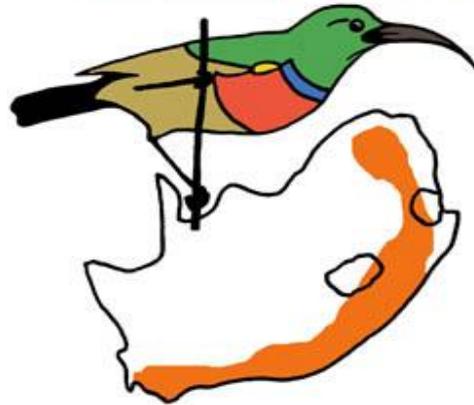


SABAP2



Heuningvlei / Morokweng Atlas Bash

Text: Andre Marx

Photos: Elouise Kalmer

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A staggering 292 Out of Range records (ORFs) by my count were generated! Thankfully mainly for common species, and I have now managed to work through these.

As is the case in poorly atlased areas, most ORFs were for common species, with Grey Go-away-bird, Monotonous Lark, Black Cuckoo, Rattling Cisticola, Common Myna, African Palm Swift, Lanner Falcon, Red-billed Oxpecker, Tinkling Cisticola, Lark-like Bunting, Red-eyed Dove, Greater Striped Swallow, Common Buzzard, Green Wood Hoopoe and Jacobin Cuckoo leading the way.



Figure 2 Some stars of the trip! From top left: Cape Penduline Tit at its nest, Northern Black Korhaan in full cry, Black-chested Prinia and a Sabota Lark

Special sightings included fair numbers of Double-banded Courser, Temminck's Courser, Burchell's Sandgrouse, a single Namaqua Sandgrouse, dozens of South African Shelduck at the main Heuningvlei Pan, Olive-tree and Icterine Warbler, and a good selection of raptors that included Pale Chanting Goshawk (many), Martial Eagle, Common Buzzard, Gabar Goshawk (several), Shikra, Lanner Falcon (several), Tawny Eagle, Lesser and Greater Kestrel,



Wahlberg's Eagle. Also, a solitary Black-winged Pratincole, Eurasian Golden Oriole and a somewhat out of range Ludwig's Bustard!

Perhaps the most enduring memory was the stunning display of larks, cisticolas (primarily Desert and Tinkling) and pipits in full song after the good rains. An amazing 10 lark species was identified; namely Rufous-naped, Sabota's, Fawn-coloured, Monotonous (in great numbers), Red-capped, Eastern Clapper, Melodious, Spike-heeled, and Chestnut-backed and Grey-backed Sparrowlark. On one morning 9 larks were found in one two-hour visit to a single pentad!



Figure 3 Gabar Goshawks were encountered on a number of occasions.

All told a very worthwhile trip to a forgotten part of the country. At times there were a few challenges with locked gates and torrential rain that produced flooded roads, but the team overcame these odds and persevered! The local people were friendly and helpful at times and there were no problems regarding our presence. But there is still more work to do in follow up visits.



