A Quick Guide to Species Search

BirdLasser v0.7.1 (iOS version)

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Introduction

Our Search engine is quite powerful and unconventional. Instead of going with the usual alphabetical search methodology, which, although accurate, can take some time to zone in on the desired species. We decided that we needed something revolutionary, something that will require the least amount of effort by the user. After all, you're supposed to have your eyes on the skies, and not on your phone.

Below is a detailed walkthrough of ways to go about searching, but we'd rather you have a go at it and discover its power by yourself.
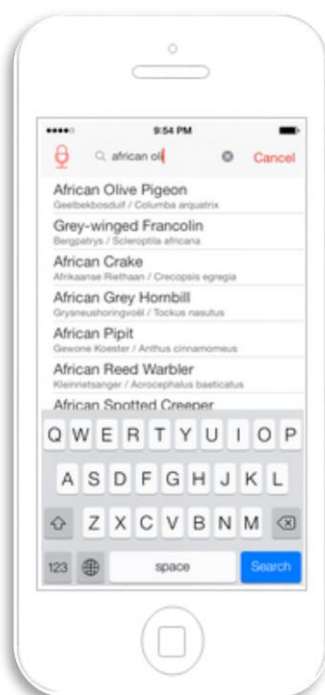
Just a note: the species database is for the whole of Southern Africa, we don't filter the data based on a sub-region, e.g. Western Cape. If we did that, how would you be able to record a rarity?!

The Search

There are multiple ways of getting to the species you want to record. With your trip card open, tap the big green **Log** button. The **Search** screen opens with the keyboard displayed on the screen, ready to start the search – just start typing!
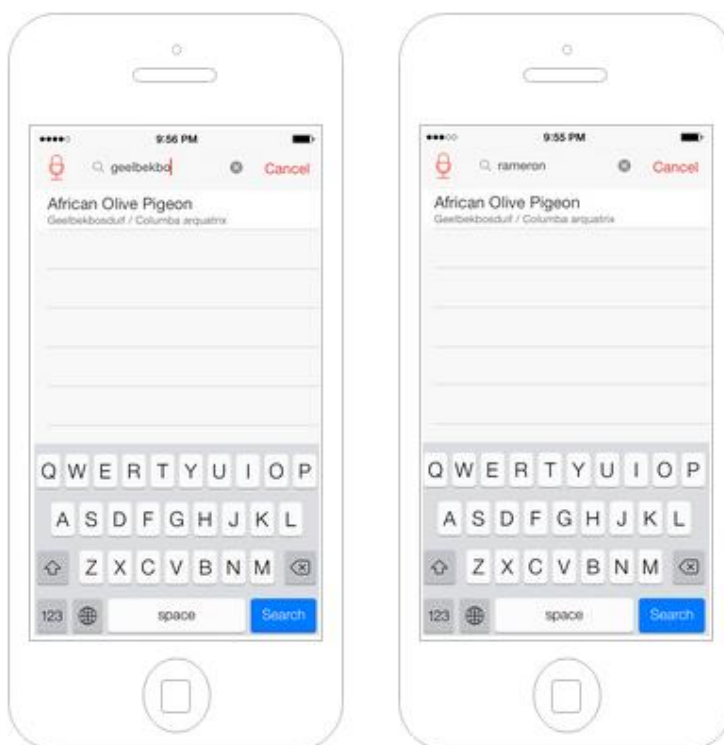
As an example, let's say you want to log **African Olive Pigeon** (*Afrikaans = Geelbekbosduif; Scientific = Columba arquatrix*). The logical approach would be to type in the complete name: `african olive pigeon` (you don't have to use capital letters).

Note as you start typing, the list dynamically zooms in on matches. By the time you've type `african ol`, African Olive Pigeon is already top of the list.
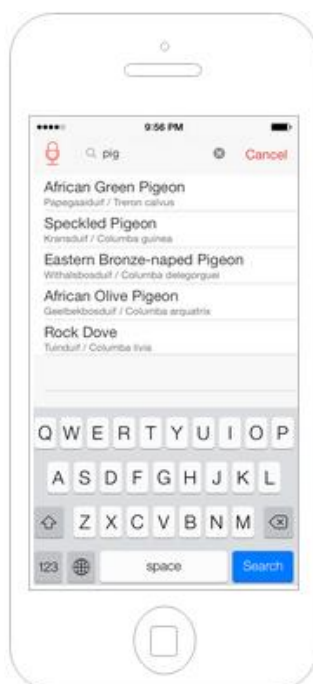
BirdLasser also allows you to search using other supported languages, i.e. Afrikaans and Scientific, as well as old/alternative English and Afrikaans names. For the example at hand, type `rameron` and `geelbekbosduif` - again, note how quickly the list zooms in on African Olive Pigeon.
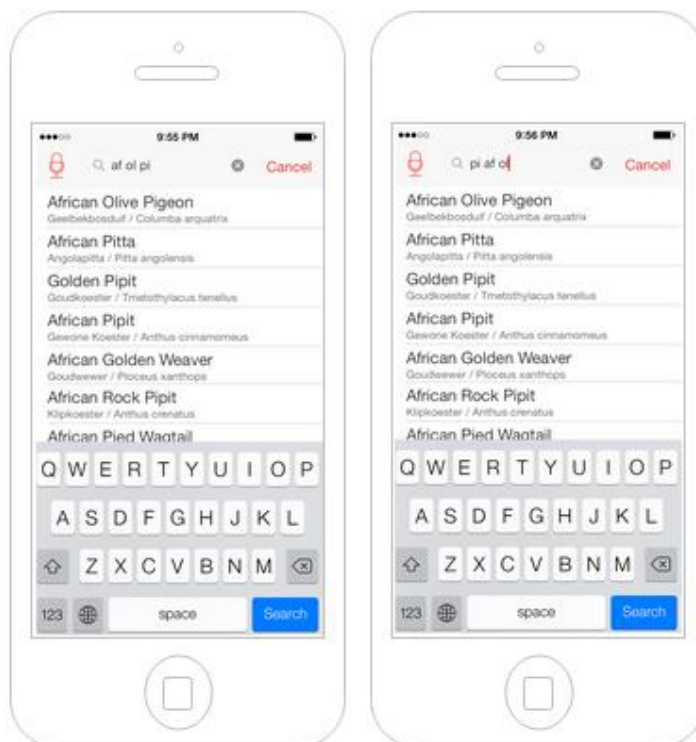

If searching by species group suits you better, start off by typing `pigeon`. All the pigeon species will be displayed (note that by the time you've entered `pig` the list of pigeons are already displayed).

The quickest way to zoom in on the desired species, is to use the first 2 letters of each word, separated by a space. For African Olive Pigeon, type `af ol pi` or alternative `pi af ol`.

A few other tips:

- Mix your languages, e.g. `pi ge` (__pi__geon __ge__elbekbosduif)
- Start anywhere within the word, e.g. `geo` (pi__geo__n)

Voice search

For the brave, we have a built-in voice search feature. The voice recognition software used has been developed by Americans, for Americans, hence sensitive to the user's accent. Background noise also affects the accuracy. So if you have a bit of a twang, and in a quiet environment, feel free to give it a go.

Tap the microphone icon next to the Search field. The message **Loading Voice Search, please wait** will recognition software starts up. After two/three seconds, the screen will prompt you with **please say species name**. Now say the (English) species name out load. The app will return with a list of names – select the applicable one, or try again by tapping on the microphone.

If the app gets stuck on **Loading Voice Search, please wait**, you might need to restart the app… Also make sure that BirdLasser has permission to use the microphone (Settings → Privacy → Microphone).

Just a note: It really struggles with **Dove**, **Bulbul** and **Barbet**, but is quite successful with **Eagle**, **Albatross**, **Thrush**, **Robin**, **Ibis** and **Duck**.

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