



Newsletter 180 January – March 2023

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## FORTHCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

**Every third Tuesday of the month EXCEPT for the next meeting (which is special!).**

Please note that owing to a T20 cricket match at Wanderers on the 28 March 2023 we are unable to hold our AGM there, as previously advised. The Anniversary Celebration will start with a (short) AGM, as soon as we have a quorum.

THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE  
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY  
AT THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE (SLIGHTLY) CUCKOO BIRD CLUB

TO BE HELD AT 11h45 FOR 12h00 ON SUNDAY 2 APRIL 2023  
AT 19 COLENZO STREET, PAULSHOF  
(CORNER HOWICK – DOUBLE STOREY WITH GREEN ROOF)

A FINGER LUNCH AND BEVERAGES WILL BE SERVED

PARKING LIMITED SO BEST TO ARRIVE IN A SMALL FLOCK

**R.S.V.P. BY 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023 to**

**[info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za](mailto:info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za)**

**Mo Bellis**

**Secretary**



**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE CUCKOO BIRD CLUB**

TO BE HELD ON **SUNDAY 2 APRIL 2023 AT 11.45 AM FOR 12.00**  
AT 19 COLENZO STREET, PAULSHOF, GAUTENG

**AGENDA**

- Open and Welcome
- Apologies, Proxies, Quorum
- Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Members held on Tuesday  
15 March 2022
  - Chairman's Report
  - Approval of the Annual Financial Statements
  - Election/Confirmation of Committee Members
    - General

Now, how can you NOT be at 19 Colenso Street on the 2 April?

Please send your acceptance to Mo:

**R.S.V.P. BY 29 MARCH 2023 to**

**[info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za](mailto:info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za)**

**Mo Bellis**

**Secretary**

Look forward to seeing you there!



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## **SPEAKERS**

**Organiser: Debbie Jennings**

[deb.jiq@gmail.com](mailto:deb.jiq@gmail.com)



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## **DAY OUTINGS**

**Organiser: Dennis Townsend**

[dennis.townsend4@gmail.com](mailto:dennis.townsend4@gmail.com)



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## **MID-MONTH OUTINGS**

**Organiser: Lester Niss**

[lestern256@gmail.com](mailto:lestern256@gmail.com)





## TRIPS AWAY

**Organiser: Marion Melville**

[marion@rbs.co.za](mailto:marion@rbs.co.za)

### **Northern Cape: 16 – 25 September 2023**

Those of us who attended the terrific talks by Steve about his trip to Namibia have been hoping that we might have a similar experience.

The proposed trip will take 10 days covering roughly 2500/3000km.

The route will start in Kimberley moving on to Brandvlei, Namaqua Park, Springbok, Kuruman and back to JHB.

As this planning is in the EARLY stages, please advise who would be interested in this trip by sending an email to [Dennis.townsend4@gmail.com](mailto:Dennis.townsend4@gmail.com)

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## PREVIOUS OUTINGS FEEDBACK

### **Sunday 29 January outing to Marievale (Summer CWAC)**

Five SCC members assisted with the summer count, joined by members of other clubs.

In total 2791 birds were counted, representing 61 species.

Some of the birds recorded:

985 Red-knobbed Coots  
251 Ruffs,  
151 Glossy Ibis  
129 Red-billed Teal  
6 Little Bittern  
10 Black Crake  
2 Fish Eagles.

Dennis Townsend has a full list if you would like to see more detail.

### **Sunday 26 February outing to Suikerbosrand**

Eleven members joined the group at the Suikerbosrand Reserve.



Twenty-six species were recorded.

Long-tailed Widowbird	Black-winged Kite
Dark-capped Bulbul	Helmeted Guineafowl
Southern Masked Weaver	African Paradise Flycatcher
Speckled Mousebird	Cape Turtle Dove
Red-faced Mousebird	Red-winged Starling
African Hoopoe	Familiar Chat
Crested Barbet	Cape White-eye
Cape Robin-Chat	Cape Weaver
Cape Wagtail	Bokmakierie
Mocking Cliff Chat	White-browed Sparrow-Weaver
Rock Dove	Pin-tailed Whydah
Southern Fiscal	Streaky-headed Seedeater
Common Moorhen	Cape Glossy Starling

Thanks to Dennis for the feedback and Heather for her beautiful photographs on this trip and last Sunday's outing to the Bishop Bird Park.



**Ant-eating Chat**

### Sunday Drinks in the park



### Mocking Cliff Chat



### Dark-shouldered Kite







**Fan-tailed Widowbird**

**Sunday 26 March outing to Bishop's Bird Park**





**Cape White-eye**



**Blesbokke**



**White-bellied Sunbird  
(in juvenile transition)**



**Red-headed Finch**

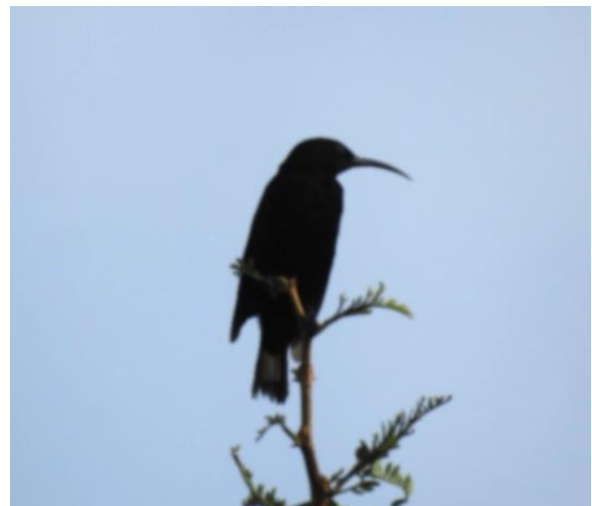


**Common Fiscal**

**Black-chested Prinia**



**Amethyst Sunbird**

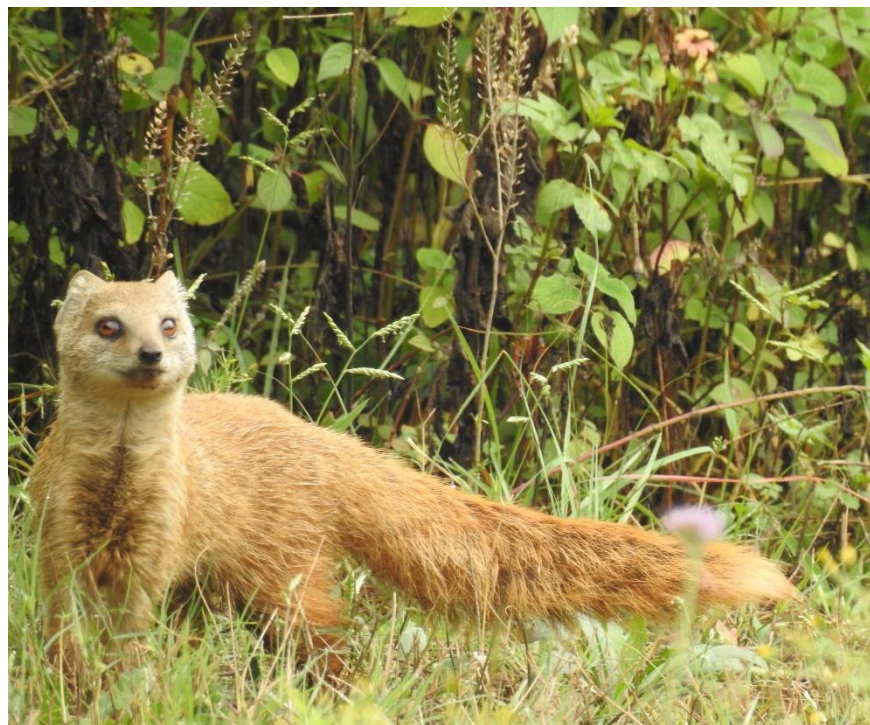


**Common Waxbill**





**Streaky-headed Seedeater**



**Slender Mongoose**



## BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA NEWS

### BirdLife South Africa Adventure Series 2023 Hiking and Biking for Birds

**BirdLife**  
SOUTH AFRICA  
Giving Conservation Wings

**BirdLife South Africa**  
*Adventure Series*

Join us in 2023 on our BirdLife adventures.  
"Hiking and Biking for Birds!"

- 1 Entabeni Game Reserve
- 2 Manukuza Wilderness
- 3 Mkuze Game Reserve
- 4 Limpokwena Nature Reserve
- 5 Selati Game Reserve
- 6 Cederberg Wilderness Area

*More Info*

+27 60 640 8868  
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info@outlandescape.com  
Christie.wooding@birdlife.org.za

### BLSA Forum

Acting Chair Dennis Townsend attended the Birdlife South Africa Northern Region Bird Club Forum, (BLSA). Here's some feedback:

- BLSA are launching a Photo Competition this month with some amazing prizes on offer in several categories. Best of all, the grand prize is a three-night stay for two at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve to the value of R237 960! So – start sorting through your photographs and keep an eye on the Birdlife magazine for all the details. (<https://www.birdlife.org.za/photography-competition-2023/>)



- BLSA is working on African names for birds which will be published once completed – we'll keep you updated.
- For your diaries: 2023 Birding Big Day will be held on 2 December 2023.

### BLSA Listers Club



<https://www.birdlife.org.za/go-birding/go-birding-south-africa-listers-club>

### THUNDERBIRD NEWS

For the latest newsletter, click on the following link:

[THE THUNDERBIRD \(ground-hornbill.org.za\)](http://ground-hornbill.org.za)

This is a wonderful newsletter and a great read, even if you're not a big fan of the Ground Hornbill (spectacular birds, by the way).

Forwarded by Mo Bellis

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## BOOK REVIEW

Twitchee's delight: Southern African birdlife vibrantly captured in a new photographic guide.

By Tamsin Metelerkamp  
13 Sep 2022

*The book, 'VELD Birds of Southern Africa - The complete photographic guide', contains close to 1,000 species found in the southern African region, including the vibrant European Bee-eater.*

*(Photo: Niel Cillié)*



A new compendium of birds, 'VELD Birds of Southern Africa: The complete photographic guide', makes it easier for avid and amateur birders alike to explore and appreciate the region's rich birdlife. Almost 1,000 species can be found between the book's covers.

Bird photography is an art that requires considerable patience. You might spend hours in remote places, holding the same position and waiting for your "quarry" to make an appearance. When it comes to rarer species, it could be years before you catch a glimpse.

For Burger Cillié, a wildlife photographer with more than 30 years' experience under his belt, photographing birds is a matter of passion – and, when the perfect shot lines up, a quick trigger finger.

*The Damara Red-billed Hornbill. Nearly a tenth of the world's bird species have been recorded in southern Africa, with over a hundred of these species unique to the region. (Photo: Niel Cillié)*



The recently published "VELD Birds of Southern Africa: The complete photographic guide", which Burger co-authored, offers an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of bird photographers' efforts. The compendium is a visual delight, showing the varied and vibrant birdlife southern Africa has to offer – from the Wandering Albatross to the Lark-like Bunting, from the African Emerald Cuckoo to the Zambezi Indigobird.



“There are just so many beautiful spaces and each with their own unique species that you’ll find only in that specific spot. I mean, the Zimbabwean highlands, the fantastic forests in Mozambique ... there are specific species that you can only find there, and I think it makes it so special,” says Henda Boshoff, marketing and project manager for the guide.



*A Levillant's Cuckoo. (Photo: Burger Cillié)*

Burger's co-authors are Niel Cillié, bird photographer and author at Game Parks Publishing; Phil Penlington, birder and co-founder of the website BirdPics; Trevor

Hardaker, chairman of the BirdLife South Africa National Rarities Committee; and Karin Wiesler, a keen birder with a degree in environmental management.

The book contains entries on 991 species that have been recorded in southern Africa, being the region south of the Kunene and Zambezi rivers, according to the introduction.

*A Black-collared Barbet. (Photo: Supplied / Burger Cillié)*

### **The visual experience**

The quality of the photography helps to set it apart from other books on the subject. The

authors took the time to find the best photos available, including images of “vagrants” – species which occur only rarely in the region, and whose native range lies elsewhere.



“Many of these have not appeared in print before, and they are probably the best set of photographic images of the region’s birds to be seen anywhere,” says the foreword by Warwick Tarboton, bird expert, photographer and author.

Almost all the images show the birds in profile and at rest, allowing a clear view of their distinct characteristics. Where there are differences within species between adults and juveniles, or males and females, pictures of the variations are presented

side by side.

The opening pages include a helpful diagram of the external anatomy of a bird – for those of us who struggle to tell our primary coverts from our upperwing coverts – and a key for the distribution maps that accompany each entry. The maps are colour-coded to show whether species are vagrants, permanent residents, introduced species or summer visitors.

“The maps are really quite unique,” says Henda. “We actually went to a lot of trouble, especially Neil [Cillié], drawing up each and every map with the latest information.”

### **Birding on the fly**

The book is divided into 15 sections to make navigating the different bird types easier for experts and amateurs alike. The authors used observable characteristics rather than scientific jargon to separate species, says Burger.

Birds are divided into groups such as “Large birds with long legs”, “Seed eaters with a conical bill” and “Swimming waterbirds”.



*Almost 2,000 colour photographs were sourced for the book, ‘VELD Birds of Southern Africa – The complete photographic guide’. Each entry is accompanied by a map showing the latest distribution data for that species. (Photo: Supplied / Burger Cillié)*

“The idea behind that is to make it quite easy for your not-so-avid birder to find the birds,” explains Henda.

The BirdScan app was developed in conjunction with the book. By scanning a photo of a bird in the book, users can find a corresponding entry about that species on the app, with additional information, further photographs, and audio clips of the bird’s calls.

*A male Eastern Bronze-winged Pigeon.*

*(Photo: Patrick Kelly)*



### **For all walks of life**

The guide is intended to encourage people from all walks of life to start birding, says Henda, including youngsters and those with limited knowledge of birds.

“To us, it’s all about nature and getting everyone involved in it.”

For those who already have a thorough knowledge of the region’s birding scene, the book can still offer something new.



*A Woodland Kingfisher. (Photo: Supplied / Burger Cillié)*

“With the avid birders that we had as authors, they would obviously spend a lot of time with these birds and pick up on interesting behaviour that has never been published before ... characteristics, hunting behaviour, nesting behaviour,” says Henda.

“There’s enough information [to] encourage even the old birders who know everything to use it and experience [birding] in a new way.”

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Sometimes you just want to put the bins and the cameras down and try something new. Here’s a new skill to learn and enjoy whilst waiting for that perfect sighting.

## **THE SECRET TO SKIMMING STONES NOT AS CONVENTIONAL AS WE’VE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE!**

Scientists have found that the age-old art of flinging a pebble across water has nothing to do with the projectile itself.



By [Joe Pinkstone](#), SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT January 2023

The first lesson imparted from parent to child when skimming stones is the importance of the chosen projectile: a pebble is not worth flinging unless it is smooth, flat, medium weight and circular.

But now, scientists have found you do not need a perfect stone in order to be able to skim it successfully, with even heavy, knobbly and potato-like objects able to bounce.

A study has found that a flat stone is best for several short, neat skips, while larger rocks skim with fewer but bigger leaps.

Dr Ryan Palmer, a research associate at the University of Bristol, has a day job studying how insects detect electric fields but spent a period of time working with AeroTex UK and used his academic skills to study what happens when ice in clouds comes into contact with water on plane wings.

His computer models will help stop ice aggregating on planes mid-air and prevent damage from freezing but are also informative of how to skim stones due to comparable physics.

“This is sort of like a bit of a side gig for me,” Dr Palmer told The Telegraph.

“The heavier a projectile is and the more curved it is, the deeper and longer the skimming interaction. That means you can get really exciting skims known as ‘superelastic’ bounces.

“Essentially, you throw it in at one height and it has a monstrous leap out of the water which is both surprising and unexpected.”

He found that irregular-shaped objects are just as likely to skim on water as a perfectly smooth and flat one, but the projectile’s properties dictate the type and number of bounces.



“If you try to skim a heavy stone you will find that it almost splashes down quite deep into the water and stays in contact with the water for a long time,” Dr Palmer said.

“But then, if it’s successful, you’ll suddenly see it emerging out of the water as it leaps to a great height. If you throw it arms-height into the water, it might bounce out twice as high.

“I think it encourages you to maybe pick up stones that you wouldn’t normally pick up to see if you can get these exciting leaps out of them.

“I always enjoy picking up these obscure stones and throwing them as hard as I can at the water to get these big leaps. It wows my kids because it looks very different to lots of nice little skinny ones.

“You get these big dramatic leaps out of the water but often only one or two skims at most. You don’t often get lots of jumps out of them.”

But Dr Palmer said that the ideal stone for skimming depends on the thrower and what they want out of their toss.

“When people ask what the perfect skimmer is, it depends on what you want. If you’re talking about something that does lots of skips then the classic flat, medium weight, round sort of thing is always good,” he explained.



“But if you want big and dramatic, go for something that’s maybe heavier and slightly more curved than you’d normally pick and you’ll see some quite exciting things.

“We are not saying you can start throwing bricks at the water and they will skim - it still needs to be relatively slender and thin - but I’ve picked up a knobby stone here and there that’s a bit more like a potato than a skimmer and you can still get a good bounce out of them. That’s always good fun.”

### **‘A greater range of shapes can skim’**

The results also reveal that if you are struggling to skim stones at all then finding a slightly more round object is a good idea as the curves help with getting it to skip.

The more curved a stone is, the fewer skips it will produce, but the more likely it is to skip in the first place.

“All of this is basically to say that a greater range of shapes can skim. For the layman on the lake this means you can try out a broader range of stones to see if you can get some exciting bounces out of them,” Dr Palmer told The Telegraph.

And if you want to make a stone fly as high in the air as possible, a heavy, curved stone is best.

“The closer you get to sinking without sinking, the bigger that leap upwards is going to be,” Dr Palmer explained. “The more curved the body is, it allows for a heavier stone to skim.

“Heavier stones essentially make contact with the water layer for longer so create a greater amount of pressure underneath the rock. Because it stays in contact for longer, you get a higher pressure and therefore a greater force across the stone.”

The study is published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society A.

Article forwarded by Debbie Jennings

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## EVOLVING “BACKWARD” DISCOVERY OVERTURNS MORE THAN A CENTURY OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF MODERN BIRDS

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE JANUARY 20, 2023



*Artist's reconstruction of the last known toothed bird, *Janavis finalidens*, in its original environment surrounded by the co-occurring 'wonderchicken', *Asteriornis*. 66.7 million years ago parts of Belgium were covered by a shallow sea, and conditions were similar to modern tropical beaches in places like the Bahamas. *Janavis* was a very large marine bird, with long wings and teeth in its jaws. It would have hunted fish and squid-like creatures in the tropical sea.*

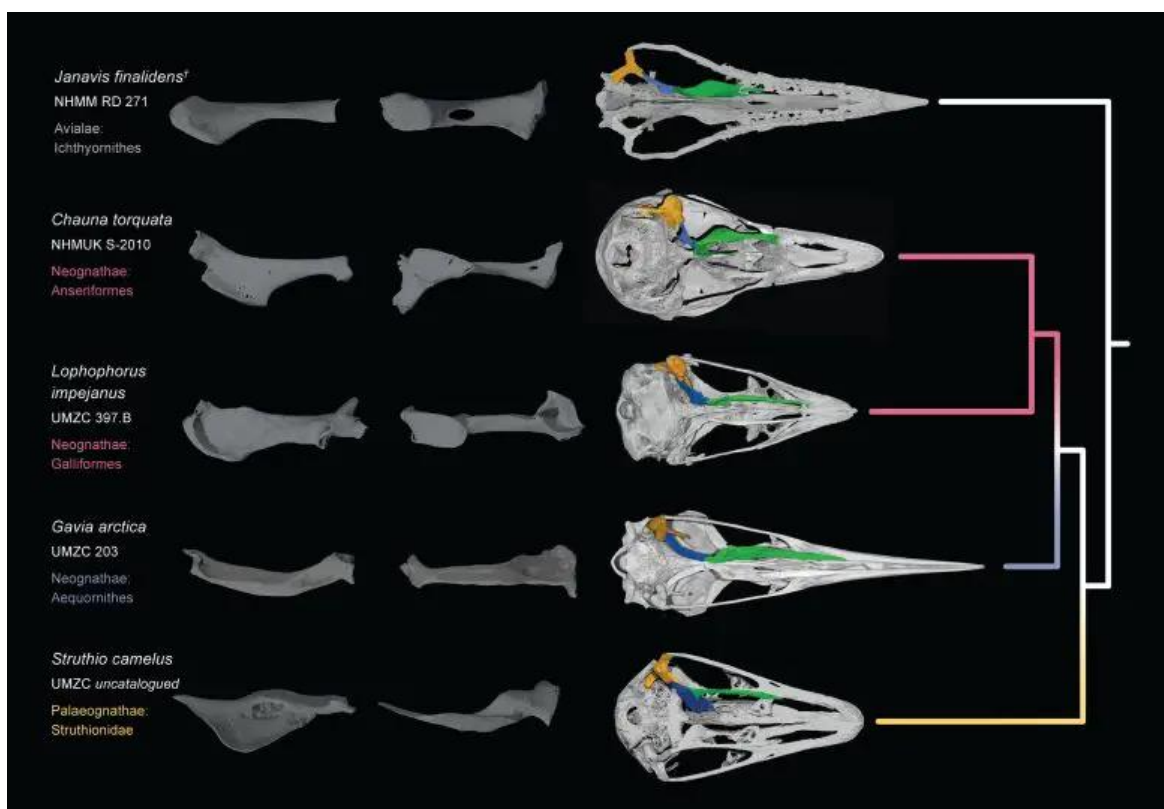
The fossilized remains of a skeleton found within a small rock have challenged a long-held belief about the evolution of modern birds.

A team of researchers from the [University of Cambridge](https://www.cam.ac.uk/) and the Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht discovered that a crucial skull feature of modern birds, the mobile beak, had developed prior to the mass extinction event that wiped out the dinosaurs 66 million years ago.

This finding also suggests that the skulls of ostriches, emus and their relatives evolved 'backward', reverting to a more primitive condition after modern birds arose. Using CT scanning techniques, the Cambridge team identified bones from the palate, or the roof of the mouth, of a new species of large ancient bird, which they named *Janavis finalidens*. It lived at the very end of the Age of Dinosaurs and was one of the last-toothed birds to ever live. The arrangement of its palate bones shows that this 'dino-bird' had a mobile, dexterous beak, almost indistinguishable from that of most modern birds.

For more than a century, it had been assumed that the mechanism enabling a mobile beak evolved after the extinction of the dinosaurs. However, the new discovery, reported in the journal *Nature*, suggests that our understanding of how the modern bird skull came to be needs to be re-evaluated.

Each of the roughly 11,000 species of birds on Earth today is classified into one of two over-arching groups, based on the arrangement of their palate bones. Ostriches, emus, and their relatives are classified into the palaeognath, or ‘ancient jaw’ group, meaning that, like humans, their palate bones are fused together into a solid mass.



*Palate of Janavis finalidens in comparison with that of a pheasant and an ostrich. The palate anatomy of Janavis likely approximates that of the most recent common ancestor of all living birds and is more similar to that of chicken- and duck-like birds, such as pheasants, than to birds like ostriches and emus, which were previously thought to exhibit the ancestral bird condition.*

*Credit: Juan Benito and Daniel Field, University of Cambridge*

All other groups of birds are classified into the neognath, or ‘modern jaw’ group, meaning that their palate bones are connected by a mobile joint. This makes their



beaks much more dexterous, and helpful for nest-building, grooming, food-gathering, and defence.

The two groups were originally classified by Thomas Huxley, the British biologist known as ‘Darwin’s Bulldog’ for his vocal support of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. In 1867, he divided all living birds into either the ‘ancient’ or ‘modern’ jaw groups. Huxley’s assumption was that the ‘ancient’ jaw configuration was the original condition for modern birds, with the ‘modern’ jaw arising later.

“This assumption has been taken as a given ever since,” said Dr. Daniel Field from Cambridge’s Department of Earth Sciences, the paper’s senior author. “The main reason this assumption has lasted is that we haven’t had any well-preserved fossil bird palates from the period when modern birds originated.”



*Artist’s reconstruction of the world’s last known toothed bird, Janavis finalidens. This reconstruction is based on the original fossil bones of Janavis and comparisons with its close relative Ichthyornis, as well as inspiration from modern marine birds such as gulls and petrels. Janavis was a large marine bird with long wings and teeth in its jaws and would have hunted for fish and squid in warm Late Cretaceous seas. Credit: Phillip Krzeminski*

The fossil, *Janavis*, was found in a limestone quarry near the Belgian-Dutch border in the 1990s and was first studied in 2002. It dates from 66.7 million years ago, during the last days of the dinosaurs. Since the fossil is encased in rock, scientists at the time could only base their descriptions on what they could see from the outside. They described the bits of bone sticking out from the rock as fragments of skull and shoulder bones and put the unremarkable-looking fossil back in storage.

Nearly 20 years later, the fossil was loaned to Field’s group in Cambridge, and Dr Juan Benito, then a Ph.D. student, started giving it another look.



“Since this fossil was first described, we’ve started using CT scanning on fossils, which enables us to see through the rock and view the entire fossil,” said Benito, now a postdoctoral researcher at Cambridge, and the paper’s lead author. “We had high hopes for this fossil – it was originally said to have skull material, which isn’t often preserved, but we couldn’t see anything that looked like it came from a skull in our CT scans, so we gave up and put the fossil aside.”

During the early days of the Covid-19 lockdown, Benito took the fossil out again. “The earlier descriptions of the fossil just didn’t make sense – there was a bone I was really puzzled by. I couldn’t see how what was first described as a shoulder bone could actually be a shoulder bone,” he said.

“It was my first in-person interaction in months: Juan and I had a socially distanced outdoor meeting, and he passed the mystery fossil bone to me,” said Field, who is also the Curator of Ornithology at Cambridge’s Museum of Zoology. “I could see it wasn’t a shoulder bone, but there was something familiar about it.”

“Then we realized we’d seen a similar bone before, in a turkey skull,” said Benito. “And because of the research we do at Cambridge, we happen to have things like turkey skulls in our lab, so we brought one out and the two bones were almost identical.”

The realization that the bone was a skull bone, and not a shoulder bone, led the researchers to conclude that the unfused ‘modern jaw’ condition, which turkeys share, evolved before the ‘ancient jaw’ condition of ostriches and their relatives. For an unknown reason, the fused palates of ostriches and kin must have evolved at some point after modern birds were already established.

Two of the key characteristics we use to differentiate modern birds from their dinosaur ancestors are a toothless beak and a mobile upper jaw. While *Janavis finalidens* still had teeth, making it a pre-modern bird, its jaw structure is that of the modern, mobile kind.

“Using geometric analyses, we were able to show that the shape of the fossil palate bone was extremely similar to those of living chickens and ducks,” said Pei-Chen Kuo, a co-author of the study. Added co-author Klara Widrig: “Surprisingly, the bird palate bones that are the least similar to that of *Janavis* are from ostriches and their kin.” Both Kuo and Widrig are Ph.D. students in Field’s lab at Cambridge.



“Evolution doesn’t happen in a straight line,” said Field. “This fossil shows that the mobile beak – a condition we had always thought post-dated the origin of modern birds, actually evolved before modern birds existed. We’ve been completely backward in our assumptions of how the modern bird skull evolved for well over a century.”

The researchers say that while this discovery does not mean that the entire bird family tree needs to be redrawn, it does rewrite our understanding of a key evolutionary feature of modern birds.

And what happened to *Janavis*? It, like the large dinosaurs and other toothed birds, did not survive the mass extinction event at the end of the Cretaceous period. The researchers say that this may be because of its large size: *Janavis* weighed around 1.5 kilograms and was the size of a modern vulture. It’s likely that smaller animals – like the ‘wonderchicken’, identified by Field, Benito, and colleagues in 2020, which comes from the same area and lived alongside *Janavis* – had an advantage at this point in Earth’s history since they had to eat less to survive. This would have been beneficial after the asteroid struck the Earth and disrupted global food chains.

The study was funded by the by the American Ornithological Society, the Jurassic Foundation, the Paleontological Society, and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

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## HELLO TO NEW MEMBERS AND A SAD GOODBYE TO THE DE BEERS

**A warm Cuckoo welcome to our new members. We look forward to seeing you at the meetings and on outings and trips.**

Melanie Honicke

Jenny Redford

Nigel Redford

Eric Sewell

Lynda Stephenson

Johna Turner

Mandy McArthur

Mark Yammin



## Farewell to long-standing members, who will be sorely missed

**Kobus and Elizabeth De Beer** are relocating to Somerset West in the Cape.

Thanks for all your support and friendship over the years.

During his last – fascinating – talk, Kobus showed us how he and Elizabeth manage to see so much of Southern Africa. So when we found the following article, we thought of them and of our club! Sadly, this is not (yet) available in South Africa but start saving now!

## KUCKOO TINY CAMPING TRAILER BLOWS OPEN BIG PANORAMA WITH GLASS DOORS

By [C.C. Weiss](#)

February 10, 2023



*Kuckoo plans to launch the Emma micro-camper in 2024*

Germany's Kuckoo Camper shook up the European small camping trailer market two years ago when it introduced the [Bruno squaredrop](#), an innovative all-roader with rooftop deck and indoor/outdoor kitchen.

Now it's back with a second model, shedding some of the size and ruggedness of the Bruno in favor of a lighter, breezier build that binds inseparably with nature. The Kuckoo Emma benefits from the same type of thoughtful innovation, living larger than its small size thanks to a panoramic interior driven by oversized glass doors and windows.

Kuckoo showed the Emma prototype at last month's [CMT show](#) in Stuttgart.

Conceived as a little sister to the Bruno, the trailer is still in development so details remain few and non-finalized. But given that the idea is to keep things streamlined and lightweight, there might not be many additional details to follow.

The Emma takes on a slightly different shape than the larger, ruggeder Bruno and sizes in 3 feet (90 cm) shorter at a very compact 11.4 feet (3.5 m). With a base weight below 882 lb (400 kg), it's quite light and ready to hitch up to a large variety of tow vehicles.

*With the optional second glass door entry, the Emma trailer becomes a breezy base camp with views in nearly every direction*  
**Kuckoo Camper**

What really sets the Emma apart and gives it a distinctive personality quite unlike any trailer we've seen is its glass door design.



Kuckoo's plans call for the camper to come standard with a pair of counter-opening glass doors on the passenger side and the option for the same setup on the driver's side. When flung open, the doors give the trailer a more spacious, airy feel, erasing the divide between indoor and out. Once closed, they ensure the view is not lost from inside.

The large glass entries team with a large rear window and overhead skylight to further increase viewing opportunities. This generous allotment of glass gives the Emma one of the most impressive panoramic designs on the global RV market — right up there with last year's Lagom pickup camper or 2021's fittingly named Kip Panorama Shelter trailer.



*The Emma's wide rear windshield adds to the panorama*

The Emma's light wood interior paneling complements all that glass in creating a bright living space.

Kuckoo keeps the layout fairly simple, using a folding mattress as

both the 58 x 79-in (147 x 200-cm) near-queen-size double bed and as a sofa. The front cabinet offers a shelf and plenty of cubby space, with more storage wrapping its way around the overhead space near the ceiling.

The rear of the interior houses a larger shelf with removable tops that provide access to the kitchen slide below. The indoor/outdoor kitchen design features a 37-in-long (95-cm) slide for housing a portable stove, dishes, and other cooking and serving provisions. On the front, a separate slide-out creates a worktop for prep and storage.

*Overhead of the Kuckoo Emma's indoor/outdoor kitchen slide, a feature derived from the larger Bruno trailer*



The Emma trades out the all-terrain tires included on the Bruno for smaller, smoother rubber and looks to be much better suited to pavement, and maybe the occasional smooth, flat dirt road, than full overlanding or gritty off-road primitive camping. Unlike the Bruno, it doesn't have a roof rack and the chances of being able to use the aluminum roof as a deck seem slim. But since the cabin itself offers nearly as much scenic, fresh-air design as an actual deck, it really doesn't need a separate deck space.

The preliminary Emma spec also includes a Dometic vent and optional electrical hardware. While sparsely equipped, the open design saves weight (and presumably price) and encourages campers to bring their own gear.



*The Kuckoo Emma squaredrop trailer peeks out to show one of its large, glass-doored entries*

#### **Kuckoo Camper**

Kuckoo will continue developing and testing the Emma this year and plans to launch it for order in early 2024. It has not listed pricing yet, but as a

reference, the larger Bruno trailer starts at €17,490 (approx. US\$18,675).

Source: [Kuckoo Camper](#) (German)

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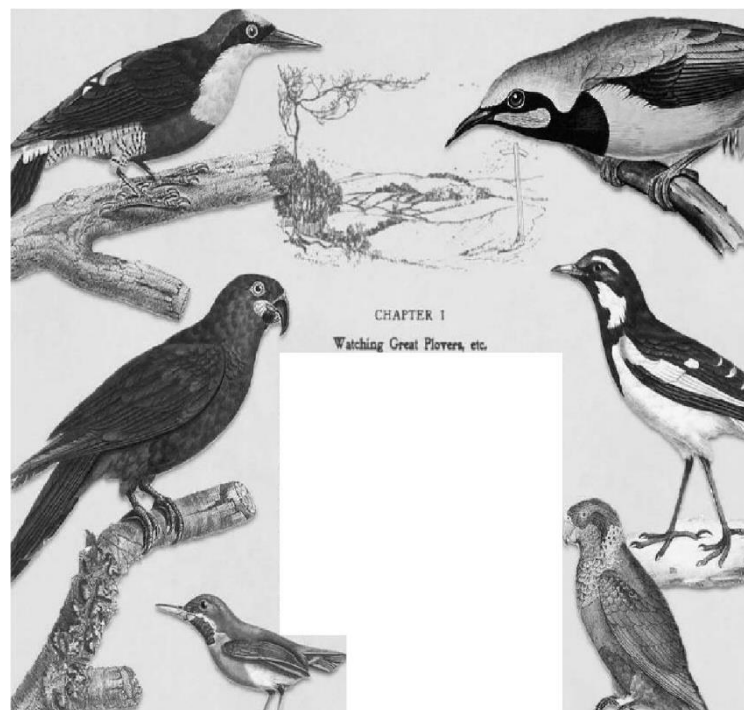
## HOW BIRD COLLECTING EVOLVED INTO BIRD WATCHING

**In the early 1900s, newfound empathy for avian creatures helped wildlife observation displace dispassionate killing.**

Tim Birkhead

Author, *Birds and Us*, August 8, 2022

Ornithologist Edmund Selous made empathy for birds respectable and, in doing so, changed the world. Bird-watching became a popular pastime, eventually making birding scientific and playing a pivotal role in the animal's conservation.



*Illustration by Meilan Solly | Photos via Biodiversity Heritage Library*

Hunting and collecting have long been obsessions among the wealthy, whether it be Egyptian pharaohs fowling in the marshes and filling their tombs with artifacts, Inca chiefs with their menageries, or early modern Europeans like Ole Worm and Francis Willughby cramming their cabinets with curiosities. The obsession with bird collecting in the 1800s and 1900s was a continuation of this trend but much more widespread, because by this date, a higher proportion of people in Europe had the wealth and time to collect. Both then and now, acquisition and accumulation often reflected deep-rooted cravings for status.

Through the 1700s, easier travel and better firearms encouraged the collecting of wildlife. By the start of the 1800s, the making of collections—of bird skins and



birds' eggs—had become increasingly popular. This was how ornithology was done at the time: Having a specimen to examine, measure, keep and refer back to whenever necessary was the essence of scientific bird study. The aim was to understand the relationships between different species via a comparison of the external (and sometimes internal) characteristics. Birds were shot (with dust shot for small birds), skinned and prepared as a "study skin" (rather than a lifelike mounted specimen) that would fit tidily inside a cabinet drawer.

But it was science that gave bird collecting its biggest boost. Like other 19th-century ornithologists, Edmund Selous killed birds to study them. Almost everyone interested in birds collected specimens in this way, but in June 1898, when Selous was 40 years old, he had an epiphany while watching a pair of European nightjars.

Magical and enigmatic, the nightjar's perfectly patterned plumage provides exquisite camouflage while it's on the ground, as Selous discovered as he stared out from his hide (a sheltered hiding place). He knew there was a bird incubating in front of him, but it took over an hour before he "finally became convinced it was the bird and not a piece of fir-bark at which I was looking; and this though I knew the eggs to be there." Thrilled by what he had seen, he wrote in an observational diary, "I must confess that I once belonged to this great, poor army of killers, though, happily, a bad shot, a most fatigable collector, and a poor half-hearted bungler, generally. But now that I have watched birds closely, the killing of them seems to me as something monstrous and horrible."

He continued:

*The pleasure that belongs to observation and inference is, really, far greater than that which attends any kind of skill or dexterity, even when death and pain add their zest to the latter. Let anyone who has an eye and a brain (but especially the latter), lay down the gun and take up the glasses [opera glasses, or proto-binoculars] for a week, a day, even for an hour, if he is lucky, and he will never wish to change back again. He will soon come to regard the killing of birds as not only brutal, but dreadfully silly, and his gun and cartridges, once so dear, will be to him, hereafter, as the toys of childhood are to the grown man.*





*Study skins of Eurasian jays (Garrulus glandarius) at the Museum fur Naturkunde in Berlin LoKiLeCh via Wikimedia Commons*

Selous made empathy for birds respectable and, in doing so, changed the world. Birdwatching became one of the most popular pastimes globally, eventually making birding scientific and playing a pivotal role in the animals' conservation. Dispassionate killing was gradually displaced in favor of a gentler, more intimate approach whose aim was to better understand the nature of a bird's world. It was a shift enhanced, naturally, by the appearance of decent binoculars, which in the early 1900s enabled watchers to observe birds from a distance without disturbing them.

As the interest in watching birds rather than shooting them increased, a view espoused by ornithologist Max Nicholson came to dominate the field. Nicholson believed that birdwatching should be "useful," and he wanted bird-watchers to direct their energies toward an even greater understanding of birds' behaviors, especially in terms of their numbers-and so started the practice of monitoring bird populations.

A second boost to birdwatching came in 1940, in the early days of the Second World War, with James Fisher's *Watching Birds*, a book that eventually sold over a million copies and which, in its introduction, emphasized the variety of people

then engaged in the hobby. For those directly involved in the war, watching birds was a welcome distraction during the long, boring intervals between fighting. And for those confined in German prisoner-of-war camps, birds provided a much-needed antidote to boredom and despair.



*A puffin on Skomer Island in WalesNaff14 via Wikimedia Commons*

One of the servicemen who took solace in birds was John Buxton, who had served as warden of Skokholm Bird Observatory in 1939 with his wife Marjorie. Captured in Norway in May 1940, Buxton spent the rest of the war in various prison camps, where he encouraged fellow inmates to watch and record the behavior of the different birds they could see. From his camp, Buxton wrote to Erwin Stresemann, Germany's leading ornithologist, who in a wonderful gesture of collegiality responded by sending books and bird bands (rings placed around a bird's leg to help identify them) to help with their studies. A true scholar-he had been partway through a graduate degree at Oxford at the outbreak of war-Buxton subsequently transformed the mass of notes accumulated by his fellow prisoners into a monograph on the common redstart that was published in 1950.

Once the war was over, interest in birds metamorphosed from a "comparatively rare eccentricity into a national pastime," according to a 2007 history in the journal *British Birds*. As it did so, two increasingly distinct strands-that Nicholson would have identified as either purposeful (censusing) or aimless (birding)-started to emerge: surveys versus listing or keeping a list of every bird the watcher has seen. In a way, such a divide was inevitable. As more and more people became interested in birds, it was unrealistic to expect them all to engage in something "useful." "But now that I have watched birds closely, the killing of them seems to me as something monstrous and horrible."

This emerging ornithological watershed generated some strong feelings,



exemplified by the Reverend Peter Hartle a professional ornithologist who in 1954 declared that "[n]on-scientific birdwatching ... is simply lazy, incompetent and slovenly bird-watching." In response, Denis Summers-Smith, an amateur who eventually became Britain's leading expert on sparrow research, countered by saying that birdwatching "is no more slovenly ... than going to a concert without a score." He added, "[M]any are not suited to carry out scientific studies or read scores. Should we criticize them for the pleasure they get from birds or music?"

The battle between Hartley and Summers-Smith was symptomatic of birding's ongoing bumpy descent through the social hierarchy. In the 1800s and early 1900s, only the wealthy could afford a serious interest in birds. Even in the 1950s, birdwatching continued to be dominated by those "that held sway in most departments of cultural life" in Britain-that is, mainly upper-class white males, as Mark Cocker writes in *Birders: Tales of a Tribe*. But by the 1970s and '80s, as interest in birds continued to expand, most birders "came from the same broad social background-the working and middle classes."

Over succeeding decades, birding became more genteel. The days of skulking in the undergrowth with binoculars are a thing of the past, for most birders today are conveyed along wooden boardwalks toward cosy hides to watch birds in comfort. Since the 1960s, the ongoing expansion of higher education across much of the world has resulted in more and more women taking university courses in biology and zoology and becoming professional ornithologists.



*A group of bird-watchers in Panama in 2012 Alex Proimos via Wikimedia Commons*

Worldwide, tens of millions of people have an interest in birds. Because there's no



precise definition of what a birder is, there's no precise figure. It is telling, however, that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the United Kingdom has more members than all U.K. political parties combined.

The irony of all this is that as the number of people interested in birds has boomed, the number of birds worldwide has steadily declined, in large part due to habitat loss and overexploitation. More and more people are in search of fewer and fewer birds. The good news is that the increase in the number of birders, together with stunning technological developments like online database eBird and migration tracking project ICARUS, are transforming many different forms of birding, giving them purpose, and enhancing our knowledge of bird biology on a scale no one could have imagined even 20 years ago.

*Adapted from Birds and Us: A 12,000-Year History from Cave Art to Conservation by Tim Birkhead. Published by Princeton University Press. Copyright© 2022 by Tim Birkhead. All rights reserved.*

*Editors Note: Edmund Selous was Frederick Selous' younger brother.*

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## CREATING A WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY WHERE TWITCHERS CAN FLOCK TOGETHER - BIRDA'S JOHN AND NATALIE WHITE

Linda van Tilburg



*Many South Africans take our abundant bird species for granted. Driving through Kruger looking for animals and ticking off the Big Five while our parents are more excited about the featured beauties in the trees is likely to be something familiar to*

*most of us. As we get a bit older and travel elsewhere, we often start appreciating the avian treasures South Africa has been blessed with. In fact, South Africa boasts almost 900 of the world's 10,906 bird species, as recorded by Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. Armed with this knowledge and the realisation that there are millions of very keen birdwatchers across the world, one estimate puts the number at 45 million in the USA, John White, originally from Kwazulu-Natal, and his wife, Natalie, launched an app called Birda to bring the birdwatching or "twitchers" as they are*



*commonly known together in a shared community. White told BizNews that he drew inspiration from apps like Strava, which caters to the cycling community, and Fishbrain, a platform that connects avid fishermen and his team are building an online space where bird enthusiasts from around the world can connect with one another, share their sightings, and explore the best birdwatching spots. – Linda van Tilburg*

### **Connecting people to the natural world with a social niche app**

Birda is basically an app which at its core is about connecting people with the natural world. The idea is that we use bird watching to do that. But, basically, spending time in nature makes us happier and healthier, and we know that if we spend time exploring and appreciating our wild places, then we're more likely to want to fight to protect them. We've built an app that brings all those things together with a community with some fun stuff like challenges and badges and learning, too, so you can learn about various species that we have all over the world. In many respects, it's similar to other social niche apps, so, the likes of Strava and Fishbrain have basically taken a niche and built features and functionality that are specific to that niche and then layered that on top of the social platform. So, it's quite different from a regular app, but that's not to say we don't have a lot of those features and functionality built in. We've got the likes of a field guide and a species logging and where to maintain your species list of all the offers that she's seen and that sort of thing.

### **Advantages of an app rather than a bird-watching group on a social platform**

Imagine you're trying to keep a list of everything that you've seen. To try and do that on Twitter is just impossible. You can share what you've seen once off, but there's no way that these big social platforms can basically build all sorts of features and functionality specific to our niche, which is birdwatching. So, that's what we do. When you see something, and you post, say, a European robin, rather than it just being a simple post that has shown people, a record has been created, and we know that you've seen a European Robin on a specific day and then that enters your species list. There's a whole lot of additional stuff that we do, that generic social media platforms don't do.

### **A freemium model with challenges to get people involved**

We've got a number of ways that we're going to monetise the platform. The app itself, we are running by what's called the freemium model, where the majority of the platform is free. There'll be specific power user features and functionality that we will probably charge for in the future and then we also work with brands that want to get exposure to communities like birdwatchers and we do stuff like sponsored



challenges and that sort of thing where a brand will want to get in front of our audience and a really good and effective way for them to do that is to run a challenge and to get people involved. It's a very different advertising proposition than traditional advertising, where you are just showing somebody an ad and you hope that they see it and click on it. This is getting people engaged in something that the brand is representing, which we think is really powerful, and it's been shown to work really effectively with the likes of Strava.

### **Cooperation with BirdLife South Africa and a project to create bird names in all 11 official languages.**

We met with BirdLife South Africa, which was the catalyst to finding our current investor. We met with them just to show them the product, explain what we are doing, and get some of their buy-in to what we're trying to build. There's quite a lot of taxonomic, scientific-type stuff for which we wanted their guidance. Off the back of that meeting, a separate person came to meet with BirdLife South Africa, and... he put us in touch with our current investor. So, that's how it all started. BirdLife South Africa has been amazing. They have supported us the whole way. We are now doing some work with them to try and help them fundraise for a project. They're creating bird names for all 11 official languages. So, rather than taking the English name for a species and doing a pure translation, they're getting experts in every language to come up with either the traditional names or develop names for all 900 species you get in South Africa, which we think is an absolutely awesome project. If you want people to get involved with birdwatching, the first step is to have names in their mother tongues. So, it's going to be amazing for birdwatching in South Africa going forward for the names to be in all eleven official languages.

### **Plans to launch globally with data available to scientists**

We built the platform to work globally. So, we are currently focusing on Europe and the United States of America, and Southern Africa. Our species guide is complete or relatively complete in those areas, and we'll be building out the other regions as we get traction in different regions. It's designed to work globally.

We're submitting all the data that people collect, all the sightings data to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). They are essentially a repository of all biological information. Any record that people record of a bird sighting gets sent off and can be used by conservation researchers.... and then researchers can say, I would like to see bird sightings of the European robins in the UK, and they can get a data set of those and download research off the back of it, which is really important.

## A RARE ENCOUNTER WITH THE CRESTED EAGLE

by [LIBOR VAICENBACHER](#)

Published on February 16, 2023

Most who visit the lowland tropical forest for the first time will be surprised to find that, despite popular documentaries, it appears rather empty. You can walk for hours in the green gloom and not find a single big animal. It makes it all the more rewarding when an encounter finally occurs.

*NIKON D200 + 17-50mm  
f/2.8 @ 17mm, ISO 100,  
1/180, f/8.0*

Although you might think that humanity and our relentless expansion is to blame, this is not the case.



Early explorers and biologists such as Alexander von Humboldt reported similar stories of waiting and searching long hours for their subjects.

The causes of this phenomenon are many. For example, a large proportion of the animals in the tropical rainforest live their lives in the higher levels of the treetops, where they easily escape our attention. It's also the case that some species specialize so strongly for a particular type of food that they spread out over vast areas rather than congregating together in well-known spots.

The jungle thus resembles an expensive box of chocolate full of candies, each of which is represented by only one or two pieces. You might enjoy a piece or two each day, but it will be a while before you can indulge again.

If, like Forrest Gump, I was to stick with the box of chocolate metaphor, the rarest chocolates you can come across are apex predators. They have to be very scarce if the forest is to sustain them. In South America, the trio that rules the water, land, and air are the Anaconda, Jaguar, and Harpy Eagle.

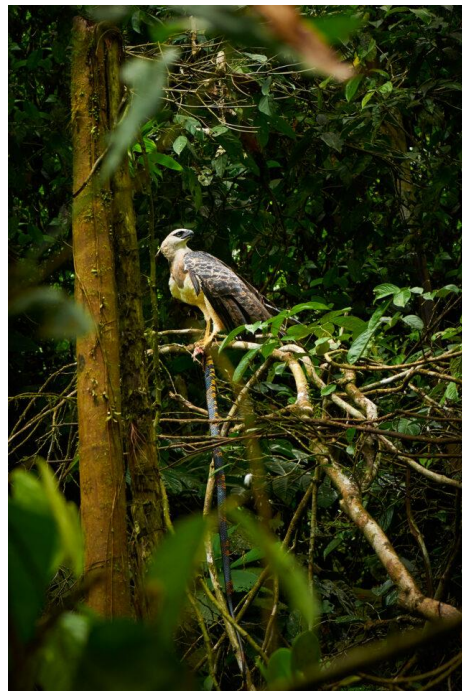
Let me take you back to a time 13 years ago when I walked one of the rainforest paths in northeastern Ecuador. A borrowed Nikon D300 camera with a Nikon 105mm f/2.8 macro lens was hanging around my neck at the time. In fact, my own D300 had

already involuntarily passed into someone else's possession.

Mostly, I photographed the small animals of the forest floor or simply contented myself to observe the forest around me. Sometimes that, too, is a welcome change. In the forest understory, I was looking for army ants, but that day, I had no luck. As I slowly made my way back to camp, suddenly there was the sound of massive wings. You don't hear that sound very often in the rainforest. I turned to follow the sound, and what I saw nearly took my breath away. Not far from me, some fifteen, maybe twenty meters away, a huge raptor perched on a branch. A Crested Eagle!

*NIKON D300 + Nikon AF-S VR Micro-Nikkor  
105mm f/2.8G IF-ED @ 105mm, ISO 1000,  
1/200, f/7.1*

It was sitting on a branch, looking at me with its piercing gaze and its prey, the Tiger Rat Snake, was hanging from its jaws. Adults of this snake can reach nearly three meters in length. The photo above shows that the eagle decapitated the snake, which is hanging from the branch.



Decapitating a snake sounds brutal, but it's a fairly common behavior in raptors. One reason may be that decapitation guarantees that the prey is safely dead. Other studies claim that it makes it easier for the young to devour larger prey. So, it's quite possible that the eagle in the photo is a male on his way to the nest with a snack for his chick.

More than that, I'll never know, because after a few moments, the eagle took off again with its precious cargo. I was left in the forest, stunned by its majesty. Even after thirteen years since that encounter, the memory of that moment hasn't faded, and I am still amazed I had time to capture the photograph I share with you above.





*NIKON D300 + 140-420mm f/5.6 @ 260mm, ISO 250, 1/400, f/8.0*

Back then, I regretted not having a longer lens on my camera, but today I am glad that I got the snake in the photo, too. In any case, just getting a photo of this bird is one of my highlights as a photographer. The bird

identification guide that I use in the field says: “Any day with a Crested Eagle deserves a gold star.” I have nothing to add to that!

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## CUCKOO COMMUNICATIONS

### WHATSAPP

CBC has two WhatsApp groups.

1. **Cuckoo Lifts** where people can offer or ask for lifts to meetings, outings etc. If you are letting an organiser know that you are attending a particular outing, please **Direct Message** – either from the group or using your normal contacts.
2. **Cuckoo Bird Club News** group is for Club news, updates for Club meetings, outings etc. Members are welcome to share special sightings, ask for birding advice ... etc but it isn't a general chat platform.

If you are not on the WhatsApp groups, please send a WhatsApp message to Bev Williams (with your name) so she can add you. Let her know which group(s) you want to join.

### FACEBOOK 'Cuckoo Bird Club'

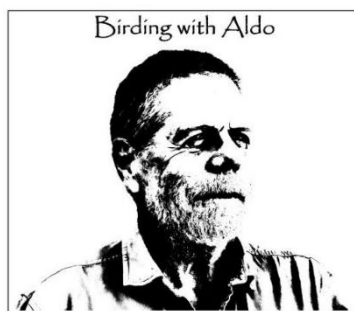
The CBC Facebook group is a Public Group – anyone can see the group and follow it.

If you want to be able to post content, there are a couple of questions you need to answer which will be asked automatically, and then one of the admins will either approve you as able to post or not.

To find the group you can either just do a search for “Cuckoo Bird Club”, or the link is <https://web.facebook.com/groups/1439497636373229>



## ***Birding with Aldo* online birding courses**



**Birding with Aldo** is now three years old, dating from early Covid days, and I now offer an incredible 13 courses. I cater for beginners and more advanced birders. My online Zoom courses comprise 1-3 sessions, are small, interactive, engaging with annotation, polls, comparisons, videos, vocalisations and chat room. Each session is person-centred, focussing on how to become a birder rather than trying to rote-learn endless characters for each species. I have devised unique protocols which will change your birding. You can review any session afterwards through a time-limited link to recorded sessions and you receive a permanent pdf copy.

My courses are **SUPERB** value for money, with discounts for pensioners.

***Cisticolas*** 3 April (Single R150, 2 or more R250, Pensioners R100 & R200 respectively)

***Pipits & Longclaws*** 5 April (Single R150, 2 or more R250, Pensioners R100 & R200)

***Larks*** 11 & 12 April (Single R250, 2 or more R350, Pensioners R200 & R300)

***Western Cape*** 17, 19 & 20 April Single R375, 2 or more R525, Pensioners R275 & R375)

***Begin Birding with Aldo*** 8, 10 & 11 May Single R375, 2 or more R525, Pensioners R275 & R375)

***Bring Birds to your Garden*** 19, 20, 21 June Single R375, 2 or more R525, Pensioners R275 & R375)

To book a course, go to my website [www.birdingwithaldo.com](http://www.birdingwithaldo.com) or if you have queries please contact me directly on [birdingwithaldo@gmail.com](mailto:birdingwithaldo@gmail.com)

Choose a path for beginners. Start with ***Begin Birding with Aldo*** and then follow on with two more courses; ***Wetlands with Aldo*** and then either ***Kruger with Aldo*** or ***Western Cape With Aldo***. Or tackle specialist courses - the ever-popular ***Raptors***, ***two new favourites Larks*** and ***Longclaws and Pipits***, and the brand-new course ***Cisticolas***.

My Facebook pages ***Birding with Aldo*** and ***Birding with Aldo Participants*** offer a daily "Bird of the Day" challenge for your identification skills. This freebie feature has



become a staple for many people to start their day!



My courses bring out the best of ZOOM and are relaxing, comfortable and thoroughly professional. I love sharing my birding with others. I draw on 58 years of experience, but I remember clearly my early birding struggles and strive to make birding as accessible as possible.

Come and join me on a course!

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### **Web Pages**

I think we knew this about birding and birdsong, but an interesting read.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-01-05-birdsong-benefits-mental-health-study-finds/>

Evolution on your doorstep!

<https://theconversation.com/large-mammals-shaped-the-evolution-of-humans-heres-why-it-happened-in-africa-196398>

For those of us who dream of the ultimate photo...

[15 Beautiful Bird Photographs That Will Make Your Day](#)

I have a soft spot for the tardigrade. Here's an update. You heard about him first in the SCC Newsletter!

<https://newatlas.com/biology/toughest-animal-save-life>

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### **EDITOR'S CHIRP**

A new year and some changes, which we hope you will find useful and informative.

First, thanks to the contributors – Dennis, Debbie, Mo and Heather (I hope I haven't missed anyone out!)

The newsletter will now be distributed every three months. This means that the speaker,



trips and days out notifications will appear less often.

A better solution has been found – Debbie Jennings has been sending out info as it comes along. Together with the Facebook and Whatsapp social media, this means that everyone can find out about our events.

This is consequently quite a long edition; I hope you'll find something of interest. Skip the ones that aren't. And please let me have your comments on the newsletter: negative feedback is helpful, so don't hold back. Positive feedback is welcome!

And if you have any questions, please note the Cuckoo info email address.

Remember to send in articles and photos for inclusion in the newsletter.

We're lucky to have Heather to supply us with excellent photos of days out and trips, but your co-birders are interested in where you've been and what birds you've seen. It doesn't have to be a long article – a few sentences is enough if you haven't time for more.

I feel the first cool mornings and evenings of winter, but this is a good time for birding. The leaves are off the trees and even if your birding only extends to the garden, how lucky we are to be able to sit in the sun during the day watching a well-stocked bird feeder.

Happy birding, everyone!

Ed.



## COMMITTEE

Chair	Dennis Townsend (Acting)
Secretary	Mo Bellis
Treasurer	Alex Jennings
Day Outings	Bev Williams
Weekends Away	Marion Melville
Speakers	Debbie Jennings (Acting)
Newsletter	Penny Clemson
News Flashes	Debbie Jennings (Acting)

## OFFICE BEARERS

Facebook Page	Bev Williams
WhatsApp	Bev Williams
Equipment	Lester Niss
Mid-month Outings	Lester Niss
Technical Support/Online Host	Mike Hamilton

## BANKING DETAILS

Cuckoo Bird Club  
Standard Bank Sandton  
City Branch code 051 001  
Account number 023 212 934

**CONTACT:**      [info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za](mailto:info@thecuckoobirdclub.org.za)



## NOTES

1. This newsletter is for members of the (Slightly) Cuckoo Bird Club only. It is not intended to be passed on to people outside the club.
  2. To opt out of receiving mail from the Cuckoo Bird Club, please send an email to [dennis.townsend4@gmail.com](mailto:dennis.townsend4@gmail.com) with the title: **Opt Out/Unsubscribe**
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