

5. ATLAS RESOURCES

Optical aids

The type of binoculars you use will depend on what you are comfortable with, but generally 8 x 40 and 10 x 42 are useful for bird-watching. For additional information on binoculars see the section in Robert's Birds of Southern Africa – 6th edition (Maclean 1998) or any of the recent field guides.

Spotting scopes can also be useful, especially if birds are viewed at a distance (e.g. waterbirds at a wetland which may only be visible from a road) or you require a closer look at certain species for positive identification (e.g. waders and raptors).

If you require more detailed information about binoculars and spotting scopes, and you have internet access, you can log onto <http://www.optics4birding.com> or <http://www.sacamera.co.za>

Field guides

Suitable field guides include *SASOL Birds of Southern Africa* (Sinclair, Hockey & Tarboton) or *Newman's Birds of Southern Africa* (Kenneth Newman). There are also other good guides to identification available which are very useful back-ups to the above guides. One can never consult too many references – in fact, the more the better especially if you come across a species(s) that is difficult to identify. It is important to try and use the most recent field guides as these contain the new names as reflected in Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa – 7th edition (Roberts 7) (Hockey, Dean and Ryan 2005) which are the names used on the SABAP2 Field Data Sheets.

Besides field and identification guides, Roberts 7 is probably the most useful reference book to consult if you require additional information on identification and distribution. Detailed breeding and behavioural information, plus up-to-date SABAP1 distribution maps are available in Roberts 7.

Access to SABAP1 data

We would encourage all atlasers to make use of the SABAP1 data in order to maximise their participation and input for SABAP2. Access to this information is available from <http://birds.sanbi.org> where you can view and download distribution maps, plus QDGC summary data.

The SABAP1 data will be particularly useful as a guide to check for the presence or absence of species in a pentad. By downloading the summary data for a QDGC you will be able to quickly check to see what species were recorded in the area during SABAP1 and provide you with a more limited list against which you can compare your pentad records. You may well record species in the pentad that are new for the QDGC and it is this kind of information that we would like you to report.

6. SAFETY AND SECURITY

As a volunteer for this project, it is important to note that you will be participating in SABAP2 activities entirely at your own risk. SABAP2 project staff cannot be held accountable for loss or damage to equipment used, or injuries sustained (or in the unlikely event, death) to individuals during atlas surveys. However, we are aware that safety and security are important issues nowadays when traveling and/or birding within southern Africa. Subsequently, we have provided the following 'common-sense' guidelines to help you plan your surveys to be as safe and secure as possible:

- Please do not, in any way, compromise your safety or security for the sake of the atlas. Should an area or habitat patch be unsafe or appear unsafe in a pentad please do not feel obligated to visit it solely because it means that you cannot cover all habitats, etc. Rather avoid the area and consider visiting other 'safer' areas within the pentad. Remember, there is space on the data sheet to indicate if not all habitats are covered.
- You or at least one person (if atlasing in a group) should always carry a cell phone. Most cell phone service providers have a number for emergency situations and can dispatch ambulances or helicopters almost immediately. You should familiarize yourself with this number and know how to access it quickly and easily.
- You should also store the numbers of your local police station, and ambulance service on your cell phone in case these are needed.

7. BIRDER CODE OF ETHICS

It is important to remember that when out atlasing you have an obligation at all times to protect wildlife, the natural environment and respect the rights of others. To ensure that atlasing is carried out according to these principles and to promote good birding behavior, we have reproduced, below, the Code of Ethics laid out by BirdLife South Africa. We encourage all atlasers to adhere to this code when participating in SABAP2.

BirdLife Code of Ethics

- 2. Birders must always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds or other wildlife. In keeping with this principle we will:**
 - Observe and photograph birds without knowingly disturbing them in any significant way.
 - Avoid chasing and repeatedly flushing birds.
 - Only sparingly use recordings and similar methods of attracting birds and not use these methods in heavily birded areas or during breeding season.
 - Keep an appropriate distance from nests and nesting colonies so as not to disturb them or expose them to danger.
 - Refrain from handling birds or eggs unless engaged in recognized research activities.
- 3. Birders must always act in ways that do not harm the natural environment. In keeping with this principle we will:**
 - Stay on existing roads, trails and pathways whenever possible to avoid trampling or otherwise disturbing fragile habitat.
 - Leave all habitats as we found it.
- 4. Birders must always respect the rights of others. In keeping with this principle we will:**
 - Respect the privacy and property of others by observing "No trespassing" signs, and by asking permission to enter private or posted lands.
 - Practice common courtesy in our contacts with others. For example, we will limit our requests for information, and we will make them at reasonable hours of the day. Always behave in a manner that will enhance the image of the birding community in the eyes of the public.
- 5. Birders in groups should assume special responsibilities. As group members we will:**
 - Take special care to alleviate the problems and disturbances that are multiplied when more people are present.
 - Act in consideration of the group's interest, as well as our own.

- Support, by our actions, the responsibility of the group leader (s) for the conduct of the group. As group leaders we will:
- Assume responsibility for the conduct of the group.
- Learn and inform the group of any special rules, regulations or conduct applicable to the area or habitat being visited.
- Limit groups to a size that does not threaten the environment or the peace and tranquility of others.
- Teach others birding ethics through your words and example.

8. REGISTRATION AND ATLAS STARTER KITS

In order for you to start atlasing you will need to register as a SABAP2 observer and acquire a Starter Kit. You can register by logging onto the SABAP2 website (www.sabap2.org) and completing the registration form, or by contacting Michael Brooks at the ADU (Tel. 021 – 650 4998, email michael.brooks@sabap2.org) giving your name, postal address, telephone number, fax number, email address and bird club membership details (if applicable). Once registered you will be given an observer number (also known as your ADU number) and issued with a SABAP2 Observer Card.

Starter Kits can be obtained either on CD, or as a posted package.

Starter Kits will vary depending on the way in which you intend capturing and submitting your data. If you plan to capture your data electronically and submit it using email then you will need the CD (computer-based) Starter Kit, otherwise if you plan to submit your data by post then you will need the Hardcopy (non-computer based) Starter Kit.

CD Starter Kit	Hardcopy Starter Kit
Instructions (PDF)	Instructions
Field Data Sheets (PDF)	Field Data Sheets
Field Record Sheets (PDF)	Field Record Sheets
Rarities Form (PDF and MS Word)	Rarities Form
Species Verification Sheet (PDF and MS Word)	Species Verification Sheet
DIVA-GIS and manual (GIS software to view digital maps)	
Data Management System and manual (for data capture)	
Adobe Acrobat (to view PDF files)	
Adobe Flash Player (a web browser plug-in)	
Selection of digital maps of local quarter-degree grid cells	

All components (and any updates thereof) of the Starter Kits will be available to download from the SABAP2 website.

To obtain a CD or Hardcopy Starter Kit and copies of additional digital maps please contact your local bird club (see pg. XX for a list of clubs) as they will be distributing (copying) all SABAP2 project materials for atlasers. Should your bird club not have any starter kits or there is no bird club in your area please contact BirdLife South Africa (Tel. 011 789 1122, Fax. 011 789 5188, email: neil.smith@sabap2.org) or the ADU (Tel. 021 650 2330, Fax. 021 650 3434, email: doug.harebottle@sabap2.org)