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## Editorial

Another hot dry season is upon us and birding is slow as we await the rains. Soon, however, the palearctic and intra-African migrants will arrive to increase the numbers of species. Our drab non-breeding local birds will get dressed up for the ladies and identification of most of the weavers, bishops and whydahs will be a lot easier. Unfortunately, the bird guides usually only illustrate these birds in breeding dress. In Namibia we only see them dressed up for 3-5 months of the year and identification is often frustrating.

Recently I caught non-breeding Shaft-tailed Whydahs in my mist net for ringing. After consulting all the reference books I found it is impossible to sex any of the birds. either in the hand or in the field. It would most helpful if members who know of any special aids or resources for identifying Shaft-tailed Whydahs would publish that information in the *Lanioturdus* for all of us. Another bird I have been trying to sex in the non-breeding season is the Chestnut Weaver. In the hand there is no problem since the male has a larger wing length and is heavier, but free-flying in a tree then identification becomes difficult.

The new Roberts VII will be about 1200 pages and will be out in April 2005 at a cost of R799. It will be nice to have all the up-to-the-date data on the birds but it is obvious from the draft texts on the website that information is missing on many of the species. See [www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/docs/roberts.html](http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/docs/roberts.html). Perhaps after the book comes out I will try and summarize where gaps in information on Namibia birds occur so we can try and fill the gaps.

## BIRD OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES

### RED-BREASTED SWALLOW *Hirundo semirufa*

They are very early this year. Just past 17h30 on 1 August, I went out to check my cows when I saw them circling above their usual breeding place: an old, disused 500 gallon water tank, that I have left lying on its side only for them. I was amazed. This is their earliest arrival date we have recorded so far, especially since winter is still here.

Previous arrival dates:

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 15 Aug 1997 | 10 Aug 1998  |
| 10 Aug 1999 | 12 Aug 2001  |
| ? Aug 2002  | 27 Sept 2003 |

(Günther Friederich)

### HORNBILLS

We're having some fun here with our Hornbills outside the kitchen. We hung one of the Zimbabwe-made tin chicken feeders from our clothesline. Each morning we get about 30 hornbills coming in to feed. They are mostly young Red-billed and Yellow-billed hornbills coming to the feeder. Since mid-July we have had a pair of Bradfield's Hornbill also feeding. They are dominant at the feeder, everyone has to "gee pad" when they want to feed. Tineke has looked to see if there are distinctive sexual differences but so far the only difference between them is in size. They come during early mornings mostly feeding on crushed commercial poultry feed. It appears they are winter visitors, having been recorded here from May to November in the past. We have never seen more than this pair. (Gunther & Tineke Friederich)

### COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Recently I went tern ringing with Mark in Swakop and had an interesting evening. First was a bizarre injury on a Common Tern: the tongue had somehow been bent down and was protruding down through the skin in the lower mandible at right angles to the bill. The injury was an old one, as this area is well supplied with blood, there was no blood at all. The bird was healthy with a good weight and did not appear stressed by the injury. It was easily fixed and the bird was

ringed and released. Tony Tree told us later that he has come across this type of injury before. Has anyone else had anything similar?

On 9 Sep 2004 I caught and released a Common Tern with a ring from Finland and submitted the data to AFRING on Saturday 11 Sep 2004. On Monday afternoon 13 Sep 2004 I got the ringing details from the Finland ringing scheme - not bad! Well done AFRING and Finland for your efficiency. The bird had been ringed as a chick in Finland on 27 Jun 1996 (John Patterson)

### KELP GULL *Larus dominicanus*

I've seen a very similar injury on an adult Kelp Gull on Dassen Island in 1997. The tongue was protruding through the lower mandible, although not at right angles. The bird was healthy and clearly not bothered. (Jessica Kemper)

### PELICANS

Marta de Ponte is a Ph.D student at the ADU under Prof. Les Underhill. She is coordinating a census of White Pelicans in southern Africa. In Namibia she is looking at covering sites previously counted for CWAC. If anyone is keen to help, please contact her directly at [mdeporte@botzoo.uct.ac.za](mailto:mdeporte@botzoo.uct.ac.za)

## Announcements

We have our network for ringers up and running. This is not exclusively for ringers though. Anyone interested in birding generally is welcome to join. Simply send a blank e-mail to: [namringers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:namringers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Mark Boorman & Sandra Dantu  
Box 1445  
Swakopmund, Namibia  
email : [felix@mweb.com.na](mailto:felix@mweb.com.na)

## SAFRING/BLSA Wakkerstroom Bird Ringing Course

1-7 January 2005

This course will focus on mistnetting in reedbeds, grasslands, and forest. It is sponsored by BirdLife SA Wetland Centre, Wakkerstroom Course fees: R600 for trainees (any level of experience welcome). Accommodation: BLSA self-catering dormitories cost R300 per person sharing for the week (two beds per room), first come basis. Camping and other accommodation is available in Wakkerstroom (details available on request).

Details on programs, what to bring, course material, etc on our web at:

<http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/safring/notices.htm>

Registration by emailing [safring@adu.uct.ac.za](mailto:safring@adu.uct.ac.za)

For further information contact Dieter Oschadleus [dieter@adu.uct.ac.za](mailto:dieter@adu.uct.ac.za)

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## NAMIBIA BIRD CLUB

### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

*LANIOTURDUS* publishes articles and notes of broad birding interest to the membership of the Namibia Bird Club. Contributors should look at recent issues of the magazine for guidance and suitability and presentation of material. Manuscripts in English, German or Afrikaans are requested and should be typed in double spacing on A4 paper. If papers are submitted in German or Afrikaans a short English summary should accompany the article. For papers in English summaries in German or Afrikaans may also be submitted. Sketches, maps and figures should be submitted on good quality white paper in black ink. High contrast black and white or colour photographs (prints or transparencies) may be submitted to illustrate articles. Artwork illustrating any aspect of birds and/or birding are also requested. All submissions should have the author's address, contact telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable).

The preferred medium of submission for articles is either computer disk (high density 3.5") or attachments to e-mails. The preferred word processing programme is MS Word Version 7.0 on Windows 95. Any other programmes are acceptable but authors should also include an alternate version in either text only (.txt) or rich text format (.rtf) files. Handwritten articles are acceptable but must be printed and legible. Short notes and observations should be submitted on a quarterly basis.

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

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