




BirdLife
SOUTH AFRICA

Giving Conservation Wings

ANNUAL
REPORT
2012

Chairman's message

2012 was a good year for BirdLife South Africa. Our organisation keeps building on its successes; we are evolving, not changing, and this is a clear sign that we have a good understanding of our important role in conserving South Africa's wild birds and their habitats.



Our identity, as a champion of conservation, has emerged from a dedicated analysis of the challenges we face. It has been a thorough process, with the Important Bird Areas Programme forming the core of our strategy. The growth of this programme in 2012 is probably our single biggest achievement. Our Seabird Division continues to produce world-class results, unprecedented in pelagic bird conservation, and the expansion of this team of dedicated scientists in 2012 is loud affirmation of their international status and successes.

The conservation work cannot be done without funding, and as a result of our powerful marketing campaigns, corporate South Africa has stepped forward to partner us in our work and with great generosity. In particular, we are sincerely grateful to Graham Warsop and his team at The Jupiter Drawing

Room (Utopia) for the creative excellence they have delivered in shaping our marketing message. We are hugely thankful for the support from Continental Outdoor Media and its CEO, Barry Sayer, and today massive billboard exposure shines across the length and breadth of the country.

The launch of our very own magazine *African Birdlife* towards the end of 2012 is a vivid reflection of the spirit and image of our organisation: dedicated; tangible; unique; winning.

It is indeed a singular honour to be part of this organisation, and I would like to thank Mark Anderson for his leadership and dedication. I would also like to extend a personal thank you (on behalf of the membership) to our Executive Committee, Council members, staff and volunteers. BirdLife South Africa is a very special team of professionals and volunteers, and we can't do it without each other. I do believe we are giving conservation resoundingly powerful wings.

Vernon R. L. Head
Chairman

Chief Executive Officer's report

The past year was another successful year for BirdLife South Africa with the organisation continuing to grow in relevance and importance as one of Africa's top conservation NGOs.

Importantly, the return to profitability in past years has been maintained with a net income from operations of R465 767 having been achieved in 2012. This can be attributed to BirdLife South Africa's excellent financial management and the support of a growing number of donors. These donors include 28 Golden Bird Patrons, 33 Corporate Members, and The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust. We have also been successful in securing 3-5 year funding for a number of positions, including for four Regional Conservation Managers, the IBA Programme Manager, the Birds & Renewable Energy Manager, and the Coastal Seabirds Conservation Manager. We use vehicles sponsored by AVIS, Honda, Knysna Toyota and Mazda Wildlife Fund. The long-term financial sustainability of BirdLife South Africa is one of our priorities, and hence we have established the BirdLife National Trust and we actively promote our Legacy Programme.

During the past year, BirdLife South Africa has continued to make great strides with its various conservation programmes. The reduction of accidental seabird mortalities in the trawl and longline fisheries has resulted in us receiving global acclaim. With funding from the Charl vd Merwe Trust, we established the Coastal Seabird Conservation Manager position and, as a result, have expanded our African Penguin research and conservation work. The terrestrial bird conservation work



continues to grow, and we now have projects on the Southern Bald Ibis, Secretarybird, White-bellied Korhaan, grassland birds, and vultures. Through the Preventing Extinction Programme, we have managed to recruit Species Champions for the African Penguin, Secretarybird, Southern Bald Ibis, Taita Falcon and White-winged Flufftail. Species Guardians were recruited for Black Harrier, Southern Ground Hornbill and Taita Falcon.

BirdLife South Africa continues to make proactive contributions to reducing the potential impact of renewable energy developments on birds, and this is being made possible through the Investec funded Birds & Renewable Energy Position. A sensitivity map, monitoring guidelines and extensive discussion with the various role players will contribute to fewer birds being killed by these structures. Through our Policy and Advocacy work, we participated on a number of national fora because of our established relationships

with various government departments. As a result we were able to constructively engage with relevant departments about important threats to bird species and habitats. Our policy influence also extends beyond the South African borders, as our Policy & Advocacy Manager is Vice-Chair of the BirdLife International Africa Policy & Advocacy Working Group (APAWG). This working group plays a critical role in ensuring that the BirdLife Africa Partnership fulfils its obligations set out in a range of multilateral environmental agreements.

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme received a major boost after substantial funding was received from the Namaqua Foundation, Mitsui & Co and Trecor for the revision of the IBA network and directory. The IBA Regional Conservation Managers have reviewed the habitat and species status, threats and conservation action of 40% of our country's IBAs. These assessments are allowing us to prioritise IBAs for conservation action. The IBA pages on our website, with detailed information and maps for each IBA, is now accessible to the public and conservation planners.

BirdLife South Africa's conservation work is determined using scientific criteria, so we focus our efforts on our country's most threatened species and most important IBAs. Our members contribute valuable data to various Animal Demography Unit bird monitoring projects and these data are used to monitor changes in abundance and distribution of our country's birds. The two Southern African Bird Atlas Projects for example have provided invaluable information for the revision of *The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*.

Although our geographical focus is South Africa, we are now undertaking an increasing



BirdLife South Africa is undertaking a number of research and conservation projects on the globally Vulnerable Secretarybird.

number of projects elsewhere in southern Africa. We are helping to establish a bird conservation NGO in Mozambique, supporting efforts to protect forests and endemic birds in Angola, engaging with various role players about proposed wind farms in Lesotho which we believe will have serious detrimental impacts on Cape and Bearded vultures, and undertaking a survey to determine the status of and threats to vultures in sub-Saharan Africa.

BirdLife South Africa is becoming increasingly well known, and this translates into more awareness about birds and bird conservation, an increase in our membership base, and ultimately more funding for our important work. The increased awareness is not only achieved through the work of our Marketing Committee, but importantly with the assistance of the creative geniuses at The Jupiter Drawing Room (Utopia). Continental Outdoor Media has been very generous in providing us with billboards at airports, shopping centres and along South Africa's roads.

We continue to host a number of professional and elegant events, and during 2012 these included the Save our Seabirds Festival, Sasol Birds & Birding Fair, Owl Awards, IBA Golf

Day, In the Pink evening on Valentine's Day, Flock 2012 and Ornithological Conference, and three Golden Bird Patron events.

BirdLife South Africa communicates with its members and the public using a variety of media, including the bi-monthly *African Birdlife* magazine, monthly e-newsletters, our two websites (www.birdlife.org.za and www.birdingroutes.co.za), Facebook, presentations to bird clubs and other groups, magazine and newspaper articles, and radio and television interviews. The first issue of *African Birdlife* was published at the end of 2012, and we are very pleased with the product.

BirdLife South Africa's success is attributed to the work of a dedicated and hard-working team, with the combined contributions of our organisation's staff, volunteers, members, bird clubs, and donors ensuring that we are giving conservation wings.

Mark D. Anderson
Chief Executive Officer

Ten highlights during 2012

- Production of the first issue of the bi-monthly *African Birdlife* magazine.
- Significant reduction in albatross mortalities in the trawl and longline fisheries.
- Funding through the Preventing Extinctions Programme for conservation work on Secretarybird, Southern Bald Ibis, Taita Falcon and White-winged Flufftail.
- The increasing presence of the Important Bird Areas Programme across critical biomes and regions by way of Regional Conservation Managers.
- Very successful events, including Save our Seabirds Festival, In the Pink, Owl Awards, Important Bird Areas Golf Day, Sasol Birds & Birding Fair, and Golden Bird Patron functions.
- Excellent marketing, publicity and exposure through a variety of media, including billboards at airports.
- Successful Flock 2012 and Ornithological Conference in Port Elizabeth.
- Improved financial sustainability through funding from Golden Bird Patrons and Corporate Members, and through the promotion of the Legacy Programme and the BirdLife National Trust.
- Funding for a number of positions, including four Regional Conservation Managers, Coastal Seabird Conservation, IBA Programme manager, and Birds & Renewable Energy.
- Success of the bird guide programme, where trained guides are making a living through bird guiding and offering a valuable service to birdwatchers.

Conserving terrestrial birds

Threatened species conservation

With a focus on the conservation of threatened terrestrial birds in South Africa, there was a remarkable growth in the suite of projects during 2012. These include research and conservation projects on White-winged Flufftail, Secretarybird, Taita Falcon and Africa's vultures. Additionally, three PhD projects with a grassland focus are underway: David Maphisa is developing a management plan that will benefit birds in the high altitude grasslands, while Kate Henderson is studying the endemic Southern Bald Ibis; and Dewald du Plessis's project includes research on the biology, taxonomy and conservation of the White-bellied Korhaan. Our prioritisation follows a scientific approach which identifies bird species which are in most urgent need of conservation attention.

Much time is spent raising money for these conservation projects. Fundraising events included a gala dinner at the Johannesburg Country Club for the White-bellied Korhaan project, and an initiative on Secretary's Day in September where bosses were encouraged to donate money to Secretarybird research and conservation.

Eskom sponsors the Ingula Project, a Partnership between Eskom, BirdLife South Africa and the Middelpunt Wetland Trust and, in addition, has signed up as the BirdLife Species Champion for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail and the Vulnerable Southern Bald Ibis.

A highlight of the year was the appointment in August of Samantha Ralston-Paton as the Birds and Renewable Energy Manager, a position sponsored by Investec Capital Markets. This position will ensure that the impacts of renewable energy facilities on birds are adequately assessed and mitigated and that monitoring, which is undertaken in accordance with international best practice, informs both project-specific mitigation and future decisions.

Red Data Book revision

BirdLife South Africa, in partnership with the Animal Demography Unit, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Endangered Wildlife Trust and South African National Biodiversity Institute, initiated a revision in 2012 of *The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland* (Barnes 2000). The regional Red List, to be launched in April 2013, will be an updated and peer-reviewed conservation status assessment of the region's 854 bird species and will greatly assist us in identifying priority species for national recovery programmes. Additionally the information in the book will be widely used in land-use and conservation planning, protected area management, and strategic environmental impact assessments throughout the region.



Albert Froneman

The Bearded Vulture will be listed as Critically Endangered in the 2013 Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Birds and renewable energy

Certain renewable energy projects can have negative impacts on birds. These include mortality through collisions, displacement and disturbance. BirdLife South Africa supports the responsible development of a renewable energy industry in South Africa and is proactively working to help minimise the impacts of renewable energy on birds.

We have developed a number of resources including an Avian Wind Farm Sensitivity Map and Best Practice Guidelines for Avian Monitoring at Proposed Wind Energy Sites (both were developed in partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust). BirdLife South Africa has also developed guidelines for solar facilities. The Birds and Renewable Energy Manager has been ensuring that government, developers and other stakeholders understand and use these resources.

We are actively involved in opposing proposed wind energy developments in Lesotho, which will almost certainly have a significant negative impact on the populations of Bearded and Cape vultures in this area.

Construction of the first round of projects in the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme is set to begin early in 2013. BirdLife South Africa is eager to learn as much as possible from these pioneering projects.



Samantha Ralston-Paton

Saving the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail

The White-winged Flufftail is restricted to a few high-altitude marshes, has a very small population and has specific habitat requirements. It also has a highly fragmented distribution and is severely threatened by habitat destruction, especially through mining. The White-winged Flufftail is only known to occur at highland marshes near Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and almost 4000 km to the south in eastern South Africa.

During 2012, BirdLife South Africa took over the administration of the Middelpunt Wetland Trust which, for the past 20 years, has been responsible for studying and conserving this threatened flufftail. Research activities on the species have begun and include genetic studies, surveys of suitable wetland habitat, and the construction of a facility at the Johannesburg Zoo where the species' biology will be studied. The year ended on a high note, with a White-winged Flufftail being seen during a survey in the upper wetland at Ingula near Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal.



Warwick Tarboton

Preventing bird extinctions

Our organisation is actively promoting the Preventing Extinctions Programme in South Africa, especially as we secure funding through Species Champions for research and conservation of globally threatened birds. Species Champions are individuals or organisations that provide financial support for the conservation of threatened birds. BirdLife South Africa currently has six Species Champions, four of which joined in the second half of 2012:

- **Airports Company South Africa SOC Ltd:** Secretarybird.
- **Eskom:** Southern Bald Ibis.
- **Eskom:** White-winged Flufftail.
- **Palabora Mining Company:** Taita Falcon.
- **Petra Diamond Mines:** Secretarybird.
- **The Charl van der Merwe Trust:** African Penguin.

There are currently three Species Guardians, two of which joined in the second half of 2012. Species Guardians are individuals or organisations responsible for the conservation, research activities and action plan for a globally threatened species.

- **Mabula Ground Hornbill Project:** Southern Ground Hornbill.
- **Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town:** Black Harrier.
- **SA Taita Falcon Survey Team:** Taita Falcon.



PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS



Taita Falcon conservation: Rise of the Guardians

The 2012 survey represents the sixth year of data collection on the regional Taita Falcon population. Only eight breeding pairs are known in South Africa. The SA Taita Falcon survey team continues to evaluate the size and breeding success of the Taita Falcon population, thereby gaining a better understanding of competition with other raptors, prey availability, hunting success and habitat preferences. Ongoing surveys will help answer many of the questions in order to better support the conservation of the species.



Hanneline Smit-Robinson

The annual Taita Falcon survey takes place in the Blyde Canyon area, Mpumalanga Drakensberg Mountains.

Secretarybird conservation: 'Spyker'

In the past 18 months we have initiated a number of research, conservation and awareness projects on the Secretarybird in the grasslands.

The highlight of the project during 2012 was the fitting of a tracking device on 'Spyker' in the southern Free State grasslands and the valuable information we received on this bird's movements after it left the nest. During 2013/14 we will fit tracking devices to both fledgling and adult Secretarybirds in order to obtain information which will contribute to the conservation of this Vulnerable species whose numbers have declined during recent years.

The Secretarybird project is sponsored by two Species Champions (Petra Diamond Mines and the Airports Company South Africa SOC Ltd) as well as BirdLife Sandton, BirdLife Northern Gauteng, Secretary's Day donations and various other donors.



Albert Froneman

Conserving seabirds

Seabird conservation – breaking new ground

Although 'breaking new ground' is a quintessentially terrestrial idiom, it encapsulates 2012 very well. Generous benefactors have ensured that the amazing work of the Seabird Division has grown considerably throughout the year. The ongoing support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), which funds four positions for the Albatross Task Force, is the mainstay of the division. In addition, the Charl van der Merwe Trust increased its support for the African Penguin Species Champion Project, including funding a full-time position. The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust supported our annual Save Our Seabirds Festival, taking the public interactions to a new level. Last but not least, Knysna Toyota powered the division with a shiny, branded Toyota bakkie.



The Albatross Task Force and Seabird Division Manager proudly show-off their newly sponsored vehicle from Knysna Toyota.

From local...

The Albatross Task Force (ATF) is a grassroots project. We put warm bodies on boats, in training venues and in boardrooms to engage with, help, convince, and lobby selected fisheries to conserve seabirds. The results in six years (starting from scratch) have been nothing short of astonishing. In late-2012 our ATF leader Bronwyn Maree submitted a scientific paper to the most prestigious international conservation journal in science – *Conservation Biology*. In the paper she and co-authors describe how, over five years, the ATF solution to seabird bycatch in the hake trawl fishery has resulted in mortality levels dropping from in excess of 10 000 birds a year to virtually nothing.

Building on earlier research work, Tshikana Rasehlomi completed two research trials of new technologies for tuna longline fishing. The Safe Lead and Hook Pod devices look set to change the way longline fishing is conducted. Globally, moves towards responsible fishing will make

these new technologies increasingly attractive to fishermen as they seek to avoid seabirds during regular fishing.

Singular praise for and acknowledgement of this team's amazing work came in the form of a top-10 placing for Bronwyn Maree in the very competitive 'Future for Nature Awards' international competition. Her nomination received high praise from the judges, and an invitation to compete in the 2013 process. Of course it is a collaborative effort, with massive support from the Global Seabird Programme structures and within BirdLife South Africa. But Bronwyn's leadership deserves this sort of recognition...so good luck!

...to global

One of the challenges facing the Global Seabird Programme has been to scale up from the very successful, but very resource-intensive ATF model to global longline fisheries. The high seas are where many seabirds continue to die on longline hooks, but there is no funding anywhere that can support ATF-style engagements in the gigantic Asian longline fleets. However, we are uniquely positioned to assist with that scaling up process. Ross Wanless, our Seabird Division Manager, manages South Africa's and Namibia's ATF teams, and also represents BirdLife International at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), where governments meet to set the rules for tuna fishing in the entire ocean basin. The ATF's research and practical experience came to the fore in April 2012, when the IOTC was negotiating to strengthen significantly the rules around longline fishing, so that seabirds would be better protected. Korea, a major fishing nation, could not agree to the new measures. After a particularly difficult session of the meeting, Ross Wanless invited the Korean delegation to discuss their concerns. A deal was struck after the delegation agreed to collaborate with BirdLife International and have an ATF instructor assist them in developing solutions that fitted Korean fishing practices and IOTC rules. The new measure was passed at IOTC, followed a few months later by the body that manages western Pacific tuna fishing.

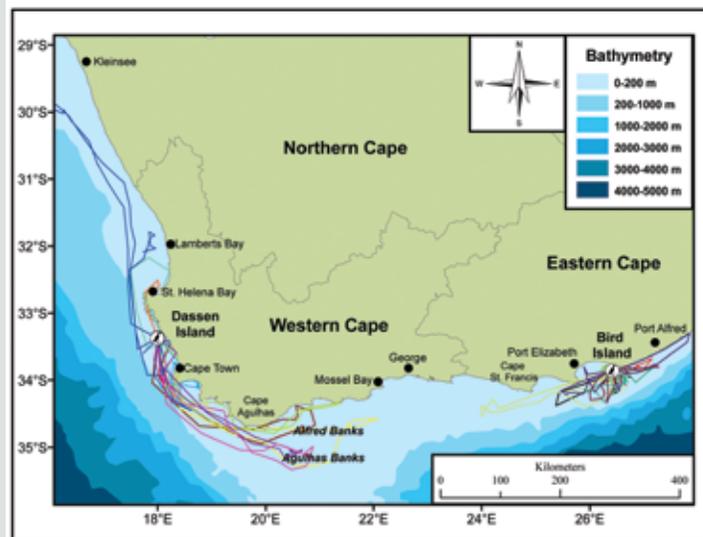
In the space of a few months the inconceivable has become reality. Not only have new, vastly improved conservation measures been passed at IOTC and their equivalents in the Atlantic and western Pacific, but BirdLife International is now collaborating with nations to assist with fleet-wide changes to fishing practices. This is a highly significant outcome. A non-governmental organisation has never before been invited to conduct research in the secretive, closeted and highly distrusting world of tuna longline fisheries on the high seas. In November, BirdLife South Africa and the RSPB were invited to Korea to meet with the government and fisheries representatives, where they ironed out a collaborative research agreement. In mid-January we received notification that the Korean government has agreed to support this collaborative research, and we will be placing an ATF instructor on a commercial Bluefin tuna vessel in April! Fleet-wide adoption of Best Practice seabird bycatch mitigation measures has been a significant hurdle, but for the first time since the Global Seabird Programme came into existence, we are close to clearing it. Several similarly big hurdles remain, such as to ensure compliance, and deal with non-compliance! But the linkages between the grassroots ATF work and global policy development are starting to show important advances.

Keeping track of penguins

Where do African Penguins go when they are not breeding? This may sound like the opening line to a joke, but currently it is a fascinating scientific question. Christina Moseley was appointed as Coastal Seabirds Conservation Manager during the year, a position funded by the Charl van der Merwe Trust. With Christina at the helm, we launched a very exciting project to answer that question. Without the answers, we cannot help protect non-breeding African Penguins as we have no idea where they are, and what threats they are facing.

Our project aims to find out where the penguins go once they have finished breeding, by attaching small satellite transmitters to them. The post-breeding period is crucial because they need to fatten up to survive two weeks of moult. During the moult, they stay on land, do not eat, and replace all their feathers. If lucky they only lose 50% of their body weight. By knowing if they stay close to their breeding islands or travel away from them, we can see if they are likely to come into competition for food with the sardine and anchovy fishery. With this knowledge, we can consider implementing special management areas.

In September 2012, Dr Lorien Pichegru and Christina Moseley deployed 10 satellite transmitters on penguins at Bird Island, Eastern Cape. Simultaneously, Ross Wanless and Craig Harding, a Conservation Biology Masters student from the University of Cape Town, deployed 10 devices on birds at Dassen Island, Western Cape. The satellite transmitters, which weigh only 40 g and are about the size of a matchbox, are attached to the backs of the penguins using special tape and strong superglue. The battery is expected to last for about 100 days.



Tracks of 20 non-breeding African Penguins fitted with satellite transmitters. Penguins from the west coast colony (Dassen Island) travelled on average twice as far over the tracking period and covered three times the distance per day as those from the east coast colony (Bird Island). This difference is likely to be due to differences in fish availability near the colonies. Map by Craig Harding.

The penguins stayed at sea for varying periods, with the longest staying out for more than 70 days. The penguins from Dassen Island moved the furthest from their colony, with one of them taking a round trip of over 1000 km to the border with Namibia and back. Several from Dassen Island also swam around Cape Agulhas to near Mossel Bay! The penguins from Bird Island stayed closer to their colony, moving on average 80 km from the colony before returning. The data collected so far suggest that there is a consistent supply of fish around Bird Island, whereas penguins from Dassen Island had a harder time finding food. Penguins from Dassen Island that returned to moult in the shortest time also went to areas with low fishing pressure, but it is too soon to know if this is significant or coincidental.



Albert Froneman

Craig Harding is collating the penguins' tracks and overlaying them onto fish abundance and fish catch data. With these results we will be able to see if the birds and fishermen use similar areas, and with a few more years this project should provide critical and robust insights into potential fisheries-penguin competition or overlaps.

This project is funded by the Charl van der Merwe Trust, Mohammed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology.



Chris Fallows

Protecting sites and habitats

Protecting South Africa's Important Bird Areas

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme's four Regional Conservation Managers assessed 47 (38%) of South Africa's 124 IBAs. The information from these assessments will enable us to publish the first ever South African IBA Status and Trends report in 2013. Conservation actions have been proposed for the IBAs where assessments have been completed.

Regional Conservation Committees were established during the year for the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo, Gauteng and North West. These committees assist with IBA assessments and are thus responsible for quality control of all IBA assessments.

The boundaries of many IBAs were also adjusted, most notably for Magaliesberg, Suikerbosrand, Steenkampsberg and the Grasslands IBAs. The reasons were either to align the boundaries with more sensible management planning, to include additional important areas, or to incorporate other conservation priority areas. Through the above processes, two neighbouring IBAs were incorporated into the Grasslands IBA. The Middle Vaal River IBA was delisted as an IBA because the IBA trigger species, the White-backed Night Heron, no longer occurs there and there was no chance of rehabilitating the habitat suitably. The result is that South Africa's number of IBAs was reduced to 121.



IBA team at the Frontiers in South African Ornithology Conference.

During 2012, Regional Conservation Managers also focused on making contact with a number of role players in their respective regions, including NGOs, private businesses, landowners, bird clubs and government, to explain the purpose of the IBA Programme and explore areas of collaboration. Most organisations have embraced the principles of the IBA Programme and it was especially good to hear that the relevant provincial governments will feed the IBA network into their conservation plans. Securing additional funding during 2012 from Mitsui & Co, Namaqua Foundation, and Trecor has ensured that 2013 will be a productive year for the IBA Programme.

IBA information technology

One of the highlights of 2012 was the uploading of the 124 IBA texts onto the BirdLife South Africa website (www.birdlife.org.za), which means that the updated 1998 IBA Directory texts are now available to the general public. Each IBA page provides information about the status of the IBA, descriptions of the area and relevant key species, a Google Earth map of the IBA, a list of key species and a list of conservation actions and threats. These pages will be updated on a continuous basis as IBA assessments are completed.

During 2012 the IBA team checked the boundaries of the IBAs and, where necessary, updated the GIS shapefiles for the country's IBAs. An updated version of the shapefiles is available on the BirdLife South Africa website and will be forwarded to the South African National Biodiversity Institute, government and other role players.

The IBA pages on the BirdLife South Africa website have been completely revamped and updated. For example, a background page of the IBA Programme, pages for each region, downloadable documents and a promotional video are available.



Securing grassland IBAs through the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme

With only 2.8% of the Grassland Biome formally conserved, innovative alternatives for securing grassland Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are needed. Biodiversity Stewardship aims to bring private and communally-owned land into voluntary contractual agreements that afford legal protected area status to sites of critical biodiversity importance. BirdLife South Africa's Regional Conservation Managers are driving Biodiversity Stewardship in several grassland IBAs, primarily Chrissiesmeer and Middelpunt-Lakenvlei (Mpumalanga), Memel (north eastern Free State) and Tillietudlem (KwaZulu-Natal Midlands).

In the Chrissie Pans IBA, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, BirdLife South Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust achieved their Phase 1 target of 58 100 ha assessed by March 2012. While the Chrissiesmeer Protected Environment Landowner Association and Management Authority was being established, we turned our attention to emergency proclamation of the Middelpunt-Lakenvlei wetland complex, which is under a pressing threat from mining. This irreplaceable site of 16 000 ha within the Steenkampsberg IBA supports both the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail and breeding Wattled Crane. With funding from WWF Nedbank Green Trust, Charmaine Uys focussed attention on the "absentee" landowners, mostly living in Gauteng. By year-end, she had completed initial assessment interviews with 12 landowners and received signed consent forms from the majority.

The Memel Protected Environment in the Grasslands IBA is a collective effort of BirdLife South Africa, WWF-SA, and Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs. The team completed initial field assessments on 38 472 ha of farmland in April 2012. The review panel has met, a draft motivation document has been written, and consent forms sent to qualifying landowners who have shown commitment. Several of these farms boast all three South African crane species, Rudd's Lark, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Southern Bald Ibis and other threatened species on which we focus conservation action.

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and Mr Price Group Limited financed Nick Theron's Regional Conservation work to support Biodiversity Stewardship at Tillietudlem in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. This tranquil 2 000 ha property falls within the KZN Mistbelt Grassland IBA and qualifies for Nature Reserve, the top category in the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, with important species such as Oribi, Blue Crane, Cape Parrot and Blue Swallow occurring there. Positive negotiations with the landowner continued, various biodiversity and veld condition assessments were conducted, and the management plan drafted. The management plan is nearing completion and we are set to achieve our goal of officially declaring the property by mid-2013. Nick also visited the other mistbelt grassland patches in southern KZN in an effort to reassess this fragmented Mistbelt Grassland IBA.

Conserving endemic birds in the Fynbos Biome

With support from the Rupert Natuurstigting and WWF-SA Table Mountain Fund, BirdLife South Africa appointed Dale Wright to the position of Western Cape Regional Conservation Manager. This illustrated our intention to become more involved in the conservation of the Fynbos Biome – a global Biodiversity Hotspot.

The Fynbos Biome hosts over 9600 different species of plants, making it one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. Additionally, the area is a recognised Endemic Bird Area, and hosts at least 20 range-restricted and biome-restricted species, including six true biome endemics. These species, such as the Cape Sugarbird and the Orange-breasted Sunbird, occur nowhere else in the world and thus the onus to ensure these species' survival is on BirdLife South Africa and our partners.



Cape Sugarbird perching on a Pincushion (Leucospermum sp).

The habitat of the endemic bird species is mostly in the high altitude Cape Fold Mountains and other areas of pristine fynbos. Seven of the 24 IBAs of the Western Cape include a number of these fynbos mountain ranges, such as the Swartberg and southern Langeberg.

Recognising the multiple threats facing these species, primarily climate change and habitat loss due to alien plant infestations and land transformation, BirdLife South Africa partnered with Dr Alan Lee on the Fynbos Endemic Birds and Climate Change post-doctoral research project. This research is focused on determining the current population sizes, abundance and dispersal patterns of the six fynbos endemics in order to predict potential responses to climate change. Dale completed four of the seven IBA assessments for the fynbos specific IBAs, with assistance from Dr Lee. Using the scientific information from Dr Lee's research and IBA assessments, BirdLife South Africa, with its partners, in particular CapeNature, will identify priority areas for the conservation of our fynbos endemic birds and develop detailed conservation plans for these species during 2013.

During 2012, awareness raising activities (for example, bird club talks, popular articles and the Intaka Bird Festival) and representation at key scientific conferences such as the Fynbos Forum, went a long way to increasing the profile of birds and bird conservation in the Western Cape.

The role of advocacy in protecting IBAs against unsustainable development

Advocacy remains a critically important tool in protecting IBAs around South Africa from unsustainable development. The past year has presented many challenges with a major increase in mining and renewable energy applications around the country. Our Policy & Advocacy strategy therefore includes interacting with government departments directly on compliance and policy issues while participating in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and mining applications that threaten our IBAs.

The “Save Mapungubwe” campaign remains a priority on BirdLife South Africa’s Policy & Advocacy agenda and a strategic decision was taken at the end of 2012 by the “Save Mapungubwe” Coalition to withdraw from direct engagement with CoAL of Africa and to become members of the Vele Colliery Environmental Management Committee (EMC). The EMC plays a very important role when it comes to monitoring CoAL of Africa’s compliance with all existing licences and where necessary, the EMC has the mandate to apply legal pressure on CoAL of Africa to toe the line while continuing with their mining operations, thereby minimising the impact of mining on the immediate and broader environment.



Regionally, BirdLife South Africa plays a very important role in advising the BirdLife Africa Partnership on policy and advocacy matters within the Africa region. In March 2012 our staff were nominated to key positions on the BirdLife Africa Policy & Advocacy Working Group (APAWG).

BirdLife South Africa remains thankful to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) for the continued financial and technical support of the BirdLife South Africa Policy & Advocacy position since August 2006.

Assisting people

Hosting professional events

A number of successful events were held. Bird of the Year 2012 was the African Fish-Eagle and this eagle, other raptors and wetland conservation were therefore the theme of the Sasol Birds & Birding Fair which was held at the Johannesburg Zoo in May. For Bird of the Year, we also developed a poster, resources for schools and pin badges.

A very enjoyable and well attended “In the Pink” event, co-hosted by the Everard Read Gallery and Charles Greig Jewellers, was held at CIRCA on Jellicoe in Johannesburg on Valentine’s Day. Flock 2012 was held in Port Elizabeth in March, and this year it was coupled to a two-day ornithological conference which we co-hosted with UCT’s Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology.

Three Golden Bird Patron functions were held during the year, at The Oysterbox Hotel in Durban, at The Westcliff Hotel in Johannesburg and at L’Ormarins near Franschhoek. At these functions we presented framed original bird paintings, certificates and gold pins to our growing number of Golden Bird Patrons.

The annual Owl Awards was held at the Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, in August. This event gives us the opportunity to acknowledge people, organisations and companies who have made meaningful contributions to BirdLife South Africa and to bird conservation. Each recipient received a beautiful bronze Barn Owl sculpture and an elegant certificate, both kindly sponsored by Charles Greig Jewellers. For the first time, an Owlet Award was presented and this was given to Kayla Boix-Witts for her efforts to raise awareness of and funds for African Penguin conservation.



We were a beneficiary of the funds raised at the popular Beechwood Gardens Open Days. This beautiful garden, the home of Christopher and Susan Greig, is opened to the public in October. We were able to share information about our bird conservation work and promote our new magazine *African Birdlife* to hundreds of visitors.

More than 500 birdwatchers took part in Birding Big Day on 24 November, an event that creates awareness about wild birds and their habitats, and raises funds for our organisation.

Save Our Seabirds Festival

The 2012 Save Our Seabirds (SOS) Festival built on existing partnerships and collaborations to bring educational programmes and awareness about marine conservation to a broad spectrum of society. The sensational and inspirational creative work of the Jupiter Drawing Room (Utopia) again provided eye-catching and content-rich material to deliver powerful messages. Oryx Worldwide Photographic Expeditions and One Ocean Expeditions sponsored the main prize for the Oceans of Life Photographic Competition – a trip for two to Antarctica, worth \$17 000. This provided strong motivation for top photographers to submit their amazing images, and once again the exhibition at Iziko South African Museum looked spectacular. It was the support of The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, however, that allowed us to put together an even more impressive and professional set of events. The online interface for the photo competition and festival website got a facelift and powerful new engine to drive it. But it was support from the Trust, together with the Department of Environmental Affairs, which allowed us to put on a Freshlyground concert at the V&A Waterfront. This broke new ground for the Festival and exposed our conservation brand and key messages to a whole new demographic.



Mike Kendrick;
www.mikekendrickphotography.co.uk

Freshlyground, one of South Africa's top bands, at the 2012 Save our Seabirds Festival at the V&A Waterfront.

World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day celebrations (2012): This is an annual, international celebration highlighting the significance of wetlands globally and BirdLife South Africa coordinates World Wetlands Day activities in many parts of South Africa each year with local schools and communities.



Martin Taylor

Avitourism development

BirdLife South Africa remains committed to developing the birding tourism sector in South Africa. Not only is the sector worth over R1 billion per year to the national economy, but it is also an important tool in our efforts to raise the profile of birds and their habitats as well as an opportunity to provide members of local communities adjacent to IBAs with much needed job opportunities.



Peter Chadwick

Junior Gabela and Sakhamuzi Mhlongo, two community bird guides who were trained by BirdLife South Africa.

In 2012, we continued with our work of developing birding tourism through various partnerships at different levels. On a national level, we collaborated with the Department of Tourism to produce a National Strategic Development Plan for Birding Tourism and, at a provincial level, assisted the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development and Tourism in incorporating birding tourism into their 2012 KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Strategy. On a district level, we worked with the Sedibeng District Municipality to develop and launch the Vaal Birding Route. BirdLife South Africa was represented by Martin Taylor on the Board of Directors of the N3 Gateway Tourism Association, which is one of the largest tourism bodies in South Africa, representing tourism associations, operators and accommodation establishments in Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

Although a large amount of work went into building of strategic partnerships and route development, the majority of our work happened at a grassroots level with the Sasol Community Bird Guide Programme. We held two bird guide mentoring courses and these focused on improving the skills of local guides. We worked on getting guides involved in the stewardship of the sites that they depend on for their living. Themba Mthembu, Bheki Mbonambi and Bheki Nyandeni from the Zululand area are assisting the IBA Programme by undertaking monitoring in the Western Shores region of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park while Bonginkosi Ndaba has made a considerable impact with his Nakekela Education Programme in Van Reenen, Free State. Samson Mulaudzi and Christopher Nethonzhe, guides in the northern parts of our country, received an Owl Award for their contributions to conservation and environmental education projects in Limpopo. The positive impact that the guides are having amongst local communities cannot be underestimated and this programme has the potential to grow into one of our most effective conservation tools.

Throughout 2012, we assisted domestic and international birdwatchers with advice on self-drive itineraries and promoted birding events around the country. We are consolidating our Birder Friendly Establishment Programme and, in 2013, will be offering an improved service to our members. The outlook for birding tourism in South Africa is exceptionally positive and BirdLife South Africa is looking forward to continuing to assist national government and stakeholders in the development of this sector in 2013.

Access to bird hides for people who are mobility impaired

BirdLife South Africa assessed 34 bird hide facilities in Gauteng to determine to what extent they make provision for people who are mobility impaired. This assessment will form the basis for a brochure which will detail how to build bird hides. Funding for this project as well as part funding for the building of a bird hide, viewing deck and toilet at Moreletakloof Nature Reserve in Pretoria was provided by Rand Merchant Bank.



Chris Patton provided advice on the assessment process, including at the bird hide at Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Pretoria.

Mpumalanga Feeding Through Greening project

We have been implementing the Mpumalanga Feeding through Greening Project (MPUFTG) at three sites in southern Mpumalanga. The work is being conducted in partnership with Eskom, the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism and the Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). The project aims are to provide green belts between newly completed low cost housing, to assist in mitigating the impacts of climate change, to provide employment and income opportunities, and to provide capacity and skills related to tree planting initiatives, nursery management and plant propagation techniques to local communities.



The Amsterdam Community Nursery members visited the Northern KZN Seedlings Nursery in Piet Retief.

The project focused on community upliftment by creating entrepreneurial opportunities in the indigenous and food plants sector. This was achieved by establishing tree nurseries in three communities, and training community members in tree propagation and nursery maintenance. The nurseries were provided with start-up equipment, tree seeds as well as other support to start a small sized business.

The second arm of the project involved the planting of 2170 trees in September 2012, across the three

communities using 39 community members. The trees are a mix of indigenous and fruit trees. These trees are being monitored over a six month period looking at the uptake of greening in the community, the home owners care of the trees and the general growth of the trees.

The key achievements in 2012 have included: three tree nurseries built in three communities, 39 community members involved in the planting of 2170 trees across three communities, and 15 community members attending a propagation course. In addition, three business and financial workshops were run in three communities, and 90% of the first round of planted trees monitoring completed. The survival rate of these trees has been an astounding 80-90%.



AECID Regional Policy & Advocacy training

The BirdLife Africa Partnership, supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), facilitated policy and advocacy training of 16 participants from 14 BirdLife partner countries in Africa. Funding for this training came from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID) and the training took place at the end of June 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya. BirdLife South Africa nominated Charmaine Uys (Regional Conservation Manager for Mpumalanga and Free State) and Dale Wright (Regional Conservation Manager for Western Cape) to participate in the training, while Carolyn Ah Shene-Verdoorn (Policy & Advocacy Manager) assisted with facilitation of this training. Building the policy and advocacy capacity of BirdLife partners in Africa remains a top priority of the BirdLife Africa Partnership and is coordinated under the BirdLife Africa Policy & Advocacy Working Group.



Building capacity in the grasslands

We received funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) for a project which started in 2011 and ended in June 2012. This funding was facilitated by the BirdLife Africa Partnership and was geared at building advocacy and biodiversity monitoring capacity of the local communities living in or around two IBAs in South Africa. This project was implemented in Wakkerstroom and Chrissiesmeer in Mpumalanga.

Working beyond our borders.....

Establishing a bird conservation NGO in Mozambique

In 2012, BirdLife South Africa had an opportunity to assist with bird conservation efforts outside our borders in neighbouring Mozambique. Mozambique is a country with immense natural resources and vast areas which are being exploited to the detriment of the national avifauna. In partnership with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and BirdLife International, BirdLife South Africa has facilitated the establishment of Ambiente Conservação e Educação Moçambique (AECM), a bird conservation body, based in Maputo. BirdLife South Africa will be assisting (ACEM) in the development of skills and capacity, which will enable them to play a leading role in the conservation of threatened birds and habitats in Mozambique.

Helping hand for Angola's forests

Michael Mills' work in Angola, which is supported by BirdLife South Africa, continued to engage local communities in an effort to conserve Afromontane and central escarpment forests for the majority of the country's threatened endemics. Significant milestones for this year's Angola work included buying a project vehicle to be stationed in Luanda and publishing several papers on Angola birds. At Mount Moco, field work progressed with the construction of a new nursery facility together with local nursery staff and continuing the pilot reforestation project by planting more trees. On the central scarp, Amy Cáceres commenced field work for her PhD at Kumbira, where she is studying the impacts of subsistence farming on threatened endemic forest birds. In addition, a bird identification training course was run for the Ministry of the Environment and Kissama National Park to help build the capacity of Angolans for ornithological work. One of the main aims for 2013 is to provide fuel efficient stoves for the community of Kanjonde at Mount Moco, which will improve their quality of life while reducing their dependence on chopping trees for fire wood.



Gerth Laubscher

Sub-Saharan African vulture review



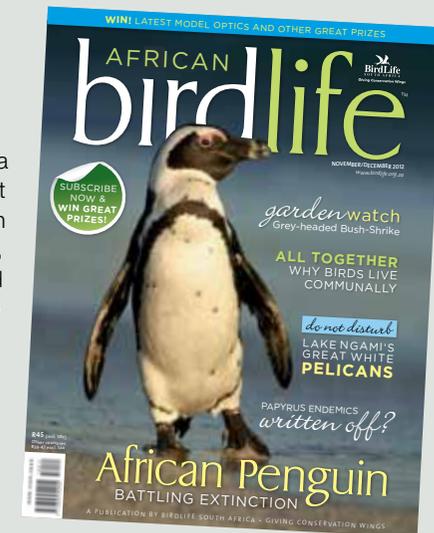
Martin Taylor

The White-backed Vulture (pictured here) and Rüppell's Vulture were globally uplisted from Near-Threatened to Endangered in 2012.

Raising awareness about birds

BirdLife South Africa is using a number of media to create awareness about the organisation, about birds, and about important bird conservation issues. These include our monthly e-newsletter, Facebook, our website (www.birdlife.org.za), and our bi-monthly magazine *African Birdlife*. With the assistance of The Jupiter Drawing Room (Utopia) and Continental Outdoor Media, we have had wonderful creative hour glass adverts in airports, shopping centres, in magazines, and on e.tv.

The review of the conservation status of Africa's vultures being undertaken by David Allan of the Durban Natural Science Museum was nearing completion by the end of 2012. Two articles reviewing the status of vultures in each African country and trends in the number of articles published annually on vultures have been submitted for publication. David presented details of the vulture review at the Pan-African Vulture Summit in Kenya in April and the Pan-African Ornithological Congress in Tanzania in October. He teamed up with Dr Patrick Benson and other colleagues, including Nick Theron of the BirdLife South Africa Important Bird Areas team, in surveying Cape Vulture breeding colonies in the former Transkei region of the Eastern Cape. A paper covering the results for the Cape Vulture along the KwaZulu-Natal escarpment has been prepared. David has contributed extensively to BirdLife South Africa's initiatives focusing on birds and wind energy, particularly the concerns relating to the potential impact of wind farms on vultures in the Lesotho highlands.



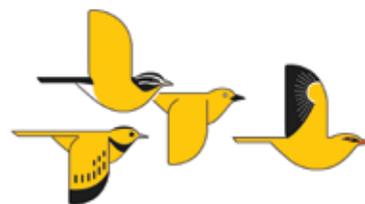
Sponsors and supporters

BirdLife South Africa is very grateful to the many people, organisations and companies which support its work. These include the volunteers who serve on the Audit and Investment, Conservation Advisory, Council, Endorsement, ExCo, Flock, IBA, Legacy, List, Marketing, Membership, and Rarities committees. Many BirdLife South Africa members also serve on bird club committees and the three regional fora. We are also grateful to the volunteers who assist at BirdLife South Africa's head office.

Donors (R1000 or more, and significant in kind contributions)

A.E. Conradie, A.J. Kerslake, A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Africa Geographic Publishers, African Mining and Trust Company Limited, Airports Company South Africa SOC Ltd, Albert Froneman, Andrew Jenkins, Anne Gray, Animal Demography Unit, Arilla du Plessis, Arno Ellmer, AVI Community/Lavazza, Avian Leisure (Patrick Cardwell), Assore Chairman's Fund, AVIS Rent-a-Car, Avondale, Beth Hackland, Birding Big Day participants, Birding Ecotours, BirdLife International, BirdLife International's Migratory Soaring Birds Project, BirdLife Northern Gauteng, BirdLife Sandton, BRO Trust, Bushnell Performance Optics SA (Pty) Ltd, bustard and korhaan project donors, C.G.G. Veritas, Canon South Africa, Cape Bird Club, Carl Zeiss (Pty) Ltd, Celia Bayley, Charl van der Merwe Trust, Charles Greig Jewellers, Charles Priebatsch, Chas Greig & Son (Pty) Ltd, Chris Lotz, Chris Magin, Chris & Barbara Cory, Chris van Rooyen, Christopher Greig, City of Cape Town, Cleo Artemides, Conservation International Foundation, Continental Outdoor Media, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, CropLife South Africa, D.S. Minneycc, David Allan, David Johnson, Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism – Mpumalanga, Department of Environmental Affairs, Department of Tourism, Diemersfontein Wine & Country Estate, Don MacRobert, Duncan MacFadyen, Durban Natural Science Museum, E. Oppenheimer & Son, Edward Snell & Co, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Eskom, Eve Gracie, Everard Read Gallery, F.H. Bertling Logistics, F.H. Chamberlain, FMC Group, First Rand Foundation, Ford Motor Company of South Africa, Fresh Eye Film Productions, Freshlyground, Gary Allport, G. Crookes, G.C. Jensen, Garden Shop, Gaynor Rupert, Geoff Lockwood, Gerhard Meintjies, George Skinner, Getaway magazine, Gisela Ortner, Go/Weg magazines, Graeme Arnott, Graham Warsop, Gregory Hawarden Memorial Trust, Greenfields Vet, Grindrod Bank, Guy Gibbon (Southern African Birding co), H.P. Viljoen, H.W. Schutz, Haggie Charitable Trust, Harriet Nimmo, Harry Dilley, Honda Motor South Africa (Pty) Ltd, HYPROP, Indaba Hotel & Conference Centre, Investec, Investec Capital Markets, Isibindi Trust, Iziko Museums, J.R. Bradshaw, Janice Frey, Jeremy Houghton, Johan Eksteen, Johannesburg Zoo, John Dory's, Jonathan and Jennifer Oppenheimer, Julian Francis, Julius Ortner, K.W. Hoffmann, Knysna Toyota, KPMG, Kraft Foods,

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Chris and Barbara Cory

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Paul Harris, Vaughan Prost, Stephen Reinecke, Remgro

African Golden Oriole

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Finances

The financial statements of BirdLife South Africa for the year ended 31 December 2012 have been audited, without qualification, by KPMG. Set out below are the abridged statements of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2012 and financial position at that date. These have been extracted from the Audited Financial Statements and reflect net profitable results for the various activities undertaken by BirdLife South Africa and disclose a sound financial position.



Mike McCullough
Treasurer

Abridged statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2012

	2012 (R)	2011 (R)
Gross income	16 456 017	13 586 511
Gross expenditure	15 990 250	13 439 427
Net income for the year	465 767	147 084
Other comprehensive income	1 315 463	5 297
Bequests and donations to sustainability fund	300 352	40 071
Surplus/(deficit) on adjustment of South African equities to fair market value	1 015 111	(34 774)
Total comprehensive income for the year	1 781 230	152 381

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2012

	2012 (R)	2011 (R)
ASSETS		
Non-current assets	11 852 091	7 246 203
Property, vehicles and equipment	680 466	790 322
Investments	11 171 625	6 455 881
Current assets	2 159 182	2 665 974
Trade and other receivables	1 549 869	864 303
Cash and cash equivalents	609 313	1 801 671
Total assets	14 011 273	9 912 177
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES		
Reserves		
Accumulated funds	5 695 966	3 914 736
Current liabilities	8 315 307	5 997 441
Deferred revenue	6 811 527	4 948 997
Subscriptions received in advance	505 844	430 833
Trade and other payables	997 936	617 611
Total equities and liabilities	14 011 273	9 912 177

Patrons

Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, Mrs Gaynor Rupert and Mr Mark Shuttleworth

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