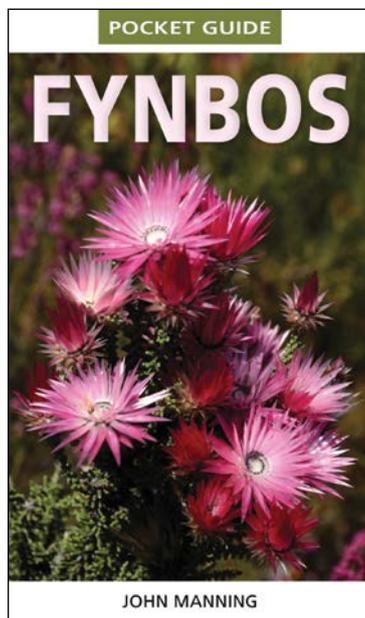


Books

Pocket Guide to Fynbos

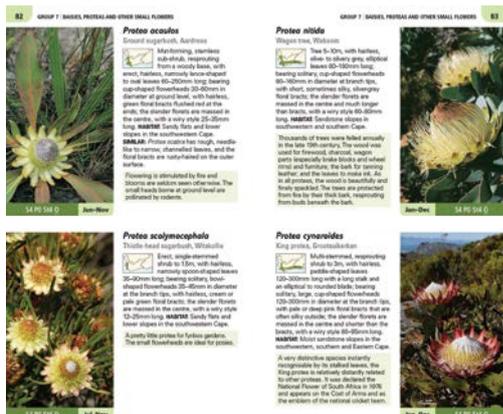
By John Manning. Struik Nature.



John Manning is the author of several wildflower guides, including the *Field Guide to Fynbos*, first published in 2007 and updated in 2018. This is a much more compact booklet, easier to slip into a shirt pocket or backpack to take along on hikes. Despite its small size, it still covers more than 300 species of fynbos plants, focusing on the most striking and commonly seen examples, which makes it a good option for novice flower-spotters or visitors to the Cape.

Each species entry includes concise descriptions of the plant and its habitat, a distribution map and photograph, and an indication of the flowering months, as well as a set of letters and numbers linked to a floral key on the inside front cover. The species are divided into 10 distinct groups for ease of use, and there is an introduction detailing the origins, diversity, adaptations and conservation of this unique flora. The recommended retail price of the book is R190, and it is available as an e-book too, at R119.

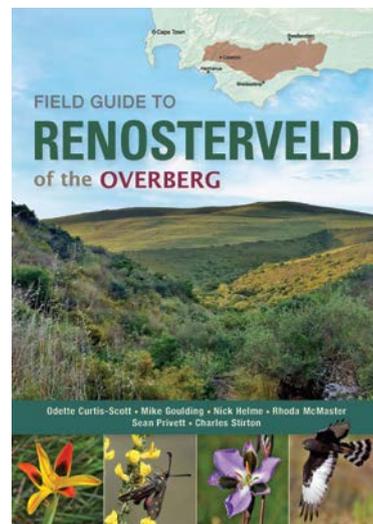
John Manning is a botanist based at the Kirstenbosch branch of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and a world authority on the iris and hyacinth families. In 2018, the Southern African Society for Systematic Biology (SASSB) gave him its Award for Extraordinary Contributions to Systematics in Southern Africa, in recognition of both his scientific endeavours and his initiatives to raise public awareness and the profile of the discipline.



Field Guide to Renosterveld of the Overberg

By Odette Curtis-Scott, Mike Goulding, Nick Helme, Rhoda McMaster, Sean Privett and Charles Stirton. Struik Nature.

Five years in the making, this book has been a labour of love for lead author Dr Odette Curtis-Scott, founder and Director of the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust. She has spent almost two decades conducting research, managing conservation projects and campaigning for the preservation of Renosterveld, one of the world's most threatened vegetation types. Part of the Fynbos biome, about 95% of the original extent has been lost to agriculture through planting of crops and overgrazing.



The book focuses specifically on the Renosterveld in the Overberg region of the Western Cape, and being the first of its kind, it will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of the area's inhabitants. It's likely that farmers who have embraced the concept of conservation stewardship will be particularly interested, and the book includes a set of guidelines for good land-management practices. But all professional and amateur botanists will enjoy paging through the book and marvelling at the diversity of flowers, which often appear as small, hidden treasures amongst the rather drab Renosterveld shrubs.

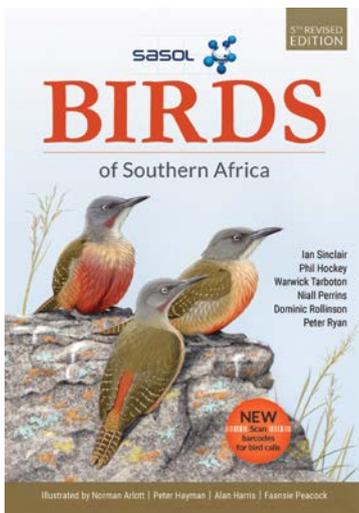
More than 980 plant species are featured in the book, but there's also a short section covering 140 animal species, from insects and reptiles to birds and mammals. An in-depth introduction sets the scene with a thorough overview of Renosterveld's conservation importance and ecology. The recommended retail price of the book is R420, but it is also available as an e-book for R290.





Sasol Birds of Southern Africa

By Ian Sinclair, Phil Hockey, Warwick Tarboton, Niall Perrins, Dominic Rollinson & Peter Ryan. Struik Nature.



Sasol Birds of Southern Africa was first published in 1993, with Ian Sinclair as the sole author. Over the years, other ornithologists and birding experts have updated the book, and new illustrators have joined the team too. So this '5th revised edition' not only includes the latest species records, but revised text, maps and plate annotations, and over 800 new illustrations.

STRUIK NATURE CALL APP



Apple App Store

DOWNLOAD FREE APP
to access the calls in this book by scanning a QR code or visiting the relevant app store.

See page 16 for further information on call app.



Google Play Store



The book is in the format of a typical field guide, and there is a choice of either a softcover version (R370) or a more rugged PVC one (R390). It is also available in Afrikaans.

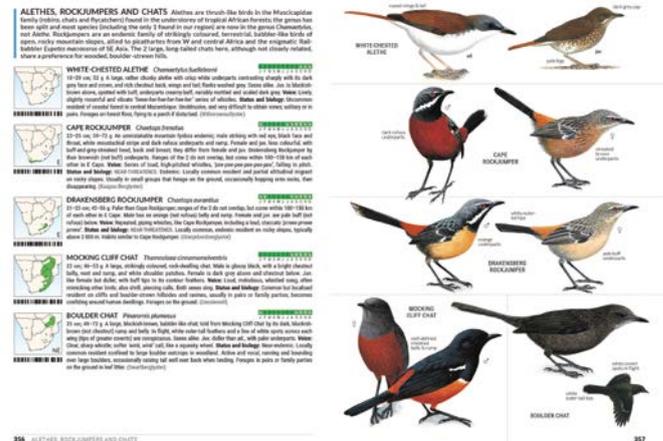
Then there's the larger-format version, *Sasol The Larger Illustrated Guide to Birds of Southern Africa*. This is more suitable for browsing at home, and is available as a softcover only, with a recommended retail price of R450.

What's more, with a smartphone in hand, it's now possible to listen to bird calls and songs for 866 of the species. All that's required is to download the free Struik Nature Call app from the Apple or Google Play store, and then scan the small barcode beneath the distribution map for the species. The app works well and is an added bonus to the book – it cannot be used on its own.



GORGEOUS BUSHSHRIKE *Telophorus viridis*

19 cm; 37 g A stunning, unmistakable, crimson-throated bushshrike. Male has black lores, a black line through eyes and black malar stripe joining broad, black breast band. Female lacks black facial pattern and has a narrow, black breast band and olive-green underparts. Juv. has dull yellow underparts, no breast band and a plain yellowish-green crown and face; breast band and red throat develop from 3 months. Olive-green head distinguishes it from juvs of other bushshrikes except juv. olive-morph Olive Bushshrike (from which it is inseparable in the field). **Voices:** Male song is a penetrating 2-5-syllabled 'kong-kon-kooi' or 'kong-kooi-kooi'; also rasping calls. **Status and biology:** Common resident in dense, tangled thickets, especially among low undergrowth on fringes of coastal and lowland forest. A skulking bird, more often heard than seen. (Konkolt)



Finally, for those who would rather access all the information on a smartphone or tablet, there's the updated *Sasol eBirds Southern Africa* app, also refreshed with all the updates of the 5th edition. While the books contain only illustrations, the app has photographs too – more than 2 700 of them. Plus the bird calls are included as part of the species entry, where available, as well as on the alphabetic and taxonomic lists accessible from the menu. Users can select English or Afrikaans as their language choice, and set their location if desired. The Smart Search function allows the species entries to be searched on the basis of bill type, bird size, colour and habitat, which should make bird identification considerably quicker and easier. Users can also create separate 'life-lists' of the birds they've identified on different outings, and these can be searched and sorted by date or alphabetically. The app is available on Apple and Android app stores for R 379,99.

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