

Cape Parrot Newsletter

Number 11 - February 2011



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Reminder: Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2011

Reminder: Hopefully you have booked Saturday 7th May and Sunday 8th May 2011 to participate in our **fourteenth** Cape Parrot Big Birding Day (CPBBD). This year's count is particularly important if the Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease Virus (PBFVDV) outbreaks or PCD (Psittacine Circovirus Disease) as it is now being referred to, are widespread and seriously affecting the population. Please contact Prof Downs or one of the co-ordinators in your area. The CPBBD report for 2010 is available at <http://biology.ukzn.ac.za/cpwg.html>.



Figure 1. Cape Parrots flying over forest in October 2010. Unfortunately some observers see none on CPBBD but nil counts are also very important for accurate data analysis. (Photo CT Downs)

Parrots visit Local Tavern

Parrots recently visited trees near the local pub in Haenertsburg, Limpopo.. Cathy Dzerefos reported that 55 Cape Parrots were seen feeding on Blackwoods next to the pub in January 2011! This is the first ever sighting of the birds in the village.

Update on Last Newsflash

As mentioned in the last newsletter Malcolm Gemmell had sms'd at 06h00 in November 2010 with the following: "Adult male (ring right leg) at 05h45 + 8 friends Xalingena. Possibly Victoria's brother?". This exciting news related to the Cape Parrot chicks ringed in the wild in 2001 (see prior newsletters for details and also detailed in the DVD for sale). The male observed by Malcolm and the Djerf family from Sweden was one of the chicks ringed at the nest 9 years previously! Pictures of the bird are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The wild Cape Parrot with a ring seen in November 2010. It had been ringed nearby as a nestling in October 2001. (Photos courtesy of Djerf family)

Places to Stay and see Cape Parrots

Many ask where they can visit and stay to see parrots.

- ✦ In Creighton KwaZulu-Natal, the guest house run by Malcolm and Gail Gemmell is recommended. Malcolm has been a stalwart in organising and co-ordinating the CPBBD in the greater Creighton area and runs Button birding (see www.buttonbirding.com for details).
- ✦ In Bulwer KwaZulu-Natal, there is the excellent Marutswa Board Walk close to the village. (See www.treeroutes.co.za/project-marutswa-forest-boardwalk-bulwer). There are bird guides who know the parrots and other forest specials. There are several B&Bs in Bulwer. In addition the nearby Ashtonvale Guest Farm, run by Carol and Russell Hill who have co-ordinated the CPBBD in the Bulwer area the past 14 years, is also recommended. (www.ashtonvaleguestfarm.co.za).
- ✦ In the Amatole region there are a number of B&Bs in Stutterheim and Hogsback and Shire Eco Lodge on the forest edge run by Rob Scott is recommended (see www.shire.co.za).



Figure 3. Cape Parrots nesting at Shire Eco Lodge, Stutterheim (Photos courtesy of Rob Scott)

Alien Invasive Parrots: Worldwide Census

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we are often phoned or emailed about people seeing Cape Parrots in their gardens, but these turn out to be Rose-ringed or Ring-necked Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*). They are the most widely introduced parrot in the world with breeding populations in 35 countries, spanning five continents. In cities like London their numbers have increased dramatically in recent years. Although mainly in Gauteng and the greater Durban area, they are extending their range in KZN. See the latest SABAP map at: http://sabap2.adu.org.za/species_maps.php?Spp=941. During January 2011 a global census of alien invasive parrots as well as those indigenous ones in urban areas was initiated by parrot researchers worldwide. Would be appropriate to include a pic of the ringneck parakeet?

Death of African Grey Parrots from DRC

Sadly, wild trapped African Grey Parrots continue to be exported from central Africa to countries around the world including RSA, despite many aviculturists breeding them successfully in South Africa. This was highlighted by the recent death of 750 African Greys while being transported on a domestic flight between Johannesburg and Durban. A combination of overcrowding and insufficient ventilation in the travel crates is believed to have resulted in this totally avoidable tragedy.

Update on Captive Bred Chicks

William Horsfield has reported that the pair of Cape Parrots on loan to him from the CPWG as part of the captive breeding programme, successfully raised three of four chicks hatched in September-October 2010. (See Figure 4). His comments: "The first 7 chicks produced and surgically sexed resulted in 5 females which is excellent news. Let's hope there are more females in the youngsters still to be sexed"

Reminder: Shaun Wilkinson, the Cape Parrot Studbook Keeper, is now based at Monte Casino Bird Gardens in Johannesburg (email: shaun@montebg.co.za). Owners of Cape Parrots are requested to update him on all chicks produced, transfers or deaths to keep the studbook up to date. It is essential that this information is collated to among other things, facilitate legitimate trade and assist in preventing illegal black market activities.

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 4. Female fledgling produced at Amazona breeding facility during September 2010. (Photo courtesy of W. Horsfield).

Cape Parrot or Grey-headed Parrot?

We are often asked about whether a bird is an Cape Parrot or Grey-headed Parrot. The pictures below should assist. Grey-headed tend to be more a bushveld, riverine species found in Kruger National Park & North into Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Cape Parrots are more an Afromontane forest species but also feed outside of forest at localised food sources in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. There is a relic population of the latter near Magoebesloof in Limpopo Province.

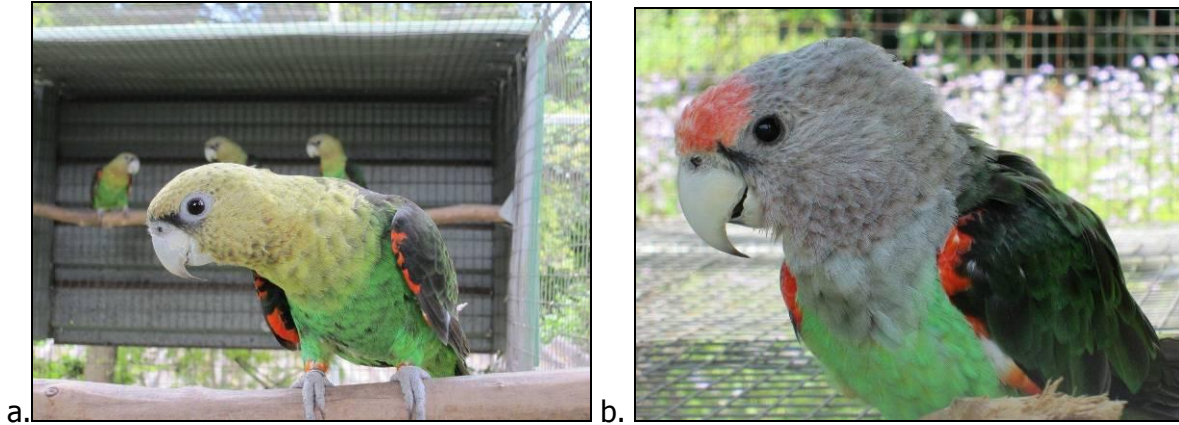


Figure 5. Male Cape Parrot compared with a female Grey-headed Parrot. (Photos courtesy of W. Horsfield).

Gifts

We have a DVD of the Cape Parrot Programme produced by Don Guy for 50/50 for sale (R50). This is informative and useful for school projects.

There are still reprints (size 60 x 45 cm, see below) of the Cape Parrot painting by Ingrid Fouche available. Cost R250.



Figure 6. Ingrid Fouche's painting of Cape Parrots.

Contact Details

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