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Editorial

The attendance at our morning walks and outings has been disappointing of late and is a cause for concern. The committee goes to great lengths to organize outings to places where we are likely to see interesting birds.

The morning walk at the Gammams Sewage Works on 09/10/2011 is a case in point. There were only seven participants and four of those were committee members. Yes – I know that South Africa was playing Australia in the Rugby World Cup that morning – I decided to give the rugby a miss and go on the bird club outing instead and I think that was a good choice given the result of the rugby and the good birds found at the sewage works. In about three hours we found sixty eight species with a number of specials amongst them. A Pink-backed Pelican was seen – this is the second sighting of which I am aware at the sewage works – two birds were seen on 12/06/2011 and it constitutes only the fourth recent sighting of which I am aware in central Namibia; the others being a single bird at Avis Dam on 17/04/2010 and two birds seen at Otjivero Dam on 30/01/2011.

the rainy season when the falls and river are lower. The flip side is that the falls will not be at their thundering best as we had them. I suppose you can't have it both ways.

(I was interested to note that the Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush in the photograph is a ringed bird. According to the SAFRING website, at the time this article was written, only 31 of these birds had ever been ringed, not all of them at Epupa and in fact I know that some were ringed way to the north in Angola and others some distance to the east at Swartbooisdrif and near Ruacana. I wonder what the odds were against Richard photographing a ringed bird – Ed.)

Report on the Winter 2011 Wetland Bird Counts in Namibia

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The winter wetland bird counts were conducted during July and August 2011 at 32 sites throughout Namibia. The abnormal rainy season experienced in most parts of the country had resulted in plenty of water still being in the field and this was evident in the counts. Lower numbers than usual were recorded at most sites and the Walvis Bay count was the lowest since regular counts were started. The low numbers are due to an almost complete absence of flamingos, lower than usual numbers of geese and ducks and the absence of certain waders e.g. Chestnut-banded Plovers, Pied Avocets and Black-winged Stilts.

Sandwich Harbour had the most birds (thanks mainly to a large flock of Cape Cormorants and an even larger flock of Common Terns) whereas the Orange River Mouth confirmed its status as an important bird area with the highest number of species recorded (44).

In terms of rarities, a Slaty Egret was seen at Otjivero Dam and a White Stork at Monte Christo. The Orange River Mouth delivered a

Glossy Ibis and eight Wattled Cranes were counted at Lake Oponono; Maccoa Duck are making a return to the Walvis sewage ponds, with four being counted there. A Greater Painted-Snipe was seen at Fischer's Pan, two Eurasian Oystercatchers were observed at Sandwich Harbour and two Common Redshanks appeared on the count sheet at the Mile 4 Saltworks.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the counters and the effort they put in to conduct the counts.

Note: See the last pages of this edition for a table of the counts by location.

Rarities and Interesting Observations

Harmut Kolb reported seeing two Yellow-billed Oxpeckers on a donkey in the vicinity of Purros in the Kunene Region on 17/09/2011. These birds were about 200 km south of their recorded SABAP1 range.

Peter Morgan and some of his Kunene River Lodge guests saw a Slaty Egret on the Kunene River about 1 200 m upstream from the lodge on 21/09/2011. None of the distribution maps in Roberts VII, SABAP1 or any of the field guides show this species occurring anywhere near where this bird was sighted. Mark Boorman, however, referred me to a paper published in the Bulletin of the African Bird Club (Vol 17 No 1 March 2010) wherein mention is made of four Slaty Egret specimens in the museum at Lubango in Angola. These specimens had been incorrectly identified as Black Herons and were collected in June 1968 in Huila Province about 200 km to the north east of this sighting. Mark has also heard that Slaty Egrets have been seen fairly regularly at Olushandja Dam near Onesi. It appears that there may well be a small population of this species along the Kunene River and in other suitable habitat in that region. Although I have photographs of the

6.1 African Spoonbill (*Platalea alba*)

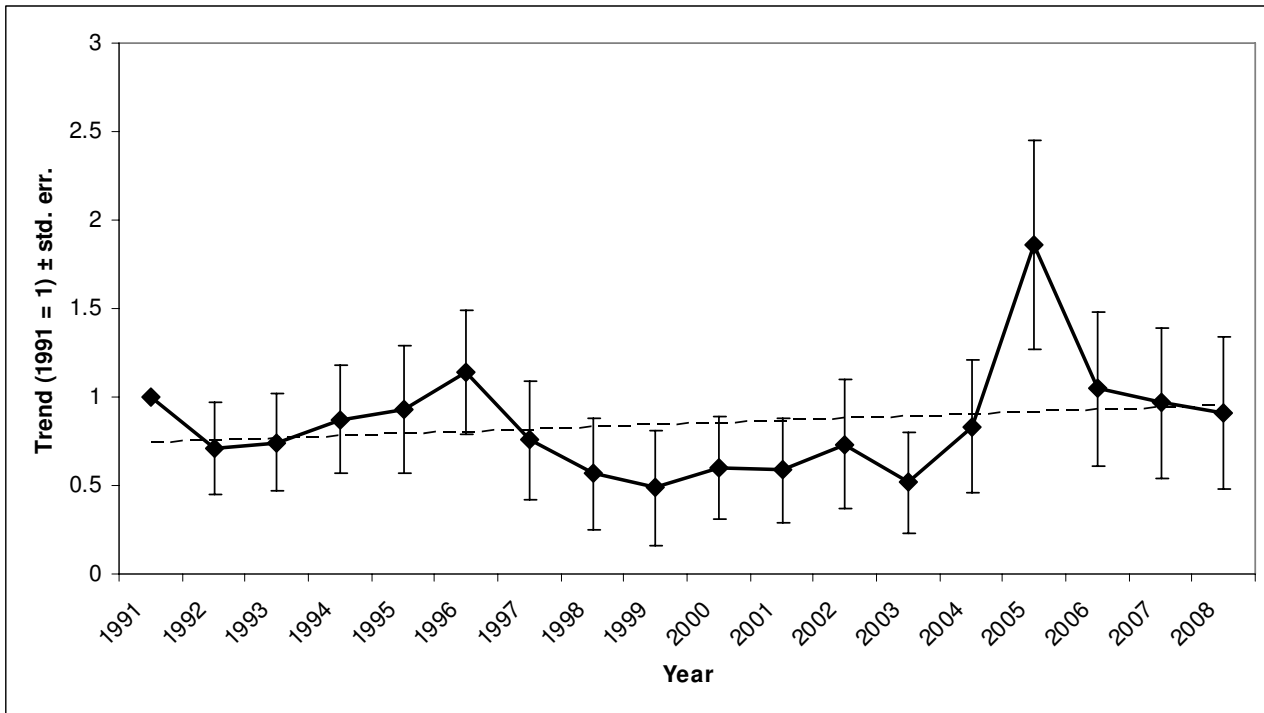


Figure 1: Trend of African Spoonbill population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

6.2 Hamerkop (*Scopus umbretta*)

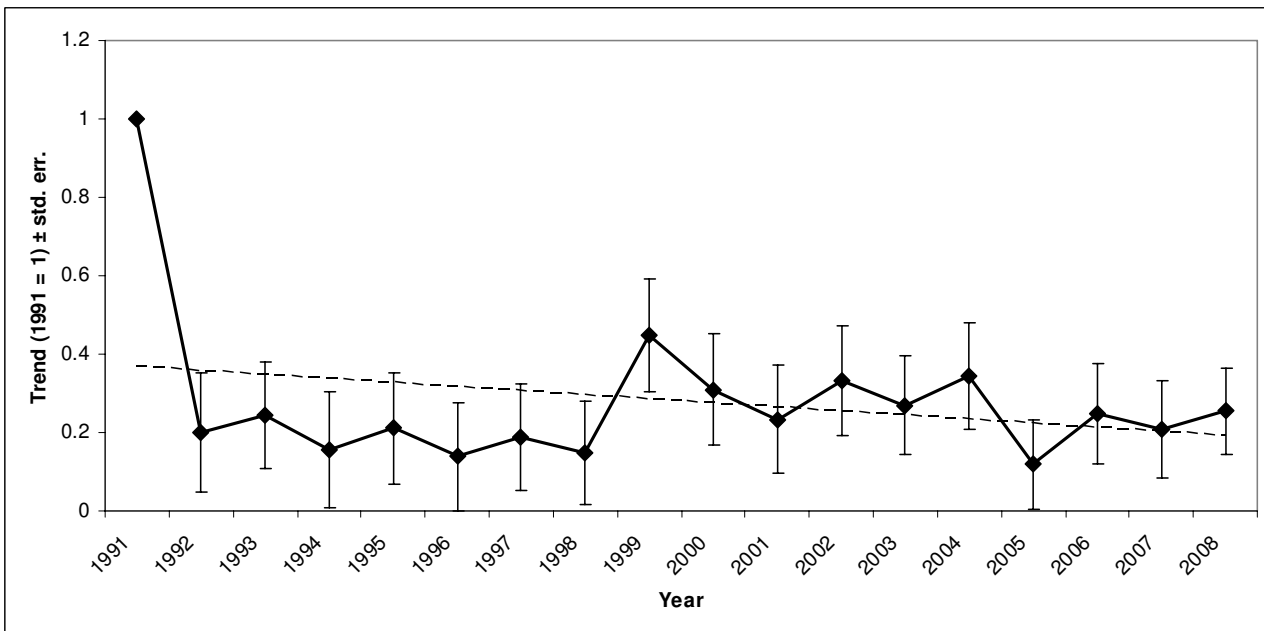


Figure 2: Trend of Hamerkop population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

6.3 Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)

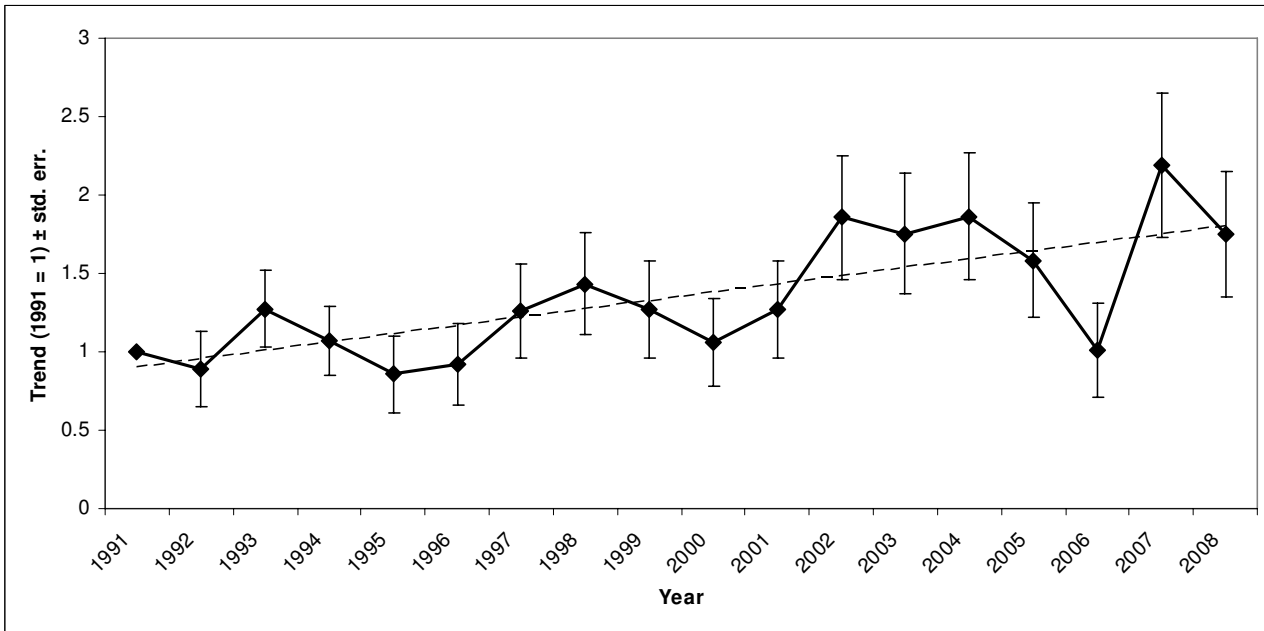


Figure 3: Trend of Greater Flamingo population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

6.4 Lesser Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus minor*)

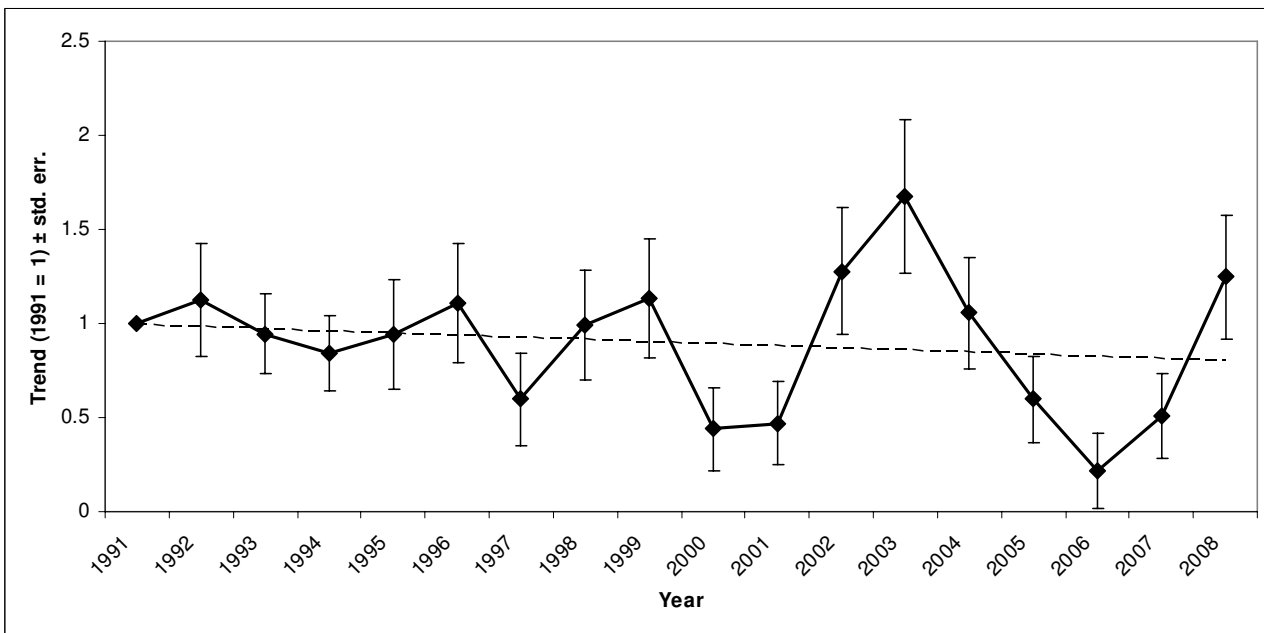


Figure 4: Trend of Lesser Flamingo population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

6.5 Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus*)

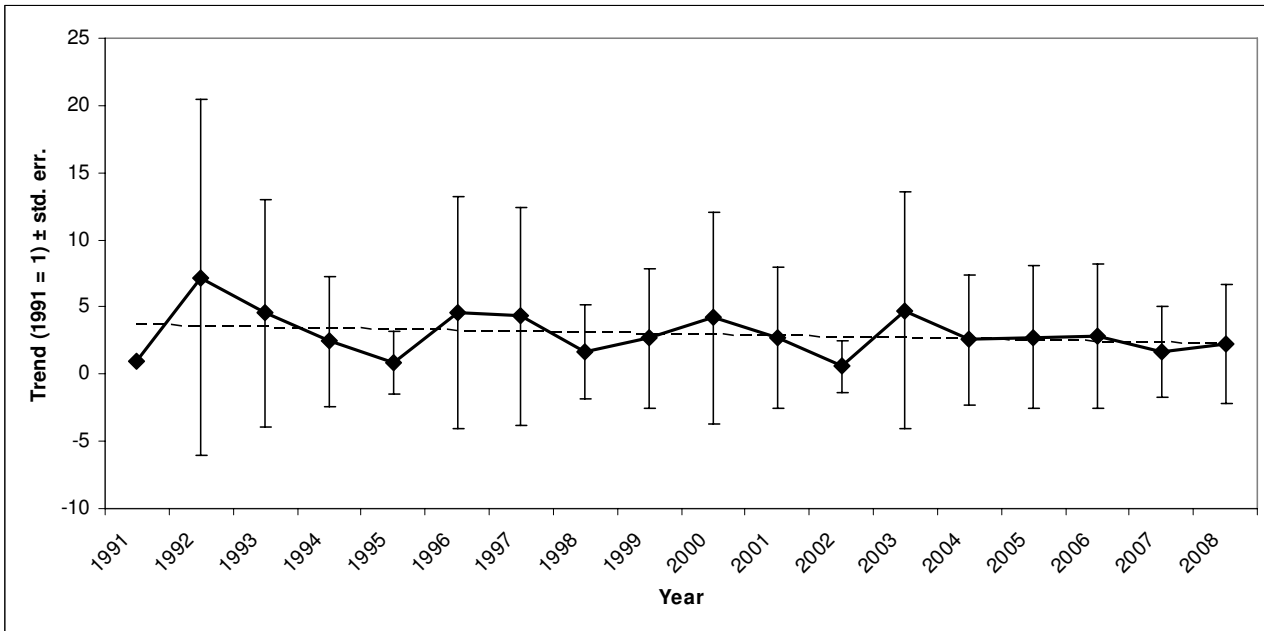


Figure 5: Trend of Wattled Crane population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

Site	Date	GREBES	PELICANS	CORMORANTS & DARTER	HERONS & EGRETS	STORKS	IBISES & SPOONBILLS	HAMERKOP & SHOEBILL	FLAMINGOS	CRANES	GEESE & DUCKS	RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS	FINFOOT & JACANAS	WADERS/SHOREBIRDS	GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMER	BIRDS OF PREY	ADDITIONAL SPECIES	Total	Species
Sandwich Harbour	17-Jul-11	0	5	15234	33	0	0	0	2000	0	40	0	0	8165	42734	0	3	68214	27
Walvis Bay	16-Jul-11	2434	404	2877	260	0	0	0	3307	0	10	0	0	3550	9882	1	0	22725	30
Lake Oponono	02-Aug-11	61	0	0	1659	945	0	0	0	8	2028	17	2	864	78	1	0	5663	36
Mile 4 Salt Works	21-Jul-11	660	0	48	3	0	0	0	292	0	85	0	0	247	2248	0	2	3585	21
Orange River Mouth	05-Aug-11	35	27	274	24	0	40	0	998	0	673	10	0	688	234	2	2	3007	44
Cape Cross	15-Jul-11	110	0	954	1	0	0	0	76	0	8	0	0	320	615	0	0	2084	16
Naute Dam	03-Aug-11	6	17	59	28	0	10	0	0	0	766	0	0	1	0	0	0	887	12
Hardap Dam	02-Aug-11	1	258	363	10	0	21	3	0	0	16	0	0	6	9	0	0	687	18
Fischer's Pan	05-Aug-11	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	602	4	0	36	0	0	0	652	12
Walvis Bay Sewage Ponds	16-Jul-11	7	16	0	18	0	0	0	13	0	245	60	0	55	85	0	0	499	15
Orange River - Bridge to Hohenfels	04-Aug-11	0	0	90	14	0	26	1	0	0	333	0	0	1	4	4	1	474	16
Swakop Sewage Works	27-Jul-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	418	0	0	423	6
Otjivero Dam	31-Jul-11	47	3	144	46	0	4	1	0	0	113	21	0	27	0	2	0	408	22
Windhoek (Gammams) Sewage Works	24-Jul-11	15	5	46	35	0	12	2	0	0	126	72	1	2	0	0	0	316	23
Monte Christo	23-Jul-11	6	1	6	28	1	2	2	0	0	173	33	7	26	0	1	2	288	28
Blaauw's Dam	02-Aug-11	126	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	109	18	0	7	0	0	0	260	9
Ekuma River	02-Aug-11	0	5	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	162	0	0	25	5	0	0	219	14
Shearwater Bay	07-Aug-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	98	0	0	185	6
Lüderitz Sewage Works	07-Aug-11	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	6	141	0	0	180	6
Second Lagoon	07-Aug-11	0	0	16	6	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	112	27	0	0	168	13
Agate Beach	07-Aug-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	119	0	0	129	4
Grosse Bucht	07-Aug-11	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	52	0	0	112	7
Avis Dam	23-Jul-11	31	4	21	18	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	20	0	2	0	103	15
Hoffnung Dam	24-Jul-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	0	0	2	0	0	0	67	3
Guano Bay	07-Aug-11	0	0	25	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	10	0	0	64	8
Griffith Bay	07-Aug-11	0	0	24	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	16	0	0	61	9

Site	Date	GREBES	PELICANS	CORMORANTS & DARTER	HERONS & EGRETS	STORKS	IBISES & SPOONBILLS	HAMERKOP & SHOEBILL	FLAMINGOS	CRANES	GEESE & DUCKS	RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS	FINFOOT & JACANAS	WADERS/SHOREBIRDS	GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMER	BIRDS OF PREY	ADDITIONAL SPECIES	Total	Species
Friedenau Dam	24-Jul-11	14	9	17	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	53	9
Aeroplane Bay	07-Aug-11	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	26	0	0	47	7
Swakop River Mouth	27-Jul-11	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	16	16	0	0	37	9
Radford Bay	07-Aug-11	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	13	7	0	0	32	6
Okondeka	02-Aug-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	4	0	0	0	19	3
Orange River - Hohenfels to Skilpad	05-Aug-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Total		3563	755	20237	2236	946	115	10	6701	8	5599	239	10	14386	56824	13	10	111652	91