

		WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB PROGRAMME 02/2026 MAY to SEPTEMBER 2026
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DATE	EVENT & VENUE	LEADER/ SPEAKER
MAY		
6	Wednesday Outing - President Ridge Bird Sanctuary	Gill Isaac
9	Birding Basics Course	Chris Hines & Lance Robinson
17	Birding with Purpose: Atlassing	Werner Van Goethem
19	East Rand Evening Meeting - Country Life Village	Andy Featherstone
21	WBC Evening Meeting - Linden Bowls Club	Claudia Holgate
20-24	LAB Conference & BLSA AGM - Bonamanzi, KZN	BirdLife South Africa
23	Saturday Outing - Roodeplaat Dam	Awie Coetzee
31	Sunday Outing - Klipriviersberg NR	Joshua Marais
JUNE		
6	Saturday - Bird Club Outings Training & Activation Workshop at Random Harvest Nursery	Northern Forum
13	Saturday Outing - Aloe Farm, Hartbeesfontein	Andy Featherstone
16	East Rand Evening Meeting - Country Life Village	Spike Taylor
18	WBC Evening Meeting - Linden Bowls Club	Matthew Orolowitz
20	Birding with Purpose: Atlassing	Werner Van Goethem
24	Wednesday Outing - Waterfall Estate	Cathy Nicholson
27	Saturday Outing - Rust de Winter Dam Nature Reserve	Werner Van Goethem
28	Sunday Outing - Suikerbosrand	Lance Robinson
JULY		
5	Birding with Purpose: Atlassing	Werner Van Goethem
16	Thursday CWAC - Rolfes Pan & Parkhaven South	East Rand
16	WBC Evening Meeting - Linden Bowls Club	Christmas in July Quiz with Carol Lippert
18	Saturday CWAC - Bullfrog Pan & Korsmans Bird Sanctuary	East Rand

DATE	EVENT & VENUE	LEADER/ SPEAKER
19	Sunday CWAC - Elandsvlei & Varkfontein Pans	East Rand
21	East Rand Evening Meeting - Country Life Village	Awie Coetzee
25	Saturday CAR count - GB03, GB04 & GH03	East Rand
26	Sunday CWAC - Marievale Bird Sanctuary	East Rand
AUGUST		
5	Wednesday Afternoon Outing - Rietfontein NR	Chris Hines
9	Sunday Outing - Faerie Glen Nature Reserve	Angela Openshaw
15	Saturday Outing- Devon Grasslands	Awie Coetzee
18	East Rand Evening Meeting - Country Life Village	John Kinghorn
20	WBC evening meeting - Linden Bowls Club	John Kinghorn
22	Birding Basics Course	Lance Robinson & Chris Hines
22	Birding with Purpose: Atlassing	Werner Van Goethem
23	Sunday Outing - Rietvlei Zoo Farm	Trevor Hulleman
28 -30	Weekend away - Wolfhuiskraal	Connor Nicholson
SEPTEMBER		
1	Tuesday Outing - Spring Day at Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden	Andy Featherstone
5	African Bird Fair - Pretoria National Botanical Garden	BirdLife South Africa
6	Sunday Outing - Winters Way Farm, Magaliesberg	Lance Robinson
13	Birding with Purpose: Atlassing	Werner Van Goethem
15	East Rand Evening Meeting - Country Life Village	Reggie Venter
17	WBC evening meeting - Linden Bowls Club	Melissa Whitecross
19	Saturday Outing - Deneysville	Selwyn Rautenbach
27	Sunday Outing - Wilge River Valley	Werner Van Goethem

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTION
Bush and Birds Weekend at Vaalkop Dam with Lance Robinson
LBJs with Duncan McKenzie

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; no prizes will be awarded for spotting the target bird on the day.

DATE: 6 MAY / WEDNESDAY OUTING

TITLE: PRESIDENT RIDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

Join for a gentle walk around President Ridge Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary has many interesting species to find, including Malachite Kingfisher, Thick-billed Weaver, Lesser Honeyguide, and even Black Sparrowhawk, which 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.

GPS: 26°06'31.2"S 27°59'35.9"E

Time: 09h30 at entrance

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Gill Isaac (082 655 9283)

SABAP Pentad: 2605_2755

Target bird: Malachite Kingfisher

DATE: 9 MAY / SATURDAY COURSE

TITLE: BEGINNER'S BIRDING COURSE - START SEEING MORE THAN "JUST A BIRD"

Have you ever wondered *what* bird you're looking at, or wished you could identify the birds around you with confidence? This course offers an introduction to birding, helping beginners learn how to observe, identify, and appreciate birds in everyday settings.

Facilitated by Chris Hines and Lance Robinson, this relaxed, beginner-friendly course is designed for anyone new to birding and curious about the natural world. Together, Chris and Lance bring a practical, down-to-earth approach that makes birding accessible, enjoyable, and unintimidating. Learn:

- Easy bird identification tips
- How to use binoculars & field guides
- Where, when, and how to start birding on your own

Birding is more than a hobby; it's a way to slow down and reconnect with the natural world.

Cost:

Members	R 375,00
Member Families	R 475,00
Non-Members	R 425,00
Non-Member Families	R 550,00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Venue: BirdLife South Africa Head Office, Dunkeld

Time: 07H00 for bird walk

09h00 for workshop

DATE: 17 MAY / SUNDAY OUTING

TITLE: BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE - ATLASSING

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project SABAP2 site (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select the year 2026, and find one or more blank pentads to atlas. Check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before heading out.

As of 05 May, there were already 314 pentads with at least one FP card for 2026.

SABAP2 Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads that have not been visited yet this year.

DATE: 19 MAY / TUESDAY - EAST RAND BIRD CLUB EVENING MEETING
TITLE: COSTA RICA

Andy and a group of seven other Wits Bird Club members and friends recently visited Costa Rica to explore this beautiful country and its fascinating wildlife. Visiting coastal forests, river estuaries, stunning beaches, and rugged mountains, the group was shown a wide range of birds, mammals, reptiles, and smaller fauna. Andy will share his images, ranging from raucous Scarlet Macaws to tiny hummingbirds.

SPEAKER: Andy Featherstone

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

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Driver's 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 - 24 MAY
TITLE: BLSA - LEARN ABOUT BIRDS CONFERENCE - BONAMANZI KZN & BLSA AGM

BirdLife South Africa and the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology invite you to one of South Africa's premier birding destinations for the 7th Learn About Birds conference and BirdLife South Africa's 97th Annual General Meeting (AGM). (The AGM will take place at 16h00, Friday 22 May 2025). Nestled in the heart of a spectacular sand forest and moist savanna, Bonamanzi Game Reserve offers unparalleled opportunities to observe some of South Africa's rarest bird species, including the elusive Green Malkoha and African Broadbill. Whether you're a scientist, seasoned twitcher, or just beginning your birding journey, this conference offers something for everyone. Experience the thrill of logging that elusive lifer, learn cutting-edge conservation techniques, and contribute to citizen science projects that protect our rich avian diversity.

What Awaits You:

- An opportunity to learn from leading scientists in conservation and ornithology
- Expert-led walks and game drives through Bonamanzi's diverse habitats
- Interactive workshops on conservation, bird identification, and behaviour
- Networking opportunities with passionate birders nationwide

The 7th Learn About Birds Conference

The conference will consist of two parallel sessions. The scientific programme will consist of shorter, research-based presentations, while the other programme will cater to a more general audience with longer, more interactive presentations. Rates include a welcome function on Wednesday evening, as well as conference lunches and dinners on Thursday and Friday evening.

The conference will not be live-streamed, but the AGM will be.

Space is limited to 180 to ensure a more immersive experience, so book now to avoid disappointment.

BirdLife South Africa's 97th AGM

The 97th AGM will take place at 16h00 on Friday, 22 May 2026, straight after the close of the conference in the main plenary room.

For additional information and bookings, go to <https://birdlife.glueup.com/event/learn-about-birds-lab-conference-2026-154368/>

DATE: 21 MAY / THURSDAY EVENING MEETING

TITLE: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE WORLD

Have you ever wondered what the world looks like through a bird's eyes? Join us for a fascinating talk that explores how birds perceive their environment — from extraordinary colour vision and ultraviolet light, to motion detection, navigation, and survival strategies shaped by evolution. Whether you're a birder, nature enthusiast, or simply curious about the natural world, this talk promises a fresh perspective on life as seen from above.

SPEAKER: Claudia Holgate

Venue: Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: Free for members. R50 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 MAY / SATURDAY OUTING**TITLE: ROODEPLAAT DAM**

Roodeplaat Dam Nature Reserve lies on the southern shore of the Roodeplaat Dam and has two hides overlooking the water. A network of roads accesses the reserve and is generally comprised of acacia woodland with reed beds along the shore of the dam. The bushveld areas are good places to look for Chinspot Batis, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Burnt-necked Eremomela, and Long-billed Crombec, amongst others. The picnic site overlooks the dam and is ideal for spotting the various water birds that are present.

Route: Travelling north on the N1, take off-ramp No152 in Pretoria through the toll gates and turn right onto Sefako Makgatho Drive (R513). Continue east on the R513 for approximately 6km and turn left on the Kameelfontein road. After 3,6km, turn left towards the reserve entrance.

GPS: S25° 38' 59.7" E28° 21' 48.4"

Time: 06h45 at the entrance to start at 07h00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Cost: There is an entrance fee payable

Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

SABAP Pentad: 2535_2820

Target bird: Burnt-necked Eremomela

DATE: 31 MAY / SUNDAY OUTING - * NEW LEADER***TITLE: 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. Several antelope species have been introduced.

Route: We will be starting 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, the sign becomes R82). At the Kibler Park sign, turn left onto Gordon Road. At the second road, turn left onto Pierpoint Drive and follow the road to Peggy-Vera Road. Turn left on Peggy-Vera, pass the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre, and the entrance to the KNR is the next right (thatched entrance).

GPS: 26°18'12.5"S 28°00'42.1"E

Time: 07h15 for 07h30 in the parking area

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Joshua Marais (074 080 8916)

SABAP Pentad: 2615_2800

Target bird: Fairy Flycatcher

**Introducing one of the next generation of leaders. Joshua Marais is a final-year BSc Biological Sciences student at Wits. He is conducting a research project with EcoSolutions on Barn Owl prey diversity. A graduate of MORE Field Guide College in June 2022, he completed an internship guiding in Namibia near Etosha National Park. Josh regularly conducts guided bird walks in Kloofendal and returns to the Waterberg for guiding during breaks. He volunteers at Friends of Free Wildlife and enjoys wildlife photography in his free time.*

DATE: 06 JUNE / SATURDAY
TITLE: BIRD CLUB OUTINGS - LEADERS TRAINING & ACTIVATION WORKSHOP

The Northern Bird Club Forum & BirdLife South Africa present an opportunity for all aspiring and existing leaders to attend a workshop to discuss bird guiding and organised birding activities in South Africa, including the legal and regulatory environment. Recent developments have begun to affect who may legally guide birding trips, under what circumstances, and with which registrations, or professional recognition is required.

This workshop will shed light on recent developments, clarify what bird club leaders and guides need to be aware of, and explore how to operate responsibly, ethically, and within the law—without losing the joy and accessibility of birding.

Topics that will be covered include:

- How to enhance the birding experience when leading a bird club outing
- An Introduction to the legal & ethical requirements of guiding
- An introduction to FGASA
- Insights from Qualified Bird Guides: Challenges & Opportunities
- An Introduction to First Aid

Please note: This workshop provides awareness and guidance, not legal advice, and is designed to help bird leaders ask the right questions and make informed decisions.

Venue: Random Harvest Nursery, Muldersdrift

Time: 09h00-16h00

Cost: Free, but lunch is for your own account

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com or dennis.townsend4@gmail.com

DATE: 13 JUNE / SATURDAY OUTING
TITLE: 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 renowned plant-lover's and tourist attraction in the Hartbeespoort area, drawing visitors to admire the gardens, photograph the plants and birds, and purchase unique plants for their own gardens.

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

GPS: 25°43'15.2" S 27°47'09.2" E

Time: 08:00 at the parking area

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231)

SABAP Pentad: 2540_2745

Target bird: Amethyst Sunbird

DATE: 16 JUNE / TUESDAY - EAST RAND BIRD CLUB EVENING MEETING
TITLE: FLOCK TO ST. HELENA

Spike will recount his recent adventure to St. Helena Island on a Flock there with BirdLife South Africa.

SPEAKER: Spike Taylor

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

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Driver's 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.

This is our first of three winter meetings this year and Sherry will be served before the meeting.

DATE: 18 JUNE / THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: BOTHA'S LARK - INSIGHTS, FACTS AND SOME SUCCESSES

Step into the secretive world of Botha's Lark, South Africa's most endangered bird. Discover how researchers locate, observe, and monitor this elusive grassland specialist, and learn about the extraordinary efforts underway to ensure its survival.

SPEAKER: Matthew Orolowitz

Venue: Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: Free for members. R50 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: 20 JUNE / SATURDAY OUTING
TITLE: BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE - ATLASSING

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As of 19 May, there were already 334 pentads with at least one FP card for 2026.

SABAP2 CoordiWaterfall Estates are bisected by the Jukskei River. The greenbelts along the river banks are accessible via paved pathways giving access to various small dams and wetlands.nator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads that have not been visited yet this year.

DATE: 24 JUNE / WEDNESDAY OUTING - * NEW VENUE*
TITLE: WATERFALL ESTATE

Waterfall Estates are bisected by the Jukskei River. The greenbelts along the river banks are accessible via paved pathways giving access to various small dams and wetlands..

Route: From the N1 Western Bypass, take the Rivonia Road offramp towards Sunninghill. Turn right into Van der Bijl Avenue and continue to the T-junction with Maxwell / Waterfall Drive taking the slip road to the left. Cross over the R55 and take the first right into Country Estate Drive (Waterfall Corner shops on the right). Continue to Gate 6. An access code will be provided on the day. Once through Gate 6 (Reddam School on the right) cross the bridge and park along the side of the road. Meet on the bridge.

GPS: 26°01'30.1"S 28°05'30.3"E

Time: 07h15 for 07h30 on the bridge.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Ron Searle (071 443 2819)

SABAP Pentad: 2600_2805

Target bird: Fairy Flycatcher

DATE: 27 JUNE / SATURDAY OUTING
TITLE: 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.

GPS: 25°13'51.3"S 28°30'54.0"E

Time: Meet 08h00 at the entrance
Book: witsbc234@gmail.com
Cost: There is an entrance fee payable
Leader: Werner Van Goethem (082 462 7108)
SABAP Pentad: 2510_2825 and 2510_2830
Target bird: Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird

DATE: 28 JUNE / SUNDAY OUTING
TITLE: SUIKERBOSRAND RESERVE

The 13, 400 ha Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve is a well-known Highveld birding site. Both the grey and black colour forms of the Mountain Wheatear commonly occur, Red-throated Wryneck and African Red-eyed Bulbul can often be found around the visitor's centre, and the mixed woodland on the southern side of the reserve holds populations of Black-faced Waxbill, Kalahari Scrub Robin, and White-backed Mousebird. Wintering birds could include Black Harrier, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Sickle-winged Chat, and even the occasional Yellow-breasted Pipit and Bush Blackcap.

After paying the entrance fee, meet just inside the gate. We will commence our birding from here, traveling by car to the Diepkloof Picnic. At Diepkloof, we will continue on foot, exploring the picnic area and surrounding office buildings in search of species such as Fairy Flycatcher, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Bar-throated Apalis, and Mocking Cliff Chat.

Thereafter, you may opt for a self-drive along the circular "Tourist Route." This scenic drive traverses a variety of habitats, including rocky grasslands, well-wooded valleys, and thornveld, offering diverse birding opportunities. If you have the full day available, we highly recommend taking the complete route. Alternatively, if you have plans around lunchtime, take the shorter right-hand turn after ascending the moist valley, which will loop you back to the Diepkloof area more quickly.

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.

GPS: 26°26'14.8"S 28°13'17.0" E (turn off to main entrance)

Time: Meet at 07h30 at the entrance
Book: witsbc234@gmail.com
Cost: There is an entrance fee payable
Leader: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)
SABAP Pentad:
Target bird: Sentinel Rock Thrush

DATE: 5 JULY / SUNDAY OUTING
TITLE: BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE - ATLASING

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project SABAP2 site (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select the year 2026, and find one or more blank pentads to atlas. Check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before heading out.

As of 19 May, there were already 334 pentads with at least one FP card for 2026.

SABAP2 Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)
SABAP2: Pentads that have not been visited yet this year.

DATE: 16 JULY / THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: CHRISTMAS IN JULY - QUIZ WITH CAROL LIPPERT

It may be July, but we're feeling festive! Join us for a Christmas in July Bird Club Quiz, hosted by the inimitable Carol Lippert. Expect seasonal cheer, sneaky bird questions, and plenty of fun that's sure to ruffle your feathers. Prizes to be won!

QUIZ MASTER: Carol Lippert
Venue: Meet: 18h45 for 19h00
Cost: Free for members. R50 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: 16, 18 & 19 JULY

TITLE: BIRDING WITH PURPOSE - EAST RAND PANS WINTER CWACS

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

16th, 08h30 - Rolfes Pan & Parkhaven South Pan

18th, 07h30 - Bullfrog Pan & Korsman Bird Sanctuary

19th, 07h30 - Elandsvlei Pan & Varkfontein Pan

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 JULY / TUESDAY - EAST RAND BIRD CLUB EVENING MEETING

TITLE: EAST RAND BIRD CLUB'S TRIP TO SWADINI AND SATARA KNP

Awie will be talking about the 2025 East Rand Bird Club's annual week away trip to Swadini in the Blyde River Canyon and Satara in the Kruger National Park.

SPEAKER: Awie Coetzee

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

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Driver's 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.

This is our second of three winter meetings this year and Sherry will be served before the meeting.

DATE: 25 JULY / SATURDAY

TITLE: BIRDING WITH PURPOSE - WINTER CAR COUNTS GB03, GB04 & GH03

LEADERS: WERNER VAN GOETHEM (082 462 7108), AWIE COETZEE (083 677 7097) & CHARLES NEL (082 547 6779)

Details are to be captured as per the CAR capture sheet v.19 using abbreviations as supplied. Species included are all large terrestrial birds and raptors.

Single vehicle events, meet at a secure site (leaders house) and leave vehicles or the leader is to fetch participants.

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.

CAR count along route GB04 (Cullinan to Bronkhorstspuit)

Predominantly 45 km of farm roads south of N4 between Cullinan and Bronkhorstspuit, with stops every 2 km or at the sighting of CAR species.

CAR count along route GH04 (Three Rivers to Suikerbosrand)

Predominantly 52 km of farm roads south of Suikerbosrand between Three Rivers and Suikerbosrand, with stops every 2 km or at the sighting of CAR species.

CAR Routes GB03, GB04 & GH03

Meet: 07h00

GPS to be supplied by leader when participation is confirmed.

Book: with the leader

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

DATE: 26 JULY / SUNDAY

TITLE: BIRDING WITH PURPOSE - MARIEVALE WINTER CWAC 2026

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 AUGUST / WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON OUTING**TITLE: RIETFontein NATURE RESERVE**

This 16-hectare reserve is conveniently situated next to the N1 and Witkoppen Road in Paulshof. A short trail leads up the ridge, offering visitors beautiful views of the northern suburbs.

To avoid the inevitable morning traffic, we are trying something new by suggesting that we meet at the nearby German Country Club for a lunchtime meal, before heading to the small reserve for birdwatching.

Route: From the N1 Western Bypass to Witkoppen Road in Paulshof, take exit 100 from the Western Bypass. Take exit R564 E/ M9 N/ Rivonia Road N. Keep left and merge onto Witkoppen Road. Continue on Witkoppen Road and turn right onto Estelle Road. At the traffic circle, take the second exit and stay on Estelle Road and proceed to the Rietfontein Nature Reserve. The German Country Club is on Holkam Road. From Estelle Road, turn left to proceed to the parking area.

Time: Meet at 12h00 at the German Country Club (meals & drinks for your own account). 131 Holkam Road, Paulshof.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Chris Hines (073 332 7578)

SABAP Pentad: 2600_2800

Target bird: Cinnamon-breasted Bunting

DATE: 9 AUGUST / NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SUNDAY OUTING**TITLE: FAERIE GLEN NATURE RESERVE, PRETORIA**

Faerie Glen Nature Reserve is probably the best suburban birding reserve in Pretoria encompassing the western edge of the Bronberg Mountains, areas of bushveld and the Moreleta Spruit floodplain. The reserve is accessed by various paths and walking trails and contains both bushveld and grassland birds such as Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler, White-throated Robin-Chat, Crimson-breasted Shrike and Cape Grassbird.

Route: From the N1, take the Atterbury turn-off to the east left back across the N1. At the January Masilela (General Louis Botha) Avenue turn left and follow the directions to the reserve. The reserve will be on your right-hand side just after Glenwood Road.

GPS: S25° 46' 31.53" E28° 17' 27.76'

Time: 07h30 at the parking area

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Cost: There is an entrance fee payable

Leader: Angela Openshaw (079 232 2052)

SABAP Pentad: Pentad 2545_2815

Target bird: Cape Grassbird

DATE: 15 AUGUST / SATURDAY OUTING**TITLE: DEVON GRASSLANDS**

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 Secretarybird, Blue Korhaan, and Black Harrier. Many larks, pipits, and cisticolas are always present. **This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.**

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.

GPS: S26°22'10.9", E28°46'54.3"

Time: 07h00 at intersection

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Cost: There is an entrance fee payable

Leader: Awie Coetzee (083 677 7097)

SABAP Pentad: Pentads 2630_2845; 2630_2840; 2625_2845 and 2625_2840

Target bird: Blue Korhaan

DATE: 18 AUGUST / TUESDAY - EAST RAND BIRD CLUB EVENING MEETING
TITLE: OXPECKERS TO HONEYGUIDES - STRANGE AND SURPRISING LIFE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM BIRDS

From the unique and unlikely partnerships fostered by Oxpeckers to nature's own 'master bird guide', the Honeyguide, leading people to hidden rewards, birds act in ways that challenge how we think about cooperation, communication, resilience, and trust. "Oxpeckers to Honeyguides: Strange and Surprising Life Lessons We Can Learn from Birds" is a lively, thought-provoking presentation that blends natural history with human insight, revealing how avian behaviour mirrors our own lives in unexpected ways. Join John Kinghorn, naturalist, specialist bird guide, and conservationist, for an engaging session that will make you see birds—and perhaps yourself—a little differently.

SPEAKER: John Kinghorn
Venue: Main Hall, Country Life Retirement Village, Brentwood Park.
Meet: 18h30 for 19h00
ID/Driver's 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.
This is our last of three winter meetings this year and Sherry will be served before the meeting.

DATE: 20 AUGUST / THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: OXPECKERS TO HONEYGUIDES - STRANGE AND SURPRISING LIFE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM BIRDS

From the unique and unlikely partnerships fostered by Oxpeckers to nature's own 'master bird guide', the Honeyguide, leading people to hidden rewards, birds act in ways that challenge how we think about cooperation, communication, resilience, and trust. "Oxpeckers to Honeyguides: Strange and Surprising Life Lessons We Can Learn from Birds" is a lively, thought-provoking presentation that blends natural history with human insight, revealing how avian behaviour mirrors our own lives in unexpected ways. Join John Kinghorn, naturalist, specialist bird guide, and conservationist, for an engaging session that will make you see birds—and perhaps yourself—a little differently.

SPEAKER: John Kinghorn
Venue: Meet: 18h45 for 19h00
Cost: Free for members. R50 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: 22 AUGUST / SATURDAY COURSE

TITLE: BEGINNER'S BIRDING COURSE - START SEEING MORE THAN "JUST A BIRD"

Have you ever wondered *what* bird you're looking at, or wished you could identify the birds around you with confidence? This course offers an introduction to birding, helping beginners learn how to observe, identify, and appreciate birds in everyday settings.

Facilitated by Chris Hines and Lance Robinson, this relaxed, beginner-friendly course is designed for anyone new to birding and curious about the natural world. Together, Chris and Lance bring a practical, down-to-earth approach that makes birding accessible, enjoyable, and unintimidating. Learn:

- Easy bird identification tips
- How to use binoculars & field guides
- Where, when, and how to start birding on your own

Birding is more than a hobby; it's a way to slow down and reconnect with the natural world.

Cost:

Members	R 375,00
Member Families	R 475,00
Non-Members	R 425,00
Non-Member Families	R 550,00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Venue: BirdLife South Africa Head Office, Dunkeld

Time: 07H00 for bird walk

09h00 for workshop

DATE: 22 AUGUST / SATURDAY OUTING

TITLE: BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE - ATLASING

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project SABAP2 site (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select the year 2026, and find one or more blank pentads to atlas. Check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before heading out.

As of 19 May, there were already 334 pentads with at least one FP card for 2026.

SABAP2 Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads that have not been visited yet this year.

DATE: 23 AUGUST / SUNDAY OUTING

TITLE: RIETVLEI ZOO FARM

Rietvlei Zoo Farm is a 200 ha property situated in the south of Johannesburg. It offers a variety of recreational, educational, sporting, and family hiking activities. The picnic park, along with lapas and braai areas, is set in the serene environment of the farm, surrounded by natural wetlands and large willow and oak trees. The wetland areas can yield African Snipe performing their display flight and Orange-breasted Waxbill. In an acacia woodland situated on the rocky slopes, one may encounter Crimson-breasted Shrike, Southern Boubou, and Brown-backed Honeybird.

Route:

From Randburg, take the N1 Western Bypass to N1/Bloemfontein/Kimberley/ Witbank. Continue on N12 Southern Bypass/ N12 to Kliprivier Drive in Johannesburg South. Take exit 396 for Kliprivier Drive toward R556. Continue on Kliprivier Drive. After 6.1 km, turn left onto Swartkoppies Drive. Continue for 1.8 km and turn left. The meeting point will be at the payment desk just inside the entrance. Address is 101 Swartkoppies Road, R554, Liefde en Vrede/ Alberton.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: -26.312, 28.0798 (Entrance gate)

Meet: 07:30

Cost: There is an entrance fee of R50 per person

Leader: Trevor Hulleman (082 456 2174)

SABAP2: Pentad: 2615_2800
Target Bird: Orange-breasted Waxbill

DATE: 28-30 AUGUST /WEEKEND AWAY - ***NEW LEADER***
TITLE: WOLFHUISKRAAL ON ZAAGKUILDRIFT ROAD

Situated on a cattle farm along the Zaagkuilsdrift gravel road, roughly 70 km north of Pretoria, Wolfhuiskraal Bush Camp lies in an area celebrated for its exceptional birdlife. The habitat features a mix of Kalahari Thornveld, open grassland, and riverine environments.

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 (right) on the R101 and take the first turning to the West (left) over the railway line. Weekenders travel along this dirt road to the gate of Wolfhuiskraal farm.

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

GPS: 25°09'42.0"S 28°11'07.6"E

Meet: Friday 18h30 for briefing

Cost: Accommodation R1,230 per person sharing.

Camping R550 per person.

R300 additional fee per person for the leader's fee

Leaders: Connor Nicholson (076 445 5672)

SABAP2: 2505_2810

Target bird: Southern Pied Babbler

**Introducing one of the next generation of leaders. Connor Nicholson is studying to become a regional bird guide through the FGASA training programme. Connor began his training in the Kruger Park area, where he worked as a field guide at Balule for seven months. Since then, he has travelled widely through South Africa, expanding his knowledge of birds and the environment and completing the requisite modules of the FGASA course.*

DATE: 1 SEPTEMBER / TUESDAY "SPRING DAY" OUTING
TITLE: WALTER SISULU NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

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 a diverse range of habitats, from cliff faces and grasslands to water, woodland, and bushveld, attracting a wide variety 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 onto 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

Time: 08:00 at the entrance

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231)

SABAP Pentad: 2605_2750

Target bird: Bar-throated Apalis

DATE: 5 SEPTEMBER / SATURDAY OUTING
TITLE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN BIRD FAIR, PRETORIA NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

The South African Bird Fair will be held at the Pretoria National Botanical Garden.

Be there, and you can expect a day of birding excitement in serene settings. Guided birding walks throughout the day, fascinating talks, exhibitors, and more await you.

More information to follow at <https://www.birdlife.org.za/>

DATE: 6 SEPTEMBER / SUNDAY OUTING
TITLE: WINTER'S WAY FARM, MAGALIESBERG

Winter's Way Farm is situated on the slopes of the Magaliesberg Mountains, featuring a diverse range of mixed woodland habitats, including productive acacia scrub and grassland areas. Cape Vultures can be seen soaring along the ridges, and Verreaux's Eagles are frequently spotted. The Yellow-bellied Greenbul has recently arrived in this area (this is still in Gauteng province), and we will also be looking for other woodland species such as the Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, White-throated Robin-Chat, and Arrow-marked Babbler. The grasslands provide a habitat for the Rufous-naped Lark and a variety of familiar bird species. Our hosts, Gavin and Tertia Amos, invite you to bring your picnic lunch along to enjoy at the pool area after the walk.

Route: Approx. 1 hour from Randburg. Directions and gate code will be provided to those who have booked.

Time: 06h45 for 07h00

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

SABAP Pentad: 2545_2735

Target bird: Cape Vulture

DATE: 13 SEPTEMBER / SUNDAY OUTING
TITLE: BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE - ATLASSING

Please check the 4 Degrees Green sub-project SABAP2 site (<https://sabap2.birdmap.africa/coverage/group/GP4>), select the year 2026, and find one or more blank pentads to atlas. Check again closer to the time to ensure they are still blank before heading out.

As of 19 May, there were already 334 pentads with at least one FP card for 2026.

SABAP2 Coordinator: Werner van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP2: Pentads that have not been visited yet this year.

DATE: 15 SEPTEMBER / TUESDAY - EAST RAND BIRD CLUB EVENING MEETING
TITLE: SENSES OF BIRDS

Reggie became interested in the senses of birds by chance and has developed his talk from a casual introduction to their sight to a full-blown presentation on their other senses as well. He was initially worried that the talk might be too technical and scientific, but he has discovered that audiences respond very well to this fascinating subject.

SPEAKER: Reggie Venter

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

Meet: 18h30 for 19h00

ID/Driver's 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 SEPTEMBER / THURSDAY EVENING MEETING
TITLE: SAVING A SENTINEL: THE RISE OF A PAN-AFRICAN EFFORT TO CONSERVE THE ENDANGERED SECRETARYBIRD

As wide-ranging predators of open landscapes, Secretarybirds reveal the critical importance of maintaining landscape-scale connectivity and intact habitats. This growing body of work underscores the value of coordinated, cross-border collaboration in addressing the conservation challenges facing one of Africa's most distinctive and threatened raptors. This talk presents an overview of the work being undertaken by the Pan-African efforts spanning southern and East Africa by the Secretarybird Working Group (SWG) over multiple ecological contexts. Melissa will talk about the importance, the challenges, and the successes of the group with which she has been so involved.

SPEAKER: Dr Melissa Whitecross

Venue: Meet: 18h45 for 19h00

Cost: Free for members. R50 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 SEPTEMBER / SATURDAY OUTING

TITLE: DENEYSVILLE & SURROUNDS

Deneysville is located on the North-West corner of the Vaal Dam and close to the start of the Vaal Dam birding routes. Selwyn will take us on a tour of the main birding sites, stopping at various locations to search for the special birds of the area which include Double-banded Courser, Blue Korhaan, Secretarybird, Blue Crane, Karoo Scrub Robin, Orange River White-eye and Spike-heeled Lark.

Route: From Johannesburg head south on the R59 towards Vereeniging and take exit 360, R716 to Deneysville. Follow Main Street into Deneysville and the Astron Energy is on your left.

GPS: S26°53'12.9", E28°05'47.6"

Time: 06h30 at the Astron Energy filling station Main Street

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Selwyn Rautenbach (072 152 5160)

SABAP Pentad: Various

Target bird: Double-banded Courser

DATE: 27 SEPTEMBER / SUNDAY OUTING

TITLE: WILGE RIVER VALLEY

This scenic drive traverses some of the most diverse birding habitats in the region, including prime Highveld grassland, only a stone's throw away from an impressive gorge cloaked with moist woodland. The road descends into Trichardspoor with its spectacular red cliffs towering above forest-like riverine woodland. The kloof has a distinct sub-tropical flavour, which is reinforced by the presence of African Goshawk, Spectacled Weaver, and Ashy Flycatcher. **This outing will be limited to 5 Vehicles.**

Route: From the N1/N4 junction, travel R50km east towards Bronkhorstspuit and take the R25 offramp. Turn left (north) towards Groblersdal. After 25km, turn right toward Zusterstroom (also signposted Amanzintaba).

GPS: S25°38'42.3", E28°53'16.9"

Time: 07h00 at the Zusterstroom / Amanzintaba turn off from the R25

Book: witsbc234@gmail.com

Leader: Werner Van Goethem (082 462 7108)

SABAP Pentad: Various

Target bird: Spectacled Weaver

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 the deposit slip to witsbc234@gmail.com
Banking details as follows:
BANK – NEDBANK HYDE PARK
BRANCH CODE: 198-765
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 before 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, steep gradients, or difficult terrain)

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

Louise Rowbotham

PHONE: 082 458 8473 • EMAIL: witsbc234@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.witsbirdclub.org.za