

## **Marisa Louw – Conservation and Avian Rehabilitation Profile**

### **Building healthy wetland ecosystems through education, stewardship, and targeted wildlife intervention**

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### **Professional Summary**

Marisa Louw is a conservation practitioner, avian rehabilitator, educator, and communications professional with more than four decades of practical experience in bird rescue and rehabilitation, and more than thirty years of experience in organisational leadership, stakeholder engagement, training facilitation, and strategic communications.



She serves as Founder and Executive Director of Parys Wetland Avian Development and Emergency Rescue (Parys WADER), where she leads the development of a structured avian rehabilitation, community education, and environmental stewardship programme in the Northern Free State.

Her rehabilitation experience began during childhood through the rescue and care of injured birds and has evolved into structured, compliance-based rehabilitation work conducted in collaboration with veterinarians, falconers, and other permitted wildlife rehabilitators. Her work includes avian rescue, triage, stabilisation, husbandry, nutritional management, rehabilitation planning, conditioning, release assessment, biosecurity management, and community education.

Alongside her conservation work, Marisa brings extensive experience from corporate, public, and non-profit sectors in communications, programme coordination, stakeholder engagement, governance support, and operational management.

### **Rehabilitation Experience**

#### **Early Practical Experience (1980s–2018)**

- Began caring for injured birds from a young age.
- First documented rehabilitation case involved a Marsh Owl during the late 1980s, cared for during recovery following veterinary treatment.
- Continued informal rescue, stabilisation, rehabilitation and release activities over several decades.
- Developed practical experience in bird handling, behavioural observation, stress reduction, nutritional support and recovery management.

## **Structured Rehabilitation Practice (2019–Present)**

- Conducts rehabilitation activities within a structured and compliance-based framework.
- Works closely with veterinarians, licensed falconers, and other permitted wildlife rehabilitators.
- Conducts avian rescue, intake assessment and triage.
- Implements emergency stabilisation and supportive care plans.
- Oversees species-appropriate husbandry and nutritional management.
- Coordinates rehabilitation planning, conditioning and release-readiness assessments.
- Applies biosecurity, disease-prevention and intake management procedures.
- Maintains rehabilitation records and operational reporting systems.
- Supports community education relating to responsible wildlife intervention.

## **Professional Experience**

### **Parys Wetland Avian Development and Emergency Rescue (Parys WADER)**

Founder and Executive Director

September 2025 – Present

- Leads daily rehabilitation operations within a regulated and compliance-based framework.
- Develops operational procedures, intake policies and rehabilitation protocols.
- Coordinates volunteers, rehabilitation networks and stakeholder engagement activities.
- Oversees biosecurity, operational systems and rehabilitation support processes.
- Leads community education and public awareness initiatives focused on wildlife welfare and wetland stewardship.
- Supports governance, strategic planning, communications and fundraising initiatives.

### **Multi-Disciplinary Freelancer**

2011 – 2025

- Strategic communications
- Stakeholder engagement
- Content development
- Programme coordination
- Public awareness campaigns
- Executive support

### **Executive Assistant and Executive Support Professional**

1996 – 2011

- Supported executive leadership teams across multiple industries.
- Developed expertise in organisational management, communications, stakeholder liaison and operational coordination.

## Training and Facilitation Experience

### Facilitator for the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA)

2019-2023

- Presented programmes in Business Writing, Creative Writing, Project Management, Event Management, Graphic Design and Web Design.
- Developed and facilitated adult learning and skills-development initiatives.
- Built a strong foundation in education, mentoring and knowledge transfer that continues to inform community conservation work.

## Community Education Focus

Community education forms a central part of Marisa's conservation approach. Her work focuses on improving public understanding of responsible wildlife intervention, wetland ecosystems, biodiversity stewardship, and practical conservation action through awareness initiatives, educational content, volunteer engagement and stakeholder communication.

## Education and Professional Development

- Studied Zoology and Botany at university level (1990s).
- Undertook tertiary studies in Communications (2000s).
- Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology: Comprehensive Bird Biology (Current)
- Member: International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC).
- Committed to continuing professional development through webinars, conferences, workshops, online learning programmes, professional reading and independent study.
- Additional Practical Training: Apprentice Falconer under Gert Pretorius of the Free State Falconry Club (Current).

## Areas of Expertise

- Avian rescue, triage and stabilisation
- Wildlife rehabilitation operations
- Avian husbandry and nutritional management
- Rehabilitation planning and release assessment
- Behavioural observation and welfare monitoring
- Biosecurity and disease-prevention procedures
- Volunteer coordination and mentoring
- Community education and responsible wildlife intervention
- Wetland bird conservation
- Strategic communications and stakeholder engagement
- Governance, reporting and operational systems
- Conservation programme development and implementation