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# My Incredible Trip to Africa

## Presented by Bruce Hockley

ASNSW Meeting 1st October 2019

Edited transcript from the meeting

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Two or three things I have always wanted to do in my life. One was to go to the Kimberley's and see all the birds that I had kept for a long time and eventually get around to photographing every Australian finch (because I have bred them all except for two at the moment); and secondly, I wanted to go to Africa.

Transcribed and edited by Janet Macpherson  
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## The Avicultural Society of New South Wales Inc. (ASNSW)

(Founded in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

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#### Introduction

Two or three things I have always wanted to do in my life. One was to go to the Kimberley's and see all the birds that I had kept for a long time and eventually get around to photographing every Australian finch (because I have bred them all except for two at the moment); and secondly, I wanted to go to Africa.

David Holmes (a photographer) goes to Africa every second year with someone, and he asked me if I knew anyone who wouldn't mind going to Africa?

In the meantime, I was contacted by the South African Zebra Society who heard I was coming, and they asked if I could come over and give them a lecture and judge their show. So, I ended up going to Africa for nearly four weeks with David and it was an incredible place.

The first day we got picked up a bloke by the name of Steven. A lovely bloke. Steven lives in a compounded yard area where you might have 400 houses inside a brick wall that's 12-foot high with electrified razor wire on top with security guards at the gate and security guards drive around all night long, 24 hours a day, with machine guns. He picked us up and took us back to his place where we stayed for a couple of days before he took us around.

These are just some of his aviaries, he is mad Gouldian breeder.



Figure 1 Some of Steve's Aviaries, he is a mad Gouldian breeder

In the cage in the top photo on the left-hand side he had [Dybowski's twinspots \(\*Euschistospiza dybowskii\*\)](#). I had those years ago and couldn't breed them. I got in and helped him get it split down the middle and on the one side we caught out 17 babies that he had bred. They were basically like zebras - they just bred – incredible!

### Southern masked weaver

Then the first morning he said *'I'll go and get some bread for breakfast'* and so we were sitting on his balcony and the first bird I saw was this [southern masked weaver \(\*Ploceus velatus\*\)](#). He just turned up; he was beautiful.



Figure 2 Southern masked Weaver. He just turned up; he was beautiful.

### Pin-tailed whydah

Then the next bird was the [pin-tailed whydah \(\*vidua macroura\*\)](#).



Figure 3 Pin-tailed Whydah

This is all in his backyard in the middle of Johannesburg; and he said, *'I wish you would catch that little !#@% and take him home – he attacks every other bird in the backyard.'* He was an incredible bird.

### Southern red bishop

Then he went to get something for breakfast and on his way back (he has to put his thumb print to get back in through the place where the machine guns are), he raced in and said *'quick, I have never seen this – come down to the front gate'*. We went down to the front gate and there was this bit of a stream with reeds in it and there must have been 200 [southern red bishops \(\*Euplectes orix\*\)](#) all displaying. Fully coloured.

He said, *'I've been here all these years and I have never seen these birds'*.

It was great. They were just everywhere.

They are a phenomenal bird.



Figure 4 Southern Red Bishop

### Southern masked weavers building their nests

Then all of sudden I saw that the southern masked were all building their nests.



Figure 5 Southern masked weavers building their nests (cock bird on the left and hen on the right)

There wasn't one female with the bishop weavers, they were all males. But the southern masked were all building their nests and they were having a ball. Then the females would come along and have a look to see what was going on.

He took us to another bloke's place who lived in Vittoria. He was more of a bird collector than a breeder.



Figure 6 Visit to aviaries in Vittoria

Each of these aviaries (in the photo above) had dividers. If you wanted to make it a double sized aviary that whole wall pulls out. You just keep taking them out and there is a rack up the back where he stacks them and if wants to divide that back off again, he just puts them back in again.

This bloke also showed [koi carp](#)<sup>1</sup>. I used to hang around with [Harry Carr](#) and Harry bred pretty big koi carp. Harry's carp would have been feed for these things they were that big. He had a crane to lift them out of the pond to take them and show them. He just puts a sling around them. You feed them, they come up and you catch them. They were so big around that you could not get your hands around them. He made millions of dollars selling the carp meat to the indigenous African people. The Afrikaans will not eat certain parts of the meat but when he cut it up and started doing things with it, the indigenous people all fell in love with it.

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<sup>1</sup> [Koi carp \(NSW Government Department of Primary Industries\)](#)

Carp are a large freshwater fish native to central Asia. Introductions in many countries have helped to make carp the most widely distributed freshwater fish in the world. They are extensively farmed in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and are a popular angling fish in Europe. However, in North America, Canada and Australia, carp are considered a significant pest.

In his aviaries he had a lot of different birds. As I mentioned before, he was a collector.

### Peter's twinspots (red-throated twinspot)

I saw a [pope cardinal \(red-cowled cardinal\) \(Paroaria dominicana\)](#) and some incredible birds that I didn't get photos of.

[Peter's twinspots \(red-throated twinspot\) \(Hypargos niveoguttatus\)](#) (Figure 7). He asked, 'have you got pairs of them?' and he didn't, he had all cock birds.

They don't get very many [Red-cheeked cordon-bleu \(Uraeginthus bengalus\)](#). They are exceedingly rare over there. He had one cock bird that everyone was trying to buy off him. I think he had it paired to a [blue-breasted waxbill \(Uraeginthus angolensis\)](#).



Figure 7 Peter's twinspot (red-throated twinspot)

### Jacarini finches and violet-backed starling

He had hundreds of pied [Jacarini finches](#), and he wasn't sure what they were. I said, 'I'll tell you what they are, I'll take them home!'

We went to another bloke's place, and you can't see the colours of this bird in my photo. It's a [violet-backed starling \(Cinnyricinclus leucogaster\)](#). If you get a chance [Google](#) it. It is the most unbelievable coloured violet bird you will ever see.

The main reason I put this photo in is because of that galvanised metal wall at the back. That is what all their aviaries are made of. It must be stinking hot. It is not painted, just this steel aviary.



Figure 8 Pied Jacarini Finch



Figure 9 Violet-backed Starling

### African yellow canary, lavender waxbill and the golden-breasted bunting

An African [yellow canary \(Crithagra flaviventris\)](#), [lavender waxbill \(Estrilda coerulescens\)](#) and the [golden-breasted bunting \(Emberiza flaviventris\)](#). He had all different types of buntings.



Figure 10 (From Left to Right) yellow canary, lavender waxbill and the golden-breasted bunting

## Kruger National Park

We spent nearly three weeks in the [Kruger National Park](#). The places we visited are circled on the map.

The Australian Capital Territory is something like 3,700 square kilometres. Kruger National Park is 28,000 square kilometres and it is all fenced.

We started at [Crocodile Bridge](#), then we went up to [Satara](#), then we went to [Orpen](#) and then [Mopani](#) and different sites, because David said, 'you only ever come once matey, you need to see as much of it as you can'.

Each night you have to be inside the camp by 6:00pm because it is all electrified and I am not joking, you are standing there cooking your barbeque and there is a leopard or a hyena outside the fence trying to get in. You have got to be in there.

At 5:00am in the morning they open the gate, and everyone goes out and goes off. There are a lot of bitumen roads – you can do 50km/h and a lot of other roads that go off from them. They call them loops. It might be a 60km/h loop, but it's dirt and you get to know it is 30km per hour. You go off them and you see a lot of the wildlife.

### Lessor masked weaver



Figure 12 Lessor masked weaver



Figure 11 Map of Kruger National Park. The places we visited are circled on the map.

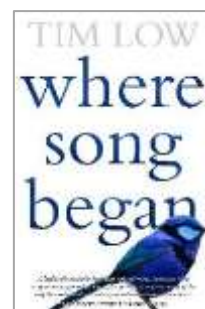
Believe it not this is [lessor masked weaver \(Ploceus intermedius\)](#) and he has got more mask than the other masked weavers. Outside the cabins that you stay in throughout the park they have this barbeque (as they call it) which is a round plate. You buy the wood for it, and I don't know what sort of wood it is, but you just put one fire starter in, throw the wood on and within five minutes you have got the best barbeque you have ever cooked on. Then every time you finish, the next morning, these birds would be in there cleaning all the charcoal off.

Bruce asked members present if anyone had read the book 'Where Song Began'?

He said that in it, it tells you that every bird in the world originally started in Australia.

When you are over there in South Africa, the number of birds that you see – like the drongos and the pheasant coucals. They don't call them that, but they are exactly the same as our birds with maybe a different marking. You can see where they originally came from. Even babblers, like our babblers; and they act exactly the same as ours in every way.

[Penguin Books](#)



### African paradise flycatcher

I couldn't get a good photo of this bird, it's an [African paradise flycatcher \(\*Terpsiphone viridis\*\)](#). It has a tail probably 2½ foot long. A phenomenal bird. I chased him all over one of the parks.

David did all the driving, and I just took the photos.

Every afternoon we would come back to the camp, and he would have a sleep and I would go walking in the camp and I would see so many different birds. It was just phenomenal. Some we used to have here in Australia many years ago.



Figure 13 African paradise flycatcher

### Magpie mannikins and bronze mannikins

The [magpie mannikin \(\*Spermestes fringilloides\*\)](#) and the [bronze mannikins \(\*Spermestes cucullata\*\)](#) were common. They are gone from Australia.

The only mannikin we have in Australia now is a few [Rufous-backed mannikins \(\*Lonchura nigriceps\*\)](#) and that's it.



Figure 14 Bronze Mannikins

### Pin-tailed whydah

The [Pin-tailed whydah \(\*Vidua macroura\*\)](#).



Figure 15 Pin-tailed whydah

In Australia we all use [St Helena whydahs \(\*Estrilda astrild\*\)](#) for the pin-tailed whydah to parasite under (to lay their eggs under). Over there I battled for nearly the whole three weeks to actually find any St Helena whydahs or common waxbills as they call them. The most common finch I did see over there was the [blue-breasted waxbill \(\*Uraeginthus angolensis\*\)](#), and I reckon the pin-tails were using them to parasite under, because there was nothing else there.

Extra reading in relation to the pin-tailed whydah inserted for your interest by the transcriber of this article.

[Ecology of the pin-tailed whydah](#) "The species is a [brood parasite](#) which lays its eggs in the nests of [estrildid finches](#), especially waxbills. Unlike the [common cuckoo](#), it does not destroy the host's eggs."

PDF Download Page 363 Pin-tailed whydah – [Species text in The Atlas of Southern African Birds](#).

Research Article by Gabriel Jamie: [Parasitic finches mimic their hosts to deceive foster parents](#) – Zoology Museum | University of Cambridge. (Fully illustrated article.)

## Cape Sparrow

The [Cape sparrow \(\*Passer melanurus\*\)](#). A beautiful bird. There were two or three birds I would have brought home with me, and this was one of them. He was a gorgeous bird, really tame, and they were everywhere.

## Blue-breasted waxbill

The [Blue-breasted waxbill \(\*Uraeginthus angolensis\*\)](#). They were just everywhere and again we have lost all of them in Australia. The last real pair I ever saw was at Alan Parmenter's original shop in Sackville Street, Sackville. The last lot I went to try and buy after that, they turned their head and they all had red patches, little red feathers.



Figure 16 Cape Sparrow

Figure 18 is a photograph of a typical blue-breasted waxbill's nest in a thorn bush. In the dry season that is what the thorn bush is like. When the rain comes, within days (like our spinifex), straight away it is just green, and nothing can get into their nest because there is nothing that can get past the spikes.

They are beautiful little birds, and they were everywhere.



Figure 17 Blue-breasted Waxbill



Figure 18 Blue-breasted Waxbill Nest

## Magpie shrike

The funny thing about it is, you would be driving along one of these dirt roads and you wouldn't see any birds. Then all of a sudden you would see a [magpie shrike \(\*Urolestes melanoleucus\*\)](#) sitting on a bush and as soon as you'd see it you would know there was going to be little birds somewhere because this bird eats them all. He was a shocker of a bird, beautiful bird, but you'd know, straight away if you'd start looking on the side of the road, you'd start to see all the different small birds.

## Green-winged Pytilia

The [Green-winged Pytilia \(\*Pytilia melba\*, family: Estrildidae\)](#).

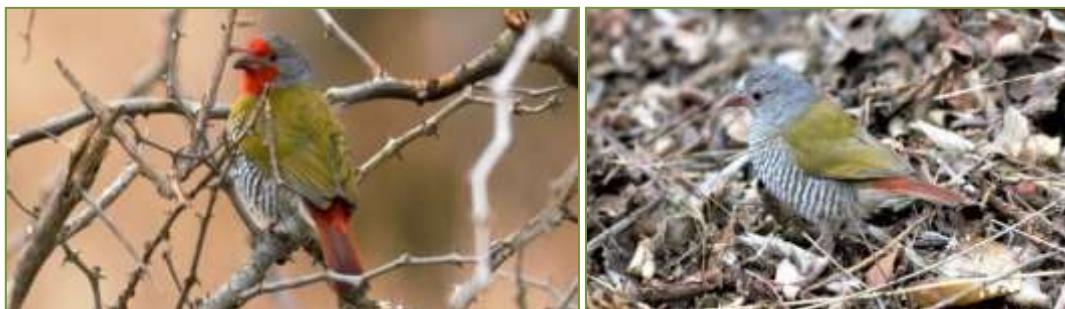
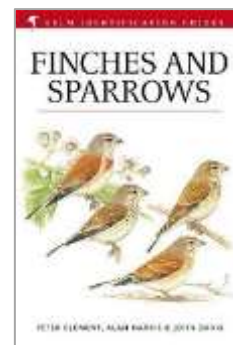


Figure 19 Green-winged Pytilia Cock (left) the Hen (right)

Different from the birds we have in Australia in that they have a red face and no red at all in their chest. It was really hard to get photos; they love getting in the thickets.

I took a lot of photos, up to 7,500, because I just wanted to have a listing of all the birds I had actually seen, and the list ended up at 276 species of birds.

There is a great book by Peter Clement and illustrated by Alan Harris and John Davis, called 'Finches and Sparrows'. It's got every finch and sparrow in the world. They are all paintings, not photos. There are 50 different ruddies (fire finches) in the world and they have got the whole lot –every finch and sparrow.



'This is a comprehensive guide to 'true' finches and sparrows, 290 species in all. Colour plates illustrate all the species, many races and most sex and age variations. Distribution maps show breeding and wintering ranges.' [Amazon](#)

### Green-singers (yellow-fronted canary)

Green-singers ([Yellow-fronted Canary \*Serinus mozambicus\*](#)) were common too. They just turned up in one of bushes.



We stopped in one of the parks (we weren't staying in this park). We used to leave before breakfast (just take coffee with us) and drive around and stop somewhere for breakfast. The reason (and I didn't realise this) but David told me (and I didn't believe him until it happened) is that South African people go to Kruger for one sole purpose and that is to see a lion, a leopard or whatever. If there is one in the bush 200 metres off the road or someone spots something in a tree, next minute there are 500 cars all with their binoculars waiting for it to move. It is a traffic jam, it's chockers. David said, '*We don't stop at them*'. *You don't get your photos, well bad luck*, and we would go around them. So, we stopped to have breakfast at one of the camps.



Figure 20 Yellow-fronted Canary

I'd seen the green singers off in the distance in another spot and then all of sudden there must have been 500 just come and landed all over the park – it's was just beautiful.

Their green singers don't have the lacework like our birds. I thought I was seeing more cock birds, but they said, '*No, that is what they are like*'.

- Q. Do they have a speckle down the chest?
- A. No. That is a young hen bird, and she would have lost that in the next moult they said. None of them have any lacework around the neck. It must be another subspecies.
- Q. Is that because of the way the guys here previously bred them?
- A. We had the large green singer here many years ago and it was a bit different. It was the Mozambique. So maybe, I don't know.

### Red-billed firefinch, African firefinch and Jameson's firefinch

There are three different firefinches in the Kruger National Park. The [Red-billed firefinch \(\*Lagonosticta senegala\*\)](#), the [African firefinch \(\*Lagonosticta rubricata\*\)](#) and the [Jameson's firefinch \(\*Lagonosticta rhodopareia\*\)](#). They told me that I probably wouldn't get to see them. I saw them and I got photos of two of them. The photo of the third one was too blurred to worry about. They were just gorgeous.



Figure 21 Red-billed Firefinch Cock (right) and the Hen (left)

The Jameson is a bigger bird, a lot blacker with a lot bigger and blacker beak. I was incredibly lucky to get this photo. (Figure 22).

### Violet-eared waxbills

We went up a dirt road and saw these birds all over the road and thought '*what the bloody hell are they*'. All of a sudden one turned, and the sun hit the purple on the side of it. They were [violet-eared waxbills \(\*Granatina granatina\*\)](#) and they were all over the road, they were just everywhere.

That was a buzz too because they are just phenomenal birds.

Also with them was [Burchell's Glossy Starlings \(\*Lamprotonis australis\*\)](#) - see Figure 56 Burchell's Starling.



Figure 22 Jameson's firefinch



Figure 23 Violet-eared Waxbill Cock (left) Hen (right)

### St Helena waxbill (common waxbill)

This is the one and only photo of a [St Helena waxbill \(\*Estrilda astrild\*\)](#) that I got.

I chased him to get him to get this photo and yet when I was in Hawaii a few months ago, there were millions of them. They were everywhere in the parks, and you would tread on them if you weren't careful because they didn't get out of the way.

They call them the common waxbill, but they weren't common for us.

### Weavers

There are a lot of birds over there that they call weavers, and a lot of these birds are nothing like a weaver. The only activity that is like a weaver is that they build nests like the huge colonies of the weavers.



Figure 24 Common Waxbill

### Red-billed buffalo weaver and white-billed buffalo weaver

[Red-billed buffalo-weaver \(\*Bubalornis niger\*\)](#) (Figure 25). There is also a [white-billed buffalo-weaver \(\*Bubalornis albirostris\*\)](#). They are a huge bird and look nothing like a weaver.



Figure 25 Red-billed Buffalo-weaver

## Cape weaver

The [Cape weaver \(\*Ploceus capensis\*\)](#). This bird had a band on his right leg. The number of birds I came across in Africa, in both Kruger and just outside Johannesburg when we went to bird places down there, that had bands on. They must have been doing a lot of work because they all had the same bands.



Figure 26 Cape Weaver

## White-browed sparrow weaver

The [white-browed sparrow-weaver \(\*Plocepasser mahali\*\)](#). He is a big bird too.



Figure 27 White-browed Sparrow Weaver

## Spectacled weaver

This bird is more like a honeyeater to me, but it is a [spectacled weaver \(\*Ploceus ocularis\*\)](#) (and it is all because of the nest they build).



Figure 28 Spectacled weaver

### Small colony of weaver's nests (probably a couple of years old)

This was a small colony of weavers' nests, what was left of it. This was a colony that was probably a couple of years old. They will all blow away or burn in the next fire and when everything greens up again there will be five times more nests in that tree next time.



Figure 29 Small colony of weaver's nests (probably a couple of years old)

## Widowbirds

### Long-tailed-widowbird

Another bird that I wanted to see was the giant [long-tailed widowbird \(\*Euplectes progne\*\)](#). About 5 to 10 minutes out of Johannesburg is this huge, big grassy area with no fences where you can drive on all the roads that run through it. In the breeding season they sit on a tussock of grass on the ground and as a female goes past, they fly up and display their tail. I only came across one or two of them that were actually in colour and fully feathered, but there were no females, so none of them were flying up for me to get any photos of the displays. Their seasons are about the same ours and it was the breeding season, but they hadn't had any rain and so the birds hadn't come into breeding condition.



Figure 30 Long-tailed widowbird

There was a lot of Long-tailed widowbirds in the same area. Adult breeding males are black and with red and white shoulder feathers. I used the maximum of my lens to photograph the following bird flying across. They are a huge bird believe it or not. We had them here in Australia years ago, but they are gone now.



Figure 31 Long-tailed widowbird in flight

## Sunbirds

There were so many different sunbirds in South Africa. I think I came across 12 different varieties while I was there. Beautiful little birds. We have got one in Australia.

### White-bellied sunbird and the Marico sunbird

The [white-bellied sunbird \(\*Cinnyris talatala\*\)](#) (Figure 32 and Figure 33).

The [Marico sunbird \(\*Cinnyris mariquensis\*\)](#) has a bright red chest underneath that green (Figure 34 but he was in the shade when I took that photograph).



Figure 32 White-bellied sunbird (cock)



Figure 33 White-bellied Sunbird (hen)



Figure 34 Marico Sunbird

### Collared sunbird

We drove back into one of the camps after travelling around and there was a [collared sunbird, \(\*Hedydipna collaris\*\)](#) attacking the tap because he could see his reflection. It is probably the best photo that I have of one in flight. He was in absolutely pristine condition. It is a beautiful bird.



Figure 35 Collared sunbird, attacking the tap because he could see his reflection

## Bee-eaters

We have one bee-eater in Australia. In Africa I came across about eight of them.

### Little bee-eater, white-fronted bee-eater and the European bee-eater

The [little bee-eater \(\*Merops pusillus\*\)](#) is the smallest being only about 15-17cm in length. The [white-fronted bee-eater \(\*Merops bullockoides\*\)](#) and the [European bee-eater \(\*Merops apiaster\*\)](#) that comes down from Europe.



Figure 36 Little Bee-Eater



Figure 37 White-fronted Bee-Eater



Figure 38 European Bee-Eater

## Barbets

### Crested barbet, acacia pied barbet and the black-collared barbet

Something we had here years ago, the barbets. There are three of them in Kruger, the [crested barbet \(\*Trachyphonus vaillantii\*\)](#), the [acacia pied barbet \(\*Tricholaema leucomelas\*\)](#) which was sitting in the acacia trees and the [black-collared barbet \(\*Lybius torquatus\*\)](#); and again, I got to see all three of these birds.



Figure 39 Crested Barbet



Figure 40 Acacia Barbet



Figure 41 Black-collared Barbet

## Woodpeckers

There were woodpeckers everywhere. I judged one of their shows and gave a lecture at the club and they presented me with a beautiful big book on African birds; and to see the number of varieties of all of their birds, like the woodpeckers and the kingfishers.

They have got hundreds of varieties of everything.

### Bennett's Woodpecker

[Bennett's woodpecker \(\*Campethera bennetti\*\)](#) Figure 42.

### Bearded Woodpecker

[Bearded woodpecker \(\*Chloropicus namaquus\*\)](#) (hen) Figure 43.

### Golden-tailed Woodpecker

The [Golden-tailed woodpecker \(\*Campethera abingoni\*\)](#) was hiding because some sort of a hawk had been chasing him and grabbed his tail and got a mouth full of feathers. He hid under the tree and the hawk was up the top waiting for him to come back out again.



Figure 42 Bennett's Woodpecker



Figure 43 Bearded Woodpecker (Hen)



Figure 44 Golden-tailed Woodpecker

## Kingfishers

### Pied Kingfisher

The [pied kingfisher \(Ceryle rudis\)](#) is the only bird known in the world that can hover. It can go left, right, backwards, or forwards. When you watch him on the river and there is a fish, he follows the fish and when the fish goes to the left, he goes to the left; and he hovers over it until he drops on it. He came out with a big fish in his beak.



Figure 45 Pied Kingfisher

### Giant Kingfisher

The [giant kingfisher \(Megaceryle maxima\)](#) is not as big as our [Kookaburra](#), but he is not far off it. In the only photo I got of him he is on a bridge; and it was blowing a gale. There are certain places where you can get out of the car where it is supposedly leopard or lion free, and bridges is one of them. So, we got out and took a photo of this bloke.



Figure 46 Giant kingfisher

Before we left on our trip Dave gave me a book to read about 100 things that had happened in Kruger.

He said this would get me ready for the way ahead.

One of the things that I can remember reading was about a tourist guide with a group of people in one of the buses they take you around in. He was busting to go to the toilet. He stopped, telling the tourists to stay in the bus, and he went around behind the tree. The people were sitting there and sitting there and sitting there, and he didn't come back. So, one of the tourists got in the driver's seat and drove up and there was a leopard eating him.

So, you don't get out of the car!

### **Brown-hooded kingfisher and the grey-headed kingfisher**

There were probably about eight or 10 of these birds with just subtle differences. The [brown-hooded kingfisher](#) (*Halcyon albiventris*), the [grey-headed kingfisher](#) (*Halcyon leucocephala*), etc.



Figure 47 Brown-hooded kingfisher

### **African pigmy kingfisher**

The [African pigmy kingfisher](#) (*Ispidina picta*) is the best and another one that I would have brought home with me. He was 12cm. He kept flapping around me, and I thought it was a butterfly, but it wasn't, it was a pygmy kingfisher. He was just gorgeous.



Figure 48 African pigmy kingfisher

## Rollers

### Lilac-breasted Roller

A bird of the family [Coraciidae](#). This is one of the most prolific birds, the [lilac-breasted roller \(\*Coracias caudatus\*\)](#). Sitting on every tree. Everywhere you go there's one, and they just sit there – a beautiful bird.



Figure 49 Lilac-breasted roller (*Coracias caudatus*)

### Purple Roller

The [purple roller \(\*Coracias naevius\*\)](#) is exceedingly rare. There is also the [European roller \(\*Coracias garrulus\*\)](#), but I didn't get to see it.



Figure 50 Purple roller (*Coracias naevius*)

## Shrikes

### African magpie shrike

The [magpie shrike \(\*Urolestes melanoleucus\*\)](#) is a little culprit, he is a savage little bird. He has a beak like our [butcher bird](#) with a little hook on it. He just rips the little birds apart.



Figure 51 Magpie shrike has a hooked beak like our butcher bird

## White-crested helmetshrike

The [white-crested Helmetshrike \(\*Prionops plumatus\*\)](#) (Figure 52) is a funny looking bird. I don't know why he has the tufts all around his face. I have no idea.

## Retz's helmetshrike

The [Retz's helmetshrike \(\*Prionops retzii\*\)](#) Figure 53.

## Orange-breasted bushshrike

The [orange-breasted bushshrike \(\*Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus\*\)](#) Figure 54. Notice the ring on its leg. We saw another bird with a leg ring but that was in Johannesburg and this one was in Kruger.

## Brubru

The [brubru \(\*Nilaus afer\*\)](#) Figure 55 is a type of bushshrike.



Figure 52 White-crested helmetshrike



Figure 53 Retz's helmetshrike



Figure 54 Orange-breasted bushshrike



Figure 55 Brubru

Extra reading in relation to the helmetshrikes inserted for your interest by the transcriber of this article.

[Fatbirder.com](#) "The helmetshrikes, were included with the true shrikes in the family Laniidae, later on split between several presumably closely related groups such as bushshrikes (Malaconotidae) and cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae) but are now considered sufficiently distinctive to be separated from that group as the single genera family Prionopidae.

This is an African group of species which are found in scrub or open woodland. They are similar in feeding habits to shrikes, hunting insects and other small prey from a perch on a bush or tree. Although similar in build to the shrikes, these tend to be colourful species with the distinctive crests or other head ornaments, such as wattles, from which they get their name. They are noisy and sociable birds, some of which breed in loose colonies. They lay 2-4 eggs in neat, well-hidden nests."

## Starlings

### Burchell's Starling

The [Burchell's starling \(\*Lamprotornis australis\*\)](#) is a beautiful bird. The shininess probably outshines even our [Satin bower birds](#). They are common everywhere and worse than [Indian myna birds](#). When you are sitting at a table they will come and knock your lunch off. Just a phenomenal bird.



Figure 56 Burchell's Starling



Figure 57 Burchell's Starlings (these were a pair)

## Cape glossy starling

The [Cape glossy starling \(\*Lamprotornis nitens\*\)](#).



Figure 58 Cape glossy starling

## Greater blue-eared starling

The [greater blue-eared starling \(\*Lamprotornis chalybaeus\*\)](#) is beautiful. He's the best of the lot. He is about the size of our satin bower birds.



Figure 59 Greater blue-eared starling

## Hornbills

Extra reading in relation to the hornbills inserted for your interest by the transcriber of this article.

Hornbills are a bird from the family [Bucerotidae](#) which was introduced (as Buceronia) by Turkish born (self-educated in France) French polymath, Constantine Samuel [Rafinesque](#) in 1815.

Hornbills have a large bill similar in size to the toucan, but they are not related.

There are 24 species of [hornbills \(\*Bucerotidae\*\)](#) in Africa, and we saw just a few of them.

### African grey hornbill

The [African grey hornbill \(\*Lophoceros nasutus\*\)](#) Figure 60.

### Southern yellow-billed hornbill

The [Southern yellow-billed hornbill \(\*Tockus leucomelas\*\)](#) Figure 61 is quite common.



Figure 60 African grey hornbill



Figure 61 Southern yellow-billed Hornbill

### Southern red-billed hornbill

The [southern red-billed hornbill \(Tockus rufirostris\)](#) Figure 62.

### Southern ground hornbill

I was told it would be extremely hard to see the [southern ground hornbill \(Bucorvus leadbeateri; formerly known as Bucorvus cafer\)](#) Figure 63. I saw lots of them! They are a large bird about 3 to 4 feet in length and they were coming up and pecking our car. They are listed as vulnerable on the ICUN Red List.



Figure 62 Southern red-billed Hornbill



Figure 63 Southern ground hornbill

## Doves and Pigeons

There are a lot of different doves. The [Namaqua dove \(Oena capensis\)](#), the [laughing dove \(Spilopelia senegalensis\)](#), the [Cape turtle dove \(Streptopelia capicola\)](#) and the [emerald-spotted wood dove \(Turtur chalcospilos\)](#) are shown in the photos below.

### Namaqua dove

The [Namaqua dove \(Oena capensis\)](#) Figure 64. How we ever keep the Namaqua dove in Australian aviaries I don't know, because in Africa, they fly like they are jet propelled. They fly so incredibly fast you can't get a photo of them. They are a beautiful bird, and they are everywhere.

### Laughing dove

The [laughing dove \(Spilopelia senegalensis\)](#) Figure 65.

### Cape turtle dove

The [Cape turtle dove \(Streptopelia capicola\)](#) Figure 66. The photo of the cape turtle dove doesn't do it justice. It is only about 9 to 10 inches in length and more grey than pink or fawn. They look like our ring neck doves, but they are entirely different when you see them. I would have loved to have them come home with me too.

## **Emerald-spotted wood doves**

The [emerald-spotted wood dove \(\*Turtur chalcospilos\*\)](#) (Figure 67) is quite common.



Figure 64 Namaqua dove



Figure 65 Laughing dove



Figure 66 Cape turtle dove



Figure 67 Emerald-spotted wood dove

## **African Green Pigeon**

Another bird I wanted to see, and I was told I might not get a chance to see, was the [African green pigeon \(\*Treron calvus\*\)](#) (Figure 68).

A huge bird. They hid in the bushes, and you couldn't see them.

One morning it was freezing cold and the monkeys and everything that could, was trying to get the sun at the top of every tree.

There was an African green pigeon right at the top of one of the trees and so I got Dave to slam the breaks on and I got a photo.



Figure 68 African green pigeon

## Turacos

### Purple-crested turaco

Another bird that is common is the [Purple-crested turaco \(\*Gallirex porphyreolophus\*\)](#) Figure 69.

### Grey go-away-bird

The [Grey go-away-bird \(\*Crinifer concolor\*\)](#) (Figure 70) is another species of [turaco](#) named because when he calls, he sounds like he is telling you to go away, 'go away', 'go away'.



Figure 69 Purple-crested turaco



Figure 70 Grey go-away bird

The South Africans breed a lot of species of turacos, different starlings, and a lot of other birds in aviaries; and they feed them all on pellets. Incredible the birds they breed and yet they would give them all away to have just half of our finches.

## Swallows

### Lesser striped swallow

Another bird that blew my mind was the [Lesser striped swallow \(\*Cecropis abyssinica\*\)](#). There is also the striped swallow which has half the number of stripes that this bird has. I think someone got their English the wrong way around. They are a beautiful bird.

### Red-breasted swallow

The [red-breasted swallow \(\*Cecropis semirufa\*\)](#) - Figure 72.



Figure 71 Lesser striped swallow



Figure 72 red-breasted swallow

There were so many different swallows that were incredible colours. There was one that was completely red, like the red siskin when you see it.

## Parrots

I saw grey-headed parrots brown-headed parrots and Meyer's parrots. I saw [lovebirds](#) off in the distance (I don't know which ones they were). We didn't see a lot of parrots. Believe it not, I have seen more African parrots in Hawaii than I have seen in Africa.

### Grey-headed parrot

[Grey-headed Parrots \(\*Poicephalus fuscicollis suahelicus\*\)](#) (Figure 73 is a subspecies of the grey-necked parrot.

### Brown-headed-parrots

[Brown-headed parrots \(\*Poicephalus cryptoxanthus\*\)](#).

### Meyer's parrots

[Meyer's parrots \(\*Poicephalus meyeri\*\)](#).



Figure 73 Grey-headed Parrot (subspecies of the grey-necked parrot)

## Miscellaneous other photographs

### Arrow-marked babbler

The [Arrow-marked babbler \(\*Turdoides jardineii\*\)](#) (Figure 74), acts exactly like our [Grey-crowned babbler \(\*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis\*\)](#) do here. It moves, it calls, it does everything the same.



Figure 74 Arrow-marked babbler

## Hamerkop

This is another strange bird, the [Hamerkop \(\*Scopus umbretta\*\)](#). It is a wading bird. It's got this long bill and huge crest on the back of its head that resembles the shape of a hammer. When he builds his huge nest, he builds it in the fork of two big tree branches with a hole that is only about 5 to 7 inches wide. When it flies to the nest, I don't how he stops because he flies in flat chat and stops before he goes out the other side. The nest is so big there is nearly always an eagle's nest of some sort on top.



Figure 75 Hamerkop

## Dark Capped Bulbul

That is a little bulbul, the [dark-capped bulbul \(\*Pycnonotus tricolor\*\)](#). He's a gorgeous little bird, with his dark head and his yellow rump.



Figure 76 Dark-capped bulbul

## African Hoopoe

Believe it or not an [African hoopoe \(\*Upupa africana\*\)](#) turned up in the Kimberley last year. I don't know how it got there but it was definitely there. It's been photograph. They were running around, and they would find a centipede, and they would pick the centipede up and you have never seen such a dance and carry on trying to kill an insect as this bird goes through. He is mad.



Figure 77 African hoopoe

## Secretary Bird

The [secretary bird \(\*Sagittarius serpentarius\*\)](#) see Figure 78 below, stands about 5 foot high. They walk around and find a snake and belt the life out of the snake and then they eat it. It is a strange looking bird.

## Grey Heron

The [grey heron \(\*Ardea cinerea\*\)](#) Figure 79.

## Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler

[Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler \(\*Curruca subcoerulea\*\)](#) Figure 80.

## Pearl-spotted Owlet

The [pearl-spotted owlet \(\*Glaucidium perlatum\*\)](#) see Figure 81, is only active during the day, it doesn't hunt at night. When he turns his head around, he has two more mock eyes on the back of his head, so you think he is always looking at you no matter where he turns.



Figure 78 Secretary Bird



Figure 79 Grey Heron



Figure 80 Chestnut-vented tit-babbler



Figure 81 Pearl Spotted Owlet

## African jacana

[African jacana \(\*Actophilornis africanus\*\)](#) Figure 82.

We have got a jacana in Australia, and it is virtually the same as this bird. Acts exactly the same, calls exactly the same and does everything the same.

## Three-banded plover

[Three-banded plover \(\*Charadrius tricollaris\*\)](#) Figure 83.

Our [Little Red-kneed Dotterel \(\*Erythrogonys cinctus\*\)](#) is the same size and acts the same.

## Green-backed heron

[Green-backed heron \(\*Butorides striata\*\)](#) Figure 84.



Figure 82 African jacana



Figure 83 Three-banded plover



Figure 84 Green-backed heron

### **Black-bellied bustard**

[Black-bellied bustard \(\*Lissotis melanogaster\*\)](#) Figure 85. They are not a big bird; they are only about 2 foot high.

### **Spotted thick-knee**

[Spotted thick-knee \(\*Burhinus capensis\*\)](#) Figure 86.

### **Kori bustard**

[Kori bustard \(\*Ardeotis kori\*\)](#) Figure 87. The Kori bustard is a bit bigger; it is about 3 foot high.



Figure 85 Black-bellied bustard



Figure 86 Spotted thick knee



Figure 87 Kori bustard

### **Crowned lapwing**

[Crowned lapwing \(\*Vanellus coronatus\*\)](#) Figure 88. There are probably 20 different varieties of lapwings.

### **Blacksmith lapwing**

[Blacksmith lapwing \(\*Vanellus armatus\*\)](#) Figure 89. It's a beautiful bird. It's black and white like a magpie.

### **Bateleur**

[Bateleur \(\*Terathopius ecaudatus\*\)](#) Figure 90. They have no tail. That is as big as his tail is. They are a phenomenal bird, and they are all over the place.



Figure 88 Crowned lapwing



Figure 89 Blacksmith lapwing



Figure 90 Bateleur

## Verreaux's eagle-owl

When David stays in the camps, he normally doesn't go on any of their night tours because he likes to do his own thing, but he said because you are with me, we will do a night tour.

They'd go out about 6:00pm before it got dark and then they would spotlight. David got in the front of a what is like a Toyota Land Cruiser with no doors or anything in it and then you step up and there are seats up the back. We went to sit up the back with some pipes and things in case something charged us.

There were three English people in the back (keen bird twitchers) and the only bird they'd come to this area to find was a bird called a [Verreaux's eagle-owl \(\*Bubo lacteus\*\)](#).

They said, *'we've been here for three days, and we haven't seen it'*.

Anyway, we didn't see it either, but the next morning as soon as we drove out and went down one of the roads, there was a nest with a baby in it. I took a photo and took it back to show it to them. They were leaving and so they couldn't go and find it which was bad luck.



Figure 91 Verreaux's eagle-owl



Figure 92 Young Verreaux's eagle-owl

## Black-headed oriole and a Pied Crow

A [black-headed oriole \(\*Oriolus larvatus\*\)](#) (Figure 93) and a [pied crow \(\*Corvus albus\*\)](#) Figure 94.



Figure 93 Black-headed Oriole



Figure 94 Pied Crow

## Chinspot batis

The [chinspot batis \(\*Batis molitor\*\)](#) Figure 95.

## White-throated robin

The [white-throated robin \(\*Cossypha humeralis\*\)](#) Figure 96.



Figure 95 Chinspot batis



Figure 96 White-throated robin

### Yellow-throated longclaw

The [yellow-throated longclaw](#) (*Macronyx croceus*). I don't know if anyone has ever kept skylarks and seen they have really long back claws but have a look at the claws on the back of this bird (Figure 97). That's how all his claws are. Hanging out underneath that leaf. No wonder they call him a longclaw because all his claws are that long. I don't know how they actually walk or hang onto anything.

### Green-backed camaroptera

[Green-backed camaroptera](#) (*Camaroptera brachyura*). If you can say that name, then good luck to you. This bird is like our wrens with its tail flicked up (see Figure 98).

### Long-billed crombec

The [long-billed crombec](#) (*Sylvietta rufescens*) Figure 99 [Crombecs](#) are a genus of African warbler and none of these birds have a tail.

There is another half dozen or so birds in this genus and they all have no tail.



Figure 97 Yellow-throated longclaw



Figure 98 Green-backed  
Camaroptera



Figure 99 Long-billed Crombec

### Yellow-breasted Apalis

[Yellow-breasted Apalis](#) (*Apalis flavida*) Figure 100.

### White-browed robin-chat

[White-browed robin-chat](#) (*Cossypha heuglini*) Figure 101.

### African stonechat

[African stonechat](#) (*Saxicola torquatus*) Figure 102.



Figure 100 Yellow-breasted Apalis



Figure 101 White-Browed Robin-Chat



Figure 102 African Stonechat

### Double banded sandgrouse

The [double banded sandgrouse \(\*Pterocles bicinctus\*\)](#) cock bird is the most incredibly coloured bird. He was just like a rainbow; a beautiful bird, but he flew so I didn't get a photograph.



Figure 103 Double banded sandgrouse

### Lemon-breasted canary

The [lemon-breasted canary \(\*Crithagra citrinpectus\*\)](#). It took me a long time to find out what this bird was. There was just one, and it was in amongst all the normal singing finches (yellow canaries). I went through all the books and finally found it.



Figure 104 Lemon breasted canary

### Martial eagle

[Martial eagle \(\*Polemaetus bellicosus\*\)](#) Figure 105.

### Yellow-billed kite

[Yellow-billed kite \(\*Milvus aegyptius\*\)](#) Figure 106.

## African fish eagle

[African fish eagle \(Haliaeetus vocifer\)](#) Figure 107.



Figure 105 Martial eagle



Figure 106 Yellow-billed kite



Figure 107 African fish eagle

## Aviary visits

The ([Aberdeen/red-headed finch \(Amadina erythrocephala\)](#) normal cock and fawn hen.



Figure 108 Normal Aberdeen finch (red-headed finch) and fawn hen

These aviaries were Walter's aviaries in the middle of Johannesburg in a ghetto area. A house had been burnt down next door, so he throws seed out there and he gets anything up to 200 of these Aberdeen finches turn up in the wintertime.

We went there for a barbeque in the afternoon, and he said, *'I put a bit of seed out, but nothing has turned up.'*

Well, all over the seed was Pintail whyders, St Helenas and the Cape sparrow, but there were no Aberdeens.

So, we were sitting down having a barbeque and just on dusk he said, *'look beside you Bruce'* and sitting on the 12-foot-high fence was about 40 Aberdeen finches. Oh, I love them. Absolutely gorgeous.

## Sociable weaver

The [sociable weaver \(Philetairus socius\)](#) Figure 109.

## Scaly-feathered weaver

The [scaly-feathered weaver \(Sporopipes squamifrons\)](#) (Figure 110) is another bird we used to have in Australia.



Figure 109 Sociable Weaver Figure 110 Scaly-feathered Weaver

### Golden-breasted starling

The [golden-breasted starling](#) (*Lamprotornis regius*), also known as royal starling. He bred these not long after we left. It's a large bird approximately 35cm long. It is a strikingly beautiful bird with its brownish purple underneath the throat, it's vivid green on the head and bright blue on the back. He had just bred them, and they are just so simple to breed.



Figure 111 Golden-breasted starling (also known as the Royal starling)

We went to another bloke's place, and he bred everything in bird rooms.

### Pink-throated twinspots

His [pink-throated twinspots](#) (*Hypargos margaritatus*) (Figure 112) had five young ones in the nest.

### Greater double collared sunbird

The [greater double-collared sunbird](#) (*Cinnyris afer*) (Figure 113).

### Livingstone's turacos

Walter's [Livingstone's turacos](#) (*Tauraco livingstonii*) (Figure 114) were pets, they talked and walked around.



Figure 112 Pink-throated twinspot with five young ones in the nest



Figure 113 Greater double-collared sunbird



Figure 114 Livingstone's turaco

### Crested pigeon

This will shock you! Our [crested pigeon \(\*Ocyphaps lophotes\*\)](#). They breed them over there and they're got cinnamons, fawns, pies, silvers; you name it they've got it.



Figure 115 Crested pigeon

### Australian sugar gliders

When we were away at one of those bloke's places, I could hear something that I used to breed. I thought 'that can't be what I can hear?' He said, 'what do you mean?'

I said, 'that can't be sugar gliders?' He said 'yep!'.

They breed [Australian sugar gliders \(\*Petaurus breviceps\*\)](#) everywhere. Every bloke in South Africa has got our sugar gliders. Unbelievable and here in Australia we are not allowed to have them.



Figure 116 Australian sugar gliders

### White-breasted Gouldian finch

Another bloke that I contacted and have been in contact with over the years was Fred. I have always wanted to meet him, and I just never thought I'd get over there to see him. He is a lovely man. He is retired now. He used to be a Latin teacher.

Bruce asked if anyone present at the meeting breeds [white-breasted Gouldian finches](#)?

Fred's father lost his job, so he got a job in a pet shop in Johannesburg and one day a lady came in while he was working there with five Gouldian finches that had a couple of bits of white in their chest.

The owner of the shop brought them and said to Fred's father, *'Fred loves breeding birds, can you get him to come over and pick them up and whatever he breeds from them we'll go halves'*.

That's where the first ever white-breasted Gouldian finches in the world came from and they were bred in this aviary Figure 117.



Figure 117 The first ever white-breasted Gouldian finches were bred in this aviary

### Judge at a zebra and Bengalese finch show

As I mentioned before, while there I was judge at a [zebra](#) and [Bengalese](#) finch show, and another bird I would have liked to have been able to bring back to Australia was the [black cheeked zebra finch](#), one of the only zebra finch mutations that we haven't got here.



Figure 118 Bruce Hockley  
Judge at a finch show



Figure 119 Black-cheeked  
zebra finch mutation

I have just been to the National Zebra Finch Show in Queensland which is held annually by the Zebra Finch National Convention (Federation). Most of the zebras that were on the show bench (and I judged a few classes) are bigger than diamond sparrows.

At the auction on the Saturday afternoon (and you will be amazed when I tell you) that some of the birds went for \$450 a pair – for zebras! Zebras aren't the little bird we used to have.

Just as a little aside, I was talking to Elizabeth Fiddler yesterday and she showed me a photo of a melanistic zebra from one of their friends in the Kimberley. It just turned up, up there in the wild, a pure black one.



Figure 120 Self chocolate  
Bengalese finch

## The big five and other animals

The other reason you go to Africa is to see the big five, which is the lion, the elephant, the leopard, the rhino and the buffalo, and. I was lucky enough to do it on four occasions in the time I was there.

### The Lion

The lion in the photograph (Figure 121) was right beside the road only a few metres away from us. He was sitting there looking after a buffalo carcass while the females were all behind him having a sleep. They'd made their kill during the night and had their feed.

Up the road was another pair of lions (Figure 122). They were googly eyeing each other and the next minute they walked off into the bush to mate. They were right beside the road.

You don't realise it when you are there, you have got to have your wits about you and have your hand ready on the window when you get your camera out. I will show why in a minute.



Figure 121 Male lion keeping watch on a carcass by the side of the road



Figure 122 Male and female lion googly-eyeing each other by the side of the road

### The African Elephant

African elephants are massive. You would be driving down a road and you wouldn't see him and then all of sudden his head would be right beside the car and he's going to walk across in front of you. David was used to it, and he was ready to put it into reverse. It's not so much the big bulls or the big females, it's what they call the juvenile delinquents which are the young males around about 6, 8, 10 years of age. They go at you. They just attack the cars, and they chase you. They are the ones that you have got to be careful of.

We were driving down the road and we came across a mother and baby in the middle of the road. The baby was about three days old, and they were just walking down the middle of the road and you have to stop. Then all of sudden these juveniles came out and David's into reverse and you've got to hope that no one is parked behind you. You have got to take off and get out of the road.



Figure 123 Elephant at the side of the road



Figure 124 Elephant cow and her-three-day old calf

Coming down to the creek from the right-hand side there were probably 500 more (I have videos at home), the biggest adults that you'd ever see; and they are destructive. They just walked up to a tree, and they'd just push it over, eat two or three of the roots and go away and push over another one. You have never seen destruction like these animals do.



Figure 125 Elephants crossing the road at the creek

### The leopard

Everywhere we went I just missed or didn't get a good photo of leopards. We were coming down a road on the second last day in the Kruger and one went straight across in front of us, just walking straight into the bushes. I went '*argh, I missed again Dave*'.

We drove a little bit further and all of sudden he started walking along the side of the car just a couple of metres away.

So, I just quickly put my smaller lens on because he was too close. He just kept spraying – he was male just marking his area – and I've got my window down taking a photo of his head. Then suddenly he must have thought, '*I'm going to have you*', and he started coming towards the car window. I had to put the window up in a hurry. If you look at the photo (Figure 127) you'll notice that he's got two different coloured eyes. That's how close he got.

That was what I was talking about earlier.

I loved that!



Figure 126 Leopard - all of sudden he started walking along the side of the car



Figure 127 Leopard - he started coming towards the car window

## The Rhinoceros

Then we came across what they called white rhinos and the reason they're called this (because they are not white) is because their mouth is wide, and they only eat grass. It should be 'wide rhino'.

The rhino in Figure 129 was a white rhino. There had been a fire and he'd been rolling in all the charcoal.



Figure 128 White Rhinoceros



Figure 129 White Rhinoceros – there had been a fire and he'd been rolling around in the charcoal

## The Buffalo

The buffalo ... they're just impressive looking animals.

The only thing we did have with anything attacking the car badly was an old male. There were four or five of them crossing the road and they stopped, and one turned around, and got his horn underneath the car and lifted the car up.



Figure 130 Buffalo

## Hyenas

My wife hates hyenas, but I love them.

We came down one road and there was a drain under the road. There were four baby hyenas in it and mum wasn't with them. We just sat there taking photos of them right beside the car.

They were so cute (Figure 132).



Figure 131 Hyena



Figure 132 Hyena cubs

### Jackals

Where you saw all the elephants at the waterhole we had to turn around and go back again. I don't know how we hadn't seen them going down. They were baby jackals, and they were just on the side of the road, just lying in the sun. They just kept looking at us and they didn't run away.



Figure 133 Jackal pup sleeping in the sun  
by the side of the road



Figure 134 Jackal pup - they just kept watching us  
and didn't run away

### Spotted civet

Dave was a bit upset with one of the last camps we stopped at because it was tented camp and not the normal buildings. When we got there the woman said to us, *'Look, I've had to put you into this tent blah, blah, blah'* and *'you have to go to a toilet and shower block up the track'*.

It was all fenced so it's okay, we think. Then she said, *'the trouble is, the honey badgers have got in'*.

Has anyone ever played with honey badger? The lions won't even attack them. They are shocking.

She said, *'somehow they've got in the park and we can't get them out, so just be careful'*.

We thought *'oh, this should be nice'*. We were having dinner on this lovely balcony overlooking a river and there's lions and stuff carrying on and an elephant, and I hear something coming up the stairs.

I said *'Dave'*, and Dave can't move really fast, *'you had better get them legs working, if this is honey badger coming up, you are going to have to move'*.



Figure 135 Spotted civet

We'll it came up, but it wasn't a honey badger, it was a large spotted civet. He was gorgeous and we started feeding him, and then up came his babies and the female.

All of the camps are electrified with huge fences, etc. One of the camps we stayed in we were in Cabin 9 and two nights before a leopard somehow got over the electric fence chasing an impala and it killed it right at the front door of Cabin 7.

Anyway, then this same night in the same camp, my bed was just inside and normally, all your food and all your cooking is outside in a cabinet with chain mesh and locks on it so the animals can't get into it. For some reason this place didn't have the mesh and the locks on the freezers outside. I was lying in bed close to a glass door with the freezers just outside and all of sudden I hear this noise. I looked out and there is a honey badger, he ripped the freezer door off and got hold of our frozen steaks and was off with them.

## Conclusion

If anyone's ever thinking of going over, I'll give you a little tip now. Do it in the next five years because if you don't, it won't be there for you to see again. It is so bad over there. They are all saying the same thing. Everything's falling apart. There's no upkeep on the parks and in some of the parks the hot water wasn't working. The people they are employing don't care and they're getting paid and doing nothing. They reckon that eventually it will get to a point where you won't want to go. I probably won't go there again. I'll go somewhere else because there are a lot of other finches and other things I'd love to see.

If you fly to Johannesburg, get a small plane from Johannesburg to Nelspruit which is just outside of Kruger. Or you can actually fly into Kruger now. We picked up a hire car and Dave drove. We just drove in, and it was really good. We did it cheaply. Dave arranged all the flights and because he's such a big man we had to go premium economy through to Africa, the internal flights, the hire car, all our meals, all our fuel, everything and the food was so cheap too. I think it ended up costing me \$5,800 for nearly a month. David used to buy something like a Baileys and a half dozen beers for a couple of days, plus steaks and I'd get some coke and some chocolates and whatever, and it might cost you \$22 for the whole lot. We would go to a restaurant and have what we call a big breakfast, and which would cost \$20 here in Australia and it's \$3.50! It was really cheap.

The Kruger is a great place. It was a great trip.

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