

# *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 the Environmental Centre, Intaka Island, Century City.  
Saturday, 06 June 2015

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

## ***Present***

**Cape Bird Club:** Vernon Head, Sylvia Ledgard, Dave Whitelaw, Joan Ackroyd.

**Tygerberg Bird Club:** Brian Vanderwalt.

**BirdLife Worcester:** Charl Oettle.

**Namaqualand Bird Club:** Salome Willemse.

**West Coast Bird Club:** Keith Harrison, Colin de Kock.

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

**Walker Bay Bird Fair Committee:** Peter Hochfelden.

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

**SABAP2:** Peter Nupen.

**Visitor:** Tony Williams (Ornithologist).

## ***Apologies***

Dale Wright (BLSA), Nigel Stainforth (BLSA), Brigid Crewe, Anton Odendal, Chris Cheetham, Kobus Graaff, Craig Holmes, Yvonne Weiss, Stephen van der Spuy (SANCCOB).

**Welcome extended to first-time attendees:** Bryan Butler (incoming chairman of Somerset West Bird Club) and Charl Oettle (representing BirdLife Worcester).

## **1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting (7/2/2015). Minutes agreed without amendment.

**2. STATUS OF WESTERN CAPE IBAs and REVISED IBA DIRECTORY** (Dale Wright):. In view of Dale's absence, this report will be carried over to the Forum meeting in September.

Notes:

- The IBA programme has been completed.
- TW will be proposing Voelvllei as a new IBA. See Wind farm concerns.
- Regional IBA Committee: With the completion of the IBA project, the question was raised as to whether the committee is now defunct? (KS) The IBA committee as originally convened fell away with Dale's appointment but continued to support Dale by commenting on reports which he sent to individual members for specific IBAs. (DW) Now that the assessments process is finished, how does Dale view the committee? Does he need further support? SW would like to be part of that committee for Olifants River.

**Action:** Dale to comment.

**3. WESTERN CAPE REGIONAL CONSERVATION REPORT** (Dale Wright). The report was not presented at the meeting but was forwarded subsequently by Dale to Forum members. In summary, the report covers:

**(1) IBA Directory and Status Report.**

- IBA Programme successfully completed for the entire national IBA Network.
- Publication in progress of the new IBA Directory for South Africa.
- In conjunction with the Directory, the data from IBA Assessments to be used to publish the first ever IBA Status Report, which will provide a baseline for future IBA Status and Trend Reports.
- The major IBA revisions for the Western Cape include:
- The expansion of the Tsitsikamma IBA to include areas around Plettenberg Bay.
- The creation of the Agulhas Plain (Heuningness Estuary IBA), incorporating the previous Heuningness Estuary and Overstrand IBAs.
- The revision and renaming of the Botrivier IBA to the Cape Whale Coast which now includes Stony Point Penguin Colony.

**(2) Protected Area Expansion at Western Cape IBAs.**

Verlorenvlei and Moutonshoek:

- Formal MOUs with CapeNature signed by 11 landowners within the Moutonshoek Valley, thus opening the way for the legal process which will lead to the eventual proclamation of a Protected Environment in the headwaters of the Verlorenvlei Estuary.
- “Landowner Needs Analysis” conducted for all landowners surrounding the Verlorenvlei Estuary which will be analysed to determine the next steps for protection of the estuary.
- A “Biodiversity Stewardship Financial Sustainability” report commissioned by BLSA to provide insight into how these protected areas can achieve long-term sustainability.

Estuary Conservation Project: Designed to test the types of protection that can be used in the complex environment of estuaries. Interviews have been completed for the employment of a project manager. The project will focus initially on protected area expansion at the Berg River Estuary and Klein River Estuary. Success in these two projects will lead to all 23 of the Western Cape IBAs enjoying some degree of formal conservation protection.

**(3) Waterbird Habitat and Water Quality Project:** Developed in partnership with NCC Environmental Services for the rehabilitation of waterbird habitat on farm dams. The project was launched at Vergenoegd Wine Estate on 10 June 2015. A number of partner farms have come on board for pilot phase testing of a floating island design and impacts of waterbirds on water quality.

**(4) False Bay Nature Reserve.**

- MoU between BirdLife South Africa, the City of Cape Town and the Cape Bird Club has been extended for a further two years from April 2015. Corporate fundraising efforts continue for skills development and education projects.
- Birdathon Fun Walk 2015: The third annual event attracted 800 participants, having doubled in attendance each year since its inception. Melomed Private Hospitals was a major sponsor covering the costs of the event. Other sponsors were the Spar Group and John Dory.
- Dale co-supervised a UCT MSC student who examined community perceptions of visitors to the FBNR. The outcomes of his research will be communicated with the reserve management to further enhance the site for visitors. Dale and Dave Whitelaw are currently assisting a BTech student from CPUT who is analysing the long-term bird count data from Strandfontein Birding Area.

**(5) Fynbos Endemic Birds Research Project.** Dale continues to support Dr. Alan Lee and other partners in the long-term research project regarding climate change impacts on the Fynbos endemic bird species. Much of this research has now been completed and the outcomes can contribute to management recommendations in reserves hosting these species. Initial surveys in regard to the status, habitat preferences and estimated population density of the endangered Hottentot Buttonquail will be undertaken by Dale and Alan in November and December. Fund raising initiatives are planned to implement these surveys.

#### **(6) Additional Regional Projects.**

- The Overberg Fauna and Flora booklet, soon to be published.
- Involvement on multiple steering committees and forums.
- Comment on relevant EIAs.
- Final stages of developing an IBA Prioritisation tool which will be used nationally.
- Dale has received a financial award to attend the International Congress of Conservation Biology in Montpellier, France, from 2nd to 7th August.

#### **4. BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA REGIONAL FORUMS - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The new constitution of BirdLife South Africa provides for representation of the Regional Forums on the Executive Board of BirdLife South Africa. Three representatives will be appointed, currently one from each of the three Regional Forums, being those of the Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and Northern Region.

The Terms of Reference for the Regional Forums was forwarded earlier to Forum members for consideration at this meeting. In accordance with clause 13.5 of the new constitution, "each Regional Forum is required to prepare a set of rules covering, inter alia, the objectives and obligations of the Forum, the rights of its member clubs and voting procedures", i.e. how the Forum wants to operate. In addition, an action plan and budget for the year must be provided against which BLSA will provide funding.

Note: CdK questioned the designation of WCBF as a Forum of BirdLife South Africa. VH responded that WCBF, by virtue of its association and interaction with BirdLife South Africa, has long been regarded as the Western Cape Regional Forum of BirdLife South Africa, representing the bird clubs of the region. Its status as such has now been formalised in the Organisational Structure of BirdLife South Africa. As such, WCBF along with the Regional Forums of Kwazulu-Natal and Northern Region constitute an integral component of the decision making body of the organisation, representing the interests of the region.

#### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL/CONSERVATION CONCERNS.**

##### **WIND ENERGY FARMS.**

(1) Voelvllei (TW). A new WEF is being proposed 10km. away from Voelvllei with +/-100 turbines in a bird movement path. Birds fly at night in small flocks. Cape Shelduck and Blue Cranes use the route. (PN) in surveys done, 800 Egyptian Geese were counted flying in at night and going out to the wheat fields in the day. TW has proposed to the developer VENTURA that a precautionary measure would be to shut the turbines down at night, but the fact is that they should not be there at all. BvdW's recommendation to consultants Savannah is that the area be classified as no-go for a WEF - thousands of birds will be killed. If Voelvllei can be declared as an IBA, it will secure the area. It is suggested that Sam Ralston-Paton be asked to check the recommendations and provide a report.

**Action:** Sam Ralston-Paton.

(2) Vredenburg (KH). The Afrisam application for expansion of the WEF to 47 turbines is of major concern. This was covered in WCBF Minutes 7 Feb. 2015 7(1), highlighting species found in the area including breeding Blue Cranes and Secretary Birds. Dale has done a survey. KH urges atlasers to

provide data from the pentad (3245\_1755). PN questioned whether there was a pre-construction monitoring report from the developer. The results of this are much more important than atlas data. KH has concerns regarding the abilities of some of the people being used by EIA specialists to carry out surveys.

(3) Pre-Construction Monitoring. There have been instances where developers have proceeded with construction before monitoring data was in. Gouda is a case in point.

(4) Post-Construction Monitoring. (BvdW). Who is looking at this? What is the mechanism for follow-up? (TW) Bird kills are being monitored at De Mond, Humansdorp, Cape St. Francis and Jeffreys' Bay. Reporting is done via "My Bird Patch" to Sam.

(5) Environmental Development Framework for Saldahna Bay District (KH). This is a statutory document in final draft that developers should read before buying land for development or commencing an EIA. It covers Saldahna Bay Municipality, farms and towns on both sides of the Berg River Estuary and the coastal strip west of the coastal road, including Dwarskersbos, and the salt marshes. This document is the first to refer to the IBAs of Langebaan and Lower Berg River with maps. It stipulates that bird flyways should be found and protected. A project for Bird Clubs?

## **WEST COAST ISSUES**

(1) Berg River (KH).

- Alien clearance of the riparian zone of the south bank at Kersefontein for 10kms resulted in the removal of 3,300 blue gums, which have been chipped for a bio-glass facility in Paarl and for export to China.
- Water hyacinth is being controlled by the Marine Ranger using spraying
- BLSA is funding the position of a River Manager.
- A meeting with SA-Ramsar is being planned. Landowners must first meet to agree on what they expect.
- Bird Hides: (a) De Plaat. A person licensed to remove asbestos is being sought. The hide and jetty are dangerous and the River Manager will have it removed. (b) Riviera. The board walk is dangerous. The tourism office will contact the Municipality.
- Pollution. (a) At Pelican Park, a lorry servicing facility has ignored a notice to quit and oil is seeping into the river. (b) Fish factory - fat is entering the river from the fishmeal plant.

(2) Saldahna Bay (KH).

- Saldahna Bay Forum. The Saldahna Bay Municipality has suspended the Forum because the project is was set up for has been completed. This leaves no forum to which collectively environmental problems can be taken; individual stakeholders must form their own forums as a requisite to obtaining their Atmospheric Emission Licence. NGOs, CWCBR and Saldahna Water Quality Trust will correspond with the Provincial DEA on their concern.
- Oil Handling Facility. Highly endangered Crowned Cormorants are nesting and fouling the facility. This is a serious problem and must be resolved. Bruce Dyer (Oceans & Coasts) recommends relocating the birds back to Marcus Island. The island is under Parks Board control and the jetty under CapeNature. The jetty owner, Jetty Transnet National Port Terminal Authority, leases out the facility. The responsibility is the landowner's. The Park Manager has been informed that relocation may be required. The construction of breeding platforms on Marcus Island, as used by CapeNature at Lamberts Bay, may be the solution. Christina Hagan is handling the project for BLSA.
- Oil Rig and Servicing Berth. New quay and servicing berth to be built. Dredging is likely to result in siltration up into the lagoon and reduction of the feeding area for small migrant waders.

### (3) West Coast National Park (KH)

- Seeberg Hide: The basic EIA has been completed and passed to Park management. Only stamping of the document is now required.
- Reeds at Abrahamskraal: Removal of the reeds is an Honorary Rangers' project. The Park Manager has their acknowledgement and must now give the go ahead.

**Comment** (BvdW): Care must be taken to avoid the natural spring when digging out the reeds.

### (4) Power Station at Vredenburg (CdK).

A large thermal power station (1400 megawatt) is planned for Vredenburg. The intention is to go to diesel if gas is not available - a potential problem.

### (5) Salmon Farm (TW).

The salmon farm between Saldahna and Malgas Island has gone ahead. TW had recommended that it should not. (KH) The farm is running but at a lower number of fish than they must have a licence for. Another 85 hectares for salmon farming is proposed. TW will follow up with Dale.

**Action:** Tony Williams.

## 6. PENINSULA FIRE (Dave Whitelaw)

In the wake of the wide-spread fire in the South Peninsula, the ADU has set up a project to monitor bird abundance and diversity in burned and unburned areas in and around the mountains. The objective is to get an idea of how such fires affect fynbos birds. The project is being co-ordinated by Sally Hofmeyer and will be conducted by a group of ornithologists and amateur birders from UCT, SANBI and the University of the Western Cape.

**7. CUBAS PROJECT (Critical Urban Bird Areas)** (Dave Whitelaw). Dave reported on early thinking regarding the proposed CUBAs project. Input has been sought from Doug Harebottle as this is a project that could possibly feed into MyBirdPatch. The objective would be to increase people's awareness of birds in urban and suburban environments outside of designated IBAs and set up a monitoring process. It has been suggested that the concept could be broadened to that of Biodiversity and not just Birds (i.e. Urban Biodiversity Areas). In general, it is felt that CUBAs have the potential to add something to urban conservation but a structure and framework with working criteria and recording processes need to be developed. The question is whether it is implementable. Members of Bird Clubs and Friends groups would need to get involved. Thinking is at the conceptual stage and when the project is more clearly defined and structured, a presentation will be made to the Forum.

**Action:** Dave Whitelaw

## 8. SABAP2 (Peter Nupen)

(1) Murraysburg Atlas Expedition. Peter organised and led the Murraysburg Atlas Expedition Autumn Attack over back to back long weekends from 25 April to 3 May 2015. Twelve seasoned and dedicated atlasers took part in this epic expedition. The area tackled was a poorly atlased part of South Africa where the three provinces of the Western, Northern and Eastern Cape meet in the Great Karoo. It provided an opportunity for a concerted attack on many unatlased pentads in that part of South Africa. In addition, Full Protocol Cards (FPCs) were added to those pentads that had been atlased only once or twice over the last eight years.

- 70 FPCs were submitted during the expedition.
- 2,531 records were logged.
- 191 sightings of different species were recorded. Had the migrants been around, the list could possibly have reached over 200 (surely a birding "hot spot").

A combination of 28 Out of Range submissions (ORFS) and 12 Regional Rarity approval documents were generated by the SABAP2 database, supplying important new information to the area.

Overall, an incredible amount of valuable data was added to the SABAP2 project by the Murraysburg-Graaff Reinet-Aberdeen Expedition team members.

(2) Update on Statistics. Nationally across South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho, of the 17,318 pentads 14,391 have at least one atlas card, giving 83.1% coverage. Four out of every five pentads have at least one FPC, providing valuable data to the project on the occurrence of wild birds.

In the Western Cape, of the 1,836 pentads, 1,619 have at least one FPC submitted for each atlas square, giving coverage of 88.13% of the region - an outstanding achievement. Importantly, 1,295 pentads have at least two FPCs equating to 70.5% coverage, and 942 pentads have four or more FPCs equating to 51.3% coverage. Four cards is the minimum number that allows for meaningful statistical analysis to be applied, so over half of the Western Cape is available for research analysis. Another worthwhile figure is that 615 pentads in the Western Cape - an area more than twice the size of Gauteng - have seven or more FPCs. To date, 25,317 atlas cards have been submitted in the Western Cape. With a view to illustrating how successful atlasing in the Western Cape has been, Kwazulu Natal with 18,799 atlas cards comes closest to this achievement.

**Note:** Peter Nupen steps down as SABAP2 Co-ordinator for the Western Cape.

- Peter writes: I have held this position for the last seven years and I feel a younger and more enthusiastic person needs to take over the post. There is still a great deal of work that needs to be accomplished. Workshops to inform people on how to interrogate the updated SABAP2 website need to be held. More expeditions to poorly atlased areas in the Western Cape need to be planned. I have had a lot of fun running SABAP2 workshops, organising large atlasing expeditions and meeting and helping many birders in the intricacies of the SABAP2 protocols. I have been part of the Western Cape Birding Forum since its inception and I wish to thank the organisation for allowing me to represent SABAP2 at their quarterly meetings. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and wish this very important birding forum all the very best in the future.
- VH thanked Peter on behalf of all the bird clubs for his considerable input and enthusiasm both as the SABAP2 co-ordinator and participation in WCBF.

**Important:** A representative from the ADU is needed on the Forum.

## **9. OVERBERG UPDATE** (Notes from a report submitted by Anton Odendal).

(1) Birdfinder Web Pages. A campaign was run over the Easter holiday period to market the three established regions as top bird-watching destinations. The Cape Town, Plett and Overstrand webpages were shared on a variety of internet forums, as was done during December. More than 9,000 views were achieved within two weeks on Facebook alone. This was achieved without boosting as no budget is available for the purpose. Enquiries on birding in the province continue to grow steadily, particularly from international birders, and itineraries for visiting birders are being developed regularly.

(2) Feature on Bird-Watching Destinations. Birdfinder has been running a regular weekly feature since the beginning of the year on top bird-watching destinations in the province. This has attracted an average of 219 views per week on Facebook.

(3) Incoming Birdfinder Web Pages. Web pages are being developed for Theewaterskloof, Witzenberg and Swellendam local municipal regions. Provisional target dates for completion are 31 June, 30 July and 30 August, respectively. The work at Swellendam will result in the training of four guides to become involved in birds and birding and the development of birding weekends. The three regions that will be addressed after this are Bergrivier, George and Cape Agulhas.

(4) Launch of African Penguin & Seabirds Sanctuary (APSS) at Gansbaai. Congratulations are due to the staff of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust for this major achievement. It will make a meaningful contribution to the conservation and rehabilitation of penguins and seabirds along the Overberg coastline.

(5) Hottentot Buttonquail Project (PH). (Refer to 3(5) above.). A project is being launched to determine the status of the Endangered Hottentot Buttonquail in the Western Cape. The Fitz is looking at this. Funding is needed. BirdLife Overberg has raised R30,000 and TBC will be contributing funds from calendar sales. Will other bird clubs come to the party? (DW) More information and a formal proposal are needed. Dale Wright will be asked to bring this to the Forum meeting in September.

**Action:** Dale Wright.

## **10. EVENTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE:**

Walker Bay Bird Fair (Peter Hochfelden).

The first ever regional bird fair, a collaborative undertaking of the Hermanus and Stanford bird clubs, was held on the Stanford village green from 25 February-1 March, 2015. The organisers were especially pleased to host celebrity guest Tim Appleton MBE from the UK, whose presence contributed significantly to positive publicity for the event.

The event comprised many regular features, namely river and Dyer Island cruises, inland outings and a photographic exhibition and the line-up of top-class speakers was very well received with attendances way above anything experienced in previous years. New items added to the programme that proved popular were the bird ringing demonstration, a photographic workshop, a Raptor ID course and an entertaining bird quiz. The organisers were very fortunate to have been well supported by exhibitors and sponsors alike. Among the highlights was the Celebrity Fundraising Dinner hosted by Grootbos. The event closed with a braai for guest speakers, sponsors, celebrities and committee members, a fitting end to a very successful event.

It was gratifying that after a full year of hard work, the organising committee's efforts paid off and one of the main objectives was achieved, that of being able to make meaningful contributions to environmental causes. We will be making presentations to the African Penguin & Seabird Sanctuary at Gansbaai and the Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust, as well as being able to partly fund the environmental education programme in two schools.

It goes without saying that bird fairs of this nature are very expensive and require many hours of hard work. Sponsors that we won't have next time are Stretton's, Zeiss and Overstrand Municipality. The WBBF organising committee will have their work cut out raising sponsors for next year's event, which will be at Fernkloof Nature Reserve in Hermanus.

Future Vision: To turn the Walker Bay Bird Fair into a premier event in the Western Cape. The WBBF committee has been looking at a site on the edge of Klein River Estuary on land owned by the Municipality as a possible location for Bird Fairs in the future.

**Comments:** (VH) Encourage our bird clubs to schedule a weekend camp at the Bird Fair in February. The timing of the event will be the last week of February. Put it on the calendar of club events for members and families. (PN) Each club could take a particular initiative. (BB) Somerset West Bird Club as near neighbours is willing to offer support and help.

## **11. BIRDERS' CODE OF ETHICS**

A complaint was received by BirdLife South Africa from a member of the public regarding what she perceived to be unacceptable behaviour by birders in regard especially to the practice of bird ringing and the use of bird call play-backs in the field. While the writer has misconstrued certain aspects of birding, it is nevertheless appropriate to remind members of bird clubs of BLSA's "Birders' Code of Conduct".

(CdK): Is there a position on bird ringing? PN will get this from Dieter Oschadleus.

**Action:** Peter Nupen.

## **12. BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA** (Vernon Head)

(1) Implementation of Action Plan in terms of new BLSA Constitution. At the Annual General Meeting held on 21 March 2015, the members of BirdLife South Africa approved the new proposed Constitution which had been available to members for review in the weeks preceding the AGM. The new Constitution came into immediate effect. In terms of the Constitution, Bird clubs that elect to be Affiliate Members of BirdLife South Africa must take action as follows:

- Sign an Affiliate Agreement with BirdLife South Africa. This is being prepared and will be forwarded to bird clubs within the next few weeks.
- Existing bird club members may now decide whether they will remain full DIRECT members of BirdLife South Africa or become AFFILIATE members through their bird clubs. An annual affiliation fee of R15 will be payable by Affiliate members.
- Bird clubs must bring their constitutions into line with the new BirdLife South Africa Constitution.

(2) BirdLife South Africa Appointments.

**President:** Dr. Phoebe Barnard.

### **Executive Board:**

- **Chairman:** Roger Wanless
- **CEO:** Mark Anderson
- **Treasurer:** Mike McCullough
- **Forum representatives:** Philip Calinikos (*Northern Region*), Roy Cowgill (*KZN*), Vernon Head (*Western Cape*) Co-opted member: David Chamberlain.

### **Governance Committee:**

- Chairman: Nigel Stainforth
- 4 Members to be appointed by an Electoral College.

(3) BirdLife National Trust. The Trust was formally registered by the Master of the South Gauteng High Court. Through legacies and donations to the Trust, BirdLife South Africa intends raising and securing funds for the protection and preservation of birds and their habitats in South Africa. Trustees are David Lawrence (chairman), Roger Wanless, Mike McCullough, Michael Spencer and Nigel Stainforth, bringing together a combination of ornithological, financial and legal skills.

The Trust has purchased property, namely Isdell House, for which BLSA received major sponsorship from Neville and Pamela Isdell.

Enquiries regarding the Trust can be directed to BLSA secretary **Pamela**

**Barrett** [secretary@birdlife.org.za](mailto:secretary@birdlife.org.za)

(4) New BLSA Headquarters - Isdell House. BirdLife South Africa will be moving in July to its new headquarters at 17, Hume Street, Dunkeld West. In addition to important sponsorships received for Isdell House and its facilities, a donation was made by Gaynor Rupert to build a Conservation Wing at the back of the main building, to be named after her father. The official launch will be in November. The occasion will present a great marketing opportunity for BirdLife South Africa. Invited guests will include dignitaries and local and international celebrities. The Isdells have provided a further R1/2-million for the launch. A full professional team has offered their services, including the landscaping of the gardens.

(5) DAWN Fellow of Environmental Education / Youth Membership. This will be a new Division of BirdLife South Africa, designed to talk to the youth of South Africa. The objective will be to raise funds to educate youth across communities, making use also of social media. The Scouts will be an initial target group to fast track the programme. A person is being sought to establish and manage the programme. Walton's is coming on board.

(6) Austin Roberts Memorial Medal Award. The award honours those who have made a significant contribution to bird conservation in South Africa. The 2015 award recipient was David Chamberlain for his commitment to the conservation of birds and his massive philanthropic donations that have enabled BirdLife South Africa to grow its conservation enterprises. His sponsorship enabled the publication of the first single field guide covering all of the approximately 2,200 bird species found in Africa, Birds of Africa South of the Sahara (Ian Sinclair and Peter Ryan), plus a complete revision and update of the book following changes in avian taxonomy, when at his expense birders were given the opportunity to exchange their first edition books for the second; first edition books were donated to fledgling bird guides in remote communities in Africa in order to promote avitourism.

Nominations for 2016 Austin Memorial and Gill Memorial Medal Awards (the latter in recognition of outstanding lifetime contribution to ornithology) should be sent to Pamela Barrett (secretary@birdlife.org.za) by Friday, 28 August 2015.

(7) "Flock" Events.

- Flock in Kruger 2016 (9-13 March). Flock in Kruger will be held at Skukuza in the Kruger National Park and will include a two-day LAB conference on 10 and 11 March 2016, co-hosted by BirdLife South Africa and the Percy Institute of African Ornithology. LAB will include an interactive series of lectures, presentations and discussions by ornithological scientists, researchers and conservationists.
- "Flock at Sea AGAIN" 2017 (24-28 April). Negotiations with MSC Cruises have resulted in a special 5-day cruise on board the MSC Sinfonia along the continental shelf from Cape Town and back again. Top seabird guides will be on board and the programme will include talks and lectures by some of the world's top seabird experts, including world authority on seabirds Peter Harrison. Bookings must be confirmed by 30 September 2015 for 680 cabins to enable BirdLife South Africa to secure the voyage exclusively for its members.

(8) Expedition to Antarctica and South Georgia-Cape to Cape (Nov. 2015). This is an expeditionary 21-day luxury cruise with Peter Harrison, which will head south as far as the pack ice. Experts from all over the world will be on board. It is fully booked.

(9) 2nd World Seabird Conference-"Seabirds: Global Ocean Sentinels" (26-30 October 2015). Venue: Cape Town International Conference Centre. The conference will be hosted by the World Seabird Union and the African Seabird Group of which BirdLife International's Global Seabird programme is a member. The Local Organising Committee will be headed up by Ross Wanless (BLSA) and the Scientific Programme Committee by Peter Ryan ((Fitz).

### **13. OTHER**

Paarl Bird Sanctuary. In Yvonne Weiss's absence, this report was not presented but arising from another mugging and robbery incident at PBS when birders were threatened at knife point, birders are asked to adhere to management's request to stay inside their vehicles or stay inside the fenced area.

**NEXT MEETING:** Saturday, 12 September 2015, at Ebb & Flow Resort, Wilderness.

**WCBF MEETINGS CALENDAR 2016**

- 6 February
- 4 June
- 3 September