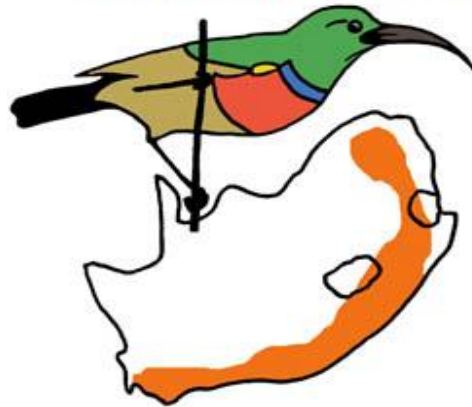


SABAP2



**Hofmeyr/Tarkastad birding atlas bash 18-21
March 2022**

**Tino Herselman, *with input from participants*
April 2022**

Southern African Bird Atlas Project

SABAP2 Reports Series

Number 20





BACKGROUND

The second Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 is valuable for many different reasons: mapping birds through space as well as time, but also for bringing together birders with a unique and singular passion – those that wish to contribute to this citizen science project (atlassers). With two long years of pandemic induced lockdown, opportunities for ‘atlas bashes’ have been few and far between. A group of us decided it was time to tackle the poorly atlased region around Tarkastad in the Eastern Cape, an area that has been on the wish-list for a long time!



1.TARGET AREA

The target area (Figure 1) for the bash was the under-atlased area covering the eastern half of the Hofmeyr district and the north-western part of the Tarkastad district in the Eastern Cape.



Figure 1. The target area of the Hofmeyr/Tarkastad birding bash held from 18 – 21 March 2022

The vegetation and topography varied considerably from the west to the east, resulting in quite diverse habitats. The western parts consisted mainly of open plains with a mixture of Karoo shrub and grass. The grasslands are uncharacteristically overgrown at the moment because of the exceptionally good rainy season. The eastern half of the target area was mountainous area covering the Bamboes mountains, known for peaks in excess of 2,000 meters above sea level, and kloofs, valleys and plains, covered with



grass, shrubs and acacia trees. Most rivers and streams had free-flowing water, while most farm dams were full or partially full.



The area consists of 64 pentads in a square (8 x 8) as shown in the Figure 2. Of these pentads, 8 were virgin pentads, 28 had 1 card, 14 had 2 cards, 6 had 3 cards and 8 were surveyed 4 or more times.



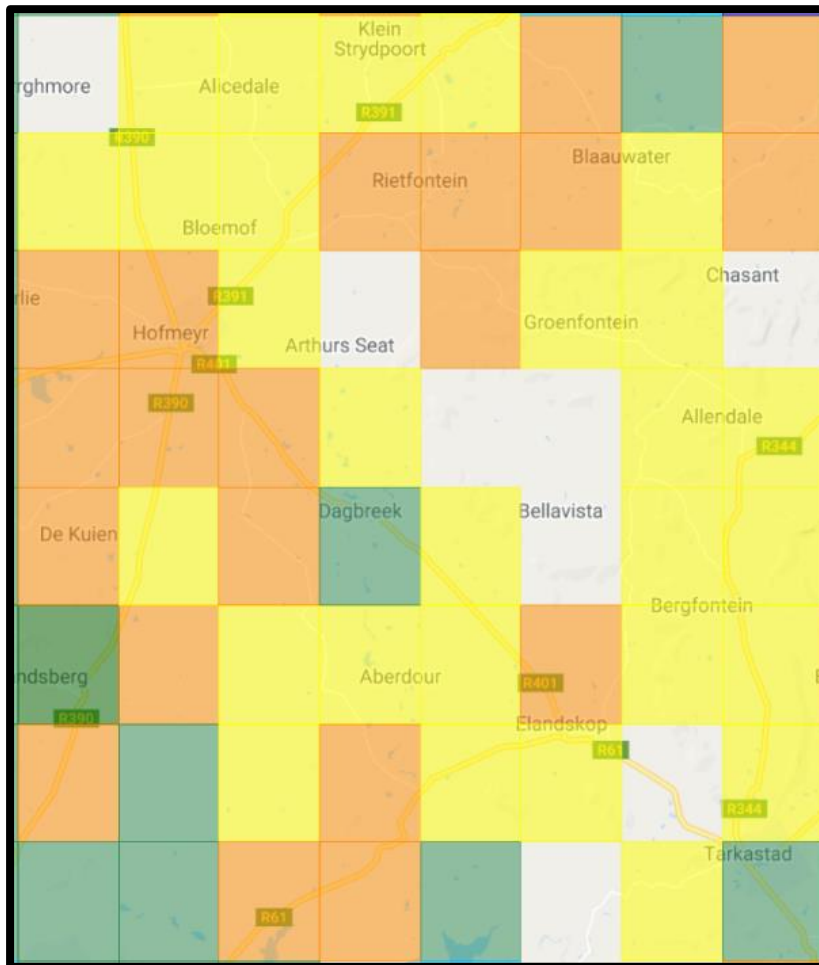


Figure 2. The 64 pentads of target area of the Hofmeyr/Tarkastad birding bash

2. PARTICIPANTS

The following eight birders participated in the bash, who formed 6 teams:

- Tino Herselman
- Stefan Theron
- Chris Cheetham
- Felicity Ellmore
- Henk Nel
- Rudi Minnie
- Salome Willemse
- Alan Lee (plus his 2 children)



Alan has also written an account of the bash from his family perspective:
<https://bluehillescape.blogspot.com/2022/04/hofmeyr-atlas-bash.html>

3. ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation was in an old farmhouse on the farm Houw Kuilen in the Hofmeyr district on the foot of the Bamboes mountain. The house has 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge, kitchen, pantry with plenty of fridge and freezer space and a large stoep with a lekker braai.

4. ATLASSING

4.1 Weather

The first full day of atlassing (Saturday, 29 March 2022) started off with great weather for birding, but a heavy thunderstorm late afternoon threatened our efforts over a large part of the target area. The challenge was less the rain than the sticky, muddy conditions that resulted. However, true to nature, the adventurous atlassers were not too phased by this – some excellent records made it onto various cards during, and just after the storm. These encounters and tales from the day in the field were shared during the evening's socialising, with highlights like Common Whitethroat, Icterine Warbler, Drakensberg Rockjumper, Buff-streaked Chat to name a few, making us wish we could stay longer and get those specials on our own lists too! The Whitethroat especially revealed that there is a twitcher in every atlasser! Sunday's weather was great with no more rain experienced on the day, neither on Monday when we returned home.





4.2 Coverage

A total of 53 Full Protocol cards were done, covering 43 of the pentads in the target area and one other pentad just outside the target area. The outcome of the bash on the SABAP2 coverage is shown in Figure 3.



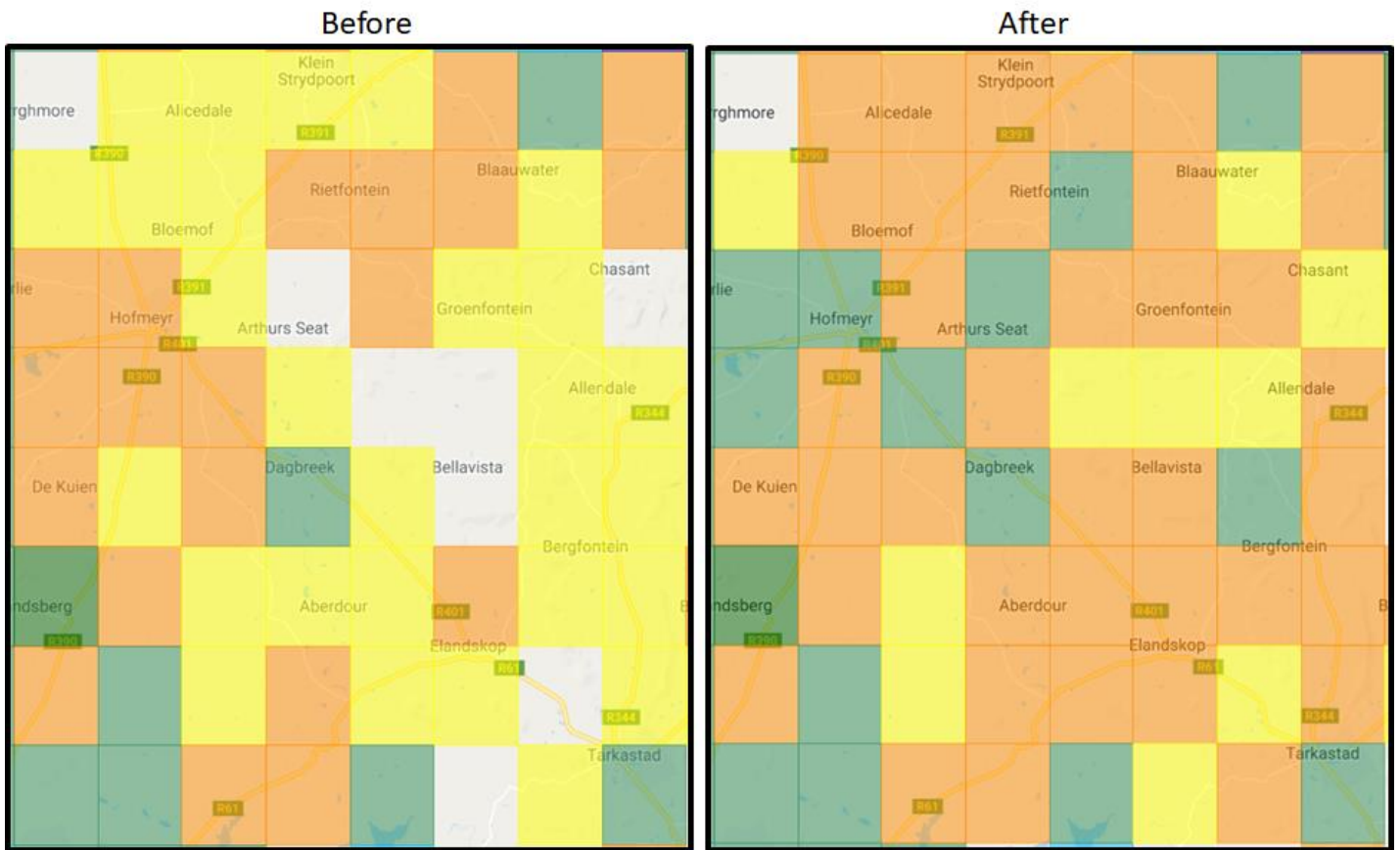


Figure 3. The impact of the birding bash on the SABAP2 coverage maps

4.3 Species

A total of 211 species were recorded during the bash, 18 of which were ORF's only. The species with the highest reporting rates were Greater Striped Swallow, Red-billed Quelea, Acacia Pied Barbet, Pied Crow and Neddicky, which were all recorded on more than 90% of the cards.





Figure 4 A few examples of the many special sightings.



Table 1 Species recorded during the Tarkastad/Hofmeyr bash. Number of observations and observation rate are included. 'ORF only' indicates new species records for the area.

Order	Number	Common group	Common species	Observations	Observation Rate (%)
1	6	Grebe	Little	10	23
2	50	Cormorant	Reed	4	9
3	54	Heron	Grey	9	20
4	55	Heron	Black-headed	5	11
5	72		Hamerkop	8	18
6	80	Stork	White	1	2
7	81	Ibis	African Sacred	1	2
8	84	Ibis	Hadada	18	41
9	85	Spoonbill	African	2	5
10	88	Goose	Spur-winged	6	14
11	89	Goose	Egyptian	28	64
12	90	Shelduck	South African	17	39
13	94	Shoveler	Cape	2	5
14	95	Duck	African Black	2	5
15	96	Duck	Yellow-billed	20	45
16	97	Teal	Red-billed	8	18
17	98	Teal	Cape	ORF only	
18	100	Duck	White-faced Whistling	ORF only	
19	105		Secretarybird	3	7
20	106	Vulture	Cape	3	7
21	113	Falcon	Peregrine	1	2
22	114	Falcon	Lanner	1	2
23	119	Falcon	Amur	ORF only	
24	122	Kestrel	Greater	3	7
25	123	Kestrel	Rock	14	32
26	130	Kite	Black-winged	4	9
27	133	Eagle	Verreaux's	6	14
28	152	Buzzard	Jackal	5	11
29	154	Buzzard	Common	2	5
30	162	Goshawk	Gabar	5	11
31	165	Goshawk	Pale Chanting	31	70
32	171	Harrier-Hawk	African	1	2
33	176	Francolin	Grey-winged	3	7



34	179	Francolin	Orange River	ORF only	
35	189	Quail	Common	9	20
36	192	Guineafowl	Helmeted	14	32
37	203	Crake	Black	ORF only	
38	210	Moorhen	Common	3	7
39	212	Coot	Red-knobbed	6	14
40	216	Crane	Blue	10	23
41	218	Bustard	Ludwig's	2	5
42	220	Korhaan	Karoo	1	2
43	223	Korhaan	Blue	7	16
44	238	Plover	Three-banded	12	27
45	242	Lapwing	Crowned	5	11
46	245	Lapwing	Blacksmith	10	23
47	275	Thick-knee	Spotted	3	7
48	278	Courser	Double-banded	3	7
49	311	Pigeon	Speckled	16	36
50	314	Dove	Red-eyed	6	14
51	316	Dove	Cape Turtle	39	89
52	317	Dove	Laughing	21	48
53	318	Dove	Namaqua	5	11
54	344	Cuckoo	Black	ORF only	
55	348	Cuckoo	Jacobin	3	7
56	351	Cuckoo	Klaas's	1	2
57	352	Cuckoo	Diederik	8	18
58	359	Owl	Western Barn	2	5
59	368	Eagle-Owl	Spotted	4	9
60	372	Nightjar	Rufous-cheeked	2	5
61	378	Swift	Common	1	2
62	383	Swift	White-rumped	16	36
63	384	Swift	Horus	3	7
64	385	Swift	Little	11	25
65	386	Swift	Alpine	4	9
66	390	Mousebird	Speckled	14	32
67	391	Mousebird	White-backed	6	14
68	392	Mousebird	Red-faced	23	52
69	397	Kingfisher	Malachite	3	7
70	402	Kingfisher	Brown-hooded	8	18
71	418	Hoopoe	African	9	20
72	419	Wood Hoopoe	Green	1	2
73	421	Scimitarbill	Common	2	5
74	432	Barbet	Acacia Pied	41	93
75	439	Barbet	Crested	1	2



76	440	Honeyguide	Greater	1	2
77	442	Honeyguide	Lesser	1	2
78	445	Woodpecker	Ground	1	2
79	450	Woodpecker	Cardinal	10	23
80	453	Wryneck	Red-throated	ORF only	
81	456	Lark	Melodious	1	2
82	460	Lark	Sabota	1	2
83	463	Lark	Large-billed	14	32
84	474	Lark	Spike-heeled	18	41
85	485	Sparrow-Lark	Grey-backed	1	2
86	488	Lark	Red-capped	4	9
87	490	Lark	Pink-billed	5	11
88	493	Swallow	Barn	35	80
89	495	Swallow	White-throated	17	39
90	498	Swallow	Pearl-breasted	17	39
91	502	Swallow	Greater Striped	42	95
92	506	Martin	Rock	11	25
93	507	Martin	Common House	1	2
94	509	Martin	Brown-throated	10	23
95	510	Martin	Banded	9	20
96	517	Drongo	Fork-tailed	15	34
97	522	Crow	Pied	41	93
98	523	Crow	Cape	4	9
99	524	Raven	White-necked	10	23
100	525	Tit	Grey	5	11
101	527	Tit	Southern Black	ORF only	
102	531	Tit	Cape Penduline	19	43
103	544	Bulbul	African Red-eyed	28	64
104	551	Greenbul	Sombre	1	2
105	559	Thrush	Cape Rock	3	7
106	560	Thrush	Sentinel Rock	1	2
107	561	Thrush	Short-toed Rock	1	2
108	564	Wheatear	Mountain	9	20
109	566	Chat	Karoo	2	5
110	568	Wheatear	Capped	2	5
111	569	Chat	Buff-streaked	ORF only	
112	570	Chat	Familiar	35	80
113	572	Chat	Sickle-winged	2	5
114	573	Chat	Mocking Cliff	1	2
115	575	Chat	Ant-eating	36	82
116	576	Stonechat	African	15	34
117	581	Robin-Chat	Cape	27	61



118	583	Scrub Robin	Karoo	35	80
119	594	Whitethroat	Common	ORF only	
120	596	Warbler	Icterine	ORF only	
121	599	Warbler	Willow	15	34
122	600	Eremomela	Yellow-bellied	8	18
123	604	Warbler	Lesser Swamp	3	7
124	606	Warbler	African Reed	3	7
125	618	Grassbird	Cape	5	11
126	619	Warbler	Rufous-eared	35	80
127	621	Crombec	Long-billed	13	30
128	622	Apalis	Bar-throated	11	25
129	629	Cisticola	Zitting	20	45
130	630	Cisticola	Desert	33	75
131	631	Cisticola	Cloud	15	34
132	634	Cisticola	Wing-snapping	ORF only	
133	637		Neddicky	41	93
134	638	Cisticola	Grey-backed	7	16
135	639	Cisticola	Wailing	3	7
136	646	Cisticola	Levaillant's	13	30
137	650	Prinia	Black-chested	ORF only	
138	653	Warbler	Namaqua	4	9
139	654	Flycatcher	Spotted	4	9
140	658	Warbler	Chestnut-vented	33	75
141	659	Warbler	Layard's	3	7
142	663	Flycatcher	Chat	7	16
143	665	Flycatcher	Fiscal	28	64
144	673	Batis	Chinspot	10	23
145	674	Batis	Pirit	9	20
146	678	Flycatcher	Fairy	14	32
147	682	Flycatcher	African Paradise	6	14
148	686	Wagtail	Cape	23	52
149	692	Pipit	African	31	70
150	694	Pipit	Plain-backed	2	5
151	695	Pipit	Buffy	2	5
152	697	Pipit	African Rock	7	16
153	703	Longclaw	Cape	8	18
154	706	Shrike	Lesser Grey	ORF only	
155	707	Fiscal	Southern	32	73
156	708	Shrike	Red-backed	2	5
157	709	Boubou	Southern	9	20
158	713	Tchagra	Southern	3	7
159	722		Bokmakierie	25	57



160	733	Starling	Common	1	2
161	735	Starling	Wattled	3	7
162	737	Starling	Cape	7	16
163	745	Starling	Red-winged	22	50
164	746	Starling	Pied	22	50
165	751	Sunbird	Malachite	3	7
166	758	Sunbird	Greater Double-collared	1	2
167	760	Sunbird	Southern Double-collared	5	11
168	764	Sunbird	Dusky	3	7
169	772	Sunbird	Amethyst	5	11
170	780	Sparrow-Weaver	White-browed	26	59
171	784	Sparrow	House	6	14
172	786	Sparrow	Cape	29	66
173	788	Sparrow	Yellow-throated Bush	6	14
174	789	Weaver	Scaly-feathered	26	59
175	797	Weaver	Village	ORF only	
176	799	Weaver	Cape	8	18
177	803	Weaver	Southern Masked	26	59
178	805	Quelea	Red-billed	42	95
179	808	Bishop	Southern Red	39	89
180	812	Bishop	Yellow-crowned	7	16
181	818	Widowbird	Long-tailed	2	5
182	820	Finch	Red-headed	25	57
183	830	Pytilia	Green-winged	ORF only	
184	833	Firefinch	African	6	14
185	837	Firefinch	Red-billed	4	9
186	843	Waxbill	Common	24	55
187	844		Quailfinch	19	43
188	846	Whydah	Pin-tailed	19	43
189	849	Indigobird	Dusky	ORF only	
190	851	Indigobird	Village	ORF only	
191	857	Canary	Cape	6	14
192	859	Canary	Yellow-fronted	6	14
193	860	Canary	Black-throated	25	57
194	861	Canary	Black-headed	2	5
195	865	Canary	White-throated	7	16
196	866	Canary	Yellow	17	39
197	867	Seedeater	Streaky-headed	9	20
198	871	Bunting	Lark-like	6	14
199	872	Bunting	Cinnamon-breasted	35	80
200	873	Bunting	Cape	16	36
201	874	Bunting	Golden-breasted	6	14



202	940	Dove	Rock	4	9
203	1035	Korhaan	Northern Black	22	50
204	1038	Rockjumper	Drakensberg	1	2
205	1104	Thrush	Karoo	5	11
206	1172	White-eye	Cape	17	39
207	1183	Lark	Eastern Clapper	29	66
208	4126	Lark	Eastern Long-billed	1	2
209	4139	Prinia	Karoo	33	75
210	4142	Sparrow	Southern Grey-headed	37	84
211	10877	Pipit	Nicholson's	2	5

We would like to acknowledge Alan Collett for the inspiration to visit this area. He was missed on this expedition! The participants would also like to thank Tino for the fantastic organisation of this bash: he printed out the battle maps, booklets of pentad information (including contact details), shepherded in the lost and late, and prepared some delicious meals. We also thank all the landowners between Hofmeyr and Tarkastad that allowed us access to their farms and their special birds.



Atlas data was collected using the incredible mobile phone app Birdlasser

