



Wakkerstroom Bird Club

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NEWSLETTER

JULY 2012

Hi All

Welcome to the second Newsletter of 2012!

Committee

We published a pic of most of the committee last newsletter, but not their contact details. Thinking about it later, we realised that it might be a good idea to give the details to you now in case you would like to offer helpful hints about possible outings the club could organise, the content of the newsletter or criticisms. The details are given below:

Brian Guerin - Chairperson	0834156701	0137449456 / 0177300570	bguerin@nelweb.co.za
Judy-Lynn Wheeler - Vice-Chair/CAR co-ordinator	0836093513		judy@bruwer.net
Norman Dennett - Projects co- ordinator	0825000212	017 730 0523	dennett@mtnloaded.co.za
John Burchmore - Recorder	0822243326		burchmore@telkomsa.net
John Barrow - Secretary/Treasurer	0822556778	017 730 0169	dajohn.barrow@gmail.com
Andre Steenkamp - Co-opted Member	0843966853		wakkerstroom@birdlife.org.za
Paul Tubb - Co- opted Member	0827865744	017 730 0707	bptubb@telkomsa.net

OUR LAST OUTING

On Saturday 7th July, we met at the Amersfoort Road Bridge for a two-hour birding session. There were about eleven in attendance which included a few non-members. The weather was fantastic! Warm temperatures and little, if any, wind at all.

The species of birds that were sighted included Squacco Heron, Common Moorhen, Egyptian Goose, South African Shelduck, Yellow-billed Duck, Cape Shoveller, Hottentot Teal, Southern Pochard, Malachite Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Laughing Dove, African Rail, Purple Swamphen, African Snipe, Blacksmith Lapwing, Black-shouldered Kite, African Marsh-harrier, Little Grebe, Reed Cormorant, Black-headed Heron, Purple Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, African Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Brown-throated Martin, Dark-capped Bulbul, Levillant's Cisticola, Cape Robin-Chat, Long-tailed Widowbird, Cape Wagtail, African Goshawk and, of course, the Red-knobbed Coot which is very common in this part of the world!

Afterwards all of us, except for Norman Dennett who had mother-in-law duty, repaired to the Birdlife SA premises where we enjoyed a most convivial "Bring and Braai" A good time was had by all and we were honoured by the presence of Yvonne Clulow, our Honorary Life member.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

The Squacco Heron



The **Squacco Heron**, *Ardeola ralloides*, is a small heron, 44–47 centimetres (17–19 in) long, of which the body is 20–23 centimetres (7.9–9.1 in), with 80–92 centimetres (31–36 in) wingspan.^[2]

Behaviour

The Squacco Heron is resident in South Africa, sedentary in areas of permanent water, nomadic elsewhere, moving to suitable habitats following rains flooding grasslands, pans etc, This is a stocky species with a short neck, short thick bill and buff-brown back. In summer, adults have long neck feathers. Its appearance is transformed in flight, when it looks very white due to the colour of the wings. The squacco heron's breeding habitat is marshy wetlands in warm countries. The birds nest in

small colonies, often with other wading birds, usually on platforms of sticks in trees or shrubs. 3-4 eggs are laid. They feed on fish, frogs and insects.

Etymology

The English common name *Squacco* comes via Francis Willughby (circa 1672) quoting a local Italian name *Sguacco*. The current spelling comes from John Hill in 1752.^[3] The scientific comes from Latin *ardeola*, little heron, and *ralloides*, Latin *rallus*, a rail and Greek *-oides*, resembling.^[4]

References

1. BirdLife International (2008). *Ardeola ralloides*. In: IUCN 2008. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Downloaded on 5 February 2009. Database entry includes justification for why this species is of least concern.
2. David William Snow, Christopher Perrins (Eds) (1997). *The Birds of the Western Palearctic [Abridged]*. OUP. ISBN 0-19-854099-X.
3. Lockwood, W B (1993). *The Oxford Dictionary of British Bird Names*. OUP. ISBN 978-0-19-866196-2
4. Jobling, James A (1991). *A Dictionary of Scientific Bird Names*. OUP. ISBN 0-19-854634-3.

OUR NEXT OUTING

Our next outing will be advised in due course.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Our current membership consists of 21 people. If you haven't paid your subs yet, we'd be obliged if you could, if possible, pay the fee directly into the club's savings account. The bank charges us a fortune if cash is deposited. The details of the account are on the invoice that was sent to you a short while ago. If you can't, then don't worry! Just give the fee to any of the committee members. If you have a problem with the fee, please feel free to contact either Brian Guerin or John Barrow to discuss your concerns.

FUTURE PROJECTS

After obtaining BLSA's permission, we want to clear a smallish area next to the Crane Hide on their property in order to have a feeding station to observe Cranes feeding behaviour. If you'd like to help, please contact Norman Dennett.

Well, that's it for now! We hope you keep warm over the rest of July and in August.