



IBA PROGRAMME

Botha's Lark
WARWICK TARBOTON

The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) Programme 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 8 IBAs in Mpumalanga.

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 Mpumalanga 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 MPUMALANGA

Name	IBA No.	Approx. size (ha)	Protection status	Qualifying criteria
Misty Mountain Natural Heritage Site	SA013	70	Fully	C1
Kaapsehoop	SA014	770	Fully	A1, A2, A3
Loskop Dam Nature Reserve	SA015	23 340	Fully	C1, C4i
Steenkampsberg	SA016	196 250	Partial	A1, A2, A3, A4i, ii
Songimvelo Nature Reserve	SA017	46 540	Fully	A1, A2, A3
Amersfoort-Bethal-Carolina	SA018	343 320	None	A1, A2, A3, A4i, ii
Chrissie Pans	SA019	111 970	Partial	A1, A3, A4i, ii, iii
Grasslands	SA020	1 084 550	Partial	A1, A2, A3, A4i, ii, iii

Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas

of

MPUMALANGA



WATTLED CRANE
WARWICK TARBOTON

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HABITAT TYPES Mpumalanga is characterised by three of South Africa's nine biomes: grassland (highveld and escarpment hills), savanna (escarpment foothills and lowveld) and forest (south and east facing escarpment valleys). The province has two Centres of Plant Endemism, Barberton and Sekhukhuneland, and over 4 900 plant species.

FLAGSHIP SPECIES FOR THE REGION Mpumalanga hosts all of the Grassland Biome's endemic bird species, which occur only in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. These include Botha's Lark, Rudd's Lark, Yellow-breasted Pipit and Southern Bald Ibis. Grasslands support Blue, Grey Crowned and Wattled cranes. The latter two species also breed in wetlands, as do the threatened White-winged Flufftail, African Marsh Harrier and African Grass Owl. These ephemeral wetlands are a magnet for waterfowl, while migratory waders forage on mudflats. Priority grassland and wetland IBAs include Steenkampsberg, Chrissie Pans and Wakkerstroom in the Grassland IBA. Forest patches in IBAs such as Blyde River Canyon support, for example, the endemic Bush Blackcap and Chorister Robin-Chat. Kruger National Park and other savanna IBAs protect the threatened Bateleur, White-backed Vulture and Southern Ground Hornbill.

THREATS TO MPUMALANGA'S BIRDS Mining, especially open-cast coal mining, is the biggest threat to Mpumalanga's birds as much of our country's remaining mineral resources lie beneath ecologically sensitive wetlands. Over half of the province's area is covered by prospecting and/or mining applications. Other threats include inappropriate burning and grazing regimes, the rapidly increasing human population and associated development, as well as the impending risk of fracking and renewable energy.



Bateleur
ALBERT FRONEMAN

Mpumalanga IBAs

place of the rising sun

Mpumalanga Province lies in the north eastern region of South Africa and borders Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa's Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. The province's name means "place of the rising sun". Blyde River Canyon (the deepest green canyon in the world), the southern Kruger National Park, panoramic Drakensberg escarpment, Highveld grassland birding, as well as a rich cultural and archaeological heritage are among the province's many attractions.

