

Animal Demography Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Town (South Africa)

About the ADU



The Animal Demography Unit (formerly the Avian Demography Unit), or ADU as it is mostly known in the vernacular, is a research unit of the University of Cape Town. Initially it was built on the nucleus of the South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING) and the Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP). The ADU was established in December 1991 within the Department of Statistical Sciences at the University of Cape Town. Over the years, the ADU has grown far beyond its starting point. In January 2008 the ADU was formally transferred to the Department of Zoology, which in 2013 merged with the Botany Department into the Department of Biological Sciences.

The concept on which the ADU is based can be traced back to 1983, when a workshop was held in Johannesburg on the establishment of a Bird Populations Data Bank for South Africa. This workshop was held in conjunction with a "Birds and Man" symposium which had been organised by the Southern African Ornithological Society (now BirdLife South Africa).

The ADU has continued to be closely associated with BirdLife South Africa, and has a formal partnership relationship with that organization, with the objective of fostering the development of further ornithological projects. This close association is appropriate because much of the research of the ADU continues to focus on large scale demographic studies in which participation by amateurs is a vital element.

Over the past years, the ADU has expanded the range of projects for which it is responsible. This website provides information on them, and the people who undertake them.

ADU's Strategic Philosophy

Mission statement:

The mission of the Avian Demography Unit is to contribute to the understanding of animal populations, especially population dynamics, and thus provide input to their conservation. We achieve this through mass participation projects, long-term monitoring, innovative statistical modelling and population-level interpretation of results. The emphasis is on the curation, analysis, publication and dissemination of data.

Purpose (Mission):

To contribute to the understanding of animal populations, especially population dynamics, and thus provide input to their conservation.

Values:

- **Conservation:**
Informing, influencing and motivating policy development based on solid/sound quantitative/scientific evidence through our combined commitment to long-term monitoring
- **Partnership:**
Nurturing partnerships with people, organizations and governments on the African continent for the sake of biodiversity conservation and mutual growth
- **Empowering:**
Enabling people to play a meaningful and living role in the science conversation by transforming Citizen Scientists into “ambassadors for biodiversity”
- **Openness:**
Adopting an “Open Access” data sharing paradigm that maximizes the benefit derived from data collectively gathered, thus, advancing interdisciplinary scholarly research and informing conservation needs
- **Innovation:**
Continuing the pioneering work that has made us leaders in Citizen Science
- **Education:**
Providing training and research opportunities to the next generation of scientists, leaders and environmentalists

Vision:

A future for All – Ensuring the Survival of Species/ Biodiversity, the Environment and the Biosphere

Current projects:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>AFRING</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Ornithological Obs.</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>SABAP2: Bird Atlas 2</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Penguin Watch</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>SAFRING: Bird Ringing</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Weaver research</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>BIRP: Birds in Reserves</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Seabirds and shorebirds</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>CAR: Bird Roadcounts</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Virtual Museum</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>CWAC: Waterbirds</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>FrogMAP</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>MyBirdPatch</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>LepiMAP</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>NERCS: Nest Records</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>MammalMAP</u> |

Current staff and students at the ADU

ADU Director: Prof. Les Underhill