

OCTOBER 2013

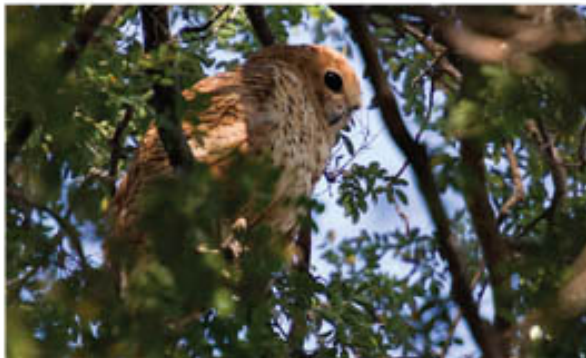
Welcome back to our old and trusted Koraal venue. The seasons have shifted and the birds are returning home, you can read more about what birds you can expect to see and which ones are still on their way, we also have some trip reports from our members as well as a bit of extra information. Happy birding and I will see you all at the year end function.

*Chantelle*

## *Pel's Fishing Owl at Club Ranch Safaris*

*by Jody de Bruyn*

On September the 7th a group of 10 eager birders left Polokwane to Club Ranch Safaris situated on the Limpopo Botswana border to look for the elusive Pel's Fishing Owl. We decided to do some atlassing of the pentad that we would be spending most of the morning in. En-route to our destination some of the species we recorded included: Cape Glossy Starling, White-browed Scrub-Robin, Red-billed Quelea, African Mourning Dove, Namaqua Dove, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Lesser Striped Swallow, Black-backed Puffback, White-crested Helmet-Shrike, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike, Meves's Starling and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver to only mention a few.



*Pel's Fishing Owl - Jody de Bruyn*

Arriving at our destination before 8am, the mission was clear, let's start looking for the Owl. Armed with binoculars and cameras we tracked through the dried up section of the Limpopo River to reach the island where we would start our search. We were able to add more birds to our list which included: Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove, Brubru, Meyer's Parrot, African Green-Pigeon, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Red-billed Firefinch, Yellow-throated Petronia and African Fish-Eagle.



*left: Meyer's Parrot right: Terrestrial Brownbul - Jody de Bruyn*

After about 10 minutes of searching the trees, we got our first glimpse of the Pel's Fishing Owl. It flew to some trees to the east of the island where it settled for a while, giving us the opportunity to take some photos and examine it through our binoculars. Mission accomplished! After the Owl did a disappearing act, we turned our attention to birding the rest of the island and the camp site. Some of the birds we recorded included: White-crowned Lapwing, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Giant Kingfisher, Tropical Boubou, Goliath Heron, Terrestrial Brownbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and Greater Honeyguide.

After having a late-morning snack, we packed up and continued to bird the rest of the pentad. We also recorded the following: African Harrier-Hawk, Red-billed Oxpecker, Common Greenshank, Marabou Stork, Malachite Kingfisher, Jameson's Firefinch, Yellow-billed Egret and Lilac-breasted Roller. We ended up with a Pentad total of 95 species. Thank you to Richter van Tonder for organizing the outing and to Club Ranch Safaris for allowing us to visit them.

## *Waterpoort Atlas naweek (Noord van die Soutpansberge).*

*deur Anneliese Pretorius*

Gedurende die naweek van 2-4 Augustus het 10 van ons lede gaan "atlas bushing" doen in die Mopane/Waterpoort omgewing. Ons het in 3 groepe verdeel en oor 2 dae altesame 22 pentads gedoen. In 2 verdere pentads is daar minder as 2 ure spandee en tel dit as ad hoc pentads. Altesame 146 spesies is geidentifiseer.

Die groot aantal vaalstreepkoppies (Lark-like Bunting) was 'n onverwagte waarneming aangesien hulle gewoonlik verder wes voorkom. Op die laaste oggend het Richter 'n grys kapokvoeltjie (grey penduline tit) eers gehoor en toe gesien. Dit het vir groot opwindings gesorg & was 'n "lifer" vir heelwat van ons.

Ons het tuis gegaan in die ou plaashuis van Willem & Max Bester. Ons het heerlik gekuier en gebraa. Dankie aan almal vir 'n heerlike naweek en veral baie dankie aan Richter vir die tref van al die reulings.



## Returning Migrants during August and September 2013

by Joe Grosel

Here are some migrant arrival dates as observed by myself and others in and around Polokwane: I haven't included waders in the list as some Wood Sandpipers, Greenshanks and Common Sandpipers overwintered in the Limpopo region this year.

### August

**Yellow-billed Kite** – 02 August, Steven's Lumber Mills, Boyne; **Red-breasted Swallow** – 05 August, Tembele Estate, Polokwane; **Wahlberg's Eagle** – 11 August at its nest in the Polokwane Game Reserve; **Lesser-striped Swallow** – 12 August, Dalmada; **Greater-striped Swallow** – 16 August, Tembele; **White-throated Swallow** – 17 August, Flora Park Dam and **White-rumped Swift** – 20 August at Tembele.

September usually sees the second wave of migrant species from equatorial Africa and the first Palearctic visitors. The first observation dates for the season are:

### September

**European Bee-eater** – 21 Sep, Bendor Village; **Willow Warbler** – 27 Sep, Tembele, Polokwane; **Marsh Warbler** – 25 Sep, Bendor, Polokwane; **Red-breasted Cuckoo** – 27 Sep, Dalmada, Polokwane and **Banded Martin** – 16 Sep, The Ranch Hotel.

The Barn Swallows, Common Swifts, Black, Jacobin, Levaillant's and Diderick Cuckoos, Stepe Buzzards and Spotted Flycatchers should be arriving in October and early November. Let me know when you see or hear the first individuals.



## Social Media

See what other members are up to on our facebook page, come and share your photos and sightings with us, [www.facebook.com/birdlife-polokwane](http://www.facebook.com/birdlife-polokwane)

If you happen to come across anything you would like to see in our next newsletter, or you would like to give feedback you can e-mail me at [chantz66@gmail.com](mailto:chantz66@gmail.com), any articles, photographs links etc are welcome.

## 5 Facts That'll Make You Think Differently About Vultures

by Mindy Townsend September 7, 2013 - [www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com)

Poor vultures. They really get a bad rap. No one wants to be called a vulture. It means you're lazy, just picking the scraps off someone else's hard work. Vulture even became part of the 2012 presidential campaign vernacular. However, vultures are actually interesting creatures that play a vital role in their ecosystems.

There are 23 species of vultures that can be split into two groups: the New World Vultures and the Old World Vultures. On this International Vulture Awareness Day, let's learn a little about these super gross and fascinating birds.



Credit: Magnus Kjaergaard via Wikipedia

### Vultures have stomach acid from hell.

That might be overstating things. I mean, I have no idea what hell's supply of stomach acid is like. However, vulture stomach acid is tough and really corrosive. It has to be, otherwise they wouldn't be able to eat those nasty, rotten carcasses that are infested with botulism, cholera and anthrax.

### Vultures live all over the world.

The popular portrayal of vultures is that they are exclusively hot desert birds that wander around looking for almost-dead prey, and, when they find it, circle mercilessly overhead. However, vultures are actually found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Species of vultures live in a variety of climates, including along the Himalayas, Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Amazon River Basin. It doesn't matter where you live. Someone needs to get rid of the dead stuff.

### Vultures can use tools.

They can't use tools the same way chimps or human can... because they're birds. However, the Egyptian vulture, for example, drops rocks onto ostrich eggs in order to break them open. They've also been spotted using twigs as a tool to gather strands of wool, which the birds use to line their nests.

Other vultures use other methods of finding food. The bearded vulture, for instance, will drop tortoises so the shell will crack open. The bird will also do this with bones so they can get at that tasty marrow.

### Vultures can be very social.

It's also part of popular cartoon wisdom that vultures slink around alone, or maybe in groups of two or three. In fact, vultures can be very social. Take the Ruppell's Griffon vulture. These birds mate for life, which can be 40 to 50 years, and live in colonies of 1,000 mating pairs. The love birds only lay one egg per year, and both parents incubate and feed the resulting chick. They don't only live in large colonies; they also tend to feed in large groups.

### Vultures can smell.

Well, at least one species can: the Turkey vulture. This is an ability that is rare in birds, but Turkey vultures can sniff out a special sulphurous smell from more than a mile away.

## Nuwe Voëlboek met klankleser!!

deur Billy Attard

Die Naboomspruitse voëlklub se welbekende boeskrywers Saartjie Kidson en Herman van Niekerk het weer 'n voëlboek die lig laat sien. Die foto hieronder toon die boek, en wat interessant is, dit sluit 'n klankleser in, die klankleser lyk soos 'n UBS geheuestokkie soos op die voorblad aangrui, wat al die voëlklanke bevat. Die stokkie word op die skets van die voëlfoto in die boek gedruk en dan word die voël se roep gespeel via hierdie klankleser! Fantasieste tegnologie en 'n eerste vir Suid Afrika!

Die boek sal nie by boekhandelaars beskikbaar wees nie, maar kan wel direk vanaf Briza Publikasies bestel word. Die promosieprys is R600 tot en met bestellings wat teen einde Oktober geplaas is en daarna is die prys R650. Posgeld vir aflewering in die RSA is gratis.

Die boek sal teen 15 November beskikbaar begin raak.

Briza se kontakbesonderhede in Pretoria is:  
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## Outings / Uitstappies

- 03 - 06 Oct - Raptor Identification Course in Letaba Camp - KNP
- 05 Oct - Day visit to the Makapans valley and farms Portugal & Spain near Mokopane.
- 19 Oct - Novice birder outing to the Polokwane Game Reserve
- 05 Nov - Year end function (venue to be announced)
- 09 Nov - Day trip to Mkhombo Dam on the Gauteng / Mpumalanga border.
- 14 - 17 Nov - 'Panda Mania' team binding event in northern Kruger. Contact Monika O'Leary 084 3043017
- 23 Nov - National Birding Big Day