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## Editorial

Tim Osborne

I must apologize to the members for the delay in Vol. 37 (1). It was at the printers in late January but due to unforeseen circumstances it was delayed until April. It also had a distortion error and a double entry of the map accompanying Holger Kolberg's ringing report, which was my fault. Not having a printer, I only work on my laptop and sometimes I cannot see what the final page will look like.

The rains are past and those birds dependent on insects have bred. The seed-eaters are enjoying the harvest and the large raptors are prospecting their nests as they also have lots of prey in the form of young birds. The Monotonous Larks are still singing their hearts out day and night on our farm. The African Scops Owls are also calling throughout the night. From our place we can hear 5 pairs, one of which is right outside our window. Funny how one gets used to natural sounds in the bush. When we come to Windhoek we cannot sleep with the car alarms, dogs barking and traffic, but here with a Scops calling all night we sleep right through.

From the Chairman's Report you will be able to see that the club membership is declining. If you want to keep the club viable you must also do your part and try and get new members to join.

There are a lot more sightings reported in this issue, which is a welcome change. Keep sending those in. So far this year we have added three new species to the Namibian list: Gull-billed Tern, Streaky-breasted Flufftail and European Blackcap (more on this species in the next volume).

GREY HORNBILL *Tockus nasutus*

On 26 Mar 2004 I saw a flock of 51 Grey Hornbills flying past just south of Namutoni, Etosha NP. It appeared to be a post breeding aggregation. (T. Osborne)

BLACK CUCKOO SHRIKE *Campephaga flava*

Three pairs were seen from Otavi and along the road to Grootfontein. This is a species, which has extended its range dramatically in the past 30 years; i.e. these birds were not seen in the area prior to this period. (S. Braine)

ORANGEBREASTED BUSH SHRIKE *Telophorus sulfureopectus*:

A single bird was heard and subsequently called in at the campsite at Namutoni; this is a western extension for this species. (S. Braine)

PINKBILLED LARK *Spizocorys conirostris*

About 10 were found in a field near the wetlands east of Ruacana. Also large numbers seen at the artesian spring north of Etosha's northern gate (Steve Braine). Several Pink-billed Larks seen on the Okaukuejo-Okendeka road, on 18 February 2004. (Neil MacLeod)

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

During a routine monthly bird count at Swakopmund Sewage Works on 29 Feb 2004 a Yellow Wagtail was observed. Although this species is not uncommon in Namibia, the particular subspecies seen, *M.f. feldegg*, is regarded as a vagrant to southern Africa (Keith S, Urban E.K, and Fry C.H. (1992). The Birds of Africa. Vol. IV. Academic Press Limited, London). This bird was a male in fresh boreal spring plumage; so a confident identification was possible. Subspecies *feldegg* is from a population whose normal southernmost limit of its wintering range is central Democratic Republic of the Congo. Repeated sightings were made of this bird daily until 03 Mar 2004 after which it disappeared. (Mark Boorman)

## The amazing, one-winged flying Quelea

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The following is a true story I wrote for my grandchildren in Alaska and is part of series of tales I have been working on to let them know about our African adventures.

Once upon a time on Windpoort Farm Grandpa Tim and Grandma Laurel were busy catching birds in a mist net so they could ring them and let them go. They did that to see where the birds were going because maybe somebody else would catch them far away and see Grandpa's ring on the leg and let Grandpa know where that bird had gone.

Grandpa was actually off doing something else and Grandma Laurel was busy watching the net. She was catching different kinds of birds but the one she was catching the most was a little bird called a "quelea." In fact she was catching lots of them. So she would get them out of the net, put them in bags, bring them in the house, measure and weigh them and finally ring the bird and let it go.

As she was working her way through about a dozen queleas, she pulled one out of its bag and started to measure its right wing. It had none! No wing at all; just a stump where once there had been a wing. "Now how did that bird manage to fly into the net," she wondered. Somehow that bird with only one wing had flown into the net and gotten caught. Maybe it just flapped along with its one wing or maybe it flew like a helicopter with its one wing going round and round above its head. "This is great!" she thought. "I will save this bird for Grandpa Tim and he can take all kinds of measurements and lots of photographs and we can write an article for a glossy magazine and get rich and famous!!!" Grandma was very excited.

After a while Grandpa Tim came home. "Guess what I got in the net," squeaked Grandma excitedly. "A one-winged flying quelea!!!" "What?" said Grandpa. "Let

