



# Biodiversity Observations

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## ROOSTER SACRIFICE FULFILLS DUAL PURPOSE

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## BIRD OBSERVATION

### ROOSTER SACRIFICE FULFILLS DUAL PURPOSE

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Yellow-billed Kites *Milvus migrans parasitus* were the beneficiaries of a religious ritual ceremony performed on a Durban beach recently.

On Friday, 12 February 2016, Arnia van Vuuren, Sean Swarts and I participated in the 2016 Coastal Bird Survey for BirdLife South Africa from Isipingo Beach to Brighton Beach.

Soon after beginning the walk at the Isipingo estuary, I noticed two robed priests kneeling on the sand. They were holding a white chicken and were praying. There were signs drawn in the sand. I assumed that they were about to kill the chicken in a religious ritual.

We continued walking and completed the first part of our survey at the ACSA outflow pipes. We then returned to our car about an hour later.

On the way back we saw a Yellow-billed Kite on the sand with the carcass of the now demised chicken. It had dragged the dead bird further inland along the estuary. It was joined by three more kites and a young Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* watching while it was feeding. The others no doubt were waiting for an opportunity to share in the spoils.

It is hoped that by dying the chicken provided spiritual as well as physical sustenance in equal measure.



Fig. 1-2. Yellow-billed Kites feeding on chicken carcass