



BLING WINGS

Golden-breasted Bunting [Marna Buys]

Edition 33 April 2026

CLUB MEETING 14 APRIL

This very interesting talk focused on the De Hoop Penguin colony.



De Hoop for Penguins

Christina Hagen, Pamela Isdell Fellow
of Penguin Conservation, BirdLife South
Africa



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MODDERFONTEIN RESERVE - 1 April

This reserve is one of the top birding hotspots near Johannesburg. Multiple raptors and kingfishers, including a pair of Giant Kingfishers, made this a rewarding outing. Pat Ailing led this outing.



A highlight – this exquisite Malachite Kingfisher [Adelle van Zyl]



African Fish Eagle with nesting material [Adelle van Zyl]



Lesser Swamp Warbler [Adelle van Zyl]

RUST DE WINTER - 18 April

The Rust de Winter roads always deliver some surprises, and this outing, guided by Rob Geddes, didn't disappoint.



Red-billed Oxpecker [AK Saib]



Rob Geddes doing his thing - guiding! [AK Saib]



Pearl-spotted Owlet [AK Saib]



Green-capped Eremomela [AK Saib]



Southern White-crowned Shrike [AK Saib]

DIE BOSVELD - 26 April

On Sunday 26 April, we did our first-ever BLNG outing to Die Bosveld. Having done a recce there previously, I felt quite confident of the hiking route we would take.

Note to self:

Be careful of overconfidence.

The plan was to pass the gate and then drive to the parking area, about 1 km deeper in. This is where we hit our first small snag. Because it had rained so much the entire week leading up to that, the road was only passable by 4x4. But, plucky birders that we are, we piled into the 4x4's available and off we went.

Note to self:

If the drive from the gate is already so muddy that you require a serious 4x4, the rest of the hiking route will probably look the same.

The start was lovely and we were grateful to see the sun for the first time in days. The beginning of the trail is a bit hilly, so drainage is good and everything went smoothly. Then we hit the lower plains area.



Note to self:

A route that was easy-peasy to walk in the dry, becomes considerably less so when there is mud so thick and sticky that you grow 1cm with every step.

It became much less of a birding outing, and more of a slip and sliding exercise.

Note to self:

When on the yellow route, the yellow pawprints and the yellow arrows are *not* in fact the same.

Instead of the 5 km hiking route, we landed on the 15 km mountain bike route. (Please don't ask me how, as I still don't know).

Note to self:

Always take a photo of the little sign with the emergency numbers, as you never know when you might need it (thank you, Eduard, who had done just that).

I phoned the emergency number and a very nice young man named Victor picks up. I tell him we are lost, and he asks, quite logically, where are you? (I thought, buddy, if I knew that, we might not be having this conversation). I tried to explain where we were and what we did to get there, and he says that he knows where we are. I'm not quite so sure, so I send him a pin, only for him to send me this emoji: 🤔. It's good to know we managed to get so badly lost, even the staff were surprised. You always learn something new when birding – even the existence of a previously unknown emoji.

While waiting for Victor to come to our rescue, three other hikers showed up. They had made the same mistake we did. It did make me feel slightly better, though, as a birder, I thought I had better powers of observation. Turns out this is only true if it involves feathers.



Once back at the parking and coffee shop, Laura was able to revive us with her homemade snacks.

Note to self:

Always make sure Laura comes on the trip you are on, as her snacks are absolutely divine.

All in all, it was a considerably more exciting trip than advertised. At least the next trip I am leading will be to Vulpro, and it will be basically impossible to get lost. Probably. And I don't mean that as a 'hold my beer' challenge.

Liesl De Swardt

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

Most migrants had departed, but we still had many riches and surprises in Wider Gauteng during April.

Zaagkuildrift and Kgomo-Kgomo held on to first place with a number of **Wider Gauteng Rarities** reported: **Black Stork** (Etienne Hinrichsen) and **Grey-headed Kingfisher**, **Allen's Gallinule**, **Lesser Moorhen** and **Greater Painted-snipe** (all JP van der Merwe).



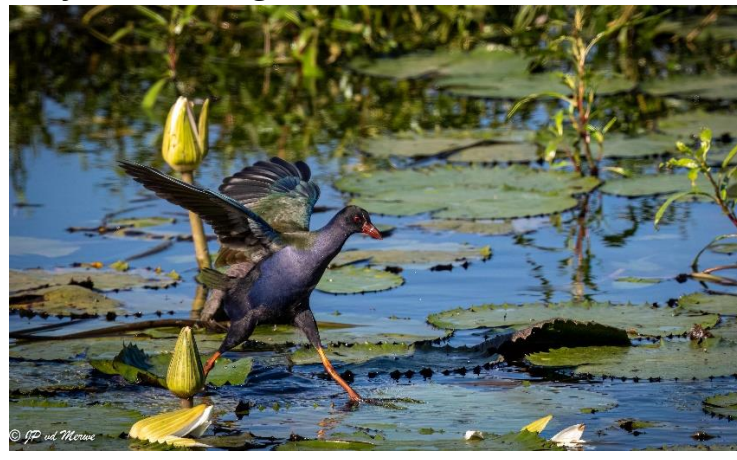
Black Stork [Etienne Hinrichsen]



Grey-headed Kingfisher [JP van der Merwe]



Bronze-winged Courser [JP van der Merwe]



Allen's Gallinule [JP van der Merwe]

Mike Pope found a **Black-necked Grebe** family at Glen Austin Pan.

Suburban Pretoria had a **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** and a **Pair of Bronze-winged Coursers** at Rietondale Farm.



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater [AK Saib]



Bronze-winged Courser [Philip Calinikos]

Rust de Winter had a **Black Stork** and a pair of **African Hawk-Eagles** (Akil Ramcharan).

There was some local excitement when a male **Collared Sunbird** was discovered at Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens, a first record of this species for Gauteng. The bird attracted a number of keen provincial birders. Dale Horne also found a **Yellow-bellied Greenbul** there.



Collared Sunbird [Dale Horne]



Double-banded Courser [Rena van Wyk]

A **Double-banded Courser** was still in more or less the same vicinity it had been spotted a month earlier at Deneysville.

All these sightings were reported on various social media forums. Some records were sourced from EBird or Sabap2 records. You are invited to share information about an interesting or rare bird with us.

Photograph of the month

Sometimes, hard work and hours of searching for your prey may bring rich rewards. Our photographer had been traversing the Vlaklaagte roads from dawn in the hopes of capturing a ringtail Harrier. Then, twelve hours later, patience was rewarded – a Harrier landed on a pole in the road close by. A cautious approach to his quarry then yielded this awe-inspiring image – this magnificent raptor basking in the last golden rays of the setting sun on the Vlaklaagte Road. The harmonious blending of rufous and auburn hues, and the subtle blue-grey barring on tail and coverts, emphasise the bold contrasts of cream of the underparts and accentuate the luminosity of the face and the spectacular golden eye of this migrant raptor. The small detail of the prey completes the image. Congratulations, JP Van Der Merwe, on this magnificent image! (The jury is still out on the exact ID of either a female or juvenile Pallid or Montagu's Harrier).



PROGRAMME – MAY 2026

Club meeting – 12 May 2026



[https://images.freeimages.com/variants]

Dr. Michael Heyns and Dr. Lizanne Berry

Birds of the Arctic and Antarctic

Come and join us!

	Membership type	Membership fees	Notes
Main member	Individual Adult	R 405.00	Choose only 1
	Senior Citizen (60+)	R 260.00	
	Student with student card (18-25)	R 195.00	
Family member	Spouse	R 175.00	Choose as many as applicable
	Child 1 (12-18)	R 75.00	
	Child 2 (12-18)	R 75.00	
	Child under 12	Free	

Please note that payments made after March will include pro-rata fees up to February 2027

BLNG Membership allows you to participate **free of charge** in bird walks and outings with experienced leaders. Camps and courses come at an extra fee.

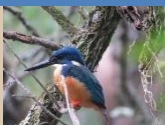
BLNG Membership does **NOT** automatically qualify you to be a member of **BirdLife South Africa**.

Contact them at membership@birdlife.org.za

PROGRAMME – MAY 2026



2 May – Old Verena Spa Rd and Mabusa



6 May – Kimiad Golf Course



16 May – Seringveld



23 May – Hex River Thornveld

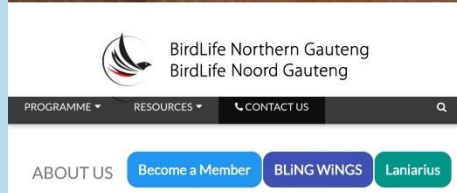


31 May – Suikerbosrand NR

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