

BE KZN is affiliated to:



P.O. Box 1672, WANDSBECK, 3631
www.blpn.org

9 October 2022

Mr G. Mullins
Environmentalist: Biodiversity Impact Assessment
Biodiversity Management Department
Development Planning, Environment and Management Unit
eThekweni Municipality

Dear Greg

BirdLife eThekweni KZN Monitoring of Van Riebeek (VR) Park

BirdLife eThekweni KZN (BeKZN) is an affiliate of Birdlife South Africa which is in turn a subsidiary of Birdlife International. As such it is concerned with bird conservation and assisting with monitoring and data collection to further any work being undertaken.

As you are aware the late Arnia van Vuuren, who until her death served as Conservation Coordinator on the BeKZN Committee, previously provided monitoring information regarding VR Park to the Biodiversity Management Department. This project has been developed by eThekweni Municipality as an offset area for the benefit of the people of the South Durban basin to replace the green lung lost in the eradication of the wetland flora and fauna of the Clairwood racecourse.

BeKZN has been fortunate enough to have well known birder and author, Mr Steve Davis step into the portfolio of Conservation Co-ordinator on the 2022 committee and he has begun monitoring the birds of VR Park. In this regard he has produced an excellent quarterly report which is attached. BeKZN hopes to maintain this collaboration with eThekweni Municipality and will endeavour to continue to provide information to monitor this important project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'N. Forbes'.

Nicolette Forbes
Chair: BirdLife eThekweni KZN

cc:
Zoe Solomon Ward 66 Councillor
Ivor Aylward Bluff Ratepayers

Van Riebeeck Park

July – September 2022

Report compiled by Steve Davis BeKZN Conservation Co-ordinator
9 October 2022

Three visits have been made by Steve Davis and Anneli Mynhardt to the Van Riebeeck Park Wetland area: 9 July, 6 August and 25 September 2022. On each occasion, a two-hour bird survey was done, from the boardwalk, by the fence alongside the carpark and walking along between the cricket field and the wetland. Fixed point photos were taken, and all butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies and any frogs heard were noted.

In July the wetland was fairly dry, but with extensive growth of *Typha* bulrushes. By August, the grass had grown more extensively, but it had been cut in some parts. In early September, a fire went through the wetland, which burnt away much of the long grass and much of alien vegetation. In addition, workers had come in and cleared some of the alien plants, especially the larger one such as bugweed and castor oil plant. This left the wetland much more open, and large shallow pools were noticeable after the rain. The wetter conditions were more favourable for frogs, and large numbers of snoring puddle frogs were heard calling.

The bird species counts have been fairly consistent between visits in July, August and September with totals of 57, 47 and 50, respectively, although there have been some changes in species and the total species count is 78. As may be expected as the wetland still establishes, there have been relatively few waterbirds and more grassland and forest birds. Key wetland birds have been Spur-winged Goose, Egyptian Goose, Blacksmith Lapwing and Malachite Kingfisher on two of the visits. Grey Herons, Hamerkops, Woolly-necked Storks and Yellow-billed Ducks have flown over but not landed, while Black-headed Heron has been seen on the ground on all visits.

In the grasslands, Rattling and Rufous-winged Cisticolas are often present, while Village Weavers, Fan-tailed Widows, Southern Red Bishops and Red-billed Queleas are generally seen. Burchell's Coucals are also resident and easily seen in the early morning. The grasslands are also well utilized by insectivores such as Little Bee-eater, Lesser Striped Swallows (building nests in the cricket pavilion) and Black Saw-wing Swallows.

Table 1: Bird list July – September 2022

		Dates	09-Jul-22	06-Aug-22	25-Sep-22
		Totals			
Name	Rep Rate	57	47	50	
Heron, Grey	66,7		1	1	
Heron, Black-headed	100,0	1	1	1	
Hamerkop	66,7	1	1		
Stork, Woolly-necked	33,3	1			
Ibis, Hadada	100,0	1	1	1	
Goose, Spur-winged	100,0	1	1	1	
Goose, Egyptian	100,0	1	1	1	
Duck, Yellow-billed	33,3	1			
Vulture, Palm-nut	33,3			1	
Kite, Yellow-billed	33,3			1	
Spurfowl, Natal	100,0	1	1	1	
Lapwing, Blacksmith	33,3			1	
Dove, Red-eyed	100,0	1	1	1	
Dove, Laughing	66,7	1		1	
Dove, Tambourine	33,3		1		
Turaco, Purple-crested	100,0	1	1	1	
Cuckoo, Klaas's	66,7	1		1	
Swift, White-rumped	33,3			1	
Swift, Little	33,3			1	
Swift, African Palm	100,0	1	1	1	
Mousebird, Speckled	100,0	1	1	1	
Mousebird, Red-faced	33,3		1		
Kingfisher, Malachite	66,7	1		1	
Kingfisher, Brown-hooded	66,7		1	1	
Bee-eater, Little	100,0	1	1	1	
Barbet, Black-collared	100,0	1	1	1	
Barbet, White-eared	33,3	1			
Tinkerbird, Yellow-rumped	33,3		1		
Barbet, Crested	100,0	1	1	1	
Woodpecker, Golden-tailed	33,3	1			
Woodpecker, Cardinal	33,3		1		
Swallow, Wire-tailed	33,3			1	
Swallow, Lesser Striped	100,0	1	1	1	
Martin, Rock	33,3			1	
Martin, Brown-throated	66,7	1	1		

Dates		09-Jul-22	06-Aug-22	25-Sep-22
		Totals		
Name	Rep Rate	57	47	50
Saw-wing, Black (Southern Africa)	33,3			1
Crow, Pied	33,3			1
Bulbul, Dark-capped	100,0	1	1	1
Greenbul, Sombre	100,0	1	1	1
Stonechat, African	33,3	1		
Robin-Chat, Red-capped	33,3	1		
Scrub Robin, White-browed	66,7	1	1	
Apalis, Bar-throated	66,7	1	1	
Camaroptera, Green-backed	100,0	1	1	1
Cisticola, Zitting	66,7	1	1	
Cisticola, Rattling	100,0	1	1	1
Prinia, Tawny-flanked	100,0	1	1	1
Flycatcher, Southern Black	33,3			1
Batis, Cape	33,3	1		
Batis, Chinspot	66,7	1	1	
Wagtail, Cape	66,7	1	1	
Pipit, African	33,3			1
Longclaw, Yellow-throated	33,3	1		
Fiscal, Southern	100,0	1	1	1
Boubou, Southern	100,0	1	1	1
Myna, Common	66,7	1		1
Starling, Black-bellied	100,0	1	1	1
Starling, Red-winged	33,3			1
Sunbird, White-bellied	100,0	1	1	1
Sunbird, Grey	33,3	1		
Sunbird, Olive	66,7	1	1	
Sunbird, Amethyst	66,7	1	1	
Sparrow, House	33,3			1
Weaver, Spectacled	100,0	1	1	1
Weaver, Village	100,0	1	1	1
Weaver, Thick-billed	33,3	1		
Quelea, Red-billed	66,7	1		1
Bishop, Southern Red	66,7	1		1
Widowbird, Fan-tailed	100,0	1	1	1
Mannikin, Bronze	100,0	1	1	1
Waxbill, Common	33,3	1		
Whydah, Pin-tailed	33,3		1	

Dates		09-Jul-22	06-Aug-22	25-Sep-22
		Totals		
Name	Rep Rate	57	47	50
Canary, Yellow-fronted	66,7	1	1	
Canary, Brimstone	33,3		1	
Crow, House	66,7	1		1
White-eye, Cape	100,0	1	1	1
Coucal, Burchell's	100,0	1	1	1
Cisticola, Rufous-winged	66,7	1	1	

Fixed Point Photos:



Plate 1: 9 July 2022



Plate 1: 6 August 2022



Plate 2: 25 September 2022



Plate 3: 25 September 2022 showing standing water and Spur-winged Geese in background