



AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK ALBERT FRONEMAN

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA e-newsletter

July 2016



Giving Conservation Wings

new projects OF THE IBA PROGRAMME

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AN EXCITING INITIATIVE IN THE FREE STATE

The Ingula Partnership, comprising BirdLife South Africa, Eskom and the Middlepunt Wetland Trust, is leading a collaborative effort with a number of NGOs and government partners to create a conservation area neighbouring the Ingula Nature Reserve Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA).

The area around Ingula contains some of the most intact and healthy grasslands to be found in the eastern part of South Africa. It is therefore important to conserve the catchment of the Wilge River – and even more important to expand this conservation footprint to ensure that this larger landscape is protected in perpetuity. Not only will this conserve numerous threatened and endemic species, such as Blue, Wattled and Grey-crowned cranes, White-winged Flufftail and Secretarybird, but it will also protect important water sources for the country. BirdLife South Africa and other partners will be engaging with private landowners to conserve this area through the use of Biodiversity Stewardship. If we are successful, more than 50 000 hectares will be formally protected.

BirdLife South Africa will report on this project through social media and *African Birdlife* magazine. For further information, please contact Ernst Retief at ernst.retief@birdlife.org.za

EXPANDING PROTECTED AREA IN THE GARDEN ROUTE

The Wilderness–Sedgefield Lakes Complex is one of the highest priority IBAs in the Western Cape. It is also a Ramsar site and a South African national park, and it supports large numbers of waterbirds and threatened and endemic bird species. However, as in many of our IBAs, what happens in the landscape surrounding the area is critical to the health of the lakes ecosystem. In a bid to protect downstream by conserving upstream, BirdLife South Africa is currently partnering with SANParks to initiate Biodiversity Stewardship projects with the private landowners around the existing national park, providing much-needed environmental management in the park's buffer zone and expanding the footprint of the protected area.

For further information, please contact Dale Wright at dale.wright@birdlife.org.za

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL COMPETITION

The lucky draw has been done for BirdLife South Africa members who renewed their membership in May 2016. We congratulate the five members who will each receive a copy of the *Robins of Africa* coffee-table book:

- Annelise Collins
- Les Penfold
- John Groenewald
- Joyce Edwards
- Margaret Reid

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership.
Shireen Gould, Membership Manager, membership@birdlife.org.za



BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA WELCOMES ESTELLE

Estelle Baker has joined BirdLife South Africa as the new human resources manager and personal assistant to the CEO.

Describing her background, she tells us that she gained an undergraduate degree in education from the University of the Western Cape before returning to Johannesburg as a secondary school teacher. 'While I was teaching, I completed an Honours degree in education at the University of Pretoria and later a Master's diploma in human resources management by studying part-time at the University of Johannesburg,' she adds.

After teaching for 13 years, Estelle joined the non-profit sector. Her career advanced to operational and management human resources positions in various organisations and she has gained a lot of experience over the past 15 years.

Estelle enjoys gardening, hiking and reading and has recently discovered a talent as a baker, so her new hobby is baking celebration cakes and cupcakes. She is also the proud mom of twin boys, Darren and Darrell.

'I am honoured and very happy to be part of the BirdLife South Africa team,' says Estelle. 'I am looking forward to working with everyone and to learning more about birds.'



T-SHIRTS

BIRDWATCHERS PRONE TO SUDDEN STOPS

DECALS



STATUS REPORT 2015

BOOKS



The 2015 Eskom Red Data Book of BIRDS of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland



BirdLife South Africa Shop, Isdell House, 17 Hume Road, Dunkeld West

Hours of business: 08h30 to 14h30

We stock various books, including the *Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*, *Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of South Africa* (the IBA directory) and *The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Status Report, South Africa*. Among the other bird- and nature-related items for sale are bird feeders, suet and

seed blocks, nest-boxes and sisal logs, branded T-shirts, peaked caps and leather belts, ceramic nest cups, posters, pin badges, key rings, various cards (including the new Heritage Card series), book marks and car magnets.

For more information, please contact me at 011 789 1122 or janine.goosen@birdlife.org.za
Janine Goosen, Office Administrator

THE AFRICAN BIRD FAIR

Be sure not to miss the African Bird Fair over the weekend of 3–4 September at the beautiful Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden. There will be an exciting variety of exhibitors who will be showcasing all things birding, such as binoculars and spotting scopes, bird books, birding apps, bird feeders, wildlife art, birding holiday destinations and tour operators. There will also be lots of things happening throughout the weekend,

including guided bird and botanical walks, photography workshops (bookings essential) and fascinating presentations, as well as fun activities for the kids. The fair will be open from 08h00 until 17h00 on both days.

For more information, please contact Emma Askes at emma.askses@birdlife.org.za



training guides again

The BirdLife South Africa Guide Training Programme was relaunched this year, having been dormant for a couple of years. The programme is aligned with the Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA). BirdLife South Africa applied and is endorsed as a specialist training provider with FGASA.

Students of the programme will be required to have at least level 1 FGASA before they can obtain the Birding Specialist qualification, which will be their ultimate objective. This is fantastic for the guides, as it gives them an even better opportunity for finding work after finishing their training and will not restrict them to trying to establish themselves as freelance bird guides from the start.

New training material has been developed, including PowerPoint lectures, to accompany the new manual, which promises to be very educational. The training course format itself also needed to be redesigned, as the level 1 syllabus now had to be incorporated into the overall programme. Under normal circumstances a level 1 guide would be required to attend a full-time course over a minimum of 55 days and only then could he or she be assessed. The funding available to the programme would never have managed that and so we needed to devise a different strategy.

The first course has begun and the students are studying by themselves for two months, during which time they will work through their level 1 work-book. Having completed the work-book, they will then attend a one-month residential course, where an intensive session on birding and practical guiding will develop their skills to the level required to attempt the practical assessment and even prepare them for the Birding Specialist qualification.

A call was sent out to existing guides to nominate people from their areas who they felt would benefit from an opportunity like this. Having received a number of applications from various areas, we selected 10 students from KwaZulu-Natal for the course. During June I met with each of them to hand over the training material and explain the process to them. Since then the enthusiasm and excitement of these new guides has been clear to see from all the WhatsApp messages going between them as they start their studies. In September they will all assemble for the residential course, where they will complete their training.

It is hoped that seven male and three female guides will be added to the list of new birding ambassadors before the end of the year.

Ian Owtram, Bird Guide Training Project Manager,
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BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA OWL AWARDS 2016

The deadline for submission of the Owl Awards 2016 nomination forms is Friday, 5 August 2016. The nomination form, as well as the criteria document for the awards and the guideline document for completing the form, are available on the BirdLife South Africa website at www.birdlife.org.za/events/owl-awards. For more information, please contact Emma Askes at emma.askses@birdlife.org.za

CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS

Austin Roberts Memorial Award and Gill Memorial Medal Award

BirdLife South Africa is inviting nominations for these awards in 2017. To make a nomination, please visit the BirdLife South Africa website for criteria and procedure information:

www.birdlife.org.za/about-us/our-organisation/gill-memorial-medal-award

www.birdlife.org.za/about-us/our-organisation/austin-roberts-memorial-award

Please send your nominations to secretary@birdlife.org.za by Friday 2 September 2016.



ROSS WANLESS

An English summer is something to behold! Apparently each year they have a couple of days akin to summer, but while I was there in June it felt distinctly like being in Cape Town in June, except it was perhaps a bit wetter in the UK. One of the primary reasons for my presence there was a BirdLife International Marine Programme (BIMP) meeting, which has traditionally taken place in Cambridge. However, this year coordinator Cleo Small suggested we convene at Bempton, on the Yorkshire coast. This was fine with me! Team meetings can be quite business-like, but the location was chosen because there is an RSPB reserve with squillions of seabirds on the Bempton cliffs.

Part of the reason for the choice of location was that marine IBA coordinator Ben Lascelles had decided it was time to start helping to run the family estate nearby and he'd already relocated there. It was his last week of full-time work, so it was a bitter-sweet time. Ben has been a massive support to many of us who are trying to float marine IBAs around the world. He leaves just as a massive project is about to start, with plenty of funding to keep his team in place and recruit a strong replacement. As we concluded the

meeting, Cleo brought out the champagne and we all set about poking fun at Ben.

After the business matters had been concluded, we traipsed over the hill to the spectacular RSPB reserve. Our visit was followed by a boat trip – yes, a ‘pelagic’ birding trip in England! – and it proved to be sensational. The geomorphology of the chalk cliffs is quite extraordinary, and having such an amazing backdrop to a colony of 50 000 Black-legged Kittiwakes and 10 000 Northern Gannets, as well as Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Guillemots and gulls, is really something else. There were even a few procellariiforms – Northern Fulmars – to keep me happy. After cruising along the base of the cliffs and getting plenty of great views of the alcids, we pushed further offshore and the crew started lobbing chum overboard. Within seconds there was a mob of seabirds, mostly gannets, yammering overhead and plunge-diving exuberantly into the water around the boat, scrumming for the fish and generally creating a fabulous visual, auditory and olfactory experience. Definitely the best UK team meeting I’ve ever been to, irrespective of the weather.

*Dr Ross Wanless, Seabird Programme Manager,
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sharing is caring

ENCOURAGING THE TWO-WAY FLOW OF SABAP2 DATA IN IMPACT ASSESSMENTS



Michael Brooks (ADU) shows workshop participants how to use the BirdLasser app.

It is widely acknowledged that early consideration of the receiving environment is key to minimising negative impacts of development on biodiversity. If potential issues are highlighted early on in the development process, before significant investment has been made, conflicts between development and the environment (or those that seek to protect it)

can be avoided. This requires data.

The Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) provides some of these data. It is a key resource used by bird specialists and environmental assessment practitioners when screening potential development sites and during impact assessment processes. SABAP2 provides a preliminary indication of what bird species are likely to be found in an area and therefore helps to determine whether there are potential red flags to development. By consulting SABAP2, investment in unsuitable areas can be avoided. SABAP2 data also help to save time and money; they can be used to establish the need for, and scope of, further specialist input. All this is free of charge. It is therefore not surprising that SABAP2 is widely regarded as one of the first places to look for bird data when developments are under consideration.

So why not return the favour? Data about birds gathered during impact assessments, or when monitoring the impact of developments, could be a valuable to SABAP2. Many renewable energy developments are located in areas where there are major data gaps and this information could make a significant contribution

to our knowledge. Unfortunately, to date the flow of data from these projects has been poor. This is in part due to the extra administration required to submit data to SABAP2 (specialists are busy people) and in part due to concerns relating to non-disclosure agreements that most specialists are required to sign (data from impact assessments are in the public domain, but much of the specialists' work is done before the impact assessment officially starts).

BirdLife South Africa and the Animal Demography Unit hope to change this. We recently held a workshop for bird specialists and field monitors to encourage the use of the BirdLasser app, which makes atlasing easy. The location and time of a sighting, plus the gender, age and number of individuals of the species seen, as well as any additional notes, can all be recorded without having to be within cell-phone reception. Data can be exported as a CSV file for later analysis, which means that the app can be used for recording data gathered during surveys (e.g. transects and road counts). If the user agrees, additional data can be recorded and submitted to BirdLife South Africa's Threatened Species Cause. What clinched the deal for many of the workshop participants was that data can be submitted to SABAP2 at a later date, such as once the impact assessment is in the public domain, which eliminates concerns relating to non-disclosure agreements.

As they say, sharing is caring. In this case sharing is caring for our planet. Thank you to Henk Nel and the BirdLasser team for making it so much easier.

Visit www.birdlasser.com for more information about BirdLasser or download the free app from your app store.

[Samantha Ralston-Paton, Birds and Renewable Energy Manager, energy@birdlife.org.za](mailto:Samantha.Ralston-Paton@energy.gov.za)



gardening

FOR BIRDS

The cold of winter and the added stress of a drought do not inspire me to write of gardening matters. But hang in there, keep your bird baths filled and be so glad that you planted succulents that can cope with the lack of rain. *Leonotis leonurus* and many of the aloe species are still looking fantastic and attracting sunbirds and other nectar-lovers. And now that the shortest day (21 June) is behind us, we can look forward to the sun rising earlier each day and know that spring is around the corner.

So instead of introducing new bird-attracting plants, I am going to have some fun with the meaning of the scientific names of some plants and the birds they attract. I hope you enjoy this sort of thing as much as I do. In the 'proper' name of plants and animals, the 'surname' comes first and the specific name does not have a capital letter. So I would be *Johnson sally*!

Calodendron capensis, the lovely Cape chestnut, has gorgeous pink flowers and big, black seeds that, once released from their prickly case, are relished by African Olive Pigeons. The pigeons swallow the seeds whole, but while they are picking at the fruiting case, many seeds fall to the ground and are eaten by bushbuck and mice. The generic name is derived from the Greek *kalos* (beautiful) and *dendron* (tree) – a most apt name.

For *Phygelius capensis*, the delightful river bells, a species much loved by sunbirds, I discovered two different opinions on its generic name. One claimed it came from the Greek *phugo* (to shun) and *helios* (sun), which suggests a shade-loving plant. I'm not too sure about that as I always find *Phygelius* growing in full sun alongside a stream. The other source claims the name is from the Greek *phyge* (flight, avoidance). According to W.J. Hooker in 1855, this name was



Cape Glossy Starling

bestowed 'in consequence of it having so long escaped the researches [sic] of botanists.'

The generic name of the African dog-rose *Xylothea kraussiana* derives again from Greek: *xylon* (wood) and *theca* (a case or capsule). The fruit is a yellow woody capsule that splits open to reveal a cluster of black seeds clasped in a red aril. In my Pietermaritzburg garden the frugivores such as bulbuls and white-eyes seemed to know when the capsules were about to open and they always managed to get to the seeds long before I could collect any. The specific name refers to Dr Christian F.F. von Kraus, who collected extensively in South Africa.

And now for some birds: the white-eyes are in the genus *Zosterops*, from the Greek *zoster* (girdle) and *ops* (eye). The white circle round the eye is made up of exactly 12 tiny white feathers. Whoever named the Cape Glossy Starling was really impressed by those shiny blue-green colours! The genus is *Lamproornis* – the Greek *lampro* means 'bright' or 'shining' and *ornis* means 'bird' – while the specific name is *nitens*, which is Latin for 'shining bright'.

Sally Johnson, sarahjarvis.johnson@gmail.com

Attention BirdLife South Africa members

Please use your membership number as a payment reference when paying your membership fees. If you renew your membership in the month it is due, you could win a copy of *Robins of Africa*.

snippets

BIRD OF THE YEAR 2016 SOCIABLE WEAVER



FRANCK THERON

The Sociable Weaver is a little brown bird, yet this sparrow-sized LBJ may be one of the most interesting birds in the world. It differs from most other species in the way it goes about building its nest – Sociable Weavers build one massive nest for an entire colony! BirdLife South Africa encourages you to find out more about this fascinating species by downloading the Bird of the Year 2016 learning resources from the BirdLife South Africa website at www.birdlife.org.za/events/bird-of-the-year. The poster (free of charge), CDs containing the learning resources (free of charge) and pin badges (R25 per pin badge, excluding postage) are available on request from BirdLife South Africa's head office, Isdell House, in Johannesburg. Please call 011 789 1122 or e-mail info@birdlife.org.za

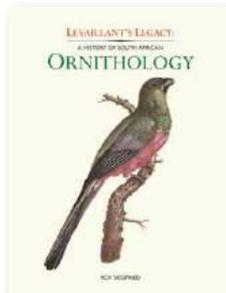
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TEAM BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA

The BirdLife South Africa team at the annual staff meeting held on 14 and 15 July 2016.



BIRDER-FRIENDLY ESTABLISHMENT NEWS SERPENTINE MANOR

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For more information or to book, contact Susan Schridde on 076 903 0248 or e-mail serpentinemanor@gmail.com

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