

THE MONTCLAIR BIRD CLUB

YOUR WEEKLY BIRD 47

July 28, 2024

by Ric Cohn

White-fronted Bee-eaters

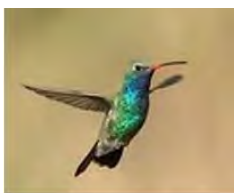
White-fronted Bee-eaters are a fairly common sight in the wetter parts of Botswana, but I didn't know that they were communal nesters. On the Chobe River, 50 birds or more were flitting in and out of their nesting holes in a steep slope, flying down to the river to drink, onto branches to socialize, and into the air to catch insects.



Since males and females look the same, I wondered if the males help. Turns out that not only do the males help, but it takes a village. According to the internet (and that's never wrong), the entire multi-generation colony works together: from digging the nest chambers to incubating and feeding the young. The social behaviors of this bird are said to be "arguably the most complex and best-studied of any avian species" (birdsoftheworld.org).



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Southwest Wings

