



Southern Ground-Hornbill Research and Conservation Program ExCo Quarterly Report



April 2015

Season update

Last year, Ntsiri group laid two eggs in their new nest, but the eggs later disappeared. This year they again laid two and we are pleased that their first chick has fledged and is now with the group. This is their first successful nesting attempts since 2011. Karan Khaya, Addger, Copenhagen and Rhino Road groups all fledged chick successfully. The sixth nestling of the season, Caroline group, is due to fledge in the next few days.

It certainly has been an interesting breeding season with both early and late dates for egg-laying being recorded in the same season. The number of days between the first egg of the first nest and the first egg of the last nest is 55 days on average. This season the difference was 101 days between lay dates in the first and last active nests. Together with the 2003-2004 season which was also 101 days, they represent the longest seasons on our record.

Recent captures

Jejane

On 04 March 2015 we successfully captured the pair on Jejane Private Nature Reserve. Our reason for the capture was to assess an injury on the female's foot that was causing her to limp. Her injury appeared to be a sprain on her toe with some swelling but no open wound. We could confirm that the female originated from Ntsiri group; she was ringed as a nestling in 2007. This is a rare and interesting case of female breeding dispersal within the APNR.



Left: Jejane pair in Steve's Tree. Top right: adult male. Lower right: Injured back toe of the female. Photos: Cassie Carstens.

Java

On 27 March 2015 we capture four of the seven individuals from Java group: two sub-adult males, one adult female and one beta female. We processed the four birds quickly and released three immediately after ringing. One sub-adult male of between 4-6 years was transferred safely to the wild-release program at Loskop Dam Nature Reserve.



Left: Java adult female. Right: Sub-adult male. Photos: Cassie Carstens.

Survival of second-hatched chicks

In the last meeting a question was raised regarding the average percentage of harvested second-hatched nestlings that survive. Since harvesting began in 2010, we have harvested 26 chicks of which 73 % have survived (Table 1). Survival ranged from 50-100 % each season. This last season, three of the five chicks (60 %) harvested have survived.

Table 1. Survival of harvested second-hatched chicks from the APNR. Percentage in parenthesis.

Season	No. chicks		
	harvested	Survived	Died
2010/2011	7	6 (86)	1 (14)
2011/2012	7	5 (71)	2 (29)
2012/2013	3	3 (100)	0
2013/2014	4	2 (50)	2 (50)
2014/2015	5	3 (60)	2 (40)
Total	26	19 (73)	7 (27)

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