



Laniarius

No. 118
Autumn 2011



BirdLife Northern Gauteng
BirdLife Gauteng-Noord


BirdLife
South Africa
Giving Conservation Wings

Newsletter of BirdLife Northern Gauteng Nuusbriëf van BirdLife Gauteng-Noord

PO Box/Posbus 12563, Hatfield, 0028
E-mail: secretary@blng.co.za
Website: www.blng.co.za

Bank account: BirdLife Northern Gauteng/Gauteng-Noord,
Nedbank, Corporate Corner.
Branch code: 163445
Account number: 1634010531

Committee 2011 Komitee

President

André Marx; 083 411-7674; turaco@telkomsa.net

Chairperson – Voorsitter

Philip Calinikos; 012 430-2168; chairperson@blng.co.za

Secretary – Sekretaresse

Rita de Meillon; 012 807-4002; secretary@blng.co.za

Honorary Treasurer – Tesourier

Hanlie Bedford; 082 488-1731; hanlieb@vodamail.co.za

PR and Website – Skakelbeampte en Webtuiste

Debbie van Zyl; 082 570-4125; debbie@blng.co.za

Sub-committee – Subkomitee: Tana Coetzer

Programme and Activities – Program en Aktiwiteite

Wanda Louwrens; 083 632-3846; louwrlj@mweb.co.za

Sub-committee – Subkomitee: Susan Velthuysen, Tana Coetzer,

Frans van Vuuren, Rob Geddes

Evening Meeting Venue Co-ordinator: Elise Venter

Bird Ringing and Specific Projects – Voëlberinging en Spesifieke Projekte

Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg; 082 840-4073; gerrie.jvr@gmail.com

Laniarius Editor – Redakteur

André Marx; 083 411-7674; turaco@telkomsa.net

Sub-committee – Subkomitee: Ingrid van Heerden, Faansie Peacock, Antony Cooper,

Roger Fieldwick, Phillip de Moor, Drinie van Rensburg (design & layout)

Young Birders – Jong Voëlkykers

Jason Boyce; 082 585-2252; jason@pluto.co.za

Trading, Bookshop – Verkope, Boekwinkel

Ralda Heyns; 082 472-7027; ralda1@law.co.za

Other portfolio holders

SABAP2 Atlas Co-ordinator – Atlaskoördineerder

Ernst Retief; 012 332-3323; ernst.retief@gmail.com

Notice to contributors

Laniarius is published three times annually.

Deadlines for contributions are 1 March, 1 July, and 1 November. Articles should preferably be e-mailed to the Editor, but may also be posted to the club post box. Contributions and advertisements are accepted at the discretion of the Editor. Digital photographic images are always welcome.

Kennisgewing aan bydraers

Laniarius word vier keer jaarliks uitgegee. Spertye vir bydraes is 1 Maart, 1 Julie, en 1 November. Artikels moet verkieslik per e-pos aan die redakteur gestuur word, maar kan ook na die klub-adres gepos word. Aanvaarding van bydraes en advertensies word aan die diskresie van die redakteur oorgelaat. Digitale fotos is altyd welkom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairman's Report/Voorsittersverslag	2
President's address.....	6
Club news	7
SABAP2 reaches a major milestone	9
Checking 841 local species	10
A lifeline to prevent Africa's first recorded bird extinction	11
Personal names commemorated in the common names of southern African bird species – Part 5	13
Ringling and atlasling workshop, Barberspan	15
Albinistic or leucistic?	18
Chrissiesmeer Camp - A Biblical experience	19
Kwêvoëls: 'n Waarneming	23
Mapungubwe here we come!.....	24
From 'pondokkie' to 'paleis'	26
Kampeerbeseok aan die suidelike Kruger NP	30
Nylsvley then and now.....	34
Spring migration	36
Kakelaar kom sy Moses teë.....	37
An encounter with an Eleonora's Falcon	38
WWF stands for?	39
Rarities and unusual sightings	39
Financial statements.....	43

Credits

Front cover: Barn Swallow/Europese Swael – the 2011 Bird of the Year by Rion Lerm.

Back cover: Diderick Cuckoo/Diederikkie, by Drinie van Rensburg.

Birding facts taken from *Everything you Always Wanted to Know About Birds* by Stephen Moss.

Cartoons from *The Crazy World of Bird Watching* by Peter Rigby.



Editorial/Redaksioneel

Our migrant birds are winging their way to what for many of them will be their summer breeding quarters. For some that have bred in our summer it will be a way to reach suitable feeding grounds so that they can continue to exist during the lean and colder period in our part of the world. Migration is a fascinating topic and takes on many forms with some birds only migrating short distances or even just altitudinally, such as is the case with the rock thrushes, or moving between continents as does the Amur Falcon. It is always a source of wonder as to why some intra-African migrants, such as the Abdim's Stork, breed in areas north of the equator during our winter, while other African migrants such as the Greater and Lesser Striped Swallow breed during our summer. These birds apparently follow the rains northwards to tropical areas where conditions become more suitable for breeding and foraging. These migratory patterns probably evolved over time and have changed with the coming and going of ice ages and changes in vegetation. No doubt they continue to change with the dramatic effects human population has had on staging areas and on crucial areas of habitat, not to mention the unknown effects of global warming. One long distance Eurasian migrant that makes this journey, and that has been the subject of an article in this newsletter, is the Barn Swallow, which also happens to be the 2011 BirdLife South Africa Bird of The Year. In recognition of that it is featured on the front cover of this edition.

This newsletter has undergone a number of changes over the years as it progressed from being a photocopied

sheet of a few pages typed on a typewriter in the 1980s, to an A5 size newsletter with a red cover when computerisation took hold in the 1990s. Then, when digital technology came to the fore it was much simpler to incorporate photos, and subsequently the use of colour has become easier and more cost effective than it used to be resulting in the inclusion of colour for the front and back cover. We are going to produce three larger newsletters from now on and to be able to do that the editor will rely a great deal on members for regular material. Even though our publication is not a scientific journal it is referenced in academic institutions around the country, so your interesting account of a raptor seizing a prey item in your garden, or your account of unusual breeding and nest building behaviour of a particular species can be worthwhile information for researchers at some stage. Please keep those interesting observations and accounts of worthwhile birding experiences coming in.

The club has a long tradition of arranging visits to interesting localities over weekends and holiday periods and there are reports in this newsletter of a couple of those trips. Check the programme for information about details of forthcoming trips as well, as it is an ideal opportunity to get to see some special birds in localities that you can visit in the company of other birders. Please support these and other events and encourage friends and family to join as it is only through strength in numbers that we will ultimately grow and have a bigger voice in conservation matters.

André Marx



Chairman's Report/ Voorsittersverslag

Philip Calinikos

I would firstly like to thank my committee for the excellent support that they have given me during the year. We often forget that committee members have made time available from their normal working and domestic lives to ensure that club matters are properly dealt with. Unfortunately, due to work and other commitments, not all the existing committee members are available for re-election and I would like to thank Jacques van Zyl and Amanda Haggett-Haagner for their contribution over the years. I would also like to thank Peter Wilgenbus who resigned from the committee during the year for his contribution to the club over many years.

All of our club activities continue to be well supported and I have to thank you the members for that. It is highly gratifying for us as a committee to see so many of our members actively participating. Thank you very much!

Membership

Our membership numbers have increased over the year. As reported at the previous AGM, we started the year with 536 paid up members. According to the December reports from BirdLife South Africa, our membership are currently made up of 401 ordinary and senior citizen members and 190 family members giving us a total of 591 paid up members. The biggest increase appears to be in the family member category. In terms of the proposed new Birdlife SA constitution family members will enjoy equal rights with full members.

Club activities

Another full programme of activities was organised by our subcommittee this year.

I would like to thank Amanda Haggett-Haagner, Anne Shaw, Wanda Louwrens and Susan Velthuysen for dedicating their time to this demanding task. I would also like to thank our tea and catering sub-committee for looking after us so well again this year. A sincere thank you must also go to Elize Venter who arranges our evening meeting venue as well as to the University of Pretoria for allowing us the use of the Sci-Enza Hall.

Without willing and experienced leaders and knowledgeable presenters, we would not have been able to organise the activities that we did. Thank you very much to everyone of you and I hope that we can continue imposing ourselves on you for your services in the future. I would like to extend a special thank you to those leaders and presenters who graciously donated their gratuity fees back to the club during the year.

We are currently pursuing a new initiative to have combined outings with other clubs in our area which will enable us to get to know each other better. By the time you read this, we will have enjoyed an outing together with BirdLife Harties and we are looking forward to an outing with the Wits Bird Club in the near future.

We are also looking at ways to involve communities at large in our activities. The first of these is our Southdowns project which is coordinated by Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg and we have also been in contact with the Pretoria Country Club with a view to establishing a project with their committee and members.

It is important that we investigate ways of attracting younger birders to the club's activities to ensure our long term survival. With this

in mind, a new portfolio has been created on the committee and hopefully we will see significant progress being made during the course of this year.

We are continually looking to arrange special events for our members whenever opportunities arise. Our first cross border trip to the Okavango Panhandle has recently been held and to coincide with our Jubilee celebrations next year further trips to foreign climes are envisaged.

The Club also launched its inaugural Birding Big Day Bash in Kruger National Park last year and not only did we have a great time but we also walked away with first prize in the Community section of the competition. We will definitely be defending our crown this year and arrangements are already underway for a repeat of this weekend in November so keep your diaries open.

Club Trading

Club trading under our banner of 'A Book or Two' continues to provide a service to you, our members, as well as contributing to our club revenues. Ralda Heyns, with support from husband Louis, has again excelled herself by attending many courses and events such as the Vulture Awareness Day to market not only her wares but also promote the club and we have recruited a number of members this way. An on-line auction was also launched this past year on our website and I would like to thank both Jacques van Zyl and Ralda for this initiative.

Laniarius

Our *Laniarius* subcommittee spearheaded by our president André Marx and Drinie van Rensburg produced another 3 excellent newsletters during the year. I would like to thank all our members, especially some of the newer members, who contributed articles and snippets of information for publication. Please

keep them coming. The unusual and rare bird sightings report that André Marx puts together is highly regarded by the other clubs and many of them are now distributing this to their own members.

Bird ringing

The report from our bird ringing group was circulated at the AGM. It is gratifying to see the growth in the number of trainees and the attendances at ringing events by other club members. I would like to congratulate Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg and his committee on their achievements as well as the contribution they make to our open days and other events.

Finances

Hanlie Bedford was co-opted to the committee as our Treasurer upon Peter's resignation during the past year, and I am pleased to say that the hand-over went smoothly and our finances are still in good hands. Hanlie presented her financial report and the audited Annual Financial Statements at the AGM which showed that we have made a small surplus during the past year and our financial position remains healthy.

I would however like to highlight one source of income which has fallen off dramatically and that is donations. Please make sure that if you make a donation to our club when paying your subscriptions that you fax or e-mail the details thereof to the BLSA offices otherwise this will not be allocated correctly to us. Alternatively you could make your donation directly into our club's bank account.

Marketing and Communication

Debbie and Jacques van Zyl continued to look after the BLNGalert e-mail advisories and the website. I would like to thank them both for their efforts during the year, notwithstanding their demanding work commitments, as well as for sponsoring our website, which is hosted by them at no cost to the club.

SABAP2

Our club continues to make a significant contribution towards the SABAP2 project. The club is very proud of the dedicated atlasers within our membership. As can be seen from the coverage maps, Gauteng-based atlasers have excelled themselves into turning the province 'green' on the coverage map.

A very recent development with the project is the capability to now submit cards on-line without the need to download any software. This makes it even easier for the rest of us to now make a worthwhile contribution to the project by joining the atlasing fraternity. The data that is available on the SABAP2 website is really phenomenal and can add so much to our everyday birding experience. I urge you all to visit the website on a regular basis as there are continual updates and enhancements being made allowing access to a mine of information.

Conservation

Wherever possible we have tried to contribute to BLSA's conservation initiatives. During the past year we registered as interested and affected parties in relation to the mining and prospecting applications in the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain area. We also sponsored four of our members to attend an Environmental Impact Assessment Workshop to build up expertise within our club. Ernst Retief who is now the BLSA Regional Conservation Manager for Gauteng and North West attended our committee meeting towards the end of last year and we look forward to working closely with him on conservation issues in our area in the future.

As part of our conservation linked initiatives, the committee took a decision to use some of our budget for a worthwhile cause. Last year BirdLife South Africa published a bird checklist for South Africa which unfortunately was only in English. Cognisant that as a club have a very large number of Afrikaans-

speaking members, we have made a major contribution towards the publication of a similar checklist in Afrikaans. This checklist will be co-branded with the BLNG logo and should be available soon.

After the very successful camp at Chrissiesmeer, the committee also decided to make a small donation to Aretha Strydom to assist her in her training efforts of bird guides for the area.

BirdLife South Africa and Gauteng Regional Forum Committee

Ernst Retief, André Marx and I have attended all of the Gauteng regional forum meetings and I was also fortunate to attend the BirdLife South Africa Council meeting in Wakkerstroom last year. The regional forum will play an increasingly important role once the revised BLSA Constitution is adopted, acting as the link between the various clubs and the BLSA Board and Executive. It is envisaged that the forum will appoint a conservation committee representing all the clubs in the region and this will enable us to make a more meaningful contribution in this critically important area.

The revised BLSA constitution will change the structure of the clubs from being branches of BLSA to being members of BLSA. It is primarily being done to prevent possible future legal exposure on both BLSA's and the club's side. It is anticipated that the constitution will be passed at the BLSA AGM in March. The Gauteng Forum raised certain queries with BLSA regarding the revised constitution which have all been suitably addressed and I would urge members attending the AGM to vote in favour of the resolution.

Secretary

In conclusion, a very special thank you to Rita de Meillon, our club secretary, for her dedication to the well-being of our club and for ensuring that matters get dealt with promptly and properly. 🐦



President's address

André Marx

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present my first president's report to the members of BirdLife Northern Gauteng.

I wish to start on a sombre note by briefly making reference to the passing of our erstwhile club president, Pauline Leinberger. When I joined this club in late 1983 one of the first people I met and subsequently became firm friends with, was Pauline. She showed me several of my first birds and later on became a personal friend and confidant on many club and personal matters. She was always level headed and calm and was an example to all of us. She commanded a great deal of respect because of her knowledge and wisdom. In many ways it is a daunting task to follow in her footsteps but I hope I can emulate Pauline's achievements and promise to approach my role as club president with the utmost seriousness and dedication.

I wish to talk to you all today about the role you can play as an individual in the conservation of our birds and their environment. Many club members are only able to enjoy their birdwatching hobby on a part-time basis because of other commitments, often family or work related. But please consider what contribution you can make to help our birds. As the local branch of BirdLife South Africa we are in the forefront of any conservation initiatives in our region. The majority of us are amateur birders who are not qualified as scientists or conservation officials, but as BLSA members we act as 'watchdogs' as we have a natural interest and are closer to local environmental matters than most.

Important policy and advocacy work will be undertaken by BLSA. Witness the role the organisation played in recent times at Chrissiesmeer, at Mapungubwe, and more recently at Suikerbosrand and Kgomo-Kgomo. At these localities BLSA were able to provide com-

ments on any EIAs that had been undertaken and have in the past been part of the process to institute legal proceedings when correct processes have not been followed. However, there are a myriad of development projects taking place around the country that may impact on sensitive habitat areas. It is not possible for BLSA to monitor all these developments. That's where we come into the picture. Our role will be to help bring potential problems to BLSA's attention so that they can carry out any advocacy work. By monitoring our Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in particular we will be doing our bit to preserve our birds and their habitat. IBAs form the cornerstone of BLSA's conservation drive and as such we are likely to see greater involvement of branches in the monitoring of IBA sites.

As citizen scientists we are already making a contribution through our involvement in projects like CAR and CWAC and of course through SABAP2, the current atlas project. By documenting your sightings in a project like SABAP2 you make a great contribution, particularly if you are able to visit out of the places for which there is not much data.

Have you ever thought of monitoring your favourite birding 'patch'? I have always believed that every birder should have his/her birding patch, which is visited fairly regularly and for which you can carry out simple activities, such as to carry out atlasing surveys throughout the year to monitor seasonal movements, produce a bird list, act as a source of information for other interested birders and members of the public, and even include an aspects of environmental education if there is scope for that. The area you adopt need not be a strict nature reserve or have definite boundaries. It can be an area of grassland or woodland, or a local conservancy or urban bird park and may not necessarily be in the same

municipal area you reside in. We can develop a network of local bird localities and have the information available on the club website so that local and visiting birders will be able to access the information. Most importantly, the champion of each site will be the person/s who monitors its wellbeing and will act as the whistleblower when any advocacy work needs to be undertaken. In this day and age we have to have a more hands-n approach to local conservation matters and by creating a network of local birding spots that we monitor and nurture we will be taking a step in the right direction in that regard.

Our chairman will be delivering his address about the contribution the various committee

members and club members make, all of who contribute to keeping this great club going. Please consider the immense contribution Philip Calinikos has made as chairman. Having undertaken the role of chairman on two occasions I know what is involved and can honestly say that Philip has shown the utmost dedication and diligence to date by playing an active role in all club activities.

I would like to invite all our members to feel free to contact me at any time to discuss any matter relating to club activities, or any birding related matter that you need advice or a second opinion on. I will help where I can or point you in the right direction. Enjoy your birding and let's make this year a great one for the club. 🐦

Club News/Klubnuus

BirdLife Northern Gauteng Open Day at the Pretoria Botanical Gardens: Sunday 15 May

We're celebrating autumn with another refreshing morning at the Pretoria National Botanical Garden. We've booked this for a Sunday so why not join us for a stroll around the garden? Bring along a picnic basket and a blanket to enjoy a peaceful morning with club friends and family.

Young Birders Portfolio

Hi everyone,

The BLNG committee is very excited to announce the beginning of a new chapter for the club. We are introducing The Young Birders of BirdLife Northern Gauteng. For a long time the club has looked at the prospect of having and running a young birders group within the club, and that time has arrived. We aim to have one or two outings every 4 months and I would like to encourage the younger birders to get involved by joining the outings and bringing along some friends. We are aiming at high school children and young adults. If you are young at heart (but a bit older in years) and would like to come along to assist or encourage or if you're bringing a young friend you

are more than welcome to slot right in and feel youthful again. Those of you still in primary school are also welcome to join and to bring your parents along to bird with you. We are also going to get involved with some ringing activities so that we can see birds in hand, and learn a little bit more about them.

I trust that this will be the start of something good for BLNG and that the youth will be excited and become involved and start to enjoy birds and birding in a greater way.

Yours in Youthful Birding,

Jason Boyce

Introductory Bird Identification Course: 11-12 June 2011 with Geoff Lockwood

Geoff Lockwood is a very experienced birder, bird artist and speaker who over many years has built up a wealth of knowledge about our local birds. Join Geoff as he takes you through the process of bird identification. Learn how to consider important elements such as to judge the size of birds, their shape, and to consider identification aspects such as bill size and colour. Some of the main bird families will be shown in order to be able to differentiate

birds and place them in the group they belong. The course will consist of Saturday morning lectures and a field outing to Northern Farm on the Sunday. An ideal opportunity to learn the important skills of bird identification using the correct approach. The cost is R250 for members and R295 for non-members. Please book with the Secretary.

Donations

If you wish to make a donation to the club with your subscription renewal please note that it is necessary to include the details of your donation with your payment, especially when paying electronically. BLSA will not know how to allocate your donation unless you indicate how you would like it allocated. The best way to do this is to fax or e-mail your proof of payment together with the details of the donation to BLSA. The donation options appear on the renewal invoice.

Club outings – Volunteer leaders vs.

Professional guides

We are dependent on a number of people in the club who lead outings and events for us on a regular basis. They are offered a gratuity depending on the distance and effort involved. This is not a 'fee' as such but rather a thank you from the club and a reimbursement for costs incurred. The leader will try to arrange the birding activities at the outing as they see fit, taking such matters as the terrain, weather conditions and attendees into account. Wherever possible the outing will include a bird walk to allow everyone in attendance to participate and interact. Even though some of our leaders have a professional background, a distinction needs to be made between the fees paid to professional

guides (and the services rendered by them) and our volunteer leaders, who often provide their knowledge and time at no cost to the club. Please ensure that your expectations from such leaders are managed accordingly.

Website auctions

Our bird book auctions running through the BLNG Shop website have been extremely successful so far. Ralda has done a sterling job in pulling this all together and has made more than R2 000 for the club already. If you do have any 2nd hand bird books that you are looking to get rid of, why not give her a call and make sure she has a good supply. You will need to register with your full details to view and bid on any books so check it out on www.blng.co.za.

Conservation portfolio

The club is expected to play an increasingly important role in conservation related matters through our membership of BLSA's Gauteng Regional Forum. The activities will be coordinated by the BLSA Regional Conservation Officer who is currently Ernst Retief. We would like to call upon interested members who wish to participate to please contact us. Although some experience in conservation related matters will be of assistance it is not essential.

Member request

Dear Members, I have the following editions of *Laniarius* missing and would really like to complete my library: Numbers 1-31, Numbers 34, 37, 38 & 40. If anybody has spare copies I would be thrilled and am quite prepared to make a donation to the club.

*Jeanette le Roux; 082 924 6217 or
Office 043 721 1321* 📧

On top of the world

The title of the most northerly bird is shared between three species: Black-legged Kittiwake, Snow Bunting and Northern Fulmar, each of which has been seen at the North Pole itself. The most northerly breeding bird is Ivory Gull, which has been found nesting on the edge of the Arctic pack ice at 85 degrees north.

SABAP2 reaches a major milestone

Les Underhill of the ADU provided this update on 21 March 2011:

SABAP2 has reached 50% coverage of the 17 318 pentads in the atlas region, representing a stunning achievement by the 876 atlasers who have participated. Well done. Three and a bit years ago, when SABAP2 started, the idea of getting 8 659 pentads visited seemed rather a remote idea. But we have made it happen.

Where to next? From here on in, I think it is clear that SABAP2 will go DEEP faster than it will go WIDE. The next major WIDE target to aim for is 10 000 pentads; to get there by the end of the year 2011, we need to average 4.7 new pentads per day. This is manageable in comparison with the 6.5 new pentads per day we have achieved recently. Here are some DEEP statistics. First of all, from every possible perspective, the second checklist for a pentad is really valuable. Frequently, one third to one half of the species on the second checklist are additional species for the pentad. Currently, 26.6% of all pentads have two or more checklists, which is in itself an impressive achievement. There are 4 068 YELLOW pentads with only one checklist and these become a real priority for further checklists. Please treat every YELLOW pentad as if it has not yet been done! From a statistical perspective, four checklists for a pentad is absolutely the smallest sample size with which we can start to do sophisticated analyses. 15.2% of all pentads have four or more checklists and are GREEN or darker on the coverage map. So the statisticians who will analyse the SABAP2 data are encouraging atlasers to shift the YELLOW and ORANGE pentads to GREEN. Please help GREEN the coverage map. And if you can help to make it BLUE, RED, PURPLE and PINK, that is also great.

Etienne Marais provided this plan for atlasing:

Eightfold Path to Atlasing with Impact

1 Do the HP (Home Patch) as often as you can. This will change from a burden to a joy as you discover gems close to home and observe the change of the seasons and the

unexpected birds they bring.

- 2 Be nice to the Neighbours. Even if you spend most time atlasing in your home patch, occasionally look across the boundary to where more poorly covered pentads need your help – plan to go and do one at least every three months.
- 3 Take a non-atlaser atlasing. Even if it's just to show them some good birds. You never know, the bug might bite!
- 4 Set Goals. I am going to do my home pentad in each season. I aim to submit 20 cards by the end of this year. I want a nice 3x3 square on my coverage map etc. Each person is different and goals for each atlaser will be different. But set yours and write them down somewhere! Some atlasers count new pentads they complete; others count the species they have atlased. It's up to you.
- 5 Go FP when birding. (Not the full monty, but Full Protocol) When you go birding for lifers, plan to take out at least one pentad in the juicy birding area you are visiting. This can be combined with a twitch (i.e. record all the birds you are seeing while waiting for that rarity to show up), or complete a proper atlas survey once you have done the business!
- 6 Dream of seeing red! First prize in terms of useful data (for conservation analysis etc) is 25 cards per pentad = red code. So target the yellow, green and blue pentads near you, starting at the bottom.
- 7 Explore the world, visit new places; look at the coverage map and use it to plan your next weekend getaway, camping trip with the kids or even holiday. You can have a great holiday or trip, which is even more meaningful if you do low-coverage pentads or even just one virgin pentad on the way to your destination, or while you are there!
- 8 Meet Virgins. Pentads no-one has done are the most exciting, but second to that are pentads you haven't done. But don't delay too long; they are getting harder and harder to reach! 🐦

Checking 841 local species

Johannesburg, 25 March 2011: The BirdLife South Africa Checklist of Birds in South Africa 2011 was launched at Flock 2011, the BirdLife South Africa Annual General Meeting, at the Bundu Lodge, close to Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, on 19 March 2011. The checklist is annually revised and endorsed by the BirdLife South Africa List Committee. This checklist provides not only a list of the bird species which occur in our country, but also their recommended common and scientific names. The checklist also includes information on their threat status, migratory status and whether they only occur in our country. For easy reference, the birds in the checklist are listed in alphabetical order. Copies of the checklist will be included with the April/May 2011 issue of *Africa Birds & Birding*, and also be available for R20 from the BirdLife South Africa head office in Johannesburg; (info@birdlife.org.za; 011-7891122).

The English checklists were funded by Zeiss. The first official Afrikaans checklist of our country's birds is also being produced with funding from Embryo Plus and BirdLife Northern Gauteng. With time, BirdLife South Africa plans to produce checklists in other official South African languages. For any serious birder, South Africa is a must-visit country. The checklist lists South Africa's 841 bird species, of which 19 are endemic to our country, i.e. not found anywhere else in the world. South Africa is also home to a remarkable 46 near-endemic bird species. A near-endemic is a species which has a minimum of 70% of its total population in South Africa, meaning that only a small part of their range/population can be outside of South Africa (e.g. Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia or Zimbabwe).

Although we have fewer bird species than several other countries, such as Colombia, Peru and Brazil in South America and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in Africa, South Africa has the highest number of endemics/near-endemics

in mainland Africa, followed by Ethiopia (Ethiopia has more true endemics). Madagascar is ahead with the highest number of true endemics in Africa.

Ian Sinclair is the continent's birding ambassador and one of BirdLife South Africa's greatest supporters. He is also Africa's most famous birder, being the first person to see over 2000 species on the continent and the first person to see over 900 species in southern Africa. However, Ian's true passion and greatest joy has always been the birds of South Africa – a place he calls home and where the conservation of birds is closest to his heart. It is therefore with great pleasure that he announces his ultimate birding achievement – being the first person to see over 800 species in South Africa. Ian's record stands at 818 species and he encourages the birding community to rise to the challenge and also try and record more than 800 species in our country – local is lekker!

For more information on the BirdLife South Africa *Checklist of Birds in South Africa 2011* or if you'd like to make a donation to contribute to the conservation of our country's threatened birds, please contact Dr Hanneline Smit at 011-7891122 or conservation@birdlife.org.za. 🐦



"It's nice to see them in their summer plumage."

A lifeline to prevent Africa's first recorded bird extinction

**BirdLife International news release:
Fri, 4 Mar 2011**

Liben Lark with a population of possibly fewer than 100 birds, is widely tipped to become mainland Africa's first recorded bird extinction, unless urgent action is taken to prevent its demise from the only area it now inhabits: a single grassy plain in southern Ethiopia.

Classified as Critically Endangered, the highest level of threat, this globally threatened bird has now been thrown a lifeline thanks to funds raised by the British Birdwatching Fair held at Rutland Water last August. Birdfair organisers Martin Davies (from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – RSPB) and Tim Appleton (from Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust – LRWT) presented a £242 000 (US\$395 000) cheque to Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International's Chief Executive at a special reception hosted by His Excellency Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopia's UK Ambassador, at the Ethiopian Embassy in London.

These funds will be used by the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, the BirdLife Partner in the country, to work with local communities to reduce the impact of over-grazing livestock and prevent conversion of the land to arable farming. Helping the grasslands recover will benefit both the lark and the pastoralists living there.

Man-made and natural phenomena all conspired, historically; to ravage Ethiopia's wildlife riches and this landlocked African



Liben Lark

Greg Davies

country now has 22 species of bird facing extinction. Conservationists hope that the proceeds from the 2010 British Birdwatching Fair will help turn the tide and save the Liben Lark and a range of other highly threatened species. A huge mural (16 ft x 4 ft) portraying all the endemic and threatened birds of Ethiopia, which was painted by more than 40 wildlife artists at the 2010 Fair, was put on display at the Embassy Reception. It will soon be heading out to Ethiopia where it will go on permanent display in Addis Ababa to help raise awareness of these bird species and their plight.

Martin Davies, of the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) – one of the fair's co-founders and key organisers – said: "Ethiopia has a remarkable natural heritage and is hugely rich in species found nowhere else in the world. Over 840 species of bird have been recorded in Ethiopia, 17 of which are unique to this country and 29 others nearly so. Unfortunately, this wonderful wildlife is under increasing threat and we hope that the proceeds from this year's event

will help the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society and BirdLife International to take the urgent steps needed to secure the future of this country's unique birds. We also hope that the event will help raise the international profile of this wonderful country, so rich in wildlife."

"Once again Birdfair have delivered a huge boost for conservation. This money will be used to secure a future for Southern Ethiopia's incredible birds", said Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International's Chief Executive.

Ethiopia's UK Ambassador, His Excellency Berhanu Kebede, said: "Ethiopia's biodiversity resources are under critical threat. Growing human and livestock populations pose the single most serious problem, resulting in deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, and desertification. To reverse the situation, the government of Ethiopia has promulgated laws and put in place the appropriate institutions. Significant achievements have been made in restoring the fauna and flora of the country; hence the percentage of land covered by forests has grown from three to nine per cent within five years. "On behalf of my country, I'm delighted that Ethiopia's unique birds have been chosen as a beneficiary of the British Birdwatching Fair. It is fantastic that British birdwatchers have a passion for conserving Ethiopia's birds. With four out of ten of Africa's birds having been seen in Ethiopia, my coun-

try has a great deal to offer visiting birdwatchers and we believe that eco-tourism will be vital in helping to protect our unique wildlife and landscapes."

Another Ethiopian endemic species in trouble is the grandly-named Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. This macaw-sized bird with scarlet and navy-blue wings, long tail and green-and-white head was first found among the personal effects of the Prince after he was crushed to death by an elephant in 1893. As the unfortunate nobleman had not had time to label the specimen, its origins remained a mystery for half a century before the species was seen in the wild by a Cambridge naturalist in southern Ethiopia.

The other species set to benefit from the proceeds of the Birdfair include: the Ethiopian Bush-crow; and the White-tailed Swallow.

The LRWT's Tim Appleton is the fair's other co-founder and co-organiser. He said: "Since 1989, the British Birdwatching Fair has raised almost £2.5 million for global conservation. Beneficiaries have included threatened species, spanning the globe from albatrosses in the Southern Ocean to rainforest birds in the Philippines. This is a terrific achievement for an event which has its home in a few fields in Leicestershire over one weekend each year. Everyone involved in the Fair, from visitors, exhibitors and volunteer supporters alike, can be justifiably proud of what they have helped achieve."

Whopping wings

The greatest wingspan probably belongs to the Wandering Albatross, with a recorded length of 3.6 metres – though some individuals of this species and the Royal Albatross may have even longer wings! For total wing area, the title goes to the Andean Condor, whose wingspan reaches three metres. But today's giants are dwarfed by a prehistoric condor in the genus *Teratornis* ('monster bird'), which was also the largest flying bird that ever lived. This titan of the Pleistocene era (more than one million years ago) had a wingspan of over seven metres and weighed about 80 kg. Its remains have been found in the La Brea tar pits of Los Angeles, California.

Personal names commemorated in the common names of southern African bird species – Part 5

John Bannon

FRANKLIN – Franklin's Gull, *Larus pipixcan* (Wagler, 1832)

Sir John Franklin (1786-1847) was an officer in the Royal Navy, best known as an Arctic explorer. He mapped two thirds of the coastline of North America and spent many years in the Arctic regions attempting to find the fabled North West Passage, but disappeared in 1845, in another ill-fated attempt to cross the Arctic by sea. He served upon HMS Bellerephon at the Battle of Trafalgar and was knighted by George IV in 1828. In the 1830s he became the governor of Tasmania, but was particularly disliked by the establishment for his humane methods and attempts to reform the penal colony and was recalled to England. His last voyage in 1845 was as commander of the Arctic expedition made up of two sound and sturdy vessels HMS Erebus and HMS Terror. Unfortunately, although carrying provisions for three years, it has been suggested that the lead solder on the new technology tinned food leaked into the contents, slowly poisoning the crews.

Remains were eventually found by the many search parties sent out to find them and forensic studies a century later found evidence of blade cuts on the bones of some of the bodies, suggesting that some crew members had even resorted to cannibalism to survive. It's likely that a combination of disease, poisoned food, botulism and starvation eventually accounted for all the expedition's members.

Franklin's Gull was named after him in 1832, by Johan Georg Wagler (1800-1832), the German herpetologist who became director of the Zoological Museum of the University of Munich in 1826. Quite why Wagler did so is not clear, but as he worked on extensive collections from South America, the wintering grounds of

the Franklin's Gull, perhaps he had come across the type specimen and named it to honour the well-known explorer.

GOLIATH – Goliath Heron, *Ardea goliath* (Cretzschmar, 1827)

Although absorbed into English as a descriptive term, Goliath of Gath (around 1030 BC) was a Philistine warrior of immense size, who was killed by a sling-shot by David, later King of the Jews (Samuel 17.4. Old Testament, The Bible).

Dr Philipp Jakob Cretzschmar (1786-1845) was a German physician who taught anatomy at the Senckenberg Medical Institute in Frankfurt. He founded the Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft and also the Senckenberg Natural History Museum and



Goliath Heron/Reusereier

received specimens from many of the foremost German collectors of the day, including Eduard Rüppell.

The two men collaborated in publishing the results of Rüppell's explorations in Africa between 1826-1830, entitled *The Atlas of Rüppell's Travels in Northern Africa*. The ornithological section described and named about 30 new species including Meyer's Parrot, Nubian Bustard, Cretzschmar's Bunting and the Goliath Heron.

GRAY – Gray's Lark, *Ammomanes grayi* (Wahlberg, 1855)

John Edward Gray (1800-1875) was an English ornithologist and entomologist, who worked at the British Museum and became Curator of Birds in 1840. Later becoming Keeper of Zoology, succeeding John George Children, he and his younger brother George Robert Gray (1808-1872), who also worked at the museum as Assistant Keeper Ornithology, published descriptions of a large number of species, including many Australian reptiles and mammals.

The brothers published a *Catalogue of the Mammalia and Birds of New Guinea in the Collection of the British Museum* in 1859 and several other manuscripts, illustrated by Edward Lear and William Swainson. With the support of his brother, John Gray worked extremely hard to ensure that the collections under his care were the finest in the world and he became the leading authority on reptiles and especially turtles. He was also a very keen philatelist, claiming that he was the world's first stamp collector.

Gray's efforts were rewarded by the decision of the Zoological Society to transfer its museum's contents to his Natural History Museum in 1855. This decision encouraged other important collections to be donated and was a catalyst for the creation of a single national zoological collection. In 1856, Richard Owen was appointed as the first Superintendent and although a difficult man to get along with, Owen had considerable political connections. In 1863 he convinced the then Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, that a com-

pletely new Natural History Museum should be built in South Kensington. Thanks to the industry of John Gray and the political savvy of Richard Owen, this magnificent building opened to the public in 1881. Now known worldwide as the Natural History Museum, it houses some 70 million earth science specimens, with major collections of botany, entomology, mineralogy, palaeontology and zoology.

John August Wahlberg's (1810-1856) life is detailed later in this series. He was a Swedish naturalist and collector who travelled widely in southern Africa, collecting thousands of specimens which he sent back to Sweden. He described and named the lark after his contemporary John Gray in 1855.

GUNNING – Gunning's Robin, *Sheppardia gunningi* (Haagner, 1909) (now known by the alternate name of East Coast Akalat)

Dr Jan Willem Boudewijn Gunning (1860-1913) was a Dutch physician who came to the Orange Free State in 1884. He eventually was appointed director of the Staatsmuseum (which became the Transvaal Museum) in 1897, a post that he held until shortly before his death.

In 1899, Gunning was the driving force behind the establishment of the Pretoria Zoo, when land became available at a nearby farm.

Gunning had kept an ever-increasing number of live animals in the museum grounds, ostensibly to be later stuffed as exhibits, but he had other ideas. He encouraged local residents to complain of the smell



and noise from his menagerie and very soon he obtained permission to transfer them to their new home. This was the beginning of what was to become the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, which received national status in 1916.

With Gunning's death in 1913 Dr Alwin Karl Haagner was appointed as director. He had worked under Gunning at the Museum and named the robin after his former boss in 1909. It is now known by the much less attractive and historic name of East Coast Akalat, or preferably Gunning's Akalat.

Gunning and Haagner had also compiled a *Checklist of the Birds of South Africa* in 1910 and Haagner, a keen ornithologist, had started the Transvaal Museum's great bird collection under Gunning. Austin Roberts also worked with them and succeeded Haagner at the Museum, when he moved to the National Zoological Gardens. Haagner later commissioned Claude Gibney Finch-Davies (1875-1920), an accomplished bird artist to illustrate his book, *Sketches of South African Bird-life*.

Finch-Davies had been involved in a strange affair involving 230 missing plates and illustrations taken from books, magazines and journals at the Transvaal museum. As he was

the only person with unsupervised access, it wasn't too difficult for the police to lay a trap for him. Sadly and without any real explanation, Finch-Davies admitted to the damage and in recompense gave the museum the entire 29-volume collection of original bird paintings until he could make good its losses. He was transferred to Cape Town, but then even more astonishingly on 18th May 1920, it was discovered that more than 130 plates were now missing from the Cape Town Museum's collection of bird books and journals. Poor Finch-Davies was found dead on the 4th August after obviously suffering some kind of severe emotional and mental breakdown and was accorded a full military funeral.

His real legacy is in his superb collection of bird paintings left with the Transvaal Museum as security, which formed the basis for much of the artwork in Austin Roberts' first edition of *The Birds of Southern Africa* in 1940.

The generic name *sheppardia* honours Peter A Sheppard (1875-1958), a fellow South African zoologist of British descent, who farmed and collected specimens in Zimbabwe and Mozambique in 1898-1916. Presumably, he first collected the robin and sent it to the Transvaal Museum for description and classification. 🐦

Ringing and atlasing workshop, Barberspan, 9-16 March 2011

Dieter Oschadleus and Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg

In years gone by, Barberspan was the site of South Africa's only permanent ringing station. This large saline water body is fed by the Harts River, and has no outlet (hence the salinity). It acts as an oasis in the otherwise arid area of the Northwest Province and as such attracts large numbers and a variety of ducks, herons, waders and other water and water-associated birds.

The greater Barberspan region lies along the N14 priority axis which runs from Pretoria-Barberspan-Vryburg-Kuruman-Pofadder-

Springbok. This is an important ecological gradient for SABAP2 data. The axis traverses numerous biomes, from savanna in the east, through the northern edge of the Grassland, through the Kalahari, and ending in Nama Karoo in Springbok which is at the changeover to Succulent Karoo. Transition zones are interesting from a bird-distribution point of view. It is in these edges where the greatest impact is predicted to occur as a result of climate change. It is vitally important that SABAP2 documents



Juvenile Sociable Weaver (Versamelvoël)



Adult Ant-eating Chat (Swartpiek)

these changing bird distributions and abundances in these ecologically dynamic areas. In June 2010 a massive effort was undertaken to get a near-continuous broad band of pentads atlased all along this road, both to the north of it and to the south. The Springbok to Pretoria atlas challenge along the N14 (or SPAN14) resulted in an incredible 113 new pentads being covered. Additional surveys from the Barberspan Bird Sanctuary, and a weekend atlasing challenge around Lime Acres in October 2010 have contributed significantly to adding new pentads and additional data along this axis; Barberspan itself already has over 60 checklists submitted with 234 species listed to date. The March 2011 event presented another opportunity for atlasers to band together and survey new pentads along



Adult Common Sandpiper (Gewone Ruiters)

this axis and to do repeat surveys in some of the yellow and orange pentads.

Ringling has also been revived at Barberspan. In March 2010 a ringers conference was held to mark the renaissance of Barberspan as an ornithological research station, following the post-doc of Magda Remisiewicz who was ringling waders at Barberspan with her team of helpers. The reserve and surrounds offers varied habitats for ringling: arid scrub, grasslands, reed beds and shoreline.

This year's conference promoted both atlasing and ringling in the area. It was not primarily a training workshop, although there were many ringling trainees who attended and benefited from the experience of qualified ringers. This time most mist-netting was in reeds, grassland and around the offices and camping area. Mist-netting also targeted Red-billed Queleas and they were given orange colour rings together with metal rings to see if farmers reported them on farms adjoining Barberspan. On 11 March a team of ringers drove to a Sociable Weaver




Ringling at reeds at the edge of the pan

colony near Ottosdal, 50 km from Barberspan. Juveniles and adults were caught, and chicks could be heard in the nests, indicating a good breeding season. Walk-in duck traps were pre-baited to catch water birds. Few waders and water birds were caught compared to 2010, due to high water levels after several months of rain. Several non-waterbirds were caught in the baited traps, including doves and several Ant-eating Chats. A total of nearly 700 birds of 58 species were caught during the workshop, including some recaptures – these were mostly of birds ringed within the last year.

A large number of PHOWN (Photos of Weaver Nests) Virtual Museum records were obtained while atlasing and ringing. White-browed Sparrow Weaver colonies were counted around the camp and office area and there was

an increase in nests compared to last year – 7 colonies with 134 nests (in 2010 there were 3 colonies with 51 nests).

On the weekend there was early ringing and atlasing but much of the time was dedicated to talks on atlasing and ringing. Ecotone Africa sponsored three nets as prizes. These were awarded to Andrew Mvundle (NW Parks staff, for qualifying as a water bird ringer during this workshop), Herman Bernitz (for his efforts in ringing Southern Red Bishop chicks in deep water), and the Zimbabwe ringing group (for driving the furthest to attend the ringing workshop).

Thanks go to Sampie van der Merwe, the reserve warden, and his staff and especially the North West Parks Board. A list of species ringed, more photos and details may be read at <http://weavers.adu.org.za/trip2011nw.php> 

NELSON'S SAFARIS AFRICA OVERLAND SAFARIS 2011

Join us on a guided on-board overland safari to some great birding and general game viewing destinations in Southern Africa. Prices are inclusive of transport (in 4X4 vehicles), camping accommodation, meals and park entry fees.

Safari groups are a minimum and maximum of 6 people accompanied by two qualified guides in two vehicles.

1. **18 night Botswana Safari** – Khama Rhino Sanctuary, Kubu Island, Moremi, Chobe (Savuti and Riverfront), Nata. Departure Date 7 May 2011 (R16 000 pp).
2. **18 night Botswana Safari** – Khama Rhino Sanctuary, Kubu Island, Moremi, Khwai River, Chobe (Savuti and Riverfront), Nata. Departure Date 17 July 2011 (R16 000 pp).
3. **20 night Angola Tag Along Adventure** – Culueque, Lubango, Leba Pass, Namibe, Flamingo Camp and Ruacana. Departure Date 17 July 2011. Cost on request. Must have own 4X4 vehicle.
4. **16 night Zimbabwe and Mozambique Birds** – Nylsvlei, Great Zimbabwe, Chirinda Forest, Huroni-Rusitu Confluence, Vumba Mountains, Marondera, Gorongosa). Departure Date 16 September 2011 (R16 000 pp).
5. **16 night Zimbabwe Birds** – Nylsvlei, Great Zimbabwe, Chirinda Forest, Huroni-Rusitu Confluence, Vumba Mountains, Marondera, Masoka Village (the African Pitta hangout). Departure Dates 25 November 2011 (R16 000 pp).

Note:

1. Upgrades to chalet accommodation where available can be done at an increased price.
2. Prices and departure dates are ex JHB or Howick.

Please contact the guides Craig and Karin Nelson for further information or detailed itineraries.

Phone: 033 3303027

Mobile: 082 9000107

E-mail: nelsonsafaris@tiscali.co.za



Albinistic or leucistic?

Rion Lerm

Mutations always fascinate people, as the former are rare occurrences not witnessed on a daily basis. Some mutations such as melanism are common in our raptor species such as the beautiful 'all black' Gabar Goshawk or Black Sparrowhawk.

But what about the less common albinistic and leucistic birds that some people occasionally see and photograph? I am fascinated by these colour variations/mutations and I need an expert to explain the differences between albinism and leucism.

This uncertainty came about when I witnessed a rare spectacle within the busy northern suburbs of Pretoria, whilst driving on my way home one afternoon. At first, I thought it was an exotic white canary, maybe an escapee. However, upon investigation I found that it was in fact a white, female Cape Sparrow *Passer melanurus* (ironically named in this case) building a typical, untidy sparrow nest together with her ordinary, multi-coloured partner. They were breeding in a stinkwood tree across from where I first witnessed the spectacle. Eventually after some cloudy days, mostly unfit for taking decent photographs, I took shots of the unusually coloured female. By the time I got myself to photograph the odd couple, she was already incubating with foraging and additional nest building only taking place in the early morning (and most likely late afternoon).

So my questions are: "Is she actually albinistic or leucistic considering she shows no form of



Rion Lerm

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow (Gryskopmossie) showing the odd colouration

black melanin pigment in her feathers or beak nor talons?" "Would some of this pair's first generation chicks show white plumage colouration, once fledged?" Thirdly, "How does this ordinarily coloured male recognise this white female as his own species in order to start a family?"

[If you would like to help solve this poser and have some information to share, please mail me for a colour photo of the bird in question – Ed.] 🐦

How long does incubation take?

This varies a lot, from just ten days in the case of the Red-billed Quelea of Africa, to almost three months in the case of the larger albatrosses and the Brown Kiwi of New Zealand. Most songbirds incubate from between two and three weeks; while ducks and waders do so for slightly longer (three to four weeks); and raptors geese and swans longer still (four to six weeks).

Chrissiesmeer Camp - A Biblical experience

Ingrid van Heerden

Noah, that venerable patriarch of the Bible, who knew a lot about floods, would have been in his element at Chrissiesmeer during the BLNG long weekend outing in December 2010. Most of the members nearly did not make it. On Thursday the 16th December, we sat at home surrounded by our packed bags trying in keeping with the public holiday to 'reconcile' our upcoming journey with the endless rain that had been inundating Tshwane for nearly a week. After frantic phone calls to fellow members, we decided to wait until we, like Noah, received a sign that our trip would not be in vain.

No dove clutching an olive branch in its beak put in an appearance, but eventually at about midday, a tentative ray of pale sunshine illuminated the pervading gloom and it was announced on TV that the covers had been removed at the Centurion cricket ground for the first test against India. Encouraged, we set off to Chrissiesmeer – after all birders, like cricketers, are made of sterner stuff and we were armed with galoshes, raincoats, hats and umbrellas. The journey of about two and a half hours via Carolina also proved less nerve-racking than the road through Hendrina which had terrorised us on our memorable trip to Ndumo in 2009.

When we arrived in Chrissiesmeer village and had paid the obligatory visit to the Coffee Shoppe to obtain a map of the area and savour

a welcome cup of coffee accompanied by vast slices of homemade *melkert*, we navigated to our camp at Genesaret. All in all, this weekend definitely had Biblical overtones. Once we turned off the tarred road to the campsite, we found ourselves driving down a merrily rushing stream. Thank goodness for 4x4s. How the brave members driving standard cars made the journey is a miracle.

So we arrived at Genesaret on the banks of Chrissiesmeer, which belongs to the NG Church and is used for youth camps as was evident from the ablution block, which was marked *Dogters* (Girls) and *Dames Personeel* (Female Staff). The male members of our group had to hike a kilometre to the recreation hall for their showers and other needs! Eventually sanity prevailed and by mutual consent, the gents used the *Dames Personeel* facility. The accommodation at Genesaret is Spartan, but each one of the 9 minimally furnished rondavels is decorated with an uplifting message such as *Genade* (Grace), *Geloof* (Faith) or in our case *Vrede* (Peace) – a most appropriate appellation for the warring van Heerdens! However, according to the list provided by Rita our accommodation also went under the name of *Pastorie* (Parsonage). This prompted me to announce to everyone that Steve was obviously the Dominee, but that I was not the Dominee's wife!

By now the sun had won its battle with



Greater Flamingos

Cindy Huddle



'Frogging' at Chrissiesmeer

the clouds and a glorious sunset illuminated the placid waters of Chrissiesmeer. Hadeda Ibis patrolled the well kept lawns and a Black-headed Oriole called in the willow trees. The recreation hall has a large kitchen that is equipped with cooking utensils (but no crockery and cutlery), a stove, microwave, fridge and freezer, plus an undercover braai which was soon put to good use. After our meal, we set off through the stream-cum-road to meet a guide who promised to show us the night herons that nest on one of the neighbouring farms. We drove through the night over muddy tracks to the designated heron roosting area. Under a mist-shrouded moon 20 birders waded through the mud, reeds and water vainly trying to flush out one of these elusive birds. Well, we did get wet and muddy and found lots of pretty frogs in the large pools of water on the roads, but only one or two chosen birders got to see a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Such is the luck of birding. Obviously the *Gelooft* injunction is one that we all need to keep in mind on such outings. It was, however, a most enjoyable way of spending an evening and the Striped Stream Frogs with their golden striations, which we caught, were most rewarding.

On Friday morning we were up at sparrow's and headed back to the village to meet our guides for the day. Pieter Strydom, a local farmer, took us to the most beautiful farm and Miss Chrissie's Country House, a lovingly renovated

and tastefully decorated farmhouse built of the golden sandstone of the area, where we met his wife Aretha who primed us on the day's activities. Aretha, a most enthusiastic lady who is dedicated to improving eco-tourism in the area, literally flooded us with information about the hundreds of lakes, pans, wetlands, lochs, ponds and pools that make this part of Mpumalanga the 'Lake District' of South Africa. In keeping with the evangelical tone of the weekend, Aretha announced that we would be assisted by various guides, namely Moses, who one presumes would part the waters for us, and Thulisa.

Aretha and her husband are doing an excellent job of training bird guides to assist visitors to enjoy Chrissiesmeer birding to the utmost. At her request, BLNG provided 4 pairs of binoculars and one field guide to these aspiring guides, who proved enthusiastic and eager to learn. Training the local workforce to identify birds which they see during their work on the farms in the area is Aretha's passion, and she ropes in everyone to help with this grassroots project. In October 21 participants, ranging in age from 10 to plus 65 years, many of whom are not able to read or write, attended a training session presented by Barbi Forsyth of the Wits Bird Club. With the support of local enthusiasts and visiting bird groups, a whole army of bird lovers is being created in the Chrissiesmeer area. This is indeed a worthwhile project and anyone who would like to donate binoculars or field guides that are in good condition to this worthy cause should contact our secretary, Rita de Meillon.

After our briefing, we drove down the farm road lined by magnificent oak trees to the shores of Chrissiesmeer. Here we split into two groups. While one group concentrated on the main lake of the district, the second group drove to Akkerhof where we navigated the sodden fields to visit another pan that is purported to be frequented by Purple Heron. This walk in the bright sunshine through patches of dainty spring flowers was most enjoyable, but boots were a blessing as we squelched through the mud and ankle-deep water. The bird life at the pan was rather sparse, a phenomenon which we experienced quite a few times during our

visit. This was due to the abundant water supply. The area had recorded 150 mm of rain the day before we arrived, so our feathered friends did not need to congregate at water sources, but could paddle around happily in any field that took their fancy.

On our return to Chrissiesmeer, the sightings improved dramatically and we spent a few happy hours watching bulky Spur-winged Geese, whole flocks of Ruffs flying in formation before coming in to land, Whiskered Terns diving and wheeling above the water, Yellow-billed Ducks, Cape, Red-billed and Hottentot Teals, flotillas of Red-knobbed Coots, Black Crakes, Maccoa Ducks, dozens of stately Goliath Herons, Cattle, Yellow-billed and Little Egrets, nesting Cape Shovelers, dainty African Spoonbills and even some pink-hued Greater Flamingos, to name but a few of the species having the time of their lives in this prolific lake.

In the afternoon we were taken to another pan which took my breath away. Where we are used to seeing one or two African Purple Swampheens (We missed you André because no one in our bird club can say 'Swamphen' with quite as much relish as you do!) skulking around at the bridge in Wakkerstroom, here was a relatively small stretch of water covered with dozens of swampheens. Wherever we looked, there were swampheens – it was a most amazing and very satisfying sight.

This was also the site of the 'Great Osprey Sighting'. We had spotted a large raptor circling an adjacent field which then landed on the ground. The distance between us and the raptor was so great that even the most experienced birders in our group could not identify the bird. Ever optimistic, someone said, "It's an Osprey!" Well, the Osprey is one of my elusive mega-ticks and hope flamed high. Alas, when our 'Osprey' deigned to fly into a nearby tree, we all sadly agreed that it was an immature African Fish Eagle! I think these juvenile raptors have foxed many a birder, but the disappointment was great and once again *Geloof* was not enough to turn a young Fish Eagle into an Osprey.

As the sun set we had to hurry back to Genesaret to meet Hester Bezuidenhout, our



Cindy Huddle

Beautiful butterflies abounded

frog guide for the evening's frogging outing. This part of Mpumalanga is rightly known as Matotoland, or the 'Land of the Frogs' in Siswati. Hester gave us a most amusing and informative lecture about the 13 species of amphibians who are such excellent indicators of the health and purity of ecosystems. We then returned to the village where we proceeded to catch frogs and toads at the local pond for purposes of identification and education. Anyone who has not plodded through reeds and water with dozens of different alluring croaks, calls, peeps and grunts emanating from every corner of the compass, cannot imagine quite how tricky it is to actually catch frogs. It was a magic scene when the dark night was illuminated by our headlamps and torches which looked like a swarm of large fireflies. The 'froggers' would swoop triumphantly on an imaginary frog only to clutch a handful of soggy reeds and then with a shout of joy someone would grasp one of the slippery little creatures and carefully transfer it into a transparent plastic bag. The youngest members of our group, Tessa and Hayden, had the night of their lives and caught the most frogs.

We then returned to Genesaret with our specimens and Hester helped us identify the different frogs and toads, who soon settled down in their plastic, well-aerated balloons and started to croak and chirp while we were served

most delicious traditional *boerekos* provided by Ann of Florence Guest Farm. After a long and busy day viewing countless birds and frogs, it was such a treat to sit down and savour bobotie and rice, roast chicken, *soet pampoen* and *groen boontjies*, followed by large helpings of Malva pudding with custard. Hester then took the frogs and toads back to the village to release them into their own pond.

Saturday was devoted to visiting as many water sources in the surrounding area as possible and entailed a full day's outing. The going was tough and even the 4x4s slipped and slithered over the muddy farm roads. Pieter Strydom took the group to Antares, a large farm with a multitude of fresh water lakes and pans. He explained that the magnificent oak trees that adorn the local farms were planted to provide acorn fodder for the sheep in winter. During a recent very cold winter however, when cattle were allowed to graze in the oak-lined paddocks, these poor beasts succumbed to a fungus that affects the oaks, and started to die off in alarming fashion. Evidently the sheep are hardier and can survive the mycotoxin produced by the oak fungus. The day's sightings included four White Storks, including a juvenile, a Long-crested Eagle and an excellent variety of ducks – Cape, Red-billed and Hottentot Teals, Maccoa and White-backed Duck, Reed and White-breasted Cormorant, and African Darter.

By the time the tired birders returned to Genesaret for a well-earned braai and drinks, our two-day period of grace had expired and massive banks of angry clouds came rolling in over the lake. As the rain began to fall, we had to take shelter in the recreation hall where there is luckily an indoor braai. Surveying the happy group of 24 birders in the hall, it struck me how birding knows no age limits. The age difference between our youngest member Hayden and Glenda de Beer's dear mother, who is affectionately called *Ma*, was all of 84 years!

The bird count came to 106 species – perhaps not a maximum for this prolific area, but with enough variety to satisfy our group. Who will forget that Purple Swampphen bonanza or the flocks of Ruffs, or the Yellow-crowned and

Southern Red Bishops zooming through the verdant grasslands like the humbug sweets and acid drops of our youth, or the magnificent *Flappe* flapping over the fields with their dowdy harems in tow?

Chrissiesmeer is indeed worth a visit. The beautiful scenery, the excellent fishing and the variety of birds, frogs, butterflies, flowers and San rock art, make this a prime tourist destination. For those who wish to explore further afield there is the 'Giant Footprint', a geological formation near Amsterdam (Mpumalanga, not Holland!), which defies explanation. As tall as Tessa, this stone artefact of a perfectly formed human footprint may be a natural phenomenon or a carving made long ago. There is another 'Giant Footprint' in Sri Lanka, which to some is proof that the giants mentioned in the Bible did once roam the earth.

South Africa's 'Lake District' is also rich in history and the Battle of Chrissiesmeer has gone down in the annals of the Boer War as a triumph of resourcefulness. In February 1901, twelve thousand British troops under Generals Sir John French and Horace Smith-Dorrien had practically surrounded General Louis Botha and his much smaller force of Boer soldiers. On 5 February, General Botha created a diversion with about two thousand of his men at Chrissiesmeer, while selected Boer commandos infiltrated the British lines and cut the picket ropes of the cavalry horses, which bolted into the veld never to be seen again. Without their cavalry Smith-Dorrien's forces were effectively hamstrung and the Boers managed to escape from the intended encirclement. Enactments of the Battle of Chrissiesmeer, which has overtones of David triumphing over Goliath, are evidently staged from time to time.

One thing that fascinated me was that no one in Chrissiesmeer could tell me where the name Genesaret originated. Everyone concurred that it is found in the Bible, but where the name is mentioned remained a mystery until I researched this conundrum and found that Genesaret was another name for the Sea of Galilee! Lake Chrissie which is named after Christina, the daughter of President MW

Pretorius, is the largest natural fresh water lake in South Africa and it certainly lived up to its Biblical connotations with most of us literally walking on water as the glory of creation unfolded before us.

Visit the Chrissiesmeer Website at: <http://www.chrissiesmeer.co.za> or phone

(017) 847-0051 to make arrangements to visit the Lake District of South Africa.

Reference:

Forsyth, B. 2010. Training 2 October 2010 – *Bokmakierie No. 229, p10-11*. Witwatersrand Bird Club, Johannesburg. 📖



Kwêvoëls: 'n Waarneming

Salomi Louw

Op 'n middag in November bemerk ek ongekende kwêvoëlaktiwiteit in die soetdoring (*Acacia karoo*) in my agterplaas. Twee Kwêvoëls (Grey Go-away-birds) land gereeld op 'n tak van die blouhaak (*Acacia erubescens*) waarmee die soetdoring verstrengeel is, wip, hop en loop oorlangs oor die blouhaak se takke tot hoog in die soetdoringtop agter digte lower waar jy net bedrywigheid kan sien sonder besonderhede.

Indien ek geweet het watter interessante maand voorlê, het ek daagliks aantekeninge gemaak, maar helaas, dis nie gedoen nie en ek moet my nou op herinneringe verlaat. Die vermoede dat hulle kan nes maak, stuur my na Tarboton se *A Guide to the Nests & Eggs of Southern African Birds* wat bevestig dat dié voëls 4-6 m hoog nes maak, verkieslik in doringbome. Die duifagtige nes (Tarboton) is egter onsigbaar in die digte blare; al wat 'n mens sien, is 'n gevroetel sodat die takke skud. En toe vroeg in Desember kan ek tussen die blare deur uitmaak dat daar kuikens gevoer word, afgelei uit die geskommel en geskud wanneer die groot voëls arriveer en wat ek deur 'n klein opening in die blarehulsel kan waarneem. 'n Dooie voëlkuiken – nog sonder vere – lê een oggend onder die boom. Weens die grootte neem ek aan dis 'n kwêvoëlkuiken, maar die gewoel in die boom gaan steeds voort.

Dit was met vreugde dat ek vir die eerste keer twee jong Kwêvoëls uit die digte blare kon sien kom om op die blouhaak se takke te

probeer balanseer terwyl hulle gevoer word: met donsnekkies, kort sterte en sonder kuifies. Die voerdery deur 'n hele gemeente was interessant: terwyl een voël kos in kele stort, sit tot vyf ander en wag vir 'n beurt om die kleintjies te voer. Later kom die voëls nie meer tot by die kleintjies nie, maar sit 'n entjie weg en roep met 'n sagte kieu-geluid om die kleintjies nader te lok. Hulle loop en klouter dan onstabiel taklangs om by die skenker te kom. Na 'n paar dae verbeter hulle balans en verken hulle die hele blouhaak, en moet die voerders nou na hulle toe loop en hop.

Nadat ek twee dae uithuisig was, is daar net een jong Kwêvoël te sien. Die grond onder die bome is ondersoek sonder om 'n teken van die tweede klein voëltjie te vind. Die oorblywende een het nou al 'n kuifie en kom nie meer naby die nes nie, maar sit êrens op 'n tak en beweeg gereeld oor die takke heen – nog steeds nie stabiel nie, maar darem met beter balans. Sy gestrekte vlerke help hom on in die boom rond te beweeg. Hy is ook besig om sy vere tussen voertye te tooi. Nou is daar slegs dieselfde drie volwassenes, herkenbaar aan hul gebreekte stertskagte, wat kos bring. Die volgende dag bemerk ek al twee die jonges in 'n jakaranda-boom 50 m verder en weer vier volwassenes wat hulle voer. 'n Dag later is daar geen teken van enige Kwêvoëls nie. Ek mis hulle en hul manewales!

Volgende keer sal ek beslis dagboek hou van sodanige gebeure. 📖

19-23 November, 2010: *Mapungubwe here we come!*

Phillip de Moor

Mapungubwe National Park has long been high on my list of desirable localities to visit. The trip organised by our club for 19th to 23rd November provided the ideal opportunity. The park is about 500 kilometres from Gauteng, north-west of Polokwane and some 60 kilometres from Musina.

The route is on excellent tar roads as far as the entrance gate but in the Park itself all roads are gravel and some are restricted to 4-wheel drive only. The park is divided into two sections; the eastern half where the main gate is located and the western part where the camping site is found. Between these two sections there is a large commercial farm producing tomatoes and citrus. When camping it is necessary to obtain entrance permits at the main gate. From there to the camping site there are two roads, one of which is a gravel road about 30 kilometres in extent through the farmland which I took the first time and found it to have the worst corrugations that I have ever experienced. The other route follows the tar road back towards Polokwane and then also enters the farmland, but the corrugated part to the gate of the park is in better condition and is much shorter. Although this route is about 60 kilometres, it hardly takes any longer than the direct one.

The eastern part of the park is largely flat with many areas of *Acacia* forest and a splendid tall riverine forest composed of Fever, Nyala and Fig Trees. The western part has amazing scenes of high hills with incredible red, vertical cliff faces that appear ideal for Verreaux's Eagle, although we did not see any. Other raptors were quite common with Tawny, Martial, African Hawk-, and Wahlberg's Eagle amongst others seen by various members of the party.

Situated on the Limpopo River in the extreme north-west of Limpopo Province with, on average, only ten days of rain per year it was

bound to have an unusual and interesting environment with the probability of a wide variety of birds, some of which would be difficult or impossible to see elsewhere. Amongst the desirables are included Pel's Fishing-Owl, Thick-billed Cuckoo, Senegal Coucal, Meyer's Parrot, Pennant-winged Nightjar, Kori Bustard and Three-banded Courser.

Immediately across the Limpopo river in Botswana is the Tuli Block Private Nature Reserve, extending over an area of several hundred square kilometres and famous for its elephants and lions which now often cross the Limpopo to join their relatives in Mapungubwe. The environment there is very similar to Mapungubwe and my memory of this area dates back many years when I had the good fortune to visit the Tuli Block a couple of times. Still etched in my mind was the sight of a Bat Hawk in broad daylight chasing a huge flock of Red-billed Quelea at a waterhole. It was also my first encounter with Black-winged Pratincoles.

My wife and I arrived at the camping site three days before the club members as we had decided to give Mapungubwe a solid week of good birdwatching. The camping site is very comfortable, with electricity, a tap and refuse bin at every site (there are only ten). The communal kitchen and shower and toilet facilities were kept spotlessly clean by the staff and there was even a complete facility for wheelchair visitors.

Our first day of birding set the tone for the week with Natal Spurfowl, Black-headed Oriole, Lesser Grey Shrike, Yellow-crowned Bishop (a new one for us), Meyer's Parrot, Jameson's Firefinch and, at a nearby hide on a waterhole, a Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper and Wood Sandpiper. Subsequently we added Levillant's Cuckoo, Red-chested Cuckoo, African Scops-Owl and

many others. When the other members of the club arrived the list raced along and included Long-billed Crombec, Sentinel Rock-Thrush [*perhaps Short-toed?* – Ed.], Yellow-bellied Greenbul, White-browed Robin-Chat, Bennett's Woodpecker, Magpie Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, African Fish Eagle and many other raptors. A Three-banded Courser was spotted sitting on eggs on the ground no more than a metre from the gravel road to the gate. The colouring of this bird is so cryptic that, even so close to the driver's window, most of us did not spot it until the exact locality was pointed out to us.

One of the attractions built for the public is a boardwalk six metres above the ground and extending about 500 metres from a parking place beside the road to a hide overlooking the Limpopo River. The boardwalk passes through the canopy of some mighty Fever Trees and Nyala Trees and the possibility of finding a Pel's Fishing-Owl here should be quite good, although none of our party found one.

Another impressive feature is the picnic site situated high on a hill overlooking the junction of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers. Looking across the river at this point to the left is the Botswana border while, to the right is the Zimbabwe border. There are tables set beneath giant Baobab trees as well as braai facilities and a small shop and neat toilets. A path up the hill leads to four viewing platforms overlooking the junction of the rivers, one of which facing east is labelled 'sunrise' and the one pointing west 'sunset'. Another path takes one to a viewing platform overlooking a mighty gorge where one could expect to see anything from elephants to eagles!

Speaking of Pel's Fishing-Owl, on our last day in the park an organised trip in an open passenger vehicle had been arranged, principally to visit a wetland on the nearby commercial farm. However, the guide and driver of the vehicle first took us on a trip to a particular spot in the riverine forest along the Limpopo where he had several times spotted one of these most desirable 'ticks'. After searching the mighty trees in this area for about a



Martin Goretz

Meyer's Parrot (Bosveldpapegaa)

half-hour he spotted a Verreaux's Eagle-Owl peering down at the party from a safe height of about 30 metres. As we all came together to get a sight of the owl, it took off in disgust and found refuge in a Fever Tree covered in a dense creeper.

The guide then gave up the search for the Pel's and took us to the wetland on the commercial farm. Here there were three large dams surrounded by reeds and thorn trees. Amongst many other birds we found a Greater Flamingo, lots of White-faced Ducks, Squacco Heron and Purple Heron as well as Southern Pochard, Green-backed Heron and Great White Egret. The extensive grassy wetland with numerous water channels leading into the dams would probably also render some specials at the right season.

A total of 212 bird species were identified by our group in a period of about 4 days. Apart from the birding, we came across herds of more than 40 Elephant quite frequently as well as Gemsbuck, Kudu, Impala, Ostriches, Zebra and Wildebeest. Taking everything together, we are all agreed that Mapungubwe is well worth visiting and my wife and I will certainly be making another trip to this fascinating national park in the near future. 🦋

From 'pondokkie' to 'paleis'

Imme Shipham and Charles Gilfillan

What better way to make use of BirdLife Northern Gauteng's opportunity than to combine the birding in Mapungubwe, a World Heritage Site, and Kruger National Park during November 2010? Armed with our Wild Cards we left an overcast and cool Pretoria and booked into Mapungubwe on Friday 19th only to drive back the way we had come to reach the campsite as this park consists of an eastern and western side with the offices in the east and the campsite (and a tented camp) in the western section.

We dusted off our humble 'pondokkie' and pitched it on one of the still vacant sites. It had been raining for the two days that preceded our arrival with the veld looking green and lush. We had obviously brought some of the Gauteng chill with us and the following morning a number of fellow tent inhabitants complained of being cold during the night. But as the weekend wore on, the heat got the upper hand with the temperature reaching 41°C on the fourth and last day of our stay.

It did not take long for the calls of starlings to tell us to look for Meves's Starling and in the evenings African Scops-Owl and African Barred Owllet were very vocal. After a lengthy and rather frustrating search we were able to get both species in our spotlights. The African Barred Owllet was an especially good sighting for Charles as it was one of his lifers for the week. Another lifer for both of us in Mapungubwe was the Three-banded Courser. A pair had made their nest about 1m from the side of the entrance road into the western side of the park. Wilma Moreby plotted the position on her GPS and we used this info to find the pair. However we drove past the bird three times before spotting them which illustrates how well camouflaged the birds are. This pair became the most well photographed and studied birds of the weekend. Other interesting sightings on the western side included a Tropical Boubou,

Broad-billed Roller (a lifer for Imme) and African Mourning Doves. A pair of broad Billed Rollers gave us a fantastic aerial display on our visit to the Limpopo Tented Camp. Another pair that gave us a great display was a pair of Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills. They were perched on the eastern side of the tree one morning in full sunlight. This gave Ria Holman and Charles great opportunities for some fantastic photos.

A striking feature of the Mapungubwe National Park is its interesting rock formations – driving from the western to the eastern section on the tar road one cannot help but be fascinated by it. The other interesting aspect of Mapungubwe is the difference in habitats between the western and eastern side of the park. The area around the camp site on the western side is Limpopo riverine forest and the Eastern Side consists mainly of rocky arid areas that are dominated by numerous Baobab trees.

On our visit to the eastern section – that is home to the 'developments' in the form of offices and the cultural centre – we tackled the well-laid out walkways to view the confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers and where South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe meet. While there we had fantastic sightings of a Red-crested Korhaan and Kori Bustard. We also got good sightings of Meyer's Parrot and Great Sparrow. Another lifer for Charles that we saw at the confluence picnic site was the Great Spotted Cuckoo. This was one of seven cuckoo species on our Mapungubwe list.

On Monday morning 22nd November we were taken on a guided tour to the Den Staat wetlands. The night before Linda Rossouw and Charles had a look at what potential specials we could add to our life list the next day with birds like African Pygmy-Goose, Caspian Plover, Black-winged Pratincole and Yellow Wagtails being at the top of our lists. We also discovered that the guide would take us to find the Pel's Fishing-Owl. The latter being a sighting that

eluded us on our visit to Ndumo last year. On Monday morning we all gathered at the main gate to the park. We travelled to the Limpopo River and stopped at a section of riverine forest to look for the elusive Pel's. We found a large owl, however it was 'only' a Verreaux's Eagle-Owl. The owl was well hidden at the top of a large tree and as large as this owl is it still took a long time for all the members of the group to see it. So once again the Pel's eluded Charles!

The Den Staat visit did not result in sightings of some of the specials we were looking for, however we did find a solitary Greater Flamingo, White Faced Ducks, Comb Ducks, Southern Pochards, a juvenile African Fish Eagle and Blue-Cheeked Bee-eaters, the latter being a lifer for Elba Swart.

As per usual, the birding got priority and one runs out of time to visit other activities that are on offer. But we will go back (I think after first going to have a look at the Mapungubwe exhibition at the University of Pretoria) and visit the cultural centre.

Our stay at Berg-en-Dal, starting on Thursday the 25th November beckoned. We had two days to travel from the far north to the southern end of the Kruger National Park. Although we still had to cook and wash dishes, we now had a thatched, instead of canvas roof over our head.

We entered the Kruger National Park at the Phalaborwa gate and soon after entering the park we had a great sighting of numerous male Monotonous Larks displaying, showing their distinctive white throat while calling. And so to Skukuza. We had not visited Kruger for some years and while the magic of bird and game watching is still very much there and is timeless, we were astounded at the change to the restaurants and shops – more up-market I suppose one could say. During our trek south, we spotted numerous Bateleurs, a few Tawny Eagles and a pair of Saddle-billed Storks. This gave us the opportunity to see the difference between the male and female storks, the male bird with the brown and the female with the yellow iris.

We left Skukuza on Thursday morning and reached the guest house at Berg-en-Dal early



Charles Giffilan

Three-banded Courser (Driebanddrawwertjie)

afternoon where we were welcomed by Philip Calinikos. Along the way we visited Lower Sabie rest camp where we Charles found a fourth lifer for the trip and Imme's third: the Red-faced Cisticola, the bird giving us a great display in the reedbeds along the river, on the boardwalk below the Lower Sabie restaurant.

At Berg-en-Dal we found ourselves really in the pound seats: a spacious living area and well-appointed kitchen. Not that we spent any time in the kitchen, because Jackey Deacon prepared the meals and took charge of tidying up and washing dishes. A real 'paleis' experience! Another luxury was the fact that all we had to do was spot and identify birds from a game viewing vehicle. The driving was done by Raymond Khoza, chief guide at the camp. Not only did he drive, he shared lots of interesting information and saw a good number of birds.

Friday started with a guided walk around the camp. This is where we saw our first Green-backed Camaroptera and so the name of our group, namely the 'Grootbek Camera Operators' (since it rhymed with Camaroptera) was born. Other interesting sightings in the camp were Bennett's Woodpecker and Brown-headed Parrots, the latter being a lifer for a number of people in the group. The walk through the camp also gave us the opportunity to study the Greater Blue-eared Starling with their striking



*Displaying Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill
(Geelbekneushoringvoël)*

royal blue belly and two rows of black spots on their wings, allowing differentiation this form the more well known Cape Glossy Starling.

On Friday we went on a morning drive and discovered that it takes a very long time to travel from Berg-and-Dal rest Camp to the turnoff to the Afsaal-Malelane Gate road in a truck with 20 alert birders. A short distance of 10 km took more than an hour to complete! However, this gave us a great opportunity to practise for Birding Big Day. Good sightings on this trip included more Bateleurs and a juvenile Lesser Spotted Eagle and a Goliath Heron seen on the Crocodile River. We returned to camp for an afternoon snooze, something made easier thanks to our air-conditioned room, a luxury that we did not have living in our canvas pondokkie at Mapungubwe. A late afternoon drive offered a sighting of a Trumpeter Hornbill, a special for this part of the park and a great photographic opportunity of a Lilac-breasted Roller that sat for a long time on a low bush just metres from the truck. The Groot Bek Camera Operators also proved that they were true birders when a Jacobin Cuckoo successfully drew the group's attention away from a lion. Another notable sighting for the evening drive was a Eurasian Hobby.

After sunset we had numerous sightings of Nightjars which we unfortunately were unable to identify and a great sighting of a Spotted Eagle-Owl next to the road. The best sighting of the whole Berg-en-Dal trip came on the way back to camp when we first found

a lioness with four cubs and then later found a large male leopard walking next to the road. The leopard ignored us for some time before crossing the road, marking his territory before vanishing back into the bush.

Birding big day started at 4:30 in the morning with a short walk around the camp to listen to the dawn chorus. A pair of White Browed Robin-Chats were chatting and a Pearl-spotted Owllet called in the distance. By 5:00 we were in the truck and driving out the gate. Charles was given the task of keeping the bird list and was kept very busy in the first hour as birds were identified and added to the list at a merry rate. On the way we stopped on the bridge over the Crocodile River at Malelane gate where we found the Goliath Heron again sitting at the same place as the day before. The Great Egret also made its appearance. We made our way to Afsaal where Jackey was waiting for us with a fantastic brunch. Afsaal, like the rest of the park, has changed since we were last there, admittedly many years ago. You can now even enjoy a cappuccino or espresso there!

The easiest tick of the day was at Afsaal where a sign pointed us to the resident African Scops-Owl roosting in one of the trees. The area was cordoned off with ropes with a sign providing information about which bird was roosting there. It is amazing how the owl can sleep with all these people looking at it and making such a noise.

Leaving Afsaal we continued on our trip to Skukuza adding the Lesser Spotted Eagle, Martial Eagle and White-headed Vulture to the list. We also saw the first of many Walhberg's Eagle that day. Flanders and Swan sang that it is only mad dogs and Englishman who go out in the midday sun. Well when we arrived at Skukuza we added another group to that list, the Groot Bek Camera Operators. We spent an hour around midday at Skukuza adding Red-billed Firefinch, Sombre Greenbul, African Green Pigeon, Water Thick-knee and Bronze Mannikin, to name a few.

Philip had predicted that we would have a bird list of between 150 and 170 for the day. On the way out of Skukuza Charles counted the birds on our list and discovered that we already had over 150 birds. So we had comfortably

reached our target by just after midday! The afternoon trip back to camp turned up Yellow-throated Longclaw, a nice sighting for the afternoon. We also spotted a group of vultures including Lappet-faced, White-backed and Hooded Vulture crowded around something in the veld. We were unable to see what it was but we suspected that it was a still-born Impala fawn. An impala ewe was hanging around looking very distressed. There was obviously far too little food for the number of Vultures present. Just before sunset we added Long-tailed Paradise Whydah and a very exciting sighting of a Crowned Lapwing which had eluded us up that point. A very long and hot yet successful day of birding in the park finished when we arrived back at Berg-en-Dal at 6.45 pm!

After dinner a few die-hard members decided to make one more valid attempt at adding more birds to the list. We did a short night drive, which was curtailed by a limited supply of diesel in the truck. Another sighting of a lion was enjoyed, with a small spotted genet and hippo also seen. Unfortunately the only birds that were seen where numerous Water Thick-knees that could not be turned into Spotted Thick-knees no matter how hard we tried.

This ended a very long and satisfying trip of about 1700 km. The full bird list for the week was 223 birds including four lifers for Charles and three for Imme. This included seven cuckoos, five true eagle species, six owls and three

vultures. Philip was informed by BLSA that our team took a first prize in the community category. This was a resounding first place with second place only mustering a list of 79 birds for the day. We are looking forward to assisting the BLNG club team defend the title of top Community Birding Big Day group in 2011. Well done to all the members for making this a very enjoyable trip. A very big thank you to Philip for making all this possible. Your attention to the many details – from gifts to Jackey and Raymond to the champagne glasses and Birding Big day badges – did not go unnoticed.

Philip Calinikos added this comment:

While enjoying our champagne breakfast the morning after Birding Big Day we had the opportunity of rechecking our official list and discovered that we had in fact recorded 159 species on the day and a total of 177 for the weekend. We had also raised over R2 300 for BLSA's conservation efforts thanks to our two sponsors, Transparent Financial Services and Grant Thornton Pretoria. I would like to thank all the BLNG participants for putting their bodies on the line for a good cause and having lots of fun to boot. Thanks also to Sadie Halbhuber of BLSA, Standard Bank, Nedbank, ABSA Bank, Grant Thornton and Transparent for providing gifts for all the participants. A special thank you to Jackey Deacon of Mpumalanga Promotions, Raymond Khosa and Stephen Nel of SANPARKS (Berg en Dal Camp), who made this outing possible. 🐦



The 'Grootbek Camera Operators' at Berg-en-Dal

Kampeerbeseok aan die suidelike Kruger NP

Neels Roos

Vir die eerste keer in baie jare het ons ons kampeertoerusting afgestof en die tent eers vir 5 nagte in Krokodilbrug kamp en daarna vir 5 nagte in Maroela kamp staan gemaak. Warm wêreld dië maar darem nie ondraaglik teen die tweede helfte van Februarie nie. Tans is dit ook baie droog daar en het die Timbavativier, en meeste ander kleiner riviere, nie gevloei nie. Die geil grasbedekking was goed in die saad na vroeëre reëns en die bome en struik lowergroen.

Krokodilbrug kamp en omgewing

Die kamp lê langs die vloeiende Krokodilrivier en is baie boomryk veral in die deel nader aan die rivier waar permanente tente en huisies perdeskoenagtig om 'n sentrale grasperk gerangskik is. Die kampeer-terrein is redelik boomryk maar het geen grasbedekking nie. Dit is ongelukkig reg langs die ingang na die kamp geleë en dus uiteraard meer blootgestel aan geraas deur die kom en gaan van voertuie.

Een van die redes hoekom ons hierdie kamp in ons besoek ingesluit het was om Ingrid die geleentheid te gee om opnuut 2 besondere bome te sien wat sy by 'n vorige oornag-besoek daar vlugtig leer ken het naamlik die **Snuifkalbassie** / Snuff-box Tree (*Oncoba spinosa* – Nasionale Boomlys no. 492) en die skaarser **Wildemango** / Wild mango (*Cordyla africana* – NBL no. 216). Die Snuifkalbassie het 'n besonderse mooi wit en geel blom en 'n harde ronde saad met 'n langerige skerp punt wat as snuifhouer en ook as "rattles" om die enkels van Riksja-manne gebruik word. Die Wildemango se blomme kom in digte oranje-geel klosse voor en sy vrugte is atipiese peule wat baie lyk soos klein mangoes wat geel word nadat hulle afgeval het, vandaar die naam.

Hier het ons elke middag wanneer die son begin water trek waargeneem dat die **Europese Swaels** (European Swallows) in groepies, so 25-30 meter hoog, rustig en al

heen-en-weer swiepende soos hulle insekte vang, ooswaarts begin aankuier. Teen sterkemer het die laatkommers egter vinnig en laag oor en tussen die boomtoppe deur pylreguit ooswaarts gevlieg. Dit was duidelik dat hulle èrens in die omgewing 'n slaapplek moes hê. Die laaste aand daar het ons toe met verkykers vanaf die kamp se grens probeer vasstel waar die samekomsplek is en gevind dat dit nie in die riete langs die rivier was nie maar seker omtrent 2 km, so skat ek, oos van die kamp en waarskynlik in die suikerrietlande wat groot oppervlaktes in die omgewing buite dië deel van die park bedek. Wat 'n verstommende gesig was die letterlik miljoene skaars-waarneembare, klein, swart stippels wat heen-en-weer in die vinnig donkerwordende aandskemering rondgekol het. Diegene van u wat swaels help ring het by Frischgewaard en Skinnerspruit hier in Pretoria 'n paar dekades gelede sal onthou hoe indrukwekkend dit is.

Identifisering van 'n swart voël is nie altyd so maklik as wat dit aangedui word in voëlgidse nie, en as dit boonop besig is om te verveer en ook in die skaduwee sit en jy nie die iris se kleur mooi kan uitmaak nie is dit nog moeiliker. Dit het my al meermale frustreer en hier was dit weer die geval. 'n Swart voël en haar hongerige jeugdige (juvenile) was baie aktief in die kamp rond. Die jongetjie was pikswart maar bo en onder oortrek met bruin kollerigheid en sy stertpunt was reguit. Die volwasene se stertpunt was effens ingekeep en kon een van die 2 byvangers, of 'n **Swartvlieëvanger** (Southern Black Flycatcher) wees. Wanneer 'n volwasse Mikstertbyvanger sy stertvere wissel is die kenmerkende mik daarvan afwesig en in die Kleinbyvanger is die keep in die stert ook maar bra vlakkerig. 'n Swartkoekoek sal dit sekerlik nie wees nie want die karnallies is parasietêr en voer nie hulle eie kleintjies nie. 'n Swart Katakoeroe ook nie want net die mannetjie is swart maar maklik uitkenbaar aan sy opvallende geel

mondhoek (gape), meesal 'n geel kol op die skouer van die gevoude vlerk, en is sy stert se punt rond. Boonop lyk hulle jeugdige altyd soos die wyfie. Ek het tentatief maar besluit dit is 'n Swartvlieëvanger en haar jongeling maar kon dit eers tuis bevestig nadat ek 'n hele paar boeke nageslaan het oor die voorkoms van die kleintjies van bogenoemde 3 moontlikhede. Die Mikstertbyvanger se jonges is wit gespikkel aan die onderkant; dië van die Kleinbyvanger net ietwat meer gryserig onder soos die wyfies, maar dië van die Swartvlieëvanger – eureka! – swart met bruin kolle daarin (scalloping). Dit word pragtig illustreer in Sinclair & Ryan se 2009 uitgawe van *Birds of Southern Africa – A complete Photographic Fieldguide*. Ai tog, wanneer gaan een van die groot voëlkundige tog 'n boek uitgee net oor al die onvolwasse voëls?

Enkele meer buitengewone voëlsoorte wat ons in die kamp self te siene gekry het was **Bontkwikkies** (African Pied Wagtail), **Kremetartlaksmante** (Southern White-crowned Shrike), **Bandkeelvinke** (Cut-throat Finch), 'n **Dwergvisvanger** (African Pygmy-Kingfisher), **Kortbeksuikerbekkies** (Collared Sunbird) en, die kersie op die koek, 'n **Swartblestinker** (Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird). 'n Mens kan dië tinker maklik aan sy kort **chop-chop-chop-chop** roep wat periodiek herhaal word uitken maar ons het hom wel ook te siene gekry. Ons verwys altyd na hom as “Andy Cap” want in illustrasies herinner hy mens aan dië karakter in strokiesprente. 'n Onvolwasse **Bosveldvisvangertjie** (Woodland Kingfisher), met sy **kenmerkende meesal swart snawel**, het een hele middag op 'n tak naby ons braaiplek gesit en onsuksesvol gepleit om gevoer te word deur net die **ki** deel van hulle roep kort-kort te herhaal. Selfs toe ons laat-middag vleis gebraai het het dit bly sit en net af en toe ook so 'n niesgeluidjie gemaak as gevolg van die effe rokerige lug! Die **Gewone Boskraai** (Trumpeter Hornbill) en die **Reuse- en Gevlekte Ooruile** (Verreaux's- and Spotted Eagle-Owls) het ons wel gehoor maar nie gesien nie. Die een wat weggekom het? Vermoedelik die **Kleinswartvlerkkiewiet** (Senegal Lapwing) waarvan 3 net te vinnig bo my verbygevlieg het om hulle



Clive Kaplan

Black Stork (Grootswartooievaar)

met sekerheid te kon identifiseer maar Bont- of Kroonkiewiete was hulle beslis nie. Ongelukkig kon ek hulle nie weer opspoor nie. Ek het so gehoop om uiteindelik ook die, vir my steeds ontwykende, **Gryskopvisvanger** (Grey-headed Kingfisher) te siene te kry maar dit sou my helaas nie geluk nie.

'n Hele kolonie **Vrugtevlermuise** (Epauletletted Fruit Bats) het gereeld bedags in 'n groot boom in die kamp “geslaap” en kon ons 2 klein seuntjies en hulle ma, wat daarnaas gehuisves was, se aandag daarop vestig en hulle daarna laat kyk deur die teleskoop. Die jongens kon net nie genoeg kry van die teleskoop kykery en die vlermuise nie en is hulle belangstelling in die natuur hopelik daardeur goed aangewakker.

Lelspreus (Wattled Starlings) moes 'n uitstekende broeiseisoen beleef het en in die halfdosyn swerms wat ons in die savanna dele aangetref het was dit 'n oorverdowende geraas soos die oormag jonges **wiet-wiet-wiet** geskree het vir kos en die volwassenes alles moes uithaal om sprinkane en sade, wat gelukkig in oorvloed beskikbaar was, te voer. In een swerm was daar letterlik duisende. Mannetjies met hulle kenmerkende broeikleed van swart lelle en



Skopsuil (African Scops-Owl)

heldergeel agterkoppe was nog teenwoordig. Die ligte kruis is baie opvallend in vlug van beide volwassenes en onvolwassenes. Jare terug toe ek hulle vir die eerste keer gesien het was almal net liggrys, met 'n ligter kruis en net 'n vae geel vlekke agter die oog en het dit my beskaamlik lank geneem om hulle te identifiseer!

By die skuiling genaamd Nhlambanyathi langs die S28 grondpad tussen Krokodilbrug en Laer Sabie het ons 'n **Groenrugreier** (Green-backed Heron) op 'n nes in die riete oorkant die waterpoel ontdek en kon met die teleskoop 2 kuikens daarin waarneem wanneer sy bietjie bene gerek het. Sy en die nes was so goed kamoefleer dat geeneen van die deursnee besoekers daar dit ooit in ons teenwoordigheid ontdek het nie – en ons het dit ook nie rugbaar gemaak nie uit vrees dat al die aandag haar kon steur. U mag ons optrede vreemd vind maar meeste mense stel net belang in die Groot 5 en nie in voëls nie.

'n Onvolwasse Groenrugreier het ook tydens ons tweede besoek aan die skuiling sy

opwagting op 'n oorhangende tak naby die water gemaak. 'n Groot alleenloper olifantbul het regs van die skuiling kom water drink en toe, tot my groot verligting, deur die riviertjie geloop en op die oorkantste wal direk voor die skuiling verby beweeg. Olifante hou skynbaar nie van ons dieselbakkie nie en verkies ons om hulle gladnie raak te loop nie. Tydens ons besoek het ek die bakkie twee keer met verbysterende spoed in trurat moes sit en retireer maar gelukkig is die alleenloper bulle dië tyd van die jaar baie meer rustig en minder aggressief!

Op pad terug vanaf die skuiling na Krokodilbrug kamp kon ons aanskou hoe 'n **Geelbekneushoringvoël** (Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill) met 'n veldmuis in sy bek aangevlieg kom na 'n dooie boom waarin sy maat 'n Buffelwewer se ou nes ondersoek het. Hy het die muis 'n ruk lank pap geslaan teen 'n tak en dit toe vir sy maat aangegee. Dië het dit verder pap geslaan en toe redelik vinnig ingewurg.

Grootglanspreeus (Burchell's Starling), met hulle donker oë en langerige stert waarvan die punt afgerond is, en **Bosveldvisvangers** (Woodland Kingfisher) met hulle rooi en swart snawel en kenmerkende luide *ki-trrrrrrrrrrr* roep, was oral volop. So ook die **Bosveldtinkie** (Rattling Cisticola) uitgeken aan hulle *chee-chee-chee-chirrrrrrr* roep met die "rattle" aan die einde daarvan. Voëls wat binnekort gaan migreer en ook volop teenwoordig was sluit in die **Rooiruglaksman** (Red-backed Shrike), **Europese Troupant** (European Roller), en **Rooiborsbyvreter** (Southern Carmine Bee-eater). Ingrid was baie beïndruk met die "kantagtige" voorkoms op die sye van die Rooiruglaksman wyfies. **Gryslaksmanne** (Lesser Grey Shrike) is ook gesien maar was verreweg nie so volop soos die Rooiruglaksmanne nie.

Maroela kamp en omgewing

Van Krokodilbrug af is ons oor Laer Sabie, Tshokwane en Satara na die Maroela karavaankamp. By eersgenoemde was onder andere 3 **Grootswartooievaars** (Black Storks) en die grootste versameling **Bontkiewiete** (Black-

smith Lapwings) wat ek nog ooit gesien het op die sandbanke onder by die Sabierivier doenig terwyl by Tshokwane, wat eintlik net 'n piekniekplek is, het 'n enkele **Roioogtortelduif** (African Mourning Dove) ook broodkrumrels kom bedel.

Maroela is 'n satelliet karavaankamp 'n paar kilometers weg van die Orpen kamp langs die Timbavativier geleë wat huidiglik droog is. Daar is oorgenoeg skaduwee bome, elektriese aansluitingspunte, sentrale kook geriewe en vrieskaste, en is uiteraard rustiger as die hoofkamp. Die stille snags was heerlik en slegs onderbreek deur die "inwonende" **Skopsuil** (Scop's Owl) se tipiese *prrrup* roep, en leesus en hiënas. **Bromvoëls** (Ground Hornbills) het twee oggende reeds vroeg in die môreskemering van hulle laat hoor terwyl hulle in die omgewing van die kamp verbybeweeg het. Twee kilometers verder langs die rivier is die Tamboti tent kamp met permanente tente-verblyf. Elke tent is baie privaat geleë maar die plantegroei tussenin is uitermate ruig.

Ander buitengewone voëls wat hier te sien was was die **Afrikaanse Koekoek** (African Cuckoo), 'n **Afrikaanse Sperwer** (African Goshawk), 'n mannetjie **Bennettse Speg** (Bennett's Woodpecker) met sy algehele rooi kappie en rooi baardstreep, en die **Groenrugkwêkwêvoëltjie** (Green-backed Camaroptera) met sy groenerige rug en vlerkies, en dun orent stertjie. As dit nie was dat ons die kenmerkende breërige wit en swart bande op die onderkant van die Koekoek se stert te siene gekry het nie sou ons dit nie met sekerheid van die Europese Koekoek kon onderskei nie. Die sperwer was 'n onvolwasse mannetjie gekenmerk deur die groterige donker kolle aan sy onderkant in plaas van dwarsstreepe, bruin rug en vlerke, dowwe bruin en swart bande oor die stert, grys neusbrug (cere) en geel pote. Hy het op 2 verskillende geleenthede skielik van nêrens onder die blaardak van die bome waaronder ons kampeer het ingedui en op 'n tak gaan sit. Elke keer het die boomeehorings, dwergmuishond familie, bospatryse, Natalse Fisante, neushoringvoëls en Grootglansspreeus wat ons geselskap gehou het skielik soos mis voor die son verdwyn. Die

kuiken van 'n **Witruugaasvoël** (White-backed Vulture) in hulle nes bo in een van die bome langs die rivier het 'n aardige baie harde kras geluid gemaak wanneer hy gevoer was. Die voerder was 'n hele langdurige gedoente. Eienaardig dat 'n redelike groot kuiken reeds einde Februarie in die nes teenwoordig was want volgens handboeke is hulle broeiseisoen in die RSA van Mei tot Junie.

Ingrid het die voorreg gehad om die **Skopsuil** (African Scops-Owl) helder oordag te sien toe dit deur 'n paar **Gryskopmossies** (Southern Grey-headed Sparrows) agtervolg was, seker maar omdat dit te veel in hulle nes met kleintjies belanggestel het. Sy was ook in haar noppies met die nuwe boom wat sy in die kamp ontdek het naamlik 'n **Wollerige kapperbos** / Woolly caper bush (*Capparis tomentosa* – NBL no. 130.1). Dit het sulke sagte, ronde, geel vrugte omtrent 2,5 cm in deursnit, elkeen aan 'n langerige steel en is baie populêr as voedselbron by die voëls. Ingrid probeer haar bes om 'n paar saadjies te laat ontkiem en oorweeg ons reeds waar hulle in die tuin geplant gaan word – as hulle groei!

In die omgewing was dit ons beskore om ons enigste korhaan, 'n wyfie **Boskorhaan** (Red-crested Korhaan), 'n **Dubbelband Sandpatrys** paar (Double-banded Sandgrouse) en heelwat arende, te wete baie **Berghane** (Bateleur), 'n **Bruinslangarend** (Brown Snake-Eagle), 'n jong **Breëkoparend** (Martial Eagle), 'n **Dwergarend** (Booted Eagle) en 'n onvolwasse **Visarend** (African Fish-Eagle) te sien. Laasgenoemde het ons in vlug gesien en word die kenmerke van sy onderkant baie mooi illustreer op bladsy 93 in *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa* van Sinclair, Hockey en Tarboton, 3de uitgawe.

Hier kon ons ook een vroegoggend 'n leu-mannetjie sien wat heelnag in die omgewing rond gebrul het – hy het net sy yslike groot kop opgelig vanuit die gras waar hy geskuil het om te kyk na die gedoente van waarnemers op die teerpad! – en 'n ander oggend 3 gevlekte hiënas wat agtermekaar in 'n ry teerpadlangs êrens heen onderweg was, eers lopende soos net hiënas kan loop en later op 'n wafferse galop wat enige perd jaloers sou maak.

Eienaardig genoeg het hiënas een nag feitlik die hele nag deur oraloor om die kamp gejojdel en gegiggel – ek weet nie hoe mens hulle geluide anders kan beskryf nie.

Die groot kersie op die koek

Ons het die hele reis só beplan dat ons by die Orpenhek sou uitgaan en oor Klaserie, en vandaar met die R531 oor Kampersrus, al met die fantastiese Drakensberg eskarpement langs, sou ry om redelik vroeg die oggend by die Abel Erasmuspas en Strydomtunnel uit te kom. Die groot trekpleister daar was natuurlik die uiters skaars **Taitavalk** (Taita Falcon) wat daar in die kranse tuis is. Net na mens deur die tonnel gery het is daar 'n klompie stalletjies aan die linkerkant waarvan een die advertensie-bord "World of Birds" toon. Hier was ons baie gelukkig om die plaaslike gids Michael raak te loop want ons het geen vooraf reëling met

hom gehad nie. Hy het die voël se posisie in 'n japtrap aan ons uitgewys en kon ons dit deur my teleskoop met 'n "zoom" lens (20-60X) op ons tyd bestudeer. Met 'n 8x42 verkyker kon mens slegs 'n witterige stippeltjie sien teen die oorkantste rooibrui kranse. Michael het wel sy eie teleskoop wat aan hom geskenk is deur weldoeners maar hy sê dit is maar 'n klein een. Dat ons so 'n skaars voël vir die eerste keer te siene kon kry was 'n baie bevredigende einde van ons besoek.

Dit was wonderlik om vir 'n wyle net weer in die natuur te kon wees en die roepe van die Oranjebors-boslaksman, die melankoliese Groenvlekduifies, Bospatryse, die Skopsuil en vele ander bekendes wat nie eintlik in die stad voorkom nie te hoor, of hulle net weer te sien. Te vinnig vlieg die tyd altyd verby en moes ons weer huiswaarts keer. Hoe onuitspreeklik kosbaar is hierdie "vensters" tog nie in 'n mens se bestaan nie? 🐦

Nylsvley then and now

Phillip de Moor

My experience of Nylsvley is limited to two visits – one with my wife when we stayed in one of the chalets at the beginning of November 2010 and the other organised by the Bird Club from 21 to 23 January 2011 when we were in communal accommodation accompanied by fifteen members of the club.

The difference in the birdlife between these two visits was truly striking and completely contrary to what we had been led to believe according to all the literature and reports about Nylsvley.

In November (as could well be expected) the water level in the main Vogelfontein wetland was low and there was very little flow even in the main channel. The paths to the hides and along the raised sand ridge before the hides that runs at right angles to the path to the hides were all well above the water level and there was no need for wading. We

first walked slowly and cautiously along this ridge. In the first pool beside the ridge we were rewarded with Yellow-billed Duck swimming with a family of babies, African Purple Swamp-hen (Gallinule) also with youngsters, African Jacana with youngsters and a pair of Southern Pochard. They all flew off complaining loudly as we passed them. Near the end of this path there was a narrow stream with a small, quiet backwater and sitting there was a male and female African Pygmy-Goose. On our return along the ridge a pair of White-faced Ducks had taken up residence in the pool.

Next – onward to the hides. The first hide looked out on a lovely open pool off the main river with a good view up the river for several hundred metres. Here there were more Yellow-billed Duck, Jacanas and an African Purple Swamphen as well as Black Crake, Little

Grebe and Comb Duck. Upstream stood a Grey Heron and a Goliath Heron. Across the vlei there were small herds of Roan Antelope, Blue Wildebeest and a solitary Reedbuck. From the second hide there was also a view over a large clear pool holding a good variety of waterbirds. The Kingfisher Hide across the road from the Vogelfontein marshes overlooked a clear, tranquil pool, but it seemed to attract only a couple of Jacanas and Yellow-billed Ducks.

So that was the pattern of the waterways in November 2010.

How did things differ towards the end of January 2011 after heavy rains in December and January? From the literature describing Nylsvley one might expect after good rains to find the water levels in the marshes to have risen considerably and to encounter large flocks of waterfowl in the ponds and streams. Indeed, the water levels had risen above the paths to the hides in many places and above the ridge running at right angles to the hides. It was necessary to wade through small streams and ponds well above ankle deep in order to reach the vantage points. The grassy vegetation of the marshes had also grown considerably taller. As we entered through the gate leading to the hides I expected to see large concentrations of waterbirds in the ponds that previously had given us so many sightings.

We started walking and wading down the ridge towards the first pond but, much to our surprise, when we reached it we found it totally covered with dense floating vegetation and the only birdlife was a couple of Jacanas hopping across the leaves. Where we had seen the African Pygmy-Geese at the end of the ridge there was only a strongly flowing stream with no quiet backwaters.

The two hides were no different – where previously they both overlooked clear ponds there was now only densely matted floating vegetation and no waterbirds. The only birds that had increased in number at the hides were Southern Masked-Weavers which had taken advantage of the tall reedbeds around the hides to build their nests

Curiously, the Kingfisher Hide across the



Martin Goetz

Allen's Gallinule (Kleinkoningriethaan)

road still retained the quiet pool, but there were no ducks in the water. However, we had excellent sighting of an Allen's (Lesser) Gallinule clambering around in the vegetation on the far side of the pond.

Despite these conditions at the hides the members of the club spotted a good variety of waterbirds, but they were mostly flying overhead in pairs or small groups. These included White-faced Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, Red-billed Teal and Southern Pochard. Various herons and Egrets were also spotted standing in the grassy marshes and on two occasions a Little Bittern appeared peering out of a wall of green grass.

There were a couple of shallow water pans remaining after the heavy rains with muddy banks, distant and not connected to the main Vogelfontein marshes. We all went on a guided walk to two of these pans where we were shown a Green Sandpiper (new to me) and a couple of Wood Sandpipers.

I have not gone into all the other birds such as raptors, cisticolas, francolins etc. that were spotted by the club members – these amounted to more than 120 species. Since Nylsvley is principally famous for its concentrations of waterbirds, I have described my experience of these birds under two different conditions – low and high water levels with results that seem to differ from the general literature about this site. It would be most interesting to hear from other members of the club who have more experience of Nylsvley and how they have experienced waterbird concentrations at different times of the year. 🦆

Spring migration

Rynetta Coetzee

"Animal migration is a phenomenon far grander and more patterned than animal movement. It represents collective travel with long-deferred rewards. It suggests premeditation and epic willfulness, codified as inherited instinct." (National Geographic Magazine November 2010)

I totally fail to understand why birds, butterflies and even snakes migrate, sometimes thousands of kilometres just to find food. I must admit that if I was a bird I would most probably move away from the Arctic zones to avoid the harsh winter circumstances, but why so far? Maybe the 'epic willfulness' and 'inherited instinct' to find food explains it all. The spectacle of bird migration is a miracle that we should all enjoy!

Mississippi falls within one of the five major flyways within North America. Shorebirds from as far as Alaska migrate down the shores of the Mississippi River Delta, feeding as they go, but it is usually on the way up to their breeding grounds that the most birds are seen. Birds start congregating near the shores of South America from approximately the last week of March waiting for the right moment to start their non-stop and often perilous flight over the Gulf of Mexico. If the wind is in their favour, most of them will only land to feed near the shores of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama or Florida but if the wind starts to blow the wrong way,

they literally fall out of the sky onto Dauphin Island, one of the barrier islands \pm 8 km off the shore of Alabama. Some birds decide to do it in any case, maybe by instinct. It is regarded as one of America's must visit places if you are a birder. From the 2nd to the last week of April, the small island is packed with birders. Even during a 'bad' year, the birding is spectacular. Sitting on the edge of a clearing in the bird sanctuary, you can see Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Blue and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great-crested Flycatcher, Orchard Oriole and many more. The surrounding woods come alive with vireos and warblers that you might not encounter in your home town as they disperse to the east and west from here. Most of them have plumages with varying degrees of black and yellow like the Golden-winged Warbler, wearing a black mask and bib, the Northern Parula that which has blue on the head and wings and a yellow throat and breast, and the Magnolia Warbler is mainly yellow with black wings and white wing patches. The magnificent turquoise blue and white Cerulean Warbler, the striking, almost gaudy orange, black and white Blackburnian Warbler and the Hooded Warbler are three of my favourites, and to add to the confusion of ID there is also Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler and Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrush, and the black and orange American Redstart.

Shorebirds occur all around the shores of the island; Hudsonian and Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin, and Piping, Wilson's, Black-bellied and Semipalmated



Bill Stripling

Prothonotary Warbler

Plovers. There is also a small wetland where Clapper, King and Virginia Rails and Sora can be seen and if you are extremely, super fortunate like I was, you get to see the rare and secretive Black Rail.

The weather is a major contributing factor to what you might or might not see, or which rare bird you might find in a highly unlikely place and this adds to the excitement of migration.

In April 2010 a birdwatcher reported that thousands of shorebirds stopped over at his farm, feeding in the drained catfish ponds. There were also four Wilson's Phalaropes. I freaked out, hardly sleeping that night, begged

Joe to go with me, and eventually convincing him at 10:00 am to accompany me on the hour-and-a-half drive to Isola. I was stunned when we arrived. The ponds reminded me of Langebaan in summer. There were birds everywhere. Long and Short-billed Dowitchers, Greater Yellowlegs, too many sandpipers to identify, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, two Bar-tailed Godwits, egrets, ducks, geese and then we found the phalaropes, in full breeding plumage – 80 of them. A day later they were gone – I had witnessed one of the miracles of migration. Totally exhilarating, I'm sure you will agree! 🦅

Kakelaar kom sy Moses teë

Adele van Vuuren en Lizna Ferreira

Frans en ek was besig om nog 'n voël, 'n Klipstreepkoppie (Cinnamon-breasted Bunting) vir ons omgewingslys te identifiseer toe twee dames ons vra waarna ons kyk. Hulle was ook op hul daaglikse oggendstap. Raak toe aan die gesels oor voëlkyk en die voëlklub. Een van die vrouens, Lizna Ferreira, vertel dat sy 'n roofvoël wat 'n Rooibekkekelaar gevang het afgeneem het. Sy het toe vir my die fotos op 'n CD gesit en kortliks geskryf hoe dit gebeur het. Hier is haar storie:

Hierdie waarneming het op 15/02/2011 om ongeveer 17:30 in Monumentpark X2 plaasgevind. Die ongewone geraas van baie voëls het my aandag getrek. Op ons grasperk het 'n voël met uitgestrekte vlerke bo-op 'n kakelaar gesit. Ek het eers gedink dat dit 'n Kwevoël is, maar sien toe dat dit 'n roofvoël is. Die ander kakelaars het op hom gedruk in 'n poging om hul maat te bevry.

Die roofvoël het toe met die kakelaar bo-oor die tuinmuur gevlieg. Dit het gelyk of hy sukkel om te vlieg, asof die kakelaar te swaar is. Ek het hulle agterna gesit en hulle in die straat gekry, waar die roofvoël (so het dit gelyk) gerus het. Na 'n kort rukkie het hy weer opgevlieg en

in die buurt verdwyn.

Ek het die voël met behulp van die boek: *Roofvoëlgids van Suider-Afrika* deur Ulrich Oberprieler en Burger Cillie geïdentifiseer as 'n jong, ligte Ovambosperwer. 🦅



Lizna Ferreira

Onvolwasse Ovambosperwer (Ovambo Sparrowhawk) met Rooibekkekelaar prooi

An encounter with an Eleonora's Falcon

Elizabeth Gevers

In late January, this year, fifteen birders were taken out on a game drive vehicle by the West Rand Honorary Birders during one of their special weekends in the Kruger National Park. We were all staying in the Shingwedzi Camp, which is one of the camps that are situated relatively far north. We were honoured to have André Marx with us for the weekend as our birding expert.

On the Saturday morning, after we had been driving and stopping, sighting and exclaiming for a good few hours, someone sighted a 'bird of prey' perched in a reasonably bare tree about 50 metres from the vehicle. It was obvious to all that this was a falcon, but which one?

We could see it was a medium to large falcon, rich buff below which was finely streaked, but the back was a brownish-black colour, with a fairly white throat, chin and cheeks. One could see the long wings sticking out beyond the tail as it remained perched on the branch. One by one identification of the different falcons was eliminated, until André realised that this could only be the 'very rare vagrant', Eleonora's Falcon. The books we had with us on the lorry, confirmed our identification. We must have watched the bird for at least 10 minutes before it flew off, but we were lucky to see it twice thereafter.

Eleonora's Falcon was named after Giudicessa ("Judge") Eleonora de Arborea (1350 – 1404). She was a most powerful and significant Sardinian princess and judge, who fought for Sardinia's independence from the Kingdom of Aragon. Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, with an area of 23 821 km². The coasts of Sardinia (1 849 km long) are generally high and rocky, with long, relatively straight stretches of coastline, many outstanding headlands, and with various smaller islands off the coast. The island has an ancient geo-

formation and, unlike Sicily and the mainland of Italy, is not earthquake-prone. Judge Eleonora was particularly interested in ornithology. As a friend of birds, she was the first to legislate protection to a certain species of bird, namely the falcon. Based on this, the Eleonora's Falcon (*Falcon eleonora*) was named after her. This may, however, have been simply a way in which to protect the use of falcons for the aristocracy sport of falconry. (Source: *The Raptor Guide of Southern Africa*).

These falcons breed from mid-July to August on the Mediterranean Islands, and along the north-western coast of Africa. They then migrate mainly to Madagascar, but are also occasionally seen in the north of Mozambique. Their migration is perfectly timed so that it coincides with the southward migration of thousands of small birds, providing them with substance along the route. Relatively speaking, the northern area of the Kruger National Park lies near Mozambique, and therefore one can accept the legitimacy of finding one of these special falcons in the Shingwedzi area.

***'The Falcon' by M.D. Hughes:
Cry of the falcon pierces the air
Shrill call echoing far and near
Majestic raptor surveys below
Sharp eye and talons, friend or foe?***

[Footnote: *One of the observers on the vehicle managed to obtain a few photos of the bird as it sat perched for several minutes. Unfortunately not all features could be seen clearly in the photos and it was not possible to ascertain with certainty that this was an Eleonora's Falcon and thus the record could not be submitted to the National Rarities Committee. In this situation it is up to individuals who were present to decide for themselves whether the sighting was 'tickable' or not – Ed.]*

WWF stands for?

Jason Boyce

If you ask a birder this question the answer will not be World Wide Fund for Nature, but White-winged Flufftail!

A group of about 120 birders ('twitchers') and even beginner birders (with many from BLNG) attended the **White-winged Flufftail Twitch** on Saturday 19th February at the Middelpunt Wetland Reserve near Dullstroom. It was a good day!

We arrived at the Wimpy at Belfast on that cold morning and after a quick 'Hashdown Splashdown Breakfast', complemented by a 'Mega Coffee', we set off in one big convoy, led by Malcolm Drummond, to the wetland. Malcolm had kindly organised a group of flushers and two trained hunting dogs to do the hard work for us. The flushing process began. "Marsh Owl!" exclaimed a member of the large group, the first

flushed victim. "African Snipe" was the next call. The first flushing attempt for the WWF proved unsuccessful, so we stopped for a quick break and then walked a good kilometre or so before trying again on the other side of the wetland.

Another snipe, and then, "Red-chested Flufftail!" was the next call by one of the flushers. All of a sudden, a loud cry: "There it is! Yes!" The White-Winged Flufftail had been found. Only a handful of the group managed a sighting, but luckily they managed to flush it again almost immediately and all but 3 people managed a great sighting of this elusive bird.

A good day for WWF Twitchers and a good day for the Middelpunt Wetland Trust and WWF conservation fund as all attendees paid a few hundred Rand to see the bird so it was all done for a good cause. 🐦

Rarities and unusual sightings: March 2011

Compiled by André Marx

The heavy rains during late December and January resulted in a change in conditions in many wetlands throughout the region, with reports of flooding in many areas, and the consequent increase in reports of rain migrants. It has been a good summer for migrant species generally, with a spate of very interesting national and regional rarities occurring in the region, as highlighted in this report. Please continue to send any records, and if you are unsure about its 'rarity status' just ask and I will send you the list of regional rarities for the greater Gauteng region.

National Rarities / Nasionale Rariteite

Eurasian Bittern. Grootrietreier: the booming call of this species was heard at Marievale

during the CWAC count there and is a significant observation as it confirms the continued presence of this bird at this site, 30 Jan 2011 (BPR).

Western Marsh-Harrier. Europese Vleivalk: one bird was at Marievale, a regular locality for this species, 15 Jan 2011 (NP); a female bird was present at the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain, 13 Mar 2011 (NP).

Striped Crake. Gestreepte Riethaan: at least one bird was at the Kgomo-Kgomo wetland which had become extensively flooded after good rains, 19 Feb 2011 (RGd).

Green Sandpiper. Witgatruiter: one bird was at Northern Farm, a locality where this bird turns up annually, 05 Dec 2010 (RS); a single bird was at Borakalalo NR, 18 Dec 2010 (CR);

with one bird seen on the Zaagkuildrift road, 08 Jan 2011 (EM).

Thrush Nightingale. Lysternagtegaal: brief views of one bird were enjoyed on the Zaagkuildrift road, 13 Mar 2011 (EM and others).

River Warbler. Sprinkaansanger: one bird was found on the Zaagkuildrift road, north of Pretoria, 13 Mar 2011 (J&LG); with a further 6 birds found in this area, 27 Mar 2011 (EM and others).

Grey Wagtail. Gryskwikkie: a solitary bird located at the WS Botanical Gardens in Johannesburg was a major surprise and in the ensuing weeks many local birders managed to see it, 27 Jan 2011 (G birders); *This sighting considerably boosted attendance at the gardens with figures provided showing a threefold increase during the first weekend.*

Regional Rarities / Streeksrareite

Marabou Stork. Maraboe: one bird was seen in farmland on the western outskirts of Pretoria, 23 Feb 2011 (ES).

European Honey-Buzzard. Wespedief: one bird was at Northern Farm, 05 Dec 2010 (RS); a single bird was at Rietvlei NR, 03 Feb 2011 (GCx,TS); two birds were at Golden Harvest, Randburg, 15 Feb 2011 (NP).

Montagu's Harrier. Blouvillevalk: one bird, a male, was observed north-east of Ekangala, near Bronkhorstspuit, 31 Dec 2010 (JBc).

Black Harrier. Witkruisvleivalk: this species was seen on the road to Greylingstad, near Devon, on

the eastern border of Gauteng, and is an unusual record for summer, 30 Jan 2011 (CK,PP).

Buff-spotted Flufftail. Gevlekte Vleikuiken: a report was received of a bird that had been present in a garden in Hennospark, Centurion, for a number of months, 19 Jan 2011 (LH via TC); subsequently the bird was seen at dusk when it was possible to photograph it, 3 Feb 2011 (AM, CK, PP, RM).

Denham's Bustard. Veldpou: a record of one bird at Wolfhuiskraal, approximately 70 km north of Pretoria, is most unusual, 08 Jan 2011 (EM and others).

Sanderling. Drietoonstrandloper: a single bird was at Kgomo-Kgomo, 16 Jan 2011 (MG,RGd).

Collared Pratincole. Rooivlerksprinkaanvoël: a solitary bird was at the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain, 23 Mar 2011 (EdB); with further sightings being reported in the next couple of days of what was probably the same bird (G birders). *This is an extremely rare species for the region and this is the only regional locality to date where its presence has been confirmed over the last couple of years.*

Other Interesting Observations / Ander Interessante Waarnemings

Pink-backed Pelican. Kleinpelikaan: a bird at Vaalkop Dam, NW Province, is most unusual at this locality, 30 Dec 2010 (F&RP).

Long-crested Eagle. Langkuifarend: one bird was seen on the road to Delmas, near Devon, eastern Gauteng, 30 Jan 2011 (CK,PP); one bird was at Florida Lake, Roodepoort, 24 Mar 2011 (LS).

Brown Snake-Eagle. Bruinslangarend: one bird soaring over the Klipriviersberg NR, southern Johannesburg, is unusual for the area, 15 Jan 2011 (HS,LRo).

Shikra. Gebande Sperwer: this species was observed in a garden in Kempton Park when it caught a Cape Robin-Chat, 07 Jan 2011 (BO); two immature birds at Delta Park, Johannesburg, is unusual for the area, 23 Feb 2011 (GLd).

Peregrine Falcon. Swerfvalk: a pair of birds was regularly seen in the vicinity of the museum and city hall in central Pretoria until



Grey Wagtail (Gryskwikkie) at WS Botanical Gardens

Garreth Hazell

late March when they were still present, 12 Jan 2011 (TC).

Red-footed Falcon. Westelike Rooipootvalk: one bird was at Wolfhuiskraal, north of Pretoria, 27 Mar 2011 (EM).

Red-winged Francolin. Rooivlerkpatrys: at least one bird was at Northern Farm, 07 Jan 2011 (EM).

Great Spotted Cuckoo. Gevlekte Koekoek: an interesting record is of two juvenile birds being fed by Common Mynas on the Wallmans-thal road north of Pretoria, 13 Jan 2011 (N&KGvD,PB).

European Nightjar. Europese Naguil: one bird stayed in a garden in the Kyalami area, Midrand, for a few weeks, 01 Feb 2011 (RS).

Woodland Kingfisher. Bosveldvisvanger: one bird was at the Cumberland Bird Sanctuary, Bryanston, 05 Feb 2011 (AM).

European Roller. Europese Troupant: one bird was at the Klipriviersberg NR in southern Johannesburg, 30 Dec 2010 (SK).

Dusky Lark. Donkerlewerik: one bird was seen near Kgomo-Kgomo, 05 Feb 2011 (NP); one bird was found on the Uitvlugt loop road south of Rust De Winter Dam, 13 Mar 2011 (LvD).

Groundscraper Thrush. Gevlekte Lyster: at least 3 birds were in the Klipriviersberg NR area in southern Johannesburg, 15 Jan 2011 (HS,KLa,LRo).

Capped Wheatear. Hoëveldskaapwagter: a first sighting at Delta Park, Johannesburg, in many years of observation at this locality is a very interesting record for the area, 03 Dec 2010 (GLd).

Common Whitethroat. Witkeelsanger: a bird seen at Golden Harvest, Randburg, is unusual for the area, 06 Dec 2010 (NP).

Olive-tree Warbler. Olyfboomsanger: a very interesting record for the Mulbarton area at the Klipriviersberg NR, southern Johannesburg, 06 Jan 2011 (LRo).

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler. Geelsanger: one bird was at Northern Farm, 06 Feb 2011 (AM).

Yellow Wagtail. Geelkwikkie: four birds were still at Rooiwal, north of Pretoria, during the



Lance Robinson

Juvenile Cuckoo Finch at Klipriviersberg NR

club outing there, 27 Mar 2011 (BLNG); at least 12 birds were at Northern Farm when at least 3 different races were noted, 02 Apr 2011 (AM).

Red-backed Shrike. Rooiruglaksman: a female bird was at Delta Park, Johannesburg, only the third record in 17 years of observations there, 13 Dec 2010 (GLd).

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver. Koringvoël: one bird at Northern Farm was a first record at this locality, 06 Mar 2011 (RS); with another bird also being seen at this locality, 11 Mar 2011 (BLNG).

Cuckoo Finch. Koekoekvink: a juvenile was at the Klipriviersberg NR in southern Johannesburg, 15 Jan 2011 (HS,LRo); one bird was at Rietvlei NR, 03 Feb 2011 (GCx,TS).



Clive Kaplan

Buff-spotted Flufftail (Gevlekte Vleikuiken)



European Nightjar (*Europese Naguil*) near Kyalami

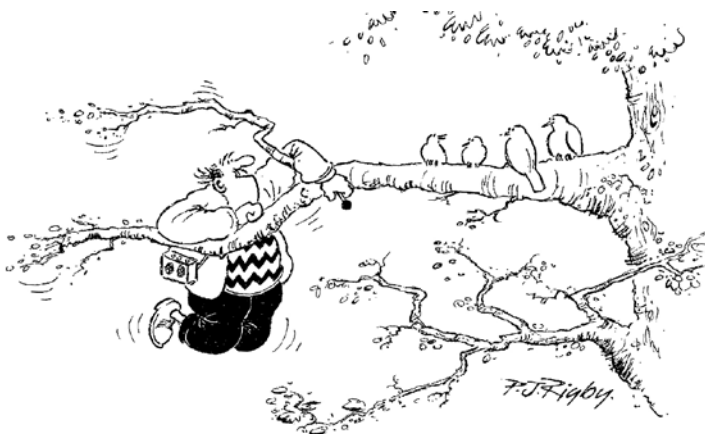
Purple Indigobird. Witpootblouvinkie: one bird was in a Glenvista, Johannesburg, garden, 14 Feb 2011 (LRo).

Observers / Waarnemers:

André Marx (AM)
 BirdLife Northern Gauteng members (BLNG)
 BirdLife President Ridge members (BPR)
 Bernie Orr (BO)
 Clive Kaplan (CK)
 Casper Rootman (CR)
 Elba Swart (ES)
 Errol de Beer (EdB)
 Etienne Marais (EM)
 Faansie & Ronel Peacock (F&RP)
 Gauteng birders (G birders)
 Geoff Lockwood (GLd)

George Cox (GCx)
 Hanneline Smit (HS)
 Jason Boyce (JBC)
 Johann & Lizet Grobbelaar (J&LG)
 Kevin Lavery (KLA)
 Lance Robinson (LRO)
 Lia Steen (LS)
 Lisl van Deventer (LvD)
 Liz Herholdt (LH)
 Michal Groenewald (MG)
 Neithard & Kathrin Graf von Dürckheim (N&KGvD)
 Niall Perrins (NP)
 Phil Penlington (PP)
 Pieter Botha (PB)
 Richard Montinaro (RM)
 Rob Geddes (RGd)
 Ron Searle (RS)
 Steve Kench (SK)
 Tamar Cassidy (TC)
 Tony Simons (TS)

This column is mainly concerned with observations of rarities and interesting sightings made within a 100 km radius of Gauteng, however observations made further afield are also welcome. Occasionally records are sourced from the Internet. All are encouraged to complete rarities documentation for regional and national rarities. Members are invited to submit details of sightings to André Marx at 083 411 7674, e-mail turaco@telkomsa.net



"For goodness sake will someone tweet or he'll be here all day!"

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

	2010	2009
	R	R
INCOME	53,432	54,245
Subscriptions	53,432	54,245
COST AND DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATION	28,311	41,131
<i>Laniarius</i>	28,311	41,131
GROSS INCOME	25,121	13,114
OTHER INCOME	50,104	75,435
Donations received	1,834	11,551
Advertising	550	1,795
Interest received	5,908	7,424
Sundry Income	240	-
Nett proceeds from outings	16,297	10,855
Nett proceeds from special events	11,293	15,753
Nett proceeds from trading activities	13,982	28,057
- Sales	88,184	83,369
- Cost of sales	(74,202)	(55,312)
TOTAL INCOME	75,225	88,549
LESS: EXPENDITURE	65,579	74,067
Audit fees	3,568	3,172
Marketing and publication relations	-	9,196
Bank charges	2,423	2,259
Bird ringing	6,000	11,000
Conservation	10,000	3,000
Evening meeting expenses	5,958	3,989
Functions	4,487	2,413
Leaders expenses	6,550	9,590
Printing and Stationary	1,001	3,878
Secretarial fees	23,000	21,000
Sundry expenses	1,067	677
Telephone & postage	1,525	3,893
(LOSS)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	9,646	14,482
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - beginning of the year	149,784	135,302
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - end of year	159,430	149,784

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 1 DECEMBER 2010

	2010	2009
	R	R
ASSETS		
Non current assets	1	1
Office equipment	1	1
At costs	4,851	4,851
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	4,850	4,850
Current assets	177,637	161,413
Bank Balance	59,046	44,057
Fixed deposit	94,535	89,032
Cash on hand and pre payments	12,284	2,216
Stock	11,772	26,108
TOTAL ASSETS	177,638	161,414
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves	159,430	149,784
Accumulated funds	159,430	149,784
Current liabilities	18,208	11,630
Creditors	18,208	11,630
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	177,638	161,414

Laniarius advertising rates (cost shown in rands)

Print ads:					Notes
	1 insert	2 inserts	3 inserts	4 inserts	
Back page	600	1 000	1 400	1 800	For printed ads: 1. advertiser to supply print-ready artwork for all advertising 2. ads can be placed in alternate issues 3. must be paid in advance
Full page	400	700	950	1 200	
Half page	250	425	600	750	
Quarter page	125	200	300	375	
Loose insert	300	500	700	900	
Smalls	50				5 lines/ad
The committee maintains the right not to accept any advertisement					

