

Western Cape Extension, 2020

September 21 – 27, 2020

7 Days / 6 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 Eastern South Africa Trip.

Day 00 or 0

You should plan to leave the United States 1 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 (September 19), arriving in Johannesburg on Day 0 (September 20), spending the night there and proceeding to Cape Town on Day 1 (September 21) to begin the tour. Alternatively, you can arrive in Cape Town on Day 0 (September 20) and spend the night there so you are in position to begin the tour on Day 1 (September 21) with a full night's rest.

Examples:

Sept 19: Depart USA
Sept 20: Arrive Johannesburg, spend the night there
Sept 21: Fly to Cape Town AM, begin tour

Sept. 18: Depart USA
Sept 19: Arrive Johannesburg, spend 2 nights there
Sept. 21: Fly to Cape Town AM, begin tour

Sept 18: Depart USA
Sept 19 Arrive Johannesburg, spend the night there
Sept. 20: Fly to Cape Town, spend the night there
Sept 21: Begin tour

Sept 19: Depart USA
Sept 20: Arrive Cape Town, spend the night there
Sept 21: Begin tour

Sept. 18: Depart USA
Sept 19: Arrive Cape Town, spend 2 nights there
Sept 21: Begin tour

Day 1, September 21

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.

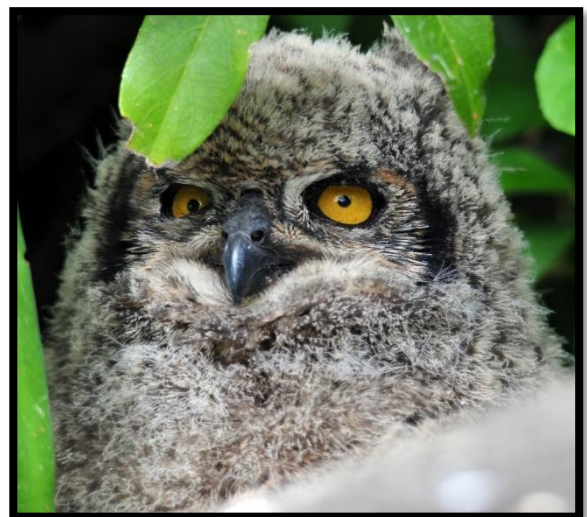
[O/N at one of the fine accommodation establishments in Cape Town \(D\)](#)



Day 2, September 22

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 which includes Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, where we often encounter Spotted Eagle-Owl, Forest Buzzard, Cape Sparrow, 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 Maccos Ducks, Hottentot Teal, Great White Pelican, Black-necked Grebe, Purple Heron and African Marsh-Harrier.

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



Day 3, September 23

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 boasts cultivated gardens surrounded by moist mountain fynbos. This site is particularly good for the skulking Victorin's Scrub-Warbler; Black Saw-Wings abound; 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) 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, September 24

Today's drive to the town of Ceres, the gateway to the Karoo, will take us through breathtaking scenery and along this route we have another back-up site for the elusive 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 Tanqua Karoo \(BLD\)](#)

Day 5, September 25

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 Chat should make our list, as well as several species of Lark such as Spike-heeled, Karoo, Large-billed and Karoo Long-billed. 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 the past year, 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, September 26

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.

O/N Langebaan (BLD)

Day 7, September 27

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.

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Deposit of \$350 with registration (registration form can be downloaded from a link on the Cheepers! Africa website). Balance is due 4 months prior to departure 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 should 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.

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Trip insurance is recommended.

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at this website:

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