



TRIP REPORT

Rowen Smith and family

Kogelberg Biosphere - Western Cape

26 April 2021

Birding highlights:

Cape Rockjumper (Kaapse Berglyster)

Cape Siskin (Kaapse Pietjiekanarie)

Ground Woodpecker (Grondspeg)

Bank Cormorant (Bankduiker)

Victorin's Warbler (Rooiborsruigtesanger)

Species total: 55 (**Afrikaans names in brackets**)

I met Rowen Smith and his family at their holiday home in Kleinmond and we headed to the nearby seaside village of Rooi Els.

The rocky slopes to the south were still in deep shadow when we arrived. We slowly birded our way along the coastal gravel track in order to allow time for things to warm up. Just past the gate we had very close sightings of several active **Orange-breasted Sunbirds (Oranjeborssuikerbekkie)**. Despite the conditions, we picked up a good variety of typical resident species including **Familiar Chat (Gewone Spekvreter)**, **Yellow Bishop (Kaapse Flap)**, **Grey-backed Cisticola (Gysrugtinktinkie)** and **Cape Bunting (Rooivlerkstreepkoppie)**. The local pair of **Rock Kestrels (Kransvalk)** noisily chased away a soaring **White-necked Raven (Withalskraai)** that got too close to their nest.

We heard the distinctive call of our main target species: **Cape Rockjumpers (Kaapse Berglyster)**. A group (5 males and single female) was found foraging very close to the road. They were very relaxed and several birds perched in the open allowing us excellent views for roughly half an hour. As we watched the Rockjumpers, we picked up our two other targets: **Ground Woodpecker (Grondspeg)** and **Cape Siskin (Kaapse Pietjiekanarie)**.

After an excellent start, we drive to a nearby mountainside stream to search for the elusive **Victorin's Warbler (Rooiborsruigtesanger)**. We quickly located a pair calling loudly from a nearby patch of dense vegetation. It took a lot of bending and patience to spot these very

well camouflaged birds. An additional bonus was an excellent view of a **Neddicky (Neddikie)** which perched up beautifully during our search for the warblers.



We headed over to the Stony Point seabird colony. Although our targets were the four marine species of cormorants, we still took a moment to appreciate the good numbers of **African Penguins (Brilpikkewyn)** along the shoreline. Fortunately we had all the different cormorants nesting close by. **Bank Cormorants (Bankduiker)** were the most common nesters despite being the rarity globally. They were joined by good numbers of **White-breasted Cormorants (Witborsduikers)**, **Crowned Cormorants (Kuifkopduikers)** and a

handful of nesting **Cape Cormorants (Trekduikers)**. A **Giant Kingfisher (Reusevisvanger)** buzzed low overhead while we tried to count all of the **Water Thick-knees (Waterdikkop)** hiding in a large wrack of kelp. We got at least ten!!

The strong onshore wind brought in a **Brown Skua (Bruinroofmeeu)** and several **White-chinned Petrels (Bassiaan)**. Just behind the kelp bed we had a Humpback Whale quietly wallowing in the breakers. We also watched a **Cape Fur Seal** feeding on a large **Common Octopus** which attracted the attention of several **Kelp and Hartlaub's Gulls (Kelp-/Hartlaubmeeu)**.



We finished the trip with a quick visit to the beautiful Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens. The birding was very quiet but we had excellent views of a very large flock of **Swee (Suidlike Swee)** and **Common Waxbills (Rooibeksysie)**. A solitary **African Black Duck (Swarteend)** was spotted hiding in the thick waterside vegetation on the Disa Kloof Dam.

The other highlights included three species of sunbirds feeding within a few metres of each other. In addition to the **Orange-breasted Sunbirds** also seen at Rooi Els, we spotted **Southern Double-collared Sunbirds (Klein-rooibandsuikerbekkie)** and **Malachite Sunbirds (Jangroentjie)**. In a nearby dead tree we got a trio of **Cape Rock-thrushes (Kaapse Kliplyster)** warming themselves in the afternoon sun.

The last surprise of the day was a vagrant **Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (Klipstreepkoppie)** perching in a dead tree with a small flock of **Brimstone Canaries (Dikbekkanarie)**. The bunting was especially interesting as this species had recently irrupted into the Cape with dozens of sightings all across the south-western Cape.



Report by Vince Ward – tour leader