

CONTENTS

VOLUME 36 (3) 2003

OSBORNE, T. O. Editorial	1
BOIX-HINZEN, C & M. BOORMAN. Helping behaviour in Gray's Lark <i>Ammomanes grayi</i>	2
DANTU, S.& M. BOORMAN. A homing pelican—part II.	4
DANTU, S. Ugab birding week	5
BOORMAN, M. Bird ringing in Namibia	6
PAXTON, M. Some Unusual Sightings at Shamvura Restcamp – Okavango River	7
BOORMAN, M. Second coastal record of Buff-spotted Flufftail <i>Sarothrura elegans</i> for Namibia	8
OSCHADLEUS, D. National ringing training courses	10
HEINRICH, D. Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ispidina picta</i> at Epupa Falls, Namibia	11
OSCHADLEUS, D, BM DYER, RJM CRAWFORD, & L UPFOLD Sociable Weaver roadside nest densities in southern Namibia	12
BIRD NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS	18

Editorial

Tim Osborne

The dry season is truly upon us with the east winds howling in the interior and the berg winds affecting the coast. News reports state that the winds at Lüderitz were reaching 140 km/h. I wonder if there were any birders there to look for vagrants to the coastal desert? On our farm we have hardly seen any Queleas or Chestnut Weavers in months. I wonder where they have gone, in search of food and water I presume. The rodent high we have been experiencing for the past three years crashed and now the effects are evident in the form of missing birds. Gone are the Barn Owls, Black-shouldered Kites, Marsh Owls and even the Pearl-spotted Owls are scarce.

For those of you with Internet access you should check out the website for SAFRING. Go to www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/safring_index.htm. The site has life histories of all the birds that have been ringed. Each week more histories are added to the site. If you have ever wondered how many African Hawk-Eagles have been ringed and where you can check it out. It might surprise you how many have been ringed since 1948. There have been 244 birds ringed and with the start of computerized records in 1975 Namibia has the most birds ringed at 76. There have been 10 recoveries with the longest distance being 795 km and oldest time being 22 years, 9 months and 21 days.

It is nice to see more articles being submitted by members from the coast. Lots of interesting birds with some out of place like Black Kites, Flufftails and breeding Gray's Larks. I have requested the annual Chairman's and Financial reports for those of us who could not attend the AGM and I will put them in the next edition. I, like many of the outlying members, wonder if any of the outings publicized in the Bird Call were attended, as there have not been any reports submitted to the *Lanioturdus*. These are important to write up because those of us who cannot attend meetings in Windhoek and outings close to Windhoek would like to know what is being seen and more about club activities.

A HOMING PELICAN part II

Sandra Dantu and Mark Boorman
PO Box 1445, Swakopmund, Namibia
felix@mweb.com.na

In the previous issue, we said good-bye to Adolf at the bird platform near Walvis Bay, little knowing that we would meet again, and that he would be introduced to Keith and Gail Wearne of Walvis Bay also.

Adolf was not content in the company of other pelicans, and set off in search of human company. This search had him visiting homes, cafes and restaurants in Walvis Bay and Langstrand. The first few days post-release were uneventful but soon Keith was inundated with callers reporting an unwanted pelican. Murphy would have it that Adolf moved on before Keith could fetch him.

To cut a long story short, these events culminated in a call from the local constabulary. Could Keith come and bail Adolf out. A municipality employee who had found him on the road opposite Dolphin Beach had brought him to the police station. By this time Keith was livid at having his Saturday disturbed by pelican updates, and to add insult to injury, the rescuer demanded a N\$500.00 reward for having saved Keith's young ostrich!!! Keith's response was to tell the chap that not only was it not an @#!*# ostrich, but that he was welcome to keep it.

Gail's cooler head prevailed and Adolf spent the night, with fellow lost souls, at the Missions to Seafarers.

We had quite a debate followed as to what would be Adolf's ultimate fate. Should we attempt another release nearby and risk conflict with people again, or release him further afield? Sandwich Harbour, Cape Cross and the Ugab River Mouth were all considered.

Eventually Rod Braby released him at Sandwich and spent about 2 hours monitoring his interaction with and integration into a flock of pelicans there. This was in March and we haven't heard from Adolf since. (Editor. Will there be a part III to this saga? Stay tuned).

UGAB BIRDING WEEK

Sandra Dantu
PO Box 1445, Swakopmund, Namibia
felix@mweb.com.na

Berndt Brell of Save the Rhino Trust organised a week of birding tuition for the SRT guides and trackers during the first week of June. The purpose of the course was to teach bird ID skills and the principles and basics of bird ringing. It was also viewed as an opportunity to involve local communities in birding and to share our interest and knowledge with people who have fewer opportunities in life in general and to try to dispel the myth that conservation in general and birding in particular are elitist past-times.

This event was announced at the Bird Club's AGM, but was not included in the next Bird Call nor was it announced via the internet, as other notices have been. We also contacted as many active, licensed ringers as we could. Unfortunately, the response was dismal. I can only guess at the reasons for this as no-one gave any feedback as to why they could not come. Could it be that birding in Namibia is elitist after all, or that the Bird Club membership prefers the environs of Windhoek?

A total of 7 guides/trackers attended the course. The instructors/demonstrators were Keith Wearne, Mark Boorman, Sandra Dantu, Tim Osborne and Berndt Brell. Also present were Gail Wearne, Laurel Osborne and Denham Graig.

The course comprised bird ID in the field, concentrating on habitat, jizz, behaviour and vocalisations, and an interactive pop quiz using the Roberts' CD ROM with excursions up and down the Ugab River. We also ventured into the adjacent plains to find different species in different habitats. We demonstrated the use of mist-nets and Bal-Chatrri trapping for ringing sessions, during which 153 new birds of 20 species were caught and ringed.

Each participant was presented with a certificate at the end of the course.