

Project Update: June 2016

The first aerial surveys of the 2016 lappet-faced vulture breeding season in the Makgadikgadi Pans (MPs) took place in June. Flying was concentrated in areas where previous years have shown to be the most favoured nesting areas, and resulted in the detection of eight active nests. Sadly, the nest numbers are down from previous years. With such a vast area of suitable nesting habitat for these birds, one can only assume that this is an indication of adult declines within the local population. This is not good news considering that 'new recruits' are the only way that existing populations can begin to attempt to recover from the large losses/declines that are occurring across southern Africa.

Out of the vultures that carry GPS transmitters, so far it looks as though four out of eight are breeding this year. These are as widely spread across northern Botswana as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, the Makgadikgadi Pans, Chobe National Park and the Ghanzi district. Now that we have a database of nesting sites from monitoring over the last couple of years, we are able to see that some nest sites of the same birds are not the same, but very close to, nest sites used in previous years. All active nests will be monitored for continuation and success throughout the season.



Aerial shot of nesting Lappet-faced vulture

The 'Kalahari Ferrari' - just perfect for surveys, but can get somewhat chilly!



The 'moon-like' landscape of the Makgadikgadi Pans