



IBA PROGRAMME

Short-Clawed Lark
ALBERT FRONEMAN

The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Programme (IBA) is a BirdLife International initiative to conserve important bird species and their habitats. There are over 12 500 IBAs worldwide.

A remarkable 847 bird species occur in South Africa, about 8% of the world's bird species. Sadly, over 15% of our bird species are threatened with extinction, mainly due to loss of suitable habitat. Managing a network of 112 South African IBAs is our best hope of conserving our threatened, endemic, biome restricted and congregatory birds. There are 7 IBAs in the North West and Gauteng.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING IBAS

IBAs are determined using globally accepted scientific criteria. An IBA is selected on the presence of one or more of the following bird species in a geographic area:

- Bird species that are globally (A1) or regionally (C1) threatened;
- Assemblages of restricted-range (A2) bird species (restricted to less than 50 000 km²);
- Assemblages of biome-restricted (A3) bird species (75% of range confined to one biome); and
- Sites that either hold >1% of the biogeographic population of a congregatory species, or hold >20 000 waterbirds to meet the global criteria (A4), or >0.5% or >10 000 waterbirds to meet the regional criteria (C4).

CONSERVING IBAS

BirdLife South Africa conserves IBAs by prioritising sites for conservation action, obtaining formal protection, developing management plans for IBAs and biomes, defending priority sites that are under threat and implementing monitoring programmes. Volunteer based Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) support these projects by surveying IBAs, implementing conservation action and educating the local youth about birds and habitats. BirdLife South Africa works with bird clubs, landowners and other organisations across the Eastern Cape to establish LCGs.

Biodiversity Stewardship is a national programme that engages private and communal landowners to assist them to formally declare their high biodiversity value lands as legally protected areas, and to improve the management of these lands for supporting livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. The Regional Conservation Manager is working with partners to implement stewardship work aimed at formally proclaiming priority IBAs as protected areas. BirdLife South Africa comments on proposed developments in or surrounding IBAs to ensure that these developments take account of valuable natural resources.

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA

BirdLife South Africa is the country partner of BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity. BirdLife International is represented in over 100 countries. BirdLife South Africa works nationally and has more than 4,000 members and over 30 affiliated bird clubs. BirdLife South Africa focuses on threatened bird species and Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, and works with people to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

BirdLife South Africa relies on the public, especially birders and nature enthusiasts, as well as landowners, government and NGO partners, to assist us in conserving IBAs. You can get involved in the following ways:

- Join BirdLife South Africa: visit www.birdlife.org.za
- Join your local bird club
- Join an existing Local Conservation Group, or assist us to start one around your local IBA
- Bring to our attention any threats to an IBA, and join us in advocating for the IBA's protection
- Become an IBA Champion for a priority IBA
- Donate to the IBA Fund to support ground level conservation work in IBAs

IBAS OF GAUTENG

Name	IBA No.	Approx. size (ha)	Protection status	Qualifying criteria
Blesbokspruit	SA021	3 060	Partial	C4i,ii
Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve	SA022	17 950	Fully	C1
Devon Grasslands	SA130	75 330	None	A1

IBAS OF THE NORTH WEST

Name	IBA No.	Approx. size (ha)	Protection status	Qualifying criteria
Pilansberg National Park	SA023	49 580	Fully	A1, A3
Botsalano Nature Reserve	SA024	5 480	Fully	A1, A3
Magaliesberg	SA025	363 890	Partial	A1, A4ii
Baberspan and Leeupan	SA026	6 090	Partial	A1, A4i, ii, 111

Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas

of the

NORTH WEST & GAUTENG



BLUE CRANE
ALBERT FRONEMAN

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HABITAT TYPES Gauteng today consists mostly of urban areas. In large cities like Johannesburg the natural grasslands have been transformed into large man made forests. However, large areas of natural grasslands remain in the southern parts of the province, which changes into open bushveld in the northern parts. The North West Province contains mostly grasslands in the east and bushveld in the west. Large areas of this province has been transformed for agricultural purposes, but has also more recently seen a growth in game farming. A number of natural pans in the North West Province host many waterbird species.

FLAGSHIP SPECIES FOR THE REGION Despite the enormous degree of habitat transformation in these two provinces, a large number of bird species have been recorded. More than 350 bird species are recorded annually in Gauteng alone, and combined the two provinces support more than 600 species. Notable IBA trigger species in these two provinces are Cape Vulture, which breeds in the Magaliesberg mountains, African Grass Owl, White-backed Vulture, Secretarybird, Blue Crane (particularly in the Devon Grasslands IBA), Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and Short-clawed Lark (particularly in the Botsalano Nature Reserve IBA). Waterbirds occur at large numbers in the many pans, rivers and manmade wetlands. The Barberspan and Leeupan IBA for example regularly hosts more than 20 000 waterbirds.

THREATS TO GAUTENG AND NORTH WEST'S BIRDS

Habitat transformation for agricultural purposes and to create space for more urban areas remain the biggest threat to the biodiversity in these two provinces. The associated infrastructure, such as roads, powerlines and fences also poses many

threats to species such as vultures and Secretarybirds, for example through power-line collisions and electrocutions. The water quality of rivers and wetlands is also negatively impacted. Waste water purification struggles to keep up with the increasing demand, and herbicide and pesticide run-off from agricultural lands pollute river systems.

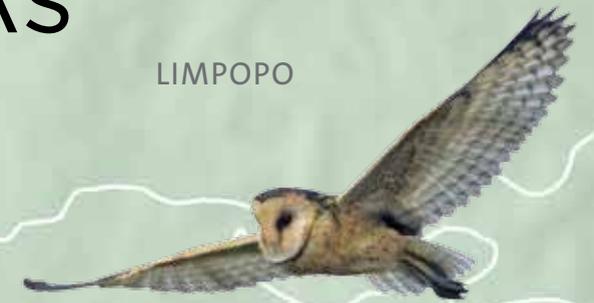


Cape Vulture
ALBERT FRONEMAN

Gauteng & North West IBAs

highveld meets bushveld

The remaining fragments of Highveld grasslands in southern Gauteng begin to morph into bushveld when you enter the Cradle of Humankind. The rise of the majestic Magaliesberg mountains signal the bushveld hinterland in the North-West Province, where you need only point your eyes skyward to appreciate the gliding Cape Vultures circling overhead.



African Grass Owl
WARWICK TARBOTON



Tawny Eagle
MARTIN TAYLOR