

BIRDS IN THE AMAXHOSA WORLD

An ethno-ornithological exploration of the cultural significance of birds, and its potential for conservation in South Africa.

by

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Birds in the amaXhosa World

An ethno-ornithological exploration of the cultural significance of birds, and its potential for conservation in South Africa.

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SUMMARY

In South Africa rural people have been living in close relation with their natural environment for centuries. Even today they depend in part on natural resources for their daily livelihood. Utilization of natural resources can be a threat as well as supportive to local biodiversity conditions. Preservation strategies in South Africa have created national parks and protected areas where local people were no longer allowed on their ancestral land, and excluded from the resources they had relied upon. The impact of this strategy on people and their former habitat caused a shift among conservation professionals to more participatory conservation strategies, restoring the relation of local people with their environment. To support this approach a deeper understanding of the human – nature relation is required. A particular a research gap exists in determining the cultural significance of a local environment. This research investigates the cultural significance of birds and its potential for conservation in two rural amaXhosa communities in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The research answers the question: ‘How can the cultural significance of birds among amaXhosa contribute to birdlife conservation?’ The aim of this investigation is to document the ethno-ornithological characteristics of the traditional amaXhosa culture. In addition we explore its importance for local birdlife conservation. We assume that the local significance of birds forms an opportunity for participatory conservation practices.

This study took an explorative approach collecting data among amaXhosa through interviews, forest walks, and free list exercises. Data of this traditional perspective was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively using a knowledge-practice-belief framework. To assess whether birds play a different role in different communities, two villages (Pirie Mission and Ndlambe) were included in this study. In addition the local attitudes to birdlife conservation were assessed. To provide a background that would allow for the identification of common ground, a number of professionals conservationists throughout the Eastern Cape, were interviewed regarding their opinions on the integration of traditional values in birdlife conservation.

Findings indicate that the amaXhosa culture assigns cultural significance to a number of birds. A main distinction can be made between the utilitarian and the symbolic value of birds. Utilitarian values are expressed in material practices such as hunting, birds as climate indicators, and all kind of indirect livelihood services. Symbolic values are expressed in non-material practices such as the role of birds in ancestral relations, birds providing a sense of place and identity, and birds as omens. Findings further indicate that birds do relate to particular place associated with ancestral veneration, this providing people a sense of place and identity. In particular ‘birds of the house’, are of high significance for amaXhosa well-being. Comparison of the two communities indicates an increased influence of modernity in Pirie Mission with utilitarian values of birds most prevalent. In the more rural village of Ndlambe the symbolic value of birds was emphasized. In respect to the ethno-ornithological characteristics of the Xhosa culture, this research does indicate that birds are recognized as meaning full even in a modernized rural context.

The contemporary significance of birds for amaXhosa does support local incentives for birdlife conservation practices. This research shows that there is a possibility for formal conservation bodies to incorporate local cultural values. We therefore challenge conservation professionals to cooperate with local communities and develop practices that find their strength in the connection with local cultural values.

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LIST OF ABRIVIATIONS

BCM	-	Buffalo Citty Municipality
BLSA	-	Birdlife South Africa
CBC	-	Community Based Conservation
DAFF	-	Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
DEAT	-	Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism
GO	-	Governmental organization
IBA	-	Important Bird Areas
IUCN	-	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NGO	-	Non-governmental organization
NTFP	-	Non-timber forest products
PFPI	-	Percy FitzPatrick institute of African Ornithology
PRA	-	Participant Rapid Appraisal
SANPAD	-	South Africa Netherlands research Program on Alternatives in Development
SEK	-	Scientific Ecological Knowledge
SSA	-	Statistics South Africa
TEK	-	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
WUR	-	Wageningen University

GLOSSARY

<i>Amayeza</i>	-	Medicinal plants, animals or parts of them
<i>Inxuba</i>	-	Great Fish River
<i>Igqirha</i>	-	Traditional healer / Diviner
<i>Isabatha</i>	-	Slingshot
<i>Muti</i>	-	Traditional medicines
<i>Umgibe</i>	-	Snare
<i>Umqombothi</i>	-	Traditional African beer

For an extensive list of amaXhosa bird names I refer to the appendices

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of this study

In South Africa rural people have coexisted with their natural environment for centuries. To this day they depend to some extent on natural resources for their daily livelihoods (Cocks, 2006b; Cocks & Wiersum, 2012). Utilization of natural resources for daily livelihood is conceptualized a threat (Cocks, Bangay, Shackleton, & Wiersum, 2008) as well as supportive to local biodiversity conditions (Cocks & Dold, 2006). The declaration of Belem (Posey, 1988) states the existence of an inextricable link between natural and local cultural diversity. It has been argued that conservation professionals should take this mutual relation of man and nature into account, to developing sustainable conservation practices (Collar, Long, Robles Gil, & Rojo, 2007; Fabricius, 2004; Fabricius, Koch & Magome, 2001; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010).

Nature conservation strategies in South Africa and elsewhere are often characterized by a preservation approach (Adams & Mulligan, 2003; Pimbert & Pretty, 1995). This approach has shown negative results to both local biodiversity and human well fare, as it tends to exclude people from the environment they are linked with. As a result it is now widely recognised amongst conservation professionals that involving local people in conservation is a promising solution to the problems that preservation continues to face (Adams & Mulligan, 2003; Berkes, 1999; Fabricius, 2001; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010). In 1975 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Parks Congress recognized the rights of indigenous people, strengthening their position as stakeholders in conservation (Colchester, 2004). These changes have been further established in the Rio 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity calling on all parties to “respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity...” (United Nations, 1992: p. 6).

From the 1980s onwards, this has lead to increased community involvement articulated in Community Based Conservation (CBC) initiatives and participatory planning throughout the world (Fabricius, 2004). This is a development that tallies with the rising interest in cultural values regarding the local environment as observed by Cock (2006b) and Collar et al., (2007). Today most scholars and conservation officials generally approve the importance of participatory planning and management. They envisage that involving local people is a practical approach to deal with conflicts arising between the local people and conservation officers (Berkes, 1999; Fabricius et al. 2001). Incorporation of local communities in conservation planning can enhance local support for biodiversity conservation. In addition, from a development perspective, it can contribute to

empowerment of local people thereby providing opportunities for poverty reduction (Fabricius, 2004; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010).

In South Africa effort is dedicated to biodiversity protection. The 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan' (DEAT, 2005) is an important instrument that provides guidelines, for the protection of biodiversity in the Eastern Cape and other parts of the country. Birds are an integral part of this legislation. This has led to for example protection programs for the cape vulture, the black oystercatcher, and the cape parrot (Anderson, 2011; PFPI, 2011). The extent to what these programs connect to the local significance of birds is unknown neither is poorly known what the cultural significance of bird in the Eastern Cape is. Against this shortfall, the cultural significance of birds among amaXhosa¹ in the Eastern Cape of South Africa becomes the focus of this study. I assume that the cultural significance of birds does inspire local practices that contribute to informal birdlife conservation. These practices and their underlying cultural value may share 'common ground', with professional conservation values, containing a potential for participatory conservation practices.

1.2 Problem statement

Research among Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape has contributed to our understanding of the role and significance of cultural landscapes (Coehoorn, 2009), the Albany thicket biome (Cocks, Dold, & Vetter, 2012; Mogano, 2012; Shackleton, Shackleton, Buiten, & Bird, 2007) and commercialized medicinal plants (Cocks & Dold, 2006). Birds are entirely left out of the picture. The only existing source of information on the cultural significance of birds within the amaXhosa culture is the early historical work of Godfrey (1941) and the collected notes and works of Skead (1912-2006). No recent scientific survey of birds in the Xhosa culture has been made. This research therefore aims to understanding the contemporary cultural significance of birds among local Xhosa communities in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Cultural significance is operationalized in this study as: the traditional perceptions of Xhosa people on birds, as expressed in cultural embedded knowledge, practices and beliefs. It is hypothesised that the cultural significance of birds among the Xhosa people as expressed in knowledge, practices and beliefs plays a role in local birdlife conditions. Current conservation programs and policies don't consider this potential for conservation. This can be attributed to a lack of resources, both human and financial as well as to a lack of knowledge on the cultural significance of birds. Through a deeper understanding of the local cultural significance of birds, new avenues for participatory conservation efforts can be explored. The central problem statement that will be answered throughout this research report is:

¹ amaXhosa indicates Xhosa-people and in general the indication Xhosa is used to indicate the whole ethnic-cultural group. In the following text the indication Xhosa will be applied.

² In our time of globalisation the world is pictured as a globe, a place we dwell on and relate to as outsiders. In line with a world where humans 'dwell on', knowledge can only be gathered through detachment and consequently meaning is overlaid by the human mind. The world itself exists of pure substance, physical matter the impenetrable surface of literal

How can the cultural significance of birds among amaXhosa contribute to birdlife conservation?

This central question derives from the recognition that cultural values are connected to our worldview and so shape our daily practices (Hall, 2005; Ingold, 2011; Lemaire, 2007). The problem statement involves four aspects: the cultural significance of birds for Xhosa people, the attitude of local people to modern (birdlife) conservation, the attitudes of conservation professionals to cultural values, and the potentials for shared ground with birdlife conservation professionals. The following research objectives derive from the problem statement.

- 1. To identify the significance of birds from a traditional amaXhosa perspective.*
- 2. To examine the attitudes of local people to birdlife conservation.*
- 3. To examine the attitudes of conservation professionals to integration of traditional values in birdlife conservation.*
- 4. To identify common ground and formulate recommendations for participatory strategies in birdlife conservation.*

By developing a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of birds, and the professional attitude towards integration of these values into conservation practices, this study hopes to expose new insights and possibly building blocks for participatory conservation strategies.

2 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

2.1 Nature conservation

Nature conservation is the practice of maintaining, developing or restoring landscapes, ecosystems and their elements or species (www.iucn.org). Among conservation professionals a distinction can be made between preservationist, who tend to view nature as an ecosystem existing in a vulnerable equilibrium and conservationist who depict nature as a dynamic system that shows spatial and temporal changes; a system in constant flux (Hutton, 2005; Pimbert & Pretty, 1995). The practice of maintaining nature from a conservation perspective allows for interaction and sustainable harvest. On the contrary a preservation approach tries to limit external disturbance in natural processes as much as possible (Singh & van Houtum, 2002). The relevance of both approaches for human interaction with nature differs largely. This section elaborates on the history and characteristics of nature conservation and the place of local people in nature conservation.

2.1.1 History roots of nature conservation

The history of modern nature conservation is closely connected to human utilisation of his environment. The rise of the nature conservation movement took place in response to increasing urbanisation and gradual vanishing of 'untouched nature'. In the beginning of the 19th century people in the colonized countries, especially the USA started to realize that the wilderness frontiers were reaching their end. Out of romanticism and an awaking appreciation of nature's unique beauty, the first national parks were reserved as protected areas. At these places the 'pristine' wilderness had to be preserved for further generations (De Groot, 2006). The first nature parks were established by the end of the 19th century, Yellowstone (USA) in 1872 and Kruger (South Africa) in 1898 (www.yellowstonenationalpark.com). Indigenous people were expelled from these places as nature was perceived as being opposite to culture and therefore characterized by pristine landscapes. This perception of nature as pristine wilderness without man interfering in any way, mainly dominated the nature conservation discourse throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century (Cocks, 2006b; Neumann, 2002). South Africa as a colonized country was no exception in this respect (Adams & Mulligan, 2003; Pimbert & Pretty, 1995).

2.1.2 Nature conservation in South Africa

South Africa is well known for its great biodiversity. At least 10% of the world's plant diversity is situated within its borders (Murina & Rutherford, 2006). According to Conservation International three out of 25 biodiversity hotspots are located in South Africa (www.biodiversityhotspot.org).

These regions are Succulent Karoo, the Cape Floristic Region and Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany, the later enclosing our research sites. This diverse biodiversity is reflected in the existence of a number of protected areas (PA's) and Important Bird Areas (IBA's) all over the country (BLSA, n.d.; DEAT, 2010; Government, 2010). In line with the dominant opinion on the human-nature relation conservation professionals initially adopted policies that aimed at developing endemic landscapes which were 'wild' protected areas, devoid of people, where animals could be observed in 'pristine environments' or wilderness (Fabricius, 2004). Local stakeholders, who maintain a very close relation with their environment, as it supports their livelihoods and well-being, were left out of the picture (Pretty et al., 2009).

Today, the protection of South Africa's diverse biodiversity is legally footed in environmental legislation such as the South Africa's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (DEAT, 2005). The national legislation is further elaborated into local policy guidelines such as the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan (Berliner, Desmet, & Hayes, 2007). In this environmental legislation more emphasis is put on the role of cultural values as a strategy for building community support for conservation in (South) Africa (Cocks, 2006a, 2006b; Infield, 2001).

2.1.3 Community based conservation in South Africa

From as early as the 1980s there has been a gradual shift in the dominant conservation discourse (Hutton, 2005). In 1975 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Parks Congress recognized the rights of indigenous people, strengthening their position as stakeholders in conservation (Colchester, 2004). This resulted in the emergence of CBC initiatives, and an increasing interest in the lives, knowledge and traditional management systems of indigenous people (Fabricius, 2004; Infield, 2001).

In South African and elsewhere the governments have sought to re-establish the mutual relationship of local communities with their environment (Fabricius, 2004). Meanwhile the question how to make conservation more effective for local development fuelled this process. To enable for sustainable participatory conservation programs, South Africa developed a 'landscape approach' in conservation (Cadman et al., 2010). This approach supported by the United Nations Development Program, the Global Environmental Facility, and the World Bank, aims to 'protect biodiversity, through managing a mosaic of land uses including protection, restoration, production and subsistence use, in order to deliver ecological, economic and social benefits' (Cadman, et al., 2010, p. 12). The program has the potential to further include local communities considering their cultural perception of the environment, and eventually includes their cultural values in a participatory conservation approach. Local successes do indicate that for nature conservation to be effective, the belief systems and cultural values of rural populations should form an integral part of conservation

strategies (Cocks, 2006b). It is anticipated that conservation that is intrinsically linked with society and socio-economic concerns will become a key factor in biodiversity conservation. Such approaches may facilitate new and improved solutions for effectively integrating conservation and social concerns as well (King, Biggs, & Loon, 2007).

However, apart from being less tangible there is also still a lack of understanding of cultural values regarding nature. We for example only begin to understand the Xhosa cultural environmental perceptions in relation to socio-cultural attachment to landscapes and species (Alexander, 2010). For a sustainable future of South Africa's natural diversity as well as for the well-being of its local communities it is pivotal to unravel and document these cultural values connected to the natural environment.

2.2 Traditional people

The focus of this research is on the cultural significance of birds in traditional Xhosa communities. We conceptualize traditional as being in line with the lifestyle of previous generations. Traditional communities thus are characterized by their continuity with the past. The concept of traditional is distinct from that of indigenous in its emphasis on practises rather than on places. The question than in: who are traditional people, and in what way do they differ from non-traditional or modern people, and why is their tradition of value to nature conservation? The answer has all to do with the environmental perception of traditional people.

2.2.1 Traditional peoples and their environmental perception

Worldview has been defined as: 'a collection of beliefs about life, afterlife and the universe held by an individual or a group' (www.thefreedictionary.com). To illustrate the difference between traditional and non-traditional people, I will consider the environmental perception of traditional people. In traditional cosmology, people relate to their environment as 'a lifeworld' (Ingold, 2011). They perceive themselves as dwelling within a world of meaning. Knowledge in this world is gathered, and can only be gathered through active engagement with the world. It is during a process of 'dwelling' that the world is progressively revealed to the knowledge-seeker (Ingold, 2011). One is part of the 'whole' and life is constituted through active participation. The world includes humans through reciprocal relations that are constantly maintained. A traditional worldview therefore includes the unity of life without strict hierarchy and order between (Berkes, 1999; Gijsbertsen, 2010; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010). As a result of the interdependence of man and nature in a traditional worldview, practices bear a different character. This has potential implication for conservation (Berkes, 1999).

Berkes (1999) brings forward three potential pitfalls that historically arose from the rediscovery of this traditional worldview. First, he construed that traditional people can be portrayed as the 'ecologically noble savage'. People who live in harmony with nature, unspoiled by the structures and philosophy that so dramatically altered the Western society and subsequently its landscape. Although it may be true that traditional people are close to the land and live in harmony with their environment, there are also examples of (mega fauna) destruction and overexploitation especially by invaders (Kellert & Wilson, 1993; Mann, 2005). Only long-settled traditional people tend to co evolve with their environment and develop a level of symbiosis with it (Dasmann, 1988). In addition the concept of 'noble savages' reflects an environmental perception of equilibrium. In reality ecosystems are constantly changing requiring continuous cultural adaptation, rather than stability (Pimbert & Pretty, 1995). A second pitfall is the opposite of the first portraying humans as unnatural intruders, despoilers of pristine ecosystems, and aliens. This view investigates questions on whether traditional people ever lived in balance with nature. 'Instead they lived in small populations limited by their resources and simple technology, trying to survive in their environment (Berkes, 1999, p. 145). The third myth is that of the 'noble savage / fallen angel' duality. Arguing that indigenous people should continue to live as primitives, lest they become a threat to their ecosystem. Langton (2003) illustrates how development such as market economy manages to transform traditional people into a threat to their environment and to themselves.

The three simplifications of traditional people do sometimes overlap. Much of the debate on traditional people can be brought back to one question: are indigenous people natural conservationists or not? At this point it is important to consider their worldview. Unlike in the Western world where a dichotomy exists between nature and culture², for traditional people such a distinction does not exist. Likewise, the distinction between conservation (wise use) and preservation (hands off) does not exist in their worldview. It is precisely here that traditional people are complementary to western conservationists. Both 'aim' for sustainable continuation of ecosystems and their species; traditional people based on their reciprocal interaction with their environment, and conservation professionals based on their concern for loss of this environment.

² In our time of globalisation the world is pictured as a globe, a place we dwell on and relate to as outsiders. In line with a world where humans 'dwell on', knowledge can only be gathered through detachment and consequently meaning is overlaid by the human mind. The world itself exists of pure substance, physical matter the impenetrable surface of literal reality. This world is hallmarked by the triumph of technology over cosmology and a movement from inside out to control from outside in. 'Once the world is conceived as a globe, it can become an object of appropriation for a collective humanity.' (Ingold, 1993). While the traditional notion of the environment as a lifeworld resulted in active engagement; the modern view of the environment as a globe creates a dichotomy of the natural versus artificial human world. What becomes clear here is that the concepts of destruction, construction, control or whatever human activity, are grounded in the discourse of intervention. The idea of the 'conservation' of nature derives from this source. The paradox here is that the discovery of nature's value, derives from the very alienation of man from the natural world, and puts us back to were we once started.

2.2.2 Traditional ecological knowledge and amaXhosa communities

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) has been defined as “a cumulative body of knowledge, practices and beliefs, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (Berkes, 1999, P. 8) It needs to be emphasised here that although there is a strong continuity with the past in TEK, it is not characterized by static repetition but rather constantly evolving by adaptive processes. Knowledge, practices and beliefs are all aspects of this dynamic. The cultural significance of birds in traditional societies is embedded in this context and expressed in a diversity of practices (Muiruri & Maudu, 2010). The value of TEK is expressed in the recognition that biodiversity “could not exist without the practices and knowledge developed by the societies that created it, and maintained or reduced it” (Bérard & Marcheney, 2006, p. 111). Although TEK is not restricted to indigenous peoples or traditional communities it is clear that its development requires a history of intensive interaction with a local environment (Berkes, 1999).

The amaXhosa communities in South Africa often lived for generations in the same rural area. As a result people did have a strong bond to their ancestral land (Coehoorn, 2009), and depended on it for resources for their livelihoods (Beinart, 2003). However, a dynamic colonial and post-colonial history, including the apartheid policies, did have its effect on these rural communities. Contact with western powers has often brought about cultural and societal changes, such as increase in population size due to increased healthcare and a change in land use practices resulting from resettlement and dislocation (Alexander, 2010; Beinart, 2003). Researchers today consider that many of the rural communities in the former homelands are characterised by “significant socio-economic differentiation”, with “livelihoods that are not tied exclusively to the land and its resources”. (Ainslie, 1999, p. 396). Many households in the Eastern Cape are characterized as ‘peri-urban’, as they partake in a continuous interaction with nearby urban areas (Majova, 2011). This development does not prevent modernising rural communities from maintaining their connection with the local environment³. It is indicated that modernizing rural Xhosa communities develop new strategies to retain their bond with the natural environment (Cocks, 2006b). In this process of cultural reinvention, the value of TEK is retained and transmitted between generation and within local communities (Powers, 1987). This finding does indicate the need to recognise and involve local people in participatory conservation, even if their lifestyle is modernizing and livelihoods depend on resources additional to local environmental support (Moller, Berkes, Lyver & Kislalioglu, (2004). The amaXhosa villages thus are not stable isolated islands in context of a changing world, but rather dynamic

³ For this reason and to contrast them from conservation professionals, we indicate the rural Xhosa communities as ‘traditional’ in this report. However it is emphasised here that to different degrees these communities are characterized by a traditional lifestyle that is integrated with a modern lifestyle.

communities that retain and revive their cultural values by connecting them with the larger socio-ecological context.

2.2.3 Ethno-ornithology; a shared fascination for birds

Ethno-ornithology is an interdisciplinary subject that combines anthropological with natural scientific perspectives to the description and interpretation of people's knowledge and use of birds. As such it seeks to understand the relationship between people and birds (Collar et al., 2007; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010). From ancient times of humans have been fascinated by the avifauna of our world (Collar et al., 2007; Murton, 1971). A number of phenomena indicates that birds play a prominent role in human culture (Lemaire, 2007; Murton, 1971). Ethno-ornithology thus can help us to unravel and rediscover what it is to live in sustainable interaction with our environment (Gosler, Buehler, & Castillo, 2010). Ethno-ornithological knowledge contributes to an increased understanding of the cultural significance of birds and reveals that both traditional peoples, who are culturally informed and professional scientific informed people, share the human fascination for birds (Collar et al., 2007).

Tradition ecological knowledge, possessed by traditional communities is often distinct from scientific ecological knowledge, possessed by modern society and the scientific community (SEK). Research does indicate that especially the direct TEK has an important overlap with SEK (Sinclair, Tuke, & Opiang, 2010). The knowledge traditional people have regarding their environment is in many cases complementary to scientific knowledge (Berkes, 2001; Gilchrist, Mallory, & Merkel, 2005). This is especially true for knowledge on population trends, local species diversity and seasonal species occurrence (Bonta, 2010; Sinclair & Tuke, 2010). Recent findings in the field of ethno-ornithology indicate the value of TEK to increase and crosscheck ecological data of birds as well as to develop birdlife conservation measures (Gilchrist et al., 2005; Muiruri & Maudu, 2010). Both types of knowledge are in particular complementary in birdlife conservation.

Ingold (1993) argues that the difference between the traditional cosmology and the modern cosmology is not one of hierarchical degree, in scale of comprehensiveness, but one of kind. Among the social sciences this awareness for the core role of culture in the human perception and attitude towards nature is well recognized. For the natural sciences however, the recognition that cultural assumptions regarding our environment, guiding to a large extent our actions, is less recognized (Lenders, 2006; Mogano, 2012). This has its consequences for the interaction between both fields of science (King, Biggs, & Loon, 2007). This vision on the relevance of cultural values in livelihood practices and environmental perceptions are expressed for examples the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment framework (Alcamo & Bennett, 2003). Both examples show that as Mascia et al (2003,

p.649) states it: “the real question for the current debate is not whether to integrate cultural values and into nature conservation but how to do so”.

Whereas to date most ethno-ornithological research did take a narrow focus on TEK as it did seek to explore the added value of local knowledge⁴ for conservation, this research includes practices and beliefs as well. We start from the recognition that TEK and SEK root in a shared appreciation for birds, and seek to indicate common ground for sustainable conservation practices in a participatory process with Xhosa communities in the Eastern Cape. To do so I take an ethno-ornithological approach to indicate the cultural significance of birds as expressed in all areas of TEK (fig. 2.2) within local communities.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The need for this research is emphasised by the absence of an up to date review of Xhosa cultural perceptions on birds (with the latest account dating back to 1941 (Godfrey)), a lack of understanding to what extent the cultural significance of birds can contribute to conservation measures, and the lacking understanding of values that to some extent modernized traditional communities contribute to biodiversity. In order to include TEK of birds into conservation programs a detailed understanding of its local characteristics is required. No examples of application of the TEK framework on the cultural significance of birds were found in the literature. I therefore adapted the framework presented by Berkes (1999) and applied it on fieldwork findings in order to structure and analyse the data. To clarify the taken approach and the place of TEK in this analysed I first present the overall theoretical framework and illustrate the place of TEK therein.

The framework below figure 2.1 illustrates how the traditional perspective relates to the professional perspective and to birdlife conservation. It indicates the conservation mechanisms in the local practices regarding birds among traditional Xhosa people, and conservation objectives among professionals in their programs. The central arrow marked with a question mark indicates the aim of this research: to explore potentials for common ground for birdlife conservation.

⁴ TEK in these cases is often limited to the area of knowledge on all kind of environmental issues. I included all distinct areas of TEK in my attempt to define the cultural significance of birds.

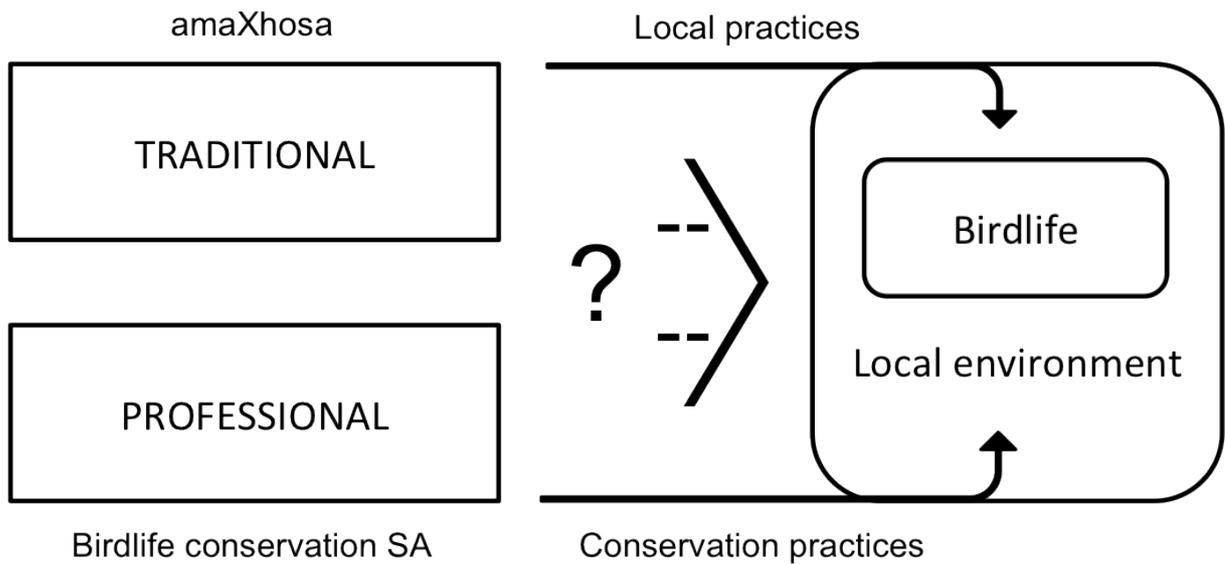


Figure 2.1 Overall theoretical framework indicating two perspectives on birdlife conservation. Both perspectives interact with local birdlife through practices, and receive services in return. The question mark does indicate the potential common ground for participatory conservation practices.

Traditional and professional perspectives are bound together in their concern with and appreciation of birdlife. Meanwhile historical roots, organisation structures, language, and strategies separate them are. Where local livelihood practices regarding birds are embedded in their cultural significance (Berkes, 1999; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010), conservation practices derive from scientific knowledge grounded in a modern conservation paradigm (Sinclair, et al., 2010).

The professional perspective (lower part of the framework) in this study is considered, as background in formulating recommendations. This perspective characterized by its reliance on western scientific knowledge can be described as SEK. Here mainly consider the upper part of the theoretical framework, investigating on the potential role of traditional values for birdlife conservation. For this reason I adapted Berkes (1999) model of TEK. According to Berkes (1999) four interrelated areas of TEK can be distinguished: knowledge, practices, beliefs, and worldview. Figure 2.2 shows these levels as well as their relative place. The outer circle indicating that all levels are part of one 'holistic' worldview.

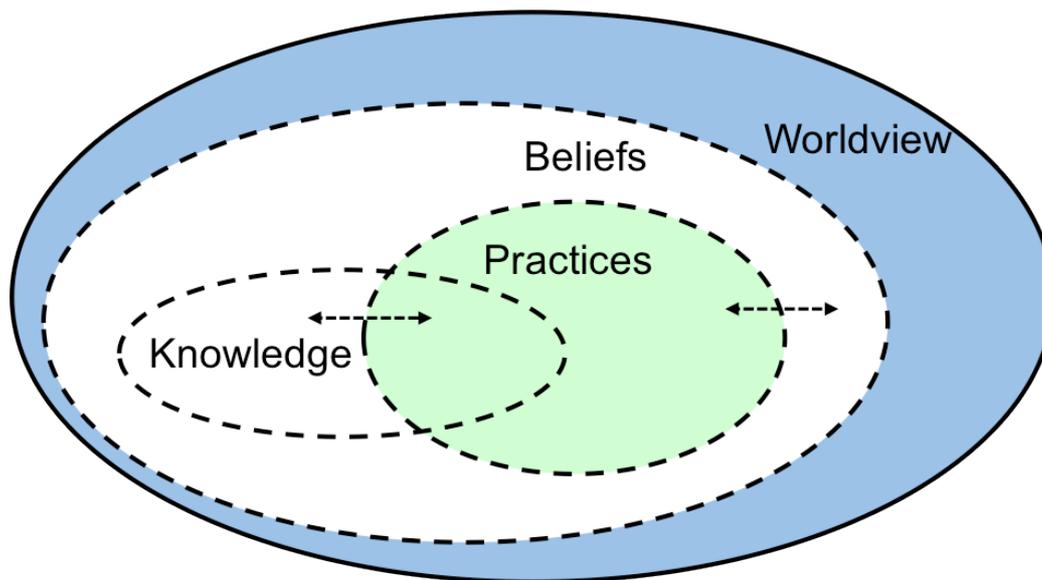


Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework, indicating different areas in a traditional Knowledge-Practice-Belief system (TEK), and their cohesion. (Adapted from Berkes, 1999)

The framework indicates the distinct areas of TEK as applied in this analysis. It also illustrates how the four areas of knowledge, practices and beliefs embedded within a worldview, and how they overlap and interrelate. Berkes (1999) defines the areas as different ‘levels’, for there is a subsequent order. At the heart is the area of knowledge. Knowledge here can be operationalized as: empirical or practical knowledge of the local environment and its aspects. This traditional knowledge derives from the direct interaction with the local environment. It is ‘primary knowledge’ about animals, plants and soils, as well as knowledge on species identifications, life histories, distribution, and behaviour. As such, the area of knowledge is only a fraction of what I understand by TEK.

The second area of TEK is that of practices. Practices are defined here as utilisation of natural resources and interpretation of events, including tools, techniques, strategies and (informal) regulations required therefore. As the figure indicates, practices partly overlap with knowledge and beliefs. These areas of overlap cover the sometimes made distinction of birds as utilitarian objects and as symbols (Rowland, 1978, in Bonta, 2010). Practices are operationalized as material, and non-material. We further subdivide material practices can be subdivided into direct and indirect applications. Examples of direct material practices are: bird hunting (practice) for food (application) and medicinal application through rituals. Examples of indirect material practices are: livelihood services (practice) through insect removal from crops by birds (application). Non-material practices are mainly related to the third area of beliefs as expression of the symbolic value of birds. Figure 2.3 illustrates this operationalization of TEK.

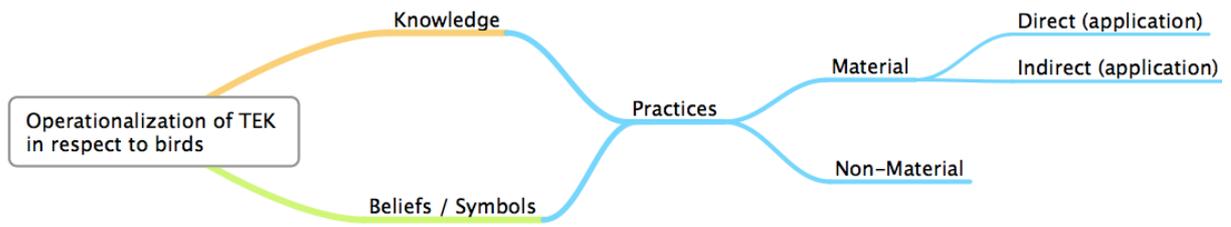


Figure 2.3 Illustration how the areas of TEK (fig. 2.2) are operationalization for this analysis in respect to birds. It indicates the distinct areas of TEK (knowledge, practices and beliefs) and the way they relate. All distinct areas are embedded in the local worldview. (Figure 10.1 in chapter 10, shows the specific findings in the Xhosa communities resulting from the data analysis)

The concept of belief can be defined as: the symbolic association with, and interpretation of bird appearance and behaviour. This knowledge does not have to correspond with scientific truth to be significant for local people neither does it have to be consistent with other ideas in once worldview. Beliefs relate to practices as an active process of the human mind expressed in interpretation and, explanation of natural phenomena, and construction of identity. The all-encompassing level of worldview, shapes environmental perceptions and gives meaning to observations and events. This outer level is closely connected to the level of beliefs, binding all areas of TEK together into a framework that gives meaning. In our analyses I will include the domain of worldview only in as much as it relates to birds the local environmental perception of people. The focus will be much more on the way birds do relate to the larger world according to the local perspective than to come up with a description of the local cosmology. Table 2.1 gives a summary of the distinct areas of TEK and shows the classification and indicators to determine the significance of birds. As worldview provides meaning to human beings, so will the areas of TEK serve as a conceptual framework for analysis and interpretation in the following chapters.

Table 2.1 Analytical framework showing the classification and indicators of the cultural significance of birds deriving from the conceptual framework

Classification	Explanation	Indicator
Knowledge	Empirical or practical knowledge of birds and their biology	Bird names, bird attributes, local taxonomy, and birds connected to environmental characteristics
Practices	Utilisation of natural resources, and interpretation of events	Tools, techniques, perceptions, daily activities, and human behaviour related to birdlife

Material (practices)	Direct: actual operations by humans affecting birds	Practices applied by humans to birds for livelihood support
	Indirect: actual behaviour by birds affecting humans	Behaviour of birds affecting human livelihood practices, as observed and interpreted by humans
Non-material (practices)	Practices directed towards birds based on symbolic interpretation of their presence	Practices and meanings applied on birds (often sustaining human well-being)
Beliefs	The symbolic associations and interpretations of reality	Symbolic and non-material values associated with birds, and qualities attributed to birds
Worldview	The collection of belief about life, afterlife and the universe, in relation to birds	Birds related to individual and collective environmental perceptions and cosmology

2.3.1 Research questions

From our problem statement and objectives presented in the first chapter, based on our conceptual framework I formulate sub-question that will be addressed throughout this report.

Questions regarding the cultural significance of birds:

1. *What do amaXhosa know of the local birdlife community?*
2. *What are amaXhosa beliefs about local bird species?*
3. *What practices are associated with the cultural significance of birds?*
4. *What is the place of birds in the amaXhosa environmental perception?*

Questions regarding traditional people and birdlife conservation:

5. *What is the attitude of amaXhosa to birdlife conservation?*
6. *What is the attitude of birdlife conservation professionals to participatory birdlife conservation?*

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology and explains how the data is analysed.

3.1 Research design

This research is designed as an explorative study (Newing, Eagle, & Puri, 2011). An inductive research approach was required due to the pioneering character in the given context. This approach allowed for complementation of our analytical framework during the writing process based on fieldwork findings. Through triangulation of methods and findings, by conducting interviews, applying Participant Rapid Appraisals (PRA's), field observations, and assessing background literature; the field findings are cross checked (Angrosino, 2008). Some basic statistical tests were conducted using the free list data. The results allowed for additional triangulation of qualitative data with quantitative results. Two separated field sites (Pirie Mission and Ndlambe) were selected, to include a comparative aspect in this study.

3.1.1 Traditional perspective on birds and conservation

Central objective in the fieldwork was to assess the cultural significance of birds for rural Xhosa. The distinct areas of TEK (section 2.2) were used as a starting point to construct an interview guide (see appendices, guide 2). During the interviews among local people, special emphasis was put on the collection of local knowledge, beliefs, practices and the place of birds in local environmental perceptions. Information often came by way of local narratives like stories, proverbs, and personal experiences regarding birds. Together with investigation on the cultural significance of birds, local people were asked for their attitude to conservation of birdlife, and potential strategies to do so on the local level.

3.1.2 Professional perspective on participatory birdlife conservation

A second aspect of this investigation is the professional perspective on birdlife conservation. This perspective is not assessed into detail as it mainly serves as a background, enabling for reflection and to giving direction to conservation recommendations. The professional perspective was assessed using both live and telephone communication and applying an interview guide depending on the specialism of the respondent (see appendices, guide 1). In addition annual reports, websites and publications of the concerning organisations are assessed to provide additional information.

3.2 Selection of research sites

The two field sites included in this research are, Pirie Mission, (hereafter referred to as Pirie) and Ndlambe village, (hereafter referred to as Ndlambe) (for the exact location see fig. 4.1). The study sites for the community studies were selected together with Michelle Cocks, supervisor at the research office on the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University, and Tony Dold, curator of the Selmar Schonland Herbarium at Rhodes University. Both have conducted extensive research among Xhosa in the region. A main criterion for selection of the sites was their location in different natural environments. The comparable socio-economic conditions and history, but different environmental conditions allow for a comparative analysis of local values regarding birds and attitudes towards nature conservation. Another argument for selection of these sites was the close relation of the communities with researchers from Rhodes University. The latter resulting in familiarity with researchers among local people, and existing data from the sites.

3.3 Selection of respondents

In the villages respondent selection took place using a snowball sampling (Newing, 2011). The first respondents were selected based on their knowledge of the local environment, as discovered by earlier researchers (Alexander, 2010; Mogano, 2012). In all cases expert interviews were conducted with the village chairman and traditional healers *amaGqirha* (isiXhosa plural of *igqirha*). In both villages a relatively equal distribution of sexes were involved in the research. To detect potential variation different age groups (teenagers, middle age and elderly people) were included initially.

Main criterion for selection of conservation professionals was their past or present stake in the Eastern Cape. The most important organisations working on birdlife conservation are contacted. Among them were representatives of governmental organisations (GO) like the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), and non-governmental organisations like Birdlife South Africa (BLSA), and the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology (PFPI) are interviewed. In addition a number of civilian bird groups are included in the research.

3.4 Methods of data collection

The data was collected during six weeks of fieldwork in the period of October – December 2011. Nine days, (four and five) were spent in Pirie. Six days were spent in Ndlambe. The visit of both locations did start with an introduction to the community by visiting the village chairman. In the villages an interpreter accompanied me. Two persons served subsequent as interpreters (Mrs. Pakama Mkulungu [‘Paki’] and Mr. Mluleki H. Nkosi [‘Mlu’]), both experienced interpreters, and native Xhosa familiar with the local customs and language.

The additional time spend at the Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and the University of Cape Town, was used for data collection among conservation professionals; governmental officials and people involved with local birdlife conservation. This was done through phone call interviews, Skype interviews and life interviews at local offices. In addition to interviews with conservation officials, study of unpublished work on the cultural significance of birds in the Xhosa culture was carried out in both the Cory Library⁵ in Grahamstown (Rhodes University, Grahamstown) and the Niven Library of the PFPI⁶ in Cape Town (University of Cape Town).

Interviews with key respondents and groups took between 30 and 90 minutes each and were finished when saturation of information was reached. In some cases respondents did end the interview because of weariness or duties elsewhere. For a number of interviews, especially those with key informants and professional people, an appointment was made beforehand. Only a very small fraction of people was unwilling to participate in an interview. At the end of an interview respondent in Pirie and Ndlambe were thanked by means of a small gift such as biscuits, sugar, tea or soft drinks. During interviews detailed notes were made, using a notebook and pencil. In some cases additional recordings were made using a digital voice recorder. Direct after an interview and at the end of the day, notes were worked out and a digital index was updated. The evenings were used to discuss the results with key informants, and interpreters. This was especially valuable in relating the vernacular bird names (free lists) to their English and scientific equivalent.

As part of the fieldwork a number of PRA exercises were done (Angrosino, 2008; Newing, et al., 2011; Pratt & Loizos, 2007). Most important among them are the free listing and forest walks with key informants. Notes were made during the PRA and a report was made afterwards. Other PRA's applied during the fieldwork were talks with key informants on the basis of the free listing results, and association exercises carried out with pictures of birds. These exercises aimed for collection of additional information on species characteristics, cross check of findings, and to amplify on their cultural significance. The free listing of locally recognized bird species was done at the start of most interviews. Additional birds that came to mind during the interviews were added as well. Interviews and PRA's were mostly carried out in groups, comprising family members and sometimes neighbours. Of all PRA's a hand written report was made afterwards.

In addition to the direct interaction with respondents, a number of context walks (3x Pirie, and 2x Ndlambe) were made to gather ecological data. During these walks, transects in the different surrounding environments (meadow, arable field, water basins, river, and forest) were visited. Bird species observed by sight and songs were registered to provide an actual impression of the local

⁵ <http://www.ru.ac.za/corylibrary/>

⁶ <http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/>

avifauna. This bird observation data also served as comparative background data in the analysis. In the appendices a list with observed species for each location is included.

A pocket notebook was carried along during the fieldwork to register all kind of additional input like: informal meetings, personal observations, and reflections.

Table 3.1 summarises the methods of data collection and number of respondents for each research location.

Table 3.1) Indication of the applied methods, number of respondents and their gender for each place.

	Pirie Mission	Ndlambe	Conservationists
Interviews	29	23	7
Respondents	36 (18 ♂ / 18 ♀)	19 (19 ♂ / 19 ♀)	9 (3 ♂ / 9 ♀)
Free listing	25	22	N/A
Forest walk	2	1	N/A
Context walk	3	2	N/A

3.5 Methods for data analysis

Qualitative data collected during interviews with traditional and professional people is analysed from the notes made during and after the interviews. First a digital record of all interviews was made to record on characteristics like respondent name, age, date, and place of the interview. Photocopies of all interview data were made and clustered on place and respondent level. Using indicators and labels deriving both from our theoretical framework (summarized in section 2.3; table 2.1) and from the internal structure of the data, the data was further coded and categorized. The thus clustered data was checked for relevance and consistency. The voice records did serve as supportive information providing context and additional information when required. Interviews with key informants (PM29, 7; Nd11) were transcribed and labelled subsequently. These key informant findings did prove to be very useful in providing a framework for description of the local worldview.

Quantitative data gathered during the free list exercise was digitalized and pre-analysed in the field, by computer. After the fieldwork period the data was further processed to indicate the significance of birds, based on their rank and frequency. The quantitative findings were analysed using demographic, and qualitative results. All computer analyses were carried out using the software program Microsoft Excel 2011

Results of PRA's did serve as background and complementary information to triangulate with interview findings.

3.6 Research limitations and constraints

Although strengthened by triangulation of data and research methods, the relatively small sample size makes it impossible to generalize the research findings for the Xhosa culture as a whole. However this research provides a first exploration of the significance of birds among Xhosa people and indicates its potential for birdlife conservation practices.

Another constraint is the perspective of the researcher. Although the researcher is the most important tool in social research, it is at the same time its core limitation. The research is investigated in a traditional context among people with a non-western worldview. Collecting data in this context by a person with a modern scientific western worldview implies the risk of bias⁷. Most important is to consider this risk during the entire research process.

A third factor of potential limitation is of ethnical character. The black community is humiliated and largely subordinated, during the apartheid period of South Africa (Beinart, 2000). Especially these living in the homelands still experience the impact of apartheid policies that formally ended in 1997. This obviously colours the interaction between local (black) communities and the 'white man'. In Pirie Mission where a mission post of the Scotch Church interacted with the local community, this dynamic differs from that in Ndlambe, which is a more traditional setting. It is not possible to estimate to what extent this factor influences the findings of this research in both villages. What is important is to consider South Africa's history especially in the former homelands, as a shaping factor for interaction between the black and with community still today (Mandela, 1994).

A final factor in working cross-cultural is the language barrier. In this case two interpreters served as to translate isiXhosa into English. The first, a lady only served during the first visit to Pirie. The second translator, a more experienced man, provided translation in more detail and nuance. This experience illustrates the dependency of a researcher on the interpreter. This inevitable constrain of this type of research encourages to providing ample instructions. In this case a daily briefing was hold in an attempt to limit translation bias. A good thing is that the interpreter served as a constant broker, limiting the impact of ethnical constrains.

⁷ This issue is often addressed through the distinction of 'etic' and 'emic' viewpoints (Pike, 1967). Emic and etic represents the insider and outsider perspective. The emic perspective focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society. Only the native members of a culture are supposed the sole judges of the validity of an emic description. Outsiders easily miss or misinterpret cultural aspects due to their etic perspective. The etic perspective relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers. Missing important aspects and misunderstanding of symbols, words and practices, simply occurs due to not corresponding worldviews. This dramatic consequence of human interaction in a globalizing world illustrates the role of culture in valuing the nature world. While the etic perspective is a limitation this distance from the Xhosa culture meanwhile serves as strength in putting the researcher in the objective of outsider. But even than it remains of key importance to be aware of once own cultural, philosophic, religious and professional scope (Angrosino, 2008)

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SITES

4.1 Introduction to the study sites

The context of this research is the East Cape province of South Africa. In the rural area of this province, the two villages of Pirie Mission and Ndlambe were selected for the fieldwork.

4.2 The Eastern Cape province

The Eastern Cape province (fig. 4.1) is the second biggest province in South Africa, covering 169 580 km² and inhabited by 13.5% of the population of South Africa. Current population size is 6.8 million (SSA, 2009). The province is home to the Xhosa and amaMfengu Nguni groups; with the majority of the population being Xhosa speaking (83.4%) (SSA, 2001). It is a province with many different faces. The Eastern Cape has a number of landscapes ranging from the coastal zone in the Southeast up to the mountains bordering Lesotho. The gradient, water conditions, climate and soil shape a diverse cover of subtropical thicket, mist-belt forest, wetlands, natural grasslands, river systems and cultivated sites (DEAT, 2005). The different environmental conditions are the context of an impressive diverse biodiversity. Altogether 7 biomes and 29 veldt types housing together 6164 plant, 156 mammal, 384 bird, 51 amphibian and 57 reptile species, are found in the Eastern Cape (Acocks, 1988; Murina & Rutherford, 2006). Up until 2003 the majority of the population lived in rural areas, providing the Eastern Cape with a rural character (SSA, 2001). As a result of past apartheid policies implemented up until 1997 conditions differ from other parts of South Africa, especially in the former homelands. These former homelands of the Ciskei were declared by the National Party regime in 1972 (www.worldstatesman.org). The area now suffers the apartheid moulded legacy; being characterised by high levels of poverty, lack of infrastructure, high population densities, inferior education opportunities and families that have been divided through migrant labour and the continuing rural-urban migration (Alexander, 2010). Very few employment opportunities exist in rural areas, particularly in former homeland regions, which record around 55% unemployment, with 77% of the population categorised as living in poverty (BCM, 2009).

The relative isolation during the apartheid period may have contributed to conservation of traditional practices in the region. Even today the unfavourable socio-economic conditions in the Eastern Cape are related to peoples continues dependency on local environmental resources (Cocks, 2006b; Cocks & Dold, 2006; Shackleton, et al., 2007). Although not entirely relying on these so called 'non timber forest products' (NTFP) they play an important role in rural livelihood. Direct contributing through provision of food, fodder, fuel wood and items required for cultural practices, but also indirect as source of income through trade in these NTFPs. Especially medicinal plants

(*amayeza*)⁸ are an important informal market product (Cocks & Dold, 2006). Birds play only a minor role in the supporting of livelihoods (Hebinck & Shackleton, 2011). They are not mentioned in this nor in a more exhaustive case study on the direct-use value of non-timber products in two rural Xhosa villages in the Transkei (Shackleton, Timmermans, Nongwe, Hamer, & Palmer, 2007). In addition to material utilization, Xhosa rely heavily on their environment for the less tangible side of life; their cultural identity and spiritual well-being (Cocks, 2006b; Cocks, et al., 2012; Coehoorn, 2009; Mogano, 2012). These factors make the Eastern Cape an interesting context for conducting research on the significance of birds in a traditional culture.

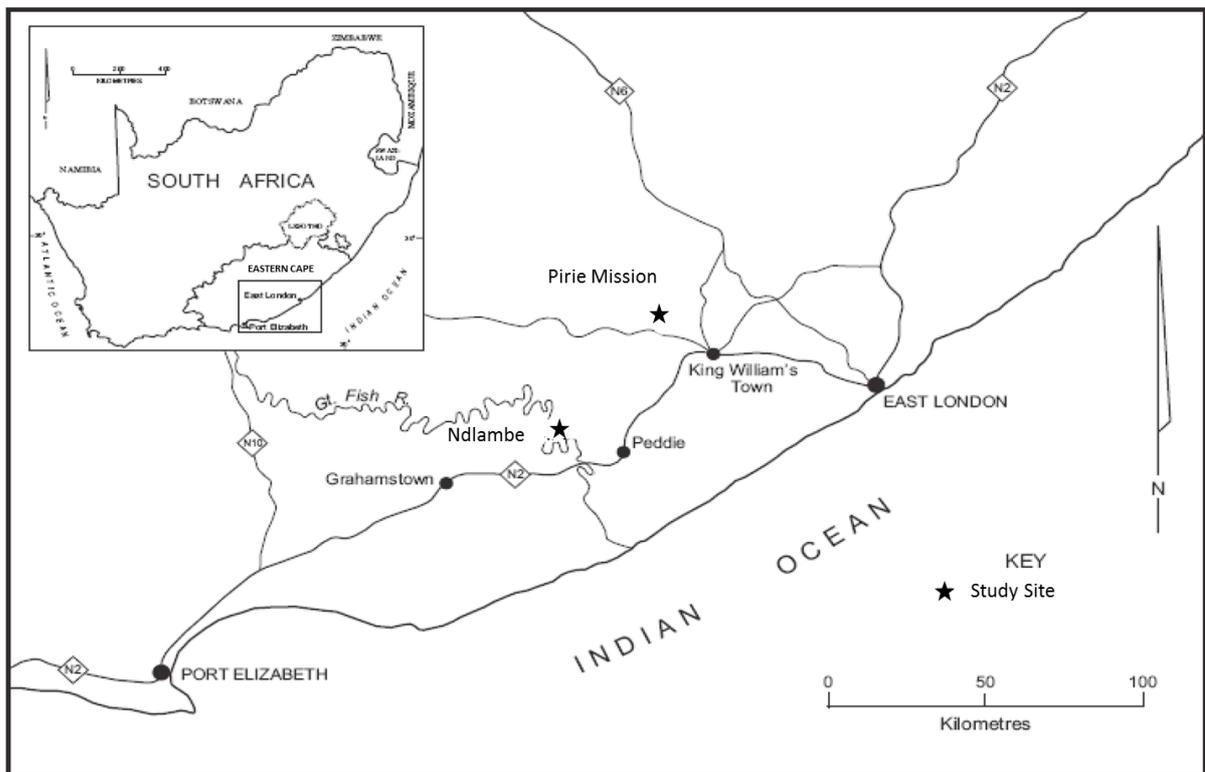


Figure 4.1 Showing the field sites Pirie Mission and Ndlambe in context of the wider Eastern Cape and South Africa (figure adapted from Alexander, 2010).

4.3 Pirie Mission⁹

Pirie Mission is located within Buffalo City local Municipality. Pirie is a rural village nestled at the foot of Pirie Forest, which is known locally as ‘Hoho Forest’. It is located about 25 km away from King William’s Town and 50 km from the town of Alice (Google, 2012).

⁸ The term *amayeza* is now understood to include not just medicinal plants for treatment of physical ailments, but rather the cultural use of plants for “well-being and healing practices in the broadest sense of the word, including non-physical spiritual, ritual, and religious functions” (Cocks and Dold 2006: 126).

⁹ The context description of Pirie and Ndlambe (section 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5) derives in part from the work of Alexander (2010), who did here research in the same villages during the period 2009-2010. For additional information on species and detailed biome characteristics I refer to here work.



Figure 4.2 Aerial view of Pirie Mission showing the Hoho forest in the upper left corner, opening up towards the meandering river central in the picture. The straight lines left central in between the village and the river are tree lines of common oak (*Quercus robur*) marking the field edges. These structures are remnants of the Missionary efforts, reflecting a British landscape. The open parts are all common pasture used for grazing. On the right a section of arable fields can be recognized at the village edge (section Red Hill). Pirie is situated central and extends towards the right. The dark dot at the far left edge is the church building. In the upper right corner some houses of the neighbouring town 'New Rest' are visible (figure source: Google, 2012).



Figure 4.3 Close-up aerial view of Pirie Mission (mid-up in figure 4.2). The red roofs on the right indicate the primary school. The composition of homesteads is well organized, reflecting the designed history of settlement. Some homesteads do have a vegetable garden next to the houses, while the remaining space is grazing field. Some old round houses are visible as well as the squared shape of a kraal on most homesteads (figure source: Google, 2012).

4.3.1 Environmental context and history

Pirie is situated 580 – 1.200 m above sea level, and records a relatively high rainfall of 890 mm per year. Soils in the area are deep, loamy and with high nutrient status on the Great Escarpment, while those supporting forests of low-lying scarps tend to be shallower. Vegetation within the forest is characterized by distinct layers of trees, shrubs and herbs, being characterised by tall closed-canopy evergreen tree species that can reach heights of 30 or 40 m. The forest is classified as Southern Mist-belt Forest (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006). At 3173 ha, it is one of the largest intact forest blocks in the Amathole district. The forest is classified as ‘critically endangered’ according to the ‘Subtropical Thicket Ecosystem Planning Project’ (Knight, Boshoff, Cowling, & Wilson, 2003; Knight & Cowling, 2003). Pirie Forest is currently administered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), and has been policed by DAFF since the 1950’s. DAFF’s attitude towards local villagers in the forest still carries taints of preservationist conservation. The fact that the forest has been perceived to be under constant threat (from people extracting timber or other natural resources since the 1800’s), and represents an important indigenous biome only serves to heighten the urgent need for conservation interventions. Certain parts of the forest are more accessible to local villagers through participatory forest management, which has been DAFF’s chosen vehicle for radical change in indigenous forest management since 2001. Although DAFF adopted the participatory forest management policy in 1998, by 2002 there were still no concrete steps taken towards its implementation in Pirie (Dold & Cocks, 2002). By 2010 there has been some authority devolved to local authorities, with the allocation of the ‘little forest’ (*dadeni*) under control of the community, and part of the state forest open to community access with permits (Alexander, 2010). Besides the collection of *amayeza*, many villagers regularly visit the forest to acquire other natural materials they depend upon, such as building poles or thatching grass. The policing of the forest and the arrest and detention of harvesters have led to feelings of disempowerment and has directly affected the villagers’ use and perceptions of the forest (Alexander, 2010).



Figure 4.4 Impression of the surrounding area looking to the Northeast. On the forefront the commonages are visible, the trees in the middle indicate the little forest (*dadeni*) aligning the Qongwe stream, behind it a larger section of the commonage is visible, with behind it the Hoho Mountains and forest. On top of the Mountains another section of meadow field is just visible (figure source: Gijsbertsen, 2011)

The fields surrounding Pirie are municipal commonages (see fig. 4.4 and 4.2). Use of these commons is regulated through village representatives who meet in a ‘chair group’. With the arrival of the new democratic government dispensation in 1994, the national land reform programme recognized the value of commonage as a redistribution mechanism with the potential to alleviate poverty (Adams, Cousins, & Manona, 1999). Although these commonages provide real livelihood opportunities for rural farmers, lack of efficient management often results in environmental degradation (Davenport & Gambiza, 2009). The resulting habitat degradation forms a potential threat for local birdlife.

The large, dense forest and surrounding fields were historically a rich hunting ground and home to leopard (*Panthera pardus*), eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) and various large and small antelope species. Early records from the 1600-1700’s recall great herds of elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), lions (*Panthera leo*) and buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) roamed the countryside and hippopotami (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) in every river. Colonial hunters and ivory traders depleted these animals (Skead, 1987). The dense vegetation has protected some of the smaller species, like porcupines (*Hystrix africae australis*), vervet monkeys (*Cercopithecus aethiops*), black-backed jackals (*Canis mesomelas*), bushpigs (*Potamochoerus porcus*) and bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) till today.

There are many birds living in the surrounding of Pirie, in particular the forest and adjacent fields. During the fieldwork bird observation, a total number of 60 unique species was observed in the village and its surrounding environment. The area is home to the endangered Cape Parrot (*Poecephalus robustus*), Secretarybird (*Sagittarius serpentarius*), Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*), and the critical endangered Southern Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*) (IUCN, 2012; Sinclair, Hockey, & Tarboton, 2002).



Figure 4.5 Showing Pirie Mission with on the forefront homesteads surrounded by small gardens, central some grazing fields and the Amathole Mountains in the distance. At the horizon left of the Mountain feet the tall shape of the church can be recognized (figure source: Gijbetsen, 2011).

4.3.2 History and socio-economic background

John Ross of the Glasgow Missionary Society founded Pirie Mission with the permission of Chief Ngqika. The Pirie Mission church was built in memorial of Ross's 50th Jubilee in 1873 and is still well used by the community (History of Pirie Mission, 2011) The mission, along with all Xhosa owned land, was taken under British colonial rule in December 1847. During the latter part of the 19th century local settlement was severely disrupted by government's implementation of the tenure system. This was requested in part by missionaries who desired a departure from the 'heathen system' of traditional communal land ownership, and centralisation of settlements to ease in conversion. The 1896 survey in Pirie officially divided the village into building lots, garden lots and commonage, drastically affecting agricultural production by relocating gardens and homes far apart. In later years, Pirie Mission and the rest of the Ciskei were included in the Betterment schemes (Vazi, 1988, in Alexander, 2010). Oral narratives from elderly people in Pirie state that Betterment was rejected by the villagers, and only implemented through threats that the village would lose access to the Qongwe stream if they objected (Alexander, 2010).

Pirie is a relatively small village of 1.400 people (PM26). Due to the historical demarcation of land during missionary administration, many villagers have legal title to 'building lots' and 'garden lots' (BCM, 2007). Farmers in Pirie have access to fertile agricultural lands, although they are

unfenced and vulnerable to crop damage by wild animals, particularly wild pigs and monkeys. Many households keep cattle, with a few also having sheep, pigs and poultry.

The long establishment of the village, the abundant natural forest, the easy access to urban centres and the good agricultural climate has allowed Pirie residents to be seen as 'relatively well off', especially in comparison to Ndlambe. The village is seen as 'a good place to retire', with many elderly people enjoying village life after working in big cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. This 'bringing back' of wealth may also contribute to the number of moderately wealthy households in the village (Alexander, 2010).

4.4 Ndlambe village

Ndlambe village is located in Ngqushwa Local Municipality in the Peddie district. Ngqushwa is sparsely populated in comparison to other municipalities, containing only 1.3% of the population of the Eastern Cape (SSA, 2009). The village is situated in semi-arid region bracketed between the Keiskamma and the Great Fish River. Most of the village is spread out along the northern banks of the Great Fish River (*iNxuba*).



Figure 4.6 Aerial view of Ndlambe and its surrounding. On top of the figure the mountains with thicket forest, lower the gravel road along which Ndlambe is situated from east to west. The scattered white spots indicate homesteads. Two water reservoirs are visible east (locally known as Mankazana dam) and at the centre of the village. Curving through the landscape is the Great Fish River visible. Below the river the green shapes indicate a private farm, followed by thicket forest further down. Left adjacent to Ndlambe, next to the river, the villagers' vegetables plantation is visible. In the same river curve the brown squares indicates a new established pomegranate plantation (foreign investment) (figure source: Google, 2012).



Figure 4.7 Close-up aerial view of Ndlambe, showing a central section of the village (mid-up in figure 4.6). The road, Great Fish River and edge of the private farm are visible. Note the homesteads were the old round houses, new square houses and the kraal fences are located on. The homesteads are surrounded by degraded thicket forest remnants and vegetation poor shale (see also figure 4.9) (figure source: Google, 2012).

4.4.1 Environmental context and history

Ndlambe village receives annual rainfall varying between less than 400 mm – 550 mm (Ainslie, 1999). Soils in the area form a thin layer over the highly erodible shale and sandstone, resulting in very low potential for dry land agricultural production (Ainslie, 1999). The village is bordered by the Albany thicket biome that is part of the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany ‘hotspot’. This biome covers 22 616 km², with an alarming 51% of the biome degraded and only 2% conserved (Low & Rebelo, 1996; Lubke, Everard, & Jackson, 1986). The biome is classified as very dense thicket of woody shrubs and trees that occurs in the river valleys of the eastern parts of the Western Cape, extending through the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It is characterised by a closed canopy, up to 6m in height, dominated by woody evergreen species. Thickets show great species diversity with many endemic species. Albany thicket is often confined to river valleys stretching from the coast inland, where drier areas benefit from the valley mists (fig. 4.8). The specific Albany thicket types surrounding Ndlambe are Great Fish thicket, and Great Fish Noorsveld, with Albany alluvial vegetation found along the Great Fish River

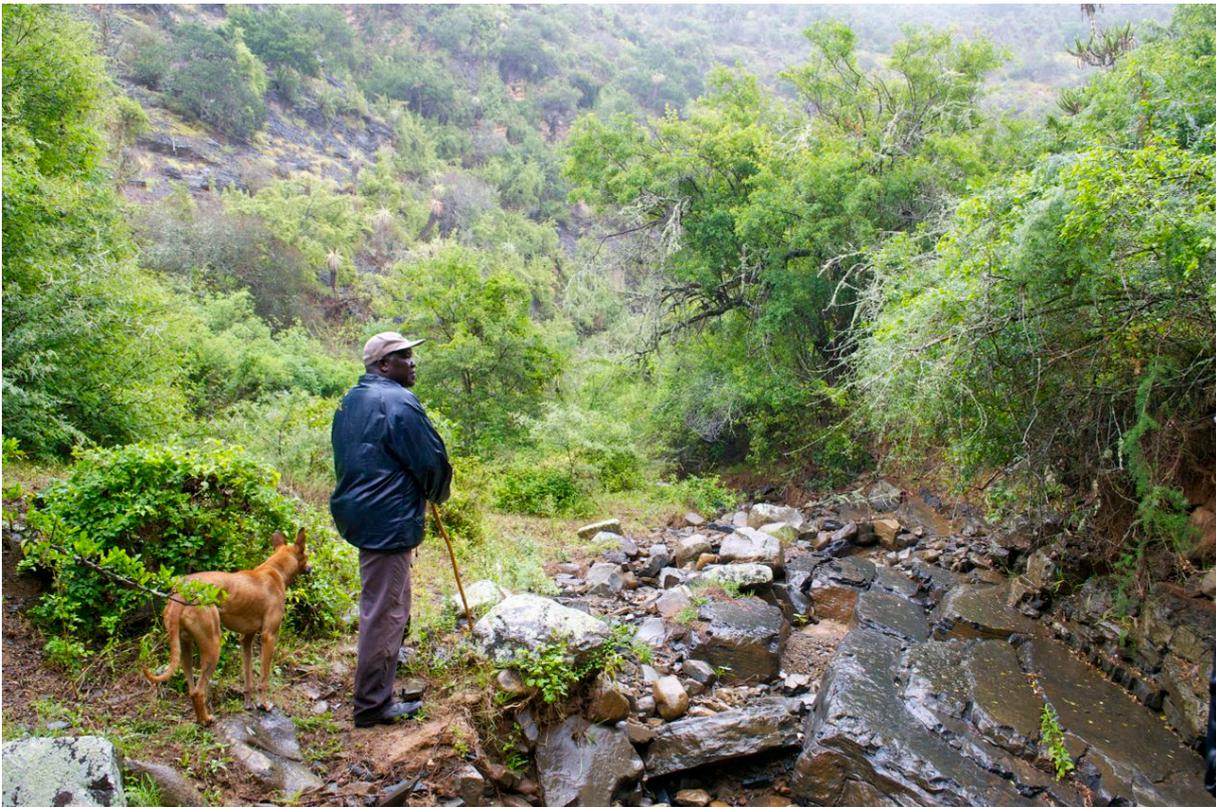


Figure 4.8 Thicket forest in a river valley East of Ndlambe. The picture is made during a context walk and shows our guide and key informant mr. Mzwakhe Ntozini (figure source: Gijsbertsen, 2011).

Currently 6% of Great Fish thicket and 34% of Great Fish noorsveld is preserved, mostly in the state reserves and private game reserves (Lubke, et al., 1986; Mucina & Rutherford, 2006). Historically Albany thicket was home to large browsers such as black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*), but decline in these species has allowed thicket to expand into other areas, particularly savannah and grassland (Lubke, et al., 1986).

In the Tyefu area Albany thickets are communally owned and villagers have equal and relatively open access to thicket resources (Ainslie 1999). Albany thicket is advised to be most suited to well-managed Boer and Angora goat or game farming, however, it is currently under threat where there is intensive, poorly managed farming with goats or ostriches. The Albany thicket has proven to be particularly vulnerable to grazing by goats, whose intensive grazing habits disallow the recovery that would be possible through grazing by wildlife (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

The surrounding of Ndlambe is home to a diverse birdlife community, of which some species are exclusively linked to the thicket. The number of species found during the fieldwork bird observation indicates this. A total number of 77 species were observed in the village and its surrounding. The area is home to the critically endangered Southern Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*), and respondents made account of South Africa's national bird the vulnerable Blue Crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus*) (IUCN, 2012).



Figure 4.9 Showing Ndlambe from the east, with left the main gravel road and rights the forest edge. In the distance are some homesteads visible. Note how the shale soil is clearly visible (figure source: Gijbsbertsen, 2011).

4.4.2 History and social-economic background

Ndlambe village was named after the popular and powerful chief Ndlamb, who fought against the British at the Battle of Egazini in Grahamstown (Wells, 2003).

The village of Ndlambe is larger than Pirie, with 2161 inhabitants recorded in the last census, and is divided into several different localities (SSA, 2001). Due to its semi-arid environment, agriculture in the Tyefu region needs to be supplemented with irrigation; an expense beyond the means of most rural farmers. Accordingly, the only viable agricultural option is livestock production from natural grazing. In recent years some small-scale farmers have also benefitted from ostrich production programmes, but in general the district has sometimes been called a 'post-agrarian' rural area due to the lack of agricultural options. The poor household condition could potentially be supplemented by additional income from (in)formal employment, remittances, state pensions or family support (Ainslie, 1999).

In the past Albany thicket located in communal areas has been subject to some restrictions, being administered by forest rangers during the 'homeland' regime. However, at present there is no policing and access is considered to be completely open. One of the main economic activities in the village is the collection of fuel wood to sell (Ainslie, 1999).

4.5 Similarities and differences between field sites

Although Pirie Mission and Ndlambe share some similarities in respect to their history and cultural characteristics, closer examination reveals a number of differences. Main factors determining these differences are the environmental, historical and socio-economic conditions. In respect to our research the differences in climate and subsequent the opportunities for subsistence agriculture between the two field sites are striking. Pirie's high rainfall and good soils allow families to grow vegetables and practice livestock farming. An agricultural lifestyle here has more potential to be successful on the long run than in areas like Ndlambe. In addition, the physical demarcation of plots (clearly visible in figure 4.2) during missionary times has provided some security and stability to households. Some families supplement their living costs by growing vegetables. However, although most households have access to individual lands, only a few maintained large vegetable gardens. Ndlambe's differing climate and soils create result in less favourable conditions for agricultural livelihood support. In Ndlambe only a few households keep cattle, the majority keeps goats or donkeys, or does have no livestock at all. Vazi (1988, in Alexander, 2010) emphasises that goats are recognised as 'the poor man's cattle', having no praise songs or rituals devoted to them. However, one could argue that given the environmental conditions for Ndlambe, goats play an adequate substitute to cattle.

Regarding the utilization of natural resources; at Ndlambe, the government has imposed few restrictions on the Albany thicket and thus households are free to access any resources they wish from the thicket. Pirie inhabitants, by comparison, are not freely allowed to harvest natural resources such as building poles or medicinal plants in the adjacent forest reserve. As a result the frequency of forest visits is in general higher for Ndlambe than it is for villagers in Pirie. In Pirie only elderly people and those who don't have money for electricity, will go to the forest for fuel wood. Also in preparation of special occasions such as funerals fuel wood will be collected from the forest. Wood collection in Pirie is seen as a 'once in a while' activity, while it is a 'daily' activity in Ndlambe. The same applies for the collection and use of medicinal plants (Alexander, 2010). People's familiarity with modern conservation practices is due to their interaction with the adjacent forest reserve higher in Pirie than it is in Ndlambe.

Abiotic conditions and human interaction with the environment do have their feedback on local biodiversity and biome characteristics as well. The villages are situated in entirely different biomes, Pirie in the periphery of the Southern Mist-belt Forest and Ndlambe in the Albany thicket. Local birdlife communities in these biomes differ subsequent. This is clearly reflected in the results of the field inventories carried out during the fieldwork. Were in Pirie 60 species were found and in Ndlambe 77 species. Only 21 species are found in both places during the field inventories (see appendices). In respect to people's interaction with local birdlife, dominating daily livelihood

practices potentially relate to the significance of species. In Pirie livelihood activities concentrate on gardening and cattle farming, both in the fields immediate surrounding the village. In Ndlambe, livelihood activities are concentrated on the forest surrounding the village.

In addition to the environmental constrains, probably most important for this investigation is the influence of modernity in both rural villages. The interaction with, and subsequent influence of the surrounding society has been more intensive and dates further back in the case of Pirie. The missionary influence there, relative good disclosure to urban centres and relative high number retired people (who receive state pensions) does result in a higher living standard and education level compared to Ndlambe. As a result the rural society of Pirie is more influenced by modernity.

5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BIRDS IN PIRIE MISSION

This chapter presents the data collected during the fieldwork in Pirie Mission. The chapter is structured along four sections (with subsections) corresponding with the first four research questions (section 2.3.1). The first section starts presenting the free list results (quantitative), the chapter then goes on presenting the interview results (qualitative) in Pirie. The distinct areas of TEK (table 2.1), knowledge, beliefs, practices, and worldview are presented subsequently throughout the chapter.

5.1 Local knowledge of birds species

This section elaborates on the question: what do amaXhosa know of the local birdlife community?

5.1.1 Knowledge indicated through bird names

The free list exercises are an entry point allowing for a quantitative presentation of peoples knowledge of birds. In Pirie the number of bird species mentioned was 60, with an average of 11.2 species per respondent. Of these 60 species, 16 were mentioned by only one respondent, 25 were mentioned between two and four times, and 19 species were mentioned by more than five respondents (table 5.1). The result of the free list PRA varies among respondents, ranging from thirty-one species to five, mentioned by one respondent. The English and scientific names in the table below are based on the 'Birds of Southern Africa' (Sinclair, et al., 2002), and the isiXhosa names are based on the interview results and 'Roberts birds of Southern Africa' (Roberts, Hockey, Dean, & Ryan, 2005)¹⁰. The appendices contain an extensive list of all mentioned species.

¹⁰ An extensive species list for the region is made available by the PFPI as part of the Robert VII nomenclature. The list contains English as well as Xhosa bird names and is used for translation of names collected during the free listing (version 14 Feb. 2012). The list is accessible through the institute website: <http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/docs/birdlist.html>. In the data presentation the isiXhosa names of the birds are used to indicate the species. For convenience of the reader we mention the English the first time a species appears in a section.

Table 5.1 Overview of the nineteen most mentioned bird species in Pirie Mission. Underlined species are recognized by the IUCN red list as vulnerable (V) and critical endangered (CE). The * indicates a bird family group, in these case no further specification was made. The abbreviations in the habitat column indicate the place of birds in the local worldview (section 5.4): H = bird of the house, F = bird of the forest, V = bird of the field and R = bird of the river.

isiXhosa name	Englisch name	Scientific name	Habitat	N
<i>Ihobe</i>	Cape turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	H/F	18
<i>Isomi</i>	Red-winged starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	H	17
<i>Ukhwaimanzi</i>	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	V	15
<i>Unomyayi</i>	Cape crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	V/R	15
<i>Incede</i>	Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	F	11
<i>Ukhozi</i>	Large bird of prey* (eagle)	spp.	V/H	11
<i>Umcelu</i>	Wagtail*	<i>Matocilla</i> spp.	V	11
<i>Ingqangqolo</i>	Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus</i> spp.	V	10
<i>Ingxangxosi</i>	<u>Secretarybird (V)</u>	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	V	10
<i>Ingqabe</i>	Cape sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	H	9
<i>Intsikizi</i>	<u>Southern ground hornbill (CE)</u>	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	F	9
<i>Inxanxadi</i>	Common fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	V	9
<i>Ihlungulu</i>	White-necked raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	F	8
<i>Inkonjane</i>	Swallow*	<i>Hirundu</i> spp.	H	8
<i>Isikhova</i>	Owl*	spp.	H/F	8
<i>Ing'ang'ane</i>	Haded ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	V	7
<i>Ixhalanga</i>	<u>Cape vulture (V)</u>	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	V	7
<i>Intambanane</i>	Falcon (small)	<i>Falco</i> spp.	V	5
<i>Isagwityi</i>	Common quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	V	5

Figure 5.1 illustrate the number of birds against gender and age of respondents, indicating the relation between these variables. The female respondents, eighteen in total had an average age of 49 year. The male respondents, eighteen in total, were somewhat older with an average age of 57. Ages ranged between 18 and 79 among male and between 29 and 73 among female respondents. Male respondents did mention thirteen bird species, female respondents mentioned on average nine species. Between the ages within a gender group, there are differences, but without a clear pattern. It is most reasonable that some respondents with exceptional interest into birds, developed into local specialists. In some cases the respondent confirmed this specialism based on personal interest.

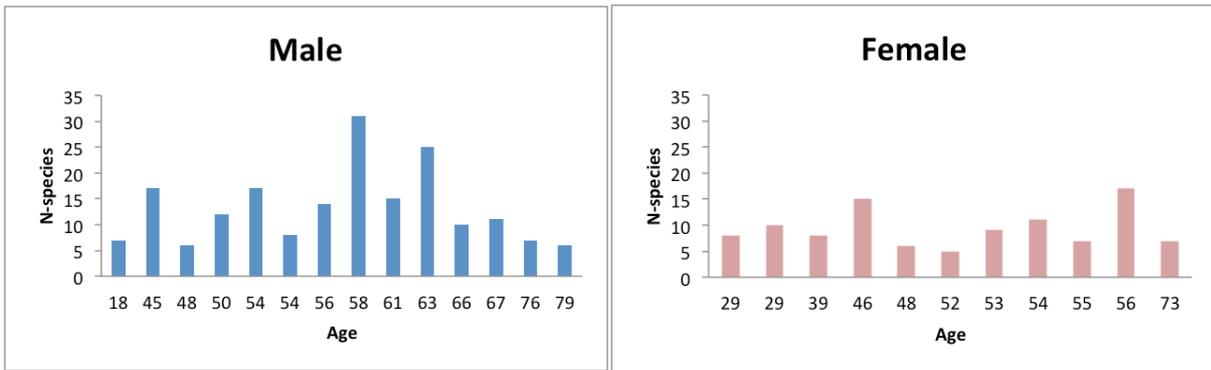


Figure 5.1 Illustration of the number of birds, age and gender of respondents in Pirie.

Based on the listing results the average rank and frequency of bird species estimated. Figure 5.2 presents a graphic overview of the 19 most mentioned species and their average rank and frequency for villagers in Pirie. The figure shows a cluster of nine species that are mentioned by most respondents (frequency) and mentioned primarily in the free list (average rank). The ranking indicates that these species are well known within the community. Although their rank is lower, majority of respondents is familiar with the remaining species.

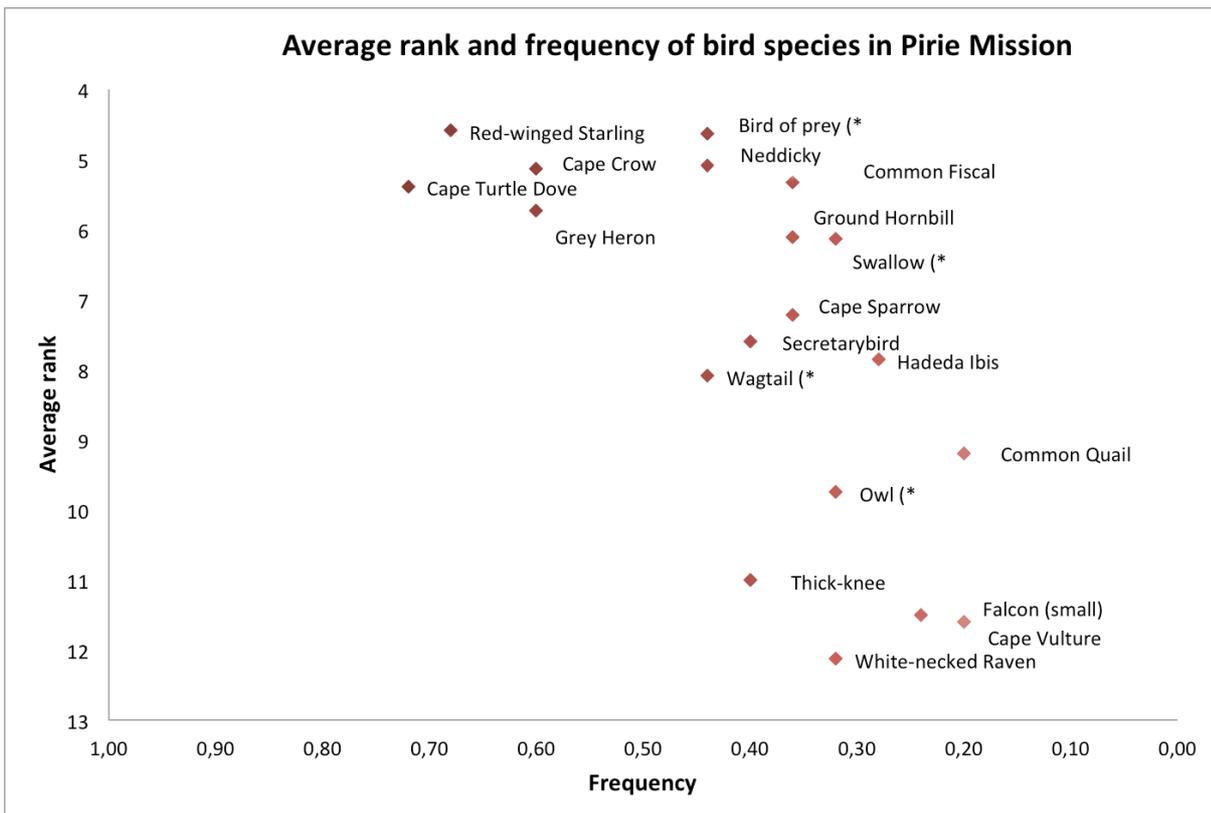


Figure 5.2 This figure presents locally recognized bird species for Pirie Mission. The nineteen most important species (mentioned five times or more / frequency 0.20 or higher) are plotted in relation to the number of times they are mentioned in different interviews (frequency) and their position in the list (average rank). So the Red-winged Starling is mentioned in most interviews at the beginning of the free list, while the White-necked Raven is mentioned only in a few interviews and in later instance.

5.1.2 Sources of local bird knowledge

Respondents in Pirie express a number of sources of contemporary bird knowledge, among them is bird hunting by teenage boys, livestock (cattle) herding also done by teenage boys together with adult man, and work at the plantation. These sources have the character of a practice were the first is an occasional boy's game the following two are daily livelihood practices. Below these practices are presented into more detail.

Bird hunting is an important source of contemporary bird knowledge. Teenage boys do most of the hunting during spontaneous organized hunting parties. Older respondents as well as teenagers, mention this practice. Occasionally small groups of teenage boys were observed while hunting birds in the periphery of the village, during the fieldwork. Hunting in Pirie, is predominant a male activity. During the interviews this was motivated by: *"girls don't do it [bird hunting] it is considered to be a boys game."* (PM8). Respondents told of their own bird hunting experiences with enthusiasm:

"When I was young I used to hunt a lot. We hunted all the bird species I just mentioned [free listing: 15 species] using the isabatha and umgibe [sling and snare]. I learned how to hunt and catch the birds from older boys, while herding the cattle. The birds we caught were roasted over a fire and eaten in the field. (...) I stopped these practice when I was fifteen and got a job." (PM1).

This experience as well as reflections by other respondents, illustrate the practice of bird hunting. Boys join hunting parties, starting at an age of seven or eight years. They join older boys on the hunt, picking up their knowledge and methods. In the past this happened during daily activities like cattle herding, while today the school holidays and weekends are used. According to respondents the hunting activities are gradually left behind at the age of fifteen, sixteen, when other responsibilities like school and work require attention. During their hunting boys collect their knowledge of birds such as name and taste, and develop hunting skills. According to most respondents no distinction was made between species. Every bird that could be caught was desirable. Some species like *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove) were preferred for their good taste: *"This bird has a very good taste!"* (PM3). Species, who have a bad taste however, are not safeguarded of being hunted, for to catch them still forms a challenge. Some species like *Inxanxadi* (common fiscal) have the habit of dropping to the ground in an attempt to escape the hunters, making them a desired object for boys to proof their skills. After killing, the boys took the birds home or braai them in the forest on a fire. They used to eat them together, celebrating the hunt. It was mentioned that: *"All can be eaten except the owl."* (PM12). Central in the bird hunting is to experience this activity with peers. The practice is abandoned when boys become older and get involved in other time demanding activities. For most

adults and even boys who are in their late teen- early twenties, bird hunting is considered a childish activity. In Pirie with its agricultural economy, livestock is valued over wildlife, especially small game like birds. *“Personally, I get bored of bird hunting after a while.”* (PM3). Real men don’t bother about bird hunting anymore, but care for their family and cattle. In addition it was mentioned that meat has a better taste and comes in better portions than birds do. *“Only boys kill birds for food, adults don't do this anymore for the meat is little.”* (PM11).

Some adult male respondents mentioned to go out incidentally to hunt game like, monkey, deer and rabbit, using dogs and bow an arrow. In these cases no birds were aimed for (PM9). However, according to some respondents, there are bird species hunted by adults, as well. Given reasons for these exceptions were, size and taste, nuisance, and birds application in rituals. *Impangele* (helmeted guineafowl) is a favoured species for its size and taste. *Insikizi* (southern ground hornbill) was used in the past in rain related rituals. Some respondents mentioned to kill nuisance birds. Species foraging on the vegetables in the garden and fields are scared away and sometimes killed. *“I used to kill the birds that come to eat vegetables in my garden, with a sling.”* (PM7). Another group of birds considered to cause trouble are the birds of prey. They are notorious for stealing chickens from the homesteads. This habit provides a general shared excuse to kill them. *“If you have the chance you kill them, but they are too fast.”* (PM16).

A second source of contemporary bird knowledge derived from animal husbandry¹¹. Especially older man mentions cattle herding as an important school for their local environmental knowledge, including birds. This is illustrated by a statement like: *“When I was a young boy, looking after the cattle, I had plenty of time to study the birds in the field.”* (PM7).

The third source of knowledge, work on the plantation is a declining practice. Older male respondents who explained the decline of environmental knowledge among youth mentioned the plantation work as a source of their bird knowledge. One respondent, who showed to be keen in birds, was well known for his dedicated work on the field till date. He stated: *“I know these birds for they are all around me when I work on the field.”* (PM25).

Male and female seem to derive their knowledge partly in different ways. Male respondent are active involved in bird hunting, cattle herding and cultivating. Male respondents refer to their own experiences as an important reason for knowing the birds by name. Female respondents, who are not supposed to hunt birds, herd cattle and only occasionally work on the field, derive their knowledge mostly through interaction with people around them. *“We grow up while people were*

¹¹ Almost every family has a number of cattle, who fulfil an important role in sustaining their livelihood and cultural identity (Sinclair, Tuke, & Opiang, 2010). The cattle are hold in a kraal during the night, to protect against theft and predators (Hebinck, & Shackleton, 2011). During the day animals are released and brought to the pastures. Today most of the animals are left in the field and collected before sunset again. In the past this was unusual, for the practice of herding the cattle was common.

calling the birds by name. Not that we actively wanted to learn them, but people just used the names, that is how we learned them." (PM21). Some woman mentioned to join their mothers and grandmothers on outings to the field and forest for the collection of food, fuel and medicinal plants. These outings did serve as a moment of environmental encounter wherein knowledge exchange could occur.

The way female gain their knowledge does indicate a final but very important sources. This is knowledge acquired through the very act living, through human interaction among each other and with their surrounding environment. Overall, a number of respondents mentioned their interaction with parents and grandparents as well as with peers and slightly older relatives, to be an important source of contemporary bird knowledge. This transfer is consistent with the first three sources of bird knowledge since the hunting, herding and cultivating practices are transferred as livelihood practices to younger generations as well. The knowledge of birds than is added to one's experiences during the practices. It is informal embedded within daily life activities, including even a recreational stroll. A respondent expressed this potentially very significant source as follow:

"When I was younger, I lived with the cattle in the field. Sometimes as we saw birds we called their names and learned from each other their names. Even the adults taught us their names and tested our knowledge." (PM14). And: "We used to go with the older boys, who shoot the birds and told us their names." (PM17).

5.1.3 Variation of bird knowledge among people

The interview results indicate a difference in bird knowledge between the older and younger generation. Older respondents derive their bird knowledge from past experiences and encounters with birds in the surrounding nature. Some parents also mention to actively transfer their knowledge of birds to their children. *"I did take my kids to the forest, so that is how they know the birds..."* (PM7). However most of the parents and grandparents complained about declining interest in birds and traditional knowledge among the youngsters. Some of them added an explanation as well. The following quotes are illustrative: *"Today we no longer teach each other about the birds. We no longer need this knowledge. Sometimes we call the birds by their name, but we thing the youth does not catch their names. They forget easily."* (PM1) indicating a sense of decreasing relevance of TEK and birds in particular. Another statement pays emphasis to conservation measures as reason for losing relevance: *"Because we no longer have access to the forest, we do not teach our children about the birds anymore."* (PM1). To close with, a notion of a 54-year old respondent, that indicates a changing lifestyle and orientation of the younger generations in Pirie:

“People in our days have changed their attitudes, we are no longer people as in the past. Those experiences have gone away. (...) I teach my children about the birds and our way of life, but they do not listen to me. They are busy with football.” (PM14)

5.2 Beliefs associated with birds

The contemporary significance of birds within the Xhosa culture is expressed by respondents in referring to their symbolic value; the area of beliefs. A respondent illustrated the symbolic importance of birds by stating: *“...only signs through birds, no application.”* (PM29). On the other hand about a third of the respondents in Pirie did notice to contribute not any significance to bird, ‘they are just ordinary birds, there is nothing special about them.’ In addition some respondents who did not relate any significance to birds at first, came up with beliefs when particular species were mentioned. For example:

“I don't know of any bird that comes with a message, they don't tell you good or bad things. (...) Isikhova [owl] is an evil bird, if it cries near your house it shows that something bad will happen; or it brings you good luck.” (PM8).*

This example expresses the symbolic role of *Isikhova* as indicator of omens.

5.2.1 Birds and ancestors

According to most respondents birds serve as intermediates in the interaction between the living and the dead¹². Only a few persons who explained to belong to a church that did not acknowledge continues interaction between ancestors and the living, were consequent in their denial of intermediation of birds. The majority of respondents in Pirie associated birds with ancestors, expressing a strong conviction of the link between ancestors, birds and the living¹³. The role of birds in maintaining the relation between living and dead relatives can be portrayed as a connecting link. In this case birds transfer the will and message of ancestors from the forest, the river and in occasionally the field to the village. One respondent illustrated this communication by a story:

¹² See for an extensive elaboration on this aspect of the Xhosa worldview the discussion.

¹³ It is worth to notice that some respondents mentioned the bees as most important communication animal for ancestors. *“If I come across the bees, I will have a job soon, or in a worse scenario I need to perform a ritual.”* (PM27). Bees benefit of special protection. It is not allowed to kill them and removal of a swarm requires special procedures. *“One of my own experiences is a bee that went into the wardrobe, followed by a swarm of bees. We could not remove it but had to perform a ritual, slaughter a goat and prepare umqombothi [isiXhosa = traditional African beer], before they left the house that same day.”* (PM27).

“Ixhalanga [cape vulture] is a dream bird. Overnight dreams are given to Ihlungulu [white-necked raven]. In its dreams Ihlungulu learns where the dead animals are. When there is a dead horse, it will go to it in the morning and take one of the eyes out of the corpse. Ihlungulu now will bring this eye to Ixhalanga and convince him of the dead animal out there. Ixhalanga now together with its group mates will go to the corpse and consume it. Ihlungulu will be left with the eye sharing it with its friends. (...) Ixhalanga will reveal its visions and dreams to men by approaching him in its dreams.” (PM14)

This story illustrates how the birds mediate through a complicated interaction between the visible and invisible world, between the world of the spirits and dreams and that of the living and deeds. The communication role seems in particular fulfilled by the local migratory species, migrating between their preference habitat and human settlements, or wander around in search for food. Example species of the local migrants are *Ingqabe* (cape sparrow), *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove), *Isomi* (red-winged starling), *Incede* (neddicky), *Umcelu* (wagtail*) and *Inkonjane* (swallow*). Some of these species are considered ‘birds of the house’ (section 5.4). Examples of the stray birds are *Ixhalanga* (cape vulture), *Ihlungulu* (white-necked raven), and *Uthekwane* (hamerkop). The regular presence of all these birds serves as an indicator in the continuous connection between ancestors and the living. They are like a thermometer, continuously indicating the well-being of the ancestors and the quality of the relation with them. In addition, irregular visits and bird behaviour can indicate ancestral contact.

About the way communication between ancestors and the living mediated by bird’s works, only some tentative information has been collected in this explorative research. Respondents for example agreed on the importance of bird presence in homesteads, especially in the kraal fence¹⁴. Having birds breeding on the roof of once house or in the kraal fence is a very obvious sign of ancestral content. The regular visit of ‘birds of the house’ into the house or right in front of the doorway is general interpreted as another positive sign. When these visiting birds make a series of calls the sign is even stronger. Not only the birds close by, but also the incidental observation of a rare species can indicate ancestral communication. In these cases and other cases, an *igqirha* (isiXhosa = traditional healer) is required to interpret the observed signs and translate the will of ancestors to their relatives. Especially in case of expected displeasure of ancestors, indicated by the absence or remarkable behaviour of some birds, the *igqirha* is consulted to interpret the signs and come up with a solution. Often the performance of a ritual is required.

The ancestors sometimes can be represented by a particular species, unique for that family (clan). This is often a ‘bird of the house’ (section 5.4.4). These particular species are considered ‘clan’

¹⁴ The kraal fulfils an important role in the Xhosa worldview, as it is the place where the ancestors dwell on the homestead, and where as a result a number of rituals takes place (Cocks, et al. 2004).

birds. Respondents with a clan bird mentioned special regulation in their interaction with this species. *“Umcelu [wagtail*] and Isomi [red-winged starling] are birds associated to my clan. The old people told me not to kill them,”* (PM5).

5.2.2 Birds and well-being

Some birds are connected with identity or more general, the emotional well-being of people. A respondent illustrated this as follow:

“For me it is important to hear the voice of the birds, especially in the forest in the early morning. It shows how great the wonders of god are. It makes me experience how everything is the same. We [the birds and humans] are just brothers and sisters. We are like the same plant but with different colors. Also when you look at the birds, there are many differences, but it is the same blood that is in them.” (PM1)

The statement indicates a sense of awe, appreciation, and connectedness. It indicates a feeling of comfort and ‘being at home’.

Other respondents express an even stronger belief associated with birds, of influence on their well-being. Birds as omens are a wide spread belief in Pirie. Some species are in particular believed to indicate omens. Among them are *Ingqangqolo* (thick-knee), *Isikhova* (owl*), *Ing’ang’ane* (hadeda ibis), and *Uthekwane* (hamerkop). These birds have some features in common; they share their size and brownish color, have a remarkable call or appearance, and live nocturnal. All of them are associated with bad omens like illness, the imminent death of a relative or the loss of once job. In general these birds are described as ‘evil birds’. *“Isikhova and Ingqangqolo are evil bird, if they cry near our house it brings bad luck.”* (PM9). There seems no agreement on the best way to treat these birds. Some try to get rid of them as soon as possible, by scaring it away and if possible killing it. Others are afraid of interacting with these species for it potentially causes more trouble. *Ing’ang’ane*, the only diurnal bird of omens, seems a special species among in this group whereof respondents gave an elaborated interpretation of its behaviour. Some mentioned: *“you can’t eat it”* (PM9). Others go further: *“We think when we come across Ing’ang’ane flying across and making its call; someone has passed away.”* (PM15).

There is some contradiction in meaning as well: *“Ing’ang’ane symbolises death once it makes its call, someone will die the following day. I use to shout to the bird to scare it away. When I see three or four of them flying over it indicates a pregnant person.”* (PM20). The last quote illustrates that one species can indicate good and bad omens. Another respondent mentioned for *Ing’ang’ane*: *“If Xhosa people are going to perform a river related ritual and they come across Ing’ang’ane, on the way, it*

indicates that everything is perfectly done." (PM19). Some other species do indicate good omens as well. An example of which is *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove). A 'bird of the house' and ancestor related species. Good omen indicated by *Ihobe* are elaborated on by one respondent:

"If you see two of them before twelve p.m. you know that something nice is going to happen. We use to say one for sorrow, two for joy, three for news, and four for lunch. For example, if I come across one Ihobe, on my way to the maintenance department, I want be able to get my money, while if I come across two Ihobe I know the money is there for me." (PM15).

Some birds are valued for their medicinal application contributing to human well-being. The application of these birds mainly depends on the methods of the *igqirha*, and primarily based on beliefs. In Pirie the diviner confirmed to receive only signs and messages through birds. She did not use them or their parts in any ritual application (PM29). Two species were mentioned by respondents as valued for medicinal application: *Ixhalanga* (cape vulture) and *Umcelu* (wagtail*). However, none of the respondents did apply birds as a cure.

5.3 Practices related to birds

Practices in Pirie related to birds were already described in the previous sections on knowledge of local birdlife and beliefs associations with birds. Here I focus on a general overview and the most prominent practices. Practices are divided into material and non-material (see table 2.1).

5.3.1 Material practices with birds

In Pirie there are a number of material practices with birds. Hunting seems the most vital and present practice. Although utilisation of birds is marginal according to most respondents, some larger species are considered worth the hunt: *"I have eaten birds when I was a boy, adults eat them also, but only the big birds."* (PM14). Two species are mentioned in particular to serve as food: *Impangele* (helmeted guineafowl) and *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove). The later only if it was not a 'bird of the house' or served as clan animal, for that family. Most respondents only, hunt *Impangele*. One respondent in related his practice of hunting *Impangele* to his origin from another village: *"People here don't do this [hunting birds], I know how to do it, because I grew up in Simon, that is very close to the forest."* (PM1). For this respondent however is had been years since he has eaten *Impangele*. Another respondent mentioned:

"Impangele is eaten by the people even today. The meat is like chicken, a free chicken from the forest. However it is not easy to catch the bird. In addition the government is looking after the

animals so you go to jail if they caught you. (...) The white people hunt Impangele during the hunting season, the black only when they come across it.” (PM.PA8).

In all other occasions the birds mentioned to serve as food were occasionally caught as one came across it. Practices like bird hunting seem to erode and get gradual replaced by a new lifestyle. Adult respondents mention to teach kids no longer how to hunt while kids show no longer interest in bird hunting. Respondents illustrate this by stating:

“They can’t hunt anymore, instead, they like girls and drinks more.” (PM2), and “Boys don't eat the birds anymore, now they watch TV when they are bored.” (PM2).

However other respondents mention: *“I would not say the boys don't eat birds, but I heard that they don't go out as a group anymore.” (PM14).*

Field observation of bird hunting together with this statement illustrate that there is still some bird hunting practiced by the youth. However, observations and experiences of respondents also indicate a change in practices.

An exceptional practice related to birds is the observation of *Intakobusi* (Honeyguide*). Although mentioned by two respondents and recognized from the picture by some others, the knowledge of its behaviour seems not widely spread. *“Intakobusi shows you where the honey is, once you have find it, you can harvest it and leave some on the ground to eat for the bird.” (PM1, 25).* The bird’s habit to draw your attention by showing up close and lure you to the honey is also interpreted as a warning for dangerous animals. Although honey is a favoured product from the forest, respondents mentioned two reasons to abandoned the practice of harvesting. *“There is a lot of honey in the forest, but I am too busy to go there and harvest.” (PM25).* Other respondent elaborated on the ban to visit the forest since it is a reserve, as a reason for leaving this practice behind. During the fieldwork a field fire adjacent to the ‘small forest’ occurred and was explained by villagers as caused by a honey harvester. For the harvest, smoke is required to mollify the angry bees. The fire can escape causing forest or field fires, and is visible from a large distance. This makes honey harvest a risky activity. Villagers noted their fear for the police who arrest you for violating the rules, or for causing destruction in forest and field vegetation through wild fire.

An indirect practice (deriving from a belief) is the role of birds in the event of rain. Especially *Inkonjane* (swallow*), *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill), and the *Uthekwane* (hamerkop) are considered to relate to the phenomena of rain. Some behaviour of *Inkonjane* does indicate the approach of rain, whereas it is believed that *Intsikizi* controls the rain by its call. *Uthekwane’s* relation

to climatologically phenomena is more diverse, but seems especially relevant in lightning¹⁵. Several respondents elaborated on *Intsikizi's* relation to rain. Their statements indicate both the role of the bird in the events of rain and drought and informal regulations regarding the species deriving from this relation.

“If you kill Intsikizi, it will rain the whole week. If you see the bird it indicates that the rain is coming.” (PM6) and “Intsikizi calls the rain, when you see it near your home you will know that the rain is coming.” (PM10).

Intsikizi not only played part in the traditional weather forecast, it also had a role in manipulation of the climatological conditions. According to some it was used in rituals aiming for rain to come or to stop. This practice is contained in the following story:

“After is has given its call heavy rains will come. (...) When I was young we used to kill Intsikizi during a drought and hang it in a tree so that the rain would come. To stop the rain the dead bird was removed from the tree. As a kid I wanted to proof this myself and it worked. The boys in our days don't do it anymore; they play football and go to school. We sometimes skipped school to go out for a hunt.” (PM19)

A 29 years old man told this story. However he already mentioned a change in this practice during his lifetime. Younger respondents mentioned the roll of *Intsikizi* in calling the rain, but did not relate to this practice. As the story does indicate the practice is no longer carried out today.

To close with some indirect practices with birds, expressed in the local appreciation for all kind of species that support human livelihood. Some are already mentioned in section 5.1.2. Among them are crop protection by birds through insect removal, and tick and parasite removal from livestock especially cattle. Species mentioned by respondents in this respect are *Isomi* (red-winged starling), *Ilanda* (cattle egret), *Ukhwali manzi* (grey heron), and *Umcelu* (wagtail*). A related practice highly appreciated by respondents is the habit of some larger birds to forage on snakes. Mentioned species in this respect are *Ukhwali manzi* and *Ingxangxosi* (secretarybird).

15 Although not mentioned explicitly during the interviews in Pirie Mission and Ndlambe, *Uthekwane* traditionally represents the 'lightning bird' or 'heaven bird'. The lightning bird is a mythical bird well known among all Bantu tribes. In some cases it is represented by a real species like *Uthekwane* among the Xhosa. It is considered to cause the lightning, a bird like phenomenon flying down from heaven to earth. The myth goes on explaining that at places where the lightning has stacked the earth a large egg of the lightning bird can be found buried in the ground. The lightning here is the very act of laying eggs. Lightning as well as its representing bird is, apart from its direct damage, seen as a bad omen. However because of its association to the phenomenon of lightning the hamerkop is secret for most people. It is believed that destroying its nest will cause heavy storms to occur (Godfrey, 1941; Werner, 1933).

5.3.2 Non-material practices with birds

There are a number of non-material practices related to the symbolic significance of birds. Some like the role of birds in ancestral veneration, birds and personal well-being and good as well as bad omens through birds, are recalled in the previous sections. This subsection will close with some meanings applied on birds that were collected during the interviews in Pirie.

Ingcungcu (sunbird*) is a popular species known and appreciated by a number of respondents for its extraordinary beauty. When someone is a rich, intelligent or beautiful person people use to call this person *Ingcungcu*, indicating its privileged position in the community (PM7,).

Intlekibafazi (green wood-hoopoe) is a remarkable bird for its behaviour as well as its beauty. The literal meaning of its name is 'laughing at someone'. It is told that this forest bird once observed a woman collecting wood in the forest. After curious observing this spectacle for a while it started to make its cackling call, drawing the ladies attention. This provided the bird its name 'laughing at woman' (PM19, 25).

Ihobe (cape turtle dove), was recalled by a woman for its sacredness. She came up with the following story:

"One day Noah sends Ixhalanga [cape vulture] to see if the earth's surface was dry. Ixhalanga started eating from the eyes of the human corpses that were there. Then Noah sends Ihobe, who picked up a branch from the earth and brought it back to Noah. This is why it is a holy bird." (PM20).

Ihobe thus became '*intaka engcwele*' (isiXhosa = holy bird).

Uphezukomkhono (red-chested cuckoo) is a favourite bird for its characteristic call. As a resident bird it arrives during summer and starts calling close to Christmas. The call according to local people sounds like: 'Christmas box, Christmas box' (i.e. a gift/present). For villagers in Pirie the call indicates that summer arrived. Of the three respondents in Pirie who mentioned *Uphezukomkhono*, one only mentioned the substitute name 'Christmas bird' (PM8), one made the connection between *Uphezukomkhono* and its call (PM9), and one motioned the bird in relation to the approach of summer (PM4). There seem to exist some confusion on the connection between this species and its call among respondents. (Sinclair, et al., 2002).

Intengu (fork-tailed drongo) is a bird that likes to be among the cattle. When someone who is expected to herd the cattle was alone the people use to say: "*Who is looking after your cattle?*" the reply than would be: "*Intengu is looking after it!*" (PM25/PA7).

A final story is related to an old and widespread parable (www.birdsandpeople.org)¹⁶. It is known as a narrative about the king of the birds, and was retold by a respondent, during one of the interviews. In this version of the parable two species, *Ukhozi* (large bird of prey*) and *Igqaza* (cloud ciscola) compete for the title 'king of the birds'.

"One day all the birds gathered to appoint their king. It seems obvious for Ukhozi, the most mighty and strong among them to become king. However when he stepped forward to be chosen by the birds, the tiny voice of Igqaza sounded. A rumor broke out among the birds and finally it was decided that the one who could fly highest had proven his strength and would be the new king. Certain of his victory Ukhozi agreed, Igqaza who agreed as well quickly climbed on the back of Ukhozi. Due to its small size no one noticed this and after Ukhozi disappeared into the sky he was certain of his victory. He flew to the sun to the limit of his strength. At the moment of his victory, when he grew tired and was about to return Igqaza fresh and quick lifted off his back and, while cheering at Ukhozi, continued towards the sun. Long after a broken Ukhozi had landed, Igqaza landed among the birds. This is how the clever Igqaza became the king of the birds." (PM25)

5.4 Birds in the local environmental perception

When asked for characteristic of the bird mentioned in the free list, most people started to elaborate on the places they live and behavioural characteristics. Based on descriptions like the often given 'this are species that live in the forest' as well as on indirect statements like "*normally we see Ingqangqolo [thick-knee] running in the field during summer.*" (PM16), birds can be clustered into groups. The four clusters are: birds of the forest, birds of the field, birds of the river, and birds of the house. These clusters reflect the natural habitat birds prefer according to respondents. The clusters also reflect to some extent the local environmental perception or worldview of respondents.

5.4.1 Birds of the forest

The forest in Pirie lies adjacent of the communal fields east of the village. Also small forest corridors run down from the mountains along the Qongwe streams and on the riverbank to the East (figure 4.2 and 4.4). Villagers mostly go to the forest for a particular reason like to collect fuel wood, fetch livestock, collect (medicinal) plants, or perform a ritual. Although the forest corridor along the river is closest to the village most people go to the main forest on the mountain slope. Birdlife there is more

¹⁶ The story, a discussion regarding its origin, the species that are figurants in it, and the differences between local version of the story can be read on the website www.birdsandpeople.org. (Direct link: www.birdsandpeople.org/blog/?p=24, accessed February 2012)

abundant with some forest species like the dark-backed weaver (*Ploceus bicolor*), several dove and pigeon species (*Columbidaea*), the cape parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*), the knysna turaco (*Tauraco corythaix*), and the narina trogon (*Apaloderma narina*) are restricted to the forest (Sinclair, 2002). Forest edge species are more abundant in the small forest sections along the stream and in the village.

According to most respondents, the forest is the home of the birds. Birds in general belong to the forest for they live there most of the year. Only some species visit the village regular or during particular seasons. Important reason for birds to live in the forest is the abundant amount of food and shelter. In the opinion of respondents: 'they simply feel at home there'. Villagers consider it to be their place of origin: 'Birds belong to the forest only some come to our gardens to help us, or in order to live under our roof' (PM1). Of the 19 species selected for this analysis, there was consensus for five species to belong to the forest. Two species, *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove) and *Isikhova* (owl*) were mentioned as forest as well as house birds. Respondents mentioned the existence of multiple *Ihobe* species (not defined) as explanation for living in the forest as well as in the village. The other species *Isikhova* is a bird living in the forest but visiting the village especially during the nights.

People's knowledge of forest birds is fragmented in a sense that some new the birds name, others recognized the birds name or picture as familiar, and some came up with biological characteristics. Practices regarding forest birds are restricted. Although villagers frequently visit the forest, there is hardly any application of the bird that life there. In contrast to practices, there are many beliefs regarding birds of the forest. Several species were gifted with a role as messenger. Examples are *Isikhova* who is an indicator of omens, *Ihobe* who serves as linkage between ancestors who live in the forest and the living in the villagers. Other respondents mentioned *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill) for its power over rain. There is some evidence that the bird was hunted in the past to manipulate weather conditions, today only the call of the bird is observed as indicating the approach of rain.

5.4.2 Birds of the field

Pirie is entirely surrounded by communal grazing fields; only the Southeast side (Red-hill) adjacent to a section of fenced arable fields is excluded. Even the village has characteristics of a settlement in the field (see figure 4.2 and 4.3). There is almost a daily interaction of villagers with the fields. Gardening, fetching cattle, travelling to neighbours and out of town, and regular activities around the homestead are just examples of this interaction.

The group 'birds of the field' is the largest in Pirie, with 11 species out of 19. However, only a few respondents mentioned the category as such. Most respondents just referred to birds that live among the cattle, help them in eating insects from their crops or hunts snakes in the fields

surrounding the village. One species, *Incede* (neddicky) was also mentioned as a bird of the house. Although other birds of the field visit the village or live in the gardens, *Incede* often breeds in the kraal fences. Together with its characteristic sound this makes the bird a noticeable appearance. Another species *Ukhwalimanzi* (grey heron) was mentioned for the field as well as the river.

People in Pirie showed to be well informed about birds of the field. Especially the larger birds like *Ukhwalimanzi* and *Ingxangxosi* (secretarybird), and those that visit the village frequently, like *Isikhova* (owl*) and *Ukhozi* (large bird of prey*), are mentioned manifold and into detail. This indicates an increase of significance, for species that live closer to man, are more obvious in their presence, or influence livelihoods man by their natural behaviour. Practices regarding birds of the field are as minor as they are for forest birds. Respondents mention only to take birds or their eggs home when they come across them. An example give was how at the end of the day an owner of cattle goes out to fetch his cows and comes across a nest of *Idada* (duck*) or *Impangele* (helmeted guineafowl) he will collect the eggs.

5.4.3 Birds of the river

Close to Pirie the Qongwe stream runs down the mountains. There are some ponds and reservoirs in the nearby presence of Pirie as well. Altogether there is not much water in the immediate sphere of Pirie. 'Birds of the river' are therefore better defined as birds that live on or next to the water. No matter how wide we take the scope, birds of the river are scarce in the data. Here the environmental conditions seem to be reflected in the bird's significance. Respondents mentioned only one species out of 19 as river bird. *Unomyayi* (cape crow) a local migratory species is recognized as bird of the river and bird of the field.

Two birds (mentioned less than five time and as a result not on the list in table 5.1) are also considered to be river birds, *Idada* (duck*) and *Ihobo-hobo* (cape weaver). The latter is well known for its behaviour of collective breeding in basked like nests that are attached to the top of a branch above the water. *Idada* is considered to be an edible bird. While in Ndlambe *Idada* serves as a messenger of the ancestors, in Pirie no belief associated to this bird were mentioned.

5.4.4 Birds of the house

Birds of the house are species that live very close to man. House in this respect can also be replaced by 'home' or even wider the homestead. These birds are at home where man lives. Due to their intensive and undeniable interaction with man, these birds are well known among a wide range of respondents. The birds of the house consist of a small but significant group. They are recognized by most of the respondent while a number of attributes were mentioned. Species that are considered bird of the house are: *Ingqabe* (cape sparrow), *Inkonjane* (swallow*), *Isomi* (red-winged starling),

Ihobe (cape turtle dove), *Isikhova* (owl*) and *Ukhozi* (large bird of prey*). The latter two are overlapping subsequently with field and forest birds.

Birds of the house are well known and appreciated by most respondents. Their presence close to man and habit to nest in or next to their houses creates a warm bond. For many respondents these birds indicate the quality of their relation with ancestors. Their presence and behaviour or absence during unusual periods of the year, is interpreted as message from the ancestors. Unusual parents in the birds' behaviour encourage consulting the *igqirha* and can lead to the performance of a ritual, to regain the goodwill of the ancestors. The ritual that is required can differ in size and character. A small ritual consist of the preparation of *umqombothi*, used by the family during the official ritual. Part of the *umqombothi* is poured next to the central pool in the heart of the kraal, as a gift to the ancestors. During bigger rituals, an animal (goat or cattle) is slaughtered and consumed by the relatives. Parts of the meat and the horns of the animal are presented to the ancestors in the kraal.

For some respondent the union with birds of the house is formalized in their representation as bird of the 'clan'. Especially in these occasions the birds enjoy special protection, while their behaviour is observed for indicating needs and demands of the ancestors. In general these birds of the house seem to contribute to the well-being of the family as is indicated by some statements:

"This morning my yard was filled with them, they like my yard." (PM-PA), and "Once Ihobe gives birth, it loves its babies. I know that if you come across the doves it means that you are lucky. In the past we used to say 'two doves for joy!'." (PM27).

A minority of respondents consider the birds of the house to be troublemakers and an easy catch. In these occasions the birds were seen as mere meat on wings close at hand. Especially *Ihobe* is appreciated for its delicious meat: *"this bird has a very good taste."* (PM3). Other species like *Isomi* are unwelcome as is stated by the following respondent: *"Isomi is not important to us, instead it is making damage to our house. When I repair the holes in our roof Isomi comes and eats the plaster out of it."* (On the roof where iron plates) (PM20). In these case people made efforts to chase the birds away.

6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BIRDS IN NDLAMBE

This chapter presents the data collected during the fieldwork in Ndlambe. The chapter is similar to chapter five in its structure along the four sections (with subsections) corresponding with the first four research questions (section 2.3.1).

6.1 Local knowledge of birds species

This section elaborates on the question: what do amaXhosa know of the local birdlife community?

6.1.1 Knowledge indicated through bird names

The free list exercises are used as an entry point for a quantitative presentation of people's knowledge. In Ndlambe the number of bird species mentioned in the free lists was 47, with an average of 9,9 species per respondent. Of all species, 16 species were mentioned by only one respondent, 14 were mentioned between two and four in a free list, and 16 species were mentioned by more than five respondents (table 6.1). Table 6.1 provides an overview of the most mentioned birds.

Table 6.1 Overview of the sixteen most mentioned bird species in Ndlambe. The underlined species are recognized by the IUCN red listed as critical endangered (CE). The* indicates a bird family group. The abbreviations in the habitat column indicate the place of birds in the local worldview (section 6.4): H = bird of the house, F = bird of the forest, V = bird of the field and R = bird of the river.

isiXhosa name	Englisch name	Scientific name	Habitat	N
<i>Ihobe</i>	Cape turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	H	21
<i>Isomi</i>	Red-winged starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	H	16
<i>Ukhozi</i>	Large bird of prey* (eagle)	spp.	F	16
<i>Umcelu</i>	Wagtail*	<i>Matocilla</i> spp.	H	14
<i>Umosi (local name)</i>	Sparrow*	<i>Passer</i> spp.	H	14
<i>Ihlungulu</i>	White-necked raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	F	13
<i>Inkonjane</i>	Swallow*	<i>Hirundu</i> spp.	H/R	9
<i>Unomyayi</i>	Cape crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	F	9
<i>Incede</i>	Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	F	8
<i>Intsikizi</i>	<u>Southern ground hornbill (CE)</u>	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	F	8
<i>Isikhova</i>	Owl*	spp.	F	7
<i>Ujackjack (local name)</i>	Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	F	7
<i>Ukhwalianzi</i>	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	R	6
<i>Igxiya</i>	Lapwing*	<i>Vanellus</i> spp.	F	5
<i>Ihobo-hobo</i>	Cape weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	F/R	5
<i>Ing'ang'ane</i>	Hadedda ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	F	5

Figure 6.1 illustrates the number of birds against gender and age of respondents, indicating the relation between these variables. The number of male and female respondents is both nineteen, with an average age of 54 year. Ages ranged between 19 and 79 among male and between 31 and 66 among female respondents. Male respondents did mention on average ten species, females mentioned on average eight species. The figures seem to indicate that male respondents know slightly more bird species than females do. For both groups a slightly increase of knowledge with age seems to occur. The general pattern does not differ from that of Pirie (figure 5.1).

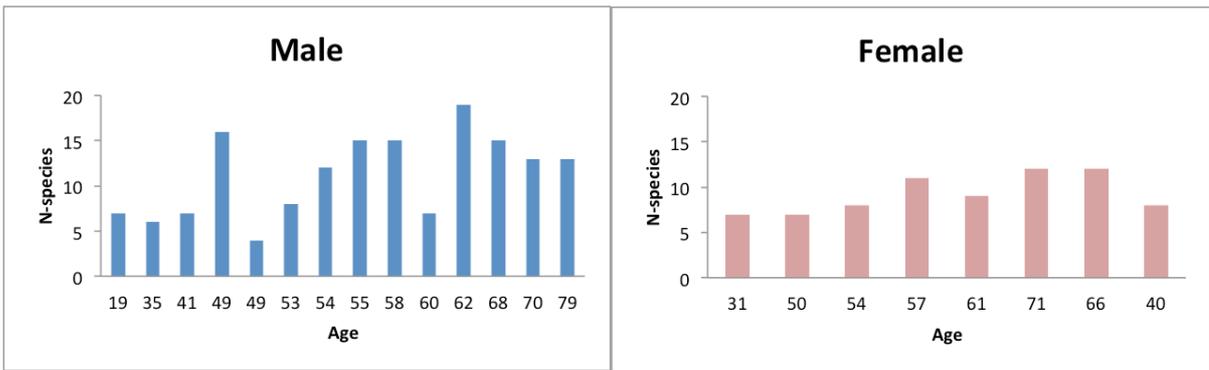


Figure 6.1 Illustrates the number of birds, age and gender of respondents in Ndlambe.

Based on the free list results the average rank and frequency of bird species estimated. Figure 6.2 presents a graphic overview of the 16 most mentioned species and their average rank and frequency for villagers in Ndlambe. The figure indicates a cluster of five species (upper left corner) with a particular high frequency and average rank. The remaining eleven species are well known within the community as well. The figure thus provides an indication of the most well-known birds.

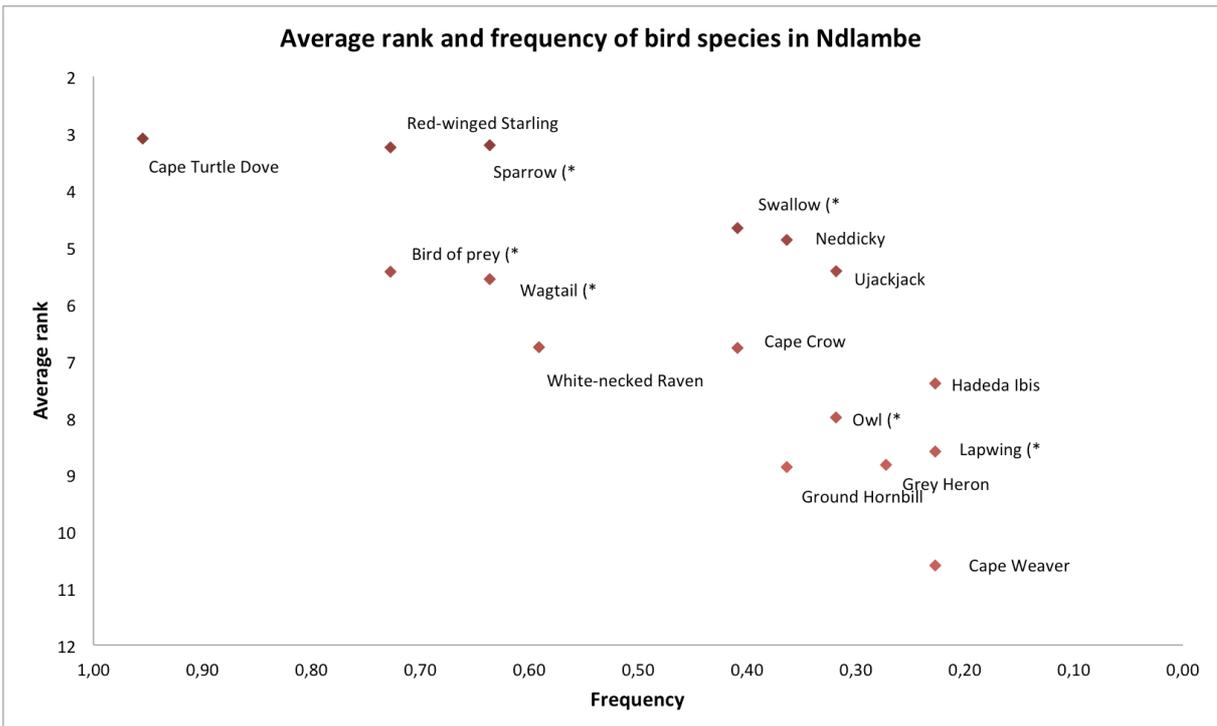


Figure 6.2 The figure presents the bird species recognized in Ndlambe. The sixteen most important species (mentioned 5 times or more / frequency 0.20 or higher) are plotted in relation to the number of times they are mentioned in different interviews (frequency) and their position in the list (average rank). So the Cape Turtle Dove is mentioned in most interviews at the beginning of the free list, while the Cape Weaver is mentioned only in a few interviews and in later instance.

6.1.2 Sources of local bird knowledge

Sources of bird knowledge and the characteristics of this knowledge are less clear than is the case for Pirie. Respondents in Ndlambe expressed a holistic perception of reality. Boundaries between the distinct areas of TEK are less obvious. This inextricable connection between different areas of life is expressed in a story of *Ukhozi* (large bird of prey*) and *Isomi* (red-winged starling).

“I don’t know what birds are important to us, and if they contribute to our life. What I do know is that Ukhozi is important for it steals my little chickens. I observed that Isomi did scare away Ukhozi. Since I don’t like my little chickens to be taken by Ukhozi, I fastened a peach can to my roof to provide a house for Isomi [fig. 6.3]. Isomi now will help me when Ukhozi comes and help me by scaring Ukhozi away. I like Isomi for it is a good protection against Ukhozi.” (Nd1)

The respondent, a 57-year-old lady, shows a very natural integration of knowledge (*I observed that...*), practice (*I fastened... and scaring Ukhozi away.*), and belief (*Isomi will help me...*). The three aspects integrate into a final statement: *‘I like Isomi...’*. This story indicates how knowledge and practices are linked with beliefs and cultural significance. Meanwhile illustrating how knowledge derives from birds that are related to livelihood practices.



Figure 6.3 Showing a traditional round house in Ndlambe with the owner posting in front of it. Under the roof an old peach can is fastened serving as breeding place for a Red-winged Starling (*Onychognathus morio*) couple. The male bird is just visible on the wire left of the building (figure source: Gijbetsen, 2011). (The right figure is a crop of the main figure)

In addition personal experiences developed during livelihood practices outside the village especially livestock (goat) herding and hunting were mentioned as a source of contemporary bird knowledge. Especially older male respondents refer to their hunting experiences as an important source of their contemporary bird knowledge. Although they exchanged the hunting game for adult activities and responsibilities, long time ago, the lessons learned in the hunting game are still present.

“We grow up hunting the birds, killing them with a sling. Once shot, we could observe the birds close at hand. That is how I get to know the birds. I believe it is hard to get to know the birds when you don't hunt them.” (Nd23).

People also express knowledge of species, without a direct linkage to their livelihood practices. One respondent mentioned: *“Isinqolamthi [woodpecker*] likes old trees very much. If you come across an old dead tree, this bird is eating the larva of insects there.” (Nd2).* This knowledge can derive from personal observation of the bird. Another example in the same interview expresses knowledge shared within the local community:

“Unoqandilana [yellow-throated woodland-warbler], lives deep into the forest, you never find it around the house. It makes a sound like a repeated phu-phu-phu. Xhosa people use to say to each other when it is very hot: ‘Unoqandilana is making his sound’.”

Were the second bird, *Unoqandilana* is a species that only lives in the deep forest, indicating knowledge not only of the birds nearby but also of species living out of the village in the periphery of villagers range. In both examples not only the species name, but also its behaviour is known. This knowledge in the latter case is further embedded into a cultural framework as it is applied in a saying.

Respondents in Ndlambe did lay much emphasis on the role of parents and other people in development of their knowledge. *“I know the birds because I learned their names from others in the village. Sometimes I just see them fly around.” (Nd1).* The reply of most respondents however indicates that they were not aware of their sources of bird knowledge. A shared general idea among respondents was that elderly people in the village hand down knowledge of the local environment and of birds. They are considered experts in the bird names and their related significance for man. In a number of cases it was mentioned ‘my father told me...’.

6.1.3 Variation of bird knowledge among people

Parents and grandparents shared their concern for the deviating life orientation of their children and their disinterest in traditional knowledge. After asking a 62-year-old man: *“Did you succeed in passing over your knowledge of birds?”* he replied:

“I hope I did. I tried as much as I could to teach my five children, but I wonder if I succeed. In the past I went out naked as we were born. I did enjoy going out into the forest. Today kids get cloths on as soon as they are born, later they have the opportunity to go to school and even university, I only went to grade five here in the village. Today kids don't go out to hunt that much anymore. Instead they prefer to socialize and hang around in the village.” (Nd7)

The statement indicates that according to this respondent the knowledge of the younger generation is declining, in spite of their parents effort.

6.2 Beliefs associated with birds

The symbolic value of birds seems well recognized among respondents. This subsection elaborates on these beliefs regarding birds.

6.2.1 Birds and ancestors

The link of ancestors with particular bird species seems strong in Ndlambe. More than in Pirie, respondents did share knowledge over and experiences with birds that are associated to the ‘invisible people’ of their family.

“Xhosa people believe in ancestors. If Umosi [sparrow] goes into the house it means a lot for me, for it is a sign that the ancestors are looking after my family and me. My own experience is that Umosi just comes and moves in and out.” (Nd1)*

This quotes illustrates how the observation of birds and awareness of their behaviour is intertwined with daily live. Maintaining a good relation with once ancestors is considered important to safeguard the family’s well-being. If signs, like mentioned received through birds, indicate a disturbed relation action needs to be taken by the family. This can be done through the performance of a ritual, like preparing *umqombothi*, slaughter a cow and prepare a meal for the ancestors in the kraal. Here birds play a role as indicator of the ancestors favour over the preformed ritual.

“Umosi is a birds of home that symbolises the presence of the ancestors. It gives us messages. If the family is about to prepare a ritual, they are coming because they want to be part of the ceremony.” (Nd3)

Especially *Umosi* seems of significance in communication with the ancestors. Not only its regular visits to once home, also it's partaking in rituals indicates the favour of the ancestors. However other birds of the house are important as well. Respondents did also mention *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove), *Isomi* (red-winged starling), and *Umcelu* (wagtail*) as representations of ancestors during daily life and ritual events. In most cases these birds did serve as a clan bird as well.

“Ihobe, Isomi, Imosi and Umcelu are all very important to me. From a traditional point of view, if you don't see these birds around the house you start questioning why? I grow up with this knowledge from my father that especially Umcelu should be around. If not, you need to prepare umqombothi and perform a ritual. (...) Umcelu helps you to see things clear in your house. If the bird is absent, you don't see where your money goes. Also the relation with your colleagues is in danger. If Umcelu is around it symbolizes a good relationship with your ancestors and things will go well.” (Nd9)

This reflection of an older couple embodies several aspects of the role of birds. There are four species of significance for this person. One is especially relevant in the interaction with ancestors. It is expressed who *Umcelu* is observed around the house. Things are considered 'normal', in place and good when the bird is around. If not, something is wrong in the relationship with the ancestors as is expressed at the end of this quote. In that case a ritual need to be performed, to make things right again. The quality of the ancestral relation determines once well-being in other areas of life as well. These respondents mention the social atmosphere in the house: 'see things clear', the control over once financial status and the relation with colleagues. The quote does indicate that ancestors are actively involved in all these areas of life. Without their goodwill and blessing living relatives cannot prosper. Maintaining a good relation, in showing respect and even venerate your ancestors is therefore of key importance.

The role of the birds as expressed in the quote above is 'symbolic'. *Umcelu* symbolises a good relation, the bird is rather passive mediating than actively involved in the communication. The reason for this bird to serve as a messenger is simply expressed as: 'I grow up with this knowledge from my father'. Other respondents expressed the role of a bird in a similar way. Often referring to their father as the one who gave them instructions regarding what species and behaviour indicates ancestral interaction. One respondent who valued *Ihobe* for its connection with the ancestors

mentioned: *"This bird gives birth along the fence of the kraal, normally two babies. I have the feeling that they are part of the ancestors."* (Nd19).

Among the areas of life that are influenced by ancestors in many cases was also health. Ancestors first of all seem to influence once health as an expression their satisfaction, with the commitment of the living in maintaining a good relation. In all cases the birds were seen as communicators and symbolic indicators of the status quo in this reciprocity.

Although the 'birds of the house' are of core importance in the ancestral veneration, occasionally other species are mentioned to serve as messenger as well. Their communication seems indicated by extraordinary behaviour, shown to the observed. In one occasion *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill) landed on the roof of once house where it was looking towards the kraal (the place where the ancestors live). In reply the respondent took his stick and went out to consult the diviner.

6.2.2 Birds and well-being

A majority of respondents is convinced that birds do interact with man. An open attitude and alertness to the behaviour of birds is therefore required. In case of any doubt the *igqirha* should be consulted for interpretation of the observed behaviour, for the signs can be of importance for once well-being. This phenomenon is especially expressed in the role of birds as omens. Some bird species can indicate good as well as bad omens. An important one among them is *Isikhova* (owl*). Its visit and call close to a homestead is a bad sign. One respondent mentioned his own experience:

"Isikhova is a bird that brings bad news. Before I joined the church, one night I heard the call of Isikhova before the sun came up. I prepared my stick and went out to chase this evil spirit. I went to the tree, but couldn't see anything. Then I saw the bird on a pool and I threw my stick. Suddenly something was moving inside me, and my strength faded away. I went inside and decided to pick up my stick later, with the light. The bird did not come back, and nothing bad happened, but I was struggling." (Nd7)

This story is reflecting experiences of others who consider the visit of *Isikhova* a bad omen. Scaring the bird away seems the best remedy to escape from the evil it indicates. As this respondent states, it is not just the owl, it is an evil spirit that is visiting. The story further indicates that although nothing bad happened, the person had to struggle afterwards. Later during the interview he mentioned that this struggle only ended after he became attendant of a Christian church. Other birds of bad omens mentioned in Ndlambe are *Inggangqolo* (thick-knee), *Ilungulu* (white-necked raven) and *Ing'ang'ane* (hadeda ibis). As less people mentioned these birds and less elaboration on their behaviour was given their role seems less important in indicating bad omens. Respondents

mentioned: *“If Ingqangqolo or Ilungulu make their sound, I expect bad things to happen. In that case I go to the diviner, who tells me what to do.”* (Nd13). Regarding *Ing’ang’ane* it was mentioned that: *“People believe that if it makes the sound, it indicates bad news. You can be witched or your ancestors are dissatisfied.”* (Nd7) Negative omens can be indicated by the visit or call of all of these birds. Among them *Isikhova* seems most well-known and recognized for indicating bad omens.

Respondents in Ndlambe associate good omens to several birds as well. Most important among them are the birds of the house (section 6.4.3), clan birds or birds that intervene between the living and the dead (section 6.2.1).

6.3 Practices related to birds

This section provides an overview of practices regarding birds expressed in the material and non-material realm.

6.3.1 Material practices with birds

A number of applications of birds can be distinguished in Ndlambe. Hunting games practiced by young boys are the most obvious practice in respect to birds in the village. Bird hunting seems very much a boys practice in Ndlambe. Boys from age seven up to sixteen go out on informal hunting trips. A respondent stated: *“When I was young, I went out with my sling to hunt for birds. This is only for kids in my opinion.”* (Nd16). One respondent of 19 years elaborated on the details of the hunt, illustrating the procedure of this activity:

“I used to hunt when I was younger. We went with a group of six or seven friends into the forest. I carried the stones, and the shooters the sling. If we were lucky we shoot three or four birds. We used to carry matches with us to light a fire in the forest and roast the birds afterwards. I remember they were nice! Later we realized that we were grown up and stopped hunting.”
(Nd18)

The most popular places to go for a hunt are the village edge and thicket forest adjacent to the village. The boys hunting game already contain a tendency towards food collection through the hunting practice. Although all birds are of interest to the boys as a potential bounty, *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove) is most favoured for its size and tasty meat (Nd21). A 62-year-old respondent mentioned:

"I wouldn't say that birds are important to me. Because when I was young (7-15 years) we went out hunting and grilled the birds we caught. Now they are no longer important to me, I just look at them. I don't eat any of them, except for Impangele [helmeted guineafowl]." (Nd7)

This and other statements indicate a shift away from interest in birds that could be caught as bounty in a hunting game. Respondents who mentioned *Impangele* as an edible bird, all had eaten the bird long ago. No indication of organized, frequent, or recent hunt was found. One respondent explained: *"Impangele is scarce, and can only be found on the farm at the other side of the river."* (Nd15) Indicating that the preference habitat of the bird could be found across the Great Fish River on the private farm, outside of the village commonage. Apart from the *Impangele* no other species were mentioned by adults to serve as food. One respondent did state to take the opportunity for easy meat if a bird would walk into the house: *"If Ihobe [cape turtle dove] by mistake goes into the house I catch it and eat it."* (Nd21). His statement illustrates that the focus of people is not on acquiring birds, but that for some respondents the opportunity to catch one will not be wasted. However only a few people would kill and eat the bird, indicating a very small-scale practice.

Second there is the ornamental application of birds. One respondent mentioned the use of bleu crane feathers. The feathers of *Indwe* (bleu crane), the national bird of South Africa are worn by important persons during festival and ceremonial events (Nd7). No account of present day practicing was made, indicating this as a former practices.

A third utilizing value of birds is more of an indirect character. Several species are considered to be of importance, and appreciated for their contribution to human livelihoods. This is best illustrated by an example: *"Ingwababane [in this case the Zulu name of Unomyayi = cape crow] is very important to us. (...) They bite the ticks from our cattle, so we don't need to dip our animals."* (Nd16). In this statement the respondent expresses some biological knowledge like the name and manner of *Unomyayi*. As a result the bird is appreciated for his habit to feed on parasites that live on livestock. Other respondents also mentioned *Isomi* (red-winged starling) and *Ukhwaimanzi* (grey heron) as species that sued to eat the ticks from their cattle. Being appreciated for a part of its behaviour does not mean that all respondents appreciate a bird. While *Unomyayi* is rated for eating insects it is less loved by other respondents for its behaviour to feed on crop seedlings and fruits in the plantation.

Another bird that is appreciated is *Isomi*. Section 6.2 already elaborated on the role of *Isomi* in protecting poultry from attacks of *Ukhozi* (large bird of prey*). Other respondents support the value of this bird as well: *"Isomi is a very helpful bird, even if it makes a nest on the roof of your house, you don't kill it. They help to protect against Ukhozi."* (Nd9). Some go even further by providing housing to attract the bird to their homestead. *"I put a can for Isomi right under the roof of my house. I put it*

there because it is a safe place for the bird to stay. (...) Isomi is very good in chasing Ukhozi.” (Nd6).

This practice underlines the positive value associated with *Isomi*.

No indication was found of birds or their parts being applied in medicines, rituals or other practices in Ndlambe.

6.3.2 Non-material practices with birds

Birds are related to different areas of life. The distinct areas of TEK engage each other particular in the non-material practices with birds. In the case of ancestors contact birds serve as symbolic mediators, in case of climatologically phenomenon their role becomes more indicative for the observer.

There are two birds associated with climatologically phenomena, *Inkonjane* (swallow*) and *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill). Both do have a connection with rain. Whereas *Inkonjane* does indicate the approach of rain, *Intsikizi* does influence the rain as well. Several respondents mentioned its ability to call and stop the rain. One of them (70 years old) told this story about *Intsikizi*:

“In the past when I was 10 or 15 we had to hang this bird at the places we wanted rain. It had to be removed if we would to stop the rain or in case it get too heavy. The chief used to instruct his warriors to go out and hunt for Intsikizi when it was very dry.” (Nd2)

Like in Pirie also in Ndlambe, *Intsikizi* is a bird that has a strong connection with rain. The practice described above was also mentioned in Pirie. In both cases it is no longer applied, but still remembered. People however expressed that the arrival of the bird still indicates the coming of rain.

A second area of non-material practices of is the role of birds in providing livelihood services. In Ndlambe, account was made of this significance in regard to the consumption of snakes by *Ukhwalimanzi* (grey heron). Other species related to livelihood services in this case is *Isomi* (red-winged starling) on who is elaborated in previous sections.

6.4 Birds in the local environmental perception

The environmental perception of most Xhosa is characterized by the connectedness of everything. Traditional societies have developed their own frameworks as strategies to order, control and relate towards the world around. Totem species are one way to relate the observed order within the natural world to the human society in an attempt to create structure within the human world (Levi-strauss in Lemaire, 2007). The results of our fieldwork indicate a fluid (holistic) worldview wherein fact and belief are inseparable. The visible world is connected with the invisible world; the living are

linked to the dead. This section elaborates on birds in their relation to the environmental perception of respondents in Ndlambe. The thus distinguished bird groups do reflect the local cultural perception of the natural world. One respondent in particular (who showed to be a diviner) draw a framework that allows for a deeper understanding of the local environmental perception and the place of birds therein¹⁷. This key informant as follow summarized the framework:

“Isomi [red-winged starling] and Umcelu [wagtail] are birds of the house. Idada [duck*] and Uskholimanzi [grey heron] live next to the river. The other species live in the forest. From the traditional point of view no other groups exists. Only these places and their related species can be distinguished.” (Nd11)*

6.4.1 Birds of the river

This section will start elaborating on the significance of birds of the river, while further illustrating the connection of birds with ancestors and the local environment as well. We first present an integral reproduction of the explanation given by our key informant:

Question: “What do you mean by ‘traditional point of view’?”

Answer: “Personally if I talk about the river, there is a ‘house’ under the river (and the other places I just mentioned [forest and house]). In it our ancestors dwell. The people living under the water send Idada [duck] to us from their home under the river. There is no name for the house under the river, but what I believe is that every Xhosa family has got a house for its ancestors under the river.”*

Question: “This River?”

Answer: “Yes this river, the Great Fish River. Animals that belong here in the village or in the forest and that are related to these families represent these ancestors to us. Every family has its own wild animal species, like the elephant or the jackals. This is not necessarily a clan animal (not every family has a clan animal) it is at least a family animal; that serves as a connection between the ancestors and the living. If there is a message coming from a river related animal, we are going to the river to perform a ritual. We for example bring mealies there, or sorghum and wheat to offer our relatives under the river.”

¹⁷ Note that we follow a distinct line of division than used in the previous chapter (6.4). The line applied in both cases represents the local worldview in its prevailing order and related to the local environment.

The section ‘birds of the field’ is excluded in this section at all. The whole elaboration is based on groups of birds as respondents themselves distinguished them. The group of ‘birds of the field’ was not mentioned in Ndlambe. Therefore it is excluded from this section. The absence of this group can best be explained by the local environmental characteristics. Where there are small fields, and plantations, but only minor parts related to Pirie.

“A message from ancestors living in the river will be represented by Idada or by a crocodile. Not necessarily in real life, they can also approach one in a dream. Especially for the animals that lived here long time ago like the elephant and crocodile, they will appear to you in a dream. This animal is not necessarily a clan animal. An animal can represent both family sides (male and female), but also only one. My father for example is umzwanga so Idada represents him. The crocodile represents my mother. If I am going to perform a ritual in the river I will have to differentiate between the two families. In that case multiple rituals need to be performed according to each family customs. (It does not have to do with clan animals here, for every family has its own river animal. So it will make a confusion talking about clan animals here. These differ for father and mother. The animal that approaches you will indicate for whom and where a ritual needs to be performed.)” (Nd11)

The given explanation provides a view into the way local people perceive their world. The natural environment is home to the living as well as to the dead, to men and animals. They interact and relate to each other resulting in mutual relations. Birds and other animals do play a role in the communication between relatives that still live and those who died. Those who died went to separate places determining much of the environmental distinctions local people make. Birds living in these distinguished areas are preserved as such; in this case ‘birds of the river’. Three species are included within this group¹⁸: *Idada* (duck*), *Uthekwane* (hamerkop), and *Ukhwalimanzi* (grey heron). All three are mentioned by a number of respondents. Some elaborated on their characteristics like: *“Idada is living next to the water.”* (Nd16). And *“We do have ancestors that are connected to the river. (...) When we are there river animals will make a sign.”* (Nd22). Two birds are considered to belong to two areas. *Ihobo-hobo* (cape weaver) is a bird of the forest as well as of the river, and *Inkonjane* (swallow*) is a bird of the river as well as the house. This double environmental attachment makes it a potential bird for transmitting messages between both places.

6.4.2 Birds of the forest

A second group of bird are the birds of the forest. This is the largest group with fifteen species, representing an important part of the natural world. Most of these species are of low cultural significance. However even here the message indicated by a bird needs to be taken seriously, as is illustrated by the key informant:

“If there is a message coming from the forest, through a forest related animal, we go to the forest, because we know that the message comes from the people [ancestors] of the forest. In

¹⁸ In this whole section the total list of birds that was used are the species that were mentioned in two or more free lists.

order to know what exactly to do, we send for the Igqirha to consult him/here. He will tell us exactly what we need to do, for the people that belong to the forest. Bees serve as important massagers from the forest people. Depending on the message we will perform a ritual. The diviner is required to explain the will of the ancestors represented by the bees. This can be for example the desire of the mother or father of the house, who passed away, to be served with a dinner. This should be prepared and served for the person in his house (here in the village).”
(Nd11)

Among the birds of the forest is *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill) who is significant for its forecast of rain. *Ihobo-hobo* (cape weaver) another bird of the forest is considered a bird of the river as well. It was stated that it prefers to build its nest above the water but lives in the forest. Another bird is of cultural significance for its association to the forest as well as to the house. This is *Umosi* (sparrow*) first of all a bird of the house, but it was mentioned to live in the forest as well. There is one bird of the forest called *Ujackjack* (neddicky) respondents frequently mentioned. Besides its name, one respondent did mention that: “*Ujackjack does build its nest right along the fence of the kraal.*” (Nd6). This statement together with the times it is mentioned indicate it as a well-known bird among respondents and a bird that is associated with the house.

6.4.3 Birds of the house

Birds of the house form a small but significant group in Ndlambe. Although respondents differed in their emphasis on certain species, there seems consensus on what species belong to the house. *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove), *Isomi* (red-winged starling), *Umosi* (sparrow*) and *Umcelu* (wagtail*) are the four species in particular associated with the house or homestead. These species live close to man, have a role in their contact with ancestors and serve in some families as bird of the clan. There is a fifth bird of the house, mentioned by a small number of respondents. *Inkonjane* (swallow*) is considered a bird of the river as well as the house. In this role it serves as communicator between those who live in the river (ancestors) and those who are of the house. The biology of *Inkonjane* is close connected to this cultural role, as it prefers to build its nest attached to house and stables while uses to fly away to the riverbank to collect mud and feed on insects. As *Inkonjane*, so the other birds of the house are appreciated for this ‘in between position’, as is illustrated by the explanation of our key informant:

“In principle all of the birds belong to the forest. What I like to emphasize is that if the bird normally comes here and it builds its nest here, than we understand that this bird belongs to the house. It is a bird of the house. And if this bird does not appear for a long time, we just question

ourselves; why does it not come back. And then it will come back in the end. So we take it from that point that these birds belong to the house especially Isomi and Umcelu. All birds belong to the forest, but if it builds a nest here we understand it is a bird of the house. Some birds of the house in particular Isomi, are considered to come back to our places over and over again. If this is not the case, it indicates that something is wrong. In that case the diviner can be consulted to advice on what to be done to make things right again. (Nd11)

The quote clearly illustrates the significance of the birds of the house in maintaining a good relation with ancestors. Especially when the species is a clan bird as well, the household members treat it with care. *“Umcelu is a home bird here, it is the bird of our clan. In the morning they come to our home. We teach our children to take care of them and treat them well.” (Nd3)*. Species people feel a connection with, are supposed to be threatened well. There is a taboo on killing them and if possible additional action is expected to protect them. In some cases it was stated that parent teach their children the importance and expected behaviour regarding the species. This is illustrated by the quote above as well as in the following statement: *“We respect Umosi, because our parents told us to do so, and it is visiting our homes representing our ancestors.” (Nd14)*



Figure 6.4 A traditional kraal in Ndlambe, build of thorn branches from the nearby Thicket forest (figure source: Gijbertsen, 2011).

The animal kraal is a place on the homestead where livestock is kept safe during the night. It is also the place where the ancestors (related to the house) dwell¹⁹. By living in and around this kraal, birds of the house underline their connection with the ancestors. One respondent illustrates this connection:

“Every day I approach the ancestors. They connect with me through the birds, which approach me. Sometimes the birds go inside the kraal and after it they go in to or in front of the house. This indicates that you need to perform a ritual. If you don't react they go away and come back to do the same again.” (Nd4)

This statement illustrates how the kraal and its birdlife do facilitate in the interaction with ancestors and their subsequent relation to once well-being. One respondent took a step further in stating that every house must have a nest of *Umosi*. Without this something is wrong and a ritual is required to make things right again.

“Every house must have a nest of Umosi, if this is not the case, a ritual must be performed, making it visiting the house. This is because it is a bird of the house. The same applies to Isomi, it is like Umosi and as important. You can support it with a can under your roof that they will use as a nesting place. The other birds live in the forest and are therefore less important.” (Nd21)

It is clear from these observations that a select group of birds is very important for villagers. For interaction with these species informal agreements on their value and the need to respect them exists.

It should be recognized that Ndlambe is far from heterogeneous. A number of respondents did not recognise the existence of birds of the house or the need to house any species as reflected in the last statement. Their approach towards the natural world has more in common with that of a scientific rational mind. However there is some contradiction in the elaboration of these respondents. Initial a bird could be seen as just a bird and nothing special as is reflected in this statement: *“Question: Do birds have importance to you? Answer: Now, they are not important, I just look at them.” (Nd7).*

¹⁹ As dwelling place of the ancestors the kraal fulfils a special role in the Xhosa worldview and spiritual perception of the worlds. It is the heart where life in the homestead (and subsequent in the village) centres around. Research has shown that even in urban settings and some rural cases where no longer livestock is kept, the kraal continues to be maintained (Cocks, Bangay, Wiersum, & Dold, 2004). As places of livestock and dwelling place for the ancestors, only male and female clan relatives are allowed to enter. The kraal fence is built of thorn branches, using at least nineteen different species (Cocks & Dold, 2006), forming a dense wall. While it keeps the animals inside, it does serve as a hide and breeding place for the birds as well. This together with the food supplier resulting from the livestock presence, the kraal is a favoured habitat for a number of bird species.

While further elaboration made clear that there was certainly an importance of birds for this respondent.

“From a traditional point of view (...) I believe there is a bird that can bring good messages. When Umcelu is just keeping on flying around the house things are going well. If the bird goes away things are going not as good. I grow up with this knowledge as a kid and witnessed during my life that it was true as I was told.” (Nd7)

The respondent explains what first seems a contradiction here, by illustrating different ‘points of view’ taken to the topic. What becomes clear is how respondents do take multiple perspectives on a topic. This provides us a glimpse of an even more complex heterogeneity, not only among but also within a single respondent. Relevant here is that from a traditional point of view birds of the house do exist and have their cultural significance in Ndlambe.

7 COMPARISON OF BIRD SIGNIFICANCE IN PIRIE MISSION AND NDLAMBE

This chapter presents the traditional perspectives on birds as presented in the previous chapters (5 and 6), by comparing their cultural significance for respondents in Pirie and Ndlambe. In the first section we compare Pirie and Ndlambe using the free list results as a departure point, while covering the distinct areas of TEK (knowledge, practices and beliefs) in the further elaboration. The second section compares birds in the local environmental perception.

7.1 Local significance of birds expressed in the areas of TEK compared

The cultural significance in this research is measured quantitative through the free listing as well as qualitative through interviews. A summary of the free list results is presented in table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Summarizing of the overall numbers of collected data in Pirie and Ndlambe.

	Pirie Mission	Ndlambe
Number of birds from the free lists	60	47
Average number per interview	11,2	9,9
Number of birds seen on location	60	77

What the table indicates is a small difference in locally recognized species between both villages. Whereas respondents in Pirie came up with 60 species in Ndlambe 47 species were mentioned. Also the average value per interview lays somewhat lower for Ndlambe. When we compare the percentages of unique species and the overlap in species for both places a similar picture appears, with 36% of the species recognized in Pirie and 19% recognized in Ndlambe.

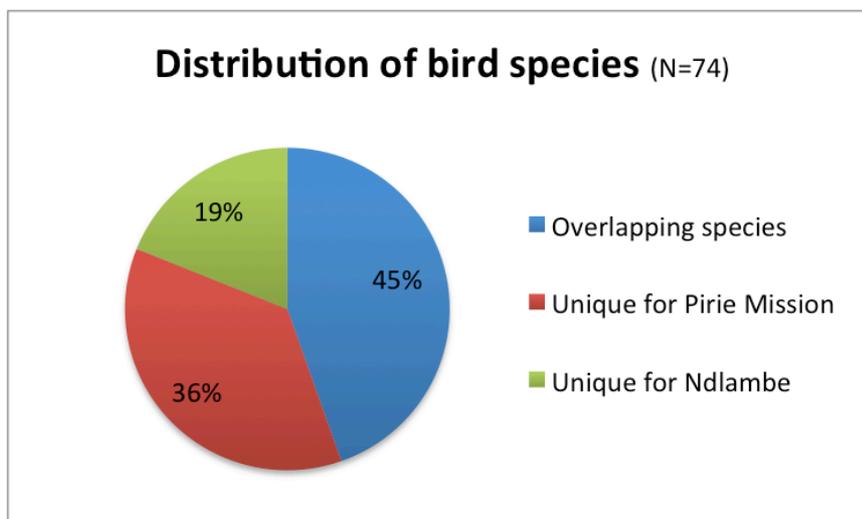


Figure 7.1 Indication of the distribution of local recognized species in Pirie and Ndlambe.

An explanation for this difference can be sought in physical conditions like a distinct environmental context. Pirie is situated in a diverse environment, but not in a biodiversity hotspot (www.biodiversityhotspot.org). The Albany thicket surrounding Ndlambe is well known for its diversity in both plant and animal species (Fabricius, Burger, & Hockey, 2003; Knight & Cowling, 2003). This difference in diversity is the field bird observation results as well (see appendices). These aspects seem to contrast with the results, as local people recognize less species in the most diverse context. We therefore reject the explanation of differences in local recognized species based on environmental variation between both areas.

An alternative explanation can be sought in diverting local practices resulting in a distinct interaction people have with their environment. A number of respondents both in Pirie and Ndlambe did mention their knowledge to derive from livelihood practices such as hunting (youth), work at the plantation, and cattle herding. It is reasonable that local transport like the travel between once homestead and field also contributes to intensive environmental interaction. It was found that the number of respondents participating in crop farming, due to a more suitable environment, lies higher in Pirie. Cattle, predominantly held in Pirie also requires more care, as the animals need to be brought home daily. In contrast goats are more self-reliant coming home independently. The few farmers who owned cattle in Ndlambe did not lock them in at night. Instead they visited them at least once a week, collecting them only at the end of the season. The relative unsuitable agricultural conditions in Ndlambe also seem to contribute to alternative livelihood strategies more oriented on labour in nearby urban centres and state support, compared to Pirie. In contrast with Ndlambe, the suitable conditions in Pirie allow most villagers to cultivate at least a small garden close by, where they grow some crops for own consumption. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the interaction people have with their environment, as a result of distinct local livelihood practices, relates to their specific knowledge of birds. The significance of birds within a culture, in this explanation derives from daily livelihood activities.

Explanation of differences in local significance can also be sought in the socio-cultural domain rather than the environmental context. Disconnection between local people and their environment can occur, resulting from a changing lifestyle. As a result loss of TEK occurs, as its relevance becomes less significant. In both Pirie and Ndlambe such a shift in lifestyle from rural subsistence (in the past) to peri-urban (present) can be observed (Alexander, 2010). Although this factor applies to both communities, a distinction based on factors seems just. The education system in Pirie is already present for a long time, due to its missionary past. Further its location and good connection with the urban centres of King Williams Town and Alice, enables for intensive interaction with an urban environment. This can be an explanation of the occurring difference in TEK. The findings indicate a

step away from bird significance based on traditional values, towards their value based on traditional values, towards their value based on a modern western worldview. In Pirie respondents put most emphasis on knowledge and practices, in Ndlambe respondents put more emphasis on practices and beliefs. Ndlambe in this respect is a community where birds do have a high significance expressed in their symbolic value. Whereas Pirie is a community where the significance of birds is expressed in bird related practices and a detailed knowledge of species. The latter having a tangible ecological character rather than an intangible cultural character. The socio-economic explanation of the in table 7.1 and figure 7.1 illustrated differences in local recognized bird species, thus can be that the community of Pirie is more aware of local birdlife and their cultural value, as a result of education. In Ndlambe people are less aware of local birdlife as their TEK is more embedded in a self-evident cultural context.

An additional remark needs to be made regarding three topics. These are the subsection with topics on birds and climatologically phenomenon, human well-being and birds in proverbs and stories. All three contain a higher level of detail in Pirie. Also a higher number of respondents did elaborate into more detail about the role of birds in these areas. It seems that while in Ndlambe the symbolic value of birds does prevail, in Pirie the ecological knowledge contained in proverbs and stories, is most prevalent.

Overall the significance of birds in Pirie is mainly expressed in knowledge of people. Often elaborated knowledge of names and species characteristics. Two reasonable explanations therefore are the local interaction of villagers with birdlife during livelihood practices and second the relative high level of education and modern lifestyle. In Ndlambe the significance of birds is most vital in their symbolic value. Respondents there more often made account of their own experiences with birds and could elaborate into more detail on their role in ancestral veneration than was the case in Pirie. It seems that the community of Ndlambe in this respect has a more traditional character. This and the less intensive interaction with modern urban areas does result in less elaborated TEK.

7.2 Birds in local environmental perceptions compared

A second topic to be touched upon is the place of birds in the local environmental perception. In both communities the most suitable division of species seem to be based on their habitat. This division meanwhile reflects the local worldview in regard to birds. It appears that for Ndlambe the group 'birds of the field' is missing. This seems just considering the local environmental characteristics, where fields are absent or don't play an important role in livelihoods. Although it is true that in both places some farming takes place. The amount of savannah type meadow fields suitable to house birds that require this habitat is very limited in Ndlambe, while Pirie is entirely surrounded by meadow fields. The resulting division of birds is illustrated in figure 7.2. It presents the

local distribution of species and their habitat as deriving from the interview data, in comparison for both villages.

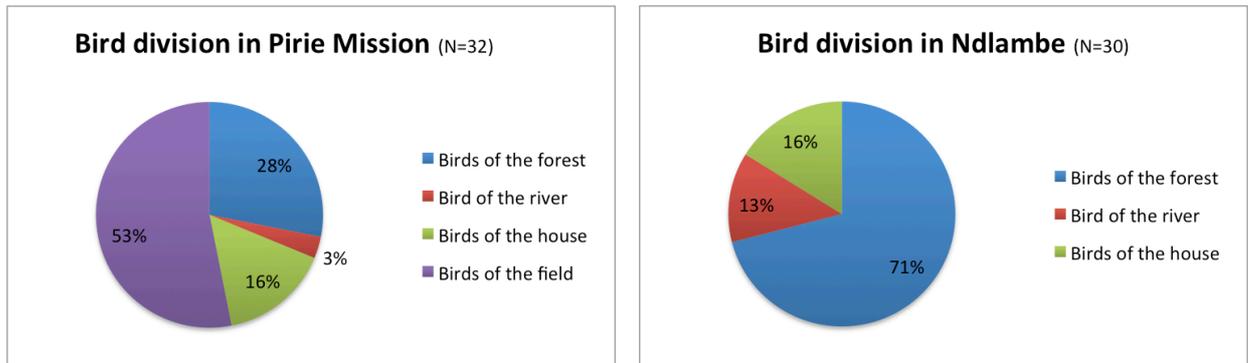


Figure 7.2 Illustration of the distribution of bird species over different environments for both villages.

What appears at first is that the dominating group is situated in field in Pirie (53%) and in the forest in Ndlambe (71%). The group birds of the river are somewhat larger in Ndlambe and the bird of the house group is of equal size. In Pirie the forest as well as the fields are considered to be the domain of the birds. Those who do not live in and next to the water or in the village belong to either one of these areas. For Ndlambe only the forest is considered to be the main dwelling place of the birds. The bird divisions again seem to reflect the Xhosa worldview very well. In Pirie as well as in Ndlambe ancestors are associated with the forest, river and house (whole homestead but particular the kraal). The field as a domain for ancestors is excluded in the traditional perception of the world. This probably explains why the division bird of the field is absent in Ndlambe. Species that base on their habitat criteria (from an ornithological viewpoint) should be based in the field are assigned birds of the forest in Ndlambe. Among them are a number of species assigned to the field in Pirie. Apart from the already mentioned environmental conditions, here again an indication of a difference in worldview between respondents in both places occurs. When we take bird and their place in the local environmental perception as a point of departure, the findings indicate the influence of a modern western worldview in Pirie. In Ndlambe on the opposite a traditional perception appears to prevail.

To close this chapter we will have a closer look at what appears to be the most significant group of birds the 'birds of the house'. In Pirie as well as in Ndlambe these birds have the highest rank, indicating their significance for a large number of respondents. In addition a number of respondents did mention additional biological as well as cultural features of these species. Below in table 7.2 the species are put together in one list.

Table 7.2 Local recognized ‘birds of the house’ in Pirie and Ndlambe. The numbers represents the times a species occurs in the free lists. The underlined numbers indicate that these species do not belong to the house for this village. The * behind a number indicates species that were mentioned as clan bird. The * behind the English names indicate that multiple species of the mentioned family are included.

isiXhosa name	Pirie	Ndlambe	English name
<i>Ihobe</i>	18	21	Cape Turtle Dove
<i>Isomi</i>	17*	16*	Red-winged Starling
<i>Incede</i>	11	<u>8</u>	Neddicky
<i>Inqgabe</i>	9	<u>1</u>	Cape Sparrow
<i>Inkonjane</i>	8	9	Swallow*
<i>Umcelu</i>	<u>11</u>	14*	Wagtail*
<i>Umosi</i>	<u>0</u>	14	Sparrow*

The number of birds of the house is the same for both places. The species differ, with two separate species for each place. All species do live in Pirie as well as in Ndlambe as is clear from the bird observation data (see appendices). *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove) and *Isomi* (red-winged starling) are the highest in rank in both cases. *Isomi* in addition is important for its role as a clan bird. Especially in Ndlambe multiple stories regarding its role in serving and protecting poultry intertwine with its symbolic value. Of the other species *Inkonjane* (swallow*) is a somewhat ambivalent species that belongs to the river and house. It is an appreciated species for its association to rainfall and its habit to nest where people live. The four remaining species can be divided into two small groups. First *Incede* (neddicky) and *Umcelu* (wagtail*), both recognized in Pirie and Ndlambe but with a different status. Although *Umcelu* is not a bird of the house in Pirie it is important in ancestral communication. One respondent mentioned its application as a medicine. *Incede* is in particular of significance for people in Pirie, where it seems more common and lives closer to the homesteads. In section 10.2 a discussion on the identification of the bird called *Ujackjack* is presented. When we consider the most reasonable option of the bird's identity (neddicky), then this has some implications for our point here. In this case we need to add up the values of *Ujackjack* (seven minus one double count with neddicky) with these of *Incede* the number of times for this species is fourteen. Although not recognized as a bird of the house, its high rank indicates its importance in both villages.

The second group contains *Inqgabe* (cape sparrow) and *Umosi*. Both are sparrows where *Inqgabe* is a more precise definition of a particular sparrow species. As is argued in section 10.2, *Umosi* as a species does not occur in Roberts list of names (Roberts, et al., 2005). The name can be borrowed

from the South African name of the cape sparrow '*gewone mossie*', that is widely present in Ndlambe.

To conclude this observation of the birds of the house, we argue that the similarity of this group for both villages is large.

To summarize the comparison of TEK among respondent in Pirie and Ndlambe, we conclude that there is a contrast between the locally recognized species and the local birdlife diversity. This contrast is explained by two reasons. First, a difference in local practices; whereas in Pirie livelihood practices like gardening and cattle farming lead to a more intensive interaction with local birdlife, in Ndlambe people focus more on livelihood support through labour elsewhere. Second a related difference in socio-economic context; whereas in Pirie people are higher educated and have easier access to urban centres resulting in a more modernised lifestyle, villagers of Ndlambe have a more traditional lifestyle with only recently increased interaction with urban areas. As a result the significance of birds in the community of Pirie is mainly expressed in knowledge and practices, while in Ndlambe most emphasis is put on the symbolic significance of birds. The elaborated TEK of respondents in Pirie does indicate an occurring merge of local TEK and external SEK.

8 ATTITUDES OF TRADITIONAL XHOSA PEOPLE TO BIRDLIFE CONSERVATION

This chapter examines the attitudes of local people towards conservation in of Pirie and Ndlambe, answering the question: What is the attitude of amaXhosa to birdlife conservation. In this chapter I use the concept of 'conservation' applied in a narrow sense to birdlife.

8.1 Birdlife conservation in Pirie Mission

Conservation in Pirie stands in light of the local experiences with past preservation practices. Villagers in Pirie are familiar with conservation due to their historical connection with the nearby Amathole Mountain reserve. For a number of villagers the concept of conservation did call forward negative associations with their forced exclusion from this forest reserve and its NTFP. Others expressed more appreciation for the reserve as a strategy to care for this unique forest and its birds. Although the following section should be read in light of this historical exclusion, its influence on local motives to protect birds seems limited. Most people even share their doubts on the value of the reserve for birdlife conservation *"I don't know if the reserve is a good idea to protect the birds, because birds are fast. It is not easy to keep the birds inside the reserve, or catch them, they fly away."* (PM16).

8.1.1 Attitudes of traditional people to the protection of birdlife

While the village of Pirie knows a long interaction with the adjacent nature reserve the idea of conserving birds seems unfamiliar for respondents. There seems no clear idea about what conservation is, neither on how birds can be protected locally. However there seem some motives for protection of birds, latent in local cultural values. This is expressed in the special status of clan and house species shown in the following statements:

"Umcelu [wagtail] and Isomi [red-winged starling] are associated to my clan. The old people told me not to kill it therefore."* (PM5) and *"Isomi is a home bird, because it lives in the village and builds its nest under the roof. You cannot kill it."* (PM12).

The later statement also illustrating how the appreciation of a species goes together with its presence close to human dwellings. The tendency to protect these species 'close by' is also expressed in education of kids by their parents: *"My kids don't kill birds; think of the baby birds, who is gone feed them if the parents are killed?"* (PM1) The later reasoning, expresses an understanding of ecological processes in the animal world, as well as an ethic of respect for living creatures. This ethic adds a dimension to the already existing respect for clan and house bird species. A number of

respondents in their reply did reflect this ethic of respect for life. Killing is only done for a reason; otherwise one should pay respect and care for other creatures. This rule applies to adults as well as to their children. *“We do not allow the kids to catch them, because birds are like people (talking about the soul) so we have to take care of them.” (PM21).*

Motivations based on which a bird species or the birds in general enjoy human care often comes from multiple angles, that mix together into an attitude of respect. Some species are threaten with respect for their help in livelihood practices. The following statement reflects this as well as other motives for respect.

*“Birds are important to me, we need to protect them. If you ask a child and it does not know the birds by name we can teach it. And for example their importance in the plantation, because some species like *Inxanxadi* [common fiscal] eats the insects there. (...) We can protect the birds by not killing them. (...) The nature reserves are maybe important, but even here at home we can protect the birds, because God creates them. (...) ...now I am a grown up parent I am responsible and do have that sympathy for nature.” (PM14)*

As a grown up one should know his place in the community and know how to behave properly. This attitude is reflected in the practice of boys to leave their hunting game behind at a certain age, and go over to lead a responsible life, especially after their initiation into manhood. Protection of birds than exists in the simple act of doing no harm to them. A practice that has first of all implications close by, ‘Here at home we can protect the birds’. The above mentioned ethic of respect for life seems motivated by a ‘stewardship’ approach (M. De Groot, Drenthen, & De Groot, 2011; Pimbert & Pretty, 1995). Also the acknowledgment ‘...because God created them’ results in a motive for care and respect. The divine act of creation leads to respect for birds and is underlined by the observation of the helpful role of birds toward humans ‘...some species like *Inxanxadi* eat the insect there’. As a result of this observation the respondent stresses: ‘I am responsible, bids became important to me, so I don't kill the birds and teach my children to do the same’. The previous respondent among others came up with additional examples of birds and their importance.

*“The birds are all important to me. For example *Inxanxadi*, is important because of its sound. Xhosa people tell the story of *Inxanxadi* calling to the boys when they go to school: ‘don't go in there otherwise you will be beaten’! Another example is *Ubikhwe* [burchell's coucal] the bird that gives us the sign that we approach summer. And then there is *Ingxangxosi* [secretarybird] who helps us eating the snake in the grasslands.” (PM14)*

“Ingxangxosi, Insikizi [southern ground hornbill] and Ihem [crowned crane] are very helpful, for they eat snakes. You don't kill them, as they are protectors rather than enemies. My parents told me so; they would punish me if I would kill one of them.” (PM7)

In these examples *Inxanxadi* serves as an actor in a local story, although this adds to the cultural significance of the species, it does not necessarily lead to increased motivation for conservation. The same applies for *Ubikhwe* a bird that is noticed for its role in indicating the approach of summer. *Ingxangxosi, Insikizi* and *Ihem* are well known among respondents. Others also mention *Ukhwalimanzi* (grey heron), for its ability to catch snakes (15 times in Pirie). Since snakes are unflavoured by a lot of people and a number of species are poisonous their predators are well known and favoured. This local knowledge generates a motive for conservation.

Birdlife conservation is often associated with an alarming decline of a certain species as well as with the severe destruction of habitat that potentially causes populations decline. As conservation professionals are alarmed by the population dynamics of species the same does probably occur among local people. Therefore some respondents in Pirie were asked after their awareness of birdlife population dynamics. In general peoples response indicates a different perception of reality. The birds are just out there and no option on population decline does exist. It was stated that ‘one cannot control the birds; they are free and care for themselves’. The idea of human influence on bird populations is unfamiliar for most local respondents. Their worldview regarding environmental issues seems is locally oriented. However some respondents mentioned from their own experiences the scarcity of a species.

“Intsikizi is very scarce in our days, because things have changed in our days. (...) We used to see Intsikizi walking and flying around but no longer today. Maybe they went elsewhere and live in a certain place today, but I don't know were.” (PM22)

“In the past Ixhalanga [cape vulture] used to be around, but is no longer present today. They are killed here. I believe they moved to a place where it is safe. But this is a reason to protect birds.” (PM14)

The two species mentioned by respondents (southern ground hornbill and the cape vulture) are endangered. According to the IUCN Red list both species are categorized as being ‘vulnerable’ (IUCN, 2012). The PFPI does categorise them as ‘endangered’, while according to both institutes the

populations are declining currently (PFPI, 2011). Both species do according to conservation agencies suffer from hunting, incidental poisoning and breeding habitat destruction. In most case these causes are out or rural villagers influence. Of *Ixhalanga* was mentioned that its ability to 'see' makes it a desired species in some traditional healing practices. The hunt on this bird for the collection of *amayesa* has led to severe population decline (McKean, 2010). The respondent who mentioned *Ixhalanga* did notice the hunt on this species in the past. Remarkably is in both cases the explanation given for its local decline. According to these respondents the birds are not threatened but they simply have moved to a safe harbour elsewhere. It seems that in cases species with a significant cultural value like *Intsikizi* (who is an important factor in the yearly rain cycles) and *Ixhalanga* (to who clairvoyance is attributed and who serves as a medicine throughout the southern parts of Africa) are declining, people are well aware of it. On the contrary other species like *Indwe* (bleu crane) and *Insikhwenene* (cape parrot) that according to the IUCN red list decline as well are not mentioned by villagers (IUCN, 2012).

Considering the individual role of people in birdlife protection, the above given examples illustrate that with the awareness of loss, the motivation to protect rises. Meanwhile there is the existing motive no to kill birds based on livelihood services and respect for life. The main protection strategy mentioned by respondents is not to kill the birds. Instead even if they harm crops you should look for other options but to kill it. *"All birds should be protected not killed except for Unomyayi [cape crow]. You should not kill it but scare it by a 'scarecrow'. A good way to protect the birds is by telling the kids not to shoot them."* (PM15) Only in case birds really harm your property people tend to give up their respect and simply declare war to them. Most villagers, who almost without exception hold poultry on their homestead, dislike especially the birds of prey. *"Some birds need protection, but others like Ukhozi [larger bird of prey*] are naughty birds, you should kill them."* (PM17) In this encounter between once own poultry and the wild birds that want to pick a piece of the pie the outsiders loses sympathy. The following quote illustrate the connection with nature as well as the continuing strives to rise and support a living from it. *"Personally I would not say that it is important to protect the birds. I protect my chickens and garden, my property, not the birds."* (PM16). Conservation of birds as seems mainly associated with ownership and control. The connection between the allocation of a reserve and the general protection of a species is out of the scope. You can only help a bird if you own or control it. The scepticism for conservation of birds through habitat protection is obvious. A respondent addressed this as follow: *"Conservation is a good thing, all is part of nature. But I don't think there is anyone who is willing to protect birds."* (PM19). This statement summarizes the general shared attitude in Pirie. Living creatures should be protected and cared for, birds included. The way this can be done is by respecting the birds close by, 'birds of the house' and

clan. Those who fly away or live in the forest are on their own, independent and free. They are out of control, protecting them does not make any sense.

8.2 Birdlife conservation in Ndlambe

In the direct surrounding of Ndlambe no protected areas do exist. Although national and provincial conservation legislation applies here, villagers are limited aware of their content and implications. According to local people there are 'no trees of the government'. Also the wild animals in the forest are not protected. Respondents did state that the village of Ndlambe does not have its own traditional communal ground. The village of Qamnya owns the area north of the village. However there is agreement with the neighbouring village about the use of the adjacent forest. Without a local awareness of conservation legislation and in absence of traditionally owned commons, it is interesting to see what the local attitude to birdlife conservation is.

8.2.1 Attitudes of traditional people to the protection of birdlife

In Ndlambe the attitudes to protect local birds is close connected to cultural values. For example the need to protect clan birds as well as birds of the house was emphasised by a number of respondents. Here some of the most illustrative statements are given:

"We only protect our clan bird. You can throw a stone at all other species. (...) My personal opinion is that you should protect every bird, because different families have different clan birds and animals they therefore need protection." (Nd2).

"I think it is important to protect birds, because they are part of nature, they live in the forest. Sometimes the bird's come into the house, we let them leave without getting hurt than. I also tell my children not to beat them if they are around the house. They belong to the forest." (Nd13)

"Conservation is important, especially of those species that visit our homes. Kids are not allowed to beat them [the birds]. In the forest it is their own business." (Nd23)

"I think it is a good idea to protect them [the birds]. I also teach my children not to kill them around the house, but only in forest." (Nd9)

The first respondent derives a reason for protection of all species from their potential recognition as clan bird. Not only once own clan bird should be protected, also the other existing species for they

probably serve as a clan species for another family. This approach testifies of a broad view and awareness of the potential implication of once actions on fellow man. Other respondents did not mention this 'ethic' explicitly. The second quote illustrates a conservation motive deriving from the bird's habitat. Birds of the house are appreciated and protected therefore (in some families birds of the house are also clan bird). Kids are taught not to kill or beat them, instead to accept their presence. The appreciation of species of the house does result in acceptance of certain damage to the house made by them. This indicates a strong conservation motive. A point well illustrated by a respondent: *"Isomi [red-winged starling] is very helpful, even if it makes a nest on our house we don't kill it, for it helps to protect against Ukhozi [larger bird of prey*]."* (Nd9) Apart from being a bird of the house also its role in protecting poultry on the homestead increases the appreciation of this species.

Most respondents tend to make a sharp distinction between birds that live close by and those that live in the forest. The quotes Nd9 and 23 are examples of this divide, as well as this statement: *"The forest birds are not important to us, only those who visit our homes."* (Nd19) The relevance of these species seems different or even missing. While the birds living on the homesteads are appreciated for their protection and role in communication with ancestors, the bird in the forest are on their own; outlawed, free. Kids (the only age group practicing bird hunting) are encouraged to go to the forest to hunt birds rather than close to home. Species from the forest that come to the homesteads (*Ukhozi* and *Intambanane* (small falcon)) to steal chickens and chicks are very unpopular to most people.

"I believe birds should be protected because they are the creation. Except for Ihlungulu [white-necked raven], Ukhozi and the Jackhals. (...) If I had a poison I would kill them. I would feel happy if I see them die one day. A month ago three of my baby chickens were gone, all taken by Ukhozi." (Nd22)

There is one exception made for the outlawed forest birds, *Intsikizi* [southern ground hornbill] is an appreciated bird of the forest. *"I would say there is a need to protect especially Intsikizi, for it indicates the coming of rain. For us this is the sign to start planting."* (Nd7) However as elaborations on the birds significance in previous chapters (Ch. 5 and 6) do illustrate, this bird was hunted in the past to serve in rain and drought rituals.

Besides the practice of protection based on the traditional value of a home and clan birds, a number of individual perceptions on conservation and the need to do so with certain species were given.

Among some respondents a general respect for life is reflected in their perception to birdlife conservation. *“It is good to protect birds for they are like human beings.” (Nd8)* and *“It might be a good idea to protect nature, because we like nature and we need to look after it.” (Nd5)* The first statement indicates recognition of and respect for, serving it as a point of departure. The second statement reflects an individual perception of nature, linking also to a ‘need to look after it’. Other respondents are characterized by what can be called a ‘stewardship’ approach reflecting a motive to look after the birds. *“Birds should be protected, for nature is created by God. (...) Villagers are not actively protecting the birds, but they don't chase after them either. The birds are enjoying themselves.” (Nd14)* However this approach does not guarantee conservation: *“Birds are Gods creation, we have nothing to do with them. We better take care of our chickens. There is nothing we can do for those who are flying around.” (Nd17)*

The later opinion is shared by a number of respondents who put emphasis on their inability to do anything at all for birds. An attitude also reflected in the divide between home and forest birds. *“I want say you can help them because you cannot catch them. But you can feed them with the left overs.” (Nd16)* Taking care of birds, protecting them has much to do with control over them. When there is no control, the possibilities to deal with them in any way are limited.

The worldview of local people including the invisible ancestral domain seems to be of influence on people’s interaction with birds and possibilities to have influence on them. This idea of interaction is reflected in the experiences of three ladies, illustrating the Xhosa perception of birds and the human role in their existence:

“There was a time Umcelu [wagtail] was scarce, so me and my sister started to question each other. We made umqombothi to make Umcelu come back and did hope good luck would come back as well. Now we have noticed that the bird didn't show up since December last year. We need to approach the diviner and make umqombothi again. Things at the moment are not well. (...) From the knowledge that was told by my father, there is nothing we can do, therefore we make umqombothi. Part of the beer will be spread in the kraal to attract the birds, among them Umcelu will appear. What we expect is that it will appear in front of us.” (Nd10)*

This special status of *Umcelu*, a bird of the house, is well recognized by other respondents as well. To protect this and other species, one can perform a ritual. Further, one can only wait. The birds will just appear in front of you. The natural world as an ecosystem wherein species have their place and where humans do interact with does not correspond with the traditional worldview expressed here. A few respondents did mention suggestions for conservation concerning human actions like: *“The best way*

to protect birds is by stopping hunting.” (Nd15) However, in general the human role regarding the birds of the forest is seen as very limited.

The local attitude to birdlife conservation in Ndlambe can be summarized by the reply of tree young man (all 35 years old) on a question regarding the importance of protecting birds (Nd21). The first reply illustrates the importance of home and clan birds *“Only Umosi [sparrow*] and Isomi should be protected, the others are just general birds, but I see a need to protect them”*. Both birds of the house are appreciated and protected; the other species are on their own, belonging to the forest. The second reply illustrating the importance of protecting for birds are Gods creation. The reply also reflects the influence of modern media on the attitude of this villager *“Birds are part of creation. I saw on TV that it is very important to protect them”*. The third reply showing apathy towards the birds indicates a decline of cultural values as the commonly shared respect for life seems absent *“If I see a bird, I just see meat, so nothing important to protect”*

8.3 Evaluating the traditional perspective

In general birdlife conservation in its professional use is an unfamiliar concept in Pirie and Ndlambe. The interview results illustrate a different worldview characterized by a local environmental orientation and limited human control over it. In both villages there is awareness of human influence on birds and vice versa of bird on human life. Some people are aware of population decline for some significant species. However the role humans have in these processes is very limited. Only birds that live close by, considered as ‘birds of the house’ and ‘birds of the clan’ enjoy special protection. They’re nesting and dwelling close to human settlements results in a connection of appreciation. As a result a strong motive not to kill these birds exist. Other motives to protect species are the value they have in crop protection by foraging on harmful insects, the habit to kill and eat snakes and species that forage on ticks and insects that live on livestock. In all cases the conservation motives derive from a certain direct or indirect benefit local people have from these species. Birds that don't add to human well-being are considered neutral. They often live further off and are free, on their own, out in the forest. You cannot control; neither harm nor protect them. Birds that do harm to humans by destroying their crops or predated on their poultry are hated to dead. Although respondents expressed a general respect for life, birds that touch personal ‘belongings’ are sentenced to dead. Lucky for them these ‘birds of prey’ are too fast to lay hand on.

When comparing attitudes to birdlife conservation between Pirie Mission and Ndlambe some differences can be recognized as well. First the divide that is made between species. In Pirie mission the main distinction between species worth to protect and those that are on their own is made based on their contribution to human life; their benefit so to say. In Ndlambe a similar distinction

occurs but is based on the habitat birds live in. Birds close to human settlement are distinguished from those that dwell in the forest. In so far there are differences the groupings can best be traced back to differences in livelihood between both villagers: (cattle versus goats, and farming versus gathering and labour) as well as environmental differences: (open pasture versus thicket dominated landscape).

A second difference between the villages is way people try to relate to the birds. (It needs to be noticed here that I do generalize here and that the villagers are far from heterogeneous.) A general respect for living beings is shared among most people. The implication thereof is not to kill birds unless they are a threat to one's property. In Ndlambe the same ethic occurs but is translated here into practices that go a step further. Providing nesting places actively supports *Isomi* (red-winged starling), and birds of the house are given the leftovers. This all relates to a stronger association of birds with ancestral presence. Birds apart from being respected and protected are actively supported in Ndlambe.

This chapter elaborates on the role of conservation agencies in the Eastern Cape. Starting with an elaboration on the governmental conservation efforts, we continue with the non-governmental organisations and close the chapter with local civil initiatives. For all groups an elaboration on their characteristics and a presentation of attitudes towards a participatory conservation approach is presented. In doing so the question: ‘what is the attitude of birdlife conservation professionals to participatory birdlife conservation?’ will be addressed.

9.1 Birdlife conservation organisations in the Eastern Cape

9.1.1 Governmental organizations

In the Eastern Cape three groups of conservation professionals are involved in birdlife conservation. First there are governmental officials, employed by Governmental Organisations (GO). The most important for environmental issues in the Eastern Cape are the South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism (DEAT) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (DAFF). Working from head offices in the main province towns the government aims to control the exploitation of local resources. Biodiversity protection and sustainable environmental exploitation are important aspects of their strategy (Berliner, et al., 2007; DEAT, 2005). Core objective is the protection of South Africa’s rich biodiversity. The department is also responsible for distribution of hunting permits. Birdlife thus is protected through national and provincial legislation, includes in the larger framework of biodiversity conservation. In the province on average twenty so-called ‘Green Scorpion’ are assigned to police on violations in the field (GO1). Core focus of environmental act enforcement is on control of trade routes, control of habitat destruction and limitation of hunting permits. The main problem signalled by department officials is lack of financial resources to implement legislation and carry out effective control. The departments work together with local stakeholders involved in hunting, pet trade and *muti* (traditional medicines) trade. It was stated that ‘Birds are not commercially utilized in the Eastern Cape, so they do not get our attention.’ (GO1). To increase effectiveness, environmental programs are developed to anticipating on ‘hot issues’. An example of which is the current program to fight litter dumping in the rural areas. As part of this program workshops and trainings are given in rural villages, informing local people about the problem and potential solutions.

9.1.2 Non-governmental organizations

A second group of conservation professionals are the environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO). Whereas the GOs do focus on a range of environmental issues as they carry out national and regional policies from a top down perspective, bottom-up processes of civil concern are the main drive for NGOs. As a result their focus is much more on a single topic. For birdlife conservation the leading organisation in South Africa is Bird Life South Africa (BLSA), a national associate of Birdlife International. BLSA works both on a national and a regional level through provincial divisions. Through partnerships with conservation agencies BLSA realizes its mission: *'to promote the enjoyment, conservation, understanding and study of birds and their habitats'* (Anderson, 2011). This mission is worked out in a number of objectives like to prevent the extinction of bird species. Maintain the conservation status of bird species. Conserve, improve and enlarge sites and habitats that are important for birds. Help to conserve biodiversity and improve the quality of people's lives, through birds. And the last objective is to integrate bird conservation into sustaining livelihoods (www.birdlife.org.za).

Another prominent organisation in birdlife conservation in South Africa is the Percy FitzPatrick institute of African Ornithology. Their mission statement is: *'To promote and undertake scientific studies involving birds, and contribute to the practice affecting the maintenance of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources'*. (PFPI, 2011). Their main focus lies on contributing to scientific ornithological research. As strategic alliance of BLSA shared initiatives are conducted, not only in research but also in applied conservation measures. Birdlife Eastern Cape the local division of BLSA works together with PFPI in a number of local projects aiming for the protection of threatened species. For the Eastern Cape three important joined projects are running. First there is a project aiming to protect the African Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus moquini*). This endemic species suffers under disturbance of its breeding habitat, coastal beaches (PFPI, 2011). There is a project aiming to stop the rapid population decline of the Southern Ground-hornbill (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*). This species used to live in the areas surrounding Pirie and Ndlambe. At present it is critical endangered species according to the IUCN criteria. The project aims to increase the knowledge of this species in order to develop effective conservation measures. The present range of existence is declining, with some core populations in the Northeastern province of South Africa. Main study area for this species therefore is outside of the Eastern Cape in the North-eastern province (PFPI, 2011). A third endemic species is Africa's endangered Cape Parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*). This species has its core distribution area in the Eastern Cape. Current population size is estimated less than 1000 individuals remaining in the wild (PFPI, 2011). A number of initiatives ranging from habitat revitalisation through reintroduction of Yellowwood trees (*Podocarpus* spp.) to community based

ecotourism as attempt to increase local support and create alternative avenues for economic development (Anderson, 2011), NGO 6 & 7).

Besides a conservation strategy aiming for the survival of individual species, Birdlife International enrolled a large program for integral protection of birdlife in South Africa and elsewhere. The so-called Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme is one of BLSA's most important conservation programmes (BLSA, n.d.). It includes all four focal areas of BLSA strategy – species, sites, habitats and people. The IBA Program identifies and works to conserve a network of sites critical for the long-term survival of bird species that are globally threatened, have a restricted range, are restricted to specific biomes/vegetation types, or sites that have significant bird populations. The purpose of the IBA program is to identify and protect a network of sites, at a bio-geographical scale, critical for the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations (Barnes, Johnson, Anderson, & Taylor, 2001; Keith, 1988). The IBA program is a valuable tool helping BLSA partners to prioritize conservation action amongst sites. The Cape Parrot project is an example of a project in an IBA site. The village of Pirie is situated within an IBA, the 'Amathole Forest Complex' (BLSA, n.d.).

Birdlife conservation efforts deployed by NGOs are conducted by professional employees and conservation partners, as well as by a number of volunteers. In most cases funding, professional support and coordination are done by NGOs (who in turn work together with GO), while semi-professional volunteers do much of the fieldwork.

9.1.3 Local bird clubs

The third group of conservation professionals are semi-professional volunteers. All over the Eastern Cape especially concentrated in the white Afrikaans communities these birders are organized in local bird clubs. Most of them are associated to Birdlife Eastern Cape and BLSA²⁰, as their objectives are in line with these professional organisations. The club representatives that are interviewed in this research expressed a great commitment to the quality of their local (bird) environment. This concern with local birdlife is often put in practice by all kinds of local activities like birdlife education with school kids, bird monitoring, improve breeding and habitat conditions and such as litter removal. All clubs organize regular birding excursions in the local context. Altogether there are eight bird independent clubs and two clubs that are branches of BLSA, present in the Eastern Cape.

²⁰ On the list of BLSA are the following categories and local bird clubs:

- 1) BLSA branches: Birdlife Border and, Birdlife Eastern Cape (2)
- 2) Clubs affiliated to BLSA: Barkley East Bird Club, Diaz Cross Bird Club and, East Griqualand Bird Club (3)
- 3) Clubs with no affiliation to BLSA: Cape St. Francis Bird Club, Graag-Reinet Bird Club, Kenton-on-sea, Queenstown Bird Club and, Stutterheim Bird Club (5)

9.2 Attitudes of birdlife conservation professionals towards local people

A high level of professionalism characterizes conservation organisations in South Africa. Birdlife conservation organized and local initiatives are well aligned. Although continuous research is required to understand and model the population dynamic of species like the Southern Ground-hornbill, knowledge is constantly applied and improved. Much effort is spend in implementing conservation measures as well (NGO3). In these efforts a scientific grounding and orientation can be recognized. Not without reason is South Africa one of the leading countries in nature conservation (Cadman, et al., 2010).

The scientific orientation of much of the conservation work is indicative for its historical western roots. As such its basic assumptions separate it from the traditional worldview of South Africa's traditional peoples. A conservation approach to the natural world, in its western (professional) sense require to a certain level alienation from this world, and roots in a western cultural background and education (Ingold, 2011). These conditions are hardly met in rural communities with a traditional lifestyle. As a result the (birdlife) conservation movement in South Africa almost exclusively exists of white South Africans, whereas the Xhosa community in the Ciskei area is exclusively black. This divide between white South Africans active in conservation and black South Africans does mirror the colonial and apartheid history of the country. A respondent from a local bird club (illustrative for other bird clubs as well) explained that the club had difficulties to get local black people involved. Their activities are open to everyone with interest in birds, but only (elderly) white people did participate (BC9). A professor from the Rhodes University recognized a similar issue:

“Our academic approach is Euro centric. I have had only a few black students studying Biology during my career. The idea in the black community is you don't get a job after attending University. (...) Interest in a study on Ornithology start long before you go to University, here lays a gap. (...) Currently I observe a gradual change. The younger black community seems to catch up the conservation paradigm. You see them more often visiting a National Park. Today they are allowed to enter and they have the finances to do so.” (NGO5)

The quote illustrates how socio-economic distinct environments cause a lack of interest and in some cases exclusion for black people to get involved in conservation. Although the past issue of access to education and national parks is legal solved it seems to take generations to cross the social and economic threshold.

The attitude of conservation professionals towards local people, their values and participation in birdlife conservation is expressed in the only CBC project in the Eastern Cape. The project is

coordinated by BLSA and applied in the village of Chata, situated in the heart of the Amathole Mountains (Cocks & Dold, 2007)²¹. It started in 2007 and runs till date. Two objectives are central in this project: economic development based on ecotourism and education to increase opportunities for villagers. As a result the local pressure on the Cape Parrot population through illegal trade in cage birds and environmental degradation is expected to decrease. Meanwhile the local population is able to increase capacity and explore alternative venues to sustain a living. Important measures are infrastructure development, business and ecotourism training of villagers (NGO 6 & 7 & 8).

The project radiates a strong commitment to involve local stakeholders and combine conservation and economic development. The dedication of the project coordinators is impressive and successes are there. *“The successes in Chata are the development of a high quality infrastructure and the first steps in capacity building are taken.”* (NGO7) On the contrary capacity building has shown to be a long and difficult process. *“Before, people practiced a subsistence lifestyle in Chata. Now their focus is on (eco-) tourism, and people rely on NGO support. Our hope was that through capacity building the village would become independent of our NGO support.”* (NGO7).

Without going into a complete evaluation of the Chata project here, the case illustrates the attitudes of birdlife conservation professionals towards traditional cultural values. The strong commitment to involve the local community in conservation is clear. Together with this dedication professionals give the terms, conditions, and objectives as well. Although the local community was consulted at the start and active involved since, the direction of development seems determined beforehand. The program approach reflects a ‘technocratic’ attitude, with a narrow focus on economic incentives. It seemed to override local traditions and values. Although the community did participate by means of interested members, it is questionable to what extent local cultural values in respect to the Cape Parrot or local environment, were linked with the project. Were the project initiators aware of this potential for connecting their objectives with local motivation? One of the project coordinators summarises his experiences in Chata:

“I still belief in conservation that involves local communities, but only to address particular issues. Also the output ambitions need to be realistic, the ‘return on investment’ is limited. With our experience here, we have become more realistic. At least we could expose the community to some conservation ideas.” (NGO8).

Conservation professionals are convinced of their profession and the best way to deal with birdlife conservation issues. They express a motivation to involve local people when they are part of an issue.

²¹ A lot of additional information regarding Chata can be found on the website established as part of the development project: <http://www.Chata.org.za/home>

However a majority of professionals is not aware of any cultural significance of birds among the Xhosa. *“Birds don't have a specific cultural meaning or value. The local community will only use them if they can make money with it.” (GO1)*. As a result the room for connection of cultural values with conservation measures seems limited.

9.3 Evaluating the professional perspective

Evaluating the fieldwork findings among conservation professionals, it is clear that there is a tendency to increase local communities involvement in birdlife conservation. Through pioneering initiatives conservation professional are becoming more and more aware of the complexity of participatory conservation, rural development and the introduction of (avian) ecotourism. The internal cultural structure of local villages seems resilient in choosing its own path of development. External interventions and programs are not adopted as they come or at once. Instead local people cooperate in a project to the extent it seem relevant for them and incorporate these aspects in their life that best fit them. The approach of conservation professionals is characterized by a high level of top down thinking and a technocratic attitude, seeking to address conservation issues through economic opportunities. The connection of this approach with local issues and lifestyles seems limited.

As the analysis of local people's attitudes illustrates, there exist a fundamental divided in worldviews between professionals and locals. Although rooting in a different history and context, both share their appreciation for certain bird species. The values of stewardship, and respect for living beings are shared between both traditional Xhosa people and conservation professionals. The potential for partnerships in birdlife conservation through inclusion of cultural values are manifold. The lessons that can be learned from NGO's and villagers experiences are that partnership is possible in projects that start from an equal basis, were local issues are adressed, and the local community is capable to choose its own path to the future. This will allow people to adhere to their cultural values and identity, meanwhile creating a strong internal motivation. The challenge for conservation proffecionals is to acknowledge this potential and connect it with professional values into applicable local programs.

10 DISCUSSION

The research results, theory and methodology as presented above are discussed in this chapter. The chapter is divided into two parts discussing subsequently the ethno-ornithological findings on the cultural significance of birds in the Xhosa culture, followed by a discussion of the potentials for birdlife conservation based on attitudes to participatory conservation among traditional and professional people.

10.1 Empirical relevance

Birds play a significant role in human lives and culture (Collar et al., 2007; Lemair, 2007b; Murton, 1971; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010). Their significance is especially expressed in their material and symbolic contribution to human well-being (Bonta, 2010). This recognition inspired to investigate the cultural significance of birds in the amaXhosa culture. What makes this culture interesting is its semi-urban character that combines a modernizing lifestyle with traditional values in respect to local biodiversity (Cocks, 2006b). The Eastern Cape is further of interest because of its potential for participatory conservation as there is a rich biodiversity and the areas is mainly inhabited by tradition communities (DEAT, 2005; SSA, 2009).

This explorative ethno-ornithological study does add to our understanding of the Xhosa culture and the place of birds therein, as it provides an up to date documentation of local TEK. The findings contribute to existing data on the significance of plants (Cocks & Dold, 2006), cultural and natural landscapes (Coehoorn, 2009; Mogano, 2012), and environmental perceptions and narratives (Alexander, 2010), as collected within the SANPAD project during the last decade. The youngest documentation of Xhosa birdlore so far was made by Godfrey (1941), and dates back to the first half of the 20th century. His historical account of isiXhosa bird names, and their place within the Xhosa culture provides a valuable reference point in time. Together with his account on local birdlife and the collected works of (Skead, 1912-2006), it is possible to draw a picture of the cultural significance of birds over half a century ago. A first comparison with the results of this research does indicate a gradual loss of knowledge on species names and characteristics as well as related practices. For example Godfrey makes account of an actual practice concerning 'the bird of rain', that is only mentioned as being remembered by present respondents. He states that:

In a season of drought, this bird [Intsikizi the Southern Ground Hornbill] is hunted down by horsemen attended with dogs, and, as it is not a bird that flies high, it is caught and put alive into water; it is said that a great rain will follow (Godfrey, 1941, p. 66)

Since Godfrey's work much has changed in socio-economic conditions of the Eastern Cape (Beinard, 2000; Wells, 2003). As a result livelihood practices have become increasingly orientation towards urban centres. Rural traditional communities went through (and are still in) a process of modernisation, including decreased dependency on nearby natural resources. In potential this could sort an effect on the cultural significance of birds. In here research on kids and environmental narratives Alexander (2010) observes an erosion of nature experiences and place-based narratives, with in turn potential consequences for conservation:

Without being socially sanctioned and supported, cultural narratives that define cultural practices can fall away. ...there is a difference between practices that have fallen away, such as the gathering of traditional broom material, and practices that continue unabated without cultural restrictions, such as hunting. While many adult participants may agree that there are certain clan animals and protected animals, children were observed to be unaware of many of these restrictions. In addition, many boys hunt indiscriminately, being satisfied with whatever they can kill. (Alexander, 2010, pp. 157-158)

In comparison with the account of birdlore made by Godfrey (1941) our research indicates a gradual loss of TEK in particular in the areas of knowledge and practices regarding birds. This research meanwhile indicates the resilience of certain cultural values, in particular in the area of beliefs and environmental perception.

10.1.1 Identification of local bird species

Authors like Forth (2010) and Thomas (2010) point at the difficulty to identify local recognized species by their scientific and English name. Local environmental perceptions (the lifeworld (Ingold, 2011)), language differences, and livelihood practices together result in a 'folk taxonomy' that makes sense for the local community. The result can differ from that of the scientific classification (for South Africa the Roberts list of birds (Roberts et al., 2005)). Some species are merged on the level of genus and indicated by one single or a few names. Examples from Pirie and Ndlambe are birds of prey that are lumped together in two groups the larger birds of prey (eagles) are indicated as *Ukhozi*, and the small birds of prey (falcon) are indicated as *Intambanane*. In Ndlambe the later group of falcons was further divided into the large falcons indicated as *Ukhetshe*, often associate with the lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), and the smaller falcons indicated as *Intambanane*. Also no distinction by name was made for doves (*Columbidaea*) indicated as *Ihobe*. Only one respondent in Ndlambe mentioned the existence of multiple dove species living in different habitats, but did not distinct them by name (PM15).

During this research however a number of variant names and unique local names appeared to be in use. An example of a variant name is the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) identified by its common isiXhosa name as *Ukwalimanzi*. In Pirie and Ndlambe respondents did mention the names *Usikholimanzi*, *Isikholmanzi*, *Usokholimanzi*, *Uskholimanzi*, and *Ukholmanzi*. Godfrey (1941) notes in his description of the grey heron:

No Native bird-name illustrates more graphically the state of flux in which a number of bird-names is found to be than Ukhwalimanzi. There are at least twenty-four modifications of this standard spelling. Even in the same center great latitude may be observed in the spelling of the name, (...) The prefix varies between u, isi, and usi; and the first half of the stem has the forms of khwal-, khwali-, khwalu-, khwel-, khwela-, khweli khwelu-, khol-, kholi-, kholu-, and skhwal-. (p. 8-9)

The grey heron thus appears to be a species with a divergent name. Additional description by respondents and the general shared character of the name made a definite identification of the species by its scientific name possible.

Apart from various local names findings of this study indicate the use of other languages, in this case Zulu, to name a bird species. The names given to two species in particular illustrate this. The cape crow (*Corvus splendens*) has the isiXhosa name *Unomyayi*, but was indicated by its Zulu name *Ingwababane*, by two respondents in Pirie and in Ndlambe. The same applies for the hadada ibis (*Bostraychia hagadash*) that was indicated by a number of respondents by its Zulu name *Inkankane* in both Pirie and Ndlambe (whereas its isiXhosa name according to Roberts et al. (2005) is *Ing'ang'ane*).

During this study two bird species *Umosi* and *Ujackjack*, were mentioned respectively fourteen and seven times in Ndlambe. These species are recognized by a number of respondents but do not appear in any literature source. Both bird names represent real birds as was emphasized by several respondents. A close examination of the names and comparison with other bird names and characteristics indicates that the names can be borrowed from elsewhere and are adapted into these locally used names. *Umosi* is most probably the local substitute of *Ingqabe*. The bird was without any doubt identified as a sparrow and the name applied to both house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and cape sparrow (*Passer melanurus*). It is reasonable that the name is borrowed from the Afrikaans name of the cape sparrow '*gewone mossie*' or house sparrow '*huismossie*'. The verb *U* in isiXhosa means 'bird' and can be added to the word '*mossie*'. This hypothesis is sustained by two arguments: one respondent who did mention *Ingqabe* as a species did not mention *Umosi*, and *Ingqabe* (the cape sparrow) is together with the house sparrow, a common and well-known species in Ndlambe.

The second species *Ujackjack* is more complicating to identify, since respondents did not identify it with certainty. Two species were mentioned, Neddicky (*Cisticola fulvicapilla*) (*Incede* in isiXhosa), and the African green-pigeon (*Treron calvus*) (*Intendekwane* in isiXhosa). The first species seems the best candidate based on its habit described by a respondent “*Ujackjack* does build its nest right along the fence of the kraal.” (Nd6), and its characteristic (alarm) call a monotonous, frequently repeated ‘weep’ or ‘tseep’, its alarm call is an even more notable sounding like a strong and fast repeated ‘tictictictic’ (Sinclair, et al., 2002). Another respondent knew the Afrikaans name of the species ‘papegaaiduif’ suggesting it would be the African green-pigeon. This species is shy of man and not common in the area of Ndlambe. Based on the mentioned characteristics it is most reasonable to identify *Ujackjack* as Neddicky.

The empirical results of this investigation thus indicate the common application of two bird names in Ndlambe, *Umosi* and *Ujackjack*²².

10.1.2 The significance of birds within the Xhosa culture

The continuous cultural significance of birds in daily life becomes visible in the knowledge, beliefs and practices people did expressed about species, their characteristics and behaviour. Knowledge of bird characteristics did proof to be detailed in particular for species that are recognized by a large number of respondents. This is well illustrated by the results in section 5.1.1 and 6.1.1. The cluster of well recognized species contains nine species that are mentioned in a free list over ten times in either Pirie or Ndlambe. It contains: *Ihobe* 18/21 (cape turtle dove), *Isomi* 17/16 (red-winged starling), *Ukhwali manzi* 15/6 (grey heron), *Unomyayi* 15/9 (cape crow), *Incede* 11/8 (Neddicky), *Ukhozi* 11/16 (large bird of prey), *Umcelu* 11/14 (wagtail), *Umosi* 9²³/14 (sparrow), and *Ihlungulu* 8/13 (white-necked raven) (numbers indicate the times a species appears in different free lists, for Pirie and Ndlambe). The interview results indicate some characteristics shared among most of these well know species. Characteristics such as living in the presence of peoples homestead, interacting with livestock and poultry, foraging on crops or insects that live on crops, and partaking in ancestral veneration. Somehow they all seem to interact with the local community on an almost daily base. Their significance based on interaction is consistent with the findings of others who indicate the cultural significance of a species is connected to it role in (livelihood) practices, cultural identity and local narratives (Alexander, 2010; Tidemann & Gosler, 2010; Gilchrist et al., 2005).

Besides the birds that derive their significance from close interaction with human livelihoods, there is a group that often occurs in local stories and beliefs, known by a number of well-informed respondents. These species seem to derive their significance from characteristics like extraordinary

²² In this report we did apply the names as identified in this section.

²³ In Pirie the name *Ingqabe* is in use to indicate this species.

size, shape, and behaviour. Among them are *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill), *Ingxangxosi* (secretarybird) and *Isikhova* (owl*). *Intsikizi*, a rare bird (IUCN, 2012), derives its importance from its association with rain. Its arrival and call is historically associated with abundant rain (Godfrey, 1941), a welcomed phenomenon in an agricultural society. Connected to this association was the role of *Intsikizi* in a ritual to start or end the rain. Some respondents did remember this practice from their younger years. Today the rain ritual seems abandoned in Pirie and Ndlambe, as no recent account of it was found. Other association of *Intsikizi*, like its skills to hunt snakes, being sacred and as bird of (bad) omens, documented by Godfrey (1941) in Pirie and other parts of the Eastern Cape were not (anymore) found during this investigation. However its special status and association with rain, “we know from the bird’s loud call that there will be a downpour.” (Godfrey, 1941, p. 67), seems unchanged as is clearly expressed by a respondent “*Intsikizi calls the rain...*” (PM10). *Ingxangxosi*, a vulnerable species as well (IUCN, 2012), is appreciated for its habit to feed on snakes. Associated with the bird is a proverb that states ‘he looks like *Ingxangxosi*’ (Nd), that applied on a person indicates he has an asymmetric figure. Godfrey’s (1941) account on birdlore does mention no additional aspect of the secretarybird apart from its universal name *Ingxangxosi*. *Isikhova*, is associated with a negative connotation as its presence and call indicates bad omens. Godfrey (1941) notes “*In the time of our ancestors, if an owl came near the home, the people went to the witch-doctors, for they said: A wizard has been here!*” and the witch-doctors said the people were bewitched. (p. 59). Association is very much alive today as is indicated by respondent a number of respondents for example: “*Isikhova is an evil bird, if it cries near your house it shows that something bad will happen.*” (PM8).

Findings from Pirie and Ndlambe indicate the continuous significance of birds when there is a connection to livelihood practices. The given examples compared with historical birdlore in particular indicate the resilience of bird significance for those species that are associated with beliefs.

Birds play an important role in ancestral veneration in Pirie and especially in Ndlambe. Species like *Isomi* (red-winged starling), *Ihobe* (cape turtle dove), and *Umosi* (sparrow), serve in the communication between the living and relatives that have passed away. Bird species that play a role in this belief system are well recognized by respondents. Their behaviour and presents can indicate a message that often through mediation of a traditional healer is interpreted. In this role birds contribute significantly to the emotional and spiritual well-being of people. This value of birds is emphasised by elderly as well as by younger respondents. For western observers, unfamiliar with a holistic worldview, the sphere of symbolic significance contributed to birds may sound vague. Lemaire (2007b) argues that the symbolic meaning humans associate with (the behaviour or characteristics of) a bird is an example of articulation of nature and culture, that provides meaning.

Human do live in a natural world, characterized by empirical 'facts' and a symbolic world, characterized by meanings, interpretations and culture. These two fuse into a (holistic) worldview, and are often hard to discriminate. Since the 18th and 19th century the western world has drawn a line between empirical and symbolic world, and lead by the natural sciences chosen to emphasis the empiric reality mostly (Lemaire, 2007a, 2007b; Van Koppen, 2002). As a result the modern western culture, became to some extend biased as it lost its sensitivity for the symbolic side of reality²⁴. In Africa and among the amaXhosa the divide between the natural and the symbolic world is not emphasised so much. For convenience of the reader who is unfamiliar with a worldview that includes ancestors, I will briefly elaborate on this topic using the work of Smith (1936, pp. 46-47)²⁵. In his work he provides a description of what can be called 'the unseen people of the tribe':

"Africans have a very strong group-feeling. ...in their thoughts, society is made up of the people who are living here now in the body and those who are living, for the time, out of the body (those who are named by foolish people 'the dead'). Those who have gone on [died] are not far away; they are still in touch with their friends here." Both the living and those who have gone still relate to each other. "...all have a need for one another. The muzimu [ancestors] are not able to do without de people here; and people here have a need for the muzimu."

For both the living and the dead, it is important to maintain the existing relation, as it is a pillar of personal well-being. Communication takes place through 'signs'. As it requires special skills to 'read' these signs, the traditional healer is an important person in maintaining these relations. 'Things' can only be right if the required obligations are fulfilled:

"If the muzimu are not well taken care of, and given things as signs of respect, they get angry and make one of the family ill; then the 'sign-reader' is required to say, after putting the question by his instruments, which muzimu has wounded feelings, and what is to be done to put things right again."

²⁴ Lemaire (2007a) among others does question if the distinction made between the nature and the symbolic realm is correct. The question is: do empirical facts exist. All facts need interpretation, an activity that can only be carried out in a frame of theories, words, and symbols that provide meaning. Such a frame of interpretation is part of once worldview and does hold a range of assumptions regarding reality. So even in a modern western worldview, facts and symbols are interrelated and connected. The danger is that they often go together unnoticed.

²⁵ Note that the work of Smith dealt with the worldview and culture of African tribes in general and not with the Xhosa culture in particular. The terms used in these quotes are not necessarily isiXhosa terms used for a concept. The work of Soga (1932, in Peires, 1979) on 'The ama-Xhosa: life and customs', does indicate an overlap in worldview allowing for the use of Smith's work to illustrate the local worldview and the place of ancestors in it.

For a large group of people in Pirie and Ndlambe, birds do serve as symbols in their interaction with ancestors. The birds are a visual expression of an intangible and invisible reality; a vehicle allowing the observer to cross the limitations of his senses (Lemair, 2007a, p. 19).

Findings in both communities do indicate a strong connection between birds as partner in ancestral veneration and the local environmental perception people have. Birds of the forest, birds of the river, birds of the field and birds of the house are distinguished by most respondents. In particular birds of the forest (*Ihobe* and *Umcelu* (wagtail)) and birds of the river (*Idada* (duck*) and *Uthekwane* (hamerkop)) do serve in this interaction. Their role as communicators provides them with special status, often resulting in a motive to protect them.

Besides some other birds do have a symbolic as they omens (*Isikhova* – owl*, and *Ing'ang'ane* – hadeda ibis). Both their call and behaviour can indicate a good or bad omen to the observer. These associations with birds are old and widespread. Somehow they relate to the empirical world, as the owl that is an indicator of dead prefers to live and hunt at abandoned places, often graveyards and ruins (Collar et al., 2007; Lemaire, 2007a).

The symbolic and utilitarian significance of birds is both expressed in and close related to practices as well as to knowledge (fig. 2.3). Bird hunting is one of the most evident utilitarian practices in both Pirie and Ndlambe. Godfrey (1941, p. 5) already states how: “. . . a little army of school-boys gathered birds for me, supplying the Native names, as far as they knew them, for the specimens they brought”. Teenage boys ranging in age from seven to seventeen occasionally go out for recreation and to develop and proof their skills in the bird hunt. The birds after being roast on a fire are consumed by the boys. This practice is left behind once they reach maturity. Adult men occasionally catch a bird for consumption, when they come across it. Especially *Impangele* (helmeted guineafowl) is appreciated. Connection with the market economy providing easy access to supermarket products seems to remove the need to hunt for food. The symbolic associated with a bird species seems to result in agreement on the taboo to kill ‘birds of the house’ and clan birds. This also applies to other significant species outside of the village. In practice the scale of bird hunting is of such small scale that it forms no serious threat for local species. Rather the opposite can be observed, as the effect of the boys hunting game, is increased TEK and a felt connectedness with the local environment and its birds. Many elderly men consider their hunting experiences as a boy to be an important source of species knowledge and appreciation. The long-term effect of the boys-game as a result seems to have a positive rather than a negative effect on local birdlife. This observation supported by Alexander (2010), who indicates that declining environmental interaction of kids in Pirie and Ndlambe in potential can lead to loss of identity and place (species) attachment. It indicated that exclusion of local people from their traditional hunting area interrupts the passing down of

knowledge to younger generations. In particular the cultural restrictions are forgotten (Alexander, 2010).

Older respondents in Pirie in addition emphasise the importance of cattle herding in their development of appreciation for bird and knowledge of particular species. They illustrated how in the morning animals were released and brought to the communal pastures. Today most of the animals are left in the field and collected before sunset. In the past this was unusual, for to herd the cattle was a common. According to respondents labour elsewhere and the introduction of formal education for kids has lead this practice to be abandoned. This recognition illustrates how the cultural significance of birds is related to the character of daily livelihood practices. Active involvement in livelihood activities in the natural environment allows developing a personal appreciation for nature. The connectedness elderly man feel with their surrounding illustrates this. When this connection is no longer maintained in practices such as hunting and herding, the relevance of nature in a persons worldview reduces. This is seems the case in both Pirie and Ndlambe where the younger generation according to adults expresses less interest in traditional livelihood practices. One of our finding is that between generations a difference in knowledge and subsequently in the significance of birds seems to occur. This can be explained simply by age and experience, arguing that knowledge accumulates over time. But another explanation in line with the observation of changing hunting and herding practices can be the gradual reorientation of the youth away from traditional livelihood practices towards a modern (western) life style. Adults seem to play an ambivalent role in this process, as they encourage a positive environmental appreciation demonstrated in conservation mindedness. *"We teach our kids not to shoot the birds, especially these close at home."* (Nd20). But meanwhile encourage schooling and development, thereby supporting the gradual reorientation of life. One respondent who was building a new house (a modern square house, whereas the traditional houses are round) expressed what is probably at the root of this change:

"We use this old house for rituals only. Our children have been to the city to study, so they want a new life including a new house. I believe we need to change and cannot leave it as it is. Life will be better in the new house." (Nd1)

Another indication of this gradual reorientation away from a traditional lifestyle is well illustrated by a respondent from Ndlambe who stated: *"You will see Inkonjane [swallow*] flying around just before the rain comes. In the past, when there was no weather forecast, we used to look at the birds."* (Nd2). In the past this bird did serve as an indicator for weather conditions. Today it is no longer important because of modern alternatives in the village. These changes indicate a gradual shift from a

traditional society with cultural values related to livelihood practices that connect people with their local environment, to a modern live style oriented towards a modernizing society that derives its values and identity from the wider context and urban centres. The very ambiguity of adults in this process illustrates the forces of tradition and progression at work here. The traditional worldview with its knowledge, beliefs and practices is merging with a modern worldview.

In respect to narratives Alexander (2010, p. 195) in here conclusion states the same process: “. . .local experts and elders possess a multitude of cultural environmental narratives, . . . However, these narratives are currently at risk of being severely impacted upon by schooling, modernisation, and government laws restricting environmental use and access.” Our findings in respect to birds indicate that their significance expressed in knowledge and practices is declining in this process. The symbolic role of birds in ancestral veneration remains more resilient in both Pirie and Ndlambe.

Figure 10.1 assembles the research findings in the distinct areas of TEK in a way that illustrates their coherence. It shows how the local significance of birds in Pirie and Ndlambe is expressed in practices (some are direct while others are of derivative nature, see table 2.2) and applications, in turn associated with particular species.

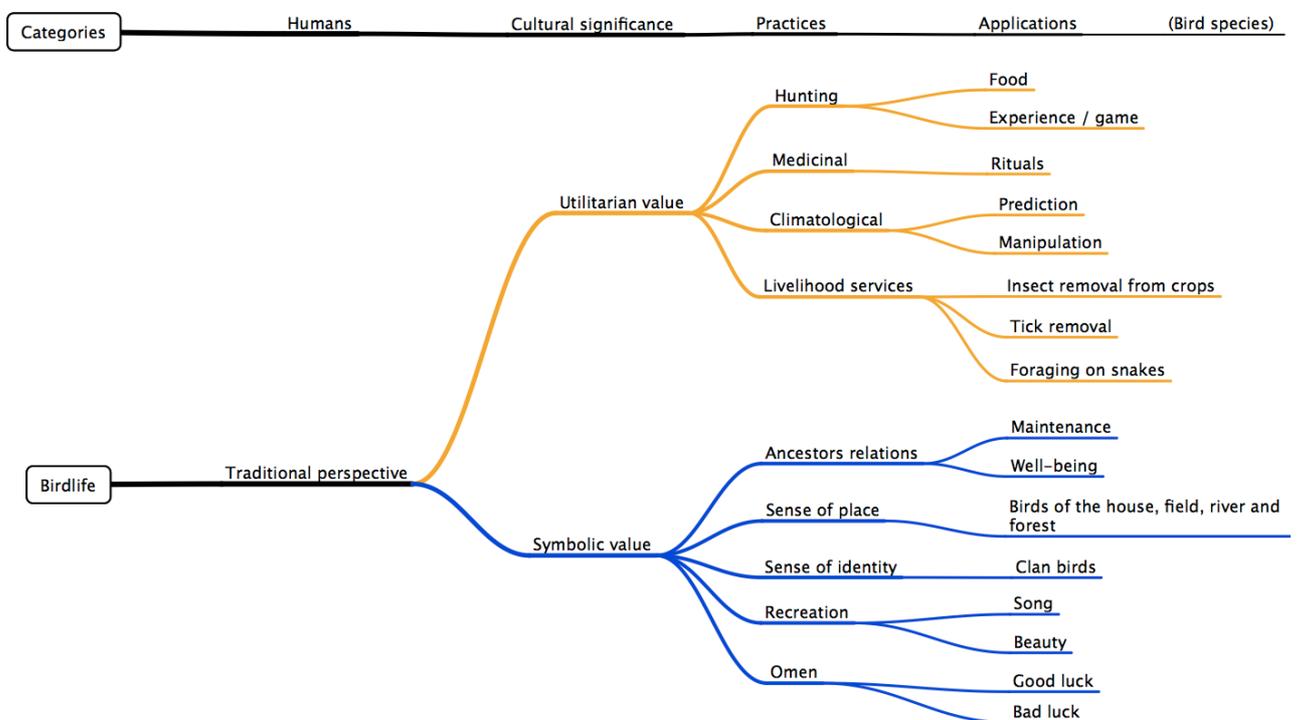


Figure 10.1 Breakdown of bird significance into practices and applications from a traditional perspective. (Note that all practices and applications derive from fieldwork findings, this report discusses only those that appear in multiple interviews)

Rowland (1978, in Bonta, 2010) indicates that the cultural significance of birds can be distinguished into utilitarian and symbolic values. This distinction applies to the findings in Pirie and Ndlambe. As a result of local livelihood practices and cultural characteristics these two value areas can be further operationalized as is done in figure 10.1. In addition a number of respondent did consider birds to be sentient being, to which one can relate and interact with. Although not explicitly distinct in the figure as this recognition fuses the two areas, it lies particular in the symbolic sphere.

10.1.3 Potential for participatory birdlife conservation.

The potential for participatory birdlife conservation has two sides, the professional and the local (traditional) perspective. On the local side in Pirie and Ndlambe a general shared respect for life was observed. This value applies especial to the birds that have a high cultural significance. Parents shared their effort to withhold their children from killing or even harming these species. Birds that live fare of (in the field and forest) are considered independent; men can harm nor protect them.

Some difference can be notices between both villages. In Ndlambe active measures such as providing nesting places for *Isomi* (red-winged starling) and feeding the birds with left over, were taken. In Pirie birdlife conservation was seen as mainly the responsibility of the government. By some it is associated with negative experiences, as access to the nearby Hoho-forest has been forbidden by the state. Villagers in both places state that they best way to protect local birdlife is 'not to kill the birds'. Were this rule applies for the birds close by, the opinion of most villagers is that men's abilities to do something for the birds are very limited. They are not like poultry, having an owner who takes care of them. Birds are free; they care for themselves and enjoy the protection of god.

Here a difference in attitude seems to occur between the communities. Findings in Pirie indicate an extensive developed knowledge of local species names, characteristics and related narratives. Some key informants did share additional knowledge collected during (self)education, residence elsewhere, or modern media like television and radio. Whereas a number of respondents in Pirie did state not to practice ancestral veneration, only some did state the importance of species based on their role therein. Birds in general were considered to be independent and belonged to the forest. In Ndlambe people tend to put emphasis on the independence of birds as well. Meanwhile they protect them those species that contribution to their livelihood. Especial the symbolic role of certain species is well recognized throughout the community, resulting in an attitude of respect and appreciation. Their knowledge and its level of detail however seem less extending. These local differences can derive from differences in livelihood practices. In Pirie cattle is more common and requires more intensive and daily care compared to the dominating livestock in Ndlambe, goat. Also the conditions for agriculture differ with more favourable condition (soil and rainfall) in Pirie. Although commercial crop farming is only practiced by a few in Pirie, most people maintain a garden for subsistence on

their homestead. Both factors can explain the difference in knowledge between the communities, as villagers in Pirie in potential interact more with local bird species during livelihood activities. An explanation can as well be sought in the local social-economic conditions. A number of factors distinguish Pirie from Ndlambe. First the influence of the Christian church in Pirie is older and more intensive, and so is the local history of education by missionaries and the state. Further its location relative close to urban centres, and the high number of retired people who return to their village after years elsewhere does result in a different social-economic environment. This environment in potential is more modernized and influenced by a western worldview than the very rural context of Ndlambe. Comparing both places something of a gradual shift towards westernized cultural values can be observed in especially Pirie.

Regarding birdlife conservation, the result for Ndlambe is a loss of TEK particular in the realm of knowledge and practices, while the symbolic significance of birds remains vital and raises a conservation attitude. In Pirie the TEK of people is weakening in particular regarding the traditional symbolic role of birds in ancestral veneration. Parallel villagers adopt new conservation values, like stewardship and a genuine respect for life.

A small part of this research has been dedicated on the attitudes of conservation professionals, to participatory conservation. Although local people are considered to be stakeholder in conservation, interviews indicate that traditional values are nearly absent from current conservation programs. Local people and their culture are unfamiliar and seen as intangible, by nearly all respondents. As a result the cultural significance of birds has limited relevance for conservation. Traditional lifestyles rather form a potential threat for birdlife, further diminishing its expected relevance for conservation programs. Legislation is the main strategy to limit negative effects of local communities on nature, including birds, with a focus on control and limitation of resource extraction (GO1).

Chata village is an example of birdlife conservation through community involvement. Main focus in respect to the community lies on local capacity building and development of economic pillars like (avian) ecotourism, for livelihood support. Cultural values are not explicitly part of the project. In general cultural values are an unfamiliar field for conservation professionals. In their strategy the main focus lies on ecological informed measures applied through legislation and in some cases along with environmental education programs.

10.2 Theoretical relevance

The theoretical relevance of this study is consisting of the insight it provides of the cultural significance of birds in two Xhosa communities. The empirical findings support the assumption (Ch. 2.3) that birds are of cultural significance for Xhosa people. Significance applies in particular to

species that fulfil a symbolic role in ancestral veneration and people's identity. This finding supports existing theories that indicate an inextricable connection between traditional people and nature (Posey, 1988). The results in addition indicate that traditional values remain vital despite external influences such as, modern education and new avenues for livelihood support, which reduce people's interaction with the local environment. In the merge of traditional and western cultural elements, birds remain of cultural relevance. This research provides an example of two peri-urban communities influenced by the modern western culture that keep their cultural connection with the local environment. This indicates that not only isolated indigenous communities are of relevance in conservation, but also that modernizing communities should be involved in conservation because of their cultural connection with the local environment. For both isolated and westernized communities can be a threat as well as a blessing to their environment, as they interact negative or positive with it. Often both can be the case at the same time. The results of this investigation indicate that birds do have a role in local environmental perceptions; part of a larger worldview (Ch. 5.4 & 6.4). To what extent people are a threat or a blessing to their environment, seems to depend on the way they relate to it. The amaXhosa examples in this research indicate an attitude of respect to nature resulting from the significance certain bird species have in people's lives.

Based on this study we suggesting a more elaborate approach towards of TEK. Current research has been focussed on the relevance of TEK for conservation, mainly looking at local (ecological facts) knowledge (Berkes, 2001; Gilchrist et al., 2005; Muiruri & Maundu, 2010). Although a number of authors dealing with TEK refer to the holistic worldview of traditional people, considering a knowledge-practices-beliefs system, a holistic framework for analyses does not exist (Berkes, 1999). This research indicates a strong interconnectedness of the areas of knowledge, practices and beliefs, embedded within the local worldview. Among the amaXhosa birds are cultural significance in particular in the area of beliefs and related practices. Based on this finding we suggest including the less tangible areas of TEK into participatory conservation research. This will potentially contribute to the holistic ethno-ornithological understanding of local values. In addition the intangible areas of TEK may show to have their relevance for conservation practices.

10.3 Reflection on research methods

This study used multiple ways of gathering information such as literature study, interviews with local villagers and professional conservationists, different PRA's, and observation. These various ways of gathering data were used to enable for triangulation of findings, and compare and validate the results gathered from the different respondents. This approach did prove to be of great help to identify the local recognized birds by their scientific name. Some names mentioned in the free lists were considered errors for they could not be identified by key informant as an existing (nor a mythic)

species. The majority of well-recognized birds could be traced back to their scientific name using the Roberts bird list (Roberts, et al., 2005).

The Participant Rapid Appraisals such as free listing, forest (transect) walks, and group exercises with bird pictures and names, did prove to be helpful in providing additional information regarding bird characteristics and their place in the Xhosa worldview. However, as other authors do illustrate, it proved to be difficult for a number of respondents to recognize birds from a picture, as they were unfamiliar with a (bird) field guide and birds depicted in a static 2D perspective (Tidemann & Gosler, 2010). The free list exercises in particular did prove to be very helpful in calculating the relative significance of bird species.

In advance of the fieldwork literature study was done to develop a theoretical framework. Due to a change in research focus, once arrived in the field, additional literature study was required after the fieldwork period. During the fieldwork some time was spent on the collection of only local available (primary) literature, both in the Cory Library (Rhodes University, Grahamstown) and the Niven Library of the PFPI (University of Cape Town). Most of it not published till date.

Data gathering did focus on the interviews in the two rural communities. Most respondents here were willing to participate in interviews, and friendly welcomed us for a talk. Gender was nearly equal distributed over the interview respondents. Ages do differ somewhat, but main focus has been on adults. In Pirie a seven boys did participate in a drawing and story writing session. This did not add additional findings, whereas the extensive work of Alexander (2010) already provides a good overview of kids' environmental (including birds) perceptions. During a number of interviews audio records were made in addition to handwritten notes. Respondents did seem to react different in interviews that were recorded. In some case the answers became brief and superficial once the recorder was 'put on the table'. To prevent negative effects, more emphasis was put on handwritten notes thereafter.

The interviews with conservation professionals consist of relative small number (7) compared to those conducted in the villages. Reason therefore is mainly their smaller number. Additional information was be collected by use of digital information on websites, annual reports and publications. The analyses of the professional perspective in this report are limited to a descriptive presentation of attitudes, as the theoretical framework is not one-to-one applicable to it. As the theoretical orientation already indicates, this data is intended to serves as background.

11 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents a summarizing overview of conclusions regarding the empirical results, answering the research questions. This is followed by recommendations on the potentials of the traditional significance of birds for participatory birdlife conservation.

11.1 Conclusions regarding the empirical research results

The cultural significance of birds is alive and vital among rural Xhosa communities. Although the number of birds known by local people seems to decline, some species remain important. Our investigation on the problem statement ‘How can the cultural significance of birds among amaXhosa contribute towards birdlife conservation?’ and the related sub-questions, leads to the following conclusions:

- In particular birds that live in the immediate sphere of the homesteads are recognized and considered significant. The cultural value of these species is enforced by the veneration of ancestors, with whom a good relationship is maintained. Birds connect the living and the dead, contributing to individuals and the community well-being. In particular ‘birds of the house’ and the birds of the clan are recognized as links with the ancestors. As a result they are well known among generations and protected by taboo and local agreements. Birds living further away, on the field, river, and in the forest are known and considered important when they serve in the same interaction with ancestors as ‘birds of the house’ do. This aspect of Xhosa cosmology – the veneration of and continuing relation with ancestors – therefore appears to be one of the key factors influencing the cultural significance of birds.
- Another group of species known and appreciated by local people are the birds that contribute to livelihood practices, for example birds that remove insects from crops or ticks from livestock. Also birds that kill and eat snakes in the fields surrounding the villages are appreciated. These species are protected by local informal regulations, as they are supportive to the community. On the opposite are birds that are a threat to livelihood practices. Birds that eat seedlings from the plantation, or aim to catch poultry on the homestead. They are scared away, and if possible killed. This indicates that the contribution of birds to local livelihoods determines much of their cultural significance. In a pragmatic approach villagers, appreciate, expel or ignore a species, depending on its relevance for daily life.
- Besides the main cultural expressions of bird significance other forms of significance were observed. First there are birds associated with good and bad omens. As a result they are well known among villagers. The reaction on their appearance differs. Birds of good omens should be

protected; they often overlap with the 'birds of the house'. Birds of bad omens are scared away, killed to prevent misfortune, or ignored in an attempt not to call misfortune over one self. Second there are birds that are hunted for food and fun. Only teenage boys hunt birds during hunting games to develop skills and prove their manhood. Adults occasionally collect a bird when they come across it. A third expression of bird significance is their relation to rain and drought. Some species are associated to weather conditions, as their call and appearance indicates the coming of rain. In the past *Intsikizi* (southern ground hornbill) was used in a ritual that aimed at manipulating rainfall.

- Pirie and Ndlambe are communities in change. In both places an increasing influence of modernity can be noticed, as households enjoy modern education, own television or radio and support their livelihood by labour elsewhere. Although these changes of influence on environmental perceptions, the traditional significance of birds seem to remain vital.
- As birds do relate to places, practices, and events, they tend to shape local peoples sense of place and (cultural) identity, contributing to their personal and collective well-being. This emphasises the inextricable bond between birds and people. A union that in a range of practices – particular in the symbolic realm – reflects a respect for life and its beauty. This is probably best expressed in the words of a respondent: 'they [the birds] are like us'.
- Local perceptions on conservation do differ among respondents. However a general shared idea is that birds are free. They express freedom and independence unless you captivate them. One cannot harm nor do well to a bird. Conservation of birds therefore is an unfamiliar concept, in this culture. However people are aware of the possibility to respect the life of birds. As a result there is a strong motive not to kill birds, except for a few species and in special occasions.
- Till date villagers of Pirie are treated as a risk for the Hoho forest, alienating them from their traditionally area. This policy makes local peoples practicing their livelihood activities into thieves and criminals. A participatory approach in (birdlife) conservation, can transform this negative interaction into strength; making villagers stewards and ambassadors of their own environment. A reconnection of the community with the forest can also contribute to increased appreciation and admiration of the younger generation for birds, as their exposure to the local environment is no longer hindered by legislation. Meanwhile this approach can strengthen the local cultural identity of people, contributing to local development.
- In this research two field sites are assessed, Pirie and Ndlambe. Comparison of the two sites does indicate a difference between both villages. In Pirie respondents showed elaborated factual knowledge of birds. Bird significance was expressed in particular in the utilitarian realm through livelihood services and hunting opportunities. In Ndlambe more emphasis is put on the traditional symbolic value of birds mainly expressed through their role in ancestral veneration.

The observed differences can possibly be explained by a larger and older influence of modernity and Christianity in Pirie. If this is the case the differences can indicate that exposure to modernity and a western life style does lead to declining cultural significance of birds in the symbolic realm (beliefs), while the utilitarian (and factual) realm becomes elaborated.

11.2 Recommendations for contribution of cultural values to local birdlife conservation

This study provides a detailed overview of the contemporary cultural significance of birds in two rural Xhosa villages. The study in addition provides an impression of the local attitudes to birdlife conservation. Taking a professional perspective, the attitudes of conservation professionals to participatory conservation, were assessed. Based on the findings and conclusion I formulate some recommendations for local birdlife conservation practices.

- In addition to the work carried out in this investigation future research is required to increase our understanding of particular to increase understanding of the changes over time in the cultural significance of birds.
- The recognition that the cultural significance of birds roots in a holistic worldview has consequences for the approach of conservation professionals. For traditional people birds are considered part of a holistic reality. The implication of this recognition is that conservation measures should reflect this holistic approach. A narrow focus on economic or ecologic objective only, relates to a limited part of local people life. Including all areas of TEK in participatory conservation practices increases the likelihood of success.
- The recognition of a shared appreciation for birds, invites conservation specialist to develop an open attitude towards local peoples values. Both sides can learn from each other. A recognition that encourages the connection of professional and traditional values in participatory birdlife conservation. Especially in a resources scarce world where traditional people have the right to choose their own future, stakeholders should work together to maximize effect.
- Bases on our findings we advocate for two approaches that can be applied in participatory conservation measures, either independent or complementary. First a general ecosystem approach that matches with the local worldview and the place or birds therein. Resulting in conservation programs that combine professional and local practices into broad strategies for sustainable interaction with the local environment. Second a species approach focussing on a particular bird species with cultural significance. This can be an endangered species like the southern ground hornbill. It can also be a species that represents the local birdlife community, serving as a flagship species (Caro, 2010; Platten & Henfrey, 2009).
- We recommend to develop environmental education programs, that strengthen cultural values supporting conservation. Such programs should aim for conscious awareness rising by

emphasising local ecological values and their connection with traditional cultural values. In this process the cultural significance of birds can be integrated (TEK) with professional knowledge (SEK), creating avenues for sustainable and local embedded birdlife conservation. In this research the indicated differences between Pirie and Ndlambe (Ch. 7) are illustrative for the potential effects of this approach.

- CBC projects in South Africa often take a technocratic approach, aiming for alternative development, through local capacity building and ecotourism. These projects are characterized by involvement of local communities but also by a previous determined path of development. Although such initiatives do sort some effect, as in the case of Chata (Ch. 9), they are expensive and stimulate opportunity-seeking behaviour among locals. Taking the local significance of birds (or other environmental elements) as starting point, this pitfall can be avoided. Instead, conservation professionals in cooperation with local people can define objectives for local conservation measures that root in cultural values, rather than in economic opportunities or required foreign intervention. Thus stimulating and supporting an endogenous process. This can still result in ecotourism, local product market, or other livelihood opportunities for local people. The results however in potential are much more embedded, sustainable, and independent as they are connected with local values.

Based on this investigation we conclude, that there is common ground for participatory birdlife conservation among amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The interaction between people and birds is expressed in a range of utilitarian and symbolic practices, creating local motivation for conservation. There is future for human and bird communities in South Africa, when conservation professionals and the amaXhosa communities together recognition and cherish the bond of man and birds.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1, Bird list deriving from the free listing in Pirie and Ndlambe

Englisch name	isiXhosa name	Scientific name	Pirie	Ndlambe
African Firefinch	Isicibilili	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	1	0
African Hoopoe	Ubhobhoyi	<i>Upupo africana</i>	3	4
African Stonechat	Isangcaphe	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	1	0
Black-collared Barbet	Isinagogo	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>	1	0
Blue Crane	Indwe	<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>	0	1
Bokmakierie	Ingqwangi	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	0	3
Burchell`s Coucal	Ubikhwe	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>	1	1
Cape Batis	Ingedle	<i>Batis capensis</i>	1	0
Cape Crow	Unomyayi	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	15	9
Cape Glossy Starling	Inyakrili	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	2	3
Cape Longclaw	Inqilo	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>	2	0
Cape Parrot	Isikhwenene	<i>Poicephalus robustus</i>	4	0
Cape Robin-chat	Ugaga	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	1	0
Cape Sparrow	Ingqabe	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	9	1
Cape Turtle Dove	Ihobe	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	18	21
Cape Vulture	Ixhalanga	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	7	1
Cape Weaver	Ihobo-hobo	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	2	5
Cape White-eye	Intukwane	<i>Zosterops capensis</i>	1	0
Cattle Egret	Ilanda	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	2	0
Cisticola*	Igqaza	<i>Cisticola*</i>	2	0
Common Fiscal	Inxanxadi	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	9	2
Common Quail	Isagwityi	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	5	1
Courser*	Ucelithafa	<i>Corsorius spp.</i>	0	1
Crowned Crane	Ihem	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	1	0
Crowned Hornbill	Umkholwane	<i>Tockus alboterminatus</i>	4	4
Dark-capped Bulbul	Ikhwebula	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	0	2
Duck*	Idada	<i>spp.</i>	0	3
Eagle-owl*	Ifubesi	<i>Bobo spp.</i>	0	1
Egyptian Goose	Ilowe	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	1	0
Falcon (large)	Ukhetshe	<i>Falco spp.</i>	3	0

Falcon (small)	Intambanane	<i>Falco spp.</i>	5	2
Fork-tailed Drongo	Intengu	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	3	0
Francolin	Isakhwatsha	<i>Scleroptila spp.</i>	4	1
Giant Kingfisher	Uxomoyi	<i>Megaceryle maximus</i>	1	0
Golden-breasted Bunting	Intsasa	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	0	1
Green Wood-hoopoe	Intlekibafazi	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	3	0
Grey Heron	Ukhwaimanzi	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	15	6
Hadedda Ibis	Ing'ang'ane	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	7	5
Hamerkop	Uthekwane	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	4	4
Helmeted Guineafowl	Impangele	<i>Guttera meleagris</i>	4	2
Honeyguide*	Intakobusi	<i>Indicator spp.</i>	2	0
Jacobine Cuckoo	Ilunga Legwaba	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	0	2
Knysna Turaco	Igolomi	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>	2	1
Large bird of prey* (eagle)	Ukhozi	<i>spp.</i>	11	16
Lapwing*	Igxiya	<i>Vanellus spp.</i>	1	4
Neddicky	Incede	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	11	8
Neddicky	<i>Ujackjack (local name)</i>	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	0	7
Olive Thrush	Umswi	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	2	1
Owl*	Isikhova	<i>spp.</i>	8	7
Pied Crow	Igwangwa	<i>Corvus albus</i>	2	0
Pipet*	Icelu	<i>Anthus spp.</i>	4	0
Red-chested Cuckoo	Uphezukomkhono	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	3	2
Red-colored Widowbird	Inakazana	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>	1	0
Red-necked Spurfowl	Inwali	<i>Pternistes after</i>	1	0
Red-winged Starling	Isomi	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	17	16
Secretarybird	Ingxangxosi	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	10	0
Sombre Greenbul	Inkwili	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>	0	1
Southern Boubou	Igqubusha	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	0	1
Southern Ground Hornbill	Intsikizi	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	9	8
Sparrow*	<i>Umosi (local name)</i>	<i>Passer spp.</i>	0	14
Speckled Pigeon	Ivukuthu	<i>Columba guinea</i>	2	1
Speckled Mousebird	Indlazi	<i>Colius striatus</i>	1	1
Steppe Buzzard	Isangxa	<i>Buteo vultinus</i>	1	0
Sunbird*	Ingcungcu	<i>spp.</i>	2	0
wallow*	Inkonjane	<i>Hirundu spp.</i>	8	9

Swift*	Ihlabankomo	<i>Apus spp.</i>	1	0
Tambourine Dove	Isavu	<i>Turtus tympanistria</i>	0	2
Thick-knee	Ingqangqolo	<i>Burhinus spp.</i>	10	3
Wagtail*	Umcelu	<i>Matocilla spp.</i>	11	14
Wattled Starling	Unowambu	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	2	0
White-necked Raven	Ihlungulu	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>	8	13
Widow-bird*	Ujobela	<i>spp.</i>	4	0
Woodpecker*	Isinqolamthi	<i>spp.</i>	4	4
Yellow-throated woodland-warbler	Unoqandilana	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>	0	1

Appendix 2, Bird list deriving from the field observations in Pirie

Nr.	Englisch name	Nr.	Englisch name
1	African grey hornbill	31	Green-backed Camaroptera
2	African stonechat	32	Grey heron
3	Amethyst Sunbird	33	Hadeda ibis
4	Black Cuckooshrike (male, ??)	34	Horus swift
5	Black saw-wing (swallow)	35	House Sparrow
6	Black-headed Heron	36	Jackal Buzzard
7	Black-headed Oriol	37	Knysna turaco (Lourie)
8	Bokmakierie	38	Lark*
9	Cape glossy starling	39	Laughing dove
10	Cape longclaw	40	Lemon Dove
11	Cape Robin-chat	41	Lesser kestrel
12	Cape Sparrow	42	Lesser striped swallow
13	Cape turtle-dove	43	Narina trongo
14	Cape wagtail	44	Neddicky
15	Cape weaver	45	Pied Crow
16	Cape white-eye	46	Pigeon*
17	Christer robin-chat	47	Pipit*
18	Cisticola*	48	Prinia*
19	Collared Sunbird	49	Red-chested cuckoo
20	Common fiscal	50	Red-eyed Dove
21	Common Quail	51	Red-fronted Tinkerbird
22	Common starling	52	Red-troated wryneck
23	Dark-backed Weaver	53	Red-winged starling
24	Dark-capped bulbul	54	Secretarybird
25	Diderick Cuckoo	55	Sombre Greenbul
26	Duck*	56	Speckled Mousebird
27	Familiar Chat	57	Spur-winged goose
28	Fork-tailed drongo	58	White-necked Raven
29	Greater double-collared sunbird	59	White-troated Swallow
30	Greater Striped Swallow	60	Yellow-fronted canary

Appendix 3, Bird list deriving from the field observations in Ndlambe

Nr.	Englisch name	Nr.	Englisch name
1	African Black Swift	40	House Sparrow
2	African Egret	41	Karoo Scrub-robin
3	African Fish-eagle	42	Lanner Falcon
4	African Hoopoe	43	Laughing dove
5	African Sacred Ibis	44	Little Egret
6	African Snipe	45	Malachite Kingfisher
7	African Spoonbill	46	Malachite Sunbird
8	Barn Swallow	47	Neddicky
9	Black Saw-wing	48	Olive Thrush
10	Black-head Oriole	49	Pied Starling
11	Blacksmith Lapwing	50	Pin-tailed Whydah
12	Black-winged Stilt	51	Pipit*
13	Bokmakierie	52	Plover* (Kittlitz`s / Common Ringed)
14	Brown-hooded Kingfisher	53	Red-eyed Dove
15	Buzzard*	54	Red-knobbed Coot
16	Cape glossy starling	55	Red-winged starling
17	Cape Sparrow	56	Reed Cormorant
18	Cape Wagtail	57	Rock Kestrel
19	Cattle Egret	58	Rock Martin
20	Chinspot Batis	59	Sand Martin
21	Common Fiscal	60	South African Shelduck
22	Common Greenshank	61	Southern Black Tit
23	Common House-martin	62	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow
24	Common Quail	63	Southern Red Bishop
25	Common Sandpiper	64	Speckled Mousebird
26	Common Starling	65	StreakyOheaded Seed-eater (canary)
27	Common swift	66	Striped Swallow (G/L)
28	Dark-capped Bulbul	67	Sunbird* (small sp.)
29	Diderik Cockoo	68	Tambourine Dove
30	Egyptian Goose	69	Tawny-flanked Prinia
31	Emerald-spotted Wood-dove	70	Weaver*
32	Familiar Chat	71	Willow Warbler
33	Fork-tailed Drongo	72	With-breasted Cormorant

34	Green Wood-hoopoe	73	With-necked Raven
35	Grey Cuckooshrike	74	Yellow-billed Duck
36	Grey heron	75	Yellow-billed Kite
37	Hadeda ibis	76	Yellow-billed Stork
38	Hamerkop	77	Yellow-breasted Apalis
39	Horus swift		

Appendix 4, Example of the basic interview guides

Interview guide applied in contact with conservation professionals.

BASIS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1
semi-structured interview; birdlife conservation (NGO/GO) perspective
Introduction
Information about the informant
Name: Age: Gender: Function and responsibilities: Contact information:
Questions (topics and attributes) 1 knowledge, 2 behaviour, 3, 4 attitude
<p>1. Existing conservation policies and programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. past policies ii. rise of present policies b. Type of policy c. Aim of the policy d. Implementation e. Control / Monitoring f. Effect / functioning / evaluation
<p>2. Development and functioning conservation policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How are they developed b. How are they implemented c. How are they evaluated d. Role of local stakeholders (Xhosa)
<p>3. Personal perception on birdlife conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expectation of effect existing policies b. Expectation of rural development c. Personal vision on best direction for rural development
<p>4. Potential for integration of conservation programs with cultural perceptions on birds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Attitude towards and familiarity with cultural practices b. Willingness for participatory planning c. Potential for integration of policies with cultural practices
Completion
Would you like to add anything? Suggestions for persons to interview next

Interview guide applied in contact with local amaXhosa.

<p>BASIS INTERVIEW GUIDE 2</p> <p>semi-structured interview; rural Xhosa perspective</p>
<p>Introduction</p>
<p>Information about the informant</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Gender:</p> <p>Place in household:</p> <p>Other responsibilities:</p> <p>Farm character:</p>
<p>Questions (topics and attributes) 1 knowledge and facts, 2 behaviour, 3, 4 attitude</p>
<p>1. Characteristics of the household</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of people in the household b. Activities to sustain the household / employment c. Main income sources d. Size of the farm (if farmers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ground and type of veld ii. Number of livestock animals
<p>2. Use of natural resources (birds) in the household</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Natural resources (general) b. Importance of birds (utilizing value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What species ii. Amount and frequency iii. Method to pursue / catch iv. Place of perchance v. Application / Utilization vi. Processing vii. Who are involved in this process c. Relative importance for household and community
<p>3. Cultural value of birds in the household</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Role of the (local) government b. Development of policies, local participation c. What policies are relevant for you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Particular significance d. Implementation and enforcement e. Sufficiency
<p>4. Potential for integration of conservation programs with cultural practices</p>

- a. Experienced relevance of policies
- b. Expectation (trust) to the national government
- c. Potential for increase of rural autonomy
- d. Potential for integration of policy with cultural practices

Completion

Would you like to add anything?

Suggestions for persons to interview next