

NAMIBIA BIRD CLUB

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All contributions for *LANIOTURDUS* should be sent to:

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THE LAND BIRDS OF THE SPERRGEBIET

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ABSTRACT: Little is known about the terrestrial birds of the Sperrgebiet. We recorded all birds seen within the Sperrgebiet and adjacent areas of southwestern Namibia during 7-17 November 1994. A total of 85 land bird species was recorded within the Sperrgebiet, 35 of which were restricted to the riparian fringe along the Orange River and adjacent irrigated sites (Oranjemund and environs). An additional 10 species were recorded in the areas adjacent to the Sperrgebiet (north to the Koichab River Valley and east to the Huib-Hoch Plateau). The survey followed above average rainfall throughout most of the region. Nomadic species such as Greybacked Finch Larks and Larklike Buntings were present in huge numbers, and many resident and nomadic species had bred in the area. The distribution and status of each species is presented in an annotated species list.

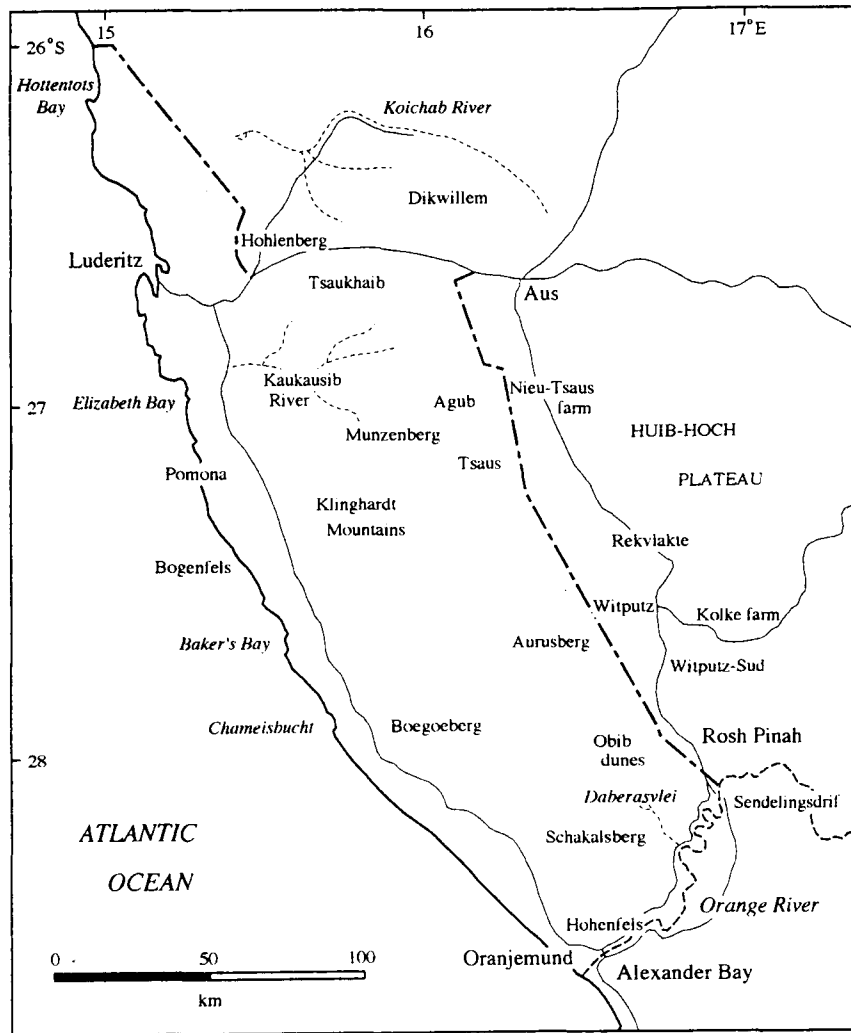
INTRODUCTION

The Sperrgebiet is a large tract of arid and semi-arid land in the southwestern corner of Namibia, extending some 300 km north from the Orange River mouth, and 80-100 km inland from the coast. Because of the limited infrastructure and restricted access resulting from diamond mining operations, the land birds of the area have been little studied. However, the area is of considerable interest because it forms the boundary between the succulent Karoo and Namib biomes, with several bird species having their northern or southern limits within the region. This paper reports observations of land birds made during a brief trip to the area in November 1994. Waterbirds are excluded, because little time was spent in aquatic habitats, and because the waterbirds of the Sperrgebiet, which are restricted largely to the Orange River, the coast and offshore islands, are well known relative to the region's land birds (e.g. Cooper et al. 1980, Williams 1986, Williams 1993).

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

We recorded all birds seen during a visit to the Sperrgebiet from 7-17 November 1994. The trip formed part of a study on the Karoo Lark *Certhilauda albescens* species complex. Our primary aim was to sample the phenotypes and genotypes of birds of the Karoo Lark complex in the area between the Orange and Koichab Rivers. Consequently, most of our attention was focused on open areas with reasonably good vegetation cover. Less time was spent exploring rocky inselbergs and mountains, and only a few hours was spent at two sites in riparian vegetation fringing the Orange River. Several species easily could have been overlooked in these habitats. Waterbirds encountered during the trip (only at the coast, along the Orange River, and at a small coastal wetland south of Bogenfels) are omitted from this report. The only unusual waterbird observed during our visit was a drake Knobbilled Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Starting from Oranjemund we travelled in a roughly clockwise direction around the Sperrgebiet. Our route was as follows: Oranjemund to Boegoeberg (7 Nov.), and on to Bogenfels (8 Nov.). Then north to Pomona, east to Schwarzerberg, north again to Grillenthal, and then east along the Kaukausib River to the Munzenberg (9 Nov.). We then headed east and north past Agub to the southwestern boundary of Tsiub (10 Nov.) and then west to Lüderitz via Tsaukhaib and Hohlenberg (11 Nov.). From there we travelled along the road into the Koichab River Valley east to 16° 04'E (12 Nov.), then south, re-entering the Sperrgebiet north-east of Dikwillem and then on to Garub. We then went east to Aus, leaving the Sperrgebiet, and travelled south along the Aus-Rosh Pinah road, visiting farms along the eastern boundary of the Sperrgebiet. One night was spent on the eastern boundary of the Sperrgebiet on Nieu-Tsaus farm (13 Nov) and one night on the farm Kolke on the Huib-Hoch Plateau, east of Witpütz (14 Nov.). We also birded on the Reklakte, around Witpütz, Sud Witpütz, and south of Rosh Pinah. We then re-entered the Sperrgebiet, and, after a brief stop at Gomtsawib, travelled up the east side of the Obib Dunes to 27° 54' S 16° 30' E (15 Nov.). We returned to near Daberasvlei before heading over the Schakalberg to rejoin the river road near Skilpadberg and spend the night at Hohenfels on the Orange River (16 Nov.). We left the Sperrgebiet on the morning of 17 November, after a brief visit to Oranjemund and the Orange River mouth.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 95 species of land birds was recorded, 85 of which were within the Sperrgebiet. However, only 50 species were found away from riparian vegetation fringing the Orange River and the irrigated gardens in Oranjemund. Cursorial (e.g. Ostrich, bustards, coursers) and ground-dwelling (e.g. larks, chats, buntings) birds predominated. There were very few warblers or other birds that glean insects while perched in bushes. Following good rains, there was considerable growth of grasses and other plants, especially in the northern section of the area. This presumably accounted for the vast numbers of nomadic Greybacked Finch Larks and Larklike Buntings. Other species whose numbers may have been inflated as a result of the favourable conditions include Ludwig's Bustard, Burchell's Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse and Redcapped Lark.

In addition to the intriguing situation regarding the Karoo Lark complex, which will be reported elsewhere, several species groups have transition zones around the Sperrgebiet. These include the northern limits for three Karoo species: Karoo Korhaan, Southern Grey Tit and Spotted Prinia. Sister taxa for two of these groups (Ruppell's Korhaan *Eupodotis rueppellii* and Ashy Tit *Parus cinerascens*) were not recorded during the trip, but Blackchested Prinias were recorded along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Sperrgebiet, and appear to interdigitate if not actually overlap with Spotted Prinias. Two plumage morphs of Fiscal Shrike also replace each other in the area, with black-headed birds, occurring in the Sperrgebiet, and being replaced by birds with a white supercilium in the Koichab Valley. A Karoo species which was not recorded during the trip, but which may be expected to occur is the Thickbilled Lark *Galerida magnirostris* which has been collected twice in the area east of the Sperrgebiet. A Namib species which reaches its southern limit in the Sperrgebiet is Gray's Lark. Birds from south of the main dune sea have a dark frons and lores, and may be a different subspecies from the nominate race found north of the dune sea.

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST

The following accounts give a brief statement of distribution and abundance of each species. Species in brackets denote birds only observed in the areas adjacent to the Sperrgebiet.

Ostrich *Struthio camelus*

Occurs throughout, but is most abundant in the interior, where it prefers open plains and low dunes. Fresh eggs were found at Munzenberg, but very few chicks were observed, suggesting that breeding success is low.

[Lappetfaced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. A pair was observed roosting in *Acacia* trees in the Koichab River Valley at 16° E. There were several large nests in the vicinity suggesting that breeding occurs.]

Blackshouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Only observed at Hohenfels on the Orange River, where it was associated with cultivated lands primarily on the south bank of the river.

Blackbreasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Scarce in the Sperrgebiet; only one was observed west of Tsirub. Other birds were seen east of the boundary fence along the road south of Aus and at Sud Witpütz.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

One adult was observed at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*

Observed occasionally in the south, from the vicinity of Boegoeberg, Obib Dunes and Sud Witpütz.

Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus*

Occurs throughout the interior. Recorded from near Agub, west of Tsirub, Aus, Nieu-Tsaus boundary, Kolke farm, Rosh Pinah, Obib Dunes, and along the Orange River at Hohenfels.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Scarce. A pair was seen harassing a pair of Greater Kestrels at Kaukausib fountain, west of the Munzenberg. Singletons were observed in the

Koichab Valley, and on the Orange River at Gomtsawib.

[Rednecked Falcon *Falco chiquera*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. A pair was observed 5 km south of Aus on the Rosh Pinah road.]

Rock Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular along the Orange River (Gomtsawib and Hohenfels), but scarce away from the Orange River; only observed at Munzenberg in the Sperrgebiet. More common farther east, in the vicinity of Aus and Rosh Pinah.

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*

Sparsely distributed throughout. Birds were observed north of Oranjemund, between Boegoeberg and Chameis gate, at Kaukausib fountain, east of the Munzenberg, in the Koichab River Valley, south of Aus, and at Nieu-Tsaus.

Cape Francolin *Francolinus capensis*

Found in riparian vegetation along the Orange River (Gomtsawib and Hohenfels).

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Only heard at Hohenfels on the Orange River, calling from cultivated lands on the south bank of the river.

Ludwig's Bustard *Neotis ludwigii*

Common in the north of the area, sparse farther south. Birds were observed east of Pomona, in the Obib Dunes, and at Nieu-Tsaus and Kolke farms. They were especially frequent in the northeast, from the Kaukausib drainage line, Munzenberg and Agub, north to the Koichab Valley, where groups of up to 20 birds were encountered. This concentration may be related to the good rains the area had received.

Karoo Korhaan *Eupodotis vigorsii*

Sparsely distributed on gravel plains in the interior. Several pairs were seen west of Tsirub, with others outside the Sperrgebiet at Nieu-Tsaus, Rekvlake and Kolke.

Spotted Dikkop *Burhinus capensis*
Heard calling at night at Bogenfels.

Burchell's Courser *Cursorius rufus*
Fairly common on gravel plains, especially in the northern part of the area. Flocks were seen at Munzenberg, near Agub, between Tsirub and Tsaukhaib, in the Koichab Valley, and on Nieu-Tsaus farm. Numbers may have been inflated by the good rains the area had received.

[Doublebanded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus*
Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. The only bird encountered was in succulent Karoo vegetation on Kolke farm.]

Namaqua Sandgrouse *Pterocles namaqua*
Occurs throughout. Birds were seen north of Oranjemund, east of Bogenfels, drinking at Kaukausib fountain, around the Munzenberg, west of Tsirub, at Tsaukhaib, and in the Obib Dunes. East of the Sperrgebiet they were found at Nieu-Tsaus, Kolke, and Sud Witpütz.

Rock Pigeon *Columba guinea*
Fairly common in the interior. Birds were seen drinking at Kaukausib fountain, and feeding among *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation near Munzenberg. A few were seen at rocky outcrops at the south end of Obib Dunes, and one was found at Hohenfels. More common in farming areas east of the Sperrgebiet, with flocks at watering points at Nieu-Tsaus, Kolke and Sud Witpütz.

Redeyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*
Common in riparian vegetation along the Orange River and in Oranjemund.

Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola*
Fairly common along the Orange River and in Oranjemund. Also found in Aus and at the farmhouse at Kolke.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*
Common along the Orange River and in Oranjemund. Also found in Aus and at the farmhouse at Kolke.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*
Primarily associated with the Orange River (Gomtsawib, Hohenfels). A pair was seen on Tsaukhaib. East of the Sperrgebiet they were found at Kolke and Sud Witpütz.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
One bird was flushed from *Eucalyptus* trees at Hohenfels on the Orange River. Another was heard calling on the northern slopes of Kirchberg in the Koichab River Valley.

Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*
Only found associated with well-wooded watercourses. A pair was calling at Hohenfels on the Orange River, and one was flushed in the Koichab Valley.

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi*
Only observed in the southwest (north of Oranjemund) and northeast (west of Tsirub and around Aus), but could presumably be found throughout the region.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*
Sparsely distributed throughout. Birds were observed foraging north of Oranjemund, at Boegoeberg, along the western boundary of Tsirub, in the Obib Dunes, and at Aus.

Redfaced Mousebird *Colius indicus*
Only observed in gardens at Oranjemund. An unidentified mousebird seen in Aus may have been either this species or a Whitebacked Mousebird *C. colius*.

Swallowtailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*
Only found in alien vegetation fringing the Orange River at Hohenfels.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Found in old farm land fringing the Orange River at Hohenfels.

Pied Barbet *Lybius leucomelas*
Only recorded in riparian vegetation on the Orange River at Hohenfels, where there were several pairs.

Longbilled Lark *Certhilauda curvirostris*

Occurs in the southwest and in the interior, probably involving two discrete populations. The southwestern population, restricted to succulent Karoo vegetation along the coast (Boegoeberg and around Chameis gate), may represent a northern extension of the pale, large, long-billed race *C.c. falcirostris*, which occurs along the coast south of the Orange River. Unfortunately these birds were only heard; confirmation of their racial status is needed. The other population in the interior of the region is a much redder, smaller, shorter-billed race, *C. c. bradshawi*. These birds were encountered around Aus, on the Sperrgebiet boundary with Nieu-Tsaus farm, on the Reklakte, and at Kolke and Sud Witpütz farms.

Dune/Karoo Lark *Certhilauda erythrochlamys/albescens*

Common resident, found throughout much of the area. Birds with fledged young were encountered at virtually every site where the species was found. Given the uncertainty regarding the taxonomic status of this species complex (cf. Crowe et al. 1994), we shall treat this species complex together here. Nominative *erythrochlamys* Dune Larks were observed only on the southern edge of the main dune sea, which is bordered on the south by the Koichab River Valley. They were found as far west as 15° 45' E, but may occur farther west north of the watercourse.

South of the Koichab Valley, birds fitting the description of *C. (e.) barlowi* were found to be widespread in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation from north of Dikwillem and the Hohlenberg, south through Tsaukhaib, Tsirub, Agub and the Munzenberg (and presumably farther south). Similar birds were encountered in well-grassed red dunes west of Hohlenberg, near the eastern boundary with Nieu-Tsaus, and at Obib Dunes, where they were found both on the vegetated dunes and on the adjacent plains with Karoo scrub. These birds also were similar to birds seen in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation south of Rosh Pinah, which grades into succulent Karoo scrub towards Sud Witpütz and *Rhigozum* scrub on the Reklakte, where birds previously have been ascribed to *C. (a.) cavei*. We could find no significant phenotypic difference between these populations, suggesting that *cavei* is merely a synonym for *barlowi*, but we await an analysis of genotypic differences. There was no sign of Karoo-type larks on the Huib-Hoch Plateau.

West of the Obib Dunes, the substratum colour changes from red to a

paler grey-brown, and this is matched by a change in lark back colour from rufous to brown (so-called *C. (a.) patae*). Brown birds were encountered west of the Schakalberg, although there was some overlap in morphs west to Hohenfels. Along the coast north of Oranjemund, these brown-backed birds are common in suitable habitat as far north as Schwarzerberg, inland of Pomona. All birds lack streaking on their flanks, and generally have rather plain, unstreaked plumage above, which separates them from "true" Karoo Larks. The latter taxon apparently reaches its northern limit in the Richtersveld south of the Orange River, although there appears to be a large contact zone between the two forms stretching from Grootberg (east of Beesbank on the Orange River) to Port Nolloth.

Spikeheeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata*

Sparsely distributed on stony plains. Birds were observed around Boegoeberg, on the main road east of Bogenfels, on the flats west of Obib Dunes, and on Nieu-Tsaus farm.

Redcapped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*

Common in open areas; probably at least partly nomadic. They were fairly abundant in open areas among succulent Karoo vegetation north of Oranjemund and at Schwarzerberg, and in similar vegetation fringing the western side of the Obib dunes. Smaller numbers were seen at Boegoeberg, around Chameis gate, north of Tsaukhaib, in the Koichab River Valley and south of Rosh Pinah.

Stark's Lark *Alauda starki*

Scarce. Singletons were seen among groups of finch larks and Larklike Buntings at Munzenberg and south of Rosh Pinah.

Gray's Lark *Ammomanes grayi*

Restricted to gravel plains in the northern part of the area. Groups were encountered west of the Munzenberg, east of Tsaukhaib, in the Koichab Valley, south of Dikwillem, and on the Sperrgebiet boundary with Nieu-Tsaus farm. They were found south to 27° 06' S, but may occur farther south on gravel plains between Tsaus and the Aurusberge.

Greybacked Finch Lark *Eremopterix verticalis*

Nomadic species, which occurs throughout the area. Following good

rains, they were abundant in much of the interior. Occasional birds were found in succulent Karoo vegetation near the coast (Oranjemund, Boegoeberg, Chameis gate, Bogenfels, Pomona and Schwarzerberg). Birds were observed drinking at Kaukausib fountain, and were extremely abundant (flocks of thousands of birds extending over large areas) on the well-grassed plains around Munzenberg, Agub, Tsirub, and Tsaukhaib, north to Dikwillem. Smaller numbers also were found at Hohlenberg, the Koichab River Valley, Nieu-Tsaus and adjacent dunes, Kolke farm, Rosh Pinah, Obib Dunes and Hohenfels. Many birds on the grassy plains in the north central area were displaying, and some fledged young were observed.

Blackeared Finch Lark *Eremopterix australis*

Sparsely distributed in the interior. A single pair was observed in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation along the western boundary of Tsirub, and there were small numbers in well-vegetated red dunes at Obib. Outside the Sperrgebiet, larger numbers probably were breeding in lush succulent Karoo vegetation at Sud Witpütz, and there were a few on gravel flats at Nieu-Tsaus farm.

European Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Sparsely distributed throughout the area, with singletons or small groups being seen north of Oranjemund, at Chameis gate, Tsaukhaib, Dikwillem, Nieu-Tsaus hills and Obib Dunes. Most abundant along the Orange River, where flocks of up to 20 birds were seen.

Whitethroated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

Only observed on the Orange River at Hohenfels.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*

Occurs throughout, typically associated with rock outcrops. Most records were from the interior of the region: birds were observed at Munzenberg, Tsaukhaib, Aus, Rekvlaakte, Kolke farm, Sud Witpütz, Daberasduin, and at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Brownthroated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Only observed along the lower Orange River, where they were common.

Black Crow *Corvus capensis*

Sparsely dispersed throughout the area. Birds were observed just north of Oranjemund, between Boegoeberg and the Chameis gate, at Bogenfels, Kaukausib fountain, on the powerline north of Agub, and at Daberasduin. Outside the Sperrgebiet, they were observed along the Rosh Pinah road just south of Aus. Nests were found on the telephone poles along the Oranjemund-Luderitz road, and on powerline supports near Agub.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Only observed in the vicinity of Oranjemund and along the Orange River to Hohenfels.

Southern Grey Tit *Parus afer*

Parties were encountered in succulent Karoo vegetation at Bogenfels and Sud Witpütz. Several birds also were found in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation and along the cliffs at Grosse Munzenberg. This is the northern limit for this species.

Redeyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans*

Common in riparian vegetation along the Orange River and in Oranjemund. It was also observed at the Kolke farmhouse.

Olive (Smith's) Thrush *Turdus olivaceus (smithii)*

Fairly common in riparian vegetation along the Orange River and in Oranjemund.

Mountain Chat *Oenanthe monticola*

Fairly common at rock outcrops. All records are from the central or eastern part of the area. Birds were seen at Munzenberg, Tsaukhaib, and Schakalberg inside the Sperrgebiet, and from Nieu-Tsaus, Kolke and Sud Witpütz east of the Sperrgebiet.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

Fairly common in the interior, often on sandy soils. Birds were observed north of Agub (with fledged young), Tsaukhaib, Obib Dunes, Kolke farm, and Sud Witpütz.

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

Fairly common where there are rocks or banks. Recorded at Munzenberg

with fledged young, also at Lüderitz, Koichab Valley, Nieu-Tsaus hills, Kolke, Sud Witpütz, Daberasduin, and Gomtsawib and Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Tractrac Chat *Cercomela tractrac*

Common throughout the area, in virtually all vegetation types, including the virtually barren areas around Pomona. Absent only from higher elevations on the Huib-Hoch Plateau (Aus, Kolke), where it is replaced by Karoo Chat. Co-occurs with Karoo Chat at sites such as Tsaukhaib, Nieu-Tsaus hills, and the Reklakte.

Karoo Chat *Cercomela schlegelii*

Restricted to taller, shrubby Karoo-type vegetation. There is an isolated population breeding on the plateau of Tsaukhaib, and it also was found along the eastern boundary with Nieu-Tsaus farm. It largely replaces Tractrac Chat at the higher elevations of the Huib-Hoch Plateau, being common at Aus, Kolke, and Sud Witpütz. Co-occurs with Tractrac Chat at Nieu-Tsaus and on the Reklakte.

Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*

Common in riparian vegetation along the Orange River, and in Oranjemund.

[Karoo Robin *Erythropygia coryphaeus*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. One bird was seen at the Klein Aus farmhouse, just west of Aus.]

[Titbabbler *Parisoma subcaeruleum*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. One bird was seen in *Acacia* trees in the Koichab River Valley.]

African Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticus*

Common in reedbeds and adjacent vegetation along the Orange River.

Cape Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

Only found in reedbeds along the Orange River.

Longbilled Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*

Surprisingly scarce. Only a single bird was encountered, in Euphorbia

hummock vegetation at the foot of Grosse Munzenberg.

[Yellowbellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. Several were found in vegetated hummock dunes in the Koichab River Valley.]

Karoo Eremomela *Eremomela gregalis*

Fairly common. Largely restricted to succulent Karoo vegetation, being found at Boegoeberg, Bogenfels and on the flats west of Obib Dunes. However, groups also were encountered in *Euphorbia* and hummock dune vegetation in the Koichab Valley and north of Dikwillem.

Fantailed Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Only observed at Hohenfels on the Orange River, where it was associated with cultivated lands primarily on the south bank of the river.

Greybacked Cisticola *Cisticola subruficapilla*

Only found in lush, tall succulent Karoo vegetation 8 km north of Oranjemund.

[Blackchested Prinia *Prinia flavicans*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. Singletons were seen in hummock dune vegetation in the Koichab Valley and in washes south of Witpütz.]

Spotted Prinia *Prinia maculosa*

Found in association with *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation at Boegoeberg, Munzenberg, Hohlenberg and Rosh Pinah. Iso found in lush succulent Karoo shrubs at Kolke and Sud Witpütz farms. All birds are very lightly spotted on the breast.

Rufouseared Warbler *Malcorus pectoralis*

Patchily distributed in the Sperrgebiet. It was only recorded from the southern part of the region, from succulent Karoo vegetation north of Oranjemund and along the western edge of the Obib Dunes. It was also found in *Rhigozum* scrub on the Reklakte.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Non-breeding migrant; one was observed in riparian vegetation on the Orange River at Gomtsawib.

Chat Flycatcher *Melaenornis infuscatus*

Found almost exclusively in association with *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation. Within the Sperrgebiet, birds with fledged young were observed at Munzenberg, Tsaukhaib, Hohlenberg and Dikwillem. East of the Sperrgebiet they were encountered in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation at Rosh Pinah, and in *Rhigozum* scrub on the Reklakte.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Occurs along the Orange River, at least as far downstream as the road bridge.

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

Only seen along the lower Orange River, at Hohenfels and the Orange River Mouth.

Grassveld Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*

Only observed at Hohenfels on the Orange River, where it was associated with cultivated lands primarily on the south bank of the river.

Longbilled Pipit *Anthus similis*

A pair with fledged young was found on rocky hill slopes on the boundary of the Sperrgebiet and Nieu-Tsaus farm.

Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris*

Black-headed birds occur in association with *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation at Boegoeberg, Munzenberg and Rosh Pinah. Other dark-headed birds were found on Kolke farm and in Oranjemund. Birds with a white supercilium were only encountered in the Koichab Valley.

Bokmakierie *Telophorus zeylonus*

Occurs wherever there is adequate vegetation. Found in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation (Boegoeberg, Munzenberg, Rosh Pinah), riverine scrub (Koichab Valley), and succulent Karoo vegetation (Kolke, Sud Witpütz).

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Introduced species; only found in Oranjemund and at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

[Palewinged Starling *Onychognathus naboroupp*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. Only found in the southern Huib-Hoch Plateau at Kolke farm and Sud Witpütz.]

Lesser Double Collared Sunbird *Nectarinia chalybea*

Only found along the Orange River, where it was abundant at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels.

Dusky Sunbird *Nectarinia fusca*

Encountered on the eastern border of the Sperrgebiet with Nieu-Tsaus farm. Other birds were seen in the Koichab Valley, Aus, Kolke and Sud Witpütz.

Cape White-eye *Zosterops pallidus*

Found along the Orange River, where it was abundant at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels, and in Oranjemund.

[Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius*

Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. Only found in the southern Huib-Hoch Plateau at Kolke farm (breeding) and Sud Witpütz.]

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Introduced species; found associated with buildings in Lüderitz, Aus, and the farm house at Nieu-Tsaus.

Cape Sparrow *Passer melanurus*

Widespread in the Sperrgebiet, occurring wherever there is tall vegetation. It was recorded in succulent Karoo scrub north of Oranjemund, west of the Obib Dunes and at Daberasduin. Farther inland it was found around Aus, as well as at Kolke and Sud Witpütz. It was in *Euphorbia* scrub at Munzenberg and Nieu-Tsaus, and in wadis with *Acacia* trees west of Tsirub and in the Koichab Valley. It occurs along the Orange River at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels, and was common in Oranjemund. A single pair was observed associated with the deserted buildings at Bogenfels.

Greyheaded Sparrow *Passer griseus*

Only found at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

[Scalyfeathered Finch *Sporopipes squamifrons*
Not seen in the Sperrgebiet. A small flock was observed on the farm Klein Aus, some 10km west of Aus.]

Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*
Only found along the Orange River (Gomtsawib and Hohenfels), where males were displaying at nests.

Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*
Only seen at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*
Only found along the Orange River, where it was common at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels.

Pintailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*
Only seen at Hohenfels on the Orange River.

Blackthroated Canary *Serinus atrogularis*
Only found along the Orange River, with small numbers at Gomtsawib and Hohenfels.

Blackheaded Canary *Serinus alario*
A single female was seen west of Schwarzerberg, inland of Pomona. It was more common east of the Sperrgebiet, with large flocks gathering at watering points at Kolke and Sud Witpütz. All males were of the northern form (*S. a. leucomela*), with the exception of a single nominate bird seen just west of Aus.

Yellow Canary *Serinus flaviventris*
Fairly common in succulent Karoo and adjacent vegetated dunes in the southwest of the area. Recorded from north of Oranjemund, Boegoeberg, near Chameis gate, Bogenfels, Pomona, and the west side of the Obib Dunes. Apparently replaced by Whitethroated Canary farther inland, although the two species overlapped at the Obib Dunes (where Yellow Canaries predominated). Many birds were recently fledged, suggesting that breeding had occurred in the area.

Whitethroated Canary *Serinus albogularis*
Common in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation from Schwarzerberg, Munzenberg, west Tsirub, Tsaukhaib, Hohlenberg, Dikwillem and Rosh Pinah. Also found on the Orange River at Gomtsawib, along the western side of the Obib Dunes, and at Aus and Sud Witpütz. Recently fledged young were seen at several sites, including Schwarzerberg and Tsirub.

Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis*
Sparsely distributed at rocky sites. Only recorded from Daberasduin and hills along the eastern boundary with Nieu-Tsausfarm. Farther inland birds were found on the Huib-Hoch Plateau at Kolke farm.

Larklike Bunting *Emberiza impetuanii*
Nomadic species, which occurs throughout the area. Occasional birds were found in succulent Karoo vegetation near the coast (around Chameis gate, Schwarzerberg and above Hohenfels), but they were most abundant in the northeast, from Kaukausib fountain, Munzenberg, Agub, Tsirub, Tsaukhaib, Hohlenberg, the Koichab Valley and Dikwillem. They also were common along the eastern boundary of the Speregebiet, being found at Aus, Nieu-Tsaus, Kolke, Sud Witpütz, Rosh Pinah, Daberasduin and the Obib Dunes. Prefers better-vegetated areas than Greybacked Finch Lark, occurring more in *Euphorbia* hummock vegetation, washes and rocky areas than on open plains. Recently fledged birds were observed at several sites, indicating breeding had occurred following the recent rains in the area.

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V WORLD CONFERENCE ON BIRDS OF PREY & OWLS

This conference is to take place in Midrand, Johannesburg on the 4-11th of August 1998. It will be hosted by the Raptor Conservation Group and Vulture Study Group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Anyone interested and wanting more information contact:

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BESUCH AUF FARM ONGANGASEMBA

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Nachdem das geplante Wochenende im August bei Ruacana rückgängig gemacht wurde, beschlossen wir auf die Farm Ongangasemba von Herrn Immo Wilkens zu fahren. Die Farm liegt direkt am Omuramba Omatako Rivier auf der Rückseite der Omatako-Berge.

Die Zahl der Teilnehmer war sehr gering. Wir waren drei Erwachsene und zwei Kinder. Die Fahrt dort hin war nicht sehr eindrucksvoll denn erst dann wird einem bewußt wie trocken das Land wirklich ist.

Auf der Farm angekommen, brachen wir auf zu einer kleinen Farmrundfahrt um einen geeigneten Lagerplatz zu suchen. Es wurden mehrere Stellen besichtigt. Die geeignetste Stelle war an einem Damm wo noch ein bißchen Wasser vorhanden war, unmittelbar in der Nähe des Omuramba Omatakos. Der Baumbestand am Ufer war das einzige Grün auf der Farm. Es gibt dort kein Gras, sondern nur noch staubige trockene Flächen. Rinder und Wild werden täglich mühevoll gefüttert.

Wir unternahmen mehrere Wanderungen am Rivierufer um nach Vögeln ausschau zu halten. Die Ausbeute war nicht sehr groß da das Wasser im Feld fehlte. Am Damm konnte man einige Waffenkiebitze, Nilgänse und Dreibandregenpfeifer beobachten. Warzenschweine, Kudus und Affen kamen regelmäßig ans Wasser zum saufen.

Am Montag begaben wir uns nochmals mit Herrn Wilkens auf eine Farmrundfahrt und halfen ihm mit der Tierfütterung. Es konnte sehr viel Wild gesichtet werden und auch die Liste der Vögel wurde ergänzt.

Nach einem vorzüglichem Mittagessen ging es wieder auf die Heimfahrt.

Wir danken dem Ehepaar Wilkens daß wir das Wochenende dort verbringen durften und hoffen das wir zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt, und nach etwas Regen es wiederholen dürfen.

Liste der beobachteten Vögel
Afrikanischer Löffler, Waffenkiebitz, Nilgans, Namaflughuhn, Raubadler,