

## Recent Sightings

### Other National Parks

#### August 2007

A COMMON REDSHANK was photographed by Hannelie de Klerk at Geelbek Hide in West Coast National Park on Friday 20th July and was seen again yesterday (22 July) by Sion Stanton and Margaret and Trevor Hardaker (for those who don't know Trevor is only the second birder in South Africa to see over 900 species in the Southern African subcontinent). Hannelie's photo can be viewed at <http://www.zestforbirds.co.za/redshank17.html>

Contrary to its name, the Common Redshank is a rare summer visitor to South Africa. The name is used because of the global standardisation of bird names and it is the well known species in Europe and Great Britain where redshanks first got their name.

Despite the rarity, common redshank is regularly recorded in West Coast National Park and Geelbek is probably the most reliable place in the country to see one. (Anyone who has been there when the tide is coming in will know Geelbek is one of the best wader watching destinations on the planet) However having the redshank over winter and show its nuptial plumage is unusual and any forumites in the Cape Town area should try and make the effort to go and see if they can see it. Anyway it is flower season in a couple of days time so they can go up and see the flowers anyway.

Posted on the SA Bird Network by **Japie Claassen** 24/7/07

I paid a visit to the park during the weekend and birding was exceptionally well. Although the area received good early rains, the flowers are not as good as last year. The area up to Skitterykloof is very good and will have a good spell of flowers. The section from Skitterykloof to the Tanqua River is dry at the moment and if rain is not coming quickly, there will be very little flowers. From the Tanqua River the veld becomes better and as soon as you enter the park on the Middelpos road, the veld is more greener with more flowers. The area around the office at Roodewerf, Maansedam and Gannaga Pass is lush and there will be a lot of flowers in August.

Well, birding was very good. The Ongeluks River was in flood sometime ago and large pans of water are along the road. On Saturday morning hundreds of Namaqua Sandgrouses gathered here to drink. A few Blackheaded Canaries came to drink as well and in the pan was a very early Common Greenshank. Further along the road we saw some Greybacked Sparrowlarks and some more Blackheaded Canaries along the Tanqua River.

Soon after we entered the park we had a interesting juvenile Black Harrier sitting on a telephone pole with a black chest and whitish belly which first gave the impression of a Black-chested Snake-Eagle. When looking through the binocs, we saw that it was indeed a Black Harrier. Other raptors were Greater Kestrel and Pale Chanting Goshawk. Around Roodewerf and Maansedam Ludwig's Bustards are abundant, flying in groups of up to 10 birds. Larks are displaying like mad and Karoo, Largebilled and Spikeheeled Larks are every where. Karoo Korhaan is often heard calling and the other "normal" Karoo species are also enjoying the lush vegetation. This morning we also saw a Secretarybird.

The park's new wilderness camp at Elandsberg will be a good venue for birders and anyone who would like to see what it looks like can contact me direct for photos.

Unfortunately, we didn't see any coursers or Blackeared Sparrowlarks.

#### Overwintering Osprey – West Coast National Park – July '07

Amongst the birds I saw on my count at the old windmill area (restricted area near white cliffs) an adult or certainly mature Osprey took off from one of the telephone poles carrying a fish. We watched it fly away from us and land on another pole further down the road. As the Ospreys are supposed to migrate and this one was here in mid winter, maybe they are staying and breeding here. Looking at one of the poles a platform, as they do overseas, could quite easily be installed so that access could be gained to the telephone lines and also providing a nesting platform. Wouldn't that be great - maybe a first for RSA?

***Brian Van der Walt***

### **Mokala National Park – July '07**

While visiting our folks near Hartswater, northern Cape, we quickly dashed off for a day visit (4 July 2007) to the latest addition to our national parks list, Mokala NP. What a pleasant surprise!! We predict that this park will become a birding hotspot in the Northern Cape .....

Mokala NP (Mokala is the Setswana for Camel thorn/Kameeldoring) has just recently been opened and is the "replacement" for the de-proclaimed Vaalbos NP, which never really got going due to prospecting rights in the park, a successful land claim and monotonous habitat (from a birding perspective). We visited Vaalbos about 8 years ago and were hugely disappointed, so it was with a sense of anticipation that we set off for Mokala NP, which is about 70km due south of where Vaalbos used to be. According to SANParks, they have done their homework on Mokala and the same fate as Vaalbos would not befall this gem of 20 000 ha.

Mokala is about 80 km south-west of Kimberley, but be warned: at this stage there is no signposting from the N12 and this resulted in us overshooting the turnoff to the park by more than 50km's! Even the Tourist Information desk in Kimberley initially gave us wrong directions. After Mokala we still had to show our teenage daughter the Big Hole in Kimberley and this 100km+ "detour" seriously impacted on our time in the park.

Directions: from Kimberley, take the N12 towards Hopetown for 58 km until you reach the Hayfield turnoff to the right. Take this gravel road (some stretches badly corrugated) for about 20km to reach the entrance to the park on your right. Ironically, after 3km on the Hayfield road, we started getting minute signposts indicating the remaining distance to the park! Hopefully the authorities would soon be putting up the necessary roadsigns on the N12.

The entrance gate is remotely controlled from the main office, which is 7km into the park in an easterly direction. One has to contact the office by means of an intercom at the gate.

The friendly and helpful staff provided some answers to our questions at reception. Apparently the park used to be a hunting/game farm and therefore there are some lovely infrastructure/facilities at the main reception in the form of two camps with semi- to luxury chalets, restaurant, swimming pool, conference centre, bar, etc. The chalets of Mosu Lodge overlook a waterhole where some excellent birding and game-viewing should be had. We did not have time to visit the other lodge, called Mofele.

The rest of the park is still in the process of being developed and road-markers have just been erected (the typical stone markers like in the KNP), but no names/directions have been attached to them yet, so one has to follow numbered beacons for the time being. All the routes are clearly indicated on a fairly detailed park map, with about 70km of accessible roads. As there are dangerous game in the park, one is not allowed to leave your vehicle, except in designated spots. The camps and campsite are not fenced, adding to the wild ambience.

The "Haak en Steek" campsite (referring to the scrubs ;-)) is rustic (no power) and has 5 shady campsites with a small ablution: toilet, basin, shower with gas geyser. There is a single chalet at the campsite. We met the park manager, mr Joubert, at the campsite and he feels that this

campsite has huge potential, because it overlooks a waterhole and has a lovely, remote setting. We fully agree and are already salivating about something like a viewing hide on the waterhole.

The good diversity of habitats (e.g. thornveld, rocky koppies, arid scrubland, karoo grassland/plains, dry watercourses) in the park will surely add to its appeal and its birdlist. There are also some nice red sandveld, smacking of the kalahari.

We could not nearly cover all the roads and tracks in the 3 hours at our disposal, having reached Mokala only at 11:30 after all the searching for the park. The time of day, cool to cold weather and breezy conditions were not optimal for birding, but we still had a good time, recording 65 species in the park. We have no doubt that a list of 100 species is possible on an extended visit and the park should eventually boast a list of close to 200 species. The high endemism of the species recorded should also add to the attraction. We saw 68 species and could easily have reached 80+ if we had more time and better conditions. So much more reason to return ...

A very southern Purple Roller on the access road set the tone for some nice avian highlights for us NFS/Gauteng highvelders. Soon after that we were delighted to find a confident female Pygmy Falcon near one of the few Sociable Weaver Nests in the vicinity of the main office. Short-toed Rock-thrush were wall-to-wall, as were Kalahari Scrub Robin. One of these delightful little blighters foraged less than 2m away in the campsite. Karoo Scrub-Robin were also present in good numbers and we saw a single Rufous-eared Warbler in scrubland near the campsite. The ubiquitous Cape Wagtail was joined at the main camp waterhole by African Quailfinch and Red-headed Finch.

Grey Hornbills were plentiful and we were lucky to first hear and then see a single male Red-crested Korhaan. A brilliant crimson flash and then good views had us agape for the umpteenth time on seeing a Crimson-breasted Shrike. Can you ever get enough of these beauties? The somewhat melancholy call of Pririt Batis was in direct contrast to its lively foraging in the mid stratum, sharing foraging trees with the delightful Fairy Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Ashy Tit, Chested-vented Tit-babbler and Long-billed Crombec in a nice mixed party. Acacia Pied Barbet chose to do their own thing outside the bird parties. The fluttery and somewhat lopsided flight of Chat Flycatcher drew attention to this giant of the flycatcher family.

Larks were represented by Sabota, Bradfield's and Fawn-coloured. To the ornithologists out there: c'mon guys, surely Bradfield's Lark is an obviously different bird from Sabota, let's have them split again, please... ;-))

A large flock of Pied Starlings were just another addition to the endemic list. Only Buffy and African Pipits were seen, but there is nice habitat for Kimberley and Long-tailed as well and we would not be surprised if these will also feature on the park list as more birders visit.

The chilly conditions prevented big raptor sightings and in addition to the rather shrike-like Pygmy Falcon, the raptors were represented by Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk, an immature Black-shouldered Kite and a single Greater Kestrel. Mountain Wheatear were common around the many rocky outcrops and a pair of Capped Wheatear was seen just before we took our reluctant leave of the park.

As you leave the park, you once again contact the office by intercom to get the gate opened. The box containing the intercom is locked, but there is an inconspicuous silver button (looking more like a big pop-rivet or a self-taping screw than a button) on the box cover that you need to press to activate the intercom. The last addition to the list before we left was Pied Crow.

Mammalian sightings included Warthog, Roan Antelope, Gemsbok, Kudu, Hartbees, Springbok, Impala and buffalo, but we dipped in giraffe and the 2 rhino species. Currently buffalo and rhino are the only big 5 species in the park.

We did not have internet access at the time of writing, so we could not check on other vital pieces of info on the SANParks website, like central booking etc. The park can be contacted at 053-2040158, 053-2040164 or 053-2040168 and faxed at 053-2040176.

All indications are that Mokala is on the right track and would become a world-class facility. Birders should not miss this park on a visit to the arid western interior. We will definitely be back.....

### ***Dawie and Sarieta Kleynhans***

#### **Mapungubwe National Park – June '07**

Just returned from 2 days in Mapungubwe which, as usual, didn't disappoint. The tree-top boardwalk was particularly productive with all of the "usual" species in attendance - good sightings of Meyer's Parrot, Meves's Starlings (in abundance), a pair of Retz's Helmet-shrikes mobbing a calling African Barred Owlet (unassisted by playback and enduring for at least 15 minutes), Orange-Breasted and Grey-Headed Bush-Shrikes, Yellow-Bellied Greenbul, Bearded Woodpecker, and Saddle-Billed Stork in the Limpopo.

The sundowner decks provided cracking eye-level views of the pair of Verreaux's Eagles, as well as Peregrine Falcon, while the Western Section of the Park was good for large flocks of Grey-Backed Sparrowlarks (with one or two Chestnut-Backed as well) and a lone Senegal Coucal (on the river loop).

Other general birding included Sabota and Fawn-Coloured Larks, Larklike Bunting, Violet-Eared Waxbill, Freckled Nightjar (heard at dusk from the rocks around Leokwe Camp) and Double-Banded Sandgrouse.

Despite Mapungubwe apparently being fully booked, it remained noticeable how "under-utilised" the Park seemed - for example, the main camp at Leokwe has obviously been designed with a high degree of privacy in mind, while our party had the tree-top boardwalk and hide to ourselves for the first 2 hours after sunrise! Even in a so-called high season, the impact of the tourist still appears to be relatively minimal - it remains a fantastic place!

### ***Mark Harrington***

#### **Mapungubwe National Park – June '07**

Larklike Buntings were here in good numbers while another record of interest from Limpopo was a White-breasted Cuckooshrike at the tree top boardwalk in Mapungubwe National Park.



***Callan Cohen***

**Overwintering Redshank – West Coast National Park – 10 June 2007**

COMMON REDSHANK - a single bird was still present at Geelbek hide in the West Coast National Park late this afternoon.

***Doug Newman***

**Karoo National Park – May '07**

The first ever birding weekend at the Karoo National Park from 11 to 13 May was a big success with 28 birders attending. We had lovely weather and enjoyed the amazing mountain landscape of the Nuweveld Mountains. The park was teeming with bird life. The winning team tracked down 60 different species - from the huge Ostrich to the diminutive Rufous-eared Warbler. Thank you again to Maria Andela, Japie and Ralie Claassen and their fellow honorary rangers for all the hard work. It was a weekend to be remembered.

***Hans and Susan Linde, Wellington***

**Cape Vulture – Addo Elephant National Park – 7 May '07**

Guides at River Bend Lodge, a private lodge in the Addo Elephant National Park, had an awesome sighting of a Cape Vulture this morning. It was sitting on a cliff the whole morning. This is only the 2nd known sighting of a grounded Vulture in the Addo National Park.

Has anyone else had any sightings in the area?

***Sue Snyman***

**Franklin's Gull – Cape Point – Table Mountain National Park – 6 May '07**

An adult in Nuptial plumage Franklin's Gull put in a brief appearance at the Cape of Good Hope on Sunday 6 May 2007. It was in company with six swift Terns and momentarily settled on a

small offshore rock. It had a full black head with white eye-rings and a total rosy-pink flush on the underparts.

A large wave smashed against the rock, flushing the gull and terns which then flew off left and disappeared beyond the Cape of Good Hope point into False Bay. It might be worth while looking for this bird amongst local Hartlaub's Gull breeding colonies or at Strandfontien Sewage..

***Ian Sinclair***

#### **Wilderness National Park – May '07**

Three African Finfoots (one immature) that weren't at all shy were seen at Caiman's River Pass near Wilderness, Red-chested Flufftail at Wilderness and Knysna Woodpeckers seen at several forest spots throughout the Garden Route.

***Chris Lotz***

#### **Collared Flycatcher – Augrabies Falls National Park – 30 April '07**

Photographed on 30 April 2007 at the camp site in Augrabies Falls National Park in the Northern Cape. The photo can be viewed at <http://www.zestforbirds.co.za/collarfly2.html>. It was showing well for the three days we were there.

***Phillip Coetzee***

#### **Golden Gate National Park – April '07**

Golden Gate was great with particularly good sightings of Bearded Vulture at the vulture restaurant.

***Alan Calenborne***

#### **Egyptian Vulture – Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park – 30 March '07**

Two (!!!) adult Egyptian Vultures were reported from Kousand Water Hole at about 15h00 on 30 March and were then seen the following day (by an independent observer) at Lijersdraai.

Whilst it could certainly be considered a MEGA (and I will definitely go along with this as it is a bird that I still desperately need to see!!), if I look through recent years, there have been several records:

2005:

- an adult seen at Stevensford Lodge on the Limpopo in Botswana on 19 March
- an adult seen near Coffee Bay (in the old Transkei) on 1 November

2006

- a juvenile seen in the Magaliesberg on 22 January
- an adult seen near Idutywa (in the old Transkei) on 4 February
- an adult seen in the Tuli Block on 29 April and again on 18 June (separate observers)
- an adult seen on the Andoni Plains in Etosha on 8 September
- an adult reported near Thabazimbi on 30 October

***Trevor Hardaker***

#### **Augrabies National Park – April '07**

On a recent trip to Northern Cape we saw a Crested Barbet in the Augrabies camping site. Is this not way out of its area or have they been seen that far west?

***Brian van der Walt***

According to SABAP1 they were seen as far west as approximately the Richtersveld - along the border with Nam on the Orange River. Sightings were also reported from Kgalagadi TFP (BIRP records)

***Arnold van der Westhuizen***

I also find the <http://birds.sanbi.org/> website useful for these sorts of questions. You can see the Atlas summary for the Crested Barbet by clicking on the Bird Atlas Summaries link. It does seem to have been recorded as far west as the South Africa/Namibia border on the coast, but not really in the Kalahari area. You can also click the 'Site summaries' link for BIRP data. There is no Crested Barbet listed for Augrabies NP, which would it seems make your record quite interesting.

***Rudi von Staden***

Without checking I'm not absolutely sure, but I seem to remember that It was seen somewhere along the Orange River during SABAP 1. However, I saw one on a farm up on the Piketberg during that period (sent the record to Promerops at the time) - I could hardly believe my ears when I heard it, but then saw it too. As far as I know, that's the most south-westerly record for this species.

***James McFarlane***

I think that Crested Barbet has spread along the Orange River as Cape Francolin did. I haven't record it at Augrabies before but saw it along the OR at Hopetown. The riverine bushes are ideal habitat for them.

***Japie Claassen***

**West Coast National Park – 5 April '07**

Quick trip to Geelbek hide revealed, unfortunately, no more Redshank for me. Not the first time this bird has evaded me. Its been quite a few...

Did see Terek SP, always nice, and more Chestnut-banded Plovers than usual, also cool. The usuals, in nice breeding colours. The Grey Plovers look very very nice.

***Tiaan Lordan***

**Mountain Zebra National Park – April '07**

A friend of mine called to say they had had two bronze-winged coursers in Mountain Zebra Park last week. Way out of range!

***Chris Roche***

**Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park – March '07**

We saw good owls and the birds of prey were more than plentiful. Very disappointed to see Lanner falcons eating the bats at Nossob!

## ***Ginger Brown***

### **Mapungubwe National Park – February '07**

Highlights from a weekend at Mapungubwe included Pallid and Montagu's Harriers, Dusky Lark, Grey-hooded Kingfisher, Olive-tree Warbler, Southern White-faced Scops-Owl, Broad-billed Roller, Carmine Bee-eater, African Pygmy-Goose and African Barred Owllet, Freckled and Square-tailed Nightjar and the usual Limpopo suspects in the form of Meve's Starling, Meyer's Parrot and Tropical Boubou. We also had excellent views of flocks of Burchell's Sandgrouse coming in to drink on the Limpopo. Big birds included 8 (eight) species of Stork (7 along the Limpopo), Southern Ground Hornbill, Kori Bustard, a pair of Grey Crowned Crane, many Goliath Herons, two Martial Eagles and several sightings of Verreaux's Eagle. The Den Staat area produced some awesome birding with large flocks of Black-winged Pratincole and about 50 Caspian Plover (also seen from about 15m in farmlands adjacent to Mapungubwe), including many showing breeding plumage, along with a few Yellow Wagtail.

## ***Etienne Marais***

### **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park – February '07**

I have just returned from an 11day trip to the Northern Cape and Kalahari National Park.

Augrabies was cooler at 39C and Brubru, Red-backed Shrike, Spotted Flycatcher, Pririt Batis, Golden-tailed Woodpecker and Dusky Sunbirds were seen well. Many were in breeding mode with their orange epaulettes. A "honey-guide" was seen which looked like Sharpbilled as distinctive white outer-tail feathers were seen by myself when it flew away from us. Photographs unfortunately do not show the white tail feathers. This would be an out of range record but Black-chested Prinia could easily be the host.

The road to Kalahari National Park from Andrieskraal (near Askam) has been tarred for 16km, with 20 odd km resurfaced ready for tar and the last 20km is fairly good at 60km per hour. Roads inside the park were also fair but with the tyres now down to 1.6 bar from 2.6 giving at 40km was enjoyable. We spent the first night at Twee Revieren and the next at Nossop, next at Mata-Mata and the final night back at Twee Revieren. Two Giant Eagle-owls were seen outside the park and at least 5 more inside. White-faced Owls was seen at Nossop and at Mata-Mata. Pearl-breasted Owls and Spotted E Os were also plentiful but no Scops. A night drive at 10pm from Mata-Mata was the best I have been on. Two Porcupines, Cape Fox, Black-backed Jackal, African Wildcat, Lioness, Spotted Genet, Springhare and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar were seen. A night drive is definitely better than a sunset drive.

Many African Wild Cats were encountered on the road and also in the trees alongside the road during the day. We also saw a ginger cat near Mata-Mata skulking through the veld which we reported to the office and were advised that this male was extremely clever and had evaded them for some time but he was definitely on the wanted list! Please report any sightings to the officials. Secretary Birds were abundant as were Black-breasted Snake-eagles. No Brown Snake-eagles seen at all. A pair of Bateleur Eagles were seen hunting over the Nossob river. Some water holes were engulfed by Larklike Buntings in their thousands which confused the 2-3 Lanners at each water hole. In a half hour of watching no birds were caught! Some birds did not even leave their perches when the Falcons attacked, a sight to see. One Lanner caught a dove at a quiet water tank. Raptors were numerous and we saw all of them excepting Brown Snake-eagle and Martial Eagle! The Red-necked Falcons and the Gabar Goshawks were a delight to watch as they hunted and harassed the small birds in the shrubs. Black-cheeked Waxbills were only seen once at Mata-Mata which was disappointing, but many Red-backed and Lesser Grey-headed Shrikes were seen. Kalahari Robin, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Sociable Weavers, Grey-headed Sparrows, Cape Glossy Starlings and Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters were nearly pests at the picnic spots! Lilac-breasted Rollers were numerous on the dry trees but no Purple this time.

All the camps now have pools for those really hot days and the Springbok and Wildebeest have all calved and the herds are 500 plus feeding on the short grass in the river beds from the recent rain.

***Brian van der Walt***

**Brian's Birding and Ecotours ([info@brians-birding.co.za](mailto:info@brians-birding.co.za))**

### **Table Mountain National Park – 18/02/2007**

Here is a short trip report from the joint "Friends of Newlands Forest"- "Cape Bird Club"- "University of Cape Town" raptor walk on Sunday (in Newlands Forest, on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain)

The highlights were 9 species of raptor observed in less than 3 hours, and watching the antics of two Honey Buzzards (local rarities) for close to an hour while they flew above: twisting, turning and soaring to avoid being harassed by other small raptors.

After a short introduction at 7h00, we walked up towards the raptor view point at Newlands Forest (the same place now for four years running; I've afraid it's very difficult to describe exactly where it is as it involves a bit of bundu-bashing). The first raptor was a juvenile Black Sparrowhawk (scoped).

The first Honey Buzzard put in an appearance shortly after 8h00, soaring above the forest against the cliffs of Newlands Ravine - and being variously mobbed by Rock Kestrel and Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk. While we were watching this, a second Honey Buzzard cruised low over our heads from directly behind us - giving everyone close up views of the plumage. Peregrine Falcon and a pale phase Booted Eagle were also in the vicinity (as was a Jackal Buzzard). Some Steppe Buzzards put in an appearance near the end, with a Forest Buzzard at the very end in the car park at 10h00.

Other birds seen were Chaffinch (introduced), Sweet Waxbill and Cape Siskin. The previous week, I also heard Lemon Dove and Olive Woodpecker in Newlands Forest, at the raptor observation point.

Thanks to Patricia Fraser and Jane von Witt for organising the walk, Michael Mills for co-leading and to Jonathan Shire for his great photos of the Honey Buzzards.

If you'd like to go on our mailing list for future walks, please send me your email address.

[callan@birdingafrica.com](mailto:callan@birdingafrica.com)

***Callan Cohen***

### **West Coast – 18/02/2007**

We located a single Pacific Golden Plover at Geelbek today. We had views at about 60m, no photo's though.

**Gerard Streicher**

### **Mapungubwe – January '07**

The Greater Limpopo Birding Route had it's first event of the year. Sarah Venter of the Soutpansberg-Limpopo Birding Route organized and lead this hugely enjoyable and successful event. The other participants in the count were Sven Carlsson-Smith, Lyn Carlsson-Smith, Anne Ayre, Linda Lutz, Charles Marais, Walter Naser and Ben de Boer.

### Friday 26 January 2007

Members of the group met at Mapungubwe's Leokwe Camp. At 19:00 we had a briefing session and discussion about how we were going to co-ordinate the days ahead. We then had dinner and an early night.

### Saturday 27 January 2007

The participants stayed together in one group and traveled in separate vehicles from point to point. There were four stops in the Park where the participants had access to the banks of the river. We walked down to the banks and scanned the water's edge for water birds, while Meyer's Parrots and Meve's Starlings called overhead. A birding highlight for Mapungubwe was, a still unidentified, 'red-billed' stint-like bird. Other than the water birds, we also saw Dusky Lark, Retz's Helmet Shrike, Rock Kestrel, Little Sparrowhawk and Verreaux's Eagle.

[See Kruger Sightings for details of birds seen in the Limpopo area of Kruger](#)

Anyone interested can get the full list from me.

Special thanks to Sarah Venter, Mapungubwe National Park, Coleen Mullen (Wilderness Safaris – Pafuri Camp), Chris Roche (Wilderness Safaris)

This event is being planned again for next year and anyone interested in participating, please contact me early, as there are only 8 places available.

### ***Ben de Boer***

#### **West Coast – 31/01/2007**

COMMON REDSHANK - 2 birds seen from the new hide at Geelbek yesterday.

### ***Trevor Hardaker***

#### **West Coast – January '07**

The Redshank showed well on the incoming tide in the afternoon at the old Geelbek hide. Chestnut Banded Plovers were at both Geelbek and Seeberg Hides.

### ***John Carter***

#### **West Coast – January '07**

Had the most beautiful views of Common Redshank at Geelbek this afternoon ... It was as if it was posing for us to take the pics ...

### ***Arnold Van der Westhuizen***

#### **West Coast – January '07**

There was a Common Redshank (Rooipootruiter) at the old main Geelbek hide, today 9 Jan. The bird initially allowed excellent views about 10m in front of the hide, but soon flew away to feed further out along the shoreline on the receding tide.

### **Tertius Gous**

#### **Golden Gate Highlands National Park – January '07**

I have just spent a few days at Golden Gate with the family and spent quite a bit of time birding around the chalets. I found two of the commoner species quite confusing. Firstly the thrush that frequented the chalet appeared from a distance to have a greyish vent. However on zooming in on one of my photos the vent feathers were white with grey centres. The throat was however darker than those of the Olive Thrushes birds in my garden in Pinetown. Are these Olive or Karoo Thrushes?

On the slopes below the main sandstone cliffs I had good close up views of a Prinia which at first I ID'd as a Karoo Prinia as it had extensive thick streaking to its throat and breast. It however had a pale eye and not a dark eye as illustrated in Sasol. The text however makes no mention of the eye colour but it is highlighted on the plates. Are these Drakensberg or Karoo Prinias?

Other interesting birds seen/heard were Long-billed Pipit, Cape Eagle-Owl, immature African Harrier-Hawk raiding African Black Swifts nests, African Quailfinch and a possible Yellow-breasted Pipit. I found an immature Pipit in the vicinity of the Basutu village which I thought was an African Pipit (mainly due to the habitat and the extensive markings to the breast and upper parts) but which had a pinkish lower mandible. Does anyone have a photo of an immature Mountain Pipit?

***Garth Aiston***