



Wakkerstroom Bird Club

NEWSLETTER – NO: 3

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to our August Newsletter.

Report on CAR (Co-ordinated Avifaunal Road Count) Saturday 28th July 2012

It was great to have enough teams/volunteers to cover the 7 routes on the Saturday. A big thank you to everyone who participated. The weather played along beautifully this year and all teams enjoyed the day despite the low numbers counted. A total of 575 birds were recorded.

Species counted were: Bald Ibis, Black-headed Heron, Secretary Bird, Helmeted Guinea Fowl, Blue Korhaan, Grey (Southern) Crowned Crane, Blue Crane, Spur-winged Goose and Northern Black Korhaan.

Something a little different was the Greater Flamingo on Vaalpoort Pan – 12 birds sighted.

Remember last Saturday in January 2013 for our Summer CAR count. Come along and join in the fun!

Report on Bird Club Outing to the Wessels Farm on Tuesday 7th August 2012

Despite the foreboding weather forecast the day dawned clear, still and crispy cold. We set off just after 7.00am, three 4x4's and 10 people. The trip took just over an hour with us birding along the route. Temperatures improved considerably once we reached our destination as the farm nestles against the base of the Krantz, surrounded by an abundance of trees. We were welcomed by Colleen Wessels, her young son, dogs and the cat. The Wessels Farm is a favourite birding spot in June/July as the Aloes are in full flower followed closely by flowering of the Protea bushes. Well known for Gurney's Sugar Bird, which we hoped to see, but our feathered friend was elusive. Malachite Sunbird, Amethyst Sunbird, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Cape Batis, Black-headed

Oriole, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Cardinal Woodpecker were but a few species found in the gardens. Most exciting was the Crowned Eagle pair with a juvenile exercising their wings tree to tree, post to post down the driveway. Our sincere thanks to the Wessels family for their wonderful hospitality.

Bird of the Month

The Greater Flamingo



The **Greater Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) is the most widespread [species](#) of the [flamingo](#) family. It is found in parts of [Africa](#), southern Asia (coastal regions of [Pakistan](#) and [India](#)), and southern [Europe](#) (including [Spain](#), [Albania](#), [Turkey](#), [Greece](#), [Cyprus](#), [Portugal](#), [Italy](#) and the [Camargue](#) region of [France](#)). This is the largest species of flamingo, averaging 110–150 cm (43–60 in) tall and weighing 2–4 kg (4.4–8.8 lbs). The largest male flamingos have been recorded at up to 187 cm (74 in) tall and 4.5 kg (10 lbs)

Like all flamingos, this species lays a single chalky-white [egg](#) on a mud mound.

Most of the [plumage](#) is pinkish-white, but the wing coverts are red and the primary and secondary flight [feathers](#) are black.

The bill is pink with a restricted black tip, and the legs are entirely pink. The call is a goose-like honking.

Feedback on Projects

Sad news for birders: The Flufftail Hide at Birdlife South Africa, Wakkerstroom was destroyed in the disastrous fire on Sunday, 12 August 2012. Recent work that had been done at the Flufftail Hide to encourage better viewing of birds all came to nought! We will keep you posted in regard to re-building efforts.

The Iain Drummond Hide will be closed for a short period so that work can take place. A new boardwalk and reed screens are being constructed. The roof of the hide will be scraped and repainted. Reeds in front of the hide need to be cleared for better viewing.

Anyone wishing to donate towards these projects please contact the Treasurer of the Wakkerstroom Bird Club, John Barrow on 082.255.6778 - All donations whether monetary, materials, or time are much appreciated.

Watch this spot for sightings of “Early Arrivals”

John McAllister sighted White-throated Swallow at the end of July and John Burchmore sighted African Black Swift in the first week of August.

Interesting Local Sightings

Southern Boubou at Kana Retirement Village, the Twomey family have Cape Batis in their garden and a beaut! Crowned Eagle seen by Ann Cleal who says this:

“Searching a known Southern Bald Ibis colony, hoping to extend a meagre CAR list, the sighting of an airborne immature Crowned Eagle just above tree line was very exciting. Rising rapidly into a clear sky, to our complete surprise, it was dive-bombed by an adult in a brief, but focused non-lethal attack. The adult repeatedly out-maneuvred the youngster, forcing it to ground on the hillside where it tried to hide in the grass, crest raised in agitation as the harassment continued. Finally, driven onto a large rock and fully exposed to further attack, it simply mantled and appeared to seek refuge under its own wings before taking off and almost crash-landing in a nearby Cabbage tree (*Cussonia* sp). Amazingly, it found cover within the foliage and disappeared from view as the adult circled before flying off. The marked plumage difference between the two birds was clearly visible; the immature bird almost snow white from crown to belly and with far paler feathering above than the adult.

Sightings of Crowned Eagle within our area are sporadic. To have such stunning views of an adult and immature bird whilst participating in the quietest of quiet CAR counts was pure magic (even if they didn't swell our list). Although not the largest of African raptors, the Crowned Eagle is the most powerful. Despite the restrained nature of this attack, we were given ample indication of the species' ability to turn at speed which makes it such a formidable hunter within the forest canopy or heavily wooded areas of its natural habitat.”

Our next outing

Please note that our NEXT BIRD OUTING will be to Jamie and Trish Oglesby's farm at Ngogo on Friday 21st September 2012. This venue provides good birding and the owners are as delightful as they are knowledgeable. Lots of space to walk around safely. A variety of habitats also makes it a good venue. This venue requires 4x4 or hi-rise vehicles. Should you wish to join us then please contact Judy-Lynn Wheeler on 083.609.3513 several days prior to the outing for directions, and to give her your names/contact numbers. People in **Wakkerstroom** will meet at the Library at 07h00 – please gear yourselves for a day outing i.e. Hat/chair/comfortable walking shoes/binoc's/bird book/jacket/refreshments/etc.