

LANIOTURDUS

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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 organise monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Water Care 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 the bird club's journal, *Lanioturdus* and outings and events are advertised on the club's website www.namibiabirdclub.org.

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organisation 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.



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Cover photo Bradfield's Hornbill © Holger Kolberg

Hildegard Becker

It is with deep sorrow that we learned of the passing of bird club member Hildegard Becker.

She served on the Namibia Bird Club committee from 2005 until mid-2008, fulfilling the post of secretary. Her friendly and efficient manner was loved by everyone. She often helped with writing the *Bird Call* - an informal events calendar.

Hildegard was also a passionate botanist combining her enthusiasm for birdlife with Namibia's nature.

She had a good sense of humour and once told me that she employed a bunch of hornbills to dig up her garden - all was left was to sow the seeds.

Black-collared Barbet

Günther Friederich

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My sighting of a Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* in the town of Grootfontein, northern Namibia, was published in *Lanioturdus* 55(4) 2022. I first heard this well-known call from the Kavango Regions in our neighborhood on 25 September 2022 at 08h30. When I had confirmed the call as being that of this bird, I tried to find it by following the call later in the day at 16h40, again on 29 September. The bird was moving between various gardens in our neighborhood.

I made another effort one afternoon the following month on 4 October, this time trying to lure the bird into sight by calling it out. I concentrated on the area where I had heard it, where some *Ficus* trees *Ficus thoninngii* and *Ficus sycomore*, the latter bearing fruit, occurred.

After a while I found the bird perched, not in a *Ficus*, but in a Sweet-thorn bush *Vachellia (Acacia) karroo*, opposite the graveled road. I made sure of the ID and left the scene and the bird.

As I was satisfied with my find, I made no further effort in searching for the bird when I heard it calling. The bird stayed through November. It was still present during December 2022, but would surely move back north after some good rains.

In December 2022 we left home during the morning, for a visit to a small holding outside town. There I heard a Black-collard Barbet call! I did not see it, but that was the call. Was this my barbet, or was this another one? This small holding is approximately 3.79 km, (measured by GPS), due west of our home. This left

me with a question which I could not yet answer.

I kept on hearing the barbet call during January 2023, February (it would not leave), through to June. During July I was satisfied with my prediction that the bird had left. Came August – Black-collared Barbet call in the neighborhood! Had I just missed it the month before?

During the following month, September 2023, I was on farm supervision in the Grootfontein area, close to town. On the morning of 19 September, I was parked at a farm entrance on district road D 2859, at the T – junction to the Hoba Meteorite in the Otjihaenena Valley, where large maize fields dominate farming activities. There! – Barbet call, reasonably close, from a Sickie-bush *Dichrostachys cinerea* thicket. I could not search. Was it possible, the barbet this far out of the known range, or was this another barbet? This location was 18.11 km due west from home. A bigger question.

Less than two hours later I was at another location in the valley, at the edge of a mountain range south-east of the previous location, having crossed the gravel road D 2905/2860 which eventually joins the Grootfontein – Otavi tarred road. I was at a cattle drinking point called "Brown Tank". There – I once again heard a barbet call! Was this the same bird heard earlier? Had it followed me? Or was this once again another bird? This location was approximately 7.54 km south east of the previous find and about 19.85 km south west of my home location.

Do we have more birds in this area? I have always only heard a call from a single locality, never two birds calling together. How large is the roaming area of Black-collared Barbet?

So far this barbet is still in the area, last recorded during November 2023.

“Roberts Birds of Southern Africa, VIIth edition” describes this bird as “resident, with little local movement, 24 km being the furthest recovery of a ringed bird.” It prefers habitat where wild figs, *Ficus ssp.* and other fruiting trees occur.

“The Atlas of Southern African Birds”, Vol. 1, Non-passerines, states this bird as being “centred in the Miombo, on the moist wooded areas of the Okavango and Caprivi (Zambezi). In drier grasslands it is restricted to riverine vegetation, also undoubtedly linked to urban areas...” Movement of ringed bird recorded 5,4 km, furthest 20 km (SAFRING). The closest SABAP1 record to Grootfontein I could find is from QDGC 1816DD, in the Namutoni area in the Etosha National Park. (There is a SABAP2 record about

halfway between Grootfontein and Mururani. – Ed.)

“The Complete Book of Southern African Birds” describes the same occurrences as above, also as “localized in drier savannas.”

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