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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

LANIOTURDUS publishes full papers and short notes (less than 2000 words) and other material of broad birding interest to the membership of the Namibia Bird Club. Contributors should examine recent issues of the journal/newsletter for guidance on suitability and presentation of material. Manuscripts, in English or German, should be typed in double-spacing on A4 paper. Sketches, maps and figures should be submitted on quality white paper with black ink. Good, high contrast black-and-white photographs may be submitted to illustrate articles. The editor is allowed wide latitude in his choice of material, thus any views and opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club. All material in **LANIOTURDUS** is copyright, and permission to reproduce any items must be negotiated with the editor.

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All contributions (including books for review) to **LANIOTURDUS** should be addressed to the Honorary Editor, **LANIOTURDUS**, Department of Birds, The State Museum of Namibia, P.O. Box 1203, Windhoek, Namibia.

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Because of the small size and ephemeral nature of the Swakop River lagoon, it is not considered to be of major conservation importance for coastal birds in Namibia. It is remarkably rich in diversity and numbers, however, for such a small site. The lagoon is situated very near to Swakopmund, which makes it ideal for education and tourism purposes. Regrettably, its location also results in much unnecessary disturbance. This is evident from the counts. Before the birds were disturbed in the morning, on average five more species and 235 more birds (28%) were present than in the evening. Some low-key development of the lagoon could alleviate this problem and make it an additional attractive amenity to the town of Swakopmund. In particular, the Municipality should declare the lagoon a bird sanctuary, a fence should be erected on the north side of the lagoon, the beach between the lagoon and sea should be closed to traffic and signs informing the public about the sanctuary should be erected. An observation hide could be built on the edge of the lagoon or on one of the old bridge supports.

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INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL CENSUS - NAMIBIA

An international census of all wetland birds is again planned for January 1992 (some of you will have already participated in the recent census held in July 1991). It will be ongoing each January and July and is co-ordinated by the International Wetlands and Waterfowl Bureau (IWRB), based at Slimbridge. They have asked local co-ordinators throughout Africa to alert local birders and conservators to count all wetlands in their country. The aim? To understand how birds, particularly migrants, are spaced on the continent and how they move over six months.

In Namibia our wetlands are fairly discrete and it should be possible to cover all of them. At the least the following need to be censused:

Bushmanland Pans
Okavango River
East Caprivi (eastern floodplain)
Cunene River mouth
East Caprivi (Chobe River)
Sandwich Harbour
East Caprivi (Kwando River)
Mouths of all western rivers
Etosha Pan and surrounds
Hardap Dam
Walvis Bay wetlands
Swakopmund saltworks

Places that should be censused but are probably harder to get to:

Ovamboland (Cuvelai drainage)
East Caprivi (Linyanti Swamps)
Namib Desert pans (Sossusvlei, etc.)

If you can get to these wetlands or any others, at anytime in January, then you must contact Rob Simmons (061-63131 x 258), and he will send you the appropriate forms and instructions. Only by co-ordinating like this can we avoid overlap in counting some areas, and combine forces in other areas.

If you are puzzled as to why July and January should be chosen for such a census, then joint the ranks; on querying this with the international organiser, it transpires that we have inherited this system from West Africa. If it proves useless to conduct censuses at this time things can be changed at discussions due in Rwanda in 1992. For now bear with us!

Thanks, let's make Namibian wetlands one of the best covered on the continent.

Dr Rob Simmons (Wetlands Biologist), Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism, P/Bag 13306, Windhoek, Namibia.

AFRICAN MARSH WARBLER LONGEVITY RECORD

An African Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*, ring number X 17871, was captured in mist-nets on 2 February 1991 in reedbeds at Sandwich Harbour (23 22 S; 14 30 E), near the Ministry of Wildlife house. The bird weighed 10.0 grams, had old, frayed plumage, and was not moulting. The bird was released shortly after capture. The warbler was recaptured and released the next day at the same locality.

This bird was ringed at Sandwich Harbour by Johan Stutterheim, sometime between June and October 1982, but unfortunately a ringing schedule with precise dates was not submitted, owing to Johan's untimely death.

Calculated from the last possible month of ringing (October 1982), and assuming that the bird was captured in mist-nets and ringed as a free-flying individual of unknown age, this represents a longevity record of at least 100 months (8.3 years) which is the highest thus far recorded for African Marsh Warblers (T. Oatley, in litt.). David Johnson recently retrapped an African Marsh Warbler of 83 months at Pietermaritzburg in Natal, South Africa, and Rod Braby retrapped four birds at Cunene mouth last year which were at least 50 months old (T. Oatley, in litt.).

A considerable number of African Marsh Warblers have been ringed on the Namibian coast, primarily at Sandwich Harbour and Swakopmund, but also at Walvis Bay, Arandis and in the Skeleton Coast Park, and it would be interesting to determine whether there is any local movement of the species between suitable wetland habitats on the coast. Maclean (1985, Birds of southern Africa.

J. Voelcker Bird Book Fund: Cape Town) has suggested that African Marsh Warblers are intra-African breeding migrants, wintering in Central Africa. To date, my few retraps of African Marsh Warblers have all been at the original ringing sites (Sandwich Harbour, Arandis and Rundu sewage works, unpublished data).

Joris Komen, The State Museum of Namibia, P.O. Box 1203, Windhoek, Namibia.

NB! NB! ATLAS PRIORITIES!

The priority map which appears together with this notice (for want of a long-outstanding regional report!) is designed to highlight those areas which most urgently need attention. The priorities are as follows:

Highest priority: Quarter-degree Squares (QDSs) within Half-degree Squares (HDSs) with heavy outline; particularly those which are blank.

Very high priority: Any blank QDS.

High priority: Any QDS with a species total less than the suggested target for the region. Species totals are coded with the letters:

Blank:	no data	
B:	1 - 25	species
C:	26 - 50	species
D:	51 - 75	species
E:	76 - 100	species
F:	101 - 125	species
G:	126 - 150	species
H:	151 - 175	species
J:	176 - 200	species
K:	201 - 225	species
L:	226 - 250	species
M:	> 250	species

Medium Priority: Any QDS with less than 200 species.

Low Priority: Any other unclosed square.

Even cards for low priority squares are valuable contributions and will be gratefully received but please do not send in cards for closed squares (blacked out) unless your list is exceptionally long.