

Cape Parrot Newsletter

Number 14 - October 2012



Contents

Cape Parrots Feeding on Apples.....1	Cape Parrot Big Birding Day May 2013.....2
'Parrots' by Mike Perrin.....3	Places to stay and see Cape Parrots4
Captive-Bred Chicks Fledge.....4	Pan African Ornithological Congress 13.....6
Cape Parrot Distribution.....6	Contact6
Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2013 Flyer7	

Cape Parrots Feeding on Apples

"We have had a joyful flock of up to 17 parrots in the garden this year from Christmas through to the beginning of February all happily snacking on our apples. Of course, they are as always here and there throughout the whole summer, in the Marutswa forest and around and about the village."
 Linda and Dave Povall February 2012.

Often during December to February Cape Parrots are seen feeding outside of indigenous forests in orchards. Historically they made feeding forays to coastal forests at this time when fruit availability was low in the inland forests. We would be grateful for any observations of Cape Parrots that you have over this time.



Image © Valerie Neumann

Figure 1. A Cape Parrot feeding on apples in the garden of the Bulwer Hanggliding School's two self-catering cottages.

Cape Parrot Big Birding Day May 2013 (please diarise)

The annual Cape Parrot Big Birding Day will be on the 5 and 6th May 2013. Please diarise this. This is a wonderful way to assist in a conservation effort and often gets volunteers out to places they would rarely visit. Each year a group of students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal assist in monitoring the forests around Ingeli in southern KwaZulu-Natal. The forests here are typical of those where the Cape Parrots occur (Figure 2). The importance of the annual Cape Parrot Big Birding Day (CPBBDD) is highlighted in several ways. Firstly, it gives population trends and numbers. Secondly, observers report illegal hunting, cutting down of forest, and capture of parrots. Thirdly, it gives important distribution data for the Cape parrot.

a.



b.

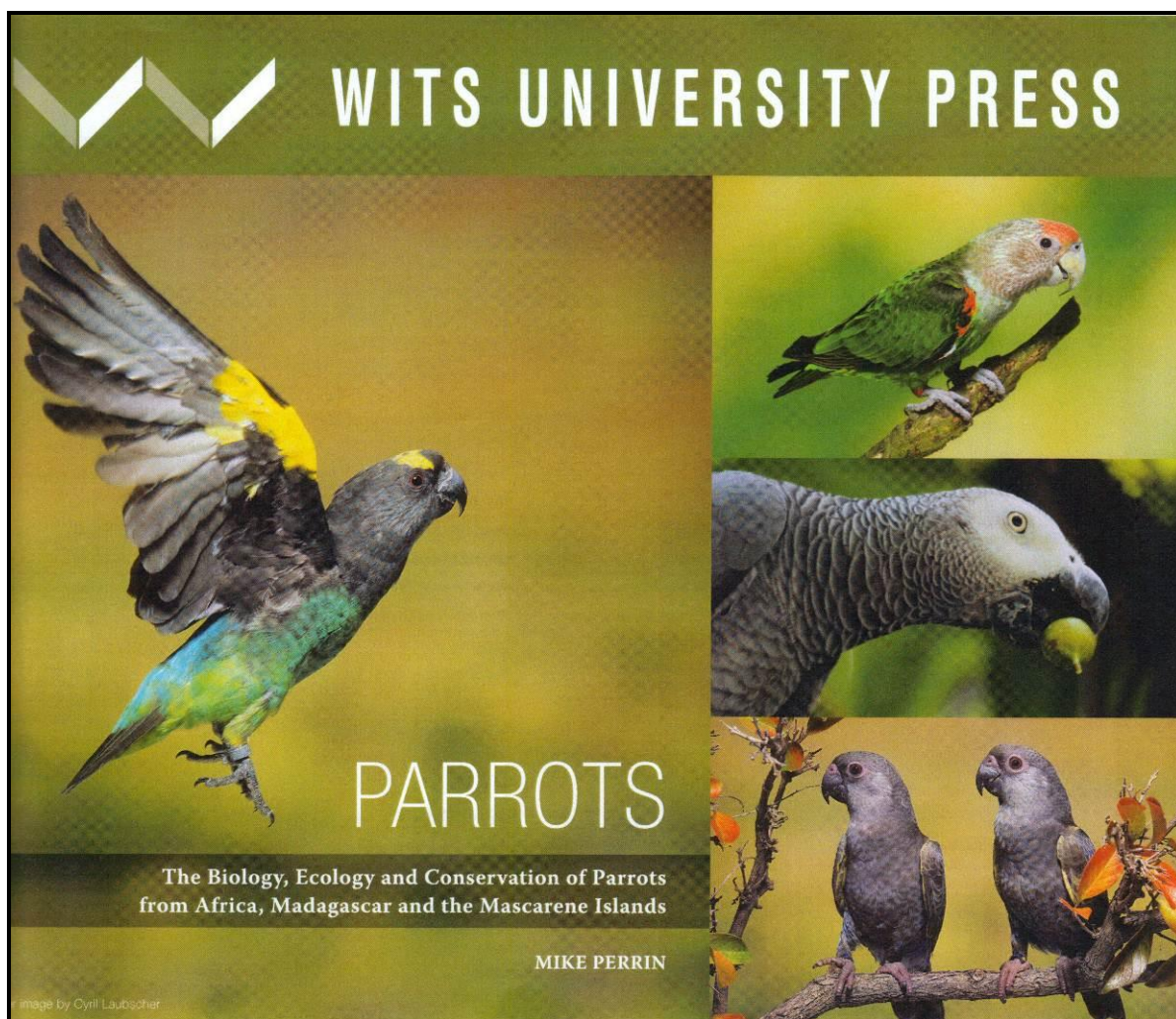


Figure 2. Ingeli forest mosaic in southern KwaZulu-Natal.

New Parrot Book

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A new book "Parrots" by Prof MR Perrin has recently been published by Wits University Press. The focus is African parrots. It covers a range of topics including the biology, ecology and conservation of parrots. The book is dedicated to the late Olaf Wirminghaus who started his PhD on Cape Parrots under the supervision of Prof Perrin. The book is available from leading book stores or Wits University Press.



Available from November 2012

ISBN 978 1 86814 552 2 • 240 x 210 mm, 600 pp. Hard cover and illustrated in full colour • Retail price R590

MIKE PERRIN obtained his BSc Hons at Royal Holloway College, University of London and his PhD at Exeter University. He undertook a Post-doctoral Research Fellowship in Canada and his first lecturing post was at Makerere University in Uganda. Having then lectured for six years at Rhodes University, he took the Chair of Zoology at the then University of Natal, where he is now Professor Emeritus and Director of the Research Centre for African conservation. He has contributed to a dozen books, about 250 scientific publications and supervised many post-graduate students.

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Conservation biology
Chapter 3: Systematics
Chapter 4: Biogeography and niche separation
Chapter 5: Intelligence, communication and behaviour
Chapter 6: Breeding biology
Chapter 7: Diet and metabolism
Chapter 8: Case study – the Cape Parrot
Chapter 9: Trade in African parrots
Chapter 10: African parrot conservation
Chapter 11: Long-tailed and fossil parrots
Chapter 12: True parrots
Chapter 13: Lovebirds
Chapter 14: Field techniques in parrot research

For information on how to order this title please visit www.witspress.co.za

Places to stay and see Cape Parrots

Many ask where they can visit and stay to see parrots. Each newsletter we will try to highlight some possibilities. If your guest house is close to a place where visitors can see Cape Parrots and you would like it highlighted in the newsletter, please contact us. Below are some suggestions:

- ✦ Granny Mouse House in the Hogsback. For more information, please see the website <http://www.grannymousehouse.co.za> or contact Ingrid email: ingi@iafrica.com; 0459621259 or 0832611144.
- ✦ Khululeka Retreat at the Ntafufu River mouth on the Wild Coast. For more information, please see the website: www.khululeka.co.za or contact Armin von Lengeling email: stay@khululeka.co.za; 27 (0)72 194 3644

(If you have a place to stay where Cape Parrots can be seen and want it highlighted, please send details to downs@ukzn.ac.za)

Captive-Bred Chicks Fledge

The CPWG pair fledged two chicks recently at Amazona Birds owned by William Horsfield (Figures 3 and 4).

Reminder: Shaun Wilkinson, the Cape Parrot Studbook Keeper, based at Monte Casino Bird Gardens in Johannesburg (email: shaun@montebg.co.za) is currently busy with a comprehensive update to the studbook. Owners of Cape Parrots are requested to update him on all chicks produced, transfers or deaths to keep the studbook up to date.

The Cape Parrot is listed as a Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004. As of 1st Feb 2008 all holders of Cape Parrots need to be registered and in possession of TOPS permits. Cape Parrots may not be moved anywhere within or out of the Republic of South Africa without written authorization from both Provincial and National Nature Conservation authorities. Provincial EXPORT & IMPORT permits strictly apply to the movement of Cape Parrots within the county.



Figure 3. A newly fledged Cape Parrot at the Amazona breeding facility. (Photo courtesy of William Horsfield)



Figure 4. An adult male Cape Parrot at the Amazona breeding facility. (Photo courtesy of William Horsfield)



Figure 5. Lindy Thompson (PhD candidate), Dr Lorinda Jordaan (Post-doc,) Erin Wreford (MSc candidate), Shane McPherson (MSc candidate), Manqoba Zungu (MSc candidate), Tiwonge Mzumara (PhD candidate), Prof Colleen Downs and Dr Amy-Leigh Wilson (Post-doc) from UKZN's School of Life Sciences

Pan African Ornithological Congress 13

A group of eight postgraduate students from UKZN's School of Life Sciences recently attended the Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) held in Arusha, Tanzania (Figure 5). 160 oral presentations were delivered by speakers mainly from Africa. PhD candidate, Ms Tiwonge Mzumara, received the prize for the best student oral presentation. She is currently working on Lilian's Lovebird in Malawi. In addition there were 61 poster presentations.

The PAOC is held every four years and is one of the only Pan African conferences dedicated to a taxon. The conference gives opportunity for those working on birds in Africa to meet and get an overview of current research and discuss possible important future areas of research. The Scientific chair for the PAOC was UKZN's Professor Colleen Downs who oversaw the collation of the abstracts and programme.

The conference highlighted that with the human population now over seven billion there is continued and increased pressure on the environment. Land transformation for urban sprawl, agriculture and biofuels continues at high rates. The effects of accelerated climate change further exacerbate the situation. Despite all this there is a need to maximise biodiversity and sustain ecosystem function. Africa is possibly the continent that is most affected.

Many of the presentations dealt with the effects of changing ecosystems (including savannah, forests and wetlands), and the effects of accelerated climate change on bird diversity and persistence in Africa. In particular the effects on migration of avian species, and raptors were highlighted. Also, the effects of changing land use and urban environments on bird diversity and survival were shown.

Symposia included bird responses to ecosystem changes; monitoring change in bird populations and habitats in Africa; Crane responses to ecosystem changes; human-wildlife conflict; African birds and climatic change; ethno-ornithology; drivers of change: climate versus habitat; drivers of change - a landscape approach to bird conservation; wetlands and waterbirds in a changing environment; continent-wide raptor conservation; conserving birds and biodiversity across landscapes in Africa; Owls; Weavers; and life on the move.

Professor Downs commented that with technological advances, particularly in global positioning system telemetry, movements, spatial use and presence of birds in Africa are advancing and some of this was presented. In addition the involvement of the general public in bird monitoring, especially as people have greater access to the internet, all providing ways of monitoring birds in Africa, were shown. 'It was a great opportunity for UKZN students to showcase their work and to interact with researchers from around the world,' said Downs. 'We thank the organisers, and look forward to the next PAOC in four years' time.'

Cape Parrot Distribution

Remember to go to the SABAP2 website to record your Cape Parrot observations and so improve the distribution map for the species (see http://sabap2.adu.org.za/spp_summary.php?Spp=4132). It is evident that many localities where Cape Parrots occur in the former Transkei have not been atlased. Perhaps if you are holidaying in this area over the next few months and see the parrots you could contribute your sightings. Birders are encouraged to submit observations of birds, particularly Cape Parrots, as the accuracy and precision of the distribution maps relies on observers submitting their observations.

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Wanted
Volunteers to
help count the
endangered
Cape Parrot in
the wild

Sat May 5th (pm) & Sun May 6th (am)

Join us in our annual evening and morning
Cape Parrot count to help save one of South
Africa's most endangered birds

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