



BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA e-newsletter

January 2016

Best wishes to all our readers for a happy and successful 2016

AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK ALBERT FRONEMAN



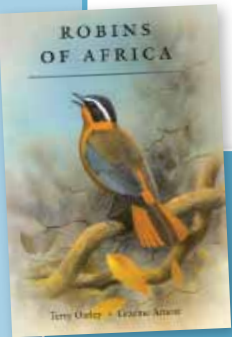
Nikon sponsorship

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Staff from Nikon in South Africa and BirdLife South Africa had the privilege of meeting Japan's ambassador to South Africa, Shigeyuki Hiroki, at BirdLife South Africa's office, Isdell House, on 9 December 2015. Conservation activities, and in particular efforts to raise awareness about the environment in the next generation, were discussed. To further such efforts, Nikon has sponsored a PROSTAFF 7s 8x30 pair of binoculars to Raymond Rampolokeng, a guide trained by BirdLife South Africa who runs birding tours in Soweto. Grant Askham, CEO of Nikon in South Africa, and Mark Anderson, CEO of BirdLife South Africa, attended the event.

[Rozanne Ras, Operational Marketing Manager, Premium Brand Distributors, rozanner@premiumgroup.co.za](mailto:rozanner@premiumgroup.co.za)



LUCKY DRAW WINNERS

A lucky draw was done for all BirdLife South Africa members who renewed their membership in November 2015, and we congratulate the five members who will receive a copy of *Robins of Africa* coffee-table book:

- Denise Sewell
- Ray Wytenburg
- Kurt & Rosalie Munstermann
- Philip van den Berg
- Joan Jacobs

We are sure you will enjoy the wonderful illustrations by Graeme Arnott and interesting accounts by Terry Oatley.

Thank you to all who renewed their membership with BirdLife South Africa.



Left to right, front row: *Ei Kato, Head of Sales and Marketing, Nikon Europe; Shigeyuki Hiroki; Tanya Caldwell, Sales Consultant, African Birdlife; and Raymond Rampolokeng.* Middle row: *Lily Mitchell, Rand Barbet Bird Club; Lunel Gaetan, Product Manager, Nikon Europe; Roger Wanless, Chairman, BirdLife South Africa; and Grant Askham, CEO, Nikon South Africa.* Back row: *Hanneline Smit-Robinson, Oppenheimer Fellow of Conservation, BirdLife South Africa; Monty Grobler, Head of Sales, Sports and Outdoor, and Rozanne Ras, Operational Marketing Manager, for Premium Brand Distributors; and Mark Anderson, CEO, BirdLife South Africa.*

Attention BirdLife South Africa members

Please use your membership number as a payment reference when paying your membership fees.

gardening FOR BIRDS

Happy New Year to you all! Happy gardening and especially happy garden birding. Although I now have a small garden, I get an enormous amount of pleasure just sitting on my patio and watching the birds that come and go. A new year means a new year list for the garden, so every feathered visitor is special, even the little House Sparrow (not at all common here in Amber Ridge!).

Gardening for birds definitely includes a little patch of lawn on which to throw bird seed and my seed-eating brigade gives me and my visitors hours of pleasure. Altogether new for our garden list was a Red-headed Quelea. Just a single little guy, but what excitement – and I managed to snap a photo through the window just to prove my case! Red-billed Queleas in all their many different colour mixes, along with Red Bishops, make up the bulk of my carpet of seed-eaters, so this little guy was a real treat. I just love watching the Red Bishop boys puff themselves up and bounce around, hoping to attract the attention of the ladies. Some of them could easily be called Orange Bishops: their 'red' feathers are a deep, bright orange, and there are all the shades in between too.

My desk and computer are situated right next to a window overlooking the section of the garden where seven of my nine birdbaths (see photo) are in full view. These non-plants are another very important part of my bird garden. One is a real little pond, far too deep for the majority of little visitors but ideal for a hot and thirsty Hadeda. On really hot days 'our' Hadeda (I'm sure it is always the same one!) plonks right down into the water, flutters and splashes for a short while and then just stands there again, enjoying the 'coolth'. The other six birdbaths are shallow to varying degrees – all leg lengths catered for here.

Outside my office window is a *Calpurnia aurea*, often called wild laburnum, which has hanging bunches of yellow pea-flowers that



attract more carpenter bees than birds. Its compound leaves, with their large leaflets covered with the finest of hairs, retain droplets of moisture long after the rain has stopped. I have just had a wonderful view of an Amethyst Sunbird enjoying a bath among the leaves, moving from one leafy cluster to another as the droplets were used up. The bird's feathers were really wet by the end and it sat preening for ages, making sure that every feather was in perfect condition.

It hasn't been a good time for planting, what with the heat and lack of rain, but I have discovered a new bird tree (for my list anyway). While wandering round a 'wild' plot in the centre of Pietermaritzburg I noticed a couple of small trees bearing blackish, oblong little fruits. I was able to identify it as *Canthium kuntzeanum*, the mountain turkey-berry, with lovely shiny, bluish-green leaves and paired spines, mostly on the younger shoots. The flowers are small and greenish-cream, so they will probably attract some of the smaller insects and, in turn, their bird diners. This species occurs in the Drakensberg and so will be frost hardy. Suitable for small and large gardens, it's one to look out for.

[Sally Johnson, sarahjarvis.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sarahjarvis.johnson@gmail.com)

spring alive

Another record-breaking art competition!



Birds' migrations, ranging from a few hundred metres to flights from north to south around the globe, are as varied as the species that undertake them. So until the start of the 2016 Spring Alive season on 1 September, keep a watchful eye on the skies for these magnificent flying machines.

Each year, through the Spring Alive Campaign, learners in Europe and Africa interact with topics such as the migration of bird species and what actions can be taken to ensure that their travels and routes are safeguarded. Kristi Garland, from the Grasslands Environmental Education Project, represents the campaign in South Africa on behalf of BirdLife South Africa. During the period September to November 2015, Kristi worked with 12 schools across the Free State and Mpumalanga on the Spring Alive Campaign. She provided interesting lessons about migratory species and the routes they take, and of course she encouraged learners to submit pieces of art to the Spring Alive African Art Competition.

The theme of the 2015 competition was 'The perfect garden for Spring Alive birds'. A total of 399 pieces of art were received from African countries, including Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. South Africa submitted the most entries in the history of the campaign.

Karolina Kalinowska, the International Spring Alive Manager (from the Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), a BirdLife International Partner), described the judging as difficult, commenting, 'The art works were lovely and inspiring and they frequently enlightened the judges. This made it extremely difficult for the jury to select the three finalists.'

The top three artists were:

1st place: Hajaratu Salamatu Bangura, Sierra Leone (age 15)

2nd place: Paulosi Mbalae, South Africa (age 12)

3rd place: Miguel Abbey, Ghana (age 9)

Learners who submitted a piece of art will receive a certificate. Each school will also receive a



PAULOSI MBALAE

certificate acknowledging the entries it submitted. The schools in South Africa were:

Free State (all these schools also participate in the Avianator Programme funded by Harmony Gold): Mamello Secondary; Tikwe Primary; Thoriso Primary; Tlongkganyeng Primary; Makeleketla Primary; Marematlou Secondary; Phahamisang Primary

Mpumalanga: Lothair Primary; Laerskool Christiesmeer; KwaChibikhulu Primary; Injomane Primary; Lake Chrissie Secondary; Laerskool Barberton

We would like to thank Steven Segang, from the Endangered Wildlife Trust in Mpumalanga, for taking this competition to a number of schools in the Chrissiesmeer/Lothair area. Thanks must also go to the Spring Alive funder, The Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa, for its continued support. Finally, to BirdLife International and OTOPI (Poland), thank you for your supportive and operational role in the campaign.

For more information and details of how you can get involved in Spring Alive 2016, please contact Kristi Garland at kristi.garland@birdlife.org.za
[Daniel Marnewick](mailto:daniel.marnewick@birdlife.org.za), Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas and Regional Conservation Programme Manager, daniel.marnewick@birdlife.org.za



snippets



DISCOVER THE MAGALIESBERG

with the 2015/16 Magalies Meander Visitors Guide

This free 40-page booklet is a comprehensive guide to places to stay, things to do and where to go in the Magaliesberg – one of South Africa's hidden treasures. This beautiful region of mountains, valleys, rivers and indigenous woodland is home to a variety of wildlife.

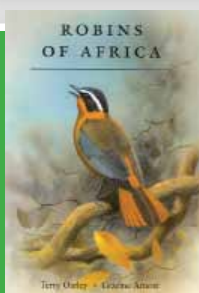
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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND STAND A CHANCE TO WIN!

Renew your membership in the month that it is due and stand a chance to win one of five copies of the beautifully illustrated *Robins of Africa*, a celebration of the African robin and its world in all its variety. Please remember to use your membership number as the reference when making your payment.

Shireen Gould, Membership Manager, membership@birdlife.org.za

NOTICE OF THE 87th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA to be held at 14h00 on Saturday, 12 March 2016 at the Conference Centre, Skukuza Camp, Kruger National Park.

For more information, please visit www.birdlife.org.za/events/flock/flock-in-kruger-2016

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