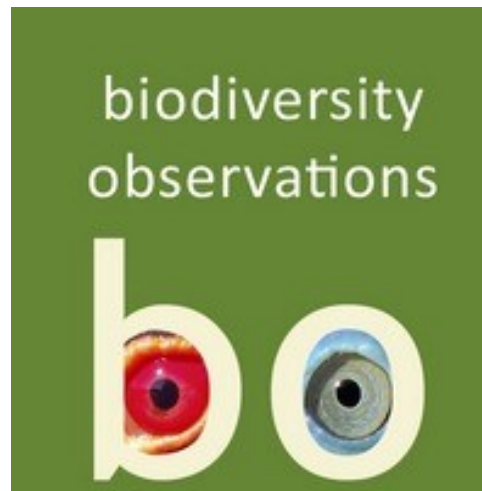


# African Red-eyed Bulbul in Stanford, Western Cape

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## ORNITHOLOGY

### African Red-eyed Bulbul in Stanford, Western Cape

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#### Abstract

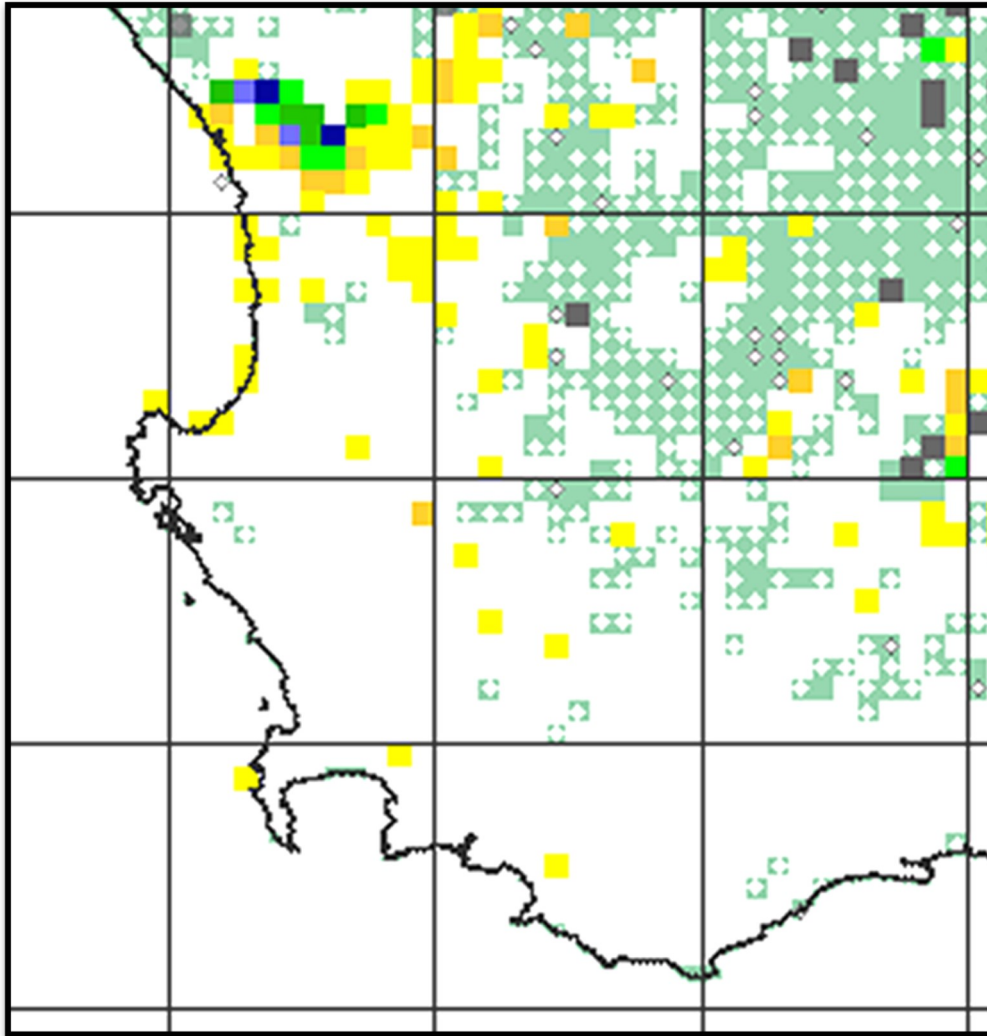
An African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* was observed in a suburban garden on 26 May 2024, in Stanford, Western Cape, South Africa. There is another record farther south on the Agulhas Plain. Given the fact that this bulbul is expanding southwards, all bulbuls in the Western Cape need to be carefully checked to determine the species.

#### Observation

A single African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* was observed during the morning of 26 May 2024 (Figure 1). The initial sighting was on the edge of a small water bath situated at ground level in well-treed garden in Stanford, Western Cape 34.2643°S, 19.4517°E. The property is adjacent to a vlei. A group of Cape Bulbuls *Pycnonotus capensis* was also present, but no direct interaction between the



**Figure 1:** The African Red-eyed Bulbul observed in Stanford, Western Cape, on 26 May 2024.



**Figure 2:** SABAP2 distribution map for the African Red-eyed Bulbul for the area south of the Olifants River in the northern Western Cape, and west of 21°E, east of Cape Agulhas. The grid cells are pentads, 5 minutes of latitude, north-south, and 5 minutes of longitude, east-west. The species is rare to vagrant in pentads shaded yellow. The southernmost shaded pentad is 3425\_1925, which includes the town of Stanford. The full interpretation of this map is provided by Underhill & Brooks (2016).

species was observed. Situated within the garden was a fruiting Cape Ash *Ekebergia capensis*. Both species of bulbul were seen moving through the canopy of the tree. However, there were no observations of the African Red-eyed Bulbul feeding on the fruit. The bird was present for less than 15 minutes. The record was reported to the Second Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP2) for pentad 3425\_1925 (Brooks et al. 2022). It is the southernmost reported record of the African Red-eyed Bulbul (Figure 2). There was a second record in the same pentad on 24 July 2024 (SABAP2 unpubl. data).

## Discussion

The African Red-eyed Bulbul has expanded its range into the northwestern section of the Western Cape; Quintana et al. (2024) described the process in detail. The first records were made in Olifants River Valley in 2009, and by 2021 its atlas reporting rate exceeded that of the Cape Bulbul. By 2021, the African Red-eyed Bulbul had largely displacing the Cape Bulbul in this area, especially in agricultural, town and garden habitats. It was moving southwards.

There has been a report of a Red-eyed Bulbul in the town of Struisbaai near Cape Agulhas on 3 December 2022 (BirdLife Overberg 2022, Wim de Klerk pers. comm.). However, this record was not included on a SABAP2 checklist, and therefore does not appear in Figure 2.

This observation, and the others for the southern part of the Western Cape mentioned here, support the idea that the African Red-eyed Bulbul is expanding its range southwards, not only in the Olifants River Valley area (Quintana et al. 2024), but also to the southernmost parts of the Western Cape. Therefore all bulbuls throughout the province need to be carefully checked to determine the species.

## Acknowledgements

Wim de Klerk commented on a draft, and provided additional information about the record in Struisbaai.

## References


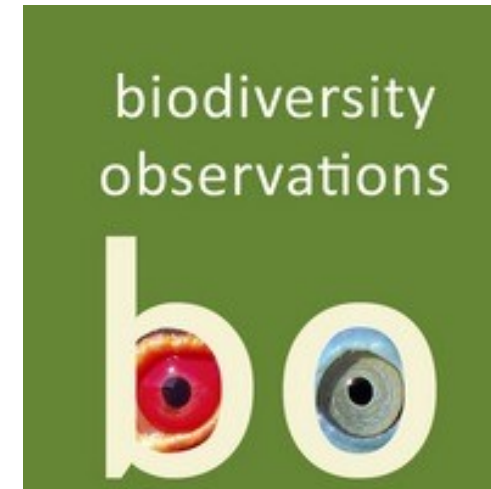
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