

FAMILIAR CHAT

June 2007



Newsletter of Birdlife Botswana
Private Bag 003#348,
Mogoditshane,
Gaborone

Dear Friends,

When I was asked to take over as editor of the Familiar Chat I was very apprehensive. However I have enjoyed every minute of producing the Chat, but as I am also the Treasurer for the association I feel that it is time to let go. The new editor will be Eugenie Skelton. Eugenie will need lots of support and contributions from the members, her email address is skelton@home.co.bw.

We bid a sad farewell to Bruce and Polly Hargreaves who will be missed as their input on flora on our walks and talks was always valued.

Whilst I was walking in our garden I thought I saw a baby Chinspot Batis, with which the male and female were frolicking in our *Pappea Capensis*, but after double checking in the books I discovered it was a Fairy Flycatcher!

The *Pappea Capensis* (Jacket Plum) is in full flower (again) and attracting hundreds of flies, small bees, wasps, butterflies, and other succulent insects. Apart from the delightful Fairy Flycatcher there are many other diners visiting.

The Editor
Daphne Goldsworthy

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<i>Illustrations by kind permission of Kenneth Newman</i>	



Photo - Mike Goldsworthy

Fairy Flycatcher May 2007

IF ANYONE CAN

Canon

CAN

Owls in your garden

Owls, once sighted frequently are becoming more and more scarce as their natural habitats decrease because of expanding developments. Their numbers are also declining due to secondary poisoning and road deaths. How much difference could a pair of breeding owls really make?

In an article in Farmers Weekly in 1993, Neil Curry reported that a pair of barn owls can catch more than 3000 mice a year. Because a single mouse can eat three to four kilograms of grain or seed a year, this will save you up to 10 tons of grain or seed per year!

Barn Owls are ideal as they regulate their breeding to suit the food supply. In the case of a rodent explosion, the owls will breed rapidly to take advantage of it. A pair of barn owls can rear 10 or more chicks in a single breeding cycle. Each chick is able to eat up to 10 mice per day, thus keeping the rodent numbers in check.

But in many farming areas, the natural predators of rodent have been eliminated. This is where owl nesting boxes come in handy to attract the owls. It is important to remember that rodent poison is deadly to owls too. So rodenticides and poisons that are harmful to birds of prey should not be used.

Owls are sensitive to high frequency sounds made by rats, hares, shrews, frogs and lizards on the ground - all of which make an excellent owl dinner.

To encourage Owls to your garden owl nesting boxes can be built, the boxes can be attached to the side of a building but the ideal spot is in a tall tree.

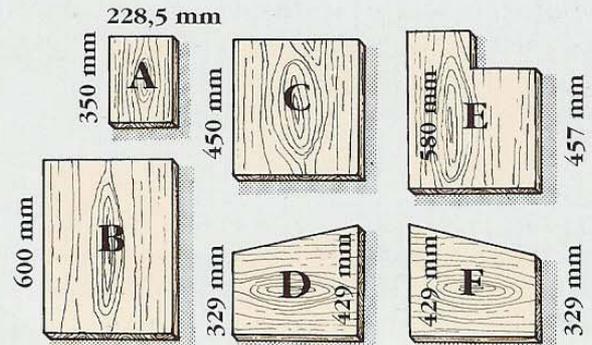


BARN OWL NEST-BOX

The Barn Owl requires a fairly large box in which to lay its eggs and rear its chicks.

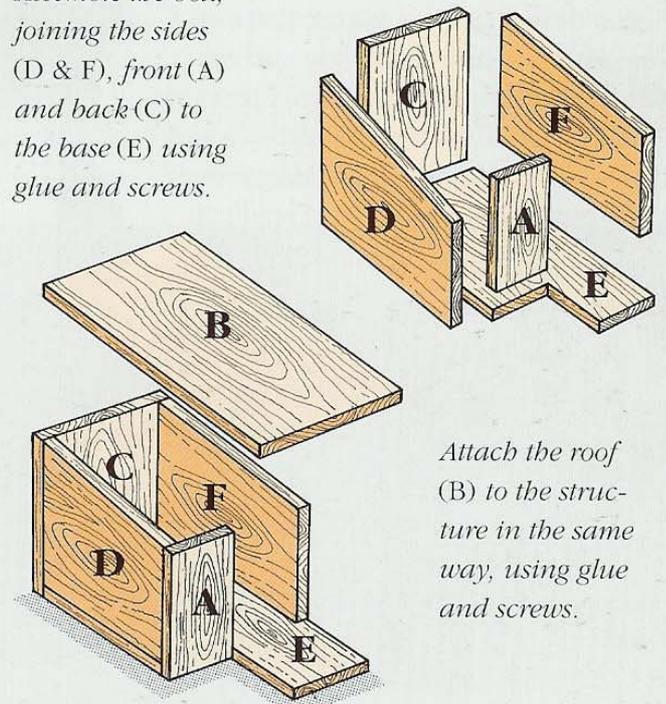
Materials:

1 x 2700 mm x 457 mm x 21 mm length of pine wood
wood glue
20 brass screws (4,5 mm x 30 mm)
3 mm wood drill bit
yacht varnish



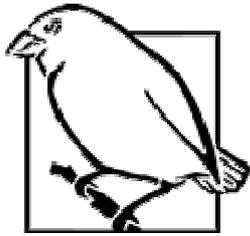
Cut the 2700 mm length of pine into six pieces (A-F) as illustrated.

Assemble the box, joining the sides (D & F), front (A) and back (C) to the base (E) using glue and screws.



Attach the roof (B) to the structure in the same way, using glue and screws.

Varnish the exterior of the box three times, sanding lightly between each coat. Place the nest under the eaves of a roof or in the fork of a tree where it is shaded and secluded.



Darwin Initiative



Convention on Biological Diversity: BirdLife Botswana and other Partners given a boost

BirdLife International has launched an ambitious project to boost the ability of developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) [1] [2]. With funding from the UK Government's Darwin Initiative, the project will strengthen the scientific capacity of national conservation NGOs, enabling them to carry out the data gathering and analysis which the effective implementation of the CBD depends on. [3]

Initial training will centre on staff from six BirdLife Partner organisations, each from a different region of the world. These individuals will in turn train staff within their organisations and from other national NGOs within their region.

The six BirdLife Partners and the regions they represent are Armonia (BirdLife in Bolivia), the Americas; **BirdLife Botswana, Africa**; Society for the Protection of Nature and Natural Resources in Lebanon, the Middle East; Bird Conservation Nepal, Asia; Palau Conservation Society, the Pacific; and the Russian Bird Conservation Union, Europe.

These countries are rich in biodiversity. Compared to the 278 native bird species in the UK, Bolivia has 1,439, Nepal 826, Russia 677, **and Botswana 528**. They have high numbers of threatened or near threatened birds: 76 in Bolivia, 72 in Russia, 50 in Nepal, compared with 7 in the UK. And they are poor in resources, with less than \$10,000 GDP per capita, compared to \$29,600 in the UK.

All six countries are Parties to the CBD, but many struggle to meet their obligations for implementation, reporting and monitoring. In developing countries where some BirdLife Partners have already set up national liaison frameworks [4], the demand from Governments for relevant and reliable biodiversity information has proved strong. Birds are recognised as excellent and cost-effective biodiversity indicators for priority-setting and monitoring, because of their ecological attributes and the ease with which relevant data can be collected.

The project will work on several levels; improving the capacity and confidence of national NGOs to undertake applied science and transfer these results to policy processes in support of their Governments. This will lead to more effective national implementation of the CBD; leading ultimately to an improvement in the status and sustainable use of host country biological diversity.

The project has four main components: training via science internships to enhance knowledge and skills in priority data-gathering and analyses (especially related to key biodiversity areas and bird indicators); demonstration projects linking scientific results to policy mechanisms to improve the implementation of the CBD; sharing experience in developing national, regional and global conservation datasets and information; and communicating through a variety of different outputs to reach key target audiences. [5] [6] [7]

“This project has been designed with impact and legacy very much in mind” —Alison Stattersfield, Head of Science at BirdLife International

“This project has been designed with impact and legacy very much in mind,” said Alison Stattersfield, Head of Science at BirdLife International. “For example, we have selected partners which we believe have great potential to further develop their scientific capacity and improve conservation outcomes as a result. We will develop a training programme which will both build and transfer skills over three years, and a set of activities which will become embedded into on-going programmes once the Darwin funding comes to an end.”

The involvement of UK-based personnel will be gradually scaled down as the project progresses, with leadership and further training being taken on by the host country coordinators, who will act as regional ‘hubs’ for training the staff of other national BirdLife Partners. At the end of the project, partner staff will have received sufficient support through hands-on training and workshops, not only to continue the activities on their own but also to serve as a resource for others nationally, including government staff and other conservation NGOs.

Notes for Editors

1. BirdLife International is a global alliance of conservation organisations working in more than 100 countries who, together, are the leading authority on the status of birds, their habitats and the issues and problems affecting them.
2. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), agreed upon at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, entered into force in 1993. It is a global treaty with three objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources. The Convention has been ratified by 187 countries.
3. The Darwin Initiative is a small grants programme that aims to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources in less developed countries. The initiative is funded and administered by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.
4. National liaison frameworks, such as committees with both NGO and Government participation, are being set up by BirdLife Partners to coordinate conservation planning, action and monitoring, and ensure that decisions are informed by the best available data.
5. With support, guidance and mentoring from the Cambridge BirdLife Secretariat staff, trainees from the focal host country partners will: **(i)** Identify the relevant scientific work and demonstration projects most needed to support their country's implementation of the CBD and their training requirements to undertake this; **(ii)** Establish demonstration projects to develop national datasets to underpin scientific reports and link the analyses and results to appropriate policy mechanisms; **(iii)** Lead regional workshops to share experiences and lessons learned with other BirdLife Partner Organisations; and **(iv)** Make all project materials available including over their websites. The six focal partners will be fully involved in all four sequential stages of the project.
6. The 'Analysis Guide' (one of the key outputs) will ensure that scientific analyses undertaken by the demonstration projects can be repeated as new data become available, thereby enabling monitoring and updating of scientific reports. It will also allow the project to be replicated by other organisations, with each of the participating organisations acting as a regional 'hub' for training staff at other NGOs.
7. The results of the project will be widely disseminated in training materials, reports and on websites with appropriate links to the CBD's Clearing House Mechanism (of which BirdLife is an International Thematic Focal Point). A critical aspect of this project will be the linkage of scientific information to the policy mechanisms relevant to the implementation of the CBD (which are themselves being explored through another BirdLife Darwin Initiative project).

This guy is in a plane when he feels thirsty. He calls the stewardess and asks her politely for a large whiskey. There's a parrot in the seat next to him who snaps, "A double scotch and make it quick". "Yes ,sir" the stewardess says, and quickly gets the bird his drink - but ignores the guy.

The parrot downs his in one gulp, and says "gimme another". The stewardess gets him a second drink, ignoring the guy again. The guy, meanwhile has been asking for his drink very politely. He decides to use the parrot's tactics and snarls at the stewardess, "You @#*\$# hag, get me my bloody scotch!". Suddenly a large co-pilot comes out of the cockpit and ejects both the guy and the parrot off the plane.

As they're falling, the parrot turns to the guy and says "You know, you're quite brave for someone who can't fly...".

EAGLES

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Unscramble each of the clue words.

Take the letters that appear in ○ boxes and unscramble them for the final message.



Photo - Denise Goldsworthy

How a simple TV dinner contributes to Global Warming.

Your Pizza delivery time: 15 minutes
Distance travelled: +/- 80 697 kilometres (Food miles)

“Food miles”

A “Food mile” is the distance food travels from the farmer who produces it to the consumer who eats it.

And whether the food travels by truck, train, ship, or plane, the journey for each of our meals has used hundreds, even thousands, of litres of fuel – fuel that when burned produces carbon dioxide , the greenhouse gas scientists blame for global warming.

While scientist have been warning governments about climate change since the 1980’s, it’s only in the past decade or so that the world has started to take notice. Governments are realising that climate change will affect not only the natural environment, but people’s lives and the economy too.

When faced with a massive problem like this, it’s often difficult to see what we can each do to help put things right.

It’s hard to make the links between our own behaviour and global problems.

Taking a closer look at the hidden kilometres in the food we eat is one way of doing so. But it is worth stepping back and thinking about the origin of all the ingredients in a meal, and working out how far your food has travelled and how much fuel has been consumed along the way – and use this knowledge to make better choices about where and what you buy.

When we multiply our food miles by all the meals eaten daily by the planet’s six billion people, we get some understanding of the enormous amount of greenhouse gases that are pumped into the atmosphere every day, just by moving food around.

Greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, are a good thing in small amounts. They allow the sun’s heat to enter the atmosphere, and then, acting like a giant blanket, trap some of the heat that is radiated off the earth, in doing so supporting life. Scientists say that the enormous quantities burned since the 1800’s has increased so much that this blanket effect is raising the average temperature of the planet.

Let examine a pizza and salad meal eaten in Cape Town

Wheat	from Malmesbury	70 kms
	And Argentina	8000 kms
Tinned tomato	from Italy	9500 kms
Olives	from Italy	9500 kms
Anchovies	from Spain	9500 kms
Pineapple	from Kwa Zulu Natal	1750 kms
Mushrooms	from Gauteng	1450 kms
Mozzarella	from Gauteng	1450 kms
Avo	from Spain	9500 kms
Lettuce	from Paarl	50 kms
Onions	from Free State	1100 kms
Fresh tomatoes	from Israel	8500 kms
Cucumber	from Eastern Cape	850 kms
Feta cheese	from George	450 kms
Olive oil	from Spain	9500 kms
Balsamic vinegar	from Italy	9500 kms

This means that your pizza and salad ingredients travelled a whopping 80 670 km before you bought your meal. The 12 km round trip you made to the pizzeria, and the 15km round trip to the supermarket for salad ingredients, made up the smallest part of your food’s journey.

So your dinner’s food miles go up to about 80 697.

The distances shown do not take into account the kilometres that trucks and ships travelled to take fertilizers and fuel to the farmers, or the distance the milk travelled to the cheese factory, or the miles the fishing vessel sailed to catch the anchovies.

Food for thought.

So what can you do?

Simply walking to local shops, when possible,

and buying fresh ingredients to cook at home has an impact

We do not realise how powerful we could be in making small changes.

Do you know

Supermarkets have centralised systems, which means a litre of milk can travel 200km from a farm to be packaged centrally and then travel 200 km back again to be sold.

Many overseas countries subsidise farmers. This means their produce is sometimes cheaper than ours, so we import it over great distances - clocking up carbon emissions in the process.

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BirdLife Botswana

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www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw

Birdlife Botswana

Calendar of events for 2007		
Jun 3	Walk	Mogobane
Jun 9,10	Quarterly Camp	Bing's Farm – Tuli block – bird count
Jun 19	No committee meeting	
Jun 19	No Talk	
Jul 1	Walk	Gabane
Aug 5	Walk	Manyane
Aug 21	Committee meeting	
Aug 21	Talk	
Sep 2	Walk	Ramotswa
Sep 18	Committee meeting – no talk	
Sep 22	Annual dinner	Mark Anderson
Oct 7	Walk	Modipane
Oct 16	Committee meeting	
Oct 16	Talk	
Oct 20, 21	Quarterly Camp	
Nov 4	Little Birding Day	
Nov 20	Committee meeting	
Nov 20	Talk	
Nov 24	Birding Big Day	
Dec 2	Walk	Mokolodi
Dec 11	Committee meeting	

1. Gaborone Bird walks start at 06:30 October to April and 08:00 May to September. Meet at the museum.
2. All Gaborone talks take place at the Botswana Accountancy College at 19:30.
3. Francistown Branch will hold their meetings on the second Thursday of each month, meetings will take place at the Supa-Ngwao Museum. The museum is located at the corner of the first turn to the left as you travel from the Bulawayo roundabout towards the light industrial area.

Sitting on a branch overlooking the parking lot, the pigeons watched as a Mercedes pulled in below them.

"What do you think?" one bird said to the other.

"Should we put a deposit on that car?"

Birdlife Botswana

Maun membership activities 2007

Date	Activity	Person leading
13/6/07	Film – The Weaver’s Tale	K Oake
16 & 17/6/07	Field outing to Deception Valley	P Hancock
4/7/07	Film – Talons: the story of a Crowned Eagle	K Oake
7 & 8/7/07	African Waterbird Counts – Thamalakane and Boteti Rivers	T Maiphetho
16/7/07	African Waterbird Counts – Lake Ngami	P Hancock
23 & 24/7/07	African Waterbird Counts - Moremi	P Hancock
15/8/07	Film – Okavango Magic	P Hancock
18 & 19/8/07	Field outing – venue to be announced	P Hancock
12/9/07	Film – Birds and their ways	P Hancock
15 & 16/9/07	Field outing to Nxai Pan	P Hancock
10/10/07	Bird quiz	P Hancock
13 & 14/10/07	Field outing – venue to be announced	P Hancock
14/11/07	Film – Flying Devils	K Oake
20/11/07	Birding Big Day	
12/12/07	Film – Amazing behaviour of birds of the Kruger National park	P Hancock

Evening activities (talks, films *etc.*) are held at Maun Lodge starting at 19h00 unless otherwise indicated.

Field outings on weekends commence from the parking area outside Ngami Toyota. Exact details for outings (*e.g.* time of departure) are announced at the evening meeting prior to the field outing.

Additional activities may be scheduled depending on demand.

Contact P Hancock/T Maiphetho for further information – 6865618.

Birdlife Botswana

Kasane Calendar of events 2007

We plan to meet on either the last Saturday or Sunday of the month.

Date	Event	Remarks
	To be advised – check the website www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw	

Answer to Eagle Puzzle : TAWNY

Clues:

African Fish

Booted

Steppe

Snake

Ayres Hawk

African Hawk