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SIGHTINGS AT SEA: SPECKLED PIGEON *COLUMBA GUINEA* OFF DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

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SIGHTINGS AT SEA: SPECKLED PIGEON *COLUMBA GUINEA* OFF DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

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Three separate sightings of 4 Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* were made at sea between July-October 2015 (Fig 1). The first sighting was of a single adult (Fig 2) on 4 July, approximately 450 km east south-east of Durban, South Africa. The second sighting was also an adult bird on 10 October, approximately 90 km east of Durban with the final sighting of two birds on 20 October, 25 km east of Durban. The single bird, seen 90 km east of Durban, landed on the vessel and remained here for a number of hours, while the bird 450 km from Durban unsuccessfully attempted to land on the vessel on a number of occasions whilst the vessel was steaming to the fishing grounds. The two birds seen flying together (25 km east of Durban) did not attempt to land on the vessel.

Speckled Pigeon occur throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa and are widespread in South Africa. They are not known to make any major movements, with only two ringing recoveries >100 km from ringing site (SAFRING unpubl. data). There are some local movements suspected in the Western Cape, however they are largely sedentary (Hockey *et al.* 2005) and thus are not well known for vagrancy. The origin or intended destination of this bird is unknown and I can only speculate that the bird was seriously blown off course and disorientated whilst undertaking a local movement, or

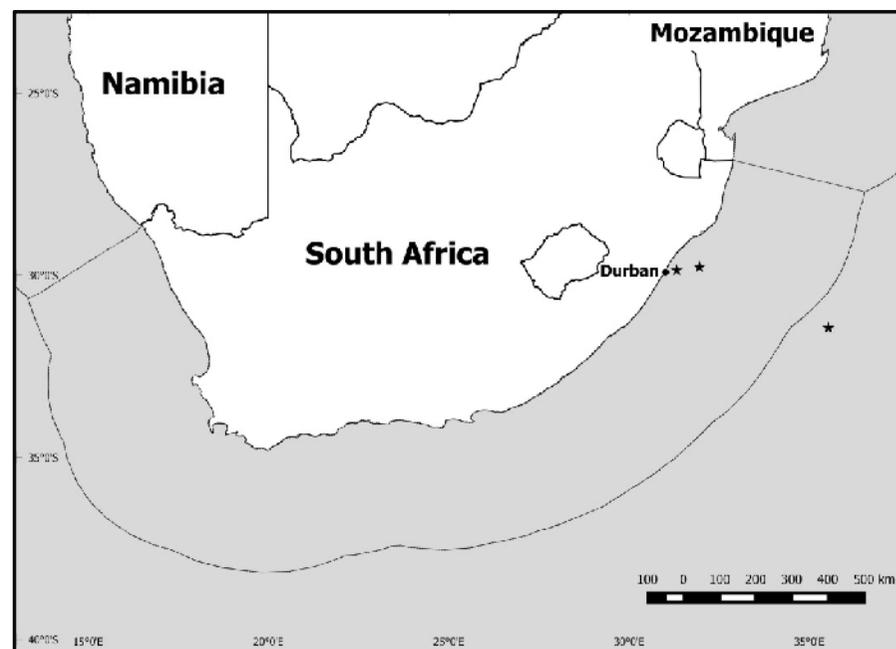


Fig 1 - Sightings of Speckled Pigeon off Durban, South Africa, (indicated with stars) with exclusive economic zones shown (thin black line).

perhaps Speckled Pigeon do make larger movements than we currently understand.

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References

Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, Ryan PG (eds) 2005. Roberts Birds of Southern Africa, VIIth ed. The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town.



Fig 2 – The adult Speckled Pigeon seen at sea approximately 450 km east south-east of Durban, South Africa on 4 July 2015. © Dominic P Rollinson