



FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS
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MINUTES OF THE WESTERN CAPE BIRDING FORUM MEETING.

HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2016 AT THE TYGERBERG NATURE RESERVE.

Present:

A Odendal	Chairman
M Brown	BirdLife SA / BLP
S Krynauw	Treasurer / SWBC
C Malan	Secretary
K Shaw	CapeNature
B Crewe	TBC
D Whitelaw	CBC
Bryan Butler	SWBC
J Fincham	CBC & TBC (Paarl Waste Water)
J Hobbs	CBC (Paarl Waste Water)
C Crump	SWBC
P Beeton	CBC
T Williams	Independent / SANCOB
J Schlebusch	CBC
C de Kock	WCBC
S Ralston-Paton	BLSA
A O'Neale	TBC
H Thompson	TBC
R Gray	TBC
M Brown	BirdLife SA / BLP
K Harrison	WCBC

Apologies:

D Wright	BLSA
B vanderWalt	TBC
S Willemse	NBC
K Graaff	BLW
H Wurr	KBC
Michael Brooks	ADU
Pat Nurse	LBC

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and noted apologies forwarded. Kevin Shaw was congratulated on his Owl Award from BirdLife South Africa.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes (4 June 2016)

Minutes approved without any changes. The Chairman mentioned that the Operational Rules and Procedures have now been accepted by the Forum and approved by BirdLife South Africa's Board.

3. GUEST SPEAKERS:

3.1 Samantha Ralston-Paton, from BirdLife SA Birds and Renewal Energy Program presented an update of minimising the impact of renewable energy on birds in South Africa.

A summary of Samantha's presentation is available on page 1 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- Participants expressed their surprise with some of the bird species that are affected (flufftails) - Dave Whitelaw.
- Kevin Harrison raised the question of investigating flyways for birds.
- Subsequent correspondence from Samantha Ralston-Paton and Dale Wright of BLSA.

From Samantha to Keith

Dear Keith, I thought some more about the Saldana Flyway issue and I must admit I am not 100% clear on what it is you are proposing. Would you be able to email me a short summary outlining the problem statement, proposed strategy and objectives? If my understanding is correct, your concern relates to particular threats (e.g. wind turbines, power lines etc)? There are existing mechanisms to ensure that this is dealt with in the EIA process and we need to keep raising it as an issue to ensure that it is adequately assessed. In terms of future planning (IDZ, SEAs etc), again it would make sense for us (WCBF and BirdLife) to raise this the flyway as an issue and encourage further investigation through those processes. Getting a broader picture how the landscape is being used would be interesting and it could be useful. I am reminded of the great work Maggie Langlands and the Kromme Trust managed to get underway in St Francis Bay. While Bird Clubs may not have the expertise to do the studies, you do have the capacity to lobby stakeholders to co-operate and possibly fund a study, and maybe even fund conservation action on the ground (if that is an objective). I'd be happy to chat more about this sometime.

From Dale to Keith

Further to Sam's response below and after a discussion with her regarding your concerns; we have a few more ideas for consideration.

The first, and most important step is to determine the potential scale of this flyway, frequency of use, and species using it. We are unlikely to garner support for an academic research project anytime soon, and thus I would suggest active monitoring by a dedicated member of the West Coast Bird Club. Or perhaps by a team of members alternating at different times. The ideal would be to find a suitable vantage point and monitor this flyway once per week in the morning, and then on two evenings /nights either side of a full moon – to account for night time use of the flyway. I think this monitoring would be a great project for a keen local club member to undertake.

Then we need to understand that any new WEF in the area will be required to do both a radar study, and include night time monitoring – and this will inform any WEF placement, and the info gathered can be used in subsequent development application reviews.

We also need to ensure that all new powerlines are adequately marked to reduce collisions. This is achieved through commenting on the EIA process, and EWT is currently testing new bird scaring devices with LED lights to prevent night time collisions – and these can then be the standard mitigation measure. However I would suggest that another potential local club activity would be the monitoring of existing powerlines for carcasses, to determine potential collision rates, and which powerlines are most troublesome. This could be undertaken weekly or twice monthly, again by a keen local club member/s. Such information will be essential for improving mitigation and providing comments on future development applications.

Thus we have two main avenues to proceed with – local monitoring efforts undertaken at the flyway and on key powerlines by the West Coast Bird Club members, and input into EIA processes, as per current standards and protocol. Sam and I will continue to support on the EIA processes, but we simply do not have capacity to undertake the monitoring. If the monitoring follows a standard protocol, then this should be easily admissible as evidence for any development.

The Chairman expressed appreciation on behalf of the Forum to Samantha and Dale for the excellent work they are doing and the reports submitted.

3.2 Samantha Schroder, Project Manager, Verlorenvlei Protected Areas Project gave an overview of project progress.

A summary of Samantha's presentation is available on page 2 of the attachment describing reports.

3.3 Paarl Bird Sanctuary - John Fincham gave an overview of the combatting of crime and vandalism at the sanctuary.

A summary of John's presentation is available on page 2 of the attachment describing reports. Also refer to the conservation report by Jo Hobbs on page 6 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- Representatives of the Cape Bird Club proposed that the possibility of the appointment an Education Officer by the Forum to serve schools on a regional basis be investigated. After some discussion it was decided to appoint a sub-committee consisting of Mark Brown, Johan Schlebusch, Priscilla Beeton and Dave Whitelaw to investigate this matter. We need to ensure that this position is sustainable, i.e funding, etc.

4. CONSERVATION REPORTS

4.1 DALE WRIGHT, the Regional Conservation Manager for BirdLife South Africa could not attend the meeting, but submitted a comprehensive Progress Report
Dale's progress report is available on page 3 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- Dale's report includes correspondence from Patricia Zurita, Chief Executive Officer of BirdLife International on the Launch of the Key Biodiversity Areas Partnership. Refer to page 5 of the attachment describing reports.
- Also take note of a letter of appreciation from the staff, parents, learners and community of the Zeekoevlei Primary School. Refer to page 6 of the attachment describing reports.

4.2 Mark Brown, the regional representative on the Board of BirdLife South Africa discussed progress from Board meetings.

Mark Brown explained the workings of BLSA Board, and that BLSA consist of an Executive Board, which meets monthly - he represents the Western Cape.

The Board consists of:

Chairman	Roger Wanless
Treasurer	Tony Zoghby
CEO	Mark Anderson
Hon President	Prof Colleen Downs
Forum Representative (Norther Areas)	Philip Calinikos
Forum Representative (KZN)	Roy Cowgill
Forum Representative (WC)	Dr Mark Brown
Co-opted Members	Ismail Borat
	David Chamberlain
	Linda Hart
	Yvonne Pennington

Mark confirmed the following:

- More professional than ever before
- The love birds campaign will be launched shortly – new marketing campaign
- Membership slow
- Events being driven by Emma (flock, etc)
- Human Resource discussion
- Busy streamlining conservation aspects
- Affiliation agreements with BLSA – 30 have been signed already

Matters arising:

- Mark invited clubs to send him a mail should any club want to raise any issues.

5. FEEDBACK FROM CLUBS

5.1 Cape Bird Club

Priscilla Beeton's report on club activities is available on page 18 of the attachment describing reports.

Dave Whitelaw's conservation report on behalf of the Cape Bird Club is available on page 9 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- Local important bird areas – a strategy will be developed to get bird clubs and BirdLife South Africa involved in the process.
- House crows - City Council has no money to continue with the eradication campaign. Dave requested that all sightings of these birds be reported to him.

5.2 West Coast Bird Club conservation report.

Keith Harrison's conservation report on behalf of the West Coast Bird Club is available on page 7 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- The continued problems being experienced with the West Coast Bird Club's representation on the West Coast National Park Forum was discussed at length. A decision was taken that Anton will take this matter further with BirdLife South Africa. (Refer to item 3 under General).

5.3 BirdLife Overberg.

Anton's report on club activities is available on page 10 of the attachment describing reports.

Matters arising:

- Peter Hochfelden gave feedback on the Walker Bay Bird Fair – there will not be a Fair soon due to the current economic climate.
- The Chairman requested that the Forum should compile a consolidated list of guest speakers for monthly meetings to be used by all clubs.

Action: Carin Malan.

6. GENERAL.

6.1. Dates to be considered for Forum meetings during 2017. The following dates were agreed upon:

- 18 February
- 3 June
- 7 October – This meeting will be used for the Forum's bi-annual away weekend and it was proposed that a venue in the Witzenberg region be investigated. It was subsequently established that the proposed date falls within the school holidays making it very difficult to get reservations. It is proposed that the weekend be undertaken between 13 and 15 October. A proposal on a venue will be forwarded to Forum members soon.

Action: Elaine Odendal

6.2. Brian Vanderwalt requested in writing that the unresolved issue concerning renovations at the Seeberg hide in the West Coast National Park be addressed. A brief discussion followed and it was decided that Priscilla will take this matter up with Vernon Head.

Action: Priscilla Beeton

6.3. The continued problems being experienced with the West Coast Bird Club's representation on the the West Coast National Park Forum was discussed at length. Colin will draft a skeleton letter regarding this and Anton will forward this to Mark Brown and Mark Anderson at BirdLife South Africa.

Action: Colin de Kock and Anton Odendal

6.4. The Tygerberg Bird Club calendars 2017 will be available soon and Brigid will circulate detail to all clubs.

Action: Brigid Crewe

6.5. It was decided that the Forum should tap into the knowledge already developed at the Environmental Education Centre at Intaka Island. Anton will discuss this with their staff.

Action: Anton Odendal

7. WCBF FINANCES (Sakkie Krynauw)

The Treasurer presented the WCBF Financial report

Opening Balance	as on 14 May	R 29 652,59
EXPENSES :	Forum meeting 4 June 2016	
	Petrol claim	R 990,00
	Catering	R 815,00
	Farewell gifts (Vernon and Sylvia)	R 950,00
	TOTAL	R 2 755,00
INCOME :	Contribution from Lake side	R 34,00
	TOTAL	R 34,00
	balance	R -2 721,00
Final balance	as on 28 September	R 26 931,59

Matters arising:

- The Forum approved that the WCBF would be responsible for the cost of one flight per year for Dr Mark Brown to attend meetings.
- Two projects (Paarl and the proposed Environmental Education Officer) to put in budgets for the possible allocation of funds.

Action: John Fincham and Forum.

8. EVENTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

8.1 Walker Bay Bird Fair - Cancelled

8.2 BLO Golf Day 2016 - Cancelled

8.3 Seabirds Identification Course prior to Flock at Sea Again 2017 – Cape Bird Club. Details to follow.

Action: Priscilla Beeton.

9. NEXT MEETING

17 February 2017. Venue: Helderberg Nature Reserve, Somerset West. Hosting club: Somerset West Bird Club.

Lunch was enjoyed before the general discussion between club Chairpersons.

10. BIRD CLUB CHAIRMEN DISCUSSION CHAIRED BY BRIGID CREWE.

General issues discussed:

- It was decided that all conservation and club reports should in future be submitted two weeks before Forum meetings.

Tygerberg Bird Club:

- Good quality speakers at monthly meetings are essential
- Only a few members are always doing the work

Cape Bird Club:

- Requesting surveys regarding membership issues and the like.

BirdLife Overberg:

- Core group of people taking responsibility for the club.
- Flatbed management structure giving responsibility to more members.
- Short birding walks at Arabella estate very popular.
- Blue Whale Lodge near George – a good venue to consider for club camps.
- Birding Big day – Team Rockjumper to participate in the BirdLasser category.

Somerset West Bird Club:

- BirdLife South Africa affiliation – forwarded view to Mark Anderson and hopefully the club will come on board by the end of 2016.
- A visit to Eagle Encounters turned out to be a great outing.

West Coast Bird Club:

- BirdLasser day – no one started yet – agreement with Fossil Park.
- Newsletter excellent.
- Municipality is starting to contact WCNP for help, which is very positive!

10. Meeting ended at 13:40 and members of the Tygerberg Bird Club were thanked for hosting the meeting.