

**The Best of South Africa:
“Endemic birds, Wildlife, and Spectacular Scenery”
26 Oct – 15 Nov, 2021**

Brief Itinerary

You may wish to arrive in Johannesburg the day before in order to rest before the tour starts. Just let us know your flight plans and also whether you will need a hotel room.

Participants will receive a longer, more complete itinerary.

Day 1: October 26 Arrival - Johannesburg

Upon arrival at O.R. Tambo International Airport we will pick up our shuttle to the Africa Sky Guesthouse. The guesthouse is set in gardens with large trees which make for some good local birding. Overnight at Africa Sky Guesthouse

Day 2: October 27 Birding around Johannesburg

After a delicious breakfast we will head out for some great birding around Jo’burg. Our itinerary for the day will be flexible and we could visit places such as Gnu River Farm, Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens and several of the local wetlands. Overnight at Africa Sky Guesthouse

Day 3: October 28 Drive to Mapungubwe National Park

It’s a fairly long drive north to Mapungubwe National Park, which sits south of border with Zimbabwe. This landscape of extensive savannahs is situated at the meeting place of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers. Elephant, giraffe, buffalo, and antelope can be found here. The bird list for park is well over 400 species. Overnight at Leokwe Camp

Day 4: October 29 Mapungubwe National Park

Today we have a full day exploring the park. The Limpopo Tree-Top Boardwalk and hide is a magnificent facility allowing the visitor into the trees alongside the birds or looking down on those that forage on the ground. Birding from the hide in the riverbed will vary depending on water levels in the river and can be very rewarding. Overnight at Leokwe Camp

Day 5: October 30 Depart for Kruger National Park

Early morning departure for the Pafuri Gate to Kruger National Park. It is an exciting birding spot with a high concentration and variety of birds. Some of the birds we will look for today include: Bat-like Spinetail and Crowned Eagle. Overnight at Punda Maria Camp

Day 6: October 31 Kruger National Park

After breakfast we will drive the Mahonie Loop. The best 'sandveld' woodland is in the region of Matukwale dam on the western side of the loop. Here we should look for Gorgeous Bush-Shrike, African Golden-Oriole, Thick-billed Cuckoo, Broad-billed Roller, Mosque Swallow, Grey-headed Parrot and Grey-headed Kingfisher. We have the option (at our own expense) to take a night drive to search for the elusive Pennant-winged Nightjar. Overnight at Punda Maria Camp

Day 7: November 1 Depart Punda Maria for Shingwedzi Camp

Shingwedzi rest camp is situated in the north of the park on the Shingwedzi River and the drive there will take us about 1.5 hours. The camp area is a great birding area as Red-headed Weaver breed amongst the huts and are followed by Cut-throat Finch using their nests. Just south of the camp is a low-level causeway over the river. This is a good spot for waterbirds, including White-crowned Lapwing. Overnight at Shingwedzi Camp

Day 8: November 2 Shingwedzi Camp

We will take morning and afternoon birding excursions by vehicle from Shingwedzi camp. There are so many birds in this area, as well as good numbers of big game. Today will be a great day exploring the many side roads in this part of the National Park. Overnight at Shingwedzi Camp

Day 9: November 3 Depart Shingwedzi for Letaba

Morning departure for Letaba camp. Waterbirds vary with the level of the dam and may include pelican and flamingo, African Openbill, African Spoonbill, Goliath Heron and Grey Heron. We will spend the afternoon birding around Letaba camp. The rest camp itself is a haven for woodland birds and the parklike gardens are worth walking around. African Scops-Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, African Barred Owlet (particularly the area around the safari tents) and Barn Owl can be seen in the camp. Overnight at Letaba Camp

Day 10: November 4 Mt Sheba

This morning we leave early in the morning for Mount Sheba. This private nature reserve offers a good selection of typical Escarpment species. Some of the specials for Mount Sheba include: African Cuckoo Hawk, African Crowned Eagle, Red-winged Francolin, Red-necked Spurfowl, Lemon Dove, Knysna Turaco, and African Emerald Cuckoo. Overnight Mount Sheba Resort.

Day 11: November 5 Depart for Swaziland. Mlilwane Game Reserve

After breakfast we will leave for Swaziland and Mlilwane Game Reserve. Mlilwane was proclaimed in 1961 and is now the kingdom's most popular eco-destination for locals and internationals alike. Endless hours of guided or self-guided exploration within the small 11,250-acre sanctuary are possible due to the relative absence of dangerous game. Afternoon birding around the main camp area. Overnight Mlilwane camp

Day 12: November 6 Malolotja Nature Reserve

After an early morning birding walk and breakfast at Mlilwane, we depart for Malolotja Nature Reserve. Established in 1979, Malolotja is home to one of southern Africa's rarest birds, the magnificent Blue Swallow. Return in the late afternoon to Mlilwane. Overnight Mlilwane camp

Day 13: November 7 Mkhaya Game Reserve

Depart after breakfast for Mkhaya Game Reserve. Mkhaya game reserve is primarily a refuge for endangered species of mammals. Black and white rhino, elephant, buffalo and a range of other species such as roan, sable and tsessebe are its main attraction. Travel in the reserve is limited to guided game drives by open landrover.. Overnight Mkhaya Game Reserve

