

LANIOTURDUS

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About the Namibia Bird Club

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. The club's mission is to contribute to Namibian ornithology by, amongst other things, arranging regular birding outings, conducting bird ringing and atlasing excursions and educating the public about the value of birds. To achieve this, we organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewage Works and occasional weekend trips further afield. Bird club members also participate in the African Waterbird Census twice a year.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we present occasional lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a digital newsletter, *Namibia Bird News*, which includes a programme of forthcoming events and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

The Namibia Bird Club is not affiliated to any global or regional organization and relies entirely on members' subscriptions and donations to fund its activities.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Namibia Bird Club or its committee.

Instructions to Authors

Lanioturdus is a journal dedicated to birds and birding. Although the journal's primary focus is on Namibia, articles from other geographical parts of the globe will also be considered for publication. Authors should use common and scientific names of southern African birds as published in *Roberts' VII*. For other regions, English and scientific names following BirdLife International's species list (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/species>) should be used. Text should be submitted as a MS Word document. Photos, maps and figures should be sent as separate jpeg images, graphs as MS Excel charts or jpeg images and tables as MS Word or Excel documents. Please indicate in the article text where these should be placed.



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The incredible effectiveness of vultures

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On 29 December 2014 late in the afternoon we were on our way to enjoy a sundowner at Okondeka in Etosha National Park. On our way we came across a springbok ram next to the road which seemed to have died just recently. The time was 17h45.



Figure 1: White-backed Vultures at the Springbok carcass.

We could not see any bite marks from any predator nor was one in sight; the carcass was attended only by some 50 vultures, 47 White-backed and 3 Lappet-faced Vultures. Two Marabou Storks were also standing around awaiting their turn to feed.

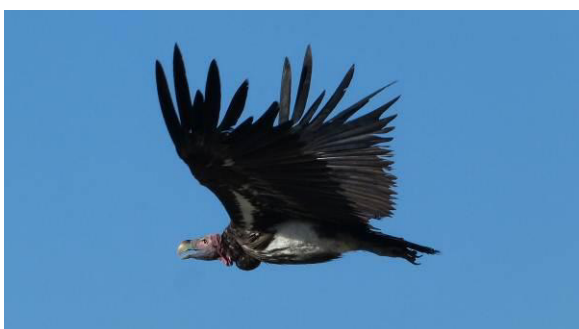


Figure 2: Lappet-faced Vulture flying in to feed.

We then left to enjoy our sundowner at Okondeka. After photographing some South African Shelduck and

having enjoyed some of Namibia's finest we had to return to the camp at Okaukuejo.



Figure 3: South African Shelduck and lion at Okondeka.

When we arrived back at the feeding site the springbok carcass was cleaned of all meat and skin, except for some skin around the head.



Figure 4: Vultures at the carcass one hour later.

The time was then 18h41. In less than one hour these vultures had devoured a whole adult springbok ram. This is most astonishing and it just goes to show how effective vultures are in cleaning up the veld.