



Affiliated to Birdlife
South Africa

WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB

PROGRAMME 01/2025

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN BRIEF - JANUARY TO MAY 2025

Date	Event	Venue
January 4	Atlassing - details in programme	Various
January 11	New Birding Year for all members	Random Harvest Nursery
January 15,18,19	CWAC East Rand Pans - details below	Various
January 16	Evening meeting - Sekoma Island	Linden Bowls Club
January 21	Evening Meeting - Birds of Malaysia	Country Life Retirement Village
January 22	Wednesday Outing	Northcliff Ridge Ecopark
January 24-31	BirdLife SA -Flock to Marion	Marion Island
January 25	Conservation activity - CAR GB03	Rayton - Bronkhorstspruit
February 2	CWAC Marievale	Marievale Bird Sanctuary
February 5	Wednesday Outing	President Ridge Bird Sanctuary
February 8	Day outing	Bishop Bird Park, Centurion
February 13	Birding by Habitat talk	Zoom
February 14-16	Weekend away/course	Wagondrift Lodge
February 18	Evening Meeting - Korsmans Pan	Country Life Retirement Village
February 20	Evening Meeting - Angola	Linden Bowls Club
February 23	Atlassing - details in programme	Various
March 1	CWAC day outing	Vaalkop Dam
March 9	Day outing	
March 12	Day outing	Northern Farm
March 15	Atlassing - details in programme	Various
March 15	Day outing	Rietvlei Nature Reserve
March 18	Evening Meeting - Madagascar	Country Life Retirement Village

Date	Event	Venue
March 21-23	Weekend away	Memel
March 29	WBC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	
April 1	Tuesday outing	Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden
April 5	Atlassing - details in programme	Various
April 13	Day outing	Marievale Bird Sanctuary
April 15	Evening Meeting - Birds & Renewable Energy	Country Life Retirement Village
April 17	Evening Meeting - Senegal and the Sahel	Linden Bowls Club
April 19	Easter Saturday Picnic	Kloofendal Nature Reserve
April 27	Day outing	Boons Road
May 1	Day outing	Wonderboom Lapa, Pretoria
May 15	Long weekend away / course	Hoedspruit
May 15	Evening Meeting - OR Tambo wildlife	Linden Bowls Club
May17	Day outing	Golden Harvest
May 20	Evening Meeting - Seekoeivlei talk	Country Life Retirement Village
May 25	Day outing	Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserve
May 31	Atlassing - details in programme	Various

	<p>Affiliated to Birdlife South Africa</p>		<p>WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 01/2025</p>
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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.

DATE: 4 JANUARY (SATURDAY)

TITLE: ATLASSING

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

At the beginning of the new year, we start over again in an attempt to visit each of the 576 pentads in the Gauteng 4 Degree Square. Thus far only 3 pentads have been completed. Please check the SABAP2 site (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>) for details; remember to select 2025.

SABAP2: Start with your home and surrounding pentads.

DATE: 11 JANUARY (SATURDAY OUTING)

TITLE: RANDOM HARVEST NURSERY - NEW BIRDING YEAR FOR ALL MEMBERS

LEADER: LANCE ROBINSON (082 927 9785) / CHRIS HINES (073 332 7578)

Join Lance & Chris for the first walk of the year at Random Harvest Indigenous Nursery near Muldersdrift. We meet early for coffee/tea and a rusk. 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 wonderful 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 2.2 km keeping right and following the small directional signed to Random Harvest Nursery.

GPS: -26.030155, 27.894143

Meet: 06h00 for 06h30

Cost: R200.00 inclusive of full buffet breakfast

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2600_2750

Target Bird: Malachite Kingfisher

DATE: 16 JANUARY THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: THE SEKOMA ISLAND EXPERIENCE, ZAMBIA

SPEAKER: LANCE ROBINSON

Lance will take us on a journey along the mighty Zambezi River and tell us about birding on a "Robinson Crusoe" island, surrounded by abundant life. Navigating the waters around Sekoma is typically done with mokoros. Birding activities at the lodge, however, involve using special flat-hulled aluminum boats to explore quiet channels, which provide excellent aquatic habitats such as papyrus beds where Greater Swamp Warbler and Chirping Cisticola can be found, sandy banks where African Skimmers breed, and water lily-covered bays where African Pygmy Goose and Lesser Jacana can be spotted. Rising each day to the strident dawn chorus of White-browed Robin-Chats, the deep bubbling of Coppery-tailed Coucal, and the frog-like calls of Swamp Boubou, birding on the small island can also reveal Half-collared Kingfisher, African Finfoot, Schalow's Turaco, Hartlaub's Babbler, and African Emerald Cuckoo - and many more. Birding from the deck of the lodge can yield sightings of Rock Pratincole when the river is low, and the Western Banded Snake Eagle on the riparian fringes.

Venue: Linden Bowls Club, 3rd Street, Linden

Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: R30 for members R40 for non-members Cash at the door or prepayment to Wits Bird Club.

Refreshments will be served. Cash bar available.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Contact Diana at diana.m.cowen@gmail.com if you can contribute a plate of savouries/sweets

DATE: 15, 18, & 19 JANUARY
TITLE: CWAC EAST RAND PANS

LEADERS: AWIE COETZEE (083 677 7097) / WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

Summer 2025 Co-ordinated Water Avifaunal Count

15th, 08h30 - Rolfes Pan & Parkhaven South Pan

18th, 07h00 - Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Pan

19th, 07h00 - Elandsvlei

Counting of all water-based birds at the aforementioned pans.

Contact the leaders for the various meeting points.

SABAP Pentads: 2605_2810, 2605_2815, 2610_2815, 2600_2825 & 2555_2825

DATE: 21 JANUARY ERBC TUESDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: BIRDS OF MALAYSIA

SPEAKER: JOHN GILCHRIST

John will present a DVD on the Birds of Malaysia.

Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Drivers license to be scanned at the entrance.

Cost: Members R20.00 / Non-members R30.00. Cash at the door.

Tea, coffee, and snacks will be served after the presentation.

DATE: 22 JANUARY (WEDNESDAY OUTING)

TITLE: NORTHCLIFF RIDGE ECO PARK

LEADER: ANDY FEATHERSTONE (083 259 0231)

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

GPS: 26°8'43"S 27°58'7"E

Meet: 07h00 at the entrance gate

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP 2: Pentad 2605_2755

Target Bird: European Bee-Eater

DATE: 25 JANUARY (SATURDAY CONSERVATION ACTIVITY)

TITLE: GB03 CAR COUNT

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

CAR count along route GB03 (Bapsfontein to Rayton)

Predominantly 50 km of farm roads south of N4 between Rayton and Bronkhorstspuit with stops every 2 km or at the sighting of CAR species. Details are to be captured as per the CAR capture sheet using abbreviations as supplied. Species included are all large terrestrial birds and raptors.

Single vehicle event, meet at secure site and leave vehicles.

CAR Route GB03

Meet: 07h00

GPS: 26°10'05.2"S 28°18'19.3"E

Book: with leader

SABAP Pentads: 2545_2830, 2550_2830, 2555_2830, 2555_2835, 2500_2835 & 2545_2835

DATE: 2 FEBRUARY (SUNDAY)

TITLE: 2025 SUMMER CWAC - MARIEVALE

LEADER: AWIE COETZEE (083 677 7097)

We will meet at the Marievale Bird Sanctuary Picnic Site at 07:00 for 07:30. On arrival, participants will be allocated an area to count and a copy of the data sheet and the Marievale map will be made available. Counting will commence at 07:30 and should end at approximately 10:30. At the end of the count, the completed data sheets should be handed in to the coordinator at the picnic site.

All participants are invited to a Bring and Braai after the count, which will be hosted by the Springs-Nigel Branch of WESSA.

GPS Picnic site: 26°21'26.7"S 28°30'56.1"E

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP Pentads: 2620_2825, 2620_2830, 2615_2830

DATE: 5 FEBRUARY (WEDNESDAY OUTING)
TITLE: PRESIDENT RIDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

LEADER: GILL ISAAC (082 655 9283)

Join us for a gentle walk around the bird sanctuary. The sanctuary has many interesting species to look for: 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 simply enjoy the tranquility 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 turn 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.

GPS: 26°06'31.2"S 27°59'35.9"E

Meet: 8h00 at entrance.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2605_2755

Target Bird: Black Sparrowhawk

DATE: 8 FEBRUARY (SATURDAY OUTING)
TITLE: BISHOP BIRD PARK, CENTURION

LEADER: KARIN WIESLER

The Bishop Bird Nature Area, named for the Southern Red Bishop, is situated less than one kilometre north of the Rooihuiskraal Historical Terrain. Spanning 16-ha, this small woodland park is a key spot for migratory warblers in the summer months.

Route: From the N1 north take the junction 121A turn-off and follow the signs for the R101 Old Johannesburg Road. Merge onto the R101 and then after 1.3 km turn left onto the M31 Uitsig Road toward Rooihuiskraal. After 2.1 km turn right onto the M37 Rooihuiskraal Road toward Raslouw and then right again after a further 2.1 km into Theuns van Niekerk Street. Take the first left into Roosmaryn Place and the parking area will be on your right-hand side.

GPS: -25.8771, 28.1426

Meet: 07h00 at the entrance gate

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP 2: Pentad 2550_2805

Target Bird: Chestnut-Vented Warbler

DATE: 13 - 16 FEBRUARY (THURSDAY TO SUNDAY WEEKEND OUTING AND COURSE)
TITLE: WAGONDRIFT LODGE, nr MOLOTO - BIRDING BY HABITAT

LEADER: CHRIS HINES (0733327578)

BIRDING BY HABITAT – WAGONDRIFT LODGE, MOLOTO - COURSE & WEEKEND AWAY

Birds are incredibly mobile organisms – and this mobility gives birds access to a wide variety of environments. Birds are found throughout Southern Africa – from the driest parts of the Namib Desert to the wettest forests and mountains of northern Limpopo. But no single species is found everywhere on the

subcontinent – each species typically occurs within a relatively limited range – often within a specific habitat, and/or at a specific time of the year. Why?

This course focuses on developing your knowledge and understanding of bird habitats – the specific areas where birds can find their key foods, water, mates, and shelter in which to breed and roost. You will be going beyond the distribution maps in your field guide to understand what factors determine the specific habitats that are optimal for certain species.

The course will comprise a 1-hour (online on 13th Feb at 19h00) talk which will be an introduction to what determines habitat – the climate, landforms/landscapes, soils, and vegetation – as well as interpreting some of the information in your field guide. The weekend outing (Friday to Sunday) will be based at Wagondrift Lodge, near Moloto, North of Pretoria. This nature reserve has a diversity of habitats, ranging from broad-leaved woodlands to tall Acacia thornveld, grasslands, and a variety of wetlands. We will also visit Mkhombo dam which will give us access to a different suite of habitats – short grass floodplains, mudflats, extensive open water areas and reedbeds, as well as the fringing Acacia scrub and secondary vegetation in old farmlands.

We will be staying at the old Trading Store which has ten beds in 5 bedrooms, all en suite. We can put up tents/caravans at the same site. There is a large outside braai area as well as a large, well-appointed kitchen. Additional accommodation is available at the main lodge area about 800m away (slightly more expensive).

Route: Travel North on the N1 and take the R513 offramp (Junction 152). Turn right across the highway on Sefako Makgatho Drive and after 1.1km turn left onto the R573 Moloto Road. Continue on the R573 for 43.4km to Moloto and turn left onto the R567. After 6.8km turn left (Waidmannsheil Safaris is on the corner) and after 1.3km the entrance to Wagondrift Lodge is on the right.

Bookings are essential – FIRST PAID, FIRST IN! Numbers are limited to 18

BOOKING LINK: <https://forms.gle/LFRnqm4SoaYUZ99n9>

Cost:

Accommodated: R 1250 pps for the weekend including drive. Ask about a single supplement.

10 places R 1050 for spouse, including game drive
R 1000 for kids, including game drive

Tents: R 900 for the weekend - first person in a tent including game drive
8 places R 550 for additional people in same tent, including game drive
R 350 for kids, including game drive

Contact Chris (WhatsApp 0733327578) directly to get costs for a caravan.

DATE: 18 FEBRUARY ERBC TUESDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: CONSERVATION AT KORSMANS

SPEAKER: JANE TREMBATH

Jane will present the history and current conservation efforts at Korsmans Conservancy.

Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Drivers license to be scanned at the entrance.

Cost: Members R20.00 / Non-members R30.00. Cash at the door.

Tea, coffee, and snacks will be served after the presentation.

DATE: 20 FEBRUARY THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: AMAZING ANGOLA - A NATURAL HISTORY JOURNEY

SPEAKER: CHRIS HINES

Angola is one of the most biodiverse countries in Africa – with habitats ranging from the hyper-arid Namib Desert in the southwest to the tropical rainforests of the Congo basin in the northern parts of the country. Chris' talk will take you on a whirlwind tour of this amazing country – looking at the different ecosystems through the lens of the birds, plants and insects that occur there.

Venue: Linden Bowls Club, 3rd Street, Linden

Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: R30 for members R40 for non-members Cash at the door or prepayment to Wits Bird Club.

Refreshments will be served. Cash bar available.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Contact Diana at diana.m.cowen@gmail.com if you can contribute a plate of savouries/sweets

DATE: 23 FEBRUARY (SUNDAY)
TITLE: ATLASING THE GP 4 DEGREES GREEN

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project SABAP2 site

(<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select year 2025 and find one or more blank pentads to atlas; check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before you head out.

SABAP2: Any blank pentad(s) between 2500_2700 and 2655_2855.

DATE: SATURDAY 1 MARCH (SATURDAY)
TITLE: VAALKOP DAM CWAC

LEADER: LANCE ROBINSON (082 927 9785)

Summer 2025 Co-ordinated Water Avifaunal Count

Counting of all water-based birds.

Contact the leader for the various meeting points.

SABAP Pentads: 2515_2720, 2515_2725, & 2520_2725

DATE: 9 MARCH (SATURDAY OUTING)
TITLE: KLIPRIVIERSBERG NATURE RESERVE

LEADER: TREVOR HULLEMAN (082 456 2174)

The largest nature reserve (680 ha) within the Johannesburg Metropolitan area, the reserve is bisected by the Blouboospruit 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). **GPS:** 27°50'40.7"E 26°05'13.8"S

Meet: 06h45 for 07h00 in the parking area

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP 2: Pentad 2615_2800

Target Bird: Acacia Pied Barbet

DATE: 12 MARCH (WEDNESDAY OUTING)

TITLE: NORTHERN FARM

LEADER: CHRIS HINES (073 332 7578)

Northern Farm, close to the N14 highway is one of the best birding areas close to Johannesburg. It has a wide range of habitats with a number of dams, old fields, woodlands, and grassland. The reserve is particularly good for raptors with Black Sparrowhawk, African Fish-Eagle, and Long Crested Eagle regularly seen.

The club visited the area in December when it was hot and dry but we still came away with just under 100 species and given that it has rained in the interim we should be able to extend that list considerably with a number of migrants such as Amur Falcon and European Sedge Warbler being regularly seen. Northern Farm is also an excellent area for Orange-Breasted Waxbill as well as the many waterfowl that frequent the dams. Woodland Kingfisher is regular at this site.

Directions: If you use Winnie Mandela Drive - go under the N14, turn left onto the R114, go over the N14. There is a 4-way stop at Bambanani centre - about 100 m past this you will see a sign for N Farm - turn right there - turn onto the dirt road on the left and go to the gate. Sign in.

If you use Cedar Road - turn right onto the R114 at the four-way stop. About 6.5 km along here you will see a sign on the left for N Farm. Turn in here and immediately left onto the dirt road and up to the gate. Sign in

We will carpool for the trip - please arrive early (0600) so we can make the necessary arrangements to leave at 0630.

GPS: S25°56'15.41", E27°59'19.74"

Meet: 0600 at the gate, depart by 0630

Cost: There is a small entrance fee payable (R70) – details on registration

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

DATE: 15 MARCH (SATURDAY)

TITLE: ATLASING

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project on the SABAP2 website

(<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select year 2025 and find one or more blank pentads to atlas; check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before you head out.

SABAP2: Any blank pentad(s) between 2500_2700 and 2655_2855.

DATE: 15 MARCH (SATURDAY OUTING)

TITLE: RIETVLEI NATURE RESERVE

LEADER: DAVE BENTLEY (083 253 4995)

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.

GPS: S25°52'58.7", E28°15'47.5"

Time: 7h30 at reception

Cost: An entrance fee is payable, no cash accepted

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP Pentads: 2550_2815

Target bird: Black-chested Snake-Eagle

DATE: 18 MARCH ERBC TUESDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: BIRDING MADAGASCAR

SPEAKER: SPIKE TAYLOR

Spike will present his experiences of traveling around Madagascar.

Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Drivers license to be scanned at the entrance.

Cost: Members R20.00 / Non-members R30.00. Cash at the door.

Tea, coffee, and snacks will be served after the presentation.

DATE: 29 MARCH SATURDAY AFTERNOON MEETING

TITLE: WITS BIRD CLUB AGM AND BIRDING IN GHANA

At this meeting, the President, and the Committee to hold office for the year 2025 will be elected. Please join us 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 by Lesley Cornish entitled 'Birding in Ghana'. Lesley's talk will focus on the 4 trips she has taken to Ghana in pursuit of birds.

Venue: TBC

Meet: 13h45 for 14h00

Cost: None. Refreshments will be served.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

DATE: 1 APRIL (TUESDAY OUTING)

TITLE: WALTER SISULU BOT GARDENS

LEADER: ANDY FEATHERSTONE (083 259 0231)

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 members 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.

GPS: 26°05'13.5"S 27°50'42.2"E

Meet: 8h00 at entrance

Cost: Pensioners free. Non pensioners an entrance fee is payable.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2605_2750

Target Bird: Black-headed Oriole

DATE: 5 APRIL (SATURDAY)

TITLE: ATLASING

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project on the SABAP2 website

(<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select year 2025 and find one or more blank pentads to atlas; check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before you head out.

SABAP2: Any blank pentad(s) between 2500_2700 and 2655_2855.

DATE: 13 APRIL (SUNDAY OUTING)

TITLE: MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY

LEADER: AWIE COETZEE

Part of the Blesbokspruit RAMSAR site, Marievale's large tracts of open water and reedbeds always have interesting birds on offer whatever the season. April is 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 the African Marsh Harrier, Marsh Owl, and African Rail. Marievale is also regularly visited by the occasional vagrant Western Marsh Harrier.

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 onto a paved road towards the gate (just after Holgatfontein/Nigel sign). Sign in at the gate and meet in the parking area at the Conference centre. Pay at the Conference centre (no cash).

GPS for meeting point: 26°22'47.6"S 28°30'27.5"E

Costs & payment details: per person & car R35.00 (No cash accepted)

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP Pentads: 2620_2830

Target Bird: Purple Heron

DATE: 15 APRIL ERBC TUESDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: BIRDS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

SPEAKER: JOHN GIBBS

John will give a presentation on birds and renewable energy.

Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Drivers license to be scanned at the entrance.

Cost: Members R20.00 / Non-members R30.00. Cash at the door.

Tea, coffee, and snacks will be served after the presentation.

DATE: 17 APRIL THURSDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: SAHEL BIRDING IN SENEGAL

SPEAKER: DYLAN VASAPOLLI

Located on the bulge of West Africa, and bordering on the edge of the mighty Sahara Desert, the peaceful country of Senegal might not seem like your immediate choice as a birding destination. But this couldn't be further from the truth... Senegal offers birders a unique chance to access the Sahel zone, which has several restricted bird species, and some of both Africa's and indeed, the world's most sought-after birds. Egyptian Plover, Quail-plover, Golden Nightjar and so many more await in this long-overlooked country. Join Dylan Vasapolli, as he talks to you about the special birds occurring in this country, and where to find them.

Venue: Linden Bowls Club, 3rd Street, Linden

Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: R30 for members R40 for non-members Cash at the door or prepayment to Wits Bird Club.

Refreshments will be served. Cash bar available.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Contact Diana at diana.m.cowen@gmail.com if you can contribute a plate of savouries/sweets

DATE: 19 APRIL (EASTER SATURDAY OUTING)

TITLE: KLOOFENDAL NATURE RESERVE - PICNIC

LEADER: KOOS VAN DYK (083 294 4700)

This popular 150-ha reserve has a good variety of birds due to its wide range of habitats. We can only hope the resident Black Sparrowhawk may put in an appearance on the day.

Route: Take Beyers Naude north. Cross the N1 Western Bypass Freeway. At the next traffic light turn left into Jim Fouché Road. Keep on Jim Fouché, crossing JG Strydom and Hendrik Potgieter Roads, and then turn right into Christian de Wet Road. At the first traffic lights, turn left into Wilgerood Road, and then second left into Topaz Road. Take the first right into Galena Road. Entrance to Kloofendal is 1km, on the left.

GPS: S26°07'38.7", E27°52'50.4"

Meet: 07h30 at entrance

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2605_2750

Target Bird: Red-throated Wryneck

DATE: 27 APRIL (SUNDAY OUTING)

TITLE: BOONS ROAD

LEADER: GRANT EGEN (084 731 3344)

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. At 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/Molotocity road from where birding will begin. The meeting point will be where the tar road ends and the dirt road starts.

GPS: S26° 00' 25.5" E27° 19' 38.0"

Meet: 07h00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2600_2715+

Target Bird: Rufous-eared Warbler

DATE: 1 MAY (PUBLIC HOLIDAY OUTING)

TITLE: WONDERBOOM LAPA

LEADER: CAMERON CROLE

Wonderboom Lapa has a convenient place to park and meet before starting our 4 to 5 km walk. The Friends of Magalies have created a network of trails south east of Wonderboom Nature Reserve. There are multi-use paths and those dedicated to hikers and birders. The duration of the walk is dependent on the fitness of the members and the number of birds seen.

The birdlife is remarkable considering that the area is in the centre of urban sprawl. Several raptors can be found soaring on the thermals as Francolins and Spurfowl scurry around. The various Thrushes will keep you on your toes with identifications, but not as much as the various Cisticolas and lingering Swifts, Swallows and Martins.

Route: Head northeast on the N1/Ben Schoeman Fwy/Pretoria Main Rd to Pretoria. Continue onto Ben Schoeman Fwy/Pretoria Main Rd. Continue onto Ben Schoeman Fwy/Pretoria Main Rd/N14. Use the middle lane to take exit 335 for M7/Eeufees Road toward Pretoria. In 650 m use the right lane to turn right onto Eeufees Rd/M7. After 450 m use the right lane to take the ramp onto Christina De Wit Ave/M18 and after 1 km use the 2nd from the left lane to continue on Christina De Wit Ave.

In 300 m use the middle lane to turn slightly left to merge onto Nelson Mandela Dr/M3 toward M18/Centurion Pretoria. After 900 m keep right to stay on Nelson Mandela Dr/M3 for 2.6 km and using the left lane, turn right onto Edmond St/N4. After 450 m, use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto Steve Biko Rd/M5 and after 3.8 km, use the middle 2 lanes to remain on Steve Biko Rd/M5. In 900 m, turn right onto De Beer St, in a further 170 m turn left onto 9th Ave and then left again in 240 m onto Lombard St. As you pass the school gate the road forms a cul-de-sac, proceed along the tarred extension of the street until you reach a T-junction onto Wonderboom Lapa Rd, turn right and reach Wonderboom Lapa in 400 m. Park on the right of the road before the Lapa entrance.

Difficulty Grading 3

GPS: 25°41'35.6"S 28°12'08.5"E

Meet: 08h00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP Pentads: 2540_2810

Target Bird: Cut-throat Finch

DATE: 15 - 20 MAY (EXTENDED LONG WEEKEND OUTING)

TITLE: LEKHALAMEETSE NATURE RESERVE

LEADER: CHRIS HINES (073 332 7578)

This is an outing over a longer weekend (Thursday to Monday) at Lekhalameetse Nature Reserve, about 70 km from Tzaneen. This small reserve is a hidden gem of diversity on the northern escarpment in Limpopo. The lower sections of the reserve comprise a mosaic of dense riverine woodlands, some forests in the narrow gorges, open deciduous woodlands, streams, wetlands, and secondary bushveld. As you go up the Orrie Baragwanath Pass, the vegetation changes rapidly, with the road going through patches of Afromontane forest, dry scrub on the steep rocky slopes, old fields, and high-altitude grasslands.

Bird diversity is high - target species lower down would include Gorgeous Bush Shrike, Narina Trogon, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, and Purple-crested Turaco. Along the streams, there are Mountain Wagtail, and in the fringing forest, Chorister Robin, Green Twinspot, and African Goshawk. The rocky areas and grasslands higher up bring a different suite of birds - Lazy Cisticola, Cape Grassbird, and widows are quite common. The reserve is a recognized butterfly hotspot with an endemic blue in the high grasslands. Dragonflies are equally diverse, with the localized endemic Elegant Malachite occurring along the main river.

Cost & accommodation: TBA.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad 2405_3030+

Target Bird: Green Twinspot

DATE: 15 MAY THURSDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: ORT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

SPEAKER: MELISSA HOFFMAN

Melissa's core function for the past 21 years at ACSA has been to mitigate the risk of bird-strike-related risks. ACSA together with EWT has created an environmentally sustainable approach to managing this risk and Melissa will share the results of this work will be shared during the presentation.

Venue: Linden Bowls Club, 3rd Street, Linden

Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: R30 for members R40 for non-members Cash at the door or prepayment to Wits Bird Club.

Refreshments will be served. Cash bar available.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Contact Diana at diana.m.cowen@gmail.com if you can contribute a plate of savouries/sweets

DATE: 17 MAY (SATURDAY OUTING)

TITLE: GOLDEN HARVEST

LEADER: SUE OERTLI (083 306 8459)

Situated near the Northgate Dome, this 55-hectare park offers walks around a dam and indigenous bushveld. Black Sparrowhawk and Half-collared Kingfisher have previously been seen.

Route: From Malibongwe Drive turn left into Olievenhout Ave. After the traffic light turn left into Maple Rd. Turn right at T-junction into Hunter's Road.

GPS: 26°03'57.3"S 27°57'14.6"E

Meet: 08h00 at the entrance.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad: 2600_2755
Target Bird: Half-collared Kingfisher

DATE: 20 MAY - ERBC TUESDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: SEEKOEIVLEI NATURE RESERVE & MEMEL SURROUNDS

SPEAKER: DAVE BENTLEY

Dave will showcase some of the sightings of the East Rand Bird Club's visit to Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve in Memel during November 2024.

Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Drivers license to be scanned at the entrance.

Cost: Members R20.00 / Non-members R30.00. Cash at the door.

Tea, coffee, and snacks will be served after the presentation.

DATE: 25 MAY (SUNDAY OUTING)
TITLE: MORELETA KLOOF NATURE RESERVE

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

This is a great destination just a few minutes from the highway. There are several habitats to be found including wetlands, open grassland, rocky ridges, broadleaved woodland, acacia woodland, and even tall riverine forest around the Rademeyer Spruit. Specials include Lesser Honeyguide and Brown-backed Honeybird, with the occasional dash past of either an Ovambo or Little Sparrowhawk. This is a small reserve and very suitable for a family outing.

Route: From the N1, take the Rigel Avenue off-ramp and travel east on Delmas Road. Turn left into Solomon Mahlangu Drive (Hans Strijdom Avenue) at the second intersection. Turn right into Rubenstein and travel until you get to Helios Street. Turn left into Helios Street. Parking is in Helios Street at the entrance to Rademeyer's Restaurant.

GPS: S 25°49'1.72" E 28°17'27.61"

Meet: 08h00 in car park

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

SABAP2: Pentad: 2545_2815

Target Bird: Brown-crowned Tchagra

DATE: 31 MAY (SATURDAY)
TITLE: ATLASING

LEADER: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108)

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project on the SABAP2 website (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select year 2025 and find one or more blank pentads to atlas; check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before you head out.

SABAP2: Any blank pentad(s) between 2500_2700 and 2655_2855.

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:

- 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
- Please note NO CREDIT CARD FACILITY.
- *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 R1 000, payment in full must be paid on booking;
- If the cost of the outing/weekend is over R1 000 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 1. 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