



**Above:** Prince's Grant – guest swimming pool, club house and luxurious rooms. Cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

house projects half-out of the estate's boundary fence. The fence-line seems to run through the cottage. A plaque identifies it as the first building on the property. Originally constructed seventy or eighty years ago by Babu Bodasing, an indentured cane cutter from India, the structure has historical status.

Other historical evidence survives in existing names. The 16th hole is called "Paddy Field". Originally a marshy area alongside the lagoon, Babu Bodasing planted it with rice decades ago. The estate was previously a portion of the farm Hyde Park. Its first owner, George Wilson Prince, had acquired the farm in 1856 through a Deed of Grant from her Majesty Queen Victoria (hence the name 'Prince's Grant'). Shortly thereafter, Babu Bodasing took ownership and developed it as a sugarcane farm.

Today there is no evidence of sugarcane, only natural biodiversity. Nowhere is this more evident than walking alongside the lagoon's riparian zone. Our birders' impressive knowledge becomes plain, identifying birds half hidden in dense foliage, and also by their calls.

The day's 'bird list' steadily grows, however African Finfoot remains elusive. Eventually the birders pronounce their verdict, "The tide's not right. We're not going to see it today. What about something to eat at the lodge?"

The day's birding tally is counted over a hearty breakfast. It's only a fifth of 240 known birds on Prince's Grant's list, and not typical of the group's success. Unfortunately Wildside has proven to be a distraction to our birders usual diligence.

Behind the table hangs a photograph showing Prince's Grant in 1993. It's a bleak windswept scene, hills denuded of any growth. We comment that it's incredible what's been achieved in 19 years.

Mike McNamara, Prince's Grants marketing manager agrees, emphasizing the estate's ongoing commitment to the environment. He says, "It was visionary of the developers to 'go entirely indigenous' at that time. The estate's vision forward remains that conservation is the right thing to do."

He continues, "Interestingly, we are finding international guests are increas-

ingly enquiring if resorts are 'green'. That's why Prince's Grant is working towards international environmental certification. In many ways, it's the normal progression of the 'indigenous' philosophy Prince's Grant has always had."

The birding folk are plotting strategy for their next excursion. We leave the table with farewells and best wishes for spotting the elusive Finfoot. A confident shout follows us, "Don't worry we'll locate him the next time. Just call us the Fabulous Finfoot Finders." **W**

### Princes's Grant

**Where:** 45 minutes north of Durban and 20 km from Ballito.

**Rates:** The Lodge offers four star accommodation with 15 rooms. De Luxe Twin/King – R905; Luxury Twin/King – R1005; Family rooms with King beds and sleeper couches for children – R905.

**Contact:** The Lodge Tel: (032) 482 0005 Fax: (032) 482 0040 e-mail: [pglodge@saol.com](mailto:pglodge@saol.com) Website: [www.princesgrant.co.za](http://www.princesgrant.co.za)