RAPTORS NAMIBIA
Working together to conserve our birds of prey!

Newsletter

#3 July — September 2011

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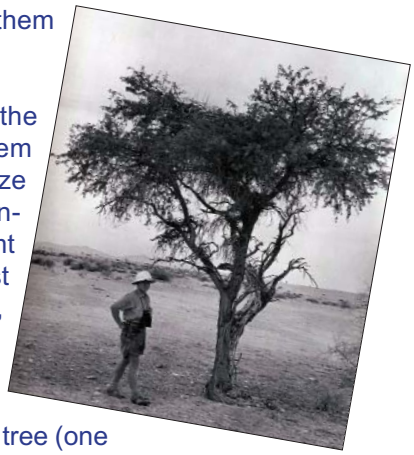
A real blast from the past!

Holger Kolberg

I received a bunch of photos and slides from Peter Becker for the Bird Club's 50th anniversary, amongst them the one seen here.



The caption written on the back says: "Unter dem Geierhorst, der die ganze Krone des Kameldorn-baumes einnimmt (Ohrengeier, 1 Junges ist im Horst), Tinkas Fläche, Wildreservat 3, 29.11.64" (Beneath the Vulture nest, which covers the crown of the Camelthorn tree (one young Lappet-faced Vulture in nest), Tinkasvlakte, Game Reserve 3, 29.11.64)The person in the picture is Peter Becker - pith-helmet, Lederhosen, sandals and sokkies and all! He is the person who came here in 1964 to teach the locals how to ring birds.

I think our challenge for this year's ringing must be to find this tree again and then we also pose there with Lederhosen etc.

Eye on the vulture

By: LIZ KOMEN

Published in "The Namibian" on 25.08.2011

Of the 23 vulture species worldwide none can be viewed as a common bird species.
Many are in the conservation classes of 'vulnerable to threats' or already 'endangered' and some species' populations are in a critical situation. Within the Namibian borders seven vulture species have been recorded. Three species are very rarely seen. The Cape Vultures in Namibia are classified as critically endangered and close to extinction.

Vultures are large scavenging birds of prey and their future is conservation dependent. In Namibia, irresponsible and indiscriminate use of chemical poisons to eliminate predators on livestock farmlands has been identified as the most devastating threat to vultures. This type of ecologically unsound farm management is deemed unethical by many groups.

Most people understand the negative consequences of poisons entering the food chain and killing primary, secondary and even tertiary victims. Poison deaths, besides being cruel, are more than often unable to be target specific even for the primary victim.

Namibia is a meat producing country which requires a responsibility to ourselves and our market to supply clean and ethically sound produce. In todays 'green' world, ethical farming is essential for the safety of our biodiversity. It is also an economically positive marketing strategy.

An International Vulture Awareness Day was declared in 2009. This year it will be celebrated on the 3rd September 2011. For additional information visit www.vultureday.org to see what the world's vulture conservationists are doing.

International Vulture Awareness Day celebrations in Swakopmund

Vultures gather in large numbers at sources of food and often stay to socialise long after the supply is finished. Vulturephiles also gather at sources of food and drink to socialise. This happened again on 3 September, International Vulture Awareness Day, when vulture ringers/lovers and their friends met at Alte Brücke Resort and Conference Centre in Swakopmund.

The well-attended annual gala dinner/dance to raise funds for Vultures Namibia was a roaring success. The good food, wine and music went a long way to create a pleasant atmosphere and get people on the dance floor.

Sandra Dantu is thanked for organising the evening and raising funds for the vulture conservation projects; Christine, Albi and staff once again produced vast quantities of excellent and tasty food. They are also thanked for their support over the years. George in his G-String supplied music and we even had an Australian/Namibian duo (Anne Maree O'Neill and Elinor Dürr) to entertain the crowd.

Thanks to the sponsors of the prizes for the lucky draw. These are Tommy's Tours, Lizette Traut Physiotheraphy and Elinor Dürr for beaded vultures.

Last, but by no means least, to all the friends who were shanghaied, bludgeoned and threatened to attend, many thanks.

NAMIBIA BIRD CLUB'S ANNIVERSARY

In 2012, the Namibia Bird Club will be celebrating its 50th anniversary and is holding a symposium in Windhoek on 30th April and 1st May. Anyone wishing to attend should contact:

Holger Kolberg: holgerk@mweb.com.na

The latest news items on the SABAP2

Doug Harebottle

http://sabap2.adu.org.za and (http://mybirdpatch.adu.org.za) websites show the range-change map of the African Grass-Owl in South Africa.

Although the species is under-recorded, the results do suggest that there have been some significant changes in the range and relative abundance between the two atlas periods; some range-contraction does appear to be occurring and the species is not as 'common' over large parts of its known range.

This grassland specialist is indeed in trouble and urgent conservation action will be required to safeguard large and viable areas of habitat to maintain populations into the future.

Festivities at the Vultures Namibia' IVAD dinner/dance

Lappet-faced Vulture found in Angola

Dieter Oschadleus, SAFRING co-ordinator, writes:
Francisco Maiato reported a vulture ring recovery (ring G28235, wing tag E213) from Angola. The bird was found dead under a tree on 13 July 2011, at Calomanga village, about 3 km from Old Chicomba, Huíla Province, Angola.

This bird was a Lappet-faced Vulture that had been ringed as a nestling on 21 October 2010, 2.2 km southeast of Leeubron (north-west of Okaukuejo camp) in the Etosha National Park, Namibia, by Wilferd Versfeld. The bird had moved at least 557 km.

Lappet-faced Vultures breed in trees and most of the birds ringed were nestlings. Adults are normally resident and don't move far, but nestlings disperse up to 1 000 km or more from their nesting site. This is the first Lappet-faced Vulture ring recovery from Angola.

The furthest movement for this species in SAFRING's database is of a wing-tagged bird (ring G19435) resighted in Zambia – it had been ringed as a nestling 1100 km further south, in the northern Kruger National Park.

Francisco Maiato writes:
I don't know how the vulture died, according to the information we got from Chicomba it was found by a young shepherd under a tree, the tag on wing having attracted his attention. He immediately informed our Vice Rector in Lubango, where I am based at the Herbarium. In addition we are responsible for the Bird Collection.

Planned analysis of satellite tracking data from Namibian Cape Vultures

Louis Phipps

The population of Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) in Namibia now consists of less than 20 individuals after a rapid decline in the breeding population in the Waterberg Plateau Park since the 1970s. This unprecedented reduction in Cape Vulture numbers is thought to be mainly due to poisoning as a result of carnivore control measures on commercial farms and the expansion of bush encroached areas hindering their foraging activity. There is no longer a viable breeding population of Cape Vultures in the country, prompting the formation of the Cape Vulture Recovery Programme with the main aim of re-establishing the species in Namibia and ensuring their conservation into the future.

Cape Vulture at the Rare & Endangered Species Trust

Between 2004 and 2008, nine Cape Vultures were equipped with satellite tracking devices at the Rare and Endangered Species Trust (REST) premises, 50 kilometres north-east of Otjiwarongo. Six wild individuals were caught at the feeding site at REST, while a further three birds were released from captivity. For all but one of the vultures, accurate GPS locations were recorded on an almost hourly basis for between 6 and 62 months, producing valuable data about the vultures' foraging patterns and flight characteristics. A juvenile African White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*), thought to be a possible hybrid produced by one of the adult Cape Vultures equipped with a tracking device and an adult White-backed Vulture, was also tracked for 6 months before being found dead. Ten different tracking units recorded 88,104 GPS positions, with the majority of the data being obtained from four vultures that were tracked for between 3.5 and just over 5 years and two vultures that both produced data for over a year.

Analysis of the first two years of tracking data revealed that while one of the immature vultures travelled widely throughout southern Africa, the adults tended to remain in the Waterberg region, with occasional trips beyond their regular foraging ranges. All of the tracking units have now stopped recording data and this vast dataset is ready to be analysed to establish which areas were most frequently visited by the vultures and to identify which land use practices provided the majority of their food supply. The vultures' use of officially protected conservation areas and private or communal farmland will be assessed and it will be possible to identify which areas were most regularly used by the vultures for feeding and roosting activity at a very fine scale. The analysis will provide valuable information to assist the proposed reintroduction of Cape Vultures to the Waterberg region by identifying the main threats and beneficial land use practices in their key foraging areas.

I have been given the opportunity to analyse the tracking data following the completion of my MSc research at the University of Pretoria. During the past two years, together with Kerri Wolter who heads the Cape Vulture Task Force, I have fitted tracking devices to African White-backed Vultures and Cape Vultures caught at Mankwe Wildlife Reserve vulture feeding site adjacent to the Pilanesberg National Park in the North West province of South Africa. Analysis of the tracking data obtained from six immature White-backed Vultures for my MSc thesis has shown that they occupied large ranges (up to 500,000 km²) and travelled widely across southern Africa, entering all countries apart from Mozambique. The vultures made very little use of officially protected areas in South Africa, but visited them more frequently in northern Botswana and Zimbabwe. Two of the vultures regularly visited supplementary feeding sites, or "vulture restaurants". I will use similar methods to analyse the Namibian Cape Vulture tracking data with a specific emphasis on identifying the most important characteristics of their key foraging areas from a conservation perspective. I hope that the results from the analysis will lead to a better understanding of Cape Vulture foraging habits in the Waterberg region, as well as any potential threats in the area.

WORKING TOGETHER …

From: Birds and People # 29 - March, 2011
www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw

BirdLife Botswana together with the Central Kalahari Game Reserve/Makgadikgadi Research project, and the Denver Zoo, is embarking on a study of the globally threatened Lappet-faced Vulture in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

This collaborative effort aims to provide information on the population dynamics and movements of this globally threatened species, as these are key to its conservation. Some of the research questions that are being investigated are:

- What is the size of the breeding population in the Makgadikgadi and Central Kalahari Game Reserve?
- Is the population increasing or decreasing?
- What is the breeding success of the species?
- What are the main threats to this and other vulture species in the area?
- To what extent are Lappet-faced Vultures confined to protected areas, and how much of their foraging range is outside?

Once again, the Lappet-faced Vulture will serve as a flagship for the conservation of other threatened raptors – while collecting information on this species, it will be easy to make field observations on White-headed and White-backed Vultures, Bateleurs and Martial Eagles. The project will benefit from the CKGR/Makgadikgadi Research project's contingent of researchers on the ground, many of whom are studying mammalian predators with which the vultures interact.

An important aspect of the project is that a Motswana student will be engaged to conduct part of the research in fulfilment of a MSc degree – this is a result of the commitment of all three partnering organisations to building local capacity.

Already a prospective student has been identified, and is keen to commence work.

Ultimately, the research will lead to advocacy to conserve the Lappet-faced Vulture; this will form phase 2 of the project.

Witches spell doom to bird of omen

From: African Raptor Group Published on 20/07/2011

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has a new headache in cracking a faceless group behind a unique poaching.

Its officers have the challenge of tackling a secret group trading in Owls' eggs. The group is believed to have connections with witchcraft and the underworld.

Dealers and brokers in the eggs are roaming the country, hunting for the eggs in a trade that seems to fetch a good fortune. Conservationists fear the illegal merchants are to blame for extinction of the bird species in Naivasha, Nyahururu, Kajiado, Laikipia plains and Meru National Park, among other areas.

The trade is flourishing amid efforts by private conservationists to resuscitate the species especially in Nyeri County. The Owl is considered a harbinger of doom by many African societies. It is, therefore killed on sight. The bird has been listed as among the rare species in the world.

Last week, a source told The Underworld that he had been promised Sh100,000 by a woman who intended to buy two eggs. The eggs are believed to be used in witchcraft. The woman, who said she works with the Rwandan Embassy, said she had a sick daughter when witchdoctors demanded that she presents the eggs so that he could cure the child.

Owl eggs are usually white and spherically shaped. The eggs are laid at intervals of one to three days and do not hatch at the same time, hence the wide variation in the size of siblings.

Lucrative deals

The Underworld established that the dealers are spread across Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, Nyahururu and Nanyuki.

Last week, dealers posing as a seller told this writer three eggs would fetch Sh20,000 each.

Surprisingly, the dealers are giving specifications on how to handle the eggs. One of them, who identified himself as Gitonga, gave strict instructions against holding the eggs with bare hands. And the dealers seem ready to travel long distances to ensure they handle the eggs themselves. "Just check whether there are some eggs and then call me. I will come over so that we ensure they are handled properly," said Gitonga.

Even though he declined to disclose where he intended to take the eggs, Gitonga told this writer that the eggs are used in treatment of various cancerous diseases. "Hiyo ni dawa mzuri sana ya cancer," he said.

These developments now raise concerns over the existence

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of the bird since the merchants could easily deplete eggs laid by the birds and lead to a slow-extinction. Our sources intimated that the merchants could be taking the eggs to Tanzania, where they are on high demand from witch doctors.

Others have outlets in North Eastern Kenya, Dubai in the Middle East and South Africa. The dealers are using unemployed youth to search for the eggs.

Treating the nest

Gitonga explained that after identifying a nest with eggs, the habitat is treated with Talcum powder, an industrial chemical used in manufacturing of cosmetics. "We cover them completely with the powder and pick them after three days, when they are now ready for use," said Gitonga.

Another dealer who declined to give his name, but claimed to be in Nairobi, said one must use gloves while picking the eggs from the nests. "If possible, you should pick the whole nest and ensure the eggs do not come into contact with each other," he said.

Mr Paul Mureithi, a private conservationist of owls in Kiawara area in Nyeri County, said he was receiving many calls from different people who claimed they wanted to buy the eggs. "Some of them have even visited me and offered to give me as much as Sh1million if I give them some eggs," he said. What is worrying is that since the birds lead solitary lives, any slight disturbance within the nest leads to their migration," he said.

Pearl Spotted Owlet

Mureithi, who also researches on breeding habits of owls, said the bird can live in one nest for about ten years. "After any disturbance on its nest, the birds move, and are even unable to breed," he said.

Paul Opiyo, the KWS officer in charge of Wildlife Use in mountain, eastern and northern conservation areas, said reports of the black trade have been received. He said dealers have approached some individuals conserving owls.

"This seems a tricky business, since most African communities do not want association with these birds, but we are at the moment tracking the dealers and getting more information about the trade," said Opiyo. "Our officers are alert, and we believe we will get a head way on our probe."

Mr Felix Mwangangi, the Aberdares National Park Senior Warden said anybody dealing with any game product or by-products must have a license from the KWS.

"We are trying to establish whether these dealers or their bosses are permitted to trade in the eggs," said Mwangangi.

Farmer gives ringers an uplifting experience!!!

Dirk Heinrich and Andre Sieverling went to ring vulture chicks on Farm Erdwolf, near Windhoek. Mr Wolfi Zimmer, the owner of the farm and enthusiastic supporter and regular sponsor of Vultures Namibia, had a pleasant surprise for them. He had seen how long it took to get the ladder off and onto the vehicle and position it at the nest.

To make ringing faster and easier, he fixed a ladder onto the bucket of his front end loader. Now the ringers can drive to the nest (**1**), have Wolfi raise the bucket/ladder (**2**) and climb to collect the chick for ringing/tagging, in safe hands with Wolfi behind the controls (**3**).

On 16 September, they ringed 7 White-backed Vulture chicks, found 9 too small to ring/tag and 2 eggs. All this only took from 12.30 to 17.20!!!

Using the normal method of vehicle and ladder would have taken two full, tiring days.

Many thanks to Wolfi and his staff for the ongoing support.

UNLUCKY 13

From: Birds and People
29 - June, 2011
www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw

Recently 13 globally threatened vultures were poisoned near Gumare after feeding on the carcase of a dead horse which had been indiscriminately laced with poison. This incident was discovered by the Gumare Police, and reported to the Wildlife Office in Gumare and BirdLife Botswana in Maun.

This is one of the most serious cases of vulture poisoning in the country. To date, Botswana has been a stronghold for vultures which have suffered drastic declines throughout Africa and Asia – however the Botswana populations cannot sustain such unnecessary killing, and we may soon join with neighbouring countries such as Namibia which is attempting to introduce vultures back into the wild at great expense.

Vultures play an important role in the ecosystem by consuming animal carcases and thereby preventing the spread of disease. Their movements also assist livestock farmers to locate their dead cattle. It seems that the unlucky 13 vultures in Gumare were needlessly killed by an irresponsible individual – this type of person is a menace to society since some of the poisons are not only harmful to the environment, but deadly to humans too. There have been instances of people dying after handling agricultural poisons such as Carbofuran and Aldicarb, and their use for poisoning vultures is strictly illegal.

The BirdLife Botswana Conservation Officer, Pete Hancock, will be addressing people in Gumare next week on the dangers associated with poisoning vultures.

International Vulture Awareness Day at Onguma

Peter Sawyer, Onguma Safari Camps

Sharing a common boundary with the Etosha National Park and living on a 36 000ha private game reserve provides the ideal opportunity to appreciate the wonders of nature and Namibia's diversity. When the opportunity arose to participate in the International Vulture Awareness Day on the 3rd September the team of rangers at the Onguma Game Reserve came up with some additional ways to draw attention to the day and highlight the plight of vultures and raptors in Namibia.

The official event for International Vulture Awareness Day involved counting the number of vultures at an existing active vulture feeding site. The aim of this exercise is to provide a minimum count of all vultures as well as raising awareness. In addition to the official research count, vulture awareness and roadside counts were conducted with guests and an education campaign amongst all the Onguma Game Reserve staff was held.

The official count commenced at a feeding site at 07h30 in the morning. A camera trap was used to capture data along with personal observations. With all vulture sightings in Namibia, observers are encouraged to look for rings and wing tags and to report these sightings. The first vultures to land at the site were four White-Backed Vultures at 09h30. After that the skies seemed to open with vultures descending onto the carcass in a feeding frenzy of feathers. Within two hours the carcass had been completely stripped clean.

Feeding frenzy of vultures at Onguma

During the frenzy a total of 295 White-Backed and 24 Lappet-Faced Vultures were counted. Of the 295 White-Backed Vultures, 207 were adults and 88 were juveniles. All the Lappet-Faced Vultures counted were adults. Whether the ratio of White-Backed Vultures (Near Threatened) to Lappet-Faced Vultures (Vulnerable) is related to their status is uncertain. Never the less, this is an interesting observation.

Breeding of the White-Backed Vulture in Namibia occurs during winter but sources confirm that additional breeding information on the success of colonies in Namibia is unknown. Due to the large number of White-Backed Vultures counted with a relatively high ratio of juveniles, the Onguma Game Reserve will be introducing a White-Backed Vulture Research Project to determine the population density, distribution and breeding success on the reserve. Hopefully Onguma will be able to contribute valuable scientific information on the breeding of White-Backed Vultures in Namibia in the not too distant future.

Booted Eagle at Lüderitz

Jessica Kemper

As you probably can imagine, we don't see that many raptors (other than Rock Kestrels) around Lüderitz. On Friday, I saw this raptor, perched on the Namdeb fence at the Agate Beach Sewerage outflow pan. It was kind enough to pose for me long enough to take some photos (albeit into the sun). Eventually it got bored with me and flew off, right past a large group of roosting Kelp Gulls. You should have seen the reaction of the gulls. They all took to the air and had MAJOR issues. Eventually the raptor was chased off towards the north by a Pied Crow.

From the relatively small size and fairly mottled plumage, my initial thought was juvenile Jackal Buzzard or possibly a Steppe Buzzard. However, apart from having feathered tarsi, the plumage pattern in flight, including the white shoulder patches, seem to point to a Booted Eagle (dark form).

Steve Brain commented: The bird is definitely a dark phase Booted, can see the landing lights well in flight, as well as the boots when perched.

Vulture-killing drug still for sale, finds survey

Ella Davies, Reporter, BBC Nature 6 September 2011

A toxic drug that threatens India's critically endangered vultures is still widely available, a survey has found. Diclofenac was banned for use by vets and farmers in 2006 because of its effect on vultures that feed on livestock carcasses. But researchers found the drug for sale in some form in 36% of the pharmacies investigated. Despite advances in captive breeding, conservationists warn the birds' future in the wild cannot be guaranteed.

Three species of vulture native to India have suffered rapid population crashes since the 1990s: the Indian Vulture (*Gyps indicus*), Slender-billed Vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*). Numbers of the latter species, also known as Oriental White-backed Vultures, are estimated to have dropped by 99.9% in the past decade. Populations of Indian and Slender-billed Vultures have declined by 97% over the same period. In 2004 scientists identified diclofenac-poisoning as the primary cause of the declines. The vultures ingested the drug when feeding on the carcasses of livestock that had been treated shortly before their death. For religious reasons, dying cattle are not killed to relieve their suffering in India, so anti-inflammatory drugs are commonly used to reduce pain and swelling in injured and diseased animals. Diclofenac was banned in India, Nepal and Pakistan in 2006 with further restrictions on its manufacture introduced in India in 2008.

But a survey published in the journal Oryx has confirmed conservationists' concerns that pharmacies are flouting the ban. Investigating more than 250 veterinary and general pharmacies, researchers found that just over a third still sold the anti-inflammatory drug in some form. Nine different brands of illegally-manufactured tablets for veterinary use were discovered. Lead author and principal conservation scientist at the RSPB Dr Richard Cuthbert also identified that some pharmacies were circumventing the ban with injectable drugs manufactured for human use.

"The ban is still quite easy to avoid because human formulations are still freely for sale in large vials which are convenient for use on large animals like cattle and clearly not suitable for human use," he said. Co-author of the study Dr Vibhu Prakash, of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), called for "firm action at government level" to enforce the law relating to the manufacture and sale of the drug.

Some success

But the findings also highlighted some hope for saving the vultures from extinction. Researchers found the vulture-safe alternative drug meloxicam available in 70% of pharmacies. In findings published earlier this year, scientists suggested the ban and availability of non-toxic substitutes had improved the situation for vultures. They identified that 40% fewer cattle carcasses were 'contaminated' with diclofenac between 2006-2008. Conservationists working to safeguard the future of the species have also made positive reports from captive breeding programmes. The number of chicks fledging at the BNHS centres has doubled this year to a total of 18.

Working with the support of the RSPB and the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (Save) consortium, 271 vultures are now housed in three breeding centres across India. All three species have now been successfully bred in captivity but conservationists remain cautious about the future. "With the latest success at the breeding centres we're more confident than ever that there will be sufficient numbers for reintroduction to the wild as soon as it's safe for them," says the RSPB's head of vulture programme and SAVE spokesperson Chris Bowden. "But until diclofenac stops being produced and sold for veterinary use we cannot guarantee these birds have any future in the wild."

Our trip through Namibia

Mike Hirschler

On 14 August 2011, about a kilometre before the junction of the road from Hotsas to Bloedkoppie with the C28, we saw two Lappet-faced Vultures (LFV's) on a nest and one sitting in a tree. At the junction, we paused at the picnic place and saw two adults and one juvenile flying, probably the whole family from the nest. Not much later we saw one of the birds perched on a tree along the C28 (not far from crossing) and I was able to digiscope it. Then we also saw the yellow tag with the markings V805.

On the D2319, north of Sorris Sorris, one adult LFV in a tree, we did not see a tag.

In Etosha, we saw one adult vulture on a nest plus/minus 6 km. south of Andoni and one adult in a tree, in the neighbourhood of Okerfontein. Since this was some 45 minutes after the sighting of the one near Andoni, we presume that this was another individual, although we could have missed it flying, looking at many other things in the mean time. No visible tags on either bird.

My wife and I hope that this information helps you to keep track of your vultures. We wish you all success.

Photo: Mike Hirschler

V805 was ringed and tagged by Holger Kolberg at Tsamsvlei in the Namib-Naukluft Park Namibia, on 10 October 2007. It was resighted almost 4 years later, having moved at least 157 km.

Many thanks to Catherine and Mike Hirschler (from the Netherlands), for all the information they sent.

Our thanks also to Naude Dreyer, who made contact with Vultures Namibia to report this sighting and make the introduction to Mr and Mrs Hirschler.

Photo: Peter Bridgeford

Ringing vulture chicks on the farm Binsenheim near Dordabis

TURRC or Totally Unscientific Raptor Road Count, May 2011

Robin and Kai Teifel, Bathurst, Eastern Cape

On Saturday the 30th April 2011, my son Kai and I took to the long and open road from Bathurst in the Eastern Cape, South Africa to the Namibian Ringers-Get-Together (RGT). The RGT was held at Augurabis Cañon Outpost, a lovely secluded camp of the Gondwana Cañon Park, near the north end of the Fish River Canyon. We spent our first night at Upington and on Sunday the 1st of May, we completed the journey to Augurabis. The return trip was done on Saturday the 7th May and we did it in one day.

To occupy ourselves on the long drives, light allowing, as we left before first light in both directions and on the return trip arrived home after dark, we did a very basic and probably Totally Unscientific Road Raptor Count (TURRC). Every time we saw a raptor along the way, we noted the species and quantity. As most raptorphiles have noticed without perches provided by Telkom and Eskom and their Namibian equivalents you see very few raptors. Most of the way we were fortunate to have some form of perch near to the road and here below we present our species list and counts.

Raptor Road Count (TURRC)

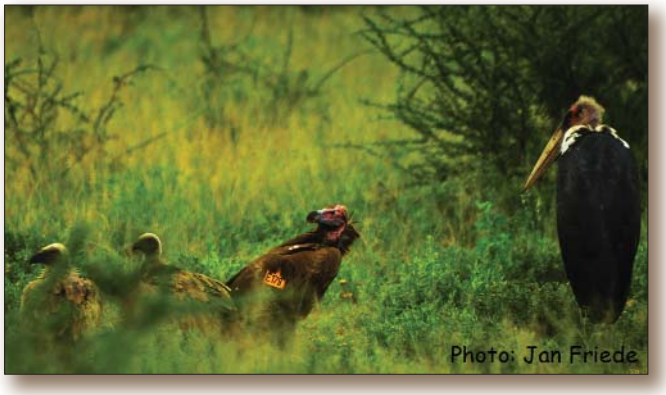
SPECIES	Bathurst - Augrabis	Augrabis - Bathurst
Greater Kestrel	10	14
Rock Kestrel	15	6
Verreaux's Eagle	2	2
Black Shouldered Kite	4	7
Jackal Buzzard	11	14
Pale Chanting Goshawk	45	37
Booted Eagle	0	1
Lanner Falcon	3	4
Peregrine Falcon	3	1
Pygmy Falcon	5	27
Martial Eagle	0	1
African Harrier Hawk	0	1
Total Raptors seen	**98**	**115**
Total kms travelled	**1 307**	**1 291**
Kilometres per Raptor	**13.3**	**11.2**

Newsflashes

►On 25 July 2011, Hilke von Ditfurth saw a tagged Lappet-faced Vulture. It was among 20 to 30 LFV's in the veld, 5km east of the Langer Heinrich turn-off, on the C28. Unfortunately, she could not read the number.

►Dr Craig Symes, craig.symes@wits.ac.za, has taken over editing "Gabar" from Mark Brown, the previous editor for five years.

►Here is a picture of the tagged (E179) Lappet-faced Vulture I photographed early in the morning of 3 Feb, 2011 on the main road from Namutoni to Halali, about 1km before the Kalkheuvel turn-off. It was with about 6 other LFV's, as well as about 11 White-Backed Vultures and 3 Marabou Storks. They were at a zebra carcass, which had been killed by two male lions that appeared to be brothers. .....Jan Friede



►On 27 June 2011, I visited the farm Ruimte and Mrs. R. van der Merwe gave me ring G-17486. The ring was found in a dried up water pool after the rains with no carcass attached. They have a lot of vulture activity in their area (nests) especially Lappet-faced Vultures. Bernd Brell

.....Director Field Operation, Save the Rhino Trust

The vulture was ringed by Peter Bridgeford on 18 October 1991 at Tsondabvlei, about 100 kms south of Ruimte.

►On 19 September 2010, we ringed (G26354) and tagged (E162) a Lappet-faced Vulture chick west of Leeubron in the Etosha National Park. On 14 September 2011, while checking vulture nests, I found remains and tag E162 in the nest. I surmise it died shortly after ringing last year .....Wilferd Versveld

►A camera trap located at Ongava Game Reserve, took two pictures of a White-backed Vulture with yellow tag R173, at 13:00 on 15 June 2011. Approximately 15m away was the carcass of a newly dead gemsbok.

►It's a sad day for the conservationists in Spain and I'm afraid to say it's not the first time it has happened and won't be the last. We are currently working, from GREFA (Madrid), on a captive breeding program involving the breeding and releasing of young Bonelli's Eagles in order to reinforce the population of this species in our country. For us is very sad that a male, previously marked by our partners in Aragon (the north-east of Spain), was shot a few days ago. This species is on the edge of extinction in our country and its population is decreasing all over its distribution range. We hope something like this will not happen again, but sadly, it will. .....
Pablo Izquierdo, 25 August 2011
http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/zaragoza/un_ejemplar_aguila_azor_perdicera_aparece_muerta_disparo_non aspe.html?regini=20 - .....(Translation available)

►Werner Pfeifer reported seeing a White-backed Vulture in good condition, tag E189, on 29 August 2011. It was feeding on a carcass on the plain at Gemsbokvlakte water hole in Etosha National Park, Namibia. Wilferd Versveld ringed it as a chick on 11 October 2010 at Grootvlakte, ring number G28211.

►Two peregrine falcons are found poisoned by a banned pesticide in Cornwall.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/news/uk-england-devon-15028801

►On 4 July 2011, Martina Küsters saw and reported three tagged White-Backed Vultures feeding on a carcass at a gravel pit 650 m north-east of Okakuejo ENP. These vultures were all ringed and tagged as chicks by Wilferd Versveld. E132 on 29 September 2009, E142 and E143 on 15 October 2009.

►On 28 Sept 2011 we saw two Lappet-faced Vultures at a young oryx carcass (fresh cheetah kill) near Keerweder, Namib-Naukluft Park, Namibia. One bird was young with a yellow tag which we could not read, even with binocs. .....Ann Scott

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