



Environment Newsletter : October 2023



*We serve to sustainably protect and restore our environment to improve
the well-being of all communities*

October is Bird Migration Month



The European honey buzzard is a summer migrant to a relatively small area in the western Palearctic from most of Europe to as far east as southwestern Siberia. It migrates to tropical Africa for European winters. Being a long-distance migrant, the honey buzzard relies on magnetic orientation to find its way south, as well as a visual memory of remarkable geographical features such as mountain ranges and rivers, along the way. It avoids large expanses of water over which it cannot soar.

Accordingly, great numbers of honey buzzards can be seen crossing the Mediterranean Sea over its narrowest stretches, such as the Gibraltar Strait, the Messina Strait, the Bosphorus, Lebanon, or in Israel. An example of this was the story on the Facebook page group, David Attenborough for the Nobel Prize and repeated on Cape Talk & Radio 702 websites, who posted about the journey of a Female European Honey Buzzard.

The Honey Buzzard was fitted with a satellite tracker in Finland before flying off to discover the world.

Upon the bird's journey, those tracking the honey buzzard realised that it spent most of its summer time in the southern hemisphere around the town Reitz in the Free State in South Africa, before heading back to its origins in Finland.

But, what was amazing to see was the direction in which the little bird made its way back home - flying in a longitudinal straight line, avoiding the Mediterranean Sea and the desert along the way, covering over 10 thousand kilometers over 42 days.

See the bird's route recorded on the right:



Pygmy Kingfisher

The African pygmy kingfisher is distributed widely in Africa south of the Sahara, where it is a common resident and intra-African migrant. It is absent from much of the horn of Africa, and also the drier western regions of Southern Africa. It is found in woodland, savanna and coastal forest, and it is not bound to water. It is usually found either singly or in pairs and is secretive and unobtrusive.

It is a very small kingfisher with rufous underparts and a blue back extending down to the tail. The dark blue crown of the adult separates it from the African dwarf kingfisher. The smaller size and violet wash on the ear coverts distinguish it from the similar malachite kingfisher.



The southern subspecies overwinters as far north as 2°N (DRC, Uganda, South Sudan and Kenya). They are thought to migrate mainly at night; feeding, resting, and hiding from predators in the course of the day.

They start arriving at Tugela Mouth and other parts of South Africa like the Kruger National Park around the third week of September to early in October, but they could even arrive earlier. Most leave their breeding grounds again in March and April, flying back to Central and East Africa on their yearly migratory cycle.

Note to all our keen Lions Photographers:

Please take note that the closing date for entries for the Environmental Photo Competition has been extended to end March 2024, to coincide with the closing dates for all District Competitions



International e-Waste day

The WEEE forum every year organizes the International E-Waste Day on 14 October that provides an opportunity to the organisations across the world to raise critical awareness about e-waste challenge.

The main focus on this year's celebration will be those small electrical devices that we no longer use but keep in drawers and cupboards .



Electronic products like mobile phones, electric toothbrushes, toasters, cameras, etc are often discarded incorrectly due to their small size. Such items make up for a significant amount of e-waste that are thrown in waste bins to be land-filled or incinerated. In such case, not only many valuable metals gets lost without getting extracted, many other metals seeps into the ground or mix in the air and increases pollution of land, water and air.

On this International E-Waste Day, here are some shocking facts related to electronic waste that you might not know.

1. Every year about 20 to 50 million metric tons of e-waste are disposed worldwide.
2. Cell phones and other electronic items contain high amounts of precious metals like gold or silver.
3. Metals found in e-waste like lead, cadmium, mercury are extremely hazardous.
4. Many electronic equipment or parts that can be reused or recycled are thrown away as waste.
5. Only 12.5% of all recyclable e-waste is currently recycled.
6. Guiyu, China, is a major dumping ground for e-waste from the US making the city unsafe for residents.



However, it's not all gloom and doom:



1. By recycling 1 million cell phones, it is possible to recover 16 000 kg of copper, 350 kg of silver, 34 kg of gold and 15 kg of palladium.
2. By recycling 1 million laptops, the energy that can be saved is equivalent to the electricity used by more than 3500 homes in a year
3. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), E-waste is the fastest growing municipal waste stream in USA, and most probably in the world
4. Europe is the world leader in recycling, collecting, and processing of e-waste - by promoting responsible e-waste recycling, we can make a difference!

International Day of Climate Action - 24 October



Weather extremes and reports of disasters make it clear: Climate change is dramatically picking up speed. At the same time, concern about climate change makes people all over the world join and take the streets. A global climate movement has emerged.

Many groups in different countries participated at Youth Climate Action Day on 23 October 2021 and on 22 October 2022. They planted trees, painted posters, took part in international online workshops, organized garbage collection campaigns, built insect houses and creatively campaigned for climate protection.

This year's Youth Climate Action Day takes place on 24 October 2023. Especially now, setting the course for climate protection is extremely important - and thus the commitment of all of us.

Start your own action and network with young people in your local community.

Environment Calendar : October - November

14 October	International e-Waste day
14 October	World Migratory Bird Day
24 October	International Day of Climate Action
03 November	World Basking Shark Day
07 - 11 November	National Marine Week