



Laniarius

No 136 March 2018



BirdLife Northern Gauteng
BirdLife Gauteng-Noord



Newsletter of BirdLife Northern Gauteng Nuusbrief van BirdLife Gauteng-Noord

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Kennisgewing aan bydraers

Laniarius word drie keer jaarliks uitgegee. Artikels moet aan laniariuseditor@blng.co.za gestuur word. 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 resoluusie/grootte.

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Credits

Front cover: Black Harrier, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, by Sheleph Burger

**Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of
BirdLife Northern Gauteng or BirdLife South Africa.**

From the Editor

Welcome to *Laniarius* 136, which turned out to be so long that we had to hold a few articles back till July. A huge ‘thank you’ to all our contributors!

We’re almost 4 months into the [Year of the Bird](#) (YotB) – not the Chinese zodiac animal for 2018 (that is the dog), or the UN international theme for this year (there isn’t one, for the first time since 1998), but rather a worldwide temporal takeover by National Geographic and BirdLife International, among others. On the local front, the YotB has to date delivered both cause for rejoicing (see [BLSA’s video on our White-winged Flufftails](#)) and cause for concern (see: [An ill wind blows for vultures in Lesotho](#) and [SA’s seabirds, raptors in serious decline](#)).

A Year of the Bird sounds celebratory – and it is, being the 100th birthday of a law protecting birds, and also an invitation to marvel at the manifold wonders of the avian world. But at its core YotB is a call to arms – to protect what wonders are left. In its launch issue for the campaign, National Geographic answers the question ‘why do birds matter?’ in two ways – firstly, by quoting Thomas Lovejoy: “If you take care of birds, you take care of most of the environmental problems in the world”, and secondly with the claim that birds are good for our souls (even when we can’t ID them) – in the words of Jonathan Franzen: “they are our last, best connection to a natural world that is otherwise receding.”

As evidence of this connection, I recently stumbled across two articles (one via a post on the BLNG facebook page) reporting on studies that assessed the effect of ‘nature’ on human wellbeing. The [first](#) showed that people are in a better mood (for some time) after they’ve experienced even the smallest slice of nature (e.g. seen a tree from a window or heard bird-song). The [second](#) found that people who live in neighbourhoods with more birds, shrubs

and trees are less likely to suffer from anxiety, stress and depression.

It seems tragically ironic that we should recognise this link at a time when so much of our planet’s natural capital has already been squandered. News headlines everywhere testify that bad decisions our species has made are now ‘coming home to roost’. Our love of convenience, novelty and comfort (more specifically, fossil fuels and plastic) is playing out in extreme weather events, the deteriorating quality of our water and food supplies, and the horrific discovery that we’ve filled our rivers and oceans, and the life they contain, with microplastics, novel chemicals and toxic metals.

Another form of non-financial capital that is apparently in steady decline is ‘social capital’ – features of social organization such as networks, norms and trust that enable cooperation and collective action toward a shared goal. Fewer people are joining clubs or volunteer organisations, reflecting low levels of civic engagement and connectedness. Citizens have become consumers above all else, and even clubs are often seen as paid service providers rather than a pooling of resources for mutual benefit.

Good governance of our national and global ‘commons’, of which our environment and biodiversity probably form the greatest part, depends to a large extent on the social capital of engaged and connected stakeholders. Your membership of BLNG (and other organisations) offers the opportunity to contribute to restoring both natural and social capital. So, mark this Year of the Bird by getting involved – and inspiring others to join you. There are hundreds (if not thousands) of ways to do so...

Tamsyn

From the Chair

During the recent BLNG AGM we reflected on some of the highlights of the past year.

Our mother organisation, BLSA, hosted the *Flock at Sea AGAIN 2017* cruise on the MSC Sinfonia. With approximately 2 000 birders joining the cruise, this event created the largest gathering of birdwatchers that has ever taken place in South Africa. This was truly a very special event and many BLNG members joined the trip.

A second highlight was the recent discovery of breeding White-winged Flufftails at Middelpunt Wetland near Belfast. The White-winged Flufftail is one of the world's most threatened and rarest birds; it is listed as 'critically endangered' and only occurs in Ethiopia and South Africa. Through the use of a novel survey method, BirdLife South Africa's research team has recently revealed the first breeding record for this species in South Africa, contradicting prior thought that the White-winged Flufftail is a non-breeding visitor to South African wetlands. BLNG will be supporting this exciting project through the sponsorship of another camera to track White-winged Flufftails.

As a club we are focusing our conservation activities on citizen science and are encouraging our members to become more involved, specifically in atlasing. The Southern African Bird Atlas Project is the most



important bird monitoring project in South Africa. Through the BLNG BirdLasser Challenges, we have been encouraging our members to use BirdLasser to log all their bird sightings. This year we would like to take this challenge a step further by getting more of our members to submit atlas cards. We have also scheduled a BirdLasser/Atlasing workshop for the end of June.

Our bird ringing group, consisting of 25 active A-ringers, and 20 C-ringers who are still being trained, ringed an impressive total of 5 917 birds during 2017.

All of the BLNG activities on offer are generally well supported, specifically our monthly evening meetings, the training courses and day outings. Faansie Peacock's wader course and Cameron Meyer's Accipiter course were both very well attended, as well as the recent Birdsounds in the Bush course by Etienne Marais. In terms of weekend and longer trips, we have noticed that our members prefer the camps that focus on finding special birds and 'lifers', and we hope to ensure that this need is met going forward.

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

Louise

To order print copies / Om harde kopieë te bestel

Laniarius is only distributed electronically. If you wish to receive hard copies please contact Rita (secretary@blng.co.za). The cost is R75 for 3 issues.

Laniarius word nou slegs elektronies versprei. As u die harde kopie wil ontvang, stuur asb 'n e-pos aan Rita (secretary@blng.co.za). Die koste is R75 vir 3 uitgawes.

President's Address



2018: The 'Year of The Bird'

It recently came to my attention when I was in discussion with

Elouise, our Chairperson, that 2018 is the Year of The Bird. It is not often that a year is dedicated to our favourite subjects, and certainly I cannot remember this in recent times. When I looked into the reason for this announcement I found that in fact a number of organisations had come together to make the declaration, and prominent amongst these were The National Audubon Society, National Geographic and BirdLife International. This is to mark the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which is regarded as the most important bird protection law ever passed.

It was in 1918 that the U.S. Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act making it illegal to possess, import, export, sell, or purchase any migratory bird or their nests and eggs, except under the terms of a valid permit. At the time many bird species were being over-exploited because they were being hunted for sport or for their feathers to adorn ladies' hats. Today there are many and varied threats from modern man-made hazards, but none are as serious as habitat loss.

According to BirdLife International "more than 40 percent of migratory bird species are declining and over 200 species are now classified as globally threatened."

BirdLife South Africa chooses a bird species every year as its Bird of The Year and for 2018 the near-endemic African Black Oystercatcher has that honour. This

bird is a modern-day conservation success story with its population having dramatically increased over the past few decades, leading to its regional Red Listing status being downgraded from 'Near Threatened' in 2000 to 'Least Concern' in 2015.

Although numbers are on the increase, the African Black Oystercatcher still faces some challenges, especially where it breeds in or near urban centres. The biggest threats include continued habitat loss due to coastal development, and disturbance of breeding birds by beach visitors and their dogs.

We belong to an organisation that has as its primary goal the conservation of birds and their habitat, but we need to be at the forefront of efforts to conserve birds and spread the word about understanding and enjoying them. So the question that will be asked is: what can we do to conserve birds? One way is to look at your own garden, or if you don't have one, focus on the area you live in. There are various initiatives that can be undertaken and just a few can be mentioned here. You can replace a part of the lawn with native trees and shrubs. Indigenous plants create the habitat and food that birds depend on, whether it's insects, fruits, seeds, or nectar. They also provide the cover needed for birds to shelter from weather and from predators. Birds need a diversity of nesting situations, so leave a section of grass unmown and don't take down old or dead trees that have cavities that birds will use. Consider erecting nesting logs and maybe an owl box if your garden is suitable for that.

Water is essential for birds of course and a birdbath that slopes gently down

to a fairly shallow depth of no more than about 50 or 60 mm is an important feature in a garden. Reducing the amount of pesticides we use on our lawns and in gardens is crucial to having a healthy environment. Pesticides as we know poison insects and rodents and this results in secondary poisoning when birds ingest the poison from their prey. Removing alien invasive plants from your garden that out-compete indigenous species is another aspect that often receives little attention. By removing these species we improve the habitat for birds.

In recent times birders have become more engaged in the monitoring of birds. We take part in atlassing projects and now

use apps to make lists of birds wherever we are. These projects should be encouraged and we should enlist the support of friends and members of the public in these projects so that we can contribute to efforts to track bird population trends.

During this Year of the Bird we must spread the word about birds, their enjoyment, and above all the need to continually improve efforts to conserve them. As we mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act we must join forces to celebrate the Year of the Bird and commit to protecting birds today and for the next 100 years.

André Marx



Rohan Chakravarty, www.greenhumour.com, used with permission

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

	2017 R	2016 R
INCOME	79,175	81,012
Subscriptions	79,175	81,012
OTHER INCOME	61,294	105,154
Donations received	10,125	10,118
Interest received	15,414	14,052
Fundraising for conservation	-	25,604
Nett proceeds from outings and camps	17,046	16,905
Nett proceeds from courses and special events	13,409	35,949
Nett proceeds from trading activities	5,300	2,526
TOTAL INCOME	140,469	186,166
LESS: EXPENDITURE	141,673	178,810
Audit fees	5,274	4,152
Bank charges	1,884	2,436
Bird ringing	10,000	10,000
Committee meeting expenses	3,040	2,400
Conservation expenses	23,596	10,000
Conservation Fund Transfer	-	25,604
Depreciation	18,597	36,707
Evening meeting expenses	8,538	10,533
AGM and function expenses	4,635	3,603
Insurance	4,549	3,554
Leaders expenses	12,600	13,300
Marketing and promotion	2,127	1,098
Printing and stationery - General	682	1,462
Printing , envelopes and postage - Lanarius	970	13,718
Secretarial fees	39,600	36,000
Telephone & postage	837	1,000
Twoway radio expenses	4,744	3,243
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	-1,204	7,356
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - beginning of year	224,303	216,947
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - end of year	223,099	224,303

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG**BALANCE SHEET AS AT
31 DECEMBER 2017**

	2017	2016
	R	R
ASSETS		
Non current assets	4	2
Office and radio equipment	4	2
At costs	60,159	41,559
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	60,155	41,557
Current assets	252,776	265,987
Bank balance	22,495	53,077
Fixed deposit	209,703	194,290
Petty Cash	3,334	849
Prepayments and Advances made	9,800	5,340
Advance Book Table	5,000	-
Wine stock on hand	2,444	12,431
TOTAL ASSETS	252,780	265,989
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves	223,099	224,303
Accumulated funds	223,099	224,303
Current liabilities	29,681	41,686
Amounts received in advance	2,000	-
Conservation Trust Fund	-	25,604
Ringers Trust Account	22,681	11,582
Creditors	5,000	4,500
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	252,780	265,989

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

31 DECEMBER 2017

	2017	2016
	R	R
Balance at 31 December 2016	223,099	224,303
Balance at 01 January 2015	224,303	216,947
Net surplus/ (Shortfall) for the year	-1,204	7,356
Balance at 31 December 2017	<u>223,099</u>	<u>224,303</u>

BIRDLIFE NORTHERN GAUTENG

**NOTES TO THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2017**

1. Basis of preparation

The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the financial statements. The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and are consistent in all material respects with those applied in the previous years.

2. Revenue recognition

Revenue comprises invoiced membership fees accounted for on a cash received basis. All other income derived from outings, courses, trading and fund raising events is accounted for on a cash received basis.

3. Computer, office and radio equipment and furniture

All computer, office and radio equipment and furniture are written off in the year of purchase. A register of all computer, office equipment and furniture is maintained.

4. Wine Stock

Wine stock is recorded at cost

5. Employment benefits

The secretary is employed on a fixed salary. None of the other club members receives any employment benefits. The association does not provide any post-employment retirement benefits.

Reasonable office expenses, actually incurred in the fulfillment of their duties as club members are re-imbursed. Standard nominal gratuity fees are paid to any person, including club members for leading a field outing or presenting a talk / course.

6. Taxation

The club is registered as a tax exempt entity
The income tax reference number is 9029/721/18/1.

7. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents consists of cash on hand and balances with Nedbank held in current and investment accounts.

BLNG uitstappie Bronkhorstspruitdam toe, 21 Oktober 2017

Pieter en Joëlna Heslinga

Uiteindelik het die naweek aangebreek en ons sien baie uit na die voëlkykuitstappie na die Bronkhorstspruitdam wat vir vandag (Saterdag) beplan is. Dis is ons eerste keer hiernatoe. Stephan Terblanche is ons gids vir die dag.

Ons ry reeds net na 5 uur uit Pretoria om vroeg daar te wees en genoeg tyd te hê vir 'n koffietjie en beskuit voor ons begin *bird*. Dis 'n wonderlike oggend en ons weet sommer die dag is perfek vir voëlkyk. Teen 7 uur is almal wat laat weet het daar – ons was eerste, toe Rob Burnett, Willie en Madelene Kruger, dan die belangrikste persoon, Stephan, toe die Heynse, Jenny Bester, Eduard en Hilda, Sean en Robin, Rita de Meillon en laaste Willie van der Merwe. Ons was 15 altesaam, net 'n lekker groepie.

Ons het aan die suide van die dam gery en gestap, waar die Bronkhorstspruit by

die dam invloei. Orals is goeie ablusiefasilitate. Die omgewing is pragtig, ideaal vir watervoëls en gou-gou begin ons spesielys groei – Kolganse, Grootwaterhoenders, Bleshoenders, reiers, Skoorsteenveërs [Egyptian Goose, Common Moorhen, Red-knobbed Coot, herons, African Sacred Ibis]. Ons hoor Kaapse Vleisangers [Little Rush-Warbler] in die riete; 'n entjie weg hoor ons 'n Draaihals [Red-throated Wryneck]. Dan ry ons 'n entjie verder al met die dam se oewer op, klim uit en kyk wat is nuut – Gryskopmeëue [Grey-headed Gull], Witbaardsterretjies [Whiskered Tern], natuurlik baie Swartkeelgeelvinke [Southern Masked-Weaver] en Rooivinke [Southern Red Bishop], en die piepklein Geelborsstrandkiewiete [Kittlitz's Plover], selfs 'n paar Ringnekstrandkiewiete [Common Ringed Plover] en Kemphane [Ruff]. So ry en kyk ons – mooi Gewone Dikkoppe [Spotted



Bosveldkwarteltjie/Small Buttonquail

Thick-knee] en dan 'n yslike swerm Afrikaanse Oewerswaels [Brownthroated Martin].

Later die oggend kry ons mooi Glansibisse [Glossy Ibis], 'n paar pragtige Kopereende [South African Shelduck], en toe begin ons koesters en lewerikke sien – Gewone Koesters, Rooikoplewerikke, Vlaktelewerikke, Rooineklewerikke [African Pipit, Red-capped Lark, Spike-heeled Lark, Rufous-naped Lark]. Ons hoor 'n Witverlkorhaan [Northern Black Korhaan] in die verte – te lekker.

Op ons pad stop twee vriendelike bergfietsryers by ons, gesels bietjie – dis Dries du Plessis en sy vrou. Hulle vertel hulle is ook voëlkykers en boer op 'n plaas net aangrensend aan die dam. Ons gesels lekker; daarna is hulle vort en ons verder al langs die dam op. Ons sien nou al die huisies van Bronkhorstbaai en die skibote begin sirkels in die water maak. Die tyd stap aan en ons kom by die einde van ons paadjie. Wat kan ons nog sien? 'n Baie groot trop Bleshoenders, ja. Is daar dalk 'n vreemde migrant tussen hulle? Maar nee. Ons draai om en ry stadig binneveld om terug na die hek toe om te gaan piekniek hou.

Stephan haal sy lyste uit en soos wat ons lekker eet en drink merk hy die lys af van wat ons gesien het. Altesaam kom hy by 97 spesies uit. Nee, maar ons moet meer as 100 op die lys kry. Dries du Plessis, die plaasboer, kom sluit by ons aan en gesels



Gewone Dikkop/Spotted Thick-knee

lekker. Ons loop gou onder die bloekom-bome rond en merk nog 'n paar voëls af – 'n Swartvlieëvanger [Southern Black Flycatcher], 'n Diederikkie [Diderick Cuckoo] en 'n Swartsperwer [Black Sparrowhawk] wat roep. Ek vertel van 'n Blouvalk, Langstertflap en Witgatspreeu [Black-shouldered Kite, Long-tailed Widowbird and Pied Starling] wat ons met die inkom gesien het. Ons maak dit – 103 spesies vir die dag. Fantasties!

Die mense het klaar geëet en, een na die ander, begin hulle aanstaltes maak om terug te keer huis toe. Ons sê baie dankie vir Stephan dat hy ons groepie so mooi gelei en geleer het. Andries du Plessis is egter so vriendelik om aan te bied dat ons saam met hom bietjie op sy plaas kan rondry, daar is pragtige Bloukorhane [Blue Korhaan]. 'n Paar van ons ry agter hom aan, en ons kry alles behalwe die Bloukorhane, maar ook 'n wonderlike troosprys. Dries ry voor – hulle soek vir Kwartelvinkies [African Quailfinch], maar wat kry hulle? 'n pragtige Bosveldkwarteltjie [Small Buttonquail]. Ons kry almal kans om mooi te kyk en foto's te neem en ry toe terug. Wat 'n wonderlike bonus om die uitstappie op so 'n hoë noot te kon afsluit.

Baie dankie aan almal wat die uitstappie moontlik gemaak het en almal wat saamgegaan het om dit met ons te deel. Dankie vir die uitruil van al die kennis en die vriendelikheid. Dit is fantasties om deel te wees van ons voëlklub! 🐦

Wakkerstroom, o Wakkerstroom... enige voëlkyker se droom!

15 – 18 Desember 2017

Sheleph Burger

At last our long-awaited and much-anticipated birding weekend started when our group arrived in Wakkerstroom on Friday, 15 December 2017. We were greeted by glorious weather, wide expanses of grassland, enticing wetlands and, of course, the friendly people of Wakkerstroom. Soon braaivleis fires were lit and acquaintances made.

At 06:00 on Saturday the group met at the Wakkerstroom Post Office where our bird guide for the two days, Lucky, already waited. Radios were sorted and soon we left, with Lucky in the leading car, pointing east. Lucky is a man of few words. Birding along the way was not on his agenda; he had a birding destination to reach. We traversed stretches of farmland, up mountains, over streams, past rivers and even a waterfall, until Lucky was satisfied that he could show us the jewels of the area. What excitement to view some of these little gems! And some not so little.

After birding for 12 hours the group settled down for yet another braai. Not till too late... Lucky wanted us fresh and ready by 06:00 the next morning. On Day 2 we travelled north to find the elusive larks of the area (Botha's, Rudd's and Pink-billed). Finding the larks entailed long walks in the veld, which was a unique experience. The Yellow-breasted Pipit eluded some the previous day, but presented itself beautifully on Day 2, when more birding sites were visited.

Ek weet die groep sal saamstem dat twee dae in Wakkerstroom nie genoeg is om die skoonheid van Mpumalanga ten volle in te neem nie. Behalwe uitstekende voëlkykgeleenthede is daar ook ander besienswaardighede om te geniet. Die dorpie bied 'n intieme gevoel van outydse gasvryheid.

Die Desember 2017 Wakkerstroomgroep: Lucky Ngwenya (ons gids); Sheleph (sameroeper en spanleier) & Louis Burger; Stella & Hannes Engelbrecht; Nic & Gill Oosthuysen; Hannalien



Very happy BLNG birders with Lucky Ngwenya after 'connecting' with Rudd's Lark/Drakensberglerwik

& Proffie Meyer; Jill & Phillip de Moor; Karin & Nic Els; Engela Janse van Rensburg; Sean & Robin Naudé; Pierre Grobler; Osie van Niekerk.

'n Indrukwekkende lys van 148 voëls was gesien, waarvan ek persoonlik 23 nuwe 'lifers' aangeteken het. Die volgende 'specials' is van belang: Vaalrivierlewerik [Botha's Lark]; Drakensberglewerik [Rudd's Lark]; Pienkbeklewerik [Pink-billed Lark] en Geelborskoester [Yellow-breasted Pipit].

Ons dank en waardering word uitgespreek teenoor Kristi Garland van BirdLife SA vir die vriendelike ontvangs en die gerieflike akkommodasie by die BLSA Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre. Dankie ook aan Rita de Meillon vir al die reëlings vooraf.

For those (unfortunate) members who have not had the opportunity to visit this rewarding birding site, do not wait too long. A visit to Wakkerstroom is not just another birding experience. The quietness of the landscapes and the diversity of birding sites will invigorate and refresh any tired mind and body.

Some of the positive comments received afterwards:

- *Baie dankie almal vir n heerlike voëlkyknaweek en vir julle aangename geselskap. Ons het fantastiese voëls saam met julle gesien..... en vandag die ROOIBEKTIPTOL, BUSH BLACK CAP! Groete. Proffie en Hannalien*
- *Baie dankie almal vir n heerlike voëlkyknaweek en vir julle aangename geselskap. Ons het baie lekker gekuier en wonderlike voëls gesien. 'n*

String Lifers! Dit was 'n voorreg. Mooi loop - Osie en Pierre

- *Dankie aan almal. Ons het naweek baie geniet saam met julle. Ons het ook hele paar lekker lifers om af te merk! Veilige reise v almal en geseënde vakansietyd. 🏠🍷😊*
- Karin en Nic Els
- *Dankie aan almal en al die lekker. Nog nie al ons lifers getel nie maar dis baie. Geseënde Kersfees almal. Nic & Gill Oosthuysen*
- *Dankie aan almal vir 'n onvergeetlike naweek. Het dit baie geniet en baie geleer. Pierre Grobler*
- *Onvergeetlik. Dankie vir almal se insette. Vir my is Wakkerstroom die mooiste deel van SA. Sal weer gaan. Mag julle 'n geseënde feestyd geniet.*
Stella en Hannes Engelbrecht
- *Thank you very much to everyone for a wonderful trip. Great company and amazing birding. We saw 3 more birds this morning. 1. Broadtailed Warbler 2. Glossy Ibis 3. Blackthroated Canary. Regards. Robin en Sean Naude*
- *Dankie aan iedere en elke een vir julle bydraes tot 'n uiters suksesvolle voëlkyknaweek te Wakkerstroom! Julle was gr8 gewees. Ek het ook 25 lifers afgemerkt. Die larks was 'n ervaring gewees - Rudd, Botha's en Pink-billed Larks en die Yellow-breasted Pipit 🐦🐦 en vele meer (Lucky se algemene opmerking 😊!)*

Wakkerstroom, see you again soon! 🦋

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.

We trust you will enjoy your birding with us. Please contact Rita at secretary@blng.co.za or 083 391 2327 if you have any queries or requests.

Francis Bloem, Pierre van Ryneveld; Anneke Rheeder, Waverley; Arista Fourie, Faerie Glen; Nic & Karin Els, Moreletapark; Martie Malan, Menlopark; Andre, Sophia en Paul Wepener, Irene; Maggs Vorster, Centurion; Ziyaad Dockrat, Wonderboompoort; Rene Joubert, Bailey's Muckleneuk; Petro Fourie, Silverton; Gabriel Foley, Nieuw Muckleneuk; Johan & Ruben Fuhri, Wonderboom Suid; Judith Gawehn; Gregory Kyle; Ben, Jana & Nina von Wieligh; Marietjie van Eeden, Silverton; Henk & Hanneke Nieuwoudt, Monumentpark

BLNG besoek aan Marievale, Januarie 2018

Kari Low

Marievale is altyd 'n besoek werd en ek en Marie-Louise was bly dat daar aan die begin van die jaar nog energie en tyd was om op hierdie uitstappie te gaan. Ons het geleentheid gekry saam met Rita om hierdie heerlike en vrugbare uitstappie by te woon; 12 voëlkykers het in totaal 103 verskillende spesies gesien! Ek het self nie almal gesien nie, maar dié wat ek gesien het, was pragtig.

Daar was natuurlik baie watervoëls, soos ses verskillende soorte eende: Fluiteend [Fulvous Duck], Geelbekeend [Yellow-billed Duck], Gevlekte Eend [Hottentot Teal], Rooibekeend (Red-billed Teal), Kaapse Slopeend [Cape Shoveler], Bruineend [Southern Pochard].

Verder het ons 12 verskillende reierspesies gesien: Bloureier [Grey Heron], Swartkopreier [Black-headed Heron], Reusereier [Goliath Heron], Rooireier [Purple Heron], Kleinwitreier [Little Egret], Swartreier [Black Heron], Rooikeelreier [Slaty Egret], Veereier [Cattle Egret], Ralreier [Squacco Heron], Groenrugreier [Green-backed Heron], Gewone Nagreier [Black-crowned Night-Heron], en die Kleinrietreier [Little Bittern]. Ons was so verras om 'n groot aantal Reusereiers te sien en die verbasing was groot toe ons ook 'n verdwaalde Swart Swaan sien.

Marievale het so baie voëls opgelewer, dat ek nie almal gaan lys nie, maar ek wil graag net 'n paar noem wat altyd my hart bly maak: Kuifkopdobbertjie [Great Crested Grebe], Kleindobbertjie [Little Grebe], Blouvalk [Black-shouldered Kite], Grootflamink [Greater Flamingo], Diederikkie [Diderick Cuckoo], Witbaardsterretjie [Whiskered Tern], asook die Bontelsie [Pied Avocet] en Rooipootelsie [Black-winged Stilt].

En so verwonder ek my ook oor die name van die voëls! Die elsie bv., die een is 'n *avocet* in Engels en die ander een 'n *stilt*! Hopelik sal die deskundiges in die klub kan verduidelik.

Marievale het intussen ook deurgeloopt onder vandalisme. Die een voëlskuiling is beskadig deur vandale en die ander een by die piekniekarea het afgebrand. Dit bly egter steeds 'n pragtige waterryke en natuurlik voëlsplek om te besoek.

Op pad terug het ons naby Bapsfontein op 'n plaas aangegaan waar die boer groot planne het om sy plaasdam groter en meer toeganklik te maak sodat meer mense daar kan kom voëls kyk. Die rede vir die besoek was omdat die Geelpootstrandloper [Pectoral Sandpiper] daar gesien is.



Fluiteend/Whistling Duck



Ralreier/Squacco Heron

Clive Kaplan



Geelpootstrandloper/Pectoral Sandpiper

Die omstap om die dam was bietjie ongelyk vir my, dus kon ek ongelukkig nie die besonderse spesies afmerk nie. Die ander voëlkykers wat



Ebouise Kallmer

Rooipootelsie/Black-winged Stilt

egter om die dam geloop het, het wel die besondere besoekertjie gesien! Een van baie hoogtepunte op hierdie uitstappie! 🐦

Qôdeshkamp, 19 – 21 Januarie 2018

Laura Jordaan

Die Bosveld roep. Gerugte van goeie reën en swerms trekvoëls in die omgewing maak 'n Zusterstroom kamp baie lekker lyk. Rita se e-pos herinner my dat ek moet bespreek. Betaal en beplan. Die terug-werk-toe roetine maak nie veel plek vir pakbeplanning nie en te gou is die Vrydag op my. Vroegmiddag val ek in die (warm) pad met 'n naweek se kos en kampgoed, blink ogies en bosveldkoors.

Oppad kry ek Witgat- en Kleinglanspreeus

[Pied and Cape Glossy Starlings], swaels en Veereiers [Cattle Egret]. Die Rooineklewerikke [Rufous-naped Lark] staan 'n erewag langs die pad af. Ek kan nou maar net nie deur die pas jaag nie en kruie met oop venster aan. Ek sien 'n Swartsuikerbekkie [Amethyst Sunbird] wyfie teen die pad aan't vroetel in struik. 'n Bruinjakkalsvoël [Common Buzzard] kyk my geduldig uit en solank ek nie stop nie bly hy sit. Ek soek in die lug tot ek die Kransswaels [Rock

Laura Jordaan



Ons bestudeer 'n boom vol sangers by die Wilgerivier kruising



Tamryn Sherwill

Bruinjakkalsvoël/Common Buzzard (alweer)



Tamsyn Sherwill

Vlaklaagtepad

Martin] gewaar, en 'n belowende wit blerts teen die krans. Die ander kamers kom met warrelende stofwolke verby my. Die rietbos by die eerste brug is platgevee deur 'n onlangse bui reën en vreemd stil. Net 'n vink of twee, en die Kroonkiewiete [Crowned Lapwing] wat hul gebied luid verkondig aan die groep kalwers. Met die indraai by die hek roep die Bosveldvisvanger [Woodland Kingfisher] luid en die Mikstertbyvanger [Fork-tailed Drongo] wip van draad na paal na verdere draad. Selfs die Paradysvlieëvanger [African Paradise-Flycatcher] flits-flits tussen die takke deur.

Hester kom my tegemoet en wys die beste oop skadukolletjie vir my uit, waar ek my tentjie staan maak terwyl Philip en die ander langs die rivier gaan stap. Elouise se man Chris het saamgekom vir die naweek. Hulle kry sowat 8 spesies gesien, insluitend 'n Reuserier [Goliath Heron]. Die nuwe lede, Johan en Ruben (10), vertel ook hoe mooi hulle die Europese Vlieëvanger [Spotted Flycatcher] kon sien. Die Bosveldvisvangers skree nog aanmekaar sodat ons almal geleentheid kry om die gesinnetjie mooi te bekyk. Tamsyn arriveer en ek sit hand by met haar tent, voor die braai begin. Die vure brand en Philip lees solank Dag Een se lys. Deur die nag hoor ons die Nonnetjie-uil [Barn Owl] skree. Vroegoggend hoor ons die Bontvisvanger [Pied Kingfisher] teen die rivier af skree, baie ongelukkig oor die Groenrugreier [Green-backed Heron] se teenwoordigheid. Die groot voertuie kry elkeen 'n ekstra passasier en ons begin die dag met 'n Hof- en Spotsanger, Dwerfvisvangertjie, Klipstreepkoppie en Swartvlieëvanger [Willow and Icterine Warbler,



Tamsyn Sherwill

Grootrooivalk/Greater Kestrel

African Pygmy-Kingfisher, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Southern Black Flycatcher]. Die brug is nogal stil en ons ry voort. Die spesies kom in sarsies in, met die hoogtepunt van 'n paar Grootjagarende [African Hawk-Eagle] en 'n groot klomp Oostelike Rooipootvalkies [Amur Falcon] wat skarrel om die insekte te kry.

Ons draai by Herseba in, om in die kloof op te stap. Met die uitklimslag warrel Blousysies [Blue Waxbill] in die bome in. Weer ryg ons vinnig spesies in en kry die Witpootblouvinkie [Purple Indigobird] nog in dieselfde boom as verlede jaar. Die klein klits kan net sit en mooi lyk terwyl ander sy kroos moet voer. Die Swartkopwielewale [Black-headed Oriole] gee vir ons 'n kooruitvoering en verskans die Kransduiwe [Speckled Pigeon] se sagte sang. Teen die hang gewaar ons die Kaapse Kliplyster [Cape Rock-Thrush] en Gestreepte Koester [Striped Pipit]. 'n Groep Rooivlerkspreus [Red-winged Starling] bekyk ons van die dakke af. Philip sien 'n groep



Tamsyn Sherwill

Qôdeshkampers op Renosterkop



Tamsyn Sherwill

Oostelike Rooipootvalk/Amur Falcon



Tamsyn Sherwill

Gebande Oewerswael/Banded Martin

Witlmlaksmanne [White-crested Helmet-Shrike] maar ek kry net die vlerke wat in die boom verdwyn. Ons stap terug na die karre vir tee en verversings. Op pad uit stop ons vir die Bruinjakalsvoël [Steppe Buzzard] met 'n bonus van Gryslaksmann [Lesser Grey Shrike] en 'n Namakwaduiwe [Namaqua Dove]. Ons kry ook een Swartpiek [Anteater Chat]. Halfpad terug kamp toe is ons bevoorreg om die gesinchroniseerde vertoon-vlug van twee Sekretarisvoëls [Secretarybird] te aanskou.

Die middagson bak nou ongenadig en ons gaan terug kamp toe vir 'n siesta. Tamsyn gaan span haar hammat waar sy die regte afstand bome kry, maar ongelukkig reg onder die voerende Bosveldvisvanger wat aanmekaar skree. Sy gee op en kom rus maar langs die tent.

Vir die aand se braai maak almal lekker bykosse en ons leer by Karin van haloumi, sampioen en chorizoworsie sosatie. 'n Groot klomp vuurvliegies vermaak ons terwyl die vleise braai.

Sondagoggend breek die dag baie bewolk maar die koeligheid sit ons nie af nie en ons mik na die Vlaklaagtepad, op soek na lewerikke en veral die Spotlewerik [Melodious Lark]. Ons kry ten minste die Vlaklewerik [Spike-heeled Lark] en baie Rooineklewerike [Rufous-naped Lark]. Plek-plek stop ons by riete om te soek vir spesies soos Goudgeelvalk en Langstertflappe [Yellow-crowned Bishop, Long-tailed Widowbird]. Nonnetjie-eende [White-faced Whistling Duck] kom ingevlieg na die poeletjie, saam met 'n Groenrugreier [Green-backed Heron]. Philip se vinnige oog tel 'n Gewone Kwikkie [Cape Wagtail] op. Karin sien die Rooiborswaels [Red-breasted Swallow]. By 'n bruggie stop

ons vir Grootwaterhoender, Geelbekeend, Lelkiewiet en Rooibeeksies [Common Moorhen, Yellow-billed Duck, African Wattled Lapwing, Common Waxbill]. Skielik stop die voorste kar en almal spring uit en beduie links waar twee Swartspewers [Black Sparrowhawk] in 'n bloekomboom sit. Net verder aan vlieg 'n Swartborsslangarend [Black-chested Snake-Eagle] laag genoeg dat ons hom mooi kan afneem. Swerms Rooibekeeweela [Red-billed Quelea] styg en daal uit die gras om 'n entjie verder voort te wei in die grassade. Ons stop op 'n hoogtetjie vir koffie voor ons die steilte na Renosterkop begin. Op pad boontoe sien ons baie Gebande Oewerswaels [Banded Martin] en Familieswaels [South African Cliff Swallow] wat op die heining sit. Die uitsig is onbeskryflik wyd, maar die voëls het seker in die vlakke gaan water soek. Ons sien wel 'n Bergklipwagter [Buff-streaked Chat]. Ek wens ons kon by van die plaasdammetjies uitkom om te soek vir watervoëls.

Ruben se 'lifers' groei vinnig en hy maak die naweek klaar met 105 spesies. Ons naweek eindig op 'n gesamentlike telling van 156. Nog hoogtepunte (bykomend aan die wat al genoem is) sluit in Edelvalk (wat deur sy ablusieplek verrai is), Grootrooivalk, Kransvalk, Kaapse Rietsanger, Europese Rietsanger, Tuinsanger, Kaapse Vleisanger, Lui-, Vlei-, Landery-, Bosveld- en Woestyntinkinkie, Dassievoël, en Grootswartooievaar [Lanner Falcon, Rock and Greater Kestrel, Lesser Swamp, Marsh, Garden and Little Rush-Warbler, Lazy, Levaillant's, Zitting, Rattling, Desert Cisticolas, Mocking Cliff Chat, Black Stork]. 🦅

BirdLife Northern Gauteng conservation initiatives

Philip Calinikos, BLNG Conservation Co-ordinator

As an affiliated club of BirdLife South Africa, we have a responsibility to contribute to its mission, which encompasses the following:

- To strive to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically-based programmes
- Supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources
- To encourage people to enjoy and value nature

One of the cornerstones of BLSA's conservation efforts is the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Programme (IBA). There are currently 112 identified IBAs in South Africa although this is set to change in the future as BLSA aligns itself to the BirdLife International conservation model which is based on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA).

To ensure that this re-alignment is done effectively, it is of primary importance that we have complete and up-to-date records of where all our distinct bird species occur and which habitats they are utilizing. The Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP2) that has

been running for over 10 years is the most important bird monitoring project in our region for this purpose. SABAP2 has relied on dedicated citizen scientists who have logged almost 11 million individual bird records and submitted well over 200 000 full-protocol cards during this time.

The BLNG committee is very proud of the citizen scientists amongst our members who have integrated atlassing into their birdwatching hobby. Atlassing was once a laborious process in the days of manual record cards but technology has transformed this into an effortless pastime. All you need these days is a smartphone, the wonderful BirdLasser App, and a smattering of bird identification skills... if you do not want to be inundated with numerous out-of-range cards!

In acknowledgment of the contribution that Henk Nel and the BirdLasser team have made to citizen science our club donates an annual amount to them, which helps cover their data storage costs for one month.



Tamsyn Sherwill

Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcount (CAR) Route GM01



Tamsyn Sherwill

Bird walk with Friends of Faerie Glen Nature Reserve

Tamryn Sherwill



Bird monitoring: Colbyn Wetland Nature Reserve

If you have not tried atlassing before, please look out for the forthcoming Bird Atlassing Workshop which we will be hosting, and register as an observer on SABAP2 so that you too can make your contribution to citizen science and conservation.

Should you be using BirdLasser already, please consider enabling the 'Causes' functionality, especially the 'BLSA Threatened Species' tab. This will allow your data to flow through to various conservation projects, irrespective of whether you register as a SABAP2 observer or not.

Another important citizen science project that our club members have been involved in for many years is bird ringing, which is administered by the South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING). In appreciation of our dedicated ringing team our club also donates an annual amount which is used to cover some of the equipment costs incurred by the ringers.

Two other citizen science projects that our club has been involved in over the years are Co-ordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) and Co-ordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts (CAR). During the past year we have been responsible for covering the Moloto CAR route and were pleasantly surprised to find that the Helmeted Guineafowl population (if not much else) remains very healthy in that area!

Our club also supports the WESSA Friends initiative wherever we can. Friends groups are



Tamryn Sherwill

Birding at Smuts Kopje with Friends of the General Smuts Foundation

volunteers who band together to conserve, rehabilitate or prevent inappropriate developments in natural or semi-natural areas or places of special interest. They embody WESSA's mission (which is very closely aligned to that of BLSA's) to promote public participation in caring for the earth by encouraging communities to become more involved with their local environment and take responsibility for its continued wellbeing. We interact with several Friends groups around Pretoria and assist with bird monitoring projects, and bird ringing demonstrations, as well as promoting bird-watching amongst their members by leading bird outings.

Other worthwhile conservation causes that we support include the Wonderboom Urban Verreaux's Eagle Project, the BLSA Secretarybird and White-winged Flufftail Project, the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project, the Blouberg Cape Vulture Project and the Youth Africa Birders Champions of the Flyway team.

Our most recent conservation-linked initiative is to support the Tracker Academy based in the Lowveld with materials needed for the trackers that they are training, most of whom come from low-income households. Please consider bringing your old bird books, binoculars, caps, camel bags, water bottles, headlamps, and raincoats to the next meeting and making a worthy donation! 🦋

Second global breeding locality discovered for Critically Endangered flufftail

BirdLife South Africa

The White-winged Flufftail [Witvlerkvleikuiken] is one of the world's rarest birds. Destruction and degradation of the species' high altitude grassland habitat have resulted in a situation where its survival in the wild is uncertain. There is a race against time to ensure that it does not become the first African bird to go extinct, following the same fate as North America's Passenger Pigeon and Mauritius' Dodo. Through the use of a novel survey method, BirdLife South Africa's research team has this month discovered the first breeding of the threatened White-winged Flufftail in South Africa, contradicting prior thought that this flufftail is a non-breeding visitor to South African wetlands.

The White-winged Flufftail is only known to occur with any regularity in Ethiopia and South Africa, more than 4 000 km apart. The species is found in high altitude wetlands in the eastern parts of South Africa from November to March. It then breeds in Ethiopia, in the northern hemisphere, during July and August. Prior to the recent discovery, the only known breeding site was Berga wetland in Ethiopia.

The implementation of a conservation plan (International White-winged Flufftail Single Species Action Plan) through the collaborative efforts of BirdLife South Africa, Middelpunt Wetland Trust and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (The BirdLife Partner in Ethiopia) is being undertaken under the auspices of the White-winged Flufftail International Working Group, African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). However, the successful conservation of this species is dependent on a better understanding of the birds' biology and movements.

Over the past two years BirdLife South Africa's Robin Colyn and ecologist Alastair Campbell have developed an innovative method to survey this cryptic and elusive species. Dubbed the BirdLife South Africa Rallid Survey Method (Colyn et al. 2017, *Ostrich* 88: 235-245), it uses a cleverly designed camera trap system to record the secret life of the White-winged Flufftail. Working at Middelpunt

Wetland near Belfast, in 2016/17 they recorded interesting wing-flapping behaviour during which both males and females display their white wing feathers. In 2017/18, the survey technique was further refined. The most exciting discovery was photographing recently hatched chicks and juvenile White-winged Flufftails. At least two breeding attempts were recorded, with chicks ranging from only a couple of days old to juvenile birds which were about four weeks old. This confirms that the White-winged Flufftail is not a "non-breeding visitor" to South Africa, says Robin Colyn, one of BirdLife South Africa's ornithologists and lead on the development of the novel survey method.

A scientific study, published a week ago, authored by BirdLife South Africa and National Zoological Gardens geneticists, has showed that South African and Ethiopian birds are genetically similar, with only three minor sequence variations between the two populations (Dalton et al. 2018, *African Journal of Ecology* 56: 28-37).

We are still unsure what our findings mean for White-winged Flufftail conservation. Our survey method did however confirm a low abundance and, therefore, until further knowledge, our assumption holds that this species is extremely rare and it remains on the brink of extinction, says Dr Hanneline

Smit-Robinson, BirdLife South Africa's Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme Manager. She adds that BirdLife South Africa would like to expand its use of the newly developed Rallid Survey Method to at least another three wetlands in South Africa to confirm the presence of, and hopefully breeding by, White-winged Flufftails at these sites. A donation of R4000 for each camera would help us to reach our target of buying another 60 camera traps for use in the 2018/19 breeding seasons. A further call by BirdLife South Africa is to raise funds to support the conservation initiatives that would ultimately protect the important habitats used by this wetland specialist. Please visit the BirdLife South Africa website (www.birdlife.org.za) or email conservation@birdlife.org.za for further information. Anyone wishing to donate towards this important conservation work can either deposit funds directly to BirdLife South Africa (FNB, Acc. No.: 62067506281, Branch: 250655) using the reference WWF_YourInitials&Surname, or can use the online

payment platform accessed via www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/donate where the White-winged Flufftail tab can be selected as the chosen cause.

For more information contact:
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BLSA Bird of the Year 2018



BirdLife South Africa has bestowed the title of Bird of the Year 2018 on a rather cute and charismatic coastal species. The African Black Oystercatcher [Swarttobie] (*Haematopus moquini*) is near-endemic to South Africa, with a restricted distribution from Angola to Mozambique, and breeding only on the South African and Namibian coasts. In choosing this species BLSA are highlighting the hopeful fact that populations in decline can do an about-turn in response to timely and successful conservation action. The population of African Black Oystercatchers, currently estimated at 6 700, has shown a 37% increase in numbers over the past 35 years. Listed in the Red Data Book as 'Near Threatened' in 2000, the species was downlisted to 'Least Concern' in 2015. The reason for this recovery is thought to be a combination of factors, including the introduction of the alien Mediterranean mussel, which



Michelle Luyken van Niekerk

African Black Oystercatcher/Swarttobie

provided an increased food supply, a ban on vehicles on beaches since 2001, the eradication of cats on islands, and general conservation and awareness actions – most specifically those of the Oystercatcher Conservation Programme, launched in 1998 by the FitzPatrick Institute at UCT, in partnership with a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations. Continued success of this species, however, depends on ongoing conservation efforts. Current and escalating threats to oystercatchers include disturbance of breeding birds by people and dogs, predation by domestic animals, and becoming entangled in coastal litter.

African Black Oystercatchers live on rocky, sandy and mixed substrate coastlines, on both islands and the mainland. They feed on bivalves/mussels, limpits, polychaetes, whelks and crustaceans – and not at all on oysters. Oystercatchers only feed in the intertidal zone, requiring that they feed by both day and night so as to make use of both low tides.

Males and females look similar, but the females are larger, with longer, more pointed bills. The birds are monogamous – with pairs

having been known to stay together for as long as 20 years – and territorial, often returning to the same nest site year after year. Breeding occurs in a scrape in the sand or shallow indentation in rock, from October to April, which unfortunately coincides with the summer holiday season on South Africa's coast, leading to a high disturbance rate for breeding birds, which increases chick mortality. The chicks leave their parents' territory after 2-6 months, and juveniles may migrate to nursery areas in Namibia and Angola for 2-3 years before returning. The longest recorded movement of an African Black Oystercatcher is 1 515 km, from Knysna to Swakopmund, and the oldest bird on record was 28 years, 11 months and 4 days.

BLSA, in partnership with Nature's Valley Trust as part of their #ShareTheShores campaign, have made available a series of resources for creating awareness about oystercatchers and their conservation, including fact sheets, lesson plans, colouring sheets and games. (See: <https://www.birdlife.org.za/events/bird-of-the-year>). BoTY T-shirts and soft toys are also available (and can be ordered from Riana). 🐦

BLNG ringers help om Wêreld Vleilandedag te vier

Ig Viljoen

Op 10 Februarie 2018 kom ses van BLNG se ringers douvoordag by die Colbyn Scout Hall langs die Colbyn vleiland bymekaar. Die rede vir die ontmoeting was om deel te neem aan 'n 'Learn about wetlands' dag wat deur die Friends of Colbyn Valley groep georganiseer was onder die vaandel van die 2018 Wêreld Vleilandedag. Die fokus van die dag was om kinders uit die omgewing van verskeie aspekte van vleilande te leer en te help beleef.

Die BLNG ringers was verantwoordelik vir 'n voëlringemonstrasie wat die kinders se verdere belang in die natuur en, meer spesifiek, voëls kon prikkel. Op die dag is meer as 170

kinders bereik. As mens hul toesighouers moet bytel was daar meer as 200 mense wat die dag, waarskynlik vir die eerste keer vir baie, kon sien hoe daar anders na voëls gekyk kan word en hoe daar ook belangrike inligting oor voëls versamel word.

Weens beperkte spasie om nette op te sit was daar aanvanklik 'n vrees dat die BLNG ringers nie genoeg voëls sou kon vang om 'n deeglike demonstrasie te doen nie. Dit was egter nie die geval nie en was daar in total 24 voëls gevang wat uit 11 spesies bestaan het. Die getal was net genoeg sodat die ringers genoeg tyd gehad het om rustig met die voëls te kon werk en vrae te



Jl van Ginkel



Tamsyn Sherwill



Tamsyn Sherwill



Tamsyn Sherwill



Tamsyn Sherwill



Marco Botha

kon beantwoord, en ook genoeg dat een voëltjie nie die heeltyd sy man sou moes staan nie. Die ringdemonstrasie het geleentheid gebied om kinders onder andere in te lig oor: die seisonale broeidrag van wewers en flappe; om leuens wat op sosiale media versprei word van arende wat na 40 jaar hul snawels verloor en weer groei aan te spreek; en hoe om verskillende tipes voëls na jou tuin te lok. Daar was nog vele ander vrae

waarop ons lig kon werp.

Terwyl daar dank teenoor die BLNG ringers uitgespreek is vir ons bydrae daardie dag, voel ons dat ons ook moet dankie sê vir die geleentheid wat ons gehad het om ons passie met al die kinders en hul toesighouers te kon deel, en glo ons dat 'n paar kinders se uitkyk op die lewe en die omgewing waarin hul woon moontlik vir die beter verander het. 🐦

Ringershoekie

Wanda du Plooy

Buffelsdrif: 7 Oktober 2017

Hierdie ring het uitgereën, maar die reën was baie welkom.

Wolhuiskraal: 13–15 Oktober 2017

Vyf A-ringers (Wanda, Frik, Johan Snyman, Janine Goosen, FC Bothma) en vyf C-ringers (Lucia en Leon Lötter, Johan en Nicole de Jager en Laura Jordaan) en twee belangstellendes (Elma Bothma en Heinrich, Johan de Jager se seun) het die naweek bygewoon. Ons het 92 voëls gevang; 73 gering en 19 was hervangste (hervangspersentasie: 20.7%). Spesiale spesies was Grootheuningwyser, Kardinaal- en Baardspeg, Witkoluil, Rooivlerkspreeu, Buffelwewer, Swartwangsysie en Hofanger [Greater Honeyguide, Cardinal and Bearded Woodpecker, Pearl-spotted Owllet, Red-winged Starling, Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver, Black-faced Waxbill, Willow Warbler]. Interessante

hervangste was 'n Grootglansspreeu [Burchell's Starling] wat op 12 April 2008 deur Dirk van Stuyvenberg gering is, asook 'n Bosveldtjerkittik [Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler], ook deur Dirk gering, op 16 Augustus 2009. Albei voëls is meer as 8 jaar gelede gering. Die Witkoluil is interessant genoeg drie keer in die laaste drie jaar gevang: eers deur M van Wyk op 22 Februarie 2014, toe deur Wanda du Plooy op 21 November 2015 en nou weer deur Janine Goosen op 15 Oktober 2017. En dit binne 'n radius van 200 meter.

Voortrekkermonument: 14 Oktober 2017

Die opleidingsessie vir toergidse by die Voortrekkermonument is geïnisieer deur die Monument se Bemerkingsafdeling en ons eie A-ringer, Elba Swart. Die opleiding in voëlidentifikasie is deur Philip Calinikos gedoen. Hy beklee die portefeulje



Wanda du Plooy

By Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station het Frik du Plooy 'n Oranjeborsboslaksman/Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike gering.

Natuurbewaring en Streekprojekte by BLNG. Sewe A-ringers – Ig Viljoen, Christo Siebert, Martin en Paula Steyn, Marié Ueckermann, Johan Muller en Marina Pienaar het Philip bygestaan met 'n ringdemonstrasie as deel van die opleiding. Die groep A-ringers het 36 voëls gevang, waarvan 12 hervangste was (35%). Oulike spesies is gevang: Bergkanarie, Fiskaalvlieëvanger, en Witliesbosbontrokkie [Black-throated Canary, Fiscal Flycatcher, Chinspot Batis].

Vergenoegmyn, Rust de Winter: 20–22 Oktober 2017

Vier A-ringers (Paula en Martin Steyn, Hein Bantjes en Marina Pienaar) en twee C-ringers (Leon en Lucia Lötter) het vir hierdie ringnaweek opgedaag. Die groep het 104 voëls oor twee dae gevang waarvan 11 hervangste was (10.6%). Oulike spesies is gevang: Kuifkop-, Bont-, Dwerg- en Bruinkopvisvanger, Spookvoël en Oranjeborsboslaksman [Malachite Pied, African Pygmy- and Brownhooded Kingfisher, Grey-headed Bush-Shrike, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike]. Die groep het ook op 'n groot luislang afgekom maar gelukkig het hy in muise en nie mense belanggestel. 'n Interessante hervangs

was 'n Swartoogtiptol wat op 11 Desember 2005 deur Dr Graham Grieve gering is – byna 11 jaar gelede.

BLNG Ringgroepvergadering, 28 Oktober 2017

Ons het op 28 Oktober 2017 'n baie lekker ringvergadering gehou by Johan en Danel Muller se gastehuis in Lynwood Glen. Die BLNG Subkomitee is herkies vir 2018: Koördineerder: Frik du Plooy, Admin: Wanda du Plooy, Geldsake: Johan Snyman, en Opleiding: Chris du Plooy, Hein Bantjes en Martin Steyn. Chris het 'n oulike ID sleutel vir naguië aangebied en Marié Ueckermann 'n baie interessante aanbieding oor voëlmigrasie. Die vergadering is deur 14 ringers bygewoon. Die 2018 ringprogram is bespreek en goedgekeur. Planne is in die pyppyn om by Hans Hoheisen Navorsingsterrein by Orpenhek 'n permanente ringstasie op te rig. Prof Anita Michel, van die Department Veeartsenykunde aan die Universiteit Pretoria het ons breedvoerig ingelig omtrent die voëlgriepprobleem. Die vergadering is afgesluit met 'n gesellige bring en braai. Pap, sous, slaai, koffie en tee is deur Johan en Danel verskaf.

Moreletakloof NR: 4 November 2017

Ses A-ringers, 'n PhD-student van Tukkies, Kyle LLOYD, vier laerskoolkinders, Yolandie, Zak en Jaco van Anton van Wouw LS, Jandré Verster van Bronberg Akademie, Jeannie du Plessis, Vriende van Moreletakloof NR, verskeie besoekers en BLNG klubdele het die baie lekker klubring-sessie bygewoon. Twee potensiële ringers, Gerald en Wanda Meyer, het ook entoesiasies deelgeneem aan die ringaktiwiteite. Die groep het 346 voëls gevang waarvan 26 hervangste was (7.5%). Oulike spesies is gevang: Diederikkie, Hoephoep, Hofsanger (migreer vanaf Europa), Swartbandlangstertjie en Rooivlerktjagra [Diederick Cuckoo, African Hoopoe, Willow Warbler, Black-chested Prinia, Brown-crowned Tchagra].

Pongola: 17–19 November 2017

Vier A-ringers, Martin en Paula Steyn, Elba Swart, en Marié Ueckermann het 'n lekker

Ons het die oujaar afgesluit by die Voortrekker Monument met 'n worsbraai na die ring op 30 Desember. V.l.n.r. is Janine Goosen, Frik du Plooy, Paula Steyn (braaier) en Ig Viljoen.



Martin Steyn

ringnaweek in Pongola geniet. Hulle het 333 voëls gevang en gering, waarvan 56 verskillende spesies was – 'n baie suksesvolle naweek. Interessante spesies is soos volg: Witborsduifie, Rooiwangtinkinkie, Rooiassie, Afrikaanse Kwartel en Dikbekkanarie [Tambourine Dove, Red-faced Cisticola, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Common Quail, Brimstone Canary].

Bushtrails: 24–26 November 2017

Vier A-ringers – Paula, Martin, Elba en Marie – het die naweek by Bushtrails naby Magaliesburg gering. Hulle het 94 (28 spesies) voëls gevang waarvan 22 hervangste was (23.4%). Oulike spesies was: Gestreepte Koester, Gevlekte Ooruil, Luitinkinkie en Rooikeelflap [Striped Pipit, Spotted Eagle-Owl, Lazy Cisticola, Red-collared Widowbird].

Rietvlei NR (Lapa): 2 Desember 2017

Dertien A-ringers, twee C-ringers, drie TUT Natuurbewaringstudente (Jana, Angela en Simone) en drie BLNG-klubdele (Sean Leather en sy vrou, en Arista Fourie) het die ringsessie bygewoon. Ons het 387 voëls gevang, waarvan drie hervangste was. Witkoppies se vlei was onder water; gevolglik het ons by die groot lapa gaan nette opsit. Oulike spesies was: Diederikkie, Kuifkopvisvanger, Witkeel- en Tuinsanger, asook 'n Hofsvanger [Diderick Cuckoo, Malachite Kingfisher, Common Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Willow

Warbler]. Die oorgrote meerderheid was Swartkeelgeelvinke [Southern Masked-Weaver]. In so 'n geval sal die meer ervare ringers by die net gaan staan met 'n tang en ringe, en dan net mannetjies of wyfies ring en dan laat gaan. Die Engelse noem dit 'ring en fling'.

Hans Hoheisen, Orpen: 5–11 Desember 2017

Agt ringers – Anita, Sascha, Frik, Wanda, Paula, Martin, Marie en Johan en Danel Muller – het 'n paar ringdae by Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Centre by Orpenhek geniet. Ons het 127 voëls gevang waarvan 18 hervangste was. Besondere voëls: Bosveldkwarteltjie, Goudstert- en Kardinaalsspeg, Bosveld- en Dwergruisvanger, Waaiertertvlieëvanger en Europese Byvreter [Small Buttonquail, Golden-tailed and Cardinal Woodpecker, Woodland Kingfisher, African Pygmy-Kingfisher, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, European Bee-eater]. Ses oorsese veeartsenykunde-studente van Nederland en Duitsland het saam met ons gekuier en baie belanggestel in wat ons doen. Hulle was Elwin Oldenborgh, Sophie van Rossem, Lisa Buren, Charlotte Glodvi, Clara Shubert en Jesse Gosker.

Teal & Trout Country Estate, Dullstroom: 12–18 Desember 2017

Vier A-ringers, Chris, Julian, Wanda en Frik, het saam met die familie nette opgesit by Finnagary se laagwaterbruggetjie. Ons het 113

voëls gevang. Spesiale voëls was: Witkeel-, Europese - en Grootstreepswaels, Afrikaanse Oewerswael, Bokmakierie en Kortstertflap [White-throated, Barn and Greater Striped Swallow, Brown-throated Martin, Bokmakierie and Fan-tailed Widowbird].

Voortrekkermomument: 30 Desember 2017

Dertien ringers het vir oulaas in 2017 op Saterdag 30 Desember 2017 vroeg

opgestaan vir 'n baie lekker gesellige ringsesie en 'n lekker boereworsrol. Ons het 155 voëls gevang waarvan 19 hervangste was (12.3%). Spesies wat uitgestaan het was Streepkopkanarie, Diederikkie, Europese Byvreter, Gevlekte Lyster, Hoephoep en Hofsanger [Streaky-headed Seedeater, Diderick Cuckoo, European Bee-eater, Groundscraper Thrush, Hoopoe, Willow Warbler]. 🐦

Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver longevity and predation record

H. Dieter Oschadleus

Most weavers are common and thus easy to catch in large numbers. Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers [Buffelwewer] are harder to catch with only 813 having been ringed (and 29 recaptured, 4 recovered) over the past 70 years in southern Africa. Previously the longevity record for this species was a mere 4 years (Ring 5H17931).

On Women's Day 2016 (9 August) Renette Opperman heard a bird distress scream at Wolfhuiskraal Farm, north of Pretoria. Looking outside she saw a Pearl-spotted Owlet [Witkoluil] perched on top of a Buffalo-weaver on the ground (below a Buffalo-weaver colony in the farm garden). She disturbed the owl but the weaver was dead upon inspection. It had Ring D55851, which had been put on this bird, an adult female, by Frik du Plooy on 21 October 2006. The elapsed time and new longevity record for this weaver is 9 years, 9 months and 25 days.

A high proportion of Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers have been ringed at Wolfhuiskraal (14.5%). There have been 3 recaptures but these were within 2 months of ringing.

This is the first time that the Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver has been recorded as a prey item of the Pearl-spotted Owlet. Roberts 7 notes "Eats mainly arthropods (especially



Dieter Oschadleus

Buffalo-weaver colony at Wolfhuiskraal

grasshoppers, crickets, solifugids, beetles, harvester termites and termite alates), but has large, strong feet and also hunts small vertebrates (rodents, bats, lizards, snakes, frogs and birds up to size of Cape Turtle-Dove)." Under the dove text, Roberts 7 notes "Attacked, but not killed by Pearl-spotted Owlet." The average mass of a female Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver is 71g, substantially smaller than the mass of Cape Turtle-Doves [Gewone Tortelduif]

(95–202 g), while the average mass of the owl is 67 g for males and 98 g for females (Roberts 7).

Reference

Roberts 7: Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, and Ryan PG (eds) (2005). *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa* (7th edn). Black Eagle Publishing, Cape Town



Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver/Buffelwewer

The Southern African Bird Atlas Project – monitoring into the future

Following the financial difficulties at the ADU in 2017, there has been concern about the future of SABAP2 and other important citizen science projects managed by the ADU. Fortunately, funding has been secured to maintain the core data capture and analysis processes for most ADU projects for the next two years through an agreement between SANBI and the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, with support from the Department of Environment Affairs. This sees Michael Brooks and René Navarro move to the Fitz staff complement, although they will continue to work closely with the remaining ADU staff. We will use this breathing space to secure additional funding to ensure that SABAP continues indefinitely, because it plays a crucial role to assess changes to biodiversity across South Africa.

A new SABAP2 steering committee has been set up to oversee the project, with representatives from the main stakeholders: SANBI (Andrew Skowno), BLSA (Mark Anderson, Ernst Retief and Hanneline Smit-Robinson), BirdLasser (Henk Nel) and the Fitztitute (Peter Ryan, Robert Thomson and Michael Brooks),

as well as representatives from core data users (Res Altwegg, SEEC, and Chevonne Reynolds, Wits) and the Regional Atlassing Committees. Les Underhill is focusing his energies on growing bird atlases across the rest of Africa under the umbrella of BirdMAP. This is already seeing considerable progress, with atlas projects blossoming in Kenya and Nigeria.

We want to assure everyone involved in SABAP2 that the project is in good hands. A new website and streamlined data engine will be launched in May 2018, making it even easier to access and upload your data, giving more options to view and interact with species distributions, and to extract data for use in research. Improved tools for Regional Atlas Committees will allow more efficient record vetting and data editing.

With your ongoing support, SABAP2 will continue to grow. 2017 saw a record number of atlas cards being submitted, from the largest ever number of pentads – thanks in no small part due to the BirdLasser revolution. Please continue to support SABAP, particularly by contributing full protocol cards from poorly atlased regions.

The SABAP2 Steering Committee



<http://sabap2.adu.org.za/index.php>

The changing face of the ADU

Dear Citizen Scientists

Usually, when academics retire, whatever research groupings they have built up through the decades have usually disappeared at the same time. UCT, and in particular the Dean of Science, Professor Anton le Roex, have recognized that the ADU and its projects have a value that transcends the university, and are in the national interest.

The ADU's largest single financial supporter was SANBI and our contract with them ended in March this year. We can all be hugely grateful for the disproportionate investment SANBI made in ADU projects, over many years. For example, SABAP2 has lasted far longer than originally envisaged.

We have tried hard to fill the funding gap. For example, most of you would have received appeals from UCT's Development Office, the official UCT fundraising section. Unfortunately, we were not successful. The ADU is self-funded and we have spent the past 26 years raising funds to keep projects going. This year has been especially difficult; these are challenging economic times.

Instead of closing the ADU's projects down completely, UCT has made a plan to ensure that they continue. The posts of Michael Brooks and René Navarro will continue next year, but hosted in the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. The actual details of how projects will operate are still being sorted out. As soon as this is clear, we will email all our citizen scientists again. We are aiming at as seamless a continuation as possible, but there will be some changes.

Due to insufficient funding, it has not been possible to keep the post of Dieter Oschadleus, and as he informed the bird ringing community, his last day of service will be the end of January 2018. Dieter took SAFRING from the mainframe age into the information age, and has made a massive contribution to bird ringing in South Africa, and in fact in Africa as a whole. In the circumstances, we are pleased that the FitzPatrick Institute will host SAFRING, and that Robert Thomson will be the academic leader.

My own position is that I have been appointed as Senior Research Scholar for a further three years, to the end of 2020. The idea is that I will retain a level of involvement in the projects, but I will not be the person ultimately responsible for them. I am hugely grateful to Peter Ryan, Director of the FitzPatrick Institute, for taking this on, and will give him, and the projects, the support I can over the next three years.

The most important projects that will continue to be driven by the ADU include the Odonata Project, funded by the JRS Biodiversity Foundation, *Biodiversity Observations*, and the EarthWatch SA Penguins Project on Robben Island. There are continuing postgraduate students, and also new ones.

We thank all of our Citizen Scientists for their support. Please continue to support the projects; they play a critical role in the welfare of our biodiversity. Please be patient with us as we work through the transition.

Les Underhill
November 2017

Monitoring heronries for HeronryMAP-Africa

Doug Harebottle

In 2014, a citizen science project was launched to start mapping and recording the status of breeding sites of various colonial waterbirds such as African Sacred Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Reed Cormorant, White-breasted Cormorant, Grey Heron, Black-headed Heron, Western Cattle Egret, African Spoonbill and Black-crowned Night-Heron [Skoorsteenveër, Glansibis, Rietduiker, Witborsduiker, Bloureier, Swartkopreier, Veereier, Lepelaar, Gewone Nagreier]. The main reason behind the project stemmed from limited and often outdated information on these sites, which are the important 'breeding factories' for these species. Commonly referred to as 'heronries' (because they are usually dominated by herons), these sites are a hive of activity during the breeding season with species vying for space and mates, and it is indeed a spectacle to watch the colony develop and the chicks grow and eventually fledge.

Some of the questions we are hoping to address in the project include aspects such as: how are species distributed through the landscape, how many sites are protected, how successful are the colonies, and what are the major threats to these sites? Often heronries come into conflict with man due to disturbance from noise and pungent smells, or in some cases bird strikes when located near to airports. In some cases colonies are persecuted through destruction of nests, killing chicks or cutting down 'breeding trees'. By gathering all relevant information future conservation strategies can be formulated and mitigation measures employed to secure these sites into the future.

You can help make a contribution to HeronryMAP by submitting relevant information when you find a colony of breeding ibises, cormorants, herons, etc. Even if you submit data for a site that is already registered that is fine. In fact, the ideal situation would be to revisit the site once a month so that we can track the progress of the colony, but if this is not



possible then just do what you can and what is feasible. The important information that is required is as follows:

- Date (you observed the colony)
- Time (hh:mm)
- Coordinates (GPS reading, or you can send a Google placemark)
- Species present
- Estimated no. of active nests for each species
- Colony location (trees on an island, trees on water's edge, trees on a road in a town, etc.)
- Is the site protected? (Is it in a nature reserve or on private land?)
- Have the birds used this site previously? (Y/N)
- Are you aware of any conflict issues (cutting down of trees, removal of nests/eggs/chicks, etc.)? If so, please provide details.

Please send your heronry information to Dr Doug Harebottle, doug.harebottle@spu.ac.za or Tel. 053 4910188.

If you use BirdLasser there is a HeronryMap 'cause' and once you activate this (Settings → Causes) you can add details from a heronry by logging any of the species present. When doing this you should get additional fields to complete. You can use the 'Notes' field to add any extra information (e.g. conflict issues, etc.).

I look forward to receiving your observations. 🐦

Grysneushoringvoëls broei in my tuin

Marina Venter

Verlede jaar net voor Oktober het 'n broei-paar Grysneushoringvoëls [African Grey Hornbill] hul in my tuin kom tuismaak. Hulle

het met ywer begin om die moontlikheid van 'n nes te ondersoek. En dit het vir my 'n wonderlike geleentheid gebied om hul te begin waarneem. Ek het een van die gekoopte keëls in my tuin waarin Kuifkophoutkappers [Crested Barbet] die vorige seisoen in gebroei het. Die feit dat hulle die spesifieke keël gekies het, het my verwagting oortref. Ek kon glad nie glo dat die wyfie daarbinne kon inkom en toegemessel word vir die duur van die broeitydperk nie. Sy was vir 'n tydperk van ongeveer 2 maande totaal afhanklik van die mannetjie om haar te voer. Sy toegewydheid het my met bewondering vir hom gevul – en ook die wyfie se totale oorgawe van afhanklikheid van hom in die tydperk.

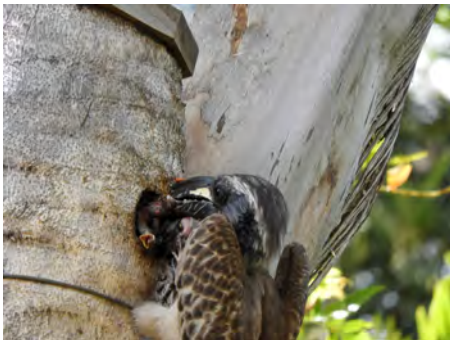


All photos: Marina Venter

Op 'n dag, het ek geweet die kuiken/s moet uitgebroei wees. Die mannetjie se voer-intensiteit het vermeerder en hy het in verbasende tydperke van minute die kos aangedra. Ek was verbaas om die grootte van die kos te sien wat hy aangedra het. Dooie muise en ook ander klein voëltjies wat hy uit neste moes gaan steel het. Soms was dié kos te groot. Dan het hy dit eers teen 'n boomtak kom fyn kap voor hy dit weer vir die nes aangebied het. En die hoeveelheid insekte wat hy aangedra het, het my in verstomming vir die voedselketting gelaat.

En toe op 'n dag, het ek die wyfie buite die 'hok' gewaar, en met opwinding die verskyning van 'n kuiken begin verwag. Maar, ek moes baie lank wag vir die geleentheid om 'n goeie foto te kon neem. Die dag na ek die foto van die kuiken geneem het, het hy spoorloos 'verdwyn'. Die voeding by die nes het aangegaan maar ek kon glad nie weer die kuiken waarneem of sien

dat die kos wat aangebied word geneem word nie. Trouens ek kon waarneem dat die kos nie geneem word nie. My kommer oor die kuiken het toegeneem. Na twee weke het ek begin vrees dat die loerie hom dalk uit sy nes kom steel het. En toe, skielik op 'n dag, het die ouers hom vir my kom 'wys'. My vreugde was groot om hulle as 'n 'gesin' te ervaar.



All photos Marina Venter

Die kuiken het groot geword en ek sien hom nog soms hier by die ouers. En tans wil dit vir my lyk asof die ouers weer daaraan dink om te begin broei. Sover ek kon waarom was daar vir hulle net een kuiken.

Hulle is sku voëls maar is my teenwoordigheid gewoon. Hulle 'klop' gereeld aan my ruit om kos te bedel (ek sit soms vir hulle neute uit wat hul gulsig kom haal), en as my venster oop is, kom hul soms in. 🐦

A swift's fight for flight

Jenny Bester

As Honorary Officers working at a campground in the Drakensberg we are often treated to an offering of a fledgling clutched in the hand of a child. As gently as possible we explain that the parent will probably feed it if it is returned to the place where it was found.

On this occasion, early in January, there was confusion as to where a juvenile Alpine Swift [Witpenswindswael] (*Tachymartus melba*) was found, so we kept it in the shade of a Cape Holly outside of the office. Initially it had to be protected from attacks by a pair of Red-winged Starlings but very soon became mobile. Lacking legs sufficiently strong for walking, it began to shuffle along using its wings and legs to propel it forwards. It found a hiding place in the shade of wild irises near the bird bath and the starlings lost interest. The following day we saw it shuffle out of its hiding place and then return. This happened several times during the day.

It was decided to take it to a rehabilitation centre in Pietermaritzburg. However, when we put the bird into a cardboard box for transport it objected strongly. So we put it on the roof of the office thinking that it was strong enough to fly and that the elevation might help it to take flight. It shuffled to the brink of the roof and then fell to the ground with a resounding thump. A few minutes later it shuffled back into its hiding place.

The following day we were puzzled as there was no sign of it. Eventually we found it in the crook of two branches of the Cape Holly tree. Later we saw it again, shuffling along the

ground, presumably to catch insects. It became stronger and stronger...

Then came the moment when we saw the bird climbing up the trunk of the tree.

It appeared to climb using its beak and legs. It eventually climbed out of sight and not much later we heard a flurry and a 'thunk' as it hit the ground. We assumed it was trying to fly. It continued this exercise throughout the day and became so proficient at climbing the tree that it looked more like a rat than a bird! At dusk it disappeared up the tree and the following morning had disappeared, hopefully to join its brethren in the sky.

We wondered whether this was a common occurrence. The will to adapt and survive was one of the most amazing things we have ever seen! 🐦



Amanda Bester

South America: Amazon Rainforest

Ron Searle

My third and final destination in a three-week birding/mammal-watching trip to South America, was a 6-day visit to the Amazon Rainforest in the far north of Mato Grosso state in Brazil, at the confluence of the Cristalino and Teles Pires Rivers, tributaries of the massive *Tapajós* River, itself a tributary of the mighty Amazon.

A short flight from Cuiabá to Alta Floresta, the nearest town, ended in total chaos at the manually-operated baggage collection facility. Surprisingly I managed to retrieve my luggage and was warmly welcomed by staff representatives of the Cristalino Jungle Lodge, and then transported to the banks of the Teles Pires River where we boarded motorised boats for the short journey up the Cristalino River to the lodge.

A welcoming family of three Giant River Otters (parents plus juvenile) met us at the wooden pier of the Lodge, a good omen for our birding which got off to a flying start with a roosting, beetle-browed Crested Owl observed in the grounds of the lodge. Recognised by birders world-wide as one of the finest birding destinations in the world, the Cristalino Lodge, conceived of by the tireless efforts of Vitória Da Riva Carvalho and her family 15 years ago, offers visitors 20 kilometres of trails through a variety of pristine forest types, two 50 metre high observation towers with privileged views of the surrounding forest canopy (at 25 to 35 metres), and a fleet of motorised boats with experienced guides to assist visitors to spot the mammals and birdlife on the 60 to 100 metre wide river and along the forest trails. Almost 600 bird species, 30% of the total number of bird species recorded in Brazil, have been listed, in an area of 1 200 square kilometres straddling the Teles Pires and including the Cristalino Lodge, with new species still regularly being added.

All too quickly the days flew by as we birded the trails, searched the river banks

and climbed the two observation towers for the numerous mammal/bird targets each member of our group had set for themselves. Noteworthy sightings included a mother and calf of the totally bizarre-looking Brazilian Tapir, which can weigh up to 250 kilograms; both fabulous-looking Agami and quaint-looking Zig-zag Herons; a small family of surprisingly active Hoatzins; Razor-billed Curassow; Cryptic Forest Falcon; a large gathering of resting Capybaras, the world's largest rodent (up to



Agami Heron

Sandy Sutherland



Zig-zag Heron

Sandy Sutherland



Black-spotted Bare-eye

65 kilograms); and large numbers of terrapins basking on the larger rocks protruding from the waters of the river.

The Hoatzin (60 centimetres in length), another of the birds listed and described in David Chandler and Dominic Couzens' book *100 Birds To See Before You Die*, has rather unkempt plumage, starring eyes set in blue skin with a wild-looking crest 4 to 8 centimetres in length, giving the bird a startled and curious appearance, but very much in line with its strange lifestyle. Possessing rather poor flight capability coupled with its inability to walk or swim, ensures that the Hoatzin is a sedentary bird. They inhabit the thick foliage of trees and vines clambering clumsily in their search for their preferred diet of leaves and buds from in excess of 50 plant species. Accordingly, it is not surprising to discover that the digestive process of the Hoatzin is unique amongst birds. Whereas with most birds, digestion takes place at some distance along the alimentary tract, the Hoatzin deals with its vegetarian intake at the front-end of their gut. Food ferments in the bird's crop and adjacent oesophagus, both muscular processors taking up to 2 days to complete the digestion task. Its 'fermentation vessel' is so large and heavy that it limits the size of its sternum and consequently also the size of its flight muscles, accounting for its poor flight performance. It also results in the bird emitting

a musky odour akin to fresh cow manure and the Guyanans' name 'stinking pheasant'. Not surprisingly the breeding behaviour of the species is likewise unusual and youngsters have a survival strategy which includes plunging into the river below its nest and swimming, sometimes under water, to escape predators, before clambering out onto the foliage of overhanging trees or vines, using two claws located on the elbow of each wing to assist them in making their way to safety.

Other notable bird sightings included Red-fan Parrot, Kawall's Amazon, Paradise Jacamar, Tooth-billed Wren, Gould's Toucanet, Alta Floresta Antpitta, screeching White-bellied Parrots, and canopy specialties, observed from the two towers, such as vivid Pompadour and Spangled Cotinga, Bare-necked Fruitcrow and a kaleidoscope of colourful tanagers and parrots.

The heat and humidity were largely responsible for determining our daily routine of trail walking, boat excursions on the river and visits to the observation towers. And the possibility of spotting a Harpy Eagle, one of the most sought-after birds in the world, guaranteed a daily visit to the towers, unfortunately in vain, with a 4-hour break at mid-day because of the intense heat. Unbeknown to us, a honeymoon couple from Kuwait, who had accompanied our group to Cristalino Lodge on the first day, were not prepared to accept the shut-down each evening at 20:00 of the generators and hence overhead fans in the rooms, and accordingly persuaded lodge management to keep the generators and fans on 24/7, thereby providing considerable relief from the heat for all lodge occupants for the duration of our stay.

A long walk on Ariosto Island in the Teles Pires River produced a third bird species described in the Chandler/Couzens book, the Amazonian Umbrellabird. Listed no doubt for its rather absurd appearance, the Umbrellabird is the largest of the South American cotinga family, being 50 centimetres in length and weighing up to 500 grams. Largely black in colour, both male and female sport an umbrella-like overhanging fringe of plumes as well as a black wattle, 15 centimetres long in the males,

which hangs from the chest area of the bird. Males of the species gather at leks to display their wares with up to 6 males present at a time, 10 to 25 metres up a tree. Lekking is both visual and vocal, the wattle of the male being inflated and apparently responsible for the emission by the males of a booming sound likened to far-off cattle and heard from a considerable distance.

On the final day, a walk in the forest at dusk to an artificial waterhole produced a cracking

Black-spotted Bare-eye, a bird more commonly associated with ant swarms. This final leg of my trip added an additional 142 species and 50 lifers resulting in a final overall trip tally of 520 bird species, of which 229 were lifers, and 27 mammals (23 lifers).

An overnight stop at a hotel in Cuiabá in transit to São Paulo concluded, what was for me, one of the most memorable and enjoyable trips of a lifetime. 🐦

Ons ervaring op Daydream Island, sentraalkus van Australië, waar Sikloon Debbie ons vasgetrek het

Pieter Heslinga

Joëlna en ek het gedurende Maart 2017 vir haar skoonsuster in Sydney, Australië, gaan kuier. Haar broer en skoonsuster het 17 jaar gelede soontoe verhuis. Boetie is ongelukkig in 2009 oorlede en ons het besluit om bietjie vir skoonsus te gaan kuier. Ons besluit toe om ook sommer die ooskus van Australië te gaan besoek, met die hoogtepunt om na die Great Barrier Reef by Cairns te gaan kyk, en bespreek 'n bustoer daarvoor. Die weer was van die begin af baie reënerig, maar dit het nie ons geesdrif gedemp nie en ons het die kuier en die toer baie geniet.

Tot op die dag toe ons 'n paar dae op

Daydream Island sou oorbly. Ons vertrek Saterdag 25 Maart die middag met 'n ferrie van Airlie Beach na Daydream Island toe. Die hotel is die enigste ontwikkeling op die eiland. Ons was baie opgewonde oor die paar dae wat ons op die eiland sou deurbring, die woude wat ons gaan deurloop en die riuwe wat ons gaan besoek. Ons skrik groot toe ons dieselfde aand nog meegedeel word dat Sikloon Debbie, wat toe reeds in aantog was, haar rigting verander het en reg op Daydream Island afpyl, soveel so dat die see reeds te ontstuimig was om ons dieselfde dag met die ferrie te kon terug neem vasteland toe.



Pieter Heslinga

Bush Stone-curlew



Pieter Heslinga

Ons gaan stap in die woude

Pieter Hestinga



Die verwoeste woud

Die volgende oggend kon ons nog lekker ontbyt geniet en in die tuine rondloop. Ons sien 'n pragtige Bush Stone-Curlew – lyk soos ons dikkoppe. Later gaan stap ons in die woude. Fantasties! Die hotelowerhede hou ons gedurig op hoogte met betrekking tot Sikloon Debbie. Dis nou finaal, die sikloon is reguit op pad na die eiland en sal 'n Gradering 4 bereik wanneer dit die eiland tref. Die nag breek 'n woeste wind uit en dit begin reën. Ons mag nie uit ons kamers gaan nie en vroeg die volgende oggend lewer hulle kospakkies by ons deur af. Die wind het die hele dag verskriklik gewaai, 240 kilometer per uur. Later het ons gehoor dat 1.2 meter reën geval het. Die wind waai en dit reën ook die volgende dag en die dag daarna.

Alles was verwoes – die pragtige hotel, die pragtige strand, die pragtige woud. Ons kry 'n pragtige Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in een van die palmbome sit, en kan nie glo hoe hierdie voël die storm oorlewe het nie. Ons is van die



Pieter Hestinga

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

buitewêreld afgesny en ons kos en water word gerantsoeneer. Watertoevoer was af, selfoon en Internet was af, en later ook die krag. Die jetty het weggespoel en niemand kon ons kom haal nie. Alles in chaos. Die hotel se kos en water was op en ons moes dringend van die eiland verwyder word.

Ons was 5 dae op die eiland, tot die Donderdag 30 Maart, voor ons met Australiese Vloot-begeleiding deur 'n privaat ferrie opgepik is. Eers na Hamilton Island toe en daarna met 'n gehuurde vliegtuig na Cairns toe. Ons toer was verby en by Cairns aangekom het elkeen gespook om reisplanne aan te pas. Gelukkig was ons almal ongedeerd.

Ons toerplanne het so uitgewerk dat ons nog Melbourne toe kon vlieg en 'n verdere 3 dae daar kon deurbring voor ons moes terug huis toe. Ons sal ons Australië vakansie nooit vergeet nie, en in die besonder ons ervaring van Daydream Island wat ons moeilik kan oortel. 🐦

DONATIONS (October 2017 – January 2018)

Once again, a sincere thank you for your generous donations. Your contributions help us to support bird conservation projects, and are greatly appreciated.

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

André Marx; Kurt Zvilavec; Dr Anton Ackerman; Anand Bauchoo; Prof Riel Franzsen; Proffie Meyer; Leon Lötter; Martie Malan; Dup du Plessis; Eric & Isabel Rycroft; Heidi Muller; Estelle de Jong

The hidden treasures of St Lucia, 5 – 11 September 2017

Neithard Graf von Dürckheim

It is often very pleasant to re-visit areas in this beautiful land which one hasn't been to for some time and just to re-connect with the environment and remember some of the pleasant experiences one has had. We were in St Lucia sometime back in 2006, a long time ago. I still remember those vast, flat and empty beaches with just a few fishermen standing patiently at water's edge, occasionally turning away at their fishing rod reel, only to look at an empty hook, and casting again to just stand and watch the waves again...

A few days break at St Lucia would just be what we needed in relaxation. Our 7-day trip started early on 5 September 2017, to miss the rush-hour traffic. Once we left the N4 we were in the Highveld proper and as far as the eye could see were grasslands and occasional hills. We stopped at Piet Retief for a good purpose: my brother had recommended that I should purchase some of the excellent smoked biltong at Berno's butchery. I requested a medium-sized piece of biltong, which Berno shredded for us. Getting back into the car we tasted it and shortly I was back in the butchery to purchase yet a bigger chunk – it was excellent!

We arrived in St Lucia early afternoon, booked into our apartment and went for a walk over the long boardwalk leading from the parking area in front of Sugarloaf Camp to the beach, and enjoyed the pleasing scenery while casually ticking some birds – Little Swift [Kleinwindswael] in large numbers, White-eared Barbets [Witoorhoutkapper] in the trees, Scarlet-chested Sunbirds [Rooibors-suikerbekkie]. The next day was spent birding and just relaxing on the vast stretches of beach ("sometimes I sits and I thinks, and sometimes I only just sits"). Golden Weavers [Goudwewer] were about; on the mudflats

where previously a break in the estuary led the river into the sea we spotted large numbers of Swift Terns [Geelbeksterretjie], with a host of waders around – Little Stints [Kleinstrandloper] in large numbers, Great White Pelicans [Witpelikaan] calmly swimming, Grey-headed Gull [Gryskopmeeu], White fronted Plovers [Vaalstrandkiewiet] darting around busily and Sanderlings on the beach dashing after the waves at water's edge, feeding where the waves had receded. Peace reigns!

The next day we had booked Themba (at an exorbitant price) the local guide to show us some special birds of the area which had eluded us before. We left shortly after 06:00 and drove back to Mtubatuba and onto the N2 highway for about 80 km, turning off on the Sodwana Road and heading east through small villages with thorn scrub, goats and many children. We drove on little tracks heading around the northern tip of False Bay and down into the Nibela Peninsula. The area was marshy – the soil deep dark clay and with very short grass. We stopped the car and walked a distance of possibly 200 – 300 m and there they



The boardwalk

Neithard Graf von Dürckheim

Neilhard Graf von Dürckheim



Sooty Tern/Roetsterretjie

Neilhard Graf von Dürckheim



Rosy-throated Longclaw/Rooskeelkalkoentjie

were (!) a number of Rosy-throated Longclaws [Rooskeelkalkoentjie], not calling but very active – flying short bouts and running–stopping–running, landing on small soil mounds or on low vegetation. We took a good look through the binoculars and then I reached for my camera and took some pictures of this lifer. The Longclaws were very colourful and very pretty. I have to give credit to Themba – despite his high fees, he knows his birds and where to find them.

We returned to the N2 highway along another route, spotting Pink-throated Twinspot [Rooskeelkopsie], which we had already seen on a number of occasions, but it is always nice to see them again. We drove back in the direction of St. Lucia and a few kilometres before the village stopped at some vendors next to the road and entered a small patch

of vegetation with medium-sized shrubs, where we walked around a small area of only a few hectares. Here we found Grey Waxbill [Gryssysie] and I noticed the marked difference to the Cinderella Waxbill [Angolasysie] we had seen at Kunene River Lodge in Northern Namibia – the Grey Waxbill only has red on the rump, not on the flanks (as the Cinderella Waxbill does). I tried to take some pictures but I was shaking too much and could not zoom in properly and the Waxbills were very active and moving around.

After some 200 km of driving and the whole morning spent, we arrived back at our apartment, the ‘paid’ birding trip having ended.

That afternoon we drove to Sugarloaf Camp again (as on all other days) and I set up my spotting scope next to the parking area. I could again spot many Swift Terns and Little Stints as well as Grey Herons [Blouereier], Reed Cormorants [Rietduiker] and Darters [Slanghalsvoël], among others, but the Sooty Tern [Roetsterretjie] that Trevor Hardaker had reported on the SARBN was not to be seen. I saw some other birders on the far side of the lagoon. I packed my gear into the car and walked the boardwalk up to the sandy beach, turned right and walked across on top of the dunes, a measure taken to avoid being confronted by hippo. Coming down from the dunes towards the wetlands, my caution was justified, as I came across fresh tracks of two hippo (these animals can reach the frightening charging-speed of 36 km/h or 10 m/sec, and if they charge, nothing will stop them). I cautiously walked to the water’s edge on the wetlands. I now understood: the ‘island’ that hundreds of terns and other waders were perched on was obscured by high and dense reed-beds, blocking the view from the parking area where I had set up my scope earlier. The other two birders were there alright. The one asked me: “What is this worth to you?” and grinned. There was the Sooty Tern, perched on the ‘island’ next to many Swift Terns. LIFER! And a rare one at that. On the *Roberts VII* maps it is indicated as “rare and vagrant birds”. Over the days that followed I saw the Sooty Tern

daily and learnt to understand its behaviour. When it was not perched on the 'island' it would fly in with markedly slow wing-beats, not dip-dipping as frequently as the smaller terns and calling with a very pronounced far-hailing high-pitched *Treee-reee*.

Back in the parking area and surrounding scrub were many other birds: Bronze Mannikin [Gewone Fret] and Lesser Striped Swallow [Kleinstreepswael], Black-winged Stilt [Rooipoetelsie] and Pied Avocet [Bontelsie] on the island in front of us, as well as Common Tern [Gewone Sterretjie], Brown-hooded Kingfisher [Bruinkopvisvanger], Black Saw-wing [Swartsaagvlerkswael] and many more. Trumpeter Hornbill [Gewone Boskraai] were flying overhead calling with loud melancholy, and Golden-tailed Woodpecker [Goudstertspieg] was also vocal.

I must not forget our long walks on the wide and endless beaches – very flat and meeting with the waves very gradually. We walked for kilometers on end on the beach and enjoyed the peacefulness. Far apart were some fishermen, casting, holding their rods and staring out at the endless horizon with the waves ceaselessly rolling in. We sat in our chairs not far from where the last bit of the waves slowed down before slowly receding again and followed the fishermen's example – just looking out in the distance, where the sandy beach and the blue sky on the horizon meet...

The 9th of September was reserved for a trip to Cape Vidal, only 30 km away, along an excellent tar road through the game park. Lush vegetation greeted us in the park and we spotted some magnificent kudu bulls with their spiral head-gear. A number of birds also crossed our path: Natal Spurfowl, Brimstone Canary and Yellow-throated Longclaw [Natalese Fisant, Dikbekkanarie, Geelkeelkalkoentjie], to name but a few. We had left early as we had a mission in mind: find the Green Twinspot [Groenkolpensie]. We parked at Cape Vidal, overlooking the dunes and the beach protected by rock-barriers. It is a really pretty sight. Bathers were arriving, fishing boats were on the sea in the distance. We asked a local guide at



Heinhard Graf von Dürckheim

Green Twinspot/Groenkolpensie

his game-drive vehicle if he knew about Green Twinspot. Never heard of it... Hmmm. Some staff were hanging around, chatting. Green WHAT?

We were on our own. We had heard that the Green Twinspots may be in between the log cabins. We walked from one log cabin to the next, looking out for dripping taps and water dripping from piping. Busloads of young teenagers were noisily coming down from the furthest-most log cabins, entangled in a battle of survival against Vervet Monkeys which had set their sights on the snacks the young people were eating. Eventually we came to a log cabin standing in the shade of *Casuarina* trees. There was a dripping downpipe which had filled a little puddle next to the cabin with water. Here we spotted some Dark-capped Bulbuls [Swartoogtiptol] noisily bathing and drinking and a few Red-backed Mannikins [Roorugfret] joining in the fun. "WAIT, let's just stand and watch". Then some distance off in the shade, I saw the first Green Twinspot. LIFER! Males and the somewhat duller females came to the water puddle to drink and bathe. I stood next to a tree and took dead-rest against the trunk to stop the camera from shaking. The Green Twinspots were hopping on the ground and feeding all around the *Casuarina* trees. I studied two bird-books – *Roberts* stating "Food Mainly seeds of forest grasses, also beef-wood (*Casuarina*) tree seeds..." Aha!

I went back to the car, fetched our camping chairs, and we sat down and just waited

for photo opportunities... There were many birds around – Southern Boubou [Suidelike Waterfiskaal], Red-capped Robin-Chat [Nataljanfrederik] (I still prefer the old name, Natal Robin), Klaas's Cuckoo [Meitjie] was calling, Crested Guineafowl [Kuifkoptarentaal] were issuing their stuttering call. When it got warmer, the birds dispersed and we went over the dunes to the Cape Vidal beach and proceeded on a long and pleasant walk. On the way we only met with one lone lady and three young chaps. Cape Vidal is really a most pleasant and pretty place.

Kathrin also had the desire to go on a boating trip up the lagoon, which we did the next day. We booked at the KZN-Wildlife offices and obtained a better price than the commercial operators. We landed on the boat in between a group of French tourists who were engaging in lively and voluminous chattering. The noise

moved to the lower deck and died down when their lunch was served. We spotted some rafts/pods of hippo, some Nile Crocodiles and some birds. The guides on board did their best to explain all the wonders of St. Lucia to the tourists, but birding was not their strength – we saw a Purple Heron [Rooiereier] and they promptly called Goliath Heron [Reusereier] in all available languages; my softly uttered correction was overheard.

St. Lucia bears many opportunities; just outside the village they have some short walking trails through the coastal forest vegetation which also provides interesting birding. The village also sports two supermarkets and besides the normal shops also a variety of restaurants. There are a number of pleasant apartment blocks where one can stay in comfort. If you wish to relax and/or do some productive birding, St. Lucia can be recommended. 🐦

Namibiëtoer, September 2017, met Karoo Birding Safaris

Estelle Raath en Dudley Gradwell

Om 6:00 die Sondagoggend 10 September, na van die toerlede in 'n B&B in Kaapstad byeengekom het, het sewe van ons uit Kaapstad vertrek met 'n Quantum bussie en ons gidse, Japie en Ralie Claassen van Karoo Birding Safaris, op 'n intensiewe voëlkyktoer deur Namakwaland en Namibië. Daar was drie lede van BLNG, drie Kapenaars en 'n dame van Kanada saam op die toer. Die afstand afgelê was by die 6 500 km in die goed toegeruste bussie plus sleepwa. Wat wonderlik was, was dat ons elke dag een sitplek vorentoe of agtertoe geskuif het om in verskillende plekke te sit, en almal beurte gekry het om voor langs ons uitstekende en ervare toergids, Japie Claassen, of agter lanks sy vrou Ralie, te sit. Hulle kennis van voëls, plante, bome, insekte, geologie en die geskiedenis van Namibië is ongelooflik goed. Ralie se biblioteek, wat langs haar op die

sitplek was, het enige vrae beantwoord wat hulle nie geken het nie.

Ons het vinnig deur die Knersvlakte (met die snaakse ou termietsirkels) in Namakwaland gery en in Springbok kort vertoef voordat ons so 4 uur die middag deur die grenspos by Noord-Oewer (Violsdrif) gery het. Die eerste aand is by die Orange River Lodge deurgebring waar ons die Garipegglasogie [Orange River White-eye] in die tuin gesien het. Die dag het ook verskeie ander voëls opgelewer, soos jong Visarend [Fish Eagle], baie Grootrooivalke [Greater Kestrel], Bleeksingvalke [Pale Chanting Goshawk], Woestynspekvreter [Tractrac Chat], en Vaalbruinlewerik [Fawn-coloured Lark], en ons het die eerste paar Witkruisarende [Verreaux's Eagle], van 10 pare wat ons gesien het, aangeteken. 'n Spesiale voël vir baie van ons was ons eerste Woestynlewerik [Stark's Lark].



Dudley Grathwell

Woestynkorhaan/Rüppell's Korhaan, naby Sesriem Canyon

Dit was ongelooflik hoe vinnig Japie en Ralie veral die lewerikke kon sien en identifiseer. Op die oewer van die Oranjerivier het ons ook ons eerste Dubbelbandsandpatryse [Double-banded Sandgrouse] gesien, asook wild soos koedoes, gemsbokke, klipspringer, ens.

Die Maandag het ons gery na Aus en die Visrivier Kanjon en sien ook die Vaalkorhaan [Karoo Korhaan] en Bokmakierie. Ons slaap die nag by die Cansón Mountain Camp wat deel is van die Fish River Canyon Lodge. Die driegang aandete by die Lodge was iets besonder en party van die groep het die skaars Red Rock Rabbit gesien. Terwyl ons onder die sterrehemel geëet het, het 'n Donkernaguiltjie [Freckled Nightjar] laag oor ons koppe gevlieg.

Dinsdag 12 September, oppad na Aus en die Namibiëse wilde perde, het ons by Hoogstasie 'n vervalde steenoonnd en kalkbrander bekyk. Hierdie wilde perde is deur die Duitse weermag in die Eerste Wereldoorlog agtergelaat. Die dag lewer baie Versamelvoëls [Sociable Weavers], Edelvalk [Lanner Falcon], Dubbelbanddrawwertjies [Double-banded Coursers] en Bloukopdrawwertjies [Burchell's Courser] op vir ons groeiende lys. By die Naute Dam is watervoëls en ook windswaeltjies volop, Pelikane, eende, Witpenswindswael [Alpine Swift], Muiskleurwindswael [Bradfield's Swift], en Swartwindswael [African Black Swift]. Net voor die uitkykpunt vir die wilde perde (waar gelukkig twee perde by die watergat kom drink het en om die voertuie geloop het, nie so wild



Dudley Grathwell

Hererospekvreter/Herero Chat, Spreetshoogte

nie), het Japie vir ons vier of vyf opwindende Barlowlewerikke [Barlow's Lark] opgespoor – nog 'n 'lifer' vir die meeste van ons. By Klein Aus Vista Lodge is ons moeë en honger klomp die aand getrakteer met 'n heerlike ete wat gemsbok steaks en springbokbreë ingesluit het.

Die volgende oggend was ons bestemming Sossusvlei, en op pad soontoe is daar weer kort-kort drawwertjies opgemerk. Net drie van die groep het die 4x4 voertuie aangedurf om Sossusvlei aan te pak. Ten spyte van 'n warm stap in die woestyn en die los sand het die dooie bome en die wit droë sand die stap die moeite werd gemaak. Die res van die groep het piekniek gehou onder groot skaduweebome. 'n Witwanguil [Southern White-faced Scops-Owl] het hulle vir die volle drie ure bokant hulle koppe vermaak. Van Sossusvlei het ons gaan stap in die wonderlike Sesriem Kanjon en dan verder gery na die groot Hammerstein Lodge waar daar weer 'n heerlike ete vir ons gewag het. Die woestyn en berge se eindelose vlaktes het ons weer almal verstom. By die lodge was Rooiborslaksmanne [Crimson-breasted Shrike] in die tuine te sien, asook kanaries, oewerswaels en glansspreeus.

Donderdag 14 September is ons na Ababis Lodge toe met sy wonderlike tuin en swembad en nog 'n smaaklike driegang Duitse maaltyd. Op pad soontoe sien ons ons eerste Woestynkorhane [Rüppell's Korhaan], wat later soos rooibokke in die wildtuin voorgekom het. Die volgende dag het ons

Dudley Gradwell



Woestynspekvreter/Tractrac Chat, wit vorm, Spitskoppes

Dudley Gradwell



Kaalwangkatlagter/Bare-cheeked Babbler, Kunenerivier

die lang pad Swakopmund aangedurf via die Spreetshoogtepas. Aan die voet van die pas het Japie weereens verras met besondere kennis van die omgewing om ons direk na die Hererospekvreter [Herero Chat] te lei – weereens ‘n nuwe voël vir die meeste van ons. Daarna is ons verder deur die Namib-Naukluft Park waar die woestyn en berge se eindelose vlaktes ons weer almal verstom het. Die Kuisebrivier Kanjon, waar die twee Duitse geoloë gedurende die Tweede Wêreldoorlog vir meer as twee jaar weggekruip het (beskryf in die boek *Sheltering Desert*), is iets besonder. Die eerste Dwergvalkie [Pygmy Falcon] is gesien; drawwertjies en singvalke was volop. Langs die pad, na ‘n kort stappie in die woestyn, kon ons mooi voorbeelde van die

beroemde mannetjie en wyfie woestynplante (*Welwitschia*) bekyk en afneem. Soos ons Swakopmund genader het, het ‘n skielike koue seewind ons verras na die snikhete woestyn. Die aand het ons oor die Atlantiese Oseaan ‘n wonderlike sonsondergang gesien terwyl ons heerlike vars seekos genuttig het by die populêre Jetty Restaurant Tug.

Saterdag 16 September is ons na die bekende Duin 7 toe vir nog ‘n nostalgiese besoek vir een van ons groep om sy weermag-dae van 1965 te herleef. Die klim in gewone klere sonder volle army pak en stewels was baie makliker, ten spyte van die ouderdom, 50 jaar later. Vandaar is ons na Rooikopmyn en die woestyn en rivierbeddings in. Weereens soos ‘n regte ‘magician’, loop Japie direk op die skaars en beperkte Duinlewerik [Dune Lark] – nog ‘n ‘lifer’ vir ons almal. Na hierdie hoogtepunt het ons gedink die res van die dag gaan redelik vaal wees. Niemand kon die verrassing van die soutpanne en lagoon by Walvisbaai beskryf nie. Ons is gegroet met duisende, derduisende watervoëls sonder om ooit die voertuig te verlaat!!! Albei flaminksoorte, Kemphane [Ruff], Rooipoot- en Bontelsies [Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet], Drietostrandlopers [Sanderling], Krombekstrandlopers [Curlew Sandpipers], Ringnekstrandkiewiete, [Common Ringed Plover], Asiatiese Strandkiewiete [Caspian Plover], Geelborsstrandkiewiete [Kittlitz’s Plover], Vaalstrandkiewiete [White-fronted Plover], Rooibandstrandkiewiete [Chestnut-banded Plover], Driebandstrandkiewiete [Three-banded Plover], Reusesterretjies [Caspian Plover], Steenlopers [Ruddy Turnstone], Kleinwulpe [Common Whimbrel], Bandstertgriete [Bar-tailed Godwit] en ‘n minuut-lang kosvlug van die Damarasterretjie [Damara Tern] ens., ens., – te veel om alles te noem – ver oor die 20 of dalk 30 verskillende spesies en nog ‘lifers’ vir baie van ons. Noord van Swakopmund is ons by duisende Trekduikers [Cape Cormorant] verby wat op die guano stellasies broei, en ook in die woestyn in waar Japie ons ‘n klomp Namibewerikke [Gray’s Lark] wys.

Die Sondag is ons by die Henty’s Baai afrit verby na die ‘Moon Landscape’ gebied en dan

na Spitskoppen met die Vyfvingerhand klipformasie. Tydens ons middagete by Spitskoppen, behalwe die 'algemene' paar Witkruisarende op hulle nes, sien ons ook die Grystjeriktik [Layard's Tit-Babbler], nog 'n 'lifer' vir baie van ons.

Verder noordwaarts deur die Urongo Berge, Karibieb naby Usakos, het ons vir twee aande by die Albrechtshöhe Lodge tuisgegaan. Heerlike Duitse gasvryheid en kos was weereens die norm. Die volgende oggend naby die plaasdam en lekkende pype by die boorgat-tenk het ons stil-stil gaan sit en die swetterjoel klein pragvoëltjies dopgehou wat kom drink het. Swartwangsysies [Black-faced Waxbills], Koningblousysies [Violet-eared Waxbills], Gewone Melbas [Green-winged Pytilia], Rooirugstreepkoppies [Golden-breasted Buntings] het 'n pragvertoning van kleur opgedis. Tussenin was daar honderde Vaalstreepkoppies [Lark-like Buntings] wat ook hulle dors kom les het in die hitte. Op pad terug na die Lodge het ons 'n Kortstertlaksman [White-tailed Shrike] paartjie dopgehou. Rooiwangparkiete [Rosy-faced Lovebird] is ook gereeld gesien.

'n Lang 400 km reis is die Dinsdag aangepak maar ons is beloon met wonderlike besigtigings van die Kaokolangbeklewerik [Benguela Long-billed Lark] en die Ovamboswartmees [Carp's Tit] – weereens 'lifers' vir baie. Naby Kamanjab het ons tuisgegaan in die Oppi Koppie Lodge. In die tuine tussen die chalets sien ons beide die Kaalwang- [Bare-cheeked] en Witkatlagters [Southern Pied Babbler], en vroeg die volgende oggend op pad uit by die hek van die kamp het Japie die Gebande Sangers [Barred Wren-Warbler] opgespoor. Die 'lifer' lys het net langer geword.

Woensdag 20 September ry ons aan die westegrens van die Etosha Wildtuin verby, deur klein dorpie waar Japie ons gewaar-sku het oor foto's neem van die kaalbolyf Mahimba vroue met hulle rooi kleibedekte gesigte en rare haartooisels. Die pad na die Kunene Rivier het deur bosveld gegaan en pragtige besigtigings van die Bloupenspapegaaie [Rüppell's Parrot] en Bruinkeelbossanger [Burnt-necked Eremomela]. Voor ons by die Kunene River Lodge vir twee aande gekuier



Dudley Gradwell

Rooibekfisant/Red-billed Spurfowl, Waterberg Plateau Park



Dudley Gradwell

Watergat naby Okakuejo

het, het ons by die Dorslandtrekkermonument gestop – wonderlike en trotse burgers wat van die Kaapkolonie weggetrek het na Angola in 1880, en teruggekeer het in die 1920's na die destydse Suidwes-Afrika toe as gevolg van twiste tussen hulle en die Portugese regering oor, onder andere, taal en skole. Die kort tydjie by die Kunene River Lodge was 'n verblyf in die Paradys. Oorkant die groen oevers van die Kunene Rivier was Angola. Droogtes in die berge van die opvanggebiede in Angola het veroorsaak dat geen water oor die Ruacana Valle loop nie, en net een turbiene kan gebruik word by die Ruacana Dam. Dit is hartseer as ons dink dat dit dieselfde area is wat die Okavango Delta met water voorsien, en dit kan later ernstige gevolge hê vir die moerasse.



Bloukoppdrawwertjie/Burchell's Courser, Okakuejo

Die twee nagte in die Lodge was wonderlik en rustig. Drie lede van ons groep is vroeg die eerste oggend geneem na die unieke Zebra Mountains om die Angolajanfrederik [Angola Cave-chat] te soek. Die berge kry hulle naam van die streep effek van die swart rotse en bruin plantegroei wat in plekke voorkom. Van 'n afstand af lyk dit soos die vel van 'n zebra. Net twee van ons het die styl rotsklim aangedurf. Die klim was moeilik en balans was nodig op die opgehoopde deurmekaar rotse. Maar ons is beloon met twee besigtigings van dié besondere janfrederik. Die twee aparte voëls wou nie mooi saamspeel nie en het 'n redelike afstand van ons gehou. Maar dit bly 'n besondere ervaring om so iets te sien. Op pad terug, na 'n ontbyt in die veld, aan die voet van die berge het ons die Witborsjakkalsvoël [Augur Buzzard] lank dopgehou, en ook 'n klomp Angolasysies [Cinderella Waxbill] by 'n diep-uitgegrawe watergat in 'n droë rivierbedding. Drie besondere 'lifers' in een oggend wat die kostes van die spesiale uitstappie beslis die moeite werd gemaak het!!! Terwyl ons gekyk het na die sisyse het donkies ook by ons onder die boom kom skaduwee soek. Hulle was vol Geelbekrenostervoëls [Yellow-billed Oxpeckers]. Die res van die groep het die dag by die Lodge gerus, geswem en voëls gekyk. Die kamp was vol Rooistertmôrelysters [Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush], nog 'n 'lifer', en ook die witkop en -nek subspesie van die Rooikeelfisant [Red-necked Spurfowl] wat ook 'n swart pens

het. Laatmiddag is ons op 'n 'Sundowner Cruise' op die Kunene uit waar ons baie watervoëls, asook die Geelwewer [African Golden Weaver] in die riete, die Bruin- [Chestnut Weaver] en Bruinkeelwewer [Southern Brown-throated Weaver] langs die rivier gesien. Tydens die bootrit het een van ons, op spesiale versoek, voet aan wal, aan die noordelike oewer van die rivier, in Angola gesit – sonder paspoort.

Vroeg die volgende oggend is ons in die donker daar weg, met heerlike ingepakte padkos van die Lodge, en by die Ruacana Dam verby na Etosha toe. Ons is by die Galton Hek in Etosha in en het binne minute die swartgesig Rooibok gevind, en daarna talle pragtige klein Damara Dikdikke. Orals in die park, by elke watergat, is ons by groot samedrommings van Hartlaub's bergebra, gewone sebras, elande, gemsbokke, springbokke, volstruise, ens., verby. By een watergat was daar 'n swartrenoster, olifante, sebras, gemsbokke, blouwildebeeste, kameelperde en Sekretarisvoëls in een kameraveld. Herinneringe wat nooit vergeet sal word nie! Die aand is ons by Dolomite Kamp inbespreek. Die nuwe kamp is pragtig bo op 'n koppie gebou, maar karre word nie toegelaat nie. Vanaf die parkeerterrein word ons en die bagasie deur 'n aangepaste gholffkarretjie vervoer na ontvangs toe. Maar vandaar moes almal na hulle chalets stap. Die verste chalets het die laaste energie uit sekere mense gehaal, maar die uitsig van elke chalet is asemrowend. Die wild kan van kilometers ver gesien word waar hulle na die watergat doer onder op die vlaktes aangestap kom. Die swembad met sundowners was 'n ware lafenis. Vroeg die volgende oggend is ons wakker gemaak met die brul van leeus. Vanaf die ontvangs area kon ons 'n familie leeus sien wat tussen die karre in die parkeerterrein rondloop. Later het ons agtergekom die jong leeutjies het lekker gespeel deur ons voertuig te spieëls en bande aan te val. By hierdie wonderlike kamp bo op die koppie kom die Klipfisante [Hartlaub's Spurfowl] elke aand slaap. Laat die middag en vroeg die oggend het ons hulle tussen die chalets mooi gesien. 'Lifers' nog steeds volop.

Die volgende twee dae het ons deur Etosha gery van wes na oos, 'n onsettende groot,

pragtige en indrukwekkende stuk aarde. Ons sitvlakke was deurgestamp op dele van die sinkplaatpad wat ernstige aandag nodig het. Die aand is ons inbespreek in Okakuejo kamp na 'n dag van talle watergate wat weer troppe wild en voëls opgelewer het. Die normale wild plus rooihartbeeste, hiënas wat 'n karkas in die water geëet het, swartrenosters en leeus is te siene gekry. In die wildtuin is Pienkbeklewerikke [Pink-billed Lark], Vlaktelewerikke [Spike-heeled Lark], Rooineklewerik [Rufous-naped Lark] en Sabotalewerikke [Sabota Lark] kort-kort opgemerk. Laat die middag is 'n paar Asiatische Strandkiewiete [Caspian Plover] naby die pad gesien en by die verligte watergat by die kamp is Nonnetjiesuile [Barn Owl], talle reiers en talle Kelkiewyne [Namaqua Sandgrouse] dopgehou.

Na Okakuejo het ons die pad na Namutoni aangepak al langs die Etosha Pan self. Die wit pan en gesig van diere in die dorre woestyn was wonderlik. 'Spook' olifante was volop, wat spierwit vertoon het na hulle modderbad in die sout water. Die dag is die Rooinekvalk [Red-necked Falcon] in 'n boom bokant die voertuig afgeneem en die Rooioorlangstertjie [Rufous-eared Warbler] het langs die pad kos gesoek. 'Lifers' weereens aan die orde van die dag. Na 'n kort stop by Namutoni is ons by die wildtuin uit weer na heerlike Duitse gasvryheid van die egpaar Sachse by hulle Lodge Sachsenheim. Die plan was om die Swartwangkatlagter [Black-faced Babbler] die volgende oggend te gaan soek. Die voëltjies het toe vroeg oggend ons kom soek en tussen die chalets baljaar. Japie het toe hulle neste opgespoor.

Maandag die 25ste het ons die lang pad Kaap toe begin, maar nog was ons verrassings nie verby nie. Kort-kort is by klipkoppies gestop om die Rotsvoël [Rockrunner] sonder sukses te soek. Ons net by twee interessante plekke aangedoen. Eers die misterieuse Lake Otjikotto wat tussen rotse en kranse 'n groot natuurlike gat vol water is. Die Duitse Weermag het by die 20 kanonne en gewere in die water weggegooi om te verhoed dat in die besit van die SA Weermag moes kom tydens die Tweede Wêreldoorlog. Die diep water met vele spelonke wat nog nie eers almal ondersoek is, is ook die



Duitby Gradwell

Spookolifant, Etosha

tuiste van 'n blinde vissie wat nêrens anders in die wêreld voorkom nie. Die tweede plek was naby Grootfontein om die wêreldbekende Hoba Meteoriet te bekyk. Dit is die grootste enkele meteoriet op ons planeet, wat 80 000 jaar gelede uit die lug geval het. Dit weeg 60 ton en om op die stuk rots te sit is 'n voorreg. Dit laat mens dink aan die wonderlike sonnestelsel waar ons bly. Die middag het ons by die Waterberg Plateau Park aangekom, waar ons by hulle Lodge geslaap het. Na party mense geswem het kon ons vanaf die chalet se stoep die son sien sak op die omliggende kranse. Tussen die chalets was talle klein Damara Dikdikke, dwergmuishonde en Groottrouphant [Purple Roller] te sien. Die ete is bedien in die ou Duitse Hospitaal wat gebou is deur die Duitse Weermag in die Duits-Herero oorlog in die 1800s. Die volgende oggend het ons die begrafplaas van die gesneuwelde Duitse soldate gaan besoek – netjies en nog steeds goed versorg. Tydens die stappie het ons weer 'n klomp Bloupenspapegaai [Rüppell's Parrot] en ook die Perskakelaar [Violet Wood-Hoopoe] gesien. Die Damararooibekneushoringvoël [Damara Red-billed Hornbill] met sy wit gesig het ook vir ons kom groet. 'Lifers, lifers' weereens.

Aan na Windhoek toe waar ons net suid van die stad by die stil en pragtige Windhoek Mountain Lodge ingeboek het. Na 'n kort blaaskans is ons deur Japie opgekommandeer die koppies agter die Lodge in, vir een laaste kans om die Rotsvoël [Rockrunner] te sien. Minder as 'n halfuur later, na op en af, heen en weer, en

siedaar, 'Eureka!', kry ons almal uiteindelik die Rotsvoël pragtig te sien. Wat 'n voorreg was dit nie. Japie jou doring!!!

Nog twee aande voor ons in die Kaap sou aankom is ons by Mariental, die Buracos Berge en vinnig by die Hardap dam verby – nog watervoëls in die riete onder die dam bekyk en by een van die spruite langs die pad tydens 'n eetstop kry ons die Goudsnip [Greater Painted-Snipe] en klomp Swaelstertbyvreter [Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters]. Die aand het ons geslaap by die Quiver Tree Lodge. Die middag het ons eers deur die Giants Playground gestap – massiewe opmekeer opgestapelde rotsformasies. Weliswaar, dit lyk of reuse hulle opgestapel het. Daarna terug na die voer van die semi-mak jagluiperde te gaan kyk. Toe na die Kokerboomwoud [Quiver Tree Forest]. Die interessante kokerbome staan tussen die rotse soos hare op 'n hond se rug. Die aand is afgesluit met heerlike skaapboud en soos al die ander aande is ons almal volmagies kamers toe. Die volgende oggend het swerms Rooiwangparkiete en ander voëls ons in die tuine verwelkom.

Ons vat die pad suidwaarts en weer is ons maklik deur die Noord-Oewer grenspos en na

die Springbok Hotel. Ons kamers was in die Ou Pastorie. Vir sekere mense op die toer was die 'lifers' nog nie verby nie, want na 'n uur of so se blaaskans is ons die berge om Upington in na die Orbicule Hill Monument. Die klipmonument is bekend vir die formasies van orbikulêre diorite [Orbicular Diorite], wat voorheen net bekend was in die Skandinawiese lande. Japie spoor die Kaneelborssanger [Cinnamon-breasted Warbler] ook op. Terwyl ons daar rondkyk het, het ons die Dassierotte met hulle lang sterte oor die klippe gesien verbyflits. Die ander diere wat vir ons baie interessant was, was Klein- en Klaasneusmuise. Die aand het ons 'n afskeidsete in die boere restaurant by die Springbok Hotel geniet, en is die volgende oggend via Klawer, Malmesbury, terug na Kaapstad toe, waar ons groep uiteengegaan het.

Twintig dae en 6 500 km se onvergeetlike opwinding, wonderlike voëls, diere, insekte, woestyn- en bergtonele, oop vlaktes, ruie bosse, koel riviere en die voorreg om al die kennis van geologie, geskiedenis, bome, plante, grasse en klippe van Japie en Ralie te geniet, was iets besonder. Dankie aan julle twee en aan al die groepslede wat die toer so fantasties gemaak het. 🐾

Twee eilande – en baie see

Salomi Louw

Mense van my ouderdom het seker almal ter plaatse grootgeword met stories oor die Anglo-Boereoorlog en die krygsgevangenes wat oorsee gestuur is. Toe Betsie tydens 'Flock at Sea 2017' praat oor haar besoek aan St Helena – en veral die feit dat die skeepvaart daarheen opgeskort gaan word – het ek besluit ek moet soontoe gaan al was my oupa in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) en nie in St Helena nie. Tuis het ek dadelik begin met beplanning en naleeswerk.

Die eerste beskikbare plek op die RMS St Helena was vir November 2017. Dié vragskip met 'n klompie kajuite neem, buiten brandstof,

alles wat op die eiland nodig is, tot selfs voertuie.

Met my kampeerwa val ek goed voor die tyd in die pad sodat ek 'n paar dae by Vanderkloofdam kan kampeer en ook in Prins Albert kan orby, en met die terugkeer Oos-Vrystaat langs ry. Dis my egter nie beskore nie: tussen Carletonville en Venterstad hou ek stil omdat die VW so erg skud en ek kan nie verder ry nie – 'n CV-joint het gebreek (ek weet nie wat dit doen nie en ook nie wat die Afrikaans daarvoor is nie). Vier uur later is ek en hy ingesleep by VW in Carltonville waar hulle alles probeer, maar uiteindelik sê 'n



Bassiaan/White-chinned Petrel



Wirebird



Atlantiese Geelneusalbatros/Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross



Java Sparrow

onderdeel moet uit Duitsland bestel word. Dis al laatmiddag en ek moet noodgedwonge in 'n gastehuis oorslaap, die volgende oggend terug na Pretoria, oorpak in 'n ander voertuig en direk Kaap toe ry.

Daar word ek betyds by die kaai afgelaai deur 'n susterskind. Vroeër het ek 'n versoek gerig aan die agentskap se bestuur om te vra dat, indien ek tydens die vaart sou sterf, hulle my ter see moet begrawe. Dit het groot opskudding veroorsaak! By die ontvangsaal wag die bestuurder en die skeepsdokter my in om my kondisie te bepaal; gelukkig was hulle tevrede – altans, voorlopig, want die skeepsdokter het spesiaal gereël dat ek by sy tafel sit (seker om my die heelyd onder oë te hou!). Nou hoor ons dat die vertrek vertraag is omdat hulle wag vir vrag uit Kanada wat moet saam sodat die Saints – soos die inwoners van St Helena bekendstaan – die goedere voor Kersfees sal hê.

Rondstaan en stap in die hawegebied lewer



Rooipylstert/Red-tailed Tropicbird

darem die gewone voëls op en toe ons uiteinde-lik twee dae later vertrek, sien ek van die bodek af genoeg om my besig te hou. Kort anderkant Robbeneiland speel Boggelrugwalvisse in die water en die lug bo hulle is spierwit van sterretjies. Nie lank daarna nie begin die eerstes van baie Bassiaanse [White-chinned Petrel] in die vaarwater wieg. Grootalbatros [Wandering



Witsterretjie/Fairy Tern



Ascensiefregatvoël/Ascension Frigatebird



Brilmalgas/Masked Booby



Gewone Stormswael/Wilson's Storm-Petrel

Albatross], Swartvlerkkoningalbatros [Northern Royal Albatross] en Atlantiese Geelneusalbatros [Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross], sowel as Bloubekalbatros [Shy Albatross] kan soms gesien word. Laatmiddag voor ons in Jamesbaai anker, vlieg twee Roetsterretjies [Sooty Tern] bo die dek – te vinnig vir foto's – en die een beland op die dek, blykbaar beseer. Dis die volgende oggend na die plaaslike natuurbewaringstak geneem.

'n Bootoffisier het gereël dat ek en 'n paar ander mense die oggend met 'n charabanc gaan ry deur die eiland. Ongelukkig is die bestuurder nie 'n voëlkenner of –kyker nie, en ons moes Woensdag al hier wees; nou is dit Saterdag en al die historiese en kulturele plekke is gesluit. Alles kon net op 'n afstand, of glad nie, beskou word. Toe ek vra oor die endemiese 'Wirebird', sê hy hulle is baie skaars en moeilik om te kry. Vyf minute later skree ek hy moet stop: hier draf die goed op die gholftaan rond. Ek en 'n ander fotograaf kon egter nie naby

kom nie, want die bestuurder toet en roep ons terug. Hy is haastig. Hy het darem verder gestop telkens as ek vra. So kon ek darem 'n paar voëls te siene kry, soos die 'Java Sparrow' – wat glad nie familie is van enige mossie nie – en die Rooipylstert [Red-tailed Tropicbird]. Na die rit het ek in Jamestown rondgeeloop en nog 'n paar voëls gesien: Indiese Spreeu [Common Myna], 'Peaceful Dove', Tuinduiwe [Rock Dove], 'Madagascar Fody' en die wondermooie Witsterretjie [Fairy Tern].

Vir Sondag het die bootoffisier gereël dat 'n gids van Natuurbewaring my kom haal vir 'n voëluitstappie. Dié man/vrou/mens het egter nooit opgedaag nie, toe stap ek maar weer in en langs die 'hoofstad' van 800 m x 2 km en kry die Rooibeksysie [Common Waxbill] en Geelkanarie [Yellow Canary]. Van St Helena se 12 landvoëls het ek net drie nié gekry nie.

Terwyl die RMS St Helena in die baai wag op vraag vir Ascension, bring ek my tyd op

die dek deur. Dis 'n vrugbare tyd: Brilmalgas [Masked Booby], Bruinmalgas [Brown Booby], Swartsterretjie [Black Noddy], Madeirastormswael [Band-rumped Storm Petrel] en Groot-bruinsterretjie [Brown Noddy] vlieg verby.

Omdat ons laat uit Tafelbaai weg is en haastig moet terug sodat 'n volgende vraag gelaai kan word, en toeriste aansluitingsvlugte moet haal, word die tyd op Ascension verkort tot 4 uur in plaas van 'n hele dag. Natasja van Natuurbewaring neem my en die oorblywende twee passasiers op 'n vlugtige toer deur die eiland. Die voëls se broeiseison is verby en daar is min te sien. Die Ascensionfregatvoëls [Ascension Frigatebird] is egter volop. Teen 'n helling draf ons eie Rooikeelfisant [Red-necked Spurfowl] voor die motor verby, maar Natasja stop nie hiervoor nie, wel vir 'n endemiese landkrap.

'n Voëlkenner van Ascension, op pad terug na Brittanje na haar kontrak verstryk het, sluit as passasier by ons aan en ons sien van Ascension tot by Kaapstad Swaelstertstormswael [Leach's Storm Petrel], Gewone Stormswael [Wilson's Storm-Petrel], Bleekvlerkkeitstert [Bulwer's Petrel], Malbaartjie [Sooty Shearwater], Geelbekpylstormvoël [Cory's Shearwater] en twee keer vlugtig en ver wat ons aanneem 'n

Brilbassiaan [Spectacled Petrel] is. 'n Voëlkyker van Oos-Londen wat op die terugvaart by ons aangesluit het, het gehelp om die Swartrugalbatros [Black-browed Albatross] en die Bruinalbatros [Dark-mantled Sooty Albatross] te identifiseer. Ek kon ongelukkig nie besluit of een van die albatrosse wat ek gesien het 'n Chatham of Gryskop [Grey-headed Albatross] was nie.

Van St Helena tot in Tafelbaai was die see veral onstuimig, dit was koud en bewolk, en die vaart teen maksimum knope het die boot laat bokspring, wieg en skommel. Die swembadjie se water is later uitgepomp omdat dit die agterstewe laat swenk het. Ek was een van die min passasiers wat dit verduur het sonder gevolge, maar dit het bygedra tot die sien van verskeie sterretjies (nie geïdentifiseer nie, buiten vir Geelbekke), Swartrugmeeue, walvisse en honderde malgasse vroeg die oggend voor ons aankoms by Kaapstad.

'n Goeie gevolg van die bootvaart is dat ek en die skeepsdokter (van Indië), en 'n tafelnoot van Sri Lanka goed bevriend geraak het. Hulle uitnodigings aan my om by hulle op besoek te kom, het veroorsaak dat ek reeds vir Junie en Julie vanjaar 'n reisplan opgestel het deur Sri Lanka, Indië en Nepal. 🇳🇵

Die groot 500

Riël Franzsen

Op pad terug van die see af vroeg-Januarie 2013 besluit ek iewers tussen Hopetown en Kimberley dat ek 500 voëlspesies in 2013 wil sien – ongeag waar in die wêreld. My vrou was baie verlig toe ek vroeg in Desember 2013 die 500ste spesie in die Stilbaai-omgewing te siene kry, maar helaas moes ek toe natuurlik kyk hoe ver ek hierdie perk kon verbystee! 31 Desember 2013 eindig ek met 530 spesies, maar presies 100 van hulle het ek buite suider-Afrika waargeneem, die meeste tydens 'n werkverwante besoek aan die Karibiese eilandstate Dominica, Saint Lucia en Saint Kitts & Nevis.

Januarie 2017 dwing 'n kompulsief-obsessiewe geaardheid my om weer 'n ambisieuse projek aan te pak. Dié jaar wil ek 500 spesies in die kalenderjaar sien of hoor, maar uitsluitlik in Suid-Afrika – 'n lekker uitdaging!

Januarie skop goed af met oggendbesoeke aan Rietveldam, Kgomo-Kgomo, die Roodeplaat-omgewing en Vlaklaagte (noord van Bronkhorstspuit en 'n ou gunsteling). Hoe het Etienne Marais en Faansie Peacock se *Birding Gauteng* nie baie van ons se voëlkykervaring in die Gauteng-omgewing verryk nie! Danksy Trevor Hardaker se 'SA



Riël Franssen

Flamink (in die reën) by Strandfontein, Kaapstad

Rare Bird News'-webbladsy sien ek my eerste Geelkeelsandpatrys [Yellow-throated Sand-grouse] in Suid-Afrika aan die buitewyke van Centurion. (Ek het dié spesie reeds enkele jare gelede in Tanzanië gesien.)

Soos enige Suid-Afrikaanse voëlkyker sal weet, kan 'n vier-dae besoek aan Noord-oos Limpopo 'n groot aantal spesies oplewer en dus 'n leue-aandeel tot 'n 500-projek. Sedert 2004 neem ek en 'n goeie vriend jaarliks aan die Wes-Gauteng Ereveldwagters se jaarlikse 'Big birding'-naweke in die Krugerwildtuin deel. Februarie 2017 is ons 14de jaar en ons is weer eens bespreek vir die 'Extreme Birding' in Punda Maria. Ons beplan om onderweg wildtuin toe 'n paar ure in die Soutpansberg-omgewing voëls te kyk om ons kyk-fiks vir die groot kyk te kry. Die Roodewal-natuurreservaat onderweg na Punda Maria-hek stel nie teleur nie en twee 'lifers', die Breëbek [African Broadbill] en Blouvlakduife [Blue-spotted Wood-Dove], asook die Bosloerie [Narina Trogon], word aangeteken. 'n Entjie verder, by die Muirhead-damme, lys ons 'n Kroonarend [Crowned Eagle] en Goudwewer [African Golden Weaver], en by die Pafuri River Camp reg langs die Pafuri-hek, waar ons oornag, lys ons Tropiese Waterfiskaal [Tropical Boubou] en Baardwipstert [Bearded Scrub-Robin]. Saam met die bekende Don English lys ons in net 27 uur 236 spesies in die Punda Maria/Pafuri omgewing! Nog twee

'lifers', die Lysternagtegaal [Thrush Nightingale] en Knopsterttroupan [Racquet-tailed Roller], word met groot vreugde naby Pafuri gelys, asook ander skaars Suid-Afrikaanse voëls soos die Driebanddrawwertjie [Three-banded Courser], Senegalvleioerie [Senegal Coucal], Savannepapegaai [Grey-headed Parrot], Kleinwaterhoender [Lesser Moorhen], Witpensstekelstert [Böhm's Spinetail], Ruddse Kleinjantjie [Rudd's Apalis], Rooskeelkolpensie [Pink-throated Twinspot] en Geelkeelkanarie [Lemon-breasted Canary]. Ek sien (uiteindelik!) ook my eerste Goudsnip [Greater Painted-snip] in Suid-Afrika. Teen einde Februarie is my lys reeds gemaklik verby die 300-merk.

Twee reise na Europa beteken dat Maart en April projekgewys stil maande is, maar Mei is weer 'n droommaand danksy 'n besoek aan die Suid-Kaap. Op pad van George se lughawe na Stilbaai op 10 Mei sien ek 'n Veldpou [Denham's Bustard] tussen Mosselbaai en Albertinia, en later – vir die eerste keer in baie jare – weer 'n Reusesterretjie [Caspian Tern] by die Goukourivier in Stilbaai. 11 Mei is koud en reënerig. Tog lewer die grondpaaie (suid van die N2) tussen Stilbaai en Heidelberg nog agt Veldpoue op, asook verskeie Bloukraanvoëls [Blue Cranes] en 'n Overberglangbeklewerik [Agulhas Long-billed Lark]. Ten spyte van 'n sterk wind sien ek op 12 Mei Bank-, Trek-, Kuifkop- en Witborsduikers [Bank, Cape,

Crowned and White-breasted Cormorants] en Brilpikkewyn [African Penguin] by die Stony Point-natuurreservaat by Bettiesbaai, en die Suidelike Swie [Swee Waxbill] en Oranjeborsuikerbekkie [Orange-breasted Sunbird] in die Harold Porter Botaniese Tuin. 'n Cape Town Pelagics vaart vanaf Simonstad op 14 Mei, met Cliff Dorse as bekwame gids, is beslis die hoogtepunt van die jaar. Ek sien 13 'lifers', waaronder die skaars Swartvlerkkoningalbatros [Northern Royal Albatross] en Indiese Geelneusalbatros [Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross]. (Cliff se verslag en foto's van die Swartvlerkkoningalbatros en Indiese Geelneusalbatros is te sien by http://www.capetownpelagics.com/cape_reports/TR1709_14MayCD.htm.)

As gevolg van 'n besige werkprogram en 'n werkbesoek aan Letland en Litouë is Julie en ook Julie stil. Tog sien ek einde Julie buite Stellenbosch Kaapse Pietjiekanaries [Cape Siskins] en 'n Kaneelduifie [Lemon Dove]. Die eerste week van Augustus neem my vrou en ek vier buitelandse vriende Krugerwildtuin toe met een nag by Kurisa Moya in Magoebaskloof op pad laeveld toe. Vroegoggend sien ek uiteindelik Kurisa Moya se befaamde Groenkolpensies [Green Twinspots] en ook Rooirugfrette [Red-backed Mannikins], 'n spesie wat ek lanklaas gesien het. In die Mopani-omgewing is daar besonder baie nuwe spesies vir my lys gegewe dat ek reeds 'n somerbesoek gebring het, en nou, in die winter, hoofsaaklik as toergids optree vir gaste wat verstaanbaar veel eerder soogdiere wil sien. My eerste Gompoue [Kori Bustards] en Sekretarisvoëls [Secretarybirds] vir 2017, asook Rooikopvink [Red-headed Finch] – 'n eerste vir my Krugerwildtuin-lys – sien ek langs die S143 (Steenbokkeerkring-pad) en die Nataljanfrederik [Red-capped Robin-Chat] en Rooivlerksprinkaanvoël [Collared Pratincole] respektiewelik op, en vanaf, die Mopani-restaurant se stoep! Einde Augustus besoek ek die eerste keer die Marakele Nasionale Park. Dit is nog baie droog en stowwerig, maar ek is gelukkig met verskeie van Marakele se teikenvoëls, waaronder Kransaasvoëls



Riel Franzen

Rooikeelbyvreter/White-fronted Bee-eater by Rietvelddam, Pretoria

[Cape Vultures], Rooiborsuikervoël [Gurney's Sugarbird], Bergklipwagter [Buff-streaked Chat], Swaelstertbyvreter [Swallow-tailed Bee-eater] en Geelpensbossanger [Yellow-bellied Eremomela].

September is stil aangesien ek bykans drie weke in Albanië moet werk, maar 'n oggendbesoek aan Marievale om (sonder sukses) die Rooikeelreier [Slaty Egret] te lys, lewer darem Kempmaan [Ruff] en Gevlekte Eend [Hottentot Teal] op. Onderweg na Wakkerstroom vir 'n blitsbesoek middel-Oktober, doen ek weer aan by Marievale. Steeds geen 'Slaty' nie, maar ek sien verskeie Kleinstrandlopers [Little Stints] en Ringnekstrandkiewiete [Common Ringed Plover]. Wakkerstroom is eenvoudig een van die beste plekke in Suid-Afrika om voëls te kyk. Ten spyte van 'n stormwind en danksy Norman Mncube, 'n bo-baas plaaslike voëlgids, lys ek op 17 Oktober verskeie teikenspesies, onder meer twee 'lifers', die Drakensberglerik [Rudd's Lark] en Grasveldlangbeklewerik [Eastern Long-billed Lark], maar ook Grondspieg [Ground Woodpecker], Mahem [Grey Crowned Crane], Kalkoenibis [Southern Bald Ibis] en Witrugeend [White-backed Duck]. Sonder gids maar met beter weer sien ek vroegoggend op 18 Oktober die Geelborskoester [Yellow-breasted Pipit], Drakensberglangstertjie [Drakensberg Prinia] ('n 'lifer' danksy die redelik onlangse afsplitsing van die Karoolangstertjie), Bergpatrys [Grey-winged Francolin], Grootriethaan [African



Pikkewyne by die Boulders, Simonstad

Rail), Grootswartvlerkiewiet [Black-winged Lapwing] (nog 'n 'lifer'), Horuswindswael [Horus Swift] en Klipkoester [African Rock Pipit].

November se hoogtepunte was beslis die melanistiese Kleinsingvalk [Gabar Goshawk] en Swartvlerksprinkaanvoël [Black-winged Pratincole] by Kgomo-Kgomo, en die Visvalk [Western Osprey], Gryskopvisvanger [Grey-hooded Kingfisher] en Geelvlakmossie [Yellow-throated Petronia] by Borakalalo. Op pad terug van 'Borra' af via Jericho wag 'n aangename verrassing – 'n klein, voëlryke vleiiland teen die pad by Lebalangwe (tussen Jericho en Soshanguve).

Tydens 'n blitsbesoek aan Kaapstad en Stellenbosch sien ek op 3 Desember 'n Gryskoppie [Common Chaffinch] in Tokai en by Strandfontein 'n Bandstertgriet [Bar-tailed Godwit] en Moerasruiter [Marsh Sandpiper]. Middel-Desember vertrek ons see toe vir 'n kort besoek om voor Kersfees terug te wees in Pretoria. Die roetes see toe en terug word fyn beplan. Op pad Stilbaai toe word daar oornag in die Suid-Vrystaat en by Nature's Valley. By Garingboom-gasteplaas (bekend vir die Kimberleykoester [Kimberley Pipit]) naby Springfontein sien ek Swartkopkanaries

[Black-headed Canaries] en 'n Vlaktespekvreter [Sickle-winged Chat]. Dit is ook hier waar ek vroegoggend op 15 Desember met die Vaalstreepkoppie [Lark-like Bunting] my aanvanklike doelwit van 500 'sien of hoor' behaal. Nou verander die reëls van die spel noodwendig – daar is immers nog 16 dae oor in die kalenderjaar. Nou móét ek 500 spesies in 2017 in Suid Afrika sien, dit wil sê nog net 'n verdere 21 spesies met 'n redelike verskeidenheid habitatte (onder meer kuswoud by Nature's Valley; kus, rivier en fynbos by Stilbaai; Karoo, 'n stukkie Kalahari-sandveld in die Kimberley-omgewing, en grasveld in Gauteng) wat voorlê.

In die Prince Alfred-pas sien ek, ten spyte van die skerp draaie en stof, 'n Bosjakkalvoël (Forest Buzzard] en Rooikeelfsante [Red-necked Spurfowl] en by Nature's Valley merk ek Bloukatakeroere [Grey Cuckooshrike], Knysnaloeerie [Knysna Turaco], Swartpensglanspreeu [Black-bellied Starling] af, maar 'n aggressiewe trop bobbejane knip 'n belowende vroegoggend staptog kort. Die Stilbaai-omgewing se somer-'specials' is amper almal daar – die Kleinsterretjie [Little Tern], Grysstrandkiewiet [Grey Plover], Grysborstjagra [Southern Tchagra], Dikbekkanarie [Brimstone Canary], Witkeelkanarie [White-throated Canary], Dikbeklewerik [Large-billed Lark], Swartsaagvlerkswael [Black Saw-wing] en die skugter Knysnaruigtesanger [Knysna Warbler] – maar die Knysnaspeg [Knysna Woodpecker], weliswaar skaars, is nêrens nie.

Op pad terug van Stilbaai af oornag ons in Murraysburg. Verlaat die N1 by die Nelspoortafdraai en 'n groot rustigheid daal summier oor jou neer. Nelspoort is totaal vervalde maar in die klipkoppies by dié gehuggie teken ek Bleekvlerkspreeu [Pale-winged Starlings] aan. Die grondpad van Nelspoort na Murraysburg is tjoepstil wat verkeer betref, maar die voëlaktiwiteit laatmiddag wonderlik. Dit is lewerikwêreld en Gysruglewerikke [Grey-backed Sparrowlarks], Rooikoplewerikke [Red-capped Larks] en Vlaktelewerikke [Spike-heeled Larks] vlieg gereeld op van die pad af, en Hoëveldklappertjies [Eastern Clapper Larks] roep oral. Kelkiewyne [Namaqua Sandgrouse]

en Rooioorlangstertjies [Rufous-eared Warblers] is ook volop. Vroegoggend (05:40) op 23 Desember is dit ek en die grondpad tussen Murraysburg en Richmond. Hier kruis mens die besige N1 vir verdere Karoo-vrede al die pad De Aar toe. en dan oor Kraankuil na Hopetown. Vroegdag reeds sien ek nog 'n 'lifer', die Karoolangbeklewerik [Karoo Long-billed Lark] en, nie lank daarna nie, 'n Karoospekvreter [Karoo Chat] en beide die Dawid en Goliat van vlieëvangers – die Grootvlieëvanger [Chat Flycatcher] en die Feevlieëvanger [Fairy Flycatcher]. Alhoewel ek hulle nie te siene kry nie, hoor ek 'n Vaalkorhaan [Karoo Korhaan] en Namakwalangstertjie [Namaqua Warbler]. Straks as gevolg van die afgelope jare se droogte, is daar geen aktiwiteit by die enkele vervalle Versamelvoëlneste [Sociable Weaver] tussen Hopetown en Modderrivier nie, maar ek sien darem naby Kimberley die Kalahariwipstert [Kalahari Scrub-Robin] en alhoewel ek reeds vroeër die Kleinflamink [Lesser Flamingo] by Borakalalo gelys het, is dit fantasties om dié spesie weer in groot getalle by die Kamfersdam te sien. Op 24 Desember is ons terug in Pretoria en my'sien'-lys is nou net kort van 500...

Op 28 Desember, langs die Vlaklaagte-pad noord van Bronkhorstspruit, sien ek spesie 500 vir die jaar – die Trekdrawwertjie [Temminck's Courser]. Sekondes later sien ek nommer 501, die Spotlewerik [Melodious

Lark] en, as 'n toegif, vir die tweede keer die jaar, Horuswindswaels [Horus Swifts]. Op 30 Desember, langs dieselfde roete, sien ek my eerste Veldpoue [Denham's Bustard] in die noorde van die land asook 'n Swempie [Coqui Francolin] – Nummer 502.

So eindig 2017 dan met 502 gesien en 'n verdere 22 net gehoor – 'n totaal van 524 volgens die ou reëls van sien en hoor. Soos alle voëlkykers sal weet, was sekere voëls, wat mens normaalweg in 'n kalenderjaar in die regte habitat te siene behoort te kry, nêrens te siene nie. Vir my was dit in 2017 onder andere die Langkuifarend [Long-crested Eagle], Ovambosperwer [Ovambo Sparrowhawk] en Dwergrisvanger [African Pygmy-Kingfisher]. Tog was die groot frustrasie die 'lifers' wat ek gehoor het, maar nie te siene kon kry nie, naamlik die Gestreepte Riethaan [Striped Crake] in Februarie naby Klopfontein in die Krugerwildtuin, die Sprinkansanger [River Warbler] einde-Maart naby Kgomo-Kgomo, die Karoolewerik [Karoo Lark] naby Nelspoort (Desember) en die Rooiborsvleikuiken [Red-chested Flufftail] by Wakkerstroom (Oktober) en Moreletakloof-natuurreservaat (Desember) – veral omdat my suider-Afrika-lys einde Desember 2017 op 695 spesies staan!

Vir 2018 het ek nie tans 'n groot projek nie, maar ek gaan beslis daaraan werk om die 700 kerf vir suider-Afrika verby te steek! 🐦



Marakele
Nasionale Park



BLNG outing to Moreletakloof, 4 Nov 2017. Thank you to Keanu Canto and Laura Jordaan for a morning of excellent birding. Etienne Nortje was happy to see 4 cuckoos in one morning and even photographed a Black Cuckoo!
Sheleph Burger



BLNG outing to Smuts Kopje, 17 Feb 2018: Highlights: a pair of Long-crested Eagles, Black Sparrowhawk, White Stork, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, and Red-backed Shrike. Those attending also got to see/hear a large proportion of Pretoria's Rose-ringed Parakeet and Basset Hound populations (the latter on a walk hosted by SA Basset Adoptions).



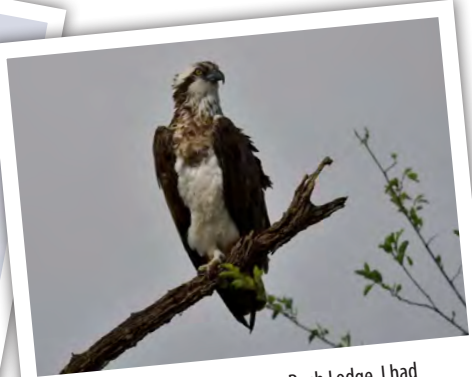
On a visit to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in Oct 2017, a friend and I were sitting at the Samevloeïing waterhole, having coffee. Suddenly this spectacular Black Harrier landed at the waterhole! It was a sighting of a lifetime, and indeed a lifer for me! In a matter of 2 minutes, my camera was hot with shooting 80 photographs of this stunning bird!
Sheleph Burger



A favourite photo... Red-crested Korhaan in full call, on the road between Shimuwini and Letaba camps, Kruger National Park, 29 Jan 2017.
Geoff Abbott



Summer CAR, 27 Jan 2018: Route GM01 (Moloto) – the wrong heron (Black-headed Herons count, Purple Herons don't). Most abundant: Helmeted Guineafowl (count: 107). Most celebrated: a Swainson's Spurfowl perched in a tree (the first SS to not just be heard, but seen, and thus counted). Non-target species accidentally spotted pre- and on-route included a pair of Greater Painted-Snipe, Lizard Buzzard, Brown Snake-Eagle and Greater Kestrel.



In Nov 2017 we visited Bakubung Bush Lodge. I had received specific directions on where to find an Osprey, and we set out to find it. The Osprey 'knew' I was coming and, lo and behold, there he was sitting high above in a tree! Lifer! Yes! Sheleph Burger



Marco Botta

Ig Viljoen releases a Half-collared Kingfisher at a BLNG bird-ringing demo held in Colbyn Wetland NR for 'Learn about wetlands', an annual event celebrating World Wetlands Day that aims to teach children about the value of wetlands.



Poor barbets! I put up a nesting log to attract hole-nesters into our garden. After Crested Barbets in March 2017 had one successful breeding attempt producing and fledging one chick, I observed a pair of Lesser Honeyguides in my garden. The picture shows this brood parasite waiting to enjoy the ill-gotten attention of its poor Crested Barbet hosts. Neithard Graf von Dürckheim

(Continued on page 60)

Rarities and unusual sightings report: 15 March 2018

Compiled by André Marx

This report covers the period from 1 Oct 2017 to 15 Mar 2018. With the onset of the summer rains and the first flush of migrants some excellent out-of-range records started to surface in early summer. These included seldom seen birds in our region such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew and Collared Pratincole. Top sightings for the last period were another Collared Flycatcher, this time in the Brits area, a tricky Eurasian Blackcap that frustrated many observers, more reports of African Skimmer and two significant records in the form of a Bat Hawk north of Pretoria and a Bateleur in the Wilge River valley (see the photos of both!).

Thank you to all the regular contributors of reports. Please send any interesting and out-of-range records together with a photo if possible to the address given below. Members should note that these regional reports are referenced and used in publications such as the Roberts Birds of Southern Africa, which is currently being revised, so all properly documented records are valuable.

National Rarities/ Nasionale rareiteite

Blackcap, Eurasian / Sanger, Swartkroon-

One bird was found in a thicket on the Zaagkuildrift road in Pentad 2505_2810 when first heard singing and then briefly observed; the bird was present for a few days, 10 Mar 2018 (AM, GL). *This is an uncommon summer migrant and very few records have been confirmed for the region.*

Egret, Slaty / Reier, Rooikeel-

The bird previously reported from Marievale Bird Sanctuary during August and September was still being sighted from time to time, well into October 2017, by many observers.

Flycatcher, Collared / Vlieëvanger, Withals-

One bird was found at Sediba Lodge, north of Brits, 11 Nov 2017 (LR). *This species is a vagrant*

in the region, with one known record from Randburg a few years ago.

Phalarope, Red / Fraiingpoot, Grys-

A single bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 3 Mar 2018 (J&CH).

Sandpiper, Green / Ruitter, Witgat-

Several observers reported this species from Rietvlei NR in Centurion during the period 14 Nov 2017 until at least mid-Feb 2018. One bird was at Waterfall Estate, Midrand, 27 Jan 2018 (RS).

Sandpiper, Pectoral / Strandloper, Geelpoot-

Two birds were present at a farm dam near



Collared Flycatcher / Withalsvlieëvanger

Lance Robinson



Pectoral Sandpiper / Geelpootstrandloper

Pieter Heiliga



Thinus van Staden

African Skimmer / Waterploëë

Bapsfontein, 9 Jan 2018 (PC). In subsequent days several observers saw and photographed these birds at this locality; reported until at least mid-Feb 2018. One bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 27 Jan 2018 (EM).

Skimmer, African / Waterploëë

Two birds were reported from Vaalkop Dam on 8 Jan 2018 (SvdW). 8 birds at a small dam on the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain was a major surprise, 24 Feb 2018 (TG).

This is still a very rare bird for the region.

Regional rarities / Streeksrariteite

Bateleur / Berghaan

A remarkable sighting of an immature bird that was photographed while soaring over grassland in the Wilge River valley in Pentad 2540_2855 took place on 24 Nov 2017 (WT). *A species not known to occur within the greater Gauteng region so this is a very significant record.*

Crake, Spotted / Riethaan, Gevlekte-

One bird was at Marievale, 5 Feb 2018 (MT).

Curler, Eurasian. Wulp, Groot-

One bird was found on the banks of Vaalkop Dam at Finfoot Lake Reserve, 13 Nov 2017, and was still present for a number of weeks afterwards (SvdW).

Eagle, Crowned / Arend, Kroon-

A juvenile bird was found in the Wilge River Valley north of Bronkhorstspuit on 4 Nov 2017 (GE).

Godwit, Bar-tailed / Griet, Bandstert-



Warwick Tarboton

Juvenile Bateleur / Jong Berghaan



Sarel van der Westhuizen

Eurasian Curlew / Grootwulp

One bird was found at Korsman Pan in Benoni, 8 Oct 2017 (RW&KdP), with several observers still reporting this bird until late November. *A very uncommon bird for Gauteng and seldom recorded inland, as this is a species that is known annually in fair numbers at coastal localities.*

Goose, African Pygmy / Gans, Dwerg-

An unusual sighting was of one bird at a farm dam near Bronkhorstspuit Dam in Pentad 2555_2835, 15 Jan 2018 (DdP). *This species is seldom observed away from lower altitude areas associated with bushveld habitat, so this is a notable record.*

Goshawk, African / Sperwer, Afrikaanse

A pair of birds were observed in the Wilge River Valley, north of Bronkhorstspuit in pentad 2535_2855, 6 Oct 2017 (MJ).

Harrier, Pallid / Vleivalk, Witbors-

A single bird was seen just east of Bronkhorstspuit Dam in Pentad 2550_2840, 3 Feb 2018 (ST). One bird was photographed in



Dirk Human

Bat Hawk / Vlermuisvalk

2530_2810, when an adult bird was photographed, 14 Oct 2017 (DH). *This is a very significant sighting, as there have been a few records of this bird in the region in recent years, not all of which could be confirmed, but this represents the first photographed record of the species in the Gauteng region.*

Heron, Rufous-bellied / Reier, Rooipens-

On 3 Jan 2018 one bird was photographed at the bridge at Kgomo-Kgomo in Pentad 2505_2800 (HL). *This is a species that is seldom observed at any locality in the country and it can be considered to be very rare in our region.*

Pelican, Great White / Pelikaan, Wit-

A single bird was at Mkhombo Dam, 26 Dec 2017 (OT).

Pipit, Yellow-breasted / Koester, Geelbors-

A breeding plumage bird was seen in grassland at Marievale Bird Sanctuary, 11 Mar 2018 (SM, RC). *This is an uncommon bird in the region, particularly in summer.*

Pratincole, Collared / Sprinkaanvoël, Rooivlerk-

At least five birds were once again recorded at Mkhombo Dam, with at least one juvenile bird present, 25 Nov 2017 (JB) and (TG, JK).

Roller, Broad-billed / Troupant, Geelbek-

A sighting of one bird on the Zaagkuildrift road in Pentad 2510_2805 is very unusual for the region, 8 Jan 2018 (MJ and AB).

Sanderling / Strandloper, Drietoon-

Two birds were found at Rooiwal Wastewater Treatment Works, north of Pretoria, 10 Oct 2017 (LvD).

Saw-wing, Black / Saagvlerkswael, Swart-

A single bird was at Thembisile Dam on the R573 road to Moloto, north-east of Pretoria, 25 Nov 2017 (TG, JK, CFT).

Stork, Woolly-necked / Ooeivaar, Wolnek-

A single bird was seen with several Abdim's Storks at the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain, 2 Feb 2018 (NP).

Vulture, Lappet-faced / Aasvoël, Swart-

A bird was photographed at Nooitgedacht Farm in the Hekpoort district in Pentad 2550_2730, on 6 Oct 2017 (AK).

Whimbrel / Wulp, Klein-

A single bird was present at Bronkhorstspuit



Andrew Keys

Lappet-faced Vulture / Swartaasvoël



Gerda Weiman

Common Whimbrel / Kleinwulp

the Devon area in Pentad 2625_2845, 24 Feb 2018 (LR).

Hawk, Bat / Valk, Vlermuis-

One bird was an unexpected sighting in the Walmansthal area north of Pretoria in Pentad

Dam NR and was reported by a number of observers, 20 Jan 2018, and was present at this locality until late Feb 2018.

**Other interesting observations /
Ander interessante waarnemings**

Crane, Grey Crowned / Mahem

One bird was seen on the Zaagkuilrft road north of Pretoria in Pentad 2510_2815 on 27 Oct 2017 (CV), and was still present 6 Nov 2017 (CT). *An uncommon bird for the region.*

Eagle, Lesser Spotted / Arend, Gevlekte

One bird was photographed at Stillbosch Wildlife Estate in Pentad 2550_2825, south-east of Pretoria, 20 Jan 2018 (CM). A sighting of 4 birds in freshly cut fields in Pentads 2550_2835/2840, south of Bronkhorstspuit Dam, is somewhat unusual for that part of the region, 29 Jan 2018 (DdP). On 11 Feb 2018 (PV) at least one bird was present at this locality, with another bird seen here on 15 Feb 2018 and again on 5 Mar 2018 (DdP).

Eagle, Tawny / Arend, Roof-

A juvenile bird was a surprise sighting and a first record at Delta Park, Johannesburg, when it was seen being mobbed by Pied Crows, 23 Nov 2017 (GL).

Falcon, Red-footed / Valk, Westelike Rooipoort-

Two birds were at Northern Farm amongst a large group of Amur Falcons, 1 Feb 2018 (AM&RS).

Greenbul, Yellow-bellied / Willie, Geelbors-

This species was recorded for the first time in a garden in the Buffelsdrift Conservancy, north-east of Pretoria, 29 Jan 2018 (TG, RG). *This represents another new locality for this bird in the Pretoria area.*

Ibis, Southern Bald / Ibis, Kalkoen-

12 birds were observed in Pentad 2555_2850, south-east of Bronkhorstspuit, 20 Jan 2018 (ST).

Owl, Southern White-faced / Uil, Witwang-

One bird was sighted at the Sandton Field and Study Centre, probably the same individual that has occurred at that locality before, 2 Nov 2017 (KTS), and on 6 Dec 2017 it was confirmed by



Cameron Meyer

Lesser Spotted Eagle / Gevlekte Arend



Ron Searle

Red-footed Falcon female with Amur Falcon / Westelike Rooipoortvalk wyfie saam met 'n Oostelike Rooipoortvalk

local birders that there were two birds present.

Stork, Marabou / Maraboe

3 birds were at the Midrand Interwaste dump site, 10 Mar 2018 (PV).

Warbler, Dark-capped Yellow / Sanger, Geel-

A record of one bird singing and then being seen at Emmarentia Dam, Johannesburg, is a significant range extension for this species which continues to be recorded at new localities in Gauteng, 7 Oct 2017 (GLD).

Observers/ Waarnemers:

André Marx (AM)
Andrew Buitendach (AB)
Andrew Keys (AK)
Cameron Meyer (CM)

Rarities

CF Truter (CFT)
Christo Venter (CV)
Colin Thornton (CT)
Dirk Human (DH)
Dries du Plessis (DdP)
Etienne Marais (EM)
Geoff Lockwood (GLd)
Grant Egen (GE)
Greg Lock (GL)
Hugo Le Roux (HL)
Jason Boyce (JB)
John & Celia Human (J&CH)
John Kinghorn (JK)
Kevin du Plessis (KdP)
Kevin Trendler-Smith (KTS)
Lance Robinson (LR)
Lisl van Deventer (LvD)
Mark Tittley (MT)
Michael Johnson (MJ)
Niall Perrins (NP)
Ormé Teichert (OT)
Pieter Cronje (PC)
Pieter Verster (PV)
Rob Crosby (RC)

Rob Geddes (RG)
Rolf Wiesler (RW)
Ron Searle (RS)
Sarel van der Westhuizen (SvdW)
Stan Madden (SM)
Stephan Terblanche (ST)
Toni Geddes (TG)
Warwick Tarboton (WT)

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

In pictures (continued)



Zack Rheeder

BLNG outing to Rooiwal WWTW, 3 Feb 2018: A multitude of White-winged Terns were flying low over the water and dip-dipping onto the water's surface with their bills – typical behaviour for these terns, which feed on aquatic invertebrates supported by the nutrient-rich water of the maturation ponds.

Neithard Graf von Dürckheim



BLNG Bosberaad, 3 March 2018: The Committee kicked off the new BLNG year with a strategic planning meeting at Wolphuiskraal Farm. Important club matters were debated and future priorities thrashed out. Some birding did also take place.

BirdLife Northern Gauteng					
<i>Laniarius</i> advertising costs (cost shown in Rands)					
Print ads	1 insert	2 inserts	3 inserts	4 inserts	
Back page	600	1000	1300	1500	full colour
Full page	400	700	950	1150	
Half page	250	400	500	675	
Quarter page	125	200	250	275	
Loose insert	300	500	650	750	
Smalls	50	90	120	140	5 lines/ad
Notes					
1. Advertiser to supply print-ready artwork					
2. Ads can be placed in alternate issues					
3. Ads must be paid in advance					
4. Ads are in black & white except back page which is in full colour					
5. For loose inserts advertiser to supply insert					
6. The committee maintains the right to accept any advertisements					

BUFFELSDRIFT

Rust de Winter

ACCOMMODATION

R450/adult/night;

R225/child 12 years and younger/night;

Day visitors R90/person/day



BOOKINGS

**Please call Donald
on 082 885 5577;**

or e-mail

bookings@birdhiking.co.za

Website: www.birdhiking.co.za

BIRDERS