

Calling all artists of great skill, stature and renown!
Carve a rare and unseen African
“Zulumagoolie” bird!

Royal

Umagoolie Society



“Loch Nessian Umagoolie” by RD Wilson

Become a charter member of the Royal Umagoolie Society, where you will not only assist the world in obtaining its first vision of a sub-species of the illusive Umagoolie, but you will also receive all the benefits of membership in this Royal Society. We are now calling upon artists of great skill, stature and renown to assist us in our quest to create a likeness of the mysterious **African Sub-species of the Umagoolie, known by local tribes as the ‘Zulumagoolie’** which to the best of our knowledge has characteristics of a **Secretary Bird** and an **African Red-Billed Hornbill**.

One thing we do know, is that the only place in the world where you will be able to observe a carving of a **Zulumagoolie** will be at the PFDA show next July. Not only that, you may even have the chance to purchase one at our Saturday night banquet and auction!

Come on Zulumagoolians, let's see what you can do! Mr. Parkin, the world's greatest ornithologist is counting on you!!

**SECRETARY BIRD +
AFRICAN RED-BILLED
HORNBILL = ZULUMAGOOLIE**

The Story Behind the “Zulumagoolie”

By Don Parkin (World Famous Ornithologist)

It all started with the dinner....

I recently attended the Cambridge University rugby alumni dinner where I reunited with my old roommate, and great friend Simba, who now lives in Natal province in South Africa. He had made the very long journey to be with us.

As the port was being passed around the table, Simba tapped his glass and asked us for our attention. He announced, with great sadness, that this would be his last reunion dinner as travel was becoming more difficult for him. Also, his father would be retiring, and he was going to take his father's place as leader of the Zulu nation. We were all shocked that one of our number should become the leader of any nation let alone the Zulu!

Simba went on to explain that his father had always been a rugby fanatic and had charged him with trying to get a Zulu player represented on the South African rugby team. He then asked us if we would be interested in heading to South Africa to help set up a program. We excitedly and unanimously agreed!

A month later we arrived and were greeted with a spectacular tribal dance of welcome. We were given refreshments and then taken to the training grounds to meet the teams and helpers. Having been introduced to the players, we told them we would begin the following day. After a week of coaching, the teams were looking great, and we felt confident that one of them would indeed be selected for the national team.

Alas, the time had come to say goodbye to the many friends we had made. A fabulous farewell spectacle of color and dance ensued, topped by the appearance of Simba in the full tribal dress of the Chief of the Nation. His headdress was a spectacular array of feathers, one of which was an unusual iridescent green color. In the center was what appeared to be a bill from a type of hornbill.

I asked about the design and was told that it had been inspired by the African Secretary Bird. He explained that the unusual feather and bird bill had been collected on the sacred ground at Rorke's Drift, the site of a battle between the Zulu nation and a small contingent of British soldiers.

I told him that I had watched the movie “Zulu” many times. I was thrilled when Simba told me that he would arrange for me to be taken to the site on the way to the airport at Dundee. He explained that the site was now very different from when the battle occurred.

How right Simba was! The site was immaculate, with monuments at every place of interest and tourists everywhere. I sat down on a bench in order to take it all in. I was soon joined by two of the elders. We spoke of the site and I explained that at one time I'd lived next to the barracks of the regiment in England. The old regimental sergeant once told me that if I ever got to Rorke's Drift, I must give a salute on behalf of the regiment, to all the brave men on both sides, which is what I'd done. The elders then told me they sensed I had come to the site for more than the salute and asked if they could answer any questions I might have.

I explained that I was an ornithologist and had spent my life looking around the world for sub-species of the Umagoolie bird, a bird that had never been seen but I was convinced existed. Too many mysterious, unexplained feathers with an unusual genetic makeup had been found.

I went on to tell them that Chief Simba's ceremonial headdress contained a feather which I believed may have belonged to a sub-species of the Umagoolie, and that Chief Simba told me it had been found at Rorke's Drift.

The elders looked at each other and smiled. They explained that such a bird does exist and is sacred to the local people, who call it the 'Zulumagoolie'. The people believe it to be a cross between an African Secretary Bird and an African Red-Billed Hornbill. It protects people and is like a spirit which has never been seen. They told me a story about a child who was about to be struck by a poisonous snake. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a green flash appeared, and beside the child lay the dead snake. Next to the snake lay the green feather and the bill, which are now part of the ceremonial headdress.

I asked if anyone had ever heard its unusual cry. Again, the elders looked at each other and smiled. They explained that when the warriors were buried on the sacred grounds, they were buried with their spears, but the tips of the spears stick up out of the graves as a symbol of their bravery and as a salute to the gods. The people believe that the Zulumagoolie protects the sacred ground by running through the graves, but when it hits the spears it calls, "OOMAGOOOLIES!! OOMAGOOOLIES"!!

At this point, my wife, who had accompanied me on the trip, came looking for me and told me we were running late and must leave to catch the flight. On our way to the car, I wandered past the sacred graves and was amazed to see a green feather floating around the site. I was so stunned that I stopped and stared. When my wife asked what was wrong.....

I told her that I had just seen a ghost.....



Now as I reach the twilight of my years my exploring days are becoming severely limited. I have decided that my only hope is to encourage a distinguished group of artists of great stature and vision from the Pacific Flyway Decoy Association, to create for me their interpretation of these amazing birds. To further this effort, I have decided to donate a portion of my collection of rare and price-less gold pocket watches that I have collected in my journeys around the world in my quest to find the Umagoolies. The winning carver will receive one of these engraved treasures each year to be henceforth worn with pride to show the world that these amazing birds live on in the hearts and minds of the members of the Royal Umagoolie Society!

Don Parkin

