

# REPORT FROM A TRIP TO ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA 5-26.7 1994

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This trip was more of a general holiday with my non-birding wife rather than a hard-core birding trip and I only birded when time off from other activities permitted. Therefore, many obvious species are missing from the list. None the less, I hope the trip list and general information can be of help to any birder planning a trip to these countries. The report is divided into three sections. The general section deals with matters that apply mainly for both countries, the Zimbabwe section with matters mainly applying to that country and the South Africa section with South African matters.

## GENERAL

### Flights

We flew Gulfair nonstop Abu Dhabi-Johannesburg on a 50% discount (not available to the public) which cost USD600. Most major airlines fly in to Johannesburg/Cape Town and Harare though. Balkan Bulgarian Airlines used to be cheap to Harare from Europe, but I am unaware if they operate today.

### Visas

Not required for Swedish nationals. Border formalities were swift, both at Beitbridge and Johannesburg. The Zimbabwe border staff appreciate receiving daily newspapers (South African or Zimbabwean) and handing them a couple of copies can be a good idea to get through swiftly.

### Customs

It would be wise to declare all optical equipment and all money before entering Zimbabwe, to avoid confiscation when exiting. It seems very rare though that the border staff actually check personal luggage.

### Travel Johannesburg-Harare

The cheapest and quickest way (apart from flying) is to use Zimibus. They travel three times a week in Toyota mini-buses and the journey takes 13 hours. They were extremely helpful and professional, and had good (safe) drivers. They stop every second hour for a pause on the trip and the buses have ac. Snacks are provided. They also operate Johannesburg-Durban and are starting up new routes Harare-Victoria Falls and Harare-Bulawayo. Booking is necessary, during holidays long time in advance. They can also do charters if you are a group. Their contact numbers are: 011-8830380 in Johannesburg, or 720426 or 790360 in Harare. Fax. to Johannesburg office is 8830370.

There are also larger buses and trains, but these take much longer time. Flights are also available, but cost c. USD 400.

### Climate

Being in the winter it was terribly cold at night. Harare temperatures reached close to 0° at night and around 20°C during the day. There wasn't any rainfall there or in Johannesburg. Johannesburg temperatures were similar, but temperatures below 0° were reached in the Karoo and we saw snow on the mountains there. In Cape Town there was some rainfall with the lowest night temperature being 4° and day temperatures around 20°.

### Literature

The field guides used were Newman's "Birds of Southern Africa" and the (relatively new) SASOL guide "Birds of Southern Africa". The latter was found to be the superior guide to the region. Chittenden's "Top Birding Spots in Southern Africa" was also used and could be useful if you don't have any local birding contacts. A drawback with this book is that the maps are not detailed enough to be easily interpreted and a lack of scales, but the lists of species for each locality with scarcer birds highlighted is very useful. Both the bookshops in SA and Zimbabwe had an amazing amount of birding literature in stock (even volumes like

Cramp *et al* and Birds of Africa!) at a reasonable price as long as they were locally published. Maps of the countries were also readily available in SA bookshops.

A recently published checklist, compiled by P. Hockey and published by SASOL to accompany that guide, was most useful and available in virtually all bookshops. Apart from being a checklist it also gives alternative names in use for the same species and the months when they can be encountered in the region. A must for any visitor!

As general travel literature we used the Lonely Planet's Guide to Southern Africa. Clearly worthwhile to buy, but a bit outdated on price information.

### Species lists

The names used follow the SASOL list unless other names are in use in Arabia/WP, when the latter have been used. Systematic order also follow this list. Due to the limited time available for birding, I did not dwell into deeper detail when identifying e. g. Glossy Starlings, female sunbirds and Cormorants once I had recorded the species. My unfamiliarity with African birdcalls also contribute to the fact that some, for a local birder, obvious species probably are missing or under-represented in the systematic lists.

### Acknowledgements

A large thanks to our friends Anders and Karen Hallgren who put us up in Harare and let me use their car for birding excursions around town. Also to all other Swedavia staff we met in Harare. Nan and Don Hill of Zimibus were incredibly helpful and saved us a lot of time (and money) through their kind assistance with practical matters. In Cape Town, Jim Enticott and Caz Thomas assisted with practical arrangements and Phil Hockey helped me to get my 200th tick of the trip and my 1000th lifer (Fairy Flycatcher) with his efficient birding in the Karoo. Also many thanks to Eva for the Ostrich dinner and good company.

## **ZIMBABWE**

### Accommodation

We stayed with friends throughout our stay and got away fairly cheap. As Zimbabwe policy is that they should attract few tourists that pay more rather than masses of budget tourists; hotels, safari tours etc. have to be paid in foreign currency at a higher price than if you are a resident. Expatriates in the country can pay the lower prices in local currency though.

### Car hire

Prohibitively overpriced. A daily rental would cost c. USD100-150, if one drove only 200 km. The cars are reported to be wrecks as well. Perhaps renting a taxi with a driver is an option.

### People

We found the Zimbabweans very nice and friendly, both blacks and white. There were a few beggars around Harare but they were not very disturbing. It is advisable to keep a careful eye on one's gear and to try to not look like a tourist in Harare itself though, as in any other large city.

### Food

We did not eat out much, but prices were definitely lower than in Scandinavia, Spain/Portugal or Arabia.

### Changing money

There is a black market for changing western currency, the best bet is probably to do it with white acquaintances and not with persons approaching you on the street. It is illegal though, and you have to declare money in your possession when you enter and exit the country. Banks change traveller's checks and cash, but if you have changed too much and want to change back there can be problems. You will have to show receipts and change it back in the same bank where you originally changed it and it will be costly. Receipts should be saved anyway in case customs want to see them when exiting.

### Literature

A useful bird-finding guide was "Birdwatch Zimbabwe" by Solomon and Williams. It was available in the bookshops in Harare.

### Daily programme

- 6.7: Birding from the bus all day. Arrived Harare c. 20.00.  
7.7: Birding early morning and late afternoon around Chisipite.  
8.7: Morning birding in Chisipite, afternoon birding Sitra pottery factory close to Ruwa.  
9-10.7: Visit to Mondhoro wilderness. Good birding, but pathetic place for "wilderness". Few animals, poor guide and average food. Not recommended, although we enjoyed the accommodation in traditional rondavels. Short afternoon visit to Cleveland Dam and evening in Chisipite.  
11.7: Morning visit to Cleveland Dam, afternoon at Domboshava. Evening birding in Chisipite.  
12.7: Morning visit to Mukivisi (need to rent guide to get in to the wood, to be arranged beforehand) and then to Harare Botanical gardens.  
13.7: Bus Harare-Johannesburg.

*Double-underlined species were recorded in South Africa only.*

- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*: 1 Mondhoro 9-10.7.  
**Long-tailed Cormorant** *P. africanus*: 1 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 from the bus 13.7.  
**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*: Singles Mondhoro 9-10.7 and Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Black-headed Heron** *A. melanocephala*: Recorded daily from the bus and in many areas around Harare, including Chisipite.  
**Purple Heron** *A. purpurea*: 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*: Common, recorded daily.  
**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*: 6 Mondhoro 9-10.7.  
**Unid. storks**: 4 from moving bus 2 hours south of Harare 13.7. Black-type.  
**White-faced Duck** *Dendrocygna vittata*: 25 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*: 10 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 4 Beitbridge 13.7.  
**Unid. vulture** : 1 from moving bus 6.7 and 13.7. White-backed/Cape-type.  
**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*: 3 from the bus 6.7, 5 Harare-Mondhoro road 9.7, 2 Mondhoro-Harare road 10.7, 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7, 2 from the bus 13.7.  
**Bateleur** *Therathopius ecaudatus*: 1 from the bus 2 hours south Harare and 1 3 hours 15 min. south of Harare 13.7.  
**Ovambo Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter ovampensis*: 1 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Little Sparrowhawk** *A. minullus*: 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Black Sparrowhawk** *A. melanoleucus*: 1 Chisipite 10.7.  
**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*: 2 (1 melanistic) Chisipite 8.7.  
**Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates*: 1 Mondhoro 10.7.  
**Swainson's Francolin** *Francolinus swainsonii*: Common Mondhoro 9-10.7.  
**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris*: Common, recorded daily.  
**Black Crane** *Ammaurornis flavirostris*: 2 Mukivisi 12.7, 4 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*: 3 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Red-crested Korhaan** *Eupodotis ruficrista*: 1 from the bus 5 hours from Zimbabwe 6.7.  
**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus*: 2 Cleveland Dam 10.7, 6 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7.  
**Crowned Plover** *Vanellus coronatus*: Several from the bus 6 and 13.7, fairly common in small numbers Harare.  
**Wattled Plover** *V. senegallus*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7.  
**Olive Pigeon** *Columba arquatrix*: 2 Domboshava 11.7.  
**Red-eyed Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Common Harare, no effort spent on identifying non-calling birds.  
**Cape Turtle Dove** *S. capicola*: Common in dryer habitat than Red-eyed.  
**Palm Dove** *S. senegalensis*: Common.  
**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*: Singles from the bus 6 and 13.7 and Harare-Mondhoro road 9 and 10.7.  
**Meyer's Parrot** *Poicephalus meyeri*: 1 Mondhoro 10.7.  
**Rosy-faced Lovebird** *Agapornis roseicollis*: Small groups (up to 6 together) seen in Chisipite throughout our stay. Probably escapes.  
**Purple-crested Lourie** *Tauraco porphyreolophus*: 1 Chinoy 10.7, 1 Chisipite 11.7, 6 at 2 hours south of Harare 13.7.  
**Grey Lourie** *Corythaixoides concolor*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 from bus c. 2.5 hours south of Harare 13.7.

**Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus*: 10 Cleveland Dam 11.7, up to 30 daily over Chisipite, flying east in early mornings and west in evenings. 4 Domboshava 11.7.

**Red-faced Mousebird** *Colius indicus*: 9 c. 3 hours south of Harare 13.7, 8 in northern RSA 13.7.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*: 1 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.

**Unid. blue Kingfisher** : 1 Mondhoro 9.7, possibly Half-collared.

**Brown-hooded Kingfisher** *Halcyon albiventris*: 1 Sitra pottery 8.7.

**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *H. leucocephala*: 1 Sitra pottery 8.7. Should not occur in Zimbabwe in July!

**Striped Kingfisher** *H. chelicuti*: 1 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus*: 2 Chisipite 8.7, 1 Sitra pottery 8.7.

**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudata*: Common along roads and in Mondhoro.

**Racket-tailed Roller** *C. spatulata*: 1 from the bus 6.7, 1 Mondhoro 10.7.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*: Common Chisipite and Mondhoro.

**Red-billed Woodhoopoe** *Phoeniculus damarensis*: 1 Mondhoro 10.7.

**Greater Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*: 3 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Grey Hornbill** *Tockus nasutus*: Singles from the bus 6 and 13.7.

**Red-billed Hornbill** *T. erythrorhynchos*: Common from the bus 6 and 13.7.

**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill** *T. flavirostris*: Several from bus 6 and 13.7.

**Black-collared Barbet** *L. torquatus*: 2 Sitra pottery 8.7, 1 Chinoy 10.7, 1 Cleveland Dam

**Acacia Pied Barbet** *Lybius leucomelas*: 1 Pietersburg, RSA 13.7.

**Whyte's Barbet** *Stactolaema leucotis*: 1 Sitra pottery 8.7, 1 Chisipite 12.7.

**Yellow-fronted Tinker Barbet** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*: 2-3 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 Chinoy 10.7.

**Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 3 Cleveland Dam 11.7, 1 Chisipite 12.7.

**Bennett's Woodpecker** *Campethera benetti*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicus fuscescens*: 1 Chisipite 7.7, 1 Mondhoro 9.7.

**Pearl-breasted Swallow** *Hirundo dimidiata*: 1 Sitra pottery 8.7, 5 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**African Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*: 6 Domboshava 11.7.

**Grey-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*: 2 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Black Cuckoo-shrike** *Campephaga flava*: 1 female from the bus 6.7.

**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*: Common, recorded daily.

**Black Crow** *Corvus capensis*: Several from the bus 6.7, 4-5 Chisipite 7-13.7.

**Pied Crow** *C. albus*: Common, recorded daily.

**White-necked Raven** *C. albicollis*: 2 Domboshava 11.7.

**Southern Black Tit** *Parus niger*: 1 Mondhoro 9.7.

**Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii*: Common Chisipite, recorded daily.

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*: Common Harare.

**Terrestrial Bulbul** *Phyllastrephus terrestris*: 5 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.

**Kurrichane Thrush** *Turdus libonyana*: Common Harare and Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Groundscraper Thrush** *Zoothera litsisirupa*: Common Mondhoro 9-10.7, Cleveland Dam 11.7 and 2 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.

**Red-tailed Chat** *Cercomela familiaris*: 1 c. 4 hours south of Harare 13.7.

**Arnot's Chat** *Thamnolea arnoti*: 2 Mondhoro 10.7.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*: Singles recorded around Harare and Harare-border, scarce.

**Heuglin's Robin** *Cossypha heuglini*: 1 Sitra pottery 8.7.

**Mashona Hylia** *Hylia australis*: 1 Mondhoro 9.7.

**African Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus baeticatus*: 1 Mukivisi 12.7.

**Yellow Warbler** *Chloropeta natalensis*: 1 Chisipite 9.7.

**Bar-throated Apalis** *Apalis thoracia*: 1 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.

**Long-billed Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens*: 2 Cleveland Dam 11.7.

**Green-capped Eremomela** *Eremomela scotops*: 1 Mondhoro 9.7, 1 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.

**Lazy Cisticola** *Cisticola aberrans*: 1 Mondhoro 10.7.

**Neddicky** *C. fulvicapilla*: 3 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava*: 3 Mondhoro 9-10.7.

**Bluegrey Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens*: 2 Chinoy 10.7.

**Southern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina*: 4 Mondhoro 9-10.7, singles in and around Harare.

**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor*: Common in and around Harare, recorded daily.

**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp*: 2 Cleveland Dam 10-11.7.

**Grassveld Pipit** *Anthus cinnamomeus*: 2 Mondhoro 10.7, 1 Domboshava 11.7.  
**Bushveld Pipit** *A. caffer*: 1 Domboshava 11.7.  
**Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus*: 2 Mondhoro 9.7.  
**Fiscal Shrike** *Lanius collaris*: Common all over Zimbabwe, recorded daily.  
**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius aethiopicus*: 1 Chisipite 9.7.  
**Puffback** *Dryosopus cubla*: Singles recorded near-daily at Chisipite, Mondhoro, Chinoy and Harare Botanical Gardens.  
**Brubru** *Nilus afer*: 1 Chinoy 10.7, 1 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Three-streaked Tchagra** *Tchagra australis*: 1 Chinoy 10.7.  
**Black-crowned Bush Shrike** *T. senegala*: 1 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**White Helmet-Shrike** *Prionops plumatus*: 7 Mondhoro 9-10.7, 6 c. 2 hours south of Harare 13.7.  
**Southern White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus anguitimens*: Several from bus 6 and 13.7.  
**Amethyst Starling** *Lamprotornis corruscus*: 4 Chisipite 10-12.7.  
**Long-tailed Starling** *L. mevesii*: 1 c. 4 hours south of Harare 13.7.  
**Glossy Starling** *L. nitens*: Only positively identified at a bus stop c. 4 hours south of Harare 13.7.  
**Greater Blue-eared Starling** *L. chalybaeus*: Identified from 6.7, seen at Mondhoro.  
**Lesser Blue-eared Starling** *L. chloropterus*: Identified from 9.7, seen at Mondhoro.  
**Red-winged Starling** *Onychognatus morio*: 2 from the bus c. 1 hour after Beitbridge 6.7.  
**Miombo Double-collared Sunbird** *Nectarinia manoensis*: Regular around Harare, recorded daily.  
**Yellow-bellied Sunbird** *N. venusta*: 1 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**White-bellied Sunbird** *N. talatala*: 1 Chisipite 7 and 12.7.  
**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *N. senegalensis*: Common in and around Harare.  
**Black Sunbird** *N. amethystina*: Common in and around Harare.  
**Violet-backed Sunbird** *A. longuemarei*: 1 Mondhoro 9.7.  
**Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis*: Common, recorded daily.  
**White-browed Sparrow-weaver** *Plocepasser mahali*: 4 at stop c. 2 hours north of Johannesburg, South Africa 6.7.  
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*: Singles in Harare and northern South Africa, scarce.  
**Yellow-throated Sparrow** *Petronia supercilii*: 8 Chinoy 10.7.  
**Thick-billed Weaver** *Amblyospiza albifrons*: 2 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis*: 1 Mondhoro 10.7, singles Mukivisi 12.7.  
**Southern Masked Weaver** *P. velatus*: Common, recorded daily.  
**Lesser Masked Weaver** *P. intermedius*: 20 Chinoy 10.7.  
**Golden Weaver** *P. xanthops*: Common, recorded daily.  
**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*: 5 Mondhoro 5.7, c. 20 Domboshava 11.7.  
**Yellow-rumped Widow** *Euplectes capensis*: 3 Mondhoro 10.7.  
**Yellow-backed Widow** *E. macrourus*: 1 Cleveland Dam 11.7.  
**Red-collared Widow** *E. ardens*: 50 Domboshava 11.7.  
**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala*: 2 Chisipite 7-12.7, 2 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Blue Waxbill** *Uraeginthus granatinus*: Common Mondhoro 9-10.7, singles Chisipite daily and c. 75 Harare Botanical Gardens 12.7.  
**Cut-throat Finch** *Amadina fasciata*: 20 Mondhoro 10.7, 2 from the bus 13.7.  
**Bronze Mannekin** *Spermestes cucullatus*: Common, recorded daily.  
**Red-backed Mannekin** *S. bicolor*: 5 Chisipite 12.7.  
**Yellow-eyed Canary** *Serinus mozambicus*: 25 Mondhoro 25.7.  
**Bully Canary** *S. sulphuratus*: Singles recorded daily Chisipite.  
**Streaky-headed Canary** *S. gularis*: Singles Chisipite, recorded near-daily.  
**Black-eared Canary** *S. mennelli*: Common Mondhoro 9-10.7, singles recorded other days at Harare.  
**Golden-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza flaviventris*: 1 male Mondhoro 10.7.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Accommodation

In Johannesburg we stayed in the Sandton Garden Court Holiday Inn, which is a budget-type Holiday Inn (ie small rooms, you carry your own luggage) and was 209 rands a room. Excellent just for sleeping in, but no place to spend a holiday in. Slightly better (but still of normal Holiday Inn standard) was the Jan Smuts Holiday Inn where we hired a day-room for 175 rands on our return trip.

In Cape Town we rented an excellent two-bedroom apartment from Jim Enticott. It was 50 rand pp a night (75 during the peak season) and had a fully equipped kitchen. No radio or TV though. It was a 20 minute drive from Kommetjie and 15 from Strandfontein and all necessary shops and restaurants were within walking distance. Another big advantage is that Jim and his wife are birders and can provide useful information (including arranging pelagics). Highly recommended! Their address: POB 34088, Rhodes Gift 7707, Cape Town. Telephone: 21-757676. The last two nights we took in at the newly opened Kommetjie Inn (POB 6, Kommetjie 7975. Tel. 021-7831706, fax. 021-7831816) so we could spend a couple of nights on the coast. The hotel was absolutely magnificent. The rooms beat any Hilton or Intercon and the interior decoration and colours were very tasteful. The restaurant was also excellent. The only drawback was the somewhat disorganised staff. They were very willing and polite but lacked proper guidance and training. The hotel had only been open three weeks though and we assume this will be rectified. A double "superior" room there was only 210 rands.

### Travel

We took the Trans-Karoo train to Cape Town for 989 rands for a private, first class compartment. Leaves at noon and arrives after 25 hours. When you book, also pay for bedding and towels unless you bring your own (can also be bought on the train at a higher price). Standard was normal Scandinavian second class train, but toilets were clean and there was shower on board. Food and drinks available at reasonable prices, the former of low standard (but edible). The main drawback was the poor heating system, it was 5°C in the compartment when we woke up in the Karoo in the morning. The booking staff were very helpful, although reluctant to fax confirmations of reservations. Phone 011-7735878, or. 7732944 for reservations or fax. 7738562.

There are (expensive) flights, buses and the very expensive Blue Train as well to Cape Town. Apparently cheap, stand-by night flights, have ceased to operate.

### Car rental

We rented a Mazda 323 from Cabs Car Hire (Tel. 021-6831932, fax 6831957) for c. 900 rands for ten days with 400 km free a day and incl. insurance. They had forgotten our reservation but are normally able to meet at airport/train station. Many other, similarly priced, companies are around, but we found international ones more expensive. "Getaway Magazine" usually has a good selection of advertisements. Use a credit card to avoid large deposits.

### Food and drink

We were disappointed with the strong British influence on the cooking. The excellent raw materials are there, but locals seem to prefer fish and chips, tasteless gravies, stodgy pies, over-cooked vegetables etc. However, there are a few up-market restaurants around where one can get a well-prepared gourmet meal on par with continental European standards but to less than a third of the price one would pay in Europe or Arabia. The ones at the Kommetjie Inn, Mariner's Warf (Hout Bay) and a couple of restaurants in Cape Town itself were absolutely excellent. There are also several good Italian restaurants, for example Pappino's at Tokai.

Wines were easy drinking and the "wine route", where one can follow signs to different vineyards and sample the produce, was extremely well organised. Although rarely comparable with the best French and Spanish wines we must admit the South Africans do make some nice wines (especially dry whites). It is recommended to spend at least one day following the wine route.

### People

We found the locals very helpful, open and friendly, more so than in any other "western" country I have travelled. There were a few beggars around in Cape Town, but not disturbingly many.

We spent as little time as possible in central Johannesburg which possibly is the most unpleasant city I have ever been to. Supposedly you cannot walk in town safely after dark when the whole city gets deserted. The sight of barbed wire, rubbish and police with guns (even on board the Trans-Karoo train) deterred us from investigating closer. Cape Town was much nicer and had a more friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

### Daily programme

14.7: Train Johannesburg-Cape Town.

15.7: Arrival Cape Town late afternoon. Drive to accommodation in Kirstenhof.

16.7: Whale-watching and birding towards Hermanus with Phil Hockey. Stop at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. Evening at penguin colony in Simonstown.

17.7: Morning at penguin colony, drive around Cape peninsula.

- 18.7: Early morning seawatch at Kommetjie, thereafter birding at Tokai forest.  
 19.7: Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden in the morning.  
 20.7: Full-day birding with Phil in the Karoo. Excellent birding!  
 21.7: Late evening watch along stream in Tokai.  
 22.7: Early morning Strandfontein sewage works in strong wind.  
 23.7: Rain all day, excursion to Hermanus.  
 24.7: Early morning seawatch at Kommetjie in poor winds until rain started.  
 25.7: Train trip to Johannesburg.  
 26.7: Arrival Johannesburg midday, flight left in evening.

### **Systematic list**

- Jackass Penguin** *Spheniscus demersus*: C. 50 Boulder's 16 & 17.7.  
**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*: 1 Heron Park 17.7.  
**Black-necked Grebe** *P. nigricollis*: 2 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: Regular in wetlands.  
**Shy Albatross** *Diomedea cauta*: 4 Cape of Good Hope 17.7, 2 Kommetjie 18.7.  
**Black-browed/Yellow-nosed Albatross** *D. melanophris/chlororhynchus*: 1 Kommetjie 18.7, the former species is the more common close to land. Several other unid. albatrosses were also seen.  
**Southern Giant Petrel** *Macronetes giganteus*: 1 Kommetjie 18.7.  
**Dove Prion** *Pachyptila vittata*: 1 Kommetjie 18.7.  
**White-chinned Petrel** *Procellaria aequinoctialis*: C. 20 Hermanus 16.7, c. 30 Cape of Good Hope 17.7, 150 Kommetjie 18 & 24.7, singles along the coast elsewhere.  
**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*: Very common along coast, e. g. 4800 flying south in one hour off Kommetjie 18.7.  
**White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*: C. 30 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Cape Gannet** *Morus capensis*: Common along all coasts, seen nearly daily.  
**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Common at Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Cape Cormorant** *P. capensis*: Recorded on all coasts from Hermanus to Cape Town, also at Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Bank Cormorant** *P. neglectus*: Recorded most days on west coast.  
**Long-tailed Cormorant** *P. africanus*: Singles Heron Park 17 and 18.7 and Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Crowned Cormorant** *P. coronatus*: Recorded most days on west coast.  
**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*: Singles Strandfontein 22.7 and along roads.  
**Black-headed Heron** *A. melanocephala*: Singles recorded along roads daily.  
**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*: Singles along coast and in fresh water. Recorded near daily.  
**Yellow-billed Egret** *E. intermedia*: 1 Strand 16.7.  
**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*: Very common, recorded daily.  
**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*: 1 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*: 1 from train 15.7.  
**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*: 1 imm. close to Ceres 20.7.  
**Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*: Common along roads, recorded daily.  
**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*: 1 Tokai 21.7 and Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Hadedda Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*: 2 from train at Wolseley 25.7.  
**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*: singles Strand 16 and 23.7, Mitchell's Plain 22.7.  
**Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*: C. 60 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*: 2 Strand 16.7. Apparently the last remaining in South Africa.  
**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*: Very common, recorded daily.  
**South African Shelduck** *Tadorna cana*: 2 close to Ceres 20.7, 2 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Yellow-billed Duck** *Anas undulata*: First spotted from the train 15.7, thereafter recorded daily.  
**Cape Teal** *A. capensis*: 15 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Red-billed Teal** *A. erythrorhyncha*: 2 close to Ceres 20.7, 20 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Cape Shoveler** *A. smithii*: 50 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Southern Pochard** *Netta erythrophthalmus*: 2 Heron Park 17.7, c. 40 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis*: 2 Prince Albert Road 15.7, singles Tokai, and 5 Strandfontein 22.7.  
**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus ceareuleus*: Common, recorded almost daily.

**Verraux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii*: 1 Cape of Good Hope 17.7.

**Jackal Buzzard** *Buteo rufofuscus*: Singles Mitchell's Plain-Hermanus 16.7, 1 Cape peninsula 17.7.

**Pale Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax canorus*: At least 3 Karoo 20.7.

**African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus*: 1 from train south of Johannesburg 14.7, 1 Tokai 21.7.

**Lanner** *Falco biarmicus*: 2 Karoo 20.7.

**Peregrine Falcon** *F. peregrinus*: 1 Strand 23.7.

**Kestrel** *F. tinnunculus*: Singles recorded from the train 14 and 25.7.

**Greater Kestrel** *F. rupicoloides*: 1-2 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Francolin** *Francolinus capensis*: Fairly common on the cape peninsula.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris*: Common, recorded daily.

**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*: 3 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*: Fairly common in wetlands.

**Crested Coot** *Fulica cristata*: Common in all wetlands.

**Southern Black Korhaan** *Eupodotis . afra*: 1 Karoo 20.7, 1 from the train 25.7.

**Northern Black Korhaan** *E afroides*: 15 from the train south of Johannesburg 14.7.

**African Black Oystercatcher** *Haematopus moquini*: Singles observed along coasts, 5 Strandfontein 22.7.

**White-fronted Plover** *Charadrius marginalis*: 2 Strandfontein beach 17.7.

**Crowned Plover** *Vanellus coronatus*: Spotted from train 14.7, 1 Constantia 24.7.

**Blacksmith Plover** *V. armatus*: Common on wetlands, seen daily.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*: 25 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avoceta*: 125 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*: 1 Kommetjie 18.7, 5 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis*: 1 from train south of Johannesburg 14.7, 2 Tokai Forest 18.7, several calling at night Kirstenhof 20.7.

**Subantarctic Skua** *Catharacta antarctica*: 6 Hermanus 16.7, 2 Cape of Good Hope 17.7, 2 Hermanus 23.7, 2 Kleinmond 23.7.

**Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus*: Very common, recorded daily on coasts.

**Grey-headed Gull** *Larus cirrocephalus*: C. 10 from train south of Johannesburg 14 and 26.7.

**Hartlaub's Gull** *Larus hartlaubii*: Very common, recorded daily. 2 imm., believed to be hybrids Grey-headed x Hartlaub's, at Hermanus 16.7.

**Swift Tern** *Sterna bergii*: Fairly common in small numbers along coast.

**Common Tern** *S. hirundo*: 3-4 Kommetjie 18 and 23-24.7.

**Antarctic Tern** *S. vittata*: 25 Kommetjie 18.7, 15 Kommetjie 23-24.7.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*: 1 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba guinea*: Commonly recorded from train and in the Cape.

**Olive Pigeon** *Columba arquatrix*: 1 Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Common.

**Cape Turtle Dove** *S. capicola*: Common.

**Palm Dove** *S. senegalensis*: Common.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*: Singles seen from train 14 and 25.7.

**(Burchell's Coucal** *Centropus burchelli*: 1 road kill 16.7).

**(Spotted Eagle Owl** *Bubo africanus*: 1 road kill 16.7).

**Black Swift** *Apus barbatus*: 5 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis*: 20 Strandfontein 22.7, 5 Hout bay 24.7.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*: 30 Worcester 15.7, 2 Hermanus 23.7.

**Speckled Mousebird** *C. striatus*: 3 Harold Porter Botanical Garden 16.7.

**White-backed Mousebird** *C. colius*: C.15 Karoo 20.7.

**Red-faced Mousebird** *Colus indicus*: 6 Tokai 16-23.7.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*: 1 Ceres 20.7, 2 Strandfontein 22.7, singles elsewhere.

**Giant Kingfisher** *C. maxima*: 1 Kleinmond 16.7, singles seen along the coast and peninsula during the rest of the week.

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Alcedo cristata*: 1 Tokai 21.7.

**Karoo Lark** *Certhilauda albescens*: 6 Karoo 20.7.

**Spike-heeled Lark** *Chersomanes albofasciata*: 2 Karoo 20.7, 1 Welverdiend, from train 26.7.

**Red-capped Lark** *Calandrella cinerea*: 30 Karoo 20.7.

**Thick-billed Lark** *Galerida magnirostris*: 2 Karoo 20.7.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*: 2 Strandfontein 22.7.



**African Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*: Singles recorded near-daily.

**Brown-throated Sand Martin** *Riparia paludicola*: 5 Karoo 20.7, c. 30 Strandfontein 22.7.

**White-necked Raven** *Corvus albicollis*: Singles Karoo-Ceres 20.7 and from train 25.7.

**Pied Crow** *C. albus*: Common, recorded daily.

**Cape Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus minutus*: 4 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Bulbul** *Pycnonotus capensis*: Common, recorded daily.

**Sombre Bulbul** *Andropadus importunus*: Several HP Botanical Gardens 16.7, and Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7.

**Southern Olive Thrush** *Turdus olivaceus*: Common Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7.

**Cape Rock Thrush** *Monticola rupestris*: 1-2 HP Botanical gardens 16.7.

**Mountain Chat** *Oenanthe monticola*: 6 Karoo 20.7, 1 from train at Baviaan 25.7.

**Red-tailed Chat** *Cercomela familiaris*: C. 10 Karoo 20.7, 1 from train at Baviaan 25.7.

**Tractrac Chat** *C. tractrac*: 1 Karoo 20.7.

**Karoo Chat** *C. schlegelii*: C. 20 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Robin** *Cossypha caffra*: Common, recorded daily in Cape. One at Jan Smuts Holiday Inn, Johannesburg 26.7.

**Karoo Robin** *Erythropygia coryphaeus*: 2 Karoo 20.7.

**Tit-Babbler** *P. subcaeruleum*: 2 Karoo 20.7.

**Layard's Tit-Babbler** *Parisoma layardi*: 1 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus gracilostriis*: 2 near Ceres 20.7, 3 Tokai 21.7, singles at Strandfontein 22.7.

**African Sedge Warbler** *Bradypterus baboecala*: Singles close to Ceres 20.7, 1 Tokai 21.7, 3 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Long-billed Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens*: 3 Karoo 20.7.

**Yellow-bellied Eremomela** *Eremomela icteropygialis*: 2 Karoo 20.7.

**Karoo Eremomela** *E. gregalis*: 1 Karoo 20.7.

**Grassbird** *Sphenoeacus afer*: Several at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, 2 Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7.

**Grey-backed Cisticola** *Cisticola subruficapilla*: 4 Karoo 20.7.

**Levaillant's Cisticola** *C. tinniens*: Common around the Cape.

**Neddicky** *C. fulvicapilla*: Singles around the Cape and Harold Porter Botanical Gardens.

**Spotted Prinia** *Prinia maculosa*: Fairly common around the Cape.

**Namaqua Prinia** *Phragmacia substriata*: 1 Karoo 20.7.

**Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta*: 1 Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, 2 Tokai Forest 18.7.

**Fiscal Flycatcher** *Sigelus silens*: Only positively identified at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7.

**Cape Batis** *Batis capensis*: Several in Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7 and Kirstenbosch 19.7.

**Pirit Batis** *B. pririt*: 4 Karoo 20.7.

**Fairy Flycatcher** *Stenostira scita*: 1 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis*: Common, recorded daily.

**Grassveld Pipit** *Anthus cinnamomeus*: 5 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Orange-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx capensis*: 1 Strandfontein 22.7.

**Fiscal Shrike** *Lanius collaris*: Common, recorded daily.

**Southern Boubou** *Laniarius ferrugineus*: Singles Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7 and 1 Chapman's Peak 24.7.

**Bokmakerie** *Telephonus zeylonus*: Heard at several places but only seen Karoo 20.7 and from train 25.7.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*: Common, recorded daily.

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*: 3 recorded Johannesburg 14.7.

**Pied Starling** *Spreo bicolor*: Common on the Karoo 20.7, c. 150 spotted from train 25.7.

**Wattled Starling** *Craetophora cinerea*: 6 from train at Laingsburg 25.7.

**Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis nitens*: Singles from train 14 and 25.7.

**Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio*: Common, recorded daily.

**Pale-winged Starling** *O. naboroupp*: C. 10 Karoo 20.7, c. 25 spotted from train 25.7.

**Cape Sugarbird** *Promerops cafer*: 1 heron Park 18.7, common Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7, several Ceres-Karoo 20.7.

**Malachite Sunbird** *Nectarinia famosa*: Several Ceres-Karoo 20.7.

**Orange-breasted Sunbird** *N. violacea*: Common Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7, Ceres-Karoo 20.7.

**Lesser Double-collared Sunbird** *N. chalybea*: Several Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, also recorded Ceres and Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, but not much effort spent in specifically identifying this species pair.

**Greater Double-collared Sunbird** *N. afra*: Several Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7.

**Cape White-eye** *Zoosterops pallidus*: Very common, recorded daily.

**Cape Sparrow** *Passer melanurus*: Recorded from train 14 and 25.7, singles elsewhere.

**Cape Weaver** *P. capensis*: Several at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, singles elsewhere, recorded near-daily.

**Southern Masked Weaver** *Ploceus velatus*: Singles recorded, not daily.

**Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix*: C. 10 Ceres-Karoo 20.7.

**Yellow-rumped Widow** *E. capensis*: 1 Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7.

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*: 30 Karoo 20.7, 15 from train 25.7.

**Cape Canary** *Serinus canicollis*: Common, recorded near-daily.

**Cape Siskin** *S. tottus*: 1 Harold Porter Botanical Gardens 16.7, 2 Ceres-Karoo 20.7.

**Yellow Canary** *S. flaviventris*: 3 Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens 19.7, flocks of up to 100 Karoo 20.7, 150 from train 25.7.

**White-throated Canary** *S. albogularis*: 5 Karoo 20.7.

**Cape Bunting** *E. capensis*: Fairly common, recorded near-daily.