

## ***Celtis africana***

Sterkfontein Country Estates June/June 2016

Good day Celtis friends!

This edition is a bit late - a new eagle chick had been hatched and I wanted to wait for some photos before I send this Celtis out. However, unfortunately, the little one did not survive. It hatched late May and on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June I went around to try and get some photos.

What was strange to me is that Henrietta was not on or near the nest itself, but on a tree some distance away. Although the chick was almost ten days old, at this stage she'd still be very protective of it, sitting on the nest or right next to it. After waiting for almost an hour there was still no sign of the curious little head popping up to see where its parents are. However I did get some excellent photos of her (Henrietta), as well as some short videos. She let me get very close to her – who knows, she might remember me from previous years! I'd certainly like to think so!



Our beautiful Black-chested Snake Eagle female, Henrietta on 03/06/2016 (Photo: Elmarie Krige)

I remember with Little Wing and Skye - she'd always be either right next to, or on the nest, and if something or someone approached, she'd immediately go down into the nest and one would not even think there is something there. So something was not as one would expect it to be. However, later that same afternoon, we had to go to

town and both parents were there busy feeding the chick inside the nest so we assumed all was well after all. Maybe she just needed a bit of a break from sitting on the nest all the time.

On Monday, the 6<sup>th</sup> I went back to the nesting site and both parents were sitting a distance away from the nest on two different trees. After a long wait I still did not see anything at the nest. Compared to the other chicks I watched growing up, the little one would be very curious at this stage of its life. It would of course hide inside the nest but would, after a while, when it would think all is safe, stick out it's head to survey its surroundings or to see if the parents were bringing some food. Both parents just sat around on two different trees a distance away from the nest and eventually, after a long time, they took off slowly and have not been back since. It was so sad to me – it was as if they paid their last respects to the nesting area.

Yesterday, Friday the 10<sup>th</sup>, Garfield and I went to the nesting site, as we wanted to see if we could see maybe something around or inside the nest. This was a whole operation as the tree is very high and although Garfield stood on a ladder and my camera was attached with tape onto a very long plastic pipe, we only managed to photograph the edge of the nest and not inside. However, with the ever-present crows looking to rob nests of eggs or chicks, it was doubtful that anything would be left lying about inside the nest.

This is very sad for me as I was looking forward to record yet another eagle chick growing up until it left the area. All I can think is that there was just not enough food around at this time of the year. The parents need to eat a lot – they are large birds and probably needs quite a bit of food to keep their condition up and for the long flights they undertake to go hunting. Also, breeding takes a lot of energy out of the adults, so between them and a growing ever-hungry chick, I think it was just a problem finding sufficient food.

This happened before when they started breeding at Nick Rosenberg's place and we had that very cold spell when the chick was still very small. I remember how many photos I took from the road on my daily walks and the same thing happened. Before it was even old enough to be flying little distances (**only** at the age of three months it is fully fledged and able to fly, and then it only stays around the nesting site for a long time, flying short distances to nearby trees etc.) the parents left the nest but then, within a short while I took a photo of them mating and they started breeding near the latest nesting site. That resulted in our Little Wing being hatched and growing up into a beautiful healthy bird.

In the veld not too much is happening, but the aloes started lighting their little orangey-pink flames, giving some colour to the otherwise dull veld. Don't forget the medicinal values of our aloes (see Celtis of July 2015) and I can testify to it! Recently I was busy doing a stir-fry and as usual doing other things at the same time. I turned away from the stove for a few moments and turning back, I grabbed onto the scorching handle, burning the inside of my hand quite a bit. Luckily I remembered about our aloes, ran outside and cut a piece off a leaf, cut it open and just rubbed

the juice onto the burn. Immediate relief! So, next time you or a worker or one of the kids have a little accident; remember the free medication in the veld!

There are lots of butterflies around in the garden at present and we both take as many photos as we can during our lunch hour. Garfield also got a fantastic picture of the African Hummingbird Hawk moth (*Macroglossum trochilus*). There is an American Hummingbird hawk moth as well as an European one too, but this is the local African one. Garfield had to be very patient to get this picture and of course he has the perfect camera with all the right paraphernalia to take such perfect pictures, but then, the cameraman must be patient and quite adept as well! I'm very proud of my hubby's good pics!



Fig Tree Blue (*Myrina silenus*) (Photo: Garfield Krige)

Have a look at this butterfly in the Afrikaans section for a photo with its wings closed. Amazingly, it looks like two different butterflies, yet it is the same butterfly!



African Humming-Bird Hawk-Moth (*Macroglossum trochilus*) taking a sip of nectar (Photo: Garfield Krige)



Pea Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) Lusern-bloutjie. Looks like the butterfly has blue glitter on its wings! (Photo: Garfield Krige)

Last month I placed a picture of a poor beheaded mouse that the Southern Fiscal put in its "larder" to make some "biltong". Have a look in the Afrikaans section for some more "biltong" pictures! One has to smile, there is enough food in our garden - of that I am sure, but I guess it is force of habit that makes it gather food to provide for the proverbial rainy day!

**A few one-liners, just for fun:**

What did the fish say when it swam into the wall? Damn!

I keep saying no to alcohol – it just does not listen!

Women are like roads, the more curves they have, the more dangerous they are!

**And finally, something to think about:**

"Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans." – Jacques-Yves Cousteau. (11 June 1910 – 25 June 1997) French naval officer, explorer, conservationist, filmmaker, innovator, scientist, photographer, author and researcher who studied the sea and all forms of life in water. He co-developed the aqua-lung and pioneered marine conservation – all in all a noble human being as far as I am concerned.

Till next month, stay warm - think: frying marshmallows at the fireplace, hearty soup with crusty bread, and for me, the all-time best South African snack: biltong and red wine! But, in saying this, let us not forget those who have less than us.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" - Martin Luther King, Junior (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) American Baptist Minister, activist, humanitarian and leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement.

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Goeie dag Celtis vriende,

Dis met 'n seer hart wat ek hierdie laat uitgawe van die Celtis uitstuur. Ons nuutste Swartborsslangarend kuiken het onlangs uitgebroei, maar ongelukkig het die kleintjie dit nie gemaak nie! Ek het juis gewag voordat ek die brief uitstuur, in die hoop dat ek 'n paar foto's van die kuiken kan insit, maar nou-ja, dis ongelukkig nie hoe dinge altyd gebeur nie.

Die kuiken het laat-Mei sy/haar opwagting gemaak en Vrydag die 3e Junie het ek besluit ek gaan 'n draai maak en kyk of ek nie al iets op film kan kry nie. Dit was vir my reeds vreemd dat Henrietta glad nie op of langs nie nes sit soos ek gewoon was met die ander kuikens nie, maar eerder op 'n boom 'n entjie weg van die nes. Ek kon darem pragtige foto's en kort video's van haar maak en sy het toegelaat dat ek

sommer baie naby aan haar kom – dalk herken sy my na al die jare! Na 'n lang wag en geen nuuskierige koppie wat bo die nes verskyn nie, het ek besluit om te verkas.



Henrietta, ons eie Swartborsslangarend-wyfie, op die punt om te vlieg (03/06/2016) (Foto: Elmarie Krige)



...en daar gaan sy! (Foto: Elmarie Krige) Die foto is uit my een video – wens ek kon die hele video deel!

Laat dieselfde middag moes ons gou winkels toe en het ons gesien hoe albei ouers besig is om die kleintjie te voer, Kgosi het pas aangekom met iets te ete. Ons het

gedink alles is dus reg en dat sy moontlik net moeg is van heeldag sit en broei en kuiken warm hou en bietjie wou bene..er..vlerke strek!

Maandag die 6e Junie het ek weer 'n draai gaan maak en eienaardig genoeg gesien beide die ouers sit 'n ent weg van die nes op twee verskillende bome. Iets het nie sin gemaak nie; die eerste vyf-en-twintig dae van die kuiken se lewe is die belangrikste en word dit intens versorg deur albei ouers en die wyfie sal altyd reg langs of op die nes self sit en as sy dink gevaar dreig, dadelik afsak in die nes om die kuiken te beskerm en nie 'n veertjie sal wys daar is iets nie. Ek het lank weggekruip, maar steeds het geen nuuskierige koppie verskyn nie en na 'n lang ruk het albei ouers opgevlieg en stadig weggevlieg en was sedertdien nog nie weer naby die nesarea nie.

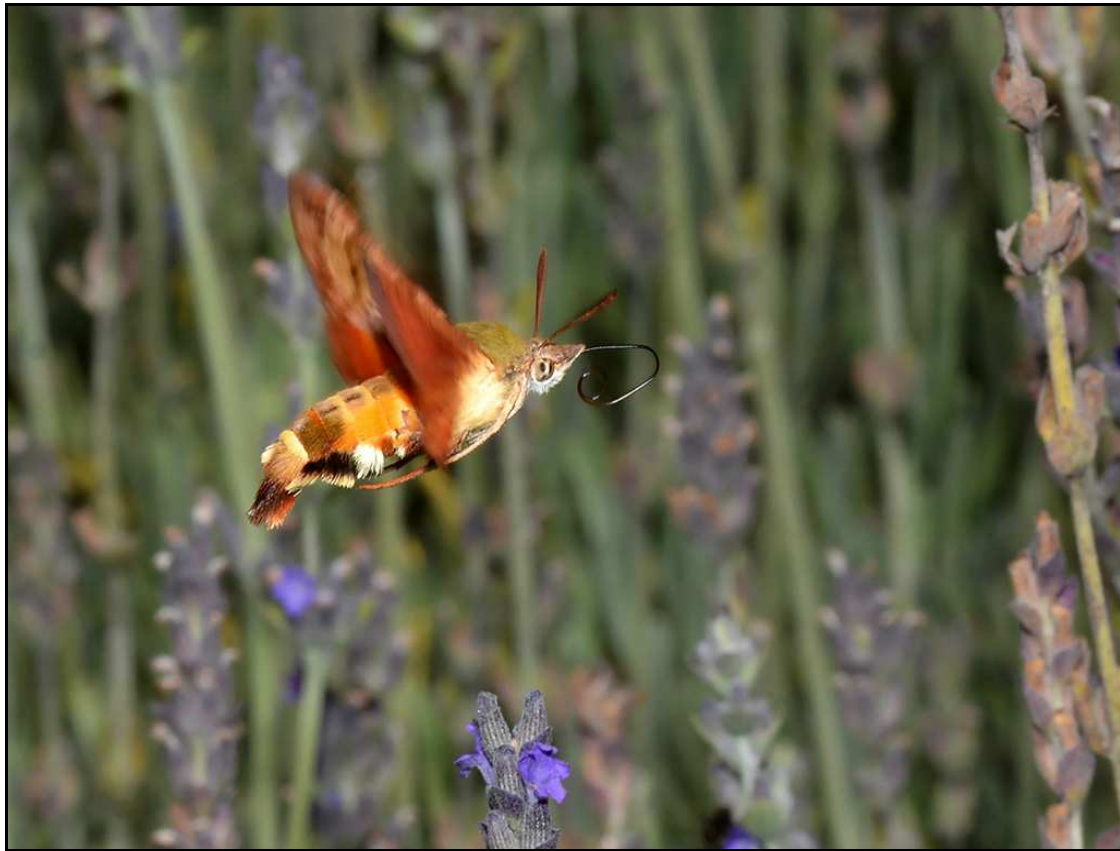
Nou Vrydag die 10e het ons na die nes gegaan om te kyk of daar nie iets in die nes agtergebly het nie. Dit was omtrent 'n storie, Garfield op 'n hoë leer en met my kamera vasgemaak aan 'n baie lang plastiekpyp. Ons het gehoop dat iets dalk sal uitkom, maar wat, die boom is so hoog ons kon slegs die rand van die nes verfilm en niks binne-in self nie. Natuurlik met kraaie ewiglik in die omtrek, reg om neste van eiers en/of kuikens te plunder, glo ek nie daar sou iets wees nie, maar ons wou darem probeer.

Al wat ek kan dink, is dat daar nie op hierdie stadium genoegsame kos in die veld is nie. Die ouers is groot voëls, Henrietta het baie energie gebruik om te broei en dus het beide ouers sowel as die groeiende kuiken genoeg kos nodig en ek kan net nie sien dat daar op die stadium in die winterveld wel genoeg is nie. Ook moet hulle kilometers ver vlieg om te jag wat dus beteken hulle moet gereeld kan eet. Voorheen het dieselfde tipe dinge gebeur toe hulle op Nick Rosenberg se plot gebroei het – dit was nog later in die winter en tydens 'n ysige paar dae het hulle ook na dit rondgesit naby die nes en uiteindelik padgegee. Ek het destyds hope foto's van die pad af afgeneem om my daaglikse stap. Hulle het egter kort daarna weer gepaar en nesgebou naby die huidige nesarea en uiteindelik is onse Little Wing uitgebore. Wat 'n pragvoël het hy/sy nie uiteindelik geword nie!

Ek is somer baie hartseer – ek lief die arende so en het so gehoop ek kan weereens die ontwikkeling en groei van nog 'n kuiken beleef. Ons hoop maar hulle kom terug, maar dat hulle nou net bietjie wag met broei sodat die nuweling in die lente of somer aankom.

In die veld is min aan die gang; net die aalwyne het begin om hul oranje-pienk vlammetjies oral aan te steek vir 'n bietjie kleur in die anders monotone winterveld. Onthou tog ons aalwyne het heelwat medisinale waardes (sien Celtis van Julie 2015) en ek het onlangs self besef hoe goed dit werk. Ek was besig om groente te roerbraai en natuurlik weer drie ander dinge ook te doen. Vir 'n paar oomblikke het ek weggedraai van die pan en toe ek terugdraai en aan die skroeiende warm handvatsel vat, het die binnekant van my hand lelik gebrand. Gelukkig het ek kopgehou en vinnig buitentoe gehardloop, 'n stuk aalwynblaar afgesny en oopgesny en dadelik die jel oor die plek gevryf en sowaar – dit was regtig dadelik beter! So onthou dit in 'n noodgeval vir werkers en/of kinders!

Gedurende middage te geniet ons dit om bietjie buite rond te stap en ons te verwonder aan die kleurvolle skoenlappers wat vir oulaas die tuin kom geniet. Garfield het ook 'n pragfoto van die African Hummingbird hawkmoth (*Macroglossum trochilus*) en as ek dit nou direk moet vertaal, kom dit uit op die eenaardige Afrika kolibrie valkmot – dit klink net nie reg nie! Ek is jammer, ek kry geen Afrikaanse vertaling van die mot se naam nie en as enigeen kan help - laat gerus weet! Hierdie is ons eie Afrika mot – Amerika en Europa het wel hul eie soortgelyke spesies. Natuurlik het Garfield baie geduld en hy het darem ook 'n kamera met die regte lense en dinge om so 'n foto te kan neem. Maar 'n mooi foto is ook nie altyd danksy die regte of duurste kamera nie – die fotograaf moet darem ook 'n sin vir die estetika hê. Ek is baie trots op manlief se mooi foto's!



African Humming-Bird Hawk-Moth (*Macroglossum trochilus*) (Foto: Garfield Krige)





Sondagsrokkie (*Vanessa cardui*), nog 'n pragtige Afrikaanse naam vir 'n skoendlapper! (Foto Garfield Krige)



Die Vyeboombloutjie (is dit nie die mooiste Afrikaanse naam nie?!), links, met sy vlerke oop en regs met toe vlerke (*Myrina silenus*) (Fotos: Garfield Krige)

Verlede maand was daar 'n foto van 'n arme muis in die laksman se "spens"- wel hier is nog 'n paar foto's van "biltong"! Mens kan eintlik net lag want, kos is daar genoeg in ons tuin! Maar ja, dis seker maar instink en 'n geval van iets bêre vir die maer dae!



Laksman se "biltong fabriek": 'n shongololo, 'n mot en 'n bolletjie mieliepap! (Selfoonfoto's: Garfield Krige)

### Lag 'n bietjie:

Op die Titanic was 'n kulkunstenaar wat die passasiers met allerhande kulkunsies moes vermaak. Ongelukkig had hy 'n mak papegaai wat heeltyd die aap uit die mou gelaat het deur te skree: "In sy mou!" of "agter sy rug, agter sy rug!"

Toe die boot nou sink oorleef die kulkunstenaar deur aan 'n stuk hout vas te klou en die papegaai, wat ook oorleef het, vlieg dae lank bokant hom. Na omtrent 'n week gaan sit die papegaai op die stuk hout langs die arme man en sê "Oukei, ek gee op – waar het jy die boot weggesteek?"

### Sowaar as vet:

"Maak in die somer hout bymekaar en sit in die winter by die vuur."  
- C.J. Langenhoven (13 Augustus 1873 – 15 July 1932) Afrikaans skrywer en digter - 'n man wat met 'n vonkel in die oog sy sê kon sê!

Van my kant groet ek tot volgende maand. Bly warm – dink aan lekker dinge soos die rooster van malvalekkers voor die kaggelvuur, stomende sop met krakerige brood of, my allergunsteling van alle eg Suid Afrikaanse happies: biltong en rooi wyn! So gepraat, laat ons nie die wat minderbevoorreg as ons is vergeet nie. Gee - sonder vrae of voorwaardes; gee - net omdat jy **kan!**

### Erkennings/verwysings/References:

WILLIS, C.K. & WOODHALL, S.E. (Compilers) 2010. Butterflies of South Africa's National Botanical Gardens. SANBI Biodiversity Series 16. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.

**Totsiens, goodbye, adios, ciao, yia sas en do svidaniya!**

