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Editorial

In this issue I am delighted to be able to publish articles on two species new to Namibia, one of which is in fact new to the southern African sub-region and is believed to be resident in the far north west of Namibia.

In May 2012 Wessel Swanepoel discovered a population of Angola Cave Chats on the southern slopes of the Zebra Mountains west of Swartbooisdrif in the far northwest of Namibia. This species was thought to be an Angolan endemic but has now been found south of the border. Please take note of Wessel's request that he be informed of any further sightings of this species in order to facilitate his research into this species in Namibia.

The second species new to Namibia which we feature in this issue is the Lesser Yellowlegs seen by Simon Woolley at the Rundu Sewage

No of times counted: 72
 No of times past 1% population (= unknown):?
 Maximum count: 120 at Mahango Game
 Reserve on 1 July 2005 and 7 February 2007
 Past 1% population at: Nowhere

A Weekend at Omandumba

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All photographs in this article are © Neil Thomson

Trend analysis

Number of sites: 4
 Number of observed counts: 48
 Number of missing counts: 24
 Total number of counts: 72

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

Site	Number	%
Mahango Game Res.923	79.0	79.0
Shamvura	131	11.2

Overall slope: Strong increase ($p < 0.01$)
 1.1528 ± 0.0326

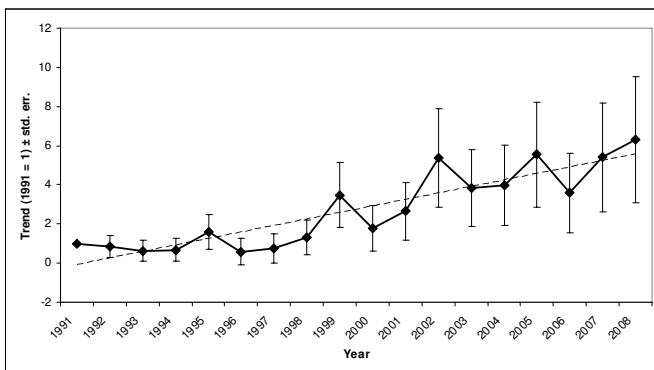


Figure 6: Trend of African Jacana population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

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 Wetlands International. 2006. *Waterbird Population Estimates – Fourth Edition*. S. Delany and D. Scott (Eds.), Wetlands International, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

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Normally I never win anything but Gudrun's daughter, Illona, put my name on a competition entry form at the Tourism Expo in mid 2011 and shortly thereafter I was notified that I had won a camping weekend at Omandumba, some 50 km west of Omaruru in the Erongo Mountains. We deemed mid winter a bit cold for camping but when the weather started to warm up we decided to make use of this prize at the beginning of October (before it became unbearably hot in this land of contrasts in which we live).

The journey there was uneventful but extremely raptor poor with only two raptors (a pair of Tawny Eagles) seen in the course of the entire three hour trip. On arrival we set up camp and started our birdlist ticking off a few species before darkness fell.



Omandumba in the vicinity of the campsite

The resident pair of White-browed Sparrow-Weavers seemed to be habituated to humans and soon visited us at our campsite, approaching us fairly closely while looking for anything edible which might have been dropped. This was an interesting pair of birds – the female had been ringed and the male was missing his right foot and the remaining

portion of the leg above the missing foot seemed to be considerably thicker than is normal. This, however, did not seem to disadvantage the bird in any way – he was agile on the ground and when perched in a tree he seemed to be holding on with the left foot while using the right leg as a prop to help him balance.

The next morning reveille was courtesy of the local covey of Hartlaub's Spurfowl with a descant sung by a Rockrunner. Although it sounded as if the spurfowl were just outside the tent we were unable to find them when we scanned the nearby rocky outcrop from where the sound seemed to emanate. Shortly thereafter, however, the early morning tranquility was shattered by a pair of low flying Egyptian Geese honking their way down the valley. These were the only waterbirds we saw the whole weekend.

Having been given permission to ring birds on the property we set up some snaptraps and mistnets and soon began catching birds. The only bird we caught in a snaptrap was a grey morph Mountain Wheatear which seems to be a lot less common in Namibia than the various black forms. Later Gudrun saw a white-bellied black Mountain Wheatear which is one of the less common black forms.



Grey morph Mountain Wheatear

Around midday we watched two Verreaux's Eagles gliding above us and when one of them (obviously a juvenile bird) suddenly started taking evasive action we wondered whether

this was a juvenile which had strayed into an adult pair's territory or perhaps even the offspring of resident adults which had decided that it was time for junior to find its own territory. As the birds disappeared behind a rocky outcrop we were unable to observe the outcome of this interplay. Raptors proved to be scarce at Omandumba as these were the only ones seen there apart from what appeared to be a resident pair of Rock Kestrels.

As the daytime temperatures were approaching 30°C and we had mistnets set up we could not go on long walks as we had to check our nets regularly to prevent entangled birds from overheating so birding was restricted to the immediate vicinity of the campsite. I was extremely excited, on approaching one of the nets, to see that we had caught a Carp's Tit which would have been a ringing lifer for me. I was bitterly disappointed however to see that another ringer had beaten me to this bird which was sporting a shiny metal ring. Perusal of the SAFRING website indicated that only 75 of these birds had ever been ringed but that this was the 13th recapture/control so it was a worthy second prize. I did get a ringing lifer shortly thereafter in the form of a Cardinal Woodpecker. I had read about the stiff tail feathers of woodpeckers which are used as props when they are hanging onto trees and doing what woodpeckers do but I must say I was quite surprised to find out just how stiff and hard these retrices actually are.



Carp's Tit

Having heard a Pearl-spotted Owlet calling we set up another mistnet in some dense vegetation in the vicinity from where the call was coming and with the aid of a recording of the call it was only a matter of minutes before we had the bird in the net giving Gudrun her second ever owl to ring.

On the Sunday morning Gudrun got a sighting of the Hartlaub's Spurfowl in this dense vegetation which gave her a birding lifer for the trip.

Late on the Saturday afternoon we caught three Rosy-faced Lovebirds which I managed to free from the nets and ring without having my fingers mutilated although I was not quite so lucky where the rather aggressive Acacia Pied Barbets we caught were concerned.

Amongst the other birds we caught were a number of Dusky Sunbirds. It was interesting to see that the orange pectoral patch of the males is not actually on the wing but underneath it. Whether the bird is able to make these feathers stand up so that they appear to be on the leading edge of the wing or whether it lifts them over the edge of the wing with its bill for display purposes I do not know.

I have seen a similar (yellow) pectoral patch under the wing of the stunning male Malachite Sunbird.



Male Dusky Sunbird showing pectoral patch under the wing

All in all we ringed 48 birds of 15 species and recaptured five birds ringed by (an)other ringer(s) in a day and a half of ringing. We also put together a birdlist of 53 species seen or heard which included five of Namibia's near endemic species – Monteiro's Hornbill, Carp's Tit, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Rockrunner and the White-tailed Shrike *Lanioturdus turquatus*, emblem of the Namibia Bird Club. Among the birds heard but not seen were Barn Owl and Freckled Nightjar.

The journey back to Windhoek was equally uneventful and equally raptor poor with once again only two raptors (this time a Black-shouldered Kite and a White-backed Vulture) seen on the entire route.

Report on 2012 Namibian Ringers Get-Together

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(All photographs in this article were provided by Jessica Kemper ©.)

I was asked, as a first time attendee, to convey my impressions on this year's Ringers Get-Together held at Farm Wiese east of Rehoboth.

It was such a wonderful experience to join you



Male Dusky Sunbird showing pectoral patch visible above folded wing