

CONTENTS

VOLUME 34 (2), 2001

EDITORIAL	1
PAXTON, M. & L. SHEEHAN. Mahango wetland bird count – Jan 2001	2
LEONARD, P. A short intra-African migration	7
SIMMONS, R.E. & J.P. ROUX. A survey of African Black Oystercatchers	14
SIMMONS, R.E. Nambian wetland bird counts: Jan, Apr, Jul 2000	19
OSBORNE, T.O. Carp's Black Tit nesting observations	23
DANTU, S. A dilly penguin	26
DANTU, S. Observations at a White-throated Canary nest	28
BOORMAN, M. Unusual coastal sightings	29
BIRD OBSERVATIONS	31

EDITORIAL

I write this editorial having just arrived back from a month in the USA, mainly Alaska and I have to marvel at the bird life here compared to the winter in the cold north. One may think that April is spring in the Northern Hemisphere but if you get far enough north, spring comes much later. Geese and ducks were arriving as the snow was melting but they met temperatures of -30°C in the northwest of Alaska. Before we left the cranes were arriving and redpolls nesting but both the birds and humans were shocked to wake up May first to a blanket of 10–50 cm of snow which ranged from the coast to the interior.

Back in Namibia the late rains were well received by the birds and nesting continued. The first bird I caught in my mist net on 15 May was a recently fledged Yellow-breasted Bunting, the second a young Red-billed Quelea. The nest box I left with four tiny Carp's Black Tits was occupied by a dormouse. Another nest box had 3 small Grey Hornbills which is rather late for this species. In my absence, Pete Leonard visited the country from neighboring Zambia and he has written an account of his visit. He sends his apologies to Steve Braine and Keith Wearne for not having the time to visit. I would encourage everyone to ask their visitors to drop me a page-long account of their observations and memories.

This journal used to have more recent sightings published but I have not been receiving any from the members and I appeal to all to send in their observations directly to me via e-mail at korie@iafrica.com.na. For those of you in the dark, snail mail also works at PO Box 22, Okaukuejo.

OBSERVATIONS AT A WHITE-THROATED CANARY NEST

Dr Sandra Dantu
PO Box 1445, Swakopmund
felix@swk.namib.com

On Saturday 14 January 2001, we found a White-throated Canary *Serinus albogularis* nest at the Spitzkoppe, and spent a few hours observing the comings and goings of the adults. Observations were done from about 15 m away, using a telescope, and lasted from 13h00 to 18h00 when the light started to fail.

The nest was a small cup in a forked branch of a Sand Corkwood tree *Commiphora angolensis* about 1.5m above the ground, and there were 4 chicks present – probably not more than a couple of days old. The chicks were fed 12 times in the 5 hours I watched the nest, averaging 25 minutes between feeds. The shortest interval was 5 minutes, the longest 54 minutes.

Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa (Maclean 1993) says that only the female incubates and that nestlings are fed by both parents. I identified the bird on the nest as the female because it had a brood patch, and could distinguish between the two adults because of differences in the patterns on their heads.

The male did all the fetching and carrying of food except on four occasions. On those occasions the male was absent for a long time so the female left the nest to fetch food, leaving the chicks unattended for up to 26 minutes. On the arrival of the male with food, the female would solicit food from him by fluttering her wings until he fed her and flew off. Then she would feed the chicks. The male was seen to feed the chicks directly three times only when he arrived at the nest while the female was not there.

UNUSUAL COASTAL SIGHTINGS

Mark Boorman
PO Box 1445, Swakopmund
felix@swk.namib.com

This report covers some of the unusual birds seen at Swakopmund and Walvis Bay during the summer of 2000–2001.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

This may be the same flagged individual which was reported in *Lanioturdus* Vol 32(2, 3&4). It was present at Mile 4 beach from November 2000 to February 2001.

Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

One present at the Raft Restaurant November 2000.

Blackheaded Gull *Larus ridibundus*

A full breeding plumage bird at The Raft in December 2000, and a non-breeding bird at Bird Paradise which was present until the end of April 2001.

Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*

Found in a Swakopmund garden and released at the Golf course December 2000.

Broadbilled Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

2 birds 1 of which was in breeding plumage at Lovers' Hill from January to March 2001.

Rednecked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

More than 50, 3 in breeding plumage were present at the Walvis Salt Works.

European Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

One at Walvis Salt Works in January 2001 and one at Mile 4 in April.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

An immature bird bearing metal ring 9A15712 on the left leg and an engraved green and white ring NGR on the right leg was seen near Lovers' Hill in March 2001. [Editors note: This bird as reported elsewhere, see Rob Simmons wetland counts, was ringed by the editor who heard in a round about fashion that Mark did not appreciate trying to read the ring number upside down! All the birds I ring have the ring/number on upside down as it makes it easier to read and prevents errors while holding the bird in the hand. My apologies to those of you who are lucky enough to see the bird's ring at close range.]

Blacktailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

One bird in full breeding plumage at Walvis Salt Works in March 2001.

Black Egret *Egretta ardesiaca*

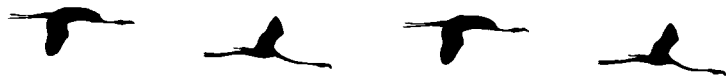
3 birds were seen at Swakopmund Sewerage Works in April 2001.

Lesser Blackbacked Gull *Larus fuscus*

One seen at Walvis Bay Harbour (fish factory jetty) in April 2001.

African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini*

There is a permanent roost of 14 birds at Mile 4, including 2 of Phil Hockey's individually ringed birds (X28 and white left: orange over metal right). Bird AA4 has left this roost and is back on Dassen Island.



BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Long-legged Buzzard

Two near Okakeujo, Etosha on 28 Feb 2001 (Ian Sinclair (IS))

Sooty Falcon

Three at Halali, Etosha, on 4 Feb 1998 (IS)

Two at Halali, Etosha, on 1 March 2001 (IS)

30 km east of Halali on 2 March 2001 (IS)

Collared Flycatcher

Four at 80 kms west of Bangani on 7 March 2001 (IS)

White Stork

Seven (adult birds) in lucerne fields on the eastern side of the main road just north of Mariental on the 14th of May 2000. This is quite late for this species and it is mostly juveniles that overwinter. (Chris Hines (CH))

Spur-winged Goose

At least 15 birds feeding in lucerne fields in the Hardap irrigation projects near Mariental. This is not a bird of the south although it has been recorded from central Namibia south to the Orange River as a straggler (Atlas records). (CH)

Sacred Ibis

Quite common at Hardap. this species may have become more established here in recent years. It is now regular at the sewerage works in Windhoek as well (v. small numbers). (CH)

Garganey

Pete Leonard saw the second record of a Garganey for Namibia and his description is given overleaf.