

# South African trip report

## KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland, March 2009

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### Introduction

We were two Swedes who spent a fortnight in South Africa to explore the local wildlife. All arrangements were made through Anton's safaris ([www.antonsafrica.co.za](http://www.antonsafrica.co.za)) run by Anton & Emma Roberts. Anton is an avid herpetologist and would be one of only a few people in KwaZulu-Natal to be able to help out if you are specifically looking for snakes and other reptiles, as we were. South Africa is a big country, so we chose to avoid too much time spent on transport and instead focused on the game reserves in KwaZulu-Natal and neighbouring Swaziland. The time of the visit was mainly chosen to fit the best season to look for snakes. For birds, the best option is rather to go during spring as birds are more vocal/territorial and the waterholes are more crowded (also by mammals) before the rainy season. However, we found the birding to be fairly rewarding also in March and the advantages include slightly cooler weather and not much rain. There was not the energy to produce a very comprehensive report, but since we took detailed field notes we thought it could be of some value to post our observations and notes of the places visited from the trip. More photos from the trip and contact info are available on Peter's pbase site: [www.pbase.com/luscinia](http://www.pbase.com/luscinia)



## Activities

**6/3** Overnight flight Sweden-Durban including the 11hrs Munich-Johannesburg leg.

**7/3** Arrival and 3hrs transport Durban – Umkhumbi Lodge, Hluhluwe.

**8/3** Morning and lunch in False Bay. Afternoon Msinene river bridge (NE Hluhluwe). Herping (i.e. looking for snakes) and night drive at private farm close to Umkhumbi.

**9/3** Morning in Hluhluwe GR and in the afternoon Umfolozi GR. Night drive St Lucia.

**10/3** Morning Igwalagwala trail, St Lucia, remaining day Cape Vidal road. Night drive False Bay.

**11/3** All day in Mkhuze GR. Night drive near Mkhuze.

**12/3** Morning herping at neighbour private game farm. Then transport to Kosi Bay. Short night drive Kosi Bay.

**13/3** Morning and early afternoon game drive in Ndumo GR. Night drive False Bay/Hluhluwe.

**14/3** Morning birding along shortcut dirtroad to N2. From lunch transport to Swaziland and Nisela safaris & reptiles. Night drive Nisela.

**15/3** All day around Nisela. Night drive south near the border and around Nisela.

**16/3** Morning Nisela, departure at lunch. Afternoon game drive “main gate loop” in Ithala.

**17/3** Morning walk up the mountain slope behind the lodge. Then game drive eastern parts of Ithala GR. Late afternoon transport back to Umkhumbi Lodge, Hluhluwe (including a short stop by the reservoir/lake Jozini).

**18/3** The whole day game drive in Umfolozi GR. Night in St Lucia.

**19/3** Morning Igwalagwala trail. Remaining day at St Lucia Crocodile centre, then Catalina Bay and Mission Rocks along Cape Vidal road.

**20/3** Late morning Cape Vidal road loops and Cape Vidal. Afternoon and evening at a private farm within the Zululand Rhino Reserve south of Mkhuze along the N2.

**21/3** Morning hours at Msinene river bridge and around Umkhumbi Lodge, Hluhluwe. After lunch departure and transport to Durban and a not that eventful flight back to Sweden.



*View at Hluhluwe game reserve*

## **Places visited**

This is just a short summary to describe the places where we went. Most game reserves have their own websites and are described in numerous other trip reports.

**Umkhumbi Lodge.** We spent most of the nights at this recently constructed lodge owned and run by Anton & Emma Roberts and situated near False Bay some 20 km northeast of Hluhluwe town on the northwest side along the R22 road north to Sodwana. The land consists of bush typical for the area and holds a number of interesting birds and reptiles. Some of the neighbouring private game farms, including Kuleni GR were also visited on a few occasions. The aim is apparently to take down the fence between the Umkhumbi and Kuleni properties to open up the area for both visitors and the bigger herbivores to move freely between.

A few kilometers south along the N22 to Hluhluwe there is a shortcut road to the N2 going west eventually crossing the railway. Along this dirt road there are agriculture fields and some bushland that produced some interesting birds the couple of times when we passed and spent some time here.

**Msinene river bridge.** A few kilometers north of Umkhumbi Lodge, on the east hand side from the R22 to Sodwana there is a small 4x4 wheel track on the north side of the Mzineni river (that a few kilometres further east flows into the northern end of False Bay). This location was visited twice, one morning and one afternoon, and offered a variety of common waterbirds including herons, Purple Swampphen, breeding Yellow Weavers and a few other finches, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Malachite Kingfisher and produced a few raptors including Black-chested Snake Eagle and Long-crested Eagle.

**False Bay.** Only a short drive from Umkhumbi Lodge this is the northwestern part of the St Lucia estuary connected to the main lake surface through Hell's Gate. We visited this popular recreation area the first day and also spent many hours night driving around on the dirt roads here and further south towards Hluhluwe in the search of snakes and other crepuscular/nocturnal wildlife.

**Zululand Rhino Reserve.** South of Mkhuze there are some 15 landowners who in a collaboration since 2004 have established the Zululand Rhino Reserve to promote conservation of particularly the Black Rhino. On the last evening we visited one of these private farms to do some herping and also took a drive along the dry river bed.

**Hluhluwe and Umfolozi Game Reserves.** These two reserves are among the oldest proclaimed in Africa and are since 1989 linked together. The best area for Rhinos appears to be in the northwestern part of Umfolozi (roads around the Black Umfolozi river) where we saw an impressive 21 White and 2 Black Rhinos on one of the visits. Here, we also saw a group with 18 Wild Dogs (supposedly re-introduced) which of course was a trip high-light. As in all reserves with big game you are not allowed to leave the vehicle, which makes looking for birds rather frustrating.

**St Lucia.** This small holiday town is situated at southeastern end of the St Lucia Estuary where the estuary flows through a short river bend into the Indian Ocean. In fact this connection to the sea was recently sealed by the sand dunes, probably due to the low water levels during the last couple of years. Along the south end of town down to the river, there is a walking trail called Igwalagwala, which is very good for many of the specialty birds.

**Cape Vidal road.** St Lucia is the gateway to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, incorporating Sodwana Bay (scuba diving destination), Maputaland Marine Reserve and



Kosi Bay by the coast near the Mozambique border. However, from St Lucia it is only possible to drive north between the coast and the estuary for some 40 kilometres to the popular camp site Cape Vidal (the other destinations are reached by inland roads). The land between the estuary and the ocean is mostly reclaimed cultivation areas and consists of grass land and, especially closer to Cape Vidal, forested patches. This turned out to be an excellent place to see the beautiful Kudu.



*Cape Vidal*

**Kosi Bay.** This small camping village near the border to Mozambique is primarily known and visited for its good ocean fishing. From a wild life perspective the area does not offer anything very special, but it is a nice and scenic place and is a good place to stay the night for visits to the northern parts of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and the north eastern game parks on the border to Mozambique like Ndumo and Tembe.

**Ndumo Game Reserve.** This reserve is renowned for its variety of birds. However, it is situated a bit “off-the-main-roads” and the tracks within the park often require a 4x4 wheel drive, so many people skip this place for logistical reasons. We found it to be rather empty of tourists and visited different parts of the park during the day including the northern road between the Usutu river picknick spot (overlooking Mozambique on the other side of the river) and the Diphini. March is not the best season to go here. The water level was high (so we could not reach the northern hide at Hotwe Pan) and Nyamithi Pan was virtually devoid of birds with the exception of a few herons and a Fish-eagle. Still, the impression was that it had very good potential and would probably have been worth an extra day, especially earlier in the season.

**Nisela safaris & reptiles.** Situated on the western foot of the Lebombo mountain range in Swaziland, along the main road just north of Nsoko some 30 km north of the Golela/Lavumisa border pass. There is a big reptile house with a large collection of South African and foreign snakes and other reptiles.

**Mkhuze Game Reserve.** Northern parts of the sand forest. At the time of our visit there was very little flowering trees and the waterholes did not hold many animals. Birding was rather slow, so the impression was that autumn is not the best time to go. We also took a 2 hrs guided afternoon forest walk north of the Mantuma camp to the park border by the Mkhuze river. It may not have yielded many new species, but it was nice to use the legs for a change. The Fig forest walk near the Nsumo Pan in the southern part of the park was unfortunately closed for visitors at the time of our visit, here you can also make guided walks to look for some the specialty birds like Neergard's Sunbird.



*Puffadder after release*



*Tawney Eagles in Ithala GR*

**Ithala Game Reserve.** With an average elevation of around 1000m (mountain peaks reaches around 1500m) the area displayed the most obvious habitat change compared to all other places visited. Undulating hills with sparse vegetation and plenty of big herbivores and many dry country species that were not encountered elsewhere. There are no big predators in this reserve but quite a few rhinos, so you are still confined to the vehicle while going around. There are a few trails up the cliffs behind the Ntshondwe lodge (where we stayed) where you are allowed to walk by foot, which we tried one morning. Here we had excellent views of the local Verrueax's Eagles.



*Views from Ithala game reserve*

## **Bird records**

**Ostrich, *Struthio camelus*.** The Ostrich has been reintroduced to KwaZulu-Natal through escapes from the feather trade and feral birds are frequently seen along the roads (as well as Emus!). The only birds that came close to being a wild population within a game reserve was in Ithala with 30+ birds seen the two days. Free-living birds also seen around Nisela, Swaziland.

**Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*.** Only noted once in an artificial pond in a neighbouring private farm near the Umkhumbi lodge, Hluhluwe.

**White-breasted Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax (carbo) lucidus*.** The only Cormorant in northern KwaZulu-Natal and here it is common along bigger rivers, the coast and in the St Lucia estuary. Big groups seen flying over the Umkhumbi lodge a few evenings, the birds possibly alternating between False Bay and the rivers. A taxon that is often considered a race of Great Cormorant, *P. carbo*.

**Darter, *Anhinga (melanogaster) rufa*.** Only recorded around Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze. Here 10+ birds were seen.

**White Pelican, *Pelecanus onocrotalus*.** Only identified in False Bay, Hluhluwe, 10-15 birds.

**Pink-backed Pelican, *Pelecanus rufescens*.** Widespread in small numbers. 20+ Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze.

**Goliath Heron, *Ardea goliath*.** 2-3 birds in St Lucia on three dates.

**Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*.** One bird Mzineni river bridge (NE Hluhluwe) and another in the big dam, Nisela.

**Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*.** Common between St Lucia-Cape Vidal. Also a few birds noted near Hluhluwe and in Swaziland.

**Black-headed Heron, *Ardea melanocephala*.** 4-5 in a small lake in Louwsburg near the Main gate to Ithala GR, 2-3 Mzineni river bridge, Hluhluwe, 3 along Cape Vidal road and 1 bird in the Nisela dam.

**Intermediate Egret, *Egretta intermedia*.** As usual probably overlooked, but at least noted near Mkhuze, Ndumo and in Swaziland.

**Great Egret, *Egretta alba*.** Not very common. Only noted Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze and in Nisela dam, Swaziland.

**Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*.** 1+1 in the St Lucia estuary along Cape Vidal road, some 10 birds Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze.

**Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*.** The only common and widespread white heron. Mostly seen in farmland outside the game reserves.

**Squacco Heron, *Ardeola ralloides*.** A single bird in Ndumo.

**Green-backed Heron, *Butorides striata*.** An adult and a juvenile together at the Nisela dam.

**Woolly-necked Stork, *Ciconia episcopus*.** 15+ in total St Lucia and Cape Vidal on three dates. Also 1 Mkhuze and 1 Ndumo.

**Yellow-billed Stork, *Mycteria ibis*.** 10+ in total in the St Lucia estuary along Cape Vidal road. 10+ Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze.

**Marabou Stork, *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*.** 1 animal perched in a dead tree in Ndumo.

**African Openbill, *Anastomus lamelligerus*.** 10-15 birds noted Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze.

**African Spoonbill, *Platalea alba*.** Only two birds noted, at the river mouth in St Lucia.

**Hamerkop, *Scopus umbretta*.** A handful Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, 2 Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze, 4 Louwsburg near Ithala, 4-5 St Lucia and 5-6 Nisela.

**Hadada Ibis, *Bostrychia hagedash*.** Fairly common and widespread. Very vocal at dusk & dawn.

**African Sacred Ibis, *Threskiornis aethiopicus*.** 1 Johannesburg airport, 2-3 birds St Lucia and 10+ Louwsburg near Ithala.

**Spur-winged Goose, *Plectropterus gambensis*.** 3+20 in farmland fields near the Umkhumbi lodge on two dates, 10+ noted near Ithala and finally a pair with 10+ small juveniles Nisela dam.

**Egyptian Goose, *Alopochen aegyptiaca*.** 5-10 in farmland near the Umkhumbi lodge, also noted in small numbers Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, St Lucia-Cape Vidal Road and Nisela.

**White-faced Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna viduata*.** The only frequently encountered duck, often in pairs or small groups near water, noted Mzineni river bridge (NE Hluhluwe), Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, St Lucia-Cape Vidal, Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze and Nisela.

**White-backed Duck, *Thalassornis leuconotus*.** A pair was seen in a manmade pond at a neighboring farm close to the Umkhumbi lodge, Hluhluwe.

**Yellow-billed Duck, *Anas undulate*.** 4-5 noted in a small lake in Louwsburg near the Main gate to Ithala GR, was the only record.

**Lappet-faced Vulture, *Torgos tracheliotus*.** At least 2 adult birds observed in a large congregation of soaring vultures just north of the border in Swaziland. Another 2 adult birds were seen at close range soaring low in Ithala.

**Cape Vulture, *Gyps coprotheres*.** At least one adult bird could be sorted out in a group of 30+ soaring White-backed Vultures near the border on the way back to KwaZulu-Natal from Nisela. The pale secondaries and dark primaries are good field marks as adult White-backed vultures can also have rather pale bodies. In this species the white/pale underwing coverts in the adults contrast strongly to the dark primaries and secondaries.

**White-backed Vulture, *Gyps africanus*.** 50-75 birds in total noted in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates. 20+ Mkhuze, some 30 birds in Swaziland just north of the border/Golela, 4 in Nisela and 25-30 near and in Ithala.

**Palm-nut Vulture, *Gypohierax angolensis*.** This, in South Africa, very localised and rare vulture was seen with one adult and a younger bird at the Crocodile centre in St Lucia, which by the way should be a fairly reliable stakeout as the birds are attracted to the *Raphia/Elais* palm trees in the garden and apparently have been around for a while.

**African Fish-eagle, *Haliaeetus vocifer*.** In total 9 birds in different ages noted in False Bay, St Lucia, Mkhuze, Ndumo and Nisela.

**Bateleur, *Terathopius ecaudatus*.** 4 adults including a female at close range Hluhluwe-Umfolozi on two dates and a perched male in Ndumo.

**Brown Snake-eagle, *Circaetus cinereus*.** 9-10 birds seen. 2 False Bay, 1+1 Mkhuze GR, 1 en route near Mkhuze, 1 Ndumo, 1-2 Ithala GR, 1 Umfolozi and 1 St Lucia.

**Black-chested Snake-eagle, *Circaetus pectoralis*.** Totally 4 adults noted in False Bay, Mzineni river bridge (NE Hluhluwe), en route just east Hluhluwe and along Cape Vidal Road.

**Tawny Eagle, *Aquila rapax*.** At least 4 birds including a pair in Ithala GR. None of the migrating *Aquila*-eagles were seen so these are likely to be largely gone by mid-late March. Also noted in Swaziland in Nisela and at the border cross.

**Wahlberg's Eagle, *Aquila wahlbergi*.** Both pale and dark birds. 5 Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates, 2-3 Mkhuze and 1 Nisela.

**Verreux's Eagle, *Aquila verreauxii*.** Three adults seen patrolling the mountain ridge behind the Ntshondwe lodge, Ithala of which two were seen at close range after climbing the "Plum-coloured starling-trail" in the morning.



*An adult Martial Eagle in St Lucia*



*A female Amur falcon near Ithala*



**Martial Eagle, *Polemaetus bellicosus*.** A perched juvenile and two soaring adults together in Hluhluwe GR and at a later date a soaring adult Umfolozi. Also an immature and an adult along Cape Vidal road.

**Long-crested Eagle, *Lophaetus occipitalis*.** 1 adult en route N Durban, 1 adult near/south Mkhuze, 1 adult Mzineni river bridge (NE Hluhluwe) and an immature over Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Jackal Buzzard, *Buteo rufofuscus*.** Only recorded near and in Ithala GR. Here it was common with 20+ birds seen. No Steppe Buzzards on the trip list indicating that they had already left north.

**Harrier-hawk (*Gymnogene*), *Polyboroides typus*.** 1 adult en route near Hluhluwe GR, 1 immature Ndumo and 1 adult Ithala.

**Yellow-billed Kite, *Milvus (parasiticus) migrans*.** Surprisingly few noted, 5-10 en route N Durban, 1 False Bay, 1 Mkhuze and 5-6 en route to and in Ithala GR. This African taxon is sometimes considered a valid species.

**Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*.** 1 Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and 2 en route south Mkhuze.

**Lizard Buzzard, *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*.** A confiding perched bird on a telephone wire near Ndumo was the only record.

**African Goshawk, *Accipiter tachiro*.** A single female/immature bird noted, soaring low over us in Hluhluwe GR.

**Lanner, *Falco biarmicus*.** A pair seen at a stop along the road some 20 kilometres before Ithala.

**European Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*.** 1-2 birds seen with Amur Falcons at a stop not far from Ithala.

**Amur Falcon, *Falco amurensis*.** A male and 3-4 females together at a stop some 20 kilometres before entering Ithala. Another 2 females seen just outside the main gate when leaving the reserve March 17<sup>th</sup>. Most birds have probably begun the migration over the Indian Ocean at this time of the year.

**Rock Kestrel, *Falco (tinnunculus) rupicolis*.** One bird was seen in Ithala. This Eurasian Kestrel-taxon displays very little sexual dimorphism and is often considered a valid species.

**Natal Francolin, *Pternistes natalensis*.** Several calling and 2-3 birds seen at the breakfast stop at the picnic site along Hluhluwe river south of Memorial Gate.

**Crested Francolin, *Peliperdix sephaena*.** Frequently heard Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) but frustratingly never seen despite a few attempts. Also heard along the dry river bed, Zululand Rhino Reserve.

**Helmeted Guineafowl, *Numida meleagris*.** 3 birds Hluhluwe GR, 1 with 6-8 chicks Mkhuze, 2 Nisela and a group with 7-10 birds close to the dam during the night drive in Swaziland near the border.

**Crested Guineafowl, *Guttera edouardi*.** Several records. A group with 10-15 birds seen repeatedly at Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 20+ seen both mornings along the Igwalagwala trail, St Lucia, another 10 together in Mkhuze GR and 10-15 at a forested loop along the Cape Vidal road.

**Purple Gallinule, *Porphyrio madagascariensis*.** 1 in a manmade pond at a neighboring farm close to the Umkhumbi lodge. 3 Mzineni river bridge, NE Hluhluwe.

**Black Crake, *Amaurornis flavirostris*.** 1 adult with a chick in a minuscule pond with reeds along the R22 road only a few 100m west of the turn down to Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**African Jacana, *Actophilornis africanus*.** 10 Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze, 1 in a pond at the neighbouring Kuleni GR (Hluhluwe) and 2 at the Nisela dam.

**Blue Crane, *Anthropoides paradiseus*.** 3 birds (possibly a pair with a young - though all three had adult pale crowns) first seen at a distance with a couple of Black Rhinos and the next day at closer range nearby on the "Main gate-loop" in Ithala GR.

**Secretarybird, *Sagittarius serpentarius*.** 1+2+2 seen on the ground in Ithala GR along the "Main Gate-loop" on two dates, i.e. possibly the same birds.

**Common Ringed Plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*.** 1+1 St Lucia, 1 Catalina Bay, Cape Vidal road. In full summer plumage.

**Three-banded Plover, *Charadrius tricollaris*.** 3 False Bay, 2 along the Black iMfolozi, 3 Nisela dam, 1 St Lucia and 3 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe).

**Kittlitz's Plover, *Charadrius pecuarius*.** 3-4 False Bay, 1 in the estuary at Catalina Bay along Cape Vidal road.

**White-fronted Plover, *Charadrius marginatus*.** 1 False Bay, 15 Kosi Bay, 20-25 totally in St Lucia and at stops by the estuary along Cape Vidal road. Many in summer plumage.

**Grey Plover, *Charadrius squatarola*.** 1-2 birds Kosi Bay, winter plumage.

**Crowned Lapwing, *Vanellus coronatus*.** 4-5 along short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and 2 en route along N22 just north of Hluhluwe town. Also 3 at Ndumo GR.





*Bronze-winged and Temminck's Coursers on different occasions near the Umkhumbi Lodge close to Hluhluwe were both trip high-lights*

**Senegal (Lesser Black-winged) Lapwing, *Vanellus lugubris*.** Up to 10 birds on two occasions along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 7-8 Ndumo GR and 4 IMvubu trail behind the St Lucia Crocodile centre.

**African Wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus senegallus*.** 2 birds together Nisela dam, Swaziland.

**Blacksmith Lapwing, *Vanellus armatus*.** 10-15 birds in total St Lucia and by the Estuary along Cape Vidal road. 3-4 daily Nisela and 1 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe).

**Turnstone, *Arenaria interpres*.** 3 Kosi Bay. 2 resting at the fish traps looked a bit odd!

**Sanderling, *Calidris alba*.** 12 Cape Vidal, 35+ Kosi Bay and 20+ at the beach, St Lucia. Winter plumage.

**Curlew Sandpiper, *Calidris ferruginea*.** 25-30 Catalina Bay along Cape Vidal road.

**Little Stint, *Calidris minuta*.** 1 False Bay, 15-25 Catalina Bay along Cape Vidal road on two dates, 10 St Lucia and 10 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe).

**Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*.** 2 False Bay, 1 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe), 2 Umfolozi GR, 2 in the dam during night drive near the border in Swaziland. 5-6 around St Lucia.

**Wood Sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*.** 1 in a small pond Nisela and 1 Catalina Bay along Cape Vidal road.

**Common Greenshank, *Tringa nebularia*.** 3 False Bay and 10-12 Catalina Bay along Cape Vidal road.

**Common Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus*.** 10+ resting on the fish traps the evening in Kosi Bay.

**Water Thick-knee (Dikkop), *Burhinus vermiculatus*.** 2+5 False Bay, 3 Cape Vidal Road, 3 Umfolozi, 2+2+3 Nisela and also seen with up to 8 birds almost every night drive e.g. in Mkhuze, St Lucia, False Bay and in Swaziland.

**Temminck's Courser, *Cursorius temminckii*.** This unpredictable species was a pleasant surprise when 3 birds were seen together with a number of lapwings late afternoon along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Bronze-winged Courser, *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*.** Another nice bird. Seen during 4 night drives, 3 at 4x4 roads at a private farm near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 5-6 Mkhuze GR, 3 the first and 5 the second evening in Nisela and another near the border in Swaziland. Appears to be locally common, but probably very difficult to spot during the daylight hours.

**Cape Gull, *Larus (vetula) dominicanus*.** 1 immature Cape Vidal, 3 adults and 2 immatures together at the beach in St Lucia.

**Grey-headed Gull, *Larus cirrocephalus*.** Common in the St Lucia estuary and along the coast.

**Caspian Tern, *Sterna caspia*.** 100+ birds in False Bay was the only time this tern was recorded.

**Greater Crested Tern, *Sterna bergii*.** 4 in winter plumage Cape Vidal.

**Sandwich Tern, *Sterna sandvicensis*.** 1 in winter plumage Cape Vidal.

**Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo*.** 1-2 Kosi Bay and 50+ over the sea in St Lucia one evening.

**Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons*.** 2 Kosi Bay and another 25+ over the sea St Lucia one evening.

**Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia*.** Only a few recorded in villages and in the Durban northern outskirts.

**Speckled Pigeon, *Columba guinea*.** 5-6 birds near Louwsburg close to Ithala GR, but not recorded inside the actual game reserve.

**Red-eyed Dove, *Streptopelia decipens*.** Common at most places with the exception of Swaziland where there were almost only Cape Turtle-doves and Laughing Doves.

**Cape Turtle-dove, *Streptopelia capicola*.** Common e.g. Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Ithala GR and Nisela. Sparse along the coast. Probably prefers a little more arid areas.

**Laughing Dove, *Streptopelia senegalensis*.** Not very numerous. A few noted Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR and in Ithala GR. Common around Nisela though.

**African Green Pigeon, *Treron calvus*.** 2+1 bird seen in the canopy along the Igwalagwala trail, St Lucia.

**Emerald Spotted Wood-dove, *Turtur chalcospilos*.** Common and widespread in bushland.

**Tambourine Dove, *Turtur tympanistria*.** 2+1 seen flying by Ndumo GR and 2 perched birds which gave better views, Umfolozi GR.

**Namaqua Dove, *Oena capensis*.** A female was seen feeding on the ground near a water hole along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Livingstone's Turaco, *Tauraco livingstonii*.** Several seen and more heard Igwalagwal trail and in St Lucia on two dates. Another two birds along the Cape Vidal road.

**Purple-crested Turaco, *Musophaga porphyreolopha*.** Seen well a few times, but more often heard. Noted in small numbers in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), Mkhuze GR, Ndumo GR and Ithala GR. Not recorded in Swaziland.

**Grey Go-away-bird, *Corythaixoides concolor*.** Noted with 1+2 birds on two dates in Nisela. Swaziland appears to be close to the southern limit of the species and no birds were seen in KwaZulu-Natal despite superficially similar habitat.

**Jacobin Cuckoo, *Clamator jacobini*.** 1 Mkhuze, 1+2 along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and 4-6 birds Nisela on two dates. Both pied and black morphs recorded.

**Didrick's Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx caprius*.** Heard in Mkhuze, a pair courting along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), and 5-10 including a few calling birds in Nisela. The only cuckoo heard during the visit.

**Burchell's Coucal, *Centropus (burchelli) superciliosus*.** Fairly common and widespread. Often heard at dusk. Recorded in e.g. Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, Mkhuze, St Lucia-Cape Vidal and in Nisela.

**Spotted Eagle-owl, *Bubo africanus*.** A hunting bird seen flying and perched at dusk in Mkhuze.

**Fiery-necked Nightjar, *Caprimulgus pectoralis*.** Commonly heard at dawn and dusk initially at the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and also 1-2 birds displaying in Nisela. Nightjars were also frequently seen on the roads during the night drives the first week including areas around St Lucia and Mkhuze, although identification was most often uncertain (see also comments on next species). After the return from Swaziland and the weather change around 16-17 March with colder weather, the birds were silent and largely disappeared from the roads.

**Square-tailed (Mozambique) Nightjar, *Caprimulgus fossii*.** A dead nightjar on the road near False Bay and the only nightjar photographed in Mkhuze was found to be this species; white outer tail feathers, an obvious light trailing edge of the wings and light-mottled scapulars. This was rather unrepresentative given the many calling *pectoralis* we heard. The calls are quite different so we probably would have heard *fossii*, should it have been vocal during our many night drives, maybe it was just silent during our visit?

**Alpine Swift, *Tachymarptis melba*.** Despite inspection of the swifts only a single Alpine Swift was identified flying low near the car during the game drive the second day in Ithala.

**African Black Swift, *Apus barbatus*.** 400-500 swifts over the mountain were probably mostly this species. The presence of Eurasian Swift, *Apus apus*, can of course not be ruled out.

**Little Swift, *Apus affinis*.** Common and widespread, seen most dates. No particularly big congregations recorded.

**Horus Swift, *Apus horus*.** One bird flying low over the Ndumo Rest Camp allowed for prolonged views. With its obvious forked tail not too hard to distinguish from the Little Swifts during these circumstances.

**White-rumped Swift, *Apus caffer*.** Noted in small numbers on 8 dates, e.g. 10+ Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, many also en route along the roads.

**African Palm-swift, *Cypsiurus parvus*.** Common in St Lucia, not noted elsewhere.

**Narina Trogon, *Apaloderma narina*.** A female was spotted in the forest from the car close to Cape Vidal and lingered in trees near the road allowing for nice observations and photographs.



*A young European Roller in Hluhluwe GR*

**Red-faced Mousebird, *Urocolius indicus*.** Noted on 5 dates from Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Mkhuzi, Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe) and along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). More slender, tidier and parakeet-like appearance in flight compared to the next species.

**Speckled Mousebird, *Colius striatus*.** Small groups noted on 8 dates from False Bay, Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), Ndumo, Ithala, St Lucia and Nisela.

**Giant Kingfisher, *Megaceryle maximus*.** 2 records. A female on telephone wires en route some 10 kilometres west of Pongola on the way to Ithala and a male in St Lucia.

**Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*.** 2-4 birds around St Lucia, 1 Umfolozi GR, 5-6 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe) on two dates, 1 Nyamithi Pan, Ndumo GR, 8 together Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze GR and 2 Nisela dam.

**Malachite Kingfisher, *Alcedo cristata*.** 1-2 Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe) on two dates and 1 Nisela dam, Swaziland.

**African Pygmy-kingfisher, *Ispidina picta*.** Typical “dart-views” of 1 flying over the dry river bed at the private farm, Zululand Rhino Reserve and 1 Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Woodland Kingfisher, *Halycon senegalensis*.** 1 Mkhuze and 2-3 Nisela.

**Brown-hooded Kingfisher, *Halycon albiventris*.** Fairly common and widespread in small numbers, recorded on 10 dates at most places visited.

**Striped Kingfisher, *Halycon chelicuti*.** 1+2 Mkhuze, 2+1 Ndumo and 3-4 Umfolozi GR.

**European Bee-eater, *Merops apiaster*.** Recorded on 10 dates with up to 15 birds in e.g. Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), False Bay, Nisela, Ndumo and Ithala.

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, *Merops persicus*.** The only Bee-eater recorded along the Cape Vidal Road where it was fairly common. Also 5-10 birds seen at Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe) on both visits, 5-6 birds Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze and 3-4 Nyamithi Pan, Ndumo.

**White-fronted Bee-eater, *Merops bullockoides*.** A single bird on the productive road stretch near the Diphini hide, Ndumo and 4 observations of totally 6 birds primarily on the Sontuli loop close to the Black Umfolozi river, Umfolozi GR.

**Little Bee-eater, *Merops pusillus*.** Some 10 birds Ndumo, 7-10 birds Ithala both days and 1 Umfolozi.

**Lilac-breasted Roller, *Coracias caudatus*.** 2 en route back from Ndumo just north of the Jozini dam and another 2 en route north of the border in SE Swaziland. Apparently the Lilac-breasted Rollers tend to largely disappear around KwaZulu-Natal during summer when the European Rollers return from the breeding grounds in Eurasia.

**European Roller, *Coracias garrulous*.** Recorded every day and locally very common on telephone wires along the roads, e.g. Cape Vidal Road, in the Hluhluwe-area and in SE Swaziland.

**Broad-billed Roller, *Eurystomus glaucurus*.** 1 just outside the Ndumo GR-entrance and another bird near Cape Vidal.

**Trumpeter Hornbill, *Bycanistes bucinator*.** Common and conspicuous in the Hluhluwe-area including the reserves, many St Lucia-Cape Vidal and also recorded in Mkhuze and Ndumo.

**Crowned Hornbill, *Tockus alboterminatus*.** 3-4 Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), totally 10 birds Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, 4 Igwalagwala trail, St Lucia, 1 Cape Vidal road, 5-6 Mkhuze and 5 in Ndumo.

**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, *Tockus leucomelas*.** 3 observations of 5-6 birds Nisela and 4 together in Umfolozi GR.

**Green (Red-billed) Wood-hoopoe, *Phoeniculus purpureus*.** 3-4 Hluhluwe GR, 2+1 Mkhuze, 2 Ndumo and 4 Umfolozi GR. More gregarious and vocal than the next species.

**Greater Scimitarbill, *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*.** 1+1 Mkhuze and a single record Umfolozi GR.

**(African) Hoopoe, *Upupa (africana) epops*.** 1 Memorial Gate, Hluhluwe GR, 1 Nisela, 1 Ithala and 1 Umfolozi GR. Never heard.

**Greater Honeyguide, *Indicator indicator*.** 2 during the Mantuma walk, Mkhuze and one briefly at a picnic stop in Umfolozi GR.

**Black-collared Barbet, *Lybius torquatus*.** 1 Memorial Gate, Hluhluwe GR, 1+2+2+2 Cape Vidal Road on two dates, 1 Umfolozi, 3-4 St Lucia, 1 Mantuma walk, Mkhuze, 1 Nisela and 4-5 Ithala.

**White-eared Barbet, *Stactolaema leucotis*.** Probably 15+ Igwalagwala trail and in St Lucia and 6-7 Cape Vidal Road. 2 Mantuma walk, Mkhuze and 3-4 Ndumo. Gregarious.

**Crested Barbet, *Trachyphonus vaillanti*.** 1 along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 1-3 daily in Nisela, Swaziland.

**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, *Pogoniulus bilineatus*.** More often heard than seen. Some confusion with the next species. The call is similar, but usually briefly interrupted every 3-4 notes. Sometimes more excited. Common in the Hluhluwe-area including the game reserves. Also many recorded between St Lucia-Cape Vidal on three dates and a few heard in Ndumo.

**Red-fronted Tinkerbird, *Pogoniulus pusillus*.** The only bird seen was along the Mantuma walk, Mkhuze where more were heard. Also seemed to be the only Tinkerbird in Ithala. Ndumo was the only place where we heard both Tinkerbirds. A continuous uninterrupted calling, unlike the previous species.

**Cardinal Woodpecker, *Dendropicos fuscescens*.** A male in Ndumo, 1 Nisela and another Umfolozi GR.

**Bearded Woodpecker, *Dendropicos namaquus*.** The characteristic decelerated drumming heard near the road from the car in Umfolozi GR. The bird continued to drum, but did not come closer when we tried to tape it in. Quite frustrating not to be able to get out of the car and search for the bird!

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker, *Campethera abingoni*.** 3-4 birds Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates, a female St Lucia and 2 in Nisela.

**Flappet Lark, *Miafra rufocinnamomea*.** At least two birds seen on the ground and another two seen displaying, i.e. wing flapping to produce a noise in an otherwise silent aerial display. Much more rufous appearance than Sabota lark and the more buff eye-brow continues all the way around the ear-coverts down under the eye.

**Rufous-naped Lark, *Miafra africana*.** The low-key melancholic whistles of this species was commonly heard in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR. Often singing from a bush or low tree. Also recorded in Ithala and along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). Quite easy to identify with its prominent bill and rufous plumage.



**Sabota Lark, *Calendulauda sabota*.** The song includes elements of mimicking and appears to vary between individuals. Probably a bit overlooked but seemed fairly common Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR and in Mkhuze. Also recorded in Ithala, along Cape Vidal road and in Nisela. The distinct eye-brow ending abruptly behind the eye and absence of much rufous in the plumage was the best field marks in addition to the general jizz, compared to the other possible larks. The bill is fairly small in this part of South Africa.

**Red-breasted Swallow, *Hirundo semirufa*.** This beautiful swallow was seen with 5-10 birds on three occasions, in Umfolozi GR on two dates and once by the Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe).

**Greater Striped Swallow, *Hirundo cucullata*.** Only noted for certain on Johannesburg Airport. A few probables at a distance in Ithala.

**Lesser Striped Swallow, *Hirundo abyssinica*.** Observed almost daily, common or fairly common in e.g. the Hluhluwe-area, Mkhuze, Ndumo, Ithala and Nisela.

**Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*.** Common pretty much everywhere and by far the most numerous swallow. Probably assembling before the migration and should not be lingering for much longer.

**Wire-tailed Swallow, *Hirundo smithii*.** 5-10 birds Hluhluwe-Umfolozi both visits, 20+ Ndumo and a few with Barn Swallows by the Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe) on two dates.

**Rock Martin, *Hirundo fuligula*.** Only seen with a few individuals at Johannesburg Airport.

**Black Saw-wing, *Psalidoprocne holomelaena*.** Noted with 1 bird in a large congregation of Swallows near False Bay, 1 in Ndumo, 5-7 birds in Ithala, 1-2 St Lucia and 4-5 Zululand Rhino Reserve.

**House Martin, *Delichon urbicum*.** One identified in a large congregation of swallows near False Bay.

**Grey-rumped Swallow, *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*.** Only noted once, 10+ birds seen in a large congregation of Swallows near False Bay.

**Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*.** A few noted among the many Barn Swallows over the reeds during both visits to Mzineni river bridge (Hluhluwe).

**Fork-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus adsimilis*.** Drongos were common and recorded daily, but not much attention was given to them. According to our notes, both species were identified on at least 9 dates each, the slightly larger Fork-tailed species being generally more common in open areas e.g. Hluhluwe-Umfolozi and along Cape Vidal road.

**Square-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus ludwigii*.** See comments on previous species. The Square-tailed Drongo was mostly seen in more wooded areas compared to the previous species.

**Black Cuckooshrike, *Campephaga flava*.** 2 pairs seen in Umfolozi GR on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Black Oriole, *Oriolus larvatus*.** More often heard than seen. Brief views were only had twice, from the Kumasinga Hide, Mkhuze and in Ithala. Also recorded in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi and in Ndumo.

**Pied Crow, *Corvus albus*.** Some 20 birds in total. Almost only noted near human settlements e.g. near Kosi Bay, Hluhluwe, along N2 near Mkhuze, in Swaziland (near border) and at the Johannesburg airport.

**Southern Black Tit, *Parus niger*.** Singles or pairs noted on 7 occasions, at Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Mkhuze GR, Ndumo and in Nisela.

**Arrow-marked Babbler, *Turdoides jardineii*.** Two groups of 5-7 birds each noted around Nisela were the only records.

**Black-eyed Bulbul, *Pycnonotus tricolor*.** Common, conspicuous and recorded everywhere.

**Terrestrial Bulbul, *Phyllastrephus terrestris*.** A party of 7-8 birds seen foraging in a thicket, Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). The last day also a single bird was seen briefly visiting the birdbath by the restaurant at the lodge.

**Sombre Greenbul, *Andropadus importunes*.** Very common and noted all days at all places visited. A vocal bird and the call (remiscent of a Pine Grosbeak) usually gives it away.

**Yellow-billed Greenbul, *Chlorocichla flaviventris*.** Common at most places visited. Like the previous species rather vocal, repeatedly calling with a nasal "neh-neh-neh". Not recorded in Ithala, Ndumo or in Nisela, but perhaps overlooked here.

**Kurrichane Thrush, *Turdus libonyanus*.** 1 in Ndumo, 2 in Nisela and 1-2 birds Umfolozi.

**Groundscraper Thrush, *Psophocichla litsitsirupa*.** Two together flushed from the ground, allowing for prolonged views when perched in the top of a at the private farm within the Zululand game reserve, was the only record.

**Familiar Chat, *Cercomela familiaris*.** Only one record of a single bird in Ithala.

**African Stonechat, *Saxicola torquatus*.** 2 in Ithala and 1 along the Cape Vidal road. All female-coloured birds.

**Mocking Cliff-chat, *Thamnoleata cinnamomeiventris*.** One Mpila camp in Umfolozi and one Ntshondwe Camp in Ithala, both females.

**Red-capped (Natal) Robin-chat, *Cossypha natalensis*.** 2-3 seen and more heard singing around St Lucia including the Igwalagwala trail, 2-3 seen and heard Ntshondwe Camp in Ithala.

**White-browed Robin-chat, *Cossypha heuglini*.** Singing birds recorded during the Mantuma walk in Mkhuze, in Ndumo and in the camp in Nisela. The latter of which, after some struggling, finally showed well. A rather strong nightingale-voiced song (including one sound like a giant Wood warbler – a decending “thy-thy-thy-thy”) unlikely to be confused with anything else.

**White-throated Robin-chat, *Cossypha humeralis*.** 1-2 males singing and showing well on three occasions around the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). 1-2 probables heard in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi. A low-key Blackbird/Robin-like song with elements of mimicking.

**Brown Scrub-robin, *Cercotrichas signata*.** A singing bird responded to tape and was seen after some struggling. Later a much more cooperative bird could be observed at the Cape Vidal camp site.

**Bearded Scrub-robin, *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata*.** The most beautiful of the three *Cercotrichas*, one wary individual was seen briefly inside (!) the Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze.

**White-browed Scrub-robin, *Cercotrichas leucophrys*.** Common around Nisela but also 2 Umfolozi. Often upset by human presence and perching in the open while giving loud warnings.

**Willow Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochilus*.** 2-3 seen and several more heard singing and calling in Mkhuze. Also 3-4 heard in Ndumo, 2 Ithala and 2 in Umfolozi GR.

**Garden Warbler, *Sylvia borin*.** One silent bird seen Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze and a singing bird seen at the Crocodile Centre, St Lucia.

**Burnt-necked Eremomela, *Eremomela usticollis*.** A small group seen near the Nisela camp one morning. The rufous chinspot is difficult to see.

**African Marsh Warbler, *Acrocephalus baeticatus*.** Singing birds in the reeds at the Nisela dam, by the pond in Ntshondwe Camp in Ithala and in Ndumo sounded like, and probably were, this species. None of these birds were seen (though this would hardly have helped much). Another silent bird seen near the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), far away from any water or reeds, could also have been a European Marsh Warbler, *A. palustris*. European Reed Warbler, *A. scirpaceus* is a possible alternative, but supposed to be quite rare this far south.

**Great Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*.** 1 singing from the reeds at Nisela dam.

**Green-backed Camaroptera, *Camaroptera brachyuran*.** Common, vocal and recorded all dates at all places visited.

**Long-billed Crombec, *Sylvietta rufescens*.** 1 singing along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and another at the lodge itself. 1 Ndumo, 5+5+10 Nisela and 2 Umfolozi. Has a wren-like contact-call in addition to the “hoarse marsh tit”-song.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis, *Apalis flavida*.** Up to 10 birds in total Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 2 Mantuma walk, Mkhuze and 2-3 Ndumo. A pair was also found roosting together on a branch during one of the False Bay night drives. The red eye is very prominent.

**Rudd’s Apalis, *Apalis ruddi*.** 2-4 birds Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) on two occasions and 1 St Lucia. The birds could be studied at close range and on none of them any visible eyebrow could be seen (unlike the illustration in the Sasol field guide). The black iris/eye was obvious and should be a more reliable field mark against Bar-throated Apalis, *A. thoracica*.

**Zitting Cisticola, *Cisticola juncidis*.** Seen and heard on 8 dates, primarily in short grass, e.g. False Bay, Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Cape Vidal road, Ithala and Nisela.

**Pale-crowned Cisticola, *Cisticola cinnamomeus*.** This one was sorted out by the rather pale appearance in combination with the black bill and gape. 5-6 birds in total of which 1-2 were singing also.

**Croaking Cisticola, *Cisticola natalensis*.** 3-5 Ithala. The size and sturdy shape alone allows for quite straight-forward identification.

**Rattling Cisticola, *Cisticola chiniana*.** Ubiquitous and vocal, one of the most common and widespread birds on the trip together second only to the Barn Swallows and Black-eyed Bulbuls. The song has individual variation, especially the “rattle” end, but the structure is always recognised. No doubt quite a bit of fumbling with the Cisticolas, but at many places this appeared to be the only species present and singing.

**Lazy Cisticola, *Cisticola aberrans*.** 2-3 of this prinia-like Cisticola was seen at a neighbouring farm along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Tawny-flanked Prinia, *Prinia subflava*.** 35+ birds noted on 7 dates, Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Ithala, Cape Vidal road and in Nisela.

**Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa striata*.** Some 15 birds noted in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Ndumo, St Lucia and especially in Nisela (where 7-8 birds were seen).

**Ashy (Blue-grey) Flycatcher, *Muscicapa caerulescens*.** 1 during forest walk near False Bay and 1 in a wooded area at a neighbouring farm along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). Quite dark appearance with light-tipped tertials (compared to the Sasol guide illustration).

**Grey (Fantailed) Tit-flycatcher, *Myioparus plumbeus*.** Song a characteristic 1,5 second long mellow descending whistle. The contrasting dark rump is conspicuous.

**Southern Black Flycatcher, *Melaenornis pammelaina*.** Common in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Mkhuze and in Ndumo. Also noted in St Lucia and Nisela.

**Pale (Mouse-coloured) Flycatcher, *Bradornis pallidus*.** A single record in savanna woodland in Mkhuze.

**African Paradise-flycatcher, *Tersiphone viridis*.** 1-3 birds noted on 6 dates, e.g. False Bay, Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze, Nisela and in Umfolozi.

**African White-eye, *Zosterops senegalensis*.** One bird at the St Lucia Crocodile Centre was strangely the only White-eye record! The eastern forms of Cape White-eye are lighter and more yellow and look more like this species, but this bird had all yellow underparts, lacking an obvious darker hood and had a contrasting yellow forehead.

**Chinspot Batis, *Batis molitor*.** Some 10 birds recorded on 7 dates. 1 female Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze, 2 pairs in Nisela, a female Ithala, 3-4 Umfolozi and a pair private farm, Zululand Rhino reserve.

**Cape Wagtail, *Motacilla capensis*.** 2 on a lawn in St Lucia, 1 Mission Rocks and 1 Catalina Bay (both places along Cape Vidal road).

**African Pied Wagtail, *Motacilla aguimp*.** Fairly common, 30+ seen, in St Lucia and along Cape Vidal road on three dates. 10+ Mkhuze and 5-6 Hluhluwe-Umfolozi.

**African (Grassveld) pipit, *Anthus cinnamomeus*.** In total 8-10 birds recorded in False Bay, Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, Cape Vidal road and in Ithala

**Plain-backed Pipit, *Anthus leucophrys*.** 2 birds in Ithala, of which one seen very well, with unmarked back, breast and underparts and very long hind claws were most likely this species.

**Yellow-throated Longclaw, *Macronyx croceus*.** 1+2 False Bay, 10+ Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two visits, 4-5 Cape Vidal road on two visits and one bird along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). Fairly conspicuous and vocal, easily observed.

**Orange-throated (Cape) Longclaw, *Macronyx capensis*.** 2-3 birds were seen in the same area along the "Main gate loop" in Ithala. A nasal "extreme Richard's Pipit"-like call characteristic.

**Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius collurio*.** Common and widespread. Recorded more or less daily with up to 25 birds. Not recorded near or in Ithala.

**Common Fiscal, *Lanius collaris*.** Locally common e.g. Ithala, Ndumo, Kosi Bay but also noted at most other places visited. Where we saw many Fiscal Shrikes we rarely saw any Red-backed Shrikes and vice versa.

**Southern Boubou, *Laniarius ferrugineus*.** More varied calls than the other bush-shrikes recorded on the trip, but still fairly easily distinguished once the call had been heard a few times. Much more rufous underparts (at least the females) compared to the picture in the Sasol fieldguide.

**Black-crowned Tchagra, *Tchagra senegalus*.** The characteristic song consisting of 5-6 bent melancholic and descending whistles was often heard. Mostly brief views, but sometimes prolonged observations. Common in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR and the Hluhluwe-area and also recorded in e.g. Ndumo and Nisela.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra, *Tchagra australis*.** Initially probably a bit overlooked, then heard and seen well along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) before leaving for Nisela. Thereafter 4-5 seen/heard in Nisela.

**Grey-headed Bush-shrike, *Malaconotus blanchoti*.** One bird uttering the species' prolonged mellow whistle was found sitting in the open in the top of a high tree in the Nisela camp.

**Gorgeous Bush-shrike, *Telophorus (quadricolor) viridis*.** One bird and a little later another, seen well in Hluhluwe, were certainly among the trip high-lights. Once the melodious three-note whistle call (and the variations of it) was learnt it was found to be fairly common in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR and was also heard a few times in Mkhuze, 2 heard Ndumo, 2 heard near the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and 1 heard Nisela, Swaziland.

**Olive Bush-shrike, *Telophorus olivaceus*.** Brief views of a single bird during the forest walk in False Bay.



*An Arrow-marked Babbler in Nisela, Swaziland and an African Bushchat in Ithala GR*

**Orange-breasted Bush-shrike, *Telophorus sulfureopectus*.** The 5-7 note repeated whistles were frequently heard around the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) and in the Hluhluwe-area, including Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR. Also recorded in Ndumo and in Nisela. Finally seen well in Umfolozi.

**White-crested Helmet-shrike, *Prionops plumatus*.** 2-3 Kumasinga Hide, Mkhuze and later 8-9 near the north eastern exit gate.

**Brubru, *Nilaus afer*.** The “bush telephone” was heard a few times in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, Mkhuze, Ithala and in Nisela, but only seen well once in Umfolozi.

**Black-backed Puffback, *Dryoscopus cubla*.** Common. Heard daily almost constantly somewhere in bushveld and forests. Not too hard to see either.

**Cape Glossy Starling, *Lamprotornis nitens*.** Common in small numbers and noted almost daily at most places visited. We did look for it, but no Greater Blue-eared Starlings, *L. chalybaeus* were identified anywhere.

**Black-bellied Starling, *Lamprotornis corruscus*.** Fairly common in St Lucia including a large congregation in a tree with 30-40 birds behind the Crocodile Centre. Easily distinguished from Cape Glossy Starling by clearly smaller size and almost no gloss. A few also noted in Ndumo and in Mkhuze.

**Violet-backed Starling, *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*.** Recorded in Mkhuze. Plum-coloured Starling is actually a better name. Gregarious, in small groups.

**Red-winged Starling, *Onychognathus morio*.** 2-4 in Hluhluwe town and 5+ in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR. 2 northern end of Jozini dam and 2 Ntshondwe Camp in Ithala.

**Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*.** This introduced species is expanding north and was mostly found around human settlements, e.g. in Hluhluwe town and along the main roads.

**Red-billed Oxpecker, *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*.** Only recorded in the game reserves Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, Ithala and along Cape Vidal road. Seen mostly on Giraffes, Zebras and Wildebeest. Many juveniles with dull bills.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird, *Chalcomitra senegalensis*.** One of the most beautiful sunbirds in Africa. A male was seen in Ndumo, a male and two females at or near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), a male Mzineni River bridge (Hluhluwe), a pair at the private farm, Zululand Rhino reserve and 1 male at the Crocodile centre, St Lucia.

**Amethyst (Black) Sunbird, *Chalcomitra amethystina*.** 2 males Ithala on two dates.

**Eastern Olive Sunbird, *Cyanomitra olivacea*.** 1 False Bay, 5+ noted in St Lucia on several dates.

**Collared Sunbird, *Hedydipna collaris*.** Sunbirds were scarce/hard to find, possibly due to rather few flowering trees. This species was the only sunbird seen in any numbers, totally 30+ birds in e.g. False Bay, Hluhluwe GR and Ithala. Most were recorded between St Lucia-Cape Vidal.

**White-bellied Sunbird, *Cinnyris talatala*.** A male near Diphini hide, Ndumo was the only record.

**House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*.** Recorded near human settlements in e.g. Hluhluwe town, St Lucia and in Nisela.

**Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, *Passer diffusus*.** A female attending an active nest at Mpilo camp, Umfolozi GR, 1 False Bay, 2 Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze and 7-8 Nisela.



**Yellow-throated Petronia, *Petronia superciliaris*.** Only recorded with 5-7 birds in Mkhuze e.g. at the Kumasinga hide.

**Thick-billed Weaver, *Amblyospiza albifrons*.** A female Hluhluwe GR, a group with 6-7 St Lucia and a female Igwalagwala trail on another date.

**Forest Dark-backed Weaver, *Ploceus bicolor*.** 4-5 on forest walk in False Bay, 3 Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), 2 at a private farm near Umkhumbi Lodge and 1 Mantuma walk, Mkhuze.

**Village (Spotted-backed) Weaver, *Ploceus cucullatus*.** 4-5 Hluhluwe GR and common in breeding colonies Nisela where many were in breeding plumage and attended nests.

**Lesser Masked Weaver, *Ploceus intermedius*.** A pair Nsumo Pan, Mkhuze and 5-10 daily in the Village Weaver colonies in Nisela. Breeding plumage. Also recorded in Ndumo.

**Spectacled Weaver, *Ploceus ocularis*.** Mostly singles or pairs, often perched in tree tops. Recorded with totally some 10 birds at the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe), in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR, Mkhuze and along Cape Vidal road.

**Yellow Weaver, *Ploceus subaureus*.** 10+ in a breeding colony in the reeds at Mzinene river bridge, 1 Mantuma walk, Mkhuze and 2 St Lucia.

**Red-billed Quelea, *Quelea quelea*.** Characteristic compact groups with 50-100 birds seen a few times in the Hluhluwe-area, e.g. at the Mzinene river bridge (Hluhluwe) and along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Red-headed Quelea, *Quelea erythrops*.** 2-3 birds seen feeding with the previous species along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Southern Red Bishop, *Euplectes orix*.** 2 Mzinene river bridge (Hluhluwe) and a few noted along the roads in the Hluhluwe area including the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi game reserve. Very common around Nisela. Males in breeding plumage.

**Red-collared Widow, *Euplectes ardens*.** 10-15 males Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates, 5-10 males around Nisela and also a few recorded in Ithala. Males in breeding plumage.

**White-winged Widow, *Euplectes albonotatus*.** 4-5 males in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates, 3-4 Ndumo. Common around Nisela. Males in breeding plumage.

**Fan-tailed (Red-shouldered) Widow, *Euplectes axillaris*.** 5+ False Bay, 10+ Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR on two dates, 10-12 along Cape Vidal road on two dates, 2-3 Nisela and 2-3 daily in Ithala. Males in breeding plumage.

**Pin-tailed Whydah, *Vidua macroura*.** Common and widespread. Recorded in small numbers almost daily. Males in breeding plumage.

**Eastern Long-tailed Paradise-whydah, *Vidua paradisaea*.** Fairly common Mkhuze with 10+ males seen. A few also recorded in Ndumo and in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR. Males in breeding plumage.

Generally, female Bishops, Whydahs and Widows were not scrutinised, but then mostly there were some males around to help with the identification.

**Dusky Indigobird, *Vidua funereal*.** 2 males (one singing) with female coloured birds in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR. 1 male Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze.

**Village Indigobird, *Vidua chalybeata*.** One male Hluhluwe and another at the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe). The species specific bill and foot colours (red or white) in the Indigobird males was easily seen also in the field.

**African (Blue-billed) Firefinch, *Lagonosticta rubricata*.** A pair seen by the roadside near the Memorial gate in Hluhluwe GR.

**Jameson's Firefinch, *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*.** Great views of a pair coming in to drink at the Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze.

**Red-billed Firefinch, *Lagonosticta senegalensis*.** Three observations of Firefinches generated all three species possible in the area. Very efficient! A pair of this species was seen with Blue Waxbills at a neighbouring farm along the short-cut road to N2 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Common Waxbill, *Estrilda astrild*.** First recorded at the Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze. Then 10+ seen around Nisela, 5-6 Ithala, 5 Cape Vidal road and 2-3 near Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe).

**Blue Waxbill, *Uraeginthus angolensis*.** Fairly widespread and recorded on 10 dates with up to 10 birds. Notes include sightings primarily in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi GR and the Hluhluwe area, Mkhuze and in Nisela.

**Bronze Mannikin, *Lonchura cucullata*.** 10 Memorial gate, Hluhluwe GR and 2 Umfolozi GR on another date.

**Red-backed Mannikin, *Lonchura (bicolor) nigriceps*.** 5-6 Mantuma camp, Mkhuze and 4-5 Cape Vidal. Often considered a subspecies of Black-and-white Mannikin, *L. bicolor*. Also, the African Mannikins are sometimes placed in a separate genus, *Spermestes*.

**Green-winged Pytilia, *Pytilia melba*.** A pair Kumasinga hide and a male during the Mantuma walk, Mkhuze. 1+2+2 birds in Nisela.

**Green Twinspot, *Mandingoa nitidula*.** A pair was briefly seen feeding low in thickets at the Umkhumbi Lodge (Hluhluwe) on the last day just before departure. Terrific ending!

**Yellow-fronted Canary, *Serinus mozambicus*.** The only Canary recorded. Noted all dates and common at most places visited.

**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, *Emberiza tahapsi*.** A male in Hluhluwe GR and another male near Catalina Bay, Cape Vidal road.

**Golden-breasted Bunting, *Emberiza flaviventris*.** A male in Ndumo, 1-2 Umfolozi and 2-3 in Nisela.



*A Fever tree in a typical landscape near Hluhluwe*

### Mammal records

The populations of bigger animals in the different game reserves of KwaZulu-Natal are all pretty much controlled and in many cases the result of re-introductions. This is especially the case for rhinos, elephants and big predators. As we understand Hluhluwe is the only place where there are lions, although we did not see any. Leopards probably roam a little more freely, also outside the reserves, but are much easier to see in the big Kruger park further north. Outside the dedicated reserves there is probably very little room left for most big animals in KwaZulu-Natal, especially those potentially dangerous for humans. There are also numerous private game farms which seem to hold pretty much whatever animals they prefer, so don't be surprised if you spot some unexpected creature from another part of the world along the roads.

**Chacma Baboon, *Papio Ursinus*.** 3-4 near Umkhumbi Lodge, 2+15 Hluhluwe/Umfolozi, 10+ Mkhuze, 20-25 Ithala and 10+ Zululand Rhino Reserve.

**Vervet (Green) Monkey, *Cercopithecus (aethiops) pygerythrus*.** Common at most reserves visited.

**Samango Monkey, *Cercopithecus (nictitans) mitis*.** This endemic taxon was easily found around Cape Vidal and was seen together with Green Monkeys at the camp site.

**Thick-tailed Bushbaby (*Galago*), *Otolemur crassicaudatus*.** More often heard than seen after dark, we did find two of these creatures on separate night drives near False Bay.

**Scrub Hare, *Lepus saxatilis*.** 5+ near Umkhumbi Lodge and also seen twice on night drives near False Bay.

**Black-backed Jackal, *Canis mesomelas*.** One observation of a single individual in Ithala during the day.

**Wild Dog, *Lycaon pictus*.** A pack of at least 18 animals were seen in Umfolozi where these declining animals have been introduced. One of the trip high-lights.

**Slender Mongoose, *Herpestes sanguinea*.** One sighting of 10+ in Nisela.

**Dwarf Mongoose, *Helogale parvula*.** A group of 20+ in Umfolozi.

**Banded Mongoose, *Mungos mungo*.** 10+15 St Lucia and another group of 10 in Nisela.

**Spotted Hyena, *Crocota crocuta*.** 1+1 Hluhluwe and 1 Umfolozi.

**Blotched (Large-spotted) Genet, *Genetta tigrina*.** One seen on a night drive near False Bay.

**Cape Rock Hyrax, *Procavia capensis*.** Several in the cliffs in Ithala. Also heard.

**African Elephant, *Loxodonta Africana*.** 1+2+8 including an impressive bull in Hluhluwe on the same day 3/9.

**Burchell's Zebra, *Equus quagga*.** Common in most reserves visited, but not noted in Swaziland, Ndumo or Mkhuze.

**Black Rhino, *Diceros bicornis*.** A female with a young Umfolozi, a female with a young and later a male in Ithala.



*A Samango Monkey at the classical location by Cape Vidal, St Lucia. A pack with Wild Dogs in Umfolozi was one of the mammal high-lights of the trip.*



**White Rhino, *Ceratotherium simum*.** Turned out to be fairly common and easily seen in Hluhluwe/Umfolozi and along Cape Vidal road. A total of at least 39 animals recorded with no less than 21 seen the day in Umfolozi on 3/18.

**Hippopotamus, *Hippopotamus amphibious*.** Several along Cape Vidal road and in St Lucia. Also one animal in Ndumo.

**Warthog, *Phacochoerus africanus*.** Fairly common with up to 40 animals seen daily at most places visited.

**Giraffe, *Giraffa camelopardalis*.** Noted almost daily with between 5-30 animals at most places visited. Also seen outside the reserves on a couple of occasions.

**Cape Buffalo, *Syncerus caffer*.** 7-8 sightings of a total of 75 animals in Hluhluwe/Umfolozi and some 20 seen along Cape Vidal road.

**Bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*.** Common along Cape Vidal road.

**Nyala (Lesser Kudu), *Tragelaphus angasi*.** Common at most places visited. Not noted in Ithala.

**Kudu, *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*.** Most and best observations of this beautiful antelope were in St Lucia along the Cape Vidal road where it was common. Also noted a few times in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi.

**Bush (Common) Duiker, *Sylcicapra grimmia*.** 1 Hluhluwe, 1 Mkuze, 1 Ndumo and 1 Nisela.

**Natal (Red) Duiker, *Cephalophus natalensis*.** Fairly common around St Lucia and along Cape Vidal road. Also noted around Umkhumbi Lodge and the neighbouring farms.

**Suni, *Neotragus moschatus*.** 1 Mkuze was the only record.

**Steinbok, *Raphicerus campestris*.** 1+1 Ithala were the only records.

**Southern Reedbuck, *Redunca arundinum*.** Most animals seen along Cape Vidal road. Also noted in Nisela and Ithala.

**Waterbuck, *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*.** 2 males Hluhluwe, 5+ Mkuze, 1 Ndumo and plenty along Cape Vidal road on all visits (highest day count was 50).

**Impala, *Aepyceros melampus*.** Common and widespread, often in large numbers.

**[Blesbok, *Damaliscus dorcas*].** Near Ithala along the road, a mixed heard at what must have been a private game farm held both white and "normal" Blesbok.

**Tsessebe, *Damaliscus lunatus*.** 4-5 sightings of nearly 20 animals in Ithala.

**Blue Wildebeest, *Connochaetes taurinus*.** Common and seen at most places visited, highest numbers in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi. Noted also a few times outside the reserves.

**[Black Wildebeest, *Connochaetes gnou*].** On the way to Ithala we saw a herd with some 10 animals together with 20+ common and white Blesbok. They were all obviously part of some local game farm collection.

**Red Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus buselaphus*.** About 15 individuals both days in Ithala.

**Epauletted Fruit Bat sp.** In a hide in Hluhluwe 4 unidentified epauletted fruit bats were day roosting.

**Squirrel sp.** Unidentified red squirrels were seen a few times around St Lucia.



*Impalas in Hluhluwe GR and Giraffes in Ndumo GR*



## Reptiles



*Snouted Cobra at release*

**Nile Crocodile**, *Crocodylus niloticus*. 2-3 Hluhluwe-Umfolozi, 20+ St Lucia and a few seen in the estuary along Cape Vidal road. In St Lucia there is also a Crocodile breeding centre open for tourists.

**Leopard Tortoise**, *Geochelone pardalis*. 1+1+3 along the roads in Mkhuze were the only land tortoise seen.

**Helmeted Terrapin**, *Pelomedusa subrufa*. 4-5 in the waterhole by Kumasinga hide, Mkhuze.

**Thread Snake sp.** One of these tiny worm-like snakes was found during the walk in Mkhuze, not a clue what species.

**Southern African Python**, *Python sebae natalensis*. A huge specimen was found hidden in grass along the road during the drive in Ndumo, it would have been at least 5 metres long.

**Brown House Snake**, *Lamprophis fuliginosus*. 1 found while herping in the Zululand Rhino reserve.

**Olive Grass Snake**, *Psammophis Mossambicus*. One while herping near Umkhumbi lodge at a neighbouring game farm, Hluhluwe.

**Boomslang**, *Dispholidus typus*. One found dead on the road near Hluhluwe. Another one seen by our guide in Nisela.

**Green Mamba**, *Dendroaspis augusticeps*. A large green snake passing in front of Jeep along Cape Vidal road was most likely this species but could possibly have been a Boomslang.

**Snouted Cobra**, *Naja annulifera*. An adult snake had been captured near Hluhluwe and Anton was called in to take care of it. The snake was later released in a forest near Umkhumbi lodge.

**Mozambique Spitting Cobra**, *Naja mossambica*. One found during a night drive near False Bay and another in Nisela while herping in the bush. Both were young snakes, around 60 cm long.

**Black Mamba**, *Dendroaspis polylepis*. In Nisela there was a project to study the behaviour of Black Mambas using radio transmitters. We joined a researcher in the field and with the aid of the equipment we managed to spot one of these snakes in some dense bushland as it was resting at a branch at two metres above ground.

**Puffadder**, *Bitis arietans*. One young captured at a neighbours farm. The snake was later released in a forest near Umkhumbi lodge

**Cape Wolf Snake**, *Lycophidion capense*. One in Nisela found under a rock.

**Giant Legless Skink**, One while herping near Umkhumbi lodge.

**Rainbow Skink**, *Mabuya Quinquetaeniata*. 2 while herping near Umkhumbi lodge.

**Striped Skink**, *Mabuya Striata*. At least 5-6 Nisela.

**Variable skink**, *Eumeces gaigeae*. 2 while herping near Umkhumbi lodge and common in Mkhuze.

**Giant Plated Lizard**, *Gerrhosaurus validus*. 1 Nisela.

**Nile Monitor**, *Varanus niloticus*. 2 Hluhluwe, 3 Nisela and 1 Ithala.

**Southern Tree Agama**, *Acanthocercus atricollis*. 1 Mkhuze and 1 Nisela.

**(Zululand) Dwarf Chameleon**, *Bradypodion sp.* Seen on two night drives near St Lucia. Uncertain taxonomy.

**Flap-necked Chameleon**, *Chamaeleo dilepis*. A total of 6 individuals seen on 4 night drives near False Bay and St Lucia. A good spot-light is essential to find them.

**Gecko sp.** Several unidentified Geckos were also seen.



*The Black Mamba with radio transmitter in Nisela.*

## **Butterflies**

The eastern parts of South Africa including KwaZulu-Natal has the greatest variety of day active butterflies in the country and there were impressive numbers flying around at the time of our visit, including many conspicuous and beautiful species. With little knowledge and not much to compare with, it is difficult for us to estimate whether this represented a distinct flight period peak or not, most subtropical species do fly all year around. However, there had been quite a bit of autumn rain the weeks prior to our arrival and according to our hosts there had been a lot of caterpillars crawling around during the end of February. There was certainly no dedicated search for butterflies, so the some 30 species and their locations listed below are not representative and only scratching the surface of what is likely to pick up during a visit like this. Identification of almost all species was confirmed from photographs. Mimicry is a popular strategy among many of the species, which sometimes adds to the confusion. The excellent photographic field guide we had available (Steve Woodhalls "Butterflies of South Africa" from Struik Publishers) only covers "true" butterflies and skippers, so moths were not identified.

### **Danainae – Monarchs et al.**

**African Monarch** (Plain Tiger), *Danaus chrysippus aegyptius*. Omnipresent and numerous. Sometimes in large congregations.

### **Satyrinae – Browns, Ringlets et al.**

Not many Browns or Ringlets were noted.

**Evening (Twilight) Brown**, *Melanitis leda*. One still active after dark at the Crocodile centre, St Lucia. With bold eye-markings on the underside.

### **Heliconiinae – Acraeas et al.**

Acraeas were noted in small numbers at most places.

**Natal Acraea**, *Acraea natalica*. This one was only identified in St Lucia.

**Broad-bordered Acraea**, *Acraea anemosa*. One identified from Ndumo.

### **Charaxinae – Emperors et al.**

**Pearl Emperor**, *Charaxes varanes*. A single specimen seen in St Lucia.

### **Limenitinae – Gliders, Foresters, Sailors and False Acraeas**

**Gold-banded Forester**, *Euphaedra neophron*. Two of these beautiful butterflies were recorded in Ndumo.

### **Biblidinae – Nymphs, Jokers, Pipers et al.**

**Spotted Joker**, *Byblia ilithyia*. Jokers were fairly common, but initially overlooked, so only this species was identified, in Hluhluwe (the other species option being Common Joker, *B. anvatar*).

**Golden Piper**, *Eurytela dryope*. Fairly common, especially around Hluhluwe.

### **Nymphalinae – Diadems, Commodores, Pansies, Admirals et al.**

**Common Diadem**, *Hypolimnys misippus*. Several similarly looking species, but this one was probably common. Photographed in Ndumo.

**Yellow Pansy**, *Junonia hierta*. Common most places.



*A Black-tailed Blue and a Mamba Swordtail, both photographed in Hluhluwe*

**Dark Blue Pansy**, *Junonia oenone*. Common e.g. Ithala, Nisela and St Lucia. Not noted around Hluhluwe.

**Brown Pansy**, *Junonia natalica*. 1-2 recorded in Ndumo.

*Lyacaeninae* – Blues, Coppers, Hairstreaks et al.

**Black-striped Hairtail**, *Anthea amarah*. Photographed in Hluhluwe

**Tailed Black-eye**, *Leptomyrina hirundo*. This beautiful Blue was only noted in Hluhluwe.

**Common Black-eye**, *Leptomyrina (Gonatomyrina) gorgias*. Identified in Hluhluwe.

*Pierinae* – Vagrants, Tips, Whites et al.

**Coast Purple Tip**, *Colotis erone*. Purple Tips were commonly noted at most places. This species was the only one identified for certain from photographs.

**Scarlet Tip (Crimson-Tip)**, *Colotis danae*. Common and easily identified in the field.

**Sulphur Orange Tip**, *Colotis auxo*. Common, e.g. around Hluhluwe.

**Smoky Orange Tip**, *Colotis euippe*. Easy to identify. Noted in small numbers at many places.

**Brown-veined White**, *Belenois aurota*. Identified in Mkhuze.

**African Veined White**, *Belenois gidica*. Identified in False Bay, Hluhluwe.

*Coliadinae* – Yellows et al.

**Broad-bordered Grass Yellow**, *Eurema brigitta*. Locally numerous, e.g. in Mkhuze and St Lucia. Often in congregations attracted to elephant dung etc.

*Papilioninae* – Swallowtails, Ladies, Swordtails et al.

**Citrus Swallowtail**, *Papilio demodocus*. Common and numerous at most places.

**Mocker Swallowtail**, *Papilio dardanus*. Males noted around Umkhumbi lodge, Hluhluwe with 1-2 daily. Impossible to photograph! Females are very variable and display Batesian mimicry.

**Green-banded Swallowtail**, *Papilio nireus*. Common throughout.

**Veined Swordtail**, *Graphium leonidas*. Only identified for certain in Mkhuze.

**Angola White Lady**, *Graphium angolanus*. White *Graphium*-species were common throughout. This one was identified in St Lucia.

**White Lady**, *Graphium morania*. Probably common, but only identified from Mkhuze.

**Mamba Swordtail**, *Graphium colonna*. Locally common. One of the Top 5 beauties.

*Hesperiidae (Coeliadinae, Pyrginae, Heteropterinae, Hesperinae)*

A few Skippers were seen, but this group was especially overlooked and none were identified.



*Reptile search near Umkhumbi lodge and a Flap-necked Chameleon during one of the night drives near False Bay.*