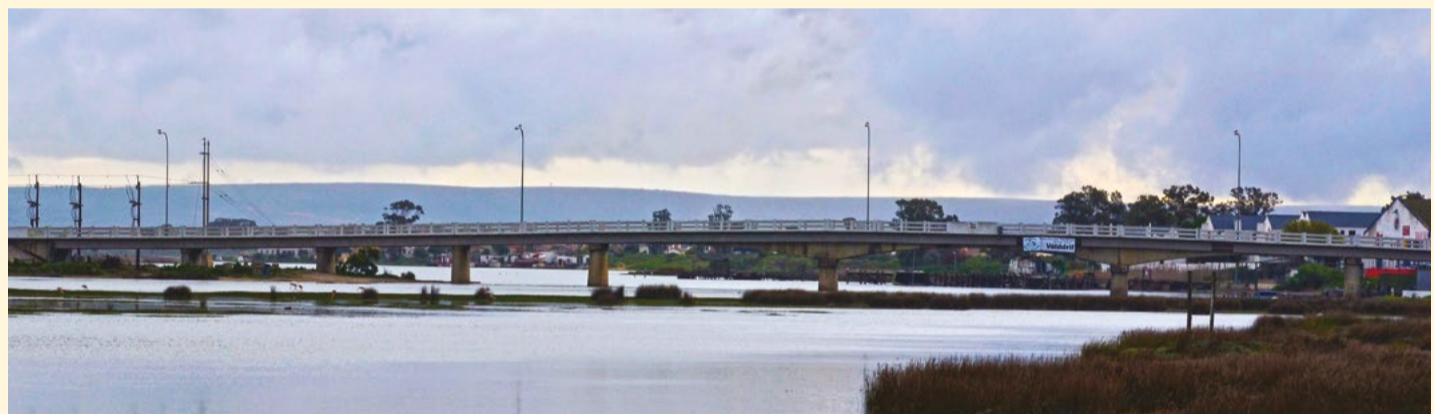




Birding Guide

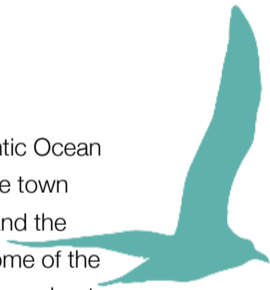


Birding

Where the Berg River meanders into the Atlantic Ocean on the Western Coast of Southern Africa is the town Velddrif. The tidal action between the ocean and the river, with its estuary and tidal flats, creates some of the multiple habitats which makes this one of the very best birding areas on the Western Coast of Southern Africa.

The Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) records bird species according to strict protocols. Over 220 bird species have officially been observed in this area since 2007. The observation of species is dictated by the seasons, with summer always having the highest number of species. Winter months have their own interesting surprises with some migrant birds such as Common Whimbrel, Grey Plover and young Curlew Sandpipers not leaving for the northern hemisphere because of the mild winter conditions.

A variety of waders, such as Plovers and Sandpipers, can usually be observed at low tide. There are a number of easily accessible viewing points such as Laaiplek Harbour (-32.7703 ; 18.1488) and at the adjoining SA Fisheries Museum (-32.7710 ; 18.1514). Expect to see Kelp, Hartlaub's and Grey-headed Gulls, African Black Oystercatchers on the far bank of the river, Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Grey Heron and Cape Cormorant of which over 100 000 have been counted flying low over the Berg River coming in to roost in the late afternoon. On the border between Laaiplek and Port Owen is Rooibaai (-32.7786 ; 18.1508) where one can sometimes be surprised by unexpected waders at low tide. On the eastern side of the Carinus Bridge is a wooden walkway (-32.7869 ; 18.1743) which takes one closer to Greater and Lesser Flamingo with different duck species at high tide and waders at low tide.



At the famous Bokkomlaan (-32.7876 ; 18.1869) you can park your vehicle and stroll along looking at Great White Pelicans, or relax at one of the eateries. Enjoy the views and look out for the African Marsh-Harrier over the reeds as well as Kingfishers, Grey Heron, African Darter, Black-winged Stilt, Gulls and Terns.

Leisurely boat trips on the river are available, with the possibility of observing more bird species. Contact the Velddrif Visitors Information Centre for details on 022 783 1821.

Access to some of the salt mines and farms east of the Carinus Bridge is only possible by prior arrangement with the property owners. There may be costs involved.

A list of birds in the greater Berg River area is available at Velddrif Visitors Information Centre.

Eddie du Plessis

Tips for enjoyable birding

- 1 Remember your binoculars.
- 2 Carry insect repellent and medication for bites and stings with you, especially during flower time.
- 3 Take care when walking on the wooden walkways.
- 4 Take care of your personal security and your belongings.
- 5 Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times, and preferably not be taken into sensitive birding areas.
- 6 Be careful where you tread so as to not destroy bird nests on the ground.



Conservation

Laaiplek Harbour 022 783 0447
Rocherpan Nature Reserve 079 203 1092

Emergency Numbers

Ambulance 022 713 4590 or 10177
Medical Doctor 022 783 0027/083 658 4056
NSRI 082 990 5966
Police 022 783 8025/8/0 or 10111
Provincial Hospital, Vredenburg 022 709 7200
Private Hospital, Vredenburg 022 719 1030



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