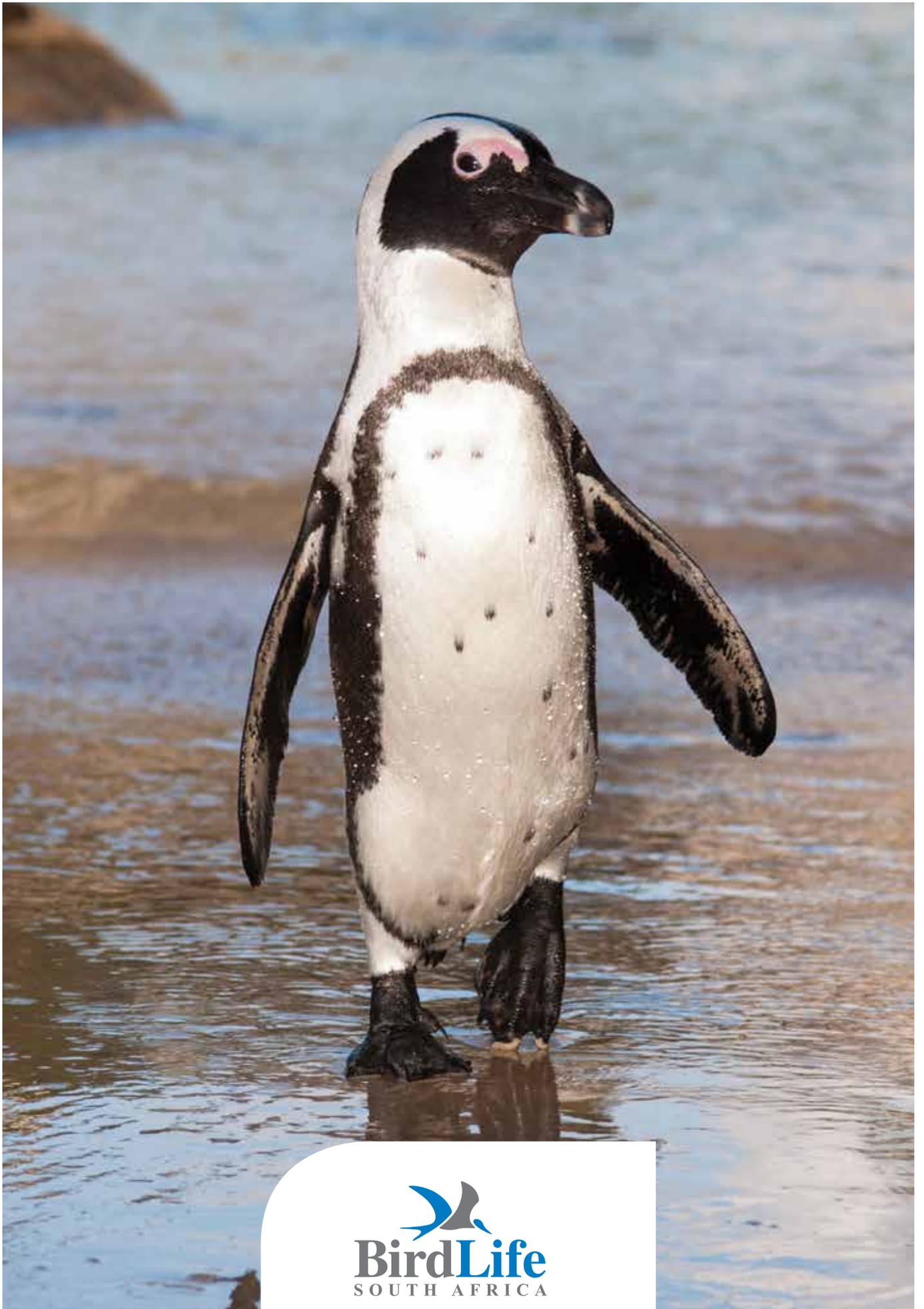


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BirdLife
SOUTH AFRICA

Giving Conservation Wings

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Vision

BirdLife South Africa wishes to see a country and region where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably.

Mission

BirdLife South Africa strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically-based programmes, through supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and through encouraging people to enjoy and value nature.

Cover page: African Penguin, Albert Froneman



Albert Froneman

Chairman's message



Albert Froeman

It is heartening to be able to report that the success and progress that BirdLife South Africa has recorded in recent years continued through 2015. Conservation of species and habitats is what we are all about and there were some notable achievements during the year. These are reported on in detail by the CEO and his team in the pages that follow.

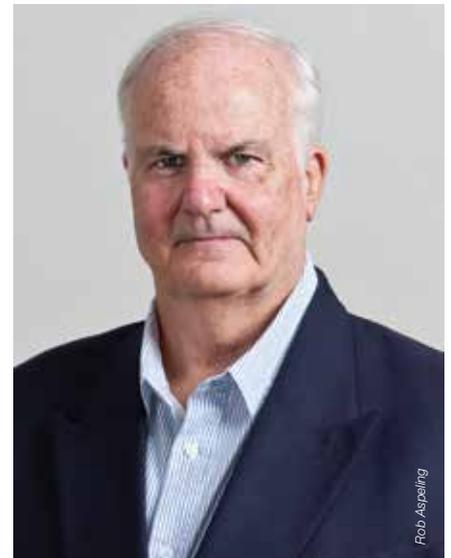
At an organisational level, there has been a metamorphosis of sorts. The Council, which had served for many years as the governing body of BirdLife South Africa, was replaced in March by an Executive Board that meets monthly and is charged with providing ongoing direction to the organisation and assisting the CEO with overall management.

An important innovation in the latter half of the year was the introduction of a formal structure that requires a rigorous strategic planning process involving detailed preparation followed by review, monitoring and measuring against plans. A further component is a self-assessment process of BirdLife South Africa and the Executive Board. We have also enhanced representation and individual skills at Executive Board level and this is an ongoing process.

A highlight of the year was the move to our new home, Isdell House. In addition to the generosity of our wonderful sponsors, credit for this achievement is due in large measure to Mark Anderson, who conceived and drove the process, and Andy Featherstone who undertook the project management.

The year unfortunately ended on a sad note when we heard, on Christmas Eve, of the untimely passing of our great friend and supporter, Roelof van der Merwe. Together with his sister Betsie and wife Willene, they have given generous support to BirdLife South Africa through the Charl van der Merwe Trust. We deeply mourn his passing.

Finally, a rousing ovation to the CEO, Mark Anderson, and his great team. Their professionalism, work ethic, and selfless



Rob Aspelling

dedication, and the resultant successes they have recorded, are something of which all our members, and all the country's birders, can be proud.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Wanless". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Roger Wanless
Chairman**

Chief Executive Officer's report

The past year was another good year for BirdLife South Africa, with many important achievements. Very importantly, BirdLife South Africa remains a committed BirdLife International supporter. As such, we have implemented BirdLife International's 2020 Strategy in South Africa and much of our work, as outlined in our action plan, is aimed at achieving defined goals and objectives. BirdLife South Africa achieved flying colours in the first, very detailed, Quality Assurance System undertaken by BirdLife International of its Partners.



One of our most important highlights in the past year was the renovation of Isdell House, our new head office in Dunkeld West, Johannesburg. We now have a perfect office – adequate space, safe, large and convenient – and it will fulfil our needs for many decades to come. Isdell House also has a large, indigenous, water wise, bird-friendly garden, with more than 3200 plants of more than 220 species grouped into different habitat types. We are very grateful to Pamela and Neville Isdell, the Chamberlain family, Lewis Foundation, Otto Muller, Nick and Jane Prentice, Gaynor Rupert, and the other donors who provided the funds and materials for this project.

BirdLife South Africa remains in a favourable financial position and, for the sixth consecutive year, we end the year with a small surplus. We have a growing number of Golden Bird Patrons, with 28 patrons contributing R1.62 million during 2015. There was unfortunately a slight decline in the number of Corporate

Members. Funding was renewed for a number of positions and projects, including from Airports Company South Africa, Charl vd Merwe Trust, E. Oppenheimer & Son, Investec Corporate Bank Ltd, Pamela and Neville Isdell, Petra Diamonds Ltd, and Rand Merchant Bank. We once again received an unqualified audit opinion, indicating our good financial controls and corporate governance.

BirdLife South Africa continued to do good marketing work and, as a result, there is increased awareness about our organisation, our conservation work and our country's birds. Our most successful awareness campaign yet, the Tuluver campaign, reached at least 81.4 million people! Other marketing work in 2015 included Vote for South Africa's Favourite Bird (with the Cape Robin-Chat winning the poll). The Bird of the Year was the Blue Crane and, as part of our efforts to create awareness about our national bird, we placed giant banners with the words "REAL CRANES FLY" on a crane at a construction site in Sandton. We also produced a poster which was distributed to schools and included in *African Birdlife* magazine, lesson plans and activity sheets for schools, and pin badges. We hosted a number of very successful events, including the inaugural Flufftail Festival in Sandton City, Flock in Jozi, the Sasol Bird Fair, Owl Awards, the opening of Isdell House, and Birding Big Day.

Six issues of *African Birdlife* were produced and the magazine continues to be financially viable through sustained advertising income and increasing retail sales and subscriptions. The subscriptions grew from 3896 for the January/February 2015 issue to 4007 for the January/February 2016 issue. During the past year



“

We once again received an unqualified audit opinion, indicating our good financial controls and corporate governance.

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Isdell House, BirdLife South Africa's new head office in Dunkeld West, Johannesburg.

Mark D. Anderson

we continued to produce a well-designed and informative monthly e-newsletter which is emailed to almost 10,000 people. We continue to communicate with people through social media, and our Facebook Group and Facebook Page now have about 19,000 and 10,000 members respectively. Our website, which was upgraded, remains a very valuable source of information for people interested in South Africa's birds.

During March, with the approval of the new constitution at our AGM, BirdLife South Africa membership became no longer a prerequisite for bird club membership. Bird clubs are being asked to sign an affiliation agreement with BirdLife South Africa and a nominal affiliation fee is payable for each member. We continue to promote membership, including at events such as at the annual Photo & Film Expo at Northgate in Johannesburg.

We regularly interact with our affiliated bird clubs and their members through presentations at bird club meetings and attendance of the three bird club forum meetings. We are very grateful to our country's birdwatchers who not only contribute to our country's economy through the pursuit of their hobby and spread an awareness of birds to other people, but also contribute important information through a number of citizen science projects, especially SABAP2. We were also able to secure funding from members of the Rare Bird Club for the Bird Guide Training Programme.

We produced three important publications in 2015, the revised directory of "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in South Africa", the first "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Status Report" and "The 2015 Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland". These books will

guide much of BirdLife South Africa's work during the next few years.

Our main goal is the conservation of our country's birds and their habitats. In terms of our Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme, we have been involved with the satellite tracking of Secretarybirds and we now have more than 50,000 data points from the 11 tracked birds. The results of this study will help us conserve this threatened raptor. We also undertake research and conservation work on a number of other raptors, including the Taita Falcon and Southern Banded Snake Eagle.

We remain integrally involved in efforts to conserve the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail, possibly our most threatened bird. We coordinated the 2nd meeting of the AEWI White-winged Flufftail International Working Group in

Chief Executive Officer's report *(continued)*

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and continued with our efforts to conserve flufftail habitat in South Africa (such as Middelpunt wetland) and Ethiopia (Berga wetland). Some of our flufftail work is conducted through the Middelpunt Wetland Trust, on which we are represented.

BirdLife South Africa remains at the forefront of birds and renewable energy work in South Africa, and we are now a recognised international authority in this field. We presented our work at local and international meetings, including in Ghana and the USA. During 2015, the third edition of the BirdLife South Africa and Endangered Wildlife Trust's "Best Practice Guidelines for Birds and Wind Energy" was finalised and released. It was endorsed by the South African Wind Energy Association. We also drafted the "Best Practice Guidelines for Birds and Solar Energy", and it was reviewed by experts from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the World Bank.

Through the Ingula Partnership and with funding from Eskom, we are involved with a number of important projects at Ingula (the site of an important pump-storage electricity generation scheme). These include recording and monitoring bird and other biodiversity at Ingula and the development of species action plans for the Wattled Crane and Yellow-breasted Pipit. We have assisted Eskom with the process of declaring Ingula as a nature reserve and the proclamation of this protected area is imminent. During late-2015, David Maphisa, a former BirdLife South Africa staff member, received his PhD for work he did at Ingula on the development of an adaptive management regime for grasslands which will benefit grassland birds.

On the Seabird Conservation Programme front, we successfully recruited a new Coastal Seabird Conservation Manager and formalised the new Pamela Isdell Fellow of Penguin Conservation position. An appeal for funding to undertake a feasibility study for the eradication of mice from Marion Island realised the required funding and the New Zealand expert undertook the site visit and drafted a report.



The Global Environment Facility-funded Food and Agriculture Organisation Common Oceans project, which will involve extensive work with the tuna long-line fisheries in the Indian Ocean high seas, is underway. One appointment, Dr Yuna Kim, has been made and two other positions will be filled in early-2016. We managed to secure a place on a Korean tuna longliner for 120 days, where we conducted an extremely important series of trials of weighting systems to be used to prevent albatross bycatch on Korean longlines. Some of the results of our successful Albatross Task Force and other seabird conservation work was presented at the World Seabird Conference in Cape Town in October, a conference we helped organise. We are grateful to Rand Merchant Bank for funding our Ocean View bird-scaring line project, as well as our membership of the Responsible Fisheries Alliance. Both are key strategic projects.

We successfully negotiated the handover of a marine IBA project in West Africa, the Alcyon Project, to BirdLife International. This has come with significant financial support for our Seabird Conservation Programme manager's position and massively raised the profile of BirdLife's Marine Programme (BIMP) in West Africa. In addition, BIMP now has its first fully-funded staff member, Justine Dossa, based in Senegal.

The focus of our Policy and Advocacy Programme work has been government liaison, especially with the Department of Environmental Affairs. We have been represented at several local and international meetings, including the annual International Association of Impact Assessors South Africa conference and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. Our Mining and Biodiversity Project Manager spent six weeks in the United Kingdom and Germany on a climate change fellowship with BirdLife International and the RSPB. We have been actively involved in the revitalisation of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) regional committee and we were represented at the Regional IUCN Forum in Nairobi. BirdLife South Africa responded to a wide range of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), from coal mines on the Mpumalanga Highveld to concentrated solar plants and wind turbines in the three Cape provinces. We also engaged with Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) for fracking in the Karoo, the Gautrain expansion and the Eskom roll out of its power line infrastructure. We worked with the Department of Environmental Affairs to host a World Migratory Bird Day celebration at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary.



Mark D. Anderson

After five years of hard work assessing IBAs, the IBA Programme published the revised IBA Directory and the first IBA Status Report for South Africa. These publications were launched at two events, in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and attended by distinguished guests, partners and funders. There has been an impressive uptake of the directory and report, including by conservation planners, government departments, and other conservation NGOs.

One of the national strategic objectives of the IBA Programme has been to improve the protection status and management of our most vulnerable IBAs. The Biodiversity Stewardship (BDS) model has been employed by the IBA Programme as key to achieving this, and the IBA Programme is now using BDS in six IBAs to achieve formal protection and improved management practices. With four years' experience in BDS, the IBA Programme has become a key role player in this conservation landscape, evidenced by our invitation to serve on the Biodiversity Stewardship Technical Working Group.

The IBA Programme has also taken the initiative to address some of the challenges facing BDS, especially financial sustainability. The Biodiversity Fiscal Benefits Project was launched in 2015 and has made great strides in understanding and leading on the fiscal benefits accruing to landowners who formally protect their land under BDS. Among other things, this project is testing the amendment to Section 37D of the Income Tax Act; a revision for which BirdLife South Africa was largely responsible in 2014. A number of training sessions with BDS field officers have taken place, as well as strategic meetings and agreements with government departments, such as Treasury, the South African Revenue Services (SARS) and the Department of

Environmental Affairs. SARS has asked our Fiscal Benefits Project Manager to assist with the drafting of an official SARS interpretation note for the amended section 37D of the Income Tax Act.

We launched the Western Cape Estuaries Project in mid-2015 and appointed a staff member to manage this project, the aim of which is to formally secure protection of and improve the management of the Berg River, Bot River and Klein River estuaries in the Western Cape. This complements the work already being done by the IBA Programme at the Verlorenvlei Estuary and Moutonshoek catchment. We have also been involved with the planning of a 2017 waterbird survey at estuaries and other wetlands along the east coast of Africa, including South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya.

The Blue Swallow Stewardship Project, which focuses on Biodiversity Stewardship in the KZN Mistbelt Grasslands IBA, was launched. Using BDS and linking into a larger landscape scale approach undertaken by our KZN Regional Conservation Manager, this project aims to develop best practice guidelines, land management and formal protection to secure the enigmatic Blue Swallow and the last remaining patches of mistbelt grasslands, interspersed between forestry and dairy farming. After a year of development, the IBA Programme is also near to finalising an IBA Prioritisation Model which will be used to develop a list of priority IBAs which require urgent conservation action by the IBA Team.

One of the often intangible yet crucial achievements of the IBA Programme, which was brought home in 2015 as a huge milestone, is the institutional relationships we have developed. When the IBA Programme was rejuvenated in 2010, it was a little known programme.

Now the IBA Programme is recognised as a leader and forerunner in conserving landscapes of critical importance for birds and other biodiversity. This is the result of a sound and coherent national IBA strategy and the commitment, relationship building and implementation of the programme by the regional IBA conservation managers. The IBA Programme has also established opportunities through innovative strategic projects such as the Fiscal Benefits Project and developed landscape scale partnerships with like-minded people and organisations.

With funding from the RSPB for our Partner Development Officer position, BirdLife South Africa's work now extends into the subregion, especially Mozambique and Zimbabwe. We provided input into BirdLife Zimbabwe's strategic planning process which resulted in the organisation changing its focus towards addressing threats to Zimbabwe's vultures. During the year, two vulture workshops were held, a vulture action plan was developed and a vulture task force was established. BirdLife South Africa is now involved with the East Atlantic Flyway Initiative work in South Africa, Namibia and Angola. During 2015 we successfully concluded the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund project in Mozambique and thus strengthened conservation capacity in that country.

The above is only a summary of BirdLife South Africa's work during 2015 and more details of the organisation's work are available from the programme and project managers. I am immensely grateful to BirdLife South Africa's staff for their hard work and dedication, and it is a privilege and honour for me to work with the team. BirdLife South Africa has a very able Executive Board, chaired by Roger Wanless, and members with diverse experience and expertise. We benefit immensely from the board's guidance and oversight. It is indeed the collective contributions of many people, bird clubs, companies and organisations which are allowing us to "give conservation wings" and to the many contributors I extend my heartfelt thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. Anderson'.

Mark D. Anderson
Chief Executive Officer

Challenges in 2015 and looking ahead



BirdLife South Africa's public profile has grown significantly in the last decade due to several factors, including successful conservation projects, effective marketing campaigns and *African Birdlife* magazine. Despite these successes, the biodiversity crisis in our country continues to increase in scope and severity. It is clear that the importance of our natural resources in underpinning and maintaining a prosperous economy and healthy living environment is still not embedded in the framework of most citizens' lives.

BirdLife South Africa receives immense support from many wonderful people, but there is a clear and urgent need to expand our scope of exposure and participation to a much larger proportion of the country's population, both in terms of culture and age.

If conservation measures are to have any chance of long-term success, the socio-economic needs of people living within and making a living from important habitats must also be addressed. Many of the threats to biodiversity are a direct result of people just trying to survive within an economic and legislative system which sometimes runs counter to sustainable principles. The current drought and predicted future climatic variability will only add to the prevalence and impact of unsustainable practises in our largely water-poor country with a growing population.

BirdLife South Africa is all too aware of the above mentioned challenges and the threats that they hold for our country's birds and their habitats. We have therefore initiated projects which aim to address these challenges in innovative ways.

It is our intention to put birds and the environment in the minds of thousands of South Africa's youth.



Looking ahead

To expand the organisation's reach to a younger audience, we have appointed a dynamic, young new staff member who will launch our innovative new Youth Membership project early in 2016. It is our intention to put birds and the environment in the minds of thousands of South Africa's youth. Through the use of social media and other online tools, we hope to capture the imagination of children across the cultural spectrum, in order to introduce them to the wonderful world of birds and nature. It is our vision that this early introduction will lead to a lifetime of stewardship and enjoyment of the natural environment by a cohort of young minds who may have never been exposed to these wonders otherwise. In the long-term, we hope to see many of these youngsters becoming ambassadors for the natural world.

Our Fiscal Benefits project was launched in early 2015, with the aim of determining ways in which landowners can gain financial benefits for conserving habitats and species on their properties. The project is gaining momentum and will expand its impact in 2016. We are testing specific environmental tax legislation in collaboration with farmers who have provided their properties as test sites. Test sites are strategically placed in habitats

which are critical to the survival of some of our country's most threatened birds, such as the Blue Swallow. It is hoped that the results of these studies will significantly improve the understanding of available tax incentives and will ultimately lead to an increase in biodiversity stewardship by private landowners.

Birding tourism is one of the unique ways in which our country's birds and people's livelihoods can be brought together. It already contributes significantly to South Africa's tourism industry and has the potential to grow even further. Top birding spots are often located in rural areas where other forms of economic activity are few and far between. It goes without saying that knowledgeable bird guides form an integral part of any successful birding trip for international tourists. An opportunity therefore exists to provide a means of living for local rural people through the harnessing of South Africa's prolific birdlife. Thanks to generous donations towards this specific goal, BirdLife South Africa has now been enabled to re-energize the country's bird guide training project. A project manager will be appointed in early 2016 and this person will be responsible for driving the Bird Guide Training project to new heights.

Fanie du Plessis
Finance & Operations Manager

TEN HIGHLIGHTS DURING 2015

1 In August we moved into Isdell House, our new head office in Dunkeld West, Johannesburg.

2 BirdLife South Africa remains in a favourable financial position and, for the sixth consecutive year, we will end the year with a small surplus.

3 We produced three milestone publications: the revised "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of South Africa" directory, "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Status Report" and "The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland".

4 BirdLife South Africa continues to communicate with a large number, and diverse group, of people through our bi-monthly *African Birdlife* magazine, a monthly e-newsletter, our website, and social media.

5 Our small marketing team has continued to create awareness about birds and the environment through a variety of different media.

6 We hosted a number of professional and well-attended events, including the Flufftail Festival, Flock in Jozi, Sasol Bird Fair and Owl Awards.

7 We undertake research, monitoring and conservation work on a large number of threatened bird species, including albatrosses, African Penguins, White-winged Flufftails, Lesser Flamingos, Taita Falcons, Southern Banded Snake Eagles, and Blue Swallows.

8 BirdLife South Africa remains at the forefront of birds and renewable energy work in South Africa, and we are now recognised as a world authority in this field.

9 We are using Biodiversity Stewardship to protect our country's most threatened Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, including through the Biodiversity Fiscal Benefits Project.

10 We have expanded our work across the subregion, such as in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.



Owl Awards 2015

BirdLife South Africa is making massive contributions towards the conservation of our country's birds and their habitats. These contributions are achieved through the collaborative efforts of our organisation's staff, volunteers, members and donors. During our annual Owl Award function, the contribution of some of the people and companies who are helping "give conservation wings" are acknowledged through the presentation of trophies and certificates.

The Owl Awards took place at the Southern Sun hotel, Hyde Park, Johannesburg, on 22 October. BirdLife South Africa's Fast & Featherless patron, seasoned birder and an Owl Award recipient, Phil Liggett, gave a short talk about his interest in bird conservation and how he became a bird-watcher. The 2015 recipients were:

Eagle-Owl Awards: Charl van der Merwe Trust and Gisela Ortner.

Owl Awards: Dr Garth Batchelor, Angus Burns, Philip Calinikos, Andy Featherstone, Christopher Greig, Maggie Langlands, Phil Liggett, Bonginkosi Ndaba and Mark Young.

Owlet Award: Sascha Michel

Austin Roberts Memorial Medal Award

David Chamberlain was the recipient of BirdLife South Africa's prestigious "Austin Roberts Memorial Medal Award". He supports many commendable education, community upliftment and conservation initiatives. David has published several bird books, including *Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands* and *Birds of Africa south of the Sahara*. David serves on several BirdLife South Africa committees, including its Executive Board, and he was instrumental in establishing *African Birdlife* magazine. He provides financial support to our organisation and his company contributed funding and materials for the purchase and renovation of Isdell House. Pictured above is David and Dr Phoebe Barnard, Honorary President of BirdLife South Africa.



Governance Committee annual review

Mandate

The Constitution of BirdLife South Africa (the "Organisation") requires that the Governance Committee expresses an opinion annually regarding the effectiveness and performance of both the Executive Board (the "Board") and the Organisation as a whole. In order to do so the Governance Committee is to conduct an annual review of the performance of the Organisation as a whole, as well as the effectiveness and performance of the Board.

Responsibilities

The review referred to above requires input from both the Board and the Governance Committee. The Board, in the first instance, is established by the Constitution of BirdLife South Africa as the primary authority and decision-making body of the Organisation to guide its business and operations with the power to agree and articulate overall strategy.

It is the Board's responsibility to decide on BirdLife South Africa's vision, mission, and business plan. It is also the Board's responsibility to assess whether the business plan supports the achievement of the vision and mission and to measure progress against this plan.

The function of the Governance Committee in terms of its mandate under the Constitution is to review, annually, the progress achieved against the business plan and to express an opinion thereon.

Report of the Governance Committee to the Members of BirdLife South Africa in terms of the Constitution for the year ended 31 December 2015

In March 2015 a new Constitution for BirdLife South Africa was approved at its Annual General Meeting and so the year 2015 has been one of transition and the Organisation generally has been finding its feet.

As contemplated by the new Constitution, the Governance Committee has confirmed that:

- A new Vision and Mission for the Organisation were formulated and approved by the Executive Board.
- The Executive Board is currently developing a formal process for measuring performance in line with the Vision and the Mission. This formal process will include a questionnaire covering the key identified areas of performance and the responses received thereto as well as a self-evaluation questionnaire that will be completed by every Board member. In future it will be possible for the Governance Committee to review this formal process in order to evaluate performance of the Board and the Organisation as a whole. In the interim, the Governance Committee continued with its review in line with what was historically carried out by the previous Audit Committee:
 - Financial performance of the Organisation against the budget approved by the Board;
 - Risk assessment and mitigation measures determined by the Board and Management;
 - The Schedule of Competencies of the Organisation;
 - Preparation of the Annual Financial Statements of the Organisation and the External Auditors report thereon.

In addition to the above, the Governance Committee:

- Reviewed the comprehensive qualitative audit carried out by BirdLife International on the Organisation. It was noted that this audit was highly complimentary of BirdLife South Africa;
- Commissioned Prof. Peter Ryan to review the Conservation Activities of the Organisation with regard to the wild bird populations of South Africa and the appropriateness and effectiveness thereof. Prof. Ryan's review was performed by (a) holding initial discussions with Mark D. Anderson, CEO of the Organisation together with a review of BirdLife International's Strategy, the BirdLife South Africa 2014 and 2015 Action Plans, and the 2014 BirdLife South Africa Annual Report and (b) posing questions to the five BirdLife South Africa conservation managers and the evaluation of responses thereto.

Prof. Ryan's report is included herewith. As can be seen, overall Prof. Ryan was very pleased to report that BirdLife South Africa is meeting its conservation mandate as well as can be expected given the resources at its disposal.

Opinion

Based on the above and as is required in terms of the Constitution, the Governance Committee is satisfied with the effectiveness and performance of both the Board and the Organisation as a whole.



Nigel Stainforth
Chairman: Governance Committee

BirdLife South Africa conservation audit 2015

The new BirdLife South Africa Constitution requires “an annual review... in regard to the conservation activities of the organisation” as part of the annual report. The inaugural review, conducted after discussions with the Chairman of the BirdLife South Africa Governance Committee, Nigel Stainforth, and CEO Mark D. Anderson, was based on the BirdLife South Africa Action Plan for 2015, and how closely this matched the BirdLife International Strategy. Feedback also was obtained from the five BirdLife South Africa conservation managers: Simon Gear (Policy and Advocacy Programme), Daniel Marnewick (Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Programme), Hanneline Smit-Robinson (Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme), Martin Taylor (Avitourism and Special Projects Programme) and Ross Wanless (Seabird Conservation Programme).

The overarching goal of the audit should be to assess how much of a difference BirdLife South Africa is making to the ‘health’ of wild bird populations in South Africa. Unfortunately we lack a robust index of bird population status; the best we can do at a community level is to look at comparative bird atlas data. And this is not particularly encouraging; signals of habitat degradation and climate change are manifest in the atlas data. However, the fact that bird populations are changing does not mean BirdLife South Africa is being ineffective; we need to assess how much worse the situation might be without BirdLife South Africa activities, but this is virtually impossible without an adequate control. Given this challenge, it was decided that the initial audit should address the following three questions:

- 1. Do the plans made by the BirdLife South Africa team adequately support BirdLife International's conservation plan?**
BirdLife South Africa's Action Plans for the last two years are directly aligned with BirdLife International's conservation strategies.
- 2. Do these plans cover the essential requirements of local wild bird conservation, or are there some additional needs that have been overlooked?** *Clearly there is always more that can be done; conservation action is resource limited, and the BirdLife South Africa conservation managers all identified the lack of capacity as the greatest impediment to their achieving their conservation goals. That said, the range of projects tackled is broadly representative of the key conservation needs, bearing in mind the need to complement efforts by other NGOs such as the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Over the past few years BirdLife South Africa has held several workshops with conservation managers and researchers to ensure that key conservation needs are not overlooked. The recent publication of the newly revised South African Red Data Book for Birds, the revised IBA Directory and the first South African IBA Status Report also has helped to identify the most pressing conservation needs.*
- 3. Are we meeting the planned objectives?** *This is harder to generalise; the past year has seen numerous successes, many of which are highlighted in the 2015 Annual Report. The conservation managers also identified several areas where results were poorer than expected; a few such setbacks are inevitable and the challenge is to maximise the ratio of successes to failures.*

NGOs should assess their performance in terms of their progress in achieving their mission, their success in mobilizing resources, and in terms of staff effectiveness. BirdLife South Africa recently adopted a revised mission statement: BirdLife South Africa strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically based programmes, through supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and through encouraging people to enjoy and value nature. The conservation audit largely addresses the first of these three goals, but as noted above, it is hard to measure success in this area directly. The conservation managers were asked to identify the best proxy measures for success within their divisions, with a view to keeping records of their performance for future audits.

In terms of the other two metrics, I have no doubt that BirdLife South Africa has been remarkably successful in mobilizing resources over the review period, despite the adverse economic climate, and the CEO is to be particularly congratulated in this regard. I am less well placed to comment on staff effectiveness, but feedback from the CEO indicates a generally high level of satisfaction with his staff, and feedback from the staff indicates a largely happy staff that enjoys the challenge of working for BirdLife South Africa, and believes that they are making a difference. To my mind, these are key starting points for an effective team.

Overall I am very pleased to report that BirdLife South Africa is meeting its conservation mandate as well as can be expected given the resources at its disposal. The full audit provides additional suggestions on how best to manage subsequent audits.



Prof. Peter Ryan
Director, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town

Terrestrial bird conservation

Students

In 2005, David Maphisa was appointed as BirdLife South Africa's project manager for the Ingula Partnership (between Eskom, BirdLife South Africa and Middelpunt Wetland Trust) at Eskom's Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme in the eastern Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Years of data collection and an ensuing thorough analysis has resulted in David Maphisa graduating with a Ph.D. in Statistical Science on 19 December 2015 for his thesis "Towards adaptive management of high-altitude grasslands: Ingula as a case study". The value of this important work now extends far beyond the borders of Ingula and will be of benefit to the management of South Africa's most threatened biome: high-altitude grasslands. David is now working as statistical ecologist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute.



The Ingula Partnership

The Ingula Partnership was established in 2004 between Eskom, BirdLife South Africa and the Middelpunt Wetland Trust, with the primary purpose of ensuring the conservation of key habitats and priority species on site. Ingula is an area of significant conservation value, encompassing nearly 7000 ha of high altitude threatened grassland habitat and more than 1500 ha of threatened wetland habitat. Ingula is recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), highlighting not only the conservation value of the threatened habitats present but also the 305 avian species recorded there to date. Of these species, 32 are listed as threatened, including the Critically Endangered Wattled Crane, White-winged Flufftail and Bearded Vulture.

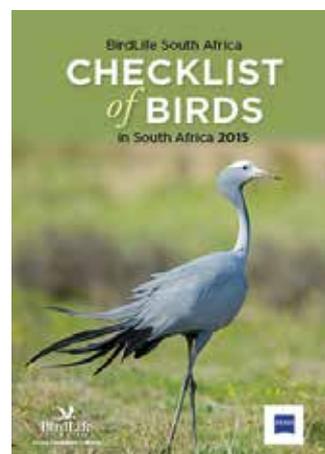


Conservation actions employed by the Ingula Partnership take on a multi-faceted approach and incorporate: priority avian species monitoring, avian breeding assessments, the compilation of Species Action Plans, habitat suitability modelling and other vertebrate assessments, including mammalian and reptilian surveys. Through direct conservation effort by the Ingula partnership, 22 new avian species, 20 new reptilian and 16 new mammalian species have been recorded at Ingula during 2015. Furthermore, a greater understanding of the ecological status and requirements of the threatened ecosystems present have been gained through assessments, which directly contributes to the future conservation of both these habitats and the species hosted by them.



Committees

The BirdLife South Africa Ethics Committee was formed in accordance with the principles set out by the National Council of SPCAs (NSPCA). This committee will evaluate scientific projects focusing on bird research to ensure that all components of research are conducted in an ethical and responsible manner. The BirdLife South Africa National Rarities Committee continued to adjudicate national rarities, with 108 rarities being evaluated in 2015. The BirdLife South Africa List Committee produces the annual BirdLife South Africa Checklist of Birds in South Africa. In 2015 the total number of bird species in the region was 846.



Raptors and vultures on the decline

Of grave concern is that 22 of the 79 raptors occurring in the region (South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland) are now considered threatened in “The 2015 Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland”. Raptors are apex predators; they are indicators of the health of the environment and play a critical role in the food chain. The uplisting of many African vulture species on the 2015 IUCN Red List was significant – three of the vulture species most commonly seen in South Africa (White-backed, Hooded and White-headed) were uplisted to globally Critically Endangered, while Cape and Lappet-faced vultures were uplisted to Endangered.



Southern Banded Snake Eagle surveys in KwaZulu-Natal

With a global population of less than 2000 mature individuals, and a South African population of fewer than 50 individuals, the Southern Banded Snake Eagle is inherently at risk of both global and regional extinction. An initial survey of those areas of the country known, or considered likely to support resident pairs of Southern Banded Snake Eagle, was undertaken in December. Meetings were also held with various stakeholders to ultimately develop a conservation action plan for this nationally Critically Endangered species.



First Secretarybird ever to be tracked from eight weeks of age to first breeding

The Secretarybird is declining in range and numbers. This iconic raptor is threatened by a number of factors throughout its sub-Saharan range; the most significant being habitat fragmentation and degradation, bush encroachment and collisions with power lines and fences. In 2011 BirdLife South Africa initiated a scientific project using sophisticated tracking devices to study various aspects of the Secretarybird's biology. A project highlight came in December when Taemane, fitted with a tracking device in April 2013, became the first Secretarybird ever to be tracked from eight weeks of age to first breeding. This record provides valuable information to understand important aspects of the species' biology. The understanding we now have about juvenile Secretarybirds' movements and habitat use will assist our conservation endeavours. Our future research efforts will be focused on the fitting of tracking devices to adult Secretarybirds.



Taita Falcons: an unstable population

The South African population of Taita Falcons appears to be inherently unstable with less than ten pairs known from the Mpumalanga/Limpopo Drakensberg escarpment area. Results from annual surveys undertaken by the Taita Falcon Survey Team, a BirdLife Species Guardian, shows that breeding success has been erratic, with considerable variation in productivity both between sites and years since the species' first discovery in South Africa in the early 1990s. Taita Falcons are listed as regionally Critically Endangered and were uplisted to globally Vulnerable in 2014. Future research and conservation effort will focus on extended surveys in neighbouring countries as well as more intense studies on the life history of the species in South Africa.



Terrestrial bird conservation *(continued)*

White-winged Flufftail: implementation of an international Species Action Plan

The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. The 2nd meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group, which was coordinated by BirdLife South Africa, took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in August. The role of the International Working Group is to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of a 10-year action programme through government involvement: the International White-winged Flufftail Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP), developed in 2008.



The government delegates of Ethiopia and South Africa and conservationists and scientists at the second meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in August.

The Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail is one of South Africa's rarest birds, and it is estimated that there are



The Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail is one of South Africa's rarest birds.



only about 50 birds left in South Africa, and perhaps as few as 250 remaining throughout its global range. The bird is only known from Ethiopia and South Africa, more than 4000 km apart. Its preferred habitat is severely threatened by habitat degradation and destruction.

BirdLife South Africa and the Middelpunt Wetland Trust, in collaboration with other institutions, have rolled out a number of research projects to focus on the conservation of the White-winged Flufftail, including genetic and isotopic analyses to understand the connectivity between the South African and Ethiopian populations of White-winged Flufftail. Funding has been secured to study the ecological requirements of this species and other waterbirds at Middelpunt wetland near Dullstroom, Mpumalanga, where the species is most regularly encountered in South Africa.

Disturbance is currently limited at the only known breeding site in Ethiopia through the involvement of the local Site Support Group that patrols the wetland



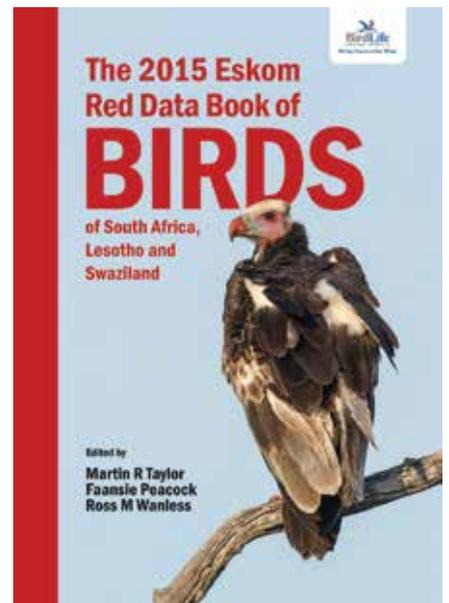
Disturbance is currently limited at the only known breeding site in Ethiopia through the involvement of the local Site Support Group that patrols the wetland during the breeding season, preventing grazing within the wetland by livestock, grass cutting and general disturbance.

during the breeding season, preventing grazing within the wetland by livestock, grass cutting and general disturbance. To further support the community, a school has been built, through the financial support of Middelpunt Wetland Trust, and the entire primary school population of Berga and adjacent

communities, consisting of 1200 pupils, receives its primary education at the school, which is named after the White-winged Flufftail. This is a classic example of a local community realising the value of a threatened species and the worth it brings to them through their involvement in the conservation of the bird's habitat.

New bird Red Data Book

The 2015 Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, a peer reviewed conservation assessment of the region's 854 bird species, was launched at Isdell House in November 2015. Red Data books, which measure the extinction risk of a group of species, form the cornerstone of conservation planning for national and provincial government, conservation stakeholders and NGOs. Representing the expertise of more than forty of the region's foremost ornithologists and conservationists, this publication provides a scientifically accurate and rigorous review of the conservation status of our birds. Of the 854 bird species assessed, 132 were considered threatened of which 47 are 'Near Threatened' with the remaining 85 being classified as regionally 'Vulnerable', 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered'. While the increase in threatened species is at best marginal (125 in 2000 and 132 in 2015), an examination of the categories in which these species have been placed is significant. For example, the number of Critically Endangered species increased from five to 13 while the number of Endangered species increased from just 13 species in 2000 to 38 in the latest revision. In addition to a greater number of species in the higher risk categories, a number of new threats have emerged while it would seem that existing threats have not lessened. Despite this there is hope with several success stories providing a source of light in the gloom of pervading pessimism and despair. This book will provide a platform for conservation professionals to identify priority species to save, pinpoint key threats to address and ensure appropriate conservation actions are implemented to ensure the continued existence of the region's bird species.



Encouraging ecological sustainability

Achieving environmental sustainability lies at the very heart of almost everything that a conservation organisation does. There is the overt fight for sustainability represented by our efforts to attend to the threats faced by threatened and Critically Endangered species, represented by so much of the excellent work done by the conservation team on such diverse projects as vulture poisoning, the protection of the White-winged Flufftail and efforts to conserve the Taita Falcon.

Recognising the importance of conserving both species and habitats, we also promote wise land-use decisions by actively participating in a wide range of environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments. A particular focus of this work is the continued protection of our Important Bird and Biodiversity Area network. By helping our members and partners understand and engage effectively with environmental assessment processes, we are growing our network of eyes and ears on the ground.

BirdLife South Africa has also been working closely with the sector that has sustainability at its core: renewable energy. Electricity from renewable energy sources may be more sustainable than that from coal-fired power stations, but poorly planned renewable energy facilities can still compromise the environment.

Thanks to sponsorship from Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking, BirdLife South Africa is helping the fledgling renewable energy industry in South Africa minimize its impacts on birds and their habitats.

We have produced world-class guidelines for impact assessment and monitoring at wind-, and now also solar-energy facilities. In 2015 BirdLife South Africa and our partner the Endangered Wildlife Trust, released the third edition of the Best Practice Guidelines for Birds and Wind Energy. Our draft Best Practice Guidelines for Birds and Solar Energy (one of the first

of its kind in the world) received positive reviews from two international experts and was released for stakeholder comment. BirdLife South Africa also encourages appropriate research and actively promotes the exchange of information and ideas among stakeholders – critical if renewable energy is ever going to be truly sustainable.

Birdlife South Africa encourages sustainability at all levels, from international policy, to individual action. Through providing input into national and international policy and agreements, as well as national regulations and acts of parliament, we ensure that South Africa's international obligations on biodiversity become adequately reflected in ground level policy. An important step forward this year has been the revitalisation of South Africa's International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) committee which has enabled BirdLife South Africa to amplify our voice by partnering with some of the other top conservation organisations in the country.

Lastly BirdLife South Africa recognizes that individuals play a critical role in sustainability. We raise awareness through giving talks and writing popular articles, and we lead by example. Our new offices, Isdell House, were renovated with a delightful focus on conservation art and indigenous plants. To see the return of bird and insect species to our little corner reminds the staff every day of the ideals for which we strive.



“

Birdlife South Africa encourages sustainability at all levels, from international policy, to individual action.

”



Samantha Ralston

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BirdLife South Africa / Endangered Wildlife Trust

Birds and Wind-Energy Best-Practice Guidelines

Best-Practice Guidelines for assessing and monitoring the impact of wind-energy facilities on birds in southern Africa

Third Edition, 2015 (previous versions 2011 and 2012)

Compiled by:

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Albert Fraemham

Seabird conservation

Areas beyond national jurisdiction

BirdLife South Africa has been given a massive opportunity by the BirdLife International Marine Programme (BIMP) – leading on the seabird bycatch component of a very large project. The bigger project is the Global Environmental Facility-funded “Common Oceans” programme that the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is responsible for. This has some \$50 million in funding for four components, with the Tuna component getting the lions share – \$27 million. Of that, BIMP coordinator Dr Cleo Small and BirdLife South Africa’s Seabird Conservation Programme are leading on putting the seabird bycatch component together, implemented through BirdLife South Africa. Late in 2014, we made a strategic decision to rework the project concept, and it will now have two major thrusts. One is largely unchanged, being at-sea work testing mitigation measures; however a key difference is that this will be delivered through training observers in scientific methods, rather than us placing our own observers onboard. Dr Yuna Kim has been appointed to assist with this work, having led the projects’ engagements with Korea very successfully. Bronwyn Maree, our Albatross Task Force Leader, has resigned to take up the

challenging post of Project Coordinator, and a third, to do port-based outreach and research on vessels in Cape Town, will swell the team to three staff.

Moving mice from Marion

Mouse impacts on island species can be devastating, tragic, and can lead to extinctions. So it is with great interest that we watch the RSPB, our UK partner, move more concerted towards undertaking an eradication of the mice at Gough Island – where many of the seabirds that frequent our coastal waters breed. South Africa’s own subAntarctic Marion Island has had mice on it for more than 150 years. In the past decade, the devastating impacts of those mice on Marion’s invertebrate and



Mouse attacks on seabird chicks are now recognised as a significant threat to albatross and petrel species at many islands, including Gough and Marion islands.



Vessel for Korean trials.



plant communities have received a very unwelcome new component – mice are killing seabird chicks. The scale is currently not like at Gough Island, where literally millions of seabird chicks are eaten alive each year. But they are definitely growing and it’s time to act. BirdLife South Africa contracted New Zealand expert John Parkes to visit the island and prepare an assessment. His conclusions were that mice can be eradicated from Marion Island, but we need to answer a few key questions before we take things further. We will continue to support the RSPB’s efforts at Gough, and we will be linking that to our plans to assist in eradicating mice from Marion Island.

From ATF leader to Marine Champion

BirdLife South Africa’s Albatross Task Force (ATF) team is, to some extent, a victim of its own success. We have done such a fine job of eliminating the problem of seabird bycatch in South Africa’s fisheries that we are struggling to justify keeping the ATF together. However, our RSPB colleagues devised a plan that should transition key ATF staff, such as ATF leaders, into



Albert Forstman

Penguin conservation – gains and losses

BirdLife South Africa's African Penguin conservation work became so big in 2014, as our work with fisheries and government mushroomed, that the other major component of this programme – creating a new, mainland colony, was falling further and further behind. At the same time as we were struggling to cope with our penguin work, BIMP took a strategic decision to do more coordinated and concerted penguin conservation work. A global campaign for penguin conservation is to be launched in 2016, and our work will form part of BIMP's penguin programme. We hope that a part- or full-time penguin coordinator position will be created soon to guide BirdLife's global penguin conservation work. Similarly, the only solution to our overloaded staff was to bring in additional capacity, and to this end we approached Pamela Isdell, our Penguin Patron. She agreed that some of the money she had donated towards the new colony project could be relocated into funding a position – the Pamela Isdell Fellow of African Penguin Conservation. Christina Hagen took up this position, and our Charl van der Merwe Trust (CVDMT)-funded Coastal Seabird Conservation Manager position became vacant. Despite the amazing number of people doing African Penguin work, relatively few are South Africans, and so we had to cast our net wide to find a suitable person. Dr Taryn Morris beat a very tough field to take up the job, and is now leading on our penguin tracking and advocacy work. While this is all good news, we were devastated with the news of the untimely, sudden and unexpected death of Roelof van der Merwe – member of the CVDMT and a passionate marine conservationist with a strong personal interest in penguins. We lost a great friend, supporter and champion.



So long and thanks for all the fish! Bronwyn Maree exchanges overalls and life at sea as our ATF leader, for coordination of the high seas tuna project.

Alcyon – marine IBAs in West Africa

Our Seabird Conservation Programme Manager's role as Africa Coordinator for BIMP includes responsibilities for marine IBA work.

Thus when he was approached in 2012 to provide support for an independently funded and run marine IBA project, opportunities began to open up. In late 2014 we were approached by the Alcyon project leader, Julien Semelin, and asked to facilitate the handing over of the project, in its entirety, to BirdLife International.

This was duly done, and in January 2015 BIMP took ownership of the project, including its Project Manager, Ms Justine Dossa, based in Dakar, Senegal. She became a BirdLife International staff member, part of the Africa Secretariat – a first for BIMP where a BIMP project has led to creation of capacity within one of the regional offices! Alcyon will wrap up at the end of 2016, but we have already been asked to facilitate a new 'Alcyon 2'.

broader marine/seabird conservation work – currently termed marine champions. Bronwyn Maree has already lived out some of that transition, as she has taken on managing the Namibia ATF, and done some international fisheries work. Although she is officially leaving us for the Common Oceans programme, the concept remains an exciting one and BirdLife South Africa will be implementing this in 2016. We will recruit a new ATF leader and Bronwyn Maree will be contracted in to provide mentorship and guidance for the incumbent.

Protecting sites and habitats

Laying the foundation for our IBAs

In 2015, the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) Programme was rewarded with the fruits of five years labour. Over this period, the IBA Team scientifically assessed each of the original 124 IBAs in South Africa. These detailed assessments have given an insight into the current status of our country's IBAs. The acquired data resulted in the publication of the revised directory of "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of South Africa", and the very first South African IBA Status Report, both launched in September 2015. The data have also been fed into a new IBA Prioritisation Model, which will inform the conservation work being done in IBAs by BirdLife South Africa and its partners.

As with the above publications, a number of other products have also been produced based on the completed IBA assessments. The IBA Shapefile (the Geographical Information System document that provides the geographic boundaries of the IBAs) was updated and distributed to conservation planners and is available on SANBI's Biodiversity GIS (BGIS) website. The individual IBA directory pages have also been made available online as interactive webpages and these will be continuously updated, making the IBA Directory a live document.

The IBAs assessments allowed the IBA team to get to know South Africa's IBAs intimately; resulting in a number of specific

benefits. Firstly, the IBA team began to intuitively understand what priority conservation projects needed to start with immediate effect. These priorities included obtaining formal protection for priority sites in the grasslands and estuaries; mitigating threats to IBAs; and developing management guidelines for birds in priority habitats in need of improved management. The IBA team was also able to develop a network of key role-players and stakeholders within various provinces who aid in the essential collaborative work necessary to secure the future of our IBAs.

Biodiversity Stewardship

Based on this foundation, the IBA Programme has strengthened and initiated many of these priority conservation projects in 2015. Biodiversity Stewardship (BDS), an innovative tool used nationally in answer to the increasing loss in habitat and biodiversity, continues to be used by the IBA team as the key means to secure the formal protection and improved management of priority IBAs. 2015 saw the continued building of existing stewardship work at Steenkampsberg, Chrissies Pans and Memel in the grasslands, and at the Verlorenvlei estuary and Moutonshoek catchment on the west coast through the Verlorenvlei Protected Areas Project.

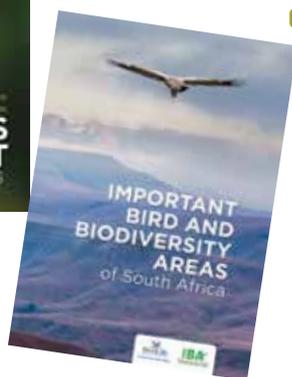
The IBA Programme has also initiated BDS in the Western Cape through the Western Cape Estuary Conservation Project, as well as within the KZN Mistbelt Grasslands. The IBA team's key roles at these sites

involve a number of important and diverse elements including: partnering with provincial conservation departments; negotiating agreements with landowners; assisting with biodiversity assessment on properties; developing management plans for the relevant area; and supporting government in motivating and formally declaring the Protected Area (PA). The entire stewardship process can take up to three years or more per site and requires immense dedication and relationship fostering by the project managers.

One of the biggest challenges for BDS is ensuring these sites are sustainable after they have been proclaimed as a PA. By this, we mean that the landowners need to continue seeing some form of support, as well as benefit from the stewardship process, as a result of their commitment to conservation by proclaiming their property a PA. This is provided to landowners through management support or financial benefits. These aspects are essential in securing the longevity of the protection afforded birds and their habitats through PA status. To this end, the IBA Programme launched the Biodiversity Stewardship Fiscal Benefits Project (the Fiscal Benefits Project) in February 2015. The Fiscal Benefits Project is assessing the viability of tax incentives that could accrue to landowners who proclaim their properties as a PA. These are being tested at five different pilot sites across the country. This is the first project of its kind in South Africa and the unique and specialist work it involves has snowballed into an exciting and leading national project.



The revised IBA Directory and first IBA Status Report were launched in September 2015.



One of the biggest challenges for Biodiversity Stewardship is ensuring these sites are sustainable after they have been proclaimed as a Protected Area.



Biodiversity Stewardship work started in earnest in southern KZN, in partnership with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and landowners.



Albert Froneman

Monitoring IBAs

Monitoring IBAs is of the utmost importance as it tells us if we are succeeding or failing in our efforts to conserve them; and there is no better indicator than the presence of the birds themselves. Of course knowing at what numbers the birds occur in an IBA or what they use the IBA for, e.g. breeding, feeding, congregating, is critical for effective conservation planning. Conservation planning emphasises whether we are conserving significant enough populations of a species across its range. Therefore, in 2015 the IBA Programme embarked on establishing a partnership with BirdLasser. With specific modification to accommodate conservation needs, this smart phone app now allows birders to share their sightings with BirdLife South Africa's conservation programmes, giving us the specific information we need. This coupled with the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 data and other monitoring projects of the ADU, will go a long way to assisting the IBA Programme to ensure the IBA network is representative of all the IBA trigger bird species.

Working locally

The IBA Team consists of nine dedicated staff members, which is small considering the amount of work needed. This is why Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) are invaluable when it comes to on-the-ground conservation work in IBAs. Last year the IBA Programme signed up two more LCGs for Steenkampsberg IBA (Escarment Bird Club) and Nyl River Floodplain (Witwatersrand Bird Club). This brings the total number of committed LCGs to six. LCGs undertake a number of chosen activities in their IBAs such as atlasing, bird monitoring, lobbying, hide construction or habitat rehabilitation and make a valuable contribution to conserving birds and their habitats.

Funding the IBA work

The IBA Fund was also established in 2015, with the aim of raising unencumbered funds to support small scale conservation work in IBAs, such as that carried out by LCGs. Part of this fund raising effort is to encourage individual IBA champions to take up the cause by donating money to this IBA Fund and becoming ambassadors for their IBA of choice. The IBA Fund was launched at a successful fundraiser dinner in November 2015 with a key partner and supporter, Reg Thompson, and hosted by renowned Tour de France commentator, Phil Liggett. An event like this allows the IBA Programme to showcase our conservation work as well as create fundraising opportunities and has started the process of securing IBA Champions.

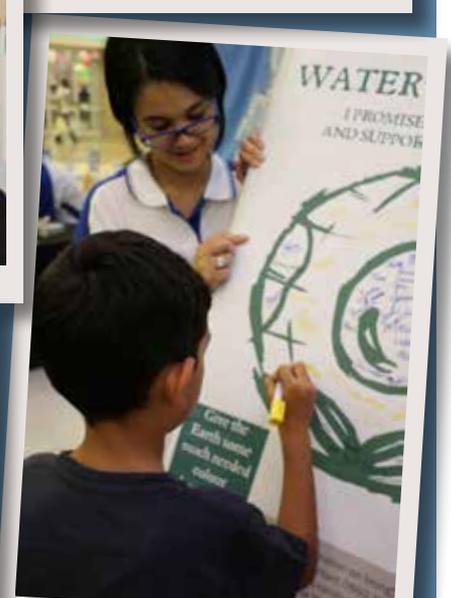
In 2015 the IBA Programme laid the foundation for the future of IBA conservation. It now has two significant publications for conservation lobbying and marketing purposes; it has a rigorous data set for planning; it has leading and relevant landscape scale projects for improved protection and management of priority IBAs; it has a network of partners and funders with a common vision for IBA conservation; and it has a dedicated team of conservationists to drive the Programme's vision. In all, 2015 was a year of recognition of five years of hard work, but also the beginning of a new chapter for IBA conservation.

Birds & people

Events

BirdLife South Africa hosted a number of important and successful events during 2015. These included the inaugural Flufftail Festival in Sandton, Flock in Jozi, the Sasol Bird Fair at the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden, the Owl Awards in Hyde Park, and Birding Big Day. The annual Staff Meeting was held at Glenburn Lodge, Cradle of Humankind, in July.

Flufftail Festival



Photographs: Mark D. Anderson

Sasol Bird Fair



Sasol Bird Fair 2015

5 & 6 September
Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden
Spring has come, bring a picnic and enjoy the fair. Guided bird walks, activities and all things birding on sale.

www.birdlife.org.za



Staff meeting



A very productive staff meeting was held over two days. Highlights were discussed, strategy was debated, and the meeting was used as an opportunity to build camaraderie.

Birds & people *(continued)*

Golden Bird Patron events



Two Golden Bird Patron functions were held, one at L'Ormarins Estate in Franschhoek and the other at Tillietudlem in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. During the Tillietudlem event, a visit was undertaken to Impendle Game Reserve to watch Blue Swallows and other grassland birds.

Oceans of Life photographic competition



The competition winners for the Oceans of Life photographic competition were announced at an event at the Iziko Museum Cape Town in October. Entrants from all around the world were narrowed down to just 40 finalists for exhibition. The winner, Albert Olle Callau, from Spain, received the top prize, a trip to Antarctica with Aurora Expeditions, for his photograph of an octopus eye.



The Bird of the Year was the Blue Crane. A poster, pin badge, lesson plans and activity sheets were designed and distributed to bird clubs and schools.

Ministerial visit

It was a pleasure for BirdLife South Africa to welcome the Minister of Environmental Affairs, The Honorable Edna Molewa, to Marievale Bird Sanctuary to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day. BirdLife South Africa arranged the day in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs and it was a spectacular success with the Minister spending a couple of hours in face to face meetings with both BirdLife South Africa staff and some of our colleagues from partner conservation organisations.



African Birdlife

African Birdlife magazine again showed steady progress during the past year, with subscriber numbers continuing to grow. The print-run of the magazine was also increased to cater for greater retail exposure. Advertising sales continued to do well, and the magazine was able to show a small profit.

Subscriptions to the digital version of the magazine were slower than expected and we are investigating ways in which the digital version can be more widely publicised to promote sales internationally, where there is potentially the greatest market. Currently, the highest level of buy-in for the app continues to come from South Africa, followed by the USA. We have changed our digital news stand platform to Magzter, which has a wider international footprint for magazines than the provider we used previously.

Concerted efforts continue to be made to gain more exposure for the magazine in retail outlets and to raise reader awareness of the title. To this end we were successful in achieving hard-won slots for the magazine in selected Woolworths and Pick n Pay outlets. During the course of the year retail sales were incentivised by the inclusion of inserts such as the BirdLife South Africa bird checklist, the Bird of the Year poster and some commercial add-ons bagged with the issue in stores.

The erratic mailing of subscriber and members' copies by the South African Post Office continued to be a cause for concern and led to much frustration on all fronts.



Wakkerstroom Tourism & Education Centre and Environmental Education Project

As recognition for its valuable environmental and community work, the Wakkerstroom Tourism & Education Centre received Eco-Centre status early in the year – the first centre in Mpumalanga to be awarded this prestigious status. The Centre hosted many groups during the year, including its first SANParks Honorary Rangers (KZN Region) birding weekend. Through the recycling programme, Wakkerstroom community collected a total of 7.8 tons of recyclables. The Centre continued to act as the regional base for Working on Fire, a critical function in this fire prone part of the country. Other than their important fire-fighting work, the Working on Fire team also undertook other environmental awareness work in the area. During the year there was progress with the declaration of Martinus Wesselstroom as a Protected Environment.



The Wakkerstroom Tourism & Education Centre can be seen in the bottom left of the image.

This has been a joint effort by BirdLife South Africa, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, supported by local associations and Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality. A range of environmental education programmes were implemented in Wakkerstroom and in the Free State, from awareness programmes celebrating special days to the curriculum-linked Aviator Programme sponsored by Harmony Gold. Through this work, 622 educators and 18,254 learners learnt more about birds and the environment.

Marketing BirdLife South Africa

Again, this year, the small marketing team along with its pro bono media partners and ad agency Utopia achieved some fine successes.

Almost 10,000 people voted for their favourite bird during an online poll. Voting started on 30 November 2014 and closed on 28 February 2015. South Africa's favourite bird was voted as the Cape Robin-chat. The other favourite birds, in order of popularity, were the Cape Parrot, African Fish Eagle, Woodland Kingfisher and African Penguin. A number of celebrities, sportspeople and organisations campaigned for their favourite birds. The GardenShop campaigned for the Cape Robin-chat.

The Tuluver campaign proved to be the most successful campaign ever run by BirdLife South Africa, and with zero budget! Vultures in Africa are in big trouble. 5 September 2015 was International Vulture Awareness Day. Utopia, our pro bono ad agency, proposed a 'risky, audacious' concept to focus the world's attention on these overlooked birds... BirdLife South Africa announced with a press release a new, 'recently discovered' bird species in South Africa... the Tuluver. We wanted to test the notion of whether people would care if vultures were new and exciting or 'beautiful'. And so, a week before International Vulture Awareness Day, we announced to the world the discovery of a beautiful bird – the Tuluver – together with a photograph of this 'recently discovered' species. Within minutes, social media erupted. Within an hour, the headline 'new species discovered in South Africa' was on lamp-posts across Johannesburg. Within hours, national newspapers, radio stations, blogs, and social media were reporting and debating its existence. People got excited. People got angry. People cared. This was the reaction we were hoping for. A few days later, we delivered the true story behind the Tuluver in an online video, where viewers could see the reverse transformation of the 'Tuluver' into a photo of a Lappet-faced Vulture. (As eagle eyes spotted, Tuluver is an anagram of Vulture.) The video carried a simple message: 'If we can get this passionate about discovering a new species, why can't we get as passionate about losing one?' The response received was overwhelming. The public applauded the campaign and the thought-provoking message, and any ruffled feathers were soon smoothed when the critics understood our clever ploy. People around the world joined the conversation and shared the story. It was determined that our global reach was 81.4 million people, and an estimated AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) of R18 million. A phenomenal success for vultures, for birds and for the BirdLife South Africa brand.



Birds & people *(continued)*



Birding tourism development

2015 was a quiet year in terms of birding tourism development work undertaken by BirdLife South Africa. The Bird Guide Training Project continues to play an important role in transforming the South African birding tourism sector and most importantly, assisting with the conservation activities of BirdLife South Africa. The Nakakela Environmental Education Programme, managed by Owl Award recipient Bonginkosi Ndaba, had a very successful year spreading the conservation messages to a multitude of learners in the Van Reenen area while guides in the Zululand area continued with different environmental education initiatives and assisted with waterbird counts at key sites on the East Coast. Five guides in Limpopo received pairs of Swarovski binoculars in recognition of the work they completed in mentoring new guides and engaging with their communities. Most importantly bird guides provided a welcome to a number of international birders, acting in the role of conservation ambassadors for the region's birds. An exceptionally generous donation by members of the Rare Bird Club will see the project resume training in 2016. During 2015, 98 Birder Friendly Establishment memberships were registered with BirdLife South Africa. BirdLife South Africa is proud to be associated with these establishments and encourages the BirdLife membership to support them wherever possible.

Partner Development Work

BirdLife South Africa, with the support of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, continued in 2015 to strengthen conservation capacity throughout southern Africa, working with several conservation organisations across our borders for the benefit of birds and their habitats.

The majority of the work undertaken during the course of the year was in partnership with BirdLife Zimbabwe who, under the guidance of Julia Pierini, the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer, underwent several organisational changes and now can boast three programmes, focusing on Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, Preventing Extinctions and Environmental Education. This reorganisation served to improve the focus of BirdLife Zimbabwe's conservation efforts and bring it into line with BirdLife International's global strategy.

There was a significant drive towards pushing the vulture crisis agenda and guiding BirdLife Zimbabwe's conservation work so that it complemented regional and continental efforts. BirdLife Zimbabwe responded to the vulture crisis by hosting a vulture workshop, forming a vulture task force and drafting a vulture action plan outlining steps to ameliorate the plethora of threats facing vultures in Zimbabwe. The organisation raised the profile of vultures through various awareness drives and submitted proposals to undertake vulture conservation work in Hwange and Mana Pools national parks, two key vulture hotspots in the region. In neighbouring Mozambique, BirdLife South Africa successfully completed a Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund project which saw the establishment of AACEM, a bird-orientated conservation organisation in Maputo and assisted with the coordination and planning of a total eastern Africa waterbird count set to take place in 2017.

On the other side of the continent, proposals were developed to assist the Namibian Nature Foundation with the goal of safeguarding key sites for Palearctic and intra-African migrants at key sites along the Namibian coastline. During the course of the year BirdLife South Africa was nominated to act as the coordinator for South Africa, Namibia and Angola as part of the East Atlantic Flyway Initiative and was appointed to represent the region on the Technical Committee of the BirdLife Africa Secretariat.



Sponsors and supporters

BirdLife South Africa is very grateful to the many people, organisations and companies which support its work. These include the bird clubs and volunteers who serve on the Endorsement, Ethics, Executive Board, Flock, Flufftail Festival, Governance, 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 and Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre.

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

N. Adami, Africa Energy Indaba, African Mining and Trust Company Limited, N.J. Aggett, Airports Company South Africa SOC Ltd, D. Allan, Aluvview, Anchor Environmental, T. Anderson, A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, aQuelle, Aurora Expeditions, AVENG Grinaker LTA, AVIS Budget Rent A Car South Africa, J. Balona, P. Barnard, C. Bayley, Benchmark Projects, D. Cameron, C. Bentel, Bidvest Waltons, Birding Big Day participants, Birding Ecotours, BirdLife Free State, BirdLife International, BirdLife Northern Gauteng, BirdLife Overberg, BirdLife Sisonke, D. Blackburn, R. Botha, BRO Trust, S.W. Burger, Carl Zeiss (Pty) Ltd, D. Chamberlain, P. Chadwick, Charles Greig Jewellers, Charl van der Merwe Trust, City of Cape Town, C. Cloete, R. Clowes, A.E. Conradie, Conservation International Foundation, Continental Outdoor Media, Controlled Irrigation, D. Cope, H. Corder, C. Cormack, Cornelian Society, C. & B. Cory, G. Crane, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, M. Croeser, Culterra, J. de Boer, S. de Jager, Delpont and Thomson Wealth Management, Department of Environmental Affairs, R. de Sousa, T. Dickson, Diemersfontein Wine & Country Estate, M. Drummond, T. Dubery, Eclipse Blinds, EcoSolutions, E.C. Eksteen, Elaine's Birding and Wildlife Products, A. Ellmer, E. Oppenheimer & Son, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Falcon Shopfitters, C. Fallows, Fast & Featherless participants, A. Featherstone, F.H. Chamberlain Trading (Pty) Ltd, FirstRand Foundation, First Rand Trust, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa, K. Forsberg, D. Foyle, J. Freer, A. Froneman, M. Froneman, Future For Nature Foundation, B. Gardner, GardenShop, Gauteng Tourism Authority, Geneva Ad, Graeme Page Consulting Engineers, G. Gibbon, Greenfields Vet, C. Greig, Grow Wild, I.A. Grundlingh, Grindrod Bank, B. Hackland, Haggie Charitable Trust, L. Hancock, L. Hart, Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Harmony Gold Mining Company Ltd, T. Hardaker, E. & L. Harris, V. Head, L. Henderson, A. Hes, I. Hirse, K.W. Hoffmann, Honda Motor Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd, L. Hudson, I. & P. Huggins, H. van den Berg/HPH Publishing, Investec Corporate & Institutional Banking, P. & N. Isdell, Italtile, Iziko Museums of South Africa, B. Jensen, G.C. Jensen, John Dory's, S. Johnson, JoJo Tanks, M. Jooste, J. Kinghorn, KPMG Inc., P. Kruger, G.M. Lackinger, Landmark Studios, D. Lawrence, Leica, Lewis Foundation, P. Liggett, C. Lotz, S. Louw, LR Service Centre, D. MacFadyen, D. MacGillivray, D. MacRobert, A.S. Malone, Manie van der Schijff Botanical Gardens (UP), R. McGrath, A. McKechnie, P.G. Meintjies, Melomed Private Hospitals, G.A. Millar, Mitsui & Co, MLC Quantity Surveyors, G. Morrison, Mr Price Group Limited, O. Muller, C.A. Murrell, MySchool/MyVillage/MyPlanet Programme, N3 Toll Concession (Pty) Ltd, Namibia Bird Club, National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, C. Natrass, T. Neary, S. Nel, Nikon, Orms ProPhoto Warehouse, Outsrc, G. Ortner, A. Ovenstone, Palabora Copper, K. Pashiou, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, N. Perrins, Petra Diamonds Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd., C. Pinker, S. Pithey, PNM Short Hauliers (Pty) Ltd., Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), N. & J. Prentice, Promac Paints, S. Pyott, Quad Africa, Rand Merchant Bank Fund, Random Harvest Nursery, Random House Struik, Rand Water Services (Pty) Ltd, C. & M. Read, E. Reed, S. Rautenbach, F. & G. Reuvers, Rentware, R.C.S. Robinson, M. Robson, Rockjumper Worldwide Birding Adventures, S. Rossington, C.D. Roux, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, G. Rupert, Rupert Natuurstigting, J. Russell, Ruth and Anita Wise Charitable Trust, P. Ryan, SABMiller (Pty) Ltd., SANParks Honorary Rangers: Johannesburg Region, SANParks Honorary Rangers: West Rand Region, Sappi Limited, Sasol Group Services, B. Schlenther, T.E. Sewell, M. Shuttleworth, G. Skinner, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Southern African Birding cc, Southern Hemisphere, R. Stapleton, Statutory City of Zlin, St Mary's School Waverley, R. Stewart, A. Summerfelt, S. Susman, Swarovski Optik, S.W. Swarts, W. Tarboton, S. Terblanche, The Diamond Route, The George Skinner Family Trust, The Hermann Ohlthaver Trust, Thelema Wine Estate, The Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, A. Theron, J. Thomas, R. Thomson, J. Richards, TLT Accountants, Total South Africa, Trecor Services (Pty) Ltd, J. Tresfon, M. Tripp, Tshikululu Social Investments, J. Twigg, Tygerberg Bird Club, J.B. Ubbink, UNEP/AEWA, M. Urson, Utopia, Van de Venter and Mojapelo (VVM), I. van Dijk, J. van Zyl, E. Veruciel, G. Wagner, Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens, WESSA – Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa, Whylo Distributors, Witkoppen Wildflower Nursery, Witwatersrand Bird Club, G. Wood, T.G. Wood, World Signs, N. Wright, WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff, WWF Nedbank Green Trust, WWF-SA Table Mountain Fund, WWF South Africa, M. Young, C.A. Younge.

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Golden Bird Patrons



Golden Pipit

Tanya Browne, David Chamberlain, Philip Chamberlain, Michael and Rose Hainebach, Tasso Leventis, Nedbank, Nicky Oppenheimer, Remgro, Gaynor Rupert.

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African Golden Weaver

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BirdLife South Africa is very grateful to the many people, organisations and companies which support its work.



Financials

ABRIDGED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the year ended 31 December 2015

| | 2015 (R) | 2014 (R) |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Gross Income | 25 667 926 | 22 207 115 |
| Gross Expenditure | 25 177 101 | 21 316 269 |
| Net income from operations | 490 825 | 890 846 |
| Surplus on disposal of investments | 665 756 | 306 650 |
| Surplus on disposal of property | 1 167 322 | - |
| Donation to BirdLife National Trust | (1 800 000) | - |
| Net income for the year | 523 903 | 1 197 496 |
| Other comprehensive (expenses)/income | (504 193) | 711 225 |
| Bequests and donations to sustainability fund | 76 426 | 70 919 |
| (Deficit)/Surplus on adjustment of South African equities to fair market value | (580 619) | 640 306 |
| Total comprehensive income for the year | 19 710 | 1 908 721 |

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 31 December 2015

| | 2015 (R) | 2014 (R) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Non-current assets | 8 697 356 | 7 943 900 |
| Property, vehicles and equipment | 853 796 | 377 984 |
| Investments | 7 843 560 | 7 565 916 |
| Current assets | 15 150 048 | 14 219 686 |
| Trade and other receivables | 2 059 113 | 1 673 945 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 13 090 935 | 12 109 903 |
| Assets held for sale | - | 435 838 |
| Total assets | 23 847 404 | 22 163 586 |
| EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES | | |
| Reserves | | |
| Accumulated funds | 9 995 467 | 9 975 757 |
| Current liabilities | 13 851 937 | 12 187 829 |
| Income received in advance | 11 934 093 | 11 170 750 |
| Trade and other payables | 1 917 844 | 1 017 079 |
| Total equities and liabilities | 23 847 404 | 22 163 586 |

The financial statements of BirdLife South Africa for the year ended 31 December 2015 have been audited by KPMG. Set out here are the abridged statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2015 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

Patrons

Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe | Mrs Gaynor Rupert | Mr Mark Shuttleworth

Council (-21 March 2015)

Dr Phoebe Barnard (President) | Vernon Head (Chairman) | Professor Mashudu Tshifularo (Vice Chairman) | Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer) | Jérôme Ainsley (-February) | Philip Calinikos | Roy Cowgill | Corné Erasmus | Rosemary Girard | David Letsoalo | Mike McCullough (Treasurer) | Rick Nuttall | Lance Robinson | Peter Ryan | Nigel Stainforth.

Executive Board (21 March 2015-)

Roger Wanless (Chairman) | Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer) | Ismail Bhorat | Philip Calinikos | David Chamberlain | Roy Cowgill | Linda Hart | Vernon Head | Mike McCullough (Treasurer) | Yvonne Pennington.

Executive Committee (-21 March 2015)

Vernon Head (Chairman) | Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer) | Philip Calinikos (Chairman of Audit Committee) | David Chamberlain | Roy Cowgill | Mike McCullough (Treasurer) | Lance Robinson | Nigel Stainforth | Professor Mashudu Tshifularo (Vice Chairman) | Roger Wanless.

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Nigel Stainforth (Chairman) | Philip Calinikos | Chris Cory | Andrew Mitchell | Mike McCullough | Ulrich Schäckermann

Staff

Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer) | Pamela Barrett (Company Secretary) | Kathleen April-Okoye | Elaine Cherrington | Robin Colyn | Fanie du Plessis | Kristi Garland | Simon Gear | Janine Goosen (July-) | Shireen Gould | Christina Hagen | Rosemary Knight | Bokamoso Lebepe | Christine Madden (-September) | Bronwyn Maree | Daniel Marnewick | Nikki McCartney | Nhlanhla Ncube | Lucky Ngwenya | Dr Taryn Morris (August-) | Dr Giselle Murison (July-) | Dinah Peenah | Nicholas Theron | Samantha Ralston-Paton | Ernst Retief | Samantha Schröder | Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson | Candice Stevens (February-) | Ntombi Stungu | Martin Taylor | Linda van den Heever | Dr Ross Wanless | Dale Wright.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Giving Conservation Wings



Partnership for
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