



# BLiNG WiNGS

Rufous-naped Lark [Denise Roode]

Edition 27 October 2025

**Read your favourite monthly newsletter now  
on your computer !**

Click this link to our website: <http://www.blng.co.za>

Then click the BLiNG WiNGS or Laniarius button. Scroll *down*  
for the newest editions.



BirdLife Northern Gauteng  
BirdLife Noord Gauteng

PROGRAMME ▾

RESOURCES ▾

CONTACT US



ABOUT US

Become a Member

BLiNG WiNGS

Laniarius

## *Inside This Issue*

October Club meeting

Rietvlei Hike

Smuts Koppie

Gnu Valley and WalkHaven

Rarities

Photograph of the month

November Programme

---

## CLUB MEETING – 14 October

Ernst Retief discussed the Landscape Conservation Programme at BirdLife South Africa, and how it was focusing on a habitat-based approach to bird conservation. He outlined the program's efforts in various regions, including the conservation of wetlands and the declaration of protected areas, particularly in Dullstroom and the Eastern Free State. The team collaborates with landowners to maintain natural habitats and minimize environmental impact.

Ernst spoke about Blue Swallow conservation, noting their critically endangered status in South Africa and the successful breeding in KwaZulu-Natal. He described the collaboration with Conservation Outcomes, which works to protect grasslands and unique plant species in the area. Additionally, he mentioned ongoing efforts to oppose a dam project that threatens Blue Swallow nesting sites. He addressed the ongoing decline of bird populations and the factors contributing to this issue, such as hunting dogs threatening ground-nesting birds. He noted the positive news regarding the White-winged Flufftail, which has been downlisted to endangered thanks to Dr. Kyle Lloyd's innovative monitoring methods. Additionally, he mentioned the Southern Bald Ibis project, which has seen success due to citizen science efforts and adaptation to agricultural land.





---

## FRIENDS OF RIETVLEI HIKE – 6 September

Bradden Stevens once again took a keen group of hikers through Rietvlei NR. It was an enjoyable hike with information on a variety of topics, including flowers, insects, fire usage and control in conservation – and, of course, birds!

Some of the many highlights included Marsh Owl, Diederik Cuckoo back from its overwintering grounds, Cape Grassbird, and Northern Black Korhaan.

Water birds included African Black Duck, African Darter, Squacco (Green-backed) Heron, Grey-headed Gull, Little Egret and Pied Kingfisher.



[Rosalind Hattingh]



Cape Longclaw [Denise Roode]



White-throated Swallow [Denise Roode]



African Stonechat [Denise Roode]



Pied Starling [Denise Roode]



Levaillant's Cisticola [Denise Roode]



Capped Wheatear [Denise Roode]



Northern Black Korhaan [Denise Roode]



---

## SMUTS KOPPIE – 18 OCTOBER

Philip Calinikos guided this walk, and a large group of birders took advantage of his expertise and the opportunity to visit this interesting site. Unfortunately, the weather was overcast, rainy and cold; and very soon a number of hikers turned back because of the rain. The Fiery-necked Nightjar was a highlight of the day.



[Fransie O' Brien]



Fiery-necked Nightjar [Krynauw Otto]



[Philip Calinikos]



Rose-ringed Parakeet [Anika Oosthuizen]



[Vilette Forwood]



Brown-backed Honeybird [Anika Oosthuizen ]



---

## GNU VALLEY AND WALKHAVEN PARK – 24 September

This was a very exciting outing to a brand-new trip location for the club in the Muldersdrift area. Angela Openshaw led the outing.

Gnu Valley features a series of dams designed for recreation and fishing. The adjacent WalkHaven is intended for dog walking and recreation, with walkways around dams.

Both sites have an abundance of water and grassland birds. We recorded 61 species, which included a Yellow-billed Stork, a variety of swifts and swallows, three of the kingfishers, a White-fronted Bee-eater, but the star of the day was the Slaty Egret. It is far out of its normal distribution range of Northern Botswana and the Caprivi Strip.

The personnel at both sites are very knowledgeable about the movements of the Slaty Egret. A great shout-out to Angela and Pieter, who persuaded Simon to phone them if they saw it. Initially, we were unable to find it, but just as we were giving up hope and prepared to head home, we received a message that it was seen at Gnu Valley. We headed back with speed and found it wading in the open, accompanied by the Yellow-billed Stork.

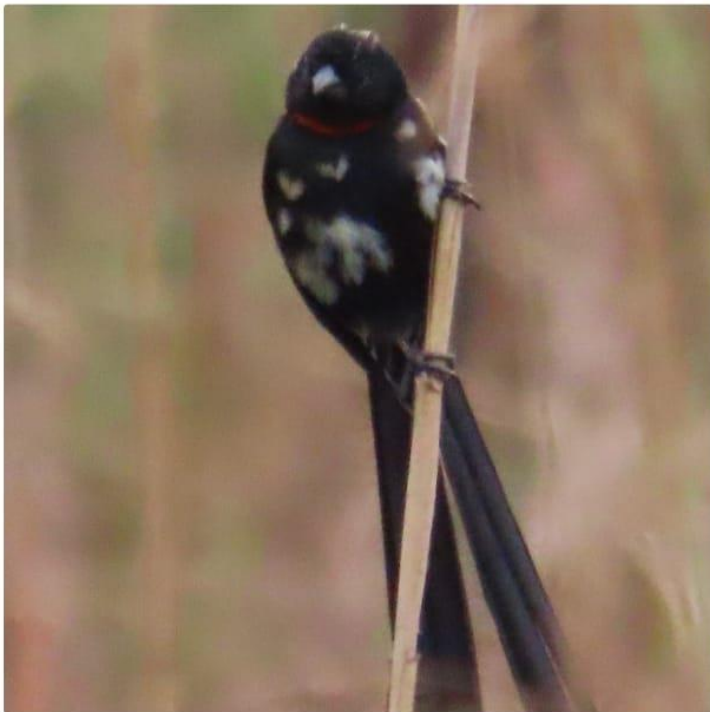
*Wilma van der Merwe*



The Slaty Egret gave this group a merry run-around before it was found. [Angela Openshaw]



The bright yellow legs and patch of rusty red on the throat help to differentiate between the Slaty and Black Egret. [Pieter Heslinga]



Top, left to right: [All by Mara Raath]

Red-billed Teal

Southern Red Bishop

Red-collared Widowbird (juvenile)

African Stonechat



---

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS



An **African Finfoot** was seen in the Wilge River valley. [Thea Jenkins]



**Lappet-faced, White-backed and Cape Vultures** attended a carcass at Kgomo-Kgomo. [Thea Jenkins]



A single **Tinkling Cisticola** was found in the Tweedespruit Conservancy. [Marlou Schalkwyk]



Several **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** were found near Chaneng in the North-West. [Sarel van der Westhuizen]



The **Slaty Egret** was still at Gnu Valley in Muldersdrift. [BLNG-Pieter Heslinga]



A **Fawn-coloured Lark** seen at the Tweedespruit Conservancy. [Marlou Schalkwyk]



---

## *Photograph of the month*

Wilma van der Merwe submitted this breathtaking image of a Southern Red Bishop in full breeding regalia. Arresting photographs such as this always have a touch of mystery. This one has it in abundance. Our subject's contemplative pose is the first element that makes us look deeper. The eye of the viewer is led to the bird's face, that hint of light on the bill. The muted light and noise reduction of the background and perfect placement of our subject, adhering to the rule of thirds, contribute to the emphasis on the bird. And finally, the dramatic punch of vibrant contrasting of reds and black of the bishop makes this a sure winner. Congratulations, Wilma!





Club meeting – 11 November 2025

### Chris Hines – Birding in Angola

*An exciting birding destination introduced.*






Bird sound expert Chris Hines will be telling us about his travels to Angola and its birding riches.

Come and join us!

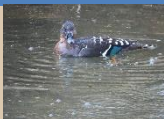


Merchandise for sale. Contact

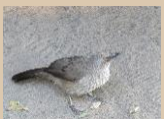
<mailto:sheleph@blng.co.za>

	<p><b>T-shirts</b></p> <p><b>Adults R170 each</b> (Sizes 3XL, 2XL, XL, L, M, S)</p> <p><b>Children R125 each</b> (Sizes 2 years to 14 years)</p>
<p>BLNG logo in front and the words BirdLife Northern Gauteng at the back</p> 	<p><b>Caps</b></p> <p><b>R150 each</b></p> 
	<p><b>Bandannas</b></p> <p><b>R100 each</b></p>
	<p><b>Socks</b></p> <p><b>R160 per pair</b></p>

### PROGRAMME – November 2025



2 Nov – Rust de Winter Dam



8 Nov – Hedianga Farm

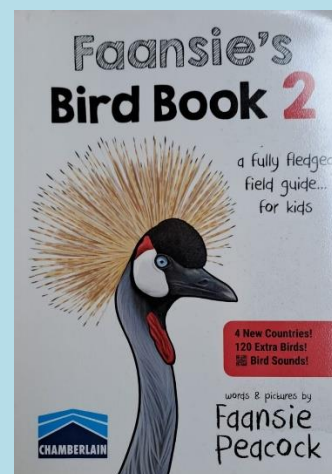


26 Nov – Wonderboom MBT



29 Nov – Rooiwal Waste Works

Various **bird guides** by Faansie Peacock are available at the club.



**@ R450**

Compilation and layout by I Coetzee  
[ivonnecoetzee@outlook.com](mailto:ivonnecoetzee@outlook.com)

Enquiries: <mailto:secretary@blng.co.za>