

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020





## Contents

- 2** Chairman's Statement
- 3** Chief Executive Officer's Report
- 13** Looking Ahead
- 14** Organisational Structure
- 15** Organisational and Conservation Objectives
- 17** Division of Expenses and Sources of Funding
- 18** Business Division Reports
- 24** Conservation Division Reports
- 34** Annual Reviews of the Performance and Effectiveness of BirdLife South Africa
- 36** Financials
- 38** Sponsors and Supporters
- 40** Office-bearers and Staff

### Vision

BirdLife South Africa wishes to see a country and region where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably.

### Mission

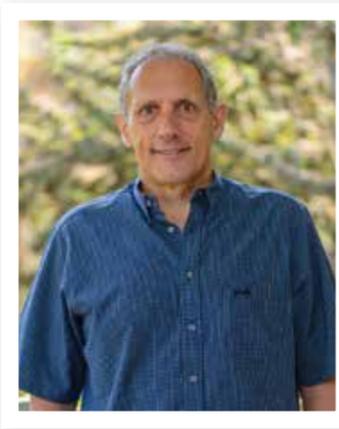
BirdLife South Africa strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically based programmes, through supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and by encouraging people to enjoy and value nature.

DAVID ALLAN

*cover* The Southern Ground-Hornbill was Bird of the Year in 2020.  
(Photo: Hugh Chittenden)

*left* Antarctic Prion

## Chairman's Statement



“ It is pleasing that we have emerged from the *annus horribilis* of 2020 unscathed and that little of our work, if any, was affected. That's not to say that the coming year will be plain sailing, but we do seem to be moving in the right direction at last ”

It is incredible that within the pandemonium caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, BirdLife South Africa managed to end up with a modest financial surplus this past year! This would not have been possible without the dedication of our management and staff, as well as the extensive support of our patrons, donors, funders and members. A heartfelt thank you to one and all.

**A**s in most other organisations, remote working conditions and virtual meetings became the norm, which in itself raised challenges with regard to communicating effectively and maintaining staff morale and well-being. It is pleasing that we have emerged from the *annus horribilis* of 2020 unscathed and that little of our work, if any, was affected. That's not to say that the coming year will be plain sailing, but we do seem to be moving in the right direction at last.

One of the victims of the pandemic was our planned voyage to Marion Island, which had to be postponed by a year. We are extremely hopeful that this epic Flock to Marion adventure will eventuate in early 2022. This is an important fundraiser for the organisation, with some of the funds going to the Saving Marion Island's Seabirds: The Mouse-Free Marion Project. Stretching over a period of three years and with a budget of about R200-million, this is one of the most important initiatives that BirdLife South Africa will ever undertake. We will collaborate closely with the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to make it a success and we are pleased that Minister Barbara Creecy has given it her personal endorsement. It is critical that each and every mouse on Marion Island is eradicated, as the predation on chicks that is currently taking place is devastating to the populations of a number of endangered seabird species.

In order to efficiently and effectively manage a project of this size, a separate non-profit company has been established. BirdLife South Africa will be well represented on the Board of Directors, which will be chaired by Dr Mavuso Msimang. Dr Frederik Paulsen, a Swedish businessman and philanthropist, has provided significant funding so that operations can commence and with a view to raising the required budget.

One of the funding initiatives under way is that of sponsorship of each hectare of the island to an amount of R1000. This is a very meaningful way that our members can become part of history and participate in this project, so I invite birders and conservationists to please visit the project website (<https://mousefreemarion.org/sponsors/>) and make a donation.

In conclusion I must thank BirdLife South Africa's Board members, as well as the members of our Fundraising, Marketing, Remuneration, Nomination and Audit & Risk committees for their contributions of time and energy, all of which are provided on a voluntary basis.

PHILIP CALINIKOS  
CHAIRMAN

## Chief Executive Officer's Report

It is very pleasing to report that, while the Covid-19 storm is not yet behind us, BirdLife South Africa managed to weather it during 2020 and it is satisfying to see that our conservation successes continue. Our competent and hardworking staff deserve much praise for their achievements over the past 12 months.

### 2020: a challenging yet productive year

Anticipating imminent government regulations to address the pandemic, we closed our offices on 19 March and subsequently worked from remote locations for the rest of the year. Although this presented a few challenges, such as remote access to the membership database on the server, these were quickly addressed. We set up various communication forums to ensure that we engaged regularly via Zoom and other virtual media. A Board subcommittee, the Covid-19 Task Team, was established by Philip Calinikos, BirdLife South Africa's Chairman, and it met regularly to deal, in particular, with financial matters during the pandemic. Manuela Krog, BirdLife South Africa's Honorary Treasurer, and senior management also served on this committee.

Very importantly, during the very early stages of remote working we informed our collaborators and donors of our new working arrangements. They were very understanding. During 2020 we developed closer relationships with other conservation NGOs and explored areas of collaboration. These included WWF-SA, the WILDTRUST, Conservation South Africa, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB).

We used the opportunity during 2020 to conduct extensive renovations to the Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre's dormitory and training centre. The first-floor outbuildings at Isdell House, BirdLife South Africa's head office in Johannesburg, were converted into new offices and these will be used by the Regional Conservation Programme's staff.

### Challenges

As a result of Covid-19, the year presented a number of unfortunate and largely unavoidable challenges. These included:

- The need to change the annual raffle prize of a sponsored international birding tour due to lockdown regulations. The substitute cash prize, however, still proved to be popular;
- The cancellation of the physical African Bird Fair, also in consequence of lockdown regulations. The virtual format of the event was a very successful replacement;
- The increased difficulty of fundraising during the current economic climate. For example, many of our Birder Friendly Establishment members are struggling financially and are not renewing their membership;
- The physical and mental exhaustion of our staff following the trials of working during a global pandemic;
- Difficulties experienced while communicating remotely. Although holding meetings via Skype and Zoom platforms is not new, the frequency with which this occurred during 2020 meant that stakeholder engagements were often subjected to technical disruptions. Participants also found that the absence of face-to-face engagement could result in poor interpretation;
- A more pronounced emphasis on development activities as a means of ameliorating South Africa's economic hardships in the latter half of 2020. This has proved to be challenging for the Policy & Advocacy Programme in terms firstly of the number of development applications with potentially negative impacts on priority sites and species; and secondly of recent efforts to fast track development applications by diluting environmental authorisation requirements;
- The renewed postponement of a resolution to the deliberations over closing the waters around African Penguin islands to fishing, despite the evidence for the beneficial effects of such closures on the demographic parameters of African Penguins at islands used in the experiment and despite an annual decrease of approximately 5% in the



“ It is very pleasing to report that, while the Covid-19 storm is not yet behind us, BirdLife South Africa managed to weather it during 2020 and it is satisfying to see that our conservation successes continue ”

population. A decrease of this magnitude is not sustainable if we are to secure Africa's only penguin population and 2021 needs to be the year when a long-term decision is finally made;

- The inability to undertake certain field projects and hold some meetings, which affected 40 out of 115 key conservation targets (35%).



BirdLife South Africa's staff met in Wakkerstroom for the annual staff meeting.

## Staff

- A successful and productive annual staff meeting was held over three days at the Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre in March, just before lockdown.
- While working remotely from 19 March, BirdLife South Africa's staff remained industrious and productive. Regular contact was maintained through weekly staff meetings, management meetings and other engagements via Zoom and other virtual means.
- Isabel Human, BirdLife South Africa's HR Manager, coordinated four wellness surveys to monitor the well-being of our personnel during the pandemic. The outcomes of these surveys informed proactive interventions that were made to assist staff while they worked remotely.
- When so many South Africans were faced with pay cuts, job losses and retrenchment, BirdLife South Africa recruited 13 new staff members. We received a large number of applications and during thorough recruitment processes, which took employment equity into account, we were able to recruit top-notch staff.
- BirdLife South Africa does excellent conservation work and we have achieved a reputation as one of Africa's leading conservation NGOs. For this, our staff can take full credit. We have a team of well-qualified, very hardworking, dedicated and passionate colleagues and, as a result, we're making great advances in our important conservation work.

## Finances and fundraising

BirdLife South Africa achieved a small operating surplus for the 11th year running and we're grateful for the support we received from many sources, including unsolicited donations, and especially from our members. Our 43 Golden Bird Patrons contributed R2.215-million to BirdLife South Africa in 2020, the largest amount we have received from this dedicated group of donors. The raffle, Virtual African Bird Fair and the call for support for the community bird guides generated significant funds. We once again achieved unqualified audits for BirdLife South Africa, the BirdLife National Trust and Middelpunt Wetland Trust. Our small financial team, comprising Fanie du Plessis (Head of Finance & Operations) and Rose Knight (Bookkeeper), continued to maintain our organisation's impeccable financial administration.

## Governance

BirdLife South Africa is proud of its excellent corporate governance. During 2020, under the chairmanship of Philip Calinikos, the Board of Directors met on six occasions. Four of these meetings took place virtually and a successful virtual AGM was held on 13 June. The Audit & Risk Committee, chaired by Andrew Mitchell, met on three occasions. Some of the important developments in the past year were the development of extensive internal controls and a new and improved means of assessing risk.

## Events

- We hosted a very successful Virtual African Bird Fair in September that not only was well received by the attendees, but also raised funds for bird conservation. The highlights were the excellent presentations, including the keynote address on albatrosses by Peter Harrison, MBE, the silent auction and the pub-style quiz.
- BirdLife South Africa's 36th Birding Big Day took place on 28 November. More than 350 teams – comprising more than 1500 people – participated, which is almost 50 more teams than in 2019! Of these, 320 teams logged their data using BirdLasser while the rest submitted paper lists. A total of 653 species, more than 75% of South Africa's bird species, were seen by all the teams. A highlight of this year's Birding Big Day was that The Raven Dikkops, with team members Bradley Arthur, Michael Mills, Marc Cronje and Callan Cohen, set a new record of 335 species, 10 more than the previous record. In addition, the teams recorded 48 769 records on BirdLasser, which is almost 9000 records more than in 2019. More than 1200 records were received for species of conservation concern and the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology's Michael Brooks reported a massive increase in data submission to the Southern African Bird Atlas Project during the day.
- We did not hold our annual Owl Awards, but celebrated instead the recipients of these awards during the previous 11 years.

## Marketing and awareness

- BirdLife South Africa's public profile was raised and we gained much support through the successful Conservation Conversations webinar series. We regularly attracted more than 600 live viewers every Tuesday for seven and a half months and showcased BirdLife South Africa's work to a wide and diverse audience.
- During the year, we made extensive use of social media to create awareness about birds, birding and BirdLife South Africa. During a series of social media posts each day during Women's Month in August we celebrated the important contributions of female ornithologists, conservationists and birders.
- DStv aired an animation with the positive message 'Hope' 330 times on eight of its channels over three weeks in August. This message, highlighting the relevance of BirdLife South Africa's work during the pandemic, also received exposure on social media.

## Membership

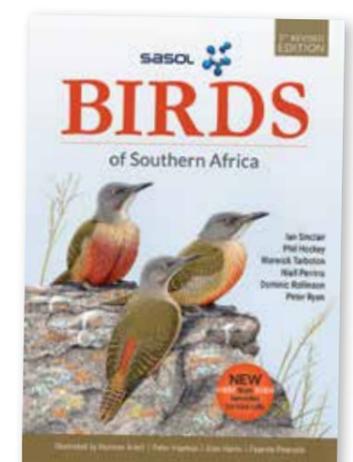
- We are very excited that we will be making use of a new, cloud-based membership database software programme. Sean Connelly from Connelly Consulting and Shireen Gould, our Membership Programme Manager, have worked hard to get this database up and running.
- We held a successful and very well attended virtual launch of the 5th edition of *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa* and subsequently sold more than 450 copies of the book, thus raising important funds for BirdLife South Africa.
- Sales of the 2021 Birds of Southern Africa calendar have been excellent and, as a result, we did a reprint in mid-November. The funds from calendar sales go to the budget for *African Birdlife* magazine.
- Our growing number of Conservation League Donors donated a minimum of R2800 in addition to their annual membership fees, thereby qualifying for a Section 18A tax certificate.

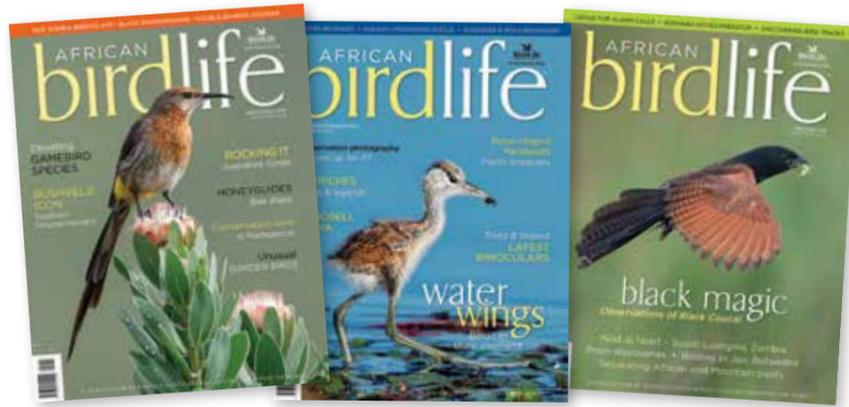
## Publications

- We continued to produce the bi-monthly *African Birdlife* magazine for our members and retail customers, despite the very challenging economic times, which resulted in



The Raven Dikkops set a new Birding Big Day record.





many magazines closing down. Editor Eve Gracie, designer Bryony van Wyk and the rest of the team are commended for the production of this world-class magazine.

- 2020 was a great year for *Ostrich: Journal of African Ornithology* with another four full issues, including a special issue about citizen science. The journal received its highest five-year impact factor ever and had one of the highest rates of submissions of prospective articles in recent years as a result of ornithologists, restricted by Covid-19 control measures, switching from field work to writing. This topic was in fact the subject of an article in the journal that was one of the most viewed during the year ('Covid-19 and citizen science: lessons learned from southern Africa' *Ostrich* 91(2) [www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)).
- Our conservation staff continued to publish their research in international scientific journals, including such prestigious publications as *Ecology and Evolution*, *Diversity and Distributions* and *The Condor*. Their work was also publicised in popular magazines, especially *African BirdLife*.

### Conservation Division

- BirdLife South Africa's conservation team consists of hard-working, dedicated, passionate and innovative conservationists who, despite the challenges of 2020, have shown their resilience and dedication to our organisation and to our important work.
- We were extremely fortunate to have been joined by well-qualified and high-calibre staff who have settled well into their new positions: Dr Melissa Lewis as Policy & Advocacy Programme Manager; Andrew de Blocq as Avitourism Project Manager; Dr Kyle Lloyd as Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation; Bronwyn Maree as East Atlantic Flyway Initiative Project Manager; and Dr Tegan Carpenter-Kling as Coastal Seabird Project Manager.
- The new Conservation Division structure was successfully implemented in January 2020 and we are achieving our goal of improved synergy and collaboration between the six conservation programmes.
- As part of BirdLife South Africa's revised conservation strategy, the six conservation programmes prepared draft strategies to guide BirdLife South Africa's conservation work over the next five years.
- In BirdLife South Africa's annual Strategic Framework update, we reported on our success in meeting a range of important conservation objectives and key performance indicators, despite the challenges of 2020.
- Various partnerships and collaborations have been established or strengthened, including with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), Peace Parks Foundation, WILDTRUST, Conservation South Africa, Kruger to Canyons, Singita, EcoTraining and the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative.
- The Conservation Division remains well funded thanks to our donors, who have continued to support our conservation work during these difficult times.

### Landscape Conservation Programme

The most important successes of the Landscape Conservation Programme in 2020 were:

- The official commencement of this new programme and the development of its conservation strategy for the next five years. This will see a more holistic,

ecosystem-based approach to our species conservation work, which will include the involvement of relevant communities;

- The deployment of telemetry devices on five White-backed Vulture chicks and three Secretarybird chicks as well as, for the first time in history, on two Critically Endangered Southern Banded Snake Eagles. These devices will help us to understand the habitat use of these raptors and inform our conservation decisions;
- The launch of a bi-monthly Biodiversity Stewardship Committee in partnership with Conservation Outcomes, which has enabled our conservation team to improve their skills and share knowledge about the best approaches for securing private land for conservation. In 2020 we received signed declarations from the relevant provincial Members of the Executive Council (MECs) for 115 hectares of mistbelt grassland in KwaZulu-Natal and 24 078 hectares of grassland in the Upper Wilge Protected Environment in the eastern Free State.

### Habitat conservation projects

#### THE INGULA PROJECT

- Ingula Project Manager Carina Pienaar assisted the Endangered Wildlife Trust with the development of an assessment framework to determine the impact of Eskom's activities on the biodiversity (ecosystem integrity and species diversity) on its property through a voluntary biodiversity disclosure platform. This provides companies with a practical avenue through which to report annually on their biodiversity performance and is similar to how they report on other climate change impacts (i.e. the Greenhouse Gas Protocol with corporate standards).
- Through BirdLife South Africa's long-term monitoring and in-depth understanding of the Ingula Nature Reserve and surrounding Eskom properties, remote sensing and the collection of historic information about management practices on the property, we were able to assess the integrity of its grassland, wetland and forest components. We were also able to determine optimal breeding population sizes for nine priority threatened species in the reserve.
- Tourist numbers to the Ingula Nature Reserve increased and the reserve was the venue for two successful SANParks Honorary Rangers' fundraising events.

#### GRASSLAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

- We have undertaken monitoring, conservation and awareness work in the Sneeuwberg Protected Environment near Memel. This has included several meetings with the area's landowners and the monitoring of threatened bird species.
- Good progress has been made with the declaration of the proposed 24 078-hectare Upper Wilge Protected Environment near Harrismith, including the submission of all required documents and the signing of the notice of intention to declare by the MEC. This process will be continued and hopefully the declaration will be finalised in 2021. This area is important for the protection of grassland and wetland habitat, including the Eastern Free State's Strategic Water Source Area.

#### WESTERN CAPE ESTUARIES CONSERVATION PROJECT

- Dr Giselle Murison, the project manager, successfully secured funding to expand the protected area at the Klein River estuary, which is ranked fifth in the country for its conservation importance. The funding, which amounts to approximately R2.5-million over three years, will see more than 2000 hectares of privately owned land along the south bank of the estuary declared in perpetuity for conservation. These sites comprise endangered estuarine and terrestrial vegetation types and constitute the last remaining intact natural habitat at the estuary, which is currently without protection.
- In August, the Western Cape MEC approved the notice of intention to declare a 7000-hectare Protected Environment at the Berg River estuary in early 2021. Currently without protection, the Berg River estuary is South Africa's third most important estuary for conservation and has a recorded bird list of more than 200 species. The Protected Environment will offer the first formal protection for this estuarine ecosystem. It will also be the first estuarine Protected Environment in the country, securing more than 6000 hectares of intact threatened terrestrial and estuarine habitats and supporting several plant and bird Species of Conservation Concern.
- The Invasive Alien Plant Management Unit Clearing Plan for the Moutonshoek Protected



Dr Melissa Whitecross with Houdini, a young male Secretarybird that was tagged in February 2020 in Besters, KwaZulu-Natal.

Environment, the primary catchment area for the Verlorenvlei estuary, was completed. Additional funds for the ongoing clearing of invasive alien plants at Moutonshoek, a partnership project with West Coast District Municipality and the Moutonshoek Protected Environment Landowners' Association, were also secured. To date the project has cleared more than 70 hectares of river corridor since its start in November 2019, with more than 300 people-days of work. Funding has been secured to continue this important work until June 2021, with additional funds for training and equipment.

- BirdLife South Africa's pilot project exploring estuarine habitat restoration and bank stabilisation solutions at key sites in the Berg River estuary saw two zoned bird sanctuaries and erosion control measures included in the recreational by-laws for the estuary. Signage and other informational material have been erected to highlight the importance of the estuary for birds, as well as erosion hotspots at the estuary. Regulations prohibiting recreational activities that might cause environmental damage, including causing or accelerating bankside erosion, are now included in the by-laws.
- Working with volunteers from several bird clubs in the Western Cape, the project has increased the number of Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWACs) from two to four per year at all major wetlands within the Cape Whale Coast Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. Through a series of workshops, it has introduced observers to BirdLasser as a means of capturing CWAC data.

### Species projects

The projects below are a sample of species-specific projects undertaken by BirdLife South Africa staff.

#### VULTURES

- The declaration of the Zululand Vulture Safe Zone was announced on 5 September, International Vulture Awareness Day, a year after the declaration of the first Vulture Safe Zone at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve. The 200 000-hectare safe zone includes some of the most important breeding habitat for the Critically Endangered White-backed Vulture in Zululand. The initiative was driven by Clive Vivier, owner of Leopard Mountain Lodge in Manyoni Private Game Reserve, who was instrumental in securing buy-in from participating landowners.
- The Peace Parks Foundation has agreed to extend the Zululand Vulture Safe Zone northwards into the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area, which will include areas frequented by White-backed Vultures in Eswatini and Mozambique.
- The Zululand Vulture Safe Zone initiative sparked concerted efforts to find appropriate lead-free alternatives for use in hunting and culling activities that will be used not only by local landowners, but also by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. This is significant, as it is the first time that a provincial nature conservation authority has made an effort to end the use of lead ammunition in its nature reserves. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is currently testing the lead-free alternatives. This is a major leap forward in our efforts to curtail the negative impact of lead ammunition and was a direct result of the awareness brought about by the Vulture Safe Zone initiative in the Zululand area.

#### WHITE-WINGED FLUFFTAIL

- Fifty-one camera traps were deployed at three long-term monitoring sites to observe White-winged Flufftail population trends and behaviour.
- Most of the field equipment needed for the project was sponsored by Rockjumper Birding Tours, Deynecke Engineering, Chamberlains, Eurolux, Jones and Wagener Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Johan and Madeleen van Loggerenberg, Dr Jessica Briner and Travis Duck.
- Surveys were conducted along South Africa's eastern escarpment to determine the presence or absence of White-winged Flufftails at high-altitude wetlands.
- Two small grants were obtained (from Club300 Foundation and African Bird Club) and two short courses were successfully completed (Bioacoustics in R and Tools for Wetland Assessment).
- Discussions about improving the conservation status and expansion of the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment were held with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment Landowners' Association, Middelpunt Wetland Trust and Endangered Wildlife Trust.



WARWICK TARBOTON

The cliff-nesting Southern Bald Ibis is one of several grassland species monitored by BirdLife South Africa staff and volunteers.

#### SOUTHERN BALD IBIS

- Numerous volunteers, from Limpopo to the Eastern Cape, have committed to assisting with the project to monitor the breeding of Southern Bald Ibises throughout the species' range.
- We have fitted rings to 10 and tracking devices to two juveniles at the artificial breeding site in the Ingula Nature Reserve. The tracking devices will enable us to determine the spatial distribution and habitat use of Southern Bald Ibises after they fledge. This is one aspect of a larger project that aims to determine the breeding success, habitat preferences, land use and spatial movement of the Southern Bald Ibis.

#### Birds and Renewable Energy Project

- The first comprehensive, national-scale study of birds killed by turbine collisions in southern Africa was published in *Ostrich: Journal of African Ornithology*.
- The report *Black Harriers and Wind Energy: Guidelines for impact assessment, monitoring and mitigation* was finalised.
- Birds and Renewable Energy Intern Nolumanyano Camagu completed her internship and has secured a position in the renewable energy industry.
- A protocol for the specialist assessment and minimum report content requirements for environmental authorisation for wind energy generation facilities was gazetted. This states that all tasks must be undertaken in accordance with the latest version of the *Best Practice Guidelines for Birds and Wind Energy* (published by BirdLife South Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust).
- Birds and Renewable Energy Project Manager Samantha Ralston-Paton attended a US National Wind Wildlife Research meeting that was held online in December. This included live sessions and more than 75 pre-recorded presentations and, because it was held online, she could attend for a fraction of the cost and with no travel-associated carbon emissions being produced.

#### Seabird Conservation Programme

##### Albatross Task Force

- With funds from a one-year research grant awarded by the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, the Albatross Task Force (ATF), in partnership with Imvelo Blue Environmental Consultancy, has finalised trial deployments of the bird-scaring line compliance device. The device is attached to the line and works by recording an increase in tension on the line each time it is deployed during fishing operations. The data are then cross-referenced with fishing logs and used to measure compliance with this regulatory mitigation measure.
- A one-year project funded by BirdLife International that aims to develop spatial utilisation maps for pelagic seabirds foraging in South African waters has been finalised. Using several hundred seabird tracks obtained from researchers around the world,



the ATF, with the help of the Seabird Conservation Programme, has produced utilisation area density maps for South Africa's Exclusive Economic Zone. These will assist in the delineation of marine protected areas as part of the National Marine Spatial Planning and Protected Area Expansion process headed by SANBI.

- The ATF, as a member of the Steering Committee Advisory Group for the Albacore Tuna Pole Fleet's five-year Fisheries Improvement Project has, together with industry and other environmental organisations, finalised the action plan for the project. The plan includes the first on-board observer programme to run for at least a year to assess potential impacts and mitigation actions for threatened and protected species. Any potential issues would have to be addressed if the fishery is to gain Marine Stewardship Certification.



C. HAGEN

above One of the 80 cameras set up to study potential penguin predators in De Hoop Nature Reserve.

above, right A leopard stalks past one of the cameras in the eastern part of De Hoop.



#### Coastal Seabirds

- During November, in collaboration with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, we facilitated a very successful Forage Fish Workshop under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). Together with fisheries and seabird experts from Angola, Namibia and South Africa, the workshop participants developed and agreed upon a set of recommendations for the management of the Benguela Current's forage fish resources and their fisheries to ensure the long-term sustainable use of the fish as a critical food for seabirds. The department's Dr Azwianewi Makhado, as Chair of the Benguela Current Commission's Top Predator Working Group, will present the recommendations to the Benguela Current Commission on behalf of South Africa.
- The monitoring of predators and infrastructure at the De Hoop Nature Reserve penguin colony site was improved by the installation of an image-processing system that automatically identifies objects that have triggered the motion cameras. This has greatly reduced the number of false triggers from wind and the movement of vegetation. Christina Hagen partnered with Panthera and the Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa to set up a camera trap survey across the reserve to determine the number of leopards and other potential penguin predators.
- 2020 was a successful year for the tracking of coastal seabirds. This crucial research will enable us to identify important habitats for threatened seabirds so that they can be integrated into marine spatial planning processes and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. In collaboration with SANParks, CapeNature and SANCCOB, we deployed biologgers, including GPS and depth sensors, on 29 breeding African Penguins at the Boulders and Stony Point colonies; 25 GPS loggers on Cape Cormorants at Stony Point and Dyer Island; and 24 GSM loggers on non-breeding African Penguins at Dassen Island and Stony Point. All these data will be integrated into spatial outputs that will be submitted to several marine spatial planning initiatives in 2021.

#### Mouse-Free Marion Project

The Mouse-Free Marion Project, which aims to eradicate mice from Marion Island in 2023, gained significant momentum in 2020. The institutional structures have been

established and preliminary budgets have been determined. Dr Frederik Paulsen (Ferring Pharmaceuticals) has agreed to provide US\$1-million to support the preparatory work for the project, including fundraising endeavours. Dr Anton Wolvaardt was recruited as Project Manager.

#### Regional Conservation Programme

- Bronwyn Maree took up the position of East Atlantic Flyway Initiative (EAFI) Project Manager, a project funded by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). She is a representative on the EAFI Task Force, a team that discusses and progresses projects along the flyway.
- Strong relationships were established with the three BirdLife Partners within the scope of the EAFI: BirdLife Zimbabwe, BirdWatch Zambia and BirdLife Botswana. In addition, strategic partnerships have been developed with key government departments in Angola and Namibia and a Memorandum of Understanding with Angola is being drafted.
- Having obtained his certification as a Red List Trainer on completion of the advanced Red List training course, Simeon Bezeng is now one of only two certified Red List trainers in Africa. He was appointed as the Regional Focal Point for western and southern Africa at the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) Committee meeting.
- We reviewed 27 proposals for new KBAs in Mozambique and these have been confirmed by the KBA Secretariat.
- Daniel Marnewick and colleagues published *Assessing the Extent of OECMs (Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures) in South Africa*, the country report for the OECM project. Daniel believes that a strong foundation has been laid to further OECMs in South Africa, particularly to align with, support and strengthen our existing community of practice under Biodiversity Stewardship.

#### Policy & Advocacy Programme

- 2020 saw the culmination of a collaboration between BirdLife South Africa, SANBI and Enviro-Insight to develop a Species Environmental Assessment Guideline. The guideline is designed to support recently gazetted protocols that prescribe the assessment and minimum reporting criteria for impacts on terrestrial animal and plant species for activities requiring environmental authorisation. These protocols are legally binding and the guideline describes the manner in which species specialists, environmental assessment practitioners and the proponents of development projects can ensure compliance with the protocols' requirements. The protocols and associated guideline will strengthen South Africa's environmental authorisation process by helping to ensure that species impact assessments are conducted to a consistently high standard.
- In a new collaboration with the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Enviro-Insight, BirdLife South Africa embarked upon a project to develop best-practice guidelines for implementing the mitigation hierarchy in South Africa. South Africa's environmental laws and policies call for a hierarchical approach to impact mitigation, whereby significant negative environmental impacts are sequentially avoided, minimised, rehabilitated and/or offset. However, it is widely acknowledged that various challenges often prevent the aims of the mitigation hierarchy from being achieved in practice. It is hoped that the guidelines produced by this project will assist specialists and developers to make appropriate decisions and enable competent authorities to better assess adherence to the mitigation hierarchy and to set robust licensing conditions to ensure that developers can be held accountable for implementing mitigation activities. The first phase of the project has involved the drafting of a guideline framework and the discussion of this document with government officials and domestic and foreign experts.
- The Policy & Advocacy Programme has submitted comments and objections on a wide range of problematic development applications in South Africa and has provided various BirdLife partners with advice on tackling threats to priority sites in other African countries. One of the programme's key priorities remains protecting the habitat of the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail from activities that are incompatible with these areas' conservation. To this end, 2020 has seen some significant progress in engaging the Department of Water and Sanitation and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy regarding the importance of this species and its habitat. BirdLife South Africa is grateful for the support provided by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and various other stakeholders in this regard.

“ The Policy & Advocacy Programme has submitted comments and objections on a wide range of problematic development applications in South Africa and has provided various BirdLife partners with advice on tackling threats to priority sites in other African countries ”

“ We are immensely grateful for the support we have received from our Board, volunteers, affiliated bird clubs, members, collaborators and donors. ‘Giving conservation wings’ is truly a collaborative effort ”

- The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment appointed Melissa Lewis as a member of the National Lead Task Team, whose mission is to make recommendations and support the implementation of processes towards achieving the vision that South African wildlife is not harmed by exposure to lead. She joins Linda van den Heever as a BirdLife South Africa representative on the task team and will be focusing specifically on aspects of this issue relating to law and policy.
- BirdLife South Africa has provided the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment with advice regarding the development of a national plan for improving implementation of AEWA. This project is still in its infancy, but if it is successfully developed it will be the first of its kind under AEWA and will set a valuable example for other countries that are Parties to the Agreement. It will also be a mechanism to better coordinate different stakeholders' contributions to the implementation of AEWA and better monitor South Africa's progress in achieving such implementation.

### Science & Innovation Programme

- The Science & Innovation Conservation Modelling Project aims to provide detailed habitat suitability maps for all threatened terrestrial bird species in South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini. During 2020 we created more than 60 species layers, of which 38 layers, in combination with data from the Southern African Bird Atlas Project, were submitted to the National Environmental Site Screening Tool. This means that when the footprint of a development overlaps with the distribution of a threatened bird species, red flags will be raised that the developer and Environmental Impact Assessment specialists must then consider in their impact assessments. This proactive approach to supporting sustainable development is aimed at promoting the conservation of our threatened and sensitive landscapes.
- The Science & Innovation Programme provided scientific input into numerous threatened species projects, many of which culminated in publications and ultimately the more effective direction of conservation efforts. The programme's outputs this year included six scientific publications, foremost amongst them the characterisation of the White-wing Flufftail's vocalisation and breeding status. This publication and another highlighting the population status of the species in Ethiopia have contributed significantly to what we know about this enigmatic species and how best to conserve it.

### Empowering People Programme Avitourism Project

Highlights of the new programme were:

- The employment of a dedicated Avitourism Project Manager, Andrew de Blocq, in May;
- The establishment of the Community Bird Guide Relief Fund to support our guides during the national lockdown. We raised more than R700 000 through crowdfunding to support over 40 guides when they were not guiding during the pandemic;
- The securing of funding for the development of an online avitourism hub to be developed and launched in 2021;
- The establishment of new partnerships with other organisations, particularly in the Lowveld, to train and support community bird guides and to run collaborative events for birders in some of South Africa's best birding destinations;
- The maintenance of our Birder Friendly Establishments and Tour Operators membership base despite the negative economic context and restricted travel.

We are immensely grateful for the support we have received from our Board, volunteers, affiliated bird clubs, members, collaborators and donors. 'Giving conservation wings' is truly a collaborative effort.



MARK D. ANDERSON  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Looking Ahead

A brief summary of some of the important work planned for 2021 follows:

- In the face of uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting social and economic challenges, the management structures at BirdLife South Africa will aim to continue with the good practices that assisted the organisation in weathering the storms of 2020. There will be a continued focus on constant pre-emptive planning and flexible but resolute decision-making.
- Following the restructuring of the Conservation Division in 2020, overarching conservation objectives will be developed and strategies will be finalised for each conservation programme in 2021.
- The Landscape Conservation Programme will continue to secure our most threatened grasslands, wetlands, forests and estuaries through Biodiversity Stewardship. Work will continue on several high-priority threats to our vultures, raptors, large terrestrial birds, grassland endemics and wetland communities, including a reduction in the impacts of lead ammunition, electrical transformer boxes, fences, detrimental habitat management practices and renewable energy.
- The Regional Conservation Programme will continue to strengthen the partnerships established in 2020 across eight African countries and roll out in these countries more capacity building and training in assessing threatened species and ecosystems, identifying KBAs and assessing OECMs.
- In addition to existing projects, the Seabird Conservation Programme will promote seabird bycatch mitigation measures for the inshore trawl fleet, improve predator control at the new De Hoop African Penguin colony, release captive-reared penguins to help bolster chances of recruitment to the colony, advocate for effective fishing closure regimes around the largest African Penguin colonies and aim to identify important habitat for non-breeding African Penguins.
- The Empowering People Programme will be training eight community bird guides in the grasslands. Avitourism webpages will be launched.
- The Science & Innovation Programme will continue to develop innovative tools for conservation planning and monitoring, including habitat suitability models for all threatened and endemic bird species. These will feed into various conservation planning tools, such as the National Site Screening Tool.
- The Policy & Advocacy Programme will focus on influencing overarching legislative and policy frameworks and producing targeted guidance to improve impact assessments and decision-making, with a lesser focus on tackling large numbers of development applications at project level.
- BirdLife South Africa will play an important role in establishing a non-profit company that will undertake the Mouse-Free Marion Project.
- A Communications Manager will be recruited to ensure that the organisation's interactions with the public are taken to a new level of excellence. We believe that coordinated, professional and clear communications are key to driving the conservation agenda and enhancing BirdLife South Africa's impact.
- Priorities of the Fundraising Committee include ensuring that all core costs are met. We are in need of a long-term funder for our Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre and the important environmental education work that is undertaken by its staff. We will continue to raise funds for the purchase of a Cape Town office.
- Several events will be hosted, including the second Virtual African Bird Fair, our Annual General Meeting, Owl Awards, Learn About Birds Conference and Birding Big Day. The planning for Flock to Marion, our January 2022 voyage to the Southern Ocean, will continue.
- A new marketing strategy will be developed. We will continue to produce our world-class *African Birdlife* magazine and we will promote awareness of the Cape Rockjumper as Bird of the Year in 2021.

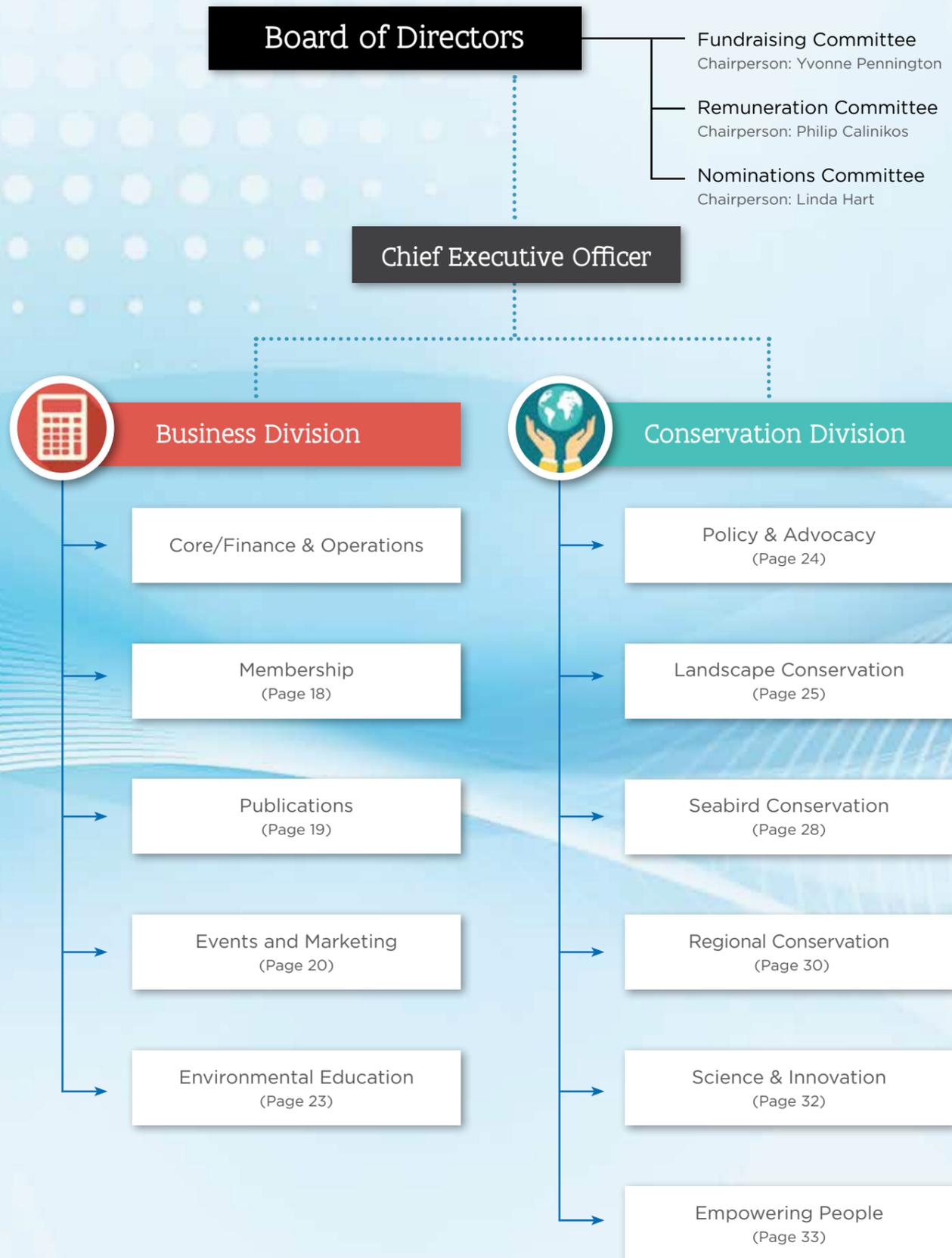
FANIE DU PLESSIS  
HEAD OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS



PETER RYAN

The Cape Rockjumper, a South African endemic, will be the Bird of the Year in 2021.

# Organisational Structure



# Organisational and Conservation Objectives

The ultimate aim of BirdLife South Africa's work is to fulfil the organisation's vision and mission (page 1). Strategic long-term goals (see below) have been set in a framework, while both conservation and organisational objectives are formulated each year in order to realise the vision and mission. The achievement of these activities and targets is measured twice annually by reporting on key performance indicators.

## Strategic goals

- To realise, both efficiently and effectively, key national and international conservation goals and objectives.
- To be a conservation organisation that is influential and well respected locally and globally.
- To be a well-financed and sustainable organisation that is driven by a team of competent and committed staff.
- To have a diverse, engaged and committed membership and an engaged and representative audience.

## Business Division

The organisational objectives of the Business Division are:

**Financial**  
(e.g. unqualified audits, proper financial management, sufficient reserves)

**Governance**  
(e.g. maintaining an optimally functioning Board of Directors, sufficient policies and procedures)

**Human Resources**  
(e.g. human resources planning and recruitment, well-being, performance management and professional development)

**Membership**  
(e.g. growing and diversifying membership)

**Marketing and Communications**  
(e.g. increasing awareness, raising profile)

**Sustainability**  
(e.g. diversifying revenue streams, developing a fundraising strategy)

These organisational objectives are informed by the organisation's annual budget, policies and procedures manual, marketing and communications strategy, fundraising strategy, sustainability plan and various committees (management, marketing, fundraising, etc.).

The Board of Directors directly (and indirectly through the Audit & Risk Committee) provides oversight and guidance to the Business Division.



## Conservation Division

BirdLife South Africa's Conservation Division has achieved several notable successes over the past 10 years and is playing an increasingly important role in the conservation sector, not only in South Africa, but also in the southern African region and globally.

The Conservation Division's work is guided by BirdLife South Africa's Conservation Strategy. Following restructuring of the Conservation Division into six main conservation programmes, this strategy was revised in 2020 to align with the organisation's mission and vision to conserve South Africa's threatened avifauna. It is informed by global and national conservation strategies and policies and by organisational strengths, with a fresh focus on socio-economic imperatives on how to improve people's livelihoods and better facilitate educational activities. Our work is guided by the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, international conventions and multi-lateral agreements, as well as national publications such as the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy and the National Biodiversity Assessment.

BirdLife South Africa's conservation programmes developed draft strategies in 2020 to direct and detail their work and support the implementation of the Conservation Strategy.

Several strategic imperatives listed in the Conservation Strategy will build on the successes of the division:



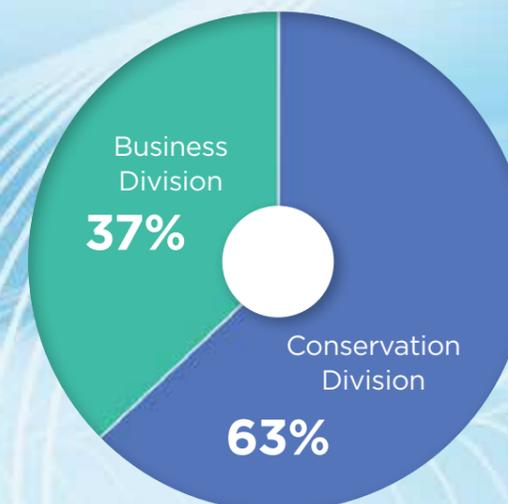
## Division of Expenses and Sources of Funding

BirdLife South Africa maintains a strict policy whereby all conservation work is supported by project-specific funding. No conservation work is undertaken without the necessary funding being in place. Furthermore, except for pre-approved administration fees, no conservation funding or donations are used to fund Business Division activities. The organisation prides itself on maintaining the highest standard of project management and reporting, which includes updating funders with regard to project activities and spending.

### Overview

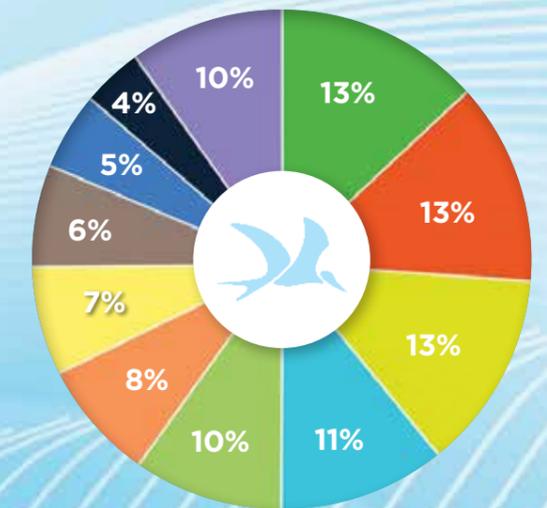
BirdLife South Africa continues to be financially sustainable in the face of challenging economic times, partly due to its maintenance of very diverse revenue streams, with no over-reliance on any individual source of funding.

Split between Business Division and Conservation Division expenses for 2020



- Conservation Division**  
R19 035 595
- Business Division**  
R10 997 096

### Total sources of funding for 2020



Sources	R'000
Donations	3681
Local corporate funding	3677
Local charitable trusts	3674
Publication income	3102
International BirdLife partners	2779
Golden Bird Patrons	2215
Individual funders	2001
International institutions/foundations	1842
Government and parastatals	1396
Events	1084
Other	2722

## Membership and Publications

“ Our base is made up of both direct members and members through affiliated bird clubs. We are grateful to these affiliated bird clubs, which support our conservation work ”



MARK D. ANDERSON

### Membership

As a partner of BirdLife International, BirdLife South Africa is required to have a membership base. Our base is made up of both direct members and members through affiliated bird clubs. We are grateful to these affiliated bird clubs, which support our conservation work.

The year started on a high note, as approximately 300 new members were signed up in the first week of January. This was the result of a successful recruitment campaign whereby BirdLife South Africa members were given preference when bookings opened for the eagerly awaited fundraising cruise, Flock to Marion 2021.

Unfortunately, in February 2020 Covid-19 found its way to South Africa. The economic fallout of the pandemic has affected our supporters and some were not able to renew their membership during the year. Even though it proved to be challenging to recruit new members, there was only a slight decrease in our membership numbers from the previous year: at the end of 2019 there were 3577 members compared to 3416 at the end of 2020.

During the year a recruitment drive was launched to expand the cohort of Conservation League Donors. These donors are generous supporters who opt to donate a minimum of R2800 in addition to their annual membership fees, thereby qualifying for a Section 18A tax certificate. This provides valuable unrestricted funding to BirdLife South Africa that can be used where it is most needed. The recruitment campaign was a success, with the number of Conservation League Donors increasing to 168 by the end of the year. The list of Conservation League Donors in 2020 appears in the ‘Sponsors and supporters’ section of this report.

Due to large gatherings being banned in South Africa in 2020, there were no opportunities to attend events or exhibitions to recruit new members. It is hoped that the situation will return to relative normality in the coming year.

Towards the end of the year, work began on procuring and setting up a new membership administration system. This project will be completed in early 2021 and will assist the Membership Programme in providing an even better service for our members.

Thank you to all our BirdLife South Africa members who supported us through an unprecedented and challenging year.

**168**  
Conservation  
League  
Donors

### African Birdlife

Unsurprisingly, the coronavirus pandemic had a major negative impact on BirdLife South Africa’s magazine *African Birdlife* in 2020. We were not alone; print magazines faced unrelentingly bad trading conditions. A number of major publishers closed their doors and many well-known and established magazine titles ceased production.

While the editorial team managed to produce all six issues for the year, the knock-on effects of magazines not being allowed to be sold in retail outlets during strict lockdown, postal deliveries to subscribers’ homes grinding to a halt for four or five months and vanishing advertising sales obviously had an adverse impact on the magazine’s fortunes. Bulk subscriptions to selected upmarket accommodation establishments throughout Africa – a major outlet for the magazine – were crippled by the restrictions on travel and tourism. Hopefully once travel is again viable and lodges reopen, this revenue stream will revive.

Fortunately there were some positive areas. As could be anticipated, sales of the digital version grew, with numbers of both local and international subscribers increasing. At the height of lockdown BirdLife South Africa decided to make the digital version of affected issues available free of charge to all members and subscribers, and that may have influenced some people to convert from print to digital subscriptions.

Before the pandemic took hold, the first two issues of the year showed marginal increases in local retail sales and subscriptions, and it is hoped that the magazine will gradually regain lost ground in 2021. The magazine team again produced a number of additional items, such as the Bird of the Year 2020 poster, a popular large-format wall calendar and the *Checklist of Birds in South Africa*.

### Ostrich

2020 was a good year for BirdLife South Africa’s scientific publication *Ostrich: Journal of African Ornithology*, whose four full issues included a special one on the theme of citizen science, with Doug Harebottle as guest editor. Its ‘impact factor’ rating improved from 2019 to the second highest score in its 90-year history, and the journal received its highest five-year impact factor ever, which indicates that more of the research published in *Ostrich* is being read and used in other research articles. Improvements to the impact factor are a combination of increased exposure to articles through social media and high-quality publishing courtesy of the NISC publishing house.

The year also recorded one of the highest rates of submissions of prospective articles in recent years, as ornithologists switched from field work to writing as a consequence of restrictions relating to Covid-19 control measures. Contributions continue to be received from across the continent on a diverse range of interesting themes. To celebrate the journal’s 90th anniversary, BirdLife South Africa commissioned a special editorial, which chronicled *Ostrich’s* journey to date and included contributions from all the living past editors-in-chief.

We’d like to thank all contributing photographers for the use of their photos for the covers, as well as authors, reviewers and associate editors, especially Rob Little and Ara Monadjem, who retired from contributing to the journal after many years of sterling work. In their places we welcome Matthew Noakes and Anina Coetzee.

With another special issue in the pipeline for 2021, as well as coverage planned for the International Ornithological Congress scheduled to take place in Durban in 2022, we are cautiously optimistic that the slow but steady upward trend in the journal’s prestige will continue.

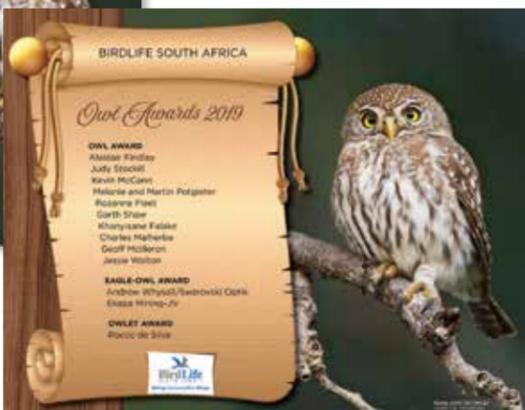


### 2020 Calendars

Calendars were again sold during 2020, and the income generated contributed to the sustainability of *African Birdlife* magazine.

## Events and Marketing

BirdLife South Africa was innovative in 2020 and most of our activities, instead of being physical events, were virtual. Our first virtual AGM, held on 13 June, was well attended and successful, and we used the occasion to thank our outgoing Honorary President, Prof. Colleen Downs, and welcome Prof. Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan as the new incumbent. We decided not to hold our annual Owl Awards event and instead celebrated the recipients of Owl Awards during the previous



11 years. Each day over a period of 11 days, we posted scrolls of the recipients of the awards and we were thus able to re-commemorate the contributions that people and organisations have made to bird conservation and to BirdLife South Africa. During the year, we made extensive use of social media to create awareness about birds, birding and BirdLife South Africa. During a series of social media posts each day during Women's Month (August) we also celebrated the massive contributions of female ornithologists, conservationists and birders.



### The African Bird Fair

Although The African Bird Fair is one of our marquee annual events, it was eminently clear in 2020 that a physical event would not be feasible and the decision was made to move the fair to a virtual platform. While not without its challenges, our virtual fair – held on 5 September – did bring significant benefits. Notably, we were no longer restricted by geographic location and were able to involve a wider local and even international audience. In a sense, it became the first truly 'African' Bird Fair, as we were able to involve several BirdLife partners from across the continent as well as feature birding destinations outside our borders. Through our innovative platform we were also able to provide opportunities for vendors to display goods. The silent auction was a novel feature and raised significant funds through the sale of nearly 70 items. We ended the fair with a keynote lecture on albatrosses by the inimitable Peter Harrison, MBE, followed by a pub-style quiz to wind down the proceedings. The fair's success was unprecedented and we are considering the continued use of a virtual platform in future.



### Flufftail Festival

The 6th Annual Flufftail Festival took place on 7 and 8 February 2020 at Johannesburg Zoo as the rain poured down. The event was hosted by BirdLife South Africa, in partnership with Rand Water (Water Wise), Toyota South Africa, the Rare Finch Conservation Group, the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the City of Johannesburg and Joburg City Parks and Zoo. On the first day of the festival, 120 Grade 6 learners from Goza Primary School were entertained by the Waxi the Hero puppet show, which was created by the Rare Finch Conservation Group and BirdLife South Africa with the kind sponsorship of Toyota South Africa. Learners rotated through three other activity stations during the day, each designed to teach participants about the biodiversity in wetlands (including the many bird species that live there), the threats to wetlands and the important services that wetlands provide, such as clean water and water storage. Wetlands form part of the Grade 6 curriculum and everything that the scholars learn during the Flufftail Festival complements their school syllabus. On 8 February, it was the turn of 100 Soweto-based young people (aged between 18 and 35) to attend the festival, despite torrential rain that forced the



day's activities indoors. Everyone enjoyed the many activities on offer, which helped to showcase why it is important for young people to be custodians of water-wise behaviour and to protect our most important natural resource.

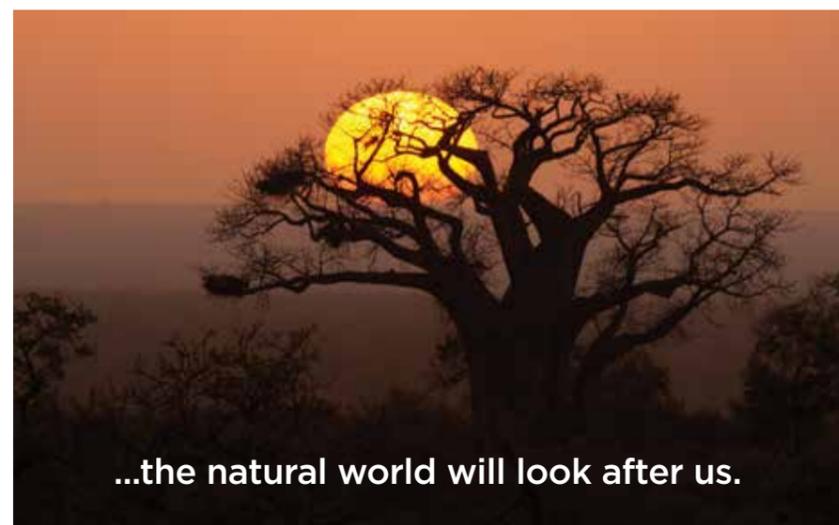


above, left Ellelwani Makhuvha presents an activity that teaches learners about different waterbirds and their biology.

above, right Melissa Whitecross gets the group ready to play a bird building game.

### 'Hope' on air

In May 2020, as part of its public service advertising budget, DStv offered BirdLife South Africa free television airtime. The package comprised 330 spots on eight DStv channels over three weeks in August. Since we had no existing television commercial, it was decided to create one that would fit the short-term strategy of demonstrating the relevance of BirdLife South Africa's conservation work in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Senior marketing adviser Mel Tripp wrote a simple, powerful and emotive dramatisation of a new dawn based on hope. Flume, our digital media advertising agency, assisted with the production. Stock footage turned up a perfect sequence of photo images shot by photographer Mario Fazekas, which captured a majestic sunrise behind a baobab. Bird calls, a critical part of the script, were supplied by Guy Gibbon of SA Birding. Captions rather than a voice-over were used, so as not to detract from the dawn chorus soundtrack. Social media exposure of the TV spot gained an even wider audience and through it the commercial received high praise.



MARIO FAZEKAS/KRUGER-2-KALAHARI.COM

### Conservation Conversations

As BirdLife South Africa entered the national lockdown, staff were no longer able to interact with members and deliver presentations at the many bird clubs across the country. It was decided to provide instead a weekly webinar covering different aspects of our conservation work to a live Zoom audience. Held on Tuesday evenings, these talks soon became popular and during the course of the year 36 of them covered

many different aspects of bird conservation and research, as well as photography and avitourism. Hosts Dr Melissa Whitecross and Andrew de Blocq had a lot of fun engaging with the audiences before and after each talk and people from around the world have enjoyed the recordings available on BirdLife South Africa's YouTube channel. The average number of viewers per show for 2020 was about 650 and they came from the United Kingdom, Europe, North America and several African countries as well as South Africa. The webinar platform enabled BirdLife South Africa to reach out to new audiences and provided a fantastic opportunity to showcase the diverse conservation work being carried out by the organisation and its partners.

right The launch screen of the Conservation Conversations webinar.



far right Melissa Whitecross and Andrew de Blocq co-host a Conservation Conversations webinar.

**BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA'S BIRD OF THE YEAR 2020: SOUTHERN GROUND-HORNBILL**

**FACT FILE**

- They can grow as fat as 1 METRE making them the largest hornbill species.
- They can live up to AT LEAST 60 YEARS.
- THEY ARE HIGHLY TERRITORIAL WITH HOME RANGES OF 80-100 KM<sup>2</sup> (IN SOUTH AFRICA).
- They live in groups of 8-10 birds consisting of an alpha pair, young males and immatures.
- Their diet usually consists of small invertebrates, rodents, reptiles and amphibians.
- Southern Ground-Hornbills are associated with many **CULTURAL BELIEFS**.
- They are associated with bringing rain to villages, and are thought to bring rain to the fields of the future people. They are also believed to bring rain to the fields of the future people.
- They are associated with bringing rain to the fields of the future people. They are also believed to bring rain to the fields of the future people.

**INTSINGIZI**

Ukwaziwa ngentaka yonyaka ka-2020 ye-BirdLife South Africa.

**INDABA EYI-INTSINGIZI**

Ukwaziwa ngentaka yonyaka ka-2020 ye-BirdLife South Africa.

**INDABA EYI-INTSINGIZI**

Ukwaziwa ngentaka yonyaka ka-2020 ye-BirdLife South Africa.

**CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS**

**PROTECT THE SPECIES**

**RAIN BIRD**

**HANS HOHEISEN CHARITABLE TRUST**

**Bird of the Year**  
We raised awareness about the Southern Ground-Hornbill, the Bird of the Year for 2020, through an informative poster, learning resources and articles in *African Birdlife* magazine. Importantly, the learning resources were translated into isiXhosa, tshiVenda and Afrikaans. We also sold pin badges, fluffy toys and T-shirts, thus generating funds for our Bird of the Year work.

# The Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre

Over the years, with hundreds of guests passing through its doors, the Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre was starting to show some wear and tear. The area's extreme weather conditions were also taking a toll on the building's exterior, as was rising damp. In early 2020 it was decided to repair the damage, focusing on the training centre and dormitory block, and to construct a new walled entrance.

Some time was spent in consultation with suppliers to the building industry to find the most cost-effective and long-lasting approach to this renovation. Our major sponsors came through for us in supplying not only the waterproofing chemicals, but also the paint to add the final touches, and in arranging the transport of the materials and the funding for the renovation. A local building company was selected to do the work, which involved removing all the old plaster on the exterior walls, treating them with waterproofing and replastering them, and finally painting them.

Work began on 1 June and the first step, to remove the old plaster, took approximately two months to complete. In the process, the centre's historical side was revealed: the dormitory's original building blocks. Whereas this building started life as the property's milking shed, the training centre is relatively new, having been constructed in the late 1990s. The walls at the entrance were in desperate need of attention too. It was discovered that structurally they did not meet safety requirements, so the decision was made to demolish them and build new walls.

By mid-July work began on the waterproofing and plastering of the completed sections and the buildings started to take shape. When the final coat of paint was applied towards the end of August, we could see a magical transformation: the centre stood proud. It has been at the heart of many guests' and visitors' birding experiences in the Wakkerstroom area over the years and now, thanks to these renovations, it will continue to enhance their experiences for many years to come.



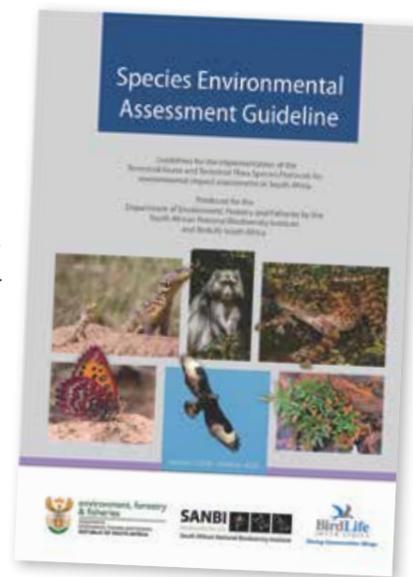
The Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre underwent a transformation during its renovation in 2020 and many people pitched in to assist, including the Working on Fire team who offloaded the materials delivered by Chamberlains.



## Policy & Advocacy

### Species Environmental Assessment Guideline

The Policy & Advocacy Programme's most significant achievement of 2020 was to finalise the Species Environmental Assessment Guideline. This publication resulted from a collaboration with SANBI, Enviro-Insight and several species specialists. The guideline is designed to support the legally binding protocols that prescribe the assessment and minimum reporting criteria for the impacts of developments on terrestrial animal and plant species. The protocols and associated guideline will strengthen South Africa's environmental authorisation process by helping to ensure that species impact assessments are conducted to a consistently high standard.



### Mitigation Hierarchy Guideline Project

In a new collaboration with the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Enviro-Insight, BirdLife South Africa embarked upon a project that aims to develop best-practice guidelines for implementing the mitigation hierarchy in South Africa. The mitigation hierarchy dictates that negative environmental impacts be sequentially avoided, minimised, rehabilitated and/or offset.

Although this approach is crucial for sustainable development, various challenges often prevent the aims of the mitigation hierarchy from being achieved in practice. It is hoped that this project will ultimately support improved decision-making with regard to developments, including by enabling competent authorities to better assess adherence to the mitigation hierarchy and to set robust licensing conditions to ensure that developers can be held accountable for implementing mitigation activities. As a first step towards achieving this objective, the project team developed a guideline framework, which it workshopped with government officials and domestic and foreign experts.

### Casework

During 2020, the Policy & Advocacy Programme submitted comments and objections on a wide range of problematic development applications. One of the programme's key priorities remains protecting the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail's habitat from activities that are incompatible with the conservation of areas where the species occurs. To this end, 2020 saw some significant progress in engaging with the Department of Water and Sanitation and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy regarding the importance of this species and its habitat. This engagement was facilitated by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment as part of its collaboration with BirdLife South Africa in implementing the International Single Species Action Plan on the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail.

In addition to its domestic casework, a key objective of the Policy & Advocacy Programme is to support partners in other African countries, many of which lack dedicated policy and advocacy staff. In 2020 we participated in the BirdLife partnership's African Site Casework and Emerging Threats Taskforce. In collaboration with the Regional Conservation Programme, we also supported BirdLife Zimbabwe and BirdWatch Zambia in their opposition to the proposed Batoka Gorge hydro-electric scheme on the Zambezi River, and engaged with BirdLife partners regarding several other threats to priority sites.

The Policy & Advocacy Programme benefits from the generous support of the RSPB.

## Landscape Conservation Programme

### Vulture Conservation Project

BirdLife South Africa's Vulture Conservation Project has made major progress with the implementation of Vulture Safe Zones, whereby owners of large tracts of land are persuaded to manage their land in ways that will safeguard vulture populations. In September 2020 more than 200 000 hectares of privately owned land were secured for vulture conservation when the Zululand Vulture Safe Zone was declared on International Vulture Awareness Day (5 September). Encompassing 14 properties that stretch from Pongola Game Reserve in the north to the borders of the Mkuze section of iSimangaliso Wetland Park in the south, this zone is a major collaborative effort. It provides important breeding habitat for the Critically Endangered White-backed Vulture and the Endangered Lappet-faced Vulture and was a logical choice for the introduction of the Vulture Safe Zone initiative into KwaZulu-Natal. With this first and most important phase now complete, the groundwork has been laid for the expansion of the Vulture Safe Zone further north into Eswatini and Mozambique and east towards Ithala Game Reserve.

In October 2020 GPS/GSM tracking devices were fitted to five White-backed Vulture chicks at Dronfield Nature Reserve, Kimberley. By following the movements of these chicks during their first year of life, we aim to determine whether being exposed to lead as nestlings will compromise their movements and/or survival rate as newly fledged juveniles. Transmitters will be fitted to an additional five chicks in 2021. Research into the

sub-lethal effects of lead on vultures continued when blood samples were collected from Cape Vulture chicks at a breeding colony above the Karmmelkspruit in the Eastern Cape. It is hoped that these samples will provide the first scientific evidence of the detrimental effects lead may have on vulture physiology. BirdLife South Africa continued as an active member of the National Lead Task Team, which persisted with its efforts to minimise the impact of lead on South African wildlife.

BirdLife South Africa is grateful to the Isdell Family Foundation and the Mary Oppenheimer and Daughters Foundation for their generous support for its Vulture Conservation Project.



WHITE-BACKED VULTURE ALBERT FRONEMAN

### Virtual Pied Crow workshop

There is increasing public concern about the spread of Pied Crows into new habitats in South Africa. It is suggested that the cost of this is both ecological and financial, as the predatory behaviour of crows results in increased mortality rates for wildlife and livestock. In response, stakeholders are advocating, or already deploying, mitigation measures, some of which have little regard for collateral damage to threatened species and sensitive ecosystems. The situation thus warranted urgent attention.

BirdLife South Africa contracted AVISENSE Consulting to compile an objective review of what is currently known so that a properly informed policy can be developed. To inform this review and to pool national interests and expertise in the field, we hosted on 25 June a virtual workshop that was attended by a range of stakeholders, including academics, conservationists, people in industry and members of the public.

We learned from the workshop that South Africa's Pied Crow population has shifted in a south-westerly direction and increased by up to 30 per cent in some areas. While the shift is correlated with climate change and the spread of linear infrastructure (power lines, roads, fences) into the Karoo, we still have no definitive understanding of the causes. While the literature suggests that a proliferation of crows has minimal impact on bird populations, a significant number of credible studies provide evidence



MELISSA WHITECROSS

### Raptor conservation

The Raptor & Large Terrestrial Bird Conservation Project successfully tagged three juvenile Secretarybirds with GPS/GSM solar tracking units. Casanovia, a female, was tagged south of Bloemfontein in January 2020. She fledged successfully but had to be rescued after showing signs of starvation during the harsh winter conditions. After being rehabilitated for two weeks and released, she flew south into the Eastern Cape, but died during a severe cold front. Her device was recovered and fitted to a young bird called Ekapa in Rooifontein Nature Reserve, Kimberley, in October 2020. Houdini, a young male, was tagged in Besters, KwaZulu-Natal, in February 2020 and continues to explore the grasslands around the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme. The data collected from these devices are vital to our understanding of the species' ecology and behaviour, especially in light of it being uplisted to globally Endangered by BirdLife International and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Two Southern Banded Snake Eagles were successfully fitted with tracking devices, which are helping us to understand how these elusive and Critically Endangered forest raptors utilise the mosaic of coastal forests, plantations, suburban gardens and linear infrastructure (power lines and railway tracks). This study will inform BirdLife South Africa's conservation strategy to work with plantation managers and the owners of farms and game farms in Zululand so that their properties are managed in a way that benefits birds.

The Raptor & Large Terrestrial Bird Conservation Project benefits from the generous support of Nick Prentice and the Ingula Partnership.

top Taking the beak measurements of Casanovia, a female Secretarybird tagged in January 2020.



BLUE SWALLOW CHICKS BRENT COVERDALE

## Blue Swallows and mistbelt grassland

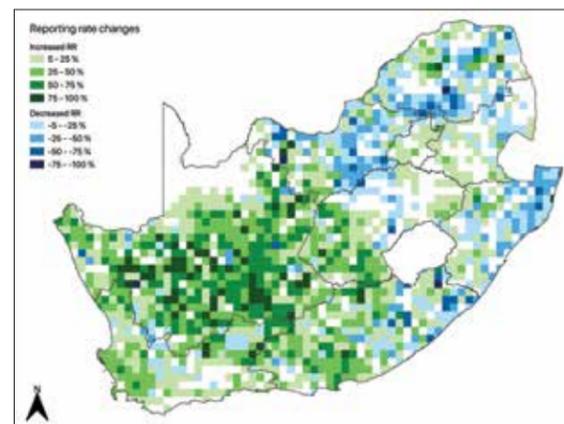
Despite the challenges of 2020, the BirdLife South Africa–Conservation Outcomes partnership to protect Blue Swallows and their mistbelt grassland habitat had a successful year. During the 2019–2020 breeding season more than 30 nest sites were monitored at least bi-weekly in KwaZulu-Natal and 34 fledged chicks were recorded. Two new active nests were also found. Only two active Blue Swallow nests were recorded in areas protected by the State, which emphasises the importance of working with private and communal landowners to conserve this iconic mistbelt grassland species.

One new nature reserve, the 120-hectare Roelton Nature Reserve, was declared during 2020 and Intention to Declare submissions for two additional mistbelt grassland areas were made to the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in December.

A proposal to the IUCN Rapid Action SOS fund to continue the Blue Swallow monitoring and Biodiversity Stewardship work in KwaZulu-Natal was successful. This funding will not only assist significantly in continuing this work, but will enable us to expand it into Mpumalanga and recruit additional Blue Swallow monitors. We are grateful for this funding and to the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust (which provided R373 698) for its continued support.



that this can cause substantial biodiversity loss. Internationally, many crow control or eradication programmes have been instituted and some have shown considerable success. However, a common conclusion was that determining and controlling the anthropogenic drivers of crow population growth, rather than the crows themselves, is a more efficient way of achieving the targeted outcome. The BirdLife South Africa initiative found insufficient reliable evidence in the published literature to either verify the perceived impacts of Pied Crow populations in South Africa or to justify the institution of any kind of landscape-scale control programme. If Pied Crows are responsible for significant and damaging levels of biodiversity loss, this is likely to be happening in specific habitats or locations and will require tailored and site-specific mitigation. The workshop concluded that addressing the current knowledge gaps through research is fundamental to formulating a response to this issue and that a precautionary approach is prudent. BirdLife South Africa is grateful to Bakwena for supporting the Pied Crow review and workshop.



The fluctuation in Pied Crow reporting rates between SABAP1 and SABAP2. The latter's pentad data are integrated into quarter-degree squares as per the SABAP1 protocol.

## White-winged Flufftail

Rockjumper Birding Tours became the Species Champion of White-winged Flufftail conservation through the Preventing Extinctions Programme at BirdLife International. The company's generous support enabled BirdLife South Africa to create the position of Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation and employ a full-time conservation biologist researching and conserving this Critically Endangered species. Dr Kyle Lloyd began work in April 2020 and is based in Dullstroom, where he is also working with landowners and provincial governing bodies to better protect and manage the sensitive wetland habitat that the White-winged Flufftail and a host of other threatened species rely upon. Small grants were awarded to the project by the Club300 Foundation and the African Bird Club to support research exploring the population demographics, distribution, movement patterns and habitat requirements of the White-winged Flufftail. Several companies and individuals donated field equipment to the project and provided scholarships to study short courses that will assist with collecting and analysing data.

Glencore through Golder Associations is conducting a mining offset in the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment near Dullstroom. Glencore's objectives include rehabilitating wetlands in the Lakenvlei system to restore wetland structure and functionality in areas of disturbance. The mining offset will continue at the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment for several years and BirdLife South Africa is committed to ensuring the safety of the White-winged Flufftail for the duration of the project. The 2019–2020 breeding season surveys took place at Middelpunt Wetland, Verloren Valei Nature Reserve and Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve between October and March. BirdLife South Africa published three scientific publications highlighting different aspects of the White-winged Flufftail's ecology and conservation in Ethiopia and South Africa, including the first description of the previously unknown call.

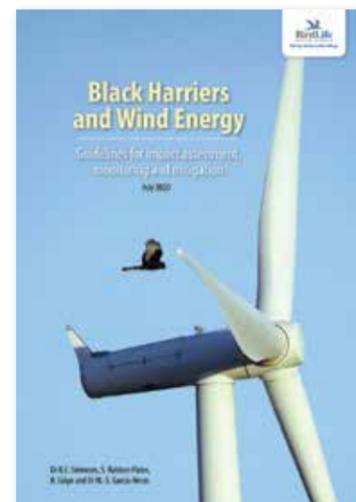


## Birds and Renewable Energy

The Birds and Renewable Energy Project reached an important milestone in 2020 when it was announced that legislated protocols for assessing and reporting on the impacts of wind energy facilities on birds require that consultants follow the latest version of the *Birds and Wind-Energy Best-Practice Guidelines*. This step was largely a formality as the guidelines, developed by BirdLife South Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust, have been widely implemented since 2012. Still, it is a significant achievement and an acknowledgement of our expertise in this sector.

Implementing the best-practice guidelines made it possible for us to publish the first national-scale review of the diversity of birds killed at operational wind farms on the continent in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. We wrote this paper in collaboration with colleagues from the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology.

Monitoring has also enabled us to test assumptions made in environmental impact assessments. Without that oversight, it might have been too late before we realised that wind energy poses a more significant threat to Endangered Black Harriers than initially thought. In response, we published guidelines for assessing and mitigating the impacts of wind energy on Black Harriers.



The guideline authors included Dr Rob Simmons (Species Guardian) and Dr Marie-Sophie Garcia-Heras, both world experts on the species. They promote the use of fine-scale habitat suitability models developed by BirdLife South Africa's Science & Innovation team with support from Nolumanyano Camagu, the Birds and Renewable Energy intern. Nolumanyano successfully completed her internship and has secured employment in the renewable energy industry.

BirdLife South Africa is grateful to Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking and our partners for making all this possible.

## Western Cape estuaries

BirdLife South Africa's work to secure increased protection for priority estuaries in the Western Cape continued to grow with the successful application for funds for protected area expansion at the Klein River estuary. Known for its incredible birdlife, this estuary is one of the country's most important for conservation. The project will launch in April 2021 and facilitate the formal protection of more than 1000 hectares of threatened estuarine and fynbos habitat along the south bank of the Klein River estuary, as well as improve habitat management and biodiversity security, contributing to the conservation of the area's more than 200 recorded bird species.

The Estuaries Conservation Project also continued to support its existing and developing protected areas throughout the province through several on-the-ground maintenance and monitoring projects. The Invasive Alien Plant Management Unit Clearing Plan was produced for the Moutonshoek Protected Environment, the major catchment area for the Verlorenvlei estuary (a Ramsar site). In partnership with government and landowners in the area, the project funded the clearing of more than five kilometres of riverbed within the protected environment in 2020. BirdLife South Africa is also leading an estuarine habitat rehabilitation and erosion mitigation pilot project at the Berg River estuary. The project includes trialling environmentally sound bank stabilisation and habitat restoration techniques and it successfully promoted the inclusion of erosion control measures and other environmental safeguards, such as zoned bird sanctuaries, in local legislation. This project is being carried out in partnership with government organisations as well as several research institutions and will produce best-practice case studies for rollout at other estuarine sites.

BirdLife South Africa is grateful to the Rupert Natuurstigting for its generous support of our Western Cape estuaries work.

## Eastern Free State grasslands

### INGULA PROJECT

- Avifaunal surveys recorded 231 species in 2020.
- Wattled Cranes bred successfully for the fifth consecutive time.
- Two SANParks Honorary Rangers' fundraising events were hosted.
- Input was provided into the development of an assessment framework that aims to determine the impact of Eskom's activities on Ingula's biodiversity through a voluntary biodiversity disclosure platform. This provides companies with a practical avenue for reporting their biodiversity performance annually, as they do other climate change impacts.



### BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP

- Carina Pienaar has taken over responsibility for the Sneeuwberg Protected Environment near Memel. She has met with landowners and completed farm visits and threatened species monitoring.
- Progress has been made on the declaration of the proposed Upper Wilge Protected Environment near Harrismith: all required documents have been submitted and the Intent to Declare was signed by the provincial MEC at the end of 2020. The proposed area will conserve approximately 24 078 hectares of grassland and wetland in the Eastern Free State's Strategic Water Source Area and has 16 participating landowners.



### SOUTHERN BALD IBIS

- Interest from volunteers to assist with monitoring Southern Bald Ibis breeding attempts throughout the species' range has increased, with new interest from Limpopo to the Eastern Cape and from Eswatini.
- Two tracking devices and 10 rings were fitted to juveniles at the artificial breeding site in Ingula Nature Reserve. The tracking devices will form part of a project studying the spatial distribution and habitat use of Southern Bald Ibises after fledging.



# Seabird Conservation Programme

## Bird-scaring line compliance

In the late 1980s bird-scaring lines (BSLs) were developed to mitigate seabird deaths in the fishing industry. While their use is regarded as standard best practice, compliance remains a challenge. Assessing compliance is only possible if an observer is aboard the fishing vessel to ensure the BSL is deployed at every set. To improve and monitor the use of BSLs, BirdLife South Africa partnered with Imvelo Blue Environment Consultancy (IBEC) on a project to further develop its prototype BSL compliance monitoring device. The BSL device was conceived by IBEC founder Sihle Victor Ngcongco and developed by Nelson Miranda of Argonaut Science, a South African company. It can monitor compliance of the use of BSLs during a trip and works by recording the change in tension created by the drag of the BSL in the water.

The project was funded by the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. During 2020 we were able to complete a series of at-sea trial deployments and data collection aboard demersal trawl and longline vessels.

We improved the technical specifications of the device's data collection software and adjusted its sensitivity to various deployment conditions at sea, such as weather and fluctuations in tension. The device was also protected from potential tampering and can detect erroneous or false BSL deployments. These ongoing improvements will make it easier to use on various fleets and with different types of BSLs. The aim is for it to be useful as a compliance tool in the absence of on-board observers. The device includes remote data collection access and a USB port, eliminating the need to remove it from its attachment point on a vessel.

Electronic monitoring is often seen as intruding on the privacy of crew members, but because the form of electronic monitoring provided by this device is not intrusive, we hope it is more likely to be accepted by fishermen. The device can complement and validate official log-book data and compliance with night-setting for longline vessels. It also has the potential to record location and linkups with the Vessel Monitoring and Automatic Identification systems that most vessels are obliged to carry. The project has helped to develop improvements in hardware and software technology, resulting in a resilient device that will directly address issues with compliance.

## Establishing a penguin breeding colony at De Hoop

One of the key threats to African Penguins is a lack of food near their breeding colonies due to a shift in the distribution of fish to the south coast. Apart from engagements with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment on closed areas around colonies and changes to the fishery management processes, BirdLife South Africa's key intervention to tackle the lack of food is an attempt to re-establish a colony at the De Hoop Nature Reserve. This is an area of high fish abundance, but the penguins cannot establish a colony there naturally due to a lack of safe breeding sites.

Working with CapeNature and SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa has installed a predator-proof fence and a remote monitoring system and set up decoys and call playback to entice penguins to breed at the site. Initial plans to start the translocation of fledgling penguins to De Hoop in 2020 were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the delay enabled us to complete several upgrades and improvements.

The first was the installation of a new machine learning system that automatically classifies video footage from the CCTV cameras. This has dramatically cut down on the number of false alerts from vegetation triggering the cameras. We are grateful to DeepAlert for sponsoring the server and running costs of this system. The second improvement was to the fence. Due to the rocky terrain, there are sections where it was more difficult to prevent access by small predators such as genets and grey mongooses. Gravel-filled gabions placed along the base of the fence have made it more effective at these sections. It is important to note that the area being fenced off is relatively small, so preventing predators from accessing it will not affect their ability to find food.

In collaboration with Panthera and the Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa (iCWild) at the University of Cape Town, we initiated a camera trap study of the predators, particularly leopards, in the De Hoop Nature Reserve. A network of 40



Sihle Victor Ngcongco and a fisherman attach a bird-scaring line and a compliance device to an inshore trawl vessel.



C. HAGEN

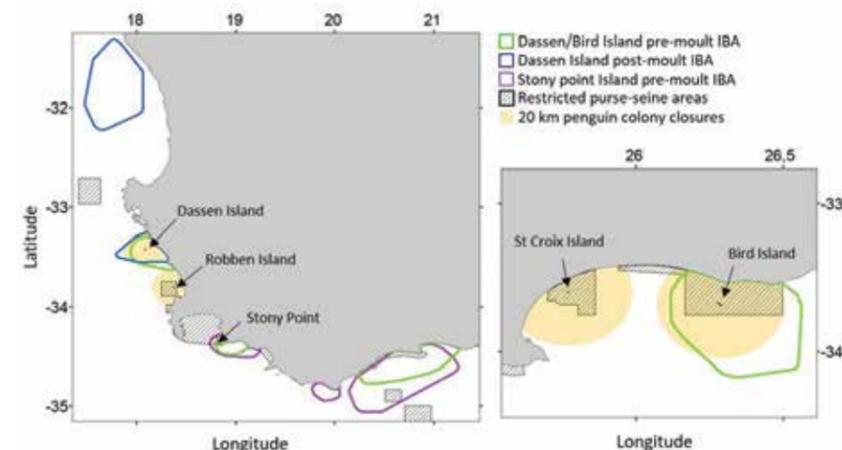
One of the life-like penguin decoys overlooking the sea.

CHARL VAN DER MERWE TRUST



giving nature a home  
rspb

Our seabird conservation work is supported by a number of generous donors, including the Charl van der Merwe Trust, the Isdell Family Foundation and the RSPB.



paired camera stations, each about two kilometres apart, was set up for three months in late 2020. An MSc student is currently analysing the images and so far has identified several individual leopards, as well as caracals, genets, honey badgers and many ungulates such as bontebok and zebra.

## Year-round protection for African Penguins

Scientists have predicted that by 2035 there will be fewer than 50 pairs of African Penguins on South Africa's west coast. The leading cause behind the penguin's dramatic decline is insufficient suitable prey such as anchovy and sardine, due to a shift in their distribution and their removal by fisheries. A massive collaborative effort by local and international universities, NGOs such as BirdLife South Africa, and the South African government has led to the identification of conservation and management strategies that may reverse the population decline. These strategies are currently being implemented. They were developed, however, for breeding penguins, which forage for food and return to their nest almost daily to feed chicks. Shortage of prey puts a penguin's breeding attempt at risk, so it is understandable that this life history stage is a priority to conservationists.

There are, however, other times when a good food supply is vital to the species' survival. Penguins must increase their fat reserves before and after their annual moult; failure to do so could lead to failure to breed or even to death. BirdLife South Africa has been tracking African Penguins during these two critical life history stages since 2012 and has learnt that, although the penguins travel much further from their colonies when not caring for young, the implementation of spatial conservation and management strategies developed for breeding penguins would help to protect them throughout the year. If the availability of prey around their colonies increased, the distance the penguins would have to travel to fatten up before and after their annual moult would decrease and subsequently result in more efficient fat gain, less adult mortality and more successful breeding attempts.

## Gough Island Restoration Programme

The anticipated eradication of house mice from Gough Island was delayed due to restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this delay, a successful South African National Antarctic Programme relief voyage on the SA *Agulhas II* was conducted in September. This enabled the restoration team to deliver cargo to Gough Island and conduct further preparations for the 2021 baiting operation. Continuous hard work by the entire team led to the RSPB board approving in December a recommendation to go ahead with the project in 2021.



left Important foraging areas for non-breeding African Penguins compared to existing island closure experimental zones and no-take zones for the sardine and anchovy fishery (purse-seine).

## Mouse-Free Marion

Despite lockdown restrictions, the Mouse-Free Marion Project – a critical intervention to save Marion Island's seabirds and restore its ecosystem – made considerable headway in 2020. A management committee comprising representatives from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and BirdLife South Africa was convened monthly during the latter half of the year to prioritise work for the planned eradication in 2023. Dr Anton Wolvaardt, who has an impressive history in seabird conservation, was appointed as manager of the project and, given the challenging scale of the work, a non-profit company was established to implement and administer it. A generous donation from Dr Frederik Paulsen, who continues to offer tremendous support, provided significant funds. The eradication of house mice from Marion Island is planned for 2023.



STEFAN SCHOOMBIE

above A juvenile Grey-headed Albatross on Marion Island showing mice-induced scalping.

left SA Agulhas II offshore of Gough Island during the September 2020 relief voyage.

## Regional Conservation Programme

The Regional Conservation Programme, established in January 2020, supports African countries and associated BirdLife country partners with the implementation of site-based conservation, using various tools to conserve priority sites for habitats and species. These tools include the global standards for Red Listing threatened species and ecosystems, Key Biodiversity Areas, Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures and the associated monitoring of sites and species. The programme's vision sees African countries effectively and equitably conserve and sustainably manage species and critical habitats, with associated ecosystem services, to benefit people and nature. Its mission is to build partnerships, capacity and skills in African countries to assess biodiversity and identify, protect and manage a network of important sites for the persistence of biodiversity and ecosystem services while promoting sustainable use and supporting local livelihoods.

### East Atlantic Flyway Initiative

The East Atlantic Flyway is a network of stopover sites used twice a year by millions of shore- and landbirds migrating from their northern breeding grounds in Eurasia to wintering areas in western and southern Africa and back again. During 2020, the project engaged key stakeholders and country-based partners in the six focal countries. Partnership collaborations with governments and the private sector were strengthened, with agreements drawn up to progress the conservation and management of important sites and habitats for migratory birds. The manager of the East Atlantic Flyway Project is supported by the RSPB.

### BASPA IUCN Red Listing

In partnership with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), the Biodiversity Assessment for Spatial Prioritisation in Africa (BASPA) project develops biodiversity assessments and mapping capacity in African countries. Pictured below are 25 Kenyan biologists trained in 2020 to apply the IUCN's Red List standards to evaluate the extinction risk of species. These Kenyan specialists are now contributing to the national Red List of species, which is anticipated to be concluded by 2021. Once completed, the species assessments will be used to identify KBAs and inform economic development priorities.



BEZENG SIMEON BEZENG



Focal countries of the East Atlantic Flyway Initiative in southern Africa.



BEZENG SIMEON BEZENG

### Identifying KBAs in Mozambique

In 2020 the Regional Conservation Programme supported Mozambique in its bid to identify KBAs by establishing a KBA National Coordination Group (NCG) and providing training on the KBA global standard. An NCG is a national constituency made up of species and habitat experts and policy-makers responsible for identifying and protecting globally important sites for biodiversity. The Mozambican KBA NCG has since identified 28 potential KBAs. After review by the programme, the NCG submitted the sites to the KBA Secretariat for publication in the World Database on Key Biodiversity Areas. The information captured from these sites is now freely available to inform Mozambique's policy and development planning activities more appropriately. Pictured above are stakeholders attending the KBA National Coordination Group establishment meeting.



W. DLAMINI

### Assessing OECMs in Eswatini

An OECM was defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2018 as 'a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and, where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values'. In 2020, the Regional Conservation Programme assisted the Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) government to undertake an OECM technical review as part of a project titled 'Strengthening the National Protected Areas System'. The technical review aimed to customise the global guidance of OECMs for use in Eswatini's national context to assess and report areas that qualify as OECMs. The review included two case study site assessments.

“ The programme's vision sees African countries effectively and equitably conserve and sustainably manage species and critical habitats, with associated ecosystem services, to benefit people and nature ”

left In Eswatini, the Regional Conservation Programme helped the national government to carry out a review of OECMs in order to strengthen the network of protected areas in the country.

### Algal monitoring at Kamfers Dam

The Science & Innovation Programme developed an innovative method to monitor algal levels in Kamfers Dam by using satellite data. The purpose of monitoring is to raise a red flag if there is a significant drop in algal levels, especially during the flamingo breeding season when such a decrease can lead to starvation and considerable chick mortalities. By analysing the levels, long-term trends can be established.



Colyn RB, Campbell A, Smit-Robinson HA.

2020. The use of a camera trap and acoustic survey design to ascertain the vocalization and breeding status of the highly elusive White-winged Flufftail, *Sarothrura ayresi*. *Avian Conservation and Ecology*. 15(2): 12. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ACE-01681-150212>

Colyn RB, Henderson CL, Altwegg R, Smit-Robinson HA. 2020. Habitat transformation and climate change: Implications for the distribution, population status, and colony extinction of Southern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus calvus*) in southern Africa. *The Condor*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/condor/duz064>

Colyn RB, Ehlers Smith DA, Ehlers Smith YC, Smit-Robinson HA, Downs CT. 2020. Predicted distributions of avian specialists: A framework for conservation of endangered forests under future climates. *Diversity and Distributions*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ddi.13048>

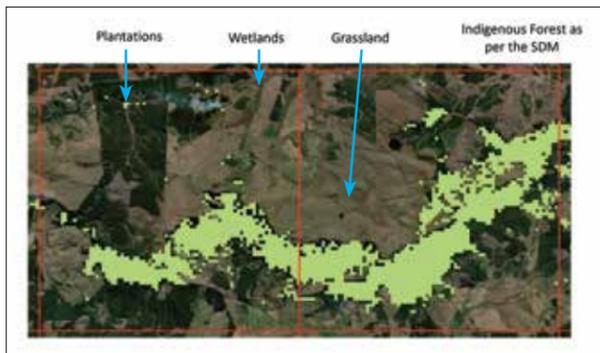
Colyn RB, Howes-Whitecross MA, Howes C, Smit-Robinson HA. 2020. Restricted breeding habitat of the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail in Ethiopia and its conservation implications. *Ostrich*. <https://doi.org/10.2989/00306525.2020.1737259>

Howes-Whitecross MA, Howes C, Colyn RB, Smit-Robinson HA. 2020. Challenges in nest monitoring of White-winged Flufftails *Sarothrura ayresi* in Ethiopia. *Ostrich*. <https://doi.org/10.2989/00306525.2020.1794996>

## Science & Innovation Programme

### Conservation Modelling Project

Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) maps are the cornerstone of all conservation planning tools in South Africa. Government departments and NGOs use these maps to guide how land should be managed and which areas should remain pristine and be protected. For many years limited bird data were used to inform these maps. During 2020 the Science & Innovation



Part of a habitat suitability map for Orange Ground Thrush. The highlighted area shows the computer model that identified the forests used by this species.

Programme developed 38 fine-scale habitat suitability maps for birds, which can now feed into CBA maps. In addition, during the reporting period these 38 models, combined with data from the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2, were submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's National Web-based Environmental Screening Tool. When the footprint of a potential development overlaps with the distribution of one of these species, the site screening tool will raise a red flag and trigger specific monitoring protocols that should be followed by environmental impact specialists. The Science & Innovation Programme will continue to develop these spatial layers for all threatened, endemic and range-restricted species and improve the accuracy of current layers.

### Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2

The year 2020 was a challenging one for the Southern African Bird Atlas Project. Lock-down restrictions hindered the work of atlasers for a few months, leaving a large gap in submissions. However, as soon as the restrictions were lifted, submissions returned to pre-Covid levels. Then SANBI indicated that it would not be able to fulfil its funding commitment for 2020 due to other urgent priorities. BirdLife South Africa and the FitzPatrick Institute launched a joint fund-raising initiative, collecting more than R600 000. Two large donations were received from the Isdell Family Foundation and the Rupert Foundation (Rupert Natuurstigting), while the rest of the contributions came from bird clubs, private companies and individuals. BirdLife South Africa would like to thank everyone who donated to this important project.

### Publications

The Science & Innovation Programme provided scientific input for numerous threatened species projects this year, many of which culminated in scientific publications and ultimately the more effective direction of conservation efforts. The programme's output in 2020 included five scientific publications (listed at left), foremost among them the characterisation of the White-winged Flufftail's vocalisation and its breeding status. This publication, together with another published this year highlighting the population status of the species in Ethiopia, has contributed significantly to what we know about this enigmatic species and how best to conserve it.

Another publication was a paper on the Southern Bald Ibis, which draws attention to the cumulative impact of climate change and habitat loss or transformation as well as the projected disproportionate risk to this endemic high-altitude species. In another study, completed in collaboration with researchers from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, three forest-specialised and habitat-specific bird species were selected as focal species. These species are restricted to their respective forest type and were thus used to understand the importance of connectivity and conservation of each of South Africa's three threatened forest classes.

## Empowering People Programme

The Empowering People Programme arose as a result of a restructuring process that BirdLife South Africa began in 2019 to better reflect our mission and the structures of BirdLife International. The programme's vision is to integrate people, communities and the wildlife and biodiversity economies into our organisational work.

The programme's first appointment was made in May 2020. Andrew de Blocq, previously our Coastal Seabirds Project Officer, was employed as the new Avitourism Project Manager. This is the first time in nearly a decade that BirdLife South Africa has had a dedicated manager for avitourism. The position was created in recognition of the extensive potential for growth in the subprojects and was made possible by support from Swarovski Optik, Whylo Distributors and Nick and Jane Prentice.

In July we hosted an avitourism strategy workshop that involved stakeholders from the avitourism community, such as tour operators, conservation authorities, optics manufacturers and training schools. The outcomes of the workshop were then developed into a strategic action plan to guide and drive the Avitourism Project's work going forward. All guide training for 2020 was postponed and will be picked up again in 2021.

The Avitourism Project is currently the only project in the Empowering People Programme, but there is significant opportunity to broaden the programme's scope in terms of community engagement, educational projects and developing an economy based on biodiversity. Plans are being made to secure funds for the employment of a programme manager in the near future.



left The community bird guides expressed their sincere gratitude to all who supported them through the BirdLife South Africa Relief Fund.

far left Four community bird guides networking at the 2019 African Bird Fair.

### Relief fund for bird guides

With all travel banned during the Covid-related national lockdown and the income-earning prospects for community bird guides looking dire, BirdLife South Africa launched a relief fund to provide a lifeline for the guides. Members, supporters and the birding community were encouraged to donate to this fund and it quickly swelled. We are very appreciative of the generosity and good will shown towards our community bird guides in this time of need. All told, R700 000 was raised within a few months and we used this to support 40 guides with monthly payments from May until November, when local travel began to open up again. We were inundated with messages of gratitude from the guides, as well as photographs of shopping trolleys full of essential foods and medicines.



### South Africa Listers' Club

One of the project's standout achievements in 2020 was the founding of the South Africa Listers' Club, a #Proudly-SouthAfrican community of listers who have seen more than 300 species in the country. The club has grown to more than 300 members in a short time and there are plans to extend its reach and brand value going forward. A number of new partnerships were also set up with EcoTraining, the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative, CNP Safaris and others to run birding weekends and citizen science workshops. These will be a valued service to our bird-loving members and they will raise unencumbered funds for the project at the same time.



# Annual Reviews of the Performance and Effectiveness of BirdLife South Africa

## 2020 reporting period

### REVIEW BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Mandate

A critical aspect of the governance structure of the organisation is encompassed in clause 10 of our constitution, which requires the Board to commission an annual review of the performance of the organisation as a whole and of the Board itself. The results of these reviews are encapsulated in this report, which has been reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee and presented here for the benefit of members. We strive as an organisation to maintain the highest level of corporate governance as prescribed by the King IV Report of 2016, which sets out four themes of the governance roles of Boards. These themes are:

- Strategy: directing the core purpose of the organisation and setting its short-, medium- and long-term direction;
- Policy: giving effect to the strategy by approving policy – the rules, structures and processes that define courses of action and boundaries within which decisions can be made;
- Oversight: providing oversight of the implementation of strategy and policy by management;
- Disclosure: disclosing the organisation's performance and sustainable value creation.

In addition, in a supplement dealing specifically with non-profit organisations (NPOs) such as ours, the King IV Report makes reference to the three major responsibilities of the leaders of NPOs. These are highlighted in the Department of Social Development Code and their purpose is to ensure survival and growth. They are that:

- the service programme is meeting the community's needs effectively and efficiently;
- a reliable and sustainable support base is established in order to fulfil its work;
- procedures are put in place to ensure the careful and accountable handling of its resources and programmes.

#### Organisational review

The past year raised unprecedented challenges for every organisation as the enforced lockdowns to control the threats posed by the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on both financial and operational aspects of business. In response to these threats, our executive management, together with the Board, established a Covid-19 task team that met regularly to ensure that the organisation remained on an even keel in order to navigate through the stormy conditions. This initiative proved most effective and, through enhanced communication with our patrons, donors, funders and members, very generous support was elicited. One specific project that proved invaluable was the financial support that we were able to provide to our community bird guides, whose income disappeared overnight. As in previous years, our executive management and their staff have prepared an extensive report, the BirdLife South Africa Strategic Framework. The strategic goals of the organisation are summarised as follows:

- To realise, both efficiently and effectively, key national and international conservation goals and objectives;

- To be a conservation organisation that is influential and well respected locally and globally;
- To be a well-financed, sustainable organisation that is driven by a team of competent and committed staff;
- To have a diverse, engaged and committed membership and an engaged and representative audience.

The report charts the organisation's performance against its objectives across the Business and Conservation divisions. It also contains key indicators that provide an aggregated view of the performance of the organisation across key functional areas. These were coloured as follows:

- Red indicating poor performance;
- Orange indicating adequate performance with room for improvement;
- Green indicating good performance.

The report has been reviewed and interrogated by the Board. We are pleased to record that, notwithstanding the challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, green was again the dominant colour across the key performance indicators and only one red area was identified. As reported in previous years, this relates to the lack of diversity within our membership base. A concerted marketing initiative that would address this matter was planned to take place in the past year but had to be postponed due to the uncertainties caused by the pandemic. It is envisaged that this priority will be tackled in the current year.

The separate review of BirdLife South Africa's conservation work by Prof. Andrew McKechnie confirms that the newly structured Conservation Division is performing well and that its work remained largely on track, despite the trying conditions.

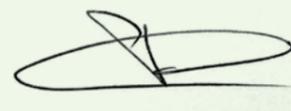
#### Board self-assessment

The Nominations Committee of the Board is mandated to oversee this assessment process. Board members individually and independently completed an evaluation document of the Board's performance as a whole and it was pleasing to note that no major deficiencies were identified relating to the Board's performance.

#### Opinion

Based on the above, the Board of Directors of BirdLife South Africa:

- confirms that it is satisfied with the effectiveness of both the Board of Directors and the organisation as a whole, and
- commends management on the significant progress made during the year under review under extremely trying conditions.



PHILIP CALINIKOS  
CHAIRMAN  
5 March 2021

### REVIEW OF BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSERVATION WORK

This sixth annual review of BirdLife South Africa's conservation activities covers the period January to December 2020. It is based on information provided to me with regard to highlights and challenges encountered by each of the six programmes within the organisation's Conservation Division, as well as the five-year (2021–2025) strategy developed for each programme during the review period.

The start of 2020 saw the Conservation Division implementing the six conservation programmes (Seabird Conservation, Landscape Conservation, Empowering People, Regional Conservation, Science & Innovation and Policy & Advocacy) that emerged from a restructuring process the previous year following Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson's appointment as Head of Conservation. What no-one knew at the time was that the new year would bring unprecedented challenges with the arrival of the global Covid-19 pandemic in March. The subsequent economic crisis, vast reductions in funding for conservation and the virtual collapse of avitourism posed new and daunting challenges to BirdLife South Africa and its staff.

Despite a host of significant trials and tribulations relating to Covid-19, the work of the Conservation Division forged ahead and remained largely on track. Highlights included the establishment of a management structure for the Mouse-Free Marion Project, the declaration of the Zululand Vulture Safe Zone, the identification of 27 KBAs in Mozambique and the development of the Species Environmental Assessment Guideline in collaboration with SANBI and Enviro-Insight. The Avitourism Project within the Empowering People Programme deserves special mention for establishing a Community Bird Guide Relief Fund that raised more than R700 000 to support bird guides during the Covid-19 lockdown. The five-year strategies developed for

the conservation programmes during 2020 are impressive for their scope and detailed implementation plans, providing road-maps for BirdLife South Africa's responses to the threats facing our birds and the environments they inhabit. I was particularly pleased to see climate change resilience initiatives featuring in several of these strategy documents.

Many of the challenges of 2020 were unprecedented in BirdLife South Africa's history. One was the switch to online platforms for meetings and stakeholder engagements, which proved to have both negative and positive impacts. Negatives included connectivity problems disrupting virtual meetings and the reduced expressiveness and nuance of on-screen interactions compared to face-to-face conversations; positives included increased accessibility to meetings through the elimination of travel costs.

In terms of its conservation activities, BirdLife South Africa continues on the excellent trajectory established over the past decade and has done an impressive job of weathering the *annus horribilis* that was 2020. That the year saw so many meaningful successes, despite a multitude of significant challenges, is testament to the dedication and resilience of the organisation's staff. I congratulate them all for rising to the challenge of the strangest and most disconcerting of years.



PROF. ANDREW McKECHNIE  
SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH CHAIR IN CONSERVATION  
PHYSIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, AND SOUTH  
AFRICAN NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE  
26 February 2021

### AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REVIEW, FINANCIAL YEAR END 31 DECEMBER 2020

#### Mandate

The constitution of BirdLife South Africa requires that the Audit & Risk Committee express an opinion annually regarding the effectiveness and performance of both the Board and BirdLife South Africa as a whole.

The Audit & Risk Committee has reviewed:

- a report titled 'Review by Board of Directors' for the 2020 reporting period, prepared by the Chairman of BirdLife South Africa;
- a report titled 'Review of BirdLife South Africa's Conservation Work' by Prof. Andrew McKechnie;
- BirdLife South Africa Board performance evaluation;
- the preparation of the financial statements of BirdLife South Africa and the External Auditors' report thereon.

During the course of the year the Audit & Risk Committee has also reviewed:

- the financial performance of BirdLife South Africa against the budget approved by the Board;
- risk assessment and mitigation measures determined by the Board and Management;
- the Delegation of Authorities of BirdLife South Africa.

#### Opinion

Based on the above and as is required in terms of the constitution, the Audit & Risk Committee is satisfied with the effectiveness and performance of both the Board and BirdLife South Africa as a whole.



ANDREW MITCHELL  
CHAIRMAN, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE  
12 March 2021

# Financials

## Abridged statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 (R)	2019 (R)
<b>Business Division</b>	668 973	434 039
Income	11 666 069	11 145 305
Expenditure	(10 997 096)	(10 711 266)
<b>Conservation Division</b>	(230 569)	(204 299)
Income	18 805 026	26 029 284
Expenditure	(19 035 595)	(26 233 583)
<b>Net income from operations</b>	438 404	229 740
<b>Net non-operating income</b>	200 790	136 264
Surplus on disposal of assets	297	-
Bequests and donations for long-term sustainability	336 757	136 284
Donations to related parties	(136 264)	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	639 194	366 004

## Statement of financial position

at 31 December 2020

	2020 (R)	2019 (R)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Non-current assets</b>	348 864	392 105
Property, vehicles, furniture and equipment	348 864	392 105
<b>Current assets</b>	31 571 613	26 490 431
Trade and other receivables	1 620 375	1 736 321
Cash and cash equivalents	29 729 234	24 632 877
Inventory	222 004	121 233
<b>Total assets</b>	31 920 477	26 882 536
<b>EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Reserves</b>	6 246 628	5 607 434
Accumulated funds	6 246 628	5 607 434
<b>Current liabilities</b>	25 673 849	21 275 102
Income received in advance	23 220 861	19 928 170
Trade and other payables	2 452 988	1 346 932
<b>Total equities and liabilities</b>	31 920 477	26 882 536

The financial statements of BirdLife South Africa for the year ended 31 December 2020 have been audited by KPMG Inc. Set out here are the abridged statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2020 and the financial position at that date. These have been extracted from the Audited Financial Statements and disclose a sound financial position.



MANUELA KROGH CA(SA)  
HONORARY TREASURER

## Sponsors and Supporters

BirdLife South Africa is very grateful to the many people, organisations and companies that support its work. These include the bird clubs and volunteers who serve on the Board of Directors and the Animal Research Ethics, Audit & Risk, Flock, Flufftail Festival, Fundraising, List, Marketing, Membership, Rarities and Kruger Wildlife Challenge committees. Many BirdLife South Africa members also serve on bird club committees and the three regional forums. We are also grateful to the volunteers who assist at BirdLife South Africa's head office and Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre.

### Donors and funders

#### R1 000 000 and more

BirdLife International, Charl van der Merwe Trust, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited, First Rand Trust (RMB), Global Wildlife Conservation/IUCN Species Survival Commission, Investec Corporate & Institutional Banking, Pamela Isdell, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Rupert Natuurstigting.

#### R500 000 – R999 999

Eka Minerals (Pty) Ltd, Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Nick & Jane Prentice.

#### R250 000 – R499 999

GaiaZOO, Neville Isdell, Italtile and Ceramic Foundation Trust, D. Slatter, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Swarovski Optik/Whylo Distributors (Pty) Ltd, The Lewis Foundation, Job Ubbink, University of Cape Town.

#### R100 000 – R249 999

Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), Angloplat Ltd, Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire (Pty) Ltd, Chamberlain Foundation, McCormick Property Development, MySchool/MyVillage/MyPlanet Programme, Rockjumper Birding Tours, Sappi Limited, Sasol Group Services, Toyota South Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Eswatini, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/AEWA), Vogelbescherming Nederland, Woolworths, WWF Nedbank Green Trust.

#### R50 000 – R99 999

African Bird Club, African Mining and Trust Company Limited, Club300 Foundation, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Ricoh South Africa (Pty) Ltd, M. Solomon, The Hermann Ohlthaver Trust.

#### R2 000 to R49 999, and significant in-kind contributions

D. Allan, R.A. Anderson, T.A. Anderson, AVIS Budget Rent A Car South Africa, G.A. Ball, I. Barber, G.G. Barnett, A. Bedford-Shaw, I.B. Bhorat, Bird Guide Relief Fund donors, Birding Africa, Birding Big Day participants and donors, BirdLasser, BirdLife Eastern Cape, BirdLife Free State, BirdLife Inkwazi, BirdLife KZN Midlands, BirdLife Lowveld, BirdLife Northern Gauteng, BirdLife Plettenberg Bay, BirdLife Polokwane, BirdLife Port Natal, BirdLife President Ridge, BirdLife Sandton, BirdLife Trogons, Birds and Bats Unlimited, N. Blackwood, L. Bloch, J.D. Boeke, A. Booysen, H. Borkum, E. Bornman, R.A. Botha, J. Bradshaw, J. Briner, E. Browne, J. Buchanan, E.J. Buchmann, G. Burle, Bustards Birding Tours, P. Calinikos, Cape Bird Club, CapeNature, Carl Zeiss (Pty) Ltd, J. Carstens, D. Chamberlain, K. Chetty, K. Christie, A.E. Conradie, D. Cope, C.J. Cory, G. Crookes, Cuckoo Bird Club, F. Davidson, D. Davies, L.F. Davies, S.B. Davis, DeepAlert, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Deynecke Engineering (Pty) Ltd, M.J. Dixon, M. Drummond, Duram Smart Paint, Duxberry Community, G. Ebedes, Elaine's Birding and Wildlife Products, A. Ellmer, Endangered Wildlife Trust, T. Erasmus, G. Erling, Eurolux, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, I. Fallon, C.J. Fauconnier, A. Featherstone, Ferring International Centre SA, F.H. Chamberlain Trading (Pty) Ltd, FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Flume Digital Marketing & PR, S. Fogarty, N. Forbes, Ford Wildlife Foundation,

A. Forsyth, M. Forsyth-Thompson, A. Froneman, M. Froneman, M. George, J. Gibbs, P. Goss, S. Graaff, Greenfields Vet, C.H. Gregson, B. Hackland, Haggie Charitable Trust, T. Hardaker, S. Havens, V. Head, J. Hewlett, M.A. Heyns, C.S. Hills, G.J.G. Hofmeyr, L. Howe, Indian Ocean Export Company, E. Ingram, C.J. Irons, J.M. Jacobs, G.C. Jensen, John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Joseph Baynes Estate, A. Jenkins, P. Katzenellenbogen, F.J. Kleyn, KPMG Inc., KZN Bird Club Regional Forum, Lakes Bird Club, E. Lane, D. Lawrence, Lawson's Birding & Wildlife Safaris, A. Lee, S. Levesque, D. Lewis, Lord Renwick, C. Lotz, R.M. Loubser, D. MacGillivray, B. Madden, J.G. Madden, S. Malone, V. O'Neill, Mary Oppenheimer & Daughters Foundation, C. Masser, A. Mawer, D. McCullough, A. McKechnie, M. Mills, S. Miner, C. Mitchell, H. Mitchell, C.M. Moraal, G.K. Morrison, Mouse-Free Marion donors, L. Muirhead, S. Muse, S.M. Mylrea, National Geographic Society, C. Natrass, E. Nel, Northern Bird Club Regional Forum, G. Ortner, S.J.B. Peile, Y. Pennington, B.L. Penzhorn, N. Perrins, G.H. Pieterse, Pimstein Family, Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), M.G.F. Pretorius, Promac Paints, Protea Garden Club, J.P. Raimondo, Rand Barbet Bird Club, Rand Merchant Bank, Random House Struik, Rand Water Services (Pty) Ltd, H.W. Rayner, Relate Trust, A. Riley, P. Rollinson, G. Rupert, P. Ryan, SANParks Honorary Rangers: Johannesburg Region, SANParks Honorary Rangers: West Rand Region, S. Schneier, T. Schonken, J. Seaman, D. Sevenster, J.B. Sherwood, S.A. Sherwood, A. Slabbert, Somerset West Bird Club, M.W. Spicer, M.D. Stainbank, N. Stainforth, A. Stalker, P. Stapelberg, R. Stapleton, R. & D. Stewart, S. Stojakovic, D. Stronach, St Thomas Anglican Church Linden, STT Sales (Pty) Ltd (Darachem & Flash Harry), D. Swanepoel, W. Tarboton, S. Terblanche, L. Terreblanche, N.E. Terreblanche, Tidy Sum cc, Timbila Consulting (Pty) Ltd, J. Tresfon, M. Tripp, Tshikululu Social Investments, C. Tucker, Tygerberg Bird Club, N. van der Merwe, H.J. van Velze, B. van Zyl, P. Verster, T. Vorster, Wakkerstroom Bird Club, D. Weaver, B. Weideman, I. Weiersbye, Whylo Distributors, A.P.N. Whyte, D. Wilcocks, C. Wilson, Wits Bird Club, T. Wood, H. Zemann, Zimanga Private Game Reserve.

### Conservation League Donors

C. Adams, P. Alves, G. Anderson, M.D. & T. Anderson, P. Ayling, K.I. Barnes, BirdLife Port Natal, D. & L. Blackburn, I.L.S. Bloxam & L. Hart, S. Bloy, J.D. Boeke, F. Boustred, M.A. & C. Bridgeford, J.A. Brown, E.J. Buchman, S.W. Burger, P. Cairns, P. & A. Calinikos, P.L. Campbell, B.R. Carless, S. Carlson-Smith, D.L. Charlton, B. Chedzey, R. Cliff, A.P. Cohen, B.D. Colahan, A.E. Conradie, I.H. Cooke, D. Cope, L.A. Cornish, C.J. & B. Cory, F. & V. da Silva, C. Dalton, S.B. Davis, P.J. Diedericks, K.V. Dixon, F. Donaldson, H. du Toit, M. du Trevou, G. Ebedes, R.T. & S. Edmond, A. Ellmer, M.S. Ellwood, T. Erasmus, G. Erling, M.G. Evans, C.J. Fauconnier, A. Finn, S. & S. Fogarty, A.T. & N.T. Forbes, B. Forsyth, C.R. Foster, L. Fouche, K. Fourie, C.L. Fransman, M. Fricke, K. Gamble, H.W. & J. Garrett, B. Garven, E. Germiquet, D. Gertzen, A. Gilbert, K. Gill, J. Glendinning, S. Goodman, J.M.D. Graham, R.J. Gray, W.G. & A. Greig, M. Griffith, B. Hackland, R.R. Harebottle, M. Harrington, J.P. Hartley, Hawarden Family, M. Hawthorne, V.R.L. Head, Healthcare Navigator CC, E.D.I.H. Hertzog, M.A. Heyns, C. Hills, K.W. Hoffman, M.A. Hoole, B. Horley, P. Horn, C.T. Howie, A. Jacobs, J.M. Jacobs, G.C. Jensen, E.J. Kay, A.J. Kerslake, N.S. Knott-Craig, M. Krog, G.M. Lackinger, P. Landy, D.M. Lawrence, N.F. Leman, D. Leppert, I. Lingenfelder, R.M. Loubser, L. Lund, J. Lutzow, E. Maas, D. MacGillivray, A. Madden, B. Madden, J. Malan, M. Mason, J. McCormick, R. & M. McGrath, W.A. McIntosh, F. McLachlan, G.D. Meihuizen, A. Mitchell, N. & J. Morris, J.C. Mouton, S.M. Mylrea, R.T. Naude, D.D. Nick, J. & L. Niemandt, G.F. Ortner, S. Peile, Y.P. Pennington, N.D. Perrins, D.Z. Pimstein, M.R. Pimstein, C. Pinker, R.N. Porter, S.E. Power-Wilson, J. Ragsdale, C. Ramsay, Rand Barbet Bird Club, J.N. & M. Randell, J.M. Rankin, W. Rapp, I. Rasmussen, H.W. Rayner, F.J. Reuvers, J. Richards, S.H. Robertson, A.A. Routledge, C.D. Roux, J. Rupert, K.J. Rust, N. Ryan, P. Ryan, K.J. Sarsfield, H. Schoeman, N. Schonegevel, G. Scott-Berning, D. Sharp, S. Singh, G.J. & B. Skinner, H. Snyman, M. Solomon, H. & J. Stacey, N.D.M. Stainforth, A. Stalker, M. Stallman, P.J. Stansfield, P. Stapelberg (Snr), P. Stapelberg (Jnr), B.A. Staples, I. Stepski, B.E. Stevens, R.E. & D. Stewart, D. Stojakovic, M. & J. Stricker, S.L. Sutherland, J.M. Sykes, P.L. Symcox, S.S. Terblanche, J.E. Thompson, R.R. Thomson, E. Thornton-Dibb, Timbila Consulting (Pty) Ltd, J.B. & M. Ubbink, N.W. Unwin, H.M. van As, C. van den Bergh, M.H. van der Mark, B.F. van der Merwe, W. van der Merwe, C. & G. van der Meulen, M.P. & D. van Niekerk, J. van Wyk, Z.I.M. van Zwieten, D. Vasapolli, L.J. Vasapolli, C. & K. Vivier, R. Wanless, B. Watson, I. Weiersbye-Porter, J. Wells, B. Williams, J. Wood, A. Younge Hayes, H. Zemann, R. Zipp.

**Total number of Conservation League Donors during the course of 2020: 196**

### Corporate members

#### Partner

Duram Smart Paint, Investec Bank, N3 Toll Concession, Sappi Limited

#### Associate

Eka Mining (Pty) Ltd, Nelesco 569 (Pty) Ltd, Omnicom Media Group SA, Surgical & Ophthalmic Supplies (Pty) Ltd

#### Introductory

Birding Ecotours, Indwe Risk Services, Kingfisher Fruits (Pty) Ltd, Ocean Breeze Food Merchants CC, Rockjumper Birding Tours CC, SA Wingshooters Association, Singita, The Cavern Resort & Spa, The George Skinner Family Trust, Timbila Consulting (Pty) Ltd, Two Oceans Aquarium



GOLDEN PIPIT ADAM RILEY

## Golden Bird Patrons

#### Golden Pipit

Tanya Browne, David Chamberlain, Philip Chamberlain, Tony and Maureen Dixon, Michael and Rose Hainebach, Tasso Leventis, Nedbank, Duncan Parker, Phil and Joanna Perry, Remgro, Gaynor Rupert, Laetitia Steynberg.

#### Golden-breasted Bunting

Chris and Barbara Cory.

#### African Golden Weaver

Mandy Ackerman, Geoff and Mary Ball, Alex Barrell, Stuart and Sandra Bird, John and Alison Bradshaw, Don Hairs, Paul and Jeanne Harris, Anton Heunis, Ken Collins Charitable Trust, Simon Milne, Michael Pimstein, Vaughan Prost, Stephen Reinecke, Simon Stekhoven, Simon Susman.

#### African Golden Oriole

Ismail Bhorat, Nadya Bhorat, Shaun Bouchier, Howard Buttery, Golden Fleece Merinos, Pat and Karin Goss, Christopher Greig, the Halfway Group, Douglas Hoernle, Pamela Isdell, Sandra Ovenstone, Steve Palframan, Giovanni Ravazzotti, Peter Willig.

*Although we have done our best to ensure that all donors are listed, we apologise for any omissions. BirdLife South Africa is grateful for all the support it receives, no matter how large or small, and we will endeavour to acknowledge financial and in-kind contributions.*

## Patrons

Mrs Pamela Isdell | Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe | Mrs Gaynor Rupert | Mr Mark Shuttleworth

## Honorary President

Prof. Colleen Downs (-13 June 2020) | Prof. Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan (13 June 2020-)

## Board of Directors

Philip Calinikos (Chairman) | Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer) | Ismail Bhorat | David Chamberlain | Peter Dival | Dr Nicholus Funda | Linda Hart | Vernon Head | Manuela Krog (Honorary Treasurer) | Galeboe Modisapodi | Yvonne Pennington

## Audit & Risk Committee

Andrew Mitchell (Chairman) | Chris Cory | Manuela Krog | Germarie Pieterse | Arthur Plint

## STAFF

### Executive Management

Mark D. Anderson (Chief Executive Officer)

### Division Management

Fanie du Plessis (Head of Business Division)

Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson (Head of Conservation Division)

### Conservation Division

#### Seabird Conservation Programme

Dr Alistair McInnes (Programme Manager) | Andrea Angel (Albatross Task Force Leader) | Dr Tegan Carpenter-Kling (Coastal Seabird Conservation Project Manager; 1 July 2020-) | Andrew de Blocq (Coastal Seabird Conservation Project Manager; -30 April 2020) | Christina Hagen (Pamela Isdell Fellow of Penguin Conservation) | Reason Nyengera (Albatross Task Force Instructor) | Margaret Tromp (Cleaner) | Nini van der Merwe (Island Restoration Project Manager)

#### Landscape Conservation Programme

Dr Melissa Whitecross (Programme Manager) | Nolumanyano Camagu (Birds and Renewable Energy Intern; -30 June 2020) | Dr Kyle Lloyd (Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation; 1 April 2020-) | Elelwani Makhuvha (Landscape Conservation Programme and Conservation Division Intern) | Dr Giselle Murison (Western Cape Estuaries Conservation Manager) | Carina Pienaar (Ingula and Grasslands Project Manager) | Samantha Ralston-Paton (Birds and Renewable Energy Project Manager) | Linda van den Heever (Vulture Project Manager) | Kyle Walker (Raptor and Large Terrestrial Bird Project Manager; -31 August 2020)

#### Regional Conservation Programme

Daniel Marnewick (Programme Manager) | Dr Simeon Bezeng (BASPA Project Manager) | Bronwyn Maree (EAFI Project Manager; 4 July 2020-) | Hiral Naik (Administrative Assistant)

#### Empowering People Programme

Andrew de Blocq (Avitourism Project Manager; 1 May 2020-)

#### Science & Innovation Programme

Robin Colyn (Programme Manager) | Ernst Retief (Data and Spatial Planning Manager)

#### Policy & Advocacy Programme

Dr Melissa Lewis (Programme Manager 1 May 2020-) | Jonathan Booth (Advocacy Officer -31 January 2020)

### Business Division

Kathleen April (Receptionist) | Joshua Chimaliro (Groundsman) | Dr Isabel Human (HR Manager and Executive Assistant) | Rosemary Knight (Bookkeeper) | Karen Lucas (Assistant Bookkeeper; -22 February 2020)

### Membership Programme

Shireen Gould (Programme Manager) | Janine Goosen (Subscriptions Manager and Office Administrator) | Baile Sechabe (Membership Administrator)

### Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre

Kristi Garland (Tourism and Environmental Education Centre Manager) | Lucky Ngwenya (Bird Guide)



VIOLET-BACKED STARLING ADAM RILEY



This annual report is printed on Sappi GalerieArt™ silk 170g/m<sup>2</sup>. Manufactured at Sappi's European mills, this coated paper is made from pulp bleached without the use of chlorine. The wood for this pulp is derived from sustainably managed forests and plantations. These mills are certified with ISO 9001 quality and ISO 14001 and EMAS environmental certification. Sappi GalerieArt™ is acid free and fully recyclable.

Printing: Jetline Burlington • Design: Bryony van Wyk • Copy editor: Leni Martin



BirdLife South Africa  
Isdell House, 17 Hume Road,  
Dunkeld West, Johannesburg,  
2196 Gauteng, South Africa  
Private Bag X16, Pinetown, 2123  
Gauteng, South Africa  
Telephone: +27 (0) 11 789 1122  
Fax: +27 (0) 11 789 5188  
Email: [info@birdlife.org.za](mailto:info@birdlife.org.za)  
Website: [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za)

**Nonprofit Registration Number:**  
001-298 NPO  
**Public Benefit Organisation  
Exemption Number:**  
930 004 518

*Member of IUCN (International Union  
for Conservation of Nature)  
Member of Proudly South African  
Member of the Water Institute of  
Southern Africa*

