



# African Bird Club

Working for birds and conservation in Africa



CLUB NEWSLETTER

<https://www.africanbirdclub.org>

JUNE 2020

## STAY SAFE

Welcome to your June 2020 Club Newsletter in extraordinary times for us all. I very much hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well, and coping with any lockdowns and social distancing, wherever you are.

ABC are as dedicated as ever to the conservation of birds across Africa, and to making our resources accessible to anyone interested in African birds and their conservation. Please enjoy reading about some of the ways we are doing that and share this with your friends on social media.

Please also **TAKE OUR [ONLINE SURVEY](#)**. It is anonymous and should take less than ten minutes to complete. Your letting us know what you value most about your membership will help us better meet your needs.

Thank you so much for your continued support, we really appreciate it.

All the best,

*David*

David Fox

[chairman@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:chairman@africanbirdclub.org)

The bird pictured to the left of me is a male Golden-naped Weaver (EN) with nest material. The photo was taken in Semliki National Park, Uganda, and may be the first of this little-known, range-restricted species.



Photo: Jake Selby



Photo: Imogen Clark

## APPLYING FOR ABC CONSERVATION AWARDS

ABC encourage all our members and others living in Africa with proposals for projects that would benefit the conservation of African birds or their habitats to continue to apply to us for conservation or expedition awards in the normal way. These projects are more important than ever.

But we want you to stay safe. So, please adapt the project activities that you propose to carry out, and the time frames that you set for completing the project, in line with local travel restrictions and lockdown rules. We can still approve successful applications for support, but we may have to delay paying an award until such time as you can put the funds to good use.

We welcome applications for funding of not only in-the-field projects but also, for example, environmental education initiatives, and proposals to build the capacity of grassroots conservation groups in Africa, which meet our awards criteria.

You can find details of how to apply for a conservation or expedition award from ABC [here](#). And to illustrate the breadth of the projects we support, a list of past projects supported by us can be found [here](#).

## GIVING TO ABC

ABC are extremely grateful to all our generous donors and legators, without whom we could not continue to fund the diverse projects all over Africa that benefit from our conservation and expedition awards. Our [African Bird Image Database](#) and Birds of Africa app (see below) will also be enriched by the late Werner Suter's collection of photographs of African birds, which his widow, Dorothee, has generously donated to the Club.

ABC are constantly on the lookout for new donors, and we are more than happy to accommodate donors' preferences to fund, for example, country-specific projects, and to meet any other reasonable conditions they attach. If you are interested in becoming a regular or occasional donor, or if you know someone who is, you or they should feel free to contact me in confidence at [chairman@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:chairman@africanbirdclub.org)

If you would like to support the African Bird Club's work by leaving the Club a gift in your will, as past and present members of ABC have kindly done, I would ask you to get your own professional advice first please.

*David Fox*

## OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Huge thanks, as always, go to ABC's loyal corporate sponsors –

**GOLD:** AviFauna Naturresor, Birding EcoTours, iGoTerra, Rockjumper

**SILVER:** Birding Africa, Limosa, Safari Consultants, Tadele Travel

**BRONZE:** Birdfinders, BirdQuest, Lawsons Safaris, Sunbird, WildWings

We are also most grateful to Venture Uganda for their continued and valuable support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously hit the travel industry especially hard, and the great majority of our corporate sponsors are tour operators. Given the seriousness of the situation in which they find themselves, we have offered them a free one-year renewal of their current sponsorships as a gesture of goodwill. It is the least we can do in the circumstances.

## A BIRDING APP FOR YOU

A new birding app – Birds of Africa – is available to download FOR FREE from the [Google Play Store](#) and [Apple iStore](#). The latest version includes 1,052 bird species on the checklists of 11 West African countries – Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo.

This app is primarily a field identification guide with the capability to record and upload sightings to a central database for back-up, as well as allowing the user to maintain personal checklists. The app is also intended to be an aid to conservation. It contains a wealth of detail including photos, calls, text, and maps.

The app is an asset of the African Bird Club designed to be used by ornithologists, birders and anyone with a general interest in African birds. Over time, it will be developed to include all species and countries in Africa. We are currently working to add Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, the Gulf of Guinea Islands, and Cape Verde as the next update.

The app has been tested on a variety of modern Android devices including Samsung Galaxy, Huawei and Xiaomi devices, and Apple iOS devices including iPad and iPhone. You just need to go to the relevant store, search on Birds of Africa and follow the installation guidelines.

*John Caddick*

## ABC BULLETIN CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

The Editor of the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* is grateful for the many submissions he has received in recent weeks, which means the next issue (Vol 27 No 2 September 2020) will, exceptionally, run to a few more pages than normal.

The Editor would particularly like to hear from you if you can supply any one or more of the following –

- “photospot” and/or “little-known African bird” items
- well-illustrated papers on specific identification problems (there are enough African species that are not so easy to identify!)
- more “birding” articles, i.e. on interesting but less well-known areas or countries in Africa, or perhaps species groups, with practical information for visitors

All submissions should be sent by email to [editor@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:editor@africanbirdclub.org) and please refer to the “Notes for Contributors” at the back of the Bulletin first.

*Ron Demey*

## SHARING YOUR CONSERVATION STORIES

We congratulate Martin Wachira Mwangi from Kenya, who was among the winners of the 2020 Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) Future Conservationist Awards. His [project](#) will contribute towards efforts to conserve the remaining grasslands on the Kinangop Plateau in Kenya, which are home to Sharpe’s Longclaw (EN) and Grey Crowned-crane (EN) among other threatened birds.

Do you have a short story to tell about something you have been doing to help conserve African birds and their habitats that you think will be of interest to other members of ABC? If you do and you have time on your hands, please send your brief submission as a Word attachment by email to [chairman@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:chairman@africanbirdclub.org) together with any one or two good quality photographs if you wish.

Let us make the most of something we all have in common – whether we are resident in Africa, the UK, mainland Europe or elsewhere in the world – our interest in the birds of Africa and their conservation.

*David Fox*

## BIRDLIFE NEWS

It is always a pleasure to share the latest news about the work of [BirdLife Africa Partners](#) across the continent, which you can read [here](#) and [here](#).

Sadly, not all the news is good. In recent months, a tragedy has unfolded in Guinea-Bissau, where more than 2,000 Hooded Vultures (CR) have been deliberately poisoned in the world's largest ever incident of vulture deaths to date.

Many of the dead vultures were beheaded, suggesting the birds' body parts were harvested for ritual purposes. "Vulture body parts, along with other animal products, are well known to be illegally traded internationally for belief-based use, particularly in West Africa", according to Dr Beckie Garbett, BirdLife's Vulture Conservation Manager. "Information coming from field teams in Guinea-Bissau suggests the vultures being killed in this incident may be illegally traded widely throughout the region for belief-based use, although this is illegal and drives declines internationally."

ABC call on the Guinea-Bissau government, ECOWAS and the African Union to take urgent action to stop the killing of vultures. Please show your support by signing BirdLife's petition [here](#).

## #ENDTHETRADE

ABC have joined [The Coalition to End the Trade](#) and signed the petition to permanently end the commercial trade and sale in markets of terrestrial wild animals, especially birds and mammals, for consumption, worldwide.

Global Wildlife Conservation, Wildlife Conservation Society, and WildAid launched this coalition, which now numbers conservation organisations such as Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Fauna & Flora International, The Peregrine Fund, and Rainforest Trust, as well as ABC, scientists, health professionals and many others.

Join us in a global movement to call on our world's governments to permanently end the trade. Together we are urging them to recognize that this is among the most important decisions that the global community can make to prevent future zoonotic pandemics and global disruption.

The coalition aims to collect at least one million signatures on the petition collectively from both individuals and organizations. You can sign the petition [here](#) and then save and share this to your social media accounts. Every voice counts.

## HAVE YOU CHANGED HOW YOU WATCH BIRDS?

Prof Piotr Tryjanowski from Poznan University of Life Science and Prof Christoph Randler from the University of Tübingen are supervising a non-commercial study of how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the ways people in different countries watch birds. Please help the researchers by answering a few simple questions – the [questionnaire](#) is in several different languages. And please keep watching birds where you can.

## HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS

The collection of publications relating to birds and their conservation in Africa that was once ABC's library has been moved from the UK to the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) in Nigeria, where the collection can be put to better use. Consequently, ABC can no longer accept hard copies of publications from BirdLife Africa Partners or other organisations. However, they are welcome to email any digital versions of such publications to [chairman@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:chairman@africanbirdclub.org)

We are grateful to Elaine Cook, who is a former Council member of ABC, for sorting out and updating the Club's database of complimentary members and former exchange partners. As a result of her review, every BirdLife Africa Partner, and a number of similar organisations in Africa, will continue or start to receive free copies of the electronic *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* (BABC). We will continue to supply free hard copies of the BABC to APLORI, BirdLife International and a select few libraries who want these, most of which are in Africa.

The Natural History Museum at Tring pays for one hard copy of every issue of the BABC and scans another for the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL), the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Back issues of the BABC will in future be openly accessible on the [BHL website](#) after an embargo of three years. At present, the embargo period is five years.

Our thanks go to Clara Cassell, who is one of ABC's supported members from Liberia, for kindly adding to and updating that country's pages of the ABC website. If you can help with updating other countries' web pages, please send an email to [webmaster@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:webmaster@africanbirdclub.org) And if you have new information that we could add to the ABC website, please submit your contribution by email to [info@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:info@africanbirdclub.org)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We regret that ABC Council had to call off the Club's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was planned to take place at the London Natural History Museum on 25 April 2020, owing to mounting concerns over the spread of the novel coronavirus. It was our intention to reschedule for a later date, and we now expect ABC will be allowed to hold a **virtual AGM**, which we have provisionally decided to call for **19 September 2020**. We will let members know in due course how they may be able to participate.

The organisers of [Birdfair 2020](#) have decided not to hold this gathering as planned. However, should they hold a "Digital Birdfair" instead this summer – with speakers and discussions online – ABC intend to take part.

The organisers of the 15<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Ornithological Congress have decided to postpone [PAOC15](#) to 15-19 November 2021. ABC look forward to supporting BirdLife Zimbabwe in holding a successful Congress in Victoria Falls next year.

## ABC ON SOCIAL MEDIA



You can keep in touch with the Club's news and views in real time.

Moderated by the Club's Communications and Youth Engagement Officers, Lynda Donaldson and John Kinghorn, ABC can be found on –

### **Facebook –**

<https://www.facebook.com/African-Bird-Club-105725097832405> - please like or follow our page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AfricanBirdClub/> - please join our community

**Twitter** <https://twitter.com/africabirdclub> - please follow us

As at the beginning of June 2020 –

ABC's Facebook group had 7,984 members from over 100 countries across the world.

ABC's Twitter handle had 1,278 followers and was following 409 others.

*Lynda Donaldson*