


LANIOTURDUS

S.W.A. SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY - S.W.A. WETENSKAPLIKE VERENIGING



ELETERVURGER
LANGSTERT-LAKKIMAN
LONG-TAILED SHRIKE

Die Federzeichnung eines Urolestes melanoticus von Jochen Voigt wurde entnommen dem Buch von W. Hoersch: Die Vogelwelt Südwesafrikas

S.W.A. WISSENSCHAFTLICHE GESELLSCHAFT

WETENSKAPLIKE VERENIGING
SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Box 57 - ☎ 225372 - WINDHOEK 9000

M I T T E I L U N G E N

der ORNITHOLOGISCHEN ARBEITSGRUPPE

No.1/2 Jg. 1. Apr./Mai 1965

Ueber die Aufzucht zweier Cabanisweber.
(Ploceus intermedius cabanisii)

Eva Maria Arnold, Farm Heliodor.

Seit einigen Jahren schon halten sich Maskenweber (Ploceus velatus) in der Nahe unseres Hauses auf und nisten vereinzelt da. Die Wasserstelle bei den Vogelkaefigen wird gern aufgesucht, und in der kalten Zeit sind die Weber am Hundefutter zu sehen. Am 10.10.1964 wurde der erste vollausgefaerbte Maskenweber am Haus beobachtet (waehrend z.B. in Otavi schon Wochen vorher Voegel im Brutkleid gesehen worden waren).

Im Dezember siedelten sich Maskenweber in den Pfefferbaeumen hinter dem Haus an und bauten ihre Nester aus Rietfasern. In heruntergewehten Nestern fanden wir die typischen rot- und grueneiss gesprenkelten Eier. Ende des Monats hingen ploetzlich Nester mit Eingangsroehren in den Baeumen, in wenigen Tagen wurden die Maskenweber durch Cabanisweber verdraengt. Deren Nester waren, wie schon von W. von Maltzahn geschildert, aus Blatt- rispen des Pfefferbaumes gebaut (siehe "Mitteilungen" No. V/1-2, Ornith. Beilage).

Aus groesserer Entfernung sind die beiden Weberarten schwer zu unterscheiden. Die Nester sind leicht auseinanderzuhalten, auch sind die Eier verschieden, die der Cabanisweber sind rein weiss. Hat man den Vogel in der Hand, kann man einen kleinen Unterschied in der Schwarzzeichnung erkennen. Der Maskenweber zeigt auch einen rost- raunen Schimmer am Kopf. Ich selbst erkenne die maennlichen Tiere im Brutkleid am leichtesten an der Augenfarbe. Die Augen von Ploceus velatus sind rot, die von Ploceus intermedius cabanisii gelb. Waehrend der erstere roetliche Beine hat, sind die des Cabaniswebers blaeuilich. Die weiblichen Tiere sind, wie an den Zeichnungen im Roberts zu erkennen ist, leicht zu unterscheiden.

Wie bei W. von Maltzahn geschildert, so kamen auch zu unserer Nester- kolonie bald Angehoerige der verschiedenen Kuckucksfamilien. Besonders der Diderik- oder Goldkuckuck, R 352, Chrysococcyx caprius, interessierte sich sehr fuer die Nester.

Bald hoerte man schon die ersten Jungen piepsen. Aus einem Nest er- toente besonders lautes Geschrei, sodass ich an einen jungen Kuckuck dachte. Am 13.1.65 holten wir das Nest herunter.

Es sassen zwei junge Weber darin, etwa eine Woche alt, die ersten Kiele waren zu sehen. Leider konnten wir das Nest nicht wieder in den Baum praktizieren, so musste ich also die Jungen grosspaepeln.

Weber fuettern ihre Jungen fast ausschliesslich mit Insekten. Man konnte beobachten, wie die Altvoegel Raeupchen brachten, wir aber konnten beim besten Willen keine finden.

o versuchte ich es erst einmal mit gekochtem Ei und Maispapp. Die Kleinen sperren ohne weiteres ihre Schnaebel auf, aber ganz richtig schien diese Nahrung doch nicht. Dann versuchten wir es mit ganz klei- nen Engerlingen, die gern genommen wurden.

Leider musste ich am 15.1.65 fuer 12 Stunden von der Farm weg. Der Kuechenjunge uebernahm das Fuettern. Bei meiner Rueckkehr befanden sich die Voegel in sehr schlechter Verfassung und wollten auch nicht mehr fressen. Etwas "Auramin" (Antibiotikum) von der Fa. Kessner in

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.



LANIOTURDUS

Vol. 50 (1) 2017

January 2017

www.namibiabirdclub.org

CONTENTS

KOLBERG H	Editorial 1
EDMUNDS T	Goshawk and Lions 2
SACK J	Ringers' Get-together 2016 6
KOLBERG H	Status assessment of Namibia's vultures 9
DEMASIUS E	Bird Atlasing in the Hardap and //Karas Regions of Namibia, July 2016..... 18
OSCHADLEUS HD	Weaver longevity records from Namibia..... 25
THOMSON N	Rarities and Interesting Observations 26
KOLBERG H	Bird Atlas Update 32

Editorial

Holger Kolberg
holgerk@afol.com.na

Fifty and counting! Indeed, your journal is into its 50th volume and as you will have noticed, we have decided to celebrate by giving it a new look.

This issue's cover page is the front page of the first ever *Lanioturdus*, then, of course, still known as the *Mitteilungen*. It was roneoed on foolscap paper and posted to members – how things have changed since!

I am hoping to continue to provide our members with a high quality publication throughout this anniversary year and beyond. This, of course, depends on you sending me contributions and I am very grateful to the two stalwarts Eckart and Neil for providing me with enough material to keep going. You do not need to be a Shakespeare, Goethe or Pierneef to contribute. A simple photographic essay, like Tony's in this issue (admittedly with wow! photographs), will do.

There are so many interesting things going on that not many people know about. Like the nest box study mentioned by Jessica in her article. Never mind the scientific part of it (which has been reported in this journal), but so many other interesting things have been observed during that study which should be recorded and published.

How many people have observed Village Indigobirds in their Windhoek gardens? What about Okahandja or Otjiwarongo? Remember, if you talk about it, it is a story, if you write it down, its history!

Your contributions will not only keep this journal going but also contribute to the knowledge base of ornithology in Namibia and southern Africa and ultimately that is what it's all about. Or not?

Keep birding!

Bird Atlasing in the Hardap and //Karas Regions of Namibia, July 2016

Eckart Demasius

e-b.de@iway.na

All photographs in this article are © Eckart Demasius

We, (that is my wife, Birgit, and I), alternatively known as Team Demasius, planned a tour to the south of Namibia to visit some historical sites which, at the same time, was ideal for bird atlasing as we covered a great area and a large part of it had hardly been atlated before.

Atlasing was done along the roads on an *ad-hoc* basis and we chose to primarily make use of lesser travelled routes such as district roads. Our goal was to reach our overnight stop at least an hour before sunset to enable us to get in an hour's birding before lighting the fire and pouring the drinks. In the mornings I was up by six o'clock, armed with camera, binoculars and coffee doing early morning birding. On "rest days", i.e. days where we spent a second night at our destination the aim was to add two, possibly three additional full protocol lists for neighbouring pentads.

On 12 July we travelled along the C23 and C15 via Dordabis to Uhlenhorst until finally the MR 41 brought us to the C20 between Mariental and Stampriet from where we took the tar road to the Hardap Dam. We covered 37 pentads before we reached Hardap; on three of these we saw no identifiable birds while the highest count was eight species. I stopped along the B1 to take some photographs of Kori Bustards on freshly ploughed fields and while doing so we found a dead owl next to the road. We could easily identify it as a Spotted Eagle-Owl, for which I got an ORF (Out of Range Form).

We stayed at the beautifully renovated bungalows at Hardap; sadly the large trees around the bungalows are slowly dying on account of not being watered sufficiently. The dam water seems to be too far away to help them. Fortunately some fig trees next to the perimeter wall were in fine shape and starting to bear fruit, which attracted many birds. This was perfect for early morning birding.

The highlight was a Fairy Flycatcher (ORF) which came to inspect the tree and a Caspian Tern flying over the dam in search of food.

After breakfast we chose the northern route to the fishing spots, all of which we visited. Some of the "roads" going down to the fishing areas had a distinct Kaokoveld character and it was only with my low range engaged that I managed to reach the plateau again. The dam itself had few birds; larks and other Nama-Karoo birds on the plateau made up a handsome tally though. Birgit spotted some vultures which were identified as Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures, both of which turned out to be full out of range.

In the late morning we drove into the Game Park, which is no longer accessible via the dam wall.

We crossed the Fish River below the wall where we saw a beautiful African Purple Swamphen and entered the park. The water level of the dam was low at 37% so the water's edge was

some distance away at the Bird Paradise.



Figure 1: African Purple Swamphen

An interesting route led to a nearby thicket of camelthorn trees, unfortunately it was marked “No Entry”. I think it would benefit the atlasing exercise if atlasers were allowed to enter at least some of these “No Entry” roads. There was a different habitat there and certainly a handful of species could have been added to the overall list for the pentad. Nevertheless I could add Kalahari Scrub-Robin to pentad 2430_1750. The non-birding highlight was a good view of an African Wild Cat as I followed some birds on foot.

The road took us in a northerly direction west of the dam into the next pentad, 2430_1745, where we diligently atlased and were able to add Short-toed Rock-Thrush, Pale-winged Starling, Ashy Tit and Kalahari Scrub-Robin to the list. As the sun was setting we returned to camp completing a successful day of birding at Hardap.

Early in the morning on 14 July I was at my station next to the perimeter wall wishing to obtain a photograph of the Caspian Tern, which was very special to me. Instead, while taking a sip of coffee an Osprey flew past me at eye level – what a wonderful view, sadly though I had the coffee instead of my camera in my hand!!

But my luck improved soon afterwards when a Layard’s Tit-Babbler made its appearance followed shortly afterwards by a Karoo Eremomela which afforded me good photographic opportunities. Both species turned out to be full out of range, the latter being a lifer for me and consequently I was quite chuffed.



Figure 2: Layard’s Tit-Babbler

That day’s destination was Anib Lodge and as we had plenty of time to get there we chose to visit Kalahari Farmhouse at Stampriet and to do some serious atlasing along the way. Pentad 2420_1815, a virgin pentad, turned out to be very productive and we added Chat Flycatcher, Common Fiscal, Scaly-feathered Finch, Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk, Red-headed Finch, Marico Flycatcher, Fork-tailed Drongo, Laughing Dove, Anteating Chat, Pygmy Falcon, Kori Bustard, Lappet-faced and White-backed Vulture to the list, all not recorded previously under SABAP1. The Lappet-faced Vulture was full out of range.



Figure 3: Red-headed Finch

Kalahari Farmhouse is a green oasis with wonderful gardens. Here meat and vegetables are produced for the Gondwana Lodges and the agricultural land attracted a number of species. We enjoyed a scrumptious meal and were thoroughly entertained by a Karoo Thrush with its lovely song. Short-toed Rock-Thrush, Gabar Goshawk (a melanistic bird), Pygmy Falcon and Dusky Sunbird were all full out of range. Wattled Starling at the camping area was likewise full out of range.

At Anib Lodge we elected to go on a game drive as I was hoping to enter an additional pentad which we would otherwise not be able to access. I took my GPS along and soon we were rewarded for the expense. Crowned Lapwing, Lappet-faced and White-backed Vulture, Yellow Canary and Pygmy Falcon increased the list for the pentad. In order to make this pentad a full protocol pentad, we spent the money and went on the game drive the next afternoon as well. Very kindly the same guide took us on another road and was rewarded seeing his first Pygmy Falcon which I could point out.

At the lodge I spent quite some time at the waterhole where a number of Kalahari species came to drink. My highlight was a Red-capped Lark of the southern race which is much more intensely coloured. Shortly thereafter I heard a Pearl-spotted Owlet calling, but when atlasing I do not rely on calls for identification. So Birgit called it and it responded immediately by flying low over us. Both these species were full out of range for the pentad. Later in the day we atlased along the D1268 in the Anib pentad to further augment it.

The next day we travelled further south and elected to drive along the

MR29 to Keetmanshoop. On this 280 kilometre stretch we saw very few birds. After Keetmanshoop we followed the tar road to Grünau. At Keetmanshoop I recorded Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and along the road to Grünau Pied Crow twice, all of which turned out to be full out of range.

We settled in at Vastrap Guest Farm for our excursions for the week. The first day was a day of "rest", so we atlased along the D270, the D208 and the B3 for the day, starting at Grünau. Here we saw a Common Peafowl and I am never sure whether to record this species as it was kept as a pet, but then all other Common Peafowl in Namibia are in the same position. Anyway, it was full out of range and so were the Short-toed Rock-Thrush and Sabota Lark.

Along the Great //Karas Mountains we saw another Lappet-faced and White-backed Vulture. Both turned out to be full out of range and by then I was convinced that something drastic must have happened to vulture distribution since SABAP1!!! Admittedly, this was the southern trip on which I have seen the most vultures; I was previously under the impression one does not find them in the south. As we were atlasing a lot of new pentads we spent the maximum time out there before returning to our base after sunset.

On 18 July we left for Velloorsdrif and travelled towards Warmbad and Karasburg. We informed our landlady accordingly – just as well as there was hardly any traffic all day – and the only comment she had about Karasburg was "dis nie 'n plek waar jy wil bly nie". As we would pass through this town daily for the next few days we made a special effort to look for birds in all areas of the town every time we went through but it

seemed that most birds shared our landlady's opinion.

We continued along the MR21 to the most historic town in Namibia, Warmbad – it appeared to look like it had two hundred years ago, only with tin shanties replacing the wattle and daub structures. The old churches are still kept in a very good condition. This was the first stop over for most travellers, explorers and missionaries venturing into Namibia. One of the earliest travellers to Namibia, Francois Levallant, is said to also have visited Warmbad. We were greeted by a Karoo Long-billed Lark in the “main road”. Birdlife was remarkably good and we stayed for a long time visiting the different sites and wherever we went there were birds. No doubt it is the attraction of the spring water, although it was also running very low. We ended up with a tally of fifteen species, many, many more than we had seen along the road to Warmbad.



Figure 4: Karoo Long-billed Lark

Continuing along the D206 amongst splendid scenery we recorded yet another Lappet-faced Vulture, and yes, again it was full out of range!!! Apart from this, the dominant species were Common Fiscal and Sociable Weaver.

Arriving at Velloorsdrif I walked down to the river from the border post for some birding and was greeted by the southern race of the Spur-winged Goose. Although the Orange River did

not produce many birds for me it was still a worthwhile walk, especially as I saw an African Fish-Eagle perched above me on a cliff on my way back.

We returned to Karasburg via the C10 recording very few birds; in fact three pentads in a row produced not a single bird, no doubt a sign of lack of food on account of the drought. Karasburg is spread over two pentads and when we entered “Karasburg 2” from the C10 the only Namaqua Sandgrouse recorded was sitting on the road crossing of the MR21, probably considering settling “in die plek waar jy nie wil bly nie”!!

Early on 19 July we were on our way through Karasburg following the footsteps of Francois Levallant, the destination being his “Camp du Giraffe”, Ramansdrif, on the Orange River.

After leaving Karasburg we did not meet a single vehicle or see a person until we reached the drift opposite Goodhouse!!!



Figure 5: Ramansdrif on the Orange River

Returning on the D292 towards the D208 we saw our first eagle of the trip, a Martial Eagle, drawing its circles majestically in the sky, totally oblivious of the fact that it was fully out of range!!! Would it care?

And so we carried on to the next drift along the D208 through the

Goodhouse Poort Pass opposite Goodhouse in South Africa. Here a very enterprising individual is investing millions of dollars to establish date plantations on an enormous scale. We saw only three people; everything was either mechanized or computerized. It was interesting to record both Cape White-eye and Orange River White-eye at the same location. Surprisingly, Common Moorhen on the river was fully out of range. And for a time Red-eyed Dove had me foxed!!!

We were now actively birding in the Karas Region for the third day and we still had not encountered Karoo Korhaan. Driving back on the D208 towards Karasburg very little was added to our lists. Double-banded Courser (ORF) did lift our spirits which probably contributed to an excellent sighting of the much longed for Karoo Korhaan shortly afterwards in pentad 2805_1840 on one of the barest patches of ground encountered all day.



Figure 6: Karoo Korhaan

On 20 July we rested once more and because the wind was not blowing we decided to revisit the D270 and Grünau, where we added Sabota Lark, a new species for the list, and Karoo Chat. Leaving Vastrap a threesome of Karoo Korhaan kindly showed up. Along the D270 only Karoo and Familiar Chat were added to our list. Whilst traveling to

Ramansdrif the day before we had noticed that pentad 2805_1840, south-west of Karasburg, was more productive than others, so we travelled there and spent another hour in the pentad and “bagged” another five species. We left rather satisfied with fifteen species being registered in the most barren landscape yet encountered on our trip.

Our additional visit to Karasburg also resulted in an additional species, Scaly-feathered Finch, which brought the final tally for the pentad to fifteen.

On Thursday, 21 July, we departed from Vastrap, where we had recorded thirty five species, and headed for Klein Aus Vista, choosing the scenic Orange River route. Along the C10 towards Ai-Ais we usually have good sightings of raptors but this time there were none to be seen. Instead I earned some ORF’s for Spike-heeled Lark, Bokmakierie and Karoo Long-billed Lark.

Along the MR66 from the C37 to Aussenkehr we were hoping for Ludwig’s Bustard which we have always seen along this route. However, this time, the area was so dry and barren with no sign of vegetation at all that travelling across the red basalt gravel plains was like driving on Mars. What a welcome sight it was therefore to see the lush green and the water of the Orange River. Here we were greeted by Sacred Ibis, Cormorants and an African Darter.

Further west along the River, we saw Yellow-billed Duck, a bird we had not seen on the river before. At Sendelingsdrif we saw our only Goliath Heron whilst an African Fish-Eagle was circling above us wishing us well on our journey further north along the C13 to Aus. Crossing the

Rekvlakte where the highest density of Barlow's Lark has been recorded not a sign of life could be seen on the endless barren plains.



Figure 7: Orange River

In the meantime we contemplated what to do on our day of rest the following day. As we had atlased the road to Lüderitz two years in a row, we needed some new destination. We chose the Huib Plateau.

First we travelled eastwards for some 30 kilometers along the B4, before turning onto the D446, also known as the "Schakalskuppe Road". Anteater Chat, twice, and Brown Snake-Eagle earned us our first ORF's.



Figure 8: Verreaux's Eagle

A majestic Verreaux's Eagle on a cliff next to the road was no doubt our highlight on this road. Passing a little farm house further on I registered a Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) at the water trough, which was marginally out of range!! Rosy-faced Lovebird and Fork-tailed Drongo also generated

ORF's. We atlased each pentad by driving very slowly and stopping frequently and in this manner we managed to find up to twelve species per pentad.

At the junction of the D727 we turned right and followed this beautiful winding road through the Huib Plateau. This road is also known as the "Kyk-in-die-pot Road". Well, we looked everywhere but there was no pot to be found; instead we found more ORF's - Rosy-faced Lovebird, Acacia Pied Barbet and Cape Bunting. Again we painstakingly atlased each pentad and the maximum tally on this stretch of road was only five species, the highlight being another three Karoo Korhaan.

We returned along the C13 to Aus, again crossing the Rekvlakte, but it felt more like the vrekvlakte as for five consecutive pentads we only registered one Karoo Chat and that at a maximum speed of 40 km/h!!! Getting closer to Aus our fortunes changed for the better as we found some Greater Kestrels and a beautiful pair of Lanner Falcons perched on the telephone poles. Where will they perch one day when all the old telephone poles are removed? And then came the highlight for the C13, two Ludwig's Bustards, our first for this trip.

The day was closed by spending the last hours in the Garub pentad where Common Fiscal and Speckled Pigeon were added to the list.

Our next destination was the Namib Desert Lodge. We travelled along the scenic D707, this time the sand was so heavy that I preferred to travel with 4x4 engaged. Rüppell's Korhaan was seen twice and we now knew that slowly we were on our way back home. Along the D827 we were very

lucky with raptors. Starting off with Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk, of which we saw at least seven pairs, and followed by Verreaux's Eagle (ORF), Pygmy Falcon, Greater Kestrel, Lappet-faced Vulture (no ORF!!), Secretarybird and Rock Kestrel. North of Hammerstein an Augur Buzzard was circling above the road, another ORF for the day.



Figure 9: Augur Buzzard

We had one more day of rest and Birgit wanted to go to Sossusvlei. As luck would have it the east wind was blowing strongly but I ventured on in the hope the wind would die down – no such luck!! But once we left the dust at Sesriem Camp the air was clean despite the strong wind. Accordingly few birds were seen, but Rüppell's Korhaan and Ludwig's Bustard seemed quite unperturbed by the wind and went on foraging, while a Pied Crow was seen seeking shelter from the wind behind a little bush.



Figure 10: Pied Crow

Returning to Sesriem Camp I registered Scarlet-chested Sunbird, which was also an ORF.



Figure 11: Scarlet-chested Sunbird

On Monday 25 July we returned home to Swakopmund driving on, amongst others, the MR1998, through the Namib-Naukluft Park. A green shimmer of grass from a rain shower that fell in early June attracted many Springbok and Mountain Zebra and never before had we seen herds of thousands of Springbok and hundreds of Zebra elsewhere in the Namib. What a stunning end to a 4400 kilometre trip through the Hardap and //Karas Regions of Namibia.

Note: My gratitude and appreciation to Neil Thomson for editing the text.