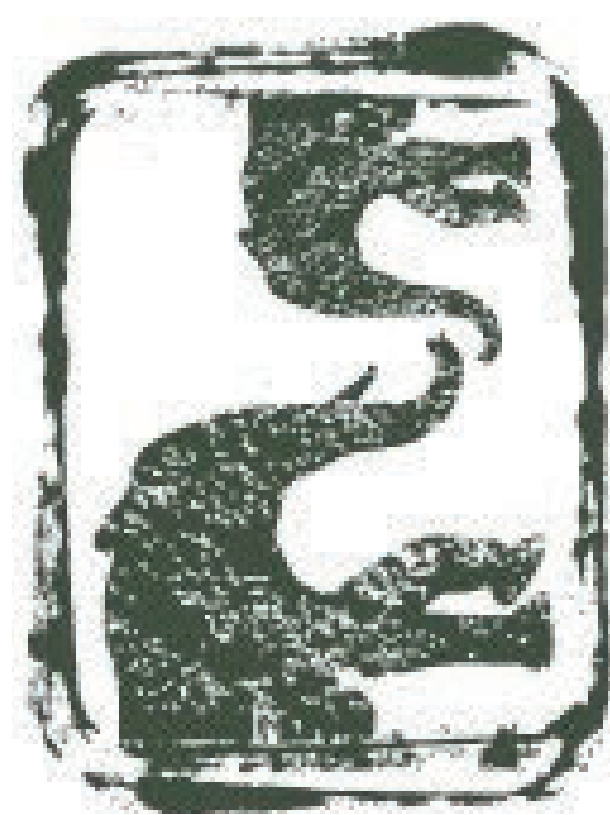


AS THE CROW FLIES:

Cape Town to Kruger National Park Birding Tour

**SOUTHERN SKY
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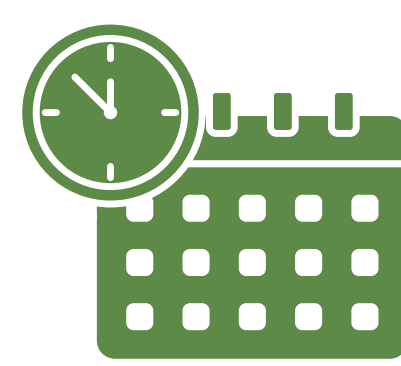
Jamie Paterson



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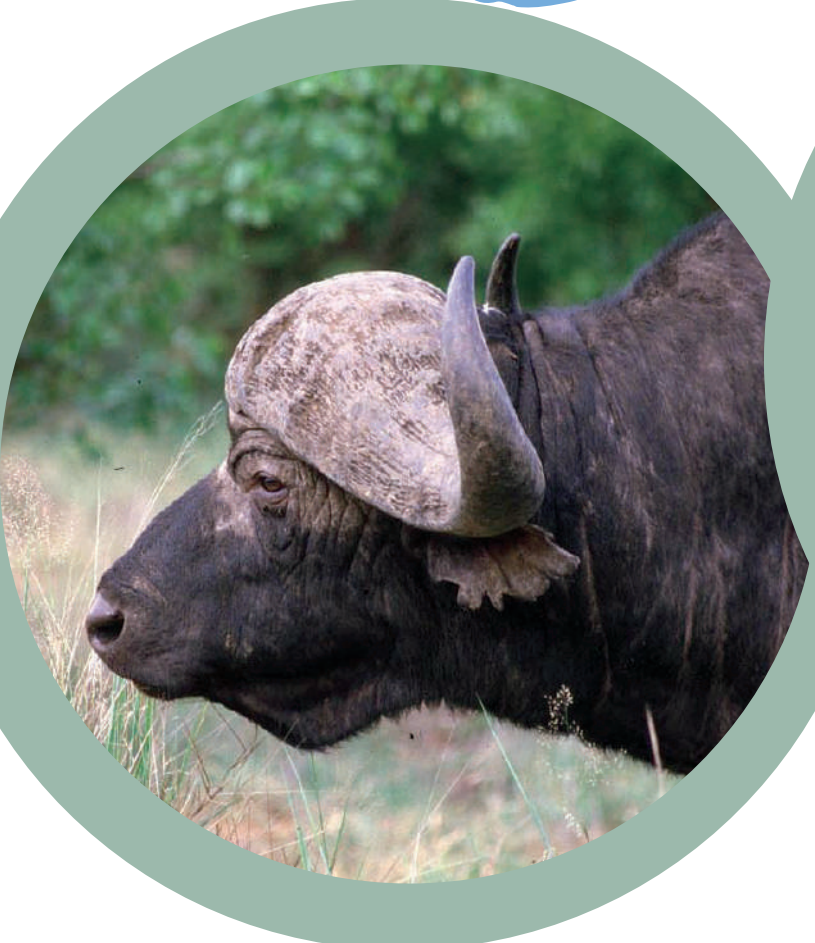
info@southernskyadventures.com
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Biomes of South Africa:

- Fynbos
- Succulent-karoo
- Nama-karoo
- Desert
- Savanna
- Grassland
- Albany Thicket
- Indian Ocean Coastal Belt
- By air
- By road
- Provincial borders

Tour Route



The Big Five



Untouched Nature



Breathtaking Views



Expert guide: Rick Nuttall

Day to Day

Day 1

The tour begins in the ‘Mother City’ – Cape Town - where our birding starts in the famous Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens in the shadow of the iconic Table Mountain. Here the Cape Spurfowl is common, and the fynbos (“fine bush”) / macchia areas are home to Cape Sugarbird, stunning Orange-breasted- and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds. The delightful, diminutive Swee Waxbills are regulars, often seen feeding in small family groups on seeding grasses. Cape Bulbuls are conspicuous, while the more densely vegetated areas along the numerous streams provide cover for Southern Boubou, Bokmakierie, Olive Thrush and Karoo Prinia.



Day 2

Although not the southern-most tip of the African continent (which is at Cape Agulhas), the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point areas offer impressive views out to the South. Over the vast oceans, the waters of the warmer Indian- and colder Atlantic Oceans mix. Excellent examples of fynbos plants grow here and are home to several endemic birds, such as Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Grassbird and Cape Siskin. Sightings of pelagic seabird species are possible from vantage points at Cape Point; a spotting scope improves the chances of seeing Southern Right Whales and other cetaceans from June to November each year.

Day 3

After enjoying an early breakfast at our accommodation near Cape Town, we travel around False Bay to the Rooi Els and Betty’s Bay area. Betty’s Bay is home to the renowned Stony Point mainland African Penguin colony, where close range sightings of penguins swimming in the water and emerging onto the beach and rocks are the norm. All four species of South African coastal cormorant (Bank, Cape, Crowned and White-breasted) breed here, and African Oystercatcher is also usually present. The nearby Harold Porter Botanical Gardens is a real gem and provides for excellent sightings.



Day 4

This morning we travel northwards to the small town of Langebaan and the nearby West Coast National Park. A major birding attraction is the significant numbers of waders utilizing the productive tidal mud and sand flats of the vast Langebaan Lagoon. A number of well-positioned viewing hides enhance this wader spectacle, particularly during summer when the Palearctic migrant waders are present. The food-rich waters also support Greater- and Lesser Flamingos, Pied Avocet, South African Shelduck, Cape Shoveler and Cape Teal. After a day of exciting birding in this unique area, we overnight in Langebaan.

Day 5

After breakfast, we will once again have a chance to venture into the West Coast National Park to find some of the specials we may have missed the previous day. We will then depart east to Ceres, where we will spend the night. There should also be an opportunity for some sightseeing and afternoon birding en route to Ceres and in the immediate surrounds of the village.



Day 6

The semi-arid Tankwa Karoo region is not far from Ceres, and provides a window into the fascinating Succulent Karoo, which is very different to the landscapes and vegetation types already visited on this tour. This is quintessential open country, accessed from Ceres via the Karooport canyon, where we will track down several special Karoo birds, including the White-backed Mousebird, Acacia Pied Barbet, Mountain Wheatear, Chestnut-vented- and Layard’s Warblers, Pirit Batis and the stunning, busy Fairy Flycatcher. Also to be found along Karooport’s rock-strewn slopes is the highly localized and elusive Cinnamon-breasted Warbler.

Day 7

We will have time for a final morning’s birding around Ceres during which we will search for the range-restricted Protea Canary. As its name suggests, this dark grey canary is often associated with proteas, particularly in mountainous areas such as these near Ceres. Other specials that will keep us busy here include the striking Bokmakierie – a bush shrike, Cape Sugarbird, Cape Grassbird and Victorin’s Warbler. After enjoying a mixture of these sightings, we take the short trip to Cape Town International Airport for our flight to Johannesburg’s OR Tambo International Airport.



Day 8

After our arrival at OR Tambo International Airport, we depart on a 1.5 hour drive north to the Zaagkuilsdrift Road. This has one of South Africa’s premier thorny woodlands and thickets, and after good summer rainfall by a vast, seasonal floodplain along the Pienaar’s River, this area hosts a number of the dry western bird species, whose ranges reach their easternmost limits here. The heavily grazed surrounding grasslands in the vicinity often produce sightings of the Greater Kestrel, Temminck’s Courser and flocks of Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks. After what promises to be an excellent day’s birding, we stay overnight at comfortable accommodation in the Zaagkuilsdrift area.

Day 9

We depart Zaagkuilsdrift and journey 200km north to the Polokwane Nature Reserve, the most reliable site for the isolated eastern-most population of the near endemic Short-clawed Lark. We will spend time here searching not only for this lark in its preferred habitat of scattered shrubs in short grassland, but also for some localized specials such as Northern Black Korhaan, Shelley’s Francolin, Double-banded Courser, Burchell’s Sandgrouse, Bushveld Pipit, and Tinkling Cisticola. This area is also good for raptors, with African Hawk-Eagle, Black-chested Snake-Eagle, Secretarybird, and Gabar Goshawk frequently encountered. We will also explore the forests of Magoebaskloof.



Day 10

This morning we leave the forested mountains and valleys and drive via the town of Tzaneen into the Kruger National Park. This Park boasts more than 500 bird species, some of which are rarely found elsewhere in South Africa. The diverse birdlife of the Kruger’s bushveld includes species such as Natal- and Swainson’s Spurfbirds, Crested Francolin – whose dusk and dawn calling epitomises the Park, the rarely seen African Finfoot, Black-bellied Bustard, Red-crested Korhaan, White-crowned Lapwing, Brown-headed Parrot with its far-carrying shrieks, exquisitely coloured Lilac-breasted Roller, Southern Red-billed, Southern Yellow-billed and African Grey Hornbills,

Day to Day

Day 11

During our stay in the Kruger National Park, we will also explore the well-maintained system of roads to find big game, including the “Big 5” – Lion, African Elephant, Leopard, African Buffalo and Rhino. The Kruger presents arguably the best opportunity to experience these amazing animals in their natural habitat - more often than not, at close range. The numerous other mammal species present in the Kruger include Hippo, African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Spotted Hyena, Giraffe, Plains Zebra, Common Wildebeest, Greater Kudu, Common Warthog, Chacma Baboon, Vervet Monkey, African Civet, African Wild Cat, Banded, Slender and diminutive Dwarf Mongoose.



Day 12

Today we head south to Satara Main Camp, located in more open country with scattered trees. As with other camps, Satara has numerous resident birds, including Southern Yellow-billed- and Southern Red-billed Hornbills, African Mourning Dove, Burchell's Starling and Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, the latter active around their large, untidy stick nest masses. Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Western Barn Owl, African Scops Owl and Pearl-spotted Owllet may be seen and heard in camp at night, as can the Square-tailed Nightjar. The open plains to the north of the camp sometimes come alive in summer with the sound of a choir of singing Monotonous Larks.

Day 13

Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Mocking Cliff-Chat and Violet-eared Waxbill are regularly seen at the nearby N'wanedzi Picnic Site, while Shaft-tailed Whydah may also be present. Any stretches of water along rivers in the area, where rocks, mud-banks and reeds are exposed, can be very active from a birding point of view, with passerines coming to drink where Hamerkop, Great- and Little Egrets and Green-backed Heron wait patiently and stalk their prey in the shallows.



Day 14

This morning we head south again, travelling to Berg-en-Dal Camp via Kruger's main Rest Camp. Along the way we will stop at Skukuza, although large and busy, worth it to stop and savour its excellent birdlife. Scanning the Sabie River in front of the restaurant often produces views of African Finfoot and Half-collared Kingfisher. We should arrive at Berg-en-Dal Camp during the afternoon, with time to settle in to our accommodation as well as an opportunity to walk around the camp, which is another excellent birding venue. If it holds water, the Matjulu Dam adjacent to the Camp attracts a host of different water birds while African Fish Eagle is usually also present.

Day 15

Today we will explore the southern section of the Park near Berg-en-Dal, which is well-vegetated and also quite hilly. Berg-en-Dal camp is an excellent place to see Grey Tit-flycatcher, White-browed- and White-throated Robin-chats, while Scarlet-chested Sunbirds are prominent. This will be our last full day in Kruger, providing an opportunity to indulge once more in the incredible natural diversity this amazing Park has to offer.



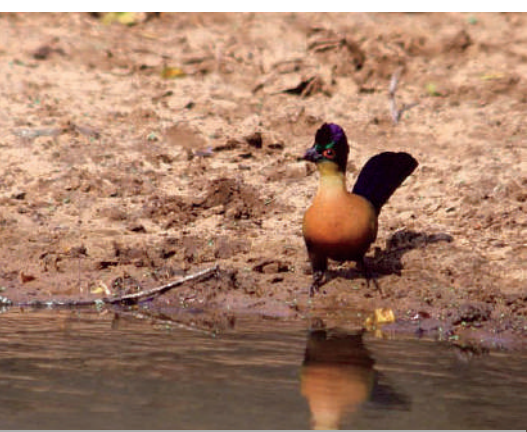
Day 16

After a final walk, we journey to Dullstroom, situated in an area of mountains with rocky outcrops, rolling grassy hills, wetlands and moist grasslands. We are in for some special birding here, with possible species including Southern Bald Ibis, Wattled- and Blue Cranes, Denham's Bustard, Grey-winged Francolin, Black-winged Lapwing, Red-chested Flufftail, Long-crested Eagle, Jackal Buzzard, Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk, Cape Eagle-Owl, Ground Woodpecker, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Sentinel Rock-Thrush, Buff-streaked Chat, Pale-crowned and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, Drakensberg Prinia, Gurney's Sugarbird, Malachite Sunbird and Yellow-breasted Pipit.

Day 17

After breakfast and some optional early morning birding on our final day, we depart Dullstroom for Johannesburg. We should have time for one or two short stops en route to look at typical highveld grassland and farmland birds such as Black-winged Kite, Black-headed Heron, endemic Cape Longclaw, Yellow-crowned Bishop and Long-tailed Widowbird. Any marshy, wetland areas should provide sightings of the Intermediate Egret, Purple Swampphen, Red-knobbed Coot, Blue-billed Teal, and the endemic Cape Shoveller. We will continue to OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg where the tour ends.





**Purple-crested
Turaco**



Black-winged Kite



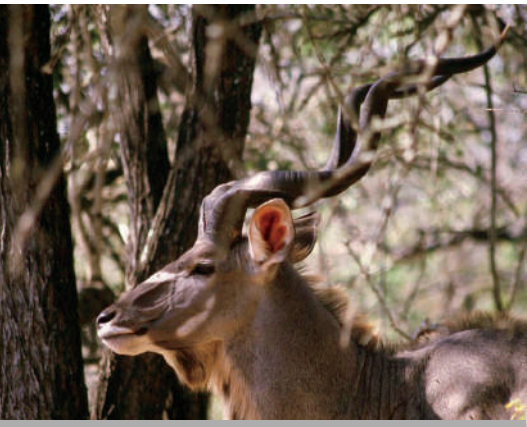
African Scops Owl



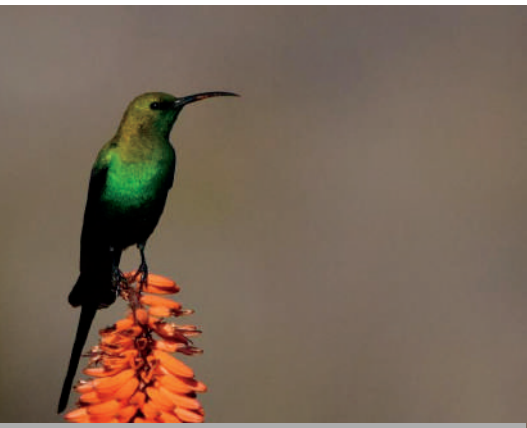
Greater Kestrel



African Wild dog



Greater Kudu



Malachite Sunbird



African Lion



Karoo Prinia



Great Egret



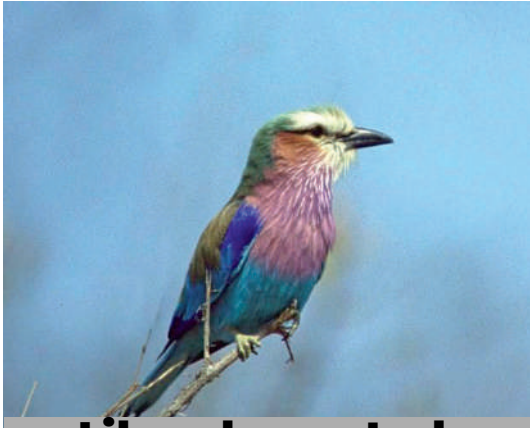
Leopard



Cape Batis



Cape Buffalo



**Lilac-breasted
Roller**



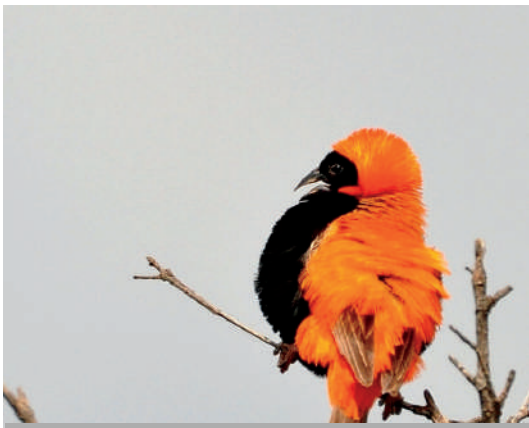
African Elephant

Included

- 3-night stay at Monkey Valley Beach Nature Resort (B&B)
- 1-night stay at on The Shark Bay (B&B)
- 2-night stay at The Tulbagh Boutique Heritage Hotel (B&B)
- 1-night stay at Zaagkuil drift Bird Sanctuary and Lodge Lodge (Self-catering)
- 2-night stay at Victoria Place (B&B)
- 2-night stay at Letaba Main Camp (Self-catering)
- 2-night stay at Satara Main Camp (Self-catering)
- 2-night stay at Berg-en-Dal Main Camp (Self-catering)
- 1-night stay at Cinzaco Dullstroom (Self-catering)
- 1 x Local flight: Cape Town to Johannesburg
- Ground transfers



Cape Longclaw



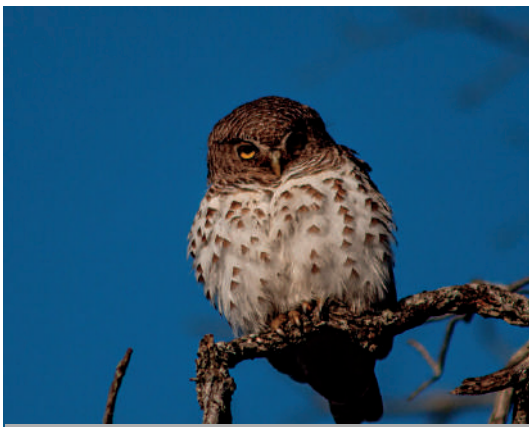
Southern Red Bishop



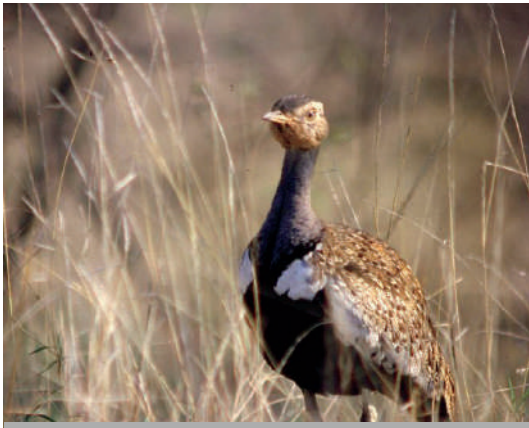
Spotted Hyena

Excluded

- Dinner and lunch at Monkey Valley Beach Nature Resort
- Dinner and lunch at The Shark Bay
- Dinner and lunch at The Tulbagh Boutique Heritage Hotel
- All meals at Zaagkuil drift Bird Sanctuary and Lodge
- Dinner and lunch at Victoria Place
- All meals stay at Letaba Main Camp
- All meals at Satara Main Camp
- All meals at Berg-en-Dal Main Camp
- All meals at Cinzaco Dullstroom
- Items of a personal nature
- International flights



African Barred Owlet



**Red-crested
Korhaan**

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.

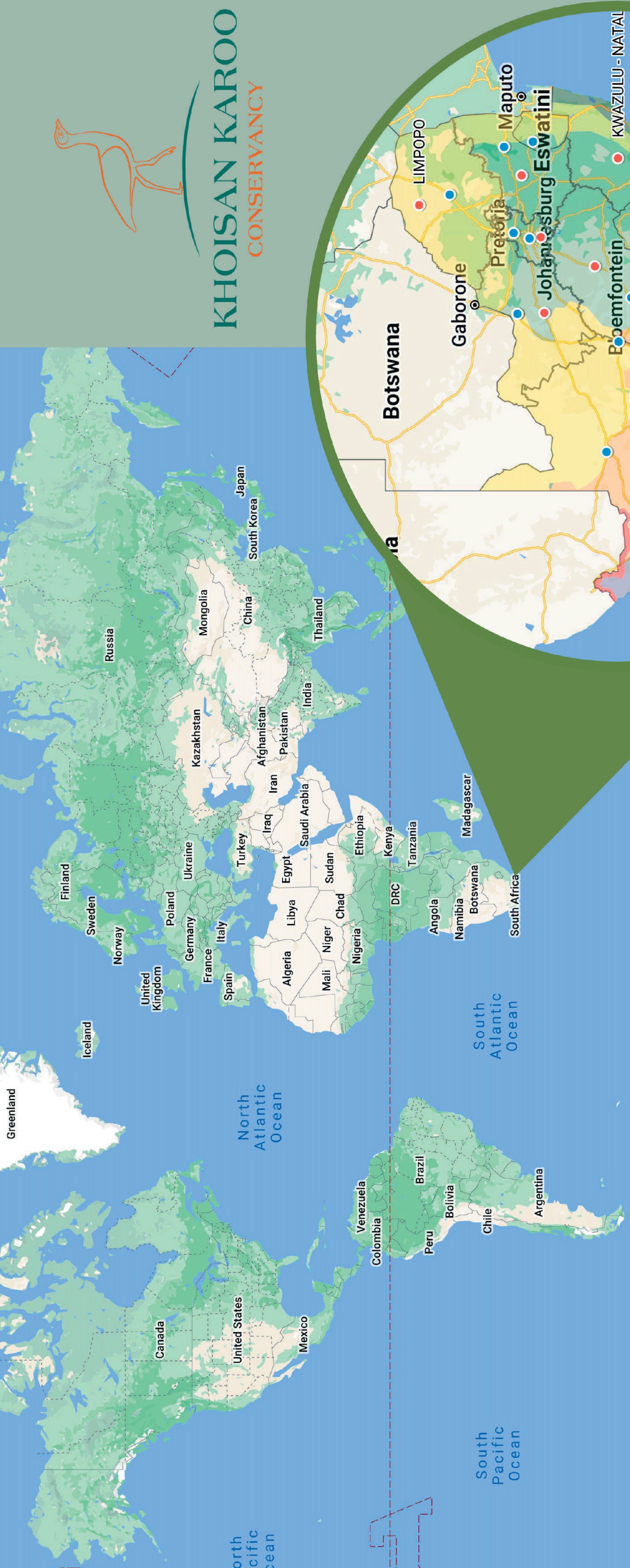
Its natural beauty and scenic wonders are legendary, from its soaring mountain peaks and passes, dense and ancient forests, to its miles of unspoiled coastline and rolling flower fields and grasslands of every hue. South Africa truly offers something to lift everyone's spirits.

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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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.

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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.



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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