

WildWings

SOUTH AFRICA: Mammals and Birds



Aardvark © David Warner

SOUTH AFRICA: MAMMALS AND BIRDS

17 September – 2 October 2022

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Introduction

After a three-year absence, WildWings returned to South Africa to, once again, search for animals including those not usually seen on your average safari. In a change to the previous itineraries, we added three days in the Western Cape at the beginning of the trip (one night at Hermanus and two at De Hoop) which allowed us an opportunity to see a number of Cape specialities, both mammals and birds. In total 67 mammal species were seen (excluding bats) and over 270 birds.

Highlights included:

- More than 10 **Southern Right Whales** at both of two locations at the cape, plus **Indian Humpbacked Dolphins**
- Long views of two **Aardvarks** and eleven **Aardwolves**
- Ten **Wild Dogs** hunting at Madikwe
- Multiple encounters with Hyenas including both **Brown** and **Spotted Hyena** cubs
- Seven species of **Mongoose**
- Two different **Elephant Shrews**

Other non-mammal highlights included Denham's bustard displaying, Cape Rockjumper, six species of owl (including Marsh Owl and Grass Owl), Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and excellent views of a Puff Adder.

Ewan Davies

November 2022

This is a shortened version of the report detailing just the mammals seen. For more information including the full trip report and bird list visit the WildWings website:

<https://wildwings.co.uk/tours/africa-middle-east/south-africa/mammals-and-birds/>

Itinerary

18 September 2022

Arrive Cape Town travel to Hermanus.

19 September 2022

Morning Hermanus, travel to De Hoop

20 September 2022

De Hoop

21 September 2022

Return to Cape Town, flight to Kimberley, Evening at Marrick

22 – 23 September 2022

Marrick and Warrenton

24 September 2022

Fly to Johannesburg, Travel to Heidelberg, Afternoon at Marievale

25 September 2022

Suikerbosrand

26 September 2022

Travel to Madikwe

27 - 30 September 2022

Madikwe

1 October 2022

Return to Johannesburg



Brown Hyena © Ewan Davies



Spotted Hyena © Ewan Davies



Cape Porcupine and Aardwolf © Sue Cunningham



Meerkat © John Warner





Southern lesser galago © John Warner

Systematic List

Nomenclature largely follows the six-volume Mammals of Africa except for bovids where it follows the recently published Bovid of the World which in turn follows the taxonomy of the Handbook of Mammals of the World.

The list excludes two introduced ungulates at Marrick which are outside their natural range: **Sable** *Hippotragus niger* and **Roan** *Hippotragus equinus*.

Mammals

Eastern Rock Sengi *Elephantulus myurus*

After a lengthy search, this species was found by Selwyn in the high rocky areas at Suikerbosrand. It was then seen through a crevice where the animal remained partially viewable for about five minutes.

Karoo Rock Sengi *Elephantulus pilicaudus*

A recent split from Western Rock Sengi. We had excellent views of a single animal on a kopje at Marrick for around 15 minutes.



Karoo Rock Sengi © Sue Cunningham

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus*

Groups seen on the roads around the Cape, common at Suikerbosrand. Large groups seen at Madikwe where one alert group alerted us to a leopard.

Vervet *Chlorocebus pygerythrus*

Small numbers of these monkeys were always present at the Madikwe river lodge. Often around the restaurant and balconies.

Southern Lesser Galago *Galago moholi*

Easily found at Madikwe by eyeshine. Found easily with torches and night vision. Three invaded John Warner's room on the final morning and were filmed on the bed and railings.

Cape Hare *Lepus capensis*

This species of hare was common around the accommodation at De Hoop. Also seen at Marrick.

African Savanna Hare *Lepus microtis*

Very large numbers seen at Madikwe after dark. Only one seen by daylight.

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*

At least two seen at Marrick in scrub close to the farm.

Southern African hedgehog *Atelerix frontalis*

As it was still quite early in the season, we did not expect to see this animal, but we had great views for 10 minutes on our second night drive at Marrick.



South African Hedgehog © Sue Cunningham

South African Ground Squirrel *Xerus inauris*

Common at Marrick, including five living near the guest accommodation. Also seen on the runway at Kimberley airport and in small numbers daily at Madikwe.

Tree Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi*

Several of these were seen most days in the rockier areas at Madikwe.



Tree Squirrel © John Cunningham

Spring Hare *Pedetes capensis*

This unusual rodent was common on night drives at Marrick with over ten seen on each night drive. Similar counts in areas near the lodge at Madikwe.

Cape Porcupine *Hystrix africaeaustralis* One seen well on the first night drive at Marrick, and two more on the second night.

Four-striped Grass Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio*

Regularly seen running across the road at all areas visited at the cape, as well as in the talons of a Rock Kestrel. Large numbers (over 50) were found along the roadside at De Hoop sunning themselves at dawn.



Four-striped grass mouse © Stephen Curtis

Southern Vlei Rat *Otomys irroratus*

One seen by some of the group on arrival at De Hoop. A second found alongside the hordes of grass mice at dawn.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis*

A group of three of these termite specialists showed well during the second night drive at Marrick.

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*

Fairly common with several seen most days. Primarily at dawn, dusk and night drives, but some good daylight views also. The largest numbers together were at Madikwe near lion kills.

African Wild Dog *Lycaon pictus*

Two amazing sightings of a group of ten at Madikwe. On our first morning drive, we found them on the move and watched as they crossed the river. The pack made hunting attempts on warthogs and impalas before briefly interacting with a White Rhinoceros, before moving away. The same pack was seen resting in the shade on our final morning drive.



Wild Dog © John Warner

Cape Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus*

One animal was seen briefly in the surf off Hermanus by some of the group.

Spotted-necked Otter *Lutra maculicollis*

After a failed attempt to find this animal at our normal site in Warrenton, a move a couple of miles upriver resulted in views of one animal crossing the river. It was also seen by Stephen climbing out onto rocks.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*

Several groups gave brief views, before we finally got a good look at three individuals for ten minutes on our final morning drive at Madikwe.

Small Grey Mongoose *Herpestes pulverulentus*

Seen briefly several times crossing roads at the cape, before good views for everyone on our first morning at De Hoop. Two more individuals were seen at Marrick: one on our first morning drive, the other when leaving the property on the second afternoon

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus*

One running alongside the road near the Suikerbosrand visitor centre was seen by everyone. A second individual was seen some of the group on our second morning drive at Madikwe.

Marsh Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus*

An animal seen by Carol at Marievale at dusk, running along the edge of the reedbed was most probably this species.

Common Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula*

A group of three was seen on our fourth afternoon at Madikwe. They were seen well by everyone, crossing the road and back and standing on a fallen tree.



Dwarf Mongoose © John Warner

Yellow Mongoose *Cynictis penicillate*

Seen on most days before we reached Madikwe. Usually by the road or moving away. In a wide variety of habits.



Yellow Mongoose © Sue Cunningham

Meerkat *Suricata suricatta*

One impressively photographed from the plane while at Kimberly by Ruth. The following morning an individual was seen well by most of the group as it foraged for 20 mins on our morning drive at Marrick. A group was seen distantly later that morning with at least seven animals present. Some of the group then encountered twelve more near their rooms after lunch.

African Civet *Civettictis civetta*

Not previously seen before on this tour, one individual was found foraging during our night drive at Madikwe.

Small-spotted Genet *Genetta genetta*

Surprisingly difficult this year. Although four were sighted seen on evening drives at Madikwe, these were never seen well, and most of the group saw only a glimpse or eyeshine. Surprisingly no sign of these around the lodge there this year.

Spotted Hyaena *Crocuta crocuta*

Two adults on one of our night drives at Madikwe with another at dusk on the final evening. Three young cubs by a den were also seen briefly on our first morning drive with much better views on the final afternoon.

Brown Hyaena *Hyaena brunnea*

An older cub was seen at a den on the first morning drive at Madikwe, and again on the last afternoon when an adult was also briefly seen nearby.

One individual was also coming to drink at the river by night. Found by thermal imager. This was seen on two nights by Ewan and eventually by John and Ruth. On the final morning the same animal came past at dawn and again drank from the river but was seen only by Ewan.

Aardwolf *Proteles cristata*

An impressive total of eleven were seen at Marrick this year, many offering prolonged views: three on the first night, eight on the second.

African Wildcat *Felis lybica*

These proved difficult this year, but two individuals were finally seen on the move near our lodge at the end of our night drive. A third was picked up by eyeshine on the final evening but could not be relocated so was only seen by Ewan.

Lion *Panthera leo*

Two on our first evening at Madikwe. A further four by the river on the second full day, stayed all day until chased off by buffalo overnight. A highlight on the third full day was a group of two adults and seven cubs devouring a Warthog. Twenty individual animals seen in total.

Leopard *Panthera pardus*

A distant male was located as a result of Baboon alarm calls and was watched moving across a rock slope before settling to rest on a rocky outcrop.



Leopard © John Warner

Aardvark *Orycteropus afer*

Another highlight of the trip. Two seen on our first evening at Marrick with both found first with the thermal imager. The second probed and moved around the vehicle for around quarter of an hour and gave some of the best views you are ever likely to get of an Aardvark.

African (Bush) Elephant *Loxodonta africana*

Large numbers present at Madikwe where they were seen daily, including one group of eleven that regularly came to the river to drink.

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis*

Very common at Betty's bay, Hermanus and De Hoop. Also seen near one of our otter sites near Warrenton and by our accommodation in Heidelberg

Plains Zebra *Equus quagga*

First seen on the trip at Suikerbosrand, then on the road north from Johannesburg, and common at Madikwe.

Cape Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra zebra*

Small numbers around the accommodation at De Hoop, with five present most of the time.



Cape Mountain Zebra © John Warner

White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*

We saw several on each full day at Madikwe, the largest grouping being three. Notable sightings included one being bothered by Wild Dogs, and on another occasion two in a dominance dispute.



White Rhinoceros © Sue Cunningham

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*

One of the surprises of the trip was two hippos seen by the river when doing a late evening walk around the river lodge. One of these was seen again the following morning in a deeper area of the river upstream from the lodge.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*

A group of four at Marrick was our first sighting. Common at Madikwe and far less prone to flee than in many places. There were one or two by the river most of the time.

Southern Giraffe *Giraffa giraffa*.

None at Marrick this year, but many were seen at Madikwe. Three sat together in the road on one afternoon proved an unusual spectacle.



Southern Giraffe © Ewan Davies

African (Savanna) Buffalo *Syncerus caffer*

It took a while to see buffalo at Madikwe this year, the first being a large herd seen by Ewan crossing the river late at night and interacting with Lions. Individual males were seen on the third and fourth days and a large herd of perhaps one hundred was seen crossing the river late one evening by John and John.

Zambezi Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus zambeziensis*

Four at Suikerbosrand were our first this year, with several most days at Madikwe including some smart males. A female group came to drink at the river on one afternoon.

Eland *Taurotragus oryx*

Large herds of this massive antelope were present at De Hoop near the accommodation, as well as groups seen distantly outside the reserve. More large groups were also seen at Suikerbosrand.

Cape Bushbuck *Tragelaphus sylvaticus*

Two males, four females and one youngster frequented the River Lodge at Madikwe and regularly seen. A few were also seen on the night drive along the edge of the reserve.

Grey Rhebok *Pelea capreolus*

Five in farmland on the drive to De Hoop. A few individuals within the reserve and several more on the drive back to Cape Town.



Grey Rhebok © John Warner

Gemsbok *Oryx gazella*

Herds seen in and around Marrick every day.

Ellipsen Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*

Quite a low count of these this year, with only one or two individuals seen daily at the River Lodge. Small groups of six or six seen on drives.

Mountain Reedbuck *Redunca fulvorufula*

One at Marrick, and a group of three on our third morning at Madikwe towards the klipspringer areas.



Mountain Reedbuck © John Warner

Southern Common Reedbuck *Redunca arundinum*

One found at Marievale by thermal imager while looking for Marsh Owls. Several more we seen later the same evening on the edge of Suikerbosrand.

Black Wildebeest *Connochaetes gnou*

These beautiful but often overlooked animals were seen in quite large numbers at Suikerbosrand as well as some reintroduced animals at Marrick.

Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus*

Along the road from Johannesburg in reserves near the road, then regularly at Madikwe.

Blesbok *Damaliscus phillipsi*

Large numbers at Suikerbosrand alongside the Zebra and Wildebeest.

Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus*

This localised antelope was common at De Hoop, particularly around our accommodation but also coming out into fields on the edges of the reserve.

Red Hartebeest *Alcelaphus caama*

One seen at night outside Suikerbosrand, with some small herds of ten or so animals within the reserve. Two individuals were also seen on the final morning drive at Madikwe, although this species is scarce there.

Common Impala *Aepyceros melampus*

Small groups were ubiquitous at Madikwe, coming together to form larger herds at night. Several conflicts between males were impressive to watch.

South African Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis*

First seen from the plane before landing at Kimberley. Reintroduced animals common at Marrick and the farms around there. Smaller numbers at Suikerbosrand.

Kalahari Springbok *Antidorcas hofmeyri*

Up to twenty animals were present on the grasslands at Madikwe.

Transvaal Klipspringer *Oreotragus transvaalensis*

Three animals were seen in the Klipspringer lookout area of Madikwe on our second morning there, although in scrub not on the rocks. Two more on our final morning in the west.



Transvaal Klipspringer © John Warner

Steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* Seen virtually every day after the first in pairs and singularly, by day and night.

Common Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia*

One on our first night drive at Marrick, then one by daylight the next day. Several were seen in the evening at Marievale, and three at Suikerbosrand. Singles at Madikwe

Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis*

Considered my most of the group to have been the highlight of the trip.

Excellent views of upwards of ten animals on the first afternoon at Hermanus, both close in and breaching further out in the bay. Similar numbers the next morning and again from the viewing point at De Hoop.



Southern Right Whale © Sue Cunningham

Indian Humpbacked Dolphin

An unexpected find as two of these dolphins swam close by the waterfront at Hermanus, easily identified by their humped back and small dorsal fin.



Indian Humpbacked Dolphin © Sue Cunningham