



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

Bird populations are dynamic – always on the move! I see this at my own home. I have lived in this house for over 23 years and up until about four years ago I had never seen a southern red bishop there – in 2009 alone I ringed 136 at this location! In September 2010 I experienced an irruption of common waxbills, a species I very seldom see in my garden. Over a period of 122 days until the end of the year we ringed 205 and then the numbers seen and caught dropped off sharply suggesting that most of them had moved on. In Lanioturdus 43(4) I mentioned the five pied crows I saw on 11/08/2010 across two Quarter Degree Squares between Rundu Airport and Ncaute where the species was not recorded in the Atlas. I had not seen this species there in about ten previous trips and I have not seen it there again since then on my subsequent trips through this area.

The above examples illustrate how dynamic certain populations actually are – some suddenly appearing and remaining, others merely moving through an area. With the climate changes currently being experienced we are seeing the earlier arrival of some migrants and also later departure dates. (In Lanioturdus 43-4 we published some of Günther Friederich's observations on the early arrival of grey-headed kingfisher and European bee-eater in our "Rarities and Interesting Observations" section).

In our "Rarities and Interesting Observations" section in this issue we have a report of a Sabine's gull seen at Kalkheuwel waterhole in the Etosha National Park – as far as I have been able to determine this constitutes

Another method was started in Germany to increase the number of lesser spotted eagles. As in most eagles the older chick kills the younger one. If due to unforeseen circumstances, the older chick dies, the parents have the younger one as "backup". In Brandenburg conservationists started taking the younger chicks out of the nests before they were killed by their siblings. "Abel" is then raised by hand, without making too much contact with humans and put back into the nest after some weeks. By now "Cain" has stopped his hatred and accepts the sibling so that the parents can raise both chicks successfully. In this way the breeding success of these eagles is doubled. The project started in 2004 and is running very successfully. In 2007 a similar project was started in Latvia. The scientists are now using this knowledge they gained from the lesser spotted eagle to increase numbers of other threatened eagles, for example golden eagles in Ireland. By means of rings and satellite tracking it has also been proven that the hand reared chicks successfully returned from Africa..... if they survived the slaughter around Mediterranean Sea!!



Photo 3
This Lesser Spotted Eagle "Sigmar" was hand reared at Hiddensee in Germany. It was ringed 15.07.2007 and found seriously injured by shot on Malta on 23.09.2007. All efforts to save its life were unsuccessful and it died like many other birds on their way to and from Africa.
www.imalta.de/Zugvogeljagd-auf-malta

References

- *Markus Jais, Überleben in Deutschland? Der Schreiadler-Deutschlands bedrohtester Greifvogel, Vögel Magazin für Vogelbeobachtung Heft 02/10, dwj Verlags-GmbH.
- *Daniel Lingenhöhl, Wilderei auf Malta erreicht traurigen Höhepunkt, Vögel Magazin für Vogelbeobachtung Heft 02/10, dwj Verlags-GmbH.

(While I find the idea of hunting small passerines despicable and the idea of crunching a mouthful of small bones extremely unappetizing, I wonder if Africa has not missed a trick. If a trader is prepared to pay a hunter €4,00 for a small passerine then surely there must be an export market for those millions of red-billed queleas that plunder Africa's grain crops..... Ed)

Rarities and Interesting Observations

In early September Kai-Uwe Denker encountered a male pennant-winged nightjar on a road on the outskirts of Usakos. He saw the bird clearly in the headlights of the car when he flushed it. There are a few records for this species in central Namibia (I know of at least one near the international airport) but this appears to be the westernmost record for central Namibia.

Peter Bridgeford reported that the vulture ringing weekend (16 & 17/10/2010) in the Namib had been a resounding success with a record equaling 86 lappet-faced vulture chicks ringed for the season. This total was also achieved in 2007.

Günther Friederich reported the reappearance of a collared palm-thrush at Farm Choantsas near Tsintsabis when the Makalani palms *Hyphaehe petersiana* started flowering. The bird was first seen on 11/10/2010. It was seen regularly in the evenings drinking at the bird bath and was roosting in a Bougainvillea shrub in the garden. It is highly possible that this is the same bird reported from this location at the same time last year. (See

Lanioturdus 43-3). By mid December a second bird had been seen and it was suspected that they were breeding in an exotic palm tree in the garden.



Collared palm-thrush – Photo Reinhard Friederich

On 23/10/2010 Belgian tourists and birders Ludo Benoy and Katja Claus saw a Sabine's gull at Kalkheuwel waterhole in the Etosha National Park about 410 km from the nearest point on the coast. This is a species usually found only offshore. Courtesy of Trevor Hardaker I have discovered that there is one other inland record for southern Africa for this species; that being a bird that turned up in the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve in December 2004 but which died the day after being discovered.



Sabine's gull at Kalkheuwel – Photo Ludo Benoy

On 27/10/2010 Chris Brown saw eight maccoa ducks on the small dam just north of Keetmanshoop. While there are a few Atlas records for this species in the general vicinity it is by no means common there but what is also of interest is that this is the largest group

of maccoas counted at a single site since 24 were counted at Mile 4 in July 2006.

On 06/11/2010 an osprey and four red-necked phalaropes were seen at Walvis Bay. (Dirk Heinrich pers. comm.)

Chris Elmer, a visitor from the UK, saw a common redshank at the Katima Mulilo sewage works on 07/11/2010 and then on 11/11/2010 saw two white-backed night-herons while on a boat trip on the Okavango River out of Ngepi Camp. While common redshanks are frequently seen at Mile 4 Saltworks and at Walvis Bay inland sightings are very unusual. The white-backed night herons are probably the same birds seen by Eckart Demasius and Richard Niddrie in the same vicinity in October 2009 (See Lanioturdus 43-3).

Eckart Demasius reported an osprey over Avis Dam, Windhoek, on 10/11/2010. There is no way of knowing whether this is one of the birds seen in central Namibia during the winter or whether it is a newly arrived migrant.



Osprey at Avis Dam – Photo Eckart Demasius

On the same day I again saw a red-billed oxpecker at Ncaute in the Kavango region confirming the continued presence of this species in this area (See Lanioturdus 43-1, 43-3 and 43-4).

On 13 & 14/11/2010 Eckart Demasius saw single willow warblers at Wlotzkasbaken. It is thought that these birds were on migration as

there are very few Atlas records for this species anywhere near the coast.



Willow warbler at Wlotzkasbaken – Photo Eckart Demasius

On 14/11/2010 Eckart also saw and photographed a ringed African black oystercatcher at Mile 4 Saltworks. The bird had a Canadian type ring on the left leg and yellow over metal rings on the right. A bird with this ring combination was seen again on 16/12/2010 at the same location (most probably the same bird). I tried to trace the origin of this bird through SAFRING but without the actual inscribed ring number they were not able to pinpoint the individual bird. It is most likely that this is one of seven ringed as chicks by Paul Martin in the vicinity of the Swartkop River mouth near Port Elizabeth in the first days of 2003. The direct distance from the ringing site to the resighting site is approximately 1 657 km but the route all along the coastline which the bird undoubtedly followed would be considerably longer. Please be on the lookout for ringed birds like this and report all sightings.



Ringed African Black Oystercatcher – Photo Eckart Demasius

Paul Gascoigne reported four juvenile greater flamingos at the Gammams Sewage Works on 19/11/2010 while Gudrun Middendorff saw five at the same venue on the same day. It is a long time since I have heard of flamingos around Windhoek. The last time I saw any was in the late 80's or early 90's at a time when Avis Dam was just a puddle. Gudrun also reported a single glossy ibis at the sewage works. This is a very uncommon species in central Namibia.

The Bird Club's Birding Big Day at Monte Christo on 28/11/2010 turned up two woodland kingfishers. This is the second consecutive year that these birds have appeared there a very long way south of their normal summer range. Other interesting sightings included a black stork and one greater painted snipe.

On 04/12/2010 Eckart Demasius found a common tern with the ring number 4H11138 on the beach just north of Wlotzkasbaken. The bird seemed to be dying but when Eckart went back in the afternoon it appeared somewhat recovered and the next morning there was no sign of it. Enquiries have revealed that this bird was ringed by Tony Tree at Mile 4 Saltworks on 13 March 1999 as a first year bird. This bird has thus presumably made the journey to its northern hemisphere breeding grounds and back twelve times since being ringed.

On 07/12/2010 Gudrun Middendorff saw a Eurasian honey buzzard feeding on paper wasp grubs in Windhoek's Olympia suburb.

On 15/12/2010 Mark Boorman captured a black tern which had been ringed as a juvenile at Turov, Belarus, on 22/07/2008. This constitutes the first foreign ringed black tern (out of a total of over 500 birds) captured by Mark this season.

Eckart Demasius reported a single common redshank at the Mile 4 Saltworks on 16/12/2010.

On 20/12/2010 Eckart managed to photograph a peregrine falcon he had noticed a few days earlier in Swakopmund.



Peregrine falcon in Swakopmund – Photo Eckart Demasius

In the week before Christmas Dieter Ludwig saw a white-bellied sunbird in Windhoek's Olympia suburb. This sighting is at least 175 km south of the nearest Roberts VII/Atlas record.

On 24/12/2010 Gudrun and I saw a pair of Karoo thrushes at Kalahari Farmhouse Lodge at Stampriet. This is a species with a very limited distribution in south central Namibia and it was a lifer for both of us. The following day I was able to turn this birding lifer into a ringing lifer when I captured one of these birds.

On 28/12/2010 Gudrun and I saw two pallid harriers on the C23 a few kilometers east of Dordabis. One of these birds was an adult male and the other a female or juvenile. The two sightings were only a couple of kilometers apart. This is a very uncommon species in central Namibia and was again a lifer for both of us.

Richard Niddrie reported a group of ten blue cranes 8 km west of Aroe waterhole in the Etosha National Park on 31/12/2010. This seems to be a rather unusual sighting as, at this time of the year, the birds are usually to be found in pairs. If these were sub-adult birds this sighting could indicate a higher survival rate amongst young cranes than had been believed.



Blue cranes – Photo Richard Niddrie

In addition Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since the middle of October 2010.

On the third weekend of October a Jacobin cuckoo was reported from Ai-Ais. This bird is some way off its normal recorded range. This is possibly the southernmost record for Namibia. The nearest Atlas record is approximately 270 km to the north. One wonders why this bird was at Ai-Ais – perhaps a passage migrant on its way to the western Cape or a bird that had overshot its normal summer range?

Twenty red-necked phalaropes and a common black-headed gull in full breeding plumage were reported from Walvis Bay on 22/10/2010 while two common redshanks were present at the Mile 4 Saltworks.

Six red-necked phalaropes were reported from the Paaltjies road at Walvis Bay on the last weekend of October while a Eurasian oystercatcher was seen in the vicinity of the pump station.

On 12/11/2010 a common black-headed gull in breeding plumage was present at Mile 4 Saltworks.

The Eurasian oystercatcher was again reported at the Walvis Bay Saltworks on 20/11/2010.

At the end of the last full week in November two common redshanks, a common black-headed gull, a Eurasian oystercatcher and at least forty red-necked phalaropes were reported from Walvis Bay.

A week later the black-headed gull, nineteen red-necked phalaropes and two Eurasian oystercatchers were reported from the same location while two common redshanks were present at Mile 4 Saltworks.

The two Eurasian oystercatchers were reported at Walvis Bay again on 27/12/2010 while an American golden plover was reported at Lüderitz a couple of days later.

Neil Thomson

About the Namibia Bird Club

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. 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. 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 have lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a programme of forthcoming events (the Bird Call Newsletter) and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

Membership Fees 2011

Members can receive a discounted subscription to the *Africa Birds and Birding* magazine. The fees below are with and without this subscription.

Category	Without	With
Single member	N\$ 130	N\$ 310
Family membership (Husband, wife, children)	N\$ 150	N\$ 330
Junior member (All scholars and students)	N\$ 90	N\$ 270
Pensioner	N\$ 90	N\$ 270
Foreign member (Not resident in Namibia)	N\$ 165	N/A
Corporate membership	N\$ 400	

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