



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

Although I am the editor of Lanioturdus, Lanioturdus is not my journal. Lanioturdus is your journal (i.e. the members’ journal). However, for it to be truly the members’ journal it needs contributions from the members.

I have been fortunate in having been able to obtain sufficient articles to have allowed me to produce four editions for three consecutive years (actually this year there will be a special fifth edition) but it is somewhat disconcerting how few people actually contribute articles. Without the contributions of the likes of Eckart Demasius and Holger Kolberg I would have been very hard pressed to find sufficient material and I would then probably have found myself in another of those editor’s nightmare situations of having to write the bulk of the articles myself. A big thank you to all who have contributed especially those who contribute regularly - to the rest of you out there - why not try your hand at writing - if something interests you it will most probably interest other birders as well.

And it is not only articles for which I am looking. Your observations of rare birds, off range species, birds new to an area etc. are all worthy of a mention in Lanioturdus. We are not yet atlasing in Namibia and records of these sightings form valuable contributions to Namibian ornithology. I have mentioned it before - Lanioturdus is sent to the Niven Library of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology and the librarian, Margaret Koopman, has assured me that bird club journals are indeed used by researchers

Table 8: Top twenty ringing localities.

Coordinates	Locality	Total
2235S 1432E	Mile 4 Salt Works	3143
2234S 1705E	Rykvoet St Klein Windhoek	2467
2234S 1706E	Klein Windhoek	2017
2543S 1450E	Mercury	994
2617S 1456E	Ichaboe	594
2701S 1512E	Possession	531
2637S 1504E	Halifax	397
2225S 1524E	Nelsville Farmhouse	361
2239S 1432E	Swakopmund Kramersdorf	319
2236S 1705E	Olympus Vill. Wdk	286
1919S 1422E	Hobater, Kunene Reg.	233
2229S 1527E	Vredelus House	231
2724S 1757E	Holog	208
2236S 1431E	Swakopmund Saltworks	192
1910S 1555E	Okaukuejo Rest Camp, Etosha Nat Park	166
2319S 1804E	Carolahof Haus	150
2239S 1432E	Kramersdorf, Swakopmund	136
2227S 1520E	Nelsville Pferdeposten	125
2227S 1530E	Köcherbaumposten	125
2233S 1704E	Kolberg Home	115

African Harrier-Hawk hunting in Palm Tree in Windhoek

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The African Harrier-Hawk or *Gymnogene Polyboroides typus* is a rare species in Namibia south of Etosha National Park. Over the past 28 years living in Windhoek I have had only three sightings in the Windhoek district.

On 31 March 2011 at about 09h00 a subadult African Harrier-Hawk flew into the top of our neighbour's old, very tall Washingtonia palm tree in Windhoek West (notice small patch of brown plumage on neck in photo below). This tree provides roosting and breeding sites for

Bradfield's Swifts, Palm Swifts, Red-headed Finches and House Sparrows.



The African Harrier-Hawk clambered around the top of the palm tree first exploring the base of the live fronds then moved down to explore the mass of dead fronds into which the Bradfield's Swifts, finches and sparrows make deep tunnels to nest and roost. The raptor would stop and listen intently, then move forward and occasionally thrust its small head into crevices between the fronds, but more often it would dart a leg deep amongst the dead fronds while holding on with the other leg and flapping to maintain position and balance. This process was repeated at least 18 times as the bird worked its way in a corkscrew pattern around and down the dead fronds.



While this was happening, some 20 Bradfield's Swifts were swooping past the African Harrier-Hawk with high-pitched squeals. The raptor took no notice of the swifts. After about 20 minutes, not having caught anything, the African Harrier-Hawk took off heading north-east towards the Okahandja Valley.

African Harrier-Hawks are regular visitors to suburban gardens in parts of South Africa. They feed on mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and insects, often trapping these in cavities and crevices in trees, on cliffs and on the ground, and taking both adult birds and nestlings from nests. There is one observation of an African Harrier-Hawk catching and feeding on an adult African Black Swift which it trapped in a crevice on a cliff in Lesotho.

(Subsequent to receiving this article I heard that, at dusk one evening towards the end of May 2011, Johan Fourie had heard considerable commotion amongst the swifts around the palm tree in his Suiderhof garden. On looking up he saw the swifts mobbing and driving off a large raptor which he was unable to identify. I can't help wondering whether this bird was also an African Harrier-Hawk and possibly even the same bird – Ed).

Some Commotion on the Farm

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I was outside early (about 06h45) on the morning of 28 January 2011 when I saw two big birds coming in and circling above the farmhouse reservoir. The usual Comb Duck? By the way – by this time “Tsutsab Vlei” was full. We had had some heavy showers from 16 January. The water came in on Tuesday 18 January.

No – these were not Comb Duck; they landed right on the water and took some fish (Tilapia) from the reservoir - they were cormorants! After a quick look through the binoculars I took out the camera. However, they were wary and flew off when I slowly came round the corner of the outbuilding. No photograph. We have had Reed Cormorants on the vlei before but these were White-breasted Cormorants, a new record for the farm. My workers confirmed that they had seen four birds the day before.



Cormorant on the reservoir - Photo : Günther Friederich

Later in the day they came back. One landed on the reservoir again. I was able capture two images before the bird flew off. Suddenly there was a loud clapping sound from the overhead transformer, a sizzling on the wires and the cormorant was no more. Unfortunately it had hit the power line. We collected the bird. It was an immature with both the breast and the belly white.



Dead cormorant - Photo : Günther Friederich

Falsterbo

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All photographs in this article are by Eckart Demasius

I was in Sweden again at the beginning of September 2010 and our itinerary included a visit to the Falsterbo Bird Show on our last