

## CONTENTS

VOLUME 37 (3 + 4) 2004

OSBORNE, T. O. Editorial .....	1
EDITOR. Authors Guidelines .....	2
JOUBERT, D. Blue Waxbill <i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i> nesting in exotic fig <i>Ficus microcarpa</i> .....	4
BISTRI, H. Monteiro Hornbills <i>Tockus monteiri</i> in unserem Garten .....	5
JOUBERT, D.J. Marico Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis mariquensis</i> nest in <i>Acacia mellifera</i> shrub. How important are hook thorned <i>Acacias</i> in affording protection to nests and chicks? .....	11
FRIEDERICH, G.& T. Birding weekend at Shamvura Lodge .....	13
PATTERSON, J. New Breeding Record for Grey-headed Gulls <i>Larus cirrocephalus</i> at Kunene River Mouth, Namibia .....	18
SIMMONS, R. Red Data Book Draft .....	19
FRIEDERICH, G. Uncommon raptor sightings on Farm Tsutsab 1818 CC, Tsumeb district .....	26
ADANK, W & P. CUNNINGHAM. Melanism in a Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> .....	27
CUNNINGHAM, P. & N.STRAUSS. Lappet-faced Vulture <i>Torgos tracheliotus</i> breeding in southern Namibia .....	28
BIRD OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES .....	30
ANNOUNCEMENTS .....	31

## Editorial

Another hot dry season is upon us and birding is slow as we await the rains. Soon, however, the palearctic and intra-African migrants will arrive to increase the numbers of species. Our drab non-breeding local birds will get dressed up for the ladies and identification of most of the weavers, bishops and whydahs will be a lot easier. Unfortunately, the bird guides usually only illustrate these birds in breeding dress. In Namibia we only see them dressed up for 3-5 months of the year and identification is often frustrating.

Recently I caught non-breeding Shaft-tailed Whydahs in my mist net for ringing. After consulting all the reference books I found it is impossible to sex any of the birds. either in the hand or in the field. It would most helpful if members who know of any special aids or resources for identifying Shaft-tailed Whydahs would publish that information in the *Lanioturdus* for all of us. Another bird I have been trying to sex in the non-breeding season is the Chestnut Weaver. In the hand there is no problem since the male has a larger wing length and is heavier, but free-flying in a tree then identification becomes difficult.

The new Roberts VII will be about 1200 pages and will be out in April 2005 at a cost of R799. It will be nice to have all the up-to-the-date data on the birds but it is obvious from the draft texts on the website that information is missing on many of the species. See [www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/docs/roberts.html](http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/docs/roberts.html). Perhaps after the book comes out I will try and summarize where gaps in information on Namibia birds occur so we can try and fill the gaps.

Grey Go-away Bird  
Jacobin Cuckoo  
Coppery-tailed Coucal  
African Wood Owl  
White-faced Scops Owl  
Pearl-spotted Owlet  
African Barred Owlet  
Giant Eagle Owl

White-bellied Sunbird  
Village Weaver  
Fan-tailed Widowbird  
Brown Firefinch  
Pin-tailed Whydah  
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah

### **New Breeding Record for Greyheaded Gulls *Larus cirrocephalus* at Kunene River Mouth, Namibia**

John Paterson

Ministry of Environment and Tourism

Skeleton Coast Park, Private Bag 5001 Swakopmund, Namibia

john@paterson.alt.na

Grey-headed Gulls, *Larus cirrocephalus*, are seen regularly at the Kunene River Mouth, 17 ° 15' S 11 ° 45' E, on the northern Namibian coast. Clinning and Jensen (1979) regarded them as being common, but more recent observations seem to suggest that they are a regular visitor rather than common (*pers. obs.*). Breeding has not been recorded there.

On 26 July 2002 a Grey-headed Gull chick was noticed walking down to the water's edge of a large vegetated island in the Kunene estuary. More detailed scanning of the area revealed 3 more chicks further away from the water beyond vegetation fringe. There were several adult Grey-headed gulls in the vicinity. No other gulls except Kelp Gulls, *Larus dominicanus*, were in the area.

During a subsequent visit on 29 August 2002 a landing was made on the island and the area around where the chicks were observed was investigated. Although there were no gulls present, 6 abandoned nests were found. The nests were placed on the short spiky grass, *Odysea paucinervis*, that covered that section of the

island. The platform was made of reeds with the cup lined with grass. The nests were situated 20 meters back from the water's edge with a minimum distance of 2 meters and a maximum distance of 4 meters separating them.

On the mud flats approximately 1 kilometer upstream of the island, 2 flying juvenile Grey-headed gulls were observed begging food from an adult. Both chicks were begging from the same adult. Presumably these chicks were from the breeding site on the island at the mouth.

Grey-headed Gulls are a winter breeding species between April and November with the peak laying period from May to June (Tarboton 2001). The recent successful breeding event of this species at the Kunene River mouth falls well within this period. Grey-headed Gulls breed regularly at the Swakopmund Sewerage Works (R. Braby *pers. comm.*). This record extends the known breeding range of this species on the Namibian coast by at least 700 km.

### **References**

- Brook, R. K. 1997. Greyheaded Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*. In: *The Atlas of Southern African Birds. Vol. 1: Non-passerines*. Harrison, J. A., Allan, D. G., Underhill, L. G., Herremens, M., Tree, A. J., Parker, V. & Brown, C. J. (eds.), p.464. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg.
- Clinning, C. F. and Jensen, R. A. C. 1979. Additions to the bird check-list of Kaokoland and the Skeleton Coast. *Modoqua* 11: 247-253.
- Maclean, G. L. 1993. *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa*. John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town
- Tarboton, W. 2001. *Nests and Eggs of Southern African Birds*. Struik Publishers, Cape Town.

### **Red Data Book Draft**

Rob Simmons

Associate Researcher FitzPatrick Institute

University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa

harrier@botzoo.uct.ac.za

The following is a draft of the Red Data Book entry for the Tawny Eagle. I would like all readers of the *Lanioturdus* to please read the draft and send me any comments, corrections, observations that will improve the document.