

This issue of *Lanioturdus* is devoted to the raptor workshop which was held at Waterberg Plateau Park from 18-19 February 2005. The workshop was organized by the Namibian Nature Foundation and was open to all who were interested in raptors.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 38 (3-4) 2005

BROWN, C. Welcome and introduction	1
BRIDGEFORD, P. & BRIDGEFORD, M. Status of vultures in Namibia	1
OSBORNE, T. & M. WINK. Taxonomy of African raptors with emphasis on Namibian species	7
BRIDGEFORD, P., BRIDGEFORD, M. & DÜRR M. Monitoring and ringing of Lappet-faced Vultures on the Namib:1991-2004	9
BRIDGEFORD, P & HEINRICH D. Ringing of African White-backed Vultures on commercial farms	13
MENDELSON. J, BROWN C., MENDELSON M. & DIEKMANN M. Observations on the movements of adult Cape Vultures in central Namibia	16
OWEN-SMITH, G. Raptor issues within conservancies	21
HENGARI, G. M., CUNNINGHAM P. L., & ADANK W. The use of vultures by traditional healers in Namibia	22
KOMEN, L. Where we are and where we can go with poison and raptors: a perspective from NARREC	29
ROBERTSON, T. & JARVIS A. Raptors and the Avifaunal Database	36
BRAINE, S. Raptor road counts - the need for continuation	45
JOUBERT, D. Raptor road counts with students at Polytechnic of Namibia.....	46
DIEKMANN, M. The capture and attachment of satellite- and radio-telemetry equipment on vultures in the Waterberg area	50
RAPTORS NAMIBIA. <i>Action Plan</i>	52

Welcome and introduction

Dr Chris Brown

Namibia Nature Foundation, PO Box245, Windhoek

Namibia's vultures, other diurnal raptors and owls are increasingly under threat from factors such as disturbance, particularly at breeding sites; the misuse of poisons and pesticides; electrocution and collisions with overhead lines; habitat degradation; persecution; illegal harvesting; and drowning in reservoirs.

Much work has been done on raptors in Namibia in the past. People have come and gone, however, resulting in a lull in activity which is now picking up again. By collaborating in a close-knit group rather than in isolation we will be able to achieve more, encouraging one another and pooling our resources in effective, coordinated synergies. There is also a need for new actions, which will be incorporated into existing programmes/initiatives where possible, with a focus on increasing public involvement.

This is why the time is right for our workshop on birds of prey at Waterberg Plateau Park on 18-19 February 2005. We are privileged to welcome a healthy mix of "old-time" raptor enthusiasts here who bring years of experience to the table, and a new cohort of young conservationists who will carry the flag into the future. One of our main outcomes will be to develop an action plan for these threatened birds (see the plan below).

Status of vultures in Namibia

Peter & Marilyn Bridgeford

Vulture Study Group Coordinator Namibia

pmbridge@iway.na

Introduction

Vulture research in Namibia started in the 1960's in the Namib Desert Park, now part of the Namib-Naukluft Park (NNP). Sauer (1973), Jensen (unpublished reports), Clinning (1978) and Brown (1985, 1986) all worked on vultures in the same area over the years. The present project of ringing Lappet-faced Vultures

Observations on the movements of adult Cape Vultures in central Namibia

John Mendelsohn¹, Chris Brown², Martin Mendelsohn¹ and Maria Diekmann³

¹RAISON, PO Box 1405, Windhoek, Namibia, ²Namibia Nature Foundation, PO Box 245, Windhoek, Namibia and ³REST (Rare and Endangered Species Trust, PO Box 178, Otjiwarongo, Namibia)

Introduction

Since early in 2004, five adult, male Cape Vultures *Gyps coprotheres* have been fitted with satellite transmitters that relay signals to satellites operated by the Argos system. Positional fixes from the satellites are usually accurate to within about 20 m, and are recorded each hour during daylight hours. Estimates of the altitude and flight speed of the bird are provided with each set of co-ordinates. Here we present some findings based on data collected between January 2004 and August 2005. Transmitters on two birds stopped functioning in 2004, while the transmitters on the other three adults have continued to transmit useful data to date. Transmitters were also fitted to a young African White-backed Vulture *G. africanus* and a young Cape Vulture, but information from these birds will be reported elsewhere.

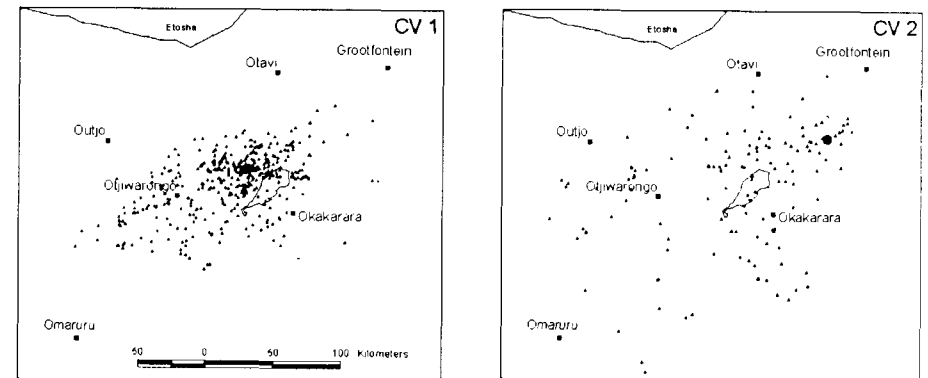
Information given here attempts to answer the following questions: where do the birds roost and nest, what areas are covered by the birds, at what speeds do they fly, from what heights do they forage and do foraging heights vary during the day, when does foraging usually start and stop, and over what land uses do the vultures forage? The data presented here are based on over 7,300 individual locations received for the five birds. For purposes of analyzing flight speeds and foraging behaviour, we selected all records when flight speeds were 10 km/hr or greater.

Table 1. Periods of satellite-tag operation, number of locations received for each adult Cape Vulture as at the beginning of August 2005, and the nature of their roost and nest sites.

Bird	Start date	End date	Locations	Home range (km ²)	Main roost sites	Nest site
CV1	17 Jan 2004	31 Oct 2004	2224	14,400	Trees	Tree
CV2	20 Mar 2004	17 May 2004	654	24,500	Trees	Tree
CV3	28 Nov 2004	Still sending data	1178	11,800	Cliffs	?
CV4	28 Nov 2004	Still sending data	2163	16,100	Trees	Tree
CV5	15 Jan 2005	Still sending data	1143	17,800	Trees and cliffs	Tree

Results and discussion

Figure 1 shows the home ranges of the five birds. With the exception of CV2, which was monitored over only two months, all the birds concentrated their movements and foraging to the west of the Waterberg Plateau Park, although CV3 also spent much time to the south of the Park. The home ranges varied between 11,800 and 24,500 km² (Table 1). These are all substantial areas (for comparison, Etosha National Park covers some 22,900 km²).



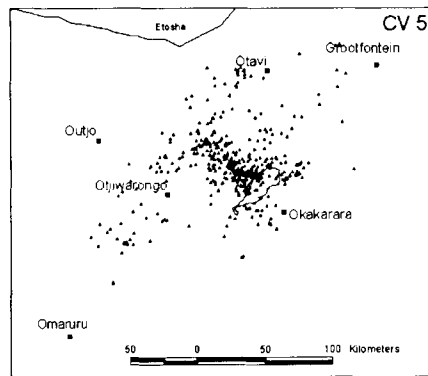
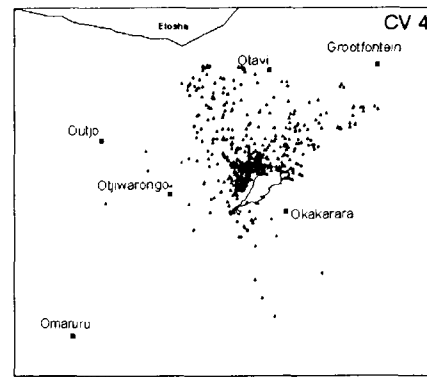
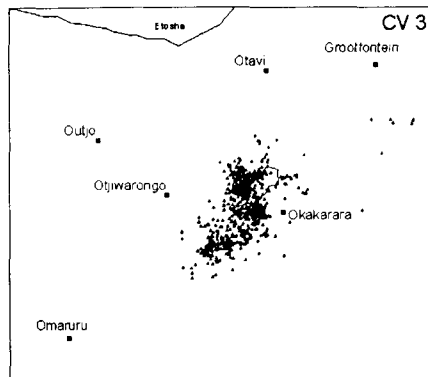


Figure 1. Places at which the five adult Cape Vulture were recorded in 2004 and 2005

The most surprising result of the study was the discovery of frequent roosting and nesting in trees at sites relatively close to the traditional cliff roosts and nests on the Waterberg (Table 1). Three of the nests in trees were within 13 km of the western cliffs of the Waterberg Plateau Park, while a fourth was about 25 km from the nearest cliffs. Only one of the adults (CV4) roosted regularly on the western cliffs, but at three separate sites, while CV5 roosted regularly on both these cliffs and in trees. One adult (CV1) was perhaps paired to a White-backed Vulture, although genetic evidence of hybridization has yet to be established.

The average flight speeds of the five males ranged between 55 and 62 km/hour, the highest recorded speeds being over 127 km/hour for three of the birds. Flight speeds did not vary significantly during the day. All records received from the transmitters are given with GMT time, which is approximately 2 hours before

local time. Of a total of 2,322 records of the birds flying at speeds of 10 km/hour or greater, only 31 were recorded before 08h00 GMT or 10h00 local time. Similarly, only 20 records of birds flying at these speeds were recorded after 18h00, suggesting that most foraging occurs between 10h00 and 18h00 local time.

Flying heights were estimated by subtracting the recorded altitude of each flying bird from a set of elevation data for the country (Figure 2). The resulting estimates suggest that Cape Vultures generally forage between 250 and 350 m above the ground. Although heights up to 1,000 m above ground were recorded, only 20% of all altitude records were above 500 m. The lower average flying heights between 10h00 and 1300 may be due to thermals being weaker during the earlier part of the day. Alternatively, these estimates may be lower because they include more records of birds starting their daily foraging trips and therefore flying at lower altitudes.

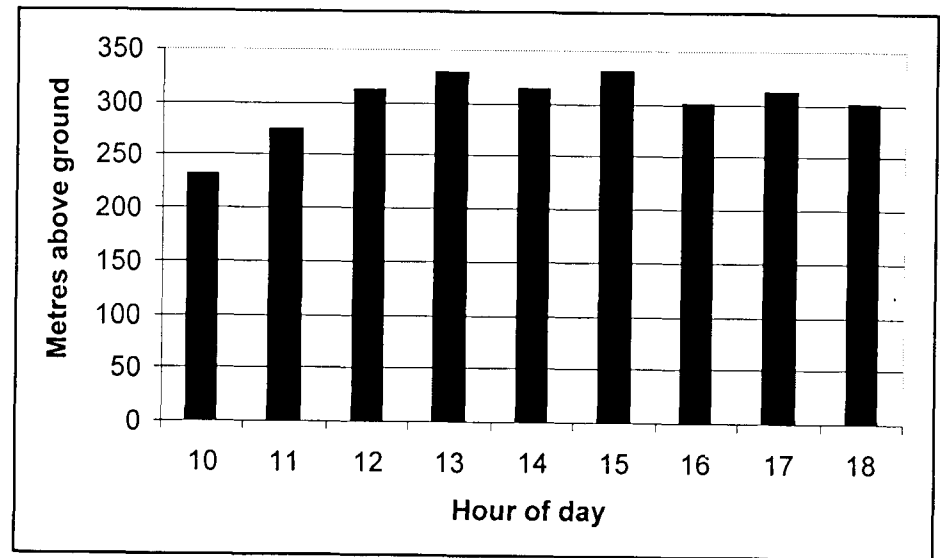


Figure 2. Average flying heights above ground of the five adult Cape Vultures.

The Cape Vultures spent much more time foraging and roosting on freehold farms than in other land uses (Figure 3). None of the birds spent any time in Etosha National Park, and there was little foraging over the Waterberg Plateau Park or the communal farming areas of what was previously called Hereroland.

Raptor Issues Within Conservancies

Garth Owen-Smith
Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
PO Box 24050, Windhoek

IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation) is a Namibia NGO and Trust which pioneered community-based natural resource management in Namibia. This approach has proved successful and has resulted in wildlife recoveries and changed attitudes in many communal areas. More than 7 million km² - 9.5% of Namibia - are now under communal conservancy status. This figure is likely to double when all emerging conservancies are registered. IRDNC works with more than 40 of the registered and emerging communal area conservancies in Kunene and Caprivi.

When I started working in the communal areas in 1966, mainly in the north-west, particularly Kaokoland, there were many raptor nests. Today it's very different, and some raptors are not seen any more. During planning sessions for 17 conservancies in the Kunene Region we talked about raptors: which can be identified, which cause problems to people. Many species were listed. Some of them were reported to kill lambs, goat kids and chickens. We also asked how communities dealt with these problems. They told us that the birds are shot or poisoned; or the nests are found and the chicks destroyed. The overall attitude is that raptors are more of a problem than an asset, although vultures are not generally regarded as a threat as they show the people where cattle have died. Many raptors have therefore disappeared from the area.

How much raptor work has been done in the north-west communal areas? We need to work with conservancy staff, training, monitoring and looking for raptor nests. Raptor conservationists are welcome to come and talk at quarterly conservancy planning meetings. In this way we can link raptor conservation initiatives to conservancies. The training course with Save the Rhino Trust rangers needs to be followed up. We needed a mechanism to link in with these huge, previously unorganized areas, and to integrate raptor conservation ethics with the local communities. The social and institutional foundation to do this is in place in conservancies. All we now need is to obtain grass-roots buy-in for raptor conservation and technical input and ongoing support for ourselves.

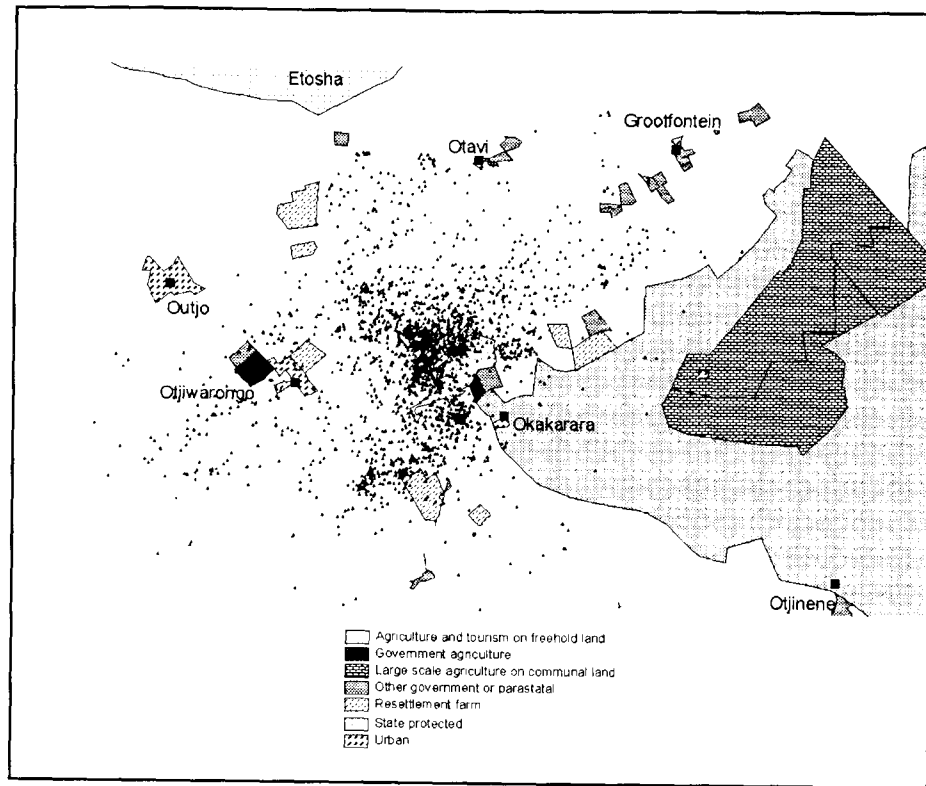


Figure 3. Places at which the five adults were recorded in relation to land uses. Each small black dot represents a record of a vulture.

In conclusion, a substantial volume of information has been collected from these five birds. The data have also demonstrated the existence of a tree-nesting population of Cape Vultures in Namibia. It can be argued that each reported locality is at least equivalent to a re-sighting, recapture or recovery of a ringed bird, and these five birds have provided over 7,300 such reports. This is a much greater return on effort than that achieved from all the ringing and colour-marking of vultures over many decades in the whole of southern Africa. Although satellite transmitters are expensive, we urge that more effort be made to track and study other birds using this technique.