

Namibia Bird Club



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# LANIOTURDUS

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## Editorial

The symposium and dinner to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Namibia Bird Club have come and gone. I am very pleased to be able to say that our members attended these events in numbers and that we had over seventy people there (including the invited speakers). The symposium went off without any real problems – none of the speakers overran his allotted time slot and on the technological front the laptops and the beamers communicated with each other.

There will be a special edition of *Lanioturdus* incorporating the papers presented so I will not go into detail here. Suffice to say that all the talks were at layman's level, all the feedback we have had has been positive and that we have had a number of people enquiring when we will be presenting another symposium – the answer to that one is simple – not before we have again accumulated sufficient funds.

Many people were able to obtain the software necessary to commence atlasing thanks to Arnold van der Westhuizen's efforts. SABAP2

## Rarities and Interesting Observations

First some slightly older records:-

Len le Roux photographed a Woodland Kingfisher in Ludwigsdorf on 31/01/2012. This summer at least three Woodland Kingfishers were present at Monte Christo where two birds had been recorded for the past few summers (see *Lanioturdus* 45(1)). This sighting suggests that there are now even more of these birds visiting central Namibia, well south of their normal summer range.



Woodland Kingfisher – Photo : Len le Roux

Stefan Rust then reported a Dwarf Bittern seen at Waterberg Wilderness Lodge on 09/02/2012. This is an uncommon species in central Namibia.

Stefan also advised me of the sighting of two Black Storks on 06/03/2012 in the Remhoogte Pass area. According to the Red Data Book (currently in final editing stage) the population estimate for this species for the entire country is a mere 140 birds.

Mark Boorman reported an adult male Greater Painted-Snipe found in Swakopmund on 29/03/2012. The bird expired but Mark found this incident unusual in that these birds are usually found at the coast after the east wind has been blowing and there had been no east

wind. This is not the first record of this species from Swakopmund – see *Lanioturdus* 42(4).

The Namibia Bird Club Easter weekend outing (06 to 09/04/2012) to Farm Karichab near Maltahöhe produced several sightings of a Black Stork along the Hudup River (see above).



Black Stork – Photo : Christiane Maluche

Also of interest at Farm Karichab was the sighting of a single Dusky Lark. This bird was at least 120 km south of the southernmost Atlas (SABAP 1) record. This could represent a range extension, a vagrant or, at this time of the year, even a reverse migrant heading south instead of north.



Dusky Lark – Photo : Christiane Maluche

On 15/04/2012 Gudrun Middendorff and I saw two Black Storks soaring near the “picture bridge” between Windhoek and Aris (see above).

On 17/04/2012 I saw an African Harrier-Hawk being mobbed by swifts above the roof of the Hervormde Church in Fidel Castro Street, Windhoek. I subsequently received reports of further sightings of this species from various locations around Windhoek. Jo Tagg reported seeing one in Pioneer Park in the first half of the month. Uschi Kirchner saw one in the vicinity of the National Botanical Garden on 14/04/2012 while Nacho Aransay reported one in Klein Windhoek on 22/04/2012. Gudrun Middendorff then reported seeing a single bird in Eros on 10/05/2012. This species, which was virtually unknown in the Windhoek area until recently, has been reported fairly regularly in and around Windhoek over the last eighteen months or so making me convinced that there is at least one bird resident in or near the city (see *Lanioturdus* 44(2), 44(3), 44(4), 45(1) and 45(2)).

An out of range Squacco Heron was reported by Stefan Rust at Kalahari Bush Breaks, Gobabis on 24/04/2012. This bird was sighted almost 200 km east of the recorded SABAP 1 range in Namibia.

On 26/04/2012 Jessica Kemper found a Lesser Crested Tern at a Swift Tern breeding colony on Halifax Island near Lüderitz. There are only a handful of records of this species in Namibia and this is almost certainly the first record for southern Namibia.



Lesser Crested Tern – Photo : Jessica Kemper

SABAP 2 has produced its first record for this column. An Out of Range Form for a Black Harrier seen at Hunkabfontein between the Hoanib and Uniab Rivers on 30/04/2012 by Wessel Swanepoel was submitted to Holger Kolberg for verification. This is a rare species in Namibia but it has been recorded in that region before.



Black Harrier – Photo : Wessel Swanepoel

The atlas training session at the Gammams Sewage Works on 01/05/2012 turned up sightings of Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Peregrine Falcon and a pair of African Black Ducks - all uncommon species in central Namibia.



Little Bittern – Photo : Christiane Maluche

The training session at Monte Christo the following day brought sightings of a further pair of African Black Ducks, a Goliath Heron and a Grey-headed Kingfisher, again all

uncommon birds in the central areas of the country. The highlight though was the sighting of no fewer than five Black Storks (see also above).

Stefan Rust reported a Lesser Moorhen at Farm Sonnleiten between Windhoek and the airport on 04/05/2012. This is an uncommon species in central Namibia and it is also late in the season for these birds to be present. Other late staying migrants reported by Stefan include a pale morph Wahlberg's Eagle at Farm Sonnleiten on 04/05/2012, two Dusky Larks at Klein Namutoni on 13/05/2012, an Osprey at Otavi and a Yellow-billed Kite between Otavi and Otjiwarongo on 15/05/2012.

The Namibia Bird Club outing to Monte Christo on 13/05/2012 again brought sightings of a pair of African Black Ducks and a possible Goliath Heron. On this occasion seven Black Storks were seen soaring (see above).

In addition Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since the middle of April 2012.

A "Mega Tick" in the form of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was reported from Mile 4 Saltworks north of Swakopmund on 13/04/2012. This apparently constitutes only the fourteenth record of this species in southern Africa and is the third Namibian record. Two Common Redshanks were also present at the saltworks.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper – Photo : Christiane Maluche

The report dated 23/04/2012 deals again with the Buff-breasted Sandpiper still at Mile 4 Saltworks together with a supporting cast of at least three Common Redshanks while six Red-necked Phalaropes were reported from Walvis Bay.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper – Photo: Eckart Demasius

On 24/04/2012 a Pectoral Sandpiper was reported from the edge of Fischer's Pan in the Etosha National Park.

The report dated 03/05/2012 mentioned that at least one of the Gull-billed Terns was still at Walvis Bay (see *Lanioturdus* 45(1) and 45(2)).

An African Cuckoo Hawk was seen in Vineta, Swakopmund, on 11/05/2012. This bird is a long way off its normal range and raises the question of whether the "mystery raptor" photographed near Gobabeb in August 2010 (see *Lanioturdus* 44(3)) might indeed have been an African Cuckoo Hawk.

The report dated 17/05/2012 advises that both Gull-billed Terns had been seen again at Walvis Bay. At least one of these birds was still present in the last week of May.

A very far off range Woolly-necked Stork was reported from Swakopmund on 06/06/2012.

Neil Thomson