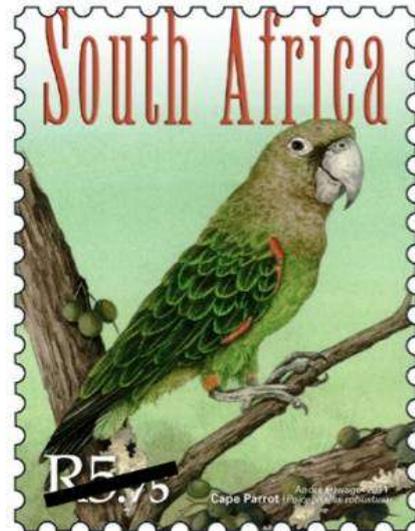


# Cape Parrot Newsletter

## Number 12 - October 2011



### Contents:

Contents.....	1	The Birder E-zine.....	4
Cape Parrot on SA Stamp.....	1	School Projects.....	4
Cape Parrots Feeding on Proteas .....	2	Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2012.....	5
Places to stay and see Cape Parrots .....	3	Gifts.....	5
Invasive Alien Parrots: Greater Durban study.....	3	Contact.....	5
Update on Captive Bred Chicks.....	4		

### Cape Parrot on South African Stamp

South African forest birds were featured on South African stamps in 2011, including the Cape Parrot. These are available from the South African Post Office ([http://www.sapo.co.za/philately/2011/birds\\_stamps.htm](http://www.sapo.co.za/philately/2011/birds_stamps.htm))



Figure 1. South African 2011 stamps featuring indigenous forest birds including the Cape Parrot.

## Cape Parrots Feeding on Proteas

"It was very interesting on Sunday morning, as we were heading to Woodbush, there were two Cape Parrots feeding low down on Kurisa Moya's proteas. At first I thought I was dreaming but we saw them clearly and Lisa saw them flying overhead later, heading to our Yellow-woods. It was very exciting to have them feeding at our home base." David Letsoalo and Paul Nkhumane SABirdnet October 2011.

As mentioned in the Cape Parrot Big Birding Day Report 2011: "Cape Parrots are considered food nomadics as they move between forest patches as fruiting trees are patchy in availability. Their preferred foods are the kernels of yellowwood (*Podocarpus* sp.) fruits. However these are usually only available from June through to November. Also the trees show mast fruiting, which is the intermittent and synchronous production of large numbers of fruits by a population of plants at long intervals. Consequently the birds cannot rely on a particular patch annually. During the remainder of the year Cape Parrots have to feed on other forest fruits with kernels including *Harpephyllum caffrum* and *Celtis africana*. They also feed on *Protea* seeds in Protea patches adjacent to forests. They make longer feeding trips to coastal forests in the summer or visit food sources outside of forests like commercial orchards or gardens when forest fruit availability is scarce."

Previously Cape Parrots have been documented feeding on Protea heads mainly in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, so this observation by David and Lisa of them feeding on Proteas in Limpopo is interesting. Often commercial forest plantations planted near indigenous forest patches do not exclude these Protea patches adjacent to forest. It appears that they are an important food source at particular times of the year for Cape Parrots; not to mention they are essential for Gurney's Sugarbirds and other sunbirds.

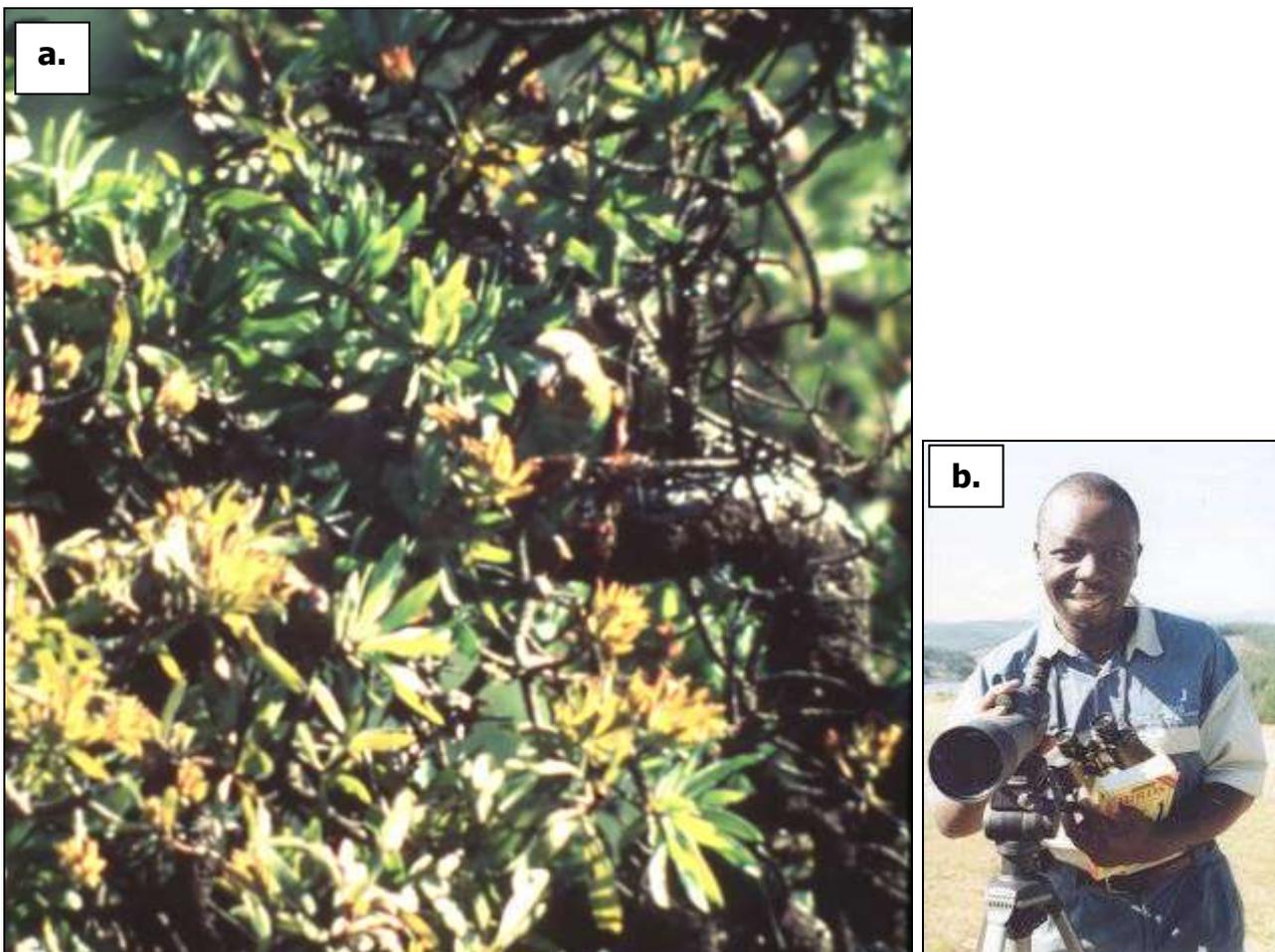


Figure 2. a. Cape Parrot feeding in Proteas; and b. David Letsoalo, Birdlife SA guide at Kurisa Moya

## Places to stay and see Cape Parrots

- ✦ Many ask where they can visit and stay to see parrots. Each newsletter we will try to highlight some possibilities. If your guest house is close to a place where visitors can see Cape Parrots and you would like it highlighted in the newsletter, please contact us. Below are some suggestions:
- ✦ In the Karkloof, KwaZulu-Natal, (near Howick) the guest house at Benvie is not only a good spot to see Cape Parrots but a range of other forest birds. The guesthouse is set in the well known 150 year old arboretum that the Geekie family started and have cared for, for several generations. (Contact Jenny & John Robinson 033-5029090 / 082-4433805 for details).
- ✦ Kurisa Moya is an amazingly beautiful nature lodge in Limpopo near Haenertsburg and the beautiful Magoebaskloof forests. (See <http://www.krm.co.za/index.htm> for further details). Again it is an excellent base for going bird watching and seeing Cape Parrots, but also offers a number of other outdoor activities. David Letsoalo is the Birdlife SA guide based at Kurisa Moya.

## Invasive Alien Parrots: Greater Durban Study

As previously mentioned, we are often phoned or emailed about people seeing Cape Parrots in their gardens, but these turn out to be Rose-ringed or Ring-necked Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*). They are the most widely introduced parrot in the world with breeding populations in 35 countries, spanning five continents. In cities like London their numbers have increased dramatically in recent years. Although mainly in Gauteng and the greater Durban area, they are extending their range in KZN. See the latest SABAP map at: [http://sabap2.adu.org.za/species\\_maps.php?Spp=941](http://sabap2.adu.org.za/species_maps.php?Spp=941).

Invasion biology has become an important area of biological research. The invasion of alien species is recognised as one of the leading causes for extinction of indigenous animal species, particularly birds. The negative impacts of alien birds may also include damage to property and crops, noise and nuisance, and the spread of disease to humans and native species. In South Africa, Rose-ringed Parakeets have established breeding colonies in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. First sightings in South Africa were noted in 1972 and initial breeding records date back to the 1980's in Gauteng. These birds were considered rare and were most likely escapees from cages. Today, in South Africa, they are considered fairly common in areas where they occur and it is estimated that the population in Durban is c. 700 - 1000 individuals. There is a paucity of literature on invasive birds in Southern Africa, with no apparent management plan in place for most of these species. Consequently Lorinda Jordaan is starting a post-doctoral study in the greater Durban area on Rose-ringed Parakeets in 2012. Any information you have on these birds, she would be grateful for. Email: [rinjordan@gmail.com](mailto:rinjordan@gmail.com) or [downs@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:downs@ukzn.ac.za)



Image © J.M.Garg

Figure 3. A Rose-ringed Parakeet.

## Update on Captive Bred Chicks

A Cape Parrot pair on breeding loan at Amazona Endangered Parrot Breeding Facility in KZN have produced another clutch of chicks Oct 2011 but only hatched 2 of 4 eggs. The two chicks have been removed to foster parents who had infertile eggs to stimulate the breeding pair to recycle. The foster parents are doing a great job of raising the two chicks, who were recently banded with the standard 10mm ID seamless stainless steel rings used for Cape Parrots. Parrot rings suitable for Capes and Grey Headed Parrots can be obtained from L & T Birds 031-7681111. Aluminium and brass rings are not suitable for these species. Split sexing rings are also not suitable and can be broken and removed by the birds, with the risk of serious injury to the leg.

Reminder: Shaun Wilkinson, the Cape Parrot Studbook Keeper, based at Monte Casino Bird Gardens in Johannesburg (email: [shaun@montebg.co.za](mailto:shaun@montebg.co.za)) is currently busy with a comprehensive update to the studbook. Owners of Cape Parrots are requested to update him on all chicks produced, transfers or deaths to keep the studbook up to date.

The Cape Parrot is listed as a Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004. As of 1st Feb 2008 all holders of Cape Parrots need to be registered and in possession of TOPS permits. Cape Parrots may not be moved anywhere within or out of the Republic of South Africa without written authorization from both Provincial and National Nature Conservation authorities. Provincial EXPORT & IMPORT permits strictly apply to the movement of Cape Parrots within the county.



Figure 4. Two week old Cape Parrot chicks produced at Amazona breeding facility during September 2011. (Photo courtesy of Johnny Jensen (Denmark)).

## The Birder E-zine: Cape Parrots

Bronwyn Howard the editor of The Birder E-zine recently wrote an article on Cape parrots with excellent photographs. See the website: [www.thebirderonline.com](http://www.thebirderonline.com).

## School Projects: Cape Parrots

Several students from schools in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape have completed projects on Cape Parrots. Please may some of you send pictures and comments for the next newsletter.

## Reminder: Cape Parrot Big Birding Day 2012

Reminder: Hopefully you have booked Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May and Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012 to participate in our **fifteenth** Cape Parrot Big Birding Day (CPBBD). Please contact Prof. Downs or one of the co-ordinators in your area. The CPBBD report for 2011 is available at <http://biology.ukzn.ac.za/cpwg.html>.

## Gifts

We have a DVD of the Cape Parrot Programme produced by Don Guy for 50/50 for sale (R50). This is informative and useful for school projects.

There are still reprints (size 60 x 45 cm, see below) of the Cape Parrot painting by Ingrid Fouche available. Cost R250.



Figure 5. Ingrid Fouche's painting of Cape Parrots.

## Contact Details

Prof. Colleen Downs, School of Biological & Conservation Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, P/Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209. Email: [downs@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:downs@ukzn.ac.za) Tel: +27-33-2605127, cell: 0829202026