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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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Editorial

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The plethora of public holidays in March and May certainly had an impact on several bird related activities in Namibia.

The Namibia Bird Club embarked on two major atlasing expeditions – one to the “far east” around Buitepos and one to the south around Maltahöhe. During these expeditions we managed to nudge the total number of pentads atlased in Namibia past the 10% mark – a truly remarkable achievement considering the number of active atlasers and the size of the country. Well done to all!

May was also the time of the traditional bird ringers’ get-together. This time it was decided to combine this esteemed occasion with the bird club excursion and in my humble opinion it was a resounding success. Due to the current drought the

number of birds caught was very low (but then most of us don’t come to the get-together to ring birds) but the variety was quite amazing. In the end, between the ringers and the atlasers we racked up over 130 species, quite a number for an area that in places looked as if it had been swept with a broom. I think this may well be a recipe to be followed in the future.

As we are entering the “slowdown time” of winter this may be a chance to reflect on the past summer and perhaps write down some of the interesting observations we made (much like the contributions by Günther, Neil and Eckart in this issue) and send them to this, your journal.

Keep birding!

Terra Incognito: Bird Atlasing Expedition to the Tsaukhaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park

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Figure 1: The team - (fltr) Holger, Bernard, Antje, Claire, Mark, Hartmut. Photo © Holger Kolberg

The Tsaukhaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park (TNP) is situated in the south-western corner of Namibia (Figure 2), bordered in the west by the Atlantic Ocean, the Orange (Gariiep) River in the south, in the east by commercial farms and the Namib sand sea in the Namib-Naukluft Park to the north. The park was proclaimed in 2008 and has an area of 21 750km². Four towns are situated on the periphery or within the park: Lüderitzbucht in the north-west, Aus in the north-east, Rosh Pinah in the south-east and Oranjemund in the south-west (Figure 3).

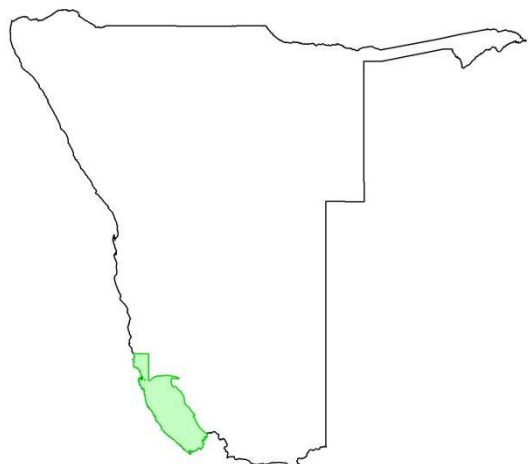


Figure 2: Location of the Tsaukhaeb National Park.

The second southern African bird atlas project (SABAP2) was launched in Namibia in May 2012 and good progress has been made. However, there are some areas that have not been mapped due to their remoteness or, as is the case with the TNP, inaccessibility.

Access to the TNP is strictly controlled because of the active diamond mines in the park and this has hamstrung the scientific exploration of the area significantly. As regional atlasing coordinator HK arranged a visit to the TNP from 29 November to 12 December 2015 through the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). There are 346 pentads in the TNP and the aim was to cover as many of them as possible in as wide a range of habitats as possible. The coast and areas along the Orange River were mostly excluded because this is where the mining takes place.

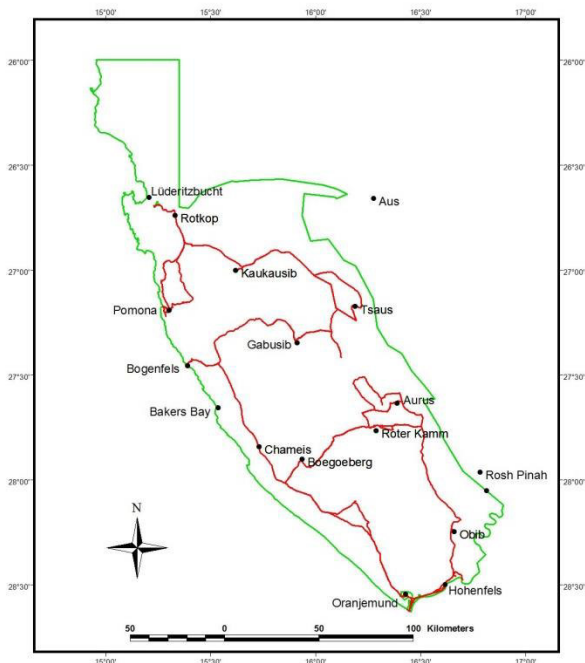


Figure 3: Place names mentioned in the text and the route travelled by the atlasing team (red line).

Sunday 29 November was used by the participants to reposition from

their places of residence to Rosh Pinah, the agreed meeting point for the next day. On Monday the team assembled at the turn-off to the TNP but when we arrived at the gate we were informed that there was no clearance for us to enter the park (this notwithstanding the fact that the paperwork was submitted more than two months prior to the trip!). After a few phone calls and a visit to the MET office in Rosh Pinah we were assured that we would be cleared by the afternoon. This forced us to do some “extralimital” atlasing along the Orange River in the Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park. We decided to “give it time” to the next morning and camped the night at the Boomrivermouth.

Early the next morning we were up and a phone call to the Namdeb security office confirmed that we were all cleared. Shortly thereafter we entered the park at Sendelingsdrift and after a while arrived in Oranjemund where we quickly stocked up on some necessary supplies. We then drove to the mouth of the Orange River, after all, this is one of the “must see” places in the park. Here, i.e. in Oranjemund and at the mouth, we completed our first two atlas cards before proceeding to Hohenfels where we would camp for the night.

On 2 December the expedition made its way into the area via the Schakalberge and Obib to Aurus. The next day we spent exploring the area around the Aurusberge before relocating on Friday to Boegoeberg. Saturday morning we returned to Oranjemund to refuel and stock up on supplies and then spent the remainder of the weekend at Hohenfels.

Monday 7 December we moved north via Chameis and Bogenfels (another

“must see” attraction) to Gabusib. The next day we explored the area around Gabusib and then moved to Tsaus on Wednesday. Our destination for Thursday was Kaukausib before returning to the coast at Pomona for our last night in the park on Friday. Saturday morning an exhausted but happy team exited the TNP at Rotkop and proceeded to Lüderitzbucht for a well-earned hot shower and a sleep in a proper bed.

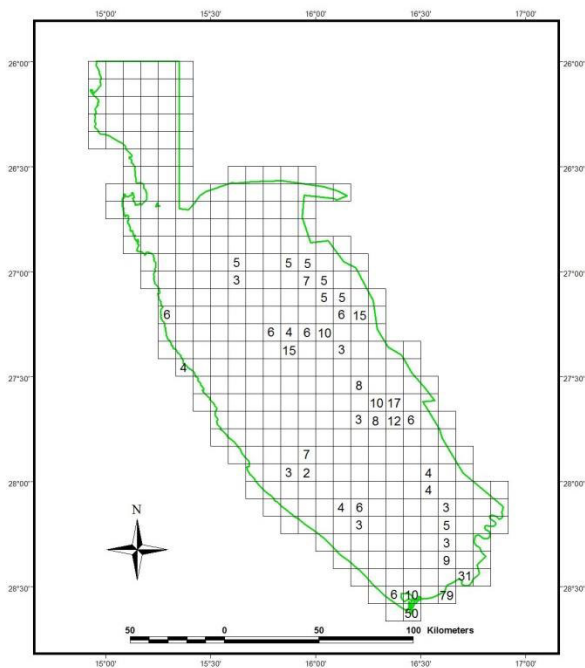


Figure 4: Map showing the pentads atlased (numbers indicate the number of species recorded).

We atlased 44 pentads (Figure 4), most of them full protocol, in the

eleven days, recording 131 species of bird in the process (Table 1). Not surprisingly, considering the amount of time spent there, the Hohenfels pentad has the highest number of species recorded with 79, whilst the average number of species recorded per pentad is 9. Barlow’s Lark (*Calendulauda barlowi*) was the bird most commonly encountered (29 out of 44 pentads or 65.91% of the pentads), followed by Tractrac Chat (*Cercomela tractrac*, 23 pentads or 52.27%) and Karoo Chat (*Cercomela schlegelii*, 20 pentads or 45.45%). Some of the more notable species seen are: Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*, see *Lanioturdus* **49(1)**), European Honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) and Gray’s Lark (*Ammomanopsis grayi*).

The trip is considered a resounding success since only one full protocol card had been submitted for the interior of the TNP prior to it (the pentads from Hohenfels to the Orange River mouth and around Lüderitzbucht are atlased regularly during the wetland bird counts). A good knowledge of the tracks and camps/shelters in the park was gained which will make future trips more efficient. The area was very dry and therefore we probably did not encounter all the species we possibly could have so a follow-up visit is definitely on the cards.

Table 1: List of birds seen in the Tsaukhaeb NP and the number of pentads where they were seen.

Common name	Scientific name	No pentads seen
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	9
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	1
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	1
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2
Cape Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	1
Reed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	2
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	1
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	1
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	2
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	1
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	1
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	1
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	1
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	1
Hadedda Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	3
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	1
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	1
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	1
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	1
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	2
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	2
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	2
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	1
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	1
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	1
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	1
Greater Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>	12
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>	3
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>	2
European Honey-Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1
Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	1
Booted Eagle	<i>Aquila pennatus</i>	1
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	4
African Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	3
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	2
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>	6

African Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	1
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1
Cape Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>	1
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	1
Ludwig's Bustard	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>	5
Karoo Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis vigorsii</i>	7
African Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	2
White-fronted Plover	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	2
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	1
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	2
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	1
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	1
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	1
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	2
Burchell's Courser	<i>Cursorius rufus</i>	4
Double-banded Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	2
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	4
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	2
Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	2
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	1
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	1
Swift Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	2
Damara Tern	<i>Sterna balaenarum</i>	1
Namaqua Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>	4
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	4
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	2
Cape Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	1
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	5
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	2
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	1
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	1
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	1
White-backed Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>	2
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	3
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>	2
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	1
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	1
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	2
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	1
Karoo Lark	<i>Calendulauda albescens</i>	1
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	12
Gray's Lark	<i>Ammomanopsis grayi</i>	9
Grey-backed Sparrowlark	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>	6
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	1

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	6
White-troated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>	1
Rock Martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	3
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	1
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	13
Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	8
Grey Tit	<i>Parus afer</i>	1
African Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	4
Mountain Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>	10
Karoo Chat	<i>Cercomela schlegelii</i>	20
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	1
Familiar Chat	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	4
Tractrac Chat	<i>Cercomela tractrac</i>	23
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	2
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	4
Karoo Scrub-Robin	<i>Erythropygia coryphaeus</i>	1
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1
African Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	2
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	1
Karoo Eremomela	<i>Eremomela gregalis</i>	3
Chat Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis infuscatus</i>	2
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	1
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>	5
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	1
Common (Southern) Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	8
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	8
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	1
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1
Pale-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus nabouroup</i>	2
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>	3
Dusky Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris fuscus</i>	5
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	7
Southern Masked-Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	3
Redbilled Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	1
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>	1
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	1
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	2
White-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>	6
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	2
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	5
Barlow's Lark	<i>Calendulauda barlowi</i>	29
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>	3
Orange River White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	3
Karoo Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda subcoronata</i>	8
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>	4
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>	1