

LANIOTURDUS

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Namibia Bird Club



since 1962

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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 organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewage 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 a digital newsletter, *Namibia Bird News*, which includes a programme of forthcoming events and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

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

Instructions to Authors

Lanioturdus is a journal dedicated to birds and birding. Although the journal's primary focus is on Namibia, articles from other geographical parts of the globe will also be considered for publication. Authors should use common and scientific names of southern African birds as published in *Roberts' VII*. For other regions, English and scientific names following BirdLife International's species list (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species>) should be used. Text should be submitted as a MS Word document. Photos, maps and figures should be sent as separate jpeg images, graphs as MS Excel charts or jpeg images and tables as MS Word or Excel documents. Please indicate in the article text where these should be placed.



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Farm Kakuse/Etosha National Park Atlasing Bash 01 to 05 May 2014

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The annual Namibian Ringers Get-Together usually takes place on the first long weekend in May and the Namibia Bird Club thus generally does not organize an outing for this weekend. This year the Ringers Get-Together was postponed to a long weekend later in May and at short notice the Bird Club organized an atlasing bash at Farm Kakuse (some 70 km north west of Tsumeb) and the eastern side of the Etosha National Park. The original intention was to go first to Etosha and then to Kakuse but due to uncertainty about the legality of taking fresh meat out of the park through the von Lindequist Gate (there is a veterinary control at the Andersson Gate) it was decided to go first to Kakuse.

Six of us met at the campsite at Kakuse on Thursday 01 May and after setting up camp Gudrun and I set up mistnets to see if we could capture some birds for ringing. Our attempts were not greatly successful but we did manage to catch a few birds including Cape Turtle-Doves and Emerald-spotted Wood-Doves and also a very much unwanted fruit bat. An attempt to find and catch birds that night with the use of spotlights proved fruitless.

Atlasing began in earnest the next day with Uli Hofmann taking us through three pentads for which full protocol atlas cards were done. He showed us an old White-backed Vulture nest in a Makalani Palm where it appeared that the birds were lining the nest with green plant material in preparation for another breeding attempt. A number of Red-headed Weaver nests that had been

used in the summer were also seen. Also of interest was a sighting of an immature African Harrier-Hawk flying from fence post to fence post looking for prey in the rotted tops of the posts while the local Fork-tailed Drongos gave it a hard time trying to chase it off.

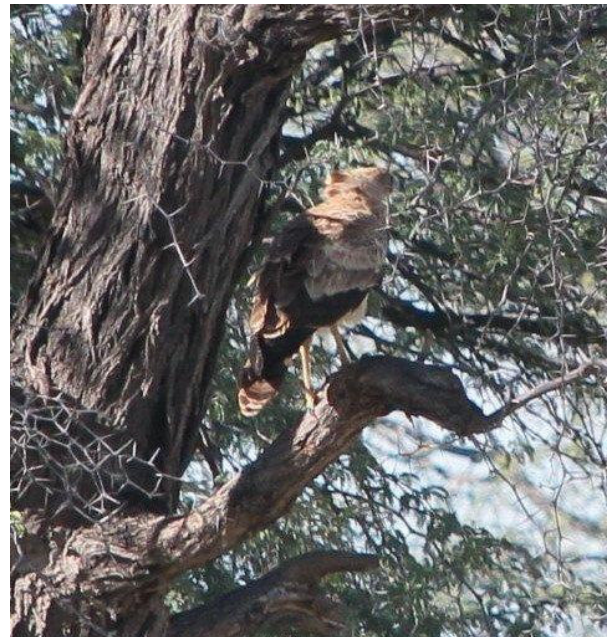


Figure 1: Immature African Harrier-Hawk
© Gisa Grønning

Many of the small vleis on the farm were still flooded and we were able to get good sightings of immature Lesser Moorhens which suggests that this species had bred on these vleis. A fleeting glimpse of an Allen's Gallinule was also obtained at one of these vleis. We had seen this species on that particular vlei before about six years previously. Another interesting sighting was that of a Senegal Coucal.

What was also quite noticeable was the number of migrant species still present. Among those seen at Kakuse were African Golden Oriole, Grey-

headed Kingfisher and Common House-Martin.



Figure 2: Atlasing at Kakuse © Gisa Grønning

On the Saturday morning it was planned that we would visit another pentad on the western side of the farm before departing for Etosha. An ad hoc card was done for this pentad as we could not spend the full two hours there but the departure for Etosha was delayed when Uli managed to get the farm bakkie stuck in mud in the Omuramba Owambo which had been flowing a week previously. Modern technology allowed him to radio for the tractor to be sent to tow us out and this saved us a walk of many kilometres back to the campsite.



Figure 3: Stuck! © Gisa Grønning

In mid afternoon we eventually reached the Environmental Education Centre at the von Lindequist Gate where we would be staying and we were joined there by another club member. A bit of birding

was done in the vicinity in what was left of the afternoon.

The aim of our atlasing effort in Etosha was to get full protocol cards for four pentads in the eastern side of the park for which there were none. To do this we split into two teams of two and three while the other two participants went off on their own to pursue their interests in photography. The atlasing teams took along a student who was doing practical work at the centre and one of the centre's employees to show them what bird atlasing is all about. The four targeted pentads were all covered and full protocol lists of 23, 27, 28 and 37 species were obtained. The afternoon was spent birding around Namutoni where a number of interesting species were seen. A stunning female Saddle-billed Stork was present at Fischer's Pan as were two Black-tailed Godwits. The godwits had been reported there on 30 April and we were surprised to find them still present as it was assumed that these birds were "refueling" while on migration and would certainly be gone by the time we got there. Another bird we were surprised to see so late in the year was Dusky Lark.

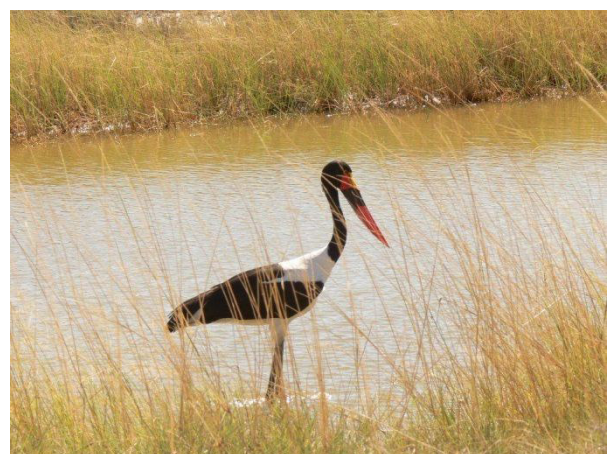


Figure 4: Saddle-billed Stork © Neil Thomson



Figure 5: Dusky Lark © Neil Thomson

On the final morning Gudrun and I set out to do a full protocol card of the Namutoni pentad and together with species seen on the previous two days managed to put together a list of 86 species.

However, all good things come to an end and it was all too soon time to depart. I elected to drive the back roads to Otavi in order to avoid the holiday weekend traffic on the main road. We managed to record a few birds for ad hoc cards and incidental sightings along this route. Interestingly we had another Dusky Lark sighting along this road. We joined the main road at Otavi and eventually made it back home safely in spite of the appalling driving standards of many road users who seemed to be harbouring death wishes.

All in all a very enjoyable outing which produced at least eight full protocol atlas cards and a host of ad hoc and incidental records.