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Editorial

Timothy O. Osborne

With this issue the *Lanioturdus* is now back to being a journal with 4 issues per year and I would like to congratulate the members for your support to make this happen. Within this issue is a wide diversity of articles from all parts of the country. Again we have articles on "common" garden birds which are not common according to the books.

I would like to apologize to Rob Simmons and Penn Lloyd for forgetting to include a figure in their article, which appeared in Volume 35(3). It is included in this issue.

We have only had 4 write-ups on bird club outings in Volume 35 from 2002 and I would like to appeal to organizers and members to please send me a short note on the outing. This will enable other members, who did not attend, to see what the club has been doing and what birds were seen.

Included within this issue is an extra membership form. Please give one to a keen birder you know, who is not a member. You may not know it, but the Namibia Bird Club only has about 90 members which is a rather shocking low number considering all the people we know who have an interest in birding in the country. If you just consider the number of tour guides operating that is more than 90 people. That does not count the number of hunting guides, farmers, scientists, and government employees who also either observe birds or do studies on birds. In 3 of our neighbouring countries Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe their bird clubs/societies have 300-600 members and have far less individuals who are active in the tourism or outdoor avocations.

Blue Waxbills in Windhoek (continued)

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I was interested to read in the latest *Lanioturdus* (Vol 35 (2)) that someone else has taken note of the presence of Blue Waxbills *Uraeginthus angolensis* in Windhoek.

We moved into our house in Klein Windhoek in August 1988 and were delighted to identify blue waxbills in the garden, in spite of the fact that according to the various books, this is out of their range. Being very new in the birding game at that stage, but armed with photographs to prove that we had not seen escapee budgies, we approached various boffins to "Please confirm and explain....."

Dave Ward was most interested because in his experience he had never seen them south of Otjiwarongo. He suggested that we contact Chris Brown.

Chris Brown said he was aware of the small, but thriving population in Windhoek, and suggested that they may have worked their way down the valley between Okahandja and Windhoek, finally ending up in Klein Windhoek. It was also suggested that they may have escaped or had been released from cages.

(Incidentally, it was this conversation which led to us filling in the Atlas cards every month and the interest in birding in general).

Whatever the reason for their presence, we have seen these delightful little birds for the past 14 years on a regular basis and believe that they nest in the Klein Windhoek riverbed nearby where their calls can usually be heard. They are often the first birds appearing to feed in the mornings and are the last to leave at night. The numbers seem to have remained fairly constant during this time - certainly not many, but always present. We have had at most about 6 or 7 individuals in the garden at a time, with juveniles each season.

They have also been seen on the slopes of the koppie next to Robert Mugabe Avenue, just south of Windhoek High School. Peter Tyldesley lived in one of the houses there and reported seeing them frequently while they were there.

I hope these comments will be of interest to you and Peter Cunningham, and perhaps someone else has another opinion to offer?

Contents of *The Babbler*.

Submitted by David Orchard
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The Namibia Bird Club runs an exchange program with Birdlife Botswana (Botswana Bird Club) where Journals are exchanged. Copies of BLB's Journal (named *The Babbler*) are held on behalf of Namibian Bird Club in the Scientific Society Library and are available for all to read.

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PALE-WINGED STARLINGS BREEDING IN THE NAMIB-NAUKLUFT PARK

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Introduction

Although Pale-winged Starlings *Onychognathus naboroupp* are common and widespread over the western half of Namibia and in the northern and western Cape, as far as the Free State in South Africa, (Harrison *et al* 1997) “we still lack the most basic information ... for many southern African species” (Craig 1996). Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa states “incubation and nestling: unrecorded” (Maclean 1993) and similarly in Tarboton (2001).

In the Namib-Naukluft Park we tried to obtain breeding records of these common birds for several years. Although nesting sites on the cliffs in the Naukluft Mountains were found, closer examination was hindered by the height of these cliffs. Some nests were accessible with a long extension ladder; however, the nests were well guarded by an abundant number of aggressive paper *Belonogaster* wasps. The Pale-winged Starlings also breed in the Sesriem Canyon to the west