

SOUTH AFRICA

Western Cape Extension

October 5 – 12, 2023

8 Days / 7 Nights

Birding in the spectacular beauty of the Western Cape is a required entry on every birder's bucket list. The area is rich in endemics, features jaw-dropping scenery, offers world-class pelagic birding and is floristically the richest place on earth. No other spot on Earth has more to offer than the Western Cape, so buckle up and enjoy the trip.

This trip will start in the Mother City, Cape Town, constantly voted as one of the top 5 most beautiful cities in the world. From here we will visit the splendors of the world-famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, enjoy

one of the few mainland Penguin breeding colonies in the world, and all this whilst searching for some of the birding gems that Cape Town has to offer. After a couple of days in Cape Town, we'll head inland to the small town of Ceres on the edge of the Karoo, and this will be our base for a day's exploration into this arid wonderland where we hope to find a whole bunch of Karoo specialties. From here, we head back to the coast, to the West Coast National Park to be precise, an area of significant importance for migrating shorebirds but also our main stake-out for birds such as the near-endemic Black Harrier. We'll conclude our trip back in Cape Town, where you will depart for home or continue on to the main tour (Birds & Beasts) of our South Africa adventure.



Cape Sugarbird

Day 00 or 0

You should plan to leave the United States one day prior to Day 1 of the tour if you want to arrive on Day 1. If you opt to arrive one or two days early, we will make reservations for lodging for you in Johannesburg or Cape Town, our first stop on the tour (extra fee for lodging). Many people like to have a day to acclimate to the time change and rest after the long transatlantic flight. We recommend leaving the US on Day 00 (October 4), arriving in Johannesburg on Day 0 (October 5), spending the night there and proceeding to Cape Town on Day 1 (October 6) to begin the tour. Alternatively, you can arrive in Cape Town on Day 0 (October 5) and spend the night there so you are in position to begin the tour on Day 1 (October 6) with a full night's rest.

Examples:

Oct 3: Depart USA
Oct 4: Arrive Johannesburg, spend the night there
Oct 5: Fly to Cape Town AM, begin tour

Oct 3: Depart USA
Oct 4: Arrive Cape Town, spend the night
Oct 5: Begin tour

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1, October 5: Arrival, Silvermines Reserve

Everyone in the group will arrive in the beautiful city of Cape Town today, hopefully before noon. We'll head straight to our lodge from the airport and allow everyone time to settle in before some relaxed afternoon birding in the gardens or in the nearby Silvermines reserve.

[O/N Cape Town \(D\)](#)

Day 2, October 6: Kirstenbosch, Constantia Greenbelt, Strandfontein Sewage Works

Good birding awaits us today as we explore the rich variety of habitats around Cape Town. The exact sequence of sites to visit may vary a bit, but we are sure to visit all the strategic sites, including Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, where we often encounter **Spotted Eagle-Owl** (sometimes with owlets), **Forest Buzzard**, **Cape Spurfowl**, **Cape Sugarbird**, **Orange-breasted Sunbird**, **Sweet Waxbill**, **Cape Batis**, **Forest Canary** and **Lemon Dove**. The Constantia Greenbelt and Tokai Plantations often yield **Cape Siskin** and **European Honey Buzzard**, and at Strandfontein Sewage Works, we'll be treated to **Maccoa Ducks**, **Hottentot Teal**, **Great White Pelican**, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Purple Heron**, **Lesser and Greater Flamingoes**, and **African Marsh-Harrier**.

[O/N Cape Town \(BLD\)](#)



Spotted Eagle-Owl



Spotted Eagle-Owlet



Sweet Waxbill

Day 3, October 7: Rooiels, Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, Stony Point Penguin Colony

In our search for **Cape Rockjumper** we'll visit sites such as Rooiels, where we often also find **Cape Rock-Thrush**, **Cape Bunting**, **Verreaux's Eagle** and the elusive **Ground Woodpecker**. We'll also stop in at the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, which boast cultivated gardens surrounded by moist mountain fynbos. This site is particularly good for the skulking **Victorin's Scrub-Warbler**. **Black Saw-Wings** abound,



and **Karoo Prinia**, **Southern Boubou**, **Brimstone Canary**, and **Cape Bulbul** usually put in a showing. A short stop at Stony Point will net us **African Penguin** at one of only two mainland breeding sites. We stand a good chance of finding all three marine cormorants (**Cape**, **Bank**, and **Crowned Cormorant**) here as well. If we failed to find the Rockjumper at Rooiels earlier on, we'll continue our search near Chapman's Peak, where we should also find **Cape Siskin**.

[O/N Cape Town \(BLD\)](#)

Day 4, October 8: Drive to Ceres

Today's drive to the town of Ceres, the gateway to the Karoo, will take us through breathtaking scenery. Along this route we have another back-up site for the elusive



Karoo Prinia

Cape Rockjumper, as well as the possibility of finding such mouth-watering specials as **Victorin's Warbler**, **Cape Siskin**, and **Cape Grassbird**. More common species such as **Grey-backed Cisticola**, **Bokmakierie**, and **Fiscal Flycatcher** are normally easy finds and we'll have a stop en-route for one of the more difficult endemics, **Protea Canary**. We'll drive through to the famous fruit-growing valley of Ceres before entering the Tanqua Karoo, a different world altogether. We'll slowly make our way to our lodge situated in the heart of the Tanqua Karoo, with a quick stop for some late afternoon birding which could produce the enigmatic **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler**, as well as an outside chance of **Cape Eagle-Owl**.

[O/N Ceres \(BLD\)](#)

Day 5, October 9: Karoo

We will enjoy a full day's birding in the Karoo, with its rich bounty of endemic birds, stark landscapes and beautiful sunsets. Early morning birding in the Karoo can be extremely rewarding. On the open Karoo plains, we'll be looking for the likes of **Yellow** and **White-throated Canaries** and, with luck, even **Black-headed Canary**. Both **Karoo** and

Trac-trac Chats should make our list, as well as several species of Lark such as **Spike-heeled, Karoo, Large-billed and Karoo Long-billed Larks**. **Pale Chanting Goshawk** and **Greater Kestrel** are frequently seen as they perch on the utility poles along the road, whilst terrestrial specials such as **Karoo Korhaan** and **Burchell's Courser** will require diligent scanning; we may even be rewarded with the much rarer **Ludwig's Bustard**. Closer to our lodge, we should find **Rufous-eared Warbler** and **Karoo Eremomela** before stopping in for a quick lunch. We've had some luck in locating the highly nomadic **Black-eared Sparrowlark** around here in past years, so let's hope our luck continues. Towards the afternoon, we'll start making our way back to Ceres with a stop at a narrow Canyon as we exit the Tanqua Karoo. Here, we often find **Fairy Flycatcher, Grey Tit, Mountain Wheatear,** and **Pirit Batis,** whilst a search in the nearby reedbeds should produce **Namaqua Warbler**.

[O/N Ceres \(BLD\)](#)

Day 6, October 10: Langebaan and West Coast National Park

Early morning will depend on our success in finding **Protea Canary** two days prior, which could mean an early morning stakeout in the Protea-covered hillsides just outside of town or an early departure to the West Coast National Park. The National Park encompasses the Langebaan Lagoon as well as protecting the surrounding Strandveld (a unique type of coastal vegetation). The lagoon is a very important site for migrant shorebirds, and scanning from several hides should net us **Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Eurasian Curlew, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and Terek Sandpiper**. The Strandveld sections should produce the likes of the stunning **Black Harrier, Southern Black Korhaan, Grey-winged Francolin, Cape Penduline Tit** and **Fiscal Flycatcher**. Time permitting, we'll exit the northern end of the park and go in search of **Cape Long-billed Lark**, a South African endemic here at the southern limit of its range.



Southern Black Korhaan

[O/N Langebaan \(BLD\)](#)

Day 7, October 11: West Coast National Park

We'll have a full day to explore West Coast National Park.

[O/N Langebaan \(BLD\)](#)

Day 8, October 12: Return to Cape Town for flights

We will be able to fit in a bit of birding before making our way back to Cape Town for flights to Johannesburg to start the main tour.

Price includes:

- All meals as indicated.
- Bottled water throughout the trip
- All ground transportation
- All accommodation
- Tips for drivers and local guides
- Expert birding guide throughout tour
- Services of two **Cheepers!** Tour leaders (Jim and Cindy Beckman)
- Post-trip electronic copy of final checklist
- Post-trip photo collection on flash drive
- Pre-trip gift package, including customized checklist and tour book

Price does NOT include:

- International flights
- Domestic flight, Cape Town - Johannesburg
- Drinks other than bottled water (this includes soft drinks and coffee)
- Tips for birding guides
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, souvenirs, alcoholic beverages, etc.

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- ~ Deposit of \$300 for the Western Cape extension is required with registration, in addition to \$700 deposit for the main (Birds & Beasts) tour.
- ~ Balance is due 4 months prior to the start date.
- ~ Checks should be made payable to *Cheepers! Birding on a Budget* and mailed with the registration form to:

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget
Post Office Box 385
Spring Valley, OH 45370

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Cancellation must be made in writing (email or snail mail)

More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit

Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit

Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit

If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

Trip insurance is highly recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

<http://www.insuremytrip.com>

http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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