

## NOTES

### Third record of pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) for Madagascar

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The pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) is a distinctive shorebird with a long, strongly upcurved bill. Primarily a coastal species, it breeds in Europe, Asia, and east and southern Africa, and is a vagrant to the Malagasy region (Safford & Hawkins, 2013). Only two confirmed records are known from Madagascar; one at Morombe in April 1961 (Appert, 1971), and one at the mouth of the Morondava River in December 1992 (Langrand & Sinclair, 1994). Earlier reports are not adequately documented and so not accepted as proven (Safford & Hawkins, 2013).

On 25 March 2013 we observed an adult pied avocet in a small area of brackish, coastal wetlands (23°15'S, 43°37'E) between the villages of Ambondrolava and Ambotsibotsike, 12 km north of Toliara, Atsimo Andrefana region (Figure 1). Also present at the site were six greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*), one lesser flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), 10 common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*), eight black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), and several Kittlitz's plover (*Charadrius pecuarius*).

Our observation represents the fourth record of pied avocet in the Malagasy region, of which three are from southwest Madagascar and one from Bird Island, Seychelles, in November 2012 (SBRC, 2013). Given that the Seychelles archipelago otherwise dominates records of Palaearctic vagrants in the region (Safford & Hawkins, 2013), this may suggest a different origin (most likely southern Africa, where the species is nomadic and partially migratory as Hockey, 2005 mentioned) for the vagrant pied avocets so far recorded in Madagascar (R. Safford, *pers. comm.*).



**Figure 1:** Pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) photographed on coastal wetlands north of Toliara on 25 March 2013. The image also shows three greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) and a black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*). (Photograph by Louise D. Jasper.)

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