



BLiNG WiNGS

Egyptian Goose [Francois Humphries] Edition 22, JUNE 2025

Reflections: Club meeting 10 June 2025



[BLSA]

Guidelines for surveying
and mitigating impacts on
White-winged Flufftail in
avifaunal assessments for
development applications

White-winged Flufftails, critically endangered with only some 50 birds left in South Africa, and a WWF flagship species, were discovered to be breeding in high-altitude wetlands in Mpumalanga. Dr. Kyle Lloyd explained his work in promoting BLSA's stewardship measures at Mpumalanga wetland sites.

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DENEYSVILLE – 1 June

The Deneysville area on the shores of the Vaal Dam is an exciting birding destination with species not encountered in Gauteng. This bird outing, led by Sandy Neveling, who is an expert in this area, proved once again just how thrilling a slight change of latitude and habitat can be. The chilly morning ended in a day with memorable sightings. The cold was forgotten when the lifers started adding up for most of the group – especially the national rarity, a Lesser Black-backed Gull.



Marsh Owl [Vilette Forwood]



Lesser Black-backed Gull [André Taljaard]



Blue Korhaan [Ben Espach]



Cape Shoveler [Johan Botha]



Orange River White-eye [Vilette Forwood]



Spike-heeled Lark [Johan Botha]



Double-banded Courser [Johan Botha]

ROOIWAL WASTEWATER WORKS – 14 June

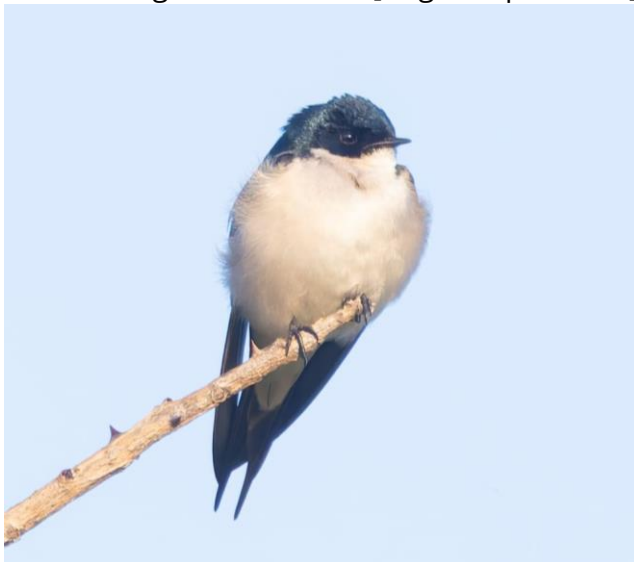
When we entered Rooiwal's gates, my hopes sank. Earthmoving equipment was rumbling, workers moved around, and access to inside dams severely limited. But very soon, the birds did their magic: basking Pearl-breasted Swallows, both Long-crested Eagle and Gabar Goshawk, and the tranquil outside pond with its Cape Teal and Marico Sunbirds. Neithard Graf von Dürckheim, our leader, always has interesting information to add to our outings: today it was polyandrous mating systems, such as in African Jacana, where the female mates with multiple males, and the males are solely responsible for raising the chicks. At least 86 species were seen, and this in unpromising surroundings and in winter!



Cuddling Blue Waxbills [Angela Openshaw]



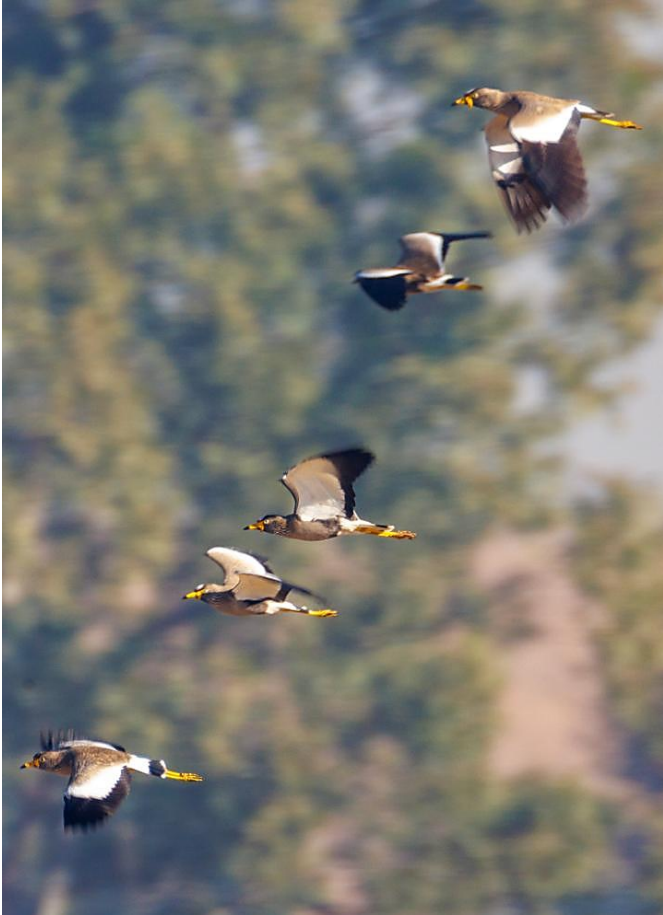
[Ivonne Coetzee]



Pearl-breasted Swallow [Marna Buys]



Hamerkop [Johan Croukamp]



African Wattled Lapwing [Skhokho Swanepoel]



Long-crested Eagle [Skhokho Swanepoel]



Gabar Goshawk, Bird of the Day [Johan Croukamp]

ALOE FARM – 18 June

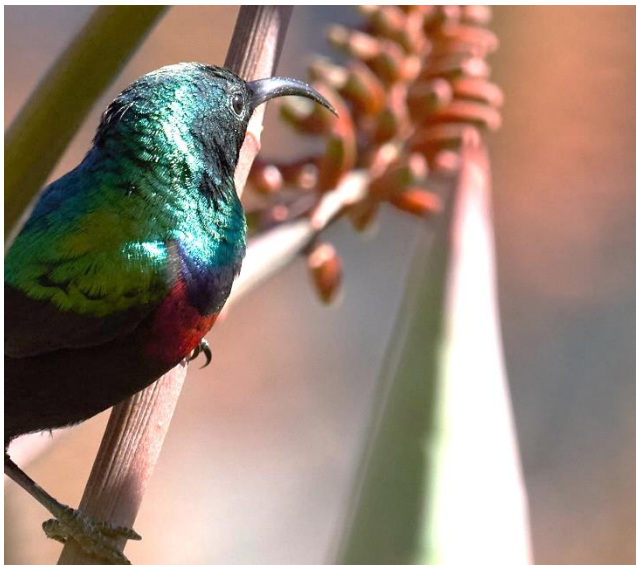
Anyone still doubtful about visiting Aloe Farm will now be convinced by the spectacular images of flowering Aloes and stunning variety of sunbirds visiting them. Not only sunbirds, but Green-backed Heron, Fairy Flycatchers and a surprise fly-by of Cape Vulture made the day. Hannes van den Berg guided the group around the premises.



White-bellied Sunbird [Angela Openshaw]



White-bellied Sunbird [Wilma van der Merwe]



Marico Sunbird [Wilma van der Merwe]



Amethyst Sunbird [Wilma van der Merwe]



Green-backed Heron [Mara Raath]



Fairy Flycatcher [Hannes van den Berg]



Cape Weaver in winter garb. [Hannes van den Berg]



Cape Vulture [Hannes van den Berg]

FINFOOT LAKE RESERVE – 22 June

Yet another new outing on the BLNG calendar proved to be a great success – the first time we visited Finfoot Lake Reserve. Sarel van der Westhuizen proved to be a wonderful guide. After a cold start, the walking and birding in the sun soon warmed up everyone. A number of lifers chalked up by some members made this outing even more unforgettable.



Burnt-necked Eremomela [Sheleph Burger]



Liesl de Swardt



Grey Tit-Flycatcher [Candace Kotzé]



Pearl-spotted Owlet [Sarel van der Westhuizen]



African Hawk-Eagle [Sheleph Burger]



Acacia Pied Barbet [Sarel van der Westhuizen]



Brubru [Candace Kotzé]



[Liesl de Swardt]



Violet-eared Waxbill [Francois Humphries]

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

Some excellent and interesting sightings were recorded during this period.

A **National Rarity** was reported when the BLNG group on an outing with Sandy Neveling found a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at South Bay at the Vaal Dam near Deneysville.



Lesser Black-backed Gull [André Taljaard]

Several **Wider Gauteng Rarities** were recorded during the same BLNG outing. **Double-banded Courser**, **Orange River White-eye**, **Spike-heeled Lark** and **Blue Korhaan** made up a pleasing total of rare or interesting species seen on the day.



Double-banded Courser [Vilette Forwood]



Orange River White-eye [Vilette Forwood]



Blue Korhaan [Ben Espach]



Spike-heeled Lark [Johan Botha]

Selwyn Rautenbach found a **Black Harrier** in the same area near Deneysville. He also found **African Goshawk** at Wilge River Valley and **Pied Avocet** at Marievale.

Gerben van de Wetering reported a **Pink-billed Lark** at Boon's Road, while **Short-clawed Lark** and **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** were seen in the vicinity of Sun City.



Pink-billed Lark [Gerben van de Wetering]



Short-clawed Lark [Thea Jenkins]

A **White-backed Night Heron** (Mabusa NR) and **Cape Vulture** seen at the Aloe Farm near De Wildt during a BLNG outing boosted the number of interesting sightings. Another BLNG outing to Finfoot Lake produced an **African Hawk-Eagle**. Mike Pope reported a single **Black-necked Grebe** at Glen Austin Pan near Midrand. An immature **Lappet-faced Vulture** was seen in the vicinity of Boon's Road (Justin Rhys Nicolau).



White-backed Night Heron [Thea Jenkins]



Cape Vulture [Hannes van den Berg]



African Finfoot was seen at Faerie Glen NR.
[Pieter Heslinga]



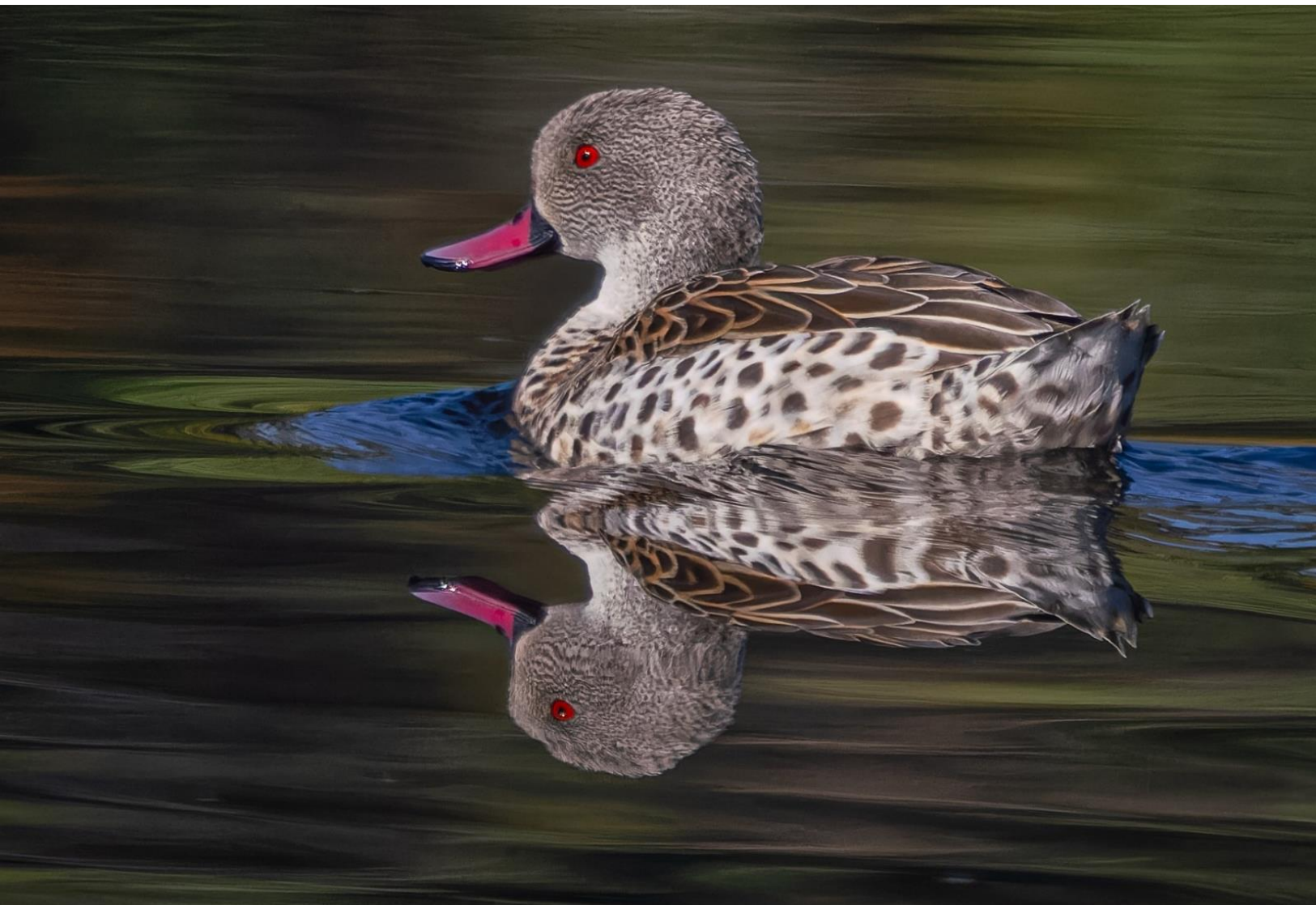
African Hawk-Eagle at Finfoot Lake Reserve
[Sheleph Burger]

Large groups of **Marabou Storks** were seen flying near Wahlmanstall (Etienne Marais) and an immature **Martial Eagle** over Suikerbosrand (Patrick O'Brien). Niall Perrins had a productive day at Devon IBA with **Black-necked Grebe**, **Black Harrier** and a large group of **Blue Cranes**.

All these sightings were reported on various social media forums. Some records were sourced from EBird or Sabap2 records.

Photograph of the month

The success of this beguiling photograph, taken during our Rooiwal outing, is first and foremost in the perfect reflection of this Cape Teal. But let us dig deeper. The scarlet of the eye and ruby-red bill are reinforced by the complementing of the blue and green between their mirrored reflections. Being a strong focus point, they lead the eye to the delicate, muted barring of the face and head. The sculpted layers of brown primaries edged in gold and buff, the playful polka-dots on the vibrant white undersides all contrast against the dark background, which in turn imparts a sense of mystery to the scene. Congratulations, Johan Croukamp, on this exceptional image, which leads us all to appreciate the beauty of this bird!





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 Inkululeko Wildlife Services

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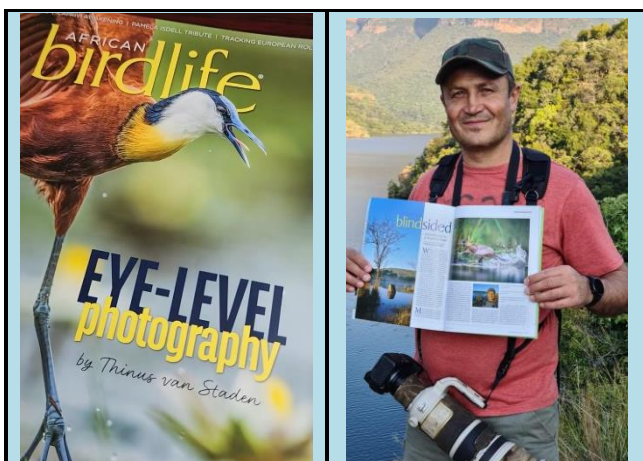
Leandri de Kock - The Roaring Forties: Life on Marion Island - 8 July

Dr Liezl Pretorius and Leandri de Kock

Life in the Roaring Forties

Have you ever wondered what it's like to spend a year on Marion Island? What would you pack, and how would you stay connected with the outside world? Join recent islanders Liezl and Leandri as they guide you through the unique experience of life on Marion Island. In their talk, they'll take you on a virtual tour of the base, introduce you to hut life, showcase the essential field gear, and even share some creative island recipes. You'll also learn about the various roles and responsibilities that keep life running on the island. Additionally, Liezl will share highlights from a rare 2023 expedition to the very seldom visited Prince Edward Island, offering a glimpse into one of the world's most remote natural landscapes.





One of the highlights of 2025!

We congratulate Thinus van Staden with the Jul/ Aug **African BirdLife** cover page photograph and anchor article 'Eye-level photography' – what a triumph!

PROGRAMME – JULY 2025



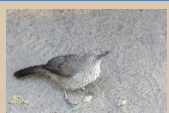
2 July – Wolwespruit MBT



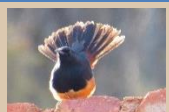
5 July – Marievale



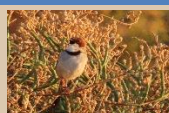
15 & 22 July – Online BirdLasser Training



16 July – Kimiad Golf Course



20 July – Hoogland Spa & Hydro



26 July – Boon's Road

Compilation and layout by I Coetzee

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BIRDING MILESTONES



Vilette Forwood and Johan Botha reached their **500th** milestone bird with a **Neergaard's Sunbird** during the recent Bonamanzi camp.



Johan Croukamp celebrated his **600th** species with a **Bushveld Pipit**.



Liesl de Swardt was overjoyed to hit her **700th** goal with a **Livingstone's Turaco** during the Bonamanzi Camp.