

Namibia Bird Club



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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

Trends in Namibian Waterbird Populations 7: Ducks and Geese (2)

Holger Kolberg
Directorate Scientific Services
Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Windhoek
(holgerk@mweb.com.na)

This article continues the series on trends in Namibian waterbird populations and summarizes count data for ducks and geese for the period 1977 to December 2008. For each species the Red Data Book (RDB) status, both global and Namibian, is given, the population trend as per Wetlands International, the number of times the species was counted, the number of times it has passed the 1% population criterion, the maximum count and the sites where it has passed the 1% population criterion.

The local trend is calculated for the period 1991 to 2008 only because continuous data is available for that time. The computer programme TRIM was used for these analyses (see an earlier publication for the selection criteria and methods) (Lanioturdus 43 (2) – Ed). For each species the number of sites used in the analysis, the number of observed counts (this includes zero counts), and the sites containing more than 10% of the total number counted are given. A trend and slope are given. A slope value of 1 would indicate a perfectly stable population, whereas any value above 1 means a positive trend and a value of less than 1 a negative trend. Population trends are graphically presented as indices relative to a base year (in this case 1991) and thus all have a value of 1 for 1991. An index value of 2 indicates a doubling of the population relative to 1991 and an index of 0.5 would mean half of the 1991 figure.

Trends for twelve species could be derived but only two show an increase the remainder are uncertain. Four species have passed their 1% population at least once in the period under review.

(Larger scale replications of the graphs in this article are attached to the end of this edition).

7.7 Cape Teal (*Anas capensis*)¹

IUCN RDB Status: Least concern
Namibia RDB Status: ?
WI Trend: Increasing



Photo: Eckart Demasius

This duck is common to abundant at most counting sites. The species has benefited from the proliferation of sewage works and farm dams and hence it is not surprising that the population shows an increasing trend.

No of times counted: 569
No of times past 1% population (=1750): 6
Maximum count: 6659 at Walvis Bay on 21 January 2007
Past 1% population at: Walvis Bay (6)

Trend analysis

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Number of sites: | 16 |
| Number of observed counts: | 225 |
| Number of missing counts: | 63 |
| Total number of counts: | 288 |

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|-------------------|--------|------|
| Mile 4 Salt Works | 6447 | 13.1 |
| Sandwich Harbour | 7163 | 14.6 |
| Walvis Bay | 22721 | 46.2 |

Overall slope: Moderate increase (p<0.01)
1.0817 ±0.0165

¹ Names follow Hockey, P.A.R., Dean, W.R.J. and Ryan, P.G. (eds) 2005. *Roberts – Birds of Southern Africa, VIIIth Edition*. The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town, South Africa.

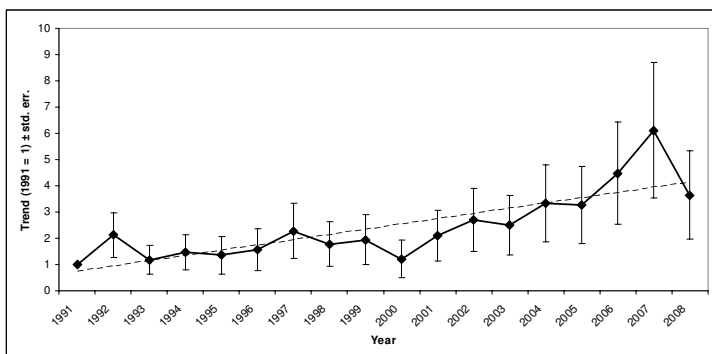


Figure 7: Trend of Cape Teal population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

7.8 Red-billed Teal (*Anas erythrorhyncha*)

IUCN RDB Status: Least concern

Namibia RDB Status: ?

WI Trend: Stable



Photo: Eckart Demasius

This is southern Africa's most abundant duck and is counted in large numbers at Namibia's ephemeral wetlands but, strangely, occurs in low numbers at the large dams.

No of times counted: 329

No of times past 1% population (=7500): 0

Maximum count: 2800 at Fischer's Pan on 26 July 2008

Past 1% population at: Nowhere

Trend analysis

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Number of sites: | 17 |
| Number of observed counts: | 223 |
| Number of missing counts: | 83 |
| Total number of counts: | 306 |

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|---------------|--------|------|
| Fischer's Pan | 6274 | 22.0 |
| Lake Oponono | 9774 | 34.3 |
| Tsumkwe Pans | 7861 | 27.6 |

Overall slope: Uncertain

1.0387 ± 0.0211

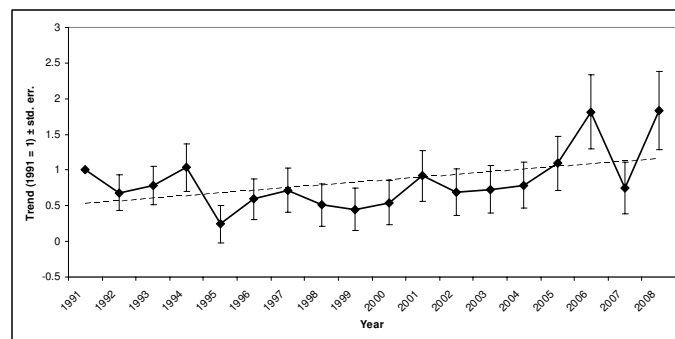


Figure 8: Trend of Red-billed Teal population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

7.9 Hottentot Teal (*Anas hottentota*)

IUCN RDB Status: Least concern

Namibia RDB Status: ?

WI Trend: Stable



Photo: Eckart Demasius

This duck is recorded in low but consistent numbers at several wetlands mainly in north-eastern Namibia, but also at several sewage works.

No of times counted: 75
 No of times past 1% population (=1000): 0
 Maximum count: 120 at Lake Oponono on 27 July 2006
 Past 1% population at: Nowhere

Trend analysis

Number of sites: 8
 Number of observed counts: 118
 Number of missing counts: 26
 Total number of counts: 144

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|-------------------|--------|------|
| Lake Oponono | 234 | 37.4 |
| Tsumkwe Pans | 114 | 18.2 |
| Walvis Bay Sewage | 125 | 20.0 |

Overall slope: Uncertain
 1.2467 ±3.9820

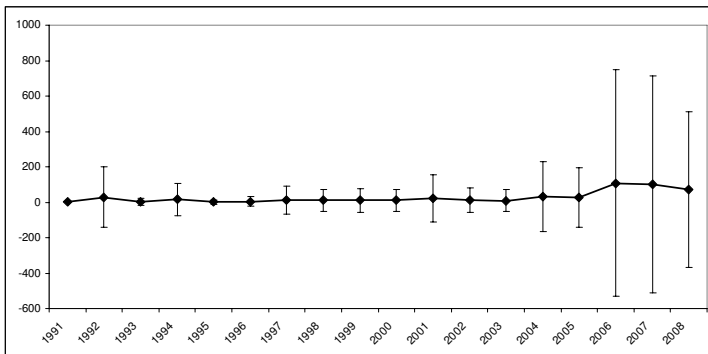


Figure 9: Trend of Hottentot Teal population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

7.10 Cape Shoveler (*Anas smithii*)

IUCN RDB Status: Least concern
 Namibia RDB Status: ?
 WI Trend: Increasing



Photo: Eckart Demasius

This near-endemic duck is consistently counted at several wetlands. This species' preference for plankton rich freshwater is vindicated by the fact that over 40% of the numbers counted are from two sewage works at the coast.

No of times counted: 294
 No of times past 1% population (=350): 0
 Maximum count: 108 at Walvis Bay Sewage Works on 2 January 1977
 Past 1% population at: Nowhere

Trend analysis

Number of sites: 12
 Number of observed counts: 170
 Number of missing counts: 46
 Total number of counts: 216

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|-------------------|--------|------|
| Lake Oponono | 256 | 14.8 |
| Sandwich Harbour | 299 | 17.3 |
| Swakop Sewage | 492 | 28.5 |
| Walvis Bay Sewage | 279 | 16.1 |

Overall slope: Uncertain
 1.0400 ±0.0265

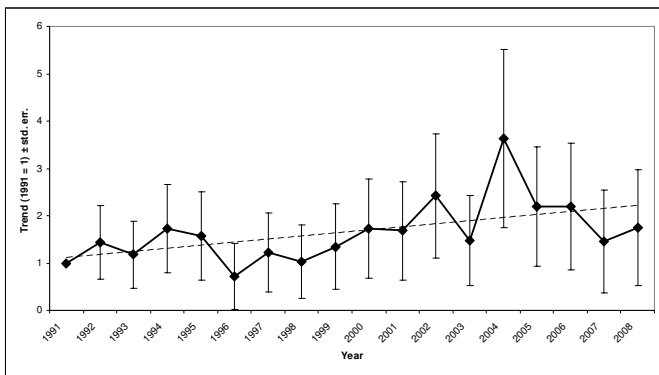


Figure 10: Trend of Cape Shoveler population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

7.11 Southern Pochard (*Netta erythroptalma*)

IUCN RDB Status: Least concern

Namibia RDB Status: ?

WI Trend: Stable



Photo: Neil Thomson

This duck is common but not abundant in most Namibian wetlands.

No of times counted: 101

No of times past 1% population (=500): 0

Maximum count: 126 at Lake Oponono on 26 February 2003

Past 1% population at: Nowhere

Trend analysis

Number of sites: 7

Number of observed counts: 102

Number of missing counts: 24

Total number of counts: 126

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|------------------|--------|------|
| Fischer's Pan | 82 | 10.7 |
| Lake Oponono | 302 | 39.6 |
| Sandwich Harbour | 128 | 16.8 |
| Tsumkwe Pans | 181 | 23.7 |

Overall slope: Uncertain

1.0342 ± 0.1382

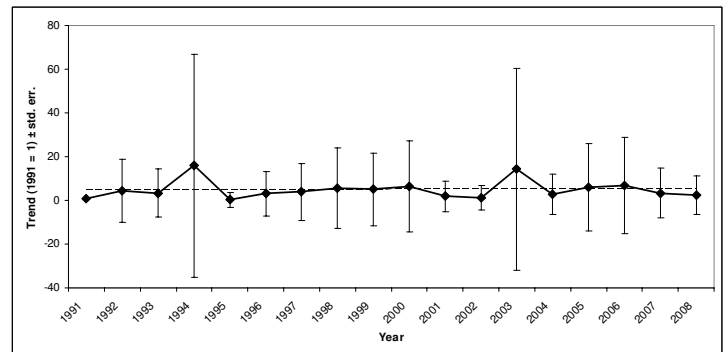


Figure 11: Trend of Southern Pochard population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

7.12 Maccoa Duck (*Oxyura maccoa*)

IUCN RDB Status: Near Threatened

Namibia RDB Status: Near Threatened

WI Trend: Unknown



Photo: Neil Thomson

This diving duck is threatened by habitat loss.

No of times counted: 285

No of times past 1% population (=80): 10

Maximum count: 784 at Swakoppoort Dam on 14 July 1992²
 Past 1% population at: Swakoppoort Dam (1), Walvis Bay Sewage Works (9)

Trend analysis

Number of sites: 7
 Number of observed counts: 92
 Number of missing counts: 34
 Total number of counts: 126

Sites containing more than 10% of the total count:

| Site | Number | % |
|-------------------|--------|------|
| Sandwich Harbour | 447 | 38.9 |
| Swakop Sewage | 140 | 12.2 |
| Walvis Bay Sewage | 391 | 34.0 |

Overall slope: Uncertain
 0.9502 ±0.0530

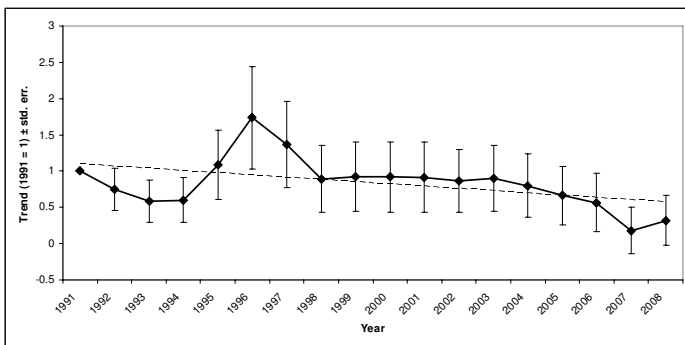


Figure 12: Trend of Maccoa Duck population in Namibia from 1991 to 2008.

References:

IUCN 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1 www.iucnredlist.org
 Wetlands International. 2006. *Waterbird Population Estimates – Fourth Edition*. S. Delany and D. Scott (Eds.), Wetlands International, Wageningen, The Netherlands
 Simmons, R.E. and Brown, C.J. In press. *Birds to watch in Namibia: red, rare and endemic species*. Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Namibia Nature Foundation, Windhoek.

² This is most likely a case of mis-identification as this is the only time Maccoa Duck were recorded at Swakoppoort Dam. The next-highest count is 129 birds at the Walvis Bay Sewage Works on 19 July 1996.

More Short Notes and Interesting Observations

Neil Thomson
batqs@mweb.com.na

Great Crested Grebe

In mid May 2011 Ulrich Hofmann “confiscated” a bird from the children of his farm workers at Farm Kakuse some 70 km north west of Tsumeb. Where and how they had caught this bird was not certain but they had pulled out the primary flight feathers leaving the bird flightless. The bird was obviously a grebe and Ulrich identified it by the striped head and neck as a young Great Crested Grebe. The question then arose as to what to do with this bird. Being a specialist diving bird feeding largely on fish, tadpoles and aquatic insects it was obviously not possible to keep the bird in captivity until the flight feathers had regrown. Following the exceptional 2010/2011 rainy season many of the seasonal pans on the farm were still flooded and Ulrich reckoned that they would retain water until at least September. He thus decided to release the bird onto one of the larger pans on the farm where it would be able to feed itself even if it was unable to fly. The bird was seen there about a month later in the company of Little Grebes and was noticeably larger than the Little Grebes. When the pan had dried up by October there was no sign of the bird. One can only hope that the flight feathers regrew before the water dried up. Great Crested Grebe is an extremely uncommon species in Namibia, and, since the Walvis Bay sewage ponds were relocated, this species has virtually disappeared from the Namibian coastal wetlands. In north central Namibia there are Atlas records (SABAP 1) for this species from only four Quarter Degree Squares.

Red-billed Firefinch

I received an article for publication in *Lanioturdus* from Thomas Göttert of the Humboldt University in Berlin on the birds observed in an area adjacent to the southern boundary of the Etosha National Park centred at approximately 19°30' South 14°45' East