

BirdLife eThekweni KZN

Non Profit registration Number:
263-993 NPO

Chair's Report 2021

Presented at the 73rd AGM

Dear Members

Welcome by the Chair

Good morning everyone and a very warm welcome to the 2022 AGM. It is wonderful to have so many people attend and also to be here in person. I cannot believe this is already my third Chair's report and what was in store for us all in the coming year when I officially took the chair in 2019. Despite the challenges that the pandemic threw at us we have really managed to grow as a club. By grow, I don't just mean the membership which has continued to increase but, in our actions and reach as a club as well as our interactions and experiences.

Committee 2021

Committee March 2021-February 2022: David Allan our honorary president is always supportive and the committee and particularly the chair appreciate his continued guidance and advice. Our thanks to Mike du Trevou for his stint on the committee and to Derek Robins who willingly stepped up to fill his position as vice-chair and act as the main sounding board and major chair assist. Derek kindly continued in this role despite a relocation to Dubai and the demands of a new job. He has happily agreed to continue during the upcoming year and shows how possible it is to participate in this new virtual world as he is one of the quickest to reply to issues online and attends the monthly committee meetings. The joys of a more virtual world since Covid-19. Our club was put onto a very solid financial footing thanks to the efforts of Mervyn Gans who sadly passed away in December 2021. He is sorely missed by me as chair as he was a solid and consistent worker and presence. We now have an investment account, NPO status and very tidy books thanks to all his efforts which continued right through to just before his death. Carron Dove, as Secretary continues to make what I do so much easier. She is unbelievably efficient at getting our minutes ready and is constantly offering assistance to me in a variety of ways. Carron has also in this vein agreed to assist with the membership portfolio and will help me with updates to the database, renewals and new members in the forthcoming year. One of the ways in which members can help to lighten both my and Carron's loads is to be responsible for their membership subscriptions by looking out for the emails from BirdLife

South Africa which administers this aspect for the affiliated bird clubs. Ticky Forbes continued to give huge support and provide the club with everything he was called on to do which included assistance with events, calendar sales/deliveries, quiz questions, talk hosting and updates to databases, leading walks and member interaction. Jenny Norman as Activities Co-ordinator carries a huge load with what I always consider to be the most important portfolio in the club. This is essentially the backbone of the club with the activities which are provided on a monthly basis to members. Our Birding Diary miraculously fills each month despite the challenges of covid and also in some cases member apathy which Jenny frequently has to navigate. Rob Jamieson is a long serving committee member who generously gives up his time to provide ideas and motivation and is developing the habitat restoration portfolio.

The next year will bring some changes to our committee. What is pleasing is that most of the present committee will be making themselves available for re-election, with only Lauren Calenborne who was getting to grips with the various social media requirements of the club having given notice of her intention to step down due to significant family commitments with three boys demanding lots of time. Fortunately for us Dave Rimmer has agreed to step into this role.

There are many other people that assist or provide encouragement to the committee behind the scenes and if I don't mention you all by name apologies but know that we do appreciate everything that is willingly offered. A few people are mentioned as we go through some of the highlights of the year in the report.

Club Rebranding

Name and Logo: 2021 was a big year for the club which having started life 74 years ago as the Natal Bird Club (NBC) has gone through some changes in its history, the latest of which has been a club rebranding. Starting off with a name change at our last AGM which as our launch materials stated, positioned us geographically, provided a more up-to-date name and also made us more relevant demographically. Along with the name change was the need to rebrand the club which started with the change of logo which has carried us through from the original split of the NBC but altered to reflect the name changes, and with the addition of a bit of colour but the same albatross emblem. The logo had to be graphically produced in multiple versions to cater for different uses and a colour, black and white and reversed logos for dark backgrounds were produced.



Social Media Banner: There was also the production of our banner which has been used for our official facebook profile as well as our zoom platform communications.



This all serves to reinforce and identify us as a club that is active and a living breathing thing - to get us noticed and to attract more warm bodies and support for birds.

Different activity labels: The rebranding has very subtly worked its way through to defining our activities a little differently and so our next focus was to start rolling out different activity labels which Jane initially and then Jenny and I have been working on. I am now unpacking these for you as it may make you pay a bit more attention to what is being offered by the club, give people some idea of what to expect and allow us to run different themes through these portals. This will enable members to quickly assess what the activity will entail, whether a walk (BeKZN Walks!) Sit-In, Let's Chat Birds & Birding, Birding online and field workshops (BeKZN Bird Learn), Bird Atlas, Location, Location, Location and the popular guest presentations (BeKZN Talks!). The latest birding diary has some of the icons that are being developed and will be associated with these different activities. Examples are shown in the blocks below.

<p>BeKZN Walks!</p> 	<p>Bird Learn Field</p> 	<p>Bird Learn Online</p> 	<p>BeKZN Sit-In</p> 	<p>BeKZN Daytripping</p> 
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Events: Special events (which include our AGM) are split off as distinct and are run/coordinated directly through and by the chair with the assistance of the secretary and other committee members and club members as needed. Events allow us to partner with other NGOs or corporate groups, raise awareness and support each other.

Activities

Overall 2021 was a busy year despite the constraints and a few postponements and cancellations. The year started with Jane Roseblade as Activities Co-ordinator but when family emergencies took precedence, she asked Jenny Norman to step in as activities co-ordinator from May onwards. Many thanks to Jane Morris for all her hard work and dedication. She does however continue to assist the club with the processing of all the trip and outing reports for Nicky to post to the web page.

The club has continued to have online offerings ranging from formal presentations from both local and international speakers, including one from as far away as Peru and other parts of Africa like Kenya. We also had some Bird Learn, Quizzes, Let's Chat Birds and Birding sessions which are more informal and sometimes delightfully raucous.

The outdoor activities continued except for a couple of months when we had stricter lockdown restrictions. We ended up with 39 outdoor activities including some square bashing for the atlas. These were all expertly lead by 22 different leaders (think how many more outings we could have if more people volunteered to organise just one or two outings a year!). 176 people attended these outdoor outings throughout the year. We managed to fit in a visit to the Natural History Museum just before David Allan retired and he shared some fascinating aspects on the birds. He continues with the monthly Bay counts and Steve Davis continues to be a conservation stalwart conducting the bi-annual CWAC counts for and with the club. A great help with long-term conservation monitoring. We ended the year with a very successful Summer Solstice Party as our themed-end-of-year function which included a good crowd who enjoyed walks led by Steve and Ticky, socialising, good coffee and eventually a lunch with people braaing meat to go with the delicious salads and rolls provided by the club.

These events wouldn't be possible without the leaders and speakers who so generously give up their time and knowledge to assist us and Jenny Norman indicated that she wished to thank them all from the bottom of her heart.

Thanks also to all the club members who join in with us on all these activities, it makes it all worthwhile.

NPO status

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our Treasurer Mervyn Gans the club was extremely pleased to official receive NPO Status (Non-Profit Organisation). Non-profit organisations (NPOs) do not exist to make a profit from the work of the organisation for the office-bearers or members of the organisation. They exist to serve some public purpose

rather than just serving the personal interests of the office-bearers or members of the organisation. This is governed by the Non-Profit Organisations Act, No. 71 of 1997,

Flock to Marion 2022

One of the biggest highlights on the birding calendar for many of our attending members, was Flock to Marion 2022. Postponed no less than three times with three ship changes we all wondered if it would ever really happen. It was lovely to interact with members on the cruise and also together be inspired about seabirds and their conservation. What amazing talks we were treated to and on the last day of the cruise many of our members gathered for cocktails and to chat. Everyone agreed that it was the best Flock to date (they get better each time) and that it was a lifetime experience.

Flock was a major fund-raising event for Birdlife South Africa's Mouse-free Marion project, and I am proud to announce on behalf of the committee that we have, to date, sponsored 32 hectares. Mark Anderson announced that the Flock to Marion voyage raised R3 million for the Mouse-free Marion project and members should be very proud to have made a contribution as a club. In addition, we were aware of personal donations made by club members and it was roughly calculated that this added another 20 hectares to the total from BirdLife eThekweni KZN.

Donations and Conservation Initiatives

Our donations and conservation initiatives covered a range of options from Mouse-Free-Marion project, CWAC counts by Steve Davis, Durban Bay Counts by David Allen, Inputs to the Durban Bay Environmental Committee and collection of bird data at Van Riebeeck Park by Arnia van Vuuren and Atlas input by a variety of members.

Mouse Free Marion: I have already mentioned the donation given by the club to BirdLife Mouse Free Marion Project and we were very proud to receive the certificate with the updated number of hectares the club has now sponsored.



Colour me Green eThekwini Atlas Challenge

This atlas challenge initiated by myself (a passionate atlasser) at the start of 2021 aimed to colour the 53 pentads which lie fully or partially within eThekwini Municipality 'green' during the year to maximise and update information on bird distributions in the municipal area. This has been a growing data gap and the club saw this as an important conservation initiative to embark on. And what an outstanding effort the club produced! Eighty-one percent (81%) of the pentads in the eThekwini boundary were atlassed at least once, and many of the pentads had many more cards than one during the year. That means we managed to cover 43 of the 53 pentads. So not only did we turn many of these pentads green but also blue and purple as well (this means than more than 10 cards were submitted for some of the pentads). Some of this change in colour was contributed by other birders who are not part of the club but the vast majority was a result of the efforts of BeKZN members. By the numbers - members contributed a total of 466 Full Protocol cards, by atlassing 1752 hours and logging 26 990 individual sightings. Out of the 466 cards submitted five people stand out for having submitted half of that total - an incredible 221 FP cards. In alphabetical order by surname - well done Garth Aiston (43), Adam Cruickshank (46), Tyron Dall (47), Ronnie Herr (22) and Dave Rimmer (63). Dave Rimmer's efforts to contribute to this important conservation initiative were nothing short of fantastic! The numbers speak for themselves. He atlassed 29 pentads, submitting 63 full protocol cards singlehandedly 14% of the clubs total . This was achieved through a dedicated 227 hours of atlassing where he racked up 4 090 individual records. Dave Rimmer was therefore the hands down (or binoculars up!) winner of the BeKZN Colour Me Green eThekwini Atlas Challenge and received the awesome prize of a Two Night Stay for two people at Bonamanzi Game Reserve with breakfast and dinner included! The detailed report can be read by following this link <https://blpn.org/2022/02/11/bekzns-colour-me-green-ethekwini-atlas-challenge-2021/>.

Calendar 2022

As per usual the calendar continues to be a major source of funds to the club and supports both club improvements/administration, outreach, and events as well as conservation donations. This year's calendar continued the tradition of rolling out an educational theme and highlighted Interesting Bird Behaviours. In addition, this year the calendar had a bonus car sticker included and we hope to see members profiling their club by proudly displaying these. The sponsors as usual make this fund-raising initiative possible and our thanks go to Whylo Distributors and Bill Nortje who both sponsored two months each, our loyal sponsors Dianne McArthur (the club's auditor) and Zulu Zonke (Noleen Turner), PIMS Financial Solutions (Nigel Thorpe), MER (Nicky and Ticky Forbes), AnA Insurance Brokers, individual members who stepped up when we needed them Kerry Rudd (Silver Rhythm), Mark Liptrot (M&L Consulting), Dr Shamlan Naidoo (Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist), and Dr Mike du Trevou for sponsoring the community birder inserts. Roger and Noreen

Broomhall always manage to amaze and humble us with their individual efforts to help us sell calendars selling in excess of 70-80 each year. Now if a few other members could take up that challenge! Hugh Chittenden is warmly acknowledged and thanked for his generous donation of photos each year and his constant push to make this not only a beautiful calendar but an informative one as well.



BirdLife eThekweni KZN
KZN Community Bird Guides
 BirdLife South Africa has trained more than 200 community bird guides across South Africa. BirdLife eThekweni KZN has produced this guide and map reference guide with the contact details and areas covered by the KZN guides to facilitate use of these specialists for your birding resources.

Wes Dubs Amalgam and Stanger Hills Cell: +27 82 873 7861	Janine Gabele iMfolozi, iMfolozi Onyonye, Eshowe, Duku, Gungahama, Upshur's Bay, Stanger & Greater Dukuze Cell: +27 82 887 2754
Sibusiso Gumbi Sowanda Bay, Inxwasa, Lake Ntshoni, Muzoni, Eshowe & Onyonye Cell: +27 72 12 8742	Richard Jabulani Gwanda Lamontsozi Hill & Dukuze Cell: +27 73 843 5852
Bhekezwele Jike iMfolozi Cell: +27 73 738 8855	Thabile Khaweyi Dukuze, Lake Ntshoni, iMfolozi, Muzoni & Onyonye Cell: +27 81 772 4121
Johann Makone Dukuze, Muzoni, Onyonye, iMfolozi & Ntshoni Cell: +27 73 843 5852	Jabulani Mhambeni Sowanda Bay, iMfolozi Game Reserve & Mafu Park Cell: +27 73 868 1111
Siqaki Mhambeni Mafu Park & Muzoni iMfolozi Cell: +27 73 843 4717	Wilfred Mkhomo Muzoni, Ntshoni, Stanger, Mthembu & Muzoni National Park Cell: +27 73 868 8221 +27 73 828 8702 +27 73 886 7882

Awards

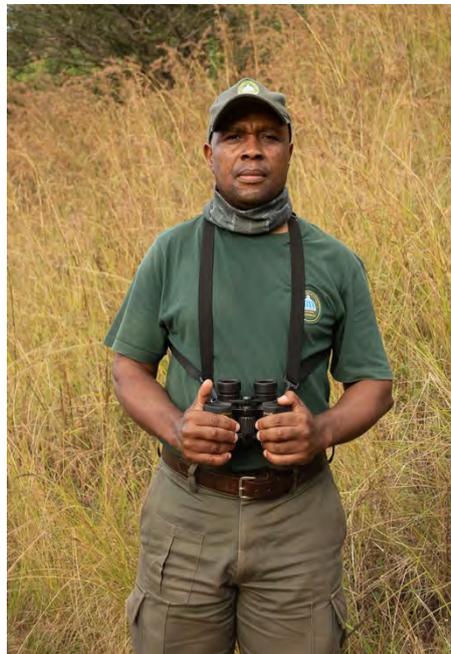
This year was a red-letter one for the club from a recognition point of view as we discovered that BirdLife eThekweni KZN members had achieved a scoop of four awards.



First came the news that our Honorary President, David Allan) had been awarded the 2021 Gill Memorial Medal for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Ornithology in southern Africa (see photo below of David at work in the Museum surrounded by bird skins which are a hugely important research resource).



Following hot on the heels of that news was the announcement that three BeKZN club members were also to receive BirdLife South Africa National Owl Awards which really added to club morale. BE KZN was extremely proud that these members were recognized for their contributions to birds and birding namely, Crystelle Wilson (top left), Sithembiso Blessing Majoka (right) and Nicolette Forbes (bottom left). To read more about this use this link: <https://blpn.org/2021/06/22/blsa-national-owl-awards/>



Lastly, my thanks to the whole committee and all the members who make this bird club an enduring bit of KZN's civil society and have taken us from strength to strength for the birds!

Nicolette Forbes
Chair
21 February 2022