

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Animal Demography Unit, University of Cape Town

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): *Big Birds on Farms*

Implementation Partners for This Project:

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): November 1, 2006 – April 30, 2009

Date of Report (June 2009):

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

This project has taken the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts (CAR) project a significant step forward. Through the CAR results and consultation with landowners, conservationists, Cape Nature, South African National Institute of Biodiversity, the Department of Agriculture and others within the agricultural sector recommendations have been developed regarding conservation and management of biodiversity. Partnerships with other organizations have been strengthened and beneficial to the project.

The initial area of focus for the Big Birds on Farms (BBOF) project was the whole Cape Floristic Region (CFR). Although the bird monitoring, that involves participants from the wider CFR region, took place in much of this region, it proved too wide an area in which to give presentations/workshops. So the main area in which these presentations occurred was the Overberg region, with one in the Swartland and one in the Little Karoo regions.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

BBOF aimed to promote private sector and community involvement in conservation in agricultural landscapes within and surrounding the Cape Floristic Region (CFR) biodiversity corridors. This was to be achieved by promoting best practice in land management for the stewardship of biodiversity

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

The main objectives did not change, but the region in which this was practical changed. We were rather ambitious in trying to cover the Little Karoo and Humansdorp areas in as much depth as the Swartland and Overberg regions. It was not possible to gather quantitative crop information for these regions, as it is not available for these regions. Crop agriculture is not extensive in the Little Karoo where ostrich farming predominates and water is scarce.

The objective to give presentations/workshops in the wider CFR was also not practically achievable for the following reasons. Firstly, setting up meetings with the farming community proved to be more difficult than expected and very time-consuming. Farmers are very busy, the agenda for their meetings are very full and I had to email and phone frequently to request an opportunity to have some time at one of their meetings. Phoning proved more effective than emailing. Secondly, the petrol price went up considerably after the budget was drawn up and it would not have been economically feasible to fit in trips to areas further afield in the CFR. Thirdly, the original plan was to share transport costs to the Overberg with Odette Curtis, but Odette moved out to the Overberg early on in the project so only one trip was shared. Fourthly, I underestimated the time required to travel to venues for meetings, especially as all the presentations to farmers were at night necessitating an over-night stay. Fortunately it was possible in most cases to over-night with CAR participants reducing costs.

The objective to design and circulate a poster to advertise the booklet promoting best practice in land management for the stewardship of biodiversity could also not be met due to financial constraints. However Landcare will circulate the booklet to all landowners on their mailing list, which will be more effective.

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

I do think that there is generally far more awareness of the big birds on farms than in the past. This is also due to working closely with the South African Crane Groups and key farmers in the Overberg region in particular. Also in recent years I have attempted to involve participants in the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts(CAR) project that are more locally based. When the project began 15 years ago it only involved Cape Bird Club members, but now many more local farmers and community members are involved in these counts twice a year. By involving local people there can be an ongoing concern for these species throughout the year. Participants receive biannual newsletters by email or post (these are also on the ADU website) as well as website interim reports that have had a focus on conserving biodiversity.

Conducting interviews based at the Crane Working Group stall at the Agri Megaweek in Bredasdorp also made farmers more aware of these birds on their farms. Fortunately the article that appeared in the Farmer's Weekly magazine reporting on a presentation at the Megaweek actually had a front cover photograph of a Blue Crane that drew attention to the article. The article gave guidelines to conserving biodiversity on farms. The Farmer's Weekly magazine has a distribution of 14 000 all over South Africa.

Due to the BBOF project the results of the CAR project are now far more widely available on the website and in the booklet. In preparing the booklet and recommendations for conserving biodiversity consultation has been as wide as possible. Comments on the booklet have been received from farmers, conservationists, the Department of Agriculture, the South African National Institute of Biodiversity, Overberg and South African Crane Groups, Cape Nature and colleagues in the biological field. The booklet is currently being typeset and has not been distributed yet, so it is not possible to assess its effectiveness yet. The use of illustrations provided by a professional photographer, who used to farm, will make it more 'reader-friendly' and it has been translated into Afrikaans.

The response to the presentations at the farmer's meetings has been positive and the feedback has been that it was encouraging. The Department of Agriculture was thankful for the presentation to Agricultural Extension Officers in Bredasdorp.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

It did prove very difficult to arrange the presentations/workshops as explained above, particularly as farmers are so short of time. I found that phoning Chairpersons regularly was more effective than sending emails.

We also struggled to get funding for the booklet and this took much time. James Harrison found it helpful when he approached someone whom he knew personally. I also found it effective when I spoke to someone from Landcare whom I had met at a Cape Action for People and the Environment workshop. Prior personal contact seemed to make a difference.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

We learnt that a workshop involving farmers and conservationists near the beginning of the project was helpful and it made a big difference to run this workshop as a team.

Drawing up a practical time schedule (using Gantt and RACI charts) really enabled us to be far more realistic in the planning of completion of the various steps of the project. This especially helped in identifying steps that needed to take place before other tasks, which hinged on these, could be completed.

Through the interviews with farmers it was encouraging to discover that there was a positive response to recommendations for conserving biodiversity. But the concept of biodiversity was not as well understood as expected amongst the farming community. In future work more emphasis should be placed on explaining the concept of biodiversity and how the conservation of biodiversity enables more sustainable farming.

It is very important to take language into consideration. The vast majority of farmers were more comfortable in Afrikaans than English; of the 22 people interviewed at the Agri Megaweek only one person chose to conduct the interview in English. Fortunately the interview questions had been translated into Afrikaans, as has the booklet for farmers.

It was time-consuming and discouraging trying to source funding for the booklet encouraging the conservation of biodiversity.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

The CAR project, involving the private sector and farming community will continue in the CFR and wider South Africa for as long as funding is available. This will ensure a continuing awareness of these species and the need for the conservation of biodiversity. The booklet will also be widely distributed in the CFR and as it is well illustrated with photographs taken by a popular local professional photographer, who used to farm in the area, I hope it will be widely read. Presentations encouraging the conservation of

biodiversity to farmers or other organizations in the local communities in the CFR and wider South Africa will be given whenever the opportunity arises in the future.

A questionnaire will also be distributed with the booklet, which will hopefully provide further insights into attitudes towards conserving biodiversity and understanding of the concept of biodiversity.

If further funding becomes available it may be possible to circulate the booklet more widely in South Africa.

The CAR project has benefited from wider consultation with other organizations through the BBOF project, this interaction with other organizations will continue.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

It has taken longer than originally planned to complete the project as the Big Birds on Farms project has been conducted alongside the CAR project which involves about 800 volunteers and many participating organizations. It also took longer to arrange the meetings with farmers partly due to the fact that at certain times of the year e.g. harvest their regular meetings do not take place.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
JJH McDowell Trust	A	\$3545	Funding for booklet for landowners
Landcare	A	\$2553	Funding for booklet for landowners
JAH Environmental Consultancy	A	\$1700	Funding for booklet for landowners
		\$	

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A*** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B*** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C*** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D*** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thank you very much for the opportunity that this funding has provided to take the CAR project a significant step further in conserving biodiversity. I have appreciated the way in which CEPF and

CAPE staff have provided support and encouragement during the course of this project. This has been particularly helpful as I have been stretched managing the CAR project involving about 800 participants at the same time. Thank you especially for your understanding in giving an extension to the project due to unexpected personal circumstances necessitating compassionate leave.

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Donella Young

Organization name: Animal Demography Unit

Mailing address: Department of Zoology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Tel: +21 6504239

Fax: +21 6503434

E-mail: Donella.Young@uct.ac.za