our time between the varied habitats in this interesting park in search of a diverse array of mammals and birds. Mountain Zebra National Park consists of a rugged landscape of mountains, rocky gorges, bushy hillsides and grassy plains. The Wilgerboom River with its densely wooded banks bisects the Park. We will traverse the good network of roads to visit as many of the wide-ranging habitats as possible during our 3-night stay.

Day to Day



Day 10

Birding in Mountain Zebra National Park is exceptional, and this part of the Eastern Karoo is good for spotting various larks. The specials include the Sickle-winged Chat, Layard's Warbler, Namaqua Warbler, Fairy Flycatcher, African Rock Pipit and Pale-winged Starling. We will keep an eye out for Verreaux's and Martial Eagle, as well as the handsome Jackal Buzzard in the mountain areas.

On the mountain plateau the Common Ostrich, Secretarybird, Blue Crane and Ludwig's Bustard are often encountered, while Grey-winged Francolin, Ground Woodpecker, Large-billed- and Eastern Long-billed Lark, Cape and Sentinel Rock-Thrush, Mountain Wheatear and the rare, endemic Drakensberg Rockjumper are all species that we will target. The wooded valleys and thorny thickets are host to species such as Lesser Honeyguide, Acacia Pied Barbet and Red-throated Wryneck

Day 11

After breakfast we depart Mountain Zebra National Park and travel to the Khoisan Karoo Conservancy / Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve and New Holme Guest Lodge. After settling in to our accommodation we can look forward to a late afternoon game drive. This will end with sundowners and snacks overlooking the Seekoei (Hippo) River, where Hippos were reintroduced after an absence of almost 230 years. The tranquility and stark beauty of the Karoo countryside is truly something to experience. We return to the Lodge for a delicious, home-cooked Karoo dinner. After the evening meal, we will be treated to a Karoo "Shy 5" night drive, under star-studded skies where there is an excellent chance to spot rare nocturnal mammals such as Aardvark, Aardwolf, Bat-eared Fox, Cape Porcupine and the diminutive Black-footed Cat, amongst others.



Day 12

After an early morning warm beverage and biscuits, we head out onto the wide expanses of the reserve in an open safari vehicle in search of typical Karoo birds. South Africa's national bird, the regal Blue Crane, is frequently encountered.

The trumpeting calls of this species is unforgettable. The stark scenery, birds and other wildlife here will also provide wonderful photographic opportunities. We return to our accommodation for a sumptuous Karoo breakfast-brunch, after which there is time to relax around the oasis-like Lodge. The late afternoon game drive takes in the short-grass shoreline of the Seekoei (Hippo) River. As the sun dips towards the horizon, we gather around the barbecue for tender fillet and bread baked over the fire, as the sky darkens and sparkles with millions of tiny diamonds of light.

Day 13

The morning routine is repeated, this time with the early game drive taking in the birdlife of the dam shoreline. The sun is behind us so the light is perfect for photographing the birds close to the water. After midday down-time we travel to a neighbouring farm to experience Khoisan rock engravings in an area of interesting stacked rocks. This place – a gathering place of early inhabitants of the Karoo - has an almost spiritual aura to it. Middle- to Late Stone Age stone flakes scattered on the ground add to the fascinating story. We return to the Guest Farm via another stunning sundowner stop, this time atop a small, flat-topped Karoo hill or "koppie". From here we watch the setting sun as the grassland stretching out below turns gold. The evening meal is once again followed by a Karoo "Shy 5" night drive to spot any species we might have missed.



Day 14

There is time for another early morning drive on the reserve before breakfast, after which we bid farewell to the Karoo and depart by road to Bram Fischer International Airport, Bloemfontein. Here the tour ends or we catch a connecting flights to either OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg from where the **Safari Feathers: Kruger National Park birding extension** departs, or to Cape Town International Airport for the **Coastal Feathers: Cape Town & surrounds birding extension**.





Acacia Pied Barbet



Olive Woodpecker



Cheetah



Red-throated Wryneck



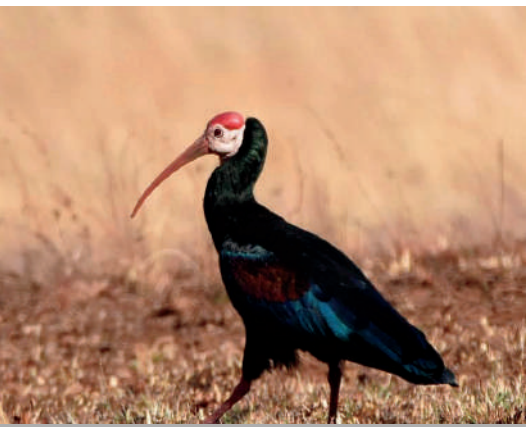
Suricate



Ground Woodpecker



Grey-winged Francolin



Southern Bald Ibis



White-starred Robin



Secretarybird



Malachite Sunbird



Cape Parrot



Chorister Robin-chat



African Elephant



Bearded Vulture

Included

- 2-night stay at Tenahead Mountain Lodge & Spa (D,B&B)
- 2-night stay at Hogsback Inn (B&B)
- 3-night stay at Barefoot Addo Elephant Lodge (Full-board)
- 3-night stay at Drostdy Hotel (B&B)
- 3-night stay at Karoo Gariep New Holme Karoo Guest House on a HB+ basis (Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Activities)
- Ground transfers
- Guides

Excluded

- Lunch at Tenahead Mountain Lodge & Spa
- Dinner and lunch at Hogsback Inn
- Dinner and lunch at Drostdy Hotel
- Lunch at Karoo Gariep New Holme Karoo Guest House
- International flights



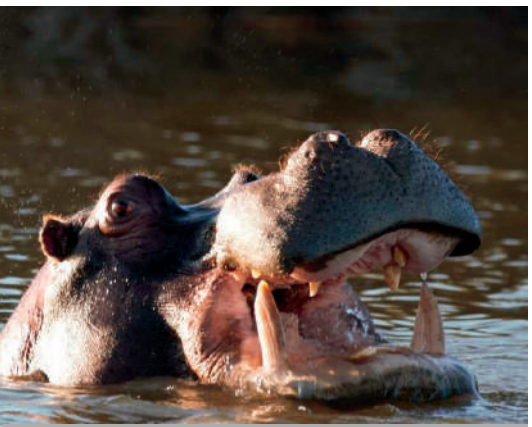
Pale-winged Starling



Zebra



Spectacled Weaver



Hippopotamus



Narina Trogon

WHY SOUTH AFRICA?



South Africa, on the continent's southern tip, is the 25th-largest country in the world – slightly less than twice the size of Texas. It boasts a lengthy coastline, stretching more than 1,500 miles along two oceans, the South Atlantic on the west and the Indian on the south and east. South Africa is neighboured by Namibia in the northwest, Zimbabwe and Botswana in the north, with Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho in the northeast.

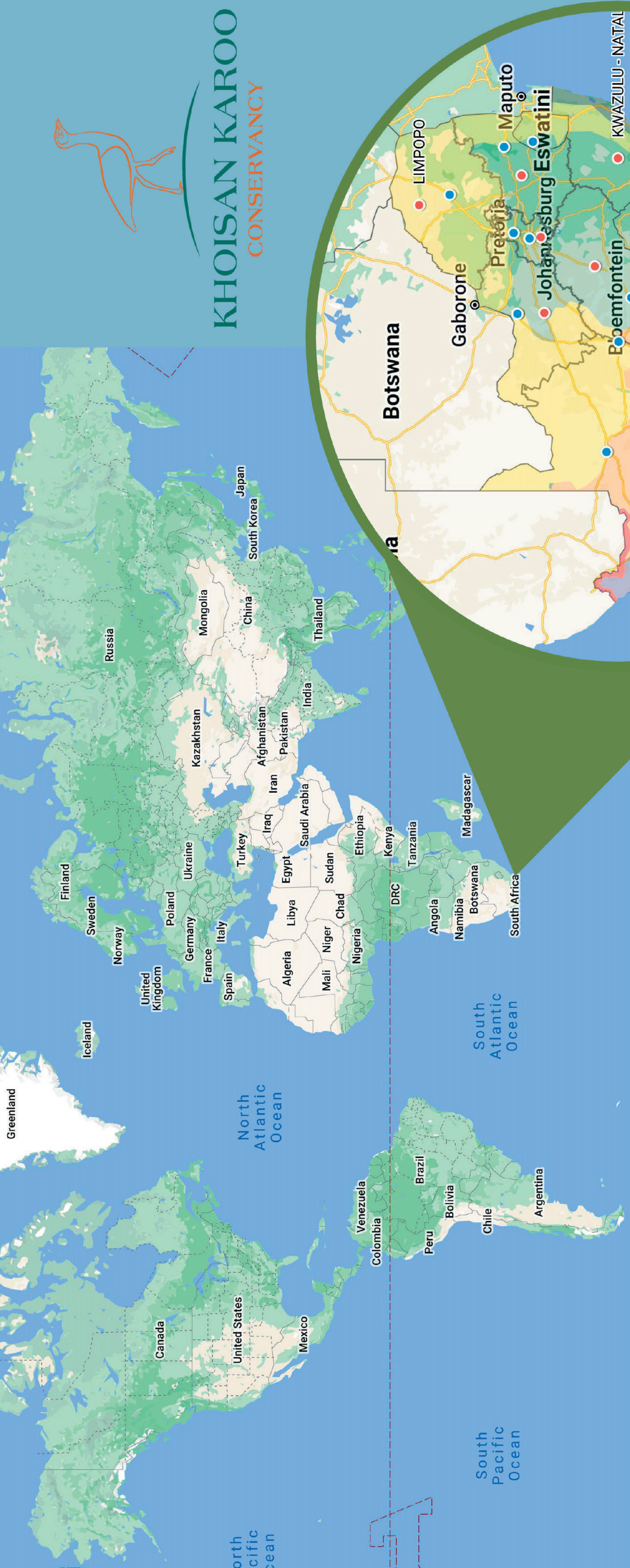
Its natural beauty and scenic wonders are legendary, from its soaring mountain peaks and passes, dense and ancient forests, to its miles of unspoiled coastline and rolling flower fields and grasslands of every hue. South Africa truly offers something to lift everyone's spirits.

South Africa is known as the adventure capital of the world. Whether it's seeing the big game animals, diving with Great White Sharks, death defying adventure sports or discovering the humanity and generosity of other cultures. Game viewing and safari in South Africa is as up-close and wild as it gets. Almost anywhere you travel in South Africa you will experience an overwhelming abundance of nature, wildlife, culture, adventure, heritage and good vibes.

One of the world's most captivating cities, Cape Town – and the Cape Peninsula up to Cape Point – are famous for its scenic beauty and celebrity beaches, 3,500 foot Table Mountain rising above the city, whale-watching, world-class shopping, nightlife, food & wine, and a laid-back atmosphere. Indeed, with wine regions stretching from the Western to the far Northern Cape and the edge of the Karoo, one can almost taste their way around South Africa.

South Africa's 'City of Gold' is Johannesburg, which pulsates with an African heartbeat felt in its endless opportunities for shopping, entertainment, freedom tours and eating out, while the world-renowned Kruger National Park is as large as Massachusetts, and consists of nearly 5 million acres and features 16 ecosystems.

When it's time to plan the most exotic golf getaway imaginable, think South Africa. The quintet of Sun City, Johannesburg, Cape Town, the Garden Route and Durban will provide the trip of a lifetime and memories for a lifetime too.



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***All itineraries can be adjusted/customised to suit your specific needs**

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Photos were provided by Rick Nuttall, Jamie Paterson, Pc Ferreira and Southern Sky Adventures , unless otherwise indicated.

ABOUT Us

Southern Sky Adventures

For almost two decades Southern Sky Adventures has introduced discerning travellers to the sheer magnificence of AFRICA. A land of warm welcomes, breath-taking sunsets, pristine wilderness areas and diversity as colourful as the local artwork.

Our tailormade- and expertly-guided safaris showcase Africa's finest hidden gems, the elusive BIG 5, wild remote locations and a natural space to unplug from the stress of modern day living. We pride ourselves on the delivery of exceptional, once-in-a-lifetime and truly memorable travel experiences for not only families, honeymooners and friends but also business travellers, school- & university groups and adventure seekers.

Although passionate about travel, we care deeply for the preservation of these untouched wild areas, the inhabiting wildlife and the surrounding communities.

Sit back, relax and allow our team of destination specialists to design and deliver your dream vacation!



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Khoisan Karoo Conservancy

KhoiSan Karoo Conservancy includes the Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve and the Hanover Aardvark Nature Reserve. New Holme Nature Lodge is the main lodge at Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve with Stoffels Rus and Karoo Gariep tented camp as additional accommodation options.

At Karoo Gariep Nature reserve we offer a variety of activities, from bird watching, night drives, a 3-day horse trail, fishing and mountain biking. On these two Reserves we also host and organize eight different events per year. We have four social- and two nature orientated projects we initiate under the Karoo Gariep Wildlife Conservation and Rhino Project (NPO).

Come and enjoy the finest the Karoo has to offer.



**Khoisan Karoo
Conservancy**



www.khoisankaroo.co.za



**@khoisankaroo
conservancy**

Rick Nuttall Birding & Nature

Rick Nuttall has been sharing his knowledge and passion for birds with like-minded people from a young age. His MSc degree involved behaviour studies of waxbills and their close relatives (Estrildid finches). Rick joined the National Museum, Bloemfontein, as Ornithologist in 1991, undertaking research for ten years before his appointment as Director, a position held until November 2017.

Rick has authored scientific, semi-scientific and popular ornithological publications and contributes regularly to national bird monitoring and citizen science projects. He has led small group birding trips in South Africa and Lesotho on occasion since 1993 and has travelled widely in Southern Africa; he now leads general nature- and birding tours full time. An avid amateur photographer and sound recordist, Rick is fascinated by the natural sound environment and always has his recording equipment at hand when he is out and about. He has been recording birds and their sounds since the early 1980s and has a particular interest in vocal imitation or mimicry, an aspect of avian behaviour prevalent in a surprising number of bird species.



**Rick Nuttall Birding & Nature
Adventures**



@ricknuttall_birding_and_nature