



# AGULHAS PLAIN BIRDING PROJECT

## YEARLY REPORT 2018

**This report is a requirement of an agreement with Agulhas National Park and Nuwejaars Wetland SMA at the start of the project 9 years ago.**

### INTRODUCTION

The year 2018 marked the fourth year of the second 5-year phase of the Agulhas Plain Birding Project. As in 2017, the persistent drought conditions had a major effect on all of the Agulhas Plain with most of the water bodies dry for much of the year. The data collected in 2019 will be the last for this project.

Hereby a short summary of the most interesting observations, developments and birding achievements:

1. All 27 pentads were covered successfully by the 24<sup>th</sup> of December. 30 Checklists were submitted for the year which brings the total checklists submitted for the project to 217. In addition to these, 30 ad hoc submissions were submitted via Birdlasser.
2. Birdlasser was utilized differently this year as compared to last year when multiple ad hoc submissions were the general rule. We rather spent our time in one pentad and did a more thorough job, trying to stop every 200-400m for 10 minutes while recording species. This increased our species numbers and allowed for several new species to be recorded for specific pentads. This is important because some of the more secretive species only present once they have not seen movement or heard strange noises for a period of time. For some species this is most likely even longer than 10 mins, but staying longer at specific sights will compromise the critical first 2 hrs of the SABAP methodology.
3. As requested by SABAP we stopped recording every single species by exact number as this seemingly caused problems at SABAP(probably data overload). Every species was recorded only once with the exception of species known to be part of a research project(e.g. Blue Crane).
4. Despite the drought, the Agulhas Plain has once again produced the goods when it comes to birding. Species diversity seemed to remain intact but numbers per species went down. No more did we see 400 African Sacred Ibis feeding in the fields, rather in 20-30's. Common Ringed Plovers were here but not in hundreds, rather just 2- 30. In Elim pentad we recorded a record number of species due to the Waschkraal vlei being excellent for waders and other waterbirds. 5 New species could be added for this pentad.
5. During the year it occurred to me that collecting data only in summer, could result in a skewed picture. This led to the introduction of Winter/Summer data collection lists. Currently the most checklist submissions are on summer data. Since then I have targeted those pentads with low winter counts in winter to improve the relationship between winter and summer checklists. Ideally the distribution should be 50:50, but at this late stage I will aim for at least 33% winter counts.

6. There were some interesting developments at Langerzandt fishing village and wetland. Arisa Voges (0832702983) has been appointed trustee in charge of the ECOZONE. She is an avid nature lover and will lead the rehabilitation of the Langerzandt wetland. The pollution in the wetland has already been addressed and three truck loads of waste have already been removed from the wetland. Well done to them! Unfortunately the Langerzandt wetland is not accessible to general public any more for security reasons.
7. The Agulhas Plain Birding Project website ([www.agulhasplainbirding.co.za](http://www.agulhasplainbirding.co.za)) is still visited regularly and remains a valuable asset to the birding community. The statistics show an encouraging picture:

| Locales            |    | Pages | Hits   | Bandwidth |
|--------------------|----|-------|--------|-----------|
| South Africa       | za | 5,353 | 35,185 | 3.52 GB   |
| United States      | us | 2,145 | 5,229  | 283.65 MB |
| Russian Federation | ru | 503   | 570    | 26.63 MB  |
| Canada             | ca | 150   | 1,341  | 53.43 MB  |
| Great Britain      | gb | 116   | 166    | 8.92 MB   |
| China              | cn | 109   | 117    | 8.23 MB   |
| Germany            | de | 78    | 82     | 839.24 KB |
| Ukraine            | ua | 55    | 55     | 430.40 KB |
| Indonesia          | id | 41    | 481    | 123.81 MB |
| Denmark            | dk | 32    | 32     | 88.04 KB  |
| France             | fr | 26    | 27     | 748.89 KB |
| Czech Republic     | cz | 26    | 78     | 6.26 MB   |
| India              | in | 26    | 27     | 2.09 MB   |
| Switzerland        | ch | 17    | 17     | 160.09 KB |
| Liberia            | lr | 17    | 53     | 5.41 MB   |
| Poland             | pl | 14    | 15     | 141.11 KB |
| Japan              | jp | 13    | 57     | 8.82 MB   |
| Netherlands        | nl | 9     | 12     | 286.95 KB |
| Romania            | ro | 9     | 9      | 23.81 KB  |

Note the international interest in birding the Southern Tip of Africa! Even more interesting is the 21% growth in Unique visitors to a total of 934. This is rather encouraging from a birding tourism perspective and underlines the value of a birding website.

| Month        | Unique visitors | Number of visits | Pages        | Hits          | Bandwidth      |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Jan 2018     | 129             | 186              | 800          | 3,547         | 300.38 MB      |
| Feb 2018     | 60              | 148              | 575          | 4,027         | 328.02 MB      |
| Mar 2018     | 69              | 150              | 939          | 6,053         | 1.09 GB        |
| Apr 2018     | 77              | 115              | 317          | 2,185         | 240.07 MB      |
| May 2018     | 53              | 125              | 804          | 2,847         | 403.79 MB      |
| Jun 2018     | 77              | 141              | 812          | 4,989         | 360.72 MB      |
| Jul 2018     | 61              | 141              | 879          | 6,304         | 329.18 MB      |
| Aug 2018     | 75              | 144              | 738          | 2,931         | 190.93 MB      |
| Sep 2018     | 62              | 112              | 396          | 589           | 36.71 MB       |
| Oct 2018     | 94              | 167              | 637          | 2,706         | 209.40 MB      |
| Nov 2018     | 77              | 131              | 910          | 3,756         | 227.96 MB      |
| Dec 2018     | 100             | 164              | 973          | 3,748         | 424.46 MB      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>934</b>      | <b>1,724</b>     | <b>8,780</b> | <b>43,682</b> | <b>4.07 GB</b> |

Thanks Sam for the hard work!

8. Struisbaai now has a local sea bird rescue service. Niel Falck works closely with Gansbaai Bird Sanctuary and can be contacted at 0838732511. Niel was contacted about the Northern Giant Petrel at Langerzandt beach and within 20mins the bird was professionally removed to safety. Thanks Niel!

9. A further 4 species were added to the official Agulhas Plain Birding List in 2018. The official list now stands at 269 species! The new species recorded in 2018 are:

Striped Flufftail

Sub-antarctic Skua

White-chinned Petrel

Grey-backed Sparrowlark

Of these the Striped Flufftail is by far the most significant as this elusive species is rarely seen. It probably would never have been identified but for the fact that it flew up 1 m in front of Eugene Hahndinck who could describe the bird in detail! Eugene was attending a veld fire when the flufftail almost collided with him!

10. I am encouraged by the first sighting of Damara Chicks(x2) and 5 Damara Tern adult parading on the beach in December. It seems as if closing of the beach could begin to show results. A friend(an avid fisherman) informs me that the breeding Kelp Gull near De Mond has moved their nests to almost the beachfront simply because they are not disturbed anymore. He also says that when the beach was open, the hundreds of fishermen constantly left waste(sharks and bait) on the beach which attracted Kelp Gull. Because they were there, they targeted Damara, White-fronted Plover and Black Oystercatcher chicks. Now he seldom encounters them when fishing away from the Plaat parking(This he achieves by cycling towards De Mond along the beach).

PENTAD REPORTS 2018:

1.

Pentad Number:3430\_1935

Pentad Name: Kouerivier

Habitat: Only half of this pentad falls within the Agulhas plain (southern part). It is drained by the Koue and Bloed rivers. The South-Western corner has some smallholdings and the Tierkloof Conservancy near Baardskeerdersbos with small dams. The South-Eastern pentad includes the very interesting De Kouderivier farm. The rest of the pentad is cultivated land and alien forest with a track that covers mountain fynbos.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 4

Ad Hoc Checklists submitted to SABAP: 7

New species added this year: 3

Project Species Number: 86

Species Reported not confirmed: 5

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 11

SABAP2 Species Number: 117

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 2:2

Comments: The visit to this pentad in 2018 led to a meeting with James Kriel of Tierfontein in Tierfontein conservancy. James was able to add significantly to the species in the area and produced our first record of **Cape Rock-Thrush** complete with pictures! Tierfontein has self-catering accommodation dedicated to birders. I was unable to secure entry into Kouderivier this year and had to find similar habitats.

2.

Pentad Number: 3430\_1940

Pentad Name: Janswarskraalrivier

Habitat: Includes large tracts of cultivated land on De Koude river farm, the Koue river with large sedge marshes which runs into the Janswarskraal river, large alien forests and a gravel road that runs past farm yards with small dams, just below the Soetmuis mountain. Recently large tracts of land cleared of aliens. The beautiful Blomkloof farm(private) gives access to the Soetmuis mountains and the chance to look for mountain species.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 4

New species added this year: 6

Project Species Number: 87

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 10

SABAP2 Species Number: 105

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 3:1

Comments: The new species added to this list were mostly common species with the exception of a huge adult **Martial Eagle**. The access to Blomkloof farm(private) in this pentad has made a big difference and promises to deliver some rare mountain species in future.

3.

Pentad Number: 3430\_1945

Pentad Name: Pietersieliefontein

Habitat: Cultivated land with farm dams, alien forests and the Pietersieliekloof river with marshes. Elim Nature Reserve has fynbos. The farm Boskloof(Quoin Rock) gives access to the mountain and kloof for some excellent birding. Elim sewerage works falls into this pentad.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 4

New species added this year: 1

Project Species Number: 96

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 10

SABAP2 Species Number: 113

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 3:1

Comments: This year one winter count of 50 species was done. The highlights were a **Greater Double-collared Sunbird, African Goshawk, Neddicky, Streaky-headed Seedeater, White-faced Duck and Orange-breasted Sunbird.**

4.

Pentad Number: 3430\_1950

Pentad Name: Kosierskraal

Habitat: Natural fynbos, alien forests, cultivated land and the Soetmuis mountains southern slope. The Kastaaiingskloof river runs through the pentad.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 7

New species added this year: 3

Project Species Number: 121

Species Reported not confirmed: 5

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 11

SABAP2 Species Number: 130

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 4:3

Comments: One winter count was done. Highlights in this pentad has been the return of the **Black Cuckoo**, our first **Brimstone Canary** for the pentad and a **Martial Eagle**.

5.

Pentad Number: 3430\_1955

Pentad Name: Grashoek

Habitat: Southern slopes of the Soetmuis mountain with natural fynbos, the Grashoek river, alien forests, cultivated land, some large farm dams.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 5

New species added this year: 3

Project Species Number: 99

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 6

SABAP2 Species Number: 106

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 3:3

Comments: One winter count was done. Highlights of this pentad were a pair of **African Harrier-hawk** and the first **Malachite Kingfisher** for this pentad. This pentad gives access to mountain species when using Bergendam Cottage accommodation.

6.

Pentad Number: 3430\_2000

Pentad Name: Bredasdorp

Habitat: Urban area, Bredasdorp sewerage works, cultivated land, Heuningberg Nature reserve on Soetmuis mountain. Some excellent forested areas on southern slopes of Soetmuis mountain,

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 3

New species added this year: 24

Project Species Number: 110

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 27

SABAP2 Species Number: 156

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 1:2

Comments: Another 22 species were added to this pentad despite being well represented on SABAP. This was mostly due to the discovery of a new birding area in the pentad. The Southern slopes of Soetmuis mountains have some productive forests and kloof areas. I even saw my first Agulhas Plain klipspringer in 9 years here! Special sightings include: **African Black Swift, Amethyst Sunbird, Black Sawwing, Cardinal Woodpecker, Glossy Ibis, Great White Pelican**(nowhere near water!), **Greater Honeyguide**(calling from forest) and **Hottentot Teal**(Sewerage works).

7.

Pentad Number: 3430\_2005

Pentad Name: Nachtwacht

Habitat: Cultivated land. The beautiful Nachtwacht Restaurant Garden, fynbos chalk dunes and Kars river with weir which gives rise to a permanent water body. Below the weir the Kars river continues as a deep slow flowing river due to a 2<sup>nd</sup> weir south of the tar road.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 4

New species added this year: 18

Project Species Number: 106

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 8

SABAP2 Species Number: 123

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 3:1

Comments: A summer as well as winter count was done. New species included **Acacia Pied Barbet, African Goshawk, Black Crake, Cape Grassbird, Cape**

**Longclaw, Common Sandpiper, Karoo Scrub Robin, Plain-backed Pipit, Red-faced Mousebird.**

8.

Pentad Number: 3435\_1935

Pentad Name: Nuwedam,

Habitat: Natural fynbos and proteaceae, Alien forest, cultivated land, the large dam at Nuwedam and some impressive wetlands revealed by alien tree removal.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 9

New species added this year: 6

Project Species Number: 120

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 11

SABAP2 Species Number: 128

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 5:4

Comments: This was a summer count and included **African Snipe, Alpine Swift and Black Crake.**

9.

Pentad Number: 3435\_1940

Pentad Name: Viljoenshof

Habitat: Alien forests, large patches of proteaceae (Springs farm), natural fynbos, origin of the Ratel river, Viljoenshof wetland and small dams near Sanity Farm.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year: 2

Project Species Number: 81

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 11

SABAP2 Species Number: 101

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 5:3

Comments: This pentad produced the first record of **African Olive Pigeon** for the project and was again showing this species this time with good photographic opportunity. Other species of note was: **African Goshawk, Neddicky** and



**Orange-breasted Sunbird.** Meeting Sue from Sanity Farm and Carlu from Springs farm has given access to the area and valuable information about birds in the area.

10.

Pentad Number: 3435\_1945

Pentad Name: Elim

Habitat: Cultivate land, Nuwejaars river and marsh lands, Waschkraalvlei, Strandveld dam with marsh. Natural fynbos. The newly discovered Skaamgesiggie bird sanctuary in the Nuwejaars river.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 11

New species added this year: 10

Project Species Number: 137

Species Reported not confirmed: 3

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP- total: 27

SABAP2 Species Number: 164

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 9:3

Comments: The Skaamgesiggie Bird Sanctuary has been extremely dry this year but the Waschkraal vlei produced some excellent waders due to a burn 4 months previously. Eugene's experience in the area helped to locate them. Some good records for this pentad included: **Booted Eagle, Brown Hooded Kingfisher, Grey Plover, Hottentot Teal, Little Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Ruff, and Wood Sandpiper. Red-chested Flufftail** was once again easily located in the Skaamgesiggie sanctuary. The boardwalk from Zoetendals to the 3 dams are now completed for easy access.

11.

Pentad Number: 3435\_1950

Pentad Name: Bo-Voelvlei

Habitat: Nuwejaars river and wetland, Langpan, 1/3 of Rondepan and Northern third of Voelvlei. Cultivated land, natural fynbos and alien forest.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year: 3,

Project Species Number: 133

Species Reported not confirmed: 2

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 20

SABAP2 Species Number: 162

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 6:2

Comments: One summer count was completed with the most interesting identifications being:

**African Black Swift, Alpine Swift, Banded Martin.** The Langpan , Rondepan and Voelvlei being so dry severely effected birding in this pentad. A new access road to the Eastern Waschkraal also opened up to birding on a pan to the left of the Waschkraal vlei thanks to Eugene. This could prove to be interesting in future. This new access road also proved to be excellent for all the larks of the plain.

12.

Pentad Number: 3435\_1955

Pentad Name: Heuningrug

Habitat: Largely cultivated land with the natural fynbos covered Heuningrug taking up most of the pentad. Small farm dams and 2/3's of Rondepan.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year: 2

Project Species Number: 123

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 11

SABAP2 Species Number: 142

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 7:1

Comments: One winter count was done this year. Interesting records included: **African Goshawk, Brown-hooded Kingfisher.**

13.

Pentad Number: 3435\_2000

Pentad Name: Grooteiland

Habitat: Cultivated land, large wetland area due to Kars river ending in flat plain, Varkvlei, Man-made canals made to drain the area towards Heuningnes river. Small patches of fynbos and alien forest.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 11

New species added this year: 6,

Project Species Number: 136

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 26

SABAP2 Species Number: 155

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 8:4

Comments: One of the best pentads to survey in a dry year as the canals always have water. This year only one summer count was conducted. Access was improved this year when Andre Christie-Smith allowed us onto his farm for extensive birding. In a wet year this must be one of the most interesting pentads to record! Interesting identifications were: **African Snipe, Cloud Cisticola, Karoo Scrub-Robin, Wood Sandpiper.**

14.

Pentad Number: 3435\_2005

Pentad Name: Princekraal

Habitat: The Kars river ends in a delta in this pentad which forms a wetland before it forms again into the Kars river in the Grooteiland pentad. Largely cultivated land with patches of gumtree forests. Water canals deviated from the Kars river runs to Vogelgezang and feeds into this wetland. Ideal habitat for African Grass-owl.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 9

New species added this year: 2

Project Species Number: 118

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 34

SABAP2 Species Number: 157

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 6:3

Comments: The **African Grass-owl** breeding spot was observed in June and looks stable. Records of interest was: **African Paradise Flycatcher and Peregrine Falcon.** We met Dirk Gilliomee for the first time and this opened up some areas and led to some interesting observations with his keen interest in nature.

15.

Pentad Number: 3440\_1935

Pentad Name: Waterford

Habitat: Coastal fynbos, Northern Buffelsjagtbaai coast, Maccoavlei wetland, alien forest, Haelkraal river and Koks river with wetland feeding Ratel river. The northern pentad consists mainly of fynbos covered mountain and valleys.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 6

New species added this year: 3

Project Species Number: 107

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 10

SABAP2 Species Number: 123

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 4:3

Comments: This was a summer count when Maccoavlei was completely dry, hence the low count. Some of the previous farm lands were locked up and entry could not be obtained. Other opportunities have though appeared for future birding in the Koksrivier wetland. Interesting species were: **Red-chested Flufftail, Sandwich Tern.**

16.

Pentad Number: 3440\_1940

Pentad Name: Wolvengat

Habitat: The Ratel river wetland, Soetwater fountain, cultivated land, Uintjieskuil pan, Uintjieskuil dam, Alien forest patches, rehabilitated fynbos/wetland Ratel river plain. Wolvengat semi-urban area.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 6

New species added this year: 2,

Project Species Number: 127

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 13

SABAP2 Species Number: 138

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 5:2

Comments: One winter count was done. Interesting species recorded was: **Black Sparrowhawk, Cardinal Woodpecker**. I was told about the Gucci family farm which I will pursue next year.

17.

Pentad Number: 3440\_1945

Pentad Name: Rietfontein

Habitat: Cultivated land, alien tree patches, Uintjieskuil and river, patches natural fynbos on farms, Melkbospan and vlei and Vispan (salt pan). Also the Southern 3<sup>rd</sup> of Waschkraalvlei. It also includes vast natural fynbos in the Agulhas National Park.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 10

New species added this year: 7

Project Species Number: 141

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 17

SABAP2 Species Number: 167

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 7:3

Comments: One summer count which was probably the highlight of the year combined with the Elim pentad as the Waschkraal vlei falls within both. The seven new species was a direct result of the excellent birding after the fire destroyed most of the reedbeds. The reeds were only about 1m high which made it ideal for photography. Highlights were: **African Swamphen, African Rail, Marsh Sandpiper, Southern Tchagra, Yellow-billed Egret**.

18.

Pentad Number: 3440\_1950

Pentad Name: Voelvlei

Habitat: Natural fynbos on Soetany'sberg, ANP, Voelvlei, some seasonal pans, cultivated land, 4 dams West of Springfield Saltpan and Western edge of the Saltpan. Small portion of the Nuwejaars river wetland.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year: 2

Project Species Number: 127

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 17

SABAP2 Species Number: 150

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 7:1

Comments: One summer count was conducted. A **Southern Black Korhaan** was seen, but for the rest it was a rather dismal year in the pentad. For the first time in 9 years the vlei at one stage was completely dry.

19.

Pentad Number: 3440\_1955

Pentad Name: Zoetendalsvlei

Habitat: Zoetendals vlei, Nuwejaars river wetland, Springfield Saltpan, Cultivated land and renosterveld.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 15

New species added this year: 3 Sanderling, Striped Flufftail

Project Species Number: 161

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 40

SABAP2 Species Number: 191

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 12:2

Comments: One summer count was done this year. Three new species were recorded for the pentad of which the **Striped Flufftail** recorded by Eugene Hahndinck must be the find of the year! Eugene was attending a burning field when the flufftail almost collided with him! Well done Eugene!

20.

Pentad Number:3440\_2000

Pentad Name: Klipfontein

Habitat: Most of the Heuningnes river, cultivated land, various small pans and natural fynbos. Southern part of the De Mond Nature Reserve. Andrews Field Nature reserve fynbos with coastal dunes.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 12

New species added this year: 1

Project Species Number: 135

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 35

SABAP2 Species Number: 176

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 8:1

Comments: One summer count was done for the pentad with **Spotted Eagle-owl** the only new species recorded.

21.

Pentad Number:3440\_2005

Pentad Name: De Mond

Habitat: De Mond Estuary and Nature Reserve, Vogelgezang wetlands, Coastal dunes and cultivated land.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 12

New species added this year: 7

Project Species Number: 164

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 136

SABAP2 Species Number: 221

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 11:2

Comments: De Mond was as good as ever with the following interesting ID's: **Long-billed Crombec, Long-billed Pipit, Ruddy Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black Harrier, Damara Tern and Whimbrel**. The working relationship with Adrian has meant that we could be more thorough in covering the nature reserve. I now have a much better understanding of the area, but this will only improve in future. The fact remains that De Mond is the Crown jewel of the Agulhas Plain. It just never disappoints!

22.

Pentad Number: 3445\_1935

Pentad Name: Quoin Point

Habitat: All alien plants have been eradicated in this pentad now and the habitat now consists of mostly coastal fynbos. Quoin Rock island falls in this pentad. Sand as well as rocky beaches.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 7

New species added this year: 3

Project Species Number: 76

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 12

SABAP2 Species Number: 103

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 8:2

Comments: A winter count was done this year which made it less productive and no special ID's were among the three new species. Still remains a very interesting outing every year.

23.

Pentad Number: 3445\_1940

Pentad Name: Die Dam

Habitat: Coastal fynbos with small pans. Ratel river marsh last km before the mouth. Sandy as well as rocky beaches.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 7

New species added this year: 0

Project Species Number: 98

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 9

SABAP2 Species Number: 106

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 5:2

Comments: Once again a winter count was done which is probably why no new species were recorded. Access remains a problem in this pentad.

24.

Pentad Number: 3445\_1945

Pentad Name: Rietfontein se Baai

Habitat: Coastal fynbos and dune veld. Drie Vleitjies pans. Sandy and rocky beaches.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 7

New species added this year: 2



Project Species Number: 72

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 8

SABAP2 Species Number: 105

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 4:3

Comments: One summer count was done this year with little excitement. **Cape Clapper Lark** and **Cape Longclaw** being the new entries for this pentad.

25.

Pentad Number:3445\_1950

Pentad Name: Brandfontein

Habitat: Fynbos and Dune veld. Soetanyenberg southern slopes. Wetlands in valley below Soetany. Sandy as well as rocky shores.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year: 5 Project Species Number: 93

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP total: 14

SABAP2 Species Number: 128

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 3:5

Comments: 2 Summer counts were done this year. Some interesting ID's were: **Cape Gannet, Common Buzzard, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Red-faced Mousebird.**

26.

Pentad Number: 3445\_1955

Pentad Name: Suiderstrand

Habitat: Coastal Duneveld, large tracks of Fynbos, Southern-most tip of Zoetendalsvlei and Renoster pan. Sandberg. Mostly rocky coast with the spectacular Ryspunt peninsula.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 8

New species added this year:

Project Species Number: 139

Species Reported not confirmed: 0

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 37

SABAP2 Species Number: 178

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 7:1

Comments: One winter count was done and together with drought conditions explains the disappointing numbers.

27.

Pentad Number:3445\_2000

Pentad Name: Struisbaai

Habitat: Urban area surrounded by natural fynbos, coastal dune veld and Langerzandt Wetland. Struisbaai sewerage works. Harbour area suitable for spotting deep sea species. Sandy as well as rocky coast line.

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP for Project: 16

New species added this year: 3 Sub-Antarctic Skua, White Stork, White-chinned Petrel.

Project Species Number: 158

Species Reported not confirmed: 1

Full protocol checklists submitted to SABAP - total: 62

SABAP2 Species Number: 185

Recording distribution Summer to Winter: 10:6

Comments: One winter count was done. The highlight was the first two pelagic species recorded for the project near the harbour. This was made possible by the birds following the trawlers almost into the harbour. Another extraordinary observation was the White Stork flying over the ocean between De Mond and Struisbaai. It was flying towards land from the ocean but was miles in the sea. Where did it come from?

Another pelagic, **Northern Giant Petrel** was recorded at Langerzandt beach, exhausted by a storm and later removed for rehabilitation.

## **GOALS FOR 2019**

### **AGULHAS PLAIN BIRDING PROJECT:**

The first objective will be to cover each and every pentad at least once but making sure that the summer winter distribution is improved. In order to do that I have in advance coloured each pentad for 2019 in either red or blue in order to remind me which ones to do in which season. Ideally I would like to end up with at least 33% winter counts.

In 2018 we found only one of our target species, so the **target species list for 2019** remains almost the same:

Rufous-cheeked Nightjar (recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Baillon's Crake (one record heard only)

Spotted Crake - no record yet but as it occurs in the peninsula occasionally, it could soon be found

Cape Penduline-Tit (recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Cape Siskin (recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

European Bee-eater(recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Great Egret (recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Karoo Korhaan (recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Arctic Tern(De Mond)

Grey-backed Sparrow Lark(we still need pictures!)

Marsh Owl (Waschkraalvlei)

Sand Martin

Willow Warbler

Kori Bustard(there was a report of one 8 years ago)

Common Redshank

Roseate Tern

White-winged Tern(exclude juvenile Whiskered Tern)

White-backed Mousebird(recorded for SABAP but not for the project)

Grey Tit

Karoo Lark

Sand Martin

Victorin's Warbler

Black-headed Canary

Parasitic Jaeger

Squacco Heron

Please report any of the above asap and take photographs or sound recordings to help us with identification. Please contact me at:

[doc@agulhasplainbirding.co.za](mailto:doc@agulhasplainbirding.co.za) or

Cell: 0828070904 (SMS or call me)

You are invited to also report interesting ID's on the website([www.agulhasplainbirding.co.za](http://www.agulhasplainbirding.co.za))

**TRAINING:** "Birds of the Agulhas Plain" lecture to be given to the personnel at De Mond shortly.

**EVENTS:** Wetland Birding Day 2 Feb

Agulhas National Park Birding Sept 2019

Big Bird Day Nov 2019

### **THANK YOU**

A Word of thanks to all who gave access to their land especially the management of Agulhas National Park and farmers and farm managers in the Agulhas Plain (Liohan, Jan, Johan, Michael, Pieter, Mick, Hadre, Dirkie, Dirk, Con, Wilhelm, Bertie, Stephan, Conrad, Alistair and Des, Pieter, Dawie, Johannes and so many others). A special thanks to Eugene(and Erica) who has contributed tremendously in the past year. Your efforts are appreciated!

Thanks to Adrian from Cape Nature for improving access to De Mond and just his overall enthusiasm. It is so good to at last have a manager at De Mond that understands the value of De Mond in terms of bird conservation and tourism!

Thanks, Sam, for all the hard work on the website and Louise, my co-driver - will we ever forget those early morning coffees when others are still fast asleep!

Yours

Wim de Klerk