



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

A report was posted on SA Birdnet in July 2013 by a renowned birder claiming to have seen two species in north western Namibia new to Namibia (there was a hint of a third) and indeed new to the southern African subregion. This person also claimed to have visited the site where Angola Cave Chat is known to occur and to have made an overnight foray into Angola to see Swierstra's Spurfowl.

These last claims set alarm bells ringing as some who had seen the Angola Cave Chat were adamant that the vehicle purportedly used could not possibly have accessed the terrain and also that it is not possible to reach the area where Swierstra's Spurfowl occurs in Angola on a single overnight trip unless there is another population of these birds a lot further to the south. This makes the

standing with the remote control unit in his hand but with nothing to control. He rushed over to the site of the accident. The N\$ 30 000 aeroplane he just flown so proudly was in a thousand pieces; scattered all over the ground. A few metres away lay the cause of the destruction - a dead eagle, later identified as a Wahlberg's Eagle.



This incident raises the following questions:- Was this an unfortunate instance of the eagle being in the wrong place at the wrong time? Or did the bird attack the aeroplane, failing fatally? Was it protecting its territory against another large “raptor”? Was it perhaps protecting its nearby nest from this strange intruder?



This incident can only be described as an accident, an unfortunate event, yet it led to the destruction of both a large raptor and an expensive model aeroplane. A bizarre incident indeed.

A New Owl in the Swakop River

Eckart Demasius
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One of my birding friend ladies made my hectic working day by sending me a number of photographs of a newly hatched Spotted Eagle-Owl.



© Christa Britz/Riana Swart - 30 October 2012

At the same time however I was as frustrated as could be as I was so tied up with work commitments that it was impossible to even think of asking them to take me to see the owl chick.



© Christa Britz/Riana Swart - 14 November 2012

A week later, to make my mouth water, so to speak, the two ladies send me more photographs of the chick.



© Christa Britz/Riana Swart – 21 November 2012

So I phoned Christa and pleaded with her to take me to the owls; I so much wanted to see them myself. Arrangements were made for Saturday 24 November 2012. The ladies were picked up and we left for the owl site. (No need to ask me where it is – I have forgotten, sorry).

Soon Riana’s eagle eyes found the chick – what amazing eyesight this lady has. The chick blended in so well with the rocks in the background that I would not have seen the little owl.



© Eckart Demasius – 24 November 2012

By now it had already left the nest, I presume for more secure shelter. The other egg was still lying in the nest and tracks of hyaena were too close to the nest for comfort.

I climbed up the rock face for a better view and with the aid of some excellent Leica optics and a decent zoom some close-up shots were taken.



© Eckart Demasius – 24 November 2012

During all this time we were watched by one of the parents, equally well blended into the the surroundings.



© Eckart Demasius – 24 November 2012

Soon it flew off; we also went on and I still managed to get a nice close view of the adult bird.



© Eckart Demasius – 24 November 2012

At home I compared my photographs with those of Christa and Riana and it was significant to see how fast the chick was growing. This prompted me to change all my plans for the next weekend and to rather secure another visit to the owls.

Kindly the ladies were obliging enough to take me along again and so we set off early on Saturday 1 December.

Once again the chick had moved its location but as nothing escapes Riana's eagle eyes we soon found it sitting on a rock ledge along the river bank.



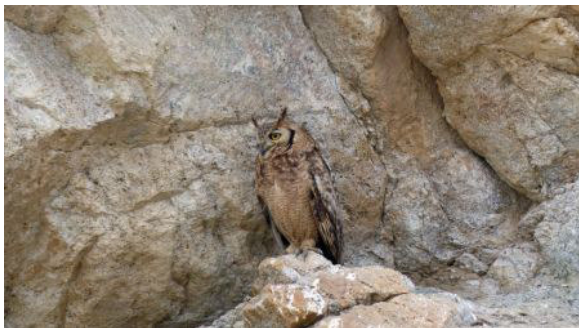
© Eckart Demasius - 1 December 2012

The Leica optics did their trick again and more close-up shots were taken.



© Eckart Demasius - 1 December 2012

Yes, as previously, the adult bird kept a watchful eye on us, whilst being dive bombed by a Rock Kestrel. This was rather strange behaviour by the kestrel; somehow it would have made more sense to me had it tried its luck on the owl chick !!



© Eckart Demasius - 1 December 2012

In my mind I was already making plans for another visit the following weekend, when an e-mail reached me informing me that the owl was now sitting in a tree (that was on the Wednesday) and thereafter, it was not seen again.

So all in all it took the owl just more than five weeks from hatching to fledging. Let us hope that it does well, we need many more of them around.

What else can we expect to find in Namibia?

Neil Thomson

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There are a number of species occurring in neighbouring countries the ranges of which continue just over the borders into Namibia indicating that there must be suitable habitat for these species in this country. Most of these species occur along our northern borders and examples of these are Grey Kestrel, Cinderella Waxbill, Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush and Red-necked Spurrow. There are others, the known ranges of which stop just short of Namibia's borders, and, as some of these occur in the same habitat as those mentioned above there must be suitable habitat for these species in Namibia too. There have recently been unconfirmed reports of Yellow-bellied Waxbill just south of the Kunene River (see *Lanioturdus* 41(1) and 45(4)) and likewise an unconfirmed report of Livingstone's Flycatcher on the Okavango River (see *Lanioturdus* 44(4)). Levillant's Cisticola has been reported on the Namibian side of the Orange River in the extreme south of the country (see *Lanioturdus* 39(1)). In 2010 African Crowned Eagle was recorded for the first time in Namibia (see *Lanioturdus* 43(4)).