



August 2024

Monthly Newsletter

Carmen Demmer Presentation @ Fordoun Village



The KZNCF were delighted to host Carmen Demmer for a talk on Improving monitoring methods and determining the breeding success of the Grey Crowned Cranes within a key agricultural area in South Africa. We welcomed over 100 people to the Fordoun Village for a delicious 3 course meal. Here is a snippet from Carmen:

“Of the three crane species residing in southern Africa, the Grey Crowned Crane is the region’s least studied crane species, largely due to difficulties in accessing their breeding habitats as well as their elusive parenting behaviours. These were

the two key challenges that I identified as fundamental to my research project. My

research aimed to address these challenges by comparing traditional on-foot monitoring methods with a novel monitoring tool: *drones*. My findings revealed that Grey Crowned Cranes responded significantly better to drone monitoring, allowing us to get much closer before exhibiting signs of behavioural stress—an average distance of 22.72 meters with drones compared to 97.59 meters with on-foot methods across all social groupings. Among the crane’s social groupings, flocks were the most sensitive,

while family groups tolerated closer approaches. However, nesting cranes displayed sensitivity to drone approach angles. Overall, my results highlighted the effectiveness

of drones for monitoring this wetland - nesting crane species, and offer valuable guidelines for future research. In closing, I emphasised the need for increased

collaboration between private landowners and conservation organizations, as well as more regular data collection with effective ecological tools. Such measures will

not only improve our understanding of this species’ long-term breeding patterns but will also help with refining future conservation strategies of these birds. Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to

everyone who attended and engaged with my presentation. Your interest and support are greatly appreciated. I also wish to express my gratitude to the event organizers for their hard work and dedication, which were crucial in making the event a

success. Remember, each of our efforts, no matter how big or small, play a vital role in uniting the community and advancing our shared conservation goals. Thank you all! For those interested in reading the detailed findings of my research, please follow

this link to access the full publication in *Ecology and Evolution*:

[https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ece3.10990.](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ece3.10990)”



SNAPSHOTS



From left to right: A school group on their guided excursion, fantastic siting of an Oribi during the walk that took place from the Earth Route Market, fencing continuing around the BBCONR in order to electrify the perimeter.



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