



**Minutes of the 89<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of BirdLife South Africa held at  
14h30 on Saturday, 10 March 2018 at Club Mykonos, Western Cape**

**1. PRESENT**

Chairman of the Board, Roger Wanless, CEO, Mark D. Anderson, Honorary President, Prof. Colleen Downs. Board Members: Linda Hart, Yvonne Pennington, David Chamberlain, Vernon Head, Philip Calinikos, and Mark Brown. RSPB guest: Dieter Hoffman. Chairman of BirdLife National Trust, David Lawrence. Past Chairpersons: Peter Sullivan, Vernon Head. The Flock 2018 Organising Committee, BirdLife South Africa staff, BirdLife South Africa members who signed the attendance register and Isabel Human.

**2. APOLOGIES**

P Divall, P Steyn, T Zoghby.

**3. WELCOME**

The Chairman, Roger Wanless (RW) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He introduced the BLSA Annual Report, and acknowledged the continuous support from Sappi enabling BLSA to present a professional product to funders, members and supporters.

**3. CONFIRMATION/APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 88<sup>TH</sup> AGM**

The minutes of the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes will be available on the BLSA website.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 88<sup>TH</sup> AGM**

None.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

The Chairman welcomed all present. A special welcome was extended to Dr Dieter Hoffmann, invited guest from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). RW acknowledged the significant contribution and support BLSA has, over time, received from the RSPB. The RSPB's continuous support

enabled BLSA to achieve significant success. RW also welcomed past chairmen attending the 89<sup>th</sup> BLSA AGM, David Lawrence, chairman of the BLNT, all other special guests and their spouses. RW announced that, in 2019, his term as Chairman of the BLSA Board will come to an end. He acknowledged the contribution made by Mark D. Anderson and his team. MDA joining the organisation almost 10 years ago was a watershed moment with exponential progress to follow. RW also honoured the contribution from dedicated BLSA staff and the support received from corporates, bird clubs and members. RW then introduced the BLSA Honorary President, Prof. Colleen Downs, who then delivered the President's address.

## **6. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

Prof. Colleen Downs' presentation centred on the looming Anthropocene which sees a significant decline in species, with some species going extinct. The rest of her talk focussed on species resilience and urban adaptations of especially a few bird species. The change in land use now provide for ecological niches and variation in past behaviour. An example of this is the Woolly-necked Stork, a species which, in KwaZulu-Natal, no longer migrates to Mozambique, as an abundance of food in urban areas now renders this strategy unnecessary. Unfortunately the social reciprocity between humans and birds in urban areas also has a downside, with an increasing incidence of bone deformities in some birds reflecting an unbalanced 'urban' diet.

## **7. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CEO**

RW invited the CEO to deliver his 2017 annual report. MDA thanked RW for all he does for the organisation. He also acknowledged the BLSA Events Manager, Emma Askes, and the *Flock* 2018 & LAB Organising Committee on their organisation of a successful event. MDA made special mention of the loyal support and assistance received from BLSA volunteers, including Gisela Ortner and Mel Tripp. MDA also acknowledged contributions from all BirdLife South Africa staff, interns, Board members, bird club members. He welcomed the Eastern Free State Bird Club representatives, especially as this bird club is the most recent affiliated bird club. MDA then provided an extensive overview of some of BLSA's activities in 2017.

## **8. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT AND AUDITED 2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Tony Zoghby (TZ), BLSA Treasurer was, due to ill health, unable to attend the AGM. Fanie du Plessis (FdP), BLSA's Finance and Operations Manager, presented the report. BLSA once again managed to

end the financial year with a marginal surplus. On request, by a show of hands, the Treasurer's report was adopted by the members attending the 89<sup>th</sup> BLSA AGM.

#### **9. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

RW explained to members the consolidated stance of the BLSA Board supporting the decision of members at the 2017 BLSA AGM re-appointing KPMG as auditors to the organisation. Despite concerning media reports, the Board decided against acting hastily in replacing KPMG as external auditors to BLSA. Their support and professional service to BLSA is valuable, and the Board decided to maintain the status quo. The BLSA Board will continue to monitor the situation and reevaluate if necessary. RW then, by show of hands, requested a vote in support of re-appointing KPMG as external auditors for 2018. The appointment was confirmed.

#### **10. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

There were no vacant positions.

#### **11. LAUNCHES OF BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA INITIATIVES AND PUBLICATIONS**

Five new BLSA initiatives and publications were launched. Hanneline Smit-Robinson (HSR) introduced the Afrikaans and English version of the BLSA Checklists, available for free download on the BLSA website. She thanked Dr Chris Lotz and other members of the BirdLife South Africa List Committee. HSR also announced the launch of a fundraiser challenge to establish a breeding facility for the White-winged Flufftail at the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria. The fundraiser, Kruger Birding and Wildlife Challenge, will take place in the Kruger National Park from 6- 15 February 2019. Information is available on the BLSA website.

Ernst Retief, on behalf of Dale Wright, presented two new publications, firstly a publication focussing on the Endemic Birds of the Fynbos Biome. The second publication focussed on the establishment of Floating Wetlands in the Western Cape. Both publications are available for download on the BLSA website.

Martin Taylor (MT) announced the State of South Africa's Bird Report 2018, and he mentioned that, through the report, we aimed to reach key decision and policy makers. Visually appealing infographics were incorporated in the report. MT thanked the funders of the report as well as all who have provided case study information.

Dr Mark Brown (MB) shared some of the activities associated with Bird of the Year 2018, the African Black Oystercatcher. A series of info fact sheets and lesson plans are being developed and are available for free distribution. There has been significant brand development around this initiative, with "Rocky" (fluffy toy) being a popular brand ambassador for Bird of the Year. Bird of the Year 2019 will be announced at a later stage.

## **12. RESOLUTIONS**

No resolutions were tabled.

## **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

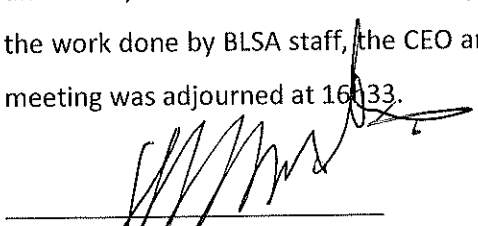
Dr Dieter Hoffman (DH) of the RSPB addressed the meeting. He acknowledged and praised BLSA for all of its achievements. With BLSA being so successful, it may result in the end of capacity development support from the RSPB and, in future, BLSA will be supported to enable it to provide greater regional and international inputs. He presented the meeting with a brief overview touching on topics such as RSPB strategic themes, certain initiatives and the importance of and focus on the East Atlantic Flyway for the RSPB. He also shared video footage complementing his talk on the RSPB's lengthy involvement with forest conservation in Sumatra. Prof Downs presented DH with a small token of appreciation.

## **14. GILL MEMORIAL MEDAL AWARD 2018**

RW announced that the award committee decided not to award a Gill Memorial Medal in 2018.

## **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

MDA provided the meeting with additional information about *Flock 2019*, such as it being a smaller event hosted in Johannesburg. The intention, as a special highlight, is to invite a prominent international speaker. MDA is soon to meet with the management of MSC concerning a possible future *Flock at Sea*. MDA invited members to the AGM dinner. There being no other business for discussion, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending. A special motion of acknowledgement for the work done by BLSA staff, the CEO and Board was offered by a member attending the AGM. The meeting was adjourned at 16:33.

  
Signed by Mr Roger Wanless, Chairman of BirdLife South Africa's Board of Directors