

PRE-TOUR INFORMATION FOR ESCARPMENT & KRUGER TOUR

NICK ROSSITER

6 – 11 November 2018

Now that you are starting to finalise your "Trip of a Lifetime" with Lawson's Birding, Wildlife and Custom Safaris, we think you'll find the following information useful:

Tour Participants

Rob Bierregaard
Daniel & Cristina Driscoll
Karl-Otto Jacobsen
Diego Johnson
Jeff Johnson
Torgier Nygard
Robert Risebrough
Jeff & Ruthe Smith
Roar Solheim
Dan Zazelenchuk

In case of Emergency

Dates	Accommodation	Contact Number	Contact Name
4 – 5 November	Africa Sky Guest House	082 749 0674	Leoni
6 November	Rose Cottage - Dullstroom	082 574 0542	Anita
7 November	Mount Sheba	013 768 1242	George
8 November	Blyde – Forever Resort	086 668 6542	Amanda
9 - 10 November	Satara - Kruger	013 7356306/7	Reception

Lawson's Contact Numbers

Lawson's Office (013) 741 2458
Leon Marais 082 214 2148
Mavourneen Pearce 082 576 7526

Notes

1. Your tour is booked on a Dinner, Bed and Breakfast basis. Lunches and drinks are for your own account.
2. If there is anything that you are dissatisfied with please speak to your guide as soon as possible so that the problem can be addressed immediately.

Guides

Note: due to unforeseen circumstances and company logistics, we reserve the right to change the guide at any stage before or during the tour.

Casper Badenhorst 072 574 8084

Casper was born in South Africa where he grew up near Dullstroom, Mpumalanga. Family holidays and many more weekends each year were spent in the Kruger National Park or other parks and reserves. Since an early age his parents instilled in him a deep appreciation for nature. It was during one of those visits at the age of 10 when he was given a copy of Newman's birds of Southern Africa. He was instantly hooked. During university every possible long weekend was spent chasing a "lifer". After completing his qualification in Chemical Engineering he lived abroad in North Africa and Central America for several years continuing his birding passion. For the last 10 years he has been free-lance guiding in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Swaziland and KwaZulu-Natal of which the last two years has been spent running a private birding company in Limpopo. He also guides for several birding tour operators. Casper is married to a Guatemalan lady and has two beautiful children. They live in Hoedspruit, South Africa. He speaks Spanish, English and Afrikaans.

Jan Pienaar 083 752 3327

Jan grew up in the flatlands of the northern Free State, pretty much in the centre of South Africa. From a very young age, he yearned to be outdoors, a yearning he took full advantage of when visiting his grandparents on their farm in northern KwaZulu-Natal. After completing his schooling, a chance sighting of an opportunity to work in the bush set him on his path to a career in guiding. Having spent the majority of his 16-year career based at some of South Africa's most prestigious lodges, he has gained an intimate knowledge and understanding of the Southern Africa's fauna and flora, and thoroughly enjoys sharing this with anyone who joins him in exploring these natural wonders.

Arrival Details

You will arrive at OR Tambo (Johannesburg International) off flight VS 461 on 4 November 2018 at 05h45. You will be met and transferred to Africa Sky Guest House.

Most of the group including the guides will be staying at Outlook Lodge Lakefield on 5 November 2018 but one of the guides will fetch you between 08h30 and 09h00 on 6 November 2018.

Passport & Visas

Please acquire the necessary travel documents for your trip to South Africa.

Weather

November is the start of summer and it should be warm to hot (even very hot) for the most part, and some rain can be expected (thundershowers and / or extended drizzle). The exact weather conditions depend a lot on the timing of cold fronts: in between cold fronts it can be mild to warm in the highlands and hot to very hot in the low lying regions. When cold fronts are passing through it can cool down significantly, especially in the higher areas such as Dullstroom. Open vehicle drives in the Kruger region can be cool to cold during the early mornings due to the wind-chill factor.

Time

South Africa has only one time zone: GMT + 02:00 hours

Remember to Pack

On group trips please pack luggage in **soft bags** as it helps with the packing of the vehicles.

Clothing

General

Comfortable casual clothing will be suitable and it is best to avoid white and bright colours whilst birding and game viewing on foot. Khaki, brown, beige or sombre coloured casual clothes are best. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers will help protect you against the sun and insect bites. Comfortable walking shoes will be needed, but sandals can also be worn at times. Hiking boots are not necessary unless your tour includes a specific walking / hiking component. Hats and sunblock lotion are vital, as are sunglasses. A warm jacket, scarf, woollen hat and gloves are advisable if your tour includes open safari vehicle drives in winter (June to September), while a windbreaker / raincoat and warm fleece are recommended for all tours, regardless of the time of the year or mode of transport.

In addition:

- Binoculars, camera and accessories. A Spotting Scope is also a good idea.
- Wide brimmed hat.
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams and insect repellent.
- Prescription medications (if any).
- Hairdryer if necessary.
- Torch / Flashlight.
- Travel alarm clock or mobile phone with alarm.
- Adapters for local electricity outlets (The South African electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ. Most plugs are 15 amp 3-prong or 5 amp 2-prong, with round pins. If an adaptor is called for, consider bringing one with you, although they can be purchased locally. US-made appliances may need a transformer).

Laundry facilities

Rose Cottage and Mount Sheba Hotel have laundry services at an additional charge.
Blyde – Forever has a self -service laundromat
Satara – Kruger has a self-service laundromat at the campsite.

General Health

Your guide will carry a very basic first aid kit with antiseptic, bandages and band aids. It would be advisable to bring some of your own basic medical supplies including anti-histamine cream for bites and itchiness, Imodium (or something similar for stomach trouble), rehydrate sachets, painkiller, antiseptic and other personal medication.

Malaria Risk

Only eastern Mpumalanga, eastern and northern Limpopo and far northern KwaZulu-Natal are malarial areas. Note that the Kruger National Park falls into this region. In malarial regions the rains usually arrive in spring and early summer (September – November), after which the Malaria Risk starts to build up and peaks in February to April. The Kruger itself is a low to medium-risk, but it is a malarial area and as a company we do advise taking malarial prophylactics. We advise consulting your medical practitioner. Prevention is better than cure though, so wearing socks and closed shoes, long pants, etc, in the evenings and spraying with repellent is a key measure of prevention.

Please consult your health care practitioner for official medical advice.

Also have a look at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>, under General Information for more advice and information.

Snakes and Scorpions

In the kinds of places we stay, we may encounter snakes and scorpions. It is thus advisable to wear closed shoes and socks when out in the field and to ALWAYS wear closed shoes and socks after dark in areas where scorpions may be encountered (these are more common in hot, dry areas). Also be vigilant and always keep an eye out, even in your rooms (check bedding, towels etc before use).

Vehicles used

Toyota Quantum
Open safari vehicle

Currency

You will need money for your drinks, lunches and personal items.

Master & Visa cards are widely accepted, Diners Club and American Express are not as widely accepted. Cash machines are readily available in most towns. It's best to ask your guide about where and when it is best to draw cash. Please inform your local bank about your travelling arrangements, as they are able to freeze your account should they be suspicious of banking activity in a foreign country. Traveller's cheques are not widely used anymore. It would be best to change money at airport on arrival if you have not arranged it before leaving home.

Tipping

Waiters at meal times generally get 10% of the bill but you would only need to worry about the meals that you will personally be paying for as the guide will cover the tips for the meals that they will be paying for. R5 per main bag is the norm for portage.

As far as your guide is concerned, there is no set standard. It is not compulsory to tip drivers and guides, but if you feel that your guide has given his or her best in order to make sure that your safari was enjoyable, then a gratuity is always appreciated.

WIFI Access

Wifi access is limited, though more and more accommodation establishments are offering Wifi services. Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like to know which specific establishments have internet access for public use.

Outlook Lodge – Complimentary WIFI in lounge/public areas.

Rose Cottage – WIFI available

Mount Sheba – Complimentary WIFI

Blyde Forever – Complimentary WIFI in public areas

Mobile Phone Reception

Cell signal is generally quite good in South Africa, but it can be limited in some of the more remote areas. Please enquire if you would like more specifics.

Recommended Reading

Your guide will have a small reference library with them (provided they are not embarking on any flights during the tour) so it is not necessary to bring that many books, but a personal bird and mammal field guide is recommended for those who want to do research on their own time.

Recommended Field Guides

Birds

Sasol Birds of Southern Africa, Fourth Edition. Sinclair, Hockey, Tarboton & Ryan. 2011
ISBN-13: 9781770079250

Roberts Bird Guide, Second Edition, Chittenden, Davies & Weiersbye
ISBN 978-1-920602-01-7

Mammals

Smither's Mammals of Southern Africa: A field Guide. Second Edition. Peter Apps. 2012
ISBN-13: 9781770079137