



Issue 3, 2019



Protecting our environment

For birders and walkers

Thanks to Bob and Mary Scholes, and Paul Grobber, who have added a 'nook' for birders and walkers alike – a cleared area with great views across the wetland with a seat to rest your feet after a stroll from the village to the Oude Stasie. Look out for this neat little area at the Oude turn off the Amersfoort Road.

If you are going to bird from here, please do ensure you pull off the road sufficiently to allow traffic to pass safely etc.

Have you have a really good name for this corner? Send your suggestions to: wnha.secretary@gmail.com.



FROM EGG TO FULLY GROWN SECRETARYBIRD

<p>1 Eggs</p> <p>Female lays 1-2 egg, rarely two. Eggs are white to very pale bluish-green, elongated ovals with chalky texture. Eggs are incubated for 40-46 days.</p>	<p>2 Newly Hatched</p> <p>Chicks are covered in greyish-white down with yellow facial skin and legs. Their bills are straight with only a slight hook on the maxilla. Their head is very large and may appear too big for their body.</p>
<p>7 Days</p> <p>Grey second down appears. The bare facial skin is greenish-yellow with some orange on the base of the bill.</p>	<p>3 3 Weeks</p> <p>Second down complete. The crest and ear covert feathers become visible through the down. Facial skin becomes pale-orange, with grey eyes. Crest extends from nape to down back of neck. Chicks are able to feed themselves, regurgitate pellets, and reverse to edge of nest to defecate.</p>
<p>5 6 Weeks</p> <p>Can self-feed, but still dependent on food brought by adults and on water regurgitated by adults up to day 63.</p>	<p>6 66 Days</p> <p>Nearly fully feathered, except for some down protruding on their shoulders, flanks and back of legs. The primary feathers extend past the secondary feathers. They have pink-orange legs and orange-yellow facial skin. Chicks are able to stand for short periods.</p>
<p>64 - 105 Days</p> <p>The chicks leave the nest and are known as fledglings. They are fully feathered by day 76 and central rectrices are just longer than rest of tail. The chicks may come back to nest to roost or practice flying and kicking. Even though they have left the nest, the chicks are still fed by adults by regurgitation.</p>	<p>7 Fully Grown</p> <p>130 Days</p> <p>Chicks start hunting, but remain partly dependent on adults for food for another 62-105 days.</p>

Find out more on the BirdLife South Africa website at birdlife.org.za/secretarybird or visit the Facebook page @BirdLifeSouthAfrica. Design and Illustrations: Christine Cloete @ChristineCloete. Photo Reference: Dawid de Swardt. SOURCES: Dean, W.L., Ryan P.G. (eds) Roberts - Birds of Southern Africa (With Ed) Cape Town: The Trustees of the John Voornot and Book Fund; Hildebrand, S.G., Sauer, C.T., Enders, L.C. (2014) Population and Seroprevalence of *Sagittarius serpentarius* Population Trends and Ecology. Insights from South African Citizen Science Data. PLOS ONE 9(3): e91772. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0091772 (Open Access); BirdLife International (2018) BirdLife International Checklist of Birds of the World, Version 12.2. BirdLife International. Animal Diversity Web. Accessed December 26, 2018 at https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Sagittarius_serpentarius/; Whittow, M.A., Ford, J.P. and Gledhill-Smith, H.A. (2019) General dynamics of juvenile *Sagittarius serpentarius* in southern Africa. *Ostrich* accepted January 2019.

STRIDER

BY CHRISTIE CLOETE



THE 4 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL HUNTING ...

1. TAKE LONG STRIDES, EVER SPINNING FOR PREY.	2. IDENTIFY TARGET	3. AIM	4. ATTACK
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STRIDER

BY CHRISTIE CLOETE



REALISING THAT HIS PARENTS WON'T LET HIM BACK INTO THEIR NEST AGAIN, STRIDER SETS OUT TO FIND HIS OWN HOME.	23 DAYS AND 208 KM LATER...	75 DAYS AND 485 KM LATER...
99 DAYS AND 677 KM LATER AND STILL GOING...	121 DAYS AND 759 KM LATER, AN EXHAUSTED STRIDER FINALLY KISSES THE GROUND OF HIS OWN PIECE OF SWEET PARADISE.	STANDING LACEDS PEEPING FROM AN UNUSUAL ALTITUDE.

Community Policing Forum involvement

The WNHA has been invited to be a stakeholder within the Wakkerstroom Community Policing Forum (CPF). Rupert Lawlor attended the first meeting on 25th April 2019.

This is a vital forum to understanding local community issues as well as a way for WNHA to convey our role within the area on water security, environmental management and community driven projects. There are approximately 18 stakeholders who are part of CPF.

Meetings are generally every three months with agenda and minutes of said meetings made available to stakeholders. The current chair of CPF is Vusi Sibiyi. The main thrust of these meetings is for the stakeholders and Wakkerstroom Police to discuss areas of concern and equally to foster better relationship between both parties. It was clear that the local Station Commander wanted to change perceptions of the service provided by the police and committed to improving local policing service. He called for greater communication on matters that are effecting the local community.

Some issues that were discussed:

Crime prevention and reporting on stolen fire arms

- Management of Liquor Act and responsibilities of local liquor outlets
- Fraud, especially around bank and Sassa cards and pin numbers
- Stock theft, animal branding and the Municipal Pound. It would seem that a new contract has been awarded for management of the Pound and details with contact numbers will be provided
- Moral regeneration campaign
- Child care

On behalf of WNHA, I gave a short presentation, covering our objectives, water pollution, objection to pipeline and also handed out our promotional flyer with pipeline bookmarks. I did raise issues around cattle and goats that are roaming around our village, and offered to assist the police by providing a village map with street names and stand numbers. They were very grateful for this offer.

Donation hand over to the Wakkerstroom Youth Development Centre

The WNHA received a number of IT training books as a donation to the Youth Centre. This sponsorship is from Delia Kench of St Benedict's School in Bedfordview.

Exploring IT: Scratch & Delphi Programme, Grade 10 (a large number of boxes), Exploring IT: Delphi Programme, Grade 11, Exploring IT: Delphi Programme, Grade 12.

These were handed over to the Centre by Rupert Lawlor and Vusi Sibiyi recently.

The Youth Centre continues to look for other items, enabling them to better service the youth of our village.

These include:

10 additional laptops, 10 desks and chairs, various stationery items and a water dispenser

If you are able to assist in any manner, please do contact Rupert on rupert@lawlor.co.za.



Pipeline update

Following many attempts to engage with the Municipality as well as the Department of Environmental Affairs, the WNHA has launched an application in the Mpumalanga High Court in relation to the project to construct a bulk water pipeline from Martins Dam to Volksrust. In this application, the WNHA has asked for the reviewing of the process by which this project was approved, as well as requesting an interdict pending the conducting of appropriate environmental processes. At this point, the application has been opposed by the Municipality and the contractors. The Ministers of Water and Sanitation and Environmental Affairs have indicated that they will not participate in the court processes.

Upcoming events in Wakkerstroom:

✓ **14th – 17th June Wakkerstroom Art and Craft Ramble.**

Contact Karen on 083 452 3363

✓ **15th June Wakkerstroom Mountain Challenge, including the launch of a new trail.**

Contact Rupert on 083 227 9020

✓ **6th July One Night, One Million Stars Star Gazing and food market @ BirdLife South Africa Centre.**

Contact Kristi on 081 726 5282

The Litter Initiative



The village of Wakkerstroom took to the streets during the weeks prior to the Music Festival. Kick off was a vlei clean-up where all the areas

around the vlei, including the waterway, were cleared of litter. We are happy to report that very little litter was found in comparison to the first clean-up which was two years ago. The Walks and Trails rambling group doubled up their Tuesday morning walks incorporating litter clearing on their routes before heading off for their much-deserved coffee and muffins. The soccer team, which is sponsored by the WNHA, assisted in a clean-up of the verges and the roadway into town along with some members of the WNHA Litter Lion youngsters, and the town was cleared by residents of Dana. Altogether there were 27 bags of litter removed from the village in preparation for the many visitors that we are expecting for the festival. The WNHA would like to thank all those that assisted in the clean-up, all those that donated

consumables (such as black bags and refreshments) and all those invisible people who quietly assist in this ongoing challenge.

The eco brick project is well under way and we are ready to build our first bus shelter. The council not only has given us permission, but is willing to assist with building materials and labour. The labour will come from the council-driven skills upliftment programme, so this is a win-win all around. Four more bus shelters are being planned and this will no doubt come to fruition sooner than later considering the various challenges and commitment that all sectors of our community are engaged with.

Our village is going to become a green village and we encourage you to 'watch this space'.

Carol Preston

