



Laniarius

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BirdLife Northern Gauteng
BirdLife Gauteng-Noord



**Newsletter of BirdLife Northern Gauteng
Nuusbrief van BirdLife Gauteng-Noord**

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Aanvaarding van bydraes en advertensies word aan die diskresie van die Redakteur oorgelaat. Digitale foto's is altyd welkom. Stuur asseblief foto's in hulle oorspronklike resoluție/grootte.

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Front cover: Little Bee-eater/Kleinbyvreter – Ernest Davis

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From the Editor



WHY BIRD?

Why Bird? What motivates us? Why is birding the fastest growing hobby world-wide?

What inner fire drove our club president, André Marx, to be a club member and serve on its various committees for the past 40 years? What makes the many new, young, and passionate birders tick?

Birding has for long been the domain of the silver brigade, with their pencils and ring-bound notebooks in the field and their heavy bird books in the car or at home. Now it is all about amazing Apps, BirdLasser, mirrorless cameras and seamless transfer of photographs to Instagram and Facebook. Young birders fast-load photographs of mouth-watering species seen immediately on Telegram or Twitter. A competitive new version of the Hunt, the Kill, the Trophy?

Most birders try to expand their life lists to reach 700, 800 ... or go birding in Costa Rica or Indonesia. Others just enjoy the daily antics of the same old regular garden visitors at their bird feeding station. For it is true that we each are on our own birding journey.

What birders young and old do have in common is a yen to categorise and classify. Bedside books often are tomes on birding. Birders' social media usage revolves around rare species seen, bird photography, *BirdLife South Africa* Facebook or Instagram posts. Instead of whodunnit detective stories, hard-core birders try and solve the IDs of species that have others stumped when they post Facebook images on *LBJ's*, *BBJ's* and *UFOs of South Africa*.

Birders employ a whole unique new language that could be dubbed BirdSpeak or possibly be named *Avioglossia* by linguists – *pentad*, *lifer*, *twitch*, *dip*, *wish list*, *atlas*, *bogey bird*, *life list*, *target species*.

Birders enjoy challenges that sometimes only they themselves know about – upping their year count, pentad count, Kruger count, photo list, identifying birdsong.

Birders celebrate and contact fellow enthusiasts when a new species visit their gardens,

pentads, or towns. Let's face it. We are addicted. In the claws of full-blown obsession.

Birders go to considerable expense – binoculars, electronic apps, cameras, scopes, community bird guides, birding expeditions, twitches. Birders get up at ungodly hours on weekends to catch the dawn chorus, stand in sodden shoes and socks, braving freezing winds, while their non-birder friends cosily sleep late or enjoy a lazy cuppa in bed. Why? Is it in the hope of seeing a lifer, or some special migrant, or an improved photograph of a warbler for their files?

One reason could be that our passion is not restricted by lack of time, funds, or even mobility. Birding may be done from an inner-city office window. I know a birder who waxes lyrical about swallows sunning themselves on her tower-block windowsill. Birding is not about numbers and statistics, finding scarce species or just about being the best. Focusing on a bathing bird or enjoying the thrill of a lifer removes you from the daily grind, its stresses, and its pressures. Lieutenant-General Alan Brooke, Chief of Staff during WWII, stated in his diary during the Conference of Casablanca: "... if it had not been for the birds and the company they provide, I could almost have sobbed with loneliness." (See Salomi Louw's article in this edition)

Lynn Thomson has the answer. In *Birding with Yeats: A Mother's Memoir*, she states: "I was conscious of that moment of stepping into the woods and leaving everything else behind. That one instant when all the sounds of people, of traffic were suddenly gone, swallowed up by trees and ferns. I waited for that moment every time ... Of course, each time we set out, there's a certain expectation we'll see something, maybe even a species we've never seen before, and that will fill us with light. But even if we don't see anything remarkable – and sometimes that happens – we come home filled with light anyway."

Ivonne

From the Chair



This is our final edition of *Laniarius* for 2022 and we are looking back at a very interesting year which had unique challenges and many highlights.

Birdlife Northern Gauteng has been in existence for 52 years, more than half a century. It started off as the Northern Transvaal Ornithological Society in 1970, with the Crimson-breasted Shrike as its mascot and the *Laniarius* as the club's newsletter. It was later renamed as the Pretoria Bird Club (1997) and in 2004 it became BirdLife Northern Gauteng BLNG as we know it today – see the short article in the September issue of *African Birdlife Magazine*.

We are very proud of our BLNG President André Marx who has received one of the prestigious Birdlife South Africa's Owl Awards. André has been a member of BLNG since 1984 and he is passionate about birding, bird conservation and atlasing. Please read all about it in this issue of *Laniarius*.

Birdlife South Africa has undertaken one of its biggest and most important projects to date, the Mouse-free Marion project. This year started off with the Flock to Marion cruise which was supported by a large number of BLNG members. This was a unique opportunity for our in-land birders to see many albatross species and other seabirds. We request all our members and birding friends to support this project as it is of critical importance to save especially the wandering albatross and other species breeding on the island.

The high fuel prices as well as the continuous power issues has been a challenge, but we have still been able to produce a full program with many interesting events. This is evident from all the articles in the *Laniarius* – thank you to Ivonne and her team for putting it all together.

BLNG have gained many new members during the past year and it was heart-warming to meet them at the different events.

The committee is currently planning an exciting year of activities for 2023. We welcome any suggestions and inputs regarding interesting and new venues for day outings and camps that are budget friendly and closer to Pretoria.

We will soon be sending out a member survey to determine your thoughts, needs and suggestions. We will appreciate it if you complete the survey, as it will assist us to create a better program for all our members.

Once again thank you to all our members, leaders, committee and sub-committee members for making BLNG such a special and exciting birding club.

BLNG is also very fortunate to have a good number of new members joining the club. It is good to see so many and getting to know them better as they participate in the club activities outings and camps.

Happy Birding!

Louise

SANBI

The South African National Biodiversity Institute leads and coordinates research and monitors and reports on the state of biodiversity in South Africa. It provides knowledge and information, gives planning and policy advice and pilots best-practice management models in partnership with stakeholders. SANBI engages in ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation, leads the human capital development strategy of the sector and manages the National Botanical Gardens as 'windows' to South Africa's biodiversity for enjoyment and education.

My last *Laniarius*

In the early 1990s we decided to join a formal bird club. We were not very active at first, Koos was still busy with his very demanding part-time MBL degree. In 1994 we attended our first camp at Vhembe. During the camp I casually mentioned to my new friends that I was a scientific editor and also doing the layout of a scientific journal and that I was willing to help with the club's newsletter *Laniarius* if necessary. Well, to cut a long story short, Lorna Chalmers took on the offer. I helped her with one issue, she then resigned, and suddenly in December 1994 (Issue No 55) I was the new Editor of *Laniarius*!

Ek het die rol van Redakteur vervul van 1994 tot Desember 2001, en ook die uitleg gedoen – nie 'n maklike taak nie. Ek het na 7 jaar en 28 uitgawes besluit om die tuig neer te lê. Stephan Terblanche het oorgeneem, en later het André Marx ook 'n paar uitgawes gedoen. In Maart 2005 het Joel Avni oorgeneem as Redakteur en ek het ingestem om (tydelik...) weer die uitleg te doen... net tot hulle weer iemand kry...

Joel het net 3 uitgawes gedoen en in

Desember 2005 neem André Marx weer oor as Redakteur, en ek doen steeds die uitleg. *Laniarius* kry 'n nuwe voorkoms met 'n spatels rooi op die voorblad!

In 2007, vanaf No 104, word die voorblad in volkleur gedruk. Dit vind baie byval.

In 2013 met uitgawe No 124 neem Phillip en Jill de Moor oor by André. Hulle het

egter ook net 2 jaar gehou. Gedurende die tydperk 2007 – 2013 het Jacques van Zyl die uitleg van 2 uitgawes gedoen, verder was ek maar steeds verantwoordelik.

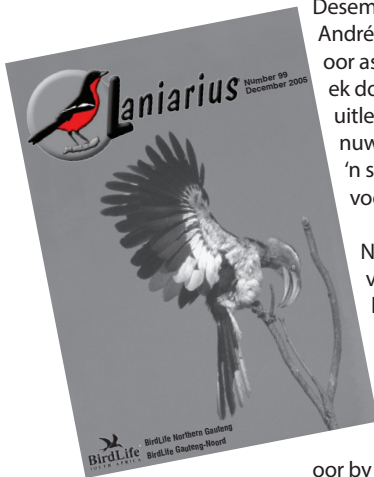
André was stand-in Editor for 2 issues again, and then in June 2017 Tamsyn Sherwill took over as the new Editor. No 134 was new in more than one way – a new Editor, BirdLife Northern Gauteng had a new logo and Tamsyn and I changed the look of *Laniarius* to a more modern clean layout. It was quite easy to work with Tamsyn. We had worked together on a journal for a number of years at the Water Research Commission and knew each other well. Tamsyn resigned after 11 issues.

Hierdie uitgawe is die derde een wat ons nuwe entoesiastiese Redakteur saamgestel het. Ek dink nie Ivonne Coetzee het mooi gewees waarvoor sy haar inlaat nie! Sy doen egter baie goeie werk en laat haar nie onderkry deur tandekry probleme nie. Saam-saam het ons drie pragtige uitgawes gedoen! Ek hoop namens die klub dat sy nog lank sal aanhou.

So, na 28 jaar (met een langerige onderbreking) en 81 uitgawes, is dit tyd vir my om te groet. Wanneer mens jou passie vir iets verloor en opsien na elke uitgawe en dit net doen omdat jy "moet", is dit tyd om op te hou.

Ek is seker julle gaan iemand vind wat die uitleg net so goed of beter kan doen!

Drinie van Rensburg



Owl award – André Marx

BirdLife South Africa's Owl Awards event was hosted at Isdell House on Tuesday 20 September 2022. Our BLNG Club President, André Marx, was duly honoured for his 40 years of membership service to the club, BirdLife SA, and conservation efforts in this field.



Citation

André Marx is well-known and highly respected in the birding community. He is passionate about birding, bird conservation and assisting beginner birders.

about birding ethics and the BLSA's Code of Conduct in the structured environment of a birding club, is essential to each beginner birder's birding journey.

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG SERVICE

André joined BirdLife Northern Gauteng in 1984. He has now been a member of the club for close to forty years, served on the club committee for more than three decades in various portfolios, and is currently serving as president of BLNG, a position which he has occupied for the past 15 years.

His invaluable support and enthusiasm have been instrumental in developing BirdLife Northern Gauteng to one of the largest and most active bird clubs in South Africa.

André's first portfolio on the club was that of Programme Co-ordinator. This was before the digital age or even the publication date of our provincial birding 'bible', *Birding Gauteng* (E Marais and F Peacock), and a huge file was used to keep locations, maps, directions, landowner's contact details, species lists and much more. He also served as editor of the club magazine, *Laniarius*. He then served as chairman before he was nominated president. Before current BLSA structures, André also was representative of BirdLife Northern Gauteng on the SA BirdLife council.

André strongly feels that club membership is essential for developing a deep-lying knowledge of birds. He states that there is no substitute for club birding to build expertise, especially in birding in the field. Apart from benefiting from experienced members' knowledge, learning

CITIZEN SCIENCE

André Marx has been the Regional and SABAP2 Moderator for Gauteng and North-West Provinces for the past 15 years. André has been on the SABAB2 Local Rarities Vetting Committee and as such is the person who communicates ORFs and will share vetted results with BLSA and birding communities such as bird clubs. His regional Rarities Reports are published in club magazines such as BLNG's *Laniarius* as well as the WITS Bird Club Newsletter.



BirdLife Northern Gauteng President, André Marx, with Philip Calinikos, Chairman – BirdLife South Africa and former BirdLife Northern Gauteng President [BLSA – Andy Wassung]

He also communicates these with Prof. Derek Engelbrecht of Polokwane Bird Club to assist in his research projects.

André is passionate about SABAP coverage, especially in under-reported areas. He initiated Atlas Bashes and has encouraged the birding community and BirdLife Northern Gauteng club members to accompany him on numerous Atlas bashing camps to far-flung areas such as Prieska, Vryburg and the Karoo for a number of years now to complete full protocol atlassing cards for areas not frequented by birders.

André is just as involved with SABAP2 and has to date submitted more than 1 400 full protocol cards.

André has been involved in the QUACK project, which was the forerunner of SABAP1, from its formation years. In those days, handwritten cards with bird species logged had to be submitted by post, after which one would receive a confirmation letter from the SABAP1 Committee. More-over, André remembers how, before electronic and social media, birders only learned about rarities in the *Laniarius* and other club magazines when these were published.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

André's community involvement in birding has not been confined to serving on BirdLife Northern Gauteng's committee in various capacities. He conducts regular community bird walks at Random Harvest indigenous nursery, in his own estate bordering the Jukskei river, and other estates in the Fourways area. He regularly volunteers to guide club excursions to venues such as Northern Farm, where he is active in conservation efforts of special species. He was involved in the construction of bird hides at Northern Farm.

André is revered as bird camp leader and expert guide to diverse locations such as Lesotho highlands, Memel and Wakkerstroom Wetlands and countless others. His phenomenal knowledge of bird calls and behaviour, top birding sites, contacts with land-owners and more, ensure that every guided trip undertaken by him as leader, is an in-depth learning experience



Mark Anderson, CEO BirdLife South Africa, presenting the citations at BirdLife South Africa Owl Awards ceremony



Elouise Kalmer (BLNG Chairman) and Sheleph Burger (BLNG Social Media and Marketing) attended the ceremony

on many levels. He is especially passionate to assist beginner birders on their birding journey, ensuring that birding ethics and the BLSA Code of Conduct is strictly adhered to.

Learners from schools and community members near Northern Farm also have benefited from his expertise, guided field trips and practical courses.

He currently is the co-ordinator of the Greater Jukskei efforts to form a Conservancy, including landowners of estates and properties abounding the Jukskei river.

We are privileged to have such a prominent figure in the birding world as president of our BirdLife Northern Gauteng club and were duly honoured to propose him to receive the prestigious BLSA Owl Award. This happened at the hand-over ceremony on 22 September.

Congratulations, André! 🦉

Thabametsi 1 – 3 July 2022

Ilse Müller

Thabametsi is a private family holiday resort in the North-West Province, roughly between Magaliesberg and Derby. The accommodation was cosy and warm.

We were greeted by numerous Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds (Geelblestinker) in the garden and took off to explore the wild olive groves up the hill with the Bar-throated Apalis (Bandkeelkleinjantjie) just everywhere. Others preferred to meander along the well-managed wetland area.

The different habitats and easy walking trails make this a little garden of Eden, for the visitors and birds.

Boons Road was the main attraction of the weekend – a short farm road, with little traffic. Keanu Canto let the way and the sightings were plentiful: Pale Chanting Goshawk, Acacia Pied Barbet, Orange River Francolin, Capped Wheatear, Cape Vulture, South African Shelduck and the Swallow-tailed Bee-eater – to name a few of a total list of 103 birds.

The overnight stay is a worthy consideration for someone who is keen to explore Boons Road in detail. The variety as well as the abundance of birds, the proximity to Pretoria and the reasonable fares makes this a superb destination for the club – even in the heart of winter.



Ilse Müller

South African Ground Squirrel



Keanu Canto

Boons Road



Keanu Canto

Thabametsi sunrise

Paradors 6 – 9 Augustus 2022

Laura Jordaan

Laeveld, hier kom ons!

Terwyl ons ry kry ons 'n boodskap dat ons maar versigtig moet bestuur want daar is groot rugby wat later die middag in Nelspruit gespeel word. Ja! By Millies staan die karre en busse volgepak. Die groen-en-goud hempies, pette en vlase skep 'n feestelike stemming. Die padwerke vir die nuwe afrit is aan die gang.

Na die tonnel vou die berge vir ons oop. Die rotsformasies, bome, blou lug met skraps wolkies stem my opgewonde. Gou is ons by die veiligheidshek van die natuurarea. By die eerste bruggie oor die Gouldsspruit, stop ons met 'n Bruinkopvisvanger (Brown-hooded Kingfisher) wat luid sy liedjie sing terwyl ek begin met Atlassing. Geelgokkanaries (Yellow-fronted Canary) vlieg verskrik op toe ons oor die bruggie se rand kom loer. 'n Rooibeklyster (Kurrichane Thrush) wip agter die takkies in en bekijk ons. Op die draad sit twee Draadstertswaels (Wire-tailed Swallow) rustig met 'n Kardinaalspeg (Cardinal Woodpecker) wat dringend kap aan sy huisie. Die Mikstertbyvanger (Fork-tailed Drongo) vlieg heen en weer om van die vele goggatjies daar te vang, met 'n Swartkroontjagra (Black-crowned Tchagra) wat sy resitasie vrolik opsê. Die grondpaadjie kronkel skerp op en af langs die spruitjie. Twee roofvoëls dans net bo ons koppe en blink in die skerp son maar raak agter die takke weg. Gewone Frette (Bronze Mannikin) flits voor ons uit en meng met die Glasogies (Cape White-eye) in die yl takke. Ek hou my venster oop en luister na die Oranjeborsboslaksman (Orange-breasted Bushshrike) se fluit toe 'n Groenvlekduifie (Emerald-spotted Wood-dove) vervaard voor die kar uitvlieg.

So kom ons by die hek wat ek opgewonde oopstoot, en kyk hoe die besempie die sand van die spoor afvee. Daar is 'n mooi aalwyn-tuintjie toegespan met drade, seker om wild uit te hou. Kos vir die suikerbekkies. Met die baie rondkyk is ons te gou by die opstal waar die

karre in gelid geparkeer staan.

Die klublede kom groet ons opgewonde, bly om weer bekendes te sien. Ons groep tou almal agter Philip aan na die tentkamp by die rivier, terwyl die Gewone Willie (Sombre Greenbul) se skerp roep meeding met ons geselsery. Dis 'n lekker stap met vele verrassings soos Suidelike Swie, Bandkeelkleinjantjie en die Witpens-en Rooiborssuikerbekkies (Swee Waxbill, Bar-throated Apalis, White-bellied Sunbird). Langs die pad kry ons 'n groep Withelm-laksmanne en die feite oor parasitering word vergelyk. Philip vertel dat die Swarthelm-laksman wel deur die Dikbekkoekoek geparasiteer word, terwyl die hele familie Withelm-laksmanne help grootmaak aan die nuwe broeisel (White-crested and Retz's Helmetshrike, Thick-billed Cuckoo).

Die son wat so wegsak agter die berge en die lou middaghitte maak ons so ontspanne dat ons skaars reageer toe die loerie begin roep en 'n groepie Gewone Swartmese in die



Aankoms by Paradors

Laura Jordaan

Elouise Kähler



Rooiborssuikerbekkie – Scarlet-chested Sunbird

bome bo ons kras. Dan is daar 'n samekoms en ons sien Glasogies, Bosveldstompstertjies, Geelborskleinjantjies, en sowaar die Gyskapokvoëltjie (Southern Black Tit, Long-billed Crombec, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Grey Penduline-Tit). Verder pad-af is 'n waterkuil waar twee Kolganse vervaard wegvlieg terwyl die Sneebal haastig deur die takke spring agter die vele goggas aan. Met ons terugkoms by die kamers sing daar 'n Grootheuningwyser lustig wat ons so geniet dat ons herinner moet word om die Hadede af te merk (Egyptian Goose, Black-backed Puffback, Greater Honeyguide).

Ons maak gereed vir aandete, met die Afrikaanse Naguiltjies wat ons so hartlik verwelkom by die groot vuur, en die roep van die Dikkoppe al om die huis smelt saam met ons lag en gesels met aandete (Fiery-necked Nightjar, Spotted Thick-knee).

Dag 1

Ons begin die dag 6:45 met 'n rit na die Peddlars Bos en op pad kry ons al 'n mooi Langkuifarend, Bontroklaksmen, Kleinglansspreeus, Akkedisvalk met sy kenstrepie, 'n groep Katlagters en 'n enkele Rooiborsduifie.



Elouise Kähler

Langkuifarend – Long-crested Eagle

Eerste tee is by die Geotrail se witklippe waar ons die Grasvoël hoor, terwyl ons 'n klein struik vol Kaapse Kanaries gewaar, vergees deur 'n paar Suidelike Swies en sowaar 'n Drakensberglangstertjie (Brubru, Cape Glossy Starling, Lizard Buzzard, Babbler, Laughing Dove, Cape Grassbird, Cape Canary, Drakensberg Prinia). Ons vertoef nie lank nie want ons is gereed vir die kloof.

Met die pad wat al smaller raak en die bosse al groener, daal ons in die kloof af. Daar vind ons Boskraaie, die geroep van die Bloukuifvlieëvanger en 'n hele paar Gevlekte Heuningwysers wat oor en weer koggel. Die roep van die Knysnaloerie en die Spookvoël met 'n flits van die Lawaaimakerjanfrederik wat rats tussen die ranke deur wip. Op pad terug kry ons darem 'n Withalskraai vir ons lys (Trumpeter Hornbill, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Knysna Turaco, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Chorister Robin-Chat, White-necked Raven).

Terug by die kamp kry ons weer die Gyskruisswaels, 'n paar Gevlekte Lysters en Elouise betrap die Dassievoël om die agterhoek van die huis (Grey-rumped Swallows, Groundscraper Thrush, Mocking Cliff Chat). Die Afrikaanse Naguiltjies is egter vanaand na 'n ander deel van die plaas en ons aandete is

Elouise Kälmer



Geelvlekmossie – Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow

Laura Jordaan



Makhonjwa Geotrail

stiller aan geluide. Die slaaie wat deur die gas-vrou gemaak is, is 'n heerlike afwisseling waar ons op die oop stoep saam eet.

Omdat daar op die plaas gejag word, mag ons net tot elfuur stap, dus begin ons vroeg. Die kant van die berg is oortrek met digte mis wat prentjiemooi wasige bome vir ons optower. By die dam gewaar ons 'n Bontvisvanger en Rooiwangmuisvoëls (Pied Kingfisher, Red-faced Mousebird). Met die terugstap hoor ons Geelkeelkalkoentjies en 'n Visarend (Fish Eagle). Ons soek na die Luitinkinkie en kry ook die Swartsaagvlerkswael te sien (Lazy Cisticola, Black Saw-wing). 'n Kuifkophoutkapper roep ver en 'n Neddikkie kom vlieg reg oor ons (Crested Barbet, Neddicky). Terug by die huis spring



Laura Jordaan

Peddlar's Bush



Elouise Kälmer

Geelkeelkalkoentjie – Yellow-throated Longclaw

ons almal op aandag toe 'n Berghaan op die horison verskyn. Dan sit ons weer en gesels met die Rooiborssuikerbekkies wat gereeld kom besoek by die aalwyne voor die stoep. Toe die vuur begin hoog vlam, pak ek solank die knof-felbrode naby genoeg om warm te word. Die interessante eetgoed bly geheim want elkeen eet waarvoor hy lus het, sonder dat daar na kalorieë gekyk word.

Dit is ons laaste dag en party groet omdat hulle voor die langnaweekverkeer in die pad wil wees. Ek en Elouise stap saam met Philip

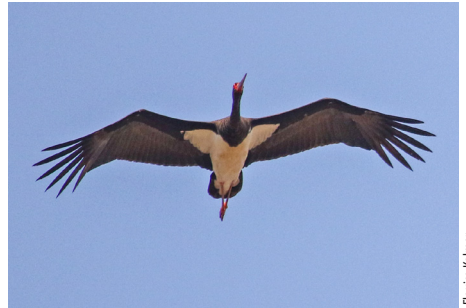
en Mandie deur die bosse terug hek toe waar Punch vir Elouise gaan oplaai. Die vars lug en reuk van bome en gras is heerlik. 'n Aanhoudende getjak-tjak laat ons diep in die bome kyk tot skerpoog Philip die Geelplek-nikator (Eastern Nicator) vir ons uitwys. Soe, en daar kom hy sowaar oor ons vlieg om ons van die anderkant te bekyk. Ons kry almal kans om hom te sien voor hy wegspring in die ruigtes in, maar sy tjak-tjak geroep sal ek altyd onthou. Verderaan hoor ons weer die tjak-tjak van ander Geelpleknikators. Presies op tyd is ons by die hek, waar Punch wag. Ons drie stap stil terug en geniet elke blinde horison wat die pad vir ons maak. So kom 'n span Rooibekkekelaars (Red-billed Wood-hoopoe) uit die bome oor die pad heen en weer terug gevlieg. Twee Hamerkoppe sing opgewonde saam met die kap van die Baardspeg (Bearded Woodpecker) in die paal. Hy het alreeds twee gate gemaak. By die laaste driffie kom die twee Bergkwikkies (Mountain Wagtail) mooi voor ons opgevlieg en met hul skril te-wiet-wieet verdwyn hulle in die bome.

By die kamers moet ek vinnig pak, die yskasgoed in die kombuis gaan haal en so mis ek die beste vertoning van die naweek. Net Philip en Jan kon dit sien. Ja, 'n Edelvalk (Lanner Falcon) kom gaps 'n klein fret uit die bondel wat op die gras wei. Wat 'n hoogtepunt vir die naweek! 🦅



Laura Jordaan

Kampteier Philip Calinikos by Elouise en Punch, Mandie en Laura



Elouise Kalmes

Grootswartooievaar – Black Stork



Laura Jordaan

Skemerkelkies teen sonsondergang

Bona Thaba en Marakele – Indrukke van groentjie-voëlkykers 23 – 25 September 2022

Henriette Rothmann and Willemien van Niekerk

Die pad na 'n nuwe voëlkykbestemming word altyd met verwagting aangepak. Hierdie keer, Thabazimbi se kant toe. Dit beteken onbekende omgewing, nuwe mense, nuwe voëls ... Opwindend!

Bona Thaba is 'n wildsplaas 250 km vanaf Pretoria, 25 km buite Thabazimbi, en 14 km vanaf Marakele Nasionale Park. Die omgewing bestaan uit berge, heuwels, woudryke klowe en rotskoppies. Dis bosveld en savanna, met die tipiese bosveld soet-en-suur grasveld. Die verwagting was om voëls van so 'n omgewing raak te loop ... te hoor ... te sien.

Groepleier vir die naweek was Neithard Graf von Durkheim, 'n bekwame gids met 'n wye veldlewe- en voëlkennis. Blyplek was op die plaas Bona Thaba, met die baie gawe gasheer en gasvrou Pierre en Nola Mostert. Dis anderkant Thabazimbi en naby die Marakele Nasionale Park, in die Rooiberg bewarea.

Gerieflike kamers, 'n goed toegeruste kombuis, heerlike vuurmaakplek en 'n groot eetkamertafel onder 'n hoë grasdak was tot die groep se beskikking. Ons is verwelkom, en heel naweek geselskap gehou, deur Geel- en Rooibekneushoringvoëls. Die Rooiborslaksman het vroegmiddag kom groet, en Geellogkanaries het ook van hulle laat hoor (Southern Yellow and Red-billed Hornbills, Crimson-breasted Shrike, and Yellow-fronted Canary).

Vrydagmiddag, toe dit bietjie koeler was, het ons gaan stap om te kyk wat rondom, en in die omgewing van die blyplek te sien is. Op die damwal het 'n Kleinbyvreter op 'n droë takkie gesit, ewe geduldig, dat almal hom mooi kon bekyk. Dit was die vonds van die middag!

Kakelaars en katlagters het baie te sê gehad. Daar was min ander voëls

– Geelbeklyster, Rooiborsduifie, Mikstert-byevanger e.a. (Green Wood-hoopoe, Babblers, Karoo Thrush, Laughing Dove, Fork-tailed Drongo). Daarom is ons huis toe om die vuur te gaan aansteek vir die aand se kuier.



Ernest Davis

Kleinbyvreter – Little Bee-eater



Carla Davis

Witkatlagter – Southern Pied Babbler

Groepieier, Neithard, het voor aandete gesels oor die reëlings vir Saterdag se uitstap na die Marakele Nasionale Park. En mooi verduidelik van die moeilike opdraende pad teen Kransberg uit, na die "Towers", waarvan daan mens aasvoëls op die lugstrome kan sien sweef. Bo in die krans is 'n baie groot broeikolonie van Kransaasvoëls. Later die aand, toe 'n paar mense nog om die vuur sit en kuier het, het Neithard oor die sterrebeelde wat sigbaar was, gesels. In die bos het naguiltjies (nightjars) geroep.

Saterdag was 'n dag met twee, letterlike, hoogtepunte.

Die eerste mikpunt was Kransberg, of "Towers", waar die broeikolonie Kransaasvoëls is.

Vroeg-vroeg is ons na die Marakele Nasionale Park toe. By die ingang was swerms Koringvoëls, Swartvlieëvangers, 'n Sneeuwal en Bosveldfisante het van hulle laat hoor (White-browed Sparrow-weaver, Southern Black Flycatcher, Black-backed Puffback, Swainson's Spurfowl).

Ons het 'n bietjie rondgery. 'n Lastigheid van konvooi-ry, ten spyte van tweerigting-radios, is dat almal nie alles sien wat party ander sien nie. Naby die ingang is 'n Groenvlekduifie en 'n Goudstertspieg gewaar, en die agter-ryers het 'n Grysrugkwêkwêvoel gehoor en gesien (Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Grey-backed Camaroptera). Die klaargroep van Groenvlekduifies, Grysneushoringvoëls, en die Spookvoël was heeldag hoorbaar. Geelblestinkers, Witliesbosbontrokkies, en Tortelduiwe was ook tussen die bome. Dese en gene met meer ondervinding as die groentjies, het baie gehoor en gesien (African Grey Hornbill, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Chinspot Batis, Cape Turtle Dove).

Ontbyt is geëet by 'n voëlskuiling, waar die mooiste koedoebulle en 'n njalabul versigtig kom kyk het of daar drinkwater in die pannetjie is.

Na ontbyt is die pad na Kransberg aangepak, na die hoogste punt op die reservaat.

Neithard het weereens die uitdagings van die eenspoor, opdraende paadjie met die skerp draaie beklemtoon. Ons vernuftige bestuurders



Reinier Meyjes

Die pad na Lenong



Reinier Meyjes

Dassievoël – Mocking Cliff Chat



Reinier Meyjes

Rooivlerkstreepkoppie – Cape Bunting

het ons egter veilig na die Lenonguitkykpunt geneem waar ons, letterlik, ingewag is deur 'n paar Dassievoëls, Kaapse Kliplysters (Cape Rock-Thrush), Rooivlerkstreepkoppie en 'n

Bergklipwagter.

Dit was 'n onbeskryflike oomblik toe die eerste Kransasvoëls gewaar is. In groepies het hulle bokant die kranse verskyn en moeiteloos met die warm lugstrome opgestyg, bokant ons gesirkel en in die verte verdwyn ... Volgens een groentjie: "Dit was so 'n skouspel, amper onbeskryflik! Hierdie pragtige, groot voëls wat net aanhou en aanhou verskyn in die verte en sirkel en sirkel op die lugstrome ... Dit was vir my ongelooflik spesiaal."

Neithard se beskrywing van die pad was goed genoeg om 'n bang-San so die skrik op die lyf te jaag dat sy nie kans gesien het daarvoor nie. Sy het saam met 'n lid van die groep die res van die reservaat gaan verken terwyl die ander berg-op is.

Marakele is hoofsaaklik bosveld. Die veld



Carla Davis

Bergklipwagter – Buff-streaked Chat



Reinier Meyjes

Bo-op Lenong



Ernest Davis

Kransasvoël – Cape Vulture

was droog en stil, sigbare wild en voëllewe het skaars gelyk. Allerhande doringbome was in blom en huilboerboonbome (*Schotia brachypetalia*) het oral tussen ander bome rooi gevlam.

Ons het darem renosters en twee klipspringers gesien. Die Tlopi-tentkamp, op die rand van 'n dammetjie, het na gawe blyplek gelyk. Daar was Lelkiewiete, die enigste Kolgans van die naweek, en mooiste Witkeeljanfrederikke (Wattled Lapwing, Egyptian Goose, White-throated Robin-chat). Inwoners van die kamp het vertel dat 'n luiperd die vorige aand kom water drink het. Dit was



Henriette Kochmann

Schotia brachypetalia



Reinier Meijjes



met groot opgewondenheid dat die groentjie Rooirugstreepkoppies en 'n Swartkroontjagra raakgesien het. 'n Akkedisvalk het verskyn en verdwyn (Golden-breasted Bunting, Black-crowned Tchagra, Lizard Buzzard). Na nog 'n draai by die voëlskuiling, waar net blou-ape die modder van die leë pannetjie wantrouig benader het, is ons terug Bona Thaba toe. Die res van die groep het later opgedaag, opgewonde oor wat hulle gesien het. Die fotografe was in hulle skik met alles wat hulle kon kiek.

Saterdag se tweede, letterlike hoogtepunt, was die uitstappie na Sundowner Rock.

Aangesien dit so warm was, het die groep besluit om eers later die middag weer uit te gaan. Sundowner Rock is 'n klipkop bo-op Bona Thaba se berg, met grootse uitsig oor

die hele uitgestrekte Kwaggavlakte wat by die Marakele Nasionale Park begin.

Gasheer Pierre het ons karwei met die wonderlikste voertuig: 1982 Toyota Landcruiser, 'n geroeste rammelkas sonder deure. Maar dit ry die bulte oor, die slote deur, tot op 'n groot klipplaat bo-op die berg. Almal moes klou om tydens die rit bo-op en binne-in te bly. Van daar bo af, die mooiste uitsig oor die vlakte en die berge. Dis waar die plaas sy naam kry: Bona = kyk of sien. Thaba = die berg. Dus: Kyk die berg = Bona Thaba. Pierre noem Sundowner Rock "Waterklip" omdat die holtes in die rots in reëntyd lank vol water bly. Daar bo het almal rustig verkeer en gekyk hoe die son sak.

Saterdagagaand is weer vuur gemaak, vleis gebraai, gekuier. Pierre het van sy tuisgemaakte



Ernest Davis

Bosveldpapegaai – Meyer's Parrot

maroelamampoer gebring om te proe. Goeie afsluiting vir die dag.

Sondagoggend was die Landcruiser weer vroeg voor die deur. Terwyl party mense nog besig was om reg te maak vir die oggend se rit, het Neithard aangedraf gekom.

"Kom gou! Kom gou! Bring julle verkykers! Bring julle kameras! Daar is Bosveldpapegaai in die boom by die hek!" Carla se wens is bewaarheid, haar wenslys vir die naweek voltooi! Die papegaai was op heelwat mense se lysies van wat hulle baie graag daar wou sien. Daar was 'n klompie papegaai en ons kon almal die blougroen kruis, geel skouers en groen pens sien, teen die hoofsaaklik bruin lyf. Die Bosveldpapegaai is dan ook eenparig verkies tot "voël van die naweek"!

Ons het weer met die Landcruiser geskommel en geskud oor klippe en deur slote, na Koedoeskom, 'n suiping diep in die veld tussen bome. Daar het ons heel oggend by die watertjie gesit en gekyk na wat opdaag. Klein bekendes – Blousysies, Gewone Melba, Rooirug- en Klipstreepkoppies het aangemeld (Blue Waxbill, Green-winged Pytilia, Golden-breasted and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting). 'n Bruinkopvisvanger is haastig verby.



Rooirugstreepkoppie – Golden-breasted Pytilia

Geelborswillie en Waaiertervlieëvangers is gehoor (Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Grey Tit-Flycatcher). En toe, tot almal se vreugde, het hulle verskyn! Daar was ook die mooiste skoelappers by die water. 'n Klein stappie met 'n veldpaadjie langs het skielik regsom gekeer toe 'n swerm bye die pad versper het.

Terug by die blyplek, om die groot tafel, is die naweek se voëllyk bekyk. Die Bosveldpapegaai is benoem tot voël van die naweek. Die beste ondervinding was die aasvoëls bo-op die berg. Alhoewel dit gevoel het na 'n naweek met min opwinding, is daar 111 voëls opgeskryf vir die paar dae.

Neithard is 'n bekwame, bedagsame gids wat graag wil hê dat almal soveel as moontlik sien en beleef. Omdat hy sy voël-, veld- en ander kennis gedeel het, het dit alles wat ons gesien en beleef het net soveel interessanter gemaak. Groentjie het baie geleer en heelwat nuwe voëls op haar lysie geskryf.

AnderGroentjie, iemand wat vir die eerste keer op so 'n naweek was, het gedink dat voëlkykers stil, stemmige, ernstige, bedeesde introverte is. Toe nou nie! Ons was 'n vrolike, uitbundige groep mense bymekaar!

Dankie, Neithard vir goeie-gids-wees! Dankie vir almal wat by Bona Thaba saam was.

Dankie Pierre en Nola vir julle gasvryheid!

Dit was 'n baie gawe naweek! 🦜

A BLNG (BirdLife Northern Gauteng) bird club trip to Makuleke

Sheleph Burger

On Wednesday, 20 July 2022, the following email was received from BLNG's Club Secretary.

*'Hi All BLNG Members,
BOOKINGS FOR MAKULEKE HAS OPENED!
You need to complete a Google Form to make your initial booking:
3 – 6 Nov 22 (Weekend) – Book here
OR
6 – 9 Nov 22 (Midweek) – Book here'*

It was a special offer to spend 3 nights at the EcoTraining camp in the Makuleke Concession. Immediately, advantage was taken of this fabulous offer, and we managed to book ahead of many hopefuls on the waiting list.

Makuleke sounded like a wonderful opportunity to visit an area of the northern Kruger Park that is closed to the casual visitor.

Our group was met by the EcoTraining guides and vehicles at 2 pm. Once all our luggage had been safely stored in the trailer and

we had climbed into the vehicles we drove a short way down the tar road before turning off at a "NO ENTRY" sign. The drive was through bush and scrub but, as it was November and the rains had not yet started, everything was bone dry and brown, except at the river courses and some pans. It was not very long before we were at the camp and the sight of our camp with its large leafy trees was inviting.



Sheleph Burger

Shared accommodation



Mama Bluyes

Lanner Gorge

Sheleph Burger



Group 1

Renier Meyjes



Group 2

We were shown to our allocated tents, given an opportunity to use the bathroom and unpack before gathering at the large dining tent for the necessary camp protocol, rules and regulations speech as well as learning a bit about the area and being introduced to our hosts. The wildness of the unfenced camp with the presence of baboons (which were surprisingly well mannered) and an elephant is normally reserved for visits to Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and it was truly wonderful.

The programme that had been arranged for our stay consisted of morning and afternoon drives to various sections of the park with early morning coffee, fruit and rusks, tea/coffee and biscuits at the morning stop and drinks at the afternoon stop. Substantial and delicious brunch and dinner kept the hunger pangs

at bay in between the drives. There was also ample time to wander around the designated parameters of the camp to do some birding or just to rest in the shade of the trees and make use of the reference library that is kept in the dining tent.

The following places/destinations were visited, i.e. Big Boabab, Makwadzi Pan, Levuvhu



Arnot's Chat
– Bontpiek

River, Lanner George, Nwambi Pan, Fever Tree forest and Mangnceba Limpopo. The views of the Lanner gorge, the fever tree forest as well as the other tree species were breath-taking.

Evening drives delivered remarkable sightings, one of which was the Square-tailed Nightjar (Laeveldnaguil), a lifer for a number of us.

Many club members' primary goal was to see birds that had eluded us in the past, e.g. Racket-tailed Roller, Arnot's Chat and Lemon Breasted Canary.

My BirdLasser list for the time spent at Makuleke indicates 182 species. Stunning views of the many bird species were had, and good photographs were taken by the keen photographers. Some bird species could also be counted and photographed towards our Kruger400 Bird Challenge.



Mama Buys

Tropical Boubou - Tropiese Waterfiskaal



Hannes van den Berg

Mosque Swallow – Moskeeswael



Hannes van den Berg

Broad-billed Roller – Geelbektroupant



Hannes van den Berg

Lemon-breasted Canary – Geelborskanarie



Sean Naudé

Stierling's Wren-warbler – Stierlingsanger

JP (Koos) van der Merwe also had the fortunate opportunity to photograph a Cape Gannet in this area! Trevor Hardaker reported the following in his Southern African Rare Bird News Report. Limpopo's offering must be one of the weirdest records of the year so far with an adult **CAPE GANNET** seen over the Limpopo River floodplain in the Makuleke Concession near Pafuri in the Kruger National Park on Friday,

Club camps & outings

04 November 2022. What a totally bizarre record!!

Our heartfelt thanks go to our BLNG management for organising these two camps, surely the highlight of the year's destinations; and to the staff of EcoTraining who ensured that we could enjoy every minute of our precious time there. 🐦



Marna Buys

Square-tailed Nightjar



Sean Haude

Racket-tailed Roller – Knopsterttrouphant



African Hawk Eagle – Grootjagarend

Hannes van den Berg



Shirlegh Burger

Fever tree forest



Renier Meyjies

Great White Pelican – Witpelikaan

Courses offered by BLNG in 2022

Two courses were offered, the most recent one being training in the use of BirdLasser. Even the most seasoned BirdLasser-veterans learned some new applications and functions to use.

The highlight this year was undoubtedly the well-attended Bird Identification course offered by Geoff Lockwood. The course

consisted of a full day's lectures and training with a hand-out which is available here. The second day was a practical application of new skills learned during a walk in Moreleta Nature Reserve.

On the next few pages you will find a summary of Geoff Lockwood's course, compiled by Annetjie Barkhuizen.



Sheleph Burger

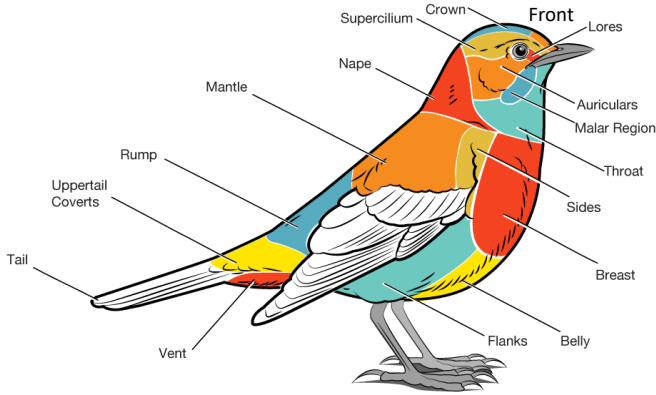
Geoff Lockwood's courses and presentations have always been very popular in the club






Sheleph Burger

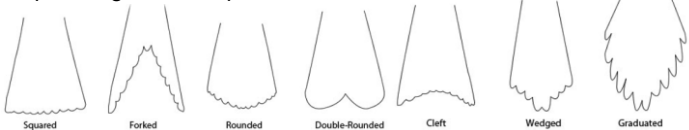

Attendees of the course

Improve your birding skills



Look at the bird, not at the book - The longer you look, the more you'll notice and remember about the bird's field marks and behaviour.

<p>1 Size and shape</p>	<p>People are notoriously bad at judging size and distance. Judge size against birds you know well e.g., sparrow, dove, guinea fowl, crow.</p> <p>Judging the size of distant birds, like soaring raptors, is much more difficult.</p> <p>Shape – a bulbul looks different from a dove from a crow</p>  <p><i>Note: Measurements given in field guides are of dead birds</i></p>
<p>2 Bill shape and colour</p>	<p>Is it long, decurved, upturned, pointed, blunt, thick, tiny</p> 
<p>3 Legs and toes – length and colour</p>	 <p>Colour of legs can be important e.g., legs of lesser masked weavers are blue grey</p>

<p>4 Plumage, colours and markings</p>	<p>Head: Look at the shape, is it peaked, flat, rounded, or crested? Are there patterns and markings on the head e.g., eye stripes, colour of the eyes, eye rings, front?</p> <p>Body: Look at the colour and markings on the throat, breast, belly, flanks, mantle, wings and tail. Look for anything unusual such as a <u>crest</u> or <u>wattles</u> on the side of the face. Markings can be <u>barred</u> (lines across body), <u>striped</u> (lines down the body), <u>spotted</u> (small spots) <u>blotched</u> (bigger blotches)</p> <p>Colour: Colour alone is not enough to identify any bird. Colour is important when you know the main group and the placement of the colour. Look at the colour on the front, crown, nape, throat, breast, belly, sides, vent, back, wing coverts, and rump. Consider the overall colour of the bird, as well as any unique patterns or markings it may have.</p> <p>Tail: A bird's tail may be long e.g. long tailed widow bird, fanned, forked, or pointed. It may also have a unique pattern or colour that will help distinguish the species.</p>  <p><i>Remember birds moult!</i></p> <p>Wings: The length of a bird's wingspan and the colour of its primary and secondary feathers are often particularly telling of its species. The wing shape can be short, long, broad, pointed, angled or straight</p> 
<p>5 Habits and behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour: Pay close attention to the way a bird flies, walks, feeds, and behaves around other birds to determine its species. Is the bird swimming in water or is it drumming on a hollow tree? Is it very nervous? Is it falling out of the air like a korhaan? • Movement and tail wagging: Some birds bob their heads as they walk. Others bob their tails (wagtails) or flick their wings (spekvreters) • Nesting behaviour: Consider the type of nest, location of the nest, time of nesting e.g, winter, birds nesting in large colonies e.g, queleas

5 Habits and behaviour

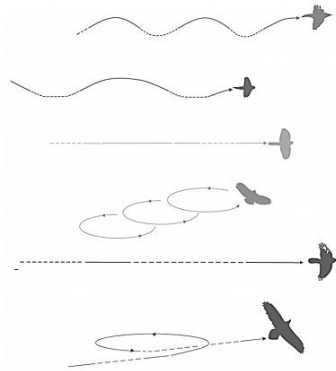
Feeding: If you are watching a bird for a while, chances are you will see it feed. Swallows catch birds on the wing, Flycatchers pounce from a perch or tree trunk down onto insect prey and then return to their position.



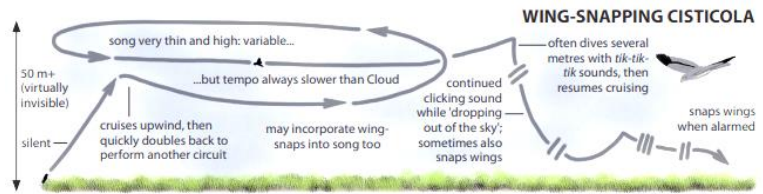
- **Ground feeding:** Stop and listen, pick here and there
- **Canopy/treetop feeding:** Seeds, fruits or insects
- **Bark Feeding:** Picking in cracks or pecking holes
- **Aerial Feeding:** Swooping or hovering
- **Water Feeding:** Wading, stabbing, dabbling, diving
- **Hawking:** Perch and wait or soar and dive

Flight:

- Some birds hover in place before diving for food.
- Some birds soar a long time without flapping.
- Some birds fly in zigzags.
- Some birds have deep wing strokes; some have very shallow wing strokes



Cisticolas have different flight patterns and displays. These are clearly explained in **Faansie's book on LBJ's**



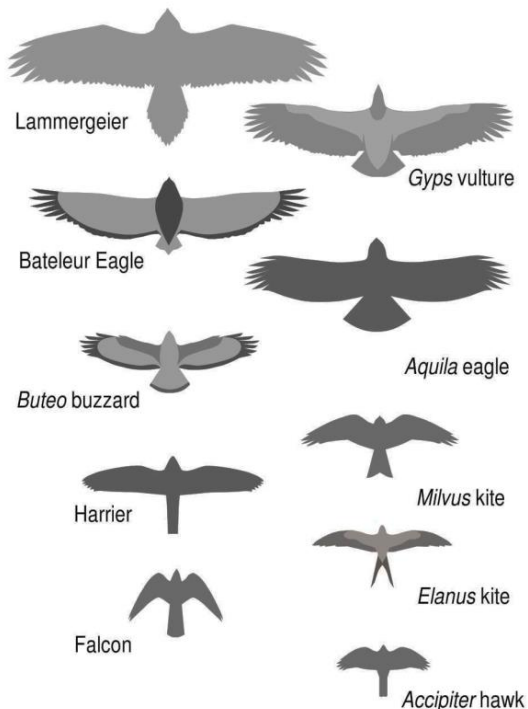
Social behaviour



- Does it hang about a tree alone or it is just one of a huge flock?
- Do they live in a **family group**?

	<p>Bird songs: Certain species can only be identified in the field by their calls e.g. cisticolas</p> <p>Bird songs are easier to remember when we see the bird singing. Another trick for remembering a bird's song is to say it to yourself in words. This is called 'mnemonics'</p>
6 Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some birds live only on the sea and adjacent shores; some birds are only found in fresh water. • Some birds prefer fruit trees; others prefer deciduous trees. Some birds live in deserts. Some birds are found only in grasslands. • Study your bird guide where this information is given
7 Distributio n and season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When identifying something new, always look at the <u>distribution map in your field guide</u> as these will, at a quick glance, rule out those birds living outside your location • Pay attention to seasonality. Some birds spend the entire year in your area. Others are found only in summer or winter. Some birds pass through in spring and autumn only

Examples of raptor wings in flight



IN PICTURES

Kloofendal 22 June



(Photos by Sheleph Burger)

Devon Grasslands 24 July



Elmaire Hirschhorn

Blue Korhaan – Bloukorhaan

Crested Grebe – Kuifkopdobbertjie



Roodeplaat Pentad Bash 13 August



Keanu Ginto

Bird of the Day – Coqui Francolin – Swempie



Eyed Pansy – Padwagtertjie



Verreaux's Eagle – Witkruisarend



*Brown-backed Honeybird
– Skerpbekheuningvoël*



*André Marx, leader, points out
Bird of the Day, Verreaux's Eagle
– Witkruisarend*



Walter Sisulu
24 August

(All photos by Ivonne Coetzee)

Mocking Cliff Chat – Dassievoël

Magalies Mountain Bike Trail 10 September



Ster van die dag – Waaiertervlieëvanger – Grey Tit-flycatcher



Feëvlieëvanger – Fairy Flycatcher



Kleinheuningwyser – Lesser Honeyguide



Rooikophoutkappers – Black-collared Barbets



Klipstreekoppie – Cinnamon-breasted Bunting



Blouvalk – Black-shouldered Kite

Zaagkuilsdrift 17 September



Kleinrietsanger – African Reed Warbler



Roelof Jonkers

Hex River Thornveld 25 September

Bird of the Day – Yellow-Throated Sandgrouse – Geelkeelsandpatrys (M)



Collectives

Collective to be filled in: Choose one from the last column. Collective options can only be used once.
(Answers on p 60)

1	A		of	babblers	wake
2	A		of	bee-eaters	tower
3	A		of	birds	siege/congregation
4	A		of	bishops	sedge/flock
5	A		of	boubous	run
6	A		of	buzzards	roost /flight
7	An		of	canaries	roost
8	A		of	chickens	raft/paddling
9	A		of	chicks	opera
10	A		of	cormorants	murder
11	A		of	cranes	gulp
12	A		of	crows	flight/dole
13	An		of	cuckoos	convocation/congregation
14	A		of	doves	concorde/flamboyance
15	A		of	drongos	cohort
16	A		of	ducks	clergy
17	A		of	eagles	charm
19	A		of	egrets	cast
20	A		of	falcons	bubble/duet
21	A		of	finches	blaze/colony
22	A		of	flamingos	asylum

Making history at Tala Manzi Game Farm (Part One)

Janelle Verster

I would like to tell you a story of five people, ten animals and a hundred birds. (Okay, some of these numbers are just to give it a nice “ring”. As Foster M. Russell said, “Every story has three sides. Yours, mine and the facts” (Proverbicals.com, 2022)).

Anyway, let me very briefly introduce you to the five people. Five bird-atlassers-slash-adventurers-slash-good-friends: Viandre and Bianca Delport, Eduard Teichert, and Pieter and Janelle Verster. The five of us are involved (yes, the project is still continuing, and I hope there will be a “Part Two” in this story as well) in compiling a bird list for the Tala Manzi Game Farm. The Tala Manzi Game Farm is situated in the Groot-Marico, breeding ground for stories

of the famous South African author, Herman Charles Bosman.

The Groot-Marico is not only a part of Bosman’s history. When I was a high school pupil, I went to a wonderful school camp in the area. Tala Manzi manager Erika told me that the Martha Glatthaar camp was on a portion of what is now the Tala Manzi Game Farm. Fond memories of obstacle courses and other adventures are part of my personal history and may be of some other atlassers too (I have already heard of two other people who also went to this spot back in the days).

What a privilege to now revisit the area years later. This time to help compile a bird list. Compiling a bird list often gels very well with atlassing, as the existing data of the area that is available on the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) website can potentially provide background for planning, preparation and setting one’s own expectations on what one is *likely* to find, whereas atlassing whilst compiling the bird list may also contribute valuable information about the area to the citizen science project. For instance, if certain birds are reported in the general area, it may pose the question, have I covered all habitats that are present, or is there perhaps something I am missing in my bird list?

We compiled our bird list for the game farm in mid-May 2022, being cognizant of the time of year and the potential effect that seasonal variation in bird species, migration, water levels and other factors may have on what we find. For this reason, we would like to go back in summer and do another card in the pentad and also add data to the bird list.

A bird list also tells a story. The British novelist Mrs Humphry Ward was quoted (Proverbicals.com, 2022) saying, “The first law of story-telling. Every man is bound to leave



Eduard Teichert

Tala Manzi Game Farm

a story better than he found it." I don't think I am generally someone who overthinks things (though that in itself already sounds complicated), but a few philosophical questions have crossed my mind lately. *Do all humans inherently want to make history? Why do some people, for instance, carve out their names in famous places or leave a footprint in a concrete path that has not dried yet?*

And then:

Isn't atlassing a constructive way to make history? To make a story better than the way we found it?

An additional benefit of atlassing is what else you see in the process of recording what birds you see. Ten animals (other than birds) that I really enjoyed seeing (or at least "experiencing") in the process, were:

- Giraffe
- Blue wildebeest
- Eland
- Zebra
- Warthogs
- Butterflies (there were so many! I particularly liked the guinea fowl butterfly, for some imaginative reason it reminds me of a dinosaur)
- Bats of different sizes
- Aardvark (although I did not see them, seeing the many burrows was a real treat)
- Hippos
- Baboons (I only heard them)

We managed to find as a group around 130 birds in the 2535_2620 pentad in which the Tala Manzi Game Farm is situated. Some of the birds that we found in the pentad that have not been recorded in the pentad before, were the following:

- Swallow-tailed Bee-eater – Swaelstert-byvreter
- Pale Flycatcher – Muiskeurvlieëvanger
- Yellow-bellied Greenbul – Geelborswillie
- Water Thick-knee – Waterdikkop
- Cape Vulture – Kransaasvoël
- Red-headed Weaver – Rooikopwewer
- African Harrier-hawk – Kaalwangvalk

It was also interesting to see that five of the birds that we found in the pentad, have not been recorded in the general area (25 pentad block including this pentad) in the SABAP2 data before. There are lots of what we perceived as excellent broadleaf habitat on the farm, together with a variety of other habitats.

We enjoyed the braais, luxurious accommodation next to a beautiful dam, lots of jokes and old stories retold and I enjoyed a solo 23 km run and even a swim (in winter!) on the farm. When it comes to the fun and adventure, it is your side of the story and mine. But when it comes to the bird data, let's submit the facts to SABAP2: "*If in doubt, leave it out*" (SABAP2, 2021). Let's go and make history! Viva atlassing!

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Vianre DeJort

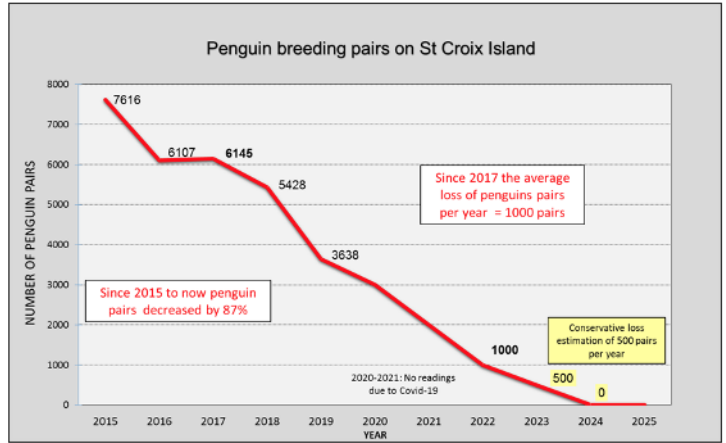
What has happened to St Croix Island's penguins?

Algoa Bay Conservation Group, June 2022

Observations at St Croix Island recently have shown very few penguins visible on the lower reaches of the island. This is in extreme contrast with the historical numbers of penguins anticipated to be seen at what used to be the largest African Penguin colony.

The Algoa Bay Conservation Group have updated the penguin breeding pair data and their monitoring graphs to depict the current situation.

The attached graph depicts that since 2015 to now, St Croix Island has lost



Breeding pairs 2015 – 2022





The current situation

87% of the African penguin breeding pairs. In real terms it equates to 6 616 pairs, or 13 232 penguins.

The average loss of penguin pairs during the last 5 years, since 2017, is 1000 pairs per year. Thus, every year a thousand less pairs of penguins have bred on the island.

The number of breeding pairs remaining on the island is currently 1200 pairs (Data provided by Professor Lorien Pichegru and DFFE).

If the trend continues there will virtually be no breeding penguins remaining by next year!

Scientific opinion is that breeding African penguin pairs “do not move from a colony, once they have started breeding, but have died.” (Prof Lorien Pichegru, Facebook 11 June 2022).

It must also be stressed, for the benefit of any persons uninformed, that African penguins are indicator species which can be counted when breeding, and the demise of such species is cause for concern for the health of the marine habitat in general, and other marine animals, such as seals, cetaceans, fishes, sharks, and other sea birds.

Possible causes of African Penguin decline St Croix Island

Minister of Environmental Affairs the Honourable Ms. Barbara Creecy, in October 2021 correspondence, following a



Provided by Raggy Charters

Penguins on St Croix Island, 2000



Provided by Raggy Charters

The situation in 2015

letter of concern, promised a “comprehensive risk assessment to be conducted and relevant concerns addressed.”

This assessment has been called for since the commencement of ship-to-ship bunkering in 2016, because of the inherent risks to the environment and the siting of the bunkering anchorages close to and having a direct impact on sea bird foraging areas.

An extract from Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) 2021 Annual Report explains a possible reason for this failure to respond by the responsible authority: “Management of sensitive habitats, TNPA’s long term ecological monitoring of the marine environment did not

Provided by Raggy Charters



The Carte Blanche team underway to St. Croix Island

take place in the ports of Cape Town, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Ngqura, East London and Richards Bay due to expiry of the contract, and the budget being cut.”

The most likely cause of the demise of the African penguins of St Croix Island is a decline in historical prey food availability, being sardines and anchovies, within their foraging habitat.

Anthropological intrusions that impact on the penguin foraging habitat have been documented, and include commercial pelagic purse-seine fishing, uncontrolled marine traffic, and ship-to-ship bunkering and resultant oil spills. The decline in breeding penguin census numbers, as shown on the graph, coincides

with the start of STS bunkering in Algoa Bay which suggests that this intrusion is ‘the smoking gun’ in the African penguin demise. Whether it is the number of oil spills, or the substantially increased vessel traffic with attendant noise and vibration pollution, or wastewater and vessel sewerage discharges, only a proper scientific assessment with specialist studies will determine.

We also say that such an assessment should have been performed before a decision was taken to permit STS bunkering in 2016, when licenses were issued to operators and without environmental authorisation.

Environmental legislation is very clear, that if the consequence of any activity is likely to have an adverse impact on the environment, the cautionary principle must be applied to decision making.

The current situation depicts an extreme ecological disaster in progress and demands urgent and radical intervention in an attempt to salvage this breeding colony of African Penguins.

This was screened on Carte Blanche on Sunday, 26th June 2022.

For background on Ship-to-Ship Fuel Transfers (Bunkering) in Algoa Bay, see the Raggy Charters website

<https://www.raggycharters.co.za/page/sts-bunkering-vs-endangered-african-penguin>

DONATIONS (June 2022 to July 2022)

A sincere thank you for your generous donations. Your contribution help us to reach our goal toward bird conservation projects. We really appreciate it.

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

Derik & Germaine Janse van Rensburg (June 2022), Antony Cooper (July 2022), Michael & Lizanne Heyns (July 2022), Laura Jordaan (Aug 2022), Philip Calinikos (Aug & Oct 2022), André Marx (Aug 2022), Andre Taljaard (September), Elna Naude, Andre vd Merwe (September), Marna Buys (Sep 2022)

A new generation birder

Jandr  Verster

(All photographs – Jandr  Verster)

I started birding properly in 2017 when I was 13 years old, but my love for birds has been part of me since I could remember. When I was a pre-schooler, my mom used to read all the bird names in my books, however when I was able to read, I memorised them myself. My mom always jokes and says she is the only mother that had to bake a birthday cake of a Glossy Starling for her 4-year-old toddler!!

I do believe that birding has become a competitive hobby in a way, but most people in general bird because they have a passion for it. Someone like me who loves birding and has a big passion for it might tend to become competitive. I love the outdoors, so walking miles when birding brings joy to my soul. I enjoy seeing how many bird species I can find in a certain area or place; it pushes you beyond

your boundaries and you also get to explore new places and experience new things.

In hard lockdown in 2020 I was bound inside the walls of my garden, but that made me enjoy and appreciate the more common birds you get in your area. During that period, I managed to get a whopping 106 species in my garden in a suburban area, but I should add I did spend a lot of time on our house's roof!!

My personal favourite bird must definitely be the African Pitta, a bird that's on the top of my bucket-list and one I'm dreaming of seeing one day! I can't tell you why it's my favourite bird exactly, but I think it has to do with the fact that they are extremely scarce, very elusive and can only be seen in certain parts of the region in the right season! My bogey bird is certainly the Retz's Helmetshrike, I've been wanting to



Jandr , BBD 2021 with the bird of the day – Common Buttonquail / Bosveldkwarteltjie

see this bird for ages, and I've spent countless hours in their range and habitat but have yet to see one. Hopefully that day will come soon, and the bogey will no longer be a bogey bird!

My top bird sighting definitely has to do with the story that follows... On 18 June 2021, a Friday, the news broke that a Lesser Whitethroat (Kleinwitkeelsanger) was seen in Marloth Park. Not only was it a first for Southern Africa it was also the first for the Southern Hemisphere! That Monday, the day before my exams started, and having to convince my mom that I had studied enough, me and a few friends went out to twitch it and after a long drive, from Pretoria to Marloth Park, we were rewarded with stunning views of it!

As a scholar I do find the expense that goes with this hobby tedious and difficult, however I save all birthday money and pocket money for trips and equipment. Recently I was privileged to go on the MSC cruise hosted by Birdlife South Africa, Flock to Marion Island. With me being in matric this year meant that I would miss a week of school and the trip was extremely expensive, however my mother

said if my marks in the November exams were within range (her range) and I paid for myself, then I could go. Never did I think I would be able to raise the funds, but I did, with the help of a November birthday, Christmas, and some donations, and I could pay my way to probably the best experience of my life!

When it comes to photography equipment, I have been fortunate to sell old equipment and upgrade my gear according to my means. Vortex sponsored some of The Birding Life ambassadors with new binoculars for the cruise and I was one of the lucky recipients. I did donate my old ones back to them in return. Things like this help a lot in furthering my birding life.

I started photographing birds not too long after I started birding. At first it was only to get good enough shots for me to be able to identify the bird later, but that quickly changed and now I'm trying to capture the true beauty of a bird, whether it's an LBJ or a rarity. I just want to show the world what special birds Southern Africa has to offer! The fact that I have an eye for detail helps with my photography. I use some editing apps to enhance the photos. This aspect stimulates my creative side and I find joy in sharing my photos on social media. My uncle taught me a lot about nature photography, and I also studied some books. My current camera is a Canon D90 with a EF500mm f/4.L USM Prime

On Flock to Marion 2022





Blue-billed Teal – Gevlekte Eend

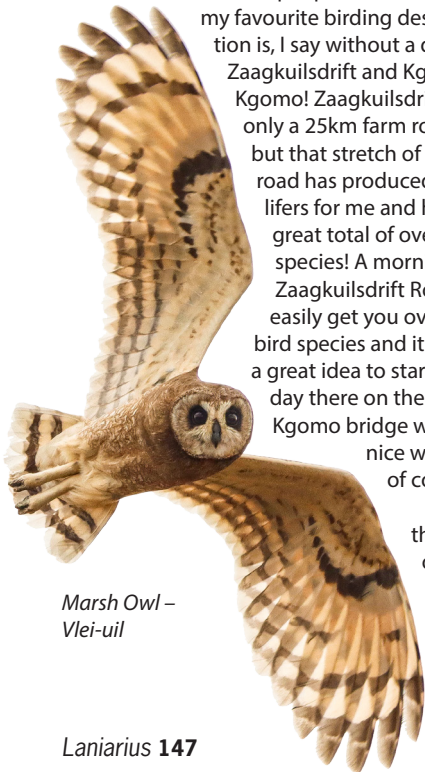


Dark-capped Yellow Warbler – Geelsanger

lens. This combo allows me to take great shots but still be able to carry my gear. Some camera lenses are just too heavy to be practical for walking miles.

When people ask me what my favourite birding destination is, I say without a doubt Zaagkuilsdrift and Kgomo-Kgomo! Zaagkuilsdrift is only a 25km farm road, but that stretch of dirt road has produced many lifers for me and has a great total of over 350 species! A morning on Zaagkuilsdrift Road may easily get you over 130 bird species and it's always a great idea to start your day there on the Kgomo-Kgomo bridge with a nice warm cup of coffee ...

I am on the brink of completing my



Marsh Owl – Vlei-uil



White-fronted Bee-eater – Rooikeelbyvreter

school career and would love to find an occupation where I can combine my passion for birding and photography with an income to support myself. At this stage we are investigating various options but to date I have not decided which career to pursue. My mom says money will not fall from the sky, but I truly hope my birding could find a way to make exactly that happen for me!!

Tiptol, 22 jaar oud

Alta Serfontein

My ma, Rina van Vuuren, is Bubu se mensma. Sy is ontsaglik lief vir voëls en diere.

My ma se huurder het in 2000 'n Tiptol-kuikentjie vir dood by haar huis opgetel. Nie een van die twee kon dit oor hul hart kry om hom "te verlos" nie. My ma het die klein Tiptolletjie versorg en hy het as Bubu deel geword van ons lewe.

Hy is dië jaar 22 jaar oud. Hy vlieg steeds in die huis rond, maar sy veertjies raak nou gry.

Bubu se aktiwiteite

Hy vlieg daaglik steeds 'n ruk in die sitkamer en het wegkruipplekkies oral. Hy maak beslis goed gebruik van kamoeflering en hou van wegkruipertjie speel, veral as hy vir sy veiligheid hokkie toe moet gaan. Bubu sal letterlik onder 'n stoel agter die pote wegkruip en sy nekkie rek om te kyk waar jy is.

My ma is 82 en beweeg nou stadiger as vroeër. Sodra hy self wil terug hokkie toe, hop hy stadig voor haar uit sodat sy hom kan "vang".

Hy geniet dit om tou te trek met 'n dun toutjie. Binne sy hokkie speel hy graag met 'n swart broekrek wat hy knoop en ontknoop deur homself in sy spieëls dop te hou. Sy ogies mis niks.

Hy hou van ligte klassieke musiek en sing heerlik saam. Baie geselsies volg dan.

Bubu se bederf

Hy slaap elke aand so ongeveer 2 ure op my ma se bors, eers op sy sy, dan sy rug en of sy magie. En eet sy kos by haar.

Daarna kry hy joghurt by my, 'n massering agter sy nekkie en ruggie, die res van sy koppie en borsie, lê agteroor en slaap amper asof hy gehipnotiseer is. Bubu laat my gou weet as sy massering nog nie klaar is nie. Dan word sy voetjies gemasseer en dan eers slaaptyd.

Vroeg in die oggend geniet Bubu 'n happie mueslibeskuit wanneer ons koffie drink.



Bubu se kos is soggens mueslibeskuit en Pro-Nutro. Hy geniet appel, papaja, bloubesies, en nes 'n kind is hy dol op jellie, joghurt en soms melktert. Saans is dit pampoens, kapokaartappels, maar hy hou ook van meelwurms, fyn hoender of vis.

Hy kry ook aanvullings, nes 'n wafferse gesondheidsbewuste – Premolt in sy water en Doxybionic-5 in sy muesli.

Tiptolletjies kan "huil"-geluidjies maak. Bubu het sy veertjies het op 'n stadium na 'n besoek by die veearts begin uittrek. Sy nek en borskasvelletjies was eintlik rou en seer. Ek het toe Aloe Vera-gel saans op sy lyfie gesmeer. Sy velletjie was sensitief en vir 5 min het hy "gehuil". Maar daarna was sy velletjie gekalmeer en het daar vinnig nuwe veertjies uitgekrom.

'n Ander Tiptol-familie wou in my ma se sitkamer kom nes maak. My ma het vir 'n tyd ook hul babatjie grootgemaak en leer vlieg. Sy ouers het daaglik vir hom in die middag kom kos gee en het kort daarna wou kom nessesie bou. Maar my ma het gesê hul kind is nou groot genoeg. Hulle moet hom/haar nou self grootmaak. 🐦

Birding at Rhino Sands

Brian Roberts shared his birding journey on the Rhino Sands blog recently. It was particularly interesting in that he is a relatively “new” birder, but seriously addicted to birding and bird photography – blame it on the COVID lockdown!

We kindly received permission to use this interview to highlight the journey of this passionate birder. More of his stunning bird photographs may be found on his INSTAGRAM page @brinji.the.bird.nerd.

Please give us a brief background about who you are

I am a born and bred KZN North Coaster. I attended Umhlali Primary School from 1973 to 1979, my wife is also a graduate of Umhlali Primary School but she finished MANY years after me! I work in the corporate property world and spent the 12 years prior to COVID commuting to Johannesburg for 3 days a week! If there is a positive to come out of the dreadful pandemic, it is that it introduced the world to virtual meetings. This has greatly reduced travelling for me and given me so much more time with my Luelle (my wife), Josh and Meg (kids).

How did you get interested in birding?

On the 23rd of March 2020 we were locked down as a country. I am a bit ADD so there is no way I could just sit around doing nothing.



Narina Trogon (F) – Bosloerie (V)



Pink-throated Twinspot – Roo skeelkolpensie

I decided then and there that we live in a fantastic eco-friendly estate, and I was going to make it my mission to see how many bird species I could see from our front veranda. I am colour-blind and decided that it would make sense to take photographs of the birds that I saw so that I could identify them post the sighting without having to remember distinguishing features. I had always had a camera but had also always only shot on auto. I did a photography course in lockdown to help me take better photos of the birds I saw. Both my birding and photography hobbies are a direct result of being forced to sit on my veranda for those 6



Grey-headed Bushshrike – Spookvoël



Black Cuckooshrike (F) – Swartkatakoeroe (V)

months (or however long it was).

Once we were allowed out, I just continued to add birds to my list but could now walk around the estate and as the rules were relaxed, I could continue adding to my list at wonderful places like Manyoni that catered for us locals in the midst of the pandemic.

What do you think birding adds to a holiday experience?

Birding enhances your awareness of the surroundings. There are over 400 bird species in Manyoni; if you add the cheetah, the pangolin and a few of the other beautiful species to the famous “Big 5”, there are probably 15 to 20 animals that the average safari guest will be looking for. As fantastic as the rangers are, it is often completely out of their control as to whether you see the animals. Birds, on the other hand, are always there. Birding adds an entirely new dimension to the experience. There is ALWAYS something to see. I liken birding to fishing, I am a keen fisherman and explain to people fishing is the experience of being outdoors, but catching a fish whilst fishing is a bonus. It’s the anticipation of the catch that is so thrilling and appealing. Birding

to me is walking around my estate or driving around the reserve, you are constantly aware of your surroundings; be it grassland, sand forest, watering holes, whatever the environment, there is always the possibility of seeing a bird. Birding is what I love, seeing a bird is the bonus.

What tips would you have for the beginning birder?

Birding goes from “there is a bird”, to “there is a yellow bird”, to “there is a Village Weaver”,



African Broadbill – Breëbek



Arnot's Chat – Bontpiek

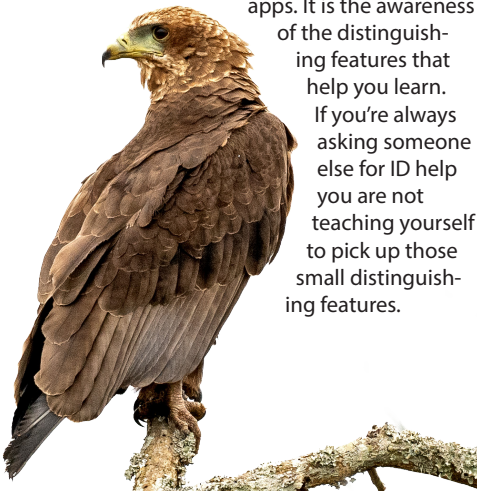


African Goshawk – Afrikaanse Sperwer

to “There is a juvenile male Village Weaver in non-breeding plumage”. Everyone starts at “there is a bird”. Persevere! Birding is all about practice. Do not be scared to ask silly questions, I am yet to meet a birder that knows everything. Birders crave new information and birders love to share knowledge. Try your hardest to ID a bird from the many books and many apps. It is the awareness

of the distinguishing features that help you learn.

If you're always asking someone else for ID help you are not teaching yourself to pick up those small distinguishing features.



Juvenile Bateleur – Jong Berghaan

What are the most remarkable birds (or simply your favorite) you've seen while staying at Rhino Sands?

There are so many remarkable birds at Manyoni so I will make it easier for myself and limit my answer to the remarkable birds we have seen at the Rhino Sands Campsite itself. We have seen Pink-throated Twinspots; a female Narina Trogon that literally came to watch us eat lunch; I watched a Grey-headed Bushshrike pluck a chameleon off a tree in front of our room; we have seen Orange-breasted Bushshrike as well. One of my favorites was a very good sighting of a female Black Cuckooshrike, the Black Cuckooshrike is one of the few species where (IMHO) the female is so much more attractive than the male. There is an abundance of birdlife around the lodge, it is difficult to make a “short” list of the great birds.

Oh, I have to mention the Arnot's Chat that we saw on this recent visit and the rarely seen African Broadbill that we saw (twice) on a previous visit in September 2021. Both the African Broadbill and the Arnot's Chat are prized lifers to any birders list.



Collared Sunbird – Kortbeksuikerbekkie

Any gear or equipment recommendations for the first-time birder?

Binoculars, a camera (doesn't have to be a fancy one), a bird book or app, and of course a place to record your bird list. They say that everyone likes to collect things, a bird list is a collection of birds you have seen. A life list (what birders call their list of birds) and a trip list add that little bit of competitiveness to the hobby, not necessarily to compete with others, simply to compete with yourself. I also find it increases the enthusiasm of the younger generation!

Any photography tips?

I am a birder first and a photographer second. There is nothing more satisfying than a great shot of a rare bird but the opportunities to get these shots are rare. I have tried to train myself to look first, take an ID shot second, and try and get that good shot third. I have missed out on ID shots many times because I am trying to get the focus, the shutter speed or the aperture setting just right. Once the bird has flown away (as birds do) you will never know what it was. Get the ID shot first, it may just be one species that you have never seen before. 🐦



Purple-banded Sunbird – Purperbandsuikerbekkie



Croaking Cisticola – Groottinktinkie



Pangolin – Ietermagog

WWII Birding

Salomi Louw

During the Battle of Sidi Rezegh in North Africa (December 1942), amidst canon shots being fired, aerial bombardment and gunfire, a combatant was surprised to hear larks singing.

While I was busy with extensive reading about South Africa's involvement in the Second World War, this comment was an incentive to be on the look-out for further references to birds, not necessarily by South Africans. Only one book satisfied me on this topic but other stray references also cropped up.

During a commando raid on Crete in 1944 to capture German General Kreipe, Commander of the Sevastopol Division which held the island, Stanley Moss often heard nightingales singing and thought they seemed mostly to sing in the daytime in Crete. Its song is particularly noticeable at night because few other birds are singing. In fact, its name includes "night" in several languages.

Manfred Mann's Earth Band's sixth album, 1975's *Nightingales & Bombers*, took its title from a World War II naturalists recording of a nightingale singing in a garden as warplanes flew overhead. Moss's comment is therefore quite apt.

General Montgomery (Monty), commander of the Allied 6th Army, had a very busy time in North Africa during the 'Desert War'. In Sicily, however, he had to share the advance of the invasion and capture of the island with American General Patton who devised his own plans for the attack and executed them in his own time. Monty therefore had time on his hands and "worked off some of his exasperation by caring for a collection of birds which he had accumulated in Sicily. In the caravan which served as his office, a pair of canaries and a hen shared a cage. The most recent addition to the menagerie was a peacock ... Montgomery was delighted with the peacock and allowed it to

strut about both in his caravan and the mess. ... Henderson, Monty's aide-de-camp, and the mess staff didn't much like the peacock as they had to catch it every time the HQ (Head Quarters) moved. At the first opportunity they launched it off an escarpment and watched it flap down the rocky face before disappearing from sight." When Montgomery inquired about the colourful bird, they told him simply that they could not find it (Follain, p 182).

Further references to birds were scarce in the dozens of books I read until I picked up Arthur Bryant's *Turn of the Tide* which is based on the 1941-1943 diary of the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lieutenant-General Alan Brooke, appointed to this position in December 1941. He had to oversee the plans for the various battles, the logistics and the progress of the war in the different theatres,



Male Northern Cardinal

Wikipedia

Wikipedia



European Goldfinch

and – above all – keep a check on the impetuous British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Brooke was known as a nature lover and bird photographer. During some of the most stressful periods in his wartime career he sought succour in bird watching.

Alan Brooke would sit with a cinecamera and his binoculars in the garden or a copse for hours on end on the few Sundays he could spend at home, to photograph a nightingale's nest or a nesting Wryneck.

While at the War Office the Chief of the Imperial General Staff would occasionally take time off during the lunch hour to walk in the park looking for birds and could become quite annoyed if anyone attempted to join him and would thus interrupt his concentration. He would be trying to identify the Scaup Duck, Britain's rarest breeding duck, on St James's Lake or some similar bird.

Brooke asked his friends and family to write to him about "birds and fish and not about human beings who could think of nothing better than continually waging war" (Bryant, p 333).

During a visit to the USA with Churchill to devise war strategy with their American allies, Brooke was very excited that, after having read Lane Allen's book on the Kentucky (Northern)



Juan Emilio

African Blue Tit

Cardinal, he managed to tick this lovely bird as a lifer. Cardinals were so named because their plumage reminded European settlers of the robes of a Roman Catholic cardinal.

Brooke also accompanied Churchill further afield on numerous occasions and bird identification vied with war strategies. These trips provided him with the opportunity of finding birds which he mostly only knew from books. In August 1942 he writes that the marshes in the deltas of the Volga made him long to visit them for birding and photography as he saw white egrets, herons and ducks as their plane skimmed past, flying low on their way to Moscow, and he spotted an eagle which he could not identify. He loved breaking away from war talk in Casablanca in January 1943 by walking on the beach looking for birds. With a companion he saw Goldfinch, Stonechat, warblers of all sorts, a White Wagtail and several kinds of waders on the seashore, such as Sanderling, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover and Turnstones.

While in Marakesh, Brooke notes in his diary: "I spent a real peaceful afternoon looking for birds in the peaceful garden of the hotel and found several interesting specimens. It is great fun identifying the European specimens in the form of some sub-species with minor



www.birdfact.com

Crossbill



John Priden

Great Northern Loon

variations. It is also very interesting seeing what a great difference there is between the bird life in Casablanca and at Marakesh, although the distance between them is only some 130 miles." Here, and later at Algiers, he saw the African Blue-Tit which is found in northern Africa and the Canary Islands.

He also found a new bird at the Siwa Oasis a few days later: a White-Rumped Chat, but apart from two ravens and a Hooded Crow there was nothing else to see as it is only during migration that birds are plentiful at the oasis. At General Alexander's headquarters in Algiers, he again took a short walk in the pine woods around the camp to look for birds and found a Cross-bill, several green finches and some doves, but not much else. Crossbills are specialist feeders on conifer cones, and the unusual bill shape is an adaptation which enables them to extract seeds from cones.

A humorous incident is entered in the diary on 30 January 1943. They were in Adana for talks with the Turkish leaders and Brooke was, apart from interpreters, alone with Field Marshal Çakmak when through the window behind the Field Marshal he spotted what he thought was "a Pallid Harrier busy quartering over the plain. I had never seen a Pallid Harrier and was not certain whether what I was looking at was one or a Hen Harrier. I was consequently very intent on looking out of that window much to Çakmak's discomfiture,

who kept looking round and possibly thought I had spotted someone getting ready to have a shot at him. It was not possible for me to explain through the interpreter that I was only bird-watching" (Bryant, p 572). The male Pallid Harrier is whitish grey above and white below, with narrow black wingtips. It differs from the Hen Harrier in its smaller size, narrower wings, paler colour, and different wing tip pattern. It is best distinguished from the female Hen Harrier on structure. No wonder then that Brooke could not readily identify the raptor while planning strategy with the Turkish general. A month later at Gibraltar he did, however, easily identify the Peregrine Falcon.

The demands of the War Office and of the irascible Prime Minister drained Brooke emotionally. After the Casablanca conference he confides his lost and lonely feeling to his diary: "Wandering alone in the garden of the Mamounia Hotel in Marakesh, if it had not been for the birds and the company they provide, I could almost have sobbed with loneliness" (Bryant, p 718).

Two days later he was in Quebec and taking a day off to spend in the wilds of Lac des Neiges where he saw an Osprey at close quarters, and a Great Northern Diver – better known as the Common Loon – which breeds in Greenland, Iceland and North America. Loons have a haunting call that is often used in films and television shows to add a wild or spooky

atmosphere to a scene. It is often used in locations where divers aren't even found!

At the lake Alan Brooke also found a Spruce Partridge (or Grouse), a Black Duck and a falcon he thought was a 'duck hawk', i.e. a Peregrine Falcon.

On a former working visit to Canada Brooke had ordered a set of Gould's bird books: 45 volumes for just over £1500. At this price it was also seen as an investment and Brooke thought he might sell the set for twice their cost after the war. The references to birds in his war diary of 1941–1943 concludes with the collection of these books: whilst looking at Gould's wonderful pictures he was able to forget everything connected to the war.



Dick Daniels

Spruce Partridge Grouse

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WELCOME TO BLNG!

Aan alle nuwe lede – baie welkom! Ons sien daarna uit om julle by ons aandvergaderings, daguitstappies of tydens 'n naweekkamp te leer ken.

To all our new members – welcome! 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 Fransie at secretary@blng.co.za or 0727370862 if you have any queries or requests.

Christo Kalmer, Roodepoort; Wouter Labuschagne, Moreleta Park; Rensina Venter, Lynnwood Ridge; Angela Openshaw, Bronberg; Hilary Wilton, Bryanston; Alet Vermeulen, Silverton; Riaan Booysen, Moreleta Park; Stephan Mühr, Murrayfield; Elna Naudè, André & Elandré van der Merwe, Hazeldean; Fiona Butchart, Roodepoort; Suzahn Kriel, Randburg; Elmarie Kriel, Hatfield

BLGN-ringershoekie 2022 (3)

Wanda Louwrens

7 Mei, Bishopvoëlpark, Wierdapark (o.l.v. Marina Pienaar)

Agt A-ringers (gekwalfiseerde ringers) en vier C-ringers (ringers in opleiding) het die oggend in die koue gaan nette opslaan. Hierdie voëlpark is 'n weggesteekte juweel binne in die stad. Die vangste was goed vir 'n wintersoggend. 87 voëls is hanteer, waarvan sestien verskillende spesies was. Die tien hervangste het 11,5% verteenwoordig.

Die Swartoogtiptolte (Dark-capped Bulbul) was die meeste met veertien voëls. Tweede was die Kaapse Glasogies (Cape White-eye) met dertien en die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked Weaver) was derde met twaalf voëls.

Ander spesies was Gewone Tarentaal (Helmeted Guineafowl), Witpensuikerbekkie (White-bellied Sunbird), Sneebul (Black-backed Puffback) en Gewone Mossie (Cape Sparrow).

28 Mei, Wonderboom NR (o.l.v. Madeleen van Loggerenberg)

Net drie A-ringers en een C-ringer het op hierdie koue dag opgedaag vir hierdie ringsessie. Die voëls was maar min – net 50 voëls is hanteer, waarvan elf verskillende spesies. Daar was geen hervangste nie, want ons het lanklaas by hierdie natuurreservaat gering. Dit was ook baie toegegroeï en die groep kon nie by die vorige ringplek uitkom nie.

Die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked Weaver) was die meeste met 16 voëls, die Witpensuikerbekkies (White-bellied Sunbird) was tweede met agt voëls en die derde plek is ingeneem deur die Bruinsylangstertjies (Tawny-flanked Prinia) met sewe voëls. Ander mooi spesies was Suidelike Waterfiskaal (Southern Boubou), Dikbekwewer (Thick-



Wanda Louwrens

Imé van Coller het vanjaar gekwalfiseer as A-ringer. Wanda en Frik (links) het haar sertifikaat oorhandig.

billed Weaver) en Geellogkanarie (Yellow-fronted Canary).

1–16 Julie, Namibië-toer (o.l.v. Johan de Jager)

Johan en Nicole de Jager (pa en dogter), Madeleen, Johan, Hanneke en Madelet van Loggerenberg (ma, pa en dogters), asook Julian du Plooy het 'n onvergeetlike twee weke in Namibië gaan voëls kyk en ring. Hulle het nege Bleeksingvalke (Plain Chanting Goshawk) op 'n bal-chatri gevang. Nicole kon in die proses kwalifiseer as Roofvoëlringer. By White Lady Lodge, Brandberg, is 195 voëls gering, 9 naby Swakopmund en 39 by Spitzkoppe. Met 'n groototaal van 252 het hulle baie goed gedoen in dié twee weke. Die Namakwaduifies (Namaqua Dove) het die koek gevat met 62 individue gevang.

Pieter du Plessis



Arrie Klopper en Pieter du Plessis van BLNG saam met Rohan van die Skova Biodiversity Rehab in Hazyview ring 'n jong en baie nat Nonnetjie-uil. Die jong uile word nat gemaak om hulle makliker uit die neste te kry. Dit het geen effek op hulle nie.

Hulle het fantastiese spesies daar gekry, eie aan Namibië, soos Perskakelaar (Violet Wood Hoopoe), Monteironeushoringvoël (Monteiro's Hornbill), Kortstertlaksman (White-tailed Shrike), Bleekvlerkspreeu (Pale-winged Starling), Vaalstreepkoppie (Lark-like Bunting), Woestynlewerik (Stark's Lark) en Grysruglewerik (Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark).

Hulle sienlys was nog meer indrukwekkend – 250 spesies! En almal in die groep het 'lifers' gekry! Hulle het die volgende endemiese of amper-endemiese spesies gelys: Rotsvoël (Rockrunner), Witborsjakkalsvoël (Augur Buzzard), Damararooibek-, Bradfield- en Monteironeushoringvoël (Damara, Bradfield's and Monteiro's Hornbill), Ovamboswartmees (Carp's Tit), Angolasysie (Cinderella Waxbill) (Johan se 700ste lifer), Rooistertmôrelyster (Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush), Herero Spekvreter



Pieter du Plessis

Frik du Plooy, Arrie Klopper en Pieter du Plessis (almal van BLNG) in die vrylatingshok op Hazyview. Ons het vier volwasse Nonnetjie-uite gering kort voordat hulle vrygelaat is.

(Herero Chat), Perskakelaar (Violet Wood Hoopoe), Kaalwangkatlagter (Bare-cheeked Babbler), Woestynkorhaan (Rüppell's Korhaan), Donkergrysvalk (Grey Kestrel), Moeraswaterfiskaal (Swamp Boubou), Kortstertlaksman (White-tailed Shrike), Rooinekvalk (Red-necked Falcon) en Bloupenspapegaai (Rüppell's Parrot).

2 Julie, Ringopleiding in Pretoria

Sewentien A-ringers, vyf C-ringers en ses familieleden het hierdie opleidingsessie by die Eastside Community Church in Moreletapark bygewoon.

Dit het die vorm aangeneem van 'n praatjie deur Karien Schmidt van SA Wildlife in Need oor die rehabilitasie van voëls. Sy het gepraat oor die noodhulp by beseerde voëls. Haar belangrikste boodskap was dat 'n beseerde voël eerstens hitte nodig het, asook vog – geen kos. 'n Beseerde voël dehidreer maklik. Die noodhulp vir 'n beseerde een bestaan uit vog – een koppie afgekoelde kookwater met vier teelepels suiker en bietjie sout.

Die eetgoed was die hoogtepunt van die dag! Omdat ons mekaar lanklaas gesien het, het ons met teetyd heerlijk gekuier.

Die groep het 'n donasie aan Karien se rehabilitasiesentrum gemaak as waardering vir haar toewyding aan voëls in die algemeen.

5 Julie, Praatjie by Bronberg Aftree-oord, Pretoria (Frik en Wanda)

Frik en Wanda is gevra om 'n by hierdie Aftree-oord te gaan gesels oor hoe hulle voëls ring. Die geleenheid is deur twaalf lede van die voëlklub by Bronberg bygewoon en dit het baie bespreking uitgelok.

Die praatjie is gebaseer op die volgende vrae:

- Hoekom ring ons?
- Waar ring ons?
- Wanneer ring ons?
- Waarmee ring ons?
- Hoe ring ons?
- Het ons permitte nodig?
- Hoe beïnvloed aardverwarming die voëls?

9 Julie, Bushtrails Ringkamp (o.l.v. Elba Swart)

Elba het vier A-ringers genooi om saam met haar by Bushtrails, naby Magaliesburg, te gaan ring. Daar is fasiliteite vir baie kinders op die plaas, wat jeugroepe ontvang vir veldskoolaktiwiteite. Die geriewe is basies, maar het lekker warm storte en beddens om op te slaap.

Liz, die eienaar, het laat weet dat sy die berg gaan brand. Elba en die span het dadelik planne gemaak om die insekvreters in die swartbrand te gaan teiken. Hulle pogings het geslaag, want dertien Vaalkoesters (Buffy Pipit), vier Kroonkiewiete (Crowned Lapwing), drie Gewone Spekvreters (Familiar Chat), drie Donkerkoesters (Plain-backed Pipit), drie Oranjekeelkalkoentjies (Cape Longclaw), twee Rooineklewerikke (Rufous-naped Lark), twee Gevlekte Lysters (Groundscraper Thrush), twee Fiskaallaksmante (Common Fiscal) en een Nicholsonkoester (Long-billed Pipit) het kom goggas soek waar dit die vorige dag gebrand het. 'n Totaal van 38 voëls en nege verskillende spesies is hanteer.

Die spesies op die berg is baie territoriaal – d.w.s. hulle bly in daardie omgewing. Die hervangspersentasie was hoog – 13,2%. Elba reël dikwels ringsessies op hierdie plaas. Drie voëls wat in 2019 gering is, is weer gevang,

waarvan twee al twee keer sedertdien gevang is – 2021 en 2022.

'Lifers' was volop – op een na het al die ringers 'lifers' gekry – 'n ring-'lifer'!

6 Augustus, Voortrekker Monument (o.l.v. Martin Steyn)

Agt A-ringers en twee C-ringers het die Akoue trotseer en by die Voortrekker Monument gaan ring. Die Monument was verlig en die foto wat Chris du Plooy geneem het, net voor dit lig geword het, het 'n pragtige foto gemaak.

Die vangste was nie baie goed nie, maar daar is tog 68 voëls hanteer, waarvan 21 hervangste was, en 'n goeie totaal spesies – 18 in getal. Dit is nogal baie hoog (30,9%) en verskaf baie inligting oor die voëls se beweging en ouderdomme.

'n Bosveldstompstert (Long-billed Crombec) met ringnommer AR58219, wat oorspronklik op 23 Januarie 2016 gering is, is hierdie Saterdag vir die vyfde keer weer gevang, hierdie keer deur Arrie Klopper (kyk na die kopie uit Safring se webblad hieronder)

Die Glasogies (Cape White-eye) en Rooibeklysters (Kurrichane Thrush) was die twee spesies wat die meeste gevang is die dag, met agt individue elk. Ander mooi spesies was Oranjeboersboslaksman (Orange-breasted Bushshrike), Witkeeljanfrederik (White-throated Robin-Chat), Bosveldtjerk-tik (Chestnut-vented Warbler). Bruinsylangstertjie (Tawny-flanked Prinia), Rooivlerktjagra (Brown-crowned Tchagra) en Kleinheuningwyser (Lesser Honeyguide).

20 Augustus, Bishopvoëlpark (o.l.v. Marina Pienaar)

Dit was 'n week van sterk winde in Wierdapark, Centurion. Nieteenstaande het ons 'n rustige en goeie oggend gehad.

Ses A-ringers en drie C-ringers het saam kom ring. Die vangste was goed – nie minder as 106 voëls is hanteer nie,

Ring	Code	Date	Species	Ringer	Age	Sex	Mark	Condition	Location Code	Location Name
AR58219	1	2016-01-23	Crombec, Long-billed (Sylvietta rufescens)	Mr C du Plooy	4	0	0	0	254652810E	WATERKLOOF EXTENSION, PRETORIA, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA
AR58219	2	2016-12-31	Crombec, Long-billed (Sylvietta rufescens)	Mrs M Pienaar	4	0	0	0	254652810E	WATERKLOOF EXTENSION, PRETORIA, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA
AR58219	2	2017-04-01	Crombec, Long-billed (Sylvietta rufescens)	Johan Snyman	4	0	0	0	254652810E	WATERKLOOF EXTENSION, PRETORIA, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA
AR58219	2	2017-10-14	Crombec, Long-billed (Sylvietta rufescens)	Mr J.M. Viljoen	4	0	0	0	254652810E	WATERKLOOF EXTENSION, PRETORIA, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA
AR58219	2	2022-08-06	Crombec, Long-billed (Sylvietta rufescens)	MRA Klopper	4	0	0	0	254652810E	WATERKLOOF EXTENSION, PRETORIA, GAUTENG,

waarvan 12 verskillende spesies en 'n 10.4% hervangs-koers.

Die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked-Weavers) het die koek gevat met 38 voëls, met die Gewone Mossies (Cape Sparrow) tweede met 'n getal van sestien. Ons was so gelukkig om 'n Gewone Tarentaal (Helmeted Guineafowl) in die net te kry. Ander interessante spesies was: Geelkanarie (Yellow Canary), Rooikopvink (Red-headed Finch), Kleinglansspreeu (Cape Glossy Starling), Bruinsy- en Swartbandlangstertjie (Tawny-flanked and Black-chested Prinia) en Bosveldtjerik (Chestnut-vented Warbler).

Hein Bantjes het 'n Bosveldtjerik (Chestnut-vented Warbler) weer gevang wat Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg amper nege jaar gelede by Bishopvoëlkark gering het. Dit vertel ons dat hierdie klein voëltjie so oud kan word!

24–25 Augustus, Lubbestlust Ringkamp (o.l.v. Hein Bantjes)

Vyf A-ringers het die lang pad aangedurf na Alldays in Limpopo vir 'n naweek se ring op 'n wildsplaaas daar naby. Daar is 'n luukse jagkamp met al die nodige fasiliteite vir 'n aangename verblyf.

Die vangste was redelik goed met 171 voëls wat hanteer is, waarvan 24 verskillende spesies. Net een was 'n hervangs. Die rede hiervoor is dat daar nie dikwels daar gering word nie. Dit is 'n jaar gelede op 15 Augustus 2021 die eerste keer deur Nicole de Jager op dieselfde plaas gering en nou deur Leon Lötter weer gevang.

Die Rooirugstreepkoppie (Golden-breasted Bunting) was die meeste met 42 individue, terwyl die Blousysies (Blue Waxbill) die tweede meeste was met 34 voëls. Interessant genoeg is 'n hele swerm Withelmaksmanne (White-crested Helmetshrike) ook aangekeer. Ander lieflike spesies was Groenvlekduife (Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove), Swartkopwielewaal (Black-headed Oriole), Kremetartlaksman (Southern White-crowned Shrike), Buffelwewer (Red-billed Buffalo Weaver), Klipstreepkoppie (Cinnamon-breasted Bunting) en Kleingeelvinke (Lesser Masked Weaver).



C-ringer, Reinhardt Fowler, oppad om alleen 'n net te gaan opslaan tydens die kamp by Wolfhuiskraal in Oktober.

10 September, Rietvlei NR (o.l.v. Chris du Plooy)

Sewe A-ringers en vyf C-ringers het hierdie Saterdag in die vleie by Rietvlei gaan ring. 'n Allemintige 303 voëls is hanteer, waarvan 22 verskillende spesies. Die havigspersentasie was 5,6%, wat sewentien voëls verteenwoordig.

Die Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked-Weavers) het die koek gevat met 148 individue wat gevang is. Ander spesies wat volop was, is Kortstertflap (Fan-tailed Widowbird) – 27, Rooivinke (Southern Red Bishop) – 26 en Vleitinkinkies (Levaillant's Cisticola) – 19. Ander interessante spesies was: Kaapse Vlei-, Riet-, asook Kleinrietsanger (Little Rush-, Lesser Swamp and African Reed-Warbler), Kuifkopvisvanger (Malachite Kingfisher), Oranjekeelkalkoentjie (Cape Longclaw) en Koningrooibekkie (Pin-tailed Whydah).

23–25 Sept, Feather River Ringkamp (o.l.v. Chris du Plooy)

Sewe A-ringers het hierdie weggesteekte plantasie van Sappi tussen Sabie en Graskop besoek. In die Venus-plantasie is daar 'n klomp rondawels wat Sappi as 'n gastehuis bedryf. Dit is baie primitief, maar met warm water in die storte en 'n bed om op te slaap is dit genoeg vir ons ringers wat bedags in die veld is.

Daar is nog baie inheemse woud wat wemel van die voëls. Vir 'n verandering het ons goeie weer gehad en het net-net die 200 merk misgeloop. Ons het 197 voëls hanteer in die tydperk, met nuwe ringe op 174 voëls en 23 hervangste (11,7%) en 'n ongelooflike 39 spesies.

Die spesies met die meeste getalle was: Swartoogtiptol (Dark-capped Bulbul) – 26; Klein-rooibandsuikerbekkie (Southern Double-collared Sunbird) – 22; Lawaaimakerjanfrederik (Chorister Robin-Chat) – 19; Witkoljanfrederik (White-starred Robin) – 14 en Olyflyster (Olive Thrush) – 12.

Ek dink die beste vangste van die uitstappie was die Mooimeisie (African Emerald Cuckoo) – 3, Heuglinse Janfrederik (White-browed Robin-Chat), Ruigtesanger (Barratt's Warbler), Olyfboslaksman (Olive Bush-Shrike), Kortbeksuikerbekkie (Collared Sunbird) – 4, Suidelike Swie (Swee Waxbill) en die Groenkolpensie (Green Twinspot) – 3.

Die oudste 'retrap' was 'n Lawaaimakerjanfrederik (Chorister Robin-chat) wat Madeleen van Loggerenberg op 30 September 2019 gering het en wat Hein weer op 26 September 2020 gevang het.

'n Spesiale dank aan Bernardus van Sappi wat dit vir ons moontlik gemaak het.

1 Oktober, Bishopvoëlpark (o.l.v. Marina Pienaar)

Net drie A-ringers en vier C-ringers kon hierdie ringuitstappie mee maak. Omrede daar so min nette was, was die getalle ook laag. Nietemin is 112 voëls gevang, waarvan 15 verskillende spesies was. Die hervangste

Juan van den Heever



Jandré Verster met 'n Witkoluittjie



Jandré Verster

Juan van den Heever met 'n Rooibekneushoringvoël

was goed – 14,3%, want dit is al die derde keer hierdie jaar dat ons daar ring. Dit was die oggend vir Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked-Weavers) – 34 en Gewone Mossies (Cape Sparrow) – 23. Ander lieflike spesies was Kleinheuningwyser (Lesser Honeyguide), Bruinsylangstertjie (Tawny-flanked Prinia), Bosveldtjierktik (Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler), Suidelike Waterfiskaal (Southern Boubou), Kleinglansspreeu (Cape Glossy Starling) en Rooikopvink (Red-headed Finch).

7–9 Oktober, Wolfhuiskraal Ringkamp (o.l.v. Wanda Louwrens)

Ses A-ringers en vier C-ringers het op hierdie plaas langs die Pienaarsrivier gaan voëls ring. Die Saterdagoggend het die wind bietjie gewaai, maar ons het nogtans gaan nette opsit anderkant die grootpad langs die pomphuis. Dit was die beste vang vir die naweek, want 83 van die 122 voëls is daar gevang. Die Gewone Melba (Green-winged Pytilia) was die volopste met

sewentien voëls en die Blousysies tweede met veertien individue. Die twaalf hervangste het die volgende spesies ingesluit: Rooiborslaksman (Crimson-breasted Shrike), Buffelwewers (Red-billed Buffalo Weavers) en Baardmanneltjie (Scaly-feathered Finch).

Die spesies wat nuwe ringe gekry het, was Bosveldfisant (Swainson's Spurfowl), Kroonkiewiet (Crowned Lapwing), Bruinkeelbossanger (Burnt-neck Eremomela), Bosveldtinkinkie (Rattling Cisticola), Rooivlerktjagra (Brown-crowned Tchagra) en Rooibekneushoringvoël (Southern Red-billed Hornbill).

15 Oktober, Pretoria Botaniese Tuine (o.l.v. Arrie Klopper)

Vyf A-ringers en vyf C-ringers het hierdie pragtige tuine in Pretoria besoek. Die voëls wat die dag gevang is, het die vroeg opstaan die moeite werd gemaak.

Arrie skryf:
Vir net vyf ringers se nette, het ons goed gedoen

met 170 voëls in totaal en 25 verskillende spesies. Hiervan was 40% Swartkeelgeelvinke (Southern Masked-Weaver) (69/170). In die tweede plek is die Swartoogtiptol (Dark-capped Bulbul) – 24 en derde die Gewone Janfrederikke (Cape Robin-Chat) – 15. Die beste vangste vir die dag was sekerlik die Kleinheuningwyser (Lesser Honeyguide) en Draaihals (Red-throated Wryneck).

Maar met 'n hele 16.5% van die vangste, wat gering is, is die 28 hervangste van tien spesies ook besonders. Die oudste een was 'n Swartoogtiptol (Dark-capped Bulbul) wat al in September 2013 gering is – dus meer as nege jaar gelede, gevolg deur twee Rooibeklysters (Kurrichane Thrush) wat agt jaar terug daar gering is. Dieselfde Swartoogtiptol (Dark-capped Bulbul), een van die Rooibeklysters (Kurrichane Thrush), en 'n Gewone Janfrederik (Cape Robin-Chat) is elk vir 'n vierde keer gevang.

Dankie aan almal se hulp met die C-ringers. Hulle het almal lekker aantalle en spesies gering.

15 Oktober, Demo by Rietvlei NR (o.l.v. Chris du Plooy)

Madeleen van Schalkwyk, een van Tshwane se werknemers by Rietvlei NR, het die ringgroep gevra om 'n ringdemo by Rietvlei vir 'n uitgesoekte groep mense te gee. Chris en Julian du Plooy, saam met Johan en Nicole de

Jager het die demo gedoen. Daar is meer as 100 voëls gering en die groep het drie ure by hulle deurgebring om alles oor voërling te leer. 🐦



Pieter du Plessis

Dr Melissa Whitecross van Birdlife South Africa besig om 'n mannetjie Dikbekweewer te ring by Rietvleidam Natuurresewaat. Daai outjie kan byt!!

WANING WATERBIRDS

Waterbirds, which are dependent on freshwater and estuarine ecosystems for foraging, tend to be excellent indicators of the health of the ecosystems upon which they depend. Encouragingly, there has been a small decrease in the number of waterbirds considered to be threatened since the 2000 regional Red List assessment, with just 20 (13%) of the 141 members of this group falling within the threatened or Near Threatened categories. The genuine change in status of certain species such as the near-endemic African Black Oystercatcher are encouraging and, in contrast to the other groups examined, the proportion of Vulnerable and Endangered species is more in line with what one would predict. While there has been some improvement some worrying trends are, however, coming to light. Some species are restricted to very few breeding locations (e.g. Yellow-billed Stork, Pink-backed Pelican), which make them intrinsically vulnerable to detrimental change.

Be a better Birdlasser-er

Hanjo Gouws

Birding as a citizen scientist was completely turned on its head when Henk Nel introduced the world to Birdlasser a few years ago. My meagre SABAP contributions, and most importantly, my SABAP experience as a budding birder made both my life and the poor vetting committees' lives much smoother. It's shameful to state how many times I misnamed a crested for a helmeted guineafowl – poor souls. This handy app has made everything from logging and recalling memories, keeping a life list, contributing to the incredible SABAP2 project or even just joining a competition a breeze.

If you've ever come across a bird party or stopped at a dam, you'd have felt the pressure of quickly trying to type out the names of all the birds, all while your working memory is shoving every bit of coal in the engine to remember that last c-a-m-a-r-o-p-t-e-r-a. That while your thumbs are either freezing or fumbling. Anyways, my father-in-law and I started taking shortcuts to type bird names much quicker with a curated set of letters. But, to flesh out this point, I want to take us on a detour through a different language.

Birding with BLNG has taught me one thing, and it goes something like this: "You know, I used to bird in Afrikaans, but these days..." and then fill in the story with "guides don't understand Afrikaans"; "everything is English"; "Once you reach a certain level, you must switch" etc. These stories all take a rainbow, smooch all the colours together and make it brown! So, here's my diverted thesis and a new story for you BLNGers: Learning bird names in Afrikaans is simply the best possible thing you can do for your birding. How could that possibly be you ask? Let me offer four reasons.

First, Afrikaans, being a Germanic language, compounds words when they are one idea. Just like the infamous rhubaberbarbara video

on YouTube. For example, a motorcycle engine repair centre becomes "motorfietsenjinherstelsentrum", or chocolate and milo gourmet milkshake' becomes: "Hmm, lekker". Point being, in English, when typing in a birding name, you don't have compounds, and you do have this silly stripe- which can make typing names cumbersome. See, silly.

Because of Birdlasser's advanced search, you can leverage the unique compound combination of species and group names in Afrikaans to cut out all the unnecessary letters with one shorthand swoop. This is an incredibly powerful bit of information for the lazy, as instead of typing "witlies" to get to the Witliesbosbontrokkie (Chinspot Batis), you can now type in "sb" and it pops right up. This single point makes the biggest difference in the practical birdlasser experience, but I'll continue my side-line linguistic apology with three lesser points.

Second, Afrikaans names for birds are on the whole more descriptive and thus more practical. Onomatopoeia and obvious visual descriptions go a long way to making a bird more memorable, and Afrikaans names are filled with them.

Thirdly, Afrikaans names are generally a bit quainter and more beautiful. Somehow, the character of a bird is often caught far better when something is described in non-scientific terms. Its essence is better expressed. I dare you listen to the Kelkiewyn's call and not get what I'm saying. Now there are exceptions to the rule, like the Yellow-fronted Canary vs the Geelooqkanarie (Yellow-eyed Canary). You'll feel a similar thing with older English names. The Gorgeous Bushshrike, or Robin have more character than the green-winged py ... what, or a green-winged cama who? It's Grey Go-away-bird, not Grey-lourie. This is true not because Afrikaans is superior as a language, but because it adheres to the principle of naming in a non-scientific way.

Lastly, and this is pedantic, but Afrikaans names aren't as subject to the whims of scientists and taxonomists. A Hadededa will stay a Hadededa, a Dikkop will stay a Dikkop, and whatever a Blouvalk is called these days, it will stay a Blouvalk.

OK, all done with my side point's four reasons: utility, speed, beauty and longevity. Back to my original point of this article. I want to give you tips on being a better birdlasser-er, but we need the info I just went through to get there. My dad and I try to aim for 3 letters per bird in Birdlasser, preferably two. So here are a few tips:

- In general, use Afrikaans names and aim for the end of the species name and the start of the group name, or uncommon letter combinations. Here's a few examples of common birds. The letters to be typed in, are
- In bold: Grootring**g**duif; Swart**k**eelgeelvink, Bru**in**sy**l**angstertjie;
- Pro-level birdlassering: use the number 3 for the three-related named birds like the Driebandstrandkiewiet, and all two or double-related names, use the number 2.
- Use ê and ë for birds like Kwêvoël and hoëveld- birds.
- Before you start singing de la Rey, de la Rey,

with unique English names, stick with the English. For example, "Waxbill" has plenty of grout with its X.

- Remember that the top entry isn't the end of the list. It's important that not everyone's screen ratio, letter sizes and screen size is the same, so I don't want to give an example here. Most screens will show up to the 5th entry. Some phones show up to the 8th.
- Lastly, I'm sure the same thing about Afrikaans and English can be said of the scientific names, but I haven't gotten to that point in my birding, so help me out if you "knows too much"
- Actually, learning the names goes a very long way in applying the one-concept-one-word trick for taking your shortcuts.

So, to kick us off, I've decided to make a list of some common birds around Pretoria and give their lettered combinations that I use. I hope a few things will come from this. Firstly, that your birding will be enriched with more speed to keep your eyes on the birds, not your screen. And also, that you could help me with your letter combinations and take part in the art that my dad and I have been enjoying in our respective birding. Go on and be a better birdlasser-er!

Freq	Species	Group	Afr Name	Birdlasser shortcut	Notes
1	Red-eyed	Dove	Grootringduif	gd	
2	Laughing	Dove	Rooiborsduifie	rsd	
3	Hadededa	Ibis	Hadededa	ha	Fifth entry
4	Karoo	Thrush	Geelbeklyster	kly	Also works for Rooibeklyster
5	Dark-capped	Bulbul	Swartoogtiptol	gti / bul	
6	Cape	Sparrow	Gewone Mossie	mos	
7	Southern Masked	Weaver	Swartkeelgeelvink	tke	
8	Common	Myna	Indiese Spreeu	ind / my	It's a 6 for England!
9	Crowned	Lapwing	Kroonkiewiet	kro / cro	This is a tough one. Sixth entry for Afrikaans; 3rd for English
10	Cape	Robin-Chat	Gewone Janfrederik	nfr	

11	Cape Turtle	Dove	Gewone Tortelduif	ldu	Entry three; “tort” types easily due to how close the letters are on the keyboard.
12	Crested	Barbet	Kuifkophoutkapper	fk	Entry five; pho makes it first entry.
13	Southern	Boubou	Suidelike Waterfiskaal	rf	Entry two
14	Speckled	Pigeon	Kransduif	sd	Entry two
15	Black-collared	Barbet	Rooikophoutkapper	iko	
16	Grey Go-away-bird	Lourie	Kwêvoël	ê	long-press the letter e for the option to appear
17	Cape	White-eye	Kaapse Glasogie	gla	“aso” gives all the white-eyes, glasogies
18	Cape Glossy	Starling	Kleinglanspreeu	ssp / glo	“glo” gives second entry; “ssp” gives fourth entry
19	Speckled	Mousebird	Gevlektemuisvoël	mui	Works with all the muisvoëls (mousebirds)
20	Red-faced	Mousebird	Rooiwangmuisvoël	mui	Works with all the muisvoëls (mousebirds)
21	Tawny-flanked	Prinia	Bruinsylangstertjie	yl / nsy	“yl” comes in at fifth
22	Egyptian	Goose	Kolgans	kol	Third entry
23	Rock	Dove	Tuinduif	ndu	Second entry
24	White-bellied	Sunbird	Witpensuikerbekkie	nssu	Four letters? Yikes! Help!
25	Southern Grey-headed	Sparrow	Gryskopmossie	pm	Second entry
26	Helmeted	Guineafowl	Gewone Tarentaal	aal	Sixth entry
27	Thick-billed	Weaver	Dikbekwewer	kwe	
28	Southern Red	Bishop	Rooivink	oiv	Third entry
29	Blacksmith	Lapwing	Bontkiewiet	tki	
30	African Palm	Swift	Palmwindswael	mw	
31	Cape	Wagtail	Gewone Kwikkie	kwi	Fifth entry
32	Bronze	Mannikin	Gewone Fret	nik	Fourth entry. Go English, Go!
33	Southern	Fiscal	Fiskaallaksman	Fis / lla	“fis” also works with a Fiskaalvlieëvanger
34	House	Sparrow	Huismossie	smo	
35	African Sacred	Ibis	Skoorsteenveër	env / sac	Gelykbreek, of hoe?
36	African	Hoopoe	Hoepoep	Ho	Thanks father Christmas
37	Little	Swift	Kleinwindswael	nwi	
38	Fiscal	Flycatcher	Fiskaalvlieëvanger	fis	See fiskaallaksman
39	Spotted	Thick-knee	Gewone Dikkop	dik / kko	
40	African Grey	Hornbill	Grysneushoringvoël	sne	
41	Common	Moorhen	Grootwaterhoender	twa	
42	Western Cattle	Egret	Veereier	vee	

43	Green	Wood-Hoopoe	Rooibekkekelaar	kak	Sies man! Unfortunately, it's the best option.
44	Arrow-marked	Babbler	Pyllekkatlagter	ylv	
45	African Wattled	Lapwing	Lelkiewiet	lel	
46	Pied	Crow	Witborskraai	rsk	Sixth entry
47	Black-backed	Puffback	Sneeubal	fb / sne / bal / uba	English wins a round
48	Kurricane	Thrush	Rooibeklyster	kly / kur	
49	Streaky-headed	Seedeater	Streepkopkanarie	opk	
50	Reed	Cormorant	Rietduiker	td	
51	Cut-throat	Finch	Bandkeelvink	dke	Third entry
52	Red-winged	Starling	Rooivlerkspreu	ksp	Second entry
53	Greater Striped	Swallow	Grootstreepswael	psw	
54	Rock	Martin	Kransswael	ssw	Works with a lot of swallows and a house martin
55	White-rumped	Swift	Witkruiswindswael	swi	Fifth entry
56	Amethyst	Sunbird	Swartsuikerbekkie	thy / tsu	Thy provides first spot. Tsu is second of two
57	Brown-hooded	Kingfisher	Bruinkopvisvanger	pvi	
58	Village	Weaver	Bontrugwewer	gw	Second entry. "gwe" makes it first entry
59	White-throated	Swallow	Witkeelswael	lsw	
60	African Olive	Pigeon	Geelbekbosduif	sdu	kb comes in last on my screen
61	Black-headed	Heron	Swartkopreier	opr	
62	Burchell's	Coucal	Gewone Vleiloerie	ilo	Second entry
63	African Green	Pigeon	Papegaaiduif	idu	
64	Lesser Striped	Swallow	Kleinstreepswael	psw	
65	European	Bee-eater	Europese Byvreter	by	Fifth entry
66	Black-throated	Canary	Bergkanarie	gk	
67	Blue	Waxbill	Blousysie	sy	Third entry
68	African Paradise	Flycatcher	Paradysvlieëvanger	dy	Fourth entry
69	White-winged	Widowbird	Witvlerkflap	kf	"kfl" makes it the only option
70	Dideric	Cuckoo	Diederikkie	di	Second entry
71	Red-headed	Finch	Rooikopvink	pv	Fifth entry
72	Chinspot	Batis	Witliesbosbontrokkie	sb	
73	African Black	Duck	Swarteend	tee	Fifth entry
74	Fork-tailed	Drongo	Mikstertbyvanger	mi	"tby" for a first entry
75	Bar-throated	Apalis	Bandkeelkleinjantjie	nj	nj also works for the Bruinjakksvoel

76	Long-billed	Crombec	Bosveldstompstert	cro / lds	
77	Yellow-fronted	Canary	Geelooqkanarie	gk	Fifth entry
78	Red-chested	Cuckoo	Piet-my-vrou	my	Second entry
79	Zitting	Cisticola	Landeryklopploppie	yk	
80	Golden-tailed	Woodpecker	Goudstertspeg	tsp	Second entry
81	Swainson's	Spurfowl	Bosveldfisant	df	Second of four entries
82	Rose-ringed	Parakeet	Ringnekparkiet	kp	Third entry
83	Cardinal	Woodpecker	Kardinaalspeg	lsp	
84	African	Darter	Slanghalsvoël	gh	Fourth entry
85	Neddicky		Neddikkie	dd	Third entry
86	Barn	Swallow	Europese Swael	sw	
87	Klaas's	Cuckoo	Meitjie	mei	
88	Grey Go-away-bird	Lourie	Kwêvoël	ê / kw	Keep e pressed in to get to the ê
89	Black-winged	Kite	Blouvalk	uva	
90	Groundscraper	Thrush	Gevlekte Lyster	lys / dsc	"dsc" is unique; "tsi" from scientific name also works as first entry
91	Yellow-billed	Duck	Geelbekeend	eke	
92	Lesser Swamp	Warbler	Kaapse Rietsanger	tsa / wam	English wins. Afrikaans name is 7th entry
93	Brown-crowned	Tchagra	Roovlerktjagra	ktj	
94	Red-billed	Quelea	Rooibekkwelea	kkw	
95	Orange-breasted	Bushshrike	Oranjeborsboslaksman	jeb / rsb	Second entry
96	Giant	Kingfisher	Reusevisvanger	sev / evi	Both combinations work well
97	Spotted	Flycatcher	Europese Vlieëvanger	vli	Fifth entry
98	Whitebrowed	Sparrow-Weaver	Koringvoël	row / kori	"-we" also works, but that's silly
99	Freckled	Nightjar	Donkernaguil	do	Fifth entry
100	Pin-tailed	Whydah	Koningroobekkie	ngr	Sixth entry
101	Chestnut-vented	Tit-Babbler	Bosveldtjeriktik	dt	
102	Woodland	Kingfisher	Bosveldvisvanger	dv	
103	Black	Cuckoo	Swartkoekoek	tko	Sixth entry. This is a tough one.
104	Black-headed	Oriole	Swartkopwielewaal	opw	
105	Black-chested	Prinia	Swartbandlangstertjie	tba	
106	Levaillant's	Cisticola	Vleitinkinkie	eit	Second of three entries
107	Lesser	Honeyguide	Kleinheuningwyser	nh	Third entry
108	Greater	Honeyguide	Grootheuningwyser	theu	Help
109	Garden	Warbler	Tuinsanger	nsa	Fourth of five entries
110	Common	Waxbill	Rooibeksysie	ksy	"sy" comes it sixth

Kompetisie 1 – Antwoorde (*Laniarius* July)

Only a few birders managed to get 7 out of 9 answers correct. No-one was able to identify all bird species to which these eyes belong.



- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Pririt Batis | Pririt Bosbontrokkie |
| 2 | Arrow-marked Babbler | Pylvekkatlagter |
| 3 | White-crested Helmetshrike | Witheelmaksman |
| 4 | White-fronted Bee-eater | Rooikeelbyvreter |
| 5 | Ground Hornbill | Bromvoël |
| 6 | Lizard Buzzard | Akkedisvalk |
| 7 | Black Oystercatcher | Swarttobie |
| 8 | Scops Owl | Skopsuil |
| 9 | African Olive Pigeon | Geelbekbosduif |

Problem eyes

- No 4
- No 6
- No 8

Kompetisie 2 – Competition 2

Watter EEN voëlspesie pas nie by die res nie?
Which ONE bird species does not belong here?



Stuur jou antwoord aan lanariuseditor@blng.co.za.
Foto's: Marna Buys en Ivonne Coetzee



An outstanding contribution to *Laniarius*: Drinie van Rensburg

One of the best attributes of a bird club is the newsletter that it publishes, where articles featuring club activities and the adventures, observations and aspirations of members about all matters related to birding can be enjoyed.

Laniarius has long been regarded as one of the leading bird club newsletters in the country, a reputation that came about due to the contribution made by the editors and the team responsible for the layout and presentation of the publication. A newsletter editor needs to find suitable material to publish, but all the content needs to be presented in a readable and eye-catching format. Appearance plays a big part if the overall presentation of a newsletter. To this end Drinie van Rensburg's contribution stands out as being of great significance, as it took place over a period of nearly 30 years and spanned 81 issues. I recall that when during my first tenure as editor, it was Drinie who helped elevate *Laniarius* to a different level through the use of photos and graphics when digital technology was in its infancy. Since then we have graduated to a digital publication with the guidance of Drinie's skills regarding the design and layout of our publication. Seldom will one find a contribution that stands the test of time like this, and we are sincerely grateful to Drinie for her dedication and commitment to help take our newsletter to where it is today!

André Marx

Collectives answers (see p 29)

1	A	tower	of	babblers
2	A	blaze/colony	of	bee-eaters
3	A	roost /flight	of	birds
4	A	clergy	of	bishops
5	A	bubble/duet	of	boubous
6	A	wake	of	buzzards
7	An	opera	of	canaries
8	A	run	of	chickens
9	A	roost	of	chicks
10	A	gulp	of	cormorants
11	A	sedge/flock	of	cranes
12	A	murder	of	crows
13	An	asylum	of	cuckoos
14	A	flight/dole	of	doves
15	A	cohort	of	drongos
16	A	raft/paddling	of	ducks
17	A	convocation/congregation	of	eagles
19	A	siege/congregation	of	egrets
20	A	cast	of	falcons
21	A	charm	of	finches
22	A	concorde/flamboyance	of	flamingos

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