

The Kite

Tygerberg Bird Club
Tygerberg Voëlklub



Photo: Brian Vanderwalt

Number 130 (February 2021 – April 2021)

In this issue:

Conservation and Covid-19	Pg 2, 3
TBC supports Black Harrier project	Pg 4
Illegal wildlife killing	Pg 5
Club Activities	Pg 6
Know your birds	Pg 7, 8
Brainteasers	Pg 9, 10
General Club information	Pg 11
Club Outings	Pg 12

Affiliated member of:



Chirp from the Chair

We want to WELCOME all the Members of the TBC to another year. We are looking forward to actual bird outings - as soon as the current regulations allow for them to resume. But in the meantime, we hope you're going to enjoy the monthly ZOOM meetings with us. We have had some great speakers during the past year, and have enjoyed the talks immensely. Some of our 2020 talks are available on the TBC Facebook page as recordings (under "media", "videos") for those who missed any.

In the meantime, we encourage everybody to continue birding. Strandfontein WWW, Intaka, Tygerberg Nature Reserve, Kirstenbosch and Rietvlei are but some of the gems right on our doorstep. Beaches may be closed, but luckily, we can still bird and go for walks in nature.

Make sure you join Birdlife SA every Tuesday evening @ 19:00 for their Conservation Conversations on Zoom. In case you missed any, they are also available on the Birdlife Website to listen to at your own leisure.

The TBC are proud co-Sponsors of tracking devices, to be fitted to two Black Harriers during their next breeding cycle. These endemic birds are in a lot of danger, with all the Wind Farms being built in our country. It is very important to monitor their behaviour so that proper planning decisions can be made going forward to save the decline of these magnificent birds.

We thank all our members who continue to give of their time and take part in CWAC waterbird counts at Bot River as well as the CAR crane counts in the Swartland area. Both these projects have been going for more than 25 years, and valuable data is collected on these counts.

I thank the TBC steering committee for the many hours put in behind the scenes to ensure this club runs successfully. Please consider joining the committee and throw your weight in with us. With no new committee members coming forward, the existing committee members have all once more offered their services for 2021.

Continue to share your birding pictures with us via Facebook.

Hoping you and your families stay healthy during these crazy times.

Happy Bird Watching!

Brigid Crewe

Conservationists set the record straight on COVID-19's wildlife links

The World Health Organization has categorized the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic in light of its spread around the world. Ever since the first cases emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan last December, there's been much speculation — and misinformation — about the origins of the virus. And while scientists suspect it may have come from a market in Wuhan when a diseased animal was consumed or butchered, spilling over into the human population from there, the issue is far from settled.

To give a better understanding of the origin of the coronavirus and what can be done to stop the future spread of disease from animals to humans, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Global Wildlife Conservation have partnered on a series of new infographics. WCS is also providing regular updates on wildlife-related issues surrounding COVID-19, and has taken to Twitter to address some of the most common rumors about the disease. These range from the demonstrably false — that the virus was manufactured in a lab — to the unfounded (for instance, that we know with full certainty which animal host passed the disease to humans).

"It is most likely that the evolutionary or ancestral host was a bat," Chris Walzer, executive director of WCS, told Mongabay. "What we don't know is how the virus got into humans and which possible intermediary host it passed through."

Corona viruses are a group of viruses with exceptionally high mutation rates that are known to exist in bats, rodents, camels and cats, making them prime for jumping from animal hosts to humans. The viruses that caused the outbreaks of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012 and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) from 2002-2004 are categorized as corona viruses. Viruses naturally mutate and are able to recombine, sharing different components to create new viruses. So, wildlife trading and meat markets, where multiple live species are kept together and butchered on the same surfaces, prove a perfect breeding ground for novel pathogens.

"The animals are captured in the wild (or alternatively raised on a so-called wildlife farm) and transported to a market, where they interact with other species from other locations," Walzer said. "Here, the animals are confined under stressful conditions, exchanging excrements and thus viruses before being slaughtered on-site. This allows for blood and organs to be exposed and increases the interface to humans."

"It's just a numbers game," Walzer said. "If you just put enough species together and allow them to share viruses and then put a lot of people in contact with the animals and their parts, then you invariably will have a virus that can enter a human cell and replicate and, in rarer occasions, transmit from human to human."

Given the clear risks both to biodiversity as well as to human health, scientists at WCS and GWC are calling for a permanent ban on wildlife trafficking and live animal markets.

The COVID-19 epidemic may be the watershed to spur action on wildlife trafficking in Southeast Asia. China has announced a ban on the consumption of wild animals; Vietnam followed with a ban on both the trade and consumption of wildlife.

"Taking China's lead, I think there will be a domino effect in the region, as all of these neighboring countries are highly interdependent and their markets are connected," Walzer said. "These countries have legislation for livestock in place. Now, they are asking how to best regulate wildlife. What laws, expertise and monitoring are needed to really implement this legislation in a meaningful way?"



Pangolins are the world's most trafficked animal, but it has not been confirmed that pangolins were the intermediary host of COVID-19

Conservationist on Covid-19 continues

“Public attention can fade quickly. But once legislation is in place, it is there to stay.”

Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia have not made a formal statement yet on bans, but Walzer says these countries have indicated they are looking into regulating the wildlife trade and investigating what needs to be done.

“The world needs country after country stepping up to prevent future viral outbreaks by banning the trade and consumption of wildlife.” Hoang Bich Thuy, country director of WCS Vietnam, said in a statement. “If just one country continues to allow the trade in wildlife, communities across the world will continue to suffer and pay the price.”

This article by Liz Kimbrough was first published on Mongabay.com on 13 March 2020.

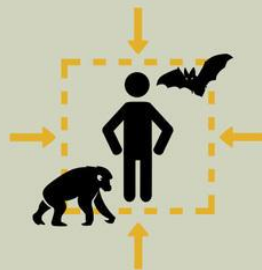


WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING & LIVE ANIMAL MARKETS: THREATS & SOLUTIONS

There is no risk-free trade or consumption of any wildlife whether they are wild-caught or farmed. | **#COVID19**

1. THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

The spread of zoonotic diseases is exacerbated by wildlife trafficking, wildlife markets, habitat destruction and climate change. These threats drive humans and animals into closer proximity.



2. WILDLIFE AND MARKETS

Live animal markets are a major source of new viruses, including ones that cause zoonotic diseases, which are transmitted between species. COVID-19 likely originated in a live animal market selling wildlife.



3. PERMANENT BAN



Wildlife are being poached and hunted, often to near-extinction, for exotic food, fake medicine, and pets. A permanent ban on markets trading in wildlife would protect endangered species and humans.

4. STOP TRAFFICKING



Combat trafficking of wild animals within countries and across borders. Change dangerous wildlife consumption behaviors, especially in cities.

TBC supports Black Harrier project

GPS trackers will provide valuable information on the impact of wind farms on Black Harrier ecology and survival.



The Tygerberg Bird Club is sponsoring this important project that aims to fit a number of Black Harriers with modern GPS/GSM trackers to determine their behaviour around wind farms.

The trackers represent a mere 2.7% of the harrier's weight and have been approved by UCT ethics committee.

Black Harriers are endangered raptors that face many challenges. They are the least common raptor in Southern Africa, endemic to SA and Namibia, and breed only in coastal and montane regions of the Western Cape and rarely in the Northern or Eastern Cape.

They now face a new threat in the form of wind farms that kill adult birds. With some of these casualties being breeding birds, breeding events often failing as both parents are needed to rear the young. It has become evident that we know little about how Black Harriers react to new wind farms in their breeding areas. Information that is needed to provide robust guidelines on appropriate buffers around Black Harrier nest sites to reduce deaths and displacement impacts.

Initial tracking of harriers has revealed that they forage on average 16 km from their nests and need a 3-5 km buffer around nests to help protect them from wind farm fatalities. However, there are very little data on the heights at which they forage or why they are so susceptible to wind farm mortality during the breeding season.

A project spearheaded by the Fitzpatrick Institute and the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust, aims to fit Black Harriers with GPS trackers to gain valuable information i.e.:

- How often do harriers fly within the blade-swept areas of wind turbines,
- At what distance from their nests are these risky flights mainly performed and
- How do they use the natural vs. transformed habitats available to them within their foraging ranges.

These trackers give fine scale information on the location (to 5m accuracy) and the height at which the birds are flying. With this information at hand, wind farm development can be guided in terms of future 'no go' areas.

Drs Rob Simmons & Odette Curtis



Tackling illegal killing, taking and trade of birds in Sub-Saharan Africa

As part of an effort to curb the devastating damage wreaked by the bird trade, BirdLife has embarked on a study to compile all existing information about bird killing, trapping and trade in Sub-Saharan Africa. They are inviting you to get in touch with any information that can help us fill in the gaps.

A bustling market in Central Africa. Among the merchandise are birds trapped in cages, as traders haggle over prices. In West Africa, stalls selling bird carcasses are a regular feature at bushmeat markets across the region.

These are just a few examples of the plight of wild birds not only in Africa, but across the globe. The truth is that illegal killing, taking and trade are driving wild birds to extinction. Recent studies have revealed startling numbers in the Mediterranean, Arabian Peninsula, Northern and Central Europe and the Caucasus. Across these regions, millions of birds are removed from their habitats every year – dead or alive – with devastating impacts on the populations of some species.



Red backed shrike trapped on limestick © BirdLife Cyprus

In the Mediterranean, Egypt loses about 5.7 million birds annually to these practices. The population of European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*, for example, has shrunk by 30-49% in 15 years, and is now classed as Vulnerable to extinction. Meanwhile, the European Roller *Coracias garrulus* has gone extinct in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, while the iconic Eurasian Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* has lost 56.7% of its range in the Western Maghreb due to extensive hunting and trading. Its rarity has led to an increase in price and the establishment of an illegal international trading network across the region. One goldfinch is currently worth \$50 – nearly a third of the average monthly income in the area. Despite all this information, the extent to which illegal killing, taking and trade affect wild birds in the Sub-Saharan region is poorly known.

Source: Supertrooper



Year-end outing: pictures by Robert Brink and Kevin Drummond-Hay

Club Activities

Club Year-end outing

With social distancing in place, a large number of our members gathered at Rooiels and Harold Porter for a long-overdue birding outing.

Rooiels certainly stayed true to its reputation for being a windy spot. As we assembled in the car park at the restaurant, we saw a colourful assortment of hats and masks flapping frantically in the gale-force wind. Undaunted, we set off in convoy to the Rockjumper hiking trail.

The strong wind made it almost impossible to hold binoculars and a hat while trying to point to some feathered object being blown across the boulder strewn slopes. A few of the local denizens made brief appearances and we managed to set eyes on Neddicky, Grey-backed Cisticola, Cape Bunting and Rock Martin. Although someone said that they heard Ground Woodpeckers calling high up on the slope, the birds remained hunkered down behind the rocks. The endemic target, namely the Cape Rockjumper, remained elusive in spite of fifty watery eyes scanning the waving vegetation.

The team reassembled at the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden where they could shed a windbreaker, jersey or jacket. Being situated in a sheltered site the wind velocity had lessened to a breeze and everybody seemed to be rejuvenated. The shady trees, colourful flowerbeds and manicured lawns seemed so orderly and welcoming after the windswept slopes of Rooiels.

A leisurely amble along the path produced Speckled Mousebird, Orange-breasted Sunbird and Cape Canaries feeding their ravenous chicks. Overhead the Black Saw-wings whistled past at such a speed that in-flight photos were just not considered. Later, Ettienne Kotze managed to locate a dark dot and capture an image of a Saw-wing that had perched for a brief moment to get its breath back.

The forest canopy along the Disa Trail did not disappoint and had necks craning for views of flitting feathers in the dappled sunlight. Very busy African Dusky Flycatchers were found feeding newly fledged chicks that were constantly begging for another morsel. Suddenly the mood lifted even higher when someone spied a Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher. The “Oohs and aahs” flowed freely when we realised that a pair, too, were feeding fledglings. The rapid clicking of camera shutters added to the chorus as members tried to get clear shots of the handsome male as he fanned his tail and spread his wings briefly before flitting off to the next partially obscured perch.

The forest continued to produce the goods with Cape Batis and African Paradise-Flycatchers providing good views. After a very relaxed and fruitful morning the members returned to the entrance and reappeared with bulging picnic baskets and folding chairs. The banter picked up steadily because we now had an excuse to remove the muffling masks. The bird list for the day consisted of an assortment from both localities and, given the windy conditions, produced a good total in excess of 40 species.

Gerald Wingate



Know your birds

WALKIES - These birds take their eggs for a walk!

Most birds lay their eggs in a nest and there the egg remains. I know of only three species that have no fixed nest-site but literally walk with their eggs. All three are seabirds and have a single-egg clutch. All three breed on relatively flat terrain and hold their egg between the top of their feet and their body.

The least accomplished egg walker is the Waved or Galapagos Albatross which breeds on sandy gravelly ground which has occasional rocks. Why they walk their egg has not been described and, since their legs are spaced the eggs are often lost as they move across stony ground. This is a bonus for the local Mockingbirds which hammer into the lost eggs to drink the fluid contents on the waterless island where these albatrosses breed.



The most accomplished egg walker is the male Emperor Penguin as they may walk their egg up to 3 km during their incubation period. These penguins breed on flat, permanent ice. Only the male incubates. They do this for 60 days, without a break or food, during the fiercely cold Antarctic winter (tuff guys!). Incubating male Emperors huddle together in the cold, especially during blizzards. Birds on the outside of the huddle get coldest. They take as much as they can tolerate and then shuffle, with their egg on their feet, around the outside of the huddle and re-join downwind. As the blizzard persists so more and more birds are exposed to the cold and walk, with their egg, to join the huddle downwind. In this way the entire huddle-colony moves downwind across the ice. This downwind movement of the huddle persists as long as the blizzard. If this is for days on end the Emperor penguins may walk their egg for kilometres and change direction depending on that of the wind.

Since embryos in Emperor penguin eggs freeze, and die, if they touch the ice, the ability to walk the egg must have evolved in conditions before these penguins bred on ice.

I lived for seven months right beside (within a metre) a King Penguin colony on Marion Island and developed an hypothesis for why egg walking in these two related species evolved.

My King Penguins shared a rocky-pebbly beach with a seasonal colony of Elephant Seals. The seals largely kept to the rockier sea edge section of the beach and the penguins bred on a pebbly landward raised beach.

During their September-November breeding season the seal area was dominated by a single bull seal -the huge harem master who weighed at least 2 tons. Other males would try to come ashore to mate with the bull's harem. To stop this the harem bull would rear up and give a snorted challenge. If the lesser males didn't heed this warning the harem bull chased across the beach, like a huge undulating slug, at near human running speed, riding rough-shod over his females and their pups (his weight killing some pups) and the lesser males fled except for a few that answered his challenge. Sometimes the lesser males fled landward and onto the raised beach. Any King Penguins there scattered as fast as they could move to avoid being crushed by the fast-moving seals. The King penguins were only able to breed on their raised beach once the Elephant Seal breeding season, with its male chases, was over.



Some weeks later Elephant Seals returned to moult. To do this they moved up the beach and inland onto higher vegetated ground where they lay in mud wallows for a few weeks without feeding. In this moulting season they moved slowly, either on arrival because they carried so much fat to sustain them for their one-month moult fast or, departing after their moult fast, because they were too weak to move quickly. The penguins, even with an egg on their feet, were able to shuffle away from these slow-moving seals. The distances moved were short but very few eggs were lost. It seems to me plausible that a joint ancestor of these two penguin species developed this ability to walk with their eggs to avoid seal traffic, and that this prior developed ability, enabled Emperor Penguins to later breed on ice.

Tony Williams

Why don't birds get cold feet?



Birds like this White-tailed Ptarmigan have special adaptations to keep their feet protected from the cold. Photo by [Bryan J. Smith](#) via [Birdshare](#).

Actually, songbirds do get very cold feet: the surface temperature of their toes may be barely above freezing even as the bird maintains its core body temperature above 100°F (38°C). But most birds don't succumb to frostbite because there is so little fluid in the cells of their feet, and their feet are mostly tendons and bones with little muscle or nerve tissue.

Birds also have a counter current heat exchange system in their legs and feet—the blood vessels going to and from the feet are very close together, so blood flowing back to the body is warmed by blood flowing to the feet. The newly cooled blood in the feet lowers heat loss from the feet, and the warmed blood flowing back into the body prevents the bird from becoming chilled. And because bird circulation is so fast, blood doesn't remain in the feet long enough to freeze.

Birds may also alternate standing on one foot at a time, pulling one up into their warm downy feathers, while the other stands in the cold, and then reversing them. And when birds perch, they can lower their bodies down to cover their feet, keeping their feet warm with their feathers.

Do cold feet bother birds? It's hard to say for sure, but we do know that birds like Common Eiders and Snow Buntings have few pain receptors in their feet.

Source: The CornellLab

Woodpeckers prepare for winter ...

First the Acorn Woodpecker finds a dead tree and starts making holes for the acorns. Each hole is made very thoughtfully, because if the hole is large, other birds can easily steal the acorn.

If the hole is narrow, the nut can break and deteriorate. By the end of summer, the woodpecker's "jewellery" work ends, by this time the acorns ripen and take their places in the tree.

The trunk of a large tree can hold about 50,000 acorns, allowing the bird a satisfying winter.

Source: Bits and Pieces

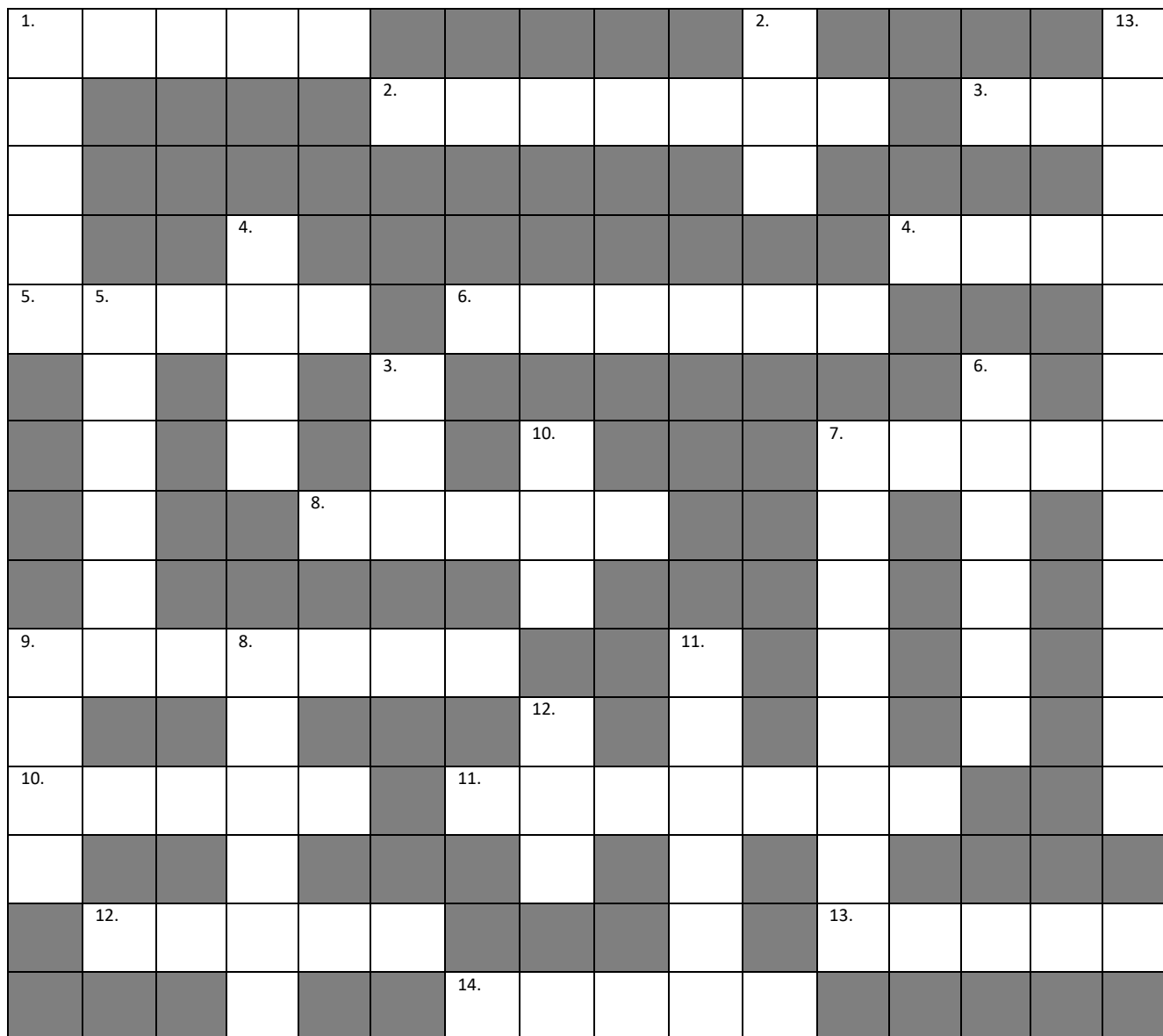


Thank you to the following members for their donations:

Les Teare, Deona Andrag, Rocco and Lizette Nel, Andrew Bell, Mara Wege, Rick Shuttleworth, Hanna and Emil Boeke, Helene Thompson, Horton and Christine Griffiths, Stuart Shillinglaw and Mandy Turner, Otto and Sandy Schmidt, Sigi and Geoff Frye, Ronald Uijs, Eike and Pieter Diederichs, Wendel du Buy, Johan and Karen Swart, Angela Zuyl, Rodney and Anke Gray, Corne and John Rautenbach, Liz van Wyk, Lesly Bust and Denys Gilfillan, Ruthette and Henriette du Toit, Magda and Johann Bignaut, Emielke Borst, Lee Silks, Rene and Alex Patterson, Annelize Roos, Idelyn O'Kennedy, Michele Nichols, Ralph and Daphne Wordon, Sigrid Vollmer, Peter and Laura Loynes, Kevin and Maria Drummond Hay.

Brain teasers

CROSS WORD PUZZLE NO. 08



Clues Down:

1. Egret known for its canopy fishing technique. (5)
2. This Whydah is into needlework to decorate its tail! (3)
3. A little, energetic, nectar-loving bird:bird. (3)
4. Lines used in the fishing industry to alleviate avian by-catch. (4)
5. A big swift taking its name from a big mountain range. (6)
6. Skulking species from the dry woodlands of Mozambique. (6)
7. Tree-derived name of a Kingfisher occurring mostly in estuaries. (8)
8. Fishing raptor. (6)
9. Most bird watchers have one or more of these to keep track of numbers and names. (4)
10. Nocturnal bird of prey. (3)
11. Skuas and Jaegers are examples ofParasites. (6)
12. Australian "ostrich". (3)
13. Community bird guides are trained in this well-known birding town. (12)

Brain teasers continued ...

Crossword Clues Across

1. Bee-eater only found on the Zambezi River in Mozambique. (5)
2. Behaviour described by random moving around of a group of birds. (7)
3. Acronym used to describe important areas, as certain endangered birds groups overlap there. (3)
4. This Kestrel and Pipit “dance” around the clock! (4)
5. A little green Eremomela occurs in this dry area. (5)
6. A biome in which mainly deciduous trees occur like Brachystegia and Julbernardia. (5)
7. The individuals of this gender of the Ruff dance at a lek. (5)
8. The name of this rare migrant egret pertains to colour, rather than temperature! (5)
9. Two special species occur mainly in this land-locked country. (7)
10. This wetland bird is known for its drumming sound in breeding season. (5)
11. Only penguin that exclusively breeds on Antarctic mainland. (7)
12.-necked Nightjar: “Good Lord, deliver us”. (5)
13. Cattle, Little, Black, Slaty, Snowy, Great and Intermediate (5)
14. The Cuckoo is a Parasite. (5)

Source: Pieter and Eike Diederichs

Rainbow colours?

Colours are used to describe the wide spectrum of bird plumages. Excluding the basic primary colours, a number of less frequently used colours are also used to describe/name Southern Africa species. Can you identify the following bird names?

1. A jewel of a nectar feeder
2. A pale tiny tot
3. A sulphur-and-fire songbird
4. A metallic colour on a wing
5. Drab streaks on a chat
6. A reddish bee-eater
7. A nut on a vent
8. A flavour on a warbler breast
9. A jaundice wagtail
10. Metal-like tail on a coucal
11. Deep red on a shrike
12. A sunset little brown job

Answers:

1 Amethyst sunbird, 2 Ashy Tit, 3 Brimstone Canary, 4 Bronze-winged Courser, 5 Buff-streaked Chat, 6 Carmine Bee-eater, 7 Chestnut-vented Warbler (Tit-Babbler), 8 Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, 9 Citrine Wagtail, 10 Coppery-tailed Coucal, 11 Crimson-breasted Shrike, 12 Dusky Lark

Source: Gerald Wingate

Habitats?



Which five habitat types are used in bird names, e.g., Marsh Sandpiper?

Answers:

Bushveld
Pipit, Forest
Canary,
Swamp
Boubou,
Mangrove
Kingfisher,
Woodland
Kingfisher

Source: Gerald Wingate

General Club information

Subscribe to the TBC Birdnet

Make sure you get all the communication from the club. Send an e-mail to:

Tygerberg-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To unsubscribe, send an e-mail to:

Tygerberg-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

In case your e-mail address change, unsubscribe your old address and send a subscribe request from your new e-mail address.

You may share information / important sightings with other club members by sending an e-mail to: tygerberg@yahoogroups.com

Change of contact details

Please notify the TBC Membership Secretary, Judy Kotze, should your e-mail address or other contact details change. Gert.k@absamail.co.za

TBC contact details

Website: www.tygerbergbirdclub.org

PO Box 4388, Durbanville, 7551

Chairperson's e-mail: B.crewe@wo.co.za

Vice Chairperson's e-mail: dalene@brians-birding.co.za

Join our Facebook page

Members are welcome to share information regarding their travels and interesting sightings on this page.

www.facebook.com/groups/tygerbergbirdclub/

Contributions to The Kite

Please mail any contributions to the newsletter (include pictures where possible) to:

dalene@brians-birding.co.za

TBC Steering committee 2020

Honorary President	Brian Vanderwalt	Cell: 082 999 9333
Chairperson	Brigid Crewe	Cell: 082 570 0808
Vice Chairperson	Dalene Vanderwalt	Cell: 084 702 4201
Treasurer	Lionel Crewe	
Secretary	Margaret Oosthuizen	Tel (021) 976 2217
Membership Secretary	Judy Kotze	Cell: 083 254 0919
Communication & Public Relations Officer	Dalene Vanderwalt	Cell: 084 702 4201
TBC Ringing Unit	Margaret McCall	Cell: 083 720 0747
Conservation Officer	Kevin Drummond-Hay	Cell: 074 587 3792



Tygerberg Bird Club's Mission / Missie van die Tygerberg Voëlklub

To enhance our knowledge of all birds, their behaviour and their habitats and to introduce the public to the conservation and science of our avian heritage through enjoyable participation by club members.

Om as klub ons kennis van alle voëls, hul gedrag en hul habitat te verbeter en deur genotvolle deelname van klublede, die publiek bewus te maak van die bewaring en wetenskap van ons plaaslike voel erfenis.

Celebrating 35 years of bringing birders together



Club meetings and outings

For the foreseeable future, all club meetings and outings are cancelled. Make sure you stay in touch and join our monthly talks on Zoom or Facebook.

January 2021

Thursday 21 January 2021: Club zoom meeting @ 19:30

Michael Mason, a passionate 'birder' and photographer, shares his wildlife and bird pictures with us.

Saturday 30 January 2021:

CAR Counts in the Swartland

Contact: Brigid Crewe (082 5700 808)

We plan to be two participants per route. Cranes and Raptors are counted along 10 fixed Swartland routes.

February 2021

Thursday 18 February 2021 @ 19:30

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of TYGERBERG BIRD CLUB – on ZOOM

The shortened AGM will be followed by the monthly talk.

SPEAKER: Kevin Drummond-Hay

Topic: "Karoo Shy Five"

Kevin will share great photos and information from a birding trip to Southern Free State and the Karoo. They visited the Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve, and had great evening drives to see the nocturnal mammals. Their goal was to see the 'shy five' – animals that are difficult to find. Birding was great, with korhaan, larks and coursers being some of the highlights. A really nice area for birding.

March 2021

Thursday 18 March: Club zoom meeting @19:30

Speaker to be announced.

April 2021

Thursday 15 April: Club zoom meeting @19:30

Speaker: Dr Melissa Whitecross, Landscape Conservation Programme Manager at BirdLife SA

Topic: Saving the Grassland Sentinels – BirdLife South Africa's Secretarybird Conservation Project

Melissa will unpack some of the lessons learned during the 10-year conservation journey to save the 'Sentinels of the Grasslands'. Through a dedicated tracking study across South Africa, much has been learned about the movement, dispersal and behaviour of the Secretarybird. This webinar comes on the back of a recent announcement by the IUCN and BirdLife International Threatened Species Forums that recent declines across the Secretarybird's African range have become severe enough for it to be uplisted to 'Endangered' on the global Red Data List. Join Melissa as she shares her passion and insights on the Secretarybird, an iconic, unique apex predator of Africa's open landscapes.