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Editorial

The trials of the Namibia Bird Club continue with it mainly being a Windhoek orientated organization. The number of articles submitted to its journal the *Lanioturdus* has withered to almost unacceptable levels. In 2006 only one issue of the *Lanioturdus* was published and here we are half way through 2007 and finally the editor has enough articles to publish what probably will be the only issue of 2007.

There is obviously an interest in birding within Namibia since there are now many subgroups specializing in aspects of birds. There is Raptors Namibia who publish an on line newsletter once a month. The Crane Working Group, Raptor Road Counts, Rare and Endangered Species Trust working on vultures, and the Wetland Bird Counts which enumerate all the wetlands twice per year.

I know that there are birders observing birds because of the rare birds which have been reported to the magazine *Birds and Birding* from Namibia.

Once again I appeal to all members to help the Namibia Bird Club. If you want to keep the club viable you must also do your part and try and get new members to join. We are currently down to fewer than 100 members.

Fortunately there is good news and there has been a recent increase in the number of articles submitted and hopefully this trend will continue and we could see another issue published this year.

I hope readers will note the addition to the Namibia list of Ruppell's Vulture. There are probably more juvenile Ruppell's Vultures visiting Namibia than we realize. Observers should keep their eyes open when watching vultures at a kill, you may be able to add a new species to your list. If you do see one of these birds please try to photograph it.

Lüderitz colour-ringed Hartlaub's Gull at Walvis Bay

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On 14 November 2005, while counting terns at Walvis Bay harbour, we found a Hartlaub's Gull with a fresh orange colour ring on its right leg and metal ring on the left leg. On making enquiries locally we could not find anyone who had colour-ringed this species in the area. On posting this information on 'namringers@yahoo.com' it was discovered that a bird with this ring combination had been rehabilitated and ringed at Lüderitz.

It was on 29 July 2005 that Pete Bartlett found a badly oiled Hartlaub's Gull in Lüderitz harbour. The bird was christened "Slipway" and it took three washes by Jessica Kemper to clean off the very sticky oil, which was concentrated on the primaries and tail feathers. The bird was released on 22 August wearing ring number 5H10001 on its left leg and an orange colour ring on its right leg.

As there does not appear to be any other record of this ring combination on a Hartlaub's Gull it seems safe to assume that this was the bird seen later in the year at Walvis Bay. In Underhill LG, Tree AJ, Oschadleus HD and Parker V (1999. Review of ring recoveries of waterbirds in southern Africa) the longest distance recovery given was of 228 km for a bird moving from Robben Island to the Olifants River mouth in exactly one year. The distance from Lüderitz to Walvis Bay harbour is approximately 410 kms and thus this record constitutes the longest distance movement to date in this species.



Raptor electrocutions and collisions with power-lines in Namibia

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In 1986/87, Brown and Lawson (1989) completed the first survey of electricity transmission lines in Namibia to look for bird interactions. During this 1 447 km survey of 220 and 330 kV transmission lines in a helicopter, they found one collision victim, a Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* and several other species of birds nesting on the pylons. In South Africa, collisions and electrocution of birds, especially raptors, have a negative impact on bird populations and cause problems to the utility companies. This problem has been dealt with in detail by van Rooyen (2000).

During a vulture ringing project northeast of Windhoek, information on this problem was collected. The owner of the farm Reveille, Okahandja district, reported that an African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* was electrocuted in 2002. At least four Flamingos *Phoenicopterus* spp., were injured when they collided with a transmission cable. In the Hochfeld area, on the farm Kataneno, a dead animal under the electricity transmission cables, attracted many vultures. Two African White-backed Vultures were killed when they flew into a cable.

Close to Windhoek on the farm Okatumba South, a Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* was electrocuted and found hanging on the transmission cable. Other farmers were questioned about this problem, but many reported that they did not use the cleared track following the power-lines. Unless carcasses lay in the road, the thick bush and grass hid the carcasses and small predators soon consumed them. Although there are undoubtedly more electrocutions and collisions, the problem may not be as severe as there are many tall trees for roosting and nesting in the northern areas of Namibia. However, in the south of the country, with

less trees and those present often lower than the pylons, the problem may be more severe.

References

Brown, C.J. & Lawson, J.L. 1989. Birds and electricity transmission lines in South West Africa/Namibia. *Madoqua* 16(1): 59-67.

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Wetland Birds on Tsutsab Vlei 2005/2006

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It has been 5 years, since 1999/2000, that Tsutsab Vlei, situated on the farm *Tsutsab, No. 293*, 1818 CC, had not received any inflow. The season 2005/2006 started late, but after the area had some good rains, water started flowing again. Although we did not have any heavy showers, we received water from farms from the south (that is not from *Hardap* region - very much closer). The waters started flowing strongly at the end of January, filling the vlei to the brim on the 3.02.2006. This was the case again on the 24.02.2006. Since then there was no further inflow any more. We expected another feast of birding, but it was disappointing in the end. Although we recorded a reasonable species count, the numbers for species were quite low. The reason for this was that other areas east and south of here had been flooded earlier and birds had a wider area to disperse on. We therefore made no effort to really search for birds, like in past years. We also reason the general decline of wetland birds over the years is just an ongoing process, for whatever reasons.

Birds recorded: (In sequence as they were seen)

Red-billed Teal	adult & chicks
Comb Duck	adult & chicks
Little Grebe	adult & chicks
Yellow-billed Egret	
Open-billed Stork	± 92 birds
Black-necked Grebe	
Great White Egret	
Senegal Coucal	1 bird seen 15.01.06, again on 19.05.06, probably present in between above dates
Cattle Heron	81 birds during July 2006, present until last.
Blacksmith Lapwing	lots of adult & sub-adult
Grey-headed Gull	1 bird on 15.03.06
Little Egret	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	
Red-knobbed Coot	
Whiskered Tern	1 bird, first sighting 19.03.06, again 08.07.06
Woolly-necked Stork	
Green-backed Heron	
Reed Cormorant	1 bird, first record for 1818 CC on 15.02.06
Little Bittern	
Squacco Heron	± 12 birds
African Jacana	seen 25.02.06, 2nd record for 1818 CC since 10.01.2000
Greater Painted Snipe	4 birds, still present 12 July 2006
Abdim's Stork	± 60 birds
Egyptian Goose	1 bird
Black-winged Stilt	eventually 21 birds counted 08.07.06, some sub-adult
Maccoa Duck	± 4 birds counted 15.02.2006
Grey Heron	2 birds, breeding
Lesser Moorhen	adult & chicks
Great White Pelican	1 bird on 13.05.2006
Three-banded Plover	± 10 birds, 2 present till last.
Dwarf Bittern	
Wood Sandpiper	3 birds seen 08.07.2006
Marabou Stork	2 birds seen 08.07.2006