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Editorial

In this issue I am delighted to be able to publish articles on two species new to Namibia, one of which is in fact new to the southern African sub-region and is believed to be resident in the far north west of Namibia.

In May 2012 Wessel Swanepoel discovered a population of Angola Cave Chats on the southern slopes of the Zebra Mountains west of Swartbooisdrif in the far northwest of Namibia. This species was thought to be an Angolan endemic but has now been found south of the border. Please take note of Wessel's request that he be informed of any further sightings of this species in order to facilitate his research into this species in Namibia.

The second species new to Namibia which we feature in this issue is the Lesser Yellowlegs seen by Simon Woolley at the Rundu Sewage

considered to be an Angolan endemic. In Angola it is extremely localized in four isolated areas along the Great Escarpment in the west where it frequents rocky hills and gorges.

Towards the end of May of this year, while on an expedition to the Zebra Mountains in the Kaokoveld, I discovered a population of Angola Cave Chat. A strange bird call was heard and after a while the bird was clearly seen and immediately recognized as being an Angola Cave Chat - the first record for Namibia of this enigmatic species! It perched on a rock just long enough for a couple of photographs before it flew off to join another bird in the distance, presumably its mate. The habitat where these first two birds and subsequent pairs were recorded consists of mountain scree.

Habitat of Angola Cave Chat in the Zebra Mountains of north-western Namibia

The Angola Cave Chat is not to be confused with the Mountain Wheatear, which has similar black and white plumage colours. It also has remarkably similar plumage colouration to the local subspecies of Common Fiscal with the white eyebrow.

No doubt there will be many more sightings of Angola Cave Chat now that its existence in Namibia is known. Feedback on sightings of the Angola Cave Chat will be highly appreciated and will be useful for my future studies on this bird in Namibia.

Angola Cave Chat perching on a scree slope in the Zebra Mountains

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) at Rundu Sewage Works – a New Species for Namibia

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(The photographs in this article are © Simon Woolley).

On the morning of August 21st 2011, I arrived at Rundu Sewage Works, Namibia (17°53'22"S, 19°48'2"E), along with my wife, Julia Casson, 14 teenage boys from Winchester College Natural History Society (UK), and Rainer Summers, our local leader from Rockjumper Birding Tours. After checking through the various commoner birds present, a calling wader attracted my attention, and I saw a medium-sized, grey *Tringa* with obviously yellow legs and a squared-off white rump fly past. Rainer's "what was that?!" was instantly met with a response of "Greater Yellowlegs!" from me, on account of the trisyllabic, very Greenshank-like call.

Calm analysis of the bird, feeding with a Wood Sandpiper, and SMS input from birding friends back in the UK, enabled us to rule out this even more outrageous identification, and the good photos obtained confirm that this was "just" an adult Lesser Yellowlegs, apparently the first for Namibia.

The generally light build, the fine, almost wholly black bill, no more than slightly longer than the head, and the dark secondaries visible on one poor flight shot confirm the identification.

(According to Trevor Hardaker's Southern African Rare Bird News Report *of 29/08/2011 this is only the seventh record for this species in southern African and the first in Namibia - Ed).*

Cat Alert on Halifax Island

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(The photographs in this article are © Jessica Kemper).

Halifax Island (26°37′S 15°04′E) is situated about 10 km west of the harbour town of Lüderitz in southern Namibia, roughly 200 m off the mainland. It consists of a flat, sandy, central plain surrounded by rocky ridges and hills. Several bushes grow along ridges on the island and there are numerous rocky overhangs, particularly on the western side of the island. In addition, a few abandoned, disintegrating buildings, relics of the guano harvesting era, are scattered along the north-eastern side of the island.

The 10 ha island ranks as one of the four most important seabird breeding islands in Namibia.

It is the only breeding locality in Namibia where numbers of globally endangered African Penguins *Spheniscus demersus* have been steadily increasing during the last decade. In 2010 the island supported about 850 breeding pairs of African Penguins, up to 70 pairs of Crowned Cormorants *Phalacrocorax coronatus*, about 60 pairs of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquinii* and roughly 340 pairs of Kelp Gulls *Larus dominicanus*. Swift Terns *Sterna bergii bergii* and Hartlaub's Gulls *L. hartlaubii* also breed there in some years. The island is part of the Namibian Islands' Marine Protected Area and access to the public is prohibited. However, two tour operators offer boat tours there and the island can thus be viewed from a boat without disturbing the birds. Staff from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources occasionally land on the island to count the birds.

On the morning of 12 February 2011 I was contacted by Rene Rossler, skipper of the tour boat "Sedina" who, with his assistant Paulus Jakobs, had just spotted a large domestic cat *Felis catus* on the north-eastern shore of the island. Upon seeing the boat crammed with tourists, the sand-coloured cat dashed into the main building. Considering that the invasion of domestic cats into pristine and/or fragile environments has caused significant damage to wildlife around the world (e.g. Burger & Gochfield 1994, du Toit et al. 2003, Lowe et al. 2000), and realizing the severe