Birds of Africa App Help Text

Introduction

We have tried to make our Birds of Africa app as user-friendly as possible. Many users who are familiar with birding apps will probably not need to use this help text. However, we have found in usability trials that some features may need further explanation.

The purpose of this section is to provide text and associated diagrams to assist usability. Email us at app@africanbirdclub.org if you have any problems or suggestions for improvement.

Species list

Access to the species list for the country of interest is via the sequence **Home: Species**. You will see a family list initially and can select a family of interest to see further species.

For fast access to a species of interest, tap a letter on the right-hand side of the screen, e.g., b, to provide a fast search to species beginning with the letter B.

Use the Search function and type for example, "bee", to find all bee-eaters.

In red, you will see the calculated distance to the nearest range of each species or the words "in range" in green. Ensure the range status setting is ON for this function, GPS is enabled, and your device is set so your location is known.

Use the Expand button to show the full list and Collapse to return to the shorter form of the list. Use the Settings function to switch between alphabetic and taxonomic species lists as required.

Photos

Access to photos is via the sequence **Home: Species**: Click on the species of interest, e.g., **European Bee-eater: Info**. The forward and back arrows at the top right of the screen allow the next and previous species on the checklist to be viewed.

The back arrow on the top left of the screen allows you to return to the species list.

Above and below the photo, you will see related information including bird type, subspecies if known, location and photographer. At the bottom

left of the photograph, you will see the number of photographs of this species and the position of each image in sequence. You can scroll left or right to see the next and previous images.

Double tap on an image to go to **Max Mode**. This allows you to use **pinch zoom** to magnify the photo. You can rotate the phone to give a full screen image of landscape photos. Double tap on the image again to return to normal mode.

Text and map

Follow the sequence as for Photos, then touch the Information button on the lower control bar. On the resultant screen, you can scroll down the species text, play the call, or see a detailed map of Africa showing the approximate range of the species.

Call

Quick access to the species call is via the sequence **Home: Species**: Click on the species of interest, e.g., **European Bee-eater: Call**.

You can hear the call by pressing Play and stop it at any time by pressing Pause or Stop. Please do not play the call at a high volume or repetitively, which may disturb the bird.

Note that calls can also be accessed from the species text screen.

If the Call button is pale blue, no call is available for this species in the app yet.

Similar species

Follow the sequence as for Photos, then touch the Similar button to see species which are similar to the target species. As an example, Great Spotted Cuckoo shows Jacobin and Levaillant's Cuckoos as similar species.

Click on Jacobin Cuckoo and you will be able to compare photos and other information for these species and Great Spotted Cuckoo. Note that not all species have similar species, in which case only the target species will be shown.

Google maps

Follow the sequence as for Photos, then touch the Map button to see the range of this species on a Google map. Click on Map layers, then the

appropriate buttons to apply your personal sightings (My Sightings), Community Sightings and Range Maps as required for this species.

Note that the world range of the species is shown in light grey if Range is selected. Pinch zoom the Google map or use the + and - buttons to zoom in and out as required. The area of interest can be shown in satellite or standard map format. Note that there are few sightings for some species at present, but we hope that these will build with use of the app.

Settings

Use settings to enable your own personal requirements to be met.

Access to Settings is via the sequence **Home: Settings**. At present, the Settings page has five functions which you can control - language, country, range status, species list, sequence and sightings.

The app is written in English but species names are provided in English and several other languages. Scientific names can also be viewed. You can decide on the primary and secondary languages and select the country of interest.

A single button is available to control range status. Note that the range is the approximate distance between your device and the nearest point of the species' range.

The species list sequence can be changed between alphabetic and taxonomic by switching the button Sort by Taxonomy on or off.

Highlighting My Sightings allows you to specify a time period for the display of your sightings.

Add sightings

You can add your personal sightings via the sequence **Home: Species**.

Click on a species of interest, e.g., **European Bee-eater: Sightings**: +Add sighting or press + in the top right corner. The date and time will be specified automatically, and the location will be given providing GPS is active. The sighting will be saved on your device.

Sightings tab

If you have added your personal sightings, you can view these via the sequence **Home: Sightings**. These are shown on the page filtered by date recorded. If you tap on a block for a specific date, the sightings will

be displayed. Touch the Map button in the top right-hand corner to display the sightings on a map.

Your species list page can also be updated to **Highlight** the species you have seen. Set the time period in the Settings tab (such as Life List or Month List).

Back-up tab

You can back up and restore your personal sightings via the sequence **Home: Back-up**.

To use this database service, you will need to register and sign in with your e-mail address and password. Once signed in, you can back up your personal sightings. These will be stored in a central database and can be downloaded to a different device later if required.

Note that your records may be used by the community of users as on the **Species:Map** pages and for other purposes, e.g. conservation research. You can also Restore your personal sightings to this device and Update community sightings to download the latest community sightings to this device. You do not need to sign out and will remain signed in the next time you use the app.

Countries tab

You can view the available countries via the sequence **Home: Countries**.

LITE (more basic) lists are also available for each country. These are designed for new or younger birders, and for those who do not have access to fast WiFi.

This page shows the country packages available for downloading or removal. Select the country and list of interest and download the content. Note that the first package downloaded may be large but only the additional content for any new package will need to be downloaded.

Make sure that you are near WiFi for any download operation. Click Remove to remove a package and note that there will be a Cancel operation if Remove is pressed in error.

Content updates will be shown and can be downloaded from this page. We plan to provide updates such as new photos, calls and error corrections on a regular basis.

Messages tab

The tab **Home: Messages** shows the number of new messages. These allow the administrator to notify users of updates, for example the addition of new content or countries.