



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

South Africa & Lesotho

Sani Pass

2022 (3 days)



Drakensberg Rockjumper by Adam Riley

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...**THE ITINERARY**

Day 1	Durban to Himeville
Day 2	Day trip up Sani Pass, Lesotho
Day 3	Himeville to Durban and depart

THE TOUR IN DETAIL...**Malachite Sunbird by Adam Riley**

Day 1: Durban to Himeville. This morning we will start after breakfast and will head for the Richmond area where we will attempt to track down the stunning Blue Swallow, undoubtedly our most elegant and severely threatened swallow. The birds regularly breed here in the summer months and our chances of finding this rare species are very good. The area also provides the opportunity of finding several other species including Red-winged Francolin, Levaillant's and Wailing Cisticola, Jackal Buzzard, Black Saw-wing, Red-collared Widowbird and Lanner Falcon amongst others. We will spend a good part of the morning exploring the area and hopefully successfully finding the Blue Swallow.

Continuing on we will pass through the dramatic Umkomaas River valley before arriving at a wonderfully lush patch of Mistbelt forest in the late afternoon. Here we will listen for the high-pitched screech of the similarly rare Cape Parrot and attempt to locate flocks as they make their

way into the forest to roost. Other species to keep a look-out for include Black Saw-wing and Southern Double-collared Sunbird, with further chances for Knysna Turaco, Grey Cuckooshrike, White-starred Robin, Sweet Waxbill and Forest Canary. We will then wind our way along a scenic country road to the small town of Himeville at the base of the majestic Drakensberg Mountains for a two-night stay at a wonderful guest house.

Day 2: Day trip up Sani Pass, Lesotho. Today we travel up into the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho in search of a handful of highly localised, highland endemics. In order to do this, we will transfer to 4 x 4 vehicles and make our way up the rugged and spectacular Sani Pass, birding en route. The grassy slopes and rocky outcrops on the ascent are home to family groups of the bizarre Ground Woodpecker, Drakensberg Prinia, African Yellow Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock Thrush and Yellow Bishop,

**Buff-streaked Chat by Adam Riley**



Bush Blackcap by Andrew Sutherland

whilst stands of protea bushes support the impressive Gurney's Sugarbird (belonging to a family endemic to southern Africa) and dazzling Malachite and Greater Double-collared Sunbirds. As we approach the crest of the escarpment we will be scanning the rocky scree at the roadside for the stunning Drakensberg Rockjumper, African Rock Pipit, Sentinel Rock Thrush and Drakensberg Siskin.

Atop the plateau, the steep slopes and rugged cliffs are replaced by gently undulating terrain and endless vistas of distant, blue mountains. Black Stork, African Black Duck and Southern Bald Ibis may be found alongside the mountain streams, whilst Grey-winged Francolin, Red-capped Lark, Sickle-winged Chat, African Rock and Mountain Pipits, Yellow Canary and Cape Bunting prefer adjacent meadows. A number of birds more typical of the Karoo, such as Grey Tit, Layard's Warbler, Fairy Flycatcher, Large-billed Lark and Karoo Prinia reach the eastern limits of their range here in the Lesotho highlands. We will also keep a careful watch skywards as the endangered Cape Vulture, magnificent Bearded Vulture, Verreaux's Eagle,

Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon and White-necked Raven are regularly seen overhead, along with fast-flying flocks of African Black and Alpine Swifts. Other animals of particular interest atop the "Roof of Africa" are the approachable Sloggett's Vlei Rat, endemic Drakensberg Crag Lizard and the colourful Southern Rock Agama.

Day 3: Himeville to Durban and depart. Depending on our success, or lack thereof, of finding Cape Parrot on the first afternoon, we will begin with a dawn visit to Marutswa Forest. After breakfast we will begin the journey back to Durban. Depending on our flight schedules we will visit the Karkloof area during our journey back to Durban. The Karkloof area, is a range of forested hills near Howick that is home to a number of uncommon and local birds restricted to Afro-montane forests. We will be searching for southern African endemics such as Forest Buzzard, Knysna Turaco, the highly endangered Cape Parrot, elusive Bush Blackcap, Barratt's Warbler, Olive Bushshrike, Sweet Waxbill and Forest Canary, as well as many more widespread yet no less desirable birds including Long-crested Eagle, African Olive Pigeon, Olive Woodpecker, African Emerald Cuckoo, Black-headed Oriole, the uncommon Orange Ground Thrush, Cape Batis, White-starred Robin, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Red-backed Mannikin, Red-collared Widowbird and Brimstone Canary.

Further up the Karkloof range, we visit a pristine area of upland grassland where



Ground Woodpecker by Clayton Burne



breeding Grey Crowned and Blue Cranes and, if we are lucky, Wattled Crane can sometimes be found. Black-winged Lapwing, Fan-tailed Grassbird and Cape Longclaw also occur here, but the star bird is undoubtedly the striking Buff-streaked Chat, an endemic wheatear that is striking both in appearance and song. Mammal possibilities include Mountain Reedbuck, the sleek Oribi antelope and if we are very fortunate perhaps even a Serval or Caracal.

After enjoying the Karkloof and what it has to offer, we will drive back to Durban where this wonderful short extension will come to a close.

INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 3;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Extra activities as mentioned in the itinerary; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY flights** (see above);
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBT cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold (South African Rand), and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**
- b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**
- c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

Tippling: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include ANY airfares. The tour will depart from Durban no later than **09:00** on the morning of day 1. The tour will conclude **mid to late afternoon on day 3** King Shaka International Airport, Durban.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.



FLIGHTS:

O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg (IATA: JNB) is the main port of entry for international flights in South Africa and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. King Shaka International Airport, Durban (IATA: DUR) and Cape Town International Airport, Cape Town (IATA: CPT) are easily reached by many direct international flights or via an internal flight via Johannesburg. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

