
EASTERN SOUTH AFRICA HIGHLIGHTS - 2023



Introduction

This Escarpment and Kruger Park birding safari is a tried-and-tested itinerary. And it always delivers! It covers some of the highlights of our home province of Mpumalanga, 'Place of the Sun Rise'. As Mpumalanga is our 'backyard', we know the area well! Moreover, February is a great time of the year for this tour, when birding is at its best. We aim to see over 300 species of birds and 35 species of mammals on this 9-day birding and wildlife safari. It's guaranteed to deliver a lot of 'bang for your buck'!

Areas covered

Our '**Escarpment and Kruger Park birding safari**' tour starts in Johannesburg. From there we visit Dullstroom, a small town in the highlands of the Province, where we will spend time birding in the surrounding countryside. After that we move on to Mount Sheba to explore the area's Afro-Montane Forests. Our next stop is the Blyde River Canyon, where the rugged escarpment gives way to the lowlands of Kruger. The Kruger National Park is the highlight of the birding tour, with time spent in three different camps. In conclusion, on the last day we'll have a final morning in Kruger before driving back to Johannesburg to arrive in the late afternoon.

Accommodation

The accommodation is of a medium-plus standard. It includes a small inn, a hotel, a resort and national park's chalets. Importantly, all accommodations have en-suite facilities, and are clean and comfortable.

The birding

Diversity is the name of the game! This Escarpment and Kruger Park birding safari covers a wide range of habitats within a relatively small area. These habitats range from the high-altitude grasslands of Dullstroom to the indigenous forest patches of Mount Sheba; the rocky slopes, cliffs and canyons of the Blyde area; and an array of woodland savanna types in the Kruger. As a result, the range of birds to be seen is correspondingly diverse. Our target birds include: Southern Bald Ibis, Secretarybird, Blue Crane, Buff-streaked Chat, Yellow-breasted Pipit, White-throated Robin Chat, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Batis, Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Kori Bustard, Martial Eagle, Southern Ground Hornbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Scarlet-chested Sunbird and many others.

The mammals

For non-birders or those with a broad interest there are plenty of mammals and other wildlife to see. For example, these include the classic African big game species such as Elephant, White Rhino, African Buffalo, Lion, Leopard, South African Giraffe and Hippopotamus. In addition, one can expect to see a range of Antelope, plus some smaller species such as various Primates; Honey Badger; Black-backed Jackal; various Mongoose species and others. In addition, there's a range of reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and other insects to be seen.

Group size

Maximum of 12 participants; 6 participants per vehicle / guide

Expected weather conditions

Cool to mild in the highlands, hot and humid in the Kruger. Some rain to be expected.

In conclusion, this Escarpment and Kruger Park birding safari is a fantastic way to be introduced to some of South Africa's scenery, birds and animals. It covers a wide range of habitats within a relatively small area and includes a chance for some fantastic mammal encounters as well. Indeed, this one is hard to beat...

Accommodation	Destination	Start	End	Basis	Duration
The Old Transvaal Inn	Dullstroom	14 Jan	15 Jan	D,B&B	1 Night
Mount Sheba Hotel	Panorama Route	15 Jan	16 Jan	D,B&B	1 Night
Forever Resort Blyde Canyon	Panorama Route	16 Jan	17 Jan	D,B&B	1 Night
Satara Main Camp	Kruger National Park	17 Jan	19 Jan	D,B&B	2 Nights
Skukuza Rest Camp	Kruger National Park	19 Jan	21 Jan	D,B&B	2 Nights
Pretoriuskop Rest Camp	Kruger National Park	21 Jan	22 Jan	D,B&B	1 Night

Key

D,B&B: Dinner, Bed and Breakfast

Price

ZAR 40 850 per person sharing

ZAR 6 390 single supplement

Included

- Accommodation
- All breakfasts and dinners
- Ground transport
- Lawson's insulated water bottle
- Entrance fees
- Personalised checklists
- Specialist guide fees

Excluded

- All airfares
- Travel and medical insurance
- Lunches
- All drinks
- Optional excursions where applicable
- Gratuities
- Items of a personal nature

Day 1: Saturday, 14 January

The Old Transvaal Inn, Dullstroom

Day Itinerary

Note: Participants should overnight on the 13th January 2023 at own cost, or arrive on early morning flights on the 14th January 2023 (07h00 arrival flights). Later arrivals on the 14th may result in additional transfer costs. Please consult us about appropriate flights.

After arrival in Johannesburg we'll drive northwards a short distance to Rietvlei Nature Reserve. This small reserve conserves some Highveld grassland habitat and holds a few bird species which we will not have a chance of seeing on the rest of the itinerary. These include South African Shelduck, Northern Black Korhaan, Greater Kestrel and Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler, among others. We'll then continue eastwards through Mpumalanga Province. The eastern reaches of the province are dominated by extensive beef and maize farming, with coal mining taking place here and there. The scenery is not too spectacular for the first two hours or so, but will improve as we leave the highway at Belfast and head north-east into the highlands. Before turning off however we will have a few stops to add some water birds to our list. Not far off the highway there are some pans and marshes where we will look for species such as Greater Flamingo, Cape Shoveler, Hottentot and Red-billed Teals, Yellow-billed, White-backed and Maccoa Ducks, Southern Pochard, Black-necked Grebe, Southern Red Bishop and others.

Further on we may deviate slightly to check out a South African Cliff Swallow colony before heading on for lunch in Dullstroom, our base for the next two days. The altitudes around Dullstroom vary from 2000 – 2250 metres (6500 feet) above sea level, and the habitat comprises open grasslands and rocky hillsides, while here and there stands of alien trees provide an additional habitat. We will probably arrive in the afternoon some time and if time allows may have a short afternoon activity before getting ready for dinner. Species we will be on the lookout for include Southern Bald Ibis, Cape Longclaw, Ant-eating Chat, Mountain Wheatear, Pied Starling, Steppe Buzzard, Cape Crow, Common Fiscal, Bokmakierie and many others. The Dullstroom area does not hold too many large mammals, though Black Wildebeest, Blesbok, Springbok and other antelope can be seen on farms, having been re-introduced by many landowners. Grey Rhebok, Mountain Reedbuck, Yellow Mongoose, Meerkat and Natal Red Rock Rabbit live under free-ranging conditions and can be seen in the area. We'll then have some time to freshen up before dinner.

South Africa

Officially listed as one of the most biologically diverse countries on earth, South Africa is made up of a staggering variety of landscapes and habitats. From near-desert on the west coast to sub-alpine scrub at the top of the Drakensberg at 3000 meters above sea-level, the unique Fynbos in the Cape and the savanna of the north-east, the visitor to South Africa will be enthralled by constantly changing landscapes. This diversity lends itself to an incredibly rich fauna and flora component, making South Africa a particularly exciting destination for the birder and natural history enthusiast.

Dullstroom

Situated in South Africa's beautiful Mpumalanga Province, the quaint village of Dullstroom is known for its excellent fishing opportunities and fresh country air. Aptly named, Dullstroom ('stroom' meaning stream) enjoys an abundance of water, marking the beginning of the Crocodile River and home to other major tributaries. It serves as a convenient stopover for visitors on the way to the Lowveld and Kruger Park. Dullstroom piques the interest of many newcomers with its sub-alpine climate, three endangered crane species, abundant wildflowers, rare mammals, great fishing and features the highest railway station in South Africa at over 2000 metres above sea level.

Overnight: The Old Transvaal Inn

Old Transvaal Inn is perfectly situated behind the iconic Old Transvaal Restaurant in the main road of Dullstroom within walking distance of shops and restaurants. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms and a coffee station with a selection of coffee and tea.



Day 2: Sunday, 15 January

Mount Sheba Hotel, Panorama Route

Day Itinerary

Today we will head out early on a morning excursion into the Veloren Valei (Lost Valley) Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site high up in the Steenkampsberg Range. Here the altitudes reach the 2250 metre (7380 feet) mark, and birds we will be on the lookout for include Denham's Bustard, Secretarybird, Gurney's Sugarbird, Eastern Long-billed Lark, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Grey-winged Francolin, Sentinel Rock-Thrush and Jackal Buzzard, among others. There's also a chance to see both Blue and Wattled Cranes in the reserve, although the numbers are low and there are many unseen valleys and depressions where they can hide from our view. After the morning excursion we will head back down to town for breakfast, after which we will make our way to Mount Sheba, a hotel situated around two hours' drive away on the edge of the escarpment. Here the warm air rising up from the Lowveld (low-lying plain) to the east brings a lot of moisture and large stands of indigenous forest grow here and there on the slopes. Mount Sheba is situated close to one of the largest remaining forest patches, and this is where our morning's birding will take place. Our temperate forests do not hold as many species as can be found in tropical forests, and yet present many of the inherent challenges of forest birding: reduced visibility, low light levels and secretive birds. Nevertheless, there are some great species to be seen here, such as Narina Trogon, Knysna Turaco, White-starred Robin, Chorister Robin-Chat, Cape Baits, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Olive Woodpecker, Orange Ground-Thrush, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Southern Double-collared Sunbird and many others. We may have time for a brief birding session during the afternoon, after which we'll have time to freshen up before dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Panorama Route

Connecting the Lowveld and the Drakensberg, and sandwiched between the Kruger National Park and the Highlands Meander, the historical Panorama Route is a scenic drive in the Mpumalanga Province. The route features sensational views of natural wonders including fascinating rock formations and impressive waterfalls and boasts numerous scenic hiking trails alongside a myriad of fauna and flora. The quaint little town of Graskop serves as the gateway to this wonderful route. Panorama's undoubted highlight is the Blyde River Canyon, one of the world's largest green canyons, filled with lush subtropical vegetation. Some other popular attractions along the route include the spectacular Lisbon,

Berlin, and Mac Mac Falls; Bourke's Luck Potholes; the Three Rondavels; and the astonishing God's Window. Don't miss the world-famous Kruger National Park and the picturesque gold rush town of Pilgrim's Rest, a historic living museum.

Overnight: Mount Sheba Hotel

Mount Sheba Hotel is situated in the rain forest near the famous town of Pilgrim's Rest in Mpumalanga. Well appointed rooms, gourmet meals and log fires give a magical feel to Mount Sheba. Walks in the forest are magical, with the rare Samango Monkey and rare bird calls around you.



Day 3: Monday, 16 January

Forever Resort Blyde Canyon, Panorama Route

Day Itinerary

Today we'll hope to have an early start, heading into the surrounding forest for some pre-breakfast birding, though as the region is often shrouded in mist we'll have to play it according to the weather conditions at the time. We'll put in quite a bit of effort to try and rack up a decent list of forest birds before breakfast, and if we still have some key species to see we'll have another bash in the forest before packing and departing for the Blyde River Canyon. En-route we'll stop off at a few of the major view sites before checking in to the resort. An afternoon walk in the resort grounds could produce Lazy Cisticola, Greater Double-collared and White-bellied Sunbirds, White-throated Robin-Chat, White-browed Scrub-Robin, Streaky-headed Seed-eater, Alpine Swift, Rock Kestrel and others, and we'll probably see the day out at the resort's Upper View Point, which provides fine views of the lower Blyde River Canyon. We'll then head back to the rooms to freshen up before dinner.

Overnight: Forever Resort Blyde Canyon

Forever Resorts Blyde Canyon has commanding views of the Blyde River Canyon, the third largest canyon in the world. It is the ideal base for hiking trails and scenic trips by car to well-known Mpumalanga locations.



Further Information: <https://www.foreverblydecanyon.co.za/>

Day 4-6: Tuesday, 17 January to Thursday, 19 January

Satara Main Camp, Kruger National Park

Day Itinerary

We'll start the day with a walk in the rocky woodland of the resort grounds. Birding here can be superb and we hope to see Mocking Cliff-Chat, Striped Pipit, Lazy Cisticola, White-throated Robin-Chat, African Firefinch, Sweet Waxbill, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Black-collared Barbet, Black-crowned Tchagra and Golden-breasted Bunting, among others. Our route will take us along the Kadisi Trail, with views of some of the stream's wonderful Tufa geological formations. After breakfast we pack our luggage and depart, perhaps taking in the canyon view site before heading for the edge of the escarpment and dropping down to the Lowveld (the low-lying savanna region of the north-east).

We enter Kruger National Park at Orpen Gate on the western side of the enormous National Park. This is where the going gets really slow, due to the incredible numbers of new bird species to be seen. These could include Green-winged Pytilia, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Yellow and Red-billed Hornbills, Swainson's Spurfowl, Crested Francolin, Senegal and Crowned Lapwings, Magpie Shrike, European, Lilac-breasted and Purple Rollers, Common Scimitarbill and many others. Raptors are plentiful and we could see Gabar Goshawk, Wahlberg's, Tawny and Martial Eagles, Bateleur, Brown Snake-Eagle and several other large raptors. Here in the south-central region of the park the basaltic soils result in good grass growth and a reduced shrub component, and this more open Knobthorn / Marula savannah attracts the grazers such as Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Common Waterbuck and Cape Buffalo. These in turn provide food for Lion prides and Spotted Hyena clans, while the smaller herbivores such as Impala and Warthog are preyed upon by Leopard and Cheetah. Our routine here will comprise morning and afternoon excursions, birding walks in the camp, a rest period and an optional sunset drive.

On our full day we'll start off with a cup of coffee or tea before a long morning drive, returning to camp for brunch at around 10h00. There are various routes to choose from – one can basically head, north, east, south or west from the camp. North is usually the call for the first morning, where the open plains country are a good bet for species such as Common Ostrich, Kori Bustard, Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark, Desert Cisticola and Secretarybird, while the sharp eye may turn up a roosting Verreaux's Eagle Owl in one of the many stands of Leadwood Trees growing along the creeks beds. Vultures are also reasonably common here and one can see all five species gathered together at feeding sites or the Witpens watering trough, where they gather to bathe in large numbers. After breakfast back at camp we'll take it as it comes, perhaps taking a walk in the camp grounds before a bit of siesta and an afternoon recce of one of the other routes in the area. There's also the option of the National Park night drive after an early dinner. This will give

participants the chance to encounter the more nocturnal species, including Owls (Barn, Spotted Eagle Owl, Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Pearl-spotted Owl, Southern White-faced Owl all possible) and mammals such as White-tailed Mongoose, African Wild Cat, Serval and Lion and Leopard on the hunt (note that these park drives are very much mammal-focused, as most participants aren't too interested in birds in general, though Owl are usually appreciated by all at least).

Kruger National Park

Stretching over more than two million hectares, the famous Kruger National Park is one of the world's largest game reserves and a truly remarkable destination. Owing to its exceptional size, visitors are able to experience fantastic diversity – from changing scenery and ecosystems to an impressive array of animals, plant life and birdlife. The park is home to over 130 mammals and over 500 bird species. Visitors can look forward to learning about the area's prehistoric past, enjoying a host of accommodation options, and viewing abundant wildlife including the famed Big Five. The diversity and sheer density of wildlife make Kruger National Park an unforgettable and once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Overnight: Satara Main Camp

Satara Camp is situated in the open Basalt plains at the northern end of the park's southern sector. The plains attract large numbers of grazers such as Zebra and Wildebeest, which in turn form the prey base for numerous Lion prides and Spotted Hyena clans, and indeed, the Satara region is one of the top game viewing areas of the park. As with all of Kruger's main camps, there's a shop, restaurant and fuel station, while two water holes on the perimeter attract herds of game in the dry season especially.



Day 6-8: Thursday, 19 January to Saturday, 21 January **Skukuza Rest Camp, Kruger National Park**

Day Itinerary

After a last morning drive from Satara, we'll have breakfast, pack and depart, heading to Skukuza Rest Camp 92 kilometres to the south. Skukuza is the park's headquarters and is situated on the southern bank of the Sabie River. This is a perennial river and one of the largest and most biologically diverse in the park. The habitat here comprises riparian zones, with large trees lining the riverbanks, and Sabie River Thickets away from the river courses. Birds we will be looking out for in this area include Saddle-billed Stork, Goliath Heron, White-crowned Lapwing, African Finfoot, African Darter, White-browed Robin-Chat, Bearded Scrub-Robin, Collared and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, African Fish Eagle, Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Busk-Shrikes, Wire-tailed Swallow, Pied and Giant Kingfishers, among many others. The permanent water source here attracts large numbers Impala, one of the main prey items of Leopard, and

we will be on the lookout for these and other predators such as Lion, Wild Dog and Spotted Hyena. Elephant and Cape Buffalo are also common in the area, usually heading down to the river as the day heats up. The area is, however, not really suited to large numbers of grazing animals and small herds of browsers such as Kudu and Bushbuck are more common here. We should arrive at the camp in time for lunch and a rest period, after which we will head out on an afternoon drive, or alternatively take a birding walk in the camp grounds.

On our full day we'll have a morning drive, which may involve a drive down to Lower Sabie Rest Camp for breakfast (your guide will discuss the exact plans with you the night before and you can inform him of your preferences – more time in camp relaxing or more time out in the field looking for animals). We'll then have a rest before an afternoon drive or you might like the option of a sunset drive with the park guides, which will give you the opportunity to be out after the public are back in camp.

Overnight: Skukuza Rest Camp

Skukuza Rest Camp, named after the first Warden of the park, Sir James Stevenson-Hamilton (the name, given to him by the local staff, meaning something to the effect of 'he who sweeps clean') is the headquarters and operations center for the entire park. Although it has a reputation for being large and busy, it's generally quiet around the rooms, and the camp itself offers some good birding opportunities. The surrounding area is also rich in wildlife, especially in the dry season when the permanent Sabie River provides a focal point for animal activity. It also features a doctor, a shop, a bank, a post office, a library, a museum, a restaurant and a cafeteria with decks overlooking the river.



Day 8: Saturday, 21 January

Pretoriuskop Rest Camp, Kruger National Park

Day Itinerary

Once again, after a morning drive and breakfast, we'll head on to our next camp and the last stop for the tour. Pretoriuskop Rest Camp is situated in the wettest region of the park and is dominated by a veld type known as Pretoriuskop Sourveld. The tall, coarse grasses growing here are not too palatable, so the area does not hold large numbers of grazers, though it is particularly good for White Rhinoceros (or at least used to be before the current poaching epidemic). Birds we will be searching for in this area include Lizard Buzzard, Dark Chanting Goshawk, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Bushveld Pipit, Yellow-throated Petronia, Pale Flycatcher, Retz's and White-crested Helmet-Shrikes, Grey Penduline Tit, Neddicky, Green-capped and Yellow-bellied Eremomelas, among others. We will probably arrive at camp in the afternoon and will have time to settle in before an afternoon drive in the area and a final dinner in the camp's restaurant.

Overnight: Pretoriuskop Rest Camp

Pretoriuskop Camp is one of the oldest camps in the Kruger National Park. Much of this old atmosphere has been retained with only a few modifications, such as restaurants, a shop, a petrol station and one of the best swimming pools in the park. The accommodation is grouped into 3 circles centered round a compact administrative block and spaciouly laid between lush green lawns.



Day 9: Sunday, 22 January**End of Itinerary**

Day Itinerary

There will be a final optional activity on the last morning, offering a last chance to see species missed so far. After breakfast we'll meander slowly out of the park and then head back to Johannesburg, a five hour drive away, with a few birding stops en-route as a last effort to up the species count for the tour!

Travel Information

South Africa

Entry Requirements

Please acquire the necessary travel documents for your trip to South Africa.

New requirements, introduced by the South African Department of Home Affairs from 1 June 2015, specify that all minors (children under 18 years) are required to produce, in addition to their passport, an Unabridged Birth Certificate which shows the details of both parents for all international travel to and from South Africa. Further documentation may be required, please research this thoroughly (<http://www.dha.gov.za/>) or contact the airline you are booked on for specific requirements.

Banking and Currency

The currency in South Africa is Rands (ZAR). You will need money for your drinks, any meals not included and personal items.

Master & Visa cards are widely accepted, Diners Club and American Express are not as widely accepted. Cash machines are readily available in most towns. It's best to ask your guide about where and when it is best to draw cash. Please inform your local bank about your travelling arrangements, as they are able to freeze your account should they be suspicious of banking activity in a foreign country. Traveller's cheques are not widely used anymore. It would be best to change money at airport on arrival if you have not arranged it before leaving home.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

An extensive tarred road system makes travelling in South Africa by vehicle convenient and easy. You will find gravel roads in rural areas though. Note:

- A valid international driver's licence is required.
- We drive on the left hand side of the road.
- Wearing seat belts is compulsory and cell phones can only be used 'hands free'.
- Speed limits are generally set at 120km on freeways, 100km on secondary roads and 60km in urban areas.
- Toll fees apply on certain national roads.
- Petrol stations are widespread.
- Most global car hire firms have branches in South Africa

Health and Medical Information

Your guide will carry a very basic first aid kit with antiseptic, bandages and band aids. It would be advisable to bring some of your own basic medical supplies including anti-histamine cream for bites and itchiness, Imodium (or something similar for stomach trouble), rehydrate sachets, painkiller, antiseptic and other personal medication.

Malaria Risk

Only eastern Mpumalanga, eastern and northern Limpopo and far northern KwaZulu-Natal are malarial areas. Note that the Kruger National Park falls into this region. In malarial regions the rains usually arrive in spring and early summer (September – November), after which the Malaria Risk starts to build up and peaks in February to April. The Kruger itself is a low to medium-risk, but it is a malarial area and as a company we do advise taking malarial prophylactics. We advise consulting your medical practitioner. Prevention is better than cure though, so wearing socks and closed shoes, long pants, etc, in the evenings and spraying with repellent is a key measure of prevention. Please consult your health care practitioner for official medical advice.

Also have a look at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>, under General Information for more advice and information.

Safety Notices

South Africa is generally a safe country to visit, especially in the wildlife areas outside of major towns and cities. Generally one should exercise caution by not openly displaying valuables, not leaving bags visible in parked cars, being vigilant and sticking to prescribed routes / areas.

Snakes and Scorpions

In the kinds of places we stay, we may encounter snakes and scorpions. It is thus advisable to wear closed shoes and socks when out in the field and to ALWAYS wear closed shoes and socks after dark in areas where scorpions may be encountered (these are more common in hot, dry areas). Also be vigilant and always keep an eye out, even in your rooms (check bedding, towels etc before use).

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice

Standards of hygiene in relation to food health and safety in South Africa, are generally high in hotels, restaurants, pubs and nightspots. Tap water in South Africa is safe to drink and cook with when taken from taps in urban areas. Not all tap water in rural areas is safe for consumption, so take precautions if necessary. It is safe to eat fresh fruit, vegetables and salads, and put ice in your drinks. South Africa's fish, meat and chicken are of excellent quality, so there is no need to limit yourself when enjoying the local cuisine.

Restaurants are subject to South Africa's food safety control legislation, which is implemented by local government. Regulations include certification and regular inspections by health inspectors to ensure hygienic standards are maintained. Street food is not as common in South Africa as it is in other countries, although vendors selling traditional snacks and meals can be found in city centres and townships. Food safety in such instances cannot always be guaranteed.

Climate and Weather***Summer: September to April***

- Most of South Africa falls under a summer rainfall region (except for the Western Cape and parts of the Eastern Cape).
- It can get hot to very hot in the north and east, mild to warm on the interior plateau.
- Thunderstorms are common, though cool, overcast weather can also be expected. The rainy season coincides with the summer.
- Summers in the Western Cape are usually dry, hot and can be windy.

Winter: May to August

- Winters on the Highveld (interior plateau) and Escarpment can be cold to very cold overnight and in the early morning while days are usually cool to mild, though occasional cold fronts can make it cold all day. Minimal chances of rain.
- The eastern coastal regions and Lowveld (savanna / Kruger region) have cool to mild nights and warm to hot days. Minimal chances of rain.
- On tours including open-vehicle game drives it can get very cold on morning drives and adequate clothing is a must.
- The Western Cape has cool wet winters in general.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

Comfortable casual clothing will be suitable, and it is best to avoid white and bright colours whilst birding and game viewing on foot. Khaki, brown, beige or sombre coloured casual clothes are best. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers will help protect you against the sun and insect bites. Comfortable walking shoes will be needed, but sandals can also be

worn at times. Hiking boots are not necessary unless your tour includes a specific walking / hiking component. Hats and sunblock lotion are vital, as are sunglasses. A warm jacket, scarf, woollen hat and gloves are advisable if your tour includes open safari vehicle drives in winter (June to September), while a windbreaker / raincoat and warm fleece are recommended for all tours, regardless of the time of the year or mode of transport.

In addition:

- Binoculars, camera and accessories. A Spotting Scope is also a good idea.
- Wide brimmed hat.
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams and insect repellent.
- Prescription medications (if any).
- Hairdryer if necessary.
- Torch / Flashlight.
- Travel alarm clock or mobile phone with alarm.

On group trips please pack luggage in **soft bags** as it helps with the packing of the vehicles.

Internet Availability

Most accommodation offer Wifi (free or paid) in their business centres, rooms or restaurants. Internet cafes are found in most business areas and shopping malls. In addition, some South African restaurants offer WiFi access (free or paid).

There are also outlets such as PostNet that offer internet, fax and postage facilities.

Electricity and Plug Standards

The South African electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ.

Most plugs are 15 amp 3-prong or 5 amp 2-prong, with round pins. If an adaptor is called for, consider bringing one with you, although they can be purchased locally. (US-made appliances may need a transformer).

General Guidance

Laundry facilities

Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like detailed info.

Tipping

Waiters at meal times generally get 10% of the bill but you would only need to worry about the meals that you will personally be paying for as the guide will cover the tips for the meals that they will be paying for.

R5 per main bag is the norm for portage.

As far as your guide is concerned, there is no set standard. It is not compulsory to tip drivers and guides, but if you feel that your guide has given his or her best in order to make sure that your safari was enjoyable, then a gratuity is always appreciated.

WiFi Access

WiFi access is limited, though more and more accommodation establishments are offering WiFi services. Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like to know which specific establishments have internet access for public use.

Mobile Phone Reception

Cell signal is generally quite good in South Africa, but it can be limited in some of the more remote areas. Please enquire if you would like more specifics.

Recommended Reading

Your guide will have a small reference library with them (provided they are not embarking on any flights during the tour) so it is not necessary to bring that many books, but a personal bird and mammal field guide is recommended for those who want to do research on their own time.

Recommended Field Guides**Birds**

Sasol Birds of Southern Africa, Fourth Edition. Sinclair, Hockey, Tarboton & Ryan. 2011
ISBN-13: 9781770079250

Roberts Bird Guide, Second Edition, Chittenden, Davies & Weiersbye
ISBN 978-1-920602-01-7

Mammals

Smither's Mammals of Southern Africa: A field Guide. Second Edition. Peter Apps. 2012
ISBN-13: 9781770079137

Terms and Conditions**Itinerary Terms and Conditions**

This itinerary is subject to change due to weather conditions at the time and other factors beyond our control.

Birds and mammals mentioned on this itinerary do not represent all that can be seen. A full list of possibles appears on your checklist.