

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

1st - 13th July 2027 (12 days)

SOUTH AFRICA

wildlife of the Kalahari, Kimberley and Northern Karoo

An exciting 'safari' exploration of the arid habitats and spectacular wildlife of the Northern Karoo and Kalahari, focussing on some of South Africa's rarer mammals, as well as big cats, desert antelopes and easy birding.

Our journey starts in the Northern Karoo, where large flocks of Blue Cranes gather, several species of bustard stalk the grasslands and our first night drives will give us a good chance of seeing Springhare, South African Porcupine and Bat-eared Fox.

We travel on to the Kimberley region, spending time on a private farm where more night drives give us the best chance of seeing Aardvark, Aardwolf and perhaps the lovely Black-footed Cat, the world's smallest cat, while we hope to find Meerkats and elephant shrews during the daytime.

The arid dunes and dried riverbeds of the Kalahari Desert, the 'place of thirst' straddle the borders between Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. We will spend our time in the South African sector of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, where daily safari drives will give us the chance to find all three of Africa's big cats, along with herds of Springbok, Blue Wildebeest and the elegant Gemsbok. This is one of the best places to look for the solitary Brown Hyena, and we will also be looking for African Wild Cat, Cape Fox and Honey Badger. Flocks of finches and sandgrouse visit the water holes dotted through the park, and huge communal nests of the Sociable Weaver adorn the acacia trees.

Our group is limited to just seven travellers, to ensure we can enjoy the best of the area's wildlife. With plenty of photo opportunities to be expected along the way, this promises to be a memorable trip.



Price

£7,350

Single Room Supplement
£500

Full board

Day 1 fly UK to South Africa
Day 2 transfer to Bloemfontein
Day 3-4 New Holme
Day 5-6 Marrick Safari
Day 7-8 Augrabies National Park
Day 9-11 Kgalagadi National Park
Day 12 depart Johannesburg
Day 13 arrive UK

Leaders

Mike Symes
and local guides

Group size
min 5, max 7

rare mammals safari,
small group,
exciting wildlife



ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1 . Our evening flight takes us from London, arriving in Johannesburg early on **Day 2**, where we transfer to a flight to Bloemfontein, and then transfer by road down to the Karoo Gariep Conservancy, a 12,000ha nature reserve along the banks of the Seekoei River in the Northern Cape. o/n New Holme, Karoo Gariep.

Days 3/4. Karoo Gariep. Our time here will be spent looking for some of the special wildlife of the Karoo: Blue Cranes gather in large numbers at this time of year, while Blue and Karoo Bustard should be found as they stride across the plains. A variety of wildfowl and waders can be found at the reserve's wetlands, which are also home to a single introduced Hippo, while smaller fayre should included Karoo Prinia, Rufous-eared Warbler, Melodious Lark, Yellow-tufted Pipit and Layard's Warbler.

After dark, we will take night drives, in search of some of the shy mammals of the area: Aardwolf, South African Porcupine, Bat-eared Fox, Cape Fox, South African Hedgehog and South African Springhare could all cross our paths. o/n New Holme, Karoo Gariep

Days 5/6. Marrick Safari. After some more early morning birding, we will set off north towards the 'diamond fields' of Kimberley, crossing the Orange River along the way, before arriving in the afternoon at Marrick Homestead, our base for the next two nights.

We will take another two night drives during our time here, with Aardvark, Striped Polecat and Hewitt's Red Rock Hare amongst the nocturnal possibilities, as well as a chance of finding Black-footed Cat, the world's smallest wild cat species which has a good population in the area. Fingers firmly crossed!

During the day, we will explore the arid grassy plains surrounding the homestead: birding should bring us sightings of various larks, pipits, finches and buntings, while we keep our eyes peeled for Bradfield's Swift overhead, with Double-banded and Burchell's Coursers and White-quilled Bustard (Northern Black Korhaan) also amongst our targets.

The mammals aren't all nocturnal, and Marrick is home to Eastern Rock Sengi and Meerkat, as well as a variety of introduced 'big game'. o/n Marrick Homestead

Days 7/8. Au-grabies Falls National Park. Saturday will be a travel day, passing huge Sociable Weaver communal nests in roadside trees, as we head west to the spectacular Au-grabies Falls National Park, where the Orange River plunges dramatically into the gorge some 145 metres below.

Amongst the red rocks at the top of the falls, sure-footed Klipspringer and brightly coloured Au-grabies Flat Lizard can be found, with Alpine Swift overhead. Vervet Monkey and Chacma Baboon cause mischief around the rest camp, Hartmann's Mountain Zebra and Southern Giraffe browse amongst the scrublands of the National Park, Namaqua



Sandgrouse fly in to drink at the water holes, and Orange River White-eye, Namaqua Warbler, Karoo Long-billed Lark and Karoo Scrub Robin are amongst the evocatively-named species we will be paying attention to during our time here. o/n Augrabies Falls.

Days 9-11. Kgalagadi National Park. Monday will see us strike north, headed to the arid landscapes of the Kalahari.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park covers a massive 38,000 square kilometres of the southern Kalahari Desert in South Africa and Botswana. Our base for our time here will be at the southern entrance to the park, at Twee Rivieren, where the dry beds of the Nossob and Auob rivers converge.

What little water is present in this arid landscape is concentrated along the two riverbeds, with the grazing herds of Blue Wildebeest, Gemsbok, Springbok, Southern Giraffe, Common Eland and Red Hartebeest naturally gravitating towards these water holes. Where ever the grazers go, so the predators will follow... Cheetah, Leopard and Lion are all present in the park in good numbers, and we can look forward to some memorable encounters with the big cats. Smaller predators include Black-backed Jackal, African Wildcat and Honey Badger, while this is one of the best places to spot the solitary Brown Hyena. o/n Twee Rivieren

Day 12. Bidding farewell to the desert, we head to Upington and fly back to Johannesburg to catch our evening flight home, arriving back in London early on **Day 13.**

Visas, travel and accommodation

For up to date travel advice, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa>

For UK passport holders, your passport must have an 'expiry date' at least 30 days after the date you leave South Africa, and have at least 2 blank pages.

If you hold a non UK passport it is essential that you check with the appropriate embassy or consulate and obtain the necessary documents prior to travel.

We will be travelling by mini-van: our group size is limited to a maximum of seven people, to ensure the travelling is as comfortable as possible during some long drives.

Our game drives and night drives will be in open-top four wheel drive vehicles, over bumpy ground.

Accommodation will be in good quality lodges and guesthouses. All rooms will have hot water and private facilities. Meals are a mixture of local and international cuisine: special diets can be catered for.



Leader

Our leader for this holiday is **Mike Symes**. Mike is an excellent all round naturalist and an experienced Wildlife Travel leader, who has led holidays from the Danube Delta to Botswana. We will be joined by an expert guide from our South African partners at Birding Africa.

Flights

International flights are with British Airways from London Heathrow as follows:

1st July depart London Heathrow 21.20, arrive Johannesburg 09.25 (2nd)
12th July depart Johannesburg 12.40, arrive Bloemfontein 13.45
12th July depart Upington 17.55, arrive Johannesburg 19.15
depart Johannesburg 21.15, **arrive London Heathrow 07.30 (13th)**

Weather, Health and Fitness

We will be travelling during the winter season: the days should be pleasantly warm, with temperatures around 20°, but nights and early mornings can be surprisingly cold, dropping to below freezing on occasions. Typically, there is no rain at this time of year.

You should consult your GP or travel clinic for current advice on travel health as soon as possible, at least 8 weeks before the trip. We do not visit any areas where there is risk of Malaria, but the 'standard' travel vaccinations to consider are tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A and B, typhoid, rabies and cholera. More information on travel health can be found at travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/201/south-africa

No strenuous walking is involved but you need to have a **reasonable level of general fitness** to be able to participate in the holiday. The tour visits several locations and we will be moving on every two or three days, with some long journeys in between, which can be tiring if you are not used to it: please discuss any concerns with us.

TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT PER PERSON £1,500, SECOND INSTALMENT ON
CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £2,000 (to cover committed costs)
BALANCE DUE BY 01/04/2027**

INCLUDED: Return flight from London Heathrow to Johannesburg, as above. Internal flights (Johannesburg to Boemfontein, Upington to Johannesburg). Local transport as specified in itinerary. 11 nights accommodation, plus 2 overnight flights. All meals from lunch day 2 to lunch day 12, as well as meals on international flights. National Park entry fees. Services of leaders and guides. **NOT INCLUDED:** Gratuities. Travel insurance. Visas.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos Front: Aardvark, Meerkat, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Lion, Springbok. Inside: Gemsbok, Black-backed Jackal, Double-banded Courser, Springbok, Blue Bustard (Birding Africa), Aardwolf (Birding Africa), Blue Crane, Cheetah (Birding Africa), Blue Wildebeest, Sociable Weaver. Trip reports and galleries of photos from our recent holidays to the Kalahari can be found on our website.