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BirdLife Northern Gauteng
BirdLife Gauteng-Noord

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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 drie 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 foto's is altyd welkom.

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Credits

Front cover: Spotted Crane/Gevlekte Riethaan photographed by André Marx at Waterfall Estate, Midrand.
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

Hallo almal!

Nee, ek is nie die nuwe redakteur nie! *Laniarius* is op die oomblik so tussen-redakteurs. Phillip en Jill de Moor het bedank en 'n nuwe redakteur is nog nie aangewys nie.

André Marx het die redakteurswerk vir hierdie uitgawe gedoen maar is op die oomblik in Indië op vakansie. Ons hoop ons kry 'n artikel met baie foto's van Indië se interessante voëls, André!

Ek dink nie mense het altyd begrip vir hoeveel werk en tyd dit behels om 'n tydskrif soos *Laniarius* te kry in die formaat wat jy nou in jou hande het of op jou rekenaar of tablet se skerm sien nie, veral wanneer dit vrywillig/deeltyds/sonder betaling gedoen word. Mense moet gesmeek (en gedreig!) word om iets te skryf, die artikels moet deurgelees en geredigeer word, die volgorde moet bepaal word. Die uitlegpersoon (dis nou ek) moet sukkel om alles mooi ingepas te kry in die regte aantal bladsye, werk met swak foto's en natuurlik moes dit gister al by die drukkers gewees het. *Laniarius* word egter al vir baie jare beskou as een van die beste tydskrifte van al die BLSA-klubs en ons moet seker maak dit bly so.

This is once again an issue packed with interesting articles. For those of you who were not able to attend the AGM in February, we added the Financial Statements, as well as the Chairman's Report and the President's Address. Frik du Plooy, the BLNG Ringing Group Coordinator, also reports on the group's activities in 2015.

Philip Calinikos entertains us further with regard to the second part of his memories of 30 years of birding in Pretoria. Ernst Retief tells us all about a new BirdLife

Northern Gauteng challenge made possible through the use of the wonderful BirdLasser app which can be downloaded on your cellular phone or tablet.

Delien Vosloo and other members attended a weekend camp at Kurisa Moya in Magoebaskloof and, amongst other special birds, saw the Green Twinspot – first flying past in the forest and afterwards on the feeder in the garden. I think I have to seriously consider a trip to Kurisa Moya soon!

Annnali Swanepoel entertains us in her own special way with a trip report to Chrissiesmeer and also shares her memories of a few club members who sadly passed away over the last year.

Ingrid van Heerden tells us all about a visit to the rugged beauty of Marakele National Park with 11 fellow members of BLNG as experienced through her eyes.

Salomi Louw lewer gereeld bydraes en ek is altyd verstom oor haar waaghalsigheid om redelik afgeleë plekke vrou-alleen te besoek. Sy is egter nie onverskillig nie en keer gou terug as haar vroulike intuïsie haar waarsku dat dit nie veilig is nie.

Punda Maria and Pafuri, a very special part of our beloved Kruger National Park, was visited by Don Reid with the West Rand Honorary Rangers and he was privileged to see the display of two Pennant-winged Nightjars on a night drive. To add to this spectacular sighting, the nightjars posed a few times on the gravel road for photos!

I cannot mention every article, just page through and enjoy this packed edition!

Regards/Groete,

Drinie J van Rensburg



Chairman's Report/ Voorsittersverslag

Philip Calinikos

I would like to begin my report by mentioning a few things about our mother organisation, BirdLife South Africa. The CEO, Mark Anderson and his highly competent team continue with their impressive work and BLSA is now one of the leading conservation organisations in the country. This past year has seen BLSA take up residence in a beautiful new head office in Johannesburg which was acquired and built with funds that were specifically earmarked for this purpose by donors. The building is owned by the BirdLife National Trust which has been created to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation. Two very important publications were launched in the past year by BLSA. The first was the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of South Africa Directory and the accompanying IBA Status Report. This publication contains completely revamped and updated assessments of the 112 IBA's and will assist with conservation activities at these sites. The second publication was the 2015 Eskom Red Data of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland which covers the conservation status assessments of the threatened bird species in the region. Reviewing the conservation status of birds is exceptionally important as birds are indicators of the health of ecosystems and highlight changes that are detrimentally affecting them. BLSA's flagship publication, *African BirdLife* has also established itself as one of the leading bird-related magazines in the world and the past year's issues were of high quality. A huge amount of positive publicity was generated by BLSA's Tuluver campaign which was focussed on the plight of the continent's vulture species and coincided with Vulture Awareness Day. Another campaign which continues gaining strength is the annual Flufftail Festival which coincides with

World Wetland Day. BLSA has started a fundraising campaign to build a state of the art captive breeding facility for flufftails at the Pretoria National Zoological Gardens.

Turning towards our own club, I am happy to announce that our membership numbers have remained stable at around 400 fully paid up members. In addition to this there are many family members and we are busy with BLSA to update these records as well. This makes us the second largest affiliated BLSA club. Our programme of activities was again most comprehensive and I would like to thank our Activities Sub-Committee and in particular Wanda Louwrens for this. Wanda will be stepping down as chair of this sub-committee and she can be very proud of her achievements. Our activities included the Waterberg IBA Trek, visits to Kurisa Moya, Eshowe, Chrissiesmeer and Marakele as well as a KNP Birding Big Day event at Punda Maria. A successful wader identification course was run by Etienne Marais and we also participated in the BLSA Sasol Bird Fair at the Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens. Excellent monthly evening talks were held with a variety of bird- and non-bird related topics being covered. Our newsletter, *Laniarius* and website continued to inform our members and our Facebook site was very busy with postings.

On the conservation front, our club continues to make a significant contribution. Amanda le Roux, our conservation chairperson, arranged activities in the Waterberg IBA of which our club is the local conservation group. At this stage our efforts are primarily focussed on atlassing the remaining virgin pentads but we will be looking at expanding our efforts there in future. The club sponsored a third tracking device for Secretarybirds. Unfortunately our bird, Third

Time Lucky is no longer sending out signal and it is suspected that the device has failed. Our support of the Wonderboom Urban Verreux's Eagle Project at Wonderboom Nature Reserve continues and we are also actively involved with friends groups along both the Moreletaspruit and Hartbeesspruit.

Our Bird Ringing Group, which now boasts of 27 active A-ringers managed to ring an impressive 9 304 birds during the year of which 890 were retraps. One of our young ringers, Sascha Michel, was awarded the Owlet award by BLSA for his contribution to citizen science.

In conclusion I would like to thank our president, committee and sub-committee members for their dedicated support. I extend a special thank you goes to outgoing members

Wanda Louwrens, Debbie van Zyl, Philip and Jill de Moor. Annali Swanepoel has stepped in ably to handle our BLNG Alerts and Johan Slabbert has volunteered his company's assistance on our website and e-mail server. I would also like to thank Riana and Stoffel Botha for taking on our trading activities and for their contribution towards manning our stand at the Sasol Bird Fair. We would not be able to host the activities that we do without the support of our outing leaders and camp co-ordinators and we appreciate your unselfish contribution to our birding. Finally thank you to all of you, our members, without whom the Club would not be able to exist.

Yours in birding

Philip



President's Address

André Marx

It is my pleasure to present this year's President's report. A special welcome to Mark Anderson, the BLSA Chief Executive Officer and other BLSA staff members who are also in attendance at our AGM.

The last year was a good one for the club judging by the number of activities and the attendance at some of the events. In addition to the regular day outings and evening events which always draw a good crowd the club visited some interesting locations in our region including localities like Kurisa Moya in the Soutpansberg, the Waterberg, Nylsvley, Blouberg and Chrissiesmeer. Another superb trip to Punda Maria camp in the Kruger National Park took place as well. While I was only present at a few of these trips it is my understanding that they were all successful and presented members with the opportunity to enjoy birds in a totally different environment together with like-minded people. The mix of experienced and new members is always enjoyable at these trips, as it is then that

you see people enjoying birds and their habitat through new eyes when birders find their first Narina Trogon or their first Grey Crowned Crane. I understand a very special moment for many members was the sighting of a few male Pennant-winged Nightjars in the north of the Kruger during the recent visit there. The club has a long tradition of arranging many good birding trips to special locations and goes to a great deal of trouble to arrange experienced leaders for these trips. May these club weekend events continue to provide our members with special memories, as they always have done.

This last year saw the onset of one of our worst drought years and while one does not want to dwell on this it is interesting to see the effect it has had on the movement of birds and their occurrence in our area. Violet-eared and Blue Waxbills started to push into areas south of the bushveld during winter already and were turning up even in parts of Johannesburg. Other bushveld species such as Orange-breasted Bush Shrike and White-crested Helmet Shrike have been seen in unlikely localities. No doubt these

birds are seeking better foraging opportunities and this phenomenon has occurred during drought years before, but it is nevertheless fascinating to observe. Many of us record these movements by taking part in the national bird atlas project, SABAP2, much of which has been said at these meetings before. You can now participate just by loading the app onto your smartphone if you have one.

Why for instance have we seen an influx of Spotted Crakes, an uncommon summer visitor, to the region, with a number of birds being found recently? This species has turned up in localities at Marievale and even at Midrand in a suburban area. Local birders have enjoyed this bonanza and have been able to add these birds to their life list at localities that are virtually on their doorstep. I live on the northern edge of Joburg not too far from Midrand and came across a Common Whitethroat in a small bushed area recently, a first for me in my local birding patch! We have also had records of Red Phalarope, Striped Pipit, Black and Bar-tailed Godwit. Even more common birds are in abundance. I cannot remember when last I saw such large numbers of the innocuous Red-billed Quelea in urban areas. They seemed to be everywhere this summer. In any event, we trust that normal rainfall patterns will return soon so that the birds can resume their normal lives. But it is

certainly fascinating to observe and document these changes.

There are always a handful of people who assist the club behind the scenes in various ways. My thanks go to the various individuals in the club who do a sterling job as volunteers and who help behind the scenes, either by serving on one of our committees, leading the occasional outing, or helping with arrangements at events that the club arranges. We have a long history of people showing dedicated and unbending support for the club. Their continued support is of great value and is appreciated and helps make this club what it is. A few people have had to stand down from their portfolios and we are at that point where the committee will be grateful for any interested parties to step forward if they have the time to serve on the committee or even in a support role on one of the sub-committees.

Tonight we have the pleasure of being entertained by Mark Anderson, the very able and knowledgeable chairman of BLSA. I plan to enjoy the presentation this evening along with you. I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening's proceedings and I look forward to another great year with the club.

Thank you.
André

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BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 R	2014 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	285,140	317,617
Bank Balance	33,249	21,456
Fixed deposit	180,238	170,658
Petty Cash	963	3,603
Prepayments and Advances made	69,830	121,300
Sundry Debtors	860	600
TOTAL ASSETS	285,141	317,618
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves	216,947	173,965
Accumulated funds	216,947	173,965
Current liabilities	68,194	143,653
Amounts received in advance	45,540	128,775
Ringers Trust Account	11,580	10,879
Sundry Creditors	11,074	3,999
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	285,141	317,618

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015 R	2014 R
INCOME	72,995	71,020
Subscriptions	72,995	71,020
OTHER INCOME	79,990	32,040
Donations received	7,310	12,555
Advertising received	3,000	875
Interest received	10,217	8,213
Other income	11,800	3,926
Nett proceeds from outings and camps	14,189	2,630
Nett proceeds from courses and special events	32,923	3,841
Nett proceeds from trading activities	551	-
TOTAL INCOME	152,985	103,060
LESS: EXPENDITURE	110,003	122,036
Accounting fees	4,430	4,485
Bank charges	2,835	2,173
Bird ringing	10,000	6,500
Committee meeting expenses	4,000	-
Conservation	8,166	9,875
Donations made	750	6,000
Evening meeting expenses	5,702	6,337
AGM and Function expenses	2,694	1,924
Marketing and Public Relations	-	3,037
Leaders expenses	7,750	9,300
Printing and Stationery - General	1,712	4,425
Printing, envelopes and postage - <i>Laniarius</i>	27,395	34,705
Secretarial fees	33,000	30,000
Sundry expenses	180	1,361
Telephone & postage	339	864
Insurance	1,050	1,050
(LOSS)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	42,982	(18,976)
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - beginning of the year	173,965	192,941
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - end of year	216,947	173,965

Brief aan die redakteur:

Geagte Phillip en Jill

Toe ek vanoggend *Laniarius* No 129 in die hand neem om dit te bêre, het ek onthou van 'n bydrae wat daarin verskyn, en wat heelwat van my Afrikaanssprekende vriende aansienlik ontstel het. Ek kon self nie glo dat dit gepubliseer is nie.

In "Redaksioneel" word lesers gewaarsku oor die "very acid letter .. insisting that Afrikaans names are inferior to the English ones". Elke mens is heeltemal geregtig op hulle eie opinie oor die beste name vir voëls, maak nie saak hoe belaglik dit is om te veralgemeen oor iets wat oor die 900 verskillende items bevat nie. Wanneer die skrywer egter skryf, "The Afrikaans names of birds are infantile in the extreme and attest to the mental simplicity of the locals," kan die publikasie van daardie brief op geen gronde regverdig word nie. Dit is eenvoudig 'n veralgemeende, vernederende stelling oor 'n groep mense, wat elke lid van daardie groep afkraak.

Die publikasie van sulke materiaal in *Laniarius* stel BirdLife Gauteng-Noord nie net bloot aan regseise nie, weens die vernederende aard daarvan nie, maar dit kan ook maklik daartoe lei dat Afrikaanse lede vervreemd begin voel, en besluit om eerder nie meer lede van die klub te wees nie. Dit sal werklik tragies wees.

Ek versoek u dus vriendelik, dog dringend, om die aangeleentheid nie bloot te ignoreer, asof die publikasie nooit plaasgevind het nie, maar om daadwerklik op te tree soos u goed dink.

Die uwe

**Stephan Terblanche
Faerie Glen, Pretoria**

Redakteur se reaksie: Die oorspronklike artikel waarna hierbo verwys word was bedoel om van 'n humoristiese aard te wees en moet in daardie konteks gelees word. Dit was nie bedoel om aanstoot te gee nie en verskoning word aangebied as iemand dit in 'n ander lig gesien het.

Thirty years of birding in Pretoria (Part 2)

Philip Calinikos

Erratum: In Part one of this article published in *Laniarius* No. 131 I stated that the Hartbeesspruit stream ultimately flows into Rietvlei Dam. However, this was incorrect as it actually flows into the Roodeplaat Dam.

THE DAWN CHORUS

It is so pleasurable to lie in bed and listen to the birds announcing the breaking of the day. Karoo and Kurrichane Thrushes are two of the early starters and are occasionally joined by the less common Groundscraper Thrush. The tiny Cape White-eye makes an extraordinarily loud

contribution to the chorus while the fluted calls of the Cape Robin-Chat add some melody. In summer the tchee-tcheesh call of the beautiful African Paradise Flycatcher and the bubbling call of Burchell's Coucal add a tropical flavour to the mix. The harsh kwaa's of the Hadedah act as crashing cymbals to jolt you from your dozing. Dark-capped Bulbul, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Cape and Southern Grey-headed Sparrows, Streaky-headed Seed-eater, Grey Go-away Bird are other members of the swelling orchestra. A pair of Southern Boubou joins in as duetting vocalists while family groups of Green Woodhoopoe and Arrow-marked Babbler swell the

chorus ranks. The singers are soon joined by the feeders which have arrived for the seed and crushed mealie buffet breakfast. The squabbling horde includes Laughing, Cape Turtle and Red-eyed Dove as well as a flock of Helmeted Guineafowl that fly in from over the Colbyn Ridge. On a good day it is quite possible to log over twenty five birds before one even gets out of bed!

BIRDING WITH CANIS LUPUS

One of our other regular activities is to take Fred and Jock on a leisurely stroll around the neighbourhood. This is done sans binoculars and hearing plays a primary role in depicting which birds are in our midst. Birds that we regularly see and hear on these walks include Rose-ringed Parakeet. These birds have recently colonised Colbyn and there is now a resident flock of six birds. There are patches of wild grass along a section of road adjacent to the Presidential Golf Course. When in seed, these are excellent for seed-eaters such as the Yellow-fronted and Black-throated Canaries that explode out of the grasses flashing their yellow rumps. The cute little Cut-throat Finches show splashes of white in their tail feathers as they take off. Many of the roads are well wooded, primarily with alien trees such as the Jacaranda which when in flower is a sight that attracts many overseas tourists to Colbyn. The trees provide nesting cavities which are exploited by both Cardinal and Golden-tailed Woodpeckers and can be located by their characteristic calls. Other cavity nesters that are regularly encountered are Crested and Black-collared Barbet. The brood parasite of the Barbets, the Lesser Honeyguide, is often seen flashing its white tail feathers. Whereas, the Greater Honeyguide is much less common and only occasionally heard. The zig-zag flight of the breeding pair of Brown-backed Honeybird betrays their presence. This is a fairly common species but is so difficult to spot due to its unobtrusive nature when not breeding. The north-western section of Colbyn abuts the Colbyn ridge and here we find a section of



Philip Galimkos

Thick-billed Weaver/Dikbekwewer

indigenous habitat which often contains Long-billed Crombec, Chinspot Batis, Bar-throated Apalis, Spotted Flycatcher (in summer), Fiscal Flycatcher, Brown-crowned Tchagra and Black-backed Puffback. This section also contains a tall sand bank which provides a nesting site for Brown-hooded Kingfisher and the resident pair is often encountered nearby. The Ridge is quite rocky in parts and therefore excellent habitat for Cinnamon-breasted Bunting which is easily located when in song with its distinctive “chip-chip-ip-ereee” or “cha-cha-cha”. Flowering trees and shrubs attract the nectar feeders including Amethyst and White-bellied Sunbird as well as the occasional Black-headed Oriole. The Colbyn Bowling Club attracts a number of terrestrial species such as African Wattled, Blacksmith and Crowned Lapwings as well as Southern Fiscal which loves hunting from strategic perches above the greens. Both Red-faced and Speckled Mousebirds enjoy searching for food amongst the many shrubs and bushes that surround the greens.

THE FLY OVERS

It is debatable whether one should count birds flying over your property in your garden

total. We have opted to do so and can therefore list species such as African Sacred Ibis. These birds roost at the LC de Villiers Sport Grounds dams and are a beautiful sight as they fly over in large slip-streaming formations to and from their feeding grounds somewhere to the north-west of us. Other fly-overs have included Black-headed, Grey and Purple Heron, African Darter, White-breasted and Reed Cormorant, White-faced Whistling Duck, Egyptian Goose, Western Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Pied Crow and Red-winged Starling.

ODDS AND SODS

The beauty about birding is that one never knows what is going to turn up next. There are quite a number of species that have surfaced from time to time and which I would unscientifically classify as “vagrants” to the area. A confused White-browed Sparrow-weaver turned up for a couple of seasons and built a series of nests without any hope of attracting a mate. He disappeared soon after. Red-throated

Wryneck was regularly seen for many years but has seemingly now disappeared. A Natal Spurfowl popped in regularly for a feed off the Ridge for a couple of seasons and then was either eaten itself or moved on. Likewise Jameson’s Firefinch were around for a while whereas Red-billed Quelea arrives in numbers during what appear to be the drier years. Other occasional visitors have been both Red-backed and Crimson-breasted Shrike, Capped Wheatear, White-throated Robin-Chat, Wattled Starling, Rattling Cisticola and White-fronted Bee-eater. At a time when our swimming pool was exceptionally green, both Mallard and Hamerkop popped in to investigate. With the inclusion of these odds and sods, our list currently stands at 172 species... and there are still opportunities to add a few more. With the advent of the Birdlasser App it is now also possible to provide a little more meaning to one’s birding and I try and use every opportunity to submit full protocol bird lists for the pentads in the area to SABAP2. Here’s looking forward to species number 173! 🐦



“Quiet now, let’s see what this one makes of it.”

BirdLife Northern Gauteng Year Challenge

How many birds can you record?

A chance encounter at the Colbyn Wetland Nature Reserve in early April 2016, resulted in a great competition being unearthed between the partnership of BirdLasser and BLNG.

BirdLasser is a mobile app which allows you to log birds in real time using your phone or tablet. It is easy to use and it will only take a few minutes to download, install the app, register your first trip card and start to log sightings. You can also use the app to submit your data to SABAP2 and other causes such as the BirdLife South Africa Threatened Species Cause. The app can also be used to update your life list and compete in various challenges.

One such challenge is the BirdLife Northern Gauteng Year Challenge! Your sightings, together with the sightings of all the other people who have registered for this challenge, are automatically loaded onto a web page. This web page will allow participants to see where club members have birded, how many species were seen by each person and, more importantly, how many have been seen by all the members in total. Can the club see 700 species together in one year in South Africa?

Absolutely! It will be difficult, but the more people that register for the challenge, the easier it will be to reach that target!

How to join in the fun:

- Download the app
- Register and begin logging.
- Then send your email address and the name you want to appear on the website to Ernst Retief (ernst.retief@birdlife.org.za). He will add you to the challenge.

All the sightings you have logged since 1 January will be added to the 2016 challenge.

To see the webpage with the current standings visit the URL below:

<http://www.birdlasser.com/private/events/BLNG2016>

BirdLasser can be downloaded on your phone, whether iOS, Android, or Windows, by going to the app store for your device.

Ernst Retief

***BLSA Regional Conservation Manager:
Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State***

Can different individuals of the same species have different dialects?

Yes. Some birds from different parts of the country have quite distinctive differences in their song; and though these may be hard for the human ear to detect, they have the effect of only attracting females from the same local area. There may be a good reason for this: a local female is more likely to be adapted to breed in local conditions than is a passing stranger. By singing in the local dialect, therefore, a male maximises his chances of attracting a suitable mate. Eventually a particular dialect may differ so much from the original that its singers become reproductively isolated from neighbouring populations; and after time may even evolve into a separate species.

Kurisa Moya, Magoebaskloof, naweekkamp 12-15 Maart 2015

Delien Vosloo

Donderdag 12 Maart 2015. Die motor is alreeds vroeg klaar gepak en ons vat die pad Noorde toe. Daar word by Bela Bela afgedraai van die snelweg om by die Toeka padstal skaaptjoppies te koop en natuurlik van die uitsonderlike toiletgeriewe gebruik te maak!

Duskant Polokwane eet ons brunch en ry dan met die R71 Magoebaskloof toe. Die roete-aanwysings op die inligtingsvonkpos wat ons vooraf ontvang het, werk perfek en Eva (ons GPS) se aanwysings is selfs onnodig!

Daar aangekom verwelkom Pieter en Joelna Heslinga ons by die plaashuis. Wat 'n lieflike plek in die berge en ons het die hele plaasopstal vir ons self!

Ons groep bestaan uit die volgende: Delien Vosloo, Danie Perold, Imme Shipham, Glynis Pickworth, Johan Pretorius, Pieter en Joelna Heslinga en twee nuwe voëlkykers Tielman en Friedel Nieuwoudt. Ons pak uit en skrop nes.

Die namiddag is David, een van die gidse, daar om ons op 'n stappie die woud in te neem!

Nog voor ons die bos bereik sien ons die Suidelike Swie en vlieg 2 Groenkolpensies

skrams oor ons koppe verby. By 'n voëlskuiling soek ons na Kaneelduifies, maar word instede verras met die Gestreepte Kanarie. 'n Piet-my-vrou sit so duidelik dat selfs foto's geneem kan word. Dieper in die bos roep 3 Knysnalories en vlieg bokant ons koppe. Ons word ook verras met 'n Geelstreepboskruiper – nie baie duidelik nie, maar ons kon sien hoe dit teen die boomstam opkruip. Daar is ook Gewone Willies, Kaapse Glasogies, 'n Bloukuifvlieëvanger, Kleinbyvanger en Swartoogboslaksman.

Terug by die opstal is daar Kaapse Vuurvinkies wat by 'n voerplek eet en ook 'n Groenkolpensie!

Almal bewonder die pragtige sonsondergang en die manne begin vuurmaak terwyl die vrouens in die kombuis skarrel met die bykosse. Daar word vroeg ingekruip want die volgende dag wil David, ons gids, al 5:30 in die pad val!

Dis Vrydag die 13de en ons is op pad na die Woodbush woud op soek na die Woudpapegai, wat ons ongelukkig nie daar kry nie, maar ons kry wel die 'n Bloukatokoeroe, Witkoljanfrederik, Lawaaimakerjanfrederik en Gryskopspeg.



Die Kurisa Moya groep met 2 van die gidse

Vandaar is ons na die Debegeni Waterval waar ons die Bergkwikkie raakloop en uitspan vir 'n teetjie en eetdingetjie.

Daarna is ons na 'n Vlermuisvalk se nes net buite Tzaneen, waar ons bevoorreg was om die volwasse valk, sy vroultjie sowel as 'n jongeling te sien. David wys vir ons 'n uitwerpsel/braaksel van die valk waarin ons die kakebeentjies, tande en ander gebeentes van 3 vlermuise kry! ('n Vlermuisvalk kan tot 4 vlermuise op 'n aand eet, die bene en hare wat hy dan later met sy mond uitwerp. Amper soos 'n kat wat 'n haarbol uitwerp!) Baie interessant!

Vandaar is ons terug Tzaneen toe om na Dikbekfrette wat in 'n plaaslike inwoner se tuin woon te gaan kyk, maar hulle was ongelukkig nie tuis nie. Ons sien wel Rooirugfrette op pad!

By Tzaneen se damwal het ons die Rooiwangtinkinkie en die Klein Heuningwyser gekry. Oppad terug opstal toe laat David ons by "The Owl Cottage" stop waar ons verras word met 'n paar Woudpapegaie! Dankie David vir daardie lifer!

Dit was 'n rowwe dag en ons het eers na 15:00 tuis gekom. Die aand het ons weer lekker vuur gemaak, gebraai en vroeg in die bed geklim.

David is ook 'n kenner van die bome van die omgewing en hy en Tielman, wat in bome belangstel, het lekker gesels en inligting uitgeruil.

Saterdag was 'n rustiger dag maar vir my die hoogtepunt van die naweek. Ons is weer vroeg die berge in. Dis koud en reëniger

daarbo en die wind waai sterk. Die paadjie is steil die berg uit. Hoër op stop ons by 'n klompie proteabosse en klim uit op soek na die Rooiborssuikervoël. Ons het nie 10 treë gestap nie toe sien ons 3 van hulle! Die mooiste gesig in 'n lang tyd! Terwyl die wind ysig waai en die mis oor die bosse aangerol kom, sit die Suikervoël pragtig op 'n struik terwyl die stert wapper in die wind en hy moet klou om nie af te waai nie! Almal is tjoepstil en gaap die voël aan terwyl David van oor tot oor glimlag oor ons waardering!

Hiervandaan is ons laer die berg af waar ons na die Kortklouewerik soek. Nogal moeilik om te kry, maar ons was gelukkig en sien een, hoewel nie goed nie, maar tog! Teen 11:30 was ons terug op die plaas en geniet 'n rustige middag. Laatmiddag is ons weer na die voëlskuiling in die woud toe waar ons 'n Kaneelduifie en sy maatjie kry. Terug by die plaasopstal is ons weer na die voerder toe en kry ons sowaar weer 'n Groenkolpensie en kan daar hierdie keer foto's geneem word!

Daardie aand brand die vuur hoog na 'n genoeglike naweek en baie lifers vir baie van ons. Dankie vir die gasvrou Lisa en die gidse David, Paul en Samson wat ons die hele naweek begelei het. Sonder hulle sou ons maar min van die voëls gevind en raakgesien het!

Sondagmôre is daar gepak en die terugtog aangepak. Wat 'n heerlike naweek! Dankie vir elkeen op die komitee wat hierdie naweek moontlik gemaak het en dankie vir die medevoëlkykers wat die naweek so aangenaam gemaak het! 🐦

How do birds digest their food?

After swallowing, food passes down a bird's oesophagus, either into the 'crop' (a storage area in the throat) or directly into the first section of its stomach, where digestive juices begin to dissolve it. Afterwards it passes into the second section, known as the gizzard, whose powerful muscular walls grind hard substances – effectively doing the same job as a mammal's teeth. However, some food items such as fur and bones are impossible to digest, and are regurgitated as a 'pellet'. Owls are particularly well known for their pellets, which can often be found beneath trees at regular roosting sites.

The-Lady-Of-The-Map

Annali Swanepoel

I was drawn into the exciting world of birdlife in general as well as Birdlife Northern Gauteng in particular, by chance. This occurred at a club meeting that found myself and a friend on our way to Chrissiesmeer. Soon, the world would become our oyster.

A major milestone for the conservation of grasslands and wetlands was reached on 22 January 2014 when the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, in a moment of surprisingly astute resolve, declared 60,203 hectares around Chrissiesmeer protected. Prior to this Chrissiesmeer was already on every self-respecting birder's bucket list.

The directions sent by the club for Chrissiesmeer seemed pretty straight forward although a bit abbreviated. Against my better judgement, I put the ancient "AA Quality Assured Map of South Africa" back on the shelf and grabbed the club's directions instead.

We exited via the N14 for Hendrina to join the other lucky members. We were immediately met with a swirling mass of low-slung and ominously dark clouds. Just then my cellphone emitted its singularly piercing and eerie Common Loon call. It was our coordinator advising us to switch to Google Maps as road works ahead made rubbish of the forwarded directions. Apparently some birders had gone off onto exciting and uncharted tracks; made U-turns short of Maputo; explored alternative routes into Swaziland, and re-routed from Pongola and environs.

I considered my next move as I slowed down – lips pursed. I do a respectable imitation of sane but very close to the surface I am paranoid and given to luminous and multicolored, private histrionics. My birding/travel partner – a large and vaguely forbidding lady, briefly gazed into my face with a look that made it clear I was the most tedious dimwit that she had ever encountered. Then she crisply informed me as I pulled off the road: "Just carry on and somehow we'll

know which way to go when we get to the road works." The fact that she didn't find our situation at all worrying, was profoundly disturbing. Right there I had an epiphany. She was as deliriously demented as myself. I have found a soul mate, albeit on the other side of the spectrum.

Under controlled circumstances I was comfortably in command of Google Maps but this was nowhere near controlled. As my sweaty little hands anxiously fumbled with my cell to activate the map application an impenetrable white veil descended upon us, and with it the drumming of roaring rain.

In previous lives I used to trust the "Lady-of-the-Map" more than my pastor, my mother and News 24 put together. Even though she did sound middle-aged and from a background of sticky buns and baked beans; her instructions were always encouragingly easy, as she voiced certainty and safe arrival. That sweet voice was now all but drowned out by the thundering storm.

With the cell stuck to my ear, and sporting a full throttle panic attack, I pulled back onto the tar and gamely pressed on. Visions of an arresting Huisgenoot headline relieved the wipers' swiping across the windshield – "Birders missing



15 years found between Nowhere and Not-Here.” A picture of the two of us, emaciated, dressed in filthy rags, and toothless vacuous grins blossoming on our sunburnt faces, told the rest of the story.

Road signs lunged out of the curtain of rain and proclaimed names that had no bearing on the crumpled directions in my steering hand. “Liefgekozen” – that one was as far off as True North was from True South. “Longview” was an even more dishonest rendition of our predicament. Then “Battle of Chrissiesmeer” jumped at us. A tremulous thought scampered into life. Things were going to work out.

At a sign-less T-junction, the “Lady-of-the-Map” found her voice and directed us to turn right. Shortly afterwards we drove into a Chrissiesmeer that was dewy-faced and sparkling. The storm had just passed. Every blade of grass and every leafy tree glistened. And thus began a perfectly enchanting birding weekend bar a surprise.

We found ourselves on the receiving end of an unexpected example of fair play. We were the unlucky, late ones who drew the outside room. For nighttime ablutions and other related needs, we had to trudge across an open, lightless street-side veranda, unlock an unwieldy front door and find our way to the bathroom. “Amnesia” added an extra measure of excitement: she forgot to bring a torch. I wanted to cause a scene about this but then as I crossed the veranda at dawn I decided nothing was going to dampen my joy in being here. A glorious sunrise swept down the grassy veld, across the lake and stole every trace of resentment.

The next day we followed the footpath from the house towards the lake. It became a puddle-muddied track that beckoned us to a helpful iron

stile. Around a clump of trees filled with the song of Red-chested Cuckoos, were some graves. The epitaphs long faded were now completely gone. As we carried on in the general direction of the lake we crossed a brooklet. Warblers darted among swaying reeds, and challenged our identification skills.

On our left was another grave. This one however, was perfectly preserved. It was a small one for a boy of two, who died over a hundred years ago – a gentle reminder of the little town’s past that was at once startlingly painful and puffated-up proud.

It was here that General Louis Botha outwitted General Smith-Dorrien. At 2:30 am on the morning of the 6th of February 1901, Botha sent his bravest commandos into the British camp to cut the ropes picketing the cavalry horses. The commandos then drove the horses from the camp. The British lost its cavalry, the battle, and the chance to capture Botha. This effectively halted Smith-Dorrien in his tracks. Twelve thousand conceited British soldiers were no competition for the fierce determination of brazen Boer bravery.

Closer to the water cattle dotted the landscape. An African Fish Eagle called. Eventually we found the raptor perched on a pole. It sat there splendidly formidable.

The weekend was made even more perfect the next day when I bagged an African Rail for my life list.

By Sunday we had seen enormous flocks of Flamingoes, Black-crowned Night Herons in beavies never seen before and a cheeky Spike-heeled Lark right next to us on the road, challenging us to take a closer look at him.

It was a simply wonderful weekend! Albeit, with a rough and adventurous start. 🦅

How do migrating birds find their way?

This is one of the greatest of all natural mysteries. There is no one, single method used by birds to find their way; instead most pick and choose from a number of orientation tools. The most important are the earth’s magnetic field, and visual compasses such as the sun (for daytime migrants), and the moon and stars (for night-time ones). Other useful tricks include the ability to perceive polarised light (especially when clouds obscure the sun), and ‘vector navigation’ – similar to the ‘point-and compass’ method used by early sailors.

Scaling 'The Towers' in Marakele National Park

Ingrid van Heerden

A visit to Marakele National Park has been on my bucket list for a long time. Earlier this year, the BLNG organised a weekend to explore this relatively unknown corner of South Africa, but alas support appeared to be lacking and the event had to be cancelled. So when a second chance to visit the dry North-West presented itself over the weekend of 30th October to 1 November 2015, Steve and I booked well in advance and despite the merciless drought that has this region in its grip, we were not disappointed.

What's in a name?

Marakele may mean 'The Place of Herding' or 'Place of Sanctuary' in Tswana depending on which source you consult. For a short time after its founding in 1994, the park was also known as Kransberg National Park. The park is within the Waterberg Biosphere of Limpopo Province and is situated close to Thabazimbi. From a historic point of view, the area with its breathtaking scenery is believed to have inspired Eugene Marais, the famous naturalist, poet and ethologist, who made the Waterberg his home for 16 years.

Having at last fulfilled my wish to see this amazing area of malaria-free Bushveld I can well imagine that the scenery and atmosphere, the towering mountains and rocky crags did contribute to Eugene Marais' creative output. No one who has scaled the heights of 'The Towers' or looked out over the Bushveld stretching to the hazy blue horizon, can remain untouched by the power of Marakele's magic.

BLNG camp

Twelve members of BLNG participated in the Bona Thaba camp. The Bona Thaba Lodge, is owned by Pierre and Lona Moster, who made us feel very welcome and were kindness

personified. Bona Thaba is a very well equipped wildlife and hunting farm situated approximately 11 km from the eastern section of Marakele. Every facility was at our disposal and Pierre went the extra mile to ensure that we had wonderful outings in his 4x4 game viewing vehicle to Sundowner Rock and Koedoe Pan, on Saturday in the late afternoon and Sunday in the very early morning, respectively.

The lodge has all the necessary mod cons from en suite bathrooms to airconditioners to a lapa and most precious of all considering the soaring ambient temperatures, a swimming pool! Now that was a very welcome watering hole for desiccated birders after a long day in the sun and wind! The seriousness of the drought was brought home to all of us when we saw African bees clustering around one end of the pool towards evening to have a sip of water as their sun-downers. Pierre had also resorted to feeding the game and provided water for the parched birds and animals.

Neithard Graf von Dürkheim, our leader for the Bona Thaba-Marakele weekend deserves special mention for the amount of planning and care he put into his preparations and the way he kept each member of the group informed and inspired. Thank you Neithard and Kathrin for making this such an enjoyable and interesting weekend!

Saturday – Scaling 'The Towers'

On Friday evening, Neithard had briefed our group about the programme for Saturday which entailed birding in the western section of Marakele National Park from the time the gates open (07:00) till about 10:00, when the famous Cape vulture colony would get going in the thermals surrounding 'The Towers' in the north-eastern section of the park.

Neithard was very clear that anyone who suffered from vertigo or fear of heights, had

problems with navigating precipitous mountain roads that can accommodate only one car at a time, or was in any other way anxious about scaling 'The Towers' should rather explore the flatter areas of the park, which some of our group elected to do.

The Towers owe their name to the communication towers and satellite dishes perched on the peak of the mountain.

Those of us who enjoy 4x4 driving like Steve, and those who will go anywhere and do anything to satisfy their curiosity like me, followed our trusty guide up to The Towers. Oh boy was it worth it to take on the precipitous drive. The views of the towering rocks and plunging valleys were thrilling to behold and when we did meet oncoming traffic there are minuscule 'lay-byes' where one can pull over and hold one's breath till the other car has passed and you are able to return to the relative safety of the 'road'.

While we were navigating the hairpin bends and exclaiming about the wonderful scenery and prolific birdlife, I noticed that for many kilometres there were signs of elephant activity – stripped branches scattered on the narrow road and heaps of cannon-ball droppings. Then suddenly when we swung around a

particularly sharp bend, there was an elephant on the side of the road munching happily and not in the least disturbed by us or the altitude. Shades of Hannibal!

The climbing abilities of these pachyderms has always fascinated me. To think that despite their massive bulk they are able to plod all the way up a steep mountain and down again (they probably have to engage low range when they descend so as not to tumble head over heels!), is amazing.

And still we climbed and clung to the 'lay-byes' and forged ahead until at last we reached the windswept top of the mountain. The welcoming committees were waiting: Firstly a trio of klipspringer arranged like statues on a massive rock – one of the best sightings in years of these stubby, little antelope with their neat hooves that make them so sure-footed. Secondly we were treated to the most wonderful exhibition of trust between humans and birds I have ever experienced.

The birds at the top of the Towers

No sooner had we settled down on the lichen-decorated boulders in the shade of a gnarled tree to eat our sandwiches, than





Ingrid van Heerden

Cape Rock-thrush/Kaapse Kliplyster

a trio of confident montane birds appeared to share our meal. The smallest was the Cape Bunting wearing his russet dinner jacket and stripy black mask. Next came the elegant black, brown and cream coloured Buff-streaked Chat, soon to be joined by the larger Cape Rock-Thrush sporting a russet breast and a handsome slate blue head.

That these birds were habituated to humans was immediately evident when the Cape Chat made off with a piece of an apple I had placed on the boulder while I ate my sandwich. The twinkle in his eye clearly said: "You've had some apple, now it's my turn!" This al fresco lunch was such a treat. Imagine having three sought-after bird species joining your picnic – that is something that does not happen often. In the meanwhile the altitude ensured that we were cooled down by the gusting wind and were able to feast our eyes in all directions on vistas of the Waterberg.

As if this was not sufficient birding luxury, the thermals had evidently reached peak strength and one by one the most magnificent vultures soared past our eyrie. They were predominantly Cape Vultures, but a stately Lappet-faced Vulture also treated us to a serene fly-past.

There is no greater longing than to be an earth-bound creature and to watch birds of prey sail through the blue sky. May they be forever free.

Mad dogs and Englishmen?

Not content with being treated to lunch with the mountain birds and an aerobic

display by the vultures, the enthusiastic BLNGs set off to explore the top of the mountain in search of Gurney's Sugarbird, another special species that lives on top of The Towers. Because of the drought we were not confident that the Transvaal proteas or sugarbushes (*Protea rubropilosa*) were producing any flowers yet and that we would be lucky enough to see Gurney's Sugarbird.

After some brisk walking we reached a particularly large and robust sugarbush which not only had flowers, but a resident Gurney's Sugarbird feeding happily from one of the flowers – a photographers delight. Once our eyes were trained to identify the budding proteas, we also saw more sugarbirds with their long tails and curved beaks. Other specials of the mountain were the Mocking Cliff-Chat, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Streaky-headed Seed-eater and Black Flycatcher.

At this stage the wind had dropped and without its cooling effect the old song of "Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noonday sun!" sprang to mind and I for one beat a hasty retreat to the relative shade of the cars and the bliss of reviving myself with a freezer brick and some liquid refreshment. Catching a glimpse of my scarlet face, Steve suggested that we add 'Wild turkey' to the bird list!

Return to Bona Thaba

The descent from The Towers is also exciting and requires careful and skilful driving, but all in all, this visit to the high ground is so very worthwhile that all visitors to Marakele should

consider attempting it. Unless you suffer from vertigo, do yourself a favour and scale the heights of The Towers, have lunch with the mountain birds, admire the soaring vultures, look for the sugarbirds if the sugarbushes are in flower and scan the endless vistas of the Waterberg.

The day was drawing to a close when we returned to Bona Thaba and quickly had a blissful dip in the pool. At about 17:00 Pierre loaded all 12 of us on to his Land Cruiser for our visit to Sundowner Rock. This is an amazing domed outcrop of sedimentary rock that is reminiscent of a moon landscape. It affords a breathtaking view of the surrounding Bushveld and the Waterberg mountains and provided the perfect spot for sundowners. Pierre entertained us with stories of the caves in the area which are populated by millions of bats, breeding leopards and other beasts seeking a safe haven. Our ancestors shared these caves with the other species and some of the rock faces are adorned with ancient art. It dawned on me that one could explore the Waterberg for an entire lifetime and not exhaust its treasures.

The long eventful and enjoyable day ended with a jolly braai at the boma. Then it was early to bed in preparation for the pre-dawn call to visit Koedoes Pan.

The brazen sun

On Sunday morning most of the energetic members of our group were up before sparrow's for the outing to Koedoes Pan. A few of us elected to sleep in a bit and rather spend time birding around the camp. In German there is a saying: "Warum in die Ferne schweifen, wenn das Gute liegt so nah?" (Why search the ends of the earth, when the best is right here at home? (With apologies to Goethe!)).

How true this proved to be for Bona Thaba. Because of the merciless drought, animals and birds congregated around the lodge for food, water and shade. We saw Meyer's Parrot, Crested and Natal Francolin, Helmeted Guinea Fowl, Grey Go-away-bird, flocks of amazingly

silent Southern Pied Babblers, White-eye, Southern Masked Weaver, and a charming pair of Magpie Shrikes loving tending their nest despite the shimmering heat.

Cuckoos (Red-chested, Black, Jacobin and Klaas's), sunbirds (Malachite and White-bellied), starlings (Violet-backed and Cape Glossy), woodpeckers (Golden-tailed, Cardinal and Bearded) and amazingly verbal Green Wood-Hoopoe.

The shrike family were also prolific with Black-backed Puffback, Brubru, Southern White-Crowned Shrike, and both Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Brush-shrike providing great sightings. But our own BLNG Bird, the Crimson-breasted Shrike gave me the greatest thrill with repeated close and wonderful sightings. It was as if our emblem bird, was comforting us that despite the soaring temperatures which reached 40°C or more, the brazen, merciless sun that made our heads spin and the dry as dust terrain, birds of great beauty still inhabit the Waterberg and shall survive until the blessed rains return.

Bird count

When the intrepid and hot Koedoes Pan adventurers returned to camp, we gathered in the lapa to enjoy breakfast and check our sightings. After some discussion and repeated counting, Kathrin announced that we had seen a total of 98 bird species in the Bona Thaba and Marakele region on this weekend. A total that is not to be sneezed at considering the harsh drought conditions.

I am sure that all of us hope and pray that this beautiful and unique area of our country will be blessed with abundant rain so that the dessicate veld and plants can recover and the flora and fauna that are so special will flourish once more.

Now that BLNG is giving more attention to the Marakele area as a Biodiversity Hotspot, I am already looking forward to future outings in the Waterberg which inspires all who experience its rugged beauty. 🌲

I Am Missing You You changed me a bird and a smile at a time

Annali Swanepoel

I was born skeptical and suspicious. These trademarks turned somewhere in my frontal cortex around the age of ten into neurotic and hysterical.

My bulwark against the wily vagaries of life was planning. I obsessively strove to be prepared for all and any eventuality. Holidays posed the biggest threat to my serenity. My holiday worries consisted of mastering French for Beginners (or Spanish or whatever other language was spoken at the destination that caught my fancy that year), being ripped off by a taxi driver, the foreign exchange rate (this one was a given) and or a hotel cleaner that took a shine to my shoes/shirt/snacks. A taxi driver who added 5 Euro to the fare on the meter got me from controlled breathing to hyperventilation in a nanosecond.

That was until I launched into my sixties and birding virtually simultaneously. As a beginner birder I became fixated with the dangers posed by snakes, spiders and related venomous insects.

And then I met a fearless few, who taught me a concern wasn't a concern until it physically tried to throttle me, tore a piece of flesh off me, chased me or planned to squirt venom into my eyes. And that wasn't all they taught me.

There was a gentle giant who taught me I had to get a grip on my entire bird book and my lifer list, because he remembered two years down the line what I had seen when and where and what I still wanted to see. I wonder how many people realised **Frans van Vuuren** had a photographic memory.

If this past year taught me anything it is that even the giants are not invincible. To some Frans van Vuuren is a fading memory but to me it is still hard to accept months later that I shall never again listen to his stories and never again be reprimanded by him because I am not paying attention.

Initially Frans and the beautiful Adele van Vuuren got involved in birding via a Beginner Birder Course the inimitable Ulrich Oberprieler presented at the Pretoria Zoo. This opened up vistas for them they could not have imagined. They loved birding and the life of the enthusiastic birder. This was how many older birders got the birding bug.

After many birding weekend outings Adele organised with an eye on Frans' requirement for a TV so that he could watch his Saturday sports programs, they became members of Birdlife Northern Gauteng. Frans' natural leadership qualities soon moved him to the forefront of the bird guide fraternity, where he wielded a black-belt guiding talent. He possessed a skills set that cannot be taught. He had the emotional intelligence to make new members feel at home while challenging old hands with tricky identifications. He had all the qualities birders treasure in bird guides.

As his involvement in birding expanded he



Adele and Frans van Vuuren doing what they loved most – birding (at Rhyno Park)

and Adele toggled his selfless BLNG commitments with exciting overseas birding trips.

Debbie van Zyl recalls: "I never saw Frans without Adele by his side. Not only did they share a love and passion for birding but one for each other that was tangible to all who saw them together. If you ever spent time with them and managed to catch them looking at each other, it was like being let into a greatly kept secret.

Frans really knew about birds and liked to share his knowledge. He understood behaviour and where to find what and when. He never came across as a know-it-all. He was gentle and wasn't afraid to refer to a field guide when there was a bit of a debate. He was a real gentleman."

Knowing Frans and Adele was indeed an intro to Relationship 101. They affirmed in me the conviction that doing the right thing is always the worthwhile thing to do. I will remember and miss Frans van Vuuren till the day I can't remember my own name anymore for treating me with way more respect than I warranted and not losing faith in my potential birding skills. Thank you Frans, for all my "Firsts", and for making me believe a little diminished mental capacity can still go a long way.

Helmut Reiff's passing away last year was a terrible loss for all who knew him. He was generous and kind and immensely good-natured.

I met **Helmut and Renate Reiff** on a BLNG weekend to Wakkerstroom. This was soon after I became a club member. I didn't really know other club members when myself and two other new members arrived at the dormitories where we stayed for the weekend. (I was the one who got stuck in the mud, and as one club member so succinctly remarked "You don't really know how to drive, do you?" I became by club standards quite famous on account of that incident)

However, it turned out to be a fortunate weekend for me as I met the Reiffs that

Renate and Helmut Reiff loving life and each other!



weekend. It was pouring with rain and Helmut offered to braai for us new girls. This was Helmut through and through – he always disregarded his own discomfort and considered others' needs before his own. He was generous and self-sacrificing to a fault.

Renate told me he came to Christianity comparatively late in life. This led him to a Christian Businessmen's Bible Study Group. Through his involvement here he became the driving force behind a donations/out-reach program to Hammanskraal. His energy, hard work and commitment soon turned the humble donations effort into a Day Care Centre that is today a monument to Helmut Reiff and what one man can achieve if he puts his mind to it. His was a life lived faithfully by what he believed Jesus taught. He was not into evangelizing. He was into walking the Walk. He never talked about his convictions. He just lived his convictions.

He loved his family dearly and hugely enjoyed his children's company. He loved and enjoyed being a member of BLNG. The highlights of his free time were the many BLNG outings he and Renate went on. Every outing gave him an irrepressible and enviable sense of adventure. And the social side of weekend camps did an enormous amount to enliven his and his sweet wife, Renate's lives.

Sometimes people tell you about themselves by way of the most insignificant gestures. With Helmut and Renate one such gesture was their homemade bread. Another was the care they took with their BLNG weekend menus. Apart from the standard three meals a day, Helmut always planned a special little surprise

treat for Renate for her between-meals coffee. Their beautiful salads and the lovingly made concoction that was their salad dressing spoke volumes of the way they lived their lives. This was tangible proof of a life lived within the boundaries of a deep commitment to caring about everything and everyone.

He was possibly one of if not the most joyously enthusiastic birder in BLNG's ranks. He was forever accessible and eager to assist other birders in their birding. Helmut's spectacularly considerate character was reinforced in my mind at Kgomo Kgombo one Sunday when I mentioned to him I had never seen a Kittlitz Plover. I could have sworn he had one up his sleeve or in his hat because it wasn't 10 minutes later when he ran up to me and instructed to follow him. He had found my lifer for the day – a Kittlitz Plover!

It was an awesome experience to know Helmut Reiff. Thank you Helmut, for teaching me to care about the things other people say and do and want and need. Thank you for making me realise every single day comes with a chance to make a difference in somebody's life.

In South-East Asia people talk of an "Arahat" when they speak of a softly spoken, pious introvert who didn't leave a footprint when they left. An Arahat's life is compared to the flight path of a bird leaving no trace in the sky. This is how **Annatjie** remembers her husband **André Barkhuizen**.

But she also remembers him as the constant companion who loved to bird and to go batting. His badge of merit was his exceptional talent to scrutinise the veld and unfailingly come up with the bird nobody had seen.

This unassuming introvert's proudest accomplishment was his unflinching devotion to his wife.

Introverts are much like some little birds birders chase. Some lurk shyly in the canopies of trees, but if someone imitated their song they would abandon their cover and fly down at once in a show of welcome.



André Barkhuizen caught in a pensive moment

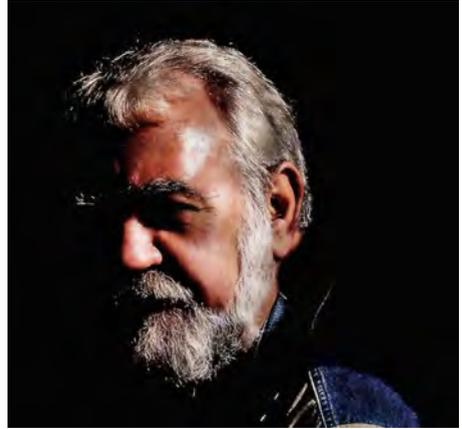
Around a huge communal BLNG fire in Hlane, Swaziland one evening I met André and Annatjie Barkhuizen. Annatjie was an immediately likeable blonde. André was the silent husband who followed her shadow and everything else connected to her.

Though he was in the company he was comfortable not being part of it. He was an island of absent-mindedness. That was till I started telling the story of how yours truly and her companion locked them selves out of their hut.

It just so happened that our bedroom window was never locked and that was where we let ourselves into the hut. It was for my friend an easy undertaking being thin, athletic and a natural at hurdles. For me however it was a different ball game. I had to negotiate my modesty, my xxx bottom and a window that was designed to keep all intruders out. As I recounted the delicate matter of pulling and pushing with the appropriate grunting, a slow smiled spread across André's face. That was possibly the most rewarding smile I ever got for telling a story that was at once self-deprecating and funny.

That smile taught me it is good to make fun of myself, because my fun is somebody else's fun. Thank you André for reminding me it is important to tell my embarrassing stories because the reward of a sincere smile will fill my heart with joy and make my day.

Chris Krog was not a club member but a birder/photographer who lived in Tzaneen and regularly posted photos on Birdlife South Africa's Facebook page. He passed away a few weeks ago. My grandson, Lourens, (a 7 year-old wonder of huge charm and intelligence) and myself will miss him enormously. When Lourens comes to visit me his fun is to sit down with my iPad, go to my Facebook postings and single out Chris Krog's bird photos to marvel at. Chris always posted photos with the bird's Afrikaans, English and Latin names attached. His deft hand with the camera and awesome editing was something to behold. I have a black hole where his name should be on my Facebook postings. I miss you terribly, Chris. 🐦



BLGN Voëlinggroepverslag 2015

Frik du Plooy (BLGN Ringgroepkoördineerder)

Die Voëlinggroep het 'n baie goeie jaar beleef.

Die volgende C-Ringers het gedurende die jaar gekwalifiseer as A-Ringers: Kotie Fildes, Ig Viljoen, Marina Pienaar en Susan Ward.

Darrell Abernethy (Ringer vanaf Engeland) en Janine Goosen (Ringer vanaf die Vrystaat) het tydens die jaar by ons aangesluit.

Die ringgroep bestaan tans uit 27 aktiewe A-Ringers: Chris du Plooy, Johan Snyman, Hein Bantjes, Frik du Plooy, Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg, Gert Opperman (Senior), Marietjie Jansen van Rensburg, Ryno Kemp, Johan Muller, Martin Steyn, Paula Steyn, Marie Uckermann, Elba Swart, Pieter Erasmus, Sascha Michel, Anita Michel, Christo Siebert, Vincent Ward, Wanda Louwrens, FC Bothma, Kotie Fildes, Janine Goosen, Johan van Rooyen, Eben Muller, Ig Viljoen, Marina Pienaar en Susan Ward.

Nie-aktiewe A-Ringers (7): Madeleen van Loggerenberg, Lynette van den Heever, Darrell Abernethy, Madeleen van Schalkwyk, Gert Opperman (Junior), Gareth Hazel en Jan Nel.

Ringers in opleiding (C-Ringers): 10 en talle belangstellendes.

Daar is ringers wat besig is met sekere projekte nl.:

- Foto's van Dikbekwewers: Hein Bantjes
- Vere en bloedmonsters van Tinktinkies: Vince Ward
- Ringprojek by Orpen Hek: Prof Anita Michel
- Lydenburg Suikervoëls (Dawie de Swart se projek): Janine Goosen
- Christo Siebert bied ring demonstrasies aan by Moreleta NR vir Moreletta Vriende
- Ring Big Year; Meeste voëls hanteer FC Bothma 1378, en Meeste Spesies hanteer Ryno Kemp 183: F C Bothma

Voëls gering in 2015 = 9304; Recoveries (bv. herwinning van dooie voëls) = 7; Hervangste (Retraps) = 890, Totaal = 10201; % Hervangste = 8.8 %.

Spesiale/skaars voëls: Sprinkaansanger (River Warbler) by Buffelsdrif 10 Januarie 2015, Hermanse Rietsanger (Eurasian Reed-Warbler) by Moreleta NR op 7 Februarie 2015. Geelborskoester (Yellow-breasted Pipit) en Kleinste Klopkloppie (Wing-snapping Cisticola) by Dullstroom Oktober 2015. Geelbeksterretjie (Swift Tern), Grootswartrugmeeu (Cape Gull)

is in Port Shepstone by 'n rehabilitasiesentrum gering.

Hervangste: 'n Geelbeksterretjie (Swift Tern) wat op Robbeneiland gering is, is nege maande later by Cape Vidal gevind waar dit in vislyn verstregtel geraak het en gered is.

Die klubbringsessies aan die begin van elke maand word goed bygewoon deur BLNG voëlkykers. Dit blyk 'n baie suksesvolle interaksie te wees, wat baie geniet word. Die maandelikse klubbringsessies word ingesluit in BLGN se jaarprogram.

Ons het ook as ringgroep die 2015 jaarlikse BLGN afsluitingsfunksie by Rietvlei NR se Coffee Shop bygewoon, waar ringsertifikate aan nuwe A-Ringers oorhandig is.

Die Ringgroep se finansies word in BLGN se bankrekening gehuisves.

Ringgroepkomitee verkies op 20 Junie 2015: Koördineerder: Frik du Plooy; Administrasie: Paula Steyn; Finansies: Johan Snyman.

Ringgroepvergaderings gedurende 2015: 14 Maart 2015, 20 Junie 2015 en 31 Oktober 2015.

BLGN se ringers het 'n ringsessie bygewoon saam met Poolse ringers op 7 Februarie 2015.

Ons het twee roofvoëltoere na Limpopo Provinsie onderneem waartydens 7 ringers gekwalifiseer het as Roofvoëlringers.

Sewe ringers het ook van 6-18 November 2014 'n baie suksesvolle ringtoer na Noord-Oos Kaokoland, Namibië onderneem. Spesiale spesies wat gering is: Rooiwangparakiet (Rosy-faced Lovebird), Bloupensapegaaï (Rüppell's Parrot), Monteirose Neushoringvoël (Monteiro's Hornbill), Rooistertmôrelyster (Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush), Rooikeelfisant (Red-necked Spurfowl), Witkruiskatlagter (Hartlaub's Babbler), Moeraswaterfiskaal (Swamp Boubou) en Ovamboswartmees (Carp's Tit).

Opleiding en hulp aan Unisastudente: (Nature Conservation Application Report). Thabo Sempe, Samson K Mokane, Christelle du Toit, Kganya Ledwaba, Ronnie Manaleng, Jan Nhapo, Shadi Noduvhoa en Thabiselele Pheko.

Bates: 4 x Tweerigtingradio's; 3 x Spring Raptor traps; Ringtrommel. 🦉

New SAFRING longevity record for the Crowned Lapwing (Vanellus coronatus)

Dane Pajmans, SAFRING

We recently received an interesting resighting of a Crowned Lapwing (ring number: **D36194**) from Mr Leon Swart (photographed in Rietvlei Nature Reserve) on the 30th December 2015. Even though this was a resighting, we were able to verify the ring number as photos were submitted (where the numbers 36194 were visible), and through a process of elimination the prefix "D" could be determined. This individual was first ringed as an adult by Mr Andrew Tucker (from Pretoria) exactly 15 years and 1 day before this resighting, on the 29th December 2000. This is an important resighting as it has nearly doubled our previous longevity record for this species (longevity: 7y 11m 19d; ring number: **524023**). Over the last 15 years



this individual has not travelled very far as it was first ringed in Rietvlei Nature Reserve and was seen only 2 km from this site.

As this individual was re-sighted and initially ringed as an adult the potential for a greater longevity is very likely. Of all the *Vanellus* species in our database this individual is the 4th oldest as the Long-toed Lapwing (*Vanellus crassirostris*) (longevity: 16y 8m 3d; ring number: **63410501**) and African Wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus senegallus*) (longevity: 21y 7m 14d; ring number: **523048**) have individuals older than 15 years. Including our record holder there have been 38 Crowned Lapwing

ringed in Rietvlei (of the total 1961 ringed, 110 re-trapped and 27 recovered Crowned Lapwing across Southern Africa) since 1998. As there have been no recoveries from this site you may be lucky to see this bird or another older individual, so please keep a lookout when visiting.

We at SAFRING really appreciate all the effort of ringers and the general public (the latter in reporting recoveries), and would like to thank everyone that has taken part in ringing and resighting in Southern Africa. If you feel you know of an older record or have any unreported resightings/recoveries please contact us at SAFRING with the details. safring@adu.org.za

Pelagiese uitstappie, September 2015

Salomi Louw

Dit was lankal my wens om vanaf Durban op see uit te vaar vir die voëls wat hier in die diepsee voorkom. Met 'n vroeë vakansie aan die Noordkus het ek so iets onsuksesvol probeer reël, nou bied Birdlife Noord-Gauteng dit aan. Ek bespreek dadelik (soos vir Flock 2016-at-Sea). Weens die onvoorspelbare weer moet 'n meeganer Saterdag én Sondag beskikbaar wees. Dit beteken jy moet ook eie verblyf reël vir Vrydagaand, Saterdag en (moontlik) Sondag. Ons is nie almal in die posisie om te vlieg en die naweek in 'n hotel naby die kaai deur te bring nie. Van so 'n uittoeg maak 'n mens dus 'n vakansie.

Met vakansiepunte bespreek ek 'n midde-week by Caribbean Estates suid van Port Edward; vir die seetog drie nagte se kampering by die Bluff Eco Park; en op pad na die Suidkus kampering by Mount Everest buite Harrismith – een van my gunstelingplekke in Suid-Afrika.

Vooraf besluit ek dat 'n bietjie atlaswerk ook gedoen kan word en trek kaarte van die Mount Everest- en die Port Edward-omgewing. Laasgenoemde is al oorlopens vol en die enigste noodsaaklikhede is na die Bizanagebied in die ou Transkei. Atlaswerk is nie my passie nie. Ek spandeer eerder tyd in ruwe veld om na

bome, insekte, blomme, kruide én voëls te kyk terwyl ek stap “ver van die stadsgeluide”. Met die baie voetwerk neem ek deesdae ook nie my kamera saam nie: dis te swaar en ongemaklik; en teen die tyd wat ek die kamera instel om 'n foto te neem, het die voël lankal verkas.

Toe ek Mount Everest bel om te bespreek, sê die eienaar, Petrus, daar is nie meer krag beskikbaar in die kampeerplek nie; ek sal dus óf 'n koue stort moet neem, óf na die Lodge moet kom vir 'n warm stort. Wat hy nie gesê – of geweet – het nie, is dat water ook nie beskikbaar was nie! Dis tog verstommend hoe ver 'n mens met 5 liter water kan kom as dit nodig is.

Mount Everest is pas regs van die pad tussen Harrismith en Verkykerskop, met afgeleë huisies genoem na die wild op die plaas terwyl daar ook moderne ‘chalets’ is. Ry oor die nek na die westekant en die kampeerterrein (Mooihoek) is in 'n ander wêreld: hooggeleë, afgesonder, uitsig tot amper in Kimberley – of so voel dit – en voëls wat nie veel met mense te doene kry nie. Stap kan jy waar jy wil en daar is enkele paadjies om te ry. Soos voorheen het ek die bergpaadjies gery (dis waar ek vroeër jare my eerste Drakensberglerik en Vaalrivierlerik gesien het, wat nou albei

bevraagteken word deur ORF's [ORF = *Out of Range Form – Ed.*] en die damme besoek. Ná so 'n rit kon my wa se een skuifdeur nie oop of toemaak nie. Ek dog dis weer VW se probleme, maar ontdek later ek het 'n rots met my wa se pens getref. (Ek verbeel my altyd hy het hoër grondvryehoogte omdat ek so lekker hoog sit!) Met 'n skroewedraaier nie eens die breedte van my pinkienael nie en 'n hamer, moes ek stelselmatig die deur van onder af ophamer en die voetstuk afdruk sodat die deur kan skuif en die komper nie heeltyd skreeu dat 'n deur oop is nie.

Donderdag, Vrydag en Saterdag het ek in dié wildplaas voëls gekyk (en dit terdeë geniet) en omliggende paaie gery. Planne om tot Normandienspas te atlas het nie uitgewerk nie, maar ek was tot ámpers daar en naby by Collingspas en De Beerspas – alles met atlasopskrywings.

In die drie dae het ek talle voëls aange-teken: Rooikoplewerik, Swartpiek, Bontrokkie, Kalkoenibis, Bloukraanvoël, Glansibis, Oranje-borskalkoentjie, Bleshoender en witgatspreeu was oral, maar Drakensberg-, Vaalrivier- en Pienkbeklewerik en Sekretarisvoël het ook bygedra tot vreugde, soos ook Bloukraanvoëls (tot 17 byeen), twee Mahems wat langs my opgevlieg het en die Donkernaguil wat hom snags hees geblaf het. Kaapse Kliplysters het saam met Fiskaal- en Feëlvlieëvangers kom vertoon in die kamp. Dis ook die omgewing waar bloukorhane volop is. Jammer was dit om 'n ooruil te vind wat doodgery is. Aanvanklik het ek aanvaar dis 'n Gevlekte Ooruil, maar later wys die foto's wat ek wél geneem het die breë dwarsstrepe op die pens en die rooibrui nêk-vlekke: Kaapse Ooruil. (Natuurlik: 'n ORF!)

En dan was daar 'n volstruisweduwee wat – letterlik – kom flankeer en vlerksleep het: kop omlaag, vlerke opgefladder, bek wat grond vreetel en al agter my aan is as ek stap! Sy mis beslis 'n maat!

Die atlaskaarte wat ek vooraf getrek het, het aangetoon dat min blokke in dié omgewing volledig opgeteken is. Ek het dus moeite gedoen om die slegte en afgeleë stofpaaie te ry en alles op te teken wat ek sien. Een waaraan ek spesifiek

twee uur spandeer het, het voorheen nog net 3 *ad hoc*-kaarte getoon, onder andere deur Niall Perrins wat die pelagiese toer moes reël.

Van die nege atlaskaarte wat ek agterna ingevul het, is elf ORF's ontvang; tot selfs die Bontkwikkie is bevraagteken!

Ek was baie jammer om van Mount Everest te vertrek, maar moes my weg na die Suidkus vind.

Op pad na my Suidkusbestemming het ek toevallig afgekom op 'Paradise Lodge Resort' naby Southbroom wat iets anders was met lieflike kampering en die netjiesste ablusieplekke wat ek in 'n lang tyd gevind het. In die misbelt en met woudbos omgewe was voëlkyk hier net so 'n heerlike ervaring. Van die 44 voëlspesies wat ek hier kon sien, was die Witborsduif en die Rooivlerkret spesiaal. (Vir dié atlaslys het ek ook ORF's gekry!)

Die gewilde Caribbean Estates aan die grens van Transkei was ongelukkig nie wat ek myself toewens vir verblyf nie: te oop; te min toegang tot kuswoud; té veel gemani-kuur of gepedikuur. Die weer was deurgaans sleg, met misreën of sterk wind of wolke. Die 'Estate' het selfs inwonende Makpoue en Groenkopeende. Loop jy egter op die woudrande, kry jy darem Nataljanfrederik en Kaapse Bosbontrokkie en Olyflyster te siene. Die toegang tot die strand waarsku jou oor die afgesonderheid en gevaar en dat jy dit op eie risiko aandurf. Gelukkig is hier heelwat stap- en ryroetes in die omgewing: die Umtamvuna Natuurrreservaat – veral die Ou Pontgedeelte – is 'n ou gunsteling; Mpajane lewer altyd en in alle weersomstandighede lekker voëlkykondervinding op én die KZN-veldwagters is aangename geselskap.

Tydens 'n langsame vordering deur Banner's Rest het daar gereeld mense by my kom verneem of ek na iemand (of iets) op soek is en was dan geamuseerd om te hoor dat ek maar net 'n voëlkyker is. (Ek wag nog op die ORF wat die Kransasvoëls bevraagteken wat ek voor my lui uit die Umtamvuna se rivier-kranse sien opstyg het.)

Daar is natuurlik ook die roetes deur kUSDorpië soos Glenmore, Trafalgar en

Soutbroom, waar jy altyd iets raakloop – soos die dikbekfret wat ek nie eens op 'n atlaskaart invul nie omdat ek weet dit gaan weer lei tot 'n ORF. Ek het wél 'n ORF gekry vir 'n voël wat ek sondiglik verkeerd geïdentifiseer het en moes regstel.

Die Bizanatrajek in die Oos-Kaap wes van Wild Coast Sun, waarvoor daar min atlasinligting beskikbaar was en deel van my optimistiese beplanning uitgemaak het, het na enkele kilometer vir my net té onveilig gevoel. Die tyd wat hiervoor beplan was, is eerder deurgebring in die hotel se kuswoude en grasheuwels.

Omdat ek nou al daelank op reis is en nie toegang het tot e-pos nie, kry ek 'n SMS om te sê die pelagiese toer is gekanselleer. Ek is nie die enigste een wat hieroor dikbek is nie. Anneli, wat tyd bespreek het in San Lameer, wil hê ek moet soontoe kom, maar aangesien ek jare lank nie naby Durban was nie, besluit ek tog om na die Bluff Eco Park te gaan waar ek kampering bespreek en betaal het. Wat 'n heerlike verrassing was dit!

Die Bluff Eco Park behoort aan die munisipaliteit en het verwaarloos geraak, maar is nou onder privaatbestuur wat moeite doen om dit 'n groenomgewing te maak, geriewe op te knap, herwinning in alle vorms te beoefen, 'n skoenlappertuin laat aanlê het en – bowenal – terrasse het waar kampeerders in die kusbos kan sit en kyk hoe Olyf- en Oranjelysters om jou voete kom woel, hoe die Nataljanfrederik skrikkelend opvlieg as jy gaan stap en selfs die Dikbekfret by geleentheid te sien is – wat ek ook nie op my atlaskaart invul nie, want ek ken die gevolge! Die Bluff het ook 'n natuurreservaat waar ek gaan stap en enkele voëls gesien het wat nie op my lysste hoort nie omdat dit in 'n ander atlasblok val; dit lewer wel 'n Grootlangtoon en Kuifkophoutkapper op wat nog nie elders op my roete gesien is nie.

Na dae van afskeepsorging het ek 'n groentebehoefte en die personeel van Bluff Eco Resort reël spesiaal met 'n wonderlike gastehuis op 'n terras bo die see om vir my een na my behoefte voor te berei. Hierdie oord, voorheen bekend as Natures Haven, sal my beslis weer sien.



Flankerende en vlerkslepende volstruiswyfie

Op pad huis toe wou ek nog 'n nag of twee langs die pad deurbring – dis immers my vakansie, nie waar nie? Toe maak ek die fout om Greytown/Tugele Ferry/Pomeroy na Dundee te ry: ná Greytown 'n horribale ontginning – die slegste paaie in die RSA, omgewing oorbevolk en oorbeweï, dooie veld, ongeskikte bestuurders, vier uur om 40 km te ry ... vermy dié roete ten alle koste!!

Verder is kampering op pad skaars; die enkele plekke was te vroeg in die dag (en onaantreklik). Toe dink ek 'Middelburg, maar die blikstem lei my verby; toe dink ek Bronkhorstspuitdam, maar dié vertoon nie verblyf nie – dus: na al die lang pad en hele dag terug na Pretoria, waar ek na 10-uur se ry tuis kom, omgekrap, want ek wou nie nou al terug wees nie met nog ten minste een nag se verblyf êrens langs die pad in die veld, by 'n dam, teen 'n koppie, of iets.

Die 'pelagiese uittoeg' het nie gematerialiseer nie, maar ek het 'n heerlike, veldryke en voëlkykondervinding gehad. (Ek moet bysê: 'n soortgelyke toer uit Durban is nie langer hoog op my wenslys nie: vir onvoorspelbare weer maak 'n voorsiening, maar nie vir onseewaardige bote nie.)

Atlaswerk

Ná die vakansie kom my probleme as amateur-atlasser. Ek kry vir elke lys wat

ek instuur een of meer ORF's. Daar word gesê ek moet 'Reply' druk en dan die gevraagde inligting voorsien. Dit gebeur egter nie. Elke ORF-vorm word dus gedruk en per hand ingevul, geskandeer en aangestuur na die vermelde e-posadres. Nou die nagmerrie: dit kan nie afgelewer word nie omdat dit te groot is; of omdat die e-posadres wat op die vorm verstrekk is, nie bestaan nie of nie werk nie!

Ek dog nogal ek kan 'n bydrae lewer. Net om te reageer op ORF's neem langer as wat dit is om die oorspronklike atlaslyste in te vul en te stuur (ek beskik nie oor die moderne tegnologie waar jy dit net intik op jou selfoon nie, maar moet alles per hand neerskryf, later tuis organiseer op my rekenaar, vertaal in Engels, as atlasblok (in Engels) lys en dan wag vir die ORF's). En dan werk die program nie altyd nie:

skielik hou die vorm op met tel en ek moet self intik dis nou nommer 22 want hy sê vir my ek het al 20 gebruik en hy nie self kan vorder tot die volgende getal nie. Op die ou end wys die totaal van my atlasbydrae per blok maklik '0', al het ek 27 spesies gelys! (Goed, ek weet, ons oues van dae is nie so vertrouwd met die tegnologie nie, maar dis frustrerend as ons iets wil toevoeg tot kennis.)

Die idee van 'n bydrae as 'citizen scientist' te lewer, maak my gedaan – maar ek sal volhard. Miskien – veral – as Ernst vir ons 'n opvolgkursus kan aanbied.

Wag nou net net vir my volgende alasbydrae!

(Terloops, my spesiegetal vir dié vakansie was 176 – gee nie om wie of wat sê [of ORF's] nie.) 🐦

Punda Mania

Don Reid

It's mostly about birding

West Rand Honorary Rangers (WRHR), in conjunction with SA National Parks, have been organising birding weekends in Kruger National Park during the less popular months (read: "very hot") since the late 1990s. We have enjoyed many wonderful moments with them, being among the first to participate in these events. A fairly recent addition to the WRHR repertoire is the "Punda Mania" event held in November.

Billed as a Team Birding Challenge, this is a special event for birders keen to spend time in Northern Kruger and is widely regarded as one of the top birding spots in South Africa. This is particularly at a time of year when the majority of migrants are present. Under the direction of Joe Grosel, assistance of the SANParks Honorary Rangers (HR's) as well as guides from SANParks, the group of some 40 people is taken through a series of challenges which focus on birding but also include other aspects of nature such as mammals, trees, insects and the odd reptile.

We have attended three of the four events held to date and this is the story of one of those weekends.

Getting there

We set off from Pretoria around 8:00 on Thursday 15th November and reached Punda Maria gate to the Kruger Park about five and a half hours later. We stepped out of the car into the oven-like heat that one can expect in the far northern Kruger in November.

From there it was a short drive to Punda Maria camp, ticking a number of the typical Kruger Park birds as we went. Once settled into the classic accommodation alongside the entrance road, we met with the rest of the birders: the Honorary KNP rangers as well as Joe Grosel (the leader for the weekend). Joe led us through the itinerary for the weekend and gave an excellent talk on the natural highlights of the area around Punda Maria and up to Pafuri. This included a description of the variety of habitats to be encountered, which are many



Pennant-winged Nightjar/
Wimpelvlerknaguil

and contribute to the famed diversity of bird species to be found in this part of Kruger.

Night(jar) drive

As the sun headed for the horizon, we were off on a very special “night(jar) drive” which took us to a patch of open ground not far from the camp that is used as a lek by the much sought after Pennant-winged Nightjars during a six week window period during the months of November and December.

After sun-downers, the group stood quietly in anticipation of the Nightjars’ arrival at the lek which was like clockwork during the mating season according to Joe, and we had no reason to doubt him. We were not disappointed, as these special birds produced an enthralling display in front of us, swooping by like enormous butterflies with their long wing-pennants creating an eerie silhouette against the darkening skies. There was one female and two males, one of which settled on the gravel road in front of the group a couple of times just to add to the spectacular sighting. We headed back to camp feeling privileged to have witnessed something seen by few birders and what proved to be the highlight of the weekend before we had really started!

Treasure hunt around Pafuri

Early Friday morning we were given a “photographic treasure hunt” to complete during the morning’s drive, while adding to our growing bird list for the weekend. This had a great boost when we reached the bridge over the Luvuvhu River. We were allowed to walk over the bridge whilst enjoying the abundant bird life in the river and surrounding bush which is



Wire-tailed Swallow/ Draadstertswael

renowned as a birding hot spot – needless to say, it fully lived up to this reputation.

A majestic African Fish Eagle kept watch over the river from atop a tall tree, while in the river, Spectacled and Lesser Masked Weavers went about their business in the reeds. The ubiquitous Wire-tailed Swallows rested on the bridge railings; I have been visiting this spot on and off for close to 40 years and have come across these swallows perched on the bridge railings almost every time. They are a great subject for photography as they allow for a close approach.

A Crowned Hornbill made an appearance in the trees adjoining the bridge along with Orange-Breasted Bush-Shrike and Dusky Flycatchers. Yellow-breasted Apalis and Grey Tit-Flycatchers added to the variety of birds on show. From there we travelled to the Pafuri picnic site, one of my all-time favourite Kruger spots, for a mid-morning brunch. We found it relatively quiet birding-wise, although we did add White-crowned Lapwing in the river bed and Yellow-bellied Greenbul and Retz’s Helmet-Shrike in the trees.

Further along the river, Crook’s Corner was equally quiet with no sign of the Pel’s Fishing-Owl sometimes located here and very little water in the river, the only birds of note being a lone African Openbill and a Common Greenshank.

We were back in Punda Maria by lunchtime – the very hot conditions meant that an afternoon nap in the cool chalet beat all other options. Later on some relaxed birding in the garden opposite the chalets produced Little Sparrow-hawk hunting among the trees. This



Don Reid
© Don Reid

Punda Maria camp

was followed by the next arranged event which was a “Botanical treasure hunt”, where we had to ID and find the likes of a “snuff-box” tree, a Kudu Berry and a Leopard Orchid – which we duly did. In the process I came across a Tree Frog about 3 m up on a bare branch, which was something new for me.

After a good dinner the rangers took us on an evening drive which produced a Square-tailed Nightjar as well as an unusual mammal in the guise of a Sharpe’s Grysbok.

Time to do some Atlasing

On Saturday, just as early as the previous day, we departed for a morning of atlasing in two pentads north of the Punda Maria camp, both of which are normally not accessible by the general public and had only been atlased once or twice previously. The area we covered proved to be very hot and extremely dry – lists produced were not extensive but of course that is the whole point of atlasing: to record the species present or not present during any given season or time of year. Some of the notable birds we listed were Hooded Vulture, Broad-billed Roller and Violet-backed Starling.

This trip included a stop at the Nyala Wilderness Trail base camp, which I remembered from a trail done back in 1999 and which has subsequently been relocated due to flood damage. An African Barred Owlet calling had us searching the trees and we eventually found it amongst the high branches, not far from

a Pearl-spotted Owlet. On the way back to Punda Maria we ticked a few more including Levillant’s Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and White-throated Robin-Chat. Back at the camp it was nap-time again followed by a walk to the hide on the edge of the camping area, which overlooks a waterhole outside the fence.

We found the waterhole alive with various game and birds coming to find some relief from the hot, dry conditions – game included Elephant, Zebra, Nyala, Impala and a lone Warthog. Marabou Storks strode back- and forwards like down-and-out gentlemen – still elegant in posture but rather tatty and unattractive. A Grey-headed Kingfisher made several sorties from a nearby perch to the water and back, while in the muddy shallows Violet-backed Starlings mingled with doves, canaries and bulbuls were seen.

Bateleur sunbathing

I watched with interest when a Bateleur arrived at the waterhole and proceeded to go through a lengthy routine of walking with some purpose into the muddy area and drinking leisurely from a small pool, taking a minute or so between sips and seeming to savour each drop. After about 10 repeats of this he walked to the drier edge of the waterhole and threw open his large wings to soak up the heat, followed by a forward fall onto his belly to get sun on the back of the wings as well, or so I surmised. Perhaps he had seen the movie with the penguins sliding on their bellies on the ice and thought he would give it a try in the sand!



Bateleur/Berghaan

Don Reid

After some time in this pose he stood up carefully, scanned the skies and then took off. This whole procedure was quite unusual behaviour, I thought. Later, research using my bird books at home did confirm that the wing-spreading action is well-known but I could find no mention of the “belly-flop” action. I subsequently did a write up on this behaviour for Ornithological Observations.

That evening it was time for a drive to view the Pennant-winged Nightjars displaying once again, followed by the final dinner and prize-giving to close off what had proved to be a memorable weekend.

On the way home

The Sunday drive back to Gauteng provided an opportunity to visit a couple of birding spots such as the Entabeni Forest and Muirhead Dams, where we spent some time exploring and looking for the area specials.

All in all a memorable weekend amongst a group of super-keen birders and another success for the West-Rand Honorary Rangers who, along with other branches who have followed their lead, are now one of the leading birding trip organisers in South Africa, contributing valuable funds to conservation. Well done to them! 🦉

Ons Kaokoland Trippie: 16 September – 4 Oktober 2015

Pieter en Joelna Heslinga

Tien jaar gelede het 'n groepie van ons vir die eerste keer die Kaokoland besoek en ons het besluit dit is nou weer sulke tyd. So baie het eintlik die afgelope 10 jaar gebeur. Waar ons voorheen meer ingestel was op die natuur in die algemeen, het ons in die tussentyd 'n groot belangstelling ontwikkel in voëlsgyk – voëlkursusse bygewoon en heelwat uitstappies bygebring om voëls te kyk. Toe ons hierdie trippie dus beplan, het almal geweet ons het een groot fokus – voëlsgyk.

Hierdie keer het ons groepie bestaan uit myself en Joelna en 5 ander pare – die Du Plessis's, die Griesels, die Pretorius'e, die Van Driels en die Venters – ons was 6 motors.

Goed toegerus en baie opgewonde het ons op 16 September 2015 vertrek uit Pretoria. Oorgeslaap op Kang in Botswana en tot by Drotsky's Cabins gery waar ons 2 nagte gebly het. Die eerste ding wat ons die volgende dag sou doen is om met 'n boot die Okavangorivier te verken en voëls te kyk. En was dit nie 'n fantastiese oggend nie. Ons gids is Otto – 'n moet vir enige iemand wat ook wil gaan. Hy is fantasties!

Ons vaar in 'n westelike rigting en gou sien ons ons eerste hoogtepunt – 'n Witrugnagreier (White-backed Night Heron). Natuurlik op soek na die Visuil (Pel's Fishing Owl), en sowaar Otto wys vir ons 'n mannetjie, sy wyfie en 'n jongvoël – 'n “lifer” vir ons almal !! Daarna wys hy ons 'n hele klomp Waterploeërs (African Skimmers). So mooi as hulle die water so ploeg op soek na goggatjies! Ons dag was gemaak. Ons het die mooiste voëls gesien,



Visuil /Pel's Fishing Owl

Pieter Heslinga



Angola Janfrederik/Angola Cave Chat



Monteirose Neushoringvoël/
Monteiro's Hornbill



Rooiستيرtmôrelyster/Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush

Pieter Heidinga



Kortstertlaksman/White-tailed Shrike

mooi Visarende, byevreters, reiers, eende, elsie, ibisse en ander voëls.

Op 20 September vertrek ons by Drotsky's en mik ons na die Kunene River Lodge op die Kuneneriver. Ons slaap eers oor op Ruacana, besoek die Ruacana Watervalle (wat droog was) en bereik Kunene River Lodge 'n dag later. Oppad kry ons ons eerste Monteirose Neushoringvoël (Monteiro's Hornbill) – nog 'n lifer.

22 September en ons is vol afwagting. Dis vroeg, 4 uur die môre, nog donker. Vanoggend gaan eienaar Peter ons die Angola Janfrederik (Angola Cave Chat) wys. Ons is met sy Land Cruiser diep die Zebraberge in. Ons moet in die berge wees voor dit lig word en hoog op in posisie wees voor die voël begin beweeg – daar is in hierdie omgewing net een. Ons het lank gewag, tot so 9 uur as ek reg onthou, toe Peter sê hy hoor hom sing en sowaar, nie lank nie of 'n enkele Angola Janfrederik kom aangewei deur 'n klossie bome op 'n klein plato halfpad die berg uit. Fantasties! Ons kon mooi fotos neem, weer en weer, tot dit later tussen die bosse verdwyn. Ons 3^e lifer van die vakansie. Ons sien nog 'n lifer – 'n Ovamboswartmees (Carp's Tit)

Oppad terug kamp toe ry hy by 'n Himba kraal verby, gee bietjie suiker en meel af en

ry by 'n klein moerasigheid in 'n spruit verby – hy stop – en wat sien ons – Angolasygies (Cinderella Waxbills). Ook 'n Rooiwangparkiet (Rosy-faced Lovebird) en 'n Kortstertlaksman (White-tailed Shrike) – nog lifers. Later sou ons nog baie van hulle sien.

Terug by die kamp ontspan ons heerlik. Ons sien ook Kaalwangkatlagters (Bare-cheeked Babbler) en Rooiستيرtmôrelysters (Rufous-tailed Palm Thrushes) wat deur die plantegroei beweeg en kos soek – nog lifers. Die aand sak 'n groot trop Bruinweewers (Chestnut Weavers) op 'n rietbos in die kamp neer, en besmeer die hele wêreld. Maar ons geniet ons verblyf by Kunene River Lodge terdeë, nog 'n absolute hoogtepunt! Die Donkergrysvalk (Grey Kestrel) ontwyk ons egter.

Die volgende dag, 23 September, vertrek ons Eupavalle toe. Sommige van ons ry die rivierpad en ander van ons links om die Zebraberge via Otjivize en Okongwati, die makliker roete. Ons kom by die Dorslandtrekkersmonument en stop daar. Dan verder. Die wat binneland omgery het arriveer al by Epupa voor 12 uur. Die ander klomp trotseer 'n baie slegte pad tussen die rivier en die berge deur en kom eers 5 uur by

Epupa aan. Ons kampeer by die kamppek van Koos Verwey, 'n ou reccie uit die grensoorlogdae en geniet dit baie. Pragtige palmbome op die Kunenerivier net 'n entjie van die waterval af, ongelooflik mooi. Ook pragtige kokerbome. Die Rooistertpalmlysters (Rufous-tailed Palm Trushes) maak ons vroeg wakker. Ook die Rooiwangparkiete (Rosy-faced Lovebirds) en Rooioogtortelduiwe (African Mourning Doves). Ons besoek 'n Himbakraal en 'n gids leer ons een en ander van die Himbavolk, hulle kultuur en gewoontes.

Op 26 September skuif ons aan na Camp Syncro, op die walle van die Kunenerivier, so ongeveer 100 km van die see. Maar eers moet ons Van Zylspas oor en dan op (noord) met die Marienfluss. Oppad kry ons weer Monteirose Neushoringvoëls (Monteiro's Hornbills) en ook Korttoonkliplysters (Short-toed Rock Trushes), Bergwagters (Mountain Wheatears), Bloupensapegaai (Rüppell's Parrots) en Gewone Spekvreters (Familiar Chats).

Die pad van Van Zylspas af was baie oif en het stadig gegaan, toe die Marienfluss op en ons kom eers skuins voor donker by Camp Syncro aan die Kunenerivier aan. Ons word hartlik ontvang deur nuwe eienaars van Switserse afkoms, Ryan en Sarah en ons slaan vinnig kamp op. Camp Syncro is 'n wonderlike kamp en ons ontspan die volgende dag om te rus van die vorige dag se strawwe roete. Die volgende oggend, kan jy glo, wys Sarah ons 'n 'verdwaalde' jong Vlermuisvalk (Bat Hawk) in 'n groot Anaboom sit, te pragtig. Die voëltjies relatief min. Ons sien ook Witkeelkanaries (White-throated canaries), Bergwagters (Mountain Wheatears), Rooibeksysties (Common Waxbills) en ander voëls.

Op 29 September breek ons kamp op, ons volgende bestemming is die Gemeenskapskamp by Puros. Ons ry verby die bekende Roodrom in 'n suidelike rigting en sien pragtige Woestynkorhane (Rüppell's Korhaans), Ludwigse poue (Ludwig's Bustard) en ook Woestynlewerikke (Stark's Larks) – nog lifers. Daar is nie gras in die Marienfluss nie, en ons kan mooi sien. Dan ry ons Joubertspas oor, verby Marble Camp en in die Hoarusibrivierbedding



Vlermuisvalk /Bat Hawk

Pieter Hellinga

af tot by Puros. Dit was weer 'n lang dag en ons kom donker daar aan. Maar slaan kamp op en geniet 'n lekker aand om die vuur met 'n vleisie op die kole en 'n wyntjie in die hand. Die volgende dag gaan soek ons na die woestynolifante maar kry hulle nie. 'n Gestreepte Wipstert (White-browed Scrub Robin) kom sing vir ons voor hy gaan slaap.

1 Oktober – hiervandaan huistoe, oor Sesfontein. Ons ry af met die Hoarusibrivierbedding, deur die Poort en besoek die pragtige Sandkastele oppad. Daarna al met die Hoarusibrivierbedding af en daar kry ons die Woestynolifante, te pragtig, en ook Springbokke, Gemsbokke en Kameelperde. Min voëls, maar ons is ook te haastig om baie rond te kyk. Ons kamp by die Camel Top Gemeenskapskamp digby Sesfontein en kry 'n lekker warm water wat die mense vir ons met 'n "donkie" warm gemaak het. Die volgende dag ry ons by Palmweg verby en besoek die Warmquelle. Daarna oppad Xhorixas toe waar ons vir die eerste keer in baie dae by 'n lodge slaap met skoon lakens en 'n warm bad. Ons eet die aand heerlik in die restaurant, en herleef al die gebeure van die afgelope 2 weke. Daar was soveel hoogtepunte! Voor ons vertrek die volgende oggend sien ons 'n pragtige Swartwangstelsie (Black-faced Waxbill) by die ontvangsgeboue.

Ons slaap die volgende aand in Windhoek by Arrebush Lodge. Ons is nou klaar met kamp. Die aand gaan eet ons by die bekende Joes



Pieter Heslinga

Beerhouse en geniet hulle lekker yskoue bier. Gaan vroeg slaap en vertrek die volgende oggend terug Pretoria toe. Ons oornag weer by Kang in Botswana en is Sondag 4 Oktober terug by die huis.

Dit was 'n onvergeetlike vakansie met

soveel herinneringe. En wat die voëltjies aanbetref – ons sien 13 lifers. Aan almal wat die toer met ons meegemaak het, vir al die vriendskap, die hulp, die ondersteuning, die lekker kuier, baie dankie. Sonder julle sou ons nie so 'n toer kon doen nie. 🇱

Trip to SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary

Peter Farmerey

On the last day of 2015 six members of the Farmerey clan plus fellow BLNG members Annatjie and André Barkhuizen finally set off for SanWild.

We were very fortunate to win the draw for the accommodation at the BLNG 2015 AGM. Our original booking in May was cancelled at short notice due to a change of ownership of the Savannah Camp but SanWild were most considerate in arranging an alternative date at Bukisa Camp.

On route to Gravelotte we did a short birding excursion at the Polokwane Nature Reserve to try and find the Short-clawed Lark. Whilst unsuccessful in that endeavour we had good

birding with 53 species listed. The highlight was seeing a flock of more than a hundred White Storks and Marabou Storks at the half empty Mooka Dam.

Our next detour was a loop through the Woodbush Forest from Magoebaskloof which should have ended at Debegeni Falls. We had taken this route some years ago but we ended up on forest roads that had not seen a vehicle for some time and we had to clear trees and branches from the tracks on a few occasions. Eventually we ran out of road and could see a road at the bottom of the mountain that would have got us to our destination but nothing short of a 6 x 6 Unimog would have managed the



One of the rescued hippos

terrain. Although we had to turn around the detour was not in vain as we saw Forest, Steppe and Jackal Buzzards plus beautiful indigenous forest and trees. On the way back we tried the route in the reverse direction but the road just beyond Debeneni had a chain across it and a permit was required to travel beyond that point.

The SanWild gate finally reached we were escorted to the Bukisa camp and settled into very comfortable *en suite* safari tents. Food at the camp was prepared by chef Michael and this was varied, well presented and delicious. The pool was also a most welcome spot to cool off after an outing.

Being a wildlife rehabilitation centre the main focus is on animals but we had some interesting birding at the same time. We did not see the New Year in as we were up at just after 4:00 am on 1st January to depart by 5:00 am on our first game drive! The area had been badly affected by the heat and drought, resulting in a complete lack of grass for grazers which meant lucerne had to be brought in to supplement available food.

The dams on the reserve had been completely dry until the week before we arrived and it was amazing to see how quickly birds and water fowl had returned. At the one dam we had good sightings of Dwarf Bittern as well as Egyptian Geese repeatedly chasing Knob-billed Ducks away in a fight over the limited resources. A number of cuckoo species



Peter Farnery

White and Marabou Storks at Mooka Dam

were sighted including Diederik, Klaas's, Black and Jacobin. The drought meant a reduction in kingfisher species but Woodland were plentiful and an African Pygmy was spotted at the lodge water hole. At the Lion camp many Hooded, White-backed and Cape Vultures were feeding off the carcasses. In general we saw many of the more common bushveld species and Black-headed and Eurasian Golden Orioles. A total of 63 bird species were listed at SanWild.

On one of our drives we were taken into one of the many old mine shafts on the reserve and learned that there was a mini gold mining boom in the area which started in 1870. We also visited the adjacent Leydsdorp which was proclaimed a city in 1890 and was the smallest city in South Africa but malaria and the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand meant that it was virtually abandoned.

Much of the wildlife at SanWild has been rescued from illegal zoos and reserves where they were to be culled. One of the hippos has a tooth that protrudes through the upper lip as a result of the incorrect diet whilst in captivity. It was a unique experience seeing the interaction with these animals which one would not normally see in the wild. The founders Louise Joubert and André Grobler and their staff work very hard with limited funding to keep the operation going.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the trip to SanWild and our thanks go to BLNG and Elba Swart who donated the prize. 🐾

Rooiborssuikervoël bering in die Long Tom-Pas, Lydenburg

Wanda Lourens

Op 19 Februarie 2016 het elf ringers Pretoria verlaat op pad na Lydenburg in Mpumalanga. Ons missie: om elkeen 'n Rooiborssuikervoël te ring.

Dawie de Swardt, voëlkundige van die Nasionale Museum in Bloemfontein het lede van BirdLife Gauteng-Noord (BLGN) genooi om die week saam met hom in die Long Tom-pas te gaan voëls ring. Die groep het bestaan uit Janine Goosen, wat die BLGN-leier vir die week was, en haar man Greg, Hein Bantjes, Paula en Martin Steyn, Elba Swart, Marie Ueckermann, Gert Opperman, Kotie Fildes, Frik du Plooy en Wanda Louwrens.

'n Deel van die groep het die Vrydagaand by Rooidraai Gastehuis bymekaar gekom vir 'n braai en om planne te maak vir die volgende dag se ring.

Paardeplaats

Ons het in spanne verdeel – Saterdagoggend dou-voor-dag het Frik, Wanda, Gert, Kotie, Janine en Greg olv Dawie by Paardeplaats, Jesus Koppie, begin ring en die ander span, Martin, Paula, Marie en Elba olv

Hein het hulle nette 'n paar kilometer verder by Paardeplaats piekniekplek opgeslaan. Laasgenoemde plek was meer produktief met meer beskikbare proteablomme en het deur die dag aan elke ringer 'n Rooiborssuikervoël besorg.

Die Sondagoggend is Frik, Wanda, Gert en Kotie ook na die piekniekplek en is beloon met 'n Rooiborssuikervoël elk. Die doel van die naweek is verwesenlik – elkeen in die groep het 'n suikervoël gekry om te ring!

Die suikervoëls is darem nie al wat ons in die Long Tom-pas gering het nie – die volgende spesies het ook 'n ringetjie gekry: Jangroentjie, Grootrooibandsuikerbekkie, Drakensberglangstertjie, Huisswael en Bergklipwagter.

Paardeplaats Gastehuis

Sondagmiddag het Gert en Kotie besluit om Shulle nette by die Paardeplaats Gastehuis – ook in die Long Tom-pas – op te sit. Maandagoggend is daar vroeg begin en somer gou was 'n verskeidenheid voëls gering. Onder andere: Kaapse Bosbontrokkie, Natalse Fisant,



BLNG ringers: groep-foto saam met Dawie de Swardt



Die foto dui aan hoe die "bulge" op P6 gemeet word

Kleinheuningwyser, Lawaaimakerjanfrederik, Bandkeelkleinjantjie, Drakensberg Langstertjie, Hofsanger, Gewone Spekvreter, Huiltinktinkie, Suidelike Waterfiskaal en Gewone Willie. Dit is nou behalwe die "gewone" voëls soos wewers, tiptolle en glasogies. In totaal was daar 19 voëls van 15 spesies gering!

Gustav Klingbiel Natuureservaat

Dawie kon reël dat daar in die Gustav Klingbiel Natuureservaat gering mag word en Maandagmiddag het Dawie, Janine, Gert en Kotie hulle nette daar gaan opstel. Dinsdagoggend vroeg is daar in alle erns begin en sommer gou-gou is daar ook 'n verskeidenheid voëls gevang. Dit was gelukkig 'n koel, bewolkte dag en die voëls het gereeld in die nette beland, daarom is daar besluit om ook op Woensdag weer daar te ring. Die son het egter sommer vroeg al baie warm geskyn en met geen wolke nie, is daar toe besluit om maar op te pak. Besondere spesies was: Swartriethaan, Gevlekte Heuningwyser, Hof-en Tuinsanger, Grasvoël, Bandkeelkleinjantjie, Pylvlekkatlagter, Drakensberglangstertjie en Brilwewer. In totaal was daar 90 voëls van 36 spesies gering!

Kudu Game Ranch

Frik en Wanda het ook 'n draai by familie op Kudu Game Ranch (so 11 km op die Ohrigstadpad) gemaak waar hulle Maandag-en

Dinsdagoggend sommer van die huis se stoep af gering het. Daar broei 'n Gryskopmossie paartjie op die stoep in 'n sisalstomp en die pa, ma en kleintjie het elkeen 'n ringetjie gekry. Die nette is twee treë van die stoep af opgeslaan en dit was interessant om te sien hoe sommige voëltjies in die net ingevlieg en onmiddellik weer uitgevlieg het. Die voordeel om so naby die nette te wees (wat nooit gebeur nie) is dat die voëls dadelik uitgehaal kon word. Nog spesies wat gering is, is die Gewone Spekvreter, Gewone Blouvinke, Swartsuikerbekkie (mannetjies, wyfies en jongs), Kaapse Glasogie en Swartoogtiptol.

Dawie de Swardt

Dawie bering Rooiborsuikervoëls al sedert 1987 in die Lydenburg-area en die projek is nou al in sy 30ste jaar. (Hy is ook besig om BLGN betrokke te kry in die projek sodat hulle in Dawie se afwesigheid met die projek kan help, veral om data oor hervangste te verkry. Janine Goosen sal as projekoördineer optree).

Daar is nou al 894 suikervoëls in die Lydenburg area gering (dit sluit ook ringrekords in van ander beringers soos Kotie Herholdt, Susan Schoeman, Zephne Bernitz en ander deur die jare). 122 Hervangste, "resightings" en "recoveries" is al die afgelope 30 jaar gekry. Beringing veral in Dullstroom area word benodig om enige bewegings tussen die twee dorpe te verkry. Die groep het so baie by Dawie geleer!

Ons het gou geleer om 'n volwasse

manneljies en wyfies van mekaar te onderskei. Manneljies rooiborsuikervoëls se vlerk en stert lengtes is langer as die wyfies, en kan dus maklik so “gesex” word. Die mannetjie is altyd groter, maar die gebruik om na die “bulge” in P6 te kyk in die mannetjies en totale kop-lengte die beste manier is om hul geslagte te bepaal. Die mannetjie se P6 primêre veer het ’n duidelike bult – dit bult uit vanaf die skag van die veer en is tot 15 mm dik teenoor 9 mm vir ’n normale veer. Die wyfie en onvolwassenes (met langer sterte) toon ook ’n effense bult op dieselfde veer, maar dit is amper onbeduidend.

Dawie het reeds sedert die vroeë 1980’s begin belangstel in voëls en het begin om voëlopnames te maak in die Lydenburg omgewing, veral in die Gustav Klingbiel Natuureservaat, die Long Tom-pas area, asook die vallei langs die Sterkspruitrivier tot by die De Kuilen Visteel-stasie. Die opnames is meestal te voet uitgevoer – geen karre of fietse betrokke! Die opnames het oor ’n tydperk van ongeveer 8 jaar gestrek en het uitgeloop op ’n publikasie in die “Southern Birds Series” (de Swardt 1990). (Daar is nie meer kopieë beskikbaar nie!) In dieselfde jaar wat SABAP1 begin het, het Dawie met sy Rooiborsuikervoël-projek in Lydenburg begin (sy “Southern Birds study area”) (de Swardt 1991). Gedurende die suikervoël-projek in Lydenburg, is data oor voëlverspreidings ingesamel vir SABAP1, die voëls in natuureservate projek (BIRP),

asook tans vir SABAP2.

Die betrokkenheid van “citizen scientists” in voëlkundige navorsing word vandag aangemoedig en ondersteun. Dit volbring die wens wat gemaak is tydens die “Bird and Man Symposium” wat in April 1983 in Johannesburg gehou is dat die lewensvatbaarheid en wenslikheid van ’n Voëlpopulasie Databank gestig moet word om langtermyn studies in Suid-Afrika se voëlpopulasies te maak (sien Bunning 1983 ref in De Swardt 2014). Wat gevolg het daai jare was kraanvoël-sensusse (wat nou deur CAR oorgeneem is), asook al die voëlatlasse soos Vrystaat (Earle & Grobler 1988), Transvaal (Tarboton et al 1987) en ander provinsies totdat SABAP1 in 1987 begin het. SAFRING bringers van Birdlife SA se takke (soos BLGN) kan ’n groot rol speel by ADU se projekte (soos SAFRING, SABAP2, Virtual Museum en ander) asook navorsers van Museums (soos Dawie by Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein), Universiteite en ander instansies om hul te help met hul navorsingsprojekte.

Voetnota

Inligting is geneem uit: De Swardt, DH 2014.

Bird distribution changes in the Lydenburg area. Mpumalanga (2530AB Lydenburg and 2530BA Long Tom Pass) using SABAP data to compare with historical data: a period since the 1980s. Ornithological Observations, Vol 5 431-449.

Kolgansverhaal

Salomi Louw

Kolgans kry jy oral, tik hulle vinnig in op jou atlasblok of merk hulle af op jou voëllys en ry verder.

Tydens ’n onlangse vakansie aan die Natalse Suidkus het ek egter tyd gehad om hulle goed dop te hou: die weer was sleg, met sagte reën/bewolkte toestande/sterk wind. ’n Mens is dus noodgedwonge aangewese op dit wat so te sê op jou voorstoep gebeur.

By een van die dammetjies effens weg was

’n kolganspaartjie met twee kuikens. Die mannetjie het die meeste van die tyd op ’n dak daan naby gesit en die wyfie soms ook, wat die twee kuikens aan hul lot oorgelaat het.

Reg onder my woonstel, met ’n groter dam hier, was ’n ander kolganspaar, met elf kuikens. Terwyl die wyfie sag ‘karr’ of kug en haar kuikens begelei op grasstrooptogte, loop die mannetjie opletterend in wye draaie om haar en sy kleingoed: hy is voortdurend op die uitkyk



Kolganswyfie met 11 kuikens

vir moontlike gevaar.

Soms kom die twee-kuikenmannetjie soos 'n bomwerper afgeduik op 'ons' gesin, maar ons mannetjie is dadelik die lug in en op die aanval met luide grofgeskut. Was die 2-kuiken ou jaloers? Wou hy kuikens doodmaak? Wie sal weet. Ons mannetjie was egter voortdurend

bedag op gevaar – en dis seker waarom hy en sy met elf kuikens kon spog.

Wat my die meeste beïndruk het, was die manier waarop die wyfie ál elf kuikens onder haar vlerke en lyf kon huisves. Die vlerke word effens oopgevoel terwyl sy hurk en roep, en die kleingoed stroom onder haar in – soms een voor in en die ander agter uit, maar uiteindelik kry almal plek onder haar beskermende pens en flanke. Hoe kry die arme wyfie rus? Sy kan nie self lê nie, want sy moet genoeg ruimte tussen haar pens en die grond laat vir al die kleingoed.

Op 'n staptog om die blok een aand het ek dié gesin verras waar hulle oornag. Onder luide geskree van die ouers het die elf(ies) onder haar uitgepeul en die donkerte in geskarrel. Ek het mooi om verskoning gevra en terwyl ek wegloop, het die elfies weer ewe liefies onder die ma kom inkruip.

Om die kolgansoptrede dop te hou, het my ure se plesier verskaf. 🐾

Kransduif – 'n 'sad story'

Salomi Louw

Vir maande - of miskien selfs jare – is 'n monogame kransduifpaartjie vroeg soggens op die nok van die lapa. Sodra ek uit die huis kom, vlieg hulle af en kom sit naby die voerdek om te wag vir die gebreekte mielies. Laatmiddag was dit dieselfde storie. Die twee was baie liefdevol en het mekaar gedurig bekyk, bevroetel en gesoen.

'n Paar weke gelede is daar op 'n dag net één kransduif. Dié een was steeds elke oggend en laatmiddag op die pos: van die nok na die geut na die voerdek en in die waterbak. Maar die kor-geroep was/is stil. Dis met groot jammer te wak ek die optrede dopgehou het.

Sy (ek neem aan die oorblywende een was 'n hennetjie weens die daaropvolgende optrede) sit al lank op die hittige Desembermiddag in die waterbak; doen niks, sit net daar met koppie ingetrek, kyk nie op, af, links of regs nie. Natuurlik skryf 'n mens

humanistiese eienskappe toe aan fauna en ek mis saam met haar haar haantjie.

En toe kom wat ek gedink het 'n Kersgeskenk is. Op die plaveisel naby die waterbak land 'n Kransduif! Hy waaierstert oor die plaveisel nader aan die waterbak. Sy gee hom een kyk en draai daarna haar kop anderpad. Hy spring tot op die rand van die waterbak, skuifel nader en knuffel haar aan die nek. Sy beweeg nie weg nie; druk net haar bors uit met 'n gekromde rug en rig haar kop omhoog soos 'n onaantastbare individu. So, met 'n kroontjie wat aan die blou hemel raak, sit sy terwyl hy rondom haar waterplas, om haar loop, aan haar nek prikkel en later afspring om in die omgewing te wei. Sy sit daar so orent met koppie omhoog dat ek later dink sy gaan dalk agteroor val. Kyk na hom, kyk sy nie.

Intussen sit ek bewegingloos vasgenaël op my stoel dié petalje te beskou met die hoop dat

sy weer 'n maatjie sal aanvaar. Maar nee, sy kyk nie na hom waar hy op die grasperk pik-pik nie, sit net daar met selfingenome waardigheid en week in die water. Selfs toe hy uiteindelik op die lapa se nok beland ("dis ons plek daai" sou ek dink sy kon dink) verwerdig sy haar nie om haar kop te draai nie; sy sit steeds hooghartig en kop omhoog in die waterbak, selfs terwyl die Grootringduif en Geelbeklysters rondom haar kom stort. Met die rug ingetrek, bors uitgestoot

en kop hemelwaarts bly sy onaantasbaar.

Die nuweling het later die pad gevat. Daarna het sy op 'haar' nok gaan sit – steeds met dieselfde ongenaakbare houding ingeslaan. Selfs toe ek die skemertydse mielies op die voerdeke gaan strooi het, het sy nie beweeg nie, net met uitgestrekte nek bly sit.

Tog so jammer! Ek wens vir haar 'n Kersfees van liefde, vriende en familie toe, want eenzaamheid kan enige individu vernietig. 🐦

Observation of a Common Buttonquail

Ron Searle

I thought that the attached photo of a Common Buttonquail which I photographed here on Waterfall yesterday might be of interest to the members of the club.

It was captured without too much trouble scurrying about in a garden in Waterfall Hills Estate in Midrand which had no grassland habitat at all. It was captured about midday and brought to me for identification after which it was released, no worse for the experience, in the grassland in front of my place. I have made a couple of observations on the bird. It has pure white eyes whereas all field guides show the eyes as being yellow. Furthermore, in one of my photos it shows a very distinct white stripe



from the crown to front of its head, a feature I don't recall seeing on any illustration of the bird or reading about in any description. 🐦

My eerste kennismaking met 'n Spookvoël

Rina van der Grÿp

Tydens 'n besoek aan my skoonsuster (Marietjie Grobler) in Potgietersrus (Mokopane) gedurende September 2015, het ek en sy in die vroeë oggendure die voëls dopgehou in die doringboom op hulle erf.

Skielik val daar peule op die grond en die volgende oomblik sien ek langs een van die peule 'n klein duifie, ek het nog die duifie

dopgehou toe die geelkleurige voël langs die duifie kom sit en hom begin pik.

Ek het in Marietjie se Roberts Voëlgids gekyk en die geel voël geïdentifiseer as 'n Spookvoël. Ek het al baie van hom gehoor, net nog nooit gesien nie.

Ek het my kamera gegryp en dadelik fotos begin neem. Bietjie verder van die duifie het nog een gelê, hy was reeds dood.



Die Spookvoël met sy prooi

Die Spookvoël het na die dooie duifie gegaan en hom opgetel en in 'n nabygeleë boom ingevlieg.



Rina van der Gijp

Spookvoël /Grey-headed Bush-Shrike

Die duifie het uit sy bek geval, maar omdat ek gelees het dat hulle nogal die gewoonte het om hulle prooi in 'n boom te hang het ons later gaan opvolg – die duifie was netjies op 'n tak uitgesprei.

Gelukkig het Marietjie tot die redding van die ander duifie gekom, hy doen baie goed, sy ouers het hom gereeld kom besoek en gevoer. 🐦

Unique “once in a lifetime sighting” on the Zaagkuildrift Road

Theo van der Merwe

On Tuesday 19 January 2016 we were bird watching on the Zaagkuildrift road towards Kgomo Kgomo. We turned left onto Crake road and soon afterwards saw a Brown Snake Eagle nearby. It took off in the direction of Zaagkuildrift Road. We then also turned back onto the Zaagkuildrift Road, and approximately 2 kms from our first sighting of the eagle we saw again a Brown snake Eagle (same one that we had seen earlier?) in a most unusual position close to the road in the grass against a shrub. The bird was pinned down – wings spread out, and its yellow eyes were panic stricken. An aggressive, writhing and mature Egyptian cobra, approximately 3 cm in diameter, had curled itself around the one of the wings of the bird, and as I approached the snake turned to me in a striking position. The head of the snake soon disappeared under the bird. I then made a decision to try and save both the bird and

the snake. I took a long stick and proceeded to prod the snake, hoping it would move off. This it did, untwining and disappearing into the long grass.

A happy ending for all. We had witnessed an amazing sighting! The bird flew off down the road, perhaps hungry, but unharmed and the snake had a narrow escape!

The unanswered question: Did the snake catch the bird or the bird catch the snake? After much deliberation, we think that the eagle went for the snake crossing the road, not anticipating its size and weight. Perhaps the snake then turned on the bird and it ended in a crash landing for the bird!

My wife, a keen amateur bird photographer, was unable to successfully photograph what we had witnessed. She had retired to the safety of our car...

Zaagkuildrift has always provided us with interesting and stimulating birdwatching. 🐦

Rarities and Unusual Sightings Report: 31 March 2016

Compiled by André Marx

There were a number of excellent rarities this past summer, with pride of place probably going to the much celebrated and obliging Spotted Crake at Waterfall Estate in Midrand, which was viewed and photographed by nearly 1500 people. It was one of the best summers at Marievale as well, which has improved tremendously as a birding destination after the good work undertaken with regard to habitat management there, and a steady stream of good birds was reported; more Spotted Crakes, Black-tailed Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Western Marsh Harriers and more. The other top locality in the very north-east of the region – Mkhombo Dam – delivered again, with Caspian Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Collared Pratincole, White-fronted Plover and a very interesting gull, more of which is written below, to name just some. A Tree Pipit in Pretoria also attracted a lot of attention. The reports for this 6 month period were numerous and not all were included, especially of more regular rarities such as European Honey Buzzard. My thanks to all who submit sightings and photos to me or via SABAP2 and the various Internet forums.

National Rarities/ Nasionale rareiteite

Crake, Spotted. Riethaan, Gevlekte: a single bird was observed at Marievale on 7 Jan 2016 (R&KW). In the days and weeks following at least another two birds were seen at the same locality (Gbird). On 21 Jan 2016 a solitary bird was noticed at a small wetland at the entrance to Waterfall Estate, Midrand (PV). The chance sighting of the Waterfall bird eventually resulted in hundreds of birders from all over the country converging on this site to tick the bird in the following weeks, and became the biggest twitch to date in South African history when nearly 1500 people had been to see it!

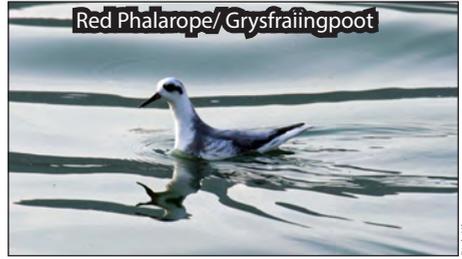
Godwit, Black-tailed. Griet, Swartstert-: at least two birds were still present at Mkhombo Dam on 5 Oct 2015 (Gbird), with records of this species still being reported well into Feb 2016. One bird was at Marievale, 26 Dec 2015 (NL).

Gull, Lesser Black-backed. Meeu, Kleinswart-rug-: The immature bird at Mkhombo Dam was still present on 28 Sep 2015 (Gbird) and remained present until at least Feb 2016 when a number of birders reported it. This bird had been studied in detail and with the help of gull experts from abroad the opinion was expressed as the bird came into moult that it belonged to the subspecies *Larus fuscus barabensis*, the form known as "Steppe" Gull, considered to be part of the Herring Gull/ Lesser Black-backed Gull complex.

Harrier, Western Marsh. Vleivalk, Europese: an immature male was seen at Marievale Bird Sanctuary, 9 Nov 2015 (reported by MT and JvR), and in the ensuing weeks up to 2 and 3 birds were present at this locality (Gbird).

Sandpiper, Green. Ruiter, Witgat-: at least one bird was in the vicinity of the vlei bridge at Rietvlei NR for several weeks, 15 Oct 2015 (Gbird) when it was seen and photographed by several birders. A single bird was at Waterfall Estate, Midrand, 21 Nov 2015 (RS).





Regional Rarities/ Streeksrariteit

Buzzard, European. Wespiedief: several sightings of this species occurred; one bird at Leeuwfontein Estate, north-east of Pretoria, 21 Nov 2015 (LL); one at Rietvlei Dam NR near the coffee shop 22 Nov 2015 (AB); one again at Rietvlei NR, 3 Dec 2015 (A&GBo). Another bird was at Delta Park, Johannesburg, 9 Jan 2016 (DH). *Several more sightings of this species were reported this summer in Gauteng, with this raptor being reported more regularly than some resident raptor species!*

Openbill, African. Ooievaar, Oopbek-: one bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 6 Dec 2015 (MB). A single bird was briefly seen at Rietvlei Dam NR, 16 Jan 2016 (FO). Another sighting was of one bird at Vaalkop Dam on 20 Mar 2016 (FP).

Pelican, Great White. Pelikaan, Wit-: a single bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 28 Nov 2015 (MJ).

Pelican, Pink-backed. Pelikaan, Klein-: one bird was on the southern side of Roodeplaat Dam, 28 Dec 2015, (DT), with another bird sighted at this locality, 12 Jan 2016 (ER).

Phalarope, Red. Fraingpoot, Grys-: a single

bird was found at Mkhombo Dam on 16 Jan 2016 (RG) and in the following weeks was reported by many birders. Another bird in non-breeding plumage was reported from Hartbeespoort Dam, 15 Mar 2016 (RK).

Pipit, Mountain. Koester, Berg-: a very interesting discovery was finding a small group of these birds at Ezemvelo NR when the distinctive features could be noted, 10 Oct 2015 (EM et al). *Etienne Marais notes: the extreme winter weather forces birds to depart their high breeding grounds [in Lesotho and surrounds] from about early April. They return again in the second half of October. Where they go in the intervening months is one of the enduring mysteries of southern African ornithology. Given that related pipits are resident or short-distance nomadic migrants in the South African winter, it seems plausible that the Mountain Pipit is merely an altitudinal migrant.*

Pipit, Tree. Koester, Boom-: one bird was found on 5 Feb 2016 in Wonderboom Nature Reserve, Pretoria, (TvS). Several birders saw this local rarity in the following weeks.

Plover, Caspian. Strandkiewiet, Asiatiese: at least 8 birds were still present at Mkhombo



Caspian Plover/ Asiatische Strandkiewiet



Tree Pipit/ Boomkoester



Collared Pratincole/ Rooivlerksprinkaanvoël



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater/ Blouwangbyvreter



Pectoral Sandpiper/ Geelpootstrandloper

Dam on 5 Oct 2015 (Gbird). At least 5 birds were present at the floodplain at Kgomo-Kgomo, 11 Dec 2015 (LR).

Plover, White-fronted. Strandkiewiet, Vaal- one bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 14 Oct 2015 (JB) and remained present until at least 19 Dec 2015.

Pratincole, Collared. Sprinkaanvoël, Rooivlerk- one bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 5 Oct 2015 (Gbird).

Sandpiper, Pectoral. Strandloper, Geelpoot-

a single bird was found at Marievale Bird Sanctuary, 23 Nov 2015 (DM).

Turnstone, Ruddy. Steenloper: at least two birds were at Mkhombo Dam, 5 Oct 2015 (Gbird). One bird was at Marievale Bird Sanctuary, 9 Nov 2015 (MT).

Whimbrel, Common. Wulp, Klein- a single bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 24 Nov 2015 (CvW).

Other Interesting Observations/ Ander Interessante Waarnemings

Bee-eater, Blue-cheeked. Byvreter, Blouwang- one bird was at Marievale on 12 Dec 2015, (RvT), an unusual record. Another interesting record for the region is one bird seen at Hamerkop Bird Sanctuary, Roodepoort, 17 Dec 2015 (BA).

Cuckoo, Common. Koekoek, Europese: one bird was found at Waterfall Estate, Midrand, 11 Jan 2016 where it remained for a few days (Gbird).

Eagle, Ayres' Hawk. Arend, Kleinjag- in early

Robert Wienand



Ayres's Hawk-Eagle/ Kleinjagarend

Anthony Paton



Lesser Moorhen/ Kleinwaterhoender

Ron Searle



Common Whitethroat/ Witkeelsanger



Southern White-faced Owl/ Witwanguil

-Jean van Rooyen

October 2015 a few birds were noted in the vicinity of Weskoppies Hospital in Pretoria, and in the ensuing weeks and months they were observed by a number of birders, still being present during January 2016 (Gbird). Another bird was seen at the Tree Pipit site at Wonderboom NR in Pretoria, 6 Feb 2016 (JvRo). **Finfoot, African. Watertrapper:** this species was confirmed as occurring at Rietvlei NR in Centurion, 18 Oct 2015, at the new hide downstream from the vlei bridge (Gbird).

Kingfisher, African Pygmy. Visvanger, Dwarf--: an usual sighting for the Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens in Johannesburg was two birds of this species, 21 Nov 2015 (JvRo). **Moorhen, Lesser. Waterhoender, Klein--:** one bird was an unusual sighting at Hamerkop Bird Sanctuary in Florida, Roodepoort, 30 Dec 2015 (BA). A single bird was at Glen Austin Pan, Midrand, 10 Jan 2016 (JA). **Owl, Southern White-faced. Uil, Witwang--:** one bird was a surprise find at The Sandton Field and Study Centre grounds, 14 Oct 2015, where it remained for a few days and was observed by several local birders (KT). **Owlet, Pearl-spotted. Uil, Witkol--:** a sighting of one bird at Hamerkop Bird Sanctuary in Florida, Roodepoort, is an unusual record for the Greater Johannesburg region, 7 Nov 2015 (BA). **Pipit, Short-tailed. Koester, Kortstert--:** this species was located again along the Mabusabackroad near Verena, 13 Nov 2015 (EM), a

highly localised bird in the Gauteng region.

Starling, Common. Spreeu, Europese-:

a single bird was observed at Delta Park in Johannesburg on 30 Oct 2015 and another individual was recorded foraging next to the N1/ N14 interchange just south of Pretoria on 10 Nov 2015 (GL). A report from the last CWAC count along the Vaal River was that it revealed 24 birds of this species in trees and lawns next to the river, 15 Aug 2015 (JBr).

Whitethroat, Common. Sanger, Witkeel-:

one bird was observed at Helderfontein Estate, north of Fourways in Johannesburg, 31 Jan 2016, a first sighting at this locality (AM). One bird was at Waterfall Estate, Midrand, on 7 Feb 2016, an unusual bird for the area (RS, AM). Another bird was recorded at Klipriviersberg NR in the south of Johannesburg, 20 Dec 2015 (LR), a new bird for the reserve.

Observers/ Waarnemers:

Amanda & Gary Boyle (A&GBo)
Andrew Buitendach (AB)
André Marx (AM)
Bradwin Adendorff (BA)
Corrie van Wyk (CvW)
David Myburgh (DM)
Dirk Human (DH)
Duard Teichert (DT)
Ernst Retief (ER)
Etienne Marais (EM)
Faansie Peacock (FP)
Fransie O'Brien (FO)
Gauteng Birders (Gbird)

Geoff Lockwood (GL)
Jason Boyce (JB)
Jerome Ainsley (JA)
John Bradshaw (JBr)
Johan van Rensburg (JvR)
Jéan van Rooyen (JvRo)
Kevin Trinder-Smith (KT)
Lance Robinson (LR)
Leon Labuschagne (LL)
Mark Tittley (MT)
Martin Benadie (MB)
Michael Johnson (MJ)
Norman Lok (NL)
Pieter Verster (PV)
Rick Kleyn (RK)
Rob Geddes (RG)
Rolf & Karin Wiesler (R&KW)
Ron Searle (RS)
Rowan van Tonder (RvT)
Thinus van Staden (TvS)

This column is mainly concerned with observations of rarities and interesting sightings made in the Greater Gauteng region, defined as being 100 km from the centre of both Johannesburg and Pretoria, however observations made further afield are also welcome. While the majority of records are included it is sometimes necessary to exclude some depending on whether the subject matter has already been well reported. Occasionally records are sourced from the Internet and from SABAP2 records. Members are invited to submit details of sightings to André Marx at e-mail turaco@telkomsa.net or 083 4117674. 🐦

New Members April 2015 – March 2016

Ons verwelkom die volgende nuwe lede en hoop dat julle gou tuis sal voel. Ons sien uit daarna om julle by ons aandvergaderings, daguitstappies of tydens 'n naweekkamp te leer ken.

A warm welcome to all our new members. We trust you will enjoy your birding with us and look forward to seeing you at our evening meetings, day outings or weekend trips.

Please contact the Secretary at secretary@blng.co.za or phone her on cell number 083 391 2327 for any queries or information.

Ime van Coller	Moreletapark
Tielman & Fredrika Nieuwoudt	Waverley
Francois & Karin van Rensburg	Eldopark
Fransie O'Brien	Menlopark
Ronel Scribante	Faerie Glen
Lynn Gouws	Sinoville
Christo du Toit	Karenpark
Roxanne & Thinus J v Rensburg	Carlswald
Gregory & Janine Goosen	The Reeds
Christiaan & Benetha Burmeister	Floruana
Frankie Allesio	Silverlakes
Kagiso Mohlamme	Spruitview
Ria J v Rensburg	Waterkloof Ridge
Klaus Rust	Waterkloof Ridge
Allan Dagutat	Hatfield
Annette v d Merwe	Derdepoort Park
Dalene Coetsee	Lynn East
Marle & Wilhelm Botha	Valhalla
Petra van Basten	Hatfield
Jakkie Botha	Murrayfield
Benita Serfontein	Clubview
Robyn Milne	Colbyn
Ezanne de Beer	Garsfontein
Angela Roche	Hatfield
Hantie Bouwer & Corine	Auckland Park
Ida Nel	Brooklyn
Helene Buckley	Annlín
Japie & Pikkie Cronje	Lynnwoodrif
Koos & Irma v Zyl, Amri, Zoui	Meyerspark
Jeanette & Carl de Beer	Rietfontein
Leon & Marianne Labuschagne	Centurion
Hannes de Wet	Tiegerpoort
Logan Weavind	Rivonia
Johan & Daleen J v Rensburg	Garsfontein
Pieter & Mariette Fourie	Moreletapark
Matthys & Annie v d Hout	Waverley
Liesl de Wet	Faerie Glen

Donasies/Donations (April 2015 – March 2016)

Once again we want to sincerely thank you for your generous donations. Your contributions help us to reach our goal towards supporting bird conservation projects and is much appreciated.

Weereens 'n groot dankie vir u donasie. U bydrae verseker dat ons 'n groter bydrae tot die bewaring van voëls kan lewer. Ons waardeer dit opreg.

Marie Ueckerman	Gary Boyle
Estelle Raath	André Taljaard
Lesley Wilton	Con Fauconnier
André Gildenhuis	Sue Visser
Elba Swart	Ben Breedlove
Tersia Horne	Stoffel Botha
Laura Jordaan	Ian Alexander
André Marx	Alan Whyte
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Malan v Rensburg	Riel Franzsen
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(R350/p/night)**



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