

Ground-Hornbills & Window-Breaking

THE BIRD: Endangered in South Africa & its numbers are still declining.



Southern Ground-Hornbills are now Endangered and one of the main threats to them is that they are shot or poisoned for breaking windows. They breed slowly and so if an entire group is removed it takes decades for those birds to be replaced in the greater population. Other threats include accidental poisoning, traditional cultural uses, habitat loss, loss of nesting trees and electrocution.

With only about 1500 individuals of this flagship species of the savanna biome left, so it is vital to reduce instances of conflict.

THE PROBLEM #1: There is a perception that because the birds are regularly seen in Kruger National Park that they are doing fine....

Ground-Hornbills are doing very well in Kruger National Park but it is estimated that that this is only half of the population. While this half is safe within the borders of formally protected areas the other half is found cohabiting with us – on private reserves, commercial farms and rural farmland. Multiple pressures from man means that this half of the population is in decline and needs each and every land-owner to protect them whilst on their property and take pride in helping to keep this charismatic bird as an integral part of our landscapes.

THEY NEED YOUR HELP

THE PROBLEM #2: Why do they break windows?

Ground-Hornbills are extremely territorial and so when the males see their reflection in a window they see not themselves but an enemy. In order to protect their nest, food supply and breeding female they attack this intruder. And the window pane shatters. There is nothing that can be done to change this deeply ingrained instinct and so the only solution is to ensure they can't see their reflections.



For more information please contact us:

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THE SOLUTIONS: Please contact us for stockists or more information

Option	Pros & Cons	
<p>Safety Glass: Two sheets of glass with a layer of adhesive between.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof. ✓ Permanent solution. ✓ No difference in visibility between this and standard glass so most attractive option ✗ More expensive (35%) than standard glass 	
<p>Plastic glass: Polycarbonate plastic or acrylic Perspex can be installed in place of standard window glass.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof ✓ Permanent solution. ✓ No difference in visibility between this and standard glass. ✗ Can get scratched easily but can easily be removed by polishing with a cream or liquid polish like Brasso. 	
<p>Contravision: Unprinted perforated vinyl film (as used in advertising on shop fronts, busses and motor rear windows)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof ✓ Permanent solution ✓ No difference in visibility between ✗ Can get scratched 	
<p>Shade cloth: Shade cloth clipped to an external frame.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof ✓ Temporary or Permanent solution. ✓ This can be removed when the building is unoccupied as birds are less likely to visit (assuming they are not being fed). ✓ Cheap ✗ More attractive options exist for lodges. 	
<p>Ash: Smear ash mixed with water on the glass and when it dries the windows are opaque. This mixture can then easily be washed off when no longer needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof ✓ Temporary solution. ✓ This can be removed when the building is unoccupied as birds are less likely to visit (assuming they are not being fed). ✓ Cheap/ Free. Great for rural schools. Children can apply the mixture before going off for school holidays. 	
<p>Paint: Instead of using ash the targeted windows can be painted with cheap paint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% Ground-Hornbill proof ✓ Permanent solution. ✓ Cheap. ✗ Difficult to do neatly thus is a less attractive option. The paint also makes the rooms dark. 	