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## WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 03/2024 FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN BRIEF

Date	Activity	Leader	Venue
<b>October 2024</b>			
4-6	Weekend at Wolfhuiskraal	Chris Hines	Wolfhuiskraal on Zaagkuildrift Road
6	Sunday outing	Chris Hines	Zaagkuildrift to Kgomo-kgomo
10-13	Long weekend outing	Selati Guides	Dunn's Camp, Selati Game Reserve, Limpopo
12	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced Pentads in Greater Gauteng
15	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Melissa Hoffman	Country Life Retirement Village
17	Thursday evening meeting	Jessica Wilmot	Linden Bowling Club
19	Saturday outing	Awie Coetzee	Elandsvlei (Dicken's Pan)
<b>November 2024</b>			
2	Saturday outing	Gillian Isaac	Rietvlei Nature Reserve - guided drive
6 – 10	5 Day Trip	Lance Robinson	Sekomo Island, Zambia
6, 13, 20 & 27	Seabird & Mammal course	BirdLife South Africa	Online
17	Sunday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
18 & 20	Grassland LBJs course	Lance Robinson	Online course plus optional Wakkerstroom weekend 22-24 Nov
19	Tuesday outing	Chris Hines	Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden - New member meet & greet
19	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	ERBC Members	Country Life Retirement Village
21	Thursday evening meeting	Melissa Whitecross	Linden Bowling Club
22-24	Weekend away	Lance Robinson	Wakkerstroom
29	Friday outing	Pat Ayling	Modderfontein Conservation Park
<b>December 2024</b>			
1	End of Year Function	East Rand	Marievale Bird Sanctuary
6-8	Birding Big Day weekend	Lance Robinson	Bushwillow Estate, Vaalkop Dam
11	Wednesday outing	Chris Hines	Northern Farm (Diepsloot)
14	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
16	Monday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
<b>January 2025</b>			
11	Welcome to 2025 Bird Walk	Chris Hines/ Lance	Random Harvest Nursery
11	CWAC weekend	Barbi Forsyth	Nylsvley Nature Reserve, Limpopo
15	CWAC	Awie Coetzee	Rolfes & Parkhaven Pans
16	Thursday evening meeting	Lance Robinson	Linden Bowling Club
18	Saturday Atlas Day	Werner van Goethem	Under-serviced pentads in Greater Gauteng
18	CWAC	Werner van Goethem	Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Bird Sanctuary
19	CWAC	Werner van Goethem	Elandsvlei & Varkfontein Pans
21	East Rand Tuesday evening meeting	Spike Taylor	Country Life Retirement Village
22	Wednesday outing	Andy Featherstone	Northcliff Ecopark
25	CAR count	Werner van Goethem	Rayton District



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## WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 03/2024

EVENING / AFTERNOON MEETINGS		
Main Club Meetings will be held at Linden Bowling Club unless otherwise stated		
<b>Tuesday October 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Melissa Hoffman</b>	<b>Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park County Country</b>
Melissa Hoffman will enlighten members on what is done at OR Tambo International Airport to mitigate bird strikes		
<b>Thursday October 17th</b>	<b>Jessica Wilmot</b>	<b>Linden Bowling Club</b>
<b>Hera's Journey: The Secrets of European Roller Migration.</b> BirdLife South Africa is working to unlock the secrets of European Roller migration, with a tiny hero leading the way – Hera, South Africa's first European Roller fitted with a solar-powered satellite tracker. Why are we doing this, and how can you help?		
<b>Tuesday November 19th - East Rand meeting</b>	<b>Show &amp; Tell</b>	<b>Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park County Country</b>
Members will present photographs taken during 2024		
<b>Thursday November 21st</b>	<b>Melissa Whitecross</b>	<b>Linden Bowling Club</b>
<b>Forest Phantoms: The Southern Banded Snake Eagles of Northern KZN</b> Found in the coastal forests of the Indian Ocean Coastal Belt In South Africa, the Southern Banded Snake Eagle is rare and elusive. Only an estimated fewer than 50 mature individuals remain in the fragmented forests of northern KwaZulu-Natal. Join Melissa as she shares her insights into unpacking the hidden lives of South Africa's forest phantoms, the threats to their population, and the strategies to mitigate these threats.		
<b>Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Lance Robinson</b>	<b>Linden Bowling Club</b>
<b>The Sekoma Island Experience, Zambia.</b> Lance will take us on a photographic journey along the mighty Zambezi River and tell us about birding on a "Robinson Crusoe" island, surrounded by abundant flora and fauna. This report back on the November 2024 excursion will tempt you to sign up for the next Sekoma Island Experience trip!		
<b>Tuesday January 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Spike Taylor</b>	<b>Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park County Country</b>
Spike will share his experiences of the <b>Atlassing Bash in Lesotho.</b>		

## 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; 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.

## DAY / WEEKEND OUTINGS AND COURSES

### 4-6 OCTOBER – WEEKEND AWAY & SUNDAY OUTING WOLFHUISKRAAL BUSHCAMP / ZAAGKUILDRIFT TO KGOMO-KGOMO (SUNDAY)

Wolhuiskraal Bush Camp is about half way along the Zaagkuil drift road in an excellent area of mature Acacia woodlands, open fields and has access to the Pienaar's River floodplain. While it may be a bit early for the floodplains to have reached their peak in terms of birds we should still see a range of good species. The Bush Camp is in a quiet area of Acacia thornveld on the farm, and we have exclusive use of the camp for the weekend.

The Sunday outing will be along the Zaagkuil drift Road that has become almost legendary in Gauteng birding circles for yielding a great number of the special birds for the region. The road runs parallel to the Pienaar's River, from the town of Pienaarsrivier to the village of Kgomo-Kgomo.

**Route:** Take the N1 north through Pretoria towards Polokwane. Approximately 63km from the N1/N4 junction in Pretoria take the Pienaarsrivier/Rust de Winter off-ramp (exit 205). Turn left on the R25 towards Pienaarsrivier and drive approximately 700m towards the intersection with the R101. Turn North on the R101 and take the first turning to the West (left) at point -25.196600, 28.295389. Weekenders travel along this dirt road to the gate of Wolhuiskraal farm. For the Sunday outing we will meet at the Pienaar's River end of the road next to a grove of syringa trees.

**Book on either:** [witsbc@mweb.co.za](mailto:witsbc@mweb.co.za) or (011) 782-7267 – Sunday Outing limited to 5 vehicles (convoy)

**GPS:** Wolhuiskraal Gate -25.161685, 28.185520

**Meet:** Sunday 06h30 at the start of the route -25.198676, 28.292190

**Leader:** Chris Hines (073 332 7578)

**SABAP2:** Pentad 2505\_2810, 2510\_2815, 2510\_2805, 2505\_2805 & 2510\_2805

**Target Bird:** Black-faced Waxbill

### 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 African 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](mailto: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.

### 12 OCTOBER – SATURDAY ATLAS DAY

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

**19 OCTOBER – SATURDAY OUTING  
ELANDSVLEI (DICKEN'S PAN)**

The conservation-minded landowners are to be commended for their continued support of the Elandsvlei pans which attract a wealth of waterbirds and grassland species including many ducks, waders and the occasional raptor. The farm roads leading to the pans are ideal for smaller raptors and the large tracts of grassland attract widowbirds, bishops, canaries, cisticolas and waxbills, amongst others, even White and Abdim's Stork. The two ephemeral pans provide a mix of open water, sedges, reed beds, and flooded grassland. Water levels can fluctuate leaving vast mudflats exposed, increasing chances of waders. The rank grass around the pan has housed ground-breeding African Grass-Owl and Marsh Owl in the past. Barn Owl and Spotted Eagle-Owl occur here too.

**Route:** From Johannesburg: N1 East -> N3 south (eastern bypass) then  
**Option 1)** take R25 East, left onto M57 for 750 metres then right to remain on R25 (Bapsfontein) and travel east until R50 and turn right, after 1.8 km Caltex Garage on left.  
--- OR ---  
**Option 2)** take R24 East, passed OR Tambo, merge onto R21 North (Pretoria), exit at R25 (Bapsfontein) and travel east until R50 and turn right, after 1.8 km Caltex Garage on left.

**Book:** [witsbc234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)

**GPS:** 26°00'32.9"S 28°25'27.1"E  
From here travelling, in convoy, along R50 towards Delmas for about 6km then turn left onto a dirt road where we start birding.

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

**Leader:** Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

**SABAP2:** 2600\_2825, 2555\_2825

**Target Bird:** Great Egret

**2 NOVEMBER – SATURDAY OUTING  
RIETVLEI NATURE RESERVE – GUIDED DRIVE EXCURSION**

WBC has been able to book the game drive vehicles for the reserve through Friends of Rietvlei which gives us a great way of getting around the reserve and into some areas not usually open to the public. Numbers are limited to 19 participants and 1 leader. The big advantage is that (with just 2 vehicles) we will be able to get onto all the birds and also not have to drive in convoy.

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.

**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:** [witsbc234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com) - limited to 19 people. **BOOK & PAY EARLY PLEASE.**

**GPS:** S25°52'58.7", E28°15'47.5"

**Meet:** 0600 at entrance

**Cost:** R350.00 includes entrance fee and use of a private picnic site where we can leave our vehicles.

**Leader:** Gillian Isaac

**SABAP2:** Pentad 2550\_2815

**Target bird:** African (Dark-capped) Yellow Warbler

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

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 are 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:** \*FULLY BOOKED\*

**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)

**6,13,20 & 27 NOVEMBER  
ONLINE SEABIRD & MAMMAL WORKSHOPS  
BIRDLIFE SA**

Do you want to brush up on how to identify the albatrosses, petrels, prions, and other seabirds and marine mammals that could be seen on the Flock to Marion AGAIN! 2025 voyage? BirdLife South Africa will be hosting a series of five must-attend seabird and mammal identification workshops:

**SEABIRD & MAMMAL ID WORKSHOPS**

06 Nov 2024	Small birds (prions, storm petrels, and diving petrels)	Daniel Engelbrecht
13 Nov 2024	Medium birds (petrels, shearwaters, skuas and jaegers)	Vincent Ward
20 Nov 2024	Large birds (albatrosses and giant petrels)	Trevor Hardaker
27 Nov 2024	Mammals (dolphins, whales, seals and elephant seals)	Ken Findlay
04 Dec 2024	Coastal and "other" birds (terns, gulls, gannets, cormorants and penguins)	Daniel Danckwerts

**Bookings at**  
<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/>

**Attendance at each workshop will cost R100, or R400 for all five. The workshops will be run on Zoom and begin at 7pm SAST. All funds raised will go towards African Penguin conservation work.**

**17 NOVEMBER SUNDAY ATLAS DAY**

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

**19 NOVEMBER – TUESDAY OUTING  
WALTER SISULU BOTANICAL GARDEN - NEW MEMBERS MEET & GREET**

We have all probably visited 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 all members (new and longstanding) to enjoy a leisurely walk around the gardens and be helped in identifying some of the birds that frequent the gardens.

**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](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)

**GPS:** 26°05'13.5"S 27°50'42.2"E

**Meet:** 08h00 at entrance

**Leader:** Chris Hines

**SAPAB2:** Pentad 2605\_2750

**Target Bird** Verreaux's Eagle

## 18 & 20 NOVEMBER

### UNRAVELLING THE GRASSLAND LBJs COURSE ON-LINE ZOOM COURSE WITH LANCE ROBINSON

Did you know that the Grassland Biome is South Africa's third-largest biogeographic region and is entirely confined to the country? Due to this, it is home to various endemic plants and animals, with over 73 bird species living exclusively in the grasslands. Some others also use it seasonally. The grasslands have the highest proportion of South African endemics, with 15 out of 45 endemic species unique to this habitat. The birds that reside in the grasslands are pretty special, too! To thrive in their seasonably variable habitat, they're often more cryptically coloured, especially in their non-breeding plumage, making them more challenging to identify. These birds are commonly referred to as LBJs ("Little Brown Jobs").

In this course, Lance will introduce you to some of the overlooked and underappreciated birds of the grassland region, such as larks, cisticolas, pipits (lectures 1), & non-breeding weavers, bishops, and widowbirds (lecture 2). Get ready to learn about these amazing creatures and appreciate the beauty of the grasslands!

Join Lance to put your newly acquired skills to practice at the weekend to Wakkerstroom, 22-24 November (note that a separate booking and payment is required).

**Book:** [witsbc234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)  
**Time:** 18h45 for 19h00 for approximately 90 mins  
**Price:** Wits Bird Club members – Individual R375.00, Family R475.00  
Non-Wits Bird Club members – Individual R425.00, Family R550.00  
**Presenter:** Lance Robinson

## 22 – 24 WAKKERSTROOM WEEKEND

The village of Wakkerstroom and the surrounding district are celebrated for offering the opportunity to witness the unique beauty of the grassland biome and its special birds. This includes species like the Yellow-breasted Pipit, Blue Korhaan, Denham's Bustard, Buff-streaked Chat, Ground Woodpecker, and Southern Bald Ibis. The high-altitude grasslands are a crucial habitat for a high proportion of South African endemics, and they provide refuge for endangered species such as the cryptic Rudd's and Botha's Lark.

The format of the weekend will encompass driving (and stopping often) along many of the established routes in the Wakkerstroom district to maximise opportunities in the diversity of habitats which will include wetlands, grasslands, forest, and scrub, the latter dominated by ouhout (*Leucosidea sericea*).

This weekend will be an ideal opportunity to learn more about some of our classic LBJs as many of the grassland species will be in their breeding plumages and in full song, aiding to their identification.

**Route:** Wakkerstroom is approx. 300 km from Gauteng. Various routes available and will be communicated to those going.  
**Book:** To indicate your interest, book your place [witsbc234@234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@234@gmail.com) (closing date to finalise accommodation & final costing for weekend is 08 November)  
**Cost:** Awaiting confirmation of costs, but the package will include accommodation in double or twin rooms, all self-catering.  
**Meet:** Friday 18h30 venue to be confirmed  
**Leader:** Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)  
**SABAP2:** 2720\_3005, 2720\_3010, 2715\_3005 +

## 29 NOVEMBER – MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION PARK

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:** If you do not have an entry card, you will have to access the Reserve via the gate at Taroko Trails office. This can be accessed from Marlboro Drive and the route is quite well sign posted. Take Exit 124 M60 (Marlboro Drive off ramp/Linbro Park. Merge onto Marlboro Drive, 1,2 m turn left and follow the signs to Taroko Trails

**GPS Co-ordinates:** 26°03'57.2"S 28°07'16.8"E

**Book:** [witsbc234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)

**Meet:** Meet in parking area at 07h00

**Cost:** There is an entrance fee payable

**Leader:** Pat Ayling

**SABAP2:** 2600\_2805

**Target Bird:** Long-crested Eagle

### **SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER – END OF YEAR FUNCTION MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY**

Join us for the year-end function at Marievale hosted by the East Rand Bird Club. We will meet at the picnic site at 07:30 for a guided walk along the road to the picnic site. East Rand Bird Club will provide the fires, salads, dessert, and bread rolls – please bring your own meat, drink, chairs, plates, and cutlery. Please book with Lauraine for catering purposes.

**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 Blesbokspruit 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](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)

**GPS:** S 26°21'27.40" E 28°30'56.17" (Picnic area)

**Meet:** 07:30 at the picnic site for guided walk or 10:30 for 11:00 for braai – fires will be lit at 11:00

**Cost:** R35 pp and R25 per car (paid at reception – no cash facility – cards only)

**Coordinator:** Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

### **6 – 8 DECEMBER BIRDING BIG DAY WEEKEND BUSHWILLOW ESTATE, VAALKOP DAM**

BirdLife South Africa's 40th Birding Big Day (BBD) will take place on Saturday 7 December 2024. The team will enter the 6 km Radius Category, meaning our birding will be more leisurely paced, with a strong emphasis on enjoying the birds and surrounds.

Vaalkop Dam Nature Reserve is almost 4000 hectares in extent and includes an 800-hectare section known as the North-West Bird Sanctuary. Bushwillow Estate is a private estate located on the northern shore. The dominant feature of the reserve is the 1045-hectare dam situated between the Elands and Hex Rivers. Vaalkop Dam is a legendary birding venue that offers a variety of wetland, woodland, and shorebird species (350+ species). This woodland area below the dam wall is outstanding for a variety of bushveld, augmented in summer by several migratory species.

This weekend will be limited to 6 people. Accommodation will be at #31 Bushwillow featuring an open plan living room/dining and kitchen area with large spaces and panoramic sliding doors opening onto the deck with pool, overlooking the dam – there are three bedrooms (1x king size bed, 1x queen, 2 x ¾ beds – all with en-suite bathrooms).

**Directions** Take the R511 north from Brits for 35 km to a sign indicating Beestekraal. Turn left and continue 4 km to a sign indicating Vaalkop Dam to the right. Travel a further 11km to the entrance to the Vaalkop Dam and Magalies Water Project complex on the left and turn right just before the reserve entrance gate, signposted Bushwillow. Follow the road, cross the low-level bridge and continue up the hill signposted Bushwillow to the gate. Sign in and proceed to the accommodation allocated.

**Book:** [witsbc234@gmail.com](mailto:witsbc234@gmail.com)

**Meet:** 18h00 on Friday for briefing

**Cost:** R1,750 per person sharing, self-catering.

**Leader:** Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

**SABAP2:** 2515\_2725

### **11 DECEMBER – WEDNESDAY OUTING NORTHERN FARM (DIEPSLOOT)**

Northern Farm has a wide range of habitats with a number of dams and large expanses of grassland. The reserve is particularly good for raptors with Black Sparrowhawk, African Fish-Eagle and Long Crested Eagle regularly seen. Northern Farm is also an excellent area for Orange-Breasted Waxbill as well as the many waterfowl that frequent the dams. January is also a good time to sort through the flocks of Amur Falcons for the occasional Red-footed Falcon that has occurred there regularly over recent years.

**Route:** From Randburg take the R512 Malibongwe Drive past Cosmo City and Cosmo City shopping centre. At the traffic lights at the top of the hill, turn right onto the R114 towards Diepsloot. After 9km, the entrance is a white gateway on the left with a "City of Johannesburg Northern Farm" sign. Once through the gate meet at the parking area.

**Book:** witsbc234@gmail.com  
**GPS:** S25°56'15.41", E27°59'19.74"  
**Meet:** 07h00 at the parking area  
**Cost:** There is an entrance fee payable to the leader on arrival  
**Leader:** Chris Hines (073 332 7578)  
**SAPAB2:** Pentad 2555\_2755  
**Target Bird:** Black Sparrowhawk

#### 16 DECEMBER MONDAY ATLAS DAY

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

#### 11 JANUARY SATURDAY OUTING RANDOM HARVEST - NEW MEMBERS MEET & GREET

Join Lance & Chris for the first walk of the year at Random Harvest Indigenous Nursery near Muldersdrift. We meet early for coffee/tea and rusks. We will spend the first part of the morning exploring the gardens, grasslands, and woodlands around the nursery. Some of the key species here are Bar-throated Apalis, Orange-breasted Bush Shrike, and Spotted Eagle-Owl. The grasslands have Zitting Cisticola, Cape Longclaw, and a good variety of butterflies. Once we return to the main nursery complex, we will have a scrumptious sit-down breakfast. Booking is essential.

**Route:** From the N1 Western Bypass take Beyers Naude Road towards Krugersdorp. Using Garden World Nursery, on your right as a landmark, measure 1.8km to the turn-off. Opposite Oakfield farm (which is well sign-posted) at Valdor Centre turn right into College Road. Continue for 2.2km keeping right and following the small directional signs to Random Harvest Nursery.

**Book:** witsbc234@gmail.com  
**GPS:** -26.030155, 27.894143  
**Meet:** 0600 for 0630  
**Cost:** R200.00, inclusive of full buffet breakfast  
**Leader:** Chris Hines (073 332 7578) / Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)  
**SABAP2:** Pentad 2600\_2750  
**Target Bird:** Malachite Kingfisher

#### 18 JANUARY SATURDAY ATLAS DAY

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

#### 22 JANUARY WEDNESDAY OUTING NORTHCLIFF RIDGE ECOPARK

Northcliff Ridge, formerly known as Aasvoëlkop, with its landmark water tower built in 1939, is a prominent feature in the Johannesburg landscape. This small park (11 hectares), enclosed with palisade fencing, is 1807m above sea level, making it the second highest point in Johannesburg from which you can enjoy a 360-degree view of Johannesburg and beyond. Various swifts, swallows and martins grace the air with their presence and one can also normally enjoy good views of the migrant *European Bee-eaters* that may be plentiful at times. Be on the lookout for the occasional *Cape Rock Thrush*; *Striped Pipit* and even *Peregrine Falcon*.

**Route:** Travelling along Beyers Naudé Drive (M5) (from Melville towards Honeydew), turn left into Frederick Drive and follow the road as it ascends the hill. Turn left into Hearn Drive, pass the Northcliff Manor Guest House and then continue along Rockey Drive. Turn right into Louie Avenue, proceed through the boom and turn right into Lucky Avenue where there is parking at the base of the water tower

**Book:** witsbc234@gmail.com  
**GPS:** 26°8'43"S 27°58'7"E  
**Meet:** 07h00 at the entrance gate.  
**Leader:** Andy Featherstone  
**SABAP2:** Pentad 2605\_2755  
**Target Bird:** European Bee-Eater



**Outings Programme Planning:** Gill Isaac – **Conservation Activities:** Werner van Goethem

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

**Atlassing:** Werner van Goethem

## SABAP2/ BIRDMAPPING

### Calling all BIRDMAPPERS!

Werner Van Goethem, Wits Bird Club SABAP2 coordinator, organises monthly atlas days that all members can participate in (see programme and monthly reminder).

Please e-mail [werner.van.goethem@absamail.co.za](mailto: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.

**KBA – KEY BIODIVERSITY:** The designation of a locality as an KBA (formerly IBA) means that it satisfies at least one of a set of strict criteria that define it as a site of importance for birds and biodiversity, 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 have not 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 grade II we will therefore only show grades ② and ③ on the programme

Please note the following:

- II 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:

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WEBSITE: www.witsbirdclub.org.za