SOUTH AFRICAN **birdfair**

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PROGRAMME

Pretoria National Botanical Garden
5 September 2026

Ford Wildlife Foundation Conservation Talks:
African Pride Conference Room

Supplementary Talks:
Coucal Room
Sponsored by Italtile

Jonathan Ball Publishers Authors' Corner:
Concert Stage

Time & Venue	Information	Speaker/Host
06h00 – 08h00	**EARLY-MORNING BIRD WALK: Session 1** • Leaving from the main car park, Cussonia Avenue (M16). • Includes a demonstration at the BirdLife Northern Gauteng bird ringing station. • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	Bird guides/experts
06h30 – 08h30	**CANON SOUTH AFRICA PHOTOGRAPHY WALK: Session 1** • Leaving from the main car park, Cussonia Avenue (M16) • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	Members of Young Widlife Photographers of Southern Africa
08h00 – 10h00 *Coucal Room*	**BÏNDO BIRDING WORKSHOP** An interactive Atlasing & Bïndo Workshop. Combining a presentation with a practical birding walk, you'll learn how to atlas birds, submit valuable sightings data and use the Bindo app to make your birding more interactive, rewarding and impactful. Bïndo is a proudly South African birding app that makes birding more social, accessible and fun. • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	**Michael Buckham** Renowned South African birder and Bïndo co-owner
09h00 – 11h00	**MORNING BIRD WALK: Session 2** • Leaving from the BirdLife South Africa Membership gazebo • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	Bird guides/experts
09h00 – 11h00	**NATURE WALK:** **Biomimicry Walk with Jonathan Leeming** The miracle of nature is that whenever there has been a challenge, there is an organism that has found a way to conquer it. There are just over 8.7 million described plants and animals on Earth which are essentially individual science experiments, perpetually testing out new ways of doing things to find a better way. There is no doubt that we have much to learn from this 4.8-billion-year-old jigsaw puzzle that is the world we live in today. Jonathan focuses upon how biomimicry can help us overcome the challenges of our time, but also how we can learn from nature to live a happier, healthier and more meaningful life. • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	**Jonathan Leeming** Leading authority on spider bite and scorpion sting first response, author, speaker and award-winning conservationist.

Keep your eyes peeled for special appearances by Bubo the Spotted Eagle Owl through-out the day!

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Time & Venue	Information	Speaker/Host
10h00 – 10h30 *African Pride Conference Room*	**BIRD OF THE YEAR: BLACK HARRIER** Selected by a public vote of over 10,000 people, the Black Harrier is BirdLife South Africa's Bird of the Year for 2026. This rare raptor is one of South Africa's most threatened and range-restricted birds of prey.	**Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson** BirdLife South Africa's Head of Conservation
10h00 – 11h30 *Coucal Room*	**ITALTILE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME** A fun, interactive session introducing learners to the fascinating world of birds, with a special focus on vultures. Through play-based learning, they'll discover how birds are adapted to survive, why vultures are vital to healthy ecosystems, the threats they face, and how young people can help protect them. • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups)	**Lessons in Conservation** A youth-led non-profit organisation that inspires young people to understand, value and protect the natural world through engaging, hands-on conservation learning.
10h00 – 10h30 *Concert Stage*	**AUTHORS' CORNER: EDDIE GERMIQUET** *South African Birds by Name: Origins and Meanings* – new release! **BOOK SIGNING!**	**Dr Eddie Germiquet** Author
10h30 – 11h00 *Concert Stage*	**AUTHORS' CORNER: MICHELLE MAGWOOD** *Brahman Hills: The Making of a World-Class Garden.* **BOOK SIGNING!**	**Michelle Magwood** Award-winning journalist and author
10h45 – 11h15 *African Pride Conference Room*	**LEAD, VENISON AND VULTURES: Why Lead-Free Matters** Join BirdLife South Africa's vulture experts as they share their groundbreaking work to research and mitigate the effects of lead poisoning in South Africa's *Gyps* vultures. Building on their work to identify lead-based ammunition as the source of exposure, the Vulture Project has expanded to include ballistic testing to assess the effectiveness and performance of lead-free alternatives.	**Dr Linda van den Heever** Species Conservation Programme Manager, BirdLife South Africa **Justin Henry** Vulture Project Manager, BirdLife South Africa
11h00 – 11h30 *Concert Stage*	**AUTHORS' CORNER: JANE GRIFFITHS** Cooking and bird-friendly gardening books by Jane Griffiths. **BOOK SIGNING!**	**Jane Griffiths** Writer, television producer, traveller, artist and an inspired chef
11h30 – 12h00 *African Pride Conference Room*	**BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY 101** A light, fun talk about the hints and tips you will need if you're starting out doing bird photography.	**Roger Machin** Canon South Africa
12h15 – 13h15 *African Pride Conference Room*	**BIRDING, ETC.!** *'If thirty years of birding have taught me anything, it is that birding is about a lot more than just birds!'* Join author and artist Faansie Peacock as we investigate the bizarre subspecies of human being known as the birdwatcher...and the shenanigans they get up to!	**Faansie Peacock** Ornithologist, author, artist and publisher
12h15 – 12h45 *Coucal Room*	**PROTECTING ESTUARINE HABITATS ON THE WEST COAST AND THE BIRD SPECIES THAT DEPEND ON THEM** A talk on the importance of South Africa's West Coast estuaries as critical habitats for both resident and migratory birds, the growing threats facing these ecologically significant systems, and the work BirdLife South Africa is undertaking on the West Coast to study, restore and protect these vital estuarine environments.	**Dr Ernita Flynn** West Coast Conservation Project Manager, BirdLife South Africa **Philipp Grundlingh** West Coast Estuaries Conservation Officer, BirdLife South Africa
12h30 – 13h00 *Concert Stage*	**AUTHORS' CORNER: TONY PARK** Meet bestselling author Tony Park, whose brand-new African thriller, *King of Beasts*, is making waves on South Africa's bestseller lists. **BOOK SIGNING!**	**Tony Park** Author of 10 biographies and 24 best-selling African thrillers, translated into several languages

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Time & Venue	Information	Speaker/Host
13h15 – 14h00 *Concert Stage* 	**HADEDA COMPETITION** **The day's highlight promises to be the inaugural "Call of the Hadeda" event!** An entertaining celebration of South Africa's unofficial national noisemaker, the Hadeda Ibis. Unleash your inner feathered alarm clock and give us your best Hadeda honk on stage!	**Hosted by Themba Robin** Voice artist, actor, MC and content creator **Joined by Busisiwe Tshabalala** Field Ranger and Miss Earth South Africa 2026 semi-finalist
14h00 – 14h30 *Concert Stage*	**AUTHORS' CORNER: FAANSIE PEACOCK** Faansie Peacock is the creator of the popular Firefinch app, co-author of *The Chamberlain Guide to Birding Gauteng 2* and author of the beloved field guide *Faansie's Bird Book 2* as well as many other seminal field guides, all of which he will be available to sign (yes, even the Firefinch app!). **BOOK SIGNING!**	**Faansie Peacock** Ornithologist, author, artist and publisher
14h00 – 14h30 *African Pride Conference Room*	**FROM VELDDRIF TO SIBERIA: Following the Extraordinary Journeys of South Africa's Migratory Shorebirds** From South Africa's West Coast to the Arctic and back, BirdLife South Africa's first shorebird tracking project is revealing the remarkable journeys of Curlew Sandpipers. By uncovering the wetlands these tiny travellers depend on, this talk will highlight why protecting habitats across entire flyways matters.	**Jessica Wilmot** Flyway and Migrants Project Manager, BirdLife South Africa
14h00 – 15h00 *Coucal Room*	**BY INVITATION ONLY! Exclusive to BirdLife South Africa's Conservation League Donors** **WRITING THRILLERS: a novel way to help conservation** Tony Park has built a remarkable career writing action-packed thrillers set in Africa. In this exclusive session, he'll share his writing journey and how storytelling can inspire a passion for Africa's wildlife and wild places.	**Tony Park** Author of 10 biographies and 24 bestselling African thrillers, translated into several languages
14h30 – 16h30	**AFTERNOON BIRD WALK: Session 3** • Leaving from the BirdLife South Africa Membership gazebo • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	Bird guides/experts
14h30 – 16h30	**CANON SOUTH AFRICA PHOTOGRAPHY WALK: Session 2** • Leaving from the BirdLife South Africa Membership gazebo • **Prebooking required** (limited numbers in small groups).	Members of Young Widlife Photographers of Southern Africa
14h45 – 15h15 *African Pride Conference Room*	**LIFE ON MARION ISLAND: Understanding Mice to Save Seabirds** Join Monique van Bers as she shares her experiences from a year living and working on a remote sub-Antarctic island. The fascinating work involved in monitoring invasive mice and their impacts on the island's ecosystem, with the ultimate goal of one day saving the island's seabirds. What everyday life is like and what a typical workday on the island looks like.	**Monique van Bers** Mouse-Free Marion Project Field Assistant

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