

Thirty-five common birds found in the Kimberley area

1. Black-headed Heron (Swartkopreier) *Ardea melanocephala*

Identification: Fairly large heron; distinguished from other members of this group by the black on the top of the head and the hindneck. In flight distinguished from the equally common Grey Heron by its tow-tone underwing (wing white in front and black behind).

Habitat: Found in a variety of habitats from open grassland to the edges of wetlands.

Habits: Feeds solitarily but roosts communally in reedbeds or trees.

Food: Frogs, fish, insects, small birds.

2. Cattle Egret (Bosluisvoël) *Bubulcus ibis*

Identification: Small all-white egret.

Habitat: During the day uses grasslands and pastures, but at night sleeps near water.

Habits: Often found in association with grazing domestic stock where it feeds on insects disturbed by these animals.

Food: Insects such as grasshoppers, but also earthworms and frogs.

3. Hadedda Ibis (Hadedda) *Bostrychia hagedash*

Identification: Large dark grey, with a metallic green/purple patch on wing seen in good light.

Habitat: Occurs in many habitat types, including gardens.

Habits: Usually in small flocks, where they feed on insects by probing their long bill into the ground. Call characteristic.

Food: Mainly insects but also other invertebrates.

4. Black-shouldered Kite (Blouvalk) *Elanus caeruleus*

Identification: Above grey, below white with black patches on upperwing. Red eye characteristic.

Habitat: Occurs in grassland and savanna habitats, as well as farmland.

Habits: This very common raptor usually perches on a tree or pole from which it hunts.

Food: Mainly rodents.

5. Lesser Kestrel (Kleinrooivalk) *Falco naumanni*

Identification: Small, slender raptor. Male and female easily distinguishable.

Habitat: The preferred habitat is grassland.

Habits: Roosts in thousands in tall trees, usually near or in towns. Disperses in the early morning to feeding areas. Summer visitor to South Africa.

Food: Mainly insects (locusts, beetles).

6. Helmeted Guineafowl (Gewone Tarentaal) *Numida meleagris*

Identification: Similar in size to a domestic chicken. Slate grey colour with white spots.

Habitat: Occurs in open grassland, vleis, savanna and cultivated lands.

Habits: When not breeding occurs in large flocks, sometimes several hundred.

Food: Seeds, bulbs and insects.

7. Northern Black Korhaan (Swart Korhaan) *Eupodotis afraoides*

Identification: The male is characteristic with his black underparts, head, neck and belly, and orange bill.

Habitat: Dry grassland, Karoo and Kalahari sandveld.

Habits: The male is conspicuous as he often sits on a termite mound. In display or when disturbed he flies up calling (*krak krak krraka krraka kraka kraka*) and then descends to the ground with rapidly flapping wings and dangling yellow legs.

Food: Eats mainly insects but also plant material.

8. Blacksmith Plover (Bontkiewiet) *Vanellus armatus*

Identification: Has bold pied black-and-white plumage.

Habitat: Usually found near water.

Habits: Usually solitary or in pairs.

Food: Mainly insects and worms.

9. Speckled Pigeon (Kransduif) *Columba guinea*

Identification: Grey and brown with white speckles on the wings.

Habitat: Usually associated with mountains, koppies or buildings but feeds in open country.

Habits: Sleeps on cliffs or buildings which become dirtied with its droppings. Departs from these roosts during early morning for the feeding areas which are often cultivated lands. Will sometimes hybridize with the exotic Feral Pigeon.

Food: Mainly seeds.

10. Cape Turtle Dove (Gewone Tortelduif) *Streptopelia capicola*

Identification: Medium-sized grey bird with a black collar on the hindneck.

Habitat: Occurs in a variety of habitats from savanna to city parks.

Habits: Solitary, in pairs, or flocks. One of the first birds to call in the morning. Call is a characteristic "where's father", "work harder" or "werk stadig".

Food: Seeds and insects.

11. Diederik Cuckoo (Diederikkie) *Chrysococcyx caprius*

Identification: Small bird. Above metallic green with bronze reflectons.

Habitat: From semi-arid desert to woodland.

Habits: Very common breeding migrant to South Africa. Lays its eggs in the nest of the Red Bishop, Cape Sparrow, Masked Weaver and other birds.

Food: Mainly caterpillars.

12. Little Swift (Kleinwindswael) *Apus affinis*

Identification: Small, stocky bird. The tail is square and there is a broad white rump and a white throat.

Habitat: Common in urban areas and in mountainous habitat.

Habits: Very gregarious, often in flocks of hundreds of birds.

Food: Feeds on flying insects.

13. White-backed Mousebird (Witkruismuisvoël) *Colius colius*

Identification: Long pointed tail, white back and maroon rump.

Habitat: Occurs in the western parts of southern Africa in habitats ranging from desert scrub to gardens.

Habits: Usually in small flocks. Feeds by clambering mouse-like about branches.

Food: Fruit, flowers and leaves.

14. European Bee-eater (Europese Byvreter) *Merops apiaster*

Identification: Distinguished from all other southern African bee-eaters by its brown back. Blue underparts and a yellow throat are also characteristic.

Habitat: Grassland, woodland and savanna.

Habits: Non-breeding migrant from Europe. However some birds breed in southern Africa and the Kimberley area is a well-know breeding site.

Food: Insects.

15. Hoopoe (Hoepoep) *Upupa epops*

Identification: Rufous coloured with boldly barred black and white wings. Long bill and pointed crest are characteristic.

Habitat: Occurs in a variety of habitat types, including gardens.

Habits: Usually alone or in pairs. Calls from a tree, "hoop-hoop" or "hoop-hoop-hoop".

Food: Feeds on insects and worms.

16. Pied Barbet (Bonthoutkapper) *Tricholaema leucomelas*

Identification: Black, white and yellow bird with a bright red forehead.

Habitat: Usually associated with *Acacia* trees, but also occurs in other habitats. Will readily accept and nest in a sisal stump if placed in a convenient position in a garden.

Habits: Usually alone or in pairs. Sleeps in its own nest or those of other species, such as Sociable Weaver nests and Brown-throated Martin burrows.

Food: Fruit, nectar and seeds.

17. Barn Swallow (Europese Swael) *Hirundo rustica*

Identification: Metallic blue-back upperparts, rufous forehead and throat and deeply forked tail.

Habitat: Occurs in all habitats, except forest.

Habits: Summer migrant to South Africa. Roosts at night in reedbeds in flocks of hundreds of thousands to millions of birds.

Food: Mainly flying insects and spiders.

18. Rock Martin (Kransswael) *Hirundo fuligula*

Identification: Brown, medium-sized bird. Square tail with white "windows".

Habitat: Usually associated with mountainous or rocky habitat or buildings.

Habits: Usually alone or in pairs. Seldom found far from cliffs, gorges or tall buildings.

Food: Flying insects.

19. Red-eyed Bulbul (Rooioogtiptol) *Pycnonotus nigricans*

Identification: Black head, orange-red eye-ring and yellow undertail are diagnostic.

Habitat: Occurs in savanna areas of South Africa. Also in farmyards and gardens. Seldom found far from water.

Habits: Usually in pairs or small groups. Tame, vocal and conspicuous and often calls from the top of a tree.

Food: Fruit, nectar and insects.

20. Karoo Thrush (Olyflyster) *Turdus olivaceus*

Identification: Olive grey-brown bird. yellowish legs and bill.

Habitat: Usually associated with trees and thick riverine bush. Common in gardens in Kimberley.

Habits: Singly or in pairs. Forages on ground, pecking at ground or leaf litter.

Food: Insects, snails, spiders and small lizards.

21. Familiar Chat (Gewone Spekvreter) *Cercomela familiaris*

Identification: Small brown-grey bird with rump and tail orange-rufous.

Habitat: Mountainous areas, tree-lined watercourses and gardens.

Habits: Solitary or in pairs. Flicks wings more constantly and deliberately than other chats.

Food: Insects and fruit. Becomes tame, especially in urban areas. Will eat animal fat if placed in the garden. Formerly ate grease from wagon axles, hence the name "spekvreter".

22. Cape Robin (Gewone Janfrederik) *Cossypha caffra*

Identification: Yellow-orange bib, white eye-brow and orange tail are characteristic.

Habitat: Usually associated with densely vegetated habitats, including gardens.

Habits: Solitary or in pairs. Often keeps to dense undergrowth. However sings exposed from a perch, usually a bush or a tree.

Food: Insects, worms, spiders.

23. Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler (Bosveldtjeriktik) *Parisoma subcaeruleum*

Identification: Small dull blue-grey bird. The tail has a white tip which is conspicuous in flight. The bright chestnut tail is diagnostic.

Habitat: Occurs in thornveld, riverine bush and thickets.

Habits: Usually singly or in pairs. Forages by hopping restlessly through foliage and the branches of bushes, calling often ("cheriktik" or "cheriktiktik" call is characteristic). Also imitates the call of other birds.

Food: Insects, spiders, fruit.

24. Black-chested Prinia (Swartbandlangstertjie) *Prinia flavicans*

Identification: Small bird with a long tail. Broad black chestband diagnostic during summer.

Habitat: Occurs in Kalahari and other semi-arid habitats.

Habits: Usually in pairs. Forages by hopping about in bushes and on the ground. Often wags its tail from side to side.

Food: Small insects.

25. Fiscal Flycatcher (Fiskaalvlieëvanger) *Sigelus silens*

Identification: The male is jet-black and the female is sooty blackish brown. Has a bold white wingstripe. Can be confused with the Fiscal Shrike.

Habitat: Thornveld, Karoo, riverine bush.

Habits: Sits conspicuously on a perch on top of a bush from which it flies to catch its prey.

Food: Insects, but also fruit.

26. Cape Wagtail (Gewone Kwikkie) *Motacilla capensis*

Identification: Dull olive grey above and off-white below. Slaty-grey breastband.

Habitat: Usually near water but also common in gardens.

Habits: Usually singly or in pairs. Walks about, wagging its tail and catching its prey.

Food: Mainly insects, but also small fish and tadpoles.

27. African Pipit (Gewone Koester) *Anthus cinnamomeus*

Identification: Pale non-descript bird but the very white outer-tail feathers are characteristic.

Habitat: Usually in open grassland or savanna.

Habits: Usually singly or in pairs. Runs in short bursts, while foraging.

Food: Insects.

28. Fiscal Shrike (Fiskaallaksman) *Lanius collaris*

Identification: Black and white bird. Bold V on back. Birds in the western areas of southern Africa have a bold white eyebrow. The females have a small chestnut brown patch on their lower flanks.

Habitat: Usually in open grassland with scattered bushes.

Habits: Usually solitary. Often perches on fences and telephone poles from which it hunts. May impale the prey on a thorn, twig or barbed wire fence.

Food: Insects, spiders, small rodents, small birds.

29. Wattled Starling (Lelspreeu) *Creatophora cinerea*

Identification: About the size of a Laughing Dove. Pale whitish-grey. The white rump is diagnostic and obvious in flight.

Habitat: Occurs in savanna habitats, sometimes gardens.

Habits: Very gregarious, often in large flocks. Very nomadic, moving around in response to food supply such as locusts.

Food: Insects, fruit and other items.

30. Dusky Sunbird (Namakwasuikerbekkie) *Nectarinia fusca*

Identification: Small brownish sunbird. The male has a metallic black head, back, throat and breast during the breeding season.

Habitat: Desert and semi-arid desert. Sometimes along watercourses and in gardens.

Habits: Singly to small groups. Very active as it moves around, even during the midday heat.

Food: Nectar of aloes and mistletoes.

31. Cape White-eye (Kaapse Glasogie) *Zosterops pallidus*

Identification: Small greyish-green bird with a short bill. Eye-ring white. Throat and undertail yellow.

Habitat: Occurs in habitats with trees and bushes. Common in gardens.

Habits: Usually in pairs but in small flocks when not breeding. Forages restlessly amongst trees and bushes.

Food: Insects, spiders and fruit.

32. Cape Sparrow (Gewone Mossie) *Passer melanurus*

Identification: Medium-sized bird. The male is characteristic with his black head and breast with broad semi-circles of white.

Habitat: Found in most habitat types. Common in cities.

Habits: In pairs or family groups. Forages while hopping on the ground. Adapts well to human settlements, becoming fairly tame.

Food: Mainly seeds, but also insects.

33. Masked Weaver (Swartkeelgeelvink) *Ploceus velatus*

Identification: During the breeding season the black face and throat and yellow body of the male is characteristic.

Habitat: Occurs in most habitats.

Habits: Feeds in small flocks. Builds beautiful nests usually near water, but also in gardens and other habitats.

Food: Insects and seeds.

34. Red Bishop (Rooivink) *Euplectes orix*

Identification: During breeding the red and black plumage of the male is characteristic.

Habitat: Usually found near water but also in gardens.

Habits: Gregarious at all times. Can cause damage to grain crops.

Food: Seeds and grain. Insects fed to young.

35. Yellow Canary (Geelkanarie) *Serinus flaviventris*

Identification: The bright yellow plumage of the male is characteristic.

Habitat: Occurs in a variety of habitat types, including arid savanna and gardens.

Habits: In pairs or small flocks,

Food: Seeds, flowers, insects.

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