



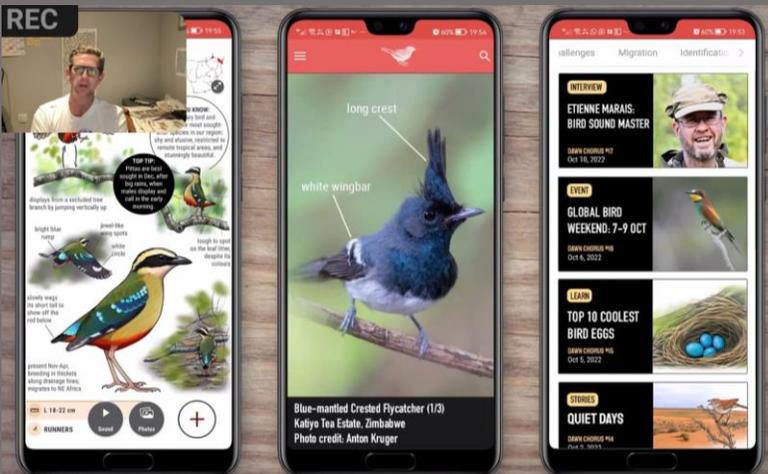
BLiNG WiNGS

Volume 4 | November 2023 | BLiNG WiNGS

Reflections

November Club zoom meeting: Firefinch App

If you missed this, you may contact the club secretary for a recording.



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Moreleta NR – 4 November

Laura Jordaan was the leader, while 14 club members also joined this bird walk. 61 Species were seen in the diverse habitats of the reserve. It was a revelation to see the beautiful colours of a Diederik Cuckoo which had met an untimely end.

This walk coincided with the bird ringers' session and up-close views of the process and different species could be had.



*Buffelsdrift Conservancy – 18
November*

Marna Buys guided this “Owl Outing” – a great day that started off with a Spotted Eagle Owl spotted by Amanda, which was consequently flushed by a Gabar Goshawk, and ended on a high note with Barn Owl. Other remarkable species saw members ticking a few lifers or bagging lifer photographs. 106 species were seen.



Spotted Eagle Owl &
Western Barn Owl [Johan Botha]



Marico Sunbird & White-throated Robin-Chat
[Johan Botha]



Northern Farm – 22 November

New BLNG member, Anna Batchelor, describes her first outing:

* The choice of Northern Farm as a birding site was already a 'winner', while the number of sightings even driving in from the gate to the parking area was just the beginning of an exceptional birding experience.

* I remember excitement at meeting new enthusiastic people and experiencing shared joy at the privilege of being out in the fresh, cool, early morning while the weaver chorus hanging from their nests provided background music.

The outing to this popular destination was led by Selwyn Rautenbach [Annetjie Barkhuizen]

Giant Heron and Long-crested Eagle (1) [all by Andy Smith]



White-faced Whistling Duck



Common Reed Warbler [Amanda Gazendam]

* One could sense that there was significant 'shared ground' among members, from talking about recent bird sightings, and past and future birding excursions, and always speaking in an encouraging, including, way. This was particularly encouraging for me to experience as a new member.

*What struck me was that people were keen not only to tell about their own experiences, but also encouraging others to also visit those birding sites.

*I am still amazed at the lightning-speed skill at recognising even far distant, fleeting 'fly-bys', and almost indiscernible calls.

Thank you that I could experience such a special day with you.”

The hoped-for Gauteng rarity, Booted Eagle, was later confirmed to be Wahlberg's.

[Andy Smith]



Andy Smith
PHOTOGRAPHER



Black-headed Heron [Angela Openshaw]

Deale's Rock – 25 November

Following the discovery of three Wider Gauteng Rarities at Deale's Rock on the Zusterstroom road on 18 November by Pieter Verster, Fransie O'Brien organised a club outing there. Even though there was no sign of the celebrated pair of Narina Trogon and the other target, Red-capped Robin-Chat, the pair of Olive Woodpeckers and views of the stunning sub-tropical gorge saved the day.

This beautiful resort and the surrounds will also be the first 2024 camp destination at the end of January. Nicole Crisp provided the photographs.



Olive Woodpecker



The gorgeous Pygmy Kingfisher

BOTY 2023 – Cape Parrot

The Cape Parrot is endemic to South Africa, so it occurs nowhere else in the world. This beautiful parrot inhabits isolated patches of forest in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. It is classified as Endangered, and is estimated to have a remaining population of fewer than 1800 individuals. The Cape Parrot is a medium-sized bird (~30 cm high) with a striking green body and golden head and neck. Adults have small orange patches on the shoulders and leg feathers, with females having a red patch above their beak, which is generally missing in males. They are usually seen as singletons, pairs, family groups or larger flocks. They are most often seen flying, or at roosting and feeding sites, especially at dawn or near dusk. The Cape Parrot is typically found in the inland Afromontane forests, much of which have been heavily affected by the logging of large hardwood trees (like Yellowwoods), causing a shortage of natural nesting sites and food availability for the species. Cape Parrots are also susceptible to the highly contagious and sometimes, fatal Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease. (*BLSA, Bird of the Year 2023*)



[Ivonne Coetzee]

Year-end function – 9 December



PROGRAMME DECEMBER



2 December – BLSA Birding Big Day



2 December – Rietvlei Bird Ringing



6 December – Hazeldean VT



9 December – Year-end function



15 – 17 Dec – Wakkerstroom Camp

Bookings: <mailto:secretary@blng.co.za>

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

Come and join us for a morning birding walk through Mooikloof and Bring & Braai at Sheleph and Louis Burger's beautifully shady and spacious garden. The highlight will be the hilarious Bird Quiz where two groups will try to trump each other. The food will be scrumptious, the conversation uplifting. Watch social media for details re time and address.

News We are thrilled to announce that the winner of this year's Eco-Intelligence Award is Mark Anderson – CEO of BirdLife SA.

This award recognizes individuals, organisations and communities that positively contribute towards a sustainable world. Our congratulations go to Mark and the entire BirdLife team!

Tune in to People's Weather channel 180 on DSTV or Openview channel 115 on the 2nd or 16th of December at 8am or 2pm to watch the awards ceremony.



Source: BLSA