

PROMEROPS

MAGAZINE OF THE CAPE BIRD CLUB

March 2018

No. 310

70th
Anniversary
Issue



Promerops: Magazine of the Cape Bird Club
Issue No. 310, March 2018



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Giving Conservation Wings

**THE CAPE BIRD CLUB IS AFFILIATED
TO BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA**

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Please send your articles, comments, observations, and news to:
fionajones80@gmail.com or 80 Ranelagh Road, Claremont, 7708.
The deadline for contributions to the next issue is 10 May 2018.

Front cover: A beautiful Cape Sugarbird – our club's emblem –
with a dusting of pollen on its forehead!

Photo: Jessie Walton

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those held by the Cape Bird Club.



GUEST EDITORIAL by our Honorary President



When I was invited to write this editorial to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Cape Bird Club (CBC) I felt privileged, even if it reminded me of my antiquity! I joined as a junior member in 1950, just two years after the club's foundation, and it appears that I may be the sole surviving member of those early days – a sobering thought.

The CBC has been an important part of my life for sixty-eight years, even during my seventeen years in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) from 1961 onwards. I maintained contact during my absence, initially through the cyclostyled newsletters, which evolved into *Promerops* with issue 128 in 1977, as well as on annual trips to Cape Town.

In the Jubilee issue of *Promerops*, published as a supplement in April 1998, editor Jo Hobbs provided an outstanding overview of our first fifty years and I should like to pay tribute here to her remarkable achievement. My contribution 'Memories of a fledgling Cape Bird Club' gave an account of early CBC activities and the characters that made our club so special. One name stands out, that of Gerry Broekhuysen, our Chairman for twenty-two years. Whenever I lead a CBC walk at Kirstenbosch, I make a point of stopping at the Gerry & Mariette Broekhuysen bench to pay tribute to their memory.

Another important early member was Bunty Rowan, daughter of renowned naturalist S.H. Skaife. She edited early issues of *Bokmakierie* before becoming the distinguished editor of *Ostrich*. In her latter capacity we corresponded frequently while I was in Rhodesia, and we also exchanged nonsense verse. As an example of her wit, I can't resist quoting one short piece referring to renowned ornithologist Leslie Brown, the doyen of raptorphiles:

I know flamingos are pink.
And penguins wear cap and gown;
Some pigeons are green, I think.
But *why* should leslies be brown?

Promerops is the mainstay of the CBC, especially for out of town members, and over the twenty years since the Jubilee issue it has grown from strength to strength under dedicated editors. It is usually my first choice for publishing observations and my 63rd cover picture was on No. 300. Recently the digital era has seen the advent of superb cover images, including rarities, from a wide range of members.

Over the last twenty years 'twitching' has grown at an exponential rate, and Trevor Hardaker's daily reports provide vicarious enjoyment for those who can no longer chase after rarities in person.

An especially significant development since our Jubilee has been the introduction of CBC trips to African and overseas destinations such as Uganda, South America and Sri Lanka; these adventures are well supported and provide exciting feedback with illustrated presentations at evening meetings. We are also fortunate to have stimulating guest speakers and the hall is often filled to capacity.

CBC members now participate in important citizen science projects, in addition to regular outings to a wide range of localities, always ably led by more knowledgeable members who so willingly share their expertise. This camaraderie is a feature that has made our club so special ever since its inception seventy years ago.

I am proud to have served as Honorary President of my beloved CBC for nineteen years and *Deo volente* I may yet match Gerry Broekhuysen's tenure. What is certain is that the CBC is in good health and I wish it well into the future.

Peter Steyn



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CLUB NEWS

Welcome to our new members

A very warm welcome to these new members of the Cape Bird Club ...

- Bridget-Nomonde Scoble, Rondebosch
- Ronel van Driel, Noordhoek
- Greta Muller, Kenilworth
- Mike Horn, Muizenberg
- Madeleine Buchmuller, Avondale
- Jean Small, Constantia
- Joyce Ward, Diep River
- Marilyn Wilford, Plumstead
- Christine Banks, Meadowridge
- Kim Tedder, Constantia
- Angela Pinder, Constantia
- Maureen Archer, Rondebosch
- Rhona and Nolan Wood, Tokai
- Sandra and Robert Sharpe, Constantia
- Michael and Hennie Quarmby, Tokai
- Mike and Mazz Gaussen, Meadowridge
- Lindsay Grier, Tamboerskloof
- Adele Hayden, Hout Bay
- Fiona Hutcheon, Capricorn Square
- Zoë and Mia Lunau-Johns, Claremont
- Nicola Petersen-van Voore, Rondebosch
- Maureen Lambrick, Camps Bay
- Gay Morris, Rosebank

- Clodagh Seegers, Rondebosch
- Glynnis Kolzing, Diep River
- Robert and Diana Donaldson, Kirstenhof
- Beth and Roy McGregor, Claremont
- Sally McCall-Le Roux, Pinelands
- Josh Wynter, Sea Point
- Maughreen and Robert Ladbrook, Fish Hoek
- John Cartwright, Muizenberg
- Benjamin Mayes, Fish Hoek
- William and Gillian Taskes, Fish Hoek
- Julie Broadley, Bergvliet
- Bridget Evans, Noordhoek
- Cindy Taylor, Sea Point
- Karin Wilson, Pinelands
- Amanda Kropman, Little Mowbray
- Jason Jardim & Caitlyn Carikas, University Estate
- Anne Collins, Rondebosch
- Heather and Richard Davies, Lakeside
- Sue Lindsey, Constantia
- Roli Murovhi, Muizenberg

And a warm welcome back to ...

- Garth Shaw, Fish Hoek
- Catherine van der Linden, Fish Hoek
- Dieter Oschadleus, Claremont

We look forward to seeing you at our evening meetings where you can enjoy illustrated talks by experts on a variety of birding and related topics, and afterwards, stay for tea or coffee and biscuits and get to know your fellow members. We also have regular field outings where you can visit new places, see new birds, and make new friends. Check the CBC Programme at the end of the magazine for more details.

Our grateful thanks for donations!

Many thanks to Mr RK Curtis-Setchell, Judge BM Griesel, Mr OP Gush, Prof RJ Baigrie, Miss D Fiveash, Mrs DK Lee, Mr AG Kilpin, Mr KW Hoffmann, Mr M Buckham, Mr D Mandy, Prof TD Noakes, Ms W Meanley, Mrs SJ Brass, Mr JJ Magner, Mr J Hemp, Mr J Ragsdale, Mr J de V van Zyl, Mr LS Evans, Mr GS Wilson, Mr RCW Boehmke, Ms AT Dalziel, Dr RD Barnes, Mrs W Murdoch, and Mrs Sandy Hills for your generous contributions to the Cape Bird Club. Your donations are very much appreciated and will be put to good use!



CAPE BIRD CLUB AGM

The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the **CAPE BIRD CLUB** will take place at **20h00** on **Thursday 12 April 2018** at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands



CAPE BIRD CLUB AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous AGM held in March 2017
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chairman's Report for the period March 2017 to March 2018
5. Conservation Committee Chairman's Report for the period March 2017 to March 2018
6. Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2017
7. Election of Committee Members for 2018/2019
8. General / Any other business

In terms of the Cape Bird Club constitution, nominations for office bearers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, and Hon. Secretary) and six Committee Members must reach the Hon. Secretary not later than 29 March 2018. They must be signed by the Proposer and Second, and countersigned by the Nominee. Please use a copy of the nomination form on this page.

For those members not able to attend the AGM, the Chairman's and the Conservation Committee reports will be printed in the July issue of *Promerops*.

After the business of the meeting there will be a presentation by **Mark Anderson**, CEO of BirdLife SA, who will be visiting us to celebrate our 70th Anniversary. He will be chatting to us about ***Bird conservation in South Africa: successes and challenges.***

NOMINATION FORM

I am a member of the Cape Bird Club and am prepared to stand for election to the CBC Committee for the year 2018/2019.

NAME OF NOMINEE (Block letters)

.....

Signed:

NAME OF PROPOSER (Block letters)

.....

Signed:

NAME OF SECONDER (Block letters)

.....

Signed:



Did YOU forget to renew your club membership?

If you did, this could well be your last *Promerops*, so please don't delay! Slow payers risk being written off the BirdLife and Cape Bird Club membership lists and subscribers may miss their copies of *African Birdlife* and *Promerops*.

Renewing your membership: Invoices are sent out by email (or by post if you do not have email), and you are encouraged to make your renewal payment by **EFT** or **direct bank deposit** to **BirdLife South Africa**, Account No. 620 6750 6281, FNB, Randburg, Branch Code 25 40 05. Please use your **membership number** as reference.

Address changes: If you change your home address or your email address, please inform BLSA at membership@birdlife.org.za, and copy to Linda at lindamerrett@gmail.com.

Seniors ... from the year you turn 60, you qualify for reduced CBC and BLSA members' rates. Be sure to inform BLSA if you qualify!



The Cape Bird Club celebrates 70 Years: 1948 – 2018

Avis, the car hire company, used to have a slogan "We're No. 2, so we try harder". Perhaps the same could be said for the Cape Bird Club which is the second oldest bird club in South Africa (Wits is the oldest).

During its 70 years, the CBC has initiated many notable ideas and has an impressive list of achievements which have helped to build the club, grow membership, raise funds and contribute to conservation.

The longest non-stop and on-going monthly bird count in South Africa was started at Strandfontein Sewage Works (known in the early days as Tamatie Vlei) by Alan Morris in July 1983, and continues to this day. A number of bird counts at other regional wetlands were also initiated and still continue, several with unceasing dedication and commitment from club members. Examples are Zandvlei Bird Sanctuary where the count also includes "hacks" and the clearing of alien vegetation. At Rietvlei (now the Table Bay Nature Reserve) the count was started in 1980 to provide data on bird numbers and species richness to be used in opposition to the Department of Water Affairs' plans to dam the Diep River. Wildevoëlvlei and the Paarl Bird Sanctuary also have regular counts, with current data being added to the historical information collected for the CWAC (Co-ordinated Water Bird Counts) project administered by the Animal Demography Unit at UCT.

The CBC started its own ambitious five year Atlas project – *Atlas of the Birds of the South-western Cape* in 1982. This was a magnificent data-gathering achievement by club members, with the atlas being published in 1989, and was all 'hand done' – nothing was digitised or computerised back then! The impressive bank of collected data was made available and provided a substantial kick-start to the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP1) which was started in 1987 by the then Avian Demography Unit.

The CBC was the first club to form its own

conservation sub-committee. Dave Whitelaw became its first chairman in 1988 and is still in the chair today, guiding many of the club's regional conservation projects.

The introduction of courses in 1985 by the then Chairman, Jan Hofmeyr, not only turned the financial standing of the club around, but proved surprisingly popular, with 248 persons attending Gordon Maclean's second bird ID course in 1986. Today, courses continue to bring in a steady income in support of the club's conservation projects.

Over the years, several of our Junior members have become eminent ornithologists, researchers, and birders, including Claire Spottiswoode, a conservation biologist working jointly at the FitzPatrick Institute in Cape Town and in the UK in the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University. Callan Cohen is an associate researcher at the "Fitz" and runs a bird tour company he founded in 1997. Cliff Dorse is the City of Cape Town's Biodiversity Coordinator, providing invaluable input into its conservation policies.

The Frank Wygold Award for Conservation Education is given annually to a conservation student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology judged to have completed an outstanding project in conservation education. This award was inspired by Frank's tireless work with young people in the field of ecology education.

There are of course many other projects and activities that the club embraces, too numerous to mention, but back to the beginning ...

The story goes that in August 1947 the 3M's, John Martin, Jack MacLeod and Coligny Murray, hatched the idea of a bird club along with birding stalwarts Richard Liversidge and Gerry Broekhuysen. 7 May 1948 saw the inaugural meeting of The Cape Bird Club, with Gerry Broekhuysen being appointed Chairman. He held the post for 22 years until his untimely death. Leonard Gill was elected the club's first Honorary President. After this, early members read like a "Who's Who" of ornithology in the Cape ... Jack Winterbottom, Dirk Uys, Bunty Rowan, Peter Steyn, Rudolf Schmidt and George Underhill to name but a few.



Two of the 3Ms – John Martin (centre) and Jack MacLeod (right), with Walter Stanford (left). Circa 1948

It was of course in memory of Edward Leonard Gill that the prestigious Gill Memorial Medal Award was created. This medal for outstanding lifetime contributions to ornithology and the study of birds in southern Africa was initially awarded by the SAOS (Southern African Ornithological Society) and is now awarded by BirdLife South Africa. Eleven Cape Bird Club past or present members have received this award, viz. Jack Winterbottom 1960, Gerry Broekhuysen 1964, Roy Siegfried 1976, Richard Brooke 1988, Warwick Tarboton 1996, Ian Sinclair 2008, Richard Dean 2009, Peter Steyn 2011, John Cooper 2012, Phil Hockey 2016 and Les Underhill 2017.



BirdLife South Africa

Peter and Jenny Steyn in 2011 when Peter was awarded the Gill Memorial Medal

Citizen Science has been embraced by many members, particularly those participating in the on-going SABAP2 bird atlas project, started in 2007, and covering far more than the Western Cape.

In the last twenty years or so, Anne Gray was an ever present, active, and legendary member serving on several sub-committees. Among

other things, she started what has become an internationally recognised and popular birding experience not to be missed by any birder visiting or living in the Cape – pelagic birding off the Cape Peninsula. “Anne Albatross” was her operational name. Her impact on the club did not go unnoticed after she passed away in 2014, and the club celebrates her memory at The Anne Gray Memorial Camp run every year.

May 2017 saw the unexpected passing of Rob Martin, our last direct link to the original founders of the CBC through his father John. The Martin family will forever be remembered for their work on Booted Eagles, once thought to be summer migrants to the Western Cape, but now known to be breeding raptors with many nest-sites located across the province. Rob’s name will live on through these and many other invaluable observations he regularly submitted to the club’s magazine *Promerops*.



Peter Steyn

A female Booted Eagle and chicks on the nest – discovered by Rob Martin and Peter Steyn

Our club’s President, Peter Steyn, who joined the CBC as a young teenager two years after it was formed, now becomes possibly the last person to have known and birded with the original club founders. In his 2017 publication *Kingdom of Daylight: Memories of a Birdwatcher*, he describes the stimulating and encouraging influence that the CBC and some of its early legendary figures such as Gerry Broekhuysen, Richard Liversidge, Buntj Rowan, and Jack Winterbottom, had on his interest in birds.

Whilst 70 years is a notable milestone, the committee has decided to “keep its powder dry” in celebrating this achievement, with only one or two events planned for this year. A “big bang” is envisaged for the 75th Anniversary!!

Mel Tripp (CBC Honorary Life Member)



Check it out! Colour ringing Pale Chanting Goshawks

The Pale Chanting Goshawk (PCG) *Melierax canorus* is near-endemic in southern Africa, and is often visible on pylons along roads and highways. In order to better understand this attractive species and gain more insight into its complex behaviour, a colour-ringing project was started in the early 2000s. Colour rings provide useful information about site fidelity, dispersal, and age, and are particularly convenient in that individuals do not have to be caught but can be reported by any member of the public. The project was started by a group of ringers which included Albert Schultz, Herman and Zephne Bernitz, the late Abrie Maritz, Ronelle Visagie, Francois Taljaard, and Gerard Malan, as well as certain ringing groups. Adult PCGs were trapped and yellow plastic colour rings with clear alphanumeric markings were attached to them. The marking consists of a letter followed by two numbers, printed in black. The letter typically denotes the person who ringed the bird.



Pale Chanting Goshawk C84 showing its yellow plastic colour ring on the right leg, and a SAFRING metal ring on the left

Ronelle Visagie

Several hundred individuals have been colour ringed but only a small percentage has been subsequently reported. Some of the sightings have provided exciting results. In July 2017 for example, the individual wearing colour ring A69 was spotted by Dave McDonald in the Northern

Cape just 2km from where it had been ringed 11 years before. This male was looking healthy and the rings were still in good condition.

Two other birds were also resighted after many years, very close to where they had been ringed. PCG 752719 C84, ringed by Ronelle Visagie on 6 June 2006, was seen again on 21 September 2014 by Niall Perrins within 1km of the ringing site! PCG 792670 C52, also ringed by Ronelle Visagie, (on 16 July 2003) was spotted on 8 September 2011 at the same spot where it was ringed.



Dave McDonald

Typically seen on telephone poles, these beautiful birds are hard to miss! Be sure to check for colour rings.

Although the project ceased actively ringing PCGs a number of years ago, some of the individuals may still be alive and wearing their rings. We are therefore requesting birders to keep an eye out for ringed individuals and report them. And also, please send us any photographs of ringed PCGs that might be stored on a computer somewhere. The birds will be wearing one colour ring and one SAFRING metal ring. If you see one, get in touch with either SAFRING or the Endangered Wildlife Trust. We would love to know the ring number, the location, the date, and if possible, a photo of the ring.

Please send your resightings to the South African Bird Ringing Scheme (SAFRING) at safring@adu.org.za, and to Ronelle Visagie at ronellev@ewt.org.za

Ronelle Visagie and Sanjo Rose



Featherings

edited by Vernon Head

We watch birds. (We think birds too!) To watch is to observe, to perceive, seeking understanding. With this understanding there is a connection. Watching a bird takes one into the natural world of answers. I call it 'Walking the Feathered Bridge'. One really does cross a divide: two worlds linking.

Martin Heidegger once said that 'boundary is the beginning of presencing'. And it is the bridges that are the way to answers across boundaries. But enough of that existential stuff!

Let's walk on, eyes glittering, minds searching ... let's walk across wild bridges ...

'Feathering,' the noun, is the plumage of a bird. 'Feathering,' the verb, is the act – in digital graphic design – of blurring one image into another.

Perhaps short stories about birds are 'featherings': textured moments of connection with nature, blurred one into another, as we paint with words, allowing us to learn, to truly see; you and me – all of us – and birds coming together; a world seen through the gentle nuances of feathers, as if they are eyelashes for our inquiring eyes.

This is the essence of *Featherings*: a collection of twenty-six short stories, each one offering the personal connection of a birdwatcher with a bird, each one a private moment to be shared with you. Some of the stories are told through the eyes of famous ornithologists, others through the eyes of artists, journalists and writers, and then there are those from people who simply want to see differently.

Professor Peter Ryan will take you to Inaccessible Island in the far sub-Antarctic, where the swell is cold and the air like steel. Adam Riley will take you to meet the Lord's Resistance Army on the northern border of Uganda, in search of an apalis that hides behind guns. The legendary Peter Steyn will let you look through his lens at the first Cape Eagle-Owl ever photographed on the nest. Dr Callan Cohen will meander down a



Congo jungle path below leaves and dreams. The inimitable Mel Tripp will make you laugh through his creative smile. Follow all the authors ... glorious bridges wait for you up ahead ...

In the end, all the stories are in fact a single story made up of intimate parts, blurred at the edges, becoming a grand view across wilderness. We hope you will enjoy watching with words ... crossing over ... discovering anew.

(And buy lots of copies: all royalties are being donated to the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology to assist with their important work.)

Vernon Head

The ADU finds a new home ...



The Animal Demography Unit (ADU) has, for the past 26 years, been monitoring and researching the distribution and abundance of bird and animal populations in Southern Africa, providing invaluable input to conservation and research in the region. Much of its work involves the participation of citizen scientists in projects such as SABAP2.

The ADU has always been self-funded, relying on benefactors and fundraising initiatives to be able to carry out its work. Recently, in these challenging economic times, the unit has no longer been able to raise the level of funding needed to maintain its many projects, and in 2017 the outlook for the ADU began to look increasingly bleak. Then, recognising that the ADU is a national asset, UCT stepped in and made a plan to ensure that the unit's work can continue. The ADU is to be incorporated into UCT's FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, which is working on strategies to keep the unit's numerous projects running. Professor Les Underhill has been reappointed as Senior Scholar, but sadly, Dieter Oschadleus' post could not be saved. Dieter has been the Coordinator of SAFRING since 1998, and has made a massive contribution to bird ringing in South Africa and Africa as a whole. His diligence and expertise will be sorely missed.

We wish the ADU all the very best for the future and hope that it will continue with its sterling work for many years to come.

Fiona Jones



**Anne Gray Memorial Camp
Nature's Valley 4 - 8 November 2017**

Twenty-eight of us made our way down the Garden Route to SANParks' De Vasselot camp at Nature's Valley. Depending on our choice, we were either camping or staying in one of the small forest huts. As Fazlyn "doesn't do camping" we were in a hut. Very nice it was too with a small fridge and kettle and built-in tables and chairs. Water had to be fetched from a nearby tap but that wasn't much of a problem.

We gathered late on the Saturday afternoon at the main lapa and Mel and Vernon briefed us on what to expect over the next few days. The answer was forest birds, and hopefully a fair few that many had not seen before! The camp was in memory of Anne Gray who had been a stalwart member of the club for many years, and both Mel and Vernon recounted anecdotes of time spent with Anne before we had a braai (burgers!) and settled in for the night after a quick check to see if we could find some African Wood Owls. Mel tried playing the call but no owls were to be seen.

Sunday

Many of us had been awake since 4am or so as the forest was alive with the sound of glorious birdsong. The area is so full of birds that you don't have to go very far to see many. Indeed we had chalked up a good few even before we reached our meeting point. We had a resident Olive Thrush outside our hut who was very busy making his presence heard. (It may have been female but it had such a gob on it I decided it must be male). We met at the main entrance to the park at 6am and, led by Vernon, Mel, and Simon, went awandering. We made about five metres before we came across our first good spot of the day – one of our key targets and a lifer for many of us – a Grey Cuckooshrike, very obligingly showing itself. This was followed by a Knysna Turaco, a beautiful Chorister Robin-chat, Cape White-eye (they look a bit different there – the eye patch is more pronounced), a Terrestrial Brownbul, Sombre Greenbul, Narina Trogon, a Bar-throated Apalis, a Green Wood-hoopoe, and a Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler amongst others. All this before we reached the bridge!

At the bridge there was some serious scanning going on for a finfoot. No such luck but we did get a Pied Kingfisher, a Reed Cormorant and a Greater Striped Swallow. Red-chested and Black Cuckoos were calling but not easily spotted and a Little Sparrowhawk perched within view. We wandered along a forest path until the birds stopped calling and then it was time for a break.



Kaye Foksett

Searching for a finfoot from the bridge over the Grootrivier, not far from the campsite

We reconvened late afternoon at the estuary for sundowners on the beach. We all brought our chairs, drinks, and snacks and watched the sun sink over the horizon, much to the interest and sometimes puzzlement of the locals walking their dogs. Someone (Fazlyn "I don't do camping") even brought along a table. There were lots of Swift Terns and some White-fronted Plovers, African Black Oystercatchers and gulls to keep us entertained before we headed back for the evening's braai. (Burgers for us!)



Kaye Foksett

Sundowners and snacks on the beach



Monday

Another fabulous dawn chorus saw everyone get up early before we all met up and car-pooled for the trip to the Bitou Valley. First stop was at the side of the road where we could look over the canopy and spot the high climbers. I had dipped on the African Emerald Cuckoo the previous day and Vernon had promised me a sighting within 10 minutes of the start of Monday. True to his word, there it was singing away. A great sighting along with a Klaas's Cuckoo no less.

Off to the top of the road where we met up with Mike Bridgeford from the Plettenberg Bay bird club (BirdLife Plettenberg Bay), who was going to be our regional guide for the day. The weather was a little overcast but not too bad and Mike took us to the local polo club to check out the little dam there. By now it was raining but that didn't spoil anyone's enjoyment as we ticked off African Jacana, White-throated Swallow and White-backed Duck among the usual suspects.

Leaving the dam for the valley, we suddenly pulled into the side of the road as Vernon had spotted a Black-winged Lapwing – another lifer for many. Now driving along the Bitou River estuary we had sightings of Crowned Lapwing, Water Thick-knee, Common Sandpiper, Yellow Bishop, a Jackal Buzzard, Wood Sandpiper, Kittlitz's Plover, Common Greenshank, and Common Ringed Plover. On the far side of a field was a pair of Blue Cranes along with a chick. Mike told us that the cranes had bred successfully for the past eight years but so far only one chick had made it to adulthood. Further up the hill we came across an African Stonechat, and turning at a farm, a lovely Peregrine Falcon.

From here we went back down the other side of the estuary for lunch. The weather was not playing along but just as we parked there was a fantastic sighting of a Western Osprey catching its lunch. Out on the sandflats a Whimbrel was spotted along with a Curlew Sandpiper as well as White-breasted and Reed Cormorants and Swift Terns. A Common Buzzard circled overhead. On the way back we also managed to find a Southern Boubou hiding in a tree.

In the late afternoon we were given a

presentation by Mark Brown who runs the Nature's Valley Trust, a small NGO operating in the area. They have undertaken some very interesting surveys of the area to assess the impact of human presence on the shorebirds. They are working on educating the public about birds nesting in the dunes and surrounding areas and had some very nice shopping bags on sale to publicise the point. After the talk we had a braai ('burgers again?' said Duke) and listened out for the African Wood Owl who just wasn't playing along.

Tuesday

Rain! All day! A Black-bellied Starling was seen along with a Black Cuckoo, a Rock Martin, Hadeda Ibis, Southern Double-collared Sunbird, and an African Dusky Flycatcher before we gave up. In the evening we had a braai (more burgers!) and tallied up the total birds for the camp. Despite one day being washed out we managed 142 birds. I managed 7 lifers and was well chuffed.



"Bird of the Camp"

The Narina Trogon was voted "Bird of the Camp" with the African Emerald Cuckoo and Western Osprey as runners up. All in all a highly enjoyable camp.

Kaye Fosskett

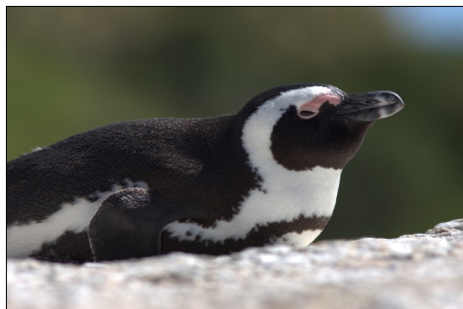




New horizons for African Penguins

People have been attempting to establish seabird colonies for over 50 years, with varying degrees of success. Tern colonies have been successfully established in Maine through the use of decoys, while Atlantic Puffins were successfully reintroduced to breeding islands in the Gulf of Maine. In New Zealand and Australia, seabird colony restoration and establishment projects have been prolific due to the high diversity of seabirds there and the devastating impacts of introduced predators. While these efforts have mainly focussed on burrowing seabirds, such as the Fluttering Shearwater, Gould's Petrel, and the Common Diving Petrel, there has recently been an exciting attempt to create a colony of Little Penguins in a safer area in Sydney's North Harbour. Although still early days, this project has yielded some success.

In principle, the task is simple; create a safe space for seabirds to breed, provide suitable nest alternatives if needed, try and attract the birds to the site through calls or decoys, and wait. In practice however, it is not a matter of "build it and they will come". Seabird life history makes establishing colonies somewhat difficult and requires a good understanding of the species' biology. Most seabirds lay only one or two eggs per year or every other year. Raising a chick requires input from both parents and means that a good partnership is key. Most seabirds mate for life – although research on some species suggests that "divorce" can be common and "affairs" (or, more scientifically, extra-pair copulations) are rife. There is no



Ross Wanless

Understanding the bird's biology is a prerequisite for establishing a new breeding colony

romantic reason why seabirds mate for life; rather it is the best way to increase breeding success as pairs become more experienced and therefore successful. And the one sure way to find your mate again in the vast ocean is to return to the same island, often the very same nest, year after year.

This is also true of the African Penguin, one of our most-loved coastal seabirds. Unfortunately for colony establishment attempts, this means that once a pair has established a nest at a colony, they are not easily persuaded to move. Young birds however are more flexible, going through a prospecting phase, looking for good breeding sites. This is the phase that BirdLife South Africa and partners aim to target in attempting to establish new breeding colonies for penguins.



Ross Wanless

Adult African Penguins, once established in an area, are reluctant to move to a new breeding site.

The need to establish new colonies is due to the rapid and sustained decrease in the African Penguin population. While many other conservation actions are being implemented, we need to try all the methods at our disposal to prevent the extinction of the African Penguin. The population has decreased by over 80% in the last 60 years, resulting in the species being listed as Endangered. Although we don't know for sure how many penguins used to breed along our coastline, it is thought that in the 1900s there were over 1 million pairs on Dassen Island alone. Egg collecting devastated the population throughout the 19th century and into the 20th when over half of the eggs laid were taken for human consumption. (Fast fact – penguin egg whites do not go opaque when boiled but stay clear, although I have not tested



this myself!) The harvesting of guano for fertiliser also took its toll as penguins could no longer make burrows in the thick layer of guano which insulated their nests and protected the chicks from predators.

Fortunately, these two damaging practices were banned in the 1970s. By then however, a new threat had emerged. African Penguins, like the Cape Gannet and the Cape Cormorant, are almost entirely dependent on the small pelagic fish species of sardine, anchovy, and red-eye round herring. Commercial fishing for sardine began in South Africa in the 1940s. The enormous amount of fish extracted from the sea almost caused the collapse of the fisheries. The industry reacted by reducing sardine catches and instead targeting anchovy by using more selective nets, allowing for the sardine stock to recover. In the 1980s, the South African government put in place a management system that allowed for the control of catch levels of both species which has stabilised the influence of fishing on the small pelagic fish populations.

In the mid-1990s, however, the sardine and anchovy stocks, once so plentiful on the west coast of South Africa, shifted south and eastwards. The reasons for the shift are unclear but climate and changing ocean temperatures are thought to play a role. Continued high fishing pressure, despite the reduction of fish abundance, has also been suggested as a cause. Whatever the reason, the result has been clear: the penguins, and other seabirds have suffered.

Most of the South African penguin colonies, and indeed historically the largest, occur on the west coast. This meant that when the fish shifted away from the west coast, the penguins breeding in this region struggled to find food

close enough to their breeding colonies. This is where establishing new penguin colonies comes in. Since the fish abundances are no longer sufficient to support the penguins, we are aiming to instead move the penguins to the fish.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries conducts two acoustic surveys for small pelagic fish along the coastline annually. From this data we are able to get a snapshot of the presence and abundance of fish, which is used to set fishing quotas. But we can also use it to look for areas of regular fish presence. The presence of fish at sea is one important criterion for the location of a new penguin colony. Other “ideal” penguin colony criteria, developed in conjunction with African Penguin experts, included the potential for expansion, ease of access for management, and the ability to protect the penguins from predators. Using these criteria, we identified two sites to investigate further.

The first of these is in the De Hoop Nature Reserve. African Penguins tried to establish a colony there in the mid-2000s. The colony was found by reserve staff in 2005 on a rocky peninsula on the eastern edge of the reserve. Six nests were initially counted and over 30 penguins were observed roosting at the site. At its peak, about 100 penguins were seen at the colony, along with Swift Terns, Cape Cormorants, White-breasted Cormorants and Kelp Gulls.

Unfortunately the colony was also discovered by a caracal and the remaining seabirds subsequently abandoned the area before any action could be taken. African Penguins normally breed on offshore islands which are naturally free from terrestrial predators. Their relative naivety with respect to predators



A panoramic view of the beautiful site at De Hoop that is being considered for a new penguin colony



coupled with their clumsy nature on land, make penguins an easy target. This is the reason that there aren't many mainland penguin colonies. The two mainland colonies at Boulders Beach, Simon's Town, and Stony Point, Betty's Bay, both formed in the 1980s, exist because the presence of human settlements in the area has artificially reduced the numbers of predators. This is not to say that the two colonies have been completely safe. Caracals preyed on penguins at Boulders in 2017 and leopards have been a problem at the Stony Point colony intermittently since the colony first established. But despite this, both colonies have thrived, and both are either stable or increasing – a rare trend.

The second site we are investigating – in Plettenberg Bay – was identified together with Dr Mark Brown, the director of the Nature's Valley Trust and a BirdLife South Africa Board member. The proposed site is much larger than the De Hoop site, so holds promise for greater expansion. However it does have other challenges since it is closer to residential areas, but learning from experiences at other colonies, we are planning ways to overcome these.



Mike Bridgeford

A visit to the proposed site at Plettenberg Bay with partners and collaborators

A question that is always asked about this project is how the colony will be started. The most important part of starting a new colony is protecting the colony site from predators. We have placed camera traps at both sites to monitor the potential predators there. Apart from the obvious predators that will go for adult penguins: caracal (recorded at Plett) and leopard (recorded at De Hoop), there are also smaller



Christina Hagen

One of the camera traps set out to monitor potential penguin predators.

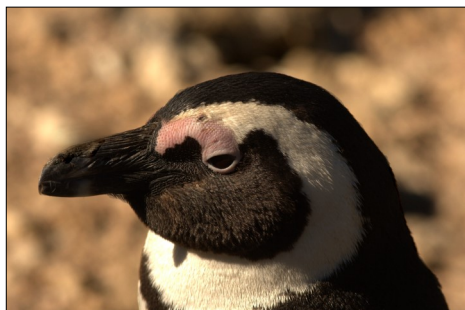
predators such as the Cape grey mongoose and Cape genet, which can prey on eggs and small chicks. This means we will need to erect a predator-proof fence. Keeping out the larger predators can be accomplished by constructing a high enough fence, with an overhanging portion so they cannot jump over. The smaller predators are more difficult, requiring a small fence mesh size and various precautions to prevent them from burrowing under the fence.

The second important component is of course the penguins, and getting them to breed at the colony site. A key technique that we will use, and one that has been successful elsewhere, is to make the site look, sound, and perhaps even smell like penguins are already breeding there. This is called social attraction and takes advantage of the fact that seabirds are colonial breeders. By placing life-like penguin decoys and mirrors through the area, playing recordings of penguin calls and possibly even depositing penguin guano, we hope to entice penguins to the new areas. If this does not work to attract relatively large numbers of penguins, we will investigate the feasibility of translocating rescued and rehabilitated chicks. Translocation will involve moving young penguins that have not yet started breeding to the new sites. After release, they will go to sea for the next 3 to 4 years, growing and learning how to hunt before deciding on a colony and a mate.

This time lag between release and potential return is why it is vital that we start this project



now. The idea of starting new colonies first emerged in 1999, when the penguin population was at 40 000 pairs. At the time not enough was known about why the populations were decreasing, and to try and start a new one would have been irresponsible. In the intervening years, the penguin population has more than halved to 18 000 pairs. But we have also learned a lot more about the threats facing penguins and have learned from other international attempts to establish seabird colonies. So it is imperative to attempt this vital piece of the puzzle for penguin conservation now, before we lose more of this unique species.



Ross Wannless

I'd like to thank CapeNature, the Department of Environmental Affairs, Nature's Valley Trust, BirdLife Plettenberg Bay and members of the Population Reinforcement Working Group for support and advice received so far. I'd also like to thank Pamela Isdell, the Bristol Conservation Science Foundation, Diemersfontein Wine Estate and BirdLife International (through the Princess Takamodo Gala Dinner) for funding for this work.

Christina Hagen

*BLSA, Pamela Isdell Fellow of
Penguin Conservation*



SAFRING

*The South African Bird
Ringing Unit*

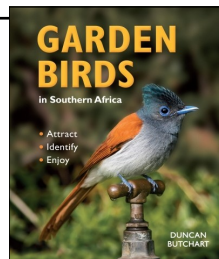
If you find a ringed bird, please contact us at safring@adu.org.za and we'll get back to you with the ringing details.

**Garden Birds in
Southern Africa**

by Duncan Butchard

Published in September 2017, this lovely new book profiles birds likely to be found in gardens around southern Africa.

Not only does it inform readers about what to look and listen for (and where and when) but it is also an inspirational guide to creating a bird-friendly and biodiverse garden wherever you live in the region. Attractively laid out, with plenty of coloured illustrations, it offers descriptions and photos of 101 garden birds; tips on how to get to know your local species, their feeding and breeding habits, calls and general behaviour; information on how to design your garden to attract the widest range of birds and other wildlife; guidance on the best plants and structures to provide food and shelter for birds; and detailed lists of recommended trees, shrubs, climbers, aloes, and grasses to plant in your bird-friendly space. This is something that every birder with a garden should have on his or her bookshelves.



CBC Camp at Rhodene Farm

1 – 3 September 2017

We gathered at the camp venue which is situated at Prince Alfred Hamlet near Ceres. This was a new venue for the CBC, though the Tygerberg Bird Club went there last year. There was a variety of accommodation ranging from small well-appointed semi-detached single-bedroom cottages, small cottages with two or more bedrooms, and one very large house with four bedrooms, a large kitchen and living room. The latter is where we all gathered in the evenings.

Ceres gets cold in the evenings and on the first evening the temperature dropped to 8°C – so we were all very happy with the underfloor heating. The farm itself grows apples, pears, and peaches. It was hard to believe that those sticks which count as trees can produce fruit – but they do, the majority for export. The farm also harvests olives and nuts.



Brian Vanderwalt was the leader for the weekend and as this is very much his turf we knew we could look forward to finding a good variety of birds. Arriving mid-afternoon on Friday, we wandered round the farm. They have a pair of resident African Fish Eagles at the dam which some were lucky enough to see. Streaky-headed Seedeaters along with Sweet Waxbills, Cape White-eyes, and Cape Siskin were among the more interesting finds.

In the evening Roger Cope put his braai master hat back on. I copied Simon Fogarty's tip from the last camp: cook your potatoes in the microwave before you put them on the braai otherwise you'll be waiting three days before they cook through enough to eat. The plan for Saturday was announced – we were to head up to the R355 and on to the Tankwa Padstal before turning off along a gravel road that heads towards the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area and then back down the R303.

Up early on Saturday we surprised the usual angry Cape Robin-chat on whose territory we were encroaching. We saw the fattest Olive Thrush ever. Honestly I thought it was going to burst. All the other birds on the farm looked very healthy – “Do birds get type 2 diabetes and hypertension?” mused Fazlyn. “That bird is seriously obese.” There were quite a few peafowl around, including one that seemed to have gotten itself stuck in the tree.

The R355 had a nice selection of birds, amongst them several Booted Eagles, White- and Black-throated Canaries, Karoo Chat, Large-billed and Red-capped Larks, Capped and Mountain Wheatears, Blue Cranes, Pale Chanting Goshawks, Karoo Chat, Layard's Tit-Babbler, Jackal Buzzard, African Stonechat, Malachite, Southern Double-collared, and Orange-breasted Sunbirds.

The padstal was calling and calling and the road long. Finally it appeared out of the dust, a quirky lonely outpost along the R355. They have an old car parked bonnet down in the dust just to ensure you don't miss it, although it is the only place for many, many kilometres. And amazingly, it sold veggie burgers! (Usually our only option is cheese and tomato toastie or Greek salad). A few of us tucked into the

roosterbrood and we all upped our caffeine intake before we set off again.



Kaye Foksett

Tankwa Padstal here we come!

A search for Protea Seedeaters proved fruitless but Karoo Larks started to make an appearance, along with Rock Martins and more wheatears, and cisticolas. We wended our way along the dusty road back to Rhodene Farm and our evening braai. Our bird count at that point stood at 84.

The next morning we headed off round the back of Ceres where there was more water and a variety of waterfowl, another Booted Eagle, an African Fish Eagle, White-faced Whistling Duck, Cape Rock Thrush, Great Crested and Little Grebes, moorhens and ibis and a Black-shouldered Kite amongst others to bring the total for the weekend to 94.



Kaye Foksett

Birding at a farm dam at the back of Ceres

Brian had set out a very nice route that was not too frenetic and produced plenty of birds and we all had a very enjoyable time.

Kaye Foksett



From Cape to Cape ...

In June 2017, Marilyn and Paul Schlansky from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, visited Cape Town and, with the help of our excellent information officer, Sylvia Ledgard, they met up with Simon Fogarty for a day's birding. The Schlanskys are members of the Cape Cod Bird Club, and on their return home, Marilyn wrote an article for the CCBC newsletter, "The Kingfisher".

She has kindly agreed to let us reproduce it here ...

Travelling somewhere? Contact the local Bird Club!

Birding is a wonderful activity, accessible no matter where you find yourself, from your backyard to the most far flung corner of the world. All you need is a pair of binoculars and a field guide. Well, almost all. Those little brown jobs that are confusing enough at home can be utterly confounding once you're out of your familiar territory. This is where the local bird clubs enter into the picture.

The Cape Cod Bird Club is only one of literally hundreds of organizations around the world, serving as a gathering place for like-minded enthusiasts. Birders, moreover, are friendly folk and usually only too happy to share their favorite spots with a visitor from another part of the world. If you are lucky, someone from the club might look upon your visit as an excuse to spend some quality birding time with a new acquaintance.

We had some free time on a recent trip to South Africa and we did just that. The Cape Town Bird Club, Western Cape, an affiliate of BirdLife South Africa (www.capebirdclub.org.za), is a large and active group that helps further important research and conservation in the region. We sent an email to the address listed, asking for some advice on where to go and perhaps someone willing to go with us. We received a lovely and gracious reply from someone who is willing to drop almost anything to go out birding. And so we met Simon Fogarty.

Simon, a retired golf pro, lovely man, and unbelievably accomplished birder, picked us up at our hotel at 7:30 am in his comfortable Land Rover. First stop was the incomparable Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden. Nestled at the

foot of Table Mountain, it's home to sunbirds, sugarbirds, Forest Canaries, and dozens of other species including nesting eagle-owls and the Red-eyed Dove whose call clearly says "I am a Red-eyed Dove".

Three and a half hours and some iced coffee later we head to False Bay Nature Reserve, home to flamingos and thousands of water and wading birds. My favorites were the two varieties of thick-knees, which rest on their long, elegant ankles like ostriches. All in all we saw 66 species of birds that day, 60 of which were life birds for us.

A good Italian dinner after helped to celebrate our success and cement our friendship. You may want to know what this wonderful day cost. Actually, it cost nothing. It was an expression of goodwill and camaraderie between people who love birds. We presented Simon with a Cape Cod Bird Club pin and an assurance that we would return the favour to anyone who shows up on our shores. We had a fabulous day, made a new friend, and forged a connection between our two "Capes". So whether you're traveling to Topeka or Timbuktu, contact the local bird club and see where that takes you!

Marilyn Schlansky



Simon enjoys a beer with the Schlanskys ... a toast, perhaps, to the "goodwill and camaraderie between people who love birds"

The Schlanskys are keen to reciprocate the hospitality they received. If any of our members visit their area, be sure to contact Marilyn at schlansky2@gmail.com.



TRAVEL

Travels in a Green Desert

In mid-February 2017 I went on Karoo Birding Safaris' tour to the Northern Cape. The countryside between Cape Town and Beaufort West was dry and brown. The dam at Beaufort West resembled a dust bowl.

At Three Sisters we turned north onto the N12, as the dam on the outskirts of Victoria West always produces large numbers of birds. Our list here included Greater Flamingo, South African Cliff Swallow, South African Shelduck, Lark-like Bunting, Blue Crane, and Grey-headed Gull.

By the time we reached Mokala National Park the countryside was green. It had rained. My first visit to this park was during a dry period and the muddy bottom of the dam at the hide had attracted large numbers of birds. On two subsequent visits the dam was full with few birds around. Lilydale camp is preferable to the one at Mosu. Lilydale is on a ridge overlooking a ravine and the camp has lush vegetation with a good variety of birds.



Helga Hill

Mokala National Park under a lush green carpet

From Mokala we travelled west to Witsand Nature Reserve where we experienced a spectacular thunder and lightning storm accompanied by rain throughout the night. What a sight to behold after months of drought and water restrictions in Cape Town. This reserve is a favourite of mine and well worth enduring the access roads to get there. The accommodation is excellent, and during the hot part of the day the pool provides relief while you watch the birds in the surrounding trees.



Helga Hill

Accommodation at Witsand Nature Reserve

From there we headed to Twee Rivieren in the Kgalagadi, but on the way we made a short detour to view Hakskeenpan where teams have been clearing stones from a 20km race track in preparation for an attempt at breaking the land speed record.

The Kgalagadi National Park was unrecognisable in its coat of green with water everywhere. This presented a problem on the way to Nossob as long stretches of the road were under water, at times too deep for comfort with no escape route to circumnavigate them.

We arrived safely in Nossob with a little assistance from a Good Samaritan. It took four days before we could travel to the picnic site at Lijersdraai north of Nossob. We attempted this earlier, but just north of Cubitje Quap there were up to 300m stretches of water which we were told were too deep for our vehicle.



Helga Hill

Our Good Samaritan on the road to Nossob

While on the subject of water holes, there was no point sitting at them waiting for 'action'.



With so much water around, neither the birds nor the other animals needed to congregate around them. Nevertheless we chalked up a good list of birds which included Black-chested Snake Eagle, Verreaux's and Spotted Eagle-Owls, Cape, White-backed, and Lappet-faced Vultures, Gabar Goshawk, Bateleur, Red-capped Lark, Tractrac Chat, Rufous-eared Warbler, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Ground-scraper Thrush, Burchell's Sandgrouse, Double-banded Courser, Barred Wren-warbler, Striped Kingfisher, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Green Woodhoopoe, Black Cuckoo, and Black-faced Waxbill. We had two specials – a Pallid Harrier and a Montagu's Harrier. We lost count of the number of Kori Bustards we saw. We also saw 33 individual lions including cubs, a lion kill, a family of cheetahs, the usual ungulates and a couple of African wild cats. On a night drive an African wild cat had a brief stand-off with a Cape cobra. Neither seemed perturbed by the other and soon each went their own way.

soft green coat, but at the same longed for the stark beauty of a red, brown, and yellow Kgalagadi.



Kgalagadi under water

Helga Hill

It was a very different scene from the usual when we drove across the red dunes. The red sand was completely covered in green grass. On reaching the Auob River, we thought we had arrived at a golf course. The river bed resembled a fairway.

We stayed at the Kalahari Tented Camp outside Mata Mata. The accommodation is good, the only drawback being that you have to stay put as the camp is not fenced. The short trip to the pool has to be done by car.

I was pleased to have seen the Kgalagadi in its



Sociable Weavers' nest in Kgalagadi

Helga Hill

On our return journey we travelled via Keimoes, Kenhardt, and then spent the night at Brandvlei where we had good sightings of Red Lark, but Sclater's Lark eluded us. En route to Leeu Gamka on the R353 we stopped off at "The Mall" in Williston. It contains an entertaining, eclectic collection of everything and whatnot from days of yore – and the milkshakes are the best in good old SA! At Fraserburg we visited a couple of historical sites. The trip down Teekloof Pass through the Steenkampsberg was spectacular, with Tafelberg (1913m) towering on our right. This less travelled route is well worth doing. Soon we arrived at Leeu Gamka where we turned north to Beaufort West for the night before returning to Cape Town.

Helga Hill



The Williston Mall

Helga Hill

The Cape Bird Club

Cape Sugarbirds



Celebrates 70 Years



Photographers –
clockwise from
top left:

Derek Longrigg
Margaret Maciver
Peter Steyn
Myburgh Brink
Jessie Walton
Otto Schmidt



The CBC Paarl Bird Sanctuary Project

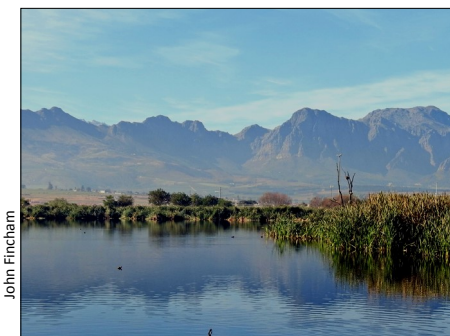
Some history. Our Cape Bird Club has a very long connection with the Paarl Bird Sanctuary (PBS), stretching back years before it was officially proclaimed in 1993. The “Paarl Sewage Works” was one of our regular outings venues in the 1970’s, more than 40 years ago, and the Cape Bird Club’s Newsletter No. 86 reported several sightings of African Jacana at the “Paarl Disposal Works” in 1967. And now it is part of the more grandly named Drakenstein Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW).

Monthly bird counts were started by Yvonne Weiss in 1994 and are still continuing with a loyal band of CBC members and local residents. John Fincham and I have been “regulars” for quite a number of years. The importance of the sanctuary’s birdlife was stressed in a comprehensive summary of the results of the first ten years of bird counts which was published in 2008 in *Ostrich**. An updated report reviewing the bird species and movements for the extended period up to 2017 is in the early stages of preparation. The birds are still present, in diversity and numbers, and in beautiful surroundings. *And the birders are returning.*

But why had they left? Well, none of us needs reminding that the world has become a more dangerous place in recent years. South Africa is no exception and no town or city is without its problems. PBS was always a place of birds and beauty, but reports of tourists and visitors having been robbed at knifepoint, as well as the repeated vandalism of its bird hides and other amenities, had slowly taken away its aura of peacefulness and serenity. The sanctuary had become a “no go” area for casual birders, and tour guides no longer included it in their itineraries.

Opening hours were reduced to weekends only and security patrols were organised. The Senior Engineer, Ronald Brown, and his WWTW staff were always supportive and encouraging. But what if the municipality decided that the additional expense was unaffordable and it was not worth keeping PBS open for visitors and tourists who no longer came? The sanctuary’s remarkable birdlife and beautiful surroundings

deserved to remain high on the city of Paarl’s list of attractions to visitors, and it is important that such a valuable amenity should be shared and valued by all the surrounding communities.



Paarl Bird Sanctuary – a place to be shared and valued

Let’s make a start with Mbekweni – John’s proposal.

This township lies just across the railway line that forms the eastern boundary of the WWTW and PBS. Skhumbuzo Mbewu was an old friend of ours from his many years as Environmental Education Officer at Intaka Bird Sanctuary. In January 2016 he was freelancing as a tourist guide in Stellenbosch and he was keen to assist. A relative of his was teaching at a school in Mbekweni, so he was the ideal person to assess the possibilities: “Sewage works? A dirty place.” ... “Bird sanctuary? Never heard of it.” ... “School visits? Tell us more.”

John then spent many hours compiling a slide presentation to be shown to teachers at the local primary and high schools, promoting the bird sanctuary and the adjoining WWTW as the ideal outdoor classroom. It was not hard to find connections to the school curriculum. The WWTW was the obvious focus for water treatment and purification, and with the Berg River on the western boundary, John was able to widen the scope of the presentation to cover the benefits to health, food production, and the importance of wetland conservation. The PBS was ideal for life science subjects, using the presence of birds as indicators of a healthy environment and bird migration patterns as global indicators. The understanding and appreciation of nature could also lead to careers in nature conservation, tourism or the hospitality industry.



The groundwork in 2016. In the following months John and Skhumbuzo made seven presentations to a total of 205 teachers at 5 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. The Cape Bird Club provided initial funding of R10,000 to cover travel expenses and Skhumbuzo's time. Without this support the project would never have taken off. The first school visits were in September 2016 by 86 Grade 10 pupils from the Desmond Mpilo Tutu High School – see report in *Promerops* 306:35. The Drakenstein Municipality sponsored the cost of transport as well as refreshments for the children, and their staff members were very supportive. Julian Hare even made a video of the occasion. It was a very encouraging start!

Gaining momentum in 2017. In February, the hottest time of the year, four classes from Groenheuwel Primary School visited PBS over two days. Phew! 152 kids, both Afrikaans and isiXhosa-speaking. To our delight the Cape Bird Club provided 20 pairs of loan binoculars, and to watch the children's excitement at their first sighting of flamingos was reward enough for all the preliminary work involved. In May we were asked to host a troop of 64 scouts and cubs from Langabuya Primary School at fairly short notice. Visiting these very crowded schools makes one realise how little contact with nature these children are exposed to. They know that birds have wings and fly, but most have never seen a duck and they are amazed that birds can also swim and dive, and that there are so many species. Some schools had never been on any outing before.

After a winter break, school visits resumed and early in September we were "booked" for 6 groups of children from Dalweide Primary School over 3 days. Hectic, but fun. One day was washed out due to rain, and it drizzled intermittently on another, but the children were determined to stay on and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. For more on this, see our website at www.capebirdclub.org.za/portfolio/paarl-bird-sanctuary-environmental-education.

A lucky break. The next part of the story goes back to June 2017 when John and I attended a meeting of the Western Cape Wetlands Forum. An interesting presentation on the ambitious Berg River Improvement Project led to a meeting with officials of the Western



John Fincham

The Dalweide Primary School kids learnt a lot and loved the experience

Cape Agriculture Department in Wellington. Here John and Skhumbuzo learnt about the Department's educational Junior LandCare Project, aimed to benefit schoolchildren from rural areas. Great interest was shown in our own work with Mbekweni schools and we were encouraged (indeed urged) to make a bid for a Small Grant under this scheme. This involved an intimidating procedure as a result of which our Club is now registered as an official Service Provider to the Western Cape Government! As we could not fully comply with the terms of the tender (a 12-page document) we were advised to describe our own project, with an emphasis on wetlands conservation, which we did. Trepidation ... Success!

A daunting target. The contract signed in mid-September called for the organisation of school visits for a minimum of 350 children before mid-December, requiring regular reports, certified attendance registers, masses of paperwork and backup documentation, forays to the market for cartons of apples and oranges, sourcing of a video showing water under the microscope, worries about the deadline with the year-end exams looming ... Oh good, the Ihlumelo Secondary School would like their tourism pupils to visit the sanctuary over two days early in October and again later in the month. The Dalweide Primary School kids from Grades 5 and 6 had been so enthusiastic that now their Grade 7's also wanted to come. So in one hectic week we had two school visits per day over 4 consecutive days! By then we had already exceeded our target.



John Fincham

Dalweide pupils learning about water treatment

Special thanks on behalf of John, Skhumbuzo and myself, to:

Ronald Brown and Drakenstein WWTW staff, regular helpers CBC members Simon Fogarty, Dick Barnes, Patsy Copeland, TBC member Antoinette le Roux, Yolanda Wellem (an Mbekweni resident and UWC graduate in Environmental & Water Science), Thembanani Magazi (Education Officer at Intaka Bird Sanctuary who helped us on two of his free days), Dale Wright (BLSA, who spent a morning at PBS with the kids), SWBC member Rose Mills, also Rudolph Röscher of LandCare for his support and advice, Chris Bam, Principal of Dalweide Primary School, all the teachers who accompanied the various school groups, and many, many more. Grateful thanks for funding over two years go to CBC, TBC, WCBF, BLSA and finally LandCare. None of this could have been achieved without all your help.

Looking ahead. Since September 2016 almost 800 local school children have had a day to remember and a brief introduction to the natural world. The ground work has been done. Who would like to take over? One go-ahead primary school is keen to establish a school “eco-club” in 2018. Our club could assist them with occasional outings, field guides, perhaps a competition with prizes. Some limited funding remains. These kids are really keen and the spark has been lit. Let’s follow it up.

Jo Hobbs

*Reference:
Harebottle DM et al. 2008. Waterbirds at Paarl Waste Water Treatment Works, South Africa, 1994-2004: seasonality, trends and conservation importance. *Ostrich*, 79(2): 147–163.

Intaka Island comes of age!

Intaka Island (formerly known as Blouvllei) and its environmental committee (now known as the BIIEC or Blouvllei Intaka Island Environmental Committee) celebrated 21 years of existence in 2017. I am sure there are many birders who remember outings to Blouvllei way back in 2000 when the reserve was not even officially open to the public! We had to park far from the tiny gate and walk across open ground to actually reach the canal around Intaka.

For those birders newer to the birding scene in Cape Town, Blouvllei was discovered when a large (very large) piece of land covered in Port Jackson willows was bought by developers who had plans to turn the site into what it is today. No-one was aware of the huge wetland in the centre which held hundreds of nests in dead trees, and when it was found an environmental assessment was done. As a result, 16 hectares of the 250 hectare site were retained as a wetlands nature reserve – and Intaka Island was born.

I joined the committee in 1997 and the original committee members are still there, though we have all got older and greyer and acquired children and even grandchildren.



Alan Liebenberg

The BIIEC – Paul Lochner, Margaret Maciver, Pat Titmuss, Tony Williams, and Clive MacDowell,

Our challenges include managing the first (and only, so far as we know) artificially constructed wetland in Southern Africa (which is now visited by schools on almost every day of the school year, as well as birders, garden clubs, and people



just wanting to get away from the chaos of the shopping malls); continuing to remove alien vegetation; planting what should be there from stocks kept in our nursery; always keeping a check on water quality; regular bird counts; and monitoring nesting on the heronry platforms, as well as roost counts.

At the end of my Blouvlei update published in *Promerops* in 2000 I said “Now we wait to see what effect the opening of the area to the general public, as well as the planned shopping centre (Canal Walk), will have on this carefully nurtured and planned wetland”. It’s hard to recall that it was a long time before Intaka was officially opened to the public!



Margaret Macover

Surrounded by the looming buildings of Century City, Intaka remains a tranquil oasis for nature lovers

Twenty years ago we had no idea what effect construction would have on our few bird species, so a list of birds seen was rigorously kept. I remember seeing our first Little Bittern in 2000 and we now have at least two breeding pairs. Intaka is now one of the best places on the peninsula to see these birds. Our Black Crakes which arrived ten years later have raised families! Flamingos now visit our ephemeral pans every winter. Sadly, we lost grassland species such as Red-capped Larks and Capped Wheatears, but we are gaining new species all the time – African (Purple) Swamphens were celebrated when they arrived and we even hosted a Baillon’s Crake a few years ago. Lately we have a Cape Batis who has been resident for two years, along with a pair of Klaas’s Cuckoos.

The original Blouvlei was discovered with hundreds of nesting cormorants and herons just before construction of the whole site was about

to begin, and we were tasked with bringing back as many large breeding birds as we could in the 16 hectares that was given to conservation. Half of this area became the ephemeral pans (with a number of Red Data plant species still there) and the other half was set aside for a wetland. We divided the wetland area into four cells (or ponds) with water of varying depths to encourage different birds. Cell 3 was the largest and here we attempted to get cormorants and herons to breed again. We had no success for a few years until the conservation officer at the time, Deon Weyers, designed platforms that stand in the water and are covered with dead nesting materials. We felt that the birds might feel safer from predators there and that certainly persuaded them to return. The cormorants, particularly White-breasted, returned to build nests with the supplied dead vegetation, eventually covering six platforms with around 300 nests! Unfortunately all the guano was very detrimental to the water quality so we had to remove three of the platforms and make another plan for the remaining three. Our current Conservation Manager, Alan Liebenberg, came up with a brilliant plan and installed tanks underneath the platforms where most of the guano ends up and is pumped out to be used later as fertiliser.

Our most common breeders are White-breasted Cormorants, Reed Cormorants, Darters and sadly Sacred Ibis! I say “sadly” because they behave like gangsters, invading the platforms when the other birds are incubating or nursing small chicks and they take over the nests – but how does one stop them from doing this? We have to keep applying our minds to find solutions.



Priscilla Beeton

A Grey Heron looking very much at home in the Intaka wetland!



Black-crowned Night Herons and Purple Herons breed in the reed beds and we are trying to encourage African Spoonbills to return by planting the type of reeds they need for nesting.

The BIIEC comprises Paul Lochner from the CSIR, Dr. Clive McDowell (botanist), Pat Titmuss (Biodiversity Department from the City of Cape Town), and Dr. Tony Williams and myself who are 'avifaunal consultants'! We are only an advisory committee, but we work extremely well with the present CCPOA (Century City Property Owners Association). At the beginning there was some friction between the various parties (greenies and businessmen) but this turned into a success story of collaboration between developers, civil society, and government. At a function on the 28 September 2017 the CCPOA honoured each member of the committee with a plaque commemorating 21 years of service (in my case, 20 years, as I joined the committee when it was one year old).

Intaka now has two bird hides and various picnic spots overlooking either the pans, or the wetlands. There is a ferry which takes visitors around the canals and three or four educational guides who handle the school groups. Our original bird guides were security guards who underwent training as bird guides and are now qualified in various other fields such as first aid, fire fighting, and plant and invertebrate identification.



The new Education Centre and entrance to Intaka

There are many ideas and dreams in the pipeline for Intaka and no one on the Committee has any intention of resigning without seeing many of these dreams realised.

Margaret Maciver

Notes on a birding trip to Angola with Birding Africa

Sunday 10 September 2017 saw a diverse group of birders descend on Luanda for an 18 day tour of Angola. The nationalities in the group were: three from the UK, two from SA, two from Singapore, one Aussie and one from the USA. Mike Mills led the tour with utmost professionalism, and the group, it transpired, were highly driven hardcore birders who had the satisfaction of recording 525 species, including all of the endemics and many near endemics. During the course of the trip it emerged that we had TWO members of that most elite group who have 8000+ species on their life lists. My paltry (only African) count of 1100 species paled into insignificance with the group average being around 5000 species!



Maans Booysen (CC BY-SA)

Male Bocage's Sunbird

Sunbirds were high on the agenda and 27 species were recorded on the trip, including the near endemic Bocage's Sunbird and Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird. We were also treated to Anchieta's and Oustalet's Sunbirds. Angola is also very rich in bush-shrikes and we saw Braun's, Gabela, Grey-green, Gorgeous (ie the old Perrin's) and Monteiro's Bush-shrikes, as well as Gabela Helmet-shrike, MacKinnon's Fiscal and Pink-footed Puffback. We also had rich pickings in francolins with Finsch's, Orange River, Grey-striped, and Hartlaub's Francolins added to our list, and Mike Mills' special: Swierstra's Francolin – a real beauty!

Our American, Peter Kaestner, ticked his final turaco for a full-house: the endemic Red-crested



Turaco – an awesome achievement! Near the Congo Basin we enjoyed several species of the striking wattle-eyes, namely Chestnut, Black-throated, White-fronted and Yellow-bellied. We also saw Bocage's and Gabela Akalats and the magnificent Black-and-rufous Swallow. But for me the bird of the trip, out of all my 123 lifers, was the White-headed Robin-chat, after which I had lusted for years!

Once into the desert areas near Lubongo, we picked up fairly easily on several northern Namibia specials – Angola Cave-chat, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Cinderella Waxbill, Rüppell's Korhaan and a Rockrunner. I still think of the Rockrunner by its old name of Damara Rock-jumper, and had the group in stitches with my slip-of-the-tongue reference to the 'Roadrunner'.



Mike Burckham

A perky Rockrunner (previously Damara Rock-jumper)

The extent of the loss of forest in the remnant fragments dotted around Northern Angola is very serious. Where once viewings of the Gabela Bush-shrike were not difficult, our guide could just not locate any specimen in two days of intensive searching. We were very lucky in a less well-known mosaic fragment of forest, but were we looking at a doomed species? With continuous population growth and the need for more fields, the species could easily be extinct within a few years through loss of habitat. Mike Mills has a project at Mount Moco to regenerate the forest in the lower valleys by plantings, establishing a nursery, and at the same time supplying the local villagers with smokeless grass burners that can be used within the huts with

huge health benefits, and of course reducing the need for wood as a fuel. A most worthwhile project, and good luck to him!

Dennis Randell

OBSERVATIONS

Too close for comfort ...

In 2014 my Dad, Eric, wrote about the birds and predators in our Clovelly garden (*Promerops* 300: 22-23).

Well three years later the birds and predators are still here but I think that the cobra is a different one as it is a different colour and seems to be marginally smaller.

In October a pair of Cape Robin-chats built their nest in a well-hidden spot that just happens to be in the same corner occupied by our cobras over the last fifty or so years.

They were busily feeding two chicks when the cobra decided that it was a good day to go on a slither about the garden. Needless to say the robin-chats did not like that idea and one of them tried to keep the snake at bay while the other one kept busy feeding the hungry chicks. While I was watching all the drama from a safe distance I noticed a puff adder coming along to see what all the commotion was about!

I was so busy making sure that the cats were safely in the house that I did not see where the snakes went but the baby robin-chats were still safe in their nest.

A week later the mother bird (or it could have been the father) alerted me to the fact that the cobra was wanting to come out of its home and I watched as she/he made sure that it stayed where it was. At some stage the bird must have been a little too close as I noticed that there was only one tail feather left and the others were sticking out through the rocks where the snake's front door is.

The Cape Robin-chats are really very good parents and for a week the tailless parent kept vigil at the snake hole. Just after lunch on 29 October, I checked the nest and saw the two fairly well feathered chicks and then went to have tea with a neighbour. On my return I again checked the nest – DISASTER – it was empty!



Gillian Barnes

Undaunted, despite the loss of most of its tail feathers (seen protruding from the cobra's hole – indicated by arrow), the Cape Robin-chat diligently keeps watch

All was not lost however, as I have since seen one youngster following its parents around the garden. So at least that was one nest that was half successful.

Gillian Barnes

Garden drama

We have lived in our Rondebosch house for 37 years, and in that time we have very deliberately allowed the half acre garden to 'go wild', using no poisons, removing lawns, and planting hedges, trees, and drought-resistant shrubs.

Over the years, we have counted about 40 bird species visiting, but the last few years have seen a burst of new species frequenting the garden – Swee Waxbills, Amethyst Sunbirds, Brimstone Canaries, Bronze Mannikins (I know they're not supposed to be here; and it's not just the odd aviary escapee – up to 14 congregate daily on the fishpond fountain, mature and juvenile), Grey Herons, and, in the last week, a Reed Cormorant. Given the drought, I guess the fountain and bird baths are a major attraction.

Late yesterday afternoon, I watched the resident male African Goshawk eating a rat, and the Reed Cormorant swallowing a fat goldfish from the pond. Shortly afterwards, a different drama: the cormorant was drying out in the sun next to the pool, when the goshawk suddenly swooped out over its head. The cormorant waddled away

unscathed, and I thought it had happened by chance. Then the goshawk launched itself from the plane tree, just over where the cormorant was sitting. This time the cormorant took off, with the goshawk in pursuit. They flew over a hedge and out of sight, so I don't know how the encounter ended.

But I am baffled. Did the goshawk have serious intentions? Was the cormorant a likely meal? It would have been rather a big meal – especially for a goshawk which had just eaten a large rat! And goshawks are deadly accurate – they would not miss a sitting cormorant. I have watched them take out doves and rats with precision bombing. So was this the kind of feint one sees with owls dive-bombing unwanted visitors, rather than a hunt? The goshawks and their offspring have been resident here ever since we arrived in 1980, so may well feel territorial about the place.

All this carnage and drama in the leafy suburbs!

Virginia van der Vliet / Welsh

Interesting observations from De Mond Nature Reserve

Early on Wednesday 13 December 2017, Simon Fogarty and I were at De Mond Nature Reserve. De Mond is the mouth of the Heuningnes River where it flows out into Struis Bay. We were there just after the low tide which was at 06h50, and the wind was blowing quite strongly.

Whilst walking along the boardwalk on the eastern side of the river we heard Blue Cranes calling. Looking up above us, two or three small flocks were coming together from different directions. They joined together to form one flock, 24 birds in all, all circling and wheeling, while calling loudly. They spiralled upwards as if on a thermal current of air in one flock, their loud bugling calls ringing out, and then, as if on some call or cue, they split into three small flocks again, departing in different directions.

What this represented is unknown to me. Certainly at this time of year in the Overberg they should be paired off and breeding, not forming flocks as they do in winter. Were they perhaps non-breeding first year birds, as was



suggested to me?

We moved along the river edge looking at palaeartic migrant waders, which were in pitifully short supply. A handful of Grey Plovers, Curlew Sandpipers, two Common Greenshanks, a few Little Stints, a Common Ringed Plover, a Ruff, a Whimbrel and two or three Sanderlings!

I raised my bins, looking further afield, down and across the beach eastwards. Perhaps 300 or 400 metres away, a thick black line ran all the way from the dunes across the beach to the mouth of the river where it entered the sea. "Put your scope on those and count them" I mockingly said to Simon. I could see this was a large – very large – a *huge* flock of Cape Cormorants. We had both got our scopes onto this densely packed, thick black mass, when they started to take to the air, disturbed by two beach walkers. Over the next few minutes we watched as thousands and thousands of the birds lifted off the beach to find a new roosting spot.



Simon Fogarty

Cape Cormorants – a fraction of the full vista of the flock

"Quick, take some shots", I urged Simon as I was desperately trying to estimate just how many birds there were – 5000, 6000 ... 10,000? The numbers were so overwhelming, my brain just stalled. Analysing the shots Simon took, I made a rough calculation by laying a grid over the images and counting/estimating each square ... over 11,000!

It is hard to imagine, when seeing so many of this near-endemic species, that they are listed as Endangered in the latest South African Red List. But it does make one ponder, as the numbers used to be in the millions when they were sitting at Least Concern before the population collapse.

Mel Tripp

Black Sparrowhawk Surprise!

Standing by my lounge window early on 4 October 2017, looking out at my little garden in Somerset West, a large bird flew from my right and landed in the flower bed below the window where I was standing – not more than 1 metre away from me. I thought it was probably one of the Hadedas that are always present in our complex, but it certainly wasn't an Ibis! For a better view I moved the fine net curtain slightly, and to my amazement there was a Black Sparrowhawk – unmistakable. She (the size suggested it was a female) was mantling over her kill and looking anxiously around and above, before flying off with her prize. On checking my stoep area, from where she first appeared, I found a scattering of Laughing Dove feathers.

This was an unforgettable experience for me – I last saw this species when a pair nested in the Helderberg Nature reserve, many years ago.

John Clements

SIGHTINGS

Please send all sightings to compiler Felicity Ellmore by e-mail at fellmore@absamail.co.za or Tel. 021 762 0176. A list of all species that constitute south-western Cape Rarities (local) can be found, together with National Rarities, on the CBC website at www.capebirdclub.org.za.

Please note that none of the sightings listed below have been verified by either a regional or national rarities committee.

NATIONAL RARITIES:

Australian Gannet – 2 birds seen on Malgas Island, 28 September 2017, reported by TH

Little Ringed Plover – a bird seen at Vermont Pan near Hermanus, 11 September 2017 (BB, SF and other birders), still there 12 September 2017 (TG), not seen again although many birders were searching!

American Golden Plover – a bird seen at De Mond NR (Western Cape), 11 November 2017 (MP), seen 12 November 2017 (KL)

Common Redshank – a bird seen from the Geelbek Hide, WCNP, 14 September 2017, reported by TH, 2 birds seen at the Geelbeck Hide, WCNP, 24 November 2017 (VW)



Pectoral Sandpiper – a single bird seen on Pan P1 at Strandfontein Sewage Works, 11 November 2017 (GR), 2 birds seen on pan P1, 18 November 2017 (JG), a single bird seen at Rooisand Nature Reserve next to Arabella, 4 January 2018 (PV)

Elegant Tern – a bird seen at Gearing Point tern roost in Hermanus, 3 December 2017 (ST), still there 7 December 2017, reported by TH, 2 birds present at Gearing Point, 8 December 2017, one bird seen at Strandfontein Sewage Works, 9 December 2017 (MN)

White Wagtail – a bird found at Rooisand Nature Reserve near Kleinmond, 6 January 2018 (LV), seen by many birders including SF and MT on 9 January 2018, last seen on 10 January 2018, reported by TH



Trevor Hardaker

The cute little White Wagtail struts his stuff at Rooisand Nature Reserve

LOCAL RARITIES:

Squacco Heron – a bird still at Rondevlei NR, 8 September 2017 (GM), a bird found at a small wetland on Old Lansdowne Road opposite Edith Stephens NR, reported by TH, one seen on a pan along Jakes Gerwel Drive, 25 November 2017 (IMR)

Green-backed Heron – a bird seen on the Black River at the point where the Liesbeek River joins the Black River, 19 November 2017 (EK), still there 25 November 2017 (GS)

Knob-billed Duck – a single bird seen at the Bredasdorp Sewage Works, 28 August 2017 and again on 7 September 2017 (PvO)

White-backed Vulture – an immature bird found roosting on a pylon on the Darling Hills

Road, 10 September 2017, still there 11 September 2017, reported by TH

Hooded Vulture – in the large bluegum tree on the western side of the iron bridge that goes over the Swartrivier on the Karwyderskraal Road, 28 December 2017 (JP)

Long-crested Eagle – a bird seen in Swellendam, 14 November 2017 (WL)

Brown Snake Eagle – a bird seen soaring over Forest Drive in Natures Valley, 12 November 2017 (EBr), a bird seen just outside Stanford, 25 November 2017 (PH), another individual seen just west of Bredasdorp, 28 November 2017 (EB)

Palm-nut Vulture – a bird seen flying over the wind farm at Gouda, 8 Oct. 2017, reported TH

Baillon's Crake – a bird seen on pan P1, Strandfontein WWTW, 18 Nov. 2017 (MM)

Caspian Plover – at least 2 birds seen on the Kliphoek Salt Pans, Velddrif, 3 January 2018 (JPe)

Red-necked Phalarope – a single bird in breeding plumage seen on the Kliphoek Salt Pans, 12 September 2017 (L&ED)

Black-winged Pratincole – a single bird seen at Stony Point, Betty's Bay, 17 November 2017 (EK)

Common Cuckoo – an immature bird seen on a farm near Villiersdorp, 15 October 2017, reported by TH

African Palm Swift – 3 birds seen seen at the Fairy Knowe Hotel in the Wilderness, 17 September 2017 (PvO), a pair seen north of Park Island, Marina da Gama, 29 December 2017 (PR)

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater – a bird seen sitting on a fence along the sand road towards Rooisand Bird Hide, Kleinmond, 17 December 2017 (DBu)

Lesser Striped Swallow – a small flock still present on the western edge of Zeekoevlei, 16 September 2017 (JG), at least one bird seen from the camp site at De Hoop NR, 6 October 2017 (MB), a few birds seen from the camp site at De Hoop NR, 6 November 2017, reported by TH, a bird seen at the entrance to Rietvlei Wetland Reserve in Milnerton, 14 November 2017 (F&JP)

Black Cuckooshrike – a female bird seen at De Hoop NR, 6 October 2017 (MB), a bird seen at the camp site at De Hoop NR, 6 November 2017, reported by TH



Eurasian Golden Oriole – a bird seen in the fig trees at the restaurant in De Hoop Nature Reserve, 2 December 2017 (BK)

Common Whitethroat - a female bird flew into a window of a house in Langebaan, stunned itself, then recovered, 21 November 2017 (FP)

Marsh Warbler – a bird calling from an empty plot in Mountain Rise Road in Scarborough, 30 November 2017 (CC)

Desert Cisticola – a pair of birds found in a garlic field just outside Prince Albert, 2 November 2017 (MF)

African Pied Wagtail – a bird seen at Cape Town International Airport, 30 November 2017, reported by TH

Western Yellow Wagtail – a bird found on the beach at Betty's Bay, 23 December 2017 (HG, WB), still there 27 December 2017 (IK)

Red-backed Shrike – a single male seen west of Ladismith (WC), 3 December 2017 (PB)

Black-bellied Starling – at least 2 birds still in Rustenberg Road, Stellenbosch, 13 September 2017, reported by TH

BIRDS ESTABLISHED IN THE SOUTH WESTERN / WESTERN CAPE, BUT RARE OR LOCALISED:

Fulvous Duck – 2 birds seen at Worcester Sewage Works, 1 Oct. 2017, reported by TH, a bird seen at Paarl Bird Sanctuary, 9 Oct. 2017 (JF)

Lesser Honeyguide – a bird seen calling in the Tokai plantation, 30 October 2017 (FE)

OTHER INTERESTING SIGHTINGS:

Goliath Heron – a bird seen at Rondevlei NR, 14 September 2017 (RM), a single bird seen in the Philippi farmlands along Punt Road, 30 September 2017 (JG)

Buff-spotted Flufftail – a pair found building a nest in Kirstenbosch NBG, 26 December 2017 (MMC), seen by many birders including SF on 6 January 2018, GF and JA on 9 January 2018

Ludwig's Bustard – a group of at least 15 birds seen just east of Velddrif, 30 September 2017 (FJ), 2 birds seen on Kuifkopvisvanger Farm, Velddrif, 31 October 2017, reported by TH

Caspian Tern – a bird seen flying up the river at Magas, 13 October 2017 (G&JL)

Whiskered Tern – at least 10 pairs nesting on the dam in front of the manor house at Vergenoegd Wine Estate, 2 January 2018 (JM)

Red-Chested Cuckoo – a bird heard in Zwaanswyk Road, Tokai, 18 October 2017 (SH)

Amethyst Sunbird – a bird seen at the entrance to Rondevlei NR, Cape Town, 25 November 2017 (EV, DB, DH, FE)

Black-headed Canary – a small flock of birds still at Abrahamskraal, WCNP, 13 September 2017 (AM), at least 5 different birds seen in the Philippi farmlands in the Punt Road area, 30 September 2017 (JG, TH), birds seen at Abrahamskraal at WCNP, 28 October 2017 (KP), a group of birds seen at the Thali Thali Game Lodge, just east of the R27/Langebaan intersection, 5 December 2017 (OS)

Lark-like Bunting – a pair seen near Gouda, 8 October 2017, reported by TH, a bird seen at Abrahamskraal, WCNP, 28 October 2017 (KP)

OBSERVERS:

Joan Ackroyd	JA	Keir Lynch	KL
Basil Boer	BB	John Magner	JM
Dick Bos	DB	Michael Mason	MM
Willem Boshoff	WB	Margaret Maciver	MMC
Philip Bredenhann	PB	Robbie Millar	RM
Erica Brink	EB	Geoff Moller	GM
Elmarie Brits	EBr	Alice Moller	AM
Mike Buckham	MB	Michele Nel	MN
Duncan Butchard	DBu	Jenny Parsons	JP
Callan Cohen	CC	Faansie Peacock	FP
Linda & Eddie du Plessis	L&ED	Jonathan Pepper	JPe
		Karen Powell	KP
Felicity Ellmore	FE	Frieda & Jan	
John Fincham	JF	Prinsloo	F&JP
Simon Fogarty	SF	Matt Prophet	MP
Gill Ford	GF	Gilbert Reinhardt	GR
Mike Ford	MF	Ian-Malcolm	
Hanjo Gouws	HG	Rijsdijk	IMR
Tertius Gous	TG	Peter Ryan	PR
John Graham	JG	Garth Shaw	GS
Trevor Hardaker	TH	Otto Schmidt	OS
Sally Harris	SH	Simon Thompson	ST
Denver Hendricks	DH	Mel Tripp	MT
Peter Hochfelden	PH	Lester van Groeningen	LV
Frans-Hendrik Joubert	FJ	Pieter van Oudtshoorn	PvO
Ethan Kistler	EK	Ermien van Pletzen	EV
Imar Krige	IK	Willie Linde	WL
Billi Krochuk	BK	Guy & Jay Louw	G&JL
Willie Linde	WL		
Guy & Jay Louw	G&JL		



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Your committee seeks to arrange outings, camps, and other activities for members to suit all levels of interest, so do come along and enjoy the birding and the camaraderie. Details of activities appear in our Programme, starting below on this page. If you can suggest other entertaining speakers or new exciting venues for field outings, please let us know, as we want to ensure that the programme is interesting and varied.

EVENING MEETINGS: These are normally held at 20h00 on the second Thursday of each month at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands, and feature interesting illustrated talks by birding experts, ornithologists, or professionals in related fields. Secure parking is available, and tea or coffee and biscuits will be served after the meeting at a cost of R5,00. Do bring your friends, but remember that there will be a charge of R10 for non-member visitors. If you are a new member please introduce yourself at the entrance table when you arrive.

FIELD OUTINGS: We arrange field outings throughout the year, usually on the first Saturday, third Sunday, and on one weekday morning in the month. You will be introduced to a variety of habitats and hopefully see many of the birds that occur in them. It's a good idea to obtain a large-scale road map and to check your route to the outing venue beforehand.

COURSES, CAMPS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS: In addition to our regular activities, we organise a range of other events. These include weekend camps, bird courses, occasional boat trips – and even visits to the theatre.

BIRD COUNTS: Our club supports ornithological research and conservation by conducting regular bird counts at a number of sites. Monthly counts are held at Strandfontein Sewage Works, Paarl Bird Sanctuary, Wildevoëlvei, and Athlone WWTW, while quarterly CWACs (Coordinated Waterbird Counts) take place at Rietvlei and Zandvlei. A BIRP (Birds in Reserves Project) species count takes place monthly at Kirstenbosch and there is a monthly "hack" at Zandvlei. See our Programme for details. The contact details for the count leaders are as follows:

Strandfontein monthly count

Dick Barnes 021 532 1632

Wildevoëlvei monthly count

Gillian Barnes 021 782 5429

Paarl Bird Sanctuary monthly count

Yvonne Weiss 021 872 4972

Athlone WWTW monthly count

Dick Bos 021 423 2546

Zandvlei quarterly CWAC

Gavin Lawson 021 705 5224

Rietvlei quarterly CWAC

Koos Retief 021 444 0315 (w)

Kirstenbosch monthly BIRP count

John Magner 082 881 3845

Zandvlei monthly hack

Gavin Lawson 021 705 5224

CBC PROGRAMME : March 2018 – July 2018

MARCH 2018

Thurs 1 March EVENING MEETING – *Cape Town's weather and climate - what changes are we likely to see?*

Speaker: Peter Johnston *Note: Meeting brought forward because Flock runs from 6 – 11 March.

Meet at 20h00 at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands.

Dr Peter Johnston is a climate scientist at the University of Cape Town. His research focuses on the impacts of climate variability and change on various user sectors. He specialises in agriculture and water related activities with special emphasis on vulnerability and adaptation options.

Observed trends and future projections give us a glimpse of the conditions Cape Town can expect. The



impacts on humans, plants, and even birds will be discussed. Should you 'bin' your binoculars? Perhaps not quite yet!

Sat 3 March RONDEVLEI OUTING

Leader: Merle Chalton ☎ 079 343 1047

Meet at 08h00. These regular monthly outings are for all Rondevlei enthusiasts and beginners are especially welcome. Duration 2½ hours. Bring a warm anorak even if it is a hot day, as it can get cold in the hides. There is a small entrance fee.

Directions: Take the M5 (Prince George Drive) towards Grassy Park. Look out for Nando's at the 5th Avenue traffic lights. Turn here – left if coming from the Rondebosch side or right if coming from the Muizenberg side. Continue along 5th Avenue to the first set of traffic lights. Turn right into Perth Road and continue to the end of the road.

Wed 14 March WEEKDAY – *Not an outing ... but a Succulent Workshop!*

Leader: Alison James NB. Email alisondoug@telkomsa.net to book your place.

Duration: 10h00 – 12h30 **Maximum 16 participants. RSVP required.**

An outing with a difference – a workshop on succulent plants at Alison James' home. Come and learn how to make your garden more drought-resistant. Participants will receive notes on the plants that Alison introduces. She will include some succulents that attract birds. There will then be a tour of her garden followed by tea and question-time. Each participant will receive some cuttings (free) but Alison will also have 6-packs of mixed succulents on sale for R50 each.

Directions: Those who book will receive directions by e-mail.

Sun 25 March SUNDAY OUTING – 'Farewell the waders' outing at Langebaan Lagoon West Coast National Park

Leaders: Vernon Head ☎ 076 569 1389 ✉ vhjarch@kingsley.co.za

Mel Tripp ☎ 083 461 4365 ✉ trippmel3@gmail.com

Note: this outing is on the 4th Sunday of the month – not the 3rd as usual.

Meet at 07h15 at Geelbek Homestead car park in the West Coast National Park. Catching the tides at the right time is crucial for optimal viewing of waders at Langebaan Lagoon, thus we need to make an early start. The tides are good: high tide is 09h35 which makes Seeberg hide ideal on the flood from 08h00 onwards and Geelbek hide good on the ebb at about 13h30. We will also visit Abrahamskraal. We suggest you allow for a full day's outing. Please try to share transport, and remember to take your Wild Card so that you do not have to pay the entrance fee of R50. The park gates open at 07h00.



BIRD COUNTS & HACKS IN MARCH

See page 32 for leaders' contact details

Sunday 4 Mar – 08h00– Kirstenbosch BIRP Count

Thursday 8 Mar – 08h30– WildevoëlVlei Count

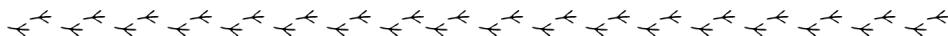
Saturday 10 Mar – 14h00– Zandvlei Hack

Sunday 11 Mar – 08h00 – Strandfontein Count

Thursday 22 Mar – 09h30– Athlone WWTW Count

Saturday 24* Mar – 09h00– Paarl Bird Sanctuary Count

**Please note change of date*





APRIL 2018

Sat 7 April RONDEVLEI OUTING

Leader: Merle Chalton ☎ 079 343 1047

Meet at 08h00. These regular monthly outings are for all Rondevlei enthusiasts and beginners are especially welcome. Duration 2½ hours. Bring a warm anorak even if it is a hot day, as it can get cold in the hides. There is a small entrance fee. See March 3 for directions.

Thurs 12 April WEEKDAY OUTING – Combined Wildevoëlvlei Count and a visit to Imhoff's Gift

Leaders: Marilyn Metcalf ☎ 076 371 0358 Gillian Barnes ☎ 078 206 4318

Meet at 08h15 at Wildevoëlvlei Waste Water Treatment Works for the count, which takes about one and a half hours, after which we will proceed to Imhoff.

Directions: From Ou Kaapse Weg or Fish Hoek take Kommetjie Road (M65) and continue past Masiphumelele until you see the signs to the Waste Depot. Turn right into Wildevoëlvlei Road and travel the short distance to the end. The gate to the treatment works is to the left. The security guard will ask you to sign the register. There is limited parking at the office but Gillian will arrange for any overflow to park closer to the maturation ponds. It is not a very large area and is an easy walk.

Please note that there are extensive roadworks taking place at the Ou Kaapse Weg/Kommetjie Road intersection and traffic in the morning is quite heavy so make sure to give yourself time for delays.

Thurs 12 April EVENING MEETING – 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Cape Bird Club

Meet at 20h00 at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands.

Come and support your club at its AGM and hear about its activities and achievements in 2017. The club's committee for 2018/19 will be elected.

After the business of the meeting there will be a presentation by **Mark Anderson**, CEO of BirdLife SA, who will be chatting to us about ***Bird conservation in South Africa: successes and challenges***. He is a vibrant speaker and we are honoured that he is visiting us from Johannesburg especially to celebrate our 70th anniversary with us.

Sun 22 April SUNDAY OUTING – Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve

Leader: Brian Vanderwalt ☎ 092 999 9333 ✉ brian@brians-birding.co.za

Meet at 08h00 at the Meulwater Wildflower Garden parking area.

Directions: Take the N1 to Paarl. Turn off at Exit 55 into Main Street, go straight over the first roundabout and then turn left at the first road on your left hand side (Jan Phillips Mountain Drive). Follow this road for approximately 6km until you get to the Meulwater day braai and picnic site.

Alternatively, follow Gabbema Doordrif Street leading up to the Afrikaans Language Monument and take the dirt road turning off to the right (Jan Phillips Mountain Drive) leading past the Amphitheatre, until you reach the Meulwater day braai & picnic area.

Initially we will bird in the wildflower garden, set high on the slopes of Paarl Mountain. Cape Sugarbirds, 3 species of sunbirds and Protea Seedeaters are all found here. Afterwards we will take a drive into the main reserve in search of raptors which frequent the area. There is an entrance fee into the reserve – both for the vehicle (R52) and per person (R17), so we do encourage car-pooling to keep the costs down.

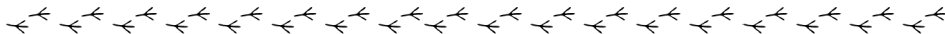


BIRD COUNTS & HACKS IN APRIL

See page 32 for leaders' contact details

Sunday 1 Apr – 08h00– Kirstenbosch BIRP Count
 Sunday 8 Apr – 08h00 – Strandfontein Count
 Thursday 12 Apr– 08h30– Wildevoëlvelei Count
 Saturday 14 Apr – 14h00– Zandvlei Hack

Thursday 19 Apr – 09h30 – Athlone WWTW Count
 Friday 20 Apr – 09h00 – Rietvlei Quarterly Count
 Saturday 21 Apr – 08h00 – Zandvlei Quarterly Count
 Saturday 21 Apr – 09h00– Paarl Bird Sanctuary Count



MAY 2018

Thurs 3 May EVENING MEETING – Hope is the thing with Feathers – Of Birds and Humans

Speaker: Ian McCallum *Note this is the first Thursday of the month, and we start earlier than usual.

Meet at 19h30 at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands.

The Special 70th Anniversary Lecture will be presented by Dr Ian McCallum, a medical doctor, analytical psychologist and psychiatrist, specialist wilderness guide, an author and poet, and trustee of the Cape Leopard Trust. He is a much sought after keynote speaker at conferences – and we are very lucky to have him come to address the Cape Bird Club in this our 70th birthday month!

Please note, as part of our celebration the meeting will begin at 7:30 with wine and snacks in the foyer.

Sat 5 May RONDEVLEI OUTING

Leader: Merle Chalton ☎ 079 343 1047

Meet at 08h00. These regular monthly outings are for all Rondevlei enthusiasts and beginners are especially welcome. Duration 2½ hours. Be sure to dress warmly as it can get cold in the hides. There is a small entrance fee. See March 3 for directions.

Sun 20 May SUNDAY OUTING – Helderberg Nature Reserve

Leader: John Magner ☎ 082 881 3845 ✉ johnmagner@netactive.co.za

Meet at 08h30. This reserve is known for its mountain fynbos and a large variety of Proteas. All five fynbos endemics are found here.

Directions: Take the N2 from Cape Town and turn left at the Somerset West/Strand intersection into Broadway Boulevard. Turn right into Main Road. Follow the road to the Lourensford Road intersection where you turn left. Drive for some distance until you see a Shell garage. From here you can follow the signs to the Reserve – turn left into Hillcrest, then right into Reservoir Road and then finally left into Verster Avenue. There is a small entry fee payable at the gate. We will meet at the main parking area at the top of the road (opposite the tea room, if still there).

Wed 23 May WEEKDAY OUTING – Alphen Trail – Constantia Greenbelt

Leader: Margaret Maciver ☎ 082 459 8843 ✉ maciver@xis.co.za

Meet at 08h45 at the bottom of Alphen Drive close to the Alphen Hotel, where there are always lots of cars and car guards. We will walk from there up the trail to the Black Sparrowhawk nest, birding along the way. The outing will last about one and a half hours.



BIRD COUNTS & HACKS IN MAY

See page 32 for leaders' contact details

Sunday 6 May – 08h00– Kirstenbosch BIRP Count

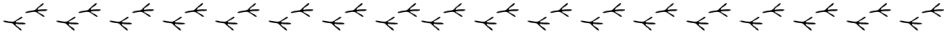
Sunday 13 May – 08h00 – Strandfontein Count

Thursday 10 May – 08h30– Wildevoëlvelei Count

Thursday 17 May – 09h30– Athlone WWTW Count

Saturday 12 May – 14h00– Zandvelei Hack

Saturday 26 May – 09h00– Paarl Bird Sanctuary Count



JUNE 2018

Sat 2 June RONDEVLEI OUTING

Leader: Merle Chalton ☎ 079 343 1047

Meet at 08h00. These regular monthly outings are for all Rondevlei enthusiasts and beginners are especially welcome. Duration 2½ hours. Be sure to dress warmly – it can get very cold in the hides. There is a small entrance fee. See March 3 for directions.

Wed 6 June WEEKDAY OUTING – Clovelly Wetlands

Leaders: Gillian Barnes ☎ 078 206 4318 ✉ eric.margs@gmail.com

Priscilla Beeton ☎ 084 803 9987 ✉ pbeeton@mweb.co.za

Meet at 09h00 at the parking area opposite the Community Hall at the beginning of Clovelly Road. We will walk from the parking area in a circular route around the wetland and, time permitting, around the lower area of the suburb.

Directions: From the Main Road between Kalk Bay and Fish Hoek turn into Clovelly Road. The parking area is to the left of the road a short distance from the robots.

Thurs 14 June EVENING MEETING – *Birding in Uganda with the Cape Bird Club*

Speakers: Johan Schlebusch and Joy Fish

Meet at 20h00 at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands.

Joy and Johan were two of the 14 fortunate CBC members who travelled to Uganda last year. They took a circular route from the swamps of Lake Victoria, up north to Murchison Falls, down the Rwenzori Mountain Range, and then back to Entebbe via Lake Mburo. No other area in Africa can match Uganda's amazing diversity of habitats and this richness makes it one of Africa's most exciting birding destinations. Come and hear about the trip and enjoy the photos of birds seen.

Sun 17 June SUNDAY OUTING – Annual seabird watch from Cape Point

Leaders: Mel Tripp ☎ 083 461 4365 ✉ trippmel3@gmail.com

Vernon Head ☎ 076 569 1389 ✉ vhjarch@kingsley.co.za

Meet at 08h30. This is our annual visit to the best location for land-based seabird watching on the Peninsula. It's a good way to get to grips with some pelagic species that are mostly encountered on pelagic trips. Hopefully there will be some winter gales to drive the seabirds in closer to shore. Spotting scopes will be available but if you have one, please bring it along. Afterwards we will move off to one of the bays for a picnic brunch, so bring refreshments.

Directions: From Simon's Town head south along the M4 and follow the Cape Point signs to the



reserve. If coming from the Kommetjie side take the M65 to the reserve, which is well sign-posted. We meet in the parking area just beyond the pay point. Don't forget your Wild Card as Cape Point is very pricey to enter these days.

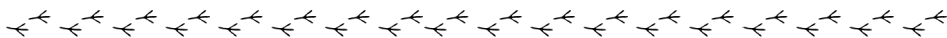


BIRD COUNTS & HACKS IN JUNE

See page 32 for leaders' contact details

Sunday 3 June – 08h00– Kirstenbosch BIRP Count
Saturday 9 June – 14h00– Zandvlei Hack
Sunday 10 June – 08h30* – Strandfontein Count
**Note later winter starting time*

Thursday 14 June – 08h30– Wildevoëlvelei Count
Thursday 21 June – 09h30– Athlone WWTW Count
Saturday 30 June – 09h00– Paarl Bird Sanctuary Count



JULY 2018

Wed 4 July WEEKDAY OUTING – Rietvlei Wetland Reserve

Leader: Heather Howell ☎ 084 352 2654 ✉ howellh@telkomsa.net

Meet at 09h00. There is an entrance fee of R15 for adults and R8 for pensioners. Parking costs R23. (These are advertised prices at the time of going to press. Prices are adjusted annually in July so there may be a small increase.)

Directions: From Cape Town travel down the N1 towards Paarl. Take the Marine Drive (R27) off-ramp towards Paarden Island / Milnerton. If travelling from the Southern Suburbs on the M5, at the Koeberg Interchange take the exit following the Paarden Island signs. You will find yourself in Koeberg Road.

Continue down Koeberg Road in the direction of Milnerton till you reach a large intersection at Boundary Road and turn left. At the next traffic light turn right onto the R27 and continue for some distance. You will eventually see Rietvlei on the right. Soon after passing Rietvlei look out for Bayside Mall and turn right into Blaauwberg Road. At the 2nd set of traffic lights turn right into Grey Avenue and continue to the bottom of the road.

After passing through the pay point, go straight to the beginning of the walkway which is at the end of the road on which you find yourself. We will park the cars there and walk to the hides.

Sat 7 July RONDEVLEI OUTING

Leader: Merle Chalton ☎ 079 343 1047

Meet at 08h00. These regular monthly outings are for all Rondevlei enthusiasts and beginners are especially welcome. Duration 2½ hours. Be sure to dress warmly – it can get very cold in the hides. There is a small entrance fee. See March 3 for directions.

Thurs 12 July – EVENING MEETING – *Plastic, plastic everywhere - the impact of plastic on our oceans*

Speaker: Peter Ryan

Meet at 20h00 at the Nassau Centre, Groote Schuur High School, Palmyra Road, Newlands.

Professor Peter Ryan, Director of the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, conducted his MSc on



the impacts of plastic on seabirds in the 1980s, before the study of micro plastics was in vogue. He has monitored the amounts of plastic in seabirds and around the South Africa coast ever since, resulting in one of the longest time series of marine litter data in the world. In this talk he'll report how much plastic there is in the sea, its impacts on marine organisms, and identify its sources so we can best decide how to tackle the problem.

Sun 15 July – SUNDAY OUTING – Klaassenbosch Trail

Leader: Margaret Maciver ☎ 082 459 8843 ✉ maciver@xis.co.za

Meet at 08h30 at the end of Oak Avenue, Constantia. This was a most successful December outing, so now we are trying it at a different season! The Black Sparrowhawks will probably be breeding so we may see either eggs or tiny chicks in the mirror over the nest. In case we have finally had some rain, bring boots suitable for muddy pathways! The trail is circular and just a couple of hours long. Anyone could leave at any time as it is easy to find one's way back to the cars.

Directions:

From Wynberg / Constantia Mall side: Drive up Alphen Drive past the Alphen Hotel in the direction of Rhodes Drive and Kirstenbosch. At the fork take the left hand road into Hohenhort Avenue. Turn right into Oak Avenue (opposite Peter Cloete Avenue).

From Newlands or City direction: Drive down Rhodes Drive past the main entrance of Kirstenbosch up to the T-junction. Turn right in the direction of Constantia Nek. Almost opposite the Cecilia Forest parking area turn left. At the T-junction turn right into Hohenhort Avenue. Turn left into Oak Avenue (opposite Peter Cloete Ave.).

Drive right up to the end and park. Oak Avenue is a cul-de-sac so even if there is not enough parking at the end, you can safely park on the kerb. ADT is usually around in that area, so cars should be safe.



BIRD COUNTS & HACKS IN JULY

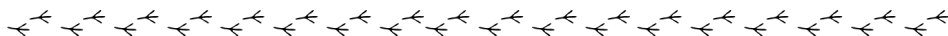
*Please support the winter CWAC counts!
See page 32 for leaders' contact details*

- | | |
|--|--|
| Sunday 1 July – 08h00– Kirstenbosch BIRP Count | Thursday 19 July – 09h30– Athlone WWTW CWAC Count |
| Sunday 8 July – 08h30* – Strandfontein CWAC Count
<i>*Note later winter starting time</i> | Friday 20 July – 09h00 – Rietvlei/Table Bay NR CWAC Count |
| Thursday 12 July – 08h30– Wildevoël vlei CWAC Count | Saturday 21 July – 08h00 – Zandvlei CWAC Count |
| Saturday 14 July – 14h00– Zandvlei Hack | Saturday 28 July – 09h00 – Paarl Bird Sanctuary CWAC Count |
| | Saturday 28 July – All day – CAR Count |

More CWAC Counts

CWAC Counts will also take place at **Radyn Dam (Malmesbury)** and **Wellington WWTW** on weekdays in July, still to be confirmed. The Wellington count will depend on access to the site due to ongoing construction work. Anyone interested in assisting can contact Otto Schmidt (Radyn Dam) at 021 674 2381 or John Fincham (Wellington) at 021 919 4069 for details. Additional helpers will be most welcome.

The Project Coordinator for the CAR Road Counts (all day on Saturday 28 July) is Amour McCarthy who can be contacted at amour.mccarthy@gmail.com.



Dates to note in your calendar: CBC Camps in 2018



- 25 - 27 May** – Breede River Lodge
- 3 - 5 August** – Anne Gray Memorial Camp at Tankwa Karoo
- 21 - 24 September** – Family Camp at Good Hope Farm near Robertson
- 2 - 4 November** – venue still to be decided

CBC SMALL ADS

To place a Small Ad: contact Dennis Randell at randestates@yebo.co.za or tel. 082 320 3377
(Small Ads are free to CBC members the first time around.)

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DE MOND VELD COTTAGE, Overberg

Restored veld cottage in the pristine coastal Fynbos adjacent to the Heuningnes Estuary of Cape Nature's De Mond Reserve. This special getaway, with fresh water plunge pool, has all linen supplied for 4 guests and two bathrooms (one en-suite). Six can be accommodated with two camp beds. Wonderful walks, clear night skies and abundant birdlife, especially in the unspoilt reserve. Fynbos endemics, wader hotspot and home to the Damara Tern, with year round Caspian Terns. Tel. 078 543 0443

Email: info@demondveldcottage.co.za

Website: www.demondveldcottage.co.za

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Tel. 082 773 4747 or email jenhall@iafrica.com.

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Sea-front cottage on the Island at Great Brak river estuary near Mossel Bay. Diversity of birdlife especially waders, seabirds, coastal, bush, and forest species. Over 50 species recorded. Sleeps ten with expansive deck, front stoep, bedrooms, self-catering kitchen. Rustic ambience, one of the first cottages on the Island. Like-minded naturalists and conservationists welcome.

Contact Liz Mackenzie on 021 761 8811

or email: lizmack@iafrica.com.

GROOT WINTERHOEK MOUNTAINS

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