

# Ornithological Observations



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Ornithological Observations accepts papers containing faunistic information about birds. This includes descriptions of distribution, behaviour, breeding, foraging, food, movement, measurements, habitat and plumage. It will also consider for publication a variety of other interesting or relevant ornithological material: reports of projects and conferences, annotated checklists for a site or region, specialist bibliographies, and any other interesting or relevant material.

**Editor: Arnold van der Westhuizen**

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## BIRDS OCCURRING OR BREEDING AT ROBBERN ISLAND, SOUTH AFRICA, SINCE 2000

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### Abstract

Robben Island, Western Cape, is an Important Bird Area because it provides breeding habitat for several threatened marine and coastal species. The island's first comprehensive bird list was assembled in 2000, but since that time 21 new species have been recorded on the island and breeding has been confirmed for five species for the first time. This paper provides an updated list of all 164 species that have occurred on the island and notes on the status of the 129 species that have been seen since 1 January 2000.

### Keywords

Robben Island, World Heritage Site, avifauna, species checklist

### Introduction

Robben Island lies in Table Bay, approximately 11 km north of Cape Town and 7 km west of the nearest mainland at Bloubergstrand (de Villiers 1971; Brooke and Prins 1986). At 507 ha, it is the largest of the South African continental islands (Crawford et al. 1995). The island is relatively flat and low-lying, the highest point being 30.2 m above sea level (de Villiers 1971), and the interior of the island is primarily covered by a sandy soil, while much of the approximately

12 km of coastline consists of jagged and uneven slate, apart from a small sandy beach on the east coast.

Robben Island's proximity to Cape Town, resulting in a long history of human activity (de Villiers 1971; Brooke and Prins 1986), has led to the introduction of a number of alien species, such as European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* in the 1650s (Cooper and Brooke 1982), Feral Cats *Felis catus* by 1881 (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and several species of Australian flora during World War II (Brooke and Prins 1986). Stands of exotic trees and shrubs now dominate the island flora (e.g. Rooikrans *Acacia cyclops*), several abandoned quarries provide (either permanent or intermittent) standing water and a number of mammal, bird and reptile species have become established (Brooke and Prins 1986).

Robben Island became a museum in 1996 and was declared a cultural World Heritage Site in 1999 (Robben Island Museum 2006). The island is also an Important Bird Area (Barnes 1998), providing breeding habitat for several threatened marine and coastal species. In 2010, Robben Island was host to a globally important (fourth largest) breeding colony of the *Endangered* African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*, as well as significant numbers of Swift (Greater-crested) Tern *Sterna bergii*, Hartlaub's Gull *Larus hartlaubii*, African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini*, Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis* and the *Endangered* Bank Cormorant *P. neglectus* (Crawford et al. 1994; Crawford and Dyer 2000).

The island also supports a number of terrestrial and freshwater bird species. Crawford and Dyer (2000) provided a description of some of the island's more prominent avifauna and compiled a list of 143 bird species known to have occurred on the island. Participation by researchers on the island in the Birds In Reserves Project (BIRP, <http://birp.adu.org.za>) and more recently the Second Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP2, <http://sabap2.adu.org.za>) has led to a number of new breeding or occurrence records since 2000.



These additional records are reported here, along with an updated checklist of the island's avifauna.

### Methods

This paper recounts observations of bird species previously not documented to have occurred on or around or to have bred at Robben Island (33°48'S, 18°22'E), Western Cape, South Africa, according to the list published in Crawford and Dyer (2000). The records are either personal observations made by the authors or their colleagues working on the island between 1 January 2001 and 30 June 2011 or they are obtained from the records of the 34 BIRP cards submitted for the island between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2007, from the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted between 1 August 2007 and 31 January 2011 or from the published literature (e.g. Underhill et al. 2001; Leshoro et al. 2010). The records include birds seen overhead at the island or seabirds observed within the coastal waters around the island. The island's coastal waters have been defined by the extent of the SABAP2 pentad 3345\_1820, but most of the records pertaining to seabirds occurred within 3 km of the island. Species accounts are only given for the species that have been recorded on the island since 2000, with notes to indicate new species that have been observed or where the species' status at the island has changed from that given in Crawford and Dyer (2000). The species accounts and the checklist are sorted according to the Roberts number assigned to the species in Hockey et al. (2005). Taxonomic affiliations and species names are also based on Hockey et al. (2005), except that Yellow-billed Kite (*Milvus parasitus*) is treated as a separate species to Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), rather than a sub-species, following Wink and Sauer-Gürth (2000). References to "winter" or "summer" refer to the austral seasons.

### Species Accounts

Twenty-one additional bird species have been recorded at Robben Island since Crawford and Dyer (2000), taking the total number of species known to have occurred there to 164 (Table 1). Of these, 129 have been observed on the island since 2000. In total, there are

confirmed breeding records for 55 species from one time or another, five of which were reported for the first time since 2000 (Table 1).

## STRUTHIONIFORMES

### Struthionidae

#### Common Ostrich (1) *Struthio camelus*

Ostrich were introduced to Robben Island in March 1968 (Brooke and Prins 1986) and have bred successfully. Crawford and Dyer (2000) reported that they were common throughout the grassland areas of the island and, although a full census was never conducted, there were at least 30 on the island in 2002 (Robben Island Earthwatch Project, unpubl. data). A series of translocations (to the mainland) and fatalities in the early 2000s reduced the population to five males by April 2004 and then to one male by June 2010. The last sighting of Ostrich was made (by BMD) on 26 August 2010 and the final individual was removed from the island by the managing authority on 28 September of that year.

## CICONIIFORMES

### Spheniscidae

#### African Penguin (3) *Spheniscus demersus*

Robben Island was impacted by the *Treasure* oil spill in 2000, but the majority of the penguins affected were either successfully de-oiled by the Southern African Foundation of the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) or returned to the island after being translocated to the Eastern Cape (Crawford et al. 2000). Subsequently, the island's population continued to recover, climbing from c. 5,700 pairs in 2000 to a peak at c. 8,500 breeding pairs in 2004 (Underhill et al. 2006). Since the mid-2000s, the population has decreased markedly at most colonies in the Western Cape and only c. 2,700 pairs were counted at Robben Island in 2010 (Crawford et al. 2011). African Penguins were reclassified as *Endangered* in 2009 (IUCN 2010) and Robben Island remains an important breeding locality for this species. The species is one of only two to have been recorded on all 34 BIRP cards and all 76 SABAP2 cards checked for this paper.



### Podicipedidae

#### Little Grebe (8) *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Little Grebe was not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and prior to August 2008 only six records occurred from the two quarries with permanent standing water. A pair was recorded in Van Riebeeck's quarry on 16 July 2002 (P Whittington, pers. comm.) and individual birds were recorded on 19 July 2002, 14 July 2004 (both BMD), twice in August and once in September 2005. These were probably birds travelling to and from the adjacent mainland. Two adults were sighted simultaneously in Van Riebeeck's quarry at the south of the island again on 17 September 2008 and on 07 February 2009 the species was confirmed to breed on the island when two adults and two chicks were spotted together (RBS). Since September 2008, Little Grebe has been encountered frequently and has been recorded on 30 SABAP2 cards.

### Diomedeidae

#### Shy Albatross (11) *Thalassarche cauta*

A rare visitor to Table Bay in winter and not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000). Shy Albatross was recorded on two of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011, once in June 2008 and once in August 2009 and at least four times in *ad hoc* observations up to the end of July 2011. Two of these sightings were made from the Robben Island ferry and were of juvenile birds at close range (RBS).

#### Black-browed Albatross (12) *Thalassarche melanophris*

Black-browed Albatross are uncommon visitors to Table Bay in winter and have been reported on two of the 34 BIRP cards (in August 2005 and in May 2006) and eight times on SABAP2 cards between May 2008 and August 2009. Most sightings are made from the Robben Island ferry en route to or from the island.

### Procellariidae

#### Southern Giant-petrel (17) *Macronectes giganteus*

Southern Giant-petrel was not included in the species list for the island by Crawford and Dyer (2000), probably because of the difficulty of a positive identification at sea. Since 2000, Southern Giant-petrel has been recorded once in the BIRP database, in 2005, and three times on SABAP2 cards, all in the winter of 2009. The recent observations were made from the ferry en route to or from the island. In 2005, one individual was found wrecked on the island (by TML) and sent to SANCCOB to be rehabilitated.

#### Great-winged Petrel (23) *Pterodroma macroptera*

Considered to be a common visitor to South African water between September and May (Hockey et al. 2005), but not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000). One individual was sighted (by RBS) close to shore (flying over the breaking waves) on the west coast of the island on 14 July 2008. This is thought to be the only record for the species around the island, but it may be overlooked due to its similarity with several other Procellariidae species.

#### White-chinned Petrel (32) *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

The White-chinned Petrel is the most abundant petrel in South African waters (Hockey et al. 2005) and was considered as a common winter visitor to the waters around Robben Island by Crawford and Dyer (2000). The species was not recorded on the 34 BIRP cards considered but was recorded three times on the SABAP2 cards, all between May and August 2008, and once in other *ad hoc* records. White-chinned Petrels can occasionally be seen close to the north-east shore of the island in strong winds.

#### Great Shearwater (35) *Puffinus gravis*

This species is considered to be relatively common in Western Cape waters for most of the year except mid-winter, but is seldom close inshore (Hockey et al. 2005). Probably for this reason, it was not recorded around Robben Island prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000). One individual was observed from the Robben Island ferry on



1 April 2011 (RBS) and the species should probably be considered a vagrant to the island's coastal waters.

### **Sooty Shearwater (37) *Puffinus griseus***

This species is probably the most abundant seabird in South African waters in winter (Hockey et al. 2005) and small flocks can sometimes be seen resting in Table Bay or foraging to the north of the island in strong winds. Crawford and Dyer (2000) considered the species to be a common winter visitor and Sooty Shearwaters have been recorded at least once in six of the 12 years since 2000 (including 2011). The species was recorded on 6% of the BIRP cards and 8% of the SABAP2 cards checked.

### **Pelecanidae**

#### **Great White Pelican (49) *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

Crawford and Dyer (2000) recorded Great White Pelicans as extinct at Robben Island, having last bred there in the 1600s. Despite the proximity of a breeding colony at Dassen Island and large aggregations of non-breeding pelicans at Rietvlei (c. 10 km east), pelicans have only been sighted at Robben Island four times since 2000. On 30 March 2002, a lone pelican was spotted flying over the island (LGU), on 16 October 2002 17 individuals were seen flying over the island (BMD) and in December 2007 and February 2008 pelicans were observed on the island (BMD and TML). Pelicans are known to eat the chicks of other seabirds at west coast colonies (Mwema et al. 2010) and an incidental record submitted to SABAP2 notes that two pelicans were observed harassing chicks in the Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* colony on 11 February 2008.

### **Sulidae**

#### **Cape Gannet (53) *Morus capensis***

The nearest Cape Gannet breeding colony to Robben Island is Malgas Island, Saldhana Bay (Hockey et al. 2005). Gannets regularly forage in Table Bay and can be seen flying over the near-shore waters around Robben Island relatively often in winter. Occasionally, injured or exhausted birds are found at Robben Island and are sent

to SANCCOB for rehabilitation. The species was recorded on 32% of the BIRP cards and 43% of the SABAP2 cards submitted during the study period.

### **Phalacrocoracidae**

#### **White-breasted Cormorant (55) *Phalacrocorax lucidus***

The White-breasted Cormorant is a fairly common resident on the island and an irregular breeder. They are most commonly encountered around the harbour area or on the sandy beach just south of the harbour. Two breeding records exist one, in 1959 and the other in December 2004 when two nests were observed (by BMD) on a temporary artificial platform erected at the harbour during maintenance work. The species was recorded on 93% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted for the island.

#### **Cape Cormorant (56) *Phalacrocorax capensis***

Cape Cormorants are present on the island all year and can be seen all around the coastline. Prior to 2000, the Cape Cormorant was an irregular breeder at Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), but the colony has grown in size in recent years and breeding now occurs annually on the harbour walls. In 2010, c. 1900 breeding pairs were counted (DEA, unpubl. data).

#### **Bank Cormorant (57) *Phalacrocorax neglectus***

Bank Cormorants breed on the harbour walls at Robben Island and can be seen all year on the east coast of the island. The *Treasure* oil spill reduced the island's population from c. 120 to c. 70 pairs (Crawford et al. 2008). Numbers have recovered and the population is now relatively stable with c. 130 pairs counted in 2009 (Sherley 2010). The Bank Cormorant is currently *Endangered*, with most of the c. 3 600 pairs of the global population breeding at two sites in Namibia (Crawford et al. 2008). Recent declines at most Western Cape colonies mean that in the late 2000s Robben Island was the only colony of over 100 pairs in South Africa (DEA, unpubl. data).



### **Reed Cormorant (58) *Phalacrocorax africanus***

Prior to 2000, Reed Cormorants were uncommon visitors to Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and had bred once in a Eucalyptus plantation at the north of the island (BMD, pers. obs.). A reduction in the freshwater habitat on the island since 2000 has seen the species become scarce at Robben Island in recent years. Reed cormorants were recorded on BIRP cards eight times between 2000 and 2006 but have been largely absent since, apart from two recent sightings recorded on SABAP2 cards in October and November 2010.

### **Crowned Cormorant (59) *Phalacrocorax coronatus***

Crowned Cormorants are present all year at Robben Island and can be seen all around the coastline. The species was recorded on 99% of the SABAP2 cards submitted from Robben Island by 31 January 2011. Small breeding clusters form in alien vegetation and on the remains of ship wrecks during summer.

### **Anhingidae**

#### **African Darter (60) *Anhinga rufa***

Rare visitors to the freshwater-filled quarries of the island, darters have been sighted on at least seven occasions since 2000. Three records exist for July (2002 and 2004), three from August (2000, 2002, 2004) and one from December (2005). Sightings have usually been of individual birds at the Van Riebeeck's quarry, on the Faure Jetty or of birds flying over the island, but in August 2004, two adults and one juvenile were seen together on the island, possibly indicating breeding.

### **Ardeidae**

#### **Grey Heron (62) *Ardea cinerea***

This species had bred on the island in the past and was considered an irregular visitor to the island. Grey Heron was recorded on 12% of the 34 BIRP card submitted since 2000 and 12% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. Most records are from the freshwater-filled quarries around the island. One bird was observed building a nest on 10 October 2010 (BMD). The nest was not seen

on the following visit in November, making this the first attempted breeding record on the island in 25 years (Crawford and Dyer 2000).

#### **Black-headed Heron (63) *Ardea melanocephala***

Crawford and Dyer (2000) described Black-headed Heron as an uncommon visitor to the island and the species was only recorded once between 2000 and July 2007 (in July 2006 by BMD). However, Black-headed Herons were recorded in the BIRP records twice in 2007 and have been recorded on 32% (24) of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted between August 2007 and January 2011. This heron is generally encountered foraging in the grassland on the west of the island. The diet includes small reptiles, rodents and invertebrates (Hockey et al. 2005), many of which have probably become more common on the island since Feral Cat eradication programmes started in 2005 (de Villiers et al. 2010). If this species is visiting the island more frequently, it could be in response to increased prey availability.

#### **Great Egret (66) *Egretta alba***

A rarity in the Western Cape, Great Egret has only been observed once on the island (LGU) on 3 February 2002, feeding in shallow water in the sheltered bay just west of Alpha 1.

#### **Little Egret (67) *Egretta garzetta***

A relatively common breeding resident on the island. Little Egret can usually be encountered foraging in the inter-tidal around the whole coast line or in the fresh-water filled quarries at all times of year. The species was recorded on 71 of the 76 (94%) SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

#### **Yellow-billed Egret (68) *Egretta intermedia***

This species bred irregularly at Robben Island prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), but has not been recorded breeding since. Yellow-billed Egret was recorded on two BIRP cards on 22 and 29 August 2005. Both sightings were probably of the same



individual. No other records for this species could be found since 2000 and it should now be considered a vagrant to Robben Island.

#### **Cattle Egret (71) *Bubulcus ibis***

This species is abundant on the island during their summer breeding season but generally absent during winter. For example, although the species has been recorded on 62 and 38% of BIRP and SABAP2 cards (respectively) since 2000, there are no records for this species on the island between May and July. Up until 2008, Cattle Egret in non-breeding plumage were occasionally observed in conjunction with antelope (e.g. Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*) in the open-range habitat that covers much of the north-west of the island. Reductions in ground cover following overgrazing by a burgeoning European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* population (de Villiers et al. 2010) may have contributed to an absence during their non-breeding season in recent years.

#### **Black-crowned Night-Heron (76) *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Small numbers (less than 50) of Black-crowned Night-Herons breed on the island in summer, usually in a heronry along with Cattle Egrets, Little Egrets, Crowned Cormorants and African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*. During the non-breeding season, adults and juveniles are occasionally seen in Van Riebeeck's quarry or flushed from roosts in Rooikrans bushes in the north-east of the island. In 2002, two immature birds and one adult were observed hunting in the intertidal at about two hours after dark (c. 21:00) with no apparent moonlight (Calf and Underhill 2002a). There appear to be no previous records of this heron feeding on open shorelines. The species was recorded on 74% of BIRP cards and 46% of SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### **Threskiornithidae**

##### **African Sacred Ibis (91) *Threskiornis aethiopicus***

A common and abundant species at Robben Island, African Sacred Ibis was recorded on all 34 of the BIRP cards and on 75 (99%) of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. Several hundred pairs

breed in the heronry each summer. The heronry is nomadic (Crawford et al. 1994) but has been located in stands of Rooikrans at the south end of the island since at least 2007. The species can also be observed year round flying overhead or foraging in the intertidal along the whole coastline.

##### **Hadedda Ibis (94) *Bostrychia hagedash***

Described by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as an uncommon visitor, the presence of this species on the island has increased since 2000. For example, the species was only recorded on one of eight (13%) BIRP cards completed in 2001, four of the five from 2005 and all six submitted for 2006. The species has been recorded on 96% of the SABAP2 cards submitted between August 2007 and January 2011. The first nest was recorded (by LGU) in 2004 and at least two nest of Hadedda Ibis have been active on the island since 2007. In 2007 and 2008, chicks fledged from at least one nest, while in 2007 the chicks from the second pair were killed and consumed by a Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*.

#### **Phoenicopteridae**

##### **Greater Flamingo (96) *Phoenicopterus ruber***

Not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000). One individual was recorded in the flooded stone quarry at the north of the island in September 2003 (TML). Flamingo's feed and roost at the nearby Rietvlei Nature Reserve on the adjacent mainland (c. 7 km east of Robben Island) and this individual probably arrived on the island during stormy weather. It was gone by the following visit.

### **ANSERIFORMES**

#### **Anatidae**

##### **Egyptian Goose (102) *Alopochen aegyptiaca***

A breeding resident, present on the island throughout the year. In the past the species was relatively uncommon on the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), and although no regular census has been undertaken, the number seems to be increasing. Egyptian Goose was recorded on 68% of the 34 BIRP cards surveyed and on 91% of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. Round island



counts in June 2003 and July 2005 recorded 14 individuals on each occasion, while in August 2007 and May 2009, 27 and 22 individuals were counted respectively.

#### **South African Shelduck (103) *Tadorna cana***

Although recorded as a vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000), South African Shelduck were recorded on the island several times since 2000. The species was found on two of the 34 BIRP cards, one from September 2000 and one from August 2001, and was listed on 13 SABAP2 cards. The SABAP2 sightings were all made between April 2008 and November 2010 and the majority were of an adult pair swimming in Van Riebeeck's quarry. An adult pair were observed (by BMD) in Van Riebeeck's quarry with small chicks in September 2001 and again in November 2010. These are the only breeding records for this species at Robben Island.

#### **European Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

This species breeds in Europe and Asia and migrates to North Africa and south-east Asia. Sightings of European Shelduck in South Africa are almost certainly of escapees from waterfowl collections (Hockey et al. 2005). As of 2005, there were at least six records for South Africa, none of which were from the Western Cape (Hockey et al. 2005). One adult male was photographed (by LGU) swimming in the flooded stone quarry at the north of the island on 7 July 2010 (Figure 1).

#### **Yellow-billed Duck (104) *Anas undulata***

An occasional visitor, the species has been sighted year-round in the water-filled quarries at the north and south of the island. Yellow-billed Duck was recorded on 29% of the BIRP cards checked but only 4% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted between August 2007 and January 2011. A reduction in the seasonal freshwater habitat, following the expansion of Rooikrans around the sandy beach area (on the east of the island), may have led to the apparent decrease in sightings of Yellow-billed Duck.



**Figure 1** – A male European Shelduck alongside Kelp Gulls at Robben Island, Western Cape, in July 2010. Photo by LGU

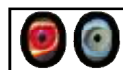
#### **Red-billed Teal (108) *Anas erythrorhyncha***

Eighteen individuals were spotted in the stone quarry at the north of the island early in the morning of 10 April 2002 (LGU). This is the only record of Red-billed Teal on the island and, as the previous day had been stormy, it is likely that the teal were on the move, got lost over the sea, and took refuge on the island.

#### **Cape Shoveler (112) *Anas smithii***

This species was recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as a regular winter breeder on the island, prior to 2000. However, a reduction in the freshwater habitat on the island following the expansion of Rooikrans coverage seems to have led to Cape Shoveler becoming scarce at Robben Island in the last decade. The species has been recorded four times since 2000, in August and September 2000 (on





BIRP cards) and in July (BMD) and August 2001 (BIRP records). The records were of individual birds in the fresh water filled quarries. The species should now be considered as a rare visitor to Robben Island.

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Mallard was not listed by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and the species is almost certainly a vagrant to the island. An adult male and female were seen (by V. Ward) swimming in Van Riebeeck's quarry at the south-east corner of the island on two occasions within the same week, on 22 and 29 August 2005. The pair probably originated from one of the small feral populations present in the Western Cape (Hockey et al. 2005).

#### **Spur-winged Goose (116)** *Plectropterus gambensis*

A rare visitor to the island's grassland in the past (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Spur-winged Goose has only been recorded three times since 2000. Two individuals were recorded flying over the island on each of 27 March 2008, 10 June 2011 (both RBS) and 28 June 2011 (K. J. Robinson pers. comm.). No individuals have been seen on the island since before 2000.

### FALCONIFORMES

#### **Accipitridae**

##### **Yellow-billed Kite (126)** *Milvus parasitus*

The Yellow-billed Kite is a summer visitor to the Western Cape (Hockey et al. 2005) and it was recorded as a vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000). In recent years, sightings of Yellow-billed Kites have been fairly common in summer and the species is recorded on 8% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. An increase in European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* numbers in recent years (de Villiers et al. 2010) may have increased the food available on the island for this species.

##### **Black-Shouldered Kite (127)** *Elanus caeruleus*

Recorded as an uncommon visitor by Crawford and Dyer (2000), only one record of Black-Shouldered Kite could be found since 2000.

The species was recorded on a BIRP card during a SAFRING ringing camp on the island on 04 December 2006. No further details were available.

##### **Steppe Buzzard (149)** *Buteo vulpinus*

A rare visitor to the island, both prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and since, the species has only been recorded four times in the last decade. Three of the four records were in mid-summer, the most recent on 22 December 2010.

##### **Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk (155)** *Accipiter rufiventris*

Considered a vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk has been recorded five times since 2000, once in each of March 2003, August 2004, November 2005, March 2008 and September 2008. Both sightings in 2008 were made around the lighthouse at the southern end of the island. The species should probably correctly be considered a rare visitor.

##### **Black Sparrowhawk (158)** *Accipiter melanoleucus*

Prior to 2000, Black Sparrowhawk was considered to be a visitor to the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and birds have been observed flying to and from the mainland since (RBS, pers. obs.). A pair was first observed together on the island on 18 March 2002 (P Whittington, pers. comm.) and the species was recorded on five BIRP cards since 2000, three of them from August and September 2007. A dead juvenile bird was discovered on the island in March 2007 and sightings of adult birds became more frequent during the winter of 2007. A nest was suspected in August 2007 but could not be located until June 2008, when it was discovered in a pine plantation at the north of the island and confirmed to contain one egg (by BMD).

#### **Falconidae**

##### **Peregrine Falcon (171)** *Falco peregrinus*

A rare visitor to the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), individuals are occasionally seen overhead or perched in large trees around the lime



stone quarry area and the north of the island. Peregrine Falcon was recorded on 9% of the BIRP cards and 12% of the SABAP2 cards assessed for this paper.

#### **Rock Kestrel (181) *Falco rupicolus***

Rock Kestrel was listed as a rare visitor by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and was only recorded on eight (24%) of the BIRP cards submitted between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2007. However, the species has been recorded with increasing regularity since late 2007, appearing on 42% of the SABAP2 cards submitted from 1 August 2007 to 31 January 2011. During the winter of 2008, one individual was repeatedly seen roosting under the roof of the Post Office in the village at Robben Island and in early 2011, a pair of Rock Kestrels was observed together on the island for the first time (RBS, pers. obs.). It is possible that breeding occurred at the Post Office during spring 2008, but this could not be confirmed. No nest had been found as of 30 June 2011.

### **GALLIFORMES**

#### **Phasianidae**

##### **Chukar Partridge (187) *Alectoris chukar***

Chukar Partridge were introduced to the island in 1964 and have established a feral population (Crawford and Dyer 2000). Breeding was confirmed in 1999 (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and the species is now relatively common on the island, if infrequently encountered. Since 2000, the species has been recorded on 71% of the BIRP cards and 59% of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. The population seems to have undergone fluctuations in the last decade, probably driven by changes in Feral Cat numbers on the island (see de Villiers et al. 2010). Chukar Partridge are most commonly sighted on the eastern side of island, with the areas surrounding the village and prison yielding the majority of sightings; however, the species occurs throughout the island in low numbers.

##### **Cape Spurrow (195) *Pternistis capensis***

An abundant breeding resident, Cape Spurrow can be encountered throughout the island, except in the middle of the dense *Eucalyptus* plantations. No data is available on the population, but it is thought to have increased in recent years, following the reduction in Feral Cat numbers. The species was recorded on 94% of the 34 BIRP cards and 98% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

##### **Common Quail (200) *Coturnix coturnix***

Common Quail is a summer visitor to southern Africa (Hockey et al. 2005) and was recorded as a vagrant to Robben Island by Crawford and Dyer (2000). Common Quail has only been seen on the island once since 2000, confirming its status as a vagrant. One individual was flushed from grassland behind the prison on 17 October 2005.

##### **Common Peacock *Pavo cristatus***

Most frequently encountered in the rectangle of scrub between the airfield and the coast, and between the village and the prison. No systematic census has been made, and although the population is estimated to have increased since the 1990s (Leshoro et al. 2010), the current population trends are unknown. The species is thought to have been introduced to the island in 1968 (Brooke and Prins 1986) and was known to breed from early on as broods accompanying peahens were frequently seen during summer (Leshoro et al. 2010). However, the first nest was only found in January 2008 (Leshoro et al. 2010). The species was recorded on 80% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

#### **Numididae**

##### **Helmeted Guineafowl (203) *Numida meleagris***

An abundant species on the island. It is thought to have been introduced at some point in the 1850s and was present by 1867 (Brooke and Prins 1986). On 1 October 2004, a nest with 23 eggs was found, and the egg-count increased to 26 on 16 October; the clutch must have been produced by two females. The species was



recorded on 97% of the 34 BIRP cards and 98% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

## GRUIFORMES

### Rallidae

#### **Common Moorhen (226) *Gallinula chloropus***

An uncommon breeding resident, Common Moorhen is generally restricted to the two quarries on the island with permanent freshwater (Van Riebeeck's quarry and the stone quarry). They are also occasionally sighted with chicks in several of the smaller quarries that flood during winter. The species occurs continuously on island in low numbers and was recorded on 20 (59%) of the BIRP cards and 55 (72%) of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

## CHARADRIIFORMES

### Haematopodidae

#### **African Black Oystercatcher (244) *Haematopus moquini***

A common breeding resident on the island, African Black Oystercatchers can be seen around the coastline of Robben Island throughout the year. The island's breeding population was probably around 175 adults in 2002 (Calf and Underhill 2002b), around 280 by 2005 (Braby and Underhill 2007) and around 250 in 2009 (South African Penguins Earthwatch Project, unpubl. data). The African Black Oystercatcher was recorded on 33 of the 34 BIRP cards checked and was one of the five species recorded on all 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

### Charadriidae

#### **Common Ringed Plover (245) *Charadrius hiaticula***

A common summer visitor to the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Common Ringed Plover can be seen on the west coast of the island between September and April. Occasionally individuals are sighted in winter. The species was recorded on 32% of the BIRP cards and 34% of the SABAP2 cards examined for this paper.

#### **White-fronted Plover (246) *Charadrius marginatus***

A breeding resident which occurs at relatively low abundance, pairs of White-fronted Plover can be seen on the sandy beach on the island's east coast, on the rocky shoreline of the west coast and occasionally on the disused airstrip. White-fronted Plover is present on the island year round, but its relatively cryptic behaviour, habitat preference and size mean it is probably under-represented on cards that cover a short-time period on the island. The species was recorded on 47% of the BIRP cards and 59% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### **Kittlitz's Plover (248) *Charadrius pecuarius***

An uncommon breeding resident on the island, Kittlitz's Plover are usually encountered along the western shoreline in winter and both along the shoreline and around the abandoned airstrip in summer. Over the last five years, round-island wader counts on which Kittlitz's Plover have been encountered have yielded a mean (SD) count of 10.6 (9.7) individuals and a maximum count of 32 individuals. The species was recorded on 29% of the BIRP cards and 42% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### **Three-banded Plover (249) *Charadrius tricollaris***

Three-banded Plover was listed as a rare visitor to Robben Island by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and only appears to have been recorded at Robben Island twice since 2000. One BIRP record exists for Three-banded Plover from 26 September 2007 and one *ad hoc* observation of the species was made (by PJ Barham) during a round-island wader count in March 2007. This species is usually seen on the western shoreline.

#### **Grey Plover (254) *Pluvialis squatarola***

Grey Plover are regular summer visitors to Robben Island at low abundance. Wader counts around the island's perimeter have yielded a maximum count of seven individuals over the last five years. Some individuals are also present through winter: the species was recorded on one SABAP2 card in June and 3 in July. In total, the



species was recorded on 29% of the BIRP cards and 42% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### **Crowned Lapwing (255) *Vanellus coronatus***

Crowned Lapwing is a breeding resident on the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), which occurs in relatively low abundance (Underhill et al. 2001) within the grassland on the western side of the island. The species is present on the island year round and was reported on 85% of the BIRP cards submitted and 63% of the SABAP2 cards submitted.

#### **Blacksmith Lapwing (258) *Vanellus armatus***

This is a common breeding resident, present along the shoreline, around the freshwater-filled quarries and amongst the island's grassland at all times of year. Thirty-one irregular round-island shorebird counts conducted (mainly from March to September) between 30 November 2000 and 21 April 2011 yielded a mean  $\pm$  SD of  $41.7 \pm 12.4$  individuals (range 21–82) and the species was recorded on all 34 of the BIRP cards checked and 75 of the 76 SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### **Scolopacidae**

##### **Ruddy Turnstone (262) *Arenaria interpres***

Ruddy Turnstone is a common summer visitor to the shoreline of Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), but small numbers also occur infrequently over winter (Underhill et al. 2001). This species was recorded on 50% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted and 79% of the 34 BIRP cards checked.

##### **Common Sandpiper (264) *Actitis hypoleucos***

Recorded as a rare summer visitor by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Common Sandpiper has been observed on the island four times since 2000. One individual was counted on a round-island wader count on each of 21 December 2002, 25 February 2003 (M Wheeler, pers. comm.), 5 January 2004 (BIRP record) and 2 November 2004 (BMD).

##### **Common Greenshank (270) *Tringa nebularia***

This species is an uncommon summer visitor to Robben Island's shoreline (Crawford and Dyer 2000). Since 1 January 2000, the species has been recorded at least 13 times; four times on SABAP2 cards, six times in the BIRP records and 3 times from ad hoc observations (BMD). A maximum of three individuals have been present on the island at any one time (Underhill et al. 2001). All of the records found were between September and March, the most recent observation being on 22 December 2010 (RBS).

##### **Curlew Sandpiper (272) *Calidris ferruginea***

Crawford and Dyer (2000) listed Curlew Sandpiper as a common summer visitor to Robben Island and large numbers have been recorded on the island in early summer in the past (Underhill et al. 2001). However, the species was only recorded on 44% of the BIRP cards between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2007 and from 16% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted between 1 August 2007 and 31 January 2011. In addition, round-island shorebird counts conducted in mid-March between 2007 and 2011 have yielded a maximum count of only 11 individuals, compared to 151 counted on 3 March 2001 (Underhill et al. 2001). Similar decreases of this tundra-nesting species have been noted at other South African wetlands (e.g. Harebottle and Underhill 2006).

##### **Little Stint (274) *Calidris alba***

Recorded as a rare summer visitor by Crawford and Dyer (2000), this species has only been seen once at Robben Island since 2000. One individual was recorded on a round island shorebird count and added to a BIRP card compiled (by M Wheeler) in late August 2007.

##### **Sanderling (281) *Calidris alba***

Crawford and Dyer (2000) listed Sanderling as a common summer visitor to the island. However, the species was only recorded on 9% of the BIRP cards checked and 14% of the SABAP2 cards checked and there were only records for seven of the 10 summers covered by this paper. All the records occurred between September and April.



Subsequently, the species should probably be considered as an irregular summer visitor.

**Bar-tailed Godwit (288) *Limosa lapponica***

Listed as a summer vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000), only two records of this species are known from Robben Island since 2000. Both were recorded on BIRP cards compiled (by LGU) on 15 March 2000 and 8 January 2001, confirming its status as a summer vagrant.

**Common Whimbrel (290) *Numenius phaeopus***

Crawford and Dyer (2000) listed the Common Whimbrel as a summer visitor to the island; however, this species has been recorded on the island in the austral winter (Underhill et al. 2001). The species was recorded on 79% of the BIRP cards submitted and 83% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed and the species has been recorded on the island in all months of the year. Most first-year waders do not migrate to the breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere from non-breeding areas as far south as South Africa (Summers et al. 1995) and it seems likely that this accounts for the birds present at Robben Island during the austral winter. Common Whimbrel should more correctly be considered as a common, non-breeding species occurring on the island throughout the year, but with a summer peak.

**Burhinidae**

**Spotted Thick-knee (297) *Burhinus capensis***

A common breeding resident, present on the island year round (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Spotted Thick-knee have been recorded on 82% of the BIRP cards and 71% of the SABAP2 cards. This species is relatively abundant on the island, with irregular round-island counts giving a maximum count of 56 individuals in the last five years. However, it is relatively localised to the grassland adjacent to the western shore. Because of its nocturnal behaviour and cryptic habits, the reporting rate is relatively low for this common species.

**Laridae**

**Parasitic Jaeger (307) *Stercorarius parasiticus***

Parasitic Jaeger is a common summer migrant to southern Africa and can regularly be seen from shore (Ryan 1997a). Crawford and Dyer (2000), considered the species to be a common summer visitor to the waters around Robben Island. The species has been recorded at least seven times in six years of the years since 2000, once on a BIRP card, three times on SABAP2 cards and three times in other *ad hoc* observations (BMD and P Whittington, pers. comm.). The records all occur from August to February, apart from one unseasonal sighting on 17 June 2002 (P Whittington, pers. comm.). This species should probably correctly be considered as an irregular summer visitor to Robben Island's coastal waters.

**Pomarine Jaeger (309) *Stercorarius pomarinus***

Pomarine Jaeger is an uncommon summer visitor to the waters of the Western Cape that typically occurs inshore in coastal waters (Ryan 1997b). This species was not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and was not recorded in the BIRP database (which generally did not consider the waters around Robben Island). One individual was observed from the Robben Island ferry (by RBS) within the Robben Island SABAP2 pentad on 30 December 2008 and recorded on a SABAP2 card. This is the only known record of what is probably a vagrant to the coastal waters of the island.

**Subantarctic Skua (310) *Catharacta antarctica***

Subantarctic Skua is a common winter visitor to the coastal waters around Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), but had not been recorded on the island prior to 2000. The species was only recorded on five of the 34 (15%) BIRP cards surveyed for this paper, which would only include individuals spotted from the island. The 76 SABAP2 cards, which include observations made at sea from the island's ferry, yielded 35 sightings of this species. On 25 May 2011, one individual was seen (by RBS and TML) standing over the carcass of a tern (*Sterna* spp.) on the sandy beach, just south of the



harbour. This is believed to be the first time that a Subantarctic skua has been recorded standing on the island.

### **Kelp Gull (312) *Larus dominicanus***

Kelp Gull was recorded as a non-breeding resident by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and the species only started breeding at Robben Island in 2000, when five nests were recorded (Calf et al. 2003). Since then, the colony has increased to c. 900 breeding pairs in 2011 (DEA, unpubl. data). Kelp Gull is present year round at Robben Island and is one of only two species to have been recorded on all 34 BIRP cards and all 76 SABAP2 cards checked for this paper.

### **Grey-headed Gull (315) *Larus cirrocephalus***

The Grey-headed Gull is closely related to the Hartlaub's Gull, but is far less common on the West Coast (Brooke 1997a). A small number of Grey-headed Gulls breed in amongst the Hartlaub's Gulls in most years at Robben Island. Grey-headed Gulls are known to form mixed pairs with Hartlaub's Gulls on the West Coast (Brooke 1997a), and this has been recorded at Robben Island (by TML and BMD). This species was recorded on 24% (8 of 34) of the BIRP cards and 41% (31 of 76) of the SABAP2 cards surveyed. Although the species has been recorded on the island in summer, its presence may be overlooked as it is less easy to separate from Hartlaub's Gull when not in breeding plumage (Brooke 1997a).

### **Hartlaub's Gull (316) *Larus hartlaubii***

Hartlaub's Gull is a common breeding resident, present over the whole island throughout the year (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species was recorded on all 34 BIRP cards and 75 of the 76 SABAP2 cards checked for this paper. The breeding colony is nomadic (Crawford et al. 1994), but since 2007 the colony has been located within a disused pistol range and around abandoned sports facilities (tennis courts and a rugby field) within the settlement at the south east of the island. In the early 2000s the species seldom bred on the island; the return to using this locality is probably related to the removal of Feral Cats.

### **Sabine's Gull (318) *Larus sabini***

Sabine's Gull is a summer migrant to the Benguela Current, mainly occurring off southern Africa from late September to late May (Hockey et al. 2005). It is abundant in the inshore waters of the northern Benguela, but less common off of the Western Cape (Hockey et al. 2005). Crawford and Dyer (2000) considered it an uncommon visitor to Robben Island's coastal waters. The species was recorded on seven (21%) of the BIRP cards checked, but five of these records were from March 2001 when this species occurred in thousands in Table Bay, and within a 100 m of the Robben Island shoreline (LGU). This gull was only recorded on two (3%) of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted to date. *Ad hoc* sightings were also made on 10 May 2001 (by BMD), when c. 100 were seen in and around the Murray's Bay Harbour; on 12 March 2002 (P Whittington, pers. comm.); on 1 February 2005 and on 13 February 2007 (both BMD).

### **Caspian Tern (322) *Sterna caspia***

The Caspian Tern was recorded as an uncommon visitor to the island by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and breeding was suspected in September 1993, but could not be confirmed (BMD pers. obs.). The species was absent from the BIRP records spanning from January 2000 to December 2007. The first record of the species on the island since 2000 was made (by RBS) on 4 September 2009, when two individuals were present on the sandy beach just south of the harbour (Figure 2). Four individuals were recorded on the island on 16 October 2010 (by RBS and BMD) and on 1 November 2010 an individual was spotted (by BMD) incubating an egg close to the stone quarry at the north of the island. A large chick was later observed on both 9 and 23 December 2010 (BMD and RBS). This is the first breeding record for Caspian Tern at Robben Island. In total, the species was recorded on seven SABAP2 cards up to 23 December 2010 and should probably now be considered a rare breeder.

### **Swift Tern (324) *Sterna bergii***

Robben Island is an important breeding locality for Swift Terns: it was the only island at which breeding occurred in every year between



1984 and 1993 (Crawford et al. 1994). The site of the breeding colony on the island is variable (see Crawford et al. 1994), but in recent years the bulk of the pairs have nested close to the western shoreline and the island has been host to the majority of the Western Cape breeding population (BMD, unpubl. data). As such, Swift Terns are probably one of the most abundant and frequently encountered birds at Robben Island during their breeding season (December to May). The species was recorded on 85% of the BIRP cards and 93% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed.

### **Sandwich Tern (326) *Sterna sandvicensis***

A regular summer visitor, usually in low abundance, to Robben Island. Sandwich Tern was recorded on 41% of the BIRP cards surveyed and 26% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed. The species was generally recorded from August to March (although one recorded exists from April 2009) and can usually be found in low numbers roosting with Common and Swift Terns along the rocky shoreline of the island. Unusually large aggregations of c. 200 and c. 350 individuals were recorded in September 2007 and March 2009 respectively. Although Sandwich Terns are Palearctic-breeding migrants, the possibility exists of occasional breeding in South Africa (Hockey et al. 2005). One suspected breeding attempt occurred at Robben Island in 2002 when a Sandwich Tern was observed feeding a chick in the Swift Tern colony (BMD). It could not be determined whether it fed a Sandwich Tern or a Swift Tern chick (Hockey et al. 2005). This coincided with several observations of courtship behaviour and birds in full breeding plumage at Koeberg, Dassen Island, Schaapen Island (all Western Cape) and Cape Recife (Eastern Cape) in that same year (Hockey et al. 2005).

### **Common Tern (327) *Sterna hirundo***

A common summer visitor to Robben Island, Common Tern can usually be seen in large numbers roosting communally with Swift and Sandwich Terns on the island's shoreline. Irregular counts of this species during the last decade have yielded large aggregations of

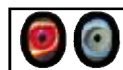


**Figure 2** – Two adult Caspian Terns on the sandy beach at Robben Island, Western Cape, on 4 September 2009. Photo by RBS.

c. 635 (March 2001; Underhill et al. 2001) c. 360 (December 2006), c. 710 (September 2007), c. 120 (September 2008), c. 140 (March 2009) and c. 400 (March 2010) on the island. The species was recorded on 68% of the BIRP cards and 41% of the SABAP2 cards checked.

### **Antarctic Tern (329) *Sterna vittata***

The Antarctic Tern is a regular, non-breeding winter visitor to the Western Cape where it often roosts ashore on islands (Williams 1997). The species is mainly in southern Africa from mid-April to October (Williams 1997) and Crawford and Dyer (2000) listed the Antarctic Tern as a rare winter visitor to Robben Island. Since 2000, the species was recorded on four of the 34 BIRP cards (12%) and seven of the 76 SABAP2 cards (9%). Six of the records were from April to September. Three records were submitted within a 10-day



period in March 2009, which were probably of the same individual, and there was one record each from February (2009) and November (2008).

## COLUMBIFORMES

### Columbidae

#### Rock Dove (348) *Columba livia*

Feral pigeons have not established a population on the island and are only infrequent visitors from the adjacent mainland (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species has been recorded at Robben Island 10 times since 1 January 2000 (6 BIRP records, 4 SABAP2 records), most recently on 17 January 2011. At least one of these individuals was a racing pigeon.

#### Speckled Pigeon (349) *Columba guinea*

A common breeder, Speckled Pigeon is the most abundant of the Columbidae on Robben Island and can be found year round, throughout the island. The species was recorded on 33 of the 34 BIRP cards and 75 of the 76 SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### Red-eyed Dove (352) *Streptopelia semitorquata*

A relative uncommon dove at Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), this species was recorded on 58% of the BIRP cards checked and 88% of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011. Red-eyed Doves are present throughout the year and can be seen throughout the island; however, they are most commonly encountered on the edges of the stands of alien trees (e.g. *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*).

#### Cape Turtle-Dove (354) *Streptopelia capicola*

A common breeding resident at Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Cape Turtle-Dove can be found over the whole the island, throughout the year. The species was recorded on 94% (32) of the 34 BIRP cards and 97% (74) of the 76 SABAP2 cards checked.

#### Laughing Dove (355) *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Laughing Dove was recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as a common breeder and was listed on 79% (27 of 34) of the BIRP cards submitted between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2007. However, in the last few years, the species has been conspicuously absent for much of the time and it has only been recorded on 14% of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted since August 2007. If the species has in fact dramatically decreased in abundance on the island in recent years, it is not clear why this has occurred.

#### Namaqua Dove (356) *Oena capensis*

Considered a vagrant to the island by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Namaqua Dove was recorded on one BIRP card (in 2007) for Robben Island since 2000 and on two other occasion as *ad hoc* sightings, once on 12 August 2002 (BMD) and once on 28 June 2011 (KJ Robinson pers. comm.). No other records of the species could be found and it is probably correctly considered as a vagrant to the island.

## PSITTACIFORMES

### Cacatuidae

#### Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Cockatiels are endemic to Australia, but common in the pet trade throughout the world. Escapees have been reported from suburbs in Gauteng and Cape Town (Hockey et al. 2005). One adult Cockatiel was seen (by BMD) perched on a sewerage pipe in front of the bird hide on the island on 23 March 2000. It flew off after being harassed by nearby penguins and was not seen again. There is no evidence that a feral population exists in South Africa (Hockey et al. 2005) and this bird must have been an escapee.

## CUCULIFORMES

### Cuculidae

#### Klaas's Cuckoo (385) *Chrysococcyx klaas*

Not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Klaas's Cuckoo was recorded on one BIRP card completed on 11 August 2004 (by





M Wheeler). No other records could be found for this species and it should be considered a vagrant to the island.

### STRIGIFORMES

#### Caprimulgidae

##### **Fiery-necked Nightjar (405)** *Caprimulgus pectoralis*

An uncommon breeder on the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), its highly cryptic nature – and a lack of night observations – probably means that this species is under-represented on SABAP2 and BIRP submissions. The species was recorded on seven of the 34 (21%) of the BIRP cards examined and seven of the 76 (9%) SABAP2 cards checked. It is possible that the increases in Feral Cat number that occurred in the 2000s (see de Villiers et al. 2010) may have impacted the abundance of this ground nesting bird on the island, but this has not been studied.

### APODIFORMES

#### Apodidae

##### **African Black Swift (412)** *Apus barbatus*

This swift is an uncommon and irregular summer visitor to Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000). Since 1 January 2000, it has been recorded at least ten times; twice from the 34 BIRP cards (6%), on six (8%) of the 76 SABAP2 cards and twice during *ad hoc* observations (by BMD). One record occurred in January (2006), six in March (of 2007, 2008 and 2009), while the other three are from August (of 2005 and 2008).

##### **White-rumped Swift (415)** *Apus caffer*

White-rumped Swift has been recorded at Robben Island at least six times since 2000, twice on BIRP cards, twice from *ad hoc* observations (BMD) and once on a SABAP2 card. Principally a summer visitor to southern Africa, birds arrive in the region in August-September and leave in April-May (Brooke 1997b). The records from Robben Island are from February (2002), March (2001, 2006 and 2007) May (in 2008) and November (2003) confirming the

species status as a uncommon summer visitor (Crawford and Dyer 2000).

##### **Little Swift (417)** *Apus affinis*

Little Swift breed on the island during summer (Crawford and Dyer 2000), making use of the eaves of unoccupied buildings in the village area (RBS, pers. obs.). The species was recorded on 19 (56%) of the 34 BIRP cards and 32 (42%) of the 76 SABAP2 cards assessed. The sightings were principally between August and April when the species is abundant on the island; however, Little Swift was also recorded once in May and once in July (both in 2008) during the period studied.

##### **Alpine Swift (418)** *Tachymarptis melba*

Alpine Swift is a common visitor to Robben Island during summer and an irregular visitor in winter (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species occurred on 32% of the BIRP cards assessed and 17% of the SABAP2 cards. The majority of records were from August to March, but the species was also recorded on four SABAP2 cards during July 2008. Unusual aggregations of around 50 and 65 birds were reported in July and August 2002 (P Whittington, pers. comm., BMD).

### CORACIIFORMES

#### Cerylidae

##### **Pied Kingfisher (482)** *Ceryle rudis*

This species was recorded as an irregular breeder by Crawford and Dyer (2000), but it has been largely absent in recent years. The species was recorded on four BIRP cards between 2000 and 2005 (12% of those assessed) and twice from *ad hoc* observations (2000 and 2001 by BMD). It has yet to be recorded on a SABAP2 card from the island. None of the recent BIRP records indicated breeding activity.



### **Giant Kingfisher (429) *Megaceryle maximus***

Described as a vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Giant Kingfisher has only been observed once since 2000. A single individual was seen flying over the sea close to shore in the north-east of the island on 6 August 2003. The bird first landed on artificial platform just off-shore and then flew to a rocky outcrop in the intertidal area where it remained for around a minute before flying off (AC Wolfaardt, pers. comm.).

## **UPUPIFORMES**

### **Upupidae**

#### **African Hoopoe (451) *Upupa africana***

African Hoopoe is an uncommon visitor to the island, which has bred in the past (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species was recorded twice on the 34 BIRP cards and five times on the 76 SABAP2 cards surveyed for this paper. The presence of the species on the island does not seem to be seasonal, with sightings occurring in the months of February, April, May, June, August, October and December. Usually one individual is observed, foraging on the ground in the gardens of the settlement at the south-east of the island.

## **PASSERIFORMES**

### **Hirundinidae**

#### **Barn Swallow (518) *Hirundo rustica***

A migrant to Southern Africa, Barn Swallow is an uncommon summer visitor to Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species was recorded on 21% of the BIRP cards and 12% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed. Most records are between January and March, but two BIRP records occur from August 2005. The species is most commonly encountered hawking insects over the grassland areas in the north of the island.

#### **White-throated Swallow (520) *Hirundo albigularis***

Considered to be an uncommon summer visitor to Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000). At least one pair has nested under a disused ship in the harbour each year since 2007 (RBS, pers. obs.).

The species is present on the island each year from around mid August to mid March and is regularly encountered at the harbour or in the nearby grassland during this part of the year. The species was recorded on 56% of the BIRP cards and 47% of the SABAP2 assessed.

#### **Rock Martin (529) *Ptyonoprogne fuligula***

Not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Rock Martin has been seen at Robben Island on four occasions since 2000. The species was recorded on three BIRP cards and on one of the 76 SABAP2 cards checked. The species was recorded once in March (2000), once in April (2008) and twice in August (2004 and 2005) and should probably be considered a rare visitor to the island. The most recent sighting (April 2008) was of two individuals perched on the roof of a disused building in the north-east of the island (RBS).

#### **Brown-throated Martin (533) *Riparia paludicola***

Considered a rare summer visitor by Crawford and Dyer (2000), only one record could be found for Brown-throated Martin in the sources examined for this paper: the species was recorded (by BMD) on a BIRP card from August 2000.

#### **Banded Martin (534) *Riparia cincta***

Banded Martin was an irregular breeder prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), nesting in the island's quarries. However, the species has apparently been largely absent from the island in recent years and only three records of Banded Martin were found for the period 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2011. A single individual was recorded (by BMD) on 7 November 2011 and 30 October 2007 while on 17 September 2008, a pair of Banded Martins was seen (by RBS) flying over the grassland close to an old stone wall of the former shooting range, near to the north-west coast of the island. The birds seemed to be hawking insects. It is possible that the pair could have been nesting, but this was not confirmed and the species was not recorded again despite five SABAP2 cards being completed over the following three months.



### **Black Saw-wing (536) *Psalidoprocne holomelaena***

Not listed, by Crawford and Dyer (2000), only two records of Black Saw-wing exists for Robben Island. One individual was recorded (by BMD) on 7 November 2003 and a single individual was observed (by RBS) for several minutes flying up and down a narrow (c. 10 m wide) strip of land between the beach and the road, close to an old shooting range near the north-west coast of the island on 17 September 2008. This bird appeared to be hawking insects. Both sightings of Black Saw-wing on the island have coincided with sightings of Banded Martin on the same day.

### **Dicruridae**

#### **Fork-tailed Drongo (541) *Dicrurus adsimilis***

Only recorded once at Robben Island, a single individual was observed (by M Wheeler) flying in and out of the *Eucalyptus* trees, hawking insects, in the area of the old prison at the north of the island on 24 September 2007.

### **Corvidae**

#### **Pied Crow (548) *Corvus albus***

A common, year-round visitor to Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Pied Crow was recorded on 47% of the 34 BIRP cards submitted from 2000 to 2007 and on 87% of the SABAP2 cards submitted from August 2007 to January 2011. The apparent increase in records of the species in recent years may result from an increased availability of carrion, a component of the diet (Hockey et al. 2005), linked to an increase in rabbit abundance on the island (de Villiers et al. 2010). The species may well be an irregular breeder or else is gradually colonising Robben Island as breeding habitat: a Pied Crow nest was discovered (by BMD) in 2009 in a cypress tree (probably *Cupressus macrocarpa*, Adamson 1934) behind the prison and two BIRP cards from subsequent weeks in August 2005 list the species as breeding, but no additional information is given.

### **Pycnonotidae**

#### **Cape Bulbul (566) *Pycnonotus capensis***

The Cape Bulbul population on the island was considered by Crawford and Dyer (2000) to have gone extinct prior to 2000. However, Cape Bulbul has been recorded at least twice on the island since 2000, on BIRP cards in December 2002 and August 2004. These sightings were probably of individuals visiting the island from the mainland and Cape Bulbul should be considered as a vagrant at Robben Island.

### **Muscicapidae**

#### **Olive Thrush (577) *Turdus olivaceus***

Described by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as a vagrant, one individual was seen on 14 July 2004 (BMD) and one individual was sighted in the area of the settlement on 23 June 2006 (D Oschadleus, pers. comm.). The species is probably correctly considered a vagrant to Robben Island.

#### **Capped Wheatear (587) *Oenanthe pileata***

Not recorded on the Robben Island prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), this species was observed on the island for the first time and photographed (Figure 3) on 23 May 2011 within the grassland on the western side of the island (E Bussière and KJ Robinson, pers. comm.). The observation was preceded by several days of stormy weather and this most likely contributed to the sighting. The species is considered a vagrant to the island.

#### **Cape Robin-Chat (601) *Cossypha caffra***

Considered to have gone extinct on the island by 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Cape Robin-Chat was recorded on four of the 34 BIRP cards submitted but has yet to be recorded on the island during the SABAP2 project. The species was observed in August 2004, twice in August 2005 (22 and 29 August, probably the same individual) and once in October 2005. These observations were almost certainly of birds visiting from the mainland and Cape Robin-Chat should consequently be considered a rare visitor to the island.



**Figure 3** – Capped Wheatear at Robben Island, Western Cape, in May 2011. Photo by Elsa Bussi re.

### Cisticolidae

#### Zitting Cisticola (664) *Cisticola juncidis*

A common breeding resident, Zitting Cisticola is usually only seen when flushed from tall stands of Pipe Grass *Ehrharta villosa* in the north-west of the island. The species became difficult to find between mid-2008 and mid-2010 in conjunction with a reduction in the Pipe Grass cover on the island following overgrazing by rabbits and deer (de Villiers et al. 2010). Zitting Cisticola was recorded on 11 of the 34 BIRP cards (32%) and 22 of the 76 SABAP2 cards (29%) covering the period 2000 to 31 January 2011.

#### Grey-backed Cisticola (669) *Cisticola subruficapillus*

Recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as extinct on the island, a single individual was observed in grassland close to the pistol range and settlement at the south of the island on 23 February 2006

(D. Oschadleus, pers. comm.). No other records exist and the species should most likely be considered a vagrant to the island.

### Muscicapidae

#### Fiscal Flycatcher (698) *Sigelus silens*

Considered a vagrant by Crawford and Dyer (2000), the species has been recorded twice since 1 January 2000, once on 12 August 2000 (BMD) and once on 17 August 2008 (RBS). It is possible, given its similarity to Common Fiscal and the prevalence of the latter on the island, that Fiscal Flycatcher occurs more often but is overlooked.

### Motacillidae

#### Cape Wagtail (713) *Motacilla capensis*

A common breeder on the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Cape Wagtail can be encountered throughout the island, except in the dense *Eucalyptus* plantations, and is easily seen around the entire coastline. The species was recorded on 33 (97%) of the BIRP cards and 75 (99%) of the SABAP2 cards checked.

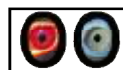
#### African Pipit (716) *Anthus cinnamomeus*

Recorded (as Grassveld Pipit) by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as a rare visitor, this species was not recorded in either the BIRP or SABAP2 databases (full protocol cards) for the period considered in this paper. Only one recorded exists for the species since 2000, an SABAP2 *ad hoc* protocol card from 23 November 2009.

### Laniidae

#### Common Fiscal (732) *Lanius collaris*

Common Fiscal is a common breeder on the island, nesting during spring. It is most often encountered near to stands of alien vegetation (e.g. Rooikrans), but can also be seen around the village and harbour area. There were 32 BIRP records and 73 SABAP2 records for this species in the databases consulted.



### **Red-backed Shrike (733) *Lanius collurio***

The Red-backed Shrike is a summer migrant to southern Africa but is rare in the fynbos biome and is considered a vagrant to the Cape Peninsula (Hockey et al. 2005). The species has been recorded only once on the island, on 17 December 2003 (by BMD). It was observed hawking an insect on the edge of the *Eucalyptus* plantation at the north of the island.

### **Malaconotidae**

#### **Bokmakierie (746) *Telophorus zeylonus***

Recorded as extinct by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Bokmakierie has been observed at least twice since 2000, on 22 May 2006 and 23 June 2006 (by D Oschadleus and M Wheeler). Both records probably represent the same individual and Bokmakierie would most reasonably be considered a vagrant to the island.

### **Sturnidae**

#### **Common Starling (757) *Sturnus vulgaris***

This species has been present at Robben Island since at least 1907 (Brooke and Prins 1986) and is now a common and widespread breeding resident. Common Starling was recorded on 33 (97%) of the BIRP cards checked for this paper and is one of only five species to have been recorded on all of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

#### **Pied Starling (759) *Spreo bicolor***

A rare visitor to the island prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), only one record for Pied Starling could be found in the sources consulted. A single adult Pied Starling was seen (by V Ward) on a patch of grass within the village area at the south-east of the island on 29 August 2005 and was recorded on a BIRP card. The bird's presence on the island may have been caused by stormy weather during the few days preceding the sighting (V Ward, pers. comm.).

### **Red-winged Starling (769) *Onychognathus morio***

Recorded as extinct by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Red-winged Starlings have been seen at least three times since 2000. One BIRP record was submitted for the species, referencing a sighting (by V. Ward) of a pair of adult birds (one male, one female) flying overhead of the village area at the south-east of the island on 22 August 2005. Two *ad hoc* observations of the species have also been reported from March 2007 and September 2008 (PJ Barham, pers. comm.). The species should most likely be considered as a rare visitor to Robben Island.

### **Nectariniidae**

#### **Malachite Sunbird (775) *Nectarinia famosa***

A common breeding resident, Malachite Sunbird can be seen at Robben Island throughout the year. This species is most frequently encountered on the fringes of the *Eucalyptus* plantations, but it can also be seen around the village area at the south-east of the island. Malachite Sunbird was recorded on 53% of the BIRP cards checked and 75% of the SABAP2 cards submitted during the time period considered. One leucistic individual was seen once (by BMD) on 6 September 2005.

#### **Southern Double-collared Sunbird (783) *Cinnyris chalybeus***

An uncommon visitor to the island (Crawford and Dyer 2000), Southern Double-collared Sunbird is usually seen on the fringes of the stands of alien vegetation. The species was recorded on seven of both the 76 SABAP2 cards (9%) and the 34 BIRP cards (21%) submitted in the time-frame considered here. The records existed from both the summer and winter months.

### **Zosteropidae**

#### **Cape White-eye (796) *Zosterops virens***

A relatively common breeder, found throughout the island but especially with the stand of alien vegetation (Crawford and Dyer 2000). The species was recorded on 75% of the SABAP2 cards submitted during the surveyed period, but was only present on 21%



of the BIRP cards submitted from 2000 to 2007. The species probably occurs at relatively low abundance on the island and its size and habitat preference may lead to it being under-represented on cards where the observer was only able to spend a short period on the island.

### Passeridae

#### House Sparrow (801) *Passer domesticus*

The House Sparrow was first recorded at Robben Island in 1985 and was not detected during a survey in 1966 (Brooke and Prins 1986). It was listed as a common breeder prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000) and House Sparrow was recorded on 17 (50%) of the 34 BIRP cards submitted between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2007 and was recorded on five of the 11 SABAP2 cards submitted between August 2007 and the end of April 2008. By early 2008, it appeared that the population on the island had been reduced to one adult pair, which resided close to the shop within the village area at the south-east of the island (RBS). One or both birds must have died shortly after the last SABAP2 record for the species on 24 April 2008 and House Sparrow was not recorded on the island again until 10 May 2011, when a small flock was observed in the settlement at the south of the island. The species has been recorded several times since (by RBS and BMD).

#### Cape Sparrow (803) *Passer melanurus*

This species is a common breeder which can be seen throughout the interior of Robben Island (Crawford and Dyer 2000). Cape Sparrow was recorded on 91% of the BIRP cards assessed for this paper and 83% of the SABAP2 cards submitted by 31 January 2011.

#### Southern Grey-headed Sparrow (804) *Passer diffusus*

Not recorded at Robben Island prior to 2000 (Crawford and Dyer 2000), one individual Southern Grey-headed Sparrow was seen (by RBS and BMD) on the island for the first time on 22 May 2008. Shortly afterwards, a pair was seen together and nest building behaviour was observed late in 2009, although breeding could not be

confirmed. Since it was first seen, the species has been recorded on 10 SABAP2 cards, which represent 16% of the 63 cards submitted since 22 May 2008. So far, the species has not been seen during winter, with all sightings occurring between September and May. The present population probably represents one, or very few, resident pairs.

### Ploceidae

#### Cape Weaver (813) *Ploceus capensis*

A common breeding resident on the island, primarily building nests in the *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* plantations (Oschadleus 2003). The population on the island may be increasing: 130 and 181 nests were counted in September and October 2003 (Oschadleus 2003), while a survey in October 2010 produced a count of 294 nests on the island (D Oschadleus, <http://weavers.adu.org.za/newstable.php?id=83>). Cape Weavers can be seen all year, throughout the island, but are most easily located amongst the stands of alien trees. The species was recorded on 88% of the BIRP cards and 93% of the SABAP2 cards surveyed.

#### Southern Masked-Weaver (814) *Ploceus velatus*

Not recorded by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Southern Masked-Weaver has been seen at Robben Island twice since 2000. One lone adult male was sighted close to the village area in May 2007 (by RBS) and one individual was observed within the village in April 2010 (by PJ Barham and BJ Barham, pers. comm.). No confirmed breeding records exist and the species should probably be considered a rare visitor to the island.

#### Red-billed Quelea (821) *Quelea quelea*

Not recorded at Robben Island by Crawford and Dyer (2000). Red-billed Quelea has an irruptive distribution in the Western Cape and sightings have been steadily increasing since the first vagrant was recorded in the province in 1946 (Oschadleus 2009). In 2007, a full-scale invasion of the province took place, with large numbers of birds recorded on the Cape Peninsula (Oschadleus 2009). On 28 April



2007, a small flock of c. 10 individuals was observed (by RBS) foraging in the narrow strip of land between the shoreline and the road at the south of the island (Figure 4; see also Oschadleus 2009). So far, no other records of Red-billed Quelea exist for Robben Island, so the species is considered a vagrant.

### **Estrildidae**

#### **Common Waxbill (846) *Estrilda astrild***

Listed by Crawford and Dyer (2000) as a vagrant. One record for the species, from 22 May 2006, exists in the BIPR and SABAP2 databases since 2000.

### **Fringillidae**

#### **Cape Canary (872) *Serinus canicollis***

Classified as a rare visitor to the island by Crawford and Dyer (2000), Cape Canary was recorded on five of the 34 BIRP cards checked but was not recorded on any of the 76 SABAP2 cards submitted by the end of January 2011. *Ad hoc* sightings of the species were also made in May, June and August 2002 (P. Whittington, pers. comm., BMD), May 2007 (RBS), May 2008 (BMD) and, most recently May and June 2011 (RBS, BMD).

#### **Lark-like Bunting (887) *Emberiza impetuani***

This species was not recorded on the island by Crawford and Dyer (2000) and the Cape Peninsula is just outside of its normal range (Dean 1997). One individual was recorded on the island (by BMD) on 16 October 2002. It is presumed to be the same bird that was seen aboard the *SA Agulhas* on 9 October, about 300 miles offshore on the return voyage from Tristan da Cunha. The bird was not aboard the ship on the following day (10 October) when the ship was off Hout Bay in a very strong north-westerly wind. This is the only record for the species and it is considered a vagrant to Robben Island.

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**Figure 4** – Red Billed Quelea at Robben Island, Western Cape, in April 2007. Photos by RBS.

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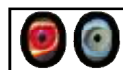
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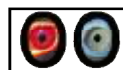


**Table 1** - Bird species recorded at Robben Island. Abbreviations: BIRP = Records of the Birds in Reserves Project ([http://birp.adu.org.za/site\\_summary.php?site=33481822](http://birp.adu.org.za/site_summary.php?site=33481822)); BMD = BM Dyer, personal observation; BR = Breeding resident; CD = Crawford and Dyer 2000; LGU = LG Underhill, personal observation; RBS = RB Sherley, personal observation; SABAP2 = Records of the Second Southern African Bird Atlas Project ([http://sabap2.adu.org.za/data\\_summary.php?Pentad=3345\\_1820&Submit=Submit](http://sabap2.adu.org.za/data_summary.php?Pentad=3345_1820&Submit=Submit)); TML = TM Leshoro, personal observation.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Roberts Number	Details of Sightings	Population Status	Source
1	Common Ostrich	<i>Stuthio camelus</i>	1	Grassland; all year	Introduced; Former breeder, last male removed in 2010	CD; RBS
2	African Penguin	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	3	Coastal; all year	BR; Declining	CD; RBS
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	8	Freshwater; mainly summer	Uncommon; confirmed breeding Feb 2009	BIRP; RBS
4	Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	11	Offshore; winter	Rare visitor	SABAP2
5	Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	12	Offshore; winter	Uncommon visitor	CD; RBS
6	Southern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	17	Offshore; winter	Uncommon visitor	RBS; BMD
7	Great-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>	23	Offshore; one record	Vagrant	RBS
8	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	32	Offshore; mainly winter	Common visitor	CD; RBS
9	Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	35	Offshore; one record	Vagrant	RBS
10	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	37	Offshore; mainly winter	Common visitor	CD; RBS
11	Little Shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	39	Specimen record	Vagrant	CD
12	Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	44	Offshore; mainly winter	Uncommon visitor	CD
13	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	49	Stone Quarry; February 2008	Vagrant; bred in 1600s	CD; SABAP2; TML
14	Cape Gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	53	Offshore; mainly winter	Common visitor	CD; RBS
15	White-Breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	55	Coastal; all year	Common, non-breeding resident	CD; RBS
16	Cape Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	56	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
17	Bank Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	57	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
18	Reed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	58	Freshwater	Bred in the past, absent in recent years	CD; RBS
19	Crowned Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax coronatus</i>	59	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
20	African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	60	Freshwater	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
21	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	62	Freshwater; mainly winter	Uncommon visitor	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
22	Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	63	Grassland; all year	Uncommon visitor	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
23	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	66	Sept 2003, Freshwater	Vagrant; one record	LGU
24	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	67	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
25	Yellowbilled Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	68	Grassland	Bred in the past, a vagrant in recent years	CD; BIRP; SABAP2



26	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	71	Woodland and Grassland; summer	BR; Rare in winter in recent years	CD; RBS
27	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	76	Woodland and Freshwater; all year	BR	CD; RBS
28	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	83	Grassland	Vagrant	CD
29	African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	91	Abundant throughout; all year	BR	CD; RBS
30	Hadedda Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	94	Woodland and grassland; all year	Common resident; at least 2 breeding pairs since 2007	BIRP; RBS
31	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	97	Dec 2003, Stone Quarry	Vagrant	TML
32	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	102	Grassland, Freshwater and coast; all year	BR	CD; RBS
33	South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	103	Freshwater	Rare visitor prior to 2010; one pair bred in 2010	CD; RBS
34	European Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	-	Freshwater	Vagrant; sightings in South Africa almost certainly escapees	LGU
35	Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	104	Freshwater	Bred in the past; rare in recent years	CD; SABAP2
36	Cape Teal	<i>Anus capensis</i>	106	Freshwater	Vagrant	CD
37	Red-billed Teal	<i>Anus erythrorhyncha</i>	108	Freshwater	Vagrant	LGU
38	Cape Shoveler	<i>Anas smithii</i>	112	Freshwater; mainly winter	Bred in the past, absent in recent years	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
39	Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	113	Freshwater	Vagrant	CD
40	Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	116	Overhead	Rare visitor	CD; SABAP2
41	Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus parasitus</i>	126b	Grassland and Overhead; mainly summer	Uncommon visitor	CD; SABAP2
42	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	127	Woodland and Grassland	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
43	Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	131	Overhead	Vagrant; one record in 1960s	CD
44	Booted Eagle	<i>Aquila pennatus</i>	136	Overhead	Vagrant	CD
45	African Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	148	Overhead	Vagrant	CD; BIRP
46	Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo vulpinus</i>	149	Woodland and Overhead; mainly summer	Rare visitor	SABAP2
47	Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter rufiventris</i>	155	Overhead; mainly summer	Rare visitor	RBS; CD; SABAP2
48	Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>	158	Woodland and Overhead; all year	One resident pair; confirmed breeding June 2008	BMD; RBS
49	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	171	Overhead; all year	Uncommon visitor	RBS; CD; SABAP2
50	Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>	181	Overhead and around old buildings; all year	Common visitor	RBS; CD; SABAP2



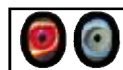
51	Chukar Partridge	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	187	Village and Grassland; all year	Introduced; BR	RBS; CD; SABAP2
52	Grey-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila africanus</i>	190		Extinct introduction	CD
53	Cape Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>	195	Abundant throughout; all year	Introduced; BR	CD; RBS
54	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	200	Grassland	Vagrant	CD; BMD
55	Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	203	Abundant throughout; all year	Introduced; BR	CD; RBS
56	Blue Crane	<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>	208	Overhead	Vagrant	CD
57	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	226	Freshwater; all year	Uncommon; Localised BR	CD; RBS
58	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	228	Freshwater	Rare visitor in the past; absent in recent years	CD; RBS
59	African Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	244	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
60	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	245	Coastal; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
61	White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	246	Coastal and Grassland; all year	Uncommon, BR	CD; RBS
62	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	248	Coastal and Grassland; all year	BR	CD; RBS
63	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	249	Coastal	Rare visitor	CD; RBS
64	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	254	Coastal; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
65	Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	255	Coastal and Grassland; all year	BR	CD; RBS
66	Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	258	Coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
67	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	262	Coastal; mainly summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
68	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	264	Coastal; summer	Rare visitor	CD; M. Wheeler, pers. comm.
69	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	270	Coastal; summer	Rare visitor	CD; Underhill et al. 2001; BIRP; SABAP2
70	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	271	Coastal; summer	Vagrant	CD; Underhill et al. 2001
71	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	272	Coastal; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
72	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	274	Coastal; summer	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
73	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	281	Coastal; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
74	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	284	Coastal; summer	Vagrant	CD
75	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	288	Coastal; summer	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
76	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	289	Coastal; summer	Vagrant	CD
77	Common Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	290	Coastal; all year	Common, non-breeding resident	CD; RBS
78	Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	297	Grassland around coast; all year	BR	CD; RBS
79	Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	298	Coast	Vagrant	CD
80	Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	307	Offshore; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS
81	Pomarine Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	309	Offshore	Vagrant	RBS
82	Subantarctic Skua	<i>Catharacta antarctica</i>	310	Offshore and Coastal; winter	Common visitor	CD; RBS



83	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	312	Abundant, mainly coastal; all year	BR	CD; RBS
84	Grey-headed Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	315	Coastal and quarries; mainly winter	Irregular breeder in small numbers	CD; RBS
85	Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	316	Abundant throughout; all year	BR	CD; RBS
86	Sabine's Gull	<i>Larus sabini</i>	318	Offshore; summer	Rare visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
87	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	322	Coastal and quarries; mainly summer	Rare; One breeding pair in 2010	BMD; RBS; SABAP2
88	Swift Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	324	Abundant, coastal and offshore; all year	BR	CD; RBS
89	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	326	Coastal and Offshore; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
90	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	327	Coastal and Offshore; summer	Common visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
91	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	328	Coastal and Offshore; summer	Vagrant	CD
92	Antarctic Tern	<i>Sterna vittata</i>	329	Coastal and Offshore; winter	Rare visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
93	Damara Tern	<i>Sterna balaenarum</i>	334		Historical record	CD
94	Namaqua Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>	344		Last recorded in 1700s	CD
95	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	348	Village and Grassland; all year	Uncommon visitor	CD; RBS
96	Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	349	Abundant throughout; all year	BR	CD; RBS
97	Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	352	Abundant throughout; all year	Common resident	CD; RBS
98	Cape Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	354	Abundant throughout; all year	BR	CD; RBS
99	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	355	Throughout; all year	Bred in the past; uncommon in recent years	CD; RBS
100	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	356	Woodland	Rare visitor	CD; Calf & Underhill 2002
101	Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>	378	Woodland	Vagrant	CD
102	Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	382	Woodland	Vagrant, one record	CD
103	Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	385	Woodland	Vagrant	BIRP
104	Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	405	Woodland	Uncommon, BR	CD; RBS
105	African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>	412	Overhead and Grassland; mainly summer	Uncommon visitor	CD; RBS
106	White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	415	Overhead and Grassland; mainly summer	Rare visitor	CD; RBS
107	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	417	Overhead and around old buildings; all year	BR	CD; RBS
108	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	418	Overhead and Grassland; mainly summer	Common visitor in summer, uncommon in winter	CD; RBS
109	Whitebacked Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>	425		Historical record	CD
110	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	428	Freshwater and Coast	Bred in the past; Rare visitor in recent years	CD; BIRP



111	Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maximus</i>	429	Village	Vagrant, two records	CD; A.C. Wolfaardt, pers. comm.
112	Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	431	Fresh water	Vagrant	CD
113	Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	435	Coast	Specimen record	CD
114	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	438	Grassland	Vagrant	CD
115	African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	451	Woodland, Village and around old buildings; mainly summer	Bred in the past; uncommon visitor in recent years	CD; SABAP2
116	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	518	Overhead and Grassland; summer	Uncommon visitor	CD; SABAP2
117	White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	520	Harbour and Grassland; summer	BR; one resident pair	CD; RBS
118	Rock Martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	529	Grassland and around old buildings; mainly summer	Rare visitor	RBS; BIRP
119	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	532		Vagrant	CD
120	Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	533	Grassland; mainly summer	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
121	Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	534	Quarries and Grassland; mainly summer	Bred in the past; Rare visitor in recent years	CD; RBS; SABAP2
122	Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne holomelaena</i>	536	Grassland by north coast	Vagrant; two records	RBS
123	Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	541		Vagrant	BIRP
124	Eurasian Golden-Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	543	Woodland	Vagrant	CD
125	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	548	Throughout; all year	Common visitor; may be an irregular breeder	CD; RBS; BIRP
126	Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	566		Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
127	Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	577	Woodland	Vagrant, two records	CD; BIRP
128	Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	587	One sighting in June 2011	Vagrant	E. Bussiere, pers. comm.
129	Familiar Chat	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	589		Historical record	CD
130	Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	601		Rare visitor; bred in the past	BIRP
131	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	664	Grassland; all year	BR	CD; RBS; BIRP
132	Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapillus</i>	669	One sighting in February 2006	Present in the past, one record since 2000; Vagrant	CD; BIRP
133	Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	677		Vagrant	CD
134	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	689	Coast	Vagrant	CD
135	Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>	698	Woodland and Shurbs; all year	Rare visitor; 3 records	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
136	African Paradise- Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	710	Woodland	Vagrant	CD
137	Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	713	Throughout, infrequently in woodland; all year	BR	CD; RBS; BIRP



138	African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	716	Grassland	Rare visitor; absent in recent years except one sighting in 2010	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
139	Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	732	Throughout, most common in woodland and shrubs; all year	BR	CD; RBS
140	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	733	One sighting in December 2003	Vagrant	BMD
141	Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	746	Woodland	Vagrant	BIRP
142	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	757	Abundant throughout; all year	BR	CD; RBS
143	Pied Starling	<i>Spreo bicolor</i>	759	Woodland and Grassland	Rare visitor	CD; BIRP
144	Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	760	Edges of Woodland	Rare visitor in the past; absent in recent years	CD; BIRP; SABAP2
145	Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	769		Rare visitor; three records since 2000	CD; RBS; BIRP
146	Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	775	Edges of Woodland and Village; all year	BR	CD; RBS; BIRP
147	Southern Double-Collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>	783	Edges of Woodland at north of island	Uncommon visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
148	Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops capensis</i>	796	Throughout, especially Woodland; all year	BR	CD; RBS; BIRP
149	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	801	Village; all year	BR; Rare since mid 2007	CD; RBS; BIRP
150	Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	803	Throughout; all year	BR	CD; SABAP2
151	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	804	Village	Uncommon resident	SABAP2
152	Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	813	Woodland, Village and Freshwater; all year	BR	CD; RBS; BIRP
153	Southern Masked-Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	814	Edges of Woodland; Village	Rare visitor; two records	RBS; BIRP
154	Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	821	April 2007; Grassland by southern Coast	Vagrant	RBS
155	Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	824	Village	Vagrant	CD
156	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	846	Woodland and Grassland	Vagrant, two records	CD; BIRP
157	Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>	872	Woodland and Grassland	Rare visitor	CD; RBS; BIRP
158	Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	878	Grassland	Vagrant	CD
159	Lark-like Bunting	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>	887	One record	Vagrant	BMD






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160	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	-	One recent sighting, August 2005	Extinct introduction; Vagrant	CD; BIRP
161	Common Peacock	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	-	Woodland and Grassland, especially behind prison; all year	Introduced; Uncommon BR	CD; BIRP; Leshoro et al. 2010
162	Greater Sheathbill	<i>Chionis alba</i>	912	Harbour	Vagrant	CD
163	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	-	Village and Woodland	Extinct introduction	CD
164	Cockatiel	<i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	-	One sighting at bird hide March 2000	Vagrant - escapee	BMD

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