

New Agatha Bat Hawk Nest Site

Where is the Bat hawk Nesting Site

The New Agatha Bat Hawk nest site is about a 30 minute drive from [Magoebaskloof Birders Cottage](#). Google maps link <https://goo.gl/maps/> Keep a look out for the SAFCOL Woodbush Plantation (Agatha) signboard. Turn right onto the dirt road. Drive under a avenue of massive gum trees then a gap and then a second avenue of gum trees. In the fifth tree of the second set of gum trees you will find the Bat Hawk nest first discovered in 1967.

The Bat Hawk nest is on a branch facing the opposite side of the road, about 25m up. Note the metal frame that underpins the nest.

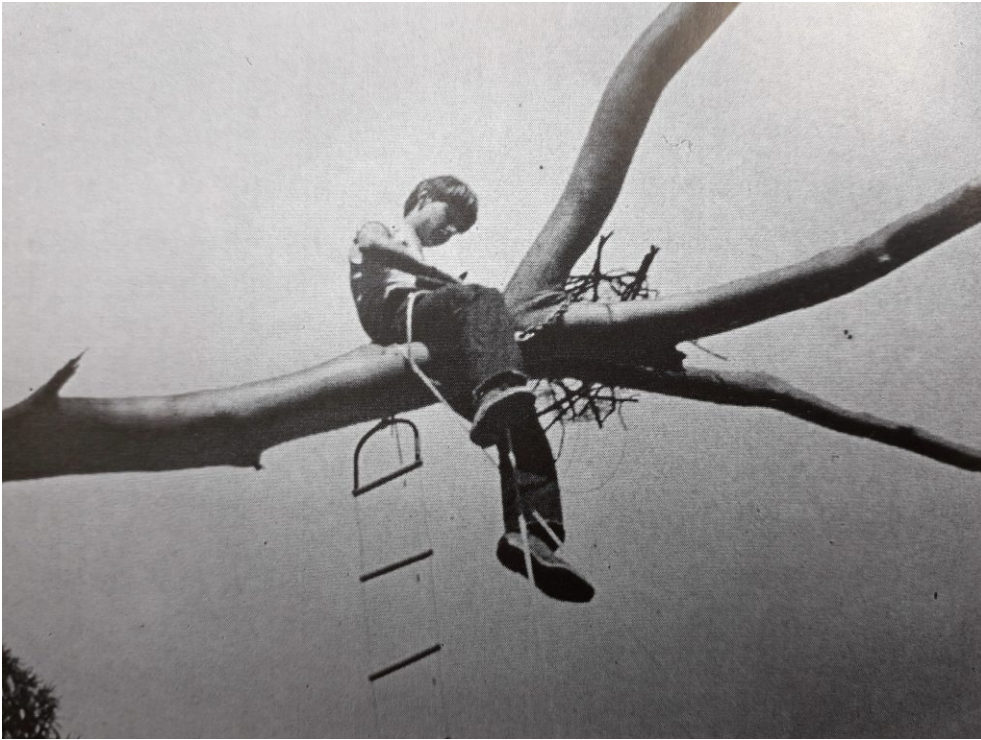
Usually you will find one or both of the birds sitting quietly on a branch high up in one of the adjacent gum trees. Early morning and early evening will probably find the birds off on a hunt.

History of the Bat Hawk Nest Site

The New Agatha Bat Hawks were first noticed by Dave Steyn in 1967 whilst collecting Eucalyptus seeds in the course of his work for the Department of Forestry. Over the next few years Archie van Reenen and Peter Williams noticed that the Bat Hawk nest was never completed. Even a slight wind would blow the nest down. Probably because gum trees have very smooth bark and they had chosen a very wide fork in the tree.



Frank van Reenen, Archie's 10 year old son, was hauled up 25m to the branch in a mielie-meal bag. In the picture he can be seen attaching a platform of chicken wire to the branch. He was hauled up a second time to place some sticks that had previously fallen off the nest on the wire platform.



Within two days they continued building the nest and 1969 was the first year the birds had a successful breeding season. Bat Hawks have been breeding at the same site ever since.

Source: FOR THE LOVE OF BIRDS by ARCHIE VAN REENEN