

# *Western Cape Birding Forum*

*Now represents 17 clubs with more than 2,000 members in the Western Cape.*

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**Minutes** of the meeting Held at Intaka Island Environmental Centre, Century City  
Saturday, 7 June 2014

**Vernon Head** - Chaired the Meeting.  
**Sylvia Ledgard** - Minutes.

## **Present**

**Cape Bird Club:** Vernon Head, Sylvia Ledgard, Anne Gray, Dave Whitelaw, Sean de Nobrega, Otto Schmidt, Jo Hobbs.

**Tygerberg Bird Club:** Brian Vanderwalt.

**West Coast Bird Club:** Keith Harrison.

**BirdLife Worcester:** Kobus Graaff.

**BirdLife Overberg:** Anton Odendal.

**Namaqua Bird Club:** Salome Willemse.

**Lakes Bird Club:** Bill Naude.

**Somerset West Bird Club:** Brian Dennis, Sakkie Krynauw, Caroline Crump, Bryan Butler.

**Stanford Bird Club:** Peter Hochfelden.

**BLSA: Western Cape** Dale Wright.

**SABAP2:** Peter Nupen.

**Visitors:** Dr Stephen Van der Spuy (SANCCOB).

**Cape Nature:** Kevin Shaw (Scientific Services)

**Apologies:** Brigid Crewe, Craig Holmes, Colin de Kock, Yvonne Weiss.

**Welcome extended to first-time attendees:** Salome Willemse (Chair of the newly formed Namaqua Bird Club) and Dr Stephen Van der Spuy (SANCCOB).

**1. Confirmation of Minutes** of previous meeting (8/2/2014) - Agreed.

**2. UPDATE ON THE SEABIRD CONSERVATION PROGRAMME** (Christina Hagen, BLSA Coastal Seabird Conservation Manager).

Christina presented important highlights and achievements in the past 12 months.

- International Conservation award: Bronwyn Maree, Albatross Task Force leader, received the prestigious "Future for Nature Award 2014" for young conservationists, hosted in the Netherlands. The award came with \$50,000 to be used on winners' projects.
- Hake trawl fishery: 90% reduction in seabird deaths with 99% reduction in Albatross deaths since 2006 when it was estimated that around 10,000 seabirds a year (70% of which were Albatrosses) were being caught and drowned on trawl cables. The findings are the result of a 7-year study on seabird mortality arising from bycatch in the hake trawl fishery. Success has been achieved through a collaborative approach with the fishery whereby bird scaring lines (tori lines) were developed and tested on board the fishing vessels by BirdLife's Albatross Task Force staff and widely implemented by the industry.
- Longliners: Testing is underway in South African waters on hook pod devices designed to protect the barb of longline hooks until they sink to a depth below which seabirds can access them.

- GEF Funding (Global Environment Facility): BirdLife South Africa is part of a broader project on fishery bycatch which is being funded by the GEF. They will receive R3.5-million/year for 5 years to investigate seabird bycatch on foreign longline vessels operating in international waters, starting with South Korea.
- West African Involvement: Ross Wanless is involved in setting up seabird bycatch monitoring And mitigation plans in West Africa, notably in Senegal and Mauritania. Mauritania in particular has a very large fishing industry but little is known about seabird bycatch in the region.
- Gough Island: BirdLife South Africa is facilitating contracts and employment of biologists from UCT to work on the island to monitor the seabird populations and assist with eradication of alien vegetation and house mice.

### **African Penguin Projects**

- Satellite tracking: A Masters student at the Fitz has taken on the tracking project. In 2013, 16 penguins were tracked post breeding and a further 10 post moulting. The project is important to the conservation of the African Penguin as there is currently a gap in knowledge of where the penguins go when they are not breeding. The data collected will assist in identifying potential fishery management zones to protect their food source. The project is being funded by the Charl van der Merwe Trust.
- New colony: Christina Hagen is working at identifying a site for a new African Penguin colony. A potential site has been suggested at Nature's Valley and Christina is liaising with BirdLife Plettenberg Bay and the Nature's Valley Trust to investigate the option. Permit requirements and researching methods that can be used to establish the colony are being looked at. Decoys and playing calls are being considered as a means of encouraging the penguins to move. It is likely that it is the Juveniles that would be relocated. Other sites under consideration are Plettenberg Bay (near Keurbooms River mouth and De Hoop Nature Reserve. How to prevent predator access is a problem.
- (DW): Dyer Island - we need to find a site between Dyer Island and Bird Island
- (KH): Paternoster is another possibility - penguins are breeding there.
- SOS Festival 2014: Dates 6 -12 October. A broader stakeholder engagement has been entered into to provide a platform for other organisations to hold events under the banner of the SOS Festival. Several organisations have expressed an interest, including International Oceans Institute, SANCCOB, CapeNature, SANBI, UCT, Marine Stewardship Council and City of Cape Town. The theme is being widened to include other conservation concerns. The 2014 theme is likely to be related to "20 years of democracy".
- (VH): We want to develop the festival to a level where corporate South Africa will see value in getting involved and give funding/open doors for conservation.

(Note: It has since been confirmed that the SOS festival is being rebranded as "Celebrate our Seas".)

### **3. REGIONAL CONSERVATION UPDATE - Western Cape, Dale Wright.**

\* Refer to Appendix 1 of these minutes. The report covers:

#### **(1) IBA Assessments.**

- Field work completed for the IBA Assessments of all of the Western Cape IBAs (23 IBAs).
- Five IBA Assessments completed for the Eastern Cape and field work planned for a further three; will bring the total completed to 73% of the Eastern Cape IBAs.
- Prioritisation exercise being planned for IBAs across the Province to guide further conservation action.
- A number of boundary revisions planned for IBAs.
- New IBAs coming on track.
- All IBA directory webpages updated, reflecting improved information for each IBA.

(2) Verlorenvlei Protected Areas Project.

- Samantha Schroder appointed as Project Manager and began work on 1 February 2014.
- Has made contact made with relevant partners and stakeholders, including land owners in the Moutonshoek valley.
- Approval given by the CapeNature Biodiversity Stewardship Reference Group for seeking Protected Environment status for the area.
- Land owners association to be established and “Land owner needs analysis” being drafted for the Verloren estuary area.

(3) False Bay Ecology Park (IBA SA116).

- Funding proposal completed including a professional video and presentation.
- Successful presentations to the Melomed Group and the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).
- Proposal for tourism infrastructure developments at Strandfontein Birding Area and other parts of FBEP submitted to the National Department of Tourism.
- FBEP Birdathon Fun Walk: Second annual event took place in April - attracted 430 participants (almost double previous year). Events expanded to include a fire safety demonstration, Zibi recycling show and reptile and bird encounters. Fish ‘n Chip lunch sponsored and provided by John Dory. Winners’ prize was a weekend on Rondevlei Island. The aim is to get the local community involved and on-side.

Further comment (DW): A number of interesting developments are taking place at Strandfontein including research work on the littoral edge. Consider a presentation for bird clubs.

**Action: Dale / Dave.**

(4) Local Conservation Groups (LCGs).

- Bitou Valley LCG functioning successfully under guidance of Dr. Mark Brown of Nature’s Valley Trust.  
Activities undertaken include:
  - (a) A project for development of a Plettenberg Bay birding route including birding infrastructure;
  - (b) A birding “Masters and Champions” programme that engages interested children in birding mentoring;
  - (c) Collecting data relative to the expansion of the Tsitsikamma IBA to include Keurbooms and Robberg peninsulas;
  - (d) Scientific research and public awareness work at the Keurbooms Kelp Gull colony; (e) BirdLife Eastern Cape LCG established for the Maitland-Gamtoos coast IBA.

(5) Publications.

- BLSA funding and technical input for:
  - (a) An information booklet for farmers in the Overberg to educate on important flora and fauna in the region and on land management practices to improve the landscape for biodiversity - this project in partnership with the Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust;
  - (b) A “Water Bird Habitat for Farm Dams guideline” being developed by Nature Conservation Corporation (NCC), to provide farmers with practical interventions that can be applied to existing farm dams to improve these as habitat for waterbirds with the focus primarily on Rallids and Ducks.

Comment (PN): Rehabilitation of renosterveld - renosterveld does not regenerate after ploughing.  
(DWr): We are trying to conserve remaining patches/fragments of renosterveld where big enough to make it worthwhile. (KS): We still do not know how to manage renosterveld.

(6) Funding being investigated for:

- Estuary Stewardship initiatives in the Lower Berg River Wetlands and the Bot and Kleinmond Estuary IBAs and also for environmental and socio-economic development in the Verloren Estuary and surrounds; need also to target the town of Elands Bay with its very poor community.
- A West Coast District Municipality Estuary Conservation Officer.
- A Fynbos Endemic Birds conservation project proposal.

(7) Forest birds.

- A research project has started to investigate why we are losing forest birds.

(8) Marketing the IBA Programme and BirdLife South Africa.

- Dale continues to provide public presentations, conduct radio interviews and write popular articles.
- IBA Signboards: Somerset West Bird Club funding an IBA signboard at Helderberg Nature Reserve.  
Bird clubs encouraged to support this project and interested chairpersons asked to contact Dale. More signboards are needed. Cost: R4, 000-R5, 000.

**Action: Bird Clubs.**

**4. FALSE BAY ECOLOGY PARK/STRANDFONTEIN:**

Refer to 3(3) above, with input also from DW.

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL/CONSERVATION CONCERNS-WEST COAST** (Keith Harrison).

\* Refer to Appendix 2 of these minutes: West Coast Report.

The report covers:

(1) Possible dangers to West Coast IBAs. All heavy minerals and rare earths come down to Saldanha by road and rail from the north, passing through three IBAs. Road surface and bridge damage due to bulk transports. Concerns are regular accidents and derailments with load spills that must be cleaned up. Minerals stored at "inland ports" (dumping sites) before going to Saldanha are not subject to air emission regulations. The Estuary Management Forum has been asked to build a case why there is a concern.

(2) Bird kill on Coastal R27 power line. 53 Common Terns collected and taken to SANCCOB where they were euthanized. It is thought the birds were on migration and encountered sea fog.  
Comment (SvdS): SANCCOB contacted EWT as they have a working agreement with Eskom. EWT is continuing to investigate the incident. The power line does not belong to Eskom and probably falls under the Municipality. There is no mitigation on the line at present.

(3) Berg River Marine Ranger appointed and funded by the Municipality. Environmental questions can be directed to Ewald van Wyk, cell 082 414 3160, e-mail [ewald@hampo.co.za](mailto:ewald@hampo.co.za) This appointment means that the Berg River Wetlands meets the requirements of a RAMSAR site.

(4) RAMSAR. There will soon be three RAMSAR sites on the West Coast. The problem is getting information through to RAMSAR on problems / events affecting the sites. It has been suggested that the Coastal Committees could be a vehicle.

(5) Port of Saldanha to increase capacity to 73MTA for iron ore handling plus an additional oil rig quay. May be planning to export manganese through Saldanha. Concerns are: (a) Dredging and siltration into the lagoon, changing the ecology and loss of wader feeding habitat; (b) Security lighting - the western perimeter is a bird flyway from St. Helena Bay to the islands.

(6) West Coast National Park is not responding to any of our environmental questions, which means there is no progress on the Kleinmooimaak. Seeberg hide, Elandsfontein aquifer and Shark Bay issues. Rumour has it that they have approved the Shark Bay development. We have carried out more than 20 high tide counts at the Seeberg hide to build the case for the importance of the roost and to indicate required orientation of the hide.

Question (BvdW): What has happened to the plaque at Seeberg hide?

(VH): It is being redesigned in synch with the bird hide.

(7) Elandsfontein Phosphate Mine and Elandsfontein Aquifer. Phosphates are internationally strategic minerals and Elandsfontein is the second largest producer. The mining process will be environmentally friendly strip mining. Concentrated slurry will be pumped 18 kms to Saldanha, de-watered and packed and the water pumped back into the mine and re-used. Water is the concern - mining will be through the Elandsfontein Aquifer which drains into the Langebaan lagoon underground. The Percy Fitzpatrick is carrying out an assessment and updating the bird list.

## 6. OTHER CONSERVATION CONCERNS.

(1) Fynbos birds and fire (Dave Whitelaw). At the previous WCBF meeting, Dale raised the question of the possible effect of fire on Sugarbirds. Dave presented the example of a fire experienced in 2004 at Pearly Beach. The fynbos there supported a large concentration of Sugarbirds. Following the fire, the proteas started dying off and the vegetation is now devoid of proteas. The Sugarbirds have disappeared.

Comments:

- (KS): Certain protea species have a lifespan. If fires go through at too frequent intervals, they do not regenerate. Only last year's seeds prior to a fire are viable. CapeNature is picking up that proteas are disappearing. Block burns used to be carried out but the emphasis now is on preventing burns. Also fires are huge, not patch burns as in the past, possibly due to mismanagement in the past - getting more grass. This is a worry.
- (DWr): Dr. Alan Lee is looking at issues of climate change, fire, dispersal, etc., and will be drawing up a plan for action. Les Underhill is working with someone with a PhD on fire.

(2) Seabirds in the Waterfront (DW). Seabirds are nesting on buildings in the Waterfront; noise and guano are problems. We are engaging with Management to adjust the maintenance programme to avoid the breeding time - there were 500 breeding terns at the Nelson Mandela Gateway. The feasibility of transferring the birds by building a platform with decoys to lure them into the harbour is being looked at. The conflict is not otherwise going to be resolved.

(3) Cormorants (DW). An overlooked species. They do not have regular roosts and counting is problematic. There is potential for an important research project. (KH) Environmental Affairs do monitoring of Cormorants; (KS) CapeNature tries to synchronise counts; we do not know the status of Cormorants - raise this with Rob Crawford. (BvdW): Can something be done through the ADU? (MS) SANCCOB will be meeting with the ADU in this connection. (VH) Is there opportunity to launch a Citizen Science project in National Marine Week?

Comments:

- (SvdS): Cormorants admitted to SANCCOB are often in very poor condition (commonly due to malnutrition) and various bone fractures are currently being seen. Three of the five species (Bank, Cape and Crowned) have been upgraded to Endangered.
- (MS): SANCCOB is undertaking a Bank Cormorant/Cormorant Project with partners. (Note: Stephen will address the Forum on the project at the next meeting.)
- (KS): CapeNature must submit a report to the Minister on the status of seabirds. People are required to visit every colony picking up trends. Bruce Dyer is doing this - can we pick up holes?
- (DW): Need to co-ordinate the work being done and decide how a joint project can be put together.

(4) Pied Crows (DW). A case illustrating predation of Pied Crows on tortoises in the Karoo raised concerns. Dave urged caution - is the perceived increased predation of Pied Crows on small reptiles, mammals and birds and harassing of raptors natural behaviour and will it have a long-term effect on biodiversity? Evidence so far is based on anecdotal reports. Hard evidence based on scientific research is needed to determine the correlation between the increasing Pied Crow population and the effect on other bird populations. There are many imponderables relating to the increase and fluctuation of species and the causes.

Comments:

- (DWr): BirdLife South Africa's position statement acknowledges the potential threat to the South African biodiversity of an increased abundance of Pied Crows and supports the need for urgent scientific research to better understand and quantify the degree of this threat on the indigenous bird population before decisions are taken. An MSc student at the Fitz has completed an initial project. SABAP2 stats show that there is a movement of Pied Crows west and south. Man-made alterations to the landscape and temperature changes are suggested as factors driving these movements. The second phase of the project will research breeding ecology, territory and home range size per breeding pair and analyse diet. For this, cameras will be used. Funding is needed to take the project forward. Stats from a review of Corvids globally found that they are generalists in their feeding habits. The paper concluded that in 63% of cases Corvids had a negative impact on biodiversity and in 29% there was no impact.
- (JH): There is also a big problem in the farming community with PCs attacking birthing ewes.
- (DWr): Go to the farmers to raise funds.
- (PN): Reports are more than anecdotal. There is evidence, e.g. the carapaces of 315 small tortoises collected from one breeding nest, large numbers of PCs at dump sites (113 counted at Brandvlei), hassling a Martial Eagle's nest and raptors in flight. We are going to miss the boat. Numbers need to be reduced now.
- (KS): There is no doubt that numbers are increasing. Some good news is that municipal dump sites are closing in smaller towns and there will hopefully be better management around centralised sites people will need to be educated on how to manage sites. On the question of taking out predators, shooting or removal is not the answer. Experience has shown that it does not work - other predators move in to fill the gap. Funding is needed to fast track research. VH will take a proposal to Hanneline, BLSA Divisional Conservation Manager.

**Action: Vernon Head.**

(5) Rooi Els: Prospective Sale of mountain-side Property (DW). A large property has been advertised for sale in the Rooi Els area between Kleinmond and Gordon's Bay, covering pristine mountainside land with an abundance of fynbos species, birds and small wildlife. This is Cape Rockjumper and Sentinal Rock Thrush territory. Potential buyers will be expected to protect the environment and ensure the proper management of natural resources.

(6) Phillipi Wetlands (DW). The area supports a community of small farmers producing and selling vegetables (Phillipi Horticultural Assoc.). Large areas of seasonal wetland attract a variety of water birds. Profit levels are minimal and farmers are tempted to make money by allowing dumping on their land to the ultimate degradation of the wetlands. We are seeking ways of making it worthwhile for farmers to remain on their land and are hoping to engage large retailers like Woolworths.

(7) Bird Kills at Turbines (Tony Williams). It needs to be determined what the acceptable turbine kill levels are per species, not just per turbine but cumulatively across provinces and nationally. Consultants need guidance from BirdLife South Africa/conservation authorities to help them advise/dissuade developers from locating windfarms where there is a strong likelihood of unacceptable numbers of Red Listed species being killed through collisions. An example is the Blue Crane that flies in small flocks, often in low light and at turbine blade height; while the number of turbine crane kills a year might be acceptable at one

windfarm, what if the same level of kills occurred at even a proportion of windfarms across the province/country? Are kill levels sustainable?

WCBF requests BirdLife South Africa to motivate national and provincial authorities to set kill levels for at least Red List bird species.

**Action: Vernon Head.**

Comments:

- (KS): We will get this data once we go into post-construction monitoring. As yet we don't have it. We have been submitting data at pentad level for a number of species but developers want information at specific level.
- (PN): Bird monitors are already doing this at proposed/designated windfarm sites. The data goes to bird consultant specialists to assess and recommend. Get hold of maps with positions of where turbines are going to be placed and do intensive monitoring on those sites.

(8) Control of Predatory Seals (Tony Williams). The Cape Gannet is listed as Endangered, is near endemic to South Africa and is the only representative of the avian family Sulidae that breeds in South Africa. Some sub-adult male Fur Seals specialise in killing gannets. Annually fewer than 15 male seals kill hundreds of gannets at Lamberts Bay. CapeNature has permission to remove predatory males but instead of using a qualified local staff member they have to send somebody from Porterville. As predation events are related to variable wind and tide conditions, the shooter from Porterville often misses the appropriate time.

- WCBF requests BirdLife South Africa to motivate for CapeNature to have a qualified local staff member to cull the killer seals.

**Action: DWr.**

Comment (KS): CapeNature has permits for Bird Island and Dyer Island and is addressing the issue of having persons on site who are certified to use a firearm. This is currently not the case. Firearms must be registered and permission given by Oceans & Fisheries.

(9) Mongooses at Intaka Island (Tony Williams). Formerly there was a thriving population of waterbirds breeding at Intaka Island. Predation by mongooses has caused almost all waterbirds to cease breeding. Following approval by CapeNature's director for the removal of mongooses, it took six months of repeated contacts before a permit was issued. The permit was finally delivered in May. Four mongooses have been removed and it is hoped to remove the remaining three to five during June/July.

(10) Critical Urban Bird Areas (CUBAs) (Tony Williams).

\* Refer to Appendix 3 - Motivation for Establishment of Critical Bird Areas.

Tony motivates for the establishment of CUBAs. CUBAs are areas too small for IBA status but locally invaluable for birds, e.g. Intaka Island, Dick Dent, Bank Cormorant boulders at Clifton, the roost island in Maynardville Park, Lesser Kestrel roost trees, many sewage works, etc. Bird clubs would list localities they consider particularly important for birds within their local urban areas. Given consensus on their importance, these should be rated by BLSA as CRITICAL URBAN BIRD AREAS (CUBAs). Tony's motivation proposes how bird clubs can become involved, initial protocols and the benefits that would be derived by designating areas as CUBAs.

- Vernon will take the proposal to Council.

**Action: Vernon Head.**

(11) Protea farms and Sugarbirds (Brian Dennis). It has come to the notice of SWB that Lourensford Farms are planning to plant commercial quantities of proteas on their farm. Some years ago, it was claimed that some producers were poisoning their blooms to kill the Sugarbirds because the birds' claws and beaks marked the blooms and reduced their market value. The practice was condemned as being totally unacceptable. The Sugarbird friendly deterrent is to use protective bags over the blooms. These blooms carried a "Sugarbird friendly" label for overseas marketing.

## **7. OVERBERG UPDATE** (Anton Odendal).

(1) Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust (Anton Odendal). An appeal was made for donations to the OLCCT for the development of a Visitor and Resource Centre on land designated for conservation of highly threatened Lowland renosterveld in the Overberg. This piece of 500ha of renosterveld near the De Hoop Nature Reserve forms part of the largest contiguous piece of Lowland renosterveld left in the world. WCBF donated R2, 000. The overall target of R250, 000 was reached.

(2) Cape Whale Coast Hope Spot. Five "Hope Spots" have been identified to date: the Aliwal Shoal and Algoa Bay, Nature's Valley, Plettenberg Bay, Knysna and associated coastline and the Overstrand around and near Hermanus (Whale Coast). The application is in to have the latter declared as a "Hope Spot".

(3) Website Developments.

(a) Birdfinder webpage for the Cape Town Metro: The webpage commissioned by WESGRO for the promotion of birding tourism in the Cape metro and environs is on target to be ready for the start of summer. The page will be incorporated on [www.westerncapebirding.co.za](http://www.westerncapebirding.co.za) and will probably be posted on the WESGRO and Cape Town Tourism websites. This will finally enable development of birding route descriptions for all regions of the province.

(b) Birdfinder webpage for Plettenberg Bay Region in progress.

(4) Marketing the Overberg. BirdLife Overberg has set up a fundraising committee. The idea is to create a weekend in the Overberg for people from up north. Club members would put up visitors for three nights and show them around the region.

(5) Stanford Bird Fair (Peter Hochfelden). The Bird Fair will not take place in October as has been the case in the past. The plan is to create a Regional Bird Fair involving other clubs in the area - Stanford, Overberg, Hermanus. A working committee has been put together. We want to expand along the lines of the Sasol Bird Fair in Johannesburg with BLSA supporting. The vision is to replicate the Rutland Bird Fair in England and turn Stanford as a Regional Bird Fair into something significant. The target date is end February 2015.

## **8. PAARL BIRD SANCTUARY: Security Concerns** (Yvonne Weiss - Jo Hobbs reporting).

A serious incident took place at PBS in May when two Spanish doctors attending a conference at Stellenbosch visited PBS and were attacked at knife point by three teenagers. Their camera, binoculars, cell phone and a large amount of cash were stolen and one of the doctors was stabbed in the hand. The Drakenstein Municipality met to discuss the security situation. The meeting was attended by Ronald Brown, Senior Engineer for all the Waste Water Treatment Works, the Works Superintendent, the Station Commander of the Mbekweni Police, a Traffic Services official and two representatives of Securimed, the company which patrols the sanctuary at weekends. The minutes record:

Main problems: The extensive area of the sanctuary and the absence of security fencing to the east of the site (the railway line adjacent to the squatter area). Transnet is in the process of erecting a security fence but the shack dwellers have to be relocated before it can be completed and this is proving a problem.

Immediate Interventions:

- The Drakenstein Municipal Law Enforcement will provide one officer during the week and at weekends if required.

- Securimed will appoint an additional security officer and equip him with a bicycle and two-way radio.
- SAPS will continue to patrol the area.
- The works staff will conduct random vehicle inspections.
- An information leaflet will be given to visitors.

Bird hides: The two hides which have been vandalised and repaired on more than one occasion will not be rebuilt at this stage. Instead, the Drakenstein Municipality will construct parking areas at suitable points where visitors can view the birds in safety from their cars.

Comments;

- (AO): PBS is off the birding website until the security situation improves.
- (TW): Get locals involved like at Strandfontein; have Xhosa speaking people talk to the community.
- (JH): The suggestion has been made in the past but this is a poor squatter community not open to this sort of engagement.

### **9. SABAP2 UPDATE** (Peter Nupen).

Nationally, 1,423 observers have participated in the SABAP2 project to date. The total number of Full Protocol Cards (FPCs) stands at 105,563, up by 5,825 FPCs since reporting to this meeting in February. Based on the last 120 days, the record shows that on average 49 FPCs are being submitted daily which is a good indicator of how vibrant SABAP2 remains.

Pentad FPC coverage of the SABAP2 region stands at 13,071 pentads, an increase of 111 new pentads since the February meeting and representing 75.48% (up from 73.28%) coverage of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Three out of four possible pentads have now been assessed throughout this entire land mass - a remarkable achievement.

In the Western Cape, atlasing continues full steam with 895 FPCs added to the database since February. Percentage coverage of the province stands at 86.0%. Very nearly nine out of every ten pentads have at least one FPC. In summary, in the Western Cape of the 1,837 pentads, 1,580 have at least one FPC (86%), 1,247 have at least two (67.9%) and 573 have seven or more (31.2%). This is an area more than twice the size of the Gauteng province and club chairpersons present were asked to congratulate participating members on the success of this Citizen Science Project.

### **10. BIRDLIFE South Africa** (Vernon Head).

(1) Memorial Medal Award winners 2014.

- Gill Memorial Medal: Recognises outstanding lifetime contribution to ornithology. The 2014 recipient of this prestigious award was Prof. Adrian Craig.
  - Austin Roberts Memorial Medal: Regarded as equal to the Gill. The award honours people who have made a significant contribution to conservation. The inaugural award went to Dr. John Ledger.
- Note: An "in memoriam" award is in plan for Phil Hockey.

(2) Nominations for 2015 Gill and Austin Roberts Memorial Medals: BirdLife members were invited to put forward nominations. These should be sent to Pam Barrett.

(3) Flock 2015. It has been decided that it is too soon for a second "Flock at Sea" event. We would want to have more influence on the route. Will consider for 2017. Flock 2015 will be in Johannesburg at the end of March - "Flock in Josi".

(4) SOS Festival 2014. Covered in section 2 above. The American Birding Association will be sending 100 birders.

(5) Incoming Membership Policy. Constitutional changes are required before the revised BirdLife South Africa structure and membership options can be implemented. The revised constitution will go to Council in August and will then be ratified at a Special General Meeting currently scheduled for September. Thereafter, the bird clubs must revise their constitutions to fall in line with the changes.

(6) New BirdLife South Africa Office. The new office, to be named Isdell House, will be located in Dunkeld West, Johannesburg. The background to the move is that growth of the organisation necessitates additional office and parking space. Considerations for choice of location were security, profile and accessibility. The office will be close to the Gautrain train station and to where most meetings take place. Funding, largely from the Isdells, has been provided specifically for the purpose.

### **11. NAMAQUA BIRD CLUB.**

WCBF is happy to welcome Samantha Willemse, chairperson of the newly formed Namaqua Bird Club based at Vanrijnsdorp. The club will serve an 80km range from Vanrijnsdorp and covers the Olifants River estuary and mouth as well as the sea to the west, the Kobee which is renosterveld to the north, the Moskam mountains with fynbos to the east and the general Vanrijnsdorp area, with access also to the Knersvlakte. Clubs are welcome to contact Samantha regarding visits and outings to the area. Support of the new club by way of talks/presentations will be appreciated. Contact details are: e-mail [japiewillemse@telkomsa.net](mailto:japiewillemse@telkomsa.net) cell 072 471 4083, tel. 027 219 1202.

### **12. PROPOSED WCBF CONFERENCE IN GARDEN ROUTE (2015) (Bill Naude).**

Bill checked several sites as possible venues for a conference. Ebb & Flow -Wilderness was found to be the best option with adequate accommodation, a conference facility and the best rates. Brian Vanderwalt can secure 15% discount as a tour operator and offered to make the bookings. Agreed we will proceed. Proposed date: September 2015 (bookings must be made a year ahead).

### **13. GENERAL**

(1) Kirstenbosch Walks (Anne Gray). During 2013, CBC and TBC conducted monthly bird walks in Kirstenbosch as the birding community's contribution to Botsoc's/Kirstenbosch's Centenary Year. At Botsoc's request, these walks are on-going.

(2) SANCCOB Tours (Margaret Roestorf): SANCCOB offers specialist tours to the public Monday to Friday at 11am and 3pm and on every second Saturday at 10am, 12 noon and 3pm. School tours daily. Penguin birthday parties on or off site. Specialist talks by arrangement. Contact details for reservations and enquiries are: Tel. 021 557 6155, e-mail [education@sanccob.co.za](mailto:education@sanccob.co.za)

(3) Princess Vlei (Grassy Park). (Anne Gray). Princess Vlei is situated in the Lotus River area of the Cape Flats. It is a large green area alongside a sizeable vlei and is used by the local community for recreation, fishing, religious events and other gatherings. Princess Vlei has been under threat by developers for the past 15 years. Concerned citizens formed the Princess Vlei Forum to do battle with the City of Cape Town over a newly proposed development of a shopping centre on the site. On 22 March, the City announced that the shopping centre plans had been dropped and Princess Vlei would be retained and further developed as a recreational area. AG has been instrumental in supporting environmental education events at the vlei for school children, introducing birds through talks and walks. (Note: The Princess Vlei Forum has launched a campaign "Imagine Princess Vlei" and this has been accepted by the City as an official World Design Capital 2014 project.)

**NEXT MEETING: Saturday, 27 September 2014, at Tygerberg Nature Reserve, Welgemoed.**