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Namibia Bird Club



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About the Namibia Bird Club

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. The club's mission is to contribute to Namibian ornithology by, amongst other things, arranging regular birding outings, conducting bird ringing and atlasing excursions and educating the public about the value of birds. To achieve this, we organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewage Works and occasional weekend trips further afield. Bird club members also participate in the African Waterbird Census twice a year.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we present occasional lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a digital newsletter, *Namibia Bird News*, which includes a programme of forthcoming events and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organization and relies entirely on members' subscriptions and donations to fund its activities.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club or its committee.

Instructions to Authors

Lanioturdus is a journal dedicated to birds and birding. Although the journal's primary focus is on Namibia, articles from other geographical parts of the globe will also be considered for publication. Authors should use common and scientific names of southern African birds as published in *Roberts' VII*. For other regions, English and scientific names following BirdLife International's species list (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species>) should be used. Text should be submitted as a MS Word document. Photos, maps and figures should be sent as separate jpeg images, graphs as MS Excel charts or jpeg images and tables as MS Word or Excel documents. Please indicate in the article text where these should be placed.



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Rarities and Interesting Observations

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Starting off with an older yet very interesting record - on 15 January 2014 the camera trap in John Mendelsohn's Olympia garden captured an image of a European Honey-Buzzard inspecting a nest box.



Figure 1: European Honey-Buzzard – Camera trap photograph courtesy of John Mendelsohn

Vernon Swanepoel saw an African Harrier-Hawk in Pioneers Park on 24 January 2015 while Gudrun Middendorff reported one in Klein Windhoek on 11 February 2015. This species was reported regularly in Windhoek from early 2011 to mid 2013 but before the above sightings it had been some time since I last heard of a sighting in town. I subsequently saw a single adult bird in the city centre on 16 April 2015.

On 01 February 2015 Gudrun Middendorff and I saw Red-billed Firefinches at Farm Teufelsbach between Windhoek and Okahandja. This species is now showing an almost unbroken presence between Windhoek and Okahandja according to the SABAP2 species map.

Jessica Kemper advised that the Hadedda Ibis first reported in Lüderitz on 03 January 2015 (see Lanioturdus

48(1)) was still present on 03 February.

The summer wetland waterbird count on 07 and 08 February 2015 at Walvis Bay turned up a Common Redshank, a Terek Sandpiper, four Eurasian Oystercatchers and sixty Red-necked Phalaropes while Klaus Hoffmann photographed the Pacific Golden Plover which had been around just south of Lover's Hill for some time. Also of interest was a count of fourteen South African Shelduck. Although seldom encountered in a marine environment, a pair of these birds has been recorded there in a few of the more recent counts but this number is unprecedented.



Figure 2: Pacific Golden Plover © Klaus Hoffmann

Seventy six Maccoa Ducks were counted at the Walvis Bay sewage ponds on 08 February 2015. This far exceeds the forty four birds counted there in the 2014 winter count (see Lanioturdus 47(4)).

While on the subject of Maccoa Ducks, Mark Boorman and Holger Kolberg recorded a pair of these birds at Cape Cross in the course of the wetland bird count there on 09

February 2015. This is the first time that this species has been counted at this location.

Paul Gascoigne and Helen Pooley reported a male Collared Flycatcher seen near Shamvura Camp on 13 February 2015. This is the second sighting of which I am aware of this species this summer (see *Lanioturdus* 48(1)). Other “good” birds seen by Paul and Helen in this area included Souza’s Shrike, Ayres’s Hawk-Eagle, African Quailfinch, Tree Pipit, Lesser Jacana and Yellow Wagtail.

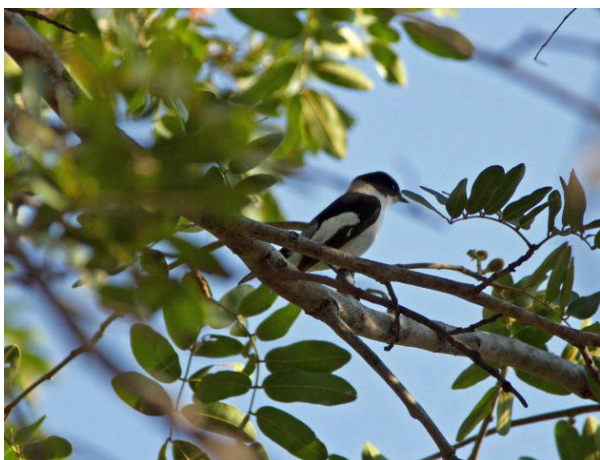


Figure 3: Collared Flycatcher © Mark Paxton



Figure 4: Souza’s Shrike © Mark Paxton



Figure 5: Ayres’s Hawk-Eagle © Mark Paxton

Avis Dam’s long staying mega rarity, the Red-throated Pipit, which was discovered on 07 January 2015 (see *Lanioturdus* 48(1)) was last seen on 16 February. This mega was enjoyed by twitchers from all over southern Africa.

The rather elusive African Quailfinch was present at Avis Dam on 16 February 2015 and still there on 23 February. At least fifty of these birds were then seen at Farm Haris south west of Windhoek in the course of the Namibia Bird Club’s outing there on 22 February.

John Mendelsohn photographed a young African Hobby perched on a dead tree at the edge of the Sikondo Irrigation Scheme 18 km west of Rundu on the morning of 24 February 2015. This is an unusual sighting as, in addition to being a very uncommon species, these birds are usually crepuscular.



Figure 6: African Hobby © John Mendelsohn

Werner von Maltzahn found a dead cuckoo on his farm near Otavi at the beginning of March. It seems very likely that this bird is an African Emerald Cuckoo which would be way off its recorded range. The specimen has been kept for further investigation.



Figure 7: Probable African Emerald Cuckoo © Werner von Maltzahn

Paul Gascoigne reported that the long staying Pacific Golden Plover was still present at its usual haunt at Walvis Bay on 04 March 2015 (See also above and below).



Figure 8: Pacific Golden Plover © Paul Gascoigne

The Namibia Bird Club's morning walk at Avis Dam on 08 March 2015 produced a good sighting of a pair of Verreaux's Eagles, a species I have not seen around Windhoek for some time. Also seen were a number of African Quailfinches (see above) and a number of Yellow-crowned Bishops, a species I cannot recall ever seeing at this location before. Also of interest was the sighting of a single juvenile/sub-adult Yellow-billed Stork. It is quite possible that this is the same individual that has been seen at several locations in central Namibia in the course of the past few months (see *Lanioturdus* 48(1)).

In the course of monitoring the nest boxes at Farm Teufelsbach between Windhoek and Okahandja on 21 March 2015 Gudrun Middendorff and I found a small group of Temminck's Coursers and a Bennett's Woodpecker. Both of these seem to be very uncommon species in central Namibia. Also of interest was a small group of Chestnut Weavers, a species which seems to have been largely absent from central Namibia this summer.

Jennie Lates reported a Black Stork in the vicinity of Namseb Lodge just west of Maltahöhe on the Easter weekend.

Eckart Demasius photographed a Jackal Buzzard in the desert east of Wlotzkasbaken on 11 April 2015. This is fairly far north for this species but it has been recorded in this vicinity before.



Figure 9: Jackal Buzzard © Eckart Demasius

An Osprey was seen in the course of the Namibia Bird Club's morning walk at the Gammams Water Treatment Works on 12 April 2015.

Michael Houlden reported seeing an African Harrier-Hawk at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve on 19 April 2015.



Figure 10: African Harrier-Hawk © Michael Houlden

Peter Cunningham reported two male Southern Double-collared Sunbirds seen on his farm some 70 km north of the Orange River and east of Ai-Ais. There are few records of this species north of the river.

Gudrun Middendorff saw a Red-billed Firefinch at Wilhelmstal on 27 April 2015 while Eckart Demasius reported its brood parasite, the Village Indigobird, present at Gross Barmen on the same day. These sightings are further evidence of the increasing ranges of both these species in central Namibia.

Two African Barred Owlets were caught and ringed at the Namibian Ringers Get-Together at Paradise Camp some 80 km north east of Grootfontein.

In addition Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since the beginning of February 2015.

A Eurasian Honey-Buzzard was seen at Avis Dam on 12 February 2015.

The Pacific Golden Plover which had been at Walvis Bay for some time was seen again on 02 March 2015.

On 07 March 2015 a number of Red-necked Phalaropes were again reported at Walvis Bay while two Red Phalaropes were seen about 20 km offshore.

A Wattled Crane was reported in the Andoni area of the Etosha National Park on 10 March 2015.

The Pacific Golden Plover together with about thirty Red-necked Phalaropes were seen again at Walvis Bay on 11 March 2015.

A single Red-necked Phalarope was seen on a dam at Farm Nomtsas about 50 km north of Maltahöhe on 05 March 2015. While inland records of this species are uncommon this is not a unique sighting – a single bird was recorded at Sossusvlei some years ago (see *Lanioturdus* 42(2)).

A Pectoral Sandpiper was reported at Walvis Bay on 18 March 2015.

In the last week on March 2015 a Southern Fulmar was reported about 80 nautical miles off the Namibian coast west of Henties Bay.

The Pacific Golden Plover and the Pectoral Sandpiper were both reported at Walvis Bay on the Easter Weekend. A female African Paradise-Flycatcher was also seen in Walvis Bay.

The Pacific Golden Plover was reported again on 21 April 2015.

A pair of Angolan Swees was seen about 13 km east of Kunene River Lodge on 29 April 2015 but unfortunately not photographed. This species has now been reported several times in this vicinity but as yet there has not been a clear enough photograph to definitely confirm its identity.

A Broad-billed Roller was reported near the Galton Gate in the western part of the Etosha National Park on 30 April 2015. This bird was a long way off its normal range and could possibly be a reverse migrant.