

NAMIBIA BIRD CLUB

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

LANIOTURDUS publishes articles and notes of broad birding interest to the membership of the Namibia Bird Club. Contributors should look at recent issues of the magazine for guidance on suitability and presentation of material. Manuscripts in English, German or Afrikaans are requested and should be typed in double spacing on A4 paper. Sketches, maps and figures should be submitted on good quality white paper in black ink. High contrast black and white or colour photographs may be submitted to illustrate articles. Artwork illustrating any aspect of birds and/or birding are also requested.

Authors are requested to submit articles on a computer disk (MS DOS: low or high density, 5.25" or 3.5"). The preferred word processing program is WordPerfect, but Word, WordStar and MultiMate and a few other commonly available word processing programs can also be accommodated. **Please mark which program has been used.** If you do not have one of the above programs please submit an ASCII conversion of your manuscript. The publication of handwritten articles are sure to be delayed as the current Editor and co Editors are unable to spend a great deal of time typing articles. Handwritten short notes and observations are acceptable but please make sure they are legible - typewritten is preferred and generally requires less editing.

All disks and photographs will be returned to authors - manuscripts will not be returned. A single copy of the issue in which your article appears will be sent to the senior author.

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CONTENTS

VOLUME 30 (1), March 1997

Editorial 1
LUDWIG, D. In Memoriam: Herman Karl Friedrich Kolberg 2
BORELLO, WD, HERREMANS, M & UNDERHILL, LG. Some
Palaeartic migrants in Namibia: Setting the record straight 4
HINES, C. Short Notes 8
Errata 11
FRIEDE, G. "Bird Parties" 12
SILVER, C. Rufous morph of European Cuckoo 14
McGIVERN, D. Waterberg Environmental Centre outing 15
DUFFIELD-HARDING, J. Nine days in Kavango 16
ALLAN, J. Personal memories of the Namibia Bird Club 21
DUFFIELD-HARDING, J. Join the waders at Walvis Bay 23
OTTO, A & LUDWIG, D. In Memoriam. Anna-Luise Beusele 25
Club members backcover
Club outings backcover

SHORT NOTES

Christopher Hines, Editor

Pennantwinged Nightjars *Macrodipteryx vexillaria*

Charmaine Silver reports that Pennantwinged Nightjars have been recorded on two occasions in the Gobabis district. The first individual was seen just after sunset on a farm 80 km north of Gobabis in October 1994. The second bird was seen at Ernst Meyer Primary School (47 km east of Gobabis) in November 1995. It was seen about 30 minutes after sunset and was flying in the beam of a spotlight catching insects. Both sightings were of single males in full breeding plumage. The white in the wings and the long trailing pennants were unmistakable features. These records represent considerable range extensions for this species in Namibia. They have been reported well out of range in several places in Namibia in the past — I know of one male in breeding plumage that was seen for several weeks in the Palmwag Lodge grounds and there is another record of a road killed female from the Kupferberg area just outside Windhoek. According to the *Atlas of Birds of Botswana* (Penry, 1995) birds have been recorded from Ghanzi in the past. What is interesting is that the Palmwag and Gobabis birds are "early" — in the Okavango and Caprivi regions where this species is commonest they are only just arriving and establishing territories at this time of the year.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*

Dane Braine, a young birder in hostel in Otjiwarongo reports several sightings of Bat Hawk in the town during the past couple of months. There are several groves of very large *Eucalyptus* (Gum Trees) in the town and the birds may be roosting (breeding?) in these. I hope Dane will be writing his observations up for a future edition of *Lanioturdus*.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

John Mendelsohn and I saw a single bird at the Sachinga Research Station near Katima Mulilo during early February. Steve Braine reports that he has been seeing a number of birds in the Omaruru town area during the past years. Chris Brown also saw a single bird about ten kilometres north of Tsumeb on the Namutoni road in early March. Honey Buzzard records are amazingly few and far between in Namibia. They feed exclusively on the

larvae of colonial nesting wasps (like Red Paper Wasps) — so if you have large concentrations in trees near you keep a look out for Honey Buzzards. These birds also tend to return to the same area year after year — I grew up on a farm where a pair of birds came back annually for at least ten years.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

Brian Field, a birder visiting from the UK, reports a Franklin's Gull from the Bird Paradise in Walvis Bay. This is almost definitely the same bird that has been regularly seen in the same set of ponds (the last ones on the right as you go out on the Rooibank road) for several years. I first saw the bird in March 1995 and have seen it regularly since then — most notably with the Bird Club in November 1996. A single bird was seen in January of one year in the mid-1980's (1985?) by Steve Braine — this was subsequently seen by a number of people. Could this possibly be the same bird?

Crimsonbreasted Shrike *Laniarius atrococcineus*

Charmaine Silver reports that there are at least two yellow-breasted Crimsonbreasted Shrikes resident on the farm Kom Nader, 80 km north of Gobabis. They are regularly seen around the farmhouse. They are not a pair and each individual seems to have a red-breasted partner.

Fairy Flycatcher *Stenostira scita*

This species is generally rare in Namibia and has only regularly been reported from the lower reaches of the Fish River and the Orange River valley. Jeremy Duffield-Harding and family saw one in the Naukluft Mountains on the weekend of 8–9 March 1997. This represents a considerable range extension for the species.

Broadtailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua obtusa*

There are a handful of records of Broadtailed Paradise Whydahs in Namibia all of them from the far eastern end of the Caprivi, most notably from Mpalila Island. During field work in mid-February 1997, John Mendelsohn and I, saw several males in breeding plumage in broadleafed woodland west of Katima Mulilo (not far from Mpacha Airport). This species may well be eruptive in the area, only coming in numbers following good rains. This species parasitizes Goldenbacked Pytilia *Pytilia afra* and so anyone birding

in the area should look out for this species as well

Stanley's Bustard *Neotis denhami*

There are several recent records of this species from the eastern Caprivi, mostly from Mamili National Park. This is an extremely rare bustard in Namibia and are only likely to occur in the Caprivi area. Steve Braine and Mark Paxton report seeing several in Mamili and I saw a single bird in the Mahango Game Reserve during May 1995. Two birds were reported in June 1996 from the Mamili by two British birders. If birding in the area keep a look out for this species — they are readily distinguishable from Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* the only other big bustard in the area. In flight they can be identified on the basis of the white patches in a black wing, well illustrated in the SASOL guide.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*

Chris Brown reports seeing a single bird in a large mixed flock of other migrant raptors on the Nossob River in the Uhlenhorst area in early February. Sooty Falcon have only been recorded in Namibia a few times. One was found in Windhoek (died in captivity) and another in eastern Omaheke in the early 1980's. I saw a single bird in Tsumkwe in Bushmanland in 1987 and there have been reports of single birds from Etosha, including excellent video footage by Jan and Suzi van der Reep.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A single bird has been reported in the Mahango Game Reserve on 22/12/96, by Brian Field a birder from the UK. This is a species which has not been recorded more than ten times in southern Africa and the record requires verification. There is a single old record of a bird from Etosha National Park. Northern Wheatear could be easily confused with immature Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* which is common in parts of Namibia. Young Capped Wheatears can be expected from as early as mid-November and care should be taken before making any ID of Northern Wheatear.

Vultures

The Windhoek Advertiser (10/3/97) reports the poisoning of 22 vultures on the Ongamombonde Agricultural Research Station near the Waterberg.

Two Whitebacked *Gyps africanus* and one Lappetfaced *Torgos tracheliotus* Vultures died, while another 19 were being treated for strychnine poisoning. Fortunately none of the Waterberg's remaining Cape Vultures *Gyps coprotheres* (probably Namibia's rarest and most threatened bird species) were affected. What are state-owned research stations doing using strychnine in such a wholesale manner?

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

There have been several reports of huge numbers of Abdim's Storks from around the country following the good rains over the past couple of months. Dieter Ludwig, Suzan Mallet-Veale, Hartwig Dedekind and other counters saw four to five thousand storks at the Omatako Dam during the January wetland counts. I have had other reports of large flocks in Damaraland (near Khorixas), Maltahohe and Gobabis. I saw a flock of about 1200 birds near Okongwati in northern Kunene Region in early March.

Please send (or phone in) any unusual or interesting sightings to me or any member of the committee for inclusion in the next edition of *Lanioturdus*.

ERRATA

In *Lanioturdus Vol. 29* the following mistakes have been noted. Both errors were my typing errors.

In *The Predator* by Dr. G. Friede (pg 43) the reference to Ashy Grey Tits should read Ashy Tits. The name Ashy Grey Tit is no longer used for this species.

In the article on Chestnutbanded Sandplovers by Dr. G. Friede (pg 49) the scientific name is incorrectly given as *Charadrius marginatus*. It should read *Charadrius pallidus*.