



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

We rely heavily on books such as Roberts VII, (often referred to as the “birders’ bible”), for distribution maps, biometric measurements etc. - but is the information in these reference books always correct? And, possibly more importantly, do we read it correctly? Mark Paxton’s observations on the tail length of the green/violet wood-hoopoes he measured at Shamvura (Lanioturdus 43-2) got me interested. My own records of the measurements of the southern masked-weavers occurring in Namibia which can be seen in this issue further stimulated this interest. While there are some very obvious mistakes in even the best of publications (the distribution map for malachite sunbird in Roberts VII is a case in point as is the distribution map for red-billed quelea in Roberts Field Guide – Chittenden 2007), some of these can probably be put down to editorial oversight and printers’ gremlins, but the

Crowned Eagle, a First for the Western Caprivi and Namibia.

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When making your 14th trip to Namibia and Botswana you do not expect wonders. However, it happened to me when birding in the Western Caprivi on our way from Divundu to Katima Mulilo.

We stayed overnight at Ngepi Camp and left on 17/02/2010 at about 07h30. We passed through the roadblock at the Okavango Bridge near Divundu around 8 o'clock. I always use my speed control, otherwise I find myself driving too fast. By the time you stop, you are either past the bird or on top of it and it flies away. My speed was around 64 km/h and we had stopped every now and then to look at birds. I took the photograph at 10h04. Therefore, we must have driven about 80 – 100 km into the Bwabwata (West Caprivi) National Park (quarter degree square 1722 DA). That is the nearest I can pinpoint the place. It was on my right-hand side, +/- 20 metres from the tarred road.

I drove past and made a U-turn, as the sun was still in my face and then stopped far enough away so as not to frighten the bird. I took the photograph and tried to get nearer. Of course, it than flew away.

Checking the book, my suspicions were confirmed. It should not have been there! Its range stops more or less at Victoria Falls. The nearest I had seen it before was on the tarred road from Ngoma Bridge to Kasane (Botswana) on 08/02/2006 - a juvenile bird.

On arriving home, I wrote an article about my trip for the Birdnet. The next day I received an email from Dr. Chris Brown asking for location and the photograph. He confirmed the sighting as a **first** for Namibia and the Caprivi. So, wonders still happen.



The Caprivi crowned eagle - Photo Jan de Vries



The juvenile bird previously photographed in Botswana – Photo Jan de Vries

Summary of the 2009 ringing season in Namibia

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The 2009 ringing season was an abbreviated one, lasting only six months rather than the customary twelve. The reason for this is that SAFRING has switched to using the calendar year as the ringing season, as opposed to the previous system which ran from 1 July in one year to 30 June the next year.

Notwithstanding the shortened season, Namibian ringers once again excelled with over 8,000 records covering 169 species being submitted. Out of these, 5193 are newly ringed (code 1) birds and the remainder retraps, controls, re-sightings etc. The latter total has been boosted considerably because of returns from the manned islands being submitted for the first time in a long while