

Cape Parrot Newsletter

Cape Parrot Big Birding Day

The annual Cape Parrot Big Birding Day (CPBBD) is in its 18th year and will be on the 18 and 19th April 2015. This is a wonderful way to assist in a conservation effort and often gets volunteers out to places they would rarely visit. Each year a group of students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal assist in monitoring the forests around Ingeli in southern KZN. The forests there are typical of those where the Cape Parrots occur. The importance of the annual CPBBD is highlighted by firstly giving information on population trends and numbers, secondly, reporting on illegal hunting, cutting down of forests, and capture of parrots, and thirdly, it gives important distribution data for the Cape parrot in South Africa. See page 5 of this newsletter for more information on how to get involved with the Cape Parrot count.

Did you know?

South Africa's Cape parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*) is among the most endangered parrots on earth with less than one thousand adults remaining in the wild.

CONTENTS

Update on Cape Parrot Study	2
Fugivory Conference 2015	2
Fifteen years of Parrot Research	3
New International Parrot Research Group	3
Places to stay and see Cape Parrots	4
Contact persons for CPBBD April 2015	5
Map of main areas for CPBBD	6

Cape Parrot Counting Day 2015



Wanted
Volunteers to help count the endangered Cape Parrot in the wild

Sat April 18th (pm) & Sun April 19th (am)

Join us in our annual evening and morning Cape Parrot count to help save one of South Africa's most endangered birds

Contact: Prof Colleen T. Downs
School of Life Sciences,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg
Tel: 033-2605127/04 (w), 033-3860947 (h),
0829202026 Email: downs@ukzn.ac.za



CAPE PARROT (*Poicephalus robustus*)



Did you know?

The Cape Parrot has a very large beak used to crack all sorts of hard nuts and fruit kernels, especially those of African yellowwood trees.

Did you know?

Due to the destruction of indigenous forests, Cape parrots have replaced much of the yellowwood fruits that they used to rely on for most of their diet. They now feed on more exotic species such as the plums from Japan, pecans from the USA, acorns from England, wattle seeds from Australia, syringa fruits from India, and Jacaranda pods from South America.

Update on Cape Parrot Study

Riel Coetzer is currently studying the genetics of Cape Parrots (*Poicephalus robustus*) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, working under Dr. S. Willows-Munro, Prof. M.R. Perrin and Prof. C.T.Downs. His research has found evidence to support that the Cape Parrot should be viewed as a distinct species, namely *Poicephalus robustus*, distinct from *P. fuscicollis*, which comprises of two subspecies, namely the Grey-headed Parrot (*P. fuscicollis suahelicus*) and the Brown-necked Parrot (*P. fuscicollis fuscicollis*). He is making good progress and has several publications in the works.

Fugivory Conference 2015

The 6th International Frugivory and Seed Dispersal Symposium (FSD) and Workshop is being hosted in the Drakensberg, South Africa, from 21 June to 26 June 2015. This is the first time that this conference will be held in Africa and is a great opportunity for those interested in frugivory and seed dispersal both in Africa and internationally to meet and share ideas. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference and that it is not taxon specific will generate much “fruitful” discussion and future collaborative research.

The major themes for the FSD this year is: Searching for commonality in frugivory and seed dispersal: and merging community ecological dynamics with phylogeny across different biomes. The FSD boasts a range on international Plenary speakers, as well as a variety of proposed symposia.

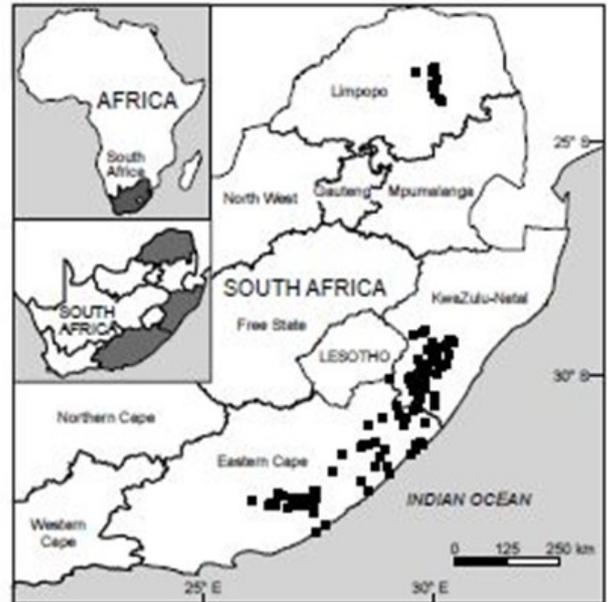
For more information please visit:

www.fsd2015.ukzn.ac.za



Fifteen years of Parrot Days Ms

The Cape Parrot Big Birding day started in 1998 as a national census to determine population estimates. Volunteers assisted each year in monitoring and counting the Cape Parrot in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, in both indigenous forests and areas where Cape Parrots were known to feed. Fifteen years of parrot survey data have been analysed by Professor Colleen Downs, Morgan Pfeiffer and Dr. Lorinda Hart and the findings have recently been published in the scientific journal *Ostrich*. They found that in all years, with the exception of 2009, less than 1 600 Cape Parrots were recorded in the wild. The census data showed a slight increase in Cape Parrots, although this may be largely explained by an increase in coverage of suitable habitat and stabilisation in the population since 2005. The picture on the right is an updated distribution map for the Cape Parrot based on fifteen years of census data. Their distribution remains largely unchanged from that presented in the 1970s. This study highlighted the value of public participation in monitoring an endangered species and the need to conserve the forests where these parrots occur, particularly because of their nomadic feeding behaviour. The full version of this paper may be downloaded via the Cape Parrot Working Group website (<http://lifesciences.ukzn.ac.za/research/Research-Initiatives/cpwg.aspx>).



Distribution of Cape Parrots in South Africa based on observations from the 1998–2012 Cape Parrot Big Birding Day and incidental observations during this period.



New International Parrot Research Group

A Research Coordination Committee (RCC) on parrots was recently formed under the International Ornithologists' Union shortly after the 26th International Ornithological Congress that was held in Tokyo Japan in August last year. The group has 247 members from all over the world with regional coordinators for five principal regions, namely Africa, Australasia, Caribbean, Continental Neotropics, and extra-Tropical. The RCC on Parrots aims to promote parrot research, establish research priorities with particular attention to regional conservation, as well as identify and form solutions to barriers to effective research and conservation of parrots.

Places to stay and see Cape Parrots

Self catering cottage called "Nibelheim" in Hogsback

Parrots in the garden on most days when the apple trees are fruiting.

Contact:

Graham & Michele Russell

Phone: 0459621084 or 0823746583

Email: gandm@procomp.co.za

Website: www.nibelheim.co.za

In the Amatole region there are a number of B&Bs in Stutterheim and Hogsback and Shire

Eco Lodge on the forest edge run by Rob Scott is recommended

Website: www.shire.co.za

Creighton KwaZulu-Natal, the guest house run by Malcolm and Gail Gemmell is recommended. Malcolm has been a stalwart in organising and co-ordinating the CPBBB in the greater Creighton area and runs Button birding

Website: www.buttonbirding.com

KZN Bulwer - Hillside Lodge are offering a discount of up to fifty percent, depending on numbers in the group for CPBBB.

The cape parrot is present almost every day and can be viewed from the chairs on the veranda.

Website: www.hillsidelodge-bulwer.com

In Bulwer KwaZulu-Natal, there is the excellent Marutswa Board Walk close to the village.

Website: www.treeroutes.co.za/project-marutswa-forestboardwalk-bulwer

There are bird guides who know the parrots and other forest specials. There are several B&Bs in Bulwer. In addition the nearby Ashtonvale Guest Farm, run by Carol and Russell Hill who have co-ordinated the CPBBB in the Bulwer area the past 14 years, is also recommended.

Website: www.ashtonvaleguestfarm.co.za

Self catering cottage called "Owl cottage" that sleeps 6 right in the Kloof at Haenertsburg, A.44.2 on R71 Magoebaskloof

Flocks of 30+ Cape Parrots feeding on pecans especially in February.

Contact: Phil And Tig Warne

Phone: 082 853 9950

Website www.owlcottage.co.za

Wild Coast Drifters has 5 little basic lodges along the Wild Coast between Mkambati and Port St Johns. They are at Msikaba, Port Grosvenor, Luphatana, Manteku and Ntafufu.

All have extensive indigenous forests around them and Cape Parrots sighted at all sites from time to time. Self catering.

Bookings can be made through Belinda@drifters.co.za

Khululeka Retreat at the Ntafufu River mouth on the Wild Coast

Contact:

Armin von Lengeling

Phone: 0721943644

Email: stay@khululeka.co.za

Website: www.khululeka.co.za

Granny Mouse House in Hogsback

Contact:

Ingrid

Phone: 0459621259 or 0832611144

Email: ingj@iafrica.com

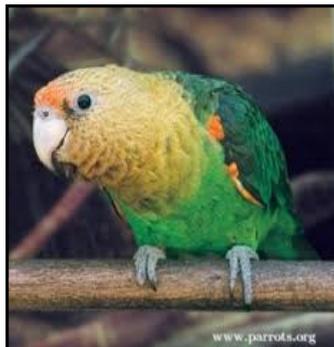
Website: <http://www.grannymousehouse.co.za>

Ingeli Forest Lodge is nestled below the Ingeli Mountain range and surrounded by breath taking indigenous forests

Contact: Clinton Armour

Phone: 0395530600

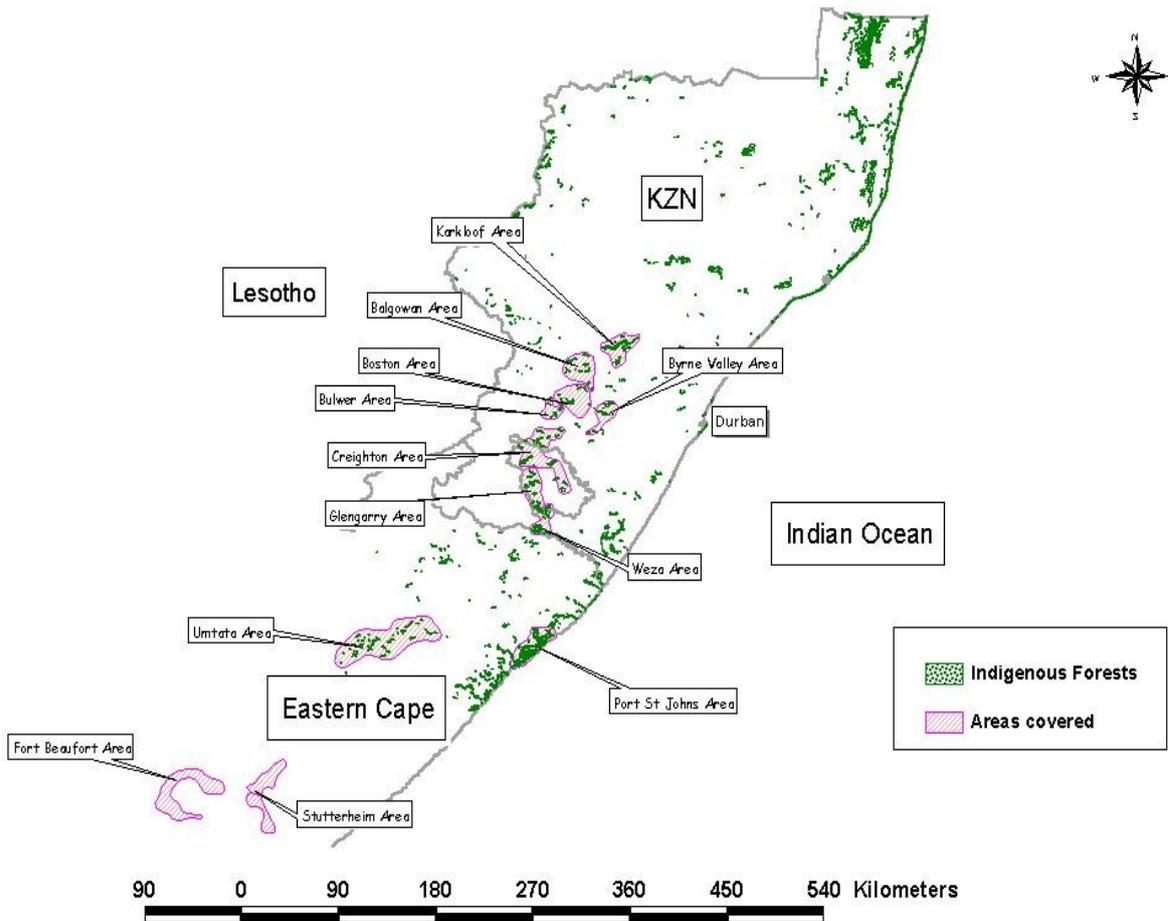
Website: www.ingeliforestlodge.com



Contact persons for Cape Parrot Big Birding Day April 2015

(See next page for map)

Area	Name	Tel	Email
Overall co-ordinator	Colleen Downs	033 260 5127; 0829202026	downs@ukzn.ac.za
Karkloof	John and Jenny Robinson	033-5029090/ 082-4433805	tomrob@mweb.co.za
Midlands conservancies: Dargle/ Nottingham Rd/ Balgowan	Sally Cummings Nikki Brighton	033 330 7175; 072 119 4253	sally.j.cumming@gmail.com cowfriend@telkomsa.net
Byrne Valley	Malcolm Anderson Malcolm Miller	033 2122744; 082 5723455 0832530645	mmanderson@mweb.co.za
Boston	Barbara & Glyn Bullock	033 997 1783; 0843049842; 0843529864	grbullock@telkomsa.net
Bulwer	Russell Hill	0741267274 082 9239649	carolhill@futurenet.co.za
Creighton/Donnybrook	Malcolm Gemmell	039 8331029 082 7895000	info@buttonbirding.com
Ngeli	Colleen Downs	See above	
Mpur/Glengarry	Andy Ruffle	039 695 0829; 0728933794	andy_ruffle@yahoo.co.uk
Alfred Nzo Region, name- ly: Ntswana, Gomo, Bulembu, Tonti, Amanzinyama and Xhama Forest	Dean Ricketts	0824325104	Dean.Ricketts@deaet.ecape.gov.za
Mthatha Langeni / Matiwane Ngcobo	Helen Dalton Bertus Bouwer	084 801 9560; 043-726 0513 (w) 082 856 3982; 043-726 0513 (w)	Helen@starlightsa.com
Hogsback	Tony Moody	045 9621131 0736895742	aim@new.co.za
Stutterheim	Neill Harvey Donald Kemp	043-6832384 073 4272 119, 043-683 1661	alliedin@eci.co.za donald@barkaybirds.co.za
Wild Coast (Port St Johns)	Kathryn Costello	047 5641240	outspan@wildcoast.co.za
Mbotyi	Wendy Ayliffe Taz Moola	039-2537200/01	info@mbotyi.co.za
KWT/Alice	Gertie Griffith Peter Mather-Pike	043 7352195 043 7403566 0829248514	gerken@intekom.com pamp@supafeeds.co.za
Limpopo Province	David Letsoalo	0835684678	info@krm.co.za



Main areas covered by coordinators on the Cape Parrot Big Birding Day



The Oracle from Rhino Print Africa

Inspiration behind The Oracle (on left)

The parrot has had a variety of symbolic meanings. In pre-Columbian America it was considered to be an oracle able to predict the weather. In Hinduism, it was an omen of love that carried Kama, the god of love, on its back. The Pueblo Indians considered the parrot a supernatural bird of the sun. The parrot has also been associated with foolishness and loquaciousness because of its incessant chatter and ability to imitate speech. However, this talent for speech also deemed the bird an interlocutor between the human and spirit world.

Thank you to William Horsfield and Billy Hare for contributions to this issue.

Cape Parrot Newsletter Editors:
Paige Potter and Preshnee Singh

CONTACT DETAILS

Prof. Colleen Downs
School of Life Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
P/Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209
Email: downs@ukzn.ac.za
Tel:+27-33-2605127
cell: 0829202026