

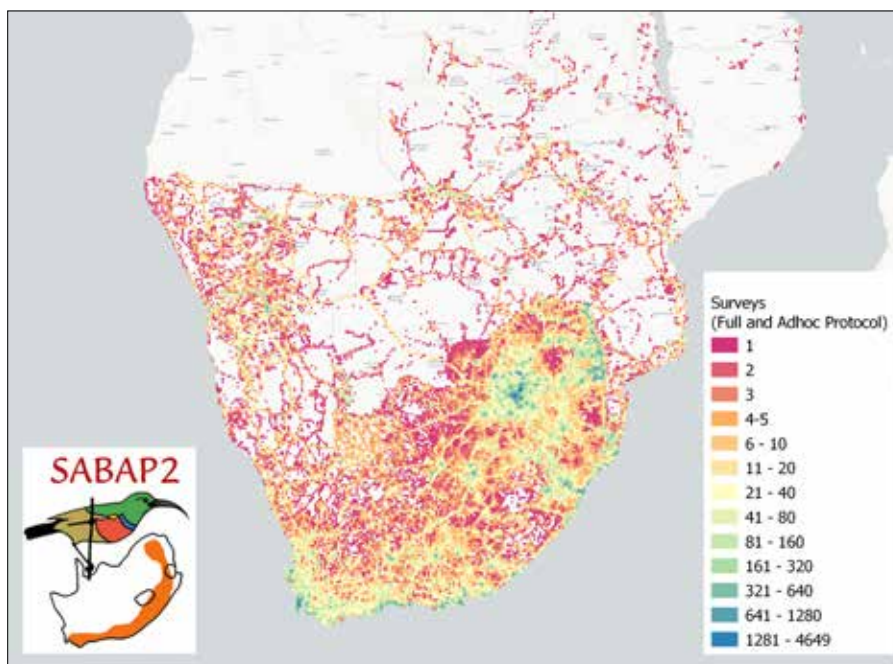
TAKING SABAP2 INTO THE FUTURE

SABAP2 is a citizen science project that supplies data on bird distributions and reporting rates, and these inform bird conservation and research across southern Africa. Over the past 17 years, the project has gathered an impressive 22 million records, establishing itself as the largest collection of bird sightings data for Africa! This valuable resource is used by students, researchers and consultants in various fields. The data support the training of new scientists, conservation planning and environmental impact assessments, and high-level research into the biology of birds and the well-being of their populations. Operated on an Open Content basis, the data are readily accessible to all.

Projects like BIRDIE, hosted by the South African National Biodiversity Institute, rely on this dataset to advance their goals. BIRDIE collects and analyses information on wetlands and waterbirds to provide valuable insights for decision-makers, locally and internationally. Using data from the SABAP2 and Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) projects, sophisticated statistical models detect trends important to conservation management. This is presented online where near real-time indicators on bird distribution, abundance and diversity at various wetlands can be accessed.

The accomplishments of SABAP2 have paved the way for significant developments. For example, the data collection protocol used by atlasers, called the 'Bird-Map protocol', was pioneered by SABAP2 and has now been embraced by the African Bird Atlas project and implemented in numerous Africa countries. Initiatives like the Kenyan Bird Map and the Nigerian Bird Atlas adopted these protocols in the mid-2010s, and Senegal launched its bird atlas project at the close of 2023. Data collection has expanded to 49 of Africa's 54 countries, with the FitzPatrick Institute hosting the dataset.

To run successfully, SABAP2 needs to maintain and update the servers on



which the ever-growing datasets are stored and maintain and develop the apps and online platforms that support the submission and display of data, and data access for researchers and conservationists. We also need to ensure continued support and training for new citizen scientists. The SABAP2 support systems also benefit its affiliated initiatives such as CWAC, SAFRING (the African bird-ringing programme) and the Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts projects. As we strive to maintain SABAP2's backbone systems – the infrastructure for collecting data – reliable funding remains essential. It is through the sustained support of our patrons that we can ensure the longevity and effectiveness of our projects.

Like many projects of this magnitude, funding is a persistent challenge. We are grateful to the numerous patrons whose generous contributions have sustained the project over the years. Given that it is designed to collect data indefinitely, securing ongoing funding is imperative. There are several avenues through which individuals and organisations can

The extent of SABAP2's survey activities in southern Africa.

support SABAP2 financially. Whether through one-time or recurring donations from individuals, or through corporate social investment donations from companies, all make a meaningful impact, whether large or small.

Donations made through the University of Cape Town (UCT) are eligible for Section 18A tax deductions. For more details on how to support SABAP2, please e-mail hilary.buchanan@uct.ac.za, or visit alumni.uct.ac.za/giving/ways-give to make an online donation (credit cards accepted; for Allocation, choose 'Other' then specify 'FitzPatrick Institute – SABAP2' for the project).

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