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Benefits of Bird Conservation for Farmers

Dr Kyle J. Lloyd



Part I



The Case Study



White-winged Flufftail



- *Sarothrura ayresi* (Gurney, 1877)
- One of nine flufftail species endemic to sub-Saharan Africa (*Sarothrura*)
- Diagnostic white secondary flight feathers
- Cryptic behaviour
- Globally Critically Endangered
- Breeds at **high-elevation wetlands** in summer
- Wetland specialist preferring intact sedge meadows
- WwF International & National Working Groups

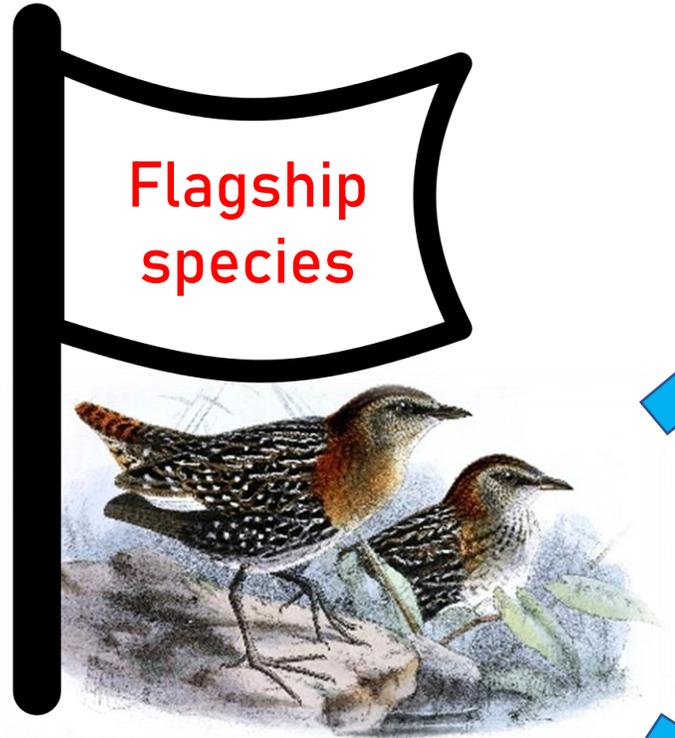


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Wetlands and water



Habitat and biodiversity



Education and awareness



CELEBRATING WETLANDS & WATER

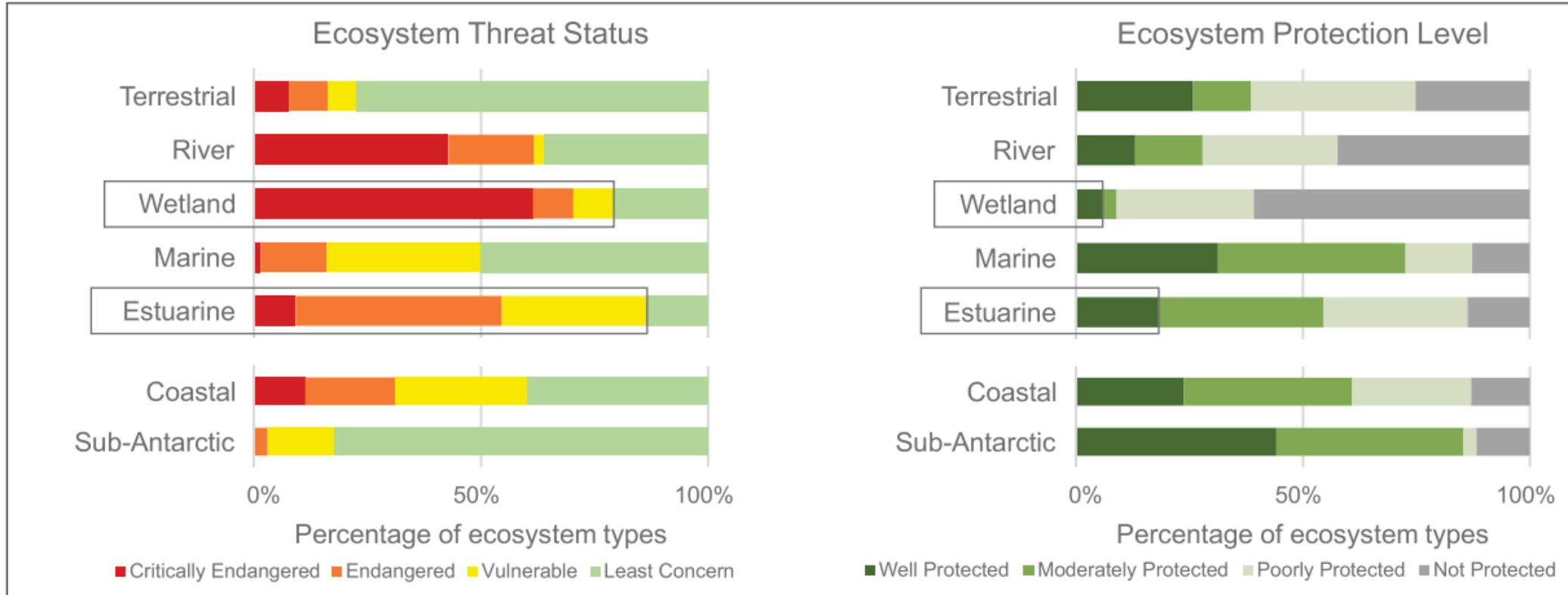
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Stewardship





Wetland Conservation





Wetland Ecosystem Services



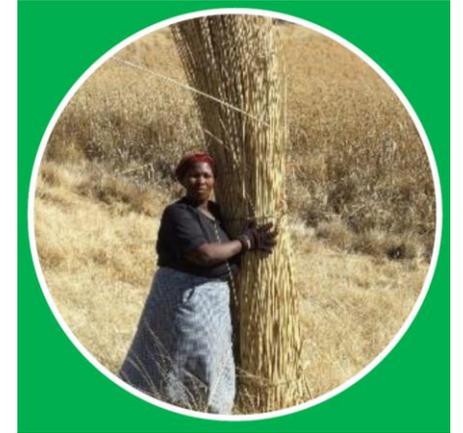
- **REGULATING & SUPPORTING SERVICES**

- Flood attenuation
- Streamflow regulation
- Sediment trapping
- Erosion control
- Phosphate removal
- Nitrate removal
- Toxicant removal
- Carbon storage
- Biodiversity maintenance
- Climate change resilience



- **PROVISIONING SERVICES**

- Water for human use
- Harvestable natural resources
- Food for livestock
- Cultivated foods



- **CULTURAL SERVICES**

- Tourism & recreation
- Education & research
- Cultural & spiritual values





Stewardship in South Africa



	Type of agreement	Legal mechanism	Typical contract length	Binding on the property	Binding on the landowner
Biodiversity importance ↑ Site security ↑ Landowner commitment ↑ State support ↑	Nature Reserve	Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003	30–99 years or in perpetuity	Protected area declaration and title deed restriction	Contract agreement
	Protected Environment		Minimum of 30 years	Protected area declaration and title deed note	Contract agreement
	Biodiversity Management Agreement	Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004	5–10 years	Not binding	Agreement governed by the Biodiversity Act
	Biodiversity Agreement	Contract law	5–10 years	Not binding	Contract agreement
	Biodiversity Partnership Areas	Informal agreement		Not binding	Not binding



Part II



The Benefits



Wetland Protection



- National recognition through protected area (PA) legislation and inclusion in global PA network

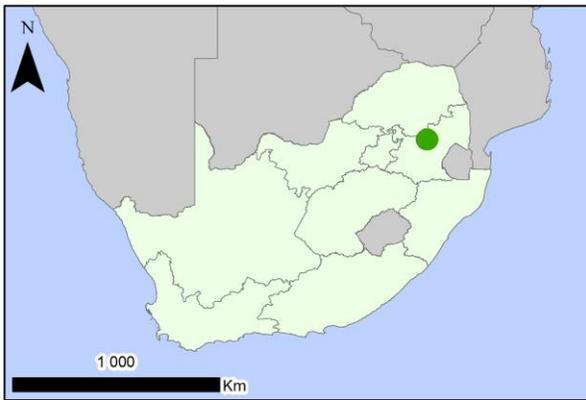
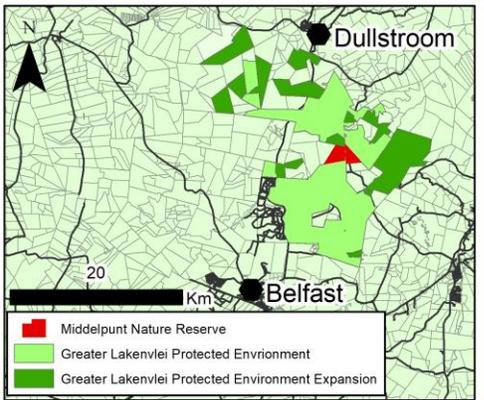
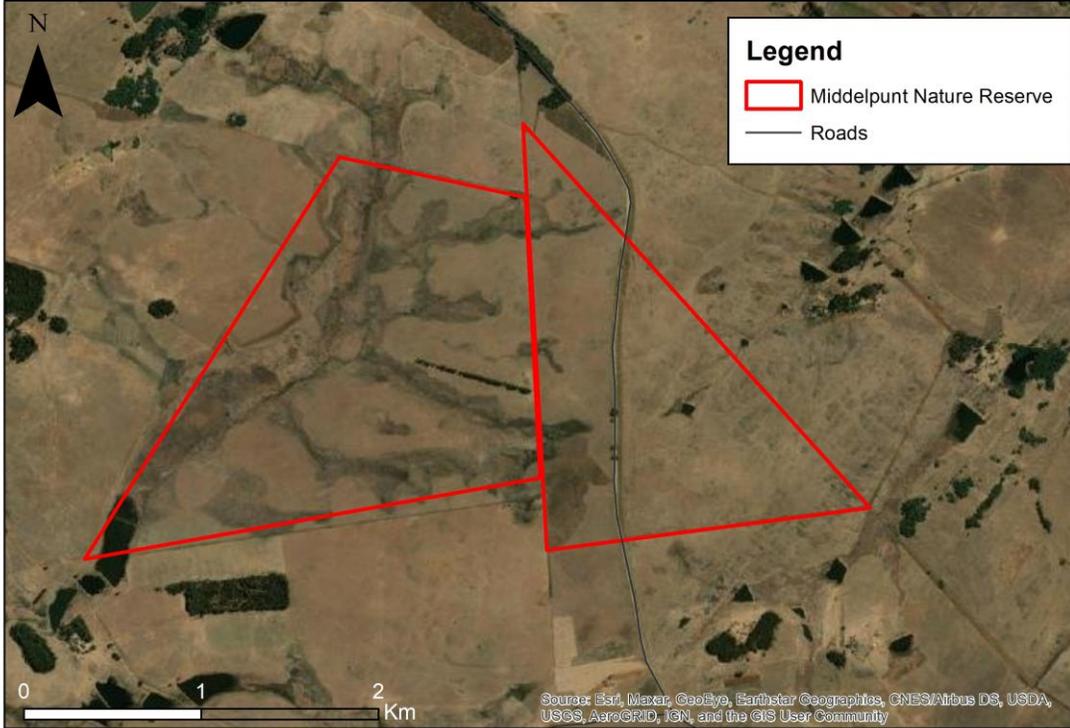
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: PROTECTED AREAS ACT 57 OF 2003

To provide for the protection and conservation of ecologically viable areas representative of South Africa's biological diversity and its natural landscapes and seascapes; for the establishment of a national register of all national, provincial and local protected areas; for the management of those areas in accordance with national norms and standards; for intergovernmental co-operation and public consultation in matters concerning protected areas; for the continued existence, governance and functions of South African National Parks; and for matters in connection therewith.

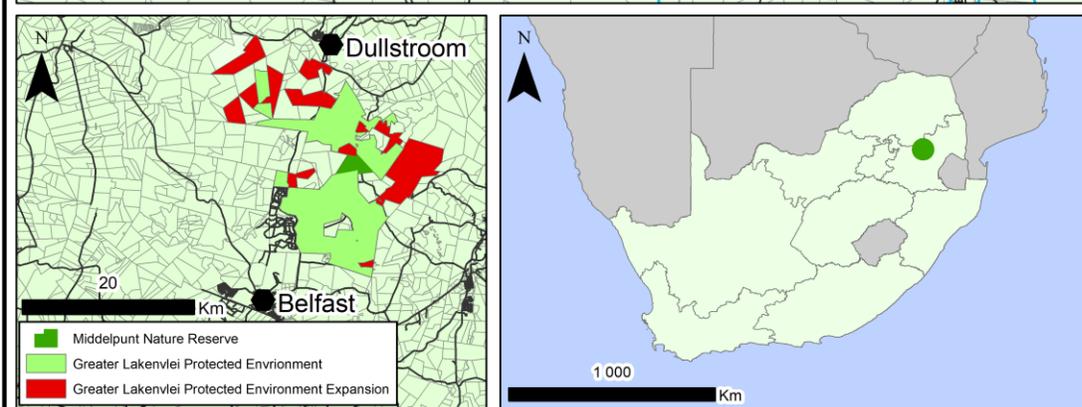
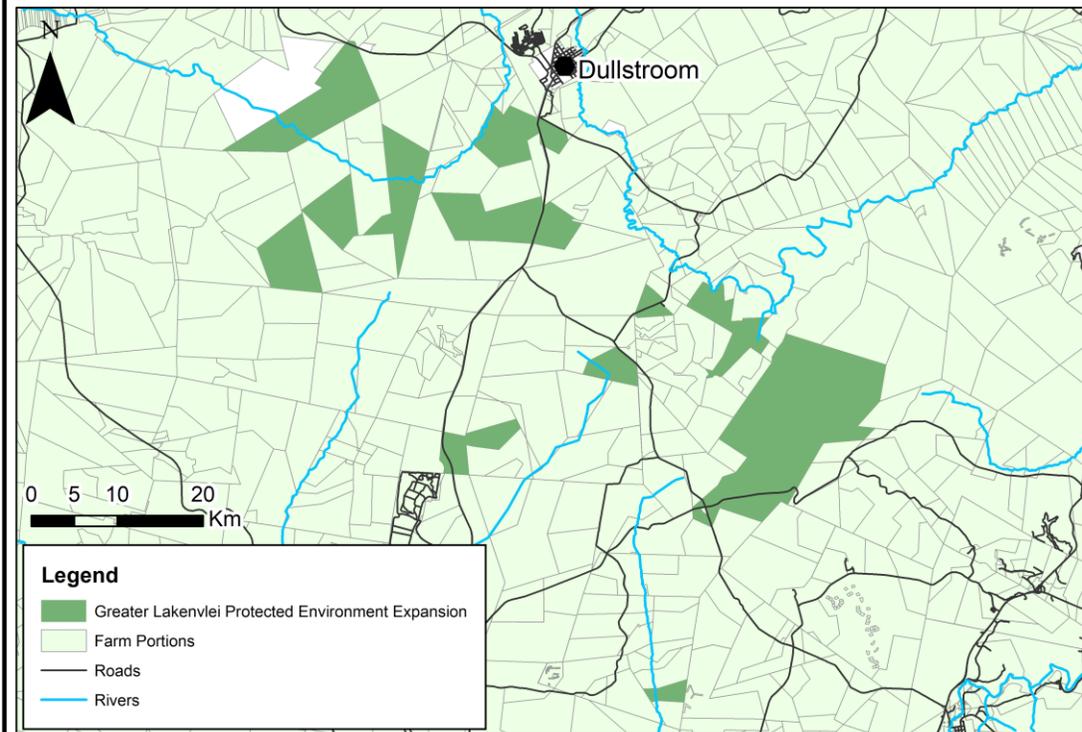
Middelpunt Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site

- **Middelpunt Nature Reserve**
 - Only confirmed breeding site in SA
 - Middelpunt Wetland Trust (1994)
 - BirdLife South Africa (2012)
 - WwF IWG Implementation Plan (2020-2022)
 - Two private landowner groups
 - Declared 14 October 2022
 - 527 ha of grasslands, wetlands and seeps
 - Co-management Agreement
 - Management Plan (2023)

- **Ramsar Site**
 - Ramsar Information Sheet (December 2022)
 - Designation by Ramsar committee (March 2023)
 - International recognition and accountability



Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment expansion



- **Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment**
- Promote sustainable management of biodiversity
- Established in 2017 (14,000 ha)
- GLPE Landowners Association
- Annual meetings and questionnaire
- Expand by >7,000 ha
- Public participation (415 support letters)
- MEC to sign declaration
- Review Management Plan (2023)
- Promote best practice guidelines for habitat management





Wetland Management



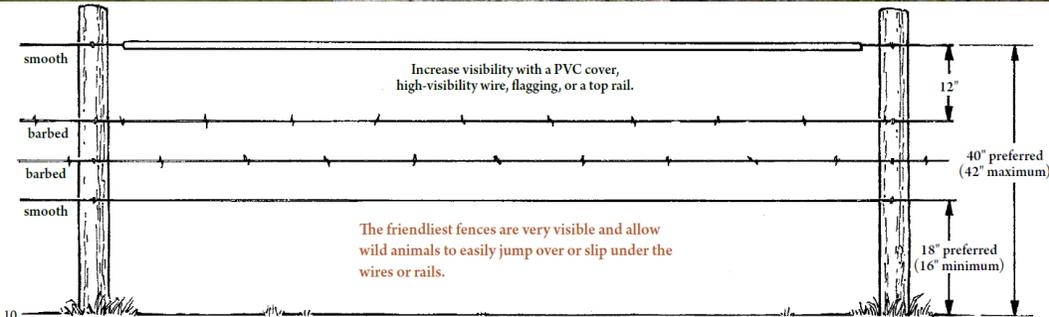
- Professional advice and support from provincial conservation agency.
- Development of management plan, annual plans of operation and annual review of management effectiveness to aid in providing additional guidance/support (grazing plans, rangeland condition assessments, best practice guidelines, technical assistance through GIS/spatial mapping/monitoring).



Grazing and Burning



- Only known breeding site in South Africa
- Privately owned cattle farm



• Threats:

1. Cattle trampling
2. Damaging peat fires

• Solutions:

1. Wildlife-friendly fence (4 km)
2. Cool, Spring burn (first 25 mm of rain)



© Anton Linstrom





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Best Practice Guidelines



- **Population dynamics**
 - Monitoring long-term population trends
 - Population vital rates
- **Distribution**
 - Within South Africa
 - Outside South Africa
- **Movement**
 - Seasonal migration routes
 - Predictors of arrival and departure
- **Habitat requirements**
 - Vegetation
 - Animals – wetland ecosystem engineers





Wetland Stewardship



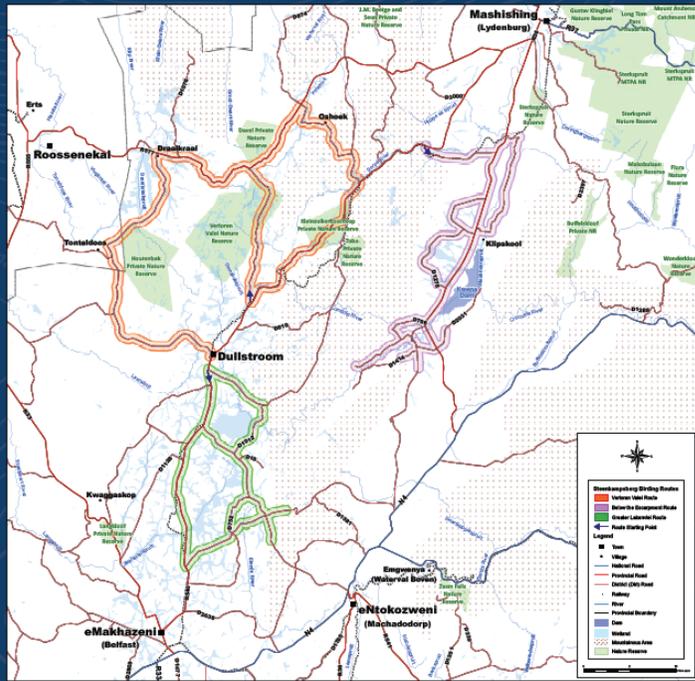
- Development of management interventions (fire-breaks, alien plant eradication, fencing, soil erosion control measures, and/or other ecotourism infrastructure planning and construction).
- Development of ecological and biodiversity monitoring programmes.



Steenkampsberg Birding Routes



Steenkampsberg 3 Birding Routes



Explore the countryside beyond Dullstroom by touring one of three local day birding routes. These routes will take you through some of the most diverse and breathtaking scenery of the Steenkampsberg at the transition of the Grassland and Savanna Biomes. Enjoy nearly 400 species of birds inhabiting wetlands, rocky outcrops, escarpment forests and near-pristine grasslands.

Only vehicles with 4x4 capabilities and high clearance should be used to drive these routes.

Scan the QR Code for:



Help us continue to protect the Steenkampsberg by donating to the White-winged Flufftail Conservation Project at BirdLife South Africa. Use 'WwF_InitialSurname' as your reference.



- Signboards erected in Dullstroom and along routes
- Dynamic QR code – 280 scans over 6 months
- Information resources housed on BLSA webpage
- Local business sponsorship
- **Extrinsic value:** provide financial incentive for landowners
- **Intrinsic value:** appreciation for biodiversity





Ntsikeni Nature Reserve Community Project



- 9,200 ha, Strategic Water Source Area, Ramsar, threatened and endemic bird species
- Habitat degradation due to limited resources and community pressures
- Management authority and local stakeholder support
- Projects related to **eco-tourism, habitat restoration, and reserve infrastructure**
- **Progress (2023):**
 - Community bird guide (monitoring, biosecurity & guiding)
 - Ntsikeni Lodge (maintenance & promotion)
 - Communal grazing management (Meat Naturally)



© Siphon Ndebele

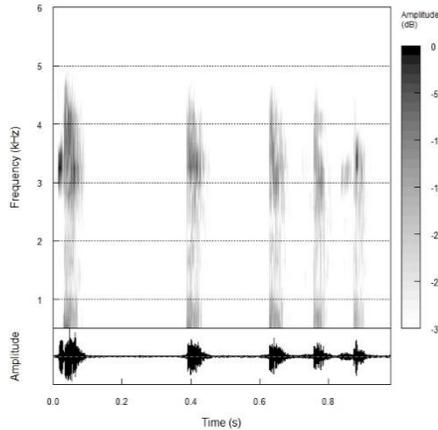




Research and Monitoring



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Wetland Rehabilitation

- Preferential access to public works programmes (such as Working for Water or Working for Wetlands).
- Preferential selection by corporates for habitat and biodiversity offsets.



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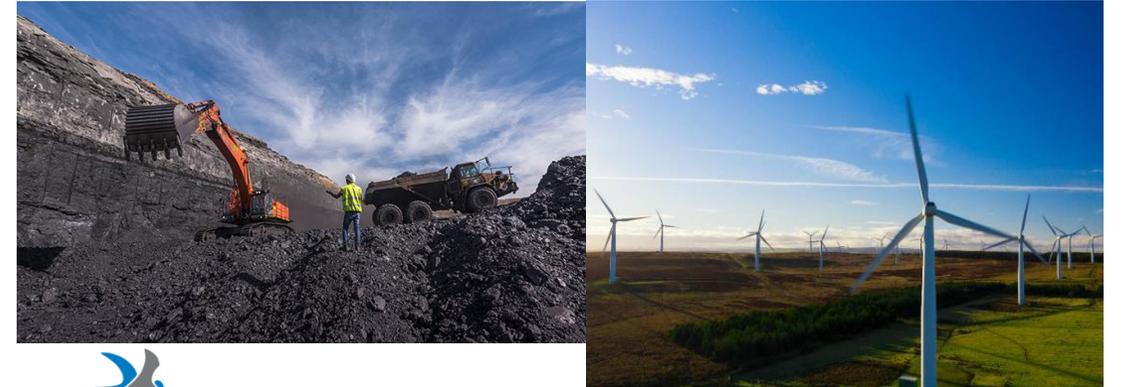




Wetland Policy and Advocacy



- Guidance around what legal protections apply to privately-owned protected areas and the processes through which landowners can oppose development applications and decisions with potential negative impacts on these sites.
- Access to BLSA resources on environmental impact assessment commentary.



HOME WHO WE ARE ▾ WHAT WE DO ▾ BIRDING ▾ MEDIA AND RESOURCES ▾

Media and Resources

Policy and Advocacy

Home / What We Do / Policy and Advocacy / Media and Resources

+ Position Statements

+ Environmental Legislation

- Guidance on Engaging in Environmental Impact Assessment Processes

[A Guide to Effective Engagement in Environmental Impact Assessment Processes](#)

[Effective Engagement in Environmental Impact Assessments – Checklist](#)

[Effective Engagement in Environmental Impact Assessment – FAQs](#)





African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement



- AEWA – an independent international treaty developed by the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Migratory Species
- White-winged Flufftails listed on Appendix 1 – highest level that necessitates protection
- South Africa became a signatory to AEWA in 2002

TECHNICAL SERIES

No. 19 (CMS)
No. 38 (AEWA)



International Single Species Action Plan
for the Conservation of the
White-winged Flufftail

Sarothrura ayresi





Wetland Awareness

- Recognition and marketing exposure through media networks.

BirdLife South Africa
27 October 2022 · 📍

#ProtectingSpecies: Middelpunt Nature Reserve officially declared!

Middelpunt Nature Reserve was officially declared on the 14 October 2022! We thank the landowners, Dullstroom Trout Farm and Elands Valley Guest Farm, and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency for their support of the declaration. Middelpunt Wetland is the only confirmed breeding site of the globally Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail in South Africa and hosts a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. Many downstream users benefit from this 10,000-year-old, peat-based wetland in the Lakenvei area. Nature reserve status will help ensure that this crucial site is safeguarded and stewarded for the benefit of birds and people for many years to come.

We would also like to thank and acknowledge Middelpunt Wetland Trust, Conservation Outcomes, Eskom through the Ingula Partnership and the many individuals who have contributed to the research and conservation of White-winged Flufftail.

Map: Middelpunt Nature Reserve, demarcated by the green outline, spans 500 ha and encompasses the main body of Middelpunt Wetland along with lateral seeps (Mervyn Lötter).



Kyle Walker, Carina Pienaar and 156 others · 16 comments · 16 shares



MIDDELPUNT NATURE RESERVE



A male White-winged Flufftail caught on motion-detecting camera at Middelpunt Wetland. The bird, a male, is displaying. Credit Kyle Lloyd

It's official!

Listed as globally Critically Endangered, the White-winged Flufftail has an estimated population size of fewer than 250 mature individuals and it is known to breed only in Ethiopia and South Africa. Middelpunt Wetland, near Dullstroom in Mpumalanga, is the only confirmed breeding site in South Africa. Declaring Middelpunt Wetland a private nature reserve was therefore considered a top priority by the White-winged Flufftail International Working Group.

Middelpunt Nature Reserve becomes South Africa's 29th Ramsar Site

Gugu Mhlongu and CSI & Nature Conservationist, Tim Neary speak to Wetland Conservation Project Manager at BirdLife South Africa, Dr Kyle J. Lloyd on some of the challenges around wetlands in light of The Middelpunt Nature Reserve, in Mpumalanga wetland of international importance by the international Convention on Wetlands organisation Ramsar.

Listen on Apple Podcasts Google Podcasts



Weekend Breakfast with Gugs Mhlongu

Middelpunt Nature Reserve becomes South Africa's 29th Ramsar Site

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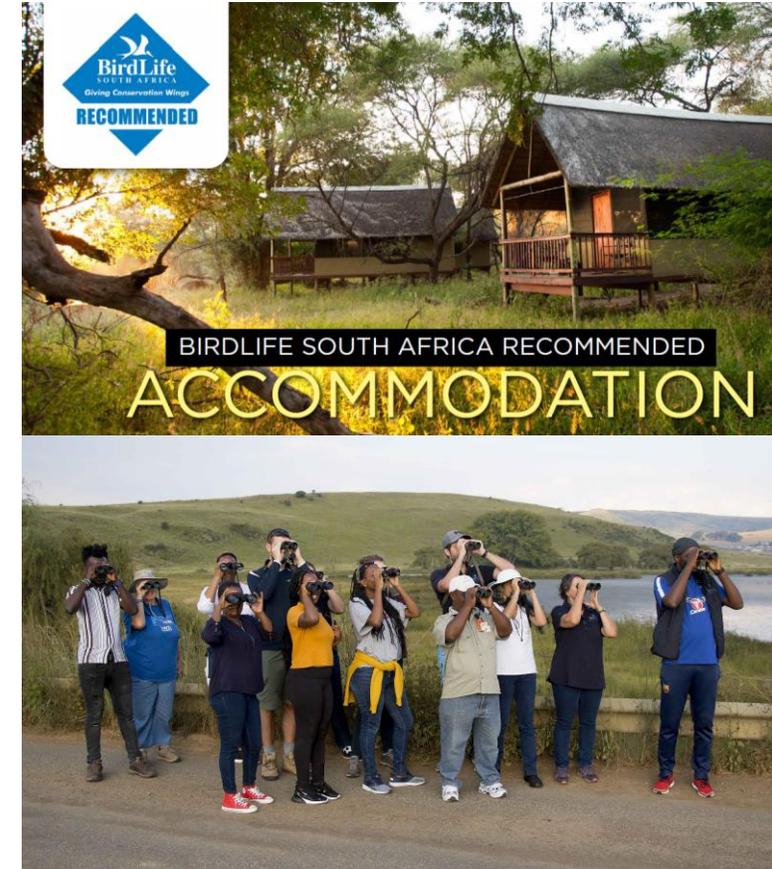
SOUTH AFRICA
Giving Conservation Wings



Wetland Incentives



- The value of the land may be deducted from the landowner's taxable income (s37D tax benefit).*
- Municipal rates exclusion for the conserved area, as provided for in the Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act 2004.
- All/some legal and publication costs covered.
- Facilitated access to external donor funding.
- Skills development and employment opportunities (e.g., bird guide training, training in fire and alien plant management).





Thank you!



The Ingula Partnership



forestry, fisheries & the environment
Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



صندوق محمد بن زايد
للمحافظة على الكائنات الحية
The Mohamed bin Zayed SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

