



**BIRDING TOUR SOUTH AFRICA: BUDGET CAPE TOWN -
FYNBOS ENDEMIC AND THE WEST COAST**

01 - 05 FEBRUARY 2026

By Zach Simpson



Protea Canary can be one of the most difficult endemics to see in South Africa.

Overview

This tour was a four-night tour based in Cape Town. Each of the three full days was spent birding different areas within an hour or two from Cape Town. Once everyone had arrived on the first day, we spent some time birding the Wetlands in Cape Town. This kicked off our trip list well as Cape Town has good waterbird diversity and numbers. Some highlights from the first afternoon included **Maccoa Duck**, **South African Shelduck** and **Cape Longclaw**.

The next day was spent to the east of Cape Town: heading out of town and then along Clarence Drive we arrived at Rooi-Els. Here we saw some of our major targets including **Cape Rockjumper** and **Orange-breasted Sunbird**. Heading into Betty's Bay we visited two sites, namely Stony Point Penguin Colony and Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. Birds like **Victorin's Warbler**, **Sweet Waxbill**, **Bank Cormorant** and **African Penguin** were all seen well.

Our second full day was spent visiting multiple sites along the West Coast. A combination of different habitats, including strandveld and wetlands, led to a wide range of targets seen successfully. **Cape Clapper** and **Karoo Larks**, **Cloud Cisticola**, **Southern Black Korhaan**, **Chestnut-banded Plover**, **Red-necked Phalarope** and **Black Harrier** were some of these targets seen.



Red-necked Phalarope is a local rarity in this area.

The last full day started off on the rocky slopes of Paarl mountain. Our major target here was **Protea Canary**. Thankfully we had great luck with this species. We also managed to get a few raptor species this morning, including a local rarity. The afternoon was spent at Kirstenbosch with the aim of cleaning up a few remaining species before the end of the tour. Species like **Lemon Dove**, **Olive Woodpecker** and **Forest Canary** were all great additions.

Detailed Report

Day 1, 1st February 2026. Birding Cape Town and its Wetlands

Our tour only started properly at around 15:00 today. Our focus for the afternoon was to spend a bit of time at Strandfontein Sewage Works to get acquainted with many water associated birds. On the way into the works we got our first views of **Jackal Buzzard**.

We spent about two hours here making regular stops throughout the area. We were spoilt with eleven species of waterfowl as well as many other species. The sheer number of waterbirds is enough to get anyone excited. **Cape Teal, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Cape Shoveler, South African Shelduck, Yellow-billed Ducks, Southern Pochard, Egyptian and Spur-winged Goose** and, best of all, **Maccoa Duck** were some of the waterfowl that we saw. We had three gull species being **Kelp, Hartlaub's** and **Gray-headed** as well as **Swift** and **Caspian Terns**. On the water front we had **Curlew** and **Common Sandpipers, Little Stints** and some **Three-banded Plovers**. Other birds of note included **Great White Pelican, Black-winged Kite, White-throated Swallow, Cape Longclaw** and **Red-capped Lark**.

All together we had a successful evening and then enjoyed a great first meal together.



Fulvous Whistling Duck was one of the many duck species that we saw, here next to a Cape Teal.

Day 2, 2nd February 2025. Rooi-Els and Betty's Bay

We were up with the sun, collected our packed breakfasts and headed east out of the city of Cape Town. Our first stop was at Rooi-Els. Very quickly we racked up **Southern Double-collared**, **Orange-breasted** and **Malachite Sunbirds**, **Cape Sugarbird**, **Familiar Chat** and **Cape Rock Thrush**. As we walked along the road we had fantastic views of **Cape Grassbird**, this confiding bird gave everyone the opportunity to take photos too. A bit of sea watching was done from this point and we got **Cory's** and **Sooty Shearwaters**. One of the highlights of the morning was seeing a male **Cape Rockjumper** feeding along the road! We spent a fair amount of time with this bird.

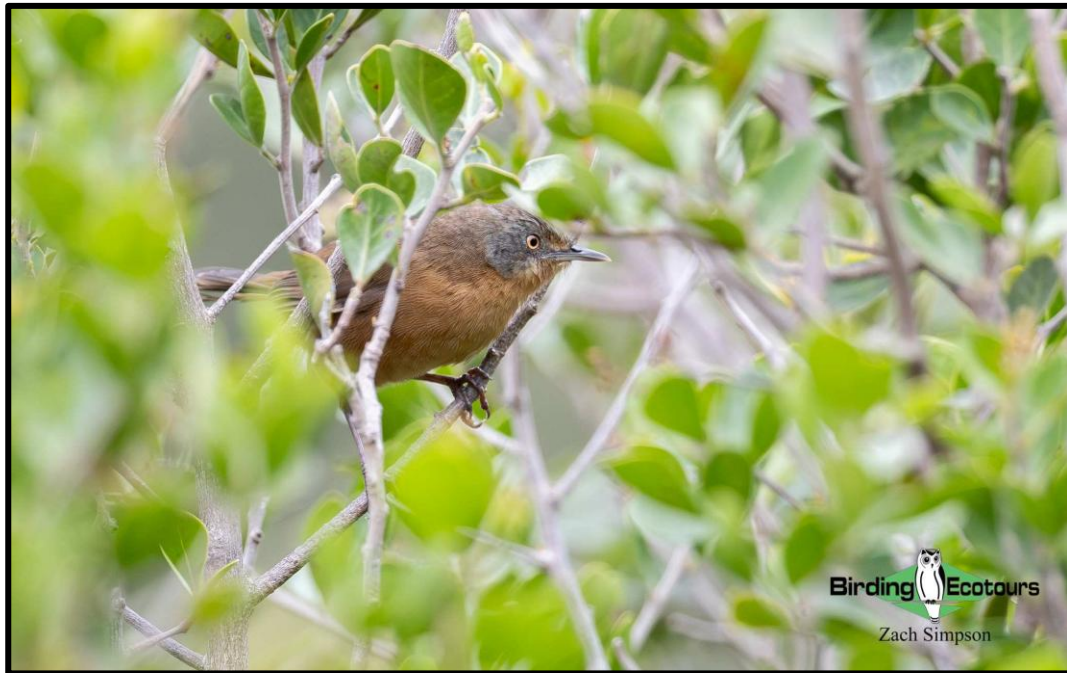


This Cape Grassbird showed incredibly well for us at Rooi-Els.

Our next stop was Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. Before we even left the parking lot we had a mixed flock of swifts. The flock included **African**, **Alpine**, **Little** and **White-rumped Swifts**. We ordered lunch and then headed into the gardens. Quite soon we saw **African Dusky** and **Fiscal Flycatcher**, **Sweet Waxbill**, **Streaky-headed Seedeater**, **Cape Canary**, **Black Saw-wing**, **Cape Batis** and brief views of a pair of **Cape Siskins**. Our major target further into the gardens was **Victorin's Warbler**. We heard an individual calling close to the trail and after a while, managed some great views of it. **White-necked Ravens** and **Peregrine Falcons** made a fly over. After lunch we had good views of a male **Amythyst Sunbird**.

Stony Point penguin colony was the next stop. Here we were treated to good numbers of **African Penguins**. Other notable species included **Arctic Skua**, **Cape Gannet**, **Bank**, **Crowned** and **Cape Cormorants**, **Water Thick-knee** and **Sandwich Tern**.

Heading back towards Cape Town we made another stop at Paardevlei. We added **African Spoonbill**, **African Snipe**, **Kittlitz's Plover**, **White-backed Mousebirds**, **Cape Sparrow** and **Levaillant's Cisticola**.



Victorin's Warbler was one of the trickiest endemics to find!

Day 3, 27th August 2025. West Coast Strandveld and Wetland Birding

With our biggest day ahead of us, we headed off out of Cape Town with packed breakfasts to the West Coast. Our first stop in the Strandveld produced a few good birds, including **Pearl-breasted** and **White-throated Swallows**, **Black Harrier**, **Chestnut-vented Warbler**, **Bar-throated Apalis**, **White-throated Canary**, **Long-billed Crombec** and **Bokmakerie**.

Another quick stop at Tienie Versveld Nature Reserve added **Capped Wheatear**, **Large-billed Lark**, **Cloud Cisticola**, **Blue Crane** and **Spotted Thick-knee**.

We stopped at a nearby “padstaal” (rustic roadside shop) to buy food to eat later for lunch. We then proceeded to West Coast National Park and used the hides (blinds) in the park. The first stop produced **Pied** and **Wattled Starlings**, **Common Ostrich** and **African Stonechat**. At the next hide the focus was waders, and we settled down for about half an hour, while eating our lunch. There were large numbers of migratory waders on the mudflats, including **Eurasian Curlew**, **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Marsh Curlew Sandpipiers**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Sanderling**, and **Common Greenshank**. Other birds included **White-fronted Plover**, **Little Tern**, **Greater Flamingo**, and a distant **African Fish Eagle**.

Seeberg hide was quiet but we finally had good views of **White-throated Canary**. Leaving West Coast National Park, we stopped at two sites in and around Langebaan. Here we added **Cape Clapper** and **Karoo Lark** as well as **Southern Black Korhaan**. As we were driving north to our next birding site, Velddrif, we managed to find **Pale-chanting Goshawk**, **Crowned Lapwings** and **Booted Eagles** along the roadside.

Velddrif added a few great birds, including **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Purple Heron**, **Great Crested** and **Black-necked Grebes**, **Caspian** and **Chestnut-banded Plovers**.

From Velddrif we had a two hour drive back to our accommodation.



Chestnut-banded Plover was a highlight at Velddrif Salt Work.

Day 4, 04th February 2026. Paarl Mountain and Cape Town Sites

Our destination for the day was Paarl Mountain. After a quick coffee stop along the road we arrived there nice and early. Unfortunately, the morning started off with a bit of rain, however it cleared up as the morning progressed. Some of the first birds were **Southern Boubou**, **African Olive Pigeon**, and **Brimstone Canary**. Right at the top of the mountain we found our main target for the morning, **Protea Canary**. As the sun came out we added a few raptors like **European Honey Buzzard**, **African Harrier-Hawk**, **Black Sparrowhawk** and the least expected **Brown Snake-eagle**, which was a rarity in the area.

After lunch we headed to Rondevlei, where we added **African Swamphen**, **Common Reed** and **Lesser Swamp Warblers**. From there we went to Kirstenbosch, where one of the first birds we got was **Lemon Dove**, we had two individuals in a more forested area of the reserve. We had fantastic views of multiple male **Cape Sugarbirds** feeding on a protea at the top of the gardens. Other birds included **Forest Canary** and **Olive Woodpecker**.

After Dinner some of the group headed out to a site in the Cape Town suburbia, where we got a pair of **African Wood Owls**. This was truly a great way to end our tour in Cape Town!



*We had multiple male **Cape Sugarbirds** putting on a show at Kirstenbosch.*

Day 5, 05th February 2026. Departure from Cape Town

This was a departure day, with no birding planned. We said goodbye to some of the group, while the rest joined me as we flew up to Johannesburg to start our Limpopo Budget Tour, which runs together with this tour.

Budget Cape Town Bird List - Following IOC (15.1 / March 2025)

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following the IUCN Red List:

EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, CR = Critically Endangered.

Common name	Scientific name
Ostriches (Struthionidae)	
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>
Cape Shoveler	<i>Spatula smithii</i>
African Black Duck	<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
Maccoa Duck - EN	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
Guineafowl (Numididae)	
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Cape Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Bustards (Otididae)	
Southern Black Korhaan - VU	<i>Afrotis afra</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
African Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Cranes (Gruidae)	
Blue Crane - VU	<i>Grus paradisea</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Stone-curlews, Thick-knees (Burhinidae)	
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Oystercatchers (Haematopodidae)	
African Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Grey Plover - VU	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pecuarius</i>
Chestnut-banded Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pallidus</i>
White-fronted Plover	<i>Anarhynchus marginatus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Curlew Sandpiper - VU	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Skuas (Stercorariidae)	
Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Penguins (Spheniscidae)	
African Penguin - CR	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>
Petrels, Shearwaters, Diving Petrels (Procellariidae)	
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis</i>
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Gannets, Boobies (Sulidae)	
Cape Gannet - EN	<i>Morus capensis</i>
Anhingas, Darters (Anhingidae)	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>
Crowned Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo coronatus</i>
Bank Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>
Cape Cormorant - EN	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Ardea brachyrhyncha</i>
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Hamerkop (Scopidae)	
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Astur melanoleucus</i>
Black Harrier - EN	<i>Circus maurus</i>
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
African Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
African Wood Owl	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>
Mousebirds (Coliidae)	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
White-backed Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Wattle-eyes, Batises (Platysteiridae)	
Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>
Bushshrikes (Malaconotidae)	
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Drongos (Dicuridae)	
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Monarchs (Monarchidae)	
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Southern Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Rockjumpers (Chaetopidae)	
Cape Rockjumper	<i>Chaetops frenatus</i>
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Cape Clapper Lark	<i>Corypha apiata</i>
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)	
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Large Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Pearl-breasted Swallow	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>
Greater Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis cucullata</i>
Crombecs, African Warblers (Macrosphenidae)	
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Victorin's Warbler	<i>Cryptillas victorini</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapilla</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Cloud Cisticola	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Layard's Warbler	<i>Curruca layardi</i>
Chestnut-vented Warbler	<i>Curruca subcoerulea</i>
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops virens</i>
Sugarbirds (Promeropidae)	
Cape Sugarbird	<i>Promerops cafer</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornises (Sturnidae)	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Karoo Scrub Robin	<i>Tychaedon coryphoeus</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>
Cape Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)	
Orange-breasted Sunbird	<i>Anthobaphes violacea</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Weavers, Widowbirds (Ploceidae)	
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estrildidae)	
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullata</i>
Swee Waxbill	<i>Coccygia melanotis</i>
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Indigobirds, Whydahs (Viduidae)	
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Forest Canary	<i>Crithagra scotops</i>
Cape Siskin	<i>Crithagra totta</i>
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>
Brimstone Canary	<i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>
Streaky-headed Seedeater	<i>Crithagra gularis</i>
White-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>
Protea Canary	<i>Crithagra leucoptera</i>
Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Species Seen:	193
Total Species Recorded:	193

Budget Limpopo Mammal List – Following Mammalwatching.com (Sep. 2024)

Introduced species will be indicated as follows: (I)

Common name	Scientific name
Hyraxes (Procaviidae)	
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)	
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Squirrels (Sciuridae)	
Eastern Gray Squirrel (I)	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>
Eared Seals (Otariidae)	
Afro-Australian Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>
Mongoose (Herpestidae)	
Cape Gray Mongoose	<i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>
Bovids (Bovidae)	
Bontebok	<i>Damaliscus pygargus</i>
Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Species Recorded:	8