



CONTENTS

THOMSON N	Editorial	1
DEMASIUS E	Roberts Geographical Variation of Southern African Birds	3
FRIEDERICH G	A Zambian Birding Experience – Part 3	6
KOLBERG H	Summary of the 2012 Ringing Year in Namibia	16
DEMASIUS E	Cuckoo – African or Common?	19
KOLBERG H	Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations 9 : Waders and Shorebirds – Part 3	21
BARTLEWSKI S	Some Conservation Efforts in other Countries	27
SKINNER G	Birding Central and Northern Namibia – 10 to 20 October 2012	28
KOLBERG H	Summary of the 2012 Winter Wetland Bird Counts in Namibia	34
THOMSON N	Colour Rings on Sociable Weavers	34
AN APPEAL BY TREVOR HARDAKER		35

ATLAS UPDATE	36
RARITIES AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS	37

Editorial

Normally I would have been tempted to devote a good part of the editorial space to another two species which have allegedly turned up in the northwest of Namibia. These birds were allegedly seen by one of the region's top birders but the validity of these claims appears to be in doubt and hopefully I will obtain more information and will be in a better position to comment in a future edition.

However, my editorial comment concerning previous sightings of Black Skimmers in Southern Africa (Lanioturdus 46 (1)) seems to have raised some lively debate and I think it is only right to conclude this issue now.

I published Tony Tree's response in Lanioturdus 46(2) and this has in turn solicited a response from Joris Komen which I am reproducing here. I am going along with Joris's closing remark that this matter should now be put to rest and I will not publish any further correspondence on this matter.

Joris's response reads:-

Summary of the 2012 Winter Wetland Bird Counts in Namibia

Holger Kolberg
Ministry of Environment and Tourism
(holgerk@mweb.com.na)

Namibia experienced one of its coldest winters for some years but that did not deter the many volunteers who participate in the wetland counts from doing their duty. Nineteen sites were covered with a total of 119504 birds of 98 species recorded. Sadly, several sites that had been counted since 1995 could not be counted due to counters being committed to other projects, leaving a gap in the long-term data series.

Greater Flamingos appeared at the coast in large numbers for the first time in several years but are still not up to the level normally recorded at the coast in winter. This is no doubt due to the fact that there was still water in the pans in Botswana, around Tsumkwe and in Etosha. Very few Lesser Flamingos were recorded. A surprisingly high number of Great White Pelicans was recorded (total = 2582), with 1125 in Walvis Bay and 534 at Avis Dam, apart from the usual high count at Hardap Dam (439). Three White Storks were seen at Avis Dam and one was also seen at Van Rhyn Dam near Keetmanshoop. Saddle-billed Storks were recorded from Lake Oponono (2) and the Mahango core area. A Glossy Ibis was seen at the Walvis Bay sewage ponds. Eight Blue Cranes and two Grey Crowned Cranes were seen at Lake Oponono, whereas five Wattled Cranes were recorded in the Mahango. The low number of birds of prey recorded is a reason for concern, with no African Fish-Eagles recorded from many sites where one would expect to find them. An Osprey was seen at Otjivero Dam. In terms of rarities, a Common Redshank was seen at Mile 4 Saltworks and eight Red-necked Phalaropes at Walvis Bay.

Many thanks to the many volunteers who contribute to the success of this project, your efforts and time are very much appreciated.

Note: See the last page of this edition for a table of the counts by location.

Colour Rings on Sociable Weavers

Neil Thomson
(batqs@mweb.com.na)

Since 2004 Dirk Heinrich has led a ringing project on Sociable Weavers at Farm Wiese some 50 km east of Rehoboth. The initial aim of the project was to try to determine whether individual birds moved between colonies or whether they remained true to a particular colony.

Three colonies were selected and birds were ringed at each colony. From 2007 the birds were colour ringed as well and the three colonies became known as the Red Nest, the Blue Nest and the White Nest with one colour ring (red, blue or white) denoting the colony applied to each bird. To the best of my knowledge only one bird from the White Nest was ever found in another of the nests (Blue Nest) but when birds were trapped at a new small nest in December 2011 and May 2012 a White Nest bird and a Red Nest bird were found among unringed birds indicating that new colonies may be started by birds originating from more than one existing colony.

American PhD student, Gavin Leighton, stayed at Farm Wiese in November/December 2011 and birds were captured at all three nests as part of his study. Blood samples were taken from the birds and all were fitted with unique combinations of colour rings to allow individual birds to be identified in the field.