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## EDITORIAL

I write this editorial having just arrived back from a month in the USA, mainly Alaska and I have to marvel at the bird life here compared to the winter in the cold north. One may think that April is spring in the Northern Hemisphere but if you get far enough north, spring comes much later. Geese and ducks were arriving as the snow was melting but they met temperatures of  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the northwest of Alaska. Before we left the cranes were arriving and redpolls nesting but both the birds and humans were shocked to wake up May first to a blanket of 10–50 cm of snow which ranged from the coast to the interior.

Back in Namibia the late rains were well received by the birds and nesting continued. The first bird I caught in my mist net on 15 May was a recently fledged Yellow-breasted Bunting, the second a young Red-billed Quelea. The nest box I left with four tiny Carp's Black Tits was occupied by a dormouse. Another nest box had 3 small Grey Hornbills which is rather late for this species. In my absence, Pete Leonard visited the country from neighboring Zambia and he has written an account of his visit. He sends his apologies to Steve Braine and Keith Wearne for not having the time to visit. I would encourage everyone to ask their visitors to drop me a page-long account of their observations and memories.

This journal used to have more recent sightings published but I have not been receiving any from the members and I appeal to all to send in their observations directly to me via e-mail at [korie@iafrica.com.na](mailto:korie@iafrica.com.na). For those of you in the dark, snail mail also works at PO Box 22, Okaukuejo.

## OBSERVATIONS AT A WHITE-THROATED CANARY NEST

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On Saturday 14 January 2001, we found a White-throated Canary *Serinus albogularis* nest at the Spitzkoppe, and spent a few hours observing the comings and goings of the adults. Observations were done from about 15 m away, using a telescope, and lasted from 13h00 to 18h00 when the light started to fail.

The nest was a small cup in a forked branch of a Sand Corkwood tree *Commiphora angolensis* about 1.5m above the ground, and there were 4 chicks present – probably not more than a couple of days old. The chicks were fed 12 times in the 5 hours I watched the nest, averaging 25 minutes between feeds. The shortest interval was 5 minutes, the longest 54 minutes.

Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa (Maclean 1993) says that only the female incubates and that nestlings are fed by both parents. I identified the bird on the nest as the female because it had a brood patch, and could distinguish between the two adults because of differences in the patterns on their heads.

The male did all the fetching and carrying of food except on four occasions. On those occasions the male was absent for a long time so the female left the nest to fetch food, leaving the chicks unattended for up to 26 minutes. On the arrival of the male with food, the female would solicit food from him by fluttering her wings until he fed her and flew off. Then she would feed the chicks. The male was seen to feed the chicks directly three times only when he arrived at the nest while the female was not there.

## UNUSUAL COASTAL SIGHTINGS

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This report covers some of the unusual birds seen at Swakopmund and Walvis Bay during the summer of 2000–2001.

### Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

This may be the same flagged individual which was reported in *Lanioturdus* Vol 32(2, 3&4). It was present at Mile 4 beach from November 2000 to February 2001.

### Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

One present at the Raft Restaurant November 2000.

### Blackheaded Gull *Larus ridibundus*

A full breeding plumage bird at The Raft in December 2000, and a non-breeding bird at Bird Paradise which was present until the end of April 2001.

### Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*

Found in a Swakopmund garden and released at the Golf course December 2000.

### Broadbilled Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

2 birds 1 of which was in breeding plumage at Lovers' Hill from January to March 2001.

### Rednecked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

More than 50, 3 in breeding plumage were present at the Walvis Salt Works.