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**South Africa's Kruger National Park
20/21 October – 3/4 November 2010**

Participants

David and Lesley Lord
Ted and Polly Doughty
Sue and Peter Burge
Barbara Wheeler
Sue Osborne

Gill Page
Julia Maynard
Barbara Last
Nigel Lawson
Brennan and Karin Aunger

Leaders

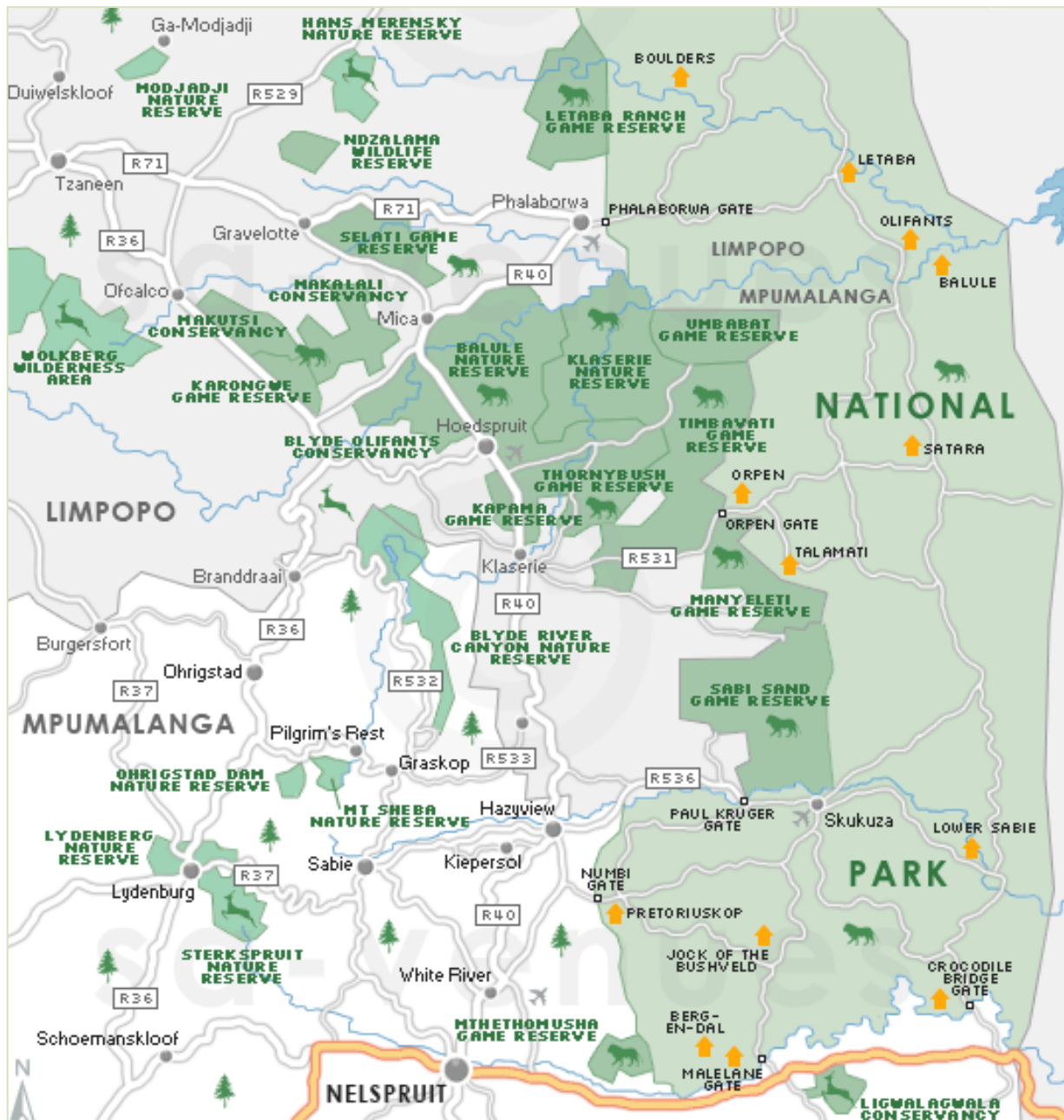
Geoff Crane and Bruce Terlien

Report by Geoff Crane

The photos in this report were all taken during the holiday, those edged blue by Brennan Aunger, edged yellow by Gill Page and edged red by Peter Burge

More of Brennan's photos of the trip are via <http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/kruger.html>

Cover – Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills



As with all Honeyguide holidays, £35 of the price per person was put towards a conservation project in the host country. In this case, £610 from the Honeyguide Wildlife Trust Ltd., and a further R6,000 (£532) from Geoff Crane, was donated to the SABAP2 project (<http://sabap2.adu.org.za/index.php>). This is updating the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project which ran from 1987-1991 and culminated in the publication in 1997 of two volumes on the distribution and relative abundance of southern African birds. Our contribution will be used to atlas areas that no-one has yet been to.

As at December 2010, the amount of all conservation contributions made through Honeyguide since 1991 totals £68,239.



Our group of 14 enjoyed two productive weeks in the Kruger National Park. Bruce and I each drove a 10-seater vehicle, which gave everyone lots of space. The participants moved between each vehicle on a daily basis and swapped seats within a vehicle on a game drive basis. We travelled through a number of different vegetation habitats and saw 279 bird and 42 mammal species. There were fewer flowers, reptiles and insects, as the rains were late and had not yet started.

DAY 1, Thursday 21st October 2010 – Johannesburg to Kruger National Park

47 bird and 6 mammal species seen today

The majority of the group arrived in Johannesburg after an uneventful flight and we headed off to the Kruger National Park straight away. Bruce stayed behind at the airport to meet the delayed flight from Germany, following on later with Karin and Brennan. The sun was out and we had clear skies all day. The birding started on touch down with Grey-headed Gull, Pied Crow, Spur-winged Goose, Blacksmith Lapwing, White-faced Duck, Greater Flamingo, Fiscal Shrike, Red Bishop, Long-tailed Paradise-whydah, Cattle Egret and Red-knobbed Coot. We stopped for lunch on route, where we added the well travelled House Sparrow to our bird list. While I was dealing with the office paperwork at the entrance to the Park the group saw a number of typical Kruger birds: Lilac-breasted Roller, European Bee-eater, Fork-tailed Drongo and up above in the skies there were Little Swifts and Lesser Striped Swallows hawking insects.

I was expecting a greener landscape than what greeted us. A week before there had been a huge storm with thunder and lightning – the start of the rainy season. Apparently the storm produced a lot of noise but not a drop of rain. With temperatures in the mid-30s not much was moving. The Long-tailed Shrikes and Helmeted Guineafowl were out in the midday sun (and so were we!) All said and done... In the short drive from the entrance at Malelane Gate to Berg-en-Dal Camp, we saw six different mammal species: Chacma Baboon, Elephant, Hippopotamus, Impala, Vervet Monkey and Blue Wildebeest.

The group were birding from the view deck while I attended to the paperwork and rooming lists in the office. We added another 29 bird species to our first day list before it became too dark, and then had the problem of identifying the bat species that were now flying about! Bruce had now joined us and we all had an early dinner and an early night.

DAY 2, Friday 22nd October 2010 – Berg-en-Dal Camp

88 bird and 14 mammal species seen today

The sun was up with no clouds in sight. Our early morning walk on the Rhino trail produced a new bird on every corner – if I were to list them here this report would read like a bird book index! By the end of the day we had 88 birds on our list. A few highlights from our walk were African Hoopoe, Crested Barbet, Bennett's Woodpecker, Speckled Mousebird, Diderick's Cuckoo and Brown-hooded Kingfisher (below left). We also saw Nile Crocodile, Marsh Terrapin, Striped Skink and Ground Agama. Tree Squirrel, Bushbuck and Waterbuck were also seen.



We had breakfast in the restaurant before heading off on our first game drive. We took a slow drive to the Matjulu waterhole where we saw a couple of White Rhinos and plenty of new birds. Blue Waxbill, Golden-breasted Bunting, Yellow-fronted Canary, African and Jameson's Firefinch, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Red-billed Oxpecker. Cape, Red-eyed and Laughing Doves were coming to the waterhole to drink and White-fronted and Little Bee-eaters were hawking insects (White-fronted Bee-eaters, page 3, right).

We had a picnic lunch back at camp, with Greater Blue-eared Starling, Marico, Scarlet-chested and Amethyst Sunbirds and a possible Grey Sunbird – though totally out of range and habitat. A Red-chested Cuckoo showed well by the swimming pool.

At 15:00hrs, after a short siesta, we went on another short drive following the Matjulu Loop. We were given a tip-off about some lions just around the corner, which we found. The lions were doing what they do mid-afternoon – sleeping. We saw plenty of new mammals and reptiles – Giraffe, Kudu and Warthog on the mammal front and Water Monitor, Tree Agama and Marsh Terrapin for the reptiles. Hamerkop, Saddle-billed Stork, Swainson's and Natal Spurfowl and six raptor species: White-backed Vulture, Black Kite, Tawny Eagle, Bateleur, Wahlberg's Eagle and Harrier-Hawk.

Six of the group went out on a night drive and came back with sightings of a few nocturnal species: Scrub Hare and Spotted Eagle Owl, and many bats were located by their frequency calls (on Peter's bat detector).

DAY 3, Saturday 23rd October 2010 – Berg-en-Dal Camp

87 bird and 20 mammal species seen today

The day started overcast, with a promise of rain. We headed east taking a few back roads, with the destination being the Gardenia Hide on the Mhlambane River. This hide, as the name suggests, is surrounded by wild gardenias *Gardenia volkensii*. We also saw wild foxgloves *Ceratotheca triloba* and wild hibiscus *Hibiscus cannabinus* on route to the hide. The river was very dry but there was some water in the pool in front of the hide.

We went to the Afsaal picnic stop for our breakfast, where we saw the resident African Scops Owl, conveniently with a sign underneath the tree, saying 'Scops Owl' with an arrow pointing up! We also had Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Red-headed Weaver, five starling species: Red-winged, Burchell's, Cape Glossy, Greater Blue-eared and Black-bellied. Arrow-marked Babbler, Dark-capped Bulbul, White-browed Robin-Chat, Blue Waxbill and Black-backed Puffback were also seen.

After breakfast we headed back to camp via the Renosterpan waterhole. Here we watched a large bull Elephant making short work of the lower branches of a leadwood tree *Combretum imberbe*. We backed off a bit when another bull Elephant came and joined the first. On the way back we also saw a Klipspringer (below) silhouetted high up on a rocky koppie and good views of a Slender Mongoose.



We had a picnic lunch on the stoep (veranda) of my cottage. While we ate, we were serenaded by Marico Sunbird, Village Weaver and Crested Barbet, which were all in a sausage tree *Kigelia africana*.

While the group rested, I drove back in to the local town just outside the Park to buy a load of provisions, as the Park shops had very little food with very little (if any) variation. We went for a short, late afternoon drive before returning to camp for the night drive. We saw Buffalo, Common Duiker and Giraffe as well as many of the more common mammals. The half of the group that didn't go on a night drive last night came back at 21:00hrs with tales of Leopard, Lion, White-tailed Mongoose, Large Spotted Genet, Lesser Bushbaby and Scrub Hare.

DAY 4, Sunday 24th October 2010 – Berg-en-Dal to Lower Sabie Camp

121 bird and 21 mammal species seen today

We moved camp today to Lower Sabie, setting off on time at the crack of dawn only to be delayed for half an hour by five very large White Rhinos that were quite happy to snooze/sleep on the road. It took a brave man (or woman) in a kombi to herd the Rhinos off the road so that the traffic jam could disperse. While we were stopped we saw a number of new birds: Black-headed Oriole, Green Wood-Hoopoe, African Grey Hornbill, Chinspot Batis and Long-tailed Shrike (Magpie Shrike).

We stopped at Afsaal again for breakfast and then set off east. The Park was very busy today as it was Sunday, with a lot of day trippers. With this in mind we headed across the Park on the N'watimhiri road to keep away from the main camp of Skukuza. Even though this area was very dry there were still many new birds to be seen. The Renosterkoppies Dam had a group of Giraffes craning their necks to drink water from the dam. Zebra, Impala and Blue Wildebeest were all either on their way to drink or walking away having drunk. For the mammals in the Park a waterhole is generally not a place to relax, but saying that, we did find a couple of Warthogs resting under a thorn tree. We saw many raptors on this road with Harrier-Hawk, Hooded, White-backed and Lappet-faced Vultures, Yellow-billed Kite, Tawny, Wahlberg's, Brown Snake and African Fish Eagles, Bateleur and a small goshawk-type bird that didn't stop for identification. At the end of this road there was a dead Giraffe. With no vultures or scavengers about I would presume that it died of anthrax.

We had lunch on the restaurant deck at Lower Sabie. We had good views of Grey Heron, Cattle Egret, Goliath Heron, Great Egret, Egyptian Goose, Hadedda Ibis, Green-backed Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Marabou Stork and Yellow-billed Stork, all on the river sand banks. Most of the group spent the afternoon walking around the camp birdwatching, while others either went swimming or rested in their cottages. We had good views of Tree Squirrels, Hippos, Bushbuck and Waterbuck as well as many new birds, obviously attracted to the area by the abundance of water. We had dinner out on the restaurant deck, with a cool breeze coming across the water.

DAY 5, Monday 25th October 2010 – Lower Sabie Camp

118 bird and 20 mammal species seen today



The White-browed Robin-Chats were calling before dawn with their melodious song – only to be drowned out every now and then by the Hippos in the dam. Some of the group had heard Lions roaring in the night from across the river. We left camp and crossed the river via the causeway only to find a lone male Lion resting after a long night's gallivanting. We continued north on the main H10 road as far as the S29 turn off and up to the N'wagovila view point that overlooks the Mlondozi Dam. There was plenty of activity coming and going from the dam, with Hippo, Impala, Waterbuck, Burchell's Zebra, Giraffe, Warthog, Steenbuck and Blue Wildebeest. A Cliff Mocking-Chat was being very confident around the picnic tables and the Rainbow Rock Skinks, with their blue tails, were warming themselves in the sun. We continued on the Mlondozi road back towards camp for breakfast. We saw White Rhinoceros and Elephant on this road and another group of Lions near our first sighting at the start of the drive. By the side of the road a Steppe Eagle was making short work of a Helmeted Guineafowl which we presumed had been hit by a car, prompting the observation that it had obviously not been wearing its helmet!



During breakfast on the Lower Sabie camp restaurant deck we watched a herd of Elephants with very small young cross the river, the young being held up by their mothers and using their trunks as snorkels. Afterwards we went on the Mativuhlungu loop to the Duke waterhole and then to the Ntandanyathi Hide. Neither the waterhole nor the hide had any water and the temperature was reaching a high 30°C, so we did not see many mammals, but there were a number of new birds: Pearl-spotted Owlet, Kori Bustard (above left), Crowned Lapwing and Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (left).

We had a picnic lunch on my stoep and time for a siesta until we went out on another game drive at 16:30hrs. There was a big bushfire somewhere up north, with smoke and ash spreading to the camp. Luckily the wind changed in the late afternoon and the smoke blew away. We went for a slow drive following the Sabie River. Broad-billed Roller, Red-billed Quelea, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike, Blue Waxbill and White-winged Widowbird were seen and at Sunset Dam we had a very red sunset due to all the smoke in the atmosphere. Peter's Epauletted Fruit Bats were very active in the trees around camp after dinner.

DAY 6, Tuesday 26th October 2010 – Lower Sabie Camp
120 bird and 23 mammal species seen today

We found that the first three hours of the morning were the most rewarding for birds and mammals, as it is hot during the day. We set off at 05:30hrs as per usual and crossed the causeway over the Lower Sabie Dam, stopping to identify the swallows that obligingly rest on the low causeway wall. We had Barn, Wire-tailed, Red-breasted and Lesser Striped Swallows as well as Brown-throated Martins, Little, Palm and White-rumped Swifts. A Goliath Heron was in the reeds and a Black Crake was making daring forays into the open. We took the Old Tshokwane Road through the grassland savanna area. Our target species was the elusive Cheetah and unfortunately it remained elusive. We met others on the road who were also looking. There were plenty of vultures hanging about in the trees, but no Cheetahs. We did however see plenty of plains game, a Nyala bull in all its finery and a Bushbuck ewe with a very small Bushbuck lamb. We had breakfast at the Nkuhlu picnic site and then did some out-of-vehicle birding over the river. We saw Woolly-necked Stork, White-crowned Lapwing, Common and Wood Sandpiper, Greenshank and Green-backed Heron as well as plenty of bushbirds hoping for a few breakfast scraps. We continued back towards our camp stopping – reversing – forward a bit – back a bit – forward another few inches – back a bit..... It was all worth it, as we chalked up new bird sightings along the way. We saw a White-faced Scops Owl (top right), Marico Sunbird, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Rattling Cisticola, White-browed Scrub-Robin, Long-billed Crombec, Square-tailed Drongo and Giant Kingfisher.



We came across another pride of Lions, doing what they do best; relaxing. There was a Spotted Hyena in the area, keeping an eye on the Lions' movements. Often Hyenas and Jackals will follow a pride of Lions with the view to getting an easy meal. We had lunch on my stoep, and then some free time until 16:00hrs when we went out on a short circular route. We found a total of six White Rhinos and just as we were heading back to camp for the 18:00hrs curfew we came upon four Lions walking down the road. The Lions kept pace with the vehicle, affording us great photographic opportunities.

DAY 7, Wednesday 27th October 2010 – Lower Sabie Camp
115 bird and 24 mammal species seen today

We went south this morning towards Crocodile Bridge on the Gomondwane Road. We saw plenty of antelopes, Impala, Kudu, Steenbuck, Bushbuck, Common Duiker and Waterbuck as well as Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest and Warthog. A few highlights on this road were a party of Dwarf Mongoose and good views of a Slender Mongoose. We took the Gomondwane Loop back towards Lower Sabie Camp (and the breakfast deck). Once back in camp we were able to watch a young Leopard with its kill in a tree across the dam. It stayed for a while affording everyone with a good view. We also had Elephants in the dam and Buffalos.

We went out again after breakfast for a short drive. At Sunset Dam we watched a White-crowned Lapwing, which was very close. A Nile Crocodile was trying to catch fish, and eventually succeeded. Impalas were being very cautious about taking a sip as there were a number of crocs keeping an eye out for the unwary. Just past Sunset Dam we saw a Black Rhinoceros, the only one of the trip. It looked like it had been in a fight with another Rhino as it had open wounds on each side and one wound on its belly. Only when it crossed the road in front of us could you really appreciate the true size of this mammal. A little bit further on we found a pride of Lions, which gave us the Big 5 in one morning.

Back at camp we had lunch on my stoep and then the afternoon at leisure. The swimming pool was used and a few Zzzzzs were appreciated. At 17:00hrs we all went out on a sunset drive. As the sun set we saw a Freckled Nightjar hawking insects and later on in the drive we saw a Verreaux's Eagle Owl. Some of the group had fleeting views of a Lesser Bushbaby and better views of Scrub Hare and Spotted Hyena. We drove out to the dead Giraffe which we had seen a few days before, but still no predators or scavengers.

DAY 8, Thursday 28th October 2010 – Lower Sabie to Olifants Camp

118 bird and 26 mammal species seen today

We had a full day's drive to our new camp today, so we decided to go for a birdwatching walk before breakfast. Then we headed north, stopping here and there at birds in bushes, seeing many new bird species. We stopped at the Nkumbe Viewsite, from where we had great panoramic views of the Kruger. We stopped at Tshokwane picnic site for a rest stop and an ice cream and then continued up to Satara Camp for lunch. When we arrived there was an Elephant at the waterhole in front of the camp and half way through lunch there was a flurry of excitement at there being a Spotted Hyena at the waterhole. We ambled over to have a look only to find a Civet Cat! The Civet Cat is very much a nocturnal creature so it was unusual to see it out and about at midday. It was a great sighting. As the early afternoon sun was at its hottest we drove directly on to Olifants Camp, only stopping on demand. We did stop for "a large Steenbok" only to discover that it was an Oribi, a species usually found much further south. We took a detour to a big old Baobab tree, *Adansonia digitata* (photo on page 13) which was surrounded by Natal Mahogany trees, *Trichilia emetica*. The group enjoyed the elevated view over the Olifants River while I sorted out the paperwork.

DAY 9, Friday 29th October 2010 – Olifants Camp

117 bird and 18 mammal species seen today

At 05:30hrs we were up and out the camp. This morning we took the Olifants Lookout circular road and then back to the Balule causeway. At the causeway we saw four species of Kingfisher; Malachite, Pied, Giant and Brown-hooded and also a White-headed Vulture on a nest. We had breakfast back at Olifants Camp and the rest of the morning was free. After a leisurely lunch on the deck overlooking the Olifants River we headed off to the Bangu waterhole on the old main road. We saw a Double-banded Sandgrouse, then as our eyes got attuned to their cryptic plumage we saw a dozen or more. We came across a Kori Bustard in full display. He looked very impressive with his neck feathers all puffed up (photo on page 5). We saw four old bull Buffalo at the waterhole as well as a couple of Black-backed Jackals. A couple of Elephants arrived and proceeded to drink from the water tank rather than the waterhole, using their trunks as straws to suck the water from over the rim. On the way back to camp we saw a Black-breasted Snake Eagle and a lone Lion was seen near where we had seen the Dwarf Mongoose family.

DAY 10, Saturday 30th October 2010 – Olifants Camp

125 bird and 20 mammal species seen today

We left camp with the plan to have breakfast at Letaba Camp. We had many stops for birds and mammals on route, spending more time at the Engelhard Dam. This large body of water was teeming with birds: Comb Duck, Egyptian Goose, Great and Little Egret, White-faced Duck, African Jacana and Water Thick-knee. We also found one Yellow-billed Oxpecker with a small herd of Buffalo.



Breakfast in Camp



The Group

When we arrived at the camp we just saw the tail end of a Leopard walking off. This Leopard had just walked in front of the breakfast deck, which made all the watchers excited and the Waterbuck and Impala very concerned and watchful! After breakfast we went through to the Matambeni Hide, where we watched a group of Hippos in the waterlilies. We had some good birds here too – African Fish Eagle, African Openbill, Squacco Heron, Hamerkop, African Spoonbill and African Jacana. A Marsh Terrapin was sunning itself on the edge of the dam and we saw Black-crowned Tchagra, African Firefinch and Black-headed Oriole in the bush to the side of the hide. We had a late lunch back on my stoep at Olifants Camp and then a free afternoon to walk around the camp birdwatching, meeting up at 18:00hrs on the view deck for sundowners. It was a beautiful sunset with great big cumulus clouds on the horizon. We had Rufus-cheeked Nightjars hawking insects in the beam of the floodlights as well plenty of bats. A Thick-tailed Bushbaby put in an appearance above our heads, before we went in for dinner.

DAY 11, Sunday 31st October 2010 – Olifants Camp

121 bird and 20 mammal species seen today

We left camp at dawn and our first bird seen once we were out of the camp was a Harlequin Quail crossing the road in front of us. We then proceeded to see new birds around every corner. We had great views of Klaas's Cuckoo, which we had heard a lot but not seen until now, Cut-throat Finch, Red-headed Finch, Dusky Lark and a few flying Namaqua Doves. Later on at the Balule causeway we had better views of a Namaqua Dove taking a drink and also a Painted Snipe. We got back to Olifants Camp for a late breakfast. We had a report that down the road there was a Leopard up a tree with its kill, just 10 metres off the road, so we dashed off only to find a Yellow-billed Kite feeding off the last two legs of the Impala carcass... we were a wee bit late.

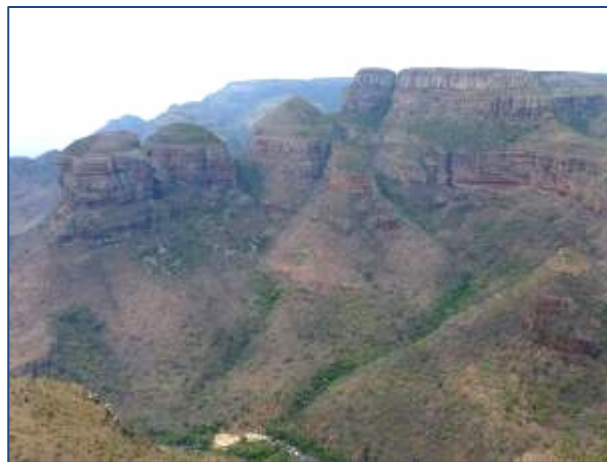
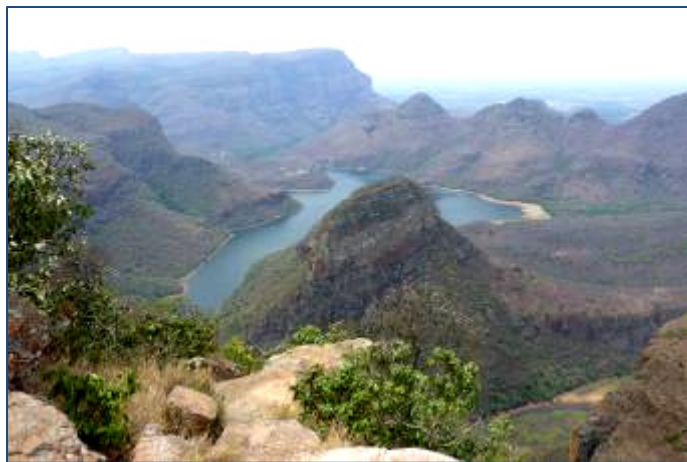
On the way back to camp we stopped at the Olifants River lookout point, where we saw a White-breasted Cormorant flying up the river and a Common Scimitarbill, Violet-backed Starling and Speckled Mousebird in the trees below. We had lunch and then some free time to recharge the batteries. We went out for a short circular drive at 16:00hrs. We saw a Sharpe's Grysbok, which obligingly stayed long enough for some good photographs.

DAY 12, Monday 1st November 2010 – Olifants to Mount Sheba

106 bird and 17 mammal species seen today

We left Olifants Camp at dawn with the intention of having breakfast at Letaba Camp and exiting the Kruger through the Phalaborwa Gate. We saw a good selection of game – Chacma Baboons giving their young piggy-backs, a few old bull Buffalos, Impala, Steenbok, Warthog, Burchell's Zebra and Waterbuck. Before we left Letaba Camp we saw a bull Nyala browsing in front of the deck.

After leaving the Park we drove up to the highveld, where we stopped at the Blyde River Canyon view point. Here we had good views across to the Three Rondavels. We saw Red-faced Cisticola, Red-winged Starling and Rock Kestrel as well as Common Flat Lizard at the viewpoint. As we drove high over the montane grasslands of the highveld to the town of Grasskop, we saw Forest, Steppe and Jackal Buzzard, Black-shouldered Kite and Alpine Swifts. We stopped at a very impressive Royal Paintbrush, *Scadoxus puniceus*. After a fun pancake lunch at Grasskop we drove to Mount Sheba Private Reserve, where we checked in and walked around the gardens birdwatching. We saw a Blesbok in the montane grasslands above Mount Sheba as well as a Croaking Cisticola, among others.



Three Rondavels viewpoint. A rondavel is an African round house, from which this rock formation gets its name.

DAY 13, Tuesday 2nd November 2010 – Mount Sheba

35 bird and 1 mammal species seen today

We woke to beautiful clear blue skies and enjoyed a pre-breakfast walk. Samango Monkeys were in the forest fringes and there were plenty of beautiful butterflies to watch, photograph and identify at breakfast. We had magnificent Emperor Swallowtails and the black and white White-banded Swallowtail as well as Citrus Swallowtail, Garden Commodore and African Monarch. We had Chorister Robin-Chat, White-starred Robin, Grey Cuckooshrike, Terrestrial Brownbul and Sombre Greenbul in the forests and Pin-tailed Whydah, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Thick-billed Weaver, Cape White-eye, Cape Wagtail, Familiar Chat, Cape Robin-Chat, Willow Warbler, Black Saw-wing, Dark-capped Bulbul and African Goshawk in the landscaped gardens. After breakfast we went for a good forest walk on the Marco's Mantle Walk to the waterfall. *Clivia caulescens* were flowering and we saw more White-starred Robins, as well as Olive Woodpecker, Cape Batis, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler and Bar-throated Apalis. During lunch we had thunder and lightning with torrential rain for about half an hour, and then the sun came out again. After lunch we relaxed around the lodge, swimming, walking or resting. A Verreaux's Eagle was spotted high on the ridge and Forest and Jackal Buzzards made an appearance every now and then. A lone Black Sparrowhawk flew through the lodge grounds and a Knysna Turaco was seen in the forest yellowwood trees. An enormous Foam Grasshopper was found and photographed by many.

DAY 14, Wednesday 3rd November 2010 – Mount Sheba to Johannesburg and home

58 bird and 2 mammal species seen today

Another glorious big blue sky morning. We had a pre-breakfast walk, where we saw Greater Striped Swallows, Rock and House Martins, African Black, Little and Horus Swifts, as well as Sweet Waxbills and Drakensberg Prinia. The Samango Monkeys (right) were being very bold and trying their luck with the breakfast table. A shy Red Duiker was seen near the lodge and a Grey Rhebok was seen as we left the lodge. We stopped at Dullstroom for a pancake lunch before continuing the drive to J'Burg airport via a few wetlands on the way, seeing Cape Shoveler, Yellow-billed, Comb and Maccoa Duck, Southern Pochard, Egyptian Goose, Red-knobbed Coot, Greater Flamingo, Reed Cormorant, Ruff, Black-winged Stilt, Grey Heron, Pied Kingfisher and African Spoonbill.

As we drove up the ramp to the airport terminal building a small flock of Sacred Ibises flew by, our last new bird of the trip.



This was a great trip with some memorable and special sightings, summed up in an ode by Barbara Last:-

KRUGER

Fourteen enthusiastic birders
On an African adventure
Fearless leaders Bruce and Geoffrey
Into Kruger they did venture

Rhinos ruminate on roadway
Blocking traffic every which way
Baby elephant a tumbling
Aunties helping, round and rumbling
Lion, zebra and hyenas
Hoping that they haven't seen us
Glimpse of leopard up a tree
Sight that very few did see
Raptures over raptors flying
Rollers rolling, hornbills honking
Lonesome bustard vainly puffing
To an unresponsive world
Seen only by us birders
With his feathers all unfurled
Two giraffes on a zebra crossing
Squelching hippos, hyacinths thrashing

All that Kruger has to offer
Bar the cheetah hiding somewhere
And the mystic
Darned elusive
Vanished
Non-existent
Phantom creature
– the Secretarybird

Sunset near Lower Sabie Camp

SPECIES LISTS

BIRDS

Common Ostrich	Steppe Buzzard	Grey Go-away-bird
Little Grebe	Forest Buzzard	Knysna Turaco
Great Crested Grebe	Jackal Buzzard	Red-chested Cuckoo
White-breasted Cormorant	Little Sparrowhawk	Great Spotted Cuckoo
Reed Cormorant	Black Sparrowhawk	Klaas's Cuckoo
African Darter	African Goshawk	Diderick Cuckoo
Grey Heron	Gabar Goshawk	Burchell's Coucal
Black-headed Heron	Dark Chanting Goshawk	African Scops-Owl
Goliath Heron	Harrier-Hawk	White-faced Scops-Owl
Great Egret	Rock Kestrel	Pearl-spotted Owlet
Little Egret	Crested Francolin	Spotted Eagle-Owl
Cattle Egret	Natal Spurfowl	Verreaux's Eagle-Owl
Squacco Heron	Swainson's Spurfowl	Rufous-cheeked Nightjar
Green-backed Heron	Helmeted Guineafowl	Freckled Nightjar
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Harlequin Quail	African Black Swift
Hamerkop	Black Crake	White-rumped Swift
Woolly-necked Stork	Red-knobbed Coot	Horus Swift
African Openbill	Kori Bustard	Little Swift
Saddle-billed Stork	Red-crested Korhaan	Alpine Swift
Marabou Stork	African Jacana	African Palm-Swift
Yellow-billed Stork	Old World Painted Snipe	Speckled Mousebird
African Sacred Ibis	Ringed Plover	Red-faced Mousebird
Glossy Ibis	Kittlitz's Plover	Pied Kingfisher
Hadeda Ibis	Three-banded Plover	Giant Kingfisher
African Spoonbill	Crowned Lapwing	Malachite Kingfisher
Greater Flamingo	Blacksmith Lapwing	African Pygmy-Kingfisher
White-faced Duck	White-crowned Lapwing	Brown-hooded Kingfisher
Egyptian Goose	Wattled Lapwing	Eurasian Bee-eater
Yellow-billed Duck	Common Sandpiper	White-fronted Bee-eater
Cape Shoveler	Wood Sandpiper	Little Bee-eater
Southern Pochard	Marsh Sandpiper	Lilac-breasted Roller
Comb Duck	Greenshank	Purple Roller
Spur-winged Goose	Little Stint	Broad-billed Roller
Maccoa Duck	Ruff	African Hoopoe
Secretarybird	Black-winged Stilt	Green Wood-Hoopoe
Hooded Vulture	Spotted Thick-knee	Common Scimitarbill
White-backed Vulture	Water Thick-knee	Trumpeter Hornbill
Lappet-faced Vulture	Double-banded Courser	African Grey Hornbill
White-headed Vulture	Collared Pratincole	Red-billed Hornbill
Black Kite	Grey-headed Gull	Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
Yellow-billed Kite	Whiskered Tern	Southern Ground-Hornbill
Black-shouldered Kite	Double-banded Sandgrouse	Black-collared Barbet
Verreaux's Eagle	Rock Dove	Acacia Pied Barbet
Tawny Eagle	Speckled Pigeon	Crested Barbet
Steppe Eagle	Red-eyed Dove	Bennett's Woodpecker
Wahlberg's Eagle	Laughing Dove	Golden-tailed Woodpecker
Booted Eagle	African Mourning Dove	Cardinal Woodpecker
African Hawk-Eagle	Cape Turtle-Dove	Olive Woodpecker
Ayres's Eagle	Namaqua Dove	Sabota Lark
Martial Eagle	Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	Dusky Lark
Brown Snake Eagle	Tambourine Dove	Barn Swallow
Black-breasted Snake Eagle	African Green-Pigeon	White-throated Swallow
Bateleur	Brown-headed Parrot	Wire-tailed Swallow
African Fish Eagle	Purple-crested Turaco	Red-breasted Swallow

Greater Striped Swallow	Red-faced Cisticola	Marico Sunbird
Lesser Striped Swallow	Croaking Cisticola	Greater Double-collared Sunbird
Rock Martin	Lazy Cisticola	White-bellied Sunbird
House Martin	Neddicky	Scarlet-chested Sunbird
Grey-rumped Swallow	Drakensberg Prinia	Amethyst Sunbird
Brown-throated Martin	Tawny-flanked Prinia	Grey Sunbird
Black Saw-wing	Spotted Flycatcher	Cape White-eye
Black Cuckooshrike	Dusky Flycatcher	Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver
Grey Cuckooshrike	Ashy Flycatcher	House Sparrow
Fork-tailed Drongo	Grey Tit-Flycatcher	Cape Sparrow
Square-tailed Drongo	Southern Black Flycatcher	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow
Black-headed Oriole	Chinspot Batis	Yellow-throated Sparrow
Cape Crow	Cape Batis	Thick-billed Weaver
Pied Crow	African Paradise-Flycatcher	Spectacled Weaver
Southern Black Tit	African Pied Wagtail	Zitting Cisticola
Arrow-marked Babbler	Cape Wagtail	Rattling Cisticola
Dark-capped Bulbul	African Pipit	Village Weaver
Terrestrial Brownbul	Yellow-throated Longclaw	Cape Weaver
Sombre Greenbul	Common Fiscal	Southern Masked-Weaver
Kurrichane Thrush	Magpie Shrike	Lesser Masked-Weaver
Olive Thrush	Southern Boubou	Red-headed Weaver
Ground-scraper Thrush	Black-backed Puffback	Red-billed Quelea
Familiar Chat	Brubru	Red Bishop
Mocking Cliff-Chat	Brown-crowned Tchagra	White-winged Widowbird
African Stonechat	Black-crowned Tchagra	Melba Finch
Chorister Robin-Chat	Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike	African Firefinch
White-browed Robin-Chat	Grey-headed Bush-Shrike	Jameson's Firefinch
Cape Robin-Chat	White-crested Helmet-shrike	Red-billed Firefinch
White-starred Robin	Retz's Helmet-shrike	Blue Waxbill
White-browed Scrub-Robin	White-crowned Shrike	Common Waxbill
Bearded Scrub-Robin	Wattled Starling	Swee Waxbill
African Reed-Warbler	Violet-backed Starling	Cut-throat Finch
Willow Warbler	Burchell's Starling	Red-headed Finch
Yellowthroated Warbler	Cape Glossy Starling	Pin-tailed Whydah
Bar-throated Apalis	Greater Blue-eared Starling	Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah
Yellow-breasted Apalis	Black-bellied Starling	Yellow-fronted Canary
Long-billed Crombec	Red-winged Starling	Cape Canary
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	Red-billed Oxpecker	Golden-breasted Bunting
Green-backed Camaroptera	Yellow-billed Oxpecker	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting



Greater Blue-eared Starlings (blue), Dark-capped Bulbuls (brown), Lesser Masked Weavers (yellow) and Crested Barbet (black, cream and red)

MAMMALS

Chacma Baboon	Inside and outside the park on many days.
Mauritian Free-tailed Bat	One found on the ground, with many flying at dusk.
Peter's Epauletted Fruit Bat	Roosting in a tree outside the Satara Camp office.
Blesbok	As we approached Mount Sheba.
Buffalo	Seen on a number of occasions.
Lesser Bushbaby	Seen fleetingly on a night drive.
Thick-tailed Bushbaby	One seen at Olifants Camp by the view deck.
Bushbuck	Seen just about every day.
Civet Cat	One was seen at midday at Satara Camp.
Common Duiker	A few were seen on the early morning game drives.
Red Duiker	One near Berg-en-Dal and one at Mount Sheba.
Elephant	Seen every day, with one breeding herd of about 75 individuals in a large Lala Palm grove.
Large Spotted Genet	One seen on a night drive at Berg-en-Dal.
Bushveld Gerbil	In Nigel's cottage at Berg-en-Dal Camp!
Giraffe	Seen just about every day.
Sharpe's Grysbok	One seen near the N'wamanzi lookout.
Scrub Hare	Seen on every night drive.
Hippopotamus	Seen just about every day.
Spotted Hyena	Seen on a few days, with one cooling off in a puddle of water next to the road.
Impala	Seen just about every day.
Black-backed Jackal	Two at the Bangu waterhole near Olifants Camp.
Klipspringer	On the koppies near Berg-en-Dal Camp.
Kudu	Seen just about every day.
Leopard	One seen on a night drive and one with a kill over the river at Lower Sabie Camp.
Lion	Seen just about every day.
Banded Mongoose	Seen once near Satara Camp.
Dwarf Mongoose	Seen on several occasions in small groups.
Slender Mongoose	Individuals seen on several occasions.
White-tailed Mongoose	Seen once on a night drive from Berg-en-Dal Camp.
Vervet Monkey	Seen just about every day.
Nyala	Seen a few times with a great sighting at Lataba Camp.
Oribi	One seen near Satara Camp – well out of its normal range.
Mountain Reedbuck	Three seen near N'wagovila Hill, Lower Sabie area.
Black Rhinoceros	One seen near Sunset Dam at Lower Sabie.
White Rhinoceros	Seen just about every day in the southern area of the Park, with five individuals causing a road block near Berg-en-Dal Camp.
Tree Squirrel	Seen just about every day in and outside the camps.
Steenbok	Seen just about every day.
Warthog	Seen just about every day.
Waterbuck	Seen just about every day near water.
Blue Wildebeest	Seen just about every day, with Zebra.
Burchell's Zebra	Seen just about every day, with Wildebeest.
Samango Monkey	In the indigenous forests at Mount Sheba.



Sleeping Hippos



Spotted Hyena bathing in a roadside pool

REPTILES

Ground Agama
Tree Agama
Nile Crocodile
Moreau's Tropical House Gecko
Water Monitor

Striped Skink
Rainbow Skink
Marsh Terrapin
Leopard Tortoise
Striped-bellied Sand Snake



Leopard refers to the leopard-like spots on the tortoise's shell



Yellow-billed Stork feeding among Nile crocodiles

BUTTERFLIES

Emperor Swallowtail

The largest butterfly in South Africa with a wingspan of approximately 5 inches

Citrus Swallowtail
White-banded Swallowtail
Garden Commodore
African Monarch



OTHERS

Giant Millipede

Tree Frog



The most southerly Baobab tree in Africa – any further south have been planted