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EDITORIAL

Summer's definitely here with the arrival of migrants and the promise of rain, and that means that we're nearing the end of yet another year. This is the fourth and final edition of *Lanioturdus* for the year. As many of you are aware, Chris Hines is roaming the globe at the moment and has trustingly left me (Carole Roberts) in charge of getting this edition out. (Hmm, I'm afraid the "Short Notes" are a little short this edition.) After having spent a month "down under" birding in Oz, Chris is now "up North" studying for a couple of months in the Netherlands. However, he hasn't forgotten us or *Lanioturdus* and submitted an article on his trip to Australia which mentions all sorts of winged wonders – frogmouths and friarbirds, parrots and pittas (to mention just a few). I have a feeling, though, that we might expect a much shorter article on his trip to the Netherlands!

There's no excuse for ignoring many of those LBJs in 1999! Peter Kaestner has put together a guide to the larks of Namibia for us. It will be published in two parts, the first of which is in this edition. He has tried to make it easy for us by highlighting the characteristics and range of each species found here, and has provided a field key as well. Peter stresses that the key should be regarded as incomplete because it needs to be put to the test (yes, that's our job), and that he would appreciate any comments to help improve it. So, birders, get out there and hit those larks!

I don't know about the rest of you, but I certainly didn't get out and about as much as I would have liked to this year. In this issue we have published a preliminary list of activities and outings for 1999 so we can all plan our trips early. If anyone has any ideas, requests or queries in this line, they should contact Dieter or Jeremy. See you out there!

That really just leaves me to extend heartfelt thanks to all those who've contributed to the journal over the past year – it can't happen without you – you've been great! Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous, bird-filled New Year!

FEEDING OBSERVATIONS ON RAPTORS IN ETOSHA

Bill Branch

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On consecutive evenings (31 July – 1 August, 1998) at the waterhole at the Okaukuejo camp in the Etosha National Park, a grey, smallish raptor was observed to take large bats feeding on moths attracted to the waterhole lights. On the first evening three bats were taken in 20 minutes, and on the next evening another two bats were taken in 15 minutes. On the first occasion the raptor was not seen perching, and it could not be confirmed that all bats were taken by the same bird. On the second evening the bird was seen perching at long distance (80–100 m), and observed to take both bats. On all occasions the bird attacked from a low position, flying about 20 m above the ground. From distance, in poor light at dusk, the bird was grey backed, and during a low pass over the waterhole view site was seen to have a barred undertail and finely barred chest and underwings. It was not a lanner, hobby or Bat Hawk (unfortunately), and looked most like an Ovambo Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter ovampensis*).

On the 2 August 1998 at 07h00, approximately 6 km east of Okaukuejo on the road to Namutoni, an immature (brown phase) and an adult Pale Chanting Goshawk (*Melierax canorus*) were observed sitting on low (<1 metre high) shrubs beside the road. Beneath them, digging at the base of the bushes was a pair of adult Honey Badgers (*Mellivora capensis*). During a ten-minute period of observation the goshawks twice followed the Honey Badgers, sitting in bushes above or adjacent to the foraging badgers. Although no prey was seen captured by either the badgers or goshawks, it was obvious that the latter were opportunistically waiting to pounce on any prey disturbed by the badgers. A similar association between Honey Badgers and Pale Chanting Goshawk has been recorded from the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (Brown 1970).

Reference

Brown, L. 1970. African Birds of Prey. Collins: London. 320p.

SHORT NOTES

Yellowbilled Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

Tim and Laurel Osborne reports seeing one in the northern Cape and another at the Orange River as early as 3/Sept/98. They also report one in Etosha on 6/Oct/98.

European Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Singles were seen along Etosha Pan edge between 8–10/Sept/98.

Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

Three pairs were seen at the Waterberg on 14/Nov/98.

Redchested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

The Osbornes heard the Piet-my-vrou calling at the Waterberg on 14/Nov/98.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*

First reported by the Osbornes who heard it calling in the Waterberg on 15/Nov/98. I (*Ed.*) heard my first on 26/Nov/98 at Aris, just south of Windhoek, and my first Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*, a little later on the same day in Windhoek.

Other migrants

On 28/Oct/98 the Osbornes experienced a fall of migrants in Etosha National Park. They saw their first Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*, Redbacked Shrike *Lanius collurio* and European Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*. They also saw 20 Icterine Warblers *Hippolais icterina* in the acacias at the Namutoni park office and hundreds of European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* all along the pan edge.

Southern Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca iberiae*

Thought that would get your attention! A small flycatcher with a black

eye and black bill, and noted to be all black above and clean white below was spotted around the sewage ponds at the Windhoek Sewerage Works on 12 October by a couple of visiting birders. It was first thought to be a Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* (which would be special enough) but on examination of their slides by various experts and a closer look at their fairly detailed notes, it is thought to perhaps be Southern Pied Flycatcher or a hybrid. Did anyone else see this bird? If so, what's your opinion?



ALBINO GABAR GOSHAWK IN WINDHOEK

John Mendelsohn
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At about 06h30 on the 3rd of November 1998 I heard the call of a Gabar Goshawk from a tree just outside our garden in Olympia, Windhoek. The calling bird was perched near the top of a large camel thorn tree and, remarkably, its plumage was completely white. Looking at it through a telescope showed that the beak was black, while the cere, legs and toes were also normally coloured in being orange-red. The bird's right eye was dark and thus also normal in colour, but the left eye was much paler.

Has anyone else seen this very distinctive individual in Windhoek?



TSAOBIS LEOPARD PARK FIELD TRIP

Jeremy Duffield-Harding
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The weekend field trip to Tsaobis got off to a good start. Eighteen people were blessed with cool weather and overcast skies, lasting the entire weekend.

Proclaimed a game reserve in 1969, Tsaobis was bought by Major Simon, a Swiss national who wished to protect the leopards and Hartmann's Zebra resident in the area. A footpath passes through desert scenery, dominated by biscuit-coloured outcrops, where we had good sightings of Tractrac Chats *Cercomela tractrac*, Blackbreasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, and African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*.

The path continues through contorted rock formations. Here, some of us turned to geology, while three larks were teasing us, too far and too active for us to even have a stab at identification. Previously, I had seen a Spikeheeled Lark here – for me it's a major achievement to identify any lark! A lonely, stunted Shepherd's tree, *Boscia albitrunca*, caught Dieter Ludwig's attention; its spartan crown providing a nesting opportunity for a single nest. On reading Roberts' nesting details for the Great Sparrow *Passer motitensis*, the nest in question could have been used for the text!

Further along, the rocky-gravel path descends into the soft sand of the Swakop River, lined on either side by Ana *Faidherbia albida*, Ebony *Euclea pseudobenus*, thickets of Wild Tamarisk *Tamarix usneoides*, and the dreaded exotic, Glandular Mesquite *Prosopis glandulosa*. In stark contrast to the surrounding desert, this greenness is a welcome sight. Here we were rewarded by an abundance of bird life; both Grey Lourie *Corythaixoides concolor* and Rosy-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis* were present in large numbers.

Saturday night we congregated around a communal grill which the Bruces