



LANIOTURDUS

VOL. 46 (2) 2013

May 2013

www.namibiabirdclub.org

CONTENTS

THOMSON N	Editorial	1
DEMASIUS E	An Early Morning Hunting Episode	3
MIDDENDORFF G	Chairperson's Report	5
THOMSON N	Cattle Egrets in Namibia	6
DEMASIUS E	A Different Kind of Birding: Birds on the Stamps of Namibia : Additions to Namibia's 5 th Definitive Series	7
FRIEDERICH G	A Zambian Birding Experience – Part 2	9
SWANEPOEL W	Red-eyed Dove <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i> in Namibia : New Records and Range Extensions	16
DEMASIUS E	An Interesting Nest Site	18
THOMSON N	Short Notes and Interesting Observations	19
NIDDRIE R	Red-chested Cuckoo in Windhoek	26
KOLBERG H	Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations 9 : Waders and Shorebirds – Part 2	26

DEMASIUS E	Rufous-cheeked Nightjars at the Coast	31
	ATLAS UPDATE	32
	RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS	33

Editorial

The Namibia Bird Club is often accused of being the “Windhoek Bird Club” as most of our activities are centred around Windhoek. With this in mind the chairperson organized a camping long weekend at Farm Eileen to the west of Omaruru. This outing was attended by ten people including two of our Swakopmund members, Mark Boorman and Sandra Dantu. The weekend was used to atlas three pentads and to do a bit of ringing. The morning walks in Omaruru were widely publicized on various radio stations in the hope of attracting some local residents to join us and perhaps to become members of the bird club. This turned out to be wishful thinking as there was absolutely no response from Omaruru residents and nobody at all turned up at the publicized meeting points. No one can now say that we have not tried to involve others from outside of Windhoek.

After many above average rainy seasons it looks as if drought conditions have returned to central Namibia. I have been measuring

A Zambian Birding Experience Trip 3-6 July 2012 (Part 2)

Günther Friederich
bateleur@iway.na

with input from
Nick Buys and Katy Sharpe
tutwasafaris@mweb.com.na

Jutta Surén

All photographs in this article are © Jutta Surén and Günther Friederich

In Part 1, a report was given about the first organized trip to develop a birding route into southwestern Zambia. This trip was led by “Caprivi Birding Safaris/Tutwa Tourism and Travel”, with three participants from the Namibia Bird Club. Nick Buys and Katy Sharpe were the guides; the participants were Günther Friederich (author of this article), Jutta Surén and Werner von Maltzahn.

Tuesday 3rd July 2012:

Our party departed from Shackleton Lodge at about 13h00, taking the road towards Livingstone. After some kilometers we reached the turnoff, signposted “Muchile IBA ...”, taking us further into the wilderness of southwestern Zambia. This was the “dry road”, a two spoor, much of it a hard, sandy track, through open savanna. The “dry road” is used to access the area in dry conditions; when wet, another access track has to be used. Much of this area gets flooded and there is no way through the “cotton soil”. The area is quite open, consisting of Purple-pod Terminalia (*Terminalia prunioides*) with mixed Acacia, Makalani Palm (*Hyphaene petersiana*) at places, (therefore we had African Palm-Swift), some big Baobab, (*Adansonia digitata*), also Giant Euphorbia (*Euphorbia ingens*) on termite mounds and small Mopane shrubs (*Colophospermum mopane*).



Giant Euphorbia



This open savanna was sometimes interspersed with large-tree thickets, which we investigated for birds. Here we found Meves’s Starling and Black-headed Oriole, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, all lifers for me and

some others. On a cattle track I noticed Double-banded Sandgrouse. We had to stop for those, Jutta and Werner insisted on following them. Cape Turtle-Doves were aplenty, which caused Nick to remark that he wished he'd met somebody to whom this bird was a special.

Although we encountered very little human activity at this time, there were signs of their presence, like the sand well we encountered. In a shallow vlei, a well was dug and fenced off with thorn bushes. The water was about 3 m deep. The inside was divided into two parts with poles, presumably for cattle to access the one part, humans the other. However this did not divide the water, which was utilized from the same source, making it all murky. The birds however, did not mind. We encountered Rattling Cisticola, Red-billed Firefinch, Doves, Green-winged Pytilia, Southern Black Tit, Black-backed Puffback and others.



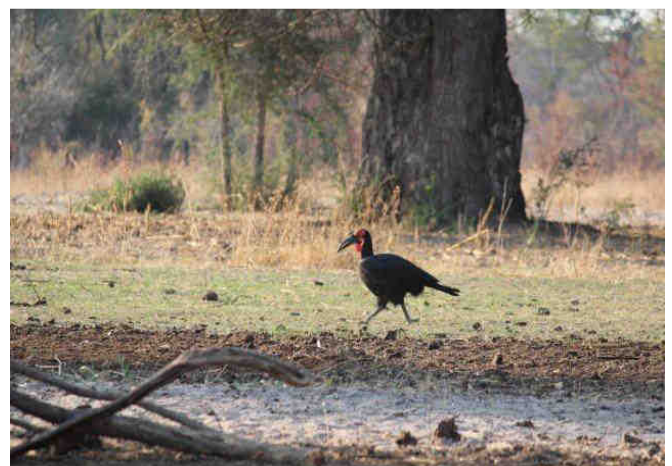
Local water point

Further on in a thicket we found Crested Barbet, which I had seen only during February 2008 in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng, RSA. Other birds: Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird; Cardinal and Bearded Woodpecker; Chinspot Batis; Tropical Boubou.

We eventually entered the Mopane Savanna, where the Black-cheeked Lovebirds were apparently making their living. Some Mopane trees were huge, slender; we also passed through thickets. We reached a village, which was surrounded by some open fields, cultivated for Mahangu (Pearl millet). We stopped there to scan the area. At last, in the

trees: Black-cheeked Lovebird calling. Excitement all around; we followed the birds to get a better view. There – on the track – about 15 birds feeding on grass seeds, and soil?? Magnificent. Photo taking devices into action! No! Why not? All left in the vehicles! So – go and get them! By the time we got back, the birds were ready to depart and did so, without giving us a chance. In the meantime Werner tried to get a count of the birds. They flew all over the place. I took position under a Manketti tree (*Schinziophyton rautanenii*) in the open field, focusing the camera onto an Acacia, waiting for a chance. But the birds did not do me the honours, nor did any of my companions manage to flush some of the birds into that tree. Tough luck, but we would have more of them later. Werner's count totaled about 54 birds.

Carrying on, we encountered our first Dark Chanting Goshawk on a Baobab tree. Passing through another village, we had Black Flycatcher, the first Helmeted Guineafowl for this trip and another kind of self-domesticated wild fowl. The only ones of this kind I had seen before were during the December 2002 Solar Eclipse trip to the Kwando River in the Caprivi, Singalamwe area. We had birded the border with Zambia and just inside Zambia we had seen them. Six Southern Ground-Hornbills wandered through this village, undisturbed by people. Nice to see.



Self – domesticated Wild Fowl

Late that afternoon we collected our local guide at a village; she directed us through

non-tracked floodplains and bushes towards our bush camp at the Muchile River, where we arrived at 17h00. There was no need to cross the floodplains with Mokoro dugouts, everything was dry.

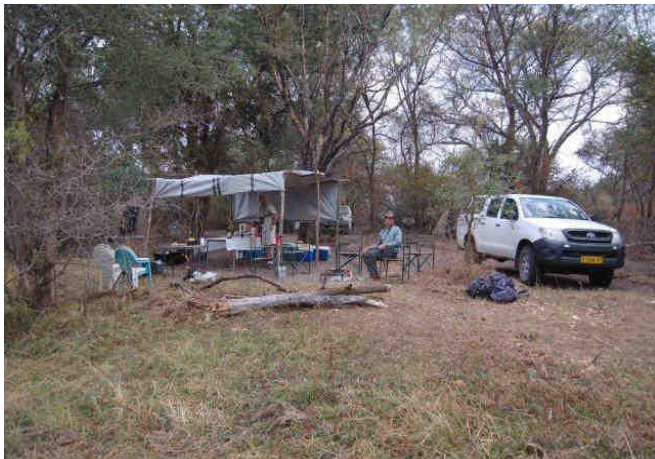
A surprise awaited us: under the supervision of the local bird guide, the locals had prepared our campsite. Undergrowth was cleared, there were sites for the tents, a canvas shade erected to become the cooking-house, cum dining room, cum lounge, cum conference centre. A primitive but effective shower and toilet were erected, chairs and firewood supplied. This would be our home for the next one and a half days



Installation for personal hygiene

With all hands involved, the tents were pitched and the kitchen prepared in no time. That's what we are used to – no supervision needed by anybody to see that the others do their job. Eventually we could settle down, drinks were popped and we could turn our attention to the birds again. Before that – a toast to Jutta. She had the privilege of experiencing her birthday, which one she would not reveal, on this trip. Earlier that morning she had a special flower, a wild Jasmine, (*Jasminum fluminense*) attached to her shirt; she had seen her birthday bird - the Black-cheeked Lovebird, now a song: Happy Birthday!

What is called the “Muchile River” was just a few paces from our conference centre. From this we got our water supply for the shower and for cleaning. For this purpose a dug-out mokoro was placed at right angles to the bank, to get the water from deeper in.



The Conference Centre

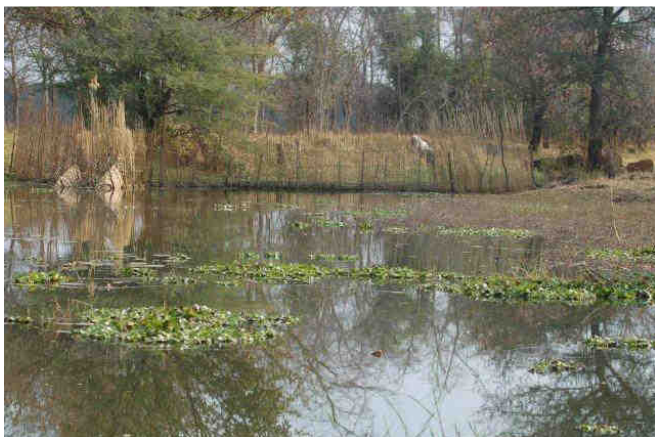


The living area



Water supply point

This river is not what we know the Okavango or Zambezi River to be like. It is a half-perennial river or more a channel, covering its vast floodplains with water during the rainy season. Now it was only a narrow, standing water body, meandering its way in long bends through the area. There was no way to cross dry-footed. Fish, like Barbel and Tilapia species had come upstream from the Zambezi, to supply a vast number of species of birds and the locals with a livelihood. Water lilies and even the pest, “Water Hyacinth” (I presume), were present. Along the banks were thickets of huge Paper-bark Acacia & Knob-thorn (*A. siberiana* & *nigrescens*), Jackalberry (*Diospyros mespilliformes*), Buffalo thorn (*Ziziphus mucronata*), Wild Fig (*Ficus spp.*), (I’m tree-atlassing again! - forgive me, I can’t resist).



Before dark we’d seen a number of birds like Black Crake, African Openbill, Hamerkop, Tropical Boubou, Kingfishers. A Verreaux’s Eagle-Owl gave us the honours across the water channel, in a tree. Some calls at the riverbank drew my attention. They were crickets, but not all of them, there must have been some frogs, so I started to try to locate the spot of origin. Turning aside the thick grasses revealed nothing. It would have been nice to get hold of one of these small frogs to take a photo home for my wife. Bad luck.

Everybody had an early warm shower. For this purpose the shower bucket had to be refilled, when necessary.

A three-course dinner followed, prepared on the fire by Katy and Nick (everybody had a third helping). We turned in at 22h00, with a good-night snack from Katy. Although it was quite cool, the bedding supplied was comfy and warm, even the sleeping bag fitted me, also the camping bed. No funny noises from within the campsite during the night - at least I did not hear any. Only some owls kept watch with their calls: African Scops-Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Southern White-faced Scops-Owl and African Barred Owlet.

Wednesday 4th July 2012:

At first light, before anybody else was up, “Philemon” got the fire started. This more or less woke the others. Katy got the coffee ready. Imagine – she was unsure of how much to put into the plunger. Therefore the morning coffee was of a high octane, which really gave us enough guts to do what we wanted to do for this day. As a result, the following morning we had to fall back to the emergency supply: plastic coffee. But in the bush you make do with what you have available.

After a snack we went out into the veld; along the river channel. Kingfishers, Black-headed Oriole; African Fish-Eagle; White-browed Robin-Chat; Herons; both Boubous; more Lovebirds; Luapula Cisticola; Flycatchers; Crested Barbet; Lizard Buzzard; African Hoopoe heard, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike; Red-billed Oxpecker – the birds just kept coming into our view. I hardly had time to pick up my binoculars for keeping notes. Far off in the floodplains on two different perches were Long-crested Eagles.



Long-crested Eagle behind grass-plume on far-side tree

“Muchile IBA” covers an area of 447 000 hectares in southwestern Zambia. It has been established to conserve the Black-cheeked Lovebird, endemic to Zambia. In the Mopane woodlands it occupies the area in two localized population groups. Large Mopane trees are utilized for nesting. In the Red Data Book this bird is classified as “vulnerable”.

The Lovebirds are endemic to southwestern Zambia. They occur in two separate sub-populations. One in the Kafue catchment and one in the Zambezi catchment area – Muchile is the Zambezi one. They occur in mature woodlands, dominated by Mopane trees and need permanent water. Their population is declining due to habitat loss but also due to capture for cage birds. Their total population is less than 10 000 individuals but the biggest threat is the limited range.

Then Nick called – come here guys, cautiously, have a look in this bush! Where? There! I don’t see! There – third branch off to the left, second twig to the right, behind the leaves – no, it’s moved down, you see it? Which bush? That one! See ? No! (I really had to do something about this! This is no way to give a direction reference!)

At last everybody had this smallish, heavily streaked bird in view: African Broadbill! It is uncommon in this area; we were very lucky to see it. It was not worried about us, we were just a few paces off it. So close, we had difficulties focusing our camera lenses onto it.



The Bird

We had no chance of moving very much further. A big acacia kept us. Jameson’s Firefinch. Woodpeckers: Golden-tailed, Cardinal, Bearded, Bennett’s – all in that Acacia. African Green-Pigeon, African Goshawk. We must have spent close to an hour at this spot. We moved back through the floodplains to the camp and boarded the vehicles in search of more Lovebirds.

After collecting our guide, Agnita, the Community Bird Guide from Magumwi Village, we carried on to another village. This village was quite large, with some houses, entertainment establishments and a radio tower. The Muchile River, to which we moved, was close by. The Black-cheeked Lovebirds were all around, feeding, drinking, fluttering around in the big trees, feeding on Acacia pods. Photos? Not me, sorry. I tried my best, choosing a water spot from which they had flown up as a focus point. Having cleared my view to this spot of grasses and weeds, I made myself comfortable (?) underneath a tree, waiting. But to my disappointment no bird came there. Just a lonely African Harrier-Hawk flew overhead.

We moved back to our camp, dropping Agnita at her village. There she asked us whether we knew the Collared Palm-Thrush. What?? Yes, we have it here! At the village. So we started a search in between the Makalani palms of all sizes which were all around the village. It did not take us long to locate these birds; we saw at least four of them. They kept us very busy following them, never staying at one spot for

long, but we were able to get some photographs. This bird was no lifer for me this time. I have had the privilege of seeing this bird during November 2010, on the farm of my cousin in the north-eastern Tsumeb district. It was way out of its recorded range there and that was the second consecutive year it had made its appearance. A pair had appeared there during October, when the Makalani started flowering. It was even suspected to be breeding there in a tall *Washingtonia* palm. At the bird bath it was captured in a photograph. (See *Lanioturdus* 43(3) and 44(1) - Ed.).



Collared Palm-Thrush



Habitat of Collared Palm-Thrush

We moved back to the campsite for a short break. We wanted to rest for a while, but the birds around us did not let us. Meyer's Parrot, Green Wood-Hoopoe, Senegal Coucal, Red-billed Firefinch and a lot more birds were active around us. Malachite Kingfishers had a nesting site on the riverbank close to us, they kept coming and going. Not to forget the African Grey Hornbill, representing the more

common birds, in all its glory. And don't miss the Green-backed Heron!

What now? There was still a lot of time left for some exploration. We decided to split, a camera in each group. Katy and Jutta would this time again pay a social visit to the Lovebirds, maybe convince them to pose decently for some photographs. Nick, Werner and I decided to explore the floodplains and riverine thickets once more.

We took the same route we had during the morning walk, in the faint hope that the Broadbill would do us the honours again. Some Vervet Monkeys were swaying around in the tall Jackalberry trees, keeping a close watch on our intruding movements. Locals were attending to their fish traps in the channel.



Activities at the channel

Cattle and donkeys were grazing stomach-deep in the water. Domestic pigs had also gone on a feeding spree. Our hope of finding the Broadbill dwindled; there was too much activity in the area, especially this cow that had decided to pass through exactly that same section where we had seen the bird. It would be gone, tough luck. But as there could still be a chance, Nick called in the bird just once. And there it was – in a small Mopane shrub. We were close to the bird once more, cameras ready. Did the bird mind all that snapping? Not in the least, it appeared. It moved around, dashed to the ground, picked up a morsel and carried it to its perch, it even demonstrated to us its toilet habits. The bird was not the least

concerned about us, just a few paces off. We thought it would have been affected by the activity in the area, like people, donkeys, cattle, even the mother pig that passed close by with her four offspring on her way back home. The bird was used to all this activity. It was such a great bird, we there and then decided this bird should be the highlight of the trip, downgrading the Lovebirds, for which we had actually come, to trash. It would be interesting to know whether this bird had claimed this area, and if so, to find its mate and probably their nest, when breeding.

We made our way back through the floodplains, logging some more LBJ's. Now Nick started getting botanical, asking me about those trees in the floodplains, with the broad leaves and large pods. They were Camel's Foot (*Piliostigma thonningii*). A short time later Katy and Jutta appeared, they had had success in capturing our "Trash birds" on camera.

Dinner was served – cooked chicken, into the pot still frozen, but everything went down well. Our cool boxes had done their jobs, the drinks also were still cool. Some discussions followed during the evening – arguments: Nick – "I still insist this owl we heard calling was the Pearl-spotted Owlet, not the African Barred Owlet". With the prospect of having some more adventures the following day, we all pulled back into our dwellings for the night.

List of Birds recorded in "Muchile IBA"

Bateleur
 White-browed Sparrow-Weaver
 Meves's Starling
 Namaqua Dove
 Arrow-marked Babbler
 African Palm-Swift
 Green Wood-Hoopoe
 Lilac-breasted Roller
 Fork-tailed Drongo
 Cape Turtle-Dove
 Red-billed Hornbill
 Red-billed Quelea
 Black-headed Oriole

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow
 Grey Go-away-bird
 Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove
 Double-banded Sandgrouse
 Blue Waxbill
 Jameson's Firefinch
 Rattling Cisticola
 Red-billed Firefinch
 Violet-eared Waxbill
 Red-eyed Dove
 Swainson's Spurfowl
 Laughing Dove
 Green-winged Pytilia
 Southern Masked-Weaver
 Southern Black Tit
 Black-backed Puffback
 Martial Eagle
 White-bellied Sunbird
 Long-billed Crombec
 White-backed Vulture
 Lapped-faced Vulture
 Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird
 Cardinal Woodpecker
 Chinspot Batis
 Tropical Boubou
 Bearded Woodpecker
 Bennett's Woodpecker
 Golden-tailed Woodpecker
 African Mourning Dove
 Black-cheeked Lovebird
 Dark Chanting Goshawk
 Southern Ground-Hornbill
 Southern Black Flycatcher
 Helmeted Guineafowl
 Hamerkop
 Black Crake
 Verreaux's Eagle-Owl
 African Openbill
 African Scops-Owl
 Pearl-spotted Owlet
 Southern White-faced Scops-Owl
 African Barred Owlet
 Red-billed Spurfowl
 Pied Kingfisher
 Brown-hooded Kingfisher

Giant Kingfisher
 Malachite Kingfisher
 African Fish-Eagle
 Magpie Shrike
 White-browed Robin-Chat
 Green-backed Heron
 Swamp Boubou
 Grey Heron
 Dark-capped Bulbul
 African Jacana
 Brubru
 Luapula Cisticola
 Tawny-flanked Prinia
 Ashy Flycatcher
 Burnt-necked Eremomela
 Black-crowned Tchagra
 Zitting Cisticola
 Grey-headed Bush-Shrike
 White-browed Coucal
 Terrestrial Brownbul
 Yellow-bellied Greenbul
 Little Grebe
 Lizard Buzzard
 Senegal Coucal
 African Hoopoe
 Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike
 Grey-backed Camaroptera
 Red-billed Oxpecker
 Long-crested Eagle
 Yellow-breasted Apalis
 Burchell's Starling
 African Broadbill
 Little Bee-eater
 Black-faced Waxbill
 Common Scimitarbill
 African Green-Pigeon
 African Goshawk
 Green Wood-Hoopoe
 Pied Crow
 Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver
 African Spoonbill
 African Harrier-Hawk
 Collared Palm-Thrush
 Meyer's Parrot
 Cattle Egret

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater
 African Grey Hornbill

(106 species)

**Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia*
semitorquata in Namibia: New Records
 and Range Extension**

Wessel Swanepoel
 PO Box 21168
 Windhoek

email: wessel@kaokosafari.com

The Red-eyed Dove occurs in southern Africa in the north-east, east and south, avoiding the arid areas of Namibia, the Kalahari Basin and western Karoo. In Namibia it is found only in the extreme north, from east to west, and again in the extreme south along the Orange River. Its habitat requirements are well-developed woodlands, riverine forests and alien plantations and thickets (Dean 2005) including urban and rural gardens and city parks (Maclean 1993). Two records of Red-eyed Dove from the arid areas of Namibia were mentioned in *Lanioturdus* (Swanepoel 2005). The first record was from Mariental on the Fish River in 2001 and the second from the Löwen River near the Naute Dam in 2003. At the time it was not clear whether the records represented resident populations or vagrants. Since 2005 more Red-eyed Doves have been recorded outside of their known range on several occasions:

Lüderitz:

- One bird seen calling from the tower of the railway station building (W. Swanepoel in July 2007)
- One bird heard from the centre of town (W. Swanepoel in June 2011)
- Five birds all over the centre of Lüderitz (June 2012, S. Rust pers. comm.)
- Up to a dozen birds on a residential roof. Population seems to be resident