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and
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17 September 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Proposed industrial development at Riversands Estate, Diepsloot, Gauteng

I am a professional ornithologist and registered with the South African Council of Natural Scientific Professions (reg. no. 400205/05).

On 15 September 2013 I visited the area surrounding Riversands Estate (portions 7, 36, 37, 38 and 121 of the Farm Diepsloot 388 JR), which I understand is the site of a proposed industrial development. Based on my assessment of the vegetation at the site, as well as photographic evidence, I consider it highly likely that the African Grass Owl (*Tyto capensis*) occurs at this site. This species is red-listed as *Vulnerable* in South Africa and moreover is of significant conservation concern within Gauteng Province. Any industrial development at the site is likely to result in severe negative impacts on this species.

I strongly recommend that:

- a) a specialist survey assessing the presence of African Grass Owls and the suitability of natural habitats for this species at Riversands Estate be conducted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, and
- b) local ornithologists with expertise on African Grass Owls, namely Geoff Lockwood and Dr Craig Whittington-Jones (GDARD), be consulted as part of the EIA process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew E. McKechnie
Professor