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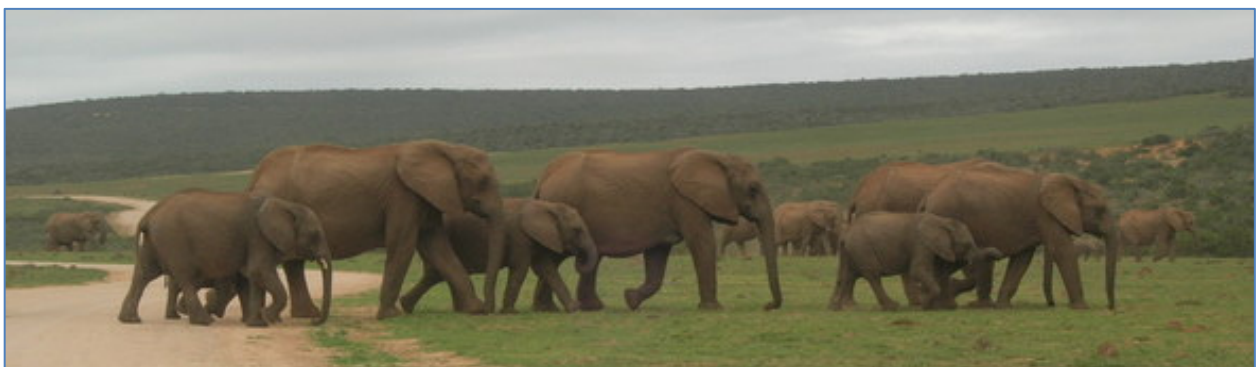
*Honeyguide*

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**South Africa's Garden Route  
and Addo Elephant National Park  
27 October – 11 November 2009**



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**Holiday participants**

Marion Hession  
Jean Fell  
Angela Turner  
Helen Jackson

Pauline Skillings  
Val Codling  
Nicholas Armfelt

Rob May  
Pam May  
John Durdin  
Chris Durdin

Leaders

Mike Raymaker  
Brian Valderwalk

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Report: plant highlights by Mike Raymaker (with some English names added by Chris Durdin), butterflies masterminded by Nicholas Armfelt, daily diary and other lists by Chris Durdin.

Pictures by Rob May (green edge) and Chris Durdin (blue edge). 'Breakfast at Old Nick's' above by Brian Vanderwalk.

Cover: Robberg Peninsula, Narina trogon, and elephants in Addo Elephant National Park.

Our hosts: Crane's Cape Tours & Travel [www.naturalhistorytours.co.za](http://www.naturalhistorytours.co.za)

We stayed at Coral Tree Cottages [www.coraltree.net](http://www.coraltree.net) (though its website doesn't do it justice) and in the 'cottages' at Addo Elephant National Park [www.addoelephant.com](http://www.addoelephant.com)

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**Conservation contribution:** this holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also put something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The usual conservation contribution this year of £35 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, and topped up by two donations from 2008.

This led to a total of £542 given to BirdLife South Africa towards the Southern Africa Bird Atlas Project – see [www.sabap2.org](http://www.sabap2.org). The project says thank-you at the end of this report. Holiday leader Brian Vanderwalk is an active participant in SABAP2, and through him all the many bird records from the holiday have fed in directly to the atlas. This brings the total given to various conservation projects to £61,363 since Honeyguide started in 1991.

## South Africa's Garden Route 27 October – 11 November 2009

### 27 – 28 October – Heathrow-Johannesburg-Port Elizabeth-Coral Tree Cottages

We gathered safely at Heathrow, all of us far earlier than need be, giving time for friendships from regular Honeyguiders to be renewed and new ones quickly made. There was time to grab a bite before a prompt take-off with SAA, then for another meal on board before settling down as best we could for the long night flight. Sleeping is never easy on a plane but it helped that it was only about half-full and to have a blankets, pillows, masks and bed socks provided. At Johannesburg we had to collect luggage before making the fairly straightforward walk and ascent up escalators to the other terminal. The wait for the flight to Port Elizabeth was enlivened by watching rock martins from the window and seeing Cape sparrows perched on iron stepladders. There was a steady, if distant, trickle of cattle egrets over the airfield and a mynah dashed past, recognised by a couple of the group despite only fleeting views.

As he was unwell, Geoff Crane had had to drop out of leading this holiday, so it was Mike Raymaker with new co-leader Brian Vanderwalk who met us at Port Elizabeth. Stepping out of the plane it was clear why Port Elizabeth is known as 'windy city.' We were soon heading west for the three-hour drive to the Plettenburg Bay area. In Port Elizabeth itself there was our first hadeda ibis feeding on the grass by some swings, and European starlings. A family of ostriches – farmed here – was a reminder that this was Africa. The vegetation, as Mike described, was mixed: lots of non-native eucalyptus, maritime pines and black wattle that had been hastily introduced after native forest had been felled, but also native fynbos vegetation of heathers, proteas and pinky-peach *Watsonia* along the road. Though the proteas need fire to germinate, forest fires of the non-native trees are too hot, Mike explained, so the habitat damage is long lasting. Though we did briefly touch the coast, mostly the road was away from the sea, with the low mountains of the Tsitsikammas to our right.

We stopped for a drink and snack at a garage adjacent to one of the several low gorges we crossed. Alpine, African black and small swifts with white rumps buzzed around: later we saw many white-rumped swifts, so they were probably these. There were also greater striped swallows, recalling European red-rumped swallows in their structure and flight style.

It was just about dusk as we arrived at Coral Tree Cottages, splendid separate cottages with pairs of twin/double rooms and their own kitchen and lounge. This is usually self-catering, but Geoff had arranged outside caterers. So, after a briefing from Mike, we met for a choice of lamb stew or chicken pie with filo pastry, washed down with local wines, naturally, followed by pavlova or apple pie. This set a pattern: Kate and her assistants with the splendid choice of evening meals became a great feature of our time at Coral Tree Cottages. Then time, at last, to catch up with some sleep!

### Thursday 29 October – Keurbooms river and forest in Tsitsikamma National Park

An excellent breakfast was delivered to our cottages at 7 am and we gathered for an 8.10 departure. Coral Tree Cottages are set in a large garden, rich in birds. This morning these included olive thrush, Cape white-eye, sombre greenbul, Cape wagtail and a colony of Cape weavers (*right*), their nests hanging over a large pond. This all made a delightful start to today and every day.

It was a very short drive – perhaps 10 minutes – to meet a boat for a trip up the Keurbooms river for a very relaxing start to our first day, with lots of chat from boatman Russell. He took us upstream on this tidal river through an important remaining stand of the indigenous Afromontane<sup>1</sup> forest. Moving upstream from flatter areas by the jetty, we were soon where the river had cut through the sandstone, with forested hillsides above. Birds were an intriguing mix of the familiar – whimbrel, greenshank, Egyptian geese and dabchick – and the unfamiliar, including jackal buzzard, white-necked ravens and spectacular flashes of the red wings of Knysna turaco (or lourie). There were several good views of reed cormorants, a freshwater bird



<sup>1</sup> Afromontane is a term used to describe the plant and animal species of the mountains of Africa. These afromontane regions are not continuous, and although at 1500-2000 metres elevation near the equator, they extend almost to the coast in South Africa. More information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afromontane>

noticeably smaller than the many white-breasted cormorants (the same species as cormorants back home). There were many fine yellowwood trees, but sobering to know just one per cent of the original Afromontane forest remains.

We left the boat to birdwatch for half an hour or so, and Brian found a wonderfully rich mix of birds for us to enjoy. I saw red-chested cuckoo, olive woodpecker, Cape batis and paradise flycatcher here and other birds were seen by Brian or group members. Highlights on the return boat journey were an immature African fish-eagle and a rock thrush on the rocks; a darter (*below right*) was perched on a dead bush tucked in behind a couple of reed cormorants. An African spoonbill was standing on the sandbanks by the jetty with the by now expected sacred ibises and whimbrels, and a Caspian tern flew past soon after we disembarked.



Mike went off for some extra lunch provisions, giving an ideal opportunity to see what we could find in what is evidently a popular park in summer. There was a good view of black-bellied starling, having struggled to see this bird well earlier, but better still was a great view of a Klass's cuckoo, which even though a female was a startling emerald green on the back, contrasting with a white underside. A huge brown and cream-coloured butterfly settled on a tree, which brought Nicholas's expertise and experience to the fore: it was a pearl emperor, a *Charaxes*, the same genus as two-tailed pasha in southern Europe. Green-striped swallowtail and brown-veined white were the other distinctive and new butterflies.

For lunch, we moved to some benches at 'Nature's Valley' in the Tsitsikamma National Park, where a yellow-throated woodland warbler and chorister robin entertained one table and chacma baboons the other. Into the woodland, along a boardwalk of recycled plastic, and three bar-throated apalises buzzed very closely around. The trees here were superb: more yellowwoods especially, but a range of other species conveniently labelled. Mike explained how familiar names, such as elder and ash, usually didn't mean they were like the familiar species to us from Europe. We found a startling pink stinkhorn fungus *Aserae rubra* (*above left*). A dusky flycatcher hunted in classic flycatcher style.

A loo stop at 'Nature's Valley rest camp' proved fruitful for birds, especially a collared sunbird, though we didn't really get to grips with the two species until the following morning. There was another excellent view of the striking-looking Cape batis; some speckled mousebirds scurried along the bushtops and perched obligingly in view.

Brian's bus stopped on the return journey to see some red-throated francolins on the roadside, close enough to see the spurs on the legs of this member of the spurfowl group. On some open fields we stopped to look for black-winged plovers and found these and our first blacksmith plovers, plus helmeted guineafowl, several dozen hadeda ibises, a white-throated swallow and red-knobbed (= crested) coots. Farther on, crossing the wetland at the top of the estuary, we did a little detour and found black-winged stilts and little egrets. As we re-entered Coral Tree Cottages we paused to admire a malachite kingfisher on the pond here. We heard later that the other bus stopped to see black-headed heron on the lawn: it was there again the following morning.

#### Friday 30 October – Diepwalle Forest and Spitskop Peak

Nearly everyone took up Brian's offer of an hour's birdwatching before breakfast – which again showed that Coral Tree Cottages is a superb base for natural history group. Five new birds for me included three sunbirds, namely the similar greater and lesser double-collared sunbirds and amethyst (formerly black) sunbird, black-headed oriole and Cape sugarbird. The sugarbirds were on a treetop, first the longer-tailed male then the shorter-tailed female. Sunbirds and sugarbirds around the cottages soon became familiar, often quite tame and easy to see like many garden birds.

We drove past a growing African township and extensive eucalyptus plantations to our starting place for a walk in the Diepwalle Forest. This is an area where there is reputed to be a small surviving population of forest elephants, though in reality no-one ever sees these, but is also known for 'big trees', namely yellowwood trees several hundreds of years old, in a good area of Afromontane forest. There were no new birds on this walk, but

we did identify two of the commonest butterflies, namely rainforest brown and common bush brown. The many ferns included tree ferns, and we paused to see and listen to stream clicking frogs, sounding like little castanets. As we re-joined the buses, it was good to see a coach party of black Africans taking in the 'big trees', and we exchanged lively greetings and chat.

We lunched at a picnic spot down the road and again dipped into the forest. We'd already seen tiny epiphytic orchid leaves this morning and here we found a fallen branch with a little gem in flower – two small white flowers of the epiphytic orchid *Mystacydium capense* (photo on p.19).

A drive up a dirt road took us into fynbos at Spitskop Peak. Recent fires, probably mostly last summer, meant the start of the re-flowering process was underway, if not yet at its peak. There were tiny pelargoniums, scarlet pimpernel, irises, daisies and much more (e.g. *Aristea confusa* – photo on p.19), albeit often scattered among broken glass. The classic fynbos elements of proteas, heathers and the grass-like restios were also there, though mostly not in flower.

We were back by five o'clock which allowed lots of time to have a cup of tea, explore the garden and enjoy the Cape weavers, sugarbirds, sunbirds and hadeda ibis in the early evening sunshine, all conveniently close to home.

#### Saturday 31 October - Old Nick's and Robberg peninsula

Brian's pre-breakfast birdwatching started with a goodie: a brown-hooded kingfisher on a wire. That was followed by a brimstone canary (incidentally only some of the South African canaries are *Serinus* as in Europe) and wonderful views of black-headed oriole. We walked to the scrub round the back of Coral Tree Cottages where a Victorin's warbler – quite a scarce and local bird – popped up on top of the scrub, though being back-lit it wasn't the best of views. But we did see neddicky – a species of cisticola – and karoo prinia very well.

Breakfast was out today, a few miles down the road at São Gonçalo's restaurant at 'Old Nick's'. After a wonderful feast we explored the garden around the small group of craft shops by the restaurant and into the adjacent countryside. On the lawn were many small butterflies that we later confirmed as rayed blue, and found common hairtail too. We watched two male pin-tailed whydahs (*right*), with their absurdly long tails, tussling in a treetop. A streaky-headed seed-eater perched on a fence and fiscal flycatcher on a bare tree.



Behind an earth embankment was a small area of open water, perhaps a farm reservoir under construction, on which was a Cape teal plus a pair of blacksmith plovers with a large youngster. A couple of plain-backed pipits fed on the grass. The relaxed morning continued with some shopping.

We then drove to the seafront in Plettenburg Bay, the town called Plett by the locals. Out to sea were Cape gannets.

We overlooked some sand bars from the car park of the Milkwood Manor guesthouse (see where we were standing here: [www.milkwoodmanor.co.za](http://www.milkwoodmanor.co.za), though the tide was out for us) where the owner popped out to see if we had lunch plans, which we did, but we didn't mind being asked and having a chat. Birdwise, we found our first black oystercatchers and Cape cormorants, the latter clearly smaller than the more numerous white-breasted cormorants. The restaurant had a bird feeder where a pin-tailed whydah seemed to be bossing the house sparrows. Brian pointed out the different eye colours on two rooftop black-backed gulls: dark for Cape gull and light for kelp gull, a possible species 'split' under discussion.

We arrived at the car park at the start of the Robberg peninsula at an ideal time for lunch, and a perfect place too, looking out from the cliffs over the sea on this now nicely hot day. Gulls and red-winged starlings kept us company as we ate, but were soon forgotten when someone at the picnic site pointed out some distant whales. We were privileged to watch what we eventually realised were four humpback whales as for an hour or so they blew, breached, flipped their tails and especially slapped flippers against the sea's surface. That we were watching humpbacks rather than the more likely southern right whales was a genuine surprise to Mike, who explained that much of the activity is to remove itchy skin from backs and flippers.

There were also dolphins, not identified by species, a southern fur seal and a rock thrush, but these really sideshows to the main event of the whales' activity, continuing ever closer as they drifted from our left to straight out offshore. The whales continued their display as we walked a little way back along the road to a path down the cliff-side to a prehistoric midden where early man caught and ate shellfishes. We found the delightful yellow chinkerenchee *Ornithogalum dubium* – a star-of-Bethlehem – as we returned, and back up on the road we had good views of southern tchagra and rock agama lizard.

A walk around some of the peninsula was then a possibility, but we made it no further than the viewpoint just beyond the other side of the car park, facing in the other direction towards Plettenburg Bay. Here, amazingly, there were yet more whales in view. Closest were two southern right whales, identifiable by the callosities<sup>2</sup> on their backs, lack of dorsal fin and blowing in two jets compared with the humpbacks' single spout; farther out were two more humpbacks. Quite a conclusion to a memorable day.

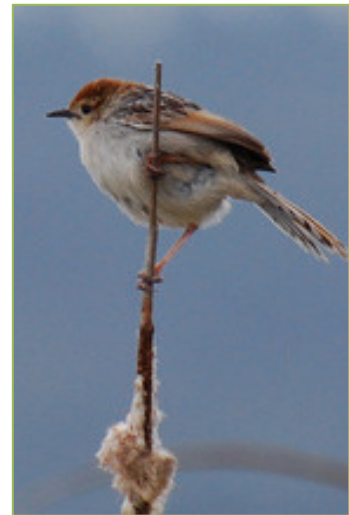
#### Sunday 1 November - Featherbed Nature Reserve

The early birders had a quieter day than the last two, but we did see our first forest canary, had good views of Cape bulbul and a white-faced duck flew through.

It was a much cooler and overcast day as we drove to Knysna, then scanned the estuary from the quay. In addition to the usual suspects of sacred ibis, whimbrels and greenshanks there were black oystercatchers and our first grey heron. We boarded a crowded boat to join many others crossing to the island nature reserve of Featherbed.

The on-board commentary was aimed at the average tourist – today from many countries, with a big French group in particular – but making a successful tourist business of the island and its nature seems to mean it remains undeveloped, unlike areas opposite that were dominated by upmarket housing. Everyone was loaded onto two very long trailers to be taken to the top of the scrub-covered slopes. Birds were a bit thin but having let the crowds descend first we were kept company by a singing sombre greenbul: 'Johnny, come out to play, sca.a.ared'. Plants and trees were helpfully labelled; even though we'd met many in the past few days, by now most of us needed reminders. The lunch spread at the buildings at the bottom of the hill was generous and tasty.

Back on the boat to return across the water, then we set off for some birding at the Rondvlei nature reserve. A yellow bishop was high on an exposed perch as we drove in. It's a large freshwater lake and we took a short walk to a good-sized hide in the bed of reedmace overlooking the water's edge, though pausing to admire a noisy Cape batis on the way. Great crested grebes were displaying and a Cape shoveler was at least half asleep. By far the commonest bird was red-knobbed coot, there were moorhens too but it took patience to spot the two black crakes on the edge of the reedmace as they spent most of the time tucked out of view. A darter on a post then went fishing, so we could see its long, snake-like neck emerging from the water like a u-boat's periscope. There were several little brown jobs: little rush-warbler and lesser swamp-warbler (formerly Cape reed warbler and sedge warbler respectively) but perhaps the best was a smart-looking Levaillant's cisticola (*right*). Blacksmith plovers flew around and two glossy ibises dropped in. As we drove away, the yellow bishop was back on its perch.



#### Monday 2 November – Swartberg Pass

An early start – 8 am – for our longest day away from Coral Tree Cottages. The drive towards the Swartberg Pass took us west past Knysna again, beyond which we stopped to overlook Wilderness Bay, near the town of Wilderness. As well as a photo opportunity there was a very tame rock hyrax, or rock dassie as they call them in SA, grazing just over the wall.

Then it was into the hills at a steady pace so we could catch the 11 o'clock tour of the Cango Caves. And impressive caves they were too, with fine stalactites and stalagmites and a guide with a nice line in gentle humour. There was time for an ice cream, loos and a quick visit to the shop, then outside into by now a hot day to watch dozens of little swifts around the rocks and buildings, with a scattering of white-rumped swifts for comparison. Brian picked up a high-flying martial eagle and at last an easy-to-identify bird for all – a male red bishop. Onwards then through ostrich country around Oudtshoorn, the 'ostrich capital of the world', farmed here in large numbers, but fun to see. Oudtshoorn itself strikes as an interesting town with its jacarandas and elegant Dutch-style buildings from the late 19th and early 20th century. The minibuses took us higher and higher into the montane fynbos, dominated by proteas and restios, where we found grassbird, a large warbler, and African stonechat.

Engineer Thomas Bain built the road over the Swartberg Pass (1583 metres) 120 years ago, working with 200 convicts and a lot of gunpowder. We picnicked just beyond the highest point where a small plantation of alien pines had been removed, albeit leaving stumps, branches, seedlings and alien vegetation recognisable to Europeans, including grasses (there are no native grasses in a natural fynbos community), heath sorrel, bramble and ribwort plantain. A Verreaux's eagle flew over, but was a bit distant to see well.

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<sup>2</sup> Callosities are pale, barnacle-encrusted areas of crusty skin. This feature helps to identify southern right whales and also forms distinctive patterns helping the recognition of individual whales.

Then a leisurely descent, producing many wonderful wildlife sightings. A ground woodpecker on a rock on the near skyline prompted us to walk down the road for a better angle. Here we had excellent views of grassbird, followed by klipspringers balanced daintily on their toes as they kept an eye on us that was careful but, it seemed, relaxed.



A little lower and perhaps the highlight of the day was the most brilliant views of orange-breasted sunbirds, males and females, close to us in tall fynbos (*male, left*). A Victorin's warbler showed its brick-red underside well and a rock kestrel mobbed a jackal buzzard. There was more: yellow bishops, spikes of *Watsonia*, protea canary and curly-leaved *Pelargonium crispus*. We were lucky enough to see half a dozen springboks, without which a trip to South Africa would surely be incomplete. Near these were karoo scrub-robin and elegant crowned plovers and our first pied starling poking around the legs of some cattle. All this, and endless stunning scenery.

Back past the ostriches and through Oudtshoorn, and then time to eat up the miles for the long drive home. We arrived back after dark but there was a clear consensus that it had been a fascinating day with some great wildlife and well worth the long journey.

### Tuesday 3 November - Robberg peninsula again

Our 'free day' and a chance for group members to choose a venue for the day. Rob and Pam hoped to do some whale watching by boat out of Plett, but rough weather meant that wasn't possible; so we all opted to return to the Robberg peninsula. Early birding apart, the day started with another visit to Old Nick's for breakfast, equally good as last time, followed by some birdwatching around there. Our butterfly list took an interesting turn as Nicholas drew our attention to an African monarch over the lawn, which was soon followed around by several cameras (*photo on p.16 and more on [www.honeyguide.co.uk/monarchs.htm](http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/monarchs.htm)*). The rayed blues were there again, too. Meanwhile, Brian had found a Knysna woodpecker, a scarce bird seen well by several in the group, while the monarch photographers went over to the little wetland and found an African spoonbill (*below left*),



two white-faced ducks, several red-billed teals and blacksmith plovers (*above right*), the last with a chick as before. Southern boubou in the gardens was another new bird and several old favourites, such as fiscal flycatcher, were seen well.

With some extra seats put into service at the back of the bigger bus, Mike was free to return to base and the rest of us set off. The sea at the Robberg peninsula was much rougher than last time and there were no whales, reinforcing what a privilege our previous visit had been. Red-winged starlings kept us company by the picnic tables and Brian found a tiny painted reed frog on a leaf, looking rather like a bird dropping. Some barn swallows flew through, rock agamas scuttled around and a stunning common figtree blue butterfly turned up near the frog.

Last time we were here, the whales had distracted us from the option of walking onto the peninsula, but not this time. There are circuits of various lengths and difficulties but, in practice, even the easy clockwise circuit takes a certain amount of physical fitness and effort. We had good views of Cape bulbul, karoo prinia and bar-throated apalis, then Marion drew our attention to Cape fur seals on some distant rocks. There were many hundreds – I estimated 800 – some on the shore and many swimming like a black tide. Viewed through the scope, you could make out that those on land included big pups. At the far point of the peninsula's short circuit there was a boardwalk leading down into Gap Beach. Two seals were playing in the surf and soon several Honeyguiders were doing likewise by paddling in the Indian Ocean.

The journey home included a stop to look at black-winged plovers in a large horse paddock, and there was a plain-backed pipit with the plovers. The horse came through the pine shelterbelt to see us.

#### Wednesday 4 November – Millwood Forest settlement

It was the warmest pre-breakfast walk so far, with many of our favourite birds on show. Two male black-headed orioles displayed at each other and a black sparrowhawk came over, the 57<sup>th</sup> bird for the garden and extended area around Coral Tree Cottages.

At the Knysna lagoons on the way to the 'Knysna Heads' there was a fine mix of waders. Kittlitz's and three-banded plovers were new birds for the holiday, as was a single marsh sandpiper and many curlew sandpipers, including a group of 10. A family of Cape teals fed on the far side of the first lagoon. Lots of black-winged stilts, several greenshanks, blacksmith plover, Cape wagtails and red-knobbed coots were there too, and a pied kingfisher kindly sat to allow telescope views.

At Knysna Heads there was the shortest of walks from the car park to the coast. Here we pottered among the rock pools – incidentally, those gold-tipped winkles were pink-lipped topshells – and looked over to the rock stack with hundreds of nesting Cape cormorants. We met again several plants we'd seen at the Featherbed Nature Reserve opposite, including the strand gazania, the labiate *Plectranthus* sp. and wild pea *Dipogon lignosus*. We drove onto some other viewpoints set among seriously expensive-looking properties and failed to get the guy selling models made of wire and beads to say what kind of price he had in mind. Then we went back to the estuary and dipped into the Steenbok Nature Reserve – [www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za](http://www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za) – for more estuary birds, including an African spoonbill, and tiny crown crabs.

It was seriously hot when we reached the old gold workings at Millwood Forest, though happily our lunchspot was in the shade. A walk around the old mine shafts and equipment didn't take long, but was a glimpse into the history of the gold rush of 1876. Forest buzzard and Cape canary were just about the only birds out in the heat.

We dropped down the hill into the natural forest, pausing by another 'big tree' – a giant yellowwood – to see if we could find any forest birds as it began to cool down. A red-necked cuckoo called loudly and persistently but after initial sightings, proved elusive high in the canopy. About four Knysna turacos moved through the trees, offering mostly fleeting views or flashes of red wings. Then Brian heard a distinctive growling noise that he knew was a Narina trogon<sup>3</sup> (*photo on front cover*). Extraordinarily, several times this usually elusive forest gem sat in good, if shady, view and everyone saw it well. It was a new bird for Mike as well as all group members and an amazing conclusion to our time in the Garden Route.

#### Thursday 5 November - Garden Route to Addo

We packed, said farewell to Shirley at Coral Tree Cottages and were soon at Old Nick's for breakfast for the third time, excellent as always. No time today for birdwatching here so we set off east for the Storms River mouth, a section of the Tsitsikamma National Park next to the sea. As we'd often seen, the set-up was delightful: shop, café and loos near the car park by the sea, and a first class walkway along the fringe of native forest overlooking a bay. Right by the car park was a southern boubou and everyone had excellent views; a black oystercatcher sat on its nest. The walk along the recycled plastic walkway, up and down various steps, produced no new birds, but gave an opportunity to enjoy bar-throated apalis and sombre greenbul close to, rock hyrax sitting on a branch and two cormorant species. Trees were again helpfully labelled, including an amazing milkwood<sup>4</sup> and flowers included patches of wild lobelia. Some made it to the suspension bridge at the far end. A phone call about two suitcases left behind at Coral Tree Cottages meant a slight change of plans and an early lunch, while Brian went back on our steps to retrieve these. We chilled out on picnic benches overlooking the sea. Many swift terns were moving to and fro; the drama of the breaking waves was likened to watching fireworks this Guy Fawkes Day; there was time to shop.

Then it was time for the long drive to Addo, four and half hours or so, with a break at a garage to pick up some supplies for early breakfasts. Birds along the way included yellow-billed and black-shouldered kites and our only African marsh harrier of the holiday. The extensive townships next to Port Elizabeth at the start of the Addo road were interesting to see, but otherwise it was an unremarkable journey.

At the Addo Elephant National Park we gathered briefly at the viewing area overlooking the waterhole by the main centre, where there were kudus and a buffalo, before being settled into our 'cottages'. There was time to quickly unpack before being picked up by the guys for the very short drive to the restaurant for an excellent evening meal, at the end of which a gecko, later identified as a marble leaf-toed gecko, appeared on the walls of the dining room.

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<sup>3</sup> This bird was named by the 18<sup>th</sup> century French naturalist François de Vaillant in honour of his Hottentot mistress, Narina! He also has various species named after himself, including the north African green woodpecker.

<sup>4</sup> The white milkwood *Sideroxylon inerme* is an evergreen tree with a large trunk that is usually twisted or bent. The derivation of the name come from *Sideros* (iron) and *xylon* (wood); *inerme* means unarmed, i.e. without spines. The wood is hard and close-grained and used in boat building. The trees grow in the almost pure sands of the coast and in dry bush, sometimes forming dense thickets. All white milkwoods are protected by law.



### Friday 6 November - Addo Elephant National Park

Forget the usual 9-5 for game and birdwatching in Africa. We were all up shortly after 5 am, grabbing a quick bite, and in the buses so we could be at the gate and then into the Park at 6 am. Almost immediately we had an incredibly close view of a pale chanting goshawk. There's a selection of routes, many on tarmac, this morning's taking us past a waterhole called Domkrag Dam, named after a leopard tortoise that once crawled under a VW beetle and stopped it moving off: domkrag is Afrikaans for jack. The two buses separated so this account is mostly of what was seen from Mike's bus. There were soon lots of kudus, a few ostriches then a startling yellow bokmakierie – we all saw many of these. At the Domkrag Dam waterhole, unusually it was OK to get out of the buses. There were red bishops among the many weavers, plus karoo scrub robin and yellow-billed ducks, among others.

Back in the bus and soon we were puzzling over dark-phase Jacobin cuckoos when five red-faced mousebirds buzzed through. Not that all the people out and about were birdwatching. One lady enquired of Mike what we were watching. "A lark", he said. "What?" "A lark, a type of bird" Mike explained. "A lark?" came the dismissive reply, as if she were Dame Edith Evans saying "A handbag?" before off she quickly went.

It wasn't really a morning for botany but there had been some rain a few weeks ago so many bushes were flowering and others had the red-flowered *Microlooma* clambering over them. Karoo gold provided splashes of brilliant yellow. New sightings kept coming: red hartebeest, warthogs and acacia pied barbet.

We'd already seen a sprinkling of elephants but suddenly we were in among them as several family parties crossed the road. Nicholas in the other bus counted 80 during the three hours we were out. From our bus, one bull elephant paused right outside our windows for an age, lazily yet skilfully harvesting the plants coming up after the rain.

We heard from another tour bus about some lions, and we found a lioness and three large cubs in the shade of some scrub. Mating leopard tortoises provided a final special sighting. The other bus with Brian had a similar range of sightings, plus red-necked wryneck.

After breakfast we did our own thing for a while. For me there was a reminder of the wildlife within the fenced camp when Cape wagtails and a fiscal shrike alerted me to a Cape cobra crossing the path and disappearing into scrub a few metres from my cottage. I discovered that the striped swallows nesting under an overhang on our cottage were lesser striped swallows, (*below, middle*) another new bird. My father and I encountered another cobra as we walked to join the group for a light lunch.



With our next outing planned for 3 pm, after lunch we all pottered around the area overlooking the waterhole, the heat keeping us in the shade. Yellow-fronted canary and South African shelduck were new birds, as was a stunning-looking black-collared barbet (*above, left*), but mostly we followed the loud 'splink' of a lesser honeyguide in the trees (*above, right*). A good moment: my first honeyguide on a Honeyguide wildlife holiday.

On the afternoon's drive, everyone caught up with the lions, both groups saw yellow mongoose and those in Mike's bus, a meercat. With Brian, at one point both red-capped lark and pearl-breasted swallow were perching on elephant dung, which was littered across most open areas. A red-lipped snake on a road caused a jam in the traffic's navigation; similarly, we watched two vehicles reverse from where a road disappeared into some thick bush to be quickly followed by an elephant that they sensibly judged had right of way. Eland, Cape sparrows, spectacled weaver on its large hanging nest and southern ant-eating chat were among other sightings. But all these were capped by eagle-eyed Brian finding a caracal, only for this lynx-like cat to have to move on quickly as a party of elephants walked through where it was lying in the grass. Our final drama came as two male black korhaans – a small bustard – stalked each other, missing by several yards and ending up with the dominant (or maybe territory-holding) male pursuing and seeing off its rival.

The gecko reappeared during supper, where the kudu steak was decidedly easier to eat than the ostrich.

## Saturday 7 November - Addo Elephant National Park, day 2



'Dung beetles have right of way', proclaims the South African National Parks' sign as you leave the Addo camp and drive into the park. It continues: 'Do not drive over dung beetles or elephant dung', to emphasize the importance of the beetles' role in the park's ecosystem.

Today's early drive took us through mostly uniform, arguably monotonous, scrub of spekboom, *Portulacaria afra*. Spekboom, also known as pork bush, has succulent leaves with patches of pink flowers and is much browsed by herbivores among Addo's mammals, though only the widespread dung – often with attendant Addo flightless dung beetles (*left*) – alerts you to that value. It was this vast area of thick cover that sheltered the mammals from hunters and provided the core of the

National Park that is today being steadily expanded. Waterholes are now maintained to help wildlife and its viewing. On the first of these were Cape and red-billed teals and yellow-billed duck. On the second, called Rooidam, there were pearl-breasted swallows and a three-banded plover. Other sightings, until the run back to camp, were all in or on the scrub. Southern tchagra, white-throated canary, karoo scrub-robin, black-collared barbet and our first white-browed scrub-robin were all noted. The run-in to camp provided a warthog right by Brian's bus and a splendid group of elephants by a waterhole.

After breakfast and checklists, most of the group went for another drive, though I stayed behind and pottered. The group reported good views of yellow mongoose, a warthog and a fiscal shrike that was engaged in a protracted effort to catch and kill a small snake or skink. Everyone opted for a quiet afternoon in the roasting heat, though there were sightings, including the minute tinkinky blue butterfly and a pale phase booted eagle by our cottages. Brian later told us that there are several pairs of booted eagles now breeding in South Africa, including a pair at Table Mountain. Marion found a night heron at the pond where I tried to count the male red bishops (*right*) from the hide: 12 was the best count, and that almost certainly missed two or three guarding nests on the other side of the central clump of reeds.



We ate earlier than usual so we were ready in good time for the 7.30 pm night game drive in the park's open-sided vehicle. In the two hours out, our guide CK with his big lamp found at least nine scrub hares, a common duiker, a pair of spotted thick-knees, five sightings of at least three different black-backed jackals and two spring hares. Two Cape cranes were roosting in the water at the Domkrag Dam waterhole where it was also possible to make out South African shelduck and yellow-billed ducks.

## Sunday 8 November - Addo Elephant National Park, day 3

A later start of 6.30 for an early morning walk, starting at our cottages and ending up at breakfast an hour later. A Klaas's cuckoo in a tree and the first views of laughing dove for some were notable. There were lots of the more common birds and some of us exchanged tales of these by our accommodation: for example, black-capped bulbul was feeding outside my cottage on crumbs of the South African breakfast cereal weet-bix. We drove out of the Addo fence line and up the hill into some splendid Afromontane forest, of a different character to what we'd seen by the coast with many big euphorbias. Three crowned hornbills (*right*) flew around the hill opposite, proving at first a little tricky to see well for such a big bird, but in the end everyone did see them through the scope. A dark-headed (or forest) weaver was another new bird, but the butterflies were even more gripping: green-banded and citrus swallowtails, both nearly always fast-flying, plus eyed pansy (intriguingly, on the very southern edge of its range), spotted sailer and several tricky whites.



Though cooler up this hill, the 12½-kilometre walk noted on the itinerary was never a serious option and anyway much of the hillsides had been cleared by fire last summer. Instead we called at the delightful 'Zuurberg Mountain Village' ([www.addo.co.za](http://www.addo.co.za)), an elegant mountain inn, recently re-built after fire damage. There were both a Labrador and a small, poisonous puff adder in the outdoor pool: Mike fished out the latter with a stick.

The lady there pointed to a hadeda ibis on a nest as we enjoyed a drink and said she would have delayed the daily bird feeding if she knew we were coming. Nonetheless there was still a crowned hornbill in the tree over

the bird tables, lots of Cape glossy starlings, African hoopoe and a big weaver colony on a large eucalyptus just outside the charming English-style gardens. Big cycads on the lawn near the pool were, perhaps, the most remarkable feature.

Our 4 pm drives had mixed results. Brian's bus went where the night drive had been past lots of termite mounds. Olive bush-shrike was a new bird and there was a large male buffalo very close on the home leg. Mike's bus caught up with meercats, albeit distant, for a second time and a good selection of birds at Domkrag Dam waterhole. You have to be in before gates close at 6.30, which means a couple of hours on this later drive, which is ideal. We all then looked over the main waterhole in the run up to dinner, hoping that a rhino might appear, which it didn't. There was a dramatic evening fly-past by a tight flock of little swifts, an African spoonbill dropped in and water thick-knee was there for a second evening. Lightning and thunder kept us alert over dinner.

#### Monday 9 November - Addo Elephant National Park, day 4

Just a little rain had fallen overnight, but on the morning game drive it seemed to have been enough to bring out scores of big millipedes, a huge snail and even more tortoises than usual, including an angulate tortoise. These apart, those in Mike's bus saw rather little, though a bird, probably a bokmakierie, was singing the introduction to Beethoven's Fifth symphony at the rhinoceros hide. The action was this morning with Brian, with two magnificent male lions at rest by a road. These have been brought in from the Kalahari, the most similar race to the lions that would once have been here, and have large darks manes that stretch down between their front legs. A spotted hyaena in a waterhole brought extra excitement.

With much to see and a cloudier and much cooler day, both buses went out again straight after breakfast. Mike's gang caught up with the male lions and everyone found Burchell's zebras for the first time, just a few here and noticeably less strongly marked than the same species in east Africa. A secretarybird was an extra treat for those with Mike, patrolling some grassland inside a fence line beyond the zebras, then flying over the fence into some longer grass that would probably be more productive for its prey of snakes. We watched two yellow mongooses at close quarters on the home leg.



Pauline and John went out in the afternoon with Mike in search of meercats and had the most tremendous luck with a little group of eight right by the side of the road, on their hind legs looking around. "An incredible sight," they said. Brian's birders walked towards the main gate to the camp and, as well as enjoying many of our favourite birds for a last time, had a great view of a yellow mongoose and our first cardinal woodpecker. Splitting up, Val and Marion found the black crane in the bishops' pond and Helen and I watched some green wood-hoopoes near the waterhole viewpoint.

Six of us braved an even colder night drive, though we were better dressed this time. Much was uneventful with a scattering of jackal and scrub hare sightings, but then we had three spotted thick-knees right by the open-sided vehicle, quickly followed by a spotted eagle owl perched on the scrub. The ride was nearly over when we caught sight of two porcupines which scurried across an open area before disappearing into scrub.

#### Tuesday 10 November - from Addo to Port Elizabeth and home

We woke for the last time to a dawn chorus of Cape turtle dove ('work **harder**, work **harder**') sombre greenbul and African hoopoe. Drawn in by some spare weet-bix, we had white-browed robin-chat, masked weaver, Cape turtle dove and fiscal flycatcher on our little table outside our cottage; a red bishop came to visit Angela and Pauline, and Nicholas. Val found a little grey mongoose by the bishop bird hide, and we saw one cross the road as we set off through the park.

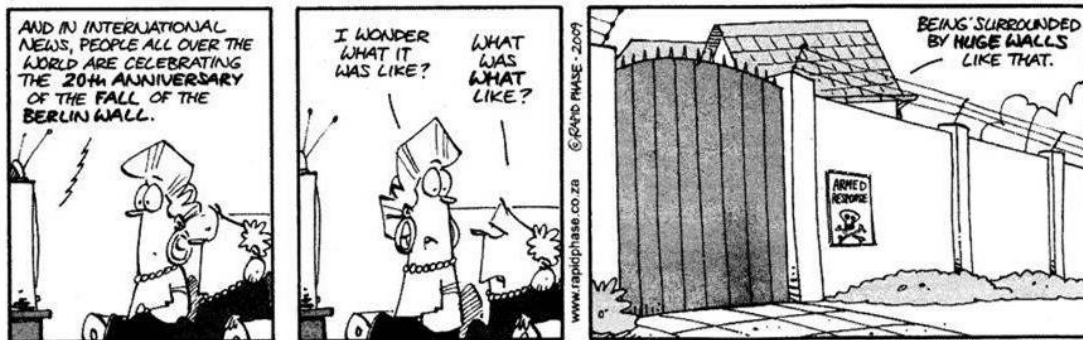
With an afternoon flight to catch, it was a leisurely morning's drive with plenty to see: rufous-naped lark, yellow-billed kite, jackal buzzard and black-backed jackal, to name a few. We left Addo briefly, through the park gates, re-entering through more gates and descending into the southern section's more open landscape, sweeping down towards coastal sand dunes and the ocean. A very tame steppe buzzard perched on the edge of some scrub as we neared the coast. Then we were back onto main roads and into the built up area of Port Elizabeth. There was time for a final group meal at the airport Wimpy (other catering outlets were shut!) before saying farewells, to Mike and Brian before they headed back to Cape Town by road and to Rob and Pam who were flying on, also to Cape Town, to see family. For the rest of us, we had the usual sitting and waiting for a full plane to Jo'burg, and a not-so-full overnight plane safely back to Heathrow.

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Our return coincided with the 20-year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Here's a cartoon from today's The Star, a South African newspaper.

## MADAM & EVE

BY STEPHEN FRANCIS & RICO



**Highlights** nominated by group members (not quite everyone, but still worth sharing):

**Helen and Jean:** the early morning walks in the Coral Cottages gardens; the sunbirds, particularly the malachite sunbirds; the whales and the whole of the Robberg Peninsula; the caves; the elephants, particularly the tiny one only a few days old; the male lions; the red bishops and the weaver birds at Addo.

**Nicholas:** caracal, seeing klipspringer so distinctly, and best ever views of lions, grassbird, collared sunbird and swee waxbill.

**Pauline:** special sightings included whales and dolphins, elephants, lions, warthogs, meercats, so many glorious birds, as well as wonderful countryside.

**Rob and Pam:** the Robberg peninsula with its spectacular bays and the views of the whales breaching. The two male lions at Addo and the close views of the birds that our guides managed to find for us. Finally, the group, which got on so well together.

**Marion:** playful humpback whales; spotted eagle owl plus porcupines on the night drive; a close encounter with a common duiker on a solo walk on my last morning above our cottages at Addo camp; fantastic views of two male lions; the excitement of seeing so many birds on our first morning when we got off the boat in the forest; fabulous views of the Narina trogon; the people on the trip.

**Angela:** having a vervet monkey look through the bedroom window at me a Coral Tree Cottages from about 3 feet away on the first day. Having such delights in that garden - sunbirds, Cape weavers and Cape sugarbirds right outside our window, let alone hadedas, orioles and olive thrushes.

**John:** Robberg peninsula, excellent accommodation at both Coral Tree Cottages and Addo; two very good leaders.

**Chris:** for birds, sunbirds both at Coral Tree Cottages and especially orange-breasted sunbird, lesser striped swallow nesting on the cottage at Addo, getting to know many of the common birds, of which a particular favourite was sombre greenbul. Of the mammals, the whales at Robberg, and best butterflies were pearl emperor, brown-veined white, African monarch and tinkinky blue.

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## Birds

**Ostrich:** Addo, plus farmed birds  
**Great crested grebe:** Rondvlei nature reserve, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov  
**Little grebe:** Keurbooms river, Rondvlei nature reserve, ponds at Addo  
**Cape gannet:** offshore on three days  
**White-breasted cormorant:** recorded on six days in the Garden Route, in both salt and fresh water  
**Cape cormorant:** recorded on four days in the Garden Route, always salt water  
**Reed cormorant:** recorded on four days in the Garden Route, always fresh water  
**African darter:** Keurbooms river and Rondvlei nature reserve  
**Grey heron:** recorded on four days in the Garden Route  
**Black-headed heron:** recorded on nine days in both the Garden Route and Addo  
**Little egret:** recorded on three days in the Garden Route  
**Cattle egret:** recorded on six days in the Garden Route  
**Black-crowned night heron:** for four days in a row on its roost at Addo  
**African sacred ibis:** recorded on seven days in the Garden Route  
**Glossy ibis:** two at Rondvlei nature reserve  
**Hadedda ibis:** seen every day!  
**African spoonbill:** recorded on coastal wetlands and at Addo  
**White-faced duck:** recorded on three days in the Garden Route  
**Egyptian goose:** seen every day  
**South African shelduck:** four days at Addo  
**Yellow-billed duck:** recorded on five days, four of which were at Addo  
**Cape teal:** Old Nick's and at Addo  
**Red-billed teal:** Old Nick's and at Addo  
**Cape shoveler:** Rondvlei nature reserve  
**Spur-winged goose:** on the first two days in the Garden Route only  
**Secretarybird:** one on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov, Addo  
**Yellow-billed kite:** recorded on four days, two of which were travel days  
**Black-shouldered kite:** recorded on six days, two of which were travel days  
**Verreaux's eagle:** one flew over at the Swartberg Pass  
**Booted eagle:** one pale phase bird at Addo, 7<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Martial eagle:** one from Cango Caves, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov  
**African fish eagle:** an immature at Keurbooms river, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct  
**Steppe buzzard:** a visitor to SA in the northern hemisphere winter, recorded on four days  
**Forest buzzard:** the commonest buzzard, recorded on six days  
**Jackal buzzard:** this striking looking black and white buzzard was seen on five days  
**Black sparrowhawk:** one flew through at Coral Tree Cottages, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Little sparrowhawk:** several in the group saw this at Addo, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Pale chanting goshawk:** amazing views at Addo on four days  
**African marsh harrier:** one as we travelled west towards Addo, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Rock kestrel:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov; mobbing a jackal buzzard near the Swartberg Pass on 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Red-necked spurfowl:** recorded on three days in the Garden Route  
**Helmeted guineafowl:** recorded on seven days  
**Blue crane:** two on a meadow, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct; with farmed ostriches on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov; two on night drive in Addo, 7<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Black crane:** Rondvlei nature reserve, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov; also on the 'bishops' pond' at Addo  
**Common moorhen:** recorded on six days, Garden Route and Addo  
**Red-knobbed coot:** recorded on seven days, Garden Route and Addo  
**Southern black korhaan:** seen on four days in Addo  
**African black oystercatcher:** seen on four days in the Garden Route  
**Kittlitz's plover:** 4<sup>th</sup> Nov, Knysna lagoons  
**Crowned lapwing (= crowned plover):** 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov, on the return from the Swartberg Pass  
**Blacksmith lapwing (= blacksmith plover):** seen every day  
**Black-winged plover:** 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov in the Garden route  
**Marsh sandpiper:** 1 at Knysna lagoons on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Greenshank:** three days in the Garden Route  
**Curlew sandpiper:** Knysna lagoons on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov, including a group of 10  
**Whimbrel:** two days in the Garden Route  
**Black-winged stilt:** three days in the Garden Route  
**Spotted thick-knee:** both night drives at Addo, 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Nov  
**Water thick-knee (= water dikkop):** four times at dusk at Addo's main water hole  
**Kelp gull:** almost daily on the Garden Route  
**Cape gull:** we only saw the dark eye on the bird at Plett on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov

**Grey-headed gull:** several seen rather poorly round Port Elizabeth, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov, as we journeyed to Addo

**Caspian tern:** 1 seen very closely at Keurbooms river, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Swift tern:** offshore in large numbers on a couple days

**Sandwich tern:** a few on the return from Featherbed, 1st Nov

**Common tern:** Rondvlei nature reserve, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov

**Speckled pigeon:** seen on six days in a range of places

**African olive-pigeon (rameron pigeon):** five days in the Garden Route, especially Coral Tree Cottages

**Red-eyed dove:** seen every day except one

**Cape turtle-dove:** seen most days but more commonly at Addo

**Laughing dove:** best seen around the car park at Addo

**Namaqua dove:** Brian saw this dry country bird near the coast on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, but not seen again

**Emerald-spotted wood dove:** seen or heard by some group members at Addo

**Knysna turaco:** this showy bird was recorded on seven or eight full days on the Garden Route

**Red-chested cuckoo:** recorded on four days on the Garden Route, but always tricky to see

**Jacobin cuckoo:** 1 at Addo, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Klaas's cuckoo:** 29<sup>th</sup> Oct at Keurbooms river and 8<sup>th</sup> Nov at Addo

**Spotted eagle-owl:** on night drive in Addo, 9<sup>th</sup> Nov

**African black swift:**

**White-rumped swift:** seen on five days, all in the Garden Route

**Little swift:** every day at Addo and a lot at Cango Caves, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Alpine swift:** 28<sup>th</sup> Oct and 4<sup>th</sup> Nov, both Garden Route

**Speckled mousebird:** recorded on 10 days, both Garden Route and Addo

**Red-faced mousebird: 4 days at Addo**

**Narina trogon:** 4<sup>th</sup> Nov in the forest near Millwood Forest settlement

**Pied kingfisher:** three days at various coastal wetlands in the Garden Route

**Malachite kingfisher:** often on the pond at Coral Tree Cottages

**Brown-hooded kingfisher:** Coral Tree Cottages and Addo, four days in total

**African hoopoe:** none in the Garden Route but daily in Addo

**Red-billed woodhoopoe (= common scimitarbill):** Addo, all four days, mostly in trees in central area near buildings

**Crowned hornbill:** in the forest on the way to and the garden at Zuurberg Mountain Village, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Black-collared barbet:** Addo, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Acacia pied barbet:** Addo, 6<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Lesser Honeyguide:** Addo, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Ground woodpecker:** Swartberg pass, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Knysna woodpecker:** Old Nick's, 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov (I missed it!)

**Olive woodpecker:** 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> Oct in the Garden Route

**Red-throated wryneck:** Brian's group saw 1 in Addo, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Rufous-naped lark:** three days in Addo

**Red-capped lark:** two days in Addo

**Barn swallow:** seen on five days, from 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov onwards, perhaps they were just arriving?

**White-throated swallow:** four days in the Garden Route

**Greater striped swallow:** almost every day, Garden Route and Addo

**Lesser striped swallow:** Addo only, nesting under a tiny eave in front of my cottage

**Pearl-breasted swallow:** this tiny swallow was seen all four days at Addo.

**Rock martin:** seen on seven days in a range of places, not all rocky

**Black saw-wing:** forest areas, five days in the Garden Route and the Zuurberg Mountain Village road in Addo

**Grey cuckooshrike:** 30<sup>th</sup> Oct, Diepwalle Forest, also at Coral Tree Cottages

**Fork-tailed drongo:** seen every day apart from the transfer day, including around Coral Tree Cottages

**Black-headed oriole:** almost every day at Coral Tree Cottages, also twice at Addo

**Cape crow:** recorded on nine days

**Pied crow:** recorded on 11 days

**White-necked raven:** recorded on seven days

**Cape bulbul:** recorded on seven days, in both the Garden Route and Addo

**Dark-capped bulbul:** daily at Addo

**Terrestrial brownbul:** proved tricky to see at Keurbooms river and Millwood forest

**Sombre greenbul:** almost every day, in both the Garden Route and Addo

**Olive thrush:** all but two days, in both the Garden Route and Addo

**Cape rock-thrush:** seen on four days in the Garden Route

**Ant-eating chat:** Addo only, on three days, but not often seen

**African stonechat:** two days, seen on the Swartberg Pass road 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Chorister robin-chat:** 29<sup>th</sup> Oct at Nature's Valley

**Cape robin-chat:** seen almost every day, including around the accommodation at both Coral Tree Cottages and Addo

**White-browed scrub-robin:** two days in Addo

**Karoo scrub-robin:** all four days in Addo

**Lesser swamp-warbler (= sedge warbler, but not the European species):** 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at Rondvlei nature reserve

**Little rush-warbler (= Cape reed warbler):** 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at Rondvlei nature reserve, also in the bishop pond at Addo

**Victorin's warbler:** in scrub within the Coral Tree Cottages site on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct; Swartberg Pass on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Yellow-throated woodland warbler:** 29<sup>th</sup> Oct at Nature's Valley

**Bar-throated apalis:** recorded every day, and often seen very well

**Cape grassbird:** Swartberg Pass on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Levaillant's cisticola:** 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at Rondvlei nature reserve

**Neddicky:** recorded on 8 days; at Coral Tree Cottages and Addo

**Karoo prinia:** recorded on nine days; at Coral Tree Cottages and Addo

**Spotted flycatcher:** Brian saw one at Addo main camp

**Dusky flycatcher:** four days in the Garden Route, once at Addo

**Fiscal flycatcher:** seen every day, in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages, common at Addo

**Cape batis:** four days in the Garden Route

**African paradise-flycatcher:** five records spread in various areas, always forest

**Cape wagtail:** seen every day

**African pipit:** on the list for Addo on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Plain-backed pipit:** Old Nick's 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and with black-winged plovers on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov

**Common fiscal:** seen every day, in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages, common at Addo

**Cape batis:** four days in the Garden Route

**Southern boubou:** after a slow start, seen well. Old Nick's on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov, Storms River mouth on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov then daily at Addo

**Southern tchagra:** Robberg on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct then daily at Addo

**Bokmakierie:** this colourful songster was daily at Addo out in the scrub

**Olive-bush-shrike:** 8<sup>th</sup> Nov at Addo only

**Eurasian starling:** seven days, six of which were in the Garden Route.

**Pied starling:** five days, including all four days in Addo

**Cape glossy starling:** all four days in Addo

**Black-bellied starling:** 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> Oct in the Garden Route

**Red-winged starling:** 11 days, in both the Garden Route and Addo. Very tame at Robberg

**Cape sugarbird:** daily in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages

**Malachite sunbird:** four days at Addo

**Orange-breasted sunbird:** superb views below the Swartberg Pass on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Southern (lesser) double-collared sunbird:** a favourite in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages on six days, but just once at Addo

**Greater double-collared sunbird:** another favourite in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages on six days, and all four days at Addo

**Amethyst sunbird:** seen well in the garden at Coral Tree Cottages on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct, but only fleetingly later

**Collared sunbird:** at Nature's Valley on 29<sup>th</sup> October

**Cape white-eye:** almost daily, but easier to see in the Garden Route

**House sparrow:** though seen on seven days, scarcer than that suggests, and not around our accommodations

**Cape sparrow:** after seeing these at Jo'burg we then had to wait until daily Addo sightings

**Southern grey-headed sparrow:** best seen on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Oct at Coral Tree Cottages

**Forest (dark-headed) weaver:** just 1 in the mountain forest at Addo, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Spectacled weaver:** we saw several spectacular but single nests from this species in Addo, including one by the cottages. The birds were trickier to find, seen on three of four Addo days

**Cape weaver:** seen every day. The noisy colony over the ponds at Coral Tree Cottages was a great sight

**Southern masked weaver:** every day at Addo

**Red-billed quelea:** poor views on two days at Addo

**Red bishop:** met these on the Swartberg pass road on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov, then daily at Addo, especially the noisy, gregarious colony of ringed birds at the pond

**Yellow-rumped widow (= yellow bishop):** 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at Rondvlei nature reserve; Swartberg Pass on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

**Common waxbill:** three days in the Garden Route, including at Old Nick's

**Swee waxbill:** excellent views on two days between the cottages at Coral Tree, but sadly not for the whole group

**Pin-tailed whydah:** four days in a spread of locations. Bossing house sparrows at a bird table in Plett was notable.

**Yellow-fronted canary:** 6<sup>th</sup> Nov in Addo only

**Cape canary:** 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and 4<sup>th</sup> Nov in the Garden Route, the latter at Millwood Forest

**Forest canary:** 1<sup>st</sup> Nov at Coral Tree

**Cape siskin:** 31<sup>st</sup> Oct at Coral Tree

**Brimstone canary:** four days in the Garden Route, especially at Coral Tree, one day at Addo

**White-throated canary:** 6<sup>th</sup> Nov in Addo only

**Protea seedeater:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov only, Swartberg Pass

**Streaky-headed seedeater (canary):** the commonest canary, daily in Addo and four days in the Garden Route

## Mammals

See mammals from this trip on [www.honeyguide.co.uk/addomammals.htm](http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/addomammals.htm)

Chacma baboon  
Buffalo  
Bushbuck  
(Bushpig – rootings)  
Caracal  
Rock hyrax or dassie  
Common duiker  
Eland  
Elephant Scrub hare  
Red hartebeest

Spotted hyaena  
Black-backed jackal  
Klipspringer  
Kudu  
Lion  
Small grey mongoose  
Yellow mongoose  
Vervet monkey  
Striped mouse  
Porcupine

Karoo bush rat  
Cape fur seal  
Springbok  
Springhare  
Suricat (= meercat)  
Warthog  
Humpback whale  
Southern right whale  
+ unidentified dolphins and bats

## Reptiles and amphibians

**Southern rock agama:** Robberg, especially

**Marble leaf-toed gecko:** in the dining room at Addo

**Blue-spotted girdled lizard:** Garden Route

**Cape cobra:** Addo

**Puff adder:** Addo

**Red-lipped snake** (aka herald snake): Addo

**Angulate tortoise:** Addo

**Leopard tortoise:** road to Swartberg, common in Addo

**Stream clicking frog:** forest pools on the Garden Route

**Painted reed frog:** Robberg, variety *verrucosus*

**Raucous toad:** on the road at Addo, also heard by Brian at Coral Tree

## Butterflies

Carefully recorded by Nicholas Armfelt during the holiday.

More African monarch pictures at [www.honeyguide.co.uk/monarchs.htm](http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/monarchs.htm)

African monarch (*below, left*)

Chief

Painted lady

Garden acraea

Citrus swallowtail

Green-banded swallowtail

Pearl emperor (*below, middle*)

Eyed pansy

Spotted sailer

Large white

(called cabbage white in SA)

Meadow white

Brown-veined white

African migrant

(also called African vagrant)

African small white

African common white

Red tip

Forest white

Buquet's vagrant

Broad-bordered grass yellow

Common dotted border

Silver-bottomed brown

Rainforest brown

Common bush brown

Trimen's brown

Burnished opal (*below, right*)

Rayed blue

Tinkinky blue

Common figtree blue

Common haretail

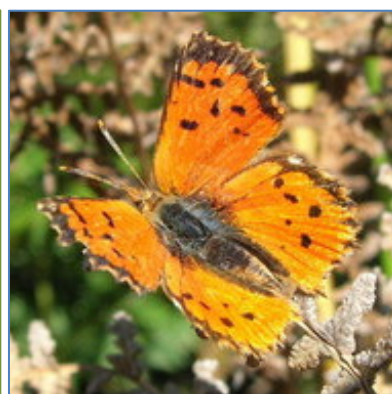
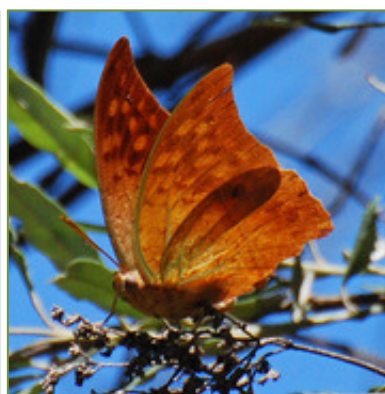
Pan opal

Aranda copper

Geranium bronze

Water bronze

Gold-spotted sylph (a skipper)



## Other notable invertebrates

Common milkweed locust *Phymateus morbillosus* (*below, left*)

Carpenter bee *Zylocopa caffra*

Common metallic longhorn *Promeces longipes* (*below, centre*)

Flightless dung beetle *Circellium bacchus*

Trimen's false trigger *Agoma trimenii* A forester moth

African giant millipede *Archispirostreptus gigas*

known as shongololos in SA

Spider hunting wasp *Tachypompilus ignites* (*below, right*)

Panther agate snail *Achatina immaculate*

Garden Route

Several places on the coast

Robberg peninsula

Addo

Addo

Several places on the coast and at Addo

Addo

Addo



## Plant list

Species with an asterix \* are introduced. Names in brackets are English names commonly used in Europe.

Common name	Family name (genus)	Species name
<b>28 October 2009 – travel day</b>		
Port Jackson *	<i>Acacia</i>	<i>saligna</i>
Rooikrans *	<i>Acacia</i>	<i>cyclops</i>
Black wattle *	<i>Acacia</i>	<i>mearnsii</i>
Blue gum *	<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>globulus</i>
Silky hakea *	<i>Hakea</i>	<i>sericea</i>
Cluster pine * (= maritime pine)	<i>Pinus</i>	<i>pinaster</i>
Bitter aloe	<i>Aloe</i>	<i>ferrox</i>
Arum lily	<i>Zantedeschia</i>	<i>aethiopica</i>
<b>29 October 2009 – Keurbooms river, Tsitsikamma National Park</b>		
Reed	<i>Phragmites</i>	<i>australis</i>
Sour fig (Hottentot fig)	<i>Carpobrotus</i>	<i>deliciosus</i>
	<i>Osteospermum</i>	<i>barerae</i>
Bietou	<i>Chrysanthemoides</i>	<i>monilifera</i>
Blombos	<i>Metalsia</i>	<i>muricata</i>
Wild iris	<i>Dietes</i>	<i>irioides</i>
	<i>Aristea</i>	<i>ecklonii</i>
Hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus</i>	<i>ludwigii</i>
Num num	<i>Carissa</i>	<i>macrocarpa</i>
	<i>Monopsis</i>	<i>simplex</i>
Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus</i>	<i>multifidus</i>
Yellow flax	<i>Linum</i>	<i>sp</i>
Cape honeysuckle	<i>Tacoma</i>	<i>capensis</i>
Plumbago	<i>Clivia</i>	<i>miniata</i>
Agapanthus	<i>Agapanthus</i>	<i>praecox</i>
Arum lily	<i>Zantedeschia</i>	<i>aetheopica</i>
Blombos	<i>Metalsia</i>	<i>muricata</i>
Rose-scented pelargonium	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>capitatum</i>
Watsonia	<i>Watsonia</i>	<i>fourcadei</i>
	<i>Erica</i>	<i>caniculata</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium</i>	<i>aquilinum</i>
Seven weeks fern		
Krans aloe	<i>Aloe</i>	<i>arborescens</i>
Crossberry	<i>Grewia</i>	<i>occidentalis</i>
Black witch-hazel	<i>Trichocladus</i>	<i>crinitus</i>
Wild pomegranate	<i>Burchellia</i>	<i>bubalina</i>
Keurboom	<i>Virgilia</i>	<i>divaricata</i>
Outeniqua yellowwood	<i>Podocarpus</i>	<i>falcatus</i>
Real yellowwood	<i>Podocarpus</i>	<i>latifolius</i>
Ironwood	<i>Olea</i>	<i>capensis</i>
Cape chestnut	<i>Calodendrum</i>	<i>capense</i>
Orchid	<i>Diaphanthe</i>	<i>xanthopollinia</i>
Orchid	<i>Cyrtochis</i>	<i>arcuata</i>
Small knobwood	<i>Zanthoxylum</i>	<i>capense</i>
<b>30 October 2009 – Diepwalle forest</b>		
Gentian	<i>Chironia</i>	<i>melampyrifolia</i>
White orchid (photo, p.19, left)	<i>Mystacidium</i>	<i>capense</i>
Fern	<i>Blechnum</i>	<i>capense</i>
	<i>Oxalis</i>	<i>incarnata</i>
Tree Fern	<i>Cyathea</i>	<i>capensis</i>
<b>30 October 2009 - Spitskop peak</b>		
White daisy	<i>Gerbera</i>	<i>piloselloides</i>
	<i>Aristea</i>	<i>racemosa</i>
	<i>Aristea</i> (photo, p. 19, middle)	<i>confusa</i>
	<i>Borbartia</i>	<i>robusta</i>
Wild cineraria	<i>Senecio</i>	<i>elegans</i>
	<i>Agapanthus</i>	<i>praecox</i>
	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>sp red stalk</i>
	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>capitatum</i>
(Black nightshade)	<i>Solanum</i>	<i>nigrum</i>
	<i>Romulea</i>	<i>rosea</i> var. <i>australis</i>
* (Scarlet pimpernel)	<i>Anagallis</i>	<i>arvensis</i>
Cape weed (Cape daisy)	<i>Arctotheca</i>	<i>calendula</i>

### 31 October 2009 – Old Nick's and Robberg

Milkwood	<i>Sideroxylon</i>	<i>inermis</i>
	<i>Solanum</i>	<i>linnaeanum</i>
	<i>Anisodonteia</i>	<i>scabrosa</i>
Wild pea	<i>Dipogon</i>	<i>lignosus</i>
White everlasting	<i>Syncarpha</i>	<i>argyropsis</i>
Yellow chinkerenchee	<i>Ornithogalum</i>	<i>dubium</i>
Pink	<i>Silene</i>	<i>bellidioides</i>
	<i>Lobelia</i>	<i>sp</i>
	<i>Tetragonia</i>	<i>fruticosus</i>
	<i>Stachys</i>	<i>aethiopica</i>
Powderpuff blue	<i>Pseudoselago</i>	<i>sp</i>
Kapokbossie, wild rosemary	<i>Eriocephalus</i>	<i>africanus</i>
Pig's ear, Round-leafed navelwort	<i>Cotyledon</i>	<i>orbiculata</i>
	<i>Dietes</i>	<i>bicolor</i>
Wild Iris	<i>Dietes</i>	<i>grandiflora</i>

### 1 November 2009 - Featherbed

Flax	<i>Heliophila</i>	<i>sp</i>
Carpet geranium	<i>Geranium</i>	<i>incarnum</i>
	<i>Nemesia</i>	<i>afinis</i>
	<i>Gladiolus</i>	<i>floribundus</i>
Dune Crowberry	<i>Rhus</i>	<i>subsp.floribundus</i>
	<i>Diospyros</i>	<i>crenata</i>
	<i>Rushia</i>	<i>dichrophylla</i>
	<i>Asparagus</i>	<i>intricate</i>
	<i>Tarchonathus</i>	<i>rubicundus</i>
	<i>Pterocelastus</i>	<i>camphoratus</i>
		<i>tricuspidatus</i>
		<i>capensis subsp.</i>
Wild olive	<i>Olea</i>	<i>macrocarpa</i>
	<i>Canthium</i>	<i>inermis</i>
	<i>Tritoniopsis</i>	<i>caffra</i>
Green wood orchid	<i>Bonatea</i>	<i>speciosa</i>
An orchid (photo, p.19, right)	<i>Satyrium</i>	<i>ligulatum</i>
	<i>Trachianandra</i>	<i>ciliata</i>
Septemberbossie (Shrubby milkwort)	<i>Polygala</i>	<i>myrtifolia</i>
	<i>Ornithogalum</i>	<i>imbricatum</i>
	<i>Limonium</i>	<i>scabrum</i>
Big leaves not in flower	<i>Brunsvigia</i>	<i>orientalis</i>
Wild Sage	<i>Salvia</i>	<i>africana-lutea</i>
	<i>Passerina</i>	<i>obtusifolia</i>
	<i>Gazania</i>	<i>krebsiana</i>
	<i>Crassula</i>	<i>rupestris</i>
	<i>Euphorbia</i>	<i>mauritanica</i>
	<i>Gasteria</i>	<i>sp</i>
Lion's tail or minaret flower	<i>Leonotus</i>	<i>leonurus</i>

### 2 November 2009 – Swartberg Pass

Chinese lantern	<i>Nymania</i>	<i>capensis</i>
	<i>Acacia</i>	<i>karoo</i>
	<i>Nicotina</i>	<i>glauca</i>
	<i>Protea</i>	<i>nitida</i>
	<i>Protea</i>	<i>eximia</i>
	<i>Leucodendron</i>	<i>salignum</i>
Pincushion	<i>Leucospermum</i>	<i>cuneiforme</i>
	<i>Othonna</i>	<i>parviflora</i>
Hairy erica	<i>Erica</i>	<i>hispidula</i>
	<i>Erica</i>	<i>plukenetii</i>
	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>ovale</i>
	<i>Nivenia</i>	<i>dispar</i>
	<i>Ixia</i>	<i>micrandra</i>
	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>elongatum</i>
	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>crispum</i>
	<i>Watsonia</i>	<i>alteroides</i>
Tree fuschia	<i>Halleria</i>	<i>lucida</i>
Red hot poker	<i>Kniphofia</i>	<i>uvaria</i>
(Bristle-fruited milkweed)	<i>Gomphocarpus</i>	<i>fruticosus</i>

4 November 2009 - - Milkwood Forest

	<i>Dipogon</i>	<i>lignosus</i>
	<i>Gazania</i>	<i>rigens</i>
	<i>Stachys</i>	<i>aetheopica</i>
	<i>Felicia</i>	<i>echinata</i>
	<i>Rhus</i>	<i>lucida</i>
	<i>Nuxia</i>	<i>floribunda</i>
	<i>chenolea</i>	<i>diffusa</i>
	<i>Sarcocornia</i>	<i>perennis</i>
	<i>Plectranthus</i>	<i>eklonii</i>
	<i>Phylica</i>	<i>ericoides</i>
	<i>Hypoestes</i>	<i>aristata</i>
Tangle fern		
Wild pomegranate	<i>Burchellia</i>	<i>bubalina</i>

5 November 2009 – Storms River mouth., travel to Addo

	<i>Sateryuim</i>	<i>corriifolium</i>
	<i>Sateryuim</i>	<i>stenopetifolia</i>
	<i>Sateryuim</i>	<i>membranaceuim</i>
(Black nightshade)	<i>Lobelia</i>	<i>coronopifolia</i>
Stock rose	<i>Solanum</i>	<i>nigrum</i>
Kelp	<i>Sparmannia</i>	<i>africana</i>
Cape saffron	<i>Ekklonia</i>	<i>maxima</i>
	<i>Cassine</i>	<i>peragua</i>

6 November 2009 – Addo 1

	<i>Microloma</i>	<i>tennuiifolium</i>
Karoo gold	<i>Rhigozum</i>	<i>obovatum</i>
Elephants' food	<i>Portulacaria</i>	<i>afra</i>
Sweet thorn	<i>Acacia</i>	<i>karoo</i>

7 November 2009 – Addo 2

	<i>Pachypodium</i>	<i>succulentum</i>
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8 November 2009 – Addo 3

	<i>Senecio</i>	<i>odontophyllus</i>
	<i>Hermannia</i>	<i>flammea</i>
	<i>Schotia</i>	<i>brachypetala</i>
River euphorbia	<i>Euphorbia</i>	<i>triangularis</i>
False cabbage tree	<i>Scheffera</i>	<i>umbellifera</i>
	<i>Ochna</i>	<i>serrulata</i>
Cycad	<i>Encephalartos</i>	<i>villosus</i>
	<i>Ledebouria</i>	<i>revoluta</i>
	<i>Cadaba</i>	<i>aphylla</i>
	<i>Senecio</i>	<i>radicans</i>
(A succulent)	<i>Pelargonium</i>	<i>petat</i>
	<i>Gasteria</i>	<i>bicolor</i>
Wild caper	<i>Crassula</i>	<i>muscosa</i>
	<i>Capparis</i>	<i>tomentosa</i>
	<i>Grewia</i>	<i>occidentalis</i>





### **Thank-you from the SABAP2 project**

The SABAP2 Project Team is deeply grateful for the donation from Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays and applauds the conservation contributions made by HWH travellers towards supporting local conservation projects. Donations from organizations outside of South Africa highlight the significance of the project at a global scale, especially in times when climate and environmental change is impacting on migrant species in different ways. The second bird atlas in southern Africa will make significant contributions to understanding changes in bird distribution and abundance over the last 20 years. The money received from HWH will be used to pay for fuel and other travel costs for field trips to survey critical gap areas where there is no coverage or extremely limited coverage. The atlas, which started in July 2007 and plans to run for five years, makes use of the efforts of nearly 700 volunteers, or citizen scientists, who compile grid-based bird checklists for inclusion in the atlas database.

Doug Harebottle  
Project Manager: Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2  
Animal Demography Unit  
Department of Zoology  
University of Cape Town

Dear Chris,

This is a superb contribution, many thanks for your generosity to BirdLife towards the SABAP2 project, through this conservation contribution by your travelers.

As Doug says, it will likely really help our efforts to cover priority data gaps in the southern African landscape, and thus achieve a much better product.

Warm regards and appreciation for this great gesture,

Phoebe (SABAP2 steering committee chair)

Dr Phoebe Barnard  
Birds and Environmental Change Partnership  
South African National Biodiversity Institute  
[www.sanbi.org](http://www.sanbi.org)

