

BLING WINGS

African Finfoot [Pieter Heslinga]

Edition 32 March 2026



Inside This Issue

Bishop Bird Park

Ezemvelo NR

Faerie Glen NR

Rarities

Photograph of the month

April Programme



CLUB MEETING - 10 MARCH

Elaine Reed from Elaine's Birding gave a passionate and humorous talk about her deep concern for the well-being of garden birds, her "Bird Grub" and other bird feed products. She set up a display of her interesting and artistic bird feeders she designed. A highlight was when numerous club members won some of these products in a lucky draw.



You may visit her website at www.elainesbirding.co.za

BISHOP BIRD PARK - 8 March

What would you say if you had the opportunity to meet and study a European Nightjar at close quarters and meet up with an Icterine Warbler, right here in Pretoria? Club members had an unforgettable experience when they visited this beautiful park and the bird ringers there in action, with Laura Jordaan leading this outing.



[Adelle van Zyl]



[Dorette Snyman]



Icterine Warbler [Adelle van Zyl]



Red-headed Finch [Adelle van Zyl]



Reinhard Fowler, bird ringer, holding the European Nightjar. [Dorette Snyman]



Willow Warbler [Nicole Crisp]



Icterine Warbler [Adelle van Zyl]

EZEMVELO - 15 March

The BLNG Ezemvelo day trip... Well, if the App says it will rain on a Birding or Golf day, find another App... 🌧️ After all the rain during the previous week, Sunday morning was no different, drizzling in Pretoria. As we cleared the uphill at Donkerhoek and overlooking the grasslands, we saw a beautiful sunrise. WOW, just what we were looking for. That lasted until we reached the gate at Ezemvelo and then it started drizzling again.

Birding was difficult, not what I expected or experienced during the earlier recce. The Larks and Pipits were very distant. We never heard or saw a Korhaan, no Coqui Francolin. Fortunately, after trying very hard, we all did see a Common Quail, Anna-Marie even got an ID, but non-shareable pic!

Despite the low specie count, Ezemvelo was still a good outing and the muddy roads also added some spice to the day. As far as birding was concerned, nature is unpredictable. Three cars returned home via the Vlakfontein road. This is certainly a stretch of road that is well worth a visit or ten. Finding the Pallid Harrier was a lifer for all of us. Then, we saw it again for the second time during the day, the SUN, a beautiful sunset as we passed Cullinan 😄. What a day!

JP van der Merwe



This wet Rufous-naped Lark says it all [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]



European Bee-eater [JP van der Merwe]



Ant-eating Chat [Mags Webster]



Barn Swallows in the rain [Kobie van Eeden]



Pallid Harrier [JP van der Merwe]



[Angela Openshaw]

FAERIE GLEN NR - 18 March

This outing once again proved that some of the best birding in Gauteng can be had in our city Reserves. A pair of Verreaux's Eagles, Giant and Half-collared Kingfishers, Ovambo and Black Sparrowhawks, and even a Marsh Warbler made this walk a resounding success.



Spotted Flycatcher [AK Saib]



African Black Duck [AK Saib]



Philip Calinikos, the leader, entertained the group with his knowledge of birds and some interesting birding tales [AK Saib]



Black Sparrowhawk [Hein Duvenhage]



[Marianne Brown]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

Migrants are departing, but we still had many riches and surprises in Wider Gauteng during March. Zaagkuildrift held on to first place with a number of **Wider Gauteng Rarities** reported: **Baillon's Crake**, **Allen's Gallinule**, **Lesser Moorhen** and **Greater Painted-snipe**, all of these fitted with tracking devices by Dr. Jonah Gula.

A BLNG group found various out-of-range and interesting species at Markon River Lodge. The first was a flock of some 11 **Southern Bald Ibis**. A **European Nightjar** was seen and later, a **Booted Eagle**. Not provincial rarities, but other good finds there were an **African Yellow Warbler** and a **Cape Bunting**.



European Nightjar [Sheleph Burger]



Southern Bald Ibis [Sean Naudé]



Booted Eagle [Pieter Heslinga]



African Yellow Warbler [Sean Naudé]

Sandy Neveling found a **Black-necked Grebe** family on private property near Deneysville.

Suburban Pretoria had **European Nightjar** at Bishop Bird Park (BLNG) as well as an **Icterine Warbler**. Daan van de Wetering photographed an **Ayres's Hawk Eagle** in Pretoria-West.



European Honey Buzzard [Rinish Singh]



Water Thick-knee [Etienne Marais]

European Honey Buzzards were seen at Roodeplaat NR, as well as at Rietvlei NR.

Zaagkuil drift Road and warblers are synonyms this time of the year. Doug Newman spotted the first **River Warbler** at the Platte River near Kgomo-Kgomo. **Thrush Nightingale** and **Water Thick-knee** were reported (Etienne Marais) and **Common Whitethroat** and **Icterine Warblers** were also photographed there.



Icterine Warbler [Marna Buys]



Common Whitethroat [Marna Buys]

Max van Waasdingen found a **Collared Pratincole** at Kgomo-Kgomo. Kgomo-Kgomo also had a **Eurasian Golden Oriole** (Etienne Marais) and **Allen's Gallinule** (Ilse Müller).



Allen's Gallinule [Marna Buys]



Red-footed Falcon [Ivonne Coetzee]

Sightings of **Red-footed Falcon** were particularly numerous and they were seen at Zaagkuil drift Road and Vlaklaagte. **Black-rumped Buttonquail** and **Montagu's Harrier** were recorded at Vlaklaagte (Marna Buys). JP van der Merwe found a **Pallid Harrier** there as well.

Pieter Heslinga photographed an **African Finfoot** with two juveniles on Crake Road, and Joshua Winter reported a **Dwarf Bittern** at Onderstepoort.



African Finfoot [Pieter Heslinga]



Pallid Harrier [JP van der Merwe]

Tristan Silver found **Swee Waxbills** along the Vergenoeg Hiking Trail west of Hartebeespoort Dam, and Rob Cliff photographed **River Warbler** at Faerie Glen NR. *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

This house-proud Thick-billed Weaver is a worthy winner of the Photograph of the Month. Three aspects immediately command the viewer's attention: strong lines, contrasts between textures and colours, and lastly, focal variation. The triangle of the reeds strongly emphasises the central subject, the weaver and nest. The intricate green scribbles of the nest structure versus the bold brown block of the weaver's shape again show the worth of contrasts. The placement follows the Golden Ratio principle of photography – in this case, slightly off-centre. It allows full emphasis on the subject but also gives space for the bird's gaze to the right. The bird and nest are in sharp focus, while the soft green blurred background with its golden glints is utterly pleasing. Congratulations, Pieter Heslinga, on this spectacular image!



Club meeting – 14 April 2026

Christina Hagen

De Hoop Penguin Colony



[Marna Buys]

Come and join us!

BLNG Membership allows you to participate in bird walks and outings **free of charge** 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 – April 2026



1 Apr – Modderfontein Reserve



12 Apr – Mkhombo Dam



16 - 19 Apr – Middelpunt Camp



22 Apr – Moreleta NR

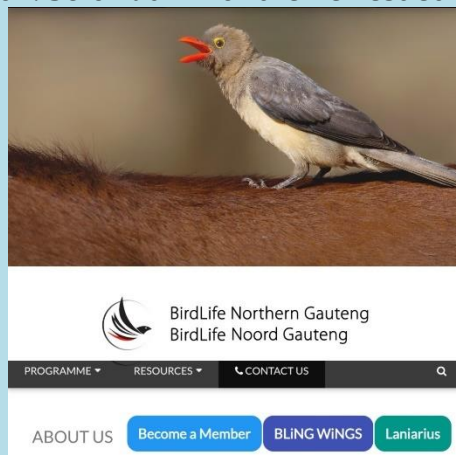


26 April – Die Bosveld

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