

REPORT OF THE BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA RARITIES COMMITTEE – 2013

It gives us great pleasure to present the 2013 Report of the BirdLife South Africa Rarities Committee after a number of years of silence on the subject. It has taken a lot of work to grind our way through the backlog of records, but it's good to finally be in a position to publish a report and acknowledge all of those conscientious birders out there who have taken the time to submit their sightings for adjudication.

The BirdLife South Africa Rarities Committee is chaired by Trevor Hardaker who is supported by a group of some of the most experienced birders in the country. The other members of the committee who have been involved with working through the recent backlog of records are Adam Riley, Athol Marchant, David Allan, David Hoddinott, Etienne Marais, Faansie Peacock, John Graham and Phil Whittington. Thanks very much to all these members for all their hard work during the past year. A special word of thanks should also be given to Hanneline Smit-Robinson and Linda van den Heever from BirdLife South Africa who have been involved behind the scenes in so ably assisting with all the administrative duties that has enabled the committee to function more smoothly.

It has been a particularly exciting period of records to work through with some new additions to the official South African checklist along the way. These included a Little Crake at Clovelly in the Western Cape, a Black Skimmer at Rietvlei Nature Reserve in the Western Cape and a Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo at Pafuri, Kruger National Park in Limpopo Province. There were also some other hugely popular birds that many people got to see, like the Golden Pipit at Pongola Nature Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal, the Northern Rockhopper Penguin at Soetwater near Kommetjie in the Western Cape and the Collared Flycatcher in Randburg in Gauteng.

It should be pointed out that the Rarities Committee is made up of a group of volunteers who give freely of their time to undertake this task. The members, most of them very busy individuals in their own rights, have to take the time to work through each submission with due diligence and make a decision based on the evidence presented to them in that particular submission.

With BirdLife South Africa's support, we will be continuing to streamline the process of rarities adjudications and hope that the system will run smoothly from now on. It is also our intention to produce annual reports moving forward and we really do hope that all of you will continue to make the effort to submit your records, providing the comprehensive information required, to the committee for adjudication. All these records will be included into an official database of accepted South African rarities for future generations to refer back to and will be incorporated into scientific studies.



Trevor Hardaker

Chairman of the BirdLife South Africa National Rarities Committee