

WILDLIFE WATCHING TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA

23 July – 9 August 2012 (2,5 weeks)

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Introduction

This was a self-organized trip to eastern South Africa, with the main goal of watching a good number of the large mammals of the region. We also had a secondary focus on birds and on the main biomes.

Flights

Barcelona – Johannesburg via Istanbul, with Turkish Airlines (630 €/person).

Car hire

We hired a Chevrolet Spark (which proved to be useful), with First Car Rental (through Auto Europe, 14.70 €/day).

Security

There was absolutely no problem, although you should observe the basic precautionary rules.

Sources of information

-In the preparation of the trip, the information in “mammalwatching.com” was very useful, and we designed our itinerary based on it, to maximise the list of large mammals seen.

-Field guide: “Smither's Mammals of Southern Africa: A Field Guide” (2012 edition)

Places visited

Code	Place	Nights	Accommodation	Comments
PNP	Pilanesberg National Park	Jul. 24-25	Manyane Camp (tent). Mammals at camp: Impala, Warthog, Banded Mongoose	1 night drive

MSF	Marrick Safari Farm (Kimberley)	Jul. 26-27	Marrick Safari Farm (room); highly recommended	2 night drives (the very best in the whole trip) www.marricksafari.com
MNP	Mokala National Park (Kimberley)	-	-	Only 1 day-visit (Jul. 27), north to south, from Marrick Farm
GGH	Golden Gate Highlands National Park	Jul. 28-29	Basotho Cultural Village (rondavel)	Bookings through www.sanparks.org
WIT	Witsieshoek (Drakensberg)	-	-	30 Jul. morning
DFR	Dlinza Forest Reserve (Eshowe)	Jul. 30	Zululand Backpackers (highly recommended; we made a reservation for a tent but they gave us a room)	31 Jul. morning walk (aerial boardwalk + tower)
SLE	Saint Lucia Village & Eastern Shores (iSimangaliso Wetland Park)	Jul. 31 – Aug. 1	Sugarloaf Campsite (tent). Mammals at camp: Hippo, Banded Mongoose, Vervet Monkey	1 night drive with Shaka Barker (very crowded vehicle with bad visibility, and a lot of time lost by the driver explaining common diurnal species; not recommended)
MGR	Mkhuze Game Reserve (iSimangaliso Wetland Park)	Aug. 2-3	Mantuma Camp (hut). Mammals at camp: Impala, Nyala, Greater Galago, Vervet Monkey	1 afternoon walk to the Fig Forest 1 night drive
WAK	Wakkerstroom	Aug. 4	Mahem self-catering cottage (highly recommended)	www.wakkerstroomcottages.co.za
KNP	Kruger National Park (southern part)	Aug. 5-6-7	Tent: 1 night Pretoriuskop, 1 night Skukuza, 1 night Berg-en-Dal	Bookings through www.sanparks.org

- Mammal species seen: **59**
- Bird species seen: **293**. Highlights: Ostrich, Crested Guineafowl, African Black Duck (GGH), Black Stork, Saddle-billed Stork, Southern Bald Ibis (GGH), Cape Vulture, Lammergeier (GGH), Palm-nut Vulture (Mtunzini), Blue Crane (WAK), Kori Bustard, Denham's Bustard (SLE), Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon (DFR), Livingstone's Turaco, Ground Woodpecker, Red-throated Wryneck, Cape Longclaw, Spotted Ground-thrush (DFR), Pink-throated Twinspot (MGR).
- Km driven: **4725**

Mammal List

P = Species photographed

V = Species videotaped

ND = Night Drive

N.	Latin	English	P	V	Comments
1	<i>Xerus inauris</i>	South African Ground Squirrel	x	x	MSF: several // MNP: 1+5
2	<i>Paraxerus palliatus</i>	Red Bush Squirrel	x	x	SLE: 3-4 near EKZN Office at Saint Lucia Village
3	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>	Tree Squirrel			PNP: 1 at Pilanesberg Centre + 1 at Tshwene // KNP: 1 at Berg-en-Dal Camp
4	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>	Springhare			MSF: seen at both ND, less common than thought
5	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	South African Porcupine			MSF: several seen at both ND
6	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Cape Hare			MSF: common ND
7	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	Scrub Hare		x	PNP: 1 + 1 (ND) // MSF: 1 ND // MGR: common ND
8	<i>Pronolagus rupestris</i>	Smith's Red Rock Rabbit		x	MSF: 2 seen at rocky outcrop (ND)
9	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Rock Hyrax	x		PNP: >1 // WIT: 1+2
10	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	African Elephant	x	x	PNP: 4 + 15 // KNP: common
11	<i>Equus quagga</i>	Plains Zebra	x	x	PNP // MSF: 1 ND // MNP // GGH // SLE // MGR // KNP
12	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	White Rhinoceros	x	x	PNP: 2+2 // SLE: 1+1 // MGR: 1+3 // KNP: several
13	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	Hippopotamus	x	x	PNP: Mankwe & Makorwane Dams // SLE: common // MGR: about 10 at Nsumo Pan // KNP: Sabie River, Sunset Dam, Crocodile Bridge, etc.
14	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Common Warthog	x	x	Common: PNP // MSF // MNP // SLE // MGR // KNP
15	<i>Potamochoerus porcus</i>	Bushpig		x	SLE: 1 ND
16	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	Giraffe	x	x	Several: PNP // MGR // KNP
17	<i>Neotragus moschatus</i>	Suni		x	MGR: 2 near kuMasinga Hide + 1 ND
18	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>	Klipspringer	x	x	PNP: 1 Nare Link // KNP: 2 Shabeni Loop near Pretoriuskop
19	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Springbok	x		Common: PNP // MSF // MNP // GGH
20	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Steenbok	x	x	Several: PNP // MSF // MNP // KNP
21	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	Eland	x		Several: GGH
22	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	Bushbuck	x		Several: SLE // KNP
23	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	Greater Kudu	x	x	Common: PNP // MNP // SLE // MGR // KNP
24	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>	Nyala	x	x	MGR: common
25	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	African Buffalo	x	x	MNP: 2+5+1+1 // SLE: small herds // KNP: common
26	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	Waterbuck	x	x	PNP: several, Mankwe Dam // MNP: 5 // SLE: common // MGR: 1 Nsumo Pan // KNP: 1+2
27	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>	Grey Rhebok	x	x	GGH: 6 at Blesbok Loop (2 mating) // WIT: 2
28	<i>Redunca arundinum</i>	Southern Reedbuck	x	x	SLE: scattered
29	<i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>	Mountain Reedbuck	x	x	MNP: 5 on a hill // GGH: 3+4
30	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Impala	x	x	Very common: PNP // MGR // KNP. Scarce at SLE (introduced?)

31	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	Red Hartebeest	x	x	PNP: 4 // MSF // MNP: common // GGH: scarce
32	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Blue Wildebeest	x	x	Common: PNP // MNP // SLE // MGR // KNP
33	<i>Connochaetes gnou</i>	Black Wildebeest	x	x	Several: MSF // GGH
34	<i>Damaliscus phillipsi</i>	Blesbok	x	x	GGH: common // WAK: several in private enclosures
35	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	Tsessebe	x	x	PNP: 1 Tilodi // MNP: small herds
36	<i>Cephalophus natalensis</i>	Natal Red Duiker	x	x	SLE: scarce // MGR: 1+2
37	<i>Philantomba monticola</i>	Blue Duiker	x	x	DFR: several; common and easy to see at close range
38	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	Common Duiker		x	PNP: 1+1 (ND) // MSF: 1+3+2 // SLE: several ND // MGR: scattered // KNP: several
39	<i>Hippotragus niger</i>	Sable	x		MNP: 1 herd (>10)
40	<i>Oryx gazella</i>	Gemsbok	x		MSF: 2+3 (ND) // MNP: several
41	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Spotted Hyaena		x	KNP: 1 walking on the main road at dusk (Skukuza area)
42	<i>Parahyaena brunnea</i>	Brown Hyaena			PNP: 1 seen well but briefly at ND
43	<i>Proteles cristata</i>	Aardwolf		x	MSF: 1 seen well at ND
44	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Lion	x	x	PNP: 1 male & 3 females seen resting at Nkwe Loop and later at ND // KNP: 3 sightings + 1 female almost dead on the road (causes unknown)
45	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Leopard		x	KNP: 1 near Pretoriuskop Camp at dusk
46	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Small-spotted Genet			MSF: 1 ND
47	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>	Yellow Mongoose	x	x	MSF: 1+2 // WAK: several
48	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	Dwarf Mongoose	x	x	KNP: 3 groups, near Berg-en-Dal Camp
49	<i>Ichneumia albicauda</i>	White-tailed Mongoose			MGR: 1+1 (ND)
50	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	Banded Mongoose		x	PNP: 2 Manyane Camp // SLE // KNP: >3 Renosterpan
51	<i>Suricatta suricatta</i>	Suricate	x	x	WAK: several family groups
52	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Black-backed Jackal			MSF: several, both ND // MNP: 1+2 // GGH: 2 on the road at night
53	<i>Lycan pictus</i>	African Wild Dog	x	x	MGR: 1 pack (9 animals) crossed the road before leaving the reserve // KNP: 1 near Pretoriuskop Camp at dusk
54	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	Bat-eared Fox		x	MSF: several, both ND
55	<i>Otolemur crassicaudatus</i>	Greater Galago		x	SLE: 2+1 ND // MGR: 3 at Mantuma Camp at night + 1 ND
56	<i>Cercopithecus albogularis</i>	Samango Monkey	x	x	SLE: several, Cape Vidal area
57	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>	Vervet Monkey	x	x	PNP: 2 // Mtunzini // SLE: common // MGR // KNP
58	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	Chacma Baboon		x	MNP: 2 // MGR: 2 troops // KNP: several troops
59	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Aardvark		x	MSF: seen at both ND (1+1); one of the animals was watched and videotaped at fairly close range for more than ten minutes!

Stuff we missed

Mainly the cats, although we looked hard for them in the right places: Cheetah, Caracal, Serval, Black-footed Cat (maybe seen at Marrick, but we couldn't see well), African Wildcat. Instead, we didn't look for bats or small mammals.

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