



# African Bird Club

Working for birds and conservation in Africa



CLUB NEWSLETTER

<https://www.africanbirdclub.org>

JUNE 2019

## CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your June 2019 Club Newsletter. A fuller message from me as the incoming Chair of ABC will appear in the Club News section of the next *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* (Vol 26 No 2 September 2019) but for those of you who don't know me, let me briefly introduce myself here.

I am originally from Kenya but have lived and worked most of my life in London. I have mostly worked as a lawyer, initially in private practice and for the past 17 and a half years in the UK Government Legal Service, from which I retired in February this year.

I am an amateur birdwatcher and most familiar with the birds of Kenya, where I grew up and return often, most recently in March to take part in the first countrywide census of the endangered Grey Crowned Crane – I am an enthusiastic citizen scientist, too.

Having a particular interest in conservation, I am delighted now to be working for the conservation of birds across Africa. This also dovetails with my ongoing collaborations with community-based organisations in Kenya and Cameroon on conservation and alternative livelihood projects there.

I look forward to hearing what you have been up to conservation-wise (see page 5 below) and to getting to know more of you in due course. I would also welcome any ideas that you may have to expand the Club's appeal.

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



Photo: George Ndung'u



Photo: Imogen Clark

## SAVING KENYA'S COASTAL FORESTS – A FUNDRAISING APPEAL

My predecessor, Richard Charles, announced at the Club's AGM in April that, to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, ABC would appeal with the World Land Trust (WLT) for funds to assist Nature Kenya (NK) with purchasing land in one of the most important and critically threatened sites in Kenya. The site in question is Dakatcha Woodland KBA, which hosts the only known breeding areas of the endemic and endangered Clarke's Weaver.

If you would like to buy an acre for £100, half an acre for £50, or a quarter of an acre for £25, please go to <https://www.worldlandtrust.org/donate/> It all adds up to helping NK purchase 810 acres of Dakatcha Woodland for the people and birds that call this home. ABC have fittingly made an initial donation of £2,500 towards the land purchase in memory of the Club's late Vice President, Martin Woodcock.

*David Fox*

## SALE OF MARTIN WOODCOCK'S LIBRARY

The initial sale of Martin's books has gone very well and has raised almost £700 for the Club so far. There are still a number of titles left and about 30 additional items that have been found since the last AGM. You can download the book list here – <https://www.africanbirdclub.org/book-sale>

These books will be available to buy at this year's Birdfair in August. We appreciate, however, that some of you may be interested in some of the titles but could not attend the last AGM and will be unable to attend the Birdfair either. If you cannot attend the Birdfair but would like any of the titles, please contact me at [richardwebb.wildwings@gmail.com](mailto:richardwebb.wildwings@gmail.com) and I will let you know the price, including postage and packing. Please note that we can only offer to post items to UK addresses.

As you will appreciate from reading the list some of the books are very old titles and although Martin looked after them well, some are not in pristine condition. Many of the more recent titles are in excellent condition, though. Anyone buying a book by post will be responsible for the cost of returning the book if not satisfied with the condition, as the Club is unable to cover the cost of returns.

Martin was very keen that his library should end up in the possession of people with a real interest in African ornithology, so we hope that most of the books will be purchased by ABC members.

*Richard Webb*

## ABC SUPPORT PROTECTING MIOMBO WOODLANDS IN ZAMBIA

Richard Charles announced at the last AGM how ABC would also mark our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year by making a significant financial contribution towards a conservation project in Zambia. This support is for the management and restoration of threatened habitats for key species such as African Pitta in miombo woodlands adjoining Kasanka National Park.

I am pleased to report that ABC have now made a donation of £7,500 through WLT to Kasanka Trust, which is a non-profit charitable institution responsible for the park management, community development and ecotourism of Kasanka National Park.

*David Fox*

## DONATIONS TO ABC

The March Conservation Fund, administered by the Tides Foundation, have generously made a grant of US\$20,000 to ABC's conservation programme. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Fund's Executive Director, Ivan Samuels, and to all our other generous donors, without whom we could not continue to fund the diverse projects all over Africa that benefit from our conservation and expedition awards.

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)

*David Fox*

## OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

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

**GOLD:** AviFauna Nature Tours, Birding EcoTours, iGoTerra, Rockjumper

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

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

We are also very grateful to Madagascar Birds and Birding, and to Venture Uganda, for their continued support.

## A GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Earlier this year ABC's trustees agreed in principle that it is in the charity's best interests to convert from being an unincorporated association, with unlimited liability, to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), with no liability of trustees or other members for its debts. Council recommended and were grateful to receive members' approval at the last AGM of this proposed change to ABC's legal structure.

Incorporating ABC as a CIO is a time-consuming process and there are a number of practical steps that trustees still have to take. One of these steps will be calling a special general meeting of members for the sole purpose of considering passing resolutions to wind up the unincorporated charity and to transfer its assets to the CIO, once it has been set up, in accordance with the Club's constitution.

We plan to hold the special general meeting at Birdfair 2019 on 16 August, and I would encourage you to come along to this if you possibly can. Notice of the meeting will be sent to the Club's membership in due course.

*David Fox*

## NEW eBULLETIN FACILITIES

Many of ABC's members are using the digital version of the Bulletin of the ABC, which has been available via a web browser for the past five editions. This has allowed the Club to expand our membership in Africa and provide many African ornithologists who would otherwise not be able to see the Bulletin with ready access to it.

A major improvement will be introduced at the time of the next Bulletin of the ABC available in August/September this year. Supported members and others who have elected to receive the eBulletin will be able to view it on an Android or IOS smartphone or tablet device, as well as via a web browser.

The new facilities will require Wifi to be available in order to download Bulletins, but will provide an added advantage to the user that they will be able to view and search Bulletins when in the field, for example. We will provide further details on installation, set-up and use of the new facilities in due course.

*John Caddick*

## SHARING YOUR CONSERVATION STORIES

Do you have a short story to tell relating to the conservation of African birds or their habitats that you think will be of interest to other members of ABC? If so, I would like to hear from you.

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. All submissions will be considered for publication in a future Club Newsletter, or the Club News section of a future Bulletin of the ABC, however we cannot guarantee that any particular submission will be accepted. Any submission that is accepted will be subject to editing for length and clarity.

Let's try and 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*

## ABC BULLETIN CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

The Editor of the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* would particularly like to hear from you if you can supply any of the following –

- “photospot” and/or “little-known African bird” items;
- more 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 little-known areas or countries in Africa, or perhaps species groups, with practical information.

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

*Ron Demey*

## MEMBERS' DAY 2019 SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS

Just a reminder that all 6 of these enjoyable and informative presentations were video recorded for YouTube and can be viewed by clicking on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRWM4ly58ro&list=PLpghOHKy2r8gzmy832lgMHRB0elvUASK3>

## WEBSITE UPDATES

Several new sections have been set up on the ABC website in the past year –

<https://africanbirdclub.org/club/about> includes ABC's latest annual reports and accounts, and AGM minutes;

<https://www.africanbirdclub.org/club-newsletters> provides a selection of previous Club (formerly Chairman's) newsletters;

<https://africanbirdclub.org/abc-app> has the latest information about the Birds of Africa App;

<https://africanbirdclub.org/dowsett-checklists> contains Bob Dowsett's updated West Africa checklists.

The African Bird Image Database is a popular resource which can be viewed at <https://africanbirdclub.org/afbid/>. AFBID was set up some 15 years ago using the species' names from the ABC checklist of those days, which was based on *The Birds of Africa*. In order to bring the taxonomy and species' names up to date, we have moved AFBID to IOC World Bird List Version 9.1 and will try and keep it up to date in future. This was a huge manual exercise, so please let us know if you find any errors or inconsistencies. You can get in touch using the AFBID contact tab.

*John Caddick*

## EXPLORING AFBID

Towards the top of the AFBID home page, you will see a search box which has two settings, Keyword and Category, operated by a toggle switch. The standard setting Keyword allows the user to carry out a general search of the database. As an example, type in Carmine Bee-eater, click on the magnifying glass and the result shows the number of images of both Southern and Northern species. Click on either species to view the images.

Use the Category option for a more specific search of Bird Family, Bird Species and Country or any of these in combination. For example, select Country=Benin to see all the images taken in Benin, select Bird Family=Meropidae (Bee-eaters) and Country=Benin to see all images of Bee-eaters photographed in Benin. Try some options and see how useful this capability can be to you.

*John Caddick*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Birdfair 2019** will take place on **16, 17 and 18 August** at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, Egleton, Rutland, and for your complete guide to who will be exhibiting and appearing, please go to <https://birdfair.org.uk/>

This year ABC have stands 65 & 66 in Marquee 2. We look forward to your visit and if you can spare some time to lend us a hand there, please contact the Club's Vice Chair, Paul Buckley, at [buckleypr@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:buckleypr@yahoo.co.uk)

Please come and support Adam Riley of Rockjumper who will be representing ABC in [Best Days Ever: the World Series chaired by Chris Gooddie](#) in the Events Marquee on 16 August from 1:00 to 1:45 pm

Please come along to the WLT-sponsored ABC lecture on [Conserving Kenya's critical sites and species by Gloria Waswa](#) of Nature Kenya in the Osprey Lecture Theatre on 17 August from 10:30 to 10:50 am

And please come and support the Club's Vice President, Keith Betton, who will be representing ABC in [Bird Brain of Britain sponsored by Swarovski Optik chaired by Stephen Moss](#) in the Events Marquee on 17 August from 3:00 to 3:45 pm

**Next year's AGM and Members' Day** will be held on **Saturday 25 April 2020** and the venue once again will be the Natural History Museum in London. **Please put this date in your diary now.** Details of the event's programme will follow.

## 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 Officer, Lynda Donaldson, ABC can be found on –

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

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

Yahoo Groups - please sign up to the AfricanBirding group via our website - <https://www.africanbirdclub.org/club/yahoo-group>