

# Cape Parrot Newsletter

## CONTENT

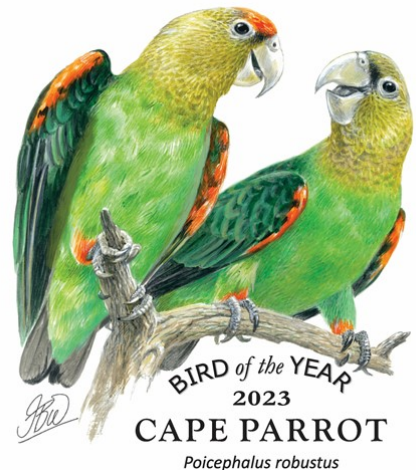
Parrot News Snippets 2

International Ornithological Congress 3

Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2022 4

## Bird of the year 2023!

On 3rd December 2022, BirdLife South Africa announced the Cape Parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*) as Bird of the Year for 2023. There are several conservation organisations and individuals that work together to protect the endemic and endangered Cape Parrots. BirdLife South Africa has partnered with their BirdLife Species Guardians, the Cape Parrot Working Group and the Wild Bird Trust's



Cape Parrot Project to raise awareness about the species through the campaign. The Cape Parrot Action Plan Coordinating Committee (CPAPCC) sees the Cape Parrot as a flagship species bringing awareness about the importance of and threats to the entire Mistbelt forest ecosystem.

The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust is the sponsor of Bird of the Year 2023 and the campaign will focus on creating awareness about the Cape Parrot with educational programmes, popular articles, social media and presentations. T-shirts, pin badges and fluffy toys will also be created to be sold through 'BirdLife South Africa's Shop for the Birds!' from January 2023. We hope that you support us with the campaign by participating in the BirdLife events and purchasing merchandise that will help in raising funds for Cape Parrot conservation.

For more information about the various organisations see the links below:

BirdLife SA Bird of the Year 2023 — <https://www.birdlife.org.za/bird-of-the-year-2023>

BirdLife South Africa's Shop for the Birds! — <https://shop.birdlife.org.za>

Cape Parrot Project — <https://www.wildbirdtrust.com/projects/cape-parrot-project>

Cape Parrot Action Plan — <https://www.capeparrotactiongroup.org>

Cape Parrot Working Group — <https://cpwg.ukzn.ac.za/about-us>



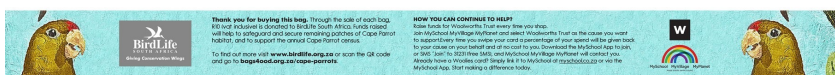
HANS HOHEISEN  
charitable trust  
MANAGED BY NEDBANK PRIVATE WEALTH



# Parrot News Snippets

The first version of the Cape Parrot bag from Bags for Good came out in 2017. In May this year they released [a second version](http://bags4good.org.za/cape-parrots-2). There may not be many left so look out for them in Woolworths stores! For every bag purchased, R10 is donated to BirdLife SA.

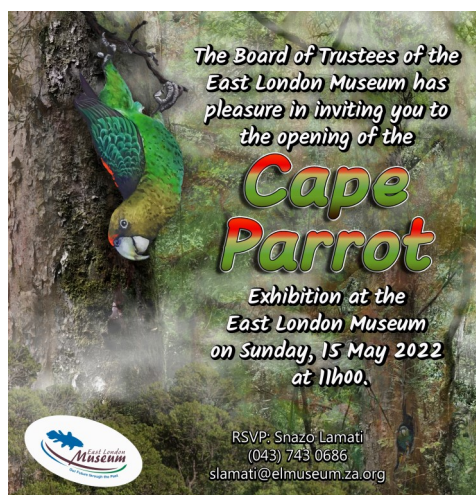
<http://bags4good.org.za/cape-parrots-2>



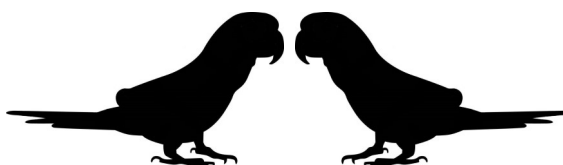
The Cape Parrot Action Plan (CPAP) website is now live so you can visit at <https://www.capeparrotactiongroup.org/> to find out about the strategies and goals we are working towards to conserve Cape Parrots and their habitat.



Africa Geographic is a conservation and travel company established in 1991. In January they did a story highlighting the Cape Parrot (<https://africageographic.com/stories/cape-parrot/>). One of the main aims was to get more people interested and involved especially in the annual count.



The East London Museum now has a Cape Parrot exhibition. It opened on 15 May this year. This will bring awareness about the Cape Parrot and education about the threats and conservation efforts. If you are ever in East London be sure to check it out!



# International Ornithological Congress

The 28th International Ornithological Congress (IOC) was hosted virtually in South Africa from the 15th to the 19th of August 2022 and the Cape Parrot was chosen to be on the logo. The Congress had never been virtual before, and this was only the second time it was hosted in Africa; the first was ~25 years ago in 1998 with the 22nd Congress.

The main disadvantage of switching to a virtual congress was the loss of planned birding tours and outings, leaving many disappointed. However, the mix of live and recorded plenaries, as well as live question and discussion sessions, with engaging round tables improved the virtual experience and made it more interactive than that of a typical webinar. Also since the event was virtual, there was a lot more participation from lower income countries with early career researchers and students, which made the event more inclusive.

There were two speed talks specifically on Cape Parrots. One on vocalizations in the Amatole Mountains by Cassie Carstens and one on Cape Parrots eating exotic pecan nuts by Kirsten Wimberger. Both Cassie and Kirsten are from the Wild Bird Trust's Cape Parrot Project. Other talks relevant to parrots were on parasites and beak and feather disease. Overall the conference achieved its goal to get ornithologists together to talk about research and conservation of the world's birds and the future of ornithology. Advances in biotelemetry and biologging, as well as drone technology look to be useful tools to studying birds in future as they are rapidly improving and becoming more affordable.

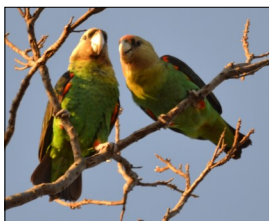
We hope that this conference is hosted on the African continent again in future. One thing that the conference highlighted was the need to understand African birds as they have been relatively understudied. Also, there is some amazing work already being done by African ornithologists on the continent and these projects need to be showcased and supported.



# Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2022

The annual Cape Parrot Big Birding Day was in its 25th year and held over the weekend of 7th and 8th May 2022. A quarter century has gone by of voluntary participation in monitoring the Cape Parrot population! The weather was not favourable for this year's count, so some areas were poorly covered. Over the years generally less than 1600 maximum Cape Parrots have been counted in the wild. This year the maximum number of Cape Parrots counted was 375 in the southern Amathole region (this is an undercount as 573 were counted in the pecan orchards a month prior), 891 in the central region (318 in the former Transkei, 591 in KwaZulu-Natal) and 52 from the northern subpopulation in the Limpopo Province. The total count was 1366 Cape Parrots in the wild. This is lower than in 2019 and 2021 counts due to the poor weather conditions. One other reason for the low count is that pecan nuts peaked fruiting in mid-April 2022 which is earlier than usual. For future counts we may need to consider a day for each subpopulation, and when pecan nuts are in fruit, instead of a national day of counting parrots. Each subpopulation coordinator could then choose the best time for seeing parrots and getting volunteers to count\*. There continues to be a decline in numbers of Cape Parrots in some areas of their distribution range, notably in the Boston, Dargle, Balgowan and Karkloof areas in KwaZulu-Natal. As always the continued monitoring of the species can and has informed conservation plans so much appreciation goes out to all the volunteers who continue to participate.

**The next Cape Parrot Big Birding Day will be on:  
6 & 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023\***



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](mailto:downs@ukzn.ac.za)  
Tel: +27-33-2605127  
cell: 0829202026