

SOUTH AFRICA Oct - 2004

SPECIES: Common Name		Scientific Name	No of days out of 8 recorded
1	Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	5
2	African Penguin	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	2
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	5
4	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	2
5	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	2
6	Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	1
7	Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	1
8	Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	1
9	Southern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	1
10	Northern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>	1
11	Pintado Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>	1
12	Great-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>	1
13	Soft-plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	1
14	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	1
15	Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	1
16	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	2
17	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	1
18	Wilson's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites Oceanicus</i>	1
19	Black-bellied Storm-petrel	<i>Fregetta tropica</i>	1
20	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	2
21	Cape Gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	3
22	White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus</i>	5
23	Cape Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	3
24	Bank Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	2
25	Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	5
26	Crowned Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax coronatus</i>	1
27	African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	3
28	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	4
29	Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	5
30	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2
31	Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	2
32	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	4
33	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	4
34	Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2
35	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	2
36	African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	7
37	Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	4
38	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	8
39	African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	4
40	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	2
41	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	7
42	Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	5
43	Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	4
44	White-faced Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	2
45	African Black Duck	<i>Anas sparsa</i>	1
46	Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	2
47	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2
48	Red-billed Duck	<i>Anas erythrorhynchos</i>	2
49	Cape Shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>	2
50	Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	2
51	Maccoa Duck	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	2
52	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	3
53	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus migrans parasitus</i>	5
54	African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	1
55	Cape Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	1
56	African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1

57	Black Harrier	<i>Circus maurus</i>	4
58	African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	1
59	African Goshawk	<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>	2
60	Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo vulpinus</i>	6
61	Forest Buzzard	<i>Buteo oreophilus trizonatus</i>	1
62	Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	4
63	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1
64	Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	1
65	Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolis</i>	5
66	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1
67	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1
68	Secretary-bird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	1
69	Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	7
70	Grey-winged Francolin	<i>Francolinus africanus</i>	1
71	Cape Spurfowl (Francolin)	<i>Francolinus capensis</i>	4
72	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	H only
73	African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>	1
74	Black Crake	<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>	1
75	African Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>	2
76	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	4
77	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	5
78	Blue Crane	<i>Anthropoides paradisea</i>	3
79	Denham's (Stanley's) Bustard	<i>Neotis denhami</i>	1
80	Southern Black Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis afra</i>	1
81	Karoo Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis vigorsii</i>	1
82	African Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	3
83	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	3
84	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	2
85	Water Thick-knee(Dikkop)	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	1
86	Spotted Thick-knee (Dikkop)	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	1
87	Blacksmith Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	7
88	Crowned Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	4
89	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1
90	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	3
91	White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	1
92	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1
93	Subantarctic Skua	<i>Catharacta antarctica</i>	1
94	Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1
95	Cape Gull	<i>Larus vetula</i>	7
96	Grey-headed Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	2
97	Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	5
98	Sabine's Gull	<i>Larus sabini</i>	1
99	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	1
100	Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	4
101	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	3
102	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna</i>	1
103	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	2
104	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	1
105	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	8
106	Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	8
107	African Olive-pigeon (Rameron Pigeon)	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>	3
108	Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	8
109	Cape Turtle (Ring-necked) Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	8
110	Laughing (Palm) Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	6
111	Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>	1
112	Klaas' Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	1+H
113	Dideric Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1
114	Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	4
115	Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchelli</i>	1
116	Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	H only
117	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	4
118	African (Black) Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>	6
119	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	7

120	White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	7
121	Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	3
122	African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	4
123	Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	1
124	Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	1
125	Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	1
126	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	3
127	Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	1
128	Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>	2
129	Algulhas Clapper Lark	<i>Mirafra marjoriae</i>	2
130	Algulhas Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda brevirostris</i>	2
131	Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	3
132	Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>	3
133	Brown-throated (Plain) Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	3
134	Rock Martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	6
135	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1
136	White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	5
137	Pearl-breasted Swallow	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>	1
138	Greater Striped-swallow	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	8
139	Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>	3
140	Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	7
141	Cape (Orange-throated) Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>	2
142	African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	3
143	Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	3
144	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	H only
145	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	2
146	Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	4
147	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	7
148	White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	4
149	Cape Rock-jumper	<i>Chaetops frenatus</i>	1
150	Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	8
151	Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>	2
152	Cape Rock-thrush	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>	4
153	Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	4
154	Cape Robin-chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	7
155	Karoo Scrub-Robin	<i>Cercotrichas coryphaeus</i>	2
156	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	3
157	Familiar Chat	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	4
158	Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	3
159	Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>	2
160	Knysna Warbler	<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>	H only
161	Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>	3
162	Victorin's Warbler	<i>Bradypterus victorini</i>	1
163	African Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	2
164	Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	4
165	Neddicky (Piping Cisticola)	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	4
166	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	4
167	Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapillus</i>	4
168	Levaillant's (Tinkling)Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	2
169	Cloud Cisticola	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>	3
170	Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>	2
171	Karoo(Spotted) Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>	8
172	Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>	5
173	African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	5
174	African Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	2
175	Blue-mantled Crested flycatcher	<i>Trochocercus cyanomelas</i>	1
176	Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>	4
177	Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	5
178	Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	3
179	Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	3
180	African Pied Starling	<i>Spreo bicolor</i>	3
181	Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	8
182	Common (European) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	7

183	Cape Sugarbird	<i>Promerops cafer</i>	6
184	Orange-breasted Sunbird	<i>Anthobaphes violacea</i>	6
185	Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	7
186	Amethyst (Black) Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>	1
187	Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybea chalybeus</i>	7
188	Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris afra afer</i>	2
189	Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus capensis</i>	7
190	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	6
191	Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	7
192	Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	7
193	Southern (Vitelline) Masked-weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	3
194	Yellow Bishop (Cape Widow)	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	5
195	Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	4
196	Sweet Waxbill (Black-faced Sweet)	<i>Estrilda melanotis</i>	2
197	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	8
198	Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	6
199	Yellow Canary	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>	3
200	Brimstone (Bully) Canary	<i>Serinus sulphuratus</i>	5
201	White-throated Canary	<i>Serinus albogularis</i>	2
202	Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>	8
203	Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	5
204	Protea Seedeater	<i>Serinus leucopterus</i>	1
205	Forest Canary	<i>Serinus scotops</i>	1
206	Cape Siskin	<i>Serinus totta</i>	4
207	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1

	MAMMALS & OTHER SIGHTINGS	<i>Scientific Name</i>	
1	Southern Right Whale	<i>Balaena australis</i>	3
2	Humpback Whale	<i>Magaptera novaeangliae</i>	1
3	Long-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>	1
4	South African Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>	3
5	Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	1
6	Eland	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	1
7	Mountain Zebra	<i>Equus zebra zebra</i>	1
8	Grey Rhebok	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>	3
9	Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	2
10	Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	3
11	Southern Scrub Hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	1
12	Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	2
13	Four-striped Grass Mouse	<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>	2
14	Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	2
15	Bontebok	<i>Damaliscus pygargus</i>	2
16	Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	2
17	Striped Polecat	<i>Ictonyx striatus</i>	1 dead
18	Cape Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>	1
19	Yellow Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ochracea</i>	3
20	Angulate Tortoise	<i>Chersina angulate</i>	3
21	Leopard Tortoise	<i>Geochelone pardalis</i>	1
22	Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	1
23	Southern Rock Agama	<i>Agama atra</i>	1
24	Karoo Girdled Lizard	<i>Cordylus polyzonus</i>	1
25	Marico Thick-toed Gecko	<i>Pachydactylus mariquensis</i>	1
26	Cape Crag Lizard	<i>Pseudocordylus microlepidotus</i>	1
27	Cape Skink	<i>Mabuya capensis</i>	1

More mammal info below -

MAMMALS (CLASS: MAMMALIA)

These are presented in taxonomic order with details of the sightings. Taxonomic order and species definitions are based upon Mammals of the World a Checklist, Duff and Lawson (2004). Supplementary text is derived from a range of sources, including: The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals, Kingdon (2001), The Encyclopaedia of Mammals ed Macdonald (1984) and various websites. Mammal taxonomy, like that of birds, is complex, often contested and subject to change. Some species are extremely variable, not only within adjacent populations, but often within individual populations.

Order: RODENTIA

Rodents

FAMILY: Sciuridae

Squirrels

Eastern Grey Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

'Our' very own Grey Squirrels introduced to South Africa from the eastern United States, via the United Kingdom, to animate the introduced Oaks (*Quercus robor*) and remind the Brits of home!

Seen whilst shopping at Spar in Paal and in Kirstenbosch.

FAMILY: Muridae

Mice, Rats, Voles and Gerbils

Four-striped Grass Mouse

Rhabdomys pumilio

Called Striped Mouse within the list. The six species of Striped Mouse actually belong to a different genus, *Hybomys*.

Only seen by two members of the group, including Johan. Seen at Kirstenbosch and on the path from the Visitor Centre to the coastal road at Cape Point. 'Views' consisted of a rapid dash by the mouse from one area of cover to another. Regarded as common.

Order: CARNIVORA

Carnivores

FAMILY: Herpestidae

Mongoose

Mongoose are the second largest group of predators, after the Mutselids (Weasels etc), which they displace (in terms of total number of species) in Africa.

Cape Grey Mongoose

Herpestes pulverulentus

Called Small Grey Mongoose within both the list and Kingdon.

Two individuals were seen. As a means of escape, one initially insisted on running ahead of the vehicles on our first day at Strandfontein Sewage Works. Another was seen on a path in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

This mammal is generally solitary and nocturnal. It occurs in a range of habitats, with a preference for drier rocky areas, especially in the coastal plain.

Yellow Mongoose

Cynictis penicillata

Seen on several occasions, mostly singularly but also a pair and three animals together. The coats of southern forms of this widespread mongoose are more yellow and the white-tipped tail was clear. It was interesting that we saw this diurnal animal traverse very large open areas. What might this say about the abundance of its predators in those areas, eg Martial Eagles and other raptors, have they declined? On several occasions they were observed to stand upright in the 'Meerkat' position!

Order: PINNIPEDIA

Seals and Sea Lions

FAMILY: Otariidae

Eared Seals

Species in this family have hind-limbs that can be articulated in front of their body so that they can 'walk', unlike the True or Hair Seals (Family: Phocidae, the Earless Seals), which have their hind-limbs pointing backwards for better performance in water, but less so on land.

The common name suffix is not necessarily a clue to family, as species with the suffix 'seal' occur in both families.

South African Fur Seal

Arctocephalus pusillus

(Australian Fur Seal)

Called Cape Fur Seal within the list.

Seen both in the sea and on the land and when we were both on land (esp Cape Point and Boulders Beach) and on the water (the pelagic!).

Their easy aquatic agility contrasted sharply with their terrestrial ungainliness.

Order: PRIMATES

Primates

FAMILY: Cercopithecidae

Old World Monkeys

Chacma Baboon

Papio ursinus

The second largest of the five species of baboon within the genus *Papio*. Adaptable, opportunist and omnivorous.

Seen on various occasions and at a range of sites varying from mountain-sides within reserves (eg Cape Point) to residential suburbs, including gardens and patios (the Rock-jumper site). This adaptability makes them, on occasions, a dangerous pest (the skulls in the Visitor Centre at Strandfontein Sewage Works show how their canines compare quite favourably with those of a leopard).

Order: CETACEA

Whales and Dolphins

FAMILY: Balaenopteridae

Rorqual Whales

Humpback Whale*Megaptera novaeangliae*

So-called because of the small (relatively) hump before the dorsal fin. The distinctive blow was seen by some on the pelagic.

FAMILY: Balaenidae**Right Whales****Southern Right Whale***Balaena australis*

Although seen whilst on the pelagic, the sightings from the land at Hermanus were truly spectacular.

No one will forget the practically continuous display of tail flukes as the whales 'sailed' for periods of 10+ minutes at a time. This behaviour is associated with temperature regulation. The related behaviour of lob-tailing being associated with communication. Quite amazing. Earlier on our trip we were also treated to excellent cliff-top views of mothers with their calves.

FAMILY: Delphinidae**Marine Dolphins****Long-finned Pilot Whale***Globicephala melas*

Whilst on the pelagic, a pod passed both boats. This gave all of those not suffering from sea-sickness an excellent view of this species.

Order: ARTIODACTYLA**Even-toed Ungulates****FAMILY: Bovidae****Cattle, Antelope, Sheep and Goats****Rhebok***Pelea capreolus*

The (Grey) Rhebok was seen on many occasions in a variety of circumstances wherever there was shorter vegetation for both grazing and to provide the animal with clear views (their means of avoiding predation). Herd size was typically small.

Springbok*Antidorcas marsupialis*

It was good to see this important symbol of South Africa. Although superficially resembling gazelles, they are different (for example, having hollow horn cores, like Impala). Extensively ranched, with much 'wild' stock living in fenced rangeland.

Steenbok*Raphicerus campestris*

Much smaller than the Springbok, although also an inhabitant of arid grassland scrub (often in more stony areas). A type of dwarf antelope.

Bushbuck*Tragelaphus scriptus*

Seen by most on 25 October (in the Swellendam farm area) and by some on the 28 October (after the pelagic).

Unlike the Rhebok, this species usually occurs in dense vegetation and is solitary. As such, Johan was very surprised to see one in the open at Swellendam and exclaimed, "What are you doing out there?".

Eland*Taurotragus oryx*

Also called Common or Cape Eland (and although this species once ranged over much of Africa south of the Equator, it is now rare in the Cape). This majestic spirally-horned bovine (which is larger than the Giant (or Derby's) Eland *T. derbianus*) is the world's largest antelope.

It was seen in the finbos at Cape Point.

Bontebok*Damaliscus pygargus*

Also known as the Blesbok and down as *D. dorcas dorcas* in the list (both are now regarded as subspecies *D. p. dorcas* = Bontebok and *D. p. phillipsi* = Blesbok).

This beautiful antelope, once widespread in open grassland and finbos (fynbos) areas, is now the subject of a successful re-introduction programme in the Cape National Park. We also saw individuals being ranched in, appropriately, the Bontebok National Park area (in a reserve / breeding site near De Hoop). Both subspecies are extensively ranched.

Mountain Zebra*Equus zebra*

We saw the Cape Mountain subspecies, *E. z. zebra*, in arable/scrub on the way to Swellendam (where we also saw Rhebok, Steenbok and Springbok). Zebra taxonomy is complex for a superficially 'simple' mammal. All species have subspecies and there is a plethora of common names.

Order: URANOTHERIA**Even-toed Ungulates****FAMILY: Procaviidae****Hyraxes****Rock Hyrax***Procavia capensis*

One of two species of Hyrax found in South Africa (other = *Dendrohyrax arboreus* (Southern Tree Hyrax)). The formally five species of Rock Hyrax (or Dassie) are now treated as one species, ie *P. capensis*. Excellent views of this superficially rodent/rabbit like mammal on three days, especially on the path from the Visitor Centre to the coastal road at Cape Point.

REPTILES (CLASS: REPTILIA)

These are presented in taxonomic order with details of the sightings. Taxonomic order and species definitions are based upon a range of websites. Reptile taxonomy is very complex and contested. In addition, and far more so than for Birds and Mammals, there is very frequent use of the 'full range' of taxonomic levels. For example, sub-Families, sub-Orders, infra-Orders and much more, are frequently used within Reptile taxonomy. These have been omitted!

Order TESTUDINES**Turtles**

Note that the term Turtle can refer to what UK residents call Tortoises, Turtles and Terrapins.

FAMILY Testudinidae**Tortoises**

South Africa has the richest diversity of tortoise species and genera in the world

Angulate Tortoise

Chersina angulata

Seen on three occasions on the first three days, with particularly good views being had at the Strandfontein Sewage Works. Found in Namibia and South Africa. This tortoise has a very domed carapace.

Leopard Tortoise

Geochelone pardalis

This tortoise, is, sadly, one of the species of tortoise most commonly kept as a pet. It has a huge range across the dry-lands of sub-Saharan Africa. Close-up views had by virtually all the group at the Strandfontein Sewage Works.

Order: SQUAMATA**Lizards and Snakes**

Comprises 95%+ of living reptiles, 40 or so families and over 6,600 species (with the number likely to increase with more research).

FAMILY Agamidae**Agama Lizards****Southern Rock Agama**

Agama atra

Seen by some in the Cape Point and Boulders Beach areas on the second day. The males can be wonderfully coloured with vivid blue to the front and lower body, hence another common name the Blue-headed Agama.

FAMILY Gekkonidae**Geckos****Marico's Thick-toed Gecko**

Pachydactylus mariquensis

Always good to see, this Gecko was found on our first day in the Strandfontein Sewage Works. The genus *Pachydactylus* is known as the Thick-Toed or Rough Geckos, this says it all really! Found in a range of habitats and mostly nocturnal.

FAMILY Cordylidae**Spinytail or Girdled Lizards****Karoo Girdled Lizard**

Cordylus polyzonus

A rock-dwelling lizard with a longish tail. It is probably the most common species in the arid western and central parts of South Africa.

Like the Agama above, Seen by some in the Cape Point area and again in Swellendam.

Cape Crag Lizard

Pseudocordylus microlepidotus

Another Cape Point finding, seen by some. The common name aptly describes its habits.

FAMILY Scincidae**Skinks****Cape Skink**

Mabuya capensis

The familiar form of the skink was our first reptile, seen at the airport, and later at Strandfontein Sewage Works.

FAMILY Viperidae**Vipers and Pit Vipers****Puff Adder**

Bitis arietans

What a delightful genus name! Particularly for a snake that has one of the fastest strikes in the world of around 7 metres per second. It is Common throughout South Africa, except for mountain tops, true desert and dense forest. They very seldom move out of the way when approached. It is a bad-tempered and excitable snake that may hiss or puff when disturbed. It is highly venomous and accounts for up to 60% in SA.

However, it is a beautiful animal that mostly feeds on rats and mice and, in this respect, is beneficial. Our specimen, just under a metre in length with an attractive sand colouration (colour pattern is highly variable), was observed on 23 October crossing the road in the Cape National Park.

Please note that our checklists do not include species seen by leaders only.

We also do not include single observer sightings or very poor views.

We do not count heard only or subspecies, although they are noted.

This we believe gives us a very honest accurate group total.

With this in mind we welcome you to compare our lists with other companies, check out our high standards and above all our prices which offer the very best value for money.

Check out our gallery for photos from this and other tours

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