

update from the African Raptor Databank for July 2015:

July has been one of strangest months for the ARDB. Our systems were thrown out by a server upgrade and we lost comms with our App for three long weeks. I thought it was going to be a month to forget about but paradoxically it has turned out to be one of our best!

Thanks go to Andrew Rayner and Simon Trice for stepping in and saving the day with the network and the App. Kurt Eckerstrom and Ken Gorton helped connect us to ESRI support. After a lot of consternation and problem-solving, Andrew has equipped us with the latest version of the Android App (1.0.2) that can talk fluently with our server again. Then in just four days we had influx of 1330 records which has got to be a record for us. Thank you so much to our ardent raptor observers who kept the faith and were out there using the app to collect the following records:

1439 new records were created in the database during July by users of the Mobile App:

observers	observations:
Andre Botha	399
Dirk van Stuyvenberg	240
Mark Brown	202
Munir Virani, David Mills	131
Holger Kolberg	111
Walter Jubber	64
Stefan van Stuyvenberg	48
Steven Evans	46
Mark Dixon, Amanda Judson	37
Andy Branfield	35
Dawie de Swardt	34
Ashwell Glasson	22
Jaco Smith	21
Hennie deBeer	13
Gisela Madden	11
Brian Waswala	9
Jacques Bester, Hennie Bester	4
Washington Wachira	4
Hennie Bester	3
Rob Davies, Laurie Davies	2
Troye Weston	2
Hennie Bester, Jacques Bester	1

July has been a good month for populating spreadsheet data into the ARDB.. A major contribution has been 140 records of Secretarybird from the WABDaB (West African Bird Database) which shows a full spread across West African countries, some of which we have very few data for. This was organised by Joost Brouwer and Ulf Lieden and co-workers and it is feeding in to a review paper on Secretarybird status being compiled by Ralph Buij, Neil Baker, Sally Hofmeyr, Lizanne Roxburg, Joost and Rob Simmons. The ARDB has supplied a new webmap to these researchers for reviewing all data for the species and evaluating the early draft habitat models. We are also introducing functionality to enable researchers to compile a database on raptor study areas which can include details on when populations were studied, density estimates etc. This will be made more widely available soon.

We have had a further shot in the arm for Ethiopian records with 219 observations by Ralph Buij on his recent trip and Ralph was able to check the locations of these and happy to see them in the right habitats using the satellite imagery basemap.

We added Stephanie Dolrenry's raptor species lists for the Lion Guardians Project in Kenya and a few interesting sightings by Yvonne de Jong travelling with Tom Butynski in northern Uganda which included Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and Red-necked Buzzard.

The other highly significant contribution this month is nearly 1k records of Namibian raptors compiled by Chris Brown from museums all over the world spanning 1839 - 1996. Many of these had quarter degree references and John Mendelsohn kindly helped geolocate all of these (n=764). Quarter degree squares correspond to areas of 22 x 25kms in Namibia which is fairly coarse data but may be just as good as the symbols printed in the Snow Atlas, some of which corresponded to areas on the ground of 30-60km across! So we are very grateful for these especially because they are our first large sample of museum data to supplement the Snow Atlas dataset.

Our largest contribution of records this month has been the update of 3472 records from the Tanzania Bird Atlas project. Thanks very much for supplying these Neil Baker and Tanzania observers. With the web developments going on at the ARDB we have also been able to supply back to TBA our non-TBA Tanzania data including some road counts and the Snow Atlas data.

In total, 6225 records were populated to the database during July 2015 bringing the total to 114,531 records at the start of August.

Through Clive Barlow we have established contact with John Rose (President Comete International) who is helping to organise survey and training work in the Niokolo-Koba National Park, Sénégal. I hope we can report more on this important work relating to raptors in the future but John and his colleague Anthony Virondeau have already helped the ARDB considerably by going through our master species list very carefully and updating all of our French names for African raptors. This helps pave the way to a French language version of our mobile App which can be seen as a major ARDB priority for helping to facilitate data collection and establishment of the ARDB project in Francophone Africa. We are on the lookout for a sponsor for this important element.

Work continues with the iOS development, the habitat modelling and range maps. During August we hope to have a bit of help starting up a database on raptor migration routes and count sites in Africa, but more on this later.. Thanks so much to everyone who helped make July such a good month afterall.

Best wishes,
Rob and ARDB team



ARDB contributions by data sources, July 2015

