

Bird List	
1	Acacia Pied Barbet
2	African Harrier-Hawk
3	African Hoopoe
4	African Pipit
5	African Red-eyed Bulbul
6	African Rock Pipit
7	African Sacred Ibis
8	African Spoonbill
9	Alpine Swift
10	Ant-eating Chat
11	Bar-throated Apalis
12	Black Stork
13	Black-eared Sparrow-Lark
14	Blacksmith Lapwing
15	Black-throated Canary
16	Black-winged Kite
17	Black-winged Stilt
18	Bokmakierie
19	Booted Eagle
20	Brown-headed Kingfisher
21	Buffy Pipit
22	Cape Bunting
23	Cape Clapper Lark
24	Cape Crow
25	Cape Robin-Chat
26	Cape Sparrow
27	Cape Teal
28	Cape Wagtail
29	Cape White-eye
30	Cardinal Woodpecker
31	Cardinal Woodpecker
32	Chat Flycatcher
33	Chestnut-Banded Plover
34	Chestnut-vented Warbler
35	Cinnamon Breasted Bunting
36	Common Ostrich
37	Common Quail
38	Common Waxbill

AWAY TRIP (s)

Ko-Ka Tsara - in the Karoo near Beaufort West Group 1 in Sept & Group2 in Oct 2022

For the first time, Birdlife Plett decided to organise 3 away trips in 2022. Two group to Ko-Ka Tsara in the Karoo near Beaufort West and one group to Riverbend Lodge, a private concession at the northern end of the Addo Elephant National Park.

All the trips were fully subscribed, with some 60 club members participating. All of the organisation and planning work was undertaken by Patrick Raymond who has done an admirable job, supported by some of his fellow committee members. A big THANK YOU Patrick!

View from the top of the Bontebok 4 x 4 pass over the Gamka river valley and the bush camp



39	Crowned Lapwing
40	Curlew Sandpiper
41	Desert Cisticola
42	Double-Banded Courser
43	Dusky Sunbird
44	Eastern Clapper Lark
45	Egyptian Goose
46	European Bee-eater
47	Fairy Flycatcher
48	Familiar Chat
49	Fiery-necked Nightjar
50	Fiscal Flycatcher
51	Fork-tailed Drongo
52	Greater Kestrel
53	Greater Striped Swallow
54	Grey Tit
55	Grey-backed Cisticola
56	Grey-backed Sparrow-lark
57	Grey-winged Francolin
58	Ground Woodpecker
59	Hadada Ibis
60	Hamerkop
61	Helmeted Guineafowl
62	House Sparrow
63	Jackal Buzzard
64	Karoo Chat
65	Karoo Eremomela
66	Karoo Korhaan
67	Karoo Lark
68	Karoo Long-billed Lark
69	Karoo Prinia
70	Karoo Scrub Robin
71	Kingfisher Malachite
72	Kittlitz's Plover
73	Lanner Falcon
74	Large-billed Lark
75	Lark-like Bunting
76	Laughing Dove
77	Layard's Warbler

Our club has organised a number of outings this year, but in line with tradition, we try to organise an “away trip” every year, with a view to seeing different areas and accordingly, different birds! At the same time, it gives us the opportunity to get to know a little more about our fellow members. As there was a very positive response to this year’s trip, we were able to organise two fully subscribed trips.

The last two away trips had a coastal bias (Ntsomi and De Hoop), so this year we decided to venture off into the Karoo. The Karoo offers very different habitat and very different birds – a number of which fall into the LBJ category. There are a number of walks and scenic drives in the area that offer breath-taking views and a number of interesting bird, animal, plant and “gogga” sightings!

We booked at Ko-ka Tsara unseen, and were very pleasantly surprised with this little oasis in the middle of the Karoo. The camp currently has nine very nicely appointed chalets in amongst some beautiful trees and surprisingly green lawns, surrounded by the scenic Karoo mountains.



Birding in the Karoo is not easy, as a number of the birds are cryptically coloured and are therefore very hard to see, let alone identify. Enter Ralie Claassen, - an excellent birder, naturalist and interesting character. Bruce organised a list of birds we would like to see, and Ralie took this on as a personal challenge!! She was determined to find everything on the list and with a 6:00am start, we all followed obediently in pursuit of these birds – finally ending up with a combined list including the 1st group, of over 130 birds.

Without Ralie’s knowledge of the area and expertise, we would have been lucky to find half this number. Some of the specials included the *African Rock Pipit*, *Verreaux’s Eagle*, *Ludwigs Bustard*, *Ground Woodpecker*, *Desert Cisticola*, *Grey-wing Francolin*, *Layard’s Warbler*, *Karoo Eremomela*, *Pirit Batis*, *Sickle-winged Chat*, *Black-eared Sparrow-lark*....(Combined bird list in the side bar).



African Rock Pipit BeaufortWest, Ko-Ka Tsara

African Rock Pipit

78	Little Grebe
79	Little Stint
80	Little Swift
81	Long-billed Crombec
82	Ludwig's Bustard
83	Maccoa Duck
84	Malachite Sunbird
85	Martial Eagle
86	Mountain Wheatear
87	Namaqua Dove
88	Namaqua Sandgrouse
89	Namaqua Warbler
90	Neddicky
91	Olive Thrush
92	Pale Chanting Goshawk
93	Pale-winged Starling
94	Peregrine Falcon
95	Pied Avocet
96	Pied Crow
97	Pied Starling
98	Pin-tailed Whydah
99	Plain-backed Pipit
100	Pririt Batis
101	Red Billed Quelea
102	Red-eyed Dove
103	Red-faced Mousebird
104	Red-knobbed Coot
105	Red-winged Starling
106	Reed Cormorant
107	Rock Kestrel
108	Rock Martin
109	Rufous-eared Warbler
110	Sabota Lark
111	Secretary Bird
112	Short-toed Rock Thrush
113	Sickle-winged Chat
114	South African Shelduck
115	Southern Fiscal
116	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow



Ground Woodpecker



Layard's Warbler (was Tit-babbler)



Pririt Batis (male)



Rufous-eared Warbler

117	Southern Masked Weaver
118	Speckled Pigeon
119	Spike-heeled Lark
120	Spotted Thick-knee
121	Three-banded Plover
122	TracTrac Chat
123	Verreaux's Eagle
124	Wattled Starling
125	Western Barn Owl
126	White-backed Mousebird
127	White-necked Raven
128	White-throated Canary
129	White-throated Swallow
130	Yellow Canary
131	Yellow-billed Duck

In addition, the camp has a very nice Boma area where we all ended up braaing in the evening, getting to know one and other and having a number of good laughs

– accompanied by the very entertaining singing of Ian Thomas!



Group 1 - at the Boma - September



Boma bush TV



Mike the fireman from group 1 / group two's fireman was Pete van Noppen



Group 2 on the Karoo plains



Group 2 around the Boma - October



Group 2 on the Molteno pass



Pin-tailed Whydah bossing the missus around

The elusive butterfly... *by Chris van Gass*

It wasn't all about birds, but a shiny butterfly that took centre stage along a dusty Karoo road leading to Rietbron, near Beaufort West.

Ralie Claassen had stopped to get a closer look at some Grey-backed Sparrow-larks when she lost it ... her special butterfly earring went missing on a dusty verge with the Karoo wind pumping at almost gale force.

We all know what a blow losing an earring is to the female species! Chris Lee, one of a group of 15 birders from Plett Bird Club, came to the rescue. He re-traced Ralie's steps and found the elusive butterfly lying near the path Ralie had walked. Much relief all round!

The 15 birders were part of the first sortie of an annual birding outing, this time at Ko-Ka Tsara Bush Camp, a gem for anyone seeking Karoo bird specials.

Ko-KaTsara means small bucks kloof in Khoi, and is set in the Nuweveld Mountains of the Great Karoo, 10km from Beaufort West along the Loxton-Carnarvon road.

Among the sightings for the Plett birding group were an African Rock Pipit, the magnificent Verreaux's Eagle, Grey-backed Sparrow-lark, Large-billed Lark, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Namaqua Sandgrouse – 91 species seen by group 1 and combined with group 2 the total was 131 species.

For others who missed the twitching outing led by Ralie, a view of the rare and endangered Riverine Rabbit, bounding past, was a delight. As was a proud-standing Mountain Zebra, also endangered.

New friends were made around the campfire in the boma and everyone was in agreement that all organisers should be congratulated for making the breakaway such fun - and a birding delight.

Sadly, unlike the butterfly, there was another prize that evaded the birding group: the elusive Cinamon-breasted Warbler.

Next time!



"Kyk kyk, kyk, daar gaan die voel!" Group 1 out on the Karoo plains with Ralie



Namaqua Sandgrouse



Spike-heeled Lark



Southern Rock Agama



Mountain Wheatear



Double-banded Courser on a nest

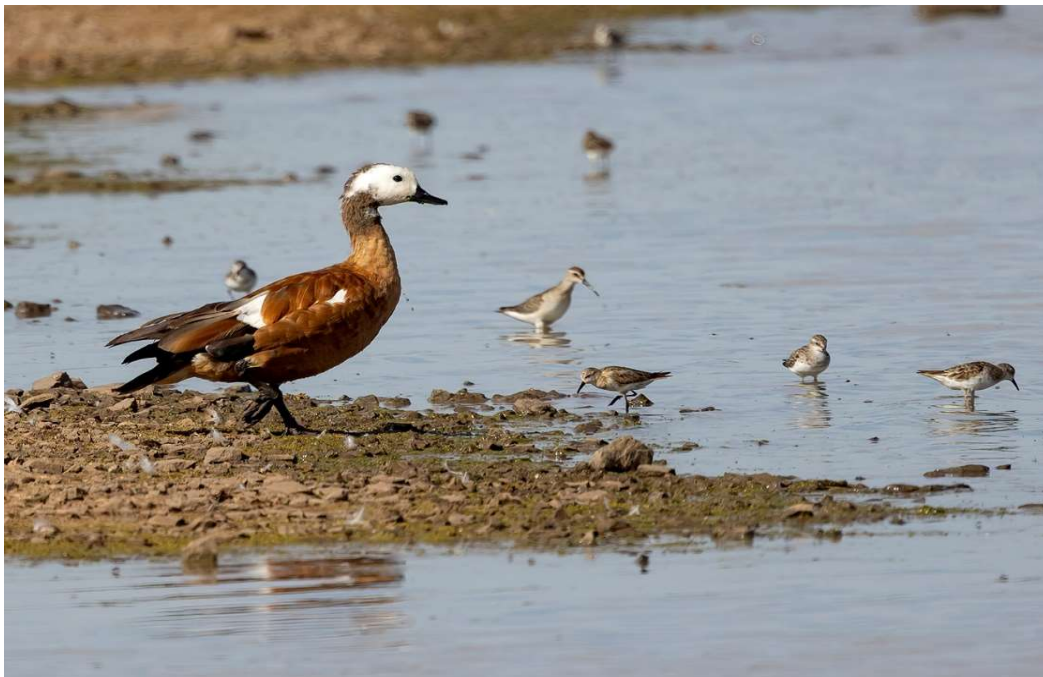
For most of us who “gloss over” the Karoo as we drive from A to B, it is well worth slowing down and exploring – there is so much more to it than meets the eye! And should you be passing through Beaufort West, I would highly recommend Ko-Ka Tsara as a stopover / weekend breakaway to slow down and enjoy the peace and beauty that the Karoo has to offer.

by Patrick Raymond

Photo Credits: Beth Hackland, Pieter Schoeman, Patrick Raymond, Chris van Gass, Dawn Pearce, Ian Thomas, Bruce Ward-Smith



Karoo Eremomela



South Africa Shellduck, Curlew Sandpiper & Little Stint



Familiar Chat



Karoo Korhaan



Ludwig's Bustard



<-----*Grey-backed Cisticola*

Karoo Scrub-robin ---->





View of the Gamka dam from the plateau above Ko-Ka Tsara on the Bontbok 4 x 4 trail