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## EDITORIAL

Once again this edition of *Lanioturdus* has been considerably delayed in its production as few articles have come in over the past six months. The rush of articles in July and August have been gratifying and I hope that this will continue in the future.

This is the last edition of *Lanioturdus* I will be editing for a while as I am no longer in a position to give the magazine the attention it needs to be successful. When I started as editor about six years ago, I had had no previous active involvement with the bird club up to that time. I got involved because I (and many other members) felt that a small informative and interesting local magazine was absolutely integral to making the club a success and birding in Namibia the pleasurable pastime it should be. I think we succeeded to a large extent and I would like to thank all of those individuals who contributed so much to making *Lanioturdus* a success. Special thanks must go to Carole Roberts who has done the layout of every copy to go out in the last six years and has done so with unfailing good humour. Coleen Mannheimer contributed the vast majority of the artwork for the magazine over the years and deserves a special mention. A special word of thanks also to Hartwig Dedekind, Dieter Ludwig and others who did the german editing, often at short notice. Willi Peters and the staff at Typoprint were always helpful and quick to get the magazine out on time. I would also like to thank the Bird Club Committee and the staff at the Scientific Society who did the posting and packaging, set up exchange agreements and answered many queries.

Tim Osborne has volunteered to take over the editing of the magazine from October onwards. I would like to wish Tim (and I am sure Laurel) well with the editorship in the future and encourage all of the contributors of the past to continue to support the magazine.

## A NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF THE PARADISE FLYCATCHER IN WINDHOEK

J. Kinahan  
P.O. Box 22407, Windhoek

Every year since 1992, a pair of Paradise Flycatchers *Terpsiphone viridis* has taken up temporary residence in my Klein Windhoek garden. The birds usually arrive in mid-October and become conspicuous in their pursuit of flying insects, mainly small flies that are attracted in great numbers by the flowering carob trees *Ceratonia siliqua*. Within a few weeks the birds also remove all cobwebs from the outside window frames of the house, presumably for the construction of their nest. The nest is probably built in one of the shade trees around the garden although I have not found it and have avoided too close a search for fear of driving the birds away.

In the last week of February 1999, the female Paradise Flycatcher took to spending most of the day hunting flies under the wide canopy of the carob trees, closely followed by a single fledgling. The young bird perched to beg each time an insect was caught, although its quick and agile flight showed that soon it would be independent of its parent. By this time the adult male had left and within a few days the female followed suit. So it was that from the first week of March the young bird hunted alone, using the same perches as the adult and confining its activity to the same small area beneath the carob trees. Then, in the first week of April, the young bird was abruptly displaced by an adult Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* which hunted assiduously in the same area, using exactly the same perches as the Paradise Flycatcher adult and its fledgling. The young Paradise Flycatcher had moved to a small thicket of *Rhus lancea* trees in the back of the property, but returned immediately to its earlier territory in the third week of April when its rival was no longer to be seen, and continued there until the end of April when it, too, left the garden.

Despite their eye-catching appearance, Paradise Flycatchers are not frequently seen in Windhoek. The birds in my garden are the only regular visitors I have noted in this area during the last thirty years. Nest records

tend to confirm this impression, with only one entry (1971) from the Windhoek District. All other Namibian records (n=21) are from further north, with the Otjiwarongo District (52%) and Rundu District (28%) predominating. Isolated records are available from Caprivi, Etosha and the Omaruru District. While these data could merely reflect the presence of avid bird-watchers, repeated records imply some degree of fidelity toward breeding localities by this intra-African migrant. This much is clear from the description by Hoffman (1995) of Paradise Flycatchers breeding over many years on a farm in the Otavi Mountains. In the same way it is possible to suggest that breeding in the vicinity of human habitation might be a real preference rather than a simple bias in the breeding records, for farm dwellings and suburban gardens provide favourable habitat conditions in areas that might otherwise prove unattractive to this species. In dry thornbush country the habitat requirements of the species are such that it is more often seen in isolated stands of mature woodland with undergrowth, than in open scrubland.

If it is the case that the Paradise Flycatcher is faithful to particular breeding localities there would be some continuity in this attachment over successive generations of birds raised in the same places. One might therefore expect that if the more southerly breeding records in Namibia are linked to the existence of suitable localities that are also very limited in extent, the species would be highly vulnerable to disturbance over at least part of its breeding range. The fact that some breeding sites are protected as fenced gardens has to be balanced against the fact that breeding could be disrupted permanently by overzealous clearing of low bushes and thickets, as well as by household cats and other dangers to garden birds. Any garden where these birds choose to breed is singularly blessed!

### Reference

Hoffman, L. 1995. Paradiesfliegenschnäpper. *Lanioturdus* 28: 12-14.