

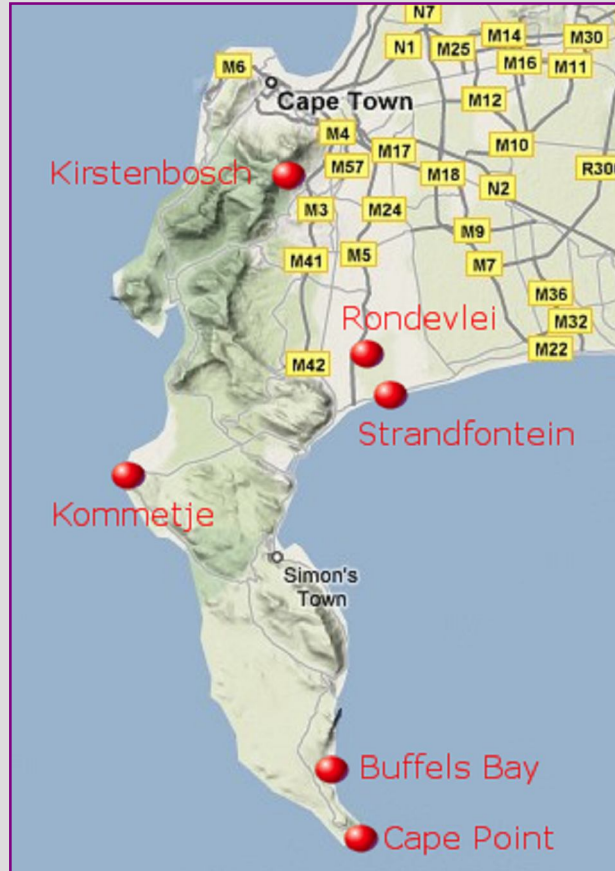
Cape Town



South Africa



26th February to 1st March, 2002



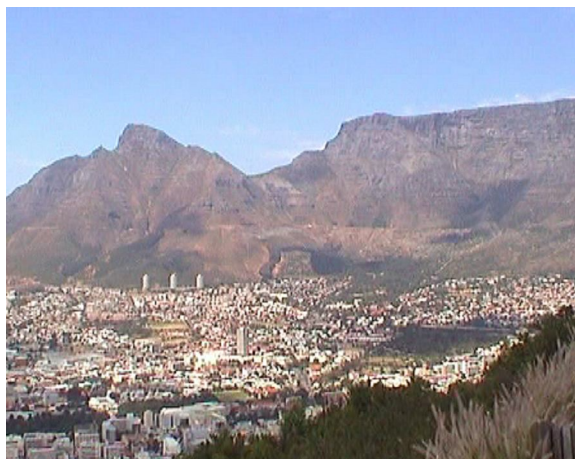
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|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Tuesday, 26 th | Signal Hill Mount Nelson Hotel area Table Mountain | 11:30-12:30 13:30-16:15 17:45-19:15 |
| Wednesday, 27 th | Company Treasure Hunt Kommetjie, Cape of Good Hope Reserve (Buffel's Bay, Cape Point), Boulders Point | 11:30-18:00 |
| Thursday, 28 th | Strandfontein Sewage Works | 14:30-17:00 |
| Friday, 1 st | Kommetjie Kirstenbosch botanical gardens Rondevlei | 6:45-7:30 8:20-12:30 13:00-14:15 |

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

26th February to 1st March, 2002

Introduction

Myself and over 100 others visited Cape Town for a few days as a company business trip, and I was fortunate enough to have enough free time to see some superb examples of South African birds while there. We landed on a Tuesday morning, and left on the Friday afternoon, so thanks go to my employers for allowing some free time in amongst the business sessions. There was also opportunity on some of the organised events to see some birds, as in the Cape treasure hunt and plummet up Table Mountain. Since my assumption that over 100 other colleagues would not be too keen to follow my steps over swamp and scrub was probably correct (apart from one poor individual who fell into the trap - well done, James, you deserve a medal!), I planned ahead with a few ideas in mind for the limited free time. Dodging the obvious attractions of shopping, beauty therapy, and being flipped upside down in a helicopter, a car was arranged for me (thanks Caroline), and a short itinerary planned for the prime sites.



From a birding point of view, the city of Cape Town is quite large and relatively sterile in terms of variety, although there are some small oases serving up some of the more common birds. However, the Cape Peninsular itself could have been designed for a short birding break. There is a good mix of habitats, from coastal to mountain, and with inland aquatic and forest in between, with the greatest distance travelled no more than three quarters of an hour from the city. Driving was no problem - it is on the left, and the roads are generally very well marked. An international driving permit is not required.

Safety was not a particular issue while I was there. Cape Town is regarded as one of the safer cities in South Africa, but that does not mean that caution should be thrown away, especially after dark. I have not heard of any problems from the birding sites that I visited. For extra piece of mind, it seems that the major mobile phone networks also work in South Africa - I do know that both Vodaphone and Orange had good reception while there.

SITES

Signal Hill

Tuesday



We weren't able to go to the hotel until early afternoon, so, after the compulsory two hour wait to get through customs check and then baggage claim to find the luggage hadn't followed us, the coach drove the half hour to Signal Hill from the airport. This seems to be the usual tourist type of stop, with parking for coaches and cars, from which the high heeled and slip-on-ed could trudge up to the magnificent views of Cape Town - plenty of noise here and hustle & bustle, but not many birds from the view point. As usual, it was much better to go in the opposite direction to the general herd. There weren't too many birds in the scrub

and bushes below the car park, which may have been due to the amount of people in the general area and the time of day (we were there over midday). However, a little bit of patience found numerous approachable Helmeted Guineafowl, and even better, a flighty Cape Robin-chat, and an equally elusive Karoo Prinia. The latter fellow popped up most obligingly on calling to it. In the air over the hill were 3 White-necked Ravens and a solitary Steppe Buzzard. The chances are that this would be an unlikely birding spot as such but may improve even more at quieter and cooler parts of the day.

Mount Nelson Hotel gardens and local area

Tuesday afternoon

This was to be our rather prestigious home for the week. It is very impressive and quaintly colonial, with all the amenities that the swimmer, sunbather and general loungeur would need for a rather relaxing and pampered time. However, the temptations to myself were the potential birding gardens surrounding the main buildings, and parks adjacent to the hotel.

Prospects looked good from the balcony of the hotel room, with a couple of Red-winged Starlings clinging to other balconies, and Speckled Pigeon on an opposing roof. The hotel and gardens were a little different from my expectations. The buildings are fairly well concentrated in one area, with some, although limited, space and vegetation between. In front of the hotel, the gardens are reasonably extensive, with one part much quieter and with more potential than the busier recreation area. The former was lawned with palms, bushes, and ornamental trees forming the body, and was very good for a small variety of the more common garden birds. The water jets sprinkling the lawns provided an added bonus, giving plenty of reason for birds to congregate around them and the pools they created. On the open areas of lawn were plenty of Olive Thrushes, Red-winged Starlings, Speckled Pigeons, Red-eyed & Laughing Doves. An unexpected bonus was a small group of Cape White-eyes, which were partial to the bushes which were being directly pounded by water jets.



From the hotel I took the first right from the main hotel entrance (Buxton Hof), which is a road climbing up the bank in suburbia to the base of Table Mountain. It passes by De Waal Park, which has plenty of trees, but seemed quiet apart from feral pigeons. Molteno Reservoir is open to the public, but is very sterile, with concrete banks - home to a few Hartlaub's Gulls, Egyptian Geese, and motley but small collection of pigeons and doves. There are security guards here, and many restrictions - haven't a clue why, since the place is pretty well boring. Just below here was a single Fiscal Shrike, which wasn't too easy



to view properly, but certainly showed the faded supercilium that seems characteristic of Cape birds. It also seemed to be more of a slate grey than black. The road after the reservoir continues to climb towards Table Mountain, but probably does not contain much of interest until the base of the slopes are reached, since it is basically a small avenue of trees surrounded by suburban houses with small gardens. The predominant birds by both sight and sound are Red-winged Starlings, with Eurasian Starlings a runner-up, along with plenty of Speckled Pigeons and Laughing Doves.

Walking back down to the hotel, I found a small waterworks plant within the De Waal Park, right next to a playground. This consists of one football pitch sized lagoon, and another half the size, which are reasonably well vegetated (particularly the smaller one). They turned up a superb and very approachable Blacksmiths Plover, along with a sizable group of Hartlaub's Gulls. I would think that this small oasis has the potential to bring in other birds at different times.

Table Mountain

Tuesday evening



Late in the afternoon, we all trooped on to buses, and were dropped off at the base of Table Mountain. Riding to the top on the revolving cable car is a novel and sometimes worrying experience, but certainly well worth the effort for the excitement of the ride itself.

Omens were good when what looked like a Cape Sugarbird flashed in front of the cable car before take off. The plateau itself extends a lot further South than expected (reportedly around 2 miles) when looking up from Cape Town. After clambering off the car with the masses, and bypassing them as they pinpointed

the gift shop and cafe, I quickly found better birding territory. The plateau is mainly flat for some distance, with plenty of very low scrub, and one or two small ravines.

Birds are few and far between. Most common and equally impressive, with vivid front standing out against green leaves were Orange-breasted Sunbirds, characteristically vocal and also approachable. A juvenile Cape Grassbird also made its presence felt, with a parent not far away. Most impressive was first sighting of a single Verreaux's Eagle which appeared low over the plateau. Soon after, 2 were seen circling high over the mountain, showing the distinctive shape of narrow wings pinched in at the base. Hundreds of *hirundines* and swifts were in what seemed like the same vicinity, but too distant to distinguish. Returning back to the cable car station, more swifts were seen in front of the mountain face. Most were African Swifts, with a few Alpine interspersed.

Treasure Hunt - the Cape Peninsular*Wednesday*

The first full day started with a morning business session, after which we were all levered into 15 minibuses and enthused for the company treasure hunt. Not normally top of the wish list, this event seemed to have a lot more potential, since one of the main aims was to cover a circuit so that the sights around the Cape could be seen. This did indeed prove to be the case. Once out of the Cape Town sprawl, we motored down the M3, across the peaks of the Silvermines area, to arrive at the first destination, which was Kommetjie. The clues pointed to the lighthouse, and although time was short, there were a number of interesting coastal birds. We at first landed short of the lighthouse, by a small beach area with exposed rocks off the shoreline. The rocks hosted multitudes of cormorants, which unfortunately were a little too distant to make out most, apart from the obvious Great Cormorants and one or two of the much smaller Crowned Cormorants, whose small crests could be clearly seen. The sandy shoreline had around a dozen Black Oystercatchers, and we could also see the lighthouse a little way further South from here. The required photo taken here, I wandered to the fenced perimeter, and this produced the goods - a couple of Spotted Thick-knees just over the boundary.

Before going into the Cape Reserve, the itinerary required a stop off for curios at roadside sellers. There were some quite good artefacts here, but the calls of sunbirds on the other side of the road was a much greater draw. Result was one bird seen and identified as Southern Double-collared Sunbird.



Buffels Bay was the designated site for lunch. With coronation chicken thrust quickly down, the Greater Crested & Sandwich Terns on the rocks were scrutinised. Among the smelly tangle on the shoreline were small numbers of Cape Wagtail. Despite a short walk into low scrub behind the beach, not much apart from Cape Bulbuls were seen.

Next stop was Cape Point, which gains almost all of its credence from geographical position - this was greatly diminished by the predictable take over by tourism. The fernicular just had to be taken to the lighthouse, but one benefit of this was the Rock Martins circling beneath.

Last stop before finish was Boulders Point, and the Jackass Penguin colony. This, of course, was also turned into a tourist spot. The sight of penguins in the wild was more than acceptable, but blighted by bathers swimming around them and the attendant commercialisation. On the other side of the car park, to the south, were yet more penguins, which were not quite as encroached upon. Despite all this, the birds seemed totally oblivious to human presence.

Strandfontein Sewage Works*Thursday afternoon*

Following a delayed finish to the morning business session, and the signing of tomes to release the hire car, we arrived here at around 2:30pm. The general area was found quite easily - after following Baden Powell Drive (R310) East along the shoreline for around 7km, and then heading North for 4km, the turn for "Zeekoevlei" was obvious. This took us past a large lake behind a line of trees to the right, which looked fairly

uninteresting. Looking for the entrance to the actual sewage works was not totally straightforward - the more obvious track before some disused buildings was barriered. The real track was just after the buildings, and much less impressive. The track from here was very sandy, and initially followed the northern and then western edges of the lagoons.



The area covered by these is quite large - each of the dozen or so individual lagoons is quite wide, and seemingly reasonably deep, with at the most only small amounts of reed fringes. The tracks running through them vary from rough or sandy, to almost average. Birding seemed to start quite slowly, and built up nicely as the day went on. First birds seen were a few wildfowl in the form of Cape Teal, Blacksmiths Plovers and Cattle Egrets. Things looked up when we chanced upon a couple of Orange-throated Longclaws and Cape Sparrows. Species such as Crested Coot, Egyptian Goose, and Little Grebe seem to be on almost every lagoon, but sorting through the small groups of wildfowl uncovered Southern Pochard and Yellow-billed Duck. One of the smaller and shallower lagoons chanced upon later had more reeds and some exposed mud, with a varied collection, including good numbers of Red-billed Teal, Yellow-billed Duck, Cape Shoveler, and a single South African Shelduck (which promptly retreated into the reeds), Sacred Ibis and White Pelicans. Good numbers of Plain Swifts had been seen throughout the afternoon, but a late treat were large numbers of White-rumped Swifts & White-throated Swallows, and single Little Swift, hawking close in over the track and adjacent lagoon. At this point, it was time to leave, so naturally as we drove back along the tracks, birds seemed to increase in numbers. The track along the western edge seemed particularly good for Tinkling Cisticola and Cape Bulbul. A Fiscal Flycatcher was almost passed up as a Fiscal Shrike - an easy mistake to make! Overall, the view of the area changed as the day went on - at first hard work with few birds, but finally one of experiencing a good site.

Kommetjie

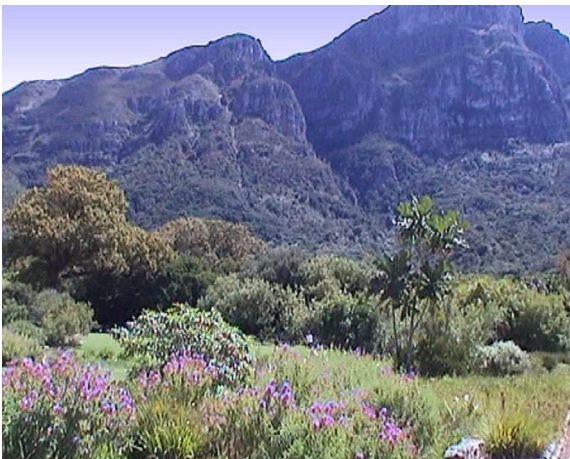
Friday morning



After seeing, but not having the opportunity to identify, the many cormorants on the

rocks on treasure hunt day, we tried again by arriving here at 7:45am. Unfortunately, the tide was only just receding, and the birds were somewhere else - the exposed rocks just beyond the shoreline must have been too close to the beach for their comfort. The detour wasn't a total flop, since a couple of very close Hadada Ibis had been passed in the centre of the village, along with numerous Helmeted Guineafowl. The Black Oystercatchers were still among the gulls, although not as approachable as hoped. We also tried for the thick-knees again at the lighthouse. They weren't to be found, but a short seawatch had lines of Cape Cormorants passing eastwards. When watching these from the shore, they seemed all black, including the lack of yellow facial skin. However, the similar Bank Cormorant apparently does not gather in such numbers away from the breeding areas, and Cape Cormorants from this distance and at this time of year can seem all dark around the gape.

Kirstenbosch botanical gardens



We arrived here a little behind schedule (i.e. 20 minutes after opening time) due to rush hour traffic heading into Cape Town. By this time, the weather had turned to a steady drizzle, but this cleared later in the morning. After picking up the guide map and a few tips from the front desk (one of which was that the Spotted Owls hadn't nested this year), we started on the cultivated gardens immediately outside of the main entrance. Birds were more vocal than visual here, most of which being the common species already seen, such as Cape White-eye, Cape Bulbul, Olive Thrush, and good numbers of Southern Double-collared Sunbirds. Much more diversity was found beyond the main pond, in the medicinal plants and erica / useful plants beds.

The pond itself was devoid of birds, but shortly after were Cape Robin, Speckled Mousebird, and Black Saw-wing. Deeper into the beds were Southern Double-collared & Orange-breasted Sunbirds, singing Sombre Bulbuls, Southern Boubou, Yellow Canaries, and Rameron Pigeons.

Next on the agenda was the Protea area - one of the parts of the garden worth looking forward to. It is quite an open area, with plentiful mown lawns, and stands of shrubs including sugar bearing Protea. The Orange-breasted Sunbirds seem so much less wary here, and a Cape Sugarbird was perched in the open for some time. We stopped for some water and to reflect on the unique character of the Sugarbird - when we moved on again and rounded the corner there were about another 10 birds together, even closer and less concerned by us than the first bird.

A change of habitat then led to the lower slope of the Nursery Ravine. This proved to be very quiet - we decided it was due to the heat of midday, and returned to the car. From our point of view, the garden deserves its reputation as one of the best sites in the area. For non-birders, the walks are very pleasant, although this time of year is not the best from the botanical minded. We only spent 3 hours there, but missed out not only a major part of the garden, but also varied habitat such as the lower slopes.



Rondevlei

Friday afternoon

This is a particularly well managed and manicured reserve, set alongside suburbia. Only an hour was left on the last afternoon to see the birds here, and we wished more time was available - this is a little gem of a place. We found it fairly easily, by driving South on the M5, where there is an obvious brown sign to the left (seen near to Grassland), and a further sign to the right after a couple of hundred yards. The reserve entrance is at the end of this road. It is actually quite close to Strandfontein sewage works, but despite this proximity, the habitat and species are not the same. Rondevlei consists of a single large brackish lagoon, with significant reed fringes and stands in the centre, a sand bar, and one or two areas of exposed mud and sand amongst the reeds. And all this for only 5 rands. There are two tower hides which overlook the whole reserve, and a generous spattering of hides. Around the lagoon, the tracks weave through low scrub and small bushes, which must harbour a lot of potential, although we saw only Tinkling Cisticola. Predominant birds are Darters, which were not seen at Strandfontein, but are in good numbers and close to here. Others are Sacred Ibis, Great Cormorants on the sandbar, and Long-tailed Cormorants from the hides. Smaller numbers of wildfowl were represented by Cape Shoveler and Red-billed Teal.



SPECIES SEEN

Jackass Penguin

Spheniscus demersus

The colony visited at Boulders Point is apparently one of only two mainland breeding sites in the country. Perhaps up to a hundred or so birds were there, both in the tourist enclosed part of the beach and the adjacent rocks and sea to the South



Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

A regularly seen bird on the lagoons at Strandfontein sewage works - singles and groups of up to 6 birds seen on almost all expanses of water

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

3 on the lagoon at Rondevlei

Great White Pelican

Pelecanus onocrotalus

The majority of the birds seen were at Strandfontein sewage works, in 4 groups totalling ~70 birds. These included both adults and some of the greyer juveniles. 2 also at Rondevlei



Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

The most common cormorant, seen every day in large numbers

Cape Cormorant

Phalacrocorax capensis

There were probably birds on the rocks at Kommetjie on 27th, but couldn't be identified. ~150 passed the lighthouse on the 1st March, from singles to large groups of up to 20. The yellow around the gape was not evident - apparently this is usual for the time of year and distance seen

Crowned Cormorant

Phalacrocorax coronatus

Adults with crests could be seen among the Great Cormorants at Kommetjie on 27th. About 20 were at Strandfontein

Long-tailed Cormorant

Phalacrocorax africanus

3 juveniles in front of the hides at Rondevlei



Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

Very prominent at Rondevlei, with ~25 seen, both on the ground and flying

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Strandfontein (5), Rondevlei (2)

Black-headed Heron

Ardea melanocephala

A solitary bird was in the dunes at Strandfontein

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

1 flying over reeds at Strandfontein

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Milnerton (1), Strandfontein (5), Rondevlei (4)

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Abundant - seen every day in most open areas, including within Cape Town vicinity

Sacred Ibis*Threskiornis aethiopicus*

A very gregarious and common bird, with 4 seen in Cape Town area, over 100 at Strandfontein, 40 at both Rondevlei and Kommetjie

**Hadada Ibis***Bostrychia hagedash*A pair was within the village of Kommetjie on the 1st, and a single bird flew over Kirstenbosch**Glossy Ibis***Plegadis falcinellus*

1 flew from the reeds at Strandfontein

African Spoonbill*Platalea alba*

2 adults at Rondevlei

**Greater Flamingo***Phoenicopterus roseus*

A group of 20 birds at Strandfontein included a few juveniles, with a single bird on a separate lagoon

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptica*

Nice to see these birds in the wild and not just feral, but they seem to be on every single patch of water imaginable. Common

South African Shelduck*Tadorna cana*

Only one bird seen, at the rear of a group of mixed waterfowl on exposed mud at Strandfontein. It disappeared into the reeds soon after being spotted

Cape Teal*Anas capensis*

A pair of these were the first wildfowl seen at Strandfontein, with perhaps up to a hundred subsequently on an adjacent lagoon

Yellow-billed Duck*Anas undulata*

A group of 6 flew from reeds at Strandfontein, and ~15 in a mixed group later on exposed mud

Red-billed Duck*Anas erythrorhyncha*

~100 birds were in a mixed group of waterfowl on exposed mud at Strandfontein, and 4 were at Rondevlei



Cape Shoveler*Anas smithii*

A total of ~30 at Strandfontein, with a further 2 at Rondevlei

Southern Pochard*Netta erythrophthalma*

~20 in small groups and pairs at Strandfontein, and 6 at Rondevlei

Black-shouldered Kite*Elanus caeruleus*

Up to 5 separate birds at Strandfontein

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

1 of the Yellow-billed subspecies at Strandfontein

(Steppe) Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

1 flew over Signal Hill, and 1 perched on telegraph pole at Strandfontein

Verreaux's Eagle*Aquila verreauxii*An initial sighting of a single bird low over the Table Mountain plateau was followed shortly after by a pair circling in the distance among a large group of *hirundines*. It is a spectacular and distinctive eagle, with long narrow wings pinched in at the base**Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

1 hovering at Cape Point

Helmeted Guineafowl*Numida meleagris*

When seen, they are very gregarious - 12 including juveniles on Signal Hill, 4 at Strandfontein, 30 early morning at Kommetjie, and 4 at Kirstenbosch

**Purple Swamphen***Porphyrio porphyrio*

2 briefly at Strandfontein

Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers at Strandfontein (~20) and Rondevlei (~10)

Red-knobbed Coot*Fulica cristata*

All birds in breeding plumage and fully knobbed - 20 were initially seen in channels on the road from Cape Town to Milnerton, 40+ at Strandfontein, and 10 at Rondevlei

**African Oystercatcher***Haematopus moquini*

Kommetjie (25), beachfront at Strandfontein (3)

Black-winged Stilt*Himantopus himantopus*

Large numbers were in channels seen from the coach on the airport to Signal Hill on arrival

Spotted Thick-knee*Burhinus capensis*

A pair in the sandy coastal scrub at Kommetjie lighthouse

Blacksmith Plover*Vanellus armatus*

After the first dapper bird was seen at De Waal Park waterworks on the first day, this turned out to be a very common bird, and usually found in quite large groups anywhere near fresh water



Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

1 at Kommetjie on 27th

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Group of six on the channel at Milnerton

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

10 on exposed mud at Strandfontein

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

Good numbers seen, usually near the coast

Hartlaub's Gull *Larus hartlaubii*

An extremely common bird from the coast to the suburbs. Regularly checked for Grey-headed Gull - all were in winter plumage



Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*

~20 amongst the Sandwich Terns at Baffels Bay, and single birds at Strandfontein and Kommetjie

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

About 80 at Buffels bay in the Cape Reserve

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*

Common



Rameron Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

The bright yellow eye rings seem to make this a more than mundane pigeon. 2 groups of 3 were at Kirstenbosch, and were very approachable

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Common



Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Common

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

5 among a large flock of African Swifts from the top of Table Mountain, and then hundreds close overhead at Kirstenbosch

African Swift *Apus barbatus*

Hundreds from the top of Table Mountain, and a single bird amongst the Alpine Swifts over Kirstenbosch

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

A single bird with the *hirundines* at Strandfontein

White-rumped Swift*Apus caffer*

Up to a hundred birds in a large flock low over the lagoons and track at Strandfontein

Speckled Mousebird*Colius striatus*

Only one was seen briefly emerging from a bush at Kirstenbosch

Malachite Kingfisher*Alcedo cristata*

1 flying along channel at Milnerton

Black Saw-wing*Psalidoprocne pristopectera*

A single bird circling a small area near the pond at Kirstenbosch

Plain Martin*Riparia paludicola*

Very common at Strandfontein, with numbers totaling over 3 figures over the afternoon

Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

Kommetjie (50), Strandfontein (20)

White-throated Swallow*Hirundo albigularis*

A mixed flock containing mainly White-throated Swallows was low over the water and track at Strandfontein, passing very close to us many times. To the uninitiated, there can be confusion with Banded Martin, since the bright light can make them look brown on the back at times, with similar breast band and white underwing coverts

Rock Martin*Ptyonoprocne fuligula*

Up to 5 circling the base of the lighthouse at Cape Point

Orange-throated Longclaw*Macronyx capensis*

2 at Strandfontein - first was a stunning adult with bright orange throat, the second a sick and pale individual with what looked like a damaged and swollen knee

Cape Wagtail*Motacilla capensis*

Regularly seen, with most at Kommetjie (5), Baffels Bay (10), and Strandfontein (30)

**Cape Bulbul***Pycnonotus capensis*

First birds seen were an elusive group of 10 at Buffels Bay and a single bird at Kommetjie. They were subsequently not as regularly seen as expected - 3 at Strandfontein, 2 at Kirstenbosch (where Sombre Bulbul was much more common), and 10 at Rondevlei

Sombre Greenbul*Andropadus importunus*

The songs and calls were heard throughout Kirstenbosch, with at least 10 birds seen. They are generally difficult to pick out of their favoured thick bushes and canopies, but some did show well

**Olive Thrush***Turdus olivaceus*

Most of the birds seen were around the hotel and suburban Cape Town area, where they are quite common. An additional 8 or so were at Kirstenbosch

Karoo Prinia*Prinia maculosa*

One of those birds which seems to have a song and call too big for the bird itself - Signal Hill (1), Kommetjie (1), Strandfontein (2), Kirstenbosch (15), Rondevlei (3)

Cape Grassbird

Sphenoeacus afer

These are much better in real life than in the books. A vocal and approachable juvenile was on the Table Mountain plateau, with an adult close by

Tinkling Cisticola

Cisticola tinniens

These were seen in the Strandfontein area, with 7 at the sewage works and 3 at Rondevlei. They can be seen well, especially if the calls are followed



Fiscal Flycatcher

Sigelus silens

These are remarkably similar to Fiscal Shrike unless looked at properly - bill shape and white on the wings are obvious pointers. The single bird at Strandfontein was almost passed by

African Dusky Flycatcher

Muscicapa adusta

Similar to Spotted, this is a less slender bird with faint though obvious eye ring. ~8 birds were at Kirstenbosch, including juveniles



Cape Robin-chat

Cossypha caffra

Signal Hill (1), Kirstenbosch (3), Rondevlei (1). They generally tend to be skulkers - none were seen in the open for long

Familiar Chat

Cercomela familiaris

2 birds together on rocks at Table Mountain plateau

Orange-breasted Sunbird

Anthobaphes violacea

The bellies on these birds stands out against the background vegetation, and they are generally very approachable - Table Mountain (10), Kirstenbosch, where they were almost exclusively in the Protea garden



Southern Double-collared Sunbird

Cinnyris chalybeus

After the single bird at the curio stalls near Scarborough, 30 or so were at Kirstenbosch

Cape White-eye

Zosterops pallidus

Common and regularly seen in any area with trees. A group of half a dozen were easy to find in the hotel gardens



Cape Sugarbird

Promerops cafer

This is a uniquely stunning bird. The first one at Kirstenbosch was lapped up, with a further 12 also in the Protea garden. There was a mix of males and shorter tailed

females, with the males happy to chase each other from plant to plant

Common Fiscal

Lanius collaris

2 birds were seen, one just below Molteno reservoir, and the other on the golf course at Milnerton. The latter bird did not have the faded supercilium that is a usual feature of Cape birds



Southern Boubou

Laniarius ferrugineus

A single very close bird at Kirstenbosch

House Crow

Corvus splendens

3 near the airport

Pied Crow

Corvus albus

Strandfontein (5), Rondevlei (1)

White-necked Raven

Corvus albicollis

Signal Hill (3), Table Mountain (3), Kirstenbosch (3)

Eurasian Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Common

Red-winged Starling

Onychognathus morio

Very common in almost every habitat



House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

A small group at the hotel

Cape Sparrow

Passer melanurus

A male and female together at Strandfontein

Common Waxbill

Estrilda astrild

3 or 4 groups of half a dozen birds around Kirstenbosch

Yellow Canary

Serinus flaviventris

These were quite regularly seen around Kirstenbosch (~30). The first ones were scrutinised carefully, since Cape birds are much greyer than the northern forms

TOTAL SPECIES = 88