



LOWVELD & KRUGER BIRDING & NATURE TOUR

This 5-day tour is designed to provide, in the short time available, an extensive overview of the birds, mammals and general nature occurring in Eastern South Africa with emphasis on the Kruger National Park. Several different habitats will be encountered ranging from Montane Grassland, Afro-montane Forest, Grass savannah, Riverine forest, as well as several tree and bush savannah areas occurring on the predominant basalt and granite soils. The tour is escorted by a specialist birding guide with more than 10 years' guiding experience.

DAY 1

Guests transfer from OR Tambo International Airport to the Peermont Metcourt Hotel at Emperor's Palace. Your guide will meet you in the late afternoon for a pre-tour briefing and dinner.

DAY 2

After an early breakfast, depart at 07h30 and travel via Witbank Nature Reserve, Belfast, Dullstroom and Lydenburg to Misty Mountain Inn on Long Tom Pass. Misty Mountain is a Natural Heritage Site because of the Blue Swallows who have nested there over the years. Meet for dinner and complete check lists.

The day consists of traveling through the high lying grassland areas (1500m to 1750m) with occasional short stops to view the mammals and birds which occur in the area, time will be spent in the montane grassland (above 2000m) in search of several birds endemic to this area.

DAY 3

Early morning birding walk followed by breakfast. Depart at 10h00 and travel via Sabie to Gecko Lodge in Hazyview. Arrive for check-in and lunch (own account) before departing at around 14h00 for an afternoon open vehicle safari in the Kruger National Park. Return to Gecko Lodge at gate closing for dinner and to complete check lists.

DAY 4

Early wake up for departure at 05h30 for a full day open vehicle safari in the Kruger National Park. The lodge will supply breakfast packs and we'll stop at around 08h30 at one of the Parks' picnic sites or rest camps. Lunch for own account. Return to the lodge at around 16h00. Meet for dinner and complete check lists.

The day comprises a full day spent in the Kruger Park traversing various habitats with possible sightings of several mammal species and a multitude of birds, trees etc

DAY 5

Early morning birding walk at Gecko Lodge before breakfast at 08h00. Check out and depart for either Casa do Sol or Sabi River Sun for final birding and completion of check lists. Both lodges could produce possible species so far not encountered. Depart on the shuttle to Johannesburg at 12h30 arriving at around 18h00. Overnight at the Peermont Metcourt Hotel.

Depending on the time of year one can expect to view in excess of 250 birds, 25 mammal species as well as reptiles, trees and other fauna.

SPECIALS

Mammals:

The Kruger Park is famed for the "Big 5" (Lion, Leopard, African Elephant, Rhinoceros, and Cape Buffalo) during the few days allowed one will be likely to view several of these species. Apart from viewing these "flagship species" other mammals such as Giraffe, Burchell's Zebra, Hippopotamus and several antelope species are likely to be seen.

Birds:

This tour gives the birding enthusiast a chance of viewing many of the possible 58 endemics, near endemics and breeding endemics which can be encountered in the area such as Knysna Turaco, Jackal Buzzard, Southern Bald Ibis, Cape Vulture, Ant-eating Chat, Pied Starling and Gurney's Sugarbird to name a few. Raptors are in abundance in the Kruger Park (particularly in summer). Sightings of African Hawk Eagle, Martial Eagle, Tawny Eagle, African Fish Eagle and Bateleur are fairly regular. Several of the 5 vulture species which occur in the area may be encountered as well as the possibility of viewing other vulnerable species, such as one of the three highly endangered Crane species that occur in the area.