



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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Newly developed camera system to aid the EWT in the prevention of power line collisions

Start

The EWT recently took another important step towards minimising the impact of power lines on birds. As part of a long-term strategic partnership with Eskom, two specially designed cameras were fitted to a stretch of power line in De Aar located in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, with the aim of better understanding, and therefore minimising the threats to birds from energy infrastructure.



The Bird Detection System (BDS) is a South African-designed concept that uses a high-resolution camera with image processing capabilities to detect movement, including birds, in the frame. It was designed when the EWT expressed a need for an affordable, versatile product that would assist in the research of bird collisions. After three years of hard work, dedication and testing, the product was ready to be trialled out in the field. The BDS, which is solar powered, is the first real-time system to transmit data such as video clips or photos directly to a user's cell phone or data bank, with

information uploaded straight to a cloud server for easy retrieval. This enables team members to count birds, identify species, and observe behaviour. The software and settings can also be configured remotely, eliminating the need for field maintenance, while the camera has an hourly self-check system and reboots every 24 hours. The BDS is fully adaptable to user requirements, and can also be used during Environmental Impact Assessments as a tool for specialists conducting surveys.

Eight years of research have shown that the installation location in De Aar is the most impacted by bird mortalities, making it an ideal site for this trial. The EWT Wildlife and Energy Programme Manager, Constant Hoogstad, says, "This device will enable us to gather information about the time of day or night these collisions occur, what the weather conditions are like at the time, and the behaviour of the bird right before colliding with a power line. This will give us far greater insight into what causes these collisions and allow us to find more effective ways to reduce them."

End

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