



African Fish Eagle [Angela Openshaw]

BLiNG WiNGS

Edition 37 July 2026

CLUB MEETING 13 JULY

Angela Openshaw came up with an idea and brilliantly executed it – a Soup and Quiz evening. As host, with Philip Calinikos as co-host and a quiz that knocked our socks off in the best possible way... an unforgettable evening and great memories were forged. See Pages 2 – 3.



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Some contestants...



The teams!

VULPRO - 4 & 5 July

Due to overwhelming interest and bookings, the leader, Liesl De Swardt, generously offered to guide two outings to VulPro on two consecutive days after the group was split in two. Like her, Alistair Sinclair also sacrificed both Saturday and Sunday to accommodate all interested parties. A heartfelt thank-you to both of you. Interesting lectures and an unforgettable opportunity to see these vulnerable and endangered species up close made this a high point in the club's birding year. Obviously, our photographers had a field day!







HOOGLAND HYDRO – 13 July

This popular hike under guidance of Philip Calinikos delivered all the targets and more.



[Philip Calinikos]



Chinspot Batis [John Truter]



Short-toed Rock Thrush [John Truter]



Pearl-breasted Swallows [John Truter]



Brubru [John Truter]



Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird [John Truter]



Capped Wheatear [John Truter]



Mocking Cliff Chat [John Truter]



Views of Hoogland Hydro's spectacular scenery along the hike. [Philip Calinikos]

DENEYSVILLE - 19 July

What a feast of birding unfolded during this outing under guidance of Sandy Neveling! Provincial rarities included. Let the photographs testify to this day's great birding.



Marsh Owl [Hannes van den Berg]



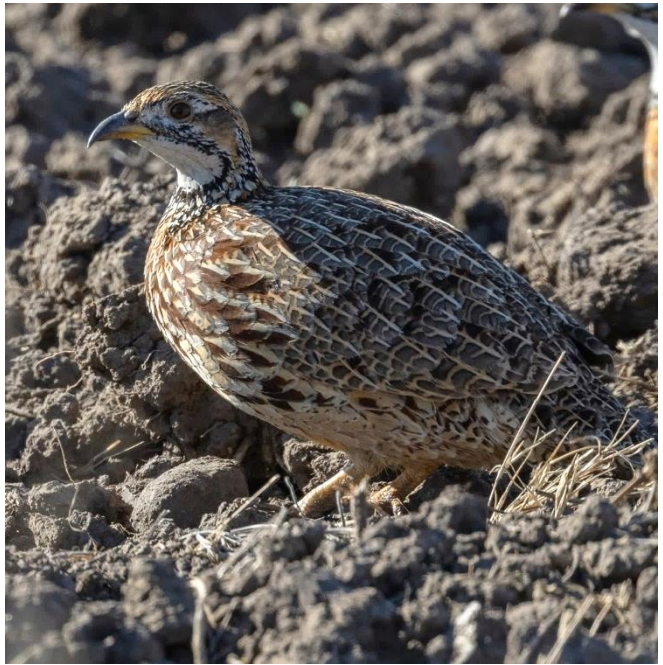
White-fronted Plover – provincial rarity [Lize Wassenaar]



Blue Korhaan in full cry – another very special species [Hannes van den Berg]



Double-banded Courser – provincial rarity and a top target [Hannes van den Berg]



Orange River Francolin [Hannes van den Berg]



Yet another provincial rarity – a Swallow-tailed Bee-eater [Lize Wassenaar]



Red-capped Lark [Hannes van den Berg]

MAGALIES MBT – 25 July

The Quest – mid-winter birding with challenging targets such as Fairy Flycatcher, Striped Pipit, and Brown-backed Honeybird. Director – Ilse Müller. Cast – a number of BLNG's top birders, and arguably some of our country's best. Film Crew – again, most of BLNG's top photographers, and by default, some of South Africa's greatest.

Location – a very dry, mid-winter, suburban Magaliesberg. Rating – ★★★★★



[Ivonne Coetzee]



Grey-headed Bush-Shrike [Anna-Marie vd Merwe] Striped Pipit – target found! [Johan Botha]



The seepage of a leak in the reservoir allowed birds to perch on mosses and drink. The targeted Brown-backed Honeybird was among them, a lifer to no fewer than four club members there. [Ivonne Coetzee]



The struggle up an elevation of 1000 m from parking area to the mountain top gave way to exhilaration with grand views all round. [Ivonne Coetzee]



Brown-backed Honeybird [Ansie Dee Reis]



Fairy Flycatcher – main target [Ansie Dee Reis]

WALTER SISULU BOTANICAL GARDENS – 28 July

It was a wonderful morning at a beautiful venue with much knowledge exchanged, according to Michelene Moore. African Firefinches, Verreaux's Eagle and the vagrant Collared Sunbird made for great birding.



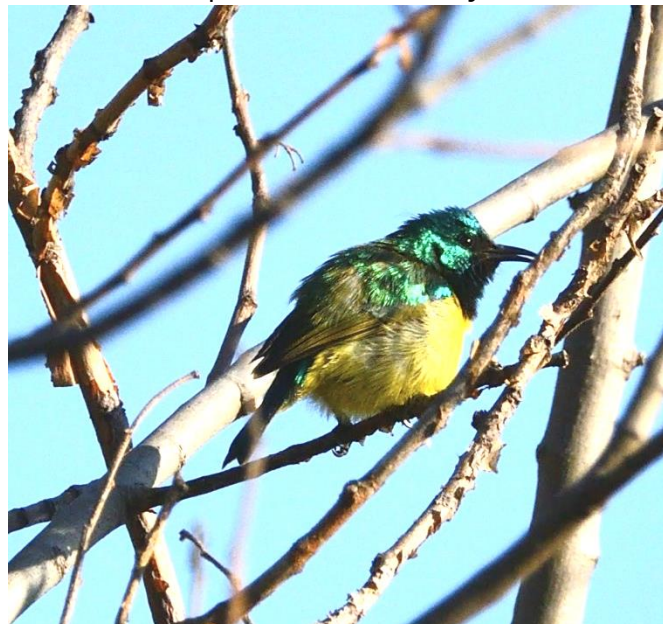
[Michelene Moore]



Cardinal Woodpecker [Chris Kisbey-Green]



Verreaux's Eagle [Willie Victor]



Collared Sunbird [Willie Victor]

BRONBERG SE WITKRUISARENDE

Die BLNG voëlklub het gedurende 2021 bewus geword dat Witkruisarende op die MTN toring op die Bronberge in Faerie Glen 'n nes het. Laetitia Steynberg het by die eienaars toestemming gekry om met vooraf reëling bergop te gaan om die arende se bewegings te monitor en aan die komitee terugvoer te gee. In Oktober 2022 het ek by haar oorgeneem omdat ons digby woon en dit geriefliker was. Sedertdien gaan ek gereeld op berg toe om te kyk wat die arende aanvang. Daar was intussen 'n verandering aan die eienaars maar hulle was gelukkig net so insiklik dat ek met gereelde toestemming kan bergop gaan om die arende te monitor. Sedertdien gaan ek gereeld berg toe soos wat ek kansie kry.

Ek het gaan oplees oor hulle en die volgende wys geword. Hulle begin nes maak rondom April, dan word eiers gelê in Mei – Junie, ongeveer ses weke (45-60 dae) gebroei, en middel Julie broei die eiers uit. Gewoonlik word net een kuiken groot gemaak (die boeke sê die sterkste kuiken maak die swakkere dood). Na ongeveer 12 weke (90 dae) dus teen laat September, is die kuiken groot genoeg om met oefenvlugte te begin. Hy weeg dan ongeveer 3.5 kg. Tussendeur kry hy nog kos by die ouers. Na ongeveer 16 weke (120 dae) dus gedurende November, word hy uit die nes geskop en moet hy pad vat en sy eie kos gaan soek en eie woongebied gaan opsoek. Die ouers verlaat die nes maar bly in hulle omgewing en gebruik dit van tyd tot tyd as plek van veiligheid totdat dit die volgende jaar weer broeityd word. Die broeityd van die Witkruisarende verskil van paar tot paar maar stem grotendeels ooreen. Die paar wat in die kranse by die Walter Sisulu Botaniese Tuin 'n nes het is gewoonlik bietjie vroeër as die Bronbergpaar.

Groot was my opgewondenheid dat die arende vanjaar in April weer begin nesmaak het en dit was duidelik dat hulle weer sou kom broei. Ons trek dus nou al by die vyfde agtereenvolgende jaar wat die ouerpaar na die toring terugkom om te kom broei. Die

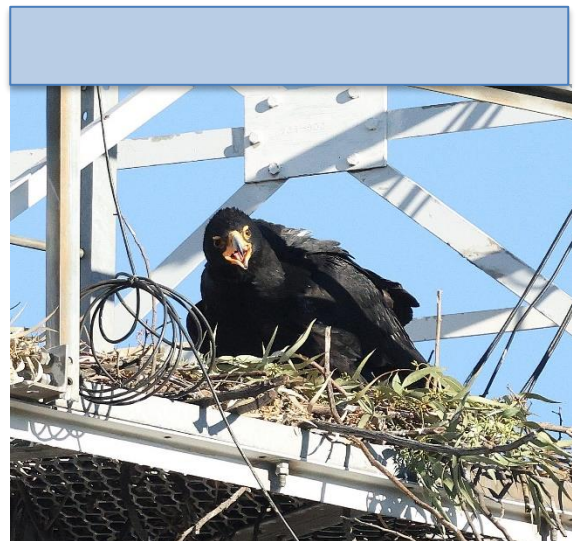
wyfie sou in Mei eiers lê en begin broei en nou wag ons in spanning vir die eier(s) om uit te broei.

Ek was die afgelope Vrydag 3 Julie weer bergop om te kyk wat aangaan. Daar is 'n paadjie wat die MTN manne gebruik wat baie steil is. Ek is maar onfiks en moet omtrent vier keer stop om my asem terug te kry. Ek was ongeveer agtuur daar. Ongelukkig is die toring baie hoog en is dit moeilik om te weet wanneer die kuikens uitgebroei het. Mens wil ook nie met 'n drone daar lawaai maak nie. Dit was stil by die nes, net die wyfie se kop het uitgesteek .

Ongeveer halfnege het ek kraaie hoor roep en toe geweet die mannetjie is op pad. Gewoonlik broei die wyfie in die nag en die mannetjie in die dag. Uit ondervinding weet ons dat die Witborskraaie die arende baie lastig val, veral wanneer die kuikens moet kos kry en hulle dit by die ouers wat nes toe kom, probeer afrokkel. Die mannetjie het toe inderdaad enkele minute daarna opgedaag. Dit was nog te vroeg om kos te bring. Gewoonlik slaap hy op 'n ander toring in die omgewing wat nie altyd sigbaar is nie. Hy het op die toring by die nes gaan sit. Die wyfie het opgestaan en die paartjie het uitgevlieg en in die lug rondom die nes met 'n wakende oog gesirkel, twee kraaie al om hulle.

Ongeveer nege uur het hulle na die nes teruggekeer. Die Bronberge het baie dassies en dit is hulle stapelvoedsel. Daarna het die mannetjie van gister se oorblyfsels geëet en met 'n stuk vel uit die nes gevlieg en êrens gaan weggooi, toe teruggekom en op die nes gaan sit om verder te broei. Ek kon sien daar was nog nie kuikens nie. Die wyfie het toe uitgevlieg en alles het weer rustig geword op die berg. Sy sou gaan kos soek het en sou later teruggekeer het nes toe.

Ongeveer halftien is ek daar weg. Oor twee weke sal ek weer gaan en dan behoort die kuikens uit te wees . Dit sou egter nog steeds moeilik wees om hulle van onder af te sien , totdat hulle groter is en hulle koppe kan optel. Ek kan nie wag nie.



(Word vervolg 😊)

Pieter Heslinga

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

The beginning of July saw in icy-cold conditions. Surprisingly, the **Collared Sunbird** remained at Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens during this month.

The national rarity, the **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, remained at Marievale during July. There is also a more or less stationary **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Manten Marina at the Vaal Dam in the Deneysville area (Sandy Neveling). An **African Cuckoo Hawk** at Northern Farm was reported (Philip Yiannakou). A single **Sickle-winged Chat** was found at Devon (Anton Schultz) while **Namaqua Sandgrouse** were reported near Boons (Sabap2). Pieter Heslinga reported that an **African Finfoot** was seen again at Faery Glen NR. Alex Brown spotted a **Cape Eagle-Owl** at Suikerbosrand NR – a great find.



African Finfoot [Pieter Heslinga]



Cape Eagle-Owl [Alex Brown]

A BLNG group under guidance of Sandy Neveling found both a **White-fronted Plover** and a small flock of **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters** near Deneysville. The **Double-banded Coursers** were also seen.



White-fronted Plover [Lize Wassenaar]



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater [L Wassenaar]

Photograph of the month

In this photograph, the African Snipe's eye and improbably long beak immediately command attention. The lines on the head and face emphasize both their direction and flow. The placement of the bird, slightly off-centre, ensures that the head and eye form a strong focal point. It also accentuates its rich golden colour versus the black. More subtle are the strong geometric lines of the habitat surrounding the bird – exploding upwards and outwards, as it were, while the beak points down. The suggestion of secrecy and tranquillity is carried by the subtle lighting and dark background setting.

Thank you, Kevin James, for submitting this Rietvlei beauty!





BLNG CLUB MEETING



Date:
Tuesday, 11 August 2026



Time:
19h00



Venue:
Eastside Community Church



Address:
850 Primula Rd

Special Guest:

JOHN KINGHORN

John Kinghorn is a naturalist, specialist bird guide, and conservationist with a passion for the intersection of people, wildlife, and storytelling. With years of experience guiding specialist birding tours across the globe, and now BirdLife South Africa's Avitourism Project Manager, John works to promote Avitourism, sustainable community-based tourism, and a deeper public connection to the natural world through birding.

Join John for an engaging talk on BirdLife South Africa's Avitourism work, a pioneering project with a 26-year history of connecting birding, conservation, and communities. In this presentation, John unpacks the project's far-reaching impact, from training specialist bird guides in communities adjacent to protected areas to creating meaningful livelihood opportunities that foster a deeper connection to South Africa's remarkable birdlife.

He also explores how a growing network of "birder-friendly" service providers - spanning accommodation, guides, tour operators, and course providers - helps elevate the country's Avitourism offering, while contributing directly to conservation efforts.

Discover how this dynamic project continues to shape a more sustainable and inclusive future for birding in South Africa.



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Marna Buys, Sheleph Burger and Hannes van den Berg reached Platinum Status in the 650 Big Bird Challenge, with two members of another club.

SOUTH AFRICAN
birdfair

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BOOKINGS OPEN!



Saturday, 5 September 2026



09h00-16h30

Birding Walks begin from
06:00 - booking required



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Guided Bird
Walks



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Talks



Kids' Activities

PROGRAMME – August 2026



2 August – Wilge River Valley



4 August – Pretoria Botanical Garden



8 August – Faerie Glen NR



16 August – Roodeplaat NR



30 August – Ezemvelo NR

Compilation and layout by I Coetzee

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