

Recent Sightings

Other National Parks

Kgalagadi – March 2009

Also of interest in the province was a record on 7 March of a juvenile **SADDLE-BILLED STORK** at the Kwang Pan north of Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.



Saddle-billed Stork north of Nossob © Carol Zengerink

West Coast 21st March 2009

Tertius Gous has just let me know that he has been looking at a **BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** at the main Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park for the last few minutes. This is almost certainly the same individual that was first reported from there in mid November last year, so has probably been there for the entire season.

Good luck if you are chasing this one!

Kind regards
Trevor

Addo Elephant – mid March 2009

In the Eastern Cape, there were some reasonable regional vagrants reported yesterday with a couple of **TEMMINCK'S COURSERS** seen at the Goro Elephant Park in the Addo National Park

Augrabies Falls – March 22nd 2009

The Northern Cape also hosted some interesting regional vagrants around Augrabies Falls on Sunday with both a single **BURCHELL'S COUCAL** as well as 2 **WHITE-FRONTED BEE-EATERS** being reported from there.

Mountain Zebra – April 2009

There have also been a few regional vagrants in the province with what appears to be a small influx of **LONG-TAILED PARADISE WHYDAHs** delivering records from a private game reserve near Grahamstown as well as reasonable numbers being reported from the Mountain Zebra National Park.

Karoo _ mid April 2009

Of unknown origin, and presumed to be an escapee, the **PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET** reported in the last report from near the camp site in the Karoo National Park near Beaufort West continues to entertain visitors.



Plum-headed Parakeet in the Karoo National Park © Hans Linde

Kgalagadi – April 2009

The Northern Cape has also produced some interesting regional vagrants with a male and two female **LONG-TAILED PARADISE WHYDAHs** seen at the waterhole at Twee Rivieren in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park during the week before last

West Coast – April 22nd 2009

a **LESSER SAND PLOVER** also seen today at Seeberg in the West Coast National Park.

10 August 2009.

Other records of regional interest in the province received over the last few days include a **GABAR GOSHAWK** in the Tanqua Karoo in an Acacia tree along the river very close to the old Tanqua Guest House

In the Eastern Cape, a rather interesting record comes from Bird Island in Algoa Bay where a **CROWNED CORMORANT** has been present for the last few days. According to available sources, this is only the second record for the province of this species which generally only

occurs as far east as the mouth of the Gouritz River west of Mossel Bay, so this record is at least 350km further east than normal.

27 July 2009

In the Northern Cape, I have been forwarded a record of 4 **BLACK HERONS** seen together at Twee Rivieren in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park recently. According to current data, it would appear that the closest known populations are in the vicinity of Kimberley which is at least 450km south-east of where these birds have turned up!



Black Heron at Twee Rivieren © Elvira Wiemann

Thursday, 06 August 2009

For anyone who has known me for any length of time, you would be well aware that one of my “pet projects” is vagrant penguins and the lack of virtually never getting the opportunity to twitch them. Well, this theme continues with the latest news of a juvenile **NORTHERN ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN** that came ashore at Struisbaai last week. Unfortunately, the bird was in a bad way being weak and emaciated and also had two rather deep chest wounds. It was collected by a member of the public and taken to SANCCOB where it is currently being treated and is apparently doing much better.

The last 5 years have turned up no fewer than 17 vagrant penguins along the South African coastline (4 King Penguins, 5 Macaroni Penguins and 8 Northern Rockhoppers) of which only one Macaroni Penguin, the bird earlier this year at Brandfontein, was twitchable! I am sure we will all eventually get the opportunity to catch up with the other species as well but, it just goes to show that, when a vagrant penguin is sitting on a beach somewhere moulting and is gettable for your list, you should make every effort possible to get there as quickly as possible as you just never know when you might get another opportunity!



Juvenile Northern Rockhopper Penguin from Struisbaai © Tertius Gous

Thursday, 06 August 2009

Continuing in the Western Cape, the Peninsula produced yet another **BROWN-BACKED HONEYBIRD** (Sharp-billed Honeyguide), this time at the Tokai Plantation. This generally unobtrusive species is considered extremely uncommon in the province, particularly down in the south-western corner of it, so the fact that there have been several reports of this species recently on the Peninsula perhaps indicates a small expansion in their known distribution, rather than vagrant occurrences.

Thursday, 06 August 2009

In the Eastern Cape, the **SOOTY TERN** first reported from Bird Island in Algoa Bay in early June was still present on the island on Tuesday and showed well in the Roseate Tern colony there.

Thursday, 06 August 2009

Limpopo Province also got in on the “out of range” action by producing a female **ARNOT’S CHAT** at Mapungubwe National Park. This is quite a lot further west than any other records in South Africa although there is certainly suitable habitat in this area and there are records from a very short distance north of here in Zimbabwe. Perhaps the occurrence of this species in the park has just been overlooked up until now?



Arnot's Chat at Mapungubwe NP © Mary de Wijn

October 1, 2009: Agulhas and Wilderness

It's been a particularly quiet last few days with only a couple of records from the Western Cape worth mentioning...

The **KORI BUSTARD** originally located near Agulhas is still present and seems to be hanging around near Elim now. It was last reported just 4km outside the town a few days ago. On Tuesday, a **SWALLOW-TAILED BEE-EATER** was seen in the vicinity of the Langvlei Dunes near Wildernis. The latter is certainly a very rare bird in the province with only a handful of previous records.



Kori Bustard near Elim © Frans Swanepoel

Kgalagadi 0910

Then, in the Northern Cape, a rather odd sighting was received of a **RED-CHESTED CUCKOO** just north of Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. According to current distribution maps, this seems to be well out of range although one has to suspect that some birds moving south to the Western Cape may well pass through this area on their migration routes.

Wilderness – 091027

Starting in the Western Cape, 3 **GREATER SAND PLOVERS** were reported from Swartvlei on the Garden Route on Tuesday.

West Coast 091028

Other reports of note included a **LESSER SAND PLOVER** at Geelbek in the West Coast National Park yesterday

Augrabies 0910

In the Northern Cape, the **CRESTED BARBETS** that were first reported from Augrabies National Park some time ago are also still present and this considerable westward range extension seems to now be taking on some level of permanency.

West Coast 0910

There also seems to be a small eruption of **LARK-LIKE BUNTINGS** on to the west coast again with several individuals being reported from the West Coast National Park over the weekend.



Lark-like Bunting in the West Coast NP
© Trevor Hardaker

West Coast 0911

Starting in the Western Cape, there were a couple of interesting regional records over the last few days.

At least one **LESSER SAND PLOVER** was showing reasonably well at Seeberg in the West Coast National Park yesterday



Lesser Sand Plover at Seeberg
© Per Holmen

The Western Cape is certainly starting to get busier and this morning turned up a stunning adult **BLACK-HEADED GULL** in full breeding plumage at Geelbek in the West Coast National Park. The park also had at least one **LESSER SAND PLOVER** on show this morning at Seeberg whilst the irruption of **LARK-LIKE BUNTINGS** on to the west coast continues with good numbers present in the park earlier today as well. The gull is of particular significance this morning as it was a milestone bird for the observer, Niall Perrins, who, with this bird, cracked the magical 800 mark on his Southern African lifelist. Well done, Niall!!!



Black-headed Gull at Geelbek
© Niall Perrins



Lesser Sand Plover at Seeberg
© Niall Perrins

West Coast National Park – November 21/22:

The West Coast National Park turned up a few interesting records on the weekend with a juvenile **RED-BACKED SHRIKE** seen along the Schrywershoek road on Saturday, a **FORK-TAILED DRONGO** reported from Geelbek on Friday and Duinepos on Saturday and a single **LESSER SAND PLOVER** showing well throughout the weekend at the salt marsh just south of the Geelbek Manor House.

Agulhas Area November 2009

Well, the odd movements of common species elsewhere in the country continue to surprise the birders in the Western Cape. The pair of **LESSER STRIPED SWALLOWS** first reported from De Hoop Nature Reserve on 16 September 2009 are still present and giving provincial twitchers more than ample opportunity to get down to the reserve and add them to their provincial lists. The birds are hanging around alongside the vlei and are most often seen in the vicinity of the rondavels or at the pool area. Equally of interest at De Hoop is what seems to be an influx of **NAMAQUA SANDGROUSE** into the area with a number of recent sightings.

Bontebok National Park November 2009

Not too far east of here, the Bontebok National Park has also turned up some rather odd visitors in the form of a pair of **KORI BUSTARDS**. With a single bird being regularly reported in the Agulhas-Elim area over the last couple of months, are we seeing another irruption of this species into the southern part of the province as well?

Wilderness

Down on the Garden Route, there have also been several interesting sightings with an **AFRICAN PALM SWIFT** (possibly even 2 individuals) present at the Ebb 'n Flow campsite in Wilderness National Park

Tsitsikamma – Nature's Valley

whilst a male **BLACK-EARED SPARROWLARK** looked rather out of place along the hiking trail which leads from the picnic site down into the Grootrivier Pass at Nature's Valley. Not only is the latter record at least 100km further south than where it should normally occur (including several extensive mountain ranges in between that it would have had to have crossed), the fynbos-covered hillside on which it was seen is also rather atypical habitat...

West Coast National Park – November 30:

A single **LESSER SAND PLOVER** was still on view at Geelbek on the weekend showing well from the main hide yesterday.



Lesser Sand Plover at Geelbek
© David Winter

Bontebok – December 8th 2009

At least one **KORI BUSTARD** was still present in Bontebok National Park on Friday (4th)

September 2008 – Info re Wilderness and Red-billed Tropicbird

Equally as exciting was a record of 2 **RED-BILLED TROPICBIRDS** on the trip. To the best of my knowledge, this constitutes only the 7th record of this species for the subregion with the first record being in Hout Bay in November 1984. The next record was a sighting at sea off of Cape Town in February 1989 whereafter there were two further records at sea near Cape Town in December 2000 and January 2001 (the December bird actually landed on a vessel and was brought ashore and taken to SANCCOB). Then, from late January to mid February 2005, an individual made appearances at several different sites around the Cape including Rondevlei Nature Reserve and Betty's Bay and the only other record I am aware of is a bird at Rondevlei in Wildernis National Park in September 2008. A sighting in March 1972 off southern Namibia appears to be beyond the normal 200 nautical mile limit accepted for inclusion on to the subregion list.

December Tankwa-Karoo

In the Western Cape, an adult **GABAR GOSHAWK** was reported from the Tanqua Karoo a few days ago along the R355 just a short way north of the turn-off to Skitterykloof.

West Coast

Starting in the Western Cape, the **AUSTRALIAN GANNET** that has been present for a while on Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay was reported as still being on the island at the end of last week. Also of interest, a **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** was located yesterday in the stand of gum trees near the Geelbek Manor House in the West Coast National Park. This is almost certainly the same individual that has returned to this same spot now over several successive seasons.



Spotted Flycatcher at Geelbek
© Cliff Dorse



Spotted Flycatcher at Geelbek
© Mike Buckham

Mokala

The Northern Cape has also had a good run of decent records over the last few days with a **EURASIAN HONEY BUZZARD** being reported from Mokala National Park on Sunday 13th December

Kgalagadi

A **SEDGE WARBLER** and a moulting male **LONG-TAILED PARADISE WHYDAH** in one of the staff gardens at Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park were also well out of range and a bit of a surprise.



Long-tailed Paradise Whydah at Nossob
© Madel Wilkins



Sedge Warbler at Nossob
© Madel Wilkins

Addo

Continuing with the recent spate of **AFRICAN OPENBILL** sightings around the rest of the country, the following reports have also been received over the last few days...

In the Eastern Cape, a single bird was reported from Addo National Park