



BLiNG WiNGS

Southern White-faced Owl [Vilette Forwood]



Edition 26

September 2025

Reflections: Club meeting 9 September 2025



The Quest for the Resplendent Quetzal

Inside This Issue

Club meeting

BLSA BirdFair

Seringveld Conservancy

Mkhombo Dam

Eugene Marais Park

Rarities

Photograph of the month

October Programme

CLUB MEETING – 7 September



Philip Calinikos took us all on a magic carpet ride through Costa Rica, where he and Amanda went on a birding trip with EcoTours. From beaches and estuaries to elevations of 3000 m, through high mist-belt and lowland tropical forests, they managed to record 284 species, of which Philip photographed close to 200. Brilliantly coloured Motmots, Tanagers, Macaws, Hummingbirds – each more spectacular than the previous. During the photography session, he shared information about his new mirrorless camera and lens used, as well as post-editing packages such as Nikon's. The results are astounding – especially as he shared a great many videos where we could see some weird habits and foraging methods of many species. Their tour ended with a nesting Resplendent Quetzal, one of the main target species, a bird which I would place as a cross between a Narina Trogon and an African Paradise Flycatcher with long streamers, flitting through the forest. See the next page for some truly unforgettable bird species.



Close to fifty club members attended, while 15 followed on Zoom.



Coffee, tea and sherry and old birding friends made for great socialising afterwards.



All photographs taken by Philip Calinikos during their Costa Rica trip.

BLSA BirdFair – 6 September

Months of planning, both at BLSA head offices and by our own BLNG BirdFair committee, culminated at the national BirdFair in the Pretoria National Botanical Garden. When we arrived at 7 am to set up our stall, the parking lot was already full, and most stands needed only some finishing touches. Many hands make light work, and I must compliment every member under the guidance of Fransie O'Brien for making our stall the most visually appealing. JP van der Merwe was a star – setting up his TV screen, power supply, and laptop to use for showing all the top photographs of our club members; helping us ladies to erect the gazebo, ready with a hammer where needed most. With tablecloths, banners, artworks and branded clothing for sale all arranged by Fransie, we were ready to enjoy the BirdFair.



Some last-minute preparations.



Anthony Cooper helping with set-up.





The event kicked off with a morning birding walk, where experts guided groups through the garden's pathways in search of birds.

BLSA unveiled the new logo at the BirdFair, honouring our national bird, the near-endemic Blue Crane.

As the day progressed, attendees could choose from a variety of workshops, covering topics from bird photography to garden-friendly landscaping, designed to attract birdlife.

Guest speakers inspired the audience with talks about conservation challenges and success stories, while local authors delighted fans with book readings and signings.

A highlight of the afternoon was the announcement of the winners of the 2025 Photography Competition, showcasing striking images of South Africa's diverse bird species.

Our club members joined the bird walks, enjoyed the stalls, and attended many of the talks. Angela represented BLNG at the Owl Awards.

Our heartfelt thanks must go out to the BLNG Ringers. Their live bird ringing demonstration drew particular interest, allowing visitors to see up close how researchers safely capture, tag, and release birds to study their movements and behaviour.

“It was such a treat to see bird ringing in action and to learn more about conservation,” said one of the attendees. The ringers received a special mention the next day for their competence and professionalism in a Facebook post by John Kinghorn from BLSA.



A Red-throated Wryneck (left) and Grey-headed Bush-Shrike at the ringing station.

A very warm word of thanks goes to Fransie, her team, and all club members involved in the Bird Fair.

SERINGVELD – 13 September

Hanjo Gouws managed to assist his group of keen and enthusiastic birders to record 115 species, with a lot of lifers among them. New club members Hanlie Verster and Stephen Brown enjoyed a great inaugural BLNG outing and had a fantastic day. The group enjoyed excellent sightings – Black Stork, White-crested Helmet-Shrike, Striped Kingfisher, Bearded Woodpecker and Brubru. Raptors were obliging with African Harrier-Hawk, Black-chested Snake Eagle and Fish Eagle, all recorded during the morning.



[Liesl de Swardt]



Striped Kingfisher [Zak Croukamp]



Black Stork [Zak Croukamp]



Yellow-fronted Canary [Zak Croukamp]



Long-billed Crombec [Zak Croukamp]

MKHOMBO DAM – 20 September

Rob Geddes was the guide for the day, and a large group of birders took advantage of his expertise and the hype around Mkhombo dam. Unfortunately, the weather was overcast, windy and cold; and the very high water levels left no mudflats or even grassy verges for waders. The African Finfoot seen on the way back at the Elands River bridge near Rust de Winter was a consolation.



Southern Boubou [Sheleph Burger]



Squacco Heron [Johan Botha]



Purple Heron [Johan Botha]



Black Crake [Johan Botha]



[Vilette Forwood]



African Finfoot [Johan Botha]

EUGENE MARAIS PARK – 24 September

Liesl de Swardt guided this outing through this lovely park in Groenkloof.



[Liesl de Swardt]



[Liesl de Swardt]



Juvenile African Harrier-Hawk [Danel Brits]



African Olive Pigeon [Danel Brits]



[Liesl de Swardt]



Thick-billed Weaver [Danel Brits]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS



The **Slaty Egret** was still moving between Gnu Valley Farm and Walkhaven, entertaining a number of birders. [Marlou Schalkwyk]



The **Red-chested Flufftail** continued to draw interested birders to Albert's Farm. [Pieter Heslinga]



A single **Sanderling** was found at the South Bay on the Vaal Dam. [Sandy Neveling]



Several **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** were found near Chaneng in the North-West. [Sarel van der Westhuizen]



An **African Finfoot** [Johan Botha] was found by BLNG members at the Elands River crossing near Rust de Winter on the Bronkhorstspuit Road.



Boon's Road area still had **Rufous-eared Warblers** hanging around. [Richard Crawshaw]



Hanjo Gouws and the BLNG club spotted a fly-over of a **Black Stork** at the Seringveld area. [Zak Croukamp]



Baillon's Crane was found at Marievale Bird Sanctuary. [Michelle van Niekerk]

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 vibrant image of an African Stonechat is the Photograph of the Month. The dramatic black and white colouring is enhanced by the bright chestnut chest and flanks and offset by the complementing fresh mint green of the spring leaves. Two strong diagonal lines of the branches draw the eye to the most arresting part of this image – the prey in the beak and the glint in the eye of this characterful bird. Well done, Zak Croukamp!



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



Club meeting – 14 October 2025

Ernst Retief – Landscape Conservation






From Estuaries to Grasslands: a Habitat-based Approach to Bird Conservation.

Ernst Retief is BirdLife South Africa's Landscape Conservation Program Manager. He will talk about the work they do in this BLSA programme.

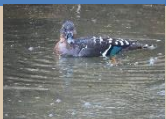
Come and join us!

Merchandise for sale. Contact

<mailto:sheleph@blng.co.za>

	<p>T-shirts</p> <p>Adults R170 each (Sizes 3XL, 2XL, XL, L, M, S)</p> <p>Children R125 each (Sizes 2 years to 14 years)</p>
<p>BLNG logo in front and the words BirdLife Northern Gauteng at the back</p> 	<p>Caps</p> <p>R150 each</p> 
	<p>Bandannas</p> <p>R100 each</p>
	<p>Socks</p> <p>R160 per pair</p>

PROGRAMME – October 2025



11 Oct – Rietvlei NR Hike



18 Oct – Smuts Koppie

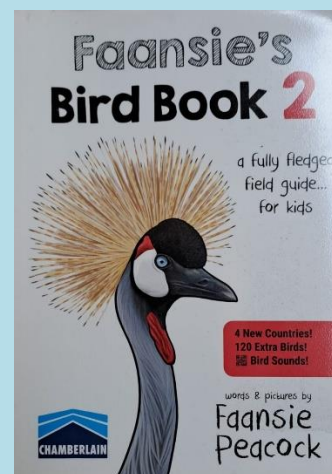


29 Oct – Gnu Valley and Walkhaven



23 - 26 Oct – Punda Maria Camp

Various **bird guides** by Faansie Peacock are available at the club.



@ R450

Compilation and layout by I Coetzee

<mailto:lanariuseditor@blng.co.za>

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