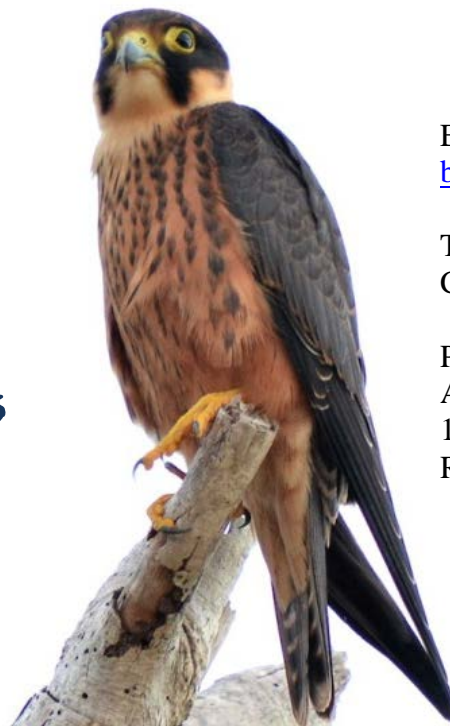


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Image: © Per Holmen

## MOKALA NATIONAL PARK

### 4 DAY TRIP 21 to 24 June 2012

Mokala is South Africa's newest park, situated approximately 80km southwest of Kimberley, and west of the N12 freeway to Cape Town. Nestled in the hills, Mokala's landscape boasts a variety of koppieveld (hills) and large open plains.

The isolated dolerite hills give the place a calming feeling of seclusion. A big surprise awaits when you pass through the hills and are confronted by the large open sandy plains towards the north and west of the Park. Drainage lines from the hills form little tributaries that run into the plains and drain into the Riet River.

Mokala is the Setswana name for the Camel Thorn tree. These trees occur in dry



woodland and sandy areas and are one of the major tree species of the desert regions of Southern Africa. Habitat in the Park comprises Kalahari Thornveld Savanna with Nama Karoo elements. Mokala provides superb scenery and breathtaking sunrises and sunsets

As a newly proclaimed park, Mokala offers an exciting opportunity for birders to explore. The park is located in the transition zone between Kalahari and Karoo biomes and is host to a varied spectrum of birds.

These include the recently described Kimberley and Longtailed Pipits which are fairly common in the area during the winter months. Dry Western area specials include Pirit Batis, Kalahari and Karoo Scrub-Robin, Rufous-eared Warbler, Fairy Flycatcher, Cape Penduline Tit and Short-toed Rock-Thrush. Orange River Francolin is also regularly encountered.

Large raptors include Tawny, Martial, Black-chested Snake and Fish Eagle while Southern Pale Chanting Goshawks are abundant. Lanner Falcon, Shikra, Gabar Goshawk, Greater Kestrel and Pygmy Falcon are among the smaller raptors to be seen.

The park is a paradise for LBJ enthusiasts, and besides the specials mentioned above, one is also likely to see a further five lark species, namely Roufous-naped, Eastern Clapper, Fawn-coloured, Spike-heeled and Red-capped. African and Buffy Pipits are also common.

Game viewing in the park is excellent. The following species occur in the park:

Black Rhino, White Rhino, Disease-free Buffalo, Tsessebe, Roan Antelope, Mountain Reedbuck, Giraffe, Gemsbok, Eland, Zebra, Red Hartebeest, Blue Wildebeest, Black Wildebeest, Kudu, Ostrich, Steenbok, Duiker and Springbok.



We will be staying in comfortable chalets in the heart of the park. From the chalets we have an excellent view of a waterhole frequented by most of the big game species. We will also be visiting Kamfers Dam, well known for thousands of Lesser Flamingoes and other water birds. A trip to the Big Hole in Kimberley should produce Bradfields Swift.