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29 September 2012

To whom it may concern

It is with great concern that BirdLife Eastern Cape heard about the proposed construction of transmission lines by ESKOM in the Elands River Valley area.

Bird Life Eastern Cape has been actively involved in helping the Elands River Conservancy (ERC) compile its bird list and some members of the club have as recently as July 2012 visited Hillingdon, the farm of the chairman of the ERC, for a birding outing.

According to studies done by Heroldt (1998); Johnsgard (1991) and Allan (1997), the collision of large terrestrial birds with the wires of utility structures and especially power lines, has been determined to be one of the most important mortality factors for this group of birds in South Africa.

As shown in the bird list of the ERC, the Elands River Valley hosts many **species that will be endangered by transmission lines.**

- Of significance are various species of ducks, wild geese, raptors and owls. The White Stork, Stanley's Bustard, Secretary birds and the Blue Crane are some of the species that have been identified as vulnerable to collisions.
- During the construction phase and maintenance of power lines habitat destruction and alteration inevitably takes place.
- Many birds are highly susceptible to disturbance and should this disturbance take place during or just prior to the chick fledging period, it could lead to temporary or permanent abandonment of the nest by the adult birds or premature fledging with fatal results for the chick.
- Such a sequence of events can have far-reaching implications for certain large, rare species that only breed once a year or once every two to three years.

Also of concern is **the visual impact** the 33m high pylons will have on the nature loving visitors to the valley.

The areas sought after by nature loving visitors are areas that are largely undeveloped. The Elands River Valley offers the serene beauty nature lovers long for.

Sadly this serene beauty will be spoiled by the erection of transmission lines as proposed by Eskom. **It will result in nature lovers seeking alternate venues in other areas and will definitely impact their decision to visit the Elands River Valley.**

A Branch of BirdLife South Africa





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There has been talk of the Elands River Valley becoming a corridor for a planned Mega Reserve linking Addo National Park, Groendal and Baviaanskloof Wilderness Areas. Power lines would certainly have a negative impact on such a project.

We believe that present as well as future tourism ventures in the Elands River Valley will be negatively affected by the erection of transmission lines in the area. We further strongly believe that birdlife as well as nature in general will suffer devastating consequences should the project go ahead.

Yours sincerely

Corné Erasmus

Chairperson – BirdLife Eastern Cape

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