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WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 02/2024 FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN BRIEF

Date	Activity	Leader	Venue
May 2024			
3-5	Weekend course	Lance Robinson	Sediba Lodge, Brits
14	Tuesday outing	Awie Coetzee	Pretoria National Botanical Garden
19	Sunday outing	Selwyn Rautenbach	Rust de Winter Dam Nature Reserve
21	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Awie Coetzee	Country Life Retirement Village
23	Thursday evening meeting	Duncan McKenzie	Linden Bowling Club
25	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
June 2024			
2	Sunday outing	Andy Featherstone	The Aloe Farm, Hartbeespoort
3-12	Mondays & Wednesdays Course	Geoff Lockwood	Zoom online course
9	Sunday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
18	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Dave Dooley	Country Life Retirement Village
20	Thursday evening meeting	Craig Natrass	Linden Bowling Club
22	Saturday outing	Awie Coetzee	Ezemvelo Nature Reserve
26	Wednesday outing	Gill Isaac	President Ridge Bird Sanctuary
July 2024			
10	Wednesday outing	Martin Benadie	Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve
12-14	Weekend away	Andy Featherstone	Santa Estate, Dullstroom
12-14	CWAC weekend	Barbi Forsyth	Nylsvley Nature Reserve, Limpopo
13	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
14	Sunday outing	Melissa Whitecross	Hoogland Health Hydro, Hennopsriver Valley
16	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Carina Pienaar	Country Life Retirement Village
17	East Rand CWAC	Awie Coetzee	Rolfes & Parkhaven Pans
20	East Rand CWAC	Werner van Goethem	Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Bird Sanctuary
21	East Rand CWAC	Werner van Goethem	Elandsvlei & Varkfontein Pans
27	East Rand CAR count	Werner van Goethem	Rayton District
27	Saturday afternoon meeting	Carol Lippert	Linden Bowling Club
28	East Rand CWAC	Awie Coetzee	Marievale Bird Sanctuary, Blesbokspruit
28	Honorary Rangers CWAC	Lesley Cornish	Klipvoor Dam, Borakalalo National Park
August 2024			
6	Tuesday outing	Karen Wiesler	Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden
11	Sunday outing	Grant Egan	Parys and Vredefort Dome, Free State
18	Sunday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
20	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Peet Zwannekin	Country Life Retirement Village
25	Sunday outing	Awie Coetzee	Devon Grasslands
29	Thursday evening meeting	Niel Cillié	Linden Bowling Club
September 2024			
7	Arbor Day Event & social	Werner van Goethem	President Ridge Bird Sanctuary
8	Sunday outing	Andy Featherstone	Bronkhorstspruit Dam Nature Reserve
15	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
17	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting - combined	Spike Taylor	Country Life Retirement Village
18	Wednesday outing	Werner van Goethem	Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Bird Sanctuary
28	Saturday outing	Kevin Lavery	Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve



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WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 02/2024

EVENING / AFTERNOON MEETINGS		
Club Meetings will be held at Linden Bowling Club unless otherwise stated		
Thursday 23 May	Duncan McKenzie	Linden Bowling Club
<p>Biological Exploration of far Northwest Zambia. The Far Northwest region of Zambia is a diverse area with a rich variety of flora and fauna. It is home to some of the tallest and wettest miombo woodlands in Africa, wide grassy plains, and thin strips of mushitu forest. A group of friends explored remote birding spots such as Mwinilunga, Nyasichala Forest, Source of the Zambezi, and the Mad Man's Crossing using a combination of plane, car, and canoe. The area the closest spot to see several Congo-based species, including the highly sought-after Vermiculated Fishing Owl and African Shrike Flycatcher. The presentation will primarily focus on birds but will also touch on other forms of biodiversity.</p>		
Tuesday 21 May	Awie Coetzee	Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park
<p>Awie will be talking about his birding trip to some of the iconic birding venues in Botswana, including the Central Kalahari National Park, Maun, Okavango Delta, Chobe National Park, and the Makgadikgadi Pans near Nata.</p>		
Tuesday 18 June	Dave Cooley	Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park
<p>A photographic journey by Dave Cooley on his experiences in the Caprivi and Chobe</p>		
Thursday 20 June	Craig Natrass	Linden Bowling Club
<p>What has bird ringing gotten me into? From flufftails to vultures, ibises to pelicans, and everything in between, I've had the pleasure of encountering a diverse range of bird species. I've had some pretty wild experiences, like taking blood while dangling from the end of a rope, giving mouth-to-mouth to a raptor, and even sitting under a rubbish bag in a landfill! You might be wondering how I got into these situations. Well, for me, it's all part of the wonderful world of citizen science. I'm excited to share these quirky stories with you to showcase just how amazing citizen science can be.</p>		
Tuesday 16 July	Carina Pienaar	Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park
<p>Carina will be talking about the Ingula Conservation Project</p>		
Saturday 27 July	Christmas in July & Quiz	Linden Bowling Club
<p>We are thrilled to be celebrating Christmas in July with a special event. Our event will feature entertainment by quizmaster Carol Lippert. Carol has been an avid birder for nearly 20 years and enjoys contributing to citizen science through atlasing. During our event, Carol will be hosting one of her highly acclaimed quizzes to test your birding knowledge. We invite you to join us for a fun get-together, complete with refreshments and a warming glass of gluhwein.</p>		
Thursday 15 August	Niel Cillié	Linden Bowling Club
<p>Accipiters. In 2006, Niel discovered the rare Ayres' Hawk Eagle at the University of Pretoria, Tukkies. This discovery led him to meet his mentor, Prof. Johann Knobel, author of the book "Eagles of Africa", and the two became friends. Today, Niel is recognised as a leading expert on this stunning species. Around 2010, he began to specialise in birds of prey and is now considered one of South Africa's foremost authorities in the field. Niel is an accomplished photographer and has written many articles, presented talks and courses, and has recently published books. The Accipiter talk aims to help birders distinguish between the six small to medium-sized grey raptors that look very similar and aims to highlight their unique characteristics to make identification easier.</p>		
Tuesday 20 August	Peet Zwannekin	Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park
<p>Peet will be giving a talk on birding in the Zimbabwe Highlands.</p>		
Tuesday 17 September - Combined East Rand / Main Club meeting	Spike Taylor	Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park County
<p>Spike will share his experiences of the atlassing bash in Lesotho.</p>		

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. 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.

3 - 5 MAY / WEEKEND COURSE "THE BUSHVELD BIRD GUILD" AT SEDIBA LODGE

As birdwatchers, the phrase "going to the bush" conjures images of watching the sunrise with a cup of coffee in hand tuning into the dawn chorus, followed by birdwatching in a thornveld habitat, and relaxing evenings spent around a campfire. You can be a part of this experience with Lance and learn about the bushveld bird guild, aspects of their behaviour, and their distinctive calls. The course will include lectures, bushveld birding, and a bird sound quiz to assess your knowledge.

Route: From Randburg take the R512 past Lanseria. At the Broederstroom T-junction turn left. Turn right at the Sun City/ Brits turn-off and cross over the bridge over Hartbeespoort Dam. At the T-junction turn right towards Brits/ Sun City. At the 4-way stop turn left towards Brits R512. At the next stop turn right onto the R512. Proceed to and through Brits and turn left onto the R511 to Thabazimbi. Travel 17 km from the outskirts of Brits to the stop street at the railway line. Cross over the railway and travel 4km. Turn right (signposted Sediba and Dikhololo) onto the Veekraal road (sand road). Sediba is 13km from the intersection. The gate is locked at all times. A code for the main gate will be issued the week before arrival and will only be advised to those going.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°21'45.0"S 27°43'22.3"E

Meet: Friday 18h30 at the boma for briefing

Cost: R1,320 per person sharing. R400 single supplement (limited numbers available).
R540 per person camping.

Chalets have en-suite bathrooms; linen and towels are provided. The communal kitchen facilities include all crockery and cutlery for chalet guests.

The Bush Camp is situated near the main lodge and campsites have electricity, kitchen facilities, and an ablution block with showers.

Leader: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

SABAP2: 2520_2740

14 MAY / TUESDAY OUTING PRETORIA NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Garden, which is surrounded by urban development, offers a much-needed green area and corridor for wildlife in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria. The ridge that runs through the Garden, the natural grassland and lawned areas containing beds of indigenous plants, offer a habitat for many animal species. Over 220 bird species have been listed for the Pretoria NBG, including various birds of prey. The garden is home to many colourful birds including Malachite Kingfisher, Green Wood-hoopoe, Crested Barbet, Black-headed Oriole, African Paradise Flycatcher, Bokmakierie and Violet-backed Starling. The artificial wetland directly north of the Mokha Restaurant caters for species such as Thick-billed and Southern Masked Weavers, Common Moorhen, and Reed Cormorant. On the grasslands and lawn areas Crowned and Blacksmith Lapwings, Spotted Thick-knee and Helmeted Guineafowl are to be seen. Medium difficulty walks, some steep gradients.

Route: Heading north on N1 to Pretoria, take the M6 Lynnwood exit and turn right over the highway. Directly after the highway turn left onto M16 Meiring Naude Road (keep right to avoid turning back onto N1 south). Follow M16 to T-junction and turn left onto Cussonia, the entrance to the gardens is 300m along on the right.

From the N4 East towards Pretoria, take the M14 Watermeyer St exit, turn left onto Watermeyer St and left again onto M16 Cussonia Ave, travel 2.2 km and the entrance will be on the right.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°44'22.4"S 28°16'24.3"E

Meet: In the car park at 08h00

Cost: Pensioners free. There is an entrance fee payable by non-pensioners.

Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

SABAP2: 2540_2815

Target Bird: Brown-backed Honeybird

**19 MAY / SUNDAY OUTING
RUST DE WINTER DAM NATURE RESERVE**

Rust de Winter Dam Nature Reserve comprises 1 650 ha of thorn and broad-leaved woodland surrounding the 500-ha dam. Birding among the various campsites and picnic spots will produce bushveld species such as Kalahari Scrub-robin, Burnt-necked Eremomela, and Ashy Tit. The dam usually contains Great Crested Grebes, Knob-billed Duck, and Goliath Heron, while African Fish Eagle and even the occasional Osprey can be seen overhead. African Pygmy Geese have also visited the dam in the past.

Route: From Johannesburg travel north on the N1 towards Pretoria and Polokwane. Take exit 205 signposted R101 Pienaarsrivier/Rust de Winter and turn right crossing back over the freeway. The entrance to the reserve is signposted on the right after ± 21 km along this road. Follow the dirt road for 3.3 km to the entrance gate

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°13'51.3"S 28°30'54.0"E

Meet: Meet 08h00 at the entrance

Cost: An entrance fee is payable

Leader: Selwyn Rautenbach (072 152 5160)

SABAP2: 2510_2825 and 2510_2830

Target Bird: Ashy Tit

**25 MAY / SATURDAY ATLASING DAY
PENTADS WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST OR SOUTHWEST QUADRANTS**

Atlasing days are held once a month to atlas the pentads falling within the Greater Gauteng area. If you would like to learn more or take part, please contact: Werner van Goethem on 082-462-7108. You don't have to be an expert to join in, you can travel with an experienced atlaser and learn how to atlas.

Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads to be allocated

**2 JUNE 2024 / SUNDAY OUTING
THE ALOE FARM, HARTBEESPOORT**

The Aloe Farm has extensive gardens that are open to the public and include a 'Bush Garden' that demonstrates the great possibilities that exist for indigenous plants in the home and commercial garden and is landscaped to attract wildlife. The aloe gardens have now become a famous plant-lover and tourist attraction in the Hartbeespoort area that draws in visitors to admire the gardens, photograph the plants and birds, and admire and purchase unique plants for their own gardens.

Route: Take the R512 from Randburg, crossover Kommando Nek; at the crossroads turn left onto the R104 (Mooi Nooi / Hartbeesfontien). Follow this road for 4.7 km; pass Brits Pale on your left; cross the bridge and The Aloe Farm is on your left.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°43'15.2" S 27°47'09.2" E

Meet: 08:00 at the parking area

Leader: Andy Featherstone

SABAP2: Pentad 2540_2745

Target Bird: Marico Sunbird

**3,5,10,12 JUNE 2024 / MONDAY & WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
"THE LIVING BIRD" ONLINE ZOOM COURSE**

The course looks at the incredible variations in behaviour amongst our birds and will open participants' eyes to the fascinating things that they do. Although it is not focussed on ID, we look at a large number of different bird species across the four lectures.

Course Details:

Lecture 1: The Daily Grind
The dawn chorus; territories; food and feeding; preening, feather maintenance, and moult.

Lecture 2: Breeding strategies
Monogamy; polygamy; monogamy with family support, complete chaos, and sneaking around.

Lecture 3: Brood parasitism (the "arms race" between the brood parasites and their hosts is currently one of the hottest research areas in evolutionary biology). The who, how and why of this breeding strategy; the defences that hosts employ to protect themselves, and the responses of the brood parasites.

Lecture 4: Migration
From the early theories surrounding this behaviour to some of the latest discoveries documenting the incredible endurance and navigational capabilities of birds.

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
Time:	18h45 for 19h00 for approximately 90 mins
Cost:	Wits Bird Club members – Individual R375.00, Family R475.00 Non-Wits Bird Club members – Individual R425.00, Family R550.00
Facilitator:	Geoff Lockwood

9 JUNE 2024 / SUNDAY ATLASING DAY PENTADS WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST OR SOUTHWEST QUADRANTS

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Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads to be allocated

22 JUNE 2024 / SATURDAY OUTING EZEMVELO NATURE RESERVE

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.

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: 8:00 just outside the gate

Cost: There is an entrance fee payable

Leader: Awie Coetzee

SABAP2: Pentad 2540_2855

Target Bird: Buffy Pipit

26 JUNE 2024 / WEDNESDAY OUTING PRESIDENT RIDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

Join for a gentle walk around President Ridge Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary has many interesting species to find, Malachite Kingfisher, Thick-billed Weavers, Lesser Honeyguide and even Black Sparrowhawk are all regularly seen. After the walk relax with coffee and rusks at the picnic spot and just enjoy the tranquillity of this oasis in a busy metropolis.

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: 26°06'31.2"S 27°59'35.9"E

Meet: 09h30 at entrance

Leader: Gill Isaac (082 655 9283)

SABAP2: Pentad 2605_2755

Target Bird: Malachite Kingfisher

10 JULY 2024 WEDNESDAY OUTING SUIKERBOSRAND NATURE RESERVE

The Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve is a well-known site where both the grey and black colour forms of the Mountain Wheatear occur. Red-throated Wryneck can often be found around the visitor's centre, and the mixed woodland on the south side of the reserve holds populations of African Red-eyed Bulbul, Kalahari Scrub Robin, and White-backed Mousebird.

Route: Take the N3 south towards Heidelberg and Durban and then the R550 (signposted Suikerbosrand) Nigel/Lenasia off-ramp. Turn right onto the R550 towards Lenasia. Follow for 6.6km. Turn left at the Suikerbosrand signboard and travel to the main entrance. Approx. 1 hour from Randburg.

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS:	26°27'17"S 28°13'22"E (Suikerbosrand NR)
Meet:	08h00 at the Diepkloof picnic & parking area, past the entrance gate.
Cost:	There is an entrance fee payable.
Leader:	Martin Benadie (083 233 5650)
SABAP2:	Pentad 2625_2810 +

12 – 14 JULY WEEKEND AWAY SANTA ESTATE, DULLSTROOM

Santa Estate is situated approximately 10km north of Dullstroom and forms a part of the Steenkampsberg. The Steenkampsberg IBA is characterised largely by high-altitude windswept montane grasslands ranging between 1,700m and 2,300m with scattered intermittent rocky outcrops. The area is home to >300 bird species, a large number being endemic or near-endemic, with over 25 endemic birds being recorded on Santa Estate, approximately one-third of all of southern Africa's famous endemics. The Verloren Valei Nature Reserve is an immediate westerly neighbour of Santa Estate. Key species which may be seen/heard include *Red-winged Francolin*, *Southern Bald Ibis*, *Gurney's Sugarbird*, *African Grass Owl*, *Blue Crane*, and *Ground Woodpecker*.

The accommodation will be in serviced traditional stone cottages with roaring log fires to take away the chill of the winter evenings.

Route: On arrival in Dullstroom, continue on the R540 towards Mashishing (Lydenburg) for 12 km. Just after passing Walkerson's Hotel, it is approx. 1.5km to the turn-off. Turn right onto a tar road, before the railway bridge, (i.e. the railway line goes under the road) and sign in at the security gate. Pass through the security gate, do a U-turn behind it, and follow the road over the railway line, through the underpass and turn left after the underpass. Lunsklip Lodge (about 3KM) - proceed through the underpass and follow the signs to Lunsklip Lodge. The Glen (about 4 km) - proceed through the underpass and follow the signs.

Book on either:	witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS:	25°20'16.8"S 30°10'36.6"E
Cost:	R1,445pp sharing. R850 single supplement. Self-catering.
Leader:	Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231)
SABAP2:	Pentad: 2520_3010
Target Bird:	Gurney's Sugarbird

12 – 14 JULY CWAC WEEKEND NYLSVLEY NATURE RESERVE, LIMPOPO

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 24°38'50.8"S 28°39'49.0"E
Meet:	07h00 on Saturday
Leader:	Barbi Forsyth
SABAP2:	Pentad 2435_2840

13 JULY 2024 SATURDAY ATLASING DAY PENTADS WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST OR SOUTHWEST QUADRANTS

Coordinator:	Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)
SABAP2:	Pentads to be allocated

**14 JULY 2024 SUNDAY OUTING
HOOGLAND HEALTH HYDRO**

We visit the best-known local site for Short-toed Rock Thrush in Gauteng. The Hoogland Health Hydro is situated in the Schurverberge Hills, and our birding will commence from the picnic site situated within a grove of trees, overlooking a pond. Early booking for this outing is essential in order to arrange access and will be limited to 15 people.

Route: Take the N1 north out of Johannesburg towards Pretoria and turn westwards at junction 124 onto the N14 at the N1/N14 split (tolls applicable) towards Krugersdorp. Continue on the N14 for 14 km until you reach junction 309 the R511/R114 turnoff and turn right onto the R511. Continue along the R511 which becomes the M26 for 13 km then turn left onto Grey Street. After 800 m at the traffic circle keep straight on to Melle Street. The meeting point is at the beginning of the sand road.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°49'26.3"S 28°00'08.1"E

Meet: 07h30 at the entrance gate

Cost: R75.00 pp (pay to Wits BC when booking)

Leader: Melissa Whitecross (082 452 6021)

Pentad: Pentad 2545_2800

Target Bird: Short-toed Rock Thrush

**17 JULY 2024 WEDNESDAY EAST RAND CWAC
ROLFES & PARKHAVEN PANS**

Book: **Awie – 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 JULY 2024 SATURDAY EAST RAND CWAC
KORSMAN DAM & BULLFROG PANS**

Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads to be allocated

**21 JULY 2024 EAST RAND CWAC
ELANDSFONTEIN & VARKFONTEIN PANS**

Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads to be allocated

**27 JULY 2024 / EAST RAND SATURDAY CAR
RAYTON DISTRICT**

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

Meet: 07h00 – Caltex Garage, R25 / R50 intersect, Bapsfontein

Leader: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

**27 JULY 2024 / WEST RAND SATURDAY CAR
LENASIA AND CARLETONVILLE**

Route: Routes GC03 and GC04 Lenasia and Carletonville

Book: Koos van Dyk (082 294 4700)

Meet: 06h00

Leader: Koos van Dijk (083 294 4700)

SABAP2: various pentads depending on CAR route

**28 JULY 2024 / EAST RAND CWAC
MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY, BLESBOKSPRUIT**

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: witsbc234@gmail.com Meet: 07h00 Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)
28 JULY 2024 / HONORARY RANGERS CWAC KLIPVOOR DAM, BORAKLALO NP
<p>The Honorary Rangers appeal for CWAC count volunteers to assist with the water bird count on this large body of water.</p> Book: witsbc234@gmail.com Meet: 07h00 Leader: Leslie Cornish (082 806 6415)
6 AUGUST 2024 / TUESDAY OUTING WALTER SISULU NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN
<p>We have all probably visited the botanical garden to stroll amongst the magnificent gardens, or to watch the resident Verreaux's Eagles soaring overhead. The garden offers many habitats from cliff face and grassland to water, woodland and bushveld, attracting a diverse range of birds. This will be an opportunity for members to enjoy a leisurely walk around the gardens and be helped in identifying some of the birds that frequent the gardens.</p> Route: Travel towards Tarlton/Krugersdorp along the R47 (Hendrik Potgieter Road). Turn left into Doreen Road (approx. a 10-minute drive from the Hendrik Potgieter/Christiaan de Wet intersection), turn right into Malcolm Road and carry on straight until the road curves. The gate to the garden is on the left. Book: witsbc234@gmail.com GPS: 26°05'13.5"S 27°50'42.2"E Meet: 08h00 at entrance Leader: Karen Wiesler SAPAB2: Pentad 2605_2750 Target Bird Fairy Flycatcher
11 AUGUST 2024 / SATURDAY OUTING PARYS AND VREDEFORT DOME, FREE STATE
<p>The Vredefort Dome is a World Heritage Site and is the largest known meteorite impact crater. The mega impact which created the dome structure has also left its mark in the form of the surface geology, resulting in diverse birding habitats in a very scenic area. Central to the region is the meandering Vaal River. Parts of the World Heritage Site feature dramatic hills and rocky outcrops where Mocking Cliff Chat and Verreaux's Eagle occur. The Dome is the best place in the area to see the localised Orange River White-eye and Double-banded Courser. This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.</p> Route: Take the N1 highway south for approximately 70 km from the N1/N12 intersection to junction 498, Parys and Sasolburg. At the junction turn right onto the R59 towards Parys and continue for 19 km into the centre of Parys. Meeting point is on the corner of Loop and Water Streets. Book: witsbc234@gmail.com GPS: 26°53'59.5"S 27°27'41.7"E Meet: 07h00 at the corner of Water and Loop Roads, Parys Leader: Grant Egan (084 731 3344) SABAP2: Pentad 2650_2725 ++ Target Bird: Double-banded Courser
18 AUGUST 2024 / SUNDAY ATLASING DAY PENTADS WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST OR SOUTHWEST QUADRANTS
<p>Atlasing days are held once a month to atlas the pentads falling within the Greater Gauteng area. If you would like to learn more or take part, please contact: Werner van Goethem on 082-462-7108. You don't have to be an expert to join in, you can travel with an experienced atlaser and learn how to atlas.</p> Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108) SABAP2: Pentads to be allocated
25 AUGUST 2024 / SUNDAY OUTING DEVON GRASSLANDS
<p>The Devon Grasslands are an outstanding area of Highveld grassland containing many sought-after local specials. The area is crisscrossed with several dirt roads, giving views across large areas of the rolling grasslands. Birds to be looked for at this time of year include Secretary bird, Blue Korhaan and Black Harrier. Many larks, pipits and cisticolas are always present. This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.</p>

Route:	Take the N3 South out of Jo'burg and turn eastwards onto the N17 (tolls applicable) towards Leandra. Continue on the N17 for 68km until you reach the R548 and turn left to Devon. The meeting point will be just beyond the intersection of the R548 and the N17 next to the small pan on the left-hand side of the road.
Book on either:	witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS:	S26°22'10.9", E28°46'54.3"
Meet:	07h00 at intersection
Leader:	Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)
Pentad:	Pentads 2630_2845; 2630_2840; 2625_2845 and 2625_2840
Target bird:	Black Harrier

7 SEPTEMBER 2024 / ARBOR DAY & SOCIAL EVENT PRESIDENT RIDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

A special event will be held at President Ridge to mark Arbor Day. The final format of the day is still to be decided but it will either be a morning of cleaning and clearing alien growth or a traditional tree planting morning.

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:	26°06'31.2"S 27°59'35.9"E
Meet:	09h30 at entrance

8 SEPTEMBER 2024 / SUNDAY OUTING BRONKHORSTSPRUIT DAM NATURE RESERVE

Bronkhorstspruit Dam offers a good variety of water birds and a selection of grassland species. Species include Little Bittern, South African Shelduck, Lark-like Bunting, and many more. Bronkhorstspruit also attracts its share of rarities with Pectoral Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Western Yellow Wagtail previously seen.

Route:	From Johannesburg, travel East on the N12. Take the R42 north towards Bronkhorstspruit for 15.7km. Look for the turn off on the left
Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS:	25°56'12.0"S 28°41'05.0"E
Meet:	Meet 07h30 at the entrance
Cost:	There is an entrance fee payable
Leader:	Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231)
SABAP2:	2550_2840, 2555_2840
Target Bird:	Little Bittern

15 SEPTEMBER 2024 / SATURDAY ATLASING DAY PENTADS WITHIN THE SOUTHEAST OR SOUTHWEST QUADRANTS

Atlasing days are held once a month to atlas the pentads falling within the Greater Gauteng area. If you would like to learn more or take part, please contact: Werner van Goethem on 082-462-7108. You don't have to be an expert to join in, you can travel with an experienced atlaser and learn how to atlas.

Coordinator:	Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)
SABAP2:	Pentads to be allocated

18 SEPTEMBER 2024 / WEDNESDAY OUTING BULLFROG PAN & KORSMAN BIRD SANCTUARY

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 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 along 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, 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.

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
Meet:	07h00 in the parking lot of the BP Garage, corner of Benoni road and O'Reilly Merry Street.
GPS:	26°08'43.7"S 28°18'47.0"E
	From here we can share rides to reduce vehicles at Bullfrog Pan. We'll then retrieve the vehicles and then head to Korsman Conservancy, parking at the main parking area: 26°11'29.6"S 28°17'24.8"E
Leader:	Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

28 SEPTEMBER 2024 / SATURDAY OUTING KLIPRIVIERSBERG NATURE RESERVE

The largest nature reserve (680 ha) within the Johannesburg Metropolitan area, the reserve is bisected by the Bloubospruit which runs through a valley. Ashy Tit, Common Scimitarbill, Brown-backed Honeybird, Orange River Francolin, Nicholson's Pipit, and White-fronted Bee-eater are all possible species to be encountered. A variety of game has been introduced.

Route: We will be starting out at the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve entrance (alongside the Recreation Centre). From the M1 South, follow the Southgate indicators and take the R82 toward Vereeniging (the M1 becomes R27 and at Kibler Park sign becomes R82). At Kibler Park sign robot, turn left into Gordon Road. At the second road turn left into Pierpoint Drive and follow the road to Peggy-Vera Road. Turn left on Peggy-Vera, pass the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre, the entrance to the KNR is the next right (thatched entrance).

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
GPS:	26°18'12.5"S 28°00'42.1"E
Meet:	06h45 for 07h00 in the parking area
Leader:	Kevin Lavery (083 267 3494)
SABAP2:	Pentad 2615_2800
Target Bird:	Brown-backed Honeybird

Programme Planning: Gill Isaac – **Conservation Activities:** Werner van Goethem
Courses: Fiona van Zyl - **Meetings:** Diana Cowen
Atlassing: Werner van Goethem

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

10 - 13 OCTOBER / LONG WEEKEND OUTING DUNN'S CAMP, SELATI GAME RESERVE, LIMPOPO

At almost 28,000 ha in extent, Selati is one of the largest private game reserves in the region and an important haven for the conservation of rare mammals such as African Wild Dog, Cheetah and Lion. With over 320 bird species recorded to date, birders are well catered for, with regular sightings of Thick-billed Cuckoo, breeding Martial Eagles and a host of broad-leaved woodland specials. The dawn chorus along the Selati River is unforgettable, as is the quality and diversity of bird sightings.

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
Cost:	R6,723 pp sharing fully catered (3 nights, 4 days) - Rate includes accommodation, three meals daily, non-alcoholic beverages, specialist instructors, walks and game drives.

6 – 10 NOVEMBER / 5 DAY TRIP SEKOMA ISLAND, ZAMBIA

We have teamed up with Tembele Ecological Services and are excited to offer a trip to one of the most idyllic birding locations in Africa, Sekoma Island on the upper Zambezi River (Zambia), a destination that provides a great diversity of birds. Birding and game viewing is mostly done on a boat, and we will be visiting some iconic African destinations including the Chobe National Park in Botswana, the Victoria Falls (Zambia), and explore the vast waterways of the great Zambezi River. Some of the target species include Pel's Fishing Owl, African Finfoot, Schalow's Turaco, Rock Pratincole, African Skimmer, and Lesser Jacana.

Book:	witsbc234@gmail.com
Cost:	R15,550 pp sharing fully catered (4 nights, 5 days) - This special rate includes airport transfers, accommodation, three meals daily, non-alcoholic beverages, walks, all boat trips, and game drives. Excludes: International flights, Visas, Gratuities, Victoria Falls entrance fees, and any items of a personal nature.
Tour Leader:	Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

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:

Saturday 25 May	Sunday 9 June	Saturday 13 July
Sunday 18 August	Saturday 15 September	

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".

Atlassing/ 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 • EMAIL : witsbc234@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.witsbirdclub.org.za