

SEPTEMBER 2013

"Dis heerlike lente, die winters verby" - geniet hierdie maand se nuusbrief propvol interessantheide

Chantelle

If you come across any interesting information or images, please send it to me at chant266@gmail.com



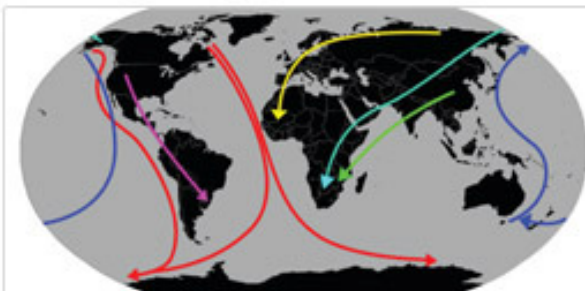
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Trekvoëls

Deur Sandrie

Volgens literatuur trek sowat 50 miljoen voëls elke jaar suidwaarts. Die Arktiese sterretjie trek die verste op sy sirkelroete van tussen 30 000km en 40 000 km vanaf hul somerbroeigebied in die Arktiese noorde, tot by die Suidpool om die somer daar op die Arktiese pakys deur te bring.

Die meeste trekvoëls vlieg sowat 3000 vt bokant die grond, maar vlieëniers het al voëls op 'n hoogte van 26 000 vt teengekom! Wetenskaplikes meen die trekvoëls orienteer hulself volgens die komaspunte. Bedags stuur hulle met behulp van die son en snags met behulp van die sterre.



<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	— Northern Wheatear
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	— Arctic Tern
<i>Falco amurensis</i>	— Amur Falcon
<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>	— Short-tailed Shearwater
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	— Ruff
<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	— Swainson's Hawk



Veerloos

deur Billy Attard

Ek het so twee weke gelede 'n oproep gekry van 'n lid van die Naboomspruitse Voëlklub wat 'n Afrikaanse Sperwer het wat in 'n wip gevang was waarvan die primere vlerkvere per abuis uitgetrek is.

Op aanbeveling van Dereck Engelbrecht sou dit goed wees as ek die roofvoël gaan haal en na René Fourie by Crown Rehabilitation neem vir observasie totdat die vere weer uitgegroe het.

Ek het wel die voël toe gaan haal maar dit moes eers na dr. Zander de Kock geneem word om een van die vlerkveerpenne wat afgebreek het, uit te trek. Sou mens dit nie doen nie, dan sal so 'n veer nie weer kan uitgroeï nie. Tans is die sperwer by Crown Rehabilitation waar dit heel lewendig rondbeweeg en die aanduiding is dat dit ongeveer ses tot agt maande sal neem vir die vlerkvere om weer uit te groei, wat op 'n onnatuurlike wyse verloor is.



Jong (juvenile) Afrikaanse Sperwer.

Wattled Crane Recovery Project

sourced by Saartjie Venter

The Wattled Crane Recovery Programme is a conservation initiative aimed at preventing local extinction of the Wattled Crane through the collection of abandoned eggs from wild birds and the subsequent release of captive-reared chicks back into the wild.

The Plight of the Wattle Crane

- One of 5 critically endangered bird species in South Africa.
- There are 235 birds left across South Africa
- Major threats include habitat loss, power line collisions and accidental poisoning.

The Role of the Programme

- The programme is managed by the Johannesburg Zoo in cooperation with the South African Crane Working Group (SACWG), the African Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AAZAB) and the Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife (EKZNW).
- 10 Participating facilities provide housing, food and reproductive management for the breeding flock.

Collecting eggs from the wild

- When 2 eggs are laid, 1 chick is reared by the parents and the other is abandoned, thus removal of second eggs has no detrimental effect on the wild population.
- Aerial surveys to locate nests are conducted with the assistance of the Bateleurs and EKZNW.
- Fieldworkers from the Endangered Wildlife Trust monitor the nests throughout the breeding season.

Chicks fly before they can walk

- Airlink provides air transport for the chicks to fly from Kwazulu Natal to Johannesburg when they are two to three days of age.
- Chicks are reared using a puppet and costume to prevent human imprinting.
- At 6-8 months of age the chicks which are not used for the captive breeding programme, are released into existing flocks of wild cranes

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Wattled Crane - www.africafreak.com

Outings / Uitstappies

- 7 Sept - Claub Ranch Safaris - Pels Fishing Owl (RvT)
- 5 Oct - Wolkberg Outing (RvT)
- 19 Oct - Beginners Outing PLK Reserve (RvT)
- 9 Nov - Mkhombo Dam Outing (RvT)
- 23 Nov - Birding Big Day

Life In A Rapidly Shrinking Puddle

by Ed Yong - www.nationalgeographic.com

What if you were born into a world that only blinks into existence once a year, and lasts for mere weeks or months before disappearing again? How would you live your life?

We can find the answer in East Africa, where a fish lives out its entire lives in rapidly shrinking pools of water.



During the rainy season, water fills small depressions in the savannah, creating temporary ponds. It's the cue that the turquoise killifish (*Nothobranchius furzeri*) has been waiting for.

Its eggs, encased in mud and lying dormant within the soil, finally hatch. Right from the start, the baby fish are on borrowed time. They have a couple of months before their puddle dries out. Before that unpredictable deadline, they've got to grow to sexual maturity, mate, and lay the next generation.

The turquoise killifish has adapted to this precarious existence by evolving the shortest lifespan of any back-boned animal. In the wild, they live for a few months and they fare little better in captivity. Back in 2003, Italian scientists Stefano Valdesalici and Alessandro Cellerino showed that groups of captive killifish start dying after just six weeks.

On average, they survive for nine weeks, and none of them make it past eleven. For comparison, other related killifish live for around a year, as do tiny mammals like shrews.

If they die young, they've got to live fast. By studying the turquoise killifish and a related species, *Nothobranchius kadleci*, Czech scientist Radim Blažek showed that their body length increases by up to a quarter every day in their first two weeks of life.

By days 11 to 13, the males are already wearing their bold red adult colours. By days 17 to 19, the females are sexually mature and start to release eggs, which the males lace with sperm. Again, these are record-breaking figures for vertebrates. Female laboratory mice take at least 23 days to become sexually mature, as do the tiny wild infantfishes. The killifishes beat that by almost a week.

At first, the females lay a few dozen eggs a day, but they start producing hundreds once they stop growing and start channelling all their energy into reproduction. One particularly enterprising female managed to lay 583 eggs in a day. The first of these fertilised eggs develop so quickly, that if there's enough water left, they can hatch in just 15 days. In as little as a month, the next generation is born.

The killifishes show how animals can adapt to extreme environments by evolving extreme lifespans. Another example comes from Madagascar. In response to the country's harsh and highly seasonal environment, Labord's chameleon spends the majority of its life within its own egg. An entire generation hatches during rainy November, matures by January, breeds by February, and dies by April. Meanwhile, their eggs stay underground until the following November. This unusual cycle means that at any given time, there's only one generation of Labord's chameleon on the planet and they're all the same age.



Reference: Blažek, Polacik & Reichard. 2013. Rapid growth, early maturation and short generation time in African annual fishes. *EvoDevo*, citation tbc.

Valdesalici & Cellerino. 2003. Extremely short lifespan in the annual fish *Nothobranchius furzeri*. *Biology Letters* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2003.0048>

g-Bird Application

If you own one of those smart android or iphones that can read gps coordinates, have a look at g-Bird, org who offers an application that assists in data capture for research.

Some features include

- GPS record quickly & easily any bird you are currently seeing
- See if your sighting is Inside / Outside its known Range
- Email your sightings to your friends you birded with
- Upload easily to the Server

The Data captured through the application helps conservationists to understand how Common/Rare different species are, what their migration timing is and also helps to create up-to-date range maps per species.

The app can be downloaded at www.g-bird.org

Thanks to Billy Attard for bringing this to our attention.

Contact Persons

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