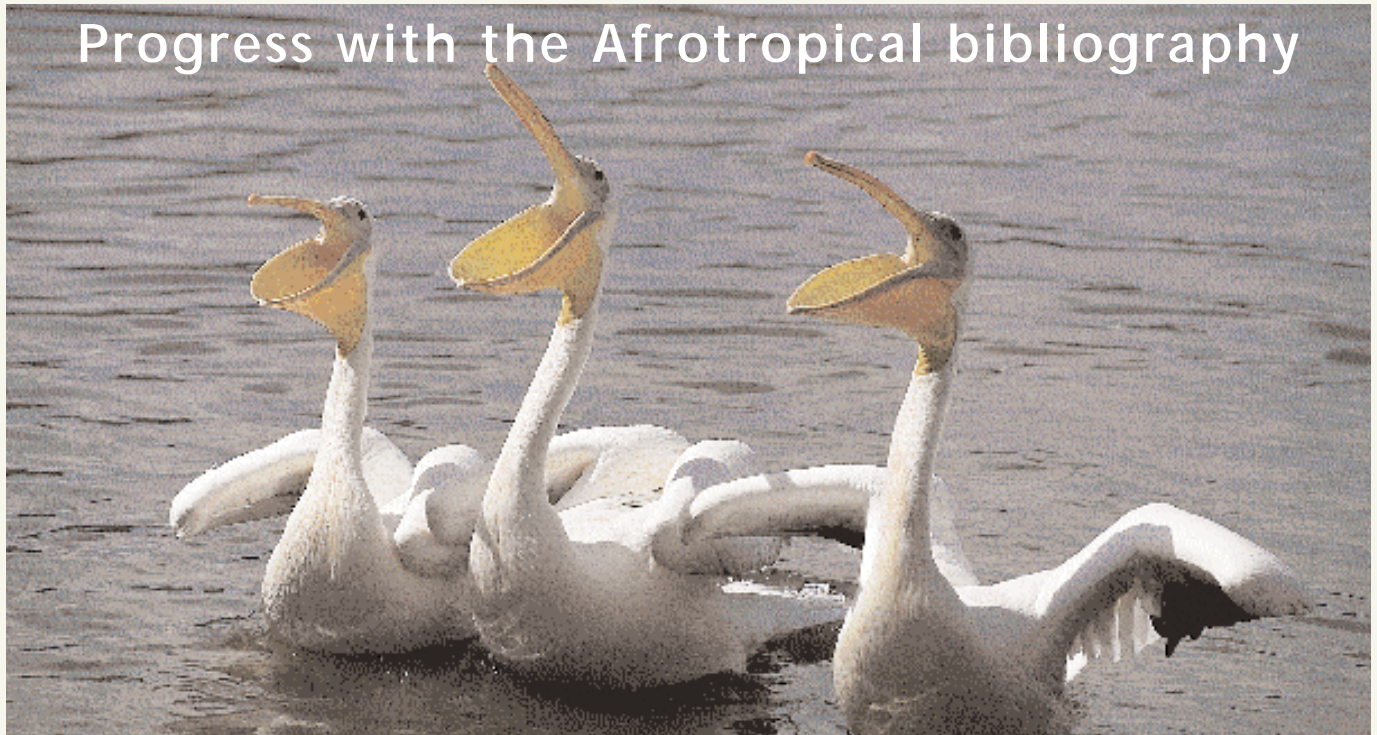


## Progress with the Afrotropical bibliography



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Species featured in the new bibliography will include those familiar to southern African birders, such as the Eastern White Pelican (above) which is found throughout the Afrotropics, and 'new' species such as the Tacazze Sunbird from Uganda (below).

As reported in *Africa - Birds & Birding* 3:3, the seventh edition of *Roberts'*, southern Africa's 'bird bible', will be a complete departure from earlier editions. It is envisaged that the new edition will serve as a comprehensive, fully referenced handbook, summarizing all that is known about the biology of southern African birds. A challenge indeed, but with a determined project manager and an enthusiastic team of 17 authors, three editors, three full-time bibliographers and several volunteers, one we will definitely rise to.

One of the first tasks facing the *Roberts'* 7 team has been to set up a key-worded electronic bibliography of Afrotropical bird literature that can be searched by species and subject matter. While the first function of this database is to assist the contributors to the new *Roberts'*, it will ultimately serve as a unique resource for the broader ornithological community and, as such, has achieved much local and international attention. The bulk of the 25 000 references already on the *Roberts'* database are from a combination of 27 databases acquired from individuals and organizations around

the world and, to a lesser extent, from the internet. It is also hoped that by targeting these databases at the outset, otherwise overlooked literature can be located, incorporated into the database and made available to the contributors. However, references from imported databases still require key-wording and this is where the really time-consuming work lies. To date, approximately 8 000 references have been key-worded.

Attention has been focused on the 330 journals held by the Niven Library and on newsletters published by bird clubs and ornithological societies in particular. These contain a wealth of information and are vital if accurate species accounts are to

be compiled. Once again, we would ask all birders to submit any interesting observations to their local bird club or ornithological society for publication as it is only through publication that the broader bird community can access this information. Of the 720 breeding species listed in *Roberts'* 7, seven have no clutch size information, 212 lack data for incubation and nestling periods, 244 lack incubation period data and 250 have no nestling period data. A complete listing of these species can be found at our website <http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/fitzpatrick/docs/roberts.html> or contact the project manager, Sharon Hampson, at [roberts@botzoo.uct.ac.za](mailto:roberts@botzoo.uct.ac.za)

With the year 2000 envisaged as the completion date for the literature database, the project remains a daunting task. The emphasis thus far has been on key-wording locally available literature; the next task will be to locate, access and key-word literature from further afield. Again, unpublished information in the form of research projects, theses and reports lodged in museums, universities and other institutions remains inaccessible to the broader scientific community. It is essential that you publish any information you might have as soon as possible for inclusion in the new edition of *Roberts'*, so get birding and, more importantly, get writing! □



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Visit the FitzPatrick website:  
<http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/fitzpatrick>

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