

NAMIBIA BIRD CLUB

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Authors are requested to submit articles on a computer disk (MS-DOS, low or high density, 5.25" or 3.5"). The preferred wordprocessing programme is WordPerfect, but Word, Wordstar and Multimate and a few other commonly available wordprocessing programmes can also be accommodated. **Please mark which programme has been used.** If you do not have one of the above programmes please submit an ASCII conversion of your manuscript. Handwritten articles are sure to be delayed as the current Editor and co-Editors are unable to spend a great deal of time typing articles. Handwritten short-notes and observations are acceptable but please make sure they are legible - typewritten is always better and invariably requires the author to give some thought to what is written (less editing is therefore required).

All disks and photographs will be returned to authors - manuscripts will not be returned. A single copy of the Volume issue in which your article appeared will be sent to the senior author.

All contributions for *LANIOTURDUS* should be sent to:

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ATLAS OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRDS

Christopher Hines, Editor

The *Atlas of Southern African Birds* is nearing completion and orders are now being taken for this magnificent work. The book will comprise 2 volumes of over 1600 pages. Each species occurring regularly in southern Africa is given a two page treatment (about 500 species), and the remainder get between 1 page (200 species) and an extended paragraph (200 species). I have seen some of the artwork for this book and it is magnificent - high quality line drawings for 500 species will be in the final book. The species texts are written by some of the leading ornithologists in southern Africa and go well beyond just general information - those that I have seen offer tremendous new insights into existing knowledge and are very readable.

This is going to be an expensive work to buy - R475-00 - but it is a huge and comprehensive work which will be the principal source of information on birds for years to come. I cannot stress the value of this book enough - if you have an interest in birds - BUY IT!!!!

The other thing to remember is that *there will only be one printing of this book* and it is *only available through orders* - it is so expensive to produce that there will be no excess copies produced - only those ordered will be printed. So this is your one and only chance to get hold of it.

If you are interested in this book and want an order form contact:

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA, P.O. Box 34046, Rhodes Gift,
7707, South Africa
Phone/fax: 0027-21-689 9445

"Preen me": ALLOPREENING IN BURNTNECKED EREMOMELAS

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There is a high *Acacia* tree near my house on the farm. It belongs, I think, to the territory of four to six Burntnecked Eremomelas. These tiny birds, about 10 cm in length, are constantly moving, usually in the upper third of the tree. With stealth and much patience, one will finally be able to see the diagnostic whitish iris and the rufous ear coverts and - not always - the brownish collar. It's all yellow belly and grey upper parts are well known by then. There are usually two or three of them visible and they communicate softly with one another. Once four of them sat, shoulder to shoulder on a branch, whilst two others were foraging amongst the foliage.

Their most remarkable habit is their mutual preening. One of the birds will suddenly point its bill skyward, stretch its neck and ruffle all its neck feathers. Another bird will diligently follow this "preen me" request, sit next to it and preen its throat, neck and hindneck, sometimes so vigorously that the bird has to change its footing so as not to lose balance. After a while the preened bird lowers its head, shakes its feathers, looks refreshed and satisfied. But not for long - the preener will then assume the bill-upward position and "preen me" - the other bird will oblige.

Does anybody know more about these birds? Do they often lose their collar in winter, like Blackchested Prinias? Do they have other social habits? Do they have an early morning song like other Eremomelas?

Burntnecked Eremomelas in Namibia generally lack a distinct collar as illustrated in most of the available field guides - this is a source of confusion in Namibia and this species is often misidentified. The best field mark is the pale eye. The loud and distinctive song of this species is one of the best ways to find it - Editor.