

THE BABBLER

Newsletter of BirdLife Zimbabwe

June-July 2020 No. 154



Summer 2019-2020
Waterbird counts - 3

Notice
BLZ 39th AGM
- 13

MENHS
News from the
Branch - 14

Hwange Birds
A March trip - 16

Tail Feathers - 18



African Reed-warbler © I Riddell

Committee	MASHONALAND (Code 024)	MATABELELAND (Code 029)
Chairperson	Innes Louw 0776-190795 hararebirdwalks@gmail.com 2490466 (h)	John Brebner 0782-781108 brebnerj@acolchem.co.zw 2242634
Vice Chairperson	Vacant	
Secretary	Kelvin Hein 0782-005889 bushpig48@gmail.com 2338714 (h)	Gaynor Lightfoot 0712-402341 gayetoes21@gmail.com
Treasurer	Debbie Wiggins 0772-252651 wigpd2015@gmail.com 2882851 (h)	Gaynor Lightfoot
Members	Geoff Lowe 0776-090632 d.i.systems@mweb.co.zw	Karen Learmonth 0772-231819 afspec@yoafrica.com 2244990 (w)
	John Vekris 0772-381582 gakamira@africaonline.co.zw	Joan Banda (Youth) 0717-743691 joanbanda84@gmail.com
	Laurence Shadwell 0712-800905 adderley@iwayafrica.co.zw 2487670	Peter Makhusa (Youth) 0732-399651 peter.makhusa@gmail.com
	Patrick Shadwell 0715 979 640 patrick.shadwell@gmail.com	Helen Lewis 0772-262636 helen@betsig.co.zw
Membership	Sylvia Muzavazi 2481496 (w) sylvia@blz.co.zw	Jenny Brebner 0783033505 brebsj@gmail.com
Babbler Editor	Ian Riddell 0772-117054 gemsaf@mango.zw	

National Office

Office hours: Monday to Friday 8.30 – 4.30

35 Clyde Road, Eastlea, P O Box RVL100, Runiville, Harare, Zimbabwe

Telephone: 024 - 2481496

E-mail: birds@zol.co.zw

Website: www.birdlifezimbabwe.org also www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe

Chief Executive Officer
Finance/Administration Manager
Conservation Officer: Special Species
In charge of IBA/KBA's
Messenger:

Julia Pierini
Sylvia Muzavazi
Fadzai Matsvimbo
Togarasei Fakarayi
Vengai Dengu

BirdLife Zimbabwe
The BirdLife International
Partner in Zimbabwe



International Waterbird Census, Zimbabwe – January 2020

Ian Riddell

53 sites were counted this season (Table 1) and this report is based on returns received by early May. The International Waterbird Census preferred count day was in the middle of January but our counts extended into February and a November 2019 count from Mandavu Dam is included here.

The water status of sites is shown in Table 1 with a number of sites dry. Some birds were counted at most of these sites, though Madingazulu, Nswatugi and Whitewaters dams in the Matopos had no birds.

Our Ramsar sites coverage is shown in Table 1. Chivero Bird Sanctuary (as part of Lake Chivero) and Monavale Vlei were covered. Lake Chivero was not counted and neither was Lake Manyame this season.

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 the 45 who participated, plus those simply listed as BLZ. Big thanks to those individuals who undertook extensive coverage in Hwange and other sites.

11 302 birds of 148 species were recorded; this total includes estimates and one unidentified raptor and seven unidentified waders (Table 2).

Note: A summary of most species is given below though most single site records (1 record for the season) are only listed in Table 2.

Anseriformes (Anatidae): ducks and geese

White-faced Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

Ranged from 2-33 (Av. 13.7), then Chinga Pan had 51, Lanark Farm 80, followed by highs of 173 at Devon Dam and 229 at Mazvikadei Dam.

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*
10, 15 & 40 at Mazvikadei Dam, Mtshelili Dam and Kent Estate dams, then a high of 157 at Clifton farm dam.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Generally ranged from 1-15 birds (Av. 5.3, 27 sites), and then numbers rose with 52 at Scotts Pan, 58 at Ngamo Pans, and a high of 74 at Mandavu Dam in November and 80 in January.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

Found in low numbers from 1-6 at 9 sites.

African Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

From 1-9 at 13 sites, the 9 at Mtshelili Dam.

African Pygmy-goose *Nettapus auritus*

Low numbers of 2-11 (Av. 6.3, 6 sites) were far exceeded by 110 at Clifton farm dam.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

Only found at Clifton (2) and Kent Estate dams (7).

Hottentot Teal *Spatula hottentota*

Numbers were low with 1-6 at 7 sites.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis*

Recorded only at David Whitehead Ponds, Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds and Mandavu Dam (November) with 2 at each site.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

2-39 birds (Av. 12.9) at 23 sites plus higher counts of 57 at Scotts Pan and 81 at Shumba pumped pan, Hwange.

Podicipediformes (Podicipedidae) grebes

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Counts were very low, from 1-3 at 8 sites, then 40 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Cuculiformes (Cuculidae) coucals

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

From 1-3 at 6 sites.



Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

From 1-4 at 4 sites, the largest number from Marlborough Vlei.

Diderick Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

Singles at 3 sites and 3 at Marlborough Vlei.

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

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

4 at Hippo Pools camp and a remarkable 22 at Pasi Dam, Kadoma.

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

1 at Monavale Vlei and 5 at Marlborough Vlei.

African Crake *Crecoptis egregia*

1 at Marlborough Vlei and 4 at Monavale Vlei.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

2 at David Whitehead Ponds on 20 January deserve special mention.

Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra*

From 1-10 (Av. 4) at 11 sites, then 26 at Mazvikadei Dam.

African Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

From 1-3 at 4 sites, plus 14 at Clifton farm dam.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

2 at Mandalay Dam and 4 at Marlborough Vlei.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Ranged from 1-10 (Av. 4.5, 10 sites) with higher counts of 23 (Marlborough Vlei) and 27 (Clifton farm dam).

Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*

1 at Biri Dam Fishing Site and 2 at Clifton farm dam.

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

All recorded from Hwange, with 1 at Somavundhla Pan, 2 each at Shumba pumped pan, 'Back Pan' and Reedbuck Vlei, 4 at Camp Hwange, and 10 at Makalolo Pan.

Ciconiiformes (Ciconiidae) storks

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*

1 at Dwarf Goose Pan, 5 at Mandavu Dam and 3 at Kent Estate dams.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

1-3 at 3 sites, 15 at Mandavu Dam in November & 29 there in January.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus*

1 at Shumba pumped pan, 13 at Mazvikadei Dam, 20 at Mandavu Dam, 53 at Chinga Pan, 5 at Kent Estate dams and 116 at Suni Pan.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

3-30 (Av. 15.3) at 6 sites, plus 70 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 153 at Crowborough Farm.

African Woollyneck *Ciconia microscelis*

12 at Camp Hwange and 23 at Shumba pumped pan.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

2 each at Dwarf Goose Pan and Mandavu Dam.

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

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

1-12 (Av. 4.1) at 7 sites 13 at Mandavu Dam in November and 26 in January.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Ranged from 1-17 (Av. 5.4) at 12 sites, Mandavu Dam having 17 in November & 2 in January, with a high of 225 from Crowborough Farm.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

2-25 (Av. 9.9) at 7 sites, Mandavu Dam having 4 in November & 16 in January, plus 48 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Only seen on Sango Ranch with 2 at Suni Pan and 3 at Chinga Pan.

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*

From 1-3 birds at 5 sites, then 8 from Hippo Pools camp.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

2-8 (Av. 4.4) from 8 sites, plus 49 from Mazvikadei Dam.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Numbers ranged from 1-130 (Av. 30.1, 14 sites) followed by 164 at Little Devon Dam, 320 at Crowborough Farm and 478 at Mazvikadei Dam.



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

From 1-8 (Av. 2.3) at 12 sites, then 18 at Mandavu Dam in November & 21 in January, plus a high 70 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

1-8 (Av. 2.4) from 13 sites, plus 10 from David Whitehead Ponds and 30 from Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

From 1-3 birds at 5 sites, then 9 at Clifton farm dam and 25 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

1-8 (Av. 3.9) at 7 sites, Mandavu Dam having 5 in November & 3 in January, 12 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary, 1 at Clifton farm dam and 22 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha*

1 at Somavundhla Pan, 27 at Mazvikadei Dam, 32 at Chinga Pan and 49 at Suni Pan.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

1-2 at 5 sites, then 75 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

From 1-8 (Av. 3.9, 9 sites), Mandavu Dam having 5 in November & 8 in January, 37 at Mazvikadei Dam and 46 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Ranged from 1-7 (Av. 2.3), the 7 from Hippo Pools camp.

Suliformes (Phalacrocoracidae-Anhingidae) cormorants and darters

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

From 1-11 at 2 sites, then 300 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus*

From 2-40 (Av. 12.3, 16 sites), then 186 at Mazvikadei Dam.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

2 each from 3 sites (Chinga Pan, Suni Pan and Mandavu Dam (November)), then 5 at Mazvikadei Dam being the only record from the plateau.

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

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*

3-12 from 5 sites, the 12 from Hippo Pools camp.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Only 1 at Mandavu Dam in November and 10 at Pasi Dam in January.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

1-24 (Av. 9.3) from 15 sites, 55 at Mazvikadei Dam, and from Mandavu Dam, 57 in November and a high of 174 in January.



Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

1-11 (Av. 3.8) at 13 sites, 17 at Mazvikadei Dam and 46 at Kent Estate dams.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

1-10 (Av. 3.9) from 11 sites, then Mandavu Dam had 21 in November and 13 in January.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus*

27 sites had 1-11 birds (Av. 4.4) (Mandavu 9 in November), 8 sites had 16-37 (Mandavu 16 in January), Av. 25.4, then 73 at Ngamo Pans and 100 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus*

1 at Marlborough Vlei, 2 at Mandalay Dam, 6 at Ngamo Pans and 9 at 'Back Pan'.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*

1-6 (Av. 3.2) at 8 sites, and 19-32 (Av. 26.5) at 4 sites, the 32 from Lanark Farm.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

Numbers ranged from 1-28 (Av. 9.8) at 19 sites, then 98 at Clifton farm dam and a high of 687 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

From 5-13 (Av. 9.6) at 7 sites (Mandavu 7 in January), 21 at Kent Estate dams and 47 at Mandavu Dam in November.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

1 at Mandavu Dam (January) & Kent Estate dams, 5 at Mandavu Dam (November) and 26 at David Whitehead Ponds.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Low numbers with 1-4 at 7 sites.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

1-4 at 9 sites.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

1-15 (Av. 6.2) at 18 sites, Mandavu with 3 in November & 6 in January, followed by 52 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Low counts of 2-3 at 5 sites, Mandavu with 2 in November & 3 in January.

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*

Only found at Mandavu Dam with 2 in November and 13 in January.

Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

1 at Mandavu Dam, 6 at Mazvikadei Dam and 50 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

2 at Clifton farm dam, 29 at Mandavu in November & 27 in January, and 300 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Strigiformes (Strigidae) owls

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*

1 at Monavale Vlei and 4 at Marlborough Vlei.

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

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Singles at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary, Mandavu Dam and Rakodzi Farm Dam, and 2 at Mazvikadei Dam.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Singles at Ballantyne Park South, Crowborough Farm, David Whitehead Ponds and Devon Dam.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

1 each at Mazvikadei Dam and Monavale Vlei.



African Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

1-3 at 15 sites, 8 at Mazvikadei Dam and 20 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*
1-3 at 5 sites and 7 at Scotts Pan.

Coraciiformes (Meropidae- Alcedinidae) bee-eaters, kingfishers

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*
2 at Mbonisa Weir and 4 each at David
Whitehead Ponds and Devon Dam.

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops
nubicoides*
3 at Makalolo Pan, 7 at 'Back Pan' and 8 at
Scotts Pan.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*
1-6 at 5 sites, 14 at Chinga Pan, 20 at
Monavale Vlei and 66 at Country Club Golf
course.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*
1-6 (Av. 3.3) at 4 sites.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus*
1-2 at 3 sites with a high 12 at Mazvikadei
Dam.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*
1-4 (Av. 1.9) at 10 sites.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
1-8 birds (Av. 3.3), then 40 at Mazvikadei
Dam.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*
2 each at Chinga Pan and Suni Pan.

Falconiformes (Falconidae) falcons

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*
Only 1 each at David Whitehead Ponds and
Kent Estate dams.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*
1 at Marlborough Vlei and 2 at Kent Estate
dams.

Cisticolas and allies (Cisticolidae)

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*
1-5 at 5 sites, the high count from Lake
Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*
Singles at Marlborough Vlei and Monavale
Vlei.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*
1-2 at 3 sites and 6 at Monavale Vlei.



Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
1-3 at 8 sites.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*
Possibly undercounted, 2-4 at 4 sites.

Reed-warblers (Acrocephalidae)

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler *Iduna
natalensis*
1 at Monavale Vlei and 3 at Marlborough
Vlei.

African Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus
baeticatus*
2-3 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary,
Marlborough Vlei and Monavale Vlei.

Lesser Swamp-warbler *Acrocephalus
gracilirostris*
1-6 at 5 sites, then 15 at Marlborough Vlei.

Grasshopper-warblers and Grassbirds (Locustellidae)

Little Rush-warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*
2 & 3 at Monavale Vlei & Lake Chivero Bird
Sanctuary, then 9 at Marlborough Vlei.

Swallows and Martins (Hirundinidae)

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo
griseopyga*
3 at Monavale Vlei and 7 at Lake Chivero
Bird Sanctuary.

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa*
2 at Crowborough Farm and 4 at David
Whitehead Ponds.



White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*
1 at Kent Estate dams and 2 at Marlborough Vlei.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*
4 each at Country Club Golf course and Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
6 at Monavale Vlei, 10 at Kent Estate dams and 15 at Crowborough Farm.

Weavers (Ploceidae)

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*
Only a single at Kent Estate dams and 40 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

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.

Most counts from 2-25, though some under counting is likely, especially of females. Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary had 60 and Monavale Vlei had 65.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens*
3-7 then 38 at Monavale Vlei.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*
Singles at Country Club Golf course and David Whitehead Ponds, then 10 at Monavale Vlei.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura*
1 at Kent Estate dams and 24 at Monavale Vlei.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus*
This season showed an incursion into Harare. 1 at Marlborough Vlei and 4 at Monavale Vlei.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*
Singles at 3 Harare sites and 4 at Country Club Golf course.

Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*
1 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary and 5 at Marlborough Vlei.

Southern Masked-weaver *Ploceus velatus*
3 at Monavale Vlei, 10 at Crowborough Farm, 12 at Country Club Golf course and 30 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Waxbills (Estrildidae)

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*
4-30 (Av. 14) at 4 sites with the high count of 30 from Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava*
4 at Mandalay Dam, 15 at Marlborough Vlei, 18 at Monavale Vlei and 200 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*
5 at Marlborough Vlei and 6 at Monavale Vlei.

Whydahs and Widowfinches (Viduidae)

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*
1-4 at 4 sites and 10 at Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary.

Pipits and Wagtails (Motacillidae)

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*
1-2 at 6 sites.

Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae*
1 at Aberdeen Farm and 2 each at Crowborough Farm and Monavale Vlei.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*
1-7 at 5 sites plus 16 at Hippo Pools camp.

Finches (Fringillidae)

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata*
1 at Marlborough Vlei and 4 at Crowborough Farm.

Table 1. Sites covered in summer 2020 (November 2019-February 2020) showing Month (number) and number of counts in brackets (if >1 in same month). Water status: D=dry, O=over-flooded. Coverage of Ramsar sites and sites within their confines are highlighted.

Site name	District	Summer	Water
Airstrip 2	HWANGE	1	
Ballantyne Park South	HARARE	1	O
Big Shumba Pan	HWANGE	1	
Biri Dam	CHINHOYI	1	
Biri Dam Fishing Site	CHINHOYI	1	
Broken Rifle	HWANGE	2	
Camp Hwange	HWANGE	1	
Chinga Pan	Bikita	2	
Chitampa Dam	MATOPOS	1	D
Clifton dam	CHEGUTU	1	
Country Club Golf Course	HARARE	1	D
Crowborough	HARARE	1	D
David Whitehead Ponds	CHEGUTU	1	
Devon Dam	KADOMA	1	
Dwarf Goose Pan	HWANGE	1	D
Eiffel Flats Sewage Ponds	KADOMA	1	D
High Acre Dam	Umzingwane	2	
Hippo Pools	Shamva	1	
Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds	KADOMA	1	
Kent Estate dams	NORTON	1	
Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary	HARARE	1	
Lanark Farm (Irvines) North dams	Seke	1	
Little Devon Dam	KADOMA	1	
Little Somavundhla	HWANGE	1	
Madison Pan	HWANGE	1	
Madingazulu Dam	MATOPOS	1	D
Makalolo Pan	HWANGE	1	
Maleme Dam	MATOPOS	1	
Mandalay Dam	KADOMA	1	
Mandavu Dam	HWANGE	11	
Mandavu Dam	HWANGE	1	
Marlborough Vlei	HARARE	1	
Masuma Pan/Dam	HWANGE	1	
Mazvikadei Dam	Zvimba	1	
Mbonisa Weir	Umzingwane	2	D
Mesilume Dam	MATOPOS	1	
Monavale Vlei	HARARE	1	
Mpopoma Dam	MATOPOS	1	
Mtshelili Dam	MATOPOS	2	
Ngamo Pan	HWANGE	1	
Nswatugi Dam	MATOPOS	1	D
Pans 2-3 km NE of Makalolo Pan, Hwange (Back Pan)	HWANGE	2	
Pasi Dam	KADOMA	1	
Rakodzi Dam	MARONDERA	1	
Reedbuck Vlei	HWANGE	1	D
Sandy Spruit Dam	MATOPOS	1	

Site name	District	Summer	Water
Scotts Pan	HWANGE	1	
Shumba Pans	HWANGE	1	D
Shumba pumped pan	HWANGE	1	
Somavundhla Pans	HWANGE	1	
Suni Pan	Bikita	2	
Suri Suri	CHEGUTU	1	
Wexcau Pan	HWANGE	2	
Whitewaters Dam	MATOPOS	1	D

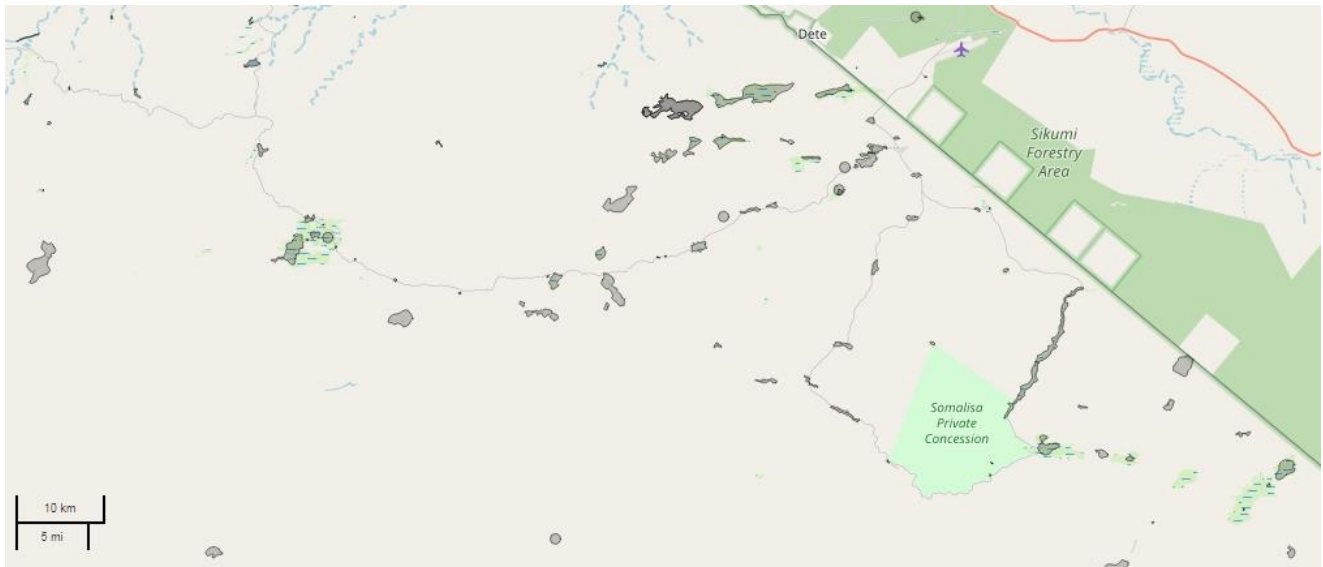
Table 2. Species totals, including recounts, in the summer season of 2020. The number of sites (including sub-sites) in brackets. Single site records, not mentioned above, are given here.

Species	Summer	Single site
Abdim's Stork	315 (8)	
African Black Duck	2 (1)	Rakodzi Farm Dam
African Comb Duck	51 (13)	
African Crake	5 (2)	
African Darter	11 (4)	
African Finfoot	26 (2)	
African Fish-eagle	56 (17)	
African Jacana	981 (21)	
African Openbill	288 (6)	
African Pied Wagtail	33 (6)	
African Purple Swamphen	22 (5)	
African Pygmy-goose	148 (7)	
African Quailfinch	2 (1)	Kent Estate dams
African Rail	9 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
African Reed-warbler	7 (3)	
African Sacred Ibis	295 (13)	Mazvikadei Ponds
African Skimmer	15 (1)	Mandavu Dam
African Snipe	4 (1)	Kent Estate dams
African Spoonbill	68 (8)	
African Stonechat	2 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
African Wattled Lapwing	132 (12)	
African Woollyneck	35 (2)	
Allen's Gallinule	6 (2)	
Amur Falcon	2 (2)	
Baillon's Crake	1 (1)	Mazvikadei Dam
Barn Swallow	31 (3)	
Black Coucal	8 (4)	
Black Crake	70 (12)	
Black Heron	83 (6)	
Black Stork	2 (1)	Hippo Pools camp
Black-chested Snake-eagle	2 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
Black-crowned Night-heron	5 (2)	
Black-headed Heron	71 (15)	
Black-shouldered Kite	4 (4)	
Blacksmith Lapwing	495 (36)	
Black-winged Stilt	425 (17)	
Brimstone Canary	5 (2)	
Bronze Mannikin	11 (2)	

Species	Summer	Single site
Cape Teal	6 (3)	
Cattle Egret	1384 (17)	
Collared Pratincole	16 (1)	Mandavu Dam
Common Greenshank	19 (9)	
Common House-martin	1 (1)	Kent Estate dams
Common Moorhen	95 (12)	
Common Ringed Plover	3 (1)	David Whitehead Ponds
Common Sandpiper	18 (7)	
Common Waxbill	56 (4)	
Croaking Cisticola	10 (4)	
Crowned Lapwing	18 (4)	
Cuckoo Finch	4 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Curlew Sandpiper	1 (1)	Kadoma Textiles Dye Ponds
Dark-capped Yellow Warbler	4 (2)	
Diderick Cuckoo	6 (4)	
Egyptian Goose	408 (30)	
European Bee-eater	117 (8)	
Fulvous Duck	4 (1)	Mandalay Dam, Kadoma
Giant Kingfisher	19 (10)	
Glossy Ibis	127 (8)	
Golden Weaver	6 (2)	
Goliath Heron	1 (1)	Mandavu Dam
Great Egret	83 (10)	
Great Reed-warbler	4 (1)	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Greater Painted-snipe	4 (1)	Mazvikadei Dam
Greater Striped Swallow	3 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Green-backed Heron	16 (6)	
Grey Crowned Crane	21 (6)	
Grey Heron	136 (14)	
Grey-headed Gull	57 (3)	
Grey-rumped Swallow	10 (2)	
Hamerkop	25 (11)	
Hottentot Teal	28 (7)	
Kittlitz's Plover	112 (15)	
Lanner Falcon	3 (2)	
Lesser Jacana	3 (1)	Clifton farm dam
Lesser Masked-weaver	3 (1)	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Lesser Moorhen	3 (2)	
Lesser Striped Swallow	37 (1)	David Whitehead Ponds
Lesser Swamp-warbler	25 (6)	
Little Bee-eater	13 (4)	
Little Egret	122 (11)	
Little Grebe	54 (9)	
Little Rush-warbler	14 (3)	
Little Stint	33 (3)	
Long-crested Eagle	2 (2)	
Malachite Kingfisher	18 (4)	
Marabou Stork	89 (3)	
Marsh Owl	5 (2)	
Marsh Sandpiper	13 (5)	
Orange-breasted Waxbill	237 (4)	
Osprey	5 (4)	
Pale-crowned Cisticola	3 (1)	Crowborough Farm

Species	Summer	Single site
Pied Avocet	11 (2)	
Pied Kingfisher	86 (15)	
Pin-tailed Whydah	19 (5)	
Purple Heron	42 (7)	
Rattling Cisticola	2 (2)	
Red-billed Quelea	41 (2)	
Red-billed Teal	434 (25)	
Red-breasted Swallow	6 (2)	
Red-chested Flufftail	6 (2)	
Red-collared Widowbird	52 (4)	
Red-faced Cisticola	14 (5)	
Red-knobbed Coot	90 (1)	Clifton farm dam
Reed Cormorant	383 (17)	
Rosy-throated Longclaw	2 (1)	Crowborough Farm
Ruff	135 (8)	
Saddle-billed Stork	4 (2)	
Sedge Warbler	14 (1)	Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary
Senegal Coucal	9 (6)	
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	18 (3)	
Southern Masked-weaver	55 (4)	
Southern Pochard	9 (2)	
Southern Red Bishop	191 (10)	
Spectacled Weaver	7 (4)	
Spotted Crake	2 (1)	David Whitehead Ponds
Spur-winged Goose	24 (9)	
Squacco Heron	84 (9)	
Streaky-breasted Flufftail	1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Tawny-flanked Prinia	10 (4)	
Temminck's Courser	2 (1)	Camp Hwange
Thick-billed Weaver	1 (1)	Monavale Vlei
Three-banded Plover	77 (12)	
unidentified raptors	1 (1)	Devon Dam
unidentified waders	7 (1)	Suni Pan, Sango Ranch
Village Weaver	1 (1)	Marlborough Vlei
Water Thick-knee	34 (5)	
White Stork	33 (1)	Kent Estate dams
White-backed Duck	222 (4)	
White-backed Night-heron	3 (1)	Hippo Pools camp
White-breasted Cormorant	317 (3)	
White-faced Duck	821 (25)	
White-fronted Bee-eater	10 (3)	
White-throated Swallow	3 (2)	
White-winged Tern	358 (3)	
White-winged Widowbird	5 (2)	
Wire-tailed Swallow	8 (2)	
Wood Sandpiper	169 (19)	
Woodland Kingfisher	4 (2)	
Yellow Bishop	12 (3)	
Yellow Wagtail	6 (1)	Crowborough Farm
Yellow-billed Duck	1 (1)	Ballantyne Park South
Yellow-billed Egret	109 (4)	
Yellow-billed Kite	17 (6)	
Yellow-billed Stork	49 (4)	

Species	Summer	Single site
Yellow-crowned Bishop	3 (1)	Wexcau Pan
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	25 (2)	
Yellow-throated Longclaw	10 (6)	
Zitting Cisticola	11 (8)	



Some of the Hwange sites

Participants

B Antonio, P.A. Banks, P.E. Banks, Jenny Brebner, John Brebner, P Brown, G Calvert, R Chirimuta, V Chitauro, A Cooper, A Dare, D Dell, P Dell, R Dennison, K Dixon, L Edwards, D Hasluck, A Jeke, A Karimanzira, L King, C Kew, D Kew, D Kok, Stephen Long, Sue Long, I Louw, G Macdonald, H Macdonald, R Mamombe, L Mathe, B Morgan, J Muropa, T Mwedzi, T Ndadziira, R Paice, M Parrock, C Pierini, J Pierini, M Piki, I Riddell, C Shadwell, L Shadwell, P Shadwell, S Stone, T Tarakini, A Tshipa, D Wakeling, D Wiggins, P Wiggins, S Wood, T Zondo, other BLZ members.

NOTICE

BirdLife Zimbabwe invites you to the Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting to be held at Goshu Park, Marondera at 10 a.m. on Saturday 27 June 2020

Members will be notified of any changes to the planned meeting by email

Mashonaland East

Mashonaland East Natural History Society
March/April 2020 Newsletter

Our March walk was around the Borradaile Trust MARONDERA property on Sunday 1 March. We all met at Jo Denton's cottage for coffee after a delayed start on account of the rain. The seven members participating were Jo Denton, Jenny Milne, Pete Banks, Phyllis Banks, Jacko Jackson, Sue Bester and Gez Bester. Well done to the two other ladies who supported but were unable to complete the walk in full.

We had a reasonable morning's birding recording 37 different species. The usual Red-winged Starlings and Greater Blue-eared Starlings that reside around the Cloisters were in hiding. We agreed that 37 wasn't a bad count given the miserable weather conditions. Thanks to Jo Denton for providing the venue for the coffee and tea at the end of the walk. Well done to the members who braved the elements and participated.

We also agreed that the usual 07h30 start to our walks was perhaps a bit early so decided to try 08h00 starts for future walks.

In the middle of March we had a group of birders who went to Connemara, NYANGA, for three nights. Members participating were Jen Mitchell, Jo Denton, Jenny Milne, Stuart Wood, Pete and Phyllis Banks, Gez and Sue Bester and Penny Raynor. Sadly Peter Hadingham withdrew on account of his health and Jacko Jackson had to decline as he had other pressing commitments. Thanks to Jen Mitchell for arranging the Zeederburg cottage for us to stay in. It is in the perfect location being close to World's View and also the dams. It is very spacious and well equipped.

The weather was very kind to us with wonderful sunshine most of the time and some welcome rain on the Saturday afternoon. The catering was very well organized by Jo and her team and some excellent meals were enjoyed by all. We had a champagne breakfast on the Saturday to celebrate Jenny Mitchell's significant birthday. That turned out to be very pleasant.

Penny thoroughly enjoyed her fishing stints and by Sunday lunch time she had caught around 23 trout. Sadly, all fish were released as per regulation.

We tried to go on birding walks after breakfasts and in the afternoons. It didn't seem like we saw a lot of birds and I was pleasantly surprised when we compiled our list at the end. I had the feeling that there were a lot more birds around than what we declared. We saw an endless number of African Stonechats (we were at Troutbeck early December last year and only sighted a couple of them). On the Saturday afternoon, when we were out near World's View and were rained upon, we saw an equally wet female Augur Buzzard at close range. She was perched on a powerline and we were able to walk right below it.

What was very encouraging to me was to see members taking such interest in the flora. Our walks took a lot longer than expected as we had several stops to study, discuss and photograph unusual plants.

I was also hugely impressed with this group of "oldies." Some of them have been members since the inception of MEHNS (1995) and the rest have been actively involved in the society for several years. They just love their excursions. They are simply happy and in their element to be out in the bush/country. Apparently camping was a regular activity on their birding calendar of yesteryear and they visited most of the country. They simply get on with their responsibilities and there is no unpleasantness. Sadly, camping is now for the slightly younger generation and costs of travel and accommodation has severely limited the number of camps undertaken each year. Nothing frightens them. I could not believe some of the places that we climbed without any fuss. Well done guys. I salute you one and all.

We had an accident when one of our male members slipped and fell while trying to take a photograph. Fortunately we were in a group and were able to assist. The end result was a couple of cracked ribs and a lot of pain. It struck me how easy it is to fall and injure yourself. On occasions during the weekend, some of us went for walks on our own and didn't always tell others where we were off to. A good learning point. Let others know where you are planning to walk and if possible how long you plan to be

walking. We also had a near boating mishap. A lesson there is to perhaps carry a whistle so as to be able to alert others if caught in an awkward situation.

During the lockdown in April, Sue and I spent many hours in our little garden watching the birds. We saw an unusual bird that we came to realise was an immature White-browed Robin-chat. It must have taken about 3 weeks to grow the white supercilium and has become very tame. On occasions it comes to within 2 metres of where we sit under a Coral tree (*Erythrina*). The Kurrichane Thrushes come equally as close if we sit still and keep quiet.

We had about 10 African Green-pigeons in our neighbour's garden for just over a week. They were feasting on the red berries on a Hawthorn bush. Kay said they have been coming every year at this time for the last few years. They really are quite beautiful. We have recorded seeing 35 different species of birds in our garden since lockdown.

A couple of the residents reported seeing a Levaillant's Cuckoo a while ago. Recently Jenny Milne, Malcolm Moodie, Sue and I saw a juvenile Levaillant's with a small flock of Arrow-marked Babblers. We all have some photographs. Malcolm was fortunate enough to see the Babblers actually feeding the cuckoo. To the best of my knowledge, the Levaillant's has now disappeared. Hopefully it will come back next year. When it was still very juvenile, Malcolm and I debated whether this cuckoo was a Levaillant's or a Jacobins. Malcolm was always adamant that it was a Levaillant's on account of the brood host being the Arrow-marked Babbler. As the bird matured and started developing the stripes on its throat, it became more obvious what it was.

I saw a pair of Groundscraper Thrushes near the bowling green on two consecutive days recently but they seem to have disappeared.

Jacko has Crested Barbets nesting in a syringa log that he has tied up in a tree in his new garden. It didn't take them long to start building their nest.

There are several Spotted Eagle-owls in the Trust. They are breeding as one resident told me she has recently seen one adult with 3 juveniles on her roof. I will try to keep a lookout for them.

The Moodies went to Harare just before lockdown (around mid-March). On the way in they saw hundreds of Amur Falcons on the

power lines in the Mabvuku area. Malcolm says they gather there before migrating to Nepal. Apparently, one or two females have radio transmitters attached and recently the falcons were reported to be leaving Ethiopia and crossing the Indian Ocean as they head to India and eventually Nepal where they breed.

Jen Mitchell reported seeing for the first time a pair of Hottentot Teals at Rakodzi, MARONDERA. She also posted a picture of a very nice bream half eaten by an African Fish-eagle.

Peter Hadingham has started posting a daily birdcall quiz. There are 15 questions every day for 10 days posed by a South African "safari expert." Sue and I managed 4 and half for the first quiz (half because we said owl but didn't specify which one). On physical ID we would have scored 13, so we are making progress in that direction. I hope you are all testing your birdcall identification skills. We haven't done much better than 5 out of 15 on the subsequent challenges Peter has posted, so we know where our weak area is. I sometimes wonder if birds develop accents, as the sounds of the calls on the challenges don't seem quite the same sound as the birdcalls in my garden. That's my excuse!

Peter also provided some interesting responses to Penny's question on dove and hornbill breeding success and their not having brood parasites.

Jacko has suggested we should send a recce to Ewanrigg before all going out there. I will try to finalise that once lockdown is lifted.

I have been thinking about developing a letterhead for our MENHS correspondence. Any ideas on the design and logo would be most welcome. I thought we should use some species of bird. What bird do you think is most appropriate for us? Please let me know. Perhaps we can continue this discussion on our WhatsApp group chat.

I think it is also that time of year that annual subscriptions to *The Babbler* and the *Honeyguide* are due. I suspect the BirdLife Zimbabwe Office is in Harare is probably closed. I will try to find out and let you all know.

Any suggestions on bird outings will always be appreciated.

Keep on twitching.

Gez Bester

Matabeleland

A Brief Sojourn in HWANGE – 20th- 23rd March 2020

We were fortunate enough to enjoy a three-day break in Hwange just before the big shutdown and it certainly was a wonderful time to be in the Park. While the solar pumped pans we saw were brim full, there seemed to be plenty of other water lying about, although the natural pans were not as full as we would expect at this time of the year. Despite the tall, green grass making game spotting fairly difficult, the birding was great but, sadly, we did not see many waterfowl apart from the ever-present Egyptian Goose, either in pairs or several in a group at all the pans visited.



Yellow-billed Oxpeckers and Bradfield's Hornbill.
Photos © Roger MacDonald

Our early morning drive on our second day was probably the most productive as we set off at first light, listening to a wonderful dawn chorus in full swing, the air fresh and clear after having enjoyed a refreshing shower of rain the day before. Crested Francolin and Swainson's Spurfowl seemed to be having a brief choral competition, five Helmeted Guineafowls were still pottering along a fallen tree trunk, keeping out of the wet grass, while a pair of

Secretarybirds had yet to depart their apartment atop a small, thorny acacia tree, where they still balanced rather precariously. A few Cape Glossy Starlings were sipping from a puddle by the roadside as a crowd of Arrow-marked Babblers, with a few Southern Pied Babblers amongst them, made their noisy way from bush to bush. Continuing along the Kennedy vlei loop roads, birds were everywhere. European Bee-eaters hawked back and forth accompanied by several Southern Carmine Bee-eaters and we caught a glimpse of the odd Little Bee-eater. We saw an astounding number of European Rollers, almost more numerous than the ubiquitous Lilac-breasted Roller. Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills were still waking up, perched on branches here and there, preening while enjoying the early morning warmth, several African Grey Hornbills mewled overhead and Bradfield's Hornbills were also about. There were plenty of little birds fossicking around in the thick bushes but fortunately, Daffy, our guide, was very patient, identifying some of them by sound and we eventually managed to see most of them – Scaly-feathered finch, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Blue Waxbill, Marico Flycatcher, Brown-crowned Tchagra and of course, White-browed Sparrow-weavers, amongst others. Rufous-naped Larks were everywhere, sitting atop a bush, a stump or an anthill calling madly while plenty of Zitting Cisticolas flitted and zitted above the long dew-wet grass heads and their cousins, Rattling Cisticolas, called from nearby bushes. Several Red-backed Shrikes were perched out in the early morning rays and there were also plenty of Magpie Shrikes everywhere. A Pallid Harrier was quartering the vlei taking very little notice of an irate Blacksmiths Lapwing that was hounding it, and, as a Red-crested Korhaan scuttled off into deeper cover at our approach, a little further along, a Kori Bustard showed its enormous wing span, flying a short distance before striding off along the side of the road on the far side of the vlei. A rather damp Senegal Coucal sat out in the open, with wings open, attempting to dry out. A huge herd of buffalo was steadily moving through the vlei, their dark backs just

visible above the tall grass and those that lifted their heads to glare at our passing, disturbed a crowd of Yellow-billed Oxpecker trying to find their breakfast. Several Fork-tailed Drongos were also getting in on the act, hawking amongst the animals. A trio of young Common Ostrich lifted their heads to stare at us balefully before moving along and in several places along the way, Meyers Parrots flew about in the tall trees along the edges of the vlei, vocalising loudly. After watching a lion pride for a while, we came across a Tawny Eagle enjoying an extended paddle in a puddle before we set off back to camp.

During the afternoon siesta period, it threatened to rain again as the clouds had built up and darkened during the morning and there were several drum rolls of thunder. A small flock of White-faced Duck whistled into the pan, settling down after several laps around the water and later five Cattle Egrets also arrived. A Black-headed Heron was curiously watching a large leguaan fossicking along the edge of one of the small pans. A Crowned Lapwing took umbrage when the leguaan approached too closely. At sundowner time, while parked overlooking the Kennedy One pan, a lone Cape Teal along with its Red-billed Teal companion, glided about the water briefly before waddling up onto the bank for the night. While enjoying another stupendous African sunset watching an elephant bull plodding along the vlei and listening to the surprisingly deep whoop of a Kurrichane Buttonquail, a flock of Black-winged Stilts appeared from nowhere, swirling around, back and forth before disappearing into the gathering gloom. On our way back into camp, several birds were having their last chat and a Bronze-winged Courser scuttled across the road in front of the vehicle. As we were being taken to our rooms before dinner, a gorgeous African Barred Owlet glared down at us from its lofty

perch as another flew in to join it. Plenty of nightjars were swirling around the floodlight over the pan and judging by the broad white stripe on the wings of some of them, we were sure there were Pennant-winged Nightjars amongst them. Both Barn Owl and Verreaux's Eagle-owl plopped down on the ground beneath the light occasionally to join in the feast and we heard several Pearl-spotted Owlets calling as well as the African Barred.

A Verreaux's Eagle-owl, having conversed for much of the night right outside our tent, was still grumbling away the following morning as we woke to the perennial sound of Africa, the Cape Turtle-dove. Along with the usual early morning bird song, we listened to the deep *doop-doop* of Southern Ground-hornbill some way off. Visiting various solar pumps pans on the way back through the park, we came across a few waterbirds - a lone Yellow-billed Stork, Comb Duck, Wood Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper, more Red-billed Teal and some Hottentot Teal, a Glossy Ibis and one African Sacred Ibis, the odd Spur-winged Goose, one Grey Heron, a few White-winged Terns and a great crowd of Ruff at Dom. During a quick drive on our last morning before returning to Bulawayo, we were surprised to find a flock of Helmeted Guineafowl with a bunch of young, fluffy chicks that dashed along the road in front of the vehicle. The guineafowl flocks we'd seen elsewhere did not appear to have any of this past season's young amongst them. We also saw some plump, young Crested Francolin chicks as well as some tiny little balls of fluff disappearing into the long grass. On our way past Livingi two trees were laden with White-backed Vultures and we could only pick up one Hooded Vulture amongst the many. All in all, we managed to list 114 birds.

John and Jenny Brebner



LOCKDOWN BIRDS

We hope to have some accounts of your lockdown birds - please send in your news.

Meyer's Parrots have never featured in my area of Newlands - suddenly they are common birds in the area. What has changed?



Dusky Lark - Epworth area



Nest mates - Steel-blue Widowfinch (left) & Red-billed Firefinch (right)



Pin-tailed Whydahs are losing their breeding dress

Useful Contacts:

CEO/Ringing Programme: Julia Pierini JuliaPierini@birdlifezimbabwe.org 0772-894562
Rarities Committee: Ian Riddell gemsaf@mango.zw 0772-117054
BLZ Library: piumosso@zol.co.zw 2304298; 2481496
Special Species: Peta Ditchburn specialspecies@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
Mashonaland East Natural History Society: Chairman Peter Hadingham 024-2497035
Secretary: Gez Bester ges.bester@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!

Due to the instability of the local currency at present, subs are listed in USD, but may be paid in Zimbabwe Dollars at the Bank Rate on the day

Students	1.00
Youth Club Members (Unemployed)	1.00
Youth Club Members	5.00
Individual/Family members (incl. children under 17)	15.00
Pensioners (65 & over)	10.00
Schools (Government)	10.00
Schools (private), Educational Institutions	50.00
Rest of Africa (payable in forex)	40.00
Rest of World (payable in forex)	50.00
Corporate members	*100.00

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

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

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 notify Sylvia sylvia@zol.co.zw phone 024-2481496 and Paula Dell paula.dell@strachansphoto.com when you have made your payments – and 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. 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 \$15.00 RTGS per person.

NOTE: We don't have the full programme for the next two months. Updates will be sent via email

Mashonaland Branch

BirdLife Zimbabwe Mashonaland Calendar of Events: JUNE 2020

Saturday 6th	Marlborough Vlei walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 7th	Mukuvisi Woodlands walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.
Sunday 21st	Monavale Vlei walk	Meet at 07.00 a.m.

For further information, please contact Innes Louw, innes.louw@ames.co.zw or 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 for more details.

Lowveld – contact Clive Stockil 0772-219204 or 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 155
Aug-Sept 2020 any time before the 15th July.*