



BLING WINGS

Ant-eating Chat [Johan Botha]

Edition 25, August 2025



Reflections: Club meeting 12 August 2025

Nandi Thobela explained her challenges and successes in the establishment of BLSA community empowerment, conservation and

AviTourism projects in the Ntsikeni NR in Southern KZN.

During the Photography Club meeting beforehand, JP van der Merwe discussed photographs of club members who attended the Bonamanzi camp in Zululand; the difference of post-editing through Photoshop and Lightroom apps.

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DEVON GRASSLANDS – 3 August

When an outing is led by Selwyn Rautenbach, whose expertise and enthusiasm are famous, it is bound to be a success – as this outing proved to be.



Anne-Marie van der Merwe



Black-crowned Night Heron [JP van der Merwe]



Cape Teal [Gerdus Heydenrych]



Greater Kestrel [Gerdus Heydenrych]



Capped Wheatear [JP van der Merwe]



Blue Korhaan [JP van der Merwe]



Rock Kestrel [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Jackal Buzzard [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Red-capped Lark [JP van der Merwe]



Cape Longclaw [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Orange River Francolin [JP van der Merwe]

VULPRO – 9 August

VulPro focuses on the conservation of Africa's vulture populations. Their mission involves comprehensive, science-driven strategies to address both short-term and long-term threats to these vital, critically endangered scavengers. BLNG club members visited them at Hartbeespoort.



[Liesl de Swardt]



[Derek Stedall]



White-backed Vulture [Wilma van der Merwe]



Cape Vultures ⬆ [Wilma van der Merwe]



WALTER SISULU BOTANICAL GARDEN – 19 AUGUST

Several new BLNG members joined this outing, led by Martin Benade, whose enthusiasm made for an enjoyable outing. A Fairy Flycatcher was voted Bird of the Day.



Southern Boubou [Sheleph Burger]



Verreaux's Eagle



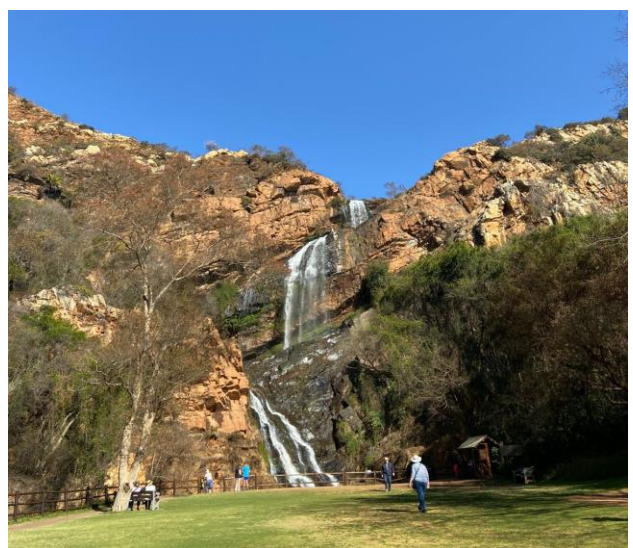
[Sheleph Burger]



Fairy Flycatcher [Sheleph Burger]



Black Sparrowhawk [Sheleph Burger]



Jenna van Schoor

OXBOW COUNTRY ESTATE – 24 AUGUST

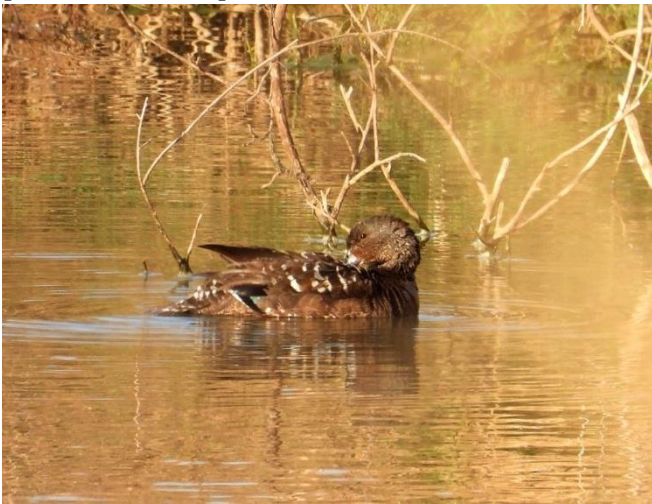
Liesl de Swardt guided this outing through the gardens and along the ponds of the estate.



[Liesl de Swardt]



[Liesl de Swardt]



African Black Duck [Wouter Fourie]



Cape Clawless Otter [Wouter Fourie]



[Liesl de Swardt]



Common Moorhen [Wouter Fourie]

BORAKALALO – 30 AUGUST

Gauteng experienced a dramatic rise in temperatures during the last week of August which was keenly felt by the BLNG group visiting Borakalalo. But neither the unseasonal heat wave nor the visible neglect could spoil the good cheer of the group under guidance of JP van der Merwe.



[Jenna van Schoor]



[Jenna van Schoor]



[Candace Kotze]



Red-headed Weaver [Jaco den Oudsten]



Black Crake

[JP van der Merwe]



Little Bee-eater [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



Black Cuckooshrike (F) [Jaco den Oudsten]



Spotted Eagle-Owl [JP van der Merwe]



Brubru [John Truter]



Golden-breasted Bunting [John Truter]



Great Crested Grebe [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



Golden-tailed Woodpecker [Liza Wassenaar]



Bird of the Day – Meyer's Parrot [JP van der Merwe]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

National Rarities

The **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was still around South Bay at the Vaal Dam, on private land. Ngu Farm's **Slaty Egret** was seen again after a period of absence.



Lesser Black-backed Gull [Sandy Neveling]



Slaty Egret [Sheleph Burger]

Regional Rarities

Verena Road had both **White-bellied Bustard** and a pair of **Denham's Bustard** at the beginning of August. The entrance to Mabusa NR had interesting species such as **Yellow-throated Petronia** and **Short-toed Rock Thrush**.

David Broom and Kevin du Plessis reported **White-bellied Bustards** near Magaliesburg.

Faerie Glen NR's **African Finfoot** was seen again by BLNG members.

On a visit to the Devon grasslands, Marlou Schalkwyk recorded both **Black-necked Grebe** and a flock of **Blue Crane**.



Denham's Bustard [Ivonne Coetzee]



White-bellied Bustard [Marna Buys]



African Finfoot [Marna Buys]



Short-toed Rock Thrush [Ivonne Coetzee]



Black-necked Grebe [Marlou Schalkwyk]



Blue Crane [Marlou Schalkwyk]

Keanu Canto and the BLNG club found a **Water Thick-knee** at a badly overgrown Vaalkop Dam. They also spotted **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** near Pilanesberg.

The relaxed **Red-chested Flufftail** at Albert's Farms drew a number of photographers keen to see this species out in the open.

Roelof Jonkers found **Allen's Gallinule** at Rust de Winter Dam.



Allen's Gallinule [Roelof Jonkers]



Red-chested Flufftail [Sheleph Burger]

Christo Swart reported a single **Cape Vulture** at Suikerbosrand, and Jason Boyce heard a **Ground Woodpecker** calling near Balfour. A **Martial Eagle** was seen in Dinokeng (Andrew Pike).

A BLNG group, guided by JP van der Merwe, found an **African Hawk Eagle** at Borakalalo during a club outing at the end of August. They also found **Meyer's Parrot**.

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

The arresting stare of this Spotted Eagle Owl makes a strong focal point, which made it easy to select it as the Photograph of the Month. There are pleasing contrasts of bright yellow of the eyes and black and white ear tufts versus the muted spotted browns and buffs of its plumage. The bark of the tree to the left repeats the colours of this magnificent bird, forming a perfect camouflage. More subtle are the two diagonal lines of the branches that frame the face. Well done, Candace Kotze!



You are invited to send me your photographs of Wider Gauteng species for placement here. Technical data is welcome.



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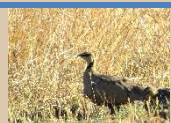
Club meeting – 9 September 2025

Philip Calinikos – Birding in Costa Rica

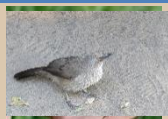
A Quest for the Resplendent Quetzal

Costa Rica, the jewel of Central America, is blessed with lush forests, wetlands, beaches, incredible flora and fauna and over 900 bird species. Philip will report back on a 12-day birding trip with Ecotours in February. Come and join us!

PROGRAMME – September 2025



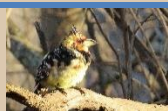
7 Sept – Hex River Thornveld



13 Sept – Seringveld Conservancy



20 Sept – Mkhombo Dam

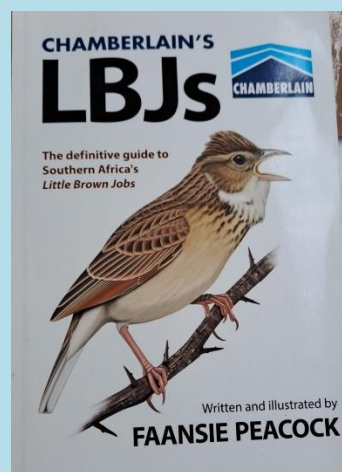


24 Sept – Eugene Marais Park



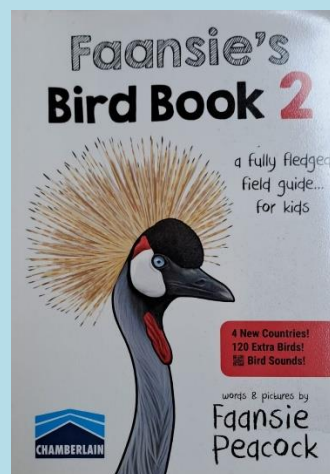
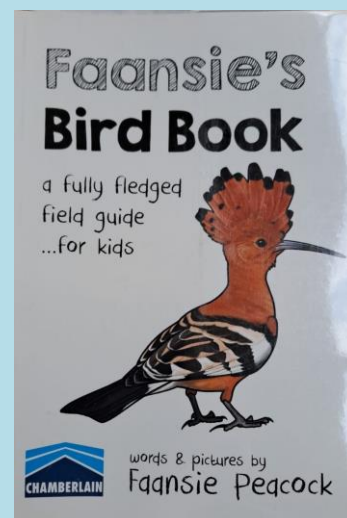
25 – 28 Sept – Caracal Lodge & Kaapsehoop Camp

BIRD GUIDES FOR SALE



@ R400

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