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About the Namibia Bird Club

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. The club's mission is to contribute to Namibian ornithology by, amongst other things, arranging regular birding outings, conducting bird ringing and atlasing excursions and educating the public about the value of birds. To achieve this, we organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewage Works and occasional weekend trips further afield. Bird club members also participate in the African Waterbird Census twice a year.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we present occasional lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a digital newsletter, *Namibia Bird News*, which includes a programme of forthcoming events and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organization and relies entirely on members' subscriptions and donations to fund its activities.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club or its committee.

Instructions to Authors

Lanioturdus is a journal dedicated to birds and birding. Although the journal's primary focus is on Namibia, articles from other geographical parts of the globe will also be considered for publication. Authors should use common and scientific names of southern African birds as published in *Roberts' VII*. For other regions, English and scientific names following BirdLife International's species list (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species>) should be used. Text should be submitted as a MS Word document. Photos, maps and figures should be sent as separate jpeg images, graphs as MS Excel charts or jpeg images and tables as MS Word or Excel documents. Please indicate in the article text where these should be placed.



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Namibia's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas 1: Introduction and Overview

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BirdLife International's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) Programme aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for the conservation of the world's birds and other wildlife. The IBA programme started in Europe in 1985 and was initiated in Africa in 1993 with the southern African programme kicking off in 1995 at a workshop hosted by the (then) Avian Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town (Barnes 1998).

IBAs are identified according to a set of four criteria based on globally threatened species, restricted-range species, biome-restricted species and congregations (BirdLife International 2013a). Criterion A1 states that a site should become an IBA if it is "*known or thought regularly to hold significant numbers of a globally threatened species, or other species of global conservation concern.*" This criterion makes use of the IUCN red list categories and the regular presence, in any number, of a critically endangered or endangered species is sufficient to qualify the site as an IBA. Species listed as vulnerable need to occur in numbers higher than the regional threshold for a site to qualify as an IBA. Twenty-eight globally threatened bird species (criterion A1) are found in Namibia (Table 1, BirdLife International 2014) and this ranks the country 37th in the world in terms of globally threatened bird species.

Criterion A2 on restricted-range species uses the definition of Endemic Bird Areas (EBA) or Secondary Areas (SA) as its basis. EBAs are areas where two or more

species with a world distribution of less than 50 000km² occur together, whereas SAs support one or more restricted-range species but less than two species are entirely confined to it. The Western Angola EBA extends into north-western Namibia whereas the Namib Desert SA and the Namibian Escarpment SA are confined to the country (Simmons *et al.* 2001).

Criterion A3 applies to species whose distribution is largely or wholly confined to one biome. This category applies to species that occur in areas that usually are greater than 50 000km² but consist of one biome and are thus of global importance. Under criterion A3 three biomes, the Zambebian, Kalahari Highveld and Namib-Karoo, were identified to hold biome restricted species in Namibia.

The final criterion, A4, uses congregations of birds as a basis, with criteria that are very similar to those for wetlands of international importance. Hence a site may become an IBA if the site is known or thought to hold, i) more than 1% of a biogeographic population of a congregatory waterbird species, ii) more than 1% of the global population of a congregatory seabird or terrestrial species, iii) more than 20 000 waterbirds or more than 10 000 pairs of seabirds of one or more species, and iv) if it exceeds thresholds set for migratory species at bottleneck sites. These criteria apply to most of Namibia's wetland-based sites, however, no sites were listed under the criterion on bottleneck sites for migratory species (A4iv), probably due to a lack of data.

In Namibia 21 IBAs were identified but only 19 of these qualified for global status (Simmons *et al* 1998). The latter are listed in Table 2. Seventeen out of the 19 sites qualified because of criterion A1 with criterion A4i being the next important one (n = 15). Eleven, nine, six and three sites qualified under criteria A3, A4iii, A2 and A4ii respectively. Of the eight IBAs inland, only two, Etosha National Park and Waterberg Plateau Park, are fully protected and the IBA containing the Mahango core area is probably 50% protected. The remainder all fall outside officially proclaimed conservation areas¹. The picture is completely different in the eleven sites that have a common border with the Atlantic Ocean. All but two of the IBAs are fully protected and of the remaining two, one, Mile 4, is a proclaimed private nature reserve. Large parts of the Walvis Bay wetlands IBA fall within the boundary of the Dorob National Park and it is hence considered partially protected.

There have been considerable changes since 1998 when the IBAs were identified, e.g. the proclamation of the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area resulted in complete protection of the islands and the proclamation of two parks, Tsau//khaeb (Sperrgebiet) and Dorob National Parks, has provided protected status for two coastal IBAs. There have also been changes in the red list classification of some birds e.g. most vultures have been classified as 'Endangered'. In the series of papers to come I will revise and update the information on each of Namibia's IBAs.

References:

Barnes, K.N. (ed.) 1998 *The Important Bird Areas of Southern Africa*. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg

BirdLife International 2013a IBA Criteria

www.birdlife.org/datazone/info/ibacritglob accessed 5 December 2013

BirdLife International 2013b IBAs Namibia

www.birdlife.org/datazone/sitesearchresults.php?cty=146&fam=0&gen=0 accessed 5 December 2013

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Simmons, R.E., Boix-Hinzen, C., Barnes, K.N., Jarvis A.M. and Robertson, A. 1998 *Important Bird Areas of Namibia*. In: *The Important Bird Areas of Southern Africa*. Barnes, K.N. (ed.) pp 295-332 BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg

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¹ I do not consider communal conservancies as formal conservation areas.

Table 1: List of globally threatened birds found in Namibia (BirdLife International 2014).

Species	Common Name	Category²
<i>Agapornis nigrigenis</i>	Black-cheeked Lovebird	VU
<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>	Blue Crane	VU
<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	Grey Crowned Crane	EN
<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	Southern Ground-Hornbill	VU
<i>Bugeranus carunculatus</i>	Wattled Crane	VU
<i>Circus maurus</i>	Black Harrier	VU
<i>Diomedea dabbenena</i>	Tristan Albatross	CR
<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering Albatross	VU
<i>Egretta vinaceigula</i>	Slaty Egret	VU
<i>Gyps africanus</i>	White-backed Vulture	EN
<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	Cape Vulture	VU
<i>Morus capensis</i>	Cape Gannet	VU
<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	Hooded Vulture	EN
<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Egyptian Vulture	EN
<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>	Ludwig's Bustard	EN
<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	Cape Cormorant	EN
<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	Bank Cormorant	EN
<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Martial Eagle	VU
<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned Petrel	VU
<i>Procellaria conspicillata</i>	Spectacled Petrel	VU
<i>Pterodroma incerta</i>	Atlantic Petrel	EN
<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Secretarybird	VU
<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	African Penguin	EN
<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	EN
<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed Albatross	EN
<i>Thalassarche salvini</i>	Salvin's Albatross	VU
<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>	Lappet-faced Vulture	VU
<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	White-headed Vulture	VU

² IUCN red list status; CR = critically endangered, EN = endangered, VU = vulnerable

Table 2: List of Namibia's global IBAs (adapted from BirdLife International [2013b] and Simmons *et al* [2001]).

Site Name	Conservation status ³	Criteria used to select site
NA001 Epupa - Ruacana	U	A1, A2, A3
NA002 Eastern Zambezi Region wetlands	U	A1, A3, A4i
NA003 Mahango core area and Okavango River	P	A1, A3, A4i
NA004 Etosha National Park	F	A1, A3, A4i, A4iii
NA005 Hobatere	U	A2, A3
NA006 Tsumkwe pan system	U	A1, A3, A4i
NA007 Waterberg Plateau Park	F	A1, A3
NA008 Brandberg mountain	U	A2, A3
NA009 Cape Cross lagoon	F	A1, A4i, A4iii
NA010 Namib-Naukluft Park	F	A1, A2, A3, A4i
NA011 Mile 4 saltworks	P	A1, A4i, A4iii
NA012 Beach Walvis Bay to Swakopmund	F	A1, A4i
NA013 Walvis Bay wetlands	P	A1, A4i, A4iii
NA014 Sandwich Harbour	F	A1, A4i, A4iii
NA015 Mercury Island	F	A1, A4i, A4ii, A4iii
NA016 Ichaboe Island	F	A1, A4i, A4ii, A4iii
NA017 Lüderitz bay islands	F	A1, A4i, A4iii
NA018 Possession Island	F	A1, A4i, A4ii, A4iii
NA019 Tsau//khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park	F	A1, A2, A3, A4i

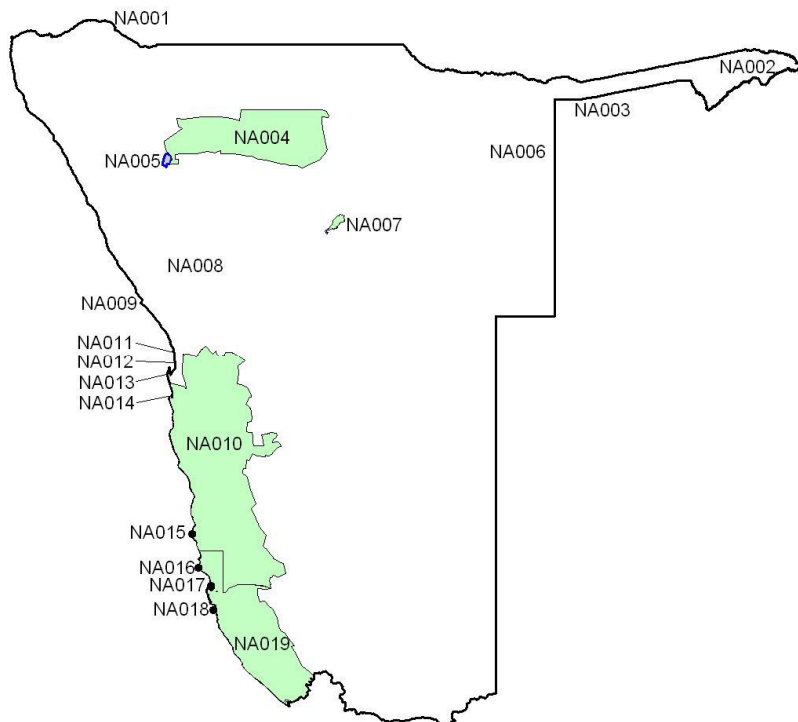


Figure 1: Namibia's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas.

³ U = unprotected, P = partially protected, F = fully protected