



### Vultures breeding in palm trees

In our area, the northern Tsumeb district of Namibia, White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus* breeding in makalani palms *Hyphaene petersiana* is a common occurrence where these trees

are available. In fact, I have not seen vultures breeding on trees other than the makalanis. Furthermore, the vultures make their task easier by selecting palms with existing nests of Red-billed Buffalo-weavers *Bubalornis niger*. These weavers

build a strong construction in the top of the palms and the vultures then make the roof of this structure the bottom of their nest. As the palm sheds its dry leaves from the bottom, the weaver nest gets torn down too, but they just keep on building by adding material to the top part. I have also not noticed vultures breeding on these nests more than once. During the winter of 2005, I had found such a nest and then made an effort of going there on a regular basis to check

on the development of the chick. The vulture seemed very opportunistic to me because it had nested in a very small weaver nest structure. The chick was past downy stage and was mostly perched on the petiole of a leaf. In August, after a very windy day, the weaver nest had been blown down and the chick was gone. At the base of the makalani, I found the remains of the weaver nest, but no chick or the remains of it.

Günther Friederich

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