

# LANIOTURDUS

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Namibia Bird Club



since 1962

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[www.namibiabirdclub.org](http://www.namibiabirdclub.org)

## **About the Namibia Bird Club**

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. The club's mission is to contribute to Namibian ornithology by, amongst other things, arranging regular birding outings, conducting bird ringing and atlasing excursions and educating the public about the value of birds. To achieve this, we organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewage Works and occasional weekend trips further afield. Bird club members also participate in the African Waterbird Census twice a year.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we present occasional lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a digital newsletter, *Namibia Bird News*, which includes a programme of forthcoming events and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organization and relies entirely on members' subscriptions and donations to fund its activities.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club or its committee.

## **Instructions to Authors**

*Lanioturdus* is a journal dedicated to birds and birding. Although the journal's primary focus is on Namibia, articles from other geographical parts of the globe will also be considered for publication. Authors should use common and scientific names of southern African birds as published in *Roberts' VII*. For other regions, English and scientific names following BirdLife International's species list (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species>) should be used. Text should be submitted as a MS Word document. Photos, maps and figures should be sent as separate jpeg images, graphs as MS Excel charts or jpeg images and tables as MS Word or Excel documents. Please indicate in the article text where these should be placed.



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## **Atlasing Bash: Farm Habis and Karibib vicinity, 22 to 25 May 2015**

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For the Africa Day long weekend outing the chairperson of the Namibia Bird Club, Gudrun Middendorff, decided to take up a long standing invitation from Dr Herbert Schneider for the bird club to visit his farm, Habis, just south of Karibib. Who were we to refuse an offer of free camping?

Gudrun and I went down on the Friday afternoon and were joined by Uschi, Anita, Anna, Judy, Franz and Michael the next morning. Incidentally all those on this outing were also participants in the Namibia Bird Club's trip to the Kavango and Zambezi Regions in October 2014. Franz had planned to be the first to arrive as he had hoped to be able to start an atlas card for our base pentad and he seemed a little put out to find that Gudrun and I had arrived the day before and had already done two hours of atlasing by the time he got there.



**Figure 1: Searching for the Herero Chat © Judy Fuller**

By late morning all the participants had arrived and after setting up camp a bit of exploring was done in the immediate vicinity of the campsite and further species were added to the

growing pentad list. Herbert Schneider had told us that Herero Chat frequent the kopjes at the entrance to the farm and after lunch we drove there to search for this elusive near endemic which some wanted for their life lists. The search proved unsuccessful and we returned to camp in time to be taken on a tour of the farm by our host. This tour took us to some different habitats and allowed us to add a few more species to the pentad list. An attempt at dusk to catch and ring Double-banded Sandgrouse which were using a small watering point near the campsite resulted in only one bird being caught – if ever there was a species which can take off vertically like a helicopter and avoid a mistnet it is Double-banded Sandgrouse!

The plan for the Sunday morning was to split up into teams and atlas some of the neighbouring pentads. I had downloaded the pentad maps for several pentads in the immediate vicinity and we were able to plan routes in pentads with long lengths of public road. Franz and Michael went off to cover two pentads to the east and south-east, Gudrun, Uschi and Anita did two to the south and south-west while Anna, Judy and I went to the Karibib and Navachab pentads. Of the seven pentads covered only one (Karibib) had previously been atlased in the full protocol format. The day's activities started with another unsuccessful search for the Herero Chat before the groups split up to cover their designated routes. We were able to compile species lists ranging from twenty two to sixty four species for these six pentads and in addition we managed to record a total

of seventy five species on our base pentad.

A good variety of birds was seen with the White-tailed Shrike, the emblem of the Namibia Bird Club, being observed on several of the pentads. Several Kori Bustards were seen as well as a good variety of raptors including Martial Eagle, Pygmy Falcon, Lanner Falcon, Black-chested Snake-Eagle, Lappet-faced Vulture, Greater Kestrel, Gabar Goshawk and Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk.



**Figure 2: Namaqua Sandgrouse © Anna Muller**

In the late afternoon while Gudrun and I prepared dinner the others again went to look for the Herero Chat and this time came back full of smiles. At night three different owl species, Barn Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet and Southern White-faced Scops-Owl, were heard but all attempts to call them into a net were in vain. On the Monday morning Gudrun and I had another go at ringing and were moderately successful catching a number of Namaqua Sandgrouse and Namaqua Doves together with a couple of Cape Turtle-Doves.



**Figure 3: Herero Chat © Michael Houlden**

It was then unfortunately time to pack up and leave for home. Gudrun and I had decided to avoid the suicidal drivers on the B1 between Okahandja and Windhoek and turned south at Wilhelmstal to take the scenic back roads to Windhoek. Uschi and Anita accompanied us and we spent two hours atlasing another virgin pentad with plenty of public road which we had previously identified. An interesting sighting in this pentad, where we recorded fifty species, was that of an African Harrier-Hawk.

All in all it was a very successful atlasing weekend with seven virgin pentads “klapped” (as Holger Kolberg would say). If the comments on the standard of the evening meals are anything to go by it would appear that Namibia Bird Club outings are getting a reputation for good food as well.

I would like to reiterate our gratitude to Herbert and Ilme Schneider for inviting the bird club to their farm and making this very successful outing possible.