



THE BABBLER

Newsletter of BirdLife Zimbabwe

June - July 2018
No. 142

Hi everyone,

The results of the 'summer' 2018 waterbird counts are presented here - I'm calling these summer rather than January since they cover from December to February. The report is quite long so other news items and reports will appear in the next *Babbler*.

My thanks to all who participated in the counts and, coming as this does just before the winter counts centred around mid-July, I hope you find them interesting and are stimulated to keep up the good efforts in winter. Related feedback from an independent visitor to Lake Manyame is depressing - there is no control over rampant netting on these waters, making rod fishing there almost impossible without snagging nets and of course there is a toll on waterbirds. He found dead ducks and cormorants in nets and what about the impact on Little Grebes and other species? National Parks are failing in their duty to conservation and proper management, being more interested in getting money from (unlimited?) netting licences.

Happy winter birding,

Ian Riddell gemsaf@mango.zw

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE.

Some members are not informing us when they pay their subscription and we have to be detectives, which takes up time! There are several payments for the last membership year that have not been confirmed. When members deposit into NMB for example, the name shown on the statement is often only the first name and therefore we may not know who you are.

Therefore it is **ESSENTIAL** please that you advise us by e-mail of your transaction, or your payment will not be recorded. Please contact Sylvia sylvia@blz.co.zw or carolyndennison@birdlifezimbabwe.org or phone Sylvia on 024-481496 for all membership-related issues – new, renewals, payments, change of details, queries.

Branch News

Mashonaland



A fair-sized group came to climb the mountain on this cloudy and rain-threatening morning and it was nice to have some of the Youth Club join in for a change. It was slightly chilly as we started the ascent through the woodland, leaving Carla to wander about on flat ground, with the usual suspects like Dark-capped Bulbul, Blue Waxbill, Grey Go-away-bird and Tawny-flanked Prinia to keep her company. Before reaching the first level Red-winged Starlings flew noisily overhead and calls to the south of the path had Patrick and I detouring to take a look – Mocking Cliff-chats and Lazy Cisticolas amongst others while Yellow-throated Longclaw and Levillant's Cuckoo calls floated up from below. Way up

the main mountain a lonely klipspringer perched in silhouette on a big boulder.

Climbing up a steep rock slope Jameson's Firefinches scolded us before ducking under cover as we returned to the main path, and we crested the rise. Most of the group was wandering down the open towards the stream but I decided to take another detour, heading to the big boulders below the dwala to look for Cape Buntings. They weren't in this spot today but a Speckled Pigeon was. Now came decision time: I had intended to break new ground and climb the isolated Musungwa dwala to the north, clothed as it is around the base by a dense woodland, but here I was at the base of the main mountain... ah well, the massif won and a shortcut to the beacon via the strenuous route.



This isn't recommended for most – some slopes are very steep and you have to traverse but you can use hands and feet at the same time... mountain goats and klipspringers do it! Not long along the first traverse and I was rewarded by the harsh cries and screams of three Peregrine Falcons – one flashed past, stooping unsuccessfully on birds below, and at a lazier pace an Eastern Saw-wing or two followed shortly while Rock Martins cruised the slopes. The wind brought the calls of Natal Spurfowl, Yellow-throated Petronia, Klaas's Cuckoo, Orange-breasted Bush-shrike and other incongruous birds. Some steep clambering brought me to the precipice high over the rock paintings and although the Peregrines calling on the cliff below were going to be impossible to see without flying myself, I at least heard the Boulder Chats in the valley far below, borne up on the wings of the wind. Across the divide the distant birders all had binos trained on an Augur Buzzard (so I heard later) and then they were off again, wearily trundling up the well-worn path to the head of the valley.

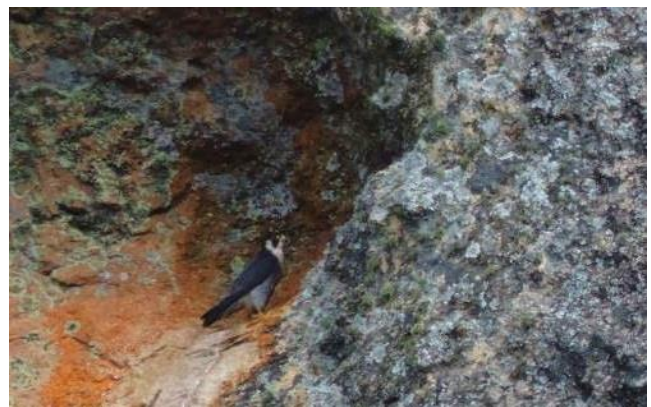


My route along the cliff edge was soon cut off by the deep cleft north of the beacon but across the way on the other side one of the Peregrines gave itself away with harsh *kek-keks* from a lonely Fire bush clinging to a tiny ledge on the bare mountain; before I could get a photo it swept back to a perch on the cliff. Heading over rocks beautifully daubed with yellow and red



lichens I came to hollow on the west side of the hill, strong with bird song from the short trees and grass that had collected there – more Lazy Cisticolas, Familiar Chats and Cape Buntings; a Cinnamon-breasted Bunting flew down from its song perch to take a quick drink from the shallow mini stream that trickled over the rock and kept the Resurrection plants verdant. Shortly afterwards a White-throated Robin-chat sang beautifully from the copse.

Heading to the little woodland that grows



south of the beacon (litter, people!) Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds were picked up along with other birds and birders. Whilst photographing a Mauve Jackal-coffee (a new distribution record *photo opposite*), and quite oddly I thought, a melodious Thrush Nightingale serenaded from the thicket, always edging ahead of us until our advances pushed it into the greenery that cascades down the steep western slope where we couldn't follow. And so we headed back down the mountain on the regular path, Ronnie confirming a Cape Bunting, a lifer for him, and a Lanner Falcon flew strongly overhead. Above the paintings I finally found one of the noisy Peregrines, perched high on the cliff above Debbie and Paul as they examined the elephants, zebras, kudus and other game on the fresco. A few more species were found at the stream crossing whilst a flock of Speckled Pigeons dashed into a treed cleft, and even more as we did the list back at the cars, including 3



White-necked Ravens, Striped Pipit, Black-chested Snake-eagle, (3 Augur Buzzards together) and more. An Ashy Flycatcher and Boulder Chats called as we tallied, bringing the list to somewhere around 70 species, a respectable count for a grey day on the rocks.

Ian Riddell

Mashonaland West

Kadoma News

The season of change as we leave summer behind and fall into autumn. Transition time for the birds also and activity has slowed as summer visitors leave while others such as bishops, weavers, whydahs change plumage to look scruffy and drab!

Our weekly walks continue to various places around Kadoma and further afield.

Eiffel flats sewerage ponds 17 March: 10 Pied Avocet, 10 Hottentot Teal, 21 Red-billed Teal, 1 Black Coucal seen and heard as we strolled in grassland nearby. The Rattling Cisticolas, Red-faced Cisticolas and Zitting Cisticolas continue to be heard on all visits.

18 April: A pair of Yellow-throated Longclaws is resident around pond area. A lone Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler darting in a thorn tree, feeding voraciously.

15 to 17 April: the mournful call of the Spotted Eagle-owl; the Barn Owls are numerous around Kadoma.

28 April E/F mine area. The 7 a.m. walk gave us a superb sighting of a female Pin-tailed Whydah happily feeding on the dry ground. Also nearby, a juvenile Cuckoo Finch, very distinct with markings of cinnamon chest and neck.

The sunbirds are arriving in numbers, the White-bellied Sunbird and Scarlet-chested Sunbird twittering everywhere looking for nectar.



2 May: a day trip to Dutchman's pool/Echo park on the Sebakwe River near Kwekwe.

After a misty, cold start, the sun appeared, as did the birds. We were able to walk along the dam wall and around some shoreline, but the reeds have choked so much of the dam, which is spoilt for fishing and birding. The caravan park is well maintained and used regularly. We each paid \$2 so parked the vehicle in safety and enjoyed our tea/lunch relaxing under the trees. A total of 36 different birds were recorded. The following were of note: 1 pair of African Fish-eagles, Black-headed Oriole, Southern Black Tit, Water Thick-knee, Cardinal Woodpecker, Purple Heron, Ashy Flycatcher and Little Bittern.

Of concern to us was the litter carelessly thrown into the bush and along the waters' edge. We did make the authorities aware of a heavy fine being metered out to anyone caught throwing litter.

Is our forthcoming winter to be cold and frosty, and how will our beautiful feathered friends fare?

Margaret Parrock



6 May: Heard a distress call from a small bird of prey in our garden this a.m. Upon investigation

found a dead Shikra just the other side of our diamond mesh fence in the corner of our neighbour's yard. It obviously died a few days ago and its mate was calling. I am sad about this and wonder what the cause of its death was? When walking with Maggi near the sewage ponds we also saw the feathers of what we thought was a Pearl-spotted Owlet. I am wondering whether the blasting at the opencast

mine about 250 metres from our house is possibly behind these deaths? We very seldom hear the Pearl-spotted Owlets now – they used to nest in an old fig tree which was a mere 100 metres or so from the opencast pit, in a friend's yard. I will be doing some research on the effects of blasting on birds, especially raptors.

Ruth Baldwin-Paice

National

International Waterbird Census counts – Summer 2017/2018

The optimal IWC count day was 14th January 2018. 70 sites were covered – four sites were counted in December 2017 (Hwange), 40 in January and 28 in February with some sites counted more than once (Table 1).

The north of the country had a good start to the season with heavy rains in the Zambezi Valley. January, however, was a bit of a drought that saw dam levels dropping though this was offset in February and March when they rose again and heavy falls in some areas caused flooding. Seke Dam was only at 9% on 24 January but rose to 93% on 22 February. The

January drought affected migrant crakes and flufftails on Monavale Vlei and Streaky-breasted Flufftails were very scarce in February and March; Striped Crakes don't seem to have arrived to breed this season.

We had 72 participants plus a few unnamed BLZ; I hope you all enjoyed your counts and many thanks for your efforts.

Species totals against the number of sites visited can be found in Table 2. 18, 881 birds were counted compared with 4, 821 in 'January' 2017 and 21, 195 in 'January' 2016.

Note that single site records are not included in the following species accounts but can be found in Table 2.

Anseriformes (Anatidae): ducks and geese

White-faced Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

At 41 sites with an overall average of 69.4. 8 sites had over 100 birds (average 251) but Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) had the highest count with 739 birds.

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*

One at Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams, 7 at Gletwyn Dam and 9 at Deteema Dam/Pan were followed by two counts of 14 (Kriedermann's and Lake Manyame) and 17 & 18 (Matopos), all surpassed by 90 at Clifton farm dam.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

The lowest counts were of 1-10 birds (28 sites) followed by 12-96 (11 sites). Higher counts were both from Mandavu Dam with 119 on 4 Dec and 115 on 21 Jan (whether these were the same birds is not known) and 166 at Ngamo pans.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Numbers ranged from 1-12 at 12 sites. Higher numbers came from the lowveld with 22 at Runde River crossing and 80 at Muchaniwa Pan, and 31 at Chinga Pan.



African Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

These ranged from 1-81, then a high of 146 at Kriedermann's Dam. With Aisleby inundated with water hyacinth, were waterbirds forced to

surrounding dams such as nearby Kriedermann's?

African Pygmy-goose *Nettapus auritus*

Only found at 7 sites with 1-3 at 4 sites, 15 at Pasi Dam, 19 at Mpopoma Dam and 44 at Clifton farm dam.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

Only found at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) (15) and Kriedermann's Dam (76).

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

At 15 sites these ranged from 1-9 birds (average 4.4); additionally 25 were at Highacres Dam and 44 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Ranged from 1-80 birds with a high count at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) of 170.

Podicipediformes (Podicipedidae): grebes

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Between 1-10 (average 3.4) were counted at 16 sites, with 16, 18, 28 and 32 at the remaining,

the highest being at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. These are quite low numbers.

Phoenicopteriformes (Phoenicopteridae): flamingos

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

1 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds, 5 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 14 at David Whitehead Ponds.



Cuculiformes (Cuculidae): coucals

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

From 1-4 (average 1.9) at 7 sites. *Note that the count at Mazvikadei Ponds is complicated as this species appears to have interbred with the White-browed Coucal but 3 were assigned to the Senegal Coucal. These birds need to be closely examined.*

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*

Only from Mazvikadei Dam and Mazvikadei Ponds. 2 from the ponds were counted as this species but see note above.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

The highest counts were 5 at Monavale Vlei and 6 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Gruiformes (Heliornithidae – Gruidae): finfoots, flufftails, rails, crakes, gallinules, moorhens, coots, cranes

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

4 from the usual site of Hippo Ponds and also a single from Mazvikadei Dam.



African Rail *Rallus caerulescens*

Singles at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) and Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds.

African Crake *Crecopsis egregia*

2 each at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds and Monavale Vlei.

Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra*

Most of the records (19 sites) ranged from 1-10 birds. 4 other sites had from 15-41, Mazvikadei Dam having the most.

African Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Not widely recorded. 5 sites were of 1-7 birds, then a higher count of 22 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

Muchaniwa and Tambahata pans accounted for 4 birds and there was a single at Greengrove Nature Reserve.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

From 1-23 were noted at 17 sites (average 8.7). Higher numbers were 30 at Gletwyn Dam, 80 at

Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) and 131 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*

The two Biri Dam sites accounted for 3 birds and 2 each were at Clifton farm dam and Greengrove Nature Reserve.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Higher counts were 95 at Aisleby Farm & Sewage Works, 109 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway), 127 at Kriedermann's Dam and 356 at Lake Manyame.



Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

All birds came from Hwange with 2 each at 8 sites, 3 at 2 sites, 4 at Ngamo pans and 8 at Camp Hwange.

Ciconiiformes (Ciconiidae): storks

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*

Small numbers, maximum 3, distributed between Aisleby, Chinga Pan and three Hwange sites.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Sites with numbers of 10 or more were Mandavu Dam (10), Tambahata Pan (11) and Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary (14).

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus*

Mostly small numbers (1-9), then 18 at Mazvikadei Dam, 25 at Chinga Pan and 28 at Suri Suri Dam.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One each at Hippo Pools and Little Somavundhla pans.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

No large numbers were found on the wetlands, most records of 1-7 (average 3.6); the highest counts were 33 at Crowborough Farm and Ngamo Pans.



African Woollyneck *Ciconia microscelis*

Note the new name for our Woolly-necked Stork. Only found at Muchaniwa (1) and Tambahata pans (2), with 3 birds on two sections of Mteri Dam.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Only 1-3 birds at 5 sites, plus 16 at Mteri Dam Section 4, 17 at Somavundhla Pan and 44 at Makalolo Pan.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

From 1-2 birds were at 9 sites plus 3 on Tambahata Pan.

Pelecaniformes (Threskiornithidae – Pelecanidae): spoonbills, ibises, bitterns, herons, egrets, Hamerkop, pelicans

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Numbers ranged from 2-16, the latter high count from Ngamo pans. 10 were at Mandavu in December with 8 there in January and 8 also at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

The majority of counts were of less than 15 birds (n=17, average 6.4). Aisleby had 73 and Crowborough Farm had 147.

Hadeda Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Restricted to the southeast apart from 2 at Highacres Dam and 4 at Kriedermann's Dam.

The latter were 4 days apart so it is not known if these involved different birds but this ibis seems to be appearing more frequently around Bulawayo. The highest counts, of 16+11, were from the Save-Runde.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Higher counts came from Aisleby Farm (19), Lake Manyame (34) and Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) (76) and Ngamo pans (154).

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Singles at Greengrove Nature Reserve and Monavale Vlei, with 2 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*

Singles at Biri Dam and Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams.

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*

Numbers ranged from 1-8 (average 3). Mteri Dam (two sections) accounted for 11 birds.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

From 1-28 (average 8.4) with the higher counts being 24 at Mazvikadei Dam and 28 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Quite widely distributed (29 sites). At 24 sites numbers ranged from 1-83 (average 20). Larger numbers were 129 at Muchaniwa Pan, 130 at Lake Manyame, 238 at Aisleby Farm, 285 at Crowborough Farm and 365 at Chinga Pan. David Whitehead Ponds had just 3 on 13 January and 52 on 10 February.



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Most sites (26) recorded low numbers of 1-9 (average 2.3) birds. 12 were at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway), 14 each at Mandavu Dam and Mteri Dam Section 1, 18 at Tambahata Pan and 26 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.



Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

From 1-4 birds at 25 sites.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

Numbers ranged from 1-5, the high count from Mteri Dam Section 4, which, combined

with 2 on Mteri Dam Section 1 gave 7 birds for the parts of Mteri that were counted. Two singles were at Mandavu Dam in December and January but it is not known if these involve a recount

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Whilst the majority of sites (13) had from 1-3 birds, Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) produced 9 and Mazvikadei Dam 31.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Numbers ranged from 1-18 (average 4.7) with 10 on Lake Manyame and 18 on Mteri Dam Section 1; added to the latter were 5 on Mteri Dam Section 4, bring the dam total to 23.

Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha*

From 1-9 (average 4.2) at 10 sites. The 9 were from Mazvikadei Dam.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

Small numbers of 1-4 (average 2.1) at 8 sites, then a higher 17 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 33 at Mazvikadei Dam.



Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*

Special mention is made of the (rare) bird on Mazvikadei Dam. Though usually confined to Kazungula occasional birds wander further east, e.g. Rainham in 1978 & 88 and Chivero in 1978 & 81, plus another at Banket in 1989. In 1990 two were on Manyame and one at Chivero in 1999 plus other sightings in the 90s as well as on from Glendale. There are other records from other areas including Mutirikwe and Mana Pools in later years.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Small numbers (1-8, average 2.4) with the exception of 14 at Mandavu Dam (Dec) and 50 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

These ranged from 1-5 birds (average 1.6), the high 5 from Ballantyne Park North (Blair).

Suliformes (Phalacrocoracidae – Anhingidae): cormorants, darters

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

Low numbers, from 1-12 (average 3.3) were counted from 13 sites with the only high count being 220 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus*

The majority of sites (27) had small numbers ranging from 1-33 (average 6.7), then 135 at Mazvikadei Dam.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

Ranged from 1-5 at 6 sites, then 14 & 20 at Mteri Dam Section 1 and Highacres Dam respectively. 3 sections of Mteri Dam covered totalled at 21 birds. The only highveld count was of 4 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Charadriiformes (Burhinidae – Recurvirostridae): thick-knees, avocets, stilts

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*

Numbers ranged from 1-10 (average 4.4) birds.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Counts of 1 and 6 at all 6 sites. David Whitehead Ponds was counted on 13 January and 24 were counted, 3 February (the 6 above) and 10 February with just a single bird.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Numbers from 1-28 (average 7.3) were recorded at 25 sites with higher counts of 38 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds, and counts of 72 and 75 at Mandavu Dam in December and January respectively. David Whitehead Ponds was counted three times with 6 in January and 9 & 19 in February.

Charadriiformes (Charadriidae): plovers, lapwings

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

7 Hwange sites had low counts of 1-6 but Mandavu produced 50 in December and 57 in January. Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary (10) and David Whitehead Ponds (13) were the other sites with this species.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

Numbers were generally low, from 1-6; Deteema Dam/Pan had 13 and Mandavu had 18 in January.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

One claimed for Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary is unusual. Runde River crossing area had 3.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus*

A widespread species. Numbers ranged from 1-29 (average 8.2) with higher counts of 54 at Kriedermann's Dam, 103 at Salt Pans Dam, 110 at Mandavu Dam (Jan), 114 at Deteema Dam/Pan, 150 at Mandavu Dam in December and 250 at Ngamo pans. David Whitehead was counted once in January and twice in February with 3, 4 & 12 birds, indicating some movement

- the degree of wandering or recounting is unknown.

White-crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*

Only found in Gonarezhou with 9 in the Runde River crossing area and 21 at Tambahata Pan.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus*

Only recorded in Hwange with 2, 5 and 25 at 3 sites.



African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*

Ranged from 1-25 (average 7.8), the highest count from Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams.

Charadriiformes (Rostratulidae – Jacanidae): painted-snipe, jacanas

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

All were from the Kadoma area, singles at 3 sites and 2 at Pasi Dam.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

Ranged from 1-88 (average 18.3), then a single high count of 431 from Mazvikadei Dam.

Charadriiformes (Scolopacidae): sandpipers, snipes

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Ranged from 1-44 (average 14.3), then a single high count of 190 at Mandavu Dam in January. The December count at Mandavu was 44 birds. David Whitehead Ponds was counted three times with 22 (13 Jan), 26 (3 Feb) & 35 birds (10 Feb). The turnover of birds at this site is unknown.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Low numbers of 1 & 4 at Deteema Dam/Pan and Mandavu Dam (Dec). David Whitehead Ponds had 15 and Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary & Mandavu (Jan) each had 18.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

All sites produced low numbers ranging from 1-7 (average 2). The 7 were from Mteri Dam

Section 1 and sections 4 & 5 had 1 each, bringing the dam total to 9.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Low numbers of 1-3 were raised by the Mandavu Dam (Jan) count when 13 were recorded.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Numbers showed a steady rise from 1-40 birds, the highest count from Chinga Pan.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Low numbers again for this species with singles at all sites apart from Mandavu Dam where 4 were seen in December and 13 in January.

Charadriiformes (Glareolidae): coursers, pratincoles



Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary had on 2 birds but larger numbers elsewhere were 124 at Tambahata Pan, 174 at Salt Pans Dam and 234 at Mandavu Dam.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

Only 5 at Shumba pumped pan and 9 at Aisleby.

Charadriiformes (Laridae): skimmers, gulls, terns



African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*

Mandavu Dam was the only site with 3 each on the December and January counts. Whether the same birds were involved is not known and 3 is the total shown in Table 2.

Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

A single at Mandavu Dam (Jan), 11 at Lake Manyame and 20 at Mazvikadei Dam were boosted by 68 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway) and 120 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Mandavu Dam had 28 in January and 72 in December although the degree of recounting, if any, is not known. 9 were found at two other Hwange sites.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Apart from singles at three sites, 50 were at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 208 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Strigiformes (Strigidae): owls

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*

Ones and twos at 4 sites, 3 of which were around Harare and the other being David Whitehead Ponds.

Accipitriformes (Pandionidae): osprey

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Ranged from 1-3 birds at 4 sites, two of which were Mteri Dam Sections 1 & 4 where 3 & 2 birds were recorded. If these 5 didn't involve recounts (the counters are fairly confident it didn't), this is a good number for that dam. In order to be more confident in cases such as this it is necessary to record the times, positions and flight directions of birds.



Accipitriformes (Pandionidae): hawks & eagles

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Singles at all sites apart from 2 at Monavale Vlei.

Black-chested Snake-eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*

Recorded in ones and twos at 4 sites.

African Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Recorded in quite low numbers this season, from 1-12 (average 3.65), the 12 from Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

8 sites recorded from 1-3 birds, then 6 at Crowborough Farm.

Coraciiformes (Meropidae – Alcedinidae): bee-eaters – kingfishers

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*

From 2-7 birds (average 4.5) at 4 sites.

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides*

From 1-7 birds at 6 sites, the highest count from "Back Pan".

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

6 at Mbonisa Weir and 15 at Charama Dam.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

The most widely recorded bee-eater this season with the higher counts being 10 at Hippo Pools camp and 12 at Mukuvisi Woodland.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus*

Six sites had between 1-4 birds (average 1.7), but Mazvikadei Dam had 29.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*

From 1-4 birds, Mazvikadei Dam having the highest count.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

The most widely distributed kingfisher with from 1-8 at 21 sites, but 40 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Cisticolidae: cisticolas

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

Counts from 2-16 (average 7), the 16 from Mukuvisi Woodland.

Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens*

Twos at 3 sites with 4 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*

Most counts (5) had from 1-4 birds; 10 at Monavale Vlei.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

From 1-4 birds at 7 sites, though a second count at David Whitehead Ponds had an increase from 3 to 16.

Acrocephalidae & Locustellidae: reed-warblers & grasshopper warblers

African Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

Counts of 1 (Mazvikadei Ponds), 2 (Hippo Pools camp) and 4 (Monavale Vlei). Probably undercounted.

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis*

Two singles and a two at 3 sites.

Great Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Ones and twos at 6 sites.

Lesser Swamp-warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

From 1-10 (average 4.2), the 10 from Mazvikadei Ponds.

Little Rush-warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

Six sites had 2-6 birds, but Mukuvisi Woodland had 19.

Hirundinidae: swallows

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Two birds each at 3 sites.

Ploceidae: weavers

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

From 2-30 (average 12.2) at 6 sites.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

Apart from a low 4 at David Whitehead Ponds, other counts ranged from 24-100.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*

From 1-49, though females are possibly undercounted.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens*

Apart from two counts of one bird, 17-30



were counted at 3 other sites.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*

Two counts of single birds and 11 & 14 at two other sites, females possibly undercounted.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura*

From 6-29 (average 16.3) at 3 sites, females possibly undercounted.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus*

Apart from two counts of 1 & 5, three other sites had from 20-50 birds (average 31.6).

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*

From 1-7 birds (average 3) at 4 sites.

Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*

Two each at 3 sites.

Southern Masked-weaver *Ploceus velatus*

2-8 at 4 sites, though Mukuvisi Woodland had a high of 123.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

9-21 (average 13.3) at 3 sites.

Estrildidae: waxbills

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

From 1-39 at 6 sites.

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava*

From 6-16 (average 12.3) at 3 sites, and 60 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Motacillidae: longclaws & wagtails

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*

From 1-7 (average 3.2) at 9 sites, the 7 were from David Whitehead Ponds on 10 February, the count on the 2nd having 5 birds and recounting is likely.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

From 1-10 (average 3.2) at 13 sites, the 10 were from Hippo Pools camp.

Fringillidae: finches



Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata*

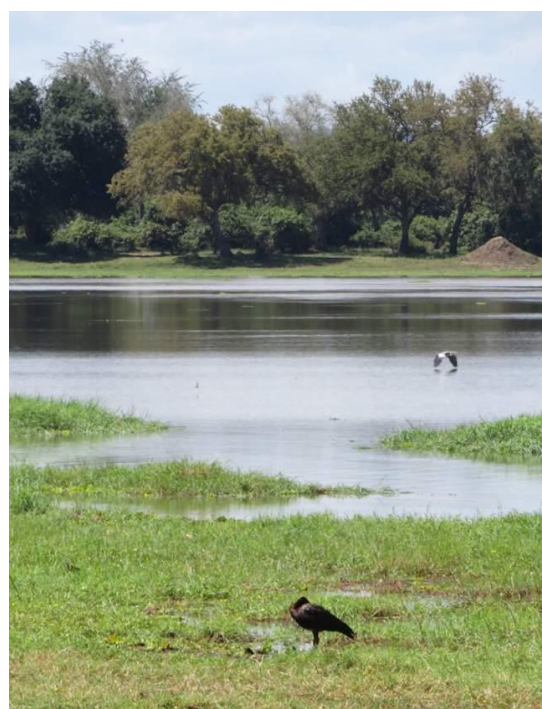
2 & 3 at Country Club Golf course and David Whitehead Ponds.

Table 1. Sites covered in the 'January' (summer) 2018 counts

Site	Area	Date	Status
Aberdeen Hideaway	Zvimba	28 Jan	
Airstrip 2	Hwange	2 Feb	
Aisleby	Bulawayo	4 Feb	
"Back Pan"	Hwange	11 Feb	
Ballantyne Park North	Harare	11 Jan	
Big Shumba Pan	Hwange	21 Jan	
Biri Dam	Chinhoyi	26 Jan	
Biri Dam Fishing Site	Chinhoyi	26 Jan	
Broken Rifle Pan	Hwange	14 Feb	
Camp Hwange	Hwange	21 Jan	
Charama Dam	Kadoma	7 Feb	
Chinga Pan	Save Valley	11 Jan	
Chitampa Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	
Cleveland Dam	Harare	21 Jan	
Clifton Dam	Chegutu	7 Jan	
Country Club Golf Course	Harare	17 Jan	
Country Club Golf Course	Harare	20 Jan	
Crowborough	Harare	3 Feb	
David Whitehead Ponds	Chegutu	13 Jan	
David Whitehead Ponds	Chegutu	3 Feb	
David Whitehead Ponds	Chegutu	10 Feb	
Deteema Dam	Hwange	4 Dec	
Dwarf Goose Pan	Hwange	21 Jan	Dry
Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds	Kadoma	20 Jan	
Gletwyn Dam	Harare	7 Feb	
Greengrove Dam	Harare	18 Feb	
High Acre Dam	Umzingwane	25 Jan	
Hippo Pools	Shamva	26 Jan	
Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds	Kadoma	27 Jan	
Kriedermann's Dam	Bulawayo	21 Jan	
Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary	Harare	14 Jan	
Lake Manyame	Zvimba	17 Feb	
Lanark Farm	Seke	11 Jan	
Little Somavundhla pans	Hwange	13 Feb	
Madingazulu Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	
Madison Pan	Hwange	2 Feb	
Major Pan	Hwange	21 Jan	
Makalolo Pan	Hwange	12 Feb	
Mandalay Dam	Kadoma	27 Jan	
Mandavu Dam	Hwange	4 Dec	
Mandavu Dam	Hwange	21 Jan	
Mandiseka pumped pan	Hwange	2 Feb	
Mandundumela Pan	Hwange	2 Feb	
Masuma Dam	Hwange	21 Jan	
Mazvikadei Dam	Zvimba	21 Jan	
Mazvikadei Ponds	Zvimba	27 Jan	
Mbisa Pans/Plain	Hwange	3 Feb	
Mbonisa Weir	Umzingwane	12 Jan	
Mesilume Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	
Mfagazana Pan & windpump	Hwange	2 Feb	
Monavale Vlei	Harare	18 Feb	



Clive Stockil at Muchaniwa Pan, Gonarezhou



Tambahata Pan, Gonarezhou

Site	Area	Date	Status
Mpopoma Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	
Mteri Dam section 1	Chiredzi	3 Feb	
Mteri Dam Section 4	Chiredzi	3 Feb	
Mteri Dam Section 5	Chiredzi	3 Feb	
Muchaniwa Pan	Gonarezhou	13 Jan	
Mukuvisi Woodland	Harare	20 Jan	
Ngamo Pans	Hwange	14 Feb	
Ngezi Dam	Kadoma	10 Feb	
Nswatugi Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	
Pasi Dam	Kadoma	20 Jan	
Reedbuck Vlei	Hwange	21 Jan	Nil count - dry
Runde River crossing	Gonarezhou	13 Jan	
Salt Pans Dam	Hwange	4 Dec	
Scotts Pan	Hwange	12 Feb	
Shozoloza Lodge	Kadoma	7 Feb	
Shumba Pans	Hwange	21 Jan	
Shumba pumped pan	Hwange	4 Dec	
Somavundhla Pan	Hwange	13 Feb	
Stofies Pan	Hwange	21 Jan	
Suri Suri	Chegutu	3 Feb	
Tambahata Pan	Gonarezhou	13 Jan	
Wexcau Pan	Hwange	11 Feb	
Whitewaters Dam	Matopos	13 Jan	

Table 2. Species totals, including recounts, by site (including sub-sites) in January 2017. Single site records, not mentioned above, are given here.

SPECIES	Count	No. of sites
Abdim's Stork <i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	154	13
African Comb Duck <i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	550	21
African Crake <i>Crecopsis egregia</i>	4	2
African Darter <i>Anhinga rufa</i>	54	8
African Finfoot <i>Podica senegalensis</i>	5	2
African Fish-eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	84	23
African Jacana <i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	1145	38
African Openbill <i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	113	13
African Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	45	13
African Purple Swampphen <i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>	38	6
African Pygmy-goose <i>Nettapus auritus</i>	86	7
African Rail <i>Rallus caerulescens</i>	2	2
African Reed-warbler <i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	7	3
African Sacred Ibis <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	335	19
African Skimmer <i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>	3	Mandavu Dam
African Spoonbill <i>Platalea alba</i>	63	11
African Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	1	Monavale Vlei
African Wattled Lapwing <i>Vanellus senegallus</i>	102	13
African Woollyneck <i>Ciconia microscelis</i>	6	4
Allen's Gallinule <i>Porphyrio alleni</i>	5	3
Black Coucal <i>Centropus grillii</i>	15	5
Black Crake <i>Zapornia flavirostra</i>	190	23
Black Heron <i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	67	10
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>	2	2

SPECIES	Count	No. of sites
Black-chested Snake-eagle <i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	6	4
Black-crowned Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1	Tambahata Pan
Black-headed Heron <i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	57	25
Black-shouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	9	8
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	1159	49
Black-winged Pratincole <i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	14	2
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	383	27
Brimstone Canary <i>Crithagra sulphurata</i>	5	2
Cape Teal <i>Anas capensis</i>	2	David Whitehead Ponds
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	1646	29
Collared Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	534	4
Common Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	29	9
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	390	20
Common Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	4	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	38	18
Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	81	6
Croaking Cisticola <i>Cisticola natalensis</i>	22	5
Crowned Lapwing <i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	32	3
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1	Mandavu Dam
Dark-capped Yellow Warbler <i>Iduna natalensis</i>	4	3
Dwarf Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sturmii</i>	2	2
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	961	41
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	21	2
Fulvous Duck <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	3	Mandavu Dam
Giant Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	21	12
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	325	13
Golden Weaver <i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	6	3
Goliath Heron <i>Ardea goliath</i>	22	9
Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	78	17
Great Reed-warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	8	6
Great White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	1	Somavundhla Pan
Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	20	3
Greater Painted-snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	5	4
Green-backed Heron <i>Butorides striata</i>	28	9
Grey Crowned Crane <i>Balearica regulorum</i>	34	12
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	146	31
Grey-headed Gull <i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	220	5
Grey-rumped Swallow <i>Pseudhirundo griseopyga</i>	8	Monavale Vlei
Hadedda Ibis <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	49	7
Hamerkop <i>Scopus umbretta</i>	32	20
Harlequin Quail <i>Coturnix delegorguei</i>	1	David Whitehead Ponds
Hottentot Teal <i>Spatula hottentota</i>	140	17
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	148	10
Kurrichane Buttonquail <i>Turnix sylvaticus</i>	2	David Whitehead Ponds
Lesser Moorhen <i>Gallinula angulata</i>	7	4
Lesser Striped Swallow <i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>	2	Monavale Vlei
Lesser Swamp-warbler <i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	38	9
Levaillant's Cisticola <i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	10	4
Little Bee-eater <i>Merops pusillus</i>	36	8
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	4	3
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	103	17

SPECIES	Count	No. of sites
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	149	20
Little Rush-warbler <i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>	39	7
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	56	4
Long-toed Lapwing <i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>	1	Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway)
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Corythornis cristatus</i>	39	7
Marabou Stork <i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>	9	5
Marsh Owl <i>Asio capensis</i>	6	4
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	22	5
Orange-breasted Waxbill <i>Amandava subflava</i>	97	4
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	9	4
Pale-crowned Cisticola <i>Cisticola cinnamomeus</i>	2	Monavale Vlei
Pel's Fishing-owl <i>Scotopelia peli</i>	2	Runde River crossing
Pied Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	46	6
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	113	22
Pin-tailed Whydah <i>Vidua macroura</i>	2	Mazvikadei Dam
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	59	15
Red-billed Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	268	6
Red-billed Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	790	36
Red-collared Widowbird <i>Euplectes ardens</i>	71	5
Red-faced Cisticola <i>Cisticola erythrops</i>	42	6
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	742	10
Reed Cormorant <i>Microcarbo africanus</i>	315	28
Ruff <i>Calidris pugnax</i>	448	16
Saddle-billed Stork <i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	17	10
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	3	Mukuvisi Woodland
Senegal Coucal <i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	13	7
Slaty Egret <i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>	1	Mazvikadei Dam
Southern Carmine Bee-eater <i>Merops nubicoides</i>	17	6
Southern Masked-weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	141	5
Southern Pochard <i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	91	2
Southern Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	162	12
Spectacled Weaver <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>	12	4
Spotted Thick-knee <i>Burhinus capensis</i>	1	Charama Dam
Spur-winged Goose <i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	179	15
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	143	17
Thick-billed Weaver <i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>	73	6
Three-banded Plover <i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	83	21
unidentified cormorants - <i>Phalacrocorax</i> spp.	3	Ngezi Dam
unidentified herons - Ardeidae	7	4
unidentified rallids - Rallidae	1	David Whitehead Ponds
unidentified waders	7	David Whitehead Ponds
Village Weaver <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	40	3
Water Thick-knee <i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	44	9
Western Marsh-harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1	Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway)
Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	109	3
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	86	8
White-backed Duck <i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>	170	8
White-backed Night-heron <i>Caltherodius leuconotus</i>	2	Hippo Pools camp
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	266	14
White-browed Coucal <i>Centropus superciliosus</i>	3	2
White-crowned Lapwing <i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	30	2

SPECIES	Count	No. of sites
White-faced Duck <i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	2986	41
White-fronted Bee-eater <i>Merops bullockoides</i>	18	4
White-fronted Plover <i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	4	2
White-winged Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	261	5
White-winged Widowbird <i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>	101	4
Wire-tailed Swallow <i>Hirundo smithii</i>	6	3
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	259	33
Yellow Bishop <i>Euplectes capensis</i>	27	4
Yellow-billed Egret <i>Ardea brachyrhyncha</i>	46	10
Yellow-billed Kite <i>Milvus aegyptius</i>	17	9
Yellow-billed Stork <i>Mycteria ibis</i>	58	9
Yellow-mantled Widowbird <i>Euplectes macroura</i>	49	3
Yellow-throated Longclaw <i>Macronyx croceus</i>	32	9
Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	33	7

Participants

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I hope you will all manage the July count, which will be either side of mid-July

What's in a site?

On the 10th February Innes Louw and I returned from counting David Whitehead ponds and just had to stop a kilometre west of the Manyame River bridge on the main road where we noticed a large gathering of birds in a field. This field must have a leaking irrigation pipe or some other source of water, and compared to some official wetland sites, was simply jam-packed! To give some idea on how productive it was we counted: at least 15 Cattle Egrets, 35 Glossy Ibis, 45 White-faced Duck, 57 Spur-winged Goose, 25 Red-billed Teal, 106 African Comb Duck and 12 Egyptian Goose. The waders were certainly under-counted because of vegetation and dips and hollows but had some 8 Wood Sandpipers, 10 Blacksmith Lapwings and a Ruff. There was a good gathering of African Fish-eagles with some 11 birds of various age classes - mostly non-adults.

Tambahata Pan by Clive Stockil - a great place to count, even if the distances are challenging for seeing all the small stuff!





A couple of Yellow-billed Ducks were seen at Ballantyne Park recently - this picture by James Ball on 3rd April.

Apart from South Africa it is usually found in the Linyanti/Chobe system and sporadically comes into the pans of western Matabeleland and sometimes Aisleby (where rare) and was possibly resident at Nyanga at one time; Ken Dixon saw it on a tiny dam on the way to Mtarazi Falls in February 1993.

It was added to the Gonarezhou list on 3 October 1985 and Ruckomechi, Mana Pools on 16 August 1992 when 8 appeared on the Zambezi! July-September 1995 saw an influx on the



Zambezi, from Ruckomechi to Chikwenya, involving one or two birds and I wonder if these weren't the same birds moving around the area - August 1995 was my first Zimbabwe record. Then there were 2 on the Fothergill foreshore on 16 August 1999. These late winter onwards records could have been dry season movements, perhaps Kafue birds from Zambia or other drought stricken areas?

This is a very unusual duck on the highveld: September 1992, December, 1993 July 1994 - Lake Manyame and it is not really known if these were genuine movements or escapees from duck collections. But then there were 7 from said dam in July 2005 which were no doubt from Duncan Parkes' releases from a nearby farm collection!

First reported at Ballantyne on 23rd March 1973 and now this pair... it is again hard to say if these are not escapees but whilst there would have been more in captivity in the 70s how many collections are there around these days? The provenance of this sighting, however, remains unclear.

Ian Riddell

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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.

Some members are not informing us when they pay their subscription and we have to be detectives, which takes up time! There are several payments for the last membership year that have not been confirmed. When members deposit into NMB for example, the name shown on the statement is often only the first name and therefore we may not know who you are.

Therefore it is **ESSENTIAL** please that you advise us by e-mail of your transaction, or your payment will not be recorded. Please contact carolyndennison@birdlifezimbabwe.org or Sylvia sylvia@blz.co.zw or phone Sylvia on 024-481496 for all membership-related issues – new, renewals, payments, change of details, queries.

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. **Note:** There will be no car guard. Don't forget refreshments for after the walk when we record the number of species. The **public car park** is off Hillside Road, -17.835393, 31.089111.

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.

Haka Park -17.843391, 31.143369. From the traffic circle at the Mutare Road/Harare Drive intersection continue 500m and turn left, follow the road (770m) to the Haka sign and boom on the left. If entering through the boom on Harare Drive (-17.828473, 31.140253; 1.9 km north of the circle) make your way to the meeting point. \$3 entrance fee for BLZ members, \$5 others.

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 charge of \$2 per person at the door please.

Mashonaland Branch

BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: JUNE 2018

Saturday 2nd	Marlborough Vlei walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 3rd	Mukuvisi Woodlands walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Saturday 9th	Haka Park	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 17th	Monavale Vlei walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Thursday 21st	The Seldomseen visit Presentation by Tony Alegria, Avondale Sports Club	Meet at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
Sunday 24th	Ewanrigg Meet at CABS Northridge Park	Meet at 7.00 a.m.

BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: JULY 2018

Sunday 1st	Mukuvisi Woodlands walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Saturday 7th	Marlborough Vlei walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.

Saturday 8th	Lake Chivero (Waterfowl Count) Meet at Prince Edward School	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Saturday 14th	Greengrove Nature Reserve (Willy's dam) -17.829783, 31.129673. From Mutare road turn left into Greengrove Dve. and 2 nd right into St. Malo Ave, continue to the end where it becomes Kirrie Rd at the corner – reserve is on the right.	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Thursday 19th	Migration video Presentation, Avondale Sports Club	Meet 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
Sunday 22nd	Hideaway, Lake Manyame (Waterfowl Count) Meet at CABS Northridge Park	Meet at 07.00 a.m.

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

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 143 August-September 2018
any time before the 15th July.*