

Raptor Rescue Newsletter

January 2017



Greetings

Our very first case for 2017 was an African Harrier Hawk that was electrocuted. This happens all too often as birds prefer to perch on the highest vantage point, and in certain areas, that means electricity pylons, poles and boxes. Because of the size and wingspan of most of our raptors, it is all too easy for them to bridge components and become conductors of an electric charge – with disastrous results. We unfortunately still have far too many ‘unsafe’ lines, but there is something that is being done about it. The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) works in partnership with Eskom to ensure action is taken to safeguard electrocution points. The most vital information if a bird is picked up (dead or alive) due to electrocution, is to record the exact location of the incident (GPS position preferably) as well as take photos of the point of electrocution and most importantly, the metal disk that can be found on the pole. This information can then be sent to Raptor Rescue or the EWT (<https://www.ewt.org.za/WEP/wep.html>) a case number will be generated, and a team dispatched to put insulating protectors in place. So far the response from this dedicated team has ensured that every electrocution reported to us has been investigated, and consequently the lines have been made safe to prevent any further electrocution incidents.



Admissions:

This month we had 10 admissions: 1 African Harrier Hawk, 2 Yellow-billed Kites, 2 Jackal Buzzards, 1 African Goshawk, 2 Steppe Buzzards, 1 Crowned Eagle and 1 Black Sparrowhawk.



The African Harrier Hawk that was a victim of electrocution was picked up along a train track, and the initial assumption was that it had been hit by a train. On inspection, the charred feet revealed the real reason the bird was incapacitated. The wounds were severe, and treatment was commenced immediately, but sadly after a few days it was evident that there was no longer circulation to the feet, and the exit wounds on the joints of the legs had become necrotic. The bird had completely lost use of both legs, probably because of extensive damage to muscles, tendons and ligaments, and the decision was made to euthanize it.

Releases:

Raptors released this month: 1 Steppe Buzzard, 1 Crowned Eagle, 1 Jackal Buzzard, 1 Black Sparrowhawk, and 1 Barn Owl

The Crowned Eagle was both an admission and release for this month. The young bird was picked up with a severe concussion shortly after fledgling from the Winterskloof nest in Hilton. Dr Shane McPherson (Crowned Eagle Research) had not managed to climb the nest this year to ring the chick as the tree is incredibly high and difficult to climb. The bird was initially treated at the Hilton Vet, and once stabilized, transferred to FreeMe Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Howick, where Dr McPherson had the opportunity to take the biometrics and ring the chick (V4). It was essential to get the chick back out under parental care as soon as possible, but the initial attempt at release was unsuccessful due to the chick's clumsy flying abilities. It spent a short time in a recovery enclosure at Raptor Rescue till its flight improved, was successfully released on the second attempt, and has since been seen by residents in the area.



Research:

With the Crowned Eagle ringing season in full swing, field work for Dr Shane McPherson has been intense. Crowned Eagle Research is just one of the research projects that Raptor

Rescue is involved in. We have had the privilege of assisting with climbing to nests and ringing these incredibly powerful raptors.



Donations/funding:

Thank you to everyone for their support in 2016. We look forward to another year continuing our valuable work through the kindness, grace and generosity of our sponsors. May 2017 be a productive and prosperous year for us all!

And to end:



Kind regards,

Tammy

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Banking details:

Predatory Bird Projects

Standard Bank

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