



## Animal Demography Unit

Department of Zoology  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch 7701 South Africa  
Phone: (021) 6504239/6502423  
Fax: (021) 6503434  
[www.adu.org.za](http://www.adu.org.za)  
email: [Donella.Young@uct.ac.za](mailto:Donella.Young@uct.ac.za)



The Avian Demography Unit conducts the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts in partnership with BirdLife South Africa



The Tony and Lisette Lewis Foundation South Africa



# COORDINATED AVIFAUNAL ROADCOUNTS (CAR)

## Newsletter 23

## December 2007

*"We have a choice where the globe will end up in a hundred years", Guy Midgley, South African National Biodiversity Institute*

### General

The last winter count on 28 July was certainly the most challenging since CAR began in 1993! There were strong winds in many parts of the country, flooded rivers down here in the Western Cape, snow on routes in parts of the Eastern Cape, Free State, Eastern Karoo and KwaZulu-Natal and also fires in northern KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Mpumalanga. I have so appreciated the way in which you have risen to these challenges and managed to count most routes. In a few precinct counts were postponed. Thank you to Precinct Organisers for your time in re-scheduling. A new route was established in the Augrabies Falls National Park by Elton le Roux, the Section Manager, and in Namaqualand by Timm Hoffmann.



*The team who counted the new route in Augrabies Falls National Park: clockwise from left: Rudolph Douque, Moses Andreas, Ben Skaaf, Mario Titus, Lize Wolfaardt and Beverley le Roux. Photo by Elton le Roux.*

I think people are much more aware of climate change now, especially after the devastating floods along the Garden Route and cold spring down here in the Western Cape where fruit farmers have been affected with significant crop losses and wheat farmers have struggled to get their harvest in between cold fronts. I was encouraged to read in the SAEON (South African Environmental Observatory Network) newsletter that the year 2008 has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Planet Earth. This initiative aims to ensure greater and more effective use by society of the knowledge accumulated by the world's 400,000 Earth scientists. This is particularly relevant at a time when global climate change, energy and freshwater needs are at the top of the agenda of many governments and business leaders. "These issues and others related to health and hazard mitigation for example, need to be addressed through a collaborative effort by the international community. Earth scientists are today's key players in building a sustainable world. More than 50 nations have already committed to this venture that will have as its central focus an "ubuntu" (Zulu word meaning community, family, unity) between geo-scientists and society to promote Earth Stewardship Science." For more information, visit [www.esf.org](http://www.esf.org)

Mark Edwards has created the *Hard Rain* exhibition based on Bob Dylan's song *It's a Hard Rain* that is being shown throughout the world. The real life images and text illustrate "our headlong collision with nature". The human race urgently needs to build trust and collaboration to work towards a sustainable world for future generations.

You are all making an important contribution by monitoring threatened species on farm lands (read the Karoo report to see use of some of this data). Some of you may feel very discouraged when you return after counting few or in some cases no birds. This is just as important, if not more important information than higher totals. Tim O'Connor, of the University of Witwatersrand commented that "Land transformation is the single most important driving force in environmental change in this country." Many of you are farming and already use bird friendly land management practices. Do encourage your neighbours to do likewise and also share your ideas and experience with James Harrison and I. We are compiling a booklet specifically for landowners to communicate land management practices that conserve biodiversity. Please email or phone me before the end of February.



### From ADU to ADU, Avian to Animal Demography Unit!

From 1 January 2008, the Avian Demography Unit (or the ADU for short) will become the **Animal Demography Unit** (still the ADU). What prompted this? Ever since the ADU initiated the frog atlas project a decade ago in 1998, there have been issues with the name Avian Demography Unit – "Why is the Avian Demography Unit doing the frog atlas?" This inconsistency has recently been heightened by our involvement with projects on reptiles (Southern African Reptile Conservation Assessment, effectively the reptile atlas), and with butterflies (Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessment, the butterfly atlas), and with five postgraduate students doing Ph.D. and M.Sc. projects on seals, one on rare mammals in Namibia and even one on dwarf chameleons.

Although the academic world thrives on these kinds of delightful contradictions, there is no need to perpetuate them for ever. So we will change our name, so it describes what we do better. We also change our host department at the University of Cape Town, resolving another anachronism, moving from the Department of Statistical Sciences to the **Department of Zoology**.

The **new website address will be <http://www.adu.org.za>**. We remain in the same offices, and all our contact details are unchanged.

*Les Underhill, Director, ADU*

If you are keen to participate in any of the other ADU projects, all the information is on this website. You could try bird, reptile or butterfly atlasing!

### Date of summer CAR count

The date set for the summer count is **Saturday, 26 January 2008**. Start your count 1–2 hours after sunrise and make every effort to do the count on this specified date. 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 winter count will be on Saturday, 26 July 2008.

### Count information

Thank you for checking your roadcount forms before sending them in. This has saved me much time as I had to follow up far fewer queries. The **CAR 13 Roadcount Form** and the **CAR leaflet** are enclosed. **Please indicate on the form if you are willing to receive the newsletter and form as a pdf document by email**, or download these from the website. Thank you to the 100 people who have already indicated their willingness to do this, as this saves us time and money.

As explained in the last newsletter you **no longer need to record the farm number for crane or bustard sightings**. Please keep checking that all details are filled in and do make a conspicuous note if you can't complete your route or have to do it in a different direction. Try to send in your form by the **end of March**, but always, **always keep a copy yourself!** If possible please send your form to your Precinct Organiser, as it helps if they can check for missing information immediately.

### Photographs of habitat

Please refer to the previous newsletter as this section is unchanged.

### Email addresses

It is even more important that you alert me to any changes in your email address now that some of you are receiving CAR information this way.

### Project material on the website

If you are missing any project material you can download it from the foot of the CAR webpage. Project material is available in Afrikaans as well. The **interim CAR winter count report** is also here, with colour photos, as well as



## 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:

**Korhaans:** Blue = UK

Karoo = KK

White-bellied = WBK

Black-bellied = BBK

Southern Black/Black = SBK

Northern Black/Whitequilled = NBK

**Bustards:** Kori = KB

Ludwig's = LB

Denham's/Stanley's = DB

**Storks:** Black = BS

White = WS

Abdim's = AS

Yellow-billed = YS

**Cranes:** Blue = BC

Grey Crowned = CC

Wattled Crane = WC

Southern Ground-Hornbill = GH

Southern Bald Ibis = BI

Spur-winged Goose = SG

Secretarybird = SEC

Black Harrier = HAR

Black-headed Heron = BHH

Goliath Heron = GOL

Oribi = OR

### Mistakes and misprints: search them out!

Please check the figures given for your route in this newsletter against your records, and report any discrepancies immediately.

past newsletters. We are in the process of changing the look of our website, so if you have any difficulties do let me know.

### Updating the trends of all species

Do visit the CAR webpage for trends in species, click on the species name in the table. Unfortunately, due to a crisis with the South African Reptile Conservation Assessment database, René Navarro has not been able to put the software that Hugues developed on the web yet.

### ADU observer numbers and mailing list

If those who assist you regularly would like to receive an ADU number and be on the mailing list, do send me their contact details.

### CAR Report

The eight-year CAR report is still available. The cost (including postage) is R150.

### Birds as indicators of climate change

In Newsletter 19 I highlighted the importance of birds as indicators of climate change. As birds are very mobile and often high up in the food chain changes in their distribution patterns, migratory patterns or breeding behaviour can indicate the responses of ecosystems to climate change and also land use changes.

More than 200 leading climate scientists have urged government negotiators at the United Nations Climate Conference in Bali, Indonesia, to act immediately to cut greenhouse gas emissions. In a statement, the group, which includes Professor Bruce Hewitson of UCT's Climate Systems Analysis Group, warned that there may be as little as 10 years to start reversing the global rise in emissions.

### Second-hand binoculars find new hands and eyes!

We would encourage you to find new hands/eyes for any second-hand binoculars or bird books. Carol Horne, who counts an Underberg route, recently received an Eagle award from BirdLife SA for collecting second-hand binocs and using the donated twenty pairs to take children from the local Farm Schools out birding. Carol took five schools out, three of which have been out twice. Fortunately she speaks Zulu reasonably well. The local Wildlife were most supportive and Professor Steven Piper, who has retired there, gave Carol wonderful bird charts to leave for the teachers.

### CAR support

A number of organisations support CAR by their involvement in the project, while others support the project financially – these are listed at the foot of the CAR webpage. It has been wonderful to have core funding from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). In August a review of the CAR project was conducted by SANBI and although the feedback was very positive SANBI is only able to let us know about continued funding after the end of March next year when they receive their budget.

As mentioned previously CAR received an African Bird Club (ABC) Conservation Award from the ABC that supports small conservation projects in Africa. Funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for a project, Big Birds on Farms focusing on the Cape Floristic region (CFR), has been most helpful, although this project has been far more time-consuming than envisaged.

We are most grateful for funding through the Darwin Initiative project 15/002 that we receive through our partnership with the South African Crane Working Group (SACWG) and the Zoological Society of London. While compiling my report for the annual SACWG workshop I realised that there are over 65 organisations that I interact with and we have responded to data requests from 16 organisations!



The Strand Rotary Club donated a generous amount to CAR and they invited me to give a presentation on CAR. There is always a shortfall of funding for CAR.

Descriptions of the three Grahamstown routes were written by Adrian Craig, Pat Hulley and Bo Bonnevie in *Diaz Diary*. Barbi Forsyth wrote an interesting account of their Chrissiesmeer count in *Bokmakierie*, as did Lesley Cornish. Wouter Kriel wrote an article in *Farmer's Weekly* (19/10/2007). If I have missed any other reports do let me know.

### Thank you so much for your donations, they really help!

BirdLife Border, Howick Birding Group, Inés and Duncan Cooke, Jean Spearpoint, Somerset West Bird Club, Strand Rotary Club.

### Big Birds on Farms project

In mid-July Monique Damon, from the Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) Coordination Unit, conducted a site visit here to check our progress with the Big Birds on Farms project funded by the CEPF. James and I designed an interview to be used at the Agri Megaweek outside Bredasdorp that attracts many farmers, as part of this project. This interview was designed to assess landowner's understanding and attitudes towards conserving biodiversity on farms and invite ideas regarding practical land management practices. I circulated this questionnaire to colleagues for comment, and had it translated into Afrikaans. In mid-August I attended the Overberg Integrated Conservation Group quarterly meeting in Bredasdorp and also distributed the *How green is your footprint?* pamphlets produced by CAPE. Following this I took photos for a presentation entitled *Big birds on farms – what's the attraction?* about CAR and the role that landowners and land management practices can play in conserving biodiversity at the Agri Megaweek later in August. I was grateful to be given the opportunity to be part of the Overberg Crane Group stall at the Agri Megaweek, as this enabled me to approach farmers for interviews more naturally. I was encouraged by the response, interest and some helpful suggestions. Farmers were very appreciative of the books (most were donated by the ADU, two copies of the *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa* field guide were also bought) that were prizes for lucky number interviews. I also distributed the *How green is your footprint?* pamphlet and poster.

I am thankful to Wouter Kriel, who attended the Agri Megaweek presentation, for writing an article *How to save the big birds on your farm* in the *Farmer's Weekly*, dated 19 October 2007. I would really value **any further suggestions from farmers about best practice in land management for the stewardship of biodiversity, especially as James and I are compiling a booklet specifically for use by landowners.**

In September I submitted an article for the Overberg Ads Agri magazine, including the ten measures that can be taken on farms to conserve biodiversity and also requesting any further ideas from farmers. I wrote this article in Afrikaans, with Marja Wren-Sargent's help, especially as at the Megaweek the vast majority preferred Afrikaans.

I have not had success in sourcing funding for the publication of the proposed booklet and poster yet. **Please contact me if you know of potential sponsors.**

### Ringed birds

Ringed Blue Cranes were seen on OV04 and OV12 and one ringed Wattled Crane on KM01. Do look out for colour-ringed cranes or other species at all times and report details to SAFRING. Doug Harebottle and Res Altwegg, also here at ADU, are conducting a study on Hadedas Ibis here in the Cape; so watch for ringed Hadedas too. For further details, see the ADU website.

### Dead birds reported

Brian Byers, who counts KG02, received a report of a dead Ground Hornbill at about 30 km, after his count.

**South African Crane Working Group [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)**

Early in September I attended the SACWG workshop just outside Howick, where I presented the updated CAR results for the three crane species including population trends, habitat use and distribution. In addition I included the measures that landowners can take on farms to conserve biodiversity. SACWG's response was very positive. I was very grateful for René Navarro's and Hugues Leray's hard work developing software summarising the CAR data and developing summary graphics. It was also helpful to meet some of the new SACWG Field Officers with whom I liaise. This presentation was written up for publication.

**SACWG urgently need colour-ring re-sightings**, so do keep an eye on those **crane legs at all times of the year** and if you have a telescope or digital camera these do help. **We can learn so much from ring re-sightings about movement patterns and life history.** If you have any information about roost sites let us know, as this would be most useful information.

SACWG has established a few routes in each province, or where possible are using existing CAR routes, that they are monitoring on a monthly basis using the CAR method. It will be very helpful to have monthly data.

Sadly Leon-Jaques Theron has resigned as SACWG Manager. I have appreciated working with Leon, and his support of the CAR project. We wish him well in the future. In January Helen Prinsloo will become the new SACWG Coordinator.

### Ground Hornbill Working Group [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)

Southern Ground Hornbills were only recorded on a Kruger route. In September, on request, I sent CAR data (GPS coordinates of over 60 sightings on 19 routes) needed for applying for an uplisting of the Red Data status of

this species to IUCN. Do send in **any sightings at any time of year**. You can post sightings directly on the website [www.natworld.org](http://www.natworld.org)

### Thank you!

The petrol cost continues to rise and we deeply appreciate your generosity and commitment to counting regularly. A big thank you to Precinct Organisers who ensure that the counts happen, gather and check forms and encourage you. It is wonderful that Prideel Majiedt has captured all the new routes that I have onto GIS! I have really appreciated Denise Lesch's accurate capture of all the data for this last count. Thank you to Linda Tsipa, for saving me time by editing the tables. Thank you to Marja Wren-Sargent for fitting in typesetting this newsletter, including snowflakes!

I have been coordinating this project for ten years now and have so appreciated working with such a wonderful group of people and seeing the project develop. James Harrison has managed CAR throughout this time, but is now leaving the ADU. I have learnt so much from James and will certainly miss his significant role in the ADU. We will work on the Big Birds on Farms project together a while longer.

I will be on leave from 21 December and for the first two weeks of January. My husband and I are moving to Villiersdorp in mid-February, where we will run a small Retreat house (our youngest begins studying at UCT). I will continue to coordinate CAR from there, coming in to UCT mid-week.

Season's greetings and kind regards to you all,

*Donella Young,*  
Project Coordinator

## ❄ ❄ Count Results Winter 2007 ❄ ❄

### Mpumalanga

*A reminder to count Oribi while scanning for CAR birds.*

#### Steenkampsberg precinct

David Gaynor reported that "Conditions for the count were appalling, with sub-zero temperatures and wind speeds estimated at + 50 km/hr. Despite the weather, the count was typical for our winter count, with six target species being recorded. The numbers showed above average counts for Secretarybird, Black-headed Heron and Helmeted Guineafowl, with Bald Ibis, Spur-winged Goose and cranes and bustards collectively down." I really appreciate the perseverance and commitment of observers in this and other precincts where bird numbers and species are low.

*Do continue to count Helmeted Guineafowl on these routes, using the abbreviation HG, and also fill in activity and location (i.e., the last two columns) for Southern Bald Ibis, as well as for cranes and bustards.*



*The C-C-Cold Wits Bird Club volunteers! Left to right: R and L Leigh, J Raubenheimer, L Cornish, E Bleksley, R Dunn, B Carstens, G Dunn (seated), A and B Forsyth, M Ueckermann, P Strydom (host), M Witcomb and J Isom. Photo by Johann Solomon.*

#### Middelburg precinct

Brian and Margaret Taylor faced strong winds counting MM01.

#### Standerton precinct

Colin Williams recorded 70 Blue Cranes and two Grey Crowned Cranes on MT01.

#### Wakkerstroom precinct

Wakkerstroom seems to have incredibly challenging weather! It was freezing in July (-14°C once) and the district was hit by high winds three days before the count, which caused serious damage. It tore entire roofs off and felled huge trees. In addition there were three large fires so on the count day there were large smouldering areas. Three routes therefore had to be counted early the following week. Bald Ibis were seen on all the routes but one.

#### Chrissiesmeer precinct

There were also strong winds in this precinct. Barbi Forsyth, the Precinct Organiser, wrote that on Friday evening she started "to feel like

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Mpumalanga											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	HG	SG	UK	Other species
MC01	74.1	1511	Barbi Forsyth		6//				12//	11//	1OR, 1SEC
MC02	64.2	2197	Mike Witcomb		2//			1//			1HG
MC03	56.1	2057	Bill Naude		1//	2//			21//		
MC04	67.8	2230, 1913, 1985	Lesley Cornish & Rob & L Leigh			7//	3//	32//	5//		1OR, 2SEC, 1YS
MC05	68.8	2232	Johann Solomon		1//	3//					
MC06	68.6	2231	Ronald Dunn		7//	1//		3//			
MC07	79	2229	René Hoenderdos		1//			15//			
MK01	56.3	550	Brian Guerin					27//	9//		3NS
MK02	62.5	2228	John Broodryk								1BBK, 1SEC
MK03	53.7	2161, 2176	Peter Lawson & Siegfried Wolff								1CF, 5GH, 3NS
MM01	54	1968, 1969	Brian & Margaret Taylor		15//				375/2//		
MS01	50.9	726, 725	David & Helen Gaynor		1//			130//	2//		2SEC
MS02	56.7	1725, 1726, 1911	Des & Ann des Brulais & N Champion		1//						2SEC
MS04	62.9	2096, 2097	Trevor & Sharon Schaefer		1//						
MS05	55.1	728, 1558	Anton Linström & Tommie Steyn		9//						
MS06	63	1178	Hendrik van Wyk		3//				1//		
MS07	56	1109, 1246	Bryan & Alice Rowland		1//			95//			5OR
MS09	54.5	1927, 1928	John & Anita Meiring	1//	2//	2//		10//	6//		
MT01	85	1816, 1817	Colin & Nalda Williams	70//	3/1//	1//	2//	196//	1/2//	11//	2SEC, 1SS
MT02	64.8	1912	Kevin Armitage		2//			197//	15//		3NBK, 3SS
MT03	35	1986, 2093	Dries & Bonita Schoeman		2//			89//	3//		1NBK, 5SS
MT04	36.9	1986, 2093	Dries & Bonita Schoeman		3/1//			159//	9/1//		1SEC
MW01	57	2160, 2004	Helen Whiteley & Bob Traynor		2//	2//					
MW03	65	361	Judy-Lynn Wheeler		8//	28//	4//	12//			3SEC
MW06	58.4	2199, 2162	Penny Fox & DA Milstein		1//	15//	2//		43//		
MW07	68.2	361, 1409	Judy-Lynn Wheeler & John Burchmore		11//	25//		20//		20//	1SEC
MW08	93	2238, 1409	Richard Whiteley & John Burchmore		4//	34/4//		121//			1DB
MW09	87	1867, 2003	John McAllister & Ann Cleal	2//	15//	29/1//	35//	30//	228//		6SEC, 1WBK
MW10	51.4	361, 1409	Judy-Lynn Wheeler & John Burchmore		1//		2//	71//			2SEC
<b>Total</b>	<b>1806</b>			<b>73</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1208</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1BBK, 1CF, 1DB, 6NS, 4NBK, 7OR, 23SEC, 9SS, 1YS, 1WBK</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	
MC - Chrissiesmeer precinct, MK - Kruger, MM - Middelburg precinct, MS - Steenkampsberg precinct, MT - Standerton precinct, MW - Wakkerstroom precinct											



Chicken Licken – only it wasn't an acorn that was falling on my head; whole branches of trees were breaking off and cascading onto the tin roof of the cottage where I tried to sleep. The constant 'drumming' was almost as proficient as the Edinburgh Tattoo." Lesley Cornish wrote an amusing account of their adventure entitled 'C-C-C-Chrissiesmeer' in *Bokmakierie*. He describes driving back worrying about their birding reputations, after seeing so few birds – only to discover that they saw the most!

This Important Bird Area certainly seems to be under threat. I read of sewerage leaking into Lake Chrissies in a report by Christelle Pauw, the SACWG Regional Coordinator of the Anglo American Crane Conservation Project.

Please continue to count *Helmeted Guineafowl (HG)* in this precinct.

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Gauteng							
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BHH	SG	HG	Other species
GB01	20.4	931, 2183	Francois & Marianne Wolfaardt				
GB02	30.5	931, 2183	Francois & Marianne Wolfaardt			19//	1NBK
GB03	52	2135	Peter Huggins	2//		253//	3SEC
GB04	45	1814	Billy Malatji			8//	
GB05	21.4	2104	Pieta Compaan				
GB06	48	613	Craig Whittington-Jones	8//		293//	1SEC
GB07	56	1764	Sean West				
GC01	19	2046	Willem de Lange			15//	18NBK
GC02	60.2	1651, 1652	John & Moira Randell	1//		79//	
GC03	82	2046	Willem de Lange			56//	3NBK
GC04	72	613, 1538	Craig Whittington-Jones & L Randell	8//		63//	1NBK, 1SEC
GC05	62.3	1651, 1652	John & Moira Randell	2//	21//		1NBK
GD01	62	77	Ian Smith	3//		155//	2SEC
GD02	53	2166	Neville Cornish		34//	77//	
GD03	32	2145	Diane Rose				
GD04	52.9	2146	Frans Rossouw	1//	3//	22//	
GH01	54	2045	Rouxdene Deysel	3//	1//	44//	1NBK, 1UK
GH02	71.2	2226	D Koen	5//	10//	105//	2NBK, 1SEC
GH03	52	2101	Hein Pienaar	3//	1//	40//	1SEC
GH04	50	1987	Coral Birss	3//		56//	1NBK, 1SEC
GH05	56.7	2039, 2038	Johnny Hennop				3NBK, 2RWF, 6SS
GM01	50	2102	Leon Labuschagne			169//	
GM02	20	2102	Leon Labuschagne			61//	
GW01	57.3	2099	Piet Muller			20//	
GW02	48.5	2152	Mags Pillay	1//			1NBK
<b>Total</b>	<b>1228</b>			<b>41</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1535</b>	<b>6SS, 1UK, 32NBK,</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>125.0</b>	<b>2RWF, 10SEC</b>
GB - Bronkhorstspuit, GC - Carletonville, GD - Devon, GH - Heidelberg, GM - Moloto, GW - World Heritage Site							

### Kruger precinct

Brian Guerin, the Kruger Precinct Organiser, described a strong wind and much smoke blanketing the Lowveld as a result of fires. I am glad that Peter Lawson saw four adult Southern Ground Hornbills with one juvenile.

\* \* \*

### Gauteng

All 25 routes were counted within six precincts. It is encouraging that 10 Secretarybirds were seen and that the first sighting of a Blue Korhaan was made on a CAR count in this province. Francois Wolfaardt wrote that at one point he was almost blown off the back of his bakkie and on another occasion he could not even hold his binoculars still enough to focus on an Egyptian Goose in flight! A special thank you to observers in Gauteng where the species diversity and numbers are very low.

Do remember to count the *Helmeted Guineafowl (HG)*. Thank you to Craig for all his work keeping CAR running.

\* \* \*



### KwaZulu-Natal

Prior to the count there were extensive fires on some of the Midlands routes. In Northern KZN there was the aftermath of runaway fires on Friday and the CAR day. Frikk Lemmer, of KZN Wildlife, who counts near Paulpietersburg was only able to count at a later date. KL11 was also counted late due to terrible fires.

The Black-headed Heron density was at its highest ever this last winter, possibly due to the extent of burnt veld. The Grey Crowned Crane density was at its second highest, not surprising as Kobus Nel saw 462 Grey Crowned Cranes on his route, KG08. Bald Ibis densities appear to have increased slightly over the period that we have been monitoring.

Drummond and Gloria Densham had the incredible experience of seeing 20 Wattled Cranes and 42 Blue Cranes in the veld together on KM01! One Wattled Crane was ringed. Oribi were seen on most of the Midlands routes, with 15 on KM08, near Greytown, as well as a single Wattled Crane. There was extensive fire damage on KM06, a route that yielded 43 Black-headed Herons! Chris Thomas saw three Wattled Cranes on KU01, as well as 35 Bald Ibis. Malcolm Rivett remarked on how wonderful it was to see the Blue Cranes coming back. He never saw any for the first few years of counting KG03, but now they are a regular occurrence. He also noted that there had been some wetland restoration and now there are Wattled Cranes in these wetlands,

but they have not been visible from the road yet. There were 10 Wattled Cranes on KG05. I am grateful to Brian Byers for taking over coordination of this precinct.

On the birdnet, concern has been expressed that Francolins in KZN may be following the same path of decline as the *Helmeted Guineafowl*. I checked the CAR data using Hugues' software and there are certainly only occasional sightings of all the species monitored, apart from Swainson's Spurfowl which is recorded regularly in the Northern Region. For all other species the densities are less than 1/100 km in recent years.

Early in September I gave a presentation to the Midlands CAR participants, as well as some CAR observers from further afield. It was wonderful to see regular observers, as well as new participants.

Do continue to count Oribi and use the following abbreviations for gamebirds: **HG** for *Helmeted Guineafowl*, **CF** for *Crested Francolin*, **SS** for *Swainson's Spurfowl*, **NS** for *Natal Spurfowl*, **RNS** for *Red-necked Spurfowl*, **RWF** for *Red-winged Francolin*, **GWF** for *Grey-winged Francolin* and **SHF** for *Shelley's Francolin*.

Thank you to Tim Wood for overseeing CAR in KZN.

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in KwaZulu-Natal												
Route	km	ADU no.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	DB	HG	SEC	SG	Other species
KD01	81	2084, 2085	Henery Bugden		2//				55//			
KD02	59	736, 1179	Tony & Val Cross			10//				1//	30//	
KD04	50	1255, 1745	Dennis & Sonja Holmes		2//	5//					4//	
KD05	55	677, 1716	Paul Garner & Margie Post		6//		3//		125//			5SS
KD06	47.9	1709, 1755	Myles & Carol Ellerker		7//	8//	1//	1//	35//		3//	4WBK
KD07	71	909	Heino Wellmann		4//	11//				1//		2BS
KD11	53	611	Tony Roberts		2//	1//				1//		
KD12	63	2172	Jeff Hilliar			11//			30//			
KG02	53.4	623, 1073	Brian Byers & Pat Lowry	2//	6//		124//	1//	93//	1//	29//	1WC
KG03	53.3	626, 1779	Malcolm & Sarah Rivett	14//	4//		90//	6//			17//	
KG04	73.1	627	Bob Williams	2//	2//		41//		113//	2//	36//	
KG05	55.3	629	'Stooks' Wilton	2//	43//		65//		22//		16//	10WC
KG06	58	623	Brian Byers		6//		49//	1//	159//	2//	19//	
KG07	47	630	Kobus Nel		3//		462//				93//	
KG09	11	427, 428	Bruce & Pat Whittle	8//	10//	1//	1//				44//	8//
KG10	36.3	1240, 2141	Ed & Myra Wells				3//					
KL01	92.4	50, 808, 142	Ken Gordon, Tony Clarkson & Neil Smith	2//	5//	2//	5//		110//	1//	9//	6SS, 2WBK
KL03	64	1602	Rose Laatz		6//	3//	2//					
KL11	34	814	Ann Gray		3//				7//			
KM01	77.4	1904, 1905	Drummond & Gloria Densham	42//	16//		2//				38//	6OR, 25WC
KM02	65.4	1887, 1888	Alan & Bernardine Turner		35//	8//	6//				14//	1OR, 1WS
KM03	96.9	167	Pamela Nicol	2//	11//		5//	1//	12//	1//	3//	3OR
KM04	35	498	Margie Sleight		6//						10//	2OR
KM05	78.3	1581	Evelyn Hughes		21//	2//	8//				161//	1WC
KM06	91	1719, 1720	Erwin & Helen Burmester		43//	1//			50//	1//	1//	
KM07	69.7	474	Shirley Bennett		8//	1//					1//	
KM08	58.2	187, 1828, 2233, 2234	Monte & Eunice Pera & J & L de Lange	36//	16//		2//	4//	25//	1//	72//	15OR, 2WC
KN01	62.3	927, 1756, 924	Johan & Christine de Villiers & H Behrens			7//						
KN03	53.8	1609, 1754	Andre & Hettie Bouwer		9//	6//			48//	1//		2WBK
KN04	48	925	Alan Schwikkard		1//						45//	22//
KN05	38.4	1717	Nic & Jean van Helsdingen		5//							1BBK
KN06	52	2036, 2037	Klaus & Miemie Heyer		8//		4//	1//	16//		1//	
KO01	51.3	425, 1529, 1963	Gavin & Sandi Calverley & Sally Calitz									
KP01	52.9	1792	Frik Lemmer		8//	39//	2//				157//	
KU01	68	429, 2015	Chris Thomas & Gayle Ellison	2//	16//	35//	19//	1//		1//	7//	3WC
KU02	66	1741	Carol Horne	4//	9//		8//	2//	36//	2//	67//	3OR, 2WC
KV01	79.5	1683	AP Keeve		14//	7//	12//	6//		2//	142//	2BBK
KV02	60.5	2016	Paul & Ria Steffensen		5//	2//						5RWF
KV03	61	1566	Darryl Baxter		3//	23//		2//	88//	2//	2//	
KV04	34.6	1722, 1790, 1791	Charl Oberholster, A Steyn & D MacLennan								1//	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2358</b>			<b>82</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1024</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>3BBK, 2BS, 30OR, 11SS, 44WC, 1WS, 5RWF, 8WBK</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>3.5</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>44.6</b>	
KC - Creighton precinct, KD - Dundee precinct, KE - Escourt precinct, KG - East Griqualand precinct, KL - Ladysmith precinct, KM - Midlands												

**Western Cape  
Swartland precinct**

Although it didn't rain on the CAR day it was not possible to complete three routes, SW03, SW13 and SW16, due to flooded rivers or drifts. The count followed much rain in the region and I was very grateful that I had arranged to borrow my brother's 4x4!

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Swartland							
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	SG	Other spp.
SW01	76	1970	Fiona & Les Hellmann	28//	1//	122//	
SW02	80.7	503, 1077	Sean & Louise Tucker	4//	1//	19//	
SW03	43.9	574, 1080	Sylvia Ledgard & Pat Waddell	10//	6/1/	23//	
SW04	63	1286, 1287	Philbert & Henrietta Melck	366//		18//	
SW05	59	163, 1239	Keith & Rena Harrison	2/1/		157//	
SW06	72.7	1359	Reg le Roux & team	9/2/	4//	90/2/	
SW07	49.2	2076, 1122, 1899	Brigid de Kock & Linda Reynolds	38//	10//	55//	
SW08	66	1474, 106	Bruce MacKenzie, Mel Tripp & F Ellmore	133//	1//	47//	
SW09	59	1135, 1467	Jens & Diane Oelbützel	49//	9//	97//	
SW10	64	2033	Jaco van Deventer	20//	1//	55//	
SW11	65.5	479, 1081	David & Anne Dixon	2//	2//	4//	1SBK
SW12	80.9	2207, 2208	Nicolaas & Erna Mostert	26//		23//	1SBK
SW13	34.8	991, 2174, 2175	Donella, Dennis & Belinda Henwood	6/2/	8/1/	110//	
SW14	52.7	506	Riaan & Marika van der Walt	19//		185//	
SW15	56.1	2006, 1135, 1467	Angela, Jens & Diane Oelbützel	31//		55//	1SEC, 2WS
SW16	42.3	2051, 1191	Cheryl Seeley & Ian Mileham	5//	1//	11//	
<b>Total</b>	<b>966</b>			<b>753</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>2WS, 1SEC, 2SBK</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>78.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>111.1</b>	

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Overberg										
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	DB	KK	SEC	SG	Other spp.
OV01	58.6	619	Patrick Hurly & Yahkat Barshap	75/3/	2//				59//	2HAR
OV02	63.3	1083, 801, 802	Anne Price & Keith & Ann McAdam	59//					66//	
OV03	48.2	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	44//					29//	
OV04	26.5	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	161/11/					26//	
OV05	69.6	228	John Carter	119//	8/1/		8//	2//	19//	
OV06	52.8	1655, 2110, 2112, 2113	Stuart & Ruth McLennan, J & M Jones	64//	6//	33//	2//		52//	1HAR
OV07	69.1	496, 2184	Ken Price & Hester Snyman	173/1/	5//	8//	2//		26//	
OV08	71.8	492, 1075	Keith & Michele Moodie	1039/14/	4//	12//			35//	1SBK
OV09	46	234, 239	Craig Thom & Bruce Squire	442//	1//	2//			46//	
OV10	57	56	Pieter Albertyn & Ren Searle	20//	2//				6//	
OV11	62	2243	Sarah Foyle & Helen Vale	67/2/		6//				
OV12	57.4	215, 216, 1380, 1381	Heather Busby, Dawn, Gill & Rory	212//	2//	13//			30//	1HAR
OV13	70	520, 229, 672,	Jill Mortimer, Inés & D Cooke & R Lind	228/8/	25//		16//		44//	3SBK
OV14	90	123, 1922	John Coats & Maureen Aucamp	461//	3//	4//	10//		4//	1HAR
OV15	58	255, 256	Dave & Sue Whitelaw	70/9/	3//	3//			19//	
OV16	62.3	249, 1379	Pierre van den Berg & Willem du Toit	350//	14//	6//			38//	
OV17	62	878	Lee Burman & team	210//	6//	3//		1//	117//	
OV18	45	240, 1712	Wicus & Hanlie Leeuwner	112//	2//				26//	
OV19	63	219, 1632	Ronnie Crowther & Christine Wallace	45//	5//	7//	11//		79//	
OV20	57.2	1325, 1441	Neville & Alison Passmore	272/2/	7//				131//	
OV21	63.7	2136, 2181	Wilson & Christine Terblanche	32//	3//	12//			31//	
OV23	58.8	1062, 1128	Andrew & Lynne Marshall	5//	12//				87//	
OV24	57.5	636, 1212	Mick D'Alton & Gerald Swanepoel	85//	4//	17//		1//	175//	
OV26	19.2	871	Jeffrey Arizon & 7 learners	33//					3//	7SBK
OV27	67.3	2213	David & Jennifer Milne	2//	2//				55//	
OV28	41	1462, 1825	Tonia & Flip Schonken	6//	2//				19//	
OV29	26	213, 214	Tom & Freya Brett	20//				1//	6//	
OV33	61.8	1463	Frans & Christie de Graaff & family	45//	3/1/	1//			26//	
OV36	34.5	1469	Avril Young	179/2/	10//	1//			46//	1HAR
OV37	36	1777, 1778, 2169	Rae & Ann Gordon & Ken Winterton	13//	1//				5//	6WS
<b>Total</b>	<b>1656</b>			<b>4695</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1305</b>	<b>6WS, 6HAR, 11SBK</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>283.6</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>78.8</b>	
OV34	61	1550, 1551	Heynè & Sharon Brink		1//	1//			51//	4HAR, 2SBK

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Western Cape								
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	KK	SG	Other species
WB01	65	343	Maria Andela & Albert Oosthuizen			20/6/		
WB03	58	1909	Stefan & Madelaine Theron	5//		2//		1BS, 1KB
WC01	43.1	1291	George Hattinigh & Clif MacLarty					1DB, 2SBK
WK02	42.6	1003	Andrew Schofield	13//			21//	2DB, 1HAR
WK03	38	1962	Keith Poole & Bruce Milne	1//	3//		2//	
WK04	45.7	2138, 2139, 2182	Laurel Bloch, G Schütte & M Powell	60//	1//		1//	3HAR, 2SBK
WK05	17	2138, 2139, 2182	Laurel Bloch, G Schütte & M Powell					
WN01	48	2222	Timm Hoffman				3//	
WU01	51	1392	Johnny de Jaar & Lakes' Bird Club		1//			1BS, 1LB
WU02	58	539	Jonas Witbooi	302//	2//	1//	2//	
WU03	50	540, 2062	JP Esau & Pat Nurse		2//	4//	2//	
WU04	34	1606	Natalie Baker & Barend le Roux		1//			5DB
WU05	70.4	297, 1520, 1521	Mike & Gill Euston-Brown & Barry	206//	3//		1//	15DB
WU06	13	1606	Natalie Baker & Barend le Roux	2//	3//		7//	
WU07	76	2173, 2206	Jan Makampies & Malcolm Botha	11//			6//	7SBK, 17WS
WW01	79.3	2054, 2127	Margaret Kiely & Maureen Beech		3//		11//	
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>			<b>600</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2BS, 23DB, 1KB, 1LB, 17WS, 4HAR, 11SBK</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>76.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.1</b>	
WB - Beaufort West precinct, WC - Calitzdorp precinct, WK - Little Karoo, WU - Uniondale precinct, WW - Wildemere precinct, WN - Namaqualand								

Sean and Louise Tucker noted that the start of SW02 was becoming much more developed with housing. Bruce MacKenzie and Mel Tripp had the highlight of 133 Blue Cranes on their route, SW08, while Philbert and Henrietta Melck had the incredible total of 366 Blue Cranes. Despite the weather the density of cranes was the third highest since counting began in this region. Not surprisingly the Spur-winged Goose density was also the third highest.

Nicolaas Mostert, who counts SW12 and grew up in this area 30 years ago, said there used to be no Helmeted Guineafowl, no Spur-winged Geese, no Blue Cranes but many Ludwig's Bustard (groups of them). His father used to shoot them for eating. He remarked that the dams on the Berg River had made a big difference. There were many more Yellow-billed Duck, but there is not as much fresh water now.

Jan Hofmeyr recorded 28 White Storks on the pig farm on the CAR day.

**Overberg precinct**

Although it was sunny in the Overberg, there was a strong, icy wind in parts and much water lying about after heavy rains the previous week. The highest Blue Crane total was on Keith and Michelle Moodie's route (1053), OV08. When studying the GIS layer showing habitat provided by SANBI for the May workshop, I was struck by how many little wetlands appear near this route that regularly has a high density of cranes. Craig Thom's route, OV09, which has a large wetland, had the second highest

total of Blue Cranes (442). The overall density in this precinct was the second highest. The highest was in winter 2005, a count that followed extensive flooding in April 2005. There were high Karoo Korhaan numbers on OV13, 14 and 19 and interestingly the overall density was one of the highest ever. The Spur-winged Goose density was at an all-time high, while numbers for the other species were among the lowest, probably as birds were sheltering from the icy wind and not as visible as usual.

On OV13 the heronry at 4 km was in use again with about 10 nests. The Spoonbills nesting there last time seemed to have been evicted. Lee Burman had to do an 18 km detour because of a flooded river, but had the highest Blue Crane count (210) ever on OV17. Jeffrey Arizon, who counts a route with Teslaalsdal Primary children, had to do a 25 km detour, also due to flooding over a low level bridge! Ken Price, who has counted OV07 since 1998, remarked on the increasing number of cattle relative to sheep in recent years. I have certainly also been aware of this and this was confirmed by farmers in the region. Large proportions of the land were cultivated with cereals or canola.

If you need to contact Bronwyn Botha, the Overberg Crane Group fieldworker, phone 082 676 1734. I am very grateful that Inés and Duncan Cooke, of Somerset West Bird Club, can take over coordination of this precinct, as I am not keeping up with the pace of CAR.

You are a wonderful group of people; I will miss phoning you regularly!



The team gathered by Cape Nature to count WU07. Back: Elizabeth Petersen, Mario Maya, Jan Makampies, Kenneth Maya, David Snyman. Crouched in front: Koos Maya, Werner Kannemeyer. Photo by Malcolm Botha.

Number of birds counted in July census 2007 in north-western Free State									
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	NBK	SEC	SG	Other spp.
FW13	56.2	1515, 1903	Johann & Rosa-Marie Potgieter			1//			
FW16	68	1172, 1749	Pieter & Cathy Lubbe			1//			
FW18	50.5	1268	Herman Jordaan			29//			
FW26	76.4	1174	Fanie Gouws			8//			
FW28	55.5	1162, 1515	Piet van der Merwe & J Potgieter			4//			
FW29	62	1168	Gert Claassen						
FW31	65.4	1175	Cecil Whitfield			21//		1//	
FW34	77.2	1163	Des Walker		3//	72//			
FW36	82.6	28, 1809	Johan & Amelia Hardy		2//	22//		1//	1BS
FW39	53	2118	Hennie Pretorius			19//			
FW42	53.6	1646	Andre Hoffmann		4//	2//		3//	
FW45	50.1	1563, 1824	Gert & Elize Jordaan			5//			
FW50	68.1	1938, 1939	Helm & Elizabeth Lekaota			23//	1//	3//	17WS
FW51	80	1253	Koos den Houting	115//		39//		5//	3UK
FW52	53.3	2201	Mary Littlewood			6//		255//	
FW53	90	1173	Chris de Lange			13//			
FW55	63.3	1936, 1937	Andries & Leanda Nel				2//		
FW57	74	1958	Joey Knoesen			15//			
FW58	63.9	2239	Robyn Kadis			3//		2//	4UK
<b>Total</b>	<b>1243</b>			<b>115</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1BS, 7UK,</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>9.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>17WS</b>

### Beaufort West precinct

In contrast to this abundance of water in the Overberg, the Beaufort West routes were very dry. Stefan Theron noted that the last good rains fell in August last year. Maria Andela commented that Karoo Korhaans are often seen in groups of 3 at this time of year, probably last season's fully grown juvenile with both parents. Nineteen Karoo Korhaan were recorded on their route, WB01, within 3 km.

### Little Karoo precinct

Four routes were counted in this precinct with the help of the Robertson Bird Club.

### Uniondale precinct

Jonas Witbooi, John Bircher and Sue Brandt saw 302 Blue Cranes on WU02, of which 250 were in a single flock. Mike Euston-Brown and his team recorded 206 Blue Cranes on WU05. Some were lying down sheltering from the icy wind. On WU04 Natalie Baker and Barend le Roux found an unusual trap cage that had been built by a landowner to catch bush pig. Natalie highlighted the importance of many observant eyes out on CAR days. I am delighted that Jan Makampies and his team from the Ruitersbos section of Outeniqua Nature Reserve invited learners from Brandwacht and Dennenprag Primary Schools in the surrounding communities to count. They had the surprise of seeing 17 White Storks!

of Outeniqua Nature Reserve invited learners from Brandwacht and Dennenprag Primary Schools in the surrounding communities to count. They had the surprise of seeing 17 White Storks!

### Calitzdorp precinct

There was a strong, icy wind and birds numbers were very low.

\* \* \*

### Free State

Brian D. Colahan, Principal Nature Conservation Scientist: Ornithology, Free State Tourism, Environment and Economic Affairs, reports:

The results for 103 routes, surveyed by 184 Free Staters, have so far been received for the 2007 winter CAR: a grand total of 6769 km was covered, 1243 km in the Northwestern precinct (FW, 19 routes), 1360 km in the Northeastern (FN, 22), and 4166 km in the Southern (FS, 62). The strong winds over most of the FN were probably the main reason for the low density of birds there (33/100 km), compared with the 60/100 km the previous winter, when conditions were fine. These winds caused the spread of extensive veld fires and Paulus Fihlo had to abandon his count just west of Harrismith because of the hazardous conditions towards the end of his route (at which stage he had seen 83 Southern Bald Ibises, 44% of the total for this species, which dominated the FN with 14/100 km). Conditions were good over most of the FW, where 57 birds/100 km were recorded and where Northern Black Korhaan (23/100 km) and Spur-winged Goose (22/100 km) were once again dominant, followed by Blue Crane (9.3/100 km), but all (115) of which were seen by Koos den Houting, just south of Edenville. Although several routes in the southern half of the FS had at least patches of snow (some in the far south-west were blanketed), and several route leaders reported starting in sub-zero temperatures, count conditions were mostly good and 80 birds/100 km were recorded. Northern Black Korhaan (24/100 km), Blue Crane (20/100 km) and Blue Korhaan (15/100 km) were dominant, with the last species continuing to do well in this Province. Unfortunately, 75% of the Blue Cranes were along just three of the routes in the southwestern section of the precinct, while 70% of the 213 Ludwig's Bustards were along just two routes, with 84 of them seen by Kevin Preddy along his route SW of Jacobsdal, an unusual concentration for this area. The Grey Crowned Crane is now rare in the southern Free State, with only the occasional pair or singleton recorded during CAR, so Abrie and Helène Bam were thrilled to see a flock of 13 along FS73, northeast of Zastron.

Many thanks to Brian Colahan for all his time coordinating CAR.

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in southern Free State											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	LB	NBK	SEC	SG	UK	Other spp.
FS06	73.2	700	Johan Watson	103/12/		1//	6//		1//	9//	
FS07	61.2	1746	Angelo Nichas		2//		10//			5//	
FS09	61.2	24	Brian Colahan	2//		1//	17//			23//	
FS12	56	662, 1180	Herman & Janet Kleynhans	224//	1//	14//	2//	2//		34//	
FS14	75	2249	Marietjie Jordan	1//		5//	23//				
FS15	71	1056	Flip Crouse				4//	1//			
FS17	74.3	1620, 204	Dawie & Johan Kok		1//		21//	2//		18//	
FS18	74	684	Louise Coetzee	20//	2//	4//	21//		18//	6//	
FS19	88	2241	Gela Naude				26//		1//		
FS20	64.7	1432, 2171	Anne McLeod & Sandra Bishop				41//	1//			
FS21	59	682	Leon Barkhuizen				15//	1//	12//		
FS27	80.3	24	Brian Colahan	36//		3//	13//	2//		20//	
FS31	71.8	259	Johan van Niekerk			16//	2//			12//	
FS35	80	1258	Hannes Blom				12//	1//	11//	17//	
FS40	67	2107	Comelia Squirra				18//	2//		4//	
FS42	68.9	952	Kevin Preddy	8//		84//	9/1/	2//			
FS43	78	1801	Christo de Meyer		3//		61//	1//			
FS47	84	1055, 1798	Johan & Henrietta van den Berg		1//		12//		2//	3//	
FS48	75	1808	Oockie Boshoff				26//			2//	
FS50	77.6	1058	Frans Marais		3//				9//	18//	
FS52	75	24	Brian Colahan					3//	40//	29//	
FS54	59.5	1262, 818	Janine Liefbrig & E Beemster-Boer		2//		100//			21//	
FS56	71.4	988, 897	Fanie & Jeanette Buys			12//	116//			17//	
FS60	72	1152, 1289	Buks & Annatjie Roets	27//		1//	10//	1//	18//		
FS62	60.7	24, 1262	Brian Colahan & Janine Liefbrig	1//	1//	2//	9//	2//		24//	
FS65	82	864, 1210	Sawas & Sheila Vrahimis				9//	1//			
FS66	56	1399	Tom Mostert				9//		1//		
FS67	68.3	950	Daan Müller		4//		23//	3//		4//	
FS68	68.9	1051	Werner Böing				20//	1//	7//		
FS69	76	1065, 1421	Deon du Plessis & M la Grange			3//				30//	
FS70	59.4	1150, 1151	Abrie & Helène Bam			6//	1//	2//	4//	38//	
FS73	66.5	1150, 1151	Abrie & Helène Bam		9//			1//	36//	7//	16CC
FS76	42.2	2150	Arnold van der Westhuizen		7//			3/1//		6//	
FS77	54.2	1153	Schalk Burger			6//	1//		8//	8//	
FS79	50.8	1397	Dewald Liebenberg				9//		2//		
FS83	49.2	2214, 2215	Hennie & Trix de Bruin		1//		16//	1//			
FS84	52	1297, 2053	Johan & Daleen Coertzen				7//	1//		13//	
FS85	76.3	285	Johan Cloete		6//		6//	1//	1//	20//	1HAR
FS87	59.1	24	Brian Colahan				1//	2//		38//	1HAR
FS91	59	641	Rick Nuttall	45//	5//	34//	64//			5//	2KB
FS92	68	1201	Fritz Krohn		9//					11//	
FS93	50	700	Johan Watson			13//	4//	2//		17//	
FS95	85.1	821	Coenie Erasmus				3//	1//			
FS101	60.8	1046, 1946	Blackie de Swardt & Hennie Bester	4//	1//	4//		2//			
FS102	71.5	687	Riëtte Griesel	50//			4//	2//		2//	
FS103	58	1052	Duart Hugo				16//				
FS104	73	1395	Geoff Johnson		3//		27//	3//	65//	27//	
FS106	48	102, 1946	Dawie de Swardt		1//		14//	1//			
FS107	74.9	1836	John Edgar		5//				2//		
FS108	59.3	129, 1959	Allen Jones & Jennifer Lotter		5//		10//	2//	62//	7//	15BI
FS109	60.3	2150	Arnold van der Westhuizen		2//		2//	1//		32//	2HAR, 2KK
FS110	55	1396	Jeremy Jones				16//			11//	
FS111	80	1146	Johann Botha				7//	2//		3//	
FS112	59	1747	Morné Pretorius	13//			13//		7//	29//	
FS113	94	1616	Danie Krynauw		15/1/		5//	1//	140//	22//	
FS114	73.7	1262, 684	Janine Liefbrig & Louise Coetzee		2//		24//	2//		4//	
FS115	75	1644, 2214	Dawie Human & Hennie de Bruin				10//	1//	12//		
FS116	47	1799	Peter Divall				31//			4//	
FS117	67.6	691	Willie Mostert				2//			2//	
FS118	67.3	24	Brian Colahan	300//		4//	5//	1//		15//	
FS119	74	1140, 1141	John & Jill Moffett		1//		39//			8//	
FS122	66	1057	Lourens Goosen		2//		21//			3//	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4166</b>			<b>846</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>15BI, 16CC,</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>20.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>4HAR, 2KB, 2KK</b>



Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in north-eastern Free State											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	BI	CC	SEC	SG	UK	Other spp.
FN16	55	701	Theunis Bekker		6//	16//			7//	3//	
FN26	65	606	Thomas Wessels						1//		
FN28	58.4	1892, 1893	Otto & Marguerite Nel		4//	3//		2//	2//		
FN31	77.6	2109	Rick Dillon	40//	1//	1//	40//	2//	2//		1BS
FN32	54	1072	David Weaver		5//			1//			
FN35	55.1	946	Natie Wessels		3//						
FN37	59.4	2042, 2043	Melanie & Martin Potgieter		2//			4//			
FN39	64	1470	Geoff Potter		4//		3//	1//			
FN40	66.5	2055, 2056	Hansie & Amie Joubert		1//				2//		
FN41	78.5	1045	Cobus Vermeulen		8//				8//		
FN44	71.8	714, 1811	Frik & Linda Oosthuysen		3//				5//		
FN45	70	188	Hazel Vickery		2//	25//		2//			
FN46	64	718, 1813	Gerhard & Elmarie van Deventer			2//					
FN48	56.3	605, 1820	Janet & Koos Lourens								
FN49	48.1	944	Gert Maritz			4//			1//	9//	
FN50	55.8	942	Pieter Koomhof		12//1	15//		2//	6//		
FN52	70	717, 1844	Johan & JLM Strauss		9//				8//		1DB
FN54	61.6	2204	M Cunningham & K Henderson		6//	31//			7//1		
FN57	62.2	1932	Pietre Enslin		4//	7//		2//			
FN58	57.6	705	Paulus Fihlo		5//	83//		3//			
FN59	43.3	2204, 2203	M Cunningham & K Henderson		1//	1//		3//			
FN60	66	1505	Brian Barnes						2//		24NBK
<b>Total</b>	<b>1360</b>			<b>40</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1BS, 1DB,</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>2.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>24NBK</b>



The wintry landscape on FS70 near Zastron in Free State. Photo by Abrie Bam.

\* \* \*

### 25th Karoo Large Terrestrial Bird Survey (KLTBS), Northern Cape

Mark D. Anderson, Ornithologist, Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation, Northern Cape reports:

On 28 July 2007 we celebrated an incredible milestone, our 25th Karoo Large Terrestrial Bird Survey (KLTBS)! As an indication of their dedication to studying and conserving large terrestrial birds, it was very pleasing to note that 50% of the 14 participants have been participating since the project's inception! I am very grateful to these stalwarts for their massive contribution to this important monitoring project.

The day prior to the survey saw a strong cold front arrived in the central parts of South Africa. Not only did this bring bitterly cold weather, rain and wind, but also snow! Some roads such as the Hanover–Middelburg road were closed to traffic. At about 10h00 on the day of the survey, there was still snow on the ground along sections of my route. Despite these conditions, 25 people braved the extreme cold, counting large terrestrial birds along 41 routes.

A total of 560 birds (eight species) was counted, with Blue Cranes (240), Ludwig's Bustards (138) and Northern Black Korhaans (119) again being the dominant species. Nine Kori Bustards, a species that is not regularly observed in the eastern Karoo, were counted. Their presence in such relatively large numbers may have been related to the dry conditions in the Kalahari, the core area of the Kori Bustard's range in southern Africa.

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Eastern Karoo											
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	KK	LB	NBK	SEC	UK	Other spp.	
NK031	20	2165	Raymond Swenson								
NK032	20	2165	Raymond Swenson					1//		5KB	
NK033	20	2165	Raymond Swenson		2//						
NK041	20	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg			11//					
NK042	20	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg	3//		13//	11//	1//			
NK044	20	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg	75//		45//	2//		1//		
NK061	20	2242	Fritz Bättenhaussen	14//		4//	3//	2//			
NK062	20	2242	Fritz Bättenhaussen	18//1				1//			
NK063	20	2242	Fritz Bättenhaussen	10//	3//	5//					
NK071	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe			4//	3//				
NK072	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe	2//		8//	17//				
NK073	20	1580	Petrus van der Merwe			3//					
NK081	20	2070	Sandra Hedges		3//	2//	5//				
NK082	20	2070	Sandra Hedges				2//	2//			
NK083	20	2070	Sandra Hedges				2//				
NK091	20	480	Peter Ferreira		1//	1//					
NK092	20	480	Peter Ferreira					1//			
NK093	20	480	Peter Ferreira							1KB	
NK101	20	2105	Heath Cronje	29//		21//	11//				
NK102	21	2105	Heath Cronje		1//	3//	7//	1//			
NK103	23	2105	Heath Cronje			10//	4//			11SG	
NK141	20	499	Henri Smith	4//	1//	3//					
NK142	20	499	Henri Smith	4//							
NK143	20	499	Henri Smith								
NK151	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe				3//			1KB	
NK152	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe				2//				
NK153	20	1898	Marisa van der Merwe				6//			2KB	
NK181	20	1579	Diana Greathead								
NK182	20	1579	Diana Greathead	7//2	2//				5//		
NK183	20	1579	Diana Greathead	7//1			3//				
NK221	20	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg		6//	1//	1//				
NK222	20	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg				2//				
NK223	18.4	105, 2154	Mark Anderson & Res Altwegg								
NK231	20	509	Ronelle Visagie		4//	1//					
NK232	20	509	Ronelle Visagie			2//	1//	2//			
NK233	20	509	Ronelle Visagie				4//				
NK391	20	493	Lorette Luscombe						2//		
NK392	20	493	Lorette Luscombe								
NK393	20	493	Lorette Luscombe								
NK431	20	478	Kobus de Villiers (Jnr)				10//				
NK432	20	478	Kobus de Villiers (Jnr)			1//	19//		2//		
<b>Total</b>	<b>822</b>			<b>241</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9KB, 11SG</b>	
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>29.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>		

Dr Res Altwegg, a postdoctoral researcher at the ADU, accompanied me on my surveys (we also surveyed Francois Taljaard's route). Res is a biologist and statistician involved in demographic and climate change studies. We have recently completed a study on Blue Cranes and climate change, predicting what effect changes in rainfall in the eastern Karoo will have on reproduction and survival in this threatened species. The study made use of different datasets collected between 1997 and 2007, including eleven years of KLTBS data, and the recovery and resighting of ringed Blue Cranes. The contributions of the KLTBS participants therefore made this study possible.

Res and I used the data to estimate survival of Blue Cranes for different age classes using combined capture–mark–resighting and ring recovery models. The proportion of juvenile birds in the road counts gave information on reproduction during the preceding breeding season. We found that cranes survived better in years with higher rainfall during the summer months, whereas reproduction was positively correlated with rainfall during the spring months. We predicted more rain to be beneficial, but increased variation in summer rain would be detrimental for this population. Increased variation in spring rain, on the other hand, may increase population growth, while a shift in seasonality with drier springs but wetter summers would likely decrease reproduction but increase survival, with little overall effect on population growth. A scientific article on this study *Rainfall in arid zones: predicting effects of climate change on the population ecology of Blue Cranes* has been submitted for publication in a leading international scientific journal.

Thank you to Mark and Ronelle for many years' work and for publishing the results!

Number of birds counted in July 2007 census in Eastern Cape												
Route	km	ADU No.	Observers	BC	BHH	CC	DB	LB	SBK	SEC	SG	Other species
EB01	64.3	175, 174	Kenneth & Gertie Griffith		5//	2//	5//			1//		
EB02	73	1398	Keith Marshall		6//	7//		1//			2//	
EB03	67	115, 2119	Graham Winch & Peter Swift		2//	69//					11//	
EB04	63.5	1568, 1567, 1584, 2073	Ken & Barbara Monfoort, W Perks & D Nell		5//		5//			7//		
EE01	37	2098	Mark van Niekerk		2//	2//					2//	
EE02	66.4	1129	Adèle Moore		1//	48//				2//		
EE06	52.9	1780	Leon-Jacques Theron			2//	3//			2//		
EE08	69.7	2236	Tanya Smith	2//	14//	47//				4//	5//	
EE12	51	901	Jenni Brown		1//	4//						
EE17	42.1	1929	Theuns Botha							1//	7//	
EE18	43.8	1918, 1919	Les & Adrian Larter		1//	9//					36/20//	4UK
EE19	83.1	1130, 1583	Sandy & Hope Stretton		5//	5/3//		1//		1//	10//	44UK
EE20	45	1730	Helen Lechmere-Oertel			4//						
EE22	23.5	2235	Mel Sephton		4//	224//				1//		
EG02	51.6	565, 1430	Pat Hulley & Lorraine Mullins		1//							
EG03	77.6	341, 2081, 2082	Bo Bonnevie & Jim & Eve Cambray				2//		8//			4KB
EG04	59	161, 2144	Adrian Craig & Jenny Gon									
EH03	55.6	1768, 1769, 1772	Liz & Emyln Horne & Maggie Keulemans	8//	14//		34//				47//	
EH04	44	1767, 1766, 1976	Jill Tudhope & Peter & Madeline Bosman		5//		4//					
EH05	40	1612, 1794, 301	Abel & Hanny Bezuidenhout, C & J Cook	8//							134//	
EH06	57.5	312, 1770	Yvonne Craig & Sylvia Leslie	159//	10/2//		68//				40//	
EK02	43	885	John Lardner-Burke		3//		1//			1//	7/3//	9OR
EK04	57.4	1525, 2210, 2209	Tim Cockcroft, John Potter & Sheila Walsh		1//		3//					4WBK
EK05	62.5	886, 1528, 131, 1527	M Turner, L Wood, D Rampf & J Roxburgh		26//		16//				3//	
EM01	62.1	974	Bradley Gibbons		157//			3//		1//		6NBK
EP01	74	635, 1244	Patrick Brett & Denise Hoffmann		28/2//			38//	1//			1KB, 1KK
EP02	62	1570, 1621, 83	Hermann & Terry Hertel & Andrew Nixon		199//			6//	4//			
EP03	62	872	Denzil Ward		37/3//							
EP04	68.7	869	Peter Hall		68//			4//	1//	1//		3KK
EP06	52.1	2237	Michael Antrobus					4//	1//			
EP07	73.7	2246, 2245	Michael & Lesley Lord					3//		1//		5KB, 1KK, 8NBK
EP08	110.6	270	Dave Brown					17//	1//			3KB, 4KK
EP09	28.1	2237	Michael Antrobus						1//			
EP10	43	1731	John Bowker			6//		31//				16KK, 29NBK
EP11	48.4	1852, 195	Briar Wright & Phil Whittington		10//		1//		1//		93//	
EQ01	44.6	995	Gail & Jock McCann		1//						234//	11UK
ES02	48.5	2063	Braam Basson						1//			1KB, 18KK
ES03	58.7	2147	Alison Drewnicki					14//	6//			12KK
ES04	48	1476, 1972	Judy & Zorb Caryer		82/7//			9//				
ES05	87.5	915	Andrew Cheeseman					6//		1//		
ES07	35	1826	Debbie Abrahamson			1//				1//		
ES08	48	875, 2019	Neville & Carmen Willows						1//			2KB
ES10	29	2244	Brian & Liz van Wijk		1//					1//		2KK
ES11	35.3	2211, 2005	Greg Brown & Ros Turner			3//						
EU01	64	1479	Emile Plumstead			7//						
<b>Total</b>	<b>2513.8</b>			<b>761</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>16KB, 57KK, 59UK,</b>
<b>Birds / 100 km</b>				<b>30.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>9OR, 43NBK, 4WBK</b>
EB - Border precinct, EE - Northeast Cape precinct, EG - Grahamstown precinct, EH - Humansdorp precinct, EK - Kenton												
EM - Middelburg precinct, EP - PE precinct (Aberdeen & Steytleville districts), EQ - Queenstown precinct, ES - Somerset East precinct, EU - Umtata												

## Eastern Cape

*A reminder to include Oribi in your counts, while scanning for CAR birds.*

There were cold, gale-force winds in most of this province, with snow on some routes on the higher ground. The Humansdorp routes were re-scheduled as the cold front hit that area on Saturday morning with much rain. The three routes near Grahamstown were counted on three different days, as it was not possible to re-schedule them all to the same day.

The Blue Crane density was lower than it has been the last three winters, but higher than those prior to that. Strangely for Ludwig's Bustard and Spurred Goose the density was the second-highest winter density.

Keith Marshall saw a Ludwig's Bustard on EB02, at the extremity of its range. Graham Winch and his team found the most extensive coverage of snow ever seen on EB03. Graham remarked that scanning was quick and easy with a white snow background! Ken and Barbara Monfoort noted that there was much burnt veld in areas where they often see birds.

Bo Bonnevie noted that there are many more game farms along their route, EG03, in the area north of the Fish River. They now see more game than livestock!

Denham's Bustard numbers were high on the Humansdorp routes and this species was recorded on EH04 for the first time. Yvonne Craig reported that on three routes, EH03, 05 and 06, the wind was so incredibly strong

they gave up trying to get out to count.

The wind was very cold and strong on the Kenton routes and most of the Somerset East routes. Nine Oribi were recorded on EK02. Neville Willows was not able to complete his route, ES08, due to a cold west wind that arose. In mid-August Neville phoned saying he had 'had his anchors on' and also reported that there were 650 Blue Cranes feeding every late afternoon on lucerne pastures on the farm Odantie on his route. I have mentioned before that this farmer plants lucerne for birds!

Hope and Sandy Stretton recorded 44 Blue Korhaans on EE19. Les Larter who counts EE18 mentioned a section of power line between their farm and the next which seems to be lethal to many birds. "In the past couple of months two herons, a vulture, a Blue Crane and the latest casualty just a few days ago, a Secretarybird, have flown into it."

Tanya Smith, SACWG Regional Coordinator of the Rand Merchant Bank Crane Conservation Project, has conducted a site visit and Eskom is planning to mark this line.

Sadly Ken and Jen Munro are no longer able to count EP06 and EP09. I will miss their description that always accompanied their forms. Michael Antrobus counted their routes in a very cold wind, with snow on the mountains. I am also disappointed to hear from Robert Bomke that EE13 route has deteriorated so much that it is now impassable. A big thankyou to Robert who has regularly taken a group of learners from Indwe High School.

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