

MAY 2015

The air is cooling down and winter is approaching. Many birds have started migrating however we have noticed a few this past weekend who are still sticking around, interesting? Please Visit our facebook page, come and see what other members have been up to, share your sightings, identification queries and photos with us. www.facebook.com/birdlifepolokwane. If you happen to come across anything you would like to see in our next newsletter, or you would like to give feedback you can e-mail me at chantz66@gmail.com. *Happy birding.*

Chantelle

Polokwane centurions – 110 bird species in a suburban garden

by Derek and Daniel Engelbrecht

We moved into our house in the Polokwane suburb of Welgelegen in February 1999. From day 1 I kept a bird list, and not long after Daniel joined the family in 2002, he also started pointing out birds. He is now the official list keeper and I do the vetting. We record all birds we see in or from our garden.

Earlier this year we joined the Garden Bird Centurion Club when we saw our 100th bird in the garden – a Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird. This is quite a rare bird in the Polokwane area. Since then we had a spate of new records and at the moment we stand on 110 birds. I recall the first bird on our garden list was a Common Fiscal and sadly a bird which no longer occurs in the neighbourhood. The latest addition was a Reed Cormorant passing over our house making a beeline for the nearest waterbody. Other noteworthy sightings over the years include Harlequin Quail, African Wood Owl, African Grey Hornbill, four species of Kingfisher (African Pygmy, Giant, Brown-hooded and Woodland), Marabou Storks, African Mourning Dove, Long-tailed Paradise-whydah, two species of indigobirds (Village and Purple), Violet-backed Starling, Thick-billed Weaver and 12 species of birds of prey: Cape and White-backed Vulture, African Harrier-hawk, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Fish-Eagle, Shikra, African Goshawk, Gabar Goshawk, Little Sparrowhawk, Amur Falcon, Yellow-billed Kite and European Honey-buzzard. Another highlight was at least three Cut-throat x Red-headed Finch hybrids at our feeder in 2014.

What was our highlight? The Harlequin Quail was very special, but since it was seen before Daniel was born, we agreed on the African Mourning Dove which stayed for a few weeks in the beginning of 2014.



Violet-backed Starling. One of the latest additions to our garden bird list.

Nature's insect exterminator

sent in by Joe Grosel

Did you know that Fiscal Flycatchers are capable of catching an insect practically every minute? This means the bird catches an average of 60 insects an hour! If you multiply 60 insects by only five feeding hours then the flycatcher takes at least 300 insects every day and about 100 000 insects in a year! Surely this is the best environment-friendly pesticide you could have in your garden.

You know you are a birder if...

sent in by Joe Grosel

- ...you don't mind walking around rubbish dumps and sewage ponds looking for birds!
- ...when you keep so many bird lists that you have to keep a list of lists.
- ... you wash dishes with binoculars around your neck.
- ...your family have all but given up on you because you will drive two hours to see a rare bird rather than drive 30 minutes to see them.
- ...books about birds take up about 90% of your shelf space.
- ...you have co-workers calling you on the phone to come by their office to ID a bird out their office window.
- ...when 90% of the gifts you receive are bird related.
- ...you're hopeless at remembering people's names, yet you know the names of all the birds you have seen in your region.

African bird emblems:

by Joe Grosel

While most African countries don't really bother about national symbols, a few boast some beautiful and interesting national birds. Here are a few:

Liberia	Dark-capped Bulbul
Namibia,	Crimson-breasted Shrike
Swaziland	Purple-crested Turaco
Ivory Coast	White-cheeked Turaco
Democratic Republic of Congo	Congo Peafowl
Angola	Red-crested Turaco
Uganda & Tanzania	Grey Crowned-Crane
Botswana & Kenya	Lilac-breasted Roller
Nigeria	Black Crowned-Crane
Zambia, Zimbabwe & Malawi	African Fish Eagle



Cheeky Cuckoos

sent in by Susan Chapman

Cuckoo Birds usually lay their eggs in nests of other birds.

When the cuckoo comes out of the egg, those other birds think that these strange big spotted birds must be their own – and they feed them!



Outings / Uitstappies

21 – 24 May:	Nature Photography Practical Workshop – Bona Thaba Lodge - Mabula Game Reserve (LG)
23 May:	Day visit to Thabaphaswa Lodge near Mokopane (RvT)
06 – 07 June:	LBJ Identification Course in Polokwane (LG)
16 June (Youth Day):	Annual Polokwane Photographic Bird Race (S3)

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