

Bird of the Month

Crowned Plover (*Vanellus coronatus*)

The Crowned Plover is easy to spot with its characteristic black cap interrupted by a white 'halo' and red bill. They have light brown breast and white bellies. Immature birds are browner than the adults

The Crowned Plover can be seen abundantly within the Rietondale area and the open spaces of the Rietondale Park suit the birds habitat perfectly. These birds can be found to forms large flocks of up to thirty birds. Very vocal, when approached by intruders, the Crowned Plover with chicks dive-bombs the intruders screeching loudly to frighten them away. Please be careful while walking not to trample nests as they are on the ground usually out in the open and blend in very easily.

Crowned Plovers are found throughout South Africa. Habitat is open grasslands. They are fond of playing fields, airfields and golf courses. They feed mainly on insects and will dig for worms in soft soil.