

BLING WINGS



African Finfoot [Angela Openshaw]

Edition 17, January 2025

Reflections: Club meeting January 2025

Everyone loves participating in quizzes – so a good number of members attended our first meeting. Philip Calinikos set up an interesting quiz, mostly based on photographs and videos, which challenged even the top birders among us. All of us learnt something new, had a lot of fun and quite a few laughs.

But the first part of the evening, starting at 6 pm, was as much fun – the Photography club had Marna Buys, Johan Botha, and Hannes van den Berg showing their photos from Limpokwena Camp.

Pel's Fishing Owl, Boulder Chat, African Finfoot, Meyer's Parrot, and White-backed Night Heron were some of the incredibly special species shown. Do join us in March at our next Photography Club meeting. All welcome to join in and learn!

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COLBYN NR – 11 January

Just as well that we were advised to wear rubber boots – Colbyn Wetlands truly was wet! After the spring fires and recent drenching rains, it was lush and green with a plethora of different bishops, widowbirds, and reed warblers taking advantage.

Colbyn NR was proclaimed some 12 years ago and is an important peatland, wetland, and grassland habitat. It hosts some 140 bird species. Half-collared and Malachite Kingfishers, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Marsh Owl and even Common Buttonquail may be seen – should you be as lucky as Philip Calinikos, our leader.



The Hartbeesspruit flows through the reserve, entering the wetlands from LC de Villiers sports grounds. It later joins the Moreletaspruit at Derdepoort Regional Park before it empties in Roodeplaat Dam. This forms a natural green corridor, and waterbirds could constantly be seen flying to and from their roosting sites at Roodeplaat, the dams at LC de Villiers and possibly Austin Roberts NR.

One of the very first species of the day was Cape Grassbird, and before we had even crossed the bridge, Great Reed Warbler and Little Rush Warbler were heard. Soon, we had excellent views of Common Reed Warbler and even a phalanx of twelve soaring White Storks.



Common Reed Warbler [Arno Schutte]



White Stork [Arno Schutte]



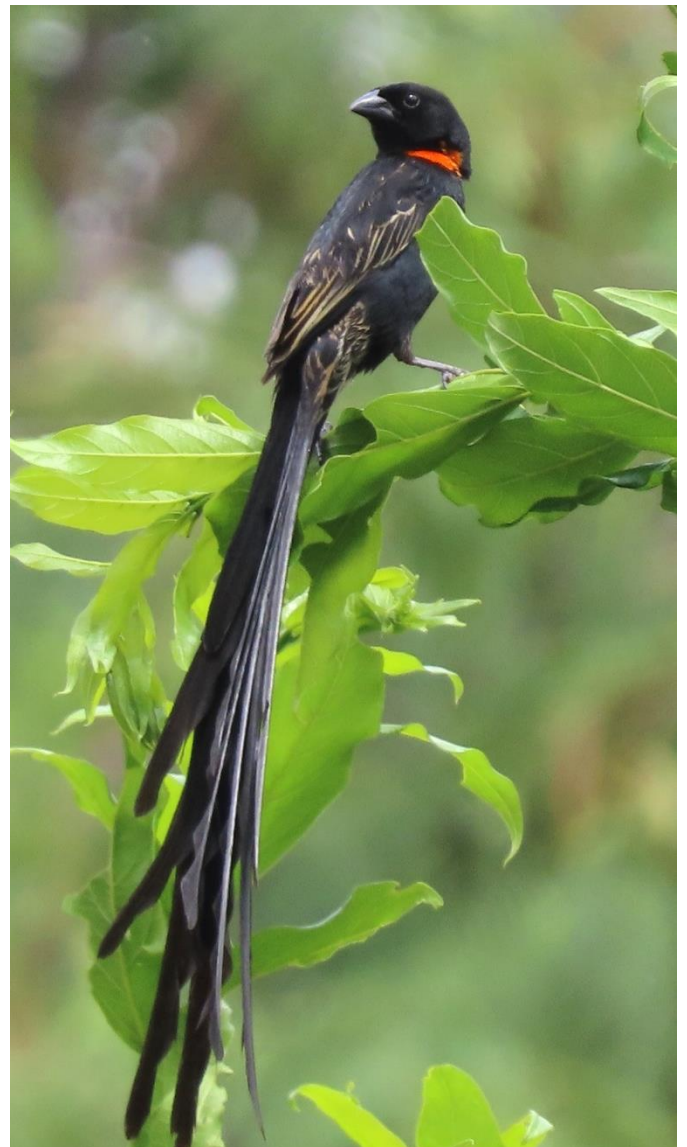
White-winged Widowbirds seemed to be everywhere. [Arno Schutte]



Little Bee-eaters are uncommon in suburbia but here they afforded us good views. [Arno Schutte]



An amazing display of two African Harrier-Hawks continued for an hour or more. Other raptors were Common Buzzard, Black-winged Kite, and Black Sparrowhawk. [Arno Schutte]



Red-collared Widowbird [Ivonne Coetzee]



[Matthys van den Hout]

MAGALIES MBT - 19 January

Ilse Müller guided this bird walk. It was a brilliant day, with 88 species recorded, and many a worthy addition to year lists were recorded. The highlight was the Wailing Cisticola. And the beautiful views!



[Philip Calinikos]



[Jenna van Schoor]



[Ilse Müller]



[Jared Beukes]

FAERIE GLEN NR - 21 January



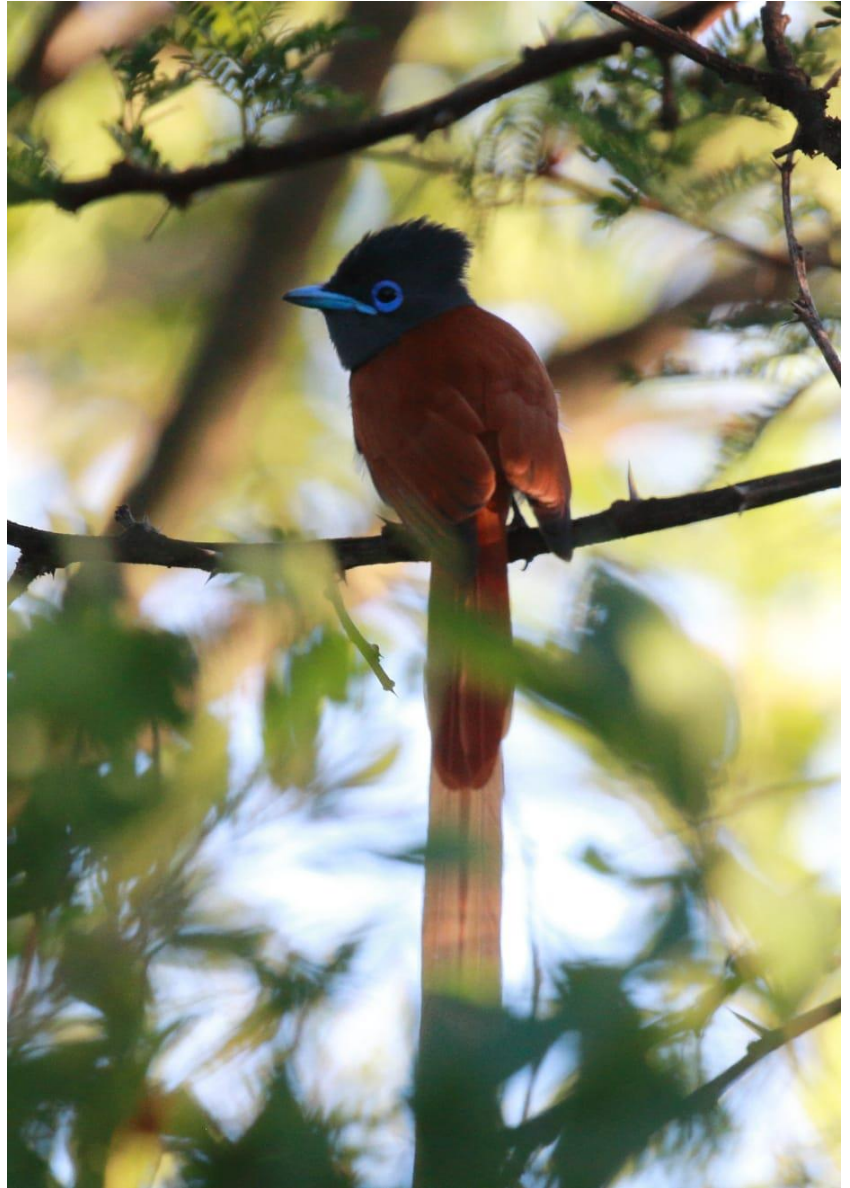
Dirk Maartens Human guided this very productive bird walk. [Matthys van den Hout]



Cape Weaver



Thick-billed Weaver



African Paradise Flycatcher

All bird photographs by Dirk Human

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

The excitement of December's national rarities had twitchers travelling the road to Mkhombo every few days for new rarities and had those away on holiday green with envy. No one would have expected another mega on top of the **Red-throated Pipit** and **Broad-billed Sandpiper** which still hung around – but this is exactly what happened when Thea Jenkins and Etienne Marais discovered the celebrity of the month, the **Lesser Yellowlegs**, a rare vagrant with only seven previously recorded sightings in South Africa. This is a first for Wider Gauteng.



Lesser Yellowlegs [Thea Jenkins]



Thea Jenkins photographed a juvenile **Collared Pratincole**. **Pink-backed Pelican**, **Caspian Plover** and **Allen's Gallinule** stayed around in the same area at Mkhombo Dam as well, while **Common Tern** and **African Crake** also joined the party.



Red-throated Pipit [Johan Kriek], as well as this **Western Yellow Wagtail**.



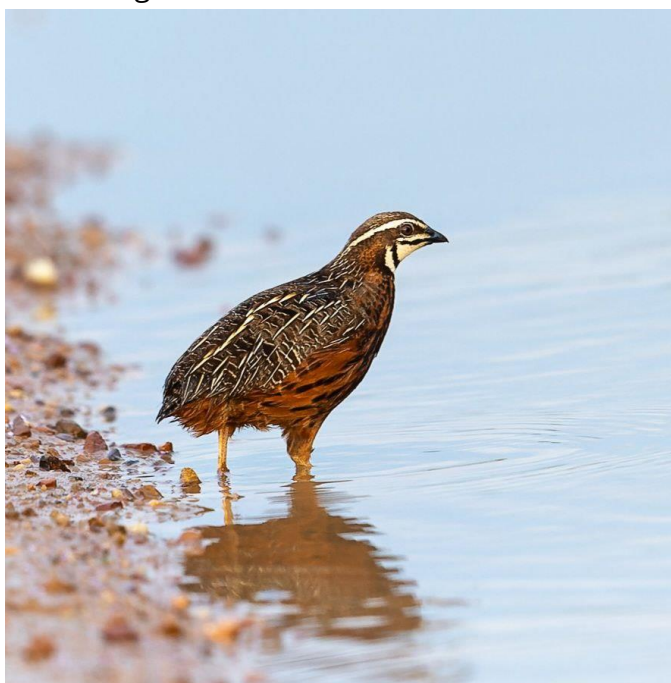
River warbler [Christoff Swart]

Zaagkuildrift and Kgomo-Kgomo had various sightings of **Lesser Moorhen, Dwarf Bittern, Baillon's Crake, Allen's Gallinule, Thrush Nightingale, Dusky Lark, and African Crake** (Doug Newman).



Dwarf Bittern chicks [Doug Newman]

Harlequin Quail was photographed at the start of Zaagkuildrift Road by Ard van de Wetering.



Harlequin Quail [Ard van de Wetering]

Rietondale Proefplaas continued to turn up interesting species. The **Dusky Larks**, two adults and a juvenile, were regularly seen in January.



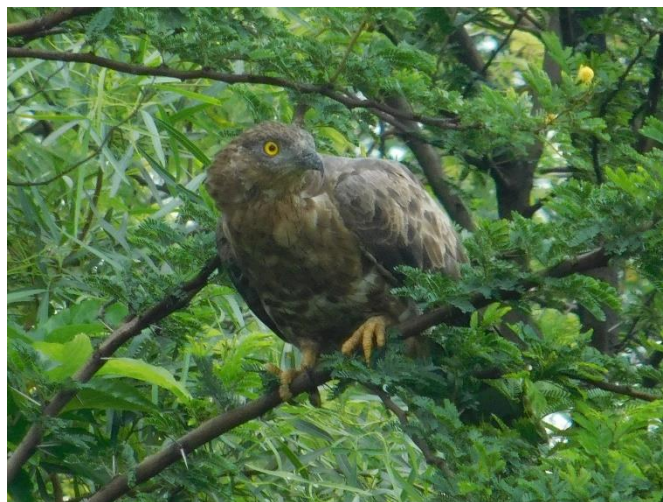
Dusky Lark [Peter Thompson]

The **Booted Eagle** also showed intermittently at Rietondale Proefplaas.



[Marna Buys]

A **European Roller** was seen there, as well as this **European Honey Buzzard** [Reinhard Haywood].



Marievale also had its fair share of rare species after the pans and streams filled up again. The first was this **Allen's Gallinule** by Nicholas Burnham.



[Nicolas Burnham]

African Crane and **Booted Eagle** were seen at Marievale and a flock of **Blue Crane** flew over. Pieter and Janelle Verster with Justin Nicolao flushed a **Corn Crane** near the mine dumps, and recorded **Horus Swift**.



African Crane [Marna Buys]

Swee Waxbills were seen in the Seringveld Conservancy.

Luca Tomlinson photographed this **Montagu's Harrier** in the Vaaldam area.



Southern Carmine Bee-eaters were seen on the Pienaarsrivier Road and the Assen Road.



Southern Carmine Bee-eater [Doug Newman]

Photograph of the month

This wonderful shot of a juvenile African Harrier Hawk was submitted by Sheleph Burger. Thank you, Sheleph, for this beautiful photograph to grace this January edition.



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

BLNG AGM 18 February

Hot Birds: Facing the Furnace



Mkhombo Twitchers [Doug Newman]



[\[https://www.up.ac.za/zoology-entomology\]](https://www.up.ac.za/zoology-entomology)

PROGRAMME – February 2025



1 February – Mabusa NR & Old Verena Road



5 February – Northern Farm



18 February – AGM



21 – 23 February – Loodswaai Camp

Professor Andrew McKechnie of UP's Department of Zoology and Entomology and South African Research Chair in Conservation Physiology is our guest speaker on rising temperatures as a result of climate change and how this affects bird species differently, and how their abilities to withstand extremely hot conditions depend on the part of the world that they find themselves in and the climatic region to which their physiology has become adapted over the course of millennia.

Come and join us for this and enjoy laden snack tables, juice, and conversation afterwards.

For bookings:
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