



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

We rely heavily on books such as Roberts VII, (often referred to as the “birders’ bible”), for distribution maps, biometric measurements etc. - but is the information in these reference books always correct? And, possibly more importantly, do we read it correctly? Mark Paxton’s observations on the tail length of the green/violet wood-hoopoes he measured at Shamvura (Lanioturdus 43-2) got me interested. My own records of the measurements of the southern masked-weavers occurring in Namibia which can be seen in this issue further stimulated this interest. While there are some very obvious mistakes in even the best of publications (the distribution map for malachite sunbird in Roberts VII is a case in point as is the distribution map for red-billed quelea in Roberts Field Guide – Chittenden 2007), some of these can probably be put down to editorial oversight and printers’ gremlins, but the

Crowned Eagle, a First for the Western Caprivi and Namibia.

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When making your 14th trip to Namibia and Botswana you do not expect wonders. However, it happened to me when birding in the Western Caprivi on our way from Divundu to Katima Mulilo.

We stayed overnight at Ngepi Camp and left on 17/02/2010 at about 07h30. We passed through the roadblock at the Okavango Bridge near Divundu around 8 o'clock. I always use my speed control, otherwise I find myself driving too fast. By the time you stop, you are either past the bird or on top of it and it flies away. My speed was around 64 km/h and we had stopped every now and then to look at birds. I took the photograph at 10h04. Therefore, we must have driven about 80 – 100 km into the Bwabwata (West Caprivi) National Park (quarter degree square 1722 DA). That is the nearest I can pinpoint the place. It was on my right-hand side, +/- 20 metres from the tarred road.

I drove past and made a U-turn, as the sun was still in my face and then stopped far enough away so as not to frighten the bird. I took the photograph and tried to get nearer. Of course, it than flew away.

Checking the book, my suspicions were confirmed. It should not have been there! Its range stops more or less at Victoria Falls. The nearest I had seen it before was on the tarred road from Ngoma Bridge to Kasane (Botswana) on 08/02/2006 - a juvenile bird.

On arriving home, I wrote an article about my trip for the Birdnet. The next day I received an email from Dr. Chris Brown asking for location and the photograph. He confirmed the sighting as a **first** for Namibia and the Caprivi. So, wonders still happen.



The Caprivi crowned eagle - Photo Jan de Vries



The juvenile bird previously photographed in Botswana – Photo Jan de Vries

Summary of the 2009 ringing season in Namibia

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The 2009 ringing season was an abbreviated one, lasting only six months rather than the customary twelve. The reason for this is that SAFRING has switched to using the calendar year as the ringing season, as opposed to the previous system which ran from 1 July in one year to 30 June the next year.

Notwithstanding the shortened season, Namibian ringers once again excelled with over 8,000 records covering 169 species being submitted. Out of these, 5193 are newly ringed (code 1) birds and the remainder retraps, controls, re-sightings etc. The latter total has been boosted considerably because of returns from the manned islands being submitted for the first time in a long while

thanks to Jessica Kemper's efforts. It is not surprising then that the top four spots in the retrap/control table are occupied by the islanders and Jessica. As for the newly ringed birds, Ursula Franke comfortably holds top spot whilst Dirk Heinrich was well ahead of Neil Thomson for second spot. However, in terms of different species ringed, Dirk easily holds top spot, testament to his tenacity and willingness to try different capture methods.

African Penguins are the most ringed bird by far because of the re-sighting records from the islands. The efforts of the vulture ringers are manifest in the fact that two vulture species top the list of raptors ringed whilst two species of tern fall in behind the penguins in the table for water and seabirds. Damara Tern head the list of Namibian endemics ringed entirely due to the commitment of the Braby clan who continue to fly the flag for this species at the coast. The islands, not surprisingly, feature prominently in the list of top ringing localities.

Many thanks to all the ringers who continue to contribute to this worthwhile cause notwithstanding considerable financial and personal expenses. This is citizen science at its best and the data gathered makes an invaluable contribution to our knowledge base.

Table 1: Number of code 1 birds ringed per ringer.

Ringer	Birds
Ursula Franke	1638
Dirk Heinrich	995
Neil Thomson	646
Tim Osborne	426
Mark Boorman	369
Holger Kolberg	255
Gudrun Middendorff	209
Wilferd Versfeld	170
Hartmut Kolb	102
Sigi Braby	94
Bernd Brell	94
Steve Braine	69
Marc Dürr	58
Maren Thomson	22
Peter Bridgeford	16

Liz Komen	13
Sandra Dantu	9
Tony Delpport	4
Rian Jones	3
Jessica Kemper	1
	5193

Table 2: Number of retraps/controls etc. per ringer.

Ringer	Birds
Rian Jones	1098
Tony Delpport	591
Pete Bartlett	345
Jessica Kemper	326
Neil Thomson	161
Dirk Heinrich	84
Ursula Franke	52
Tim Osborne	29
Sigi Braby	22
Gudrun Middendorff	16
Wilferd Versfeld	10
Steve Braine	4
Bernd Brell	3
Maren Thomson	3
Hartmut Kolb	2
Liz Komen	2
	2763

Table 3: Number of species ringed per ringer.

Ringer	Species
Dirk Heinrich	78
Neil Thomson	58
Ursula Franke	50
Wilferd Versfeld	33
Gudrun Middendorff	29
Hartmut Kolb	28
Holger Kolberg	25
Steve Braine	23
Tim Osborne	23
Bernd Brell	18
Liz Komen	17
Marc Dürr	15
Maren Thomson	9
Mark Boorman	8
Sigi Braby	8
Rian Jones	7

Sandra Dantu	5
Tony Delpont	5
Peter Bridgeford	4
Jessica Kemper	1
Pete Bartlett	1
	169

Table 4: Top twenty species ringed.

Species	No
African Penguin	2123
Lark-like Bunting	624
Cape Sparrow	383
Black-throated Canary	375
Common Waxbill	329
Red-billed Quelea	314
Red-headed Finch	263
Common Tern	245
Laughing Dove	239
Chestnut Weaver	237
Southern Masked-Weaver	228
Blue Waxbill	218
African Red-eyed Bulbul	186
Scaly-feathered Finch	177
Black Tern	167
Southern Red Bishop	164
Bank Cormorant	115
House Sparrow	108
Cape Gannet	103
Namaqua Dove	100

Table 5: Numbers of birds of prey ringed.

Species	No
White-backed Vulture	71
Lappet-faced Vulture	61
Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk	24
Pearl-spotted Owlet	14
Barn Owl	13
Black-shouldered Kite	6
Rock Kestrel	6
Gabar Goshawk	5

African Scops-Owl	4
Tawny Eagle	4
Augur Buzzard	3
Pygmy Falcon	3
Secretarybird	3
Shikra	3
Brown Snake-Eagle	2
Greater Kestrel	2
Southern White-faced Scops-Owl	2
Spotted Eagle-Owl	2
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	2
Yellow-billed Kite	2
African Hawk-Eagle	1
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	1
Martial Eagle	1
	235

Table 6: Numbers of water and seabirds ringed.

Species	No
African Penguin	2123
Common Tern	245
Black Tern	167
Bank Cormorant	115
Cape Gannet	103
Damara Tern	77
Cape Cormorant	10
Kelp Gull	10
Arctic Tern	9
Crowned Lapwing	8
Hartlaub's Gull	6
Kittlitz's Plover	6
White-fronted Plover	5
Australian Gannet	3
Chestnut-banded Plover	2
Ruddy Turnstone	2
African Black Oystercatcher	1
African Jacana	1
Blacksmith Lapwing	1
Blue Crane	1
Common Ringed Plover	1
Curlew Sandpiper	1
Sanderling	1
Three-banded Plover	1
	2899

Table 7: Numbers of Namibian endemics ringed.

Species	No
Damara Tern	77
Carp's Tit	6
Rosy-faced Lovebird	3
Bare-cheeked Babbler	2
Rockrunner	2
Damara Hornbill	1
Gray's Lark	1
Monteiro's Hornbill	1
	93

Table 8: Top ten localities.

Locality	Total
Mercury Island	1101
Rykvoet St Klein Windhoek	710
Klein Windhoek	657
Ichaboe Island	595
Vredelus House	466
Mile 4 Salt Works	389
Possession Island	345
Halifax Island	325
Königsberg	289
Tandala Ridge, Windpoort Farm, Outjo Dist	281

Dial in to PHOWN!

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PHOWN (PHotos Of Weaver Nests) is a monitoring project aimed at determining the distribution of colonies or nests of all weaver species globally. Counting weaver nests and taking photos allows tracking of changes in weaver breeding effort. Many weavers are common and this project provides an easy way of monitoring them, while some weaver species are threatened and this project would help their conservation.

The software for the ADU Virtual Museum projects was written by Rene Navarro and the current software allows users to submit photos directly to the web, rather than emailing photos. PHOWN is the fourth Virtual

Museum project and was launched in time for the 2010 breeding season. In the Western Cape Southern Masked and Cape Weavers had started to build nests.

Anyone can view photos submitted to the ADU Virtual Museums (<http://vmus.adu.org.za>). You do not need to be registered. Click on the Project (eg Photos of Weaver Nests), and then in the menu on the left you can select "Search VM". In the Search form, you can select the "Search" button to see all photos, or scroll down to the "Search by English name:" button. In the menu on the left, click "Species maps" to see the distribution of colonies in South Africa. Colonies submitted outside SA are not viewable yet on this map, but are in the database and the map will be expanded later.

To submit photos you need to register as an ADU participant and obtain a password. Then find weaver nests and start taking photos! More details on the project may be found at <http://weavers.adu.org.za/phown.php>.

All weavers in the family Ploceidae are included – a species list appears on the weavers web. All countries where weavers breed in the wild are included, even introduced populations, but excluding captive birds. Photos taken in previous years may be submitted if you know the exact locality of the nests. Your photos need to be accepted by the Project Coordinator first before you can see them on the public web - this will typically be within one day.

The project was launched on 29 July 2010 and 42 records were submitted during the first week. There were records for 20 weaver species. Most records were from South Africa, 3 from Namibia and 3 from Rwanda. The most northerly record was of a Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus*, a colony of 6 nests in Rwanda, recorded by Claassen Marcell.

What is an ADU Virtual Museum? The ADU use of the term "museum" is not to be interpreted as the display part of a museum that is open to the public. The real museum