

CONCERN OVER TARGETING OF BIRDS OF PREY

AKHEEL SEWSUNKER

People who are shooting birds of prey should be prosecuted, says FreeMe Wildlife, who are on a mission to protect the raptors amid a rise in their killings.

Tammy Caine, a raptor specialist at FreeMe Wildlife, said they have recently had two birds of prey — an African harrier hawk and a spotted eagle owl — come in with pellets in their wings.

“While the African harrier hawk is still in care, the spotted eagle owl sadly had to be euthanised.

The pellet, embedded in the wrist joint of the wing, could not be surgically removed, and continued to cause immense inflammation and necrosis to the surrounding tissue until, eventually, the joint became immobile, and the owl was clearly suffering a great deal,” she said.

She added that while this might be happening in South Africa, it is not unique to the country.

“Birds of prey are protected in many countries, including South Africa, because of active persecution. There is a myriad of reasons, not least of which is that, as a predator, they are seen as a threat to domestic livestock and pets.

“Birds of prey are obligate carnivores. They have to eat other animals from the time they hatch to the time they die. This is the



This African Harrier Hawk was shot in the wing. Under the care of FreeMe Wildlife, it has made a splendid recovery, and the organisation is confident that they will be able to release it in the near future.

way nature has designed them, and they cannot change that. Unlike humans who can decide

what their dietary requirements are, birds of prey cannot.

“There is no such thing as

going ‘vegan’ for a raptor. They also have absolutely no understanding of ownership, protection and boundaries,” she said, adding that raptors have to exist in a natural system and humans often create constraints for the animals.

“It is humans who have turned the world artificial and have set rules that exist for no other species but our own. But the victims of this persecution are sometimes quite innocent

“The general public’s inability to correctly identify raptors, or understand anything about them, is often so limited that any bird of prey is identified as a potential threat and shot just in case it might ‘attack’ pets or livestock.

“In so many instances, there was absolutely no reason to vilify the raptor in the first place, other than a human’s misguided fear and ignorance. Unfortunately, the bulk of these persecutions also happen now in the winter months.

“Many of our resident raptor species breed in the winter, so it is a time when they are most active, spending more time hunting and foraging for their young,” Caine said.

She added that these killings often affect the hatchlings as well as the parents. “This makes these shootings even more tragic, know-

ing that in many cases, it is not just the parent bird that is killed, but the same senseless act of violence condemns their young to starvation in the nest,” she said.

She added that those who shoot endangered birds, if they are caught, they should be prosecuted by the laws that protects the wildlife of this country.

Merlyn Nomusa Nkomo, who is a PhD candidate in conservation biology, in the field of ornithology, said that raptor biologists are aware of human-wildlife conflict regarding birds of prey and people.

“This happens often due to the perceived and sometimes real threat they pose to small livestock like poultry and lambs. However, how common or widespread this is, is unknown,” she said.

“Training people as well in identifying raptors and knowing their conservation threat status will prevent misdirected fears and persecution of vulnerable species like vultures that do not prey on livestock anyway,” she said.

- Merlyn Nomusa Nkomo is an expert listed on Quote This Woman, which is a database of women sources for media practitioners with the aim of increasing gender diversity in the media.

Howick educator invited to world summit

Howick resident, Lindelani Zuma, has been given the chance to represent his town and country at the World School Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.

The manager of the Howick Academic Tutoring Centre was nominated for the ‘Inspirational Leader’ award thanks to his efforts to improve the educational qualifications of young people in the area. The prize will be presented at a ceremony at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on July 20.

The Centre offers pupils the chance to improve their matric results allowing them to access higher education and job oppor-

tunities.

In a letter from Simran Mansoori, a member of the World School Summit team, Zuma was told “Your remarkable contribution to the education sector has caught our attention and we are delighted to recognise your efforts.”

Zuma was also offered the opportunity to be part of the Indian television show, *Story Behind the School*, to participate in panel discussions and to receive and honorary doctorate from Maryland State University in the United States.

The Summit, which is now in its fourth year, was launched in 2020 by Anne-Marie Duguid and Ste-



Lindelani Zuma.

phen Cox, alongside Professor John Hattie, to give something back to the teaching profession.

“Little did we know at that point how big this would become. Now in 2024 we will have reached over 100 000 registrants globally,” organisers, Osiris Educational, says on its website.

“We seek brave leaders, passionate practitioners and cool schools from around the world.

“Most importantly it is all about impact – allowing access all year enables flexible use for schools and practitioners. We want these sessions debated and unpacked for your schools. Try the new learning, adapt it and discuss with our teams.

“The ripple effects of WES 2021, 2022 and 2023 were felt in classrooms around the world, heralding the start of a new era of

professional learning and a worldwide stage to showcase incredible approaches.”

Zuma told *Village Talk* that if he gets to attend the event, he will use all the knowledge he gains to help the young people of Howick get the education they need to be able to go to university.

Before he can do that, however, he needs the help of the local community to pay for his airline ticket and expenses.

If you can help, please use the following bank account details: LB Zuma, ABSA Current Account, Account number: 4091252616, branch code: 632005. Please use the reference: World School Summit.

Seniors Club hosts monthly meeting

The Midlands Seniors Club will be holding its monthly meeting on Friday, June 21, at the Presbyterian Church Hall at 9.30am for 10am.

The speakers this month are Colin and Sarah Tilbury, who will be sharing their adventures through Africa researching the African Dwarf

Chameleon. The talk will be accompanied by slides.

The usual tea and sandwiches will be available and visitors are welcome and only pay R20 for the morning. Come as a visitor and leave as a member.

There is plenty of safe parking at the rear of the church and the Fraser

Street gate will be open.

On Tuesday, June 25, the club will be enjoying coffee and cake at Classic Cafe for which booking at Friday’s meeting is essential.

Last Thursday’s event was well supported and many thanks to hosts, 68 On Main, for their efforts and support.

UMNGENI MUNICIPALITY TENDER NOTICE NOTICE TO AWARD

Interested Bidders are hereby informed of the below award:

BID NAME	BID NO.	AWARDED BIDDERS
Appointment of a service provider for supply and delivery of Vouchers and equipment for informal traders and SMME / Project management services to facilitate insuring of vouchers and equipment for informal traders and SMME	UMN 26/2023-24	1. Khulangwane Trading as Kwalanga

The municipality is notifying the bidders of the decision to award the above tender. Bidders aggrieved or wish to object on this process have 14 days from the date of this advertisement. Objections must be directed to Municipal Manager and SCM.

For Supply Chain Management related queries regarding this notice may be directed to Mr. Mbongeni Zuma on Email: mbongeni.zuma@umngeni.gov.za or Tel: 033 239 8313 and Ms Joy Pratt on Email: joy.pratt@umngeni.gov.za

MR. H. HLOBA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

SPCA rabies clinics

Umngeni SPCA is offering free rabies clinics at its kennels at 15 Campbell Road on Wednesday, June 19 from 10am for residents in Howick, KwaMevana, Merrivale and the Siyabazali informal set-

tlement. The organisation will also provide a rabies drive in clinic in the Karkloof on June 21, Cedara on June 26 and Howick West on June 28. The clinics will take place at 10am.

Missing parent

Social services are looking for the father of Andiswa Shelembe. His biological father’s name is Siyabonga Shelembe and his late mother’s name was Hlengiwe

Memela. Their last known address was in the Karkloof. Anyone who knows Shelembe or who has seen him is asked to contact Howick social worker, Yandiswa at 033 330 4309.