

BLiNG WiNGS

Hadeda Ibis [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]

Edition 38 August 2026

CLUB MEETING 11 August

John Kinghorn heads BLSA's AviTourism project and shared some interesting and even heartwarming details during his engaging talk. Our country's endemic bird species and landscape diversity make it a choice destination for international birders; benefiting the upliftment of local communities, and the 250 BLSA community bird guides trained through this programme.



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WILGE RIVER VALLEY – 2 August

When one of the very first birds encountered is a majestic White-bellied Bustard, the outing may be deemed a success. But Wilge River Valley had so much more to offer once we entered the woodland sections between the red cliffs and had views of the river. Jared Beukes was the outing leader.



[Menno Klapwijk]



[Jared Beukes]



A stunning Rock-loving (Lazy) Cisticola [Hein Duvenhage]



Arrow-marked Babbler [Hein Duvenhage]



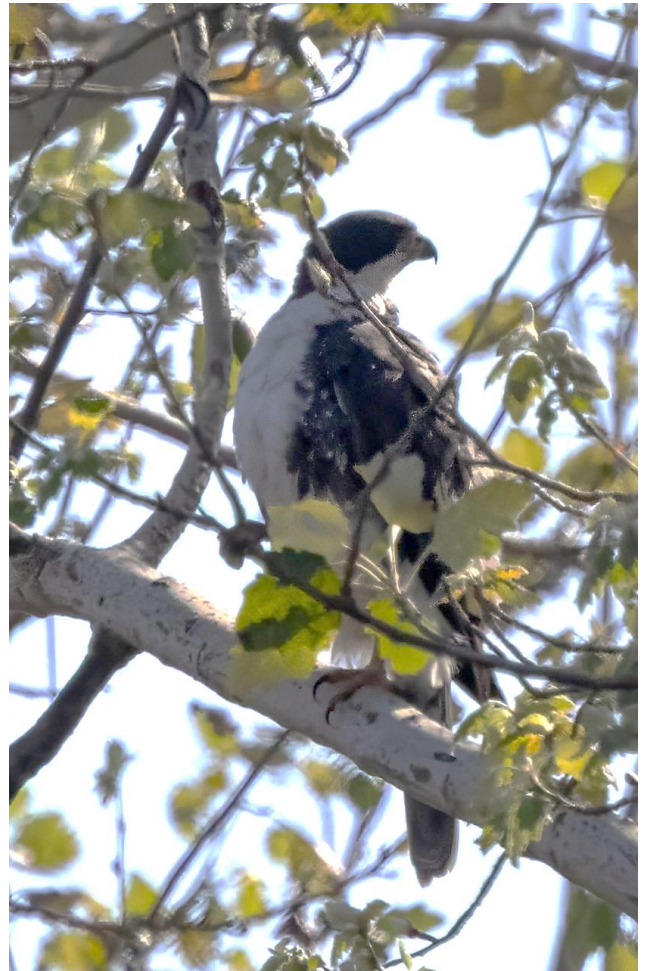
Blue Waxbill [Hein Duvenhage]



Another wonderful highlight was the Black Sparrowhawk nest with chicks.
[Hein Duvenhage]



Pearl-breasted Swallow [Hein Duvenhage]



Black Sparrowhawk [Hein Duvenhage]

PRETORIA BOTANICAL GARDEN – 4 August

Prof. Willem Boshoff shared his knowledge of birds, bird sounds, and this beautiful venue. Raptors caused great excitement – a Verreaux's Eagle, and an African Harrier-Hawk were seen. Interesting species were Brown-backed Honeybird and Red-throated Wryneck.



[Angela Openshaw]



Spotted Thick-knee [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



Fairy Flycatcher [JP van der Merwe]



Red-throated Wryneck [JP van der Merwe]



Orange-breasted Bush-shrike [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



Long-billed Crombec [JP van der Merwe]

FAERIE GLEN NR – 8 August

The lucky few who visit this reserve late in the day may catch the resident Half-collared Kingfishers or even an African Finfoot. This morning walk, with Hannes van den Berg as guide, was a highlight, even though the star attractions stayed hidden.



Looking for the elusive African Finfoot [Derek Stedall]



White-throated Robin-chat [Sheleph Burger]



Cut-throat Finch [Hannes van den Berg]

EZEMVELO – 30 August

Ezemvelo was a feast! This incredible outing, with some 93 species seen, was guided by JP van der Merwe. Several species were voted to be Bird of the Day – the Secretarybird, the Half-collared Kingfisher, the Black Sparrowhawk, Common Buttonquail, Cloud Cisticola, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Southern Bald Ibis... the list goes on and on.

JP commented:

Fifteen Birders met at the 10th Tee of the Bronkhorstspuit Golf Club, where we got a couple of excellent birdies. Unfortunately, no eagles were seen. Although with the temperature down to a fresh 3 degrees C but with no wind, it was quite bearable.

We were spoilt by the various brief sightings of the Black Sparrowhawk darting from one tree to the next and back again. All of us also saw the Half-collared Kingfisher, which was pretty skittish, perched between the branches with a tadpole in the beak.

From there we left for Ezemvelo where we found a good number of species around the office/reception. The drive through the reserve was quiet but with Jaco spotting the Common Quail and Ian the Cloud Cisticola on the way back to the office, it really made it worthwhile.

Back at the office, the birders said our goodbyes, and three vehicles were supposed to return home via the Vlaklaagte road. This turned out to be a great detour with beautiful views of the Secretarybird flying over the road just ahead of us and the Northern Black Korhaan giving us a show just before that. Darkness caught up with us at the newly repaired bridge while we were listening and searching for the African Rails calling.

At that point we decided to return home via Bronkhorstspuit, bagging a total of 93 species. What an outing it was and a big thank you to all the participants who really made it a great outing.



One of the short-tailed Cisticolas - Cloud Cisticola. Frustratingly difficult to separate from others of this sub-species, unless it is singing, as this one was. [JP van der Merwe]



Cardinal Woodpecker (f) [Ian Johnson]



Black Sparrowhawk [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



Secretarybird [Denise Roode]



Half-collared Kingfisher [Ian Johnson]



Long-tailed Widowbird in transition [Giel Roode]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

The national rarity, the **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, was still showing well at Marievale during August.



Lesser Black-backed Gull [André Cloete]

The single **Collared Sunbird** continued to entertain birders at Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens this past month. (Akil Ramcharan).

African Finfoots were seen at Rust de Winter and Faerie Glen. (Pieter Heslinga)

Cameron Blair saw an **African Cuckoo Hawk** over the Friends of Magalies trail, while a **Sickle-winged Chat** turned up in Suikerbosrand.



African Cuckoo Hawk [Cameron Blair]



Sickle-winged Chat [Jake Obermeyer]

WITKRUISARENDE

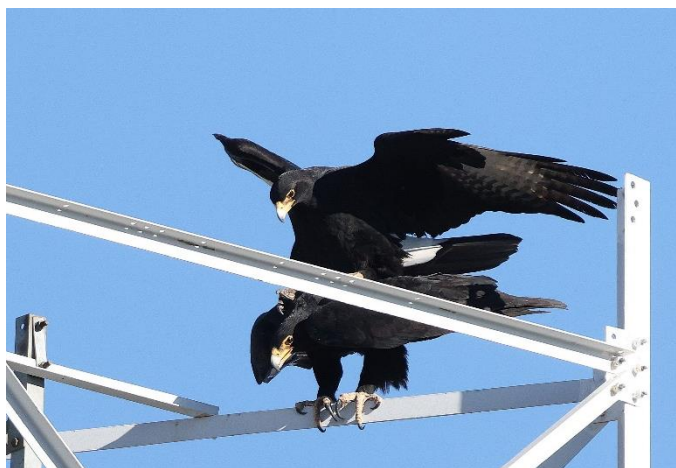
Hiermee my volgende episode.

Op 24 Julie het ek die wit donsveervoëltjie gekry en op 21 Augustus, amper 'n maand later, 'n yslike knaap.



Dis Vrydag 24 Julie 2026 en ek was baie nuuskierig om te sien hoe dit met die arende gaan en of ek al 'n kuiken sal kan sien. Ek was kwart oor sewe bo. Dit was goed koud, maar ek dink te laat want die twee volwassenes het alreeds heen en weer oor die nes gevlieg en die kraaie om hulle. Van onder kon ek nie sien wat in die nes aangaan nie. Ongeveer halfagt het een van die volwassenes op die paal kom sit (seker maar die wyfie?) en die volgende oomblik steek 'n klein donskoppie bo die nes uit. Die eier(s) het uitgebroei en daar is een kleintjie in die nes. Op sterkte van sy grootte sê die experts hy/sy moet

omtrent drie weke oud wees. Te pragtig. Later het die ander volwassene ook nes toe gekom met 'n bloekomtakkie in sy bek en dit op die nes gerangskik. Dit het nie gelyk of die kleintjie die oggend al nuwe kos gekry het nie. Die kleintjie het op 'n stadium sy bene gerek en ek kon mooi foto's kry van hoe groot die knaap al is, daarna het hy weer gaan lê. Ongeveer nege-uur het albei volwassenes weer op die toring kom sit en gepaar. Die "mannetjie" het toe op die nes gaan sit om die kleintjie toe te maak en die wyfie het opgevlieg en in die verte verdwyn.



Ons was bietjie weg en ek kon eers weer op 21 Augustus na die arende gaan kyk. Ek het vroeg opgestaan en was al kwart oor ses bo by die toring. Stom geslaan! Die kleintjie is al yslik groot, donsveertjies is weg, 'n knaap met bruin en wit vere wat sy vlerke oefen! 'n Entjie daarvandaan sit sy ma, glo ek, om hom dop te hou. Ongeveer halfsewe kom sy by hom op die paal sit en 'n half uur later hoor ek die kraaie aankom. Ek kon maar net weet dat dit die pa is wat aankom. Die jong voël ontlas twee keer en ek was tevrede dat hy nie honger gaan slaap het nie. Later het die ouers uitgevlieg, seker om kos te soek. Die ma het teruggekom en by die kleintjie kom waak. Ek is ongeveer halfnege daar weg. Die ouers sou deurentyd kos soek en huis toe bring. Ek sou graag 'n slag daar wou wees as hulle met 'n dassie of iets dergeliks nes toe kom.

Pieter Heslinga

Photograph of the month

August rings in winds of change and veld fires. Birds foraging in open, burnt sections provide interesting contrasts and photographic opportunities, such as this Common Hoopoe captured by Johan Botha. This photograph is all about dramatic contrasts. The monochrome background is blurred, indicating a shallow depth of field, which isolates the bird and foreground sharply. The unique shape and dramatic colours of the Hoopoe are celebrated. The placement of the bird, slightly off-centre, according to the golden ratio, ensures that the head and eye form a strong focal point. Lighting is natural and balanced, highlighting the bird's warm colours without overexposure. The long beak with prey adds visual interest. Thank you, Johan Botha, for submitting this Rietvlei beauty!





BLNG EVENING MEETING

Date:
Tuesday, 8 September 2026

Starting Time:
19h00

Guest speaker:
Stephan Terblanche

Venue:
Eastside Community Church
and School, Moreleta Park

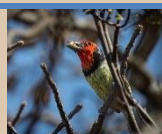
Identification of Swifts & Swallows – Easier Than You Think!

Stephan is an amateur birder with more than 35 years' experience. For most of this time, he has been a member of BirdLife SA and BirdLife Northern Gauteng, in their various configurations. His life list for Southern Africa is more than 800 birds. I am an active atlaser and have been participating in SABAP2 since its inception in 2007. So far, my contribution has been a modest 2100 cards in almost 1300 pentads.

Stephan has a special interest in swifts and swallows and has given talks on their identification for more than 20 years, all over the country, but mostly to bird clubs in Gauteng. The talk aims to provide a simple structure to identify these birds, focusing on the few visual cues that are unique to each species, both in flight and when perched (in the case of swallows). The talk is illustrated with photos, many of which Stephan has taken himself.



PROGRAMME – September 2026



5 Sep – BLSA Bird Fair



8 Sep – Club Meeting



13 Sep – Hex River Thornveld



16 Sep – Irene Farm Village



26 Sep – Buffelsdrift

	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 weekly bird outings with experienced leaders. Monthly Camps and courses come at an extra fee.

SOUTH AFRICAN
birdfair

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CHAMBERLAIN FAMOUS FOR HARDWARE since 1903

BOOKINGS OPEN!



Saturday, 5 September 2026



09h00-16h30

Birding Walks begin from 06:00 – booking required



Pretoria National Botanical Garden



Book at
tinyurl.com/BirdLifeSA



Guided Bird Walks



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Exhibitors



Unique Talks



Kids' Activities

See the exciting programme here:



[Bird-Fair-2026-Programme-A4.pdf](#)

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