

South Africa: Birding & Wildlife Safari Species List | September 16 – 30, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



**NJ Guide Bryan Shirley & Local Guides Dalton & Nick with Participants:
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Mark**

Trip Summary

Amazing tour to beautiful South Africa! Our trip primarily covered 2 very different parts of the country – we spent the first half of the trip around Cape Town where besides the endemic birds, we enjoyed learning about the fynbos, karoo, and other interesting habitats. Our guide, Dalton, was like an encyclopedia of flowers and plants and he never ran out of interesting facts to share with us. For the second half of our trip we flew to Johannesburg and drove to Kruger NP with a couple of nice birding locations along the way. Kruger lived up to the hype and we had a fabulous time exploring there – between all the birds, the plethora of mammals, and the stunning landscapes we never had a dull moment.

BIRDS 352 species were recorded.

The eBird link below details the 352 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[South Africa: Birding & Wildlife Safari | September 16 – 30, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Mammals (45):

Hyraxes: Procaviidae

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis* - Seen by Carol around Simonstown while the rest of us were on the pelagic, but everyone had very good looks at this interesting species on our morning walk at Dehoop Nature Reserve.

Elephants: Elephantidae

African Bush Elephant *Loxodonta Africana* – Iconic species of Kruger, where it is very common. We saw them daily here, but never tired of watching them! One specific highlight was seeing a herd of dozens coming to water at Nsemani Dam near Satara Camp.

Hyraxes: Procaviidae

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* – a large toop was seen at DeHoop NR slowly feeding across the grassy plains. We also saw them nearly every day at Kruger NP.

Vervet Monkey *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* – While not as common as baboons, still very common at Kruger and we recorded them almost daily

Blue (Samango) Monkey *Cercopithecus albogularis* – After working hard to catch a glimpse of them in the forest around Mt Sheba, we went back for breakfast and they were walking around the grass near the hotel. Peter even had one try to come in his room!

Rabbits & Hares: Leporidae

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* – Only seen on the night drive from Satara Camp but we saw several of them during our drive

Squirrels: Sciuridae

Smith's Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi* – Common around Skukuza Camp at Kruger

Old World Rats & Mice: Muridae

Four-striped Grass Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio* – Dalton found on in a bush in West Coast NP and it didn't move so eventually we all were able to see it

Bush Vlei Rat *Otomys unisulcatus* – One ran across the road in front of the adventure bus. The fun bus also had one in the same area near the ocean viewpoing in West Coast NP

Mole-Rats: Bathyerdidae

Cape Dune Mole-Rat *Bathyergus suillus* – Not sure if anyone actually saw this guy or just the dirt flying out of his hole during our picnic lunch at Harold Porter Botanical Gardens

Pigs & Hogs: Suidae

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* – Seen daily in Kruger NP.

Whales & Dolphins: Cetacea

Southern Right Whale *Balaena glacialis* – Distant views of one, possibly two, at Koppie Allen at DeHoop NR. It was a bit far but since it was rolling around and sticking fins up in the air we were all able to see it though the scope

Hippos: Hippopotamidae

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* – Seen daily in Kruger, normally just a ears and part of a head in the water but sometimes we would have them out of the water lounging around as well.

Whales & Dolphins: Cetacea

Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* – Common but always amazing in Kruger NP. Nice to see so many so we could compare coloration, size, etc on them. Such a graceful animal!

Buffalo, Antelope, Sheep & Goats: Bovidae

African Buffalo *Synerus caffer* – Recorded 3 days in Kruger, often times very close to the vehicle. We had one herd that was probably well over 100 animals feeding along the roadside

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus* – We saw them a few times in Kruger, including a female with a young calf that was hanging out near the bathroom during our lunch stop at Lower Sabie Camp

Nyala *Tragelaphus angasii* – What a beautiful animal! Found only in SE Africa, we were fortunate to see a gorgeous male feeding only a few feet off the road in Kruger. We saw a female the following day as well.

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* – Recorded most days in Kruger. The long, spiral horns and stiped pattern of the males made them a favorite

Common Eland *Taurotragus oryx* – Only recorded twice – both times in Dehoop NP where we both days we had one feeding in the grassy areas near the road

Common Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia* – Only recorded once and it was on the night drive so only marginal looks at it through the grass with our flashlights

Steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* – Saw a few of this tiny, cute antelope on our day at West Coast NP and a couple of times in Kruger

Gray Rhebok *Pelea capreolus* – We had a small herd in the plains during our day trip out from Dehoop NP. There were several females and at least one male. We only saw them one other time at Verloren Valie

Mountain Reedbuck *Redunca fulvorufula* – Only had brief views of one at Dullstoom Nature Reserve. It was high on the ridge a quickly disappeared over the top

Common Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprurnus* – Seen several times during our safari drives in Kruger NP

Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* – One on our first day at West Coast NP and only one other at DeHoop NP

Impala *Aepceros melampus* – Very Common at Kruger NP and we saw a lot of them every day. Often dismissed as just another impala, but truly amazing antelope. Summed up by a quote I just read: “ There is no more beautiful sight than that of a troop of impala... really on the move and jumping in earnest... you have forgotten so shoot; but they have left you with something better than a trophy, something which time will only glorify – a picture that in daylight or in dark will fill your mind when ever you hear the name impala.” – Percy Fitzpatrick, 1907

Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus pygargu* – We first saw a herd on the flowery plains at West Coast NP, but very common at DeHoop NR. They were all around the lodge daily

Blesbok *Damaliscus pygargus pygargu* – A couple of nice herds at Verloren Valie

Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus* – Fairly common in Kruger NP and we saw a few daily, especially common along the dirt road on the drive from Satara (S100)

Black Wildebeest *Connochaetes gnou* – Only recorded on a private game reserve along the Valoren Valie drive

Gemsbok (Southern Oryx) *Oryx gazelle* – Several mixed in with Zebras in West Coast NP. Normally would be found a bit further north in more arid regions but there is a small introduced population here

Horses & Zebras: Equidae

Plains (Common) Zebra *Equus quagga* – Very common at Kruger. Told apart from the following species by the “shadow stripes” – light stripes between the darker black stripes

Mountain (Cape) Zebra *Equus zebra* – quite a few wandering around West Coast NP. Also common at Dehoop NR

Cats: Felidae

African Wildcat *Felis lybica* – A species we were really hoping to see and lucked out to find a young kitten at Satara Camp in Kruger. It was laying in the scrubby edge of the road we were birding along and we watched it for several minutes before we decided to back off in case its mom was waiting to come back. Quite a lucky experience!

Leopard *Panthera pardus* – What a welcome to Kruger! We met our safari guides and entered Kruger at the Phabeni gate and a few minutes later were watching a Leopard lounging on a rock in a dry riverbed! We watched it for a while and eventually it got up and moved into the brush so we moved on. About 10 minutes later several miles down the road we had another Leopard sneaking along through the grass!

Lion *Panthera leo* – We were extremely lucky with Lions on this trip and had them everyday but one in Kruger (the day we didn't see them we saw 2 Leopards!). It was especially fun to watch the standoff with the sleeping lions and some Giraffe who wanted to go past to the waterhole during our picnic at N'wanetsi. We also enjoyed watching them feast on a recent kill during our night drive.

Civits & Genets: Viverridae

Common Genet *Genetta genetta* – Distant view on one scampering around a large tree trunk during our night drive

Mongoose: Herpestidae

Common Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula* – One was spotted during the drive between Sukuza and Satara. It was very cooperative and everybody in both vehicles got good looks at it

Cape Gray (Small) Mongoose *Herpestes pulverulenta* – Some of us had one just before lunch at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. It was interesting to see how quickly the nearby Egyptian Goose saw it and started making a distress call to round up her chicks! Several more recorded throughout the tour

Yellow Mongoose *Cynictis penicillata* – Spotted by the "fun bus" at Dehoop NP

Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon* – Remarkably, both vehicles saw this uncommon to rare species at different places the same day as we were leaving DeHoop. Both crossed the road and disappeared into the tall grain. Huge mongoose and walked across the road like a Komodo Dragon

Hyanas: Hyaenidae

Spotted Hyena *Crocuta Crocuta* – Easily seen most days in Kruger, both near dens and running around the roadsides

Wolves, Foxes, & Jackals: Canidae

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* – Almost missed this species but finally found 3 just before our 6 PM curfew as we were driving back to Satara Camp

Badgers, Otters, & Martens: Mustelidae

Honey Badger *Mellivora capensis* – One of those amazing experiences we will never forget. We had 2 Honey Badgers playing around just a few feet off the road from us! Nick said it was the best he had ever seen this species since we got to watch them for so long, plus it was still light outside so we were very lucky

Pinnipeds: Pinnipedia

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus* – Good numbers on rock islands and along the coast during our pelagic trip in False Bay

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (11):

Tortoises: Testudinidae

Marsh Terrapin (Helmeted Turtle) *Pelomedusa subrufa* – One sitting on a rock in the river as we were watching birds from a bridge in Kruger

Crocodiles : Crocodylidae

Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* – Seemed to be common in the right habitat in Kruger (basically everywhere we could see water). Saw some huge guys off the bridge over the Sabie River

Snakes & Lizards: Squamata

Mole Snake *Pseudaspis cana* – Dalton caught a small one along the road in the Darling Hills area. Interesting to see how it played dead in his hand.

Puff Adder *Bitis arietans* – Like the Egyptian Mongoose, both vehicles had this species at different places the same day. The Adventure Bus nearly ran one over and it actually struck at the tire as we went by!

Variable Bushsnake *Atheris squamigera* – This venomous tree snake was found in the scrub at Orpen Gate while we were having our picnic and saying goodbye to our safari guides

Rock Monitor *Varanus albigularis* – One was walking around the grass in Satara Camp as we were loading up and checking out

Giant Plated Lizard *Matobasaurus validus* – Several were in the rocks at the view point at N'wanetsi picnic area

Rainbow Skink *Trachylepis margaritifera* – Seen in the rocks surrounding the cabins at Sukkuza Camp. Also recorded at the N'wanetsi picnic area

Cape Girded Lizard *Cordylus Cordylus* – Several of these dark black lizards on the rocks at a viewpoint in West Coast NP

Frogs: Anura

Cape River Frog *Amietia fuscigula* – In the pond at Harold Porter Botanical Garden

Chameleons : Chamaeleonidae

Flap-necked Chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis* – Amazing find by our driver on the night safari – even though we parked a few feet away and used the laser to show everyone where it was it was difficult for everyone to find