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## Editorial

The trials of the Namibia Bird Club continue with it mainly being a Windhoek orientated organization. The number of articles submitted to its journal the *Lanioturdus* has withered to almost unacceptable levels. In 2006 only one issue of the *Lanioturdus* was published and here we are half way through 2007 and finally the editor has enough articles to publish what probably will be the only issue of 2007.

There is obviously an interest in birding within Namibia since there are now many subgroups specializing in aspects of birds. There is Raptors Namibia who publish an on line newsletter once a month. The Crane Working Group, Raptor Road Counts, Rare and Endangered Species Trust working on vultures, and the Wetland Bird Counts which enumerate all the wetlands twice per year.

I know that there are birders observing birds because of the rare birds which have been reported to the magazine *Birds and Birding* from Namibia.

Once again I appeal to all members to help the Namibia Bird Club. If you want to keep the club viable you must also do your part and try and get new members to join. We are currently down to fewer than 100 members.

Fortunately there is good news and there has been a recent increase in the number of articles submitted and hopefully this trend will continue and we could see another issue published this year.

I hope readers will note the addition to the Namibia list of Ruppell's Vulture. There are probably more juvenile Ruppell's Vultures visiting Namibia than we realize. Observers should keep their eyes open when watching vultures at a kill, you may be able to add a new species to your list. If you do see one of these birds please try to photograph it.

less trees and those present often lower than the pylons, the problem may be more severe.

#### References

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### Wetland Birds on Tsutsab Vlei 2005/2006

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It has been 5 years, since 1999/2000, that Tsutsab Vlei, situated on the farm *Tsutsab, No. 293*, 1818 CC, had not received any inflow. The season 2005/2006 started late, but after the area had some good rains, water started flowing again. Although we did not have any heavy showers, we received water from farms from the south (that is not from *Hardap* region - very much closer). The waters started flowing strongly at the end of January, filling the vlei to the brim on the 3.02.2006. This was the case again on the 24.02.2006. Since then there was no further inflow any more. We expected another feast of birding, but it was disappointing in the end. Although we recorded a reasonable species count, the numbers for species were quite low. The reason for this was that other areas east and south of here had been flooded earlier and birds had a wider area to disperse on. We therefore made no effort to really search for birds, like in past years. We also reason the general decline of wetland birds over the years is just an ongoing process, for whatever reasons.

#### **Birds recorded: (In sequence as they were seen)**

Red-billed Teal	adult & chicks
Comb Duck	adult & chicks
Little Grebe	adult & chicks
Yellow-billed Egret	
Open-billed Stork	± 92 birds
Black-necked Grebe	
Great White Egret	
Senegal Coucal	1 bird seen 15.01.06, again on 19.05.06, probably present in between above dates
Cattle Heron	81 birds during July 2006, present until last.
Blacksmith Lapwing	lots of adult & sub-adult
Grey-headed Gull	1 bird on 15.03.06
Little Egret	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	
Red-knobbed Coot	
Whiskered Tern	1 bird, first sighting 19.03.06, again 08.07.06
Woolly-necked Stork	
Green-backed Heron	
Reed Cormorant	1 bird, first record for 1818 CC on 15.02.06
Little Bittern	
Squacco Heron	± 12 birds
African Jacana	seen 25.02.06, 2nd record for 1818 CC since 10.01.2000
Greater Painted Snipe	4 birds, still present 12 July 2006
Abdim's Stork	± 60 birds
Egyptian Goose	1 bird
Black-winged Stilt	eventually 21 birds counted 08.07.06, some sub-adult
Maccoa Duck	± 4 birds counted 15.02.2006
Grey Heron	2 birds, breeding
Lesser Moorhen	adult & chicks
Great White Pelican	1 bird on 13.05.2006
Three-banded Plover	± 10 birds, 2 present till last.
Dwarf Bittern	
Wood Sandpiper	3 birds seen 08.07.2006
Marabou Stork	2 birds seen 08.07.2006

A first breeding attempt since the late 1960's / early 1970's for Grey Heron. The chick we eventually found dead, it had hanged itself in the branches of the tree. One immature African Fish Eagle seen on 05.06.2006, again on 12.07.2006. It was feeding on young freshwater Barbel in the receding water. Last seen on 21.07.2006 when last water was gone. As the water diminishes, more species of waders appear.

**Note:** We have up until now assumed this vlei covering an area of  $\pm 70$  ha. I have made the effort now and walked the edges, close to the high-watermark, which was not always possible due to dense thickets, measuring the distance with a GPS. The calculations result in an area of about 300 ha, of which the smaller, overflow-vlei takes up  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the area. Average depth 0,8 m, at the deepest 1,2 m when full.

The last puddle dried up on 21.07.2006, after we've rescued lots of  $\pm 20$  cm long freshwater Barbel. Birds still present then were 17 *Cattle Heron*, two *Three-banded Plover* as well as scores of juvenile *Wattled Starling* which were feeding on insects in the still wet soil. Closer to sunset we saw the *African Fish Eagle* perched on a tree.

#### Reference

*Wetland Birds on Tsutsab Vlei*, *Lanioturdus* Vol. 34 (3) 2001

#### Birding weekend on farm Tiefland

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On Friday morning 23.03.2007 we, Tineke (T) & Günther (G), as the sole representatives of the Namibian Bird Club, were having a splendid time on Tiefland. We had an unrestful night in our tent. For yesterday evening's supper we had to move from our open-air kitchen / living / sleeping quarters underneath a *Prosopis* tree into the garage, where we also had to have coffee this morning. The sleeping quarters had to stay, the rest we shifted into an open-plan sort of kitchen. This place was quite smelly; a stench coming from some dried cattle/game skins. Four empty tins of "Ustilan" arboricide and a wooden plank made a nice bench for kitchen utensils. Was that charcoal in this old bucket? A roof overhead, three sides covered, one of them only partially with corrugated roof sheets, the other side open. A beautiful view, nice for birding. But we did not dare leave the shelter, except if we were willing to get wet. Yes – there you have it: it was raining. During the night we had a few light showers. This morning we had just enough time for our morning duties before we were rained down again. Now it was just a case of sitting it out.

We arrived on Tiefland early Wednesday afternoon 21.03.2007, coming from the north, through the Paresis Mountains. A warm welcome from the owner of the farm, Hildegard Becker (H), a committee member of the Club, and her mother: coffee and a chat. This was especially significant for me (G), as my mother had visited this farm frequently in her youth, being friends with Hildegard's parents, the Hofmeister's. While pitching our campsite we noticed all those African Palm Swifts *Cypsiurus parvus*. Maybe unusual for this area but two Makalani palms *Hyphaene petersiana*, about 70 years of age, 20-25 m high, suited them well.

We saw a big white bird coming down to land in the direction of the dam, so we had to have a look at the dam first. Slowly reaching the top of the wall we saw a single White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, which took off again. There was not much