



# LANIOTURDUS

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### Editorial

Included in this issue is the chairperson's report as delivered at the Annual General Meeting held on 5 March 2009. In it our chairperson, Gudrun Middendorff, outlines the activities of the Namibia Bird Club over the past year which include outings, talks, attendance of meetings and conferences by committee members and others, the partnership agreement with NEWS (Namibia Environment and Wildlife Society) and the donations and sponsorships given to various causes.

There are a number of birding projects on the go in Namibia and also a number of special interest groups eg. ringers, raptors, cranes and coastal birds. One can then ask what the primary function of the bird club is. We believe that the Namibia Bird Club provides social and educational birding to its members through outings, talks and of course, the publication of *Lanioturdus*. Morning walks are led by ex-

perienced birders who are able to help others develop their bird identification skills and general birding knowledge. It is our hope that members will go on to become involved in other projects where they can use these skills. A number of members have participated in the summer and winter bird counts at Walvis Bay which form part of the African Water Bird Census under the auspices of Wetlands International. The Bird Club has undertaken to contribute to these counts by doing summer and winter counts at Monte Christo. On 1 February 2009 four Bird Club members, Gudrun, Hanjo Böhme, Rolf Adrian and myself assisted by my daughter, Maren, as scribe, counted 335 birds of 34 species at Monte Christo. If there is interest from members and particularly if someone can provide a boat, the Bird Club could make an even bigger contribution to this project by doing counts on other inland waters such as perhaps Hoffnung Dam or Otjivero Dam which are not currently being counted.

Although I only fairly recently formally joined the Namibia Bird Club I have long been of the opinion that if one gets a lot out of birding one should put something back. Over the years I have been involved in data collection for the Atlas of Southern African Birds, various wetland counts, raptor road counts and I now have a ringer's license. I believe that by participating in these various activities I am putting something back into birding and I hope that others will also follow this path.

Tim Osborne resigned from the committee before the AGM (after resigning as editor of *Lanioturdus* some months ago) and Suzan Mallet-Veale has stood down from active involvement. We now welcome two new committee members in Holger Kolberg and Richard Niddrie.

### Chairperson's Report 2009 Presented at the Annual General Meeting held on 5 March 2009

*Gudrun Middendorff*  
*gudrunm@iway.na*

First I want to thank my committee for their hard work, support and commitment and good spirit over the past year. Secondly a want to thank our members and friends for supporting our outings and lastly I want to thank the Scientific Society for the venue and their staff for excellent cooperation.

It has become a set pattern that we visit Avis dam and the sewage works alternately at the beginning of each month

**Table 2: Sites counted during the July 2008 flamingo survey.**

Date	Site	Lesser Flamingo			Greater Flamingo		
		ad	juv	total	ad	juv	total
10 July 2008	Kunene River Mouth						
09 July 2008	Little Oasis near Hoarusib						
13 July 2008	Hoanib River Mouth	1	5	6		8	8
13 July 2008	Hoanib Oasis						
14 July 2008	Uniab Delta						
14 July 2008	Huab River Mouth						
18 July 2008	Cape Cross Lagoon	1	10	11	1	4	5
20 July 2008	Mile 4 Saltworks	37	43	80	2		2
21 July 2008	Swakop River Mouth						
19 July 2008	Walvis Bay Ramsar Site	4382	372	4754	4655	296	4951
21 July 2008	Walvis Bay Sewage Works	854	9	863	955		955
19 July 2008	Sandwich Harbour	1	1	2			
19 July 2008	Lüderitz Peninsula	252	30	282	2		2
30 July 2008	Orange River Mouth*	63	53	116			
26 July 2008	Fischer's Pan	7		7			
19 July 2008	Etosha Pan	50000	10000	60000			
24 July 2008	Hardap Dam						
25 July 2008	Naute Dam						
		<b>55598</b>	<b>10523</b>	<b>66121</b>	<b>5615</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>5923</b>

\*Namibian side only

## RARITY SIGHTINGS AND INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS

On 19/01/2009 Hartmut Kolb spotted a colour ringed adult greater flamingo at Walvis Bay with a black ring on the left leg and a metal ring on the right. Enquiries revealed that this bird had been ringed in Botswana where black rings are used to identify the country in which the bird was ringed.

Further to the rarities seen at Walvis Bay during the summer wetland count which were reported in Lanioturdus 42-1, the summer count also turned up a red-necked phalarope at Cape Cross and a pectoral sandpiper was recorded at the Walvis Bay sewerage works. Three more red-necked phalaropes were counted at the Mile 4 Salt works together with two American golden plovers and an elegant tern. An elegant tern was seen here at the salt works in February 2007 and later that month at Wlotskasbaken. It is thought to be the same bird that was recorded in February 2006 at the Strandfontein sewerage works on the Cape Peninsula and this is most probably the same bird again. The Strandfontein record was a first for southern Africa.



*Red Necked Phalarope (top) and Pectoral Sandpiper (bottom)*  
Photos : Neil Thomson



Ulrich Hofmann reported a cut-throat finch at Farm Kakuse northwest of Tsumeb on 11.02.2009. This species has been recorded in about nine quarter degree squares in northern Namibia outside of the Caprivi but this appears to be a new record for this QDS. On 10.04.2009 I captured a bird that I initially thought was a cut throat finch at Kakuse. Further investigation revealed that it was in fact a cut-throat x red-headed finch hybrid. Whether it was this hybrid bird that Ulrich saw is not certain.



*Cut-throat finch X Red-headed finch hybrid*  
Photo: Neil Thomson

Holger Kolberg reported 9 pink-backed pelicans at Hardap Dam on 10.02.2009. His count of great white pelicans at Hardap was 736.

A Eurasian honey buzzard was seen and photographed by Flip Louw in Olympia, Windhoek on 14.02.2009. A photograph of this bird can be viewed on the website: <http://www.zestforbirds.co.za>

Eight Red (Grey) Phalaropes were seen at Walvis Bay on 22.02.2009 by John Paterson, Eckart Demasius and Richard Niddrie.

Sakkie von Plato reported a partially leucistic black-necked grebe from the Walvis Bay salt works on 22.02.2009. The bird has an almost white body but the neck and head are black as is the normal breeding plumage and the bird had the yellow cheek tuft of a breeding bird.

On 26.02.2009 Günther and Tineke Friederich saw a lesser jacana at the flooded vlei on Farm Tsutsab near Tsintsabis and on 01.03.2009 they reported a rufous-bellied heron from the same location. This is the first time they have seen either of species there. There were also pygmy geese present on the vlei for the first time in a number of years.

Also on 01.03.2009 Eckart Demasius reported finding a Gray's lark nest containing two eggs behind Kramersdorf, Swakopmund. An article on the development of the chicks that hatched in this nest will be published in a future edition of Lanioturdus. A few years ago Eckart found a similar nest and Mark Boorman ringed the chick. This was one of very few Gray's lark ever ringed.

Richard Niddrie, who has always found birding off the beaten track after good rains to be rewarding, saw a bronze-winged courser on 15.03.2009 2 km from the C 28 turn off on the D1958 in the Khomas Hochland while on 22 March he was delighted to see three lesser kestrels hunting in flight 16 km down the D1435 from the M53 junction (Steinhausen road). He observed them for over half an hour before they moved off.

The Namibia Bird Club outing to Farm Krumneck (about an hour's drive to the south west of Windhoek) on 29.03.2009 turned up several interesting sightings in the form of a black stork, a yellow billed stork and an osprey.

Also on 29.03.2009 Marina Coetzee saw a hadeda ibis flying over Hochland Park. This sighting confirms the continued presence of the hadedas in the Windhoek area.

On 07.04.2009 I saw a juvenile Verreaux's eagle in Klein Windhoek. This bird was possibly also present in the area on 31.03.2009 when I saw a large raptor in the distance but I was unable to identify it. Some years ago a pair of adult Verreaux's eagles used to regularly patrol the ridge between Windhoek and Klein Windhoek but they disappeared when development took place in this area.

On 11.04.2009 in the middle of the day a number of bird club members saw a group of five woolly-necked storks at Fischer's Pan near Namutoni. This is a somewhat unusual sighting as these birds are usually found singly or in pairs except at roosting sites.

Trevor Hardaker's SA Rare Bird News Reports mention the following rarities seen in Namibia since late January 2009:

A juvenile Tristan albatross was found in a very weak condition at Cape Cross on 23/01/2009. The bird unfortunately died later at a rehabilitation facility. This is the first record of a live Tristan albatross in southern Africa. The species has previously only been known in the region from dead birds washed up on beaches.

A freshly dead light-mantled sooty albatross was located just south of Walvis Bay on 23.01.2009. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> record of this species for southern Africa and a first for Namibia.

A common black-headed gull and at least six red-necked phalaropes were reported from Walvis Bay in the week ending 13.02.2009 while the American golden plover was still present at the Swakop River mouth and two common redshanks were seen at the Mile 4 Salt works north of Swakopmund. At least one of the redshanks was still present at the end of March.

In the report dated 19.03.2009 mention is made of four Böhms's spinetails seen with a flock of little swifts near Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport. Given the location of this sighting it is likely that these birds are of the nominate race *Neafrapus boehmi boehmi* which is found in

the coastal areas of Angola rather than the race *N b shepardii* found in the eastern parts of southern Africa. If confirmed this would be a first sighting of the nominate race in southern Africa.

#### Older records

A really interesting older record came from Hartmut Kolb who sent in this photograph of a red-necked phalarope taken at Sossusvlei in April 1997 when the vlei held water. This must surely be a unique record.



*Red necked Phalarope at Sossusvlei*  
Photo: Hartmut Kolb

#### Interesting breeding records

Dave Ward reported the following southern ground hornbill breeding records:

20.05.2008 – two adults and one juvenile in the Susuwe area of the western Caprivi (1748S 2310E).

30.08.2008 - two adults and one juvenile in the Susuwe area of the western Caprivi (1749S 2309E).

09.01.2009 - two adults and one very young bird in Mudumo National Park (1809S 2328E).

20.01.2009 - two adults and one juvenile in the Susuwe area of the western Caprivi (1745S 2320E).

He also reported an African red-eyed bulbul nest at Brakwater on 08.03.2009 containing two Jacobin cuckoo eggs and two bulbul eggs.

Neil Thomson

#### Other newsletters

If you would like to receive the following newsletters (in electronic format) please contact the persons concerned as listed below:

**Raptors Namibia** – Marilyn Bridgeford  
[pmbridge@iway.na](mailto:pmbridge@iway.na)

**Namibia Crane News** – Ann Scott  
[ecoserve@iway.na](mailto:ecoserve@iway.na)

**Namibia Coastal/Marine Bird News** – Ann Scott  
[ecoserve@iway.na](mailto:ecoserve@iway.na)

#### 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*.

#### Membership Fees 2009

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

Category	Without	With
Single member	N\$ 120	N\$ 300
Family membership (Husband, wife, children)	N\$ 140	N\$ 320
Junior member (All scholars and students)	N\$ 80	N\$ 260
Pensioner	N\$ 80	N\$ 260
Foreign member (Not resident in Namibia)	N\$ 165	N/A
Corporate membership	N\$ 400	

#### Namibia Bird Club Committee 2009

Gudrun Middendorff (Chairperson) Tel: 061 225727 (h)  
 Sonja Bartlewski (Secretary, Bird Call editor)  
 Tel : 081 149 2313  
 Jutta Suren (Treasurer) Tel: 061 241382 (h)  
 Liz Komen (Planning and education) Tel: 061 264409 (h)  
 Neil Thomson (Editor *Lanioturdus*) Tel : 061 222140 (h)  
*email: batqs@mweb.com.na*  
 Wilfried Hähner (Member) Tel: 081 242 1471  
 Holger Kolberg (Member) Tel: 081 129 5163  
 Richard Niddrie (Member) Tel: 061 233 892 (h)