

BIRDS AND PEOPLE

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BirdLife Botswana's Bird Conservation Newsletter



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EDITORIAL

The Pan African Ornithological Congress is the premier meeting for ornithologists from throughout Africa, and PAOC 12, which was held in South Africa earlier this month, was attended by over 200 participants from all corners of the continent.

However - perhaps surprisingly - it was with some hesitation that I attended the Congress. The reasons for this go back to 1984 when I was a participant at the 6th PAOC in Francistown and it turned out to be a life-changing experience. There are of course positive and negative life-changing events, and unfortunately PAOC 6 fell into the latter category. This was because many of the presentations were quite unintelligible - slides were poorly prepared with minute text that was illegible beyond the first row (some were even upside down), speakers mumbled, and many topics were very theoretical with little practical relevance. All this left one with the impression that ornithologists were out of touch with the real world, and for this reason I subsequently put away my binoculars and concentrated on other aspects of biology and natural history.

Happily PAOC has advanced by a quantum leap since 1984, and PAOC 12 was an enlightening experience with a great exchange of information and ideas and many new contacts made. The theme for the congress was 'Birds and People - Interaction, Utilization and Conservation' which immediately made it relevant to the African situation and the 21st Century. There was a large BirdLife contingent present which obviously identified easily with this theme, but most of the 250 or so presentations



explored one or more of these aspects. And, best of all for me, most presentations were not only clear and understandable, but many were inspiring, fascinating and/or directly relevant to BirdLife Botswana's work. The only downside of the congress was that one could not be at all five parallel sessions simultaneously!

Having ornithologists from all over Africa together under one roof was also an incredible source of expertise that begged to be tapped in other concrete, tangible ways. Indeed one of the most useful outputs from the congress was the statement developed urging the Government of Tanzania to treat the proposed soda ash plant at Lake Natron (the world's most important breeding site for Lesser Flamingos) with utmost caution. It is highly significant that this issue should be identified as the most important ornithological concern in Africa at present, as indicated by its unanimous adoption and endorsement. Thus PAOC 12 was not all talk, but harnessed the cumulative expertise present to make a difference to bird conservation in Africa.

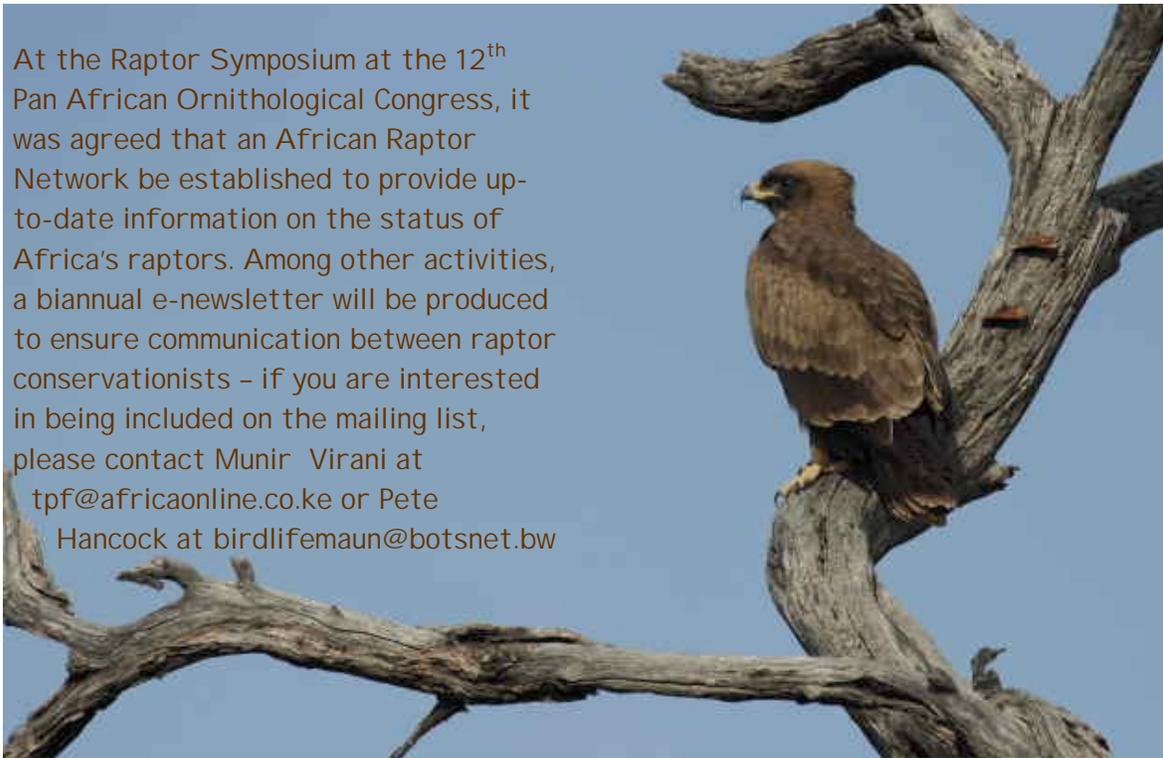
Congratulations and thanks to the organising committee for all the hard work and thought they put into making the congress a success.

Pete Hancock

BirdLife Botswana is the  partner in Botswana.
Together for birds and people

AFRICAN RAPTOR NETWORK

At the Raptor Symposium at the 12th Pan African Ornithological Congress, it was agreed that an African Raptor Network be established to provide up-to-date information on the status of Africa's raptors. Among other activities, a biannual e-newsletter will be produced to ensure communication between raptor conservationists - if you are interested in being included on the mailing list, please contact Munir Virani at tpf@africaonline.co.ke or Pete Hancock at birdlifemaun@botsnet.bw



REPORTING TAGGED BIRDS

Khumaga – Tana Hutchings



Tuli Block – Jeanetta Selier

A Cape Vulture with tag B148 was seen at Dopotta in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve on 2nd and 3rd July this year feeding on a zebra carcass. This bird was originally tagged by Keri Wolter in Gauteng in late November 2007 and has moved a considerable distance north since then.

Vultures

A yellow tag in the middle of a scrimmage of vultures at Leroo la tau alerted Tana Hutchings to the fact that something interesting was going on. Indeed, it proved to be White-backed Vulture W073, tagged by Mark Anderson and Angus Anthony as a chick in 2007 on Dronfield Farm, Kimberly, South Africa. This means that it has moved 800 kilometres in the nine months since tagged.

Mombo – Cisco Letio

Cisco saw a White-backed Vulture tagged K059 at Mombo on Chief's Island in July this year. This is another of 'Abrie Maritz's' birds from the southern Kalahari, a good 850 kilometres from 'home'. Other guides should keep a look out for this bird and K029 which has a similar number.

Marabou Storks

Tuli Block – Shem Compion

See www.shemimages.com to view Shem's outstanding wildlife images



Shem Compion sent in this pic of a tagged Marabou Stork (A080) in response to the article on this species in the previous newsletter. It was seen at Mashatu in the Tuli Block on 12/11/07, having originally been tagged at Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre near the Kruger National Park, South Africa, in January 2007. This is over 300 kilometres away. These birds certainly get around, although I predict that further Marabou Stork re-sightings will soon surpass this one by far!

These sightings, although rather isolated, suggest that young White-backed Vultures from the southern Kalahari move northwards to forage in Botswana and beyond. It will be interesting to see whether they return to their natal areas to breed once mature. Vultures and Marabou Storks from sites in the eastern part of Southern Africa also move northwards and are seen in eastern Botswana.



The Namibian Bird Club and the Namibian Environment and Wildlife Society, in conjunction with NARREC, have produced a poster alerting people about tagged and ringed birds. Since these birds move throughout Southern Africa, they have made this a regional resource and included contact details for, among others, BirdLife Botswana. They have also made a large number of copies available to us at no charge. This is greatly appreciated. If you have a suitable place to display a poster, contact your nearest BirdLife Botswana office to obtain one.

ROBERTS VII DONATED

A BirdLife Botswana office without a copy of the Southern African Birder's Bible – Roberts VII – is quite unthinkable! Happily this situation was rectified one Tuesday afternoon recently when Jane Bettenay of ULINDA SAFARIS popped in at the Maun Office with a copy under her arm which she promptly donated to BirdLife Botswana. This tome is a valuable addition to our small, but growing reference library. Thank you, Jane.

BOTSWANA TICKBIRD – WORLDBIRDS IN BOTSWANA

Support our web-based bird monitoring system.

Enter your bird checklist – www.worldbirds.org/Botswana

THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN WATERBIRD AGREEMENT

What is AEWA?

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is an international treaty aimed at providing some protection for waterbirds that migrate between Africa and Eurasia, and which consequently cannot be adequately protected by any one country alone. To be effective,



conservation efforts must consider and address the ecological needs of a species holistically and throughout its lifecycle. Such an approach ensures that investments in one location are not undermined by inaction or detrimental activities somewhere else. It recognises biological, not political boundaries, requiring harmonised international co-operation. Only this can ensure that migratory birds find the necessary resources and critical sites they need along their entire migratory route, to complete their annual journeys.

The rationale for this treaty as described above is obvious, but how can such an ambitious agreement be actioned?

The Wings over Wetlands project

One component is the Wings over Wetlands Project which aims to promote the 'flyway-scale' approach to conserving migratory waterbirds and their critical wetland habitats. Worldwide, waterbird migration routes can be grouped along four major flyways (the one relevant to us is the African-Eurasian flyway) – and migratory birds will benefit from conservation actions at sites along this flyway.

Countries within the flyway are participating in the project in diverse ways – it focuses on capacity building, co-operative research and monitoring and communication activities. It is funded by UNDP-GEF and managed by Wetlands International in close co-operation with BirdLife International – at US\$12 million, it is the largest international wetland and waterbird conservation initiative ever to take place in the African-Eurasian region. For more information, visit www.wingsoverwetlands.org

AEWA participating countries

The agreement covers 118 countries including the European Community (EC), parts of Asia and Canada, the Middle East and Africa. In fact, the geographical area covered by AEWA stretches from the northern reaches of Canada and the Russian Federation to the southernmost tip of Africa. Of the 118 Range States and EC currently 61 countries (as of 1st September 2008) have become Contracting Parties to AEWA.



AEWA covers 235 species of waterbirds



Although the Agreement only entered into force a few years ago, its implementation is well underway. The European Union, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom increasingly support the implementation of AEWA.

Botswana and AEWA

Recently a Botswana delegation was invited as observer at the AEWA Meeting of Parties in Madagascar. Botswana is not currently party to AEWA, although much of the bird conservation work in the country dovetails nicely with AEWA's objectives. Motshereganyi Kootsositse from BirdLife Botswana was part of the delegation and reports below on the meeting.

The fourth Meeting of Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) took place in Antananarivo in Madagascar from the 15th to the 19th September 2008. Over 150 representatives of Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations, as well as waterbird experts from 80 countries, met in Madagascar to discuss the urgent conservation responses necessary to reverse the declines of many migratory waterbird species along the African-Eurasian Flyway. The meeting also highlighted the most recent findings showing continuing declines of many waterbird species in Africa and Eurasia and considerable discussion centred around how best to restore the status of these species to meet the target of halting the decline of global biodiversity by 2010.



Morning discussions took place in plenary.

In a video statement, the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Achim Steiner, indicated that the meeting was not only important for AEWA, but also for wider global discussions on how we could conserve biodiversity, especially migratory species, which in many ways served as an early warning system for the state of

the environment. He expressed the need to maintain flyways and the conditions around them that allow migratory species to survive.

Two awards were presented during the meeting. From the individual category, Mark Anderson from BirdLife South Africa won the award for his outstanding and continuous efforts to conserve waterbirds, especially Lesser Flamingos. During his presentation he noted that in Southern Africa, there is only one site where flamingos successfully breed regularly *i.e.* Sua pan in Botswana. From the institutional category, Oiseaux Migrateurs du Parlearctique Occidental (OMPO) from France, represented by Guy-Noel Olivier, won the award for its role in increasing the AEWA membership, providing assistance in scientific research, and obtaining support of the Agreement implementation.



Participants posing for a group photograph.

International reviews included the following; conservation status of waterbirds, hunting and trade legislation, re-establishments of projects, Single Species Action Plans and non-native species. The hottest debate revolved around 'phasing out lead shot for hunting in wetlands'. Some argued that it is easy to regulate a ban on lead shot for hunting while others said that in the developing countries it is not easy as lead shot is cheap and readily available. And yet others pointed out that developed countries should stop manufacturing lead shot if the 2012 target is to be met.

From Botswana, the delegation included Dr Lucas Rutina from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Mr Sekgowa Motsumi from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Mr Motshereganyi Kootsositse from BirdLife Botswana as a technical advisor. The head of the delegation, Dr Lucas Rutina, presented Botswana's position on AEWA, noting that Botswana is not yet party to the Agreement. However, he noted that participating in the Meeting of the

Parties was a way of identifying issues of concern as shared by other African countries, and areas of potential collaboration should Botswana decide to join.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



This mystery raptor was photographed recently in the Linyanti area by Lindsey Glickfield, a guest hosted by Okavango Wilderness Safaris - many thanks to Glynis Humphrey from the OWS Environmental Department for sending it in. It is an Augur Buzzard, a Category A rarity in Botswana (meaning that it has been positively recorded in Botswana less than 10 times *i.e.* it is a very rare sighting for Botswana). Its usual range is from Ethiopia southwards to Namibia and Zimbabwe where it prefers hilly and mountainous country. According to Kemp and Kemp (*Birds of Prey of Africa and its Islands*) the adult appears black from behind, including the head, but below it is white, including the underwing coverts (except for a black carpal patch). The grey barred secondaries and rufous tail and (in some individuals) throat are evident at closer range. The juvenile appears brown

above and buff below - this particular bird is probably in its second year as shown by the intermediate plumage (adult plumage is only attained in the third year, when the species is quite distinct).

STOP PRESS

Wattled Crane project on hold - The start-up of the satellite tracking of Wattled Cranes, as described in the previous newsletter, has been postponed slightly due to delays in receiving additional funding to pay for the data downloads and the GIS component of the project. Watch this space for further information related to the commencement of the project.

Debswana supports BirdLife Botswana - Debswana has provided financial support to BirdLife Botswana over the past few years, but has recently increased its level of funding to the extent where it is now a major partner in conserving birds in Botswana. The funds will mainly go towards the ongoing study of the Kori Bustard in Botswana, including field costs (travel), and for BirdLife Botswana's school and community outreach programme. This support is most welcome and our sincere thanks go to Debswana.



Volunteers needed – If you have not yet put your name down to participate in BirdLife Botswana's Common Bird Monitoring project, please contact Pete Hancock at the address below. The contribution required by participants is not at all onerous (half a day, twice a year) but when pooled with data collected by a large number of individuals spread across the country, your counts will become part of a powerful tool for monitoring birds. Remember, a long-term commitment will have greatest impact.

CONTACT ADDRESSES

BirdLife Botswana
Private Bag 003
Suite 348
Mogoditshane
blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw

Tel: 3190540

Fax: 3190540

Physical address:

Unit C1

Kgale Siding

Plot 1069 KO

(the old TEBA complex near St Joseph's College)

BirdLife Botswana

PO Box 20463

Maun

birdlifemaun@botsnet.bw

6865618/6865272

6860525

Ngami Toyota

off the Maun/Sehithwa Road

Visit our website <http://www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw/>

BIRDLIFE BOTSWANA MISSION

BirdLife Botswana aims to conserve birds and important bird habitats, by creating awareness, carrying out research and promoting beneficial relationships between birds and people.

This newsletter appears quarterly. If you would like to contribute an article on your field observations or bird conservation project, please send it to birdlifemaun@botsnet.bw



Membership Details

Membership is due in *January* of each year, as the subscription runs from January to December.

Rates

- Ordinary - P120.00
- Corporate - Minimum P2000.00
- Professional – Rangers, guides and SSG members - P60.00
- Life - P2000.00
- Students studying in Botswana - P15.00
- Schools/Clubs - nil
- SADC Region – P200.00
- Overseas (and outside SADC) – P300.00

The following details are required:

I/We/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms: _____ wish to become members of BirdLife Botswana

Address: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Email (PRINT please): _____

I acknowledge that my family dependents, invitees and I take part in the BirdLife Botswana organised events entirely at our own risk. I, in my personal capacity and as representative of my spouse, children, dependents, and invitees hereby keep BirdLife Botswana, its committee, members and agents indemnified and hold them harmless against all loss, injury, or damage to person or property from any cause (including negligence) arising as a result of our participation in events organised by BirdLife Botswana.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Please make your cheque payable to 'BirdLife Botswana'

Please return this form with your subscription to one of the addresses given below:

The Secretary (membership)
BirdLife Botswana
P/Bag 003
Suite 348
Mogoditshane
Botswana

Pete Hancock
PO Box 20463
Maun

or phone Pete to
collect 6865618

Guy Brina
Private Bag F12
Francistown

or phone Guy to
collect 2412913

Geoff Williams
Private Bag K4
Kasane

or phone Geoff to
collect 6250341

OFFICIAL USE

Card issued? _____

Data base _____



Birds of Concern Reporting Sheet

BirdLife Botswana is very interested in collecting information on Birds of Concern – they are species that are either globally or nationally threatened. **Please use the format below when submitting sightings to make computerisation of the data easier.**

Note that the co-ordinates of each sighting are essential – it is convenient to get these from a GPS but of course they can be read off any good map. If you have a GPS, please set the datum to WGS 84 and the position format to decimal degrees. If you use any other datum/format, please just let us know what it is. Information in **bold** in the table below is the most important, if you cannot collect it all.

Species (see list below)	GPS co-ords		Quarter degree square <i>e.g.</i> 1923C4	Area <i>e.g.</i> NG 19	Locality <i>e.g.</i> 2 km west of Machaba	Date	Time	# of birds	Ad. M	Ad. F	Ad. ?	# of Imm.	Observer (your name)	Comments
	S	E												

The species that we are interested in are the following:

Slaty Egret	Maccoa Duck	Wattled Crane	Grey Crowned Crane	Lesser Flamingo
Cape Vulture	White-headed Vulture	Lappet-faced Vulture	Hooded Vulture	White-backed Vulture
Bateleur	Martial Eagle	Lesser Kestrel	European Roller	Pallid Harrier
Kori Bustard	Southern Ground Hornbill	African Skimmer	Chestnut-banded Plover	
Black-winged Pratincole				

Breeding records for these species would also be invaluable.

Please send this information to:

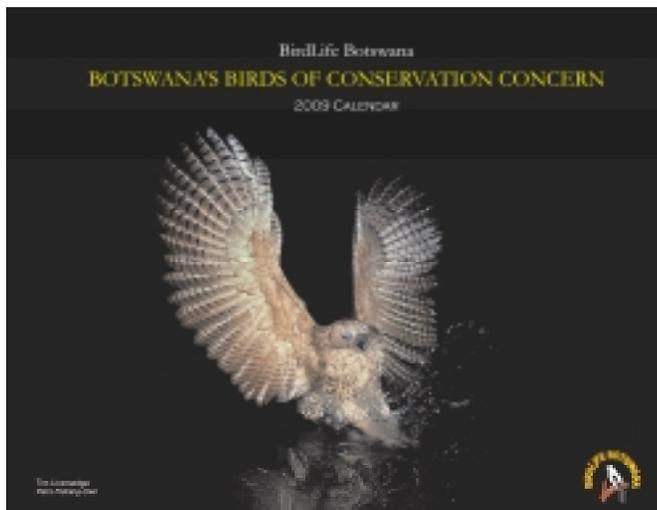
[BirdLife Botswana](http://www.birdlife.org/botswana), PO Box 20463, Maun, BOTSWANA. Alternatively, please e-mail us at birdlifemaun@botsnet.bw



BirdLife Botswana 2009 Calendar

Order from your nearest BirdLife Botswana office: A2 = P120.00, A4 = P70.00

Front cover



Inside



Back cover



Inside

MARCH 2009

Great White Pelican
a bird of conservation concern?

The Great White Pelican is a large, white, waterfowl bird. It is found in wetlands and coastal areas. It is a species of conservation concern because its population is declining. The bird is known for its long neck and large, powerful beak. It is a social bird and often forms large colonies. The Great White Pelican is a symbol of conservation and is featured on the BirdLife Botswana logo.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

