

LANIOTURDUS

Volume 47 No 2

June 2014

Namibia Bird Club



since 1962

Journal of the Namibia Bird Club
www.namibiabirdclub.org

Rarities and Interesting Observations

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Hilke von Dittfurth informed me of the presence of European Honey-Buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*) at Farm Rietfontein near Dordabis from November 2013 to January 2014. At times three birds were present.

Claire and Holger and others saw a European Honey-Buzzard in the Buffalo Core Area of the Bwabwata National Park on 05 January 2014 while the wetland bird count along the Okavango River at that time produced twelve Wattled Cranes (*Bugeranus carunculatus*).



Photo © Neil Thomson

Franz Klein reported a European Honey-Buzzard at Farm Wildbad in the Seeis area on 25 January 2014. Franz also saw at least one Lesser Striped Swallow (*Cecropis abyssinica*) there (see *Lanioturdus* 47(1) regarding the southward range extension of Lesser Striped Swallows).

In the course of the summer wetland count at Hardap Dam on 16 January 2014 Holger Kolberg found thirteen Pink-backed Pelicans.



Photo © Holger Kolberg

The Namibia Bird Club outing to Monte Christo on 26 January 2014 produced some interesting birds. Horus Swifts (*Apus horus*) were seen in a mixed flock including Little Swifts (*A. affinis*), White-rumped Swifts (*A. caffer*) and African Palm-Swifts (*Cypsiurus parvus*). Woodland Kingfishers (*Halcyon senegalensis*) were seen again and it was believed that at least four birds were present. A male Village Indigobird (*Vidua chalybeata*) was also observed. Another bird, initially believed to be a Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla*), was seen as well although the photographs were inconclusive. A member went back to the site on the Tuesday and confirmed this sighting although Trevor Hardaker later identified the bird in one of the photographs as a juvenile Allen's Gallinule (*Porphyrio alleni*). Whether a crake and a gallinule were present or whether the crake confirmation was another misidentification is not known.

Jessica Kemper reported a Common Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*) at Radford Bay, Lüderitz, on 08 February 2014. While this species is seen fairly regularly at Mile 4 Saltworks and

Walvis Bay there are very few records for the southern coast, the last apparently being in 1987.



Photo © Jessica Kemper

A Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) was seen at the Gammams Sewage Works in the course of the Namibia Bird Club morning walk on 09 February 2014.

The summer wetland count at Walvis Bay on 15 and 16 February 2014 turned up thirteen Red-necked Phalaropes (*Phalaropus lobatus*) and a Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*) while both South African Shelduck (*Tadorna cana*) and Cape Shoveler (*Anas smithii*) were seen on the lagoon which is rather unusual. Shelduck are rarely to be found in a marine environment and although Cape Shovelers are known to frequent tidal estuaries, coastal lakes and lagoons I cannot recall ever seeing them here before. (*Shelduck are regularly encountered at Guano Bay, Lüderitz, during wetland bird counts – Ed.*)

Eckart Demasius photographed a skua (possibly Sub-Antarctic Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus*) on the beach at the Swakop River mouth on 16 February 2014. These birds are usually seen at sea and I cannot ever recall seeing one on the beach.



Photo © Eckart Demasius

On 18 February 2014 Hartmut Kolb photographed a Denham's Bustard (*Neotis denhami*) on the Andoni Plains in the Etosha National Park. This sighting is almost undoubtedly a first for Etosha but there is at least one old record of this species in the Zambezi Region. (*The subspecies jacksoni of this bird is listed to occur in northern Namibia by Roberts VII – Ed.*)



Photo © Hartmut Kolb

Franz Klein and his team saw a European Honey-Buzzard at Daan Viljoen in the course of the wetland bird count there on 23 February 2014 while Liz Komen reported one near Friedenau Dam on 23 February 2014.

In the course of the bird club's long weekend outing to Ovita Game Lodge from 21 to 23 March 2014 Franz Klein saw a much out of range Red-billed Firefinch (*Lagonosticta senegala*).

On 30 March 2014 Gudrun

Middendorff and I saw a European Honey-Buzzard between Dordabis and Windhoek. There was a second similar sized raptor present but we were uncertain as to whether or not it might have been a second European Honey-Buzzard.



Photo © Neil Thomson

In addition, Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in and off Namibia since the beginning of 2014: A Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) and an American Golden Plover (*P. dominica*) were present at Walvis Bay in the second week of January 2014. These birds were still present on 12 January 2014 together with a number of Red-necked Phalaropes and an Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*).

A Southern Black Flycatcher (*Melaenornis pammelaina*) was reported from Okahandja on 19 January 2014. This is somewhat south of its accepted range.

The report dated 03 February 2014 mentions a Common Redshank and three Red-necked Phalaropes seen at Mile 4 Saltworks while Walvis Bay was host to seventy Red-necked Phalaropes, two Eurasian Oystercatchers, two American Golden Plovers and a Pacific Golden Plover.

A Barau's Petrel (*Pterodroma barau*) was reported in Namibian waters on 04/02/2014. It seems that this is only the second ever Atlantic record for this species following a sighting some 400 km south of Cape Town some years ago.

A European Honey-Buzzard was reported at Okahandja Country Lodge on 20 February 2014.

American and Pacific Golden Plovers together with a number of Red-necked Phalaropes were again reported from Walvis Bay on the last weekend of February while a Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) was seen at Mile 4 Saltworks. Three Eurasian Oystercatchers were seen at Sandwich Harbour the previous weekend.

American and Pacific Golden Plovers together with a Eurasian Oystercatcher and a number of Red-necked Phalaropes were reported from Walvis Bay in the first week of March.

Two Gull-billed Terns (*Geochelidon nilotica*, one in almost full breeding plumage) were located at Okashana Spring on the Andoni Plains north of the Etosha National Park on 12 March 2014.

A European Honey-Buzzard was reported at Avis Dam on 13 March 2014 while there were further reports of the American and Pacific Golden Plovers and the Eurasian Oystercatcher from Walvis Bay in the second week of March. A "flock" of Gull-billed Terns was also reported from Walvis Bay.

A European Honey-Buzzard was reported 40 km east of Kalkrand on 16 March 2014 while at least one Common Redshank was reported

from Walvis Bay.

The report dated 24 March 2014 again mentions the presence of both American and Pacific Golden Plovers, Red-necked Phalaropes and a Eurasian Oystercatcher at Walvis Bay while a Common Redshank was reported at Fischer's Pan in the Etosha National Park on 20 March

2014.

There is some doubt as to whether the photograph of the Common Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) published in *Lanioturdus* 47(1) is indeed this species. It is believed that it may well be a Grey-headed Gull (*C. cirrocephalus*).