

Recent Sightings

Other National Parks

December 2010
26th

- The **AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** is still present this morning in the restricted sanctuary area north of Olifantsbos in the Cape Point section of the Table Mountain National Park.



American Golden Plover near Olifantsbos
© Peter Ryan

Limpopo Province has not missed out on the action either producing a **PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** at the Den Staat Wetlands near Mapungubwe National Park earlier today with a **YELLOW WAGTAIL** as supporting cast.

With respect to the above, I have received the following note from the observer which may be of some use to those of you wanting to chase this bird:

As you no doubt know this was once a working fish farm and real bird haven, but was subject to a land claim and is now 'run' by the community

and two families specifically. They still allow birders onto the property though, but for a fee. We had to pay R100 per person which was quite harsh, but the overall birding here is still very good although the tracks around the dams are not as good as they once were...In the wet season, would need a 4X4 to access all areas.

Directions:

Pass Mapungubwe National Park turnoff heading towards Pongdrif

Take the Den Staat turnoff to the right.

Travel approx 7kms down this road and take the signposted Den Staat farm sign turnoff again.

Travel past the first set of dams (pretty good birding here) and follow the main-looking road towards the homestead.

Eventually you will see a sign saying 'Compound' off to the right.

Just before this take the small track to the left just after a bridge.

Follow this track around, initially passing some newly worked fields, on your right towards what looks like a small koppie ahead of you will an old fort on it.

Basically at the koppie, take a left turn and keep right.

Travel a short distance and you will see a nice open stretch of shallow water on your right and a plethora of birds...One cannot go much further by car here anyway as the road is washed away a short distance along here. The plover was feeding on the far side so a scope is a good idea.

Best to try arrange access with Sol Simata who generally cruises around in a beaten up white Ford Bantam bakkie. He approached us while birding off another track and had to part with some rands and all was well. For the overall birding experience it was still worth it. His mobile is apparently 071 134 7534.

16th

Still in the province, the PECTORAL SANDPIPER at Woodbourne Pan in Knysna has continued to show well every day this week and was still entertaining twitchers earlier today.

13th

Staying on the west coast, the West Coast National Park still had both BLACK-HEADED CANARIES and LARK-LIKE BUNTINGS on view yesterday as well, both arid zone species that have moved into the area.

Moving across to the Garden Route, the PECTORAL SANDPIPER at Woodbourne Pan in Knysna showed well throughout the weekend and the latest photos confirm that it is definitely that species (and not something more esoteric!).

Also in the area, the male RED-BACKED SHRIKE reported a few weeks ago from near the Rondevlei hide in the Wilderness National Park was still present yesterday as well whilst a BLACK-CHESTED SNAKE EAGLE was noted flying over Langvlei Dunes in Wilderness on Wednesday. It would also seem that the WHITE-FRONTED BEE-EATER noted recently at Matjesvlei near Calitzdorp is still in the area and was reported again on the weekend.

Karoo NP

Also of interest was a female RED-BACKED SHRIKE reported from riverine vegetation near to the Klipspringer Pass in the Karoo National Park on Friday.

For those Western Cape listers in the Great Karoo, Andrew Stainthorpe has just reported the presence of a female RED-BACKED SHRIKE in riverine Acacia thickets close to the Klipspringer Pass in the Karoo National Park today. This can be a particularly tough species to connect with in the province, but we do seem to be having a bit of an influx this season.

November 2010

Garden Route – Woodbourne Pan, Knysna – 30th

Boy, how I so much enjoy sending these alerts out, especially for the megas...!

Anne Brash has just been in touch to let me know that she located a LESSER YELLOWLEGS at Woodbourne Pan in Knysna late this afternoon! She was also fortunate at the time in that Charlie Ratcliffe was also there and was able to get a few record shots of the bird whilst 2 experienced Dutch birders were also visiting the site and were able to confirm the identification on site.

To the best of my knowledge, this is only the 6th record of this species in Southern Africa. The first record was from Harare in Zimbabwe in December 1979. This was followed by 2 consecutive records at the Berg River estuary in Veldrif, the first in August 1983 and the second in December 1999. The 4th record came from the Sappi wetlands at Stanger in December 2008 and the last record was at Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana in April 2009. So, well done to Anne on this exceptional find!!

I am sure there is going to be a LOT of interest in chasing this one, so please, if there are people out there that do connect with this bird again, please let me know as soon as possible, so that I can post updates on it here for everyone else that may be interested.

Here are a couple of Charlie Ratcliffe's photos of this mega taken this afternoon:





Mapungubwe NP – Den Staat Wetlands – 29th

Martin Benadie has just called in to let me know that they have located a PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER at Den Staat wetlands in Limpopo Province this morning. He has apparently photographed the bird and will send photos and further directions through to me later which I will hopefully be able to include in the report later this evening.

Garden Route NP – 29th

On the Garden Route, the pair of VERREAUX'S EAGLE OWLS along with their youngster remain reliably on view in the Hunter's Home area of Knysna and were still showing well on the weekend for provincial listers wanting to add this tough species to their Western Cape lists.



Verreaux's Eagle Owls in Knysna
© Trevor Hardaker

Staying in the general area, another exciting find late yesterday afternoon was 2 LITTLE BEE-EATERS at Langvele in Wildernis about 2km north-west of the Malachite Kingfisher hide. This is

certainly the first record for the province since the inception of SABAP2 and is a highly sought after species for most keen provincial twitchers.

Mapungubwe MP 28th

A slightly delayed report (28 November 2010) has also been received of 8 CASPIAN PLOVERS close to the bird hide at Mapungubwe National Park.

Kgalagadi TfP

In the Northern Cape, there was some excitement late last week when a TREE PIPIT was discovered walking around in one of the staff gardens in Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. This is way out of range and surely represents the first record for the province.



Tree Pipit at Nossob
© Madel Wilkens

Addo – 26th

In the Eastern Cape, a TEMMINCK'S COURSER was photographed on Bird Island in Algoa Bay yesterday.

Garden Route NP – Rondevlei - 21st

Also, Alan Collett has let me know that he photographed a male RED- BACKED SHRIKE earlier today near the turn-off to the SAN Parks offices at Rondevlei in Wilderness. He has given co-ordinates for where the bird was as 33 59 46.1 S 22 43 08.1E. This is a very good bird for the Western Cape and those in the area should certainly consider chasing it for their provincial lists. Staying on the Garden Route, a PECTORAL SANDPIPER was located at Woodbourne Pan in Knysna on Saturday whilst a RED-BACKED SHRIKE was found on Sunday near the turn-off to the SAN Parks offices at Rondevlei in Wilderness.



Pectoral Sandpiper at Woodbourne Pan
© Anne Brash



Red-backed Shrike in Wilderness
© Alan Collett

West Coast NP

Up on the west coast, the West Coast National Park seemed to be the place to be on the weekend (13th/14th). Along with good numbers of BLACK-HEADED CANARIES (of both forms) at various sites in the park, there also seems to have been a major influx of LARK-LIKE BUNTINGS into the park with birds present at several places yesterday in good numbers. Elsewhere in the park, at least 2 LESSER SAND PLOVERS continued to perform at the old salt marsh hide to the south of Geelbek Manor House throughout the weekend whilst the BLACK TERN was also still on view at Seeberg hide yesterday. Also new to the list of recent west coast rarities was the discovery yesterday of a COMMON REDSHANK at the main Geelbek hide which was feeding just off to the right



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



Lesser Sand Plover at Geelbek
© Trevor Hardaker



Black Tern (at 100 miles away!) at Seeberg (bird on right)
© Trevor Hardaker



Common Redshank at Geelbek
© Trevor Hardaker

West Coast NP 10th

Niall Perrins has just called in to let me know that he has found a BLACK TERN at Seeberg hide in the West Coast National Park this morning. This can be a particularly tough bird to connect with in the province, although one or two of them do turn up every year somewhere on the west coast.

He has also noted that there are now at least 3 LESSER SAND PLOVERS in non-breeding plumage plus the breeding plumaged bird at the old salt marsh hide just south of the Geelbek Manor House in the park as well.

11th

On the west coast, the best news yesterday morning was of a **BLACK TERN** at the Seeberg bird hide in the West Coast National Park whilst the **LESSER SAND PLOVERS** at the salt marsh hide just south of the Geelbek Manor House were still showing well this morning too. Elsewhere in the province, yesterday also delivered several flocks of **BLACK-HEADED CANARIES** inland of the George – Uniondale road with the largest flock numbering about 30 individuals.



Lesser Sand Plover at Geelbek



Black Tern at Seeberg

© Niall Perrins

9th

Moving up on to the west coast, BLACK-HEADED CANARIES are still regularly being reported with recent sightings from the Darling district as well as at several different sites in the West Coast National Park. In the West Coast National Park, the recent news of the LESSER SAND PLOVERS at Geelbek has also attracted some attention with the birds still present earlier today. Latest information shows that there are at least 2 individuals in non-breeding (winter) plumage which means that there is a minimum of 3 birds present there. Just to clarify, these birds are not seen at any of the two newer hides there that you reach via boardwalks, but are visible from the old semi-sunken hide (the first one that you reach) at the salt marsh which lies to the south of the Geelbek Manor House and is reached via a 1km walk through the veld to get there.



Lesser Sand Plover at Geelbek

© Niall Perrins

Historic info relating to current sightings

Interestingly, the first ever Greater Frigatebird recorded in Southern Africa was a dead bird found in Grabouw in the Western Cape in 1907. Additional records that I am able to find for the province include a bird in False Bay in January 1984, another at Bot River Lagoon in January 1989, **one at**

Nature's Valley in November 1995 a bird in Hermanus in February 2002, one at Knysna Lagoon in November 2002 and, lastly, one at Laaiplek in Veldrif in April 2008. I would love to hear if anyone knows of any other records for the province

5th

And now, another one for the Western Capers...

Barrie Rose has just called in to report that there were 2 **LESSER SAND PLOVERS** (aka Mongolian Plovers) at the Salt Marsh hide just south of the Geelbek Manor House in the West Coast National Park late this afternoon. One of the birds is in non-breeding (winter) plumage whilst the second individual is still in breeding (summer) plumage. These birds do turn up in this area from time to time, but there are still a number of locals who need this species for their provincial lists (or even their life lists).



Lesser Sand Plovers at Geelbek salt marsh hide
Non-breeding plumaged bird on left and breeding plumaged bird on right
© Barrie Rose

Garden Route NP 1st

Elsewhere in the province, the Garden Route area has not held back either with the **WAILING CISTICOLAS** still showing well in a patch of grassland in between cultivated fields west of George on Friday whilst further individuals were located at Sparrebosch in Knysna later that same day. Also of interest on Friday in Knysna were 2 **WHITE-FACED DUCKS** actively calling over the Hunter's Home area in Knysna whilst, in the same area, at least one **VERREAUX'S EAGLE OWL** was still showing well as well. The Diepwalle State Forest just north-east of Knysna also produced a single **CROWNED HORNBILL** close to the turn-off to the "Big Tree" on Saturday, possibly the same individual reported from near the main office complex earlier in the week.



Wailing Cisticola west of George
© Trevor Hardaker



Verreaux's Eagle Owl in Knysna
© Trevor Hardaker

October 2010

Garden Route NP (Knysna) – 28th Oct

Elsewhere in the province, the records have also been coming in with the most exciting being a CROWNED HORNBILL reported from Diepwalle State Forest just north-east of Knysna yesterday. This was backed up by 2 LONG-CRESTED EAGLES at the same site whilst a pair of WHITE-FACED DUCKS were present on a rather flooded Knysna Golf Course on Tuesday.

West Coast NP - 28th Oct

On the west coast, the irruption of arid-zone species continues with BLACK-HEADED CANARIES reported during the week from the West Coast National Park

Garden Route (Knysna) – 20/10

Starting in the Western Cape, the only news received this week so far is that the pair of VERREAUX'S EAGLE OWLS reported from Knysna a couple of weeks ago were still showing well late yesterday and had a juvenile with them which obviously means that they have bred in the area

!Ai-Ais!Richtersveld

In Namibia, a JACOBIN CUCKOO was reported from the camp area at Ai Ais on the weekend, somewhat further south than its known range in the country.

West Coast NP – 16th/17th

Staying with the dryland birds, the BLACK-HEADED CANARIES continued to show well at a number of sites over the course of the weekend including along the R45 between Hopefield and Rust, at Mauritz Bay and in the West Coast National Park. The latter two sites held both the nominate black-headed form as well as the more colourfully patterned "Damara" form, surely a countable split in the not too distant future and definitely worth chasing down if you

West Coast NP

BLACK-HEADED CANARIES continues unabated with reports coming in this week of birds both south and west of their normal range. In the Uniondale area, flocks of between 40 and 50 birds have been reported whilst a group of 20 individuals was reported between Mossel Bay and

Herbetsdale yesterday as well. The west coast also continues to support good numbers with birds reported from Mauritz Bay, the West Coast National Park and at the entrance of Koeberg Nature Reserve this week....

Alright, so enough of the dreaming and on to some recent local news. Starting in the Western Cape, the eruption of BLACK-HEADED CANARIES on to the west coast continues with individuals of both races being reported from the West Coast National Park and Mauritz Bay this week. Added to this, a single LUDWIG'S BUSTARD was also present near the Seeberg View Point in the WCNP on Tuesday.

Knysna (Garden Route NP)

Moving across on the eastern side of the province at Knysna, a pair of VERREAUX'S EAGLE OWLS have been showing well over the last few days in a patch of bush along a streamline that comes down from the Sparrebosch Golf Estate.

Addo Elephant NP

Moving into the Eastern Cape, a somewhat out of range COMMON SCIMITARBILL has been reported recently from Gorah Elephant Camp in the Addo National Park and would seem to be a particularly good record for the province

September 2010 **West Coast NP**

The influx of BLACK-HEADED CANARIES continues with a number of birds reported from the West Coast National Park (both Black-headed and Damara forms) on the weekend (18th and 19th).

The salt marsh hide at Geelbek in the West Coast National Park also turned up 2 LESSER SAND PLOVERS on Friday (17th).



"Damara" Canary in the West Coast National Park
© Per Holmen

On Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay, a single AUSTRALIAN GANNET remains on view in the Cape Gannet colony and was showing well until at least Tuesday 14th.



Australian Gannet on Malgas Island
© Patrick Cardwell

Namaqua and Tankwa Karoo NP

Day 5 was spent in the Namaqua Nat Park where we had good views of Sth Black Korhaan, Large-billed & Cape Clapper Lark, Booted Eagle and Yellow Bishop. A few single flowers of interest had our attention for most of the time. Birding around Kamieskroon inter alia produced Capped Wheatear, a few Black Eagles, Ground Woodpecker, White-necked Raven, Afr Harrier-Hawk and White-throated Canary.

The next morning we went down to the Tanqua plains and birding in the Tanqua was good. On top of Gannaga Pass Grey-winged Francolin and Cape Clapper Lark were performing. On the plains we had many Ludwig's Bustards, Black-headed Canary, and 2 Lanner Falcons on an old windmill, Larklike Bunting and Dusky Sunbird. At the trees near the office the Lesser Honeyguide didn't let us down. This one is now in the same tree for about 5 years. The weather wasn't great and moving towards Oudebaaskraal we had a soaring Martial Eagle, Tractrac Chat and Karoo Korhaan. We turned off to Oudebaaskraal on the eastern road and were looking for Burchell's Coursers. We spotted 6 of them about 4 km of the main road and they gave us excellent views. The Oudebaaskraal Dam has lots of water birds like Black-necked Grebe, Maccoa Duck and a variety of other ducks. Proceeding through the park gave sightings of some game, good numbers of Ludwig's Bustards, Karoo Lark, Redcapped Lark and Sth Pale Chanting Goshawk.

The last morning we were awoken by rain in the Tanqua, a rare sighting. Most birds were hiding and close to the junction with the R355 road we had a puncture and 2 Karoo Korhaans at the same spot. Down to Ceres, the dam at Inverdoorn hosted Pied Avocet, Greater Flamingoes, Afr Fish Eagle and a few thousand Redknobbed Coot. At the picnic spot in Karoopoort a Cinnamon-breasted Warbler was willing to show itself outside in the wind and drizzle.

Japie Claassen

In the Western Cape, a LESSER HONEYGUIDE was reported from the Tanqua Karoo National Park on Sunday, whilst the Garden Route area turned up a LONG-CRESTED EAGLE alongside the N2 between George and the airport earlier today and a WAILING CISTICOLA about 20km west of George over the last few days.



August 2010

Langebaan – near West Coast

Also of interest in the province on Saturday was a CAPE GLOSSY STARLING in the gardens of the Langebaan Fossil Park. This almost certainly refers to the same individual reported from Langebaan itself on 15 July 2010

Richtersveld

In the Northern Cape, a report has been received from earlier in the month of a FIERY-NECKED NIGHTJAR recorded at Sendlingsdrift in the Richtersveld. Most distribution maps currently do not show this species as occurring in the area although this may be more as a result of lack of birding coverage of the area rather than the species being out of range. There is currently one record in this general area on the SABAP2 database as well.

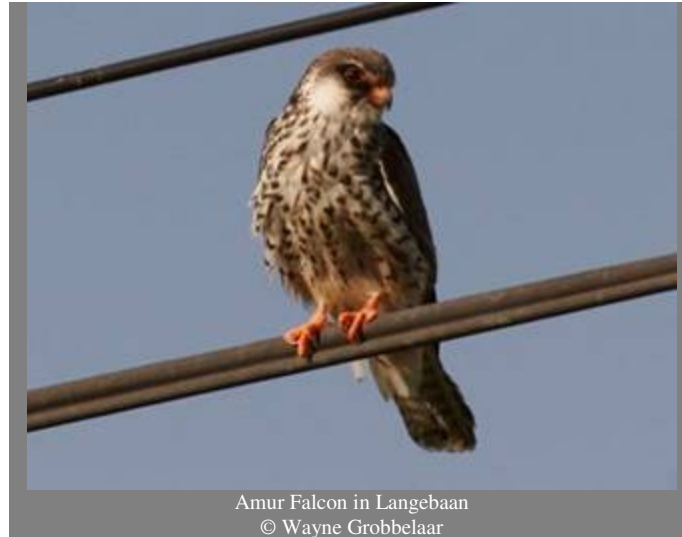
Golden Gate Highlands - 21st – 22nd

In the Free State, an OLIVE WOODPECKER was reported from just east of Clarens on the border of the Golden Gate National Park over the weekend which would appear to be just a little north-west of its more usual distribution.



Langebaan – near West Coast NP

Friday 13th turned up a surprise in the form of a female AMUR FALCON in Langebaan.



Amur Falcon in Langebaan
© Wayne Grobbelaar

Mountain Zebra

Also of interest in the province, a single male VIOLET-BACKED STARLING was reported from the Mountain Zebra National Park on the loop road near the entrance a few days ago.

July 2010 – Garden Route NP 20th

Firstly, some more on the AFRICAN OPENBILLS...

In the Western Cape, a single bird was reported near the Diep River at Woodville East near Sedgefield on Tuesday.

A TEREK SANDPIPER on the Goukamma River estuary near Sedgefield on Thursday – 22nd.

West Coast NP – 21 July 2010

in the Western Cape, a single AUSTRALIAN GANNET was still present on Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay on Wednesday.

Thu 7/15/2010 – Addo

Moving into the Eastern Cape, there was some excitement on Bird Island in Algoa Bay yesterday when both a BRIDLED TERN (assumed to be the same individual that regularly visits Cape Recife) and a SOOTY TERN were present on the island. I can't imagine that there are too many people (if any!) who can say that they have seen both vagrant brown backed terns together anywhere in the Southern African subregion!

Thu 6/24/2010 – Garden Route – Wilderness Section

It would seem that the **AFRICAN OPENBILL** irruption has still not totally died out yet...

In the Western Cape, at least 7 birds were present at Swartvlei near Sedgefield on 8 June whilst 11 birds were reported from the causeway in Sedgefield the following day (presumably many of the same individuals). Vermont near Hermanus weighed in with at least 6 birds seen intermittently over a few days until 10 June

on the 12th of June, a single **CHESTNUT-BANDED PLOVER** was seen on the edge of Langvlei in Wilderness.

Also of interest in the province, 2 **WHITE-FRONTED BEE-EATERS** spent some time in the early part of June around the Tsitsikamma Coastal Golf Estate, not far from the border with the Western Cape

Last week of May 2010 – Mokala and Marakele

We stayed our first night at the new gem of Sanparks, Mokala. Between the N12 and the entrance gate we had 2 Pygmy Falcons perching on the telephone wire.

We entered Mokala and on the way to the office we had a lovely bird party consisting of Common Fiscal (subsp *subcoronatus*), Cape Penduline Tit, Yellow Canary, Chestnutvented Titbabbler, Yellowbellied Eremomela, Blackchested Prinia, Goldenbreasted Bunting, Familiar Chat and Swallowtailed Bee-eater. The personnel at the office is excellent, helpful and knowledgeable. After downloaded all the luggage we drove further north into the park and picked up Helmeted Guineafowl, Sabota Lark and a Kimberley Pipit. During the night we heard Spotted Eagle Owl calling. The next morning on our way out we saw Cardinal Woodpecker, Eastern Clapper Lark, Pririt Batis, Fairy Flycatcher, Ashy Tit and Longbilled Pipit.

Just outside the park we had a male Shorttoed Rock Thrush.

...

The next morning we paid a visit to Marakele and started off with Orangebreasted Bush Shrike, Sth Whitecrowned Shrike and Redbilled Oxpeckers on giraffes. We first tackled the road up to the towers and along it we saw Jameson's Firefinch, Cape Vulture soaring overhead, a pair of Blackchested Snake Eagles and Greenspotted Dove. On top of the mountain we had lovely views of the Cape Vultures soaring low over our heads, a pair of Peregrine Falcons swooping through the sky and trying to get some Rock Martins, Longbilled Pipit, Lazy Cisticola, tame Buffstreaked & Mocking Chats, Cape Rock Thrush and Cape Bunting. Add the amazing panoramic views from here and it is a MUST visit place. Down hill we found a swooping Black Eagle, Barthroated Apalis and Sth Black Tit.

The open veld below the mountain gave us some Whitecrested Helmet Shrike, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Goldentailed Woodpecker, Browncrowned Tchagra and Burntnecked Eremomela.

Japie Claassen

Tue 2010/06/08 – Agulhas and Wilderness

a single **KORI BUSTARD** was present along the road from Baardskeedersbos about 5km before Elim on the weekend as well. This is almost surely one of the same individuals that were reported from the same general area a number of times last year. Also of interest in the province, a single **AFRICAN PALM SWIFT** was present earlier today over the Wilderness Resort Hotel in Wilderness.

Wed 2010/06/02 – Table Mountain NP (well almost)

For all keen Western Cape listers, Bruce Dyer has just called in to let me know that he is currently watching 2 **SWALLOW-TAILED BEE-EATERS** at Seaforth in Simon's Town. They are apparently hawking insects from some gum trees between the car park and sports field near the naval building there. This is an incredibly rare species in the province with only a small handful of previous records.

West Coast NP May 31, 2010

Starting in the Western Cape, news this afternoon from Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay was that there was still a single **AUSTRALIAN GANNET** present in the Cape Gannet colony there whilst a secondary attraction on the island today was an adult **ROSEATE TERN** in full breeding plumage.

Also of interest in the province yesterday were 2 **LUDWIG'S BUSTARDS** on Seeberg Hill in the West Coast National Park. This is known to be an irruptive species but is particularly uncommon this far south on the west coast. To the best of my knowledge, the last known irruption of this species that reached the park was about 8 years ago (where these birds were available at several sites on the west coast) and it has not been seen in the area since.



Wilderness NP May 24, 2010

Wilderness Mon 5/24/2010 9:30 PM

Wilderness NP April 19, 2010

And now for the rest of the news, what little of it there is...

In the Western Cape, a single **SAND MARTIN** was present at Rondevlei Nature Reserve yesterday along with two **HOTTENTOT TEALS** whilst the **GOLIATH HERON** was reported from the same site on Saturday. Also from the province, but slightly delayed in being reported (9 March 2010), two **LESSER STRIPED SWALLOWS** were reported from Rondevlei in Wildernis.

Wilderness NP April 19, 2010

a **EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR** was reported on Tuesday from a farm close to Rondevlei in the Wilderness National Park. This is an extremely uncommon bird in the province and is probably also just under-reported.

Friday April 9, 2010
Garden Route & Mountain Zebra NPs

In the Western Cape, the **EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER** remains on show at the mouth of the Bot River Lagoon whilst the **BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATERS** are also still present at Groenvlei near Sedgefield. Also of interest in the province was a **LONG-CRESTED EAGLE** reported from the Wolwerivier Road in the Wildernis area.

In the Eastern Cape, several **MELODIUS LARKS** have been reported displaying at the Mountain Zebra National Park.



West Coast National Park Mon 4/5/2010 9:37 PM

Starting in the Western Cape, the West Coast National Park produced only one noteworthy sighting on the entire Easter weekend, a **BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** at Geelbek on Saturday.

West Coast National Park Thu 4/1/2010 12:32 PM

The only new news of any note that I have received in the last couple of days is that there was an **AUSTRALIAN GANNET** present on Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay yesterday.

Friday 3/26/2010

Starting in the Western Cape, the main attractions remain at the West Coast National Park with the **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** at Seeberg taking pride of place. The bird was still on view today and was "backed up" during the course of the week by at least 2 **LESSER SAND PLOVERS** also at Seeberg.

Further east, the 4 **BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATERS** at Groenvlei near Sedgefield are also still on site and have had a steady flow of provincial tickers heading off that way to add these birds to their Western Cape lists.



Hudsonian Godwit at Seeberg
© Per Holmen



Lesser Sand Plovers at Seeberg
© Per Holmen

Mon 3/22/2010 9:33 PM West Coast:

In the Western Cape, the West Coast National Park was certainly a popular place on the weekend turning up good views of the **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** at Seeberg throughout the weekend. Other attractions included at least one **LESSER SAND PLOVER** at Seeberg as well as a **GREATER SAND PLOVER** at Geelbek.

Saturday 13th March 2010 West Coast NP

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Philip Coetzee has just called in (13h00) to say that they have relocated the godwit at Seeberg and are currently watching it.

LESSER SAND PLOVER: The single bird is also still present at Seeberg at the moment.

UPDATE

Saturday, 13 March 2010 at 18h45

The **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** showed well this afternoon at the Seeberg bird hide in the West Coast National Park. Getting the call at 13h00 from Philip Coetzee to inform me that the bird was present, I quickly sent out an alert and then Margaret and I jumped in the car and shot up there. Just in terms of adding some useless information to this report, this was in fact the first time that Margaret, my much better half for those of you that don't know, was chasing a bird for her Southern African list which was not actually a full lifer for her (having seen the species previously in Argentina), so it added an interesting perspective to the whole thing...

Previous observers had indicated a winter plumaged (non-breeding) bird, so I was quite surprised after about 20 minutes to locate a Hudsonian Godwit moulting into summer (breeding) plumage. Despite a fair bit of scanning, we were unable to locate a winter plumaged bird, but it might well imply that there are currently 2 birds present there!

Obviously, the best time to visit this hide is at high tide or on the pushing tide or dropping tide very close to when high tide is. One must also bear in mind that if the bird is not obviously present in front of the hide, the godwits and whimbrels often roost off to the right of the hide at high tide in the little bay which is hidden from view from the hide by a slightly raised piece of land.

Most people have been concentrating on the black underwing coverts as THE feature to see, but there are several other features worth looking for. In winter plumage, this species has a smooth grey back as opposed to the streaked back of a Bar-tailed Godwit. They also have obvious white wing bars on the upperwing and

a broad black band on the tail with a white rump, very reminiscent of a Black-tailed Godwit. Close observation will also reveal that they are ever so slightly smaller than the Bar-tailed Godwits. The bird we saw this afternoon also showed a lot of summer plumage and was easy to pick out from the others by the obvious barring on the belly and flanks.

I have included a couple of photos below that I took this afternoon to give you a better idea of what to look for. Unfortunately, the bird was rather distant and straight into the sun, so please excuse the quality of the photos, but at least they show some of the features. If one could get the right tide in the morning, it would give one great light for photos (assuming the bird is presenting itself!)



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