

BABBLER
The Newsletter of



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The BirdLife International Partner in Zimbabwe

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Celebrating the 100th *Babbler*

Dave Gray reminded me the other day that he was the first editor of *Babbler* in July 1994, when Mashonaland Newsletter *Sunbird* was combined with Matland Newsletter *Barbet* to form the national newsletter. Now we are celebrating the 100th issue of *Babbler* in a new format, in colour, with donations and advertisements to cover the costs so that all resident BLZ members receive a printed copy. Emailed copies will continue to be sent, minus the colour! Editor Julia Pierini has been the driving force behind this change, supported by Celesta von Chamier who has spent much time learning about the software, required by the new printing company, to get this issue published and paving the way for future issues. A great thank you goes to these two dynamic ladies for their time, determination and effort!

A number of us have noticed over the years that “members are not reading their *Babblers!*”. Our observations coincided with the advent of emailed *Babblers*. Members have responded very well to the email reminders sent out each week, but how many ever sit at their computers reading through the full newsletter, which tends to disappear down the inbox into cyberspace? Some say: “What is going on in the Office? What do the staff do?”, when the staff actually do write regularly in *Babbler* about the many and varied activities and projects undertaken providing an essential interface between the Office and the Membership. Michael Irwin has asked for comments on his House Sparrow article and there were few forthcoming. So hopefully *Babbler* in hard copy will be read more fully, not just by the members, but by their

friends, families and a wider readership. Good communication is essential for a successful organization and *Babbler* contributes to this function very well. It is a very interesting and important birding newsletter, which not only gives us a calendar of events, write ups of outings, but also your birding observations. These stimulate discussion, add to our knowledge of birds, their habits, movements and distributions. Even the smallest contribution from you, the 'citizen scientists', is valuable to research and conservation. Birds are indicators of change. We are constantly aware of how birds respond to altered weather patterns and habitat changes, we notice differences in migrants' arrival and departure dates, so let's keep note of these observations and our interesting sightings and submit them to *Babbler*. More detailed submissions will be sent on to *Honeyguide*, as Short Communications, at the discretion of the Editor.

In acknowledgement to editors (and now also desk top publishers) past and present, your help has been and continues to be very much appreciated.

Dave Gray and Martin Smith	Issues 1 to 18 July/Aug 1994 – May/June 1997
Di Rushforth and Martin Smith	Issues 19 to 51 July/ Aug 1997 – Nov/Dec 2002
Jennifer Carter	Issues 52 to 84 Jan/Feb 2003 to Oct/Nov 2008
Carolyn Dennison	Issues 85 to 94 Dec/Jan 2008 to June/July 2010
Julia Pierini	Issues 95 to Aug/Sept 2010 to
And to our new Desk Top Publisher:	
Celesta Von Chamier	Issue 100 to... June/July 2011 to...

Enjoy the new look *Babbler* and do send in your contributions – they are more valuable than you realise, and published they are accessible forever!

Dorothy Wakeling

****SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL****

If you are not a member, please join BirdLife Zimbabwe today. Your membership is really important to BLZ, although you may not attend outings or meetings. Birds are indicators of the health of the environment and the fact that you are a member supports the ongoing conservation and ornithological efforts undertaken by BirdLife Zimbabwe members and staff. This in turn supports the preservation of Zimbabwe's biodiversity, its avifauna and natural habitats, which are becoming increasingly threatened. As a member you receive our world-recognised journal *Honeyguide* twice a year and our newsletter, *Babbler*, every two months. The more members we have, the more effective we can be at lobbying government, communities and local and international organisations.

Subscription fees have not been increased and are, in USD:

Individual & Family members (Including children under 17)	\$20.00
Pensioners (65 and over), Students And Junior members	\$10.00
Schools (private)	\$50.00
Schools (high density)	\$20.00
Corporate members	\$50.00
Outside Zimbabwe	\$30.00

Donations of any amount are always very welcome.

Payment can be made to the BLZ national office at 35, Clyde Road, Eastlea in Harare or if preferred, dropped in (with all your details) to Michael Irwin's box at 30 Dandaro Village, Borrowdale. Matabeleland members can contact Jenny Brebner on 09-242634 or e-mail

brebsj@gmail.com or Cecilia Hubbard at Woodlands Service Station, Old Esigodini Road, Bulawayo -09-287692 (Bus), 0772-433733, or e-mail woodlands@netconnect.co.zw. Subscriptions can also be given to any Committee member at BLZ events. Another option is to deposit your funds into the BLZ bank account - Barclays Bank Branch No. 2157; Account No. 6465998. It is very important that you please put your name on the deposit slip and give the details to Sylvia on e-mail sylvia@blz.co.zw or telephone her on 04-481496, or your payment may not be recorded.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

Contact a committee member if you need transport to any of the events. **Members, non-members and beginners are welcome** – don't worry if you do not have a pair of binos – there is usually an extra pair at most outings. There are no BLZ charges for any bird walk or evening presentation. However there may be entry fees (e.g. National Parks) or a tip required depending on the location. Remember to always bring chairs and refreshments.

MASHONALAND BRANCH

Evening Meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. The venue is the Avondale Sports Club on Brighton Road between Sam Nujoma Street Extension and Upper East Road. There is a cash bar and a security guard.

Thursday 16 June: *Identifying Breeding Birds in your Garden & The Garden Survey Talk*
Thursday 19 July: *RIFA Talk by Tony Alegria*

Saturday 11 June and 9 July 7a.m. Rainham Dam

All 3 longclaws (Yellow-throated, Cape & Rosy-throated should be seen around the dam, plus Marsh Owls...and hopefully Locustfinch and African Grass-owl! Meet in the Prince Edward School car park (in front of office to the right) on Josiah Tongogara Ave.

Saturday 18 June 7.00 a.m. Harare Botanic Gardens

This venue rarely disappoints. May see Black-throated Wattle-eye, Purple-banded Sunbird and Tambourine Dove. Meet in the car park.

Saturday 16 July 7 a.m. Marlborough Vlei

Black-chested Snake-eagle often spotted here. Also Capped Wheatear, African Rail and all 3 longclaws (Yellow-throated, Cape and Rosy-throated). Turn off Harare Drive into Princess Margaret Rd. Travel to the end of the road and follow the road round to the left. After 100m or so a short tarmac stretch leads to a wooden shack. You'll find other BLZ folk parked there!

Sunday 5 June and 3 July 7a.m. Mukuvisi Woodland

Look out for the Long-crested Eagle on its nest, Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters and of course, all the woodland specials in their bird parties. Turn off the Chiremba Road into Ford Road (opposite Queensdale shops) and continue down to Blatherwick Road (T- junction). Turn right and the gate is about 150 metres on the left. Bring a reasonable tip for the guard, taking into account the value of your vehicle! Don't forget refreshments for after the walk when we record the number of species.

Sunday 12 June and 10 July 7a.m. Lake Chivero Bird Sanctuary

African Fish-eagle, Hottentot Teal, Squacco Heron, the resident warblers will certainly be seen. Come see all the others too! Meet in the Prince Edward School car park (in front of office to the right) on Josiah Tongogara Ave.

Sunday 19 June and 17 July 7a.m. Monavale Vlei

Always a wonderful area to stroll through. The LBJs will be a challenge even for the best among us! Meet on the BS Leon side of Fenella Drive

Sunday 26 June 7a.m. Hildemara

This is a new and exciting venue but sure to be interesting as there's a dam, Miombo woodland and rocky outcrops. Meet at Westgate Shopping Centre (at the roundabout on Lomagundi Rd turn left, then right into the shopping complex then left into the parking area).

Sunday 24 July 7a.m. Goshu Park

This is a small game park within easy reach of Harare. There are various kopjies, small dams and rivers and Miombo woodlands so expect to see Miombo Rock-thrush, Rufous-bellied Tit, Boulder Chat, Coqui Francolin, Mocking Cliff-chat among others. Meet at CABS, Northend Rd.

(NB. Any members who have suitable birding venues within 100km of Harare and don't mind hosting us please write to the Editor)

BLZ Mashonaland Proposed Away Outings:

The Committee met and proposals for away outings were put forward. Please voice your opinions for-and-against!

July/August 2011 Weekend trip to James Varden's Mavuradonha Wilderness

September 2011 Chipinge – New Year's Gift (Tea Estate)

January 2011 Coastal Birding in Mozambique (Vilancoulos)

For further information & to book contact: Tony Alegria: talegria@zol.co.zw or 04-490375.

MATABELELAND BRANCH

Sunday 12 June Walk at Mabukuwene

Meet at 10 a.m. in the car park. (Take the Burnside Road and turn right into Chipping Way). There are a number of interesting paths through the granite outcrops and many of the aloes should be flowering. Bring your lunch and chairs as after the walk we will adjourn to the nearby home of John & Jenny Brebner (24a Inverleith Road, Burnside).

For more information phone Jenny Brebner on 242634

July Waterfowl Counts

As usual the branch will be undertaking waterfowl counts at Aisleby, SAST and Cowdray Park during July, exact schedule to be confirmed nearer the time.

For more information phone Julia Duprée on 246269

COUNTRY DISTRICTS

Mashonaland South (Kadoma) – Contact Margaret Parrock on 068-22005 or her daughter, Coralee on 0772-739370.

Eastern Districts – Monthly outings are on the last Sunday of the month and depart at 7.30 a.m. from the Mutare Museum. Spare binoculars and field guides are available. Members with a vehicle are encouraged to attend and fuel can be provided. Contact Peter Gwidibira 0773-524844or pggroup.gwidibira38@gmail.com for details.

Other Areas – Those members in other areas – we are always interested to hear what is happening in your bit of the country. Please send in what you have seen. *Ed*



RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Update from the Director

We are in the second month of our financial year and already this is promising to be an exciting year on several fronts. Both our staff and members have shown great zeal and enthusiasm to advance the goals and objectives of BirdLife Zimbabwe and this must be commended. In the past year the Council managed to fundraise for the publication of two issues of *Honeyguide*, and the purchase of a container that has helped in providing additional storage space for BLZ material. The library is now housed in a bigger and more comfortable building. Although we need more resources to support our activities, we need to appreciate the efforts that have been put in the conservation of birds by our committed members and staff over the past year.

We have had two important visitors coming to Zimbabwe in the past four months. Dr George Archibald, co-founder of the International Crane foundation, visited us at the end of January and spent two full days with the communities in the Driefontein area. In April, Dr Richard Bellfuss, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crane Foundation visited Zimbabwe and we took him the Driefontein Grasslands for a full day. Both Rich and George were impressed by the activities BLZ is undertaking in the area. As a result of these visits, we got funds to support for the Project officer's position until the end of 2011.

The www.worldbirds.org is now active for use across all African countries, with each country being able to enter and manage their own records. This world bird database has been particularly successful for Kenya (KenyaBirdFinder), Botswana (Tickbird) and Uganda where many records including bird population monitoring data are being entered. Unfortunately, in Zimbabwe only five people have entered information on worldbirds over the past ten months. However, data from the museum is being uploaded onto the system by a team led by Fadzai Matsvimbo and Innocent Magunje. You can visit this site and enter your sightings directly. You can register easily and the system is very user-friendly. Please feel free to contact Fadzai at the office for further information.

BirdLife International and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) are working with teams of regional and international scientists in the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot and representatives from local communities to conduct a comprehensive review of biological, social and economic data about the region and gathers information on threats, policies and current investment in the area. The fund then uses this to develop an ecosystem profile, which is a strategy to conserve the hotspots. I attended the first African Sub-Regional Workshop for the CEPF Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot Profiling Meeting in Addis Ababa from April 27-28, 2011. The aim of the meeting was (1) to review a draft of the Ecosystem profile; (2) refine the lists of threatened species, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and proposed landscape corridors to be targeted as conservation outcomes for the hotspot; and (3) to recommend Strategic Funding Directions for the eventual CEPF investment. This meeting marked the climax of a national consultation process in Africa that has involved 7 country workshops and more than 150 participants and 80 institutions since December last year. The Nyanga Highlands, Chimanimani, Chirinda Forest and Honde Valley were included in the profiling process for Zimbabwe.

Lastly, we bid farewell to Innocent Magunje whose contract ends at the end of May 2011. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Innocent and he has proved to be an excellent field person and a good birder. I hope Innocent's departure from BLZ is only for a short period as we are looking at the possibility of re-engaging him once additional funds are secured. For now we wish Innocent the best and hope he continues watching and ringing birds.

Dr Chip Chirara

IBA monitoring project report – June/July 2011

The National Project Manager visited Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Chirinda Forest and Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park from 12 to 19 April 2011. Monitoring forms were distributed, general site assessments done and site monitoring teams strengthened, as part of the project requirements. The monitoring forms for the 2010 monitoring period were submitted by the site monitoring teams. Meanwhile the process of compiling the National Status and Trends report for 2010 has began. Selected personnel from Parks and Wildlife Management Authority will be involved in uploading the monitoring data onto the World

Biodiversity Database and compilation of the report. The wildlife assessment report for Chirundu that was produced in November 2010 about developments by transport companies was revised and will be submitted to the Physical Planning Office in Chinhoyi and distributed to other stakeholders. We still have a few copies of the 2009 National Status and Trends report in the office for those who are interested.

Kanisios Mukwashi, National IBA Project Manager

Richard Belfuss' visit to the Driefontein Grasslands

The president and CEO of the International Crane Foundation (ICF) Professor Richard Belfuss visited Zimbabwe on 12 April 2011. It was a short visit as he was attending a two-day workshop at Bronte Hotel in Harare. Richard had expressed great interest to visit the Driefontein Grasslands after his workshop and Dr Chip Chirara and myself, Togarasei, of BirdLife Zimbabwe were happy to travel with him to Driefontein on 16 April 2011. It was a successful one day trip. The team left Harare at 0600hrs and arrived in the Driefontein area at around 0830hrs. A total of 9 different sites were visited during this trip and these included the following sites: Lionsdale, Widgeon, Chinyaure, Shashe and Driefontein Mission Farm. From these sites, a total of 21 Wattled Cranes that comprised of a flock of 15, 2 singles and 2 pairs were recorded. A total of 7 Grey Crowned Cranes were also recorded. During the trip the ICF and BirdLife Officials discussed issues relating to crane habitat management and conservation. Threats to cranes identified were discussed and the team shared ideas on how to address such problems. Richard was impressed by BirdLife Zimbabwe's work on crane conservation in the Driefontein Grasslands. However, he emphasised the need to secure more funding to achieve more and address the current challenges faced by the cranes in the area. Richard's visit came after another visit by Osiman Mabhachi (ICF/EWT Crane Officer) and Dr George Archibald (co-founder of ICF) to Driefontein at the end of January 2011. George was concerned about the deterioration of dams that are used as breeding and foraging habitats by cranes as the local communities lack resources to repair the dams. George and Osiman were also impressed by the planned activities of the Daviot and Chinyaure Site Support Groups. Should funding become available they would be pleased to see the activities of the Site Support Group backed to strengthen community participation in crane conservation. The visit by the ICF officials to the Driefontein Grasslands and their support to crane conservation in the area is greatly appreciated by BirdLife Zimbabwe.

Togarasei Fakarayi, Projects Officer

MASHONALAND

Duetting Rattlers

Cisticolas are renowned for being easier to identify by what they say than by what they look like. Each of the fifty plus species has at least one call that is effectively a signature tune for that species. But there are only four species that duet: i.e. where male and female combine to give a combined call that is distinctive for that species. They are mostly montane and none of them occur here.

The Rattling Cisticola is not a duetter. Most of the bird's rattling call is uttered by the male from a prominent elevated perch and probably has a territorial function. Typically this call is a loud confident series of 5 to 8 notes that fall into two sections: there is a uniform opening of about three "cheer, cheer, cheer" notes quickly repeated at the same pitch. This is followed immediately by 3 to 4 notes of endless variety. You can get a "lo hi", a "hi lo", "dot dot dot", "dot Dot dot" or a trill that goes up or down the scale.

But in the past January to February, the Monavale vlei had a couple of Rattlers that duetted. One bird, 'A', would give the first three "cheers" and then the second bird, 'B', would take over and complete the strophe. The 'A' bird called in a more gentle way than the normally strident "Cheer, cheer, cheer" and 'B's combination would be a definitely subdued "Tulip" / "lohi". The birds would be perched a few metres apart and B would come in exactly on time after 'A' opened the calling. If 'B' did not respond, 'A' would not push that bout of calling any further. 'B' would respond with the "tulip" only if 'A' started the strophe off.

I saw and heard this happening within the same small patch of not-ideal Rattler habitat in the south-western corner of the vlei on two occasions some 10 days apart. The duetting continued on and off for some 2-3 minutes on each occasion. When I first heard the call I noticed that it

was not as brash as usual but it took a bit of time to realize that the different parts of the call were coming from different places. The birds did not seem unduly excited, they did not each pour forth a stream of “cheer cheer cheers.....” as these birds usually do when agitated and they did not dash from one perch to another. The calling was not continuous while I watched but on each occasion there were about 8 to 10 bouts of duetting. I do not recollect any other calling between the bouts of duetting.

Gay performers indeed.....?

Alex Masterson

Friendly Owls

I have had to rescue two Spotted Eagle-owls a dozen times over the last few weeks. As you know, they leave the nest way before they can fly and the office block where I work has very low windows. They nest on the roof but the chicks soon find their way down into one of the courtyards and during the night come across what they perceive as nice dark quiet caves (offices), so make themselves at home. One Monday morning, an office was well white-washed and there was a headless rat on the floor. Yesterday, an owl was sitting in the middle of the tea tray – I suggested the milk jug be rinsed as it looked like it had eaten a rat over it! I moved them to a well-vegetated area outside offices occupied by people who are used to watching over owls, ducklings and other strays I acquire. These owls are now strong and clever enough to scramble up trees and back onto the roof. Once up there, they eventually find their way down into another area where the office occupiers are not so sure about sharing with ‘spooky birds’. One lady complained that recently she was working late – but owls were calling, the babies were hissing and clicking their beaks and she eventually got so scared she had to leave before she completed her work and said it was entirely my fault! Most of the offices have the windows shut at night now!

My reputation for being a little eccentric was enhanced the other evening when I was grubbing around in a flower bed, and quite a crowd had gathered before I noticed them. My explanation that I was gathering owl pellets which I was going to boil to see what bones were inside and hence identify what the owls are eating, was met with looks that let me know they thought it time to call the funny farm!

David Dalziel

RAINHAM Dam 9 April 2011

Another windy low cloud morning following a heavy shower the evening before. So water levels were higher than before and birds and birders stayed out of sight or in bed.

Absences were again more noticeable than presences, both in species diversity and numbers of those present. No African Purple Swamphens, 5 White-backed Duck were the only duck, no Red-knobbed Coot, no plovers and no waders – and NO PIED CROWS. But there were lots of Martins – Brown-throated Martin, Banded Martin and Common House-martin, plus a couple of swallows. Two Saddle-billed Storks flew down the vlei as we arrived but four wet-ground trampers only managed to flush two Marsh Owls and one Red-chested Flufftail.

The Black-shouldered Kite had downy chicks and Broad-tailed Warblers were squeaking. Black-throated Canary out-numbered brown widows and bishops and there were still a couple of Black Coucals about though not calling at all.

The final “tea and tally” among the thorn trees added another ten birds to the list but these acacias will remain uninviting until it is burned. Best sightings of the day were probably two Wattled Starlings seen from the wall and a Purple-banded Sunbird among the acacias.

Total seen 63 plus a Marsh harrier: Dunno which one.

Alex Masterson

Rifa Rocks!

Over one hour and 40 minutes is what it takes for over 150 birds to consume lunch at RIFA camp. RIFA was set up in 1982 by the Zimbabwe Hunters’ Association as a conservation camp 5 kilometres away from Chirundu at the border with Zambia. Today it remains one of Zimbabwe’s most active sites for the education of young children by bringing them into contact with wildlife and the wilderness itself.

BLZ Mashonaland Branch plus two Zambian BirdLife members visited RIFA for Easter and counted over 173 species more than the holiday weekend. Many of us saw the Arnot’s Chat for

the first time. We had stunning views of Mosque Swallows building their nest in a Baobab tree and nesting White-fronted Bee-eaters. We heard but never found the resident African Scops-owl, mocking our attempts to locate it in the tree in which it roosted. I believe all of us saw for the first time the consumption of an adult lion carcass by over 150 birds. And to this day, the mystery snake guarding that carcass in the camp cool house the night before it was served at the vulture restaurant remains a mystery.

All in all we had a wonderful time. Dave Winhall and Elspeth Baillie were the perfect hosts and John Osbourne accompanied us on many walks into the bush.

Celesta von Chamier

Time-line for Vulture Restaurant

10.02	Carcass was laid out
10.04	1 st Hooded Vulture arrives
10.05	1 st White-backed Vulture
10.14	Tawny Eagle arrives
10.17	1 st Marabou Stork
10.19	1 st White-headed Vulture
11.12	Lappet-faced Vulture
11.44	Carcass was consumed

A Visit to EWANRIGG BOTANIC GARDENS March 2011

Maybe 20 members of the Mashonaland Bird Club gathered at Ewanrigg to have a look at what birds we could find. The idea was to make a visit and try to record migrants which are here at this time and not normally, when we traditionally visit in June/July. In terms of the species count we only got 64 and we explored some of the established garden. The 286 ha park is in Miombo Woodland/savannah and where there is no shade the spear grass was plentiful and the Hyparrhenia more than 2m high and wet so was not explored.

In the event, we only saw two birds new to the Ewanrigg list. The Amur Falcon and the Red-throated Twin-spot. 25 Amur Falcons were noted, but I only saw one, on a utility wire over nearby soya bean land. They are a palaeartic, non-breeding migrant, that come to us from Eastern Asia – Siberia, Mongolia & Manchuria. They fly here over the Himalayas, across India and Pakistan and over the Indian Ocean to visit us in the hot wet season from November to April.

The other bird new to the list was the Red-throated Twin-spot which we found in a forested part of the park, just left of the gate where lots of Japanese Marigolds were flowering. It was also the best spot for birdwatching on the day. We haven't yet recorded the Green Widowfinch which it is supposed to parasitize but we did see several male Steel-blue Widowfinches, which parasitize the Red-billed Firefinch. The adults accurately mimic the song of their hosts while the chicks' gape markings mimic the distinctive markings of the hosts chicks gape.

Only one African Palm-swift was seen; they glue their eggs to palm leaves with sticky saliva, and therefore don't turn their eggs. David Dalziel was telling us that he has seen Pied Crows at Cabs, Borrowdale, go right up the palm leaves and take eggs and chicks from their nests. Speckled Mousebirds were seen, they often look ruffled rather than sleek, because the outer parts of their feathers on head and body do not have barbules to keep the vanes together making them look unkempt. Barn Swallows were not seen and they seem very scarce this year (2010/2011 hot wet season). I can remember seeing hundreds on the telephone lines to Ewanrigg, and years ago there was a huge roost in the Chishawasha reedbed. We heard White-crested Helmet-shrikes; they are one of the many birds that use spider webs as building material like penduline-tits, flycatchers, batises, shrikes and sunbirds. Only one Scarlet-chested Sunbird female was seen and it seems they have suffered a drastic decline especially at Ewanrigg.

Six male Red-collared Widowbirds were seen and no bishops. It is thought that the longer their tail feathers, the more females are attracted and males with longer tail feathers father more offspring. The downside is they become more vulnerable to predators.

My checklist for the birds of Ewanrigg is about 224 species. Ewanrigg needs visitors; I hope you can come the next time we visit.

For more on Ewanrigg read *Babblers* 8, 14, 20, 27, 32, 50, 52, 55, 62, 66, 68, 71, 74, 75, 77, 78, 83 89 and 94 [& many *Sunbirds*]
Reference R & H Loon, 2005, Sasol, BIRDS, the inside story. Struik Publishers, Cape Town
D.V. Rockingham-Gill rgill@zol.co.zw

On the absence of House Sparrows and changes in birdlife in a Sentosa Garden 1970 to 2010

It is not difficult to agree with Michael Irwin's observation (*Babbler* no.99 April/May 2011) that the House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* is far less common today in the capital city and its environs than it was decades ago. When we moved onto our rock- and tree-covered acre in Sentosa in 1970, there were House Sparrows to be seen everywhere in the adjacent Mabelreign area which had been established a couple of decades previously, being subdivided generally into 1/4 acre stands.

Sentosa was then separated in the East, North and West from existing suburban development by open grassland and some woodland, and the only sparrow resident in our garden was the Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, *Passer diffusus*. As the open spaces were developed, and houses sprang up on bare 1/2 acre plots, the House Sparrows moved in from the adjoining areas where they had established themselves long before. I never recorded this species from No. 32 Trafalgar Avenue, but frequently saw House Sparrows just 'around the corner', not more than 100m from our gate, where the habitat differed markedly. I used to drive to Workington between Highfield and Willowvale Roads to work, and there House Sparrows were plentiful. Lots of concrete, tarmac-covered spaces, workshops, warehouses, factories, skips full of all sorts of rubbish, and plenty of 'leaking' grain bags etc. I wonder if the situation there has changed since.

We have always kept two or three bird baths topped up, but not ever having fed wild birds I cannot comment on which birds frequented the feeding tray then and now, nor how they behaved. But the bird baths provide endless hours of pleasure and give a good idea of what's around and about here. We still have the two dozen or so indigenous tree species growing naturally on our property, a fact which attracted my attention in the late sixties and made me decide to purchase it. A few of the original set have disappeared, but most of the others have grown into big or huge trees, mainly the figs (*F. thonningii*), the Erythrinas (*E. abyssinica*), the Mnondos (*Julbernardia globiflora*) and a single introduced *Acacia sieberiana*, now decorated with a Hamerkop nest, occupied by Barn Owls. So whilst the composition of the community of woody plants has undergone little change during the past 40 years, the character of the place has changed considerably, as a veritable untidy forest developed and the previously open grass-covered spaces between the trees slowly disappeared. This on-going process has obviously affected the birdlife on our property. Of the four species of sunbirds recorded during the first ten years or so (Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Amethyst Sunbird, White-bellied Sunbird and Miombo Double-collared Sunbird) only a single individual of the latter-named made a brief appearance a couple of years ago, and the Variable Sunbird (*C. venustus*) is now the only sunbird seen with some regularity and breeding here. The Grey-headed Sparrow has also disappeared, no doubt because forest habitat slowly developed on our property, as have the mousebirds, both the Red-faced Mousebird which we often saw in the early years, and the Speckled Mousebird which replaced it from about 1990 onwards, and also the Red-winged Starlings whose calls we often heard and which once seemed to be interested in selecting one of the beams of our verandah roof for a nest site. I wonder why these species have not returned? What strikes me as interesting is that the Grey Go-away-bird which regularly appeared on Sentosa hill in the seventies, mainly in the dry winter months, failed to turn up at all for a good two decades, until it re-appeared, again in winter, about ten years ago and since then frequents the garden, sometimes in numbers. It does so when the Purple-crested Turacos are about, and both these species hop around in the large fig trees, calling frequently apparently quite unconcerned over the presence of the other. The Purple-crested Turacos only arrived here twenty years after we did, although they were resident on the Avondale ridge, not more than 2 kilometres due East. We had fruiting fig trees, as we have now, but no Purple-crested Turacos. Could it be that the populations in the areas previously occupied by this species expanded to such an extent that new Lebensarum was needed? Grey-headed Parrots and African Green-pigeons used to visit us occasionally when the fig trees were in fruit, yet I have only seen or heard the pigeons very occasionally since about 1980, but not the parrots,

and then only every few years or so. The occasional Tambourine Dove calls from the tall pine trees on the adjacent property, but only for a week or so, before it departs again, presumably in the direction of 'the more leafy northern suburbs' or the Mazowe valley. Michael Irwin's comments on the Southern Masked-weavers, *Ploceus velatus* in Dandaro are of interest. Have the ones which were common and nested in numbers in our garden moved onto a more desirable neighbourhood? We used to have at least four breeding males, now perhaps one or at the most two. But the once rarely seen Spectacled Weaver has been constructing its unmistakable nest here for the past few years, and has bred successfully. The Village Weavers with their strikingly spotted backs, of which large numbers used to build dozens of nests (mostly first-years birds practicing?) in the tall bamboo growing next to our gate between June and August, have virtually disappeared from our property, except for the occasional individual seen at one of the bird baths. Have all the others moved off in search of villages after the name change? Unlikely, but why do they no longer come here? I regret being unable to comment on the competition between what Michael Irwin has suggested might be called the Masked 'House Sparrow' and the 'real thing', as I have never witnessed any interaction between these two species myself. I cannot disagree with his views on the subject, but venture to add that the thousands of bird-feeding tables in Harare's gardens must surely have had an impact on the distribution, and also behaviour, of birds. Species not normally much in contact under natural conditions now meet at a lavishly provisioned banquet table, and a whole new set of rules develop. The drought years in the early 1990s brought some birds into our area which I have not recorded before or since. Much to my delight, a couple of Terrestrial Brownbuls took up residence for a few months, and a White-throated Robin-chat hung around for a few days. A pair of Grey-headed Bush-shrikes arrived and built a nest, from which two chicks fledged. And just around the corner, a Boulder Chat occupied a rocky and well-treed property similar to ours for a couple of weeks. All in all, it is perhaps useful to reflect on the fact that many of nature's creatures, and certainly most birds, are very adaptable and will turn up in places where we do not expect to see them, or behave in what we call an 'atypical manner'. Nature is devoid of shut drawers which we like to use for storing our natural history collections in, arranged in a manner which makes sense to us.

Rolf Chenaux-Repond, Trafalgar Avenue, Sentosa, P.O. Mabelreign

The Ponds in Chegutu

Three or four times a year Innes Louw visits the DAVID WHITEHEAD Ponds. Quite often I accompany him as I did on Saturday the 23 April. We arrived at the gate at about 1 p.m. and were asked to park outside (new company regulation) but the guards were happy to keep an eye on the car. A couple of the security staff decided to join us on our walk. There are very few birds as compared to 10 or 15 years ago but we did see Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Cape Teal, a small flock of Ruff, White-faced Duck, Red-billed Teal, many Egyptian Goose and Black-headed Heron, a White Stork and a few other species.

On the second dam where there were a number of Egyptian Goose and Black-headed Heron, we noticed many whip snares and then saw three boys with dogs on the shore. We approached them and the security staff spoke to them and sent them on their way. There were probably close to 30 whip snares and many had no nooses so may have already caught something. Amongst the whip snares were a few ordinary snares and small fish hooks baited with small grasshoppers. In the past I have seen a Black-headed Heron flying towards Ballantyne Park trailing a stick. This was probably a victim of one of these whip snares. One of the longest lived African Wattled Lapwing ringed on the 7th January 1973 was recovered on 20th August 1994. The lapwing had swallowed a baited fish hook at Chivero so we can assume these traps are very effective!

Hopefully the security staff at the Ponds will find the time to patrol the area and dismantle any further snares as this area was of great importance to the birds some years ago. We only had time to look at three ponds so there may be many more snares further away from the factory. There are often many waders like Common Greenshank, Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper and Wood Sandpipers. On occasion there have been hundreds of Egyptian Goose, Comb Duck, White-faced Duck and good numbers of Hottentot Teal and Red-billed Teal. Some of the less common birds seen here are Grey Plover, Chestnut-banded Plover, Common Ringed Plover, Greater Flamingo and Lesser Flamingo, Yellow-billed Stork, Cape Teal and Cape Shoveler.

David Dalziel

Ringling Returns to Zimbabwe

Bird Ringing in Zimbabwe is up and running again after a few years in the doldrums. The main aim at the moment is to get a few more interested people properly trained and experienced so that they can undertake ringing activities on their own. Since the beginning of 2010 one person has achieved the 'A' grade which allows one to ring any bird that is not specially protected. Two other people have been awarded 'B' grades. A 'B' grade allows one to ring a group of birds that one is particularly interested in and in which sufficient experience has been gained. If all goes according to plan another 4 or 5 should be 'A' grade before the end of the year.

To kick start ringing in Zimbabwe a ringing course was held at Chivero in January 2010. Since then the Harare ringing group has had about 70 ringing sessions at a number of different places. In 2010 over 900 birds were handled and about 20 trainees attended at least a few of the bird ringing sessions. Interesting places visited over the last 18 months were probably two ringing trips to Seldomseen in the Bvumba Mountains where ringing has been undertaken since the 1970's, the course in January and the trips in the Marondera area. Ringing is held in Bulawayo with prior arrangement with Dr. Mundy and a number of ringing sessions have been undertaken.

All the Zimbabwe Bird Ringers make returns to Afring which is based at the University of Cape Town. All the records are computerized and the ringing scheme is administered from there. Once there are a few more 'A' grade qualified bird ringers the real work will start and we will start monitoring 'Measured Effort Sites' and studying a number of species.

There have been many interesting highlights, including the handling of many fascinating birds. Among the birds we have been privileged to handle are Corn Crake, Common Whitethroat, Thrush Nightingale, Garden Warbler, Square-tailed Nightjar Natal Spurfowl, Ovambo Sparrowhawk and Little Sparrowhawk, Swynnerton's Robin, White-starred Robin, Orange Ground-thrush, Olive Thrush, Olive Bush-shrike and Red-faced Crimsonwing among many others.

During the first visit to Seldomseen last year the following birds were controlled. It was very interesting to see how long these birds can live.

Controls: Birds retrapped on 19-20 June 2010 that were originally ringed at Seldomseen

Birds retrapped	Date retrapped	Date first ringed	Ring no.
White-starred Robin	6/19/2010	4/24/2004	AF13424
Kurrichane Thrush	6/20/2010	9/8/1998	465252
Stripe-cheeked Greenbul	6/20/2010	9/11/1993	BD1087
Yellow-streaked Greenbul	6/19/2010	4/6/1996	BD21522
White-browed Robin-chat	6/19/2010	11/3/1998	BD21594
Orange Ground-thrush	6/21/2010	9/11/2001	BD55444
Orange Ground-thrush	6/20/2010	12/10/2003	BD68998
White-browed Robin-chat	6/19/2010	Data not recd	F08698
Olive Sunbird	6/19/2010	4/23/2004	GA28327
Yellow-streaked Greenbul	6/19/2010	3/21/97	BD21550

Total: 10

If anyone is interested in learning about Bird Ringing or just coming along to observe please contact BLZ at birds@zol.co.zw.

David Dalziel

My Ringing Experience

I've been ringing birds for about a year now and I can report that it's a very interesting hobby. There are many reasons I enjoy bird ringing, for example: catching a bird means you get to see it up close and personal, and you notice things about the bird which you normally wouldn't. How soft are a nightjar's feathers? Just how *tiny* is an Orange-breasted Waxbill? Another perk to ringing is that you are out doing something; watching birds, ringing birds and enjoying the company.

Obviously the aim of bird ringing is not just to see birds up close, but to actually collect information and learn more about the birds. It's always very interesting to re-capture a bird that already has a ring on it. I re-trapped a Sedge Warbler at Lake CHIVERO in February, and found that the bird had migrated back to the same reedbed for two years in a row!

As long as you are reasonably quick with the bird and don't handle it for too long, it should not get too stressed and will go about its business like nothing happened (except that it now has a lovely new piece of jewellery!). Earlier this month, we caught a Grey-headed Bush-shrike at MUKUVISI. Until I saw the bird in the net I really had no idea how big the bird's bill was. Size aside, it has a particularly vicious-looking hook on the end, which managed to introduce itself to Julia's fingers whilst I was ringing it. I think, at the end of the experience, the ringers were much more traumatised than the bird!

In future, when I have earned my A Ringer's Permit, I would like to put a more concentrated effort into ringing Miombo woodland birds, as those have had little research done on them. In the meantime we are ringing a huge variety of birds (anything we catch) so that all of us trainees can get the experience to do it on our own. New trainees are welcome to come along, and there's always some fun to be had on a ringing trip.

Nick Hart

MATABELELAND

Peri-urban Potter – 27 March 2011

The theme for this year's event organised by Judy Ross was Golf Courses – see how many species you can log in the time given (morning) on the four courses in and around Bulawayo – not everyone on all the courses, you understand, but one team allocated one each. However, there was a problem with one venue, so this was replaced by a school.

Results – numbers represent species recorded not individual birds:

	Team	Venue	No. seen
1.	Team Brebner	Bulawayo Golf Club	50
2.	Team Ross	Whitestone School	45
3.	Team Hubbard	Bulawayo Country Club	42
4.	Team Lightfoot	Hornung Park Golf Club	27

Well, as most of you will know by now, tradition has it that the organisers win these sorts of things, no questions asked. This time tradition was not observed and Judy's team of six came second. The reason? She wasn't given a nice open golf course, with lovely short grass and easy-peasy birding, because there wasn't one to give. So instead she took her mob to Whitestone School where the birds were scattered far and wide in the very varied habitats – actually, a wonderful environment – and ears had to be used as much as eyes.

But we give full credit to Team Brebner for their polite restraint in times of possible disappointment. They had spent the early morning perusing birds at the Bulawayo Golf Club from the verandah of the Jacksons' house in Qalisa while partaking of tea. And guess what? They found themselves back at the Bulawayo Golf Club for the event proper.

Raptors are always a favourite with observers. The three Golf Clubs produced Black-chested Snake-eagles (Team Brebner reported two); teams 1 and 2 had African Fish-eagles (one – Team Brebner as above – reported two); there was a Wahlberg's Eagle at the Bulawayo Golf Club, a Black-shouldered Kite at Hornung Park and a Long-crested Eagle – always good to see – reported by Team Hubbard at the Bulawayo Country Club where it is known to have a nest.

Perhaps – but not necessarily as everyone has their favourites - the star sighting of the day were two Spotted Eagle-owls perched in a tree near the school hall at Whitestone.

Not surprisingly, waterfowl were few – a couple of Common Moorhens and a Black Crane. White-faced Ducks were seen by Team 1 and Red-billed Teal with 7 ducklings reported by Team Lightfoot at Hornung Park.

Most teams got White-browed Robin-chat and White-throated Robin-chats and one team had a White-browed Scrub-robin; Team 1 reported 6 shrike species, Team 2 had 5; Team 3 reported

4 sunbirds and everyone else had 3. Only one team reported Red-billed Quelea, and no-one – not one – saw Rattling Cisticola.

A very enjoyable morning was followed by lunch at Judy Ross's home in a lovely environment at Ntaba Moyo just off Circular Drive.

If anyone would like to see the checklists, please contact me.

Thank you to Judy for her organisation and hospitality, and for the teams for taking part.

Julia Duprée

Walk at Lakeside – Saturday 9 April

Bulawayo has experienced some unseasonal weather of late and Saturday 9 April was one of these occasions. On Friday the weather turned cold, damp and grey and we debated whether to cancel the walk. But as it had been advertised and we were not sure who would turn up it was decided to go ahead. Well who turned up was no one but me! On arrival at Lakeside I was tempted to huddle miserably in my car but then decided I may as well wander around for 10 minutes while I gave any late comers a chance to show up. But each time I planned to turn back an illusive bird call, or a glimpse of movement, drew me on. An hour later, despite not having moved more than 300m in any one direction from my car, I had seen 18 species and really enjoyed myself. I didn't see anything startling but there are always those few special moments: 3 little fluffed up Blue Waxbills sitting close together in the middle of a bush; two Black-headed Herons dancing in the wind, lifting off with a minimal flap of wings, circling around each other, barely touching down, then up and round again.

Next time, regardless of conditions, do consider coming along to join our walks. I'm sure you will find them worthwhile.

Adele Edwards

Shrieks and Choice Words!

Makalolo Plains HWANGE National Park

The morning light is perfect. Camera with 300mm lens, check! Finger on the trigger and to make it even more perfect: a poser of a Bradfield's Hornbill. 'Click', 'click', 'click'. It's easy to get carried away. Suddenly to the hornbill's disgust a shriek is heard above. Looking up, a battle seems to be taking place. Two raptors dog fighting. The hornbill meanwhile has flown away in disapproval. Another shriek and the two fly overhead. Binoculars already glued to my face, confirm the identity of one: an adult Gabar Goshawk. The other remains a mystery. A flash of rufous is seen now and again on the belly as the two seem to be dancing in the sky. I run to catch up with them. What is that mysterious shrieking raptor? The Gabar vanishes and so does the mystery bird. Some choice words are voiced loudly! When in the vicinity of some False Mopane trees, the hornbills are swooping and chasing a familiar yet unknown figure. Yes! That shriek again! I smile and start running. Many blurry photos later, I try to get closer and closer but it's so shy and flies away every time, keeping me wanting! A small momentary obsession. I lose sight of it. I stop and listen for what seems like forever. Then that all too familiar shriek again. The hornbills have found it and it seems to have found a Shikra! Looking up and following at a near jog, I step in a Springhare hole, and almost fall, pride bruised but I keep going. The Mystery bird has a go at the Shikra (choice shrieks from Shikra) then perches in a tree with an unconcerned Lizard Buzzard. What a morning! Then it vanishes into thin air! Back in the office, photos are shown and bets are made as to what it is. Money, pride and reputations are at stake. Books are produced and two win the bets. The mystery bird was in fact a juvenile Ovambo Sparrowhawk.

Sam Reichenvater

Jo's Journeys – Viewing Vultures at Makalolo Plains HWANGE National Park

One of the greatest perks of working in a safari camp is the awesome wildlife opportunities that present themselves, often, and in close proximity to camp. On this particular occasion hyaenas had killed an adult zebra about 100 metres from the camp perimeter in a thicket of silver cluster leaf shrubs (*Terminalia sericea*). As we lay in our shade netting and canvas houses we heard a commotion of panicked zebra whinnying and hyaena whooping until the early hours of the morning. We thought nothing of it until around midday when clouds of vultures started dropping like feathered parachutists into the silvery thickets. With anticipation we bundled the camp staff into a jalopy utility and drove off belching black smoke to see what we could see.

On arrival at the site, the feathery scavengers took flight in a whirring of heavy wings and began to alight on the trees some way away. The buzzing of blue bottle flies filled the air, and as we piled out of the vehicle the stench of discarded stomach contents, blood and mild putrefaction filled our nostrils. What lay before us was the remains of a mostly-devoured zebra carcass, the gaping rib cage reaching like claws into the fly filled sky.

Sam and I, avid, albeit beginner photographers, decided that as it was siesta time, and the opportunity was right on our doorstep, we would spend the next few hours capturing award winning photos of vultures on a carcass. What is it that they say about best laid plans?

After returning the staff to camp, we jumped into a tier-seated, game drive vehicle (for better photographic elevation and views you see) and returned to the site. On the vulture front, the last few greedy birds that had returned took off in a cloud of flies and wing beating to take refuge some distance away. We parked the highly conspicuous bright white land rover 15 metres away from the carcass and settled in to wait, why we were surprised that the feathered fiends didn't return beats me!

In the photographic magazines and books, they say that patience is the key, well, we had all afternoon, but after 10 minutes, the clouds of thermal catching vultures were mere specks in the sky, so we decided that a plan B was necessary. So there Sam and I sat, debating the sensibility of reversing the conspicuously white car under a large camel thorn acacia, ('the birds will NEVER know!'). Then walking into the thicket and taking up strategic positions under the silver cluster leaf bushes for the best photo opportunities. Our plan was flawless, right up until Sam, very knowledgeable guide that she is, mentioned that lions are attracted to kills by watching vultures and there was a high chance they would appear to investigate. HA!, not such a clever plan after all, especially when lying prone in the thickets, visibility was about, at a guess 2 metres. Well no one ever got good photos without a little risk involved', "Yes, Sam, but no one ever got good photos dead either". After some debate, and weighing up the options, 'to be eaten, or NOT to be eaten' we decided that what the hell!, this was an amazing opportunity and we had to get the crafty vultures to return. Besides, we had found a wheel spanner, so beware lions! us girls were armed!

So we not-so-stealthily crept up to the bushes, lay down a green rain mackintosh and while I got comfortable lying in the bushes, Sam completely covered me with branches. Foolish vultures, we are too clever for you, ahhh, but apparently not...

After 15 minutes of lying still, cameras at the ready, downwind of the decaying carcass, (not so smart, but in photography sun position is everything), covered by bushes, trusty wheel spanner at the ready and crawling with bugs, we discussed the possible scenarios if lions appeared, none of which were very appealing. Another 10 minutes went by, and still not a single vulture to be seen ANYWHERE! So after two very cunning plans and thirty minutes of waiting, the score was vultures 2, girls 0!

It was time to step up our vulture stalking game. Plan C was ingenious, well at least we thought so. We tied the rain mac above our heads, (green of course, so much more camouflaged, right?) and sat up, covered ourselves with branches and waited...again.

But some cruel forces of nature were at work that day. The completely camouflaged bivvy soon became an oven and as the sun broke through the clouds and beat relentlessly down on us, our smug, oh, so clever smiles slowly slid off our dirt-smudged faces. Suddenly, a large shadow swept over the carcass, YES!! Finally they had returned, we held our breaths and waited, dreams of double page spreads in AFRICA and GETAWAY magazines floating through our heads. But the joke was on us, the last few stragglers had finally given up; the winged carrion eaters took off from the trees, riding the thermals high into the heavens until quite suddenly, the sky was clear. Not a single vulture was visible as far as the eye and the binoculars could see. Game, set and match! Vultures 3, Girls 0. Bested by feathered, carrion eating, small brained birds! The horror! Sam and I called it a day and returned to camp, we had no photos of vultures to show for our incredible efforts...but only the lingering thought: also *in death, lies beauty.*

Jo Sharp

TAIL FEATHERS

Eastern Nicator Sighting

Fellow birders, have any of you had sightings of the Eastern Nicator around Harare as according to all the bird books I have, they shouldn't appear in this region? This bird appeared in my garden in Ridgeway North in Harare at about 10 a.m. on Sunday 1 May 2011 in a thorn tree thicket about 20 meters from where I was sitting and flittered around for about 10 minutes. Luckily, I had my binoculars and was able to really have a good look and positively identify it as a Nicator. At first I thought it was a female Black Cuckooshrike but it had no bars on its front and very definite spots on its wings.

Roy Hyslop

NOTICEBOARD

Obituary

Monica Fiorini passed away on 12 April 2011, at her home at Dandaro Village, at the age of 92. Those of you who were birding a long time ago in the 80's and 90's will remember Monica with great fondness. She was an avid birder and supporter of BLZ. A delightful and lovely lady, who took us beginner birders under her wing, as Dave Dalziel reminds us, and lured some of us onto the Committee! We extend our sympathy to Peter and Michael Ward and their families on the passing of their beloved mother and grandmother.

Dorothy Wakeling

Awards

Peter Mundy. Many congratulations, Peter, from all of us at BirdLife Zimbabwe, on receiving the **Steven Piper Lifetime Achievement Award** from the Birds of Prey Programme of the Endangered Wildlife Trust in South Africa. We, too, well appreciate your great achievement in your work on vultures. See *Honeyguide* September 2010 Vol. 56(2).

Peter Steyn was awarded the **Gill Memorial Medal** at the BLSA AGM in April this year. On behalf of BirdLife Zimbabwe, I congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition for a lifetime devoted to ornithology, especially that of raptors, and its literature. There is a definite sense of pride felt by us Zimbabwean birders, especially the old timers, as Peter spent a considerable time at Falcon College which turned out to be very influential in the course his life took. He presented a most inspiring address at the award ceremony entitled *Holding up the mirror to nature...* a copy of which has been placed in the BLZ Library and can be forwarded on to those interested. You will also find it on the BLSA website.

Dorothy Wakeling

BLZ Library

If you have a spare moment or are in the area, do pop in to the lovely new BLZ Library! I am sure you will be astonished at the extraordinary birding information it houses and will be tempted to linger and browse through books, reprints and journals. Bring your laptops. Join the Library Mailing List and receive e-newsletters from Botswana, Zambia, BLI and more. We greatly appreciate the very valuable and extensive donations of books and journals from Michael Irwin, Anthony Cizek, Jacko Williams and Di Rushforth.

Dorothy Wakeling, Librarian library@blz.co.zw

AGM

The 30th Annual General Meeting of BirdLife Zimbabwe will be held at 10 a.m.
on Saturday 4th June 2011 at The Hideaway, Lake Manyame.

The Hideaway is a very attractive resort on the shores of Lake Manyame (Darwendale) Dam. There are modern camping facilities (US\$10ppday) and self-catering thatched chalets and tented accommodation that sleep up to 5 people at US\$120 per night for the chalet or tented

accommodation. Food that will be available to order at The Hideaway: Cold Meats and rolls for US\$5 each, Burgers or Boeri rolls for US\$3, Braai Pack US\$10 each, Steak Rolls US\$4 each. The Hideaway is only 45 minutes from Harare, so a day visit is easily possible (US\$5pp for day trippers). We are planning to make this a fun event to attract as many members from all over Zimbabwe as possible. There'll be the AGM but as the venue boasts a lake shore, grasslands and nearby woodlands, there will also be plenty of good birding from land and water (the last time we were there we saw 6 African Skimmers...!) Please hurry and make your bookings by contacting Kelly on +263 (0)773 -109334 or kellyf@junglecomms.com

13th PAOC

The 13th Pan-African Ornithological Congress will be held from 14-21 October 2012 at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Details from Prof. Adrian Craig, A.Craig@ru.ac.za, Chair of PAOC Committee

Our Grateful Thanks to the following companies and people for their donations that covered the printing costs of the printed version of this *Babbler*: