

SOUTH AFRICA



"Kruger National Park is the crowning glory of South Africa's natural treasures, with the prospect of a big game experience to rival anywhere on the continent. With our very local guide (Joe lives close to the Park), this promises to be a special trip."
Darren Rees

Dates Fri 28 July - Sat 12 Aug 2017
Price £5,795
Deposit £1,150 Single Supp £500

Leaders Darren Rees and Joe Grose
Flights South African Airways scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Durban (via Johannesburg)
Inbound: Overnight, Johannesburg-Heathrow
Weather This is the South African winter, so cool mornings, warm afternoons and chilly evenings. In Kruger and KwaZulu-Natal, it will be mild, with temperatures from 15°-25°C. In Wakkerstroom, the coolest place, from 5°-20°C
Walking No serious hiking, mostly short walks along country roadsides. In the National Parks, we bird from the vehicles and have short walks around the rest camps. In Madikwe and for the Kruger night drives, we use special open sided vehicles
Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 15
Insects Malaria is present in Kruger, so please consult with your travel clinic/doctor
Accom We stay at a combination of comfortable lodges, guest houses and rest camps, all with private facilities
Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

African Elephant	Sable Antelope
Black and White Rhino	Meerkat
African Lion	Wildebeest
Cheetah	Bat Hawk
Leopard	Blue Crane
African Wild Dog	Blue Korhaan
Southern Giraffe	Purple-crested Turaco
Southern Oryx	Woodward's Batis

Callan Cohen: Lion, White Rhino, Marico Sunbird, Wild Dog, Kori Bustard, Southern Ground Hornbill

Spectacular big game safaris and brilliant birds - a big tour of beautiful landscapes, with wildlife highlights all the way!

- Incredible Kruger National Park for the best African big game
- Top carnivores: Lion, Leopard and African Wild Dog
- Big beasts: Elephant, Black and White Rhino, Hippo and Cape Buffalo
- Giraffe and a host of antelope: Kudu, Impala, Oryx and Wildebeest
- Stunning birdlife: Bee-eaters, Turacos, Barbets, Hornbills and Sunbirds
- Special species: Endemic Cranes, Larks, Korhaans plus Meerkats!
- Multi-centre tour with top South African guide

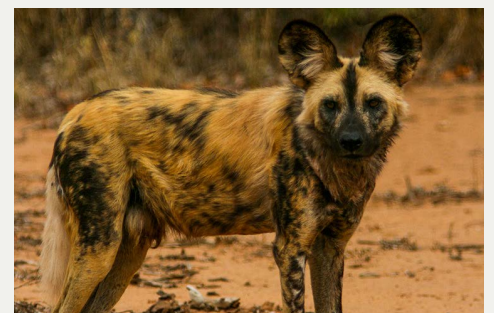
1-2 After an overnight flight to Johannesburg, we fly to Durban to meet our local guide. We travel northwards to the verdant surroundings of St Lucia, where a range of habitats - grassland, dune forest and estuary, hold special birds like Livingstone's Turaco, Woodward's Batis, Crowned Hornbill, Rudd's Apalis and White-eared Barbet. Dolphins surf the Indian Ocean breakers, there are large Nile Crocodiles and other goodies include Red Duiker, Reedbuck and Hippo, not bad for starters!

3-4 Inland, we've two nights at Bonamanzi Reserve, a mix of savannah, riparian forest, endangered sand forest and perennial 'pans', particularly bird-rich, with Purple-crested Turaco, Gorgeous Bush-Shrike, Neergaard's Sunbird, African Broadbill and Tambourine Dove, to name just a few. We will also be visiting Mkuze Game Reserve, one of the best Black and White Rhino reserves in Southern Africa and in the hotter part of the day we'll be at one of their famous

waterhole hides, where Kudu, Rhino, Nyala and Warthog drink, alongside Golden-breasted Bunting, Blue Waxbill, Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove and Pink-throated Twinspot.

5-6 Driving to the highland grasslands of Wakkerstroom, one of South African's best birding destinations, we've two nights to search for endemic and threatened birds, including Blue and Grey Crowned-Crane, Rudd's and Botha's Larks, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Blue Korhaan and Denham's Bustard. Mammals include Black Wildebeest, Mountain Reedbuck, Blesbok and Meerkat

7-10 We depart for the 'Lowveld' and Kruger National Park, described as one of Africa's most prolific and diverse Parks, over 500 birds and nearly 150 mammal species have been recorded! Our first two nights, at a southern camp, is amidst woodlands hosting a variety of hornbills, sunbirds, mousebirds, woodhoopoes,





"Alongside the mammals, the bird-list is as mouth-watering. We'll take in a variety of habitats, from estuary and ocean, to forest and savannah, so expect the spectrum, from Sunbirds to Ostrich!"
Darren Rees

barbets, bee-eaters and bush-shrikes! A variety of raptors can be seen too, such as Martial and Tawny Eagles, Brown and Black-chested Snake-Eagles and African Harrier-Hawk. We'll also explore some of southern Kruger's best Wild Dog areas, before heading to the central plains.

We've two nights in the central areas, where there are large concentrations of plains ungulates, such as Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Impala, Giraffe and Cape Buffalo, along with predators including Lion, Leopard, Spotted Hyaena and maybe Cheetah. Impressive savannah birds include Secretarybird, Kori and Black-bellied Bustard, Southern Ground-Hornbill and Common Ostrich. Other mammals commonly seen are Chacma Baboon, Vervet Monkey and Steenbok.

Another full day will include a visit to the perennial Olifants River, where there's a large Elephant population. The birdlife has outstanding species such as White-crowned Lapwing, Yellow-billed and Saddle-billed Stork, Goliath Heron and African Openbill. We'll take safari vehicles for a night-drive looking for nocturnal beasts: Genets, Porcupine, Civet, Leopard and Honey Badger will be targets, along with owl and nightjar species.

11-12 Leaving the 'Lowveld', for the northern Drakensberg escarpment, our route takes us into Limpopo Province, where we'll make a few special birding stops, including one to see spectacular Bat Hawks. We've one night in Magoebaskloof, with its beautiful Afro-montane forests, where Samango Monkey and Bushbuck are found, along with exquisite birds: Chorister Robin-chat, Cape Batis,



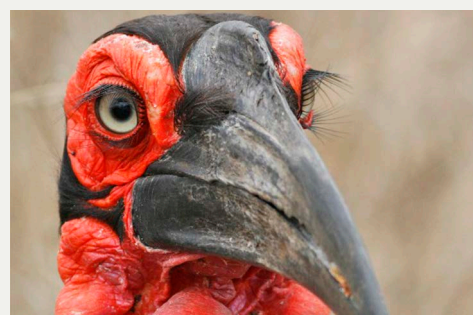
Black-fronted Bushshrike, Knysna Turaco, White-starred Robin, Orange Ground-thrush and Green Twinspot.

Heading west, to the semi-arid savannah of Polokwane Game Reserve, its acacia-scrub and grasslands are home to Tsessebe, Sable Antelope and White Rhino, along with arid-region species like Oryx and Red Hartebeest. The impressive bird list includes Crimson-breasted Shrike, Black-cheeked and Violet-eared Waxbill, Acacia Pied Barbet, Scaly-feathered Finch and Marico Sunbird.

13-14 After a morning at Polokwane we head off, via the scenic Waterberg Mountains, for our final destination, the Madikwe Game Reserve. From a beautifully appointed lodge, our game drives are conducted in safari vehicles. This is a big-five reserve (Lion, Leopard, Buffalo, Elephant and Rhino), with the extra attraction of African Wild Dog.

The birdlife is typical of the dry 'Bushveld', with Southern Pied Babbler, Red-Crested Korhaan, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Red-faced Mousebird, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Temminck's Courser, Pale Chanting Goshawk and more. Our last evening will feature a night-drive, where we'll search for more unusual species: maybe Springhare, Bat-eared Fox, Caracal, Aardwolf, White-faced Scops-Owl, Spotted Eagle-Owl or Pearl-spotted Owllet?

15-16 After one last early morning bush drive at Madikwe, we'll start the return journey to Johannesburg airport. Our overnight flight arrives in London on Day 16.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Overnight flight from London to Johannesburg, then an onward flight to Durban and travel to St Lucia
1 night at Lodge Afrique
- Days 3-4 Travel to Bonamanzi Reserve
2 nights at Lalapanzi camp
- Days 5-6 On to Wakkerstroom highland grasslands
2 nights at Wetlands Country House
- Days 7-8 Drive to Kruger National Park
2 nights at southern rest camp
- Days 9-10 Move to the central plains in Kruger
2 nights at central rest camp
- Day 11 On to the Afro-montane area of Magoebaskloof
1 night at Magoebaskloof Hotel
- Day 12 Travel to Polokwane Game Reserve
1 night at Plumtree Lodge
- Days 13-14 Drive to Madikwe Game Reserve
2 nights at Jaci's Tree Lodge
- Days 15-16 Return to Johannesburg for flight home, arrive UK Day 16