



3-DAY TANKWA KAROO BIRDING TOUR

(2-DAY VERSION ALSO AVAILABLE)



The normally elusive Cinnamon-breasted Warbler will be targeted on this Tankwa Karoo birding tour.

We fetch you from your hotel in the early morning and head through spectacular scenery to the beautiful town of Ceres (2.5-3 hours' drive from Cape Town). Ceres is the gateway to the Karoo. The Karoo happens to be one of the greatest endemic hotspots on the entire African continent, and almost everything will be new to birders who have not yet visited these parts. We recommend this tour as a three-day birding tour however, should you be short of time, we can shorten it to a two-day tour and still target most (but not all) of the specials listed below.

On the way to Ceres, we may also find some exciting mountain fynbos endemics such as **Verreaux's Eagle**, **Victorin's Warbler**, **Protea Canary**, **Cape Sugarbird**, **Cape Siskin**, and many others.

Soon after passing through Ceres, the impressive open plains of the Tankwa Karoo will appear and the birdlife will change markedly. New birds here will likely include a suite of endemics and near-endemics, including **Karoo Korhaan**, **Tractrac** and **Karoo Chats**, **Karoo Eremomela**, **Pale Chanting Goshawk**, **Rufous-eared Warbler**, **Grey Tit**, **Karoo, Large-billed**, and **Spike-heeled Larks**, **Yellow Canary**, and many others. One of the birding sites we will visit is a canyon near Katbakkies, which is the famed site for the bizarre, crevice-skulking **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler**. This canyon is also full of other incredibly exciting species such as the beautiful **Fairy Flycatcher**, **White-backed Mousebird**, **Pale-winged Starling**, **Mountain Wheatear**, **Layard's** and **Rufous-vented Warblers** (Tit-babblers), **White-throated Canary**, and a host of other rock- and mountain-associated species. **Booted Eagle** is relatively common here in these dry parts of the south-western Cape.



*The subtly beautiful **Karoo Korhaan** occurs in the plains of the Tankwa Karoo.*

We will then continue to head north through the plains where our chances of finding **Greater Kestrel**, **Namaqua Sandgrouse**, **Namaqua Dove**, **Karoo Long-billed Lark**, **Tractrac Chat**,

Lark-like Bunting and **Dusky Sunbird**, and the rare and declining **Burchell's Courser** (with luck), will have markedly increased. Dry river beds in the area usually hold **Namaqua Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied Eremomela**, **Pirit Batis**, and **Long-billed Crombec**.

At the right time of the year (spring) large numbers of **Black-eared Sparrow-Larks** push further south, from their regular haunts in the Northern Cape province, and on these trips, this desert nomad will be one of our biggest targets. In spring **Ludwig's Bustard** also becomes easier to find, although it is still a tough bird in these parts. **Black-headed Canary** will also be targeted on this trip however it is also a highly nomadic species which can be very tricky to find, although there are certain areas where we will concentrate our searches.

Night drives in the Tankwa Karoo sometimes generate **Rufous-cheeked** and **Freckled Nightjars**, **Cape** (with lots of luck) and **Spotted Eagle-Owls**, **Bat-eared Fox**, **Black-backed Jackal**, **Caracal** (red lynx – with luck), and good numbers of other small mammals. After spending the night in the Tankwa Karoo, we continue birding for the whole of the next two days before eventually arriving back in Cape Town. Our aim is to find almost all the Karoo endemics.

Nearby patches of dry mountain fynbos can be visited to search for **Cape Clapper Lark** (easiest when they give distinctive display flight in spring), **Grey-backed Cisticola**, and occasionally small family groups of **Ground Woodpeckers**. It is also possible to search for some fynbos endemics such as **Protea Canary**, **Cape Rockjumper**, **Cape Siskin**, and others, in addition to all the Karoo species.



*We'll stop off at a mountain pass en route to the Tankwa Karoo to look for **Protea Canary**.*

Recommendation

This three-day trip forms part of our longer Best of Cape Town and Beyond birding tour. We recommend combining this three-day trip with our three-day Agulhas Plains tour and/or a one-day West Coast or Cape Peninsula birding tour, if you have more than two but less than eight days available. To really clean up on South African birds, we recommend the eight-day Best of Cape Town and Beyond birding tour plus at least a portion of the Namaqualand and Kalahari birding trip, plus our two-week Subtropical South Africa birding tour.

The guide for our shorter trips/day trips is allocated only after you have booked, as all of them are run as private trips. But we always use the country's top birding guides.



*The cute **Fairy Flycatcher** is normally seen on this tour.*

Duration: 3 (or 2) days

Start: Cape Town

End: Cape Town

3-day price: **R16, 415** per person sharing, assuming 3-6 participants; **R21, 398** per person sharing for 2 participants, **R36, 345** for 1 participant.

Single supplement: **R931**

2-day price: **R10, 031** per person sharing, assuming 3-6 participants; **R13, 218** per person sharing for 2 participants, **R22, 780** for 1 participant.

Single supplement: **R465**