



Wakkerstroom Bird Club



(Affiliated to BLSA)

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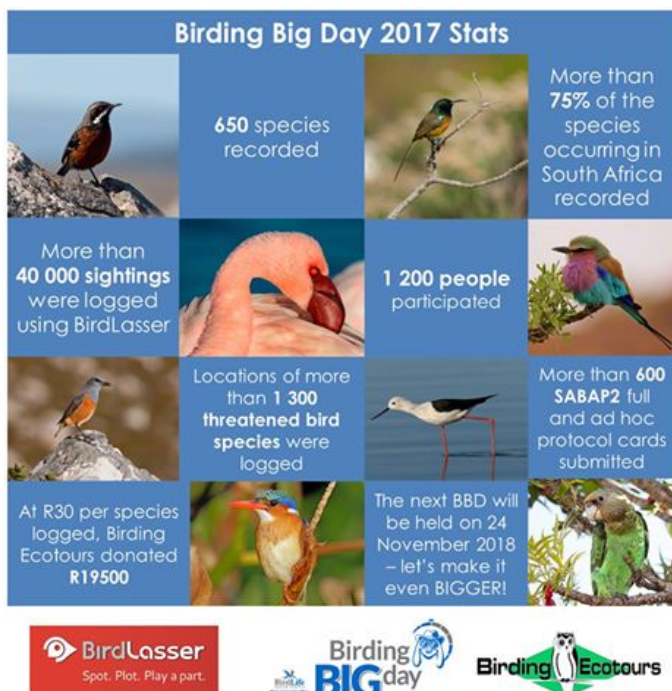
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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 53 – DECEMBER 2017

Hi All,

Well, the rain we all hoped and prayed for came to us in all its welcome volume and deluge after deluge will hopefully top-up Zaaioek Dam over the next short while. See our facebook page for some indication of the quantity of water that fell in and around town and the rate of inflow beneath the Thaka Bridge.

Birding Big Day:



November 27 saw the clubs second attempt at this event and it seems to have been well received by those taking part and all agreed they would join in again next year. Top “scorers” for our Club were the Wakkerstroom Picnickers team of the Maxteds and Spencers with 153 species followed by Vlei Volk (the Burchmores and Ann Cleal), 124 species and team Judy Wheeler and Chris Voets with 79 species. The Wakkerstroom Junior Birders, two groups of some 100 children led by Kristi Garland notched up 64 species and walked all the way! Wonderful effort! The Kana Thick-knees, who shall remain nameless, saw 63 species - but we had a good time! The Birdlasser website lists the overall winners as seeing 303 species followed (closely) by the team Zonke iNyoni with 302! Amazing, in only 24 hours. All in all 650 unique species were recorded on the day.

Wakkerstroom Junior Bird Club:

Spring has sprung and grass is rising! Kristi Garland from BirdLife South Africa recently attended the Spring Alive Committee Meeting, representing BirdLife South Africa as well as southern Africa, in Gdansk Poland. This international project is implemented across Europe, Africa and Asia. The main objectives are: the monitoring of five migratory bird species, implementing bird lessons in the class and really getting young and old out into the natural environment. The 2017 season saw a project very close to Wakkerstroom’s heart come alive – the release of a children’s book entitled Ringo – the Journey of a White Stork. Judy-Lynn Wheeler and Kristi wrote the story line and Carol Preston did all the art work. This story takes the reader on a journey through Ringo’s first five years, across Europe and eventually into



Africa, making her way to Wakkerstroom. The book is only available in digital format at the moment as the project investigates methods by which to fund printed copies.

Taking such a project into the big world has been ever so easy with the three recently developed junior bird clubs; Country College in Volksrust, the Clay Edu-Centre and Smiley's in eSizameleni. Each week, Kristi and Carol visit these groups to teach them a little more about birds and litter, two projects that go so easily hand-in-hand. Currently we have approximately 200 children that participate in these activities. Their interest and enthusiasm each week is ever so encouraging and has led to the registration of two groups for the recently celebrated International Outdoor Classroom Day (12th October) as well as currently the only junior bird club team for BirdLife South Africa Birding Big Day held on the 25th November. Not too shabby for Wakkerstroom!
Kristi Garland.

The Wakkerstroom Bird Club Committee is pleased to announce that the Club will be subsidising this initiative and we welcome them and their enthusiasm!

One of our proud new members showing off his Junior Members badge!

Diary of Future Events:

Saturday 6 January – monthly Wetland Walk, as you may know we were rained off in December so let's hope for better luck this time! As early as you like on the bridge – the migrants should be in full swing, tea/coffee available.

Wednesday 17 January – monthly meeting at BirdLife, a different sort of talk by club member Mike Maxted, and I quote

“As a thought, I really enjoyed Faansie Peacock when he did a light-hearted take on birders and birding and I thought I could do something similar for the bird club on my big year with the Newcastle Challenge, I have some nice pictures, stories of all the birds I have missed and the lengths I went to find some of them and the people I have met along the way.” Should be good fun and an introduction to Birdlasser's Challenge system.

Saturday 20 January – **note change of day** from a Tuesday! At the last Committee meeting it was decided that every 3 months or so we would move our outing to a Saturday to cater for those that can't attend on Tuesdays. As the second Tuesday in January and the third Wednesday are consecutive days we thought that a break might be welcomed. This Saturday outing will be to Newcastle Ponds in the hope that along with the usual excellent birding there that we will see some flamingos.

Saturday 27 January – the Summer CAR Count takes place again. Please liaise with Judy Wheeler (to take part in this important survey, many years of valuable data have been gathered by Citizen Scientists like us. More details to follow and a briefing will be held on the evening before.

Saturday 3 February – the big one – our Annual General Meeting for the year to 31 December 2017. Nothing to be afraid of, we normally make the AGM a brief affair! Probably followed by a bring and braai and a special treat will be a talk by Bob Scholes on Wetlands in support of World Wetland Day, always celebrated on the 2nd of February. Not to be missed!

The appropriate notices and Proxy Forms will be e-mailed to members in January.

A Stocking Filler for Christmas – and for the Environment as Well!



Taken from BLSA website www.birdlife.org these attractive bags are a great alternative to using the “litterbags” that often end up adorning the countryside.

“The IBA team is also very excited that the first Woolworths shopping bags in support of BirdLife South Africa have been designed and will raise funds to support our work to protect the remaining fragments of Cape Parrot habitat. These beautiful bags are available in Woolworth’s stores nationwide and R10 from every bag bought goes towards protecting Cape Parrots and funding the annual Cape Parrot census. For more information, go to <http://bags4good.org.za/cape-parrots>

Uninhibited funds raised from initiatives such as these are very important in assisting with the day-to-day running costs of the IBA Programme. We thank everyone who has supported these initiatives as we close 2017 on a high note and look forward to another productive year in 2018.”

And another one! What about Gift Membership for someone special?

ABRIDGED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.

Name _____ Title _____

E-mail address _____

Phone Number (H) ----- Cell No. _____

ANNUAL SUBSDRIPTION, R130.00 p.a.

Bank Details: Capitec Bank, Volksrust

Branch Code: 470010

Account Number: 1340870248

All that remains is for the Committee of Judy Wheeler, Kristi Garland, Claudine Spencer, John Burchmore, John Barrow, Norman Dennett and I to wish all of our members and those who gave of their time in 2017 a happy and Blessed Christmas and a prosperous, lifer-filled New Year!

Brian.