



## Twitterers & Tweets To Fly For

Need a break from the emails and tweets? Gadgets n gizmos? Buzzers n beeps?

For a real “tweet” “au natural” why not escape to KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa for some tweets and twitterers of an altogether different kind!

You don't need to be a birder, twitcher or ornithologist to appreciate the amazing birdlife you will see in KwaZulu-Natal. You don't even need to know a single bird name to be converted into someone with an appreciation and basic knowledge of birds. Just leave that to us!

### **A little bird told me ...**

There are a number of amazing properties in KwaZulu-Natal from where you can enjoy spectacular scenery, fantastic weather, amazing wildlife and fantastic birds! Be you feather-novice or dedicated twitcher!

### **For a bird's eye view: Cathedral Peak Hotel**

Head for the World Heritage Site that is the famous Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Mountains. Base yourself at the popular leisure resort, the Cathedral Peak Hotel for some of the most expansive mountain views anywhere – and a wide array of self guided and guided walking and hiking trails – ideal for spotting birds. An opportunity to spot the rare Bearded Vulture (Lammergeyer), Cape Vulture, Black Eagle, Jackal Buzzard or Lanner Falcon. [www.cathedralpeak.co.za](http://www.cathedralpeak.co.za)

### **Feather your nest: Fordoun**

Fordoun is a fantastic retreat, just a couple of hours from Durban on the popular Midlands Meander. Besides being an award winning spa and health hydro, it is also fantastic for those who enjoy the great outdoors including amazing birdlife. A few years ago, Fordoun donated 150 hectares of its natural veld and wetland to the KwaZulu-Natal Crane Foundation to create a reserve for breeding both the Wattled Crane and Oribi Antelope – two highly endangered species. Fordoun and its guests now support the reserve and help cover the costs of rearing the chicks to adulthood so they can be released into the wild. Guests are encouraged to visit the project. [www.fordoun.co.za](http://www.fordoun.co.za)

### **Out on a lark: Ghost Mountain Inn**

Zululand and in particular the area around Mkuze, has one of the largest bird lists you will find anywhere in South Africa due to its wide variety of habitats including pans, swamps, acacia thornveld, sand forest, riverine forest and open woodland. There are even mountainous areas with cliffs as well as open grassland in places. With more than 420 bird species on record, the area is renowned as a mecca for bird lovers. Ghost Mountain Inn is the place to base yourself to visit birding hotspots including Mkhuze, Hluhluwe-Imfolozi and the acclaimed Ndumo Game Reserves. Some of the specials one might tick off are Mangrove Kingfisher, African Broadbill, Pink Throated Twin Spot, Blue Billed Fire Finch and Narina trogon on 4 hour, half day or full day guided birding trips. Fantastic water and wetland birds can be spotted on boat cruises on Lake Jozini as well as in the inn's expansive gardens or from the jetty that expands over the lake. [www.ghostmountaininn.co.za](http://www.ghostmountaininn.co.za)



### **Something to crow about: Amakhosi Safari Lodge**

This 5 star lodge in remote Zululand is home to the big 5 as well as over 420 bird species including 3 breeding pairs of a very powerful eagle, the *Stephanoaetus coronatus*. Phillip Khumalo, Amakhosi's Head Ranger, is a Specialist Birding Guide – considered by many ornithologists and respected trainers as one of KwaZulu-Natal's top birding guides. A “must do before you die” for birders! [www.amakhosi.com](http://www.amakhosi.com)

Although safari game drives will allow you to spot in many cases the large game and predators – visitors to KwaZulu-Natal quickly learn that it is not all about the Big 5 tick list! It's the fresh air, the wide open spaces, the jaw-dropping sunsets, the amazing trees and habitats, the Milky Way at night – and the beautiful birdsong that greets you in the mornings.

Rangers are trained to fill the periods between traditional “big game sightings” to impart wisdom and anecdotes about the trees and shrubs, the insects, the birds and even local folklore. By your third game drive you will be almost as excited about spotting and recognising an unusual endemic bird as you will that elephant on the horizon! Plus you can impress your colleagues when you get back with your newly discovered birding slang and growing tick list!

Another stop you might want to include on your “flight path” is **Isandlwana Lodge** on the Battlefields. Don't miss the double-story Hammerkop nest on Nyoni Rock which can be spotted from the lodge – or Issie the Mockingchat that likes to frequent the dining room and

welcome guests. There are also over 300 species in the area including the Southern bald ibis and birding tours can be arranged. [www.isandlwana.co.za](http://www.isandlwana.co.za)

Another fantastic experience on offer is bird-watching on horseback at **Pakamisa Private Game Reserve** in Zululand! More than 200 species have been recorded in the Pakamisa Game Reserve with many more occasional visitors and seasonal migrants. From soaring eagles overhead to the vivid sunbirds flitting through the shrubs, the area offers birdwatchers constant excitement. [www.pakamisa.co.za](http://www.pakamisa.co.za)

Once you gain your basic birding “wings”, even a novice will know how to identify a few birds, spot LBJs (little brown jobs!), BOPs (Birds of prey) – or might even, (hold your breath) – spot a lifer ...a rare bird a real fanatic wouldn't have dare dreamed of spotting! The rangers will often show you when to listen, how to call a bird and get a response. It is a fascinating world waiting to be discovered!

So pack your binoc's and head for KwaZulu-Natal for the *tweet* of a lifetime!

For more info email [info@ethosmarketing.co.uk](mailto:info@ethosmarketing.co.uk), visit [www.ethosmarketing.co.uk](http://www.ethosmarketing.co.uk) or call (01403)243619.