



Northern Cape Bi-annual Waterbird Surveys Summer 2006/7



Summer 2006/7 survey

During the recent survey 50 693 waterbirds of 86 species were counted at 61 Northern Cape wetlands.



A Lesser Flamingo photographed at Kamfers Dam during June 2007.

Northern Cape's top wetlands

Kamfers Dam (22 064), McDougall's Bay (7116), the Orange River estuary (4747) and Springbokkamp pan (3337) supported the largest number of waterbirds. Only 546 waterbirds were counted at Spitskop Dam, as the count had to be called off (after doing the first section) because of boat problems. Hopefully the new boat (ordered in 2005/6) will arrive soon! The greatest number of species was counted at the Orange River estuary (51) and Spitskop Dam (36).

Yet more wetlands surveyed in Namaqualand!

Enrico Oosthuysen now counts waterbirds at an additional ten wetlands in Namaqualand, bring the totally number of wetlands surveyed to 19. The information collected by Enrico represents the first detailed and comprehensive information about Namaqualand's waterbirds. The previous waterbird surveys were only done on an *ad hoc* basis. Many thanks Enrico, and Maxie and Johan Jonk!

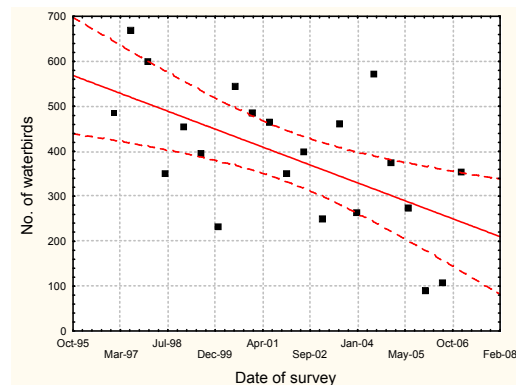
Coastal wetlands

In addition to the three estuaries/river mouths (Orange, Groen and Spoeg) that are surveyed, Enrico, Maxie and Johan conducted our first "marine" survey, when they visited McDougall's Bay and counted the waterbirds along the beach

and on Matthew Rock. The total number of birds counted was 7116, comprising mainly Cape Cormorants (5604), but also Bank Cormorants (221), Crowned Cormorants (104), Hartlaub's Gulls (306) and a large number of waders (incl. 242 Curlew Sandpipers).

Orange River data analysis

Holger Kolberg and I have just completed an analysis of the waterbirds counted along a 23.0 km stretch of the Orange River (Ernst Oppenheimer Bridge to Skilpadberg/Brandkaros) during 21 surveys (1997 to 2007). The results are quite alarming as they reveal a slow and steady decline in the number of waterbirds counted along this section of the river.



*The number of waterbirds counted between Hohenfels and the Ernst Oppenheimer Bridge during 21 surveys between January 1997 and January 2007. There has been a gradual decline in the number of waterbirds ($y=3356.9373-0.0797*x$; $R^2=.355$, $p=0.04$).*

Kamfers Dam flamingo breeding island

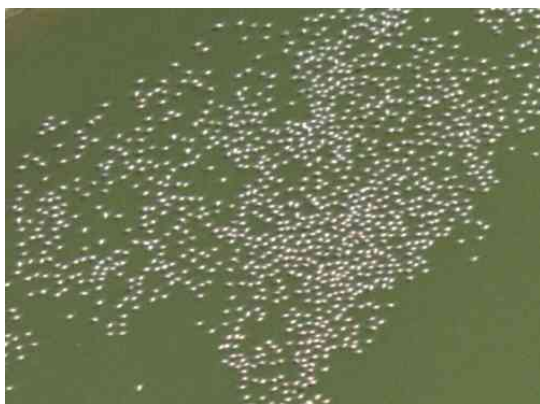
Although the Lesser Flamingos make extensive use of the island (some nights up to 20 000 birds roost on the island), they have not bred successfully (but did build c. 150 nests and lay two eggs last summer). We recently did some minor modifications on the island (enlarged the ponds, put in outlet pipes, and installed a solar panel system to drive the submersed pump). This flamingo island has really put Kamfers Dam on the map (locally and internationally)! The 25 min 50/50 documentary was also well received and has resulted in numerous enquiries. The flamingo use of the island is monitored on a weekly basis.



Aerial photograph of the flamingo island. The island is covered (literally wall to wall) with Lesser Flamingos.

Aerial survey of Kamfers Dam's flamingos

During May 2007, Ekapa Mining kindly arranged for high resolution aerial photographs to be taken of Kamfers Dam (with the aim being to get an accurate count of the wetland's flamingos). Thirty one images were taken and these have now been sent to Ib Krag Petersen in Denmark. He has image analysing software which he uses to successfully count sea ducks on the Baltic Sea. Having a look at the images, I am convinced that we will be able to count (to the nearest bird) the numbers of flamingos on Kamfers Dam (it may unfortunately be difficult to distinguish between Lesser Flamingos and Greater Flamingos).



Aerial photograph of foraging Lesser Flamingos.

Information boards erected at Kamfers Dam

The Wildlife & Environment Society and the Department of Tourism, Environment & Conservation recently collaborated on a project to produce two large and colourful information boards for Kamfers Dam. These were placed at the entrance to the flamingo "viewing point". The artwork was done by Maggie Newman, the design by Luke Evans of SwiftPrint and the project was funded by the Lomas Wildlife Protection Trust.



Information board about Kamfers Dam and its waterbirds.



Information board about Kamfers Dam's Lesser Flamingos.

Next survey

The next survey will take place during July 2007.

Acknowledgements

The following persons kindly contributed towards the survey: B. Benadie, Justine Braby, Shari Cade, Trygve Cooper, Heath Cronje, Ilonka Cronje, Trevor Datnow, Sandra Hedges, Eric Herrmann, Priscilla Hlanjwa, Johan Jonk, Maxie Jonk, Deon Joubert, Holger Kolberg, Lorette Luscombe, M. Mathshikiza, David Nkosi, Enrico Oosthuysen, Gideon Seekoei and Ronelle Visagie. I am also grateful to the landowners who allowed access onto their properties.

Mark D. Anderson, Ornithologist
 Department of Tourism, Environment & Conservation
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**The number of waterbirds and species counted during the summer
2006/7 waterbird survey in the Northern Cape Province, South Africa**

Wetland name	Observer	Number of waterbirds	Number of species
Agter Tuin se Dam	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	82	6
Benfontein Dam (Kimberley area)	Eric Herrmann	0	0
Benfontein Pan (Kimberley area)	Eric Herrmann	0	0
Bergsig Sewerage Works	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	73	12
Boetie Tol se Dam (Namaqualand)	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	168	18
Bosduiwekop (Petrusville)	Heath & Ilonka Cronje	694	17
Bo Vlei se dam	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	29	10
Dampoortdam (Spitskop)	Mark Anderson	239	13
Danielskuil Dams (Danielskuil)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Danielskuil Pan (Danielskuil)	Mark Anderson	0	0
De Aar Sewerage Works (De Aar)	Mark Anderson	153	17
Dutoitspan (Kimberley area)	Not surveyed		
Espagsdriftvlei (Jan Kempdorp)	Mark Anderson	232	20
Faugh-A-Ballagh (Colesberg)	Heath & Ilonka Cronje	121	10
Ganspan A (Jan Kempdorp)	Mark Anderson	42	8
Ganspan B (Jan Kempdorp)	Mark Anderson	871	30
Ganspan Nedersettingdam (Jan Kempdorp)	Not surveyed (dam generally dry and encroached with vegetation)		
Great Pan (Danielskuil)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Groen River Mouth	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	180	21
Grootdam (Rooipoort)	Shari Cade	37	6
Hanskopfontein Pan (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Hertsogvanwyk Dam (Namaqualand)	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	219	12
Kafferspoort Dam (Hanover)	Mark Anderson	12	2
Kamfers Dam (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson	22 064	26
Kamieskroon Sewerage Works	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	42	8
Klipkolk Dam (Mier)	Not surveyed (Ben von Wielligh no longer resident in Upington)		
Kraankuilsdam (Strydenburg)	Ronelle Visagie	1521	19
Kraankuilsdam Weir (Strydenburg)	Ronelle Visagie	492	16
Kraankuilsaaidam (Strydenburg)	Ronelle Visagie	0	0
Kriegerspoort Dam (Hanover)	Lorette Luscombe	1889	19
Marrick Pan (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson	0	0
MacDougall's Bay	E. Oosthuysen/Maxie & Johan Jonk	7116	21
Nantwich Salt Pan (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson	28	5
Nooitgedacht (Orania)	Ronelle Visagie	76	10
Nourivier Dam (Namaqualand)	Enrico Oosthuysen & Maxie Jonk	732	18
Nuwejaarsfontein House Dam (De Aar)	Mark Anderson	0	0

Nuwejaarsfontein Farm Dam (De Aar)	Not surveyed		
Orange River Estuary - Ramsar site	Mark Anderson <i>et al.</i>	4747	51
Orange River: Bridge – Hohenfels	Mark Anderson/Holger Kolberg	355	28
Orange River: Hohenfels – Skilpadberg	Mark Anderson/Holger Kolberg	230	9
Orange River: Fiddler’s Creek - Hamerkop	Enrico Oosthuysen/Johan Jonk	201	18
Orange River: Hamerkop - Sjambok	Enrico Oosthuysen/Johan Jonk	126	13
Orange River: Sjambok - Norosthama	Enrico Oosthuysen/Johan Jonk	123	14
Orange River: Norosthama - Richtersberg	Enrico Oosthuysen/Johan Jonk	102	15
Orange River: Richtersberg – Fish River	Enrico Oosthuysen/ Johan Jonk	135	15
Pedro’s Kloof Dam (Namaqualand)	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	713	22
Platfontein Pans (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Pudu Farm Dam (Olifantshoek)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Rooifontein Pan (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson/Eddie McFarlane	0	0
Rooipan (Danielskuil)	Mark Anderson	0	0
So Ver Myn Dam (Spitskop)	Mark Anderson	831	31
Soutpan (Ghaap Plateau)	Not surveyed (pan now game fenced and therefore not easily accessible)		
Spitskop Dam (Spitskop)	Mark Anderson	546	36
Springbok Sewerage Works (Springbok)	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	396	17
Springbokkamp (Modder River)	Eric Herrmann/David Nkosi	202	24
Springbokkamp pan (Modder River)	Eric Herrmann/David Nkosi	3337	23
Spoeg River Mouth	Enrico Oosthuysen/Maxie Jonk	103	19
Strydenburg Pan (Strydenburg)	Ronelle Visagie	0	0
Theunis se Dam	Enrico Oosthuyen/Maxie Jonk	23	5
Vaalbos: Holpan/Graspan (Kimberley area)	Mark Anderson/Deon Joubert	0	0
Volstruispan (Rooipoort)	Mark Anderson	0	0
Vanderkloof Dam	Sandra Hedges <i>et al.</i>	618	11
Vioolsdrift Dam	E. Oosthuysen/Johan & Maxie Jonk	67	10
Wanebaai, Vaalharts Weir (Warrenton)	Mark Anderson	169	24
Wortelfontein Dam (Richmond)	Mark Anderson	312	16
Zeekoei River Tributary (Vanderkloof Dam)	Heath Cronje <i>et al.</i>	245	13
TOTAL			