

FAMILIAR CHAT

June 2005



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

IF ANYONE CAN **Canon** CAN

June 2005

Dear Friends

We had a most successful office opening in May where we gained much approval for what we have done and are planning to do. There were several important guests there, among who were the Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism as well as two Permanent Secretaries in the ministries of Wildlife and the Environment. There were other government officials from DWNP and the public sector. An important guest was a senior lady from the British Embassy who is responsible for DFID. Altogether there were about sixty guests, who gathered outside our new office and enjoyed drinks and snacks and listened to an excellent address from the Minister who said exactly what we needed him to say. Then Kabelo gave a PowerPoint presentation on progress and plans for BLB. Several outsiders approached us to join the Society and one of our corporate sponsors said that they hoped to adopt our IBA project as theirs. The Minister was particularly complimentary and said that he hoped that his departments and ourselves would work closely together in the future. The ambience was most pleasant in the early evening under the large trees and stars, with lanterns twinkling above our heads

Remember – The Annual Dinner is on the 17th September and we have an exciting speaker.

The Editor
Daphne Goldsworthy
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*Illustrations by kind permission of Kenneth Newman
Photographs by Mike Goldsworthy*

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Darnaway Farm – Limpopo river bed

FLAMINGO FROLICS

Nikki Bousfield

Have you ever held a wild bird and felt the flutter of its heart? How about enfolding the prince amongst birds - the magnificent pink Lesser Flamingo in your arms? This was the experience of the privileged few that ventured to Sua Pan with the Francistown branch of Birdlife Botswana. Dr.G.Mc Culloch graciously invited us together with a contingent of birders from Zimbabwe, to participate in an exercise involving snaring flamingo for the purpose of measuring, weighing, and placing rings on their legs for research. When funding has been obtained to purchase satellite tracking devices costing about P20,000 each, the exercise will be repeated and this time harnesses holding the device on the flamingos back will be fitted in order to track their movements. Some of us participated in this exercise some 3 years ago when Dr.McCulloch was "Graham" - the endearing Irishman with the twinkling smile - and ex Jack's camp guide.

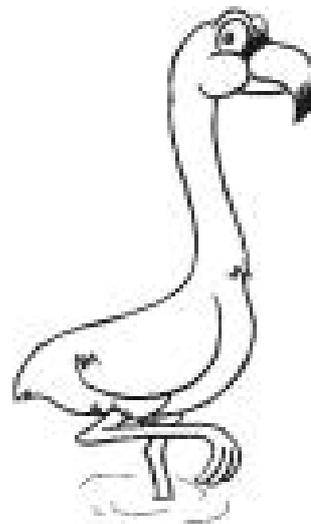
There is a correct way of handling most things. A flamingo is held under the arm to restrain the delicate wings from flapping and possibly snapping. The head faces backwards and is hooded. (In the absence of a custom-made cotton hood, a sock serves just as well) The legs therefore present forward and are free to move unrestricted. The legs are also accessible for measuring and placing the rings on the thighbone.

Please absorb this detail because as a bird enthusiast you may well find it useful not only for flamingo but any large bird. This reverse position prevents birds like cranes and storks from pecking vulnerable areas like the face and eyes. Recently we were traveling deep in the Kalahari near Khai-khai and experienced an afternoon shower, which resulted in numbers of pools forming and spanning the narrow track. In one such pool were 5 Red billed teal and a single Greater Flamingo. The teal took flight but the flamingo was dragging a broken wing. If we left him, he would assuredly be a dead flamingo by dawn. With the greatest of ease we surrounded and caught the bird, placed a sock over his head to

minimize stress and struggle, and as a makeshift immobiliser dressed him in a T shirt. With the sleeves firmly knotted, it kept both wings and legs restrained. He traveled successfully on the back seat - a passenger between human passengers. Some 10 hours later he was delivered to Kinose Nkape - lecturer at the Maun Wildlife Education Centre- who placed him in the care of a rehabilitation center.

To snare flamingo for research is a finely honed skill. It is labour intensive as it involves making and setting hundreds if not thousands of submerged fish snares in the feeding areas. (I've just realized why Graham invited 30 of us to join him!!) This way, over the course of the weekend 9 flamingo were captured, processed and released. It was exhilarating. It was also very beautiful. Dawn and dusk had the pink sky echoed in the shallow water of the pan. Thousands of bright pink birds feeding peacefully were casting their reflections in the pink water. A magic weekend.

In between we spotted 85 species of birds. For me the specials were a Black tailed Godwit and the rufous form of immature Ovambo Sparrowhawk.



The roll call follows: -

Greater flamingo
White fronted plover
Lesser flamingo
Kittlitz plover
White pelican
Chestnut banded plover
Redbilled teal
Three banded plover
Cape teal
Crowned plover
Hottentot teal
Little stint
Cape shoveller
Greenshank
Southern po chard
A vocet
Egyptian geese
Ruff
Curlew sandpiper
Black wing stilt
Black tailed godwit
Grey headed gull
White winged tern
Marabou stork
Glossy ibis
Fish eagle
Martial eagle

Black breasted snake eagle
Black shouldered kite
Dark chanting goshawk
Greater kestrel
Little banded goshawk
Ovambo sparrowhawk
Lappet faced vulture
White back vulture
Barn owl
Black korhaan
Double banded courser
Swainsons francolin
Burchells sandgrouse
Black crow
Pied crow
Grey hornbill
Yellow bill hombill
Lilac breasted roller
Purple roller
Long billed pipit
Grassveld pipit
Buffy pipit
Sabota lark
Rufous naped lark
Grey back finch lark
Button quail
Green woodhoopoe
Pied barbet
Cape glossy starling

Wattled starling
Red billed buffalo weaver
Marico flycatcher
Ground scraper thrush
White browed scrub robin
Three streaked tchagra
White crowned shrike
Capped wheatear
Grey headed sparrow
Yellow throated sparrow
House sparrow
Cape turtle dove
Ant eating chat
Chin spot batis
Rock bunting
Golden-breasted bunting
Southern masked weaver
Long billed crombec
Desert cisticola
Scaly-feathered finch
Violet-eared waxbill
Yellow fronted canary
Banded martin
South African cliff swallow
Black chested prinia
Yellow bellied eremomela
White bellied sunbird
Greater honeyguide

At the EEASA (Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa) Conference, held this year in Lusaka, Zambia from 16 to 19 May 2005 I was delighted to become acquainted with Ali Garnett who attended the conference as a presenter. Ali is a Member of Parliament (Education) in Australia. She is enthusiastic, dedicated, effective and a developer of original educational materials using birds in innovative ways. She developed a teaching and learning pack called **Cockatoo Island** for lower primary that uses birds to teach young children about democracy through practice.

A couple of years ago a lecturer from Rhodes University in South Africa met Ali in Australia and sought permission to bring the concept of Cockatoo Island to South Africa and adapt the materials as **Hadedda Island**. This was done and the materials published under Share-net which is based at WESSA at Umgeni Valley in Howick. I obtained a copy of the Hadedda Island resource pack last year and had the opportunity to successfully use it at EE teacher workshops that were held before the 2004 national elections. However, the materials are designed for use in the classroom over a period of time. If any teacher out there would like to borrow the materials and try them in the classroom, please let me know. They are very original and a delight to use and I felt fortunate to meet the original developer and share her enthusiasm for birds and education.



News From Saudi Arabi

Trish Dunn

Hi Birders,

Have been meaning to catch up with you for some time and today Friday is our weekend so can do so. Especially thinking of you out at Kgale siding I used to look after my friends house there and did so enjoy it.

Birders are few and far between here so I have had to go it alone which has actually been really good as I ordered Birds of the Middle East from Amazon and thanks to that have identified a few new ones.

To name a few as some people might be interested :

Black bush robin

Hoepoe lark

Hoepoe

Namaqua dove I was thrilled it has a more rufous tinge under the wings and a whiter tum

Ring neck parakeet

Rufous turtle dove

Yellow wagtail ...the colour of a golden oriol

Ruppells weaver

African Silverbill who squats in the aboves nest.

Stonechat

Blackwinged stilt

Whitecrowned black wheatear!!

That reminded me of my first sighting of a wheatear in the delta area and our difficulty in identifying it.

We are on the migration path and it is fascinating how what can best be described as arid broken rocky stony hilly semi desert after a smattering of rain becomes greenish along the watercourses(wadis) and this has turned into the silvery grass that we are familiar with in Botswana rather sparse but very beautiful blowing in the wind and an important food resource...plus a few other grasses.

Unfortunately the depressions do seem to be a favourite dumping ground for builders rubble as elsewhere.

Am missing all my friends in Botswana, and look forward to joining a camping trip when I return.

To my amazement have managed a lot of camping here even encountering camel spiders...lets put it this way if you thought baboon spiders were big.....!!

Lots of love to all and look forward to hearing from you all

Trish can be contacted on pdun@mweb.co.za.

BirdLife Workshop on implementing Species Action Plans

Pete Hancock

During June, BirdLife Botswana was represented by Pete Hancock at a workshop on implementing Species Action Plans (SAPs) for globally threatened species. The workshop was organised by the BirdLife Africa Partnership, and sponsored by the RSPB and the Darwin Initiative, and was held in Jinja, Uganda.

A Species Action Plan is a blueprint for the conservation of a globally threatened bird species, outlining the steps that need to be taken, within a specific timeframe, and detailing the human resources required. These aspects were covered at a preliminary workshop held at Wakkerstroom, South Africa, in February/March 2005; the Uganda

Workshop focussed mainly on advocacy and communications as means of achieving the conservation goals outlined in SAPs. A second aspect of the workshop highlighted the use of the outputs of research to strengthen SAPs and improve their effectiveness.

Since Pete Hancock attended the workshop on behalf of BirdLife Botswana, he is concerned about providing feedback to any interested members. He has workshop handouts, and soon will have a comprehensive report on the proceedings of the workshop. If you are interested in finding out more about the workshop, please contact him at pete@info.bw or telephone 6862481.

Request for old bird fieldguides

The previous issue of Familiar Chat carried a request for old bird fieldguides that could be used for training specialist bird guides. To date, not a single book has been received, possibly because BirdLife members have assumed that the books have been quickly obtained from other members. The bird guide training is already underway (see Bird Conservation Newsletter #5) and books are therefore still urgently needed. If you do have an old fieldguide, please ring Pete Hancock (6862481) or Kabelo Senyatso (3190540) to arrange for it to be collected. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Pete Hancock

TAYLOR COTTAGE'S

Private Thatched Chalet's on Waterfront
Bird Watchers Dream, Wake up to the call of Fish Eagle's



Ideal for that weekend getaway or for business accommodation, we have two secluded thatched cottages, which are situated right on the waterfront. The two cottages sleep 2 each, one cottage having a Queen size bed and the other two singles.



CHECK IN TIME

Please collect keys and gate opener latest 17.00
Please hand the keys in at the main house or to the staff before departing before 10am

SERVICE

Gloria and Alfred are available to ensure a comfortable stay. If you require anything or have a problem please contact:
Linda 72304162 or Gloria 71747894

LAUNDRY

Laundry services are available, please arrange with Gloria.
P30.00 per laundry bag.

Please contact our office for directions to our cottages from your area of origin,

We would be pleased to assist you.

CATERING

Meals are available please advise in advance, we have various frozen meals and braai packs.

OFFICE FACILITIES AVAILABLE

For the business minded, we have Internet, email, fax and secretarial services, please enquire at main house.

RATES

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BED & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
.....P260.00

DOUBLE
BED & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
.....P400.00

Plot 45, Crocodile Way, Notwane

Tel:+267 3161820 Fax:+267 3161676 Cell: 72304162

Quarterly camp at Darnaway Farm

On the afternoon of 17th June 2005 we arrived at the Farmhouse at Darnaway Farm, Mrs Riggs who is always very pleased to see us, gave us her usual warm welcome. Unfortunately, the camp site where we normally camped was occupied but we were able to go anywhere else. We travelled a little further up the river and found a bend that was lined with the most unusual yellow rocks. A wonderful camp-site was established, above a small pool of water. The river was quite low and although there were small pools of water, it was the lowest that we had seen it.

Much to our amazement our newest member Kabo – who trekked all the way from Jwaneng - arrived long after dark. We were very impressed as we had been to Darnaway a number of times before and had often become lost. Our thanks go to Bruce Hargreaves for the very comprehensive map.

We walked both mornings in opposite directions along the river and had wonderful sightings on both occasions of game and birds. We were treated to a Fish Eagle swooping on a flock of Guinea Fowl and a Giant Eagle Owl sitting in a tree above the river.



In the early hours of the morning on both Saturday and Sunday we could hear an otter splashing in the river – sounding just like someone swimming and throwing things across the water, unfortunately nobody was brave enough to put their nose out in the early morning cold and so we did not see it, but we did see its tracks on the bank and the freshwater molluscs that it had eaten.

On Saturday afternoon half of the group managed to be left behind, the rest of us were about to turn back to find them when they arrived with grins on their faces as they had managed to positively identify a curious shrub absolutely covered with large fruits – Gardenia Volkensii.



Membership Details

Membership is due in *January of* each year, as the subscription runs from January to December.

Rates

- Resident - entitles you to both Babbler issues and the quarterly Familiar Chat (per family): P120.00
- Corporate - (4 families): P5000
- Professional - Rangers, guides and students (Babbler and Familiar chat): P60.00
- Life - P2000
- Schools/Clubs - nil
- SADC Region - P150
- Overseas (and outside SADC) – P200

The following details are required:

I/We/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms: _____

wish to become members of BirdLife Botswana

Address: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Email:(**PRINT** please) _____

I acknowledge that my family dependents, invitees and I take part in the BirdLife Botswana organised events entirely at our own risk. I, in my personal capacity and as representative of my spouse, children, dependents, and invitees hereby keep BirdLife Botswana, its committee, members and agents indemnified and hold them harmless against all loss, injury, or damage to person or property from any cause (including negligence) arising as a result of our participation in events organised by BirdLife Botswana.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Please make your cheque payable to 'BirdLife Botswana'

Please return this form with your subscription to the address's given below:

The Secretary (membership)
BirdLife Botswana
P/Bag 003
Suite 348
Mogoditshane
Gaborone, Botswana

Pete Hancock
PO Box 20463
Maun

or phone Pete to
collect 6862481

Guy Brina
Private Bag F12
Francistown

or phone Guy to
collect 2412913

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BIRDLIFE BOTSWANA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2005

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>e-mail</u>
Chairman	Harold Hester	P.O. Box 329 Gaborone	3161766	haroldh@info.bw
Vice Chairman				
Secretary	Susan Ocaya		3926929 Cell 71656476	ocayaa@yahoo.com
Hon Treasurer	Daphne Goldsworthy	Private Bag BR 335 Gaborone	3165204(H) 3930782(W)	daf@botsnet.bw
Members	Stephanie Tyler (left Botswana but e-mail still operational) (Editor Babbler) steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com (Records sub Committee)			
	Mike Goldsworthy (Membership)	P. Bag BR335 Gaborone	3930782(W) cell 71300005	mgg@botsnet.bw
	Daphne Goldsworthy (Editor Familiar Chat)	P. Bag BR335 Gaborone	3930782(W)	daf@botsnet.bw
	Doreen McColaugh (Environmental Education)	P. Bag 0457 Gaborone	cell 71607540	bdmac@info.bw
	Christopher Toyé	PO Box 26053 Game City Gaborone	3973388 cell72261585	toye@it.bw
	Chris Brewster (Rarities)			cbrewster@botsnet.bw
	Guy Brina	P. Bag F12 Francistown	2412913	gltm@botsnet.bw
	Glen Stephen	P. Bag 114 Maun	6801052	glen@dynabyte.bw

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Birdlife Botswana
Calendar of events for 2005

Date	Event	Remarks
July 3	8.00am Walk Gabane	MB to organise
July 12	Committee mtg	
July 19	No Talk	Presidents Day
August 7	8.00am Walk Phakalane	Tea at Gem Nursery, MS
August 9	Committee mtg	
August 16	Talk: Cheetah Conservation	A M Hauser
Sept 4	8.00am Walk Bokaa dam	
Sept 13	Committee mtg	
Sept 20	No talk	
Sept 17	Annual dinner	MS to organise, P Funston?
Oct 2	6.30am Walk Notwane	CB
Oct 11	Committee mtg	
Oct 18	Talk	HCH to arrange speaker
Oct 21/23	Quarterly camp	Nnwane Dam
Nov 6	Little big birding day	HCH to organise, Tea at Gem Nursery
Nov 8	Committee mtg	
Nov 15	Talk	MG/DG to arrange speaker
Nov 26	Birding Big day	
Dec 4	6.30 am Walk	Surprise walk with DMC
Dec 13	Committee mtg	
Dec 20	No talk	

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.