

# BLING WINGS

Levaillant's Cisticola [Hannes van den Berg]



## Reflections: Club Meeting – 14 May



In a mere two decades, from 2004 - 2024, the Secretarybird's status changed from Least Concern to Endangered, with numbers plunging by about 90%. Cassie Carstens explained how habitat loss through agriculture and bush encroachment, collisions with power lines and fences, high chick mortality and predation caused this disastrous decline. He also focused on the movements of BLNG2, a bird whose tracking device was sponsored by the club.

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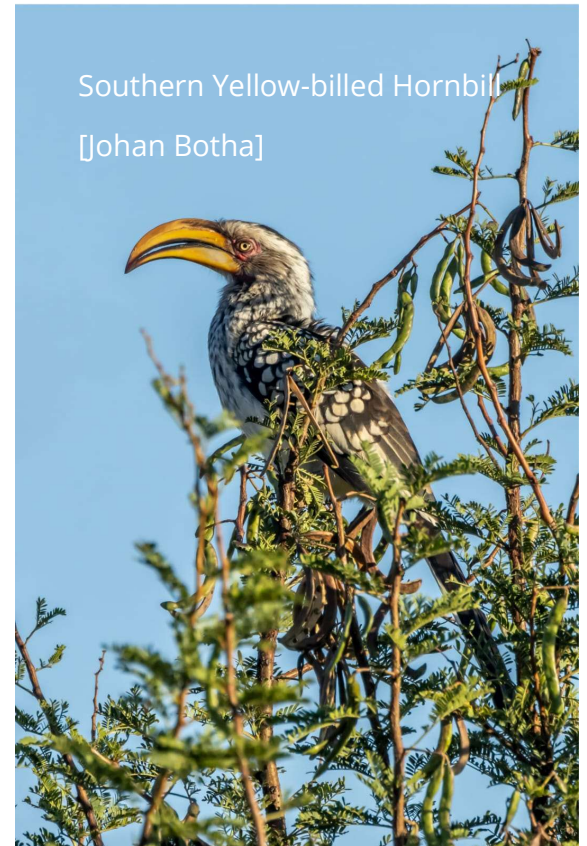
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## ROODEPLAAT NR - 4 MAY

Who would ever have thought that a mere 12 km north from suburban Pretoria, a whole new suite of bird species awaits one in Roodeplaat Nature Reserve? 92 Species were seen under the guidance of expert leader, Neithard Graf Von Durkheim. Let the photographs tell all about it.

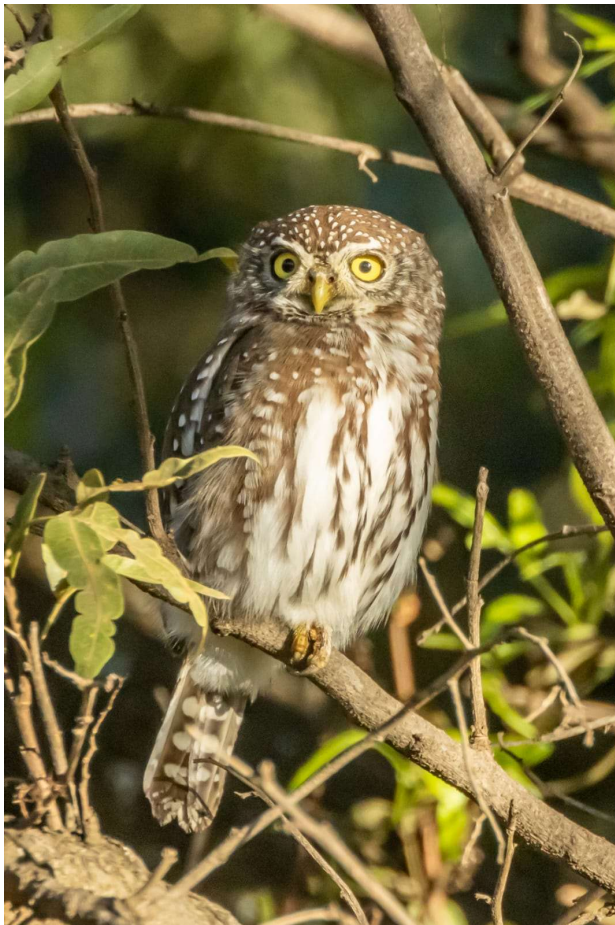




Bird of the Day – the cheeky Kalahari Scrub Robin [Craig Green]



Striped Kingfisher [Vilette Forwood]



Pearl-spotted Owlet [Johan Botha]



Burnt-necked Eremomela [Craig Green]



Our expert leader, Neithard, on the right.

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## PRETORIA NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS - 12 MAY

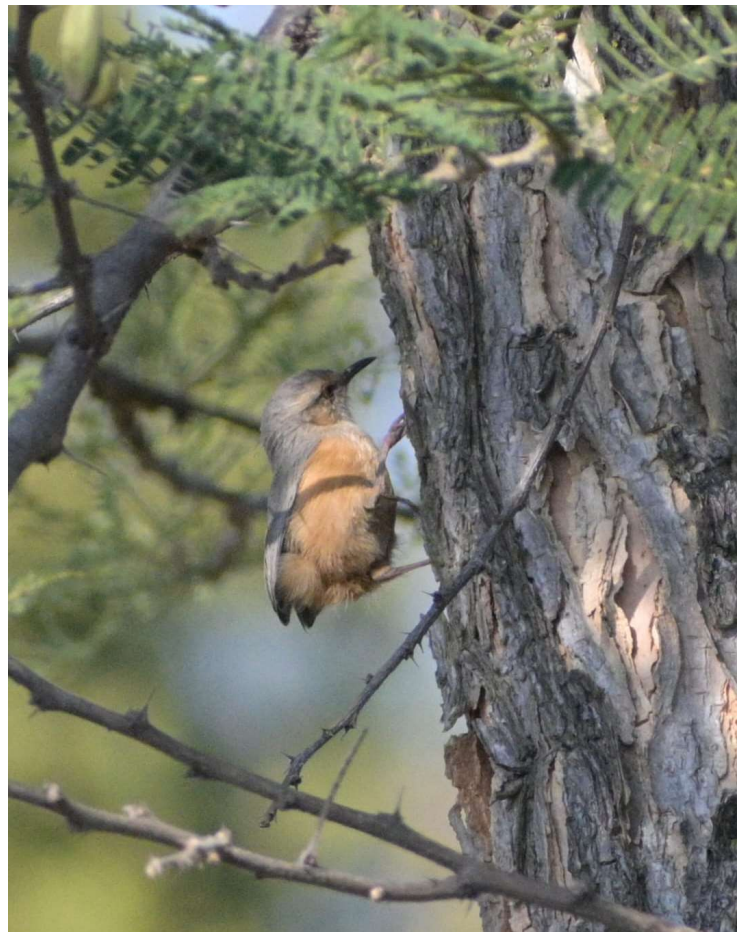
Twelve BLNG-members joined Pieter Uitenweerde on this outing. Highlights were Violet-backed Starling, Fairy Flycatcher, White-throated Robin-chat, Yellow Canary, Brown-backed Honeybird, and Blue Waxbill.



[Vilette Forwood]



Kurrichane Thrush [Pieter Uitenweerde]



Long-billed Crombec [Pieter Uitenweerde]



Brown-backed Honeybird [Pieter Uitenweerde]

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## EZEMVELO – 19 MAY

The group was privileged to be guided by the experienced Doug Newman. There was great excitement when a Common Buttonquail, not at all that common, and for most a lifer, was seen. The Red-winged Francolin was also a welcome addition to many a life list. 64 Species were seen.



Ant-eating Chat [Vilette Forwood]



Familiar Chat [Doug Newman]



Spike-heeled Lark [Johan Botha]



Red-winged Francolin, with the neck pattern clinching the ID. [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]

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## RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS IN GAUTENG: 1 – 31 MAY

Although May started rather quiet on the Gauteng provincial rarities front, Zaagkuil drift continued delivering excellent records. Ian Vos had excellent views of this **Grey-headed Kingfisher** at Zaagkuil drift Lodge.



Farrah Hatting photographed this **Black Stork** at the start of Zaagkuil drift Road on 6 May.



A **Black Stork** was also seen at Hekpoort by Allen Weideman.

The Boons Road area had some great records, reported by Michael Johnson: **Rufous-eared**

**Warbler**, an excellent bird for Gauteng, **Lark-like Bunting**, an adult pair of **African Hawk-Eagles**, as well as a single **White-backed Vulture**, roosting on a pylon.

Winter migrants are moving to more temperate areas. Selwyn Rautenbach found a **Sickle-winged Chat** in Rietvlei NR, while Klaus Schmid posted two photographs of this **Sickle-winged Chat** seen in the Devon area on 16 May.



This **Pink-billed Lark** was photographed on the Pantiki Road by Lloyd Nelson on 18 May.



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The pair of **African Pygmy Geese** remained at Rust de Winter Dam.

At least five **Chestnut-banded Plovers** were spotted by Peter Thompson at Leeupan.

**Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters** seem not to have left our area, and both Thea Jenkins and Peter Thompson spotted a pair at Rietondale Proefplaas. André Thomas managed to photograph this individual there.



On 29 May Reinhard Haywood was surprised by the interesting find of a possibly overwintering **Ayres's Hawk Eagle** on the Magalies MBT trail.

Cameron Blair reported the amazing sighting of a single **Orange River White-eye** at Kloofendal NR, and managed to capture this photograph.



Two species, not rarities per se, were seen mid-May in the region: a group of seven **White-crested Helmet-Shrikes** at Cradle NR, by Grant Egen, and **Shelley's Francolin** at the Magalies MBT trail.



[Attie Hartsliet]

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## *Photograph of the month*

It is an elevated skill to capture excellent images of flying birds. Roelof Jonkers proves that it is possible with this beautiful photograph of a juvenile but fierce Little Sparrowhawk seen over Fairy Glen Nature Reserve.







Mating Verreaux's Eagles on the MTM tower at Bronberg, Faerie Glen. [Pieter Heslinga]

*A warm thank-you to all our club's outing leaders, and our eager photographers, for your support.*

*I try to select a variety of species seen in a month by our own club members, to show our readers the remarkable diversity of bird life in our region. I also try to feature photographs from different photographers in each issue.*

*You make BLING WiNGS possible!*

PROGRAMME	
	2 June – Hoogland Health Hydro
	11 June – Evening meeting
	15 June – Devon Grasslands
	19 June – Aloe Farm
	23 June – Faerie Glen NR

## 11 June - Club Meeting *Thinus van Staden*



[LinkedIn]

Very few of us would not have been in contact with Thinus van Staden before – either as competent and well-loved leader of BLNG group outings, previous talks at club meetings, or the mind-blowing bird photography in his article on floating bird-hide photography in African BirdLife, or posts on FaceBook or Instagram.

With growing interest in bird photography amongst club members, there was a request to invite Thinus to deliver his fascinating talk on the successes, trials, and tribulations of his floating hide photography.

For future placements: Ivonne Coetzee  
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