

# The face of South Africa

Photograph by Mike Holmes

Organized birding in the Eastern Cape is celebrating its 60th anniversary from 1 to 8 May this year. What is now BirdLife Eastern Cape was founded on 21 April 1950 as the Eastern Cape Wild Bird Society, a branch of the then South African Ornithological Society. The committee's first chairman was the late Cecily Niven, the daughter of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick.

One of the successes of the society was getting the maturation ponds at the Cape Recife sewerage works declared a nature reserve. This area has now become a favourite birding spot of the Society, and quite a few rarities have cropped up there.

The club is now stronger than ever, and even more involved in matters of conservation and education.

An exciting eight-day programme has been organized to celebrate its Diamond Anniversary, with a bird-ringing course, a pelagic trip and bush outings. Amongst the speakers at the evening functions are the executive director of BLSA, Mark Anderson, and Warwick Tarboton, internationally known birding author. Phil Hockey of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology will present the Cecily Niven Memorial Lecture at the gala dinner on 8 May.

For more details and to register, go to [www.birdlife.org.za](http://www.birdlife.org.za).

Photographer Mike Holmes caught the birding action at right off Port St Francis. He says what started as a quiet, relaxing fishing outing was soon transformed into frantic action as numerous "bait balls" arrived accompanied by Cape Gannets, dolphins, Brydes and Minke whales.

