



# THE BABBLER

Newsletter of BirdLife Zimbabwe

*February - March  
2017 No. 134*

**Hi everyone,**

Due to financial constraints and printing costs we will be sending out your newsletter in electronic format for the foreseeable future.

This does mean I can use more colour but I would welcome news from more people and whatever photos you can send me - [gemsaf@mango.zw](mailto:gemsaf@mango.zw)

So please don't be shy - support the regular stalwarts!

Here is No. 134 in a new layout; it's all rather experimental!

Happy Birding in this rather wet season, ☁️ hope the sun is going to come out,

Ian Riddell

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# Branch News

## Mashonaland

### *Branch visit to Greystone Nature Preserve, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2016*

There hasn't been enough rain yet to fill the dam or make the island an island but there was an impressive array of birds for the 9 of us who turned up on Saturday. We recorded 77 species despite the only waterbirds being a Hamerkop and a Black Crake. I must admit, though, most of the birds would escape the attention of the ordinary punter. I was lucky enough to be in the company of Patrick who has the youngest, sharpest, eyes and ears in the group. Not the slightest movement or sound goes undetected and he also has the ability to identify them all. On my own I would probably have listed only half that number.



**African Wood-owl. Photo Ian Riddell**

Rather than recount the whole of the hour and a half circuit, I shall choose the most memorable half hour of our walk. We had completed about three quarters of the route and were listening out for the call of the Black-throated Wattle-eye when a Dark-capped Bulbul began calling loudly and insistently. Thinking there might be a snake or another predator causing the kerfuffle, we went to investigate and found an African Wood-owl sitting calmly on a horizontal branch about 5m from the path and 1.5m from the ground, surrounded by many smaller birds who had

come to see what was annoying the Toppie. Among the excited onlookers, none of which actually attacked the owl, were lots of Blue Waxbills, Red-billed and Jameson's Firefinch, 2 Southern Hyliotas, Crested and Black-collared Barbet, a Willow Warbler, a Greater Honeyguide and a Brown-hooded Kingfisher. What a privilege to witness such a group of different species from close quarters! The Wood-owl sat impassively throughout and after a while the Toppie quietened down and the spectators moved on.

Other noteworthy species were a male Black Cuckooshrike with a very prominent yellow shoulder patch, Purple-banded and Copper Sunbird, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, White-throated Robin-chat and 2 Brown-crowned Tchagras.

**Ken Dixon**

#### CORRECTION



*Apologies to James Ball for crediting this photograph of a Spotted Eagle-owl to Peter Munday in The Babbler No. 133*

## ***Visit to Hippo Pools, Shamva District, 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016***

David and Penny Rockingham-Gill went to Hippo Pools from 28-30 December 2016, just after 95mm of rain on Christmas Day. The commonest birds were the Village Weavers. They were nesting on 3 islands with about 120 nests, some of which had eggs but most had chicks just about to fledge. Some young birds were seen to take their first c.20m flight from nest to riverbank. If they failed, and I didn't see one fail, it would have been food for croc, tiger fish or barbel. Red-chested Cuckoos were calling throughout the day and African Emerald Cuckoos could be heard some way away. 2 Little Grebes were on the dam with a pair of Reed Cormorants, but the dam had just filled from empty 3 days before. An African Goshawk was in camp and there were at least 14 Trumpeter Hornbills visiting fruiting figs. Some birds I don't report often were Yellow-breasted Apalis, Pale Flycatcher, African Green-pigeon, Grey Heron, Lesser Striped Swallow, Black-crowned Tchagra, African Reed-warbler and Grey-headed Bush-shrike.

Animals recorded were 2 waterbuck, 3 warthog, 4 kudu, 20 impala and 40 Vervet Monkeys, with shouting Greater Bushbabies after dark.

**D & P R-G**

Ken and Lynn Dixon were also visiting Hippo Pools. A little further upstream at Water Bessie, the tent opposite the animal feeding-station, we saw all 4 giraffe, 4 zebra and a wildebeest as well. New Year's Eve saw the welcome return of at least two hippos that had been away for some time in shallower water upstream.

Fairly frequent visitors to our spot was a family of 3 Black-throated Wattle-eyes while the African Finfoot male, female and 1 young all crossed the river at different times and the White-backed Night-heron, Little Bittern and a Malachite Kingfisher appeared briefly in the reeds on the opposite bank. I had only a brief glimpse of a Narina Trogon but their calls could often be heard. There were disappointingly few birds in the riverine forest but a Lizard Buzzard family was very active at their nest over the old ablutions. African Wood-owls called in the evening, a much more welcome sound than the Bushbabies.

**K & L Dixon**

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## **Matabeleland**

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### ***Crete to Cape Vintage Air Rally – In Bulawayo 8<sup>TH</sup> & 9<sup>TH</sup> December 2016***

After months of planning by the organisers, and weeks of travel by the participants, those planes that remained in the rally arrived at the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo International Airport, Bulawayo.

Bulawayo folk had been advised that the first plane should arrive around 8.30 a.m. and on my arrival at the airport at approximately 8.00 a.m. the number of people who had travelled out to witness this leg of the Rally was astounding! The Vintage and Classic Car Club had been invited to bring their cars to the airport – so they too could be on display and admired by all. These immaculately maintained treasures of years gone by were allowed to park on the airport apron. An impressive view for the pilots of the Vintage aircraft, and accompanying aircraft, as they landed and taxied their way to the airport building.





It seemed as though the public of Bulawayo were waiting in vain as the allotted time slot for the arrival of the airplanes came and went, and then another hour passed with still no arrivals! All that was being said was that the planes were delayed in Vic Falls and the first one would only touch down just after 11.00 a.m. This time delay gave the perfect opportunity to mingle with the public and hand out the flyers and information leaflets informing them that this rally was not being run just for the pleasure of the participants, but they were also flying to raise much needed awareness of the vulnerability of the Vultures of Africa and at the same time fundraise for them. The general public were hugely responsive to this information, and many were unaware of how serious is the threat to these magnificent birds.



Eventually the first plane was spotted at 11.25 a.m. and after that they continued to arrive at regular intervals with the last one arriving at 12.10. At 12.47 p.m. the largest participating plane – the Antanov – landed, taxied, and “coughed and spluttered” its way onto the concourse. Some of the vintage cars from roughly the same era as the planes, lined up in front of the planes to form the perfect, unusual photo opportunity.

As this was a planned ‘rest stop’ for both pilots and planes, with the impending arrival of an international flight at the airport, as well as inclement weather being predicted – no time at all seemed to have passed before the pilots were asked to taxi their aircraft to an empty hanger.

It was a fantastic way to spend most of a day – chatting to the public about Vultures, having the opportunity to see and greet so many of the ‘hidden treasure vehicles’ and their rightfully proud owners from right here in Bulawayo, and finally to have had the privilege of meeting and greeting aviation enthusiasts from around the globe whose enthusiasm extends to their avian friends – The Vultures of Africa.

**Cecilia Hubbard**



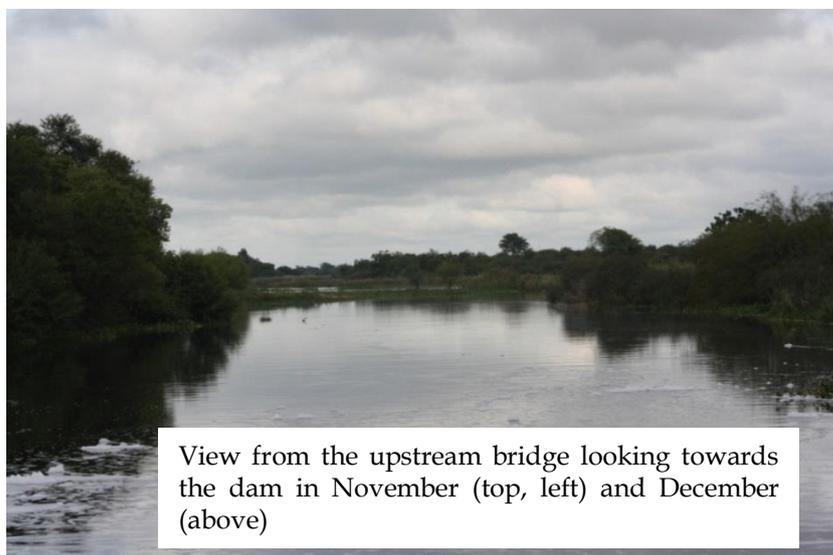
## AISLEBY SURVEY, 20 November & 18 December

The surveys at Aisleby in November and December took place under conditions that were



extreme opposites. In November the water level in the river and dam were extremely low. The water hyacinth continues to flourish and with the low level of the dam the surface area of open water was greatly reduced. Surrounding areas were very dry. By December a lot of water had flowed into the dam and the surrounding areas were green and the bush thick. In several places the rising water had flooded the grass attracting very large barbel and very large bullfrogs.

Another 24 species were added to the list bringing the total to date to 159. The new species were: Chin-spot Batis, Little Bittern, Zitting Cisticola, Senegal Coucal, Black Cuckoo, Diderick Cuckoo, Jacobin and Red-chested Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Spotted Flycatcher, Lesser Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, White-crowned Lapwing, Common House-martin, Neddicky, Yellow-throated Petronia, White-throated Robin-chat, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Violet-backed Starling, Abdim's Stork, Scarlet-chested Sunbird,



View from the upstream bridge looking towards the dam in November (top, left) and December (above)

White-winged Widowbird and a vulture - species not determined. 96 species were observed in November, 59 species in December. 770 water birds were counted in November, and 656 water birds in December. These numbers were much lower than in previous months - in comparison 2,727 water birds were counted in September and 2,588 in October. The exception was Cattle Egrets for which the number observed in December was much higher than in previous months.

Species	No. Dec	No. Nov	Average Aug-Oct
Red-knobbed Coot	148	218	605
Little Grebe	6	0	697
Southern Pochard	12	0	189
Red-billed Teal	78	80	380
Black-winged Stilt	0	2	147
Cattle Egret	245	37	120

Text: Adele Edwards

Photos: Gaynor Lightfoot

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## ***Annual Bistro, Saturday 7 January***



*Have you ever eaten a meal that is so good you just wish you didn't have to fill up and could keep on eating? Well, that was me at Cecilia Hubbard's BirdLife Bistro!*

*It has become something of an annual tradition – this time held after Christmas instead of before – where the current Matabeleland Chairperson, Cecilia Hubbard, cooks BirdLife Members a slap-up oxtail meal. This is a fund raising effort to help with Matabeleland's expenses through the year and members are charged a nominal fee for their meal. Cecilia manages to get ingredients donated, and our most grateful thanks go to the various donors.*

*Held on a Saturday night in January, the lounge had earlier been cleared out and a huge dining table set up. With some help from fellow BLZ committee-cooks, Cecilia turned out a stunning meal with a choice of starters (I had both!) and a delightful dessert. By the way, this is one function we have no problem getting the men to attend! Fourteen members and two guests attended and ate, drank and were merry. It was a wonderful night all round. We didn't speak too much about birds I must admit, and the only road blocks stories told were really funny ones.*

*Thank you so much to Cecilia for once again hosting this fun event, and I have no doubt that everyone is looking forward to the next Bistro as much as I am.*

***Karen Learmonth***

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Marina Jackson photographed this African Hoopoe feeding a Greater Honeyguide chick in her garden at Qalisa (Suburbs, Bulawayo) early in November. They were seen together for four consecutive days after which time the honeyguide disappeared

## HWANGE – December 2016

What a joy to be back in the park now that there's been a bit of rain! We took the opportunity to have a four night stay at Main Camp in the middle of the month and were delighted to see how the park had greened up in most places. Rainfall has, apparently, been pretty patchy but it was great to see some of the natural pans filling up, the grass becoming green and lush again with the bush thickening up, as well as the wild flowers starting to emerge, the more soggy patches littered with *Crinum* veld lilies.

Our first lovely surprise was seeing the water at Livingi. Two solar units are in operation there so along with the help of some rainfall it is now a veritable lake! Gary says in all his years, he has never seen such water there. The water was teeming with waterbirds – ducks, teal, geese, Black-winged Stilts, African Spoonbills, a lone Grey Heron as well as a Little Egret, Grey Crowned Crane – sweeping, swimming, dabbling and ducking to a chorus of frogs. Also in attendance was a cloud of kites – we suspect Black Kites as well as Yellow-billed Kites – constantly wheeling, calling and diving, teasing the waterbirds and sending the frogs a-diving as they swooped down, tipping the water on a fly past.

Despite the time of the year and the thick bush, we got to see some lovely game. It took a while to find a giraffe but once we had, we saw several. The wildebeest and impala were busy with new infants so we got to see some real new-borns on their shaky, spindly legs and we watched several pale brown wildebeest calves cavorting and dashing about. There was a small herd of waterbuck lazily lying about in the Nyamandhlovu vleis and two of the young rams were constantly testing their strength against each other. The hippos seem to have abandoned Nyamandhlovu in favour of Dom although the huge crocs still bask around its edges. Lovely herds of fat zebra were seen and one morning at Nyamandhlovu 25 kudu gingerly trotted down for a drink. Several Black-backed Jackals were seen, obviously lying outside their dens drying out. Everywhere the vleis were teeming with storks and we were amazed at the large numbers of White Storks along with the Abdim's and Woolly-

necked Storks. At Nyamandhlovu there was a crowd of 42 White Storks, some of the birds having a competition to see who could control the top of a large anthill so there was much clonking of beaks and wing flapping until the victor stood defending his castle atop the mound. Sitting having drinks at Makwa one evening, we stopped trying to count the Marabou Storks – there were 200 plus. They were plodding about mostly gobbling down frogs in the various puddles and ponds. After a short, sharp shower, quite a few of them flew into the tops of trees, to spread their gigantic wings in an attempt to dry out. Of course, the migrant birds are back in full force and everywhere we looked were big brown jobs perched or flying in numbers – the Steppe Eagles, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Steppe Buzzards, Black and Yellow-billed Kites, and of course, several others we couldn't identify – all waiting for the alate termites to emerge. Two Montagu's Harriers were quartering the open area at Tshabema. There weren't many elephants around but we did get to see a couple of breeding herds with some very small babies. Any mounds of dung we came across were usually seething with dung beetles trying to find enough dung to roll and we only came across one tortoise plodding across the road. We saw three lionesses at a distance one afternoon and managed to get a really lovely shot of one of them on a termite mound gazing at the several car loads of game spotters staring at her! One very wet day, we abandoned our idea of going down to Ngweshla as it was so wet. So after a quick look at Sinanga, driving back towards Makwa, we came across the pride of four lion that had been seen several times, this time having the gorgeous animals all to ourselves, walking along the road towards us in the drizzle. The huge male passed within metres of the car affording our visitors an amazing photo opportunity. There was also a large, beautiful female and a younger female who was rather agitated at first but then seemed to settle down once she'd passed the vehicle. Bringing up the rear was a young male. Another fantastic sighting was when we headed off to Guvalala to see how things were faring there now that the platform has been

sorted out and a more reliable water source put in place. Just before getting to Boss Long One we found a pack of 18 wild dogs taking an interest in a herd of zebra. They abandoned that hunt and set off down the road, and as we followed them, they stopped every now and then to curiously inspect us, particularly the younger dogs, with large, soup-bowl ears erect coming ever closer to the vehicle. Getting to the open area near Boss Long One, most of the dogs took to the water in a large puddle near the road, having a great game, bounding and bouncing around, playing tag and generally playing the fool. Two of the large male dogs were collared and one of the older females was carrying a front leg injury. Not having seen

wild dog for some time, we were delighted as were our visitors. Such a treat.

It was so satisfying to see the water situation so good in the places that we managed to visit during our time there. The solar units have made a difference and hopefully the rains will continue, making a huge difference once the dry sets in again.

We should like to wish everyone compliments of the season and all the best for 2017. Thank you for all the support during the year. Please keep supporting the cause and also visiting Hwange as much as possible.

**John and Jenny Brebner**

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## Mashonaland West

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### *Chanyika Ranch Sebakwe -18.91400 30.23400, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016*

To be invited to this new venue was a real surprise and privilege for Chris & Sandy Payne, some friends and I. We travelled to Kwekwe, then the Mvuma road for 39 km with a left turn for 19 km at arrive at the lodge of the 8,000 ha ranch. The great dyke is visible from the lodge and chrome mining is taking place but is not too much annoyance.

We arrived safely on Friday at 4 p.m. in torrential rain, the first big downpour of the season. Daybreak on Saturday was sunny, bright with clean air as the bush and vegetation had been washed and all come to life overnight. Insects crawling everywhere and the birds singing happily. The game usually seen at the salt licks was nowhere to be seen.

100+ White-backed Vultures at a zebra carcass was enthralling. They were relaxed, healthy and undisturbed.

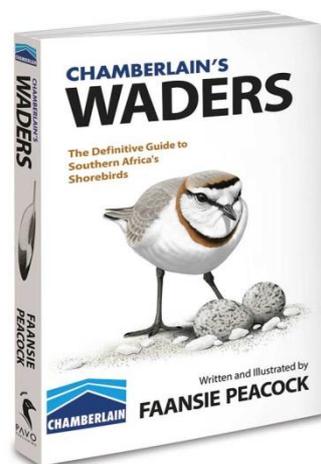
The following of interest were also noted: 3 Wahlberg's Eagles, 1 Martial Eagle, Meyer's Parrot, Fiery-necked Nightjar, a pair of Lilac-breasted Rollers, African Grey Hornbill and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Red-faced Crombec and Long-billed Crombec, Bushveld Pipit, Magpie Shrike, Green-winged Pytilia, Violet-backed Starling, African Pygmy-kingfisher, Golden-breasted Bunting and Wood Pipit. Only a few groups of Helmeted Guineafowl as they were pairing off for egg-

laying. "Hope" the juvenile Black-headed Heron reared by Wendy Olivier visits the house regularly and brings joyful pleasure as he waits at the various doors to say hello and mingles with the dogs and drinks water from the dog dish. His large heronry family is not far away. These adults seem to continually be building nests and rearing young. Large groups of Abdim's Storks have also appeared and feeding on cultivated fields.

We look forward to much rain this summer season for Kadoma and district.

**Margaret Parrock**

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Look out for Faansie Peacock's new book in bookshops or when visiting South Africa.

Visit the site below for previews and more information on this, **The Definitive Guide to Southern Africa's Shorebirds**

<http://faansiepeacock.com/books/>

## Vulture Surveys in the Zambezi Valley



Team members at Mkanga Field Station

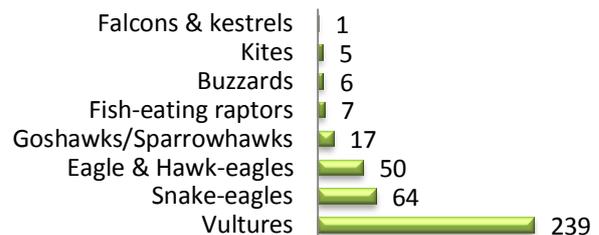
As part of a Vulture Mapping Project, a road transect survey was conducted from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of October in the Middle and Lower Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe. The team comprised Neil Deacon, Fadzai Matsvimbo, Lovelater Sebele, Duncan Parkes and Augustine Malunga. Areas surveyed include Karoi-Marongora, Rifa, Nyakasanga, Mana Pools National Park, Chewore Safari Area, Kanyemba and Mushumbi Pools and ranged from communal areas to hunting areas and a National Park.

This was certainly a challenging time to work in the Zambezi Valley. We had to battle with a combination of extremely high day temperatures, Tsetse flies and dilapidated roads but managed without any problems.

A Nissan Hardbody double cab was used with the observers sitting in the back of the vehicle, giving an unimpeded view of the surroundings at all times. The surveys followed the prescribed method: the vehicle being driven at between 30-50km/h and the routes were recorded using a GPS. At any given time, the team consisted of a driver, at least two observers and a recorder. Transects

were chosen mainly due to accessibility and to give a representation of the various habitat types and were carried out between 9.00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and all raptors encountered were recorded.

### Numbers in bird groups



Vultures had the highest number of individuals recorded. The figure shows that a total of 239 individuals were recorded. Snake-eagles were the second most abundant group whilst the least abundant family was falcons/kestrels. The most numerous vulture was the White-backed Vulture, which comprised 92% of all the vultures recorded. The second most abundant was the Hooded Vulture, whilst the White-headed and the

Lappet-faced Vultures were the least abundant. In areas where there was no water or springs nearby we saw very, very few birds if any, then when a Meves's Starling or a Red-billed Hornbill was spotted we would start seeing many more raptors. The small birds were great indicators, especially the starlings.

Outside the protected area system, the rapid changes taking place to the environment are very visible with huge areas of natural woodland being converted to settlements and

agricultural land. At this rate the loss of biodiversity is indeed a cause for concern.

### Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority for the support given to the team as well as waiving the research fees for the permit. BirdLife Zimbabwe also acknowledges the support (financial and technical) given by Ralph Buij and Andre Botha to make the surveys possible.

**Fadzai Matsvimbo**

### **To Humani Ranch (Save Valley Conservancy) for the weekend 18-21/11/2016. Turgwe River Camp -20.412222, 32.147500**



Annabelle Hill, Penny and I set off in one car and Charlie and Gill Bruce in another. It took us two hours to go the 60 km from the Birchenough Bridge road to Turgwe River; the road was excellent, and all the while we were game viewing. At camp we were probably 10 km downstream from Karen & Jean Paolillo at Hippo Haven. Water was running in the river, but further downstream the water disappeared into the sand and it was dry at the Save Junction.

At camp we had 20 African Palm-swifts breeding (one egg found on the lawn below), 3 African Black Swifts flying with them and Collared Palm-thrush.

Overlooking the river we had a pair of Saddle-billed Storks, a Marabou Stork, a Black Stork, Goliath Heron, 2 Hadedda Ibis, Hamerkop, African Fish-eagle, Cattle Egrets, Water Thick-knee, White-crowned Lapwing, Common Greenshank, White-faced Duck, African Pied Wagtail, Meyer's Parrot, African Emerald Cuckoo, White-browed Robin-chat and White-throated Robin-chats, Orange-

breasted Bush-shrike and Grey-headed Bush-shrike and Verreaux's Eagle-owl calling at night. Game around us were waterbuck, nyala, bushbuck, kudu, buffalo and baboons and lion and Spotted Hyaena heard near camp. Both hyaenas have been recorded on the farm. Half a kilometre away was a colony of breeding White-fronted Bee-eaters.

On a couple of pans near the Save River were Dwarf Bittern, White-crowned Night-heron and Rufous-bellied Heron, Kittlitz's Plover, Three-banded Plover, Burnt-necked Eremomela and Woodland Kingfisher. We were told when these pans really fill, they cover acres of ground and the duck and other waterbirds are there in their thousands.

At the junction of the Turgwe/Save we had Comb Duck, 23 Spur-winged Goose, Egyptian Goose, Bateleur, Marsh Sandpiper and Common Sandpipers, Malachite Kingfisher, Blacksmith Lapwing, Woolly-necked Stork and Yellow-billed Storks, African Jacana, Black-winged Stilt and Sombre Greenbul.



In the bushveld we had 66 White-backed Vultures on a dead zebra; we also found one

nest in a Baobab at -20.409722, 32.16805. Three groups of Southern Ground-hornbill and only 4 Yellow-billed Oxpeckers on say 50 buffalo. On the side of a kopje was an African Crowned Eagle and nest in a Baobab tree\*. Roger Whitall told us this bird breeds in most years and not just once every two years. Tawny Eagles were there and we came across a Martial Eagle eating a rock monitor. The late Don Broadley once told me this was a common Martial Eagle prey item. Our first Red-backed Shrike of the season was 21.11.2016 and Crowned Lapwings were on a plain with zebra and wildebeest. Meves's Starlings were everywhere and I thought I saw a pair of Common Myna. We heard Red-chested Cuckoo.

We saw a 1700 year old baobab (Carbon dated) with a *Diospyros* growing in it and Red-billed Buffalo-weaver nests in the canopy. Other buffalo-weaver nests were in transmission line frames.



Sadly we were told the Common Ostrich are no longer and there are only 3 Kori Bustards, one pair and a single; (his/her mate ) hit a powerline and was killed.

Overall we had over 120 species of birds, mostly big ones, and 25 species of animals. Lion 6, Wild Dog 8, and Black-backed Jackal, eland, giraffe, kudu, and of the smaller stuff 1 Grysbok, 1 Duiker and a large group of say 30 Banded Mongoose. If Humani Ranch isn't on your Bucket List it should be. Anabelle Hill is thanked for arranging the visit, and the Whitall

family for being so good to us while we were there. They have been there since 1930.



\*In my list of birds that nest in baobabs, I have White-backed Vulture, Tawny Eagle, Verreaux's Eagle, Dickinson's Kestrel, Hamerkop, Meyer's Parrot, Grey-headed Parrot, Pel's Fishing-owl, Southern Ground-hornbill, Mosque Swallow, Böhm's Spinetail, Red-billed Buffalo-weaver, Red-headed Weaver and White-browed Sparrow-weaver. African Crowned Eagle was not one of them. Have you any others?



### To & Fro

**18.11.2016.** We stopped at Widgeon Pan, Gutu District, for breakfast, on the way down where we saw Yellow-billed Kite, 2 Secretarybirds, an African Marsh-harrier, a Black-bellied Bustard and a Temminck's Courser.

**22.11.2016.** On the way home we dropped in at Widgeon Pan again but there was nothing there. 2 or 3 km further north we found a place with lots of standing water with 2 Grey Crowned Cranes, 2 Secretarybirds, 30-odd Lesser Spotted Eagles and a few Steppe Buzzards, all eating termite alates.

**David Rockingham-Gill** [rgill@zol.co.zw](mailto:rgill@zol.co.zw)

## ***PAOC – another great success!***

We were very pleased to see so many National Coordinators (or representatives) at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) in October. A special thanks to the coordinators who came to the IWC meeting, all those who provided important input beforehand and Col. Abdoulaye Ndiaye for facilitating the meeting. The conference proved to be an excellent forum for sharing experiences, stimulating new ideas and to catch-up with old friends and colleagues. We are indebted to everyone involved in the organising of the PAOC for all their assistance and tireless efforts. In particular, we are grateful for their efforts in helping us celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IWC with our African colleagues and partners, all of whom have played such a vital role in ensuring the continuation and expansion of this global monitoring programme. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and wish all the IWC network success in the upcoming January count!



Col. Abdoulaye Ndiaye cuts the IWC50 cake at the PAOC, Dakar, Senegal. Photo by Szabolcs Nagy

## **New representative for African coordinators**

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Miguel Xavier (Angola) will follow John Musina (Kenya) as the sub-Saharan African National Coordinator Representative to the Strategic Working Group of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership, after elections at the IWC National Coordinators meeting in Dakar, Senegal. We are very grateful to John for all of his efforts and contributions over the last few years, and we look forward to working closely with Miguel to make sure the views and needs of National Coordinators are fairly represented under the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership. Miguel speaks French, Portuguese and English and has a lot of experience working in different sectors, which will be of great value in his role to represent you on the SWG. Miguel will also work with regional representatives for West Africa (Papanie Bai-Sesay, Sierra Leone), Central Africa (Alphonsine Koumba Mfoubou, Gabon), East Africa (Judith Mirembe, Uganda) and Southern Africa (Michael Brooks & the CWAC team, South Africa).

## **AEWA Workshop Strengthens Data Management Capacity in Africa**

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This news item has been provided by AEWA.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, in collaboration with Wetlands International and the Technical Support Unit (TSU) for the implementation of the AEWA African Initiative, organised a Waterbird Data Management Workshop from 22 to 24 October in Dakar, Senegal, immediately following the 14<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC 14) which also took place in Dakar. The

local organisation of the workshop was supported by Wetlands International Africa.

The aim of the workshop was to improve the capacity in the Anglophone AWEA Contracting Parties in Africa to manage waterbird monitoring data collected in the framework of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), as well as to cleanse and fill in gaps in waterbird and site-related data currently available in the IWC database for the participating countries. The expected impact of the workshop is the substantial enhancement to the quality and quantity of the data over time.

Made possible through a generous financial contribution from the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) in Switzerland, the workshop brought together some 20 participants, among them national IWC data managers from 13 African countries (Angola, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe) as well as representatives from some AWEA partners concerned with waterbird data collection in Africa, including Wetlands International Africa and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative.

The training, which was conducted by data management experts of Wetlands International and the TSU, equipped workshop participants with an in-depth understanding of IWC processes, data management and the underlying systems and tools required for data entry, curation and analysis. It was also an opportunity for participants to exchange relevant experience and expertise. Hands-on sessions enabled participants to practise and consolidate the knowledge and skills they acquired during the workshop, for example on reviewing and cleansing existing IWC historical data. In addition, a case study on the Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) programme, implemented by South Africa, helped to illustrate effective data management in the region.

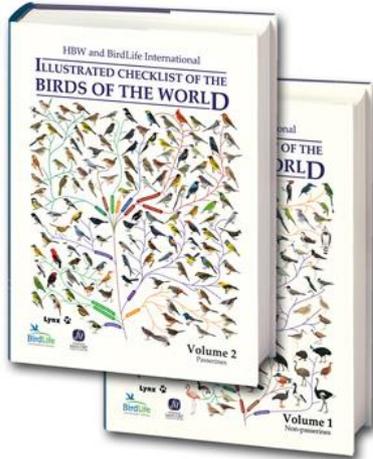
With the support from the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and the Norwegian Environmental Agency to Wetlands International participants were able to attend the last day of PAOC 14. This gave them the opportunity to participate in a round table discussion on IWC planning and coordination at the regional level as well as in a symposium on the links between waterbird data collection and policy and decision-making.



IWC national coordinators and representatives at the PAOC, Dakar, Senegal. Photo by Szabolcs Nagy

## Recent publications

The first ever **FULLY ILLUSTRATED** checklist  
of the birds of the world  
is now complete!



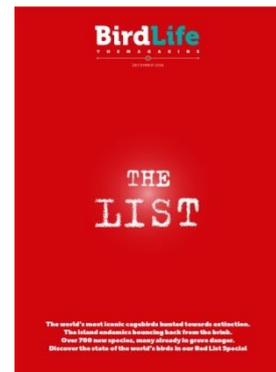
### *HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World*

Volume 1 (Non Passerines) and  
Volume 2 (Passerines) are available!

With a new taxonomy that incorporates the most  
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systematic and consistent methodology.

### Why the *Illustrated Checklist* is **THE ULTIMATE LIST**

Read [this article](#) from the December 2016 issue of *BirdLife–The magazine*. *Illustrated Checklist* co-author, Prof. Nigel Collar of BirdLife International, explains why this tome will be a vital tool for conservationists.



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## BOOKS FOR SALE

From Neuby-Varty, contact Pen Sylvester, [pen.ann.15@gmail.com](mailto:pen.ann.15@gmail.com) for full details. 📖-1st Edition

📖 *Birds of the Gauntlet*, Von Michaelis, Hutchinson, London 1952

📖 *The Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, Priest, Volumes I, III, IV, William Clowes & Sons, London 1933

📖 *The Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, Priest, Volume 2, William Clowes & Sons, London 1934

*Eggs of Birds Breeding in Southern Africa*, Priest, Robert Maclehose & Co. Glasgow 1948

📖 *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, Mackworth-Praed & Grant, Longmans Green 1952 - 1955

*Birds of the Southern Third of Africa*, Mackworth-Praed & Grant, Longmans Green 1962 - 1963  
Volume 1 & 2 📖

*A check list of the birds of Southern Rhodesia*, Smithers, Irwin & Paterson, Rhodesian Ornithological Society, 1957. Signed on the front free endpaper by all three authors

*A Check list of the Birds of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Caprivi Strip*, Smithers, Trustees of the National Museums of S. Rhodesia 1964

*Der Brutparasitismus in der Vogelwelt* [Brood parasitism in the bird world], Makatsch, Neumann Verlag 1955

*Die Vogel der Seen und Teiche* [The birds of lakes and ponds], Makatsch, Neumann Verlag 1954

*Sunbirds of Southern Africa, also the Sugar birds, the White-eyes and the Spotted Creeper*, Skead, A. A. Balkema for the Trustees of the South African Bird Book Fund, 1967. Sunbird calls & songs on 45rpm record contained in pocket to inside back board

*The Birds of South Africa*, Roberts, H. F & G Witherby for the Trustees of the South African Bird Book Fund. 1942

*Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, Trustees of the South African Bird Book Fund, 1957. (First impression new revised edition). Subscribers' Edition, copy no 109 of 300 copies with author signatures

*Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, 1970

*Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, 1978

📖 *The Birds of Zimbabwe*, Irwin, Quest Publishing, 1981

*The Birds of Zimbabwe*, Irwin, Publisher Quest Publishing, 1987 reprint

*A Complete Field Guide to Nests in the United States, including those of birds, mammals, insects, fishes, reptiles, and amphibians*, Richard Headstrom, Ives Washburn Inc., New York. 1970

*A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, Peterson, Mountfort & Hollom, Collins, 1971

*British and European Birds in Colour*, Bruun, Hamlyn 1969

📖 *Birds of the World, their Life and Habits*, Barruel, Harrap 1954

*Living Birds of the World*, Gilliard, Hamish Hamilton 1958

*Reader's Digest Spectacular World of South African Birds*, Reader's Digest Association 1997

## From Mark Shaw, 0772 343485, [sas4security@live.com](mailto:sas4security@live.com)

I wonder if it would be possible to advertise the following books which belonged to my father, John Shaw, and which the family would like to sell. There are many more books, but this is a beginning.

1. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*, vols. 1-10. Salim Ali & S Dillon Ripley 1974
2. *Birds of Europe*. John Gould 1966
3. *Birds of Australia*. John Gould 1967
4. *The Birds of Borneo*. Smythies 1960
5. *The Birds of Burma*. Smythies
6. *Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds*. Gilliard
7. *Birds of Prey*. Leslie Brown
8. *Fundamentals of Ornithology*. Van Tyne Berger
9. *Birds of Sudan*. Cave & Macdonald
10. *Game Birds of Kenya and Uganda*. Sir Frederick J Jackson
11. *The Birds of Nyasaland*. Belcher
12. *Ecological Adaptations for breeding in birds*. David Lack

13. *Eggs of Birds breeding in Southern Africa*. Priest
14. *Guide to Birds of Southern Rhodesia*. Priest
15. *Birds of Kenya and N Tanzania*. Zimmerman, Turner, Pearson, Willis & Pratt
16. *Sunbirds of Southern Africa*. Skead
17. *The Life of Birds*. Noel Carl Welty
18. *Thorburn's Birds*. James Fisher
19. *The Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, vols. 1-4. Priest 1936
20. *Birds of Kenya Colony and the Uganda Protectorate*, vols. 1-3 Sir Frederick Jackson 1938
21. *Birds of West and Equatorial Africa*. Vols. 1, 2 David Bannerman 1952
22. *Birds of the Congo Parts 1-4*. Chapin 1932
23. *Extinct and Vanishing birds*. Greenway 1958
24. *Game Birds of Southern Africa*. Clancey
25. *A new dictionary of birds*. Thomson 1964
26. *The Palaearctic-African Bird migration Systems*. Moreau
27. *The Bird Faunas of Africa and its Islands*. Moreau
28. *The Canaries, Seedeaters and Buntings of Southern Africa*. Skead
29. *A hand list of the Birds of Southern Moçambique*. Clancey
30. *SAOS checklist of Southern Africa Birds*. Clancey
31. *Honeyguide* vols. 30-116
32. *Ostrich* vols. I-XXVII and 28-69 (and supplements)
33. *The Atlas of the Birds of Sul du Save, Southern Moçambique*
34. *The Game Bird Symposium*. South African Journal of Wildlife Research

**From David Rockingham-Gill, 0774-605314, [rgill@zol.co.zw](mailto:rgill@zol.co.zw)**

David also has some good mammal, insect, tree & flower books for sale so please contact him for details.

1. *The birds of South Africa*. Witherby London 1953
2. *Roberts' Birds of Sthn Afr.*, 5th Edn. Cape and Transvaal printers
3. *Roberts' Birds of Sthn Afr.*, 6th Edn. Cape and Transvaal printers
4. *Nests and Eggs of Southern African Birds*. Struik 2011
5. *Common birds of the Cape*, 7 volumes bound by DRG. Longmans 1951
6. *White storks on the up*, Proceedings of W/S symposium 1996. Nebu 1988
7. *Conservation of the White Stork*. Vogelwarte 1995
8. *Weistorchweg*. Josef Margrat 1988
9. *Ducks Geese and Swans of Africa*. Fraudsen Publishers 1988
10. *Ducks Geese and Swans of the world*. University of Nebraska 1978
11. *Atlas of the Anatidae in Africa and Western Eurasia*. Wetlands Int. 1996
12. *Waterfowl Population estimates*. Wetlands Int. 1977
13. *A preliminary Waterbird Strategy for Africa*. Wetlands Int. 1997
14. *Af Waterbird Census reports*. IWRB 1991-2001
15. *The genus Sarothrura*. *Am. Museum of Nat History* 1970
16. *The last of the Curlews*. Country Book Club 1957
17. *Bustard Studies Nos 2-4*
18. *Game Birds and Waterfowl of SA, Bustards and Snipes parts 1 of 4*. 1912
19. *Game birds of Southern Africa*. Purnell 1967
20. *Pheasants including their care in the Aviary*. Blandford Press 1959-78
21. *Eagles Hawks and Falcons of the World*, 2 vols. Cased. Country life books 1968
22. *A bird called Cousin (Augur Buzzard)*. Regal Publishers, Sby. 1977
23. *Fleas, Flukes and Cuckoos*. Arrow Books 1961
24. *Cuckoos, cowbirds and other cheats*. Poyser 2000
25. *The Giant Eagle Owl* in a file
26. *A delight of Owls*. David Phillip 1984
27. *The status a distribution of the Black-cheeked Lovebird*. BLI/RSBP 1994
28. *Encyclopaedia of Aviculture Vol 2*. Blandford Press 1972
29. *Parrots*. TFH Publications 1960
30. *Taming and Training of Cockatoos*. TFH Publications 1980
31. *Endangered Parrots*. Blandford Press 1984

32. *Parrots their care and breeding.* Blandford Press
33. *The migration of the Swallow.* Witherby 1974
34. *Flycatchers to Waxbills.* Govt. Printer Lusaka 1963
35. The Yellow Wagtail. *The New Naturalist* 1978
36. The Grain-eating birds. Natural Resources Institute 1996
37. *Birds of West Africa & equatorial Africa*, 2 Vols. Oliver & Boyd 1953
38. *Birds of eastern & north eastern Africa*, 2 vols. Longmans 1957
39. *Birds of the Southern Third of Africa*, 2 vols. Longmans 1962
40. *Checklist of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia + map.* Govt. printer Lusaka 1957
41. Common Birds of Zambia. ZOS 1990
42. *The Birds of Malawi.* Mountford Press, Limbe 1974
43. *The natural History of South Africa – Birds.* Longmans Green 1923
44. *The Birds of Botswana.* van Rensburg 1989
45. *Birds of Botswana.* Southern Book Publishers 1989
46. *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania.* Christopher Helm 1996
47. *A Bibliography of the Birds of Rhodesia.* Rhodesian Orn. Society
48. *Eggs of birds breeding in southern Africa.* Macle hose & Co. 1948
49. *Birds of Zimbabwe.* Quest Publishing 1981
50. South African Red Data Book – Birds. SA Nat Scientific Programme 1984

## **Birding Big Day 2016**

**Ian Riddell**

The full results of Birding Big Day, held over the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> November 2016, will appear in *Honeyguide*, but here is a shorter summary.

Please note that you can download detailed results from the BirdLife Zimbabwe web page [http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org/b\\_conservation\\_11\\_sur.html](http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org/b_conservation_11_sur.html) - for the Excel file.

16 teams participated this year, 5 in the 36 hour category and 11 in the 24 hour (Tables 1 & 2) despite inclement weather which made birding challenging. The country had better coverage with teams from the Honde Valley and Eastern Highlands, Gonarezhou, Victoria Falls and Hwange reporting local and peripheral birds. The total species list was 459, or 68% of the country list, 101 more than were seen in 2015.

A Collared Flycatcher from Kadoma remained unconfirmed, but another Collared was confirmed from the Honde Valley. Our team (Hot Spotters) visited Pomona rubbish dump first, where we hoped to find Marabou Storks, but due to the recent fire there wasn't a single bird. Whilst making sure there were no other birds we were unlikely to find later, an

Eleonora's Falcon lazily flew over! A WOW indeed but although Richard and I were pretty sure it could only have been this rarity we didn't add it to our list.

A Mosque Swallow was claimed for Komani (c.1475m asl) but without a supporting description and I wondered why it wasn't a Red-breasted Swallow, more expected in the Harare area. The Mosque Swallow is very infrequently a scarce winter visitor to the central plateau, usually as far as Chinhoyi, though a pair did reach Trelawney in 1990 and a group of about 15 occurred on Hatcliffe Estate in late January/early February 1992. Also note Brian Marshall's comment on this bird being present at the University in Harare in 1964 (Irwin, M.P.S. 2012. A disappearing event by the Greater Striped Swallow. *Honeyguide* 58(1): 57-58).

Congratulations to the *Bundu Boys* on their 263 species and to *Zambezi Pratincoles* on their 163. The latter team only had 1 BLZ member in their party but in the spirit of 'participation and having a fun day' I have let that slide...

**Table 1. 36-hour category**

Position	Species	Name	Leader	Location
1	263	Bundu Boys	G Douglas	Honde Valley
2	213	Chilo Champions	C. Stockil	Gonarezhou
3	87	Louw Toppies	I. Louw	Harare
4	73	Cannon Twitchers	Michael Cannon	Victoria Falls
5	60	Falcon	G. Macdonald	Esigodini

**Table 2. 24-hour category**

Position	Species	Name	Leader	Location
1	163	Zambezi Pratincoles	John Laing	Victoria Falls
2	157	Welshlads	Laurence Shadwell	Mutare
3	146	Hot Spotters	R. Dennison	Harare
4	142	Gonarezhou Gaggle	Elsabe van der Westhuizen	Gonarezhou
5	140	Muddy Swampkens	D. Dalziel	Harare
6	129	Charama Chicks	R. Paice	Kadoma
7	122	Dodos	A. Masterson	Harare
8	121	Bunny Huggers	Jenny Brebner	Bulawayo
9	114	Wilderness	A. Tshipa	Hwange
10	107	Two old Ducks & Duckling	Helen Lewis	Bulawayo
11	95	Mad Mannakins	Jean-Michel Blake	Harare

## Who saw what...?

The Common Ostrich is pretty much restricted to our Parks so *Wilderness* was the only team to find it. *Zambezi Pratincoles* found the Rufous-bellied Heron and White-backed Night-heron. White Storks were thinly distributed with records from Bulawayo, Harare, Hwange and Honde Valley and Saddle-billed Stork, a 'special species', was only found by the *Chilo Champions* at Gonarezhou.

Vultures were restricted to Hwange, Victoria Falls, Gonarezhou and Honde Valley. European Honey-buzzards were seen in Bulawayo, Honde Valley and Gonarezhou and Verreaux's Eagle only in Gonarezhou with Martial Eagles restricted to Hwange and Gonarezhou and Western Banded Snake-eagle to Victoria Falls and Honde Valley. The *Zambezi Pratincoles* claimed the African Hobby.

Grey Crowned Cranes were found in Hwange as expected but even better was 3 at Clavelshay farm, Kadoma seen by the *Charama Chicks*.

The only African Finfoot came from Victoria Falls and the Kori Bustard from Hwange. A Grey Plover came from Hwange and Pied

Avocets were found at Chivero, Crowborough and Bulawayo. The *Zambezi Pratincoles* got two out of three with Black-winged Pratincole and Rock Pratincole. Whiskered Terns were noted in Hwange and Gonarezhou, whilst both Victoria Falls teams and the Gonarezhou Gaggle had the African Skimmer.

Brown-headed Parrot and Green Malkoha were seen in Gonarezhou and Southern Ground-hornbills were restricted to Hwange, Victoria Falls and Gonarezhou.

The Olive-tree Warbler was only found in Bulawayo and is a nice record, as is the Bushveld Pipit, if only because it is so seldom reported.

Common Mynas were noted in Bulawayo, Harare, Hwange, Victoria Falls and Honde Valley/Eastern Highlands - the latter sounds like a new area! The Black-bellied Starling is hardly ever seen in Zimbabwe any more so the record from the *Bundu Boys* is significant.

The Blue Waxbill was the most frequently recorded bird, seen by 16 teams. 108 species were only seen by a single team.



## “A mystery unravelled”

Peter B Munday 12/ 2016

The wonderful “Roberts VII, Multimedia, Birds of Southern Africa, Android Edition” was downloaded onto my smart phone as a 2015 Christmas present. I have used the ‘App’ almost every day and can recommend it to anyone interested on our varied birdlife.

Over thirty years ago I started making ‘nesting tubes’ from Agave stems for our Crested Barbets, see the photographs of the barbet and Lesser Honeyguide. Having cut the maturing stems into 1.2 metre lengths I store them in an open car port to dry out.

About twenty years ago the barbets wouldn’t wait for me to finished the product and tie it onto a tree. The breeding pair decided to excavate the core pith from one of the stems which was stored at an angle, at head height. By the time I realised that the pair had commandeered the stem it was evident that they were feeding chicks. A surreptitious investigation revealed that at the base of the tube



were two youngsters. Their feathers were reasonably well developed after emerging from the quills.

I mentioned the fact to a few friends who said they would visit me to see the fledglings. They visited a week or so later. Strangely the feathered chicks had already left the nest! But to our absolute surprise at the bottom of the nest were two very young pink coloured, wide mouthed chicks! I was sure that these chicks were only days old.

This observation lead me into the theory that the first set of chicks (feathered) had, before they

left the nest, helped the parents to incubate the next batch of eggs. The literature indicated that the incubation time is 17 days. This theory, I have held for decades and mentioned it in passing when giving talks on the 'Birds in our Garden'.

Well the mystery has now been resolved. In the Roberts App, it states quite clearly under the heading, 'Breeding success, Regularly Double-brooded', which accounts for what we observed two decades ago and also proves you learn something new every day.

## Red-throated Twinspot display

At our home, Val d'Or, near Ruwa, we occasionally see Red-Throated Twinspots *Hypargos niveoguttatus*. This has happened more frequently during November and December 2016 and I have been able to photograph the male.

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December I was watching the male twinspot foraging under a seed birdfeeder. He then picked up a sprig of cut grass and holding in his bill, performed a series of



crouching and jumping movements (about 10), advancing about a metre while doing this, before flying to a nearby shrub. Although I didn't see one, there may have been a female bird nearby.



*Roberts 7* says "Courtship behaviour known mainly from captive birds. Male dances around female, bowing and hopping with breast puffed out and tail fanned, singing softly and sometimes carrying nesting material in bill."

**W.R. Clarke**

# BLZ MEMBERSHIP

## Obituary

*It is with deepest regrets that we report the death of KEVIN STAINTON, who passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> December. He had fought long and hard against a tumour and we send our deepest sympathy to his family.*

*Kevin had been a member of BirdLife Zimbabwe for some years and supported us in many ways, not least of which was sponsoring a page in our calendars (Curverid Tobacco).*

*He was well-known for his love of the bush and will be greatly missed.*

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### Useful Contacts:

CEO/Ringing Programme: Julia Pierini [JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org](mailto:JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org) 0772-894562

Rarities Committee: Ian Riddell [gemsaf@mango.zw](mailto:gemsaf@mango.zw) 0772-117054

BLZ Library: [piumosso@zol.co.zw](mailto:piumosso@zol.co.zw) 304298; 481496

Special Species: Peta Ditchburn [specialspecies@blz.co.zw](mailto:specialspecies@blz.co.zw) 0775-940714, 09-244596

Mashonaland South: Margaret Parrock 068-22005 or her daughter Coralee 0772-739370

Eastern Districts: Sue Fenwick 0779-408557 [ingram.sue@gmail.com](mailto:ingram.sue@gmail.com)

Mashonaland East Natural History Society: Chairman Peter Hadingham 04-497035

Secretary: Colin de Beer 0279-23931 [jcdb1936@gmail.com](mailto:jcdb1936@gmail.com)

Honeyguide production: Julia Duprée [daliadupree@gmail.com](mailto:daliadupree@gmail.com) 09-246269

### SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION

BirdLife Zimbabwe's membership year is from April to March, but you can join any time.

**Even if you don't attend meetings and outings**, your membership is really important and supports our goal to protect biodiversity and conserve birds and their habitats through education, lobbying decision-makers and interaction with international organisations.

In addition, your involvement with data collection through atlassing and submission of records is invaluable. As a member you get the newsletter, *The Babblers*, every two months and two issues of *Honeyguide*, our internationally acclaimed journal, every membership year. All for a very reasonable annual fee.

Especially in these difficult economic times, donations towards any of our projects are always much appreciated and you may consider mentioning BLZ in your will!

Individual/Family members (incl. children under 17)	US\$ 25.00
Pensioners (65 & over), Students	15.00
Youth Club	5.00
Schools (high density)	25.00
Schools (private), Educational Institutions	50.00
Rest of Africa	40.00
Rest of World	50.00
Corporate members	*75.00

\* If you would like recognition on our public forums, choose the \$200 Corporate Plan. To learn more about corporate sponsorship and BLZ projects, write to [JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org](mailto:JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org)

Please deposit either into [BirdLife Zimbabwe](#) account at **NMB Bank, (Borrowdale Branch) Account No: 260092014** or [BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Branch, CABS \(Chisipite Branch\) Account No: 1002399955](#).

**Paynow online!** Look on the website membership page [www.birdlifezimbabwe.org/joinus](http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org/joinus) where old and new members may pay their subs by clicking on the Paynow tab at the bottom of the page. This is especially important for our members outside Zimbabwe. We also have an **Ecocash** account – Merchant Code No. 22084.

It is VERY IMPORTANT please that you include YOUR name on the deposit slip so it appears on the bank statement AND advise Carolyn Dennison by e-mail or phone, or your payment may not be recorded.

Please contact me, the national membership secretary, for all membership-related issues – new, renewals, payments, change of details, queries [CarolynDennison@birdlifezimbabwe.org](mailto:CarolynDennison@birdlifezimbabwe.org)  
And look on our Facebook page for great pictures and recent bits of birding news - [www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe](http://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe) and our informative website [www.birdlifezimbabwe.org](http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org)

## Branch Activities

**Friends of the Vumba** is a community initiative that employs 3 trained scouts to protect the wildlife – tracking for snares and arresting poachers of game, birds and wood. We also support an education outreach into the schools in the area, mostly focussed on birding but more recently extending into wider environmental issues such as WESSA's Water program, rubbish health awareness, alien tree harvesting and indigenous tree planting.

We hold a monthly fund raising event we call **The Vumba Walk** on the second Saturday of every month. These vary from the Upper to Lower Vumba areas and occasionally may extend into Penhalonga, Burma Valley, and even Chimanimani. Many birding enthusiasts join us although it is not officially a birding walk. They are usually hosted by either a Vumba resident or a commercial venue such as Tony's Coffee Shop, Forest Hills Lodge, White Horse Inn or the Botanical Gardens and the walks will often traverse private properties not always accessible by the public. **Contact Sue Fenwick 0779-408557 or [ingram.sue@gmail.com](mailto:ingram.sue@gmail.com) for more details.**

### Directions to regular venues (Google Earth co-ordinates):

**CABS Northridge Park** -17.777494, 31.090782. From town drive along Borrowdale Road, turn right into Whitwell, next right into Ridgeway North, next right into Northend Road and first right into Northridge Close. Drive to the end of the road and go through a security boom into Northridge Park.

**Marlborough Vlei** -17.742715, 30.990416. Meet at the bottom of Princess Margaret Road, off Harare Drive and follow the road round to the left. Park on the short road midway along the bottom of Princess Margaret.

**Mukuvisi Woodlands** -17.851935, 31.092010. Turn off the Chiremba Road into Ford Road (opposite Queensdale shops) cross over Longford Avenue and bear left down to the T-junction on Blatherwick Road. Turn right and the gate is about 150 metres on the left. Bring a reasonable tip for the guard, taking into account the value of your vehicle! Don't forget refreshments for after the walk when we record the number of species.

**Chivero and Rainham Dam** -17.818721, 31.036462. Meet at Prince Edward School car park on Josiah Tongogara Ave.

**Monavale Vlei** -17.806770, 31.010579. From Quendon Road turn into Lyndhurst Road, at bottom follow right hand bend, take first left and second right to BS Leon roundabout. Second exit is Fenella Drive. Meet on Fenella Drive.

**Avondale Sports Club** -17.785100, 31.041972. Brighton Road, Harare between Sam Nujoma Street Extension and Upper East Road. There is a cash bar and a security guard. A minimum donation of \$1 per person at the door please.

## Mashonaland Branch

### *BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: FEBRUARY 2017*

<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Marlborough Vlei Walk</b>	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mukuvisi Woodlands Walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Haka Park</b> Meet at boom or at gazebos -17.836951, 31.146592	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
There is a new entrance off Harare Drive (-17.828515, 31.140361) opposite Denmark School between Arcturus Road and Mutare Road. The old way in from Mutare Road next to Danhiko is still usable but exiting is tricky. \$3 for BLZ members, \$7 non-members.		
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Hideaway for Waterfowl Count</b> Meet at CABS	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Birding in Lancashire</b> Presentation by Linda Fussell, Avondale Sports Club	Meet at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monavale Vlei Walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Komani Estates</b> Meet at CABS	Meet at 06.30 a.m.

### *BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: MARCH 2017*

<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Marlborough Vlei Walk</b>	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mukuvisi Woodlands Walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Ballantyne Park Conservancy</b> Park by ZRP office opposite the shops on Wellburn Drive -17.772724, 31.100386, accessed from Brentford	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Outing</b>	
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Why taxonomists can't help being a pain in the neck</b> Presentation by Tjeerd (Sebastien) Jongeling, Avondale Sports Club	Meet 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monavale Vlei Walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Marirangwe Farm, Beatrice</b> Meet at Prince Edward School	Meet at 06.30 a.m.

For further information please contact Tony Alegria, [tonyalegria47@gmail.com](mailto:tonyalegria47@gmail.com) 0772 438697(h) 490375

## Matabeleland Branch

Activities for February and March will appear in the Matland Musings.

### Other Areas

**Mashonaland West** – Margaret Parrock 068-22005 or 0773-263673

**Eastern Districts** – Second Saturday of every month The Vumba Walk. These vary from the Upper to Lower Vumba areas and occasionally may extend into Penhalonga, Burma Valley, and even Chimanimani. Many birding enthusiasts join us although it is not officially a birding walk. Contact Sue Fenwick 0779-408557 [ingram.sue@gmail.com](mailto:ingram.sue@gmail.com) for more details.

**Lowveld** – contact Clive Stockil 0772-219204 or [clive@chilogorge.com](mailto:clive@chilogorge.com)

*Please send contributions for  
The Babbler 135 April-May 2017  
any time before the 15<sup>th</sup> March*