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UCT PhD graduate finds ways to save birds from power line collisions

More than 40% of SA's Ludwig's Bustard population may die annually on power infrastructure

Fascinated by the conflicts between birds and power infrastructure, UCT PhD graduate Jessica Shaw set out to investigate the impact of power line collisions on the regionally endemic Ludwig's Bustard and other large birds of the Karoo for her thesis, *Power line collisions in the Karoo: conserving Ludwig's Bustard*.

She found that this species and many others are highly susceptible to collision mortality. However, tracked Ludwig's Bustards revealed previously unsuspected familiarity with the landscape, which may help to reduce the probability of collision. Shaw also established a large-scale experiment to test line marking devices, and recommends that this mitigation measure should be implemented on all new power lines to stem the heavy toll taken by the expanding power grid.

This avian conservation biologist has a BSc in Ecology with Honours in Wildlife Management from the University of Edinburgh. She came to South Africa in 2008 to study for an MSc in Conservation Biology. Shaw was one of 83 PhD students who graduated at UCT last week (on 6 and 7 June 2013).

ENDS

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