

# LANIOTURDUS

VOL. 44 (2) 2011

[www.namibiabirdclub.org](http://www.namibiabirdclub.org)

## CONTENTS

THOMSON N	Editorial	1
MIDDENDORFF G	Chairperson's Report	2
DEMASIUS E	Blue Crane Report : December 2010	4
THOMSON N	Who were the People after whom some of our Bird Species are named? (Part 2 : Abdim's Stork to Franklin's Gull)	7
BARTLEWSKI S	Portrait – Spotted Flycatcher	11
KOLBERG H	Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations 4 : Herons and Egrets Part 1	12
THOMSON N	New Names, Old Names and Very Old Names	16
BARTLEWSKI S	Ost-Afrika Bericht	18
DEMASIUS E	A Different Kind of Birding Part 1 : Birds on the Stamps of South Africa	22
	RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS	31

## Editorial

This is now the eleventh edition of Lanioturdus that I have edited. Looking back to Lanioturdus 41 (1), the first I edited, I note that I wrote "I do not see myself as a longterm replacement in this position but rather as someone who will fill the gap until a permanent editor can be found. However, I have the feeling that this statement might well end up in the category of 'famous last words.'" How true that statement has turned out to be! However, I must hasten to add that I have thoroughly enjoyed editing the journal. My first attempt at editing was also our first electronic edition of Lanioturdus and looking through all the electronic issues to date I see that we have come a long way since the early attempts.

The last four issues have been set by Eckart Demasius and I believe that Eckart has done a fine job after initially finding himself up against a rather steep learning curve. Eckart also has a huge library of birding related digital photographs, some of which we have used to illustrate various articles and which have, in my opinion, really enhanced the publication.

I would really like to know what you, the readers, think of Lanioturdus. I have had the odd email commending the journal and initially there were one of two who said they preferred Lanioturdus in the booklet form to the electronic format. Printing and postage costs made the booklet form prohibitively expensive forcing us to change to the electronic format. In this regard we are way ahead of most of the South African bird clubs some of which are now starting to investigate

## A Different Kind of Birding Part I:

### Birds on the Stamps of South Africa

Eckart Demasius  
P.O.Box 1413  
Swakopmund  
[e-b.de@iway.na](mailto:e-b.de@iway.na)

This four-part series of articles deals with a hobby of mine which I refer to as “office birding” or “a different kind of birding”. No, not looking out of the window and searching for birds but looking at birds on the stamps on the letters I receive through the mail. The first article deals with birds on stamps of South Africa, Part II will deal with the birds on the stamps of South West Africa and finally we shall have a look at the wonderful bird stamps we have in Namibia (Parts III & IV).

Ever since stamps were first used as tokens for payment of postal services, they have depicted, inter alia, images of important people, scenes of natural beauty, buildings, development projects, plants, animals and birds. Apart from being a mirror of our society, they also reflect our awareness of issues important enough to be displayed on our stamps.

In South Africa stamps were used for the first time in the Cape of Good Hope on 1 September 1853.

The Union of South Africa was established on 31 May 1910 and the stamps continued to portray mainly the reigning monarchs, although in 1927 a first definitive series with pictorials was issued. Gnus were depicted on one of these stamps but birds played no role at this stage. The other stamps portrayed buildings, ships and some scenes of natural beauty.

Fifty one years later the Union of South Africa became the Republic of South Africa and for the first time three birds, the African Pygmy Kingfisher, the Crimson-breasted Shrike and the Secretarybird, appeared as part of the first definitive issue on 31 May 1961. It took 108 years of philatelic history before the first birds were depicted on stamps in South Africa.



The same stamps reappeared in 1964, but the designs were redrawn and some of the stamps had new values. The kingfisher stamp was redrawn in 1967 and again in 1969, while the 20c Secretarybird stamp was reprinted in 1971.



On the occasion of the five year anniversary of the Republic of South Africa a celebratory stamp was issued depicting what should have been a peace dove although it does not really resemble a dove at all.



With the arrival of the second definitive issue on 20 November 1974, six new birds were displayed. The Cape Gannet, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Yellow-billed Hornbill, Bokmakierie, Blue Crane (South Africa's National Bird) and the Bateleur were chosen.



Real birding on stamps started in 1988 with stamp issues commemorating the 500th anniversary of Bartholomeu Diaz's arrival at Mossel Bay and with a series on lighthouses. In both cases birds were only depicted as part of the artwork and are very difficult to identify.

The bird on the Diaz stamp, according to [www.bird-stamps.org](http://www.bird-stamps.org), is a Cape gannet, whilst the birds around the lighthouse remain unidentified.



On 2 August 1990, for the first time, a commemorative set of stamps was issued with South African birds. The set of four depicts the Knysna Turaco, the Red-capped Robin-Chat, the Rufous-naped Lark and the Bokmakierie.



Very soon after the above date, on 21 February 1991, another special issue on animal breeding in South Africa, including a racing pigeon, was issued. This is the first time a domesticated bird was used on a stamp in South Africa.



The signing of the Antarctica treaty by South Africa was commemorated on a set of stamps in December 1991. One of the two stamps shows the supply ship, SA Agulhas, with three penguins in the foreground.



Environmental conservation was also gaining momentum and the topic was soon being used on stamps to spread the message. In February

1992 a set of three stamps was issued and a nondescript red and black bird (it could be some kind of weaver) appears at a polluted stream.



Bird-stamps describes this bird as a Red-billed Malimbe, but hastens to add that no such bird exists in Southern Africa.

With the change in politics peace was celebrated which also served as a good reason to issue new stamps. The peace dove made its appearance twice on this beautiful set of stamps depicting child art.



The third definitive issue had Cape fynbos as its theme, the fourth, South African architecture and fifth edition's theme was succulents. The sixth definitive series with its topic "threatened fauna" appeared on 3 September 1993 and included a number of threatened bird species. The six birds are the Kori Bustard, African Penguin, Wattled Crane, Blue Swallow, Martial Eagle and Bateleur.







A set of stamps promoting tourism in each new South African province was launched in 1995. The KwaZulu-Natal stamp depicts a white rhino and on its shoulder an oxpecker (Red-billed Oxpecker according to bird-stamps) can be recognized.



In definitive series, additional values are often added from time to time. In the series then in use all the additional stamps were dedicated to birds. On 2 October 1995 an additional value to the definitive series depicting the Lemon-breasted Canary was issued.



Two further additions followed - on 20 March 1997, an African Fish-Eagle stamp and on 27 August 1997 a stamp with a Subantarctic Skua and one with a King Penguin completed this definitive series.



All in all nine birds appeared on this definitive series, possibly a reflection of greater environmental awareness and the fact that birds and birding have become more and more popular in recent years.

In the same year, on 5 June, a commemorative issue was published, depicting waterbirds of South Africa. This beautiful set of ten standard postage stamps bears images of White-breasted Cormorant, Hamerkop, Pied Kingfisher, Purple Heron, Black-headed Heron, Darter, Green-backed Heron, White-faced Duck, Saddle-billed Stork and Water Thick-knee.



Birds as motives for stamps were becoming more popular and a year later, on 1 June 1998, another commemorative set on South African raptors was issued. As was the case with the previous set, this latest set also consisted of standard postage stamps, representing ten different South African raptors. Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk, Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon, Bearded Vulture, Black Harrier, Cape Vulture, Bateleur, Spotted Eagle-Owl, White Headed Vulture and African Fish-Eagle appear on these stamps.



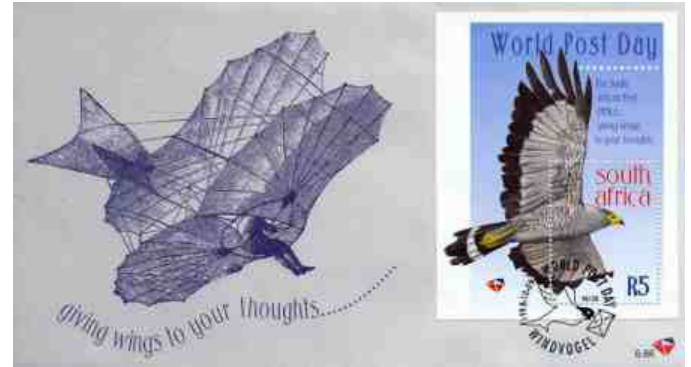


It is worth noting that three of the birds are vultures, birds that were much despised in the past and unnecessarily hunted by ill informed farmers. This certainly is a sign that the educational efforts of the past years have achieved some positive results.

Tourism was again promoted in 1998 with sets of postcard-rated stamp booklets for each province. The Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal booklets both depict some birds. The Knysna Turaco, so often associated with the Garden Route, did not make it to be depicted on one of the stamps, but at least it appeared on the cover of the booklet. The Common Ostrich, associated with the related industry around Oudtshoorn poses proudly on one of the stamps. Pink-backed Pelicans are seen in the background on one of the KwaZulu-Natal stamps.



World Post Day was commemorated with a most beautiful mini-sheet depicting an African Harrier-Hawk in flight in October 1998. The topic being “give wings to our thoughts...” I cannot figure out how this links up with the harrier-hawk except that the flight of one of the first aeroplanes depicted on the first day cover was as odd as the flying pattern of the African Harrier-Hawk!!



Also in 1998, the re-drawn sixth definitive issue appeared. The motives were the same, the only difference was “cleaner” stamps without any frames. Some of the bird images had also been rotated by 180 degrees.



The former additional value stamp depicting the African Fish-Eagle was also issued as well as a stamp with a Yellow-billed Kite and one with the Cape Vulture.





Migratory species of southern Africa were celebrated in August 1999, in a manner very similar to the booklets that were issued on water birds of South Africa and South African raptors. Of the ten stamps in the booklet six were bird stamps, namely Barn Swallow, Lesser Kestrel, European Bee-eater, Curlew Sandpiper, Wandering Albatross and Lesser Flamingo.



Then, in May 2000, on the occasion of the London Stamp Show, the Knysna Turaco appeared on a South African stamp as part of a mini sheet.

Sadly these special stamps are rarely used on postal items and so remain unknown to most people.



On 15 November 2000 the 7<sup>th</sup> definitive series was launched and birds were again part of the series. The (by now) very well known bird stamps appeared for the first time, depicting Lilac-breasted Roller, Woodland Kingfisher, White-fronted Bee-eater, African Green-Pigeon and Purple-crested Turaco. The stunningly beautiful Carmine Bee-eater was unfortunately relegated to the first day cover.



Historic occasions are often depicted on stamps and so the establishment of the first ever cross-border park, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, was commemorated with the issue of special stamps in May 2001. On the first day cover four stamps show typical Kalahari scenes, one with a nest of Sociable Weavers, a very common bird in that area. A maxi first day cover with a mini sheet includes the stamp mentioned above as well as a Martial Eagle landing on a tree branch as part of the scene.



Another historic occasion commemorated in South Africa in June 2001 was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soweto Uprising in Kliptown. The Soweto uprising involved demonstrations against especially the second class education system under the apartheid regime.





Only three years later another bird was to be seen on a South African stamp. A beautiful gesture was the recognition of the work done by volunteers. To this effect a series of stamps was issued celebrating the gift of volunteers and the African Penguin appears in a scene where volunteers help cleaning oil-spillage affected penguins.



On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of airmail in South Africa a special stamp was issued in the form of a mini sheet. Air mail goes hand in hand with flying and flying with birds, so it is not surprising that at least a graphic form of a bird appeared on that stamp.



Then it was time for environmental matters again. In September 2004 the ecology of Table Mountain in Cape Town was featured. Indeed a worthy topic and the endemic Cape Sugarbird has pride of place on one of the stamps.



2004 was a good year for birds on stamps in South Africa as SAPOA, the Southern African Post Operators Association decided to launch the first joint stamp issue. The issue shows the national birds of all member countries. It is interesting to see how many chose the African Fish-Eagle as their national bird, whilst others chose a rather modest bird like Botswana with the Cattle Egret as its national bird.



The Chinese years are always celebrated in South Africa and so it has become a tradition that annually stamps are issued to celebrate the new Chinese year. 2005 was the year of the rooster and a very proud cockerel appears on the mini sheet marking that occasion.



The South Africans became very innovative with the topics they chose for their stamps each year. A striking topic was the fairy tales of various indigenous people and the contents thereof were depicted on stamps.

One stamp for example deals with the tale of King Lion and King Eagle while another tells of the honeyguide's revenge and the last stamp explains to us how the ostrich got its long





neck. These very picturesque stamps make one want to read these wonderful fairy tales!!



South African landscapes had appeared on stamps before, but they had always been very sterile until the edition of May 2005. Maybe the powers that be recognized that there are some artists who do not shy away from colour and form!!! In the end a very naïvely drawn bird appears on one of the stamps and adds another one to the list!



The lunar year of the dog or what we know as 2006 was also very innovatively recognized. The very valuable work dogs execute in leading the blind or sniffing out drugs at, for example airports, or as preventative assistants at airports where they are used to chase away birds to prevent bird strikes on aeroplanes,



was depicted on a mini sheet to celebrate this year.

2007 was another good year for birds on South African stamps. First the International Polar and Heliophysical Year was celebrated with the issue of a mini sheet depicting a scene in the Antarctic. Four recognizable birds appear on the stamps: King Penguin, Adelle Penguin, Antarctic Tern and Wandering Albatross.



Birds were now appearing annually on stamps associated with specific topics. In 2007 it was the turn of the owls and a beautiful set of stamps was launched on 3 August 2007. The Marsh Owl appears on the first day cover and the stamps bear images of Barn Owl, Cape Eagle-Owl, African Barred Owlet, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl and Pel's Fishing-owl.



Another bird appeared on a stamp in 2007. An additional value stamp was added to the seventh definitive series depicting a running ostrich, (so as



not to miss the boat?), on 19 October 2007.

Almost a year later on 1 August 2008 “The South African Big Five of Birds” was launched. It appears that the birding world has also become prone to tourism buzz words!! Nevertheless we ended up with another stunning set of stamps depicting the Southern Ground-Hornbill, Kori Bustard, Common Ostrich, Blue Crane (South Africa’s national bird) and the Bearded Vulture.



The International Polar Year (IPY) was an extensive international scientific programme, which focused on the Arctic and Antarctic Polar Regions. It started in March 2007 and continued until March 2009.

To raise awareness of changes in climate, especially the warming of the Polar Regions and the melting of glaciers, the South African Post Office joined the international community with a special stamp issue dated 2 January 2009.



The postage stamp in the top part of the miniature sheet features the Light-mantled

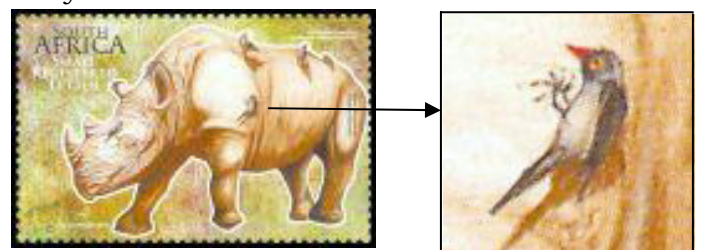
Albatross. Emperor Penguins appear to the left on the mini sheet.



The bird topic tradition was continued in 2009 with the topic of South African Coastal Birds which was launched on 3 August 2009. The set of five stamps depicts the African Penguin, the African Black Oystercatcher, the Cape Gannet, the Cape Cormorant and the Kelp Gull.



During 2010 a set of tourism stamps was issued depicting tourism areas in South Africa. A Rhino is depicted with a Red-billed Oxpecker (according to bird-stamps) on its body.



Another stamp depicts an odd-shaped Lilac-breasted Roller.

August truly turned out to be the birding stamp month as in 2010 another striking set of stamps depicting grassland birds was launched.

It was hoped that with the issue of this set further awareness would be generated which would lead to enhanced conservation and protection for these birds.

On this final set of stamps Blue Korhaan, Buff-streaked Chat, White-bellied Korhaan, White-winged Flufftail and Yellow-breasted Pipit appeared.



Ayres' (now Wing-snapping) Cisticola made it to the first day cover!



Hopefully these stamps indeed raised the required awareness to save these fine birds.

The momentum of birds on stamps carried over to September 2010 when a set of stamps for the Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical

Landscape, celebrating the rugged beauty of the Richtersveld was issued.



Although the Richtersveld is a mainly arid area it includes part of the Orange River, as we know it from the Namibian side, opening the way for water birds to be included, hence the Giant Kingfisher on the first day cover. More appropriate is the inclusion of the Namaqua Sandgrouse or in Afrikaans "Kelkiewyn", (glass of wine) in the set of stamps.



South Africa's philatelic history is the oldest of the three countries under discussion. Although it took a long time, (108 years), for the first bird to appear on a South African stamp, birds have gained momentum and the total of identifiable birds stands at 78 species.

The Blue Crane, South Africa's National Bird has appeared five times on a stamp, whilst Namibia's National Bird, the African Fish-Eagle has appeared six times. Bateleur and African Penguin each appeared four times whilst the Common Ostrich made it three times. Another ten species appear twice, which makes for a nice overall variety of bird species depicted on South African stamps.