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Bemerkungen an Mitarbeiter

Manuskripte sollten mit Schreibmaschine (oder in gut lesbarem Handschrift) geschrieben sein und zwar mit doppelter Zeilenabstand auf A4 (30 x 21 cm) Format. Skizzen, Karten und Tabellen sollten auf weissem Qualitätspapier mit schwarzer Tinte gezeichnet werden. Klare Schwarz-weiß-Photographien (15 x 20 cm) können eingereicht werden, um die Arbeit zu illustrieren.
EKONGORO - A VERITABLE BIRDING PARADISE

Ekongoro, the Kavango Administration Education Centre about four kilometres east of Rundu (1719 D), and the associated sewage ponds and seepage lakes were visited three times in 1986. On all three occasions the visits proved to be three of the most interesting of all, with a wide variety of birds being seen. The reed beds had recovered considerably, with abundant growth of lush green reeds. The water level was considerably lower than in October, resulting in large expanses of mud around the ponds, and large concentrations of waders - including two Black-tailed Godwits Limosa limosa and another Great Snipe.

On our most recent visit in December we caught and ringed six European Reed Warblers *, along with large numbers of the more common migrant and resident warblers. The reed beds had recovered considerably, with abundant growth of lush green reeds. The water level was considerably lower than in October, resulting in large expanses of mud around the ponds, and large concentrations of waders - including two Black-tailed Godwits Limosa limosa and another Great Snipe.

On three days in succession we had a very tired-looking skimmer scuttling along and feeding alongside White-winged Terns Chlidonias leucopterus on the upper sewage ponds - and a most unusual skimmer at that. Much larger than an ordinary African Skimmer Rynchops flavirostris, this skimmer had a prominently red belly and black head, and a very obvious white tail with black tail feathers! It also had very shabby black plumage and badly broken primary feathers, indicating some recent trepidation. On consulting our local field guides, we could not come to any definite conclusion about this odd-looking skimmer - it was only on our return to Windhoek that we discovered that this was an American Black Skimmer Rynchops niger * a first record for Africa! Unfortunately, despite desperate appeal, no-one managed to get up to Rundu to confirm the identity of this exciting, and highly unusual, vagrant (in fact, the most noteworthy response was ... why didn't you shoot it? ).

It is obvious from this article that Ekongoro is a 'birding paradise', a place to see 'lifers' and unusual birds. Unfortunately, Ekongoro ponds and sewage ponds and the area is over-run by local fishersmen and poachers - in both October and December we were forced to interact with poachers who indiscriminately shot at everything in sight (including us), through the fence on the eastern boundary of the property. The fence is broken in numerous places, providing ready access to dogs, cats and human beings. The remnants of riparian woodland are receding rapidly as a result of indiscriminate destruction and covering of an 'artificial' environment. Ekongoro, the sewage ponds and seepage lakes desperately need stricter supervision by the local Administration, if not by the Department of Nature Conservation, to ensure that it remains a favourable habitat for an impressive variety of otherwise rare and unusual birds in southern Africa.

JORS & LIZ KOMEN, c/o State Museum, P.O.Box 1203, Windhoek.

[N.B. All species marked with an asterisk (*) in this article are subject to confirmation by the Namibia Unusual Bird Sighting Committee.]

PARTIAL ALBINISM IN A REDEYED BULBUL

Partial albinism has been recorded in two of the bulbul species which occur in southern Africa: the Cape Bulbul Erynomus capensis (Broekhuysen & Broekhuysen 1969 Ostrich 40:82) and the Black-eyed Bulbul P. barbatus (Ashley Maberly 1970 Ostrich 41:261).
On 26 January 1987 a predominantly albino Red-eyed Bulbul P. nigricans was observed on the farm Matador No. 179, about 40 km north of the town of Okahandja. The bird retained some normal coloration, displaying the lemon-yellow vent as well as the diagnostic orange-red eye ring. The plumage was otherwise mostly white, with only the crest on the head being a dark grey colour.

The bird was observed alone in a tree, although normal conspecifics were observed in the immediate surroundings on the same day.


TRAGEN NILGAENSE IHRE KUECKEN IM SCHNABEL WENN SIE VON EINER WASSERSTELLE ZUR ANDEREN WECHSELN?

Bei einer Farmrundfahrt im Maerz entdeckten wir oben in einem Baum auf einem Gesellschaftsvogelnest eine brütende Nilgans Alopochen aegyptiacus, etwa einen Kilometer von einer Wasserstelle entfernt.

Anfang April schwamm die Gans mit sechs Kuecken auf dem Ruß von dem Wasserloch. Wie kamen diese Kuecken aus dem Nest? Hat die Nilgans die Kuecken im Schnabel zur Wasserstelle gebracht oder least die Gans die frisch geschlüpften Kuecken aus dem Nest fallen und traegt sie zur Wasserstelle?


J & C FISCHER, Farm Omomongua, Okahandja.


Wir selbst haben noch keine Nilgans gesehen, die ihre Jungen im Schnabel zur Wasserstelle bringt, aber Arbeiter haben dies schon beobachtet.

A. BRANDLER, Postfach 189, Windhoek 9000.

RECOVERY, TREATMENT AND RELEASE OF A HOUSE SPARROW

A juvenile House Sparrow Passer domesticus was found lying on a road, possibly injured by a passing car. I took the sparrow home and examined it for injuries. Fortunately, no bones were broken. The sparrow was placed in a cage, and was force-fed water and some Pro-nutro. Food and water were left in the cage, which was darkened for the afternoon and night. The following day the cage was moved to the verandah, where other wild birds congregate daily to feed. On the third day the cage door was opened, and the sparrow, apparently recovered, left shortly thereafter. The sparrow regularly returned to feed in the cage, until eventually I removed the cage.

SUZAN MALLEY-VALE, P.O. Box 3787, Windhoek 9000.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

Jesnitz & Jesnitz (1989 Lanioturdus 22:55) reported two records of Black and Pied Crows Corvus coronoides and Corvus albus burying food in the sand. These were unable to find previous records of this behaviour in the literature. I observed a Pied Crow bury a lamb chop bone in the sand at Okaukeujo Rest Camp, Etosha, some years ago.

H. J. L. ORFORD (DR.)

ANSWER TO LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY BIRD

The flying mystery bird in the last issue of LANIOTURDUS was a Common Tern Sterna hirundo.

[The Windhoek State Museum is acknowledged for permission to publish the photograph]

ERBATA - APOLOGIES!

In:

1. On page 30, line 5, November should be December.