



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## South Africa

Western Cape

2022 (6 days)



Cape Rockjumper by Clayton Burne

*The Cape Extension will be a feast of endemics and we will be treated to the remarkable beauty of the south-western Cape. The Mother City, Cape Town, widely considered one of the world's most beautiful cities, will be our base for the first three nights of the extension. From here we will range out to explore the varied ecosystems conveniently accessible from our comfortable accommodations. We will then make our way up the west coast where we will explore the dry country riches of the Tanqua Karoo to round off this unbeatable South African adventure.*

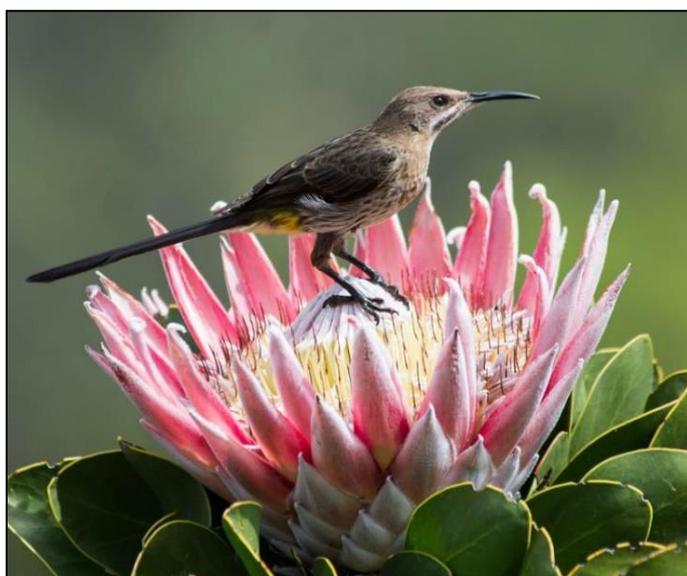
**THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...****THE ITINERARY**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival in Cape Town, visit Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Seabird outing</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Cape Peninsula and surrounds</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Ceres to Cape Town</b>

**THE TOUR IN DETAIL...**

**Day 1: Arrival in Cape Town.** We arrive in Cape Town in the early afternoon and begin our exploration of the picturesque Cape Peninsula at one of the local birding hotspots. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens lies on the slopes of Table Mountain and is home to a plethora of endemics restricted to the Macchia-like fynbos vegetation of the southern tip of Africa: Cape Spurfowl scurry across the lawns, the magnificent protea gardens are home to spectacular Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird, both of which are South African endemics, whilst Cape Bulbul, Olive Thrush, the attractive Cape Grassbird, Karoo Prinia, Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou and Southern Double-collared Sunbird may be found in areas of denser cover. We will watch out for African Goshawk and Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, which occasionally display above the indigenous forest that cloaks the slopes above the gardens. These forests are also home to African Olive Pigeon, Lemon Dove, Cape Batis and Forest Canary.

**Day 2: Seabird outing.** The cold upwelling of the Benguela current off Cape Town supports a wealth of pelagic seabirds, with vast concentrations of albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters and prions gathering in the deeper water at the edge of the continental shelf. Birding is excellent year-round and we hope to see Indian Yellow-nosed, Atlantic Yellow-nosed, Shy and Black-browed Albatrosses, Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, Cape and White-chinned Petrels, Sooty Shearwater, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Antarctic Prion, Brown Skua and Cape Gannet. If we manage to locate one of the commercial fishing trawlers the birding can be truly spectacular, with a cloud of seabirds following in the wake



Cape Sugarbird by Gareth Robbins

of the vessel to feed on the fish offal. Once the excitement has subsided, we will carefully search through the thousands of birds present for rarities such as Wandering, Northern and Southern Royal Albatrosses and Spectacled Petrel. Cetaceans are almost always encountered and we have a good chance of seeing Bryde's and Southern Right Whales. It goes without saying that a day off the Cape is likely to be a highlight of any trip to South Africa!

If time permits and depending on how tired we are after the pelagic trip, we will have the option of visiting the nearby nature reserve of Jonkersdam. This picturesque little nature reserve situated between Simon's Town and



Noordhoek protects a large tract of pristine fynbos habitat that harbours a number of fynbos endemics such as Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird and Cape Siskin, as well as other noteworthy species like Cape Grassbird, Malachite and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, Bokmakierie and Karoo Prinia.

**Please note: it is not unusual for the pelagic tour to be cancelled as a result of bad weather. Furthermore, the weather and ocean conditions off the Cape are extremely unpredictable, so our daily schedule will thus remain flexible to optimise our birding on both land and at sea.**

**Day 3: Cape Peninsula and surrounds.** A diverse array of birding habitats is present around Cape Town and today we will visit a variety of sites, ranging from wetlands to fynbos and marine shoreline.



Cape Petrel by Adam Riley

Making our way early to the rugged Hottentots-Holland Mountains, we will search for one of South Africa's finest endemics: the handsome Cape Rockjumper. Though strikingly plumaged and conspicuous by their vocalisations, these charismatic birds possess an incredible ability to disappear amongst the boulders and we may have to be patient if we wish to enjoy long sightings of these elusive creatures. The thick mountain fynbos is the favoured habitat of Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Siskin and the beautiful, endemic Victorin's Warbler, while other species including Verreaux's Eagle, Grey-backed Cisticola and Ground Woodpecker are also found in the area. Chacma Baboon is fairly common here, but we will have to scan the rocky ridges carefully for the agile Klipspringer.

Whilst in Betty's Bay we will also visit the famous African Penguin colony at Stony Point. Here we will enjoy the spectacle of hundreds of penguins waddling about on the beach and rocks at extremely close range, which makes for superb photographic opportunities. We will also keep a lookout for the endemic African Oystercatcher along the adjacent rocky shoreline, and scan through the masses of nesting cormorants for all four species of South African coastal cormorants: Crowned, Bank, Cape and White-breasted.



Protea Canary by Clayton Burne

After enjoying this spectacle, we will pay a visit to the nearby Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. A smaller version of Kirstenbosch, these beautifully appointed gardens support a wealth of fynbos specialties like Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird and Cape Siskin and is a particularly good site to see the skulking, endemic Victorin's Warbler. We are also likely to encounter a range of other noteworthy and eye-catching species like Cape and Brimstone Canaries, Karoo Prinia, Sweet Waxbill, Cape Batis, Bar-throated



Apalis, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Robin-Chat, African Dusky and Fiscal Flycatchers, Olive Thrush and Sombre Greenbul.

If time allows, we will spend the late afternoon at the productive Strandfontein Water Works. The network of settling ponds here usually supports large numbers of waterbirds of many different varieties and we are likely to encounter good numbers of Cape Shoveler, Cape Teal, Southern Pochard and Red-knobbed Coot, as well as Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Common Moorhen, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, Greater Crested and Whiskered Terns, Grey and Black-headed Herons, Yellow-billed Duck and Red-billed Teal. If we are fortunate and depending upon the water levels of the pans, we may also find small numbers of Maccoa Duck, Hottentot Teal and South African Shelduck. The surrounding reedbeds harbour African Reed, Lesser Swamp and Little Rush Warblers as well as Levaillant's Cisticola. In the late afternoon we will make our way back to our now-familiar and very comfortable accommodation on the Cape Peninsula.



Orange-breasted Sunbird by Adam Riley

**Day 4: Cape Town to Ceres via the West Coast National Park.** Our first site of interest today is the West Coast National Park. Although wader numbers are much reduced when compared to our summer months, we still will check the exposed banks of Langebaan Lagoon for lingering Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, White-fronted and Grey Plovers, as well as resident Kittlitz's Plover. In addition to the shorebirds, these areas also support large numbers of Greater Flamingo, Pied Avocet and Cape Shoveler as well as smaller numbers of Lesser Flamingo, South African Shelduck and Cape Teal. The surrounding short, coastal vegetation – strandveld, is home to the endemic Southern Black Korhaan, Grey-winged Francolin, Grey Tit, Cape Penduline Tit, Karoo Lark, Capped Wheatear, Fiscal Flycatcher, Karoo Scrub Robin and the magnificent Black Harrier, surely one of the world's most attractive raptors. In the late afternoon we will make the drive through to the farming village of Ceres, gateway to the Tanqua Karoo.



Rufous-eared Warbler by Clayton Burne

**Day 5: Ceres and the Tanqua Karoo.** Just a short drive from the village of Ceres is the semi-arid, central plateau of South Africa known as the Karoo; a land of endless vistas and spectacular sunsets, renowned for its endemic larks, chats and canaries. We leave the famous fruit-growing valley of Ceres before reaching our first stop at Karoopoort, a narrow canyon that forms the gateway to the Succulent Karoo. Birds inhabiting the arid, rocky slopes and acacia-filled watercourses of this area include White-backed Mousebird, Acacia Pied Barbet,



Mountain Wheatear, Layard's and Chestnut-vented Warblers, the dainty Fairy Flycatcher and Pririt Batis, whilst the adjacent reedbeds are home to the endemic Namaqua Warbler. One of the area's most charismatic birds is the highly localised Cinnamon-breasted Warbler. Though fairly vocal, this species is highly elusive and seeing it in its habitat of jumbled boulders and rocky scree will require a combination of patience and perseverance.



**Black Harrier by Adam Riley**

Continuing northwards onto the open flats of the Karoo, we will watch the roadsides carefully for Karoo and Spike-heeled Larks, Tractrac, Sickle-winged and Karoo Chats, the elusive Karoo Eremomela, Rufous-eared Warbler and Yellow and White-throated Canaries. Pale Chanting Goshawk and Rock Kestrel perch conspicuously on any vantage points and, if we are lucky, we may find Booted Eagle or Lanner Falcon. We will also stop to listen for the distinctive flight calls of Namaqua Sandgrouse as well as look for the cryptically coloured Karoo Korhaan. If very fortunate, we may even see the nomadic Ludwig's Bustard striding through the desolate plains.

**Day 6: Ceres to Cape Town and depart.** This morning we have the opportunity to target one final endemic species, the range-restricted Protea Canary. This uncommon and local bird is fairly regularly seen on the high protea-clad mountain slopes above Ceres and we will spend time at key positions listening for its distinctive call. The moist gullies here also hold a few other endemics such as the skulking Victorin's Warbler, Cape Grassbird, Cape Sugarbird and Bokmakierie. After our morning's birding we will then depart from Ceres for Cape Town International Airport, where the tour will conclude.



**Greater Flamingo by Adam Riley**



**INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS****This includes:**

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6;
- 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:**

- 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 (ZAR), 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.**
- Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**
- Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader 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 he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

**Special Notes:**

- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover long distances in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of yourself and your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- Please note that the seas during the pelagic trips off the Cape can be rough and participants who opt for this pelagic must therefore bear this in mind. If you have any medical conditions or physical limitations relating to balance and mobility, please do let the RBT office know.
- The Cape Pelagic is weather dependent, and has a departure potential of around 60%. If we are unable to head out to sea, we will bird other localities on the Cape Peninsula.
- Crime is problematic in certain areas of South Africa. Exercise caution as you would for any big city where crime exists. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.

**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. 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.**

