

CRANE'S CAPE TOURS & TRAVEL

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**SOUTH AFRICA'S SOUTH-WESTERN CAPE
1 – 14 OCTOBER 2011**

Participants

Val Codling
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Leader

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Report and wildlife lists by Geoff Crane.

Photos edged red by Geoff Crane and edged blue by John or Jan Croft,
all taken during the holiday.

More of Geoff's photos can be seen via

<http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/westerncape.html>

Cover photo – Southern Double-collared Sunbird; Strelitzia 'Nelson Mandela'; Southern Right Whale.



As with all Honeyguide holidays, £40 of the price per person was put towards a conservation project in the host country. £250 from the Honeyguide Wildlife Trust Ltd. was matched by Geoff Crane and donated to the SABAP2 project (<http://sabap2.adu.org.za/index.php>). This is updating the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project which ran from 1987-1991 and culminated in the publication in 1997 of two volumes on the distribution and relative abundance of southern African birds. Our contribution will be used to atlas areas that no-one has yet been to.

As at November 2011, the amount of all conservation contributions made through Honeyguide since 1991 totals £73,500.

South Africa's South-Western Cape
1 – 14 October 2011

DAY 1. Saturday 1st October 2011

Orientation tour / Silvermine Nature Reserve / Kommetjie

Overcast with a light wind.

The flight arrived on time (to the second) and we had cleared the airport by 9am. We took the scenic route to our accommodation on the Cape Peninsula, via Cape Town, Camps Bay, Hout Bay and Chapman's Peak Drive. From the Cape Town Airport to Maidens Cove overlooking the beach at Camps Bay, we spotted a number of the more obvious urban birds like the Pied Crow, Hadedda Ibis, Hartlaub's Gull, Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove), Egyptian Goose and Helmeted Guineafowl. We stopped at the top of Chapman's Peak drive for the view only to find that we were looking down upon a few Southern Right Whales in the bay.

After a welcoming cup of tea the group settled in to their rooms and relaxed for an hour. On leaving the lodge we were distracted by an African Marsh Harrier disappearing in to the adjacent reed beds. We found the harrier perched at the edge of some tall reeds. The Levallant's Cisticolas were showing well – thanks to the harrier. We also saw a Cape Spurfowl and a Speckled Pigeon here. We drove up to the Silvermine Nature Reserve for our picnic lunch. After lunch we went for a walk looking at the fynbos (the vegetation of the Cape). We saw Malachite Sunbird, Cape Bulbul, Dusky Flycatcher, Karoo Prinia, White-necked Raven, Yellow-billed Kite and Cape Robin-chat as well as a sad looking Cape River Frog, a few well camouflaged Saw-backed Locusts and a couple of bright, hairy, moth caterpillars – Cape Lappet and Tri-coloured Tiger – and an incredible diversity of flowering plants.

We took a detour via Kommetjie to see what sea birds we could pick up. Swift, Sandwich and Common Terns, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, Little Egret, African Black Oystercatcher Cape, Crowned and White-breasted Cormorants to name but a few. Blacksmith Lapwing, Cape Wagtail, Sacred Ibis and Common Fiscal were also seen at Kommetjie. A couple of Spotted Thick-knees under a willow tree were a good way to end the day. We had a traditional dinner at our lodge – a Snoek (fish) starter, Bobotie and sambles, followed by Malva pudding.

A few plant highlights:

Green Satyr Orchid, *Satyrium odorum* – a green orchid with a pleasant smell.

King Protea, *Protea cynaroides* – large flowers, our National flower.

Erica lutea – large bush by the reservoir, one of many erica species seen.

Berzelia lanuginosa – lots of bushes crowned with white balls.

Drosera trinervia – small sundew.

Salvia africana-lutea – 'sage' with brown flowers.

Erica plukenetii – red / pink flowers with long anthers sticking out.

Pelargonium cucullatum – large bushes with clumps of pink flowers.

Lobelia pinifolia – small blue flowers.

Polygala bracteolata – pink flowers on a large shrub, especially around the reservoir.

DAY 2. Sunday 2nd October 2011

Penguin colony / Cape Peninsula / Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve

Sunny with a strong wind.

Cape White-eye and Common Waxbill were seen in the lodge garden before breakfast. After a sumptuous breakfast we headed off to Simon's Town and the African Penguin colony. There were plenty of African Penguins at the colony, in various stages of moult, but the majority were keeping their heads down to keep out of the wind. We found a Cabbage White butterfly, a Cape Skink sunning itself out of the wind and a Slug-eater Snake. We saw a troop of Chacma Baboons on the side of the road just before the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

At the Cape of Good Hope Reserve we drove down towards Olifantsbos, where we had the first of many Bontebok sightings. We stopped to do some botanising, starting with the orange snake-stem pincushion which has the great scientific name: *Leucospermum hypophyllocarpodendron* ssp.

hypophyllocarpodendron. At the little bay of Olifantsbos we found several Angulate Tortoises and a big old Leopard Tortoise and many birds. New birds for the day were Cape Canary, Speckled Mousebird, Grey-backed Cisticola, African Pipit, Yellow-rumped Widow, Rock Kestrel and Rock Martin. We found three Gray Rheboks with another small herd of Bontebok, a few Rock Hyrax watching us from the cliff tops and we watched a Green Grooved Dung Beetle rolling a ball of dung and burying it in the sand.

The car park was a mass of tourists so we decided to walk from Cape Point across the clifftops to the Cape of Good Hope, where we had great views of the Cape Point. The nesting Cape Cormorants on the cliffs were doing their best to keep out of the wind. From the vantage point of the top of the Cape of Good Hope I watched a Cape Cormorant make several landing attempts at its nest on one of the cliff ledges – with no success! We found Familiar Chat, Cape Bunting, a Cape Girdled Lizard, a Southern Rock Agama and a number of Dassies (Rock Hyrax) enjoying the sun in the lee of the Cape of Good Hope. The only ones to be really enjoying the strong winds were the Cape Gannets offshore. After dinner the wind had dropped and the night sky was clear enough to see the Southern Cross.



African Penguins at Boulders Beach in Simon's Town and Bonteboks at the Cape of Good Hope Reserve.

A few plant highlights:

Pig's ears – *Cotyledon orbiculata*, medicinal plant with a red edge to the succulent leaf.
 Sour fig – *Carpobrotus edulis*, carpets of succulent leaves with yellow flowers.
 Golden conebush – *Leucadendron laureolum*, large cones.
 Pincushion – *Leucospermum conocarpodendron*, large bushes covered in yellow flowers.
 Marsh pagoda – *Mimetes hirtus*, large stand next to the road, with red flowers.
 Cape cowslip – *Lachenalia aloides*, with red and yellow flowers.
 Men in a boat – *Androcymbium eucomioides*, small plant with many 'Russian doll' leaves.
 Medusa's head – *Euphorbia caput-medusae*, succulent.
 China flower – *Adenandra villosa*, white flowers.



DAY 3. Monday 3rd October 2011
Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens and Table Mountain
Sunny with no wind!

Our before breakfast bird was an African Harrier-hawk feasting on a small bird in the trees of the Afton Grove Lodge (*left*). Not a bad way to start the day!

Kirstenbosch Gardens were looking magnificent, the show of spectacular spring flowers near the entrance was a mere taster of what was to be found up in the protea section of the gardens. We photographed the Spotted Eagle-owls and their chicks and we then made our way slowly up to

the highest point of the cultivated gardens, the protea section. Forest Canary, Cape Batis, Dusky Flycatcher, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird, African Olive Pigeon, Steppe Buzzard and Olive Thrush, plus many others, were seen. Being botanical gardens there were obviously many plants for us to look at. The area of the gardens that will be remembered most was the protea section with many beautiful proteas flowering. We had lunch in the Tea Room restaurant before heading off to Table Mountain, as the sky was clear and there was zero wind, a rare combination in Cape Town! We decided to take the cable car to the top of the mountain and we then spent the next couple of hours walking around the 'table top'. We saw some Cape Girdled Lizards and we also saw Orange-breasted Sunbird, Familiar Chat, Red-winged Starlings and White-necked Ravens.



*Some of the delights of Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens:
Orange-breasted Sunbird, pincushion protea and Spotted Eagle-owl chick.*

A few plant highlights on Table Mountain:

Blister Bush – *Peucedanum galbanum*.

Erica coccinea, a pink erica.

Erica abiantina, a bright red erica.

Climbers' friend – *Cliffortia ruscitolia*.

DAY 4. Tuesday 4th October 2011

Rietvlei Nature Reserve / Darling Hills Road / Bloubergstrand

Sunny with a light wind in the afternoon.

The African Harrier-hawk was back again this morning, which made us think that perhaps there was a nest about? En route to Rietvlei Nature Reserve we stopped at a wetland area just north of Cape Town. Here we saw many new birds. Brown-throated Martin, Red Bishop, Southern Masked Weaver, Cape Sparrow, White-throated Swallow, White-rumped Swift and Little Grebe. But the highlight for this stop was a couple of White-backed Ducks.

At Rietvlei Nature Reserve we walked to the hide and spent the next couple of hours watching the birds. We saw plenty of new birds, which included Black-winged Stilt, Common Moorhen, Red-knobbed Coot, Red-billed Teal, Cape Shoveler, Yellow-billed Duck, African Darter, Reed Cormorant, Great White Pelican, Great Crested and Black-necked Grebe, Greater Flamingo, African Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Cattle, Yellow-billed and Little Egret, Purple Heron and an African Fish Eagle, which was being mobbed by a couple of Pied Crows. The water level was fairly high, which seemed to attract a large number of Greater Flamingos to the vlei. We also had a good sighting of a Cape Clawless Otter close in to the hide. The chinkerinchee *Ornithogalum thyrsoides* were looking very showy as were the Arum Lilies *Zantedeschia aethiopica*.

We had our picnic lunch in the farmlands on the 'Darling Hills' road. Just after lunch a large Mole Snake was spotted not more than ten metres from where we had been enjoying our picnic! We found a large

red flowering Cancer bush *Sutherlandia frutescens* next to the dirt road and we spotted many birds on this drive, with the new birds to our ever growing list being Red-capped Lark, Pied Starling, Capped Wheatear, African Stonechat, European Bee-eater, African Hoopoe and a majestic Blue Crane.

At the Waylands Flower Reserve we watched a Cape Weaver colony, the males going berserk trying to attract a female to one of their nests. We also saw a Bokmakierie here as well as a number of late flowering 'spring' flowers.

We saw some Cape Crows en route to the Table View beach to see the classical view of Table Mountain from across the bay. The kite surfers with their brightly coloured kites made the view that much more colourful. The last bird of the day and the 76th was a Pin-tailed Whydah back at the Afton Grove Lodge garden.



Blue Crane and male Cape Weaver.

A few plant highlights:

African sage – *Salvia africana-coerulea*, a nice-smelling blue-flowered plant.

Monsonia speciosa, a large white flower from the geranium family.

Cheiridopsis rostrata, a bright yellow flower.

Wachendorfia parviflora, a yellow flower that we keep on seeing.

Trachyandra divaricata, small white flowers on a scruffy plant (near the bird hide).

Romulea hirsuta, a pink sand crocus.

Moraea gawleri, a white iris, with a very long single leaf.

DAY 5. Wednesday 5th October 2011
Paarl Mountain Reserve / Paarl Bird Reserve
Sunny with a light wind in the afternoon.

We took the coastal route past False Bay and then inland to Stellenbosch. We did a drive-through tour of Stellenbosch stopping to look at a Spotted Eagle-owl in an old oak tree. We then went on to the Paarl Bird Reserve (Paarl Water Purification Plant), where we had a good couple of hours watching birds from the hide and also from the vehicle. We saw plenty of birds at the reserve, with a number of new birds for our tour list; White-faced Ducks, Southern Pochard, Cape Teal and a Maccoa Duck. Three-banded Plover, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Common Sandpiper, Brimstone Canary, African Reed Warbler and Malachite Kingfisher. We also saw three Marsh Terrapins sunning themselves on the bank.

We headed for the Paarl Mountain Reserve for our picnic lunch. Here we enjoyed the magnificent view of the Cape Winelands with the Hottentot Holland Mountains in the distance. We saw Karoo Scrub-robin, Fiscal Flycatcher, Black Saw-wing and some great views of Malachite Sunbirds. The plants and flowers were looking great at the botanical garden part of the reserve. The pond was full of Waterblommetjie, *Aponogeton distachyos* and the Fan Aloe *Aloe plicatilis* was looking good. The gardens had many species of proteas most of which were in flower. The King protea - *Protea cynaroides*, Wagon tree protea - *Protea nitida*, Red sugarbush - *Protea gradiceps*, and the Bot river protea - *Protea compacta* were all looking good. The *Protea nana* was looking beautiful in the display area – but we did not find the plant in the gardens! Also the Australian protea the 'warratar' was in full flower with red blooms. There were many ericas flowering, with the star of the show being *Erica versicolor*, with its red and yellow flowers.

Before heading back to Cape Town we visited the Fairview Wine Estate for some wine and cheese tasting... after all, we could not come all the way to the Cape Winelands without tasting some wine! We bought a couple of bottles of Shiraz to go with our lamb dinner back at the Afton Grove Lodge.

A few plant highlights:

Red hot poker – *Kniphofia uvaria*.

Wachendorfia thyrsiflora, tall yellow flowers growing in water.

Satyrium coriifolium, orchid with a tall spike of orange flowers.

Satyrium odorum, a green orchid with a pleasant smell.

DAY 6. Thursday 6th October 2011
West Coast National Park / Langebaan Lagoon
Sunny with very little wind.

We made an early start so that we could get the best of the day up in the West Coast National Park, stopping here and there on the way, including Milnerton, where we saw gulls, terns, cormorants and egrets. En route we also saw, Rock Kestrel, Yellow-billed Kite and Black-shouldered Kite. The vegetation in the park is predominantly coastal strandveld, which hosts an abundance of bush birds. We first visited the Abramskraal bird hide, where we saw African Spoonbill, Little Grebe, many Red-knobbed Coots with young, Black Harrier, Cape Spurfowl, Karoo Scrub-robin, Namaqua Dove, Yellow Canary and Bokmakierie and many more bushbirds that were coming in to drink the fresh water. Some Eland were keeping their distance on the other side of the vlei.

We had our picnic in the shade of an old farm cottage on the Seeberg lookout point, where we saw a few Karoo Girdled Lizards. The turquoise colours of the lagoon water were looking extremely vivid today – perhaps reflecting the bright blue sky. We arrived at the hide at Geelbek just in time to watch the waders arriving as the high water ebbed out of the lagoon. The waders seen from the hide included Ringed, White-fronted, Grey and Kittlitz's Plovers, Marsh and Curlew Sandpiper, Greenshank, Ruff, Whimbrel, Turnstones and Bar-tailed Godwits.

We decided to avoid the Cape Town rush hour traffic by having dinner at the Cape Town Waterfront, with an hour before dinner to look around the crafts in the Red Shed.



Common Ostrich and Kittlitz's Plover.

DAY 7. Friday 7th October
Strandfontein / Rondevlei Bird Reserve
Sunny with some strong winds.

Today we visited the two main wetland sites of Cape Town, namely Rondevlei Bird Reserve and Strandfontein Water Purification Plant. On leaving the Afton Grove Lodge we caught up with the Chaffinch. This individual had been serenading us since we arrived..... But understandably there had been no rush to see an 'English' Chaffinch or the 'English' House Sparrow that we heard at our picnic lunch at Rondevlei!

We drove past the False Bay beach to Strandfontein Water Purification Plant, where we spent a couple of hours birding from the vehicle. The wind was keeping the birds tucked in to the reeds but we still managed to see plenty of new birds. Purple Swamphen, Greater Flamingos by the hundreds, White Pelicans and many waterfowl species. We then drove through to Rondevlei Nature Reserve, where we spent the afternoon going through the various hides. Little Bittern, Great Egret, Malachite Kingfisher, Hottentot Teal, Lesser Swamp Warbler and Little Rush-Warbler were a few of the many bird sightings. From one of the viewing towers we watched many birds flying out to the reed islands with nesting material. Glossy and Sacred Ibis, Black, Purple and Grey Herons, Little and Cattle Egrets and African Darter were some of the birds seen nest-building. We looked at some of the very threatened plants that once flourished on the Cape Flats as well as the beautiful Arum Lilies and Watsonias. We identified an African Hummingbird Moth and a Citrus Swallowtail butterfly. Other creatures seen



Sign at Rondevlei. "In our dreams" said John and Jan!

were a Leopard Tortoise being pursued by a Grey Mongoose, an Angulate Tortoise, some enormous Carp and Catfish either fighting or breeding and 'Pippa' the reserve porcupine.

Back in Noordhoek we took a detour to find a pink orchid *Satyrion carneum*, which we had seen flowering on the side of the road. (At this stage we did not know that we would be seeing fields of the orchid in a few days time!) We also saw Greater Striped Swallow and Spur-winged Goose. A delightful dinner back at the Afton Grove Lodge finished off a windy day's birding! A few surprises for the day were a couple of White-backed Ducks at Strandfontein and Great Egret, Hottentot Teal and Little Bittern at Rondevlei Nature Reserve.

DAY 8. Saturday 8th October
Tokai Arboretum / Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
Sunny with no wind.

We spent the best part of the morning walking at the Tokai Arboretum. We took a circular route through the forest and at one point we sat for a while overlooking the forest canopy. We saw African Paradise-flycatcher, Cape White-eye, Dusky Flycatcher, Cape Robin-chat, Forest Buzzard, Sweet Waxbill, Cape Canary and plenty of the ever-present Egyptian Geese. We then drove to Cecilia Forest for a short walk on Table Mountain to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. (As we slipped in a visit to the top of Table Mountain during the afternoon on day 3, we felt that we had not done justice to the gardens at Kirstenbosch – hence the second visit!). Cape Batis, African Paradise-flycatcher and plenty of flowering plants were seen en route. We had lunch at the Tea Room and then went for a walk through the forest on the brail trail. African Paradise-flycatcher was seen again for the third time in a day! We walked around the gardens, visiting the erica gardens, the forested dell section, the medicinal garden area and the 'art in the gardens' section. Today was a good butterfly day with African Monarch, Garden Acraea, Common Dotted Border, Cabbage White and Painted Lady.

DAY 9. Sunday 9th October
Free Day (Seal Island trip, Cape Town and Simon's Town) and Cape Pelagic Trip
Sunny and hot with no wind.

Our first stop after Chapman's Peak Drive was at Hout Bay, where three of the group took a 45 minute boat trip out to the Cape Fur Seal colony on Duiker Island. Hundreds of Cape Fur Seals were seen as well as a new bird for the trip, Bank Cormorant. From Hout Bay we drove past Llandudno, Camps bay, Clifton, Bantry Bay to our first stop in Sea Point, to look at the 540 million year old geological features of the rock. Here we saw African Black Oystercatcher, Cape, Crowned and White-breasted Cormorants, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gull. At the Company Gardens in the centre of Cape Town, the group had time to walk in the gardens, while I minded the vehicle with all the luggage on board. Grey Squirrels (and one

albino Grey Squirrel), Speckled Pigeon, Rock Dove and Laughing Dove were seen in the gardens. We then headed down the peninsula to Simon's Town, seeing some Southern Right Whales very close to the shore. After lunch we looked around Simon's Town until the pelagic boat arrived back. After a quick cup of coffee we all drove through to Hermanus for part two of the trip. We had such a balmy evening in Hermanus that we ate a great dinner outside at the Burgundy Restaurant.

Cape Pelagic Trip

The boat left Simon's Town on a very calm sea – well, perhaps it was 'calm' for the Cape! A number of fishing trawlers were found which bought in the pelagic birds. Sooty Shearwater, Shy Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross, Great Shearwater, Arctic Skua, Antarctic Skua, Southern Giant Petrel, Northern Giant Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Cape Gannet and Cape Petrel 'Pintado'. Southern Right Whales and Bryde's Whale were also seen as well as a Sunfish.



DAY 10. Monday 10th October

Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens and Fernkloof Nature Reserve

Sunny with a strong wind in the morning and a light wind in the afternoon.

Our original plan was to spend the morning watching for Southern Right Whales from the cliffs above the old harbour. But as the whales were a fair distance out in the bay we decided to head for the Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens at Betty's Bay. The wind was very strong, which did not help the birdwatching! We still managed to see a few new birds to the trip. Cape Siskin, Cape Rock-thrush, Little Swift, Peregrine Falcon and, on the way back to Hermanus, a Jackal Buzzard and a Steppe Buzzard. The gardens were looking great, with plenty of flowers to look at. We went for a walk through the gardens and up to the waterfall through the indigenous forest. After a picnic lunch in the gardens (in a sheltered nook!) we drove to the Fernkloof Nature Reserve via Rotary Drive, a scenic road overlooking Hermanus. The flowering fynbos in Fernkloof was looking spectacular especially the orange pincusions. We all had a great opportunity to get good photos of Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird on top of the proteas, as well as a couple of Klipspringers on one of the koppies. We went for a short walk stopping every two feet to look at a new plant and at the same time scanning the mountain ridges above us for Verreaux's Eagle. We had a nice dinner in a local Italian restaurant.

A few plant highlights:

In the hills behind Hermanus and at Fernkloof Nature Reserve we found a treasure-trove of beautiful flowering plants. The great diversity of plants from ericas to proteas was due to a late summer bushfire at the beginning of the year and the late rains that we had in the Cape this winter.

Geissorhiza ovata, small flowers with white petals, which are pink on the reverse.
Protea longifolia, the bearded protea with a flower head that is as soft as velvet.
Protea compacta flowering on their tall stems.
Protea cordata were not flowering but we saw the big, heart-shaped leaves.
Protea cynaroides flowering at the Botanical Gardens but not at Fernkloof.
Protea repens that were dripping with sugar.
Leucospermum cordifolium with many sunbirds on the orange pincushions.
Leucospermum gracile, a creeping pincushion.
Drosera cistiflora with a pink flower.
Drosera pauciflora, flat red sundew.
Berzelia lanuginosa with small white balls as cones.
Liparia spendens ssp. *comantha*, mountain dahlia.
Erica cerinthoides, red fire heath.
Erica sessiliflora, light yellow flowers that the sunbirds were enjoying.
Erica plukenetii with their anthers sticking out.
Erica imbricate, salt and pepper.
 And many everlastings, daisies and other fynbos species.

DAY 11. Tuesday 11th October 2011

Whale watching / birding and botanizing in the Overberg area to Elim

Sunny with a light wind in the afternoon.

We spent three hours after breakfast watching the Southern Right Whales from the clifftop. We had perfect whale-watching weather and there were plenty of Southern Right Whales in the bay. We saw Swift Terns, African Black Oystercatcher, Hartlaub's, Grey-headed and Kelp Gulls, and the inquisitive Rock Hyraxes were out on the rocks sunning themselves.



Left: *Satyrium coriifolium*; middle: an unidentified species (both in the burnt field);
 right: *Satyrium carneum*, a roadside orchid.

We set off for the Moravian Mission village of Elim and the surrounding area of the Overberg. We found a couple of Denham's Bustards just after Stanford and half a dozen Crowned Lapwings in the same field. The Crowned Lapwings had been eluding us up until now! It wasn't long before we saw a Fork-tailed Drongo and individual Blue Cranes were becoming a regular sight. A Bontebok and a small herd of Grey Rhebok were seen in the fields near the road. We came across a field that had been burnt the previous summer and was now full of fascinating flowers. The orange orchid *Satyrium coriifolium* was mixed in with another white orchid, a *Disa* ssp.? (to be identified) and there was also a beautiful white *Moraea* (also to be identified!). Pink *Watsonias* *Watsonia laccata* were also flowering along with many other flowers.....

We arrived at the Elim Flower Reserve for our picnic lunch. After lunch we did some botanizing, finding many interesting plants, virtually all of them endemic to this reserve. We headed back to Hermanus via

the coastal route. Just past Pearly Beach we stopped at the Uilkraals rivermouth. Here we saw Blue Cranes, Whimbrel, White-winged Tern and Black-winged Stilt. At Gansbaai there were thousands of orchids flowering. The pink *Satyrium carneum* and the pink *Pelargonium capitatum* were turning parts of the dune hills into a pink wash. A quick stop at the 'Prawn Flats' slipway, before returning to the Windsor Hotel, our base in Hermanus. We had dinner in the Burgundy Restaurant with some good local wine – Raka.

DAY 12. Wednesday 12th October 2011

Birding and botanizing in the Overberg area to Cape Agulhas

Overcast in the morning and sunny with a moderate wind in the afternoon.

Our route to Cape Agulhas and the southern tip of Africa was via Stanford, Napier, Bredasdorp and Struisbaai to L'Agulhas. A pair of Jackal Buzzards were nest-building, an African Fish Eagle was having a tough time flying into the wind and we saw many Yellow-billed Kites. We stopped at Bredasdorp to visit the shipwreck museum, which puts things into perspective when at Cape Agulhas! We kept to the tar roads, stopping here and there to see what was flying or flowering. We managed to see a good selection of birds today including Red-capped Lark, Large-billed Lark and African Pipit. We also saw Cape Crows on their nests and a few small groups of Blue Cranes. As soon as we drove in to the 'limestone fynbos' belt close to Struisbaai we pulled over to have a look at the vegetation. Amongst others we found three types of orchid, a couple of moraeas, restios and new proteas, leucospermums, leucadendron and many other exciting species.

We had our picnic at 34° 49'58" S, 20° 00'12" E (the southern tip of Africa) next to the wreck of the 'Meisho Maru' which hit the rocks at the Cape in 1982. Keeping us company while having our lunch were a few Kittlitz's Plovers and Cape Wagtails. We spotted a White-fronted Plover and a few Brimstone Canaries en route to a tern roost, where we found a few Damara Terns as well as the usual Swift, Sandwich and Common Terns. We continued on our way, birding and botanizing as we went. We found a pair of Denham's Bustards, the male doing his best to display to his female, but he was obviously blinded by love as he was going in the wrong direction ... so the female flew off!



Picnic at Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of Africa.

As we had been enjoying the Raka wines so much with our dinners, we decided to do a wine-tasting of their wines that we had not seen on the restaurant wine lists (general verdict – excellent). As we arrived back in Hermanus we took a turn to the beach in time to see a Southern Right Whale breaching six times.

A few plant highlights:

Albuca maxima – small flowers that hang down.

Gladiolus cunonius – an unusual-looking gladiolus with red flowers.

Moraea tripetala – striking blue flower.

Homeria galpinii – yellow flowers on all the road verges.

Watsonia aletroides – an unusual-looking watsonia with red flowers.

Satyrium coriifolium – orchid with a tall spike of orange flowers.

Satyrium carneum – orchid with a tall spike of pink flowers.

DAY 13. Thursday 13th October 2011
Birding and botanizing at Grootvadersbosch Forest

Overcast in the morning and sunny in the afternoon.

We spent today at the Grootvadersbosch Forest, which is situated in the Boosmansbos Wilderness Area. We had quite a long drive to get to the forest, so we left Hermanus early and decided to drive straight there. We did however see plenty of Blue Cranes, Yellow-billed Kites and Spur-winged Geese on the way. Once we had arrived at the forest station we went for a walk through the forest, following the 'Redwood trail' and looking out for (and seeing) Olive Bush-shrike, Bar-throated Apalis, African Olive-pigeon, Neddicky, Cape Wagtail, Forest Canary, Dusky Flycatcher, Greater Double-collard Sunbird, Olive Woodpecker and Cape Batis. A fair number of the indigenous trees were labelled, which made life easier for us – Yellow-wood, Iron-wood, Cape Saffron, Hard Pear, Cape Beech, Assegai and plenty of smaller trees. After a late picnic lunch under the Yellow-wood trees we went for a walk around the campsite area, seeing new birds for the day and the trip – Sweet Waxbill, Fiscal Flycatcher, Rock Martin, African Black Swift, Little Swift, Greater Striped Swallow, Fork-tailed Drongo, Cape Robin-Chat, Olive Thrush, Cape Canary and good views of a Knysna Woodpecker. We also saw a pair of mating Forest Grasshoppers! These large green grasshoppers can breed to form swarms of huge proportions when the climate is right. We stopped a few times on the way back to Hermanus, once for a Cape Grassbird and a few times for 'botanical stops'.



Our last evening meal together.

DAY 14. Friday 14th October 2011
Hermanus to Stellenbosch

Sunny with a few sudden rain showers.

At Rooiels we took cover in a local café for tea and coffee while a rainstorm passed over us. We had a nice walk with some good birds. Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Grassbird, Cape Sugarbird, Familiar Chat, Cape Bunting, Yellow-rumped Widow, Grey-backed Cisticola, Sentinel Rock-Thrush and great views of a male Cape Rockjumper bringing food to a female. We spent ten minutes following the call of a Victorin's Warbler, to be rewarded with a fleeting view of the elusive bird. On the botanical front we saw some new interesting species – *Disa bractata*, a small orchid hidden underneath a large *Leucadendron loriolum* bush, and some yellow ericas.

We drove through to Stellenbosch where we had a nice late lunch under the oak trees in Church Street. The group went off in their own directions, Christmas shopping and sightseeing, until we reconvened at the vehicle to drive through to the airport for the flight home.

SYSTEMATIC LISTS

BIRDS

Common Ostrich	African Fish Eagle	Little Swift
African Penguin	Steppe Buzzard	Speckled Mousebird
Great Crested Grebe	Forest Buzzard	White-backed Mousebird
Black-necked Grebe	Jackal Buzzard	Malachite Kingfisher
Little Grebe	African Marsh-harrier	Eurasian Bee-eater
Sooty Shearwater	Black Harrier	African Hoopoe
Sabine's Gull	Harrier-hawk	Knysna Woodpecker
Shy Albatross	Peregrine Falcon	Olive Woodpecker
Black-browed Albatross	Rock Kestrel	Red-capped Lark
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	Cape Spurfowl	Large-billed Lark
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	Helmeted Guineafowl	White-throated Swallow
Great Shearwater	Blue Crane	Greater Striped Swallow
Arctic Skua	Purple Swamphen	Rock Martin
Antarctic Skua	Common Moorhen	Brown-throated Martin
Southern Giant Petrel	Red-knobbed Coot	Banded Martin
Northern Giant Petrel	Denham's Bustard	Black Saw-wing
White-chinned Petrel	Southern Black Korhaan	Fork-tailed Drongo
Cape Petrel 'Pintado'	African Black Oystercatcher	Cape Crow
Wilson's Storm Petrel	Ringed Plover	Pied Crow
Great White Pelican	White-fronted Plover	White-necked Raven
Cape Gannet	Kittlitz's Plover	Cape Penduline-tit
White-breasted Cormorant	Three-banded Plover	Cape Bulbul
Cape Cormorant	Grey Plover	Sombre Greenbul
Bank Cormorant	Crowned Lapwing	Olive Thrush
Reed Cormorant	Blacksmith Lapwing	Cape Rock-thrush
Crowned Cormorant	Ruddy Turnstone	Sentinel Rock-thrush
African Darter	Common Sandpiper	Capped Wheatear
Grey Heron	Marsh Sandpiper	Familiar Chat
Black-headed Heron	Greenshank	African Stonechat
Purple Heron	Curlew Sandpiper	Cape Robin-chat
Great Egret	Ruff	Cape Rock-jumper
Little Egret	Bar-tailed Godwit	Karoo Scrub-robin
Yellow-billed Egret	Whimbrel	Chestnut-vented Titbabbler
Cattle Egret	Black-winged Stilt	African Reed-warbler
Black-crowned Night-heron	Spotted Thick-knee	Lesser Swamp-warbler
Little Bittern	Kelp Gull	Little Rush-warbler
African Sacred Ibis	Grey-headed Gull	Victorin's Warbler
Glossy Ibis	Hartlaub's Gull	Bar-throated Apalis
Hadedda Ibis	Caspian Tern	Cape Grassbird
African Spoonbill	Swift Tern	Grey-backed Cisticola
Greater Flamingo	Sandwich Tern	Levaillant's Cisticola
White-faced Duck	Common Tern	Neddicky
White-backed Duck	Damara Tern	Karoo Prinia
Egyptian Goose	White-winged Tern	Dusky Flycatcher
South African Shelduck	Rock Dove	Fiscal Flycatcher
Yellow-billed Duck	Speckled Pigeon	Cape Batis
Cape Teal	African Olive-pigeon	African Paradise-flycatcher
Hottentot Teal	Red-eyed Dove	Cape Wagtail
Red-billed Teal	Cape Turtle-dove	African Pipit
Cape Shoveler	Laughing Dove	Common Fiscal
Southern Pochard	Namaqua Dove	Southern Boubou
Spur-winged Goose	Spotted Eagle-owl	Bokmakierie
Maccoa Duck	African Black Swift	Olive Bush-shrike
Yellow-billed Kite	White-rumped Swift	Eurasian Starling
Black-shouldered Kite	Horus Swift	Pied Starling

Red-winged Starling	House Sparrow	Chaffinch
Cape Sugarbird	Cape Sparrow	Cape Canary
Malachite Sunbird	Cape Weaver	Forest Canary
Orange-breasted Sunbird	Southern Masked-weaver	Cape Siskin
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	Red Bishop	Brimstone Canary
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	Yellow-rumped Widow	Yellow Canary
Amethyst Sunbird	Common Waxbill	White-throated Canary
Cape White-eye	Sweet Waxbill	Streaky-headed Seedeater
	Pin-tailed Whydah	Cape Bunting

Total = 191 Species

MAMMALS

Baboon, Chacma	Grey Rhebok	Mouse, Striped
Bontebok	Grey Squirrel	Otter, Cape Clawless
Dassie, Rock (Hyrax)	Klipspringer	Seal, Cape Fur
Eland	Mongoose, Small Grey	Whale, Bryde's
Giraffe		Whale, Southern Right

REPTILES

Tortoise, Angulate	Snake, Slug Eater	Lizard, Cape Girdled
Tortoise, Leopard	Skink, Cape	Lizard, Cape Crag
Terrapin, Marsh	Skink, Western three-striped	Lizard, Karoo Girdled
Snake, Mole		Agama, Southern Rock

AMPHIBIANS

Frog, Cape River

BUTTERFLIES

African Monarch	Painted Lady	Common Dotted Border
Cape Spring Widow	Cabbage White	Citrus Swallowtail
Garden Acraea	Meadow White	Water Opal

OTHERS

Saw-backed Locust	Green Grooved Dung Beetle	Tenebrionid Beetle 'Toktokkie'
Cape Lappet Caterpillar	Garden Locust	Forest Locust
Tri-coloured Tiger Caterpillar	African Hummingbird Moth	Forest Millipede