

This issue of *Lanioturdus* is devoted to the raptor workshop which was held at Waterberg Plateau Park from 18-19 February 2005. The workshop was organized by the Namibian Nature Foundation and was open to all who were interested in raptors.

## CONTENTS

VOLUME 38 (3-4) 2005

BROWN, C. Welcome and introduction .....	1
BRIDGEFORD, P. & BRIDGEFORD, M. Status of vultures in Namibia .....	1
OSBORNE, T. & M. WINK. Taxonomy of African raptors with emphasis on Namibian species .....	7
BRIDGEFORD, P., BRIDGEFORD, M. & DÜRR M. Monitoring and ringing of Lappet-faced Vultures on the Namib:1991-2004 .....	9
BRIDGEFORD, P & HEINRICH D. Ringing of African White-backed Vultures on commercial farms .....	13
MENDELSON. J, BROWN C., MENDELSON M. & DIEKMANN M. Observations on the movements of adult Cape Vultures in central Namibia .....	16
OWEN-SMITH, G. Raptor issues within conservancies .....	21
HENGARI, G. M., CUNNINGHAM P. L., & ADANK W. The use of vultures by traditional healers in Namibia .....	22
KOMEN, L. Where we are and where we can go with poison and raptors: a perspective from NARREC .....	29
ROBERTSON, T. & JARVIS A. Raptors and the Avifaunal Database .....	36
BRAINE, S. Raptor road counts - the need for continuation .....	45
JOUBERT, D. Raptor road counts with students at Polytechnic of Namibia.....	46
DIEKMANN, M. The capture and attachment of satellite- and radio-telemetry equipment on vultures in the Waterberg area .....	50
RAPTORS NAMIBIA. <i>Action Plan</i> .....	52

## Welcome and introduction

Dr Chris Brown

Namibia Nature Foundation, PO Box245, Windhoek

Namibia's vultures, other diurnal raptors and owls are increasingly under threat from factors such as disturbance, particularly at breeding sites; the misuse of poisons and pesticides; electrocution and collisions with overhead lines; habitat degradation; persecution; illegal harvesting; and drowning in reservoirs.

Much work has been done on raptors in Namibia in the past. People have come and gone, however, resulting in a lull in activity which is now picking up again. By collaborating in a close-knit group rather than in isolation we will be able to achieve more, encouraging one another and pooling our resources in effective, coordinated synergies. There is also a need for new actions, which will be incorporated into existing programmes/initiatives where possible, with a focus on increasing public involvement.

This is why the time is right for our workshop on birds of prey at Waterberg Plateau Park on 18-19 February 2005. We are privileged to welcome a healthy mix of "old-time" raptor enthusiasts here who bring years of experience to the table, and a new cohort of young conservationists who will carry the flag into the future. One of our main outcomes will be to develop an action plan for these threatened birds (see the plan below).

## Status of vultures in Namibia

Peter & Marilyn Bridgeford

Vulture Study Group Coordinator Namibia

pmbridge@iway.na

## Introduction

Vulture research in Namibia started in the 1960's in the Namib Desert Park, now part of the Namib-Naukluft Park (NNP). Sauer (1973), Jensen (unpublished reports), Clinning (1978) and Brown (1985, 1986) all worked on vultures in the same area over the years. The present project of ringing Lappet-faced Vultures

## The capture and attachment of satellite- and radio-telemetry equipment on vultures in the Waterberg area

Maria Diekmann  
Rare and Endangered Species Trust  
PO Box Otjiwarongo  
rest@iway.na

The breeding population of Cape Griffon Vultures *Gyps coprotheres* on the cliffs of the Waterberg Plateau has declined from an estimated 500 in 1939 to only 11 birds in 2004, and the species is now considered critically endangered in Namibia. In 2002, the Rare and Endangered Species Trust (REST) initiated a supplementary feeding scheme on the farm Uitsig, as part of a project to obtain and fit satellite-telemetry equipment onto some of the remaining birds. REST has designed and developed a large capture aviary. Eighteen more Cape Griffon Vultures are held in an aviary alongside the main capture aviary. Initially these birds are being used as lure birds but plans are being made for their release in November 2005. Food is placed out regularly and some 500 scavenging birds feed at the site per week. These include up to five Cape Griffon Vultures, large numbers of African White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus*, up to 52 Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos*, one Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* and several Marabou Storks *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*.

In 11 captures, 778 birds of four species have been ringed (Table 1). All vultures handled were documented photographically, while a full set of mensural and other data and sex estimations were done for large samples. Detailed methods and results of the capture and fitting of satellite- and radio-telemetry equipment onto Cape Griffon Vultures, African White-backed Vultures and Lappet-faced Vultures during the first three captures in 2004 have previously been documented (Diekmann *et al.* 2004).

REST is now the first organization in the world to fit satellite "collars" or PTT harnesses onto Cape Griffon Vultures. Radio-telemetry devices have been fitted to a further five African White-backed Vultures in the area. REST is also the first in the world to develop a capture aviary and mechanism of this nature and

the first in Africa to catch and process such large numbers of free-flying old-world vultures in one operation for extensive sampling. No losses were sustained, and marked birds returned to the restaurant and into the capture aviary almost immediately after the captures.

The preliminary results of the satellite tagging study on Cape Griffon Vultures are presented elsewhere in this journal (Mendelsohn *et al.* 2005) and are being used for conservation management. Of interest is the fact that an adult male Cape Griffon Vulture (Skybanker) is breeding with an African White-backed Vulture in a tree. In 2004 they produced a chick that was apparently preyed upon by an eagle. A yearling that showed characteristics of both vulture species is being investigated genetically. The methods for continuing with the ringing programme are now being investigated in collaboration with the Bird of Prey Working Group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa. Some of the new rings are being tested on captive birds at REST.

### Acknowledgements

The following sponsors are gratefully acknowledged for their financial aid: Nedbank of Namibia for Skybanker, Ned & Diana Twining for Teabag and Tetu, Steve Martin's Natural Encounters for Emperor, Namibia Nature Foundation / Wilderness Safaris / Jack Hanna for Sofe. Others who have helped are: Sasol Vulture Monitoring Grant, Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, GIS: Dr John Mendelsohn / Dr Ara Monadjem, and all the members of the capture and ringing teams.

### References

- Diekmann, M., Scott H.A., Scott, R.M. and Diekmann, J. 2004. Capture and fitting of satellite- and radio-telemetry equipment onto Cape Griffon Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* vultures and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* in the Waterberg area, Namibia in 2004. *Vulture News* XXX pp
- Mendelsohn, J. C. Brown, M. Mendelsohn. & M Diekmann. 2005. Observations on the movements of adult Cape Vultures in central Namibia. *Lanioturdus* 38(2):

Table 1. Number of vultures and storks captured at REST.

Date	Cape Griffon Vulture	African White-backed Vulture	Lappet-faced Vulture	Marabou Stork
18 Jan 2004	1	92	0	0
21 Mar 2004	2*	41	0	0
29 Apr 2004	1	152	1	0
27 Nov 2004	1	93	0	0
28 Nov 2004	1	91	0	1
4 Dec 2004	1	74	2	1
15 Jan 2005	1	34	1	2
15 Feb 2005	0	31	0	5
20 Feb 2005	0	41	6	1
21 Feb 2005	0	20	2	3
26 Mar 2005	0	67	0	8
<i>Total</i>	9	736	12	21

\* includes one hybrid

## RAPTORS NAMIBIA

### *Action Plan*

### *RAPTORS UNDER PRESSURE*

Namibia's vultures, other diurnal raptors and owls are increasingly under threat from factors such as disturbance, particularly at breeding sites; the misuse of poisons and pesticides; electrocution and collisions with overhead lines; habitat degradation; persecution; illegal harvesting; and drowning in reservoirs. The *Raptors Namibia* Action Plan was developed by a group of raptor enthusiasts at a Birds of Prey workshop at Waterberg Plateau Park on 18-19 February 2005, facilitated by Dr Chris Brown of Namibia Nature Foundation. Several of these actions are already being implemented, but will benefit by increased co-ordination; new actions will be incorporated into existing programmes/initiatives where possible, with a focus on increasing public involvement. The six-point plan identifies the following priorities:

1. **Promote co-ordination and communication**
  - 1.1 Appoint working group coordinators
  - 1.2 Develop a raptor working group with sub-groups for projects
  - 1.3 Promote coordination and communication for all projects below (see also 3)
2. **Obtain information/data**
  - 2.1 Assess/determine needs for further information
  - 2.2 Aerial surveys
    - Co-ordinate where possible
  - 2.3 Ringing programmes
    - Reassess rationale/objectives and continue with ringing programmes
    - Increase effort to obtain ring resightings/recoveries
    - Increase public involvement in programmes (see also 4)
  - 2.4 Satellite/radio tracking programmes
    - Continue with tracking programme for Cape Vultures
    - Expand the programme to other targeted species/areas
  - 2.5 Avifaunal database
    - Update existing database
    - Provide internet access to database
    - Determine procedures for entry of information by participants
  - 2.6 Raptor Roadcounts
    - Reinstate the programme
    - Popularise the roadcounts
    - Determine data needs to determine status and population trends; identify focal species
  - 2.7 Further research programmes
    - Traditional beliefs and knowledge of raptor
  - 2.8 Analyse data and provide feedback (see 3)
3. **Promote awareness and education**
  - 3.1 Target relevant audiences, working through existing initiatives where possible
    - Commercial and communal farming areas/conservancies
    - Roadcount participants, MET/MAWRD, bird/nature clubs