



In conjunction with



Presents:

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICA: THE CAPE, KRUGER AND VICTORIA FALLS

30 May - 10 June 2024



Lilac-breasted Roller abounds in the Kruger National Park

Join us on a comfortable birding and wildlife safari of a lifetime in South Africa and at the Victoria Falls! This is a fabulous “introduction to Africa” trip that will allow you to get your first taste of Africa (we almost guarantee that you’ll be wanting to return to this huge continent multiple times though after this trip—or, if you’ve in fact been before, you’re likely to now see some birds and mammals you might have missed the first time around). We begin by experiencing one of the world’s most beautiful cities, Cape Town, and the surrounding Cape Fold Mountains and spectacular Cape coastline with its unique, mega-rich plant-life and accompanying endemic birds such as sugarbirds, sunbirds and **Cape Rockjumper**. We also look for **African Penguin**, **Blue Crane**, **Cape Mountain Zebra** and many other charismatic species.

We will then fly to the opposite corner of South Africa and spend a few days in one of Africa’s greatest game parks, Kruger National Park. This is not only one of South Africa’s richest places for mammals, but also boasts a bird list of over 500 species. This massive park covers a vast area and is teeming with Africa’s big (and small) mammals (including **African Elephant**, **Giraffe**, **Burchell’s Zebra**, **Lion**, **Leopard**, and **Cheetah**). The great thing for birders, though, is that it’s full of easy-to-see, spectacular-looking birds, such as several species each of roller, bee-eater, kingfisher, hornbill, vulture, owl, and stork. The park is teeming with birds of prey, including the spectacular, colorful **Bateleur**. There’s also a good chance of finding **Secretarybird**, **Kori Bustard** (the world’s heaviest flying bird), and **Southern Ground Hornbill** (along with a plethora of other hornbill species). We end this amazing trip with a flight from the Kruger Park to Victoria Falls, bordering Zambia and Zimbabwe. What locals call “The Smoke that Thunders” is the planet’s largest waterfall (it’s twice the height of Niagara and more than twice its width), where the mighty Zambezi plummets into a deep gorge. The area around the falls is extremely rich with birdlife and is in the heart of wild Africa where megafauna still freely roam.



Lion (and with luck Leopard and Cheetah), should be encountered on this tour

Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

Days 1-4. Birding the Fairest Cape

We arrive in beautiful Cape Town and spend our first four nights of the trip at a comfortable B&B near Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, one of the world's great botanical gardens. After checking into our accommodation, time-permitting we can start looking for some of the more common Cape Town area bird species which are likely to include brightly-colored sunbirds and our first localized endemic species such as **Cape Bulbul**.



Malachite Sunbird is often seen near Cape Town

During our first full day in Cape Town, we plan to visit several bird-rich sites on the Cape Peninsula and around the breathtakingly beautiful False Bay coast where the mountains come right down to the sea. We can visit Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope, where we might see **Common Ostrich**, localized nectar-feeding birds such as the dazzling **Orange-breasted Sunbird** and unbelievably long-tailed Protea nectar specialist, **Cape Sugarbird**, along with mammals such as **Bontebok**, **Cape Mountain Zebra** and particularly brazen **Chacma Baboons** which might snatch any food you're carrying so be alert!

There are some amazing wetland birding sites near Cape Town, and we hope to bird the mega-diverse Stranfontein Bird Sanctuary for a few hours. This is a great place for **Greater Flamingo**, **African Marsh Harrier**, **Maccoa Duck**, all three South African teal species, a number of reedbed-inhabiting warblers and a great many other species.



African Penguin can be seen near Simonstown on this tour

During one of our three full days in Cape Town, weather-permitting we can embark on a pelagic seabird trip that sails up to 50 miles out to sea from the iconic landmarks Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope. Here we usually encounter at least four albatross species, **Cape Gannet**, petrels, storm-petrels, shearwaters, and many other seabirds. After the boat trip ends, we can visit one of the three mainland **African Penguin** colonies if we have not already done so around False Bay, although we are also likely to see swimming penguins during the pelagic.

On another of our full days, we'll head north to the West Coast National Park and the huge Langebaan Lagoon where birds like **Southern Black Korhaan**, **Black Harrier**, the tiny **Cape Penduline Tit** and stacks of others will be sought, among an assemblage of interesting mammals.



Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross is one of four albatross species we see on Cape pelagic trips

Overnight: Fernwood Manor or similar, near Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens

Days 5 – 7. Karongwe Private Game Reserve

Today is a long travel day since we have to fly about a thousand miles from Cape Town to the small town of Hoedspruit. These flights are not always direct and sometimes transit through Johannesburg. Hoedspruit is the gateway town to the central Kruger National Park and adjacent private reserves such as Karongwe. Once we arrive in Hoedspruit, the guide will collect our tour vehicle for an hour's drive to Karongwe. (*We book this flight for you and add the cost to your final bill; please see cost estimates below under the tour information summary section at the end of this document.*)

Karongwe is one of the many large private game reserves near Kruger National Park. It's what's known as a "Big Five" reserve since it features the five mammals African big game hunters sought: the **Lion**, the **Leopard**, the **Cape Buffalo**, the **White Rhinoceros**, and the **African Elephant**. Not only will you have a chance to stalk these animals with your cameras, you'll have an excellent chance of getting shots of all of them here. **Cheetah** is another specialty in this reserve—and of course there's also **Hippopotamus**, **Giraffe**, **Burchell's Zebra**, and a large range of antelopes, too. It's also a great place for birds, boasting almost 300 species. Our targets will include **White Helmetshrike**, **Common Scimitarbill**, **Brubru**, **Purple-crested Turaco**, **Black-backed Puffback**, **Black-crowned Tchagra**, **Hamerkop** (literally, "hammerhead," a name perfectly suited to this species!), **Green Woodhoopoe**, **Black-collared Barbet**, **Southern Black-Tit**, **Red-faced Mousebird**, Arrow-marked Babbler, and various flycatchers and kingfishers. There are lots of dams and waterholes on the reserve, and at these we'll have a chance for **Grey Heron**, **Water Thick-knee**, **Three-banded Plover**, **White-faced Whistling Duck**, **Blacksmith Lapwing**, and various swallows and swifts.



Hamerkop is a charismatic African bird species we should see on this trip

Each day at Karongwe we'll take a morning and an afternoon birding/game drive in an open safari vehicle. It's also possible to arrange a walk in the bush with the local guides who will teach you the uses of various plants in traditional medicine.



A friendly-looking (but pet at your own risk!) African Wild Dog. They've become very rare

Overnight: Chisomo Safari Camp luxury safari tents, Karongwe Collection

Days 8-9. Kruger National Park proper

After leaving Karongwe private reserve, we'll head south to Kruger National Park, where we'll spend two nights in the park itself. Kruger is one of the most famous game parks on the planet. And rightly so. It covers a humongous area of low-altitude dry woodland and savanna. Not only is the park full of Africa's megafauna, but it also has a staggering diversity of birds, a disproportionate number of them easy to see, dazzlingly colorful (e.g. barbets, rollers, etc.) or just plain large (in the case of **Southern Ostrich**, **Kori Bustard**, all the storks, eagles and owls). There are a lot of weaver species in the park, usually bright yellow and black, but with some exceptions such as the incomparable **Red-headed Weaver**.



Red-headed Weaver is very different from most weavers which are usually bright yellow and black

Another dazzling thing about Kruger Park is the size of the herds of mammals it's possible to encounter. While we will have seen **Burchell's Zebra, Giraffe, African Elephant, African Buffalo** and many antelope species in Karongwe, we're likely to see much larger numbers of these species at Kruger. Additionally, the guide will put in extra effort to try and locate the more difficult species such as **Black Rhinoceros, Leopard, Cheetah**, smaller cats, and **African Wild Dog**.

The accommodation inside Kruger is basic but it's great to spend time inside the park itself.

Overnight: Skukuza, Kruger National Park



Bateleur, a colorful, acrobatic eagle that is still common in the Kruger National Park but now very rare outside of large game parks

Days 10-12. Victoria Falls sightseeing and birding

We fly from Kruger to the town of Victoria Falls (*another flight we book for you*) on the Zimbabwe side of the incomparable Victoria Falls where we spend two nights. This is wild country, and big game can still be encountered around the town (please be aware that many of these are dangerous animals so kindly don't stray off on your own without one of our guides accompanying you!). We are bound to see all kinds of amazing birds such as hornbills, turacos, firefinches, waxbills, perhaps even a **Pennant-winged Nightjar** in the evening. Your flight homeward will depart from Livingstone (you can book this flight for any time on Day 12).

Overnight: Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Zimbabwe

Please note that this itinerary is a guide only and might be changed depending on accommodation availability, updates to flight schedules to Victoria Falls, local updates as to conditions in certain areas, etc.



Victoria Falls!

- Duration:** 12 days
- Group size:** 7-8 guests
- Dates:** 30 May - 10 June 2024
- Start:** Cape Town, South Africa
- End:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- Prices:** ZAR102,000 per person sharing, based on a group of 7 or 8 (we limit this trip to a maximum of 8).

Single supplement: R17,300

Click [here](#) for currency converter.

Price includes

- A US\$300 per participant fee to GGBA
- Accommodation
- Meals
- Unlimited bottled water is provided in the vehicle (which you're welcome to take at night as well but more pricey bottled water bought at restaurants is for your account)
- Kruger conservation fee and other entrance fees
- Fees for local guides
- All transport during the tour, including an open safari vehicle while in Kruger and an open safari vehicle in Karongwe

Price excludes

- International and domestic flights. We book domestic flights for you to ensure everyone is on the same ones. These can only be booked in late 2023 or early 2024, but to give you an estimate of prices, current costs are as follows:
 - Cape Town to Hoedspruit (near Karongwe/central Kruger) on 3 June 2024 – about US\$250-300
 - Nelspruit (near southern Kruger) to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe on 8 June 2024 – about US\$330-350
 - (if needed, we can also help with a flight from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe to Cape Town or Johannesburg on 10 June if needed – this is if you book your international flights to arrive in Cape Town and depart from either Cape Town or Johannesburg)
- • **Travel insurance (vital to have, and it needs to cover trip cancellation, trip interruption, medical, evacuation, repatriation costs in case needed, and Covid insurance to cover extra expenses outside of the tour itself due to Covid or other illness)**
- • Drinks
- Tips (see either GGBA travel homepage or <https://www.birdingecotours.com/tipping-guidelines/>)
- Laundry
- Gifts and other items of a personal nature

How to book: To make a booking, you can kindly go to <https://www.birdingecotours.com/make-a-booking/> or e-mail info@birdingecotours.com. We will then also inform you how to pay your 25 % deposit to confirm your booking. Most people pay this by mailing a check at the prevailing exchange rate (which we'll give you) to our Ohio office (which we'll also give you details of when we get your e-mail or online booking). The 75 % balance is due two months before the trip starts.