COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

Newman's BIRDS

OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

REVISED BY

Vanessa Newman

sappi

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SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT: FAANSIE PEACOCK

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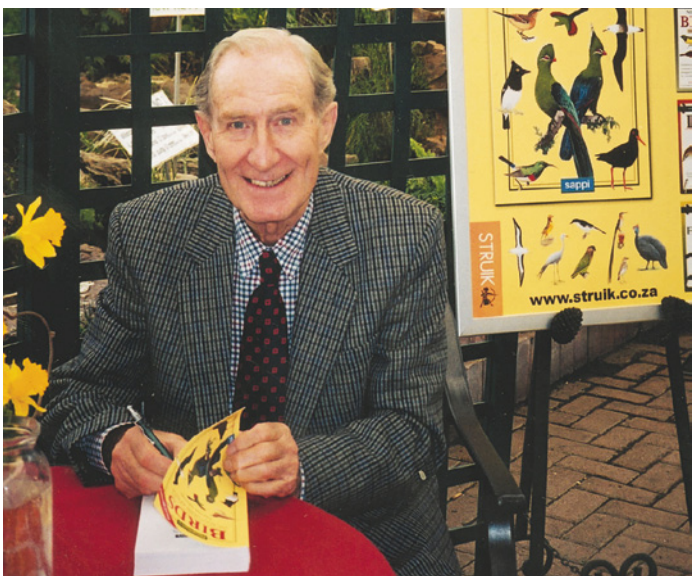
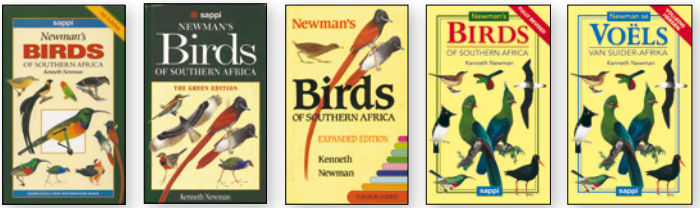
Tribute to Kenneth Newman

He was a wonderful guy. Only now, after Ken's death, are his contributions to humanity and Nature beginning to be fully appreciated. Apart from being Africa's 'Mr Birdman', his achievements were many and his influence global, in some respects.

Ken grew up in England, yet when he arrived here shortly after World War II, he soon gathered as much knowledge about this continent's natural wonders as any individual in Africa. It was he, as much as anyone in the world, who taught people how to identify – in an almost subconscious instant – shapes flying in the air. As a boy too young to enlist for service early in World War II, he was recruited to teach Allied airmen, plane-spotters and anti-aircraft gunners his arcane skill which allowed them to tell the difference between Allied aircraft and the enemy flying over Britain.

His favourite place was in a makoro on the waters of the Okavango Delta. Or in a glider soaring above the highest vultures on the Highveld. His most memorable place was probably an unnamed patch of equatorial jungle beyond the Congo, on the road to Timbuktu. It was near Lake Chad in the 1950s that the jalopy in which Ken and his wife were travelling broke down irretrievably. As night fell the lost couple were marooned, without food, human contact or any form of communication. In the gloom they suddenly saw a face at their window, heavily scarred





with patterned cuts. It smiled, and they saw in the torchlight two rows of file-sharpened teeth. Ken had met an unknown tribe. 'The women as well as the men were quite naked, except for a little flap they wore; they were primitive and wonderful people. Some of the nicest we ever met.'

Ken was a true gentleman in the best, old-fashioned sense; one who believed self-importance and self-interest were anathema to the spirit.

His life was dedicated to sharing with others those so-called 'moments of magic' which he had discovered in a special area of life on this planet. In propagating to the world awareness of this 'life force' he was exceeded in the past century by only one man I believe: Roger Tory Peterson who had, 30 years previously, through his art and obsession, popularised birding and turned it into a tourist industry in the United States.

Ken would spurn as irrelevant my attempt at listing his achievements in this same field. But his work was highly relevant, and all the world should be aware of and grateful for it. He pioneered a popular form of bird guides which outsold all other books in Africa except, until quite recently, the Bible. His books followed a clear, instantly grasped formula inspiring similar bird guides here and in many other countries. If you go back to his simple step-by-step route to bird identification, set out in different words in almost all his works, you will see how effective his teaching is and how big his influence has been.

Fortunately he will be with us, and our children and our children's children for a long time. His daughter Vanessa is among the first to hold the torch that illuminates his work, his advice, his paintings and his unspoken philosophy. Hers is an important mission, for birding has become one of the most effective ways of re-introducing 'civilised' mankind to the joys and benefits of our natural environment. The form of widespread public interest in birdlife which Ken encouraged so joyously provides a constant reminder of the growing threats to our environment. Vanessa's work will benefit all of us. It should help other birders – scientific, scholarly and people of the earth – to carry the torch in greater and greater numbers.

HARVEY TYSON **(former Editor of *The Star*)**
Hermanus 2010

DEDICATION

To the memory of Kenneth, who loved his birds,
and to Ursula, who loved the trees they perched in.
They will continue living in our hearts
and be remembered by all who knew them.
From Vanessa, Nicholas and Pamela.

Struik Nature (an imprint of Random House Struik (Pty) Ltd)
Reg. No. 1966/003153/07
Wembley Square, First Floor, Solan Road, Gardens, Cape Town, 8001
PO Box 1144, Cape Town, 8000 South Africa

Visit us at **www.randomstruik.co.za** and
subscribe to our newsletter for monthly news and updates

First published by Macmillan South Africa (Publishers) (Pty) Ltd in 1983
Published by Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd in 1988
Published by Struik Publishers (Pty) Ltd in 2000
Commemorative Edition published by Struik Nature in 2010

5 7 9 10 8 6 4

Softcover edition ISBN: 978 1 77007 876 5
PVC edition ISBN: 978 1 77007 878 9

Also available in Afrikaans as *Newman se Voëls van Suider-Afrika*
Softcover edition (Afrikaans) ISBN: 978 1 77007 877 2
PVC edition (Afrikaans) ISBN: 978 1 77007 879 6

Publishing manager: Pippa Parker
Managing editor: Helen de Villiers
Editor: Ian Parsons
Ornithological consultant: Faansie Peacock
Designer: Louise Topping
Design assistant: Jennifer Addington
Translator: Banie Penzhorn
Reproduction: Hirt & Carter
Printed and bound by: Toppan Leefung
Packaging and Printing (Dongguan) co. Ltd, China

SPONSOR'S FOREWORD

It is with mixed feelings that I am introducing this revised edition of Sappi-sponsored *Newman's Birds of Southern Africa*. I am delighted to present an updated version of this definitive field guide; on the other hand, I am saddened that Ken is not here to witness its re-launch. His death in October 2006 was a loss not just for the birding community, but for anyone interested in conservation.

Ken played a pivotal role in the popularisation of bird watching through the publication of his many books. His commitment was reflected through his presidency of both the South African Ornithological Society and BirdLife South Africa, and he was President of the BirdLife Sandton branch at the time of his death. Ken was the first non-scientist to receive the prestigious Gill Memorial Medal, for a lifetime's contribution to ornithology in southern Africa. He was also awarded a BirdLife South Africa Owl Award for promoting the enjoyment, conservation, study and understanding of wild birds and their habitats.

Ken had a rich canvas from which to draw: over 900 bird species occur in southern Africa, of which 179 are either full or near endemics. The region also hosts a number of intra-African migrants such as cuckoos and kingfishers, as well as birds from the Arctic, Europe, Central Asia, China and Antarctica. Of the 10 families of birds found only in Africa and related islands, nine are found in southern Africa.

Sappi's association with Ken – and with birding – goes far back. Between 1997 and 2007, Sappi Forests held the Sappi Great Birding Adventure annually: teams of watchers recorded bird species sighted on Sappi's lands within a given period of time, and those frequently recorded were compared with unusual, infrequent sightings. This showed that 286 species (63%) were recorded regularly (five or more times); and 74 species (16%) were recorded only once, and are regarded as rare on these estates. Every year, an average of 15 Red Data species were recorded, with two Critically Endangered species, the Blue Swallow and Wattled Crane, frequently listed.

Together with our strategic partner, WWF, we are also involved in several community-owned avi-tourism projects on our land, centred around threatened, biodiversity-rich indigenous forests and wetlands in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. The objective is to protect sensitive biomes and establish sustainable business ventures for rural communities. These include the Wakkerstroom Birding Centre in Mpumalanga, the Ongonye Forest Birding Camp in KwaZulu-Natal and the Southern KwaZulu-Natal Birding Route.

In a world characterised by speed and urgency, birding offers the antithesis – a chance to sit still, unwind and simply observe – whether in one's own garden or in a remote area of bush. Little wonder that it is one of the fastest growing hobbies in the world and that, for many, sighting the birding Big Six – the Ground Hornbill, Kori Bustard, Saddlebilled Stork, Pels Fishing Owl, Lappet-faced Vulture and Martial Eagle – is more important than sighting the Big Five game animals.

Benjamin Franklin said, 'An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest'. Whether you're a committed twitcher intent on adding yet another 'lifer' to your list, or a beginner, you'll find this field guide invaluable.

It has been predicted that paper usage would die out in the 21st century. This revised edition is proof of the integral role paper still plays in education, in preserving our collective memory and in providing the tactile and visual experience that only paper can offer. Ken's commitment to and his passion for his subject are alive on every page of this field guide.

I hope you enjoy reading it and using it as much as I plan to.

RALPH BOËTTGER
Chief Executive Officer • Sappi Limited

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Newman's Birds of Southern Africa was my father's chief labour of love, an ongoing project which he began when I was a small child and one I'm proud to continue for him, on behalf of my brother Nicholas and sister Pamela. Even towards the end of his life, when he knew there would soon come a time when he could no longer work on his books, I sensed only a deep satisfaction that he'd had an opportunity to share his love and immense knowledge of birds with others while he could. Dad never once insisted that any of us take up the reins, but I always knew I couldn't abandon his legacy. Once my decision was made and I announced to him my intention not to let his long years of hard work simply end, he just smiled in that quiet, gentle way that he had, saying, 'well then, I'd be very happy with that'. I'm not the only person to wish there was some way of downloading a person's knowledge to access after they've gone, because no matter how often I picked his brains I continued to learn from him right up to the end. While I'm lucky enough to be able to draw and paint as he did, there is so much accumulated expertise that he took with him. It has therefore been a vast boon to have had the invaluable help of ornithologist Faansie Peacock to fill the gaps of my knowledge in bringing this Commemorative Edition to life; my sincere and heartfelt thanks go to him.

The Commemorative Edition is not only a tribute to my father's work and achievements, but is a natural evolution following recent DNA research and ornithological re-classification, much of which has been achieved by the Percy FitzPatrick Institute in Cape Town. Subsequent alterations to groupings and scientific names have, in many instances, affected common names. While there will always be debate on the 'suitability' or 'accuracy' of the vernacular, I've taken the decision to make name changes in accordance with the International Ornithological Committee (IOC) list. These changes are also in line with those common names used in other parts of Africa and the rest of the world.

My father's original motivation was to produce an informative but easy-to-use field guide that both beginners and expert birders could use. In the Commemorative Edition my objective has been to enhance it as a reference tool, a challenge in itself for a field guide, which, by its very nature, shouldn't be too complicated! However, when I considered the little gems of information on recognition, calls, behaviour, etc. that I've hand written in my own treasured and well-leafed copy over the years, I felt it would really add something. So, in the trend adopted by other field guides around the world, the plates are now annotated. All distribution maps are updated according to the latest recordings and incorporate a new two-toned theme indicating species' abundance. There is also more detail on rarities, vagrants, endangered and endemic species, which is vitally important to our general understanding of our fragile and very threatened ecology.

On behalf of my father, grateful thanks must of course go to everyone who helped him bring this field guide together in its original form over the years: his friends, colleagues, museums and ornithological institutions. My own thanks go to Nick, Pam and my husband Edward, for their continued support over the many months I've been working on this. Thanks also to Banie Penzhorn who, once again, has taken on the massive task of translating information and names into Afrikaans. My thanks go also to Pippa Parker of Struik Nature, a font of knowledge and experience, who has guided me through this revision from the start. Naturally, my biggest thanks are to my beloved father for being the best, most patient teacher, quietly training me for when I would take up the torch and run with it.

VANESSA NEWMAN, **for Kenneth Newman (1924–2006)**

CONTENTS

SCOPE OF THIS FIELD GUIDE

This field guide covers the whole of the southern African subregion and the subantarctic region adjacent to the continent. Southern Africa is generally accepted as being that part of Africa lying south of the Zambezi, Okavango and Kunene rivers, or approximately 17°S. It embraces several national states and a diversity of geophysical regions, ranging from tropical coasts to the most arid desert, and its bird fauna is correspondingly diverse. As might be expected, the birds show strong affinities with the avifauna of the rest of Africa south of the Sahara Desert (the Afrotropical region). The majority of birds found in the subregion therefore also occur north of its limits.

Emperor and Adelie penguins

In addition to the wide variety of mainland birds, numerous pelagic sea birds, many of which breed on islands in the southern oceans, visit the southern African coasts. These sea birds, ranging in size from the diminutive storm-petrels to the enormous albatrosses, are often difficult to identify. Many are only identified by small details of plumage or flight pattern and, in addition, they are normally glimpsed from the pitching deck of a ship or from wind-blasted and rain-lashed shores as they mount upwards briefly from a wave trough before descending out of sight again. Such are the difficulties of getting to grips with sea bird identities that, for many years, the average bird-watcher showed little interest in them. Even so, the birds of the northern seas have always been better known than those of the southern oceans through their more frequent contact with land.

Since the 1960s, a gradual change has come about because of a new interest by leading nations of the world in the southern islands and in Antarctica itself. Permanent stations have been established for, amongst other things, weather monitoring. Teams of scientists are permanently or temporarily stationed in these inhospitable regions for the purpose of studying the ocean and its resources. As an example, the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology in Cape Town has for many years been studying sea-bird life in the seas adjacent to southern Africa. A succession of its researchers has been based on Marion Island, from where periodic visits are made to other islands as far afield as the Tristan da Cunha group.

Much has been learned about the population dynamics, feeding ecologies and breeding of some sea birds. Stemming from this new interest in the southern sea birds, and the increased need for a specific guide to those found in southern African seas, the entire region south to the pack ice has been included in this field guide. Not only does it embrace all sea birds known to reach the shores of southern Africa, but also those that will be seen on or in the vicinity of Tristan da Cunha (Tristan, Nightingale and Inaccessible islands), Gough, Bouvet, Marion and Prince Edward islands. There is a total of 19 additional species, including some land birds. South Africa's territorial waters now extend to 200 nautical miles offshore, and this has led to an increase in sightings of sea birds that now qualify for inclusion in the southern African species list.

IDENTIFYING BIRDS

With the array of birds that can be seen in southern Africa (around 1 000 species), identifying the bird you have seen can be extremely challenging. To this end, you need the right equipment, you need to use the equipment you have correctly and you need to notice the features of the bird and its environment that will lead to an accurate identification.

WHAT YOU NEED TO IDENTIFY BIRDS

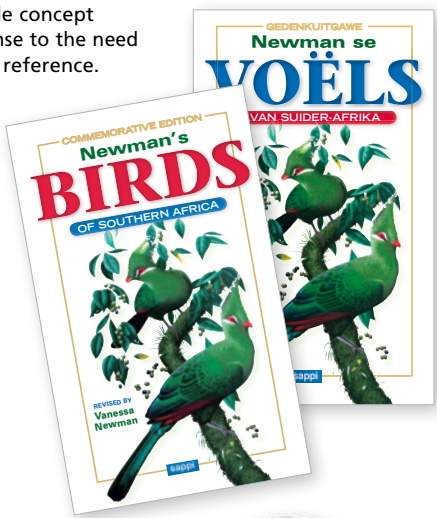
Binoculars

A pair of binoculars is an essential part of a bird-watcher's equipment; hardly any bird can be properly studied without it. Many good makes are available and 7 x 30, 8 x 35 or 10 x 40 are recommended. The first figure indicates the magnification and the second, the diameter of the front, or objective, lens.

Generally speaking, the greater the diameter of the objective lens in proportion to the eyepiece, the more light is gathered and transmitted, and so the brighter the image. Many people also use a telescope to study distant, difficult-to-identify species.

Field guides and handbooks

A field guide is the next essential part of the bird-watcher's equipment. The field guide concept originated in the late 1930s in response to the need for portability coupled with ease of reference. First was the now famous series by Roger Tory Peterson, covering the birds of the United States of America. Later the idea caught on in Britain, Europe and elsewhere. For the serious bird-watcher, a field guide is only a supplement to a more comprehensive and informative bird handbook, the latter usually being too bulky and cumbersome for normal fieldwork. The main purpose of a field guide is to help the observer identify a species speedily from an illustration and a brief description of plumage and song. More comprehensive information about the bird may then be sought at leisure from an appropriate handbook.



Bird call recordings

When learning the songs and calls of birds the use of bird-call recordings can help tremendously. A wide range of CDs and mp3s is available and many are linked to this field guide.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN IDENTIFYING BIRDS

The following six guidelines will help you to identify a bird; try to memorise them. With practice, they will come to mind automatically when you look at a new bird and will help you to remember its important features. If possible, write what you have seen in a notebook at the time of sighting.

Relative size

Compare the bird with common ones that are well known to you. Is it larger or smaller than a sparrow? If larger, is it larger or smaller than a pigeon? If larger, is it larger or smaller than a guineafowl?

14–15 cm

33 cm

53–58 cm

Bill shape and colour

The shape of a bird's bill is a guide to what it eats and, therefore, to the kind of bird it is. Is its bill short, stout and conical like that of a sparrow, or is it small and slender, long and slender, long and curved, powerful and hooked? What colour is its bill? Many birds have black or dark bills, but some bills are brightly coloured.

Insect-eater

Flower-prober

Ground-prober

Fish-eater

Omnivore

Fruit-eater

Seed-eater

Flesh-eater

Length and colour of the bird's legs

Does the bird have unusually long legs, such as are found in many that wade in water or walk in long grass, or short legs as seen in swallows and swifts? Are its legs a distinctive colour?

Plumage colours or markings

If the bird has bold markings on its head, wings, body or tail, these should be noted, as should any bright colours. Many birds have white wing-bars or tail-bars; others have distinct eyebrows or breast-bands.

Edward Owen

Communal nests of Red-billed Buffalo-weavers in a mixed thornveld habitat.

Habitat

Is it in the garden, in water, in grassland, bushveld or forest? The habitat in which the bird is seen is another important clue to the kind of bird it is (see description of habitats on pp. 26–32).

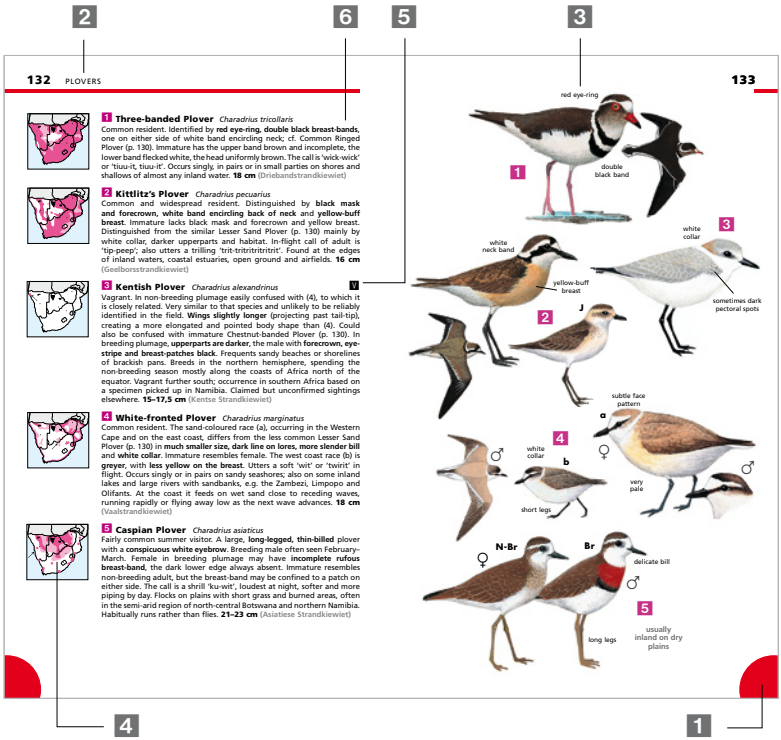
Activity

Is it walking, hopping, wading or swimming? Does it peck at the ground, feed in the air or in a tree, or probe in the mud? Try to detail its behaviour as closely as possible.

Often the details of a bird's structure, plumage or behaviour are soon forgotten and the observer may spend much time trying to recall them. If these six points are remembered or noted at the time of the observation, an analysis can be made after the bird has flown away.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Once you have used the guidelines above to identify the bird's features, it is time to consult the field guide. Follow the six steps below to identify the bird you have seen accurately. These identification methods are further explained on pp. 14–33.



1 Using the colour coding (see pp. 14–17), identify in which section of the book you are most likely to find the bird.

2 Using the running head at the top of the page, decide on which page or group of pages you should be looking.

3 Examine the pictures of the birds and decide which looks most like the bird you have seen.

4 Check the selected bird's distribution map and see whether the bird occurs in the area, and whether it is present all year round or only some of the year. Text below the map indicates the bird's status, e.g. endangered, vulnerable, etc.

5 Symbols (see p. 21) indicate whether the bird is endemic/near-endemic/introduced/vagrant/rare.

6 Read the text to pick up additional information and confirm the identification.

1 and 2 WHICH GROUP DOES THE BIRD BELONG TO?

The colour coding in the field guide divides the bird species into 12 distinct groups. By placing the bird you have seen into one of the 12 groups, you immediately limit the number of species you need to consider in determining

Ocean, offshore and Subantarctic birds

Habitat is your best clue to placing birds in this group.
The exceptions are some of the gulls, the African Skimmer and some of the terns, all of which are also seen on inland waters.

EXTRA-LIMITAL SPECIES: Cormorants 34 • **Penguins** 34 • **Storm Petrels** 36 • **Diving Petrels** 36 • **Terns** 26 • **Petrels** 38 • **Sheathbills** 38 • **Moorhens & Rails** 38 • **Buntings** 40 • **Thrushes** 40
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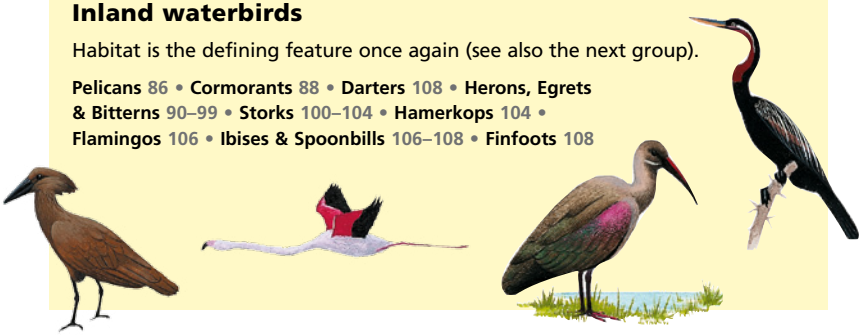
Inland waterbirds

Habitat is the defining feature once again (see also the next group).

Pelicans 86 • **Cormorants** 88 • **Darters** 108 • **Herons, Egrets & Bitterns** 90–99 • **Storks** 100–104 • **Hamerkops** 104 • **Flamingos** 106 • **Ibises & Spoonbills** 106–108 • **Finfoots** 108



Ducks, wading birds and shorebirds

These birds are also found on inland and coastal waters; the wading birds generally have long legs adapted for feeding in shallow water or on the shoreline.

Geese & Ducks 110–119 • **Greves** 120 • **Coots, Gallinules & Moorhens** 120–123 • **Flufftails, Crakes & Rails** 124–127 • **Painted-Snipes** 128 • **Plovers, Snipes & allies** 128–133 • **Sandpipers and allied waders** 134–146 • **Golden Plovers** 146 • **Jacanas** 148 • **Lapwings** 148–151 • **Oystercatchers** 152 • **Phalaropes** 152 **Crab Plovers** 154 • **Avocets & Stilts** 154

its identity. Once you have located the right group of birds, headings at the tops of pages will tell you which family group (or groups) is dealt with on each page. Use this to find the page that probably features the bird you have seen.

Terrestrial birds

These include the long-legged birds that inhabit grasslands.

Raptors

Birds of prey all have bills and talons adapted for killing and eating meat.

Colourful, medium-sized birds

This group is comprised of colourful, medium-sized birds with distinctive calls.

Nocturnal birds

Very distinctive nocturnal birds. Most also have identifying calls.

Owls 246–252 • **Nightjars** 252–257

Aerial feeders, hole-nesters and sociable birds

A diverse group comprising species that catch their prey in flight, such as swifts, swallows and martins; the distinctive mousebirds; the hole-nesting species (barbets, bee-eaters, hornbills and hoopoes); and the honeyguides.

Swallows 258–264 • **Martins** 264–268 • **Swifts** 269–273 • **Mousebirds** 274 • **Bee-eaters** 274–279 • **Kingfishers** 280–285 • **Rollers** 286 • **Wood Hoopoes** 288 • **Hoopoes** 288 • **Hornbills** 290–294 • **Barbets & Tinkerbirds** 294–298 • **Woodpeckers** 298–302 • **Wrynecks** 302 • **Honeyguides & Honeybirds** 304–306 • **Creepers** 306 • **Broadbills** 302 • **Pittas** 306

Insect-eaters

The slender-billed, insect-eating birds of this group have similarities of shape and behaviour.

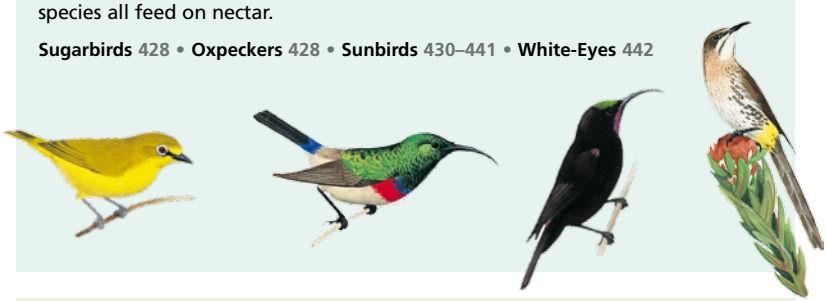
Larks 308–319 • **Long-billed Larks** 316 • **Sparrow-Larks** 320 • **Pipits, Longclaws & Wagtails** 322–333 • **Drongos** 334 • **Cuckooshrikes** 336 • **Crows** 338 • **Orioles** 338–341 • **Bulbuls & allies** 342–345 • **Tits** 346 • **Babblers** 348 • **Thrushes, Chats & Robins** 350–371

Insect-eaters, fruit-eaters and omnivores

This group contains a variety of insectivorous, frugivorous or omnivorous species that can be recognised from their jizz.

Specialised feeders

This is a small group of specialised feeders. The oxpeckers have very distinctive feeding behaviour, white-eyes are specialised leaf-gleaners, and the other species all feed on nectar.



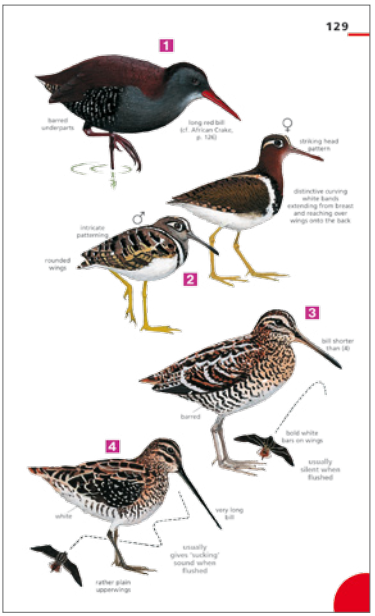
Seed-eaters

The seed-eaters are distinguished by their strong, conical bills.

3 COLOUR PLATES

Use the colour illustrations to find the bird that looks most like what you have seen (watch out for colour variations). The birds have been painted, so far as is possible, in such a way as to reveal their characteristic shapes, colours, markings and stance (or 'jizz' as it is known in birding parlance). Where several species on a plate closely resemble each other, they are all drawn in a similar stance to facilitate direct comparison. All the main figures on a plate are in approximate proportion to each other and, wherever possible, all birds in a family are drawn to the same proportions whether on the same plate or not. In a few cases it has been necessary to depict larger birds of a family to a smaller scale than the others on the same plate. Secondary figures showing birds in flight or performing some other characteristic action are not drawn to the same proportions as the main figures.

It is customary in bird books to present species in strict taxonomic order, that is to say, in the order used by the national checklist. This usually means that one starts with the ostrich and the grebes, continues with sea birds, herons, ducks, and so on, and finishes with canaries and buntings. In this field guide, this order of presentation has been applied with elasticity. Because its basic purpose is to help with bird identification, and in the knowledge that many users may not be familiar with the various bird families and their characteristics, some species that have a visual resemblance to birds of another family have been illustrated with those they most closely resemble.



Symbols used on the colour illustrations

♂	denotes MALE
♀	denotes FEMALE
J	denotes a juvenile or immature bird
Br	denotes breeding plumage
N-Br	denotes non-breeding plumage

4 DISTRIBUTION MAPS

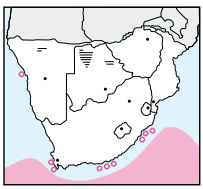
Each bird description is accompanied by a small distribution map showing the areas in which it is likely to be found. These species ranges are rough guides only, based on present-day knowledge of the bird's occurrence.

All maps are two-toned: each species' relative abundance is indicated by dark pink (common) and light pink (less common). In some cases, light pink may also indicate where a species occurs during part of the year only. In certain cases, notably among the waterbirds, light-pink areas have been added to indicate temporary range extensions that occur under favourable weather conditions.

Vagrants are indicated by small open circles, while the known local ranges of isolated populations are shown with coloured spots. Arrows have been liberally applied to highlight small populations or vagrants. For pelagic species, distribution is given for a wide oceanic region.

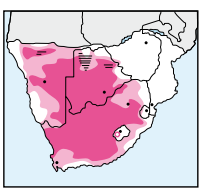
Because birds are highly mobile creatures, they frequently appear in the most unlikely places and one should be ever watchful for species occurring beyond the range shown on the maps. Comparison with the master maps (p. 20) will provide an accurate key to the locations shown on the distribution maps or in the text.

Key to distribution maps

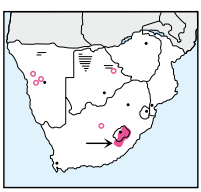


OCEAN DISTRIBUTION
The broad area of colour over the ocean indicates a bird of the open seas, rarely found along the coast.

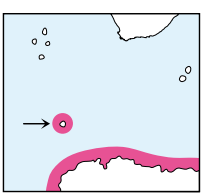
COASTAL DISTRIBUTION
The narrow band indicates a bird found along the coast.



POPULATION DENSITY
The dark area indicates where a bird is more common, the pale area indicates where it is less common or ranges for only part of the year.

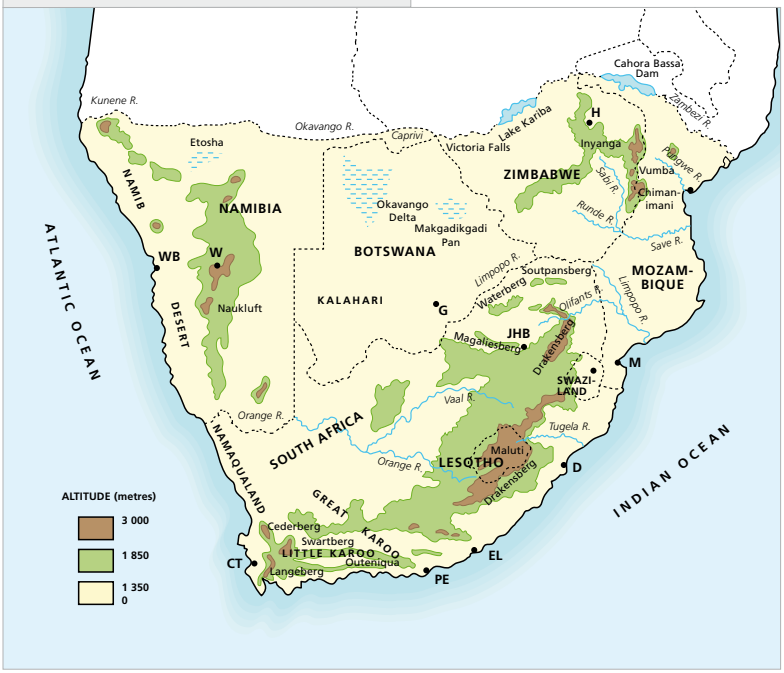


OPEN CIRCLES AND ARROWS
A circle indicates where a bird has been recorded but is not regular. An arrow points to an area where there is a known population, be it resident or visiting.

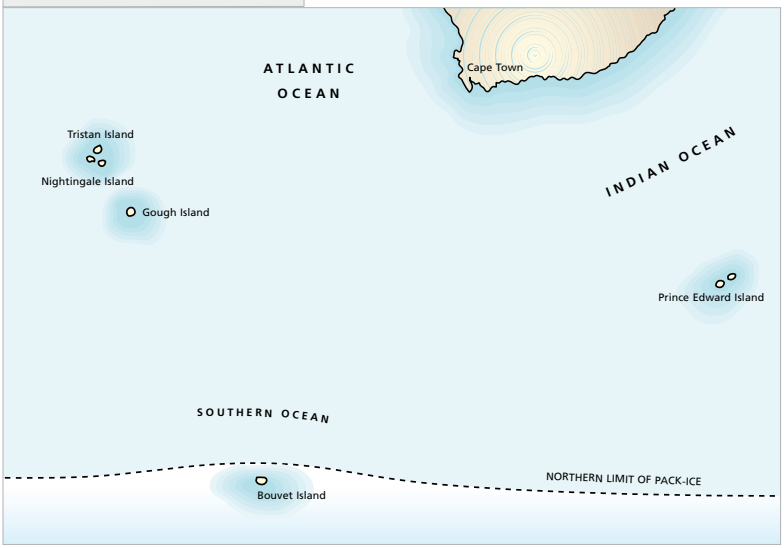


SUBANTARCTIC REGION
An arrow indicates where there is a known resident population. The other distribution indicators apply as for southern Africa.

Southern African subregion



Subantarctic region



5 STATUS OF THE SPECIES

The status of a bird as an endangered species (near threatened, vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered) is indicated below the distribution map.

NEAR THREATENED	likely to become endangered in the near future
VULNERABLE	high risk of endangerment in the wild
ENDANGERED	high risk of extinction in the wild
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	extremely high risk of extinction in the wild

Following the bird's names is a brief statement about its relative abundance, whether it is rare or endemic, and whether it is a seasonal visitor, a resident or a vagrant. Endemic, near-endemic, introduced, vagrant and rare species are marked with symbols, as shown below. (Note that terms indicating abundance relate to the bird's status within its preferred or normal habitat, and not to its abundance in the entire region.)

E	endemic: found exclusively in the area indicated
NE	near-endemic: almost exclusively inhabits the area indicated
I	introduced from other parts of the world by humans
V	vagrant: not normally seen in southern Africa
R	rare: recorded 10 times or less in any year in suitable habitat
Very rare	recorded 5 times or less in any 5-year period
Uncommon	recorded 30 times or less a month in suitable habitat
Fairly common	recorded 1–10 times a day in suitable habitat
Common	recorded 10–50 times a day in suitable habitat
Very common	recorded 50–100 times a day in suitable habitat
Abundant	recorded 100 times or more a day in suitable habitat
Seasonal	seen at certain times of the year only
Winter	April–August
Summer	September–March
Localised	seen only in restricted areas of suitable habitat
Resident	breeds in southern Africa
Visitor	non-breeding (Palearctic or intra-Africa migrant)

E Endemic species

Of special interest are the endemics: those species found in southern Africa and nowhere else. There are 100 endemics in the region and 76 near-endemics (species whose distribution extends just beyond southern Africa).

African Black Oystercatcher
African Penguin
African Rock Pipit
Agulhas Long-billed Lark
Ant-eating Chat
Bank Cormorant
Barlow's Lark
Barratt's Warbler
Black Harrier
Black-eared Sparrowlark
Black-headed Canary
Blue Crane
Blue Korhaan
Botha's Lark
Brown Scrub Robin
Buff-streaked Chat
Burchell's Courser
Bush Blackcap
Cape Batis
Cape Bulbul
Cape Canary
Cape Clapper Lark
Cape Grassbird
Cape Long-billed Lark
Cape Longclaw
Cape Parrot
Cape Rock jumper
Cape Rock-Thrush
Cape Shoveler
Cape Siskin
Cape Spurfowl
Cape Sugarbird
Cape Vulture
Cape Weaver
Cape White-Eye

Chirinda Apalis
Chorister Robin-Chat
Cinnamon-breasted Warbler
Crowned Cormorant
Denham's Bustard
Drakensberg Prinia
Drakensberg Rockjumper
Drakensberg Siskin
Dune Lark
Eastern Long-billed Lark
Fairy Flycatcher
Fiscal Flycatcher
Forest Buzzard
Forest Canary
Greater Double-collared Sunbird
Grey Tit
Grey-winged Francolin
Ground Woodpecker
Gurney's Sugarbird
Hartlaub's Gull
Jackal Buzzard
Karoo Eremomela
Karoo Korhaan
Karoo Lark
Karoo Long-billed Lark
Karoo Prinia
Karoo Scrub Robin
Karoo Thrush
Kimberley Pipit
Knysna Turaco
Knysna Warbler
Knysna Woodpecker
Large-billed Lark
Layard's Warbler
Melodious Lark
Namaqua Warbler
Neergaard's Sunbird
Orange River White-Eye
Orange-breasted Sunbird
Pied Starling
Pink-throated Twinspot
Protea Canary
Red Lark
Roberts's Warbler
Rudd's Lark
Rufous-eared Warbler
Sclater's Lark
Sentinel Rock-Thrush
Short-clawed Lark
Sickle-winged Chat
Sociable Weaver
South African Shelduck
Southern Bald Ibis
Southern Black Korhaan
Southern Boubou
Southern Double-collared Sunbird
Southern Pied Babbler
Southern Tchagra
Swee Waxbill
Victorin's Warbler
White-backed Mousebird
White-bellied Bustard
White-quilled Bustard
White-throated Robin-Chat
Yellow-breasted Pipit

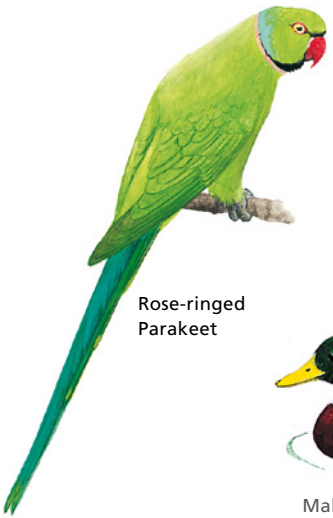
NE Near-endemic species (including breeding endemics)

Acacia Pied Barbet
African Red-eyed Bulbul
Ashy Tit
Barred Wren-Warbler
Benguela Long-billed Lark
Black-chested Prinia
Black-faced Babbler
Bokmakierie
Boulder Chat
Bradfield's Hornbill
Bradfield's Swift
Burchell's Sandgrouse
Burchell's Starling
Burchell's Coucal
Cape Bunting
Cape Cormorant (BE)
Cape Gannet (BE)
Cape Penduline Tit
Cape Sparrow
Cape Starling
Carp's Black Tit
Chat Flycatcher
Chestnut-vented Warbler
Cloud Cisticola
Crimson-breasted Shrike
Damara Red-billed Hornbill
Damara Tern (BE)
Double-banded Sandgrouse
Dusky Sunbird
Eastern Clapper Lark
Fawn-coloured Lark
Gray's Lark
Great Sparrow
Grey-backed Cisticola
Grey-backed Sparrow Lark
Hartlaub's Spurfowl
Herero Chat
Kalahari Scrub Robin
Karoo Chat
Lark-like Bunting
Lemon-breasted Canary
Ludwig's Bustard
Marico Flycatcher
Monotonous Lark
Monteiro's Hornbill
Mountain Wheatear
Namaqua Sandgrouse
Natal Spurfowl
Olive Bush-Shrike
Pale-winged Starling
Pink-billed Lark
Pririt Batis
Red-billed Spurfowl
Red-crested Korhaan
Red-headed Finch
Rockrunner
Rosy-faced Lovebird
Rudd's Apalis
Rufous-winged Cisticola
Rüppell's Parrot
Sabota Lark
Scaly-feathered Weaver
Shaft-tailed Whydah
Short-toed Rock-Thrush
South African Cliff Swallow (BE)
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk
Southern White-crowned Shrike
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
Spike-heeled Lark
Stark's Lark
Swainson's Spurfowl
Tractrac Chat
White-tailed Shrike
White-throated Canary
Woodward's Batis
Yellow Canary

1 Introduced species

Many birds have been introduced into southern Africa in past years, but only 11 species survive today. They are:

Chukar Partridge	Common Starling	Mallard
Common Chaffinch	House Crow	Mute Swan
Common Myna	House Sparrow	Rose-ringed Parakeet
Common Pigeon	Indian Peafowl	



Rose-ringed Parakeet

Common Starling

Mallard

6 SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS

The final step is to read the text about the bird you think you have identified to check whether the description matches its behaviour, call and habitat. The species descriptions have several components.

Status | English common name(s) | Scientific name

3 Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

Description

Uncommon to locally common summer visitor. Distinguished from (4) by **pale blue forehead, eyebrows and cheeks**, and **yellow-and-brown throat and upper breast**. Told from European Bee-eater (p. 276) by green (not gold-and-brown) mantle. A large bee-eater of generally **green appearance**. The short, liquid call is 'prruik' or 'prree-oo, prree-oo'. Usually occurs in small flocks near large rivers, dams, floodplains and coastal grassland, where it often hawks from a dead tree standing in water. **27–33 cm** (Blouwangbyvreter)

Voice | Habitat | Behaviour

Measurement | Afrikaans common name

Bird names

In the descriptive text for each species, on the page facing the illustration of that species, the bird's common English name is given first in bold letters. In some cases a second common English name in wide use is also given in brackets. Immediately following the common name is the scientific name by which the species is known throughout the world regardless of language. This appears in italic type and consists of the bird's genus and species, in that order. The Afrikaans common name is given in brackets at the end of the text.

Scientific names call for some explanation for the benefit of those unaccustomed to them. The accepted common names of species tend to vary from country to country. Therefore, based on the international system of scientific nomenclature originated in the 18th century by the Swedish naturalist, Carl Linnaeus, all animals (and this includes birds) have been placed in clear groups or taxa, using names based on Latin or ancient Greek, which obviates any risk of confusion. No two birds can have the same binomial (two-part) scientific name. First, all animal life is placed in classes, and birds belong to the class Aves, mammals to the class Mammalia, insects to Insecta, and so on. These classes are then divided into major groups known as orders. The orders are subdivided into families, the families into genera (genus is the singular), and the genera into one or more species. A species can further be divided into races or subspecies.

When the above system of scientific nomenclature is applied to the common House Sparrow, its credentials look like this:

Class:	Aves
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Passeridae
Genus:	*Passer*
Species:	*domesticus*

Description of the species

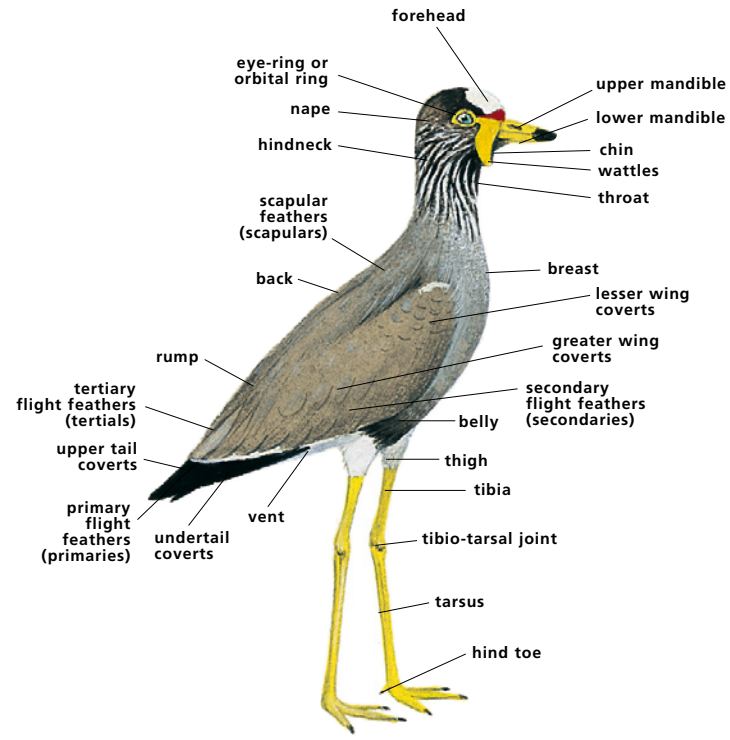
This is a brief description of the bird, enlarging on what is shown in the illustration and, where possible, comparing it with other species with similar plumage. It is important to be familiar with certain terms used to describe a bird's anatomy. These are clearly indicated in the illustrations opposite.

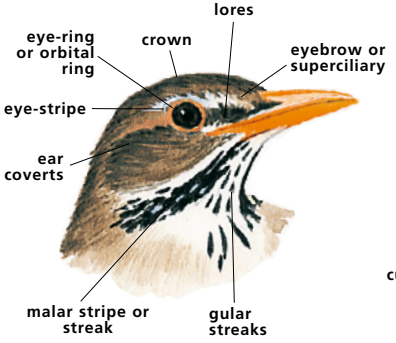
Voice

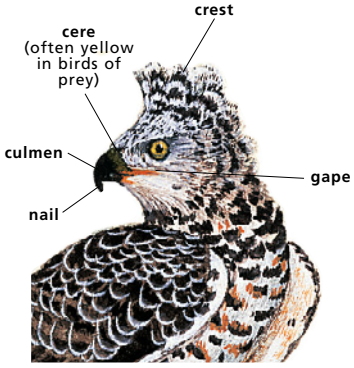
After the description is a rendition of the bird's call or song, written as closely as possible to the sound heard. If it cannot be written, a general description is given of the type of song uttered. The transcription of birdsong into words is no easy matter, and no two people hear it or describe it in quite the same way. These descriptions should, therefore, be regarded as approximations only, and reference to one of the popular bird-call recordings is recommended.

Southern Red Bishop (p. 456):
'zik-zik-zik… ayzayzayzayzay'

Bird anatomy

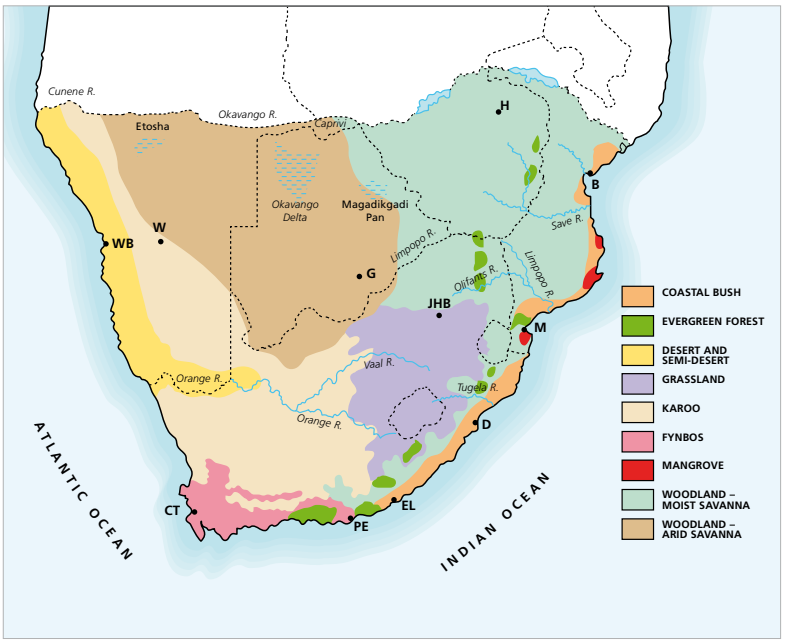






Bird habitats

The bird's usual habitat is described next and provides a vital clue to its usual haunts. All birds have a preferred habitat, often with a specialised niche within that habitat, and many will disappear entirely if their habitat is destroyed or degraded, because they are unable to adapt to different living conditions. Thus, in order to see many bird species it is necessary to know and seek their preferred habitat, often a very restricted area or one difficult to access. There are several major habitat types in southern Africa.



WOODLAND: The moist and arid tree savannas of southern Africa together make up its richest bird habitat. This variable habitat, covering about three-quarters of the region and supporting most of its bird species, can be further divided into areas known as bushveld, woodland, savanna, mopane-veld and miombo. Bushveld is a somewhat loose term applied to the woody veld found over much of the far northeastern lowveld areas of southern Africa. It is comprised of various types of deciduous, small-tree woodland and mixed bush varieties and may include such diverse vegetation as scrub mopane, mixed thorn and broad-leaved bushes and even small patches of pure thornbush. The presence of all these bush types is dictated by variations in soil types, so that one sees frequent changes, each type intergrading with another. Woodland is made up of broad-leaved trees, usually deciduous, with wider spacing than is found in bushveld, so that their canopies do not touch. Perhaps the richest woodland type in terms of bird populations and species numbers is miombo woodland, a broad-leaved biome in which deciduous trees, especially *Brachystegia* and *Julbernardia* species, are dominant. In miombo woodland, a major veld type of Zimbabwe above 1 200 m, the tree canopies do actually touch. However, the trees are so spaced as to allow sufficient sunlight to penetrate for the rich growth of grasses and shrubs.

Miombo broad-leaved woodland in Zimbabwe

Margaret Roper

White Stork in Mopane-veld, Kruger National Park

Pam Newman

Mixed woodland in southern Botswana

Margaret Roper

Bushveld near the Limpopo River, a common mixed woodland

Mature thorn savanna, a woodland habitat on Kalahari sands

Margaret Roper

Coastal bush in the Eastern Cape

COASTAL BUSH: This consists of dense evergreen vegetation with thick undergrowth and some tall trees. It grows on sandy soils in a narrow strip along the east and south coasts and shares many characteristics and bird species with evergreen forest.

FOREST: Throughout Africa indigenous forests are being increasingly cut back for fringe agriculture, or the trees felled for charcoal production. These evergreen, animal-rich regions have taken millions of years to reach their present-day climax, and are irreplaceable. As they disappear the birds that depend on them, and much other animal life besides, disappear too. Pockets of riverine evergreen forest occur in the midst of many other, more arid, habitats. Alien plantations of eucalyptus or pine trees should not be confused with indigenous evergreen forests.

Vanessa Newman

Evergreen forest interior

Vanessa Newman

Commercial plantation in Limpopo province, a man-made forest

Riverine forest in Mpumalanga province

Dune forest, an evergreen forest habitat surrounding a coastal lagoon

FYNBOS: Fynbos is home to a number of endemic bird species, including Victorin's Warbler, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Protea Canary and many other pecies with a wider habitat tolerance. Unfortunately runaway fires tend to devastate large areas of fynbos almost annually.

Shaen Adey/IOA

Montane fynbos (above) and coastal fynbos (below) in the Western Cape

Elizabeth and Christopher Roper

Vanessa Newman

Montane grassland interspersed with evergreen forest, southern African escarpment

GRASSLAND: There are wide expanses of grassland, where trees are sparse or absent, in the central high-altitude regions of southern Africa. These apparently wide expanses of unspoiled 'grassveld' have become a rapidly diminishing biome through the spread of crop farming, human settlements, multi-carriageway roads, opencast mining, commercial forestry and other industries. Montane grassland, an apparently pristine, inaccessible and inhospitable region for settlement or farming, has also been reduced in recent years by the often ill-judged encroachment of commercial timber plantations with their inevitable network of access roads. Steep grass slopes on shallow soils that were once held stable are now exposed to soil erosion after heavy rains following clear-felling.

Elizabeth and Christopher Roper

A typical Karoo landscape

KAROO: The semi-arid south-central and west-central areas are comprised of stony plains, either flat or undulating and sparsely dotted with succulent plants, shrubs and small trees. Rocky, scrub-covered, flat-topped hills may also be present. Annual rainfall is 150–300 mm except in the more arid regions where it may be as little as 50–200 mm and where desert grasses predominate. Birdlife is mostly comprised of korhaans, larks, warblers and canaries plus raptors, including Verreaux's and Martial eagles and kestrels.

SEMI-DESERT: As typified by the semi-arid scrub and bush savanna of southwestern Namibia, it is home to a surprisingly wide variety of birds, both resident and seasonal. Residents most in evidence are the White-quilled Bustard, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Greater Kestrel, Double-banded Courser, Cape Crow, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Capped Wheatear and Marico Flycatcher. During summer Red-backed and Lesser Grey shrikes, Caspian Plovers and various migrant warblers arrive. Since the region suffers from high temperatures and a serious lack of standing water it is surprising that so many insectivorous birds are able to make a living in the region. The secret is that the numerous stunted broad-leaved bushes harbour a thriving insect community that provides adequate moisture for those that feed on it.

Elizabeth and Christopher Roper

Semi-desert in Namibia

Namibian dune desert (foreground) and stony desert intersected by riverine forest

WETLANDS: The inland waters of southern Africa, including rivers, streams, dams, pans, estuaries, marshes and floodlands, are one of the most vulnerable habitat types. They are all too frequently drained or filled for industrial development or agriculture. Wetlands are very productive for the birdwatcher.

Floodlands, a wetland habitat

Pam Newman

A pan, a temporary wetland habitat

MANGROVE: Mangroves are a threatened habitat confined to isolated pockets on the northeast and east coasts. These specialised communities of estuarine and intertidal fauna and flora are dominated by mangrove trees.

Pam Newman

Mangroves in northern Mozambique, an east-coastal wetland habitat

COASTLINE: The southern African coastline stretches for over 5 000 km and supports a wide variety of resident and migrant bird populations.

Peter Newman

A river estuary, a coastal wetland habitat

Margaret Roper

Intertidal zone of a south coastal habitat

Behaviour

Where relevant there is a description of the typical behaviour of the species, which is often a useful guide to its identity. Many species that closely resemble one another can be accurately identified by small traits of behaviour, such as wing-flicking, tail-wagging or by their display procedure.

Edward Owen

Lilac-breasted Rollers perform a tumbling, rolling display flight.

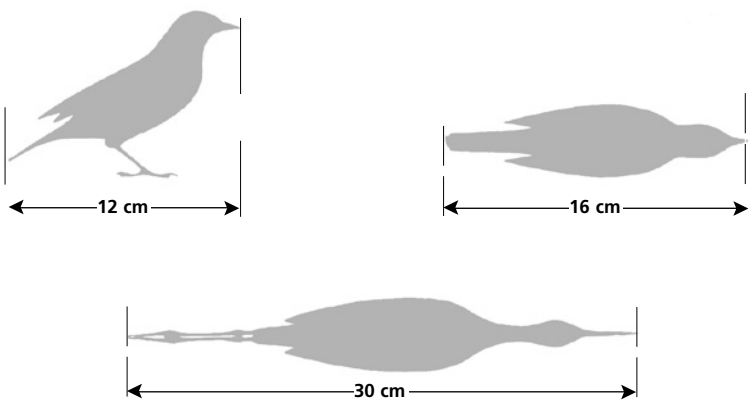
Edward Owen

Male Southern Masked Weavers often flutter their wings excitedly at their nests.

Measurement

Size is often difficult to gauge but the measurements are useful for comparison. It is a good idea to remember the size of three common birds and then to use that as a yardstick when looking at the sizes in the book: a House Sparrow is 14–15 cm, a Common Pigeon is 33 cm and a Helmeted Guineafowl is 53–58 cm (see p. 10).

The measurements given for each bird in this field guide represent those of a dead bird lying flat on a table, neither stretched nor compressed. If the bird has long legs that project beyond the tail, these are included in the total measurement. In a few cases only, where a species has seasonally long tail-plumes, the total measurement with and without the tail is given. The reason for measurements being taken in this way is that it is not practicable to measure a bird while it is standing, perched or swimming because various species hold themselves in different ways at different times. A long-necked bird may hold its head and neck outstretched or tucked in, some birds have a hunched posture while others of similar size may habitually stand erect.

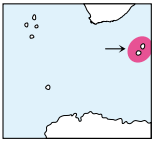


EXTRALIMITAL SUBANTARCTIC BIRDS

(This section does not include birds that are vagrant to the subantarctic region.)

CORMORANTS

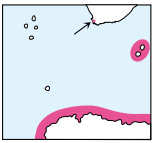
Web-footed, long-necked, hook-billed, fish-eating waterbirds that hunt their prey under water, and surface to swallow it. They swim with body partially submerged and habitually stand out of water with wings spread. Normally silent. See also p. 88.



1 Imperial Cormorant *Phalacrocorax atriceps*
Common on Marion Island. **The only cormorant in the subantarctic region.** Gregarious; breeds in small colonies on rocky headlands and low cliffs. **61 cm** (Keiserduiker)

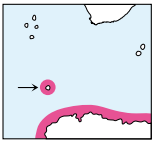
PENGUINS

Flightless marine birds of the southern oceans. Characterised by **stocky build, flipper-like wings, short legs** and an **erect stance**. They dive to considerable depths in pursuit of fish. On the surface they swim with most of the body submerged, head held high. See also pp. 42–44.

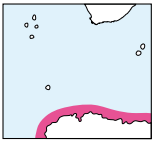


NEAR THREATENED

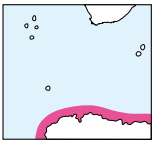
2 Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua* V
Common, but vagrant to southern Africa. **Bright red bill, orange feet** and **triangular white ear-patches** diagnostic. Immature resembles adult but has duller bill and grey-mottled throat. Occurs in small breeding colonies on Marion and Prince Edward islands. Unlike other penguins shows fear of humans and makes off when approached. **76 cm** (Witoorpikkewyn)



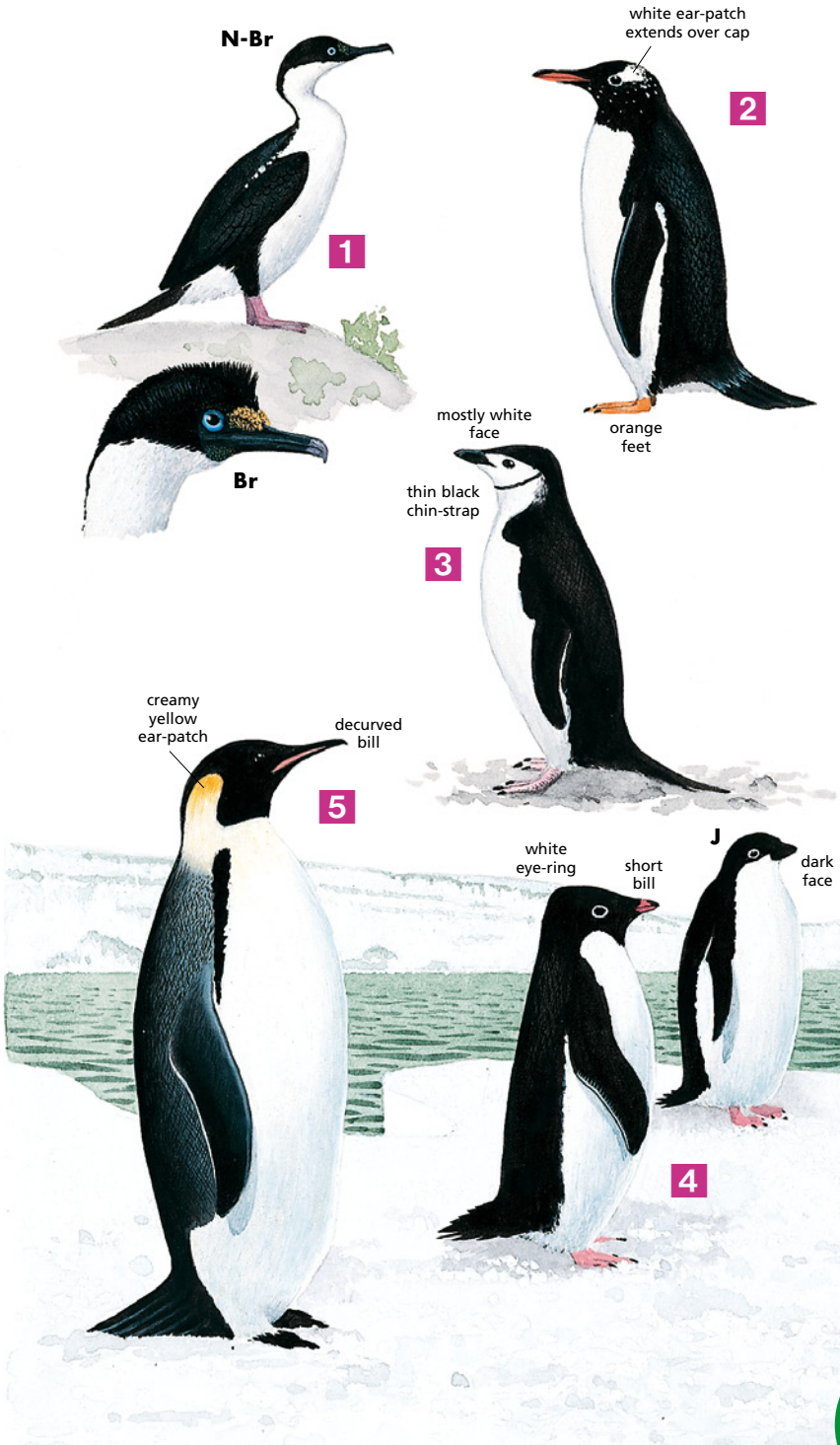
3 Chinstrap Penguin *Pygoscelis antarcticus*
Common. **Thin black line across throat** diagnostic at all ages. Found with (4) in small groups in pack ice. Very common breeder on Bouvet Island; vagrant to Marion Island. **76 cm** (Kenbandpikkewyn)



4 Adelie Penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae*
Common. Identified by **short, stubby bill, black head** and **white eye-rings**. At long range immature resembles (3), but the black of the face extends below the eyes. Most often seen in small groups in the pack ice, resting out of water or porpoising at speed through the water. **71 cm** (Adéliepikkewyn)

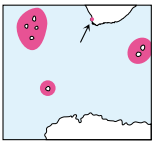


5 Emperor Penguin *Aptenodytes forsteri*
Uncommon. **Largest penguin in the world.** Distinguished from smaller King Penguin (p. 44; breeds on Marion and Prince Edward islands) by **creamy yellow, not orange, patches on sides of head** and **shorter, more decurved bill**. Confined to the ice shelf and pack ice within the Antarctic; rarely seen at sea. Mostly found singly or in small groups. **112 cm** (Keiserpikkewyn)

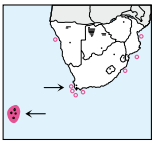

N-Br
1
Br
white ear-patch
extends over cap
2
orange
feet
mostly white
face
thin black
chin-strap
3
creamy
yellow
ear-patch
decurved
bill
5
white
eye-ring
short
bill
J
dark
face
4

STORM PETRELS

Swallow-sized petrels of generally dark appearance, some with white rumps or underparts, all with **long, delicate legs**. They fly with a bat-like motion or an erratic bounding motion, or with more direct, swallow-like movement. Many **feed from the water's surface with feet pattering in the sea, and appear to walk on the water**. Specific identification is difficult except at close range. See also pp. 64–66.



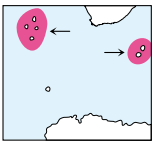
1 Grey-backed Storm Petrel *Garrodia nereis* R
Uncommon in offshore waters at Gough, Marion and Prince Edward islands. **Dark head and flight feathers** with **ash-grey back and rump**. Only storm petrel in the region with uniformly grey back and rump; cf. (2). Usually solitary. Flight swallow-like; hovers buoyantly when feeding and skips from side to side low over the water. **17 cm** (Grysrugstormswael)



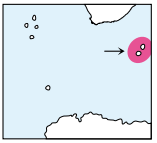
2 White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* R
Common offshore at Tristan group. Only storm petrel in the region with **white throat and breast** and **distinctive head markings**. **Pale grey rump** (not white as in most other storm petrels) contrasts with dark back. **Legs very long and projecting beyond tail**. Occurs in small groups of 2–4 that fly in ships' bow waves, and has a **peculiar, fast swinging action** as it skips and trails its long legs through the waves. **21 cm** (Witwangstormswael)

DIVING PETRELS

Very small, short-necked, short-winged and short-tailed sea birds. They fly close to the water's surface with rapid wing beats, bouncing off the waves like flying fish or **plunging through them** with no perceptible change in wing beats or speed. When settled on the water, they float high like grebes (p. 120) and take off after a short run across the surface.



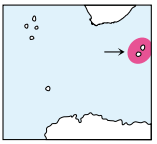
3 Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*
Common resident on Tristan group, Marion and Prince Edward islands. **At sea indistinguishable from (4)**, differing mainly in bill shape and size (see illustrations). Otherwise seen as small black-and-white birds with fast, direct flight on **short, whirring wings**. Occurs singly or in small groups around islands. **20 cm** (Gewone Duikstormvoël)



4 South Georgian Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus*
Common resident on Marion and Prince Edward islands. **At sea indistinguishable from (3)**; cf. bill illustrations. At sea behaviour identical to (3). Breeds at higher elevations than (3) on islands, usually on non-vegetated cinder cones, where it digs small, rat-like tunnels deep into the scoria. **19 cm** (Kleinduikstormvoël)

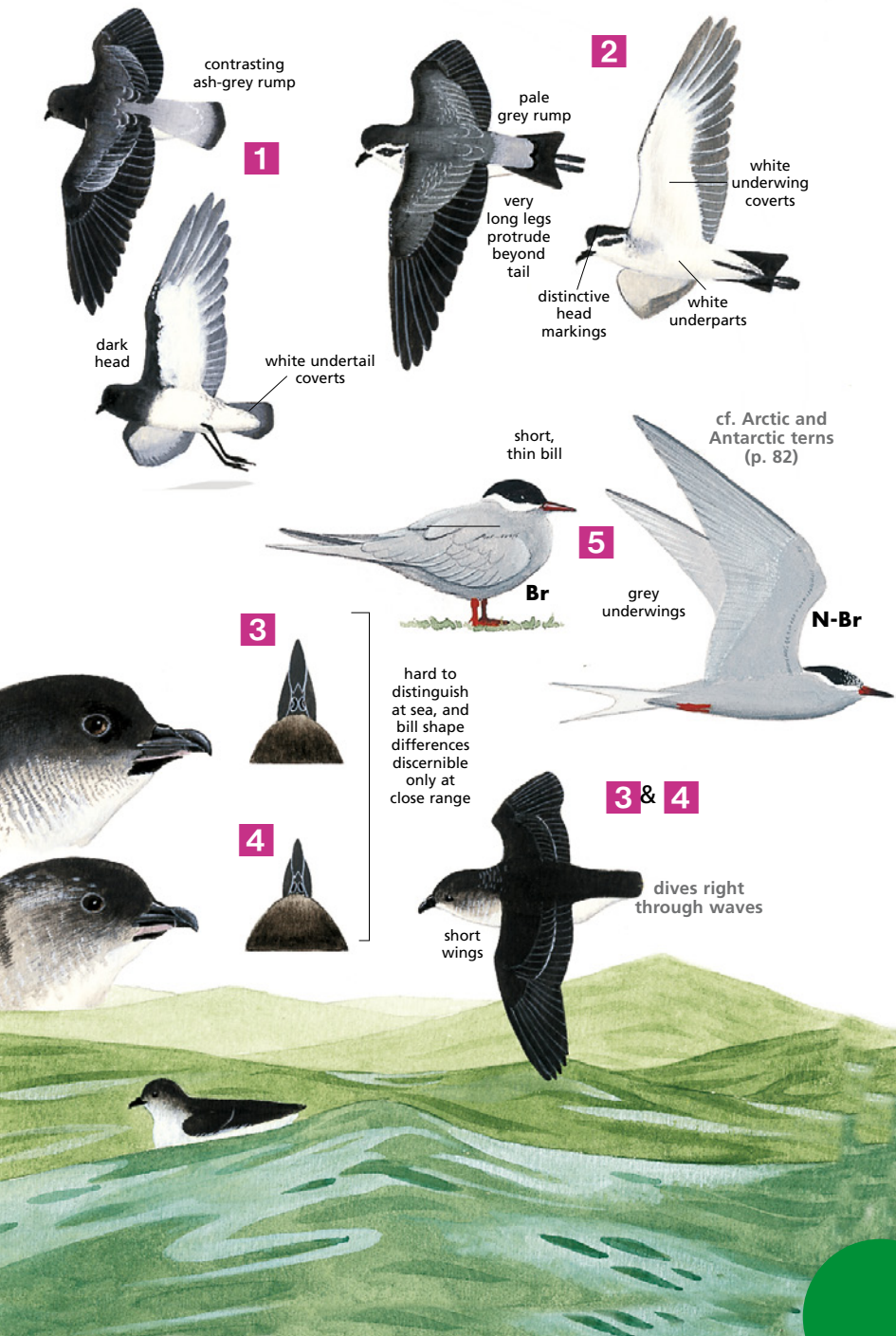
TERNS

Smaller than gulls, with more slender proportions. Most species have **forked tails**. They plunge-dive for fish. See also pp. 78–84.



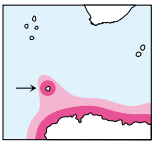
NEAR THREATENED

5 Kerguelen Tern *Sterna virgata*
Resident on Marion and Prince Edward islands. **Darker grey** than Arctic Tern (p. 82), with **grey tail, grey underwings** and **shorter, thinner bill**. Immature darker and more heavily barred than immature Antarctic Tern. **Flight buoyant**; cf. *Chlidonias* terns (p. 84). Regularly feeds on insects taken from the ground on open grassy plains. **31 cm** (Kerguelensterretjie)


contrasting ash-grey rump
1
dark head
white undertail coverts
pale grey rump
very long legs protrude beyond tail
2
white underwing coverts
distinctive head markings
white underparts
short, thin bill
Br
5
cf. Arctic and Antarctic terns (p. 82)
grey underwings
N-Br
3
4
hard to distinguish at sea, and bill shape differences discernible only at close range
3 & 4
short wings
dives right through waves

PETRELS

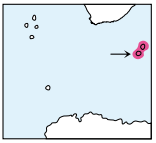
Pelagic birds ranging in size from the tiny prions (15 cm) to the giant petrels and small albatrosses. See also pp. 52–60.



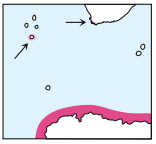
1 Snow Petrel *Pagodroma nivea*
Common in pack ice and adjacent seas. **Unmistakable, all-white bird**. Flight rapid over sea and ice. More agile on land than other petrels. Sometimes runs over pack ice in the manner of a shorebird. Breeds on Bouvet Island. **34 cm** (Witstormvoël)

SHEATHBILLS

White, pigeon-like, scavenging birds of the southern islands and ice floes. They fly laboriously and reluctantly, but they can swim.



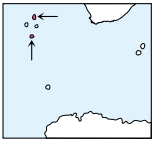
2 Black-faced Sheathbill *Chionis minor*
Common resident on Marion and Prince Edward islands. Told by its **plump, white appearance**, with **black bill and facial skin** and **pink legs**; cf. (3). Frequents penguin rookeries and grassy coastal plains in pairs or small groups. Feeds on penguin corpses, eggs and regurgitated food, which it obtains by disturbing penguins feeding their young. **38 cm** (Kleinskedebek)



3 Snowy Sheathbill *Chionis albus* V
Differs from the Black-faced Sheathbill (p. 38) in **pink cere**, **yellow bill with black tip** and **grey legs**. A conspicuous terrestrial scavenger from the Antarctic, from where it migrates northwards to the southern tip of South America. Unafraid of humans. Birds recorded in our region have most probably been ship-assisted. **40 cm** (Grootskedebek)

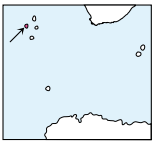
MOORHENS AND RAILS

Smallish, long-legged, large-footed, mainly terrestrial or water-associated birds. See also pp. 120–122, 128.

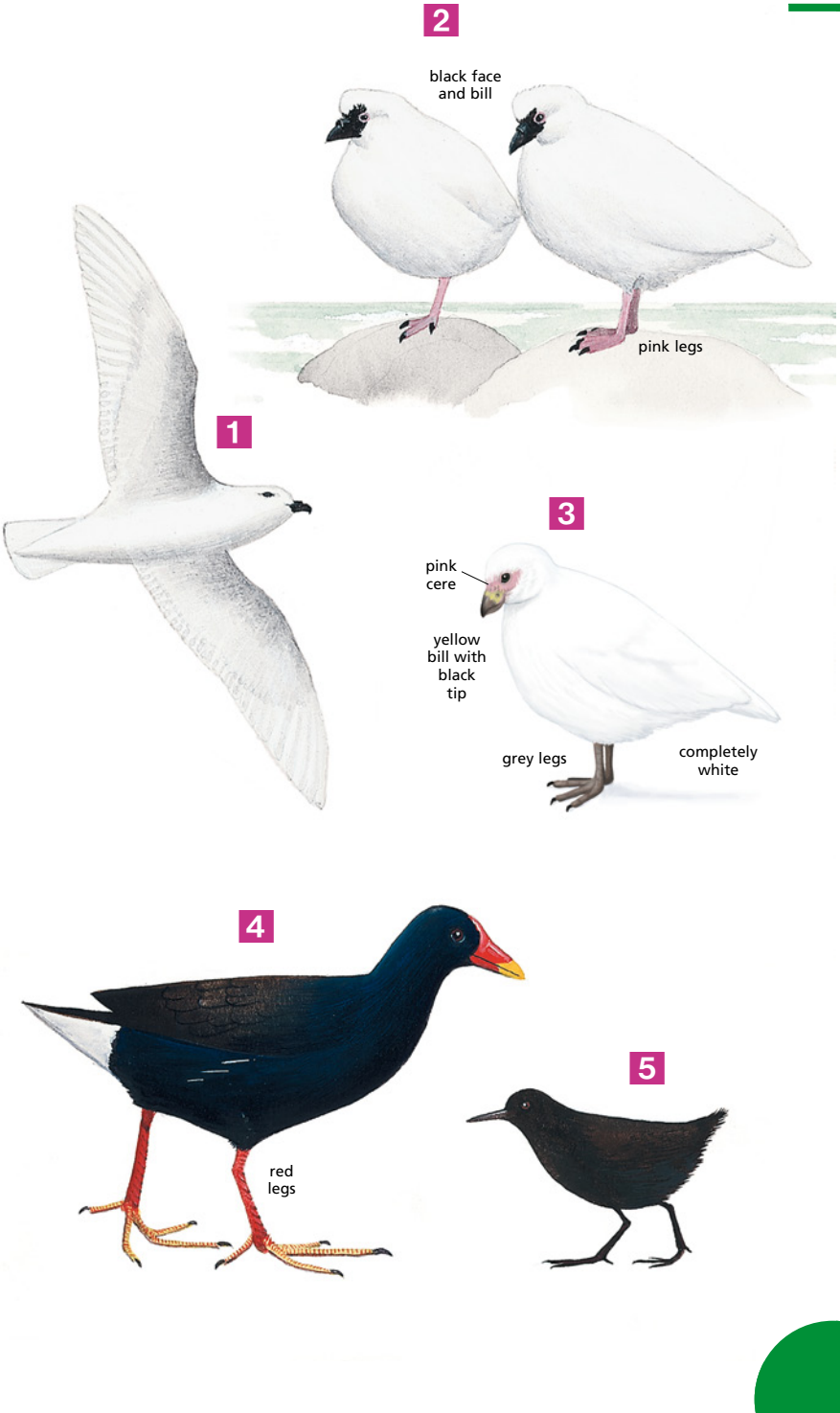


VULNERABLE

4 Gough Island Moorhen *Gallinula comeri*
Common on Gough Island; reintroduced to Tristan Island following past extirpation. Similar to Common Moorhen (p. 122) but has **red (not yellow) legs**. Most frequent on the coastal plateau; but more often heard than seen. Very secretive; keeps within thick tangles of tree fern and bracken to avoid predation by skuas (p. 72). Wings small but can flap for a short distance when disturbed. **27 cm** (Goughwaterhoender)

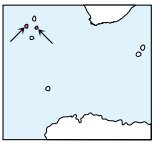


5 Inaccessible Island Rail *Atlantisia rogersi* E
Common endemic on Inaccessible Island. The smallest living flightless bird. Unmistakable; the **only small rail on the island**. Very vocal, the call 'pseep' heard all over the island. Individuals frequently glimpsed as they **race, rodent-like, between tussock clumps**. Inquisitive, coming into open areas to inspect unusual objects. **17 cm** (Inaccessible-riethaan)

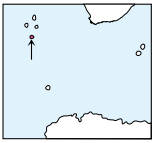

2
black face and bill
pink legs
1
3
pink cere
yellow bill with black tip
grey legs
completely white
4
red legs
5

BUNTINGS

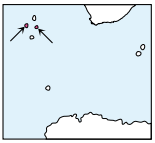
The so-called buntings of the Tristan group and Gough Island differ from mainland buntings (p. 482) in several ways, being more closely related to the Fringillidae of South America.


VULNERABLE

1 Inaccessible Island Finch *Nesospiza acunhae*
and Nightingale Island Finch *Nesospiza questi*
Common resident. Confined to Inaccessible and Nightingale islands. Distinguished from (3) by **smaller, thinner bill**. Song is a melodious twittering or chirping 'chickory-chikky', followed by a wheezy 'tweeyer'. Birds on Inaccessible Island have larger bills and are more buffy on the breast. Pairs or small flocks forage on the ground or clamber over *Phylica* bushes in search of insects. **16 cm** (Inaccessible/Nightingale-streepkoppie)


CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

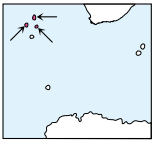
2 Gough Bunting (Gough Finch) *Rowettia goughensis*
Common resident on Gough Island, where it is the only bunting. **Sexes markedly different.** Immature resembles female, but more richly coloured (orange-buff). Has a penetrating 'tissik' call; utters a soft 'pseep' while feeding. Pairs and small groups forage on the ground or clamber over tussocks and *Phylica* bushes. Inquisitive and unafraid of humans, but dives for cover when a skua passes overhead. **16 cm** (Goughstreepkoppie)


VULNERABLE

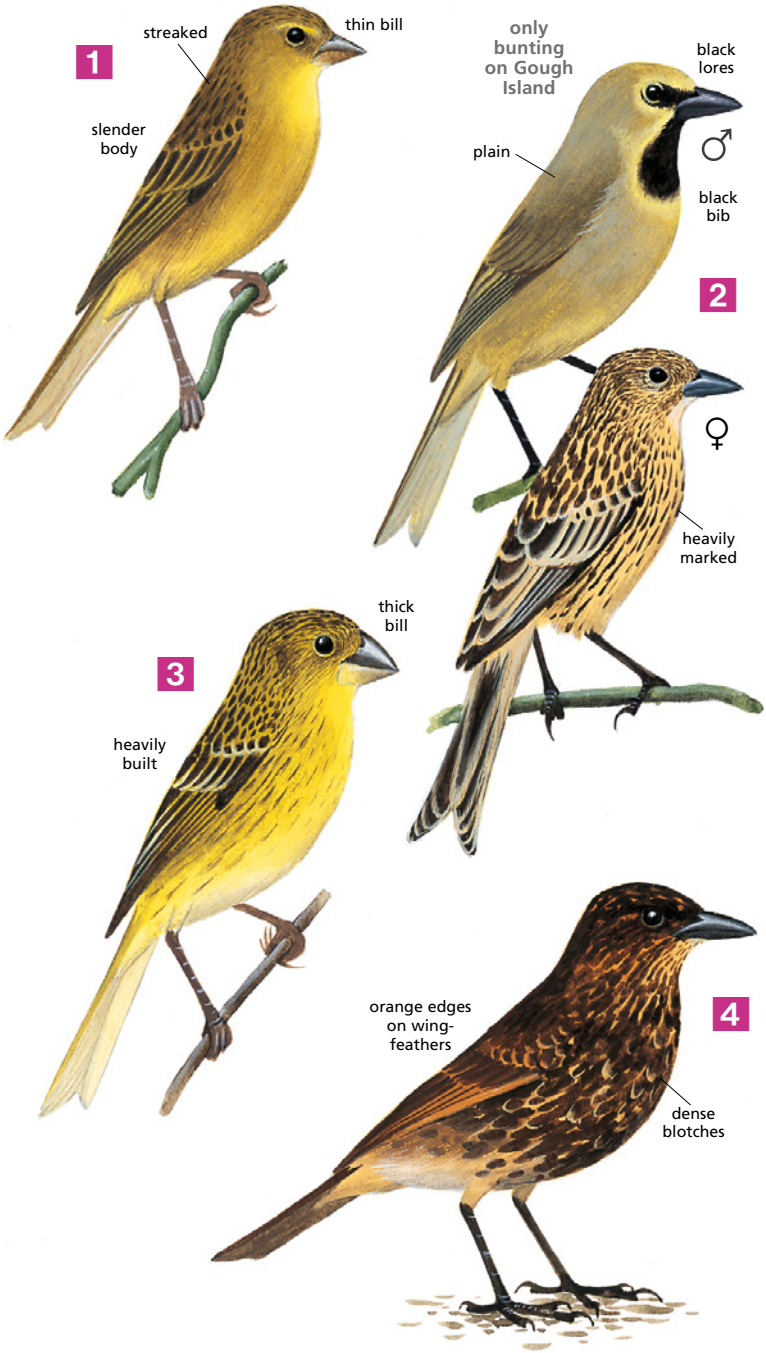
3 Wilkins' Bunting (Wilkins' Finch) *Nesospiza wilkinsi*
Common resident on Inaccessible and Nightingale islands. Occurs alongside (1) but is **more heavily built** and has **a massive, thick bill** used for cracking open hard *Phylica* nuts. The call of Nightingale Island birds is a clear 'tweet-twee-yeer, tweet-tweeyer'. Inaccessible Island birds have a similar but harsher call. Occurs mostly in the *Phylica* bush and tree-fern zone; less often in open grassy and tussock areas. **18 cm** (Wilkinsstreepkoppie)

THRUSHES

Largely terrestrial, **insectivorous** birds. The sexes are alike. See also pp. 350–352.


NEAR THREATENED

4 Tristan Thrush *Nesocichla eremita*
Common resident on Tristan, Inaccessible and Nightingale islands. Unmistakable **orange-brown thrush with heavy overlay of dark brown blotches, the wings showing much orange at rest and in flight**. Immature has more orange spotting and streaking on the upperparts and smaller, more clearly defined spots on the underparts. Birds on Nightingale Island have a more streaky breast. The song is 'chissik, chissik, trrtkk, swee, swee, swee' or 'pseeooee, pseeooee, pseeooee, pseep-tee'. It hides beneath canopies of *Phylica* bushes. Found in clearings in undergrowth where it hops about with typical thrush-like stance, turning over moss and leaf litter in search of food. Birds on Tristan Island are more secretive than those on Inaccessible and Nightingale islands. **22 cm** (Tristanlyster)


1
streaked
thin bill
slender body
only bunting on Gough Island
black lores
plain
♂
black bib
2
♀
heavily marked
thick bill
3
heavily built
orange edges on wing-feathers
4
dense blotches

BIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PENGUINS

Flightless marine birds of the southern oceans. They are characterized by **stocky build, flipper-like wings, short legs** and, **on land, an erect stance**. They walk with a shuffling gait or, on rough terrain, a series of hops and slides in which the bill and stiff tail may be used as props. On snow and ice penguins may lie prone and propel themselves with their feet and flippers. In water the flippers are used in an oar-like action, and the feet as an aid to steering. They dive to considerable depths in pursuit of fish. **On the surface they swim with most of the body submerged, head held high.** Colours basically black and white. Sexes are alike.

VULNERABLE / ENDANGERED

1 Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome* **V**

Vagrant. Distinguished by **short, stubby red bill** and **pale yellow stripe** from in front of the eyes to the nape, where it ends in a **shaggy plume**. Differs from (2) in **plain black forehead**, wholly dark rump and fairly stiff lateral head-plumes. Individuals, usually moulting birds, occasionally seen ashore on southern mainland coast (c. 50 records); otherwise not normally at sea in southern African waters. A summer breeder on Tristan group, Marion and Prince Edward islands. Sometimes considered to be three separate species: Western Rockhopper Penguin (*E. chrysocome*), Eastern Rockhopper Penguin (*E. filholi*) and Northern Rockhopper Penguin (*E. moseleyi*), which are distinguished by the patterns on the undersides of the flippers. **61 cm** (Geelkuifpikkewyn)

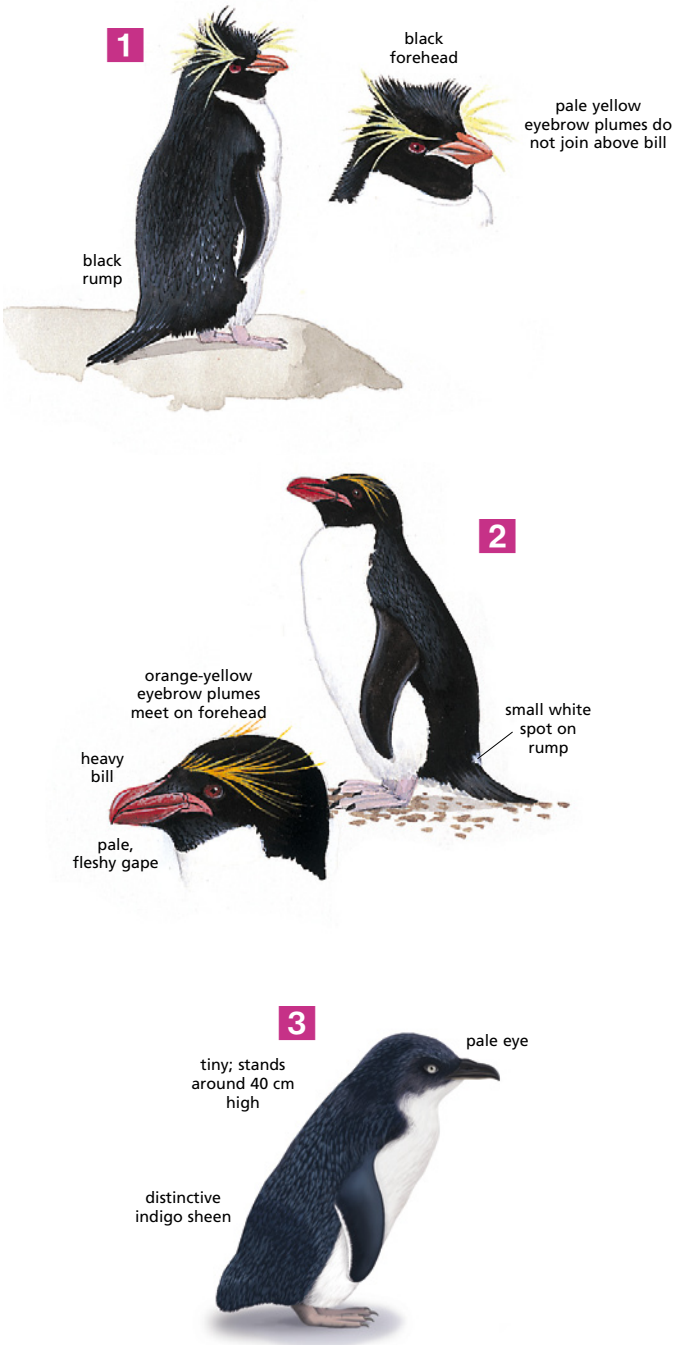
VULNERABLE

2 Macaroni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* **V**

Rare vagrant. Distinguished from (1) by **more robust bill** and **orange-yellow eyebrow plumes** that meet on the forehead. The plumes are **loose and floppy**. At sea distinguished from (1) with difficulty; however, in addition to the plumes, the **pale, fleshy sides of the gape** and **white rump-spot** are diagnostic. Immature differs from immature of (1) in yellow stripe starting above eye (not in front of eye). At sea utters a harsh, nasal bark. A few individuals ashore on southern mainland coast, but not normally seen in southern African waters. Summer breeder on Bouvet, Marion and Prince Edward islands. **71 cm** (Langkuifpikkewyn)

3 Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* **V**

Rare vagrant. World's smallest penguin. Easily identified by its **white or silvery iris** and **indigo upperparts**. Could be confused with dark-backed juvenile African Penguin (p. 44), which is much larger and has a dark eye. Immature has paler upperparts and greyish chin and throat. On the breeding grounds utters soft cat-like mewing, trumpeting calls and high-pitched screams. Breeds along the coasts of southern Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and the Chatham Islands. Also recorded in Chile, where it has been suggested that an undiscovered breeding population may exist. In southern Africa, sole record is of a single adult, found on Ichaboe Island off Lüderitz, Namibia, in Apr 2005. **35–42 cm** (Kleinpikkewyn)


1
black forehead
pale yellow eyebrow plumes do not join above bill
black rump
2
orange-yellow eyebrow plumes meet on forehead
small white spot on rump
heavy bill
pale, fleshy gape
3
pale eye
tiny; stands around 40 cm high
distinctive indigo sheen

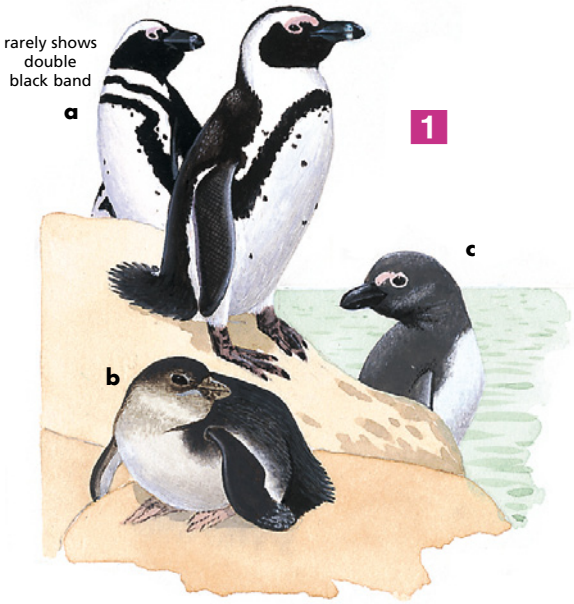
VULNERABLE

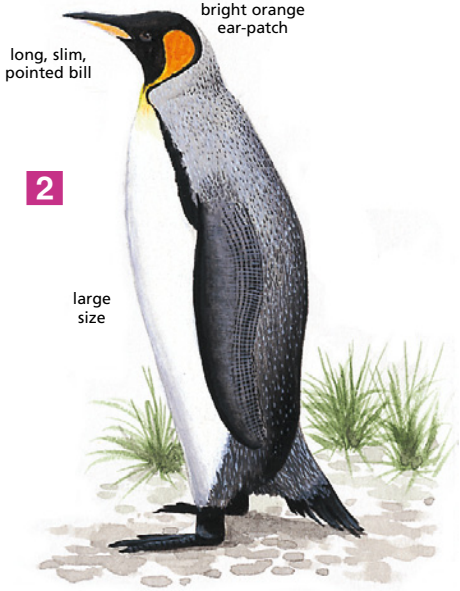
1 African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* E

Very common to locally abundant endemic resident. Black and white facial pattern and white underparts with **encircling black bar** diagnostic. Individuals **sometimes with double bar** as (a). Chick (b) and immature (c) as illustrated. The call is a donkey-like braying, heard mostly at night. Occurs singly or in groups in coastal waters or colonies on offshore islands and mainland beaches. **63 cm** (Brilpikkewyn)

2 King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus* R V

Rare vagrant. **Large size, long, pointed bill** and **bright orange ear-patches** distinguish it from all other penguins in southern African waters. In Antarctic waters distinguished from larger Emperor Penguin (p. 34) by orange, not pale yellow, ear-patches. At sea utters a monosyllabic 'aark'. Rarely ashore on southern mainland coast. Breeds on Marion and Prince Edward islands. **94–100 cm** (Koningpikkewyn)

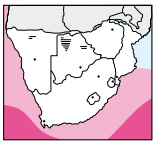




cf. Emperor Penguin (p. 34)

ALBATROSSES

Huge, narrow-winged marine birds identified by their **wing patterns** and **bill coloration**. Immatures frequently different to adults. Several races of well-known species have been elevated to full-specific status, but some authorities still consider many of these taxa to fall under a few, wide-ranging species. The genus *Diomedea* contains the Wandering, Tristan, and Southern and Northern Royal Albatrosses, which all show white backs in the adult stage. All the smaller albatrosses can be identified by their **dark upper bodies forming a bridge with their dark upperwings**.



VULNERABLE

1 Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Uncommon in offshore waters. In its adult stage differs very little from the confusingly similar (2) and (3), but has a pink bill with a yellowish tip, which **lacks the black cutting edge** of other species. Young birds undergo a lengthy process of age-related body whitening. Juveniles leave the nest all-brown except for a white facial mask, and retain similar white underwings to the adult at all subsequent stages. Upperwings whiten **from the centre outwards towards the wing tips and forward towards the leading edge** (b–d). Stage (d) retains a greyish crown-patch and upper breast while the upperwing shows distinct whitening. Breeding may occur from this stage onwards. In stage (e) the entire body is white, while the whitening of the upperwing is well advanced. Old birds of this species (f) become entirely white except for a narrow black trailing edge on the wing, the so-called 'Snowy' stage. **107–135 cm** (Grootalbatros)

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

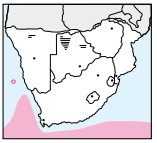
2 Tristan Albatross *Diomedea dabbenena* R

(NOT ILLUSTRATED) Status in southern African waters uncertain. Previously regarded as a race of the Wandering Albatross. Breeds on Tristan and Gough islands. Older birds probably indistinguishable at sea from (1), but young birds have a more prolonged sequence of age-related plumages, yet to be clearly defined. (Tristangrootalbatros)

VULNERABLE

3 Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora* V

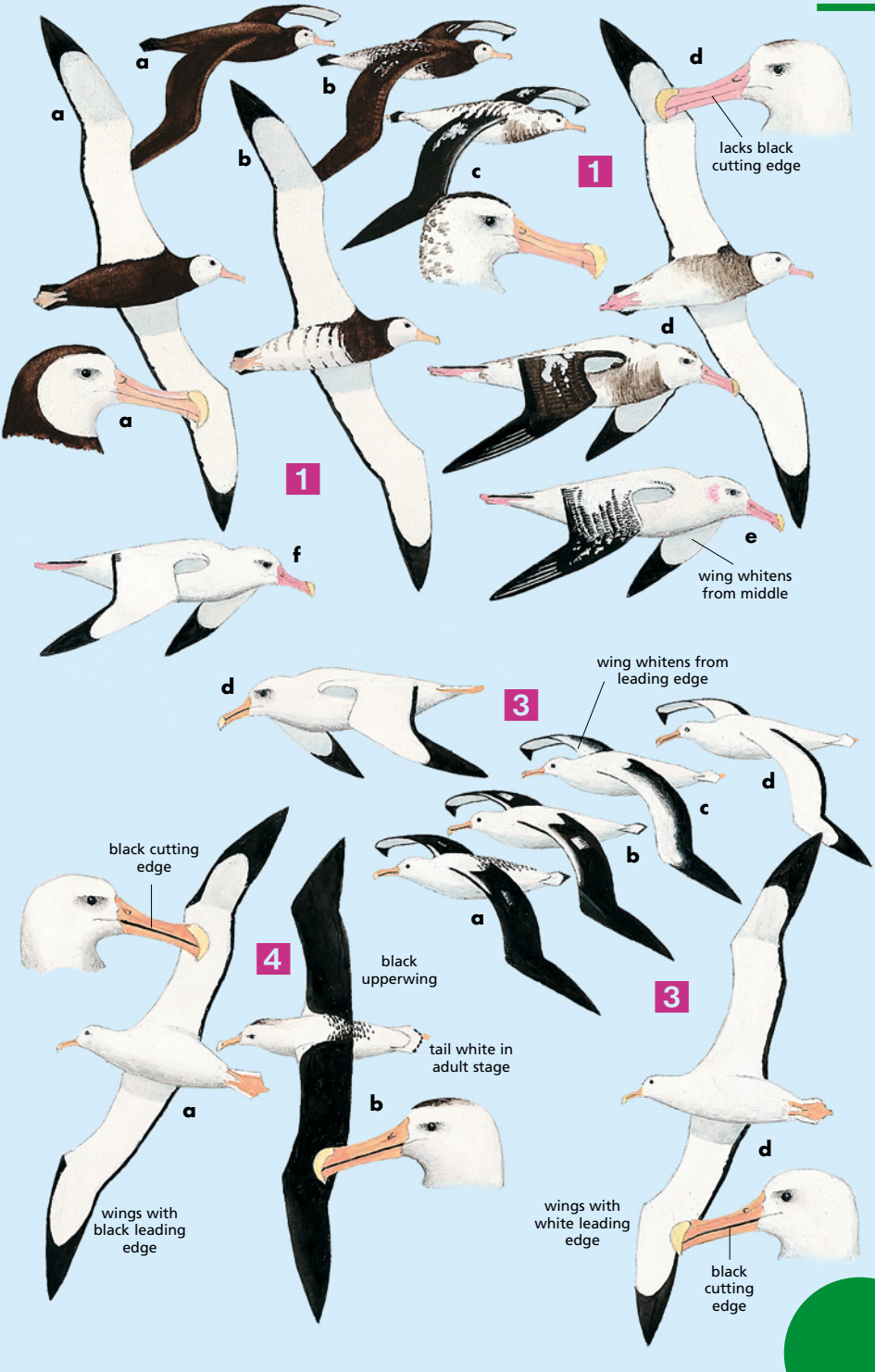
Rare vagrant. A diagnostic feature at all life stages is a **black cutting edge to the bill**. Young birds (a, b) identified by **dark upperwings** (not extending across the back), **small whitening patches on the inner wing** and no dark markings on the head. The **white tail has a black tip**. Stage (c) is separable from young (1) by the whitening process of the upperwing surface, which **commences from the leading edge and gradually extends backwards**. Adults (d) closely resemble the 'Snowy' stage of (1), except for the pinkish-yellow bill with black cutting edge, visible at close range. Sexes are alike. **107–122 cm** (Witvlerkkoningalbatros)

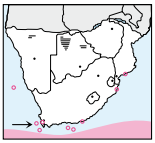


ENDANGERED

4 Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi* V

Rare vagrant. Previously known as the northern Pacific race of the 'Royal Albatross', it also has a **black cutting edge to the bill**, but is distinguished from (2) by having **black leading edges to the underwings** extending from the carpal joints to the primaries (a) and **full black upperwings at all life stages**. Immatures (b) have indistinct brownish mottling on the crown, pencil-like vermiculations on the lower back and **black tips on the tail-feathers**. **107–122 cm** (Swartvlerkkoningalbatros)


a
a
a
b
b
c
1
d
lacks black cutting edge
d
d
1
e
wing whitens from middle
f
wing whitens from leading edge
3
d
c
b
a
black cutting edge
4
black upperwing
tail white in adult stage
a
b
wings with black leading edge
3
d
wings with white leading edge
black cutting edge


ENDANGERED

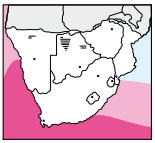
1 Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca* R
Rare in southern offshore waters. **All-dark, slender** albatross with **narrow wings** and **long, wedge-shaped tail**. Differs from (2) in having a **uniformly dark back**, which rarely shows contrast with upperwings except in very worn plumage, and then never as pale as (2). At close range, **pale yellow cutting edge on bill** is diagnostic. At sea, difficult to distinguish between the immature of this and (2), but this species shows a **pale buffy collar** that does not extend to the lower back. Could also be confused with either of the giant-petrels (p. 52). **86 cm** (Bruinalbatros)


NEAR THREATENED

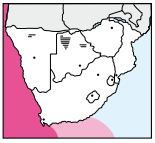
2 Light-mantled Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata* V
Very rare vagrant. Adults differ from (1) in **ash-grey mantle and body,** which contrast sharply with **dark head, wings and tail**. At close range, **pale blue cutting edge on bill** is diagnostic. The immature has a slightly mottled, all-pale back, and pale underbody. Could also be confused with either of the giant-petrels (p. 52). **86 cm** (Swartkopalbatros)


VULNERABLE

3 Laysan Albatross *Phoebastria immutabilis* V
Very rare vagrant. Upperwings, mantle, back and upper tail blackish; head, rump and body white. Underwings are white with narrow black trailing edge margins and **variable dark patches on the coverts**. Adult and immature are alike except for bill colours: **dull yellow with a black tip in adult**, but duller in immature. The pink **feet protrude beyond the tail in flight**. **80 cm** (Swartwangalbatros)


ENDANGERED

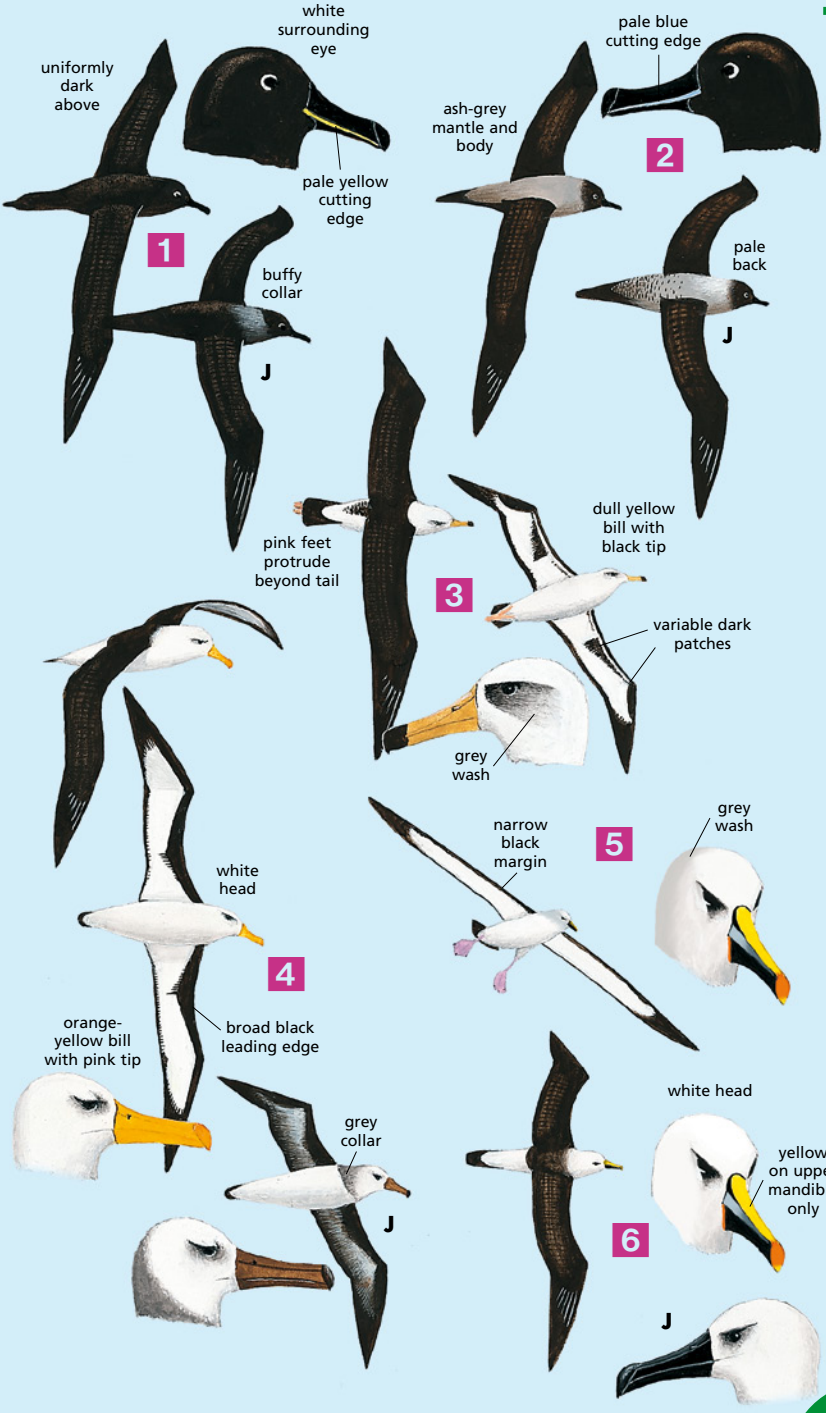
4 Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys*
Common summer visitor; all-year in southern offshore waters. **Blackish-brown upperwings, mantle and upper tail** contrast with pure white head and body. The white underwings show black margins, the **leading edge being particularly broad**. At close range, **black brows** and **orange-yellow bill with pink tip** are distinctive. Immature plumage similar to adult, but shows duskier underwings and a greyish nape that extends to form a collar; the bill dusky-horn with black tip (cf. Grey-headed Albatross on p. 50). **80–95 cm** (Swartrugalbatros)

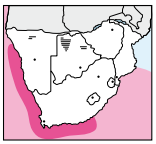

ENDANGERED

5 Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross
Thalassarche chlororhynchos
Regular visitor to west coast waters. This species and (6) are the smallest, most slender albatrosses. The adult has a **grey wash on the head** and white body; upperwings, mantle and upper tail blackish brown, **underwings show narrow black margins** (cf. other grey-headed albatrosses). The bill is black with a **broad yellow upper ridge**. Immatures of this and (6) have white heads and all-black bills and cannot be told apart at sea. **75–81 cm** (Atlantiese Geelneusalbatros)


ENDANGERED

6 Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche carteri*
The Indian Ocean equivalent of (5) and a common winter visitor to east coast waters. Exactly as the Atlantic species, but with a **white head**; at close range may reveal a **grey suffusion to the cheeks**. The bill is black with a **yellow upper ridge** that tapers towards the tip. Immature same as immature of previous species. **71–85 cm** (Indiese Geelneusalbatros)


white surrounding eye
uniformly dark above
pale yellow cutting edge
1
buffy collar
J
pale blue cutting edge
ash-grey mantle and body
2
pale back
J
pink feet protrude beyond tail
3
dull yellow bill with black tip
variable dark patches
grey wash
white head
4
orange-yellow bill with pink tip
broad black leading edge
grey collar
J
narrow black margin
5
grey wash
white head
yellow on upper mandible only
6
J


NEAR THREATENED

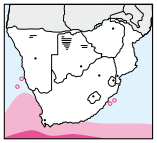
1 Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta*
Common winter and uncommon summer visitor. The **largest black-browed albatross**. Apart from dark upperwings, mantle and upper tail, the head and body are white in adults. Underwings have **narrow black margins** and a diagnostic **black patch or 'thumbprint' where the leading edge of each wing joins the body**. The black brow and **grey bill with yellow tip** are visible at close range. Immature like adult but with blue-grey head and **grey bill with black tips** on both mandibles. **95 cm** (Bloubekalbatros)


VULNERABLE

2 Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* V
Very rare vagrant. Formerly considered a race of (1). The underwing pattern same as (1), but the dark wing-tip region is more extensive. It also differs in having a grey-brown head with **white forehead** and **ash-grey mantle extending to the upper breast**. Bill ivory-horn, with a yellowish upper and lower ridge. **Tip of upper bill yellow; tip of lower mandible black**. Immature as adult but **bill grey with black tips** on both mandibles. **90 cm** (Salvinalbatros)


CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

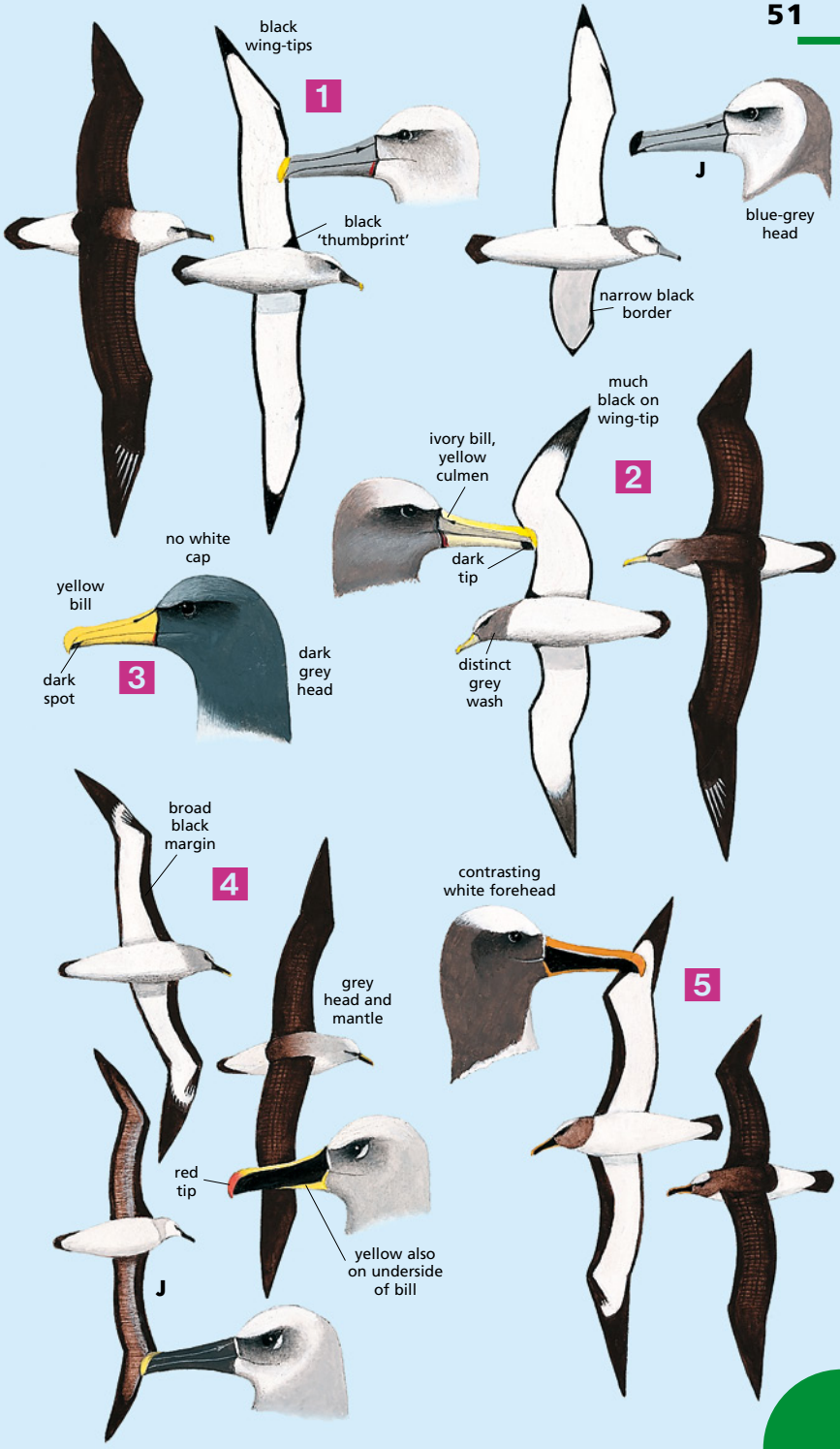
3 Chatham Albatross *Thalassarche eremita* V
Very rare vagrant. Formerly considered a race of (1). Exactly as the previous species but with a **completely grey head and neck, the head without a white cap**. Bill **yellow with a dark spot at the tip of the lower mandible**. **90 cm** (Chathamalbatros)


VULNERABLE

4 Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma* R
Rare winter visitor. Told by grey head and black bill with **yellow ridges to both mandibles** (cf. other grey-headed albatrosses). The underwings have a **broad blackish margin on the leading edge** and a narrow margin on the trailing edge. Tail dark above and below. Immature has dark underwings and a variable extent of grey on the head and breast, but has a **black bill with a dull yellow tip**. **80–90 cm** (Gryskopalbatros)

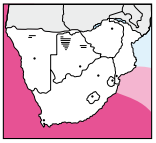

VULNERABLE

5 Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri* V
A rare vagrant to Cape waters. Can be confused with other albatrosses with grey-brown heads, but has a **contrasting white forehead** and **narrow underwing margins**. The bill is black with a **broad yellow culmen** and **narrow yellow ridge to the lower mandible** (cf. Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, p. 48). Young birds start with a dark bill that gradually becomes **dull yellow or horn colour on the ridges** before assuming full adult bill colouring. **76–81 cm** (Witkroonalbatros)

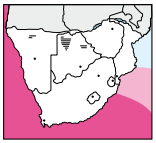

black
wing-tips
1
black
'thumbprint'
J
blue-grey
head
narrow black
border
much
black on
wing-tip
ivory bill,
yellow
culmen
2
dark
tip
distinct
grey
wash
no white
cap
yellow
bill
dark
spot
3
dark
grey
head
broad
black
margin
4
grey
head and
mantle
red
tip
yellow also
on underside
of bill
J
contrasting
white forehead
5

PETRELS, FULMARS, SHEARWATERS AND PRIONS

A large and varied group of **long-winged pelagic birds**, ranging in size from the small prions (14–20 cm) to the giant-petrels, which are comparable in size to albatrosses. They are characterised by a **single nasal tube surmounting the upper mandible that encloses both nostrils**, which open obliquely or vertically. They show **drab plumage colours** and have a typically **stiff-winged mode of flight**. All species breed on islands in the subantarctic and visit southern African offshore waters mainly during the winter months, when they may be seen foraging for offal around fishing trawlers.


NEAR THREATENED

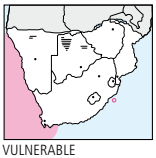
1 Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*
Common all-year visitor. This and (2) distinguished from Sooty Albatross (p. 48) by **massive pale bill, thicker wings, bulkier body** and a **humpbacked appearance in flight**. Difficult to tell from (2) unless bill colour is seen: **creamy yellow with a darker tip**. Adult has some white around the face but never as extensive as in (2). Immature identifiable only at close range by bill colour. Congregates around seal islands on the west coast. **75–90 cm** (Grootnellie)


NEAR THREATENED

2 Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*
Common all-year visitor. Two morphs: (a) more common variant with **extensive area of white** or speckled-white on head extending to upper breast (more extensive than in (1)); (b) **entirely white except for a few scattered black feathers. Bill pale cream with greenish tip.** Immature can be confused with (1). Found singly or in small flocks, especially around trawlers. **75–90 cm** (Reusenellie)


VULNERABLE

3 White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*
Common all-year visitor. Differs from all other dark petrels except (1) and (2) in much larger size, darker colour and pale **greenish-yellow bill**. The white chin is small in adult; absent in immature. Gregarious; found in large numbers around trawlers. **A common offshore petrel. 58 cm** (Bassiaan)


VULNERABLE

4 Spectacled Petrel *Procellaria conspicillata* R
Uncommon non-breeding visitor. Closely similar to the previous species, but smaller and told by **dark-tipped bill, extensive white markings on the head**, and **lack of white throat patch**. Breeds on the Tristan group and, when not breeding, mostly disperses westwards to the waters of southern Brazil. Very infrequent off the coast of Namibia. An endangered species. **51 cm** (Brilbassiaan)

5 Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*
Uncommon all-year visitor. Characterised by large head, short neck and **long, thin wings held at sharp angle at the carpal joint**. Differs from similar-sized Sooty Shearwater (p. 62) in **dark underwings**, from (3) in smaller size and **short black bill**. Solitary at sea, moving with **dashing, twisting flight**, often towering high above the water. **42 cm** (Langvlerkstormvoël)