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**Black-Shouldered
Kite vs. Porsche**

6 June 2011: A driver on his way back from the Vaal on Sunday afternoon, unavoidably hit a Black-shouldered Kite. Seeing that it had somehow gone through his Porsche 4x4's grille, but was still alive, he drove on slowly so as not to overheat the bird.

In Johannesburg, he met Porsche roadside rescue people and FreeMe volunteer Jax, who couldn't remove the bird but treated it for shock and popped in a couple of mice for an overnight snack.

On Monday morning the car was jacked up and the whole front section removed - apparently the only way to get to the radiator - and the bird was rescued and taken to FreeMe, stressed but otherwise uninjured!



Photo: Brenda Lacey-Smith

No Poles, No Birds

Neil Thomson

In a previous article (Raptors Namibia #2 April - June 2010) I mentioned that the majority of the raptors seen on a trip to the south of Namibia were perched on either telephone poles or the wooden masts and pylons carrying electricity distribution lines up to 66kV. I then speculated on the effects of the removal of the telephone poles.

On 14 & 15/01/2011, I accompanied my daughter on the long drive to Cape Town where she was to commence her second year at university and en route from Windhoek to the South African border, we did a raptor road count. All in all we counted 48 raptors (43 birds of 7 identified species plus 5 unidentified birds). Once again the vast majority of the raptors seen were in areas where there are either telephone poles or wooden power pylons.

Of the 48 raptors seen, a whopping 69% (33) (including the only African White-backed Vulture seen), were perched on these posts or pylons. (I can't recall ever seeing a vulture perched on a telephone pole before). Of the remaining birds, one was (presumably feeding) on the tarred road, 5 were flying, 2 were perched on trees, 4 were perched on fence posts, one was perched on the elevated air release valve of a water line, one was perched on a sign next to the railway line and one (a Martial Eagle) was perched on a huge steel electricity pylon.

Again I am forced to wonder where those raptors utilizing the telephone poles will go when the last remaining poles are removed. To me it is very obvious that these poles are important perching sites for some species and there are simply very, very few raptors to be seen from the road in the areas where there are no overhead telephone or low voltage electricity lines.

www.vultureconservation.co.za/
www.liveleak.com/view?i=a0c_1289944378
www.africanraptors.org/
www.stopwildlifepoisoning.wildlifedirect.org/
www.kestreling.com
www.nnf.org.na
www.ewt.org.za
www.birdlife.org.za/page/5356/vulture_tagging
www.peregrinefund.org/default.asp

BOPPing in Zim

Holger Kolberg, Intrepid Intra-continental Traveller
and Land-speed Record Breaker

A Namibian delegation had the honour of being invited to attend the EWT Birds of Prey Programme AGM at the Maleme Conference Centre, Matopos National Park, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 26 May 2011. The delegation consisted of the King Vulture (*Ponsvadum petrus*¹), his queen (*P. marialynus*²) and yours truly (*Locomons holgerus*³).

At the crack of dawn, well, actually shortly thereafter, on the 23rd of May we sped (strictly sticking to the legal speed limit, of course) out of Windhoek, towards the rising sun. The plan was to overnight in Maun and then continue from there the next day. The journey went by without any major incident and we arrived in Maun just in time to catch the local five o'clock rush hour. Our accommodation was a bit out of town and hidden away amongst some mopane trees - perhaps that's why it is called Discovery B&B. Since the distance from Maun to Bulawayo was shorter than that from Windhoek to Maun, the general consensus was that we could leave at leisure the next morning - a fatal miscalculation, as it would turn out.

Botswana has these eccentric (I was told that it is not politically correct to call them stupid) speed restrictions and very efficient policemen, so soon we were trundling along at 80km/h in the middle of nowhere. Just for the hell of it they then throw in the odd veterinary check point where you have to get out, wipe your shoes, and your spare shoes, and your spare shoes' brother etc. Ah, and then there's road works! Why the blue blazes they are constructing a five lane highway from Francistown to the Zim border is beyond comprehension. And just to stop people from going faster than the average Botswana donkey they put down sleeping policemen (in this country called speed bumps) every 500m on the detour! So by the time we reached the border the sun was getting low in the west and by the time we had completed the "formalities" of crossing the border it was even lower.

It was at about this point when Peter thought out loud that he wondered when they close the park gate. Whaaaaat?! We still had over 100km to go and not a lot of time before sunset, which is when park gates are normally closed. Needless to say we soon were trying to break all kinds of land speed records, our attempt only thwarted by a "toll gate" and a scenic tour of Bulawayo (if you don't have a pom-pom or whatever those

gadgets are called, it's quite easy to get lost). Racing out of Bulawayo we kept a mental note of all the hotels and B&Bs we passed, "just in case". Testament to the speed we were doing is the fact that it took us almost two kilometres to slow down the car (that sounds so much better than: we missed the b****y turn-off!) and eventually we found ourselves at the park gate. Lo and behold it was still open! (We were later reliably informed that it is open 24 hours because it's a public road). It is quite interesting to drive through a park that you don't know in the dark but we finally reached the rest camp, just in time for dinner.



Photo: Mike Lloyd

Jackal Buzzard (*Buteo rufofuscus*) taken at Sandwich Harbour, Namibia

The first thing you have to get used to in Zimbabwe is that you pay for everything in Dollars - the George Washington kind, not the Kaptein Witbooi ones. The second thing you have to get used to is that there's no real beer - only the ones named after a sturdy old building and the others named after a large carnivore. But, as the Germans say "In der Not frisst der Teufel

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

auch Fliegen” and soon we were sipping our very expensive, crappy beers, chatting to old friends and in my case, finally putting faces to all the names I knew. The day’s action soon took its toll though and we made our way back to our bungalow for a well deserved night’s sleep.

The next morning the meeting kicked off with a stimulating presentation (toffee coloured background and all) by the evergreen and energetic Professor Mundy who tried to convince us all that Zimbabweigh was at the coal face of raptor study. This was followed by various talks on Verreaux’s Eagles, falconry and humans. Humans? Yes, lest we forget that *Homo sapiens* (whoever got the idea to call us wise man?) is the root cause of many a “raptor problem” and unless we can change the mindset of people, we may as well kiss most of our birds of prey goodbye. There were also presentations about power lines, wind farms and other insignificant raptors such as Black Harriers. In the evening the Steven Piper Memorial Dinner was held (with white table cloths and silver cutlery nogal!) and we were regally entertained by yet another toffee coloured Mundy presentation.

On Thursday the presentations finally were on matters of substance - vultures. The gap between the real world and the one across the ocean was just too clearly illustrated by a young lady from some university in the states who complained that she could only afford 30 GPS trackers to stick on vultures in the Masai Mara. Holy Toledo! Here we are sukkeling to get bucks for one of those gadgets and she has 30 of them! Eish! On top of that then, Andre Botha bragged about his 100% (yes, 100%!!) re-sighting record of vultures tagged at Moholoholo. Man, we Namibians really have to pull up our socks...

Too soon the conference had ended and on Friday morning, this time well before the first dassie had even yawned, we were on our way back to Nam. Again things went smoothly apart from a minor hold up in Nata (how can a bureau de change not have Pula - in Botswana?) which necessitated a quick visit to the friendly local China shop. In Maun we were welcomed back to the B&B and the next day we made it back to Windhoek with a sore backside but nevertheless richer for the experience.

¹ That’s Latin for Peter Bridgeford

² That’s Latin for Mrs B

³ That’s Latin for me

Donations to Vultures Namibia

In the Raptors Namibia newsletter, 4/2010, we paid tribute to our friend Marc Dürr who passed away in October 2010.

We would like to thank all those friends who made a donation to Vultures Namibia in lieu of flowers. The names I have are:

Robin Teifel, Namibia Bird Club,
Wolfgang Neubrech, Hu and Conny Berry.

Several donations had no names.

A total of N\$2 850.00 was received.

This money will be used to help pay for the aerial survey and ringing of vultures in the Namib-Naukluft Park.

Thank you.

Peter Bridgeford, for Vultures Namibia.



Mystery Bird

I saw this beautiful white Wahlberg's Eagle (?) in Etosha near Twee Palms, Etosha National Park, last week.

..... Holger Kolberg, 13/4/2011

My best guess is a very pale, juvenile Tawny Eagle. Note the thick tarsi and new, pale-tawny feathers on the face, the beginning of moult. Also, the head is not shaped like a Wallies'..... Bill Clark, 29/5/2011
Your picture is of a Tawny Eagle rather than a Wahlberg's Eagle in my opinion.... it is too heavy-set and robust for a Wallies'. These pale birds (Tawnies) have been recorded previously in Etosha and occur especially in winter. Rob Simmons, 29/5/2011

Many thanks to Bill and Rob for their replies.



Photo: Dirk Heinrich

Marco Böhmer with a Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk ringed on the farm

From the archives

In November 2010, Dirk Heinrich was on the farm *Moringa*, near Wilhelmstal, west of Okahandja. Dirk and Marco Böhmer went to look at a carcass where vultures had been seen. On approaching the carcass lying next to a fence, they saw many White-backed Vultures feeding. All the birds took off, but one tried to get through the fence. Dirk realised it was tangled and jumped out of the vehicle and tackled the vulture before it could free itself. So he and Marco could ring and tag it. This is probably the first vulture caught at a carcass without the aid of nets or other equipment. Well done Dirk.

When they returned to the farmhouse, Peter Böhmer showed Dirk a report of a vulture found dead on his farm in 1963. He sent the details to the South African Ornithological Society and they sent him a postcard with the details of ringing. It was a Cape Vulture ringed at the Skeerpoort colony, Hartebeespoort Dam (near

Pretoria) on 4 August 1962, by Lynn Hurry. Time elapsed: 436 days and distance travelled 1 193.06 kms. See the details on the postcard. Thanks to Dirk and Peter Böhmer for this interesting report from almost 50 years ago.

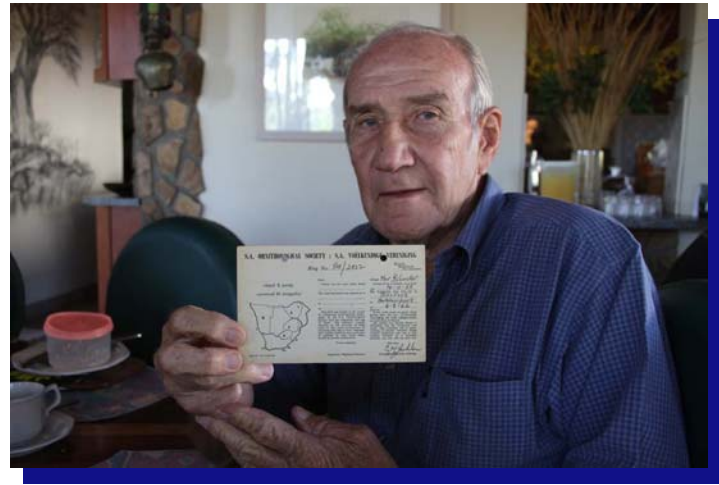


Photo: Dirk Heinrich

Peter Böhmer who found the ringed Cape Vulture

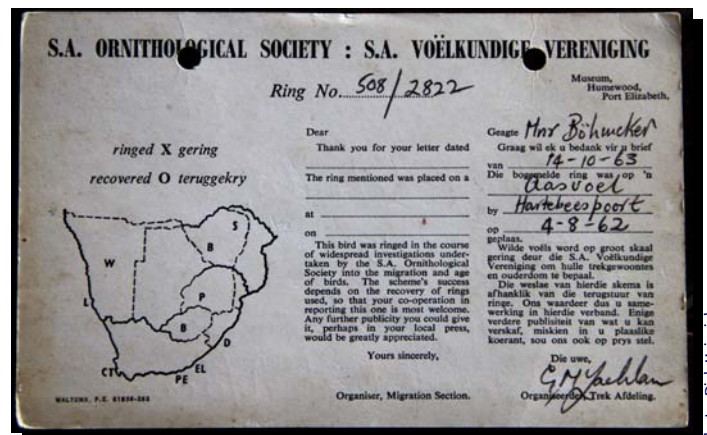


Photo: Dirk Heinrich

Post card received from G. McLachlan of the South African Ornithological Society, showing ringing details

More wing-tags seen

Peter Cunningham

On 19 March 2011, my brother Andrew saw an immature Lappet-faced Vulture on a zebra carcass 4 km east of Namutoni, Etosha National Park, Namibia. It had a wing tag E221 as well as a metal ring on the right leg. It had evidently been ousted from the carcass by White-backed Vultures and adult Lappet-faced Vultures during the observation period. Wilferd Versveld replied that it had been seen again on 4 April near Namutoni and on 6 April at Chudop. It was ringed as a chick on 23 November 2010 near Kalkheuwel in Etosha.



Photo: Andrew Cunningham

Vultures on zebra carcass near Namutoni

Three endangered owlets hatched at Cambridgeshire zoo

Three chicks from an endangered breed of owl, believed to be extinct in the wild in its home territory, have hatched at a Cambridgeshire zoo. Linton Zoo are hand rearing the three Turkmenian Eagle-Owlets. Kim Simmons, zoo manager, said staff had had to take them from their mother to give them a chance of survival. "They hatched in mid March but were rejected by their inexperienced mother and so were removed for hand-rearing but will rapidly grow," she said. "They should weigh in at around a kilo each by the time they are three weeks old. "The Turkmenian Eagle-Owl is one of the largest in the world and is closely related to the European Eagle-Owl. "Sadly it is believed to now be extinct in its original wild range around Turkmenistan," she said. BBC 5 April 2011



Poisoning

WildlifeDirect (an NGO in Kenya), is stepping up a campaign to have carbofuran, the active ingredient in the deadly pesticide product Furadan, banned in Kenya and East Africa.

Martin Odino, who is a scientist and an author of the WildlifeDirect blog, Stop Wildlife Poisoning, has reported that despite FMC claims that Furadan is no longer in Kenya, it actually continues to be used to poison tens of thousands of wetland birds in Bunyala rice irrigation scheme in Kenya. The product is coming in from Uganda.

He has documented in photographs and film how the birds are killed by lacing a meal of rice with the poison and laying out in the rice paddies. Ducks and other waders eat it and die shortly thereafter. Insects, reptiles and fish in the water are all killed. Predatory birds pick up the carcasses and so the pesticide is affecting a whole chain of species. Open billed storks are killed by lacing snails and using decoys to attract over-flying flocks. He claims that up to 50% of each flock that lands in these fields die, and this amounts to some 6,000 bird deaths each month in Bunyala rice irrigation scheme alone. We suspect even higher mortalities in Mwea and Ahero irrigation schemes. The consequence of poisoning to raptors and migratory birds could be catastrophic.

But it's not just birds. The human cost is enormous; the people handling the deadly toxic chemical do so with bare hands. The product is put into the water which is consumed by the community, and the ducks, storks, doves, sandpipers and other species that are killed, are sold in local markets as human food. The evidence is shocking and we will be releasing a short documentary on the same shortly. For latest updates check out

www.stopwildlifepoisoning.wildlifedirect.org/

Although FMC claims that Furadan is not available in Kenya, it is permitted for use in the production of flowers in Kenya. Our largest flower farms are at Lake

Naivasha, a Ramsar site and an extremely important bird area.

We have submitted reports, attended meetings with the pest control products board and government officials and we are part of the government task force on the impacts of pesticides on the environment. That task force, which is under the Ministry of Agriculture and is chaired by the CEO of the Pesticide Control Products Board has not met since September 2010, and few of the actions agreed on have been implemented. We believe that the PCPB is not in a position to attend to the problem due to resource constraints and conflict of interest.

We would like you to share this through your networks, put it on your websites, blogs, facebook and email it to everyone.

Our campaign has two targets.

1. The immediate and total ban on use of carbofuran and other carbamate pesticides in any pesticide control product.
2. We are demanding that the government move the Pesticide Control Products Board out of the Ministry of Agriculture where the organization faces a conflict of interest, and into the Ministry of Environment where it can effectively achieve its mission "To provide professional, efficient and effective regulatory service for manufacture, trade, safe use and disposal of pest control products while ensuring safety to humans, animals and the environment"

We ask that you support our initiative by circulating information, advise us on funding opportunities to continue the research, monitoring, reporting and education, as well as the advocacy to change the Kenyan laws.

Please circulate this information widely

Kind Regards

Paula Kahumbu

Winner of the National Geographic/Buffer Award for conservation leadership in Africa 2011

Executive Director WildlifeDirect,
P.O. Box 24467 - 00502, Kenya



The population of the Oriental White-backed Vultures crashed by 99.9%

Drug ban helps vulture recovery

Victoria Gill,
Science and nature reporter,
BBC News 12 May 2011

A ban on the veterinary use of a painkiller in South Asia appears to be preventing vultures from being poisoned there, say researchers. Many vultures have been killed by eating livestock carcasses that were contaminated with the drug.

The crash in vulture populations was so severe that the three endemic species are now threatened with extinction. This study, published in the journal *PLoS One*, reveals the first signs that the ban has reduced vulture poisonings.

The governments of India, Nepal and Pakistan banned the use of diclofenac for livestock in 2006. But by this time the Oriental White-backed Vulture population had crashed by 99.9% and populations of the Long-billed Vulture and Slender-billed Vulture had fallen by about 97%. The researchers set out to assess the effectiveness of the ban by measuring the concentration of the drug in livestock carcasses. They took samples from the livers of 5,000 cattle carcasses. Some samples were gathered one year before the ban, some immediately after its implementation, and some between 2007 and 2008. This revealed that the proportion of cattle carcasses in India contaminated with the drug declined by approximately 40% between 2006 and 2008. In animal carcasses that were contaminated, the concentration of the drug was significantly lower. But, according to the RSPB, which helped fund the research, diclofenac manufactured for human use is still being used in India to treat cattle.

Verreaux's Eagle, *Aquila verreauxii*, Black Eagle

Sightings of wing-tagged Verreaux's Eagles in southern Africa should be reported to Lucia Rodrigues at signet@mweb.co.za or 083-325-8881, or André Botha at andreb@ewt.org or 082-962-5725.



Cuckoos and Sparrow Hawks have almost identical patterns on their underbellies

Cuckoos mimic hawks to scare their hosts, says research

By Victoria Gill
Science and nature reporter, BBC News

Cuckoos have evolved plumage patterns that give them a hawk-like appearance to scare the birds whose nests they invade, say scientists. A study has shown that Reed Warblers - a cuckoo host species - are less likely to attack more "hawk-like" cuckoos. This helps the parasitic birds to lay their eggs undisturbed. The visible similarity between Cuckoos and Sparrow Hawks was already clear, but this is the first study to show the effect the trickery has on host birds. The findings are published in the journal *Behavioural Ecology*.

Playing hawk

Cuckoos are brood parasites; after laying an egg in another bird's nest, they leave the unsuspecting host to raise their chick. To fool their victims into caring for their young, Cuckoos first need to lay an egg in the right nest, without being "mobbed" or attacked by the nest's owner.

"We noticed in another experiment that Great Tits and Blue Tits were just as afraid of Cuckoos as they were of Sparrow Hawks," explained Dr Justin Welbergen from the University of Cambridge, UK, who led this research. Since these species are not targeted by Cuckoos, they have no reason to fear them, so Dr Welbergen decided

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to find out if a Cuckoo's appearance might have evolved to help it to scare its hosts. To study this, he and his colleagues placed stuffed dummies of Cuckoos and Sparrow Hawks near reed warbler nests.

"The most striking similarity between a Cuckoo and a Sparrow Hawk is the bar patterns on [both species'] underbellies," Dr Welbergen explained. So he and his team covered the bellies of the Cuckoo and Sparrow Hawk models with white cloth, to hide their barred bellies. They then studied the Reed Warblers' reactions to both the covered and uncovered models. "We found that the Reed Warblers were more reluctant to approach the birds if the dummies had barring on their chests," said Dr Welbergen. "So if we made a Cuckoo look less hawk-like - if we removed this bar pattern - it was more likely to be mobbed."

Dr Welbergen said this showed how "hawk mimicry" helps Cuckoos to gain better access to Reed Warblers' nests in order to lay their eggs. The findings represent just one part of an evolutionary arms race between Cuckoos and the species whose nests they target. The birds lay parasitic eggs that are very similar in colour to the host's own eggs, and a recent study found that Cuckoo chicks have evolved to mimic the calls of the hosts' offspring.

Why kill Scottish birds of prey?

David Miller BBC
Scotland

The sight of a Golden Eagle soaring above Scotland's mountains can be the highlight of a day out in the Highlands. The chance to catch a glimpse of a White-tailed Sea Eagle hunting, especially on the west coast where a sighting is rarer still, is likely to be an even more precious memory. Scotland's biggest birds of prey embody the wild character of the nation's most remote mountains, lochs and glens. They're also the focus of a fierce debate between sporting estates and gamekeepers on one hand and conservation organisations like RSPB Scotland on the other. That's because every year birds of prey are found trapped, poisoned and shot on the country's hills, despite being protected by law and specialist wildlife crime officers. I have seen the evidence at firsthand and it's a depressing picture. But the scale of the problem is



disputed. Landowners say the number of illegal killings is relatively small. The official figures are between 25 and 30 each year. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds believes many other cases of raptor persecution go undiscovered and unreported.

So why would anyone want to kill a bird of prey?

- Bird of prey is a loose term often applied to the eagle, kite, hawk and even sometimes the owl
 - Typically they have curved beak, curved talons and good eyesight for finding prey
 - Raptor is sometimes used specifically to describe birds that seize warm-blooded animals during the day
- The RSPB believes it's all about money. Shooting, especially driven grouse shooting, is vital to the economy of rural Scotland. It's worth £240m a year. The owners of sporting estates argue that without careful land management, stocks of game birds - like Red Grouse - can be wiped out by predators. Profits and jobs can be wiped out too. Everyone involved in this debate condemns the illegal killing of birds of prey. That's where the agreement ends.

The Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA), which represents many landowners, believes the Scottish government should allow gamekeepers to control the number of birds of prey. The association is not calling for a large-scale cull of all raptors. Instead, it wants keepers to be allowed to control more common species, such as ravens and buzzards, in certain circumstances. The Scottish government says it won't consider the licensed killing of birds of prey, while illegal persecution continues. That leaves open the possibility that, at some point in the future, licences could be granted. It's a prospect that horrifies the RSPB, which has pledged to ensure the law continues to protect all of Scotland's birds of prey.

The two sides in this debate are at loggerheads, but there may be a glimmer of hope. Research is being carried out in an attempt to find new ways to protect birds of prey while ensuring there are healthy stocks of game birds. Feeding species like the Hen Harrier during the breeding season is seen as one possible way forward. But diversionary feeding, as it's known, is seen by land managers as only part of the answer. The financial



A poisoned buzzard, photographed by the RSPB

stakes are high and the demands from sporting estates for a licensed cull of birds of prey in specific circumstances are likely to grow louder.



Animal health officials said there was a "premium" for falcons

Cornwall falcon DNA database aims to prevent thefts

Animal health experts are taking DNA samples from newly-born Peregrine Falcon chicks in Cornwall to try to catch unscrupulous bird dealers.

The work is being carried out to allow identification if any are found in suspicious circumstances in captivity. Officials from the government's Animal Health Agency said they obtained the birds' DNA from feathers in

nests. The county has about 50 breeding pairs of falcons on cliffs along the north coast.

Nest patrols

The move is part of work to prevent chicks from being stolen during the current breeding season and being sold on to dealers, particularly dealers abroad. The head of compliance at the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Nevin Hunter, said there had been "significant issues" across the UK and falcons had been targeted in particular. He said: "In one example, a man was arrested at Birmingham Airport last year trying to smuggle 14 eggs taken from five sites in south Wales. "We know there is a premium for wild-taken falcons."

Devon and Cornwall was rated as the third worst area in England for the killing of birds of prey, according to the RSPB last September.

Devon and Cornwall Police said the DNA would help trace any birds back to individual nests if they were stolen from Cornwall.

As well as the DNA database, patrols by police and bird lovers are being stepped up to protect the birds in the county during the breeding season.

LONG - TERM EFFECTS OF LEAD POISONING ON BONE MINERALIZATION IN EGYPTIAN VULTURE *NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS*

LAURA GANGOSO¹, PEDRO ALVAREZ - LLORET², ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ - NAVARRO², RAFAEL MATEO³, FERNANDO HIRALDO¹, AND JOSE ANTONIO DONAZARI

ABSTRACT.—Poisoning from lead shot has been well documented globally. However, despite its recognized importance as a threat factor for populations of vertebrates of conservation concern, very little is still known about its hidden long-term effects. Long-lived species are particularly susceptible to bioaccumulation of lead in bone tissues. In this paper we gain insights into the sub-lethal effects of lead contamination on Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*), a globally threatened species. We compared two populations (Canary Islands and Iberian Peninsula) differing in exposure to the ingestion of lead ammunition. The island population, being sedentary, has a greater exposure to the ingestion of lead hunting shot during the winter hunting season. To determine the sub-lethal effects of lead, we analyzed the consequences of the accumulation of this contaminant in bone tissue.

Blood lead levels were higher in the island population showing clear seasonal trends, being highest during the

hunting season. Moreover, males were more susceptible to lead accumulation than females. Bone lead concentration increased with age, reflecting a bioaccumulation effect. The comparison of quantitative measurements obtained from deconvoluted FTIR spectra showed that the bone composition was significantly altered by this contaminant and, in particular, the degree of mineralization decreased as lead concentration levels increased. These results demonstrate the existence of long-term effects of lead poisoning which may be of importance in the declines of threatened populations of long-lived species exposed to this contaminant.

The Peregrine Fund, Boise, Idaho, USA.



Tag E118 at water-hole in Etosha National Park. See Newsflashes

Condors still dying from lead poisoning

No. 286 was the Old Man of this park's California Condor restoration program. Hatched in a zoo seven years ago, he learned to live in the wild, a hopeful sign the majestic birds' population could rise again. But recently somewhere on his journey above Pinnacles' rocky spires to neighboring cattle ranches and beyond, the endangered vulture got lead poisoning. Then, on May 11, condor No. 286 died at the Los Angeles Zoo. "It's sad, and it indicates the uphill battle we have," said Jim Petterson, a wildlife biologist at Pinnacles. Nearly a year after the California Legislature banned lead bullets in the 15 counties covering condor country, lead poisoning remains the No. 1 condor killer. But biologists and game wardens say there are some encouraging signs of progress despite lack of compliance with the July 1 ban by some defiant hunters. The California Fish and Game Commission information shows that 59 percent of condors and two of five nestlings sampled in California tested high for lead from January to June 2008, compared with 45 percent from July to December.

In March, the National Park Service prohibited lead in bullets and fishing tackle, and the Center for Biological Diversity sued the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to force a lead ban on land it manages near the Grand Canyon.

Chris Stoots, a California game warden, said about 90 percent of hunters he checked in San Benito County parking areas during summer deer season used steel and copper shot, encouraging scientists that lead-free areas could eventually be a reality. But beyond the parking lots are oak-studded ranches, where thousands of ground squirrels and wild pigs are considered vermin and are shot by ranchers, who often are reluctant to switch to more expensive non-lead ammo.

No. 286's death was the second fatal lead poisoning of a Pinnacles condor in just over six months, and lead poisoning is suspected in a third. A fourth bird was recently treated and released. Fourteen condors have died from lead poisoning in California since 1992.

Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/05/16/BAF617LV7Q.DTL#ixzz1IG31p6Cl> See also: www.peregrinefund.org/default.asp



Photo: Adri Barkhuizen

Should hunters switch to 'green' bullets?

4 March 2009 By John D. Sutter CNN

Last year, California banned lead bullets in areas where the endangered California Condor lives. Three years ago, Phillip Loughlin made a choice he knew would brand him as an outsider with many of his fellow hunters: He decided to shoot "green" bullets. "It made sense," Loughlin said of his switch to more environmentally friendly ammo, which doesn't contain lead. "I believe that we need to do a little bit to take care of the rest of the habitat and the environment -- not just what we want to shoot out of it." Lead, a toxic metal that can lower the IQs of children, is the essential element in most ammunition on the market today.



News of ringer's get-together

At the annual Ringers-get-together in Gondwana Canyon Park in May 2011, several ringers were awarded either cash prizes or floating trophies.

Cash prizes were donated by Werner and Renate Bader of Electro Repairs, for most species ringed and for most raptors ringed.

Dirk Heinrich took both prizes. Well done Dirk!

A cash prize donated by Ursula Franke from Germany went to Mark Boorman for ringing over 1 000 Black Terns in one season and to Jessica Kemper-Roux for collecting information of birds ringed on the islands off the coast and dedication to bird conservation in general.

Two really magnificent new floating trophies made by Hans Kolberg of Windhoek, for the Dürr family in memory of Marc, were presented to: the Braby Family, for promoting Damara Tern conservation for many years and Peter Bridgeford, for promoting vulture conservation.

Anyone wanting a trophy with a difference, for that special occasion, can contact Hans Kolberg at bullfrog@iafrica.com.na (see page 10).

Adri Barkhuizen, 20 May 2011 says: The photo (left), is of a young Black Harrier with a green colour-ring on right leg, taken in the Kalahari Gemsbok Park, along the road between the Auob and Nossob Rivers, on Monday morning. Rob Simmons ringed the chick either in West Coast National Park or Rondeberg Private Nature Reserve in 2010. Distance travelled about 850 kms.

Newsflashes

- Seen while on tour during March/April: A juvenile and an adult Bateleur as well as a Tawny Eagle in Etosha; an African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene) on the way to Etanga, being harassed by Fork-tailed Drongo; a Secretarybird hunting for food; a Verreaux's Eagle hunting at sunset on a granite hill; a Lanner Falcon sitting on mopani tree in the Khumib River; two Lappet-faced Vultures roosting on small tree south of Puros; a Black-chested Snake-Eagle flying up from the ground; possibly the same two Lappet-faced Vultures on nest on a camel thorn tree (not active); circling over the cliffs at Mudorib waterhole a Lappet-faced Vulture and a Verreaux's Eagle; also in the Mudorib River, an Augur Buzzard attacking Verreaux's Eagle three times! The Augur Buzzard was calling in display. Two Black-chested Snake-Eagles; a Black-chested Snake-Eagle circling, west of Uis, a Martial Eagle and Black-chested Snake-Eagle circling, between Wilhelmstal and Okahandja; two Tawny Eagles on telephone pole, mating!

➤ *Hugo Hausman*
Keep the sightings coming, Hugo. Thanks!

- On Friday 28 January 2011, Mr Klaus von Baum of the farm Otjimukona found wing tag L101 next to a dead cow on his farm. Tag belongs to a White-backed Vulture ringed on 13 Sept 2010 by Peter Bridgeford on farm Rainhof (Mr Düvel). No sign of a dead bird, we presume the tag fell off (?).

- *Holger Kolberg*
- A dead Lappet-faced Vulture was found on the farm Alsuma, east of Helmeringhausen, in the Bethanie district, on 20 June 2011, by Willem Knouwds, with tag L77. This chick was ringed in Tsondabvlei on 3 Oct 2009 by Holger Kolberg. Time elapsed: 623 days and distance 300 kms.

Thanks to Mr Knouwds for the information.

- Lappet-faced Vulture (? White-backed Vulture) E027 was seen by Mike Ralfe close to Okaukuejo on 8 April 2011. It was ringed by Wilferd Versveld on 23 January 2009 on Grootvlakte near Okaukuejo in Etosha N P.
- In the first week of May, two dead adult White-backed Vultures were found by Nina Diekmann on a farm near Otjiwarongo. Both birds were in good condition, lying about 100 meters apart. NARREC sent the birds for toxicology screening and the results were positive for strychnine. Liz Komen

- On 26 June 2011, Mr R van der Merwe of the farm Ruimte, bordering the Namib-Naukluft Park, found a metal ring G17485 in a dry water pool. No carcass was found, but they do have a lot of Lappet-faced Vulture activity on the farm as well as nesting birds. The ring found came from a Lappet-faced Vulture chick ringed in Tsondabvlei on 19 October 1991. Time elapsed, almost 20 years; distance about 100 km.

Thanks to Mr van der Merwe and Bernd Brell for this interesting record.

- Dr Ken Stratford from Ongava Game Ranch, bordering Etosha Nat Park in the south, sent photos taken at a waterhole of tagged vultures. L53 was a White-backed Vulture, on 27 July 2010. Waiting for ringing information. E110 was a White-backed Vulture seen on 28 July 2010. It was ringed on 5 November 2008 by Wilferd Versfeld, west of Leeubron. Tag ?? on a Lappet-faced Vulture, but the tag could not be read.

Many thanks to Ken for the information



*Elinor Dürr presents
Peter Bridgeford
with the Marc Dürr award
for
Vulture Conservation*

*&
Holger Kolberg presents the award
to Rod Braby for the Braby family's
work on Damara Tern
Conservation*



Photo Jessica Kemper-Roux

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