

AFRICAN BIRD CLUB
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

31 DECEMBER 2007

Charity Number 1053920

AFRICAN BIRD CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

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AFRICAN BIRD CLUB

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

Status

African Bird Club is formed under a Constitution dated 9 March 1996 and amended at the AGM on 9 March 2002. It is a registered charity, with charity number 1053920.

Council Members

As required by the Constitution, all Executive Officers and Council Members (Trustees) shall be elected or re-elected at every Annual General Meeting. Nominations from the Council for election or re-election of Council Members have to be circulated with the notice of the AGM. Nominations by ordinary members of the Club have to be signed by at least five members and submitted with the written consent of the nominated candidate at least three months before the AGM.

Council Members serve for no longer than four consecutive years, unless they are to become or to continue as an Executive Officer of the Club.

The Council has the power to co-opt new Council Members at any time subject to confirmation at the following Annual General Meeting.

The Council has the power to remove any Council Member provided the number does not fall below a minimum of six.

The Council Members who served from the Annual General Meeting of 2007 or were co-opted during 2007 are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| P Atkinson (co-opted) | Vice Chairman |
| J Caddick | Treasurer |
| J Childs | Country Representatives Coordinator |
| E Cook | Publicity and Sponsorship Officer |
| G Randall | Secretary / Sales Officer liaison |
| S Tyler | Chairman of the Conservation Committee |
| N Thomas | Rutland Officer |
| R Webb | Chairman |
| A Williams | Membership Secretary |

Principal Office

The Club does not have a principal office address, as all activities and Council meetings are undertaken at the private addresses of Council members or other equivalent locations. Those who serve on Council can be contacted however via the following address:

African Bird Club, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA.

Independent Examiner

Ed Marsh, Chartered Accountant, Thornton House, Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1AT.

Bankers

Barclays plc. Holt Branch, 17 Market Place, Fakenham, Norfolk.

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REPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

The Council Members have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited financial statements of the Club for the year ended 31 December 2007.

Aims of the Club

- To provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology
- To encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region
- To liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies
- To publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin
- To encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region
- To encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near-threatened species
- To run the ABC conservation programme

Organisation

The main decision-making forum of the Club is the meeting of Council Members three times per annum. The purpose of this meeting is to review progress since the previous meeting and to set policy, constraints and direction for the next period. Several specific areas of activity are considered at each meeting of Council Members: the report of the Chairman of the Conservation Committee which manages the conservation programme; the report of the Chairman of the Bulletin Editorial Board which oversees the content and production of the twice-yearly colour bulletin; the report of the Treasurer; the report of the Membership Secretary; reports from individual Council Members with specific areas of responsibility such as publicity and sponsorship, website development and sales. Individual Council Members have day to day decision making authority within their allocated areas of responsibility and within the policies and constraints specified at the meeting of Council Members.

Investment powers

The Constitution places no restrictions on the investment powers of Council Members.

Review of activities and future developments

- **Membership**

The membership at the end of 2007 remained stable at c.1240. Some 50% of members are from the UK although the Club has members in 70 countries. Members pay an annual subscription fee. Many members participate in a supporting membership scheme by paying an increased fee in order to support a member in Africa.

- **Bulletin**

The Club produced 2 colour bulletins in 2007 with a total of 240 pages. These were distributed to all members and corporate sponsors. These high quality bulletins comprised 33 feature articles as well as items of news and comment on African ornithology. In addition, they contained items of Club news, minutes of the AGM, the 2006 financial report and reports on projects supported by the conservation fund. The cost of printing the bulletin and the amount of colour continues to be reviewed and alternatives considered.

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REPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

- **Conservation**

The following conservation projects were funded by the Club during the year in support of the conservation of Africa's avifauna.

- Jackson's Widowbird in Kenya – final payment*
- Bird census in Mali – final payment*
- Vultures in Nigeria – final payment*
- Northern Bald Ibis in Ethiopia
- Mauritius White-eye in Mauritius
- Uvidunda Mountains survey in Tanzania
- Lake Tsimanampetsotsa survey in Madagascar
- Niger Delta survey in Nigeria
- Oberlander's Ground-Thrush in Uganda
- Coastal Forest survey in Tanzania
- African Grey Parrot in Kenya
- Tern counts in Libya
- Spiny Forest research in Madagascar
- Short-clawed Lark in Botswana

* final payment was made following receipt of a satisfactory interim report.

- **Sales**

New T-shirts and Coffee Mugs based on a Turaco theme were introduced for sale during 2007. The T-shirts were part funded by one of our corporate sponsors. The Club was represented at the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water. This is our major outlet for sales during the year although the event was badly affected by the weather and hence sales were lower in 2007 than in recent years. The Club launched a Lottery Draw in 2007 with prizes provided by our corporate sponsors. The Draw will take place at the AGM in March 2008.

- **Corporate Sponsorship**

The Club was very successful in retaining its corporate sponsors during 2007 as well as signing 3 new sponsors to bring the total to 30 at the end of the year. This is important for the future of the Club not only in terms of direct sponsorship fees but also in providing opportunities for advertising revenue and sponsorship of conservation projects.

- **Country Representatives**

At the end of the year, the Club had representatives in 34 countries of which 24 were in Africa.

- **Website**

There were further developments to the Club's website at www.africanbirdclub.org during the year in order to maintain the site as the premier free website resource for African ornithology. These included the implementation of country checklists and their roll out for all countries in the region, the development of a discussion forum which focuses specifically on African birds, and the integration of

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YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

information from The Gambia Birding Group website. The website is now an important business tool for the Club with some £11,000 of subscription, sponsorship, donation and sales income received over a secure connection from the website in 2007.

- **Local Payment Schemes**

The Club operates local payment schemes whereby members in selected African countries can pay their subscriptions in the local currency. The funds are held within the country to be spent locally on projects which support the aims of the Club. Such schemes are operated currently in Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. 58 members paid into a local scheme in 2007 and these members have the same benefits as overseas members who pay their subscriptions into the UK account directly. In addition in 2007, four of ABC's corporate sponsors, all based in Uganda paid their fees into the Uganda account.

The associated funds belong to the Club and Council Members reserve the right to specify how these funds may be disbursed and may veto any projects proposed. The following conservation awards were authorised and paid in 2007; small grants at Makerere University in Uganda; bird ringing in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe.

- **Affiliated Membership**

This scheme allows ornithological clubs in African countries to receive collective membership if approved by Council. No subscription is levied but the clubs are sent a few copies of the bulletin for circulation among their members in exchange for submitting reports of ornithological activities in their countries. Three clubs participate in this scheme currently; Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Guides Association in Kenya; Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society; ASITY in Madagascar.

- **Plans**

During the next year, the Club intends to produce a further 2 bulletins with increased colour content, support further conservation awards, and develop new website functions as a minimum. The Club will be represented at the British Birdwatching Fair.

Reserves policy

The Council Members established a policy during 2004 whereby a financial reserve equivalent to at least 50% of anticipated annual income would be held. At this level Council Members feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the Club in the event of a significant drop in funding or increase in expenditure. It would obviously be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed accordingly should such an event occur. At the balance sheet date, reserves excluding designated funds amounted to £18,645. In addition, the Life Membership fund stood at £10,522 which Council Members agreed could be used as a reserve in the event of an emergency.

Investment policy

The Council Members have considered the most appropriate policy for investing any available funds. In the light of the modest value of these funds and the periodic need to draw on the funds at short notice, a policy of placing these on bank deposit where an acceptable interest return is achieved has

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REPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

been followed. The deposit interest rates are kept under review and new arrangements are considered where appropriate.

Risk review

A strategic review was carried out in 2005 which identified the major risks to which the Club is exposed. The review resulted in systems being put in place to mitigate those risks. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of effective internal control procedures which ensure both appropriate authorisation of all transactions and projects and consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Club. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure their continuing effectiveness.

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REPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

Members of the Council

Council Members who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 1.

Responsibilities of the Council Members (Trustees)

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Council Members to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the Council Members should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Council Members are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and which enable them both to ascertain the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable law, regulations and trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

Principal Office:

(Contact address, see note on page 1)

c/o BirdLife International,
Wellbrook Court,
Girton Road,
Cambridge CB3 0NA

Signed by order of the Chairman

.....
R Webb

Dated 28 February 2008

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

I report on the unaudited accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2007 set out on pages 8 to 14.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES AND THE EXAMINER

As the members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of the procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charities Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charities Commissioners. An independent examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as members of the council concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- (b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Thornton House
Richmond Hill
Clifton
Bristol BS8 1AT

Ed Marsh
Chartered Accountant

29 February 2008