



LANIOTURDUS

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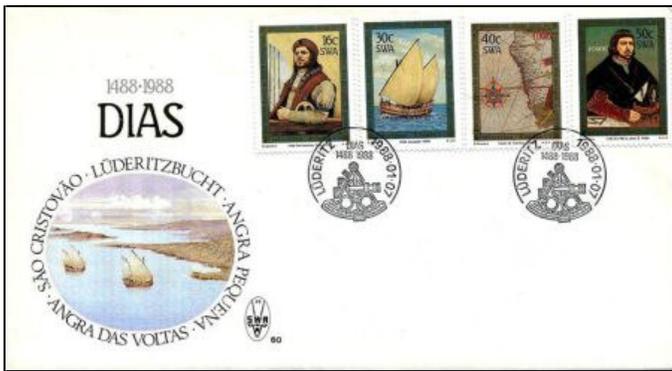
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Editorial

English common names of bird species occurring in southern Africa : this topic seems to be the subject of a never ending debate. Recently *The Hornbill*, the journal of BirdLife Lowveld, published letters fuelling this debate over the ever changing English common names of our birds. My article in the last issue of *Lanioturdus* shows however that "new" bird names are nothing new at all and that the common names of species have been changing and evolving for many years.

The question does arise, however, as to which names a journal such as *Lanioturdus* should use. It is my policy as editor to use the common names used in Roberts VII and I shall continue to do so until another definitive publication is issued. I believe it is necessary to choose a standard and stick to it in order that most readers will be able to determine which species are being discussed. The common names used in Roberts VII are also for the most part used in all the newer publications such as Roberts Bird Guide, Sasol 3, Sinclair and Ryan, Oberprieler and Cillié and the new revised edition of Newman's. I am sure that most readers have access to at least one of these publications. Thus I shall stick to the names Comb Duck, Osprey, Barn Owl, Cattle Egret and Great Egret as per Roberts VII in spite of the fact that I understand that these are now Knob-billed Duck, Western Osprey, Western Barn Owl, Western Cattle Egret and Western Great Egret. I shall also continue to use the name Black-headed Canary and not the split Black-headed Canary/Damara Canary as it occurs in Sasol 3 – it seems that the authors of Sasol



The last South West Africa stamps to depict birds were issued on 3 November 1988 simply under the title of “Birds”.



The four birds that appear on the stamps are all near endemics and I find it rather strange that the title is simply “Birds”. The leaflet in the first day cover explains it thus : “The five birds depicted on the four stamps and the commemorative envelope represent species whose distribution is almost wholly confined to South West Africa. Small populations of these birds also exist in similar habitats in south-western Angola. All five species are fully protected by law”.

In the 115 year existence of South West Africa, regardless of which regime was in power, only 20 bird species were depicted on SWA stamps.

Interestingly, the bird that is so much associated with South West Africa because of its black, white and red colours, the Crimson-breasted Shrike, (der Reichsvogel in German, die Duitse vlag in Afrikaans), never appeared on a stamp of South West Africa.

Rarities and Interesting Observations

First some slightly older records:

Dawid van der Merwe informed us of a European Honey-Buzzard he photographed near the van Eck Power Station on 06/02/2011. A rare migrant in central Namibia and the second sighting of which I am aware for the 2010/2011 season (see Lanioturdus 44(1)).



Photo: Dawid van der Merwe

Dieter Ludwig informed us of another Village Indigobird seen in the vicinity of Ashenborn Street, Pioneerspark, in February. (See Lanioturdus (44-2).

Then on 28/03/2011 Luise Hoffmann and Sigi Gläfke both (independently of one another) heard a coucal calling from the riverine vegetation along the Seeis River between Sonnleiten Farm Residence and Africa Farm Ondekaremba. Sigi Gläfke later saw the bird and identified it as a Senegal Coucal. This bird is way south of its normal range but it is not the first coucal to be seen in central Namibia. Some years ago a White-browed Coucal was seen at Monte Christo.

Richard Niddrie reported six Dusky Larks between Baumgartsbrun and Friedenau Dam on 01/04/2011. While not a rarity this is a fairly uncommon species in central Namibia.



Dusky Lark - Photo: Richard Niddrie

The Bird Club morning walk at the Gammams Sewage Works on 10/04/2011 produced an unexpected sighting of a pair of African Black Ducks. While this species has been seen occasionally in the Windhoek area at Monte Christo and Farm Ongos where its preferred habitat of running water is available these birds were seen on a stagnant pond.

Also seen on this outing was an adult African Harrier-Hawk in the vicinity of the Hammerkop nest. This is a very uncommon species in central Namibia although there have been several sightings recently. An immature bird was seen at the sewage works

on 13/02/2011 (see Lanioturdus 44(2)) while Chris Brown reported a sub-adult bird in Windhoek West on 31/03/2011.

Richard Niddrie and Christiane Maluche reported a Bronze-winged Courser seen in broad daylight at Daan Viljoen Game Park on 17/04/2011. This is a fairly uncommon nocturnal species seldom seen during the day. Gudrun Middendorff and I saw one after dark on 26/03/2011 near NARREC at Brakwater.



Bronze-winged Courser - Photo: Christiane Maluche

On 20/04/2011 I saw three Red-billed Oxpeckers near Sharukwe Village on the road between Rundu Airport and Ncaute. This species was not recorded in this area during the Atlas period but I have seen it there several times over the past eighteen months. This sighting is marginally further north than where I have seen the birds before. This is however the first time that I have seen more than two birds (see Lanioturdus 43(1), 43(3), 43(4) and 44(1)).

In late April Günther Friederich reported Maccoa Ducks breeding for the first time on Tsutsab Vlei near Tsintsabis when he observed a female with four ducklings.

The ringer's get-together at Augurabis near Holog in the south of Namibia from 01 to 06/05/2011 produced sightings of an off range Grey Go-away-bird and a male Southern Double-collared Sunbird. The sunbird was some way north of its normal recorded range but this species has been seen in Lüderitz in the past.

Nancy Robson reported hearing a coucal calling in the Odiba area about 1 km south of the Angolan border for a period of at least ten days prior to 05/05/2011. Unfortunately the bird was not seen so the species could not be determined but she advised that she had never seen or heard a coucal there before in the 18 years she has lived there.

Dawid van der Merwe reported a Grey-headed Kingfisher seen in mid May at Avis Dam. This is a very uncommon species in central Namibia and it also seems very late in the year for this intra-African migrant to be present. I also received another report of this species seen by Henk van Renterghem at Daan Viljoen Game Park on 06/02/2011.

Hartmut and Helen Kolb reported two Terek Sandpipers and a Pacific Golden Plover seen at Walvis Bay Lagoon on 15/05/2011. The Terek Sandpipers are very uncommon birds on the Namibian coast and the only other Namibian record of Pacific Golden Plover I have been able to trace was one seen by Mark Boorman in Swakopmund about ten years ago although there have been several records of American Golden Plovers in recent years.

Henk Van Renterghem reported a Bat Hawk seen perched on a telephone pole near a small marsh some 50 km past Dordabis on the C23 on 21/05/2011. This bird seems to be well off its recorded range although I have heard of records in the vicinity of Arnhem Caves. Henk also reported two Greater Painted Snipes and a Lesser Moorhen from this wetland while a month previously he had seen Yellow-crowned Bishop, Lesser Moorhen and Dwarf Bittern there.

Henk Van Renterghem also provided some other interesting records including an Osprey seen at Avis Dam in January 2011, confirmation of a Common Redshank at Mile 4 Saltworks on 13/03/2011, several Red-necked Phalaropes at Mile 4 Saltworks on 12/03/2011 and two Red Phalaropes at the same location on 13/03/2011. He also reported an African Barred Owlet seen along the C23 near Dordabis – this is an extremely

uncommon species in central Namibia with only a small scattering of Atlas records.

Another of his records is that of five Montagu's Harriers seen along the C23 about 20 km from Dordabis. At the end of December 2010 we saw two harriers in the same area which we identified as Pallid Harriers – I can't help wondering whether these are some of the same birds and whether one of us got the identification wrong.

We received a report of a single Black Stork seen by Dieter Stetzel on 07/06/2011 from the road to Monte Christo. While not exactly a rarity this is a very uncommon species in central Namibia although it has been seen at Monte Christo on occasion.

On 09/06/2011 Gudrun Middendorff again saw Black-backed Puffbacks at Monte Christo confirming their continued presence there well south of their recorded range. Puffbacks were first seen at Monte Christo in February 2011 (see *Lanioturdus* 44(2)).

The Namibia Bird Club morning walk at Windhoek's Gammams Sewage Works on 12/06/2011 produced a sighting of two Pink-backed Pelicans. This is a very uncommon species in central Namibia although two birds were seen at Otjivero Dam in January (see *Lanioturdus* 44(2)).



Pink-backed Pelican - Photo: Neil Thomson

Holger Kolberg saw an Osprey in the vicinity of the railway bridge at Swakopmund in the third week of June. This bird is undoubtedly overwintering in Namibia which is unusual

but not unheard of. Last year there were at least two overwintering birds in central Namibia (see *Lanioturdus* 43(3)).

On 22/06/2011 I saw two Southern Ground-Hornbills between Mpacha and Katima Mulilo. This is a species which has become very uncommon outside of protected areas but this is the second time I have seen it in this vicinity (see *Lanioturdus* 43(2)).

In addition Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities etc. seen in Namibia since the beginning of April 2011.

The report dated 05/05/2011 makes mention of one Common Redshank at Mile 4 Saltworks while five Red-necked Phalaropes were seen at Walvis Bay.

At least four Red-necked Phalaropes were reported from Walvis Bay on 03/06/2011 while a far less welcome species in the form of a House Crow was seen at the entrance to the town. This is an invasive species from Asia which has caused major problems in cities such as Durban and Cape Town where it has survived all efforts to eradicate it. Presumably this bird has come off a ship in the harbour.

At least two Common Redshanks were present at the Mile 4 Saltworks on 18/06/2011.

Neil Thomson

About the Namibia Bird Club

The Namibia Bird Club was founded in 1962 and has been active since then. We organize monthly visits to interesting birding sites around Windhoek as well as regular visits to Avis Dam and the Gammams Sewerage Works and occasional weekend trips further afield.

Experienced birders are more than happy to help beginners and novices on these outings. If you have a transport problem or would like to share transport please contact a committee member. Depending on the availability of speakers and suitable material we have

lecture or video evenings at the Namibia Scientific Society premises. Members receive a programme of forthcoming events (the Bird Call Newsletter) and the Bird Club journal, *Lanioturdus*.

Members can receive a discounted subscription to the *Africa Birds and Birding* magazine. The fees below are with and without this subscription.

Membership Fees 2011

Category	Without	With
Single member	N\$ 130	N\$ 310
Family membership (Husband, wife, children)		
	N\$ 150	N\$ 330
Junior member (All scholars and students)		
	N\$ 90	N\$ 270
Pensioner	N\$ 90	N\$ 270
Foreign member (Not resident in Namibia)		
	N\$ 165	N/A
Corporate membership	N\$ 400	N/A

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