



Bridging the science-implementation gap – South Africa

The Energy Task Force (ETF) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is a multi-stakeholder platform that works towards reconciling energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. **BirdLife South Africa is an ETF observer which champions the environmentally responsible development and management of renewable energy facilities in South Africa.**

Problem: Evidence to support site screening, impact assessment and mitigation is not always readily available.

Solution: Species guidelines help ensure decisions are based on the best available information and stimulates research to address knowledge gaps.



Project Overview

Guidelines for species at risk from the expansion of wind energy facilities gather the best available information regarding how to assess and mitigate impacts. The BirdLife South Africa guideline series focuses on species for which the approach to specialist studies and recommended mitigation measures differs markedly among environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and/or where the monitoring results from operational phases point to the need to strengthen impact assessments and mitigation strategies.

To date guidelines for Verreaux's Eagle, Cape Vulture and Black Harrier have been completed.

Key receptors: Environmental assessment practitioners and consulting bird specialists, wind farm developers and operators, decision-makers.

Project partners: BirdLife South Africa, co-authors, species experts, Birds and Renewable Energy Specialist Group.

Location: South Africa

Solutions and Actions Taken

- ✓ Guidelines were authored by species experts and BirdLife South Africa. Where available, peer-reviewed research was drawn on and this information was supplemented by expert opinion and grey literature (including EIAs and monitoring reports).
- ✓ The Guidelines include spatial advice (e.g. nest buffers) and explain the science behind the recommendations.
- ✓ This consultative process encouraged scientists to analyse existing datasets and publish research to support recommendations.
- ✓ Consultation with industry helped ensure recommendations were clear and easily understood, and promoted buy-in.
- ✓ Recommendations have been incorporated into EIAs, operational phase mitigation strategies, site screening and strategic environmental assessment.



Enabling Conditions for Success

- ✓ National legalisation requires EIA for proposed wind energy facilities.
- ✓ Existing data are made available to support site screening.
- ✓ Impact assessment predictions are verified through operational phase monitoring (normally a condition of approval). Monitoring reports are made available to BirdLife South Africa and data are captured in a central repository.
- ✓ A culture of collaboration and information exchange among researchers, consulting bird specialists, decision-makers and NGOs (e.g. facilitated through Specialist Group and Forums).
- ✓ A constructive relationship between project lead (BirdLife South Africa) and the national Wind Energy Association.

Next Steps

- ✓ Existing guidelines to be updated as new data, research and assessment tools become available.
- ✓ Ongoing review and collation of EIA and operational phase monitoring reports will help flag if guidelines for other species are required.
- ✓ Funds must be secured to enable monitoring and research on species at risk and address information gaps.
- ✓ Introduce, and experiment with, mitigation to reduce the high fatality rates of collision-prone species.
- ✓ Exchange knowledge and insights with stakeholders through national and global networks. Encourage other countries to adopt and adapt this approach to suite conditions in their region.

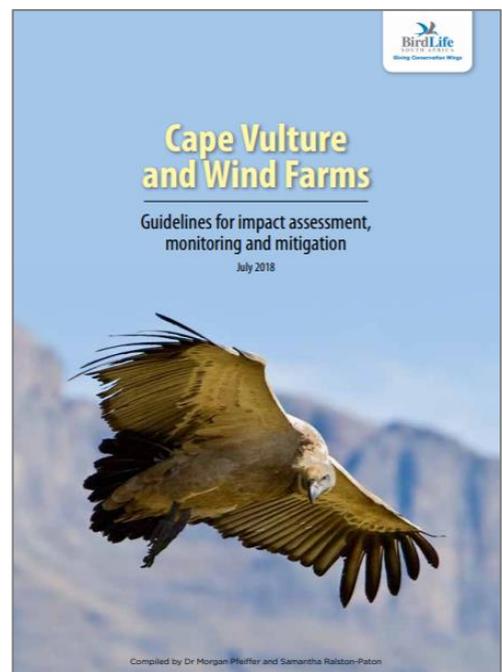
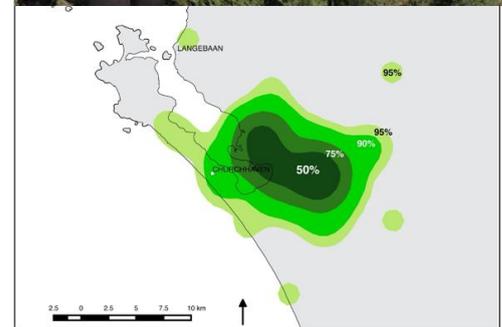
About CMS and the ETF

CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, works for the conservation of a wide array of endangered migratory animals worldwide through the negotiation and implementation of agreements and species action plans. The ETF brings together governments, multilateral environmental agreements, investors, the private sector and non-governmental organizations with the aim of avoiding and minimizing the negative impacts of energy developments on migratory species.

Getting involved

If you wish to learn more about the work of the ETF, become a member or engage otherwise, please contact the ETF coordinator:

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Convention on Migratory Species