

conservation | community | science | creativity

# BirdLife KZN Forum

A wonderful programme  
of birding and talks

Hosted by



## SAVE THE DATE

# Sani Pass & Surrounds

## 20-24 September 2024

*Come birding with us in the mountains  
Enjoy scenery, photography and birding specials*



Nicolette Forbes

- Self-Guided Bird drives and walks
- Guided Bird drives and walks
- An atlas challenge for the local area
- Bird Talks
- Group get-togethers to chat, eat and talk



Register and pay using the link to receive the full itinerary  
which provides details of routes, waypoints and paid activities  
Note the bookings for any paid activities/workshops will only open on the 17 August 2024  
to give everyone a chance to read the programme, register and decide.



The BirdLife KZN Forum is the regional gathering of KZN bird clubs to promote the communication, enjoyment, understanding, study and conservation of birds and their environments in South Africa as well as provide regional support and communication between the bird clubs and BirdLife South Africa.

**BIRDLIFE KZN FORUM | SANI PASS AND SURROUNDS**

20 – 24 September 2024

**HOW TO REGISTER****STEP 1**

In order to register to attend please click the following link and provide the details of each attendee (if you haven't already done so

<https://forms.gle/STJx7RPkSveja9176>

**STEP 2**

Registration costs of R150 per person need to be made asap using your surname and BLKZN as a reference e.g. **SMITHBLKZN**.

You can use one of three options to pay – you will then be eligible to receive the full brochure of information, book for the vulture hide or workshops and be included in the catered lunch for the day of talks.

Pay using EFT (Details below), Zapper (if you have zapper on your phone) select how many units you need or secure Yoco Credit Card link – use your phone camera to scan the code (right).

**EFT DETAILS**

**Bank:** Nedbank

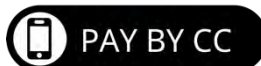
**Bank Code:** 198765

**Name of account:**

Natal Bird Club

**Account Number:**

1305 421 663

**Secure Yoco  
Credit Card****Zapper**

ONLY once you have registered and paid will you receive the detailed itinerary with information such as birding routes (six routes have been set up for attendees), birding spots (GPS coordinates), as well as be able to book for vulture hides and other workshops. You will also then be added to the registered attendees list, whatsapp group for bird sightings and happenings and the BirdLasser challenge.

Please note the itinerary will be sent in batches as payments are confirmed.

Step 3 overleaf/

### STEP 3

Once you are confirmed registrant be aware that the bookings for the **number-limited and PAID activities will open on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August at 08h00** and bookings will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Note that the uMzimkulu hide numbers are limited by the size of the hide and for the comfort of the participants.

Cape Vulture | Nicolette Forbes



Bearded Vulture | Nicolette Forbes



Jackal Buzzard | Nicolette Forbes



Bokmakierie | Nicolette Forbes





*We are better together!*



*Come bird with us*

DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT
Thursday 19 September	<b>The BirdLife KZN Forum Begins...</b>		
	Some people begin arriving on Thursday to settle into their accommodation and enjoy the Friday agenda and birding more fully.		
Friday 20 September	<b>ATLAS CHALLENGE STARTS TODAY AT 00:01</b> Birding, Birding and more Birding for the Participants		
	<b>ACTIVITIES FOR TODAY</b> Group and individual self-help birding along routes and to recommended birding spots and		
	7am -12 pm	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	<b>6</b> places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	12pm - 5 pm	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	<b>6</b> places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	Self-drive in your own time - you choose the route. There will be options to convoy with a guide vehicle as well, but this will be communicated each evening to allow people to meet up the next day.		Six Routes on offer and included with GPS co-ordinates in the more detailed programme sent to registered and paid attendees.
	08h30 -	<b>Bird with a Purpose</b> Atlas workshop	Set up your phone, learn the atlas protocols and the finer points of using BirdLasser to contribute to the South African Bird Atlas Programme 2.

DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT
	08h30 -	<b>Let's go Flying while we Bird</b> Fly- fishing with an experienced fly-fisher	The Central Drakensberg and Southern Drakensberg have long been favoured as a prime fly-fishing destination. From rivers wild-spawned fish of up to eight pounds are taken and from the dams come fish of ten pounds and more. Nowhere else in South Africa are so many heavy-flanked fish caught in such unspoiled surroundings. It is from here that the waters of the uMzimkhulu, Pholela and uMkhomazi, the iNkwangwane and iNdawana, the uMzimkhulwana and uMkhomazana flow. This is a well-watered mountain land of towering peaks and tumbling rivers, set near the twin villages of Underberg and Himeville.

This event is convened by the regional forum **BirdLife KZN** and hosted by **BirdLife eThekweni KZN**



Drakensberg Rockjumper | Nicolette Forbes



White-necked Raven | Nicolette Forbes



Drakensberg Siskin | Nicolette Forbes



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DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT	
Saturday 21 September	BEST OF BOTH WORLDS   LET’S BIRD, LEARN AND TALK!			
	07h00 -12h00	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	4 places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )	
	12h00 - 17h00	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	4 places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )	
	08h45-09h15	REGISTRATION with tea, coffee, muffins		
	Time Slot	Speaker Name	Speaker Affiliation	Talk Title
	09h15-09h30	Nicolette Forbes	Chair BLKZN and BeKZN	Welcome and Introduction
	09h30-10h15	Dr David Ehlers Smith	Science and Spatial Planning Manager   BirdLife South Africa	Botha’s Lark and other threatened birds of the grassland biome
	10h15 - 10h45	Hugh Chittenden	Editor Roberts Field Guide	Painted Snipes
	10h45 - 11h15	Prof Ticky Forbes	Lead Scientist MER / BL KZN E-mag Editor /BeKZN Committee	Eggs - one of the miracles of nature
	11h15 - 11h45	Nandi Thobela	Empowering People Programme Manager-BirdLife South Africa	



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DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM		COMMENT
	12h00 - 13h00	Lunch provided		
	Time Slot	Speaker Name	Speaker Affiliation	Talk Title
	13h00 - 13h30	Prof Digby Cyrus		Rare birds of KZN: interesting aspects, the importance of long-term records & how to report these sightings.
	13h30 - 14h00	Hugh Chittenden	Editor Roberts Field Guide	Cuckoos of KZN with some fascinating migration details on Common Cuckoo
	14h00 - 15h00	Roger Machin	Canon SA - Product manager	Bird Photography 101 and bird quiz
	15h00	Nicolette Forbes	Chair BLKZN and BeKZN	Closure
	Afternoon - Tea, coffee, muffins and chats / networking			

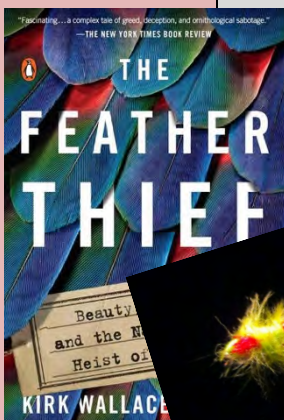
The Bird Shoppe will be available in the main conference room to sign up for membership, buy pins, fluffies, books and other bird goodies.

**BIRDLIFE eTHEKWINI KZN 2025 CALENDARS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE VENUE.**

Bird club chairs from BirdLife eThekweni KZN (Nicolette Forbes), BirdLife KZN Midlands (Peter Divall), BirdLife Sani (Doug Bell), Ladysmith Birders (Peter Nelson), and Dolphin Coast Bird Club (Chris MacDonald) will be available to answer queries and facilitate membership applications for the club closest to you.



DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT
Sunday 22 September	<b>LET'S BIRD, BIRD AND BIRD SOME MORE</b>		
	07h00 - 12h00	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	* 5 places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	12h00 - 17h00	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	* 5 places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	Self-drive in your own time - you choose the route. There will be options to convoy with a guide vehicle as well, but this will be communicated the evening before to allow people to meet up the next day.		* Six Routes on offer and included with GPS co-ordinates in the more detailed programme sent to registered and paid attendees.
15h00 - 18h00		<b>SPECIAL EVENT   FEATHERED TALES ...</b> This event is FREE for all BeKZN Feather Tales Book Club participants you just need to register by clicking on the BL KZN WhatsApp group when it is created. Venue will be at Sani Pass Hotel (TBC).  Anyone else is very welcome to attend with an entry fee of R100 per person. Wine and/or Whisky tasting plus an animated review by Prof Ticky Forbes on the bestselling book - <b><i>The Feather Thief</i></b> which links seamlessly to a feather fly-tying demonstration (projected onto the big screen) by Dr Andrew Mather.	



DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT
<b>Monday 23 September</b>	<b>BIRDING, BIRDING AND MORE BIRDING</b>		
	<b>ACTIVITIES FOR TODAY</b> Group and individual self-help birding along routes and to recommended birding spots plus a photographic workshop and atlas workshop		
	7am - 12 pm	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	<b>3</b> places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	12pm - 5 pm	uMzimkulu Vulture Hide	<b>3</b> places available ( <i>book and pay using the link</i> )
	Self-drive in your own time - you choose the route. There will be options to convoy with a guide vehicle as well, but this will be communicated the evening before to allow people to meet up the next day.		Six Routes on offer and included with GPS co-ordinates in the more detailed programme sent to registered and paid attendees.
	08h30 - 12h00	<b>How to Shoot Birds</b> Bird Photography Workshop	Get taken through the basics of bird photography and try out different settings at the workshop while admiring local birds. Participants must bring, a Bridge, DSLR or Mirrorless Camera to participate. Book and pay using the link.
	14h00-16h00	<b>Bird with a Purpose</b> Atlas workshop	Set up your phone, learn the atlas protocols and the finer points of using BirdLasser to contribute to the South African Bird Atlas Programme 2.
This event is convened by the regional forum <b>BirdLife KZN</b> and hosted by <b>BirdLife eThekweni KZN</b>			



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DAY / DATE	TIME	PROGRAMME ITEM	COMMENT
<b>Tuesday 24 September</b>	<b>23h59 BirdLasser Challenge ends today - how many birds will we have logged.</b>		
	Self-drive in your own time - you choose the route. There will be options to convoy with a guide vehicle as well, but this will be communicated the evening before to allow people to meet up the next day.		Six Routes on offer and included with GPS co-ordinates in the more detailed programme sent to registered and paid attendees.
	08h30 -	<b>Bird with a Purpose</b> Atlas workshop	Set up your phone, learn the atlas protocols and the finer points of using BirdLasser to contribute to the South African Bird Atlas Programme 2.
	08h30 -	<b>Let's go Flying while we Bird</b> Fly-fishing with an experienced fly-fisher	The Central Drakensberg and Southern Drakensberg have long been favoured as a prime fly-fishing destination. From rivers wild-spawned fish of up to eight pounds are taken and from the dams come fish of ten pounds and more. Nowhere else in South Africa are so many heavy-flanked fish caught in such unspoiled surroundings. It is from here that the waters of the uMzimkhulu, Pholela and uMkhomazi, the iNgwangwane and iNdawana, the uMzimkhulwana and uMkhomazana flow. This is a well-watered mountain land of towering peaks and tumbling rivers, set near the twin villages of Underberg and Himeville.



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## Basic Information

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The BirdLife KZN Forum hub will be the Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel.

*The nearest towns to the hub:*

- Himeville: 14.5 km
- Underberg: 20 km
- Bulwer: 59 km
- Nottingham Road: 113 km (via Stoffleton Rd)

*Area attractions relative to the Premier Sani Pass Hotel*

- Sani Top Pub: 23km (straight up)
- uMzimkulu Vulture Hide: 28 km
- Coleford Nature Reserve: 55km

### Main route distances:

Durban to Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel: 230 – 250 km depending on route.

Pietermaritzburg to Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel: 139 – 149 km depending on route

Howick to Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel: 125 -135 km depending on route

Ladysmith to Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel: 273 – 350 km depending on route

More information on Sani Pass can be found on the Go Birding site using this link:

<https://gobirding.birdlife.org.za>

## Additional information for the event

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- 1) **Communications** – a WhatsApp group for all registered attendees will be set up. A WhatsApp Group will be created, to provide assistance with finding places or to coordinate informal meet ups for sundowners, talks etc. Interesting Bird Sightings will also be posted. This will also be a first point for emergency communications.
- 2) **Accommodation and food** – accommodation at Sani Pass, Underberg, Himeville and surrounds will put you in the centre of the activity. The main hub will be at the Premier Resort Sani Pass Hotel and thus the talk day will be convened at this location. **Only people attending the talks will be catered for lunch.**
  - a) Accommodation – camping, self-catering, air bnb, hotels, inns the choice is endless
  - b) **Lunch Saturday 21 September** | **BirdLife eThekweni KZN** will host and supply a lunch for attendees at the talks and speakers. Drinks for own account.
  - c) All other meals during the weekend are self-catered or for own account at an establishment of your choosing.

- 3) **Passports** – you need to be in possession of a valid passport to go up the Sani Pass Road and move beyond the South African border post which is close to the bottom at (1 500 m). Sani Top is 2 400 m. You will not be allowed to go up the pass beyond this point without this documentation. It's also possibly wise to have your vehicle logbook and insurance papers with you.
- 4) **Maps** | A digital map and information will be provided with key birding sites marked and a checklist supplied to registered and paid participants.
  - a) The map provided will indicate local birding areas and hotspots with GPS coordinates, including good district roads.
  - b) Some **routes** will be accessible with 2x4 vehicles but ridesharing in a vehicle with good clearance is recommended to reduce the number of vehicles in convoy.
- 5) Traveling between points can be at own pace or in convoy.
  - a) People travel at own speed,
  - b) Events open to all, nothing compulsory but we would especially request that people do convene for the conference.
- 6) **BirdLasser Species Challenge:** There will be a BirdLasser Challenge which will run from 00:01 Friday 20/9 to 23h50 Tuesday 24/9.

To join this challenge | Participants just need to send their BirdLasser email address (the one you used to register for BL) to [chair@birdlifekznforum.org](mailto:chair@birdlifekznforum.org). All identified sites are within a 25 km zone centred to allow the Sani Pass Road, Pevensey, Lower Lotheni Road, uMzimkulu Vulture Hide and Coleford Nature Reserve into the circle. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the South African Bird Atlas Project and a great outcome for the forum.
- 7) **Additional Costs** need to be anticipated – for example but not limited to:
  - a) Guided Bird excursions if you choose to join these.
  - b) Entrance to reserves
  - c) Drinks and refreshments (including your own water)
  - d) Gratuities
  - e) Donations to bird conservation funds
  - f) Curios
- 8) A number of commercial guides operate in this area and will not be profiled or recommended by the BirdLife KZN Forum. Anyone is free to book and organise these independently.
- 9) For additional guide and area information consult **BirdLife South Africa's Go Birding site** (<https://gobirding.birdlife.org.za>) for birding site information and options.