



FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

**MINUTES OF THE WESTERN CAPE BIRDING FORUM MEETING
HELD ON 3 June 2017 AT INTAKA ISLAND, CENTURY CITY**

Present:

A Odendal	Chairman & BLO
S Krynauw	BLSW
B Butler	BLSW
K Harrison	WCBC
C de Kock	WCBC
T Williams	Independent
A Krynauw	BLSW
K Graaff	WBC
W Uys	Ceres BC
R Soller	CBC
B Crewe	TBC
B VanderWalt	TBC
P Beeton	CBC
N Stainforth	BLSW
M Anderson	BLSA
M Brooks	ADU
D Whitelaw	CBC
B Jones	CBC
J Fincham	CBC & Paarl Bird Sanctuary
J Hobbs	CBC & Paarl Bird Sanctuary
D Wright	BLSA
K Shaw	CapeNature
M Brown	NVT
C Malan	Secretary

Apologies:

P Nurse	PLBC
C Crump	BLSW
M Watt	Witzenberg BC
J Schlebush	CBC
S Willemse	NBC
Bruce Ward-Smith	PL Plett

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman specially welcomed Mark Anderson, CEO of BLSA and Nigel Stainforth previous council member to the meeting. All other members were welcomed and apologies noted. See attendance register.

A minute of silence was observed in honor of Messrs. Rob Martin and Eric Barnes that passed away recently.

The Chairman congratulated Bryan Butler & Sakkie Krynauw from the Somerset West Bird Club, as well as the Hermanus Bird Club on the two clubs' successful affiliation with BLSA.

The Chairman also expressed his appreciation to all who made nominations for the Owl Awards, many nominations were received and have gone to a committee to be adjudicated.

Mark Brown congratulated A Odendal on his 100th Flight for Birders course that was recently presented.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes (18 February 2017)

Minutes approved.

3. GUEST SPEAKERS:

3.1 Mark Anderson

Mark explained that he has been with BLSA for almost 9 years in which a lot of integration and negotiations took place.

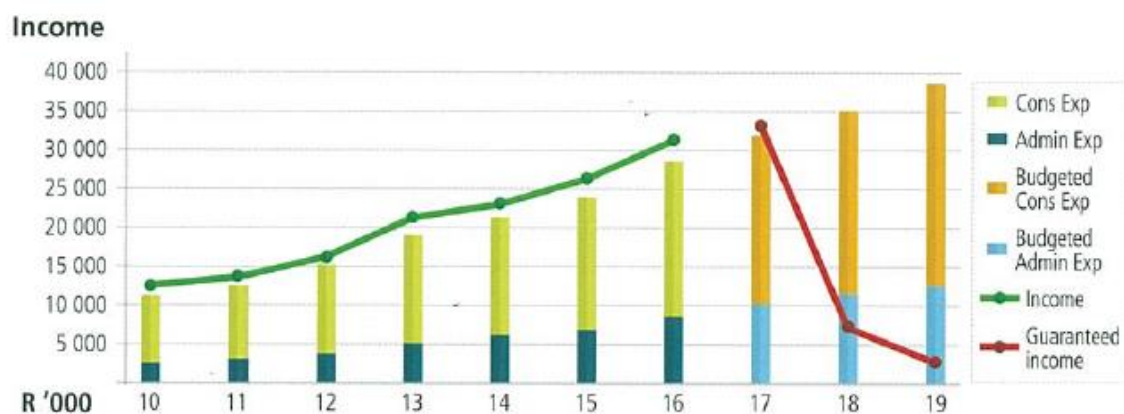
Actions/Tasks that were non-negotiables and will always be are:

- Exemplary corporate governance
- Impeccable financial Administration
- A scientific basis is used in our decision making
- BLSA are guided by BLIN 2020 strategy as our global alliance
- Our primary goal is to conserve SA birds and their habitats
- and we have lots of fun !

BLSA operates:

- Executive Board that meets once a month, some board members Skype in to avoid extra costs.
- Audit Committee that meets 2 to three times a year
- A remuneration committee

BLSA Finance



Mark reported that BLSA have yet again received an unqualified audit report from KPMG, BLSA external auditors. It is interesting to note that for the last 3 years BLSA have made a surplus, this will help to replenish our reserve funds of which we hope to have sufficient funding of one year in the kitty.

Interesting to note that far more funds are spent on conservation than on admin (salaries, etc).

Corporate Members, includes Partners, Associates and Introductory members.

Golden Bird Patrons, totalling 34 individuals donated a total of R1.9m.

All donors over R500 are thanked personally.

Mark and his team is still looking for funds for 2017 – 2019.

BLSA is trying to achieve financial sustainability, we need to be independent from fund raising.

Trustees of The Birdlife National Trust: members are, Dawid Lawrence, Humphrey Borkhum, Michael Spicer, Roger Wanless and Tony Zoghby.

BLSA is aiming to have a R100m in trust, this should be covered by bequests (bequest is BLSA’s biggest income and will be targeted).

Isdell House: We are very grateful to Pamela & Neville Isdell and the all the other donors who made this possible. Isdell house is worth R15 m, no conservation funds were used, the property is in a trust and is run as a separate entity.

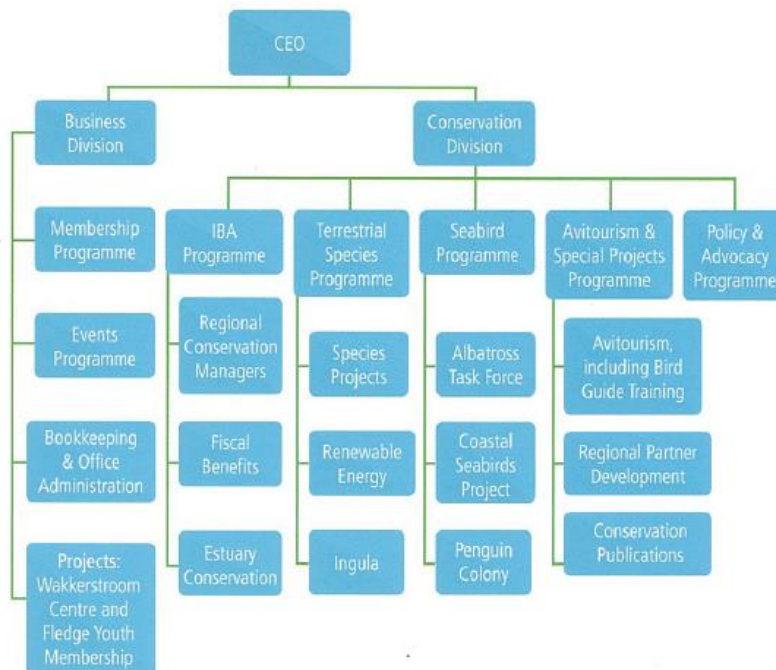
Scientific publications produced:

The Red Data Book 4th edition was published, this took SABAP2 data and lately Birdlasser data into account.

State of SA Birds 2017. This will be launched later in the year and is a snap shot of the current state of birds in South Africa.

Organigram

Mark reported that there are currently two divisions within BLSA, a Business and a Conservation Division, with a core complement of 42 employees.



Business division

- 12 employees
- Business division handles: Membership, African Bird Life (growing from strength to strength both retail and new subscriptions). Bulk subscriptions are also improving.
- It also deals with all the different bird clubs in South Africa.

Conservation Division

- 26 employees
- 5 new positions have recently being approved
- Events division is run by Emma Askes (Flock at sea AGAIN ! 2017, African Bird Fair) with help of volunteers Gisela Ortner and Mel Tripp
- Flufftail Festival to raise wetland awareness.
- False Bay Nature Reserve an IBA Birdathon held in Cape Town organised by Dale Wright
- Wakkerstroom Tourism & Education Centre - bed nights have increased. BLSA staff member Lucky is doing very well.
- Marketing & Awareness are done by Utopia & JCDecaux, with whom BLSA meet once a month.
- BLSA New campaign "Where are birds taking their names from". This campaign is backed by 12 bill boards advertisements as well as magazine advertising.
- Bird of the Year: Lappet-faced Vulture, amazing lesson plans have been developed.
- Every year a Checklist of Birds in SA is produced.
- Bird of the Year 2018 will be the African Black Oystercatcher, great choice taking the successes into account. This is an iconic species found on our shores.
- Environmental education at Wakkerstroom by Kristi is very well received by the children of the area.
- Young Birders Fledge Conservation Club is growing – Dawn Distribution network is sponsoring this wonderful initiative.

Conservation Work

- BLSA concentrate on species, sites and habitats.
- Terrestrial birds and Seabirds are covered by the IBA Program and Policy.
- Seabird Conservation is been headed up by Ross Wanless and his team. They have made significant progress to conserve pelagic and coastal birds.
- Line makers in CPT Houtbay .
- Penguins are moving up the East coast, two extra colony sites are proposed, one for Robberg, Plettenberg Bay and one for De Hoop. This program is being driven by Christina Hagen.
- Eradication of mice from Gough (British owned) is planned for 2019. BLSA will be involved.

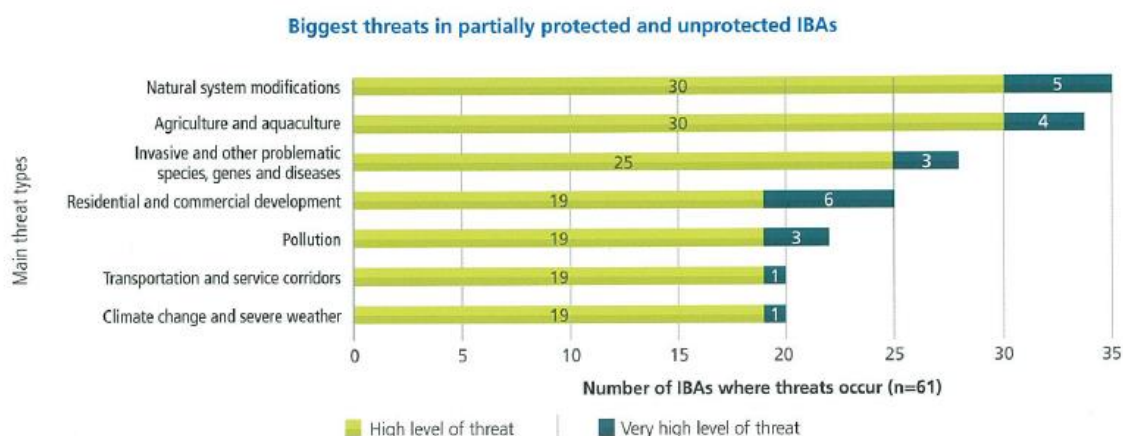
- Eradication of mice from Marion Island (SA owned) is planned for 2020, we have already secured 3 helicopters and will over the next few years have to raise R29m for poison.

Terrestrial Birds (Hanneline Smit-Robinson)

- White-winged Flufftail - in the 1960 there was 16 potential sites, now there is only 8 known sites. In 2000, Hanneline proved that the Ethiopian birds and the South African birds are from the gene pool. Investigation is currently underway to see if we could breed these birds in captivity.
- Hanneline also does work on the Taita Falcon together with Andrew Jenkins.
- The renewable energy program also falls under Hanneline. This is possible with funds received from Investec.

IBA Dale Wright reports as follows:

- Biggest threats to IBA’s is loss of habitat due to unsustainable development and land use; habitat deterioration from mismanagement, agriculture and Alien species.
- Get unprotected sites protected, 58 000ha was declared in 2014 and 17 456 ha in 2016.
- Fiscal Benefits Project – This tax incentive is a national first and its successful inclusion in the tax return system in 2016 created the first reward/ rebate for landowner. This project is driven by Candice Stevens.
- The Bird Friendly habitat guideline for Fynbos is almost finished, only a few hard copies will be printed. This publication will be available electronically.
- Estuary conservation – Verlorenvlei, Kleinrivier and Bot Lagoon – complex estuaries and very difficult to manage.
- At the largest IBA, Verlorenvlei, a lot of alien clearing have been done, but a lot to still do. The Berg River alien clearing team have cleaned about 45 ha thus far.



Policy & Advocacy

Mark reported that this position is currently vacant after Simon Gear left BLSA employment. This position requires a lot of pro-active and reactive work. Government sometimes call on us and even expects BLSA to help.

Avitourism and Special Projects

- This is run by Martin Taylor (funded by RSPV) and Ian Owtram in Namibia.
- The training of Guides falls under Martin, currently BLSA flagship program that we should nurture.

Comments/Discussion of Mark's presentation

Communication – no comments from the meeting.

Membership / Bird club affiliation

35 Clubs have signed up with BLSA and affiliation agreements are in place. Mark felt that BLSA should make sure that clubs understand the agreements.

Bryan Butler are concerned that there could be double counting of members by BLSA, Mark assured him there are checks and balances in place to avoid that.

The Chairman are concerned about birding related FB groups that is popping up, how do we get those informal groups incorporate into BLSA?

Keith Harris asked who is responsible for coastal sea birds ? Mark confirmed that it was Tarren Morris and that another post has been approved to help. Kevin Shaw reminded all that according to legation coastal birds falls under different departments, which make it so difficult to manage. Mark Brown suggested that bird clubs should get involved, in his experience with the White-fronted Plover, as soon as the clubs got involved they saw a 10% - 15% survival increase. Mark Brown referred to BLO's workshop they are planning in September on coastal birds, where clubs, NGO's, government, conservation organisations will get together to discuss a strategy to conserve our coastal birds. Mark also suggested we get Taryn Morris to the workshop as a speaker.

John Fincham, asked where BLSA stands on Nuclear energy, Mark Anderson explained that they avoid the subject as they are following BLIN policy on this issue. John also wanted to know if BLSA is involved in the problems at Ndumo. Mark explained that Ndumo is a massive problem, due to politics in the communities and also poachers coming in from Mozambique to come and harvest animals in Ndumo.

Tony Williamson expressed concern that flexibility not is not taken into account in the guidelines of the wind-farms. Dale Wright to raise this with Sam Ralston-Parton and report back to Tony.

In conclusion, Mark Anderson, welcomed members to call him anytime, and open-door policy remains and comments and discussions are welcomed.

He invited all BLSA affiliated clubs to get involved and offer their services for the 2018 Flock that is planned from the 7 – 10th March 2018 at Club Mykonos.

4. CONSERVATION REPORTS

4.1 DALE WRIGHT, the Regional Conservation Manager for BirdLife South Africa

- Got funding for employ two people at Strandfontein.
- Karoo Bio Bash = 12 expert's surveys across Karoo in fracking footprint, where or where not to allow fracking. We urgently need data for the Karoo.

- The Forum paid over R15 000 to John and Joan for use at the Paarl Bird sanctuary - Laptop
- Clubs running small projects – contact Dale for some funds
- Dale very happy with the BLO conference and the fact that all parties, government and NGO will be involved.
- LIBA's Pilot project - **Want to formalise certain projects, Dave Whitelaw, look at sub-committee.**
- John Fincham raised concern on how are we going to involve individuals from previously disadvantage backgrounds. Mark Anderson, remarked that although the BLSA Board have changed, he suggests that local bird clubs adopt a school in their area, etc. Colin de Kock feels we should have a special discussion on this and put a strategy together. **Mark Anderson will draw up a schedule and circulate to clubs to complete. This data could be used by Christie. All clubs to submit data by???**
- Southern Black Korhaan - Dale & BrianvdW to discuss.

4.2 Mark Brown, the regional representative on the Board of BirdLife South Africa

Mark Brown reiterated the role of BLSA board and its sound governance. If Western Cape clubs have issues, please raise them with Mark Anderson via mail.

Bridget raised concerns of Kelpie dogs chasing African Black Oystercatchers at Yzterfontein, forcing them to feed deeper and deeper in the water, with concerns of drowning. Mark Brown suggested that they put together baseline data and write a report to the municipality and get them involved. It normally takes 3 years data to make informed decision. Mark Brown also suggested to rather engage with the dog owners, get them on your side by giving them an alternative.

Anton Odendal reported that BLO will be getting all roll players in the Overstrand Municipality together to focus on coastal birds. Mark Brown will lead the strategic workshop at the end in which we will identify two or three projects to raise funds for.

5. FEEDBACK FROM CLUBS

5.1 Cape Bird Club

Priscilla Beeton's report on club activities:

- Grootvadersbaach chalets are wonderful for bird camps, one short coming is a central Lapa, but CapeNature is working on that.
- A ½ day course by Dale Wright on A journey into the World of SA Forest Birds to be held on the 22 July 2018 at the Biodiversity Environmental Education Centre in Mouille Point.
- Dave Whitelaw reported that Strandfontein lost a ranger and that the position is not filled yet. The Foreman's term came to an end, CBC managed to give him a partial contract, but he also resigned now. The previous ranger was generating some breeding sites for terns and created sand banks with a cement mixture. Unfortunately, the new ranger knows nothing about wetlands. Dave will arrange with the old ranger to come and spent some time with the new ranger, to hopefully get Strandfontein on track again.

Dave reiterated that counting/collecting data at the SSW is important as it is regarded as an artificial wetland. The area also generates interest and indirectly spreading the message.

- Dave Whitelaw reports that the Gulls at the V & A are proving to be a big problem and invite anyone with ideas to contact him.
- The application by Consol glass mining in Philippi has been accepted. The old Edith Stevens site that has been mined previously is now being rehabilitated.

LIBA's

Dave explained that if an area is not a declared IBA, but there are sufficient birds to conserve, how do we get this area to get a status of conservation? He used the example of Dick dent in the Strand where data are going back 30 years with almost 32 000 cards being completed. It is interesting to note the data from 1993 vs 2016 shows a constant and there was downward curve.

Paarl Sewerage Works

John Fincham thanked the WCBF for the start-up funding that went to buy a new laptop. He will be going from school to school in the area to spread the word of conservation. He further reported that the scouts had a very successful visit to the Works.

The Drakenstein Municipality have budgeted to ringfence the area with security fencing, this will need to be patrolled. The Scouts will be part of the patrolled schedule as well as planting some indigenous plants. Cape Nature have agreed to donate 4 artificial islands from NCC.

CBC will through an educational workshop, look for further funding for an Educational Officer.

Thank you letters from BLSA & WCBF to Drakenstein Municipality. Tony to draft a letter.

It was also suggested that the Paarl Sewerage Works Group maybe involve a registered NGO in the area to assist them.

5.2 West Coast Bird Club conservation report.

Keith Harrison highlighted West Coast conservation issues from the submitted report.

1. Extension to the Yzerfontein Gypsum Mine

An opportunity to obtain correct bird friendly rehabilitation methods to hold birds, which potentially will be displaced from the Saldanha area due to industrialisation developments. A proposal by the CWCBR is also to remove the alien plant species from the Riparian Zone of the Slangkop River from the flower reserve to the sea through the Gypsum pan and Red pan as a tourist amenity. An ornithologist has been appointed to produce a bird report.

2. West Coast National Park

- Management is unable to maintain the bird hides; therefore, the Honorary Rangers are arranging fund raising activities for materials.

- A new concession for House-boats at Kraal Bay has been issued for 20 years, and increased from 2 boats to 7 boats.
- Hides at the Geelbek Wader Pans have been removed with no proposal to replace.
- Extension of the Park to Melkbos by the North/South Corridor, the contract of the consultant handling the project has been terminated, there appears currently to be no replacement. Land owners are very concerned for the future and the work that has been done.

3. Aquiculture Development Zone

A complicated development, consisting of Small Bay, Big Bay, Outer Bay and Langebaan Lagoon. The areas have been reduced by half, to 884 ha in order to prevent over stocking.

An area suitable for fin fish is suitable for shell fish, while an area suitable for shell fish can be unsuitable for fin fish.

At a workshop for Fin fish the BLSA Bird Report was discussed as a serious comment, the Farm reported no bird fatalities as yet.

None of the reports mentioned what can occur during the out of breeding period. Cape Cormorants from the Benguela Current System gather in Big Bay to form the epicentre for their post breeding gathering forming rafts to moult, this year about 250,000 birds, which was confirmed by the Farm Manager, WCNP and SB Water Quality Trust.

Cape Cormorants feed by driving small fish into a 'bait ball', then into shallower water where there is a feeding frenzy, also joining in are aerial diving predator species Gannets, Gulls, Swift Terns and Migratory Terns (Common and Sandwich terns are not included in reports.)

The Farm Manager had a video made to show the development of the benthic fauna under the cage, mainly mussels. Detritus attracts many small crayfish, which are the prey for Bank Cormorants which could become entangled in the nets after diving 25 metres to feed, there are only 65 breeding pairs in the Saldanha area.

Cape Cormorants also drive the bait ball through mussel areas, carcasses of birds entangled in "stocking", netlike material used to put small mussels onto the ropes have washed up onto beaches in Small Bay.

One applicant had failed to include the BLSA report in their EIR.

4. The Chairman tabled a letter received from the HR at WCNP, stating that two hides have been demolished and that the HR's have funds available to replace one of the hides. Unfortunately, the WCNP is not interested in this option.

After some discussion, the following was decided to:

- Get the original drawings that were done (Anne Gray Fund sponsored)
- Get all the stats from Trevor Hardaker, Hockey and Keith Harrison.
- Michael from the ADU also to forward any stats he has.

Kindly to forward these to Dale Wright. Dale to write a letter that M Anderson could forward to Parks Board HO with a possibility to discuss the matter with them.

5.3 BirdLife Overberg

In addition to Anton Odendal's report hereto attached the following:

Global Big Day, it was decided to see how many birds we could count in one day in the Overberg. All participants counted their local patch. This was such a success that BLO will do this on a quarterly in future, with the one in Spring in conjunction with BBD 2017. Application Arniston Spa The various clubs to develop a combined approach to object to the development applications in future. The BirdLife Overberg objection (on behalf of the WCBF) to the Arniston Spa Hotel application will be used as an initial case-study in view of monitoring progress. Project to be co-ordinated by Dave Whitelaw and Anton Odendal. An application for beach rides from the Arniston Hotel was heavily objected. No feedback has been received on our objection.

Damara Tern Arniston Spa – beach rides. Gone quiet.

BLO Conference We have a Xmas in July planned to sponsor a 2-day workshop in September to look at helping our Coastal birds. Mark Brown will facilitate the strategic session at the end of the two days to identify two or three projects that needs our help and for which we will be raising funds in the future.

5.4 ADU

Michael Brooks reported that the ADU is growing well and that 91% of all Atlas pentads have been visited, with only 160 pentads that have not been visited. The Chairman requested that Michael forwarded the pentad numbers so we could encourage our members to atlas those specifically.

CWAC counts all organised.

ADU funding - SANBI pulled out, funding ok for now, but we still need R2.4 m per year.

5.5 CapeNature

Kevin Shaw reported that due to a shortage of funds, no vacant positions are currently being filled within CapeNature. The Biodiversity report for 2017 will give some data. Kevin's time has been split between field work and managing people now. He expressed his appreciation to Dale for all the help and interaction. The situation at CapeNature is not good at the moment and NGO's are stepping in as CapeNature is not coping.

Mark Anderson commented that NGO's are ask more and more to help.

6. GENERAL

- Colin de Kock reported on various management issues at the West Coast National Park (WCNP).
- Mark Anderson undertook to write to Mr Fundisile Mketeni, the CEO of SANParks, and raise a few matters and ask a few questions.

7. WCBF FINANCES (Sakkie Krynauw)

The Treasurer presented the WCBF Financial report

Financial Report :			
Opening Balance	as on 26 May		R 25 361,59
EXPENSES :			
1	Forum meeting 18 Feb 2017		
	Petrol claim	R	1 610,00
	Catering	R	1 003,50
	Bank fees	R	62,00
	Mark Brown, visit cost	R	3 032,00
	Paarl Bird Sanctuary project	R	15 034,50
	total	R	20 742,00
INCOME :			
1	Contribution from Bird Clubs	R	2 446,00
	total	R	2 446,00
	balance	R	-18 296,00
Final balance	as on 2 June	R	7 065,59

8. EVENTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

8.1 Forest Birds identification course by Dale Wright.

9. NEXT MEETING

13 – 15 October, Bi-annual breakaway weekend to Duinepos in the West Coast National. Book through Sakkie Krynauw. It was also decided that self-catering will be done.

10. BIRD CLUB CHAIRMEN DISCUSSION CHAIRED BY PRICILLA BEETON

General issues discussed:

- Bryan Butler reported on that the CCPT have bought the property next to Paardevlei, the EIA states that it will be used for low cost housing and 12 petrol garages. Objections/responses have to be in by Monday the 12th June. BLSW together with other conservation organisations within the Helderberg area will put an objection together for submission.
David Whitelaw encouraged them to write to the council if the correct steps have not been taken and to communicate directly. Also use all the historical data that was collected at Paardevlei in the past.
- Tygerberg, Reported on the phenomenal presentation by Faansie Peacock.
- Brian vdWalt reported that they have donated R20 000 towards the Black Eagle project via the FritzPatrick, as well as the Black Harrier project. Once feedback have

been received from Dale Wright a further donation will be made towards some research on the Southern Black Korhaan. All these donations were made possible by the wonderful calendar that Brian and his team at Tygerberg BC put together every year. Well done to all!!

- Anton Odendal reported that the PopUp Outings are still very successful at BLO. An amount gets communicated before the time for a petrol levy.
- CBC reports that they have also established a Whats-up-Group for lift club arrangements.

10. Meeting concluded at 14:00 and members of Cape Bird Club were thanked for hosting the meeting.

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Chairman

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Date