

Cape Parrot Newsletter

Number 6 - January 2008

Contents:

<i>Contents:</i>	1	<i>Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2008 Co-ordinators.</i>	3
<i>Breeding of the "Snowstorm Pair"</i>	1	<i>South African caught smuggling parrots - Tee</i> ...	5
<i>STOP PRESS! Vicky has a chick</i>	2	<i>Echo Parakeets Downgraded to Endangered - Tee</i>	5
<i>Cape Parrot Mosaic Mirror</i>	2	<i>Web Sites of Interest:</i>	5
<i>Guidelines for Keeping Parrots as Pets</i>	3	<i>Contact Details:</i>	5

A Word from the Editor

Hi Everyone

It is hard to believe that this is the 6th Cape Parrot newsletter and that I have been putting them together for over a year now. I have had a busy last few months including attending a couple of wildlife crime meetings, hence the delay in this edition. Next month I am off to Cape Town for a few months, I have only passed through briefly before, and will hopefully get lots of research done as it has been piling up a bit recently. I am also looking forward to seeing some of the sites there.

May I wish you all a very Happy 2008! Tee

Breeding of the "Snowstorm Pair"

Recently I heard of the breeding success of this pair of Cape Parrots that were illegally removed from the wild some time ago and have since been incorporated into the breeding program. I have pieced together bits and pieces from a number of emails I have received over the last few years from a number of people that had been involved in the story.

The story started in several years ago when Malcolm Gemmell was contacted by a local farmer who had taken in two Cape Parrots that had been illegally captured and were being offered for sale. There was a snowstorm at the time and the farmer was concerned for their welfare in these conditions*. The wings of the birds had been clipped and so it would not have been possible to release them back to the wild immediately (which can be an option given the necessary permissions from the authorities).

Given the potential for transmitting potential disease (e.g. PBFDV) back to the wild population after a period of time in captivity with other birds it was not practical for these birds to be returned to the wild.

The birds were subsequently placed on breeding loan with parrot breeder William Horsfield.

"the female had previously laid eggs in the wild..."

In addition to a major health and disease test, Williams vet, Dr Chris Kingsley, confirmed they were an adult male and female. The female having ovulation scars on her ovary which indicates that she had, prior to capture, previously laid eggs in the wild. This is quite sad as she

would have been part of the wild



Cape Parrot breeding flock. The male was also well developed and it was possible that they had initially been caught together as a pair in a nest cavity.

Given their ordeal, it took the birds some time to settle into their new home and regain breeding condition. But as can be seen in the photos they are a lovely pair and are now in excellent condition. William has also provided a picture of the female with her eggs in the nest box.

The origins of, and relationships between, many of the birds in the

captive population are unknown. Birds of wild origins from known areas can be very important in retaining genetic variation within a captive population.

Latest news: All 3 chicks successfully hatched and are growing well.



*NB: The farmer had acted under his best intentions when taking these birds. However, the ideal action would have been to contact the wildlife authorities to arrange the official confiscation of the birds. Whether this would have been practical under the circumstances is uncertain.

Photos: William Horsfield, Amazona Endangered Parrot Breeding Facility

STOP PRESS! Vicky has a chick

A couple of months ago I got an email from William Horsfield, telling me that Vicky had bred successfully and was in the process of rearing a chick. Vicky is the Cape Parrot who's story has appeared in a couple of previous newsletters.

She was initially removed from the wild in 2001, as a chick, due to a badly damaged beak and the fear she would not survive in the wild. Her story was updated in the last newsletter to say that since that time she had settled in well at the L&T Bird Farm, but that she had not yet bred.

Don Guy has once again produced a brilliant piece for 50/50 highlighting the Cape Parrot this was shown in November. You can see the transcript of the

"Wild birds are extremely important in providing diverse genetic input... into the captive population..."

programme at:

www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=8077

As William points out on the 50/50 program another fantastic part to this story is that Vicky's mate is another bird that was previously

caught from the wild. This bird had lived in captivity possibly for as long as 20 years before joining the breeding program.

Wild birds are extremely important in providing diverse genetic input, from 'founder' stock, into the captive population. Especially if a breeding program is to have the ability to select breeding pairs in order to maintain genetic diversity and reduce inbreeding over time. These birds and their chick will be very valuable to the studbook and Cape Parrot captive breeding program.

Cape Parrot Mosaic Mirror

Nicki Kirby has crafted a beautiful mosaic mirror featuring the head of a Cape Parrot which she has donated to the Cape Parrot Working Group.

The mirror is to be auctioned at the BirdLife SA annual auction taking place at the BirdLife South Africa: 79th Annual General Meeting and Official Launch of the Overberg Birding Route Hermanus - 12 to 16 March 2008. The auction will take place at on the evening of the 15th March during the evening dinner.

I asked Nicki about her reasons for conceiving and designing the mirror, she said that there were several. Nicki grew up enjoying and appreciating natural habitats and has become increasingly concerned at the decimation and loss of many important areas in

recent years. Plus she has seen how important conservation projects can be in protecting and preserving natural environments.

However, given her hectic schedule, both at work and with her family, she finds it difficult to actively participate in any ongoing conservation activities.

Nicki has been creating mosaics for a while now and saw that by using these skills to develop this mosaic it provided a method through which she could contribute to conserving nature. Given her close friendship with Colleen Downs, Nicki chose the Cape Parrot and CPWG as her focus.

In producing this mirror her craftwork has provided a way in which she can contribute to

conserving the natural environment.

Developing the mosaic took some time. Interestingly finding the right coloured tiles was quite difficult. To find those that would provide as true to life representation as possible, less popular colours e.g. brown were especially difficult. Putting the mosaic together requires dedicated periods of time which Nicki found during her recent maternity leave.

NB: I apologise as my photo, is at a bit of a slant and really does not do the colours and textures of the mirror justice (Tee).

If you are interested in contacting Nicki her email address is: FelthamN@ukzn.ac.za

Guidelines for Keeping Parrots as Pets

The Loro Parque Fundación has up-dated its guidelines for keeping parrots as pets. The guide provides advice in a wide

range of subject areas: suitable, housing, diet, enrichment etc. The guidelines can be downloaded at:

www.loroparque-fundacion.org
(full link to the pdf in web site list at end)

Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2008 Co-ordinators

The annual cape Parrot Big Birding Day takes place on the weekend of the 3rd & 4th May in 2008, the count takes place on Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

So if you are interested in volunteering you need to make sure

you don't get booked up for anything else up on that weekend!

Below is a list of the contact people who will be co-ordinating the different regions for 2008. Please get in contact the person in the region you wish to be placed in (or contact Colleen: see next page).

On the next page is a copy of the flyer for the event - feel free to print it off and distribute it to publicise the event to people who may be interested.

As usual the overall co-ordinator is Colleen Downs whose contact details are on the flyer.

Contact persons for the Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2008

Area	Name	Tel	Email
Overall co-ordinator	Prof. Colleen Downs	033 260 5127; 0829202026	downs@ukzn.ac.za
Newcastle (Ncandu)	Tony Roberts	034 2125585 082 8217779	trtours@dunideekzn.co.za
Karkloof	John & Jenny Robinson	033-5029090/ 082-4433805	tomrob@mweb.co.za
Dargle/ Nottingham Rd/ Balgowan	Adam Robinson	033 2344484 0726146081	adamjnr@mweb.co.za
Byrne Valley	Malcolm Anderson	033 2122744 082 5723455	mmanderson@mweb.co.za
Boston	Barbara & Glyn Bullock	033 997 1783	
Bulwer	Russell Hill	039 8320053 082 9239649	carolhill@futurenet.co.za
Creighton/Donnybrook	Malcolm Gemmell	039 8331029 082 7895000	buttonbirding@futurenet.co.za
Weza/ Glengarry	Colleen Downs	See above	
Mpur/Glengarry	Louis Marx	039 6821468	jeanmarx@telkomsa.net
Kokstad	Pat Lowry	039 7273844	lowry@kznwildlife.com
Mthatha Langeni / Matiwane Ngcobo	Gary Harvey	0834520883, 0436422791h, 0406350283w	starsec@mweb.co.za
Hogsback	Jane Pledger		janepledger@ananzi.co.za
Stutterheim	Neill Harvey	043-6832384	alliedin@eci.co.za
Wild Coast (Port St Johns)	Kathryn Costello	047 5641240	outspan@wildcoast.co.za
Mbotyi	John Duff	083 657 8764	heatherj@futurenet.co.za
KWT/Alice	Gertie Griffith	043 7352195	gerken@intekom.com
	Peter Mather-Pike	043 7403566 /0829248514	petcher@xsinet.co.za
Northern Province	David Letsoala	083 568 4678 015 2762704	info@krm.co.za
	Cathy Dzerefos	083 7462239 015 2765003	cathy@dzerefos.com
	Kobus Pienaar	082 809 8875	pienaarAJ@ledet.gov.za
	Coenraad van Zyl	082 801 0014	Coenraadvz@TelkomSA.net

Cape Parrot Counting Day 2008



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

Sat May 3rd (pm) & Sun May 4th (am)

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

Contact: Prof Colleen T. Downs
School of Biological & Conservation Sciences,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg
Tel: 033-2605127/04 (w), 033-3962011 (h),
0829202026 Email: downs@ukzn.ac.za



South African caught smuggling parrots - Tee

I was chatting to a New Zealand customs official a couple of weeks ago about this case.

Recently, Phillipus Fourie, a 21-year-old South African was convicted in New Zealand for attempting to illegally smuggle parrot eggs into the country.

Fourie pleaded guilty and was fined a total of NZ\$20,000 (R106,201), for "attempting to possess

unauthorised goods", "making a false declaration" and "trading in threatened species".

He had concealed a total of 44 parrot eggs in a purpose-made vest that was worn under the man's clothing.

He was detected by New Zealand Customs officers when he arrived at Auckland International Airport. New Zealand's Ministry of

Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) lead the inquiry into the seizure.

NZ Customs pointed out that it was a professionally organised shipment and that they treat the illegal importation of wildlife very seriously.

Further details on web site: http://www.customs.govt.nz/about/News/parrot_eggs91107.htm

Echo Parakeets Downgraded to Endangered - Tee

I mentioned previously that I did some genetic work on the Echo Parakeets of Mauritius. This species went down to 8 known individuals on the 1980's and was classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Species Red Data List. Carl Jones started the work trying to bring back this species as well as the Mauritius Falcon and Pink Pigeon and this is now overseen by the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation. I

was really pleased to read that it is one of the very few species that has now been downgraded in the IUCN latest Red Data List, from 'Critically Endangered' to 'Endangered'. The population now numbers over 302 birds in the wild. Following the intensive work of the group which targeted many of the aspects which endangered this species. Reduction of alien habitat and species, provision and

protection of nest boxes, captive breeding and supplementary feeding.

Although the parrots still require this type of assistance the guys that have been working with this species over the years have something to feel very proud of what an achievement to get the species you work on downgraded!

Web Sites of Interest:

I have included a few web sites that may be of interest (please let me know of others):

The **Cape Parrot Working Group Web Site:** www.cpwg.unp.ac.za Email: CapeParrot@ukzn.ac.za

You can view back copies of the **Cape Parrot Newsletters** at www.cpwg.unp.ac.za/CPNewsletter2.html

World Parrot Trust: www.parrots.org

The Parrot Action Plan: www.parrots.org/index.php/ourpublication/parrotactionplan/

The EU Trade Ban Campaign: www.parrots.org/index.php/ourwork/pp_eustradeban/

The Loro Parque Fundación up-dated guide for keeping pet parrots:

www.loroparque-fundacion.org/portada/Pet%20parrots_standards_ing.pdf

The Cape Parrot has featured on several **50/50 TV programmes** here are some of the links

2007: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=8077

2007: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=7679

2000: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=4721

Feb 2002: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=2415

May 2002: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=2542

Nov 2002: www.5050.co.za/inserts.asp?ID=4594

Contact Details:

Tiawanna (Tee) Taylor Email: taylor@ukzn.ac.za Tel: (033) 260 6032

Department of Zoology, School of Biological and Conservation Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, KwaZulu Natal

You can view back copies of the **Cape Parrot Newsletters** at www.cpwg.unp.ac.za/CPNewsletter2.html

This newsletter is compiled independently, its contents have been submitted by individuals and may not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or any other party involved in its production. This newsletter is an informal document and it is recommended that its contents are not cited as references but rather the origin of the source be sought. Please feel free to pass the newsletter on to anyone who you think may be interested in receiving it. If you wish your name to be added, or removed, from the emailing list please send an email with the word 'Subscribe' or 'Unsubscribe' in the Subject line. Any comments, queries or contributions for the newsletter should be sent with the words 'Cape Parrot Newsletter' in the subject line.