



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate use

### **BirdLife South Africa welcomes code of conduct for wind energy**

**Johannesburg, 15 June 2013:** BirdLife South Africa has welcomed the recent launch of the South African Wind Energy Association's (SAWEA) recommended Code of Conduct for Wind Energy Development.

It is often suggested that birds and wind energy are not compatible. While it is true that poorly located wind farms can impact on birds (through causing injury or mortality if birds collide with the turbines, or by displacing sensitive species), bird conservationists and wind farm developers are working towards the same goal: a greener future for all.

The code of conduct is an important step towards this goal and aims to promote the sustainable development of an environmentally and socially conscious wind energy industry in South Africa. While the code of conduct does not explicitly deal with birds, it does require SAWEA members to follow international best practice during project development, implementation and operation, and to exercise due care to reduce the risk of negative impacts on the environment.

Duncan Ayling, South African Wind Energy Association Environmental Working Group chairperson said "This code aims to promote the sustainable development of an environmentally and socially conscious wind energy industry in South Africa. We hope it will demonstrate the positive, responsible contribution that SAWEA is making."

"It is important that we follow international best practice" said Samantha Ralston, Birds and Renewable Energy Manager for BirdLife South Africa. "Wind farms are new to South Africa, but we are in a fortunate position that we can learn from our international partners who have years of experience in assessing, monitoring and mitigating the impacts of wind energy on birds. With the right approach conflicts between birds and wind farms can, to a large extent, be avoided" she said.

With sponsorship from Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking, BirdLife South Africa works with government and industry to support the responsible development of a renewable energy industry in South Africa. BirdLife South Africa, in partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust, has developed *Best Practice Guidelines for Avian Monitoring and Impact Mitigation at Proposed Wind Energy Development Sites*. These

guidelines are based on international best practice and are a key resource used to help minimise the impact of renewable energy developments on birds and their habitats.

BirdLife South Africa, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the South African Wind Energy Association came together to celebrate the launch of the Code of Conduct on World Environment Day (8 June) and Global Wind Day (15 June) by hosting an afternoon of birdwatching. They visited sites in and around Cape Town, including Black River and Rietvlei, where magnificent birds such as flamingos and pelicans could be seen. Keeping the event green, transport was provided by the Green Cab, Cape Town's only carbon neutral transport service.

## **Ends**

### **For further information, please contact:**

BirdLife South Africa: Samantha Ralston, [energy@birdlife.org.za](mailto:energy@birdlife.org.za) (083 673 3948)

Endangered Wildlife Trust: Andrew Pearson, [andrewp@ewt.org.za](mailto:andrewp@ewt.org.za) (074 946 1464)

South African Wind Energy Association: Duncan Ayling, [duncan@sawea.org.za](mailto:duncan@sawea.org.za) (079 498 4844)

### **Notes to Editors:**

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#### **About Birdlife South Africa**

- The vision of BirdLife South Africa is to promote the conservation, research, understanding, observation of and enjoyment of natural birds, and their habitats.
- BirdLife South Africa supports renewable energy production, but renewable energy facilities can have unintended negative impacts on avifauna. BirdLife South Africa's Birds and Renewable Energy Manager, a position sponsored by Investec Capital Markets, works with government and industry to minimise the impact of renewable energy developments on birds and their habitats.
- South Africa has 846 bird species, of which 65 species only occur here and 125 (15%) are listed in *The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland* (Barnes 2000). With one of the highest levels of bird endemism in the world, South Africa has an important obligation to ensure their survival.
- BirdLife South Africa is the largest non-profit bird conservation organization in the country. It relies on donor funding and financial support from the public to carry out its critical conservation work.
- For more information, visit [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za)

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