

CONTENTS

VOLUME 33 (1 & 2), 2000

| | |
|--|----|
| EDITORIAL | 1 |
| LUDWIG, D.E. Chairman's report | 2 |
| KINAHAN, J. A note on the breeding of the Paradise Flycatcher in Windhoek | 4 |
| ROBEL, D. Damarasegler <i>Apus bradfieldi</i> in Windhoek Brutvogel in Baumen | 6 |
| SIMMONS, R. Peregrines and other raptors at Sandwich Harbour | 8 |
| SIMMONS, R. January 1999 wetland count data. | 10 |
| PAXTON, M. July wetland bird count – Mahango Game Reserve | 13 |
| PAXTON, M. Ducking the ducks – Chobe River, June 2000 | 20 |
| MALLET-VEALE, S. & F. SCHWENNICKE. Wetland count at Otjivero Dam | 26 |
| VON LUDWIGER, K. & H.-J. BRAND. Erste sichtung eines Glockenreihers in Sossusvlei | 27 |
| VON LUDWIGER, K. Schreiseeadler schlägt nilgans im fluge | 28 |
| SIMMONS, R. Review of bird ringing in Namibia – 1997 to 1998 | 29 |
| MALLET-VEALE, S. Vulture ring recovery | 35 |
| BECKER, H. Penguins in danger | 35 |

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.

DUCKING THE DUCKS – CHOBE RIVER, JUNE 2000

Mark Paxton
P.O.Box 183, Rundu

The Chobe River once again this year flooded its banks extensively offering some diverse waterbird habitat. A brief look at the area on a trip through Ngoma border-gate in May convinced me that the area required some serious birding attention. The mere mention of a bird count at the Sharpe's 'Fish Farm' in Katima produced such an enthusiastic response from Katie Sharpe that I could hardly stop a mad uncontrollable rush to pack up and start counting immediately. We subsequently made plans to fit in a count to qualify as an official Wetlands International count based on the diversity and numbers of waterbirds I'd observed at the Ngoma bridge. The wheels of organisation were set in motion!

A newly acquired flat-bottomed aluminium boat in the process of being made beautiful was given special attention to be finished in time. Our previous experiences on the Chobe River in September last year, where we used Dick Sharpe's boat, taught us that we required a boat for shallow water. This time a GPS was a must as well. On the weekend of 22–23 June we gathered our forces at the 'Fish Farm' in Katima.

It was a sorry start! On the Saturday morning only myself, Katie Sharpe, Linda Sheehan and Sukela forged ahead in a fully loaded Land Cruiser dragging our boat. We found our campsite of last year due to some spectacular navigational skills and went through the motions of setting ourselves up. However the air reverberated with the wing-beats of what appeared to be millions of waterfowl circling after being disturbed by our presence on the riverbank. We hadn't even been on the river and already the forthcoming count looked to be hard work.

We got the boat into the water and went for a quick sortie along the river, which made us even surer that the count was going to be difficult. The ducks, although concentrated in small areas along the river, took off in large groups immediately we were visible which did not allow for easy or accurate

counting. We therefore decided to count only the more obvious birds, leaving the two duck species until the following day by which time we hoped they would be more accustomed to the boat and our presence.

With Linda as 'scribe' and Katie and myself as able-bodied specialists, we tackled the daunting task with unfaltering determination. With pen poised and binoculars glued to our faces we set our jaws and tried to ignore the world's duck population that took flight constantly around us on occasion blotting out the sun. We tried hard to focus on everything but ducks and still remain cool. We found it almost a relief to reach a cut-off point towards near Serondella where we decided we would end the count. We returned to camp armed with the 'non-duck' figures, feeling well pleased and ready to give the ducks our best shot having built up a small degree of confidence.

Having just got underway again after a short rest salvation arrived in the form of a fully laden Land Rover with Richard Diggle, Dick and Karen Sharpe. Dick on the previous count had been aptly named Moby Dick after proving himself a very able skipper under shallow water conditions. Dick was now in a very unfortunate state with a leg in plaster and a temper worsening with every additional day of his disability. He was now named 'The Cripple' and made the most of it, insisting on being carried to and from the boat in true colonial fashion. We were however only too happy to share our 'Duck Burden' with anybody else, and we all went out on the boat before sundown to expose our new additions to the team to the problem of the ducks. That night we decided to duck the ducks and drown our sorrows.

The following morning we were out armed with hangovers, bins and determination. The ducks had by now also got more used to the boat as we had to the concentrations. We had a strategy in mind, which didn't involve shotguns, mass destruction and elimination of the problem. We'd only just got underway when some more salvation arrived – Chris Hines, Helen Price and my wife, Charlie with everybody's dogs. Our next foray into battle with the ducks was with final resolve and we gave them everything we had, we even brought out our secret weapon – ESTIMATION. Our final day was triumphant and that evening we had some serious celebrating to do. We'd conquered the Chobe; we'd done the ducks!

The overall count produced a greater variety of species compared to the previous count of September last year.

Only one Dabchick was recorded and surprisingly this time, one group of Great White Pelicans, which was different to the September count where large numbers of Pink-backed Pelicans were recorded. Black-winged Stilts were few as were Water Dikkop. There were a few more Red-winged Pratincoles this time round, although no big flocks, and only very few Whiskered Terns, although nearer the Ngoma Bridge many more were seen before the count. We struggled to find at least one Malachite Kingfisher but Pied Kingfishers popped up in the usual good numbers. We also saw only a few Grey-headed Gulls although as with the terns there were more concentrations up near the Ngoma Bridge, out of our counting area. Reed Cormorants were not very well represented with only small clusters of 3 – 4 birds or single flying birds. Grey Herons were again the dominant species and were found in groups of up to 14 birds with the occasional Black-headed Heron. Green-backed Heron, Purple Heron and Rufous-bellied Herons were only seen as single birds, usually flying overhead. Squacco Herons were few and far and seen mostly as single birds. As with the previous count Great White Egrets were well represented with scattered groups of up to 12 birds. More Cattle Egrets were seen this count, in two groups, with some single Yellow-billed Egrets.

Only a few Hamerkops and surprisingly few Marabou Storks were noted when compared to the vast numbers during the previous count in September last year. Presumably the water had not yet receded enough to afford these large birds their required optimum foraging opportunities. One group of Open-billed Storks was seen flying overhead, and Yellow-billed Storks were seen in isolated small groups of up to six birds. More African Spoonbills were seen this time, either flying overhead in groups, or single birds. Only a few Glossy Ibis and Sacred Ibis were seen this count.

Knob-billed Ducks were present in large groups, as were White-faced Whistling Ducks. These groups were concentrated in some more ideal areas along the river in the more isolated pans or marshy areas still containing shallow water. Red-billed Teal were seen in some relatively large groups as

were Egyptian Goose, of which 80 were seen in a single group. As with the last count only a few Spurwing Goose were seen in groups of up to seven birds.

African Fish Eagles were common, with three active nests being the highlight. As expected we only found single Black Crake and Baillon's Crake, the vegetation and floodplains not offering suitable feeding habitat for any of the crakes. We did however find three Painted Snipe on one of the few walks onto the bank and one wonders if more of these waders would have been recorded if more walks were undertaken. There was the expected abundance of Blacksmith Plovers with only a small number of Long-toed Plover and Wattled Plover.

General comments

The area covered this time was somewhat less than in September last year. The depth of water made boating easier, but the bird concentrations made the counting more demanding and more time would have been needed to cover the remaining area between our camp and Ngoma Bridge. We had also heard that most of that area had been professionally counted by two students from AGRED of South Africa, funded by the resident concession hunter of the Salambala Conservancy. The river had started to flow back towards the Zambezi junction and the floodplains were starting to dry out, however, there were very few isolated pools as in September offering less feeding prospects for the fish-eating species like Marabous, etc. The number of ducks was heartening and should indicate that some serious consideration should be given to seasonal duck hunting in the area. The degree of fish netting on the river was less than last year, although this was probably due to lack of access to the river through the still soggy surrounding floodplains. The opposite bank in the Chobe Game Park again offered some spectacular and diverse game-viewing opportunities. These included lions on a buffalo kill and a herd of ±200 buffalo. Interesting other observations included an immature Augur Buzzard and a Black-bellied Korhaan.

I can only again emphasize my earlier thoughts that this area should be seriously considered as a 'core area' in the Salambala Conservancy plans, and be given special protection and consideration for tourism/hunting

potential. With the correct management strategies this area could yield more all round benefits with less input than the area already targeted as the 'core area'. The adjacent Chobe Game Park with a well controlled game population must surely be seen as a definite merit point to consider to enhance the success of this area as a 'core area'.

| Species | Sept 1999 | Jun 2000 |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Dabchick | | 1 |
| Great White Pelican | | 46 |
| Pink-backed Pelican | 1913 | |
| Reed Cormorant | 99 | 18 |
| Grey Heron | 46 | 18 |
| Black-headed Heron | 3 | 3 |
| Purple Heron | 4 | 1 |
| Great White Egret | 72 | 59 |
| Little Egret | 21 | |
| Yellow-billed Egret | | 7 |
| Slaty Egret | 15 | |
| Cattle Egret | 5 | 24 |
| Squacco Heron | 50 | 7 |
| Green-backed Heron | 8 | 1 |
| Rufous-bellied Heron | 14 | 5 |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | 16 | |
| Hamerkop | 13 | 3 |
| White Stork | 2 | |
| Open-billed Stork | | 28 |
| Saddle-billed Stork | 11 | |
| Marabou Stork | 167 | 1 |
| Yellow-billed Stork | 63 | 19 |
| Sacred Ibis | 8 | 1 |
| Glossy Ibis | 90 | 6 |
| African Spoonbill | 6 | 63 |
| White-faced Duck | 67 | 2963 |
| Fulvous Whistling Duck | | 25 |
| Egyptian Goose | | 93 |
| Red-billed Teal | 130 | 531 |

| Species | Sept 1999 | Jun 2000 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Knob-billed Duck | 31 | 1084 |
| Spurwing Goose | 49 | 17 |
| African Fish Eagle | 3 | 5 |
| African Marsh Harrier | 4 | |
| Helmeted Guineafowl | 3 | |
| Blake Crake | | 1 |
| Baillon's Crake | | 1 |
| African Jacana | 44 | 38 |
| Painted Snipe | | 3 |
| Kittlitz Plover | 2 | |
| Three-banded Plover | 7 | |
| Crowned Plover | 1 | |
| Blacksmith Plover | 142 | 31 |
| Wattled Plover | 2 | 6 |
| Long-toed Plover | | 5 |
| Common Sandpiper | 8 | |
| Greenshank | 30 | |
| Ruff | 5 | |
| Black-winged Stilt | 20 | 2 |
| Water Dikkop | 4 | 2 |
| Red-winged Praticole | 2 | 24 |
| Grey-headed Gull | 86 | 5 |
| Whiskered Tern | 37 | 4 |
| White-winged Tern | 1 | |
| Coppery-tailed Coucal | 1 | |
| Pied Kingfisher | 41 | 58 |
| Malachite Kingfisher | | 1 |
| TOTAL | 3348 | 5210 |

