












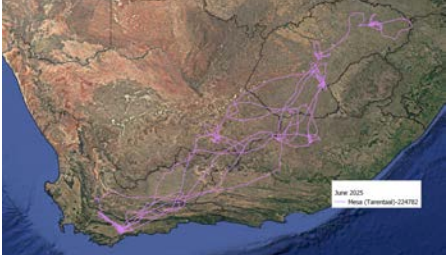



Overberg Renosterveld Trust: Black Harrier Project: Updates from tracked birds, 2020-2024



Thanks to the incredible donations from ORT supporters, we have managed to raise enough funding to purchase 24 tags over the last four years (three of which have been used twice as they were still functional after being retrieved from dead birds, and six of which just arrived in South Africa and will be deployed in 2025). Most of the tags have been used to tag renosterveld-breeding harriers in the Overberg, but because of our collaborative work with Dr Rob Simmons, as well as our concerns around the impacts of windfarms throughout the species' breeding range, some of the tags (3) were used by Rob to tag birds outside of the Overberg. This report covers the 18 renosterveld-breeding birds that the ORT (with much assistance from Rob) has tagged since 2020.

Name	Update	Tracking map
<p>♂</p> <p>GOEREESOE MALE #47 (Goereesoe)</p> 	<p>?</p> <p>This male never left the Overberg over the two years that his tag was functional. Last signal from 27th Dec 2022, but bird is alive! Seen on same breeding site in both 2023 & 2024 (tag clearly visible). We will need to wait for the 2025 breeding season to see if he returns again.</p>	 <p>26 Nov 2020, signal lost 27th Dec 2022</p>
<p>♂</p> <p>GOEREESOE MALE #48 (Goereesoe)</p> 	<p>☠</p> <p>After breeding at Goereesoe in 2020, he spent time at De Hoop NR and we then lost his signal for about 10 months. On 5th November 2021, he was killed through a collision with a wind turbine at Excelsior Wind Energy Facility.</p>	 <p>26 Nov 2020, died 5 Nov 2021</p>
<p>♂</p> <p>GOEREESOE MALE #88 (Goereesoe)</p> 	<p>?</p> <p>After breeding at Goereesoe in spring 2021, he headed east on 12th February, travelling over 800km in just 5 days, settling about 70km south of Bloem where he stayed until 4th April. He then moved further northeast to near Vrede, Free State, where he stayed until early July, when he headed south and back to Goereesoe to breed in spring 2023. He stayed on here the whole year and is bred at Goereesoe again in 2024, however his signal was lost south of here on 31st March 2025.</p>	 <p>1 Dec 2024 – 31 Mar 2025, signal lost</p>

Name	Update	Tracking map
<div></div> <p>AMES (Tarentaal), named by donors who wish to remain anonymous</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>After breeding in the Overberg in 2022, he spent the rest of summer and autumn west of Cathcart, Eastern Cape. He then travelled up to southern Namibia (where it appeared he might have been planning to breed!) but was killed by an aerial predator near Springbok.</p>	<div></div> <p>4 Oct 2022, died 5 Sep 2023</p> <p>Tracker was retrieved and still in perfect working order; fitted by Rob to another bird ('Houdini') at the Hopefield Wind Farm, where some exciting research on blade-patterning as a mitigation measure for bird strikes is being tested.</p>
<div></div> <p>HWK MALE (Haarwegskloof)</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>Didn't leave his breeding grounds from 2021 – Dec 2022, after which he left the Overberg for the Eastern Cape, undertaking an impressive journey of over 760km over just 4 days, settling in Stutterheim (Eastern Cape), where he appears to have bred. He left this area in early June 2024 and returned to HWK in mid-July. Unfortunately his signal was subsequently lost.</p>	<div></div> <p>26 Oct 2021 - signal lost 8 Aug 2024</p>
<div></div> <p>TARENDAAL MALE #08 (Tarentaal)</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>After breeding in and staying in the Overberg through 2021 and 2022; he headed east in Feb 2023 on an incredible journey covering over 1000km in 7 days. He stayed at various locations (Stekfontein Dam, Vrede) in the Free State region until July 2023 when he made his way back to the Western Cape: this time the Klein Karoo. He then bred near Robertson in 2023 and subsequently made his way back to his Overberg breeding grounds in 2024. After breeding season, he moved through the Klein Karoo and last 'pinged' from the mountains south of Citrusdal on 6 March.</p>	<div></div> <p>1 Dec 2024 - 6 Mar</p>

Name	Update	Tracking map
<p>♂</p> <p>HARTEBEESTERIVIER MALE (Hartebeesterivier)</p> 	<p>⚰</p> <p>5th November 2021, killed by wheat-cutter / harvester, where he was roosting in a wheatfield, less than 2km from nest. His chicks had luckily just fledged and the female was able to take care of them.</p>	 <p>26 Oct 2021, died 5 Nov 2021.</p> <p>Tag re-fitted to Goereesoe female#10</p>
<p>♀</p> <p>MESA (Tarentaal), named by donors who wish to remain anonymous</p> 	<p>♥</p> <p>After breeding in the Overberg in 2022, Mesa moved east, spending Dec near Victoria West, moving further east to southeast of Bloemfontein. She returned to the W Cape, sampling the Klein Karoo & the eastern Overberg in July 2023, deciding on the Robertson area in the Klein Karoo for breeding. In April 2024, she returned to the Overberg, sampling several sites before heading back to Tarentaal to breed. On 8th Mar 2025, she undertook a 10-day foray into the Eastern Cape as far as Molteno, then headed back for the Overberg.</p>	 <p>1 Dec 2024 - current 2025</p> <p>After another 10 days, she headed northeast again, along a relatively similar route and spent April heading even further through the Eastern Cape & into the Free State, where she has now settled near Reitz, north of Lesotho.</p>
<p>♀</p> <p>GOEREESOE FEMALE #10 (Goereesoe)</p> 	<p>?</p> <p>Left the Overberg after breeding in 2021 and spent time overwintering north of Oudsthoorn and then north of Mossel Bay. She then returned to the Overberg, but her signal died on 3rd June 2022: We suspect this is due to the battery dying during long periods of no sun while she incubated. She was confirmed alive in 2022 (nest found and tag clearly visible on her back, seen much later in the breeding season again (October); faulty tag. Not seen since.</p>	 <p>1 Dec 2021, signal lost 3 Jun 2022</p> 

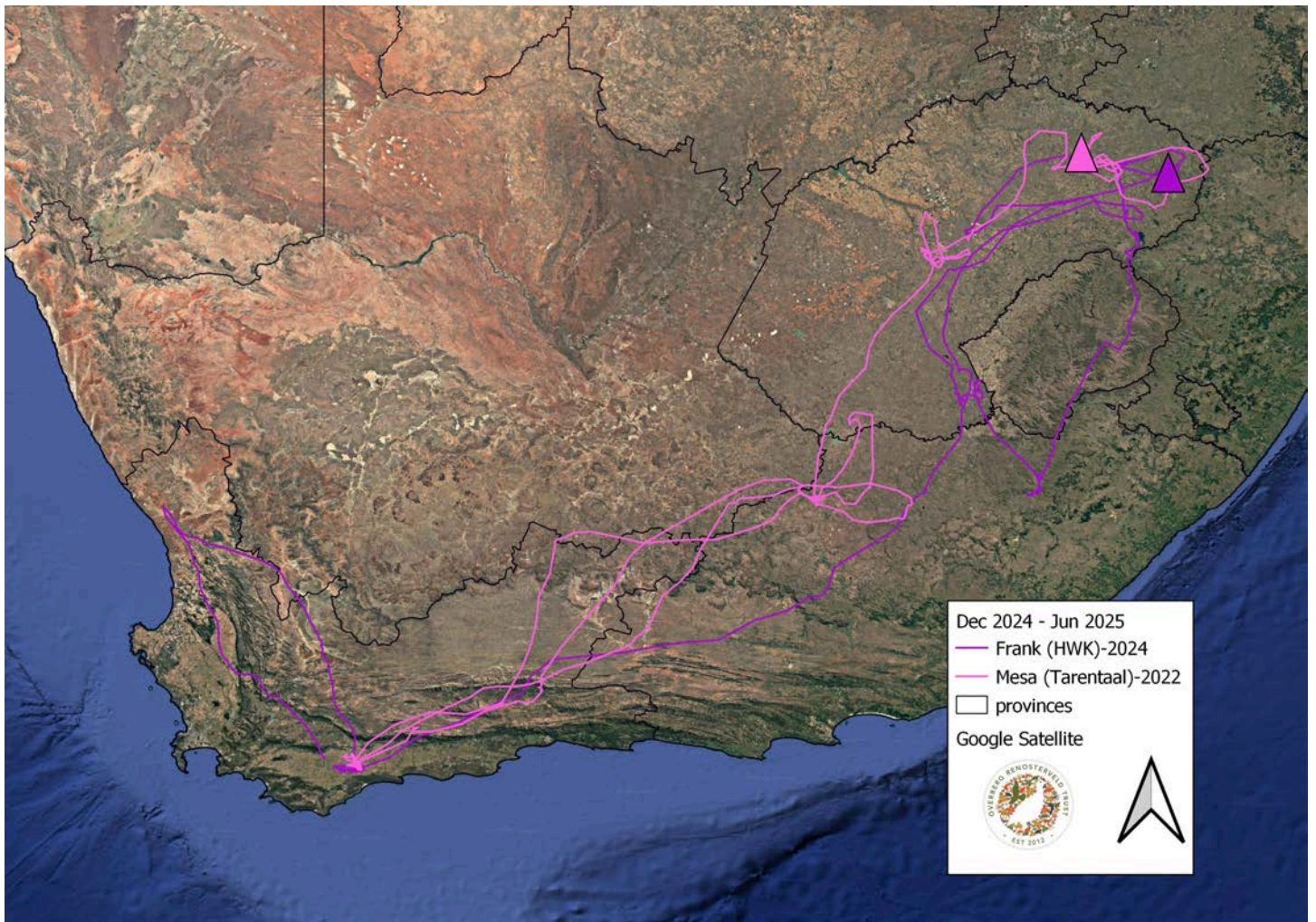
Name	Update	Tracking map
<div> </div> <p>CHUANA (Tarentaal), named by Callan Cohen on behalf of Birding Africa</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>After breeding in the Overberg, Chuana moved northeast to spend the remainder of summer and autumn in the Free State, just next to the Lesotho Border. He then returned to the W Cape, where he has been since winter 2023, breeding in renosterveld remnants south of Riversdale in both 2023 and 2024, where he has essentially remained until now.</p>	<div> </div> <p>1 Dec 2024 - current 2025</p>
<div> </div> <p>KHWEZI II (Goereesoe), named by donors, the Inkwazi Bird Club</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>Kwezi II has been centred on her breeding grounds at Tarentaal since she was tagged last year, although she has done some impressive sampling trips including a two-week return trip to just west of East London in April and a week long foray along the west coast and into the Tankwa Karoo (the latter covering about 800km). On 24th Mar 2025, she started heading northwards and we last received a ping from her 60km northeast of Victoria West on 26 Mar 2025.</p>	<div> </div> <p>1 Dec 2024 - 26 Mar 2025, signal lost</p>
<div> </div> <p>MOLLY (Tarentaal), named by Odette after her daughter</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>After breeding at Tarentaal in 2023, Molly undertook a sampling trip that included the Karoo (near Calvinia) and the Free State where she turned southwards again just south of Bloemfontein, eventually settling in the Gamkaberg just south of Oudtshoorn. She stayed here for a few weeks before her tag stopped transmitting. However we suddenly received a single 'ping' on 5 June 2025 from just north of Kimberly, confirming she is alive.</p>	<div> </div> <p>5 June 2025, we received a single ping from north of Kimberly</p>

Name	Update	Tracking map
<div> </div> <p>VALERIE (Haarwegskloof), named by the Cape Bird Club (donor) and by the late Peter Steyn prior to his passing, in anticipation of another female being tagged, in honour of Valerie Gargett, great naturalist and biologist (an expert on Verreux's Eagles)</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>Valerie is another one of our handful of birds tagged in 2024. Sadly, her nest also failed shortly after she was tagged (several nests in the area have failed due to predation, thus we do not believe the tagging had anything to do with it). She has since done some exploring within the areas around Haarwegskloof, but is still centred on the reserve. After the breeding season, she undertook a couple of impressive sampling trips, into the Tankwa Karoo as well as up the West Coast as far as Lambert's Bay.</p>	<div> </div> <p>1 Dec 2024 - Current 2025</p> <p>She has been settled in an area just east of Caledon, Overberg more recently.</p>
<div> </div> <p>TONY (Tarentaal), named by the ORT to acknowledge Toni Hoenders, Dutch biologist and volunteer (photographed above, holding Frank) for her contributions to the ORT's Black Harrier work.</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>A newly-tagged male currently provisioning a nest with four young chicks (<1 week old).He successfully raised his chicks and started moving northwest in mid-February, settling around Morreesburg on the West coast ever since.</p>	<div> </div> <p>4 Dec 2024 - Current</p>
<div> </div> <p>FRANK (Haarwegskloof), named by donor Michael Raimondo for his father, the late Frank Raimondo, a man who cared deeply about conservation and about wild things and wild places.</p> <div> </div>	<div> </div> <p>Frank was tagged 2024. After this nest failed, he left the breeding area on a 'sampling trip' of 800km lasting 5 days that took him beyond Vredendal after which he made a beeline back for Haarwegskloof, where he settled again to breed. At the end of Jan 2025, he started heading northeast and has settled north of Lesotho near Reitz in the Free State.</p>	<div> </div> <p>25 Nov 2024 - Current</p>

Name	Update	Tracking map
<div></div> <p>PETER (Goereesoe), named by the Cape Bird Club (donors) & the ORT to honour the (now late) Peter Steyn, legendary naturalist, author & photographer.</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>Tagged at Goereesoe, a breeding hotspot for Black Harriers, located opposite the Excelsior Wind Farm (WEF), Peter lived only another two months before tragically meeting his end through a collision with Turbine 1 at the WEF</p>	<div></div> <p>11 Nov 2023, died 14 Jan 2024</p> <p>Tag refurbished and fitted to Valerie</p>
<div></div> <p>ZIG (Fairfield), named by donor Alison Gilbert, keen birder and Cape Bird Club member, for her late husband Simon, whose nickname was 'Zig'.</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>. Zig was tagged just 15km west of Napier in late 2023, where she had a large chick on the nest. She subsequently undertook some impressive travelling where she traversed the Klein Karoo, the Tankwa Karoo and the Eastern Cape (As far as East London), before settling down in Mossel Bay where she bred. On 25 Dec 2024, she did a quick foray as far north as Sutherland, turning south again on the 29th, reaching the Overberg around the 30th, where she sampled some sites briefly and headed back to Mossel Bay again on 31 Dec</p>	<div></div> <p>1 Dec 2024- 31 Dec 2024, signal lost</p> <p>She has lost signal since then, but we still hope to hear from her again.</p>
<div></div> <p>JULES (Goereesoe), named by the Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation to honour harrier enthusiast, Jules Tolboom</p> <div></div>	<div></div> <p>Apart from a brief sampling trip into the Klein Karoo, Jules has essentially not left the Overberg since she was tagged in 2023. In 2024 she moved from the Goereesoe renosterveld breeding colony to the fynbos mountains of the Heuingberg behind Bredasdorp. Since then she has been hanging around Napier and roosting in one of the local renosterveld remnants</p>	<div></div> <p>1 Dec 2024 - current 2025</p>

Some interesting journeys

Mesa, a female tagged in 2022 at Tarentaal and Frank, tagged in 2024 on Haarwegskloof, have both been spending the autumn / winter north of Lesotho in the Free State, with their foraging ranges overlapping. We wonder what is so good about this particular spot! It's most likely high numbers of mice.



What tracking reveals in renosterveld-breeding harriers:

Out of 18 adults tagged to date:

- 4 dead: 2 through wind turbine collisions, 1 by a wheat-cutter & 1 by an aerial predator (3 of these tags were re-used)
- Maximum distance travelled between breeding & non-breeding sites: $\pm 1000\text{km}$
- Maximum continuous flight in a single day (12 hours): 525km
- Maximum speed travelled: 80km/h
- Foraging distance from a nest for provisioning males in the Overberg appears to be below 10km.

Thank you for your contribution to this important work. Without your generosity, none of this would have been possible.



Our fundraising effort are ongoing, please see our webpage for more details:
<https://overbergrenosterveld.org.za/black-harrier/>

