

# LANIOTURDUS

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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 organise monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Water Care 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 the bird club's journal, *Lanioturdus* and outings and events are advertised on the club's website [www.namibiabirdclub.org](http://www.namibiabirdclub.org).

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organisation 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.



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## CONTENTS

SCHWIPPERT B	African Harrier-Hawk vs Smith's Bush Squirrel ..... <b>1</b>
THOMSON N	An overview of ten years of bird ringing in Klein Windhoek ..... <b>9</b>
DEMASIUS E	How I became a birder ..... <b>14</b>
KOLBERG H	Summary of the 2018 winter wetland bird counts in Namibia ..... <b>17</b>
THOMSON N	Some "Do's" and "Don'ts" when feeding garden birds ..... <b>21</b>
ANON	Rotstirnbartvogel, R. No 432 ..... <b>23</b>
BOORMAN M	Vultures Namibia..... <b>25</b>
THOMSON N	Short Notes ..... <b>26</b>
THOMSON N	Rarities and Interesting Observations ..... <b>30</b>
KOLBERG H	Bird Atlas Update ..... <b>37</b>
KOLBERG H	Tracked Vultures ..... <b>38</b>

Cover photo Black-chested Prinia © Holger Kolberg



## Rarities and Interesting Observations

Compiled by Neil Thomson  
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A Woodland Kingfisher was seen at Farm Monte Christo in the course of the wetland bird count there on 02 February 2019. This is at least the tenth consecutive summer that this species has been recorded there, well south of its recognized range. Other interesting sightings at Monte Christo included a Greater Painted Snipe and a Martial Eagle.



**Figure 1:** Woodland Kingfisher © Neil Thomson

On the same day the counters at Goreangab Dam were rather surprised to find 110 Maccua Ducks. This is probably the highest count of this species anywhere in Namibia for some time.

Two Glossy Ibises were seen at the Gammams Water Care Works on 2 February 2019.

Gudrun Middendorff and I found a European Honey Buzzard in the Rykvoet Street area of Klein Windhoek on 04 February 2019. On the same day we saw two Black Storks over Brakwater.

On 05 February 2019 we were pleasantly surprised to find a Bennett's Woodpecker (probably the least common of the woodpecker

species occurring in central Namibia) at Okombahe.



**Figure 2:** European Honey Buzzard © Neil Thomson

A picture of a European Honey Buzzard seen at Midgard Country Estate was posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page on 07 February 2019.

The water bird count at the Cape Cross lagoons on 08 February 2019 turned up three Red-necked Phalaropes.

A Terek Sandpiper was seen at Walvis Bay during the water bird count on 09 February 2019. An unidentified Golden Plover was seen there the same day but unfortunately it was not possible to determine whether it was an American or a Pacific Golden

Plover and the bird disappeared before it could be photographed.

Twenty four Red-necked Phalaropes were counted in the saltworks at Walvis Bay in the course of the water bird count there on 10 February 2019.



**Figure 3:** Red-necked Phalarope © Michael Houlden

Rather disconcertingly, a House Crow was seen at the Walvis Bay sewage ponds on the same day. This invasive alien species has been recorded several times previously at the central coast.



**Figure 4:** House Crow © Neil Thomson

The water bird counters at Sandwich Harbour found two Terek Sandpipers and a Eurasian Oystercatcher there on the weekend of 09/10 February 2019.

Danie Brand reported a Glossy Ibis sighting at Avis Dam on 13 February 2019. This is in all likelihood another

sighting of one of the birds seen at the Gammams Water Care Works on 02 February (see above).

Holger Kolberg reported two Pink-backed Pelicans and a flock of about twenty Lesser Kestrels at Hardap Dam on 19 February 2019.

Ursula Franke-Bryson caught and ringed a very far off range Ashy Flycatcher at Farm Hamakari near the Waterberg on 21 February 2019.



**Figure 5:** Ashy Flycatcher © Ursula Franke-Bryson

On 24 February 2019 Wilfried Friederich saw a flock of about 60 African Openbills circling over Windhoek before heading off in an easterly direction.

Our trip to the north east of Namibia from 18 to 27 February 2019 turned up single Lesser Jacanas on both the Kwando and Chobe Rivers. In addition, numbers of Red-headed Queleas were seen along the Kwando River and Northern Grey-headed Sparrows were encountered at both Chobe River Camp and in Rundu while a Miombo Blue-eared Starling was also seen at Chobe River Camp. Rather surprisingly about sixty African Skimmers were seen on a sandy shore on the Zambezi River on 23 February 2019 – it seemed rather late in the season for these birds to still be present in the area.





**Figure 6:** Northern Grey-headed Sparrow © Neil Thomson

Wilfried and Sibylle Hähner also found Red-headed Queleas in both the Kwando Core Area of the Bwabwata National Park and the Mudumo National Park at about the same time.



**Figure 7:** Red-headed Quelea © Sibylle Hähner

Paul Gascoigne and Helen Pooley found the following in and around Katima Mulilo:- Three Racket-tailed Rollers plus a Great Snipe on 27 February 2019, three Common Mynas on 28 February together with a sighting of a European Nightjar while a Yellow-throated Leaflove was seen again in the gardens at Caprivi Houseboat Safari Lodge on 01 March.

Gudrun Middendorff and I saw at least one hundred Marabou Storks in

the vicinity of the Kupferberg landfill site on 01 March 2019.



**Figure 8:** European Nightjar © Paul Gascoigne

Paul Gascoigne and Helen Pooley reported seeing five Wattled Cranes in the Mahango Core Area of the Bwabwata National Park on 02 March 2019.

A morning walk at Avis Dam with visiting birder Richard Thompson on 03 March 2019 turned up a Glossy Ibis, four Marabou Storks and no less than ten Yellow-billed Storks. I was informed by Walther Hanke that there had been 100+ Marabou Storks there earlier in the week.



**Figure 9:** Yellow-billed Storks © Neil Thomson

According to a post on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page a yellow morph Crimson-breasted Shrike was seen again at Erindi Private Game Reserve on 06 March 2019. It is some time since I have received a report of a bird of this morph at Erindi.

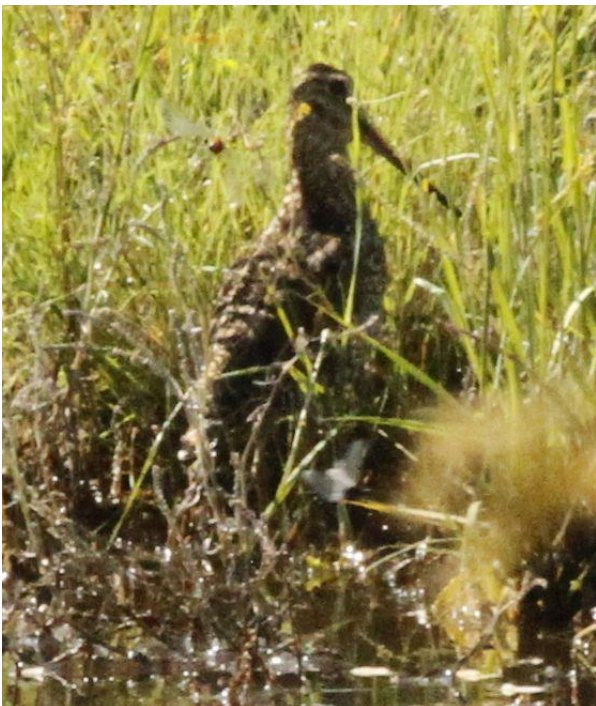
Two American Golden Plovers were seen at Walvis Bay by Paul Gascoigne and Helen Pooley on 11 March 2019, one near the Protea Hotel and the other near the pump station on the Paaltjies Road.



**Figure 10:** American Golden Plover © Paul Gascoigne

Somewhat disconcertingly a Common Starling, another invasive alien species, was reported from Walvis Bay in early March 2019.

Curt-Ingo Sagell found another Great Snipe, an extremely uncommon bird in Namibia, on a flooded pan near Katima Mulilo on 13 March 2019.



**Figure 11:** Great Snipe © Curt-Ingo Sagell

The Namibia Bird Club's atlasing bash in the Hochfeld area from 21 to 24 March 2019 turned up sightings of Lesser Kestrels on at least two different pentads while Gudrun Middendorff saw a pair of Red-billed Firefinches in Hochfeld, further evidence of the rapid range extension of this species in central Namibia.



**Figure 12:** Lesser Kestrel © Neil Thomson

Eckart Demasius informed me of his sighting of a flying Bat Hawk in Eros on 22 March 2019 although a subsequent search for the bird at the old roost in von Eckenbrecher Street proved futile. Eckart also reported at least ten Ludwig's Bustards at Farm Krumhuk some 20 km south of Windhoek on 24 March 2019.



**Figure 13:** Ludwig's Bustard © Eckart Demasius

Swakopmund's long staying Black Sparrowhawk was seen again in the vicinity of the cemetery on 02 April 2019.



Photographs of Red-billed Firefinches in Omaruru were posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page on 04 April 2019 – a further range extension of this rapidly spreading species.

Eckart Demasius advised that he had again seen a free flying Rose-ringed Parakeet in Swakopmund on 04 April 2019 (see *Lanioturdus* 51[3]).

Lise Hanssen found a group of at least ten Crested Guineafowl about 30 km east of Kongola on 04 April 2019.



**Figure 14:** Crested Guineafowl © Lise Hanssen

Eckart Demasius found a flock of about ten Black-throated Canaries at Wlotzkasbaken on 08 April 2019 (this seems to be a new species for SABAP2 in this extremely well atlased pentad) and the following day he saw both Black-headed Heron and Southern Masked Weaver in the Wlotzkasbaken vicinity, both unusual species in that area.



**Figure 15:** Long-tailed Paradise Whydah – Provided by Danie Piek

Danie Piek provided a photograph taken on 12 April 2019 of a partially leucistic Long-tailed Paradise Whydah at the Benguela Angling Club premises in Olympia, Windhoek.

On 17 April 2019 I saw an African Harrier-Hawk in Windhoek's Southern Industrial Area – my first sighting for some time of this species in town. About the same time, I received several reports of a Verreaux's Eagle seen over Klein Windhoek.

Mark Boorman and Franz Klein found a Lesser Sand Plover at the Walvis Bay lagoon on 19 April 2019.

We were rather surprised to see both a Great Spotted Cuckoo and an African Cuckoo in the vicinity of the Omatako over the Easter weekend. It seemed very late in the season for these migrants to be present.

A picture of African Skimmers seen in the vicinity of Zambezi Mubala Lodge circa the last week in April 2019 was posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page. The presence of this species at this time of the year can only be due to the extremely low level of the Zambezi River (See also above).



**Figure 16:** Tree Pipit © Neil Thomson

The highlight of the Birders' Get-together at Swartfontein Lodge in the first week of May 2019 was



undoubtedly the sighting (and ringing) of a Tree Pipit. It was suspected that this bird may have been a reverse migrant. This seems to be the first SABAP2 record for this species in Namibia.

A very out of place African Jacana was seen by Eckart Demasius at Farm Neuras near Büllsport on 06 May 2019 (see also below).

More photographs of Red-billed Firefinches in Omaruru were posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page on 08 May 2019 (see above).

Pictures of young Red-billed Queleas taken in Walvis Bay were posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page on 17 May 2019. This is a very unusual sighting at the coast and the only coastal record I could find in SABAP2 for this species was one at Wlotzkasbaken in May 2013 (see also below).

On 21 May 2019 Rian Jones posted pictures on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page of two Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters which had rather surprisingly appeared on Mercury Island where they had remained for several days.



**Figure 17:** Red-billed Queleas © Eckart Demasius

Eckart Demasius reported a flock of Red-billed Queleas in his Swakopmund garden on 26 May

2019 (see also above). Eckart was of the opinion that they had been blown down to the coast by the east wind which had been active.

A photograph of a Monteiro's Hornbill taken on 26 May 2019 at Farm Westerwald near Witvlei was posted on the Birds of Namibia Facebook page. This is a long way east of all SABAP2 records for this species.

Eckart Demasius was extremely surprised to find a small flock of Helmeted Guineafowl next to the road at Mile 8 on 28 May 2019.



**Figure 18:** Helmeted Guineafowl © Eckart Demasius

In addition, Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since the beginning of February 2019:-

Yellow-throated Leafloves were reported again at Caprivi Houseboat Safari Lodge on 20 February 2019.

An immature Egyptian Vulture was observed visiting a waterhole at Safarihoek Private Game Reserve adjacent to the Etosha National Park every day for about a week towards the end of February 2019.

A Pectoral Sandpiper was seen at Twee Palms waterhole in the Etosha National Park on 23 February 2019.

A European Honey Buzzard was reported at Caprivi Houseboat Safari Lodge on 15 March 2019.

Four Yellow-throated Leafloves were seen in the gardens of Caprivi Houseboat Safari Lodge on 30 March 2019. Four of these birds were observed there again on 11 April 2019 while the species was reported there throughout May.

Single Fulvous and White-faced Whistling Ducks were seen in a borrow pit some 16 km east of Swakopmund on 05 April 2019.

A very out of place African Jacana was found in the middle of the Messum Crater on 08 May 2019.

A way off range Emerald-spotted Wood Dove was reported at the Dead Vlei (Sossusvlei) on 17 May 2019.