



THE BABBLER

Newsletter of BirdLife Zimbabwe

April - May 2017
No. 135

Hi everyone,

It's the time of year when the branches have held their AGMs, so this issue has quite a lot of reports.

January was also the month for the first main IWC counts of 2017 and the heavy rains seem to have negatively affected the results, very few of which have been received so far. *So please complete these and send them in as soon as possible.*

World Wetlands Day fell in this period so there is news on that too, as well as other wetland news, appropriate for the season!

Don't forget to send in pictures and news to brighten up the newsletter - anything is gratefully received.

Happy Birding,

Ian Riddell gemsaf@mango.zw

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Branch News

Mashonaland

Branch visit to MONA VALE VLEI, Sunday 22nd January 2017

Our local Ramsar site, jealously protected but still threatened, was invaded early Sunday by a legion of frenetic SA twitchers and their guides and a dozen or so regular Monavale birders. I spoke to one group of four who had flown up from Jo'burg Saturday and were returning Sunday; their target Striped Crake, Corn Crake, Streaky-breasted Flufftail and any other species not on their lifelist which might include Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Whyte's Barbet or other miombo specials more or less endemic to Zimbabwe.

The crakes and flufftails proved difficult to locate and photograph despite the help of local guides and two well-trained, bird-sniffing German Short-haired Pointers and their owner who made mazy runs through the long wet grass, the dogs that is, responding to whistles and calls. No one was fazed by the flooded grassland or the rain in the desperate search for the rare birds. We all had fair views of the target species, especially the Corn Crake, and at least one photo of the flufftail proved its identity beyond doubt.

Eventually all the specials were seen and the twitchers returned to their accommodation for breakfast. The locals remained to record the more common species, like Southern Red Bishop and Yellow Bishop, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Red-collared Widowbird, Orange-breasted Waxbill and Common Waxbill, African Black Duck and Diderick's Cuckoo. The song of the uncommon Pale-crowned Cisticola was identified by Jimmy and added to the Rattling Cisticola, Croaking Cisticola, Zitting Cisticola and Red-faced Cisticolas, which were all present. Other wet weather species were Dwarf Bittern, 3 or 4 Black Coucals and a Giant Kingfisher. The warblers were unusually quiet. As we stumbled through the heavy undergrowth, Marsh Owls rose silently from their hiding places and resettled further away,

not a lifer for Monavale regulars but always the most welcome and moving sight.

The count was made under umbrellas as the rain returned and we reached 65 species before we set off home to dry out.

Wetter but worth it

...& Sunday 19th March 2017

A *Jewel in the Heart of Harare*, as COSMO has christened this Ramsar wetland on their latest fund-raising car sticker, lived up to its name on our most recent visit which attracted 13 local members, an American touring birder, a South African and a Zambian. Mind you, to really appreciate it you have to be pretty passionate about trudging through long wet grass and foot deep water. The rewards though are tremendous; 67 species in 2½ hours.

Highlights were at least 4 Black Coucals calling constantly, a Marsh Owl, a Streaky-breasted Flufftail, a confiding pair of Pearl-breasted Swallows, 7 types of warbler and 5 cisticolas. The summer migrants, like the large flock of European Bee-eaters, were thinking of moving north, while the sweetly singing Willow Warbler was probably tuning up for courting in Europe. The resident Southern Red Bishop could be more accurately described as Orange or Pink as his plumage fades and widowbirds and whydahs are shedding tail feathers but the Yellow-mantled Widowbirds are still displaying prominently. There were no Abdim's Storks on the golf course, but then they prefer short mown grass to the tall, dense variety in standing water currently offered by the Sherwood management.

Yet another great walk thanks to our leaders Jimmy and Dorothy and the COSMO Kids represented by Mosi and Shelton.

Ken Dixon

Visit to BALLANTYNE PARK RESERVE, Saturday 11th March 2017

What a treat it is to have such an attractive venue right in the heart of the northern suburbs. We must once again congratulate the committee and their workers for the wonderful job they have done and are still doing. Each time I visit further improvements have been made. Very important on this occasion was the recent cutting of the broad paths which allow one to circumnavigate all 3 dams without getting one's feet wet.

13 of us congregated at the entrance and as we greeted one another noted a bird party in the trees and bushes bordering Ballantyne Dam; Southern Black Flycatcher, African Yellow White-eye, Red-eyed Dove, Fork-tailed Drongo, Yellow-fronted Canary, Black-throated Canary and Streaky-headed Seedeater, Kurrichane Thrush, Blue Waxbill and Common Waxbill, etc., and these before reaching the water's edge.

On the dam were families of Common Moorhen, Red-knobbed Coot and Little Grebe while Southern Red Bishops buzzed over the reedbeds. Blair Dam was also alive with birds, the dozen or so Reed Cormorants being most

noticeable. Both Dwarf Bittern and Little Bittern were spotted here too and 2 Egyptian Goose flew over. In the reeds were Bronze Mannikin, Lesser Swamp-warbler and Little Rush-warbler. The resident Lesser Honeyguide 'fripped' in the gums as we climbed up to Staley but no Abdim's Stork had braved the cold weather. Here again families of coot, Little Grebe and moorhen dominated while from the gardens on the edge of the grassland we picked up Brubru, Pin-tailed Whydah, Willow Warbler, Variable Sunbird, Amethyst Sunbird and Miombo Double-collared Sunbird, Whyte's Barbet, Little Bee-eater and the Common Fiscal. On the way back past Blair an African Purple Swamphen, a Black Crake and a flock of Village Weavers were spotted in the reeds.

Birds that were added to these by other groups were Hottentot Teal, Tropical Boubou and African Paradise-flycatcher. The final count reached 67 species!

Ken Dixon



In the absence of bird pictures from Monavale here is a sample of some other creatures in celebration of this diverse wetland

Top left: Yellow-veined Widow (♂)

Top right: Osiris Smoky Blue

Bottom left: Oriental Bee Hawk

Life on Mud Island by Linda Fussell

Linda and Andy, regular participants in BLZ activities in recent years and members of the Mashonaland Committee left Zim reluctantly about a year ago to join their son and daughter and their families in Lancashire, north-west England. They have a house in Oswaldtwistle, a town of 11,000 inhabitants, near Blackburn and Accrington and are gradually adapting to the lifestyle there. Linda is very positive about their new life in general and the birding scene in particular. She did however mention that Andy's UK list had reached only 46 in the year, not per day!

They spend much time at Stocks Reservoir and Brockholes Quarry where the main focus is waterbirds. What is different are the excellent facilities afforded birders with comfortable, heated hides and free use of telescopes to spot the birds and watch them being fed. Entry, though, can be expensive for the casual visitor. As members of the local Nature Group Linda and Andy join the regular outings and enjoy not only the birds but also mammals, butterflies and plants. The locals are friendly and fairly easy to understand. We saw photos of huge flocks of duck, geese and swans and a murmuration of Common Starling. Although their garden is a tad smaller than they were used to here, birds visit the bird table and are easy to photograph. Robins, tits, Common Blackbirds and Chaffinch are very confiding. Photos taken on outings ranged from Whooper Swan and Grey Heron to the tiny Goldcrest.

In conclusion, Linda talked more generally about life in the UK, how everybody seems to go out walking whatever the weather. Apart from birding A&L have been to stately homes, ridden on the Flying Scot, walked along the Leeds-Liverpool canal, visited a wind farm and much more. We wish them well in the future but I for one will fork out the \$100 to keep my residency here for the foreseeable future. Thank you, Linda.

Ken Dixon

Brockholes

See *The Babbler* #130, June-July 2016, for an account of Andy and Linda's first nature walk / bird outing in Lancashire

Mashonaland West

Kadoma and surrounding districts have had rains of unexpected amounts this season. As of 10th March, the total rainfall is 1090 mm. It's been wet, wet, wet, muddy roads, potholes, and police road blocks everywhere, which has not encouraged much motor movement in any direction.

The breeding heronry of Black-headed Herons in town near the police station and at the back of the old Grand Hotel continues to

grow in nest numbers and fledglings. Both areas have tall old eucalyptus trees which appear ideal. At least 45 nests have been counted and the young are visible in many nests. Feeding and flying continues daily with constant chattering day and night as food is brought in.

A house in Kadoma suburbia had a wonderful surprise on morning of 25th February. The Olivier family rushed to their

neighbours urgent beckoning of hearing a strange bird call of shrill high pitch notes. From the thickets an African Crake appeared with 3 black nestlings. A photo of the adult and 1 chick has been taken. These neighbours had previously seen this quail-like bird wandering about their garden not knowing something thrilling would happen. An adult has been since searching for food, then dashing away into the thick reeds.

My garden Spectacled Weaver parents are feeding chicks again and using the same old nest as before. I suppose breeding continues while food supply is available.

Eiffel Flats sewerage ponds continue to attract many water birds. On 1st March: 1 pair of White-faced Ducks has reared 12 ducklings. On 11th March: 5 Hottentot Teal and 1 pair of African Purple Swamphens strutting along the reed edges and moving quickly because of their long legs. The Three-banded Plovers have discovered the floating debris is safe to stand

and feed without much effort, looking for food. Also seen recently was an adult Allen's Gallinule with a chick.

The 3 Grey Crowned Cranes of Clavelshay



Allen's Gallinule. Photo: Ruth Paice

farm, not far from the Eiffel Flats sewerage ponds, have not been seen recently so hopefully they are safe somewhere.

Margaret Parrock

Featuring Wetlands...

World Wetlands Day, 10 February 2017

Mukuvisi Woodlands hosted the event this year, which was attended by 850 school pupils plus teachers and drivers, representing over 50 schools. An impressive turnout. Many were treated to a light lunch provided by UNICEF.

A group of pupils (mostly senior) went on a walk in the grasslands led by Simon Pitt, Chairman of Mukuvisi Woodlands. 12 school groups, both junior and senior, were given an inspiring wetland talk by Jimmy Muropa, the Monavale Vlei Scout, and all were given a wetland talk by Professor Chris Magadza. EMA, the Environmental Management Agency, gave out their pamphlets.

A quiz competition with small prizes was held, designed to show off a few animals that live hidden away in the lovely grassland of Monavale Vlei and to gauge the pupils' knowledge of them. 500 pupils participated and High schools, as expected, produced the better answers. Many Primary pupils found it

difficult but were interested - remarks "This snail is moving, but how can it, with no legs?"

Our very future on the planet depends on us working closely with the natural environment. The contact with Nature on the Wetlands Day is very important for stimulating interest in Nature for children. On a previous Wetland Day, a while back, a live snake exhibition was commented on by two pupils years later who said "I touched a live snake." At this event there was a vibrant atmosphere at the Woodlands with the crowds enjoying themselves.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to those that participated: UNICEF, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, BLZ and Conservation Society of Monavale (COSMO).

Excerpts from Leslee Maasdorp's report.



Clueing up for the quiz at World Wetlands Day, 10 February 2017



IWC waterbird counts

Thanks to everyone who did their waterbird counts in January (or February). As yet I have received relatively few forms so if you have been tardy, please complete them as soon as possible and return them to me at gemsaf@mango.zw



Homann Hide at Mbonisa Weir, Heather Macdonald

The following YouTube video:
<https://youtu.be/czFBr61GzZo>
by Tour du Valat, the AEWA Technical Support Unit and all the partners involved, is interesting to watch.
See what others have been up to in North Africa
Szabolcs Nagy

MONAVALLE VLEI Highlights 2016: Report to BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Branch AGM, 19 January 2017

Dorothy Wakeling, Monavale Vlei Programme Manager. Conservation Society of Monavale Trust
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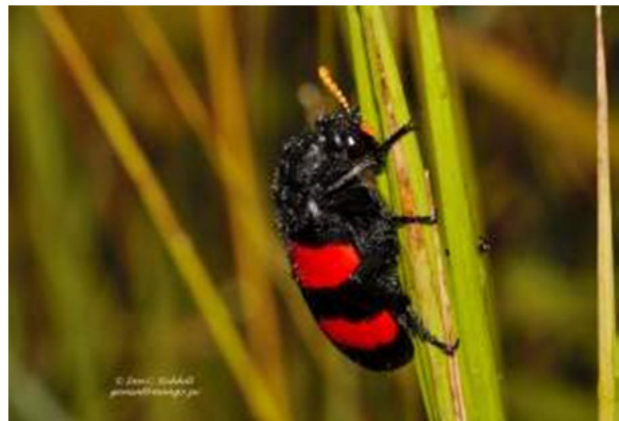
Observations

Seasonal rainfall totals are given at the bottom of this report for the first time. Rainfall has always been reported annually (January to December) for AGM purposes, but seasonal totals make more sense when looking at bird records. Seasonal and annual totals are very different, of course. Also, a drought month often occurs during rainy seasons, which must have an effect on biodiversity and breeding success of some species.



For the first time since 2005, when bird and rainfall records began on a daily basis, we did not hear or see Streaky-breasted Flufftail or Striped Crake between January to April 2016, due to low rainfall and therefore unfavourable breeding conditions. However, in December 2016, with the onset of heavy rains, thanks to the La Niña ocean current effect, the Streaky-breasted Flufftail came in on 28th December and in record numbers.

Whilst we record almost the same total number of bird species each year, the populations of some species are down. Even though the core area of 34 ha of Monavale Vlei is intact, the surrounding wetland areas within the Ramsar Site (520 ha) have been disturbed by cultivation and development. Monavale Vlei has been restored and has remained undisturbed since 2004/05 wet season with the



Blister Beetle

birds still being recorded. However, if the surrounding areas were to be restored and preserved then the population densities would likely improve. The population densities for migrant species are down too, for multiple reasons, no doubt. Declines in bird species populations have been noted worldwide. It is hoped that the heavy rains of this season will improve bird populations.

Highlights of the 180 different bird species seen during 2016 (the regular Vlei specials were present, of course!)

Little Bittern and Dwarf Bittern, Abdim's Stork, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Fish-eagle, Brown Snake-eagle, Steppe Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon and Amur Falcon, Kurrichane Buttonquail, Corn Crake and African Crake, Common Moorhen, Levillant's Cuckoo, Black Coucal, Marsh Owl, Malachite Kingfisher, European Roller, Greater Striped Swallow and Lesser Striped Swallows, Barn Swallow, Capped Wheatear, Great Reed-warbler, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, Willow Warbler, Pale-crowned Cisticola and Levillant's Cisticola, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Lesser Grey Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, Black-crowned Tchagra, Copper Sunbird, Thick-billed Weaver, Cuckoo Finch, White-winged Widowbird, Green-winged Pytilia, Orange-breasted Waxbill and

Red-backed Mannikin (a new bird for the list), Yellow-fronted Canary and Brimstone Canary.



Habenaria schimperiana

The Side-striped Jackal bred on the Vlei, Common Duiker, Large Grey Mongoose, Slender Mongoose, Clawless Otter, Vervet Monkey, Scrub Hare, Bushpig plus vlei mice and Cane Rats were the mammals seen; also recorded were the Olive Grass Snake, Three-striped Grass Snake, Egyptian Cobra; Giant Bullfrog, Fresh Water Crab. The floral biodiversity is remarkable with the Spotted Leaf Arum Lily *Zantedeschia albomaculata* flowering and a highlight. We were treated to impressive fields of *Crinum* lilies flowering in November and December 2016.



Blue Dropwing

Monavale Vlei Management and Activities

Litigation against the proposed development of 121 houses on the core area of Monavale Vlei Ramsar Site took place with the court ruling against this permit, on a technicality related to planning procedures. The wider Ramsar Site area is also threatened by development and agricultural pursuits which are being dealt with through the Environmental Management Agency and City

of Harare Department of Works, and the courts, if need be.



Stink Bug














The Harare Wetlands Trust (HWT) was formed this year with Julia Pierini the Chairperson. This umbrella organization provides a structure acceptable to donors to fund litigation, advocacy and lobbying activities, thus giving residents an opportunity to raise their voices on the serious matter of wetland loss and preservation. A proposal has been written by HWT which is to be submitted to donors shortly.



Marsh Acraea

University students, school children, officials, community organizations and the general public continue to visit the Vlei for wetland awareness walks. The COSMO Kids Club is flourishing as is the COSMO Tree Nursery, the COSMO Trust and COSMO Management Committee. Jimmy Muropa has been working on Monavale Vlei for over 11 years. Visitors are visiting the Vlei to seek out the specials as the conditions are so good this 2016/17 season, thanks to the heavy rains.

Monavale Rainfall Statistics and Daily Bird Records from 2005 (T=210) to December 2016 (T=245)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Birds & *Rainfall  mm	
129	132	134	127	101	96	101	100	99	107	114	119	180	2016
63	62	40	57	42	45	50	37	39	46	70	58		3 rd Sun
169	96	197	84	3.5					5	126	270	950.5	
149	137	126	127	104	101	104	104	104	114	124	123	178	2015
66	70	62	54	43	22	39	47	45	57	35	44		3 rd Sun
234.8	147	73	12.2						10.7	43.1	147.6	668.4	
141	139	125	117	97	94	96	97	98	114	123	136	181	2014
80	62	53	36	41	34	56	34	48	57	71	82		3 rd Sun
172	239.8	28.2	48						44	107	274	912.48	
138	135	134	113	102	97	100	103	103	119	119	125	180	2013
74	72	77	58	48	38	67	64	63	54	66	67		3 rd Sun
421	59.5	231	51.5						1.6	103.5	157.8	1025.9	
142	136	137	124	103	100	102	102	110	117	120	129	178	2012
72	62	59	66	56	32	65	32	47	57	62	70		3 rd Sun
267.5	171.5	173.5	24.5						37.5	94.5	215	984	
144	132	136	124	106	96	103	99	108	106	125	134	177	2011
66	71	75	61	56	56	48	58	45	66	68	80		3 rd Sun
221	75	62	9	1	2.5	9			35	115	419.5	949	
142	140	136	111	93	87	97	106	107	121	130	143	181	2010
62	66	61	54	46	54	32	64	63	62	83	78		3 rd Sun
207.5	171	49	178	3.5					25.5	126	152	912.5	
131	123	120	114	95	89	100	91	103	109	120	127	163	2009
70	51	59	49	45	47	37	47	44	51	61	57		3 rd Sun
197.5	130	165.5	20	40					4	142	183	882	
117	113	115	110	90	91	87	98	103	108	112	126		2008
52	53	52	45	25	45	45	50	40	47	64	71		3 rd Sun
383.5	38.5	43	33						9	167.5	253	927.5	
121	118	112	109	91	91	91	93	97	101	109	116		2007
58	69	53	53	40	39	53	53	55	57	73	52		3 rd Sun
174	58.5	92.5	45.5	2.5				4	2	168	540	1087	
116	114	115	107	85	90	86	92	92	101	104	106		2006
	58	52			49	35	48	41	36	48	52		3 rd Sun
279	171.5	155.5	3						9.5	65	148.5	832	
								43	63	95	100		2005
183	94	137	24	8				0.5	12	106.5	285	850	

* Yearly rainfall totals were checked and the few errors found were adjusted for the 2015 report

Seasonal Rainfall totals

2015/16	750.9	2009/10	938
2014/15	892	2008/09	982.5
2013/14	750.61	2007/08	1212
2012/13	1110	2006/07	596
2011/12	1206.5	2005/06	1013
2010/11	683		

LAKE CHIVERO BIRD SANCTUARY, JANUARY 2016 to DECEMBER 2016

We visited the sanctuary in January, April, July, October and November last year and wader space was significant from July because of low rainfall.

Species Count

The annual species count was 127, which was 8 more than the previous year. There were no additions to the total number of 331 species recorded since records began in 1992.

In my opinion the highlights were:

Shore and Water Birds

Grey Heron	34 in January
Yellow-billed Stork	50 in October
Glossy Ibis	100 in July
Egyptian Goose	62 in July

Cape Teal	6 in July
Cape Shoveler	2 in October
Spur-winged Goose	30 in April
African Fish-eagle	20 in April
Kittlitz's Plover	60 in January
Common Ringed Plover	2 in October
Blacksmith Lapwing	32 in January
Ruff	100 in January
Pied Avocet	51 in January and 95 in October
Black-winged Stilt	32 in January
Collared Pratincole	2 in October
Grey-headed Gull	62 in January
White-winged Tern	50 in April

Richard Dennison

MATABELELAND BRANCH REPORT FOR 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AISLEBY SURVEY

Members of BLZ Matabeleland have been monitoring the birdlife at Aisleby for many years but it was only in June last year that the Branch began a formal survey of the area. This report covers eight months – June 2016 to January 2017. In general the survey is carried out on the third Sunday of the month. We have endeavoured to count the number of birds of each species seen; this was not done in December when, due to time constraints, we counted water birds only. Survey results are submitted to the BLZ national office, while the results of the July and January surveys were also submitted for inclusion in the African Waterbird Census.

Five transects have been identified and these same routes have been covered for each survey. These transects pass through a variety of habitat types. Umguza Dam is observed from four different locations. The transects also cover 'Muddy Puddle', the bridges above and below the dam, a feedlot, irrigated pastures, and a section of road outside the Aisleby Sewerage Treatment Works which passes through thorn scrub and degraded, resettled farm land.

Weather conditions and water levels have been recorded at the time of each survey. Conditions at the dam varied greatly over the

eight months. Water hyacinth is a major problem, both on the dam and on the river above and below the dam. The quantity of water hyacinth has not appeared to increase. However the carpet of weed moves and depending on the strength and direction of the wind a particular part of the dam, e.g. the area in front of the club house, could be found to be open or completely choked by weed. As the water level in the dam dropped the area of open water available to water birds was greatly reduced, until in November the surface area of the dam was probably one third of what it had been in June. Following the rains in December and January the dam began to fill up and in January was probably 75% full. The dam is highly polluted.

To date 165 species have been recorded by the survey. Historical records indicate that more than 250 species have been recorded in the area so we hope more members will take part in the survey in 2017 to help build up a comprehensive record. The fewest species were seen at the first survey in June (56), and the most in November (96). The number of waterbird species has varied from 23 in December to 33 in October. On average 40% of species seen have been waterbirds, i.e. species included in the African Waterbird Census.

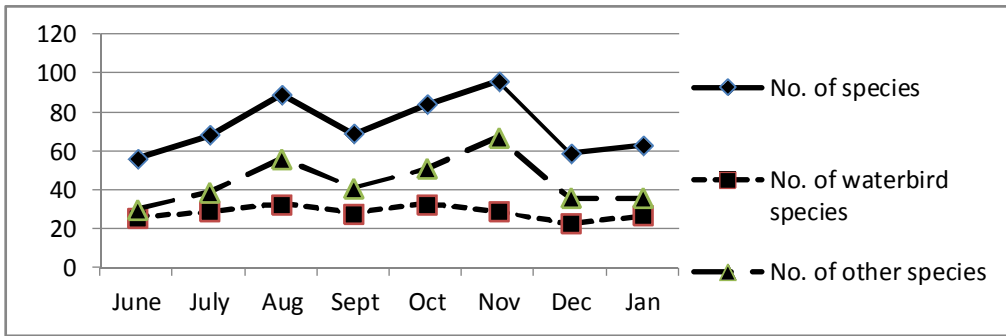


Figure 1: Number of species of birds recorded between June 2016 and January 2017

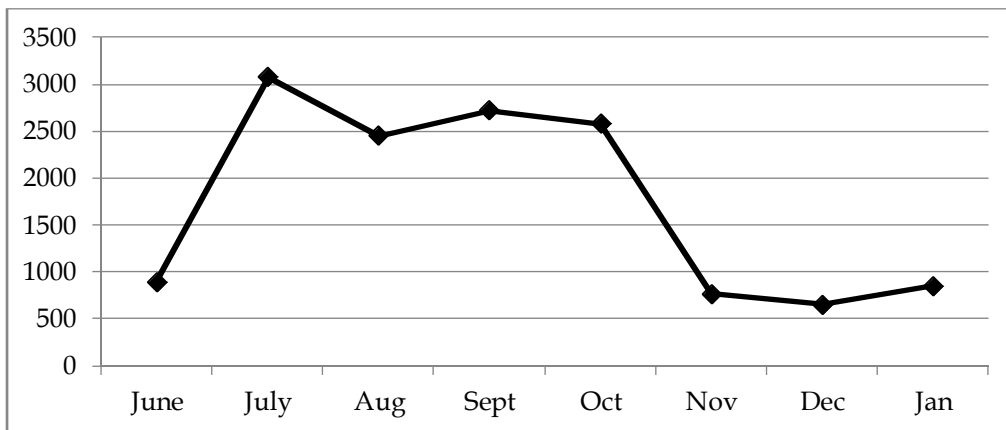


Figure 2: Number of waterbirds counted between June 2016 and January 2017

The highest number of birds was recorded in July (3,558), and the least in November (986). Numbers were not recorded for all species in December. These numbers exclude quelea. The highest number of waterbirds was counted in July (3,085), the lowest in December (656).

The data collected so far is insufficient for any meaningful analysis but one trend that is apparent is decline in the number of waterbirds present at Aisleby during the wetter months of November to January compared to the drier month of July to October - see table below. For example:

- Red-knobbed Coots: counted 726 in October, 218 in November and 35 in January;
- Little Grebe: counted 637 in October, none in November and two in January;
- Red-billed Teal: counted 447 in October, 80 in November and 23 in January.

Presumably this happens because with the onset of the rains more natural waterbodies form throughout the region and the birds are no longer confined to the few available water sources such as Aisleby.

In contrast the highest number of Cattle Egrets recorded was in January - 423 compared to a low of 37 in November. Wood Sandpipers are migrants and only started appearing in August; the low number of three recorded in

January was possibly because with the dam level rising there was little muddy shoreline to attract waders (or they were there but not visible). White Storks are also migrants and, other than a lone bird seen in June and July, the first record was January when 174 were recorded.

Some of the other interesting records from the survey include:

- Raptors: Lizard Buzzard, Martial Eagle, African Fish-eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Lesser Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Yellow-billed Kite, Black-chested Snake-eagle and Brown Snake-eagle.
- Special species: Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Maccoa Duck, Martial Eagle, Yellow-billed Kite, Common Myna and Marabou Stork.
- Hadeda Ibis were recorded in June (13) and July (5).
- Red-billed Quelea numbers peaked in August (+2,500) and September (+3,200).

Thanks to the following members and visitors who participated in the survey: Jenny Brebner, Kudzinai Dhlwayo, Cecilia Hubbard, Marina Jackson, Linda Lawrie, Karen Learmonth, Gaynor Lightfoot, Tafadzwa Tichagwa and Melissa, Angel, Arthur, Chery and Peace.

	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dev	Jan
Little Grebe	105	1129	832	621	637	-	6	2
Common Moorhen	2	9	6	3	15	7	17	3
Red-knobbed Coot	179	642	556	535	726	218	143	35
White Stork	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	174
African Sacred Ibis	19	44	7	121	90	90	24	51
Cattle Egret	191	387	209	102	49	37	245	423
Pied Avocet	6	36	57	221	163	2	-	-
Black-winged Stilt	7	19	35	70	57	13	-	-
African Jacana	3	27	45	60	13	2	25	9
Blacksmith Lapwing	30	80	109	93	56	196	26	64
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	13	22	5	20	15	3
White-faced Duck	17	20	9	51	-	-	6	16
Southern Pochard	45	164	142	247	178	-	12	4
Cape Teal	9	25	2	13	6	-	-	-
Hottentot Teal	7	17	23	15	14	26	26	1
Red-billed Teal	82	259	230	464	447	80	78	23
TOTAL	703	2829	2275	2638	2456	691	623	808

Adele Edwards, 24.02.2017

SABAP2 Atlassing

Dear Team ADU

It all began 25 years ago when fieldwork started for the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project. This project ran for five years, ending in 1992 and produced the first comprehensive atlas of bird distributions for southern Africa. Since then, the Animal Demography Unit (ADU) has coordinated a long series of projects, generating data about frogs, butterflies and reptiles, almost all of them involving our amazing groups of citizen scientists.

We recall many memorable milestones, but the 25 Citizen Scientist Days we have held around South Africa have provided an opportunity to meet many of you. The total number of records you have helped us assemble is currently 23 million! These records are used for conservation assessment, environmental impact studies, biodiversity management and priority setting, as well as for academic research.

Our 25th anniversary today, 1 December 2016, is a poignant moment to reflect on the impact of the contributions made by all of you, our citizen scientists, our incredible ambassadors for biodiversity. You, our citizen scientists, are the ones who speak up on behalf of biodiversity, and working together as a team, we are giving biodiversity a voice.

You have already given so generously, for which I sincerely thank you. Now, as we face arguably the most critical time in our history, where biodiversity is rapidly threatened and many species face extinction, there is so much more we need to do. I appeal to you to help us ensure that the work of the ADU is sustained. Please consider becoming a donor to the ADU. Every donation, no matter how small, helps to continue the work of the ADU. Please visit our online giving page to make your gift today or download a pledge form and return it to us.

Yours in biodiversity,
Em Prof Les Underhill, ADU Director

The latest version of BirdLasser is an easy way to Atlas from your cell phone & now caters for all of Africa. You can set your region (e.g. Southern Africa or Eastern Africa) under Settings. You can also set your language preferences and which taxonomic authority you follow.

The Annual General Meeting of BirdLife Zimbabwe will be held on Saturday 10th June at Maleme Rest Camp, based at the gazebo next to tennis court, in the rest camp area. Time - tba.

Accommodation

These are the prices of accommodation available - Fish Eagle and Black Eagle lodges - 2 bedrooms \$113 per night - self-contained.

2 bedroom Lodges - \$90 per night - self-contained

1 bedroom Lodges - \$50 per night - self contained

2 bedroom Chalets - \$40 per night - ablution block & outdoor cooking

1 bedroom Chalets - \$20 per night - ablution block & outdoor cooking

Camping - this is in a slightly different location (at the bottom of the hill) - \$30 per night per site, for up to 3 people.

Imbila Executive Lodge is also available, but also in a slightly different location across the dam - \$135 per night - 2 bedrooms.

All accommodation reservations & payments should come through to Karen Learmonth - afspect@yoafrica.com - tel. 09-244990 / 0772 231819 - as I am liaising with the Bulawayo Parks office which does Maleme bookings.

Park entry fee

Zim Res - \$2 per day if staying in Parks accommodation / \$4 per day if not using Parks accommodation

SADC Res - \$6 per day if staying in Parks accommodation / \$12 per day if not staying in Parks accommodation.

I am going to write to the Regional Manager here and request a discount, although I have been told by the booking office not to expect a reply, never mind a discount!

Catering

Please choose one of the following options and not a "mix and match". Matland members will do teas during meeting & salads for lunches, those attending meeting to bring own meat - no charge.

1. Friday night supper, 2 courses - \$10 per person.
2. Matland will do all catering, very simple, for \$25 per person as follows:
 - a. Friday night supper (stew or casserole)
 - b. Saturday morning breakfast - bacon & egg rolls
 - c. Saturday lunch - steak rolls and salads
 - d. Saturday supper - stew or casserole
 - e. Sunday morning - bacon & egg rolls

Sunday - will advise on location of Sunday birding.

Please note that nights will be VERY cold in Matopos, particularly with all the water that will be around, so to please pack accordingly,

Regards

Karen Learmonth
AFRICA SPECTACULAR

Penrith Road, Morningside, Bulawayo

Tel - (+263-9) 244990

Fax - (+263-9) 244109

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MASHONALAND BRANCH OF BIRDLIFE ZIMBABWE HELD AT AVONDALE BOWLING CLUB, HARARE, ON THURSDAY 19TH JANUARY 2017 AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT: T. Alegria (Chairperson), D. Wiggins (Treasurer), K. Dixon (Secretary), D. Rockingham-Gill (Vice Chairperson), J. Ball (Member), A. MacDonald (Member)

BRANCH MEMBERS PRESENT: 26 members.

APOLOGIES: D&B Rushforth, W. Bourne, S. Mattinson, D. Barron, C. Rosevere, L. Walker, R. MacDonald, C. Dennison, L. Maasdorp, J. Wood, L. Wilson.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (T. Alegria)

I am grateful to Avondale Sports Club for letting us use this venue for all our evening events. We had a fright when they wanted to raise the fees, but happily that was resolved and we'll carry on as before.

The outings have continued and as usual the numbers attending any venue is highly variable. If anyone has a new venue, please come forward and let us know.

We still need rubble to put into the swampy parking area in Mukuvisi. Please bring any rubble you have and just dump it out of the way near a gum tree!

We are very grateful to everybody that allowed us onto their properties. I thank all the regular leaders - Dorothy Wakeling, Dave Dalziel and Richard Dennison and those who stepped in!

Lake Chivero is no longer a popular venue but those who didn't go there on the last two outings missed out on some spectacular water bird species. Amongst many others, the following were seen: Loads of Pied Avocets, there were Ruff, African Spoonbills, Kittlitz's Plovers, Black Herons, African Purple Swamphens, Banded Martins and Marsh Sandpipers.

Thanks to our speakers, without them we would not have a monthly function. We had: (Jan) right after the AGM, a *presentation on Special Waterbird Species*; (Feb) *Birding in Ghana* during a bird conference by Julia Pierini; (Mar) *Hwange Game Counts* by Dave Rockingham-Gill; (Apr) *In search of the African Pitta* by Tony Wood; (May) *Do birds have senses?* by Innes Louw; (Jun); *March 2016 Rifa visit* by Ken Dixon; (Jul) *Birding in Ghana* by Alex Masterson; (Aug) *Biodiversity at Catapú, Mozambique* by Ian Riddell; (Sept) *National Trust Talk and Bird Quiz* by Fira Bache; (Oct) *The*

BLZ Bird Presentation by Tony Alegria; (Nov) *IUCN Conference, Honolulu* by Julia Pierini; (Dec) *Birding in Hwange during annual wildlife counts* by Dave Rockingham-Gill, after our Xmas Social. Of course monthly evening functions would be pointless without an audience, so many thanks to all the members and non-members who attended the functions.

The most difficult job we have as a committee is finding topics and speakers to deliver the monthly presentations. If you can help with a presentation or suggestions for these things, let's hear from you!

Last year we planned only one away outing, and that was to RIFA. Sadly, the response was so poor that we were unable to do the trip. However, the Marondera birders were short of people and were able to accommodate the few Harare birders who wanted to go.

The second trip we wanted to do was the "One Week's Birding Holiday" to Mozambique to tick off as many pelagic and coastal birds we could find. Unfortunately we were unable to go as the security situation has changed in Mozambique making it a no-go destination for the mean time. Hopefully, things will change and we can do that trip this year.

With the economic situation being the way it was, we didn't even try to organize an outing towards the end of last year - and guess what? Not one person asked me about any away birding outings.

Your incoming committee will be organizing an away trip this year - we are talking to Hippo Pools at this point in time, so keep the targeted weekend free - May 12-15th! **[See new dates in Branch Activities]**

In March we celebrated the birthday of someone who has done a tremendous amount for birding in Zimbabwe and a lot for BLZ. The lunch held at the National Botanic Gardens

went down well as did the entire event. Alex Masterson, I think, felt honoured. Alex also treated himself to a trip to Ghana and gave us a presentation on his birding trip.

We began the Harare Garden Bird Survey in May last year and we are now into the 38th week. The number of participants is not as high as I would like but then that's probably the case with any survey. Debbie Wiggins has been doing a terrific job in communicating and keeping the participants informed as we go along. Many thanks, Debbie.

I wish to thank all those who wrote articles for *The Babblers* thereby providing feedback to all our members on our outings and monthly functions.

Unfortunately we are losing a committee member this year - Dave Rockingham-Gill is off to the UK - we wish him luck. Knowing Dave, our loss will be someone else's gain.

I thank Carolyn for sending out the email reminders for the outings & evening functions and I thank Ken Dixon for providing the necessary information for the *Ndeipi* monthly magazine.

In closing I thank my committee for all their input & work during the last year and Pam for providing snacks and for putting up with our committee meetings every other month.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT (D. Wiggins)

As with the country as a whole, BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland has had a pretty lean year. The accounts are showing a loss of \$132.63 with the overall balance down from \$1,116.41 to \$983.78, of which \$403.78 is in cash & CABS.

The loss can mainly be attributed to reduced evening meeting attendance and therefore donations which were down from \$442 to \$354, a drop of 20%. In fact whereas we normally take in slightly more than we need to cover the meeting expenses, in 2016 we didn't quite cover costs. The other factor was that there were no raffles held during the year - we hope to raise some funds through raffles this year, starting with tonight, so please buy a ticket or two! There were a few much appreciated donations last year from individual members amounting to \$41, for which we are very grateful. Lastly on revenues, CABS interest is reduced as interest was no longer paid after March.

Moving to expenses, our meeting costs remain the same. The local venue expenses are about the same as last year and comprise our annual donations to Mukuvisi and Greystone Nature Preserve. These donations are gestures to the venues for allowing members free access and contributions towards their maintenance. CABS is now charging for internet transfers (these are BLZ subs deposited into our account which I transfer to NMB) although the account has always been a 'no charges' account. I have raised the issue with CABS and await their response.

In conclusion, the main regular expenses, if meeting costs can be covered, are the local venue donations. These are currently about \$150 and an annual donation to Ballantyne Park Conservancy which we now visit every year has been suggested. We would therefore need about \$200 and this is why we need to raise extra funds every year.

Thanks for listening and please continue to support us as without your support the Mashonaland branch of BirdLife Zimbabwe will struggle to survive.

5.1 MUKUVISI WOODLANDS, David Dalziel

Monthly walks were undertaken on the 1st Sunday of every month. Many thanks to Richard Dennison and Tony Alegria who led the walks and completed the check list when I was not there.

We usually have very good coverage with at least three groups and often we have people that walk from the office. The total number of species for the year was 184. Maximum counts are between December and March. In February we got 124 species.

There have been some very interesting sightings during the year. Perhaps the most interesting bird has been the single male Miombo Rock-thrush which was first seen in 2015. The Miombo Rock-thrush seems to have taken up residence near the bee hives. It was often located by call and was also seen on numerous occasions outside of the BLZ walks. Only a male bird was seen so it is possible that this is the only bird.

Raptors appear to be doing well. A Black-chested Snake-eagle nest was monitored and they managed to fledge one chick. The Wahlberg's Eagle nest was easy to see and on the last occasion we looked at the nest there

was a very large chick on the verge of leaving the nest so it is hopeful that this pair was successful. As in years past the female was a very white bird while the male is very dark. The Black Sparrowhawks were using a new nest close to the old nest. The old nest tree collapsed. Long-crested Eagles are frequently seen and must breed in or near the woodlands. Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Little Sparrowhawk, African Fish-eagle and African Cuckoo Hawk were all seen on the walks. Bat Hawks were seen but not on the BLZ walks.

Red-backed Mannikin and Black-throated Wattle-eyes are now seen frequently.

Birds that were only seen occasionally include Southern White-faced Scops-owl, Yellow-breasted Apalis and Giant Kingfisher.

Birds that appear to be getting less common include Stierling's Wren-warbler, Neddicky and I suspect Spotted Creeper. The Spotted Creeper is still seen frequently but very often it is only seen by one group. Swallow-tailed Bee-

eaters appeared to be uncommon in Harare this winter and only in June were a few birds recorded.

We are very lucky to have such a wonderful area so close to town so make use of it and join us during 2017.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS: MASHONALAND BRANCH COMMITTEE

All present committee members except D. Rockingham-Gill (emigrating) were willing to stand again. L. Shadwell, K. Hein and J. Vekris offered to join the committee and, following brief discussion, were unanimously elected.

Chairperson	T. Alegria
Vice Chairperson	J. Ball
Treasurer	D. Wiggins
Secretary*	K. Dixon
Member	L. Shadwell
Member	K. Hein
Member	A. MacDonald
Member	J. Vekris

*Replaced by K. Hein in March

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MATABELELAND BRANCH OF BIRDLIFE ZIMBABWE HELD AT THE GAZEBO, QALISA RETIREMENT VILLAGE, SUBURBS, BULAWAYO ON SATURDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 2017 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT: Cecilia Hubbard - Chairman, John Brebner - Vice Chairman, Jean Cranston - Treasurer, Marina Jackson - Secretary, Karen Learmonth - Committee Member

And members: Jenny Brebner, David Jackson, Tom Cranston, Margaret Frame, Laraine King, Geoff Calvert, Tony Wharam, Peter Mundy, Melissa Pondayi, Peace Chuma, Clare Hubbard, John and Coppie Dicey, Sue Harvey, Vernon and Shirley Tarr, Candice Martin and Colin Gillies.

APOLOGIES: Cathy Sharp, Gwen Calvert, Bill and Helen Lewis, Lisa Wharam, Paul Hubbard, Alan and Christina Gillott, Verity Bowman, Linda Lawrie, Elton and Gaynor Lightfoot, Gavin and Marjorie Blair, Gordon and Heather MacDonald, Marthinus and Cheryl Nel, Howard and Cindy Sellick, Peta Ditchburn, Gift Gana, James Varden, Adele Edwards, Basil and Jill Butcher, Dave and Dee Thompson, Dennis and Shelagh Adams, Doug Kew.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Attendance by members at our walks, talks and outings has been steady throughout the year. The afternoon presentations proved to be the most popular. However one of the stumbling blocks is finding 'presenters'. Therefore I will reiterate previous encouragement to any and ALL members - if you have a particular area of interest and there is possibly 'birding' included somewhere please volunteer to share this interest with your fellow

members. I can say there are NEVER harsh critics in the audience.

Some feedback on what has been happening in BLZ as a whole.

The past year has been a stable one for BLZ in terms of administration. Julia Pierini continues to be a driving force for, and within, our society. She and the few staff that remain at the Office persistently seek funding. However there has been no change in the status of Zimbabwe being of 'little or no interest' to the international community, so the many

hours compiling an application still usually comes to naught. An example - 3 applications were made for the Black Eagle Breeding Survey during the course of 2016 - and the result for all three was zero.

The ever dwindling finances of BLZ in general have been tightly controlled by the CEO and Council. Their fund-raising efforts have been extraordinary. This enthusiasm and hard work, together with a more cost effective production of publications, has meant that subs remain static for the 6th year running. An amazing feat. Our thanks to Council, all members and everyone who has contributed to holding the purse strings tight and introducing cost-cutting measures - all done in the interests of we members.

RSPB has continued to assist with the core funding needed to maintain our National Office. Whilst the sum received from RSPB is generous, it is not enough to maintain all expenses. They have however, indicated that this core funding may not be available in time to come. The withdrawal of their funding means that we as members will have to 'step up to the plate' and assist in any way possible to maintain our National Office. To remain as part of the BirdLife International 'family', we are required to have our 'Office'.

Vulture Conservation in Africa is a top priority for BirdLife International and immediately after the BirdLife Council of the Africa Partnership meeting (10-13 October 2015) various commitments for taking actions for Vultures nationally in >20 countries were made. To this end Masumi Gudka, the Vulture Conservation Manager in the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, continues to support the partnership in achieving the commitments made and to coordinate BirdLife action on saving vultures.

Something must be working as it was with delight BirdLife International was informed that the recently held Vintage Air Rally run from Crete to Cape would not only be flying for fun - they would also be flying to raise funds for Vulture Conservation in Africa. The

rally passed through Bulawayo on 8th December, 2016 and it was interesting to hear a couple of the pilots commenting on how they had never been aware of the plight of our Vultures, but since being made aware - they were extremely happy to be 'doing what they could'.

Our branch has still not been in a position to be directly active in the field of education, except for a day at Fort Rixon, where schools surrounding the Fort Rixon Educentre were invited to attend a 'Conservation' day. BirdLife Matabeleland, together with other organisations such as the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management, Dambari Wildlife Trust, the Natural History Museum and Chipangali were invited to put up displays at the Centre. This turned out to be a day very well spent. Cedric Maforimbo of the Dambari Wildlife Trust and a Branch member works hard at schools within the Matobo area and his reports at the end of each term are fantastic and encouraging. His emphasis on birds during the second term of the educational year is truly appreciated. Well done Cedric and thank you!

Our thanks are extended to all Branch members who took part in the surveys - without your participation they just wouldn't be!!

Jean Cranston and all Committee members worked hard at fund-raising this year and our coffers are in a position for this forthcoming year to continue with surveys and the financial assistance we give to the Natural History Museum in the form of fumigation. As the Branch will be receiving no funding for these surveys in 2017 I am afraid we will have to double our efforts in the course of the year should we wish to continue with these surveys in 2018.

John, Marina, Jean and Karen - I thank you for your unfailing support and assistance throughout this past year. You have all made this year in office a relatively easy task.

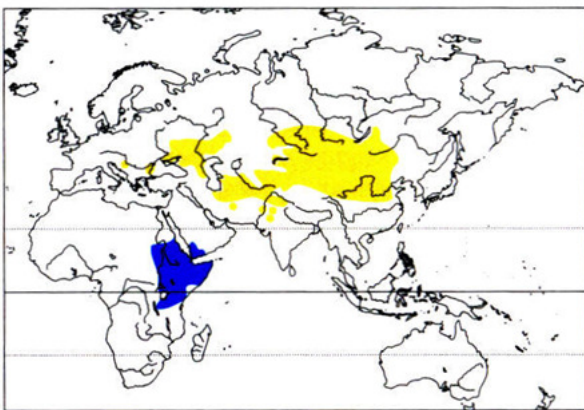
Cecilia Hubbard



Pied Wheatear – a new bird for Zimbabwe

Many people, especially those on social media, are aware that a Pied Wheatear was seen at VICTORIA FALLS airport car park from 23-25 February 2017.

This obliging fellow was first seen by Gavin Ford and Dave Carson at midday on the 23rd and the notification of its presence caused a flurry of excitement as local and regional birders rushed to the spot. Many of the external 'twitchers' enjoyed the convenience of landing at the airport, walking out of the building and 'ticking' this amazingly confiding bird! Couldn't be easier.



Then a weather front swept through and that was that, he had gone, a disappointment to those still travelling to Vic. Falls.

The breeding grounds are from SE Europe across to China and its winter quarters (blue on the *HBW* map) are NE Africa and the SW Arabian peninsular. In east Africa it usually comes as far south as north Tanzania but is widely recorded as a vagrant, e.g. in W Europe, South Africa and elsewhere.

Read more on

<http://www.hbw.com/species/pied-wheatear-oenanthe-pleschanka>

I. Riddell



Notice

eBird Global Big Day

13 May 2017: Global Big Day. Are you ready to be a part of the biggest day of birding the world has ever seen? Last year's Global Big Day featured 6,331 species, reported by 17,500 people in 153 countries. What can we do together in 2017?

Start thinking about your team – more details from the office later!



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Gerda du Toit ~ 077 884 2884

gerdadutoit69@gmail.com

BLZ MEMBERSHIP

Useful Contacts:

CEO/Ringing Programme: Julia Pierini JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org 0772-894562
Rarities Committee: Ian Riddell gemsaf@mango.zw 0772-117054
BLZ Library: piumosso@zol.co.zw 304298; 481496
Special Species: Peta Ditchburn 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
Mashonaland East Natural History Society: Chairman Peter Hadingham 04-497035
Secretary: Colin de Beer 0279-23931 jcdb1936@gmail.com
Honeyguide production: Julia Duprée daliadupree@gmail.com 09-246269

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE NOW

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 Babbler*, 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

Payment details. Please deposit into BirdLife Zimbabwe account at **NMB Bank, (Borrowdale Branch) Account No: 260092014** or BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Branch, CABS (Chisipite Branch) Account No: 1002399955 or **Ecocash** – Merchant Code No. **22084**. You can **also** pay your subscription online with **Paynow**. Look on the BLZ website on the membership page www.birdlifezimbabwe.org/joinus, and click on the Paynow tab at the bottom of the page. This is especially important for our members outside Zimbabwe. You could **also** come to our office at 35, Clyde Road, Eastlea in Harare.

It is **ESSENTIAL** please that you include YOUR name on the deposit slip so it appears on the statements **AND** advise Carolyn Dennison by e-mail or phone of your transaction, 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

And look on our Facebook page for great pictures and interesting birding news -

www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe. You can find out about us and projects you as a member can get involved with, on our informative website 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.

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.

Prince Edward School car park -17.818721, 31.036462. 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: APRIL 2017

Saturday 1st **Marlborough Vlei Walk** Meet at 07.00 a.m.

Sunday 2nd **Mukuvisi Woodlands Walk** Meet at 06.30 a.m.

Saturday 8th **Greystone Park** Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Meet at the Preserve -17.746190, 31.127282

From Rolf Avenue/Harare Drive intersection, turn east onto Gaydon Road. After 2 km turn right into Halford Road and preserve is 200 m on left.

Sunday 9th **No outing**

Sunday 16th **Monavale Vlei Walk** Meet at 06.30 a.m.

Thursday 20th **Garden Birding** Meet at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
Presentation by Peter Munday, Avondale Sports Club

Sunday 23rd **Lake Chivero Sanctuary** Meet at 06.30 a.m.
Meet at Prince Edward School car park

Friday 28th – May 1st Hippo Pools weekend

All BLZ members welcome. Contact Tony Alegria for details and bookings

BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: MAY 2017

Saturday 6th	Marlborough Vlei Walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 7th	Mukuvisi Woodlands Walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Saturday 13th	Umwinsidale Venue Directions to be confirmed	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 14th	Bryden Country School, Chegutu Meet at Prince Edward School car park	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
Thursday 18th	PAOC; wetlands and birding in Dakar, Senegal Presentation by Ian Riddell, Avondale Sports Club	Meet 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
Sunday 21st	Monavale Vlei Walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 28th	No outing	

For further information please contact Tony Alegria, tonyalegria47@gmail.com 0772 438697 or 490375 (h)

Matabeleland Branch

Saturday 8th April	Visit to Vulture Restaurant at Sundown Abattoir & Sandown Dam.
Saturday 13th May	Bird Walk at Hillside Dams.
26th-28th May	Black Eagle Survey Dassie Population Census.
Saturday 10th June	National AGM.
Sunday 11th June	Bird Walk at Tshabalala.
Saturday 8th July	NUST Walk with Peter Mundy.

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. 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 ingram.sue@gmail.com for more details.

Lowveld – contact Clive Stockil 0772-219204 or clive@chilogorge.com

*Please send contributions for
The Babbler 136 June-July 2017
any time before the 15th May*