



# THE BABBLER

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## Hi everyone,

This issue is mainly taken up with the report on the waterbird counts of 2019.

As many of you will know, the 'extra' count at Chivero Bird Sanctuary on the 10<sup>th</sup> November turned up an unprecedented two Spur-winged Lapwings! Fortunately, Ronnie Chirimuta

and other members of the Youth Club decided to go a bit further than the main party did and discovered the birds where the Marimba stream enters the lake. A steady stream of visitors, both local and regional, is still visiting the site and the next amazing discovery was of four 'just out of the box' chicks (the first breeding south of Kenya?), and the number of adults rose to three and recently to five! The chicks have risen from little fluff balls, on ever-growing legs, and can be watched as they confidently feed around their little mudbank which 'mum' actively defends, chasing Black-winged Stilts, African Jacanas and the occasional African Fish-eagle (see Tail Feathers).

This is Zimbabwe's 6<sup>th</sup> record of this rare bird, which we tentatively state (hope) is going to colonise! This event isn't included in this report; it is really part of the 2019-2020 season. But get out there to your favourite wetland - who knows what might turn up... and thanks as always to those that devote so much time and effort to these counts in these trying times!

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# National

## International Waterbird Census, Zimbabwe 2019

Ian Riddell

53 sites were counted in 2018, 38 in summer and 45 in winter. Of these, 30 were counted in both seasons, with 8 only counted in summer and 15 in the winter season (Table 1). The International Waterbird Census preferred count days were in the middle of January and July but our counts ranged a month either side of these dates, though none were counted in December 2018. Site counts in more than a single month per season can be seen in Table 1 and all these data including recounts are shown in this report.

In January, Nswatugi and Whitewaters dams (both Matopos) were dry as was Reedbuck Vlei, Hwange. In July, Chitampa, Madingazulu, Nswatugi and Whitewaters dams (all Matopos) were dry.

Uncontrolled gillnetting continues on highveld dams, and, if anything, appears to be worsening.

Our Ramsar sites coverage is shown in Table 1. Chivero Bird Sanctuary (as part of Lake Chivero) was covered in both seasons, Aberdeen, as a part of Lake Manyame, and Monavale Vlei in summer.

Participants are encouraged to count any sudden and significant influx that occurs at any time of the year.

Coverage of our wetland sites relies on the voluntary services of our members and their often-limited resources so grateful thanks are due to those who participated, 45 in the wet and 48 in the dry season, plus those simply listed as BLZ. A big thankyou to those individuals who did extensive counts in Hwange and other sites.

20 676 birds of 152 species were recorded; this total includes estimates and recounted sites (Table 2). A summary of most species is given below though single site records (1 record for the year) are only listed in Table 2.

### Anseriformes (Anatidae): ducks and geese

#### White-faced Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

Summer: The highest count of 279 from Suni Pan far exceeded the range of 2-65 (Av. 15.5) at 19 other sites, the high of 65 from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. Aberdeen Farm had a count of 50.

Winter: a wide range from 1-3644, the high count from Mazvikadei Dam. 12 sites had less than 100 birds (Av. 25.5), with higher numbers from Mpopoma Dam (103), Suri Suri Dam (140), Biri Dam (325) and Lanark Farm North dams (1200). Mandavu had 7 birds in Apr and 20 in May.

#### Fulvous Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Winter: 3 at Makororo Dam and 13 at Mazvikadei Dam.

#### White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*

Summer: These ranged from 9-300. The high count of 300 came from Clifton farm dam in April, where 46 were counted in January. Excluding the April count, numbers ranged from 9-4 (Av. 31), with 9 at Mandalay Dam, 20 at Gletwyn Dam, 46 at Clifton and 48 at Sandy Spruit dam.

Winter: 2-7 birds at 3 sites, then 378 at Clifton and 392 at Claw Dam.

#### Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Summer: Generally ranged from 1-10 birds (Av. 5.3, 12 sites), and then numbers rose with 24 at Shumba pumped pan, 38 at Crowborough Farm, 44 at Masuma Pan/Dam, and a high of 101 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: 17 sites ranged from 1-20 birds (Av. 5.8), followed by higher counts from 24-54. Mandavu was counted in Apr (20), May (37), June (54) and July (53). Mazvikadei Dam had 31.

#### Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Summer: From 1-9 at 6 sites and then 20 at Suni Pan.

Winter: a single at Horseshoe Dam and 125 & 152 at Big Shumba Pan & Reedbuck Vlei.

#### African Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Summer: From 1-8 at 9 sites, followed by 16 at Camp Hwange and 82 at Kriedermann's dam.

Winter: low numbers of 2-5 at 5 sites with 10 at Suri Suri Dam and 13 each at Mandalay Dam and Mtshelili Dam.

#### African Pygmy-goose *Nettapus auritus*

Summer: Low numbers of 1 at Gletwyn Dam, 2 each at Kriedermann's dam and Mandalay Dam,

9 at Sandy Spruit dam, then 10 at Clifton farm dam in January and 49 at this site in April.  
Winter: 3 & 7 at Mandalay & Claw Dams, with 18 at Mtshelili Dam and 48 at Clifton farm dam.

#### Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

Summer: Low counts were of 10 at Gletwyn Dam and 16 at Clifton farm dam in April. At Clifton, 114 were counted in January and 123 at Kriedermann's dam.

Winter: only a single at Shumba pumped pan and 51 at Clifton farm dam.

#### Hottentot Teal *Spatula hottentota*

Summer: Numbers were low with 2-7 at 4 sites and 10 at Camp Hwange.

Winter: from 1-10 (Av. 5.6) with 10 each at Gletwyn Dam and Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

#### Cape Shoveler *Spatula smithii*

Winter: Two at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary on 14 July is an interesting record.

#### African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*

Summer: Only found at two sites, 2 at Knoll Farm Dam and 5 at Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: 2's and 4's at 6 sites.

#### Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata*

Winter: a single at Gletwyn Dam on 23 July was interesting, possibly an escapee, though the provenance of these sparse records is difficult to determine?

#### Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Summer: 1-30 birds (Av. 10) at 16 sites plus a high of 112 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds. Clifton had 22 in April. The January count report says "Clifton had in January and..." which is an error as none were seen in that month.

Winter: numbers ranged quite evenly between 2-35 (Av. 13.4), then 70 were at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 120 at Mazvikadei Dam. Mandavu counts were 10 in Apr & 4 in May.

### Podicipediformes (Podicipedidae) grebes

#### Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Summer: Counts were very low, from 1-6 at 6 sites. At Aberdeen Farm, where high numbers are expected, only 3 were counted. This apparent

decline could be the result of excessive gillnetting.

Winter: as in summer, counts were poor with 1-22 (Av. 7.8) with the highest count from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

### Phoenicopteriformes (Phoenicopteridae) flamingos

#### Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Winter: a single at Mandavu Dam on 18 July.

### Cuculiformes (Cuculidae) coucals

#### Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

Summer: A single from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and two each from Gletwyn Dam and Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 1 at Horseshoe Dam, 2 at Gletwyn Dam and 6 at Mazvikadei Dam.

#### Coucal unidentified

Summer: At least two were calling at Mazvikadei Ponds where White-browed Coucal also occurs.

#### Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

Summer: 2 at Monavale Vlei.

#### White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*

Winter: only from Mazvikadei with 2 from the dam.

#### Diderick Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

Summer: twos at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds, Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and Monavale Vlei.

### Gruiformes (Heliornithidae-Gruidae) finfoots, flufftails, rails, crakes, cranes

#### African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

Summer: 2 at Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: 3 at Hippo Pools camp and 2 at Claw Dam.

#### Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

Winter: 1 at Lanark Farm North dams and 3 at Marlborough Vlei.

#### African Rail *Rallus caerulescens*

Summer: under-recorded due to its secretive behaviour but a single from Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: 1 at Lanark Farm North dams and 2 at Marlborough Vlei.



**Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana***

Summer: a single at Ballantyne Park South on 3 February warrants special mention.

**Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra***

Summer: from 1-20 (Av. 5.) at 14 sites, Gletwyn Dam having the high count.

Winter: ranged from 1-28 (Av. 7), plus 40 at Lanark Farm North dams and 88 at Mazvikadei Dam.

**African Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis***

Summer: from 1-3 at 2 sites, plus 10 at Gletwyn Dam and 16 at Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: from 1-8 at 8 sites, the high count from Greengrove Nature Reserve.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Summer: ranged from 2-12 (Av. 4.7) with higher counts of 40 (Clifton farm dam, January) and 60 each at Aberdeen Farm and Gletwyn Dam. The April count at Clifton had 5 birds.

Winter: from 2-55 (Av. 18.4), the high from Mazvikadei Dam.

**Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata***

Summer: From 2-6 at 5 sites, plus 35 at Clifton farm dam in January.

Winter: 4 at Clifton farm dam.

**Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata***

Summer: 32-88 (Av. 65.4) at 47 sites, the high of 88 from Clifton farm dam in January, where 32 were counted in April.

Winter: 1-10 at 6 sites, then 48 at Clifton farm dam.

**Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum***

Summer: all recorded from Hwange, with 1 at Camp Hwange, 2 at Dwarf Goose Pan and 4 Masuma Pan/Dam.

Winter: 5 at Devon Dam.

**Ciconiiformes (Ciconiidae) storks**

**Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer***

Winter: Lanark Farm North dams (1), Greengrove Nature Reserve (2) and Marlborough Vlei (18).



Winter: 1 & 2 at Horseshoe Dam & Shumba pumped pan, 14 at Suni Pan, 17 each at Chinga Pan & Reedbuck Vlei, and 47 at Suri Suri Dam.

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

Summer: 2 at Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: 1 each at Hippo Pools camp & Highacres Dam, and 3 at Maleme Dam.

**Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii***

Summer: 1-23 (Av. 8.8) at 5 sites, plus 121 at Kriedermann's dam.

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Summer: low numbers of 1 at Camp Hwange, 2 at Kriedermann's dam and 6 at Suni Pan.

**Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis***

Winter: 1 each at Claw Dam & Reedbuck Vlei, and 2 at Chinga Pan.

**Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis***

Summer: 5 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: apart from 6 at Chinga Pan, Mandavu had 1 (Apr), 5 (May), 8 (June) and 7 (July).

**African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus***

Summer: 2 at Chinga Pan and 77 at Suni Pan, both sites at Sango Ranch, Save Valley Conservancy.

**Pelecaniformes (Threskiornithidae-Pelecanidae) ibises, spoonbills, herons, Hamerkop, pelicans**

**African Spoonbill *Platalea alba***

Summer: 2 each at Camp Hwange and Marlborough Vlei, and each at Chinga Pan and Mandavu Dam.

Winter: 1-17 (Av. 8.4) from 8 sites. Higher counts were 12 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and at

Mandavu Dam, the latter having 4 counts (Apr-July) with numbers ranging from 8-17 birds.

**African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus***

Summer: ranged from 1-30 (Av. 9.7) with the 30 from Kriedermann's dam.

Winter: a range of 1-25 (Av. 7.3), then 48 from Claw Dam, 53 from Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and 68 from Greengrove Nature Reserve. Mandavu, with 4 counts (Apr-July), showed no appreciable change in numbers with 3-4 birds.

#### **Hadeda Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash***

Summer: 1 at Chinga Pan and 17 at Suni Pan, both sites at Sango Ranch, Save Valley Conservancy.

Winter: the single from Claw Dam is an interesting record; the other counts were from Suni Pan (2) and Chinga Pan (5).

#### **Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

Summer: 2-5 at 3 sites and 15 at Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: ranged from 1-17 birds (Av. 6), then a high 131 at Mazvikadei Dam. Mandavu (3 counts) had 2-3 birds.

#### **Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii***

Summer: 1 at Biri Dam and 2 at Masuma Pan/Dam.

#### **White-backed Night-heron *Calherodius leuconotus***

Summer: 3 at Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: 2 at Hippo Pools camp.

#### **Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Summer: 2 at Mandavu Dam and 9 at Suni Pan.

#### **Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata***

Summer: from 1-8 birds (Av. 2.5), the 8 from Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: from 1-5 birds (Av. 2.3), the 5 from Hippo Pools camp.

#### **Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Summer: 1-7 (Av. 2.2) from 10 sites, plus 23 from Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: 1-8 (Av. 2.2), then 25 from Lanark Farm North dams and 4 from Mazvikadei Dam.

#### **Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris***

Winter: 6 at Lanark Farm North dams are worth mentioning as this is a high number for the plateau, and in a year of low rainfall.



#### **Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

Summer: numbers ranged from 1-57 (Av. 12.8) followed by 129 at Clifton farm dam in April, where 40 were counted in January.

Winter: a range of 1-40 (Av. 12.6), plus 101 at Clifton farm dam and 12 at Mazvikadei Dam.

#### **Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Summer: from 1-4 (Av. 1.8) at 14 sites, plus 17 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: most counts ranged from 1-3 (Av. 1.3), then 13 at Suni Pan. Four counts at Mandavu in Apr-July had 15-23 birds and accounted for all high numbers.

#### **Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala***

Summer: 1-3 from 12 sites, plus 9 from Mazvikadei Ponds and 21 from Suni Pan.

Winter: range of 1-5, then 9 at Marlborough Vlei, 15 at Makororo Dam and 33 at Mazvikadei Dam. 3 counts at Mandavu Dam had singles each time.

#### **Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath***

Summer: 1 was at Aberdeen Farm and 2 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: 1-2 sites at all sites. Mandavu (4 counts, Apr-July) had 1 in June and 2 in the other months.

#### **Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

Summer: From 1-3 birds at 8 sites.

Winter: singles at four sites, 4 at Claw Dam and 12 at Mazvikadei Dam.

#### **Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Summer: 1-8 (Av. 2.9) from 8, the 8 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: ranged from 1-9 birds at 13 sites, 13 at Claw Dam, 15 at Mazvikadei Dam and 19 at Mandavu Dam in April. Mandavu (4 counts, Apr-July) also had 2-6 birds in other months.

#### **Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha***

Summer: 1 at Aberdeen Farm, 8 at Chinga Pan and 11 at Suni Pan.

Winter: 6 sites had 1-5 birds (Av. 2.7) but Mazvikadei Dam had 20.

#### **Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca***

Summer: 1 at Clifton farm dam and 8 at Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: 5 sites had 2-4 birds but Mazvikadei Dam had 30.

#### **Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Summer: from 1-5 (Av. 3) plus 27 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: 1-12 (Av. 4.5) at 3 sites, then 31 at Claw Dam. Mandavu had 12 in April and 7 in May.

#### **Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta***

Summer: Ranged from 1-7 (Av. 2.2), the 7 from Hippo Pools camp. Marlborough Vlei (ponds)

### **Suliformes (Phalacrocoracidae-Anhingidae) cormorants and darters**

#### **Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus***

Summer: from 1-20 (Av. 5.4), the 20 from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Winter: 16 sites ranged from 1-40 (Av. 9.3) plus 126 at Mazvikadei Dam.

#### **White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus***

Summer: from 1-4 plus 10 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

had 2 in January and February and were probably the same birds.

Winter: 14 sites had 1-6 (Av. 1.8), then 8 at Chinga Pan and 20 at Biri Dam Fishing Site – this high number was attributed to the fishing camps, though recounting is also possible.

Winter: low numbers of 1-40, the high count from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. Mandavu counts in Apr-July had 1-8 birds.

#### **African Darter *Anhinga rufa***

Summer: 1 each from 4 sites (Esigodini, Hwange, Matopos and Save Valley). None recorded from the plateau.

Winter: ranged from 1-4 birds. Mandavu (4 counts, Apr-July) had 3 on 3 counts and 4 in May.

### **Charadriiformes: thick-knees, avocets & stilts, plovers, jacanas, sandpipers & snipes, coursers, pratincoles, gulls, terns & skimmers**

#### **Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus***

Summer: 1, 3 and 5 from Mazvikadei Ponds, Mandavu Dam and Masuma Pan/Dam, 12 from Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: from 1-10 (Av. 3.), 9 from Suni Pan and 10 from Hippo Pools camp. Mandavu (4 counts, Apr-July) had 2, 2, 4 & 2 birds.

#### **Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

Summer: 1 from Marlborough Vlei.

Winter: 70 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.



#### **Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Summer: 1-6 (Av. 3) from 7 sites, 41 and 42 from Mandavu Dam and Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds, and a high of 115 from Crowborough Farm.

Winter: ranged from 1-76 (Av. 17.1) plus 115 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds. The 4 Mandavu counts (May-July) had 25, 43, 12 & 14 birds.

#### **Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius***

Summer: only in Hwange with 3 at Masuma Pan/Dam and 6 at Mandavu Dam.

Winter: 1-9 (Av. 4.3) plus 45 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. At Mandavu Dam they ranged from 3-9 (May-July).

#### **Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris***

Summer: 1-12 (Av. 4.2) from 11 sites, the two Marlborough Vlei (ponds) counts having 2 and 4 birds.

Winter: 1-10 (Av. 3.3), the 10 from Greengrove Nature Reserve. Mandavu Dam (May-July) had 4-5 birds.

#### **Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus***

Summer: 12 sites had 1-2 birds, followed by 10-18 at 4 sites, then 37-52 (Av. 46) at 3 Hwange sites and Kriedermann's Dam, the latter with 50 birds. Marlborough Vlei (ponds) had 2 on both counts.

Winter: ranged from 1-24 (Av. 7) plus 47 at Greengrove Nature Reserve and 73 at Mazvikadei Dam. Mandavu Dam counts were 20 (Apr), 24 (June) and 20 (July).

#### **White-crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps***

Winter: only recorded from Sango Ranch; 1 at Chinga Pan and 6 at Suni Pan.

#### **Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus***

Summer: 1 at Highacres Dam, 3 at Big Shumba Pan and 11 at Shumba pumped pan.

Winter: 1-2 at 5 sites.

#### **African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus***

Summer: 1-12 (Av. 5.2) at 6 sites, the 12 from Rakodzi Farm Dam.

Winter: 1-12 (Av. 4.6) at 17 sites, plus 15 at Lanark Farm North dams and 34 at Mazvikadei Dam.



**Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis***  
Summer: 2 each at Clifton farm dam and Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds, all in the Kadoma area.  
Winter: 1 at Mandalay Dam, Kadoma.

**African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus***  
Summer: one of the more widespread species found at 22 sites. Numbers ranged from 1-20 (Av. 7.5) at 20 sites, with 77 (April) and 88 (January) at Clifton farm dam and 100 at Aberdeen Farm. 2 were at both Marlborough Vlei counts.  
Winter: 22 sites had from 3-75 birds (Av. 18.7), but Mazvikadei Dam had a high 618. Mandavu was counted in Apr-July, with 3-9 birds.

**Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis***  
Summer: 2 at Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway).  
Winter: 2 at Clifton farm dam.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***  
Summer: from 2-61 (Av. 22.9) at 7 sites. High numbers of 59 and 61 were from Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and Mandavu Dam.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***  
Summer: low numbers with 1-2 at 5 sites.  
Winter: 2 at Hippo Pools camp in July.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***  
Summer: 1 at Shumba pumped pan.  
Winter: 1-3 at 3 sites. Mandavu Dam had 1 in May, 2 in June and 1 in July.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***  
Summer: 1-30 (Av. 7.9) at 15 sites. Two counts at Marlborough Vlei were of 11 & 20 birds, and the

high of 30 came from Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds.  
Winter: 1-4 at 6 sites.

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***  
Summer: low counts of 1-5 with the 5 from Suni Pan.

**African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris***  
Summer: 5 at Mandavu Dam.  
Winter: apart from 2 at Mazvikadei Dam, all other records were from Mandavu Dam - 5 (Apr), 6 (May), 19 (June) & 23 (July).

**Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus***  
Summer: only from the Manyame lakes with 3 at Aberdeen Farm and 50 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.  
Winter: 1 at Clifton farm dam and 25 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.



**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***  
Winter: all at Mandavu Dam, 4 (Apr) & 2 (May).

**White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus***  
Summer: 2 at Mandavu Dam.  
Winter: 5 at Mandavu Dam in April.

## Strigiformes (Strigidae) owls

**Marsh Owl *Asio capensis***  
Summer: 1 at Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 5 at Marlborough Vlei.

## Accipitriformes (Pandionidae-Accipitridae) osprey, kites, hawks, eagles

**Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus***  
Summer: one each at Aberdeen Farm, Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and Crowborough Farm.  
Winter: 1-5 (Av. 2) at 9 sites, the 5 from Marlborough Vlei.

Winter: 1 at Makororo Dam, 2 at Mazvikadei Dam and 5 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Black-chested Snake-eagle *Circaetus pectoralis***  
Summer: 1 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds.

**African Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer***  
Summer: 1-6 (Av. 2.3) with highest counts of 5 and 6 from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and Aberdeen Farm.

Winter: 1-7 (Av. 2.3) at 23 sites, 7 at Claw Dam and Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. Mandavu Dam had 1-2 birds in 3 counts in Apr-July.

## Coraciiformes (Meropidae-Alcedinidae) bee-eaters, kingfishers

**White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides***  
Summer: 4 at Chinga Pan and 5 at Highacres Dam.

Winter: 3 at Highacres Dam, 4 each at Mbonisa Weir and Claw Dam, and 5 at Devon Dam.



**European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

Summer: 2 and 6 at Suni Pan and Gletwyn Dam, and 20 each at Mazvikadei Ponds and Monavale Vlei.

**Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus***

Summer: 1-8 (Av. 4) with the 8 from Gletwyn Dam. Winter: 12 sites had 1-3 birds, Lanark Farm North dams had 10 and Hippo Pools camp had 12.

**Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus***

Summer: 1-4 (Av. 1.8) at 6 sites with a high 4 at Mazvikadei Ponds. Winter: 1-3 (Av. 1.5) at 6 sites and a high again at Mazvikadei Dam of 25.

**Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata***

Summer: 1 at Hippo Pools camp. Winter: 2 at Hippo Pools camp.

**Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima***

Summer: 1-4 (Av. 2) at 4 sites, the 4 from Hippo Pools camp. Winter: 1-4 (Av. 1.6) at 10 sites.

**Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis***

Summer: 1-6 birds (Av. 2.1), most counts 1-3 with 6 each from Hippo Pools camp and Mazvikadei Ponds. Winter: 1-8 birds (Av. 2.8) at 16 sites plus 19 at Claw Dam and 40 at Mazvikadei Dam. Mandavu Dam (4 counts Apr-July) had 2 on each count.

**Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis***

Summer: 3 each at Chinga Pan and Suni Pan.

### **Cisticolas and allies (Cisticolidae)**

**Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops***

Summer: 3-6 at 4 sites, the high counts from Mazvikadei Ponds and Monavale Vlei.

**Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana***

Summer: 2-4 at 5 sites.

**Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens***

Summer: 3 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary. Winter: 1 at Gletwyn Dam and 7 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis***

Summer: 1 each at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds and Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds, and 5 at Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 1 at Horseshoe Dam.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava***

Summer: Possibly undercounted, singles and 2 at 3 sites.

Winter: 5 at Marlborough Vlei and 7 at Country Club Golf course.

### **Reed-warblers (Acrocephalidae)**

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

Summer: 5 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds and 12 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

**African Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus***

Summer: 1 at Monavale Vlei. Winter: 1 at Gletwyn Dam and 2 at Hippo Pools camp.

**Lesser Swamp-warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris***

Summer: 2-13 (Av. 5.5) from 6 sites. The high count was from Mazvikadei Ponds.

Winter: 1-4 (Av. 2.7) at 6 sites and 11 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Great Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Summer: 1 each at Aberdeen Farm, Mazvikadei Ponds and Monavale Vlei.

### **Grasshopper-warblers and Grassbirds (Locustellidae)**

**Little Rush-warbler *Bradypterus baboecala***

Summer: 1-4 (Av. 2.3) from 6 sites.

Winter: 1 each at Lanark Farm North dams and Greengrove Nature Reserve, plus 5 at Marlborough Vlei. No doubt undercounted.

### **Swallows and Martins (Hirundinidae)**

**Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga***

Winter: 5 at Gletwyn Dam, 10 at Mandalay Dam and 15 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii***

Summer: 1-5 at Monavale Vlei, Mazvikadei Ponds and Gletwyn Dam.

Winter: 6 at Gletwyn Dam, 12 at Horseshoe Dam and 39 at Claw Dam.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Summer: 2 at Monavale Vlei and some 100 at Crowborough Farm.

**Old World Flycatchers and Chats (Muscicapidae)**

**African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus***

Summer: 2 at Gletwyn Dam.

Winter: 3 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Weavers (Ploceidae)**

**Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons***

Summer: 2 at Gletwyn Dam, 8 at Monavale Vlei and 10 at Mazvikadei Ponds.

Winter: generally under counted; 25 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and 40 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds.

**Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix***

*The counts of low numbers in the Euplectes spp. below probably reflect the visible males, with variable effort to count females.*

Summer: from 3-44, though some under counting is likely, especially of females. Mazvikadei Ponds had 36 and Monavale Vlei had 44.

Winter: undoubtedly very under counted in winter; 30 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis***

Summer: 4 at Mazvikadei Ponds.

Winter: 3 at Country Club Golf course.

**Southern Masked-weaver *Ploceus velatus***

Summer: 3 at Monavale Vlei and 4 at Mazvikadei Ponds.

Winter: 3 at Marlborough Vlei and 17 at Country Club Golf course.

**Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens***

Summer: 3 at Gletwyn Dam and 21 at Monavale Vlei.

**Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus***

Summer: 80 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and 93 at Mazvikadei Ponds.

Winter: 60 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds.

**Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis***

Summer: 2 each at Gletwyn Dam and Monavale Vlei. Identification difficulties in winter.

**Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura***

Summer: 21 at Monavale Vlei. Identification difficulties in winter.

Winter: 11 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Tricky winter plumage - opposite**

**White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus***

Summer: 18 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds.



**Waxbills (Estrildidae)**

**Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild***

Summer: 4-23 at 4 sites with the high count of 23 from Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 20 at Marlborough Vlei and 27 at Horseshoe Dam.

Winter: 4 at Horseshoe Dam and 57 at Marlborough Vlei.

**Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata***

Summer: 8 at Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 30 at Country Club Golf course.

**Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava***

Summer: 3 at Monavale Vlei and 100 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

**Red-backed Mannikin *Spermestes nigriceps***

Summer: 3 at Gletwyn Dam.

Winter: 30 at Country Club Golf course.

**Whydahs and Indigobirds (Viduidae)**

**Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura***

Summer: 5 at Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 18 at Country Club Golf course.

## Pipits and Wagtails (Motacillidae)

**Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus***

Summer: 1-2 at 4 sites.

Winter: 1-4 at 5 sites.

**Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae***

Summer: 1 at Aberdeen Farm and 2 each at Crowborough Farm and Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 1 at Horseshoe Dam.

**African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp***

Summer: 1-4 at 4 sites plus 8 at Hippo Pools camp.

Winter: 1-6 (Av. 2.8) at 8 sites plus 10 at Hippo Pools camp. Mandavu Dam counts had 5 (June) and 2 (July).

## Finches (Fringillidae)

**Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica***

Summer: 1 at Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds and 6 at Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds.

Winter: 1 at Country Club Golf course.

**Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata***

Summer: 1 at Monavale Vlei.

Winter: 2 each at Country Club Golf course and Horseshoe Dam.

**Table 1. Sites covered in 2019 showing Month (number) and number of counts in brackets (if >1). Coverage of Ramsar sites and sites within their confines are highlighted.**

Site name	District	Summer	Winter
Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway)	Zvimba	1	
Ballantyne Park South	Harare	2	
Big Shumba Pan	Hwange	1	7
Biri Dam	Makonde	2	7
Biri Dam Fishing Site	Makonde	2	7
Camp Hwange	Hwange	1	
Charama Dam, Muraga Wilderness	Kadoma		7
Chinga Pan, Sango Ranch, Save Valley Conservancy	Bikita	2	7
Chitampa Dam	Matopos	1	7
Claw Dam	Kadoma		7
Clifton farm dam	Chegutu	1, 4	7
Connemara dams	Nyanga		7
Country Club Golf course	Harare	1	7
Crowborough Farm	Harare	1	
Devon Dam	Kadoma		6
Dwarf Goose Pan	Hwange	1	7
Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds	Kadoma	1	7
Gletwyn Dam	Harare	1	7
Greengrove Nature Reserve	Harare		7
Highacres Dam, Esigodini	Insiza	2	7
Hippo Pools camp	Shamva	1	7
Horseshoe Dam	Goromonzi		7
Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds	Kadoma	2	7
Knoll Farm Dam	Goromonzi	1	
Kriedermann's Dam	Bulawayo	1	
Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary	Zvimba	1	7
Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams	Seke		7
Madingazulu Dam	Matopos	1	7
Makororo Dam	Chegutu		7
Maleme Dam	Matopos	1	7
Mandalay Dam	Kadoma	2	7

Site name	District	Summer	Winter
Mandavu Dam	Hwange	1, 4	5, 6, 7
Marlborough Vlei	Harare	1, 2	7
Masuma Pan/Dam	Hwange	1	7
Mazvikadei Dam	Zvimba		7
Mazvikadei Ponds	Zvimba	1	
Mbonisa Weir, Falcon College	Insiza		7
Mesilume Dam	Matopos	1	7
Monavale Vlei	Harare	1	
Mpopoma Dam	Matopos	1	7
Mtshelili Dam	Matopos		7
Mvurachena Dam	Harare		7
Nswatugi Dam	Matopos	1	7
Pasi Dam	Kadoma		7 (2)
Rakodzi Farm Dam	Marondera	2	7
Reedbuck Vlei	Hwange	1	7
Sandy Spruit dam	Matopos	1	7
Shumba Pans	Hwange	1	7
Shumba pumped pan	Hwange	1	7
Suni Pan, Sango Ranch, Save Valley Conservancy	Bikita	2	7
Suri Suri Dam, Chakari	Chegutu		6
Troutbeck Dams	Nyanga		7
Whitewaters Dam	Matopos	1	7

**Table 2. Species totals, including recounts, by season in 2019. The number of sites (including sub-sites) in brackets. Single site records, not mentioned above, are given here.**

Species	Summer	Winter	Total	Single site
Helmeted Guineafowl		60 (3)	60 (3)	
Fulvous Duck		16 (2)	16 (2)	
White-faced Duck	589 (20)	5743 (17)	6332 (27)	
White-backed Duck	423 (4)	781 (5)	1204 (6)	
Egyptian Goose	271 (16)	298 (19)	569 (28)	
Spur-winged Goose	43 (7)	278 (3)	321 (10)	
African Comb Duck	124 (11)	49 (8)	173 (19)	
African Pygmy-goose	73 (5)	76 (4)	149 (7)	
Southern Pochard	263 (3)	52 (2)	315 (4)	
Cape Shoveler		2 (1)	2 (1)	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Hottentot Teal	28 (5)	45 (8)	73 (11)	
African Black Duck	2 (7)	18 (6)	25 (7)	
Yellow-billed Duck		1 (1)	1 (1)	Gletwyn Dam
Red-billed Teal	281 (17)	457 (21)	738 (31)	
Little Grebe	17 (6)	133 (17)	150 (20)	
Greater Flamingo		1 (1)	1 (1)	Mandavu Dam
Diderick Cuckoo	6 (3)		6 (3)	
Senegal Coucal	5 (3)	9 (3)	14 (5)	
White-browed Coucal		2 (1)	2 (1)	Mazvikadei Dam
Black Coucal	2 (1)		2 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Unidentified coucals	2 (1)		2 (1)	Mazvikadei Ponds
African Finfoot	2 (1)	5 (2)	7 (2)	
Red-chested Flufftail		4 (2)	4 (2)	
Streaky-breasted Flufftail	1 (1)		1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
African Rail	1 (1)	3 (2)	4 (3)	



Species	Summer	Winter	Total	Single site
African Crake	1 (1)		1 (1)	Masuma Pan/Dam
Black Crake	82 (14)	240 (18)	322 (25)	
Spotted Crake	1 (1)		1 (1)	Ballantyne Park South
Unidentified rallids	1 (1)		1 (1)	Sandy Spruit dam
African Purple Swamphen	32 (4)	32 (8)	64 (9)	
Allen's Gallinule	5 (1)		5 (1)	Clifton farm dam
Common Moorhen	216 (14)	221 (12)	437 (19)	
Lesser Moorhen	51 (6)	4 (1)	55 (6)	
Red-knobbed Coot	327 (4)	85 (7)	412 (9)	
Grey Crowned Crane	7 (3)	5 (1)	12 (4)	
Marabou Stork		21 (3)	21 (3)	
Yellow-billed Stork	5 (1)	27 (2)	32 (2)	
African Openbill	79 (2)	98 (6)	177 (6)	
Black Stork	2 (1)	5 (3)	7 (3)	
Abdim's Stork	165 (6)		165 (6)	
African Woollyneck		11 (1)	11 (1)	Chinga Pan, Sango Ranch
White Stork	9 (3)		9 (3)	
Saddle-billed Stork		4 (3)	4 (3)	
African Spoonbill	20 (4)	92 (8)	112 (10)	
African Sacred Ibis	87 (9)	279 (15)	366 (21)	
Hadeda Ibis	18 (2)	8 (3)	26 (3)	
Glossy Ibis	26 (4)	185 (8)	211 (10)	
Little Bittern	1 (1)		1 (1)	Gletwyn Dam
Dwarf Bittern	3 (2)		3 (2)	
White-backed Night-heron	3 (1)	2 (1)	5 (1)	Hippo Pools camp
Black-crowned Night-heron	11 (2)		11 (2)	
Green-backed Heron	20 (8)	14 (6)	34 (12)	
Squacco Heron	47 (11)	99 (14)	146 (19)	
Rufous-bellied Heron		6 (1)	6 (1)	Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams
Cattle Egret	296 (12)	443 (21)	739 (28)	
Grey Heron	42 (15)	101 (15)	143 (26)	
Black-headed Heron	52 (14)	80 (15)	132 (24)	
Goliath Heron	3 (2)	11 (4)	14 (5)	
Purple Heron	14 (8)	20 (6)	34 (11)	
Great Egret	23 (8)	92 (15)	115 (19)	
Yellow-billed Egret	20 (3)	36 (7)	56 (10)	
Black Heron	9 (2)	43 (6)	52 (8)	
Little Egret	45 (7)	72 (9)	117 (14)	
Hamerkop	26 (11)	53 (16)	79 (21)	
Reed Cormorant	70 (12)	274 (17)	344 (23)	
White-breasted Cormorant	192 (7)	98 (6)	290 (11)	
African Dartar	4 (4)	20 (5)	24 (6)	
Water Thick-knee	21 (4)	38 (7)	59 (8)	
Pied Avocet	1 (1)	70 (1)	71 (2)	
Black-winged Stilt	219 (10)	389 (14)	608 (20)	
Kittlitz's Plover	9 (2)	75 (6)	84 (7)	
Three-banded Plover	50 (11)	70 (19)	120 (22)	
Long-toed Lapwing		1 (1)	1 (1)	Suni Pan, Sango Ranch
Blacksmith Lapwing	265 (20)	323 (29)	588 (35)	
White-crowned Lapwing		7 (2)	7 (2)	
Crowned Lapwing	15 (3)	8 (5)	23 (6)	
African Wattled Lapwing	31 (6)	138 (19)	169 (23)	
Greater Painted-snipe	4 (2)	1 (1)	5 (3)	
African Jacana	422 (22)	1085 (23)	1507 (32)	
Lesser Jacana	2 (1)	2 (1)	4 (2)	
Ruff	160 (7)		160 (7)	
Common Sandpiper	7 (5)	2 (1)	9 (5)	

Species	Summer	Winter	Total	Single site
Common Greenshank	1 (1)	8 (3)	9 (4)	
Wood Sandpiper	126 (15)	12 (6)	138 (20)	
Marsh Sandpiper	11 (4)		11 (4)	
Kurrichane Buttonquail		1 (1)	1 (1)	Horseshoe Dam
Temminck's Courser	4 (1)		4 (1)	Shumba pumped pan
Collared Pratincole	46 (1)		46 (1)	Mandavu Dam
African Skimmer	5 (1)	55 (2)	60 (2)	
Grey-headed Gull	53 (2)	26 (2)	79 (3)	
Caspian Tern		1 (1)	1 (1)	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Whiskered Tern		6 (1)	6 (1)	Mandavu Dam
White-winged Tern	2 (1)	5 (1)	7 (1)	Mandavu Dam
Marsh Owl	1 (1)	5 (1)	6 (2)	
Osprey	1 (1)		1 (1)	Mandavu Dam
Black-shouldered Kite	3 (3)	18 (9)	21 (11)	
Black-chested Snake-eagle	1 (1)	8 (3)	9 (4)	
African Marsh-harrier	1 (1)		1 (1)	Aberdeen Farm (Hideaway)
African Fish-eagle	21 (9)	58 (23)	79 (27)	
Yellow-billed Kite	1 (1)		1 (1)	Highacres Dam
White-rumped Swift	3 (1)		3 (1)	Mazvikadei Ponds
White-fronted Bee-eater	9 (2)	16 (4)	25 (5)	
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	4 (1)		4 (1)	Highacres Dam
European Bee-eater	48 (4)		48 (4)	
Little Bee-eater	20 (5)	42 (14)	62 (16)	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	
Striped Kingfisher	1 (1)		1 (1)	Biri Dam
Woodland Kingfisher	6 (2)		6 (2)	
Malachite Kingfisher	11 (6)	34 (7)	45 (13)	
Half-collared Kingfisher	1 (1)	2 (1)	3 (1)	Hippo Pools camp
Giant Kingfisher	8 (4)	16 (10)	24 (12)	
Pied Kingfisher	31 (15)	112 (18)	143 (25)	
Red-capped Lark		1 (1)	1 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
Red-faced Cisticola	19 (4)		19 (4)	
Levaillant's Cisticola	3 (1)	8 (2)	11 (3)	
Croaking Cisticola	8 (1)		8 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Zitting Cisticola	7 (3)	1 (1)	8 (4)	
Pale-crowned Cisticola	1 (1)		1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Tawny-flanked Prinia	4 (3)	12 (2)	16 (5)	
Dark-capped Yellow Warbler	1 (1)		1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Sedge Warbler	17 (2)		17 (2)	
African Reed-warbler	1 (1)	3 (2)	4 (3)	
Lesser Swamp-warbler	33 (6)	27 (7)	60 (10)	
Great Reed-warbler	3 (3)		3 (3)	
Little Rush-warbler	14 (6)	7 (3)	21 (9)	
Grey-rumped Swallow		30 (3)	30 (3)	
Barn Swallow	102 (2)		102 (2)	
White-throated Swallow	4 (1)		4 (1)	Crowborough Farm
Wire-tailed Swallow	8 (3)	57 (3)	65 (5)	
Pearl-breasted Swallow		7 (1)	7 (1)	Horseshoe Dam
Lesser Striped Swallow		4 (1)	4 (1)	Gletwyn Dam
Red-breasted Swallow	1 (1)		1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Greater Striped Swallow		5 (1)	5 (1)	Horseshoe Dam
African Stonechat	2 (1)	3 (1)	5 (2)	
Thick-billed Weaver	20 (3)		20 (3)	
Red-billed Quelea		35 (1)	35 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
Southern Red Bishop	160 (7)	30 (1)	190 (8)	
Red-collared Widowbird	24 (2)		24 (2)	
Yellow Bishop	4 (2)		4 (2)	

Species	Summer	Winter	Total	Single site
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	21 (1)	11 (1)	32 (2)	
White-winged Widowbird	18 (1)	65 (2)	83 (2)	
Spectacled Weaver	4 (1)	3 (1)	7 (2)	
Golden Weaver		2 (1)	2 (1)	Country Club Golf course
Southern Masked-weaver	7 (2)	20 (2)	27 (4)	
Village Weaver	173 (2)	60 (1)	233 (3)	
Cuckoo Finch	1 (1)		1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Common Waxbill	47 (4)	47 (2)	94 (6)	
Orange-breasted Waxbill	103 (2)	61 (2)	164 (4)	
Bronze Mannikin	8 (1)	30 (1)	38 (2)	
Red-backed Mannikin	3 (1)	30 (1)	33 (2)	
Pin-tailed Whydah	5 (1)	18 (1)	23 (2)	
Yellow-throated Longclaw	6 (4)	10 (5)	16 (8)	
Rosy-throated Longclaw	5 (3)	1 (1)	6 (4)	
African Pied Wagtail	17 (5)	35 (9)	52 (13)	
Black-throated Canary		3 (1)	3 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
Yellow-fronted Canary	7 (2)	1 (1)	8 (3)	
Brimstone Canary	1 (1)	4 (2)	5 (3)	

## Participants

T Alegria, D Allison, B Antonio, J Ball, P.A. & P.E. Banks, BLZ, J & J Brebner, G Calvert, M Chandafira, R Chirimuta, A Chisango, V Chitauru, P Chuma, A Cooper, D Dell, P Dell, J Delorie, R Dennison, D De Wit, K Doba, D Goosen, D Hasluck, A Jeke, A Karimanzira, L King, D Kew, C Kew, P Kok, M Langton, K Learmonth, H Lewis, S & S Long, I Louw, G Macdonald, H Macdonald, A Masterson, H Matthews, J Matthews, J Milne, J Muropa, T Ndadziira, T Olivier, W Olivier, R Paice, M Parrock, C Pierini, J Pierini, M Piki, B Pisant, A Randell, B Randell, A Robinson, J Robinson, I Riddell, S Ross, D Ruzungunde, S Sakarombe, E Shadwell, P Shadwell, S Stone, T Tarakini, Mark + 1 (US Embassy), P van Deventer, J Varden, D Wakeling, D Wiggins, P Wiggins, S Wood, T Wood, Moses ?, Shelter ?

## Branch News

### Mashonaland

#### Lanark Farm Game Park, Beatrice – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

Sixteen members, including the owner and our guide for the day, assembled at PE car park for this exciting repeat visit to Lanark Farm. To be more precise our destination was the 500-acre Game Park, which lies within the boundaries of a huge property comprising many farms that produce poultry, beef and various crops. The Game Park has woodland, dams, vleis and a very attractive visitor centre where we ended up to do the count. The two or three groups who had dispersed in different directions came together at 1030 to share their experiences and amass a list of at least 125 species. As one group stayed behind to spend more time in the miombo woodland we can be sure the final figure was much higher.

Apart from birds, the park has a wide variety of animals from sable who met us on arrival to mongoose, all of which were spotted during the walks. My group headed for the dams, which of course were low and full of vegetation. Lots of White-breasted Cormorant and Reed Cormorant, a lone African Darter, all the egrets, Black Crake, Common Moorhen, Squacco Heron, Purple Heron and Grey Heron, African Sacred Ibis, Malachite Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher and Giant Kingfisher, Egyptian Goose and Spur-winged Goose and African Jacana were all present on the first dam. A short journey in our vehicles took us to Dam 2 where we found Glossy Ibis, Wood Sandpiper, African Fish-eagle and, after a careful search, the resident Rufous-bellied Heron. While passing

through the miombo we heard an African Paradise-flycatcher and Golden-tailed Woodpecker and saw other common varieties.

Inevitably the other group had seen far more species than us and uncommon ones at that; Black-chested Snake-eagle and Brown Snake-eagle, Namaqua Dove, Rufous-naped Lark, African Barred Owlet, Capped Wheatear, Willow Warbler, African Pipit and Buffy Pipit, Shikra, Rattling Cisticola, Croaking Cisticola,

Levaillant's Cisticola and Zitting Cisticola...the list seemed endless and they were still looking for more when we left. A wonderful sighting as we approached the gate was two Secretarybirds searching for prey on the burnt and scarred field.

We are indebted to Dave Hasluck for allowing us access and leading us on a fantastic morning's birding.

**Ken Dixon**

## HAKA PARK Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019

The cost of entry to Haka is now \$40 for BLZ members which may, along with fuel problems, have deterred a few regulars but the fee is easily justified given the good facilities and the varied wildlife. Hence only 10 of us gathered at the central gazebo for a walk to visit the various habitats. My first birds at the Harare Drive entrance were 2 African Green-pigeons feeding on figs, an encouraging start.



The river and dam being very low, Common Moorhen, African Jacana, African Purple Swamphen, Three-banded Plover, African Snipe, Squacco Heron, Wood Sandpiper and Black Crake were feeding on the muddy shoreline. Yellow-throated Longclaw and Cape Longclaw, African Stonechat, African Wattled Lapwing, Yellow-mantled Widowbird and Yellow Bishop with incipient yellow breeding patches, Little Rush-warbler, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Rufous-naped Lark and a Buffy Pipit among others were seen as we proceeded through the mown grass parallel to the river. 2 Wattled Lapwings had a brief altercation with a snake, a Black-chested Snake-eagle flew over us and African Fish-eagle called.



**Fiery-necked Nightjar (left) & Spotted Creeper - also seen on the walk by Ian Riddell and Carla Pierini. Photos: Ian Riddell**

For once we strayed onto the far bank and wandered through the wooded areas with their attractive picnic sites. There we spotted most of the common woodland birds but there were few as the whole area is so parched.

Back on our usual route we wandered through the miombo woodland back towards the gazebo. On the way we found one or two small parties which included Greater Honeyguide, Lesser Honeyguide and Green-backed Honeybird, plenty of newly-arrived African Paradise-flycatchers, Ashy Flycatcher, all the barbets, Chin-spot Batis, Cardinal Woodpecker, Long-billed Crombec, Spotted Creeper, etc. A Red-chested Cuckoo called continuously, the first for the season for many of us.

Our very pleasant stroll had amassed a total of 105 species, not bad in such dry conditions.

**Ken Dixon**



## Matabeleland

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### Birding the Block, BULAWAYO – Take three!

Having done two other write ups about birding around the block, one after some rain and another from a cold winter's morning, I decided that it was time to take note of birds on a hot October morning. The sun was already quite high and the heat building up as I left our drought stricken garden just after seven. A Crested Barbet was sitting atop the gate post opposite, trilling away and as I peered back over our wall, a pair of Black-collared Barbets was having a quiet, chortling chat to each other while keeping a wary eye on Wol, the Spotted Eagle-owl, who'd decided to roost for the day quite close to where they've just excavated a nest hole.

As it was already quite warm, I had to rely on sound rather than sight. First up was a White-throated Robin-chat, secreted away amongst some rocks, chattering away. A Yellow-bellied Greenbul was flitting about in a small *Ficus*, grumbling as they usually do. I could hear a Golden-tailed Woodpecker wailing and luckily got to see two on my way back. Several times during the walk, I heard Red-faced Mousebirds but only saw one, sitting right at the top of a Mangwe, glancing anxiously about – perhaps it had temporarily lost the rest of its squadron? Five Pied Crows were stalking about in a horse paddock while above, a small cloud of European Bee-eaters swirled together with a few African Palm-swifts and two Barn Swallows. A Brown-hooded Kingfisher perched on a ZESA line, bobbing its head and I could hear another calling. African Green-pigeons called from one of the few lush gardens and all along the way, I could hear various sunbirds calling now that the trees and shrubs are finally beginning to come into bloom. A Marico Sunbird flashed brilliantly in a parasitic plant but a Scarlet-chested Sunbird muscled in and rudely buzzed him off. A pair of White-bellied Sunbirds was fossicking around in a small flowering acacia bush as a Black-headed Oriole flew into a massive Tipuana – its gorgeous yellow plumage almost immediately being camouflaged amongst the mass of yellow blossoms. Several Laughing Doves flew about and I could hear a Red-eyed Dove somewhere, as well as a group of noisy Green Woodhoopoes, three of which then flew by. A Chin-spot Batis called and the grinding '*chawaya*' of the Swainson's Spurfowl sounded off in the

distance. Dark-capped Bulbuls were out in force as always while several little groups of Blue Waxbills and a few Golden-breasted Buntings flew up from the road verges. A couple of African Grey Hornbills, which we don't often see in our area, mewled over my head as I was trying to identify a high-flying and distant raptor, coming to the conclusion that it was probably a Yellow-billed Kite. In a copse of very tall fever trees in a garden, a large number of Southern Masked-weavers have built their colony right at the very top, hopefully confirming the old wives tale that if weavers build high then we will have a good rainy season! There was much noise and activity about the colony with the male birds busily weaving away, while fussy females hung around giving advice. A Familiar Chat landed briefly on a low wall, flicking its wings, fixing me with a bright eye before disappearing over the other side. I came across three Namaqua Doves, another species we don't often see around here, and was surprised when yet another scarcity, a Groundscraper Thrush, bustled across the road in front of me. An African Hoopoe waddled along the road ahead of me, struggling to cope with the large beetle it had speared and a pair of Green-winged Pytilias pecked amongst the dry grass on the edge of the road. As I rounded the corner on the home stretch, I paused to watch a pair of African Hoopoes taking an interest in a hole in an old, gnarled fig tree – a possible nest site? Will have to keep watching that. A noisy bunch of Arrow-marked Babblers could be heard as well as a Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird in one of the gardens as an African Paradise-flycatcher chattered away, flitting around the fronds of a very tall ponytail palm.

Back at the gate, a Kurrichane Thrush was dashing about as several African Hoopoes stabbed away at the cricket holes in what was the lawn and two Southern Grey-headed Sparrows and a White-browed Robin-chat were delighting in the spray from a rather tired sprinkler. I have yet to hear any cuckoos this season but am delighted that the African Paradise-flycatcher is about the garden again. And for sure, we are ALL looking forward to some rain!

PS. A couple of days later, I found six African Hoopoes fossicking around in the gnarled old fig tree, all inspecting various

secretive holes – I had to wonder whether the original two had brought the rellies along to check out the real estate.

Jenny Brebner

## Mashonaland West

### Kadoma-Chegutu News

Our weekly outings continue despite difficulties and the intense October-November heat.

With our packed lunches, we spend the day at leisure, moving from one area of our district to another, discovering new locations with friendly encounters with people along the way. Our wetland areas have sufficient food to sustain the varied aquatic bird life and other animals.

#### *21<sup>st</sup> September at Martin Textile ponds, halfway between Chegutu and Kadoma*

4 African Sacred Ibis, 4 Glossy Ibis, 1 Grey Heron (resident), 12 Blacksmith Lapwings, 50 Ruff, 15 Wood Sandpipers, 2 Three-banded Plover, 3 Yellow-throated Longclaw.

We then proceeded to Suri Suri dam at 11 a.m. This dam was built by the pre-independence government and covers a long, wide area. Lesser Striped Swallows and Grey-rumped Swallows were moving all about as was the Common House-martin. The bush and vegetation around is still very natural and nesting high in a big tree, we were privileged to see an African Fish-eagle with two nearly fledged juveniles, the parents moving back and forth continually checking and feeding.



323 White-faced Ducks, 9 Black-winged Stilts, 1 pair Collared Pratincoles, 4 Kittlitz's Plovers, 1 Grey Heron, 116 African Openbills, 39 Comb Ducks, 2 Common Greenshanks, 5 Reed Cormorants, 14 Red-billed Teals, 3 Egyptian Goose and a surprise sighting of 4 Greater Flamingos avidly feeding. In the surrounds were White-crested Helmet-shrike, 1 pair Mocking Cliff-chat, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Senegal Coucal, Namaqua Dove, Black-backed Puffback and Tropical Boubou. A Trumpeter Hornbill was calling so we had a good view of it high in a tree.



By the long dam wall we watched a mother Egyptian Goose with her 10 goslings happily lolling in the water. Kittlitz's Plover, Common Greenshank, Three-banded Plover and Collared Pratincole fed by the receding water's edge.



Photos from Suri Suri by Margaret Parrock

### 5<sup>th</sup> October at Sable Farm

This farm produces pigs and chickens so 20+ Marabou Storks hang around all day. At their farm dam, surrounded by rocks and tall trees, we saw a pair of Giant Kingfishers, 1 Purple Heron, 5 Common Scimitarbills, Amethyst Sunbird, Scarlet-chested Sunbird and White-bellied Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and a Hamerkop nest.

### 9<sup>th</sup> November at Devon farm for a 6 a.m. start

200 White-faced Duck, 1 Purple Heron, 1 pair Red-knobbed Coot, 1 Reed Cormorant, 1 White-

breasted Cormorant, 1 Little Grebe, 3 Black-winged Stilts, 3 African Jacanas, 3 Yellow-throated Longclaws, 1 pair African Pipit, 1 pair Buffy Pipit. How thrilling to see a flying Wahlberg's Eagle, a summer visitor looking healthy with dark plumage and bright yellow beak.

The Golden-tailed Woodpecker has been calling from many areas. The Klaas's Cuckoo and Levaillant's Cuckoo are also rejoicing over the summer rains. The African Grey Hornbill has also been calling during our hot days. May we continue to soldier on and refresh ourselves with the summer rains and new life all about us.

**Margaret Parrock**



## **eBird October 2019 Big Day results—a new record and more than 6,000 species in a day!**

More than 18,000 eBirders from 164 countries and territories joined together on 19 October to go birding on the second October Big Day. The global count of 6,497 species broke last year's total of 6,360 species, setting a new October Big Day record! And for the seventh Big Day in a row, eBirders around the world recorded more than half of the world's bird species in a single day! eBirders also added 41,300 photographs of 2,345 species and 857 audio recordings of 309 species to their checklists, providing excellent documentation and memories for an epic day. Wow!

Africa is one of the most exciting and challenging places for Big Day with many iconic endemics and abundant spectacles, but difficult access in some regions means that everything hinges on local turnout. This year 191 eBirders in 25 different countries submitted 429 checklists and recorded 1,049 species! This beats last year's effort on both fronts, and we expect this total to grow as checklists continue to roll in.

South Africa (463), Zambia (421), and Kenya (409) had the most species of any countries. Swallows were also the high count for Africa with 25,000 Barn Swallows at a roost in Zambia.

We look forward to seeing how eBird's continued growth in Africa will make future Big Day events in Africa even more exciting!



Zimbabwe - 218 Species 15 Checklists

1	Gary Douglas	129
2	Mitchell Riley	112
3	Daniel Landman	105
4	Graham Cochrane	104
5	Ronnie Chirimuta	60
6	James Varden	53
7	Neil Fairlie	26

1	Mashonaland West	150
2	Mashonaland East	116
3	Harare	65
4	Bulawayo	53
5	Mashonaland Central	7

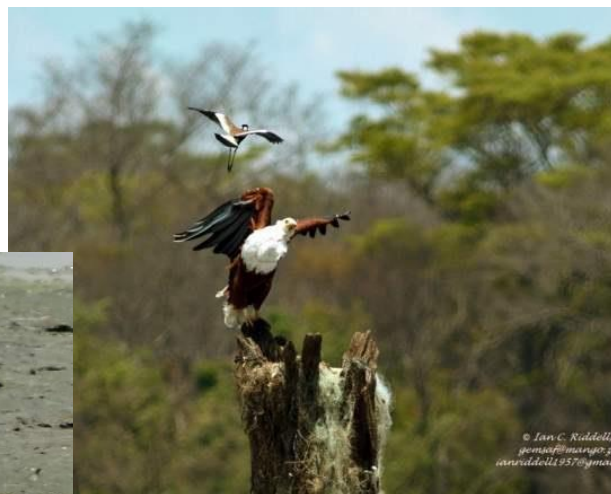
### The Lake Chivero Spur-winged Lapwings



14<sup>th</sup> November: chicks sheltering – a lapwing with many legs (left) and sitting out in the open (below). She hadn't taken to chasing birds at this stage.



Two adults in flight



16<sup>th</sup> November: adult chasing stilts, jacanas and this African Fish-eagle (above).

23<sup>rd</sup> November: one of the chicks foraging (left).



## Useful Contacts:

CEO/Ringing Programme: Julia Pierini [JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org](mailto:JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org) 0772-894562  
Rarities Committee: Ian Riddell [gemsaf@mango.zw](mailto:gemsaf@mango.zw) 0772-117054  
BLZ Library: [piumosso@zol.co.zw](mailto:piumosso@zol.co.zw) 2304298; 2481496  
Special Species: Peta Ditchburn [specialespecies@blz.co.zw](mailto:specialespecies@blz.co.zw) 0775-940714, 029-2230075  
Mashonaland South: Margaret Parrock 068-22005 or her daughter Coralee 0772-739370  
Eastern Districts: Sue Fenwick 0779-408557 [ingram.sue@gmail.com](mailto:ingram.sue@gmail.com)  
Mashonaland East Natural History Society: Chairman Peter Hadingham 024-2497035  
Secretary: Colin de Beer 0279-23931 [icdb1936@gmail.com](mailto:icdb1936@gmail.com)  
*Honeyguide* production: vacant

## BLZ MEMBERSHIP

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)	Zim\$ 25.00
Pensioners (65 & over), Students	15.00
Youth Club	5.00
Schools (high density)	25.00
Schools (private), Educational Institutions	50.00
Rest of Africa	40.00
Rest of World	50.00
Corporate members	*75.00

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

**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](http://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 when members deposit into the banks, 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](mailto:sylvia@blz.co.zw) or phone her on 024-2481496 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](http://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](http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org)

# Branch Activities

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

## 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 tip for the 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. \$40 entrance fee for BLZ members, \$60 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 \$4 per person at the door please.

## Mashonaland Branch

### *BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: DECEMBER 2019*

<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Mukuvisi Woodlands walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Marlborough Vlei walk</b>	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
 <b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Christmas Party at Mukuvisi Woodlands</b> Bring own eats/braai foods/drinks to the platform	Meet 4.30 p.m.
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Greystone Park</b> Meet at the Preserve -17.746190, 31.127282	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
From Rolf Avenue/Harare Drive traffic circle, turn east onto Gaydon Road. After 2 km turn right into Halford Road and preserve is 200 m on left.		
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Monavale Vlei walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.

## *BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: JANUARY 2020*

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<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Marlborough Vlei walk</b>	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mukuvisi Woodlands walk</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Ballantyne Park (Waterbird Count)</b>	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Lake Chivero (Waterbird Count)</b> Meet at Prince Edward School car park	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Mashonaland Branch AGM</b> Avondale Sports Club	Meet 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monavale Vlei walk (Waterbird Count)</b>	Meet at 06.30 a.m.
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Kent Estates (Waterbird Count)</b> Meet at Prince Edward School car park	Meet at 06.30 a.m.

For further information, please contact Innes Louw, [innes.louw@ames.co.zw](mailto:innes.louw@ames.co.zw) or [hararebirdwalks@gmail.com](mailto:hararebirdwalks@gmail.com) 0776 190795

### **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](mailto:ingram.sue@gmail.com) for more details.

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

### **Are you using the BLZ Mashonaland Calendar of Events on your smartphone?**

On your Google account on your computer, click the Google Apps icon (9-dot square) and click **Calendar**. Under My calendars, on the left, tick the box for BLZ Mashonaland Calendar of Events, or try this [link](#).

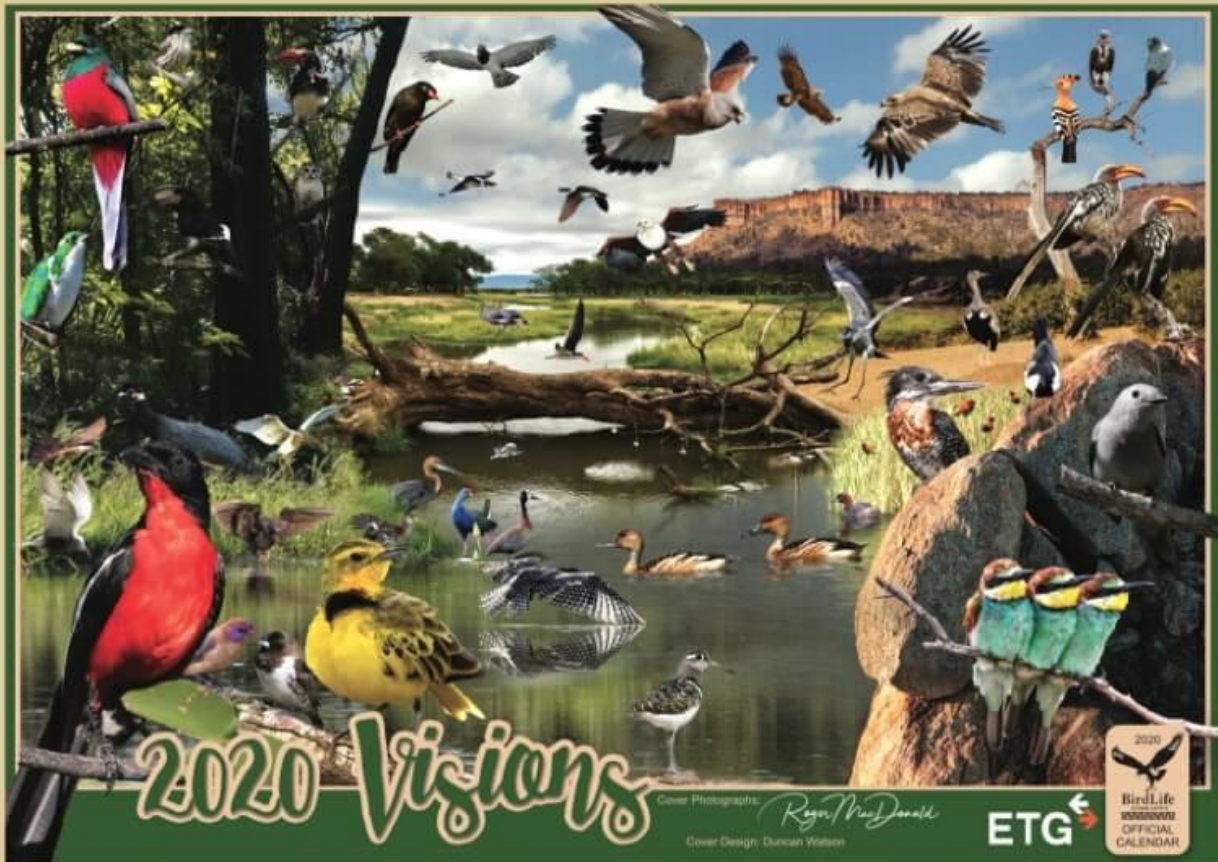
On your phone go to your calendar – mine is called S Planner – and tap on *More* (yours might say something else but it is your calendar menu) and then *Manage calendars* or whatever yours says. Under Device, the phone, my Samsung has *My calendars* – make sure that is on/ticked, further down it has my Google account – turn on all relevant items and the BLZ Mashonaland Calendar of course. There may be a box/switch to sync your phone with your Google account and this must obviously be on.

Phones and their menus are different but hopefully you can work it out...  
...and always have events easily available on your phone.

*Please send contributions for The Babbler 152  
Feb-Mar 2020 any time before the 15<sup>th</sup> Jan.*



# HOT OFF THE PRESS



## BIRDLIFE ZIMBABWE'S *and stunning* OFFICIAL 2020 CALENDAR "2020 VISIONS"

With Photographs by: Roger MacDonald,  
Brian Ashby, Mike Bridgford, Chris Collyer,  
Darmesh Daya, Dave Dell, Patrick Kelly, Laura Rosen and Piet Zwanikken

