



Friends of Verloren Valei Nature Reserve –Wildflower and Birding Weekend

23-24 January 2021 with Susan Abell and Geoff Lockwood

Although the birding planned for Sunday had to be cancelled - on account of the rains associated with tropical cyclone Eloise, we had still managed some good sightings on Saturday. Highlights were a fairly approachable pair of Blue Cranes, several sightings of Yellow-breasted Pipits and a great fly-by by a male Denham's Bustard that co-operated beautifully, flying past everyone in the convoy of vehicles. These Red Data-listed bird sightings re-emphasised the conservation value of this spectacular reserve. We also had great close flight views of Cape Vultures, Alpine- and African Black Swifts in the reserve.

Grey-winged Francolin	Two birds flushed from the ridge line where we had <i>Disa alticola</i>
Natal Spurfowl	Bird calling near the office during lunch
Hadedda Ibis	Seen from the waterfall (outside the reserve)
Western Cattle Egret	Waterfall
Cape Vulture	ENDANGERED Great, low flight views at Milly's; also 1 overhead at the waterfall
Common Buzzard	Bird flying over the public road through the reserve
Jackal Buzzard	Waterfall
Rock Kestrel	Male hover-hunting over the public road
Amur Falcon	Male overhead near the waterfall
Denham's Bustard	VULNERABLE Great views of a male which flew past all the vehicles
Red-chested Flufftail	Heard calling from the wetland on the public road
Blue Crane	NEAR-THREATENED Pair in the centre of the reserve
African Wattled Lapwing	Waterfall (outside the reserve)

African Olive Pigeon	Two birds in a tree near the entrance gate
Ring-necked Dove	Several sightings around the office
Alpine Swift	Great flight views – overhead at Milly’s, and also in the centre of the reserve
African Black Swift	Great flight views – overhead at Milly’s, and also in the centre of the reserve
Cape Crow	Distant views in the reserve plus four birds near the entrance
Dark-capped Bulbul	Two birds at the office
Banded Martin	Sightings of birds at several spots in the reserve
Barn Swallow	Many sightings throughout the day
White-throated Swallow	Two on the reserve fence next to the public road
Greater Striped Swallow	Several birds flying around overhead at the waterfall
Little Rush Warbler	Bird calling from the sedges in the wetland on the public road
Wailing Cisticola	Bird calling from the rocks en route to the waterfall
Levaillant’s Cisticola	Bird calling from the sedges in the wetland on the public road
Wing-snapping Cisticola	Several birds heard displaying at various stops along the circular drive through the reserve
Pied Starling	Small group near the entrance gate
Red-winged Starling	Pair flying over the public road at the end of our visit
African Stonechat	Several sighted around the reserve
Sentinel Rock Thrush	A female on a small rock outcrop near the first stream crossing
Malachite Sunbird	Repeated sightings of birds feeding on the <i>Crocoshia paniculata</i>
Cape Weaver	Several sighting near the gate, and around the office
Southern Masked Weaver	Male nest-building next to the office
Yellow Bishop	Seen at several points along the circular drive
Long-tailed Widowbird	Displaying of wetlands at several points
Cape Wagtail	A bird flushed from the second stream crossing
Cape Longclaw	Several pairs flushed along the circular drive
African Pipit	Several birds displaying along the circular drive
Yellow-breasted Pipit	VULNERABLE Several good sightings of pairs on the circular drive
Cape Canary	A small group feeding en route to the waterfall

