

# BLiNG WiNGS



Pygmy Goose [JP van den Merwe]

## Reflections: Club Meeting: 8 October

John Gibbs, BLSA's Birds and Renewable Energy Project Leader, explained the effects of renewable energy on birds, in particular habitat loss (solar and wind), collision (wind turbines and power lines) and electrocution (power lines). The efforts of BLSA at two wind farms, by halting the turbines when spotters see a bird approaching, is one of several mitigation measures still in the experimental phase.



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## DERDEPOORT REGIONAL PARK – 2 OCTOBER

Ilse Müller guided the group through this farm with its old homestead, two dams and perennial Hartbeesspruit. Exciting species may be picked up there, such as the Crimson-breasted Shrike, African Black Duck, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Half-collared Kingfisher and African Finfoot. Bird photographs by Wilma van der Merwe.



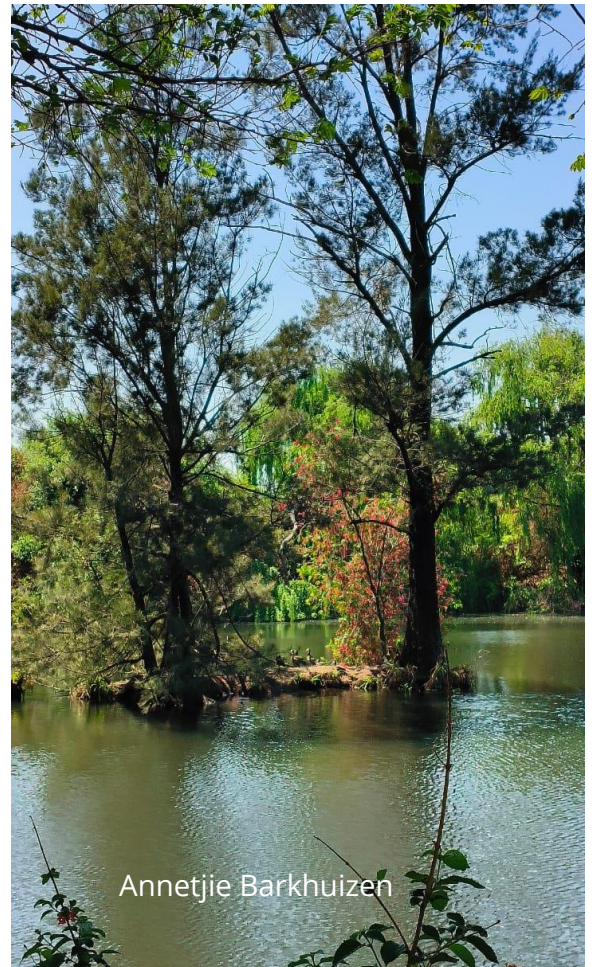
African Wattled Lapwing



White-faced Whistling Duck



White-fronted Bee-eater



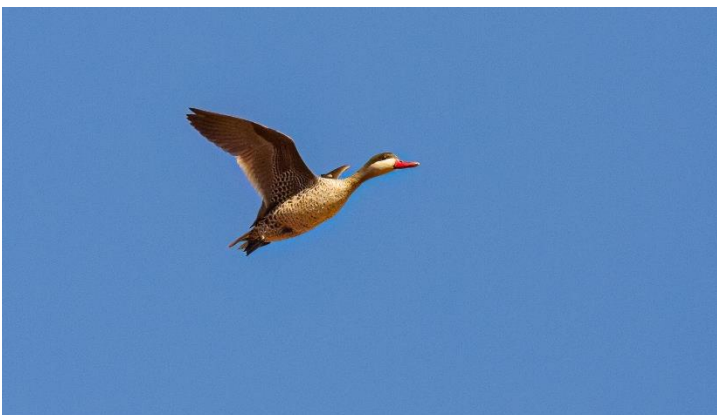
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## BOEKENHOUTKLOOF – 5 OCTOBER

Boekenhoutkloof is all about African Snipes! This outing also lent ample opportunities for birds-in-flight photography – according to JP van der Merwe, who guided this outing.



African Snipe [Sean Naudé]



Red-billed Teal [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Marsh Owl [Craig Green]



Whiskered Tern [JP van der Merwe]



Western Cattle Egret [JP van der Merwe]



African Sacred Ibis [Marna Buys]



Pied Kingfisher [Craig Green]



White-backed Duck [Kayleigh Marcus]



Spur-winged Geese [Thea Jenkins]

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## **BUFFELSDRIFT – 12 OCTOBER**

Despite raging veld fires that destroyed some 12 houses in this area a few weeks ago, enough of the natural bushveld remained to make this a very worthwhile morning of birding under the guidance of Marna Buys, with 76 species seen. Highlights were Black Sparrowhawk and Ovambo Sparrowhawk, with a skulking warbler that refused to unmask its identity by singing. The photographs are proof enough of a successful birding walk!



Blue Waxbill [Marna Buys]



Marico Sunbird [Wihan Barnard]



Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike [Wihan Barnard]



Common Reed Warbler [Marna Buys]

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**RIETVLEI HIKE – 28 SEPTEMBER**



Bradden Stevens led this enjoyable hike.



Fiscal Flycatcher [Johan Botha]



Banded Martin [Johan Botha]



Spotted Thick-knee [Danie van Zyl]



Blacksmith Lapwing [Danie van Zyl]



Capped Wheatear [Danie van Zyl]

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## REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

“Mkhombo Magic” is the only way to describe this birding hotspot with the excitement of national rarities pitching up at Mkhombo Dam this past month.



To kick off, Elandré Scherman managed to spot this **Slaty Egret**.



**Collared Pratincole** [Klaus Schmid]

The star of the show, however, was the discovery of a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** on October 12 by Eduard Teichert.



Pieter Uitenweerde photographed a scarce **Terek Sandpiper**, seldom seen inland.

Klaus Schmid photographed the **Collared Pratincoles** which were reported end of September as well, in the same general area as the waders and the Slaty Egret.



After his photograph of the Broad-billed Sandpiper appeared on the Wider Gauteng Rare Bird Alert Telegram group, substantial numbers of twitchers enjoyed this amazing and obliging bird.

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To put this national rare sighting in perspective: one Broad-billed Sandpiper was seen at West Coast NP in 2021, and one again in 2022. One also briefly appeared at East London in 2021. This appears to be the first-ever record for Mpumalanga and Greater Gauteng.



Cameron Blair went on to pick up this **Southern Bald Ibis** at the same locality as the Broad-billed Sandpiper and the Slaty Egret. This was followed by a **Sanderling** reported by Etienne Marais, and **Grey Plover** by Michael Johnson.

Mo van der Merwe reported at least two **White-backed Vultures** feeding on a carcass on Zaagkuil drift Road. Jandr  Verster again located the two long-staying **Double-banded Coursers** at Deneysville.



Pieter Verster next discovered that several **Pygmy Geese** were back at the inlet of Rust de Winter Dam.

Two interesting sightings for suburban Pretoria were a **Horus Swift** picked up by Peter Thompson at Rietondale Proefplaas, with short on its heels a juvenile **Common Cuckoo**, seen there by Daan van de Wetering.



Horus Swift [Marna Buys]



Juvenile Common Cuckoo [Daan van de Wetering]

*These sightings were compiled from various social media Wider Gauteng Rarity sources. - Ed.*



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## *Photograph of the month*

This breathtaking photograph is from Marlou Schalkwyk, taken at the start of October. Some technical data: Marlou used a CANON EOS R5. The focal length was 400mm, shutter speed 1/1600, aperture f/8.0, and ISO 800.

The heron caught the last of the afternoon's sunrays against a darker background which already was enveloped in shade. Marlou removed some lighter spots in the background during editing.



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



Sacred Ibis seen at Boekenhoutkloof during the BLNG-outing. [Anna-Marie van der Merwe]

*A warm thank-you to all our club's outing leaders, and our eager photographers, for your support.  
You make BLiNG WiNGS possible!*

**PROGRAMME**



1 – 10 November – Limpokwena Camps 1 & 2



17 November – Oxbow Country Estate



20 November – Voortrekker Monument



23 November – Bishop Bird Park



30 November – Year-end Function

For bookings:  
<mailto:secretary@blng.co.za>

**12 November – Club Meeting**



Dr Karin Lourens is the co-founder and head veterinarian of the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. She combined it with a wildlife rehabilitation centre - making it the only one of its kind in South Africa. The goal of this facility is the treatment, rehabilitation and release of wild animals, reptiles and birds back into the wild. Come join us when she shares her unique journey.

<https://www.jsvc.co.za/>

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