

Avian Demography Unit

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The Avian Demography Unit is conducting the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts in partnership with BirdLife South Africa.

The Tony and Lisette Lewis
Foundation South Africa



COORDINATED AVIFAUNAL ROADCOUNTS (CAR)

Newsletter 16

June 2004

General

During this last summer count on 31 January 780 observers travelled 19 000 km counting 340 CAR routes within seven provinces! I was delighted that the first CAR count in the Gauteng province took place, a route counted by Craig Whittington-Jones, of Gauteng Nature Conservation. Welcome to other new participants, including those who started new routes, or did recce routes near Beaufort West, Addo, Robertson, Outeniqua and Standerton. Fortunately the weather was favourable throughout the country.

New information

I have enclosed updated copies of Information Sheets No. 1, *How to count* and No. 4, *Filling in the CAR roadcount form*. Please check through these before a count and take them with you, as I have summarized all the important points to avoid repetition in this newsletter. Information Sheet No. 4 is available in Afrikaans on the website, or we can post you a copy if you let us know. This newsletter is also available on the website, with the photographs in colour. Search under 'Research' and 'CAR'. A report on the summer count appeared on the website under 'What is new' dated 15 April. If you did not receive an email about this, let me know as your address is obviously not on my distribution list. If you ever lose your route map, do get in touch with your Precinct Organiser.

I have also enclosed the updated **CAR 10 roadcount form**. The main change is that we have re-named the 'close to' column to make it clearer what information we are looking for. The 'Relevant features nearby' section that describes this is in Information Sheet No. 4. Please discard any previous versions of this CAR form and only submit this updated one. Should you ever need extra copies these are always available on the website, at the foot of the CAR page.

As you are aware there has been much debate about bird names. Where there is sufficient space I have included the old name and the new name.

We plan to update the trends in species numbers on the website annually and also find sponsorship for a booklet for the public highlighting results from the eight-year report.

Date of winter CAR count

The date set for the winter count is **Saturday, 31 July 2004**. As usual, make every effort to do the count on the specified date, starting 1–2 hours after sunrise. If for some last-minute, unavoidable reason you are unable to count on this date, please let your Precinct Organiser know and do it on the nearest possible day. The next summer count will be on Saturday, 29 January 2005.

The significance of biodiversity

James Harrison and I recently attended the C.A.P.E. Partners' Conference entitled 'Innovating conservation'. Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.) is a partnership programme, with support from international donors, led by the South African government with partners from a range of sectors. C.A.P.E. aims to conserve the biodiversity of the Cape Floristic Region and, through this, to ensure sustainable economic benefits to the people of the region. It was inspiring to

glimpse the extent of this partnership programme, the value of networking and involving communities in conservation action. A major part of this strategy is to engage industries that put pressure on biodiversity to develop and implement practices that encourage biodiversity.

You may ask what is meant by this buzzword 'biodiversity'? It refers to the diversity of all living organisms and the habitats in which they live. When biodiversity is intact, species and ecosystems can adapt to changes in the environment and recover more readily from natural disasters. However, when biodiversity is lost, ecosystems cannot function healthily and nature responds unpredictably making it more difficult to plan production and conserve natural resources. Agriculture and our very survival depend on these natural resources that include air, soil, water, plants and animals. Measures, like the ten points highlighted in the CAR report, can help maintain biodiversity. Our precious resources need to be used in a sustainable manner. As Richard Cowling writes in an article entitled 'The value of Biodiversity', sustainable development is encapsulated in the following statement: 'We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. The promulgation of the National Biodiversity Act in March this year signifies a major step in biodiversity conservation in South Africa.

Ventures like the Conservation Stewardship programme, coordinated by the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board and the Botanical Society, are recognizing the vital role that landowners play in conservation, especially as 80% of South Africa is privately owned. Three voluntary options have been established that are designed to meet the needs of landowners and that have considerable benefits to the landowner. None of these options mean ceding any ownership rights. For more information about this programme phone 028-3140185.

The Flower Valley Trust, one of the C.A.P.E. partners, is involved in training communities to harvest wild flowers in a sustainable manner and market these flowers with a story of their origin, special features and the community that is being supported by this income. The Flower Valley Trust has brought something of the uniqueness of people's lives and the beauty of creation into the relentless wheels of the economy. Projects like CAR and the Flower Valley Trust rekindle hope in the generosity of the human spirit and our expressed concern and respect for our environment and each other. I have just read two articles in the journal *Conservation Biology* 18(2), one entitled *Hope in Hard Times* and the other *Scanning the Horizon for Hope*. I would like to share two quotes with you. 'Humans do have the energy and ingenuity to restore their home. All that is required is to evoke the will, the humility, and the trust that our journey with this remarkable blue-green planet is entering another phase of promise and possibility.' (M.E. Tucker) 'Hope, real hope, comes from doing the things before us that need to be done in the spirit of thankfulness and celebration, without worrying about whether we will win or lose.' (D.W. Orr) It is important to kindle hope for our environment as our fledgling democracy takes flight into the future.

Encounter with a really cunning Kori Bustard on route EP02

'The Kori Bustard that was seen was quite awe-inspiring. Andy Nixon spotted movement behind



a bush about 2 m from the fence. As we reversed back a short way to see what it was the Kori ducked lower, but when he realized he had been spotted he stood up to his full height. At such a short distance its size was almost unbelievable. A sight we will remember for a long time. He then walked off at a stately pace.'

Terry Hertel

At 20 kg this remarkable bird is our heaviest flying bird!

Migrant White Storks

Jan Hofmeyer has been monitoring White Storks on a pig farm near Tygerberg Zoo and he counted 850 in January. This concentration of storks has given Jan the opportunity to spend many hours scanning stork legs, with a telescope, for rings that will tell the story of the long flights made by these migrant birds. Last year Jan recorded 10 rings on birds from afar, while this year he has seen four birds from Germany, and one each from Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Belarus and Poland. The birds from Lithuania and Poland have been sighted the last three summers, while the one from Belarus has been here the last four summers. You may like to visit a website www.livinglakes.com for more information about this species. Apparently more storks nest in Poland than in any other country and according to the latest estimates 'every fourth stork is Polish'. This species used to be numerous in Western European countries, but transformation of the environment, particularly by excessive intensification of agriculture has resulted in a decline of stork populations. There is therefore concern about the rapid economic changes currently taking place in Poland. I was interested to read that schools in Poland are helping to collect string left in fields, as string is often collected by storks as nesting material. Plastic string is especially dangerous as young storks get their legs entangled.

Trip to Botswana and Gauteng

In May I was very fortunate to be flown up to Gaborone to speak about the CAR project at the BirdLife Botswana AGM. I appreciated visiting this beautiful country for the first time and was amazed at how it stirred memories of my early days in Zimbabwe. I am hopeful that the CAR 'seed' planted by my visit will take root and give rise to 'routes' in Botswana; particularly as these birds don't observe our country borders and it will be very helpful to gather more information about species like the Kori Bustard and Ground Hornbill.

En route I took the opportunity to meet with members of the Pretoria and Wits Bird Clubs to encourage the establishment of more routes in this province. Craig Whittington-Jones is intending to conduct more reces in this area.

Species to be counted

In addition to the usual species, the **Black Harrier** can be counted on a voluntary basis (use abbreviation **HAR**). Check your regional section of the newsletter for other details (KZN observers remember to continue counting **oribi**). Remember that **Korhaans should be counted both when seen and when heard**. All other species should be recorded only when seen.

ADU Observer numbers

If those who assist you regularly would like to receive an ADU number and be on the mailing list, do include their name, title, initials and postal and email address details on a separate piece of paper.

CAR Report

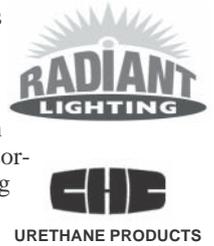
Positive reviews of the eight-year report appeared in the journal *Ibis* and in the *BirdLife Africa* newsletter, in which you were all congratulated for your monitoring effort.

The CAR report is still available if you know of anyone who would find it useful, please contact the ADU or order through our web page. The cost (including postage) is R150.

CAR support

We still have a funding shortfall of R65 000 for this year. I have spent some time this year trying to source funding and some possibilities are still in the 'air'. If you are aware of any potential sponsors, please let me know.

We are most grateful for recent generous donations from Wits Bird Club, Cape Bird Club, BirdLife Border and the Radiant Lighting company. Thank you to CHC Urethane products (Pty) Ltd. for their recent donation in March. The Wits CAR observers also got sponsorship for their counts and raised R1170, a sterling effort. The Tony & Lisette Lewis Foundation South Africa met a third of this year's budget! Many thanks!



Thank you to Yvonne Craig for writing an article about birds as indicators of the environment and the CAR project in *Our Times*, their local paper and Alison Richardson for her report in *Bokmakierie*. John Yeld, environmental writer, put an article in the *Cape Argus* the day before the summer count. Erina Botha put a fantastic full-page article in *Die Buite Burger* and I was delighted to see the ten points in Afrikaans. There were reports on all three Grahamstown routes in the *Diaz Diary*. Thank you to Chris van Rooyen, of Eskom-EWT Strategic Partnership, for reviewing the CAR report in *Ibis*. If there are other reports that I am unaware of, please send me a copy to include in the annual report.

Ringed cranes

Do look out for colour-ringed cranes at all times of year, as well as during the CAR count.

Reporting dead or injured birds

Remember to report any dead birds in suspicious circumstances to your local Nature Conservation Officer or the Poison Working Group (011-4861 157(o/h); cell: 082 446 8946), or Eskom (086 011 1535), if it is an obvious case of collision or electrocution. Sue Mare and John Coats saw a dead Blue Crane on the road.

Thank you

We are extremely grateful to you all for bearing the rising costs of petrol in counting your routes and for your birding skills. Thank you to all Precinct Organisers for their time and commitment in organizing counts. Birds are increasingly being used as indicators for our changing environment and your contribution to monitoring is invaluable. I really appreciate Linda Tsipa's help with data capture and other tasks and Marja Wren-Sargent's skills in typesetting this newsletter. A reminder to note my changed email address: donella@adu.uct.ac.za. I will be away from 24 June until 25 July, so if there are any problems or queries during that time please contact Sue Kuyper (021-6502423). It is thankfully pouring with rain as I write, but I do hope that 31 July will be a clear day – travel safely!

*Donella Young,
Project Coordinator*

Results

In the tables, three numbers may appear, e.g., 15/5/2 = 15 adults, 5 juveniles and 2 chicks, or two numbers, e.g., 20//1 = 20 adults, no juveniles and 1 chick, or one number, e.g., 13// = 13 adults, no juveniles or chicks. The following abbreviations apply:

BC = Blue Crane	CC = Crowned/Grey Crowned Crane
WC = Wattled Crane	KB = Kori Bustard
LB = Ludwig's Bustard	SB = Stanley's/Denham's Bustard
BS = Black Stork	WS = White Stork
AS = Abdim's Stork	SEC = Secretarybird
BK = Black/Southern Black Korhaan	
BBK = Blackbellied Korhaan	
UK = Blue Korhaan	KK = Karoo Korhaan
WBK = Whitebellied Korhaan	
WQK = Whitequilled/Northern Black Korhaan	
GH = Ground Hornbill	BI = Bald/Southern Bald Ibis
SG = Spurwinged Goose	BHH = Blackheaded Heron
YS = Yellowbilled Stork	HAR = Black Harrier

Mistakes and misprints

Please carefully check the figures given for your route in this newsletter against your records, and report any discrepancies so that we can correct the database.

KwaZulu-Natal

I am always surprised at how many Wattled Cranes are seen on CAR routes in KwaZulu-Natal, despite the fact that we are not specifically monitoring wetlands. In total 76 Wattled Cranes were counted, representing about 30% of the entire South African population of about 230 birds. Usually most of the Wattled Cranes are seen on the Dorning's farm that has a beautiful wetland on which all three crane species occur. However this farm was drier this year due to the drought and 38 Wattled Cranes were counted by Stiggs Cathcart on KG05 which crosses the same valley, but higher up. KG05 also had the highest number of Crowned Cranes in the precinct. Four Midlands routes had two Wattled Cranes each.

Jimmy and Lorraine Scott remarked on a stork roost on their farm, East Hebron, where up to 160 birds were counted over a week in January. If you have any species regularly roosting on your farm, do let us know. In the Swartberg area Val Baxter reported that there were fewer White Storks as there were no pastures to mow due to the drought. However there were 339 on the Scott's route as they had an abundance of grasshoppers. The highest total for White Stork in KZN was on KO01 (598+). Sandi Calverley has promised to take her camera in future and send me the evidence. Two weeks later Sandi saw 5 Ground Hornbill while walking their dogs. Gail and Jock McCann had the highlight of seeing a Crowned Eagle sitting on a telephone pole 10 m from their car!

Frik Lemmer, of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, has reported that there is definite interest in starting CAR routes in the Ulundi and Maputaland areas.

Thank you for including oribi (OR) in KZN counts. Twenty-three oribi were counted compared to 32 in winter last year. Rob Melville noted that no oribi were seen at Midmar Game reserve for the first time in many years. Please continue to count oribi, record the km as usual, write 'oribi' in the species column and the number of individuals in a group. This information will contribute towards research being conducted by KZN Wildlife on this threatened species.

Gail McCann has moved to Queenstown and so John Sharpe will be taking over coordination of the Newcastle precinct. Many thanks to Gail for ensuring that the Newcastle routes were counted regularly.

It is with great sadness that I report the sudden death of Rod Dorning, an active conservation farmer in the Swartberg area, in April. Rod was particularly concerned about crane conservation and their farm is home to many Wattled Cranes. We do wish his family much strength in the journey ahead.

Please continue to count gamebirds in KZN and use the abbreviations **HG** for Helmeted Guineafowl, **CF** for Crested Francolin, **SF** for Swainson's Francolin, **NF** for Natal Francolin, **RNF** for Rednecked Francolin, **RWF** for Redwing Francolin, **GWF** for Greywinged Francolin and **SHF** for Shelley's Francolin.

Thank you to Tim Wood, of BirdLife Port Natal, who has continued to maintain regular contact with CAR Precinct Organisers in KZN.

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in KwaZulu-Natal														
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	HG	SB	SEC	SG	WS	Other species	
KC01	50.2	433	Malcolm Gemmell		12/1/	57/10/	21//		4/2/	2//		1//	2BBK	
KD01	82	1829	FJ Cloete		6//	2//						2//		
KD02	63	1255, 1745	Dennis & Sonja Holmes		23//	8//			2//			112//		
KD03	74	1830, 807	Müller & Peter Dearlove		6//			4//			7//		1OR, 1WBK	
KD05	52	677, 1711	Paul & Bev Gamer		4//							58//	1SF	
KD06	51	1755, 1709	Carol & Myles Ellerker	2//	3//					1//	10//	39//		
KD07	70	909, 1835	Heino & Zeldia Wellmann		2//	8//		2//				46//	2WBK	
KD08	63	1834	Peter Stroeweg								4//	50//		
KD11	53	611, 1833, 1832	Tony, Brenden & Curteis Roberts	4//										
KD12	60	611, 1833	Tony & Brenden Roberts											
KE01	111	1602	Rose Laatz	2//	8//							25//	3OR	
KG02	53.6	623, 1073	Brian Byers & P.B.Lowry	2//	9//		1//					50//		
KG03	54	626, 1779	Malcolm & Sarah Rivett		11//		48//				13//	49//		
KG04	73.2	627, 628	Bob & Judi Williams		5//		7//	21//	1//		31/5//	5//		
KG05	55	1134, 1886	Stiggs Cathcart & Rob Williamson		8//		62//			2//	81//	13//	38WC	
KG06	58	1536, 1537	John & Val Baxter		5//		58/1/		3/1/		25//	31//	1OR	
KG07	50.4	630	Kobus Nel		15//		18//	6//		1//	31//	339//		
KG08	60	631	Mark Meter		4//		5//	2//				58//	28//	
KG09	13.8	809	Rod Dorning	4/2/			6//				44/6/	12//	25WC	
KG10	36.3	1240, 1241	Ed & Myra Wells		5//		35//			1//	12//	71//		
KG11	53.7	632, 633	Jimmy & Lorraine Scott		4//		31//	21/6/			38//	179//	3WC	
KL01	84.2	50, 142	Ken Gordon & Neil Smith	6/2/	6//		5//	76//22			9//	30//	2UK, 2WBK	
KL10	32.2	1504	Rob Collett					28//			5//		1BBK, 14OR, 2SF	
KL11	40	814	Ann Gray & team & 7 pupils		19//		1//				8//			
KM01	76.4	498, 1610	Margie Sleigh & Betty Jones		7/1/		2//			1//	1/1/	30//	2WC	
KM02	65.5	474, 333	Shirley Bennett & Lu Haines		9//						3//	117//	2WC	
KM03	98	491, 1887, 1888	Rob Melville, A & B Turner		7//		1//	16//	2//		11/4/	13//	1RNF	
KM04	35	1885	Elizabeth Martens					7//		1//	5//	43//	2WC	
KM05	84	167, 1719, 1720	Pamela Nicol, E & H Burmester	1//	11//		4//1		2//			69//	1OR, 1RNF, 2WC	
KM06	89	1904, 1905	Drummond & Gloria Densham	2/2/	10//							102//	3OR	
KM07	69.4	490, 1843	Kevin & Lindy McCann		1//	6//					3//	6//		
KM08	58	187, 1828	Monte & Eunice Pera		8//		4//				36//	51//		
KN01	67.5	927, 1756	Johan & Christine de Villiers		1//	4//	2//				1//	19//	2SF	
KN03	56.2	1609, 1754	Andre & Hettie Bouwer		5//							4//	1SF	
KN04	48	925	Alan Schwikkard		16//		2//			1//	7//		2RWF, 2SF, 3WBK	
KN05	41.2	1071, 1742	John & Kathy Sharpe			34//		2//			3//	54//	1SF	
KN06	73	995	Gail McCann		7//		2//	4/4/			158//	74//	1BBK, 3SF	
KN07	94	995	Gail McCann	2/2/	5//	24//	2//					16//	1HAR	
KN08	80.9	997	Robert Stannard	8/2/	2//	2//			4//	2//	2//	53//		
KO01	53.4	425, 1529	Gavin & Sandi Calverley	4//	7//				1//			598//		
KP01	64.2	1792	Frik Lemmer		14//				4//		8/3/	12//		
KU01	68	429, 155	Chris Thomas & Brian Murray	2/1/	12//	21//	23//	2//	1//		7//	61//		
KU02	68	1218, 741	Bridget & Richard Robinson		22/1/		7//		2//		6//	244//	2WC	
KV01	80.8	1683	AP Keeve		1//		39//			1//	10/4/	9//		
KV02	60.5	1732	Tom Mills		2//			5//3			2//			
KV03	61	1566	Darryl Baxter		1//					1//		25//	2SF	
KV04	30.6	1722, 1790, 1791	Charl Oberholster, Arlene & David	3//						1//		2//		
Total	2916				53	300	180	390	231	29	15	662	2742	4BBK,1HAR,23OR,
Birds per 100 km					1.8	10.3	6.2	13.4	7.9	1.0	0.5	22.7	94.0	2RNF,2RWF,14SF,
														2UK,6WBK

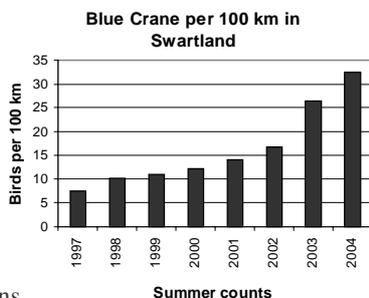
KC - Creighton precinct, KD - Dundee precinct, KE - Escourt precinct, KG - East Griqualand precinct, KL - Ladysmith precinct, KM - Midlands precinct, KN - Newcastle precinct, KO - Melmoth precinct, KP - Paulpietersburg precinct, KU - Underberg precinct, KV - Vryheid precinct

Western Cape

Swartland precinct

In the Swartland two routes had far more cranes than ever before. Ralph Wordon and his team from Tygerberg Bird Club saw 81 cranes on their route SW06, while Jens Oelbützel and his family saw 99

on SW09! I have included a histogram showing the summer counts of Blue Cranes since 1997 as this shows a remarkable gradual increase. Mel Tripp and Sylvia Ledgard commented on the increase in the number of vineyards on their routes. The 26 White Storks on SW06 were spotted on compost heaps. The Porterville Blue Crane route was launched at the end of 2003 by the Porterville community, Overberg Crane Group (OCG), Open Africa and Engen. I look forward to meeting you on the Slabber's farm after the count.



Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Swartland									
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	SG	WS	Other spp.	
SW01	75	1418	David McMillan	2//		5/1/			1BK
SW02	76.3	106	Mel Tripp & K Drummond-Hay	5//1	3//	8/2//			
SW03	63.7	574, 1080	Sylvia Ledgard & Pat Waddell	2/2//	9/3//				1BK
SW04	66	1286	Philbert Melck	3//					
SW05	59.6	163, 1239	Keith & Rena Harrison	6//	1//	8//			
SW06	75.5	1368, 1565, 1362	Ralph Wordon, Libby & Pat	80//	2//	10//	28//		1SEC
SW07	43	477	Koos de Goede	24/7/1		7//			
SW08	72	1474	Bruce MacKenzie	12//1	6//	1//			1SEC
SW09	62.7	1135, 1467	Jens & Diane Oelbützel	99//	1//	20//			1SEC
SW10	63	223	James Harrison	14//		20//			1BK
SW11	62	479	David Dixon						
SW12	78	1552, 1553	Tielman & Alta Klynsmith						1BK
SW13	57	674, 673	Tertius & Elna Slabber	8//5	2//	6//			
SW14	54	506, 1882	Riaan & Marika van der Walt	19/3//	2//	6/5//			
Total	908			294	29	99	28	4BK, 3SEC	
Birds per 100 km				32.4	3.2	10.9	3.1		

Overberg precinct

There were generally fewer White Storks than usual in the Caledon area, but routes OV08, OV16, OV19, OV20 and OV27 had 257, 291, 357, 178 and 338 birds respectively. These routes are all further east near Heidelberg. The density of Blackheaded Herons was about twice as high as it has been recently. Dave and Sue Whitelaw saw two Secretarybirds on their route, OV15 and Mick D'Alton and his family counted 31 Stanley's/Denham's Bustard. Many more Black Harriers were counted than usual, 40 including those seen on OV34 in the test range area near De Hoop. Patrick Hurlly and Stuart and Ruth McLennan saw the highest diversity of species on a route.

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Overberg											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	KK	SB	SEC	SG	WS	Other species
OV01	58	221, 222	Des & Mary Frylinck	108/3/3	5//				266//		1HAR, 1BK
OV02	66	221, 222	Des & Mary Frylinck	14/4/	9//				2//		
OV03	48.6	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	75/5/	15//		1//		277//	1//	
OV04	27	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	23/15/2	4//					6//	
OV05	70.8	228, 1064, 1148, 227	John Carter, Max, Brian & Ben	97/11/10	31/1/	6//	1//	1//		157//	3HAR
OV06	52.7	619 1655	Patrick Hurlly & Stuart McLennan	61/3/2	12//		5//	1//	27//	55//	3BK, 5HAR
OV07	67.8	496, 801, 802	Ken & Ann Price, K & A McAdam	118/9/7	12//			1//		146//	
OV08	73.8	492, 1075	Keith Moodie	77/6/1	14//		9//			257//	1BK, 3HAR
OV09	46.3	234	Craig Thom	339/10/6	16/2//				16//	7//	1HAR
OV10	57	56, 1585	Pieter & Ann Albertyn	66/2/2	5//	2//			10//	42//	
OV11	62.2	244, 246, 245	Peter & Sheila Siebert, M Loubser	28/6/4	8//		12//			15//	2HAR
OV12	57.1	215, 216, 1380, 1381	Heather Busby, Dawn, Gill & Rory	41/2/1	3//						
OV13	70.4	520, 229, 671, 1063	Jill Mortimer, Ines, Anne, Petra	149/9//	16/4/	3//				3//	2BK, 4HAR
OV14	93	164, 123	Sue Maré & John Coats	86/12/2	1//	4//		1//		64//	1HAR
OV15	57	255, 256	Dave & Sue Whitelaw	51/13/	5//			2//		160//	
OV16	64	249, 1379	Pierre van den Berg	86/3/1	6//				7//	291//	1BK, 1BS, 1HAR
OV17	62	878	Lee Burman	115/3/6	2//		3//			9//	
OV18	50	240	Wicus Leeuwner & Mark Bidwell	84/6//	9//				11//		
OV19	61.4	219, 1213, 1632	Ronnie Crowther, Estelle & Christine	46/8/2	2//	9//	2//		1//	357//	
OV20	58	1325	Neville Passmore	14//	30/1//				1//	180//	1HAR
OV21	63.6	1440, 1840	Alex & Nancy Swanepoel	23/1/	29//		6//	1//	20//	165//	4HAR
OV22	60	48, 392	Mick Killeen & Joy von Korff	84//			8//				
OV23	55.6	1062, 1128	Andrew & Lynne Marshall		29/12/2				10//	55//	
OV24	57.5	636, 1211	Mick & June D'Alton	57//7	16//		31//	2//	10//	19//	1HAR
OV25	55.5	1469, 1777, 1778, 991	Avril Young, R & A Gordon, Donella	43/5//	4//				4/8//		
OV26	19.2	871	Jeffrey Arizon & 3 Teslaarsdal pupils	23//							2HAR
OV27	68	1786, 1569	Keith Spencer & 5 De Hoop rangers	20//7	38/3//		8/2//		8//	338//	
OV28	39	1825, 1462	Flip & Tonia Schonken	3//2	13//					35//	
OV29	26.4	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	6//2	9//					12//	
OV33	62	1463	Frans de Graaff	19//1	15//		6//		65//	27//	1HAR
Total	1710			2160	383	24	94	9	743	2701	8BK, 1BS, 30HAR
Birds per 100 km				126.3	22.4	1.4	5.5	0.5	43.5	140.4	
OV34	60.9	1550, 1551	Heyné & Sharon Brink	8//2	6//		1//		14//		2BK, 10HAR

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Western Cape precincts									
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	KK	SG	Other species	
WB01	65	343	Maria Andela				13//		
WB03	58	1909	Stefan Theron	24//		1//			1BK, 3KB, 1LB
WC01	41	1291	George Hattingh		6//				1BK, 16SB
WK02	45	1003	Andrew Schofield	18/5//	3//		37//		38WS
WU01	51	934	Peter Chadwick						11SB
WU02	58	539, 1392	Jonas Witbooi & J de Jaar	38//	4//				10SB
WU03	52	934	Peter Chadwick		1//				146WS
WU05	70	297, 1520, 1521	Mike & Gill Euston-Brown, Barry	10//	1//				5SB, 18WS
WU06	45	539, 1392	Jonas Witbooi & J de Jaar	5//	3//		2//		3SB, 11WS
Total	485			100	18	14	39	2BK, 3KB, 1LB,	
Birds per 100 km				20.6	3.7	2.9	8.0	45SB, 203WS	

WB - Beaufort West precinct, WC - Calitzdorp precinct, WK - Little Karoo precinct, WU - Uniondale

Beaufort West precinct

I was thrilled to see a new route counted in this area by Stefan Theron who saw 24 Blue Cranes.

Little Karoo precinct

Gilly Schütte and Keith Poole are investigating a route near Robertson.

Uniondale precinct

The number of Stanley's Bustard seen in this precinct is encouraging. The route WU04 was lengthened and renumbered WU06.

Karoo, Northern Cape

Mark Anderson, Ornithologist, Northern Cape Department of Tourism, Environment & Conservation, reports:

'The 18th Karoo Large Terrestrial Bird Survey (KLTBS) took place on 31 January 2004. The conditions for conducting the survey were ideal: mild temperature and a light breeze.

'At the start of my survey, I took a moment to absorb the typical sounds and sights of the Karoo. The veldt was alive and the calls of many birds filled the air, with the Thick-billed, Clapper and Spike-heeled Larks being particularly vociferous. For a few minutes I stood quietly and took in the early morning atmosphere, reminding myself about how privileged I am to spend so much time in such wonderful environments. The familiar call and display of a male Northern Black Korhaan then reminded me of the goals for the morning and I climbed in my vehicle and started my survey.

'During each survey I always spend a moment in thought, reminding myself of the dedication and unselfish commitment of the people who offer up their valuable time to count large terrestrial birds. This survey was no exception and 37 people in 23 vehicles participated, travelling a total distance of 1320 km.

'One of my tasks as the Provincial ornithologist is to monitor the population status of threatened birds, ranging from waterbirds to raptors to large terrestrial birds. Various projects are underway, many with the involvement of enthusiastic bird-watchers. Imagine the challenge if I, on my own, had to count large terrestrial birds each summer and winter along road transects exceeding 1000 km in length, and travelling at a speed of about 20 km/h. It would be a daunting task! I am grateful for the assistance of the numerous participants. Interestingly, more than 50% of the participants are farmers and their involvement is extremely important as they are the custodians of our natural heritage.

'Back to last summer's survey in the eastern Karoo. A total of 1340 large terrestrial birds were counted (101.5 birds/100 km). White Stork (522), Blue Crane (302) and Northern Black Korhaan (269) were the most numerous. There were no White Storks on most routes, however two neighbouring routes near Hanover did have significant numbers. Van Zyl and Jolene Venter counted 324 White Storks (NK36) and Christiaan and Magdel Venter counted 190 White Storks (NK37). These storks gather in the Karoo to feed on Brown Locusts, often feeding in association with other birds, particularly Abdim's Storks, but even the occasional Marabou Stork. No Abdim's Storks were observed this summer.

'A reasonable number (33) of young Blue Cranes were observed: 15 pairs had either one or two chicks and Chris van Rooyen also counted a number of subadults in a small flock of cranes. Grateful thanks to Lorette Luscombe, Ronelle Visagie, Jannie Venter, Kevin McCann and Themba Mathebula for their assistance in ringing 44 chicks this year. To date we have colour-ringed 276 chicks and there have been many interesting, valuable resightings of ringed birds and recoveries of dead birds. Although still early days, the data will eventually provide much information about the biology of our national bird. It is really interesting to note that there have been no long-distance movements of 'our' birds into other areas (such as the Overberg) or movements of birds ringed elsewhere into the eastern Karoo. Does this perhaps indicate that the different Blue Crane populations are isolated? Time will tell!

Thank you to Mark and Ronelle for all their time in coordinating this project.

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Karoo											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	KK	LB	SEC	UK	WQK	WS	Other spp.
NK011	20	1753	WSO Marais	2//		5//	2//		1//		
KN012	20	1753	WSO Marais	7//1					2//		
NK013	20	1753	WSO Marais	6//3		3//			2//		
NK021	20	486	Luke Kock		1//	2//	1//		7//		
NK022	20	486	Luke Kock			1//					
NK032	20	486	Luke Kock	11//	1//		1//				1BHH, 3SG
NK031	20	1196, 1197	Maxie Jonk	2//	1//	4//			3//		
NK032	20	1196, 1197	Maxie Jonk	39//3		1//	2//	1//		3//	
NK033	20	1196, 1197	Maxie Jonk	4//					2//		
NK041	20	501, 1205	Francois & H Taljaard		1//	3//			3//		
NK042	20	501, 1205	Francois & H Taljaard	9//		1//			1//		
NK044	20	501, 1205	Francois & H Taljaard	11//			2//				
NK061	20	494	Fritz Bättenhausen	14//3		8//			2//		
NK062	20	494	Fritz Bättenhausen	1//		1//	2//		4//		
NK063	20	494	Fritz Bättenhausen	2//2				2//	1//		7SG
NK071	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe	3//2	3//				2//		
NK072	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe			1//			13//1		
NK073	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe	2//					1//		
NK091	20	480	Peter Ferreira	9//	2//	3//	2//		12//		
NK092	20	480	Peter Ferreira						3//		
NK093	20	480	Peter Ferreira						3//		
NK101	20	1086	Jannie Venter	9//				1//	7//		
NK102	20	1086	Jannie Venter				2//		1//		
NK141	20	499	Henri Smith		3//		1//				
NK142	20	499	Henri Smith	2//							3SG
NK143	20	499	Henri Smith								
NK151	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe				1//		15//		
NK152	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe						7//		1KB
NK153	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe						3//		
NK181	20	1579	Diana Greathead			2//			10//		1SB
NK182	20	1579	Diana Greathead	8//				2//	11//		
NK183	20	1579	Diana Greathead	3//					1//		2SG
NK221	20	105	Mark Anderson	3//		1//	5//		20//		
NK222	20	105	Mark Anderson	6//					11//		
NK223	20	105	Mark Anderson						4//		
NK231	20	509	Ronelle Visagie		2//				25//		
NK232	20	509	Ronelle Visagie			4//			11//		5SG
NK233	20	509	Ronelle Visagie						14//		
NK271	20	1814	Belly Malatji	1//							
NK272	20	1814	Belly Malatji	5//							
NK273	20	1814	Belly Malatji	2//							
NK301	20	1494	Amie Venter			2//	1//		9//		3SG
NK302	20	1494	Amie Venter	15//1		2//	4//		1//		
NK331	20	1194	Chris van Rooyen		2//	2//1		5//2	18//		9/3/ SG
NK332	20	1194	Chris van Rooyen	24//14		4//		2//3			
NK333	20	1194	Chris van Rooyen	2//1			1//				
NK341	20	668	John Bell	2//				8//	1//		
NK342	20	668	John Bell						1//	4//	1BHH
NK343	20	668	John Bell	6//		2//	2//		2//		1BHH
NK361	20	1492, 1493	Van Zyl & Jolene Venter	2//1	4//	1//				98//	5SG
NK362	20	1492, 1493	Van Zyl & Jolene Venter				1//		3//	226//	
NK363	20	1492, 1493	Van Zyl & Jolene Venter			1//		2//	1//		
NK371	20	1491, 1815	Christiaan & M Venter	2//	2//2					1//	6SG
NK372	20	1491, 1815	Christiaan & M Venter							188//	
NK373	20	1491, 1815	Christiaan & M Venter	1//	2//					1//	
NK391	20	493	Lorette Luscombe	1//	9//	5//	1//		1//		
NK392	20	493	Lorette Luscombe		1//	2//		1//		1//	
NK393	20	493	Lorette Luscombe	4//		2//			2//		
NK431	20	478	Kobus de Villiers (Jnr)	4//2					14//		
NK432	20	478	Kobus de Villiers (Jnr)					2//	9//		
NK441	20	1642	Nell Kingwill	6//							3KB
NK442	20	1642	Nell Kingwill	14//		8//					
NK443	20	1642	Nell Kingwill	21//	2//	8//					
NK451	20	1490	Madeleine van Heerden	4//	2//	4//			4//		2BHH, 4SG
NK452	20	1490	Madeleine van Heerden								
NK453	20	1490	Madeleine van Heerden		2//						
Total	1320			302	42	86	29	31	269	522	5BHH, 4KB,
Birds/100 km				22.9	3.2	6.5	2.2	2.3	20.4	39.5	1SB, 50SG



Eastern Cape

Helen Lechmere-Oertel, the Educational Officer at for North East Cape Forests, is now coordinating the Northeastern precinct. I would like to thank Jon Smallie for organising CAR counts while he worked for the South African Crane Working Group (SACWG) in this area. David Jolliffe, also of SACWG, has moved recently and I would like to thank him for his contribution in initiating the Somerset East precinct. Alison Brown has taken over coordination of this precinct. I forgot to mention in the last newsletter that Sonja Vorster, who started route EU01, has left Umtata and Emile Plumstead, also of University of Transkei, is continuing this route. Fred Leask's route EE05 has been changed slightly and renumbered EE20. Briar Wright did a recee for a route near Addo, which requires some alteration.

Conditions were very dry in parts of the Eastern Cape. Sandy Stretton remarked on this and the fact that there were hardly any storks in his area. As usual his route had a significant number of Blue Korhaan (30). Yvonne Craig also mentioned the drought and the extent of burnt areas on their route EH06. Victor Craig saw 470 White Storks on EH03, as well as many raptors including a magnificent Martial Eagle nearing adulthood. The highest number of Ludwig's Bustards (16) was seen on route EP10 by John Bowker. Jen and Ken Munro remarked on the amazing transformation of the Karoo after good rains (their son-in-law had had half his annual rainfall in 3 weeks on a farm near Craddock). Most of their storks were on freshly-cut lucerne lands where the caterpillars were easily accessible. Graham Winch saw the highest number of White Stork (174) recorded on EB03 yet. Graham remarked that he also saw Golden Bishops (± 5) on the route for the first time.

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Eastern Cape													
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BK	CC	LB	SB	SEC	SG	WS	Other species
EB01	62.7	175, 174	Kenneth & Gertie Griffith		16/2/	1/1/			4/1/		6/1/		
EB03	67.2	115, 680	Graham Winch & Ian Field	13/1/	11/1/		22/1/			1/1/	10/1/	174/1/	
EB04	62.1	1567, 1568, 1584	Barbara & Ken Monfoort & Wendy Per	2/1/	8/1/		6/1/		1/1/	1/1/	11/1/	19/1/	
EE01	37.9	1129	Adèle Moore		3/1/		8/2/				5/1/	76/1/	
EE03	29	1730	Helen Lechmere-Oertel		7/1/		51/1/				27/1/	31/1/	
EE06	66.6	1126	Jon Smallie		3/1/		6/1/					32/1/	
EE08	73.5	1126	Jon Smallie		4/1/		36/1/					7/1/	
EE10	63	899	Kevin Meise		2/1/						2/1/	11/1/	
EE12	54	901	Jenni Brown	4/1/	4/1/		8/1/			1/1/	17/1/	7/1/	
EE13	65.9	1743, 1067	Rob Böhmke, 9 Indwe High School pupils		5/1/						11/1/	7/1/	9BI
EE17	43.6	1126	Jon Smallie		2/1/		6/1/					4/1/	
EE19	84.5	1130, 1583	Sandy & Hope Stretton	9/1/4	5/1/		2/1/	5/1/		2/1/	17/27/		30UK
EE20	64	896, 1430	Fred, Retha, Cara & Michelle Leask				116/1/			2/1/	9/1/	4/1/	1HAR, 1WC
EG01	85	161	Adrian Craig	3/1/	3/1/	2/1/							
EG02	55.1	565	Pat Hulley	6/1/		3/1/							
EG02	76.6	341, 1530, 887	Bo Bonneve, Lorraine & Nikki		1/1/	5/1/		6/1/		1/1/	13/1/	1/1/	
EH03	58.5	313, 1771, 1772	Victor Craig, Wendy & Maggie	12/1/	12/1/				2/1/		9/1/	407/1/	1HAR
EH04	44.5	1132, 1767, 1766	David & Jill Tudhope, Peter Bosman		2/1/						11/1/	29/1/	
EH05	39	1612, 1794, 1775, 1774	Abel & H Bezuidenhout & Holstenson's	8/1/					14/1/	2/1/	2/1/		1WBK
EH06	56	312, 1769, 1773	Yvonne Craig, Emlyn & Jenny		9/1/	36/8/			5/1/		117/1/	78/1/	
EK02	58.6	885, 1523	John Lardner-Burke & Alan Wilson	2/1/	21/1/						13/3/	7/1/	
EK04	59.5	884, 1525	Peter Metcalf & Tim Cockcroft		3/1/				6/1/		7/1/	5/1/	1HAR
EK05	62.5	886, 1528, 131, 1526	Maureen Turner, Laurie, Dagmar, Lorraine		14/1/				5/1/	2/1/	103/1/	30/1/	
EP01	74	635, 1244	Patrick Brett & Denise Hoffmann	68/1/		1/1/		9/1/		4/1/		31/1/	4KB, 10KK
EP02	66	1570, 1621	Hermann & Terry Hertel	4/1/		9/1/		9/1/	1/1/		1/1/	279/1/	1KB, 2KK
EP03	61	872	Denzil Ward			2/1/		11/1/					1KB, 5KK
EP04	72.9	869	Peter Hall	2/1/	1/1/	3/1/				1/1/		21/1/	1KB, 6KK
EP06	53	868, 1089	Ken & Jen Munro		1/1/	2/1/		2/1/	10/1/			70/1/	3WQK
EP07	72	1475	Alan Collett	38/1/							6/1/	66/1/	4UK, 65WQK
EP08	109	207	Dave Brown	19/1/	5/1/			6/1/			5/1/	1/1/	2KB, 5KK
EP09	31	868, 1089	Ken & Jen Munro								6/1/	239/1/	
EP10	42	1731	John Bowker	7/1/				16/1/			5/1/		6KK, 1UK, 54WQK
EQ02	55	930, 1290	Don Field & Brian Ellison					7/1/					14UK
ES05	89	1182	Neil Turner		1/1/	3/1/		2/1/		1/1/		3/1/	2KB
ES07	34.6	1826	Debbie Abrahamson	2/1/1									1WQK
EU01	66	1479	Emile Plumstead		3/1/								
Total	2195			216	185	30	264	75	48	18	443	1639	1BI, 49UK, 3HAR, 1WC, 1WBK, 11KB, 34KK, 123WQK
Birds per 100 km				9.8	8.4	1.4	12.0	3.4	2.2	0.8	20.2	74.7	

EB - Border precinct, EE - Northeast Cape precinct, EG - Grahamstown precinct, EH - Humansdorp precinct, EK - Kenton precinct, EP - PE precinct (Aberdeen & Steytleville districts), EQ - Queenstown precinct, ES - Somerset East precinct, EU - Umtata precinct

Mpumalanga

Steenkampsberg precinct

In the Steenkampsberg precinct long grass, as a result of the late rains in January, hampered visibility. But as far as cranes were concerned they had their best count ever, with a total of 40 for all 3 species. This was the first summer since January 1998 (when only 4 routes were counted), that no Stanley's Bustard have been sighted. David Gaynor, of Highlands Crane Group, reported that the low rainfall led to considerable debate between farmers about when to mow, and many pastures were mown. Eighty-six of the 126 Bald Ibis were sighted foraging on mown pastures.

This was Toos Dijkzeul and Marius Kuipers' last count, many thanks for your contribution!

Please continue to count Helmeted Guineafowl on the Steenkampsberg routes and use the abbreviation **HG**.

Remember to fill in activity and location (i.e., the last three columns) for Bald Ibis, as well as for cranes and bustards.



Donella meeting with Wits Bird Club members after the CAR presentation in Johannesburg on 11 May 2004.

Middelburg precinct

I am delighted to report that the Middelburg routes were counted again in January and that Peter du Plessis has taken over coordination of CAR in this area.

Wakkerstroom precinct

It was wonderful to finally meet Alison and Barbi after many emails and the odd phone call – especially as Alison and I started communicating about CAR in 1999! I also so appreciated meeting the CAR observers who were present at the talk I gave about the project in May, it makes such a difference to meet the people behind the names I know so well from the roadcount forms.

Alison Richardson and Barbi Forsyth, of Wits Bird Club, report:

‘The count, which took place on Saturday 31st January 2004, was great cause for celebration. At last we have found ONE Wattled Crane along one of our 7 routes in the area. In total, the 7 routes cover over 440 km of farm roads in the Wakkerstroom district. A very enthusiastic group of 17 volunteers gathered at BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) for the customary briefing session on Friday evening. It was like a gathering of old friends, as many of the volunteers return every 6 months to participate in the CAR counts. The accommodation at BLSA was very comfortable thanks to the various bird clubs (including WBC) who have contributed financially to the upgrading of the dormitory.

‘Another “first” for our weekend, was that two volunteers from the Wakkerstroom Bird Club joined us. Ann Cleal and Norman Dennett are residents in Wakkerstroom and we are delighted that they are now on board, as it has been a goal of WBC to get more of the ‘locals’ involved in the counts, thereby ensuring local support for the CAR project.’

Please continue to count Helmeted Guineafowl in this precinct and use the abbreviation **HG**.

Thank you to Lauraine Leigh, Alison and Barbi for organizing a special weekend around the CAR count.

Standerton precinct

Colin and Nalda Williams were successful in initiating another route. Kevin Armitage saw 4 Whitebellied Korhaan on this new route. Thank you to Colin for giving a talk about CAR recently to encourage participation in this project.



Free State

Brian Colahan, Ornithologist, Free State Department of Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs, reports:

‘Good weather was experienced by most of the 233 observers who surveyed 116 routes for the 2004 summer CAR in the Free State, covering a total distance of 8310 km. 19 routes (1241 km) were done in the Northwestern precinct (FW), 25 (2116 km) in the Northeastern (FN), and 71 (4886 km) in the Southern (FS). A total of 6708 birds was counted in this Province, giving an average of 80.7 birds/100 km, a lower density than that recorded for the 2003 summer survey (93.4/100 km).

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in Mpumalanga											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	SG	UK	WS	Other species
MM01	60	1910	Pieter du Plessis					13/8/			39HG
MM02	45	1910	Pieter du Plessis		1//			19/1/			
MM03	43	1910	Pieter du Plessis			19/1/					3HG
MS01	56.8	726, 725	David & Helen Gaynor		1//	50//	18//	2//			12HG, 1WC
MS02	56.3	1725, 1726	Des & Ann des Brulais	1//	1//	34//				3//	4HG
MS04	63	1259, 1260	Jeremy & Jill Brown								
MS05	56	728, 1558	Anton Linström & T Steyn	4//	1//	30//	6//	17//			3SEC, 3WC
MS06	64.3	1178	Hendrik van Wyk	7//	1//	6//		6//			12HG
MS08	36.3	1109, 1246	Bryan & Alice Rowland							2//	
MS09	55	1727, 1780	Jim McLuskie & L Theron			6//		1//			7HG
MS13	60.8	1640, 1309	Toos Dijkzeul & M Kuipers								
MT01	89	1816, 1817	Colin & Nalda Williams		19//			1/10/	8//		24HG, 14SF
MT02	62	1912	Kevin Armitage		8//			14//			4WBK
MW01	57	1337, 1370	Malcolm & Sylvia Henderson		18//	21//				40//	1WC
MW02	61.2	1511, 1750	Barbi & Alan Forsyth		2//		4//	13//		52//	2SEC
MW03	64.4	1001	Alison Richardson	2/1/	7//	16//		1//	5//	32//	3HG
MW04	68.9	1630	Mariaan Ahlers			10//	4//	30/1/	2//	14//	11HG
MW05	65.8	1548, 1818	Malcolm & Lorraine Forbes		2//	8//		4/2//		10//	6HG
MW06	58	1369, 1351	Lester Niss & Murrie Slotar		4/1//	60//		32//		6//	2HG
MW07	65.9	1913	Rob Leigh		10//	19/4/		16/7//			
Total	1189			15	76	284	32	198	7	169	123HG, 5SEC, 14SF
Birds per 100 km				1.3	6.4	23.9	2.7	16.7	0.6	14.2	4 WBK, 5 WC

MM - Middelburg precinct, MS - Steenkampsberg precinct, MT - Standerton precinct, MW - Wakkerstroom precinct



Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in northwestern Free State											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	SEC	SG	WQK	Other spp.		
FW02	67		Gary Noeth		3//		3//	8//			
FW08	55	1514	Pieter Terreblanche					16//			
FW13	54	1515, 1903	J & R-M Potgieter		1//			1//			
FW16	68	1172, 1749	Pieter & Cathy Lubbe		7/2//			12//			
FS18	51.2	1268	Herman Jordaan				4//	81/1/	1BS		
FW19	70	1160	FG Botha	7//	3//		13//	26//	1HAR		
FW26	76.4	1174	Fanie Gouws		1//		5//	7//			
FW28	55	1162	Piet van der Merwe		3//		2//	31//			
FW29	65.7	1168	Gert Claassen		4//			3//			
FW31	60.9	1175	Cecil Whitfield		3//		8/13/	27//			
FW34	77.2	1163	Des Walker		13//		40//	93//			
FW36	78	28, 1809	Johan & Amelia Hardy		7//		88//	29//	16AS		
FW43	67	1176	Robert Drewes				5//	12//			
FW45	51.9	1563, 1824	Gert & Elize Jordaan				2//	7//			
FW46	53	1624	V van Niekerk Brink	12//2	1//		27//	100//	2UK		
FW47	65.3	1890, 1891	Greg & Janine Goosen				2//	64//	1AS, 2UK		
FW51	79	1253	Koos den Houting		3//		5//	80//	4UK		
FW52	59	1827	Tony Jones		1//		14//	12//			
FW53	90	1173	Chris de Lange		4//	2//	8//	43//			
FW54	64	1176	Robert Drewes				33//	1//			
Total	1308			21	56	2	272	654	17AS, 1BS,		
Birds/100 km				1.6	4.3	0.2	20.8	50.0	1HAR, 8UK		

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in northeastern Free State												
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	SEC	SG	UK	WS	Other species
FN13	69.7	606	Thomas Wessels		2//							
FN16	55	701	Theunis Bekker	2//	6//	2//			23//	8/1/	1//	
FN24	65	719, 720	Georg & Erla Wandrag		2//	2//		1//	7//		3//	
FN26	66.5	974	Bradley Gibbons	2//1	2//				14//			
FN28	55	1892, 1893	Otto & Marguerite Nel	28//	3//	41//	3//		11/9//		12//	
FN29	66	1219, 721	John & Freda W hipp		3//	11//			2//		29//	
FN32	60.1	1072	David Weaver	4//	17//		35//	2//	12//	2//	152//	1SB
FN35	56	946	TI Wessels		8//	3//						
FN37	51	708	Derick Labuschagne		2//				10//	3//		5W QK
FN39	65	1433, 1470	Peter Millin & Geoff Potter		9//		1//		2//			
FN40	65	831	Meyer de Kock		2//				7//			8W QK
FN42	71	1517	Henk Venter		10//					7//1		
FN43	61.1	706, 1812	Harry & Christa Illsley	2//	12//	12//	2//	3//	3/2//		33//	
FN44	68.6	714	Frik Oosthuyzen		13//	34//	2//		20/28//			1AS
FN45	72.3	188, 845	H Vickery & M van Gelder	5//	3//	13//			4//	4//		
FN46	644	718, 1813	Gerhard & E van Deventer		5//	48//			2//			
FN48	58.2	605, 1820	Janet & Koos Lourens		1//							
FN49	47.5	944	Gert Maritz		3//	7//	5//		14//			1WBK
FN50	57	942	Pieter Koornhof		9//	5/12//			4/18//	2//	2//	22AS
FN51	68.1	1157, 1821	Frans & Lana du Plooy		9//				9//			
FN53	60.3	1272	JC Koster		4//	58/9//			2//			
FN55	62	703	Nacelle Collins	4//	14//	98//	26//				13//	
FN58	66	705	Paulus Fihlo	5//	8//	35//			12//	2//		
FN59	39.9	336, 1822	Louis & Maureen Mileham		2//				11//			
FN60	66	1505	Brian Barnes		2//							96W QK
Total	2116			53	151	390	74	6	226	30	245	22AS, 54BI, 26CC
Birds per 100 km				2.5	7.1	18.4	3.5	0.3	10.7	1.4	11.6	1SB, 1WBK,
												109W QK, 13WS

This is not surprising considering that the most abundant species then was the migrant White Stork, which made up 24% of the total, whereas in 2004 it formed only 5% of this. Our resident Whitequilled Korhaan was the top species in 2004, with 3166 reported (47% of the total), a density of 38.1/100 km, nearly double that for 2003 (20.7/100 km). This species was dominant in both the FW (63% of total) and FS (55%), while in the FN (where this korhaan is mostly very sparse) its place was taken by the Bald Ibis (35%). It is difficult to be sure whether there was a real increase in Whitequilled Korhaan numbers, or whether they were just better censused this year, with an increase in their visibility in sparser grass cover, following poor mid-season rains.

The highest Whitequilled Korhaan total (120) came from FS19, a new route between Korannaberg and Excelsior, being surveyed by John & Jill Moffett; three other routes yielded 100 or more of these korhaans, and another 16 had 50 or more. David Weaver's team recorded 152 White Storks along FN32, 62% of the total for FN and 49% of the Free State total; they also saw the most Crowned Cranes (35) and Blackheaded Herons (17) in the Province, and the only Stanley's Bustard in FN. The only Whitebellied Korhaan recorded in FN was spotted by Gert Maritz's team (FN49), while Hannes Blom (FS35) saw the only one in FS. Abdim's Storks appeared in all three precincts, but Fanie & Jeanette Buys (FS56) counted 180, 88% of the Free State total. Pierre Nel was fortunate to see seven Secretarybirds along FS58, as well as two Kori Bustards; Erika Schulze and Brenda Weyer (FS27) saw another two of these bustards, as well as the only two Karoo Korhaans recorded in the province.

Twelve Red Data Species were recorded in the Free State (with 2003 summer figures for comparison): Blue Crane 366 (461), Crowned Crane 74 (58), Bald Ibis 491 (358), Ludwig's Bustard 92 (138), Kori Bustard 4 (6), Stanley's Bustard 4 (0), Whitebellied Korhaan 2 (1), Blue Korhaan 377 (270), Secretarybird 97 (86), Black Stork 10 (5), Yellowbilled Stork 7 (3), and Black Harrier 5 (9).

A big thank you to Brian for organizing so many routes and writing this report.



Blackheaded Heron struggles with a knotty problem

'We witnessed a most interesting episode. There were five Blackheaded Herons on a newly mown section of grassland and one of them had found itself a really gargantuan feast in the form of a large skaapsteker snake. When we came upon it, part of the snake had already been swallowed and the rest was hanging down from the heron's bill, with a portion being hidden so that at first we didn't know which part of the snake had been eaten. After a few minutes of strenuous gulping and neck stretching, a bit more of the snake disappeared down the heron's maw and the end appeared from the grass – but what an end! It was the tail, with a big knotty kink in it, and several strands of grass clutched in the kink! The snake had apparently coiled its tail around a tussock of grass in a desperate effort to avoid being swallowed and had expired still clutching the grass. The heron gulped and swallowed until only the knotted tail and the grass were visible sticking out of the sides of its bill, and there it stuck, with about 30 cm of snake reappearing after a while this time with two kinks. Again it was swallowed, and again the end reappeared, with a kink in a different place, but the grass still *in situ*. We watched for about 15 minutes, while snake tail disappeared and was regurgitated several times. Eventually, with an almighty shake of its head, the heron got the kinks straightened out, the grass flew through the air and with a triumphant gulp and stretch of the neck, heron finally got his meal down his throat!'

Number of birds counted in January 2004 census in southern Free State												
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	LB	SEC	SG	UK	WQK	WS	Other spp.
FS02	74.5	1046	Blackie de Swardt	12//		1//	1//	2//				
FS06	75	1059	P de Villiers	62/1//		11//	8//	5//	1//	20//		
FS07	61.5	1746	Angelo Nicholas	10/1//	1//	2//	3//	15/3//	2//	23/2//		
FS08	69	6, 1429	André & Annatjie Schlemmer	2//	2//	3//	1//	3//	2//	13//		3HAR
FS09	62.6	24	Brian Colahan	2//1		2//		9//	8//	25//		
FS12	64	662, 1180	Herman & Janet Kleynhans	14//	4//	15//	3//	7//	27//	51//		1BS
FS14	66	1203	Helena Vorster				2//	2//	3//	37/3//		
FS15	70.3	1056	PL Crouse			1//				22//		
FS17	75.2	1620	Dawie Kok				1//	17//	3//	88//		
FS18	72.3	684	Louise Coetzee				1//	2//		75//		
FS19	84.6	1155	Ronél du Preez		3//		3//	14/10//	6//	59/2//		
FS20	64.7	1432	Anne McLeod		1//		6//			76//	6//	
FS21	64	682	Leon Barkhuizen				2/1//	33//		42//		
FS23	78	683	Chris Botha	14//	1//	8//	5//		6//	6//		3SB
FS27	82.8	694	Erika Schulze	2//	1//				10//	12//		2KB, 2KK
FS29	62.2	822	Stephanie Gerber						4//	46//		
FS31	76.6	259	Johan van Niekerk		1//		1//	2//	16//	50//		1BS
FS35	78.4	1258	Hannes Blom					72//	10//	56//		1WBK
FS39	77	689	Ann Hiemstra		3//			15//		16//		
FS40	73.8	1257	Steven Squires					12//		69//		
FS42	68.3	952	Kévin Preddy	2//1		4//	2//			15//		
FS43	76	1801, 1802	Christo & Mandie de Meyer		1//		1//			60//		
FS45	76	1169	Stefan du Preez					41//	19//	46//		
FS47	84	1055	Johan van den Berg		2//		2//	47/19//		56//	13//	1HAR
FS48	75	1808	Ockie Boshoff		1//			1/3//	7//	50//		
FS50	79	1058	Frans Marais		2//			7//	2//	2//	1//	
FS51	79	1049, 1796	Thea & Doep du Plessis	10//	1//	1//		5/2//	7//	12//		2YS
FS52	72.4	1900	Charles Lötter		4//			1//			12//	
FS54	57.4	1262, 818	J Liefbrig & E Beemster-Boer		14//			4//	6//	102//		1YS
FS55	50.3	1147, 1803	Koos & Marianna Uys							31//	11//	
FS56	71.8	988, 987	Stephanus & Jeanette Buys		13//			9//	9//	106//	2//	180AS
FS58	78	863	PJ Nel		6//		7//	2//		82//		
FS60	71	1152, 1289	Buks & A Roets	14//	1//	1//		1//	6//	32//		
FS62	62.2	1906	LM Grobler				2//	18//	2//	38//		
FS66	55	1399	Tom Mostert		1//					10//		
FS67	67.9	950	Daan Müller		3//			22//	6//	29//		
FS68	63.9	1051	Werner Böing				3//	1//		27//		
FS69	76	1065, 1421	D du Plessis & M la Grange		5//	1//		1//	15//	19//	14//	3BS
FS70	60.7	1150, 1151	Abrie & Heléne Bam		2//	4//	3//	11//	9//	4//		
FS73	67.5	1723, 1805	Callie & Renett Bam		3//		2//		2//			
FS77	54	1263, 1264	Henk & Laetitia van Vuuren		3//	4//		20//	10//	13//		
FS79	55.6	1397	Dewald Liebenberg				2//	4/4		37//		
FS81	56	1269	Kenny Bruwer					12//			5//	
FS82	72.9	864	Sawas Vrahimis	4/1//		7//	1//	8//		11//		
FS84	52	1297	Johan Coertzen		1//			16//		1//		1AS
FS85	79.6	285	JB Cloete		3//			6//	18/1//	34//	1//	1BS
FS86	70.3	1499	Thys Strydom		3//		3//	3//		26//		
FS87	58.2	1501, 1500	Wessel & Rina Bester		1//				11//			
FS88	61	1400	Ivan van Rooyen		1//			46//	4//	26//		4YS
FS91	60.1	641	Rick Nuttall		4//		4//		8//	89//		
FS92	68	1201	Fritz Krohn		3//		2//	3//				
FS93	52.6	1799	Peter Divall	15/4//	1//	1//		1//	4//	5//		
FS94	73.8	1048	Samuel Pauw		4//	1//		14/10//	2//	14//		
FS95	78.5	700	Johan Watson	37/1//		4//	1//	8//	2//	22//		
FS96	78	1896, 1897	Louis & Pat Fourie					4//	2//			1BI
FS99	68	1057	Lourens Goosen		1//			33//		27//		
FS101	63.5	24	Brian Colahan	6//2			9//	5//	6//	4//		
FS102	75.5	687	Riëtte Griesel	6//2	3//	5//	2//	17//	9//	22//		
FS103	55	1052	Duart Hugo							28//		
FS104	70	1395	Geoff Johnson		1//		1//	12//	20//	48//		
FS107	72	1836	John Edgar		8//		1/1//	10//		6//		
FS108	70.5	129	Allen Jones		2//			31//	1//	5//		
FS110	57.8	1396	Jeremy Jones		1//		2//	25//	6//	55//		3BS
FS111	74.1	1724, 102	W Wolfaardt & D de Swardt				2//	2//	13//	75//	1//	
FS112	60	1747	Morné Pretorius		4//		2//	11//	17//	76//		
FS113	89.3	1616	Danie Krynaauw		3//				10//	9//		
FS116	48	1645	Hannes du Toit					4//		41//		
FS117	67.3	691, 1807	Willie & Dawn Mostert							28//		
FS118	69	1907	EA de Villiers	65//1		8//	2//	4//		16//		
FS119	75	1140, 1141	Jill & John Moffett		7//			4//	2//	120//		
FS120	76.1	1889	JC Labuschagne		7//		2//	3//	5//	51//		
Total	4886			292	137	92	89	737	339	2403	66	181AS, 1BI,
Birds per 100 km				6.0	2.8	1.9	1.8	15.1	6.9	49.2	1.4	2KB, 2KK,
												1WBK, 7YS
												4HAR, 3SB