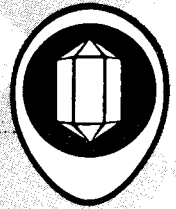


Lanioturdus torquatus



MITTEILUNGEN DER ORNITHOLOGISCHEN ARBEITSGRUPPE
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SOUTH WEST AFRICA/NAMIBIA RARE BIRD REPORT FOR 1984/1985

Christopher J. Brown and the S.W.A. Rare Bird Committee

A South West African rarities committee was established in 1984 with the following objectives: (i) to draw up a list of rare birds for the country, (ii) to evaluate all recorded sightings of these rare birds, (iii) to evaluate records of range extensions to the present known distributions of bird species and (iv) to evaluate sight records of new species to the South West African bird list (see Brown 1984, *Lanioturdus* 20 No. 2). The committee consists of five members; Dr. Tony Williams (Ornithologist, Nature Conservation), Mr. Dieter Ludwig (Bird Group Leader, Scientific Society), Mr. Chris Hines (Biologist, Nature Conservation), Mr. Joris Komen (Ornithologist, Windhoek State Museum) and Mr. Chris Brown (Ornithologist, Nature Conservation).

The South West African bird list consists of about 620 species. Of these, just over 100 are considered "rare". Birds may be considered "rare" for a number of reasons. They may occur over most of the country, but very sparsely (e.g. Peregrine Falcon), they may occur peripherally, i.e. just entering the country at one place (e.g. Pel's Fishing Owl on rivers in Caprivi) or they may be vagrants, i.e. unusual visitors (e.g. Grey Wagtail).

Because the Rarities Committee is responsible for accepting sight records of new species onto the S.W.A. bird list, these records have to be critically evaluated. In the past, the only way that new species could be accepted for a region was by obtaining a Museum specimen. Luckily we are moving away from this narrow-minded approach, and today a good description, preferably accompanied by a photograph and a taped call, can be used to positively identify a bird and have it accepted for that region. The high standard of evaluation applied by the committee to these new records is also applied to all other rare bird records that are submitted. The description given has to convince the committee beyond a shadow of doubt that the bird claimed by the observer could not have been a similar but more common species. If a record is not accepted by the committee this does not necessarily mean that the committee thinks that the observer did not see that bird, but rather that the description was inadequate and an acceptance could not be justified.

Please do not be put off if not all your records are accepted. It is important to remember that if incorrect information is taken up into the scientific literature it becomes very difficult to correct or remove; it is far better that we err on the cautious side than accept records which later turn out to be mistaken identities.

During the past 12 months a total of 65 rare bird records were received. A number of these were of birds listed on the Southern African Ornithological Societies' (SAOS) Rarity List, and these records were sent directly to that committee, and a number of results are still outstanding. The other records were evaluated by the S.W.A. Rare Bird Committee. Of the 53 records that have been processed 58% were accepted. This is a rather low figure and the main reasons for this are (i) that rare bird forms are not correctly completed, e.g. dates and places are not given and (ii) that insufficient descriptive information on the bird is given. In particular, when submitting a rare bird form, the observer should clearly state what features he used to identify the bird, describe these features and point out how these differ from any similar, more common species (see example at end of report).

We wish to thank everyone who sent in records during the past year and look forward to receiving your future sightings.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF ACCEPTED RECORDS

Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus

Etosha National Park, Rietfontein Waterhole. One immature bird, present from 10 - 14 February 1983, first seen foraging in fresh elephant dung (M. Paxton).

Cuckoo Hawk Aviceda cuculoides

Kavango, Mahango. One adult seen perched in open woodland on 19 April 1984 (C.J. Hines, C. Meyer, D.A. Milstein & P. Leinberger).

Ayres' Eagle Hieraaetus ayresii

Eastern Caprivi, Katima Mulilo. A pair seen on 28 March 1985, perched in tree on edge of small pan (C.J. Brown, A.J. Williams & B.R. Riekert).

Western Banded Snake Eagle Circaetus cinerascens

Kavango, Mahango. A single bird was seen in riverine forest fringe of the Okavango River on 20 April 1984 (C.J. Hines, C. Meyer, D.A. Milstein & P. Leinberger).

Kavango, Kaudum Omuramba. Two birds seen flying over heavily wooded edge of open omuramba on 19 September 1984 (R. & J. Jessnitz).

Palmnut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis

Etosha National Park, Sprokieswoud. A pair of subadult birds on 8 April 1984 (R. Crous, M. Lindeque & P. Rankin).

African Goshawk Accipiter tachiro

Kavango, Poppa Falls. A single adult, perched in a tall tree on the river bank on 14 February 1985 (C.J. Hines & C. Meyer).

Montagu's Harrier Circus pygargus

Otjiwarongo district, farm Janhelpman no. 358. A single adult male seen on 11 March 1984 (C.J. Brown).

Bushmanland, Naye-Naye and Khabi Pans. About 15 birds, consisting of adult males, females and immatures in the company of Pallid Harriers, on 1 & 2 January and 18 - 26 February 1985 (C.J. Hines & C. Meyer).

Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus

Bushmanland, Naye-Naye and Khabi Pans. A number of males seen in association with Montagu's Harriers; females could not be distinguished with certainty, between 18 December 1984 and 2 January 1985 and on 18 February 1985. (C.J. Hines and C. Meyer).

Osprey Pandion haliaetus

Windhoek, Goreangab Dam. An adult seen perched on a telephone pole with a fish on 14 December 1984 (D.E. Ludwig).

Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus

Kavango, Leeu Pan. An immature bird seen capturing a Meyer's Parrot at a waterhole on 21 July 1984 (C.J. Hines).

Bushmanland, Deng-we Pan. An adult seen attempting to catch small waders on a pan on 26 February 1985 (C.J. Hines & C. Meyer).

Eastern Redfooted Falcon Falco amurensis

Etosha National Park, near Rietfontein Waterhole. A single adult male seen on 26 January 1985 (M. & R. Paxton).

Bushmanland, near Tsumkwe. One adult male amongst a large flock of Western Redfooted Falcons, hawking insects on 18 March 1985 (C.J. Hines).

Corncrake Crex crex

Kavango, Nhoma Omuramba. A single bird seen on 31 December 1983 (A.J. Williams & P. Mostert).

African Crake Crex egregia

Bushmanland, Nhoma Omuramba. One bird, flushed from long grass at the edge of water on 31 December 1984 (P. Mostert & A.J. Williams).

European Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus

Walvis Bay, main pump station on Pelican Point. A single bird seen foraging with a small flock of Black Oystercatchers on 4 March 1984 (C.J. Hines).

Sandwich Harbour. Four birds, two adult and two immature, seen loafing on an exposed sandbank with three Black Oystercatchers on 11 November 1984 (P. & C. Cardwell).

Grey Phalarope Phalaropus fulicarius

Windhoek, Avis Dam. A single bird seen on 17 March 1985 (C. Meyer & B.R. Riekert).

Pel's Fishing Owl Scotopelia peli

Kavango, Mahango. A single bird, presumed adult, seen on the bank of the Okavango River on the evening of 21 September 1984 (R. & J. Jessnitz).

Pennantwinged Nightjar Macrodipteryx vexillaria

Windhoek district, farm Lichtenstein no. 356. An immature bird picked up as a road kill on 14 January 1984 and identity confirmed by Dr. A.C. Kemp of the Transvaal Museum (H.C. Biggs).

Kavango, near Poppa Falls. Three males with full pennants seen on the road in October 1984 (P.J. Richards).

Horus Swift Apus horus

Windhoek district, farm Haris no. 367. Three birds seen in Khomas Hochland mountains on 22 January 1985 in the company of European and Alpine Swifts (C.J. Brown).

Natal Robin Cossypha natalensis

Eastern Caprivi, Kwandu River near Lizulu. One bird seen in lowest stratum of riverine forest on 27 December 1984 (T. Harris).

Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava

Windhoek, Avis Dam. Up to five individuals were present from 27 January to 2 February 1984, and thought to belong to the races M.f. flava and M.f. thunbergii (C.J. Hines and C. Meyer).

Kavango, Poppa Falls. A single bird of the race M.f. thunbergii seen in April 1984 (A.J. Williams).

Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea

Windhoek, Avis Dam. A single bird, seen in the company of Yellow and Cape Wagtails from 27 January to 2 February 1984 (C.J. Hines & C. Meyer).

EXAMPLE OF FORM CORRECTLY COMPLETED.

SOUTH WEST AFRICA / NAMIBIA : RARE BIRD SPECIES OBSERVATION FORM

This form may be completed in respect of observations of (1) new species for the South West African bird list and (2) rare birds as listed on the back of this sheet.

SPECIES: PEL'S FISHING OWL (SCOTOPELIA PELI) ADULT or JUV. / SEX: UNKNOWN

PRESUMED ADULT NUMBER OF BIRDS: 1

DATE: 1984-09-21 HABITAT: RIVER BANK, DENSE, HIGH VEGETATION

EXACT LOCALITY: MANANGO GAME RESERVE

NEAREST TOWN: BAGANI MILITARY BASE ATLAS $\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ SQUARE: 1821B6

OBSERVER(S) AND ADDRESS: R+J JESSNITZ P.O. Box 22923

WINANOEK 9000 TEL: 52313

OPTICAL AIDS: NONE USED IN SIGHTING DISTANCE FROM BIRD: 15 M
BUT THERE AFTER 8x40 BINOCULARS

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THIS SPECIES: REFER TO 'REPORT' TO MR C.J. BROWN

OTHER SPECIES IN ASSOCIATION: NONE

WEATHER CONDITIONS: EVENING, WARM BUT STILL

FIELD DESCRIPTION (Use guide lines below where possible)

- * Behaviour; manner of feeding, flight, perching etc.
- * Shape and posture; size (c.f. another species), build, length and shape of bill, legs, neck, wings and tail, bearing. Photograph if possible.
- * Call; tape if possible.
- * Plumage description; forehead, crown, nape, belly, breast, flank, back, rump, cheek, eye & ear coverts, bill & leg colour etc. (Refer to Roberts diagrams for bird parts.)

BEHAVIOUR - SHY; FEEDING - UNOBSERVED; FLIGHT - POWERFUL, MUCH THE SAME AS FISH EAGLE, USUALLY LOW, NOT OBSERVED HIGHER THAN TREE TOPS; PERCHING - OWL LIKE.

SHAPE AND POSTURE - OWLISH (DEFINITE); SIZE - LARGE, POSSIBLY

SIZE OF GIANT EAGLE OWL IN PREVIOUS SIGHTING (DETAILED IN
C. J. Brown

FIELD DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED,

REPORT TO MR (J. BROWN) WHEN 2 BIRDS WERE SEEN, (1) DISTINCTLY LARGER THAN (2), BUILD - ALTHOUGH LARGE, OBVIOUSLY MORE POWERFUL - OR MUSCULAR AND MORE EAGLE-LIKE, ESPECIALLY IN FLIGHT, THAN OTHER OWL SPECIES. BILL - EAGLE-LIKE, ALTHOUGH VIEWED FROM FRONT IS UNMISTAKABLY OWL. LEGS - BARE, LIGHT-COLOURED. REST OF BODY, REDDISH OR RUSTY BROWN NO SHARP CONTRASTING COLOURS. HABITAT VERY SHADY + DARK, PHOTOGRAPHS PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL.

CALL - SLOW, UNEMOTIVE "HOO HOO HOO HOO" MONOTONOUS, THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. PREVIOUS SIGHTING/OBSERVATIONS, HIGH PITCHED SCREECHING ALSO HEARD, ALWAYS AT WATERS EDGE.

PLUMAGE - MOTTLED RUSTY BROWN THROUGHOUT, BELLY POSSIBLY SLIGHTLY LIGHTER IN COLOUR, BUT COLOUR GENERALLY UNIFORM. NO "EARS" LEGS BARE, EYES DARK - OWLISH EXPRESSION BUT NO FACIAL MARKINGS OF ANY KIND. LEGS ARE LIGHTISH IN COLOUR, BUT NOT CONSPICUOUSLY SO.

003 Rockhopper Penguin	209 Lesser Gallinule	396 Halfcollared Kingfisher
009 Greyheaded Albatross	893 American Purple Gallinule	406 Olive Bee-eater
015 Antarctic Fulmar	213 African Finfoot	444 Slenderbilled Honeyguide
016 Greatwinged Petrel	227 Blackbellied Korhaan	452 Olive Woodpecker
019 Softplumaged Petrel	894 European Oystercatcher	454 African Broadbill
950 Kerguelen Petrel	234 Mongolian Plover	487 Bimaculated Lark
046 Brown Booby	239 Sand Plover	494 Angola Swallow
071 Bittern	922 Lesser Golden Plover	511 Black Saw-wing Swallow
982 Slaty Egret	259 Green Sandpiper	524 White-necked Raven
070 Whitebacked Night Heron	895 Pectoral Sandpiper	525 Southern Grey Tit
093 European Shoveller	261 Redshank	725 Yellowspotted Nicator
111 Egyptian Vulture	896 Dunlin	755 Whinchat
127 Cuckoo Hawk	252 Baird's Sandpiper	579 Natal Robin
131 Bat Hawk	985 Temminck's Stint	593 Collared Palm Thrush
132 Honey Buzzard	981 Broadbilled Sandpiper	910 Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush
110 Ayre's Eagle	249 Great Snipe	607 European Marsh Warbler
143 Crowned Eagle	271 Grey Phalarope	644 Red-faced Cisticola
148 Western Banded Snake Eagle	272 Rednecked Phalarope	647 Croaking Cisticola
112 Palmnut Vulture	930 Longtailed Skua	917 Collared Flycatcher
973 Longlegged Buzzard	899 Lesser Blackbacked Gull	689 Yellow Wagtail
159 Black Sparrowhawk	901 Sabine's Gull	690 Grey Wagtail
160 African Goshawk	935 Royal Tern	698 Tree Ibit
170 Montagu's Harrier	293 Roseate Tern	691 Fulletorn's Longclaw
168 Pallid Harrier	292 Antarctic Tern	918 Sousa's Shrike
116 African Hobby Falcon	331 Blackcheeked Lovebird	977 Tropical Boubou Shrike
888 Sooty Falcon	343 Redchested Cuckoo	723 Greyheaded Bush Shrike
119 Eastern Redfooted Falcon	350 Emerald Cuckoo	739 Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling
889 Grey Kestrel	344 Black Coucal	741 Sharptailed Starling
174 Crested Francolin	360 Grass Owl	751 Malachite Sunbird
181 Cape Francolin	367 Cape Eagle Owl	754 Coppery Sunbird
188 Rednecked Francolin	370 Pel's Fishing Owl	756 Purplebanded Sunbird
198 Corn Crake	377 Pennantwinged Nightjar	760 Lesser Doublecollared Sunbird
199 African Crake	384 Horus Swift	854 Cuckoo Finch
200 Striped Crake	389 Bohm's Spinetail	920 Cinderella Waxbill
205 Redchested Flufftail	393 Narina Trogon	853 Broadtailed Paradise Whydah

Please post / deliver to: The Rareties Committee, Ornithology Section, Nature Conservation Division, Private Bag 13306, Windhoek 9000.

LIST OF RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Slaty Egret, Mahango, April 1984. Whitebacked Night Heron, Poppa Falls, 19 April 1984. Bat Hawk, Etosha National Park, 8 March 1984. Honey Buzzard, Grootfontein district, 24 December 1983. Palmnut Vulture Khorixas, 3 April 1984. Osprey, Mahango, 15 February 1985. African Hobby Falcon, Waterberg Plateau Park, 11 March 1984. Eleanor's Falcon, southern Kavango, 31 December 1983. African Crane, Mahango, 4 January 1984. Lesser Gallinule, Mahango, April 1984. Mongolian Plover, Rundu, 7 April 1984. Sand Plover, Sandwich Harbour, 5 March 1984; Walvis Bay, 5 May 1984. Redshank, Walvis Bay, no date. Temminck's Stint, Okavango River, Mashari, 17 August 1984. Great Snipe, Bushmanland, April 1984. Longtailed Skua, Walvis Bay, no date. Franklin's Gull, Walvis Bay, 4 March 1984. Sharpbilled Honeyguide, Mahango, April 1984. Slenderbilled Honeyguide, Bagani, 14 April 1984. Sharptailed Glossy Starling, Okavango River, Shodi-gongoro, 19 August 1984.

Rare bird forms can be obtained from C.J. BROWN, Ornithologist. Nature Conservation, Private Bag 13306, Windhoek 9000.

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VÖGEL UND IHR VERHALTEN (8)

Die Lieder der Vögel: Gesänge

Es wird im allgemeinen angenommen, dass Gesänge nur von Singvögeln zu hören sind. Dies ist falsch. Allerdings kennen wir von Singvögeln die kompliziertesten Liedformen.

Meist singt das Männchen, um Weibchen anzulocken, das Revier zu markieren sowie zur geschlechtlichen Stimulierung. Ausserdem dienen Gesänge dem individuellen Erkennen der Partner und der Synchronisation des Brutablaufs. Arten, die keine Reviere gründen - etwa Stare - singen wegen des Paar- und Gruppenzusammenhalts.

In unseren Breiten wird die Gesangsaktivität von dem Hormon Testosteron gesteuert und zeigt eindeutig eine Jahresperiodik, wobei die meisten Gesänge vor der Brutzeit und zu deren Beginn zu hören sind. Bekannt sind von verschiedenen Arten - beispielsweise Rotkehlchen - auch Herbstgesänge. Sie werden meist von Jungvögeln vorgetragen und stehen in engem Zusammenhang mit der Geschlechtsreife.

Es gibt auch Arten, bei denen beide Geschlechter regelrecht im Duett singen, bei uns zum Beispiel der Zwergtaucher. Diese Wechsel- oder Duettgesänge dienen dem akustischen Kontakt dieser im Röhricht brüten-