

Wildwings

WILDWINGS SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

MAMMALS AND BIRDS
2nd-13th SEPTEMBER 2019

LEADER – RICHARD WEBB

Wildwings
9 Pound Close
Long Ditton
Surbiton
Surrey
KT6 5JW

+44 01179 658333
www.wildwings.co.uk



CLIENTS

Sally Dean, David Knaggs, Mike Thompson, Katie Waldron, Albert Willis and John Wright.

INTRODUCTION

This our fifth mammal tour to South Africa was a day longer than the previous four tours as we chose to spend five nights in Madikwe this year and we were rewarded with a record total of 61 mammals (plus two others seen by the leaders only) not including three additional introduced ungulates outside their normal range. And we didn't even need any bats to pad out the list. Our previous record of 58 was well and truly broken.

Night temperatures at Marrick were again lower than we had hoped but nowhere near as cold as in 2018 while the weather around Heidelberg was less pleasant than on the previous tours. After a cold start to early morning drives at Madikwe the temperatures rose as the week went on.

The highlights included:

- A superb **Caracal** in Marrick which performed for over 15 minutes.
- Another fantastic encounter with a group of eight **African Wild Dogs**.
- Five different **Brown Hyenas** and seven **Spotted Hyenas**.
- A male **Leopard** on two consecutive mornings along with two **Cheetahs** on the second of these.
- Our best ever views of **Aardwolf** including unusually one daytime sighting.
- At least three different **Aardvarks** at Marrick.
- Brief views of a **Black-footed Cat** at Marrick and good views of **African Wildcat** at Madikwe.
- Great views of **Spotted-necked Otters** at Warrenton and Marievale along with great views of **Marsh Mongoose** at the latter.
- **Black Rhino** and numerous **White Rhinos** at Madikwe.
- Our first ever **Short-snouted Sengi** at Madikwe and great views of what now appears to be **Karoo Rock Sengi** at Marrick.

On the bird front we saw 210 species with highlights including three species of bustard, Temminck's and Double-banded Coursers, Namaqua and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and our first Southern White-faced Owls.

Thanks to everyone in the group for their good company throughout the trip and also to thank the local guides and drivers, particularly Johnny, Elaine and Benson, who supported us during a great trip. Their efforts were really appreciated by everyone. Thanks also to David for the photos included in this version of the report.

Richard Webb
15th September 2019

DAILY SUMMARIES

2nd September

The group arrived in Johannesburg around 0730 and after a long six-hour stopover we eventually set out on our short domestic flight to Kimberley at 1330 where we were greeted by two Northern Black Korhaan alongside the runway.

On arrival in Kimberley we quickly transferred to the Marrick Game Farm, checked into our rooms and set out on a short pre-dinner game drive where we started our mammal list with **Black Wildebeest**, **Blesbok**, **South African Ground Squirrel** and **Yellow Mongoose**. Best of all as we headed back towards the lodge was our first ever daytime **Aardwolf** which gave everyone good views.

The birding also started well with Northern Black Korhaan, Kori Bustard, Double-banded Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse and an obliging Spotted Eagle-Owl near the lodge.

The first night drive was equally enjoyable, albeit somewhat cold, with another or possibly the same **Aardwolf**, the first **Aardvark** of the trip, four **Bat-eared Foxes**, five **Black-backed Jackals**, four **Cape Porcupines**, dozens of **Spring Hares** and several **Scrub Hares** along with Barn and Spotted Eagle-Owl.

3rd September

After early coffee and biscuits we were back out on the truck for the morning exploration of the pan and nearby kjoopies. Ungulates were well represented with good numbers of **Black Wildebeest**, our only **Mountain Reedbucks** of the trip and our first **Ellipsen Waterbuck** and **Zambezi Greater Kudu** along with some introduced Sable and Roan outside their native range. On the drive back to the lodge two **Meerkats** showed briefly on the track ahead of the vehicle.

A short stop at a dam produced the first Quailfinches seen on this tour and only the second that Johnny had ever seen at Marrick, along with large numbers of Lark-like Bunting another species rarely seen on the tour in any numbers. Another

stop at a windpump produced a large Leopard Tortoise, Golden-breasted Bunting and some attractive Violet-eared Waxbills while Katie had a glimpse of the the first **Slender Mongoose** of the trip.

After a welcome late breakfast back at the lodge we headed out for a short walk around the lodge grounds where birds included Crimson-breasted Shrike, Short-toed Rock Thrush and Black-throated Canary. Another walk, after lunch and a rest in the heat of the day, produced two obliging **Four-striped Grass Mice**, Pirit Batis, Brubru, Red-breasted Swallow and a nice variety of swifts including Little, Alpine and African Black Swift.

After dinner we were back out on the truck with high expectations for the second night drive and we were not to be dissatisfied. It proved to be an outstanding drive. It started well with the first of three **Aardwolves**, one of which fed close to the vehicle totally unconcerned while a second individual foraged nearby.

Next up was the first of three **Aardvarks** while the supporting cast included four **Bat-eared Foxes**, five **Cape Porcupines** (including two young ones as we headed back towards the lodge), **Large-eared (Gerbil) Mouse**, **Desert Pygmy Mouse** (briefly for Johnny and Sally), six **Cape Hares**, **Scrub Hares**, **Spring Hares**, two **Black-backed Jackals** and what should have been best of all a **Southern African Hedgehog**. However sadly the latter was clearly badly injured and appeared moribund, Johnny speculating that it had been attacked by a Spotted Eagle-Owl.

However the real highlight of the night was the totally unexpected **Caracal** that was watched at close range for over 15 minutes, Caracals are very rare at Marrick and this was only the second seen there this year and consequently very welcome and in the leader's eyes at least, the mammal of the trip.

We returned to the lodge tired but highly satisfied after a superb night's spotlighting.

4th September

Our second morning in the Kimberley area found us heading north after an early breakfast, to our regular otter stakeout at Warrenton and yet again good fortune was with us. We had our first **Vervet Monkeys** in the car park at Warrenton and then quickly found a **Slender Mongoose** followed shortly afterwards by a **Spotted-necked Otter** which unfortunately disappeared before most people had a chance to see it. However John quickly re-found it together with a second and we were able to enjoy great views of both animals for over 30 minutes during which time they performed well displaying their characteristic porpoising and also demonstrating apparent disdain for both a Goliath Heron and Grey Heron trying to fish in the same stretch of river, chasing both birds off.

The rest of the morning was spent birding from the bridge and we added a good number of birds to the trip list including the aforementioned Goliath and Grey Herons, Purple and Squacco Herons, Little Bittern, Malachite and Lesser Pied Kingfisher, South African Shelduck, African Jacana and among the passerines Lesser Swamp Warbler and Levallant's Cisticola.

Returning to the lodge after a picnic lunch we were soon back out on the truck for a short excursion to a nearby kjoie with our only **Small (Cape) Grey Mongoose** of the trip dashing across the track in front of the vehicle on route. At the kjoie itself we found at least three **Karoo Rock Sengis** one of which performed superbly posing for photos for several minutes.



After dinner we were back on the truck for our final night drive at Marrick. It was to be another successful one with another three sightings of **Aardwolves**, another **Aardvark**, four **Bat-eared Foxes** (two of which gave us our best views of the trip) and some nice views of Namaqua Sandgrouse.

Eventually Johnny, clearly much to his delight, found a surprisingly elusive **Black-footed Cat** and although the views were briefer and more distant than I would have liked the group finally got a look at this much sought-after species. Despite Johnny's best attempts to find another that was it for this year but we did have a successful drive back to the lodge with great views of a showy **Small-spotted Genet** on the kopies followed shortly afterwards by our first **Smith's Red Rock Rabbit** for two years. A fitting end to our spotlighting at Marrick.

5th September

After a leisurely start to the day we headed out to Kimberley Airport for our flight back to Johannesburg where we met up with Elaine, our new driver for the next four days. As normal we had a quick lunch on route to Heidelberg where we checked in to our lodge where the first **Rock Hyraxes** of the trip were soon encountered.

After buying supplies for the next two days' packed lunches we set out for a short excursion to Eendracht Road on the edge of Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve. Sadly the hoped-for Marsh Owls proved elusive in blustery conditions but we did see a covey of three Grey-winged Francolins much to Mike's delight while mammals included **Plains Zebra**, seven **Red Hartebeest** and three **Black-backed Jackals**.

We returned to the lodge before having dinner at a nearby Capuccinos restaurant.

6th September

We woke to the disappointing sight of low cloud and rain and decided to change plans and head for Marievale instead of Suikerbosrand but the morning was still somewhat disappointing with no mammals and relatively few new birds in a cold south-easterly wind and with the water levels being unusually low. New birds included Southern Pochard, a nice pair of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks and good numbers of Lesser Flamingo.

As the morning progressed the weather improved and the skies brightened so we headed around the northern part of the reserve. It proved to be a good move and we picked up our only Marsh Sandpiper of the trip, several African Snipe and a Little Bittern but our luck really picked up when we walked out to the derelict Shelduck Hide and Mike picked up two otters swimming near the hide. We were able to enjoy prolonged views of them close to the hide although they subsequently sadly turned out to be two more **Spotted-necked Otters** rather than the hoped for Cape Clawless.

We then headed back to the picnic site. After an enjoyable lunch we went back to the area near Otter Hide where we had started the day and we had just seen an African Rail, a much wanted lifer for Mike, when Katie found what she initially thought was another otter. However it actually proved to be a superb **Marsh Mongoose** which gave everyone excellent views. Although two of the group had glimpsed a Marsh Mongoose on the 2018 tour this was the first time that the whole group had been able to enjoy the species and my first sighting in South Africa. We finished the day early with a walk out across a track through the wetlands, which produced nice views of a variety of birds, before heading back to the lodge and then back out to Cappuccinos for another enjoyable dinner.

7th September

We started the day along Eendracht Road in the hope that a Marsh Owl would still be quartering the grasslands but we were to be disappointed again so we quickly set off for the Suikerbosrand reserve where a short walk around the visitor centre area produced Mocking Cliffchat, Cape Robin-Chat and Black-collared Barbet. Unfortunately the upper parts of the reserve were shrouded in low cloud and although a couple of short stops produced the only Yellow Bishop and Cape Bunting of the trip the only mammals encountered were three **Chacma Baboons** spotted by Katie.

Fortunately as we descended from the hills the weather improved and we started encountering ungulates on a large burnt area. These included our first **Eland** of the trip, **Blesbok**, **Red Hartebeest**, **Plains Zebra** and **Black Wildebeest**. Another

stop further along the loop drive produced more of the same species this time in unburnt grasslands and John spotted two separate **Meerkats** on termite mounds.

We stopped for lunch at the picnic site where birds encountered included two lovely Red-throated Wrynecks.

The afternoon drive through the north-west part of the reserve was less productive although a nice bull **Eland** posed for photos before we left the park and headed back to Suikerbosrand.

8th September

This morning found us heading north-west for the long drive up to Madikwe on the border with Botswana, the drive producing the first Grey Go-Away Birds and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills of the trip and good numbers of **Chacma Baboon** and a few **Zambezi Greater Kudus** north of Zeerust.

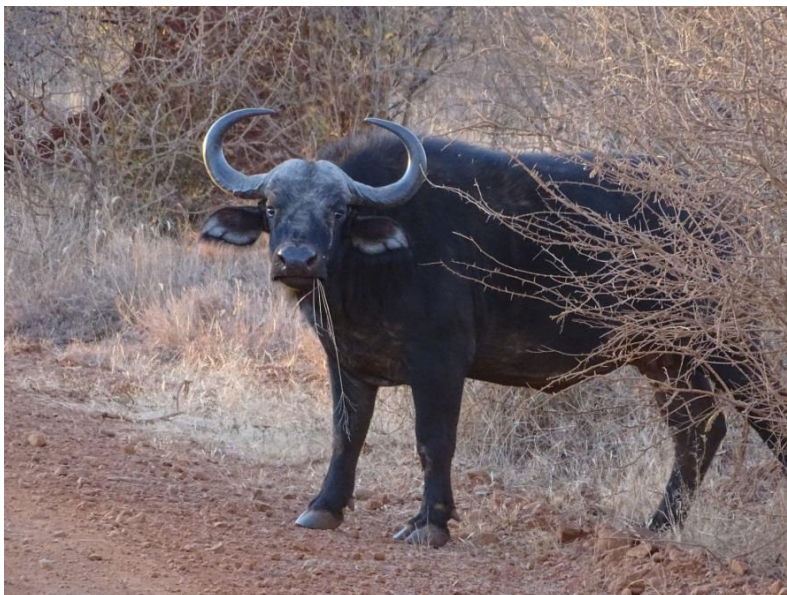
Entering the park the hour-long drive to Madikwe River Lodge produced unexpectedly good numbers of ungulates including our first **White Rhino** and **African Bush Elephants**. Elaine made exceptionally good time and we arrived at the lodge around 1315, six hours after we left Heidelberg. We said goodbye to Elaine and met up with Benson our ranger/guide for the next five days.

After checking in at the lodge we were delighted to find that I'd been allocated chalet 17, the one overlooking the lodge 'waterhole', actually a section of river where many mammals come to drink. This meant that the clients had access to the balcony for most of the hotter hours of the day to overlook the 'waterhole' although the fact that the chalet only had an al fresco shower on the balcony meant that everyone had to be banned from the balcony for short period each day.

After lunch, a short exploration of the lodge grounds and high tea, we were out on our open-back truck with Benson for our first afternoon and evening drive. First up were a number of **South African Ground Squirrels** appearing noticeably smaller than their cousins at Marrick followed by four **Lionesses** dozing in the shade.



Continuing on our way we soon came across our first **Cape Buffalos**, a nice herd of 50+ animals. Buffalos can be surprisingly elusive at Madikwe so this was a very welcome sighting although it proved to be the first of three sightings this year. We headed off to look for a safe spot for our first sundowner but not before we had enjoyed our first **African Savanna Hares**, a close encounter with a nice herd of **African Bush Elephants** and a female **Spotted Hyena** with four young at a traditional denning site.



After the sundowners the spotlight came out and the drive back to the lodge produced a nice view of a **Small-spotted Genet** that came in nicely to investigate the pishing and a less-obliging **African Wildcat** which only gave brief views as it moved away from us through the grass. As we approached the lodge two **Southern Lesser Galagos** were seen in a tree just inside the lodge grounds.

We arrived back at the lodge for dinner after a very enjoyable first drive and shortly afterwards **Spotted Hyaenas** started calling from the other side of the river.

9th September

After an early morning coffee we headed out on our first morning drive and quickly connected with one of our two key targets at Madikwe, a **Brown Hyaena**, which Benson successfully tracked for about 10 minutes before somehow spotting it standing quietly in the bushes. He carefully manouvered the vehicle into a position where we were able to enjoy great views of the hyaena for some time.

Heading on next up was an **African Wildcat** spotted by John, the first daytime one we have had on the tour. It showed slightly better than the one the night before although frustratingly was again moving away from us. The remainder of the morning produced our second group of **Cape Buffalos**, a nice herd of **Kalahari Springbok** (we only saw one individual in 2018) and some good birds including a pair of Temminck's Coursers, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and two Black-chested Snake-Eagles.

After breakfast back at the lodge most of the group spent some time on the balcony of chalet 17 where a steady procession of mammals came down to drink at the river. These included small herds of **African Bush Elephant**, **Ellipsen Waterbuck** and **Zambezi Lesser Kudus** while birds included Brown-hooded Kingfisher and White-rumped Swifts and reptiles included Water Monitor and the only Nile Crocodile of the trip.

The afternoon and evening drive was relatively quiet although we did have brief views of our only **Common Dwarf Mongooses** of the trip, eight **White Rhinos** and probably best of all two Southern White-faced Owls, the first seen on this tour.

The drive back to the lodge produced at least thirty **African Savanna Hares** and after dinner John went out for a walk and found a **Southern Lesser Galago** in the grounds again,

10th September

One of the best days of the trip found us setting out early to an area where wild dog tracks had been found the day before. The dogs were proving elusive probably due to the fact that the pups were still in the den and possibly due to the full moon

which enabled the adults in the pack to hunt at night. Reaching the area we quickly found fresh tracks and slowly cruised one of the tracks adjacent to the ridge where the dogs were known to be denning. After 15 minutes or so Benson suddenly turned the vehicle and switched into rally mode racing back down the track that we'd just driven along. Temporarily slowed by another vehicle in front of us we soon found ourselves watching a group of six **African Wild Dogs** sitting on the track that we had driven down only five minutes earlier. It was almost déjà vu as we had done a similar thing the year before turning to find the dogs sitting on the track a few hundred metres behind us. After a couple of minutes the six dogs were alerted by the call of a seventh individual in the bushes and then joined by an eighth and set off in pursuit of a **Common Impala** that had carelessly walked into view but the chase was short-lived and we soon enjoyed further close range views before they eventually disappeared into the bushes. Understandably elated, particularly John who could not have asked for a better birthday present, we stopped for a celebratory coffee break.



Starting out again we were soon watching two adult **Spotted Hyaenas** when news came through of a stalked out Leopard towards the southern boundary of the park. We set out on the long drive stopping briefly for an obliging African Hawk Eagle at the edge of the road. Eventually we arrived on site and we were soon enjoying views of a somewhat sleepy male **Leopard** which we were able to watch at close range for some time. Eventually convinced that we'd seen as much action from the Leopard as we were likely to see we continued on our way with a nice herd of **African Bush Elephants** and four **White Rhinos** on the way back to the lodge.



The middle of the day was spent back at the lodge where we added two **Black-backed Jackals** to the balcony list.

The afternoon drive started with **White Rhino** and Water Dikkop near the river crossing close to the lodge and we found the female **Spotted Hyaena** with the four young at the den again.



After the nightly sundowners we spotlighted back to the lodge and were rewarded with two **Brown Hyenas** and a probable **Small-spotted Genet** looking out from a hole in a tree.

Dinner back at the lodge was our first braai of the trip.

11th September

Another cracking day began with Benson finding some intriguing drag marks accompanied by the tracks of a Honey Badger which he followed up to discover a dead Leopard Tortoise wedged in entrance to a Honey Badger's burrow. Unfortunately there was no sign of the perpetrator but shortly afterwards Katie spotted our fourth **Brown Hyaena** of the trip.

We carried on our way towards the south of the park to look for two Cheetahs reported the day before. Unfortunately we had got three quarters of the way there when news came through that they had actually been re-found in the completely opposite direction in the north-west of the park so we changed direction and headed north-west having a brief stop to look at the male **Leopard** that had been re-found on route. It was well fed having caught a Common Warthog during the night and as a consequence was even more soporific than the day before so we moved on quickly in pursuit of our main target for the morning and were soon watching the two male **Cheetahs** which although resting, were somewhat more active than the Leopard regularly sitting up to check on calling zebra and other potential items on their menu. We were once again able to enjoy prolonged close range views of the cheetahs.



After post-Cheetah coffee we headed off on the long drive back to the lodge seeing no fewer than seven **White Rhinos** on route. Stopping at a waterhole which had been bereft of mammals on previous visits we were delighted to find a stereotypic African waterhole scene with a large number of ungulates including a nice herd of **African Bush Elephants**, **Zambezi Greater Kudu**, **Plains Zebras**, **Blue Wildebeest** and our only **Gemsbok** in Madikwe.

Adding to the quality were two **Lionesses** sheltering under a bush next to the waterhole. We drove closer for better views just as the lionesses became alert at the presence of a **Common Warthog** coming down to drink nearby. They immediately adopted a hunting pose hoping that the warthog would approach closely enough to make a chase viable but at one point the warthog seemed to become aware of their presence lifting its head and sniffing the air. Needless to say it never came any closer and the Lionesses went back to lounging around in the shade.

Continuing on our way we found two **Red Hartebeest**, our only ones at Madikwe, and then found two more **Lionesses** asleep at another waterhole before eventually arriving back at the lodge for breakfast.

Breakfast itself even provided some mammal entertainment when one of the regularly marauding **Vervet Monkeys** made an audacious raid on the buffet table grabbing not only a croissant but also a piece of cheese to eat with it. Clearly an educated monkey with taste.

During the midday break Sally added to the trip list with a **Tree Squirrel** by her chalet and John and Mike encountered a few additional birds in a feeding flock in the lodge grounds.

Late afternoon saw us back out in the truck and it turned out to be a very successful afternoon and evening drive. A stop at a regular rocky stakeout produced the hoped-for **Transvaal Klipspringers**. At the first waterhole visited earlier in the day we re-found the two **Lionesses** together with a young male **Lion** in the nearby scrub as they set off to hunt at dusk and then found a nice **Cape Porcupine** as we headed back towards the lodge. Next up was a superb **African Wildcat** which posed beautifully in the spotlight for several minutes much to the delight of Sally after the brief views of the previous two seen.

To round off the evening in fine style after a tip-off from another vehicle we found a superb **Black Rhino** not far from the airfield and were able to enjoy good views of it before it disappeared into the bushes.

Finally to round off the day back at the lodge I inadvertently disturbed two **White Rhinos** which were approaching the waterhole' as I left the chalet to go to dinner.

12th September

A **Lion** calling close to the camp resulted in me stumbling out of bed to find a lioness at the waterhole at 2 am but I quickly returned to the warmth of my bed but it only seemed moments later that we were back out on the vehicle at 6 am for the morning drive which started with a nice encounter with two magnificent male **Lions** together with a moderately responsive **Lioness**, after another bit of rally driving from Benson. We were able to enjoy prolonged close range views of the lions in the pleasant morning sunshine.



Continuing on our way Katie found yet another **Brown Hyena**, our fifth of the trip but other than that mammals were thin on the ground and we had to entertain ourselves with nice views of Black-chested Snake-Eagle and Wahlberg's Eagle instead.



The middle of the day session back in the lodge grounds produced nothing new although there was a small feeding flock of birds near the lodge briefly and showering on the balcony while elephants and waterbuck stood watching you remained somewhat surreal.

The afternoon and evening drive was somewhat understated but surprisingly successful. We initially headed out to try to add Hippo to the trip list but although we failed to do so we did quickly add a new mammal to the trip list when Benson stopped to look at a mouse on the side of a termite mound. The mouse actually turned out to be a **Short-snouted Sengi**, a new mammal for the tour, and a lifer for me, the first I have had since the first tour in 2016, so an extremely welcome bonus. We continued on to search for a daylight sighting of Black Rhino but had to settle for the very welcome first two **Tree Squirrels** of the trip for most of the group. The post-dinner spotlighting proved unproductive although we did spend a few minutes staking out the Honey Badger burrow unsuccessfully. The tortoise remained wedged in the entrance to the burrow.

Back at the lodge dinner was another braai in the corral and we all quickly retired to bed in preparation for the final drive early the next morning. Having returned to my chalet I was about to retire for the night but went out onto the balcony to investigate an unfamiliar sound that proved to be a calling Water Dikkop but on switching on the spotlight immediately found the only **Large-spotted Genet** of the trip just off the balcony. It quickly headed towards the next chalet but unfortunately John was still in the restaurant and missed my call to tell him the genet was heading his way.

13th September

We again had an early start on our final morning setting out at 0500 for a final game drive but it was a fairly quiet drive with four **Transvaal Klipspringer** and a **White Rhino** roadblock the mammalian highlights and a Spotted Eagle-Owl and the same two Southern White-faced Owls the avian highlights. Albert tried an early morning vigil at the lodge 'waterhole' instead of joining the drive but it proved remarkably quiet although at least he got a longer lie-in.

After a final breakfast back at the lodge we said our goodbyes to Benson and set off on the drive back to Johannesburg. Once out of the park we made good progress despite the initially bumpy road and after a stop for a quick lunch at a Wimpy at Sun City Village, we eventually arrived back at the airport in the late afternoon. Even then there were still mammals to see with John and Mike seeing a **Slender Mongoose** in the airport grounds.

Our flight departed slightly later than scheduled and consequently we arrived back at Heathrow slightly later than scheduled the following morning only to find frustratingly long queues at the passport scanners in terminal two. At least as a result we didn't have to wait long for our luggage to appear on the carousels but it was a slightly inauspicious end to an otherwise highly successful and enjoyable trip.

MAMMALS

The list excludes three introduced ungulates at Marrick which are outside their natural range: **Sable** *Hippotragus niger*, **Roan** *Hippotragus equinus* and **Bontebok** *Damaliscus pygargus*

1	Karoo Rock Sengi <i>Elephantulus pilicaudus</i>	Three including one that posed beautifully on a kjoie at Marrick. Now generally believed to be this species rather than Western Rock Sengi previously thought to occur at Marrick.
2	Short-snouted Sengi <i>Elephantulus brachyrynchius</i>	An unexpected bonus with one found briefly sitting on a termite mound in Madikwe. A new species for the tours.
3	Southern African Hedgehog <i>Atelerix frontalis</i>	One sadly found injured and apparently moribund on the second night drive at Marrick.
4	Chacma Baboon <i>Papio ursinus</i>	One Heidelberg, three Suikerbosrand, common along the main road north of Zeerust and large groups on three days in Madikwe, twice at the lodge 'waterhole.
5	Vervet Monkey <i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>	Five at Warrenton, two on the drive out of Madikwe and small numbers seen daily around the lodge, particularly around the restaurant, on most days in Madikwe.
6	Southern Lesser Galago <i>Galago moholi</i>	Two in the lodge grounds on the first night in Madikwe with one also seen by John the following night.
7	Cape Hare <i>Lepus capensis</i>	Seen on two night drives at Marrick with a maximum of six on the second night.
8	African Savanna Hare <i>Lepus microtis</i>	Common at Madikwe with 30+ on the second of the four night drives.
9	Scrub Hare <i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	Up to three each day at Marrick.
10	Smith's Red Rock Rabbit <i>Pronolagus rupestris</i>	One on the final night drive at Marrick on the kjoies close to the lodge.
11	South African Ground Squirrel <i>Xerus inauris</i>	Common at Marrick and up to six on four days at Madikwe, the animals at the latter appearing distinctly smaller than those at Marrick.
12	Tree Squirrel <i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>	One seen by Sally in the grounds of Madikwe River Lodge with two more seen by the whole group on the final afternoon drive in Madikwe.
13	Spring Hare <i>Pedetes capensis</i>	Abundant at Marrick and up to three on four of the evening drives in Madikwe.
14	Cape Porcupine <i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	Counts of four, five and six on the three night drives at Marrick and one on the fourth night in Madikwe.
15	Four-striped Grass Mouse <i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>	Two near the lodge on our second afternoon at Marrick with another probable the following day.
16	Large-eared (Gerbil) Mouse <i>Malacothrix typica</i>	One on the second night drive at Marrick.

17	Desert Pygmy Mouse <i>Mus (Nannomys) indutus</i>	One seen but only briefly by the local guide Johnny, and Sally, on the second night drive at Marrick.
18	Bat-eared Fox <i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	Four on all three night drives at Marrick.
19	Black-backed Jackal <i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Five, two and two on the three night drives at Marrick, three along Eendracht Road near Suikerbosrand and a total of seven seen on four of the days at Madikwe.
20	African Wild Dog <i>Lycaon pictus</i>	Another highly enjoyable encounter with eight individuals shortly after dawn on the 10 th . On one occasion they briefly set off in pursuit of a Common Impala .
21	Spotted-necked Otter <i>Lutra maculicollis</i>	Prolonged views of two at Warrenton and another two seen at close range for 15 minutes or so from the derelict Shelduck Hide at Marievale.
22	Small (Cape) Grey Mongoose <i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>	One dashed across the road in front of the vehicle at Marrick and was seen briefly by everyone in the group.
23	Marsh Mongoose <i>Atilax paludinosus</i>	An unexpected bonus of one spotted by Katie near Otter Hide at Marievale. It then gave us excellent views before disappearing into a clump of reeds where it remained for almost 30 minutes feeding on either something it had caught or possibly a clutch of eggs.
24	Slender Mongoose <i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	One seen briefly by Katie at Marrick, another seen briefly by most of the group at Warrenton the following day and another seen by John and Mike in the grounds of Johannesburg Airport as they killed time waiting for our return flight.
25	Common Dwarf Mongoose <i>Helogale parvula</i>	Brief views of two on our second afternoon in Marrick.
26	Yellow Mongoose <i>Cynictis penicillata</i>	A total of six including two on a night drive at Marrick, one in Suikerbosrand and another in Madikwe.
27	Meerkat <i>Suricata suricatta</i>	Two out in the pan at Marrick where the habituated group were also seen around the lodge and another two in the lower level grasslands at Suikerbosrand.
28	Small-spotted Genet <i>Genetta genetta</i>	Nice views of one on the kjoopies near the lodge on the third night drive at Marrick and singles on two nights in Madikwe.
29	Common Large-spotted Genet <i>Genetta maculata</i>	Annoyingly the only one seen was one seen well by me late at night outside my room at Madikwe and it did not hang around long enough for anyone else to see it.
30	Spotted Hyaena <i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	A better year in Madikwe with a female and four young at a den on two occasions, two lethargic adults shortly after the encounter with the Wild Dogs and other individuals calling nightly near the lodge.
31	Brown Hyaena <i>Hyaena brunnea</i>	Another good year with sightings of singles on three occasions in Marrick with two together on a fourth occasion. Three of the encounters were again during the day.
32	Aardwolf <i>Proteles cristata</i>	Our best ever views at Marrick with one during the day and sightings of one, three and three on the three night drives. One particularly confiding individual performed for over 15 minutes close to the vehicle.

33	African Wildcat <i>Felis lybica</i>	Remarkably none at Marrick this year but three sightings at Madikwe, one seen briefly on the first evening drive, another seen briefly during the first morning drive and another which posed for over 5 minutes on the penultimate evening drive.
34	Black-footed Cat <i>Felis nigripes</i>	The biggest disappointment of the trip with only one brief and relatively distant sighting this year. I wonder if the increase in jackal sightings is having a detrimental effect on cat sightings.
35	Cheetah <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Prolonged views of two in Madikwe although they were somewhat inactive this year.
36	Caracal <i>Caracal caracal</i>	The biggest surprise of the trip with superb views of a young animal at Marrick for over 15 minutes on the second night drive. A rare bird at Marrick the local guides had not seen one since January but we were treated to fantastic views.
37	Lion <i>Panthera leo</i>	Four lionesses on the first afternoon drive at Madikwe, two females encountered at a waterhole on the third morning drive were crouched preparing to chase down a drinking Common Warthog but it never came close enough to spark them in to action. Later in the day the females were seen nearby with a young male approaching to within a few feet of the vehicle as they set off hunting. Another two at another waterhole on the same morning, a female at the lodge 'waterhole' in the early hours of the penultimate morning and finally two magnificent males with a female on the morning drive the same day.
38	Leopard <i>Panthera pardus</i>	A male was seen on two consecutive mornings at Madikwe dozing in the shade on the second morning apparently well satiated after killing a Common Warthog during the night.
39	Aardvark <i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Seen on all three night drives at Marrick with singles on the first and third drives and three on the second drive.
40	African (Bush) Elephant <i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Much commoner at Madikwe this year with several great encounters with large groups and small herds frequently encountered at the lodge 'waterhole'. Chalet 17 at Madikwe has an outdoor shower and showering on the balcony a few metres away from elephants is a truly outstanding experience.
41	Rock Hyrax <i>Procavia capensis</i>	Up to three daily in the grounds of Heidelberg Kloof Lodge and along the Heidelberg bypass close to the lodge entrance.
42	Plains Zebra <i>Equus quagga</i>	Three at Eendracht Road and common in the south-west of Suikerbosrand and in Madikwe with reintroduced animals also seen at Marrick.
43	White Rhinoceros <i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	Daily counts of one, 10, six, nine, two and one in Madikwe including one group of five individuals.
44	Black Rhinoceros <i>Diceros bicornis</i>	One seen well just after dark on the fourth evening in Madikwe.
45	Common Warthog <i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Three at Marrick and up to 20 daily in Madikwe.
46	South African Giraffe <i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	Up to 20 per day seen at Madikwe with eight introduced animals at Marrick.
47	African (Savanna) Buffalo <i>Syncerus caffer</i>	Two groups of at least five and one group of at least 50 animals in Madikwe.

48	Zambezi (Greater) Kudu <i>Tragelaphus zambeziensis</i>	Only only sighting of three at Marrick this year but up to 15+ daily in Madikwe including one in the lodge grounds on the final morning and several along the road north of Zeerust on route to Madikwe.
49	Eland <i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	c.15 in Suikerbosrand.
50	Cape Bushbuck <i>Tragelaphus sylvaticus</i>	Up to three in and around the lodge at Madikwe every day and a singleton along the river west of the lodge.
51	Gemsbok <i>Oryx gazella</i>	Up to c.20 at Marrick but just one sighting of two animals in Madikwe.
52	Ellipsen Waterbuck <i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	Three at Marrick and up to 12 at in Madikwe particularly in the area around the lodge.
53	Mountain Reedbuck <i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>	Four at Marrick.
54	Black Wildebeest <i>Connochaetes gnou</i>	Large numbers encountered in the plains area of Suikerbosrand with 100+ including introduced animals at Marrick.
55	Blue Wildebeest <i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Small numbers seen every day at Marrick. Two introduced animals outside their natural range were also seen at Marrick.
56	Blesbok <i>Damaliscus pygargus</i>	Seen daily at Marrick with a maximum count of 20+ and common in Suikerbosrand.
57	Red Hartebeest <i>Alcelaphus caama</i>	Seven Eendracht Road near Suikerbosrand, 10+ in Suikerbosrand and two in Madikwe 10+ reintroduced animals at Marrick.
58	Common Impala <i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Common at Madikwe with small numbers in Marrick including some black phase individuals.
59	Kalahari Springbok <i>Antidorcas hofmeyri</i>	A nice herd of around 25 animals in Madikwe compared to only a single individual in 2018.
60	South African Springbok <i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Only four seen in Suikerbosrand this year and large numbers of reintroduced animals each day in and around Marrick.
61	Transvaal Klipspringer <i>Oreotragus transvaalensis</i>	Three pairs seen in Madikwe including two pairs in Klipspringer Valley.
62	Steenbok <i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	One at Marrick and daily counts of up to 13 in Madikwe.
63	Common Duiker <i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	A total of six in Marrick but surprisingly no sightings elsewhere this year.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Striped Skink	<i>Trachylepis striata complex</i>	X		
Water Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>			X
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>			X
Cape Marsh Terrapin	<i>Pelomedusa galeata</i>			X
Leopard Tortoise	<i>Stigmochelys pardalis</i>	X		
Snake sp?		X		



BIRDS

Notes:

- Kimberley – includes Marrick and Warrenton.
- Heidelberg includes Eendracht Road, Suikerbosrand, Marievale and Heidelberg Kloof Lodge.
- Madikwe includes species seen on route to and from the reserve.
- L – Leader only. S – Single observer only. H – heard only.

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	X	X	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	L		
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	X	X	
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>		X	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>		X	
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>		X	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	X	X	X
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	X		
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	X	X	
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	X	X	X
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		X	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X	X	X
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>		X	X
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>	X	X	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	X	X	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	X	X	
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	X	X	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		X	X
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>			X
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	X	X	
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>			X
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>		X	
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>		X	X
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>			X
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	X	X	X
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	X	X	X
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	X	X	
African Black Duck	<i>Amas sparsa</i>	X	X	X
Cape Shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>		X	
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	X	X	X
Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>		X	
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>		X	
Cape Vulture	<i>Gyps caprotheres</i>	X		X
African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>			X
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus wahlbergi</i>			X

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>		L	
African Hawk-Eagle	<i>Aquila spilogaster</i>			X
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>			X
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>			X
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>			X
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>		X	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	X	X	X
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	S		
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>	X		X
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>			L
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>		X	
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	X		
Helmeted Guinea fowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	X	X	X
Grey-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila afra</i>		X	
Crested Francolin	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>			X
Natal Spur fowl	<i>Pternistis natalensis</i>			X
Swainson's Spur fowl	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>	X	X	X
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X	X	
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>		X	
African Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>		X	
African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>		X	
Black Crake	<i>Amauornis flavirostra</i>		X	X
Secretarybird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>		L	X
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	X		X
Red-crested Korhaan	<i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>			X
Northern Black Korhaan	<i>Afrotis afraoides</i>	X		X
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		X	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		X	
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>			X
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	X		
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	X		
Temminck's Courser	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>			X
Double-banded Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	X		
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	X	X	X
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	X	X	X
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>		X	X
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>		X	
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	X	X	X
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>		X	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		X	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		X	X
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	X		X

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		X	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		X	
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>		X	
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		X	
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>		S	
Namaqua Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>	X		X
Yellow-throated Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles gutturalis</i>			X
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			X
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	X	X	
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>		X	
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	X	X	X
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	X	X	X
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	X	X	X
Grey Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>			X
Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>		X	
Southern White-faced Owl	<i>Ptilopsis granti</i>			X
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	X		X
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	X		
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>			X
Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>			H
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	X		
African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>	X	X	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	X		
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>		X	X
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	X	X	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>		X	X
Red-faced Mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>	X	X	X
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	X	X	X
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	X	X	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>			X
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>			X
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>	X		X
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>			X
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>			X
Purple Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>			X
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>			X
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>			X
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus rufirostris</i>			X
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	X		X
Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>		X	
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	X		
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>		X	

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>			X
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	X		X
Bearded Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>			X
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>			X
Red-throated Wryneck	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>		X	
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	X		
Sabota Lark	<i>Calendulauda sabota</i>	X		X
Eastern Clapper Lark	<i>Mirafr fasciolata</i>	X		
Pink-billed Lark	<i>Spizocorys conirostris</i>		X	
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>	X		
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	X	X	
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>			X
Red-breasted Swallow	<i>Cecropis semirufa</i>	X		
South African Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon spilodera</i>	X	X	
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>		X	
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>	X		
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	X		X
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>			X
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	X	X	X
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger</i>			X
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>			X
Southern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>			X
African Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	X	X	
Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>			X
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>	X	X	
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>			X
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa</i>			X
Short-toed Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola brevipes</i>	X		
Sentinel Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola explorator</i>			X
Mocking Cliff Chat	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>		X	X
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>	X	X	X
Ant-eating Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>	X		X
Mountain Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>		X	
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>		X	
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>		X	
Kalahari Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas paena</i>	X		X
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>		X	
White-throated Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha humeralis</i>			X
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>			X
Chestnut-vented Warbler	<i>Sylvia subcaerulea</i>	X	X	X
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	X	X	
Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>		X	

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	X	X	
Black-chested Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>	X	X	X
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>			X
Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>	X		X
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis silens</i>	X	X	
Marico Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis mariquensis</i>	X		X
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>			X
Pirit Batis	<i>Batis pririt</i>	X		
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	X	X	
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	X		X
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>		X	X
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	X	X	
Magpie Shrike	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>			X
Southern White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>			X
Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	X	X	X
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	X		X
Crimson-breasted Shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	X		X
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>	X		X
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>			X
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	X	X	X
Meves's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis mevesii</i>			X
Burchell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>			X
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>	S		
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	X	X	
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	X		X
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>			X
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>			X
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		X	
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	X	X	
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	X	X	X
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	X		X
Scaly-feathered Weaver	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>	X		X
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>		X	
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	X		
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	X	X	
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	X		X
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>		X	
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>		X	
Red-headed Finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	X		
Blue Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>			X
Violet-eared Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus granatinus</i>	X		X
Black-faced Waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>	X		X

		Kimberley	Heidelberg	Madikwe
Quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	X	X	
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	X		X
Black-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra atrogularis</i>	X	X	
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	X		
Lark-like Bunting	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>	X		
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	X		
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>		L	
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	X		X

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