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## Editorial

Tim Osborne

I must apologize to the members for the delay in Vol. 37 (1). It was at the printers in late January but due to unforeseen circumstances it was delayed until April. It also had a distortion error and a double entry of the map accompanying Holger Kolberg's ringing report, which was my fault. Not having a printer, I only work on my laptop and sometimes I cannot see what the final page will look like.

The rains are past and those birds dependent on insects have bred. The seed-eaters are enjoying the harvest and the large raptors are prospecting their nests as they also have lots of prey in the form of young birds. The Monotonous Larks are still singing their hearts out day and night on our farm. The African Scops Owls are also calling throughout the night. From our place we can hear 5 pairs, one of which is right outside our window. Funny how one gets used to natural sounds in the bush. When we come to Windhoek we cannot sleep with the car alarms, dogs barking and traffic, but here with a Scops calling all night we sleep right through.

From the Chairman's Report you will be able to see that the club membership is declining. If you want to keep the club viable you must also do your part and try and get new members to join.

There are a lot more sightings reported in this issue, which is a welcome change. Keep sending those in. So far this year we have added three new species to the Namibian list: Gull-billed Tern, Streaky-breasted Flufftail and European Blackcap (more on this species in the next volume).

## Tagesausflug auf die Farm Seeis / Day outing to Farm Seeis

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Am Dienstag, den 4. Mai 2004 hatten wir einen Tagesausflug auf Farm Seeis von Dr W. Späth. 10 Personen trafen sich an der Roten Brücke hinter dem Avis Damm. Der Tag war sehr windig und unangenehm. Aber wir haben immerhin noch  $\pm$  20 Vogelarten, so wie Weißrückengeier, die wir beim Nestbau beobachten, Elfenastrild, Elsterndroßling, Perlkauz und Spornpieper gesehen. Der Höhepunkt des Tages war einen Kardinalspecht beim Nestbau zu beobachten.

We held a day outing to Farm Seeis on 4 May 2004. We were 10 people, who met at the railway bridge behind Avis Dam. The day was windy and uncomfortable. We saw ca. 20 species such as Whitebacked Vulture, which we observed while building their nest, Blackchecked Waxbill, Pied Babbler, Pearlspotted Owlet and Grassveld Pipit. The highlight of the day was watching a male Cardinal Woodpecker building its nest. The day was enjoyed by all.

### BIRD OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES

Steve Braine guided a bird tour for BIRDQUEST from the UK and recorded several interesting birds. The tour started from Windhoek on 16 November 2002 and ended in Windhoek on 2 December 2002. The route took them from Windhoek via Omaruru to Spitzkoppe and then to Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. From Swakopmund to Henties Bay via Uis to Hobatere Lodge and then up to Ruacana in the north. From Ruacana across northwestern Ovamboland to the northern gate of Etosha, then via Grootfontein to Rundu and on to Suclabo Lodge, Mahan-go finally to ending at Shakawe Fishing Camp in Botswana. They then retraced their route back as far as Otavi and then via Okonjima Lodge back to Windhoek. A total of 415 species was observed during this period. Some of the more interesting records are listed below.

Neil MacLeod also had several guided trips and his notes are included in the lists below.

Erik Forsyth, Adam Riley, Hugh Chittenden, Alan Kirby and Cagan Sobanicglue from Rockjumper Bird Tours recently went to Angola. While driving up through northern Namibia, they found two new species for Namibia. The first species was flushed by Hugh Chittenden near a pan and was relocated in acacia woodland nearby and identified as a female Streaky-breasted Flufftail. The second was a Stanley's Bustard walking in short grassland. Both species were found just outside Etosha National Park on Andoni Plains and photographed. They found no records for these species in the Atlas of Southern African Birds (1997) and assumed that they were new to the country. (Editor's note: this is not the first record of a Stanley's Bustard in Namibia as Chris Brown saw 2 near the same area in 1997. See *Lanioturdus* 30(4):19-20).

#### BLACK HERON *Egretta ardesiaca*

One was seen at Walvis Bay on 21 Feb 2004. Three seen at the Swakop River mouth on 7 April 2004. One at Namutoni on 11 April 2004. (Neil MacLeod)

#### SLATY EGRET *Egretta vinaceigula*

A single bird was observed at the wetland east of Ruacana, this is probably the most western record for this species, which they also observed in the Mahango Game Reserve. At the wetland we also encountered c. 12 Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*, c.10 Ethiopian Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis* and c.100 Kittlitz's Sandpipers *Charadrius pecuarius*. (Steve Braine)

#### WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

One observed 13 Feb 2004 at the Orupembe community camp trying to roost for the night on a cliff. It was disturbed with us camping below. Next morning the bird was seen 5 km west in the gravel plain desert feeding next to some Rüppell's Korhaans. Another bird that was late to migrate, was seen at Okaukuejo on 28 April feeding with an equally late Abdim's Stork. (T. Osborne)

#### WOOLYNECKED STORK *Ciconia episcopus*

A group of c. 200 individuals were encountered at a termite emergence in the

Mahango Game Reserve. There were also tens of thousands of *Milvus* Kites, c. 250 Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis*, c. 200 Lesser-spotted Eagles *Aquila pomarina* and many other more common species. (S. Braine)

OPEN-BILLED STORK *Anastomus lamelligerus*

15 storks were seen on Charitsaub Plain, Etosha NP on 10 Jan 2004. The bird is quite rare within Etosha due to the lack of their main prey of snails. (T. Osborne)

WHITE-FACED DUCK *Dendrocygna viduata*

13 were seen at the Otjiwarongo sewage works on 16 Feb 2004. They also saw 26 European Rollers along the Otjiwarongo-Otavi Road. (N. MacLeod)

CAPE GRIFFON *Gyps coprotheres*

How many free-ranging Cape Griffon are there at Waterberg presently? In 1999 Namibia had 8, with another 10 birds due to be released in the future (GYPS SNIPS, December 2003, Issue No. 34). Is it possible then that a Cape Griffon has been correctly identified on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004 on 1818 Cc, Farm Goab 760 (S18°54'35.2" E18°06'30.6")?

On that morning at about 08h00 they were on the way to town when they noticed a vulture perched on a dead tree next to the road D3017, a few kms from home. Another bird was perched a distance away. We only took notice of the bird's presence, looked for more birds, suspecting a dead carcass somewhere. There were no more birds. Tineke noticed however, that the bird had a whitish breast.

They carried on.

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> his cousin and his wife came over for a visit. We talked birds. His cousin mentioned they had seen a Cape Griffon a few days ago. Where? When? It was the same place we had seen them, just a little later. We had a look in "SASOL" and immediately his cousin pointed to the Cape Griffon, saying he had distinctly noticed the white spots on the wing secondaries. The bird was perched just off the road, lightened by the morning sun. Our quick observations make this a Cape Griffon. (Günther & Tineke Friederich)

PALLID HARRIER *Circus macrourus*

A male was seen on the on the road from Okaukuejo to Okondeka along with

five Caspian Plovers which included two males in brilliant breeding plumage. (N. MacLeod)

BOOTED EAGLE *Hieraaetus pennatus*

One was seen at Bird Paradise, Walvis Bay on 21 Feb 2004. (N. MacLeod)

EUROPEAN MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

A single juvenile was seen at the Rundu sewerage works to the east of Rundu. (S. Braine)

BLACKTAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

A single bird seen at the Rundu sewerage works to the east. (S. Braine)

LESSER JACANA *Microparra capensis*

A single bird observed on floating vegetation on the Okavango River near Sarasunga Lodge east of Rundu. (S. Braine)

CHESTNUT BANDED SANDPLOVER *Charadrius pallidus*

More than c. 100 were seen at the artesian spring to the north of Etosha, just north of the new entrance (King Nehale) gate in the north. (S. Braine)

TEREK SANDPIPER *Xenus cinereus*

One was spotted along the road from Esplanade bungalows towards the salt works on 21 February 2004. (N. MacLeod)

GULL-BILLED TERN *Gelochelidon nilotica*

This bird was first seen flying over the first pond on the left past the Esplanade Bungalows between 22-24 March at Walvis Bay by Phil Hockey. Many people searched for the bird subsequently but failed to find it. Then on 23 April Mike Buckin found the bird in a tern roost out on the tidelands opposite the second pond past the bungalows. A phone call later and most of the Swakopmund/Walvis Bay birding network (K. Wearne, S. Roux, M. Boorman, S. Dantu, etc.) saw the bird either at the roost or feeding over one of the ponds. This bird is very rare in southern Africa but a few are seen on an annual basis within Zambia.

SOUTHERN GROUND HORNBILL *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

Five birds were seen next to the road between Oshakati and Ondangwa. (S. Braine)

GREY HORNBILL *Tockus nasutus*

On 26 Mar 2004 I saw a flock of 51 Grey Hornbills flying past just south of Namutoni, Etosha NP. It appeared to be a post breeding aggregation. (T. Osborne)

BLACK CUCKOO SHRIKE *Campephaga flava*

Three pairs were seen from Otavi and along the road to Grootfontein. This is a species, which has extended its range dramatically in the past 30 years; i.e. these birds were not seen in the area prior to this period. (S. Braine)

ORANGEBREASTED BUSH SHRIKE *Telophorus sulfureopectus*:

A single bird was heard and subsequently called in at the campsite at Namutoni; this is a western extension for this species. (S. Braine)

PINKBILLED LARK *Spizocorys conirostris*

About 10 were found in a field near the wetlands east of Ruacana. Also large numbers seen at the artesian spring north of Etosha's northern gate (Steve Braine). Several Pink-billed Larks seen on the Okaukuejo-Okendeka road, on 18 February 2004. (Neil MacLeod)

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

During a routine monthly bird count at Swakopmund Sewage Works on 29 Feb 2004 a Yellow Wagtail was observed. Although this species is not uncommon in Namibia, the particular subspecies seen, *M.f. feldegg*, is regarded as a vagrant to southern Africa (Keith S, Urban E.K, and Fry C.H. (1992). The Birds of Africa. Vol. IV. Academic Press Limited, London). This bird was a male in fresh boreal spring plumage; so a confident identification was possible. Subspecies *feldegg* is from a population whose normal southernmost limit of its wintering range is central Democratic Republic of the Congo. Repeated sightings were made of this bird daily until 03 Mar 2004 after which it disappeared. (Mark Boorman)

## The amazing, one-winged flying Quelea

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The following is a true story I wrote for my grandchildren in Alaska and is part of series of tales I have been working on to let them know about our African adventures.

Once upon a time on Windpoort Farm Grandpa Tim and Grandma Laurel were busy catching birds in a mist net so they could ring them and let them go. They did that to see where the birds were going because maybe somebody else would catch them far away and see Grandpa's ring on the leg and let Grandpa know where that bird had gone.

Grandpa was actually off doing something else and Grandma Laurel was busy watching the net. She was catching different kinds of birds but the one she was catching the most was a little bird called a "quelea." In fact she was catching lots of them. So she would get them out of the net, put them in bags, bring them in the house, measure and weigh them and finally ring the bird and let it go.

As she was working her way through about a dozen queleas, she pulled one out of its bag and started to measure its right wing. It had none! No wing at all; just a stump where once there had been a wing. "Now how did that bird manage to fly into the net," she wondered. Somehow that bird with only one wing had flown into the net and gotten caught. Maybe it just flapped along with its one wing or maybe it flew like a helicopter with its one wing going round and round above its head. "This is great!" she thought. "I will save this bird for Grandpa Tim and he can take all kinds of measurements and lots of photographs and we can write an article for a glossy magazine and get rich and famous!!!" Grandma was very excited.

After a while Grandpa Tim came home. "Guess what I got in the net," squeaked Grandma excitedly. "A one-winged flying quelea!!!" "What?" said Grandpa. "Let