

Kuruman River Reserve Bird List

Kalahari Meerkat Project

Information from sightings by Simon Davies: Feb 2000 – Feb 2001

* Indicates birds seen in or from the Rus en Vrede garden; Afrikaans names in brackets

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Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Probably the most ridiculously out of place bird I've seen for a long time. A single adult bird was seen perched on the top of a dead tree about 400m NW of Gannavlake farm house on 9th August. When approached it just lazily flew to the next tree and showed no signs of wanting to move on. This species was recorded in the Van Zylsrus area during the South Africa Bird Atlas project but it is very unusual for one to be seen in such atypical habitat, considering how usually tied to water Grey Herons are. (Bloureier)

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Very unusual visitor, only one record of a group of 6 birds flying south over R91A on 20th April after periods of heavy rain. Large flocks have been seen in Upington, feeding on flooded vineyards and the odd one has been seen in Kuruman. (Bosluisvoel)

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A single bird landed on the rim of the reservoir near R31A, in the evening of 20th October after a thunder storm in the afternoon, when approached it flew off strongly to the north. (Kleinwitreier)

Spur-Winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Another out of place waterbird in the desert. 3 flew south east over R99B on 6th October. This is an unusual sighting as they were not recorded in the area during the Atlas but there have been some further west in the Kalahari. (Wildermakou)

Lappet-Faced Vulture* *Torgos tracheliotus*

Common resident, usually seen flying high overhead singly or in pairs. (Swartaasvoel)

Cape Vulture *Gyps coprtheres*

Scarce visitor, only a handful of definite records due to its close similarity with White-Backed Vulture, especially immatures, seen flying overhead, often in association with White-Backs, occasionally seen roosting in mixed groups on the farm. Probably much commoner than the few records suggest. (Kransaasvoel)

African White-Backed Vulture* *Gyps africanus*

Extremely common resident, seen daily around the farm. Occasionally seen in large flocks i.e. 250+ roosted in trees near the small spotlight beacon on 18th April. (Witrugaasvoel)

Bateleur* *Terathopius ecaudatus*

Unpredictable visitor to any part of the farm, mostly juveniles seen but impressive adults occasionally. (Berghaan)

Brown-Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

Only one record of a single bird over H11A on 25th February. (Bruinslangarend)

Black-Breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Fairly common resident, adults only regular over Vivian and Rascals range but wandering juveniles seen elsewhere i.e. the riverbed. The only large raptor around the farm that regularly hovers above its prey. (Swartborsslangarend)

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Only one record of a single seen from the small spotlight beacon on 18th April. It possibly could have roosted with the flock of 200+ Vultures already mentioned on this date as it was quite low, moving off to the west. The bird was probably a juvenile of the race *A. n. orientalis* with the two white bars on the upperwing being very prominent.

This is quite an unusual record as there have only been a handful of records of this species in the Kalahari (mainly from the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park) and April is also quite late for this species as most of them have left South Africa by the end of March. (Steppe-arend)

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

The commonest Eagle species seen on the farm, regular all over. (Roofarend)

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*

Scarce visitor, only two records of birds at H11A in late February and at R80A in early May. (Bruinarend)

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

Regular visitor, to most parts, with the same pattern of records as B.B Snake Eagle – wandering juveniles anywhere and adults most common over the game camp, the surest way to identify a Martial Eagle is to watch the Meerkats reaction as this is the only raptor which provokes a full scale predator alarm when it is just a dot on the horizon. (Breekoparend)

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Scarce visitor with only one or two records of pale phase birds over Umbongo range. (Dwergarend)

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Scarce but regular summer visitor, none were seen throughout winter until one flew high over R97A to the south on 30th October. These birds were of the race *B. b. vulpinus* which breed in eastern Europe and Asia and migrate to Southern Africa in the winter, they differ from our own *B. b. buteo* by being generally more rufous, having a more prominent black trailing edge to the wing and having slightly longer and thinner wings - a result of their much more migratory habits. (Bruinjakkalsvoel)

Pale-Chanting Goshawk* *Melierax caorus*

Very common raptor all over the farm, regular everywhere. Especially seen perched on telegraph posts, usually right next to Meerkat burrows, resulting in no Meerkats getting up that morning (just ask eye-eye Walton). A pair bred near the front gate and two juveniles fledged in November but apparently (I was on holiday) one of them was killed on the road but the other appears to have made it to adulthood, it was very regularly seen hanging around the front gate and was seen to catch a fairly large snake just into Frisky territory.

It then went missing for a few weeks but reappeared on 22nd January, when it half heartedly joined an adult (parent?) in mobbing an immature Martial Eagle over the front gate, much to the annoyance of Youngies but it soon backed off as the Martial cruised off and the adult made threatening movements and calls towards the immature, who then shot off in the opposite direction making loud 'submissive' calls. (Bleeksingvalk)

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Very scarce visitor with only one record of a single bird moving east over H18B in late February. (Swartwou)

Yellow-Billed Kite* *Milvus aegyptius*

Very scarce visitor, with only three records, the first again over H18B of a pair moving south west, amazingly on the same day as the Black Kite, then a single flew in from the east to land in the test collar tree for 20mins (much to the annoyance of Whiskers), before moving off slowly to the east again on 21st December, after a very large thunder storm the night before and a third bird drifted slowly over the house to the east on 23rd January, the morning after a night of rains. (Geelbekwou)

Black-Shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Uncommon, but regular visitor to most parts of the farm. Usually seen as singles but occasionally seen in small groups i.e. 3 flew north over R13A on 14th July. (Blouvalk)

Pygmy Falcon* *Polihierax semitorquatus*

Very common all over the farm, most inactive Sociable Weaver nests are due to a pair taking over one of the nesting chambers, they are easily spotted by the ring of white guano around the rim. Pairs have been observed taking it in turns flying into an active nest and each time returning with a chick so its not surprising that the nest is deserted when the Falcons move in. Displaying pairs are particularly obvious as they bob up and down calling their heads off.

They seem to have a tendency to chase/dive bomb other medium birds as if they've got a chip on their shoulder, they have been seen to have 'arguments' with Hoopoes and Drongo's amongst others, this also sometimes extends to Meerkats as every so often one of them gets an idea to repeatedly buzz a Meerkat group, swooping low (10 or so cm) above their heads, this behaviour has been seen at R96B where Cassia didn't take to kindly to it and at R62A where Basil *et al* were the victims. There is no way that they could take a Meerkat (not even a pup) so it is probably a mob response, as seen in smaller birds mobbing a raptor. (Dwergvalk)

Gabar Goshawk* *Micronisus gabar*

The commonest raptor on the farm, regular everywhere. There were three records of the melanistic form, one in the riverbed near R35A in May, a second flew over the house with a normal form on 11th September and a very noisy pair were seen around the G09A corral, with the (presumably) male carrying food and displaying etc. on 22nd December. (Kleinsingvalk)

Little-Banded Goshawk (Shrika) *Accipiter badius*

Uncommon resident, most common around Gannavlake. There were none seen throughout most of winter until a displaying pair were seen over the riverbed just west of G115A on 18th August, are they partial migrants and so move away from the area during winter? The best sighting was one mobbing a Giant Eagle Owl in the scrub behind Gannavlake farm house on 13th September. (Gebande Sperwer)

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*

Only one record of a male just behind the house in the last week of May. This would be a potential first for the Northern Cape as it is generally a western forest species but as there is some doubt concerning this record it is only included tentatively. (Kleinsperwer)

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Common summer visitor to the farm, most common over Umbongo and Vivian. The only returning bird was one that flew west over R80B on 23rd January. (Edelvalk)

Red-Necked Falcon* *Falco chicquera*

Uncommon resident, occasional sightings from all over the farm, including one seen fighting with a Gabar Goshawk from the veranda. (Rooinekvalk)

*****Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus****

An enigma. A single bird which could only have been this species flew low past R80A on 21st July and it is a potential South African first, I had very positive feedback from various contacts so its included in this report. The bird was seen well, in good light, just as Young Ones were returning to the burrow at around 1700hrs, it was uniformly grey above and below with its yellow cere and eye-ring prominently seen. It was quite a chunky falcon, about the same overall size as a European Kestrel but it had a broader and blunter tail, broader and shorter wings and a deeper chest. Interesting.

This species has only an isolated presence in the Southern African subregion – a small breeding population in the northeastern Cunene region in northern Namibia, could the combination of 10-day long severe storms in north Namibia just before the sighting and normal non-breeding season wanderings combine to push the bird this far south? (Donkergrysvalk)

Red-Footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Common passage migrant, seen in small migrating flocks with a maximum of 14 birds in 10mins over H18B on 1st March. (Westelike Rooipootvalk)

Rock Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

One flew south over R99B on 14th September. (Kransvalk)

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Scarce visitor, only a handful of records. (Kleinrooivalk)

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*

Only two records, one a dodgy single bird over G07A in early February and one definite bird over M40B on 17th July. (Grootrooivalk)

Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

Scarce visitor, a pair made a spectacular appearance on the flats behind the house on 2nd June, much to the annoyance of Yoda in Vivian who war-danced at them. There were then several records of singles in the area surrounding the flats through July and probably the same pair were seen stalking through the grass near R81B in the afternoon of 28th July.

A pair has previously been seen in the game camp, so maybe there is just one resident pair which mainly stays in the game camp and makes occasional forays to Rus en Vrede, however none were seen after this last date, despite walks through the game camp, so they are probably just a scarce visitor to this area. (Sekretarisvoel)

Red-Billed Francolin *Francolinus adspersus*

Scarce resident. 5 birds were seen very close to the corrals behind Gannavlake farm house on 9th August. This species is quite scarce in the Northern Cape with their distribution extending like a tongue down from Botswana, through Van Zylsrus to Olifantshoek and just beyond. (Rooibekfisant)

Common Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Several are resident around the Heights farmhouse but I don't know how many and on 22nd January 5 females were seen in the game camp near the Vivian gate, I was driving past and stopped, trapping them against the fence and they fluffed out their neck feathers as a threatening display? they then wandered further into the game camp and scared the hell out of Vivian who were on the road. (Pou)

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

Very common resident, occurs in flocks of 350+ birds especially in the riverbed. The only other large flock ranges across Drie Doring from R111B to R09B, about 20-25 birds which were seen occasionally around R99B are possibly fragments of this flock. Birds were seen to start to get amorous in January with the males chasing the females round in circles for up to 10 minutes until the female gets annoyed and flies off. (Gewone Tarentaal)

Ostrich *Struthio camelus*

Best not to mention these. (Volstruis)

Kurrichane Buttonquail *Turnix sylvatica*

Common but elusive resident. Only seen when flushed from dense grass, probably much more common this year than in previous years due to the unusually thick and extensive grass covering. Quite a few really small juveniles seen in autumn and early winter. (Andalusian Hemipode or Small Buttonquail in Europe). (Bosveldkwarteltjie)

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*

Seen occasionally on all parts of the farm, with a maximum of 5 near R09B in May, always impressive no matter what they are doing. (Gompou)

Red-Crested Korhaan *Eupodotis ruficrista*

Occasional records of this species in Drie Doring range from R10B and R104B, Lazuli range and the game camp in Rascals range. Probably more common than the number of records suggests especially across Drie Doring range. A nest was found 100m south of R85B with a single egg in it when a female was flushed off on 16th October. (Boskorhaan)

Northern Black Korhaan *Eupodotis afraoides*

Common and spectacular resident, most common across Drie Doring range with a couple behind the big dune. Usually seen as you jump out of your skin as they burst out of nowhere just before you tread on them but are bold enough to get good views on the ground. Often seen in harem groups of a male and 2 or 3 females. (Witvlerkswartkorhaan)

Three-Banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

One circled Gannavlake twice at 1130 on 23rd October, probably associated with a very big thunder storm two nights earlier. (Driedandstrandkiewiet)

Crowned Plover* *Vanellus coronatus*

Extremely common everywhere. Bloody noisy things. Forms large non-breeding flocks in winter with a maximum of 51 on the flats behind the house on 18th July. (Kroonkiewiet)

Spotted Dikkop *Burhinus capensis*

Uncommon but regular, nocturnal summer visitor. First returning birds were superb views of a pair seen on the Drie flats behind R53B on 15th September. Most often seen on the main road in the car headlights. (Dikkop)

Double-Banded Courser *Smutsonis africanus*

One was seen in the short grass just east of R18B in the evening of 17th October, it was first located by its high pitched call and a pair were seen in roughly the same place on 16th January. (Dubbelbanddrawwertjie)

Burchell's Courser *Cursorius rufus*

Only two records of one near R18B in late May and a pair flushed from by R29B on Christmas Eve. Probably more common than records suggest. (Bloukopdrawwertjie)

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*

A single was flushed from the flats, just in the game camp near R98B on Boxing Day and a pair were seen very well deeper into the game camp on 18th January where their total lack of white on the trailing edge of the wing and tail tip as well as the more prominent long, all white supercillium extending to a point behind its head, which distinguished them from the similar Burchell's Courser. (Trekdrawwertjie)

Burchell's Sandgrouse *Pterocles burchelli*

Uncommon but regular visitor, usually to areas of shorter grass such as the flats behind the house and parts of Drie Doring range, often just seen flying high overhead giving its diagnostic two-note flight call, with a maximum of 4 going over G57A to the west on 29th July. (Gevlekte Sandpatrys)

Rock Pigeon *Columba guinea*

Seen occasionally around Gannavlake and The Heights farm houses with a few pairs sometimes recorded. Only two records away from the houses of a single bird flying high to the east over R57A in late May and a pair low over R100B to the north on 3rd October. (Kransduif)

Cape-Turtle Dove* *Streptopelia capicola*

Extremely common resident, seen daily all over the farm. Large flocks congregate around water troughs and reservoirs, before dispersing to forage elsewhere as on 3rd November a distinctive individual with no tail was seen at the Lazuli, G09A water reservoir in the morning and in the afternoon it was seen in the riverbed near R35A. (Gewone Tortelduif)

Laughing Dove* *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Very common resident, seen daily all over the farm. Also forms large mixed Dove flocks around water. (Rooiborsduifie)

Namaqua Dove* *Oena capensis*

Common resident, most often seen around water troughs and reservoirs (especially the small pool that regularly forms outside the bathroom) in association with other Doves. (Namakwaduifie)

African Cuckoo* *Cuculus gularis*

Uncommon but regular summer visitor, on all parts of the farm. The first returning birds were a displaying pair in the riverbed (flying in formation round and round in circles), about 5-600m into Gannavlake on 4th October. (Afrikaanse Koekoek)

Black Cuckoo* *Cuculus clamosus*

Uncommon summer visitor, seen mainly across Lazuli and Whiskers range. The first returning bird was one being mobbed by a Fork-Tailed Drongo, just west of R85B on 21st September. A juvenile appeared at the birdbath around midday on 23rd December. (Swartkoekoek)

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*

Common summer visitor to most parts of the farm but most common along the road in Umbongo range. First returning bird was seen near M40B on 15th December but they could have arrived in November while I was on holiday. (Bontnuwejaarsvoel)

Great-Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

Widespread only in December and January with records of an immature somewhere on The Heights behind H13A on 13th December, a pair of adults near R62A on 16th December, a single near R97A on 21st December and regular sightings of a single near R108B. They seem to be quite common at this time of year, so it would lead to the conclusion that they arrive later and leave earlier than other summer visitors as none were seen when I first arrived (Jan, Feb and Mar), or perhaps just it's a good year or I didn't see them earlier on.

This appears to be the opposite of many other Palearctic migrants, (except European Bee-eater), who seem to be more numerous in the latter half of summer (ie. Red-footed Falcon, European Roller and Spotted Flycatcher) but I only have two seasons to compare. (Gevlekte Koekoek)

Deiderik Cuckoo* *Chrysococcyx caprius*

I learnt the call of this species when I was on holiday and when I returned in the first week of December I immediately heard one from the house and realised that I had actually been hearing this species for most of October before I left but it was not until 11th December that I saw one – a male flying south over R85B. (Diederikkie)

Giant-Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*

Common but elusive resident, most often seen along the main road in the car headlights or early in the morning on telegraph posts. There is a resident pair which are often seen perched on telegraph poles opposite H11A first thing in the morning, an immature was seen here in the morning of 27th December. (Reuse Ooruil)

Spotted-Eagle Owl* *Bubo africanus*

Uncommon resident. A bird was flushed from the riverbed on the Heights farm on 28th June, with another sighting there on 11th October, this one was mobbed by a whole host of other species including Drongos and Thrushes and a pair (probably immature birds) flushed from trees on the southern edge of Drie range, near R102B on 18th September. The best however came on 4th November when Andy Young found a nest just south of R85B and later that afternoon I went to have a look and flushed two adults from the tree and saw the young owlet at the base of the tree, it was still just a ball of white down with only a few dark feathers just poking through on its wings, it was totally unfazed by me going up to half a metre away. Superb.

When I returned from holiday however, there was an unfortunate story as Kev was out with Rascals and the young Owl attempted to catch a Rascals pup, missed, and

then was jumped by the whole of Rascals and was badly injured and had to be put down. A single adult which was subsequently seen regularly hunting over the flats in the game camp, closer to the Vivian gate may have been one of the dispersing parents.

Dissection of a number of pellets from the nest site revealed no small mammal remains, despite Striped Mouse and Gerbils being present in the area, consisting mainly of beetle carapaces and plant material, these pellets could be from the adults who surrendered the more protein rich mammal catches to the chick and lived on insects throughout this period? But the sample size of pellets was quite small.

In January a single bird was present nearly every night on the fence by the entrance to the 'car-park', during which there were many sightings along the road to Van Zylsrus after dark, where they just stand in the middle of the road and wait for you to almost stop before lazily taking off. (Gevlekte Ooruil)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Scarce resident. Seen infrequently by everyone except me up until I finally caught up with them on 9th September when 2 adults and an immature were seen on a nest on the water tower next to Gannavlake farm house (nest was found by Andy Young the previous evening). Its amazing to think that I've walked past there many times before, during the day, and had no idea that they were there and they were found by accident by Andy using the tower as a vantage point to see the sunset. (Nonnetjie-uil)

Pearl-Spotted Owl *Glaucidium perlatum*

Common resident, most regularly located when a group of small birds mob a roosting Owl, most common in the riverbed. Usually seen in singles apart from a pair just west of G115A on 18th August, probably early birds preparing for the breeding season. (Witkoluil)

White-Faced Owl *Otus leucotis*

Probably a common resident but not often seen as its strictly nocturnal. Most often seen on night drives in Drie Doring range. The most regular sightings came from a pair which were often seen near R100B in Rascals range, presumably the same pair moved across to R99B on 19th January with an juvenile in tow who made persistent hissing alarm calls at me while the adults looked on disinterestedly. (Witwanguil)

Rufous-Cheeked Nightjar* *Caprimulgus rufigena*

Common summer visitor, most often seen at dusk around R34A and the big dune, occasionally flushed during the day from the ground. Birds started reappearing in mid-September, with the number of displaying males increasing rapidly, with them being seen around the house, G07A, very common in the Elveera riverbed and at both the small and big dunes. A male was found dead on the road in the morning of 13th October.

The displaying males are easily attracted to you by waving a white rag (or bright white, new trainers) at dusk, as it imitates the white flashes on their wings and tails. (Rooiwangnaguil)

Pennant-Winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*

Only one record of a female we hit in the car on the way to the pub in Van Zylsrus in the evening of 12th February. This species has not been recorded this far west in South Africa before but there are a few records from Botswana and even Namibia. (Wimpelverknaguil)

European Swift* *Apus apus*

Very common summer visitor, forms large flocks of 400+ birds over any part of the farm. Largest flocks form when birds follow storms. The first returning birds were 2 or 3 which lingered over R101B with a small group of Little Swifts on 15th September, these proved to be a very advanced guard as the next ones were not seen until 5th November when 8+ flew east over G05A at around 1830hrs. The big arrival though was some time in November as when I returned from holiday in the first week of December they were widespread. (Europese Windswael)

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

6 flew west over R03B, followed by 2 or 3 which lingered over R101B half an hour later on 15th September (accompanied by 1 White-Rumped Swift and 2 or 3 European Swift). This species is extremely common in both Upington and Kuruman, where they form large flocks over the towns, an unusual individual was seen in Upington in April with an very elongated, white outer tail feather. (Kleinwindswael)

White-Rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

A single bird flew west over R03B with 6 Little Swifts on 15th September. (Witkruiswindswael)

Red-Faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*

Uncommon and localised summer visitor, seen in groups of up to 12 birds, mainly confined to Lazuli range around G07A. The first returning birds were a pair seen along the Botswana road on 4th October. (Rooiwangmuisvoel)

White-Backed Mousebird* *Colius colius*

Fairly common visitor, scarce in winter though, with only a single in the garden in June being seen all winter. The first returning birds were a group of 5 near the corral opposite H11A in Umbongo range on 11th October, generally replaces Red-Faced Mousebird in other ranges, including around the house and in the garden. (Witkrusmuisvoel)

Grey-Hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

Only one record of a single bird in the riverbed G54A in April around the time of really big storms. One was also seen on the communications tower in Van Zylsrus about a week after the one on the farm. There were other vagrant records of this species this summer in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and the Langeberg Mountains (near Witsand Nature Reserve) and they have also been seen at Olifantshoek. (Gryskopvisvanger)

Brown-Hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*

One record of a single bird in the riverbed near R32A in April. Apparently there have been no other records of this species in the Van Zylsrus area although they are relatively common near the Korannaberg Mountains (on the way to Kuruman, including Twsalu). (Bruinkopvisvanger)

European Bee-eater* *Merops apiaster*

3 were seen in the riverbed about 500m west of Gannavlake farm house on 13th September, this marked the start of a large influx of this species to the farm with odd birds being seen everywhere, sometimes in large flocks such as 12 south over R80B on 16th September and 16 south east over G07A on 19th September. These early birds could be part of the small breeding population in South Africa, which probably only migrate as far north as central or maybe northern Africa for the South African winter and the main Palearctic population would start to arrive later. They are often

only located by their calls as they hawk flying insects extremely high up, often out of view. (Europese Byvreter)

Swallow-Tailed Bee-eater* *Merops hirundineus*

Common resident, seen very regularly in groups of up to 8 or 9 on all parts of the farm. (Swaelstertbyvreter)

White-Fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*

One record of a single bird flying high to the south west over R80A in April during the period of large storms. This species is common in the Kimberly region and along the Orange River as far as Prieska, and during the Southern African Bird Atlas project there were records in the Molopo River, not far east of Van Zylsrus. They have recently been discovered breeding at Augrabies so it was probably a bird moving between the two populations, still a good record though. (Rooikeelbyvreter)

Lilac-Breasted Roller* *Coracias caudata*

Very common resident, seen daily all over the farm. Regularly seen perched on telegraph poles, especially obvious when they are displaying when they fly upwards calling loudly and then dive bomb anything they see when they are at the top of their arc – including Meerkat researchers, much to the annoyance of the Meerkats. The only immature bird was noted near G05A on 5th January in the company of an adult and it sounded very like a pup giving a distress call. (Gewone Troupant)

Purple Roller *Coracias naevia*

Uncommon visitor, only seen occasionally on all parts of the farm. A displaying pair were seen near R29B on 16th June. None were then seen throughout most of the rest of winter until a single was seen in the riverbed just west of G115A on 18th August. (Groottrouphant)

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Uncommon passage migrant, only seen occasionally when passing through, mostly in Umbongo range. Small migratory flocks can occur anywhere though. No returning birds were seen. (Europese Troupant)

Grey Hornbill* *Tockus nasutus*

Common resident, seen all over the farm. Forms large flocks in the winter evenings, especially across Drie range between R10B and R03B, with a maximum of 21 in the evening of 31st July – do they roost communally? (Grysneushoringvoel)

Yellow-Billed Hornbill* *Tockus leucomelas*

Very common resident, seen daily all over the farm, in groups of up to 22 birds. Especially obvious are displaying pairs as they inflate their throat sacks, spread their wings and call their heads off. Yellow-Billed Hornbills seem to be dominant over the Grey's in the few interactions observed between the two Hornbill species, with them rarely tolerating the Grey's in the same tree as them.

Occasionally this species, like the Fork-Tailed Drongo, kleptoparasitises the Meerkats, using its size and muscle to wrestle food away from the Meerkats by perching above them and almost landing on their heads when they see some food. They seem to be in direct competition with the Drngo's but usually come out second best to the Drongo's speed and agility despite using their size and muscle to good effect by pushing the Drongo's off the best perch above the group. One was seen to take a well grown Cape-Turtle Dove chick from the nest on 28th October near R02B. (Geelbekneushoringvoel)

Red-Billed Woodhoopoe *Phoeniculus damarensis*

One record of a single bird near G39A on 19th March. There have been over the years a number of records of this species along the Molopo and Kuruman rivers but it is not clear whether it is a resident population but if it were you would think that small groups would have been seen as they are cooperative breeders with usually three or more helpers plus the breeding pair. (Gewone Kakelaar)

Greater Scimitarbill* *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*

Very common resident, seen all over the farm, including in the garden. (Swartbekkakelaar)

African Hoopoe* *Upupa africana*

Common resident, regularly seen on all parts of the farm. The first displaying male of the season was seen in a tree at the front gate on 24th August. It is now widely recognised that there are in fact, three species of Hoopoes with the African Hoopoe here (*U. africana*), being distinct from the Eurasian birds (*U. epops*) and the Madagascar species. There is an interesting theory, given to me by Dr. Richard Liversidge that although the Hoopoe originated in Africa, they were exterminated and survived only on Madagascar, from where they were pushed up to Eurasia by the monsoons and then were pushed back down into Africa by the glaciations, he is just awaiting DNA confirmation before the paper is published. (Afrikaanse Hoepoep)

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*

Only one record of a juvenile near R34A in late March. Although this species is out of its normal range here, they are fairly regularly found in the eastern Northern Cape, so it's not that far for a wandering juvenile to go. (Grootheuningwyser)

Acacia Pied Barbet* *Tricholaema leucomelas*

Common resident, regularly seen on all parts of the farm. Often seen in association with Sociable Weaver nests. (Bonhoutkapper)

Golden-Tailed Woodpecker* *Campethera albingoni*

Uncommon resident, although the most regularly seen Woodpecker species, can be seen on any part of the farm. They were especially obvious in early October when pairs would fly round and round a tree shrieking their heads off with the male occasionally stopping to drum for a short period. (Goudstertspieg)

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*

Uncommon resident, can be seen on any part of the farm. (Kardinaalspeg)

Bearded Woodpecker *Thripias namaquus*

A single male was seen near R13A on 14th July and another was seen just to the east of Gannavlake farm house on 18th August, are they possibly partial migrants so are just uncommon winter visitors on the farm? (Baardspieg)

Clapper Lark *Mirafrapa apiata*

Uncommon, localised visitor, 4 birds were seen on the flats behind the house in April, none were then seen through most of winter until the 24th August when a walk across Rus en Vrede from Rascals to Drie Doring range produced 10-12 displaying males (flying high, wing clapping and giving a high pitched whistling call before parachuting down to the ground again). It is probably a combination of observer bias (not being in that area for some time) and them just starting to display which explains why they suddenly became obvious as it would be easy to overlook them in the long

grass if they were not displaying. After this date birds were regularly seen and heard displaying in the eastern half of Drie Doring range. (Hoeveldklappertjie)

Rufous-Naped Lark *Mirafra africana*

Having learnt this species call on holiday, one was heard calling in the game camp in the evening of 19th January. Probably more regular than this one record suggests. (Rooineklewerik)

Sabota Lark *Mirafra sabota*

A possible/probable single was seen just over the road towards Frisky in early June and a definite bird was seen near R80A on 18th July. (Sabotalewerik)

Fawn-Coloured Lark* *Mirafra africanaoides*

Very common resident, seen all over the farm. This species shows great variation in colour around the farm, varying from a quite dark, almost ginger form which is most common to a much paler, washed out version, commoner across Gannavlake and very pale birds have been seen along the Botswana road. Nests are often raided by the Meerkats. (Vaalbruinlewerik)

Monotonous Lark* *Mirafra passerina*

Unpredictable visitor, they were extremely widespread when I first arrived and for the subsequent 2 or 3 months, they were very obvious perching on telegraph poles etc singing constantly day and night, really living up to its name. The only bird to be recorded from then on was a single heard calling somewhere in the Heights on 20th September, after which none were seen despite there being somewhat of an influx to the east near Kimberley.

This species is not usually that common this far south, being more a Botswana bird and the two influxes mentioned can probably explained by local conditions – in Botswana and northern South Africa. This trend is probably rainfall related (see 'Wattled Starling' entry) (Bosveldlewerik)

Stark's Lark *Spizocorys starki*

One was seen in the grass, alongside the road near R04A in the evening of 20th October after an afternoon thunder storm. (Woestynlewerik)

Chestnut-Backed Finchlark *Eremopterix leucotis*

One record of a male flying south east over R80B calling loudly on 15th September. (Rooiruglewerik)

Grey-Backed Finchlark* *Eremopterix verticallis*

Common, but localised when I arrived, prefers areas of shorter grass such as the flats behind the house and behind the big dune. Has been seen drinking from the reservoir in the garden in very hot periods. No returning birds were seen at the end of my time – a direct result of last years very wet conditions and this seasons dry conditions? (see 'Wattled Starling' entry) (Grysruglewerik)

Spike-Heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasiata*

Uncommon visitor, seen in small groups on the flats behind the house and in Drie Doring range. (Vlaktelewerik)

Greater-Striped Swallow* *Hirundo cucullata*

3 were seen hawking low over the house in the afternoon of 12th September. A pair were then seen perched on a dead tree near the buildings at G05A on 1st November but were not seen to go into the buildings so perhaps they were briefly checking out a

potential nest site before moving on again, probably the same pair were seen flying east over G75A (away from the buildings) the next morning. The next day (3rd) they were seen perching on trees and repeatedly entering the small red-brick building at the Lazuli, G09A corral but they were not staying inside for longer than a few seconds, so they were just looking for potential nest sites again and they were seen again the next day but not going into the building and then I went on holiday so do not know what happened subsequently.

When I returned from holiday, probably the same pair were seen hawking around the buildings at G05A on 22nd December and remained until 5th January but there were no signs of breeding or having bred but... (Grootstreepswael)

South African Cliff Swallow *Hirundo spilodera*

One record of a single bird flying north west close to R09B on 24th August. This species is uncommon in the Kalahari, Botswana and Namibia and its been said that the scattered records in these locations are birds on route to their breeding locations in Zaire, they generally start arriving in South Africa in August (depart by April) although there have been several overwintering birds this year around Kimberly, so a passage bird would not be totally unexpected. The nearest breeding sites are near Kimberly. Several were also seen in Upington on 29th August, possibly the road bridge over the river could provide a suitable nest site? (Familieswael)

European Swallow* *Hirundo rustica*

Common passage migrant, seen regularly in ones and twos passing through, mainly to the north. First returning birds were two which flew south over H01B on 26th October. (Europese Swael)

Rock Martin* *Hirundo fuligula*

Only two records of a single bird flying east over H18B in early February and another single hawking low over the house on 22nd August. Also seen in Van Zylsrus. (Kransswael)

Swallow sp. *Hirundo sp.*

On two separate occasions a Swallow species has been seen briefly but not well enough to get it down to species level. On 16th October a Swallow was seen high over R85B which was probably a South African Cliff Swallow, *H. spilodera* and on 23rd October a large Swallow with long tail streamers was seen very briefly over the house, it was probably a White-Throated Swallow, *H. albigularis*, or possibly a European Swallow, *H. rustica*.

Fork-Tailed Drongo* *Dicrurus adsimilis*

Extremely common and fearless resident, seen on all parts of the farm. Regularly follows the Meerkat groups snatching insects and small lizards that the Meerkats miss (very useful when you haven't got a Yaesu), they have also been seen following foraging Guineafowl, Goats and large Sociable Weaver flocks.

As well as catching prey that has been disturbed by the Meerkats, Drongo's are masters of kleptoparasitism, perching above a foraging group, waiting until one has caught something then swooping down with a very loud screech (half imitating a Raptor or Owl), scattering the Meerkats and thus leaving the prey item open for the Drongo to steal. They seem to target the larger prey items such as large larvae, Barking Geckos or Scorpions, this could be an 'energy returns' consideration but is more likely due to the fact that smaller items, as well as being harder to see are gobbled down very quickly, giving the Drongo's no time to strike, whereas the larger prey is eaten more slowly allowing the Drongo's time to do their stuff.

The main limiting factors to this ploy are the older Meerkats, which learn to respond to a predator alarm by running with their prey item in their mouths so the Drongo cannot steal it, the Drongo's combat this by appearing to target pup feeds where the adult drops the prey on the ground for the pup to eat it, they screech when the prey item is on the ground, the Meerkats scatter leaving the prey on the ground. The Drongo's can only attempt this technique a finite number of times as the predator response to the Drongo's screech decreases every time it is done, so the Drongo can only do it several times in a short period of time, then have a break and come back half an hour later and try again when the Meerkats appear to have forgotten about the Drongo's screeching. I may have read too much into it but that's what it seems like.

This behaviour is much more prevalent during the breeding season (especially October/November), when they come into direct competition with Yellow-Billed Hornbills who also have young and/or mates to feed. An interesting aside is the way they readily transfer prey, once they have caught it, from their bill to their feet, even if they are just flying a few metres to a perch, which is uncommon in small, non-raptors.

A particularly optimistic individual was seen to try and muscle in on a Pygmy Falcon eating a lizard on 10th January – needless to say it wasn't successful. (Mikstertbyvanger)

Grassveld Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*

Just seen on the flats behind the house, throughout winter, possibly overlooked in summer, with a maximum of 5 there on 18th July. (Gewone Koester)

Ashy Tit* *Parus cinerascens*

Common resident, seen on all parts of the farm. The Kalahari version of the Great Tit in Britain, with very similar habits and calls. (Acaciagrismees)

Southern Pied Babbler *Turdoides bicolor*

Common and noisy resident. Their behaviour is extremely similar to that of the Meerkats, as they live in family groups of up to 10 birds and exhibit sentinal behaviour when the majority of the group are foraging on the ground or low down, one or two birds remain on the highest available perch to keep watch for danger. Two adults have also been seen to allopreen each other and the chicks begging and adults feeding them is also very similar to Meerkats. The territories are most clearly seen in the riverbed as this is the best foraging areas, a walk there will usually produce sightings of all the groups in the area, allowing me to work out that there are 8 troops between The Heights boarder and Gannavlake farm house.

Two groups have occasionally been seen to meet but not fight, they just seem to shriek at the tops of their voices at each other. Juveniles began to appear in mid-October with six separate groups being seen with brown juveniles (three groups with three, two groups with two and one with one juvenile). (Witkatlagter)

African Red-Eyed Bulbul* *Pycnonotus nigricans*

Common but localised resident, seen daily around the house with a maximum of 12 around the birdbath on 29th July. Also regular in the riverbed but scarce elsewhere. (Afrikaanse Rooioogtiptol)

Groundscraper Thrush* *Turdus litsitsirupa*

Common resident, seen on all parts of the farm but commonest near corrals, the house and the riverbed. They became increasingly obvious in mid-September when the males started to display – standing up to their full height, throwing their heads back and giving a very loud cackling call. (Gevlekte Lyster)

Familiar Chat* *Cercomela familiaris*

Common but localised resident, most often seen in the garden. Also common around Gannavlake farm house. A pair regularly foraged for insects killed when they were attracted to the light above the ping-pong table. (Gewone Spekvreter)

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

Localised nomad, only regularly seen in the shorter grass around the Drie Doring burrows R18B and R09B. None were seen throughout the winter until 10th December when a pair were on the flats behind the house and from then on 4 were resident there and many pairs were present on the Frisky/Drie Doring flats. (Hoeveldskaapwagter)

Southern Anteating Chat* *Myrmecocichla formicivora*

Very common resident, often found around burrows as they stupidly nest in the entrances and get eaten. Usually seen in groups of up to 7 or 8 birds. (Suidelike Swartpiek)

Kalahari Robin *Erythropygia paena*

Common resident, seen singly or in pairs on all parts of the farm. A very vocal species most often seen shaking its tail while its pointed upwards. The first juvenile was seen along the Botswana road on 4th October. (Kalahariwipstert)

Willow Warbler* *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Scarce summer visitor, seen very occasionally anywhere on the farm. The first returning bird was noted in the garden early on 28th August. Although this is a fairly early record, Willow Warblers are one of the earliest Palearctic migrants to arrive in South Africa but this species was not recorded in the Kalahari (south of the Botswana boarder and north of the Orange River) during the Atlas period. (Hofsanger)

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Two records of a single in Lazuli range near G05A in March and another in the bush at the centre of R99A in the early morning of 30th December while we were waiting for Vivian to get up. (Spotvoel)

Olive-Tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*

On 20th March a large pale green *Hippolais* warbler was seen briefly in the riverbed near R31A and was probably this species. (Olyfboomsanger)

Cape-Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus*

Scarce resident, only a few records in the heart of Drie Doring range. (Kaapse Kapokvoel)

Yellow-Bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

Very common resident, seen regularly all over the farm. (Geelpensbossanger)

Fairy Flycatcher *Stenostira scita*

Scarce winter visitor, two records in roughly the same place, near the riverbed on The Heights farm on 28th June and 19th July. Was associated with a mixed Passerine flocks both times and responded really well to pishing. (Feevlieevanger)

Chestnut-Vented Tit Babbler* *Parisoma subcaeruleum*

Extremely common resident, seen daily all over the farm. An extremely vocal species which has a very wide variety of calls, especially in spring, when displaying males

chase females around, bow their heads, spread their wings upwards and raise their tail to show off their red vent. (Bosveldtjieriktik)

Long-Billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*

Only three records of a single in the scrub just to the east of Gannavlake farm house on 14th June, a pair near the small spotlight beacon in Umbongo range on 27th September and another pair somewhere on The Heights behind H13B on 13th December, probably a scarce, localised resident. (Bosveldstompstert)

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus*

Fairly common resident, probably more common this year due to the abnormally tall and thick vegetation. Seen on most parts of the farm, especially those areas with tall grass and isolated shrubs (so pretty much everywhere). (Woestynkloppie)

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*

One record of a male calling near R53A on 20th September, the rattle on the end of its two-note call was diagnostic, as was its rufous crown contrasting well with its grey back and pale underparts. (Bosveldtinktinkie)

Rufous-Eared Warbler *Malcorus pectorallis*

Very scarce resident, only a handful of records, one an extremely dodgy one near R86A in early February, one definite one along the road to the big spotlight beacon in early June, another about 6-700m north of R09B in the middle of nowhere which was associating with several Black-Chested Prinias and a displaying pair near R10B on 17th October. (Rooioorsanger)

Black-Chested Prinia* *Prinia flavicans*

Extremely common resident, seen daily all over the farm. Although very obvious all year round they become even more obvious in spring when 2-4 males and females chase each other round like mad things, with the males bobbing their heads and tails up and down simultaneously while calling loudly. (Swartbandlangstertjie)

Spotted Flycatcher* *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common summer visitor, only regularly seen in the riverbed. The first returning bird was not seen until 27th December near M40B, surely they must have arrived before that? (Europese Vlieevanger)

Chat Flycatcher *Melaenornis infuscatus*

Uncommon, localised resident, seen only in Drie Doring range between R18B and R10B, along the road to the big spotlight beacon and a pair was seen somewhere in deepest Gannavlake on 9th August. Usually seen in pairs perching on obvious perches from where they make typical Flycatcher forays. (Grootvlieevanger)

Marico Flycatcher* *Melaenornis mariquensis*

Very common resident, seen all over the farm. Very scaly juveniles began appearing in October. Often perches directly above a foraging group of Meerkats to try and catch insects flushed from the ground. (Maricovlieevanger)

Pririt Batis *Batis pririt*

Uncommon resident, seen infrequently all over the farm. Usually seen singly or occasionally in pairs, tend to see noticeably more females than males? (Priritbosbontokkie)

Crimson-Breasted Shrike* *Laniarius atrococcineus*

Very common resident, seen daily all over the farm, usually in pairs or fours. Probably 3 individual yellow forms have been seen in the riverbed, a pair and a single with a crimson form – not by me though, until however, after a glut of sightings of the pair in the riverbed between the road to Lazuli and the road to the big dune throughout September drove me crazy, I finally caught up with them on 3rd October.

There appears to be few recent records of this colour form in the Northern Cape, from Kimberley, Vaalbos National Park, a farm just west of Kimberley, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Kathu Nature Reserve and Van Zylsrus (also Namibia and the Northern Province). This appears to be the first record of a 'pair' of yellow forms, as with the population of this kind being so small the chances of two yellows meeting are very slim, it is thought they appear every 5-7 years in locations where they have been seen before.

However, in October the yellow pair were seen being continually harassed by several red individuals and on 3rd November a single yellow form was seen with a red individual at the exact spot where the pair of yellows have been seen regularly, so perhaps the birds natural tendencies to pick on 'different' individuals has caused one yellow to be displaced or maybe the other was predated. (Rooiborslaksman)

Red-Backed Shrike* *Lanius collurio*

Common summer visitor, seen most regularly in the riverbed but can be seen everywhere. An extremely bright male spent a few days resting in the garden before moving on in early April. The occasional Beetle or Gecko seen impaled on thorns or barbed wire were probably down to this species. They probably returned in November as a male was seen immediately when I returned from holiday near R93B. (Rooiruglaksman)

Lesser-Grey Shrike* *Lanius minor*

Very common summer visitor, regular all over the farm, especially along the main road where they perch conspicuously on posts and trees coming down to feed on squashed insects. A similar story to Red-Backed Shrike as they were common when I returned from holiday in the first week of December. (Gryslaksman)

Common Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris*

Very scarce resident, only regularly seen along the road to the big spotlight beacon and at the Botswana boarder. Only two records elsewhere which was a single on the roadside fence just west of M40B on 22nd July and another near G52A on 20th September, all being of the 'arid' form, having a conspicuous white eye stripe as opposed to the form seen in Pretoria with a solid black head. (Gewone Fiskaallaksman)

Black-Crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*

A pair were seen near H28B on 13th July, and another pair were seen at G18A on 9th August, probably a scarce resident. There is some confusion to whether the Tchagra's seen on the farm are actually this species (which have not been recorded in the Northern Cape before) or whether they are in fact, Three-Streaked Tchagra's (*T. australis*) but clear views have been obtained and their calls have been compared to an audio tape so I am still convinced that they are Black-Crowned. (Swartkroontjagra)

White-Crowned Shrike *Eurocephallus anguitimens*

Only one record of a single across the road opposite H11A in the last week of May. This species is quite unusual in the Northern Cape, although it is relatively common to

the east in the Vorstershoop/Tosca area and there were some records to the east of Van Zylsrus during the Atlas period. (Kremetartlaksman)

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

Fairly common resident, seen all over the farm. Seemed far less obvious throughout winter until late August when they suddenly became obvious again, usually first detected by their high pitched whistling calls. (Bontroklaksman)

Glossy Starling* *Lamprotornis nitens*

Extremely common resident, seen everywhere. Especially mad for egg when weighing Meerkats, they also quite often forage with the Meerkats picking up anything that is missed or thrown behind them as they dig but they have never been seen to steal any food directly. Sometimes forms largish flocks with a maximum of 25 near R62A on 14th October. (Kleinglansspreeu)

Burchell's Starling *Lamprotornis australis*

Fairly common, localised resident. Only regular around Gannevlekte (with a maximum of 7 on 18th August) and unusual elsewhere with only two other records, at R80A and R111B. Also seen in Van Zylsrus. (Grootglansspreeu)

Wattled Starling* *Creatophora cinerea*

Complicated partial migrant. Very common in the summer of 1999/2000 when breeding (large untidy nests, in loose colonies, the three main colonies being in the Elveera riverbed, the area surrounding R99/100B and in the tall trees between Gannavlake farm house and the riverbed) but as winter approached most of the adults moved away leaving just flocks of wandering juveniles all over the place. These flocks became fewer and fewer throughout the winter leaving only the odd one here and there by mid-June and none by July. On an overnight trip to Upington, extremely large flocks of 400+ birds were seen feeding in vineyards and reedbeds on the south side of the river, so perhaps Kalahari birds winter in the more profitable areas along the Orange River.

The first returning flock was one of about 26 over the house on 28th August, after which the odd birds kept appearing which increasing frequency, I'm sure the migration patterns of this species is incredibly weather dependant. They were widespread when I returned off holiday but showed no signs in moving to their colonies and hardly any even showed signs of coming into breeding plumage, I'm sure they are just waiting for the main rainy season to start as the small storms we have up to February haven't been enough to trigger them to breed – if they will at all, when last seasons and this season rainfall are compared, as in December 1999 there was a total of 209mm while December 2000 produced only 14.9mm (taken from the Rus en Vrede garden) which would have a dramatic effect upon when all birds arrive and breed (Lelspreeu)

Red-Billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

Only one record of a single in the top of the tree with the weavers nest in at R91A with a group of Glossy Starlings in mid-April. This species is occasionally recorded in the Van Zylsrus area and there is a resident population at Severn. Their range may expand as farmers change their cattle dips from organophosphates to pyrethroids but this expansion west, will be limited by the increasingly dry conditions i.e. the drier it gets, the fewer ticks the cattle have. (Rooibekrenostervoe)

Marico Sunbird* *Nectarinia mariquensis*

Uncommon resident, seen infrequently all over the farm, far less obvious in winter. A male which was resident at R29B for a few days in the second week of June was

however, the only one seen throughout winter until a male appeared in the tree above the birdbath on 8th August, are they partial/local migrants? The males are extremely aggressive towards other small birds, especially other male Marico Sunbirds and especially when there is a female or two watching them. (Maricosuikerbekkie)

Dusky Sunbird *Nectarinia fusca*

Only one record of a single male near R86A in February. (Namakwasuikerbekkie)

Great Sparrow* *Passer motitensis*

Uncommon resident, most often seen in Lazuli range near R07A where a particular male thinks the reflection in the car wing mirror is a rival and spends hours on end attacking his reflection, his record is arriving 15 seconds after the car has pulled up. Another male which hangs around the house regularly attacks his reflection in the wing mirrors or the hubcaps of Grants brown VW Beetle. Loopy. (Grootmossie)

House Sparrow* *Passer domesticus*

A male and two females were first noticed in the garden on 28th July. The male and 1 female were again seen on 15th August and sporadically after that, so perhaps they are moving around between farm houses, coming and going, maybe associating with other Sparrow or Weaver flocks. Also seen in Van Zylsrus. (Huisbossie)

Cape Sparrow* *Passer melanurus*

Common but localised resident, seen daily around the house where they have several nests under the veranda roof but rarely seen elsewhere, just occasionally in the riverbed. There seemed to be more and more records away from the house and the water reservoirs as the winter progressed, i.e. from R99B and from deep into Lazuli range, could they be ranging further in winter or could it just be observer bias?

Occasionally forms large non-breeding flocks, although not as readily as Grey-Headed Sparrows, with a maximum of 83+ in the riverbed near R31A on 24th August, these flocks tend to be more species specific than the Grey-headed flocks with hardly ever any other species with them. (Gewone Mossie)

Southern Grey-Headed Sparrow* *Passer diffusus*

Very common resident, seen all over the farm especially around the house and in the riverbed where they form large flocks of up to 600+ birds in winter which often contain many other species such as Whydahs, Canaries, Weavers, Waxbills and other Sparrow species. (Suidelike Gryskopmossie)

Red-Billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

Only three records of the most numerous land bird in the world, the first was a female somewhere in the middle of Drie Doring range in early May, it looked like it was just passing through, alighting on a tree for 2 mins before heading off high to the east, the second was a non-breeding plumaged male in the riverbed near R37B on 14th September associating with several Cape Sparrows and Black-Throated Canaries and then three were seen drinking from the water trough at G75A on 5th January.

Its amazing to think, especially in light of the 5 individuals recorded here in the year, that in August and September alone, a total of 7.9 million Red-Billed Quelea were controlled in RSA (using aerial, chemical and fuel explosion actions on a total of 12.4ha [Aug] and 39.8ha [Sept]) Wow. (Rooibekwelea)

Red-Billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*

Scarce and incredibly localised nomadic visitor, only ever seen around the corral at R96/111B where they have several of their untidy nests and around Gannavlake farm house where up to 17 were recorded on 14th June, none were seen from this date up

until 13th September when a pair were seen in the scrub just to the east of Gannavlake farm house. Often seen in association with White-Browed Sparrow Weavers or Wattled Starlings. (Buffelwewer)

White-Browed Sparrow Weaver* *Plocepasser mahali*

Extremely common resident, their nests in loose colonies are everywhere you look, many are very tame and will come down and take egg from your hands at burrows while you are weighing the Meerkats (especially R93B). They show a great propensity for chasing birds smaller than themselves, especially Sociable Weavers and Fawn-Coloured Larks, they can't be territorial so they must just be natural bullies with an inferiority complex. (Koringvoel)

Sociable Weaver* *Philetairus socius*

Extremely common resident, their massive nests which play host to a number of species such as Pygmy Falcon, Pied Barbet and Scaly-Feathered Finch are never far away. They form, sometimes massive, feeding flocks which can be seen anywhere on the farm including in the garden. (Versamelvoel)

Southern Masked Weaver* *Ploceus velatus*

Fairly common resident, not many nests have been seen on the farm with only 5 or 6 in the garden and 3 at the Lazuli, G09A corral being noted but they form non-breeding flocks of up to 12 birds in winter. These are probably made up from birds which nest around other farmhouses, which roam around almost anywhere on the farm but especially around corrals and water reservoirs. Often in mixed flocks with Grey-Headed Sparrows and Canaries.

On a trip to Upington on 29th August many full breeding plumaged males were seen building nests and displaying but here on the farm the first breeding plumaged male was not seen until 24th September when a male with a slightly black face visited the birdbath, then possibly the same male, this time in full breeding plumage on 3rd October and the first evidence of actual breeding was not until late October/early November when nest renovation and displaying was seen at the Lazuli, G09A corral.

This time lapse between the two populations is probably due to the far better conditions alongside the Orange river, thus bringing breeding forward while birds here in the drier, less productive areas have to wait until the rains come (December or January) before attempting to breed. This also leads to much higher densities of Weavers along the river so the males will have much higher competition amongst themselves for females/nest sites so would have to start breeding earlier. (Swartkeelgeelvink)

Shaft-Tailed Whydah *Vidua regia*

Scarce resident, a number of females have been seen around the water reservoirs in Lazuli range and along the riverbed mixing with predominantly Grey-Headed Sparrow flocks with large flocks of 18+ birds in the riverbed on the Heights farm on 19th July and 14 in the riverbed in Gannavlake on 4th October being seen. However the only breeding plumaged males have been seen near R96B in late May and in the riverbed near Gannavlake on 12th July with a flock of Sparrows, until December when they became more widespread.

A dead female was found in the garden on 10 July, presumably killed by one of the cats. It was spotted when a Sociable Weaver was attacking it. (Pylstertrooibekkie)

Eastern-Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*

Only one record of a breeding plumaged male in the riverbed quite far into the Heights farm for 2 days in mid February. It is one of the farthest west records of this species ever, apparently. Probably the same male, this time in non-breeding plumage, and a

probable female were seen further west along the river bed with a flock of Waxbills and Sparrows on 28th June.

There have been no other documented records of this species from this area and not west of 23 degrees. However their range expands and contracts extensively with changing rainfall levels and during wet years (such as this one) they have been recorded up to 60km west of Kimberly. (Gewone Paradysvink)

Red-Billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*

One record of a single juvenile in the riverbed into the Heights farm on 28th June, it was with a flock of Waxbills and Sparrows (the same flock that contained the non-breeding Paradise Whydah), most closely associating with a group of 6-8 Black-Cheeked Waxbills. (Rooibekrobbin)

Violet-Eared Waxbill* *Uraeginthus granatinus*

Uncommon resident, seen on many parts of the farm especially in the riverbed and around water reservoirs. Wobbly Cat caught a female in the garden in early June. (Koningblousysie)

Black-Cheeked Waxbill* *Estrilda erythronotos*

Fairly common resident, seen most regularly in the riverbed in little groups of up to 7 or 8 birds, also seen in the garden. (Swartwangsysie)

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

Only two records at the corral near H11A and in the riverbed in the Heights. (Rooibeksysie)

Red-Headed Finch* *Amadina fasciata*

Common resident, seen on many parts of the farm especially near water reservoirs. A pair had a nest in a hole underneath the bathroom window, probably two well grown juveniles which appeared at the birdbath on 6th September came from here. Sometimes forms non-breeding flocks with a maximum of 17 seen near G57A in the evening of 7th August. Large flocks became much commoner from October onwards as all the juveniles fledged with a maximum seen of 29 in the riverbed on 3rd November, this however was totally eclipsed when on 17th December a flock of 160+ were seen near the gate into Gannavlake building to 300+ by 5th January in the same location. (Rooikopvink)

Scaly-Feathered Finch* *Sporopipes squamifrons*

Very common resident, seen all over the farm. Several nests in the garden. Started to form large post-breeding flocks at the end of the year with a maximum seen of 56+ near the front gate on 6th January. (Baardmannetjie)

Melba Finch* *Pytilia melba*

Uncommon resident, only regularly seen in the riverbed and along the road to the big spotlight beacon. However 3 well grown juveniles were seen around R99B from 27th August to 7th September, occasionally accompanied by an adult and were extremely confiding allowing me to approach to within 2m of them. (Gewone Melba)

Yellow Canary* *Serinus flaviventris*

Common resident, seen anywhere on the farm in little groups, with a maximum seen of 13 near R57A on 14th September, often with Sparrows and other Finch type things. (Geelkanarie)

Black-Throated Canary* *Serinus atrogularis*

Fairly common resident, seen regularly on many parts of the farm, including the garden. Usually in pairs or small flocks in winter with a maximum of 22 seen in the riverbed near R32A on 24th August. (Bergkanarie)

Golden-Breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*

A single male was seen drinking from the water trough at the corral opposite H11A in Umbongo range on 11th October, followed half an hour later, by a pair over the big dune to the south of the corral, these were almost definitely different birds to the previous one as they had slightly duller yellow breasts. A single male was also seen near the water reservoir near G75A on 2nd November. (Rooirugstreepkoppie)

Larklike Bunting *Emberiza impetuani*

A pair were seen close to R13A in the evening of 17th January with small group of Scaly-Feathered Finches, their contact/flight call was very distinctive as was their nondescript plumage with just a hint of a cinnamon wash over the body. (Vaalstreepkoppie)

Farm Total – **158 Species**.

Other Reported Birds

Due to minor plumbing problems a small pool was more or less permanent just to the west of the house and it attracted a few birds but always when I was not there, as there was a Wood Sandpiper there on 23rd October (Andy Young) when I was in Van Zylsrus and a Hamerkop was reported there in November (Lynda Sharpe) when I was on holiday. The only other reported bird not mentioned in the text was an Alpine Swift over Lazuli in mid-September by Dafila Scott.

In the 12 months since I've left there has been a number of reports of additional species from the farm. These have included Egyptian Vulture and Carmine Bee-eater from Rascals range (Jessica Wright, Neil Jordan *et al*), a Crested Coot spent a day in the garden and a pair of Arrow-Marked Babblers were seen drinking from the leaking water tower at Gannavlake farm house (Anne Carlson).

Additional Species Recorded on Trips to Kuruman and Upington

(Trips to town were very infrequent, so the species here do not give a very accurate picture of the avifauna of the area - there were only two occasions when I went birding, 29th August and 29th September)

Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*

Seen flying along the Orange River in Upington. (Rietduiker)

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

Seen flying along the Orange River in Upington. (Afrikaanse Slanghalsvoel)

Black-Headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

A pair were seen in a flooded field adjacent to a small vineyard on the south side of the river in Upington on 29th August and one was seen there on 29th September. (Swartkopreier)

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Superb views of one clambering around in a reed bed on the south side of the Orange River in Upington on 29th August. (Woudapie)

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Seen flying along the Orange River and over the town in Upington. (Hamerkop)

Hadeda Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Seen flying over both Kuruman and Upington, usually in small flocks. (Hadeda)

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Seen flying along the Orange River in Upington and on the short grass on the western outskirts of Kuruman. (Skoorsteenveer)

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Several pairs were seen on the Orange River in Upington on 29th August, including one with 9 small chicks on the short grass on the south side, 8 of which were still there on 29th September, when a flock of 20 flew downstream. A pair were also seen on the small permanent pool just to the west of the last salt pan on the way to Upington on 30th December. (Kolgans)

South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana*

3 or 4 were seen briefly on a small pool on the eastern side on the last salt pan on the way to Upington on 28th August and 6 were there on 29th September. (Kopereend)

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

A single female was seen flying downstream along the Orange River in Upington on 29th August. (Bruineend)

Yellow-Billed Duck *Anas undulata*

4 were seen flying upstream along the Orange River in Upington on 29th August and one flew downstream on 29th September. (Geelbekeend)

Red-Billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

4 were seen flying downstream along the Orange River in Upington on 29th August and 11 flew upstream on 29th September. (Rooibekeend)

Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*

One record of an adult perched on a telegraph post along the tar road to Upington. (Rooiborsjakkalsvoel)

Black Harrier *Circus maurus*

An adult was seen flying low over the flat area between the road and the mountains just before the tar road on the way to Upington on 29th September. (Witruispaddavreter)

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

A possible/probable ringtail was seen perched on a telegraph post at the corner with the tar and dirt roads on the way to Upington in April but was not seen for long enough to confirm as we flashed past but I'm very close to being convinced. (Bloupaddavreter)

Blacksmith Plover *Vanellus armatus*

Seen on the short grass on the western outskirts of Kuruman and the salt pans on the way to Upington. (Bontkiewiet)

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

A single non breeding plumaged bird was seen from the car on the way back from Upington on 30th September about an hour west of the farm. (Asiatiese Strandkiewiet)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was heard at The Eye in Kuruman while I was in the camp site behind the pool in the evening of 5th November. (Gewone Ruiter)

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

8 were seen feeding in the flooded vineyard on the south side of the river in Upington on 29th September. A single bird was seen with a Greenshank on the small permanent pool to the west of the last salt pan on the way to Upington on 30th December. (Bosruiter)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was seen on a small pool on the western side of the last salt pan on the way to Upington on 30th December, it flew up but landed about 50m away and didn't want to leave. (Gewone Groenpootruiter)

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

Fairly common winter visitor to Kuruman, forms large flocks over the town. They are tricky to differentiate from European Swifts, with the easiest methods being the time of year seen and if a good view is obtained, their pale secondaries, forming a pale patch on their upper wing. (Afrikaanse Swartwindswael)

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Occasionally seen with other Swift species over Kuruman, especially at the bus stop and in Upington. (Afrikaanse Palmwindswael)

Giant Kingfisher *Ceryle maxima*

Superb views of one fishing from the bridge in Upington on 29th August. (Reuse Visvanger)

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

A pair were seen in reeds surrounding a small vineyard on the south side of the river in Upington on 29th September. (Kuifkopvisvanger)

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*

A pair were seen in the trees surrounding a small vineyard on the south side of the Orange River on 29th August. (Kleinheuningwyser)

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii*

2 or 3 males were heard (and one seen) displaying around The Eye camp site in the evening of 5th November. (Kuifkophoutkapper)

Red-Breasted Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*

Not really on a town trip but a pair were seen from the Intercape bus about 12Km's east of Kuruman on 5th December. (Rooiborsswael)

White-Throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

4 were seen hawking around the bridge and perching on the rocks in the river on 29th August and several were seen around this area on 29th September. (Witkeelswael)

Brown-Throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Regularly seen hawking over the Orange River in Upington, a large flock of 140+ were seen resting on an exposed sandbank on 29th September before being flushed by a Hamerkop from where they moved in the reedbed. (Afrikaanse Oewerswael)

White-Necked Raven *Corvus albicollis*

One record of a single on a telegraph post on the tar road to Kuruman on 3rd July. (Withalskraai)

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

One was seen flying upstream in Upington on 29th September. (Witborskraai)

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus*

Common throughout Kuruman and Upington. A partially albino bird, with an almost completely white head, was seen in a small vineyard on the south side of the Orange River on 29th August. (Olyflyster)

Mountain Chat *Oenanthe monticola*

A male was seen well near the small permanent pool just west of the salt pans on 29th September, several others had been seen on the roadside on that trip and others but not well enough to be positively identified. (Bergwagter)

Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*

Common on the south side of the river in Upington and one was seen in the Eye camp site, Kuruman on 5th December. (Gewone Janfrederik)

Karoo Robin *Erythropygia coryphoeus*

A pair were seen on a burnt patch of reeds and in the small vineyard on the south side of the Orange River on 29th August. (Slangverklikker)

Cape-Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

1 or 2 were seen in the reeds surrounding the small vineyard on the south side of the river in Upington on 29th September. (Kaapse Rietsanger)

African Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

Many were seen and heard singing in the reeds on the south side of the Orange River on 29th August and 29th September. (Kleinrietsanger)

Fan-Tailed (Zitting) Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Several were seen in the reeds on the south side of the river in Upington on 29th August. (Landerykloppie)

Grey-Backed Cisticola *Cisticola subruficapillus*

A pair were seen in the vegetation surrounding the small vineyard on the south side of the river in Upington. This species is a typical Karoo bird and its stronghold is more to the south west but their distribution extends like a tongue into the Kalahari along the Langeberg and Koranneberg mountains, almost to Van Zylsrus. (Grysrugtinkinkie)

Fiscal Flycatcher *Sigelus silens*

Several males and a female seen at the Eye of Kuruman on 3rd July, also a male was at the bus stop on the same day. A male was seen in The Eye campsite on 5th November. (Fiskaalvlieevanger)

Cape White-Eye *Zosterops pallidus*

Common throughout Kuruman and Upington. (Kaapse Glasogie)

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

Seen along the Orange River in Upington and at the bus stop in Kuruman. (Gewone Kwikkie)

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Seen along the Orange River in Upington, including the O'Hagan's beer garden. (Bontkwikkie)

Bokmakierie *Telophorus zeylonus*

One was seen on the side of the road between the salt pans and the farm on 29th September. (Bokmakierie)

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*

Several female type birds were seen on the river bank in Upington on 29th September and one was seen in the reeds by the small permanent pool just to the west of the salt pans on the same day. (Suidelike Rooivink)

**List of Additional Species Seen at Augrabies NP on Volunteer Trips
9th – 11th April and 30th Dec – 3rd Jan.**

White-Breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Black Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostris*

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Burchell's Coucal *Centropus burchellii*

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi*

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Long-Billed Lark *Certhilauda curvirostris*

Namaqua Warbler *Phragmacia substriata*

Pale-Winged Starling *Onychognathus nalouroup*

White-Throated Canary *Serinus albogularis*

Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis*

The Highlight at Augrabies – New Years Eve

The best half an hour had at Augrabies was at the end of an evening game drive where we stopped off at Echo Corner on New years Eve. We'd only been there 15mins when a pair of superb Black Eagles cruised gracefully down the valley giving great views of their white rump and V on their backs.

Then. 10mins later a pale phase Booted Eagle soared over the cliffs closely followed by a pair of Fish Eagles who were in the air together. These raptors were surrounded by a Little Egret and a Reed Cormorant on the river while around the carpark were Pirit Batis, White-Throated Canary, Namaqua and Laughing Doves, Cape White-eye, Pale-Winged Starling, Dusky Sunbird and Cape Sparrow (Plus Mountain Chat, Larklike and Cape Buntings the next day) while Alpine and European Swifts wheeled overhead. Superb.

The pair of Black Eagles made several spectacular appearances on the way back, with them first appearing high over the mountains being dive-bombed by a Lanner Falcon, then they swooped really low over the car giving amazing views and finally they reappeared to soar over a pair of Eland, a Klipspringer and 5 Giraffe. This is Africa.

Northern Cape Total :- **221 Species**

Holiday Bird List

8th November - 5th December

The Route - Uppington - Cape Town - Nature's Valley - Port Elizabeth - Cintsa - Durban -

St. Lucia - Phinda private game reserve - Swaziland - Pretoria - Kuruman.

Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*

Quite a few seen on the pelagic trip out of Simon's Town, on 11th Nov, often quite far out to sea. Seen at very close quarters at their breeding site at Boulder's Beach on 13th Nov, a few individuals with orange dye on their chests were seen indicating that they were some of the ones that was translocated to Port Elizabeth when the 'Treasure' sank off the Cape.

Great-Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

3 or 4 were seen at Paarl Bird sanctuary on 9th and 13th Nov but nowhere else.

Black-Necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Very large numbers were seen at Strandfontein sewage works on 9th Nov, with large rafts of 15+ birds being common, the greatest concentration of them I've ever seen but they were not seen anywhere else.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common on a wide variety of freshwater habitats all the way up the coast, large numbers were seen at Paarl and Strandfontein, then until I got to St. Lucia they were only seen in pairs on small pools.

Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*

The most common Albatross species seen on the pelagic trip on 11th Nov, with over 250 seen, it was such an amazing sight when the first one just appeared behind the boat and cruised past at eye level. Soon got blasé about them though.

Black-Browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

Quite common on the pelagic trip on 11th Nov. Several just sat right by the boat and allowed us to come within a few metres of them. Amazing.

Yellow-Nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*

2 of the grey headed 'Atlantic' race - *D. c. chlororynchos*, as opposed to the white headed 'Pacific' race - *D. c. bassi*, were seen at middle distance on the pelagic trip on 11th Nov.

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*

5 or 6 were seen around the trawler we found on the pelagic trip, they allowed excellent views of them, their sheer presence was just incredible. No wonder they are called the 'vultures of the sea'.

White-Chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

Very common on the pelagic trip on 11th Nov, with over 200 seen, especially around the trawler but also quite close in (within view of the Cape).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Quite common on the pelagic trip with large rafts of 50+ seen regularly, which often contained other species.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

Common on the pelagic trip, rafts of 20+ were regularly seen.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Only 2 or 3 were seen on the pelagic trip as they tend to arrive later than Great Shearwaters.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Only one was seen at quite close quarters on the pelagic trip when we were circling the trawler.

Pintado Petrel *Daption capense*

3 or 4 of these handsome, mainly winter visitors were seen on the pelagic trip, especially around the trawler.

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

Under 10 of these were seen on the pelagic trip.

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Only one was seen on the pelagic trip, its white on the underwing was distinctive when compared to Wilson's Storm Petrel.

Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*

Very common offshore from the Cape, also seen from Nature's Valley, Cintsa and Cape Recife, Port Elizabeth where large flocks of 200+ were pushed close into shore by the very strong onshore wind on 18th Nov.

White-Breasted (Great) Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Very common all the way up the coast, mainly on open coasts or estuaries but also seen on some large freshwater bodies such as Paarl and Strandfontein. These birds were of the race *P. c. lucidus* with a white throat, neck, breast and belly which breeds in Africa south of the Sahara.

Bank Cormorant *Phalacrocorax neglectus*

Seen roosting in very large numbers on rocks just off Simon's Town and off the Cape. A leucistic individual was unusual just out of Simon's Town on the pelagic trip.

Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis*

Seen in good numbers roosting at Strandfontein with White-Breasted Cormorants and also very common off the Cape.

Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*

Seen on basically every stretch of fresh water I came across, all along the coast (Long-Tailed Cormorant in the Western Palearctic).

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

Only 1 or 2 individuals were seen at Paarl on 9th Nov but nowhere else on holiday.

Eastern White Pelican *Pelecanus oncorotalus*

None were seen at the 'guaranteed' spot at Strandfontein and it was not until 10th of Nov that I saw my first in the unlikely setting of the arable fields just south of Darling as a flock of 15 circled, gaining height before drifting off south. Several were also seen at the St. Lucia river mouth providing direct comparisons with the larger numbers of Pink-Backed Pelicans that were also there.

Pink-Backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

Resident at the St. Lucia estuary mouth where they were commonly seen loafing on the exposed sandbanks with a maximum of 10 seen together. They were all in full breeding plumage with their silly little crests, pink backs and smaller size (compared to White Pelicans) being obvious.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

Just seen twice in the wetlands around St. Lucia.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

One was seen very well in a small pool at Strandfontein on 9th Nov and one was seen circling the St. Lucia wetlands just north of the estuary mouth.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Commonly seen all the way up the coast, with the largest concentrations seen at Paarl/Strandfontein and St. Lucia.

Black-Headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

Similar story to the Grey Heron as they were common all the way up the coast, although I can't recall seeing the two species together.

Yellow-Billed (Intermediate) Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Only seen in the wetlands around St. Lucia with 15+ being seen together on one flooded pan. The largest numbers were seen however, from the boat as we cruised up the river as 20mins before a big storm arrived 300+ flew downstream, close to the surface in groups of up to 100 birds, I don't know where they were going because we were quite close to the estuary mouth at the time.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Commonly seen on seemingly every stretch of water I came across.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Took the place of Little Egrets in the drier areas all the way up the coast, its always interesting to see them following herds of cattle around (with which they were usually

associated) but on a number of occasions they were seen accompanying White Rhino, Impala and Zebra, an overall much better view!

Black-Crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Only seen at Paarl, where they have 30+ nests in a mixed Heron/Egret colony.

Yellow-Billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Only seen at the St. Lucia estuary mouth where up to 12 birds were seen feeding on the beach, sandbanks and estuary shores.

Woolly-Necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

Mainly seen in the wetlands around St. Lucia where they were usually in pairs and were regularly seen feeding in flooded areas or just cruising overhead. A single was also seen in a tree in Hluhluwe game reserve on 27th Nov.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Small numbers of quite faded birds were seen at Paarl on 9th Nov but much larger numbers of much brighter pink birds were seen at Strandfontein on the same day where the biggest flock contained 200+ birds, very impressive, they were in their classic TV 'wavy linear' flocks which were not very many birds wide but very long.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Three at Paarl on 9th Nov and 1 at the Abrahamskraal waterhole in the West Coast National Park on 10th Nov were the only ones seen.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Somewhat surprisingly not seen until I reached St. Lucia on 24th Nov, from where they were common everywhere being seen all around the St. Lucia wetlands, Hluhluwe (where the Zulu belief that if one flies around your house, calling then there will be a death in the family, was told to me), Phinda, Swaziland and on the journey back to Pretoria.

Hadedda Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

These bloody noisy things were seen everywhere on holiday, quite a few mornings I was woken up before dawn to their raucous calls.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

2 or 3 feeding on thick floating vegetation on a pan at Strandfontein on 9th Nov were the only ones seen during the trip.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Like the Hadedda's seen everywhere on holiday but not quite as noisy.

Spur-Winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Only seen in the wetlands around St. Lucia where they were often seen on flooded pans or flying overhead, with a maximum seen of 17 in one flock.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Seen on almost every stretch of I came across on holiday, the best sighting was of a pair leading their one small chick almost through the legs of a pair of White Rhino at Hluhluwe.

South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana*

Three pairs seen from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park were the only ones seen on the trip.

White-Faced Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

A pair were seen at Paarl on 9th Nov (apparently a recent, scarce arrival to the Cape) and then none were seen until I reached Hluhluwe where a pair were seen playing chicken with a Crocodile in a waterhole and a pair were also seen in Mlilwane reserve in Swaziland.

White-Backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*

6 on a flooded pan near St. Lucia were the only ones seen.

Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

A pair were seen on a different flooded pan in St. Lucia.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

<10 at Paarl were the only ones seen on holiday.

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*

3 or 4 pairs at Paarl and large numbers at Strandfontein on 9th Nov were the only ones seen.

Yellow-Billed Duck *Anas undulata*

Seen on every stretch of freshwater I came across on the trip, with a maximum seen of c36 at Cape Recife Nature reserve, Port Elizabeth.

Cape Shoveler *Anas smithii*

Several pairs were seen at Paarl and at Strandfontein on 9th Nov and a pair were seen at Cape Recife Nature Reserve on the 18th.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis*

Only seen at Paarl and Strandfontein.

Red-Billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Only seen at Paarl and Strandfontein.

African White-Backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

Good numbers were seen in trees and circling overhead in Hluhluwe but nowhere else.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Very common on the St. Lucia estuary where several allowed the boat to get to within 5 metres of them as they either perched in a tree (a pair seen displaying to each other) or on the bank, just standing, watching the boat. They allowed superb views so the sexual dimorphism could be easily seen – especially the differing extent of white on the chest.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One was seen daily on the Cintsa lagoon and during this time another was seen perched in a tree in Inkwenkwisi Game Reserve. A third bird was seen cruising over the St. Lucia estuary during the boat trip.

Brown-Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

A single bird in Hluhluwe was the only one seen.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

Good views of a sub-adult in Hluhluwe was the only one seen.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

When in Inkwenkwisi, at one of the lodges a group of Hadedas went crazy and soon a superb adult bird cruised gracefully down the valley we were overlooking, excellent. An adult was also seen on a nest in Phinda while calling its head off but the view was obscured by the foliage.

Long-Crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

Superb views of an adult perched in Pine trees near the St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*

Seen daily around Cape Town/Hermanus/West Coast National Park/Darling etc but not seen anywhere else on the trip – somewhat surprising?

Forest Buzzard *Buteo trizonatus*

Excellent views of one perched on a dead tree in the forests around Nature's Valley allowing opportunity to compare with Steppe Buzzards (which were also seen around here), its overall paler underside with limited barring on the flanks/belly was most distinctive.

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Commonly seen in most places on the trip, especially on roadside telegraph poles. A very strange individual was seen on a telegraph post near Hermanus on 12th Nov which was almost completely black which accentuated its yellow legs and cere, it took us 10mins (until it took off) to work out that it wasn't a Black Harrier!

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

Excellent views of a couple of birds quartering the reeds at Strandfontein on 9th Nov and good views also around the Geelbek hide in West Coast National Park.

Black Harrier *Circus maurus*

Superb views of a single bird cruising over the road and the fynbos in the West Coast National Park.

Yellow-Billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

Common around Cape Town and extremely common around St. Lucia but scarce inbetween. The birds in St. Lucia were semi-habituated with some of them following you in case you had food, their foraging techniques were very varied with birds seen hunting usually over short vegetation, picking up roadkills without touching the ground, catching fish from the tide line and shrinking floodwater and most impressively attempting to kleptoparasitise Caspian Terns with large fish, often pursuing them quite far out to sea (never successful though!).

Black-Shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Very common around Cape Town, especially on the slopes of Table Mountain, also very commonly seen perched on telegraph poles. However, none were seen all the way up the coast until one was seen on a telegraph post in Swaziland (my first Swaziland bird) – again unusual?

Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*

A single bird was seen well soaring overhead, in the forests around Nature's Valley, I wasn't sure at first that it wasn't an African Goshawk until I saw one the following day when the shape of the wings (much longer and thinner) and the colouration were very obvious.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*

A single bird was seen soaring overhead in the forest around Nature's Valley, it was first located by its persistent high pitched call.

Red-Breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris*

A single bird seen cruising round Lion's Head, Cape Town was the only one seen.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Just one sighting from the Baz Bus somewhere in the Transkei region on 22nd Nov.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A pair soaring over Table Mountain on 8th Nov was the only sighting

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*

An immature bird, which had probably just arrived, was seen well cruising over the pine trees near the St. Lucia estuary mouth on 26th Nov.

Red-Footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

I can remember seeing a male somewhere on holiday but I can't remember where! I think it was probably somewhere on the Cape.....maybe.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

A female coming in off the sea at Cape Recife, Port Elizabeth, on 18th Nov during strong onshore winds was the only record.

Rock Kestrel *Falco tinninulus*

Commonly seen around Cape Town, especially Table Mountain, but not seen elsewhere.

Red-Necked Francolin *Francolinus afer*

3 or 4 were flushed from the short grass and reedbeds in Cape Recife nature reserve on 18th Nov.

Cape Francolin *Francolinus capensis*

Very common around Cape Town with birds seen at Kirstenbosch, West Coast National Park, Harold Porter Botanical Gardens and probably somewhere else but I can't remember.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numidia meleagris*

Seen in most places on holiday, the most noticeable sighting was of a pair at Kirstenbosch, where the male (?) was chasing the female (?) round and round in circles on a 50m circuit and were not at all interested in me, often running within a metre of me.

Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*

A pair were seen in the Iphiva camp site, near St. Lucia on 24th Nov.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

A single was flushed from the side of the road at Inkwenkwisi game reserve on 21st Nov.

Crested Coot *Fulica cristatus*

Seen on virtually any stretch of freshwater I came across.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Also seen on most freshwater sites, especially Paarl, Cape Recife Nature Reserve and around St. Lucia.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyria porphyria*

Seen at Paarl, Strandfontein and Cape Recife Nature Reserve.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

A single bird was flushed from a drainage ditch at Paarl on 9th Nov, this is a very good record as Jacana's are only just annual in the Cape. They were very common around St. Lucia on all the flooded pans, especially the large one near Iphiva camp site, where there were 20+ individuals present.

Red-Chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

One was heard calling from a patch of dense waterside vegetation in St. Lucia but could not be located.

Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradiseus*

A pair were seen at the small Tienie Versveld Nature Reserve, just west of Darling, from where they flew very high and glided downwards calling, a superb sight but then.....in a field near Hermanus on 12th Nov was a flock of 14 just by the roadside. Amazing.

Secretary Bird *Sagittarius sepentarius*

A single which was seen well in Hluhluwe was the only one on the trip.

Stanley's Bustard *Neotis denhami*

3 or 4 displaying males – fluffing all their feathers into a massive white, fluffy ball, which could be seen for miles away, much more obvious than the Wildebeest and Blesbok that were accompanying them – were seen in Inwenkwisi Game Reserve.

Southern Black Korhaan *Eupodotis afra*

A single male on the approach road to the Seeberg Lookout in the West Coast National Park was the only one seen.

African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini*

Commonly seen all along the coast as far north as Cintsa, usually in pairs but a good group of 12 were seen roosting on a causeway between two pans at Strandfontein with large numbers of Cormorants and Kelp Gulls.

Black-Winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Commonly seen on a wide variety of fresh and estuarine (avoided open coast) water bodies all the way up the coast, especially common at Paarl where large numbers were feeding on the sewage settling pans.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*

Fairly common around the Cape, especially at Paarl and Strandfontein but then not seen until St Lucia.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Several were seen from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park and a pair were seen on the lagoon at Cintsa.

Three-Banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

Common on most stretches of water I came across but seemed most common in estuarine areas such as the lagoons at Nature's Valley and Cintsa.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

Very common on the sewage settling pans at Paarl and Strandfontein and also seen from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park but not seen once I left the Cape.

Chestnut-Banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*

A pair seen from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park were the only ones seen on the trip.

White-Fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

The most widespread small wader that I came across, never in large numbers like Curlew Sands or Little Stints but always present on most water bodies that I came across. Most common on sandy beaches, a nest with 2 eggs was found on the beach at Cintsa but I imagine that many could have been found if looked for.

Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus*

Seen very occasionally on areas of short grass all the way up the coast, usually from the bus or while game driving etc.

Wattled Plover *Vanellus senegallus*

A pair flying over, then a single posing on a termite mound were seen in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

Blacksmith Plover *Vanellus armatus*

Very common everywhere, seen in a variety of habitats from arable crop land to the edges of estuaries but never seen on the open coast. The first bird I saw when I arrived in Cape Town – feeding on a grassy slope by a shopping centre.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Just seen from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park and on the shore of Cape Recife.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Commonly seen around the Cape, being very common at Paarl, Strandfontein and the Geelbek hide but not seen further north.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Common at the Geelbek hide and a small flock was seen on Hermanus lagoon but not seen elsewhere.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Large numbers were seen at Paarl and especially from the Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park, as well as smaller numbers elsewhere on the Cape, they became scarcer as I went north with only a small group seen on Cape Recife and a single

which landed in a puddle in the beach car park near the St. Lucia estuary mouth for a few seconds the only others seen.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Large numbers were seen from the Geebek hide with smaller numbers elsewhere in suitable habitat around the Cape, also common, in variable numbers everywhere I stopped on route up the coast with large flocks being seen at Cintsa and on the sandbanks at the St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A similar distribution pattern to Curlew Sands, with which they were usually associated but a single at Cape Recife was the furthest north record.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Seen at virtually every patch of water I came across from small puddles to Crocodile infested estuaries to the open coast.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

A single at Paarl on 9th Nov was the only one seen on the trip.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Seen on almost every stretch of water I came across from small pools to estuaries, 3 seen on the very exposed shore of Cape Recife were the only ones on the open coast.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

4 or 5 seen in front of and behind the Geelbek hide in West Coast National Park were the only ones seen.

Bar-Tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Good numbers were seen from the Geelbek hide and a single bird on the shore of Cape Recife was the only other one seen.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Commonly seen in small numbers all the way up the coast, usually on sandbanks in estuaries or on the open coast.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

A single associating with Whimbrels from the Geelbek hide was the only one seen.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

1 or 2 seen on the mudflats from the Geelbek hide and larger numbers on rocky shore at Cape Recife were the only ones seen.

Water Dikkop *Burhinus vermiculatus*

Seen at a number of locations all the way up the coast from a single at Paarl to 2 or 3 pairs on the Nature's Valley lagoon (seen roosting on the woodland path near the lagoon – until I flushed them to the waters edge) and Cintsa lagoon to a large group of 10+ on a single pan in St. Lucia, usually seen when I strayed from the paths and made my own way.

Subantarctic Skua *Catharacta antarctica*

3 or 4 of these superb predators were seen around the trawler on the pelagic on 11th Nov, usually just cruising menacingly past and occasionally chasing Terns or Gannets.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Again 3 or 4 were seen on the pelagic trip but seen only half an hour out of Simon's Town.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicus*

Very common around the Cape, offshore and onshore, with the largest roost seen at Strandfontein probably containing 200+ birds, small numbers were seen at Nature's Valley and Cintsa. Larger numbers were seen roosting on rocks on the tip of Cape Recife, while the only one seen at St. Lucia was a 2nd summer bird attempting to kleptoparasitise a Caspian Tern of a large fish, it eventually gave up after about 10 minutes. I'm not sure the energy gains for either the Tern or the Gull was worth the long chase.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

One was seen briefly over Hermanus lagoon and then they were very common at the St. Lucia estuary mouth with roosts of 100+ birds seen on the sandbanks. Very commonly the target for other species to try and steal fish that they have caught.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

Common offshore on the pelagic trip on 11th Nov.

Grey-Headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

Very common around the Cape, one of the first birds seen when I arrived in Cape Town, flying around the shopping centre carparks etc. variable numbers were seen up the coast until St. Lucia where they were common, especially around the estuary mouth. A flock was also seen in a Johannesburg shopping centre carpark.

Hartlaub's Gull *Larus hartlaubii*

Only two definite birds were seen on the Hermanus lagoon but others were almost definitely seen on the pelagic etc.

Lesser-Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

Only seen at the St. Lucia estuary mouth where they formed large mixed flocks with Swift and Sandwich Terns where their smaller size and deeper coloured bills differentiated them from the Swift Terns.

Swift Tern *Sterna bergii*

The most commonly seen Tern on the trip, seen everywhere that I stopped (on the coast), often forming very large roosts with the largest being probably in excess of 500 birds at Strandfontein.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Seen in small numbers everywhere up the coast, most often in association with Swift Terns at roosts and otherwise just singles or pairs flying along the coast.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Commonly seen all the way up the coast in small numbers, either roosting in mixed species flocks or in pairs or singles flying along the coast.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

2 or 3 seen offshore on the pelagic were the only ones seen on the trip.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

A pair of non-breeding plumaged birds lingering off Cintsa beach were the only ones seen.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

About 10 or so birds fishing in front of the Seeberg hide in the West Coast National Park were the only ones seen on the trip.

White-Winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

An amazing sight greeted me at Paarl with 300+ of these graceful marsh terns fly-catching over head, dip-feeding or roosting on the islands – superb. Also seen at Strandfontein.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

4 or 5 breeding plumaged birds were briefly seen dip-feeding on a marshy river as the Baz Bus flashed past, somewhere near Cintsa and a single was seen from the boat trip on St. Lucia estuary.

Rock Pigeon *Columba guinea*

Commonly seen throughout the trip, in a wide variety of habitats but usually connected to towns etc. Also very common on the slopes of Table Mountain.

Rameron Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

A single perched in a pine tree near the bottom cable car station on Table Mountain was the only one seen.

Cinnamon Dove *Aplopelia larvata*

Several of these elusive Doves were seen very briefly as they were flushed from the forest floor in the area surrounding Nature's Valley.

Red-Eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Seen every now and again when I could be bothered to distinguish them from Cape Turtle Dove, seemed to displace Cape Turtle Dove only in Nature's Valley town.

Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capensis*

Commonly seen everywhere up the coast from city centres to the middle of game reserves.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Similar story to Cape Turtle Dove but in slightly smaller numbers – seen everywhere from city centres to the middle of game reserves such as Hluhluwe and Phinda.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calva*

Very common in the forests around St. Lucia, sometimes in large concentrations with a maximum of 32 in a single fruiting tree.

Green-Spotted Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*

One seen flying across the road in Hluhluwe was the only one seen, its small size was very distinctive.

Tanbourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*

More regularly seen than Cinnamon Dove which lives in the same habitat and has similar behaviour, better views were obtained as they appeared to be less flighty than Cinnamon Dove so a few were seen on the forest floor, most sightings were in Nature's Valley but one or two were also seen in the forests round St. Lucia.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

One seen flying across the road in the West Coast National Park was the only one seen.

Knysna Lourie *Tauraco corythaix*

The first one seen in the forests around St. Lucia was a real shock as it was just seen flying away from me and its vivid crimson wing patches were amazing and it was not until the next day when I saw one in detail that I realised that it was a Knysna Lourie! They were then seen daily around Nature's Valley. One was seen briefly on the top of a tree in Inkwenkwisi and they were also common in the forests around St. Lucia, where, at one stage 2 males were seen chasing a female.

Purple-Crested Lourie *Tauraco porphyreolophus*

Several were seen in a number of rest camps in Hluhluwe where the call was learnt and then although none were seen they were heard calling daily around St. Lucia.

Grey Lourie *Corythaixoides concolor*

A couple of brief sightings in Pretoria were the only ones seen.

Red-Chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

They were heard calling all the time in Nature's Valley but it was only on the 2nd or 3rd day that the head of one was eventually seen poking out of a bush to confirm what they were, the only other sighting was of the back end of one poking out of another bush later on. They were also heard calling in Hluhluwe and Phinda but were not seen.

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

The first one on holiday was a single male in the bottom of a bush in Cape Recife Nature Reserve, showing all the signs of a tired migrant just arrived, it flew in low from the direction of the sea, straight to the bottom of the bush and stayed in that one position for over 25mins. They were also commonly seen and heard around St. Lucia.

Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

A stunning male was seen from below in the canopy of a large tree near Nature's Valley.

Burchell's Coucal *Centropus burchellii*

Several were seen in Inwenkwisi, Hluhluwe and St. Lucia. Zulu's call them the rain birds as they only appear before and during rain, and amazingly it was raining in Inkwenkwisi! One out of three's not bad.

Green Coucal *Ceuthmochares aereus*

Superb views of a pair in the woodland between Iphiva camp site and the sea, near St. Lucia.

Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*

A pair were seen on the banks of a small river in Phinda during a night drive.

Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*

Excellent views of one perched on the boarder fence of Phinda during a night drive, as it allowed us to drive to within 4m of it before flying lazily to the next tree.

Fiery-Necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis*

Several were seen in Phinda, with the best sighting being an immature perched in the middle of the road and refused to move on a night drive.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Only seen zooming over Table Mountain in Cape Town.

European Swift *Apus apus*

A single was seen hawking over Cape Recife Nature Reserve.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

Commonly seen most of the way up the coast, being most common over Cape Town.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Seen everywhere up the coast, often in large numbers with a maximum seen of 500+ roosting, nesting and generally just hanging out around the big road bridge in St. Lucia.

White-Rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

Seen all the way up the coast but in smaller numbers than little Swift.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Seen in St. Lucia town and in Pretoria.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

A medium sized bird was seen to fly through the canopy and land behind some foliage in the forests around Nature's Valley, when I eventually found it in binoculars, it had its back to me and all I could see was its green back and conspicuous yellow bill as it looked from side to side. I began to get very excited. It then, after about 10mins it turned round to reveal its bright red belly and green chest. "#*\$! me" I then exclaimed "a #*\$!*# male Narina Trogon" a little louder than I should of, it was a good job there was no one else around.

Red-Faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*

A group of 14 birds seen in Cape Recife Nature Reserve were the only ones seen.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

Seen in various locations all the way up the coast.

White-Backed Mousebird *Colius colius*

A pair seen in flight with a group of Speckled Mousebirds in the farmland to the south of Darling were the only ones seen.

Giant Kingfisher *Ceryle maxima*

Seen all the way up the coast on large enough fresh or estuarine stretches from Paarl in the Cape to the estuaries/lagoons at Cintsa and St. Lucia.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Not seen anywhere on the Cape but seen regularly all the way up the coast on a variety of locations from freshwater pools and streams to the open coast at Cape Recife.

Half-Collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquatus*

Good views of pairs on each of the two rivers either side of Nature's Valley, the large Storms River on one side and the smaller more wooded Groot River on the other.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

One seen flashing across the pools at Paarl was the only one seen on the trip.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*

One was seen on a scrubby dune at the corner of Cintsa lagoon, near the sea, its small size was the most distinctive feature.

Brown-Hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*

Several were seen around the Cintsa lagoon where despite their terrestrial habits a nest was found low down on a bank by the lagoon, a very noisy pair were also seen in the more typical bushveld in Inkwenkwisi Game Reserve and a pair were also seen in Hluhluwe.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A couple were seen around the Abrahamskraal Waterhole in the West Coast National Park and maybe surprisingly only a couple of others in Hluhluwe were seen on the rest of the trip.

Blue-Cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

A week before I arrived in St. Lucia there was apparently a large arrival of this species on the north east coast of South Africa and while I was there there were many large flocks hawking together or perched in large flocks on wires etc. with the largest flock being 96+ hawking high over the estuary one evening as I was on a boat trip.

White-Fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*

Several small groups were seen in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland but they were not seen elsewhere.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

Several groups were seen in the pine trees and scrub near the estuary mouth in St. Lucia.

Broad-Billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

One was seen briefly as it overflew me as I was walking near the Iphiva campsite in St. Lucia, then when I returned from walking around the campsite probably a different bird was perched on the telegraph wires near the camp entrance, which allowed me to get to within 15m of it before it flew off in the same direction as the first one, a superb bird.

Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

A superb group of 4 birds were seen stalking around in the grass not far into Hluhluwe, one of them then flew across the road revealing their massive size and white wing patches. Amazing birds.

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator*

Commonly seen flying round St. Lucia town and the surrounding woodlands.

Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus*

One was seen from the Baz Bus somewhere between Port Elizabeth and Cintsa and then good views were gained of a pair feeding on the ground just down the road from BIB's Backpackers in St. Lucia.

Red-Billed Woodhoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

A group of 4 or 5 were seen from below as they hung out in the canopy above a road going through the forests surrounding Nature's Valley.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana*

I think I saw one of these somewhere on the Cape but I'm not sure where, it was probably near Hermanus and a definite one was seen feeding on the dunes at the entrance to the path that leads from the beach to the Iphiva campsite in St. Lucia.

Scaly-Throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*

One was pointed out giving its trilling, insect-like call and was eventually seen perched in the understory along a small stream (It was a surreal experience creeping through the bush with Alistar with his rifle over his shoulder.....but not surprisingly after he told us the story of a ranger who got out of his Land-Rover to look at some tracks and got munched by a Lion).

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*

A couple of sightings were had in Phinda, the most notable one was one being chased by a Black-Collared Barbet away from its nest.

Black-Collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*

One was seen in Cintsa, several were seen in St. Lucia town, one was seen chasing a Lesser Honeyguide in Phinda and a pair were seen in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

White-Eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis*

Commonly seen around St. Lucia town and the surrounding woodlands.

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii*

Several displaying males were seen and heard around the Sondwela Backpackers in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland and one was seen and heard displaying at the Eye campsite in Kuruman.

Golden-Rumped Tinker Barbet *Pogoniulus bilineatus*

Several sightings were had in the woodland surrounding St. Lucia, especially in Iphiva campsite.

Ground Woodpecker *Geocolaptes olivaceus*

A single bird was seen perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking a valley in Salmondsam Nature Reserve before cruising across the valley, it was perhaps unusual to see just one as they usually live in groups, especially at the start of the breeding season.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*

A single bird seen perched on top of a dead tree in St. Lucia was the only one seen on the trip.

Knysna Woodpecker *Capethera notata*

One was seen very briefly in the forest around Nature's Valley but this was overshadowed by the family party I saw extremely well in the lagoon-side woodland at Cintsa, there were two adults and 3 or 4 juveniles who were very confident indeed.

Karoo Lark *Certhilauda albescens*

Commonly seen in the West Coast National Park where their 4-note flight call was very distinctive.

Thick-Billed Lark *Galerida magnirostris*

Also commonly seen in West Coast National Park especially in the area behind Geelbek Manor House.

Rufous-Naped Lark *Mirafra africana*

Commonly seen in Inkwenkwisi and Hluhluwe game reserves.

Red-Capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*

A single seen feeding on short grass in the small Tienie Versveld Nature Reserve was the only one seen.

Red-Breasted Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*

First seen in Hluhluwe hawking over some Ground Hornbills then there were several separate sighting from the car between Swaziland and Pretoria and then a pair were seen about 12 Km's east of Kuruman from the Intercap bus.

Greater-Striped Swallow *Hirundo cucullata*

Very common around the Cape and as far north as Cape Recife, then somewhere between Cape Recife and Cintsa was the cut off point between these and Lesser-Striped Swallow as there was no point where both species were seen together. The same pattern emerged as I moved west from St. Lucia but I don't where the cut off point was.

Lesser-Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*

First seen in Cintsa where they were very common, from there northwards they were regularly seen everywhere I stopped up the coast but soon after we started travelling west again they were replaced again by Greater-Striped Swallows.

European Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen pretty much everywhere on holiday, often seen to form large roosts in reedbeds, especially in St. Lucia and to a lesser extent at Cape Recife Nature Reserve.

Wire-Tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

A single bird was seen flying low over Cintsa lagoon, a pair were seen resting on a bridge over a small stream in Hluhluwe and a small group of 6-8 birds were seen hawking low over a small inlet in the St. Lucia estuary while I was on a boat trip.

White-Throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

Basically seen everywhere on the trip, especially around freshwater but not in as large as numbers as European Swallows.

Pearl-Breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*

Possibly seen hawking in a mixed flock over the summit of Lion's Head, Cape Town but a definite bird was seen perched on a telegraph wire near Hermanus.

Black Saw-Wing Swallow *Psalidoprocne holomelas*

Seen in most places during the trip, Kirstenbosch, Harold Porter, Nature's Valley, Cintsa, St. Lucia etc. basically everywhere there was largish stands of mature woodland.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

1 or 2 birds were seen in a mixed Hirundine flock hawking over the summit of Lion's Head, Cape Town.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*

A pair were seen briefly hawking over fields to the south of Darling.

Brown-Throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Seen all the way up the coast, especially over and around freshwater.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*

Seen everywhere on the trip in a wide range of habitats, from inner city to the top of Table Mountain.

Fork-Tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

Although not seen on the Cape, they were seen everywhere else all the way up the coast in a very wide range of habitats, from following Wildebeest and Blesbok herds on open plains in Inkwenkwisi to dense evergreen forest in Nature's Valley.

Square-Tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*

Very common in the woodland around St. Lucia where they were seen together with Fork-Tailed Drongos, they were quite similar to the former apart from the shorter and only slightly indented tail, with similar behaviour and calls.

Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia*

2 sightings in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley, the best being one in the canopy, seen from the road which winds up the hillside so the tops of the trees were at eye level.

Black-Headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*

Several good sightings in the forests around Nature's Valley (and in the town itself) where their typical Oriole flutey calls were a dead giveaway. An male Oriole seen briefly as it flew overhead in Cintsa was probably this species but also possibly a European Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*).

White-Necked Raven *Corvus albicollis*

Common around the cliffs on Table Mountain and in the hills around Paarl and Hermanus but not seen anywhere else probably due to the lack of suitable habitat visited after the Cape.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Seen everywhere on holiday in most habitats visited, most regularly seen on the roadside – in fields, on telegraph poles etc.

Black Crow *Corvus capensis*

Only seen in Cape Town just north of Strandfontein, feeding on wasteland on the side of the road.

Southern Black Tit *Parus niger*

Commonly seen around the restcamps in Hluhluwe and also seen in the bush at Phinda.

Cape Bulbul *Pycnonotus capensis*

Very common around the Cape and as far north as Nature's Valley, the cut off point between this species and Black-Eyed Bulbul was somewhere between Nature's Valley and Cintsa.

Black-Eyed (Common) Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Very common in an extremely wide range of habitats at Cintsa and further north and west to Pretoria, I don't know where the cut off point is between this species and Red-Eyed Bulbul.

Terrestrial Bulbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*

Several noisy parties of this dull looking bird were seen moving through the leaf litter in the forests around Nature's Valley.

Sombre Bulbul *Andropadus importunus*

Commonly seen in a number of locations all the way up the coast, Kirstenbosch – Nature's Valley – Cintsa – St. Lucia.

African Yellow-Bellied Bulbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

Very common in the forests around St. Lucia where their annoying squeaky calls were very prominent.

Yellow-Spotted Nicator *Nicator gularis*

One was seen to fly across the road in Phinda, its overall dull green plumage and with yellow tail and wing spots were distinctive.

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus*

Commonly seen all the way up the coast, usually in towns/cities but also in the middle of forests, ie Nature's Valley.

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana*

Good views of one perched in the top of a tree in Phinda was the only one seen.

Groundscraper Thrush *Turdus litsitsirupa*

One seen very briefly in Pretoria, by the Backpackers was the only one seen on holiday.

Cape Rock Thrush *Monticola rupestris*

Superb views of a singing male on top of a rock, overlooking a ravine in Salmondsam Nature Reserve was the only one seen.

[Cape Rockjumper *Chaetops frenatus*]

Despite visiting several prime spots (Sir Lowry's Pass, Salmondsam and Harold Porter Botanical Gardens) looking for them, I was unsuccessful with a combination of bad luck and windy conditions the main reasons.

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

Commonly seen at a number of locations all the way up the coast, where they showed a preference for upland/rocky habitats such as Table Mountain and Salmondsam.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

One seen in an arable field (typically for a Wheatear it was in a corner of a field where livestock had churned it up and there was a cattle trough), just to the south of Darling.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Just seen on the Cape in the West Coast National Park, Harold Porter Botanical Gardens and Salmondsam Nature Reserve.

Southern Anteating Chat *Myrmecocichla formicivora*

Just seen on the side of the road between Pongola and Pretoria.

Chorister Robin *Cossypha dichroa*

Common in the woodland and gardens around Nature's Valley.

Natal Robin *Cossypha natalensis*

Only a couple of sightings in the forests around St. Lucia.

Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*

Seen all the way up the coast in a wide variety of habitats from the centre of towns to the middle of evergreen forests in Nature's Valley and St. Lucia.

Brown Robin *Erythropygia signata*

Good views of one at the bottom of Buccaneers Backpackers garden and a pair were also seen in the forests around St. Lucia.

White-Browed Robin *Erythropygia leucophrys*

A single bird was seen singing from a dead tree in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

Karoo Robin *Erythropygia coryphoeus*

Only seen in the West Coast National Park and in the area around Hermanus, especially along the approach road to Salmondsam Nature Reserve.

Starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*

Just one sighting of a single in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley.

Yellow-Throated Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapillus*

Two sightings in the forests around Nature's Valley, the first came down from the canopy, chasing a butterfly and the second was in a mixed species flock in a small clearing.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A single in Mlilwane Nature Reserve in Swaziland was the only one seen on the holiday.

Knysna Warbler *Bradypterus sylvaticus*

One was seen at very close quarters on the Braile trail, at the base of Table Mountain, part of Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Victorin's Warbler *Bradypterus victorini*

One was tape lured to call back to us on the slopes above Harold Porter Botanical Gardens by Mike Ford but as it was very windy the bird kept its head down and we couldn't get a view of it.

Barrat's Warbler *Bradypterus barratti*

One was heard singing and finally tracked down in a bush in the scrubby area between the forest and the beach near the St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Broad-Tailed Warbler *Schoenicola brevirostris*

2 or 3 displaying males were seen and heard in the long grass surrounding Sondwela Backpackers in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

African Sedge Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

Heard singing at Salmondsam (pointed out by Mike Ford) and was probably heard at Strandfontein and Paarl as well but I just didn't realise, it was not until St. Lucia until several were seen, singing from wires and bushes in the marshy areas surrounding the flooded pans, especially the 'Jacana' pan near Iphiva campsite.

African Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

Seen at a number of locations all the way up the coast – at places with large enough reedbeds like Paarl, Strandfontein, Cape Recife and St. Lucia.

Grassbird *Sphenoeacus afer*

A pair were seen at close quarters in very short grass on the edge of the lagoon at Nature's Valley.

Green-Backed Bleating Warbler *Camaroptera brachyura*

These noisy, small birds were commonly seen in the forests around Nature's Valley, Cintsa, St. Lucia and Phinda.

Long-Billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*

A single bird was seen briefly in Phinda, its tailless profile was all the view that was necessary.

Yellow-Breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

A couple of sightings around St. Lucia included a very obliging pair along the boardwalk at the estuary mouth.

Bar-Throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica*

Heard calling at both Harold Porter and Salmondsam (thanks to Mike Ford again), before being seen at Nature's Valley, Cape Recife Nature Reserve and around St. Lucia.

Fan-Tailed Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Only seen in the long marshy grass behind Buccaneers Backpackers in Cintsa.

Cloud Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus*

A single bird was seen displaying in the long dry grass in the Tienie Versveld Nature Reserve.

Neddicky *Cisticola fulvicapillis*

Regularly seen in a wide range of habitats throughout my holiday from upland grassland on top of Table Mountain to quite barren rocky areas at Salmondsam to the scrubby area between the beach and the forest at St. Lucia.

Grey-Backed Cisticola *Cisticola subruficapillis*

Very common in the West Coast National Park but nowhere else.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*

Commonly seen in the marsh areas surrounding flooded pans in St. Lucia, especially the large 'Jacana' pan near the Iphiva campsite but not seen anywhere else.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*

Quite a few were seen in Phinda where their rattling call was very distinctive - a very apt name.

Black-Backed Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes*

Regularly seen in reedbeds around St. Lucia where it replaces Levillant's Cisticola.

Levillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens*

Basically seen wherever there are reedbeds (or even long marshy grass at Salmondsam), from the Cape - Paarl, Strandfontein, West Coast National Park etc. up as far north as Cintsa as somewhere between Cintsa and St. Lucia is the cut off between this species and Black-Backed Cisticola.

Drakensberg Prinia *Prinia hypoxantha*

A pair were seen in the long grass on the hill behind Buccaneers Backpackers, Cintsa, they were able to be compared directly with Spotted Prinias who were also present, their yellowy underparts were very distinct from the Spotted.

Spotted Prinia *Prinia maculosa*

Very common all the way up the coast but especially around the Cape in places like Salmondsam and West Coast National Park.

Tawny-Flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

A pair were seen in the rank grass behind Buccaneers Backpackers, Cintsa and they were common in the scrub between the forest and the sea near St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*

Very common on the Cape in the right habitat, in places such as Kirstenbosch and Harold Porter, also seen in Nature's Valley and St. Lucia.

Blue-Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens*

A pair were seen from the boardwalk near St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

One was seen in St. Lucia, surely they should have been much commoner.

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*

A single bird was seen being a typical Flycatcher near a small pool in Cintsa West.

Fiscal Flycatcher *Sigelus silens*

Seen occasionally all the way up the coast, including Kuruman.

Blue-Mantled Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas*

Common in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley, not seen anywhere else.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

Common in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley, not seen anywhere else.

Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*

A pair were seen in the scrub between the forest and the sea near the St. Lucia estuary mouth.

Cape White-eye *Zosterops pallidus*

Seen absolutely everywhere on the trip, the most annoying bird in South Africa as 99 out of every 100 small birds seen briefly flitting around in a tree or bush turn out to be one of these bloody things.

Cape Batis *Batis capensis*

A pair were seen carrying food in a well vegetated riverbed in Salmondsam Nature Reserve, also several sightings in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*

A pair were seen well in Phinda.

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

Seen alongside almost every stretch of water I came across on the trip, from small rainwater puddles to the open coast, also seen regularly away from water in towns – so basically everywhere.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Maybe surprisingly, not seen until I was in St. Lucia where they were common.

Long-Tailed Wagtail *Motacilla clara*

An adult and an immature was seen on a stream running into Cintsa lagoon.

Long-Billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

Seen in good numbers in Inkwenkwisi and Hluhluwe game reserves.

Plain-Backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*

A very obliging individual was scrutinised in depth as it perched on a mound in a grass field near Hermanus until it was sure that it was a Plain-Backed Pipit.

Yellow-Throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*

Common in the grassland around St. Lucia, especially the area surrounding the 'Jacana' pan where several pairs were presumably flushed off nests.

Orange-Throated Longclaw *Macronyx capensis*

A very beautiful individual was seen on the salt marsh just before I got to the Geelbek Hide in the West Coast National Park.

Red-Backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A very bright male was seen behind Buccaneers Backpackers, Cintsa and several birds of all sexes/ages were seen in St. Lucia.

Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris*

Very common all the way up the coast, most often seen perched on the roadside.

Southern Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus*

A noisy party was seen in the coastal bush at Cintsa.

Black-Crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*

A pair were seen well in Phinda.

Southern Tchagra *Tchagra tchagra*

Superb views of an adult in Salmondsam Nature Reserve.

Bokmakierie *Telophorus zeylonus*

Good views of a noisy party in the West Coast National Park, at the turn off to the Seeberg Hide and they were also heard in Salmondsam.

Olive Bush Shrike *Telophorus olivaceus*

Two sightings were had in Nature's Valley, one superb view first thing in the morning just in roadside bushes as the sun was just rising above the forests extending down to pristine sandy beaches.....

Black-Backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*

Very common in the forests surrounding Nature's Valley and St. Lucia.

Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens*

Very commonly seen in a number of habitats north of Port Elizabeth.

Plum-Coloured Starling *Cinnyricinclus corruscus*

A female and two superb males were seen in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

Black-Bellied Starling *Lamprotornis corruscus*

Good views of 4 in the canopy of the forest surrounding Nature's Valley and bizarrely, for this 'coastal and riverine forest' species several were seen feeding out of a rubbish bin next to the market in St. Lucia.

Red-Winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*

Very common in Cape Town, in the city centre, on the top of Table Mountain and many places in between.

Indian Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

First seen from the Baz Bus driving through Durban in the morning and from then on they were seen in every human settlement up to St. Lucia and across to Pretoria (not seen in Swaziland though).

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The most obvious bird on the Cape, seen in every habitat from Cape Town to as far north as Cintsa. The cut off point between these and Indian Mynas is therefore somewhere between Cintsa and Durban and apparently there is a small overlap zone where the two species are in direct competition for food, nest sites etc. where these two very successful introduced species fight violently for the resources sometimes causing the decline of native Starling species such as African Pied and Red-Winged.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*

A flock of 8-9 on the main road above Cintsa were the only ones seen.

African Pied Starling *Spreo bicolor*

Very common in the West Coast National Park where small flocks were constantly flying over, especially around the Seeberg Hide and one was seen on the side of the road between Nature's Valley and Port Elizabeth.

Red-Billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

3 birds were seen on the back of a White Rhino in Hluhluwe.

Cape Sugarbird *Promerops cafer*

Very common all over the Cape wherever stands of flowering Proteas were, especially on one slope of Table Mountain where there were upwards of 30 birds flitting around, feeding and calling.

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa*

Unfortunately I missed out on these at Kirstenbosch, so I was getting a bit desperate to see them, which was made even worse when I went out with Mike Ford to Harold Porter Botanical Gardens where they are 'a dead cert' and there were none to be seen anywhere. Then about 20mins east of Harold Porter we passed a large stand of Proteas on the side of the road, where there were about 5 or 6 just flitting about. Phew. A couple were then seen in Nature's Valley.

Orange-Breasted Sunbird *Nectarinia violacea*

These were also missed out upon at Kirstenbosch but after I nearly died of exhaustion climbing Skeleton Gorge to the top of Table Mountain and was very unsteady on my legs, a superb little male jumped up on to the top of a Protea and posed very nicely before flying off to chase a female, all my tiredness just melted away (at least for 5 mins), another male was even more obliging perching 2m from the main path leading to the cable car, not caring about all the people walking past – who also just ignored him. A few more pairs were also seen at Harold Porter.

African Black Sunbird *Nectarinia amethystina*

Very common in Nature's Valley and then seen occasionally up the coast from there ie. Cintsa and St. Lucia.

Eastern Olive Sunbird *Nectarinia obscura*

Several sightings around St. Lucia, especially noisy pairs around the 'Jacana' pan near the Iphiva campsite.

Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris*

Common in the scrub and woodland surrounding St. Lucia.

White-Bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia talatala*

A pair were seen in Phinda.

Greater Double-Collared Sunbird *Nectarinia afra*

Very common in Nature's Valley and seen very occasionally northwards up the coast.

Lesser Double-Collared Sunbird *Nectarinia chalybea*

The commonest Sunbird on the Cape with many birds being seen at all the Sunbirdy places such as Kirstenbosch and Harold Porter, the only other sighting was a single male with a pair of Greater's in Nature's Valley.

Purple-Banded Sunbird *Nectarinia bifasciata*

A pair were seen in the scrub between the forest and the sea near the St. Lucia estuary mouth.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Seen in basically every town I went through.

Cape Sparrow *Passer melanurus*

Seen regularly all the way up the coast.

Southern Grey-Headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus*

Not seen anywhere on the Cape with actually the only ones I can definitely remember seeing being in Nature's Valley but I'm sure there were a few kicking around the game reserves of Inkwenkwisi, Hluhluwe and Phinda.

Thick-Billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

A pair had a nest in a very small patch of reeds in Cintsa West and were always very obvious and the other pair seen had a nest dangerously overhanging the main Crocodile pit at the St. Lucia Crocodile centre.

Forest Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*

Several noisy parties were seen in the forests surrounding St. Lucia.

Spotted-Backed Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

First seen in a large mixed colony with Southern Masked Weavers in Cintsa West and from there on seen every now and again but these weavers all blend into one and I didn't keep very good field notes.

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*

The commonest Weaver species seen on holiday but again due to all these Weavers mixing and looking the same I don't really know where I saw them, I just know I saw them!

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*

A single colony was found in the roadside trees somewhere in St. Lucia.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*

First seen in the same small reedbed as the Thick-Billed Weaver pair in Cintsa West and they were also common in St. Lucia.

Cape Weaver *Ploceus capensis*

Very common on the Cape in any suitable habitat ie. Paarl, Strandfontein and the West Coast National Park, also seen at places like Cape Recife and Cintsa.

Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*

A single male was seen in a small patch of reeds in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland, its pale eye was very distinctive, it blew all the 'possibles' seen around St. Lucia clean out of the water.

Yellow Weaver *Ploceus subaureus*

Very common in the reeds adjacent to Cintsa lagoon and around St. Lucia.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*

Seen in basically every patch of reeds (no matter how small) on the Cape but none were seen all the way up the coast until I reached Swaziland where they were common again from there across to Pretoria.

Golden Bishop *Euplectes afer*

Only seen from the car on the journey from Pongola to Pretoria in areas of rank grass and marshland.

Long-Tailed Widow *Euplectes progne*

Only seen from vehicles as I flashed past, one was seen from the Baz Bus somewhere in the Transkai and several males were in every field along the journey from Pongola to Pretoria, they were all displaying by hovering above the grass with

their long tails blowing in the wind, only a few females were seen as they cruised around looking for the best male. A superb example of Zaharvi's Handicap Principle, made even more poignant as the man himself visited us on the farm a few months earlier.

Red-Collared Widow *Euplectes ardens*

Seen in the same binocular field of view as 3 Elephants in Hluhluwe (one of the old bulls translocated from Kruger to teach the young males to stop killing Rhinos by trying to mate with them!), also seen in the long grass in Mlilwane Nature Reserve, Swaziland.

White-Winged Widow *Euplectes albonotatus*

A few males and a female seen in Phinda were the only ones seen.

Red-Shouldered Widow *Euplectes axillaris*

Very common in the long grass behind Bucaneers Backpackers in Cintsa where the male fly low over the grass with exaggerated, floppy wingbeats as the females look on, usually disinterested, also common in the long grass adjacent to flooded pans in St. Lucia, especially near the 'Jacana' pan near Iphiva campsite.

Yellow-Rumped Widow *Euplectes capensis*

Seen everywhere on the Cape, in every patch of reeds (no matter how small), every patch of longish grass and even in dry Fynbos but not seen anywhere when I went further north.

Pin-Tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

Commonly seen everywhere up the coast with a first brief sighting of a male along a small stream just south of Darling, the best sighting though was just up the road from Buccaneers Backpackers, Cintsa where a male was seen for 20 mins hovering above 2 females perched on telephone wires, with his tail blowing in the wind, before the 2 females flew off!

Black Widowfinch *Vidua funerea*

A pair were just seen briefly on the side of the road during a game drive in Hluhluwe.

Swee Waxbill *Estrilda melanotis*

A couple of sightings of a small group of 8-10 birds in St. Lucia.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

A group of about 7 were seen in Salmondsam Nature Reserve and a group of about 12 were seen in St. Lucia.

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*

A couple of pairs were seen well on the side of the road in Hluhluwe.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullatus*

A single bird was seen in a garden in Cintsa West and a couple were seen in St. Lucia.

Pied Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides*

A single was seen on the roadside between St. Lucia town and the Crocodile centre, with the size being the most distinguishing feature.

Melba Finch *Pytilia melba*

A single male (possibly a female present as well) was seen in Phinda.

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula*

A pair were seen at very close quarters in a forest clearing near St. Lucia.

Yellow Canary *Serinus flaviventris*

Seen occasionally all the way up the coast, they were more common once I started to move away from the coast being somewhat displaced by all the other Canary species.

Bully Canary *Serinus sulphuratus*

A single feeding on the manicured lawns at Kirstenbosch with a small group of Cape Canaries and a pair at Salmondsam were the only ones seen on the trip.

Yellow-Eyed Canary *Serinus mozambicus*

Seen occasionally all the way up the coast, they became quite annoying in Phinda when we were looking unsuccessfully for Lemon-Breasted Canaries.

Forest Canary *Serinus scotops*

Seen briefly at Kirstenbosch and very regularly around Nature's Valley town and forests.

Black-Throated Canary *Serinus atrogularis*

A group of 6 or 7 were seen next to the Eye in Kuruman at the end of the trip.

Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis*

Commonly seen in a number of locations on the Cape, especially at Kirstenbosch and Harold Porter, a pair were also seen on a lawn in Nature's Valley.

White-Throated Canary *Serinus albogularis*

Several seen in the scrub along the path to the Seeberg hide in the West Coast National Park were the only ones seen.

Streaky-Headed Canary *Serinus gularis*

A single was seen at Paarl Mountain Reserve and they were also common in Nature's Valley town where many males were seen singing from garden bushes.

Cape Siskin *Pseudochloroptila totta*

One was seen briefly as it flew overhead while I was in the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, with its call and white in the tail being diagnostic.

Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis*

Many were seen in the West Coast National Park, especially around the Seeberg hide.

Cinnamon-Breasted Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* - Pretoria

South African Total – **459 Species**