

# Familiar Chat



	Pipits	Larks
<b>Build</b>	Slimmer, lighter	Dumpier, heavy-looking
<b>Bill</b>	Slender	Heavy, thicker (variable)
<b>Wings</b>	Narrower	Rounder/broader
<b>Tail</b>	Longer	Shorter
<b>Nostrils</b>	Fully exposed	Partially exposed (variable)

<https://birdcount.in/is-that-a-pipit-or-a-lark/>

Which species of lark is this? Or is it a pipit? How do you differentiate between the two groups of birds? Both are usually brown, variably streaked above and on the breast and often have patterns on the face.

## Limpopo Spring Camp

Our October camp on the Limpopo is almost upon us. The Rustenburg Club is joining us and have 21 confirmed campers.

We will be camping at Limpopo River Lodge on the weekend of the 19th and 20th of October. Anyone still interested should contact Ian White at <ianwhite2010@gmail.com>

We expect that, with the warm weather and the migrants arriving, it will be a fascinating weekend. We need all our experts to help find the Pels, Three-banded Courser, Boulder chats and others that the RBC members are eager to catch up with! We expect a number of the Acacia species to brighten up the bush while we wait for the summer rains too. Don't miss the chance to camp on the Limpopo river bank!

IMAGE FROM LIMPOPO RIVER LODGE WEBSITE



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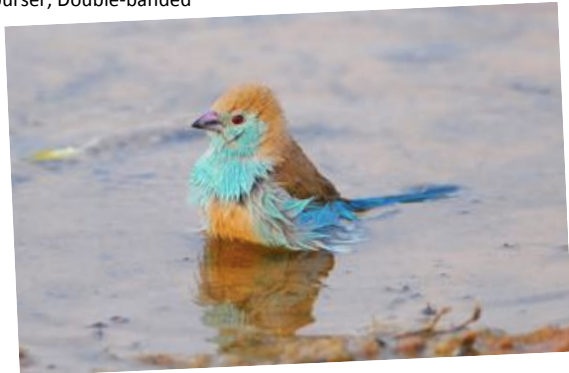
# Botsalano Mid-Winter Camp, 10-12

**A bunch of intrepid BLB stalwarts braved the -4°C night-time low to spot 77 species of bird just South of the Botswana border –**

- Barbet, Acacia Pied
- Barbet, Crested
- Batis, Chinspot
- Brubru
- Bulbul, African Red-eyed
- Bulbul, Dark-capped
- Bunting, Cinnamon-breasted
- Bunting, Golden-breasted
- Bustard, Kori
- Canary, Black-throated
- Canary, Yellow
- Chat, Ant-eating
- Cisticola, Rattling
- Cisticola, Zitting
- Courser, Double-banded



- Guineafowl, Helmeted
- Heron, Grey
- Hoopoe, African



- Crombec, Long-billed
- Crow, Pied
- Dove, Cape Turtle
- Dove, Laughing
- Dove, Namaqua
- Drongo, Fork-tailed
- Duck, Yellow-billed
- Finch, Red-headed

- Hornbill, African Grey
- Hornbill, Southern Yellow-billed
- Ibis, Hadeda
- Kite, Black-shouldered
- Korhaan, Northern Black
- Lapwing, Blacksmith
- Lapwing, Crowned



- Firefinch, Red-billed
- Fiscal, Southern (Shrike)
- Flycatcher, Fiscal

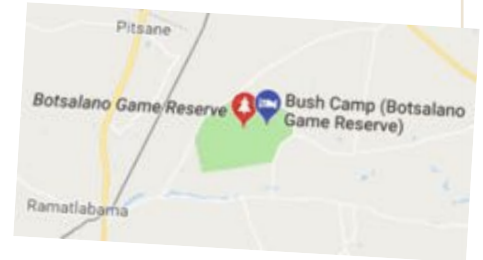
- Lark, Fawn-coloured
- Lark, Grey-backed Sparrow-
- Lark, Sabota



- Flycatcher, Marico
- Go-away-bird, Grey
- Goose, Egyptian

- Mousebird, Red-faced
- Neddicky
- Ostrich, Common

- Pigeon, Speckled
- Pipit, African
- Pipit, Plain-backed
- Prinia, Black-chested
- Prinia, Tawny-flanked
- Pytilia, Green-winged
- Quail-finch, African
- Quelea, Red-billed
- Robin-chat, White-browed
- Roller, Lilac-breasted
- Sandgrouse, Burchell's
- Scimitarbill, Common
- Shrike, Crimson-breasted
- Sparrow-weaver, White-browed
- Sparrow, Great
- Sparrow, Southern Grey-headed
- Spoonbill, African
- Spurfowl, Swainson's
- Starling, Cape Glossy
- Starling, Wattled



- Teal, Red-billed
- Thick-knee, Spotted
- Tit-babbler, Chestnut-vented
- Vulture, Lappet-faced
- Vulture, White-backed
- Waxbill, Black-faced
- Waxbill, Blue
- Waxbill, Violet-eared
- Weaver, Sociable
- Weaver, Southern Masked
- Whydah, Pin-tailed

With weather reports at our fingertips, we were fully aware about the temperatures that lay ahead for us in launching out on this BirdLife winter camp at Pioneer campsite in Botsalano Game Reserve near Mafeking in South Africa. However, nothing could have prepared us for just how bitter the first 12 hours were to be. On our first night the temperature plummeted to -4°C, and we woke to long icicles hanging from the shower rose! Some of the party had a torrid night, but all emerged with all our toes, fingers, nose-tips and good humour intact ... but only just!



The hardy campers were Gail and Floris Fortgens, Elizabeth and Werner Freigang, Harold Hester, Ian White, Mary Webb and visitor Pippa Cope from Groot Marico. Even more hardy than us, a group of birders from Rustenburg joined us, having set out from home at 5am! The birds emerged with us to thaw out in the warmth of the morning sun, and our morning walk to a nearby hide and dam was a rich feast of bushveld jewels. All of us will carry home the magic of a line up on

*(continued...)*



(Botsalano camp, continued...)

the shore of Black-cheeked, Blue and Violet-eared Waxbills, Redbilled Firefinches, Pythilia, Yellow canaries, Golden and Cinnamon-breasted Buntings all coming down to drink. A photographers' dream, one shot would capture 4 or 5 of these species together in a blaze of colour. It was a perfect opportunity for contributions to this year's calendar which is to feature these birds. We drove the park after a leisurely breakfast, and a steady flow of interest pushed up the range of species on our list to 77. The list of species held nothing of outstanding note birdwise – Kori Bustard, Black-chested Korhaan, Grey-backed Finch-lark, Lilac-breasted Roller, Lappet

faced and White-backed Vulture, African Pipit, African Quail-finch, Double-banded Coarser to mention a few. Of note were no raptors except for a Black-shouldered Kite. Prime raptor country, this absence was accounted for by the dominant presence of Pied Crows which are known for driving off other species. However, added to the birds there was a rich feast of antelope, wide unspoiled landscapes and vast Botswana-blue skies – food for the soul.

A much warmer night and another morning walk left us feeling the worth of more frequent BirdLife camps to this park. It is a venue strongly recommended to all. Under-utilised, but with much to offer, it is just 2.5 hours from Gaborone including the border, and offers 4 or 5 exclusive campsites at ridiculously low rates. Details can be provided by Ian White, or under North West parks website. For a quick and easy weekend getaway, add it to your list of places to explore. It was a delightful weekend, full of laughter, interest and natural beauty, and should persuade you to join our next camp!



## BOTSWANA'S 12 IBAs (IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS) – from North to South..

1 Chobe National Park, 2 Limyanti swamp / Chobe river, 3 Okavango Delta, 4 Lake Ngami, 5 Makgadigadi Pans, 6 Central Kalahari (Kgalagadi) and Khutse Game Reserves, 7 Tswapong Hills, 8 Bokaa Dam, 9 Phakalane sewage lagoons, 10 Mannyelanong Hills, 11 South-East Botswana, 12 Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

**Forest-dwelling bird species are disappearing from some of South Africa's indigenous forests, with forest birds in the Eastern Cape being the most affected.**



A new study, published in *Bird Conservation International* recently, showed that the ranges of 28 of South Africa's 57 forest-dwelling bird species were declining, while those of 22 species were increasing and seven remained stable.

The findings are based on 25 years of citizen science data collected by the Southern African Bird Atlas Project. The data can be used to indicate the conservation status of a species, depending on its known range and how it is changing. The first survey took place from 1987 to 1992, and the second survey started in 2007 and is ongoing.

Researchers from Stellenbosch University (SU) and South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs used data on 57 forest-dwelling species to investigate links between deforestation, species characteristics and range declines for these species over the last 20 years.

Indigenous forests make up less than one percent of South Africa's landscape, but are home to some 14% of the terrestrial birds, many of which are endemic or range-restricted. But these forest patches are highly fragmented, with most remaining forests being smaller than 1 km<sup>2</sup>.

Prof. Michael Cherry, a behavioural ecologist from SU and one of the co-authors, says they are particularly concerned about the disappearance of forest birds from indigenous forests in the Eastern Cape, and especially the former homelands of the Ciskei and Transkei. "Based on the data from the Atlas, we know that some bird species have disappeared from these forests. But we do not know whether this implies a decline in population or whether they are simply moving somewhere else".

"When a forest is destroyed or becomes degraded, the bigger and stronger bird species can fly elsewhere to find food and refuge. But smaller bird species could be stuck if there is not another forest patch within range."

Often plantations of alien trees, usually pine or gum, are closely associated with indigenous forests. These trees are planted so that they can be harvested either for timber or for pulp.

He says while some forest-bird species are able to benefit from plantations, others, such as the Bush Blackcap, the Yellow-throated Woodland-warbler and the Orange Ground-thrush, were lost from areas



***How to treat powdery mildew in your garden***

***What does this mean for me/my plants?***

Particularly new soft growth of plants is affected, but the microscopic spores will spread to the rest of the plant if not treated, or if in too much shade and the entire plant will be damaged and die

***Suggested Action***

Treat with a broad spectrum fungicide. Remove leaves that are infected and do not add to your compost heap. Visit a garden centre for advice on the best fungicide for you.

<https://www.lifeisagarden.co.za/gogga-of-the-month-september-powdery-mildew/>

"Plantations are unsuitable habitats for these species as they build nests in the understory of indigenous forest, which is vulnerable to trampling if cattle are allowed to graze there. This is often the case, as forests are not usually fenced unless they fall within park boundaries," he explains.

Currently Prof. Cherry leads a major research project, funded by the Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme, that will try to ground-truth the results of this study in the forests of the Eastern Cape. Research partners include four South African universities and six museums, as well as Harvard University in the United States of America.



*Species which suffered a direct impact because of loss of indigenous forests in the Eastern Cape include this White-starred Robin which was ringed by researchers from Stellenbosch University during their last field trip to the Transkei Mistbelt forests. Similarly-affected species are the African Goshawk, Southern Banded Snake-eagle, Bush Blackcap, African Wood Owl and Spotted Ground-thrush.*  
Credit: Jake Mulvaney.

During 2016 and 2017 the group has already undertaken three field trips to the Amathole and Transkei mistbelt forests and the Pondoland scarp forests, and another three field trips are in the pipeline. They are working not only on birds, but other animal groups as well.

"We predict that if birds -- perhaps the most mobile of animal taxa as they are able to fly relatively long distances between forest fragments -- are being negatively affected by forest degradation, then other animal species are likely to be worse affected," he says.

Indigenous forests are not only threatened by deforestation. Forests are also under pressure from rural communities who collect forest products for firewood, building materials, food and traditional medicines. "If humans and birds are targeting the same tree species as resources, then the quality of these resources declines for both," warns Cherry.

"The challenge is to develop a forest management policy which minimizes forest degradation to the benefit of both humans and birds," he concludes.

**Story Source:** Materials provided by [Stellenbosch University](#).

**Journal Reference:** TESSA J. G. COOPER, ANDREW. M. WANNENBURGH, MICHAEL I. CHERRY. **Atlas data indicate forest dependent bird species declines in South Africa.** *Bird Conservation International*, 2017; 1 DOI: [10.1017/S095927091600040X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S095927091600040X)

## Watching Birds Near Your Home is Good For Your Mental Health

By [Good News Network](#) - Jan 11, 2018 According to this study, people living in neighborhoods with more birds, shrubs, and trees are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and stress. The study conducted at the University of Exeter, involving hundreds of people, found benefits for mental health of being able to see birds, shrubs and trees around the home, whether people lived in urban or more leafy suburban neighborhoods.

The study, which surveyed mental health in over 270 people from different ages, incomes and ethnicities, also found that those who spent less time out of doors than usual in the previous week were more likely to report they were anxious or depressed. After conducting extensive surveys of the number of birds in the morning and afternoon in the study found that lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress were associated with the number of birds people could see in the afternoon.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...)

# Plants for birds

*Life is a garden filled with a healthy population of permanent and visiting bird species, so why not entice these lovely creatures into your garden this summer by planting the plants they love?*



## *Aloe species*

The flower spikes of aloes are loved by sunbirds. These succulent plants should be planted in sun in well composted soil



## *Tecoma capensis (Cape)*

(1.5m x 2.5m) This sprawling shrub is a fast grower with tubular shaped flowers that range in colour from yellow to salmon to orange. Not fussy about soil, it makes a good hedge plant as it is quite happy to be clipped. This plant should be placed in a sunny spot. The showy flowers are sought out by the nectar-eating birds



## *Acacia species (thorn trees)*

It is very worthwhile planting a variety of the indigenous Acacia species in your garden. Trees with thorns are very attractive to birds for nesting sites; the thorns deter predators and provide good foundations for nests. Acacias also provide food for birds in the form of worms, as a variety of butterfly larvae feed on their leaves.



Sunbird photo courtesy Ian White

<https://www.lifeisagarden.co.za/plants-for-birds/>

# Africa's vultures are sliding towards extinction warns BirdLife

By Adrian Long

"I can't imagine the African skies devoid of vultures", said Mark Anderson, Chief Executive, BirdLife South Africa. Can you?

Six of Africa's 11 vulture species – the continent's largest and most recognisable birds of prey – are now at a higher risk of extinction, according to the latest assessment of birds carried out by BirdLife International for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The main causes of the drop in African vulture populations are thought to be indiscriminate poisonings, where the birds are drawn to poisoned baits, use of vulture body parts in traditional medicine, and deliberate targeting by poachers, as the presence of vultures can alert authorities to illegally killed big game carcasses.

Dr Julius Arinaitwe, BirdLife International's Africa Programme Director, said: "As well as robbing the African skies of one of their most iconic and spectacular groups of birds, the rapid decline of the continent's vultures has profound consequences for its people – as vultures help stop the spread of diseases by cleaning up rotting carcasses."

*"However, now we are becoming aware of the sheer scale of the declines involved, there is still just enough time for conservationists to work with law-makers, faith-based organisations, government agencies and local people, to make sure there is a future for these magnificent scavengers."*

**We're not just going to sit around and watch vultures fall out of the sky.**

BirdLife Partners recently came together to take action for African vultures - [making a commitment to save 'Nature's clean-up crew'](#).

Patricia Zurita (BirdLife's Chief Executive) with Bradnee Chambers (Executive Secretary of the UNEP Convention on



the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)) [recently made a commitment to ensure that the plight of these essential creatures is made known to a global audience.](#)

It is high-time the world fully-appreciated the severity of this problem - for not only the birds themselves, but the health of the people of the continent.

"Vultures and other birds play a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems," said Simon Stuart, Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. "Their decline can have serious knock-on effects on other species and the many benefits provided by nature. While it is encouraging to see some positive outcomes of conservation action, this update is an important wake-up call, showing that urgent efforts need to be taken to protect these species."

Six species of African vultures have seen their status worsen:

**Hooded Vulture** [Necrosyrtes monachus](#): Endangered to CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

**White-backed Vulture** [Gyps africanus](#): Endangered to CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

**White-headed Vulture** [Trigonoceps occipitalis](#): Vulnerable to CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

**Rüppell's Vulture** [Gyps rueppellii](#): Endangered to CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

**Cape Vulture** [Gyps coprotheres](#): Vulnerable to ENDANGERED

**Lappet-faced Vulture** [Torgos tracheliotos](#): Vulnerable to ENDANGERED

Five other species of vulture are found in Africa, and one of these is already classified as Endangered (Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*), with two others Near Threatened (Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* and Cinereous Vulture *Aegyptius monachus*).

Just two species that occur in Africa, the Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, a predominantly Southern European and Central Asian species, and the mainly vegetarian Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*, are still regarded as Least Concern, though numbers of Griffon vulture in Africa are also thought to be declining.

In Africa, the situation is not attributable to a single issue – unlike in South Asia, where the three previously most common vulture species have seen numbers decline by 98% in recent years as a result of feeding on carcasses of livestock treated with the veterinary drug diclofenac (a medicine used to treat cattle and highly toxic to vultures). In Africa, the main causes of a drop in vulture populations appears to be threefold, primarily the indiscriminate poisoning of vultures – a by-product of people trying to deliberately eradicate mammalian predators of livestock (and in some areas feral dogs), with the poisoned carcasses or baits inadvertently attracting vultures.

Another major issue is the use of vulture body parts in traditional medicine – a recent scientific paper found that 29% of the vulture deaths recorded continent-wide could be attributed to this secretive trade. These practices are thought to be widespread in West Africa, as well as Southern Africa. Body parts of vultures are used by the traditional medicine industry for a number of purposes.

The third most significant threat to African vultures appears to be poachers deliberately targeting the birds to avoid them giving away the presence of their illegally killed big game carcasses, such as rhinos or elephants. Between July 2011 and 2014, at least ten such poisoning incidents were discovered, which resulted in the deaths of at least 1,500 vultures across six southern African countries.

Other factors thought to play a role in the declines include habitat loss, human disturbance and collisions with wind turbines and electricity powerlines (as well as electrocution by the latter).

7 of Africa's vulture species are on the edge of extinction  
 #lovevultures  
 BirdLife INTERNATIONAL www.birdlife.org/savevultures



**Watching Birds Near Your Home is Good For Your Mental Health , FROM P5**

The academics studied afternoon bird numbers – which tend to be lower than birds generally seen in the morning – because are more in keeping with the number of birds that people are likely to see in their neighbourhood on a daily basis.

In the study, common types of birds were seen. But the study did not find a relationship between the species of birds and mental health, but rather the number of birds they could see from their windows, in the garden or in their neighbourhood.

Previous studies have found that the ability of most people to identify different species is low, suggesting that for most people it is interacting with birds, not just specific birds, that provides well-being. University of Exeter research fellow Dr. Daniel Cox, who led the study, said: “This study starts to unpick the role that some key components of nature play for our mental well-being. “Birds around the home, and nature in general, show great promise in preventative health care, making cities healthier, happier places to live.” (Continued on page 12)



## **From slaughter to spectacle - education inspires locals to love Amur Falcon**

AMUR FALCONS ARE SEEN IN LARGE GROUPS ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA DURING OUR SUMMER MONTHS. AT OTHER TIMES OF THE YEAR THEY MIGRATE THOUSANDS OF MILES TO AND FROM EASTERN ASIA - RUNNING THE USUAL GAUNTLET OF MANKIND'S IGNORANCE

**Five years ago, hundreds of thousands of migrating Amur Falcons were being slaughtered annually in northeast India. Today, they are celebrated.**



Eco-clubs give locals a new appreciation of the Amur Falcon © Thangam Velusamy / Shutterstock

Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis* are incredible long-distance migrants. During their travels from their breeding grounds in north-east Asia, hundreds of thousands of them cross the Indian Subcontinent and the Indian Ocean to their wintering grounds in southern Africa. However, in November 2012, an estimated 100,000 falcons didn't make it past Nagaland, a state in north-east India. They were trapped, slaughtered or taken to local markets alive and sold as fresh food. The shocking news spread quickly across the world thanks to a [video put together by the campaigning organisation Conservation India](#). The video

showed how local hunters were using huge nylon nets across the Amur Falcon's forest roosting sites, capturing them indiscriminately in enormous quantities. The appalling scale of the killing prompted the Bombay Natural History Society (BirdLife in India) to contact the Indian Minister for Environment and Forests and the Chief Minister of Nagaland

Simultaneously, BirdLife set up an emergency fund to help BNHS coordinate a series of actions in order to halt the massacre. Many BirdLife Partners such as BirdLife South Africa and the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) also lent their voice to the campaign and received international support. The then-Minister for the Environment Jayanthi Natarajan personally intervened, which led to the destruction of nets and to the release of some of the captive falcons that were still alive.

The tragedy was stopped that year, but BNHS needed to put steps in place to ensure that future crises would be prevented. Supported by the emergency appeal, BNHS coordinated a widespread programme of action, working with Nagaland Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Trust. Field teams were established to monitor Amur Falcons at their roosting sites and to directly intervene to prevent the atrocities from happening ever again. Locals were employed to patrol the Doyang Reservoir, one of the largest roosting sites for the Amurs. The Government's Forest Department also joined the patrolling team, who acted as conservation ambassadors within the local community.

*The falcons were trapped, slaughtered or taken to local markets alive and sold as fresh food*

After a process of consultation, BNHS decided to focus on natural history education as a means of advocacy. Several eco-clubs were set up, using a unique model. Local adults from villages were trained and employed as teachers, and young students between the ages of eight and 17 years were given free environmental education. The aim was to teach children about the wonders of bird migration and the importance of keeping certain wild bird populations intact. To this day, BNHS also runs eco-clubs independently in other villages in Nagaland, resulting in more than 500 students being tutored. (CONTINUED...)

(CONTINUATION FROM PREVIOUS PAGE...)

BNHS is also supporting natural history outreach and advocacy in Manipur through the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN). The Amur Falcon dance festivals held in that state are the first of their kind. As a result, Tamenglong in Manipur, which sees a very large congregation of birds every year, has also passed a resolution to stop hunting Amur Falcons through their village council.

Tackling the underlying causes of illegal killing in communities is no easy feat. Yet the following year, Amur Falcons were granted safe passage through north-east India, thanks to the joint action of locals, government and NGOs. As attitudes changed in the space of a single year, not a single Amur Falcon was trapped during and since the 2013 winter migration. The hundreds of thousands of Amur Falcons that visited the Doyang Reservoir that year were finally able to do so in peace.

*“We have not told the locals what to do. Through education and skill development they decided to give up hunting.”*

“We have come a very long way from working in a state which has no conservation history to trying to advocate for wildlife in a sensitive manner, without hurting local sentiment”, says Neha Sinha, Advocacy and Policy Officer, BNHS, and Principle Investigator of the Amur Falcon Project. “One of the reasons we decided to impart natural history education is because education itself is empowering. We have not told the locals what to do. We have shown them Amur Falcon migration maps, falcon biology and stories, and inspired an absolute dedication to the community’s education and skill development, and they decided to give up hunting. For this, we have the community to thank.”

*Not a single Amur Falcon was trapped during the 2013 winter migration*

Pangti, the largest hunting village in the area, recently declared a total ban on airguns – a very significant development as it was a common hunting method. Furthermore, the village council put a seasonal ban on all wild bird hunting, fulfilling another one of BNHS’ project goals in the area.

Locals have been exemplary in giving up their hunting practices. Today the Doyang Reservoir is recognised as a stopover for up to a million Amur Falcons every year, a spectacle that all locals, from government officials to former hunters, can all enjoy together.



*This article is brought to you by the [BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme](#).*

## Penguins die in 'catastrophic' Antarctic breeding season

All but two Adelie penguin chicks have starved to death in their east Antarctic colony, in a breeding season described as "catastrophic" by experts.

It was caused by unusually high amounts of ice late in the season, meaning adults had to travel further for food. It is the second bad season in five years after no chicks survived in 2015.

Conservation groups are calling for urgent action on a new marine protection area in the east Antarctic to protect the colony of about 36,000.

WWF says a ban on krill fishing in the area would eliminate their competition and help to secure the survival of Antarctic species, including the Adelie penguins. WWF have been supporting research with French scientists in the region monitoring penguin numbers since 2010.

The protection proposal will be discussed at a meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The Commission is made up of the 25 members and the European Union.

### ADELIE PENGUIN BREEDING HABITS:

Adelie penguins are the most southerly breeding bird in the world. They are found along the Antarctic coast, and breed from October to February

They typically lay two eggs in nests made of stones, and parents take turns to incubate the eggs

Breeding adults may have to travel up to 30-75 miles (50-120 km) to catch food to then regurgitate for their chicks



"This devastating event contrasts with the image that many people might have of penguins," Rod Downie, Head of Polar Programmes at WWF, said.

"So CCAMLR needs to act now by adopting a new Marine Protected Area for the waters off east Antarctica, to protect the home of the penguins."

### HERE IS THE AVAAZ TAKE ON THE SAME STORY..

18,000 beautiful baby penguins hatched in an Antarctic colony last winter. But just two survived!

The rest starved -- and industrial-scale fishing and climate change threaten to wipe out countless other polar species. Scientists say **the only way to save Antarctica's ocean is by urgently protecting it** -- and if just two more governments give their backing, we can create a massive network of ocean sanctuaries there.

The vote is coming up, and European leaders can bring the blockers on board -- **if we quickly show massive public support, we can make sure they step up.** Let's make this huge, then run opinion polls, take out media ads, and deliver our voices directly to President Macron and the EU, calling on them to **save this penguin paradise, before it's too late.**

In 2016, millions of us helped rally public pressure to create **the first Antarctic Ocean sanctuary**, in the Ross Sea. It is the largest marine protected area on the planet. But it represents only a small portion of the fragile ocean that surrounds Antarctica.

The wildlife there is already struggling because of climate change -- and industrial fishing fleets could push this fragile ecosystem over the edge. At least three more sanctuaries are needed to keep this precious wilderness safe. And they could be created if we make sure EU leaders feel this is a public priority.

Whether we win another marine sanctuary there comes down to a single decision. Russia and China are the two main blockers -- but experts say that **French President Macron and the EU Commission can win them over.** Let's inspire them to action by raising a million beautiful voices to save this polar paradise -- join now and share this everywhere.

### MORE INFORMATION:

Penguins starving to death is a sign that something's very wrong in the Antarctic (The Guardian)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/13/penguins-starving-death-something-very-wrong-antarctic>

#ANTARCTICA2020 – A vision for the future (ASOC)

<https://www.asoc.org/explore/latest-news/1751-antarctica2020-a-vision-for-the-future>

So long, King Penguins: Scientists warn climate change may leave these birds "screwed" (Mashable)

<https://mashable.com/2018/02/26/king-penguin-populations-decline-as-oceans-warm/#EPboQjyNimqG>

Decline in krill threatens Antarctic wildlife, from whales to penguins (The Guardian)

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/14/decline-in-krill-threatens-antarctic-wildlife-from-whales-to-penguins>

Plans rejected for East Antarctic marine park (Nature)

<https://www.nature.com/news/plans-rejected-for-east-antarctic-marine-park-1.22913>

EU and China agree ocean partnership - China's position may be softening (China Dialogue)

<https://chinadialogueocean.net/3925-can-the-eu-and-china-work-together-in-antarctica/>

Why remote Antarctica is so important in a warming world (The Conversation)

## ***BIRDLIFE BOTSWANA WEIGHS UP IMPACT OF ELEPHANTS ON THREATENED BIRD SPECIES – BOTSWANA SUNDAY STANDARD ARTICLE***

The statistics are quite astounding. For one poisoned elephant carcass, five hundred vultures perish. For years now, Birdlife Botswana, an NGO that deals with protection of birds in order to prevent any extinction of bird species in the wild has been using different means to sensitise the government and other stakeholders on the issue.

Birdlife Botswana Project Manager, Virat Kootsositse, revealed that his NGO has requested for finances that would fund a project titled; "Assessing elephant impacts on key bird species and habitats, and mitigating elephant poaching and concomitant vulture poisoning through mobilising citizen scientists".

"The objectives of the project are to assess the impact of elephants on the status and trends of biodiversity in Botswana's Important Bird Areas through Management Oriented Management Systems (MOMS), field based and remote sensing methodologies, with emphasis on the direct and indirect impacts of elephants on globally and nationally threatened bird species and suggest remedial actions," explained Kootsositse.

He also said they intend to evaluate the extent to which elephants impact on habitat specialist birds, and establish which species of birds best serve as environmental indicators of the status of habitats subjected to varying degrees of elephant density.

"We would like to develop a website through which wildlife poisoning events would be reported by the public; and state agencies, with a back-end system - not open to the public - through which statutory law enforcement agencies and technical departments would have access to the poisoning events so that they could track their agency," he says.

He said the project is expected to run for three years with the first quarter starting in the year 2018

and will be spearheaded by BirdLife Botswana and it will be based at Chobe District and Makgadikgadi area. He emphasised that the project is of utmost importance because amongst other benefits it will lead to a better understanding of direct and indirect impacts of elephants on globally threatened birds and their habitats, conservation of birds and even facilitate partnerships between different stakeholders.

"BirdLife Botswana has collaborated with other departments like Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) to monitor the biodiversity status and trends at protected areas and Important Bird Areas. Assessments were summarised in Annual Protected Area Status reports, covering the period 2008-2011. Results from those years show that elephants were considered a key biodiversity threat, notably through habitat modification," he said.

The project will be implemented in collaboration with the Royal Society for the protection of Birds (Birdlife in the UK) who will train BirdLife Botswana, DWNP, Department of Forestry and Range Resources (DFRR), and other partners as required. The Department of Environmental Science at the University of Botswana will provide technical back-stopping and lead on much of the remote sensing data analysis and interpretation. BirdLife is aware of the Japan International Cooperation Agency inventory of forest resources through remote sensing -working with DFRR, but the understanding of the project is that it does not do detailed –or fine –scale level of wildlife and habitat monitoring and trend and analysis as proposed in this project.



He said there is urgent need to undertake species-specific analysis of elephant impacts on threatened birds, so that remedial actions could then be instituted. Therefore in that regard, BirdLife Botswana seeks funding from the Conservation Trust Fund to strengthen their Important Bird Areas programme within parts of the elephant range, and with an emphasis on the direct and indirect impacts of elephants on globally and nationally threatened birds.

Kootsositse said that the majority of the Conservation Trust Fund grant would be used towards among other things: training field counters -non-scientists with an interest in BPM, DWNP staff, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) members and to individuals around parks and Wild life Management Areas (WMAs), and in unprotected areas within the sampled elephant range to improve the robustness of the data.

"The project would also help with compilation of bird checklists and development of a monitoring framework and protocol for several sites like parks, forest reserves, WMAs and so on, and help link elephant density and distribution to key biodiversity features especially habitats, threats, and livelihoods, MOMS, all on the basis of population trends in birds," he says.

As for the benefits to be generated by the project, Kootsositse explained that, there will be better understanding of direct and indirect impacts of elephants on globally threatened birds and their habitats; with suggestions to mitigate damage - unacceptable elephant induced environmental change prevented, reduced or reversed. There will be conservation of critical sites for threatened birds that need protection.

"Local communities (CBOs) will be organised and directly leading on site level natural resource monitoring (MOMS, IBA and BPM monitoring) and conserving their own environment," he says.

There also will be data collection and conservation action on globally and nationally threatened birds of Botswana and meeting obligations to international conventions and multilateral environmental agreements. Annual reports on the status of Important Bird Area (IBA) will be published-leveraging and profiling wildlife and natural conservation in Botswana.

"Civil society will be strengthened through the further development of BirdLife Botswana and participating CBOs. There will be training of government staff in biodiversity monitoring and assisting them with tools to address the negative impacts that elephants have on co-occurring species, including vultures poisoned in connection with elephant poaching-strengthening of public service. Communities, local and central government, NGOs, private sector will be working together facilitating partnerships between different stakeholders," he said.

The benefit distribution, he said will be in the sense that expected direct financial beneficiaries from the project are members of neighbouring communities participating across the project site. The project will develop community-drive businesses through trainings for bird guide and trainings/ short courses for biodiversity monitoring, business management as well as for tourism. The training opportunities should be equally assigned to all members of the participating CBOs as per CBO's benefit distribution policies.

Furthermore, Kootsositse explained, the benefits for the project visibly outweigh the costs.

"The project is visibly both feasible - given the expertise within BirdLife and collaborating partners, and justifiable-development of pro-wildlife constituent, and reduction of wildlife poaching and associated poisoning, with at a minimum reduced negative perceptions to elephants and wildlife," he said.

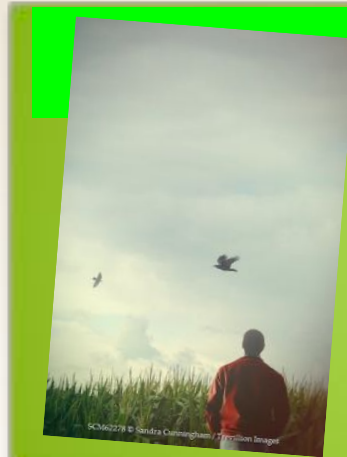
Moreover, the sustainability that that is in-built into the project further makes the benefits outweigh the costs.

"For instance, in terms of institutional sustainability, involving CBOs as the lead implementer on many of the project activities will help ensure the sustainability of the programme," he said.

Article courtesy of Botswana Sunday Standard, published on **29 JUNE 2018**



DO YOU HAVE A BIRD-BATH? THEY ATTRACT A LOT OF BIRDS, ESPECIALLY IN PLACES WHERE THERE IS LITTLE SURFACE WATER



**Watching Birds Near Your Home is Good For Your Mental Health . . . (From Page 8)**

The positive association between birds, shrubs and trees and better mental health applied, even after controlling for variation in neighbourhood deprivation, household income, age and a wide range of other socio-demographic factors.

*(Source: University of Exeter) – Photo by Andrea O’Connell*

## BirdLife Botswana Shop

Please visit our shop where you can find information about up-coming events, renew membership and, of course, buy BirdLife Botswana products retailing there. The shop is situated in Kalahari Art Suppliers next door to Cafe Dilo at Kgale Spar complex.

The opening and closing times are as follows:

Monday – Friday 09:00 a.m – 18:30 p.m.  
Saturday 09:00 a.m - 15: 00 p.m



Water Thick Knees

**BirdLife Botswana, P O Box 26691,  
Game City, Gaborone, BOTSWANA**

**Tel:** +267-3190540

**Fax:** +267-3190540;

**Email:** [blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw](mailto:blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw)

**Website:** [www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw](http://www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/BirdLifeBotswana](http://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeBotswana)

**Twitter:** @KgoriBustard

**Editor:** [peterdarcybotswana@gmail.com](mailto:peterdarcybotswana@gmail.com)

Cartoon courtesy :

<http://cartoonist.co.za/2017/09/18/dr-jack/>