



**WITWATERSRAND BIRD CLUB
BRANCH OF BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA
PROGRAMME 1/2010**



FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN BRIEF

Date	Activity	Leader	Venue	Org
January 2010				
9	Saturday CWAC	Val Odendaal	Rolfes Pan	BF
10	Sunday CWAC & Outing	Val Odendaal	Elandsvlei & Sunday outing	BF
10	Sunday Outing	Gail Schaum	Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden	TV
13	Wednesday Afternoon outing	Geoff Lockwood	Delta Park	AH
15-17	Weekend CWAC	Barbi Forsyth	Nylsvley NR (IBA SA008)	BF
16	Saturday SABAP2 Outing	Andy Featherstone	Rysmierbult 2627AC	AF
21	Evening Meeting	Lesley Cornish	Kenya Part 2	RL
23	Saturday CWAC	Lance Robinson	Vaalkop Dam NR	LR
24	Sunday Outing	Janice Isom	Delta Park	LR
29-31	Weekend CAR	Barbi Forsyth	Chrissiesmeer (IBA SA019)	BF
29-31	CAR-SABAP2 Weekend	Andy Featherstone	Chrissiesmeer 2630AC	AF
29-31	Nylsvley Woodland Census	Friends of Nylsvley	Nylsvley NR (IBA SA008)	FoN
February 2010				
3	Wednesday Afternoon Outing	Pat van Nierop	Modderfontein	AH
6	Saturday Outing	Local Guides	Northern Farm	LR
12-14	Weekend & Sunday outing	Janice Isom & Alison Hanson	Somabula NR	Jl
19-21	Beginners Bird Course	Geoff Lockwood	Delta Environmental Centre	Jl
20	Saturday SABAP2 Day	Andy Featherstone	TBA	AF
21	Sunday Outing	Thinie van der Merwe	Panfontein	TvdM
24-28	SABAP2 Weekend	Andy Featherstone	Kuruman, Northern Cape 2723AD	AF
27	Saturday Outing	James Smith	De Rust	BC
March 2010				
3	Wednesday outing	Phillip Tarboton	Klipriviersberg NR	AH
6	Saturday SABAP2 Day	Andy Featherstone	TBA	AF
14	Sunday Outing	Oenie Poplak	Poplak's Farm, Devon	LN
18	Evening Meeting	Les Underhill & ADU speakers	Delta Environmental Centre	RL
19-22	BLSA AGM	Gauteng Region of BLSA	Wakkerstroom	LR
19-22	BLSA AGM-SABAP2 W/end	Andy Featherstone	Wakkerstroom	AF
27-28	Waders Course & Outing	Richard Montinaro	Delta Environmental Centre/Marievale	Jl
28	Sunday outing and field trip	Murrie Slotar	Marievale Bird Sanctuary	Jl
April 2010				
2-5	Easter Weekend Away	John Bunning	Barberton	MS
11	Sunday Outing	Lance Robinson	Suikerbosrand	LR
13	Tuesday outing	Mike Fullerton	Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens	AH
15	Evening Meeting	Martin Steen	Delta Environmental Centre	RL
17	Saturday SABAP2 Day	Andy Featherstone	TBA	AF
18	Sunday Outing	Judy & Peter Watts	Pelindaba, Magaliesberg	Jl
24-27	Long Weekend Away	David Letsoalo	Kurisa Moya, Magoebaskloof	LN
May 2010				
1-2	SASOL Bird Fair	BLSA	Johannesburg Zoo	LR
8	Saturday Outing	Gisela Ortner	Damhoek Private NR, Magaliesberg	BC
8-9	13 th Cape Parrot Counting Day	Cape Parrot Working Group	Various sites	LN
15	Saturday Atlas	Andy Featherstone	TBA	AF
16	Sunday Outing	Janice Isom	Tswaing Meteorite Crater	Jl
20	Evening Meeting	Kevin Ravno	Delta Environmental Centre	RL
22-23	Weekend Away	Lia Steen	Viljoenskroon, Free State	AF
30	Sunday Members Braai	WBC Committee	Weavers Roost, Magaliesberg	TV
Forthcoming Events – Start Planning Now Winter Weekend Pelagic & Seabird Course in Durban with Dave Allan 7-9 August – Kimberley. Diamond Route & the Flamingos with Mark Anderson				
Programme Planning Subcommittee: Bev Carstens (BC), Alison Hanson (AH), Janice Isom (Jl), Lester Niss (LN), Lance Robinson (LR) and Thinie van der Merwe (TV) CWAC & CAR - Barbi Forsyth (BF); Courses - Janice Isom (Jl); Evening Meetings - Rob Leigh (RL) SABAP2 – Andy Featherstone (AF)				

THURSDAY EVENING MEETINGS AT DELTA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE ARRANGED BY ROB LEIGH

Follow First Avenue, Linden towards Johannesburg until it becomes Rustenburg Road. Turn left into Road No 3 at the robot. Follow the road past King David Primary School and into the Park. Once in the Park, turn left at the T-junction and follow the road to the parking lot of the Delta Environmental Centre.

Price: Members R20, non-members R30, Pensioners, juniors and students R10

Time: 19h15 for 19h30

21 January	Lesley Cornish	Kenya - Part 2
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Almost a year to the day, Professor Lesley Cornish told us all about her trip to Peru. On this occasion she will talk about her second trip to Kenya. Lesley's father was interested in birds so she has been birding as long as she can remember. Lesley has an abiding interest in all wildlife and has been an Honorary Officer for the North West Parks and Tourism since 2003. Lesley is Director: African Materials Science and Engineering Network at Wits University and is also Assistant Dean (Research) for the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment.

18 Feb	Chairman and Committee	The 50 th AGM of the Witwatersrand Bird Club
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At this meeting the President and the Committee to hold office for the year 2010 will be elected. After the Annual General Meeting there will be cheese and wine for all to enjoy.

18 March	ADU Speakers	Animal Demography Unit
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A double act this evening with Dr Magda Remisiewicz and Yahkat Barshep from the ADU.

Magda obtained her PhD in 2003 at the University of Gdansk, Poland. Magda's main research interests are the patterns and strategies of large-scale migrations of birds in her two favourite groups - waders and passerines. Magda has taken part in many research expeditions, such as to Bolivia for an assessment of wildlife in an Amazon rainforest nature reserve. A keen bird ringer since 1995, in 1997 she launched an international research project on the migration patterns of the Wood Sandpiper. As a part of her wader research in South Africa she has conducted wader ringing at the Barberspan Bird Sanctuary. Apart from ringing and birding, Magda's passions are travelling and folk music.

Yahkat did her BSc (Hons) in Zoology at the University of Jos, Nigeria, and her Masters in Conservation Biology at the AP Leventis Ornithological Institute in Jos and at the University of Lund in Sweden. Her PhD topic is the migration strategy of the Curlew Sandpiper and her supervisors are Prof. Les Underhill, Dr Clive Minton (Melbourne) and Dr Pavel Tomkovich (Moscow). In Nigeria, she did research on the ecology of the endemic Rock Firefinch, a species only described a decade ago. She enjoys reading and birding.

15 April	Martin Steen	The birds of Costa Rica – pura vida ('the pure life')
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'The Birds of Costa Rica' – a photographic excursion of Martin and Lia's trip to Costa Rica in July 2009 where they recorded over 400 'lifers'. Immerse yourself in an evening of tropical birding while they relive their birding memories from this exotic birding paradise.

20 May	Kevin Ravno	In search of the Picathartes. An introduction to birds of West Africa
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West Africa is one of the continents poorly known regions, yet it is among the richest in terms of biodiversity. With a tropical climate and abundant rainfall, it is home to some of the rarest, most striking and also strangest birds - perhaps none more so strange than the seldom-seen *Picathartes (Rock fowl)*. Kevin will share some of his experiences in search of this species and some of his stunning photographs of others seen along the way. Kevin started birding about 20 years ago after visiting Kruger for the first time and found a fire-ravaged landscape with no mammals to be seen anywhere - so he started watching the birds and has been doing so ever since.

OUTINGS - DIRECTIONS AND INFORMATION

IMPORTANT NOTE: THE WBC OFFICE WILL CLOSE ON 15 DECEMBER 2009 AND REOPEN ON TUESDAY 12 JANUARY 2010

- **9 JANUARY 2010 / SATURDAY CWAC**

ROLFE'S PAN

SABAP2 Pentad 2610_2810

Route: Take the N12 Witbank freeway and then the R21 Boksburg/JHB International turn-off (off-ramp No. 429) towards JHB International Airport for 2km. Take the Griffiths Road off-ramp (No. 49) and turn left into Griffiths Road (from JHB International direction, turn right into Griffiths Road). After about 300m turn left into Kelly Road. Follow Kelly Road for approximately 1,7km (you will pass the pan on your right) and turn right at the traffic lights into Yaldwyn Road. Continue for 800m and turn right into Michael Place.

Meet: 07h00 in front of the gates of Thempelihe Equipment.

Leader: Val Odendaal (082 921 5019)

After CWACing at Rolfe's Pan you can spend the night of Saturday 9th January in the accommodation at Elandsvlei. Please reserve your accommodation for the Saturday night, contact either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267. (**Note:** Other than club outings, access to the pans must be arranged with the landowner, Peter Barnes on 011 733 1086 or 082 818 4300.)

- **10 JANUARY 2010 / SUNDAY CWAC & CLUB OUTING**

ELANDSVLEI

SABAP2 Pentad 2555_2825

Day visitors can arrive and join the team at any time it suits them.

Route: From Johannesburg: Take the Johannesburg Eastern Bypass (N3) and turn-off onto the R25 (Modderfontein Road) travelling northeast past Modderfontein and through Kempton Park for approximately 17km to a T-junction with route 57. Turn left, continue for 800m and right again at the next set of traffic lights staying on the R25.

From OR Tambo International Airport: Travel north on the R21 for ± 14 km to the Kaalfontein / Bapsfontein off-ramp (No 32). Turn left on the R25.

***From here on the directions apply to both of the above:**

Travel northeast for ± 18 km to a T-junction. Turn right towards Delmas (R50). Travel for 1,6km to a four way stop. Carry on straight on the R50 for 6,2km and turn left at the "Kleinsonderhout" turn-off. (Note: This sign is only visible from the other side). Continue on this (dirt) road and take an unmarked left turn after 1,5km. Continue through the cultivated fields for 2,1km to a skew-junction to the right. Turn right and continue for another 600m, following the road through the gate on the left (which is locked overnight – see note). Once through the gate, keep right (trees on your right). Carry on straight, keeping right all the time. The first marsh / pan is 1 km further on the right. The main pan hide can be reached by carrying straight on, past the first left turn and taking the second left turn, marked by the 'long drop' toilet on your left.

For those with GPS, the Waypoint of the main pan is: - S25.99567 E 28.46592

Meet: For CWAC: 06h00 at main pan

Leader: Val Odendaal (082 921 5019)

- **10 JANUARY 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

WALTER SISULU NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

SABAP2 Pentad 2605_2750

Well known for the *Verreaux's Eagles* which are often seen throughout the year, the garden is also a good place to see a wide variety of birds in a magnificent setting.

Route: Travel towards Tarlton/Krugersdorp along the R47 (Hendrik Potgieter Road). Turn left into Doreen Road (approx 10 minutes 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. An entrance fee is payable

Meet: 08h00 at entrance

Leader: Gail Schaum (072 400 7722)

- **13 JANUARY 2010 / WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON OUTING**

FLORENCE BLOOM BIRD SANCTUARY, DELTA PARK

SABAP2 Pentad 2605_2800

A favourite local patch, the park offers birders a variety of garden and woodland species in addition to a number of waterbirds

Route: See directions for evening meetings.

Meet: Front steps of Delta Environmental Centre at 15h30

Leader: Geoff Lockwood

• **15-17 JANUARY 2010 / CWAC WEEKEND CAMP**

NYLSVLEY NATURE RESERVE (IBA SA008)

SABAP2 Pentad 2435_2840

Route:

1. Travel on the N1 North. At the Kranskop Toll Plaza take the Nylstroom exit onto the R33. Travel into Nylstroom. At the crossing with R101 turn right in the direction of N1 - Pietersburg and Naboomspruit. Near Middelfontein turn left towards Naboomspruit. (Do not go straight as this leads back onto the N1 to Pietersburg). Take the R101 and turn right to the Boekenhout station.

OR Travel on the N1 and take the Naboomspruit turnoff. Turn left and follow road until meeting up with old road. Turn left towards Nylstroom and proceed about 10km southwards until Boekenhout station turnoff.

2. **THEN** Continue on dirt road over the N1 and then the railway line. Continue straight for about 2km. Nylsvley is well sign posted and the gate is on your left.

Two campsites have been booked at Nylsvley for the nights of 15th and 16th January. Book for this weekend on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267.

Meet: 07h00 on Saturday.

Leader: Barbi Forsyth (082 336 6217)

• **16 JANUARY 2010 / SATURDAY ATLAS OUTING**

RYSMIERBULT

SABAP2 Pentad Block 2427AC

A summer excursion to an area previously visited by the atlasing team in May last year. Since then only one further field sheet has been submitted, records are therefore still low.

Please let Andy know if you will be taking part so that he can organise teams of observers, preferably two per vehicle, and allocate pentads accordingly.

Route: Take the 14th Ave (M8) offramp from the N1 Western Bypass. Turn North onto the M47 Tarlton Road and continue to the T-junction with the R563 at Oaktree. Turn right and then left onto the N14 Ventersdorp Road. Continue along this road crossing the R24 Rustenburg Road until reaching the R500 Carletonville Road where there is a diversion due to the closure of the N14. Turn left to follow the diversion and take the first road right signposted Ventersdorp, this will take you back onto the N14. Continue until reaching the Klerkskraal Dam wall on the left-hand side of the road.

Meet: 08h00 at Klerkskraal Dam wall

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

• **23 JANUARY 2010 / SATURDAY CWAC**

VAALKOP DAM

SAPAB2 Pentad 2515_2725

Route Take R512 to Brits. Travel through Brits and continue on the Thabazimbi Road (R511) for about 38km. Just after Beestekraal take the left turn "Rustenburg/Vaalkop Dam" over the bridge. Continue to the T-junction and turn right. Follow the road for approx 14km and turn left on to the gravel road to the dam for about 2km. Meet outside the entrance to the Vaalkop Reserve.

Meet: 07h00 on Saturday. **Please advise Lance by 18h00 on Friday 22 January if you intend coming through on the Saturday for the CWAC.**

Leader: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

• **24 JANUARY 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

FLORENCE BLOOM BIRD SANCTUARY, DELTA PARK ①

SABAP2 Pentad 2605_2800

A favourite local patch, the park offers birders a variety of garden and woodland species as well as a number of waterbirds.

Route: See directions for evening meetings on page 2

Time: 07:00 in the car park

Leader: Janice Isom (083 267 4273)

• **29-31 JANUARY 2010 / CAR WEEKEND**

CHRISSIESMEER (IBA SA019)①

SAPAB2 various pentads depending on CAR route

Seven 4x4 vehicles are needed for the CAR weekend in our precinct at Chrissiesmeer. You do NOT have to be an experienced birder in order to participate! If you do not have a 4x4 you can accompany others, as each vehicle needs a minimum of 2 people per car.

Further details and directions will be sent on confirmation of booking.

Cost per person for the weekend: R445 in the accommodation and R90 to camp. Book for the weekend on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267. Your payment confirms your booking.

CLOSING DATE: THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2010.

Leader: Barbi Forsyth (082-336-6217)

Atlasing will be done on the Sunday in an area where birds are still relatively under-recorded

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

- **29-31 JANUARY 2010 / NYLSVLEY WEEKEND CENSUS**

11th FRIENDS OF NYLSVLEY ANNUAL WOODLAND CENSUS **SABAP2 Pentad 2435_2840**

Knowledgeable and keen birders are invited to help count Nylsvley's Woodland Bush Birds

Meet: From 16h00 on Friday for route confirmation, census training & bird ID review.

Saturday: 06h00 Census.

Accommodation and other meals are by arrangement. Attendees are invited to stay over in case of bad weather when the census will be done on the Sunday instead.

Bookings: Marion Dunkeld-Mengell: Tel/fax: 012-667-2183.

E-mail friendsnylsvley@mweb.co.za

- **3 FEBRUARY 2010 / WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON OUTING**

MODDERFONTEIN

SAPAB2 Pentad 2605_2805

This area used to be part of the AECI factory grounds and still manages to yield an amazing number of species, despite all the Gautrain development.

Route: Take the N3 South (towards Germiston). Take exit 119A on to R25 (Edenvale/Kempton Park). Go $\frac{3}{4}$'s around circle following signs for R25. At traffic light turn left on R25. Less than 1km further follow left fork into Modderfontein. Pass a traffic light and soon thereafter take the RIGHT fork – away from the garage and shops. Continue through a circle, over a bridge, round a bend, up a hill and then under the Gautrain bridge. At the next circle, turn left and continue to the large CAR PARK. This is opposite the entrance to the conservation area. There is an entrance fee payable.

Meet: 15:00 in car park opposite entrance to the Conservancy

Leader: Pat van Nierop (011 882 4392)

WBC Co-ordinator: Alison Hanson

- **6 FEBRUARY 2010 / SATURDAY OUTING**

NORTHERN FARM ①

SAPAB2 Pentad 2555_2740

A range of habitats occur - a variety of waterfowl is to be found on the dams and the whole area is good for a number of raptors. We hope to see some of the different races of the *Yellow Wagtail*, an uncommon summer visitor to this working farm.

Route 1: Note: Ongoing Road works at time of publishing. Take Malibongwe/Hans Strydom (R512) past Cosmo City to Muldersdrift/Laezonia Road, and turn right towards the Lion Park. After 9 kms there is a white gateway on the left with grey and yellow signs – "City of Johannesburg Northern Farm". Once you are through the entrance (pay leader), proceed to the parking area where we will meet.

Route 2: Take William Nicol (R511) towards the Fourways shopping mall. Turn left on to the Witkoppen Road (R564) at the first robots, turn right into Cedar Road (R552). After 8km, turn right at the Lion Park Café on to the R114 Diepsloot Road. After a further 6 km the gate to Northern Farm is on the right. Once you are through the entrance (pay leader), proceed to the parking area where we will meet.

Cost: R20 per person – pay leader.

Meet: 06h30 to start birding at 07h00

Leader: Local guides Vincent & Thabiso

WBC Convenor: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

- **12-14 FEBRUARY 2010 / WEEKEND AWAY & SUNDAY OUTING**

SOMABULA NATURE RESERVE, CULLINAN AREA

SABAP2 Pentad 2540_2830

Set in 400 hectares of pristine bush, this will be the club's first visit to this private reserve. The bush should provide ample opportunity for some excellent birding and a wide variety of antelope may be encountered. This venue is approximately an hour from Johannesburg.

Route: From the N1 to Pretoria & Polokwane, take the N4 turn off to Witbank and, after approximately 30km, take the Cullinan R515 exit. Continue along the R515 towards Cullinan, after approximately 6km you will pass through Rayton, continue for 3 or 4 km after Rayton looking for a small sign to Somabula

on your left - you will see white stones announcing Zonderwater Prison on the hillside on your right. If you reach the railway line - you've gone too far.

Accommodation: Stone and wooden chalets are situated in secluded areas with beautiful trees and accommodate up to 5 people each. All linen, bedding, crockery and lamps for lighting are provided. The chalets are fully equipped for self-catering with braai areas, gas cooking, refrigeration facilities and hot & cold water. One bundle of wood per chalet is supplied.

The shaded camping areas each have their own braai area and share the open air ablution facilities (hot and cold water). A maximum of six people allowed per site.

Cost per person for the weekend: R500 in the self-catering chalets and R180 to camp.

Book on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267. Your payment confirms your booking. CLOSING DATE THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2010

Day visitors: R35. Please book and pay Lauraine by 11 February 2009.

Leaders: Janice Isom (083 267 4273) and Alison Hanson (072 277 7985)

- **19-21 FEBRUARY 2010 / WEEKEND COURSE WITH GEOFF LOCKWOOD
DELTA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE**

Whether you are a complete beginner or even a seasoned birder, you can always learn something from Geoff Lockwood, Delta Park's resident ornithologist. The course will comprise both a theoretical and practical component and will be held at the Delta Environmental Centre. The Florence Bloom Bird Sanctuary is conveniently located at the Centre and you will be able to put your newly acquired birding skills to the test. Tea and coffee will be served during the breaks. A light meal will be available for a small fee at Saturday lunch time.

Cost: R475 per person. For more detail and bookings contact Lauraine in the office on (011) 782-7267 or info@wbc.co.za before Thursday 11 February 2010. Your payment confirms your booking.

Course Co-ordinator: Janice Isom (083 267 4273)

- **20 FEBRUARY 2010 / SATURDAY SABAP2 DAY**

Venue to be advised after review on needs of SABAP2 atlasing programme.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

- **21 FEBRUARY 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

PANFONTEIN – A RAND WATER PROPERTY

SABAP2 Pentad 2640_2800

This is a large Rand Water property consisting of a series of man-made dams near the Vaal River. It is possible to walk and drive around the pans. Past sightings have included South African Shelduck, Greater Flamingo and a number of other waterfowl. The Rand Water braai and toilet facilities will be made available.

Route: Take R59 to Vereeniging. Take the Ring Road off ramp. Turn left into Ring Road. Continue to T-junction and turn right into Van Riet Louw Street. Cross a railway line and at the three-way stop turn left into Houtkop Road. Cross the railway line again, cross a 4-way stop and turn left at the next 3-way stop into Klip Rivier Drive West. Continue through two sets of traffic lights (the road becomes Blackwood Street (R42). At the 4-way motors garage (Land Rover Dealer) on the right hand side turn right into Maribou Street (R54). Keep to the left and pass first turnoff to the right which goes into Three Rivers East. Take the second road right (where there should be a sign stating "Vischgat Road/Zuikerbosch Pumping Station). Travel along this road passing turnoff on right to Zuikerbosch and shortly thereafter you will see Panfontein on your left. Meet at the gate.

Meet: 07h00

Leader: Thinie van der Merwe (083 565 2450)

- **24 – 28 FEBRUARY / WEEKEND AWAY**

KURUMAN, NORTHERN CAPE 2723AD

Don't miss this opportunity to atlas in uncharted territory! As at the beginning of December 2009 the one degree square 27S-23E had only eight field sheets submitted for a total of 144 pentads! So come on atlasers, let's get stuck into this area and add some better information. This is an area of Kalahari Desert so the birds will be very interesting. Not even the town of Kuruman has been atlased, so there is plenty to do.

Route: N14 from Johannesburg through Vryburg and Kuruman. Red Sands is 15 kilometres west of Kuruman on left-hand side.

Accommodation: Chalets will be booked at the Red Sands Country Lodge just outside Kuruman on the N17. There are varying types of units that can accommodate singles, couples or two people sharing. Camping is also available.

Cost per person: R330 per night shared accommodation (two rooms one single bed, one double bed) or R500 per person per night single tariff. Camping: R70 per person per night.

Book with Lauraine at the office on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782-7267. Your payment confirms your booking. CLOSING DATE: THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2010.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

• **27 FEBRUARY 2010 / SATURDAY OUTING** **SABAP2 Pentads 2545_2745 & 2540_2545**
DE RUST – HARTBEESPOORT DAM / MAGALIESBERG®

Our hosts James and Linky Smith allow us exclusive access to their property right on the Magaliesberg Mountain. There is always a great selection of birds and we hope to see the *Cape Vultures* at close range. For those fit enough to make the steep climb you may be rewarded with really close up views of the vultures and other raptors, but certainly with a magnificent view over the dam. Those not wanting to do any climbing may bird at leisure from the splendid veranda. Braai facilities will be available, please bring your own wood/ charcoal.

Route: Follow the R512 past Lanseria. At the Broederstroom T-junction, just after crossing the Crocodile River turn left onto R512. Travel for 11km and you will see a sign towards Brits, turn left into R560. Drive 2km and you will find “De Rust”, on your right hand side. (Opposite Magalies Park Golf Estate and before Leopard Lodge.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL: Limited to 20 members. There is no cost but you are asked to book to ensure we keep to limitations. To book contact Lauraine on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267.

Meet: 06h30 for 7h00

Host: James Smith

WBC Convenor: Gisela Ortner (083 414 8542)

• **3 MARCH 2010 / WEDNESDAY OUTING** **SABAP2 Pentad 2615_2800**
KLIPIVRSBERG NATURE RESERVE

This is 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* and *Long-billed Pipit* are all possible. A variety of game has been reintroduced.

Route: We will be entering the reserve from the Klipriviersberg 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 and then right into the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre.

Meet: 08h30 in the shaded parking area to the left of entrance gate.

Leader: Philip Tarboton (082 828 5959)

• **6 MARCH 2010 / SATURDAY SABAP2 DAY**

Venue to be advised after review on needs of SABAP2 atlasing programme.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

• **14 MARCH 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING** **SABAP2 Pentad 2240_2810**
POPLAK’S FARM, DEVON

The Poplak’s, longstanding club members, have invited us to visit their farm again. The Devon region has been largely overlooked by birders but with habitats comprising Highveld grassland, seasonal wetlands and farmland, may be considered a birding rich area. Oenie says owls are plentiful on the farm and both *Blue* and *Barrow’s (White-bellied) Korhaan* may be found in this area.

Route: Take the N12 Benoni/Witbank freeway to Delmas/Bapsfontein off-ramp. Continue towards Delmas on R50, bypass Delmas and after 11km turn right on to R548. Travel for 23km along R548 and entrance to farm is on the left (approx 1 hour 15 minutes drive from Randburg). Braai facilities will be available.

Meet: 07h00

Hosts: Tico (084 751 9084) and Oenie Poplak (017 688 0156)

• **19-22 MARCH 2010/ LONG WEEKEND AWAY: BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA AGM**
WAKKERSTROOM

The 81st Annual General Meeting of BLSA takes place in Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga over this long weekend. The event is being hosted by the Gauteng Regional Forum of BLSA, a consortium of Gauteng based clubs which includes the WBC.

Come join Dave & Sally Johnson, Warwick & Michele Tarboton, Faansie Peacock, Philip Stapelberg and the local guides and enjoy a wide range of events, outings and lectures that have been specially arranged. This promises to be an AGM weekend not to be missed.

If you would like to join us for this special weekend, you need to make **TWO** bookings – one to attend the actual BirdLife South Africa AGM events and another to secure your accommodation for the weekend.

1. **Accommodation bookings** can be made by visiting www.wakkerstroomreservations.co.za or www.wakkerstroom.co.za or by emailing info@wakkerstroomreservations.co.za. You can also call Wakkerstroom Reservations on 017-730 0792 / 072 177 0805. A wide range of accommodation is available to meet your needs, including camping, B&B, self catering, guest houses and the hotel. Accommodation in Wakkerstroom is limited, so don't delay, book your accommodation today.
2. For more details and **bookings for the AGM** please contact Lauraine at the office on 011-782-7267.

Please also visit the BirdLife South Africa website www.birdlife.org.za, or our website www.wbc.co.za for further details.

- **19-22 MARCH 2010 / BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA AGM
WAKKERSTROOM**

Atlasing will be a part of the programmed events available. More details to follow in due course.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

- **27-28 MARCH 2010 / WEEKEND WADERS COURSE WITH RICHARD MONTINARO
DELTA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE & MARIEVALE FIELD TRIP**

Who better to learn about waders and wader identification from, than the man who found South Africa's first Asiatic Dowitcher? Richard Montinaro will share his impressive knowledge of waders; their habits and habitats. The theoretical session of the course will be held at the Delta Environmental Centre while the practical session, to practice your newly acquired knowledge, will be at Richard's familiar stomping ground: Marievale Bird Sanctuary. Late March is a very good time for Palaearctic migrant waders as many will have started preparing for their imminent journey and may already show some breeding plumage.

Cost: R350 per person. For more details and bookings contact Lauraine in the office on (011) 782-7267 or info@wbc.co.za before Thursday 18 March 2010. Your payment confirms your booking

Course Co-ordinator: Janice Isom (083 267 4273)

- **28 MARCH 2010/ SUNDAY OUTING
MARIEVALE BIRD SANCTUARY**

SABAP2 Pentad 2620_2830

This popular Gauteng birding Hotspot and RAMSAR site often hosts a rarity or two and almost always yields an array of birds. Late March is a very good time for Palaearctic migrant waders as many will have started preparing for their imminent journey and may already show some breeding plumage.

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). It is recommended that you continue straight past the signposted turn-off at Union Carriage and drive over the Marievale vlei bridge (\pm 3km). Turn left into a marked gate (just after Holgatfontein/Nigel sign) heading towards the Conference centre, turn right on a dirt track towards the Hadeda hide but continue straight to a gate. Turn left and then right towards the picnic area. Braai facilities are available.

Meet: 07h00 at picnic area

Leader: Murrie Slotar (083 367 6613)

- **2-5 APRIL / EASTER WEEKEND AWAY**

BARBERTON

SABAP2 Pentad 2545_3100 (+ others)

Back by popular demand, we go birding with John in the 'gem of the Lowveld'. This earlier frontier town is nestled in the Makhonjwa hills and the ravines echo to the sounds of *Purple-crested* and *Knysna Turacos*. John will again arrange an exciting programme which will be advised to you on booking. We will be staying at the Digger's Retreat Hotel where camping is also available.

Accommodation: Rondawels with en-suite bathrooms: R725pp for the weekend (sharing).

Camping: R275pp for the weekend (shared site).

For more details and bookings contact Lauraine in the office on (011) 782-7267 or info@wbc.co.za before Thursday 18 March 2010. Your payment confirms your booking.

Route: Take the N4 Toll road to Machadodorp. Before Machado tollgate (R46-00), turn right into Machadodorp, then left at the church, drive through town and follow signs (R541) for Badplaas. Drive through scenic area for ± 60km and at R40 T-junction, turn left towards Barberton. After another 60km, turn left at R40 T-junction towards Nelspruit.

Leader: John Bunning (083 355 0823)

WBC coordinator: Murrie Slotar (083 367 6613)

- **11 APRIL 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

SUIKERBOSRAND NATURE RESERVE

SABAP2 Pentad 2240_2810

Highveld grassland, wooded valleys and dry acacia thornveld are some of the habitats to be found in this reserve. The parking area is good for *African Red-eyed Bulbul* and *Acacia Pied Barbet* amongst others. The 60 km circular drive will require at least four hours to adequately bird the various habitats along the way.

Route: Take the N3 south towards Heidelberg. At the R550, Kliprivier/ Nigel offramp, turn right to Kliprivier. Continue for 6.6km and turn left into the reserve road (signposted). Enter the reserve and meet in the parking lot of the Diepkloof Visitors Centre.

Cost: Entrance fee applicable.

Meet: 07h15 in the parking lot

Leader: Lance Robinson (082 927 9785)

- **13 APRIL 2010 / TUESDAY OUTING**

WALTER SISULU NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

SABAP2 Pentad 2605_2750

Calling all pensioners, enjoy FREE entry to the garden on Tuesdays. The Garden's kiosk also has special Tea and Muffin offers for pensioners. Well known for the *Verreaux's Eagles* which are often seen throughout the year, the garden is also a good place to see a wide variety of birds in a magnificent setting.

Route: Travel towards Tarlton/Krugersdorp along the R47 (Hendrik Potgieter Road). Turn left into Doreen Road (approx 10 minutes 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 gardens is on the left. An entrance fee is payable for non-pensioners.

Meet: 07:30 at entrance

Leader: Mike Fullerton (082 653 3219)

- **17 APRIL 2010 / SATURDAY ATLAS OUTING**

TO BE ADVISED

SABAP2 Pentad TBA

Venue to be advised after reviewing the needs of the SABAP2 atlasing programme.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

- **18 APRIL 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

PELINDABA, MAGALIESBERG²

SABAP2 Pentad 2545_2750

The Phaladingwe Nature Trail traverses the hills in Broederstroom, and passes alongside the Crocodile River. The walk is quite steep in some places but is along a well defined path. There will be a local guide to take us to the best birding spots on the trail and *Mountain Wheatears* and *Malachite Sunbird* should feature while you admire some gorgeous views.

A light meal will be available for an additional cost (to be confirmed). Please book with Lauraine on (011) 782-7267 or info@wbc.co.za before Thursday 15 April 2010. Your payment confirms your booking.

Route: From Randburg: Follow the R512 past Lanseria Airport. At the T-Junction with the R104, turn RIGHT and travel for 1,7km. Take the GATE 1 entrance road.

From Sandton: Follow the R511 for about 40km out of Sandton, towards Hartebeespoortdam. At the 4-way stop with the R104, turn LEFT towards Broederstroom. Travel for 6,7km to the GATE 1 entrance road.

At GATE 1, proceed along the road to the right – **DO NOT GO THROUGH SECURITY**. Follow the 'O' signs to the Parking area (at Preller House).

Leader: Peter and Julia Watts

Cost: R25

WBC coordinator: Janice Isom (083 267 4273)

- **24-27 APRIL / LONG WEEKEND AWAY (4 days / 3 nights)**

KURISA MOYA near MAGOEBASKLOOF

SABAP2 Pentad 2345_2955

Kurisa Moya (Tsonga for Tranquil Spirit) Nature Lodge in the Limpopo Province is situated in the Northern Drakensberg escarpment and overlooks the Kudu River valley. This is an opportunity to go birding with renowned BLSA trained guide David Letsoalo (see Africa Birds & Birding Vol. 11 no.1).

The programme includes guided visits to at least four sites: Kurisa Moya's indigenous forest, the Woodbush Forest, the Tzaneen Bat Hawk area and Polokwane Nature Reserve. Specials include *Black-fronted Bush-Shrike*, *Green Twinspot*, *White-starred Robin*, *Yellow-streaked Greenbul*, *Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler*, *Cape Parrot*, *Orange Ground Thrush*, *Narina Trogon*, *Grey Cuckoo-Shrike*, *Barratt's Warbler*, *Short-clawed Lark*, *Barred Wren-Warbler*, *Bushveld Pipit*, *Shelley's Francolin*, *Gurney's Sugarbird*, *Wailing Cisticola*, *Drakensberg Prinia*.

Accommodation: Self-catering Farm house sleeping 10 (5 rooms with en-suite bathrooms) has a large living and dining area, a well-equipped kitchen and a wide veranda.

Cost: Farm House: R1750 per person sharing for 3 nights / 4 Days birding (includes guide fees). No single supplements allowed and we need 10 people to share. Please bring your own charcoal.

BOOK WITH LAURINE IN THE OFFICE (011) 787-7694). YOUR PAYMENT CONFIRMS YOUR BOOKING.

Guides: David Letsoalo and Paul Nkhumane

- **BONUS SABAP2 LONG WEEKEND – MAGOEBASKLOOF**

SABAP2 Pentad 2345_2955

Enjoy all the special birds of the area and atlas at the same time. Atlasing outings will to be arranged and will be combined with the normal birding events over the course of the weekend. Get the best of both worlds!

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

- **1-2 MAY 2010**

SASOL BIRDS AND BIRDING FAIR – JOHANNESBURG ZOO

The fair is being organised by BirdLife South Africa. Further details will be released closer to the time. Watch press for details

- **8 MAY 2010 / SATURDAY OUTING**

DAMHOEK NATURE RESERVE ②

SAPAB2 Pentad 2545_2735

Damhoek is a Private Nature Reserve on the southern slope of the Magaliesberg, the nearest town is Hekpoort. The mixed woodland, acacia scrub and grassland provide the perfect habitat for a variety of species.

Route: Take the R47, Hendrik Potgieter, north towards Tarlton and Ventersdorp. At the traffic light, Pinehaven Garage, continue straight ahead - road becomes N14. At T-junction, about 10km on, turn right and follow the R563 to Hekpoort. At T-junction 24km on, turn right on to the R560. At sign "Hartebeesfontein" / Geolyn Café (now closed) turn left onto dirt road. About 3 km turn left at sign to Damhoek. At the security gate, Lucas will open for you. Keep on the centre road towards the MCSA/Castle Gorge route. Thereafter follow farm road until you get to the main house with grey roof and terracotta walls (on left hand side of road) ± 6km from turnoff to Damhoek Nature Reserve - sign posted at gate.

Braai facilities available. Please bring your own chairs and refreshments.

GPS Location 025.48.89S – 027.36.95 E

Meet: 07h00 (Gate will be manned between 06h45 and 07h00)

Leader: Gisela Ortner (083 414 8542)

- **8-9 MAY 2010**

ANNUAL CAPE PARROT COUNT (volunteers always needed)

Cape Parrots only occur in the South African Afro-montane indigenous forest patches and these only occur in three provinces. These forests run in a belt from KwaZulu Natal ending in the Stutterheim and Hogsback region of the Eastern Cape. In Limpopo there is a small patch of Afro-montane indigenous forest where there is a remnant parrot population. The primary aim of the CPBBDD is to estimate the population of the *Cape Parrot* in the wild. Information is also gathered regarding the movements and seasonal changes of eating patterns of the birds. The numbers of the endangered Samango Monkeys and *Southern Ground Hornbills* are also recorded. This count also highlights the importance of the Afro-montane regions. Threats to this habitat include illegal logging and commercial foresting.

If anyone would like to get involved or would like to find out more about the *Cape Parrot* please visit the Cape Parrot Working Group website www.cpwg.co.za or contact Prof Colleen Downs at downs@ukzn.ac.za or on 033-260-5127/4.

• **15 MAY 2010 / SATURDAY ATLAS OUTING**
TO BE ADVISED

SABAP2 Pentad TBA

Venue to be advised after reviewing the needs of the SABAP2 atlasing programme.

Coordinator: Andy Featherstone: (083 259 0231) or email afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

• **16 MAY 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING**

TSWAING CRATER, NORTHWEST OF PRETORIA² SABAP2 Pentads 2520_2800 & 2525_2805

Tswaing means "Place of Salt" in Tswana. It is of the best-preserved terrestrial meteorite impact craters worldwide and one of four known impact craters in South Africa. The whole site is covered in bushveld and one can walk along the trail on the rim and look down into the crater with its small lake in the centre. Around 240 bird species have been recorded thus far. It can be hot so please ensure you carry adequate water with you.

Route: From Johannesburg: Take the N1 (north) through Pretoria's eastern suburbs towards Pietersburg/Polokwane. Drive past Zambezi/Cullinan off-ramp. Take N4 (west) (Rustenburg) at next off-ramp (Bakwena Platinum Freeway). Drive for 19 km west. Note: **Toll fees payable** at Doornpoort Plaza. Take M80 Pretoria/Soshanguve off-ramp and go direction Soshanguve. Drive north along M80 (Mabopane Freeway) until a point where this freeway stops at three-way stop-sign intersection (distance about 18 km). Turn right towards M 35 Soutpan (old name for Tswaing) at this intersection. Turn left at T-junction with M 35 Soutpan or Tswaing Road.

* Drive on for about 15km north past Soshanguve's informal settlements (beware of speed humps at stop-signs!). Watch out for game fence (left) and Coca-Cola sign indicating Tswaing Crater 2,7km. Turn left at brown tourist signs after 2,7km into gravel road leading to main gate.

Alternative route: Follow Ben Schoeman Highway or N14 to Pretoria. Take the Eeufees off-ramp and turn right and proceed underneath two highway bridges, and then turn left to follow the Sunnyside signs taking you into Beatrix St., which becomes Voortrekker Rd (M5) which will take you over the hill at Wonderboom (R101). Go past Makro on the right and at the next traffic light, turn left (R566). At next traffic light turn right to Soshanguve (M35). Continue then from *

The museum opens at 07h30 and an entrance fee is payable at the museum.

Meet: 07h30 at entrance gate of the Tswaing Crater Museum

Leader: Janice Isom (083 267 4273)

• **22-23 MAY 2010 / WEEKEND AWAY**

VILJOENSKROON, FREE STATE

SABAP2 Pentad 2700_2655

The atlasers discovered this wonderful birding area last year. Viljoenskroon is situated in the heart of the maize triangle and is reputedly named after the original farm owner, JJ Viljoen, and his horse *Kroon* (Crown). This is still an underexplored birding area that could produce some unexpected species.

Accommodation: The Viljoenskroon Guest Farm: Four rooms have been booked, two with double beds and two with two single beds. Arrive Friday afternoon/evening, depart Sunday lunchtime. Approximately one and a half hours from Johannesburg.

Cost: R300 per person sharing. Book on either info@wbc.co.za or 011 782 7267. Your payment confirms your booking. **CLOSING DATE: THURSDAY 13 MAY 2010.**

Route: details to follow on booking

Leader: Andy Featherstone (083 259 0231) afeatherstone@mlc.co.za

• **30 MAY 2010 / SUNDAY OUTING AND MEMBERS BRAAI**

WEAVER'S ROOST RESORT – CRADLE OF HUMANKIND, MAGALIESBERG

SABAP2 Pentad 2550_2735

Situated in dense indigenous woodland, this is a relatively new venue for the club. We will meet and go birding for a while, then go for a drive through the Hekpoort valley before returning to the venue for a picnic lunch.

Route: Travel North down Hendrik Potgieter Drive, turn left on the R563. The venue is on the right hand side before the R560.

Cost: R30 per vehicle and R10 per person

Meet: 08h00 at Weaver's Roost

Leaders: Wits Bird Club Committee

NOTES

1. Always consult a map before leaving home or the AA for routes, toll gate costs and road works.
2. Entrance fees may apply at some venues and these may have been revised by the time of publication.
3. Please advise your leader of any medical problems before you start walking.
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. **PAYMENTS OPTIONS FOR WEEKENDS AWAY AND OUTINGS**

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

- a. Pay directly into the Wits Bird Club Bank account and fax deposit slip to (086 512 7696).
Banking details as follows:
BANK – NEDBANK CRESTA
BRANCH CODE: 191-305
ACCOUNT NO: 1913 257 789
NAME OF ACCOUNT: WITS BIRD CLUB
- b. Phone, (011 782 7267) Fax (086 512 7696) or email (info@wbc.co.za) the office with your Credit Card number, expiry date and last three digits on the back of the card (Amex and Diners Club Cards NOT accepted);
- c. Post your cheque to WBC, PO Box 641, Cresta 2118;
- d. Bring your Credit Card, Cheque or cash to the WBC office between 09:00 and 15:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

RULES REGARDING BOOKINGS AND PAYMENTS OF OUTINGS:

- ✂ A booking for an outing or weekend away will 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.

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

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

Please note the following:

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

Programme Arranged by:

Bev Carstens, Alison Hanson, Janice Isom, Lester Niss, Lance Robinson and Thinie van der Merwe

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

**Lauraine Leigh WBC Office, Delta Park Environmental Centre
Office Hours: 09:00-15:00 Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
PHONE: 011 782 7267 • FAX: 086 512 7696 • EMAIL: info@wbc.co.za
WEBSITE: www.wbc.co.za**