



BLiNG WiNGS

[African Pygmy Goose – JP van der Merwe]

Reflections: Club Meeting – 12 March



Dr Linda van den Heever of BLSA, was the guest speaker at our club meeting on 12 March. Her fascinating talk centered on the harmful effects of lead in bullets used to cull game and domestic animals, which are then delivered to vulture restaurant sites. Her research demonstrated how this lead poisons adult vultures and especially chicks.

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BIRD WALK AT MORELETA NR - 2 MARCH

The first club outing of March was scheduled to coincide with the bird ringing at Moreleta NR. Roelof Jonkers guided this walk.



Diederik Cuckoo [Roelof Jonkers]



[Wihan Barnard]



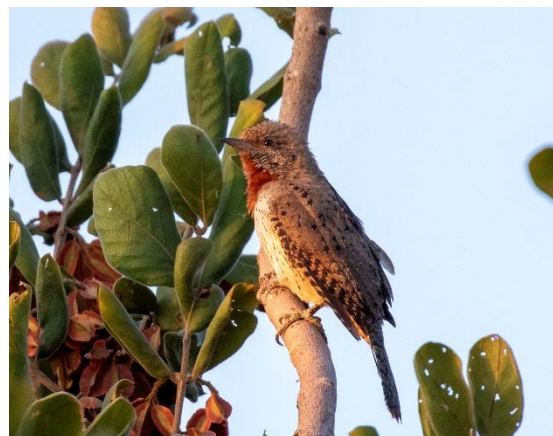
This Acacia Pied Barbet was on display at the bird ringing station.
[Wihan Barnard]



It was a privilege to study a Half-collared Kingfisher. [Wihan Barnard]



Little Sparrowhawk [Roelof Jonkers]

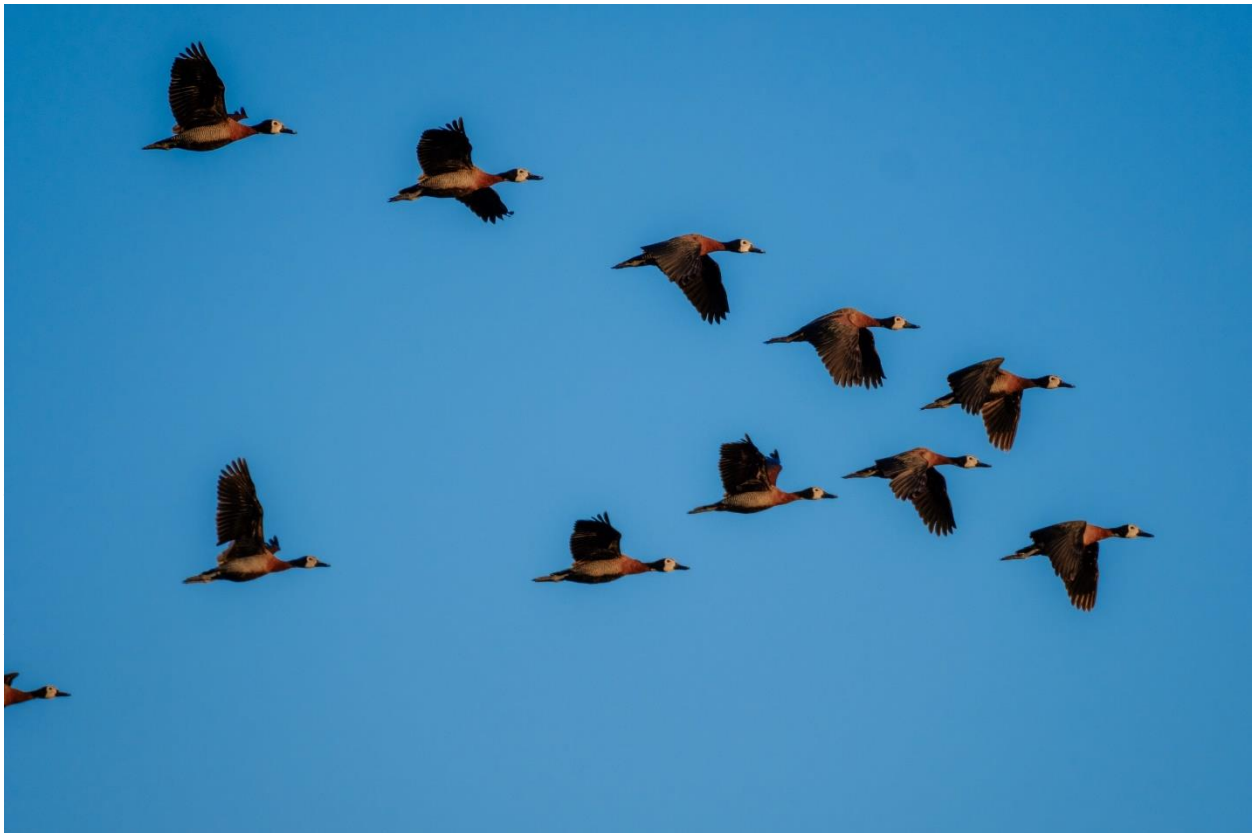


Red-throated Wryneck [Roelof Jonkers]

ROODEKOPJES DAM – 7 MARCH

16 members joined the very successful outing led by Pieter Uitenweerde to Roodekopjes Dam, near Brits. Though the day was hot, we ended with an excellent tally of over 120 species.

The day started with birding on the bridge over the Crocodile River for about an hour, where we picked up Common House Martin among the Little and White-rumped Swifts; Lesser Swamp, Common Reed, Great Reed, and Sedge Warblers in the reedbeds; and a good number of waterbirds passing overhead, including Squacco and Purple Herons, delightfully large and elegant groups of Glossy Ibis, and the charming piping calls of White-faced Whistling Ducks. There were also Marico Flycatchers, Burnt-necked Eremomela, and a Wahlberg's Eagle soaring overhead.



White-faced Whistling Ducks [Wihan Barnard]

At the dam, there were good numbers of African Pipits, Black-winged Stilts, Red-billed Teals, Wood Sandpipers, Ruffs, Little Stints, Common Ringed, Three-banded and Kittlitz's Plovers, Little Grebes, and Red-knobbed Coots. We got to witness a Black Heron demonstrating its canopy feeding method, and a look through Pieter's scope afforded views of Fulvous Whistling Ducks and Southern Pochards on the opposite bank.

As the temperature climbed into the 30s (and real-feel up to 40 degrees), we finished the morning in the spacious shade of the picnic area, where we picked up a very inquisitive and confiding Chestnut-vented Warbler, boisterous Arrow-marked Babblers, a Common Sandpiper near the water's edge, and an elusive Grey Tit-Flycatcher. Perhaps the highlight of the morning was the assembly of three Wagtail species: a number of Cape Wagtails, a lone African Pied Wagtail, and two vividly coloured separate individual Western Yellow Wagtails (one at the picnic area, and one on the southern side of the angling area).



Long-billed Crombec [Wihan Barnard]



Western Yellow Wagtail [Wihan Barnard]

A very gratifying morning of birding, and all the more gratifying to get into air-conditioned cars for the drive home!

Jared Beukes

FRIENDS OF MAGALIES MBT HIKE - 13 MARCH

Ilse Müller guided this walk on the fruitful MBT Trail. A total of 70 birds were seen, of which the Common Whitethroat was undoubtedly the highlight. All photographs provided by Matthys van der Hout.



Black-crowned Tchagra



Violet-backed Starling



MARIEVALE – 23 MARCH

A group of 13 BLNG'rs, some of them brand new members, joined Hannes van den Berg on this annual outing. Even though it was still relatively dry, there was a wonderful variety of birds, as these photographs of Hannes van den Berg (unless indicated otherwise) will testify. 89 Species were seen.



African Swamphen



Knob-billed Ducks



Black Heron



Malachite Kingfisher



Red-billed Teal [Mariana Arnoldi]



Sedge Warbler



Common Reed Warbler



Lesser Flamingo



African Marsh Harrier

ZAAGKUILDRIFT – 30 MARCH

Despite reports that warbler season was over, and the flood plains relatively dry, 13 club members joined our guide, JP van der Merwe to sample, once again, the birding wealth of Zaagkuil drift and Kgomo-Kgomo. We were richly rewarded! The cool, overcast conditions ensured lots of bird activity throughout the day. Dave Sole carried his spotting scope down to the floodplain at Kgomo-Kgomo for excellent views of Pratincole, African Snipe, waders and a variety of ducks and heron, and a fair number of Common House Martin amongst swallows overhead. A total of 128 species were seen.



[Ivonne Coetzee]



Southern White-crowned Shrike [Lynne Heydenreich]



Black-chested Snake Eagle
[JP van der Merwe]



The Purple Rollers at the entrance to Crake Road were a great surprise, as was their noisy interaction. [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



Red-backed Shrike [Gerdus Heydenreich]



Lesser Grey Shrike [Dave Sole]



Woodland Kingfisher [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]



African Snipe [JP van der Merwe]



Kalahari Scrub Robin [Anne-Marie van der Merwe]

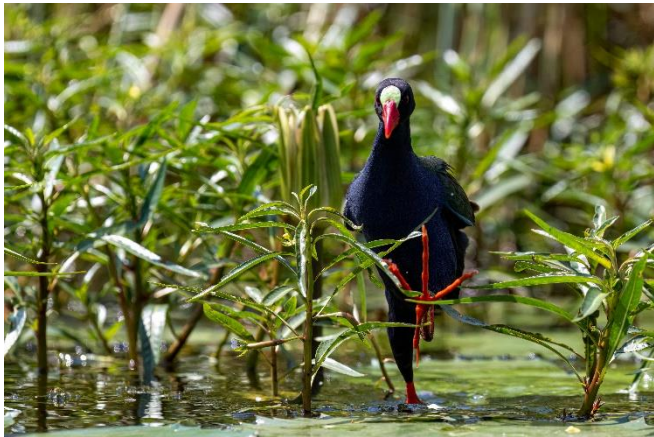


Dusky Lark [Ivonne Coetzee]

REGIONAL AND LOCAL RARITIES AND INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

With summer in its last throes, the reporting of special migrants and out-of-range species seems to be slowing somewhat.

Early in March, JP van der Merwe photographed **Allen's Gallinule**, **White-backed Night Heron** and **African Pygmy Geese** at Rust de Winter Dam.



Early March, a pair of **Red-footed Falcons** was found at Northern Farm amongst roosting Amur Falcons by Mike Pope. Thea Jenkins spotted a **Lark-like Bunting** at Zaagkuil drift.

A **River Warbler** was found at the Pretoria Botanical Garden by the bird ringers mid-March.



Justin Rhys Nicolau found a number of **Olive-tree Warblers** in Winterveld on 10 March, with a **Lark-like Bunting** on the same road. A **Eurasian Golden Oriole** was the crowning achievement when he spotted this in the vicinity later in the day. Michael Johnson picked up a **Yellow-bellied Eremomela** there as well.

Ilse Müller had another great find on the Friends of Magalies MBT Trail when she spotted **Common Whitethroat**, with a repeat sighting by BLNG members on a club outing there a few days later.



Common Whitethroat [Attie Hartslied]



Reinardt Haywood photographed this **European Nightjar** at Rietondale Proefplaas. Lastly, BLNG members encountered a group of three **Dusky Larks** during a club outing to Zaagkuil drift.

Photograph of the month

This beautiful photograph is of a juvenile Greater Honeyguide, seen at the fountain at Magalies MBT Trail. Thank you, Marna Buys, for this photograph of the month!



If you would like your photograph of a bird seen in Wider Gauteng to be featured on this page, please submit.



Cape Weaver [Roelof Jonkers]

A warm thank-you to all our club's outing leaders who send in summaries of species seen and the Bird of the Day, those who contribute articles, as well as our eager photographers, their photos. Without your contributions, BLING WINGS would not be possible.

| PROGRAMME | |
|---|--|
|  | 6 Apr – Bird ringing at Voortrekker Monument 6 Apr – Rust de Winter Dam |
|  | 14 Apr – Wilge River Valley inc |
|  | 19 - 22 Apr – Vredefort Dome & Vaal River |
|  | 28 Apr – Hedianga Farm |
| Bookings: mailto:secretary@blng.co.za | |

Compilation and lay-out by I Coetzee.

For future placements: <mailto:lanariuseditor@blng.co.za>

9 April - Club Meeting

Prof. Andy Featherstone



Birding In Georgia

Andy put together a Wits Bird Club trip to Georgia in April 2019. This was a follow-up on their previous trip in 2018 to Belarus. Georgia was part of the old USSR and gained independence in 1991. His talk includes pictures of the landscape, historical landmarks and a selection of the birds seen. He became interested after hearing about tours run there by their Hungarian guides to Belarus.



Red-throated Pipit [Andy Featherstone]

Come and join us on 9 April!