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Dear Observer

Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2017- the 20th year!

This is the 20th Cape Parrot Big Birding Day (CPBBD)- quite a milestone! Please find attached the data sheet we wish to be completed on the afternoon of the **6th and** morning of the **7th MAY** 2017. Please return these preferably by email or fax (see details above). Remember even a nil count is as important as any of the others. As the numbers of birds are low, this census is extremely important in highlighting their plight. Cape Parrots are usually active in the early morning (around sunrise especially so you need to get out there before day break) and late afternoon until dark. This year the count is particularly important to determine if the effects of the beak and feather disease are wide spread and if numbers have declined.

Cape Parrots make inter-forest movements and because of their distinct piercing call while flying are easy to spot on these inter-forest flights. Cape Parrots at a distance can be confused with African Olive (Rameron) Pigeons. However, Cape Parrots usually call in flight thereby making this sort of identification virtually impossible. Please note from which compass direction birds arrive or depart from a locality so that we can avoid over counting.

If you are fortunate to observe Cape Parrots close by, please try and identify numbers of males, females and/or juveniles present. Juveniles should be active in juvenile flocks at this time of the year. All adult birds have orange on the shoulder (bend of wing) and ankles (tibia), while females have orange on the forehead. Males usually lack orange on the forehead, but there are exceptions where a small amount of orange is present, usually only visible at very close quarters. Juveniles have orange only on the forehead, and absence of orange on the ankles and wing. The head and neck are also slightly darker in juveniles and these birds often solicit food from their parents. For the experienced "parroter" the bill is slightly smaller in juveniles and first year birds. If you observe Cape Parrots feeding, please try and identify the tree species. If the birds are active near your post and you are able to watch the behaviour of the birds, please record these including types of calls, allopreening behaviour, aggressive behaviour, wing displays and anything else you may find interesting or unusual eg. birds with yellow feathers or "bald" birds.

Under the heading "other comments" you may wish to make comments about the day and whether you would be interested in participating in future "Parrot Days".

As part of a genetic study on Cape Parrots, we would be grateful if you find any Cape Parrot feathers to put them in an envelope with the locality details and send it to me.

If you have any queries or wish to get further information about the day please do not hesitate to contact me. Although the primary interest is Cape Parrots, I hope you will get out there and enjoy yourself in what can be viewed as a Forest Conservation Day.

Thanks again for your support and interest. I hope you have an enjoyable birding cum forest day.

Best wishes and many thanks

Prof Colleen Downs (Chairperson Cape Parrot Working Group).



