

SOUTH AFRICA RARE MAMMALS AND BIRDS GUIDED TOUR

04th to 22nd September 2026
19 Days, 18 Nights

TRIP REPORT



Aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*) male

Summary

Tour Leader:	Michael Wright
Tour Participants:	Jeffrey Belth, Sandra Belth, Alan Belth
Total Distance Travelled:	4,168 kms
Temperature Range:	3-24°C
Total Mammals:	64 species
Total Birds:	308 species
Top 10 Mammals:	Oribi, Spotted-necked Otter, Cape Fox, Cheetah, Temminck's Ground Pangolin, Aardvark, Southern Aardwolf, African Wild Cat, Eastern Rock Sengi (Elephant Shrew), Large-eared Mouse.
Top 30 Birds:	Drakensberg Rockjumper, Cape Rockjumper, Gurney's Sugarbird, Cape Sugarbird, White-headed Vulture, Bearded Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, White-

bellied Korhaan, Blue Korhaan, Karoo Korhaan, Ludwig's Bustard, Denham's Bustard, Southern Bald Ibis, Secretarybird, Wattled Crane, Blue Crane, Grey-crowned Crane, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Red-winged Francolin, Grey-winged Francolin, Ground Woodpecker, Red-necked Spurfowl, Drakensberg Siskin, Sentinel Rock Thrush, African Penguin, Bank Cormorant, Crowned Cormorant, Cape Clapper Lark, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Grey-backed Cisticola.

Top 5 Reptiles: Southern Tent Tortoise, Leopard Tortoise, Rock Monitor, Water Monitor, Nile Crocodile.

Top 5 Butterflies: Guineafowl, Little Acraea, White-barred Charaxes, Buquet's Vagrant, Dark Blue Pansy.

Top 2 Amphibians: Poynton's River Frog, Guttural Toad.

Note: All images included in the report are from this particular trip.

Trip Breakdown and Report:

Our tremendously successful **19-day South Africa Rare Mammal and Bird Tour** for our 3 clients from Indiana, USA, once again produced a multitude of special mammal and birding highlights. The number of rare and special mammal species we encountered was very impressive, and even though most of the bird migrants had yet to return, we tallied a substantial bird species list, despite the occasional inclement weather, including snow conditions. This tour route once again delivered in bucket loads. We explored an awesome array of thriving and interesting destinations, and our clients left fulfilled longing to tour with us again.

Final species totals:

- **Mammals = 64**
- **Birds = 308**
- **Reptiles = 7**
- **Butterflies = 9**
- **Amphibians = 2**

The significant tally of species seen was largely a result of the different territories, varied habitats, altitudes, great spotting and good fortune. These were enjoyed on the many day and night open safari vehicle game drives, regular game drives, and day nature walks we undertook.



Kruger National Park arrival



Ruigtefontein Game Farm social time



Manyoni bush breakfast with Sensiri Plains



Sani Pass, uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park



Mthimkulu Vulture Hide, Underberg



Golden Gate Highlands National Park



Khoisan Karoo Conservancy nature walk



Last supper in Swellendam

Tour Route Itinerary and Map:

Tour Route

Johannesburg – Dullstroom – Kruger – Eswatini – Zululand – Vryheid – Karkloof – Drakensberg – Maloti Mountains – Kimberley – Hanover – Beaufort West – Swellendam – Cape Town

Tour Itinerary

Day	Date	Nearest Town	Accommodation	Reserve, Park or Town	Day Plan	Distance (kms)
1	04/08/2026	Dullstroom	Linger Longer Country House	Verloren Vallei Nature Reserve	Johannesburg to Dullstroom	240
2	05/08/2026	Skukuza	Pretoriuskop Rest Camp	Kruger National Park - South Region	Verloren Vallei to Skukuza	210
3	06/08/2026	Malelane	Berg en Dal Rest Camp	Kruger National Park - South Region	Around Kruger	90
4	07/08/2026	Malelane	Berg en Dal Rest Camp	Kruger National Park - South Region	Around Kruger	90
5	08/08/2026	Mkuze	Sensiri Plains Safari Lodge	Manyoni Private Game Reserve	Skukuza through Eswatini to Manyoni	550
6	09/08/2026	Mkuze	Sensiri Plains Safari Lodge	Manyoni Private Game Reserve	Around Manyoni	60
7	10/08/2026	Vryheid	Ruigtefontein Farm	Near Vryheid	Manyoni to Vryheid game farm	200
8	11/08/2026	Vryheid	Ruigtefontein Farm	Near Vryheid	Around Vryheid game farm toward Wakkerstroom return	80
9	12/08/2026	Underberg	Mkomazana Mountain Cottages	Maloti-Drakensberg Park	Vryheid game farm to Sani Pass	420
10	13/08/2026	Underberg	Mkomazana Mountain Cottages	Maloti-Drakensberg Park	Up Sani Pass and around Underberg	80
11	14/08/2026	Clarens	Glen Reenen Chalets	Golden Gate Highlands National Park	Sani Pass to Golden Gate Highlands NP	430
12	15/08/2026	Kimberley	Main Guesthouse	Marrick Safari	Golden Gate Highlands NP to Marrick	470
13	16/08/2026	Kimberley	Main Guesthouse	Marrick Safari	Marrick to Mokala return	200
14	17/08/2026	Hanover	New Holme Guest Farm	Khoisan Karoo Conservancy	Marrick to Khoisan Karoo	340
15	18/08/2026	Hanover	New Holme Guest Farm	Khoisan Karoo Conservancy	Around Khoisan Karoo	30
16	19/08/2026	Beaufort West	Main Rest Camp	Karoo National Park	Khoisan Karoo to Karoo NP	285
17	20/08/2026	Beaufort West	Main Rest Camp	Karoo National Park	Around Karoo NP	65
18	21/08/2026	Swellendam	Arumvale Country Retreat	Bontebok National Park	Karoo NP to Swellendam	400
19	22/08/2026	Cape Town	None	None	Swellendam to Rooi-Els to Cape Town Airport	300
TOTAL KILOMETRES						4,540

Tour Started: At OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

Tour Ended: At Cape Town International Airport in Cape Town, Western Cape.

Guided Tours and Activities Undertaken

- 2 x Guided open safari vehicle night drives – 1 x Berg-en-dal, 1 x Karoo NP.
- 11 x Exclusive (private) guided open safari vehicle day and night drives – 4 x Manyoni, 2 x Vryheid, 2 x Marrick, 3 x Khoisan Karoo.
- 12 x Guided vehicle day and night drives – 4 x Manyoni, 2 x Vryheid, 2 x Marrick, 4 x Khoisan Karoo.
- 1 x Guided closed vehicle night drive – 1 x Verloren Vallei.
- 8 x Guided closed vehicle morning or afternoon day tour – 1 x Verloren Vallei, 1 x Ruigtefontein, 2 x Golden Gate, 1 x Mokala National Park, 2 x Karoo NP, 1 x Bontebok NP.
- 1 x Pangolin monitoring tour – 1 x Manyoni.
- 1 x Sani Pass 4x4 birding tour.
- 2 x Sengi (Elephant Shrew) and Suricate (Meerkat) morning tour – 1 x Marrick, 1 x Khoisan Karoo.

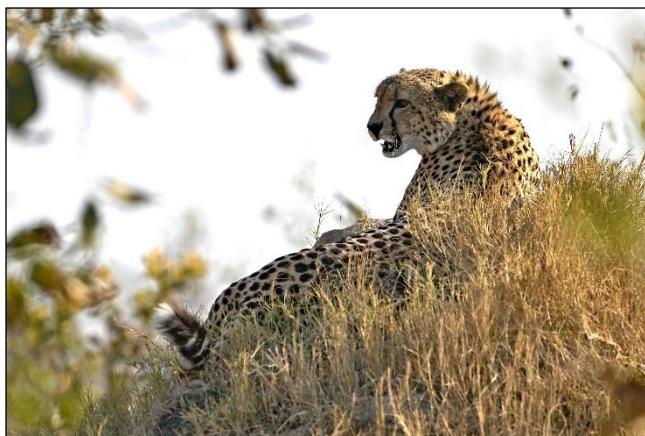
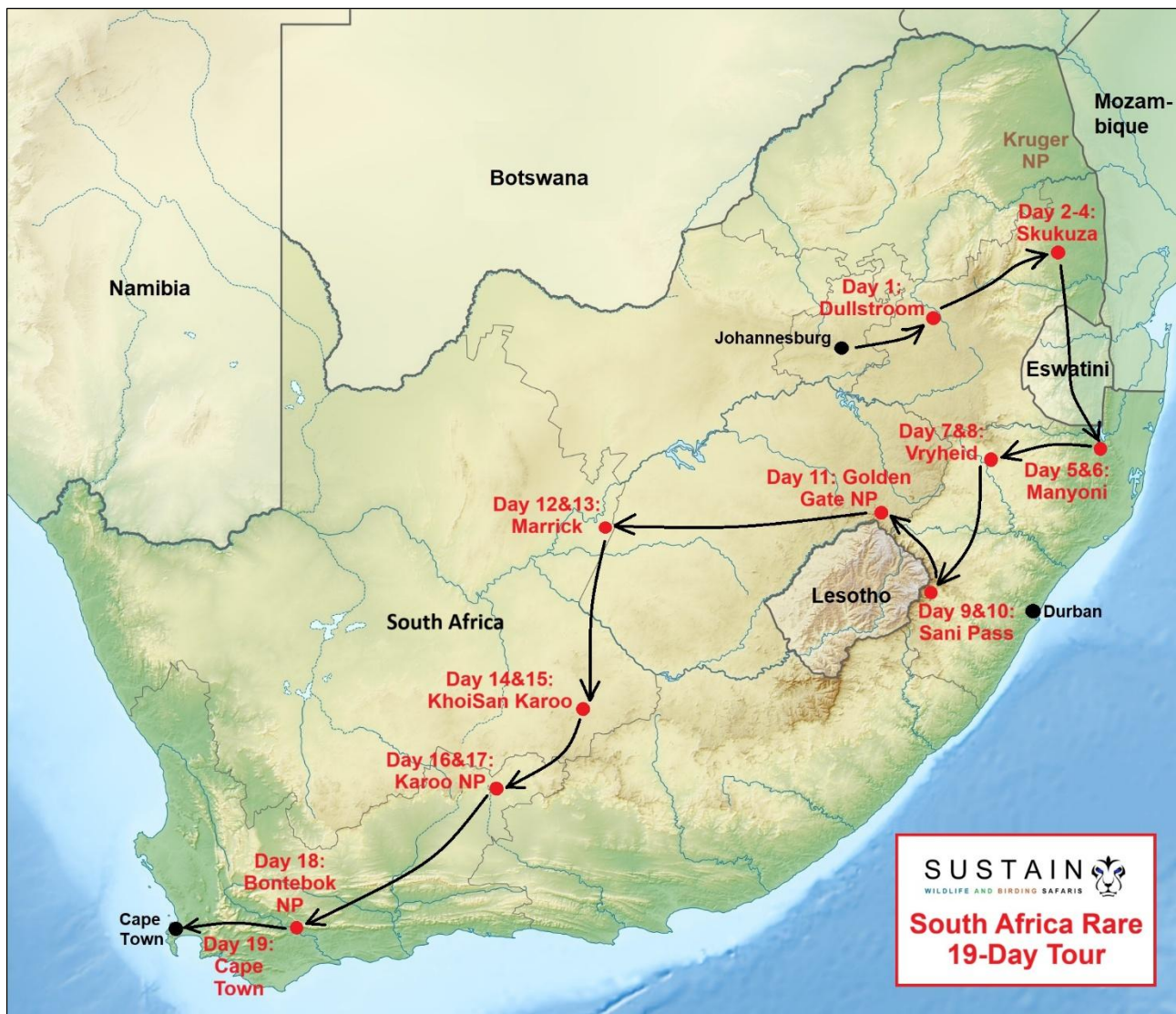


Manyoni Game Reserve sunuppers



Khoisan Karoo Conservancy interpretative walk

Tour Map



Cheetah



Cape Porcupine



Cape Fox



Large-eared Mouse



Eastern Rock Sengi (Elephant Shrew)



Black-backed Jackal

Mammal List

1	Grey Rhebok	33	African Savannah Hare
2	Springbok	34	White Rhinoceros
3	Blue Wildebeest	35	Temminck's Ground Pangolin
4	Spotted-necked Otter	36	Southern (Common) Reedbuck
5	Blesbok	37	Steenbok
6	Mountain Reedbuck	38	Common Eland
7	Oribi	39	Chacma Baboon
8	Black Wildebeest	40	Mountain Reedbuck
9	Yellow Mongoose	41	Common (Grey) Duiker
10	Vervet Monkey	42	Black-backed Jackal
11	Impala	43	Red Hartebeest
12	Burchell's Zebra	44	Sable Antelope
13	Smith's Bush Squirrel	45	Gemsbok
14	Common Dwarf Mongoose	46	Springhare
15	Grey (Common) Duiker	47	Southern African Ground Squirrel
16	Common Waterbuck	48	Large-eared Mouse
17	African Elephant x 5	49	Tete Veld Rat
18	Southern Giraffe	50	Cape Hare
19	Cheetah	51	Cape Porcupine
20	Steenbok	52	Southern Aardwolf

21	Greater Kudu	53	Bat-eared Fox x 5
22	Lesser Bushbaby (Galago)	54	Rock Hyrax (Dassie)
23	Spotted Hyena	55	Eastern Rock Elephant Shrew (Sengi)
24	Rusty-spotted Genet	56	Roan Antelope
25	Common Hippopotamus	57	Aardvark
26	African Civet	58	African Wild Cat
27	Slender Mongoose x 3	59	Cape Fox
28	Common Warthog	60	Small-spotted Genet
29	Klipspringer x 2	61	Four-striped Grass Field Mouse
30	Banded Mongoose	62	Cape Mountain Zebra
31	African Lion x 6	63	Cape Grey Mongoose
32	Nyala	64	Afro-Australian (Cape/Brown) Fur Seal



Drakensberg Siskin (endemic)



Drakensberg Rockjumper (endemic)



Cape Vulture



Black Kite



Karoo Prinia (endemic)



Ground Woodpecker (endemic)



White-necked Raven

Bird List

1	Common Ostrich	155	Chinspot Batis
2	White-faced Whistling Duck	156	Pririt Batis
3	White-backed Duck	157	White-crested Helmetshrike
4	Egyptian Goose	158	Retz's Helmetshrike
5	South African Shelduck	159	Brubru
6	Spur-winged Goose	160	Black-backed Puffback
7	Blue-billed Teal	161	Black-crowned Tchagra
8	Cape Shoveler	162	Southern Boubou
9	African Black Duck	163	Crimson-breasted Shrike
10	Yellow-billed Duck	164	Bokmakierie
11	Cape Teal	165	Gorgeous Bushshrike
12	Red-billed Teal	166	Orange-breasted Bushshrike
13	Southern Pochard	167	Grey-headed Bushshrike
14	Maccoa Duck	168	Fork-tailed Drongo
15	Helmeted Guineafowl	169	Magpie Shrike
16	Southern Crested Guineafowl	170	Southern Fiscal
17	Crested Francolin	171	Cape Crow
18	Red-winged Francolin	172	Pied Crow
19	Grey-winged Francolin	173	White-necked Raven
20	Shelley's Francolin	174	Cape Rockjumper

21	Cape Spurfowl	175	Drakensberg Rockjumper
22	Natal Spurfowl	176	Fairy Flycatcher
23	Swainson's Spurfowl	177	Southern Black Tit
24	Red-necked Spurfowl	178	Ashy Tit
25	Rock Dove	179	Spike-heeled Lark
26	Speckled Pigeon	180	Karoo Long-billed Lark
27	African Olive Pigeon	181	Eastern Long-billed Lark
28	Red-eyed Dove	182	Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark
29	Cape Turtle (Ring-necked) Dove	183	Sabota Lark
30	Laughing Dove	184	Fawn-colored Lark
31	Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	185	Cape Clapper Lark
32	Namaqua Dove	186	Eastern Clapper Lark
33	African Green Pigeon	187	Rufous-naped Lark
34	Double-banded Sandgrouse	188	Large-billed Lark
35	Ludwig's Bustard	189	Red-capped Lark
36	Denham's Bustard	190	Long-billed Crombec
37	White-bellied Korhaan	191	Cape Grassbird
38	Blue Korhaan	192	Victorin's Warbler
39	Karoo Korhaan	193	Yellow-bellied Eremomela
40	Red-crested Korhaan	194	Namaqua Warbler
41	Northern Black Korhaan	195	Bar-throated Apalis
42	Grey Go-away-bird	196	Tawny-flanked Prinia
43	Purple-crested Turaco	197	Black-chested Prinia
44	Burchell's Coucal	198	Karoo Prinia
45	Klaas's Cuckoo	199	Drakensberg Prinia
46	Fiery-necked Nightjar	200	Rufous-eared Warbler
47	Freckled Nightjar	201	Rattling Cisticola
48	Alpine Swift	202	Grey-backed Cisticola
49	Little Swift	203	Wailing Cisticola
50	African Palm Swift	204	Levaillant's Cisticola
51	Common Moorhen	205	Neddicky
52	Red-knobbed Coot	206	Zitting Cisticola
53	Purple Swamphen	207	Desert Cisticola
54	Black Crake	208	Cloud Cisticola
55	Grey Crowned Crane	209	Lesser Swamp Warbler
56	Wattled Crane	210	Brown-throated Martin
57	Blue Crane	211	Large Rock Martin
58	Water Thick-knee	212	White-throated Swallow
59	Black-winged Stilt	213	Wire-tailed Swallow
60	African (Black) Oystercatcher	214	Lesser Striped Swallow
61	Three-banded Plover	215	South African Cliff Swallow
62	Blacksmith Lapwing	216	Sombre Greenbul
63	Senegal Lapwing	217	Dark-capped Bulbul
64	Crowned Lapwing	218	African Red-eyed Bulbul
65	African Wattled Lapwing	219	Cape Bulbul
66	Kittlitz's Plover	220	Layard's Tit-babbler (Warbler)
67	Greater Painted-snipe	221	Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler (Warbler)

68	African Snipe	222	Orange River White-eye
69	Wood Sandpiper	223	Cape White-eye
70	Ruff	224	Arrow-marked Babbler
71	Little Stint	225	Red-billed Oxpecker
72	Double-banded Courser	226	Common Starling
73	Grey-headed Gull	227	Wattled Starling
74	Swift (Greater Crested) Tern	228	Common Myna
75	Greater Flamingo	229	Pale-winged Starling
76	Lesser Flamingo	230	Red-winged Starling
77	Little Grebe	231	Burchell's Starling
78	African Penguin	232	Pied Starling
79	African Darter	233	Greater Blue-eared Starling
80	Reed Cormorant	234	Cape (Glossy) Starling
81	Crowned Cormorant	235	Kurrichane Thrush
82	Bank Cormorant	236	Olive Thrush
83	Cape Cormorant	237	Karoo Thrush
84	White-breasted Cormorant	238	Marico Flycatcher
85	Glossy Ibis	239	Pale Flycatcher
86	African Sacred Ibis	240	Chat Flycatcher
87	Southern Bald Ibis	241	Fiscal Flycatcher
88	Hadedea Ibis	242	Karoo Scrub Robin
89	African Spoonbill	243	Kalahari Scrub Robin
90	Little Heron	244	White-browed Scrub Robin
91	Western Cattle Egret	245	Cape Robin-Chat
92	Grey Heron	246	White-throated Robin-Chat
93	Black-headed Heron	247	Sentinel Rock Thrush
94	Hamerkop	248	Cape Rock Thrush
95	Secretarybird	249	African Stonechat
96	Black-winged Kite	250	Buff-streaked Chat
97	African Harrier-Hawk	251	Sickle-winged Chat
98	White-headed Vulture	252	Karoo Chat
99	Lappet-faced Vulture	253	Ant-eating Chat
100	White-backed Vulture	254	Mountain Chat (Wheatear)
101	Cape Vulture	255	Capped Wheatear
102	Bateleur	256	Familiar Chat
103	Brown Snake Eagle	257	Gurney's Sugarbird
104	Martial Eagle	258	Cape Sugarbird
105	Long-crested Eagle	259	Orange-breasted Sunbird
106	Booted Eagle	260	Scarlet-chested Sunbird
107	Tawny Eagle	261	Malachite Sunbird
108	Verreaux's Eagle	262	Southern Double-collared Sunbird
109	African Hawk-Eagle	263	Greater Double-collared Sunbird
110	Dark Chanting Goshawk	264	White-bellied Sunbird
111	Pale Chanting Goshawk	265	Dusky Sunbird
112	African Goshawk	266	Red-billed Buffalo Weaver
113	African Marsh Harrier	267	Scaly-feathered Finch (Weaver)
114	Black Kite	268	Red-headed Weaver

115	African Fish Eagle	269	Cape Weaver
116	Jackal Buzzard	270	Southern Masked Weaver
117	Western Barn Owl	271	Red-billed Quelea
118	African/Annabon Scops Owl	272	Southern Red Bishop
119	Spotted Eagle-Owl	273	Yellow Bishop
120	Pearl-spotted Owlet	274	White-winged Widowbird
121	African Wood Owl	275	Long-tailed Widowbird
122	Speckled Mousebird	276	Bronze Mannikin
123	White-backed Mousebird	277	Black-faced Waxbill
124	Red-faced Mousebird	278	Common Waxbill
125	Common Hoopoe	279	Quailfinch
126	Green Wood-hoopoe	280	Blue Waxbill
127	Common Scimitarbill	281	Green-winged Pytilia
128	Southern Ground Hornbill	282	Pink-throated Twinspot
129	African Grey Hornbill	283	Jameson's Firefinch
130	Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	284	Pin-tailed Whydah
131	Southern Red-billed Hornbill	285	House Sparrow
132	White-fronted Bee-eater	286	Cape Sparrow
133	Little Bee-eater	287	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow
134	Malachite Kingfisher	288	Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow (Petronia)
135	Brown-hooded Kingfisher	289	Cape Wagtail
136	Pied Kingfisher	290	African Pied Wagtail
137	Lilac-breasted Roller	291	African Pipit
138	Purple Roller	292	Nicholson's Pipit
139	Crested Barbet	293	Plain-backed Pipit
140	Acacia Pied Barbet	294	African Rock Pipit
141	Lesser Honeyguide	295	Yellow-breasted Pipit
142	Greater Honeyguide	296	Cape Longclaw
143	Red-throated Wryneck	297	Yellow-fronted Canary
144	Bearded Woodpecker	298	Brimstone Canary
145	Cardinal Woodpecker	299	Yellow Canary
146	Ground Woodpecker	300	White-throated Canary
147	Golden-tailed Woodpecker	301	Streaky-headed Seedeater
148	Rock Kestrel	302	Drakensberg Siskin
149	Greater Kestrel	303	Cape Canary
150	Lanner Falcon	304	Black-headed Canary
151	Peregrine Falcon	305	Golden-breasted Bunting
152	Brown-headed Parrot	306	Cape Bunting
153	Black Cuckooshrike	307	Lark-like Bunting
154	Black-headed Oriole	308	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting



Southern Tent Tortoise
(Psammobates tentorius tentorius)



Leopard Tortoise

Reptile List

1	Rock Monitor	5	Striped Skink
2	Marsh Terrapin	6	Tent Tortoise
3	Water Monitor	7	Leopard Tortoise
4	Nile Crocodile		

Butterfly List

1	African Plain Tiger	6	Dark Blue Pansy
2	Guineafowl	7	White-barred Charaxes
3	Yellow Pansy	8	Buquet's Vagrant
4	Little Acraea	9	Painted Lady
5	Hairstreak		

Amphibian List

1	Poynton's River Frog	2	Guttural Toad
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With our trusty 4x4 SUV



Saying Farewell in Simon's Town



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