



MEDIA RELEASE
For immediate release

SAWEA AND BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA RELEASE NEW RESOURCE TO ENCOURAGE WIND FARMS TO TRIAL BLADE PATTERNING AS A MEANS TO CONSERVE BIRDS

[Monday, 2 October 2023] The vision of birds, particularly those that hunt from the air, such as birds of prey, has not evolved to perceive large, moving structures in their environment, such as wind turbines. This is largely due to birds' physiological limitations, such as low colour contrast detection abilities, combined with motion smear created by moving, un-patterned turbine blades. This makes these species vulnerable to blade collisions, which is particularly concerning for threatened species.

However, there may be a relatively simple solution on the horizon: experience in Norway suggests that painting ("patterning") wind turbine blades can improve their visibility and reduce avifaunal fatalities.

This exciting research spurred the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) and BirdLife South Africa to join forces to encourage similar experiments at local wind farms in order to test, and ultimately prove, the effectiveness of this solution.

As an initial outcome of this initiative, SAWEA and BirdLife South Africa have compiled a briefing document for wind farm developers, environmental consultants, and decision-makers which outlines the key considerations of this innovative, low-tech approach to onsite mitigation.

The briefing document is available on the SAWEA and BirdLife South Africa websites at the following links:

- BirdLife South Africa: <https://www.birdlife.org.za/birds-renewable-energy>
- SAWEA: <https://sawea.org.za/research-studies>

Ends

Editor's Notes

About SAWEA

The South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) represents the interests of its members who are invested in the South African wind power value chain.

SAWEA activities are focused on:

- Advocacy for investment in wind power;
- Promotion of socio-economic development and transformation through wind power;
- Excellent operational practice in the generation of wind power;
- Provision of pertinent information on the SA wind power market;
- Promotion of renewable power in large and small-scale applications;
- Promotion of wind and renewable power investment in Africa

Find out more about SAWEA here: <https://sawea.org.za>.

About BirdLife South Africa

BirdLife South Africa is the country partner of BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, by working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. BirdLife International partners operate in more than 120 countries worldwide. BirdLife South Africa relies on donor funding and financial support from the public to carry out its critical conservation work.

Find out more about BirdLife South Africa's Birds & Renewable Energy Project here: <https://www.birdlife.org.za/birds-renewable-energy>.

Find out more about BirdLife South Africa here: <http://www.birdlife.org.za>.

Phone: +27 11 789 1122

Email: info@birdlife.org.za

For interviews or comment, please contact:

SAWEA

Liandra Scott-Shaw, Chair, Environmental Working Group, SAWEA

Email: Environmental@sawea.org.za

Email: lscottshaw@slrconsulting.com

Shaun Taylor, Chair, Wind Energy & Birds Sub Working Group, SAWEA

Email: Shaun.taylor@mainstreamrp.com

BirdLife South Africa

Samantha Ralston-Paton, Birds and Renewable Energy Project Manager, BirdLife South Africa

Email: energy@birdlife.org.za

Andy Wassung, Communications Manager, BirdLife South Africa

Email: andy.wassung@birdlife.org.za

Images

NB: Please credit these images as they appear below.

Please get in touch for images



Left: An unpatterned wind turbine in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Although quite visible to humans, it is thought that birds don't always perceive the moving wind turbine blades as a threat. Source: Samantha Ralston-Paton



Right: The first of its kind in Africa: A red patterned blade on a wind turbine at the Umoya Energy Wind Farm at Hopefield in the Western Cape, South Africa. Source: Dr Rob Simmons