



# Animal Demography Unit

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## *Newsletter 35, December 2013*

I looked at the heavens and saw him there,-  
A black speck downward drifting,  
Nearer and nearer he steadily sailed,  
Nearer and nearer he slid through space,  
In an unending aerial race,  
This sailor who hailed  
From the Clime of the Clouds. – Ever Shifting

On billows of air  
And the blue sky seemed never so fair,  
And the rest of the world kept pace.

The Eagle – E. E. Cummings

Photo by A.M. Archer

## July 2013 Count

Overall the weather throughout the country was fine, with a few reports of strong winds. Very dry conditions were reported in the Free State. The interim report on the winter 2013 count can be found at [http://car.adu.org.za/news\\_winter\\_2013.php](http://car.adu.org.za/news_winter_2013.php)

### Ringed Cranes

Two blue cranes were spotted in the Graaff-Reinet area; the one on ES03 and the other ES04. The ring combination has not been matched yet. Do keep a look out for colour-ringed birds at all times and report the details to SAFRING <http://safring.adu.org.za/index.php>

### Date of summer 2014 count

The next count will be on Saturday, 25 January 2014. Start your count 1-2 hours after sunrise! The next winter count will be Saturday, 26 July 2014. If you can't count on 25 January, please contact your Precinct Organiser well in advance.

### The CAR webpage

It is helpful adding the CAR home page to your favourites in your browser <http://car.adu.org.za> All the project material can be found here and can be downloaded. There is now also a FAQ section available.

CAR is also on Facebook,

<http://facebook.com/groups/CoordinatedAvifaunalRoadcounts/>

Here you can share your counting experience and interact with fellow CAR participants.



## Overview of the count

By Les Underhill

First and foremost, we acknowledge the massive role that Donella Young played in the CAR project for an extremely long period of time. We have tried hard in the ADU to maintain stability of project leadership; the personal interactions which so many of you built up with Donella over a long period of time are remarkable. Donella was a real people-person, and she thoroughly enjoyed putting faces to the names of the people who did the CAR routes, and meeting them and getting to know them. We will miss these skills enormously not just in the CAR project, but in the ADU in general.

Secondly, the thing that I would value most at this point in time, and which Donella would want for the project, is for us all to bust a gut to keep the project running. For me, that means finding the resources to keep CAR ticking along until such time as we can make an appointment or someone whose job description will include CAR. For all of the CAR route counters, it means getting their routes done on 25 January.

I am deeply grateful to Amour McCarthy who has taken responsibility for CAR for the past few months. Amour is a DST intern, and she will be with us until at least March 2014.

Here is an overview of the CAR winter count from last July. It is the view from high up. A total of 295 routes totaling 16161 km were covered. That is 14 routes less than covered last year in the January count. There were nine fewer routes counted in the Eastern Cape, and this is where most of reduction occurred.

# Count results Winter 2013

## Total number of Species per Precinct

Precinct	Total km	KB	LB	DB	BC	CC	WC	GH	BI	SG	SEC	BHH	HG	NS
Eastern Cape	1700	14	33	129	901	564	0	0	0	189	34	171	0	0
NE Free State	1274.5	0	0	2	127	13	6	0	100	41	18	197	0	0
S Free State	4078	2	77	0	1678	1	0	0	4	445	30	24	0	0
NW Free State	795.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	224	9	39	0	0
Gauteng	1256.5	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	518	18	142	2877	0
North West	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0
KwaZulu Natal	1952	0	0	28	41	518	8	0	258	614	24	165	612	2
Mpumalanga	1375	0	0	1	13	22	0	100	0	216	22	62	578	0
Eastern Karoo	420	4	6	5	674	0	0	0	0	212	2	2	0	0
Overberg	1748	0	0	169	4334	0	0	0	0	1714	4	145	0	0
Swartland	808.9	0	0	0	360	0	0	0	0	994	1	39	0	0
Western Cape	646.4	4	11	6	375	0	0	0	0	111	0	17	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16158.8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>8543</b>	<b>1118</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>5280</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>4067</b>	<b>2</b>

A total of 28047 birds were counted. This is the first time that the crows and the “pole-sitting raptors” were included in all precincts. This experiment worked well, and we will be including these species as a permanent feature. 2413 Cape Crows were counted, 700 of which were in the Overberg precinct and 637 in the Northern Free State precinct. There were 1746 Pied Crows, with the Southern Free State (796) and the Swartland (275) being the top two precincts. The general pattern was for one crow to be in much larger numbers than the other. The North West precinct, which has just two routes, recorded only Pied Crows.

Precinct	Total km	UK	WBK	BBK	SBK	NBK	KK	RCK	BS	WS	YS	HAR	SPBZ	JKBZ	PCG	BSKT	WNR	PICW	CPCW
Eastern Cape	1700	0	4	4	7	26	22	0	0	8	0	8	1	30	19	13	50	106	245
NE Free State	1274.5	72	4	0	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	61	6	16	637
S Free State	4078	250	0	0	0	661	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	7	30	34	0	796	10
NW Free State	795.5	6	0	0	0	276	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	33	0	21	2
Gauteng	1256.5	11	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	103	0	60	9
North West	104	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
KwaZulu Natal	1952	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	62	0	18	17	150	416
Mpumalanga	1375	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	41	0	6	207
Eastern Karoo	420	3	0	0	0	43	15	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	4	1	0	174	0
Overberg	1748	0	0	0	8	0	44	0	0	1	0	12	5	95	2	24	129	48	700
Swartland	808.9	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	19	3	11	4	275	0
Western Cape	646.4	0	0	1	14	1	70	0	1	2	0	0	0	13	26	18	55	92	187
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16158.8</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>1746</b>	<b>2413</b>

## Total distance travelled and number of Routes counted of each Precinct

Precinct	Winter 2012		Summer 2013		Winter 2013	
	Total Distance	No of Routes	Total Distance	No of Routes	Total Distance	No of Routes
Eastern Cape	2380	42	2291	42	1700	33
NE Free State	1233	20	1110	18	1274.5	22
S Free State	4005.6	60	4252	64	4078	62
NW Free State	1019	16	1021	16	795.5	13
Gauteng	1339	27	1241	26	1256.5	26
North West	44	1	44	1	104	2
KwaZulu Natal	2346	40	2042	36	1954.03	33
Mpumalanga	1423	23	1510	24	1375	22
Eastern Karoo	614	29	287	15	420	21
Overberg	1749	32	1742	32	1748	32
Swartland	1061	17	1052	17	808.9	14
Western Cape	804	18	769	18	646.4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>18017.6</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>17361</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>16160.83</b>	<b>295</b>

More detailed tables of the Winter 2013 count will be available on the CAR Webpage in early January 2014.



Photo by H. Badenhorst



Photo by J. H. Wilkinson

Four species of “pole-sitting” raptor are now included. There are 372 Black-shouldered Kites, 85 Southern Pale Chanting Goshawks, 245 Jackal Buzzards, and 13 overwintering Steppe Buzzards were recorded. Even though we have no historical data to go by, these totals are scary low. For example the density of Black-shouldered Kites was 0.023 kites per km, or 43 km per kite!

The two species with the largest totals were Blue Crane, with 8543, and the Spur-winged Goose, with 5280. 4334 of the Blue Cranes and 1714 of the Spur-winged Geese were in the Overberg precinct! So it is not surprising that the Overberg precinct had the largest total of any precinct, 7434 birds.

### Thank you!

With Donella leaving and the Project needing to become more “automatic”, it has been amazing to see everyone step up to the challenge and take on extra responsibilities. Thank you to all the participants and especially the Precinct Organisers for all you’ve done to keep the project running! Thank you for all the time each and every one of you has put into the project; braving the unpleasant winter weather, longer time spent counting due to the addition of the raptors and corvids, and a lot of people capturing their own forms on myBirdPatch! I wish everyone a happy and merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Kind Regards,  
Amour McCarthy



### Animal Demography Unit & Virtual Museum

Please take your camera with you when you do your CAR route, and have it at the ready. Please help us build the 21<sup>st</sup> century distributions of 1000s of species – look at the logos above, and they show the various groups of animals which the Virtual Museum caters for: mammals, frogs, spiders, butterflies, moths, scorpions, snakes, lizards, tortoises, dragonflies, damselflies.

As we build a database of 1000s upon 1000s of images of these species, we slowly build up their distributions. Knowledge of distributions, and how they are changing, is the fundamental prerequisite before any conservation action can be taken. A few records, even of common species, taken during your CAR route can make a huge difference to filling the gaps in knowledge. Please make your photography count for conservation!

Submit your records to our Virtual Museum <http://vmus.adu.org.za/> – you log into this website using the same email/password combination as you use to enter your CAR data. Once you are logged in, you can upload your records.

Having trouble? Here is a step by step guide explaining how to submit new records: <http://www.slideshare.net/meganloftieeaton/how-to-submit-records-to-the-animal-demography-units-virtual-museums-28710898>



MammalMAP is a conservation project run jointly by the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town and the Mammal Research Institute at the University of Pretoria.

The project aims to map the current mammal distribution ranges of ALL mammal species on the African continent. The information consolidated within MammalMAP will not only yield crucial information for species conservation policies and landscape conservation policies, but provides an excellent platform for educating the public about African mammals and their conservation challenges.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MammalMAP/>

Blog: <http://mammalmap.blog.com/>

Records can be submitted via their blog:

<http://mammalmap.blog.com/submit-mammal-records/submit-your-sightings-online/>



LepiMAP is the African butterfly and moth mapping project. The project is aimed at determining the distribution and conservation priorities of butterflies and moths on the African continent. It is the continuation of SABCA (the Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessment).

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LepiMAP/>

Lepidopterists' Society of Africa: <http://www.lepsoc.org.za/>