

# LANIOTURDUS

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## CONTENTS

THOMSON N	Editorial	1
Van der MERWE D	A Trip to Al Ain, Abu Dhabi – Part 1 – Desert Camp	2
THOMSON N	The Real Difference between Swallows and Swifts	7
POTGIETER H	Vulture Ringing on Farm Smalhoek, 2012	8
DEMASIUS E	Workshop Birding	10
FRIEDERICH G	A Zambian Birding Experience – Part 1	14
SWANEPOEL W	More Records for the Cape Eagle-Owl <i>Bubo capensis</i> in North-Western Namibia	19
PAXTON M	KOAR Winter (July) Wetland Water-bird Counts, Okavango River, 2012	21
SCHMIDT O	A Spectacular Day at Namibia's Coastal Birding Mecca	25
KOLBERG H	Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations 9 : Waders and Shorebirds – Part 1	27
ATLAS UPDATE		33
RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS		34

## Editorial

Once again in this issue we are able to report on species new to Namibia. Er, well, perhaps one of them is not really new to Namibia, but none of the previous records was accepted.

The species concerned is the Black Skimmer, a species native to the Americas and for which, as far as I can determine, there were no confirmed records on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

A single bird suddenly appeared at Rietvlei near Cape Town in October 2012, stayed a few days and then disappeared. A couple of days later a single bird (believed to be the same individual) appeared in Walvis Bay, stayed for a short period and again disappeared.

There have been two previous unconfirmed records of this species in Namibia of which I am aware. The first is Joris Komen's record from the Rundu Sewage Works in the mid 1980's which was not accepted by the then rarities committee on the grounds that it was just too unlikely that this species had found its way there - I don't think that Joris has forgiven that committee to this day.

The second record is Tony Tree's sighting of a single bird at Walvis Bay in February 1998, which, as far as I am aware, was also shot down by the rarities committee.

For more on the Walvis Bay Black Skimmer see Otto Schmidt's article and John Paterson's stunning action picture in the "Rarities and Interesting Observations" section of this issue.

**More Records for the Cape Eagle-Owl  
*Bubo capensis*  
in North-Western Namibia**

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Red-eyed Dove  
Red-faced Mousebird  
African Mourning Dove  
Tropical Boubou  
Wire-tailed Swallow  
Black-faced Waxbill  
Magpie Shrike  
Neddicky  
Violet-eared Waxbill  
Black-backed Puffback  
Red-billed Firefinch  
Green Wood-Hoopoe  
Common Scimitarbill  
Burnt-necked Eremomela  
Bearded Scrub-Robin  
Long-billed Crombec  
Chinspot Batis  
Southern Black Tit  
Brubru  
Brown-crowned Tchagra  
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater  
Red-headed Weaver  
Arrow-marked Babbler  
Purple Roller  
Gabar Goshawk  
Terrestrial Brownbul  
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove  
Black-throated Canary  
Grey-rumped Swallow  
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird  
Hamerkop  
Lizard Buzzard  
Lesser Swamp-Warbler  
Red-billed Teal  
Red-billed Oxpecker  
Little Grebe  
African Rail  
Red-crested Korhaan  
Lesser Moorhen  
African Stonechat  
African Pipit  
African Wattled Lapwing  
Pygmy Goose  
White-backed Duck  
Hottentot Teal  
Cattle Egret  
Crowned Lapwing  
Rattling Cisticola  
Bateleur  
Swainson's Spurfowl  
Namaqua Dove

(123 species)

Only five published substantiated records for the Cape Eagle-Owl in Namibia exist, four of which are substantiated by photographs and the fifth by a sound recording (Swanepoel 2003, 2005). Our knowledge regarding the distribution of this enigmatic owl species thus is mostly based on call records and a few sight records. These owls occur in remote areas and unless calling their presence is usually not detected.

Since the last published record of Cape Eagle-Owl in Namibia in 2005 (Swanepoel 2005), the author has found the species in a number of localities in north-western Namibia at which it was not recorded before:

- Baynes Mountains, Okavhare River, 8 km south of the Kunene River, 1712BB, July 2005. Two birds heard calling from cliffs above the river.
- Otjihipa Mountains, 4.5 km south of Onyesu and the Kunene River, 1712BA, April 2006. Two birds heard calling from cliffs in the mountain.
- Mikberg, 14 km south of De Riet and the Huab River, 2014CA, October 2006. One bird heard calling from the northern slopes of the mountain.
- Otjihipa Mountains, top of Van Zyl's Pass at view point, 1712DA, May 2007. One bird heard calling.
- Rocky outcrops, 19 km south of Leyland's Drift and the Hoarusib River, 1912DD, January 2012. One bird seen and photographed (Fig.1), roosting on ground amongst boulders in early morning sun.

- Mountains west of Giribesvlakte, 1913AB, May 2012. Two birds heard calling from the mountains.
- Mountains along Hoarusib River, 28 km north north west of Puros, 1812DB, May 2012. Three birds heard calling from the mountainous area adjacent to the river.

Apart from the above-mentioned new records, a Cape Eagle-Owl has been seen and photographed by Adri van der Merwe in the Okavhare River cliffs in the Baynes Mountains in August 2010 (Fig.2). This record is from the same locality as the one by the author in July 2005.



Fig. 1 © Wessel Swanepoel

To date the Otjihipa Mountains record is the closest record of Cape Eagle-Owl to Angola, at only 4.5 km from the common border. It thus seems highly likely that this species will eventually also be found there.

The record by Adri van der Merwe constitutes the sixth substantiated record for Cape Eagle Owl in Namibia and also the northernmost in both Namibia and south-western Africa.

The record south of Leyland’s Drift constitutes the seventh substantiated record for Namibia.

Apart from the above-mentioned records, the author has heard Cape Eagle-Owls on numerous occasions at several of the known localities as indicated in the article published in 2003. In the Khan River several birds were heard calling during one night and one bird was seen the following morning. Cape Eagle-Owls are probably more common than realized but due to the preferred habitat in remote areas, they are seldom recorded unless they are calling and the call is recognized as such by observers.

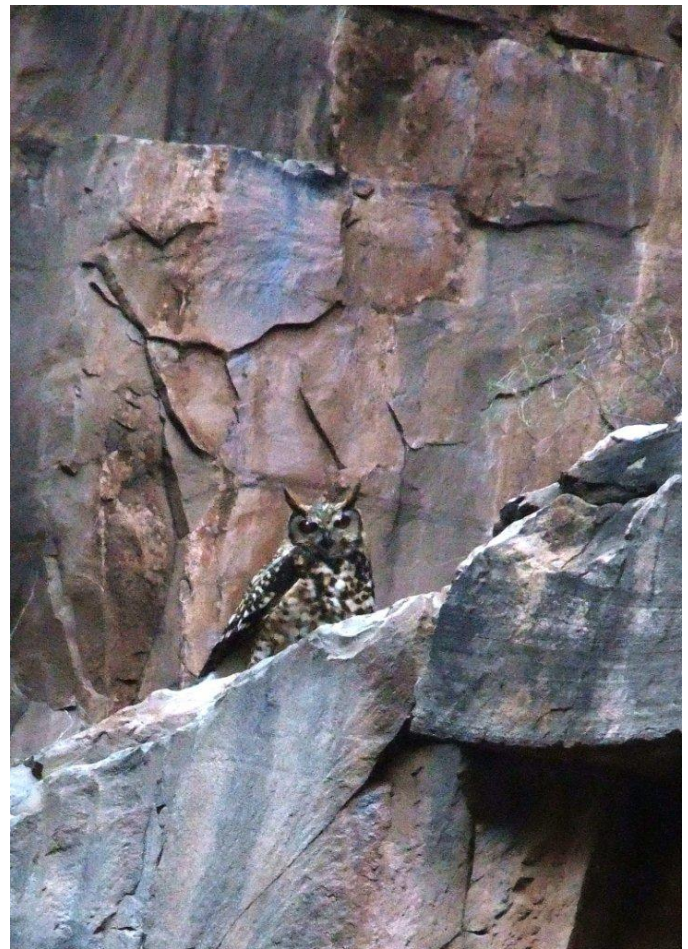


Fig. 2 © Adri van der Merwe

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