



GURNEY'S SUGARBIRD ALBERT FRONEMAN

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA e-newsletter

April 2015



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LUCKY DRAW WINNERS

A lucky draw was done for all BirdLife South Africa members who renewed their membership in February 2015, and we congratulate the five members who will receive a copy of the beautifully illustrated *Robins of Africa* coffee-table book:

Hilary Gerber
Allan Youell
Cleo Artemides
Margaret Edwards
Carol Yeoman

We are sure you will enjoy the wonderful illustrations by Graeme Arnott and interesting accounts by Terry Oatley.

Thank you to all who renewed their membership with BirdLife South Africa.

R70 000...

Imagine how much good BirdLife South Africa could do with that!

Between 14 April and 22 May 2015 MySchool, MyVillage, and MyPlanet cardholders can vote online for their favourite MyVillage or MyPlanet charity – and it could be BirdLife South Africa! The charity that comes out tops will receive R70 000, 2nd place R35 000, 3rd place R25 000 and 4th to 10th place will each receive R10 000.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

1. Visit www.vote4charity.co.za to vote.
2. Select BirdLife South Africa.
3. Insert your personal details and your MySchool, MyVillage, MyPlanet or Woolworths linked card number and press vote. (Please note: You can only vote once.)
4. If you don't have a card, apply for one now at www.myschool.co.za/supporter/apply/ and choose BirdLife South Africa as your beneficiary.
5. Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do the same so that BirdLife South Africa gets even more votes!



Please vote for the birds – vote BirdLife South Africa! For more information, contact Nikki McCartney, Events & Marketing Manager on 083 636 1060 or events@birdlife.org.za



gardening FOR BIRDS

I used to get really irritated with the bees that flocked to my nectar feeder and simply flooded the little feeding pool with their bodies, making it impossible for the sunbirds to get a look in. Then I had a chat with a beekeeper in the area and found out that bees, countrywide, are in a lot of trouble. In the Cape, bee numbers are dwindling at an alarming rate. In the US things are worse. The consequences of no bees are alarming to say the least. Who would pollinate our food crops, our garden flowers, and make our delicious honey? So now I am pleased to see a couple of bees buzzing around my nectar feeder and just hope that the birds and the bees can come to an agreement that suits both parties!

With both summer and winter *Leonotis* spp. flowering at the moment, the Malachite Sunbirds are in daily attendance in my garden. The males still have their long tails, but have lost a lot of their glistening green feathers, to be replaced with female dress plus blobs of shiny green here and there. Although the breeding season is now over, these boys are showing a lot of aggression against other sunbird species (in my garden that is the Amethyst Sunbird) and not allowing them to settle and feed on the flowers. I wonder if nectar is scarce right now and this is a way of protecting the dwindling supply? I have noticed Gurney's Sugarbirds up in the berg area fiercely guarding *Aloe arborescens* plants, even against their own kind. I do love the



Kniphofia pauciflora

fact that the more you watch the birds in your garden going about their daily business, the more questions you can ponder and discuss with like-minded friends.

I like to surround my many birdbaths with plants that would naturally occur near water in the wild. A particularly attractive one that is flowering right now alongside streams in the berg is *Phygelius aequalis* River Bells, sometimes called Wild Fuchsia, with hanging trumpet flowers offering nectar to the sunbirds. It can grow up to a metre in height and flowers from spring right through until winter really bites. There is a yellow version available too, not quite so appealing to the birds, but great if you are a colour-conscious gardener, and I noticed a dark red one the other day at a nursery. The dainty little *Kniphofia pauciflora* with its yellow flowers is another delightful birdbath attendant. The books seem to think it only flowers in spring, but mine didn't read the books and are flowering now as well! A real bonus.

I'm not a fan of cold weather, but the winter flowering aloes make it all worthwhile. Up in the berg the *Aloe arborescens* are already producing fat buds; mine haven't started yet but I know (hope!) they will soon get going. I am slowly collecting different aloes and hope soon to have flowers throughout the year. Our water-short country makes succulents the obvious choice for a bird garden and the nectar-lovers of the bird world really appreciate this.

Sally Johnson, sarahjarvis.johnson@gmail.com



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To look through a pair of Zeiss binoculars is to get closer to your quarry than you ever thought possible. Suddenly, there is no forest too dense or too dark in which they can hide. You can purchase Zeiss binoculars directly through the BirdLife South Africa website and support bird conservation. Visit: www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/zeiss-optics



green incentives

Biodiversity Stewardship Fiscal Benefits Project

South Africa is home to a wealth of bird species and other unique biodiversity. The rapid spread of urbanisation, mining, pollution, agriculture and a host of other human-induced factors has caused the current precarious status of many of our birds and their habitats. Sadly, we could permanently lose a large portion of our natural heritage if we do not change the situation.

The Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBA) Programme seeks to protect habitats and sites identified as critical to the survival of the species found there. These IBAs are also of the utmost importance in securing our water and food-production. The overall health of these ecosystems impacts our households directly. The majority of these habitats, and the birds and other biodiversity they house, are found outside of state-owned protected areas. It is, therefore, essential that private landowners are engaged to steward their land in such a way that our environmental health and the beauty of our country is preserved for the future.

BirdLife South Africa has been investing continued efforts into the national Biodiversity Stewardship initiative as a key means to formally protect priority IBAs. Part of this process has been to address challenges in this otherwise innovative tool. The use of fiscal benefits, such as 'green taxes' accruing to landowners engaging in local Biodiversity Stewardship Programmes (BSPs), is currently underutilised. To this end, BirdLife South Africa launched the Biodiversity Stewardship Fiscal Benefits Project in February



ABOVE Candice Stevens (BirdLife South Africa) and Angus Burns (WWF) visiting critical Biodiversity Stewardship sites.

TOP Panoramic views of South Africa's high water yield grasslands.

2015. The Fiscal Benefits Project, managed by Candice Stevens, involves the testing of a number of tax incentives with the aim of using them as benefits for individual landowners who are willing to align themselves with the principles of Biodiversity Stewardship.

It is hoped that, through this project, the IBA Programme may be able to bolster efforts to secure the protection and environmental management of a range of different habitats, thereby providing numerous birds and other species a home, as well as ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services such as healthy food production areas and securing water catchment areas to the benefit of all South Africans.

The Fiscal Benefits Project is partnering with the WWF Grasslands Programme and is funded by the WWF Nedbank Green Trust.

Candice Stevens, Biodiversity Stewardship Fiscal Benefits Project Manager, candice.stevens@birdlife.org.za

Attention BirdLife South Africa members:

Please use your membership number as a payment reference when paying your membership fees.

onboard!

In March 2015, two South Korean fisheries observers, Mr Jaegu Jung and Mr Gi Chul Choi, travelled to Cape Town for a five-day special observer training workshop. This is as a result of the Republic of Korea's willingness to implement seabird bycatch mitigation measures in accordance with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's (IOTC) resolutions for tuna longliners. The workshop was hosted by BirdLife South Africa's Albatross Task Force (ATF), and lectures were presented by the ATF-team, Dr Ross Wanless and Dr Yuna Kim, BirdLife's Korean liaison.

Presentations covered a variety of topics relating to longlining and bycatch mitigation, including the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), seabird identification and biological information, bycatch mitigation measures and best practice



One of the excursions was to the Ocean View Association for Persons with Disabilities where the team and fisheries observers learnt to build bird-scaring lines.

recommendations according to the IOTC. The presentations were accompanied by practical experiences and excursions. These included exposure to experimental protocols onboard a South African longline vessel, a visit to the Ocean View



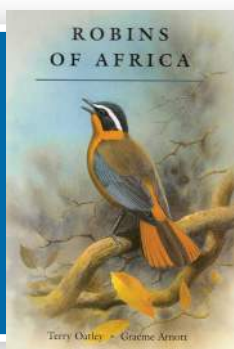
ABOVE The Albatross Task Force, Dr Yuna Kim and fishermen showing the Korean fisheries observers around a longline fishing vessel.

TOP Mr Jaegu Jung and Mr Gi Chul Choi with a demersal trawl vessel in the background during a pelagic sea trip where seabird identification skills learned in the workshop were put to the test.

Association for Persons with Disabilities where bird-scaring lines are made, and a pelagic fishing trip where the observers were able to practice their newly acquired seabird identification skills.

Messrs. Jung and Choi have returned home and will board fishing vessels from April to June to apply what they have learned.

Adri Meyer, Intern: Seabird Programme,
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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND STAND A CHANCE TO WIN!

Renew your membership in the month that it is due and stand a chance to win one of five copies of the beautifully illustrated *Robins of Africa*, a celebration of the African robin and its world in all its variety.

Please remember to use your membership number as the reference when making your payment.

Shireen Gould, Membership Manager, membership@birdlife.org.za

snippets

#SaveOurFlufftails



The BirdLife South Africa head office team (left to right): Nhlanhla Ncube, Kathleen April Okoye, Elaine Cherrington, Roger Wanless, Shireen Gould, Hanneline Smit-Robinson, Pam Barrett and Ntombi Stungu.

Help us to create awareness for the nine flufftail species, with special focus on the plight of the most threatened flufftail, the White-winged Flufftail. An estimated 250 birds remain in the wild and the species is nationally and globally Critically Endangered. BirdLife South Africa and the Mid-delpunt Wetland Trust are undertaking a number of research projects to unravel the species' biology and understand its conservation action.

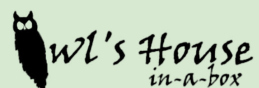
This awareness initiative, started by avid birder and BirdLife member John Kinghorn, entails taking a photo of yourself with a paper reading #SaveOurFlufftails, and it has been widely supported around the world.

The BirdLife South Africa head office team, pictured here, challenge readers to continue to help us to spread the message and show their support for flufftail conservation.

Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson, Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme Manager/Oppeneheimer Fellow of Conservation,
conservation@birdlife.org.za

GIVING A HOOT Better Barley, Better Beer

Owl's House in-a-box's most recent venture and exciting news is a project in conjunction with SAB and WWF-SA for the roll-out of a few owl houses to grain farmers in the Southern Cape. Owl houses are a long-term, eco-friendly solution to rodent control and this initiative forms part of the Better Barley, Better Beer sustainable agricultural project. Visit our website www.owlshouse.yolasite.com or contact Debbie Hedenskog on debbiehedenskog@gmail.com for more information.



subscribe & WIN



AN UNFORGETTABLE HWANGE HOLIDAY WORTH R26 000!

Everyone who subscribes to the print edition of African Birdlife between 1 May and 31 October 2015 will be entered into the lucky draw to win this fantastic holiday for two to Wilderness Safaris' Davison Camp in Hwange National Park. For more information, or to subscribe to the magazine, visit www.birdlife.org.za



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what's on?



SASOL
Bird Fair
2015

SAVE THE DATES!

5 & 6 September 2015

Sasol Bird Fair at the Walter
Sisulu National Botanical
Garden, Johannesburg

For more information, please
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Events & Marketing Manager,
events@birdlife.org.za

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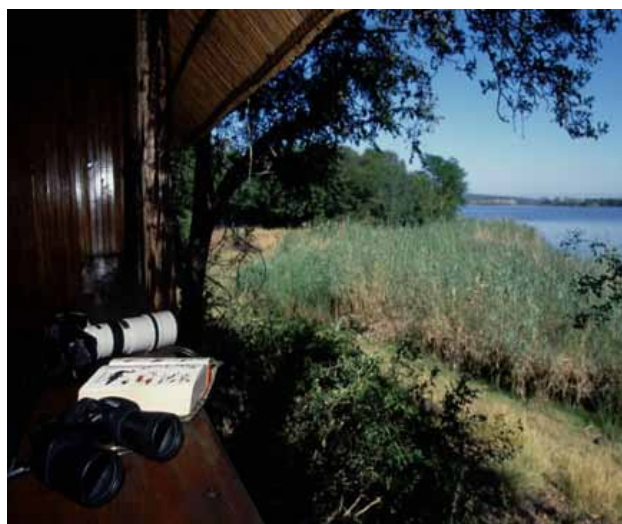
Budget Madagascar Birding Tour

26 October to 6 November 2015

Tour Price: US\$ 3 450 per person sharing

The Budget Madagascar Birding Tour provides the
budget-conscious birder with a fantastic opportunity
for observing the highlights of this magical island's in-
credible birds and wildlife. We stand excellent chances
of finding all five of the island's endemic bird families,
as well as up to 10 different lemur species, including
the awesome Indri. Some of the expected highlights
of this tour include Subdesert and White-breasted
mesites, Long-tailed and Pitta-like ground rollers, stun-
ning Schlegel's and Velvet asities, Blue Coua, Sickle-
billed and Van Dam's vangas, and the ubiquitous
Cuckoo Roller.

For more information, visit [www.rockjumper
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ii-2015?crumb=birding-tours-africa-and-madagascar](http://www.rockjumperbirding.com/tourinfo/budget-madagascar-birding-ii-2015?crumb=birding-tours-africa-and-madagascar)
or contact our Tour Consultant, Crystal Brook, on
info@rockjumperbirding.com



NDUMO BIRDING WEEKEND

hosted by SANParks Honorary Rangers

Thursday 29 October to Sunday 1 November 2015

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birding destination, Ndumo Game
Reserve in northern KwaZulu-
Natal.

For more information and to
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leonie.meyer@kpmg.co.za or visit
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