



# Laniarius

August 2025 | No 155



*BirdLife Noord-Gauteng  
BirdLife Northern Gauteng*

*Image Source: Saddle-billed Stork by Thinus van Staden*

  
**BirdLife**  
SOUTH AFRICA

*Giving Conservation Wings*

# 2025 KOMITEE

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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## What is a birdwatcher?

### How would you define the psychology of a birder?

Aldo Berutti, ex-CEO of BirdLife South Africa, posed this question to us on our last evening at the BLNG Bonamanzi camp.

First of all, we decided, a birdwatcher had to be passionate about, no, be enthusiastic about birds. But if we were honest: where other people have mere hobbies or interests, most birders are in the grips of an all-consuming obsession. Who else would set the alarm for 3 am on an icy winter's morning, drive to a destination some hundred or more kilometres away, and then trundle in low gear, with open windows, streaming nose and eyes, to look for Grass Owls? What birder hasn't yet stood broiling on the Kgomo-Kgomo bridge, trying to spot a glimpse of a Baillon's Crake? Or trudging desert sands in the quest to find the now 'extinct by pen stroke' Benguela Long-Billed Lark? In fact, when we reached this definition of the psychology of a birder, one club member at the table turned to her son and said: "Ja, in ons familie is ek en jy die malletjies!"

Secondly, mad or not, most avid birders are collectors, methodical listers. Not all of them keep count meticulously, but most find pleasure in identifying, categorising, and keeping record. They discuss their findings with other fellow enthusiasts. Many birders record their species on BirdLasser and submit their cards to add to the ever-growing database of the distribution and population numbers of birds. They take note of field marks, memorise bird song, bird behaviour, check distribution maps, habitat, migration patterns. In this way, it is an intellectual pursuit. All of our tribe are scientists, in a way.

Some birders regard birding as a competitive sport. Birding Big Day, participating in annual BirdLasser Challenges, posting of rarities on the relevant forums, setting targets, recording milestones and placing stunning photographs of desirable species seen on social media seems to be a contributing factor to this facet of birding.

The advantage that birders have is that they pursue their passion in nature. It is, in essence, an escape to green spaces. As such, birding is holistic, and increasing evidence of the benefits and psychological value of this total submergence in nature and raptness on birds is published. Add to this travel to unspoilt birding destinations, providing yet another richness and exhilaration to our passion.



Ivonne - Editor

Birders form friendships within the broader birding community. An obvious step is to join a bird club. They attend bird club lectures, online training courses, club meetings, join guided bird outings and camps, such as the recent Wagondrift Birdlasser camp, or the Sediba Bird Sound camp. They form new bonds and sign on for notifications about rare birds in their area. Many become compulsive twitchers, travelling far and wide at the drop of a hat to tick some scarce vagrant species. Many get involved in conservation efforts for habitats or threatened species.

This brings us to another aspect of birders' psychology – if we are honest, we must admit to addiction, in one or another form. The thrill to see some scarce species or even a new bird, a lifer, fills us birders with a rush and puts us on a quest to experience this again and again. We need better and more expensive models of binoculars, harnesses, waders, scopes, and cameras. For often, the quest to photograph birds either to assist in identification afterwards, or to build photographic lifelists, or even sharing images with fellow bird lovers via social media is another all-consuming passion.

Most birders develop a patience they never knew they possessed – especially bird photographers who may wait for hours for a bird to move into just the right spot to be immortalised in a photograph. The rewards are phenomenal. I am sure you will enjoy the themed photo report, BLNG's Best, on this topic.

And their reason for all of this? *"Birds will give you a window if you allow them. They will show you secrets from another world...they will do this for you if you watch them."* (Lyanda Lynn Haupt, Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds)

# FROM THE CHAIR

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## Dear Club Members,

This year so far has been very busy with a lot of interesting birds popping up all over. With winter now in full swing hopefully we all get some interesting migrants wandering into our neck of the woods.

The photography meetings have been a huge success with Koos leading us all on a very well-needed journey of enlightenment and discovery on our personal photographic journeys.

Many of us have taken the leap into the modern era of mirrorless and slightly more affordable bridge cameras.

DLSR's are still magnificent cameras and some of the best pics we see in our beautiful Laniarius and BLING WINGS are from DLSR's. The newer cameras just make it a bit easier and faster. You still need to know what you are doing to get the best out of these fancy bodies.

I have personally seen a big improvement with my photos. The significant difference is speed and keeper rates for birds in flight. For those doing the more static photos, you will get a huge improvement with noise and low light performance.

The committee is continuing to do a wonderful job.

Finances are now fully in hand with the new system. We are moving everything to this system and will have the ability to see the status of our finances very easily and it will take a lot of manual work out of the process. A huge thank you to Annetjie, Fransie and Pieter for their tireless work to make this happen.

Our program committee is just amazing. The outings and camps planned are getting more and more exciting.

Some new venues as well as our old favourites are being blended into something that will make more people want to join us on our outings. Not all outings will suit everyone but there will always be something for everyone in the variety of outings that are available.



It is a tough job to please everyone all the time, but we do take all suggestions seriously and try and work them into the program.

This committee also gets some fantastic speakers for our monthly meetings. Please take the time to join us, either in person or via our Zoom feed. We would love to see you there.

The bird fair is coming up on the 6th of September at the Pretoria Botanical Gardens.

It would be remiss of us to not attend it, since it is in our home grounds. Please take the time to attend this event. BLSA has assured me that they have some exciting talks and events planned for the fair.

Happy birding  
Sean



# LANIARIUS - AUGUST 2025

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# SEDIBA BIRD SOUNDS CAMP   APRIL 2025

# CAMP

Een van die spesiaalste BLNG-aktiwiteite waarvan ek nog deel was, is die Bird Sounds Camp by Sediba Lodge die naweek van 4-6 April 2025.

Die eiesoortigheid van die kamp word weerspieël in die beskrywing daarvan: Bird Sounds – die fokus gaan hierdie naweek op die geluide van voëls wees.

Die lodge is geleë in die hartjie van die bosveld net noord van Brits, waar ons nie kon vra vir 'n beter ligging om hierdie spesifieke tema te bestudeer nie. Hoewel ons op die stert van die somer staan, is dit nog baie nat en ons verwag om 'n paar somerbesoekers af te merk wat nog nie gereed is om hul tog noordwaarts aan te pak nie.

Ons is besonder bevoorreg om die ervare deskundige, Lance Robinson, as kursusleier vir die naweek te hê. Met sy skerp oor en ingesteldheid op die fyn nuanses van die bos, het ons baie by hom te leer.

Met ons aankoms word ons verwelkom deur 'n bosveldkoor, wat nou meer as gewoonlik gelaai is met betekenis: Bosveldtinkinkie (Rattling Cisticola) met sy kenmerkende "1-2-3-Cheers!", die klassieke "Three-blind-mice" van die Witliesbosbontrokkie (Chin-spot Batis), Bosveldstompstert (Long-billed Crombec) en die Swartkopwielewaal (Black-headed Oriole) wat sy eie naam sê: "O-ri-ole".

Die lodge is geleë in 'n pragtige tuin met 'n magdom bome en ons hoef glad nie ver te loop om allerhande interessante spesies te hoor nie. Die Baardspeg (Bearded Woodpecker) timmer eers teen 'n stam en roep ons dan nader met sy stem "Quick-quick-quick!".





'n Groepie Bruinkeelbossangers (Burnt-necked Eremomela) spring energiek tussen die takkies rond terwyl hulle die lug klief met hul fyn, skril piep-fluite – merkwaardig vir 'n lyfie wat nie eers 10g weeg nie. In 'n droë boom sit 'n jong Diederikkie (Diederik Cuckoo) met sy jeugdige kopergewaad glansend in die middaglig.

Een van die belangrikste aspekte wat Lance by ons wil tuisbring, is hoe om te luister. Begin in jou tuin deur te kyk én te luister, sê dit vir jouself, ontleed die klank in terme van klankkwaliteit (bv. helder/trillend), toonneiging (op-/afwaarts, konstant/afwisselend) en herhalend al dan nie. Let ook op die verskillende lae van klanke, i.e. sommiges is digby, ander bv. waar die bome begin, nog ander in die verte.

Die eerste praktiese oefening in hierdie les is om voor die heel eerste daglig, ja, selfs voor die Dawn Chorus begin, buite te gaan sit met jou koffie (oppas vir beskuit – die geknars is oorverdoewend in die stilte!)

En te luister.

Afrikaanse Naguiltjie (Fiery-necked Nightjar), baie ver. Gewone Dikkop (Spotted Thick-knee). Saam met die eerste ligskynsel – Gryskopmossie (Southern Grey-headed Sparrow). Dan Natalse Fisant (Natal Spurfowl). En Bosveldvisvanger (Woodland Kingfisher) voor sy vertrek na die tropiese dele hoër op in Afrika.

Voor ons onself kan kry, is die bos wawyd wakker en besig om die dag luidkeels aan te kondig. Lance het ons uitgedaag om hierdie oefening sonder verkykers en kameras aan te durf ten einde volledig op gehoor te fokus. Gaan probeer dit – dis verstommend moeilik! Soos die bewegings en gefladder in die bome al meer sigbaar word, raak die versoeking net te groot en ons skarrel om ons toerusting te gaan gryp en beeld by die klank te sit.

In nog 'n teoretiese komponent het Lance die belangrikheid beklemtoon om geheuebruggies te bou (mnemonics) – dit is om voëls se klank in menstaal om te sit. Dit het tot 'n uiters vermaaklike sessie gelei wat almal laat skaterlag en sommige selfs laat bloos het.

Het jy al gehoor hoe sê die Swartoogtiptol (Dark-capped Bulbul) "Get on your feet, Bridgette!"? Is daar nog iemand vir wie die Grootringduif (Red-eyed Dove) klink soos "Look at me, I'm perfect!"? As jy ver van die beskawing af voëls kyk, klink die Oranjeborsboslaksman (Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike) se "Coffee, tea or me" naderhand soos "Ek wil piepie!"?



*Bruinkeelbossanger*  
[Charmaine Engelbrecht]



[Derek Stedall]



Voëls gebruik klank om hulle voël-wees te kommunikeer, onder meer teenwoordigheid, dominansie, vrees en honger. Om die rede moet in gedagte gehou word dat 'n enkele spesie 'n wye verskeidenheid van geluide kan hê. Die vreemde, splinternuwe klank wat jy dus vandag in jou tuin hoor, is dalk net nog 'n versie uit die liedboek van die... Sneeubal! (Black-backed Puffback).

Dan is daar die mimiek-verskynsel: die Diederikkie se roep in die middel van die winter, blyk toe al die tyd jou plaaslike Gewone Janfrederik (Cape Robin-Chat) te wees. Nie net boots sommige voëlspesies ander spesies se klanke na nie, maar selfs ander diere. Daar word beweer dat die Mikstertbyvanger (Fork-tailed Drongo) meerkatte se alarmroep na-aap. Wanneer laasgenoemde laat spaander om weg te kom van die "gevaar", raap die vindingryke byvanger die meerkat se maaltyd op.

Simon Barnes wy in sy boek "How to be a Bad Bird Watcher" 'n hele hoofstuk op aan voëlklanke onder die titel "I Spy with my Little Ear". Hy skryf: "Sing out! It is a challenge, a plea, a bit of showing off, a bit of passion, a bit of lust, a bit of joy, a bit of fear".

Daar is só baie te leer deur te luister na die stemme van ons geveerde vriende. Begin deur nie net te hoor nie, maar te luister. Volg die klank as dit moontlik is; soek tot jy die oorsprong vind. Luister na opnames. Ontleed die klank. Bou 'n geheuebrug – een wat vir jōu werk.

Word deel van die voëls se wêreld deur hul taal te leer praat en te verstaan.

**MARIANA ARNOLDI**





# WAGONDRIFT BIRDLASSER TRAINING CAMP MAY 2025

# CAMP



*Savannah Dam at sunrise*  
[Angela Openshaw]

In May 2025, another brand-new BLNG camp was held at Wagondrift Game Lodge.

This was a unique camp that combined hands-on birding with practical training on BirdLasser (an app for logging bird species). Wagondrift Game Lodge is in the Cullinan area in the Limpopo province about 80 km outside of Pretoria. This was a completely different bird camp for BLNG in that we remained within the game farm for the entire weekend.

To start the training, Angie hosted a Zoom session to make sure that everyone had the BirdLasser App loaded on their smartphones. This did complicate things a little bit because BirdLasser works differently on the iPhones and Android smartphones. Not to worry, in true BLNG fashion, Angie made a plan and made two versions of the BirdLasser training manuals, one for each smartphone. Everyone enjoyed the Zoom training session and looked forward to the start of the actual camp.

Accommodation at Wagondrift Game Lodge was a combination of chalet, luxury tents and executive campsites.

The camp leader was JP van der Merwe who did an extremely excellent job of leading and guiding us around the Wagondrift Game Lodge, pointing out the various bird species that were there.



*Black-collared Barbet*  
[Deon van der Hoven]





*JP surveying the damage and working out a strategy [Mauritz Kotze]*

We birded on foot around the lodge areas on Friday night and then gathered together at the Zebra chalet for the evening braai and socializing.

A couple of weeks before the camp, there had been some incredible rainstorms and the roads at Wagondrift were very muddy. We did get stuck a few times, but JP's incredible 4x4 driving skills got us out every time. Everyone has some serious respect for his driving abilities now!

Saturday morning had us up at sunrise to go out in the game drive vehicle and put our BirdLasser training into real time practice. We had a marvellous time, and getting stuck in the mud only made it more so. One of the very special species we saw was the Bushveld Pipit, which was a "lifer" for many of us. In the afternoon, we had a lunch break at the chalet and luxury tents. While sitting there, we first heard and then saw Ansie-Dee and Deon come crashing through the bush in pursuit of the Western Barn Owl.



*Hamerkop [Mauritz Kotze]*



*Arrow-marked Babbler [Angela Openshaw]*





*Bushveld Pipit*  
[Mauritz Kotze]

The Barn Owl was being chased by several Fork-tailed Drongos. We leapt up and joined the chase with our cameras and binoculars. We tried very hard to photograph the Barn Owl as it flew from branch to branch to escape the Drongos.

On Sunday morning, after another bird drive, we had our final BirdLasser training. This was to learn how to submit our trip cards (list of bird species seen) to SABAP2. Angie explained the various points to be checked to ensure that Atlassing protocols were followed before submitting the trip cards. Ansie-Dee submitted her trip card to SABAP2 and received an email confirming her successful submission.

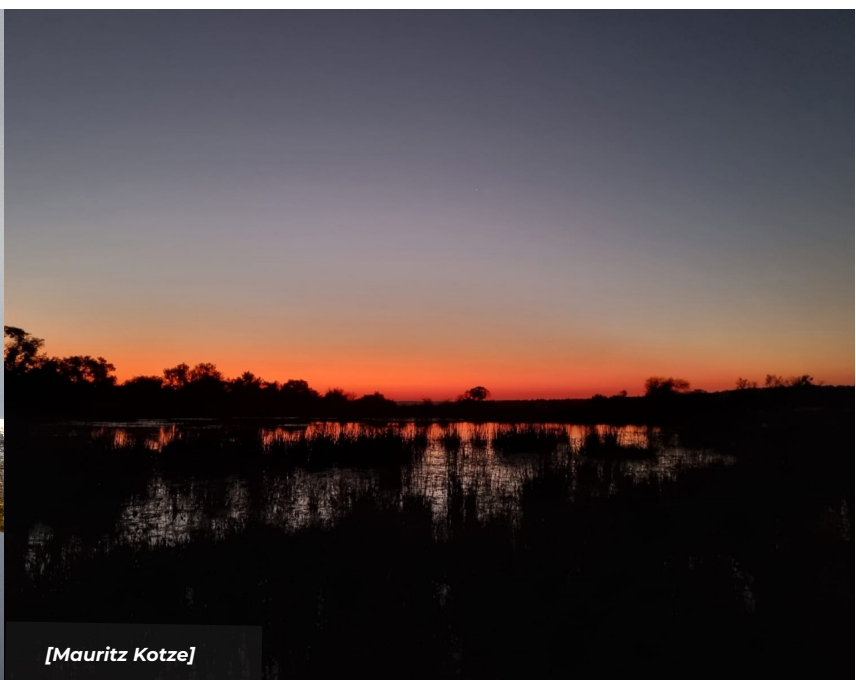
Back at the chalet, we read the bird list for the weekend and found we had seen 85 species, a totally respectable count for winter birding within just the game lodge (one pentad).

A big thank you to everyone who made the weekend such a success. Angie for her training and support, JP for his expert leading and driving skills, and to all our attendees who made it such a memorable camp full of learning, laughter, and birds.

*ANGELA OPENSHAW*



*Fork-tailed Drongo*  
[JP van der Merwe]



[Mauritz Kotze]



# BONAMANZI 4 8 JUNE CAMP

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“Guys, I need you to be quiet – I hear a Brown Scrub Robin calling.”

To a man, we freeze, all eighteen of us, scared to even breathe. “About a metre behind that straight horizontal branch, in the tallest tree... Do you see it? Going down, down... Wait, it's moving left, just above my pointer!” Aldo's green light appears at some impenetrable clumps of leaves. Now, some jostling for the best line of fire ensues in the back ranks, while in the front, we shorties duck and dive and with creaking joints get into crouching or kneeling positions lest we obscure the barrels behind us.

Sixteen camera lenses are aimed and at the ready. “There it is, right in the open!” A volley of heavy artillery is fired off. More modest models click once. We smile from ear to ear, congratulate each other; we get that rush that only addicted birders know. Another lifer!

With infinite patience, Aldo would allow more photo-opportunities so that each photographer might be able to take that award-winning shot, or to have just some record of a scarce and seldom-seen species. And in that fashion, we clicked off the specials like a litany of beads: Rudd's, Neergaard's, Woodward's, Livingstone's... If you know, you know.

You know just how range-restricted and in the smallest corner of our country these species are, at the southernmost point of their distribution, how hard to see in these dense forests, how rare.

Our base camp was at Bonamanzi Game Reserve near Hluhluwe. We came well-prepared. We had attended two Zoom courses by our camp leader and guide, Aldo Berutti, in the week prior to the camp. Each of us had arrived with a hefty wish-list to get lifer species or special photographs.

But even more so, eager to leave behind our winter highveld with its frosts and city smog and to revel in one of the wettest years ever of the St Lucia Lake system and its surrounding sandforests.



*Birding the sandforests and shores of the Isimangaliso Wetlands near Hluhluwe and St. Lucia at False Bay: Each special bird species would cause a speed hump in the day – until all sixteen photographers were satisfied. [Angela Openshaw]*



Before we had even arrived, Aldo messaged us to check the lawn before the Bonamanzi gate: Senegal Lapwings! What a grand welcoming committee!

When we met Aldo after arrival for some birding around reception, some could tick more lifers with the flocks of Black-bellied Starlings and White-eared Barbets in the gardens there.

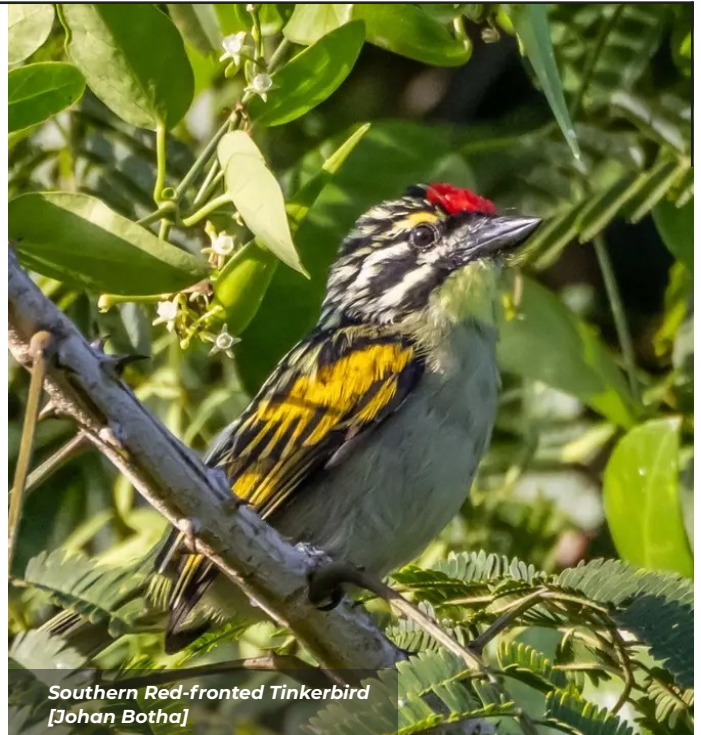
After our first braai and during our first 'round table conference,' Aldo set out the programme for the next few days and the bird species we would target. We would spend the first day at False Bay Park and the Nibela Peninsula on the Western Shores of the St Lucia Lake system. The second day would take us to the Eastern Shores, birding Cape Vidal and St Lucia town. During our last day, we would explore Bonamanzi itself.

The downside was that in Zululand, winter days would be short with limited sunlight. On the other hand, Aldo had never before experienced such abundant and spectacular water bird species as during his exploratory days in the area.

We also discussed rotating cars in the queue and even rotation of our valuable guide Aldo as travelling partner. This fostered a real sense of harmony and team spirit amongst the members of our large group.

Nibela Peninsula proved Aldo's claim with a multitude of herons, ducks, and African Pygmy Geese. A single Pink-backed Pelican crossed right above us, and soon after, a squadron of Great White Pelicans in a V-formation. What unexpected riches!

Returning to Bonamanzi, fortune smiled upon Johan and Vilette's car, causing some serious last car envy: African Pygmy Kingfisher!



*Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird*  
[Johan Botha]



*Gorgeous Bush-Shrike*  
[Vilette Forwood]



*Woodward's Batis (F)*  
[JP van der Merwe]



*Interesting fossil beds at lakeside False Bay and Bonamanzi had two genera of Ammonite: Collignoniceratid and Placenticeratid* [Ivonne Coetzee / Sheleph Burger]



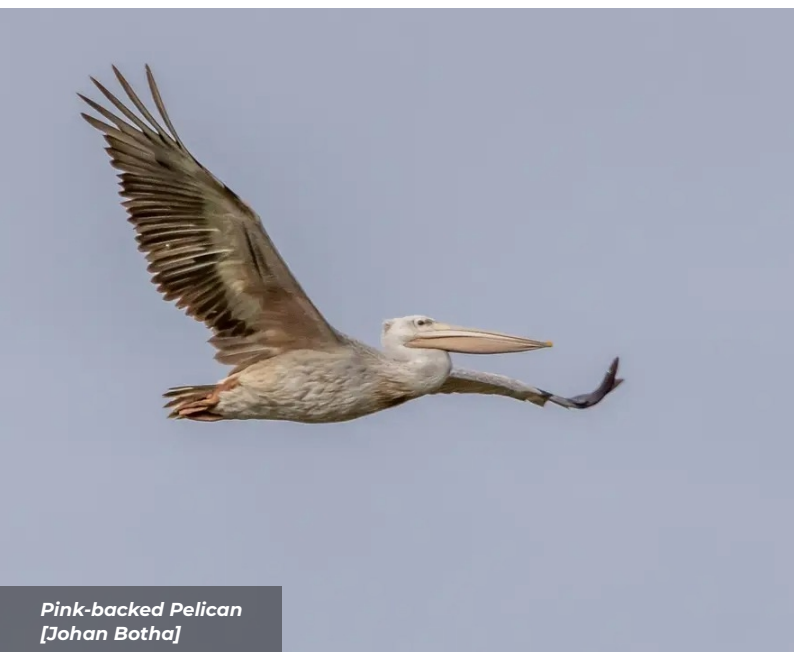
Back at the lodge, there was more opportunity to photograph four special species of sunbird foraging in the Bottlebrush tree. Aldo was kept busy analysing photographs to identify a road-side raptor we had seen. It could be either a juvenile Martial or Crowned Eagle. Aldo's expertise, meticulously weighing up the colour of leg feathering, base of bill and dirty neck, clinched it as Martial. Then, like the other evenings, the braai fires would be going, the wine uncorked, and we would relive the day's high points around the table. Computers would come out and we could drool over beautiful photographs, enjoying the special birds a second time.

The next day, en route Cape Vidal, we found vast road-side areas at the Eastern Shores flooded, confining the few buffalo, zebra, and antelopes to higher ground. Vlei Loop, where Rosy-throated Longclaw might be found, was under water. White-backed Ducks floated close to the tarred road. We scanned each pole for raptors, with high hopes for a lifer sighting of the Southern Banded Snake Eagle.

A most accommodating Crowned Eagle was perched right next to the road, and remained there, allowing occupants of all six cars to have breathtaking views of this, one of South Africa's most magnificent eagles. A consolation, since only a few of us had seen the Southern Banded Snake Eagle speeding past the lead cars.



*Neergaard's Sunbird*  
[Johan Botha]



*Pink-backed Pelican*  
[Johan Botha]



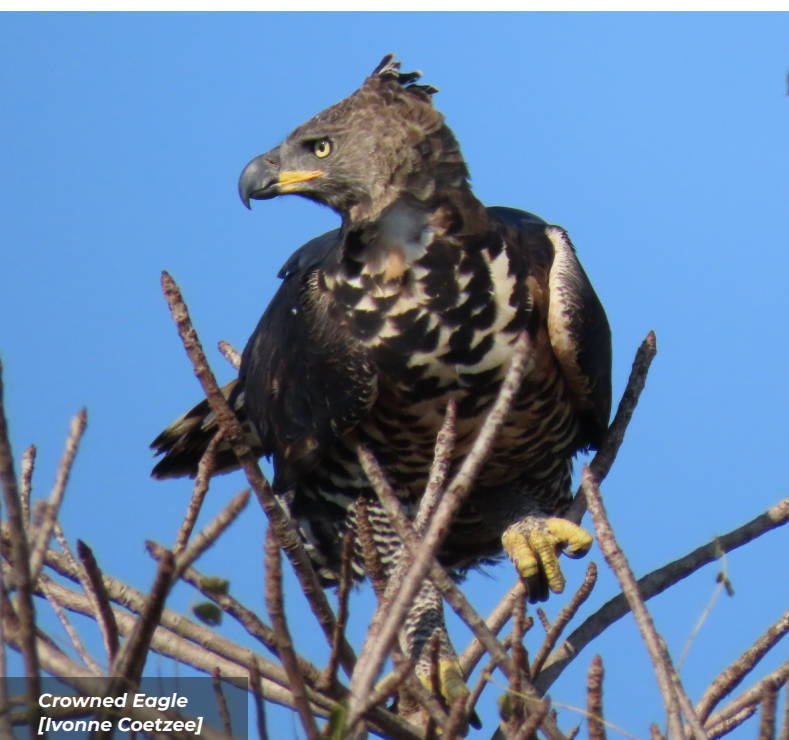
*Collared Sunbird*  
[JP van der Merwe]



The radio crackled: Liesl had just seen her 700th species with a fly-by of a Livingstone's Turaco! A quick foray to Cape Vidal had us encounter a mixed bird party at a leaking tap – Konkoit, Green Twinspot, Red-capped Robin-Chat and Red-backed Mannikin. Cape Vidal also yielded shy Grey Waxbill, spotted by Elmarie's sharp eyes, and many more.

But St Lucia was waiting. Rushing back from Cape Vidal, we had excellent views of an African Marsh Harrier, busy quartering the continuous linked wetland pools which had formed next to the road. Yellow-throated Longclaw perched on roadside bushes.

In St Lucia, a magnificent fruiting Wild Fig on the road to the estuary boardwalk was all we needed for views of both Purple-crested and Livingstone's Turaco, as well as Crowned and Trumpeter Hornbill. Eastern Golden (Yellow) Weavers and Holub's (African) Golden Weavers competed for their share. A female Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, scarce winter visitor to these forested lower elevations and also a frugivorous species, sped away from the canopy to the denser Igwalagwala forest.





Green Malkoha, true to its secretive nature, taunted us with partial views only. But the next day, a more co-operative Green Malkoha and Southern Yellow White-eye in the Bonamanzi reception gardens made up for it. And when we visited Bonamanzi's lakeside, African Yellow Warbler and Grey-rumped Swallows bolstered our bulging bird lists.

The radio buzzed again: Lemon-breasted Canaries! Frantic action with cameras and binoculars captured this sought-after species. We headed home for our celebratory final braai. Thanks so much Angela for your hard work in putting together the course and camp, and to Sheleph, camp-co-ordinator. A heartfelt thanks to Aldo Berutti, our wonderful guide, who so patiently would point out that special sighting to our large group of birders, and who made sure that we could tick most species on our long lists of target birds, repeating instructions to stragglers or the hard-of-hearing. Thanks to a great group. We forged connections, and, indeed, friendships, and shared our joys about our successes over a drink at our table. Until next time, when we will meet here again. And Broadbill will break cover at dawn, the Rosy-throated Longclaw will bask out in the open, and we will be there to catch more of these moments to last us a lifetime. Next time, Bonamanzi!

IVONNE COETZEE



*Brown Scrub Robin*  
[Johan Botha]



*Mocking Swallowtail Butterfly*  
[Innes Buchner]



*Southern Yellow White-eye*  
[Sheleph Burger]



*Livingstone's Turaco*  
[Johan Botha]



*Green Malkoha*  
[Innes Buchner]



*Pink-throated Twinspot*  
[Innes Buchner]



# WHITE-WINGED FLUFFTAIL 2025 CONSERVATION

## DOWNLISTED FROM CRITICALLY ENDANGERED TO ENDANGERED

This downlisting is a result of increased knowledge about the elusive bird, resulting from more than a decade of dedicated study and the use of innovative techniques.

The White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) is a small, elusive bird and is one of nine flufftail species in Africa.

2 July 2025, Johannesburg: BirdLife South Africa, supported by Middelpunt Wetland Trust, has actively studied the highly threatened and elusive White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) using innovative techniques for more than a decade. The new knowledge gained about its biology, breeding distribution, and habitat requirements has allowed for the first robust estimate of its population size. South Africa hosts a larger population than previously thought, resulting in the downlisting of the species' IUCN regional threat status from Critically Endangered to Endangered. However, the bird still faces significant threats to its wetland habitat and requires continued conservation efforts.

The White-winged Flufftail is a globally Critically Endangered bird endemic to Africa. It is one of the most threatened and rare waterbirds on the continent, and is so secretive that, despite being the subject of years of concerted study, there is still much to unravel about its biology. South Africa and Ethiopia are the only countries where the White-winged Flufftail is known to breed. The species' population has declined and its distribution has contracted due to the destruction and degradation of its specialised wetland habitat by land-use practices like mining, water drainage and abstraction, agriculture, afforestation, overgrazing, pollution, and peat fires. In fact, wetlands are considered the most threatened and unprotected habitat in South Africa. Little else is known about the species' breeding behaviour, habitat requirements, and seasonal movements, although this is changing through BirdLife South Africa's dedicated project.



*A White-winged Flufftail in hand during fieldwork. [Warwick Tarboton, BLSA]*



Authorities like the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) specify that the White-winged Flufftail needs the highest level of protection. The International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail found that the lack of knowledge about the species was one of the major obstacles to its effective conservation.

Malcolm Drummond, chairperson of the Middelpunt Wetland Trust (MWT), noted that not much was done to conserve the species in South Africa until 1994, when a group of citizen scientists formed the MWT to safeguard one of only three known sites where the bird was occasionally seen: Middelpunt Wetland near Dullstroom, Mpumalanga. Drummond: “When we formed Middelpunt Wetland Trust in 1994, we were driven by the fear that we might lose this extraordinary bird forever.

To see three decades of citizen science and conservation efforts culminate in the declaration of Middelpunt as both a nature reserve and Ramsar site, while discovering a larger population than we dared hope for, validates every early morning spent in the wetlands. This downlisting represents hope, but our work is far from over; these wetlands and the species that depend on them still face immense pressure.”





The Regional Red Data Book that assesses the threat status of South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini's bird species using the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List criteria was recently published by BirdLife South Africa (see the White-winged Flufftail's assessment [here](#)). New data about the White-winged Flufftail collected since the last Regional Red Data Book review in 2015 has revealed a slightly larger estimated population and breeding range than previously documented.

Dr Alan Lee, Science and Innovation Programme Manager and Lead Author on the 2025 Red Data Book, BirdLife 3 South Africa: "This downlisting represents the power of rigorous science in conservation. When we completed the 2015 Red Data Book assessment, we worked with limited data on one of Africa's most secretive birds. The innovative use of camera traps and acoustic monitoring has revolutionised our understanding of the White-winged Flufftail's distribution and numbers. While we celebrate this scientific breakthrough, the Endangered regional status reminds us that this species remains precariously balanced on the edge of extinction."

Dr Kyle Lloyd, Wetland Conservation Project Manager/Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation at BirdLife South Africa, stated that while the downlisting is a call for celebration, it must be carefully interpreted and contextualised: "This downlisting reflects years of painstaking fieldwork across South Africa's Eastern Escarpment, where our team has used improved research techniques such as motion-activated camera traps and acoustic recorders to monitor for White-winged Flufftail activity in some of the most remote wetlands imaginable.

What we've discovered is both encouraging and sobering. The White-winged Flufftail is present in more locations than previously documented, but each population is small and fragmented. While our improved understanding allows for this status change, the species remains dependent on our continued vigilance and habitat protection efforts."

Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson, Head of Conservation at BirdLife South Africa, elaborated on the work that has been done and that which still remains to protect this embattled waterbird: "The White-winged Flufftail's story exemplifies both the challenges and possibilities in modern conservation. We've moved from guesswork to evidence-based conservation. However, this downlisting must not be mistaken for 'mission accomplished'. South Africa's wetlands face relentless pressure from development, mismanagement, and climate change. We must intensify our efforts, not relax them." To this end, guidelines have recently been published to assist land users and other management authorities in maintaining and improving wetland health for the White-winged Flufftail and other waterbirds.

Additional guidelines have been published on conducting surveys and mitigating impacts to the White-winged Flufftail, and these will assist avifaunal specialists in advising development applications. Other major successes include the declaration of Middelpunt Wetland (the first confirmed breeding site of the White-winged Flufftail in South Africa) as a nature reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar), and expansion of biodiversity stewardship to the surrounding wetlands.

White-winged Flufftail at Middelpunt Wetland  
[Kyle J Lloyd]





Mark Anderson, CEO of BirdLife South Africa, said, “With Ethiopia having sufficient habitat to support only 55 breeding pairs, South Africa plays an important role in preventing the extinction of the White-winged Flufftail.” He implores all stakeholders to maintain and intensify their commitment to protecting this highly threatened bird and the wetland habitat on which it and humans depend.

(BLSA MEDIA RELEASE - 2 July 2025, Johannesburg)

**Contact:** Dr Kyle Lloyd: Wetland Conservation Project Manager/Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation, BirdLife South Africa Cell: 071 103 4464 Email: [kyle.lloyd@birdlife.org.za](mailto:kyle.lloyd@birdlife.org.za)

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*(Ed. If you would like to watch the recording of 25 June 2025 about this project, please visit the BLSA Conservation Conversations YouTube channel:*


[CLICK HERE.](#)



## Best Practice Guidelines for High-Elevation Wetland and Peatland Management in Southern Africa.

Wetlands supply essential ecosystem services, which would require substantial financial investment to replicate. Despite their economic value, they face ongoing threats worldwide. This is concerning for water-scarce regions like southern Africa, especially under climate change forecasts. High-elevation wetlands form part of the water towers in the upper reaches of our catchments that provide, support, and regulate water resources to many downstream users. While the impact of destroying wetlands is obvious, a more subtle impact is degradation through mismanagement.

Scientific understanding of wetlands and their management has improved but remains inaccessible to those responsible for stewarding these ecosystems, primarily private and communal landusers. BirdLife South Africa and partners have developed simplified and illustrated management guidelines for high-elevation wetlands (above 1 400 m) in southern Africa's mesic grassland regions. These guidelines are designed for land users (landowners, farmers, traditional authorities, protected area managers) and their advisors, providing practical knowledge to balance land use with wetland conservation, benefiting communities, future generations, and wildlife.



**Best Practice Guidelines for High-Elevation Wetland and Peatland Management**  
in Southern Africa  
Version 1


*Wetland Management Guidelines Flyer [BLSA]*

### E-BOOK LAUNCH

Our illustrated guidelines contain recommendations and tools for managing and conserving high-elevation wetlands in southern Africa's grasslands while optimising primary land-use activities. They address the urgent need to protect this threatened habitat that provides irreplaceable ecosystem services to communities and wildlife.

Understand the dynamic nature of wetlands in simple terms, and gain the know-how needed to manage your wetlands effectively and sustainably, for the benefit of all.

Download your free digital copy here:



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## New Avifaunal Specialist Guidelines Released for the White-winged Flufftail.

We are pleased to announce the release of our new publication: Guidelines for surveying and mitigating impacts on White-winged Flufftail in avifaunal assessments for development applications.

The White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) is among the world's most threatened and elusive waterbirds. This globally Critically Endangered species breeds only in the high-elevation wetlands of South Africa and Ethiopia, with South Africa hosting the larger population along the Eastern Escarpment.

These science-based guidelines provide avifaunal specialists and environmental practitioners with:

*Habitat suitability assessment - Desktop identification tools and in-field verification protocols.*

*Advanced surveying techniques - Motion-detection cameras and acoustic monitoring methods.*

*Mitigation strategies - Following the mitigation hierarchy, including buffer zone recommendations.*

These guidelines are endorsed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), reinforcing their importance for environmental impact assessments and biodiversity conservation in South Africa. We encourage avifaunal specialists and wetland practitioners to implement these guidelines in their assessments and share their results with us to safeguard the White-winged Flufftail.



**NEW GUIDELINES RELEASED**

The threatened and elusive White-winged Flufftail inhabiting the vegetated wetlands of South Africa requires special methods for surveying and reducing impacts from proposed developments.

BirdLife South Africa's government-endorsed recommendations feature habitat models, monitoring techniques, buffer zones, and mitigation strategies. This essential toolkit helps environmental consultants assess the secretive birds of high-elevation wetlands.

Scan here to download your free copy:



**Flufftail Surveying and Mitigation Guidelines Flyer [BLSA]**

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## FREE CHILDREN'S eBOOKS

### Run Until You Can Fly

'I wish I could fly, Mama,' Saro said. 'Run until you can fly,' Mama said. So, as Sun warmed Wetland's morning mist, Saro ran. What will Saro run into along the way? How will he possibly learn to fly? Join Saro, a Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail, and his friends Oryx the otter and Gus the crane, as they come across surprises together; surprises that will test the trio's strength and friendship.

Written by Brenda Daniels

Illustrated by Amy-Jane Jenkins

Target ages 5-8

Join Saro, a Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail, and his friends Oryx the otter and Gus the crane, as they go on a journey that will test the trio's strength and friendship, in this educational children's book written to awaken a love for nature in those aged 5-8.

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**Run until you Can Fly**

Written by Brenda Daniels  
Illustrated by Amy-Jane Jenkins

A publication by **Run Until You Can Fly** **Flyer [BLSA]**  
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I wish I could fly, Mama,' Saro said.  
an until you can fly,' Mama said. So, as Sun  
warmed Wetland's morning mist, Saro ran.

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Poodles, Piffy and Zenzi, wonder what "birding" means. On a birding day out with their human friends, the dogs discover a diversity of birds and other species inhabiting wetlands. They learn about the special adaptations to living in aquatic habitats and the vital role wetlands play in our everyday lives. Join these two cheeky pups on their birding adventure—a journey that leads to a threatened bird few have ever seen...

Written by Kirsty Kyle

Illustrated by Karlien Muller

Target ages 9-12

Join Saro, a Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail, and his friends Oryx the otter and Gus the crane, as they go on a journey that will test the trio's strength and friendship, in this educational children's book written to awaken a love for nature in those aged 5-8.

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Download your free copy: [CLICK HERE](#)



# SANI IN DIE SNEEU

# TRAVELOGUE

Vir baie jare wou Joelna en ek graag Kroonarende mooi sien. Ons het al 'n jong Kroonarend jare gelede in Tanzanië gesien toe ons op 'n Serengetitoer was, en het hulle ook al in die lug sien oorvlieg as ons in die Noordkus omgewing was, maar ons wou die voël mooi op 'n tak sien sit.

Vennote van my wat by Sanlameer in die Suidkus gaan aftree het, het vertel van 'n Kroonarendnes op die landgoed, en ek het gereeld van die Kroonarende daar gehoor. Verder het Angela Openshaw vertel van 'n vriendin van haar wat by Munster in die Suidkus woon wat ook weet van 'n Kroonarendnes in die woude naby haar.

Ons het minstens 25 jaar gelede aan die suidkus vakansie gehou, en toe ons bewus word dat Maandag 16 Junie 'n openbare vakansiedag is, besluit ons dis die regte tyd om die Kroonarende te gaan soek.

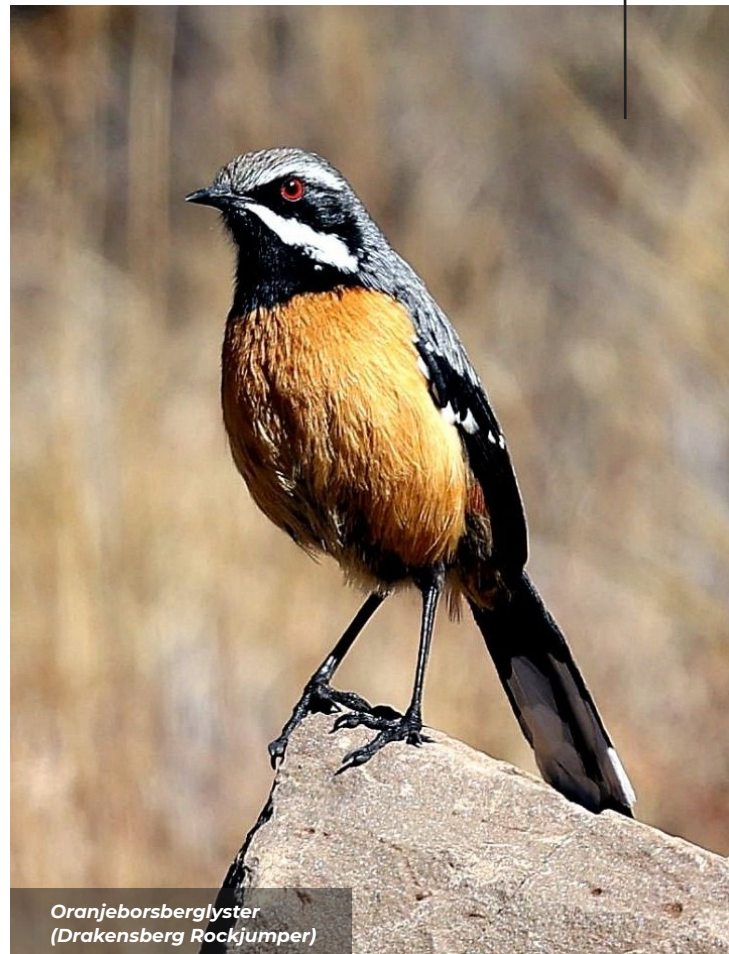
Ons reël toegang by Sanlameer en met Angela se vriendin Ann Pepworth en bespreek 'n tyddeel oor die naweek van die 16de.

Soos dit maar gaan kry ek 'n krieweling dat ons lanklaas Sanipas op was, ons ry dan "daar verby"! Ek maak kontak met Aldo Berutti van Underberg, en bespreek 2 dae by hom om ons Sanipas en omgewing se voëls te gaan wys, die Donderdag en Vrydag voor die langnaweek. Niemand kon raai dat dit die vorige naweek op die Lesothoberge en die Sanipas sou sneeu en alles toe onder die sneeu sou wees nie.

Ek WhatsApp Aldo die Dinsdagaand of ons nog moet kom, en hy haak af: "Kom ons kyk hoe vër ons kan ry." Woensdag laatmiddag daar aangekom, vind ons Underberg in die donker, hulle krag was af sedert die groot storm en reën van die afgelope naweek en niemand kon voorspel wanneer dit weer aan sou kom nie. Met lampolie-lampies en kopliggies tot ons beskikking besluit ons dis "varkie-aand", eet ons by 'n naburige restaurant en is ons bed toe.

Die volgende oggend vroeg kom laai Aldo ons op en vertrek ons Sanipas toe. Ons probeer mekaar opbeur met wat ons sou kon verwag en gesels oor allerhande dinge. Hyself het nog nooit gaan voëls kyk wanneer die Sanipas en Lesotho toe onder die sneeu was nie. Ek is nogal voorbarig om te sê: "Wel, die voëls moet tog eet!"

Ons geniet die oprit, bereik die SA Grenspos sonder enige sneeu in sig, maar sien dat die toppe van die berge spierwit is. By die suikerbosse kry ons 'n Rooiborssuikervoël. Die Rooibektiptolle (Bush Blackcap) en Ruigtesangers (Barrat's Warbler) sou nie daar wees nie, dis winter. Ons ry en ry, later begin ons sneeu kry, maar die pad is nog rybaar. So tussen die sneeukolle kry ons ons eerste Oranjeborsberglysters en ook Bergpietjiekanaaries.



Oranjeborsberglyster  
(Drakensberg Rockjumper)



Bergpietjiekanaarie  
(Drakensberg Siskin).





Bergpatryse  
(Grey-winged Francolin)

Die sneeu word al meer. Ons ry by 'n toegesneeude watervalletjie verby. Aldo waarsku dat die sneeu nie te gevaarlik is nie, maar dat sneeu wat ys as gevolg van die koue, seepglad word, en baie meer gevaarlik is. Ons sien egter dat daar al heelwat ander motorspore is en ons skep moed dat ons tog bo sou kom. Dit word al steiler en steiler, die haarnaalddraaie al skerper en gladder maar ons gaan. Aldo verwissel die Toyota 4X4 na sy laagste rat, ons kyk nie meer voëls nie, met alle konsentrasie op die pad tussen die sneeu deur. Die laaste draai voor ons bo was, val ons bietjie terug, maar met die tweede probeerslag is ons uit en bo. Wow, dit was 'n storie.

Ons registreer by die Lesotho Grenspos en ry verder Lesotho in, in die rigting van die Black Mountain Pass. Op 'n plek stop Aldo en kry ons ontbyt en koffie. Die wêreld is spierwit en die pad die bergpas uit toegesneeu.



Aldo en Joelna



Pieter en Joelna Heslinga





Langtoonkliplyster  
(Sentinel Rock Thrush)

Die volgende oomblik begin Aldo voëls uitroep – Drakensberglangstertjie (Drakensberg Prinia), Kaapse Kliplyster (Cape Rock Thrush), Withalskraai (White-necked Raven), Huiltinktinkie (Wailing Cisticola), Langtoonkliplyster, nog Oranjeborsberglysters, Piet-tjou-tjou-grysmees, Grystjeriktik (Layard's Warbler), Bergwagter (Mountain Chat), en by 'n toegeyste dammetjie selfs Kopereende (South African Shelduck).

Verder Rooivlerkstreepkoppies (Cape Bunting), Dikbeklewerikke (Large-billed Lark), 'n Kransvalk (Rock Kestrel) wat aan 'n muis vreet, om maar 'n paar te noem. Wat 'n fees. Selfs 'n Sloggett's Vleiroet (Sloggett's Ice Rat). Kostelik.



Piet-tjou-tjou-grysmees  
(Grey Tit)



Grondspeg  
(Ground Woodpecker)





Kroonarend  
(Crowned Eagle)

Nou ja , ons moes na 'n uur weer huiswaarts keer. Die afgaan sou ook senutergend wees, die grondpad bo tussen die ys baie glad, maar ons is veilig af. Langs die pad weer Berglysters gekry en ook Grondspegte (Ground Woodpecker). Mens kan sê 'n "full house" van Drakensberg wintervoëls.

Aldo laai ons af by die cottage wat ons gehuur het en ons sê baie dankie.

'n Onvergeetlike ervaring met Aldo Berutti, Sanipas uit en voëlkyk in die sneeu, wie sou dit kon raai? Hiervandaan is ons die volgende dag kortpad (wat langpad deur die kronkelende berge en gehuggies geword het) Suidkus toe . Ons slaap by 'n tyddeel naby Margate. Ons sou so gelukkig wees om nie net die Kroonarende te kry nie maar ook 'n paar Witaasvoëls ( Palm-nut Vulture) wat 'n nes by die Riverbend Krokodilplaas in die hoë bome gehad het.

'n Onvergeetlike naweek, wat 'n week geword het.

PIETER EN JOELNA HESLINGA



Witaasvoël  
(Palm-nut Vulture)



# BEST OF BLNG

## BLNG's BEST – NORTHERN KRUGER WISHLIST

We regularly receive stunning images from BLNG members which are not necessarily part of a camp, club outing or travelogue.

This forum was created for just this niche. In each issue, a collection of themed photographs will be showcased. In this case, a few images of special birds photographed in the Punda Maria / Pafuri area, to whet your appetite for the BLNG Punda Maria camp in October.

Kindly submit your special photographs to [ivonnecoetzee@outlook.com](mailto:ivonnecoetzee@outlook.com). You will never know when they might be selected for this section!



Grey-headed (Brown-necked  
Parrot) / Savannepapegaai  
[Marna Buys]



Three-banded Courser  
Driebanddrawwertjie  
[Ivonne Coetzee]





Pennant-winged Nightjar  
Wimpelvlernaguil  
[JP van der Merwe]



Southern Yellow White-eye  
Geelglasogie  
[JP van der Merwe]





*Dickinson's Kestrel*  
*Dickinsonsgrysvalk*  
[Sean Naudé]



*Böhm's Spinetail*  
*Witpensstekelstert*  
[Sean Naudé]





*Racket-tailed Roller*  
*Knopsterttroupant*  
[Deon van der Hoven]



*Black-throated Wattle-eye*  
*Beloogbosbontrokkie*  
[Sheleph Burger]





Pel's Fishing Owl  
Visuil  
[Ivonne Coetzee]



Arnot's Chat  
Bontpiek  
[JP van der Merwe]



# FAERIE GLEN-VERRASSINGS BIRDEERS EYE VIEW

'n Vriend van my, Dirk Human, is 'n toegewyde voëlkyker, en is my altyd voor om eerste 'n skaars voël te vind. As dit nie 'n Feevlieëvanger (Fairy Flycatcher) by die Moreleta NR is nie, dan is dit 'n Blouvisvanger (Half-collared Kingfisher) by Kimiad, en dan is ek agterna om dit ook te probeer opspoor.

So het dit gekom dat hy my van 'n Watertrapper (African Finfoot) vertel wat hy in Maart vanjaar in die stroom by die Faerie Glen NR gesien het. Gedurende dieselfde tyd was daar berigte oor 'n Sprinkaansanger (River Warbler) wat ook daar gesien is. Ek en Joelna wou eers graag die sanger sien en is agter hom aan maar toe die sangers weg is, het ek weer aan die Watertrapper begin dink.

Dirk het met my 'n waypoint gedeel wat doer agter in die reservaat was, na-aan Manitobastraat, nou al twee maande later as wat hy dit gesien het. Nou was dit al goed koud maar ek het 'n Maandagoggend met 'n beker koffie by die spruit gaan sit waar Dirk die Watertrapper vir die eerste keer gesien het. Ek het van sewe-uur tot tien daar gesit, maar geen spoor van 'n Watertrapper nie. 'n Blouvisvanger het my kom verras.

Dinsdagoggend dieselfde roetine, weer niks, maar hierdie keer het 'n Reusevisvanger kom wys en 'n paar Swarteende verby geswem. Woensdagoggend, rondom 9 uur, siedaar, die Watertrapper, maar toe hy my sien spring hy om en weg.



*Blouvisvanger (Half-collared Kingfisher)*



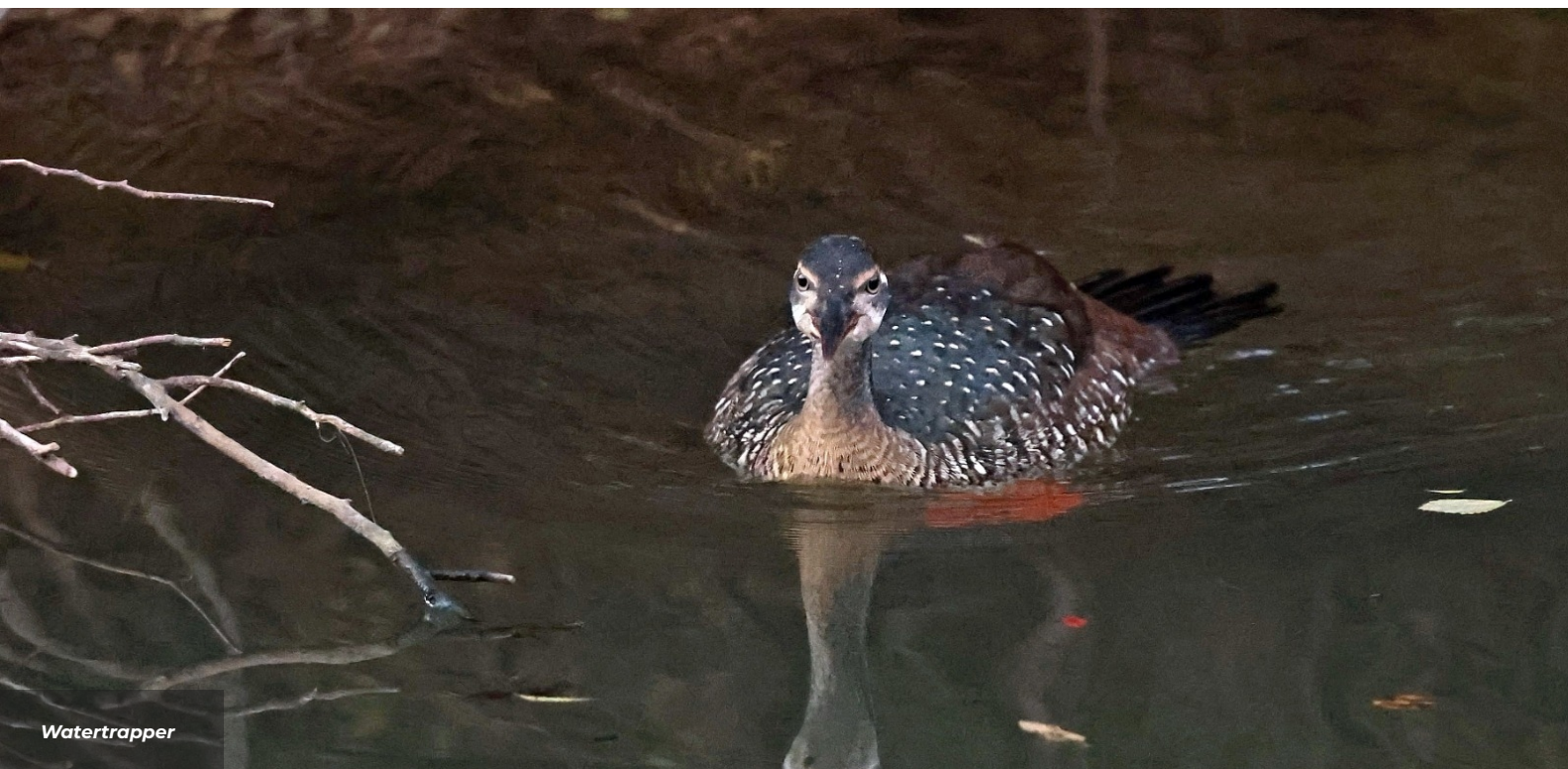
*Reusevisvanger (Giant Kingfisher)*





*Swarteend (African Black Duck)*

Ek vertel vir Louise Kritzinger, voorsitter van die Vriende van Faerie Glen, van die visvangers wat ek gekry het en deel foto's met haar. Sy vertel toe van 'n oom, Johan Brink, wat elke dag van vieruur tot halfses by die Black Duck Pool op 'n bankie gaan sit en 'n snaakse eend van tyd tot tyd daar opmerk. Tussen die twee van hulle het hulle besef dit is 'n Watertrapper wat Johan sien. Ek maak kontak met hom en kom ooreen dat ek hom die volgende dag daar sal ontmoet, wat ek ook doen.



*Watertrapper*

Ons gesels lekker en ek maak my tuis langs 'n boompie op die oewer van die spruit, met my koffiebeker en wag. Siedaar, klokslag vyfuur, hier kom die Watertrapper vanuit die ooste aangeswem, en sonder om skaam te wees swem dit reg voor ons verby stroomaf. Ek dink dis dieselfde een as wat Dirk twee maande terug gesien het. Dit swem maar op en af op soek na kos.

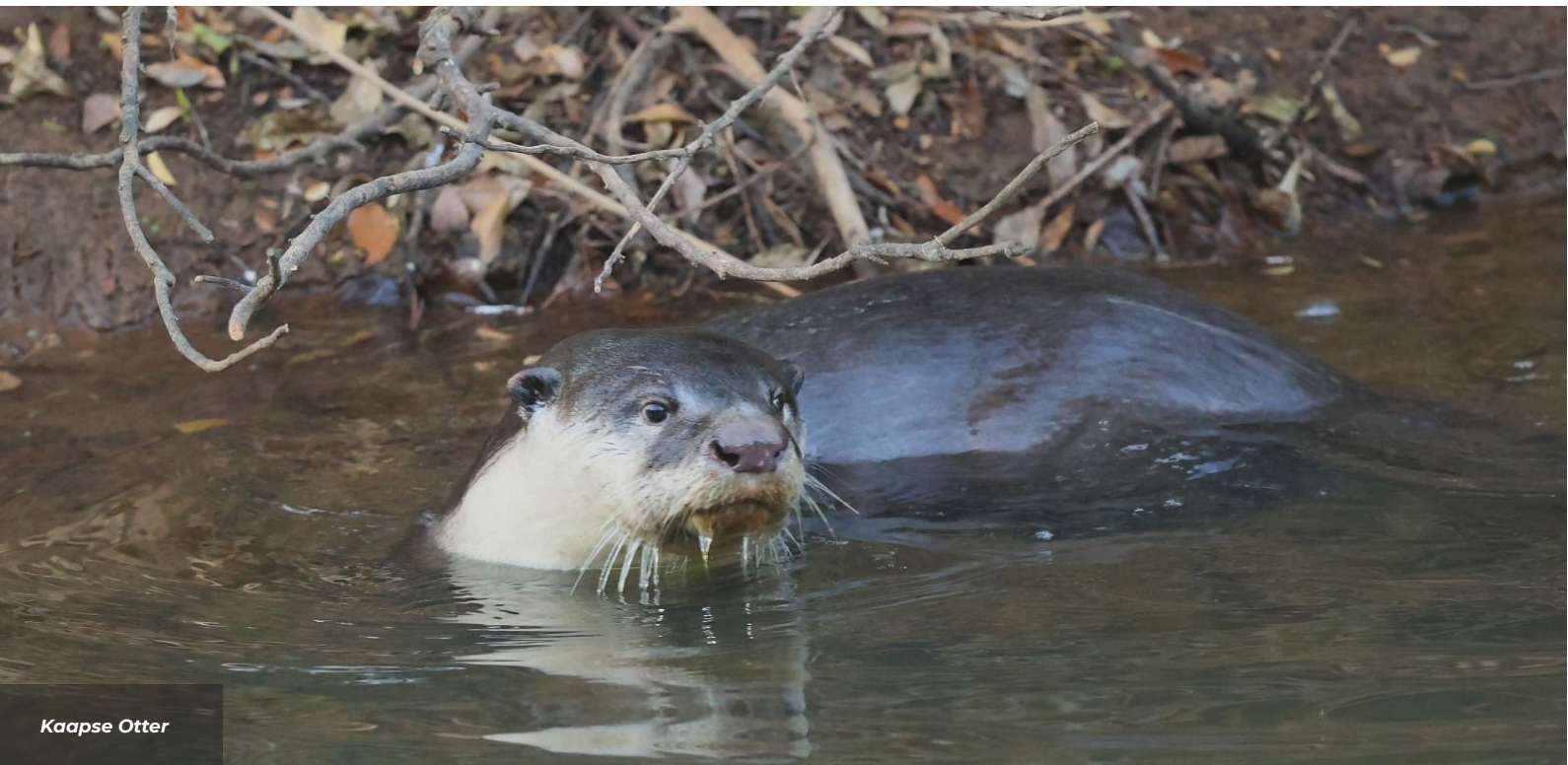
Ek kon mooi foto's neem. Ek gaan die volgende dag weer saam met Johan sit, maar hierdie keer niks nie, en nog 'n slag weer niks nie. Toe, op 4 Junie, gaan Joelna saam. Beginners luck.





Watertrapper

Eers kom 'n paar Swarteende verby, daarna vlieg 'n Reusevisvanger oor, toe kom die Watertrapper en skuins voor half ses kom vier Kaapse Otters verby. Nog nooit tevore daar gesien nie. Ons was só gelukkig. Sedertdien het Johan ook al Bosvarke raakgeloop en het ons weer by die kuil gaan sit en die Watertrapper gesien. Een keer het dit van die westekant af stroomop geswem. Hoewel dit redelik laat word en koud is, kry mens nog billike fotos, 'n mens moet maar net gaan sit en geduldig wag.



Kaapse Otter

Die Watertrapper wat ons sien is 'n jong wyfie, dink ons. Louise vertel van 'n ander persoon wat 'n Watertrapper stroomaf in die spruit by Murrayfield gesien het. Sou dit dieselfde een wees?

Die Faerie Glen NR is oop vir almal. Neem 'n stoeltjie en gaan sit by die Swart Eendekuil. As jy nie die reservaat ken nie, daar is 'n kaart in die kantoorgeboutjie wat mooi wys waar die kuil is. Wees maar geduldig, een of ander dag sal julle haar te siene kry.

Lekker wag!

PIETER HESLINGA



## Photographer

noun — fot-gra-fer

A person who finds joy in lying on the ground, climbing things, and generally contorting themselves into odd positions and frequently utters the phrase "Just one more" and yet never stops at just one.



Bonamanzi [Vilette Forwood]







Verloren Vallei [Craig Green]



Mozambique [Annetjie Barkhuizen]



Mozambique [Annetjie Barkhuizen]





Verloren Vallei  
[Craig Green]



Mabusa NR  
[Fransie O'Brien]





St Lucia  
[Stephnè Coetzee]



Mozambique  
[Angela Openshaw]



Vriende van Magalies  
[Harry Bijker]





**Dullstroom**  
[Marlou Schalkwyk]



**Zaagkuildrift**  
[Ivonne Coetzee]



**Roadside lifer - Zaagkuildrift**  
[Ivonne Coetzee]



# RINGVERSLAG, JAN - JUNIE 2025

# CITIZEN SCIENCE

Die ringgroep was die afgelope ses maande baie bedrywig. Ons het Saterdagoggend-uitstappies gehad na Bishopvoëlpark, Rietvlei NR, Moreleta NR, Colbyn Valley vir Wêreldvleilanddag, Botaniese Tuin, Voortrekkermonument, Strubendam in Lynnwood Glen en twee plase, genaamd Boekenhoutsloof, en Adonai uit op die Moloto-pad. Ook naweekkampe is gehou by Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Centre naby Orpenhek, Paardeplaats NR naby Lydenburg, Wolfhuiskraal naby Pienaarsrivier, Wilton Valley anderkant Lephalale, Bushtail naby Magaliesburg en Mabalingwe anderkant Bela-Bela.



Ons vang nie net voëls in die nette nie. Pieter du Plessis het hierdie nagapie by die Voortrekkermonument in die nette betrap.



David Keyter was so gelukkig om 'n Grootheuningwyser (Greater Honeyguide) by die Voortrekkermonument te ring. [Daniël Keyter.]

Die totaal vir die laaste ses maande was 2 595 voëls wat hanteer is. Daarvan het 2 386 nuwe ringe gekry, en die res was 'retraps'.

Die ringplek wat die meeste voëls opgelewer het vir 'n oggend se vangs, was Rietvlei NR met 207 voëls in Januarie. Die meeste 'retraps' is by Strubendam gevang met 'n getal van 38 voëls, ook in Januariemaand.





Dit was -2°C op die berg by Bushtrail (Magaliesburg) toe Sonya de Bruyn hierdie Oranjekeelkalkoentjie (Cape Longclaw) in Junie daar gering het. [Charl de Bruyn]



Hierdie was maar een van die 34 roofvoëls wat tydens die Wilton Valley-kamp gevang is. Chris du Plooy hou die Swartborsslangarend (Black-chested Snake Eagle) vas, terwyl Julian en Hanneke saam poseer. [Hanneke van Loggerenberg]



Wanda Louwrens was saam Wilton Valley toe. Sy het dié Groenrugreier (Striated/Little Heron) as 'n 'lifer' gering.



Hierdie Grootjagarend (African Hawk Eagle) was maar een van die meer as twintig roofvoëls wat die groep op 'n ringuitstappie na Wilton Valley naby Steenbokpan en Lephalale (Ellisras) area onderneem het. Julian du Plooy het hierdie een gering. [Hanneke van Loggerenberg]

Die grootste getal voëls by 'n kamp, was die besoek aan Wilton Valley anderkant Lephalale in Maart vanjaar. Die 634 Rooibekkweleas (Red-billed Quelea) het die getal vir die week opgestoot na 974 voëls wat gevang is, waarvan 10 'retraps' was. 'n Nuwe rekord!

Die roofvoëls in Limpopo was volop en die 33 voëls wat gevang is, het spesies soos Kleinsperwer (Little Sparrowhawk), Bleeksingvalk (Pale Chanting Goshawk), Edelvalk (Lanner Falcon), asook verskeie arende ingesluit soos Bruin- en Swartborsslangarend (Brown and Black-chested Snake-Eagle), Grootjagarend (African Hawk Eagle) en Bruinarend (Wahlberg's Eagle).



Dit was ook die eerste keer dat kleurring saam met metaalringe aangesit is. Agt Rooiruglaksmanne (Red-backed Shrike) was die ontvangers. Ons hoop dat dit goeie data sal inbring.

Die drie Bosveldpapegaai (Meyer's Parrot) wat Arrie by Wilton gevang het, was 'n 'lifer' vir hom. Dit is baie moeilik om hierdie papegaai te vang. Hy moes baie hoë nette opsit om dit reg te kry. Nog net 60 is op Safring se rekords aangeteken, 57 wat nuwe ringe gekry het, twee 'retraps' en een 'recovery'.

Dit is verblydend dat daar die afgelope jaar twaalf jonger mense aangesluit het by die ringers vir opleiding. Twee voëls wat groot opwinding onder die ringers veroorsaak het, was die Rooibektiptol (Bush Blackcap) en die Gestreepte Koester (Striped Pipit), wat Elba Swart en Arrie Klopper onderskeidelik by Paardeplaats NR naby Lydenburg gering het. Beide die spesies was nog nie voorheen, volgens SABAP2, vir die pentad aangeteken nie. Dit was ook 'lifers' vir albei van hulle.

WANDA LOUWRENS



Hierdie Bosveldpapegaai (Meyer's Parrot) was maar die 60ste een wat ooit gering is. Arrie Klopper het dit by Wilton Valley met baie hoë nette gevang. [Arrie Klopper]



Elba Swart was die eerste een wat 'n Rooibektiptol (Bush Blackcap) by Paardeplaats (Longtompas) vir daardie pentad op BirdLasser aangeteken het. [Elba Swart]



Die plaas Adonai op die Moloto-pad is 'n nuwe ringplek vir die ringers. David Keyter het hierdie Geelblestinker (Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird) daar gering. Dit was 'n 'lifer' vir hom. [Daniël Keyter]



By die Opleidingsdag in Junie het Sonya de Bruyn haar A-ringer sertifikaat van ringkoördineerder, Frik du Plooy, ontvang. Die ander ontvangers was vlnr: Charl de Bruyn, David en Daniël Keyter. [Pieter du Plessis]



# A TOUCHING RESCUE MISSION

# CITIZEN SCIENCE

## SUCCESSFUL RESCUE OF BROWN-HOODED KINGFISHER TRAPPED AT MENLYN MALL

On Sunday, 27 July 2025, a female Brown-hooded Kingfisher (*Halcyon albiventris*) was discovered trapped high inside Menlyn Shopping Centre in Pretoria. The bird was first spotted by Mr Werner Coetzee, a member of the public, who promptly sent photographs and video footage to Judy, head of the South African Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre (SAWRC) clinic in Springs. Judy immediately shared the alert with the SAWR Pretoria rescue team via WhatsApp.

Wildlife volunteer Lizelle English, upon seeing the alert, contacted FC Bothma, an A-ringer with BirdLife Northern Gauteng (BLNG), who has the necessary equipment, such as nets and extension poles, for high-ceiling rescues. FC assembled an A-ringer team, including Elba Swart and Arrie Kloppe, and coordinated with Centre Management to conduct the rescue after shopping hours.

At approximately 18:30 on Sunday, 27 July 2025, after careful planning and the deployment of a 12-metre mist net, the bird was successfully captured. She was identified as a healthy adult female, fitted with SAFRING ring number E12893 by Arrie Kloppe, and safely released near the Menlyn mall the following morning, 28 July 2025.





# AVILIST 2025 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

# CITIZEN SCIENCE

AviList, a unified global checklist of birds that provides the most current and authoritative taxonomy of birds around the world, was released by experts in taxonomy, nomenclature, and bioinformatics including researchers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Ornithological Society, BirdLife International, International Ornithologists' Union, and Avibase.

The AviList team worked for four years to harmonize the global checklist of birds with the aim of providing a single list of species names making it easier to compile and share information on bird species to improve conservation outcomes.

The working group of ornithologists and taxonomists behind AviList formed under the International Ornithologists' Union, with a mission to reconcile the differences in scientific species names among the Clements, International Ornithological Congress, and BirdLife International checklists.

The working group employs an "integrative species concept." According to Christidis, the integrative species concept "looks at all areas of evidence to make an assessment, including morphology [what a species looks like], behavior, ecology, genetics, phylogenetic relations [species relationships on an evolutionary tree], time since divergence based on genetics, biogeographical distributions, and of course any evidence of reproductive isolation."

The working group's debates over species status often go beyond poring through research on evolutionary trees to analyzing sound recordings of breeding songs, inspecting museum specimens for plumage differences, and considering the latest DNA research via genome sequencing. Decisions for the unified checklist are ultimately made by a vote from eight of the working group members.

This collaborative effort resulted in a single current consensus taxonomy for the birds of the world, along with key information on taxonomy and nomenclature. The checklist is free to download and can be used by ornithologists, birders, biologists, conservation practitioners, administrators, legislators, and any other stakeholders in bird classification.

The Southern African list also moves across to be aligned to this new world list. These name changes and lumps are subject to the final decision by the List and Rarities Committee.

There have been a large number of lumps across the globe and some in the subregion. Many will affect us locally in terms of the names used.

## Name Changes:

<b>Old Name</b>	<b>New Name</b>
African Swampphen	<b>African (Purple) Swampphen</b>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<b>Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird</b>
Intermediate Egret	<b>Yellow-billed Egret</b>
Green-backed (Striated) Heron	<b>Little Heron</b>
Mountain Wheatear	<b>Mountain Chat</b>
White-breasted Cormorant	<b>Great (White-breasted) Cormorant</b>
Dark-capped Bulbul	<b>Common (Dark-capped) Bulbul</b>
Lazy Cisticola	<b>Lazy (Rock-loving) Cisticola</b>
Crested Guineafowl	<b>Southern Crested Guineafowl</b>
African Hoopoe	<b>Common Hoopoe</b>
Barlow's Lark	<b>Dune Lark</b>
Rock Martin	<b>Large Rock Martin</b>





African Swampphen  
**African (Purple) Swampphen**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



Red-fronted Tinkerbird  
**Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird**  
 [Johann Botha]



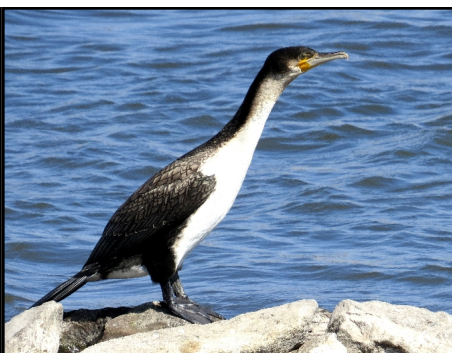
Intermediate Egret  
**Yellow-billed Egret**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



Green-backed (Striated) Heron  
**Little Heron**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



Mountain Wheatear  
**Mountain Chat**  
 [Marna Buys]



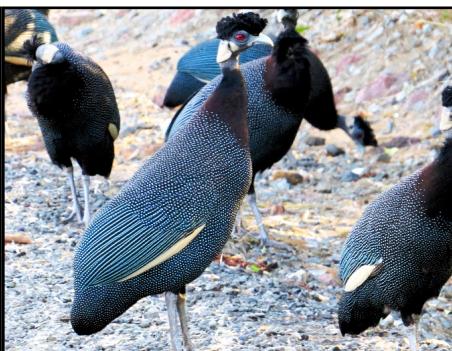
White-breasted Cormorant  
**Great (White-breasted) Cormorant** [Ivonne Coetzee]



Dark-capped Bulbul  
**Common (Dark-capped) Bulbul**  
 [Marna Buys]



Lazy Cisticola  
**Lazy (Rock-loving) Cisticola**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



Crested Guineafowl  
**Southern Crested Guineafowl**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



African Hoopoe  
**Common Hoopoe**  
 [Marna Buys]



Barlow's Lark  
**Dune Lark**  
 [Dom Rollinson]



Rock Martin  
**Large Rock Martin**  
 [Ivonne Coetzee]



Lumps:



Cape Long-billed Lark  
[Stephnè Coetzee]



Agulhas Long-billed Lark  
[Stephnè Coetzee]

**Cape Long-billed Lark** (\*Subject to review)



Karoo Long-billed Lark  
[Stephnè Coetzee]



Benguela Long-billed Lark  
[Dubi Shapiro, Birding Angola]

**Karoo Long-billed Lark**



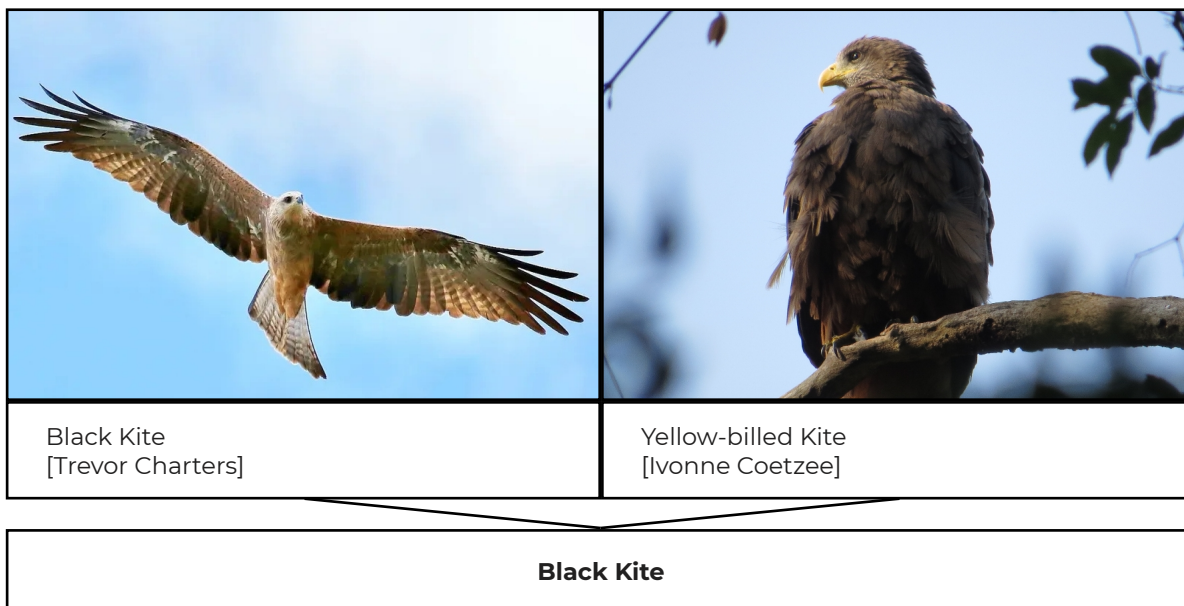
Green-backed Camaroptera  
[Vilette Forwood]



Grey-backed Camaroptera  
[Hannes van den Berg]

**Bleating Camaroptera**





For a full explanation and discussion by the Chairman of the List and Rarities Committee, Chris Lotz, please watch the episode of BLSA's Conservation Conversations: South Africa's Bird Names- and the country's official bird list by clicking on the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNC61qX8pr\\_XIEXy3ceee3p9xK4l3jE18](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNC61qX8pr_XIEXy3ceee3p9xK4l3jE18).

Source:

[AviList: A Unified Global Checklist of the World's Birds is Now Available | Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#).

BLSA Checklist, July 2025 -

[www.birdlife.org.za/media-and-resources/bird-checklists/](http://www.birdlife.org.za/media-and-resources/bird-checklists/)



# CLUB RARITIES

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

### APRIL

With migrants having departed, and a dismally wet and cold April which caused flooded and impassable roads, reports of special sightings all but dried up.

A single **Cape Vulture** was seen in Cheltondale in Johannesburg. Ard van de Wetering reported a **Black Stork** on Crake Road. The Trichardtspoort road had a flock of eight **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters**, reported by Hanjo Gouws. Selwyn Rautenbach found a **Martial Eagle** on the dirt road next to Mabusa NR. BLNG members saw a **Yellow-bellied Greenbul** at Wilge River Valley, with a **Grey Tit-flycatcher** another notable sighting.



Cape Vulture  
[Brad Merwitz]



# MAY

Rather a quiet month as far as regional rare birds were concerned. Still some excellent and interesting sightings were recorded, starting with a pair of **Grey-winged Francolin** seen at Suikerbosrand NR (Michael Johnson).

Selwyn Rautenbach had, as seems to be ever the case, scarce birds popping out everywhere: **African Crake** at Kgomo-Kgomo, an **African Goshawk** flying over Deales' Rock Lodge in the Wilge River Valley, and a large family of **Green-capped Eremomela**, and **White-crested Helmet-shrike** on the Wilge River Road. He also spotted **Greater Painted-snipe** at Marievale.

A magnificent **Verreaux's Eagle Owl** was seen at Johannesburg Golf course. Andy Featherstone guided Witwatersrand Bird Club on an outing to Boons Road and came across a flock of **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters**, but with the star of the show, a **Rufous-eared Warbler**, showing well. He also led a BLNG group around the Devon grasslands, and **Blue Crane**, **Blue Korhaan**, and **Maccoa Duck** were some of the highlights of the day. **Maccoa Duck** was also seen at Dickenson's Pans.

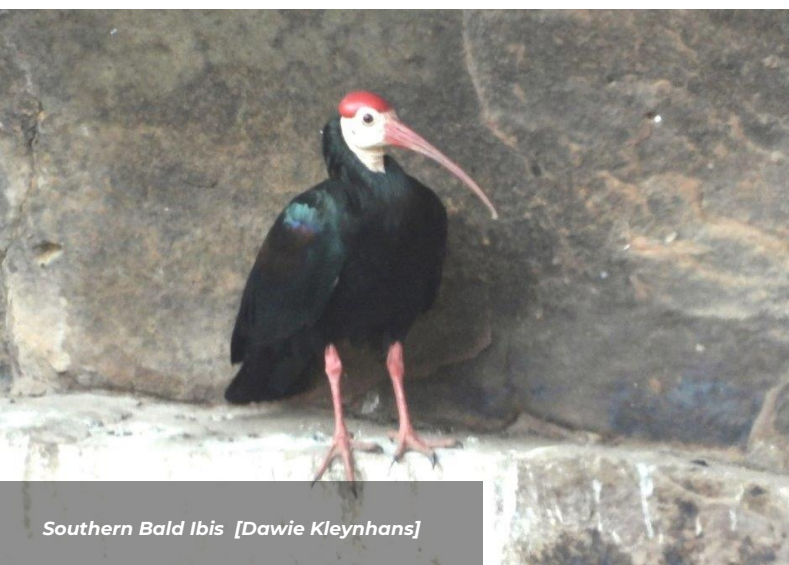


*Rufous-eared Warbler [Daniel Cleary]*



*Verreaux's Eagle Owl [Trevor Barnes]*

An interesting record of no fewer than six Southern Bald Ibis at Little Eden was sent in by Dawie Kleynhans near the end of May.



*Southern Bald Ibis [Dawie Kleynhans]*



*Maccoa Duck [Marna Buys]*



# JUNE

Some excellent and interesting sightings were recorded during this period.

A **National Rarity** was reported when the BLNG group on an outing with Sandy Neveling found a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at South Bay at the Vaal Dam near Deneysville.



Several **Wider Gauteng Rarities** were recorded during the same BLNG outing. **Double-banded Courser, Orange River White-eye, Spike-heeled Lark** and **Blue Korhaan** made up a pleasing total of rare or interesting species seen on the day.





Selwyn Rautenbach found a **Black Harrier** in the same area near Deneysville. He also found **African Goshawk** at Wilge River Valley and **Pied Avocet** at Marievale.

Gerben van de Wetering reported a **Pink-billed Lark** at Boon's Road, while **Short-clawed Lark** and **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** were seen in the vicinity of Sun City.



*Pink-billed Lark [Gerben van de Wetering]*



*Short-clawed Lark [Thea Jenkins]*

A **White-backed Night Heron** (Mabusa NR) and **Cape Vulture** seen at the Aloe Farm near De Wildt during a BLNG outing boosted the number of interesting sightings. Another BLNG outing to Finfoot Lake produced an **African Hawk-Eagle**.



*White-backed Night Heron [Thea Jenkins]*



*Cape Vulture [Hannes van den Berg]*



*African Finfoot [Pieter Heslinga]*



*African Hawk-Eagle [Sheleph Burger]*

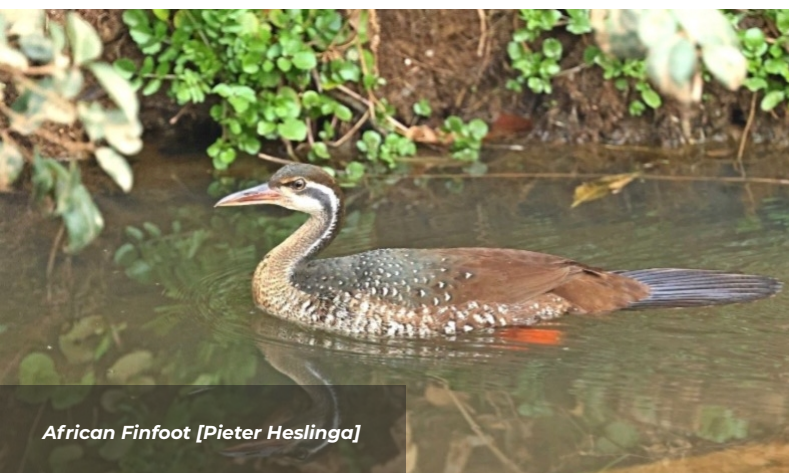
Mike Pope reported a single **Black-necked Grebe** at Glen Austin Pan near Midrand. An immature **Lappet-faced Vulture** was seen in the vicinity of Boon's Road (Justin Rhys Nicolau).

Large groups of **Marabou Storks** were seen flying near Wahlmanstall (Etienne Marais) and an immature **Martial Eagle** over Suikerbosrand (Patrick O'Brien). Niall Perrins had a productive day at Devon IBA with **Black-necked Grebe**, **Black Harrier** and a large group of **Blue Cranes**.

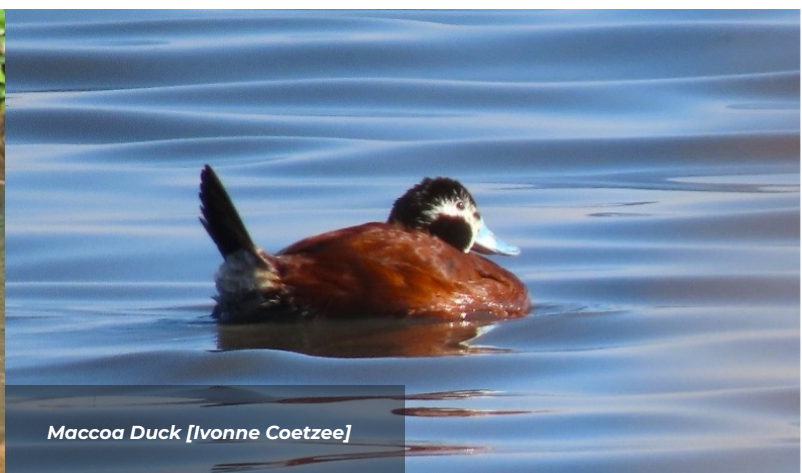


# JULY

A very quiet month as far as regional rare birds were concerned. Still some excellent and interesting sightings were recorded, starting with a pair of **Grey-winged Francolin** seen at Suikerbosrand NR (Michael Johnson). **Maccoa Duck** was seen near Bapsfontein and Glen Austin Pans. The **African Finfoot** was seen again in Faerie Glen.



*African Finfoot [Pieter Heslinga]*

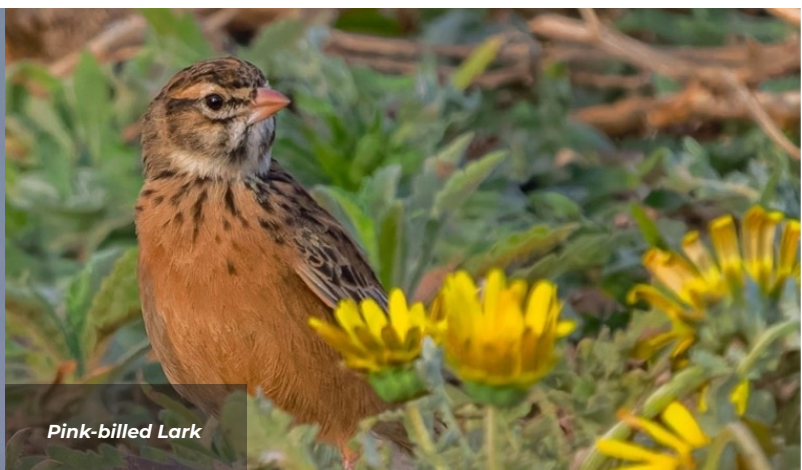


*Maccoa Duck [Ivonne Coetzee]*

The BLNG club on an outing to Boons Road came across **White-bellied Bustard**, showing well. A **Pink-billed Lark** was also found. Other interesting species were **Spike-heeled**, **Red-capped** and **Eastern Clapper Lark**, not regularly seen closer to Pretoria.



*White-bellied Bustard [Johan Croukamp]*



*Pink-billed Lark*

*All these sightings were reported on various social media forums.*



# LANIARIUS NEW MEMBERS: APRIL TO JULY 2025

# BLNG MATTERS

## AAN ALLE NUWE LEDE - BAIE WELKOM!

Ons sien daarna uit om julle by ons aandvergaderings, daguitstappies of tydens 'n naweekkamp te leer ken.

## TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS – WELCOME!

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

*Please contact Fransie at [secretary@blng.co.za](mailto:secretary@blng.co.za) or phone her on cell number 072 737 0862 for any queries or information.*

Ronel van der Walt	Montana Park	Sonya & Charl de Bruyn,	Mooiplaats/Donkerhoek
Eugene Pansegrouw & Riana Swart	Centurion	Alzane & Elisna	Mooiplaats/Donkerhoek
Bertus Spreeth	Sinoville X2	Izette Malan	Pierre van Ryneveld Park
Chris Teurlinckx	Moreleta Park	Elise Franz	Capital Park
Jano & Abigail Moller	Magalieskruin	Liza Wassenaar	Murrayfield
Niels Bredahl	Randburg	Jaco den Oudsten	Bergtuin
Xander Kotze	Valhalla	Danel Brits	Centurion
Zak Croukamp	Rooihuiskraal	John Truter	Roodepoort
Jannie de Beer	Brooklyn	Gary & Amanda Boyle	Wonderboom South
Francois Humphries & Raegan	Mooikloof	Gertraud Danler	Montana
Hannes de Wet	Bashewa	Eben Nel	Brooklyn

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The Laniarius is only distributed electronically. The Laniarius will no longer be printed by BLNG.

Die Laniarius word slegs elektronies versprei. Dit word nie meer gedruk deur BLNG nie.

Fransie O'Brien | 072 737 0862 | [secretary@blng.co.za](mailto:secretary@blng.co.za)

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Ons opregte dank aan almal vir donasies gemaak. U donasie verseker dat ons 'n groter bydrae tot die bewaring van voëls kan lewer. Ons waardeer dit opreg.





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# **BUFFELSDRIFT**

## **Rust de Winter**

### **ACCOMMODATION**

**R700/adult/night;**

**R350/child 12 years and younger/night;**

**Day visitors R100/person/day**



### **BOOKINGS**

**Please call Donald**

**on 082 885 5577;**

**or e-mail**

**bookings@birdhiking.co.za**

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