



Foraging Rufous-tailed Scrub Robins (*Cercotrichas galactotes*) flick their long rufous tail frequently showing the black and white tips of the tail feathers.



By 5pm on Monday over 257 birders had visited Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve.

PICTURE:CLIFFORD DORSE

Bird lovers in tizz over lost Robin

KAREN WATKINS

A confused Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin caused a bird-watching frenzy at Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve this weekend as it made a 180 degree mistake, flying south instead of north.

It should now be breeding around the Mediterranean but is instead feeding on insects and bitou (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) in long grass at the reserve.

Peter Steyn from Claremont and André Demblon from Constantia made the astonishing find.

They had been swanning around at Strandfontein Sewage Works on Sunday and decided to drive back along the east-

ern shore of the mirror-like vlei when Peter spotted the bird at 11am and André took a picture of it.

Unsure of the identity because the bird is way off its range, he sent the photo of it to Trevor Hardaker of South African Rare Bird News, who was on a trip at sea.

After much head-scratching by Trevor, along with Clifford Dorse of the Rondevlei Nature Reserve, his wife Suretha and other birders, John Graham and Michael Mason, the bird's identity was eventually confirmed and that it has never been recorded in southern Africa. This makes it "an absolute mega of the highest quality", said Trevor.

By Monday afternoon, over 257 twitch-

ers had visited the eastern shore of the reserve, some having flown in from Johannesburg, Durban and the Garden Route.

Mr Dorse said it is a species that migrates from Somalia, Syria and Israel into Africa, normally as far south Kenya. He said this is possibly a case of reverse migration where instead of turning north it kept flying south.

Asked what now for the bird, Peter said he has no idea but it might realise it's in the wrong place and fly north.

The bird may still be at the reserve to be seen but readers are reminded to not get too close as there will be many birders from other parts of the country travelling to see it.

Ward 73 not without its improvements

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She adds: "Another challenge is a lack of affordable senior retirement facilities, as many seniors only get an old age grant from SASSA (South African Social Security Agency). As the adult children have to prioritise to meet challenges like school fees and aftercare, there is just not enough money to help their parents."

Ms Bew said the ward had not been without its improvements over the last five years. She referred to the building and refurbishment of several play parks, road upgrades, the installation of CCTV cameras in hot spots, the resurfacing of tennis courts and provision of sports equipment, LED upgrades for street lights and road landscaping, among other things.

In the 2011 municipal elections, 72.86 percent of Ward 73's nearly 15 000 voters went to the polls.

Of the 10 707 voters who did turn up, 94.66 percent voted for Ms Bew.

Other candidates for the ward include Mogamat Salie Layloo of the Africa Muslim Party, the ACDP's Grant Haskin, the ANC's Jason Adams, Fairouz Nagia-Luddy from Al Jama-Ah, Valma Pfaff from Al Shura Party, Isgak Adams from the Cape Muslim Congress, Jack Miller from the Cape Party, Fahdia Jackson from Coloured Voice, COPE's Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa, the EFF's Ncedo Silas, Fatima Davids from the Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa, Achmat Williams from the National Party South Africa, Michelle Calitz from the National People's Party, Leanda Yekani from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, Godfrey Leibrandt from the Patriotic Alliance and Ismail Bagus from Sizwe Ummah Nation.

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