



African Bird Club

Working for birds and conservation in Africa



<https://www.africanbirdclub.org>

Chairman's Newsletter

January 2017



**Richard Charles
Chairman, ABC**

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(Photo: Creavo Medical Technologies)

An excellent 2017 in health, prosperity - and outstanding birding - to all Members, Corporate Sponsors, donors and our many friends!

The Club has been very active since my first Chairman's Newsletter in August last year. I have had the pleasure of meeting many members, both existing and new, at BirdFair in August, and at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) in Dakar, Senegal, in October. More on these events below.

We have made major progress in our strategic plans to broaden access to membership in Africa backed by an electronic version of the Bulletin. We have also made back issues of the Bulletin available to public access through the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Again, read more below.

Importantly, may I earnestly encourage all members to pay their 2017 subscriptions to the Club, if not already done, as soon as possible. If you have any difficulties paying online through the website, please let us know, with details of any problem encountered. Many thanks - and I hope you enjoy our news!

ABC eBulletin – ready to go in 2017 for sponsored members in Africa

As mentioned in the August newsletter, it is ABC strategy to ensure much greater access to the Club within Africa. There are many passionate birders, fieldworkers, rangers and students who would benefit from membership of the Club, crucially with access to the Bulletin, but for whom the cost of a subscription may be prohibitive.

We have just completed a 'road test' of the eBulletin, produced in association with digital publishing company PageSuite. A panel of assessors received BABC 23.2 in a version built for desktop, tablet and Smartphone. Ironically, the main problem was in distribution of the link to assessors by PageSuite's mass emailer but enough feedback has been obtained to show that the eBulletin is a successful product in Africa - decent strength wifi is important, and desktop or tablet are the optimal platforms for ease of reading.

ABC is currently working with our partners in Africa to identify those who would most benefit from free membership allied to the new eBulletin, a really exciting development for 2017!



Biodiversity Heritage Library

- The BHL improves research methodology by collaboratively making biodiversity literature openly available to the world as part of a global biodiversity community.
- Working with the Natural History Museum at Tring, back issues from our very first Bulletin are now freely available with a 5-year latency to the current issue, under a creative commons licence at www.biodiversitylibrary.org

❖ All Bulletin back issues remain available in hard copy to purchase via the ABC website.

Pan African Ornithological Congress, Dakar, Senegal, 16th – 21st October 2016



Richard Charles, Philip Hall, and Prof. Richard Beilfuss, President and CEO of the International Crane Foundation. Rich will speak on the Cranes of Africa at the 2017 ABC AGM.



Richard Charles, Dominic Kimani, and Chris Magin. Dominic is one of ABC's sponsored students who presented his research at PAOC. (Both photographs: PAOC appointed photographer)

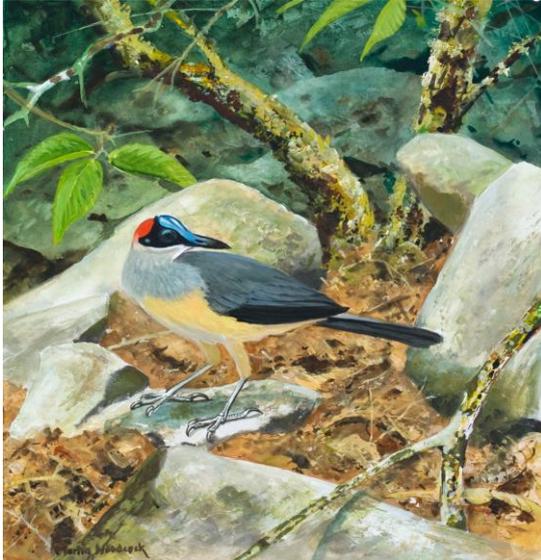
ABC was well represented at PAOC in Dakar. From Council, I was accompanied by Philip Hall and Chris Magin. ABC's principal contributions were:

- Chris Magin's Plenary Lecture '*Every little helps: How small projects contribute to African bird conservation*'. Chris has also kindly consented to give this presentation again at the AGM, Saturday 1st April 2017
- An exhibition stand, receiving many visitors and international ABC members, enlisting new members - including the Netherlands Ambassador to Senegal - and offering sales of merchandise.
- Sponsorship of two African presenting students.
- Prizes of a year's free membership and a book to the two best posters, judged by Dr. Colin Beale, Chair of the PAOC Scientific Committee.

A summary of the PAOC science programme by Colin Beale is featured in the forthcoming ABC Bulletin, 24.1 March 2017.

Painting by Martin Woodcock

Martin Woodcock, ABC Vice President and internationally renowned wildlife artist, has generously painted and donated to ABC three specially commissioned works, supporting the Club's projects and Conservation Fund. For 2016 Martin donated a new work, shown again here, depicting the Grey-necked Picathartes (Rockfowl) *P.oreas* for auction at the Bird Fair.



Grey-necked Picathartes (Rockfowl): Martin Woodcock

Martin Woodcock's original painting raised £600 at auction for the Club! Our warm thanks to him.

A few limited edition prints are still available on the Club's website at

<https://www.africanbirdclub.org>

Josie Hewitt wins Young Ornithologist of the Year Award!

Our warmest congratulations to Josie Hewitt, ABC Council Member representing Next Generation Birders (NGB), of which she is Vice Chair, for winning the **2016 Young Ornithologist of the Year Award from the Marsh Christian Trust**. The awards were presented at a joint ceremony with BTO, held at the Society of Wildlife Artists exhibition in London.

Josie is a BTO 'C' Permit ringer, organising many events for budding birders, ringers and ornithologists. She has spoken at BirdFair and appeared on BBC SpringWatch in 2015. Josie is a role model for young ornithologists, and we are very proud to have her on board at ABC. Well done, Josie!

Photograph right: Josie receives her award from Prof. Dame Georgina Mace, University College London.

(Photo provided by Josie Hewitt)



ABC signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BirdLife International

BirdLife International and ABC signed, at BirdFair 2016, an MoU establishing a closer, structured collaboration which should enhance the activities of both parties in their joint endeavours on behalf of African birds. My thanks to Paul Buckley, ABC Vice Chairman, Hazell Thompson, Global Director and Patricia Zurita, CEO of Birdlife International, with whom I signed the document, for facilitating this important alliance. More details are given in Club News, BABC 24.1, March 2017.

Thanks to our generous donors

As always, we are enormously indebted to our sponsors and donors; they are the engine behind the effectiveness of our Conservation efforts. Just recently, we came across a great idea from a member who organised a 'sponsored weight-loss competition' with the promise of match funding from his firm. With this and Gift Aid, his donation of £378 has become worth £850 to the Club!

ABC on Social Media



Don't forget to keep in touch with the Club's news and views in real time!

Moderated by our General Secretary, Phil Hyde, ABC can be found on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AfricanBirdClub/>, Twitter <https://twitter.com/africabirdclub> and the Yahoo Africa Birding Group – sign up via our website and follow Club>African Birding Group. As above, we aim to upload the AGM lectures to YouTube after each meeting.

Website 'Tips and Tricks' (from John Caddick, ABC Webmaster)

The African Bird Club website has approximately 2,000 pages of text and photographs. We appreciate that it may be difficult at times to find what you are looking for. Have you tried the SEARCH function? Towards the top right of each page, you will find a SEARCH box within the page template. This is the rectangular box with the magnifying glass. Type your search text into the box and press enter. The search could be a species, person or place name for example. A list of all the website pages containing your search text will be returned. Click on any of these pages to see more details. These are the results of a few trial samples: Shoebill 36 hits; Serengeti 29 hits, Eminent Ornithologist (name withheld) 49 hits. Please try it and let us know if it meets your requirements.

Upcoming Events for your Diary

- **ABC Members' Day and AGM**
 - Saturday April 1st 2017: Natural History Museum, London
 - Programme will be circulated in February
- **British Bird Watching Fair: August 18th - 20th, Rutland Water Nature Reserve**
- **Sao Tome & Principe – ABC Conservation Tour: January 14th – 21st 2018**



A few places remain available! Call Birdquest: 01254 826317 (international: +44 1254 826317) Email : birders@birdquest-tours.com