



LANIOTURDUS

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Editorial

Bird populations are dynamic – always on the move! I see this at my own home. I have lived in this house for over 23 years and up until about four years ago I had never seen a southern red bishop there – in 2009 alone I ringed 136 at this location! In September 2010 I experienced an irruption of common waxbills, a species I very seldom see in my garden. Over a period of 122 days until the end of the year we ringed 205 and then the numbers seen and caught dropped off sharply suggesting that most of them had moved on. In Lanioturdus 43(4) I mentioned the five pied crows I saw on 11/08/2010 across two Quarter Degree Squares between Rundu Airport and Ncaute where the species was not recorded in the Atlas. I had not seen this species there in about ten previous trips and I have not seen it there again since then on my subsequent trips through this area.

The above examples illustrate how dynamic certain populations actually are – some suddenly appearing and remaining, others merely moving through an area. With the climate changes currently being experienced we are seeing the earlier arrival of some migrants and also later departure dates. (In Lanioturdus 43-4 we published some of Günther Friederich's observations on the early arrival of grey-headed kingfisher and European bee-eater in our "Rarities and Interesting Observations" section).

In our "Rarities and Interesting Observations" section in this issue we have a report of a Sabine's gull seen at Kalkheuwel waterhole in the Etosha National Park – as far as I have been able to determine this constitutes

4.8 Walvis Bay



Photo: Eckart Demasius

The Walvis Bay wetlands consist of the bay and lagoon, the Pelican Point sandspit and the artificially flooded ponds of the salt works. The area is easily accessible and is therefore a popular destination for tourists and birders. The wetlands are also a Ramsar site.

Area counted: Approximately 70km²

Number of counts: 44

Last counted on: 19 July 2008¹²

Average number of birds: 91045

Average number of species: 40

Maximum number of birds: 237224

Maximum number of species: 54

Species past 1% population level: African Black Oystercatcher (33), Bank Cormorant (1), Black Tern (2), Black-necked Grebe (40), Black-winged Stilt (15), Cape Cormorant (15), Cape Teal (6), Caspian Tern (34), Chestnut-banded Plover (41), Common Ringed Plover (1), Common Tern (9), Curlew Sandpiper (31), Damara Tern (8), Great White Pelican (23), Greater Flamingo (42), Grey Plover (13), Hartlaub's Gull (23), Kelp Gull (37), Lesser Flamingo (42), Pied Avocet (40), Ruddy Turnstone (17), Sanderling (24), Sandwich Tern (1), Swift Tern (21), White-breasted Cormorant (25), White-fronted Plover (41).

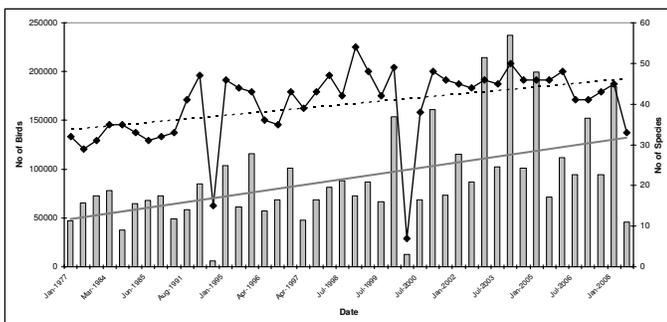


Figure 8: Number of birds (bars, left-hand y-axis) and species (diamonds, right-hand y-axis)

¹² These counts are ongoing.

counted at Walvis Bay and the trend over the counting period (dashed line = species trend, solid line = bird numbers trend).

Breaking News: Greater Sand Plover in Swakopmund

Eckart Demasius

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On Tuesday 4 January 2011 I received a call from Mark Boorman telling me of a Greater Sand Plover that he had located at the Mile 4 Saltworks. I searched for the bird twice a day but to no avail.

Photo: Shaun Overmeyer

On Saturday afternoon when I was about to leave the Saltworks Mark arrived with a couple of birders, amongst them Shaun Overmeyer who was at the time taking care of the sa-



rarebirdnews site during the absence of Trevor Hardaker. I arranged with them to call me should they be so lucky as to see the bird.

I could not believe my luck when my phone rang and they told me that the bird was sitting literally in front of their car. I was out in a flash but in the meantime a territorial White-fronted Plover chased off this rare bird and it moved to a little island in one of the evaporation ponds.



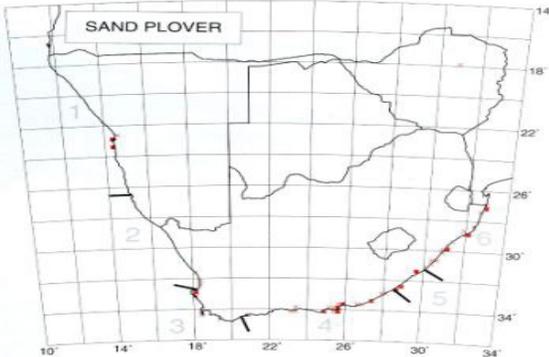
Photo: Eckart Demasius

Well done to Mark Boorman who first sighted this rarity and for sharing this information. What a wonderful way to start a new birding year!! This record might just be the first official sighting for Swakopmund.



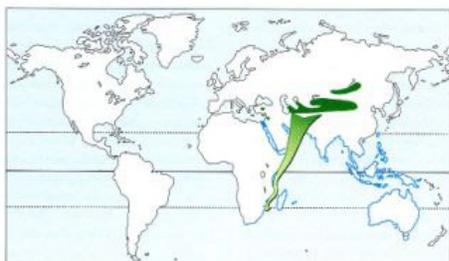
Photo: Eckart Demasius

At home I studied the literature on the Greater Sand Plover. The distribution map of the Atlas of Southern African Birds indicates that there are very few records along the Namibian coast.



The Greater Sand plover migrates along the East African Coast southwards and seems to prefer certain river estuaries as indicated on the distribution map with *only a handful of recorded sightings from Walvis Bay along the Namibian coast.* (Phil Hockey). The Atlas for Southern African Birds also makes reference to some records from Walvis Bay only.

SAND PLOVER
Charadrius leschenaultii



References:

Hockey P and Douie C: The Waders of Southern Africa, The Struik Publishing Group (Pty) Ltd Cornelis Struik House, 80 McKenzie Street Cape Town 8001, 1995

Harrison, J.A, Allan, D.G., Underhill, L.G., Herremans, M., Tree, A.J., Parker, V. & Brown, C.J. (eds). 1997. The Atlas of Southern African birds. Vol. 1: Non-passerines. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg, 1997

A Trip to the South, May 2010

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Recent issues of *Lanioturdus* have featured a number of trip reports on excursions to the Kavango and Caprivi Regions of Namibia. The south, however, seems to be a rather neglected birding destination. So, when Holger and Claire Kolberg suggested that we might like to join their group at Holoog, where they were participating in the “Hunsberg Hellride”, we jumped at the opportunity. Quite why any seemingly sane and normal person would want to put his/her body and bicycle through that sort of punishment is quite beyond us especially when there are birding and ringing options available, but - to each his own, and anyway, ours is not to reason why.

I have done relatively little birding in southern Namibia and saw this trip as an opportunity to extend my lifelist possibly by finding cinnamon-breasted warbler or black-headed canary. Big mistake – it seems that one seldom finds the species one is specifically seeking and this trip was no exception.

We decided to start our southern birdlist at Mariental and it got off to a good start with the sighting of a bunch of marabou storks mooching about outside the abattoir there. We ticked off a number of raptors and a few other species which are identifiable from a moving vehicle before stopping at Naute Dam for a quick look at the waterbirds. Here we found both inland cormorant species, African darter, great white pelican, sacred ibis, little egret, little grebe, Egyptian goose and grey heron before proceeding to Holoog.