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Birdlife
South Africa



WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB
PROGRAMME 01/2023
FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN BRIEF

| Date | Activity | Leader | Venue |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| January 2023 | | | |
| 7 | Saturday outing | Kevin Lavery | Meyer's Farm, Alberton |
| 18 | East Rand CWAC | Awie Coetzee | Rolfes & Park Haven Pans |
| 19 | Thursday evening talk | Trevor Hardaker | Zoom Online Talk |
| 20-22 | CWAC weekend | Barbi Forsyth | Nylsvley Nature Reserve, Limpopo |
| 21 | East Rand CWAC | Werner van Goethem | Korsman & Bullfrog Pans |
| 22 | East Rand CWAC | Werner van Goethem | Elandsvlei & Varkfontein Pans |
| 28 | East Rand CAR count | Werner van Goethem | Rayton |
| 29 | East Rand CWAC | Awie Coetzee | Marievale, Blesbokspruit |
| February 2023 | | | |
| 10 | West Rand CAR count | Christo Venter | Lenasia and Carletonville |
| 11 | West Rand CWAC | Christo Venter | De Pan, Carletonville |
| 12 | West Rand CWAC | Christo Venter | Panfontein, Three Rivers |
| 16 | Thursday evening talk | Jeanne Tarrant | Zoom Online Talk |
| 18 | Sunday outing | Colin van der Meulen | President Ridge Bird Sanctuary, Ferndale |
| 21 & 23 | Tuesday & Thursday Dragonflies | Christopher Hines | Zoom Online Course |
| 22 | Wednesday outing | Dave Bentley | Rietvlei Nature Reserve |
| 25 | Saturday outing | Christopher Hines | Ezemvelo Nature Reserve |
| March 2023 | | | |
| 8 | Wednesday outing | Felicity Kanichowsky | Elphin Lodge, Rietfontein |
| 11 | Saturday outing | Awie Coetzee | Marievale Bird Sanctuary |
| 16 | Thursday evening meeting | WBC AGM & Lance Robinson | Zoom Online AGM and Talk |
| 17-19 | Weekend course & outing | Etienne Marais | Warbler weekend Zaagkuil drift Lodge |
| 26 | Sunday outing | Christopher Hines | Abe Bailey Nature Reserve |
| April 2023 | | | |
| 5 | Wednesday outing | Koos van Dijk | Kloofendaal Nature Reserve |
| 16 | Sunday outing | Andy Featherstone | Boons Road, Syferbult |
| 20 | Thursday evening talk | Nandi Thobela | Zoom Online Talk |
| 22 | Saturday outing | Dave Bentley | Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Conservancy |
| May 2023 | | | |
| 4 - 8 | Long weekend outing | Ryan Tippet | Karoo Plains, Carnarvon, Karoo |
| 13 | Saturday outing | John Wesson | Wesson Farm, Magaliesberg Protected Area |
| 17 | Wednesday outing | Awie Coetzee | Elandsvlei Pans & Varkfontein Pan |
| 18 | Thursday Evening Talk | Andy Featherstone | Zoom Online Talk |
| 21 | Sunday outing | Leslie May | Modderfontein Nature Reserve |



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WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB

PROGRAMME 01/2023

| EVENING / AFTERNOON MEETINGS | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Club Meetings and Courses will be held online using Zoom until further notice | | |
| Thursday 19 January 2023 | Trevor Hardaker | Birding in Paradise |
| Trevor recently spent 3 weeks traveling and birding around Papua New Guinea with a group of friends and will be sharing an overview of that trip including some of the trials and tribulations of getting around the island nation, an itinerary of where all they went, as well as plenty of photos of many of the birds that they got to see, many of which are considered to be some of the most iconic bird species on the planet. | | |
| Thursday 16 February 2023 | Jeanne Tarrant | Celebrating 10 years of amphibian conservation in South Africa: EWT's Threatened Amphibian Programme |
| In September 2012, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Threatened Amphibian Programme was initiated by Dr Jeanne Tarrant, who had recently graduated from North-West University armed with a PhD in Zoology with a focus on amphibian conservation. The programme was established to address some of the gaps identified through this research, and to focus targeted conservation action for some of South Africa's threatened frog species. Initial funding was secured for work on the then Critically Endangered <i>Pickersgill's Reed Frog</i> on the KZN coast, and the Critically Endangered <i>Amathole Toad</i> in the Eastern Cape, following its 'rediscovery' in 2011. Fast-forward 10 years, and the programme now employs 14 people full-time across three provinces and focusses on nine flagship threatened species, including one snake. This is almost half of all the country's threatened frog species. Our work includes research, facilitation of habitat protection and management, educational outreach, inspiring appreciation, and environmental compliance monitoring – amongst the many other facets of running NGO-based conservation projects. Join Jeanne to hear about this 10-year journey and to learn more about this interesting, but often under-looked group of animals. | | |
| Thursday 16 March 2023 | WBC AGM and Lance Robinson | Zoom Online AGM and Talk |
| At this meeting, the President, and the Committee to hold office for the year 2023 will be elected. Please join us online for the AGM and celebrate with our winners of the annual Diamond Award and Bearded Vulture Award (in honour of the late Steven Piper). This will be followed by a talk on grassland birds by Lance Robinson. While many of the more cryptic LBJs are to be found in the grasslands, there are equally many spectacular, some endemic, and even some of the most iconic bird species to call the grasslands home. In this lecture Lance will showcase some of the birds to be found in this threatened biome in South Africa. | | |
| Thursday 20 April 2023 | Nandi Thobela | BirdLife South Africa's Empowering People Programme |
| Nandi Thobela has been BirdLife South Africa's Empowering People Programme Manager since February 2022. Nandi is responsible for the implementation of BirdLife South Africa's northern KwaZulu-Natal community conservation project and oversees all other related projects within the Empowering People Programme, including the Avitourism Project. Having worked in the field of conservation for over a decade, Nandi has spent the bulk of her career managing many aspects of community conservation, protected area management, and environmental education with a strong focus on training and learning material development. The talk will cover an overview of the Empowering People Programme strategy and take a closer look at some of the projects the EPP team is working on, and inform us of what the challenges are, what progress has been made so far, and how members of established bird clubs can get involved. | | |
| Thursday 18 May 2023 | Andy Featherstone | From the Outside Looking In |
| In November 2021 and November 2022 Andy led a three-week tour for overseas visitors to various locations in South Africa and Lesotho, including the Kruger Park, Wakkerstroom and the Sani Pass. The talk showcases some of the iconic birds and animals seen on these trips, gives an overview of the places visited and an idea of the problems encountered. With a list of over 400 bird species and more than 50 mammal species seen the tours gave an excellent introduction to the fauna of South Africa and Lesotho. | | |

DAY / WEEKEND OUTINGS AND COURSES

Target Bird Challenge

Target birds are not necessarily the most elusive, prettiest or rarest birds to be found. We encourage you to read up beforehand and get to grips with our nominated target birds; share your newly acquired knowledge with your fellow members and in this way, we all learn something new. Please note that the overall objective is to learn more and to have fun, therefore no prizes will be awarded for spotting the target bird on the day.

7 JANUARY 2023 / SATURDAY OUTING MEYERS FARM, ALBERTON

The farm boasts the only artificial nesting platform in Africa which is also central to the breeding pair of eagles, known as the Klipriviersberg *Verreaux's Eagles*. This very historic farm and farmhouse, built in 1881, was also featured as one of JH Pierneef's old Johannesburg station panels, featuring Alberton, in the 1930s.

Route: Head east on the N12 southern bypass. Take the 404 for Voortrekker Road toward Alberton on the R103. Keep left at the fork and merge onto Voortrekker Road (M31). Turn right onto Ring Road. Turn right onto Fore Street. At the roundabout, proceed (through the boom gate to Reading Golf course) and continue along Fore Street, under the highway and meet at the parking lot for the stables

Book: witsbc@mweb.co.za or (011) 782-7267

GPS: S26°16'02.5", E28°05'01.6"

Meet: 07h30 at parking lot for stables

Leader: Kevin Lavery (083 267 3494)

SABAP2: Pentad 2615_2805

Target Bird: Black Sparrowhawk

18 JANUARY 2023 / EAST RAND CWAC WEDNESDAY ROLFES & PARK HAVEN PANS

Book on either: **Awie (083 677 7097) as attendance is limited to a few participants.**

GPS: 26°10'16.3"S 28°13'13.1"E

Meet: 07h00 – Thembelihle, 1 Michael Place, Yaldwin Road, Jet Park

Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

20-22 JANUARY 2023 / CWAC WEEKEND CAMP NYLSVLEY NATURE RESERVE (IBA SA008)

Route: Travel on the N1 North. At the Kranskop Toll Plaza, take the R33 Nylstroom exit. Travel into Nylstroom. At the crossing with R101, turn right in the direction of N1 - Pietersburg and Naboomspruit. Near Middelfontein, turn left towards Naboomspruit. Take the R101 and turn right to the Boekenhout station.

OR:
Travel on the N1 and take the Mookgopong / Naboomspruit turnoff. Turn left and follow the road until meeting up with the old road. Turn left towards Nylstroom and proceed about 10km southwards until Boekenhout station turnoff.
THEN Continue on the dirt road over the N1 and then the railway line. Continue straight for about 2km. Nylsvley is well sign posted and the gate is on your left.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: main gate S24°38'50.8", E28°39'49.0"

Meet: 07h00 on Saturday

Leader: Barbi Forsyth

SABAP2: Pentad 2435_2840

Book: **Werner (082 462 7108) as attendance is limited to a few participants.**

GPS: 26°11'29.9"S 28°17'25.2"E

Meet: 07h00 – c/o The Drive & Kilfenora St, Westdene, Benoni

Leader: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

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|---|---|
| 21 JANUARY 2023 / EAST RAND CWAC KORSMAN & BULLFROG PANS | |
| Book on either: | <u>Werner (082 462 7108) as attendance is limited to a few participants.</u> |
| GPS: | 26°11'29.9"S 28°17'25.2"E |
| Meet: | 07h00 – c/o The Drive & Kilfenora St, Westdene, Benoni |
| Leader: | Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108) |
| 22 JANUARY 2023 / EAST RAND SUNDAY CWAC ELANDSVLEI & VARKFONTEIN PANS | |
| Book: | <u>Werner (082 462 7108) as attendance is limited to a few participants</u> |
| GPS: | 26°00'32.2"S 28°25'27.1"E |
| Meet: | 07h00 at the Caltex Garage, R25 / R50 intersect, Bapsfontein |
| 28 JANUARY 2023 / EAST RAND SATURDAY CAR RAYTON | |
| Book: | <u>Werner (082 462 7108) as attendance is limited to a few participants.</u> |
| Meet: | 07h00 – Caltex Garage, R25 / R50 intersect, Bapsfontein |
| Leader: | Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108) |
| 29 JANUARY 2023 / EAST RAND SUNDAY CWAC MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY (IBA SA021) | |
| Marievale has recently been added to the East Rand's CWAC portfolio and always produces a good array of water birds. As this is a large area to cover for a CWAC count volunteers are welcomed. | |
| Book: | <u>witsbc234@gmail.com</u> |
| Meet: | 07h00 |
| Leader: | Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097) |
| 10 FEBRUARY 2023 / WEST RAND FRIDAY CAR LENASIA AND CARLETONVILLE | |
| Route: | Routes GC03 and GC04 Lenasia and Carletonville |
| Book: | <u>Christo Venter (083 655 1912) as numbers taking part are limited</u> |
| Meet: | 06h00 |
| Leader: | Christo Venter (083 655 1912) |
| SABAP2: | various pentads depending on CAR route |
| 11 FEBRUARY 2023 / WEST RAND SATURDAY CWAC DE PAN, CARLTONVILLE | |
| Route: | From Johannesburg travel west on the N14 towards Ventersdorp. At the junction with the R41/R500 turn left, continue on the R500 past the R41 intersection and the entrance to the pan is 2.5 km on the left-hand side. |
| Book: | <u>Christo Venter (083 655 1912) as numbers taking part are limited</u> |
| GPS: | S26°13'49.0", E27°25'14.3" |
| Meet: | 07h00 |
| Leader: | Christo Venter (083 655 1912) |
| SABAP2: | Pentad 2610_2725 |
| 12 FEBRUARY 2023 / WEST RAND SUNDAY CWAC PANFONTEIN, THREE RIVERS | |
| Route: | Take the R59 to Vereeniging and exit via the Ring Road offramp. Turn left onto the Ring Road, continue to the T-junction and then turn right onto Van Riet Louw Street. Cross a railway line and at the three-way stop turn left onto Houtkop Road. Cross the railway line again, cross a 4-way stop and turn left at the next 3-way stop into Klip Rivier Drive West. Continue through two sets of traffic lights (the road becomes Blackwood Street (R42). The meeting point is at the Four Ways Kwik Spar car park at the intersection of the R42 and R54. |
| Book: | <u>Christo Venter (083 655 1912) as numbers taking part are limited</u> |
| GPS: | 26°9'11."S, 28°00'05.9"E (meeting point) |
| Meet: | 06h45 |

Leader: Christo Venter (083 655 1912)

SABAP2: Pentad 2640_2800

18 FEBRUARY / SUNDAY OUTING PRESIDENT RIDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

Wits Bird Club has now taken over the administration of the sanctuary so join Colin for a pleasant early morning walk around the dam and for a picnic breakfast afterwards. The sanctuary comprises a dam surrounded by mature trees and with a bird hide overlooking the dam. There is a breeding colony of herons and egrets, and, in the past, Little Sparrowhawk has also bred there.

Route: From the N1 Western Bypass take the R512 Malibongwe Road towards Johannesburg. After crossing the intersection with Republic Road turn left onto Cross Street and then first right onto Malcolm Road. The entrance to the sanctuary is 400m on the left-hand side with parking in front of the Duneden apartment block.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S26°06'31.17", E27°59'35.94"

Meet: 07h30 at entrance

Leader: Colin van der Meulen (083 454 2102)

SABAP2: Pentad 2605_2755

21 & 23 FEBRUARY / TUESDAY & THURSDAY ZOOM ONLINE COURSE OF DRAGONS & DAMSELS

Dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata) are a common sight around pans, marshes, rivers, and streams throughout the summer months in South Africa. We are fortunate in having a diversity of species and these occupy very specific habitats within the wetlands where they occur. This short course is designed to give birders (and anyone else!) an introduction to the Odonata of South Africa.

Part 1 of the course will cover elements of the biology and ecology of these amazing insects, including reproduction, life cycles, migration and movements and habitat requirements.

Part 2 will be focused on the identification of the main groups (what is a dragonfly vs a damselfly) and some of the key pointers for distinguishing between species.

Watching dragons and damsels is remarkably complementary to birding – after the birds go off the boil mid-morning, these wonderful insects are just getting going. Upgrade your skills and you might get sufficiently hooked (you might have to pass on that midday GnT!).

The course will comprise 2 evening zoom sessions (each around 40 – 50 minutes long with time for questions) and a field trip to Ezemvelo Nature Reserve, near Bronkhorstspuit.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Time: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: R225 Members. R275 Non-members (excluding field trip)

Facilitator: Christopher Hines

22 FEBRUARY / WEDNESDAY OUTING RIETVLEI NATURE RESERVE, PRETORIA

Rietvlei Nature Reserve comprises 3 800 ha of Highveld grassland with occasional patches of acacia woodland. The Rietvlei Dam and the Marais Dam are linked by the Grootvlei Spruit and there is an extensive network of roads around the Reserve. As the reserve now contains some of the Big Five, visitors are only allowed to alight from their vehicles at designated picnic spots. African Finfoot has been observed from the bridge over the spruit and the grasslands are a prime area for larks and cisticolas. **This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.**

Route: Travel north on the N1 towards Pretoria/Polokwane, take the M9 Rigel Avenue off-ramp (junction 136) and turn right onto the R50 Delmas Road. Drive for 5.1 km then turn right onto the M31 Nellmapius Drive towards Rietvlei and Irene along the boundary of the reserve for 3.2 km to the junction with the M57 and turn left. After 1.7 km (crossing the Sesmyl Spruit) turn left onto the entrance road to the reserve.

Book on either: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S25°52'58.7", E28°15'47.5"

Meet: 07h30 at entrance

Cost: An entrance fee is payable

Leader: Dave Bentley (083 253 4995)

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| SABAP2: | Pentad 2550_2815 |
| Target bird: | Red-capped Lark |
| 25 – 26 FEBRUARY / WEEKEND OUTING EZEMVELO NATURE RESERVE | |
| <p>This outing is the field trip for the dragonfly course and whilst primarily it will focus on the observation of <i>Odonata</i> on the Saturday there will be the opportunity to observe the many bird species to be found there as well. On Sunday morning there will be an early morning bird drive and walk. This outing is not restricted to the course attendees but is open to all.</p> <p>The reserve is situated on the Bankenveld, a transition zone between the grassland biome to the south, and the savannah to the north. The bird list (286) therefore comprises species from both biomes. For the enterprising LBJ sorters, as many as seven lark species and four different pipits can be located here. Shelley's Francolin may tantalize you with their "I'll drink YOUR beer" call. Aardvark and Aardwolf may also be encountered. In addition to the birds and dragonflies there are many species of butterfly to be seen and Chris will assist you in identifying them.</p> | |
| Route: | (± 75km from Pretoria) Take N4 eastwards to just beyond Bronkhorstspuit. Turn left onto the R25 off-ramp to Bronkhorstspuit and Groblersdal. Travel towards Groblersdal for 4,5km and turn right towards Vlakfontein. Follow the Ezemvelo signs (a dirt road), until the reserve is reached some 20km further. |
| Book: | witsbc234@gmail.com |
| GPS: | 25°42'30.2"S 28°55'49.3"E |
| Meet: | 09h00 at the main dam |
| Cost: | An entrance fee is payable at the gate. Camping R185 per person per night Chalets R500 per person per night sharing (R400 pensioners) Single supplement R410 per person per night (R300 pensioners) |
| Leader: | Christopher Hines (073 332 7578) |
| SABAP2: | Pentad 2540_2855 |
| Target Bird: | Striped Pipit |
| 8 MARCH / WEDNESDAY OUTING ELPHIN LODGE, RIETFontein | |
| <p>Elphin Lodge is part of the Rand Aid retirement village complex first established in Rietfontein in the late 1980's. The complex comprises three villages, Tarentaal, Inyoni Creek and Elphin Lodge. Situated on the Jukski river a bridge was built over the river, joining all three villages. Each village has beautiful gardens filled with a huge variety of birds and dams with a multitude of water birds. Felicity will take visitors on a walk through the grounds of all three villages, visiting the dams enroute. Coffee will be available at the Inyoni restaurant after the walk.</p> | |
| Route: | From the N3 Eastern Bypass take exit 119B, the Edenvale turnoff, and turn left onto the R25 towards Edenvale Hospital. The entrance to Elphin Lodge is on the left after approximately 2.4 km. opposite the National Health Laboratory. After passing through security turn left and there will be parking at the meeting room. |
| Book: | witsbc234@gmail.com |
| GPS: | S 26°07'53.75" E 28°07'08.47" |
| Meet: | 07h30 in the car park |
| Leader: | Felicity Kanichowsky (082 902 0873) |
| SABAP2: | Pentad 2605_2805 |
| Target Bird: | Malachite Kingfisher |
| 11 MARCH / SATURDAY OUTING MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY (IBA SA021) | |
| <p>Part of the Blesbokspuit RAMSAR site, Marievale's large tracts of open water and reedbeds always have interesting birds on offer whatever the season. Late March should be an excellent time for migrating waders and, if water levels are right, there should be plenty on show. Marsh Sandpiper, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint are all regular visitors. In addition, other potential birds for the area include African Marsh Harrier, Marsh Owl, and African Rail. Marievale is also regularly visited by the occasional Western Marsh Harrier.</p> | |
| Route: | Take the N3 south. At the Klipriver/Nigel off-ramp turn left towards Nigel on the R550. About 20 km further, turn right at a T-junction to Nigel (M63). Continue through Nigel to Marievale on the R42 (Delmas Road). To enter through the main entrance (about 5km from Nigel), pass the turn-off at Union Carriage and over the Blesbokspuit bridge, turn left into a marked gate (just after Holgatfontein/Nigel sign) heading towards the Conference centre, turn right onto a dirt track and continue past the Hadeda hide, continue straight to the gate. Turn left and then right towards the picnic area. |

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS: S 26°21'27.40" E 28°30'56.17" (Picnic area)
Meet: 07h00 in main parking at gate
Cost: R30 pp and R20 per car
Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)
SABAP2: Pentad: 2620_2830
Target bird: Marsh Sandpiper

17-19 MARCH / WARBLER & WETLAND WEEKEND, ZAAGKUILSDRIFT LODGE & BUSH CAMP

Palaearctic migrant warblers are among the most fascinating and remarkable small birds one can see in Southern Africa. The Field Warbler weekend has been running every March since 2006. Etienne focuses on tricky palaearctic warblers, and it's not just a twitching trip to see the warblers, but an educational experience which aims to highlight the incredible life cycles and remarkable behaviour of this fascinating groups of birds. There is also a big emphasis on birding skills – the fieldcraft needed to get good views (and photos) of these master skulkers. Top stars on these weekends include River Warbler, Thrush Nightingale, Olive-tree & Icterine Warblers. The weekend is a long-running favourite – it is run as a field course with a mix of skills training, classroom discussion and learning, ID discussion and just simply good birding! However, the weekend is not just about Warblers and at this time of year the Floodplain can be spectacular for other species including Lesser Moorhen, Allen's Gallinule, Greater Painted Snipe, Striped Crake, Baillon's Crake and on occasion other regional rarities like Saddle-billed Stork, Pectoral Sandpiper, Streaky-breasted Flufftail and Rufous-breasted Heron.

Route: Take N1 North Pretoria then N1 Pietersburg/Pretoria. Approx 63km from N1/N4 junction in Pretoria take Pienaarsrivier/Rust Der Winter off ramp (exit no 205). Turn left (R25 Pienaarsrivier) and drive ±700m to stop sign. Turn right (R101 Bela-Bela/Warmbaths) and 1km later turn left on to dirt road at Zaagkuil drift sign. Drive 300m (crossing railway line) and turn right at Zaagkuil drift sign. Drive along this road for approximately 16km then turn left onto Crake Road. Turn right at the end of Crake Road and left at the next intersection. The entrance to the Lodge is on the right.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS: S25°10'50.9", E28°08'44.2"
Meet: 16h00 on Friday 17 March at Main Lodge
Cost: R3,700 per person sharing
Leader: Etienne Marais
SABAP2: Pentad 2510_2805
Target bird: River Warbler

26 MARCH / SUNDAY OUTING ABE BAILEY NATURE RESERVE

Situated near Carletonville on the West Rand, this predominately Highveld Grassland habitat also has extensive wetland habitats. Birds are best observed by walking around the reserve to obtain good views of a variety of species. Specials for the area include Orange-breasted Waxbill, Northern Black Korhaan and African Marsh Harrier.

Route: From Johannesburg, take the M1/N1 towards Bloemfontein and then the N12 west towards Potchefstroom. Before the railway bridge across the N12, turn right onto the R501 to Carletonville. Take the first turning into Carletonville, cross the railway line and then proceed along Agnew Road to the 4-way stop on Annan Road. Cross over Annan Road passing the Carletonville Technical College on the right. Turn right into R500 Ada Street and continue straight over the bridge (grain silos on the right) until you see signs indicating Khutsong to the left. Proceed as to Khutsong and keep a sharp lookout for the Abe Bailey Project sign on the right 3,9km from the turning. If you reach the little town of Welverdiend you have gone too far.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS: S 26°20'01" E 27°20'58" (Abe Bailey NR entrance road)
Meet: 07h30 at the Entrance
Cost: R30 per person and R30 per vehicle. Payment to be made to the club by Monday 20 March 2023, proof of payment to be e-mailed to witsbc234@gmail.com
Leader: Christopher Hines (073 332 7578)
SABAP2: 2615_2720, 2615_2715
Target Bird: Orange-breasted Waxbill

5 APRIL / WEDNESDAY OUTING KLOOFENDAAL NATURE RESERVE

The 150 ha Kloofendal Nature Reserve comprises a mixture of tall woodland along the stream by the entrance, dense scrub along the rocky ridge above the mine and grassland covered rocky areas to the south and west. Black Sparrowhawk have bred at the reserve and Malachite Sunbird can sometimes be seen on the protea shrubs in the grassland areas. Crimson-breasted Shrike is often encountered in the picnic area.

Route: From Johannesburg take the M5 Beyers Naude Drive north and cross the N1 Western Bypass Freeway. At the next set of traffic lights turn left onto Jim Fouché Road and keep on this road crossing JG Strydom and Hendrik Potgieter Roads before turning right onto Christian de Wet Road. At the first set of traffic lights turn right into Galena Road. The entrance to the Nature Reserve is ± 1km on the left.

Book on either: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S26°07'38.7", E27°52'50.4" (entrance road)

Meet: 07:30

Leader: Koos van Dijk (083 294 4700)

SABAP2: 2605_2750

16 APRIL / SUNDAY OUTING BOONS ROAD, SYFERBULT

The Boons Road is a rural dirt road that runs between the town of Boons and the N14 Ventersdorp road. The adjacent grassland and cultivated fields hold many grassland species and Orange River Francolin, Quailfinch, Eastern Clapper Lark and Greater Kestrel are regularly seen. The target bird for the day will be Rufous-eared Warbler which was recently discovered as an isolated population many kilometres east of its known breeding area. **This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.**

Route: From Johannesburg take the N14 Krugersdorp highway towards Ventersdorp. Where the N14 bears right keep straight on the R563 towards Hekpoort. In approximately 8km turn left onto the R400. At the intersection with the R24 turn right towards Magaliesburg. After passing through Magaliesburg turn left onto the R509 Koster road. From this point continue for 32.5km and then turn left onto the Geodgedacht/Molotecity road from where birding will start. Meeting point will be where the tar road ends, and the dirt road starts.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S26° 00' 25.5" E27° 19' 38.0"

Meet: 07h00

Leader: Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231)

SABAP2: Pentad 2600_2715+

Target Bird: Rufous-eared Warbler

22 APRIL / SATURDAY OUTING BULLFROG PAN & KORSMAN CONSERVANCY

Part of the **Bullfrog Pan** site was originally used as a landfill site until Giant Bullfrogs were found to be breeding there. The pan can be visited from the North via Wyman's Park, Evans Road, Jatniel. The site is relatively safe as it is situated on a dead end with good all-round visibility. The pan supports many water-bird species including Black-necked Grebe, Maccoa and White-backed Duck. Very little walking is required once at the site.

Initially fenced in 1950 as a reserve, this EMM owned **Korsman Bird Sanctuary** is currently maintained by the Korsman Conservancy volunteers (www.korsmanconservancy.com). The birdlife can be observed from the many berms around the pan or from anywhere on The Drive, a circular road around the pan. Many water-bird species make the sanctuary their home all year round, whilst Barn Swallows use the reed beds to roost in large numbers before, they migrate North. Goliath Herons have bred here for several years. When water levels are low, exposing mudflats, waders can be found in various areas around the pan. The trees in and around the pan should be checked for smaller raptors and African Olive and African Green Pigeon. This site is safe as there are many people walking and cycling around the pan. Several berms have been made wheelchair friendly.

Route: From the N12 East take the R23 (437) off-ramp and turn left. Continue for 3 Km turning right onto Oak Street continuing for 1.5 Km to O'Reilly Merry Street, cross the intersection (road becomes Benoni Road) and turn right into the BP Service station and park near the back, left of the pumps.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 26°08'43.9"S 28°18'48.2"E (Meeting point)

Meet: 07:00

Leader: Dave Bentley (083 253 4995)

SABAP2: 2605_2815 (Bullfrog)

2610_2815 (Korsman)

**4 – 8 MAY / LONG WEEKEND OUTING
KAROO PLAINS, CARNARVON, KAROO**

Ryan Tippet gave a fascinating talk on the birds and scenery of the Karoo in April 2022 and this weekend will be spent birding with him on his farm. The farm holds all the Karoo specials with the notable exception of Red Lark (they do not have any red sand dunes). The habitat on the farm is quite diverse. There is a large mountain that holds Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Cape Eagle Owl, Freckled Nightjar, African Rock Pipit etc. and there are extensive gravel plains with populations of Sclater's Lark and Black-eared Sparrowlark. In addition, there are large dams that have produced some interesting finds during the Summer including Eurasian Curlew, Grey Plover, Maccoa Duck and Greater Painted Snipe.

Route: From Johannesburg take the N1 Western Bypass towards Bloemfontein and then at junction 60 take the N12 towards Potchefstroom and Kimberley. Stay on the N12 for 710 km passing through Kimberley and Hopetown until reaching Britstown and then turn right onto the R384 towards Vosburg and Carnarvon. Stay on the R384 for 150 km until reaching Carnarvon. At the intersection with the R361 turn left on Daniel Street towards Carnarvon and take the first right onto Panos Street. After 600m turn left onto Pasonage Street and the Carnarvon Hotel will be on the right. Please allow plenty of time for travel, overall distance is 904 km (approximately 10 hours), co-sharing of transport can be organized and is encouraged.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S30°49'16.5", E22°21'56.3"

Meet: Meet in the bar of the Carnarvon Hotel at 18:30 on Thursday 4 May.

Cost: R3,500 pp sharing (excluding meals).
R2,100 pp single supplement

Leader: Ryan Tippet (079 016 7231)

SABAP2: Pentad 3045_2220

Target Bird: Cinnamon-breasted Warbler

**13 MAY / SATURDAY OUTING
WESSON FARM, MAGALIESBERG PROTECTED AREA**

Join us for a visit to John Wesson's property in the Magaliesberg where John will take us on a guided walk through the area. The property lies on the northern side of the mountain with relatively easy walks along farm roads through woodland and grassed areas. The area also includes a Protea belt and a stand of wild Syringa. Birds seen in the area include *Flappet Lark*, *Striped Pipit* and occasional specials such as *Short-toed Rock-Thrush*, *Cuckoo Hawk* and *Yellow-bellied Greenbul*. Bring your camp chairs and brunch as John has a braai area for socializing after the walk.

Route: From Johannesburg take the R512 Malibongwe Drive past Lanseria to the T-junction at Broederstroom. Turn right towards Pelindaba and at the intersection with the R511 turn left towards Hartebeespoort. On entering Hartebeespoort turn right on the R511 Beethoven Road past the cable car station. At the T-junction turn left to stay on the R511 and after 2.8 km turn right onto the R513. After approximately 8 km the entrance to No 89, the Wesson property is on the right.

OR

From Johannesburg take the R511 William Nicol Drive towards Hartebeespoort. On entering Hartebeespoort turn right on the R511 Beethoven Road past the cable car station. At the T-junction turn left to stay on the R511 and after 2.8 km turn right onto the R513. After approximately 8 km the entrance to No 89, the Wesson property is on the right.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: S25°41'02.9", E27°57'59.6"

Meet: 08:00 at the entrance.

Leader: John Wesson

SABAP2: Pentad 2540_2755

Target Bird: Flappet Lark

**17 MAY / WEDNESDAY OUTING
ELANDSVLEI PANS & VARKFONTEIN PAN**

With the on-going support of the farmer, the **Elandsvlei Pans** remain an attraction for many waterbirds and grassland species. The water levels of the pans have fluctuated from bone-dry to flooded due to long-term precipitation cycles. The pans are in a mix of farmland and rank grassland with alien trees in the mix. Access must be arranged and is dependent on road conditions as determined by the farm manager. An outing here could offer several wader, heron, waterbird, and raptor species. Not much walking is required, and site is safe.

Varkfontein Pan is located on a farm in Bapsfontein, accessed from the R51. Access is unrestricted but the access road can be impassable at times. The birdlife on this small pan can be incredible, many Duck, Grebe, Goose and wader species. Grassland species are also abundant, with Cistocolas, Bishops, Widowbirds and Warblers all well represented. Site is safe but remain vigilant, no walking required.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Route: | From the R21 take exit 32 and head East on the R25 towards Bapsfontein. At the T-junction with the R50 turn right towards Delmas. Meet at the Caltex garage at the intersection of the R25/R50 & R51. |
| Book on either: | witsbc234@gmail.com |
| GPS: | 26°00'32.2"S 28°25'27.1"E (Meeting point) |
| Meet: | 07:30 |
| Cost: | None |
| Leader: | Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097) |
| SABAP2: | 2555_2825 & 2600_2825 (Elandsvlei) 2600_2820 (Varkfontein) |

21 MAY / SUNDAY OUTING MODDERFONTEIN NATURE RESERVE

Over 250 species have been recorded on the reserve – some of which are not normally found in urban areas. These include African Fish Eagle, Long-crested Eagle, Jackal Buzzard and Crimson-breasted Shrike, amongst others. One of the reasons for the species diversity is the presence of the large alien blue gum and pine species favoured by raptors. The dense vegetation and the large bodies of water provide perfect habitats for a large number of bird types, as well as for the near threatened Spotted-necked Otter. Small areas of threatened grassland habitat within the reserve provide refuge for species such as the Cape Longclaw and Capped Wheatear.

Note: this is a walking route – Medium grade

Route: From the N3, take the Modderfontein exit and head East. Take the Johannesburg Road turn-off to Thornhill and Lakeside. Travel along Johannesburg/Valley Road, first exit at the first traffic circle, 2nd exit at 2nd traffic circle (i.e., straight through; name change to Centenary Street) until the T-junction; turn right. Continue over bridge to 3-way stop; turn left to Pinelands. At the next stop street (4-way), turn left onto Arden Road and proceed through first, un-manned gate. Continue along road, keep an eye out for cyclists and potholes and after crossing the bridge enter the reserve. Payment is required at the gate. Continue along road until dirt/gravel road on right, turn right and proceed to parking.

Book: **witsbc234@gmail.com**

GPS: Gate 26°04'58.5"S 28°08'21.3"E
Parking 26°04'28.0"S 28°08'07.8"E

Meet: Meet in parking area at 07h00

Cost: There is an entrance fee payable

Leader: Leslie May (082 460 1991)

SABAP2: 2600_2805

Target Bird: Long-crested Eagle

Programme Planning: Andy Featherstone – **Conservation Activities:** Lance Robinson

Courses: Fiona van Zyl - **Meetings:** Diana Cowen

Atlassing: Werner van Goethem

SABAP2/ BIRDMAPPING

Calling all BIRDMAPPERS!

Werner Van Goethem, Wits Bird Club SABAP2 coordinator, has organised the following exclusive atlas days that all members can participate in:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Sunday 15 January 2023 | Saturday 15 April 2023 |
| Sunday 12 February 2023 | Sunday 21 May 2023 |
| Saturday 11 March 2023 | |

Please e-mail werner.van.goethem@absamail.co.za with your contact details and Observer number (if you are a registered Observer). If you are interested in becoming an Observer, send your details to Werner and he will assist with the process of getting you started. You do not have to be a registered observer to take part, anyone keen to participate can join in and act as a "spotter".

Atlasing/ BIRDMapping adds a whole new dimension to your birding and is a contribution, through citizen science, to a better understanding of our birdlife!

GLOSSARY:

BBD – BIRDING BIG DAY: The annual BirdLife South Africa Birding Big Day is a fun, yet competitive day for South Africa's birdwatchers, both beginners and competitive twitchers, while at the same time raising much-needed funds for the organisation's important bird conservation and bird species monitoring work. Anyone can take part, anywhere in South Africa. Get a group of fellow birders together and visit your favourite birding spot; get the family together for a day out or just enjoy the birds in your garden. Let's put the BIG back into Birding Big Day.

CAR - COORDINATED AVIFAUNAL ROADCOUNT: Large, conspicuous birds offer the opportunity to monitor their populations by using the road count technique where observations are made from vehicles covering fixed routes. The counts take place twice a year, once in midsummer and once in midwinter. Comparisons can then be made.

CWAC - COORDINATED WATERBIRD COUNT: a programme of regular mid-summer and mid-winter censuses at a large number of South African wetlands. All the counts are conducted by volunteers, people and organisations with a passion for waterbird conservation. It is one of the largest and most successful citizen science programmes in Africa, providing much-needed data for water bird conservation around the world.

IBA - IMPORTANT BIRD AREA: The designation of a locality as an IBA means that it satisfies at least one of a set of strict criteria that define it as a site of importance for birds, thus providing scientific backing for the conservation argument and facilitating legal protection.

SABAP2 –SECOND SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRD ATLAS PROJECT: the follow-up on the Southern African Bird Atlas Project (for which the acronym was SABAP, and which is now referred to as SABAP1). The first atlas project took place from 1987-1991. The current project is a joint venture between the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The project aims to map the distribution and relative abundance of birds in southern Africa and the atlas area includes South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. SABAP2 was launched in Namibia in May 2012. The second atlas project started on 1 July 2007 and plans to run indefinitely. The fieldwork for this project is done by more than a thousand volunteers, known as citizen scientists - they collect the data from the field at their own cost and in their own time and as such, they make a huge contribution to the conservation of birds and their habitat. The unit of data collection is the pentad, five minutes of latitude by five minutes of longitude, squares with sides of roughly 9 km. There are 17000 pentads in the original atlas area of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, and a further 10000 in Namibia.

NOTES

1. Always consult a map before leaving home or the AA for routes, tollgate costs and road works. GPS coordinates (where applicable) have been sourced from the internet or from the venue and it should be noted that accuracy, completeness, reliability, usability or suitability cannot be guaranteed. WBC assumes no responsibility for incorrect results or damages resulting from the use of the data.
2. Entrance fees may apply at some venues and these may have been revised by the time of publication.
3. Before the walk, please advise your leader of any medical problems.
4. If you have booked for a weekend away/ outing/ event requiring payment, but you are unable to attend and if you haven't cancelled before the due date, you are still liable to pay the Club. We have to pay the venues very shortly after the due date mentioned in the programme. Too many losses are incurred because members are neither cancelling nor paying for their bookings. If your payment is not received by the due date, we will have to cancel your booking/ reservation.
5. **PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR WEEKENDS AWAY AND OUTINGS**

You may make your payments for weekends away and other outings in any of the following ways:

 - a. Preferably pay directly into the Wits Bird Club Bank account and email deposit slip to witsbc234@gmail.com
Banking details as follows:
BANK – NEDBANK CRESTA
BRANCH CODE: 191-305
ACCOUNT NO: 1913 257 789
NAME OF ACCOUNT: WITS BIRD CLUB
 - b. Please note **NO CREDIT CARD FACILITY**.
 - c. ***Please assist the Club to minimise exorbitant banking fees by paying by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) wherever possible.***

RULES REGARDING BOOKINGS AND PAYMENTS OF OUTINGS:

- ✈ A booking for an outing or weekend away will only be confirmed once a deposit has been received;
- ✈ If the cost is below R1000, payment in full must be paid on booking;
- ✈ If the cost of the outing/weekend is over R1000 a 50% deposit must be paid on booking;
- ✈ In all cases 25% will be non-refundable to cover costs;
- ✈ The final 50% must be paid one week prior to the closing date;
- ✈ Non-members accompanied by members are welcome. For weekend outings and courses, an additional administration fee of 20% may be payable.

NB: Grading of outings - distance to be walked or steepness of terrain

Most outings are grade① we will therefore only show grades ② and ③ on the programme

Please note the following:

- ① An easy stroll suitable for people of all ages and abilities
- ② A comfortable but slightly challenging walk (e.g. uneven terrain with some gradient)
- ③ A strenuous / challenging walk (fairly long distances covered, or steep gradients, or difficult terrain)

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

Lauraine Leigh

PHONE : 083 387 1960 / 011 686 2090 • EMAIL: witsbc234@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.witsbirdclub.org.za