



CONTENTS

THOMSON N Editorial	1
SWANEPOEL W Angola Cave Chat <i>Xenocopychus ansorgei</i> in the Kaokoveld of Namibia	2
WOOLLEY S Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i> at Rundu Sewage Works – a New Species for Namibia	3
KEMPER J Cat Alert on Halifax Island	4
BROWN C Notes on Arnot's Chat and Sharp-tailed Starling from Eastern Caprivi, Namibia	6
KOLBERG H Summary of the 2011 Ringing Season in Namibia	7
DEMASIUS E An Interesting Observation on Feeding Behaviour	10
THOMSON N Are you sure that "your" Garden Birds really are "your" Garden Birds?	11
KOLBERG H Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations : Rails, Gallinules, Coot and Jacana	13
THOMSON N A Weekend at Omandumba	17

MÜLLER E Report on the 2012 Namibian Ringers' Get-together	19
KOLBERG H Summary of the 2012 Sum- mer Wetland Bird Counts in Namibia	21
THOMSON N Red-billed Queleas	21
ATLAS UPDATE	24
RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS	25

Editorial

In this issue I am delighted to be able to publish articles on two species new to Namibia, one of which is in fact new to the southern African sub-region and is believed to be resident in the far north west of Namibia.

In May 2012 Wessel Swanepoel discovered a population of Angola Cave Chats on the southern slopes of the Zebra Mountains west of Swartbooisdrif in the far northwest of Namibia. This species was thought to be an Angolan endemic but has now been found south of the border. Please take note of Wessel's request that he be informed of any further sightings of this species in order to facilitate his research into this species in Namibia.

The second species new to Namibia which we feature in this issue is the Lesser Yellowlegs seen by Simon Woolley at the Rundu Sewage

but as Holger Kolberg, who is leading SABAP2 in Namibia says, '1% coverage means that 99% has yet to be covered so at the moment we have more gaps than non-gap'. All atlasers visiting Namibia are encouraged to atlas and it is clear that **'incidental records'** and **'ad hoc lists'** are going to be even more important in Namibia than they are in the remaining SABAP2 region."

A month later Les followed this up with the following:-

"Especially in the Northern Cape, in Namibia and other countries to the north **incidental records** are going to be of critical importance in documenting the basic distribution of species."

Here we have it from the horse's mouth so to speak – if you cannot do the full minimum two hour protocol please submit the list you have made for the time you have spent in the pentad. It seems that many people are apprehensive about the minimum two hour protocol and are reluctant to collect and submit data when they are unable to spend this "minimum" period birding in a pentad. Namibia comprises 10 584 pentads and to get meaningful coverage of the country all records and lists are valuable contributions. If you are unable to do the full two hours it means that your data cannot be used in determining how common or otherwise a species is but it will be used in redrawing the distribution maps. When Gudrun and I go out ringing we do not spend the required two hours of intensive birding but we keep a list of what we see (and catch). At one location fairly close to Windhoek where we have three times been ringing and once visited for about 45 minutes there are now 58 species recorded on the database for that pentad for which no other data has been submitted.

Likewise, my job takes me to a number of remote places in Namibia such as Nepara, Katwitwi, Oshivelo, Mosokatwane, Kanono etc. While I do not have the time to go birding on these trips I do make and submit lists of what I see around the building site, landing strip etc. and along the roads while travelling.

Usually these lists include only the most conspicuous and easily identifiable species but at this stage they constitute the only data submitted for these pentads.

As at 24/09/2012 a total of 252 full protocol atlas cards for 156 pentads had been submitted by about thirty six active atlasers. This constitutes some full protocol coverage for 1.5 % of the pentads in Namibia.

It can be seen that we have a huge task ahead of us. Those of you who have not yet registered for atlasing please do so and those who have registered but have not yet started now is the time to become active. If you are having problems submitting data Holger can be contacted for assistance to get you going.

Rarities and Interesting Observations

Jessica Kemper reported an African Jacana seen in the vicinity of the Lüderitz Sewage Works on 21/05/2012. This bird seems to be a long way off its recorded range.

Three Caspian Terns were seen flying over the Gammams Sewage Works in the course of the Namibia Bird Club morning walk on 10/06/2012. This is a very unusual sighting. There is a small population of Caspian Terns at Hardap Dam but, to the best of my knowledge, this species has not been recorded on inland waters elsewhere in Namibia. The three birds seen were flying in a rough line abreast and quite high in a southerly/south easterly direction. It seems most probable that they were in passage to some destination, possibly Hardap Dam.

Also seen on this outing was a single Purple Heron, an uncommon species in central Namibia but one seen not infrequently at the sewage works.

Further to the recent spate of African Harrier-Hawk sightings in the Windhoek area Dawid van der Merwe reported a single adult bird seen flying over the Windhoek High School sports field on 17/06/2012.

Ann Scott reported a male Greater Painted-Snipe found dead on NamibRand near the Keerweder reservoir on 19/06/2012. This is the first time this species has been recorded at NamibRand and this bird seems to be approximately 260 km from the nearest SABAP1 record to the north and approximately 180 km from the nearest record to the east.



Greater Painted Snipe – Photo : © Ann Scott

Stefan Rust reported Red-eyed Doves and Marico Sunbirds in Lüderitz on 23/06/2012. Both of these seemed to be well off their recorded ranges. Jessica Kemper confirmed the presence of both species at the town advising that Red-eyed Doves have been resident there in small numbers for some eight years.



Marico Sunbird in Lüderitz– Photo : © Jessica Kemper

Stefan Rust also reported an overwintering Osprey seen at Oranjemund on 27/06/2012 while the following day he saw three Hadedas Ibises there. While Hadedas have been present along the Orange River further to the east for some time this seems to indicate a significant westward expansion of their range since SABAP1.

Neil MacLeod reported an African Crake on his lawn at Rosmund Estate outside Swakopmund towards the end of June. This bird was some way off its recorded SABAP1 range and is also usually regarded as a summer visitor to Namibia.

The few who braved the bitterly cold weather to attend the Namibia Bird Club morning walk at Avis Dam on 08/07/2012 were rewarded with the sighting of three White Storks (presumably overwintering birds). At least one White Stork was apparently also seen at Brakwater earlier in the week. Three White Storks were seen again in the course of the wetland bird count at Avis Dam three weeks later on 28/07/2012 while Wessel Swanepoel reported four present on the same day. Four birds were still present on 19/08/2012.



White Storks at Avis Dam – Photo : © Christiane Maluche

Also of interest at Avis Dam on 08/07/2012 was the large number of Great White Pelicans present. About 140 were counted and these birds had presumably been attracted to the large numbers of dead fish in the dam. The cold weather was apparently responsible for the death of large numbers of tilapia, an exotic species more suited to warmer water. The

pelican numbers had swollen to a counted/estimated 534 on 28/07/2012.

Stefan Rust reported sighting an Eastern Saw-wing at Lianshulu Lodge on the Kwando River on 16/07/2012 and again on 11/08/2012. It seems that this is a very rare species in Namibia recorded previously in only one quarter degree square according to Roberts VII.

Stefan also reported another overwintering Osprey at Nunda River Lodge near Popa Falls two day later.

Christiane Maluche photographed an overwintering Eurasian Curlew at Mile 4 Saltworks on 20/07/2012.



Overwintering Eurasian Curlew – Photo : © Christiane Maluche

In the course of the wetland bird count at Walvis Bay on 21/07/2012 seven Red-necked Phalaropes were seen from the Paaltjies road. Another interesting sighting was that of a Cape Gannet in the lagoon. This is apparently something that was not uncommon in years gone by but is now very unusual.



Red-necked Phalaropes – Photo : © Christiane Maluche

On 22/07/2012 a single Glossy Ibis was seen at the Walvis Bay sewage ponds in the course of the bird count conducted there.

Eddy Kadima reported an African Harrier-Hawk in the vicinity of Baines Centre, Pioneer Park on 27/07/2012. The bird was seen feeding on the eggs of a Rock Dove nesting on a roof.



African Harrier-Hawk – Photo : © Eddy Kadima

The wetland bird count at Monte Christo on 28/07/2012 produced a sighting of two Greater Painted-Snipe while a Yellow-Billed Oxpecker was seen there again (see Lanioturdus 45(1)).

Nacho Aransay reported a single African Black Duck seen in the course of the wetland bird count at Friedenau Dam on 28/07/2012. This is somewhat unusual as this species generally prefers flowing water to large dams. Nacho also reported two Pied Kingfishers at the same location. This is an uncommon species in central Namibia.

A single Purple Heron was seen at the Gammams Sewage Works in the course of the wetland bird count there on 29/07/2012 (see also above).

Eckart Demasius photographed an African Black Oystercatcher showing a degree of leucism on the beach near Mile 4 Saltworks on 29/07/2012. This bird has at least one pure white outer primary feather on the right wing.



Partially leucistic African Black Oystercatcher – Photo : © Eckart Demasius

At the beginning of August Nancy Robson informed us of the presence of Yellow-billed Oxpeckers near St Mary's Mission, Odibo, where she has been resident for many years. This was the first time she had ever seen this species there so it appears that this is a species that may be expanding its range (see also *Lanioturdus* 43(1)).

In the course of an outing to Swakoppoort Dam on 05/08/2012 Gudrun and I saw a single Black Stork soaring. There have been a number of sightings of this uncommon species this year (see *Lanioturdus* 45(3)). Also seen on this outing was a pair of Verreauxs' Eagles carrying prey (probably a dassie) to an almost fledged chick on a nest high on the cliff face near the dam wall. We also saw a ringed Great White Pelican with a red Canadian ring engraved V7 on the right leg standing on rocks at the edge of the dam. This bird was ringed by Dirk Heinrich at Hardap Dam on 04/06/2011. The distance between the ringing and resighting sites is about 290 km.

Stefan Rust reported sighting a leucistic Namaqua Sandgrouse at Rietfontein in the Etosha National Park on 08/08/2012.

The Namibia Bird Club morning walk at the Gammams Sewage Works on 12/08/2012 again produced a sighting of two African Black Ducks. This is an uncommon species in central Namibia although it is seen quite regularly at this location.

I received a report that Pete Morgan had seen a single African Skimmer on the Kunene River about 4 km upstream from Kunene River Lodge on the afternoon of 17/08/2012. Pete also advised of an African Finfoot which now seems to be resident in the area being seen every few days. As far as I can determine neither of these species has been recorded before on that part of the Kunene River which forms the border between Namibia and Angola.

Stefan Rust reported a juvenile Yellow-billed Stork at the dam outside Gobabis on 23/08/2012. This is an uncommon species in central Namibia.

In the course of the Namibia Bird Club long weekend outing to Farm Omandumba on the northern side of the Erongo Mountains (25 - 27/08/2012) Dawid van der Merwe found a Verreauxs' Eagle nest with a chick in it. Interestingly this chick appeared to be smaller than the one we saw at Swakoppoort Dam some two months previously.



Verreauxs' Eagle nest with chick – Photo : © Dawid van der Merwe

Stefan Rust reported two Greater Flamingos, an adult and a juvenile, at Sossusvlei (which still contained water) on 28/08/2012. He also reported a possible Rüppell's Vulture in the vicinity of Okaukeujo. If confirmed this may be another first for Namibia.

Stefan further reported a possible Lesser Jacana at Klein Namutoni on 01/09/2012. While this species usually occurs further to the north east there are records from the Etosha area. On 04/09/2012 Stefan saw a Rock Pratincole at Susuwe Island Lodge on the Kwando River where the habitat is not suitable for this species as that part of the river contains sandbanks rather than rocky outcrops.

On 04/09/2012 I saw an African Finfoot swimming on the Zambezi River right in front of the Protea Hotel Zambezi River. This much sought after species which was recorded in only four or five quarter degree squares in Namibia in SABAP1 was a lifer for me!

In addition Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since early June 2012.

An African Crake was reported from Nuamses waterhole in the Etosha National Park on 09/06/2012 (see also above).

The report dated 05/07/2012 stated that the leucistic Common Redshank had again been seen at the Mile 4 Saltworks (see *Lanioturdus* 45(1)) while in the course of the previous week a Spectacled Petrel and a Wandering Albatross had been seen from a fishing vessel offshore.



Wandering Albatross – Photo : © John Paterson

The leucistic Common Redshank was still present at Mile 4 Saltworks on 03/08/2012.

The report sent out on 03/09/2012 makes mention of six Red-necked Phalaropes at Walvis Bay.

A “mega alert” sent out on 11/09/2012 advised that a Wilson's Phalarope had been observed at Walvis Bay in the same area where one was seen last year – possibly the same bird returning. That week nine Red-necked phalaropes were also reported from Walvis Bay while the leucistic Common Redshank was still present at Mile 4 Saltworks.

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 (Namibia Bird News) and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.



Spectacled Petrel – Photo : © John Paterson

In the last week of July at least four Wandering Albatrosses were seen from a fishing vessel operating northwest of Walvis Bay and about 60 km offshore.