



Lilac-breasted Roller [Sheleph Burger]

BLING WINGS

Edition 21, May 2025

Reflections: Club meeting 13 May 2025



It was all about albatrosses, petrels, and prions – BLNG members who attended Flock II to Marion 2025 shared their experiences and photographs, making the rest of us uncomfortably aware that they now belong to a higher cult of mortals... for they have seen the albatross!

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ROODEPLAAT NR – 17 May

Roodeplaat NR is a hidden gem, a mere 20 km from Pretoria, with mostly great tarred roads, and bird species such as Marico Flycatcher, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill and Lilac-breasted Roller. There are safe, scenic hiking trails although some were found to be quite overgrown.

During this bird outing, led by Laura Jordaan, birds like Pied Kingfisher, African Olive Pigeon and African Fish Eagle made the day. 62 Bird species were seen. All photographs by JP van der Merwe.



Fork-tailed Drongo



Crowned Lapwing



Marico Flycatcher

All photographs by JP van der Merwe.

PRETORIA BOTANICAL GARDEN – 20 May

Willem Boshoff, the outing leader, arranged for the group to meet at 7:00, to get a bit of a jump start on the birding before the throngs of pensioners arrived for their Tuesday's senior citizen free entry. Angela Openshaw took the photographs of some of the great species seen.



Black Cuckooshrike (female)



A pair of Spotted Thick-knee



Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird



Arrow-marked Babblers

DEVON GRASSLANDS – 25 May

This popular winter outing always brings many rewards – not only the peace of open, golden fields, stretching out to the horizons, korhaan, cranes and francolin, but also dams with quirky species such as Maccoa Duck, flamingos, pochards and grebes.

Andy Featherstone of Witwatersrand Bird Club guided this outing along a maze of farm roads. And, even if the targeted species such as Blue Crane, Blue Korhaan, Orange River Francolin and Maccoa Duck were ticked, the abundance of raptors made the day. At least seven raptor species were seen.



Capped Wheatear [Geoff Abbott]



[Geoff Abbott]



Blue Crane, in steps of comparison
[Philip Calinikos]



Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil... Cape Shovelers
[Philip Calinikos]



Greater Kestrel [Geoff Abbott]



Black-chested Snake Eagle [Geoff Abbott]



Jackal Buzzard [Philip Calinikos]



Southern Pochard [Philip Calinikos]



One knit, one purl, one knit. Red-billed Quelea [Philip Calinikos]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

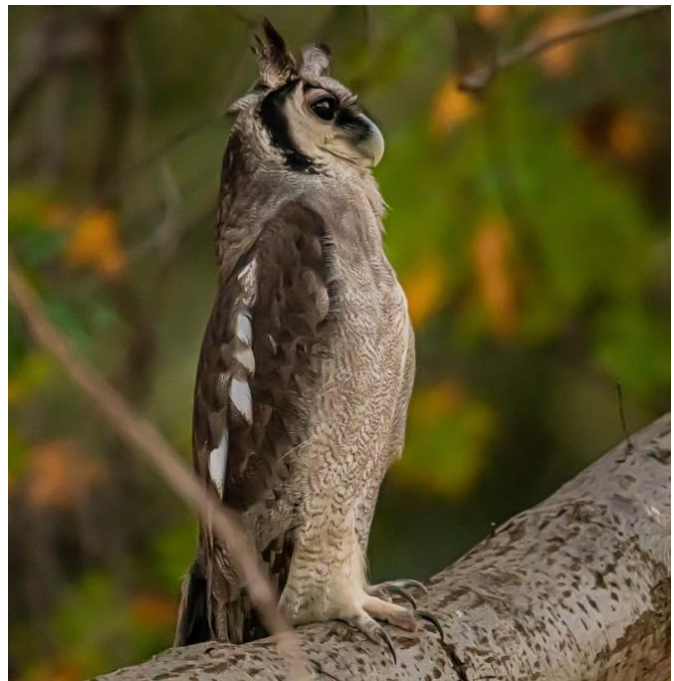
Rather a quiet month as far as regional rare birds were concerned. Still some excellent and interesting sightings were recorded, starting with a pair of **Grey-winged Francolin** seen at Suikerbosrand NR (Michael Johnson).

Selwyn Rautenbach had, as seems to be ever the case, scarce birds popping out everywhere: **African Crane** at Kgomo-Kgomo, an **African Goshawk** flying over Deales' Rock Lodge in the Wilge River Valley, and a large family of **Green-capped Eremomela**, and **White-crested Helmet-shrike** on the Wilge River Road. He also spotted **Greater Painted-snipe** at Marievale.

A magnificent **Verreaux's Eagle Owl** was seen at Johannesburg Golf course. Andy Featherstone guided Witwatersrand Bird Club on an outing to Boons Road and came across a flock of **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters**, but with the star of the show, a **Rufous-eared Warbler**, showing well. He also led a BLNG group around the Devon grasslands, and **Blue Crane**, **Blue Korhaan**, and **Maccoa Duck** were some of the highlights of the day. Maccoa Duck was also seen at Dickenson's Pans.



Rufous-eared Warbler [Daniel Cleary]



Verreaux's Eagle Owl [Trevor Barnes]

An interesting record of no fewer than six **Southern Bald Ibis** at Little Eden near the end of this month came through from Dawie Kleynhans.

Another record of note was when Luca Tomlinson found a **Whiskered Tern** at LC de Villiers, feeding its young.

Other records concern movement of species to their wintering grounds, such as **Fairy Flycatchers** recently noted in various localities in Pretoria.



Southern Bald Ibis [Dawie Kleynhans]



Maccoa Duck [Marna Buys]



Whiskered Tern [Thea Jenkins]



Fairy Flycatcher [Daan van de Wetering]

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 at lanariuseditor@bng.co.za

Photograph of the month

No-one will deny that finding a Half-collared Kingfisher leaves one with a feeling of awe, a glow for the rest of the week. And then, to be able to preserve that moment with a series of stunning photographs adds to that joy. Pieter Heslinga was the lucky birder walking on clouds for the rest of the week - he found this one at Fairy Glen NR. This capture shows why these secretive and scarce kingfisher species generate so much excitement when they are spotted. Its appeal lies not only in its luminous colours, and micro-fine barring on the head, but also in the surprising accents of the black bill, the snow-white collar, and vibrant red feet. The drab setting of dull browns accentuates the jewel-like turquoises and cobalt of its feathers. Thank you, Pieter, for sharing your joy!



After our BLNG camp at Middelpunt, one of the prime White-winged Flufftail sites near Dullstroom, our interest to hear more about the conservation programme was spiked. The BLNG programme organisers obliged- come and join us!



PROGRAMME – JUNE 2025



1 June – Deneysville



10 June – Club meeting – White-winged Flufftail Conservation 18:00



14 June – Rooiwal Water Works



22 June – Finfoot Lake NR



29 June – Groenkloof NR



[Photo credits: BLSA]

Dr Kyle Llyod: White-winged Flufftails – 10 June

Kyle is the Wetland Conservation Project Manager, a Rockjumper Fellow of White-winged Flufftail Conservation of BirdLife South Africa.

Kyle oversees the research and conservation of the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail (WwF). Kyle's responsibilities are broadly divided into conducting research on WwF population dynamics, breeding biology and movement patterns, and protecting WwF habitat by engaging with local landowners, improving habitat quality, and identifying potential threats which can be mitigated through effective conservation measures. Come and join us to hear of his interesting findings.

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