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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

Having heard a Pearl-spotted Owlet calling we set up another mistnet in some dense vegetation in the vicinity from where the call was coming and with the aid of a recording of the call it was only a matter of minutes before we had the bird in the net giving Gudrun her second ever owl to ring.

On the Sunday morning Gudrun got a sighting of the Hartlaub's Spurfowl in this dense vegetation which gave her a birding lifer for the trip.

Late on the Saturday afternoon we caught three Rosy-faced Lovebirds which I managed to free from the nets and ring without having my fingers mutilated although I was not quite so lucky where the rather aggressive Acacia Pied Barbets we caught were concerned.

Amongst the other birds we caught were a number of Dusky Sunbirds. It was interesting to see that the orange pectoral patch of the males is not actually on the wing but underneath it. Whether the bird is able to make these feathers stand up so that they appear to be on the leading edge of the wing or whether it lifts them over the edge of the wing with its bill for display purposes I do not know.

I have seen a similar (yellow) pectoral patch under the wing of the stunning male Malachite Sunbird.



Male Dusky Sunbird showing pectoral patch under the wing

All in all we ringed 48 birds of 15 species and recaptured five birds ringed by (an)other ringer(s) in a day and a half of ringing. We also put together a birdlist of 53 species seen or heard which included five of Namibia's near endemic species – Monteiro's Hornbill, Carp's Tit, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Rockrunner and the White-tailed Shrike *Lanioturdus turquatus*, emblem of the Namibia Bird Club. Among the birds heard but not seen were Barn Owl and Freckled Nightjar.

The journey back to Windhoek was equally uneventful and equally raptor poor with once again only two raptors (this time a Black-shouldered Kite and a White-backed Vulture) seen on the entire route.

Report on 2012 Namibian Ringers Get-Together

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(All photographs in this article were provided by Jessica Kemper ©.)

I was asked, as a first time attendee, to convey my impressions on this year's Ringers Get-Together held at Farm Wiese east of Rehoboth.

It was such a wonderful experience to join you



Male Dusky Sunbird showing pectoral patch visible above folded wing

all in this beautiful part of Namibia on this wonderful farm. That alone made the trip worthwhile; the hospitality, the bush, the animals and the way it is run. Everything was well organized and the accommodation and food excellent.



Dinner time

The exposure to Dirk and the raptors was very interesting. His large variety of measurements was very impressive and I learned a lot about nest boxes, their challenges and their possibilities.



Dirk measuring a Gabar Goshawk

Graham and I had a run on Anton's farm north of Windhoek earlier that week and we had to close our nets quickly to be able to cope with all the birds. So I was a bit disappointed with the numbers at Farm Wiese, but on the other hand we had a larger variety there and I accept that the numbers can differ from year to year and season to

season. The results with the flap traps were also very good, but hard work.

I liked the family atmosphere and that the children were allowed to join in, which means that ringing in Namibia has a bright future.

The presentations in the evening were very interesting and I was both impressed and inspired by what can be achieved by individuals and the role they can play in helping us to either understand certain species better or help them to survive better; our sincere thanks and admiration to Dirk, Mark, Jessica, Sigi and Rod. You are doing a lonely but marvelous job!

The project on Sociable Weavers is another example of how far you will go and how much you are willing to do to aid the study of different bird species. I was a bit disappointed, however, that the aims of the project were not clearly spelt out to us as participants, but I am sure the American (*Gavin Leighton - Ed*) knows what he wants to achieve. I hope that we will all receive feedback on it.



Ringling at the "red" nest

Last but not least, I would once again like to thank our hosts, Werner and Renate, for allowing us to spend those memorable days on their beautiful farm. Next time, if there is a next time, I would like to spend at least one whole day learning more about farming in Namibia with Sussex cattle and Damara sheep and visiting the different parts of the farm, as I am sure there will be much to see.

I would also like to thank Neil and Gudrun for allowing us to stay with them before the Get-Together and for the arrangements they made to enable us to do some more ringing north of Windhoek.

May there be many more such Get-Togethers.



Eben with a Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill

Summary of the 2012 Summer Wetland Bird Counts in Namibia

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Ministry of Environment and Tourism

Wetland bird counts were once again conducted throughout Namibia during the months of January and February 2012. A total of 33 sites were covered resulting in 262 833 birds of 112 species. For the first time since 2007 counts were also conducted in the Caprivi, on the Okavango and the

Kwando Rivers. The effects of the good rainy seasons over the past few years are still very evident with low numbers of especially flamingos and ducks recorded at the coast. Rains which had fallen in the central northern and north-eastern parts of the country since early January probably account for the low numbers recorded at those sites.

Walvis Bay and Sandwich Harbour made up the bulk of the total of birds counted, once again confirming the importance of these two sites not only in Namibia but also as internationally important wetlands. The highest number of species was recorded in the Mahango, with Walvis Bay running a close second. Several rarities were observed: 4 Common Redshanks at Mile 4, 3 Eurasian Oystercatchers at Sandwich Harbour, 1 Common Redshank, 3 Terek Sandpipers and 13 Red-necked Phalaropes at Walvis Bay, 2 Slaty Egrets on the Kwando and one in the Mahango, 1 Black Heron at Otjivero Dam and 1 Pink-backed Pelican at Hardap Dam. Maccoa Ducks are making a come-back at the Walvis Bay sewage ponds with a total of 27 counted.

I would like to thank all the counters for the time and effort that they spend to do the counts. My sincere gratitude goes to Christian Thimende and Dan Stephens who expertly skippered us around the Okavango and Kwando Rivers respectively.

Note: See the last page of this edition for a table of the counts by location.

Red-billed Queleas

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I think that most people know Red-billed Queleas as rather drab little birds almost fitting the LBJ (little brown job), or the Afrikaans equivalent VVV (vreeslike vaal voëltjie), moniker. The bright red bill however makes them readily distinguishable from most other LBJ's.