

# Important Bird Areas of the WESTERN CAPE



BRUCE WARD-SMITH

The Important Bird Areas Programme (IBA) is a BirdLife International initiative to conserve important bird species and their habitats. There are over 10 000 IBAs worldwide.

A remarkable 846 bird species occur in South Africa, about 8% of the world's bird species. Sadly, over 15% of our bird species are threatened with extinction, mainly due to loss of suitable habitat. Managing a network of 122 South African IBAs is our best hope of conserving our threatened, endemic, biome restricted and congregatory birds. There are 24 IBAs in the Western Cape.

### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING IBAS

IBAs are determined using globally accepted scientific criteria. An IBA is selected on the presence of one or more of the following bird species in a geographic area:

- Bird species that are globally (A1) or regionally (C1) threatened;
- Assemblages of restricted-range (A2) bird species (restricted to less than 50 000 km<sup>2</sup>);
- Assemblages of biome-restricted (A3) bird species (75% of range confined to one biome); and
- Sites that either hold >1% of the biogeographic population of a congregatory species, or hold >20 000 waterbirds to meet the global criteria (A4), or >0.5% or >10 000 waterbirds to meet the regional criteria (C4).

### CONSERVING IBAS

BirdLife South Africa conserves IBAs by prioritising sites for conservation action, developing management plans for IBAs and

specific biomes, defending priority sites that are under threat and implementing monitoring programmes. Volunteer based Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) support these projects by surveying IBAs, implementing conservation action and educating the local youth about birds and habitats. BirdLife South Africa works with bird clubs, landowners and other organisations across the Western Cape to establish LCGs.

Biodiversity Stewardship is a conservation model that engages private and communal landowners and assists them to improve their land for farming and biodiversity conservation. The Regional Conservation Manager is working with partners to implement stewardship work aimed at formally proclaiming IBAs as protected areas. BirdLife South Africa comments on proposed developments in or surrounding IBAs to ensure that these developments can proceed sustainably and take account of valuable natural resources.

## BirdLife South Africa

BirdLife South Africa is the country partner of BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity. BirdLife International is represented in over 100 countries. BirdLife South Africa works nationally and has more than 6,000 members and over 30 affiliated bird clubs. BirdLife South Africa focuses on threatened bird species and Important Bird Areas, and works with people to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

## How can you get involved?

BirdLife South Africa relies on the public, especially birders and nature enthusiasts, as well as landowners, government and NGO partners, to assist us in conserving IBAs. You can get involved in the following ways:

- Join BirdLife South Africa: visit [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za)
- Join your local bird club
- Join an existing Local Conservation Group, or assist us to start one around your local IBA
- Bring to our attention any threats to an IBA, and join us in advocating for the IBA's protection
- If you are a landowner, you can become an IBA custodian

## IBAs of the Western Cape

Name	IBA No.	Approx. size (ha)	Protection status	Qualifying criteria
Tsitsikamma National Park	SA 098	24 000	Full	A2, A3
Olifants River Estuary	SA099	2000	None	A3, A4i
Bird Island	SA 100	3	Full	A1, A4i, ii, iii
Cederberg–Koue Bokkeveld Complex	SA 101	500 000	Partial	A2, A3
Karoo National Park	SA 102	33 000	Full	A1, A3, A4ii
Verlorenvlei	SA 103	1700	None	A4i
Lower Berg River Wetlands	SA 104	6600	None	A4i, iii
West Coast National Park & Saldanha Bay Islands	SA 105	27 600	Full	A1, A4i, ii, iii
Swartberg Mountains	SA 106	500 000	Partial	A2, A3
Eastern False Bay Mountains	SA 107	250 000	Partial	A1, A2, A3
Anysberg Nature Reserve	SA 108	34 000	Full	A2, A3
Dassen Island	SA 109	270	Full	A1, A4i, ii, iii
Robben Island	SA 110	575	Full	A1, Ai, ii, iii
Rietvlei Wetland Reserve	SA 111	530	Full	A4i
Outeniqua Mountains	SA 112	180 000	Partial	A2, A3
Southern Langeberg Mountains	SA 113	175 000	Partial	A1, A2, A3
Wilderness–Sedgefield Lakes Complex	SA114	12 250	Partial	A2, A3, A4i, iii
Overberg Wheat-belt	SA 115	300 000	None	A1, A2, A3, A4i
False Bay Park	SA 116	3000	Full	A4i, iii
Boulders Bay	SA 117	2	Full	A1
Botrivivlei & Kleinmond Estuary	SA 118	1400	None	A4i, iii
De Hoop Nature Reserve	SA 119	40 000	Full	A1, A2, A3, A4i, iii
Dyer Island Nature Reserve	SA 120	20	Full	A4i, ii, iii
Heuningnes River and Estuary system	SA 121	9000	Partial	A4i

### WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



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**HABITAT TYPES** The province is characterised by the Cape Floristic Region (CFR) which supports the Fynbos and Renoster-veld vegetation types. The CFR has over 9600 plant species and is recognised as a Global Biodiversity Hotspot due to the high levels of plant and animal diversity and endemism. The interior of the province is arid and includes parts of two other Global Biodiversity Hotspots, the Succulent Karoo and Nama Karoo biomes.

**FLAGSHIP SPECIES FOR THE REGION** The Fynbos Biome hosts a number of endemic bird species, which occur nowhere else in the world. These include the Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Rockjumper, Victorin's Warbler, Cape Siskin and Protea Seedeater. The Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird feed on the nectar of Proteas and Ericas. Important wader populations are primarily associated with the wetlands and coastal estuaries in this region. Species such as Curlew Sandpiper, White-fronted Plover, Kittlitz's Plover, Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and Red Knot migrate to South Africa's shores to over-winter and depend on healthy estuaries to fatten up for their long migration to the Palearctic region of the northern hemisphere.

**THREATS TO WESTERN CAPE'S BIRDS** The bird species which are endemic to the Fynbos are under threat from habitat loss or changes in habitat quality as a result of ecosystem modification. Alien plant species rapidly outcompete and replace the indigenous Fynbos plants which occupy the high mountain areas. Invasive alien plants also increase fire frequencies and fire intensity. These changes lead to a loss of habitat or plant species critical for the survival of Fynbos endemic birds.



Cape Sugarbird  
PETER RYAN



# Western Cape IBAs

## mountains meet the sea

The Western Cape is the 4th largest province in South Africa and is characterised by a 900 km rugged coastline and the Cape Fold Mountains. The Province is also South Africa's premier wine region and the meeting point of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.



Cape Rockjumper  
TREVOR HARDAKER



Blue Crane  
BRUCE WARD-SMITH

Click on the IBA name for more information