

Cape Parrot Newsletter

CONTENT

**So, what's the
plan for Cape
Parrots? 2**

**Zoological
Society of SA 3
2019**

**Cape Parrot
Big Birding 4
Day 2019**

The Future of Cape Parrots

A species action plan workshop for Cape Parrots was held over 26 & 27th September 2019 in Hogsback. The workshop included 48 stakeholders from across the country representing 23 organisations with various backgrounds including being directly involved with Cape Parrots, birds in general and/or species conservation. The workshop was structured according to the IUCN's Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning. This document outlines the exact steps to take when creating an action plan for the conservation of a species from the types of participants to include to specific activities designed to share knowledge and generate new ideas.

The workshop was intensive and focused to create actionable items that can be implemented in the next 10 years to help with the conservation of the species. It started out with talks from various people to determine the status of the species at present. There were then many activities to structure a vision and list goals which were then further teased out into strategies and actionable tasks. Overall the workshop was a great initiative to get the various organisations involved with Cape Parrots to sit together and create a unifying plan for the future of the species. Please see the next page for some details from the draft plan.



Cape Parrot Action Plan Workshop

26 - 27 September 2019, Hogsback, South Africa











WORLD
PARROT
TRUST



CAPE PARROT
PROJECT



IUCN
Species Survival Commission



CONSERVATION
PLANNING
SPECIALIST GROUP



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUYESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI
science
& technology
Department
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

So, what's the plan for Cape Parrots?

The action plan is still in its first draft and will be finalised early next year. It is a large and comprehensive document with many stakeholder interests so it needs to be a plan everyone can be happy with before uptake.

The overall vision that came out of the workshop was:

A thriving population of Cape parrots acting as a flagship for the protection and recovery of indigenous forests in South Africa, for the shared benefit of people and nature.

There are four goals split up into two key aspects i.e. the species and the habitat.

Species goals:

Current level of genetic diversity (heterozygosity) is maintained within and between the three sub-populations by 2030, AND Sustained growth in effective population size, with no reduction in distribution across the range.

Habitat goals (encompassing the Forest/Grassland mosaic):

Formal protection and effective management of at least 10% of currently-utilised Cape parrot habitat AND Maintain overall size of current Cape Parrot niche habitat, particularly mature forest sites, at 100,000 ha, and halt further degradation in critical Cape Parrot forest sites by 2030.

The four main strategies are:

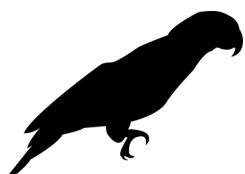
Research - there is still a lot we don't know about Cape Parrots and this strategy aims to fill these gaps in knowledge.

Habitat & Landscape - this is particularly addressing aspects around habitat loss.

Law Enforcement - to educate agencies and landowners, and address gaps in policies.

Community Engagements - to address poaching and persecution of the species.

Each goal, strategy and task has a target, indicators of success, and monitoring plans and methods to ensure that it follows the SMART criteria. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Relevant and Time based. These criteria and the monitoring plans put the "action" into an action plan and prevent things that are not implementable as it tries to ensure the best success.



Zoological Society of SA 2019

The 39th Zoological Society of South Africa (ZSSA) congress, hosted by the University of Mpumalanga, was held in Skukuza, Kruger National Park from 7 –10 July this year. The society celebrated its 60th year of existence with the theme for this year's congress being *Celebrating 60 years of African Zoology*. Two parrot relevant talks were from Dr D.A. Ehlers-Smith on the conservation and connectivity of endangered forests, and Mr M.B. Wardjomto on detection of avian malaria.

Dr Ehlers-Smith from UKZN highlighted that anthropogenic climate change compounds the negative effects of land-use changes on forest biodiversity. He modeled three forest-specialized and habitat-specific birds to see the likelihood of their niche persistence under predicted climate-change scenarios. The results were that habitat loss under climate change intensified habitat fragmentation and increased dispersal resistance, and species resilience will depend heavily on the connectivity of habitats. He emphasized that planning for connectivity is therefore key in mitigating these negative effects and facilitating species' dispersal ability in light of the effects of climate change.

Mr Wardjomto from the University of Free State spoke about Avian Haemosporidian parasites that are vector-borne blood parasites that affect most birds. They can have serious negative effect on their avian hosts and studies of these parasites in South Africa are lacking. Interestingly instead of using the traditional microscopy technique, they detected the parasite via mitochondrial DNA. They found that a diversity of these parasites occur in various avian species sampled throughout the Kruger National Park and drew attention to the need for disease prevalence maps which are necessary for effective biodiversity conservation.



Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2019

The CPBBD was held on the 4 and 5th of May 2019. This year Saturday, the weather was rainy and misty with poor visibility in many areas. Over the years generally less than 1600 maximum Cape Parrots have been counted in the wild. This year ~250 volunteers were posted at least 77 localities. Because the weather was poor on Saturday in most areas, only about 1334 Cape Parrots were seen during the afternoon count while many more, about 1660, were seen the following morning. The maximum number of Cape Parrots counted was 947 in the southern Amathole region (there is a possibility of double counting here as many submitted a total count for both days), 772 in the central region (369 former Transkei, 413 KwaZulu-Natal) and 75 in the northern subpopulation in the Limpopo Province. This suggests that there were at least 1804 Cape Parrots in the wild on the CPBBD in 2019 which is higher than recent years. There are, however, still some concerns of declines in numbers of Cape Parrots in some areas of their distribution range, for example the Boston, Dargle, Balgowan and Karkloof areas in KwaZulu-Natal. It is commendable that volunteers roughed it out despite the poor weather this year. The continued monitoring of the species can and has informed conservation plans so much appreciation goes to the volunteers for continuing to participate!

**The next Cape Parrot Big Birding Day will be on
9 and 10th May 2020.**



Cape Parrot Newsletter Editor:
Preshnee Singh



CONTACT DETAILS

Prof. Colleen Downs
School of Life Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
P/Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209
Email: downs@ukzn.ac.za
Tel: +27-33-2605127
cell: 0829202026