

# CAR COUNT REPORT

WAKKERSTROOM PRECINCT - SUMMMER JANUARY 2017

By Judy-Lynn Wheeler, Wakkerstroom Precinct coordinator

This year was a record year for volunteers and the first count where we had more teams and vehicles than routes. I was delighted to see such a turn out at the briefing and thank you all for your enthusiasm and support towards the CAR project.

General report back from all routes was that visibility was restricted owing to long grasses. This is what happens when we have early spring rains! Both rural development and cereal crops are on the increase. Identified crops: maize/soya/cow peas

The day started off cool, misty with a fair breeze. Temperatures did warm but the breeze held.

We received a special request from Rina Pretorius of Amur Falcon Ringing to assist in counting Amur Falcons on our particular routes. A total of 1199 Amur Falcons and 2 Red Footed Falcons were counted over the 7 routes. Rina has sent her thanks for the assistance.

White Stork (379) and Bald Ibis (358) contributed to a relatively low total bird count of 1029.

An interesting note on the White Stork is that, of the 379 birds counted only 1 juvenile was seen. Spain and Portugal in 2016 saw a massive increase in White Stork during winter months, both adults and juvenile feeding on landfill sites rather than migrating. We are talking in excess of 38,000 birds just in Portugal alone. (This however has been going on since 2013). Good news is that both countries plan to cover and close the landfill sites. Perhaps the White Stork will again be forced to feeding grounds in Africa! We will look at figures in summer 2018.

It's crazy out there! Amur Falcons are being used as a food source on their migration route. White Storks are feeding on rubbish sites instead of migrating to feeding grounds. Something to think about!