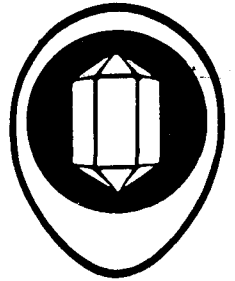


Lanioturdus torquatus  
Drosselwürger

## MITTEILUNGEN

# ORNITHOLOGISCHE ARBEITSGRUPPE



SCHRIFTFLEITUNG: POSTFACH 67, WINDHOEK, S.W.A.

Nr. 2-3

18. Jahrgang

Mai/Juni 1982.

### Programm der Ornithologischen Arbeitsgruppe 1982.

#### Morgenwanderungen

5. Juni  
11. Juli  
8. August  
12. September  
17. Oktober  
14. November  
5. Dezember

#### Arbeitsabende

14. Juni  
12. Juli  
2. August  
13. September  
4. Oktober  
1. November  
13. Dezember

Beringung 19. Juni am Avis Damm.

Leitung: D.E. Ludwig.

Treffpunkt: 14.30 Uhr Francois Denkmal

Beringungen werden jeweils einen Monat zuvor in den Mitteilungen bekannt gegeben.

Programmänderung vorbehalten.

Nähere Auskunft erhalten Sie bei: D.E. Ludwig, Tel 2-3986  
nach 18 Uhr.

Bitte achten Sie auf die Ankündigungen der Programme der Ornithol. Arbeitsgruppe in der „Allgemeinen Zeitung“ und dem „Windhoek Advertiser.“

GLIMPSES OF AN UNSPOILT LAND

F.B. Oatley.

For someone who has lived for over 30 years on the opposite side of the subcontinent in Natal, the first visit to South West Africa was a long-awaited event and proved to be no disappointment. The occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Working Group on Ornithology of the S.W.A. Scientific Society provided the opportunity for a week in the territory, too short a period to see such a huge stretch of country, but enough to whet the appetite and provide stimulus for a more extended visit in the future.

After the fynbos of the S.W. Cape Province, it was pleasant to land at Windhoek airport and drive out into typical African scenery. Thornveld looks best in the late afternoon sunlight, but the odd dead acacia tree gave mute evidence of the drought. It has to be really bad when thorn trees die of thirst. A pleasant evening was spent with Herr Stöck and his family at Frauenstein, and at dawn the following morning I heard, for the first time, calls of the Red-billed Francolin.

The highlight of the morning was a trip out to the Khomas Hochland with Dr. Harry Biggs. Black-cheeked and Violet-eared Waxbills, Grey Louries, Tit-babblers and Marico Flycatchers reminded me very much of the northern Transvaal bushveld. A study of waxbills in the vicinity of Windhoek would be rewarding and provide useful data to compare with studies made of these species in the Transvaal by Dr. Skead (Ostrich Suppl. 11, 1975). Rosy-faced Lovebirds, a Great Sparrow and White-browed Sparrow Weavers added a local flavour to a very attractive landscape.

Mrs. Henrichsen had kindly offered me a lift to Swakopmund and the trip down the main road via Karibib afforded new vistas and impressions. Heavy cumulus clouds massed over the hills; we actually drove through rain showers near Okahandja. Looking back towards the escarpment the sky was black and promised substantial falls of rain. Ahead, into the westering sun, fleecy grass heads provided a white swathe on each side of the road, stretching to the horizon. For someone who enjoys seeing unspoiled countryside it was a unique and refreshing experience to travel for stretches of seventy or eighty kilometers and see nothing more civilised than a roadside fence. It was interesting too, to observe the effect of diminishing annual rainfall as we proceeded westward and the trees grew shorter, were replaced by shrubs, until the vegetation ceased altogether and we were in the Namib.

A visit to the Swakopmund Municipal Sewerage Purification Works and to the saltpans, together with other delegates on Saturday afternoon, revealed the wealth of waterfowl and waders that may be seen on the fresh and salt water habitats of the coast. A mixed breeding colony of Hartlaubs and Grey-headed Gulls with many evident hybrid birds at the sewerage works provides a unique opportunity for study.

The rare Damara Tern was plentiful in the vicinity of the salt pans and migrant Ringed Plovers were also seen. Great hosts of cormorants were flying into the guano platforms as a cold south-westerly wind bleakened the scene.

Sunday, 4th April, was a memorable day because it rained in Swakopmund. It was also memorable for all those of us who were taken on an excursion into the Namib Park. The generally overcast and humid conditions provided probably the best possible conditions for travel and viewing the unique attractions of a fascinating area. The lichen fields were visidly green, and we were shown the much-publicised Welwitschia plants. No matter how many pictures one has seen of it, viewing the living plant in its natural environment together with its orange-and-black patterned hemipteran symbionts is a noteworthy experience. In fact there can be few better examples of genuine co-evolution between a plant and an insect, each dependent on the other for pollination and food respectively.

A stop in the Swakop Valley enabled a leg stretch and we saw Dusky Sunbirds, Tit-babblers and Pririt Batis. Then on to Bloedkoppe for a picnic lunch. Rüppell's Korhaan, Bradfield's Swift, Pale-winged Starlings and White-throated Seedeaters were new species for some of us. A pair of Plum-coloured Starlings seemed out of place in this stark habitat.

It was still overcast and humid, but after leaving Bloedkoppe the clouds cleared a little and we saw some of mammalian fauna of the park: a suricat, a ground squirrel, several springbok, two mountain zebra and many gemsbok. Lapped-faced Vultures were in evidence but we didn't manage to get a satisfactory view of Gray's Lark. The late afternoon at Ganab was beautiful, with heavy cumulus clouds promising rain and the lowering sun lighting the flat, stony plain and rock hills. A Lark-like Bunting was another new bird for me as was the Namaqua Sandgrouse, a group of which provided the highlight of an otherwise rather birdless return trip to Walvis Bay. The final leg to Swakopmund was fog-free and we were treated to a glorious sunset.

It was still spitting with rain in Swakopmund, and most of the roads were quagmires of mud. Crossing any of them was a daunting task for pedestrians. The roads had just started to dry out by lunchtime on Monday but in the mid-afternoon there was a downpour that must have contributed more than the annual average rainfall in the space of 15 minutes. However, inside the Voermannhaus we were enjoying a well-chosen series of talks that showed just how varied an avifauna South West Africa has, and it is a credit to the small group of ornithologists of this huge territory that they have managed to achieve so much. The Atlas project, which was explained by Dr. Stutterheim on Tuesday, will require even more effort, however, and it is to be hoped that membership of the Ornithological Working Group will increase.

The meetings ended at midday on Tuesday and Dr. Watt kindly took me to Walvis Bay in the afternoon and showed me the Sewerage Farm and the Lagoon. The tide was high and the sun low over the water, not the best conditions for viewing birds, but there were large

numbers of migrant waders to be seen, some of which were sporting ruddy-hued breeding plumage. I had a few hours to spend the following morning before my flight to Cape Town, and so walked to the Lagoon again, arriving in time to see a very large flock of White Pelican on a fishing drive in one of the channels. White-breasted Cormorants accompanied them, fishing around the perimeter of the solid phalanx of pelicans and visibly benefitting from the 'beating effect' of the larger birds, as they swallowed large fish virtually everytime they surfaced. A group of 10 Blacknecked Grebes swam in the opposite direction, keeping a good distance from the pelicans and showing no interest in their activities. Everywhere one looked there were birds: ranks of flamingos, pelicans, cormorants and waders. The tide was starting to move in, and I sat for forty minutes at the shoreline. Six Greater Flamingos fed within 15 m of me and whilst I watched a group of eight Curlew Sandpipers I could hear their paddling and bill-sifting movements continuously. One of the Curlew Sandpipers had a shiny new ring on the left leg. On such occasions one always wishes one could call the bird to hand in order to check the ring number, or that the bird was colour-ringed so that the presence of that particular individual could be indisputably recorded. Feeding near the Curlew Sandpipers was a Terek Sandpiper, with orange-red legs somewhat shorter than theirs, and with a characteristic slightly upcurved beak. A Turnstone pecked at a barnacle on a small rock, and a Grey Plover, immaculately black from face to belly, loafed on a sandbank.

What a superb site for birds. But, perhaps, Sandvis is even better. That will have to wait for next time!

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### Die Kanarienvogelzucht der

### St. Andreasberger Berg- und Hüttenleute

Den letzten zusammenfassenden Bericht über die früher von vielen Einwohnern der Bergstadt St. Andreasberg (Landkreis Goslar) betriebene Zucht von Kanarienvögeln (*Serinus canaria*) veröffentlichte im Jahr 1886 W. Böcker aus Wetzlar. Die Broschüre ist längst vergriffen, der Inhalt weitgehend unbekannt. Da das später erschienene vogel- und heimatkundliche Schrifttum eine Vielzahl irriger und unzutreffender Aussagen hin bis zu Märchenerzählungen über den Harzer Roller und seine Züchter enthält, soll hier auf Quellen beruhende, hinreichend deutliche Beschreibung von der Aufnahme, der Entwicklung und vom Ausklang des einstmals wirtschaftlich so bedeutenden Erwerbszweiges in der Harzstadt geliefert werden. Einen ersten dahin zielenden Versuch in Kurzform enthält meine Broschüre „Mensch und Vogel im Harz“ (Clausthal-Zellerfeld 1980).

Bei der Beschreibung der bergbaulichen und wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in der Stadt waren mir die Arbeiten von Wilke (1952) und Jäger (1972) von grossem Nutzen.