

Project Update: July 2013

Looking for rainbirds

The months between harvests of redundant chicks sees us working on other facets of the project - continuing the reintroduction programme, continuing research and expanding the education programme. We have launched a formal education programme freely available on the website with full teaching plan and have welcomed an environmental educator to the team - increasing our ability to get the message out in all the areas where we are and will be reintroducing hornbills and in the few places where the wild populations are still stable. We have launched a preliminary report on the decline of the species in Kwa-Zulu Natal and have received an excellent response, sparking newspaper articles, floods of sighting records and insights into the decline. This will allow us to workshop the issues and then plan a response for slowing the decline in the province. Our main focus here is to ascertain the strength of hornbill populations in the communal lands as few focussed surveys are conducted here and to assess how land-use is transforming hornbill habitat to the extent that it is no longer viable. The rewilding groups are doing well (bar the tragic loss of a breeding female in a freak storm in April) and planned reintroductions are underway. Data collected by the shepherds is helping inform site selection for future reintroductions.



Some of the education worksheets used in the education programme, making learning about hornbills fun.