



Laniarius

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BirdLife Northern Gauteng
BirdLife Gauteng-Noord

Image Source: Black Crake
[Sixteen-year old Mizelle Janse van Vuuren]


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SOUTH AFRICA

Giving Conservation Wings

2023 KOMITEE

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FROM THE EDITOR

We received the shocking news that our club's president, André Marx, had lost his life on 1 May. We were in Botswana at the time, and like all club members, I reeled when this news was shared. André had been beloved and respected and had served on BLNG's committee for close to forty years.

He was a true gentleman.

He had an amazing knowledge of birds, and was a passionate leader who made each club outing or camp a special occasion to anticipate with excitement.

I first met André on a BLNG-club outing to Northern Farm. He was the leader and upon learning that I was a newcomer both to the club and the venue, he graciously let me ride in his car so that I could get the very best opportunity to see all the specials of the trip.

On subsequent outings and camps, he reinforced the impression that he was a staunch conservationist, an ethical birder foremost, and passionate about club membership and guiding new birders. He never reverted to using call-back but relied on his excellent hearing and phenomenal knowledge of bird calls and behaviour to guide us to the best position from which to spot a bird.

In this way, he led the Memel weekend group to Rudd's Lark, high up on a pasture on a private farm. No-one was allowed to enter the pasture for better photographs, as he explained that this species of Lark is under tremendous pressure and might not breed if pursued relentlessly in the quest for close-up photographs, as is unfortunately the case in Wakkerstroom surrounds.

Once, during another club outing to Northern Farm, a few club members spotted Orange River Francolin entering a small gully. With just a bit of trouble, the birds could be flushed, and all club members might enjoy the sighting. André deliberately chose not to disturb the birds, but rather led the club away to enjoy other sightings.

Through his forty years as a committee member of the club, André forged friendships with many landowners and bird conservationists and he used these contacts to ensure that the club could get entry to private properties or profitable roads in the quest for specific species.

No howling winds or spitting rain could get him to cancel a club outing or proposed drive or hike to try and find some target species – he knew that many a club member had booked a space on that camp or outing exactly to tick that bird.



Ivonne - Editor

Thank you, André.

For my first Blue Korhaans, my first Rudd's Lark, my first African Snipe, my first Orange Waxbill, my first Sedge and Marsh Warblers, my first Grey-winged Francolin, my first Quail Finch... the list could go on and on.

And even though some of the latter might be specials, André used to express his appreciation and enthusiasm for even the most common and mundane garden bird encountered - it was afforded as much attention and interest as, say, the Cuckoo Finch or Long-crested Eagle at Northern Farm.

I had the privilege to conduct the interview with André at his home when he was nominated for a BLSA Owl Award, to be used for the citation which he received in 2022. Here I learned exactly how much he had contributed to birding and BirdLife Northern Gauteng over the previous four decades.

André's memory lives on through the Dainfern Nature Association who dedicated the DNA Trophy and Bird Walk to André, in honour of his commitment to this association.

The last time I spoke with André, discussing photographs of regional rarities to be used in Lanarius, he told me how much he was looking forward to his retirement and the wonderful birding opportunities ahead. This is now not to be.

But André, instead, for you, now: 'doves with wings of silver and feathers of gold.' (Psalm 68:13, NLT).

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

During the last quarter the untimely death of our well loved and respected BLNG President, Andre Marx has saddened us all.

Andre had been a BLNG member for close to forty years and had been serving as President of BLNG for the past 15 years. He was passionate about birds, birding, helping beginner birders and bird atlasing. Andre will be sorely missed by all of us. It has been such a great privilege to have known him, learned from him, and birded with him.

Winter birding is very different, but no less exciting than summer birding. In many ways it is much easier to see the birds in winter when the trees are bare, and the grass shorter. Winter is also a very good time to sharpen your birding skills.

We are looking forward to the online Raptor Course that will be presented by Aldo Berutti from 24 – 27 July. The Intermediate Bird Identification Course, held in May, was very well accepted by all who attended the course.

Aldo managed to keep our attention and focus with the short online polls after each birding group, followed by a recap of those difficult identification features. Please don't forget to register for the Raptor course.

Committee members had the privilege to join BLSA (Birdlife South Africa) at the Bird Club Indaba that was part of the Flock to the Wilderness during May. During this online session, bird clubs shared valuable information on how they improved their marketing through the use of social media, improved management of membership as well as special social events. We are planning to introduce some of these suggestions regarding BLNG. Special attention will be given to the use of social media, online and internet services.

Bird conservation is one of the BLNG priorities driving many of our activities. The main areas we are focussing on are SABAP2 Atlasing, the Secretary Bird and Faerie Glen Verreaux's Eagle project, the latter breeding on the Faerie Glen koppies for the second year. Last year they successfully raised a chick from their nest on one of the cell phone towers.

We encourage our members to join the BLNG Birdlasser Challenge covering the Wider Pretoria area as well as the Pretoria Old East Pentads. Birdlasser is an easy-to-use tool to capture and track all your bird sightings by year, region, and area. It allows you to compare your totals to previous years and to track where and when you found specific species.



Elouise - Chair

Birdlasser is available as a free Application for all smart phone users. You can join the BLNG Birdlasser and the Pretoria Old East Pentads challenges by sending a mail request to secretary@blng.co.za.

We also encourage our members to do a winter SABAP2 card of your favourite and home pentads and compare your winter and summer sightings – please share some of your findings in this regard on the Birdlife Northern Gauteng Facebook group.

We would like to see an increase in the number of cards submitted and members participating in atlasing.

The Secretary Bird project is done in conjunction with Birdlife South Africa. BLNG has contributed to the tracking devices that were fitted to four Secretary Birds and we are following their movements and behaviour.

We encourage our members to join the threatened species cause on Birdlasser and to log all Secretary bird sightings. All details are found in this short video: <https://youtu.be/w0yanWOFt7k>

Once again, a warm welcome to all the new BLNG members and those that were inactive for a while. We invite you to attend as many of our activities as possible, specifically the monthly evening meetings that are held on site and online. This is the place to meet the other BLNG birders and to share knowledge and questions.

Enjoy your Birding, it is a wonderful hobby!

Elouise

LANIARIUS - MARCH 2023

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IN MEMORIAM ANDRÉ MARX

André Marx, BLNG Club President and a member for 40 years, was well-known and highly respected in the birding community up to his untimely death on 1 May. André joined BirdLife Northern Gauteng in 1984. He was a member of the club for close to forty years, served on the club committee for more than three decades in various portfolios, and serving as president of BLNG up to his death, a position which he occupied for 15 years.

His invaluable support and enthusiasm were instrumental in developing BirdLife Northern Gauteng to one of the largest and most active bird clubs in South Africa. He was passionate about birding, bird conservation and assisting beginner birders. In recognition of this, André received the prestigious BLSA Owl Award on 22 September 2022.

André's first portfolio on the club was that of Programme Co-ordinator. He also served as editor of the club magazine, *Laniarius*. He then served as chairman before he was nominated president. Before current BLSA structures, André also was representative of BirdLife Northern Gauteng on the BirdLife SA council.

André Marx was the Regional and SABAP2 Moderator for Gauteng and North- West Provinces for the past 15 years. He was on the SABAB2 Local Rarities Vetting Committee and as such the person who communicated ORFs and shared vetted results with BLSA and birding communities such as bird clubs. As member of the QUACK project which was the forerunner of SABAP1, André was passionate about SABAP coverage, especially in under-reported areas. He initiated Atlas Bashes and encouraged the birding community and BirdLife Northern Gauteng club members to accompany him on numerous Atlas bashing camps to far-flung areas such as Prieska, Vryburg and the Karoo for several years to complete full protocol atlas cards for areas not frequented by birders. He himself submitted more than 1400 Full Protocol cards.

André's community involvement in birding was not confined to serving on BirdLife Northern Gauteng's committee in various capacities. He also conducted regular community bird walks at Random Harvest indigenous nursery, in his own estate bordering the Jukskei river, and other estates in the Fourways area. He regularly volunteered to guide BLNG club excursions and was revered as camp leader. His phenomenal knowledge of bird calls and behaviour, top birding sites, contacts with landowners and more, ensured that every guided trip undertaken by him as leader, was an in-depth learning experience on many levels. He was especially passionate to assist beginner birders on their birding journey and ensured that birding ethics and the BLSA Code of Conduct was strictly adhered to.



André said this in his most recent Presidential address, which now could serve as his farewell message: "Flock to Marion brought into focus the role that a bird club plays in a birder's development. This year is my 40th year of membership of our club and like many other long-standing members I have met a great many fellow birders over the years, participated in many events and outings, and visited many interesting locations that I otherwise would never have managed to see.

But most importantly, I have through my contact with other club birders over time learned everything I know about birds and birding. It started with identification skills, then moved to listening to and memorising bird calls, and more recently branched out to bird photography, which in itself is a whole new field to discover.

There is no substitute for the bond that exists between fellow birders due to our shared interest, and the knowledge gained over a period of time through the interaction with our peers. I firmly believe that a club like ours provides the best platform to gain experience and to become an accomplished birder!

BirdLife Northern Gauteng / Gauteng- Noord is a well-managed club with very good membership retention and recruitment of new members.

There has always been a good programme of activities and events at our club. We have an excellent committee that keeps matters on an even keel and my thanks go to Elouise Kalmer and her team for the dedication they show to the club. May I wish all of you superb years ahead filled with good health and good birding!"

WOLFHUISKRAAL - 28 MARCH 2023.

CAMP

ZAAGKUILSDRIFT SLEEPOVER.

A trip to Zaagkuilsdrift is great, most times. A sleepover in the Zaagkuilsdrift area is very special indeed. A sleepover with likeminded friends during the middle of the week in Zaagkuilsdrift is truly amazing! There was almost no vehicle traffic at all and the only congestion on the roads was the cattle.

Some birders arrived Tuesday morning early and others unfortunately could only join later during the day. We were a group of twelve.

Visiting Wolfhuiskraal, one cannot exclude the topic of the venue itself. It is ideally suited to smallish groups being set up in rooms (due to shared amenities) and a smallish camp site which could cater for up to four tents with communal bathroom facilities. As far as birding is concerned, we were given access to three portions of the farm on which one could spend a day or two without even traveling Zaagkuilsdrift road. One needs to keep in mind that this is private property, and one cannot just enter the premises without authorization from the owners.



Sunrise at Platte river [Angela Openshaw]

Back to the event. Tuesday morning, we headed towards Pienaarsrivier in the hope of spotting the Southern Carmine Bee-eaters having been reported recently (without any luck). However, the drift at Roets's farm was very productive and we saw large numbers of White-faced Whistling Ducks, Cattle Egrets, also Pied Kingfisher, Woodland Kingfishers, Malachite Kingfisher, Bearded Woodpecker and Mizelle was able to get a single photograph of the elusive African Crake.

From there we worked our way towards Kgomo-Kgomo. At the old Makekeng road intersection, we were fortunate to find both Greater - and Lesser Honeyguides as well as an Acacia Pied Barbet. Crake road bridge was the next stop. Hannes captured an excellent photograph of a Gabar Goshawk, and we spotted a flock of about 40 Red-billed Oxpeckers but other than that, with a very dryish Crake road, the chance of spotting a crake was unlikely.



Groottroupan en
Grysneushoringvoël - Purple
Roller and African Grey
Hornbill [Angela Openshaw]



Grootmossie - Great Sparrow -
[Marna Buys]

At Kgomo-Kgomo we were treated to flocks of Marabou – and Yellow-billed Storks amongst the Cattle Egrets, Spoonbills, Sacred Ibis and Herons. Time wasn't doing us any favours and we rushed back to Wolfhuiskraal to meet the rest of the group and have supper.

Tuesday evening, the atmosphere was special with jackal calling and sound of the nightjars and Barn Owl. We simply had to try to get a visual and capture an image.

We went for a drive up and down a surprisingly quiet Zaagkuilsdrift road as far as birding activities was concerned, only spotting the Lapwings, a very short sighting of a skittish Nightjar and two Verreaux's Eagle-Owls.

Wednesday morning, we started doing the route from Kgomo-Kgomo, instead of from the usual Pienaarsriver end. It was very foggy indeed and capturing bird photographs was not ideal. Even through binoculars, the glare was difficult to deal with, but sunrise pictures were spectacular.

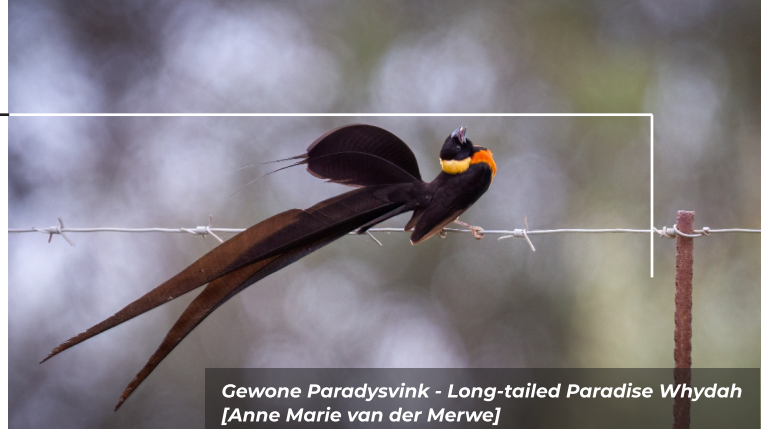
After the fog lifted, the angle of the sun reflecting off the water from the bridge was also a challenge and making ID'ing the Lesser Moorhen difficult but in the end the sighting was confirmed. White-faced Whistling Ducks, Cattle Egrets, and Spur-winged Geese passing over. On the Plat river floodplain two of the highlights were the Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark and Kittlitz's Plover.

Halfway to Pienaarsrivier, we had the Pale Chanting Goshawk amongst the other road-side birds and another highlight was the Temminck's Courser at Roets's Farm.

We finished the outing with a total of 158 species. When birding in Zaagkuilsdrift, every day could be a surprise and no two days' birding is the same.

JP van der Merwe

A big THANK YOU to all the fellow birders and BLNG committee making each outing special!



MTUNZINI AN ESPECIALLY SPECIAL TIME!

CAMP



Leaving the encroaching autumn behind us we battled our way through the long weekend's traffic to Mtunzini, some of us braving the stop, start driving of the N3 and some taking a somewhat longer scenic route through the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

When we arrived, we found Mtunzini was a paradise of green leaves, hot and humid.

We settled into our comfortable lodge, a large old building filled with all the comforts we could desire, a huge patio and every appliance we could need. An inviting swimming pool beckoned, but not one of us swam as the weather forecast proved unfortunately accurate with cool, rainy days ahead.

The weather was definitely inclement and forced our BLSA guide, Sakhumuzi Mhlongo, to reorganise the trips to maximize our chances of seeing the endemic specials. Our excursions included much of the surrounding habitats. The oNgoye Forest Nature Reserve is a coastal scarp forest that rises to a height of 460 metres above sea level some 10km inland. This doesn't sound imposing until you have to walk up its grassy slopes!

We also visited the uMhlalazi Nature Reserve on several occasions as it was near our lodge. It is a riverine, estuary area of mangrove swamps complete with raphia palms, the nesting choice of the Palmnut Vulture.

The aerial walk in the Dlinza Forest took us to the canopy species although on a very windy day. And the final destination took us to an inland dam to the south of Mtunzini.

They were days of specials. The first bird to greet us on arrival was a White-eared Barbet perched in plain sight at the top of a tree in the garden. For some of us it was a lifer and proved to be the first of many in the next few days. The garden itself was a pleasure. Purple-crested Turacos and Trumpeter Hornbills called incessantly but were not often seen in the dense foliage.



Dawn on the first morning was heralded by the call of the Trumpeter Hornbill, a welcome change from the raucous Hadedah call. But the most beautiful dawn call was that of the Olive Sunbird (Olyfsuikerbekkie) perched at the top of the trees outside the lodge. As we waited in the car park every morning it set the atmosphere for memorable days of birding. We set off for the oNgoye Forest to search for a true special, the Green Barbet listed as Vulnerable (in my personal parlance it is a green spot bird!).

A lengthy drive took us to the beginning of a 4x4 trail described by Sakhumuzi as being moderate, although it seemed more like severe to some of us. It took us up the escarpment along a grassy 4x4 trail high above the scattered farmlands below. The view was spectacular, rolling hills and pockets of forest. Near the entrance to the oNgoye Forest the going got tough and we had to walk the final distance to the trees where we hoped to find the Green Barbet.

In the breeding season this bird is very vocal but in autumn it is not so obliging. We walked and walked, and we called and called until eventually, elation! we heard it, and then saw it, high in the canopy. And all the while, Sakhamusi hiked in his slip-slops – his “lucky shoes” which sure brought us luck! The call of the Dark-backed Weaver (Bosmusikant) was a welcome distraction after this lengthy search.

On our return to the road, we heard both a Croaking Cisticola (Groottinkintie) and a Fan-tailed Grassbird (Breëstertsanger) but unfortunately did not see them despite enthusiastically wading through long grass! We visited the nearby uMhlalazi Nature Reserve more frequently and were able to explore the mangroves and the riverine species.

Woolly storks (Wolnekooievaar) were a common sighting but finding a Mangrove Kingfisher in its element was a treat! And much to everyone's surprise an African Finfoot was spotted in one of the small tributaries. Although not regarded as being specials, the beautiful Red-capped Robin-Chat and Chorister Robin-Chats (Natal- en Lawaaimakerjanfrederik) were a welcome sighting. And on one rainy excursion we found four Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds flitting through the branches.



*Purple-crested Turaco –
Bloukuifloerie [Johan Botha]*



*White Eared Barbet - Witoorhoutkapper
[Hannes van den Berg]*



*Trumpeter Hornbill –
Boskraai [Johan Botha]*



Mangrove Kingfisher – Manglietvisvanger [Johan Botha]



Green Barbet [Hannes van den Berg]

Two long drives to find the Southern Banded Snake Eagle (Dubbelbandslangarend) proved to be disappointing for many of us, as, on the occasion it was seen, only those in the lead car saw it before it flew off.

At this stage, the weather descended, and rain forced us back to the welcome shelter of our lodge. In a short reprieve a few of our braver souls went to the nearby seashore in the hope of adding seabirds to our list. But the wind won the day, whipping the sand into a frenzy and forcing both us and the birds into shelter and out of sight.

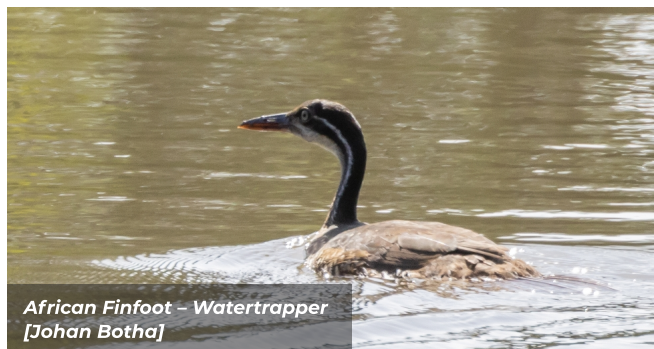
The last day Sakhumuzi recommended another visit to the uMhlalazi Nature Reserve as the weather forecast was dismal. Although shortened by rain the day had its excitements. Our guide took us to a spot he knew to be frequented by the Green Malkoha (Groenvleiloerie). For most of us this was the climax to a visit of specials. We heard its call and eventually were rewarded with a sighting.

Although also known as a Green Coucal many of us were surprised at its diminutive size, much smaller than a Burchell's Coucal. To top what had promised to be a disappointing day, on our way home through the farmlands we spotted a Yellow-throated Longclaw (Geelkeelkalkoentjie) and a Striped Kingfisher (Gestreepte Visvanger). And then it began to rain, and it rained.....and rained!!

It was a stunning visit to this coastal area. We saw a total of 91 species, a very good effort considering the weather conditions. All of us saw lifers and our photographers did us proud. Ilze's calm guidance was appreciated by all and our BLSA guide Sakhumuzi Mhlongo found really special birds under the most difficult of circumstances. I look forward to visiting this area again but will definitely need Sakhumuzi's guidance.

Forest birding is not for the faint hearted or optically challenged!

Jenny Bester



EAGLE'S REST - 16TH TO 18TH JUNE 2023.

CAMP



[Sheleph Burger]

Eagle's Rest Game farm is a privately owned farm, on the Eastern Edge of the Ezemvelo Nature Reserve, overlooking the Wilge River.

The group of thirteen birders met our host Gino at the Sergeant Pepper's Restaurant at the Balmoral off-ramp off the N4 and then drove to the farm in convoy.

On the way through Ezemvelo we saw Ant-eating Chats (Swartpiek) and a group of Coqui Francolin (Swempie).

Upon arrival we met our hostess Ina, then quickly unpacked our fridge stuff before setting off for our first game drive. The farm is set at an altitude of 1500m and there are a number of habitats including grassland, woodlands, and rocky mountain outcrops.

Our first drive was through a lovely wooded area where we walked for a while and saw Southern Black Tit (Gewone Swartmees), Grey Tit-flycatcher (Waaierstervlieëvanger), Grey-headed Bushshrike (Spookvoël) and Black-headed Oriole (Swartkopwielewaal) amongst others. Some Red-billed Oxpeckers (Rooibekrenostervoël) were perched on the three giraffes Gino and Ina have on the farm.

Back at camp we settled into our rooms and had a little rest before setting out for a sunset drive at 16h00. Gino has built many 4x4 roads on his property, and he treated us to an adventurous ride on the Game Viewer to see some incredible scenery.

We had sundowners on a deck he has built overlooking the Wilge River.

While there we saw some birds which caused some debate. The first bird we had seen at the Lodge was a Mocking Cliff Chat (Dassievoël), and now we thought that these might be female MC Chats. But on closer inspection we saw that the grey head only extended to the neck, and not to the chest, so we decided on female Cape Rock Thrushes (Kaapse Kliplyster). We went back to camp hoping to see some owls but did not.



Coqui Francolin [Angela Openshaw]

© Angela Openshaw 2023

The following morning, the veld around the camp was alive with birds.

We spotted Cape Rock Thrushes, Mocking Cliff Chats, Southern and Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Amethyst Sunbird, (Klein-, Grootrooiband- en Swartsuikerbekkie), Yellow-fronted Canary (Geeloogkanarie), Speckled Pigeon (Kransduif), and Cape Bunting (Rooivlerkstreepkoppie).

At breakfast on Saturday morning, we received the news that one of the giraffes had calved the previous afternoon.

As we set off that morning, we were truly fortunate to see the little calf walking around with the others, not even a day old yet!

The game drive that morning was not for the faint-hearted! But fortunately, the driver and vehicle knew what they were doing, and Gino took us safely through an amazing cutting he had made through the rock and down a very steep descent through a beautiful wooded area to a bridge he had built across a tributary of the Wilge.

Up on the other side was a grassland area with some rocky outcrops where we found Long-billed Pipit (Nicholsonkoester) and Lazy and Wailing Cisticola (Lui- en Huiltinktinkie). From this side we got a beautiful view of the camp perched on top of the cliffs above the river.

A drive through a plain of Wild Seringa did not yield any birds, but then Gino stopped and gave everyone an opportunity to hike down to some waterfalls.



Cape Rock Thrush [Angela Openshaw]

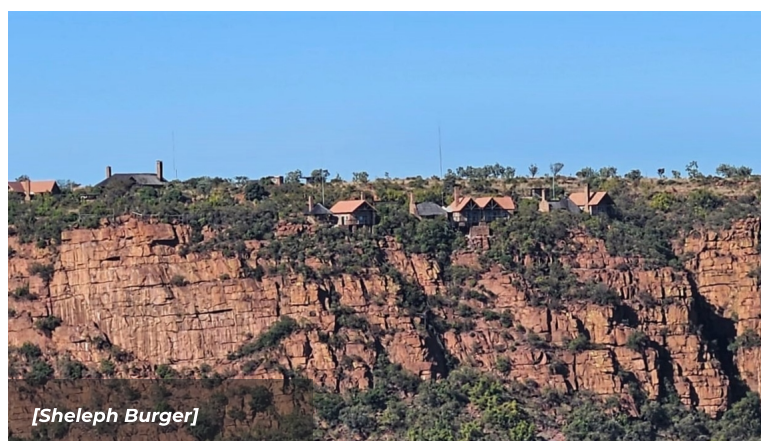


Giraffes & Oxpeckers

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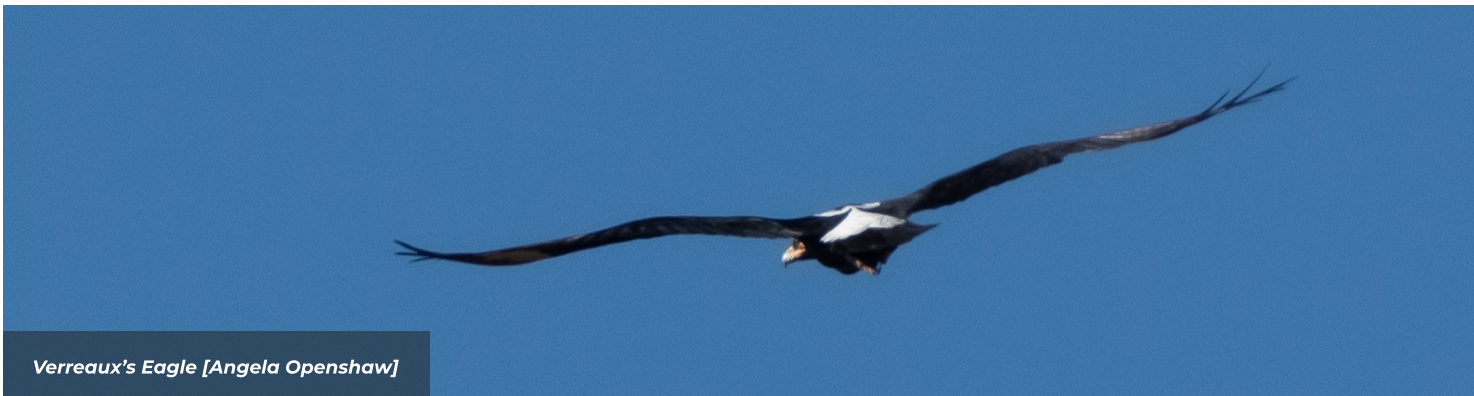
Cape Bunting [Angela Openshaw]



[Sheleph Burger]

Verreaux Eagle.

At lunchtime that day a cry of 'Eagle' was heard, and everyone rushed outside to catch a glimpse of two Verreaux's (Witkruisarend) soaring just above the horizon. The Lodge is set high above the Wilge River, so the eagles often soar right over the camp, or along the cliffs just below the chalets. A little later an African Harrier Hawk (Kaalwangvalk) was also spotted.



I opted not to go on the evening drive, but to stay and wander around camp.

I was standing on the balcony of one of the chalets when I became aware of a quiet whooshing sound, and a Verreaux's Eagle glided past me, just at my eye level. It felt as though I could reach out and touch it, but it was probably about three metres away. I decided not to even try to photograph it, but rather just to absorb and enjoy that incredible moment. What a magnificent creature! The Verreaux's Eagles showed themselves to us a few more times that weekend. When the others returned, they had seen an owl, but there was some debate on whether it had been a Spotted Eagle Owl (Gevlekte Ooruil) or a Southern White-faced Owl (Witwanguil). A nightjar (naguiltjie) had also been spotted.

That night the Southern White-faced Owl was heard near the camp. On our last game drive on Sunday morning, we did a lot of walking in wooded areas and saw several special birds, a typical winter bird party. White-throated Robin-Chat (Witkeeljanfrederik), Grey-headed Bushshrike, Brubru (Bontroklaksman), Chinspot Batis (Witliesbosbontrokkie), Striped Pipit (Gestreepte Koester), Cardinal and Golden-tailed Woodpeckers (Kardinaal-en Goudstertspeg). The most exciting for me was a flock of Green-capped Eremomelas (Donkerwangbossanger) which played around in the trees above us for a while.

At first glance I had decided that they were Cape White-eyes (Kaapse Glasogie), but on closer inspection, and with assistance from other birders, they were identified as Eremomelas.

The two birds are the same size, but the Eremomela has a smaller reddish eye-ring, yellow on the belly and pinkish legs, whereas the White-eye has a white eye ring, a greyish belly, and black legs. There were lots of Southern Black Flycatchers (Swartvlieëvanger) too, probably the most numerous of the birds we saw.

When we did the bird count at lunchtime it totalled 77.

On the way home a Namaqua Dove, an Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (Namakwa- en Groenvlekduifie) and some Grey-backed Sparrow Larks (Gysruglewierik) were spotted. We ended the weekend with a count of 82 species.

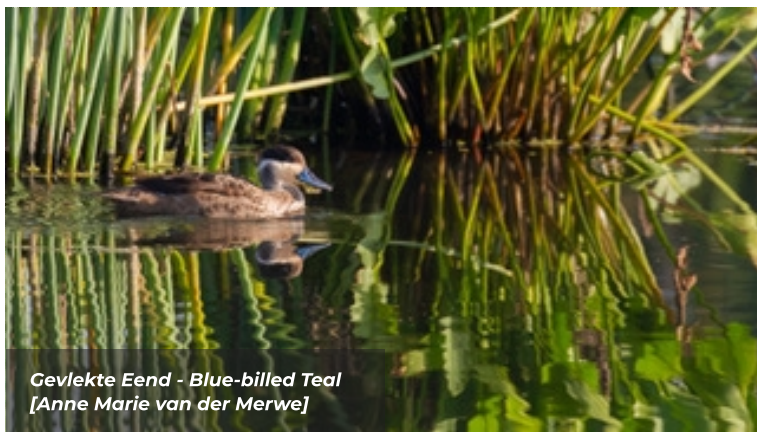
Thank you to our hosts Gino and Ina for an exceptional birding weekend. Thank you to Gino for all the adventure driving and to Ina for going ahead and preparing the camp for us. Also, a special thanks to Fransie who was our very capable and efficient camp leader.

Nicole Crisp



MARIEVALE - 19 MARCH 2023

OUTINGS



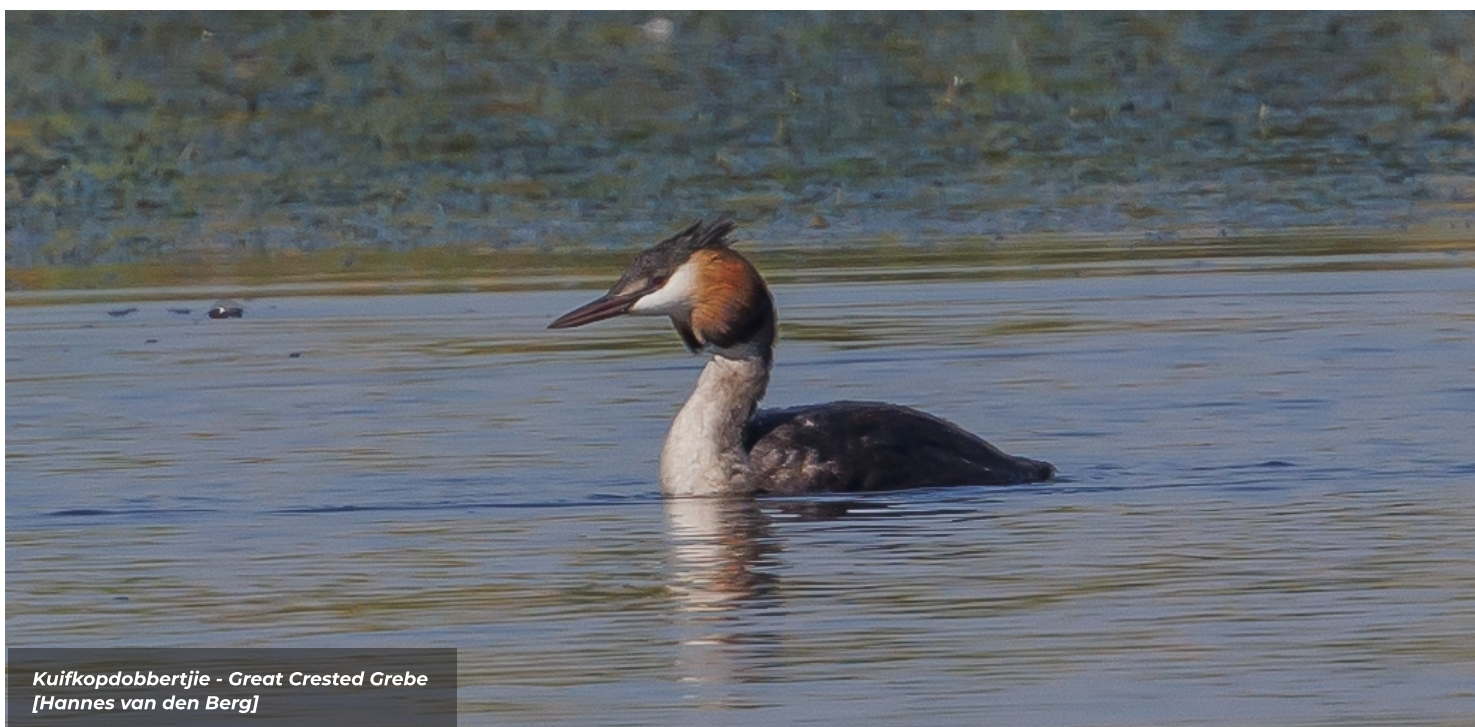
Gevlekte Eend - Blue-billed Teal
[Anne Marie van der Merwe]



Kuifkopvisvanger - Malachite Kingfisher- Our little showman!
[Angela Openshaw]



Grootriethaan - African Rail
[JP van der Merwe]



Kuifkopdobbertjie - Great Crested Grebe
[Hannes van den Berg]



Afrikaanse Snip - African Snipe
[Anne Marie van der Merwe]



Afrikaanse Vleivalk - African Marsh Harrier [Hannes van den Berg]



BLNG-lede o.l.v. JP van der Merwe
[Angela Openshaw]



Bosruiter - Wood Sandpiper
[Reinier Meyes]



Lepelaar - African Spoonbill [Angela Openshaw]

VERENA SPA ROAD & MABUSA - 16 APRIL 2023

OUTINGS



1. Green-capped Eremomela - Donkerwangbossanger
[Anne Marie van de Merwe]



2. Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird - Geelblestinker
[Anne Marie van der Merwe]



3. Pearl-spotted Owlet - Witkoluil
[JP van der Merwe]

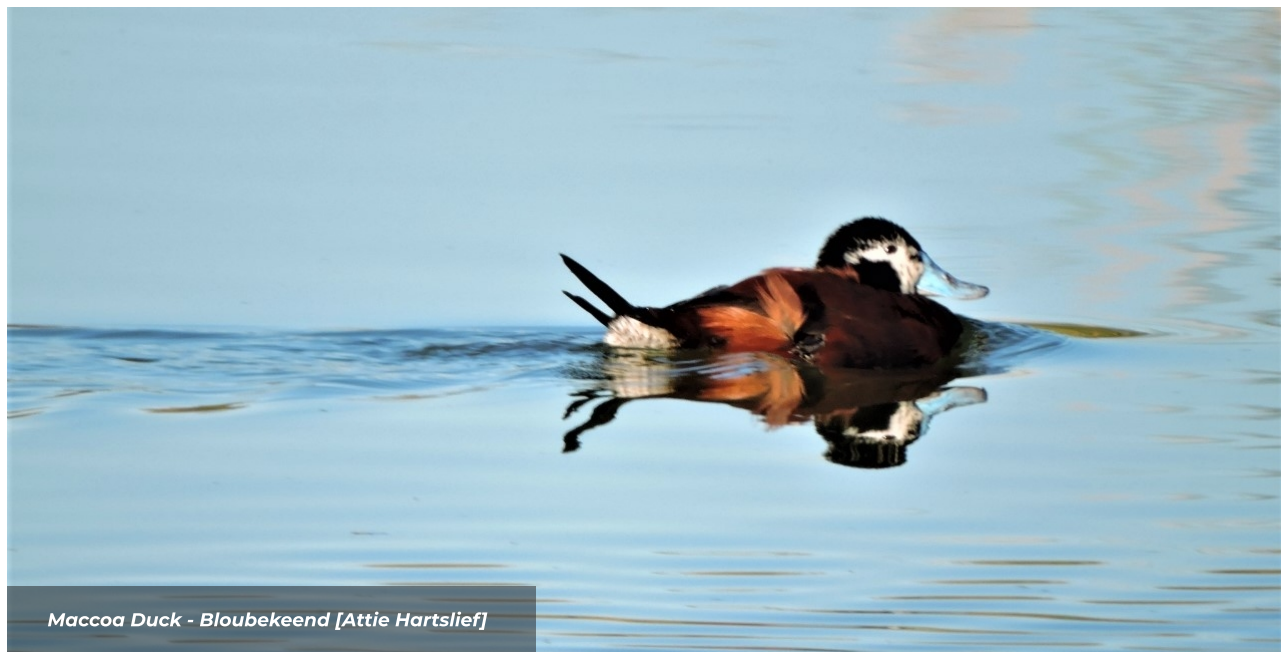


Cardinal Woodpecker - Kardinaalspeg
[JP van der Merwe]



EAST RAND PANS - 21 MAY 2023

OUTINGS





Maccoa Duck - Bloubekeend
[Attie Hartslief]



Squacco Heron - Ralreier [Ronel Viljoen]



Keano Cantu, our leader, with BLNG members
[Angela Openshaw]

MAGALIESBERG MBT TRAIL - 3 JUNE 2023

OUTINGS



Brown-backed Honeybird - Skerpbekheuningvoël
[JP van der Merwe]



Tawny-flanked Prinia - Bruinsylangstertjie
[Craig Green]



Neddicky - Neddikkie [Craig Green]



Brown-crowned Tchagra - Rooivlerktjagra
[JP van der Merwe]

MAGALIESBERG MBT TRAIL - 3 JUNE 2023



White-bellied Sunbird (F) - Witpensuikerbekkie
[JP van der Merwe]



[Ivonne Coetzee]



Village Weaver - Bontrugwewer
[JP van der Merwe]



Photo 8 - By die fontein [Lindie Jordaan]

DERDEPOORT STREEKSPARK 7 JUNE 2023

OUTINGS



Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird - Geelblestinker
[Angela Openshaw]



Black Sparrowhawk - Swartsperwer
[Angela Openshaw]



African Black Duck - Swarteend
[Angela Openshaw]



Red-throated Wry-neck - Draaihals
[JP van der Merwe]



Black Sparrowhawk after delivery at its nest
-[JP van der Merwe]



[JP van der Merwe]

DEVON - 11 JUNE 2023

OUTINGS



Ant-eating Chat - Swartpiek
[Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



African Pipit- Gewone Koester
[Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



*Orange-throated Longclaw
and Capped Wheatear*
[Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Levaillant's Cisticola - Vleitinktinkie
[Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



The icy approach...

COURSES WITH ALDO

COURSES



On-line courses with Aldo



Course information

- Courses are presented online via Zoom
- Each course comprises three 90 minutes sessions
- Recordings are made available for one week after each session
- Permanent pdfs are provided at the end of the course.

Arrangements

Bookings: Complete booking forms issued by BLNG

Participants will receive Zoom links from Aldo

Course fee

R250 per person per course

Dates:

Monday 15 May
Wednesday 17 May
Thursday 18 May

[Booking form](#)



Intermediate Birding

Take your birding further and deeper!

This unique person-friendly approach tackles obstacles facing most people in becoming a better birder. From preparing for an outing to finding and identifying birds, learn processes which allow you greater freedom and skill to recognise and retain new bird groups and species. We tackle the identification of difficult bird groups and species pairs.

This course reviews birding resources and equipment (field guides, apps, binoculars, apps, speakers, scopes). Learn new ways to go birding - the use of photography, atlasing, listing, garden birding, local bird guides, birding communities. We delve further into bird vocals. The practical options shown will bring you more rewards and fire your passion for birding.

Session 1. Overview, finding birds, equipment and difficult birds

Session 2. Birding protocols, bird guides, vocals and difficult birds.

Session 3. Mindset and assumptions, birding communities and difficult birds.

Dates:

Monday, 24 July
Wednesday 26 July
Thursday 27 July



Raptors with Aldo

A guide to 60 South African raptors

Raptors are difficult.

A typical birding course is a series of species images and ID characters that can overload the senses and drain the joy out of birding!

Our course emphasizes process against detail; principles versus individual species.

We use our successful 2 step identification protocols, which combined with comparative work, games and self identification exercises (repetitive to embed memory) turns a daunting task, turns into an enjoyable session of learning.

Session 1. Principles of raptor ID – falcons & kestrels

Session 2. Vultures and eagles

Session 3. Buzzards, Goshawks, Harriers and other fantastic raptors



Sani Pass weekend 2 - 5 November 2023

Notes:

The weekend is preceded by an online course in October

Accommodation:

Sani Lodge Backpackers
(Details to follow)

Costs:

(Details to follow)



Pre-trip online course

Dates

Monday,	23 October
Wednesday	25 October

2 sessions of 90 minutes starting at 19:00

An introduction to the birds of the Sani Pass and mist-belt forests

The mountains, upland grasslands and forests of the southern Drakensberg are host to a bonanza of special endemics; including rare and endemic species.

The Sani Pass, an iconic destination in its own right, South Africa's most spectacular pass with birds to match.

The grassland and special mist-belt forest patches shelter more of South Africa's most iconic ticks.

Session 1: Sani Pass and the mountains

Session 2: Upland grasslands and mist-belt forests



Weekend outing

Thursday 2 Nov: Arrive and general birding

Friday 3 Nov: Sani Pass (**Valid passport required**)

Saturday 4 Nov: Mist-belt forest, Blue Swallow, wetlands and grasslands

Sunday 5 Nov: Return home

For the detailed itinerary [click here](#)

RE-INTRODUCING MEYER'S PARROT CONSERVATION

THE CAMP DISCOVERY SUCCESS STORY

In October last year, we entered the Uitvlugt Road, highly recommended in Birding Gauteng, just north of Dinokeng. Suddenly, we were treated to a small flock of Meyer's Parrots (*Bosveldpapegaai*) which landed on a tree nearby but took off again before I could grab a photograph. Wonderful to tick this lifer!

At first, I was surprised to find them there. Then a memory of about ten or more years ago surfaced.

I had accompanied a group of learners on a leadership programme at Camp Discovery nearby at the time, and I remembered that even then were sightings of Meyer's Parrots were reported on their premises. I decided to call Camp Discovery in February this year to enquire whether we could visit, in the hope of seeing and photographing this species. I mentioned that I was accompanied by Elouise Kalmer (our BLNG Chair) and Fransie O' Brien, another committee member.

Wouter van Deventer, CEO of Camp Discovery, welcomed us with open arms. We were blown away by their reception, the wonderful hospitality, the game drive and birding opportunities we were treated to. Camp Discovery itself is awe-inspiring and the facilities and programmes there of international standard.

Wouter explained about their conservation efforts which centred on the Meyer's Parrot, although other bird species are also part of their rescue and breeding programme. We enjoyed seeing a great variety of water birds on pristine dams. A guard is stationed in a camouflaged hide at the dam to chase away Fish Eagles and even a crocodile, both of which had already inflicted some damage.

We were shown nest cavities of breeding pairs of Meyer's Parrots on the property, and now understand why one may encounter them in the vicinity – not only have the premises been planted with impressive numbers of indigenous aloe species and other fruiting and flowering trees to ensure their right diet, but snacks such as apples and other fruit are put out around Camp Discovery's restaurant to entice the parrots to feed and breed on the premises.

Meyer's Parrot was once abundant in the Dinokeng/Rust de Winter area. Unfortunately, farmers poisoned them to near extinction because of damage to crops. Wouter and his team then started a breeding and very successful reintroduction program at Camp Discovery a decade or more ago.



He bought all he could find. Parrots started arriving from specialty pet shops and breeders intent on selling them. One came from Richard's Bay via plane and was collected by the Camp Discovery team. Some were of the p.m.damarensis sub-species, a more robust variety than the p.m. transvaalensis. Wouter focused on the p.m. transvaalensis sub-species to ensure that the genetically correct birds would be re-introduced to the area where they originally appeared. The p.m. damarensis were sent to rehab centres in Botswana and Namibia.

Great rejoicing followed the first breeding successes, and offspring were released into the wild. Numbers soon increased and sightings are now frequent in and around Camp Discovery and the greater Dinokeng area. Landowners had to be educated, but with the proclamation of the Dinokeng Game Reserve, many erstwhile agricultural activities have changed to game farming, which allows nature to return to its original state. This is another factor which assisted in the re-introduction successes.

Rare sightings of Meyer's Parrot before, are now common sightings. At Camp Discovery any visitor will be guaranteed a sighting of Meyer's Parrots around the resort, as the numbers have grown and there is an encouraging number of breeding pairs in and around the area. This is a true sanctuary where feeding and protection of this species, and of all native birds, enjoy priority.



With a large group of avid Meyer's Parrot fans currently monitoring numbers and sightings in the greater Dinokeng area, Wouter and his team can comfortably announce that the project is very successful with more sightings in the area in a larger range. Autumn is the best time for sightings - when the Marlothii Aloes are in full flowering stage it attracts the parrots in great numbers, feeding on the sweet nectar flowers.

This is yet another inspiring success story where an individual decided, against overwhelming odds, to try and re-introduce a local species, on the brink of eradication in an area where it used to be abundant and succeeded.

(All photographs - Wouter van Deventer)

Ivonne Coetzee

OWLS OF SUIKERBOSRAND CONSERVATION

ANNUAL AFRICAN GRASS OWL AND MARSH OWL ENCOURAGING NEWS.

BY GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

The annual African Grass Owl and Marsh Owl surveys took place on Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve last week. The survey team was made up of GDARDE officials (Scientific Services, Biodiversity Stewardship and Resource Management South), interns from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), wildlife officers from the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) and volunteers from the private sector. Approximately 21km of suitable wetland habitat was surveyed over 5 days.

The team recorded 81 owls of which 20 were threatened African Grass Owls. This is the highest number of African Grass Owls recorded for the reserve since 2011 and the highest number of Marsh Owls recorded since regular surveys began in 2009.

The high number of owls is attributed to good rainfall in recent years which has increased the extent and quality of wetland habitat available for foraging, roosting, and breeding. Threats to these two species include accidental or planned fires in wetlands during the breeding season (autumn), trampling and excessive grazing by livestock (these species breed on the ground), habitat transformation, entanglement in barbed wire fences erected through and around wetlands, collisions with vehicles and invasions by alien plant species. Let's work together to conserve our rich biodiversity!



Photographs By Gauteng
Department Of Agriculture,
Rural Development &
Environment
Originally Published On 13 June
2023

At:

<https://www.facebook.com/100064478719045/posts/pfbid0Fdufkqa9P38Wjbpjd2Jndpe2W5Mvhjkhqgxgjjuf6JewrmblBijvuslyjbhgfwr/?sfnsn=Scwspmo&Mibextid=6Aamw6>



HOME PATCH

Many of us may thank lockdown during COVID-19 for one thing – we were forced to bird our home patch. And what hidden jewels did we uncover in our busy suburbs, in over-populated Pretoria!

What unexpected bird species were we fortunate enough to find in that resented 5 km of home arrest! Having met fellow passionate birders of our area through BLNG and forged strong friendships with them, we revelled and still revel in the riches here, celebrating with each other new species spotted.

Which of these species is on your wish list: Flappet Lark (Laeveldklappertjie)? Shelley's Francolin (Laeveldpatrys)? Booted Eagle (Dwergarend)? Nightjar (Naguiltjies)? Grey-headed or Pygmy Kingfisher (Gryskop- of Dwergvisvanger)? Bronze-winged Courser (Bronsvlerkdrawwertjie)? Or maybe-breeding Finfoot (Watertrapper), even? All of these, and many more, we found right here, on our home patch.

Three 'pockets' of nature or green zones, and, in our case, true hidden birding gems, had unbeknownst been on our doorstep, so to say, all within a 5km radius of our home in busy suburban Waverley. First, a stretch of Magalies mountain between Voortrekker Road and the N1. Secondly, the Derdepoort Regional Park, lying in a natural poort (gap) of the Magalies, just east of the N1, and lastly, Rietondale Experimental Farm.

These have been sources of delight and even lifer bird species since. Add to that the Pretoria Botanical Gardens and Colbyn Wetlands, also in our pentad, and you have a feast for birders.

Fast-growing suburbs surrounding green pockets cause wild birds to flock to these last undeveloped refuges available to them, making for prolific birdlife. The overflow from the reservoir on the Magalies, and a fountain high on the slope of the Magalies, provide permanent water on the mountain.

The Hartbeesspruit flows through Derdepoort Regional Park, which happens to lie on a migration route. This has drawn more birds and diverse species than we could have dreamt of. Who would ever have thought that eight kingfisher species occur right here, on our home patch?



[Ivonne Coetzee]

The beautiful Magalies MBT trail, with its grassland, woodland patches, kopjes, cliffs and even a modest wetland below the fountain, providing varied habitats for many different bird and plant species. I only discovered this gem during Lockdown, after having lived here for decades! The Friends of Magalies, affiliated to WESSA, do a sterling job by eradicating invasive plant species and maintaining paths. Unbroken lines of fences by landowners on both sides of the mountain prohibit entry except at two gated points, ensuring safety and an absence of vagrants.



Half-collared Kingfisher – Blouvisvanger - Derdepoort Regional Park
[André Thomas]



Fiery-necked Nightjar
Rietondale Experimental Farm
[Marna Buys]

European Nightjar -
Rietondale Experimental Farm
[Ivonne Coetzee]

Another surprising find, mostly by Reinardt Haywood, local owl whisperer, was four species of Nightjar - Fiery-necked, European, Freckled -, and Rufous-cheeked (Afrikaanse , Europese , Donker en Rooiwangnaguil). Owls like Barn Owl (Nonnetjieuil) and Spotted Eagle Owl frequent gardens in our suburb and breed in owl boxes erected by residents.

One species of game bird that we hear calling more often than it is seen, is Shelley's Francolin. We have photographs to prove that it lives here, right in the middle of our city, on the slopes of the Magalies. Crested Francolin (Bospatrys) are sometimes seen there as well. Natal - and Swainson's Spurfowl (Natalse - en Bosveldfisant) are common, and Helmeted Guineafowl (Gewone Tarentaal) form the remaining four of five, or even six game bird species to be found here on the Magalies.

Some birders claim to have seen Orange River Francolin (Kalaharipatrys) - the only species of game bird whose occurrence here is not yet confirmed by a photograph.

We too have a feast of raptors.

A resident pair of Verreaux's Eagles (Witkruisarend) on the Magalies raises chicks most years. Booted Eagle, a regional rarity, has been seen a few times this year, and a Long-crested Eagle (Langkuifarend) is a regular in Derdepoort Regional Park.

A Common Buzzard (Bruinjakalsvoël) though has been the more common and reliable sighting there and returns each summer. Black -, Ovambo - and Little Sparrowhawk (Swart-, Ovambo- en Kleinsperwer), and African Harrier-Hawk (Kaalwangvalk) are regularly seen, even in gardens.

Both Peregrine and Lanner Falcon (Edelvalk) were photographed on our home patch this year. Add to these exciting migrants such as European Honey Buzzard (Wespedief) and even Ayres's Hawk Eagle (Kleinjagarend), and you have some very happy birders!



Black Sparrowhawk – the dark morph, scarce in Gauteng.
Derdepoort Regional Park
[André Thomas]

LBJs such as Flappet – (Laeveldklappertjie) and Rufous-naped Lark (Rooineklewerik), Wailing -, Lazy -, Rattling -, Zitting - and Desert Cisticola (Huil- en Bosveldtinkinkie, Landery- en Woestynkloppie), and African -, Striped -, Nicholson's - and Buffy Pipit (Gewone, Nicholson- en Vaalkoester) occur on our stretch of the Magalies.

And while both Purple and Village Indigobird (Witpoot- en Staalbloublouvinkies) have been seen there and in Derdepoort Regional Park respectively, their brood hosts, Jameson and Red-billed Firefinches (Jamesonse en Rooibekvuurvinkies), are more commonly seen.

African Firefinch (Kaapse Vuurvinkie) also appeared once or twice – and could it have been a Dusky Indigobird (Gewone Blouvink) I saw in their company? Grey Tit-Flycatcher caused a flurry of excitement when it was spotted on the Magalies and remained, and the Fairy Flycatcher, frequenting the sweet thorn trees, is a drawcard in winter

The more common warblers such as Willow Warbler (Hofsanger), and Chestnut-vented - (Bosveldtjeriktik) are always a welcome sight in Derdepoort Regional Park, but scarce migrant warblers such as Marsh, Garden, and, last year, even a single River Warbler (Europese Riet-, Tuin- en Sprinkaansanger), were diligently searched for and reported by enthusiastic birders on the Magalies in the vicinity of the fountain.



Striped Pipit – Gestreepte Koester
[JP van der Merwe]



Lazy Cisticola – Luitinktinkie
[Ivonne Coetzee]



Fairy Flycatcher – (Feëvlieëvanger)
[Marna Buys]



Grey Tit-flycatcher – Waaiertertvlieëvanger
[Marna Buys]



Burnt-necked Eremomela – Bruinkeelbossanger
[André Thomas]

We were spoilt when both Temminck's and Bronze-winged Coursers visited newly ploughed patches on Rietondale Experimental farm – a Dusky Lark, even, came to investigate, causing a flurry of excitement under local birders.

Indian Mynas raised a Great Spotted Cuckoo (Gevlekte Koekoek) there this past summer as well, making this a popular spot amongst birders from all over the city.

Cuckoos such as Black, Diederik, Red-chested, Levallant's and Jacobin Cuckoos (Swartkoekoek, Diederikkie, Piet-my-vrou, Gestreepte- en Bontnuwejaarsvoël) occur here in summer, while Klaas's Cuckoo (Meitjie) and Black Cuckooshrike (Swartkatakoeroe) stay here year-round.

Higher altitude species such as Mocking Cliff-Chat, Mountain Wheatear and Cape Rock Thrush seem to prefer the eastern part of our part of the Magalies' Green Belt, and even venture into gardens and visit bird feed stations in the colder months.



Bronze-winged Courser - Bronsvlerkdrawwertjie
[Attie Hartsliet]

19.01.2023 19:50

The Hartbeesspruit has delivered its fair share in herons, but the Purple (Rooireier) and Green-backed Heron (Groenrugreier) deserve special mention, as does the Dwarf Bittern (Dwergrietreier) that visited twice. African Black Ducks (Swarteend) are permanent residents.

But the star of the show? Undoubtedly the breeding African Finfoot!

Green-winged Pytilia (Gewone Melba), Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (Klipstreepkoppie), Violet-backed Starling (Witborsspreeu), Marico Sunbird, Crimson-breasted shrike and, once, even Violet-eared Waxbill (Koningblousysie) and Long-tailed Paradise Whydah (Gewone Paradysvink), ensure that we have vibrant colour in our pickings.

With exciting flyovers such as Cape Vulture (Kransaasvoël), Black – and Abdim's Stork (Grootswart- en Kleinswartooievaar), and White Stork during migration, supplementing the water birds keeping to their daily fly paths through Wonderboom- and Derdepoort, who could deny that we live on possibly the most exciting 5km² of birding in South Africa?

(All birds shown and discussed here were photographed in a 5km radius from our home)

Ivonne Coetzee



*African Finfoot – Watertrapper
[Anne-Marie van der Walt]*

BIRDLASSER PRETORIA OLD EAST PENTAD CHALLENGE CITIZEN SCIENCE



Pretoria Old East Pentad Challenge 2023
From 1 Jan 2023 (00:00) to 31 Dec 2023 (23:59)

PENTADS:

2540_2810

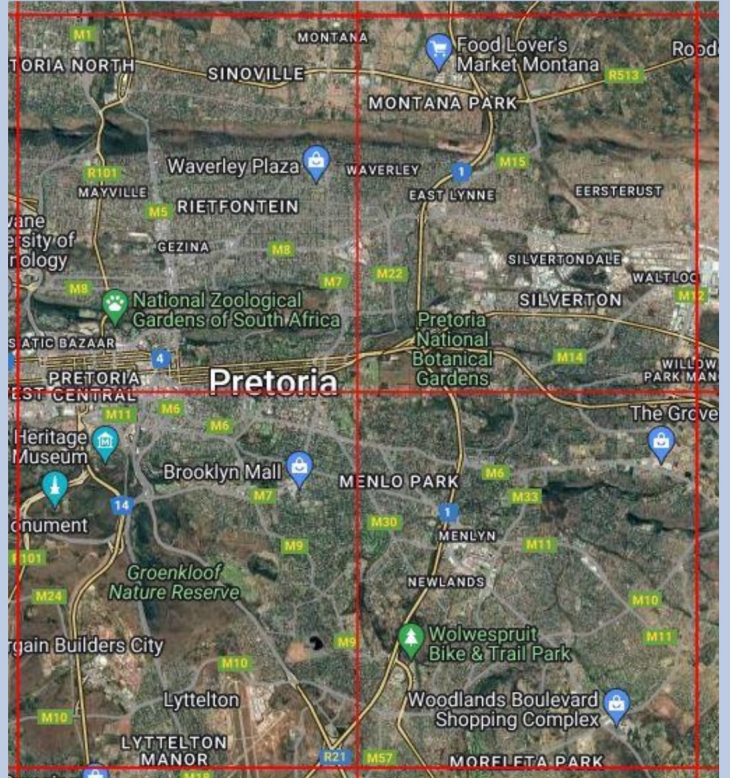
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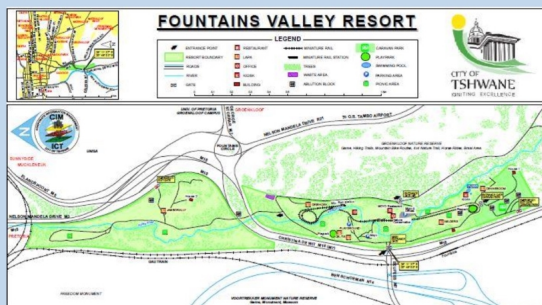
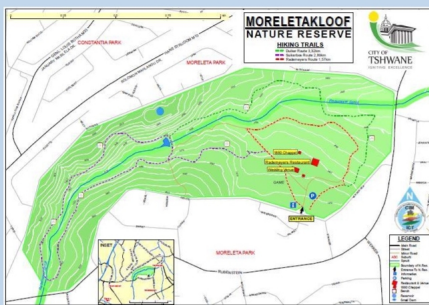
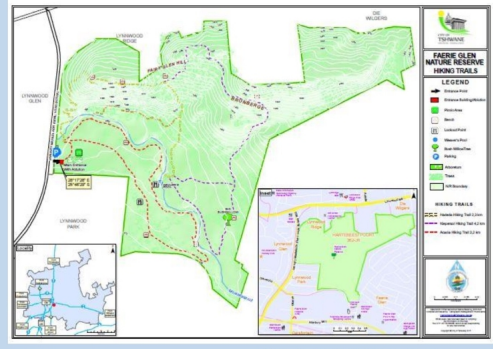
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TO JOIN PLEASE CONTACT ERNST RETIEF:

ernst.retief@birdlife.org.za



City of Tshwane
Nature Reserves
and
Recreation Areas

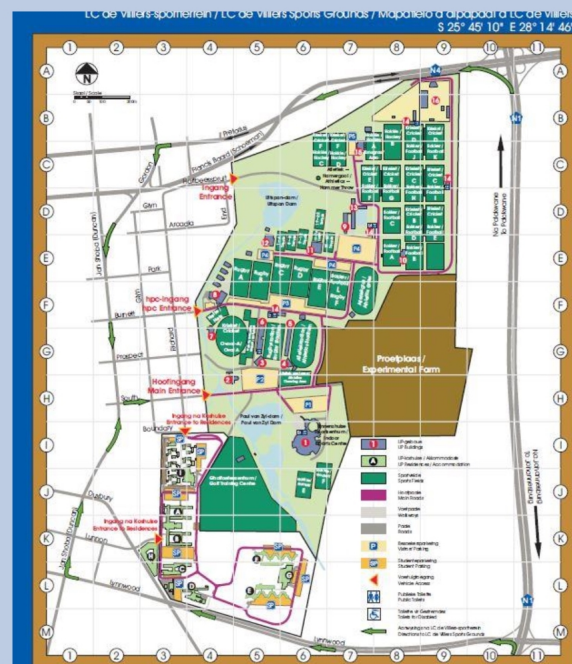




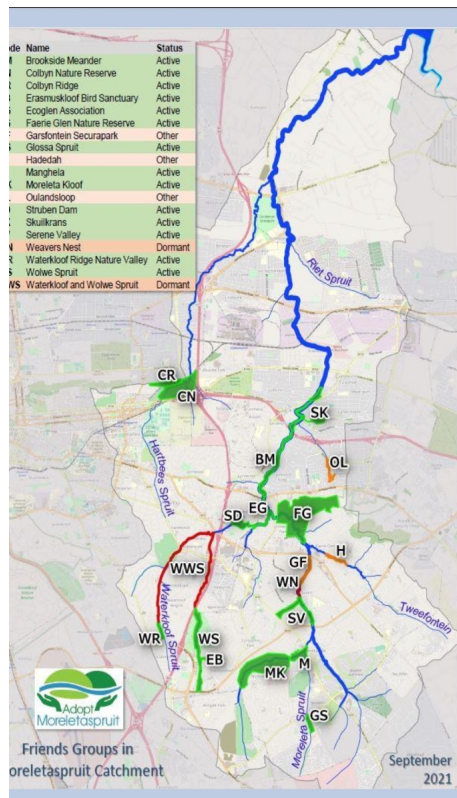
AUSTIN ROBERTS BIRD SANCTUARY



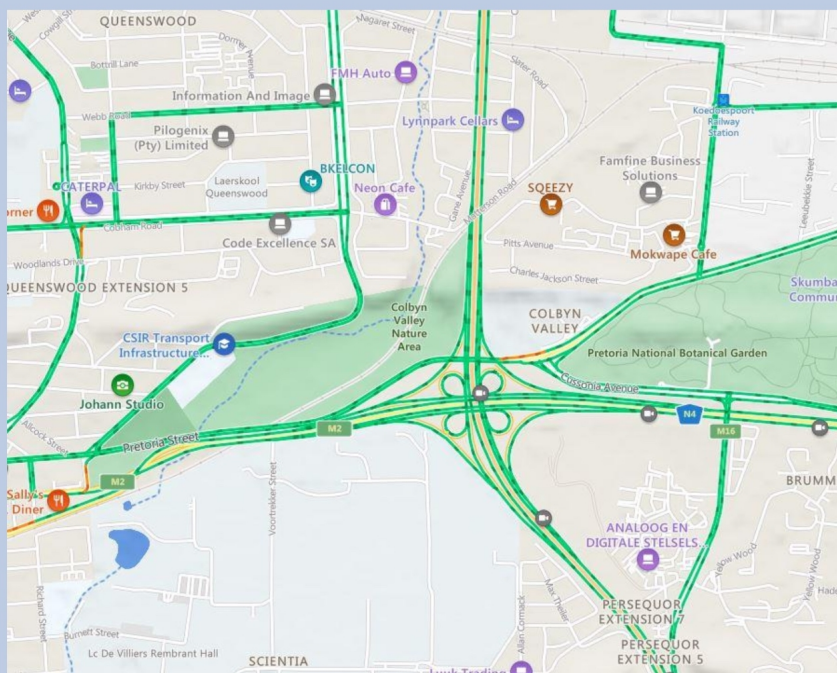
PRETORIA NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA –LC DE VILLIERS CAMPUS AND PROEFPLAAS



COLBYN WETLAND NATURE RESERVE



COLBYN WETLAND NATURE RESERVE- SPECIES LIST															
Number of Cards- Bird Monitoring		34													
Number of Cards- Other		19													
Number of Cards- Total		53													
Spp	SppName	A	B	C	Totals			Reporting Rates			BLNG	CNC	Winter	Spring	Summer
47	Cormorant, White-breasted	UC	F	ML	10	0	10	29%	0%	19%					
50	Cormorant, Reed	VC	F	R	32	18	50	94%	95%	94%	1	1	1	1	
52	Darter, African	C	F	ML	24	16	40	71%	84%	75%	1	1		1	
54	Heron, Grey	FC	F	R	12	8	20	35%	42%	38%	1	1	1		
55	Heron, Black-headed	VC	F	R	33	18	51	97%	95%	96%	1	1	1	1	
57	Heron, Purple	RA	F	R	3	0	3	9%	0%	6%					
58	Egret, Great	V	F	R	1	0	1	3%	0%	2%					
59	Egret, Little	UC	F	R	4	4	8	12%	21%	15%					
61	Egret, Western Cattle	C	F	R	26	16	42	76%	84%	79%	1	1	1	1	
63	Heron, Green-backed	UC	F,W	R	3	5	8	9%	26%	15%					
69	Night Heron, Black-crowned	V	F	R	0	1	1	0%	5%	2%					
72	Hamerkop	RA	F	R	4	2	6	12%	11%	11%					
76	Stork, Yellow-billed	V	F	R	0	1	1	0%	5%	2%					
78	Stork, Abdim's	V	F	MIA	1	0	1	3%	0%	2%					
80	Stork, White	V	F	MP	1	1	2	3%	5%	4%					
81	Ibis, African Sacred	VC	F,T	R	29	17	46	85%	89%	87%	1	1	1	1	
83	Ibis, Glossy	UC	F	R	4	5	9	12%	26%	17%					
84	Ibis, Hadedah	VC	F,T	R	31	16	47	91%	84%	89%	1		1	1	
88	Goose, Spur-winged	V	F	R	1	0	1	3%	0%	2%					
89	Goose, Egyptian	C	F,T	R	28	11	39	82%	58%	74%		1	1	1	
91	Duck, Knob-billed	V	F	R	0	1	1	0%	5%	2%		1			
95	Duck, African Black	FC	F,W	R	18	7	25	53%	37%	47%				1	1

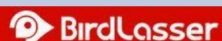


BIRD MONITORING DATA -2014-2022
173 SPECIES RECORDED TO DATE

SPECIALS RECORDED DECEMBER- JANUARY

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO
TEMMINCK'S COURSER
DUSKY LARK
BRONZE-WINGED COURSER
DWARF BITTERN
HALF-COLLARED KINGFISHER
BUFFY PIPIT
EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR
BOOTED EAGLE

BRONZE-WINGED COURSER
PHOTO BY ATTIE HARTSLIEF



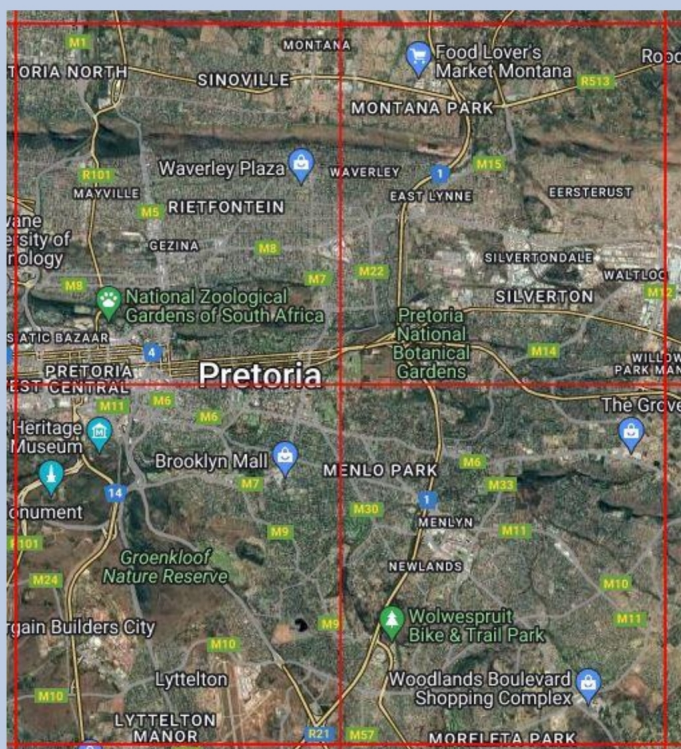
Pretoria Old East Pentad Challenge 2023
From 1 Jan 2023 (00:00) to 31 Dec 2023 (23:59)

PENTADS:

2540_2810
2540_2815
2545_2810
2545_2815

TO JOIN PLEASE CONTACT ERNST RETIEF:

ernst.retief@birdlife.org.za



BLGN-RINGERSHOEKIE. CITIZEN SCIENCE

Wonderboom NR - 4 Februarie 2023 (Madeleen van Loggerenberg)

Dit was 'n groot werk om hierdie terrein gereed te kry vir die ringsessie. Johan van Loggerenberg en 'n span vrywilligers het in die week die pad gaan oopkap, want tydens die grendeltyd het die plek heeltemal toegegroeï.

Net drie A-ringers het die ringsessie bygewoon. Tog was die getalle nie sleg nie – daar is 70 voëls hanteer, waarvan 19 verskillende spesies. Die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked Weaver) het voorgeloop met 23 voëls, terwyl die Bruinsylangstertjies (Tawny-flanked Prinia) hierdie keer die tweede plek behaal het met agt individue. Die hervangpersentasie was net 4,3%, omdat daar voor Covid laas hier gering is.

Interessante spesies, waarvan net een elk gevang is, was Bruinkopvisvanger (Brown-hooded Kingfisher), Kleinheuningwyser (Lesser Honeyguide), Hofsanger (Willow Warbler), Paradysvlieëvanger (African Paradise Flycatcher), Rooivlerktjagra (Brown-crowned Tchagra), asook Kleingeelvink (Lesser Masked Weaver). Die groep het ook 'n paar Witpensuikerbekkies (White-bellied Sunbird) en Gewone Melbas (Green-winged Pytilia) in die nette gekry.

Wolfhuiskraal - 3-4 Maart (Wanda Louwrens)

Net vier A-ringers en een C-ringer kon hierdie naweek naby Pienaarsrivier op die plaas bywoon. Dit was aanvanklik droog toe ons Vrydagmiddag daar aangekom het, maar teen die aand was daar 'n verwoede storm wat die hele plaas se krag uitgeslaan het. Gelukkig het Renette en Danie Opperman, eienaars van Wolfhuiskraal, die plek onlangs toegerus met solarligte en daar is 'n gasstoof in die kombuis geïnstalleer, wat die lewe vir ons baie makliker gemaak het. Ons het die Eskom-krag nie eers gemis nie – behalwe om selfone te laai. Maar daarvoor het Elba Swart gesorg – sy het haar 'battery pack' saamgeneem.

Die pomphuis, oorkant die pad van die opstal af, was baie vrugbaar. Van die 134 voëls wat die naweek gering is, is 112 daar gevang. Die spesies by die pomphuis was 33, terwyl die Boskamp net elf voëls en 8 spesies opgelewer het. Die 'retrap' persentasie was 9,7% vir die 13 voëls wat weer gevang is. Die oudste 'retrap' en die voël wat die afgelope drie jaar die meeste weer gevang is, was 'n Gewone Melba (Green-winged Pytilia) wat op 1 Maart 2020 deur FC Bothma vir die eerste keer gering is; dit is die volgende jaar op 7 Maart 2021 deur Arrie Klopper in dieselfde omgewing gevang, toe weer deur FC Bothma – 'n jaar en 'n half later op 9 Oktober 2022 en nou weer deur Frik du Plooy.

Die naweek is beplan om die sangers te teiken – vyf spesies is wel gevind: Hof-, Europese Riet-, Gebande, Spot- en Witkeelsanger (Willow, Marsh, Barred Wren and Icterine Warbler and Common Whitethroat). 'n Verrassing was die 28 suikerbekkies wat ons in hierdie Bosveld-habitat gekry het. By nadere ondersoek het ons gevind dat die veld vol aalwyne was – net die kos vir suikerbekkies! Spesies soos Marico-, Witpens en Swartsuikerbekkie (Marico, White-bellied and Amethyst Sunbird) is gevind. Die Maricosuikerbekkies het los voorgeloop met 15 voëls wat ons in die nette kon vang. Ander mooi spesies was: Rooiborslaksman (Crimson-breasted Shrike), Rooibekneushoringvoël (Southern Red-billed Hornbill), Oranjaborsboslaksman (Orange-breasted Bushshrike), Rooibekkekelaar (Green Wood-Hoopoe) en Buffelwewer (Red-billed Buffalo Weaver).

Wolfhuiskraal - 3-4 Maart (Wanda Louwrens)

Vier A-ringers en een C-ringer het op hierdie Saterdag om 4 uur by die natuurreservaat bymekaar gekom. Die vangste was verbasend goed! Nie minder nie as 267 voëls is die dag hanteer. Daarvan was 29 hervangste en 21 verskillende spesies. Die persentasie hervangste was 10,9%.

Die voël van die dag – nee, van die jaar – was beslis die Rooiborsvleikuiken (Red-chested Flufftail) wat Arrie Klopper gering het.

Die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked Weaver) was die meeste met 103 voëls, terwyl die Dikbekwewers (Thick-billed Weaver) tweede was met 32 in totaal. Vier verskillende sangers spesies is ook in die nette gevang – naamlik Tuin-, Hof-, Europese- en Kleinrietsanger (Garden, Willow, Marsh and African Reed Warbler).

Een elk van die volgende spesies is ook gevang: Bruinkopvisvanger (Brown-hooded Kingfisher), Witkeelswaai (White-throated Swallow), Bontrugwewer (Village Weaver), Geelgokkanarie (Yellow-fronted Canary), Gevlekte Muisvoël (Speckled Mousebird), Geelbeklyster (Karoo Thrush) en Witpenssuikerbekkie (White-bellied Sunbird).

Bishopvoëlpark - 1 April (Marina Pienaar)

Vyf A-ringers en twee C-ringers het vir hierdie ringsessie opgedaag. Die weer het saam gespeel en dit was 'n heerlike dag. Die hoogtepunt was beslis Leon Lötter se Rooiwangnaguiltjie (Rufous-cheeked Nightjar).

Daar is 80 voëls hanteer, waarvan 22 spesies, met 'n 'retrap' persentasie van 21,1%. Hierdie persentasie is baie hoog omdat Marina drie keer 'n jaar 'n ringsessie daar reël. Die meeste ou ringe was op ses Gewone Janfrederikke (Cape Robin-Chat).

Die volgende voëls het nuwe ringe gekry: die Kaapse Glasogies (Cape White-eye) was die meeste met 18 voëls, terwyl die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked Weaver) die tweede plek ingeneem het met dertien individue en die Swartoogtiptolle (Dark-capped Bulbul) was derde met 12 wat ringe gekry het.

Ander mooi spesies was een Bruinkopvisvanger (Brown-hooded Kingfisher), twee langstertjies, naamlik Bruinsy- en Swartbandlangstertjie (Tawny-flanked and Black-chested Prinia), een Bosveld-tjeriktik (Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler) en die twee suikerbekkies was Witpens- en Swartsuikerbekkie (White-bellied and Amethyst Sunbird).

Honignestkrans, Landerye - 11 Maart (FC Bothma)

Drie A-ringers en een C-ringer ('n ringer in opleiding) het op hierdie lieflike Saterdag Honignestkrans toe gery om in die landerye te gaan nette opsit. Dit is noord van Pretoria naby Bon Accord-dam.

Daar is 70 voëls gevang die dag, met 68 voëls wat nuwe ringe gekry het.

Twee was 'retraps'. Die hervangspersentasie was laag – net 2,9%. Die Rooivinke (Southern Red Bishop) was die volopste met 23 in getal en tweede was die Witvlerklappe (White-winged Widowbird) met twaalf voëls.

Die beste vangs van die dag was beslis die skaars Rooiassie (Orange-breasted Waxbill). Ander spesies was Goudgeelvink (Yellow-crowned Bishop), Indiese Spreeu (Common Myna), Gewone Fret (Bronze Mannikin), twee tinkinkiespesies naamlik Vleitinktinkie en Landerykloppie (Levaillant's and Zitting Cisticola).



Rufous-cheeked Nightjar

*Pretoria Nasionale Botaniese Tuin
15 April
(Arrie Klopper)*

Ses A-ringers en vier C-ringers het hierdie ringessie by die Tuine bygewoon.

Sjoe, wat 'n lekker ring was dit nie. Ons het sommer baie meer voëls gevang as die vorige paar kere wat ek daar was, hoewel ons aantal spesies nie so hoog was nie:

September 2020 - 224 voëls, 33 spesies

April 2022 - 171 voëls, 29 spesies

Oktober 2022 - 170 voëls, 25 spesies

April 2023 - 249 voëls, 30 spesies

Meeste: Soos gewoonlik was die 803's (Swartkeelgeelvink/Southern Masked Weaver) die meeste (50), gevolg deur die Kaapse Glasogies (Cape White-eye) (34) en Rooiwangmuisvoëls (Red-faced Mousebird) (23).

Hervangste: Aanvanklik het ek gedink die 'retraps' is maar min tot ek Leon Lötter se data gesien het. Oudste van die klomp voëls was twee wat in Februarie 2017 gering is.

Daar is sommer 'n hele paar wat vir die derde keer gevang is. Die hervangspersentasie was 14,5% wat nogal hoog is, want ons probeer om ten minste drie keer 'n jaar daar te ring.

Vangs van die dag:
Oranjoborsboslaksman (Orange-breasted Bushshrike) en
Goudstertspieg (Golden-tailed Woodpecker)!

Soos altyd, dankie vir almal se hulp met die C-ringers. Hulle het almal meer as twintig voëls gering en mooi spesies gekry.

Soos op die dag, laaste maar die belangrikste: Baie geluk Reinhardt! Volgende keer sit jy jou eie nette op en gebruik jou eie ringe. Mag daar sommer baie 'lifers' wees.

(Reinhardt Fowler het op hierdie dag as A-ringer gekwalifiseer, nadat hy 500 voëls, waarvan 50 verskillende spesies moes wees, onder toesig gering het.)



Elba Swart, Pieter du Plessis en Arrie Klopper dra sakkies aan na die werkstasie by die Voortrekkermonument.

6 Mei, Voortrekkermonument (Martin Steyn) Foto's: Louisa Stroebel

Martin het Danie Langner, hoof van die FAK, bedank vir die gebruik van die terrein en het 'n opsomming van die ringery verskaf.

Dit was 'n baie goeie dag. In totaal is 169 voëls gevang – 143 nuwe ringe is opgesit en 26 was 'retraps'. Dit is 'n 15.4% 'retrap rate' wat baie goed is.

Die oudste voël ('n Gewone Janfrederik / Cape Robin-Chat) wat ons gekry het, is op 2 April 2016 gering as 'n volwasse voël en is nou sewe jaar later weer gevang. Ons het ook 'retraps' gekry van die volgende jare: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 en 2022.

Ander mooi spesies was Afrikaanse Naguil (Fiery-necked Nightjar), Bont- en Rooikophoutkapper (Acacia Pied and Black-collared Barbet), Suidelike Waterfiskaal (Southern Boubou), Gysrugkwêkwêvoël (Grey-backed Camaroptera), Rooibeklyster (Kurrichane Thrush) en Witkeeljanfrederik (White-throated Robin-Chat).

Ons het ook besoek ontvang van twee skoolgroepe, naamlik Zwartkop Hoërskool se Zwarrie Eco-klub, asook seuns van die Junior Ereveldwagters (Pretoria-streek). Hulle het die oggend saam met ons deurgebring om meer te leer van voëls en hoekom ons hulle afmetings neem en ringe aansit. Die Zwarries het fluks gehelp om voëls aan te dra om gering te word.



Marina Pienaar en Zwartkop Hoërskool se Eco-klublede Anika, Angelique en Aniela help om sakkies aan te dra by die Voortrekkermonument.

6 Mei, Voortrekkermonument (Martin Steyn) Foto's: Louisa Stroebel

Vyf A-ringers en drie C-ringers (ringers in opleiding) het op 'n koue oggend by hierdie dam in Lynnwood Glen byeengekom vir 'n ringsessie.

Elba doen verslag:

Dankie vir almal se bydraes tot 'n lieflike dag om lank te onthou. Dit was die eerste lekker koue ringuitstappie van die herfsseisoen, met die laagste temperatuur van 1°C en 'n goeie laag ryp.

Nanet, Drikus en sy nefie, kort 'n ekstra vermelding, want daardie twee is altyd bereid om te help al is hulle vingers morsdood van die koue.

Ons het 58 voëls hanteer en 42 gering. Die ander 16 voëls was 'retraps'. Die oudste was 1911 dae of te wel (5 jaar 2 mde en 26 dae) gelede vir die eerste keer gering. Die hervangspersentasie was 27,6%, wat redelik hoog is.

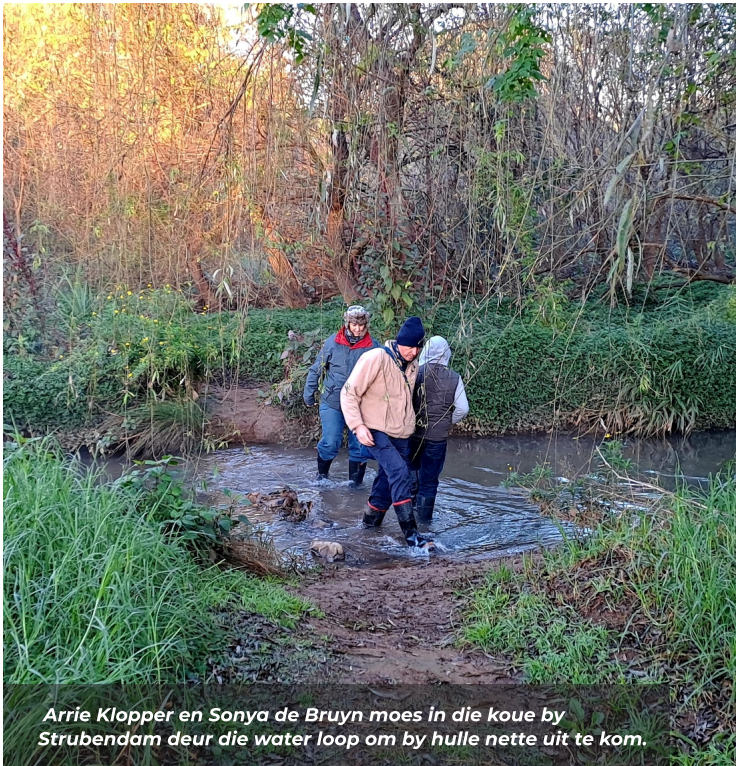
Die spesiale spesies van die dag, was verseker die twee Geelbekbosduiwe (African Olive-Pigeon), 'n Blouvisvanger (Half-collared Kingfisher) 'n Gewone Vleiloerie (Burchell's Coucal) en tien Dikbekwewers (Thick-billed Weaver).

En verseker die seerste Dikbekwewer-byt wat ek nog beleef het! Sonya, een van die C-ringers het ook deurgeloopt onder hulle bekke. Ander mooi spesies was Rooibeklyster (Kurrichane Thrush), Bontrugwewer (Village Weaver), Gewone Fret (Bronze Mannikin) en Bergkanarie (Black-throated Canary).

Daar was ook twee kuiergaste! Gerda Mischke en haar kleinseun, Erich, het met belangstelling gekyk hoe die ringe aangesit word en die voëls gemeet is. By die huis gekom het sy ma hom gevra hoe hy die dag beleef het. Sy antwoord was: "20 uit 10"!



Reinhardt Fowler was baie trots op hierdie Bosveldtjerik wat hy by die Voortrekkermonument gering het.



Arrie Klopper en Sonya de Bruyn moes in die koue by Strubendam deur die water loop om by hulle nette uit te kom.



Die werkstasie by Strubendam is sommer in die pad opgeslaan.



Erich Pieterse (links) en Reinhardt Fowler neem 'n koffiebreek tydens die ringessie by Strubendam.



Dit was Erich Pieterse (14 jaar oud) se eerste besoek aan die ringers. Sy reaksie: Dit was 20 uit 10!

CLUB RARITIES

Regional and Local Rarities / Streeksrariteite and interesting sightings

National Rarities/ Nasionale Rariteite

There were no national rarities to report in this period.

Regional and Local Rarities / Streeksrariteite



Lesser Black-backed Gull [Richard Crawshaw]

The most exciting report was of a single Lesser Black-backed Gull at the South Bay at The Vaal Dam. (RC, SR)



Lark-like Bunting – Vaalstreepkoppie [Richard Crawshaw]

A Lark-like Bunting was seen on the Zaagkuil drift Road on 25 March. (PV) This bird was re-located the next day (RC) and several birders have since reported Lark-like Buntings in the region.

Saddle-billed Stork

A single Saddle-billed Stork photographed at the Kgomo-Kgomo bridge caused quite a bit of excitement amongst birders and was seen again for a few days afterwards. (PV)



European Nightjar – Europese Naguil [Thinus van Staden]

The European Nightjar on Crake road stayed obliging as did the European Nightjar on the Rietondale Experimental Farm in the middle of Pretoria suburbs. (RH, TvS)



Square-tailed Nightjar - Laeveldnaguil [Doug Newman]

A Square-tailed Nightjar was photographed near the Platte river at Kgomo-Kgomo on 31 March. (DN)

African Rock Pipit - Klipkoester

An African Rock Pipit - Klipkoester was reported in the vicinity of Greylingstad on 2 April (CW) and was reported again at the end of May.

Sickle-winged Chat - Vlaktespekvreter

The first Sickle-winged Chat (Vlaktespekvreter) of the winter was spotted in Suikerbosrand on 15 April. (DN)

African Goshawk - Afrikaanse Sperwer

An African Goshawk (Afrikaanse Sperwer) was seen on 23 April at the ever-productive Wilge river valley. (PB), and again proved why it is such a great birding destination, with forest species within Gauteng birders' reach. Deale's Rock had Sweet Waxbill and Trichardskloof a pair of Mountain Wagtail at the waterfall during June. (PV)

White-backed Vulture - Witrugasvoël

A single White-backed Vulture (Witrugasvoël) was at Boons Road near the end of April. (KC, MJ)

Martial Eagle - Breëkoparend

Boons Road, productive as always, delivered besides Grey-backed and Red-backed Sparrow-larks, also a Martial Eagle (Breëkoparend). (PY)

Lappet-faced Vulture - Swartaasvoël

Of note, a Lappet-faced Vulture (Swartaasvoël) was seen attending a carcass in the same vicinity, a few days later. (SO)

Denham's Bustard

A single Denham's Bustard was seen outside Ezemvelo's western fence on 14 May. (PV)

Corn Crane

A Corn Crane was found entangled in a fence at Devon on 1 April and consequently taken to a vet. (TS)

Red-backed Sparrow-larks - Rooiruglewerik / Lesser Moorhen - Kleinwaterhoender

Red-backed Sparrow-larks (Rooiruglewerik) near Platte river as well as a single Lesser Moorhen (Kleinwaterhoender), one of a good number which were reported during the summer, were at Kgomo-Kgomo on 28 March. (BLNG)



Grey-backed Sparrow-lark / Gysruglewerik [Angela Openshaw]

A Grey-backed Sparrow-lark on the Eendracht Road close to Suikerbosrand, the first of what seems to be an influx from drier western areas of the country. (GS)

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater – Swaelstertbyvreter [Marlou Schalkwyk]

Good numbers of Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters were reported throughout the region, regularly seen at Marievale in good numbers.

Southern Bald Ibis - Kalkoenibis [Mike Pope]

A juvenile Southern Bald Ibis was photographed at Glen Austin Pan on April 14, an interesting record. (MP)

Terrestrial Brownbul

A single Terrestrial Brownbul was at Roets' Farm on the Zaagkuil drift Road (DN), and another encountered in Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserve on 1 July. (DS)

Temminck's Courser

Rietondale Experimental Farm had a single Temminck's Courser on 20 March, which hung around on a freshly ploughed area for more than a week, quite a sighting in the middle of suburban Pretoria. (AH)

Yellow-bellied Eremomela - Geelpensbossanger

A Yellow-bellied Eremomela (Geelpensbossanger) was seen at Dinokeng (PV).

Black Stork

A Pair of Black Stork were reported flying over the R511 near Hennops Hiking Trail. (PV)

African Dusky Flycatcher

An African Dusky Flycatcher was found near Muldersdrift end of June (LG)

Water Thick-Knee

Dinokeng's Water Thick-knees, the past year or more becoming regulars there, were reported at Larry's Dam. (EM)



Chestnut-banded Plover [Doug Newman]

A Lesser Black-backed Gull and Chestnut-banded Plover were reported on Leeupan near Leandra in mid-June. (RC, SR, DN)

Black-necked Grebes – Swartnekdoobertjie [I Coetzee]

Of interest, the same venue also delivered impressive numbers of Black-necked Grebes (FO'B and L) and Greater and Lesser Flamingos.

Blue Korhaan – Blou Korhaan [Marlou Schalkwyk]

Other interesting sightings were Double-banded Courser at Vaal Marina (SN, MS)

Ayres Hawk-eagle - Kleinjagarend [Andy Smith]

A long-staying Ayres Hawk-eagle was photographed at Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary (AS) on 28 May.

CONTRIBUTORS

Observers / Waarnemers:

Pieter Verster (PV)	Laura Jordaan
Doug Newman (DN)	Patrick O'Brien (PB)
Richard Crawshaw (RC)	Philip Yiannakou (PY)
Connor van der Walt (CW)	Tristan Spurway (TS)
Michael Johnson. (MJ)	Andy Smith (AS)
Reinhard Haywood (RH)	Marlou Schalkwyk (MS)
Thinus van Staden (TvS)	Damien Schwardtz (DS)
Keanu Canto (KC)	Connor van der Walt (CvdW)
Garret Skead (GS)	Sandy Neveling (SN)
Fransie O'Brien	Luke Goddard (LG)

This column is mainly concerned with observations of rarities and interesting sightings made in the Greater Gauteng region, defined as being 100km from the centre of both Johannesburg and Pretoria. While the majority of records are included it is sometimes necessary to exclude some depending on whether the subject matter has already been well reported. Most records are sourced from reports on the internet or dedicated social media forums.

CAPE PENINSULA - WESTERN CAPE TRAVELOGUE

TRIP REPORT

Sheleph and Louis Burger

Birding highlights: Cape Siskin, Forest Canaries, Swee Waxbills, Forest Buzzard, Black Sparrowhawk, Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, Common Chaffinch, Olive Woodpecker.

Species total: 43 seen

After meeting up with Sheleph and Louis we headed to Cecilia Forest on the eastern slope of Table Mountain to start a quick targeted trip.

We quickly located a mixed flock of canaries and waxbills roosting in a large bush next to the parking lot. The clear “peachy” call of one of our prime targets: Cape Siskin was evident amongst the calls of the Cape and Forest Canaries and Swee Waxbills. As the sun rose, this mix of seedeaters flew out to start feeding higher up the slope. We hiked up an old forestry track to get better views of them feeding in an area of open ground. Besides these seedeaters, we also recorded a fantastic variety of raptors including Forest Buzzard, Black (pale morph), and Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, African Harrier-hawk, and Yellow-billed Kite.

With the morning slipping away, our attention turned to finding Common Chaffinch, in the nearby Lower Tokai Plantation.

After a thorough search, we located a small flock of this introduced species, with a handsome male showing very well. Our visit delivered another fantastic sighting of dark morph Black Sparrowhawk. The rest of the morning was spent casually birding the famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. The top birds in our brief visit included a fantastic encounter with a feeding flock that included pair of Olive Woodpeckers, Cape Batis, Olive Thrushes, Sombre Greenbuls, and a large flock of Cape White-eyes. The rest of the visit turned up the expected diversity of local species.



Sheleph Burger and Vince Ward [Louis Burger]

LANIARIUS NEW MEMBERS: NOVEMBER 2022 TO MARCH 2023

BLNG MATTERS

AAN ALLE NUWE LEDE - BAIE WELKOM!

Ons sien daarna uit om julle by ons aandvergaderings, daguitstappies of tydens 'n naweekkamp te leer ken.

TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS – WELCOME!

We trust you will enjoy your birding with us and look forward to seeing you at our evening meetings, day outings or weekend trips. *Please contact Fransie at secretary@blng.co.za or phone her on cell number 072 737 0862 for any queries or information.*

Salomé & Johan van Niekerk	Garsfontein
Arlene & Rowan Addinall	Lyttelton
Gerda Mischke	Rietvalleirand
Johan Kampman	Waverley
Suné Janse van Rensburg	Wilgeheuwel, Roodepoort
Mika Betten	Randjesfontein, Midrand
Imran & Ayesha Vanker	Emmarentia
Rod & Lois Clack	Faerie Glen
Chris de Blocq	Lynnwood
Lorris & Renée Duncker	Moreleta Park
Terren Kourkouvelis	
Helen Pretorius	Die Wilgers

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Ons opregte dank aan almal vir donasies gemaak. U donasie verseker dat ons 'n groter bydrae tot die bewaring van voëls kan lewer. Ons waardeer dit opreg (January to May 2023)

Maryke Carstens	January 2023	Elba Swart	February 2023
Heidi Muller	February 2023	André Marx	February 2023
Joshua Coulson	February 2023	Leon & Lucia Lötter	February 2023
Quinton & Gail Boshoff	February 2023	Anton Ackermann	April 2023
Johan Zwarts	February 2023		

CLUB COMPETITION

SOLUTION COMPETITION 3 (Laniarius March 2022)

What do these four birds have in common? The answer, of course, spotted by a number of ladies: All have a precious stone or jewel as part of their names:

Amethyst Sunbird
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove
Pearly-breasted Swallow
Malachite Sunbird

But Stephan Terblanche, though missing the obvious, sent in this fascinating in-depth study:

1. They all have (at least some) iridescent feathers
2. They all breed in South Africa.
3. They are all solitary nesters.
4. They are all monogamous.
5. They were all photographed by Marna Buys. ;-)

Thank you for this, Stephan Terblanche. I only wish there had been some wonderful prize for our competitions, which you in this case would have won!



CLUB COMPETITION

COMPETITION 4

4.1 What do these Kruger birds have in common?

Solutions to lanariuseditor@blng.co.za

Photos: Marna Buys en Ivonne Coetzee

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

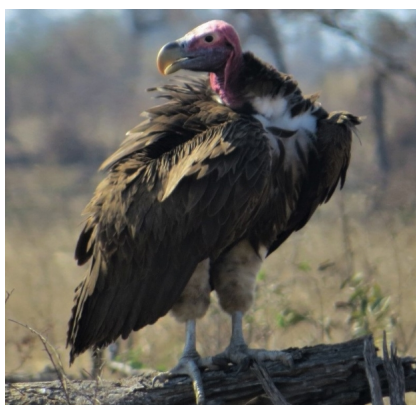


Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



4.2 CAPTION THIS – GEE ‘N BYSKRIF

(Photo of birder's car on Zaagkuil drift Road)

All answers to lanariuseditor@blng.co.za



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