



CHAIRMANS REPORT 2025 - Ann Mawer

Dear Members,

2025 was a busy year for birding in our club. The Team organized monthly walks, dinners, and various functions, all of which were very well attended. We are very pleased with the support from members and their friends.

Membership

Our membership remains much the same, with new people moving into the area and members inviting friends and family. It is good to welcome new members with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. We continue to manage the numbers at outings and Talks/dinners. Our Team is training and finding additional guides for walks to try to accommodate the needs of attending members. We have visited many private properties, and the owners limit the number we can bring at any one time and the number of visits. We have to respect their requests and their private space. Please remember that if you wish to assist us with guiding, you are welcome. We encourage members to participate.

Conservation Efforts:

As in past years, we supported conservation and rehabilitation partners. We assisted financially and in any way we could. Our focus in 2025 has been the critically endangered African Penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*). We received some Penguin wine, generously donated to us by Dawie Chamberlain. These 1.5 l bottles of Thelema Red blends were raffled and auctioned to raise funds and awareness of the plight of the African Penguins. Since 2017, BLPB has assisted with many penguin releases off Lookout Beach. We collect donations, which are dedicated to feeding and medicating penguins in rehabilitation. Our combined efforts have seen about 153 penguins released back into their natural environment. Robberg Veterinary Clinic, NVT, Tenikwa Rehabilitation Centre, Marine Stranding, Raptor Rescue, and Cape Nature all deserve a mention for their contributions to rescue, conservation, and rehabilitation.

Events and Activities:

Many great events were planned during the year, including bird-watching walks and away trips, guest speakers, and the second successful Bitou Birding Festival. The feedback from these activities has been overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing our commitment to education and shared experiences.

Importance of Bird Ringing

On 22 December, Conserve Eden's intern Rani found a dead Sandwich tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) with ring number DB03624. The bird was ringed as a nestling on 5 June 2000 at Lady's Lake, Wexford, Ireland. It lived for 25,5 years and had traveled more than 10 000km from its ringing site. We have supported Dr. Mark Brown and Conserve Eden. Conserve Eden has taken over the monitoring of shorebirds, particularly the white-fronted plover (*Charadrius marginatus*). Mark has also trained a few new bird ringers so we can continue to gather crucial information about birds' movements.

27 Years of Bird Count and Data Collection:

We continue our CWAC (Coordinated Waterbird count) and submit our data for ongoing monitoring. The data collected is submitted to national databases for analysis to aid broader conservation strategies.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to all our members, particularly our dedicated committee, who give their time for the benefit of our club.

In conclusion, our bird club will continue to conserve and protect our avian wards. Thank you all for your support and commitment to our mission.

Sincerely,

Ann K Mawer
Chairman
Birdlife Plettenberg Bay