Birdlife Polokwane

THE LARK

P.O. BOX 699, FAUNAPARK, 0787
TEL: 015-263 6473

www.birdlifepolokwane.co.za
www.facebook.com/birdlifepolokwane

MARCH 2013

EDITORIAL

Februarie is op sy rug en ons is reg vir 'n nuwe maand met nuwe uitdagings.
'n Hartlike welkom terug aan al ons lede wat saam was op die 'flock cruise', ek glo en vertrou dat julle almal dit gate uit geniet het. ('n paar fotos vir volgende maand se nuusbrief is welkom!) Nader aan die tuisfront was daar ook opgewondenheid, nie net rondom die C.W.A.C tellings nie maar ook oor 'n paar interessante voëltjies wat in die omgewing opgemerk is, Lees gerus meer hieroor in die nuusbrief.

Ek hoop almal is reg vir die 'bird photo race' wat op 21 Maart plaasvind, baie sterkte aan almal wat gaan deelneem, mag die beste span wen!

Sien julle volgende maand (Donderdag 4de April) by ons nuwe nes by die gholfbaan!

Chantelle

The 2013 Flock Cruise Summary

By Joe Grosel

At least 30 birders from the Limpopo Province travelled to Cape Town for a five day ocean cruise to Walvis Bay and back onboard the MSC Opera. Eleven members of Birdlife Polokwane formed part of a group of 1170 birders setting a new world record for the most birders on one vessel. Apart from all the normal onboard cruise entertainment, birding passengers were also treated to informative presentations by seabird researchers and experts. Birders congregated at ten observation stations across five decks which were manned by sea bird guides from sunrise to sunset. On Sunday 03 March the Opera docked in Walvis Bay harbour from where birders had the opportunity to explore the desert habitats, salt works and lagoon for several hours. Birdlife Polokwane members were fortunate enough to see the two desert specials Gray's and Dune Lark and had an added bonus of ticking a rarity in the form of an American Golden Plover. Over 400 Birdlife South Africa members attended the AGM in the ship's main theatre on Monday 4th March. This was the largest ever turnout for a birdlife SA AGM. On Tuesday morning the Opera docked in Cape Town harbour and after a lengthy disembarkation over a thousand very satisfied birders started their journeys home.

More than 35 coastal and pelagic bird species were identified from the ship including the following: Shy, Black-browed and Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, White-chinned, Soft-plumaged and Great-winged Petrels, Wilson's, European and Leach's Storm Petrels and Great, Sooty and Cory's Shearwaters.

LOCAL BIRDING HOT SPOT OF THE MONTH

TSHULU CAMP

Tshulu camp is situated on the banks of the Mutale River in eastern Venda. The camp is surrounded by Lebombo Ironwood groves, baobabs and mopane woodland. Several kilometers from the nearest village, the soundscape is dominated by cowbells, baboon calls, and the rush of rapids as the river spills out of the deep pools that mark the end of a dramatic gorge. It is a wonderful place to rest and recuperate, and the birding is excellent. There are also several short walking trails from the camp, including a tree walk, and guides are available if you would like to venture further afield.

Accommodation is in spacious tents on raised platforms with en-suite bathrooms and plenty of hot running water. A well-equipped kitchen opens out onto a central area for eating and relaxing. Solar power is available to charge cell phones, cameras and laptops, and provides light in the central area and in the tents.

Tshulu Camp is a Birder Friendly establishment, and a member of the Greater Limpopo Birding Route. There is a qualified bird guide who is available to show birders all the best viewing places in the vicinity. Tshulu is also close to the Golwe Camp Site and can facilitate visits to this well known birding hotspot.

Contact details
082 223 7605
www. tshulutrust.org

Coordinates:
S22 34.779 E30 48.518,

C.W.A.C 2013 SOMER TELLING BY DIE POLOKWANE VOËLRESERVAAT

Deur Richter van Tonder

Op 19 Februarie 2013 het 'n paar van ons hierdie dag aangepak. Ek, Chris en Wilna Campbell en 2 buitelandse vriende Rienk en Jante. Ons almal was mooi stiptelik om 07:00 voor die hek van die Polokwane Voëlreservaat. Die hekwag Thomas was bietjie laat en Chris het toe oorgespring om hom te gaan roep. Maar hy was nooit daar nie en toe oomblikke later daag hy daar op met sy fiets.

Ons het almal besluit om met Chris se voertuig in te ry tot by die 'hide' aan die anderkant van die 1ste dam, sodat die son mooi aan ons agterkant is. Net voor ons daar aankom gewaar ons 2 fantastiese Bruinarende.

Ons het toe begin tel. Die eerste dam is in 'n wonderlike toestand en lewer ook toe 85% van ons 30 verskillende watervoël spesies op. Terwyl ons soek en tel, gewaar ek 'n waadvoëltjie wat baie skaars is, 'n Geelpootstrandlo-per! Ons was eers skepties en begin toe fotos neem. Dis toe bevestig later dat dit wel ene was!

Die 2de en 3de dam is die volgende damme wat werk benodig, maar het darem 'n paar spesies opgelewer soos die Grootlangtoon, Groenrugreier, Gewone Nagreier en Gewone Ruiter. Dis toe ook waar ons die roep van die Afrika bosveld hoor, 'n Visarend!

Ons het lekker vroeg geëindig en hier is net 'n paar van die voëls wat ons op die damme getel het: 1 Geelpootstrandloper, 100 Kemphane, 60 Rooipootelsies en 10 Kaapse-rietsangers.

Birdlife Polokwane members meet Peter Harrison MBE **By Joe Grosel**

Several members of Birdlife Polokwane had the privilege of meeting and birding with Peter Harrison. A professional birder, artist, author, and screenwriter, Peter is widely considered the world's foremost authority on seabirds. Often credited with having seen more seabirds than anyone, past or present, Peter has written and illustrated 14 books, of which *Seabirds: An Identification Guide* is considered the bible of seabird identification. Peter has led expeditions the world over and has visited Antarctica more than 100 times. An active conservationist, he has been honored by Queen Elizabeth II with the title Member of the British Empire for services to natural history. During the Flock Cruise Peter gave two excellent presentations to packed audiences and received a standing ovation for his passionate portrayal of the plight of the world's albatrosses. On deck Peter was at hand to help spot sea birds and to interact with birders. His enthusiasm and friendliness added tremendous value to the Flock event.

Joe with sea bird authority Peter Harrison

Interesting bird sightings **Joe Grosel**

Here follows a summary of some of the most significant bird sightings in the Polokwane region for the month of February.

Honey Buzzard – 01 Feb – Polokwane Golf Club – Johan Janse Van Vuuren

Thrush Nightingale – 02 Feb – Lund's Farm (Marabastad) – Angela Lund

Pallid Harrier – 03 Feb – Polokwane Airfield – Joe Grosel

Pectoral Sandpiper – 09 Feb – Polokwane Bird Sanctuary – Richter van Tonder

Lesser Moorhen – 12 Feb – De Loskop Farm Dam – Derek Engelbrecht

Maccoa Duck – 15 Feb – De Loskop Farm Dam – Derek Engelbrecht

Grey Wagtail – 23 Feb – Debengeni Falls – David Letsoalo

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OUTINGS

8th March – Night Drive at Polokwane Nature Reserve (RvT & SC)

15 – 17 March – Bird ringing in the Polokwane Nature Reserve (DE)

15 – 17 March – Bushveld Tree Identification in the Waterberg (LG)

21st March – Bird Photo Race and bring & braai (JG)

5 – 6 April – Verlorenvlei weekend outing near Dullstroom – To be confirmed (RvT)

11 – 14 April – Shimuwini Bundu Birding Bash in the KNP (CH)

Contact numbers for enquiries & reservations.: Charles Hardy – **CH** (083 457 1721); Joe Grosel – **JG** (082 415 5250); Lisa Grosel - **LG** (083 380 2322); Derek Engelbrecht – **DE** 0822005277, Richter van Tonder – **RvT** 082 213 8276 and Susan Chapman – **SC** (082 809 7873)