

SABAP2 - Southern African migrants

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Migrant birds in southern Africa can be divided into two broad groups:

- A. **Palaearctic migrants** (*species that migrate between Europe/Asia and southern Africa*)
- B. **Intra-African migrants** (*species that migrate within Africa*)

The following tables list **Palaearctic** and **Intra-African migrants** and their months of typical occurrence in South Africa; the associated months during which they are known to be absent is also given. The months during which they are expected to be absent can be regarded as being 'out of season' and extra care should be taken when identifying one of these species during this period. Additional notes and photographs (where possible) should be taken should you believe that you have recorded one of these migrants outside of its usual seasonal occurrence in South Africa. This additional information will be crucial in supplying evidence and motivation for the record.

Please be aware that these 'out of season' dates are not rigid, especially the start and end of the window period, so it is possible that some species may still be recorded late in the season (i.e. before departure) or early on in the season (i.e. on arrival). With climatic and other environmental changes, some species may be shifting their patterns of occurrence and could well be recorded 'out of season' (particularly juveniles) – this is where these records need to be carefully and thoroughly documented by atlasers.

Please note too that rare vagrants have been omitted – as these get covered during normal SABAP2 vetting procedures – as well as those species that have relatively high levels of 'over-wintering' individuals; for example, some of the Palaearctic waders (such as Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank) have juveniles that do not return to the breeding grounds in their first year of life and remain in South Africa during the southern hemisphere winter.

Palearctic migrants (44)

Species	Arrival	Departure	Out of season dates
Amur Falcon	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Barn Swallow	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Black Kite	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Black-winged Pratincole	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Common Cuckoo	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Common House-Martin	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Common Ringed Plover	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
Common Swift	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Common Whitethroat	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Corn Crake	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Oct	Mar	Apr-Sep
Eurasian Hobby	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
European Bee-eater*	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
European Honey-Buzzard	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
European Nightjar	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
European Roller	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Garden Warbler	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Great Reed-Warbler	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Icterine Warbler	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Lesser Grey Shrike	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Lesser Kestrel	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Lesser Spotted Eagle	Oct	Mar	Apr-Sep
Little Stint	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Marsh Sandpiper	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Marsh Warbler	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Montagu's Harrier	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Olive-tree Warbler	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Pallid Harrier	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Red-backed Shrike	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Red-footed Falcon	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Ruff	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Sand Martin	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Sedge Warbler	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Spotted Flycatcher	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Steppe Buzzard	Oct	Mar	Apr-Sep
Steppe Eagle	Oct	Mar	Apr-Sep
Tree Pipit	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Western Marsh-Harrier	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
White Stork	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
White-winged Tern	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
Willow Warbler	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Wood Sandpiper	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Yellow Wagtail	Nov	Apr	May-Oct

**Most European Bee-eaters in South Africa come from European breeding populations, but there are small African breeding populations which are suspected to 'migrate' within Africa but their movement patterns are not clearly understood and as such have been lumped with the Palearctic migrants.*

Intra-African migrants (35)

Species	Arrival	Departure	Out of season dates
Abdim's Stork	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
African Crake	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
African Cuckoo	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
African Golden Oriole	Aug	May	Jun-Jul
African Paradise Flycatcher	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
African Reed-Warbler	Aug	May	Jun-Jul
Allan's Gallinule	Nov	May	Jun-Oct
Banded Martin	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Black Cuckoo	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Blue Swallow	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
Broad-billed Roller	Oct	Mar	Apr-Sep
Cuckoo Finch	Sep	May	Jun-Aug
Diderick Cuckoo	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
Dusky Lark	Nov	Jun	Jul-Oct
Dwarf Bittern	Oct	May	Jun-Sep
Great Spotted Cuckoo	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Greater Striped Swallow	Aug	May	Jun-Jul
Grey-headed Kingfisher	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Horus Swift	Sep	May	Jun-Aug
Jacobin Cuckoo	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Lesser Moorhen	Nov	May	Jun-Oct
Lesser Striped Swallow	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Levaillant's Cuckoo	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Mountain Pipit	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Pennant-winged Nightjar	Oct	Feb	Mar-Sep
Pygmy Kingfisher	Oct	Apr	May-Sep
Red-breasted Swallow	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Red-chested Cuckoo	Sep	Apr	May-Aug
South African Cliff-Swallow	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	Dec	Mar	Apr-Nov
Violet-backed Starling	Oct	May	Jun-Sep
Wahlberg's Eagle	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
White-rumped Swift	Aug	May	Jun-Jul
White-throated Swallow	Aug	Apr	May-Jul
Woodland Kingfisher	Nov	Apr	May-Oct
Yellow-billed Kite	Jul	Apr	May-Jun

The information for these species lists has been sourced primarily from:

Roberts' Birds of southern Africa VII ed. (2005)
Atlas of southern African Birds (SABAP1, Vols 1&2, 1997)
Birds of the Transvaal (1987)