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EDITORIAL

Once again this edition of *Lanioturdus* has been considerably delayed in its production as few articles have come in over the past six months. The rush of articles in July and August have been gratifying and I hope that this will continue in the future.

This is the last edition of *Lanioturdus* I will be editing for a while as I am no longer in a position to give the magazine the attention it needs to be successful. When I started as editor about six years ago, I had had no previous active involvement with the bird club up to that time. I got involved because I (and many other members) felt that a small informative and interesting local magazine was absolutely integral to making the club a success and birding in Namibia the pleasurable pastime it should be. I think we succeeded to a large extent and I would like to thank all of those individuals who contributed so much to making *Lanioturdus* a success. Special thanks must go to Carole Roberts who has done the layout of every copy to go out in the last six years and has done so with unfailing good humour. Coleen Mannheimer contributed the vast majority of the artwork for the magazine over the years and deserves a special mention. A special word of thanks also to Hartwig Dedekind, Dieter Ludwig and others who did the german editing, often at short notice. Willi Peters and the staff at Typoprint were always helpful and quick to get the magazine out on time. I would also like to thank the Bird Club Committee and the staff at the Scientific Society who did the posting and packaging, set up exchange agreements and answered many queries.

Tim Osborne has volunteered to take over the editing of the magazine from October onwards. I would like to wish Tim (and I am sure Laurel) well with the editorship in the future and encourage all of the contributors of the past to continue to support the magazine.

Sossusvlei in June 2000 following flooding in March. This is a long way out of its known range. A surprising number of Black Egrets were seen around the country during the past wet season. The good rainfall obviously provided the opportunities for birds to move away from their normal haunts on perennial waters to the east.

Additional sightings of this species were from:

Suzan Mallet-Veale, who reports that a Black Egret was seen at Avis Dam in 1999 between January and March. On the 11th April 2000 during a wetland count, two Black Egrets were enjoying their fishing in the Otjivero Main dam with many other waterfowl.

Several residents on the coast were lucky enough to see two birds fishing in the surf between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund over a two-month period (late January to March 2000).

Additional sightings were from the Fish River near Hardap Dam, the Okahandja Sewerage Works and on a small farm dam near Grootfontein.

SCHREISEEADLER SCHLÄGT NILGANS IM FLUGE

Klaus von Ludwiger
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Zwischen dem Grenzörtchen Noordoewer am Oranje und der Fischflußmündung in denselbigen Fluß gibt es laut meinen Informationen drei Seeadler-paare *Haliaetus vocifer*.

Während einer fünftägigen Bootstour in Juni/Juli, gab es auf dieser Strecke Gelegenheiten dieser majestätischen Vögel zu beobachten.

Ein Schreiseeadler-paar mit Jungvogel entdeckten einige Nilgänse, welche Stromab flogen. Plötzlich stieß einer der beiden Altvögel hinab auf eine Nilgans, welche jedoch zu schwer für ihn war. Er mußte sie fallen lassen und sie schlug wie ein Stein am Flußufer auf. Sie war sofort tot.

Wir verweilten mit unseren Booten noch etwas in der Umgebung, um zu sehen ob die Vögel zu ihren Opfer kamen – leider erfolglos.

REVIEW OF BIRD RINGING IN NAMIBIA – 1997 to 1998

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Ringling of Namibian birds has always been done by a relatively small but highly motivated band of ring and flingers within Namibia, aided by a few visitors from South Africa and overseas. This is a short summary of the ringers and the birds they ringed in 1997/98. A previous summary was provided by Brown (1991) who reviewed the period 1980 to 1990. He found that 11,620 birds of 308 species were ringed in this eleven-year period, and at least three groups (Skeleton Coast staff, Dieter Ludwig and Chris Brown) had ringed over 1000 birds. Thus, on average, 1056 birds were ringed per annum. Simmons (1991), reviewed the pros and cons of ringling and flinging in a country as large as Namibia and highlighted the very low recovery rate of about 0.7% of all birds ringed. He recommended colour-marking birds to increase the reporting rate.

The summary here is based on SAFRING Schedule 1 forms sent direct to the Ornithology Section (a part of the ringling permit requirements) and also a summary of 1997/98 records, as a service provided by SAFRING (D. Oschadleus in litt.).

Active ringers

While Namibia has few ringers they are all fairly active and they catch a wide range of species. Table 1 gives those ringers currently active in Namibia. Some enthusiasts are ringling purely for the interest of putting rings on birds and hoping for interesting returns, (much valuable data is also collected on morphology from such studies); other ringling such as Peter

Bridgeford's and Tim (and Laurel) Osborne's are part of long-term studies of Lappet-faced Vultures and Kori Bustards respectively. On the Lüderitz islands, Ichaboe, Mercury and Possession, the Ministry of Fisheries has three dedicated staff who ring impressive numbers of young penguins, gannets and Cape Cormorants each year. Pete Bartlett, Rian Jones and Yves Chesselet stay on the islands virtually year round and monitor growth and food of the birds there, and ring youngsters as they come of age. Some of the interesting species recovered from all this ringing is given below.

Table 1. Ringers active in Namibia in 1998, and their records received to date

Ringer	Locality	Birds ringed	Species ringed	Interesting species
Bernd Brell	Walvis Bay/Kamanjab	119	28	Dickinson's Kestrel
Sandra Dantu	Swakopmund	50	5	Passerines/waders
Mark Boorman	Swakopmund	—	—	Passerines/waders
Tim Osborne	Etosha	817	52	Kori Bustards, White-quilled Korhaan
Bruno Nebe	Swakopmund	—	—	Waders
Rod Braby	Swakopmund	—	—	Waders
Peter Bridgeford	Namib Desert	—	—	Lappetfaced vultures
Dirk Heinrich	Windhoek, S. Namibia	—	—	Raptors
Tony Tree	Central coast	457	22	Terns and waders
Christian Boix	Daan Viljoen	—	—	Hornbills
Yves Chesselet	Possession Island	—	—	Penguins, gannets
Pete Bartlett	Ichaboe	—	—	Gannets, penguins
Rian Jones	Mercury Island	—	—	Penguins, cormorants
Paxton/ Sheehan	Okavango	—	—	Passerines/raptors
John Paterson	Mowe Bay	—	—	Shorebirds, desert birds
Rob Simmons	Sandwich Harbour	—	—	Warblers, shorebirds

Ringed and recovered birds

The most frequently ringed birds in 1997/98 were Cape Gannets (769 birds mainly nestlings) and 320 penguins on the Lüderitz islands. A large total of 390 masked Weavers was ringed, mainly by Dr Sue McRae who was undertaking a study of them, while the fourth most frequently ringed bird was the Kelp Gull (268 birds, mainly youngsters). The total number of birds ringed in Namibia between 1997 and 1998 was 4408. The top ringer in that period was Mark Paxton (Table 2) with 1018 birds followed by Pete Bartlett (636) and Tim Osborne (549 birds). Mark Paxton, who has nets up almost continuously in his garden which backs onto the Okavango River at Shankara, was ably assisted by Linda Sheehan who put together all the ringing records for the last eight years. Keep a look out for ringed birds where ever you are, and check any dead birds that you find for rings.

Table 2. Ringing totals from ringers active in Namibia 1997/98

Ringer	Locality	Total birds	Comments
Mark Paxton	Shankara/Okavango	1018	Only 8 years late! Riverine passerines
Pete Bartlett	Ichaboe Island	636	mainly young gannets/penguins
Tim Osborne	Etosha inside & out	549	Kori Bustards and raptors
Mark Boorman	Swakop area	506	warblers and waders
Rian Jones	Mercury Island	415	Young penguins and cormorants
Sandra Dantu	Swakopmund	352	waders, warblers and weavers
Dirk Heinrich	Windhoek/Aus/roving	277	Raptors and garden birds
Sue McRae	Waterberg/Windhoek	264	White browed Sparrowweaver project (Cambridge)
Yves Chesselet	Possession Island	225	Penguins, gannets
Bernd Brell	Walvis/Kamanjab	122	Raptors and finches
Peter Bridgeford	Namib: Tsondabvlei	32	Lappet faced Vulture study
Rod Braby	Swakop/Mile 4	12	Waders, warblers

Table 3. Foreign ringers active in Namibia 1998

Ringer	Locality	Birds ringed	Species ringed	Interesting species
Robert Ellis (W. Cape)	Orange River	109	21	Lesser DC Sunbird
Gerrie Grobler (OFS)	Katima/Popa/Kwando	125	35	Purple banded Sunbird Redheaded Quelea
Mark Anderson (N.Cape)	Orange River	0	–	
Christian Boix (UCT)	Daan Viljoen	0	–	Hornbills

* Schedules not expected until mid 1999.

Interesting recoveries received from SAFRING 1998

The following are the most interesting Namibian recoveries received from SAFRING by the end of 1998.

Wandering Albatross – Ringed on Marion Island in 1987 and recovered dead by John Paterson 34 km south of Mowe Bay almost 10 years later 3778 km from home.

African Black Oystercatcher – Travelled 2000 km – more than any previous record – from Knysna to the Swakopmund coastline in about 400 days. Caught by Mark Boorman and Tony Tree in February 1998 at the coast, ringed by the Black Oystercatcher conservation group in South Africa.

Cape Gannet – Ringed in 1994 in Algoa Bay Eastern Cape South Africa and found dead 2017 km from home near Terrace Bay a year later by Dr HK Weimann.

Wahlberg's Eagle – 10 years 8 months old (but found as dried skeleton) only 8 km from ringing place in Okakarara district. Ringer: A. Harington, Finder: W. Dickmann.

Pale Chanting Goshawk – Two interesting recoveries came to light in the same year and both birds were ringed by Dr Harry Biggs during a study of

this species on the farm Claratal just west of Windhoek. The first was reported to Liz Komen by school children from Friedenau Dam, 20 years 9 months after it was ringed (as an adult). The second bird ringed in 1982 as an adult (male) was recovered dead in a reservoir in July 1998, by Eke Freyer, on the same farm where it was ringed. This bird was, therefore, over 16 years old because it too was ringed as an adult. The latter recovery shows the danger of uncovered farm reservoirs to birds of prey and farmers are encouraged to place a large branch in each reservoir to allow birds to climb out. This is not only raptor-friendly, but avoids pollution of the water source itself.

African Marsh Warbler – This bird has had a colourful career. First ringed by Peter Bridgeford at Sandwich Harbour in December 1992, it was recaptured by a Dutch research group studying warblers in Walvis Bay sewage works where it was suped up with some colour rings in 1996, and then recaptured alive and well at Sandwich Harbour in January 1999 by Rob Simmons and Damian Newmarch as a six-year-old bird.

White Pelican – This is probably one of the longest lived Pelicans on record and still going strong. It was ringed by Hu Berry (who is also in this category), in December 1972 on the Walvis Bay 'Bird Rock' guano platform as a nestling. It's number was read in the field on 3 Jan 1999 by Bruno Nebe in Walvis Bay, 26 years and 14 days later. Nice record!

Mystery Rings

Two reports of birds with rings of unknown origin have been made known to us:

Bruno Nebe reports a colour ringed Greater Flamingo with black rings on its upper leg from the Walvis Bay/Sandwich area. No one has yet owned up that they have ringed flamingos with black rings. If you know who this may be, please let us know. They aren't from the 1994 release – all young Greater Flamingos had yellow rings, and they aren't from the 1989 Etosha birds as they were coloured rings.

Colour-ringed Cape Wagtails were also reported to us via SAFRING from Hentie's Bay. I am the only person who has colour-ringed Cape Wagtails in recent years and they are not my birds. Again information on those who may have colour-ringed these birds will be useful.



Summary

About 16 active ringers currently operate in Namibia, and in the 1997/1998 season a total of 4408 birds were ringed. Visiting ringers also added to this total. Despite this relatively low tally, the year's total is much higher than the average of 10 years ago (~1000 birds p.a.) and several interesting recoveries were reported including two 20+ year-old birds: a Pale Chanting Goshawk and a White Pelican. Active ringing takes place mainly on the Okavango River, at the coast, and in two protected areas: Etosha and Daan Viljoen. We encourage all ringers to maintain their ringing activities and submit their schedules to SAFRING by June each year, not forgetting a copy to the Ornithology Section of the Ministry of Environment & Tourism. To get your permit simply send your old one to us with your ringing schedules and we will update it. If you wish to start ringing, the best way is to join one of the active ringers, learn the ropes and then apply to us, with a letter from the experienced ringer for a 'C permit'.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all those of you who have added to knowledge of Namibian birds through your ringing activities. Thanks also to Dieter Oshadleus and Cynthia Best of SAFRING for their efficient service and Elly Hamunyela for decoding and totalling.

Please note: when submitting schedules always write the species name next to the (old) Roberts' number on your schedule 1 SAFRING form. This avoids embarrassing mistakes such as Broadbills ringed in Namibia!

References

- Brown, C.J. 1991. Bird ringing in Namibia. *Safring News*.
Simmons, R. 1991. Squeezing the ringers, Namibian style. *Safring News* 20: 37-41.

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VULTURE RING RECOVERY

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On 17 Feb 2000, at Mount Valley Farm, in the Helmeringhausen area, a farmer, Mr Hoffmann, found a dead vulture lying on its back. The bird was ringed with Pretoria Zoo ring No. 6-17431 with green and yellow colour rings.

Feedback was received from SAFRING stating that the bird was a Lappetfaced Vulture, ringed as a nestling in a Tsondab River nest, by Peter Bridgeford on 5 November 1994.

When I gave the farmer the feedback, he told me that whilst he was at that farm on the day prior to finding the dead bird, there were about 15 Lappetfaced Vultures sitting under a tree in the shade. There was no carrion or signs of, or remains of anything they were eating. They appeared to be simply resting in the shade as it was a hot day, and he did not disturb the birds at that stage. The dead bird was found not far from this spot on the next day and it is suspected that it may have died from poisoning.

PENGUINS IN DANGER

H. Becker

On 23 June 2000 the iron ore carrier *Treasure* – considered unseaworthy by the Cape Town harbour authorities – turned out to carry a destructive 'treasure' for the penguins of Robben and Dassen Islands. These two islands are home to 40% of the world's African penguin population – amounting to about 150,000. The carrier sank between these two islands, the fuel tank ruptured and about 400 tonnes of heavy fuel oil formed large slicks on the surface of the sea. Thousands of penguins became oiled.