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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.

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

Site	Number	%
Lake Oponono	171	25.6
Mahango Game Res.	94	14.1
Tsumkwe Pans	403	60.3

Overall slope: Uncertain
0.9885 ±0.0527

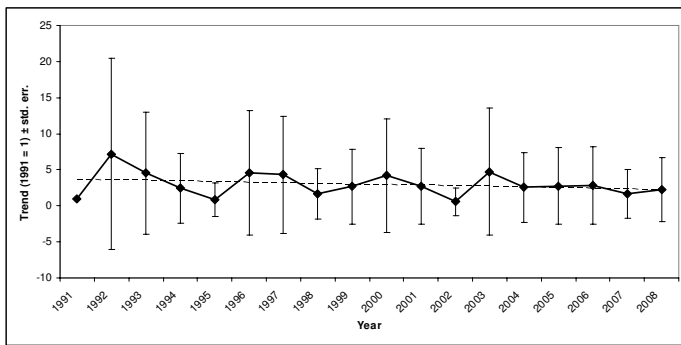


Figure 5: Trend of Wattle Crane population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

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**Success Story from Unfallstation-Wild Bird Hospital :
Pale-winged Starling “Jim Knopf”
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All photographs in this article are by Sonja Bartlewski

On a farm near Windhoek Jim Knopf and his two siblings hatched in a nest high up under

the roof of a barn. One morning the farmers found the oldest sibling lying dead on the ground. They observed the nest for a while and realized that the parent birds had not been returning to the nest for more than a day. The next morning they found sibling number two lying on the ground but still alive. Now they knew something was wrong and they rescued the remaining chick out of the nest. This is how two Pale-winged Starling chicks came to Wild Bird Hospital on 28 February 2011.



2 March 2011

The first bird had a severe head injury and did not look as if it would ever be able to fly or even walk without difficulty. The farmers and I decided that it would only be a torture to keep the bird alive. We would rather concentrate on the survival of the healthy looking remaining chick, which I named “Jim Knopf”.

He was very hungry but also very active and very lonely. But he developed well. He made friends with my tame mousebird and of course with me. He would make a real effort to keep me away from the door when I tried to leave the hospital.

As he grew up his favorite pastime was to sit on my shoulder, mess up my clean T-shirt and bite into my ear! Slowly but surely I realized that he had to start becoming a wild bird. I had to go to Cape Town for four days and took him to NARREC for Liz and Co. to look after him. It took only seconds for both students to fall in love with him. I had a good feeling about leaving him there.



06 March 2011 – Growing up

When I returned I hoped that he would somehow have forgotten me. Silly thinking, not in four days! So I took him home again. But from this time on I started to train him to be a wild bird. I took him to my parents' garden with a large lawn and lots of old indigenous trees and a riverine section. He enjoyed jumping around in the trees and being a real bird, but the moment I turned around to go to my car to leave, he would follow me, sit on my shoulder, make a deafening noise and bite my ear.



31 March 2011 – Grooming

I did this every day for a week. Drove from Hochland Park to Klein Windhoek, let him do what birds do and when we were both tired we returned home.

The next week I took his cage with me so that he could fly around but always had the opportunity to return "home". This was the time when he started to realize that the time



31 March 2011 – A beautiful bird

had come to say goodbye and his outings took longer every day. Then the rains started again over Windhoek and he had a very wet and stormy night. I was unable to sleep knowing he was out there somewhere. But hey, he returned the next morning telling a long story about a fantastic night of freedom. Now I definitely knew Jim Knopf had grown up and was able to survive on his own. He would only land on my shoulder and not on another person's, so he would also not go to any of the neighbours.

After a week of freedom he returned once to introduce his girlfriend, a wild Pale-winged Starling. He survived losing his parents and siblings, he survived being raised by a human, he survived the last heavy thunderstorms over Windhoek; I am sure my little black goblin will survive the coming winter.



21 April 2011 – A last goodbye

(The name Jim Knopf comes from the German children's book by Michael Ende "Jim Knopf und Lukas der Lokomotivführer" -Ed.)