

Steppe Whimbrel in Mozambique 2017

The male Steppe Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus alboaxillaris* first found in February 2016 was colour ringed, tagged and tracked in March-May 2016 and the details were reported by Gary Allport et al. in 2018. The tag remained stationary in May 2016 at the final locality near Aden in Yemen and it was not clear if the bird was dead or the tag had fallen off the bird. It was therefore very good to re-find the bird on the beach in Maputo in early August 2016 where it stayed for the subsequent boreal winter, defending the same feeding territory and undertaking full moult. An attempt to tag the bird again in January 2017 was unsuccessful but the bird remained on its feeding territory, last seen on 8th March and probably leaving on the full moon 10th March 2017, two weeks earlier than the previous year. The bird was not subsequently re-sighted but further searches found several birds showing the features of Steppe Whimbrel in the huge estuarine system of Inhambane Bay, including three on the 3rd August 2017, two on 6th April 2018, and up to eight birds in March 2019. There were three sightings further north at the San Sebastian Peninsula in August 2018 (GA pers obs) and a single March 2019 (N. Perrins in litt. 2019). However, the only confirmed sightings of birds showing the full set of identification features in Mozambique were 6th April 2018, Inhambane Bay (see Recent Reports, Bull ABC 25(2): 242) and, most recently, a first winter bird on the beach in Maputo 800m from where the first bird was found November 2019-January 2020 (J. Hogg in litt. 2020).