



**BUDGET SOUTH AFRICA BIRDING TOUR: ZULULAND  
SPECIALS  
TOUR-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**



*Pink-throated Twinspot is a major target on this tour.*

## TOUR OUTLINE

This Zululand birding tour forms part of our carefully designed South African budget birding circuit, which also includes Cape Town, northern South Africa, and the Northern Cape. Together, these tours provide an outstanding opportunity to experience South Africa's remarkable ecological diversity, ranging from arid desert landscapes and open savannas to coastal forests, wetlands, and the unique fynbos biome. By combining these destinations, participants can build an impressive and well-rounded bird list while exploring some of the country's most productive birding regions.

While some tours focus primarily on species numbers and others on localized endemics, KwaZulu-Natal's Zululand region offers an excellent balance of both. The region is renowned for its rich birdlife, high habitat diversity, and excellent birding infrastructure. During the tour, we will explore a variety of habitats, including grasslands, the highly restricted sand forests of northern KwaZulu-Natal, bushveld, coastal forest, estuarine systems, and extensive wetlands. This diversity of habitats supports an exceptional range of species and makes Zululand one of southern Africa's premier birding destinations.

## PACE OF TOUR

This is a week-long tour and is considered medium to fast-paced. Zululand has a well-developed tourism industry, and the excellent road network and infrastructure allow us to move efficiently between birding sites while minimizing travel time. The combination of accommodation located close to our key birding areas and the later sunrise times during this period means that extremely early starts are generally not necessary.

Most mornings begin with an opportunity to enjoy coffee together before heading out for the day's birding. After several hours in the field, we will either return to our accommodation for breakfast or enjoy a packed breakfast at a birding site. As with most dedicated birding tours, our daily schedule is designed to maximize time in the field, and lunch arrangements may vary depending on the day's objectives and bird activity.

Some days may allow for a short period of relaxation during the warmer part of the day before resuming afternoon birding, while on other days we may continue birding with only a brief break. The exact schedule will depend on weather conditions, target species, and local bird activity.

Optional night birding may also be offered during the tour. These excursions can provide opportunities for nocturnal birds and other wildlife, but participation is entirely optional. Guests are welcome to opt out of any evening activities if they prefer additional rest.

Each evening, your guide will discuss the following day's plans with the group in detail. While we operate according to a well-planned itinerary, we retain a reasonable degree of flexibility to adapt to local conditions and maximize birding opportunities whenever possible.

## WALKING AND STYLE OF BIRDING

A large proportion of our birding will be conducted from the vicinity of the vehicle. We often stop at carefully selected locations and spend time working an area thoroughly in search of

specific target species. This approach allows us to cover a variety of habitats efficiently while minimizing unnecessary walking.

Several sites, including Dlinza Forest and the iGwalagwala Trail, feature well-maintained forest trails that we will explore on foot. Walks are generally easy to moderate in difficulty and are not expected to exceed approximately two miles (3.2 kilometers) in length. In some locations, particularly around our accommodation, birding may be conducted almost entirely on foot as we explore nearby habitats at a relaxed pace.

Participants should be comfortable with short walks on uneven ground, but no strenuous hiking is required for this tour.

### **LENGTH OF DRIVES**

The drives between our various accommodation bases are generally between two and three hours in duration. Unlike many southern African birding tours, this itinerary does not include any full-day travel days.

Most longer drives are scheduled during the middle of the day, allowing us to maximize birding during the more productive early morning and late afternoon periods. Road conditions throughout the region are generally good, contributing to comfortable and efficient travel.

### **SAFETY**

Throughout the tour, we spend the majority of our time in areas that are regularly visited by tourists and are generally considered safe. As with travel anywhere in the world, sensible precautions should be taken.

We recommend that valuables are not left unattended in the vehicle, particularly when stopping in towns or public areas. If you are ever uncertain about the safety of a particular location, please consult your guide for advice.

### **HEALTH, PESTS AND DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

When walking on trails, we recommend wearing long trousers and applying tick repellent to your socks, shoes, and lower legs. Ticks may occasionally be encountered in some habitats. While ticks in South Africa do not transmit Lyme disease, bites can sometimes result in tick-bite fever, which is generally treatable and rarely results in serious long-term complications.

As with many wildlife destinations, encounters with potentially dangerous animals are possible, particularly within protected areas. Large mammals such as elephant, buffalo, and leopard occur within the region, and venomous snakes and scorpions may also be encountered. Such encounters are uncommon, and your guide will provide appropriate safety guidance whenever necessary.

*Please refer to the “South Africa General Information” document for more detailed information regarding wildlife, health considerations, and safety precautions.*

## TRANSPORTATION

A comfortable 14-seater minibus will be used throughout the tour. To ensure fair viewing opportunities for all participants, a daily seat-rotation system will be implemented, which your guide will explain at the start of the tour.

Our intentionally small group size ensures that every participant has access to a window seat. Additionally, because we do not tow a trailer, the vehicle remains highly maneuverable, allowing us to respond quickly to bird sightings and reach a wider variety of birding locations.

Airport transfers on the first and final days of the tour are included in the tour price. Should you arrive before the tour begins or remain in South Africa after the tour concludes, additional transfers will be at your own expense. We will, however, gladly assist in arranging any required transportation.

## DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

No domestic flights are required for this birding tour. The tour begins and ends at King Shaka International Airport in Durban.

Participants combining this tour with other tours in our South African budget circuit may, however, need to arrange domestic flights between destinations. We will provide guidance regarding any necessary travel arrangements.

## ACCOMMODATION

Throughout the tour, we stay in comfortable lodges, guesthouses, and bed-and-breakfast establishments that offer a good standard of accommodation and hospitality. While this is a budget-focused tour and accommodation may not match the standard of our premium itineraries, all properties are selected to provide comfort, cleanliness, and convenient access to our birding locations.

Many of the accommodations also offer excellent birding opportunities directly on the property or in the surrounding grounds.

## ELECTRICITY

Room lighting in some establishments may be relatively low wattage. Participants who enjoy reading in the evenings may wish to bring a good-quality torch or headlamp.

We also recommend carrying an international travel adapter. South Africa is gradually transitioning to newer plug standards, and accommodations may use a variety of outlet types. This is largely outside of our control, and having a universal adapter will help ensure compatibility throughout the tour.

## WEATHER

Zululand is generally warm and humid throughout much of the year. As this tour takes place outside the peak summer months, temperatures are usually pleasant and comfortable for

birding. Evenings and early mornings, particularly in the Eshowe area, can occasionally be cool, but conditions are rarely cold.

This tour takes place during May, a period when weather conditions can sometimes be variable. Although most rainfall in eastern South Africa occurs during the summer months, occasional rain is still possible. We therefore recommend packing clothing suitable for warm, cool, and wet conditions to ensure comfort throughout the tour.

### **WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING AND OTHER ITEMS**

Please refer to our blog article, *“What to Bring on a Birding Tour,”* for detailed packing recommendations. This guide provides practical advice on clothing, optics, footwear, luggage, and other useful items to help you prepare for your South African birding adventure.