

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.

Crimson-breasted Shrike and Western Barred Spitting Cobra

Fritz Curschmann
All photos © Fritz Curschmann



On the morning of 16 January 2023 I heard the alarm call of a Crimson-breasted Shrike in a Ringwood Tree (*Maerua schinzii*) in front of our chalet in the Okaukuejo Resort, Etosha National Park.

After investigating, I saw a baby Western Barred Spitting Cobra (Zebra Snake) in a crevice at the bottom of the tree trunk. I immediately went to look for help to capture the snake, to be released outside the perimeter fence. When I got back, the shrike had caught the snake. It took flight with the snake dangling from its beak and landed on a branch, where the bird continued with the “killing process”.

I took some video footage and some pictures with my mobile phone. After a while I was unfortunately distracted by a phone call and missed something interesting. I was later informed of this by my wife who had joined me.

After accidentally having dropped the snake, the shrike picked it up and was very soon joined by another shrike and a “tug-of-war” started. The newcomer came out victorious and flew away with its prize.



We tried to find the shrike with the snake but to no avail, so unfortunately I do not know how the bird devoured the snake.

It is known for shrikes to kill and eat all sorts of reptiles and insects, but this scenario was totally new to me.