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## EDITORIAL

This is my first issue as editor of *Lanioturdus* and by reading the articles you may think I have taken the opportunity to monopolise the issue to publish everything I have done over the past several years. I do admit that my quest for material has spurred me to finalise several papers. But it seems that a stiffy disk with four articles, I sent to the previous editor, Chris Hines, over a year ago, got lost in the post. I have included these although the one on flamingos is dated information.

Good rains have fallen over most of the country and the birds are responding by breeding and the migrants are getting fat on the insects. Everyone should be seeing new birds and hopefully will report on the vagrants, local migrants and oddities.

When Chris met with me, over a beer at Joe's pub, to hand over the editor's job he said the hardest part of this job would be trying to get people to put to paper their observations, adventures and studies. Once again the editor appeals to all the members to please send in your articles so we can get our journal back on a four-times-a-year schedule. I would like to start a section of the *Lanioturdus* for visitors' comments, trip reports, etc. If any members have visitors or bird-watching clients please ask them to send us a short summary of their trip. I am sure that we would like to know what visitors are seeing and how their experience was in Namibia.

the ground in trees but the females never nested. 2000 was a good breeding year for all the birds in Etosha and the guineafowl were no exception. The birds were very infrequent at our feeder since there was more natural wild food available. Towards the end of 2000 the kanga brought their young into the feeder but old Two Toes was never seen again.

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## SHORT NOTES / BIRD SIGHTINGS

Editor

### **Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

On 11 Jan 2000 I found 80–100 pairs nesting in four *Acacia* trees a road side pond about 30 km north of Outjo. The colony abandoned the nests in late Jan. when the pond dried up.

### **Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala***

On 20 April 2000 I saw three birds on the Outjo–Okaukuejo roadside and by May every waterhole in Etosha NP had from 1 to 4 birds in residence. The birds remained in the park until November 2000.

### **Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris***

With the good rains during the 1999–2000 period guineafowl finally bred for the first time since 1997 within Etosha NP. In April 2000 we found 9 flocks with 62 adults and 207 chicks. On 8 May we found one flock with chicks only three weeks old.

### **Lark-like Bunting *Emberiza impetuani***

We found three nests with either newly hatched young or eggs on 21 May 2000 at Tsaobis Farm, Karibib District which had good rains. The nests were in the grass growing between a two-track road on the farm. We did not stop to look for nests each time we flushed a bird from the tract but suspect that hundreds of buntings were nesting.

### **Black-throated Canary *Sernus atrogularis***

I saw an albino individual with red iris in a flock at Okaukuejo on 10 August 2000. Another albino was seen in October at Windpoort Farm, Outjo District.

### **Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti***

One bird was seen on 19 July 2000 at Gobaub, Etosha NP. This bird is rare anywhere in Etosha.

### **Kurrichane Buttonquail *Turnix sylvatica*, Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei***

Both Buttonquail and Harlequin Quail were very common in the grasslands within Etosha NP during the dry season of 2000. We would flush quail every few hundred meters on the short grass plains and in the grassland north of Okendeka.

### **Yellow-billed kite *Milvus aegyptius***

One bird seen south of Outjo on 1 Aug. 2000. Rather early for this migrant.

### **Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradiseus***

As we drove to Namutoni on 20 Dec 2000 we saw a pair each at Halali plain east and west. At Namutoni three birds dropped into the waterhole and there were 2 birds at Twee Palms. We believe the birds just arrived from wherever they spend the dry season.

### **Scimitar-billed Woodhoopoe *Phoeniculus cyanomelas***

On 27 Dec. 2000 we watched a male catch a moth and then fly to a tree where a female was perched. The male mounted the females and after copulation, which lasted 20 seconds, he fed the moth to the female. After eating the moth and cleaning her bill she flew off up the hill followed by the male. Birds usually conduct a pre-coital courtship feeding and I do not know if post-coital feeding is common.

### **Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii***

Near Okaukuejo we saw a melanistic stork mixed in a flock of Abdim's. The bird had black legs, bill, iris, and bare skin around the eye. It was a confusing bird to identify since it was missing the white on the belly and back.