

# Black Eagle Project Roodekrans

BEPR Status Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 - No 15

## From my Perch

Bless project chairman, Gerald Draper...he has given me many topics to write about...enough to last quite some time ...and whilst on the subject of "quite some time", I would like to suggest that we possibly focus on a bi-monthly or monthly news page/letter as even I am at a stage where I'm thinking that Gerald and I are going to run out of ideas and writing 52 per annum is rather demanding, even for youngsters like Gerald and me! All I'm asking is for you to chew the curd on this and when you're ready gimme a shout!

## How long is a piece of string?

Most of us know that the Black eagles of Roodekrans date back to somewhere in the 1940's – even my late parents once told me that whilst they were visiting friends (the Barnhoorn's) that still own a large chunk of Little Falls – better known as Hadeco – they saw a pair of "Swartarende" flying along the ridges of Little Falls way back in 1935...which is a longer time ago!

Not the same pair of eagles, oh no, cause when the Black Eagle Monitoring Project was founded in 1992, that was already 57 years after 1935, and we know that the male disappeared in March 1998, some are of the opinion that the current female is the same one that was observed in 1985 by Messrs G. Verdoorn and others that observed this pair on an ad hoc basis, personally, I have my doubts because that would make the present female 29 years + approx. 4 years (adult plumage) = 33 years old whereas some believe she is much older...closer to 40 or more! With no one really observing these eagles 24/7 from 1985-1992, anything may have occurred...even a possible partner change during the 7 year period?

As previously mentioned in BEPR Status 14, one can only determine the age of any bird of prey between 0 – 3 or 4 years old...thereafter there is no way of telling its age unless it was banded and recaptured by others. If the bird is neither banded...forget it...one cannot estimate its age.

When one of the female's male partners disappeared during March 1998, the female abandoned her two-week-old incubation period prematurely as she was too stressed to continue – no single eagle or garden bird can incubate eggs solely on their own without the support of their partner (one needn't be a underwater bricklayer to understand this). ☺ She was extremely fortunate to have found a replacement partner within one month and she brought him home to Roodekrans...refurbished the nests...mated...and laid a fresh set of eggs within quick time! The male (Thulani) was extremely skittish during his first year "in town" as it was quite evident that he had zero knowledge about being a city slicker...something that you have to get under control swiftly or go back home wherever home was. I recall that this new boy was yet a toy and I estimated him to possibly be 3 years old as his leggings (stovepipes) were pale-ish and he also had some lighter streaks in his primary feathers...the V on his back was neither fully visible. So the missus got herself a boy...at the time about 20 years younger than she – were it me...I would certainly get the evil cradle snatcher look!!

## Bits & Pieces

- ❖ On behalf of the project we wish to convey our condolences to Libby Woodcock whose mother passed away on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Losing one's parent in death is immeasurable and we wish you, your family, your brothers and their families strength and that you will all find peace in the weeks and months ahead. God bless everyone!
- ❖ Peeps, we are looking for a volunteer that is keen to assist us with the compilation of a BEPR power-point presentation. We have received a number of requests to present talks during the course of 2014 and beyond!
- ❖ I have a heap of BEPR paraphernalia that I wish to store...has someone got some space please?
- ❖ Waiting for the golf shirts...should get them during the course of next week – yippeeeeeeee!!
- ❖ Nessi will be 77 & 78 days old over the weekend or 10 weeks if you fancy – the boy is doing fierce wing exercises I see...

Eagle greetings...

Bo van der Lecq

BEPR & RCP

*NESSI @ 66 & 67 days old - Photos by Garth Heydenrych*

