

RIDING FOR A PURPOSE

## A 3600 KM SOLO CYCLE RIDE

CAPE TOWN - NAMIBIA - BOTSWANA - VIC FALLS | START 19 FEBRUARY 2017

save  
africa's  
smallest  
finch



ORANGE-BREADED  
WAXBILL PROJECT

small is

# BIG



Make a BIG difference to help save africa's smallest finch



## AFRICA'S SMALLEST FINCH NOW NEEDS CONSERVATION HELP

On 19 February 2017 Eelco Meyjes will attempt to do an unsupported **3600 km solo cycle ride** (no back up support vehicle) from Cape Town to Namibia, across certain parts of the Namib Desert, through the Caprivi Strip and then onto northern Botswana and end at the mighty Victoria Falls.

**The purpose of the ride** - Recent unexpected declines in Africa's smallest finch, the Orange-breasted Waxbill, has resulted in the need for the species to be researched. Not yet listed as threatened BirdLife South Africa has now selected the species as a key sentinel (watchdog) species for no less than eight threatened bird species and 84 common bird species that all use a similar wetland habitat to itself . **It's a small bird with BIG responsibilities.**



*Orange-breasted Waxbill | Photo: Chris Krog*

**THE TARGET**  
IS TO RAISE  
**R 300 000**

Donations can be made to: [www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/](http://www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/) or [www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate](http://www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate)  
Supporters will be able to follow the ride on [www.safesporttracking.co.za](http://www.safesporttracking.co.za)

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## WHAT WILL THE MONEY BE USED FOR ?

### Research

Future postgraduate work includes a scientific study to ground truth initial findings and to investigate changes in distribution and trends in population size.

### Environmental Education and Conservation

Teaching young children all about environmental education and conservation is critical if we wish to leave a legacy for future generations. The conservation strategy for Save Africa's smallest finch is simple and powerful:

**small is BIG.**



The natural wetland habitat for the Orange-breasted Waxbill.

If we can successfully teach children to appreciate the small things in life the BIG things will take good care of themselves. With time, the small Orange-breasted Waxbill, as a sentinel (watchdog) species that helps save other bird species, will be made into a BIG hero. A very exciting new small is BIG environmental and conservation education puppet show, where the small bird named Waxi the Hero will be portrayed as a lovable hero, is currently being developed for an ongoing schools program and possible TV series. We all want our small children to grow up to be BIG heroes.



*Work on the Waxi the Hero puppet show concept is at a very advanced stage. Test pilot performances have already been completed. Photo left Dr. Hanneline Smit-Robinson BirdLife South Africa Manager: Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme with Alastair Findlay, puppet maker and honorary Rare Finch Conservation Group member. Centre photo : Two young children reaching out to touch Waxi the Hero at the end of a puppet show performance. Puppeteers Teboga Machaba and Linda Jackson Tshabalala , both graduates from the Market Theatre acting Laboratory, with the cast of puppets. In real life these birds will all benefit from the field research work on the Orange-breasted Waxbill.*

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# HOW CAN YOU HELP ?

## SPONSORS

An exciting option of Platinum, Gold, Silver and General sponsorship opportunities are available for corporate participation.  
Please see Appendix A

## DONORS

Alternatively you may prefer to make a private or corporate donation to the small is BIG Save Africa's smallest finch conservation project. Please see Appendix B

## PLEDGES

Individuals, Families, Friends, schools, clubs and small businesses may want to participate in an ALL OR BUST pledge challenge to incentivise Eelco Meyjes to successfully complete the 3600km small is BIG, Save Africa's smallest finch, fundraising cycle ride.  
Please see Appendix C

This new conservation project is a proud collaboration between BirdLife South Africa and the Rare Finch Conservation Group (both are registered non-profit organisations) The small is BIG Orange-breasted Waxbill conservation project has now been identified as the ideal entry level conservation project to educate and excite both young children and adults alike about modern day bird conservation work.

**All supporters will be able to follow the ride on [www.safesporttracking.co.za](http://www.safesporttracking.co.za)**

## INTRODUCING OUR SMALLEST FINCH AMBASSADOR

Eelco Meyjes is a retired advertising executive. At 20 years of age he successfully solo hitch-hiked across Africa to Europe. He is both a founder director of the Rare Finch Conservation Group and a member of BirdLife South Africa. In 2009 he cycled, as a novice, in his very first Momentum 94.7km road challenge. He does not see himself as a natural athlete, but more as someone who enjoys adventure, nature, wildlife, birds and the great outdoors. WHAT DID HE LEARN from the 94.7?

**Life lesson:** There was lots of fear mixed with excitement at the start. Self belief is important. Get out of your comfort zone and try something new, it can be very exciting. Push your limits. Ride lesson : 94.7 km was a long way and he could just ride the distance ....and not very fast.

In February 2013 to help raise awareness and funds for Africa's rarest finch, the threatened and elusive Shelley's Crimsonwing finch, that can be seen in Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC, Eelco Meyjes rode an unsupported 1460 km solo cycle ride from Johannesburg to Cape Town. The ride took him 19 days of which two days were rest days (a day in Kimberley and a day in Beaufort West) WHAT DID HE LEARN from the Joburg to Cape Town ride?

**Life lessons:** Learnt a lot more about his body both mentally and physically. He learnt that his survival limits are far higher than he ever imagined. The value and importance of good planning. Giving something back into society is very fulfilling. Ride Lesson: Putting back to back multiday rides together. The importance of a good recovery programme. How to ride long distances at night.

In March/April 2015 to help launch the public awareness campaign and raise funds for the little Orange-breasted Waxbill, which now needs conservation help, Eelco cycled from Cape Town, going via Botswana, to Vic Falls. It was an unsupported solo cycle ride of 3008km.

The ride took him 44 days of which seven were rest days. Life Lesson: Be flexible, sometimes plan C can be far better than plan A. Ride Lesson: Cycling amongst wildlife.



Selfie taken whilst crossing the Great Karoo *Eelco Meyjes*

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On 19 February 2017 Eelco Meyjes will start his small is BIG fundraising cycle ride. The target is R300,000. The distance will be 3600km. It will AGAIN be an unsupported solo cycle ride. It will start in Cape Town, cross Namibia and go across the top end of Botswana and end at the mighty Victoria Falls. He hopes to complete the ride in 67-70 days. A major new challenge for him will be to try and cross large sections of the Namib Desert. Managing water supplies, cycling on soft sand, cycling on long stretches of corrugated dirt roads and avoiding desert storms will be a key challenge. If he does successfully cross the Namib Desert and reach Walvis Bay (at 1950km he will be just over the halfway mark) the next major challenge for him will be to pick himself up mentally to complete the rest of the 1650kms ride to Victoria Falls. This will include quite a few areas where he will be cycling amongst wildlife.



A desert storm in Namibia : Photo [Sanette Roussouw](#)

## MORE ABOUT RARE FINCH CONSERVATION GROUP (RFCG) AND THE BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA COLLABORATION

- The RFCG was founded in 2005 by a group of nine highly dedicated South African and Australian finch enthusiasts. Its first conservation project was on the threatened and elusive Shelley's Crimsonwing up in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda. The research findings were shared with BirdLife International, Ugandan Wildlife Authorities and Nature Uganda
- In 2014 the RFCG collaborates with BirdLife South Africa.
- Based on citizen science data from the Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP 1 and SABAP 2) BirdLife South Africa identifies that the small Orange-breasted Waxbill needs conservation help.
- Not yet listed as threatened, the Orange-breasted Waxbill is chosen by BirdLife South Africa as a key sentinel species for eight threatened species, ranging from Near Threatened to Critically Endangered and 84 common bird species that all use a similar wetland and grassland habitat.
- The Orange-breasted Waxbill project becomes part of BirdLife International and BirdLife South Africa's Preventing Extinctions initiative for *Keeping Common Birds Common*.
- Because of the small size of the bird and its attractive orange colour the RFCG recommends that a small is BIG marketing strategy be adopted to help raise public awareness and funds for the project. In addition to the small size and its attractive orange colour the fact that the bird was selected as a key sentinel bird for no less than eight threatened and 84 common bird species, that all enjoy a similar habitat, provided an excellent opportunity for the species to be marketed as a small bird BIG HERO (the field research results will benefit all the other identified wetland and grassland species)
- The small is BIG Orange-breasted Waxbill project has now been identified as the ideal entry level conservation project to educate and excite both young children and adults alike about the need for modern day bird conservation work.



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# APPENDIX A

## PLATINUM SPONSOR:

### R 50 000.00



Orange-breasted Waxbill Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species



**Critically Endangered**  
Wattled Crane  
Photo: Bruce Ward-Smit



**Critically Endangered**  
White-winged Flufftail  
Photo: Warrick Tarboton



**Endangered**  
African Marsh-Harrier  
Photo: Warrick Tarboton



**Endangered**  
Grey Crowned Crane  
Photo: Warrick Tarboton



**Vulnerable**  
African Grass-Owl  
Photo: Warrick Tarboton



**Vulnerable**  
Greater Painted-snipe  
Photo: Marietjie Froneman



**Vulnerable**  
Striped Flufftail  
Photo: Bart Wurston



**Near Vulnerable**  
Rosy-throated Longclaw  
Photo: Albert Froneman

#### Branding

Corporate logo prominently placed on all marketing material as the Platinum Sponsor - including the website, email marketing campaign & any print advertising secured. A linked logo & 100 word profile will be included on the Rare Finch Conservation Group webpage. All rider correspondence & materials to feature your corporate logo. The start and finish banner can also include your corporate logo.

#### Media Exposure

Your participation to be featured in all comprehensive media campaigns including any print, television & radio exposure secured by the small is BIG fundraising cycle ride.

#### Press Release

A dedicated press release regarding your involvement in the initiative will be written & released by the Rare Finch Conservation Group. The press release will be written in the format of your choice & an interview conducted with your representative for maximum credibility & exposure.

#### Social Media Exposure

The Rare Finch Conservation Group's dedicated social media sites will link to your corporate page & cross pollinate any corresponding posts. An announcement will be made on the social media sites about your participation, along with your corporate logo or image of your choice. Any media exposure received will be acknowledged on this medium, over & above the possible print, & radio broadcasts secured.

#### Mascot

Your company is entitled to provide one mascot which will travel with the ambassador on his journey. We will create an individual campaign around the mascot of your choice and include it in our publicity pre and post the cycle. The mascot will then be auctioned off at the 2017 post cycle celebration event in order to raise further funding.

#### Onsite Exposure

Company to provide two corporate banners which will be erected onsite at any Rare Finch Conservation Group participant events.

*\* There is only one exclusive Platinum Sponsorship available.*



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# APPENDIX A

## GOLD SPONSOR:

### R 25 000.00



Orange-breasted Waxbill Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species

#### Branding

Corporate logo prominently placed on all marketing material as the Gold Sponsor - including the website & email marketing campaign. A linked logo & 75 word profile will be included on the Rare Finch Conservation Group webpage. All rider correspondence & materials to feature your corporate logo.

#### Press Release

A press release regarding the gold sponsors' involvement in the initiative will be written & released by Rare Finch Conservation Group. An interview will be conducted with your representative for maximum credibility & exposure.

#### Social Media Exposure

Rare Finch Conservation Group dedicated social media sites will link to your corporate page and cross pollinate any corresponding posts. An announcement will be made on the social media sites about your participation, along with your corporate logo or image of your choice. Any media exposure received will be acknowledged on this medium, over & above possible print / television & radio broadcasts.

#### Onsite Exposure

Company to provide one corporate banner which will be erected onsite at any Rare Finch Conservation Group events.

#### T-shirt-A-Day

Company to provide one fully branded t-shirt for the ambassador. The t-shirt will be worn by the ambassador and will be featured in all photographs of a specified day. These visuals will be used in our post event exposure campaign.

*\* There are only four exclusive Gold Sponsorships available.*



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# APPENDIX A

## SILVER SPONSOR:

### R 15 000.00



Orange-breasted Waxbill Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species

#### Branding

Corporate logo prominently placed on all marketing material as the Silver Sponsor - including the website & email marketing campaign. A linked logo will be included on the Rare Finch Conservation Group webpage.

#### Press Release

A press release regarding the silver sponsors' involvement in the initiative will be written and released by the Rare Finch Conservation Group. An email interview will be conducted with your representative for maximum credibility & exposure.

#### Social Media Exposure

Rare Finch Conservation Group's dedicated social media sites will link to your corporate page and cross pollinate any corresponding posts. An announcement will be made on the social media sites about your participation, along with your corporate logo or image of your choice. Any media exposure received will be acknowledged on this medium, over and above the possible print / television and radio broadcasts secured

\* There are only six exclusive Silver Sponsorships available.



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# APPENDIX A GENERAL SPONSORSHIPS:



Orange-breasted Waxbill Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species

## Create your own Sponsorship

The sky is the limit and this is your chance to be creative and uninhibited with your marketing strategy. If none of the packages above tickle your fancy then why not tell us what you would like to get out of your sponsorship. We can create something that fits both your marketing needs and just, as importantly, something that fits your budget. You have the freedom to choose.

## Donation

If you are unable to participate in a sponsorship, but would still like to make a donation please refer to Appendix B.

*\* If sponsor cannot provide item at their own cost, Rare Finch Conservation Group will source the product on behalf of Sponsor. Sponsorship price will be adjusted accordingly to include the items cost.*



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# APPENDIX B

## DONATIONS:

### Make a Donation

For quick and easy donations please go to :  
<https://www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/>

Alternatively all donations, private and/ or corporate, can be submitted through the secure easy online BirdLife South Africa facility at [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za)

For corporates your donation may contribute to your B-BBEE scorecard. BirdLife South Africa is a nationally recognised and approved project for Socio-Economic Development (SED) purposes under the B-BBEE Act and related Codes of Good Practice, based on BirdLife South Africa's national organisational and operational presence, as well as the conservation mandate undertaken by BirdLife South Africa. This position is recognised and supported by the DEA and validates BirdLife South Africa's commitment to socio-economic growth, skills development, community upliftment and the integration of previously disadvantaged communities through conservation.

*BirdLife South Africa is a registered Public Benefit Organisation (No. 930004518) and is authorised to issue 18A tax certificates where applicable*



*Orange-breasted Waxbill Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species*



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# APPENDIX C

## EXCITING ALL OR BUST PLEDGE CHALLENGE OPPORTUNITIES



Orange Breasted Waxbill | Photo: Chris Krog  
The research data will benefit eight threatened species

### How pledge works

This is the perfect opportunity for individuals, families, friends, schools, clubs and small businesses to compete with pledges against one another!

Make a pledge, share the journey and follow the daily challenges of the ride. If Eelco Meyjes makes it you will need to honour your pledge but if he doesn't - you will owe absolutely nothing.

### R500 or more

If you pledge R500 and he finishes the ride you will receive a lovely souvenir Coffee Mug once you have honoured your pledge.



### R1 000 or more

If you pledge R1000 and he finishes the ride you will receive a beautifully engraved save africa's smallest finch souvenir solar lamp jar once you have honoured your pledge.

Collectively lots of small pledges will make a BIG contribution to help Save Africa's smallest finch.

## GO ON HAVE SOME FUN! MAKE A PLEDGE FOLLOW THE ADVENTURE

All we need is your name, mobile number, e mail address plus your pledge amount.

Supporters will be able to follow the ride on  
[www.safesporttracking.co.za](http://www.safesporttracking.co.za)

Donations can be made to: [www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/](http://www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/) or  
[www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate](http://www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate)



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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT US ON  
082 457 4936 OR EMAIL [editor@avitalk.co.za](mailto:editor@avitalk.co.za)  
[www.rarefinch.org](http://www.rarefinch.org)

Listen to a 702 podcast radio interview  
<https://soundcloud.com/primediabroadcasting/eelco-meyjes-will-attempt-to-do-an-unsupported-3600-km-solo-cycle-ride-from-cape-town-to-namibia>

PROPOSAL PREPARED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF HAIKU STUDIO

Finally what does Eelco Meyjes have to say about all of this:

*"The ride is going to be my toughest endurance test ever. Cycling for the small is BIG, Save Africa's smallest finch, the Orange-breasted Waxbill, conservation project is going to be a very exciting and fulfilling experience."*

Supporters will be able to follow the ride on  
[www.safesporttracking.co.za](http://www.safesporttracking.co.za)

Donations can be made to: [www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/](http://www.givengain.com/cause/4593/campaigns/14722/) or  
[www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate](http://www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate)



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