

THE

LARK

Mahela
Paradys in die Laeveld

miombo
mania

Club outings
Dap Naude Dam
Mockford Farm

Limpokwena
Birding hotspot

Handicapped Olive Woodpecker · Cape Vulture resightings · Bird names in Northern Sotho · Long-billed larks in the Eastern Cape · Short-clawed Lark longevity · Marabou Stork breeding in the Limpopo Province · A plea for a list of the birds feeding at your bird feeders · African Grey Hornbill predation by a Honey Badger

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The Lark is the newsletter of Birdlife Polokwane and is published bimonthly. It publishes reports of club activities, trip reports, photographic contributions and any natural history notes of birds or events involving birds. Contributions are accepted in English or Afrikaans and are accepted at the discretion of the editors. Non-members are also welcome to contribute, especially if it is of relevance to birds or birding in the Limpopo Province. When submitting images, please submit high resolution images without any borders, frames or signatures.

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The opinions expressed by contributors in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors, the Birdlife Polokwane committee or Birdlife South Africa.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE:

15 AUGUST 2021

This newsletter is best read in a 'two page view' format.

COVER Cape Starling © Joe Grosel

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Remember to Cut the Straps on Disposable Masks Before Throwing Away!



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Mahela 5

Richter Van Tonder deel hulle ervarings tydens 'n onlangse klub uitstappie na dié prag plaas naby Letsitele.



Miombo Mania 11

Don't believe everything you read or hear about Zimbabwe. **Daniel Engelbrecht** recently visited our northern neighbour and says it is still a gold star birding destination.



Birding at Dap Naude Dam 27

New member **Alan Harrison** thought Dap Naude Dam was only good for fishing, until he racked up a number of lifers during a recent club outing to the Northern Woodbush forests.



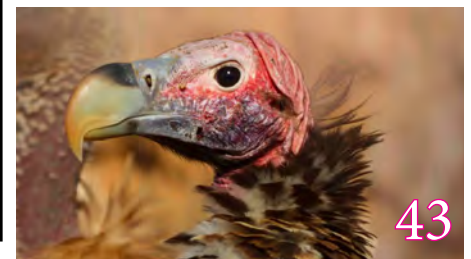
Limpokwena 2021 33

Derek Engelbrecht reports on a field excursion with botany and zoology students to this birding paradise on the Limpopo River.



Mockford Vulture Restaurant 43

The annual mid-winter club outing to the Mockford Farms Vulture Restaurant delivered a number of uncommon species on the Polokwane Plateau. **Richter Van Tonder** reports back.



For a lark ...



Birdy Bouncers © Dawie De Swardt.

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Editors' chirps

The winter solstice brings with it an air of excitement, of new beginnings, and, of course, warmer weather. There is something to be said for birding in winter. The birds seem to behave differently. There is always the chance of an unexpected surprise showing up in our region. In this regard, the talk of the town (or shall we say the SADC region) was the southern hemisphere's first record of a Lesser Whitethroat, which showed up in Marloth Park in Mpumalanga. This is probably a classic example of reverse migration because that bird should have been somewhere in the Palaearctic. It seems pretty ironic that Daniel twitched this Palaearctic giga rarity on the 21st of June, the winter solstice! Remember last year this time, we also had a local rarity in Namaqua Sandgrouse just outside Polokwane. That just goes to show that winter birding can be as exciting as in summer, so dress warmly and get out there.

We are heading for an exciting time now as the first migrants, mainly intra-African ones at first, will start returning to our neck of the woods. August is a particularly good month for passage migrants, particularly for waders.

So, keep a lookout for them and report it to our Birdlife Polokwane 100K WhatsApp group as soon as possible as they don't tend to stay long. A special word of thanks to all our contributors to this issue. If you haven't submitted something to The Lark as yet, why not take a moment and share that interesting observation with our readers. Raelene and Daniel



Lesser Whitethroat © Daniel Engelbrecht



Mahela

TEKS Richter Van Tonder
FOTOS Marcia and Richter Van Tonder

Wat 'n besondere stuk grond! Van wat ons kan sien word die veld by Mahela so entjie oos van Letsitele baie goed bestuur. Dit maak

'n groot verskil in die aantal voël spesies wat in dié stukkie Laeveld gesien kan word.

Ons klein groepie van 11 het so 7 uur se kant op 'n koel

en winderige oggend by Mahela opgedaag. 'n Skerpbekheuningvoël (Brown-backed Honeybird) het ons naby die hek van die plaas gegroet. Ons het besluit om tot in die digter bos te ry waar daar bietjie minder wind was en eers 'n koppie koffie te geniet. Hier het ons Geelvlekmossies (Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow) gekry. Dit was maar stil in dié gedeelte en nadat ons koffie gehad het, het ons aan beweeg na

LINKS Mahela is 'n pragtige stukkie bos in die Laeveld.

ONDER 'n Akkedisvalk op sy pos by Mahela.





Bo Geelborskleinjantjie
(Yellow-breasted Apalis).

'n oper stuk veld. Hier was die area soos 'n stuk park gebied met baie groot, breëblaar bome wat redelik gepassieerd was en met kort gras tussen in.

Dadelik kon mens optel dat daar meer aktiwiteit was. Hier het ons uitstekende laeveld spesie gesien en gehoor, o.a. Grootblouoorglansspreeus (Greater Blue-eared Starling), Geelborskleinjantjie (Yellow-throated Apalis), Grys-kapokvoël (Grey Penduline Tit), Breëkoparend (Martial Eagle) en die hoogtepunt - vier Bontpieke

(Arnot's Chat)! Dié outjies het baie mooi vir ons vertoon en was heel bedrywig tussen die droë bome. Dit is meer bekend dat die Bontpiek in die noorde van die Kruger Wildtuin gesien word. Hier was hulle sommer naby ons en ons kon hulle buite 'n voertuig besigtig.

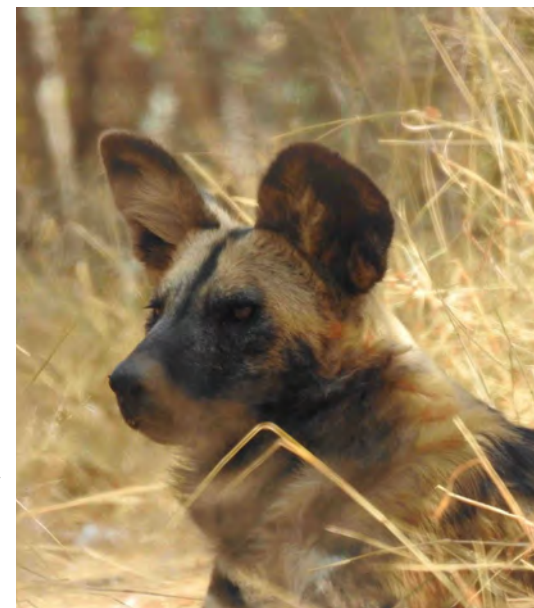
Hierna het ons stadig aanbeveeg, nogsteeds in dieselfde stuk veld, waar ons heelwat Gestreepte

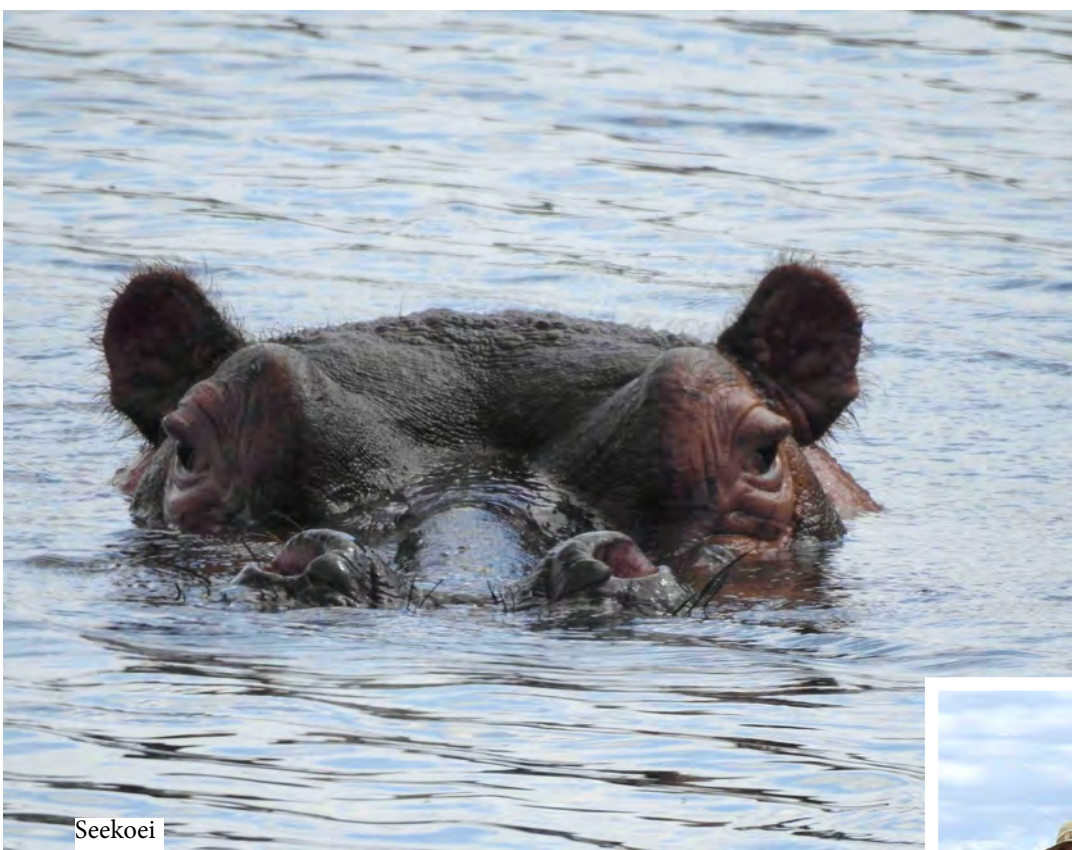


Visvangers (Striped Kingfisher) gesien het en ook twee Bosveldkoesters (Bushveld Pipit). Die plaas het heelwat wild soos koedoes, njalas, rooibokke, kameelperde, baie vlakvarke en seekoeie. Daar was 'n geslote kamp met wildehonde ook!

Bo Die Bontpiek (Arnot's Chat) was die hoogtepunt van die dag.

REGS Mahela het 'n teelprogram vir die bedreigde Wildehond.





Seekoei

Daar is 'n paar groot damme op die plaas wat baie watervoëls lok. Ons het toe beweeg na die lapa op die plaas en oppad soontoe het ons Swarhelm- (Retz's Helmetshrike) en Withelmlaksmanne (White-crested Helmetshrike) gekry. Hier kon ons onder groot skadubome middagete geniet. Blougrysvlieëvanger (Ashy Flycatcher) en Papegaaiduiwe (African Green Pigeon) het hier mooi vertoon in een van die groot vyebome by die lapa. Daar was besonder baie voël aktiwiteit rondom die lapa asook heelwat skoenlappers en akkedisse. Ons het toe besluit om terug te be-

weeg en langs een van die damme te stop oppad uit. 'n Groot seekoei het ons vermaak en hier het ons ook Visarende kon opteken. Ons totaal vir die dag was 105 spesies.

Baie dankie aan Edward Vorster wat ons die geleentheid gebied het om op sy wildsplaas te kon voëls kyk. Ook dankie aan almal wat dit bygewoon het. Ons het dit almal baie geniet.

Outeur se e-pos: richter.mcase@gmail.com

ONDER Almal teenwoordig was in hulle noppies met die dag se voëllyisie.



Reënboogakkedis - wyfie





Miombo mania

African Spotted Creeper

TEXT AND PHOTOS Daniel Engelbrecht

Political instability, fuel shortages and empty shelves tend to jump to mind when thinking of Zimbabwe. However, over the course of 11 days (8-17 March 2021) of

nonstop birding in this incredible country, I encountered a host of astonishing bird species and debunked some myths regarding the situation on the ground. Upon planning the trip, Tony Wood (my guide for the journey, a

long-time family friend and a legend in Zimbabwean birding) and I developed a rough trip plan consisting of three core areas.

Firstly, we would focus our attention on the Miombo woodlands and wetlands surrounding the capital city of Zimbabwe – Harare. We would then move north-east and spend a few nights along the banks of the Mazoe River in search of some woodland specials before heading back to Harare for one night. The final stretch would then consist of three nights birding the infamous Eastern Highlands. This area promised to deliver many a lifer. For ease of reading - and to assist anyone planning a trip to Zimbabwe - I provide a daily breakdown of the sites visited and the species encountered in each of the areas.

March
8, 2021

After a short hour and a half flight from Johannesburg to Harare, I met up with Tony Wood at the arrivals terminal in Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport. Upon arrival in Zimbabwe, you are immediately made aware of the shocking quality of urban roads within the city. Potholes are everywhere, and caution is required whilst traversing the city's extensive road network. We head-

ed for Tony's house and quickly picked up my first lifer in the form of a Variable Sunbird in the garden. After unpacking, it was all systems go, and we decided to visit Greystone Nature Reserve for some late afternoon birding.

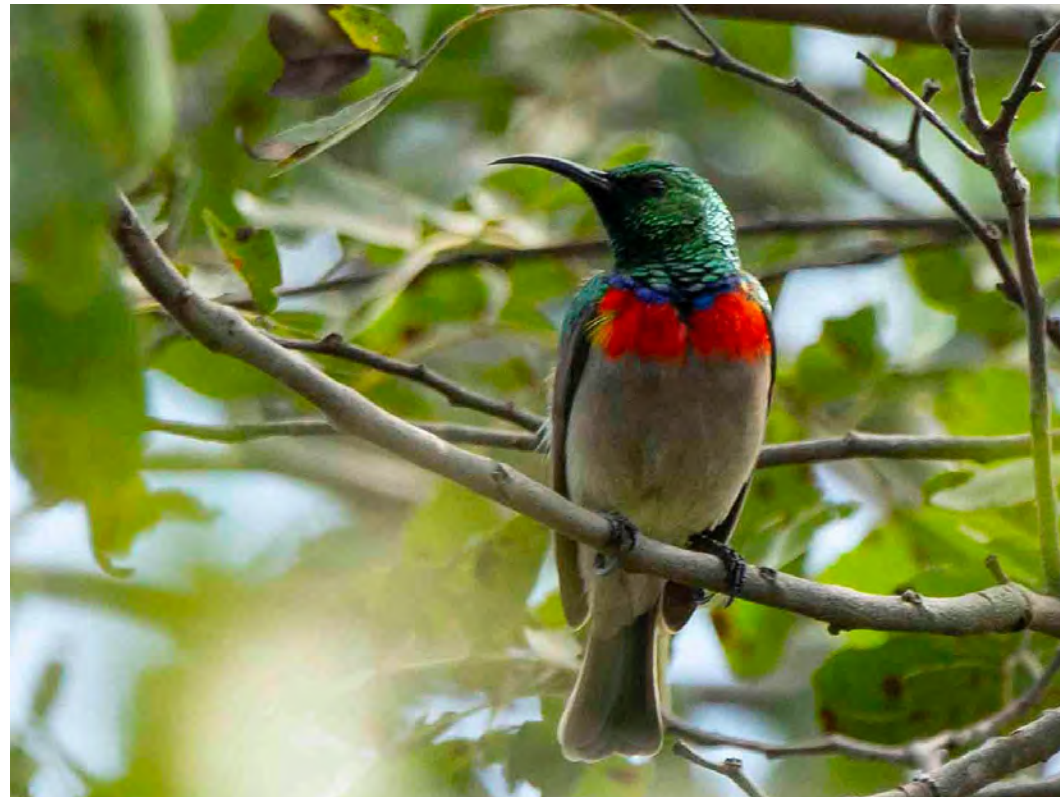
This reserve is located within the suburbs of Harare. The trip list quickly started growing with sightings of Jameson's and Red-billed Firefinch, African Yellow White-eye, African Yellow Warbler, Lesser Honeyguide and the black-headed *nigriceps* race of Village Weaver. Amur Falcons flew over the reserve in their hundreds as they returned to their nearby roosts. A pair of Long-crested Eagles also offered splendid views. We returned for an early night with the prospect of excellent Miombo birding for the next day.

March

9, 2021

Day two started at 6:30 am, and our plan was to spend the morning birding Haka Game Park in search of several Miombo woodland specials. For those unfamiliar with the term Miombo, it is the name given to the woodlands dominated by trees of the genera *Brachystegia* and *Julbernardia*. On our way to Haka, a quick stopover at Greengrove Dam delivered improved views of Variable Sunbird, Senegal Coucal and a small group of foraging Orange-breasted Waxbills. At Haka, Cleveland Dam's grasslands delivered one of the main targets,

BELOW Miombo woodland at Haka Game Park.



ABOVE Eastern Miombo Sunbird at Haka Game Park.

Rosy-throated Longclaw, along with both Yellow-throated and Cape Longclaws. We were also afforded great views of Pale-crowned Cisticola, Cuckoo Finch, African Wattle Lapwing and yet another lifer – Yellow-mantled Widowbird.

With the temperature slowly rising, Tony and I walked into the Miombo woodland and I was immediately struck by the silence. The key to Miombo birding is finding bird parties. Luckily, we soon found our first party and added, amongst others, Green-backed Honeybird, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Eastern Miombo Sunbird, Green-capped Eremomela and White-crested Helmetshrike. An Ovambo Sparrow-

hawk also showed well briefly before darting off into the bush, and a Spotted Eagle-Owl sat watching us from its daytime roost.

It took over an hour to find our next bird party, which contained some cracking birds: Whyte's Barbet, African Spotted Creeper and Southern Hylia. We then headed into the Gusu woodland section of the park, searching for Miombo Blue-eared Starling. Alas, the starlings had other plans for us and proved to be quite elusive, partly because the fruiting trees they feed on were out of the fruiting season.



ABOVE After giving us the run-around at Haka, Miombo Blue-eared Starling showed well at Mukuvisi Woodlands in Harare.

After a quick discussion over lunch, we decided to head to yet another of Harare's splendid parks - the Mukuvisi Woodlands - to search for the starlings. Sure enough, after less than 10 minutes of walking along the well-kept trails traversing the Miombo woodlands at Mukuvisi, a large flock of Miombo Blue-eared Starlings flew into view and started foraging around us, providing splendid photographic opportunities.

March
10, 2021

After a successful day of Miombo birding, it was time to tackle the legendary wetlands within the

city limits of Harare. Tony and I met up with a local guide and avid-birder, Piet Zwanikken. Piet knows the wetlands and vleis of Harare like the back of his hand. To help us maximise our chances of success, he brought along Dolly, an English Pointer, trained to locate the elusive specials that inhabit the marshes and reeds. Sure enough, Dolly ran out and, within seconds, flushed a pair of African Crakes. As we traipsed through the shallow water and thick grass, Dolly continued to flush several more African Crakes and Lesser Moor-

hens. She then ran into the thicker reeds and flushed something that looked like just another African Crake. I took a few shots, and upon closer inspection of a back-of-the-camera view of the bird, I realised it was actually a Striped Crake! This scarce inhabitant of wetlands across east and central Africa immediately became one of the trip highlights and was undoubtedly an unexpected bonus. Monavale added sightings of Croaking and Pale-crowned Cisticola, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Cuckoo Finch, Great Reed Warbler and several vocal Streaky-breasted Flufftails (which unfortunately couldn't be bothered to show themselves) to the trip list.

We returned home for lunch before meeting up with Piet again, this time for more 'Miombo Magic'.

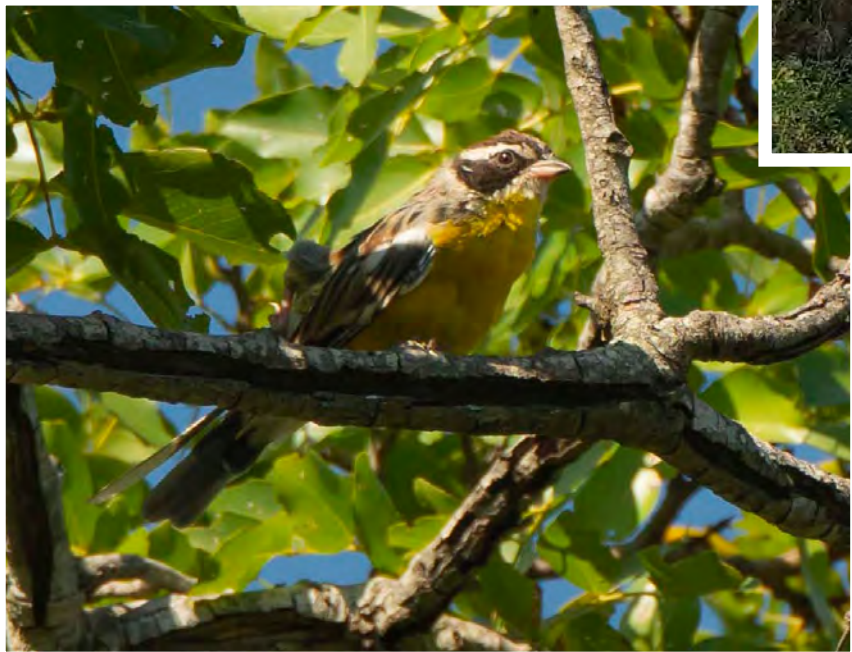
The road wound between the hills east of Harare, and after half an hour, we had arrived at our destination. We walked down a steep track between several illegal gold mines - which now threaten these spectacular woodlands - and picked up our first bird party. It was simply astounding, with no less than 23 species in a tiny area. Highlights included outstanding views of the uncommon Black-eared Seedeater, Cabanis's Bunting, Red-capped Crombec, White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, Green-backed Honeybird and Eastern Miombo Sunbird. Just as quickly as the party arrived, it

BELOW You take what Striped Crake offers you, and this was it. The inset shows a close-up of the Striped Crake seen at Monavale.





ABOVE The breathtakingly beautiful vistas at Christon Bank.



ABOVE Cabanis's Bunting near Harare

March
11, 2021

Day 4 started before 6 am and, once again, we were off into the Miombo woodlands. We had a tall order of a target list, but birding alongside Tony and our local guide Jean-Michel Blake filled me with confidence. The serenity of Christon Bank was surreal. Mist hung between the Mountain Acacia trees, and we soon picked up Boulder Chat and Miombo Rock Thrush, two of our five targets for the day. As we headed on through the hills, we added Klaas's and African Emerald Cuckoo, African

BELOW Southern Hyliota at Christon Bank.



dissipated, and silence descended over the *Brachystegia* trees once more. Another noteworthy sighting was a single Black Cuckoo, a rarity on the Mashonaland Plateau.

TOP Always a special bird to me. White-breasted Cuckooshrikes were quite common in the woodlands north of Harare.



Harrier-Hawk, Grey Penduline Tit, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, and three flycatcher species - Spotted, Pale and Grey Tit-Flycatcher to our trip list. Suddenly, a massive bird party livened the scene allowing for views of another African Spotted Creeper, Cabanis's Bunting and Whyte's Barbet, along with two more lifers, Miombo Tit and Wood Pipit. Both these species would prove to be regular sightings for the remainder of the trip. Bird of the day, however, came in the form of a single Augur Buzzard cruising slowly overhead, an uncommon and certainly unexpected sighting for this part of Zimbabwe. The remainder of the morning was spent searching unsuccessfully for Copper Sunbird before returning to Harare, packing our gear and heading north-east to Umfurudzi National Park.

For the most part, the national highways in Zimbabwe were of good quality, but as we passed the town of Shamva on our way to the Park, it all but fell apart. Progress was slow as we drove on a narrow strip road and dodged an endless number of potholes.

At long last we arrived at Umfurudzi National Park. We were immediately greeted by several Wood Pipits foraging in the road on our way to Hippo Pools - a camp offering a range of accommodation options along the stunning Mazoe River. The rest of the afternoon was spent birding around the exquisite camping grounds surrounded by lush lawns and towering riverine trees. Some notable species included Black-throated Wattle-eye (a common species around the camp), Verreaux's Eagle-Owl and African Wood Owl, as well as our only Livingstone's Flycatcher for the trip.

March 12, 2021

The sun rose and revealed the prospect of yet another day of excellent birding. Sure enough, the list rocketed with sightings of Grey-headed, Pied, Giant, Brown-hooded and Half-collared Kingfisher, Crowned and Trumpeter Hornbill and Bearded Scrub Robin - all within the camp! A quick drive through the drier bushveld produced more Wood Pipit sightings, Red-throated Twinspot and Flappet Lark. I was blown away by the sheer beauty and calibre of birding at Hippo Pools. I was told that during the summer months, African Broadbill and Narina Trogon are regulars around the chalets. We dedicated the remainder of the day to searching for Collared Palm Thrush, which unfortunately gave

LEFT TO RIGHT Boulder Chat, Augur Buzzard and Whyte's Barbet, all recorded at Christon Bank, while Wood Pipits were common at Umfurudzi National Park.

us the silent treatment during the heat of the day.

March 13, 2021

We woke to our final morning in Umfurudzi National Park and decided to head back to an area lined with Lala Palm trees to try again for the Collared Palm Thrush. Before we even had time to lift our binoculars and start searching, three individuals irrupted into song and showed well in the morning light. We also added Bateleur, Marsh Warbler and Village Indi-



LEFT We were treated to a serenade by three Collared Palm Thrushes on our last morning at Hippo Pools.

Roberts's Warbler are of particular interest on an international scale as their global ranges are restricted to these mountains. The drive from Harare to Mutare (the nearest city to our accommodation in the Vhumba region of the highlands) was predominantly on single car-

riageway roads making progress slow (5 hours in total to do 290 km). Yet, we arrived at our accommodation in Seldomseen, eager as ever to get going with the birding. Seldomseen offers an excellent array of self-catering cottages and camping opportunities, not to mention unrivalled birding within the gardens. It is an absolute must-stay when in the Vhumba.

gobird to the list before encountering several more Red-throated Twinspots. We headed back to Harare for the night with the Eastern Highlands due for the next day.

March

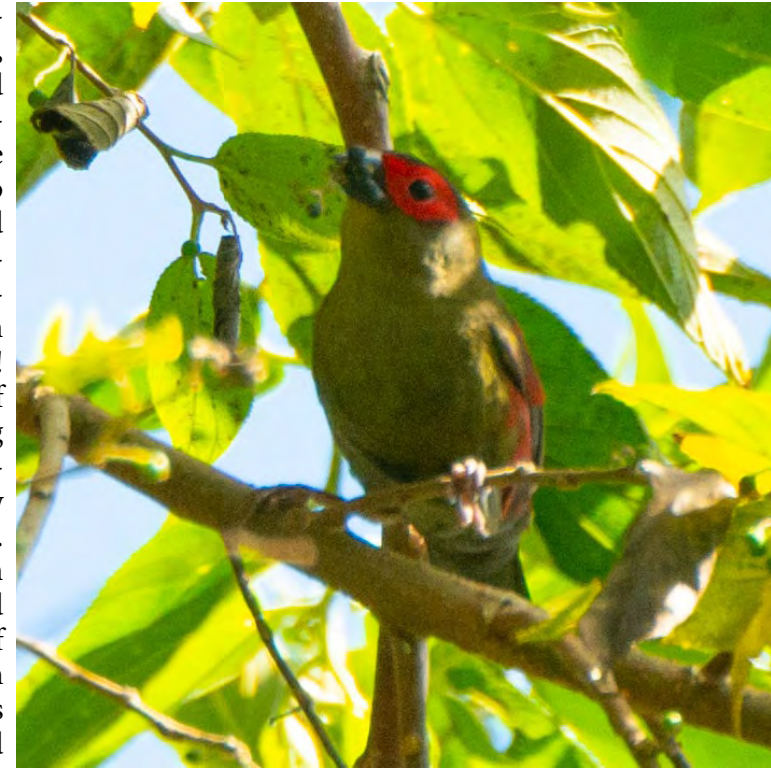
14, 2021

The Eastern Highlands form a mountain range running for approximately 300 km along the border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The area is well-renowned for its exceptional biodiversity. For southern African birders, the highlands are home to many range-restricted species found nowhere else in the sub-region. Chirinda Apalis and

Tony and I set off to bird the gardens, and our first bird turned out to be an absolute screamer - Red-faced Crimsonwing. The single male foraged for about 5 minutes as we watched in complete awe before it darted off into the forest. The list continued growing with good views of Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Black-fronted Bushshrike, Livingstone's Turaco, Yellow-bel-



lied Waxbill, Stripe-cheeked Greenbul, Olive Sunbird and White-tailed Crested Flycatcher. We quickly picked up the two highland endemics, Chirinda Apalis and Roberts's Warbler, with ease in the gardens! We crested one of the hills overlooking the most breathtakingly beautiful view over Mozambique. Here we scored with Singing Cisticola and the *orientalis* race of Black Saw-wing with its silver underwings (soon to be elevated to full species status).



We tucked in for an early night in preparation for an epic day birding with Bulawezi - a legend of the Eastern Highlands.

ABOVE AND TOP How is this for a garden bird? Red-faced Crimsonwing in the gardens at Seldomseen.

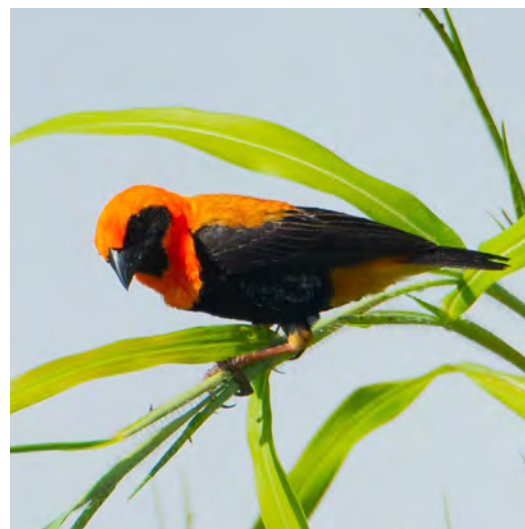


Chirinda Apalis (ABOVE) and Roberts's Warbler (TOP) were frequently seen at Seldomseen.

March 15, 2021

Our plan for the day was simple, we would head down into the

low-lying Burma Valley and attempt to bag what was still left on the shopping list. Birding with local guides is a no-brainer for anyone visiting a foreign country and nowhere was this more obvious than with Bulawezi Murambiwa. He knew all the spots and nailed each and every target species time after time. At our first stop in the Valley, we found one of our main targets, Black-winged Red Bishop, without hassle. We also added several other special birds here, including Grey Waxbill, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Dark-backed Weaver and the dark form of Ayres's Hawk-Eagle. We continued our search for the second target species. After close to an hour of searching, we found a Zambezi Indigobird calling atop a dead Marula tree - target number two. Sightings of White-eared Barbet, Red-backed Mannikin, Red-throated Twinspot and Grey Tit-Flycatcher soon followed. The road rewound up into the Vhumba, and we found ourselves once again birding in Miombo. We located a bird party, and sure enough, Miombo delivered once more with African Golden Oriole, Collared Flycatcher, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Miombo Rock Thrush and Red-faced Crombec showing well. Other noteworthy additions included Red-necked Spurfowl, Bronzy Sunbird and Garden Warbler on our way back up to Seldomseen. One species was still eluding



Black-winged Red Bishop (ABOVE LEFT) was seen in maize fields in the Burma Valley and Miombo Rock Thrush (ABOVE RIGHT) seen in Miombo woodland in the Vhumba region.

RIGHT I was particularly thrilled to be able to add Swynnerton's Robin as my 700th southern African bird species.

us, and so we set off after lunch to track it down. After close to 3 hours of searching to no avail, we eventually located a single Swynnerton's Robin, which became the 700th species for my southern African list. Celebrations were in order, and so we retreated back to the comfort of our cottage at Seldomseen in preparation for our last day of birding the Vhumba.



March
16, 2021

The main target for day 3 of the highlands mission was Cinnamon-breasted Tit, the last true miombo species that I needed for the trip. We spent most of the day attempting to find it but repeatedly failed at all of the spots where it had been seen regularly before. Still, the birding was by no means dull, and we managed to get sightings of Tree and Striped Pipit, Miombo Tit, Barratt's Warbler, Eastern Bronze-

naped Pigeon and Mottled Swift. Bulawezi still had one last trick up his sleeve, and so we set off up a winding track through the stunted Miombo where he had seen the elusive tit before. We hiked for ages, and then, just as we were about to call it a day, a single Cinnamon-breasted Tit was spotted, offering mind-blowing views. The day was an overwhelming success, and we set off early the following day for Harare.

BELOW Perseverance pays. After a day of hiking through Miombo, we managed to find this Cinnamon-breasted Tit late in the day.



March
17, 2021

The trip back to Harare passed without any hassle. It even provided a new trip bird in the form of a Lizard Buzzard sitting on a telephone pole. A quick and final trip to Chikurubi Vlei in the newer suburbs of Harare provided the last lifer for the trip – a single male Copper Sunbird. It felt great to finally see the sunbird after searching for it at several sites over the past few days. It was the perfect end to an incredible trip.

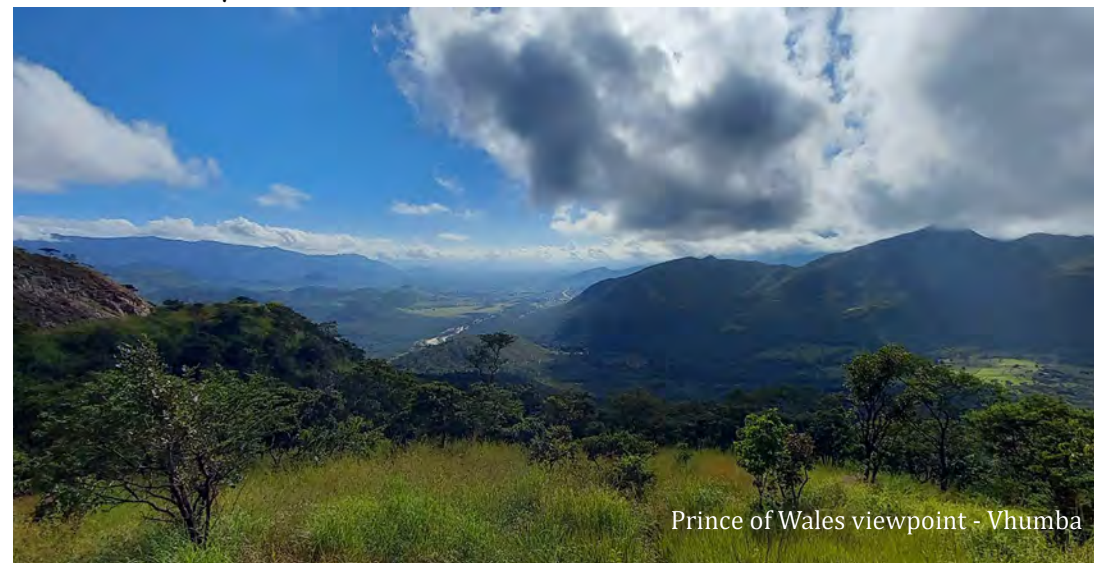
To conclude, over 11 days, Tony and I managed to record 246 species, of which 38 were lifers for me. Zimbabwe proved to be an excellent and easy country to travel through. Not once did I encounter issues with fuel or food shortages or feel remotely unsafe at any of the sites we visited.

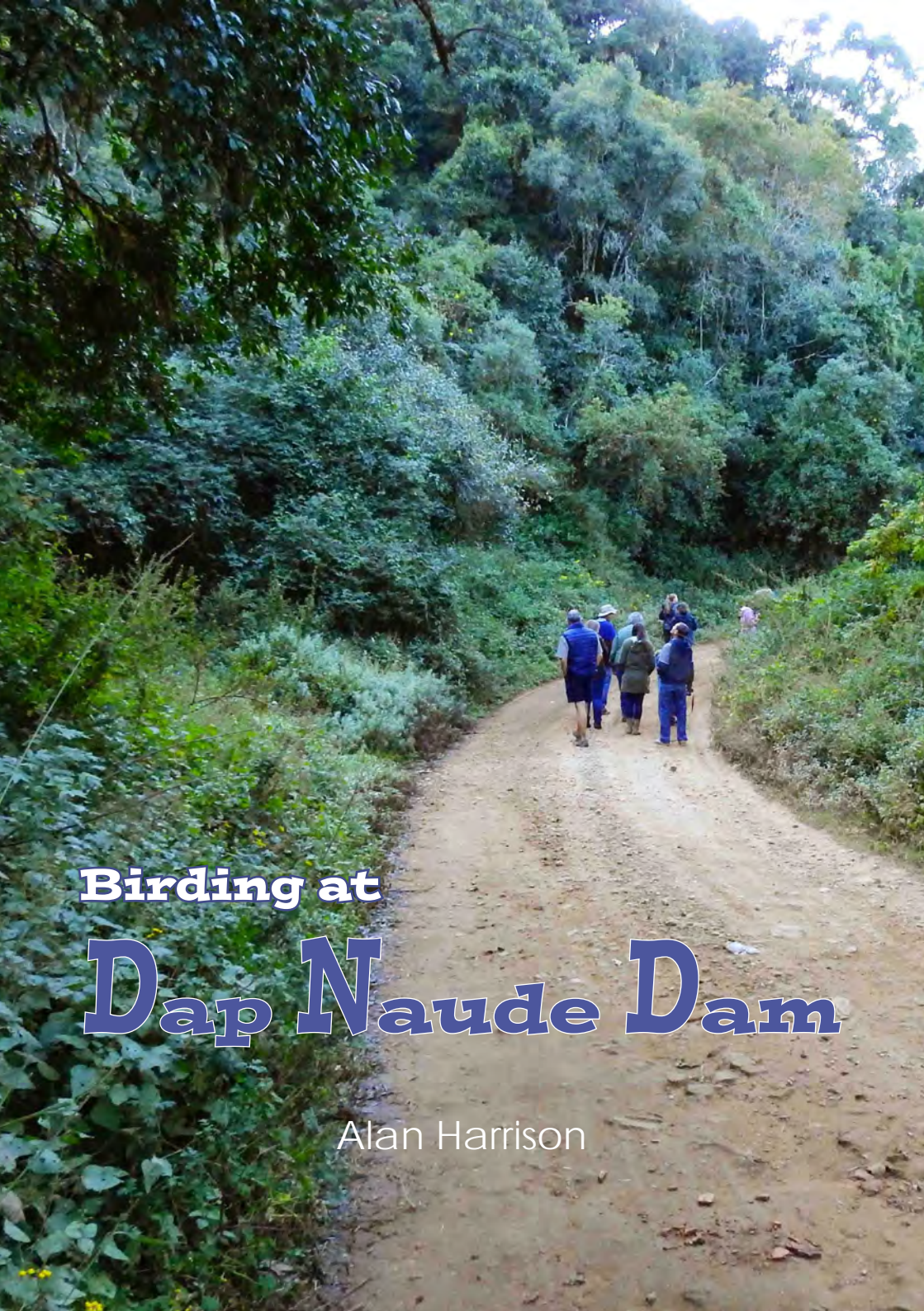
I can only encourage anyone wishing to visit this spectacular country to do so without a second thought and experience the incredible birding that Zimbabwe has to offer first hand.

Bird of the trip, I hear you ask? There were several contenders. The best we could do was come up with a top 5 in no particular order: Striped Crake, Cinnamon-breasted Tit, Livingstone's Flycatcher, African Spotted Creeper and Swynnerton's Robin. A special thank you needs to go out to all the fantastic Zimbabwe birders whose help was invaluable, including Piet Zwanikken, Jean-Michel Blake and Bulawesi Murambiwa. Lastly, to my hosts, the Woods, without whom this trip would not have been possible, a massive thank you is due. I have included Tony's details for anyone keen on birding in Zimbabwe.

Author e-mail: danielengelbrecht101@gmail.com

TONY WOOD
BIRDING IN ZIMBABWE





Birding at Dap Naude Dam

Alan Harrison

Fellow birders, great was my surprise as a newcomer to Birdlife Polokwane, when I received a WhatsApp message on Saturday afternoon from our outing leader, Richter Van Tonder, asking me to write a report about our day's outing to the Dap Naude region.

Being that this was my father's and my first incursion with the club, I frantically requested formats and examples on how to write such a trip report, remembering 'sitrap' reports done in days gone by. The answer I received was ... 'none, just write and send'.

So, here we go. Jan Fourie and I attended our first birding meet-

ing on the 4th May 2021. There and then we enrolled for our first birding excursion with the club to Dap Naude Dam near Woodbush on the 15th May. Preparations were made on Friday evening - batteries charged, lenses cleaned and 'pad kos' delicacies made. Alarms were set and the excitement grew as the new day broke.

We met on the Saturday morning and left in an orderly convoy to

OPPOSITE The forest at Dap Naude Dam © Richter Van Tonder.

BELOW It was autumn alright © Richter Van Tonder.



our destination. The tar road soon ended with only Pied Crows and Common Mynas seen. The gravel road led us through dark pine plantations with no birds or anything else of interest.

At last, the pines gave way to beautiful indigenous forest and our first coffee break. As we sipped our coffee, we started to relax and got chatting with our fellow birders. Immediately, Richter set off listening for bird calls sharing what he had heard or seen, some familiar and some I have never heard of in my life before.

Jan Fourie, an avid birdwatcher, with over 50 years experience,

also heard strange calls other than the ones of the Free State plains and Vredefort dome areas he was familiar with. 'This could get very interesting', I told my father as I have, up to now, only been concentrating on the identification of birds by sight and photos.

Anyway, let's get on with the day, we wondered further into the indigenous forest with amazing Broad-leaved Yellowwood, Lemonwood, Common Wild-quince,

BELOW Birding the grasslands at the inlet of Dam Naude Dam © Alan Harrison.



Strangler Figs and Sage Trees where I heard and saw my next lifers for my list: a Blue mantled Crested Flycatcher, Olive Woodpecker, Yellow-streaked Greenbul and a Dusky Flycatcher.

Lunch was called for at the Dap Naude Dam and more lifers were seen by my father and I; for me an African

ABOVE One of a number of lifers for me, Olive Woodpecker © Richter Van Tonder.

RIGHT Jackal Buzzard © Alan Harrison.



Goshawk and Yellow Bishop, for my father, a Drakensberg Prinia. We also noted a majestic Jackal Buzzard and an African Fish Eagle.

During the latter part of our trip, we also saw Woolly-necked Storks, Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, Speckled Mousebirds, Brown-hooded and Malachite Kingfishers, Little Grebe, African

Olive Pigeon, Dark-capped Bulbul, Common Waxbill, Cape White-eye, Tawny-flanked Prinia, African Stonechat, the famous Red-eyed Dove (for Mark) and another lifer for both my father and I, a Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler.

The trip was not only about birding, but being out in nature with people with simi-



ABOVE An African Dry-leaf Commadore © Richter Van Tonder.



LEFT Green Milkweed Locust © Alan Harrison.



ABOVE Yet another lifer for the two newbys, a stunning Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler © Richter Van Tonder.

RIGHT Some serious birding was done © Alan Harrison.



lar interests. Insects, butterflies, spiders and plants were also intently observed with a few highly scientific names given by Willie.

What inspired me the most is that one must be like a hunter using both auditory and visual cues, but most of all to enjoy oneself with nature.

Summing up the day: we were 14 people on the trip and at least 42 bird species were identified. What an enjoyable outing

and I thought the Dap Naude Dam was just for fishing!

From the eyes of both us newcomers, a huge shout out and thank you from my father and I. I'm not a writer but I have thoroughly enjoyed writing this trip report. Just a thought before I sign off. I spoke to one of my good friends yesterday, Jimmy Neethling, and he mentioned something so true about birders: 'julle is eerlike, goeie mense'.

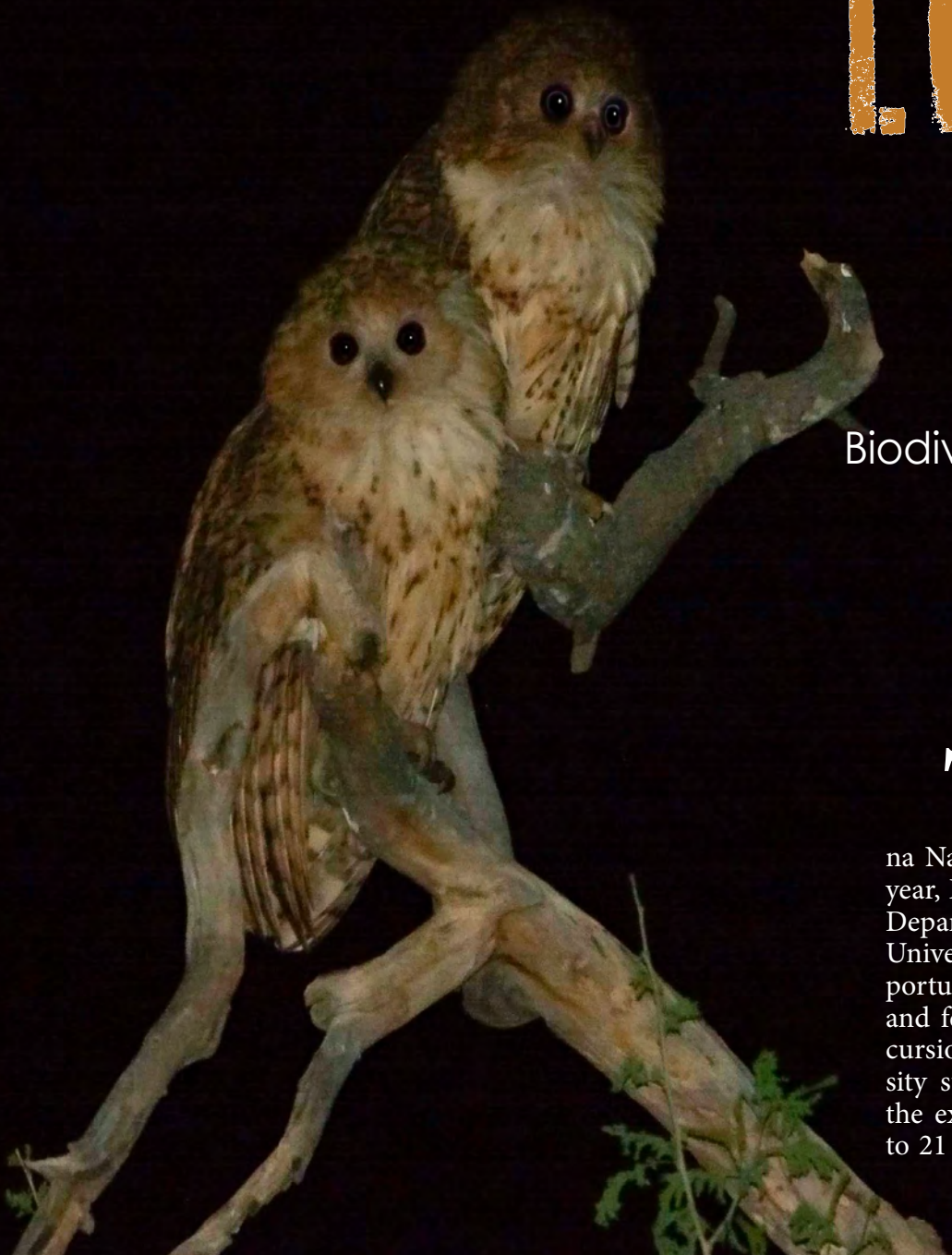
Author e-mail: alanh@cargomotors.co.za

LIMPOKWENA

2021

Biodiversity students get hands-on field training

Derek Engelbrecht

A photograph of two owls perched on a branch at night. The owls are illuminated against a dark background, showing their brown and white mottled feathers. One owl is perched higher than the other, and both are looking towards the camera.

The Biodiversity Class of 2021 made their mark at the Limpokwena Nature Reserve this year. Each year, B.Sc Honours students in the Department of Biodiversity at the University of Limpopo get the opportunity to get their hands dirty and feet wet as part of a field excursion to learn different biodiversity survey techniques. This year, the excursion took place from 18 to 21 May. Having been to the re-

serve earlier in the year to twitch a Collared Flycatcher at their Island Camp, and experiencing some of the other birding delights on offer, I was particularly excited to return to Limpokwena. This year's good rains meant there were plenty of pools for one of Limpokwena's star attractions - Pel's Fishing Owl.

Limpokwena Nature Reserve is situated at the confluence of the Mogalakwena and the Limpopo Rivers, a few kilometres down-

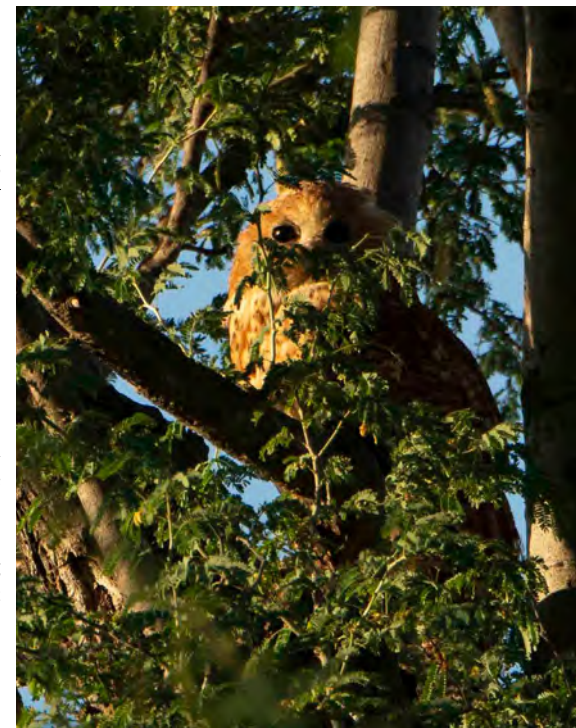
stream of the Platjan Border Post. Apart from a prolific bird list, there are also plenty of mammals to add to the excitement, including a stunning, sunken photographic hide to capture those magic moments.

While the students were attending survey sessions with the other specialists, I had the opportunity to do some atlasing and bird ringing. I recorded a total of 109 species during my 2-day stay, not bad for winter. Some of the highlights included a clean sweep of the western Limpopo Valley specials: Meyer's Parrot, White-crowned Lapwing, Meves's Starling, Tropical Boubou and, yes you guessed

it from the previous spread, Pel's Fishing Owl - a pair. We were treated to the near-constant booming call of a pair of Pel's throughout the night and into the early morning hours at the main lodge. We were soaking-in the moment when a pair perched in a dead tree just outside the lodge's perimeter fence, calling (in fact almost duetting) while we snapped away and I made some voice recordings to my heart's content. It felt like a cardinal sin when I finally decided to turn my back on such an epic bird and a memorable sighting of a relaxed pair, still perched in the same tree and calling the night away. The



next evening they thrilled us again with their deep booming call, albeit a little further from the lodge. The next morning I went to the area where I heard them calling from and, sure enough, there they were. Special birds!



TOP White-crowned Lapwing, one of the Limpopo River specials © Derek Engelbrecht.

RIGHT Peek-a-boo-boo: Pel's Fishing Owl roosting in one of the giant Ana Trees at the lodge © Derek Engelbrecht.

OPPOSITE A crocodile about to start feasting on a waterbuck © Derek Engelbrecht

PREVIOUS SPREAD Special bird, special place. A pair of Pel's Fishing Owl calling at the Limpokwena River Lodge © Derek Engelbrecht.



ABOVE An adult Bronze-winged Courser was a bit of a surprise given the time of the year © Derek Engelbrecht.

The Pel's pair was undoubtedly the highlight by a country mile, but there were lots of other nice sightings too: a Saddle-billed Stork fly-by at the viewing deck on the Mogalakwena River, an adult Bronze-winged Courser, a hunting pair of Verreaux's Eagle at the Island Camp, seven owl species (Pearl-spotted -, Southern White-faced -, African Barred -, African Scops -, Western Barn -, Spotted Eagle-Owl, and of course the ginger one mentioned above) seen and heard at the lodge, Dou-

ble-banded Sandgrouse drinking at pools in the rivers, Grey Penduline Tit, White-crested and Retz's Helmetshrikes, to name but a few.

The ringing demonstration was done on the morning of the 19th May. The nets were set up in a thicket on the banks of the Mogalakwena River. Seventeen birds, representing 13 species



Meves's Starling



Grey-backed Camaroptera



Long-billed Crombec



White-browed Scrub Robin



Southern Red-billed Hornbill



Brown-hooded Kingfisher



ABOVE Sunrise over the Limpopo River
© Derek Engelbrecht.

were ringed and released. Ringing highlights included a pair of Meves's Starling, Southern Red-billed Hornbill, a female Village Indigobird, Fork-tailed Drongo and Grey-backed Camaroptera (just because I love the camaropteras). The students were also able to see these beauti-

ful birds at arms length, and a few had the opportunity to release them.

Limpokwena Nature Reserve is yet another one of those gems the Limpopo Province has to offer. From a birding point of view, the area is top notch, but there is also plenty of oth-

er critters to keep the 'not-yet-a-birder' occupied. Elephants abound, especially in the drier months, we heard Lions, a Leopard and Spotted Hyaena, and Wild Dogs were seen near the lodge the week before. It is a true wilderness area with game freely crossing the river between South Africa and Botswana's Masha-tu Game Reserve. A place well worth a visit!

On behalf of all of us, we wish to thank our hosts Riley and Syanne for their hospitality and willingness to bend over backwards to accommodate all our crazy requests.

Author e-mail: faunagalore@gmail.com





Mockford Farms

VULTURE RESTAURANT

MENU
12 JUNE 2021



Mains

Cape Shoveler
Cape Vulture
White-backed Vulture
African Wattled Lapwing

Specials

Cape Teal
Rock Kestrel
Secretarybird
Lappet-faced Vulture
Hooded Vulture

Dips

Palm-nut Vulture
Jackal Buzzard
Glossy Ibis
African Hawk-Eagle

Appetizers

Marabou Stork
Bushveld Pipit
Crimson-breasted Shrike
Hamerkop
Quailfinch
Yellow-bellied Eremomela
Pearl-spotted Owlet
Great Sparrow
Pearl-breasted Swallow
Black-chested Snake Eagle
Cape Penduline Tit
Gabar Goshawk (melanistic)
Long-crested Eagle

Sides

Butterflies
Black-backed Jackal



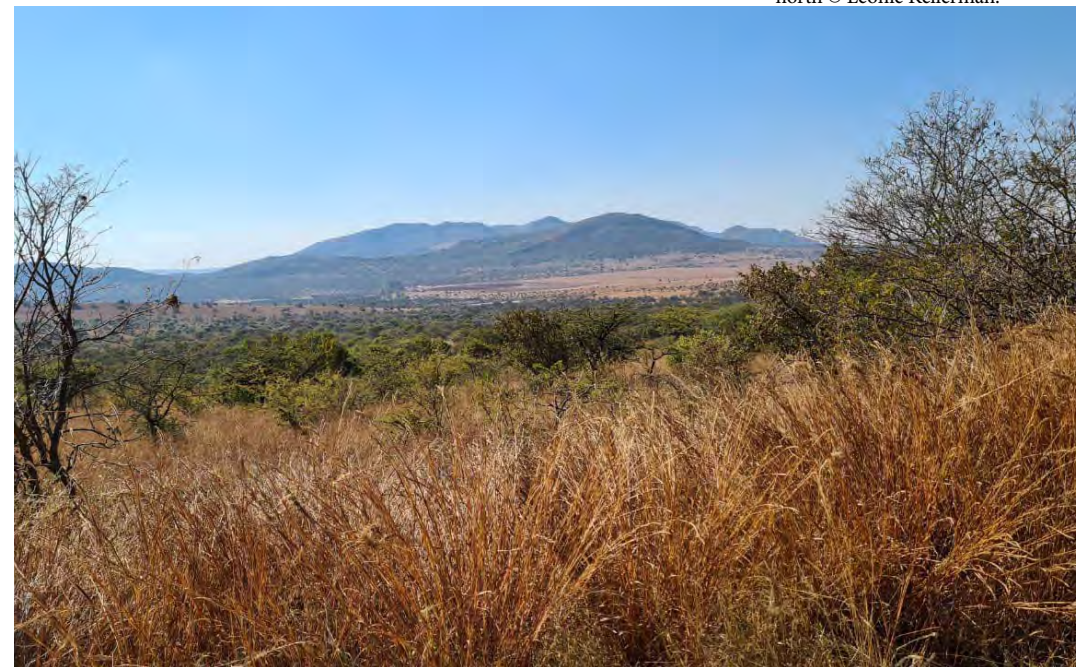
TEXT Richter Van Tonder

Was history going to repeat itself? For the last two years, the annual visit to the Mockford Vulture Restaurant west of Polokwane, didn't provide us with many vultures at this particular restaurant. So, I decided to change our strategy. In the past, we usually arrived before the carcasses were dropped. This time around, however, we arrived at the restaurant about 15 minutes after the fact.

We started our trip to the restaurant 1.5 hours before. We took it slowly and tried to record all species seen and heard on the farm. This particular outing is always good for some rarely seen birds in our Polokwane 100K Challenge. These local specials include

(apart from the vultures): Rock Kestrel (Kransvalk), Secretarybird (Sekretarisvoël), Cape Teal (Teeleend), Cape Shoveler (Kaapse Slopeend) and White-fronted Bee-eater (Rooikeelbyvreter). We were not disappointed this year as we managed to see all of them within a couple of hundred metres of each other. A particularly memorable sighting was watching a melanistic Gabar Goshawk (Witkruissperwer) chasing a dove - both flying at break-neck speed! Another special sighting, and a lifer for some of us, was a couple of Bushveld Pipits (Bosveldkoester).

BELOW The view of Mockford Farm from the vulture restaurant looking north © Leonie Kellerman.





ABOVE A pair of Bushveld Pipits showed well © Richter Van Tonder.



LEFT A single Secretarybird in one of the fallow fields was certainly one of the highlights of the day © Richter Van Tonder.

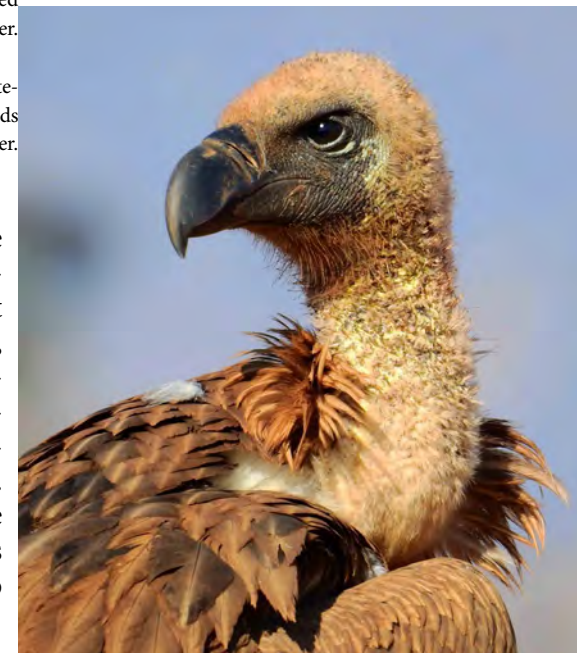
Now back to the vultures... We arrived about 9:45 at the restaurant. As we approached the hide, large numbers of circling and descending vultures suggested that the restaurant was a hive of activity. My plan worked, and as we entered the hide, we were greeted by lots of vultures on the ground. The closest vulture was about 5 meters away, and it was a special for the Polokwane Plateau - a Hooded Vulture! No fewer than nine Hood-



ABOVE We counted at least four Lappet-faced Vultures © Richter Van Tonder.

RIGHT There were good numbers of White-backed Vultures, including several young birds © Richter Van Tonder.

ed Vultures were counted! This is the most we ever recorded at this restaurant. Everyone managed excellent views of Cape Vulture (Kransaasvoël), White-backed Vulture (Witruugaasvoël), Lappet-faced Vulture (Swartaasvoël), Hooded Vulture (Monnikaasvoël) and Marabou Stork (Maraboe). However, the local Palm-nut Vulture (Witaasvoël) was MIA again and has been so for quite some time now. Two tagged vultures were seen.





Thanks to the six other people who joined this particular outing. Also, thank you to Peter Mockford for allowing us to access his farm and the vulture restaurant. Our tally for the day was 124 species - a good haul for a mid-winter's day.

Author e-mail: richter.mcase@gmail.com

LEFT An uncommon resident elsewhere around Polokwane, Rock Kestrel is relatively reliable at Mockford Farms © Richter Van Tonder.

BELOW Hooded Vultures are a real rarity on the Polokwane Plateau, so to see nine on one day must make it the Bird of the Day. Interestingly, all were juvenile birds © Richter Van Tonder.



Bird of the Year 2021

CAPE ROCKJUMPER

BREEDING BIOLOGY

Cape Rockjumpers (*Chaetops frenatus*) are **monogamous** breeders, meaning that one male mates with one female forming a **breeding pair**.



CO-OPERATIVE BREEDING

They are found in groups of **2-5 individuals**. In each group there is a **single breeding pair**. They are sometimes assisted by the previous year's offspring who help to raise the nestlings by participating in tasks such as defending territories and feeding.

TERRITORIES

Pairs of birds occupy **exclusive territories** throughout the year in which they nest. They **defend** these territories using visual displays, alarm calls and by chasing away other birds or predators that pose a threat. This territorial defence is most intense during the **breeding season** from **August to December**.

CAPE ROCKJUMPERS ARE GROUND NESTERS



IN THE NEST

Eggs are **incubated** for around **20 days** before hatching. The chicks then remain in the nest for a further **20 days** while they are fed by both parents. When they leave the nest they do not have fully developed tails or wings, but their strong legs allow them to run and jump.



2-3 EGGS
PER CLUTCH

The breeding pair **SHARE** parental duties.



Regulars

Birds in Art

Crowned Eagle

Text and Artwork Willem Van der Merwe

In this issue, I share with you a portrait of one of Africa's most magnificent bird species, the Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*. The scientific name means 'crowned crown eagle'. It is sometimes known as the Crowned Hawk-Eagle. This is one of Africa's largest eagle species, reaching 100 cm in total length and weighing over 4 kg. It is not quite as heavy as the Martial Eagle but perhaps more powerful. This eagle is associated with heavily wooded habitats in Africa, occurring from the Western Cape Province northwards, through equatorial Africa and as far north as the highlands of Ethiopia. Its stronghold is the equatorial rainforest belt.

The Crowned Eagle is somewhat elusive and hard to see. I've had

several distant glimpses of it but haven't yet been able to get a perfect, close view of one. The easiest way to locate it is by its display call. This is a rather high-pitched, whiny sound uttered while the bird is flying above the forest canopy. It can be heard even when the bird is too high up to be seen with the naked eye. It's not a single cry but a repeated 'yee-yip, yee-yip, yee-yip' sound. At the same time as it is calling, the eagle will display by first beating its wings to ascend vertically. At the apex, it will briefly stall before falling and gliding into a dive, repeating the climb again. The flight is conspicuous to other eagles, helping them know who 'owns' what patch of the forest.

At other times, the Crowned Eagle will be much less obvious. Its



Crowned Eagle

plumage, dappled in rufous-brown, dark brown and white, gives it excellent camouflage as it perches on a thick branch amidst the patches of sunlight penetrating the canopy. It hunts by stealth and will spend a lot of time just sitting and hiding while spying out the environs using its keen eagle-eyes. It may drop down onto prey on the ground or rapidly fly towards prey spotted in the tree-tops. Its flight is silent, and it can sneak up to and snatch an oblivious victim. Its wings are proportionally short and broad, enabling it to flit through narrow gaps between tree trunks and branches.

Most of its prey consists of mammals such as monkeys, hyraxes and small to even medium-sized antelope. The most significant recorded kill was a bushbuck, which weighs six times as much as the eagle. A pair will sometimes hunt together. One will fly above the canopy, drawing the monkeys' attention, while the other will sneak up on them from behind. A male and female may also work together to kill an antelope too large for just one.

This eagle uses its incredibly huge and powerful talons for dispatching its prey. Grasping a mam-



Garth Batchelor

ABOVE During egg-laying and raising the chicks, the central platform is lined with fresh, leafy green twigs and shoots brought by both birds © Garth Batchelor.

mal by the torso, it sinks its claws in deep enough to pierce the vital organs and kill its victim quickly. It is also strong enough to fly off, carrying an animal up to about its own weight. Still bigger prey will be dragged over the ground towards cover. Once the prey is concealed, it will dismember it and carry bits of the carcass to nearby trees. Here, it will stash the meat in the forks of branches, safe from predators such as leopards that may otherwise stumble upon and take it.

Mostly eating mammals, Crowned Eagles nevertheless sometimes diversify their diets to include reptiles and birds. They've been noted as catching domestic animals such as chickens, cats or goat kids, but many people living

in urban areas will be happy to hear that in one study, the ubiquitous and noisy Hadada Ibis was the dominant prey item after hyraxes. Although attacks on people have been recorded, these attacks are rare and only occur when people are considered threats, especially to their chicks. One man has been knocked out of a tree where he was climbing up towards a Crowned Eagle nest. They will also attack and try to drive off monkeys and other mammals they perceive as threats.

Crowned Eagles nest in large forest trees, their nests typical



LEFT Legendary raptor biologist, the late Leslie Brown, showing some of the injuries sustained after a Crowned Eagle attacked him as he tried to reach its nest.

BELOW The incredibly large feet and long claws of a Crowned Eagle © Hugh Chittenden.



for large eagles, namely bulky affairs built from sticks. They sometimes collect fallen branches from the forest floor but mostly break branches off trees, carrying them to their nests in their feet or beaks. The nests are typically situated at a height 12–30 m from the ground and very hard to access by humans or leopards. It can be used year after year; the pair keeps adding new twigs and branches until it is enormous, in some cases measuring 2.5 m across and 3 m deep. The record age for a nest thus far is 50 years! Sometimes a pair will have more than one nest, switching between them over different breeding years.

The nest is a focal area for the pair, and a lot of their bonding is

performed on or close to it. The male will bring food to the female to show that he will be a good provider. Other displays include aerial flights, during some of which the male and female may lock their feet together and tumble through the air head-over-heels. These cartwheeling displays are often misinterpreted by human observers as attacks. Still, they're actually occasions for the male and female to get attuned to each other, similar to human dancing.

In South Africa, Crowned Eagles lay their eggs from late winter to spring. The female usually lays two

BELOW An adult and a chick just about ready to fledge at their nest in the Soutpansberg © Derek Engelbrecht.



eggs. She remains on the nest to incubate them while the male brings her food every few days. However, some 'husbands' are not prudent providers, and one female has been recorded going without food for two weeks!

But the male also sometimes incubates, with the female, in turn, bringing him food. This is the only African eagle where the female assists the male like this. The eggs hatch after about fifty days.

Although this eagle lays two eggs, only one chick ever survives to be raised. In many eagles, the elder chick kills the younger soon after it hatches, a behaviour called Cainism, after the biblical Cain who killed his brother Abel. This occurs in the Crowned Eagle too. The chick is initially covered in thick, white down. At first, its mother broods it continually as its father brings food for them both. The male delivers food to the female, who then gives it to the chick.

By the age of six weeks, the chick can tear up and swallow prey itself, so the parents just fly in to deposit food items on the nest. Its first proper feathers emerge at the age of five weeks, and by the age of 60 days, its crest starts showing. By eleven weeks, it is fully feathered.

At about a hundred days old, the chick attempts its first flight. It still remains dependent on its parents but starts making its own kills about two months after leaving the nest. Slowly the feeding by the par-

ents taper off, and the chick also improves its own hunting expertise. By the age of 270 to 350 days, it becomes fully independent. While in Eastern Africa, Crowned Eagles breed mainly every other year, in South Africa, they frequently breed yearly. They live on average to 15 years, so each couple has time to raise enough chicks to replace themselves.

Crowned Eagles are successful when left alone and occur widespread in Africa. They suffer primarily from forest destruction and from humans over-hunting the same prey mammals they depend upon. This is a huge concern in central and western Africa, where the 'bushmeat' trade involves pretty much every kind of wild forest mammal from small to large, killed and sold in markets to feed the burgeoning human population. Eagles are also sometimes hunted or killed on suspicion of targeting domestic animals. But they do occur in several nature reserves and protected areas, and for now, their future is secure.

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View my gallery by clicking on the logo below:

Reflections

REFLECTIONS

Birding in SANParks Limpopo parks

Maloutswa Hide – Celebrated Schizophrenia

Chris Patton

Mapungubwe National Park's Maloutswa Hide in the western section of the Park I rate as my favourite hide in all of SANParks. Yet, it has two very distinct personalities, but thankfully its schizophrenic nature is in no way negative because both personas are incredibly appealing... one is as a magnet for thirsty mammals, during the dry season – there may be one or two birds present, but nothing to write home about... but when the Limpopo Floodplain is waterlogged Maloutswa becomes like a miniature Okavango Delta teeming with birdlife that can be so plentiful it's almost overwhelming...

My first experience with Maloutswa was in drier times, just before Limpopo Tented Camp

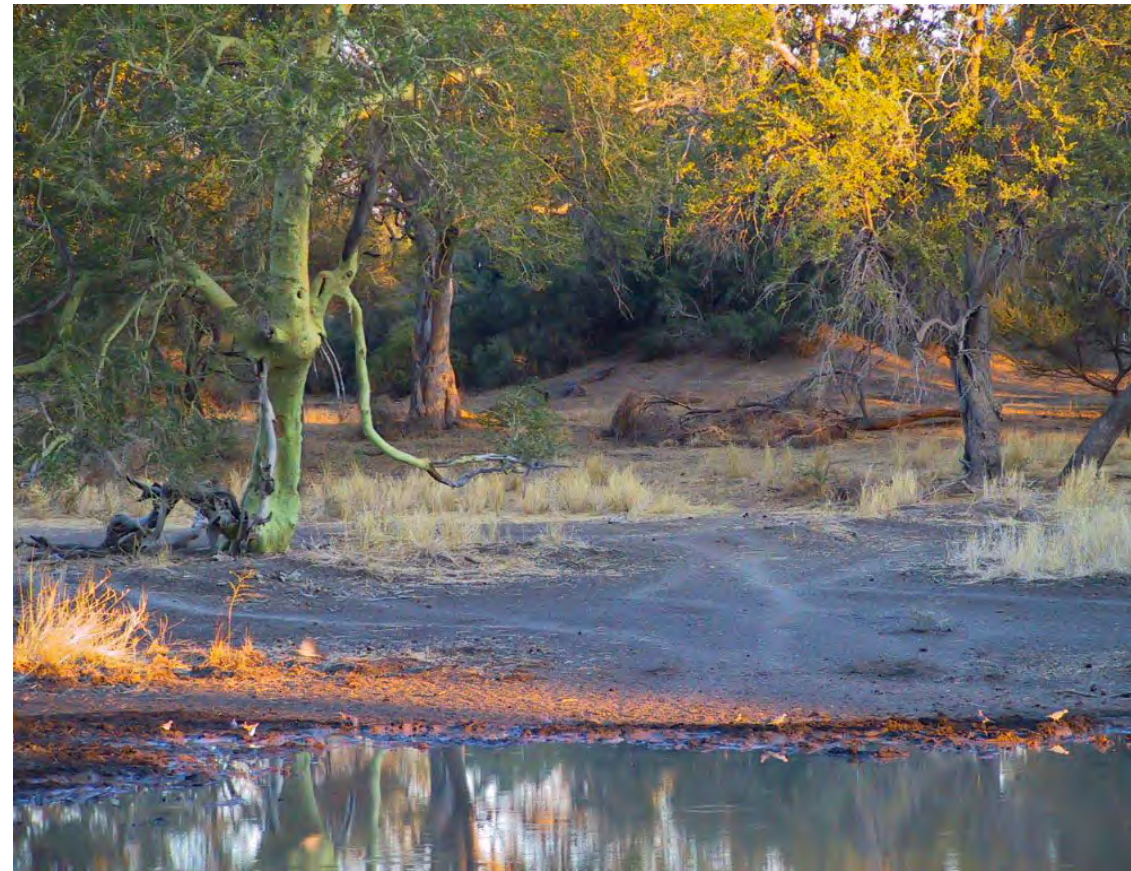
opened to the public, when this pan within the Limpopo River floodplain was among the only standing water available... It was incredible to witness the irresistible appeal of the waterhole not to birds, but to the mammals of the area... sitting in the hide for a few minutes, there would be a steady stream of zebra, wildebeest, kudu, impala, waterbuck and warthog as the most regular protagonists. And then the elephants would come through, bossing proceedings and drinking their fill or splashing in the water.

On that first encounter with the Hide, my colleague and I were staying in the nearby Limpopo Tented Camp, which, as I said, was not yet open to the public. As we were on an official visit, we had license to push the usual time limits of be-

ing back in Camp. We were in the Hide at dusk, in the hope of seeing something special, when a sounder of nine bushpigs came down to drink, certainly not something one normally sees at a waterhole. Then thrillingly, we heard the cough of a leopard, and the pigs all scattered. As we peered through the twilight we became aware of a big male leopard sitting on its haunches on the other side of the Pan, looking more like an Alsatian dog than a stealthy feline. His carefree attitude was most unusual. He remained in place when we retreated from the Hide back to our vehicle. From that moment I was in love with Maloutswa.

But readers may recall I am a wheelchair user, and the original structure of Maloutswa Hide was not very accessible. The viewing slots were all too high (I was told the Hide was originally built as a hunting Hide when the land was under private tenure and the slots were for rifle use from a standing position). The pathway was also not suitably accessible. In the dry season, the pathway was firm and

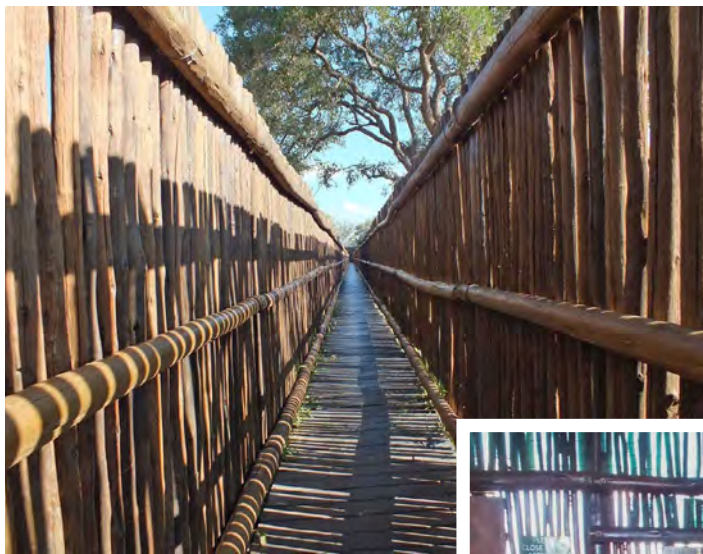
BELOW The view from Maloutswa in the dry season. Note the criss-cross of game paths leading to the water's edge, evidence of the busy mammalian traffic that come to quench their thirst © Chris Patton.



compact enough for a wheelchair to use. Still, a small stream needed to be crossed just before getting to the actual hide. Some thin latte poles had been used to create a bridge, and this uneven raised surface meant assistance from a companion was required to get over it in my chair... And later, I would discover that during the wet season, the ground along the pathway was transformed into mud, and thus getting there became a bit of a nightmare for me when the

Pan was in flood... So for years I campaigned for the hide to be upgraded to meet more acceptable universally accessible standards, so that all visitors could get into the hide independently, and that the viewing slots were more conducive to binocular use by a seated person...

Things often move slowly in SANParks, particularly in remote locations, and the inaccessibility lingered for around the first 10 years of my relationship with the Hide, but then I think in around 2014 the pathway to the hide pathway was damaged during flooding, and when rebuilt a magnificent firm smooth even boardwalk now takes visitors the entire way from the parking zone into the Hide itself.



ABOVE The access boardwalk to Maloutswa Hide is now a wonderful firm even surface, and the thrill of anticipation in travelling along its length is always worth experiencing © Chris Patton.

RIGHT And some of the viewing slots have been lowered so that children, wheelchair users and other height compromised people can enjoy the views from Maloutswa © Chris Patton.



But this is a birding publication, and it's the birds that we are interested in...

Even in the dry season, the action starts in the palisaded parking area... Look out for Crimson-breasted Shrike being in the bushes next to the ablutions.

But when the Limpopo Floodplain receives sufficient rain and the pans fill up and the surrounding ground cover become rank flooded grassland, and water lilies start to adorn the Pan, this Hide becomes a birder's Mecca...

RIGHT Crimson-breasted Shrike can be seen at close quarters in the Hide's parking area © Derek Engelbrecht.

BELOW Compare the rank flooded grasses flanking the Pan to the earlier image of bare earth and the criss-cross of game trails. Greater Painted-snipe and Egyptian Geese certainly prefer it... © Chris Patton.





ABOVE A Knob-billed Duck head on at Maloutswa Pan
© Chris Patton.

The luxuriant grass will attract various rallids from an assortment of crakes to Lesser Moorhen and Allen's Gallinule. Waterfowl come in large numbers... Knob-billed Duck, White-faced Whistling Ducks, Egyptian and Spur-winged Geese, and there may be some African Pygmy Geese too, perhaps attracted by the water-lilies that also entice jacanas.

The heron family is represented by the squat members of the tribe with their extendible necks like Green-backed Heron and Dwarf Bittern, and both night-herons, to the more elegant egrets and larger herons. Grey Crowned Crane and Pink-backed Pelican are some of the larger species that have been recorded at the Hide, and aquatic storks are well-represented too.

Plovers, sandpipers, pratincoles, painted-snipes and Pied Kingfisher present other pleasant

picture opportunities for those with patience prepared to peruse the Pan from the protection of the Hide.

And even in the dry season, there are birds to look out for. A pair of Verreaux's Eagle-Owl have a nesting site in the woodland adjacent to the boardwalk to the Hide. They can be heard grunting in contact with their partners, even in the middle of the day. I hope readers will get as much joy from visiting the Hide as I have had over the years.

Author e-mail: chris.patton@sanparks.org

BELOW Hamerkop © Derek Engelbrecht.



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BIRD BRIEFS

Handicapped Olive Woodpecker

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The photo of Derek Engelbrecht's stabbed thumb in the previous issue allows me to share another Olive Woodpecker anecdote, again focusing on the bill.

To a bird, a bill is everything; to a woodpecker, this multi-pur-

pose body part indeed assumes huge importance.

A nest-hole in a tall cedar in our garden here in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands has been used

BELOW The injury-caused seriously deformed bill © Ingrid Weiersbye.



ABOVE The probing upper mandible spears the pupa © Ingrid Weiersbye.

for three years at least. It is used currently throughout the year by the family of three to roost in. It has had two clutches raised in it, both with the female woodpecker I got to call 'scissor-bill'. The resultant offspring from the family unit of either 3 or 4 birds regularly forage in the garden.

Photos of the female in September 2019 with a newly fledged chick clearly show her with an undamaged bill. In January 2020, there was a fierce take-over bid of the nest by Black-collared Barbets - then lock-down kept us away from KwaZulu-Natal, and monitoring ceased.

In September 2020, we returned, and photos showed that her once dagger-shaped bill was

twisted and no longer forming a single point, hence the name scissor-bill.

I have a strong suspicion that the conflict came to a head in 2020 whilst we were away. The Black-collared Barbets put strong pressure on the woodpeckers to oust them from their hole, and they in turn put up a spirited defence, all the time keeping just out of reach of the barbets' powerful bills. Although the Olive Woodpecker has a dagger of a bill, I imagine it is no match for the bulldog clamping power of the barbet's. It's just possible that the female down in the nest-hole was attacked by



the barbet during one of these conflicts and had her bill clamped and twisted by the intruder.

As I observed her, I got to notice that her scissor-bill progressively deteriorated until the lower mandible started to splinter, and even more distressing, the upper mandible continued to grow way beyond the length of the lower bill. This meant she could only access grubs in holes

with the upper hoopoe-like bill, and once speared, she had to struggle to manoeuvre the food item off the upper bill tip down onto the tree trunk to then scoop it into her gape with the lower mandible. Invariably the food item was dropped, and she would flutter down to try and catch it, seldom successfully. Woodpeckers have a long barbed tongue but in this case it didn't extend far enough to be of use. Sadly, the accompanying photos show her at a point where she was really struggling to feed. Since then, I have not seen her at the nest, and another female woodpecker appears to have taken over with the male.



ABOVE The bird struggling to remove the pupa onto the tree-trunk, possibly using the foot © Ingrid Weiersbye.

RIGHT Occasional success enables the bird to lower its head sideways onto the pupa and scoop it into gape. This maneuvering effort took 4 minutes © Ingrid Weiersbye.



Cape Vulture resightings

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The following two tagged vultures were seen at the Mockford Vulture Restaurant west of Polokwane on 12 June 2021.

TAG C285: CAPE VULTURE



The bird was tagged as a juvenile by Elba Swardt on 15th December 2016 at Blouberg Nature Reserve. The straight-line distance between the tagging and resighting locality was 120.4 km and the days elapsed were 1 641 days (4y, 5m, 29d).

TAG C287: CAPE VULTURE

The bird was tagged as a juvenile by David Pretorius, also on 15th December 2016 at Blouberg Nature Reserve. The straight-line distance between the tagging and resighting locality was 120.4 km and the days elapsed were 1 641 days (4y, 5m, 29d).



Acknowledgements Thanks to Johan Van Wyk, reserve manager at Blouberg Nature Reserve, for providing me with the details of the tagged birds.

The standardisation of bird names in Northern Sotho (Sesotho sa Leboa / Sepedi)

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Northern Sotho is one of the Sotho languages or rather a cluster of dialects with a standard language. The standard language is called Northern Sotho or Sesotho sa Leboa. Since the standard language is based on the dialect of the Pedi tribe, it is also called Sepedi. In the constitution it is called Sepedi, but many people are not happy with that since it does not reflect all the dialects that make up the standard language. In this article, the language will be referred to as Northern Sotho.

Northern Sotho is the fourth largest language of South Africa in terms of the number of home language speakers. It is the Sotho language with the most speakers in South Africa and is only spoken in South Africa.

Bird names in many languages have been standardised. However, this is not the case for the African languages (Meyer, 2020). The bird names in Zulu for the birds of KwaZulu-Natal is the only case where bird names for a region of South Africa have been standardised (Koopman et al., 2020). Ambrose (2020) standardised the

names for birds found in Lesotho in Sesotho. Therefore, there is still a need to standardise the bird names in Northern Sotho, at least for the birds in the Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, if not the whole of southern Africa. To do this, a standard methodology is needed with clear guidelines or principles.

Proposed Methodology

The method used to create species-specific names for all southern Africa birds in Northern Sotho is set out below.

Names were collected from various literature sources, mainly dictionaries and articles. All the names of birds in Northern Sotho found were documented. A database of bird names was made using the same method as described by Meyer (2021a) for Venda bird names. The results of the database are summarised in Table 1. A total of 1077 data entries were made, of which only 456 were unique entries; 45.6% of the unique entries was a species-specific name. This is lower than the 55.6% of Venda but higher than the 13.2% of Ndebele (Meyer 2021a, 2021b). However, Northern Sotho had twice as many

Table 1. A summary of the results of the analysis of bird names in Northern Sotho.

Category	Number of entries	Number of unique entries	% out of unique entries
Only 1 species (species-specific name)	281	208	45.6
General name for >1 species, same family	491	188	41.2
General name for >1 species, different families	305	60	13.2
Total data entries	1077	456	

species-specific names as Venda and 30 times more than Ndebele (Meyer 2021a, 2021b). A full list of all the names found in Northern Sotho with their English equivalent and the family to which the bird belongs can be found in the Appendix after the References.

After analysing the documented names, four cases arose:

1. One name is used for many species. Lepidibidi is used for all ducks. Descriptive parts were added to distinguish between species.
2. A single bird species has many names. The Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* is called Modišane, Modišadikgômo, Ledišadikgômo, Kgogonokane, Kgogobadimo. The name that appeared most in the database or that was the most relevant was used.
3. As standard Northern Sotho is a collection of various dialects, variations in the spelling of names occur, or the names are in different noun classes. An example of spelling variation is the

name of the Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*. It is either legotutu or lehututu. The name for falcon can either be in class 7 (sepekwa) or class 9 (pekwa). In both cases, the name that occurs the most in the database was used.

4. Certain species or group of birds have no known name. This is true for almost all seabirds as Northern Sotho is not spoken at the coast.

Group names

A group name was chosen for each group of birds after analysis of the documented names. These groups did not always correspond to the names of groups in English or Afrikaans. These names were chosen using the following principles:

1. Traditional Northern Sotho words were chosen over loanwords, even if the loanword has a more general use. Examples are tladi and not flaminko for flamingo and legelhe and not papalagae for parrot.

2. Where no name exists, names from Setswana, Sesotho or Silozi were used, for example ntdi for cormorant, which is the Setswana name.

3. If no name exists according to the two previous principles, new names were coined. These names are not always mere direct translations of English or Afrikaans names. The description or behaviour of the birds were taken into account. The gannets were called seswinyo, meaning the diver. If two nouns were combined, the class prefix of the second noun was left out. Leeba (dove) and ledimo (storm) becomes leebadimo (storm dove = petrel).

4. Loanwords were not used for birds found in southern Africa. Two exemptions were the word for penguin (phenkwine) and peafowl (phikoko).

Names at species level

Once a group name was chosen, names up to the species level were given. Descriptive names were used as much as possible, describing the appearance or behaviour of the species. Places or regions are only used for names

BELOW There are no species-specific names for our two guineafowl species in Northern Sotho. Both Helmeted (Left) and Crested Guinea fowl (RIGHT) are called Kgaka © Derek Engelbrecht.



Mankutukutu -Secretarybird © Derek Engelbrecht



Tsoko - Narina Trogon © Derek Engelbrecht



Legwa - Cape Crow © Derek Engelbrecht



Maliberwani - Melodious Lark © Derek Engelbrecht



Lefokori - African Wattled Lapwing © Derek Engelbrecht



Serala - African Pipit © Derek Engelbrecht

Table 2. Scientific, English, Afrikaans and the proposed Northern Sotho name of southern African representatives species in the family Phasianidae. The last column gives the direct translation into English of the proposed Northern Sotho name.

Scientific Name	English	Afrikaans	Northern Sotho	Direct translation
<i>Phasianidae</i>	Francolins and Quails	Patryse en Kwartels	Dikgwale le Dikhwiri	francolins and quails
<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	Chukar Partridge	Asiatiese Patryys	Kgwale ya Asia	Asian partridge
<i>Peliperdix coqui</i>	Coqui Francolin	Swempie	Lebudiane	“coqui francolin”
<i>Scleroptila afra</i>	Grey-winged Francolin	Bergpatryys	Kgwale ya thaba	mountain francolin
<i>Scleroptila levallantii</i>	Red-winged Francolin	Rooiverkpatryys	Kgwale ya lephegohwibidu	red wing francolin
<i>Scleroptila shelleyi</i>	Shelley’s Francolin	Laeveldpatryys	Kgwale ya Bohlabela	eastern francolin
<i>Scleroptila gutturalis</i>	Orange River Francolin	Kalaharipatryys	Kgwale ya Kgalagadi	Kalahari francolin
<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>	Crested Francolin	Bospatryys	Lesogo	“crested francolin”
<i>Pternistis hartlaubi</i>	Hartlaub’s Spurfowl	Klipfisant	Lehoho la leswika	rock spurfowl
<i>Pternistis adpersus</i>	Red-billed Spurfowl	Rooibekfisant	Lehoho la molomohwibidu	red bill spurfowl
<i>Pternistis capensis</i>	Cape Spurfowl	Kaapse Fisant	Lehoho la Kapa	cape spurfowl
<i>Pternistis natalensis</i>	Natal Spurfowl	Nataalse Fisant	Lehoho la molomomodipa	orange bill spurfowl
<i>Pternistis afer</i>	Red-necked Spurfowl	Rooikeelfisant	Lehoho la mogolohwibidu	red throat spurfowl
<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>	Swainson’s Spurfowl	Bosveldfisant	Lehoho la leotoso	black leg spurfowl
<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Common Quail	Afrikaanse Kwartel	Sekhwiri se sesotho	brown quail
<i>Coturnix delegorguei</i>	Harlequin Quail	Bontkwartel	Pilo	“harlequin quail”
<i>Excalfactoria adansonii</i>	Blue Quail	Bloukwartel	Sekhwiri se setalalerata	blue quail
<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Indian Peafowl	Bloupou	Phikoko	peacock

when a good descriptive name cannot be found. The names were kept as short as possible.

Spelling

No hyphens are used except to facilitate reading, e.g. Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* - Peolwanewatle-sotho le kgolo. The descriptive part of the name is written loose and after the group name. No hyphens are used between the nouns, copulas and the descriptive part (adjective or noun), e.g. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* is Lentlopodi le leso and not Lentlopodileso, Lentlopodi leleso or Lentlopodi-le-leso. Although Ambrose (2020) used hyphens for the bird names in Sesotho, this is not the standard way of writing in Northern Sotho and looks artificial. Only the group name is capitalised, e.g. Black Stork is Lentlopodi le leso and not lentlopodi le leso, Lentlopodi Le Leso or Lentlopodi le Leso. Compound nouns are written as one word. Hyphens are only used as explained above; therefore the Cape Shoveler *Anas smithii* is Lepidibidileho la Kapa and not Lepidibidi-leho la Kapa or Lepidibidi leho la Kapa.

Example of a family

An example of a family of birds, the Phasianidae (francolins and spurfowl), are given in Table 2. The table contains the scientific name and the name in English, Afri-

kaans and the proposed Northern Sotho name. In the final column, the direct translation into English of the proposed Northern Sotho name is given. A general name for the family is chosen as Dikgwale (singular kgwale). Certain species had a species-specific name that was used. The remainder of the species was divided into three groups, francolins (dikgwale, singular: kgwale), spurfowl (mahoho, singular: lehoho) and quails (dikhwiri, singular: sekhwiri). Descriptive species-specific names were then given. For the Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*, a loanword, phikoko (plural: diphikoko) was used. This is found in numerous sources, and it is an introduced species.

Conclusion

There are enough species-specific names and general names in Northern Sotho for birds to make a standardised list of names for the birds of southern Africa in Northern Sotho. Following the above-mentioned principles will make a list more acceptable. It should be stressed that the list and principles should not be seen as set in stone, and input would be greatly appreciated.

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Appendix. Bird names in Northern Sotho

Family	Scientific Name	Northern Sotho	English
Struthionidae	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Mpšhe	Common Ostrich
Anatidae	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Lefalwa	Egyptian Goose
	<i>Anas undulata</i>	Lepelebele	Yellow-billed Duck
	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	Moselamotlaka	Spur-winged Goose
Phasianidae	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Kwekwe	Common Quail
	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>	Lehwerehwere, Lesogo	Crested Francolin
	<i>Peliperdix coqui</i>	Lebudiane	Coqui Francolin
Caprimulgidae	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	Seribišane	Fiery-necked Nightjar
Musophagidae	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>	Mokgowe, Mokowe, Mokwe, Mokwenete	Grey Go-away-bird
Otididae	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	Kgori	Kori Bustard
	<i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>	Mosweleswele, Kgwarakgwara, Kgwarakgwara, Mošwelešwele	Red-crested Korhaan
Cuculidae	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>	Mpue	Burchell's Coucal
	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	Makaokele	Diederik Cuckoo
	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	Bjalapeu, Morakhulong	Red-chested Cuckoo
Columbidae	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>	Leebamphepana, Leebasodi, Lephapane	African Olive Pigeon
	<i>Columba guinea</i>	Leebašupi	Rock Pigeon
	<i>Oena capensis</i>	Lengetlane, Lenketane, Mankotane, Mankwetlana, Mmankwetla, Mokgorwane, Segorwane	Namaqua Dove
	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	Leebakgwethe, Leebakoko	Laughing Dove
	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	Leaba kgorwana, Man-kurwane	Ring-necked Dove
	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	Leeba la mahlomahubedu	Red-eyed Dove
	<i>Treron calvus</i>	Lephui	African Green Pigeon
Rallidae	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	Kgwale ya meetse, Lefudi	Red-knobbed Coot
	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Kgogomeetse	Common Moorhen
Gruidae	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	Lehemu	Grey Crowned Crane
	<i>Grus carunculata</i>	Motlathomo	Wattled Crane
Phoenicopteridae	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	Tlatšana	Lesser Flamingo
Turnicidae	<i>Turnix hottentottus</i>	Sehwiri	Fynbos Buttonquail

Family	Scientific Name	Northern Sotho	English
	<i>Turnix sylvaticus</i>	Mperinyane	Common Buttonquail
Recurvirostridae	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Mmotlanakane	Black-winged Stilt
Charadriidae	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	Letletlerwane	Crowned Lapwing
Ciconiidae	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	Lekololwane	Abdim's Stork
	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Leakapula, Lentakaranwane, Lentlopodi, Lentlopodi le lešweu	White Stork
	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>	Mmakaitšimeletša	Marabou Stork
Threskiornithidae	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	Lengao	Hadada Ibis
	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>	Mokhotoo	Southern Bald Ibis
Ardeidae	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Khwitimohlaka	Eurasian Bittern
	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Kgogobadimo, Ledišadikgomo, Madišadipere, Modiša, Modišadikgomo, Modišana, Tšhwedietane	Western Cattle Egret
Scopidae	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	Lešianoka, Mamašianoka, Mašianoka, Mmamašianoka, Mmašianoka	Hamerkop
Sagittariidae	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Hlame, Mankutukutu, Mankutukutu, Mmamolangwane, Mokolokute, Thlame, Tlhame	Secretarybird
Accipitridae	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Matsenelela, Mmat-senella	Shikra
	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Kobokobo, Ntšhukobokobo	Tawny Eagle
	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	Lejapela	Verreaux's Eagle
	<i>Buteo augur</i>	Nkgodi, Segodi	Augur Buzzard
	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Mmallakokwane, Segwetšane, Sehlabamaebana, Seutlamaeba	Black-winged Kite
	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	Rrantswe	Cape Vulture
	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Kgonyaihlo	Egyptian Vulture
	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Mmakgwana	Martial Eagle
Tytonidae	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Mmakgohlo	Western Barn Owl
Strigidae	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	Lešibiri	Spotted Eagle-Owl
	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	Lekota	Verreaux's Eagle-Owl

Family	Scientific Name	Northern Sotho	English
	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	Kgaribišanyane, Leribišane	African Scops Owl
Trogonidae	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>	Tsoko	Narina Trogon
Upupidae	<i>Upupa africana</i>	Hupu, Khukhu, Kukuku, Kukuu, Leremakatsaka, Pupupu, Segologolo	African Hoopoe
Phoeniculidae	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	Senkgamogwete	Green Wood Hoopoe
	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	Kuela	Common Scimitarbill
Bucorvidae	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	Legotutu, Lehututu	Southern Ground Hornbill
Bucerotidae	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	Mokgothopitsi	Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
Coraciidae	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>	Lehlake, Letlakela	Lilac-breasted Roller
Lybiidae	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>	Mphago	Crested Barbet
	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	Serokolo	Acacia Pied Barbet
Indocatoridae	<i>Indicator indicator</i>	Tsehlo	Greater Honeyguide
Picidae	<i>Geocolaptes olivaceus</i>	Llapaleome	Ground Woodpecker
Falconidae	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Seotsanyana	Lesser Kestrel
Malaconotidae	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	Palamafsika	Crimson-breasted Shrike
	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	Malobe	Southern Boubou
	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>	Mmamapena. Tshokane	Black-crowned Tchagra
	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	Mpherwane, Tswilodi	Bokmakierie
Campephagidae	<i>Coracina caesia</i>	Mmaselakgwahla	Grey Cuckooshrike
Laniidae	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>	Leagakametlwa	Southern White-crowned Shrike
	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	Tsemedi, Tšokatšokane	Southern Fiscal
	<i>Urolestes melanoleucus</i>	Motsilodi	Magpie Shrike
Oriolidae	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	Khulong	Black-headed Oriole
Dicruridae	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>	Thekwane	Square-tailed Drongo
Monarchidae	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	Letsobe, Mmakgwadi, Mothoapea	African Paradise Flycatcher
Corvidae	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	Mmankgoro	White-necked Raven
	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Legatswatswa, Mogagabane	Pied Crow
	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	Legogobane, Legwa, Legwaba, Mmamogomilo, Segogobane, Sephurapeo	Cape Crow
Paridae	<i>Parus pallidiventris</i>	Segege	Cinnamon-breasted Tit

Family	Scientific Name	Northern Sotho	English
Remizidae	<i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>	Kgororwane, Leswarelela	Cape Penduline Tit
Alaudidae	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	Motinyane	Spike-heeled Lark
	<i>Mirafra africana</i>	Pulaekhudile, Tshehle-lamedupe	Rufous-naped Lark
	<i>Mirafra cheniana</i>	Maliberwani	Melodious Lark
Pycnonotidae	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	Seruane	Terrestrial Bulbul
	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	Lekolo	Cape Bulbul
	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>	Lekwete, Rankgwetshe, Rrampšokgodi	Dark-capped Bulbul
Hirundinidae	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	Lekabelane	Brown-throated Martin
Macrosphenidae	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	Kurutle	Long-billed Crombec
Acrocephalidae	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	Radikwero, Rametlae	Icterine Warbler
Locustellidae	<i>Schoenicola brevirostris</i>	Thatha	Fan-tailed Grassbird
Cisticolidae	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	Lellakakwana	Green-backed Camaroptera
	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>	Lekgere, Matea, Mateane	Rattling Cisticola
	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	Setwaneng	Neddicky
	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	Moteane	Levaillant's Cisticola
	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	Nanaswi, Teteretere	Tawny-flanked Prinia
Zosteropidae	<i>Zosterops capensis</i>	Mmalakaneng, Lentsiana	Cape White-eye
	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	Setsiololo	Orange River White-eye
Sturnidae	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	Lefokori	African Wattled Starling
	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	Lebutswa	Red-winged Starling
Buphagidae	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>	Thagatsukudu	Yellow-billed Oxpecker
	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	Legame, Tšhomi	Red-billed Oxpecker
Muscicapidae	<i>Campicoloides bifasciatus</i>	Tantabe	Buff-streaked Chat
	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>	Tšhakga	Chorister Robin-Chat
	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	Monotobidi	White-browed Robin-Chat
	<i>Cossypha humeralis</i>	Lekonko	White-throated Robin-Chat
	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>	Mmaratasebilo	Cape Rock Thrush
	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>	Letlerenyane	Familiar Chat
	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	Thoromedi	Capped Wheatear
	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	Thisa	African Stonechat
	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>	Leseka	Mocking Chat
	Nectariniidae	<i>Anthreptes aurantius</i>	Tswitswana
<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>		Taletale	Olive Sunbird

Family	Scientific Name	Northern Sotho	English
	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	Tšhekgere	Malachite Sunbird
Passeridae	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	Lemphorokgohlo la Kapa	Cape Sparrow
Ploceidae	<i>Euplectes afer</i>	Rramakgatho	Yellow-crowned Bishop
	<i>Euplectes progne</i>	Lephaka, Lephakga	Long-tailed Widowbird
	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Leragane, Lerwerwe	Red-billed Quelea
Estrildidae	<i>Estrilda perreini</i>	Rramphitlimphitli	Grey Waxbill
	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	Mošalašopeng	African Firefinch
	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	Sejamoroko	Bronze Mannikin
	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	Lebonyane	Quail Finch
	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	Kgakanagae	Green-winged Pytilia
	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	Tlwere, Tšwee	Blue Waxbill
Viduidae	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Mmalekutu	Pin-tailed Whydah
	<i>Vidua regia</i>	Lehelo	Shaft-tailed Whydah (female)
Motacillidae	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	Serala	African Pipit
	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>	Tlholapula	Plain-backed Pipit
	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	Mogofepitswana, Mose-lakatane	African Pied Wagtail
Fringillidae	<i>Crithagra mozambica</i>	Thaganyane	Yellow-fronted Canary
	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>	Tale	Cape Canary
	<i>Uraeginthus granatinus</i>	Lete	Violet-eared Waxbill
Emberizidae	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	Motweditwedi	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting

Click on the links below to view my work and participate in the discussion ...



Long-billed larks in the Eastern Cape

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When I was part of an Eastern Cape birding group on Facebook, there would always be a lively debate when someone posted a photo of a Long-billed Lark in the Mountain Zebra National Park. The discussion always centred around whether it was Karoo or Eastern Long-billed Lark. Indeed, the birds in the 'genuine' Karoo (as opposed to those in the grassy Karoo) are slightly bigger, have longer, stronger bills, are more grey on the nape, and generally are greyer and more streaked below than the birds in the eastern grassy Karoo and genuine grassland.

It is an established fact that habitat plays a significant role in determining where birds occur. Habitat shapes the birds so that the birds will be shaped to best fit into that habitat after very long periods of time. For example, the plumage colouration of Long-billed Larks in the Karoo will be what best suits the substrate or habitat in that region, hence the greyer colouration. Their bills will also be best suited to penetrate the hard, dry soils of the Karoo. In contrast, the birds in the grassland content with generally softer soil, with more humus and

hence their bills do not require such a long, strong bill. Their plumage is also overall browner to fit into the winter grass (see p83).

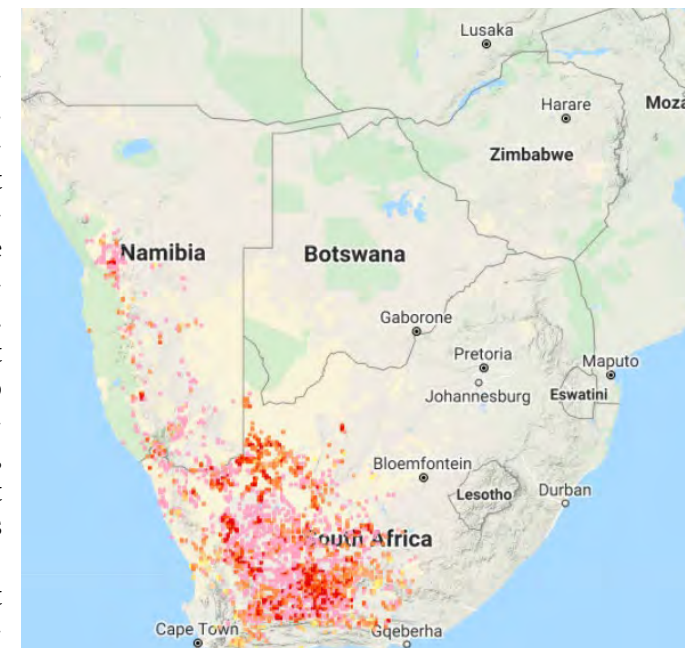
It follows then that Karoo Long-billed Larks will be found in the Karoo and Eastern Long-billed Larks will be found in the grasslands. The difficulty occurs when those two biomes are drawn on a map. Where are the boundaries, and how does Karoo change into grassland moving in an easterly direction? It is definitely not a case of the Karoo ending and grassland starting within a space of 100 meters. Even deep into what could be called the genuine Karoo (Prince Albert, Beaufort West, Carnarvon, Namaqualand), given good wet seasons, there is grass. Still, for the sake of this article, we will call these areas genuine Karoo. Around Willowmore, Graaff-Reinet and Middelburg, the amount of grass starts increasing going east, gradually becoming natural grassland along the east coast and into Mpumalanga. But even so, it is not all that simple.

In the Eastern Cape, the two biomes are present along with other biomes in a mosaic that makes it very difficult to depict them on a map. The Cradock area is very

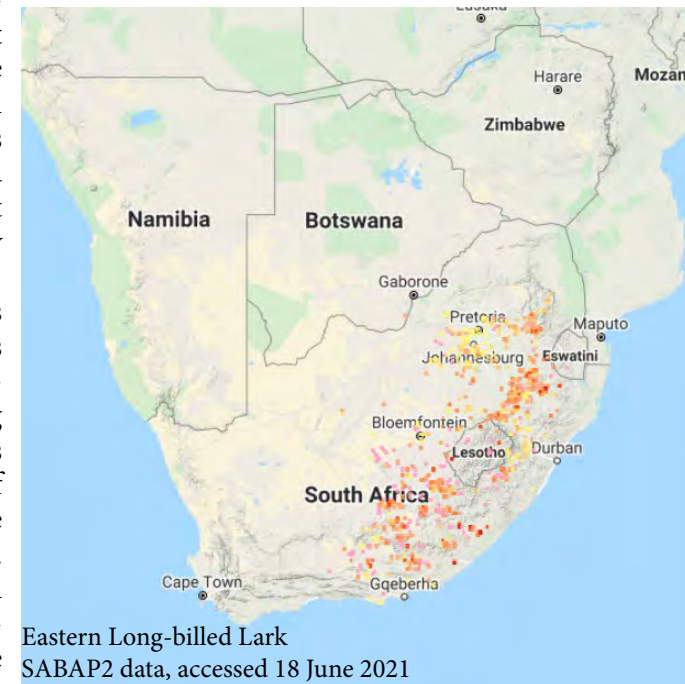
grassy but still has a Karoo scrub component. Bedford has true grassland in the mountains, but almost as far as Grahamstown in the Carlisle Bridge area, there is scrubby Karoo with very little grass. The Steytlerville district is true Karoo right up to the Kouga and Cockscomb Mountains. Yet, that area is 100 km east of where the grasslands start in other areas.

Just as the habitat does not change suddenly, it has been my experience that the birds also don't change suddenly. The Mountain Zebra National Park is an excellent area to focus on because many photos get taken there. The Park also has a good mix of grass and Karoo scrub, although it tends to be more grassy in good wet seasons.

Why is it always so difficult for birders to decide which species they are looking at? One of the reasons is that the features of the two species can be looked at subjectively. My interpretation of bill length and all the other features may not be



Karoo Long-billed Lark
SABAP2 data, accessed 18 June 2021



Eastern Long-billed Lark
SABAP2 data, accessed 18 June 2021



Karoo Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett



ABOVE Some of the Long-billed Larks in the Eastern Cape show features intermediate between Karoo and Eastern Long-billed Lark. These images are of the same bird and show the heavily streaked breast associated with Karoo Long-billed Lark, but a relatively weak and somewhat shorter bill of an Eastern Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett.



Eastern Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett

the other, and interpretation will sway birders one way or the other.

Eastern Long-billed Lark has been reported 122 times in pentad 3210_2525 (the reception area) and Karoo Long-billed Lark has been reported 38 times. This points to atlasers either seeing both species, or some atlasers interpreting the features differently to others. The Eastern Long-billed Lark photo from the Mountain Zebra National Park (MZNP) on the next spread, with its more robust bill is the type of bird that causes confusion in the MZNP. The other two Eastern Long-billed Larks are from Fish River, 35 km north of Cradock at the same latitude as MZNP and in the same habitat. The Karoo Long-billed Larks are all from Rietbron and Graaff-Reinet.

For a species to be recognisable, there must be a way of recognising it as a species. In the west (Karoo), they can be recognised as Karoo Long-billed Larks, and in the east (grassland), they are Eastern Long-billed Larks, but in the transition zone, it is very difficult to always identify them. I have heard birders suggest they be lumped together as they were in the past, and this certainly would make identification easier.

the same as yours. Another reason they are not easy to identify is that there will often be a feature that fits one species on the same bird, but then another feature leans more towards the other

species. But the main reason is that the Long-billed Larks in the transition zone are not definitely Karoo or Eastern Long-billed Larks. Like the habitat, they fall somewhere between being one or



Karoo Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
West of Rietbron, Eastern Cape.



Karoo Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
Rietbron, Eastern Cape.



Karoo Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape.



Eastern Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
Katkop Farm, 40 km north of Cradock, Eastern Cape.



Eastern Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
Katkop Farm, 40 km north of Cradock, Eastern Cape.



Eastern Long-billed Lark © Alan Collett
Mountain Zebra National Park, Eastern Cape.

Missing, presumed dead: Mokgalaje the Short-clawed Lark

Derek Engelbrecht

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Fifteen years, 8 months and 1 day, or 5725 days! It seems as if the reign of the world's oldest known lark, Mokgalaje the Short-clawed Lark, has come to an end. I ringed Mokgalaje on 24 May 2005 in the back of the Polokwane Game Reserve and he was last seen in his territory on 24 January 2021. He was an absolute record-breaker as the next oldest lark on record is a Crested Lark in Germany, found dead 11 years and 7 months after being ringed (Fransson et al. 2017). Through the years, he was the star pupil of my project on the life history strategies of Short-clawed Lark. A considerable amount of what we know about Short-clawed Lark can be attributed to him.

Since I last saw him in January 2021, at least four attempts to relocate him have failed. It doesn't seem like he was ousted by another male, as the territory has remained vacant since his departure. Even his mate of the 2020/21 season appears to have absconded. I also searched neighbouring territories to see if there had been a subtle shift in territorial boundaries, but still no luck. Surveys in nearby suitable habitat also failed to find him. Thus, the available evidence suggests he either perished or left the area searching for greener pastures.

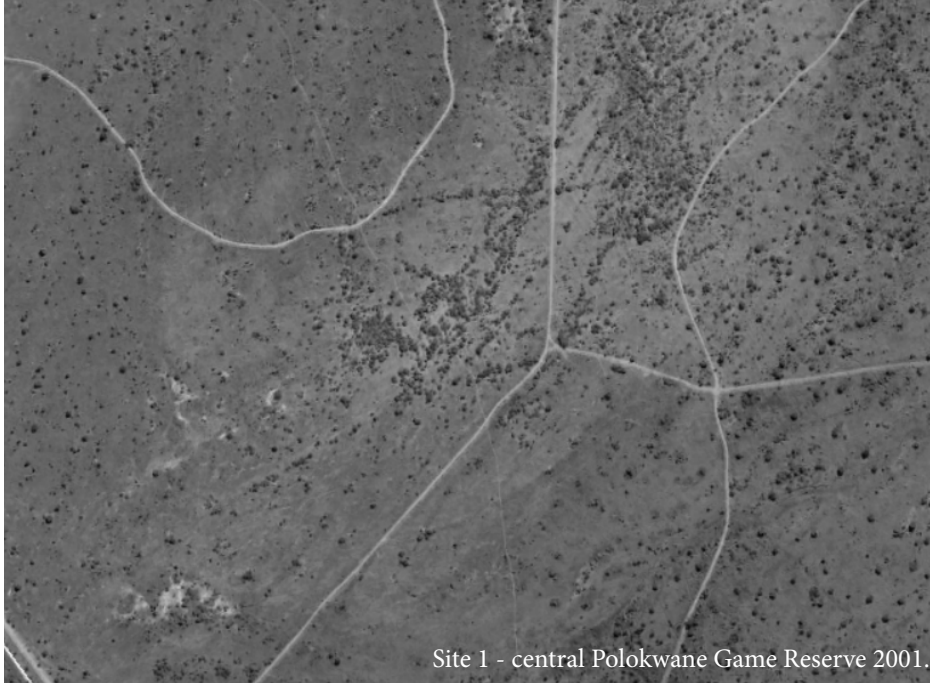
The fact that his territory has remained vacant supports our findings that changes in the habitat structure, notably an increase in the woody component of the vegetation in the Polokwane Game Reserve, have created unfavourable habitat for Short-clawed Larks in this reserve (Marr et al. 2017). A population census in the reserve in 2007 revealed the presence of 55 territorial Short-clawed Lark males. We haven't done another census since then (one is on the cards for September 2021), but I'll be surprised if there are even as many as 20 territorial males in the reserve at present. The decline of Short-clawed Lark in the reserve follows the same pathway as several other open-habitat species which are either declining or locally extinct in the Polokwane Game Reserve, e.g. Spike-heeled Lark, Secretarybird, White-bellied and Northern Black Korhaan. This is matched by a concomitant increase of woodland species such as Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Groundscraper Thrush and Red-crested Korhaan. The Google Earth images accompanying this note (next spread) show changes in the habitat structure between 2001 and 2021. Both sets represent the core areas for Short-clawed Lark in the Polokwane Game

Reserve, and the increase in woody cover is clear from these images. Ground-level changes in the habitat structure in the two core areas for Short-clawed Lark in the Polokwane Game Reserve in 2003 and 2004, and again in 2021, show the extent of the increase in woody cover in a relatively short space of time. Marr et al's. (2017) findings showed Short-clawed Lark's preferred habitat include areas with small amounts of grass cover, lots of bare ground,

short grass, trees that are generally in the 1–2m height range with a canopy diameter also in the 1–2 m range. These ground-level photos show many of the trees in the two core areas now exceed the size threshold preferred by Short-clawed Lark. The reason for its habitat preference can be drawn back to its spectacular display flights.

BELOW Mokgalaje in 2015
© Derek Engelbrecht.





Site 1 - central Polokwane Game Reserve 2001.



Site 2 - south-east of Polokwane Game Reserve 2001; Ellipse = Mokgalaje's territory.



Site 1 - central Polokwane Game Reserve 2021.



Site 2 - south-east of Polokwane Game Reserve 2021; Ellipse = Mokgalaje's territory.

For a male to perform its aerial display flight, he needs a relatively large open area, free of obstructions such as tall trees. Equally important, the display needs to be seen. An increase in tree cover increases the number of potential obstructions. Large trees (2–4 m height and canopy diameter) present as much as an obstacle as a hindrance to be seen by potential mates and rivals. Apart from these inherent requirements in the species biology, changes in the vegetation structure may also cause a change in the predator suite. This, in turn, may negatively impact upon, amongst others, the nesting success of Short-clawed Lark.

I always say that managing habitat for Short-clawed Lark is a conservationist's nightmare. Their stronghold is rural farmland where veld management practices such as heavy grazing and trampling by livestock maintain a short grass sward with lots of bare ground. Furthermore, the reliance on wood harvesting as a source of fuel and for construction purposes in rural areas results in small, even-sized trees, which creates the ideal habitat structure for this species (Brewster et al. 2010; Marr et al. 2017). Whether or not Mokgalaje is still alive, the habitat changes over the lifetime of this lark highlight how subtle changes in habitat structure can significantly impact a population and, ultimately, the species. Perhaps this was Mokgalaje's last and lasting message.



Site 1 - central Polokwane Game Reserve 2 August 2003.



Site 1 - central Polokwane Game Reserve 4 June 2021.



Site 2 - south-east of Polokwane Game Reserve 21 July 2004.



Site 2 - south-east of Polokwane Game Reserve 4 June 2021.

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ABOVE Eye-level changes in the habitat structure of the two core areas for Short-clawed Lark in the Polokwane Game Reserve. The images at Site 2 were taken in Mokgalaje's territory © Derek Engelbrecht.

Marabou Storks breeding in the Limpopo Province

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Marabou Stork has a widespread distribution in sub-Saharan Africa, with numbers estimated somewhere between 200 000 and 500 000 birds and increasing (Dodman and Diagana 2006). Its stronghold in southern Africa is centred around the Zambezi River Valley, the Okavango Delta, the Kruger National Park (Stalmans et al. 2020), but there are also substantial numbers on the Polokwane Plateau. Compared to the large breeding colonies of 1 000+ pairs in East Africa, nesting colonies in southern Africa are much smaller (Stalmans et al. 2020). Furthermore, Marabou Stork breeding has only occurred at 34 known localities in southern Africa: one in Swaziland, one in Botswana, 24 small colonies scattered over Zimbabwe (mainly in the Zambezi River Valley, Harare region and Gonarezhou in the south-eastern Lowveld), six in Namibia, a relatively large meta-population of 380 nests comprising five colonies in the greater Gorongosa region of Mozambique, and a small, recently established population of 5–12 pairs in the Phongola Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Brown and Peacock 2015; Simmons 2015; Stalmans et al. 2020). Although there are three histor-

ic records of breeding attempts in north-eastern South Africa, only one attempt, a nest in 1969, appears to have successfully fledged two young (Elwell 1970; Whyte et al. 1993).

I was recently contacted by Ronald Wainwright, who notified me of two Marabou Stork nesting records on the Limpopo River between the Platjan and Pontdrift Border Posts in December 2020. According to Ronald, there were two nests; one on the Botswana side of the Limpopo River with two well-grown chicks and another nest on the South African side with a single, well-grown chick. These are the first breeding records for Marabou Storks in the Limpopo Province since 1969! Furthermore, it is also one of only two sites in South Africa where Marabou Storks are now known to have bred successfully.

It is interesting that these breeding records follow on the recent establishment of breeding populations of two other species with their traditional breeding strongholds in the region being in the Zambezi River System. Since 2016, African Skimmers bred successfully at various localities in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces in South Africa (Engelbrecht (2020), and McKenzie (2021) reported a breeding colony of Southern Carmine Bee-eaters near the Platjan

Border Post in the Limpopo River Valley. Are these birds the canaries in the coal mine? Only time will tell, but in the meantime, keep 'em peeled for African Pitta.

Acknowledgements A special word of thanks to Duncan McKenzie who encouraged Ronald Wainwright to report this interesting record.

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BELOW The first Marabou Stork nest in the Limpopo Province in more than 50 years © Ronald Wainwright.



A plea for a list of the birds feeding at your bird feeders

Tjaša Zagoršek

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I work for BirdLife partner organization DOPPS in Slovenia. This year we have joined the team [Bird Buddy](#) that is working to create a smart bird feeder. The point of this feeder is that it can recognize birds by the image of the bird that is coming to feed on the feeder. Right now we are creating a world database of the birds that are coming to feeders. Since we would like this database to be as complete as possible, we would be really grateful for your help. Is

it possible to get from you a list of birds that you know are coming to feed on the bird feeders in your country?

Please email Tjaša with your list and cc thelarknews@gmail.com. We will then compile a list of some of the most unusual birds at your garden feeder for a future issue of *The Lark*.

BELOW A Lesser (left) and juvenile Greater Honeyguide (right) sharing their wax feeder in Polokwane © Derek Engelbrecht.



African Grey Hornbill predation by a Honey Badger

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The sealing of nest cavity entrances is a unique trait exercised by hornbills. The female seals herself inside the nest cavity, leaving only a narrow vertical slit through which the male hornbill feeds her and later the chicks. It is widely accepted that this seal, created mostly from faeces, mud, invertebrates and dry material, functions as an anti-predator mechanism protecting the nest contents from predators as well as intraspecific and interspecific competition for nesting cavities (Kemp 1995). Although the seal hardens once dry and creates a solid brick-like effect, if a predator can break the seal, access to the nest contents is relatively easy. The seal as a predator deterrent showed its importance in the Kalahari. Two predation events, one by a Cape Cobra *Naja nivea* and another by a Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea*, occurred at Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas* nests after the chicks failed to re-seal the nest entrances in time following departure of the females. Had the chicks sealed the entrances in time, these predators would most likely have been unable to enter the nest box, or at least had more difficulty entering it (Van de Ven 2017). Predation on natural hornbill nests,

as well as artificial nests (nest boxes), is seldom recorded (Kemp 1967; Kemp 1995; Van de Ven 2017). However, Chacma Baboons *Papio ursinus*, Rock Monitors *Varanus albigularis*, Honey Badgers *Mellivora capensis* and large raptors have all been documented to predate on the nest contents of hornbill nests (Kemp 1995; cf. Hockey et al. 2005).

During one of my nest box checks at Mogalakwena River Reserve (Alldays, Limpopo), I noticed that the seal of a hornbill occupied nest box was broken. The African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* female that nested in the nest box recently departed, and the chicks were still too young to have broken the seal to fledge. On closer inspection, I noticed the remains of the hornbill chicks on the ground below the nest box. Something managed to break the seal, entered the nest box, and predated on the three African Grey Hornbill chicks.

The two trail cameras I had up at the nest box captured the perpetrator, a Honey Badger, in action and recorded the predation event perfectly. Below are screenshots of the trail camera footage of the event and a short description. The footage includes that of both the trail cameras.



The Honey Badger first appeared on the trail camera at 20:46 on 23 April 2021. It immediately started breaking the seal of the hornbill occupied nest box. Having powerful claws of up to 25 mm on the front feet (Stuart and Stuart 2013), it didn't seem like a challenging task.



The trail cameras did not record any movement for approximately an hour. The Honey Badger left and what it did during this hour is unknown, but I doubt it took an hour to eat the hornbill chick. The trail cameras recorded it again, an hour later (21:57), struggling to pull out another chick. Again, it only took about 1 minute to get the chick from the nest box (see photo).



It showed incredible agility and flexibility. It manoeuvred its way around the nest box, trying to find the best spot to claw open the sealed entrance. It took the Honey Badger roughly 4 minutes to break the seal wide enough to fit its front leg through the opening (see photo).



The Honey Badger took a bit more time getting the last chick from the nest box (2 minutes), but it managed to remove it in the same manner as the other two chicks (see photo).

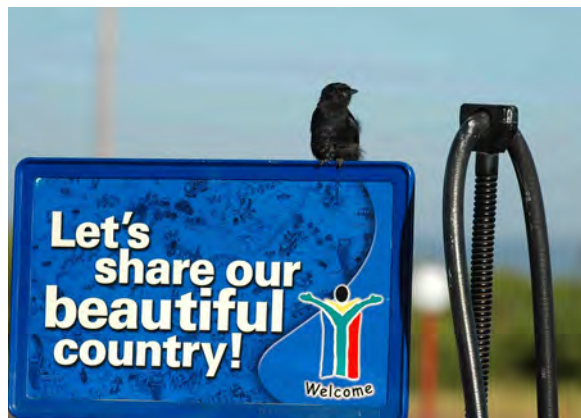


The Honey Badger struggled for about 1 minute, wriggling its front leg inside the nest box, trying to pull one of the chicks out. It seemed like it used its claws to hook and pull the chick closer to the nest box entrance. Once a part of the chick was outside the entrance, it grabbed it with its mouth and pulled it from the nest box.



All three chicks were eaten by the Honey Badger at the same spot, as seen in the photo. After killing and eating the last chick, it checked the nest box one last time at 22:07 and disappeared. The predation event lasted roughly an hour and twenty minutes (20:46–22:07).

Since the predation happened at night, I don't believe sound, such as chicks begging for food, attracted the Honey Badger. They have a keen sense of smell (Carter et al. 2017) and most likely used it to detect the hornbill occupied nest box. Predominantly nocturnal, Honey Badgers are known to be generalist and opportunistic carnivores, preying on a range of prey including small mammals, scorpions, insect larvae, eggs, and reptiles (Carter et al. 2017). Even though hornbills are meticulous about nest sanitation by excreting from the vertical slit left in the seal, removing food remains and faecal matter from the nest cavity (Kemp 1995), occupied nest boxes still have a typical nest odour. This could have been enough to interest the Honey Badger and for it to pursue breaking the seal, resulting in the predation of the three hornbill chicks. Although I was saddened about the loss of the three African Grey Hornbill chicks, the intelligence, agility, and perseverance of the Honey Badger were honestly impressive.



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WANTED: HONEYGUIDE SIGHTINGS

Have you seen a Greater Honeyguide?



1. Record its location



2. Adult or juvenile?



JUVENILE



ADULT MALE



ADULT FEMALE

3. Did it guide you?



4. Anything else to add? (optional)





Honeyguide Research Project

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16 April 2021 - 15 June 2021

Share your interesting sightings seen within a 100 km radius of Polokwane. Please submit your sightings to thelarknews@gmail.com and include the date, locality and a brief write-up of your sighting. Photos are welcome but will be used at the discretion of the editors.

SABAP2 Out of Range record; Regional rarity; National Rarity

NON-PASSERINES

African Rail - 8 May 2021. At the George's Valley/Magoebaskloof junction at Haenertsburg (Richter Van Tonder).

African Skimmer - 25 May 2021. A single bird stayed a few days at Letaba Estates (Johan Botma).

Bronze-winged Courser - 24 April 2021. An adult bird seen in the Polokwane Game Reserve (Daniel Engelbrecht).

Diederik Cuckoo - 8 May 2021. An unusually late immature bird seen at the Madea/Sebayeng Wetlands (Derek Engelbrecht).

COMPILED BY Derek Engelbrecht



Diederik Cuckoo © Derek Engelbrecht

Hooded Vulture - 12 June 2021. At least 9 juveniles at the Mockford Vulture Restaurant (Birdlife Polokwane club outing).

Lappet-faced Vulture - 12 June 2021. At least four adults at the Mockford Vulture Restaurant (Birdlife Polokwane club outing).

Western Osprey - 5 June 2021. An overwintering bird seen at Flag Boshielo Dam (Leonie Kellerman).

Ovambo Sparrowhawk - 8 May 2021. A bird soaring in the Polokwane Game Reserve (Daniel Engelbrecht).

Palm-nut Vulture - 3 June 2021. One flying over Letaba Estates (Daniel Engelbrecht); 6 June 2021. An adult seen at Entabeni Safari Conservancy in the Waterberg (Bianca Boswell).

Pied Avocet - 8 May 2021. One bird seen at the Madea/Sebayeng Wetlands (Derek Engelbrecht).

Secretarybird - 8 May 2021. One seen in grasslands at Vencor East (Richter Van Tonder); 12 June 2021. A single bird seen at Mockford Piggery (Birdlife Polokwane club outing).

Southern Bald Ibis - 27 April 2021. A single bird seen on the sports fields of the University of Limpopo (Susan Dippenaar).

PASSERINES

African Red-eyed Bulbul - 12 June 2021. Three birds at Lowlands Farm on the Randfontein road (Schalk and Annette Van Schalkwyk).



Western Osprey © Leonie Kellerman



Palm-nut Vulture © Daniel Engelbrecht



Secretarybird © Richter Van Tonder



African Red-eyed Bulbul
 © Annette Van Schalkwyk

**BEST OF THE REST
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

NON-PASSERINES

Bronze-winged Courser - 18 May 2021. An adult seen on banks of the Mogalakwena River at Limpokwena Lodge (Derek Engelbrecht).



Bronze-winged Courser © Derek Engelbrecht

Denham's Bustard - 6 May 2021. One seen 10 km southwest of Settlers (Stephan Terblanche).

Great White Pelican - 26 April 2021. A flock of 80+ individuals 5 km north of Mopani Rest Camp, Kruger National Park (Leigh-Ann Hoets).



Great White Pelican © Leigh-Ann Hoets

Pink-backed Pelican - 17 April 2021. One seen at Vogelfontein, Nylsvley Nature Reserve (Christo Venter); 24 April 2021. A single bird at Vogelfontein, Nylsvley Nature Reserve (Jody De Bruyn); 29 May 2021. Two birds still present at Vogelfontein (Wilma Moreby) and these birds were present until at least 5 June 2021 (Arnold Van Zyl).



Pink-backed Pelican © Wilma Moreby

PASSERINES

African Golden Oriole - 27 April 2021. A bird seen at the bridge at Pafuri (Leigh-Ann Hoets).

Karoo Thrush - 23 May 2021. A bird caught on a trail camera in a garden near Ndlovumzi Game Reserve, 15 km west of Hoedspruit (Darren Pietersen).



Karoo Thrush © Darren Pietersen

Malachite Sunbird - 26 April 2021. One seen in Hoedspruit (Garrett Fitzpatrick).



HELP SAVE OUR SEABIRDS

BirdLife South Africa is collaborating with the Department of Environmental Affairs and the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology to rid the island of mice and restore it towards its once-pristine beauty.

The bait required to cover the island alone will cost upwards of R30 million. To help raise the necessary funds, please would you consider sponsoring one or more hectares of land on Marion Island.

At R1000 (US\$90), you can aid us in ensuring that this monumental project will be successful.

Once completed, Marion Island will be the largest island from which mice have successfully been eradicated.

Be a part of history, and sponsor one (or more) hectares of this beautiful oceanic gem.

For more information about this very worthwhile project and how to become a sponsor, please visit <https://mousefreemarion.org/about/>

Percent of target reached: 5.73%

Sponsored Hectares: 1741 ha

Sponsors: 657



Marion Island Sponsor Map
August 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS



Birdlife Polokwane Club Meeting

Date: 06 July 2021

Time: 18:30

Venue: (details to be confirmed)

Birdlife Polokwane Club Meeting

Date: 03 August 2021

Time: 18:30

Venue: (details to be confirmed)

Birdlife Polokwane Club Meeting

Date: 07 September 2021

Time: 18:30

Venue: (details to be confirmed)

Club outing

Where? Letaba Estates

Date: 17 July 2021

Contact: Richter Van Tonder

Cell: 082 213 8276



Shopping list: African Skimmer (Waterploeer), African Cuckoo-Hawk (Koekoek-
valk), African Finfoot (Watertrapper), Half-collared Kingfisher (Blouvisvanger), Grey-
rumped Swallow (Gryskruisswael). Lizard Buzzard (Akkedisvalk), Green-capped Ere-
momele (Donkerwangbossanger),

Klub uitstappie

Waar? Plaas Hugomond (Mogwadi area)

Datum: 14 August 2021

Kontak: Richter Van Tonder

Sel: 082 213 8276



Inkopielys: Ons was nog nie by die plaas nie maar die gemengde bosveld belowe
'n goeie spesielys vir die tipiese bosveld spesies. Roofarend (Tawny Eagle), Gevlekte
Sandpatrys (Burchell's Sandgrouse) en Witkatlagter (Southern Pied Babbler) is van
die spesies wat wel in die omgewing voorkom.

Klub uitstappie

Waar? Club Ranch Safaris
Datum: September 2021 (date to be confirmed)
Kontak: Richter Van Tonder
Sel: 082 213 8276



Inkopielys: Visuil (Pel's Fishing-Owl), Witkopkiewiet (White-crowned Lapwing), Bosveldpapegaai (Meyer's Parrot), Tropiese Waterfiskaal (Tropical Boubou), Saalbekooievaar (Saddle-billed Stork), Langstertglansspreeu (Meves's Starling)

**REMEMBER TO CUT THE STRAPS ON DISPOSABLE MASKS
BEFORE THROWING AWAY**



THE AFRICAN birdfair

31 JULY 2021 VIRTUAL

Virtually the best bird fair in Africa.

The Virtual African Bird Fair is back on 31 July 2021 for its second edition!

Make sure not to miss the biggest event in African birding. This virtual event includes a star-studded line-up of speakers, opportunities to interact with exhibitors and online stores, networking with other birders on the continent and around the world, and even an online auction.

The proceeds from this event are put straight back into supporting BirdLife South Africa's important conservation work.

For details on how to register, please see BirdLife South Africa's website and social media, or email birdfair2021@birdlife.org.za

Cinderella's page

Birdlife Polokwane honours the LBJs of this world which may never make it onto a cover page.



Bushveld Pipit © Leonie Kellerman