



# LANIOTURDUS

VOL. 42 (2) 2009

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## CONTENTS

THOMSON, N. Editorial

MIDDENDORFF, G. Chairperson's Report

KOLBERG, H. Of Gale-Force Winds and Balmy Days...  
Narrative of Twenty Five Days of Bird Counting in the  
Wild Hinterland of Namibia

THOMSON, N. Ringed Blue Crane Sighting

PATERSON, J. Vagrants, Range Extensions and Interes-  
ting Bird Records for Skeleton Coast Park, Namibia and  
Southern Angola

FRIEDERICH G. & T. Early Birds on Tsutsab Vlei

KOLBERG, H. Population Census of Flamingos in Nami-  
bia, July 2008

RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS

### Editorial

Included in this issue is the chairperson's report as delivered at the Annual General Meeting held on 5 March 2009. In it our chairperson, Gudrun Middendorff, outlines the activities of the Namibia Bird Club over the past year which include outings, talks, attendance of meetings and conferences by committee members and others, the partnership agreement with NEWS (Namibia Environment and Wildlife Society) and the donations and sponsorships given to various causes.

There are a number of birding projects on the go in Namibia and also a number of special interest groups eg. ringers, raptors, cranes and coastal birds. One can then ask what the primary function of the bird club is. We believe that the Namibia Bird Club provides social and educational birding to its members through outings, talks and of course, the publication of *Lanioturdus*. Morning walks are led by ex-

perienced birders who are able to help others develop their bird identification skills and general birding knowledge. It is our hope that members will go on to become involved in other projects where they can use these skills. A number of members have participated in the summer and winter bird counts at Walvis Bay which form part of the African Water Bird Census under the auspices of Wetlands International. The Bird Club has undertaken to contribute to these counts by doing summer and winter counts at Monte Christo. On 1 February 2009 four Bird Club members, Gudrun, Hanjo Böhme, Rolf Adrian and myself assisted by my daughter, Maren, as scribe, counted 335 birds of 34 species at Monte Christo. If there is interest from members and particularly if someone can provide a boat, the Bird Club could make an even bigger contribution to this project by doing counts on other inland waters such as perhaps Hoffnung Dam or Otjivero Dam which are not currently being counted.

Although I only fairly recently formally joined the Namibia Bird Club I have long been of the opinion that if one gets a lot out of birding one should put something back. Over the years I have been involved in data collection for the Atlas of Southern African Birds, various wetland counts, raptor road counts and I now have a ringer's license. I believe that by participating in these various activities I am putting something back into birding and I hope that others will also follow this path.

Tim Osborne resigned from the committee before the AGM (after resigning as editor of *Lanioturdus* some months ago) and Suzan Mallet-Veale has stood down from active involvement. We now welcome two new committee members in Holger Kolberg and Richard Niddrie.

### Chairperson's Report 2009 Presented at the Annual General Meeting held on 5 March 2009

*Gudrun Middendorff*  
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First I want to thank my committee for their hard work, support and commitment and good spirit over the past year. Secondly a want to thank our members and friends for supporting our outings and lastly I want to thank the Scientific Society for the venue and their staff for excellent cooperation.

It has become a set pattern that we visit Avis dam and the sewage works alternately at the beginning of each month

As a conclusion we find it worthwhile to mention the Flamingos. On the morning of Thursday, December 18th, at 05h45 I (G) heard a flight of *Greater Flamingo* (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) overhead. I dashed outside and could see about 25-30 birds flying in the direction of Etosha. They must have been on their way from Botswana - Sua Pan? I called Wilferd Versveld of MET in Okakuejo. He informed me that there was still water in the Etosha Pan and that the Flamingo chicks there would survive. Only about 1000 Flamingos had been counted at the Walvis Bay wetlands and they were breeding again at the Sua Pan as well as on Kamfersdam near Kimberley, RSA.

*Species recorded:*

Red-billed Teal	± 160	Egyptian Goose	9
Glossy Ibis	2	Woolly-necked Stork	25
Little Grebe	± 20	Grey Heron	1
Black-winged Stilt	8	White Stork	2
Cape Shoveler	2	Saddle-billed Stork	3
Whiskered Tern	2	Osprey	1
Common Green-shank	many	African Spoonbill	2
Wood Sandpiper	many	Pied Avocet	1
Blacksmith Lap-wing	many	Whitefaced Duck	6
Little Stint	many	Southern Pochard	1
Painted Snipe	13	Cape Teal	4
Great Egret	1	Marsh Sandpiper	16
Little Egret	1	Collared Pratincole	1
Three-banded Plover	10	Dwarf Bittern	1
Marabou Stork	2	Black-crowned Night-Heron	1
Cattle Egret	4	African Snipe	1
Open-billed Stork	22	Hamerkop	1

Tsutsab Vlei is an ephemeral pan, situated on the farm Tsutsab in the northern Tsumeb district of Namibia, QDS 1818 CC.

Post script. Then it started all over again! On 6 February 2009, six weeks after the vlei had dried up it started filling with water again. Good rains in the catchment area filled the vlei in four days. Birding kicked off with five *Maccoa Duck* (*Oxyura maccoa*) and ten *Whiskered Terns* (*Chlidonias hybrida*) amongst others. The depth of the water ruled out waders as areas that had had no water before now had dense vegetation standing in the water. We will continue to monitor the situation and see what new surprises this flooding brings.

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*Collared Pratincole*

Photo: Eckart Demasius

**Population Census of Flamingos in Namibia, July 2008.**

*Holger Kolberg*

*Directorate Scientific Services*

*Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Windhoek*

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*This report is dedicated to the memory of Keith Wearne – he will be missed!*

The southern African Lesser Flamingo population was estimated to number 55,000 – 65,000 individuals in the mid-1990s, but these were either under estimates or the numbers have increased since, because at times Kamfers Dam, the Goldfields wetlands (in South Africa), Etosha Pan (Namibia) and Sua Pan (Botswana) each support more than that number. In order to try and get to grips with the size of the southern African population of Lesser Flamingos, a co-ordinated survey was planned for 20-21 July 2008. During this survey, all of the sites which at times have supported more than 750 Lesser Flamingos were to be counted. In Namibia, Lesser Flamingos have been counted at 47 sites and the 750 birds criterion has been exceeded at least once at 12 of these (see Table 1, data up to date, May 2008). This meant most of the coastal sites and Etosha Pan would need to be counted and a concerted effort was made to attain full coverage. Unfortunately the shortage of counters meant that not all sites could be counted at the given dates and a decision was taken to count the three most important sites, Walvis Bay, Sandwich Harbour and Etosha Pan on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July and to slot the remaining areas in when time allowed. Counts started as early as 9 July and finished on 25 July covering 18 sites. Both, Lesser and Greater Flamingos were counted and counters were also asked to try and get separate totals for adults and juveniles. At nine sites Lesser Flamingos were counted, totalling 66121 birds comprising 55598 adults and 10523 juveniles. The bulk of these were counted at Etosha Pan using aerial photography; the birds were still breeding there and perhaps more chicks will hatch (Wilferd Versveld, pers comm.).

**Table 1:** Sites where Lesser Flamingos have been counted, the number of times the counts have exceeded 750 birds and the percentage of times the counts have been over 750 birds.

Site	No of times LF counted	Counts of LF >750	% of counts >750
Agate Beach	1	0	0.00%
Bushmanland	1	0	0.00%
Cape Cross Saltworks	18	3	16.67%
Cape Cross to Jakkalsputz (63 km)	1	0	0.00%
Caution Reef - Swakop	1	0	0.00%
Conception Bay	2	0	0.00%
Kunene River Mouth	1	0	0.00%
Ekuma River	6	1	16.67%
Etosha Pan	1	0	0.00%
Fischer's Pan	10	4	40.00%
Gautscha	1	0	0.00%
Guano Bay	2	0	0.00%
Hardap Dam	3	0	0.00%
Hoanib River Mouth	6	0	0.00%
Huab River Mouth	3	0	0.00%
Jakkalsputz to Swakop River (61 km)	1	0	0.00%
Kamingama Dam	1	0	0.00%
Karamba	2	0	0.00%
Khorixas Sewage Works	1	0	0.00%
Klein Dobe	1	0	0.00%
Kuiseb River Delta Wetlan	1	0	0.00%
Lake Oponono	15	2	13.33%
Lüderitz Sewage Works	10	2	20.00%
Meob to Conception Bay	1	0	0.00%
Mile 4 Saltworks	21	10	47.62%
Naute Dam	2	0	0.00%
Nonidas (Swakopmund)	3	0	0.00%
Nyae Nyae	12	3	25.00%
Okahandja Sewage Works	1	0	0.00%
Okerfontein, Etosha Pan	1	1	100.00%
Olushandja Dam	2	0	0.00%
Omatako Dam	2	0	0.00%
Orange River Wetlands	17	2	11.76%
Oshituntu	7	0	0.00%
Radford Bay	3	0	0.00%
Sandwich Harbour	45	29	64.44%
Second Lagoon	9	0	0.00%
Sewage Works, Luderitz	3	0	0.00%
Shearwater Bay	1	0	0.00%
Swakop River Mouth	24	0	0.00%
Swakop Sewage Works	2	0	0.00%
Swakoppoort Dam	2	0	0.00%
Ugab River Mouth	3	0	0.00%
Uniab Delta	1	0	0.00%
Von Bach Dam	1	0	0.00%
Walvis Bay Ramsar Site	38	38	100.00%
Walvis Bay Sewage Works / Bird Paradise / Bird Sanctuary	41	3	7.32%

My most sincere thanks go to the many people who gave up their weekend, quality family time and other plans to help with the counts. It is heartening to see that despite the current economic crisis, people are still prepared to foot (sometimes considerable) expenses in order to count birds:

1. Kunene River Mouth counted by Chantel Louw, Alwyn Engelbrecht and Holger Kolberg
2. Little Oasis near Hoarusib counted by Chantel Louw, Alwyn Engelbrecht and Holger Kolberg
3. Hoanib River Mouth counted by Chantel Louw, Alwyn Engelbrecht and Holger Kolberg
4. Hoanib Oasis counted by Chantel Louw, Alwyn Engelbrecht and Holger Kolberg
5. Uniab Delta counted by Chantel Louw and Holger Kolberg
6. Huab River Mouth counted by Chantel Louw and Holger Kolberg
7. Cape Cross Lagoon counted by Sandra Dantu, Chantel Louw, Mark Boorman, Marc Dürr, Petri Hoppola, Arnold Uwu-Khaeb and Holger Kolberg
8. Mile 4 Saltworks counted by Connie Berry, Ingrid Heller and Gisela Friede
9. Swakop River Mouth counted by Gisela Noci and Arnold Uwu-Khaeb
10. Walvis Bay Ramsar site counted by Sue Roux and a huge team of volunteers.
11. Walvis Bay Sewage Ponds counted by Petri Hoppola, Ann Scott, Mike Scott, John Paterson, Wilderness Safaris x7 (sorry do not have all the names), Hartmut Kolb, Sue O'Shann, Verna Hasse, Hans Goetze and Marc Dürr
12. Sandwich Harbour counted by Chantel Louw, Mark Boorman and Holger Kolberg
13. Lüderitz Peninsula counted by Jessica Kemper
14. Orange River Mouth counted by Mark Anderson and Holger Kolberg
15. Fischer's Pan counted by Wilferd Versfeld
16. Etosha Pan counted by Werner Kilian and Wilferd Versfeld (by air)
17. Hardap Dam counted by Holger Kolberg
18. Naute Dam counted by Holger Kolberg



Lesser Flamingos

Photo: Eckart Demasius

**Table 2: Sites counted during the July 2008 flamingo survey.**

Date	Site	Lesser Flamingo			Greater Flamingo		
		ad	juv	total	ad	juv	total
10 July 2008	Kunene River Mouth						
09 July 2008	Little Oasis near Hoarusib						
13 July 2008	Hoanib River Mouth	1	5	6		8	8
13 July 2008	Hoanib Oasis						
14 July 2008	Uniab Delta						
14 July 2008	Huab River Mouth						
18 July 2008	Cape Cross Lagoon	1	10	11	1	4	5
20 July 2008	Mile 4 Saltworks	37	43	80	2		2
21 July 2008	Swakop River Mouth						
19 July 2008	Walvis Bay Ramsar Site	4382	372	4754	4655	296	4951
21 July 2008	Walvis Bay Sewage Works	854	9	863	955		955
19 July 2008	Sandwich Harbour	1	1	2			
19 July 2008	Lüderitz Peninsula	252	30	282	2		2
30 July 2008	Orange River Mouth*	63	53	116			
26 July 2008	Fischer's Pan	7		7			
19 July 2008	Etosha Pan	50000	10000	60000			
24 July 2008	Hardap Dam						
25 July 2008	Naute Dam						
		<b>55598</b>	<b>10523</b>	<b>66121</b>	<b>5615</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>5923</b>

\*Namibian side only

## RARITY SIGHTINGS AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS

On 19/01/2009 Hartmut Kolb spotted a colour ringed adult greater flamingo at Walvis Bay with a black ring on the left leg and a metal ring on the right. Enquiries revealed that this bird had been ringed in Botswana where black rings are used to identify the country in which the bird was ringed.

Further to the rarities seen at Walvis Bay during the summer wetland count which were reported in Lanioturdus 42-1, the summer count also turned up a red-necked phalarope at Cape Cross and a pectoral sandpiper was recorded at the Walvis Bay sewerage works. Three more red-necked phalaropes were counted at the Mile 4 Salt works together with two American golden plovers and an elegant tern. An elegant tern was seen here at the salt works in February 2007 and later that month at Wlotskasbaken. It is thought to be the same bird that was recorded in February 2006 at the Strandfontein sewerage works on the Cape Peninsula and this is most probably the same bird again. The Strandfontein record was a first for southern Africa.



*Red Necked Phalarope (top) and Pectoral Sandpiper (bottom)*  
Photos : Neil Thomson

