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DOREEN McCOLAUGH

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Front Cover: Southern Ground Hornbill, Photographer: Ian White



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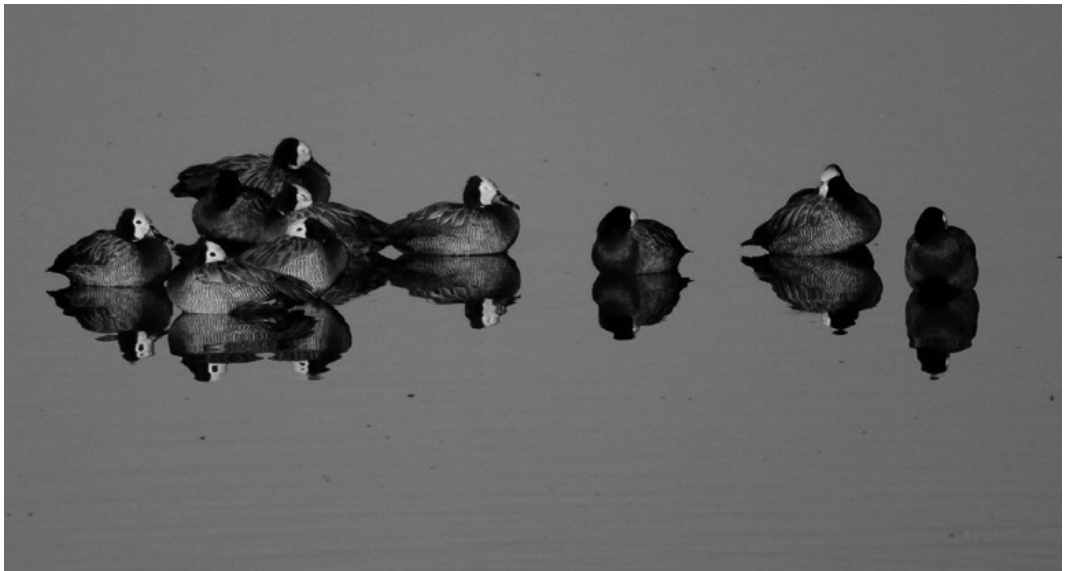
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White-faced Whistling Ducks

Photo: Ian White

Editorial

I was saddened to learn of Doreen McCullough's death in February. She was a remarkable lady and a pioneer of environmental education in Botswana. I relied on her to proof check my draft version of each *Babbler*. Harold Hester has written a tribute to her below and he has also written a tribute to my husband who died at the end of 2021.

I was disappointed to learn in mid-December that the rapidly declining population has led the status of the Maccoa Duck, a waterbird species protected under the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), to be uplisted to Endangered in the updated IUCN Red List of Endangered Species. With an estimated 4,800-5,700 remaining mature individuals of Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* in Africa, the species has been upgraded from Vulnerable to Endangered. All its three biogeographic populations are decreasing, and the species' habitat continues to decline. According to estimates of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Census, the Southern African population has decreased by 52% between 2002 and 2018 while the Eastern African population has plummeted by 99% over the same period.

We are fortunate in Botswana in that many of the threats facing this duck elsewhere such as drowning in gill nets and drainage of wetlands for agriculture do not exist here. This makes our small population of Maccoa Duck all the more important and we must continue to record and count these ducks to monitor their numbers. Chris Brewster's summary of the situation in 2021 in this issue of *Babbler* is timely and welcomed.

Also in this issue, Harold Hester has provided a note on Common Mynahs rearing a Great Spotted Cuckoo chick in a nearby garden and Chris Brewster has written many notes such as about a sighting of a Red-billed Spurfowl near Olifantsdrift, of Buffy Pipits at Tsabong and with Ian White, an account of the sightings of Striped Crakes in Gaborone and on a pan north of Molepolole. He also extols the delights of birding around Kacgae with his son, Declan, and along with other notes he has written is a fascinating account of Short-clawed Larks and their songs around Shoshong.

I always greatly welcome notes by other observers, so I was pleased to have a report from Elsabe and Jac-John van der Westhuizen about Secretarybirds and Southern Ground Hornbills on the open fields of the Pandamatega Farms south of Kasane and Karin Nelson's records of raptors in the southern Kalahari over a three week trip.

The heavy and good rains in the summer meant that inevitably waterbird counts in January were very low as birds were well dispersed. I have summarised the counts from July 2021, as well as January 2022.

As ever, recent bird records are summarised; this will be invaluable to ornithologists of the future to show how the status and distribution of species has changed. I urge every birdwatcher in Botswana to consider sending Chris Brewster details of your sightings and of any breeding birds.

Stephanie Tyler, Editor



A tribute to Doreen McColaugh

Harold Hester (written on 16 February)

Doreen passed away peacefully this morning, Wednesday 16th February, 2022.

She had been the doyenne of environmental education in Botswana for many years. Anyone who was anyone in this field in Botswana, had benefitted from her deep knowledge and experience. Her contributions in this field were enormous; at last count she had authored or co-authored twelve books, mostly for children.

Doreen was the driving force for environmental education. She was passionate about all aspects of the subject. When she was younger, Botswana was at the forefront of this field in Southern Africa. She never really retired but with becoming older she had to allow the younger fry to lead the way. Doreen's main drive was to integrate environmental education into the formal education system, especially for young children. Another passion was to improve the environmental awareness of decision-makers and key persons. Sadly, environmental education suffered in her recent absence, much to her chagrin.

She played an enormous role in BirdLife Botswana. Not only did she keep us on the straight and narrow path at meetings, but she contributed extensively to the Familiar Chat and her proof-reading skills were legendary. She was an energetic supporter of, and ambassador for our Society.

For many years, Doreen and Bob hosted our Christmas walk at their home in Mokolodi, which event was one of the most popular of our calendar. Bob and Doreen had been married for more than sixty-five years.

Our thoughts are with Bob in the next few days and son Craig and his family.

May her soul rest in peace.

A tribute to Dr Lindsay Tyler

Harold Hester

“Life is about living to your fullest abilities; it’s about being true to yourself. It means to love and support those around you, help where you are able to, be known as a person that can be trusted and just do the best you can.”

The above philosophy applies in full measure to Dr Lindsay Tyler, who lived in Botswana with his dear wife Dr Stephanie Tyler, current editor of “The Babbler” and outstanding ornithologist. Lindsay was born in Northern Ireland in June 1943 and passed away in Monmouthshire, Wales, in December 2021, having lived life to the full.

From January 1996 to December 2000 Lindsay was Epidemiologist and Team Leader of the DFID funded Veterinary Epidemiology & Economics Unit & Tsetse Entomology Project, Botswana with the task of developing cost-effective, sustainable disease control programmes; information systems and legislation to support surveillance and contingency planning for major diseases; management systems for wildlife.

Apart from being an outstanding veterinarian, Lindsay was a wonderful man to know and an enthusiastic member of the then Botswana Bird Club and of the ornithological work which Stephanie undertook. Whether she was ringing birds on their beloved Phakalane Sewage Ponds or traversing the Okavango Delta searching for or counting Slaty Egrets, Lindsay was always there for Steph. When Stephanie had the idea that we should become a member of BirdLife International, Lindsay was a vocal supporter. He was there at our inauguration as BirdLife Botswana, as one of the founder members.

He was a passenger on business in a horrific helicopter accident in the Delta towards the end of his stay here, when the helicopter literally fell out of the sky. He thankfully recovered from severe spinal injuries.

Lindsay was a big man in every sense of the word, with a huge presence, practical demeanour and vibrant sense of humour. He was one of those people who everybody naturally liked. He was always there to give practical advice from a life well lived and to lift and encourage his fellow man. The cherry on the top was that he and Steph loved their Landrover which took them all over Botswana on many birding trips. A second cherry was that he enjoyed drinking good red wine; we enjoyed many a fine glass together.

Lindsay Tyler will be remembered as an excellent birder in his own right, and who made a lasting contribution to ornithology in Botswana. He leaves a devoted wife Stephanie, married son Rob and married daughter Sally.



Common Mynas parasitised by Great Spotted Cuckoo

Harold Hester

Per Erik Bergh lives in Crocodile Pools, just north of Notwane. He has observed a pair of Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis* that have lived in his garden for the past four years. In the summer of 2019/2020, they bred, producing one chick which fledged satisfactorily. The Common Mynas are very territorial, but co-exist in his spacious garden with other typical common species such as African Red-eyed Bulbuls *Pycnonotus nigricans*, Cape (Glossy) Starlings *Lamprotornis nitens*, Laughing Doves *Spilopelia senegalensis*, Black-headed Orioles *Oriolus larvatus*, Black-backed Puffbacks *Dryoscopus cubla* and Arrow-marked Babblers *Turdoides jardineii*, to name a few.

This season he noticed a dramatic change, in that the Mynas had produced another chick but significantly it was not a Myna but a Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*. Per Erik had noticed adult Great Spotted Cuckoos sporadically over the past two years, but since seeing the chick he has not seen the adults. On 24 January he sent a photograph of the Mynas with their cuckoo juvenile to me (HH).

Per Erik has feeding trays of wild bird seed and suet balls, which the Mynas ignore. However, they enjoy eating dog pellets which are always available. Obviously, they are feeding these to their cuckoo fledgling which is about a third larger than its parents. The Myna adults spend much time on the ground, but the chick rarely leaves the safety of trees. The chick is demanding and noisy, screaming for food consistently when it is with the parents who are semi-attentive to the demands. Normally the parents arrive first before the chick arrives a bit later. Per Erik has been observing this relationship daily for the last week or so of January 2022.

If all gardeners could replicate what has happened in Per Erik's garden, with some luck invasive Common Mynas may be eradicated in this part of the world. That is probably just wishful thinking.

Harold Hester Email: harold@accelerate-it.co.bw



Common Mynas with Great Spotted Cuckoo chick

Photo: Per Erik Bergh



Maccoa Ducks in south-eastern Botswana in July 2021

Chris A. Brewster

In south-eastern Botswana there are a large number of man-made water bodies. Most of these water bodies are dams, though there are also sewage ponds near large settlements. While the water levels in sewage ponds are relatively constant, the water levels in the dams vary greatly as the water levels in dams are dependent on rainfall. Typically water levels in dams rise during the summer months and fall during the dry season. Often dams, especially the smaller dams, become full in the summer months, while in the dry season some dams, particularly the smaller ones, can dry up completely following summers with poor rainfall.

Maccoa Ducks *Oxyura maccoa* breed in summer at small water bodies, such as pans, dams and other impoundments. They are often hard to find in summer as such small water bodies are difficult to locate and are seldom visited. In the dry season these small water bodies dry up and Maccoa Ducks then congregate on larger water bodies, which retain water into and during the dry season. When they congregate on larger water bodies in the dry season, they are much easier to locate and count than in the summer months.

In July 2021, water levels in dams in south-eastern Botswana were relatively high following a summer with reasonable rainfall. Visits were made to most, if not all, of the dams and other water bodies where Maccoa Ducks are likely to occur in the dry season. All the visits were made in July 2021, apart from a visit to Jwaneng Sewage Ponds on 4 August 2021.

The numbers of birds seen in July 2021 were as follows:

Makgomakgosi Dam: 35
 Sehatlane Dam: 50
 Kubung Dam: 62
 Gampudi Dam: 26
 Lotlhakane West Dam no. 2: 12
 Moshupa Dam: 9
 Bokaa Dam: 1
 Phakalane Ponds, near Gaborone: 5
 Jwaneng Sewage Ponds: 7

Makgomakgosi, Sehatlane and Kubung Dams are all located west of Thamaga. Lotlhakane West Dam No.2 is located west of Moshupa and Gampudi Dam is located west of Kanye, near Moshaneng. Of the water bodies where Maccoa Ducks were seen, it is likely that only Lotlhakane Dam West no.2 and Gampudi Dams are breeding sites for the species.

Visits were also made to Thagale Dam, Gaborone Dam, Gamoleele Dam, Sephatlhaphatla Dam (between Thamaga and Moshupa), Lotlhakane West Dams no.1 and no.3, Bathoen Dam (Kanye) and Mogobane Dam, but no Maccoa Ducks were seen at any of these dams.



A total of 207 birds were counted. This number is probably an indication of the population of Maccoa Ducks in south-eastern Botswana in 2021. Few birds were thought to have been missed, apart from possibly a few at sewage ponds that were not visited. This figure, of around 200 birds is likely to be an indication of the number of birds present in south-eastern Botswana in a year with reasonable rainfall. Numbers are likely to be lower in a year with low rainfall, when the number of birds breeding is likely to be smaller. It is also possible that some birds leave the area in winter in years when there is little water in dams following a summer with low rainfall.

Maccoa Ducks are also found elsewhere in Botswana, principally in eastern Botswana as far north as Francistown. The species was regularly counted at Mahalapye Sewage Ponds from 2010 to 2015 with a maximum of 77 birds in July 2015 (D’Arcy and Tyler 2016). Apart from at Mahalapye, the number of birds present in the dry season in eastern Botswana is unknown, so a survey of water bodies in this part of Botswana, to count Maccoa Ducks, would be useful. Maccoa Ducks are occasionally found elsewhere in Botswana, such as in the Makgadikgadi system (Tyler 2012), but the numbers found in other parts of Botswana are likely to be relatively small.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to Mike and Daphne Goldsworthy and Harold Hester for waterbird counts at Mogobane, Bathoen, Moshupa and Gamoleele Dams.

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Chris A. Brewster
P.O. Box 26292, Gaborone



Maccoa Duck
Photo: Ian White



A record of Red-billed Spurfowl *Pternistis adspersus* near Olifantsdrift

Chris A. Brewster

On 4 April 2021, I was driving slowly along a track close to the Limpopo about 6 km north of Olifantsdrift in quarter degree square 2426B2. About 20 metres in front of me I saw a few Crested Francolins *Dendroperdix sephaena* on the track. As they walked to the side of the track, I noticed a single Red-billed Spurfowl with them. With its yellow eye ring, red bill and legs and relatively unmarked greyish plumage, it was clearly a Red-billed Spurfowl rather than a Natal Spurfowl *Pternistis natalensis*, which is a common resident in the area.

This sighting of a Red-billed Spurfowl was a great surprise to me. I have lived on the hardveld of eastern Botswana for more than 30 years and this was my first record of the species on the hardveld in all that time, though I know the species and its call very well. I have recorded the species on Kalahari sands around Letlhakeng (2425A1) and around Sojwe (2325B3/4), but never further to the east.

Red-billed Spurfowl was previously considered to be a francolin and Penry (1994) considered it the typical francolin of Kalahari sands and common or very common in northern, western and central areas of Botswana, but sparse and irregular in the east and absent in most of the south-west. Penry (1994) shows records on the hardveld in two half degree squares around both Gaborone and Francistown, and three other squares along the Limpopo valley, one of which is in 2326D, just a bit further north of Olifantsdrift. According to data for SABAP2 (Southern African Bird Atlas Project) there is only one record of the species in South Africa west of the Limpopo and Marico Rivers, and that is in Madikwe Game Reserve, not far from Gaborone.

Why a single Red-billed Spurfowl came to be associating with Crested Francolins near Olifantsdrift is a question that cannot easily be answered. Spurfowl and francolins do not fly far and are likely to be strictly resident. Is there a small population of the species in that area, as evidenced by a record in Penry (1994) in 2326D? Are there currently any populations of Red-billed Spurfowl elsewhere on the eastern hardveld, such as around Francistown and Gaborone, as indicated by Penry (1994)?

While a Red-billed Spurfowl cannot be confused with another species when seen well. Its call, however, is quite similar to the call of Natal Spurfowl, which is common in the east from Francistown south as far as Lobatse. If a bird is only recorded on call, care needs to be taken to confirm identification.

Reference

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Chris A. Brewster Email cbandog@gmail.com



Two records of Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* from south-eastern Botswana

Chris A. Brewster and Ian White

Striped Crake is a scarce migrant to the north of the country, mainly to the Okavango Delta and Chobe District, to temporarily flooded pans in grassland, breeding following rains (Hancock & Weiersbye 2016). Muller (2000, 2006) found Striped Crake to occur regularly in summer in the Maun area and breeding was confirmed too near Kasane. There are also two records from seasonal pans in Bobirwa in eastern Botswana (Brewster 2004). The species, an intra-African migrant, is mainly recorded in Botswana from December to April. It is a secretive species that is difficult to observe and to flush (Urban, Fry & Keith 1986).

On 18 September 2021 a particularly confiding Striped Crake was photographed by Ian White at Broadhurst Ponds in Gaborone. This was the first record of the species in south-eastern Botswana. That it would occur in south-eastern Botswana and also that it would occur in the dry season, were both unexpected. That it was recorded in September raises the possibility that at least some birds remain in Botswana at permanent wetlands in the dry season, after seasonal inundated pans have dried up, rather than migrating northwards to equatorial regions.

On 14 January 2022 Chris Brewster visited a grassy pan at Botlhapatlou, 40 km north of Molepolole. This pan, at the edge of the village, is a few hundred metres long. On this visit there was water in the pan and most of the pan had grass about a metre high in standing water. Walking through the wet grass of the pan, a Striped Crake was flushed at about 5 metres range and as it flew briefly its grey upperparts, streaked white, and its reddish flanks and undertail were clearly visible. About 10 Lesser Moorhens *Paragallinula angulata* were also flushed. The pan provides suitable breeding habitat for Striped Crake and this record indicates that the breeding range of the species possibly extends southwards to south-eastern Botswana in some years. In January 2022, following above average rainfall, there was a noticeable influx of Lesser Moorhens into south-eastern Botswana. The wet conditions that resulted in an influx of Lesser Moorhens were presumably also favourable to the Striped Crake.

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A pair of Buffy Pipits *Anthus vaalensis* at Tsabong

Chris A. Brewster

Maraloganyane Pan is situated about 10 km south-west of Tsabong. Maraloganyane Pan actually comprises two adjacent pans, both of which are deep bare saline pans with stony sides surrounded by the characteristic vegetation of much of the Tsabong area which is western woodlands on Kalahari sands

On the afternoon of 21 September 2021 we visited Maraloganyane Pan and noticed, in contrast to the dry vegetation of everywhere else in the area, there was some short green grass on the stony northern side of the more westerly pan. Within this area of green grass, the ground was damp as water reached the surface there. There were a couple of wells there, with water just 1m or so below the surface; the water in these wells was sweet and we were told that the wells never dry up.

Not surprisingly, the damp area was attractive to birds that came to drink; it was also favoured by livestock which kept the grass short. Amongst the bird species present, there were some African Pipits *Anthus cinnamomeus* in the area and also a pair of 'plain-backed' pipits, either Buffy Pipit or Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*; these 'plain-backed' pipits were exceptionally confiding, remaining within a few metres of us and not flying far even when disturbed. Plain-backed and Buffy Pipits are very difficult to positively identify, but I eventually concluded they were a pair of Buffy Pipits. As they were so confiding, the pinkish base of the lower mandible was clearly visible and their long and heavy tails were evident, as well as features of their plumage, indicating they were Buffy Pipits. One of the birds appeared to have an injured wing and only flew with difficulty and never far.

Buffy Pipits are fairly common in summer, mainly from December to April, in southern Botswana, including the southern Kalahari. Buffy Pipits of the race *A. v. neumanni* breed in Angola and are wet season migrants to Botswana and Northern Cape Province of South Africa (Clancey 1997). Most Buffy Pipits that are seen in summer in southern Botswana are presumed to be of this race.

In the dry season I have not previously encountered Buffy Pipits in the southern Kalahari, so I was surprised to see the pair at Tsabong in September. Away from the southern Kalahari, in south-eastern Botswana, Buffy Pipits are occasionally seen in the dry season; whether the species is resident there or is a visitor, probably from South Africa, where the race *A. v. vaalensis* is widespread (Peacock 2012), is not known. Peacock (2012) shows the race *A. v. exasperatus* as extending throughout southern Botswana, but makes no mention of the race *A. v. neumanni* and also does not show the range of the race *A. v. vaalensis* extending into Botswana. It is unclear, therefore, if the birds seen at Tsabong in September 2021 were of the race *A. v. exasperatus* or the race *A. v. vaalensis*.

Buffy Pipits and Plain-backed Pipits *Anthus leucophrys* are difficult bird species to positively identify. The movements of these two species in Botswana are unclear. Any records of either of these species in Botswana, especially in the southern part of the country, are therefore of interest.

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Chris A. Brewster Email: cbandog@gmail.com



Buffy Pipit
Photo: Ian White

The use by raptors of the electricity pylons between Sekoma and Jwaneng

Chris A. Brewster

Between the village of Sekoma and the town of Jwaneng, a distance of 87 km, there are electricity power lines supported by tall wooden pylons. These pylons do not follow the main road but follow the old road a couple of hundred meters south of the present main road. These wooden pylons are favoured by perching raptors. The area between Sekoma and Jwaneng is mostly open bush savanna with no large trees, which makes the tall pylons attractive to perching and roosting raptors.

On two occasions in the 2021-2022 austral summer I drove along this road from Sekoma to Jwaneng and I noted relatively large numbers of perched eagles and vultures on two dates as shown in the table below.

	8 December 2021	27 February 2021
Tawny Eagle <i>Aquila rapax</i>	6	2
Martial Eagle <i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	1	-
Black-chested Snake Eagle <i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	2	6
Brown Snake Eagle <i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	1	-
White-backed Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	4	15

Two smaller species of raptor, Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus* and Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides* were also seen perched on the pylons but they were not counted. The Tawny Eagles and Black-chested Eagles were seen singly or in pairs perched along the length of the road. For south-eastern Botswana, the numbers of Tawny Eagles and Black-chested Snake Eagles seen on these two dates are notable. Both species are now relatively uncommon in this part of the country so large numbers like these are unusual.

Between 2005 and 2022, I travelled along the road between Sekoma and Jwaneng probably once or twice a year; on each journey I have taken a note of the number of large raptors seen perched along the wooden pylons. My journeys for the most part were in March/April and July/August, though I also sometimes travelled along the road in December. In all cases, the five raptor species listed above were the only large raptor species recorded. No **Bateleurs** *Terathopius ecaudatus* were seen on any occasion, either perched on the pylons or flying over the veld. On some dates, either no raptors or just a single raptor was seen perched on the wooden pylons.

From 2005 to 2022 sightings of **Tawny Eagles** perched on the pylons involved between one and four birds, with the exception of the six birds seen on 8 December 2021. Most Tawny Eagles were seen in March and April, with only a single record, of one bird, in the winter months of July and August. **Martial Eagles** were only recorded on two dates prior to 2021, on 20 July 2012 and 5 April 2013. On both these dates single birds were seen at an active nest on one of the wooden pylons.

Black-chested Snake Eagles were seen on several dates, usually one or two birds, though four were seen on 19 March 2017. The six seen on 27 February 2022, which comprised three pairs of adults, was the largest number seen on any date. **Brown Snake Eagles** are uncommon in the area and were only seen on two other dates prior to 2021, on 7 April 2010 and 3 August 2018; both of these sightings involved pairs of adults.

White-backed Vultures were the most frequently recorded large raptor perched on the wooden pylons. Typically between one and five birds were seen, scattered along the length of the road, but on 19 March 2017 fourteen birds were counted. The 15 birds seen on 27 February 2022 was the highest number of birds recorded. Over the period that I have been recording the species along the road, there has been no noticeable decline in the number of birds recorded, despite the clear decline of this species in Botswana over the past two decades.

The numbers of large raptors seen along the road is very variable. One factor affecting this variability is the time of day. The number of raptors seen perched on the pylons tended to be greatest in the late afternoon before it gets dark, presumably as they roost on the pylons overnight. This, however, also was the time that I tended to drive along the road, so many of the counts were made at this time of day. Earlier in the day, often very few or no birds were seen. Another factor affecting the numbers of raptors seen, particularly of Tawny Eagles and Black-chested Snake Eagles, was the time of year. Numbers of these two species were clearly greater in the summer months, from December to April, than in winter, in July-August, indicating an influx in summer.

Counts were not made of Pale Chanting Goshawks and Greater Kestrels, mainly to limit the time which I spent pulling off the road to record birds seen. The numbers of Greater Kestrels seen along the road, nevertheless, appeared to be quite high and certainly the species was more numerous along the road than elsewhere in south-eastern Botswana.

With the exception of within 20 km or so of Jwaneng, where there are cultivated lands, the area between Sekoma and Jwaneng is clearly attractive to raptors. On either side of the road, there are large ranches, many of which appear to be relatively undeveloped. These large ranches provide favourable conditions for raptors. These large ranches are likely to be more attractive to raptors than areas of communal grazing where disturbance is greater and the veld is not likely to be in such good condition, due to higher livestock densities. Certainly these ranches are more attractive to raptors than cultivated lands, where generally few large raptors are seen, due to lack of prey and to disturbance. It is notable that no Bateleurs were recorded on any date, though they are occasionally seen further west, between Sekoma and Kang. This species appears to be more sensitive to disturbance than most other large raptors and has become noticeably less common throughout Botswana in the last thirty years.

Chris A. Brewster



Secretarybirds and Southern Ground Hornbills at Pandamatenga Farms

Elsabe van der Westhuizen & Jac-Johan van der Westhuizen

Secretarybirds *Sagittarius serpentarius* and Southern Ground Hornbills *Bucorvus leadbeateri* are regularly sighted on the extensive, open fields of the Pandamatenga farms, 100 km south of Kasane.

On a single day, traversing the farming area, it is not uncommon to see at least three groups of Southern Ground Hornbill, and single or pairs of Secretarybirds are also regularly sighted by the farmers in the area.

Ground Hornbills seem to be mostly associated with fields that are in closer proximity to the uncleared bush, with some groups being encountered quite close together. Average group size seems to be five, although up to nine birds have been sighted together and smaller groups of two or three as well, which would be expected, depending on the timing of the sighting in reference to the breeding season.

These farms have been cleared from scrub mopane mostly, but some beautiful sandveld strips remain in between, which are obviously surrounded by the huge open arable fields. The Pandamatenga Farms are a fascinating area, and well-deserving of additional attention from the birding community.

Elsabe van der Westhuizen elsabe.vdwesthuizen@fzs.org



Secretarybird

Photo: Ian White

Short-clawed Larks *Certhilauda chuana* at Moiyabana and Shoshong and their songs

Chris A. Brewster

White (2019) recorded three Short-clawed Larks *Certhilauda chuana* to the south of Moiyabana in the southern part of Central District. This record extended the known range of the species in Botswana northwards. I visited the Moiyabana area on 2 January 2020 and found a Short-clawed Lark at the same locality as White's (2019) record south of Moiyabane at 22°42.9'S 26°24.3'E, and also at another locality to the west of Moiyabana at approximately 22°37.5'S 26°21.6'E.

Short-clawed Lark is a common resident in south-eastern Botswana. Its preferred habitat there is agricultural land cultivated for field crops using traditional practices (Brewster et al 2010) though it is also rarely found in open savanna, such as at Kgoro pan, near Goodhope in Southern District, where I regularly see it. It also occurs in South Africa in the North West and Northern Cape Provinces, with a smaller, isolated population on the Polokwane Plateau in the Limpopo Province.

Male Short-clawed Larks have a distinctive territorial song, usually sung from a low perch but occasionally from the ground. They sing throughout the year, though they are most vocal in the summer months when they breed. Another type of territorial song is uttered by the male in display flight (Engelbrecht and Grosel 2022).

With the encouragement of Derek Engelbrecht, I visited the area south of Moiyabana on 29 December 2021, to make a recording of the song of birds from this population and find how it compared to the songs of the Short-clawed Lark elsewhere.

Arriving at 09h00, at the same location south of Moiyabana where I had seen a Short-clawed Lark in January 2020, I parked the car beside the tar road. Before I even opened the car door, I saw a Short-clawed Lark on the ground beside the car. Though I had found a Short-clawed immediately, the bird was rather elusive and gave only brief views. It frequented two fields adjacent to the tar road, but at no time did it sing and the only vocalisations heard were contact or alarm calls. I suspect a nest was probably close to where I had parked the car beside the tar road.

After 30 minutes or so, I had no success in hearing the song of the Short-clawed, so I went into one of the fields to see if I could find any other Short-clawed Larks. I crossed the field and a Short-clawed Lark flew up and started to sing from a fence post on the opposite side of the field. This is typical behavior of the species, flying up to sing from a low perch, such as a fence post, when a person comes into its territory. This bird was quite vocal and undisturbed by a person who walked along a track beside the fence, just 2 m from where it was singing.

I crossed over the fence, and while recording its song, I heard another bird singing close by, also from a low perch, presumably in response to the first bird's song. I returned to the car and moved to another location a few hundred metres away where I found a third bird singing from a perch and was able to record its song.

Three territorial males were found in song in a small area and the bird, possibly a female, found close to the tar road was presumably also occupying a territory. That four territorial birds were found in a small area indicates that the species is not uncommon there.

A territory of Short-clawed Lark was estimated to be about eight hectares (Brewster *et al.* 2008).

To the west of Shoshong, along the Molepolole – Serowe road, about 40 km or so to the south, there appeared to be much more suitable habitat for the species. In 1992 Marc Herremans recorded a Short-clawed Lark from the Shoshong area, though to the east of Shoshong at 23°15.01'S 26°34.85'E (pers. comm). Next day I went to the Shoshong area to look for Short-clawed Larks.

I spent the night in Shoshong and early the next morning, on 30 December 2021, I started looking for the species along the tar road which goes westwards from Shoshong to join the Molepolole – Serowe road. In a short time, at 23°02.68'S 26°27.32'E, I encountered a bird in display flight. I searched the fallow fields in the vicinity of where I found the bird in display flight and I found two other territorial males in song. A bit later, on the western side of the tar road that goes northwards to Serowe, I found two more birds, at different locations. These two birds were not in song, though their contact calls were heard.

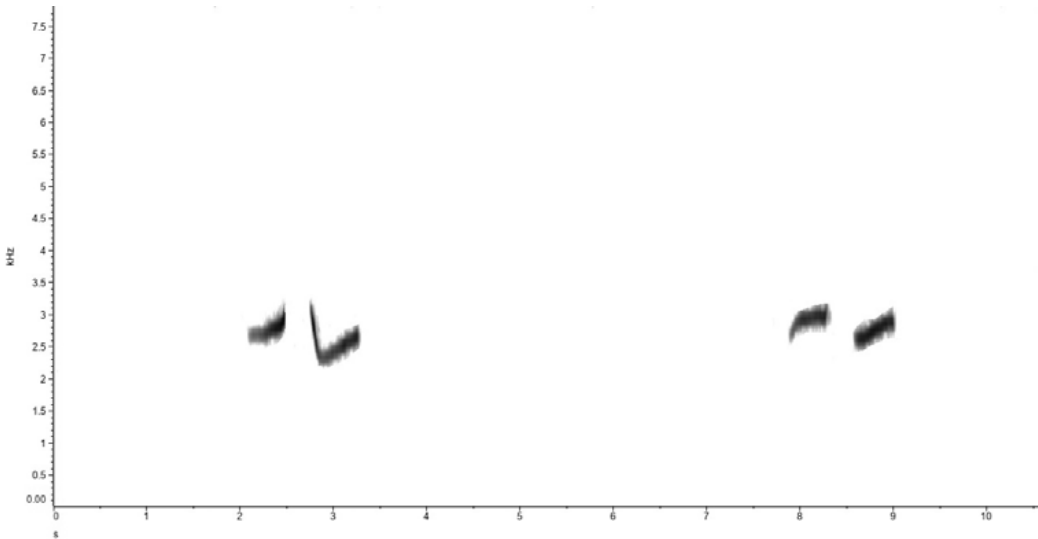
The presence of three birds in song near Shoshong and two more birds a bit further west indicates that the species, like at Moiyabana, is not uncommon around Shoshong. The song of the birds heard near Shoshong appeared similar to the song of the birds near Moiyabana.

The territorial song of the Short-clawed Lark varies between localities, often not far apart. For example, there are differences in the territorial song of birds in the population between the eastern and western regions of the Polokwane Plateau in the Limpopo Province of South Africa (Engelbrecht and Grosel 2022). The territorial song of the western birds is more musical and complex than the stereotypical simpler songs of the eastern birds (Engelbrecht and Grosel 2022). These different songs are considered to be dialects.

I am familiar with the song of Short-clawed Lark in south-eastern Botswana around Gaborone. It typically has a musical quality with undulating whistles and comprising several elements (e.g. Herremans M, XC 667444. Accessible at [www.xeno-canto.org / 667444](http://www.xeno-canto.org/667444)); this song is considered by Herremans to be the central dialect and was recorded at Metsemotlhaba. This song is rather similar to the western dialect on the Polokwane Plateau.

The territorial song of the birds recorded near Moiyabana was different to the song that I am familiar with around Gaborone. It was less musical, and more monotonous.

It had just two elements, and was somewhat similar to the song of the Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*, which also has two elements. It appears to be somewhat similar to the eastern dialect on the Polokwane Plateau (Engelbrecht D, XC 675342. Accessible at www.xeno-canto.org / 675342). A song recorded at Ranaka (Herremans M, XC 667441. Accessible at www.xeno-canto.org / 667441), and regarded as the southern dialect by Herremans, was also similar to the song recorded near Moiyabana.



Sonogram of the territorial song of one of the birds recorded south of Moiyabana

Acknowledgement

Thank you to Derek Engelbrecht for encouraging me to record the Short-clawed Lark song, for providing me with sonograms and for his helpful comments.

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Chris A. Brewster, Email: cbandog@gmail.com

Birding around Kacgae

Chris A. Brewster

North of Kang, and to the east of the main road from Kang to Ghanzi, is the village of Kacgae. In early December 2021 I visited the area around Kacgae, including the Okwa Valley to the north of the village, to look at the birds of the area. I found a great deal of interest there. There had been rain in the few days prior to my visit which continued while I was there. Due to the rain, the vegetation was green and the weather was relatively cool. I was accompanied by my six year old son, Declan, who greatly enjoys such birding trips.

Around Kacgae and also in parts of the Okwa Valley there were some cattle posts, which impacted on grass cover in the area. Elsewhere, such as south of the Kacgae turn off and along the Okwa Valley east of the old main road to Ghanzi, the area was not grazed by livestock, so the veld there was generally in good condition, with good grass growth.

On 5 December 2021, we left Kang and travelled northwards along the main road, stopping for a while near Lone Tree Wildlife Camp. Along the way, a Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*, the only one seen on the trip, two Tawny Eagles *Aquila rapax*, a large flock of Common Swifts *Apus apus* and a few Yellow-billed Kites *Milvus aegyptius* were seen. The latter species is less common in the west of the country than in the east and north, and it is possible that these birds were only non-breeding visitors to the area, having bred elsewhere.

North of Lone Tree Wildlife Camp we turned right off the main road along the gravel road to Kacgae which crosses a pan just before Kacgae. We passed through the village and then drove along the Kacgae valley that runs north-eastwards from Kacgae towards the Okwa Valley, until, after passing the turn-offs to a couple of cattle posts, the track eventually became too overgrown to go any further. Finding a place to camp there was not easy, due to a lack of trees, but we eventually camped overlooking a small ephemeral pool in the valley in 2222C2. At this pool, there was a Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* and a Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, all unexpected species in an area where there is generally no surface water. A lone Elephant had also come to the water and was seen close by the next morning. Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio* were very common along the valley and Lesser Grey Shrikes *Lanius minor* were also numerous. A Willow Warbler *Phyllocopus trochilus* was seen in a flowering *Acacia fleckii*; only a few Willow Warblers were recorded on this trip and most were seen, like this bird, in the vicinity of flowering *Acacia fleckii*. Most of the valley was bush and shrub savanna, but in one open grassy area, there were Buffy Pipits *Anthus vaalensis*, Red-capped Larks *Calendrella cinerea*, Capped Wheatears *Oenanthe pileata* and a Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, the latter a most unexpected species in the Kalahari. Nearby we had good views of a group of Bronze-winged Coursers *Rhinoptilus cinctus*. We recorded a total of 52 species along the Kacgae valley.



The next morning, we returned along the valley back to the pan just west of Kacgae. A lone female Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* showed itself well at this pan and the only Bateleur *Trathopius ecaudatus* of the trip was seen there. Other birds of interest at this pan included a Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*, a Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*, Temminck's Coursers *Cursorius temminckii*, Grey-backed Sparrow-larks *Eremopterix verticalis* and two Dusky Sunbirds *Cinnyris fuscus*. We then looked around the village of Kacgae and added a few more species, including a Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* and Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis*, the latter being the only ones seen on the trip. We saw 50 species around Kacgae village and the nearby pan.

We drove northwards along the tar road to Ghanzi to where the road crosses the Okwa Valley. Where the road crosses the valley, there was an area of water in the rocky floor of the valley close to the road and there were also two more pools, a few hundred metres further east along the valley. The water in these pools had remarkably remained from the previous summer, though water levels had dropped and the number of pools had reduced through the dry winter months. There was a great variety of waterbird species in these three pools, including many species unexpected in the Kalahari. Most notable of the waterbird species were 140 Little Grebes, a Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*, two Squacco Herons *Ardeola rallodes*, three Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, a Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*, a Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*, three African Jacanas *Actophilornis africanus* and two Greater Painted-snipes *Rostratula benghalensis*. In total there were 21 species of waterbird and also of note was a single Western Yellow Wagtail.

Some time was spent enjoying the waterbirds there, before we proceeded a few kilometres eastwards along the Okwa valley, passing a single Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* on the way, and then crossing the old main road to Ghanzi. We looked for a place to camp, which was not easy due to a lack of trees in the valley, but we eventually located a beautiful place to camp, overlooking the valley in 2221B4, a few kilometres east of the old main road, and decided to spend two nights there. We spent the next day birding along the Okwa Valley in the area where we camped.

The Okwa valley is well defined and relatively deep with, in places, rocky outcrops on its sides and in the floor of the valley. The vegetation of the valley is mostly low shrub and bush savanna, with very few trees. However, near where the old main road to Ghanzi crosses the valley, in the vicinity of an abandoned cattle post, there are some relatively large trees.

Despite the general lack of trees, birding along the eastern Okwa Valley was very good. Immediately obvious in the early morning was the large number of calling Orange River Francolins *Scleroptila gutturalis* and this species was common along the valley. Red-backed Shrikes and Lesser Grey Shrikes were very common along the valley and, with also large numbers of Common Swifts and Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*, it was evident that palaeartic migrants comprised a relatively large proportion of the birds seen.

There was a variety of larks, including Sabota *Calendulauda sabota*, Fawn-coloured *Calendulauda africanoides*, Dusky *Pinarocorys nigricans* and Rufous-naped Larks *Mirafra africana* and Grey-backed Sparrow-larks. There were some Zitting Cisticolas *Cisticola juncidis* in patches of long grass along the valley and, unexpectedly, there were also a few Rattling Cisticolas *Cisticola chiniana*. In a group of trees near where the old main road crossed the valley, there was a Spotted Flycatcher, one of the handful seen on the trip. Other birds of interest were an adult Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* and a Shikra *Accipter badius*, the only ones of both species seen on the trip. To the north of the valley, along the old main road to Ghanzi, a Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* was heard calling. A total of 101 species were recorded along the Okwa Valley and its vicinity, which, for the Kalahari, is a remarkably large number.

After the Okwa valley, we visited the rather attractive villages of East Hanahai and West Hanahai, two villages, like Kacgae, that I had not previously been to. After West Hanahai we drove back to the main tar road and proceeded southwards back along the main road. After passing the Kacgae turn off we looked for a place to camp between there and the Lone Tree Wildlife Camp. We eventually located a suitable spot in 2222C3 by driving along the old main road, which is west of the tar road, and then following a faint track leading off this road.

The area in which we camped was open acacia tree savanna, though a couple of kilometres away were extensive open areas of shrub savanna. As the sun set I was surprised to hear the sound of a calling Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena*; while this species is common in the east and north of the country, it is largely absent from the Kalahari. It has, however, been recorded around Kang in the past and this record was confirmation of its continued presence in this part of the Kalahari. Other birds of interest in the area included calling African *Cuculus gularis* and Black Cuckoos *Cuculus clamosus*. It was noticeable that in this area of tree savanna, unlike along the Okwa Valley and Kacgae Valleys, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes were relatively uncommon. The next morning, I explored on foot an area of shrub savanna, to the east of the main tar road. Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*, Cape Penduline-tit *Anthoscopus minutus*, Tinkling Cisticola *Cisticola rufilatus* and Rufous-eared Warbler *Malcorus pectoralis* were all seen or heard calling; these species were not seen elsewhere on the trip. A total of 55 species was recorded in this area, between Lone Tree Wildlife Camp and the Kacgae turn off.

A great variety of bird species was seen during the five days birding in this part of the Kalahari, including many species, particularly waterbirds, that were unexpected in the Kalahari. In contrast, a few species expected in the Kalahari were seen in smaller numbers than expected or not seen at all.

The relative lack of several species of raptor was noticeable. One species, Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*, considered by Penry (1994) to be very common in the Kalahari, was not seen at all. Indeed, the only falcons seen were the single Red-footed Falcon and single Lesser Kestrel at Kacgae Pan.

Very few Pale Chanting Goshawks, less than five in total, were seen, despite this species also considered by Penry (1994) to be very common in the Kalahari. Only one Bateleur was seen, an indication of the huge decline in numbers of this species in recent years. The only vultures seen were three White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus* and a single Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* to the north of Kang, an indication too of the decline in numbers of vultures. In contrast, a few Tawny Eagles were seen, perhaps an indication that the decline in numbers of Tawny Eagles is not as great as for some other large raptors.

Of palaeartic migrants, it was noticeable how common Red-backed Shrikes and Lesser Grey Shrikes were along the Okwa and Kacgae Valleys and it was a real pleasure to see so many of these two species. In contrast, only a handful of both Willow Warbler and Spotted Flycatchers were seen. Considered to be both fairly common to common throughout Botswana by Penry (1994), it was expected that these species would be more numerous, though it is possible that the open areas along the Okwa and Kacgae Valleys, lacking in trees, were unsuitable for these two species. No Icterine Warblers *Hippolais icterina* were seen at all, which was surprising.

Most birders visiting the Kalahari tend to visit wildlife areas, but good birding is not confined to these areas. There are many areas away from wildlife areas which offer good birding too and they have the advantage that there are no restrictions on walking to look for birds. This visit to the Kacgae area might encourage birders to visit some of the less frequented parts of the country and enjoy the birds that are found in such places and also add to our knowledge.

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Chris A. Brewster cbandog@gmail.com



Red-necked Falcon
Photo: Ian White

Highlights of counts of waterbirds in 2021 and in January 2022

Stephanie J. Tyler

I note below some of the more interesting species or notable counts made in 2021 or early 2022. The good rains in the summer months in both years had a major effect on numbers of birds seen at the main dams. Sadly this report mainly covers wetlands in south-east Botswana because no or very few counts were made at important sites elsewhere. Exceptions were at Ghanzi and Nata Delta.

Wet season January 2021 South-east Botswana

During January 2021 most dams and pans were more than 50% full after rains but by early February, after unprecedented rainfall, they were much fuller. When all waterbodies are full, birds do disperse widely so counts will be lower in such conditions. Moreover, with no muddy edges to dams, waders will be few. Despite this, over 8,000 waterbirds were counted.

Table 1. Counts of waterbirds in south-east Botswana in January 2021

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
South-east Botswana	8,345	70			
Bathoen Dam	115	9	Mogobane Dam	249	13
Bokaa Dam	2942	42	Moshupa Dam	59	15
Broadhurst S.P./Gabs GR	984	25	Phakalane S.P	144	18
Gaampudi Dam, Kanye	154	14	Ramotswa S.P	207	19
Gaborone Dam	1311	39	Sita Pan	93	10
Gamoleele Dam	124	13	Taeshele Dam, Kanye	371	26
Kgoro Pan	162	17	Thagale Dam	440	21
Lobatse S.P.	363	34	Tswaiing Pans	627	37

Chris Brewster noted that on 3 February the corner of **Gaborone Game Reserve** adjacent to **Broadhurst Sewage Ponds** (S.P.) was difficult to count due to tall vegetation and lilies on the pan. Recent heavy rain had caused flooding and water was still flowing through the game reserve. He added that at Broadhurst S.P. there were few waterbirds, apart from Sacred Ibises, except that one large pond had been drained and that had attracted large numbers of waders. At **Lobatse S.P.** on 5 February, water was flowing everywhere and all old ponds were full. Chris wrote that it was as muddy as Inch Lake in Donegal and along two tracks to the ponds, water was flowing and Catfish were trying to swim against the current in ankle deep water on the vehicle track.

Despite waterbodies being more than half full or overflowing, some 70 species were reported. The 14 most numerous species are shown below in Table 2. It is good to see Wood Sandpiper, Ruff, Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper all figuring in Table 2, especially as Curlew Sandpiper is a declining species. A high proportion of the numbers of these waders came from **Bokaa Dam** but 550 Little Stint at **Broadhurst S.P.** and 100 at **Gaborone Dam** were also of note.

Table 2. The Top 14 species (highest combined counts all sites) in south-east Botswana in January 2021

Little Stint	1148	Curlew Sandpiper	325
Egyptian Goose	977	Sacred Ibis	299
Cattle Egret	911	Red-billed Teal	258
Ruff	624	White-faced Duck	250
Blacksmith Lapwing	596	Wood Sandpiper	149
Red-knobbed Coot	571	Kittlitz's Plover	139
White-winged Tern	537	Southern Pochard	123

Bokaa Dam, apart from high wader counts, had a Goliath heron, 23 Black Herons, 120 Black-winged Pratincoles (none seen elsewhere), five Yellow-billed Storks and 21 Ringed Plovers. At **Broadhurst S.P and the adjacent area of Gaborone Game Reserve**, an African Crake, Dwarf Bittern, a male Maccoa Duck and 207 Sacred Ibis were all of note. At the beautiful small **Gaampudi Dam** near Kanye, 12 White-backed Ducks and 20 Maccoa Duck were the highlights whilst at nearby **Taueshele Dam** were four more White-backed Duck and four more Maccoa Ducks.

At **Gaborone Dam** the noteworthy birds included another Goliath Heron, six Black Herons, a Dwarf Bittern and a Little Bittern, 20 Ringed plovers, 394 Egyptian Geese (the largest count at any site), an Osprey and the only Grey-headed Gull seen in south-east Botswana during the summer counts. The overflowing ponds and adjacent habitats at **Lobatse S.P.** had two Painted Snipe, five Wattled Lapwings and two Black Duck. Disappointingly few birds were at **Bathoen Dam, Mogobane Dam, Moshupa Dam** or at **Ramotswa S.P.** although a Lesser Moorhen was of note at the last site. There was, sadly, much litter around Moshupa Dam. **Thagale Dam** was the only site with Fulvous Ducks (13) and there were also three Yellow-billed Storks there. There were 17 species at **Kgoro Pan** but no counts of note as the pan was so full.

Mid to late February counts were made at **Sita Pan** 20km south-west of Gasita and at **Tswaiing Pans** when they were full of water. At the latter pans a Dwarf Bittern, Black-winged Pratincole, 88 South African Shelduck (a high count for this species) and 50 Kittlitz's Plovers were of note.

Kweneng West

In late February Chris Brewster counted waterbirds at three pans in the Kalahari: Tshwaane, Takatokwane and Mosarwe five kilometres north-west from Takatokwane Pan.

Table 3. Wet season counts of waterbirds in February 2021 in Kweneng West

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
Total of birds at 3 pans	259	17	Takatokwane Pan	39	6
Tshwaane Pan	127	10	Mosarwe Pan	93	11

Ghanzi District

Modiegi Bakane carried out counts during January at Ghanzi S.P., two pans at Tsootsha, the small pan at Thakadu Camp site and at a new site - a pan on private land called Ghanzi Pan below. Modiegi also visited New Xade sewage ponds during early February. As elsewhere in Botswana, water was plentiful and pans were full. Among the interesting species that he noted were a Green-backed Heron, three Black-crowned Night Herons, four Black Herons and an African Crake at Ghanzi Pan and two South African Shelduck, out of their usual south-eastern range, 17 Abdim's Storks, a Greater Painted Snipe and 15 Black-winged Pratincoles at Tsootsha Pans.

Table 4. Wet season counts of waterbirds in January/February 2021 in Ghanzi District

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
Total at five sites	413	27	Thakadu Camp pan	38	3
Ghanzi S.P.	123	12	Ghanzi Pan	120	15
New Xade S.P.	14	4	Tsootsha Pans	118	16



Greater Painted Snipe
Photo: Ian White

July 2021 dry season waterbird counts South-east Botswana

A range of sites, mainly dams, were visited but sadly no counts were carried out at some key sewage ponds – **Broadhurst, Lobatse and Ngotwane**. **Bokaa Dam** as usual had a high count and the most species of waterbird but for overall numbers **Phakalane Sewage Ponds** won the day with at least 1,138 waterbirds counted.

Table 5. Counts of waterbirds in Botswana in July 2021 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in shown too) N.C. = no count

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
Southeast Botswana	6,271	45	Mogobane Dam	689	15
Bathoen Dam	59	13	Moshupa Dam	101	19
Bokaa Dam	1,027	35	Pans (3) NW Lotlhakane West	22	16
Broadhurst S.P/ Gaborone GR	N.C.		Ramotswa S.P.	N.C.	
Gaborone Dam	261	23	Phakalane S.P.	1,138	30
Gamoleele Dam	N.C.		Sehatlhane Dam	425	16
Gampudi Dam near Kanye	101	12	Sephatlhphatla Dam	119	16
Lobatse S.P.	N.C.		Taueshele Dam	102	17
Kubung Dam	282	17	Thagale Dam	510	26
Jwaneng S.P.	228	21			
Okwa Valley pools	165	8	Makgadikgadi Pans		
Makgomakgosi Dam	246	16	Nata Sanctuary – part count	441	28
Manyelanong Pan	43	22			

Nonetheless some interesting species were noted and some new dams surveyed. Of particular note was the large number of Maccoa Duck seen with the highest counts of 62 and 50 at **Kubung and Sehetlane Dams** respectively, 35 at **Makgomakgosi Dam**, 26 at **Gampudi Dam** and one to 12 birds seen at three other sites. Of note at **Thagale Dam** on 1 July were a Pink-backed Pelican, two Black Storks and nine Yellow-billed Storks and also about 100 African Quailfinches. There was a Black Heron at **Gaborone Dam** on 8 July and **Bokaa Dam** on 13 July boasted a breeding colony in reeds of seven active nests of White-breasted Cormorants and active nests of Grey Heron, Black-headed Heron and African Spoonbills.:

Table 6. The Top 12 species (highest combined counts all sites) in south-east Botswana in July 2021

Egyptian Goose	952	Cattle Egret	268
Red-billed Teal	701	Reed Cormorant	243
Little Grebe	549	White-breasted Cormorant	235
White-faced Duck	500	Greater Flamingo	202
African Spurwing	386	Maccoa Duck	200
Red-knobbed Coot	349	Blacksmith Lapwing	173

Makgadikgadi Pans

A visit was made by Chris Brewster to Nata Delta. The water level in the pan was high, extending up the Nata River, though all pans were otherwise dry. Due to high water levels, it was impossible to reach the Nata River mouth and bird numbers were relatively low. Breeding birds at Nata River mouth such as White Pelicans could only be seen from a great distance and not counted.

Of note though were a Black-necked Grebe, at least 80 White Pelicans, 200 Lesser Flamingos flying by and five Chestnut-banded Plovers. In all, only 441 birds were seen of 28 species.

Waterbird counts in the wet season January/February 2022
South-east Botswana

Again, very good summer rains meant that most dams were full or almost so and, consequently, numbers of waterbirds were very low with their dispersal to small water bodies for breeding. The total count for south-east Botswana was 3,000 fewer than in January 2021. However, an influx of species such as Dwarf Bitterns, Painted Snipe and Lesser Moorhens was evident in January and early February at small wetlands such as **Dihudi Pan near Mmathethe** and even in the **Nossob Valley** of the Kalagadi Transfrontier Park but these are not included in the counts below.

Unusually, **Bokaa Dam** had low numbers of birds but this was because of the dam being full and access more difficult. **Phakalane S.P.** and **Broadhurst S.P.** had high numbers of birds and of species, rivalled only by **Gaborone Dam**.

Of note there were single Goliath Herons at **Thagale Dam** and **Broadhurst S.P.**, three Black Herons at **Bokaa Dam** and 11 at **Broadhurst S.P./Gaborone G.R.**, three Yellow-billed Egrets at **Gaborone Dam**, 11 Yellow-billed Storks at **Bokaa Dam** and eight at **Phakalane S.P.**, seven Fulvous Duck at **Thagale Dam**, and a Great Crested Grebe, at **Taueshele Dam**. Five Maccoa Duck were seen at **Gaampudi Dam**, four at **Ramotswa S.P.**, four at **Makgosi Dam** west of Thamaga and some 16 at **Kubung Dam**.

Waders were generally scarce because of high water levels and little exposed shore but at **Broadhurst S.P.** the large pond was almost dry and here waders were numerous. For example, there were 90 Black-winged Stilts, 190 Blacksmith Lapwings, 600 Ruff and 80 Little Stilts. At **Phakalane S.P.** too the large lower pond had little water and here there were 500 Ruff and 170 Little Stilts. On a depressing note, the only Curlew Sandpipers seen were two at Phakalane S.P.; this is a declining species.

Table 7. Counts of waterbirds in south-east Botswana January/early February 2022

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
Southeast Botswana	6,061	64			
Bathoen Dam	7	3	Mogobane Dam	239	15
Bokaa Dam	217	26	Moshupa Dam	23	5
Broadhurst S.P./Gabs GR	1,435	35	Phakalane S.P	1,677	33
Gaampudi Dam, Kanye	39	9	Ramotswa S.P	96	12
Gaborone Dam	1,528	27	Sita Pan		
Gamoleele Dam	61	10	Taueshele Dam, Kanye	112	16
Kubung Dam	133	20	Thagale Dam	385	27
Makgosi Dam	66	18	Tswaiing Pans		

Table 8. The Top 12 species (highest combined counts all sites) in south-east Botswana in January 2022

Ruff	1163	Little Stint	275
Egyptian Goose	916	Black-winged Stilt	266
White-faced Duck	634	Cattle Egret	151
White-winged Tern	576	Red-billed Teal	136
Blacksmith Lapwing	558	Red-knobbed Coot	98
Marabou Stork	318	Wood Sandpiper	84

Sadly, yet again, no data have been received for any site in the Chobe area or from the Okavango Delta or for sites that used to be well-covered e.g. Nata Delta and Shashe Dam. Surely there are BirdLife Botswana members who could take on a site and count waterbirds there twice a year. For example, sites such as Kasane S.P., a section of the Chobe River, pans in Savuti, a section of the Thamalakane or Boteti Rivers, any lagoons or pans in the Okavango Delta, Francistown S.P., Mahalapye S.P. or any other wetland near you.

In addition to the species in Table 10 (see below) there were records too of several species of other birds associated with water such as coucals, kingfishers, wagtails and hirundines.

Table 9. Some other waterbirds seen at sites in south-east Botswana in January 2021, July 2021 and January 2022

	Jan 21	July 21	Jan 22
Burchell's Coucal <i>Centropus burchellii</i>			1
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	13	21	7
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Corythornis cristatus</i>		1	
Woodland Kingfisher <i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	2		
Grey-headed Kingfisher <i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>			2
Cape Wagtail <i>Motacilla capensis</i>	15	57	4
Western Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	1		
African Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	6	10	4
Pearl-breasted Swallow <i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>		3	2
Brown-throated Martin <i>Riparia paludicola</i>		1	4

Acknowledgements to Volunteers

I am most grateful to the few faithful volunteers who did do the counts in the south-east of the country: – Chris Brewster (CAB), Daphne Goldsworthy (DG), Mike Goldsworthy (MGG), Harold Hester (HH), Stone and also to Modiegi Bakane for his counts from the Ghanzi District. Sadly, by the time you read this, Mike and Daphne Goldsworthy will have left Botswana.

Stephanie Tyler – Co-ordinator of waterbird counts in Botswana for Wetlands International and BirdLife International. Email steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com



Great Crested Grebe
Photo: Ian White



Table 10. Counts of different species of waterbirds in south-east Botswana (SE), Kalahari pans (K), Nata Sanctuary (NS) and Ghanzi District (GH) in January 2021, July 2021 and January 2022

	January 2021			July 2021		January 2022		
	SE	K	GH	SE	NS	SE	K	
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	1			12		4		
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	82	10	53	779	4	127		
Black-necked Grebe <i>Tachybaptus nigricollis</i>					1			
Pink-backed Pelican <i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>				1				
White Pelican <i>P. onocrotalus</i>					80			
White-br. Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	46			235	1	16		
Reed Cormorant <i>P. africanus</i>	40			243		39		
African Darter <i>Anhinga rufa</i>	28		3	34		35		
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	66			40	3	34		
Black-headed Heron <i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	15	1		23		15		
Goliath Heron <i>Ardea goliath</i>	2					2		
Great Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	5		12	13	1	18		
Black Egret <i>E. ardesiaca</i>	33		4	1		10		
Yellow-billed Egret <i>E. intermedia</i>	4			1		3		
Little Egret <i>E. garzetta</i>	85		11	22	2	30		
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	9					16		
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	911	11	7	269	1	151		
Green-backed Heron <i>Butorides striata</i>	3		1			3		

	January 2021			July 2021		January 2022		
	SE	K	GH	SE	NS	SE	K	
Black-cr. Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2		3			1		
Dwarf Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sturmii</i>	3							
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutes</i>	1							
Yellow-billed Stork <i>Mycteria ibis</i>	11			10		19		
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>				3				
Abdim's Stork <i>Ciconia abdimi</i>			17					
African Openbill <i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>					1			
Marabou Stork <i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	14				1	318		
Hammerkop <i>Scopus umbretta</i>				3		2		
Sacred Ibis <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	299			33		18		
Hadeda Ibis <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	13			16		16		
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	57	15		10	3	18		
African Spoonbill <i>Platalea alba</i>	112		1	103	4	12		
Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	19			202		66		
Lesser Flamingo <i>P. minor</i>	3			72	200	1		
Fulvous Duck <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	15					7		
White-faced Duck <i>D. viduata</i>	250			500		634		
White-backed Duck <i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>	16					1		
Spur-winged Goose <i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	43			389		62		
Comb Duck <i>Sarkidiornis melanotus</i>	13	1	2	54		21		
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	977	11	4	955	6	916		
S. African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	122	7	2	90		12		

	January 2021			July 2021		January 2022		
	SE	K	GH	SE	NS	SE	K	
Black Duck <i>Anas sparsa</i>	2							
Cape Teal <i>A. capensis</i>	39	7			20	18		
Red-billed Teal <i>A. erythrorhyncha</i>	258	12	18	733	1	136		
Hottentot Teal <i>A. hottentota</i>	7					8		
Yellow-billed Duck <i>A. undulata</i>	20			140		11		
Cape Shoveler <i>A. smithii</i>	55			19		2		
Southern Pochard <i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	123	3	4	120		30		
Maccoa Duck <i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	25			210		29		
African Crake <i>Crecopsis egregia</i>	1		1			1		
Black Crake <i>Amauornis flavirostris</i>	9		1			10		
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	28		10	72		7		
Lesser Moorhen <i>G. angulate</i>	1					1		
Allen's Gallinule <i>Porphyrio alleni</i>						1		
Purple Swamphen <i>P. madagascariensis</i>	1					5		
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	571			370	6	98		
African Jacana <i>Actophilornis africana</i>	36		8	22		31		
Greater Painted Snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	2		1			1		
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	36	6	2	48	36	266		
Pied Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	6	3			12	21		
Black-winged Pratincole <i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	121		15			4		

	January 2021			July 2021		January 2022		
	SE	K	GH	SE	NS	SE	K	
Three-banded Plover <i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	27	3	23	93		14		
Kittlitz's Plover <i>C. pecuarius</i>	139	47	5	71	11	36		
Ringed Plover <i>C. hiaticula</i>	44					11		
Chestnut-banded Plover <i>C. pallidus</i>					5			
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	596	32	151	190	31	556		
Crowned Lapwing <i>V. coronatus</i>						4		
Wattled Lapwing <i>V. senegallus</i>	5							
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	149		33		1	84		
Marsh Sandpiper <i>T. stagnatilis</i>	14				1	4		
Greenshank <i>T. nebularia</i>	62	56			1	5		
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	22		21	3		13		
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	325					2		
Little Stint <i>C. minuta</i>	1148	34			5	275		
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	624			2	1	1163		
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1							
African Snipe <i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>				1				
Grey-headed Gull <i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	1							
Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	3			1	2			
White-winged Tern <i>C. leucopterus</i>	537			1		576		
African Fish Eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	6			1		7		
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1							
TOTAL	8,345	259	826	6,271	441	6,061		

Raptor records in southern Botswana in April 2021

Between 17 April and 1 May 2021 Karin Nelson visited southern Botswana. She travelled from Pioneer Gate at Lobatse through Jwaneng, Werda and Tsabong to Mabuasehube in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. From Mabuasehube she drove to Kaa in the northern part of Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and, after spending eight days in the park, she travelled through Zutshwa and Kang, spending a night in both places, before continuing through Takatokwane to Khutse Game Reserve. She spent three nights there and then proceeded to Gaborone. Excluding one rest day, she recorded all the raptors seen over a period of 14 days. The large majority of her raptor sightings were in wildlife areas, that is national parks, game reserves and wildlife management areas.

The most numerous species she recorded was Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus*, with sightings of 125 birds. Pale Chanting Goshawks were mostly seen singly, though there were occasional sightings of two or more birds; they were most numerous around Kaa, where a total of 40 birds were seen. The next most numerous species was White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*, of which she saw 60; most of the White-backed Vultures were in two groups, a group of 40 in Khutse Game Reserve and a group of 12 at Kaa. The next most common species was Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*, with sightings of 28 birds. Unlike most other raptor species, Greater Kestrel did not appear to show a preference for wildlife areas, as a total of 12 birds were seen from Jwaneng through Sekoma to Werda, which is primarily agricultural land. Other fairly common species were Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*, with 20 birds seen, Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*, with 18 birds, Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*, with 16 birds, Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, with 15 birds, and Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*, with 12 birds seen. Most of the Lappet-faced Vultures seen were in three groups, a group of four at Mabuasehube, a group of three at Kaa and a group of nine at Khutse. All the Bateleur sightings were in wildlife areas, and they were most numerous at Mabuasehube, with sightings of 12 birds there, including one group of six birds. The majority of Black-winged Kite sightings were between Kaa and Zutshwa, where a total of ten birds were seen.

Other species seen in smaller numbers were nine Tawny Eagles *Aquila rapax*, six Secretarybirds *Sagittarius serpentarius*, six Red-necked Flacons *Falco chiquera* and five Black-chested Snake Eagles *Circaetus pectoralis*. There was a sighting of two Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus* at Khutse; records of this species in the south of the country are rare. There were also two Martial Eagles *Polemaetus bellicosus*, a single Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*, one White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis* and a Shikra *Accipiter badius*.

Compiled by Chris Brewdster from records sent by Karin Nelson

Report from the Records Subcommittee: Category A Records

The following records were assessed by Chris A. Brewster, Andrew Hester, Richard D. Randall, Grant Reed and Stephanie J. Tyler. Records were assessed on the basis of majority vote. Observers did not vote on their own records.

Species	Square	Date	Comments
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	2425B4	24.10.21	One seen and photographed at Bokaa Dam (C. Brewster, I White)
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	2023A2	16.11.19	Pair of adults seen and photographed at Maun (C. Viljoen). Fourth accepted record away from Chobe District.
Red-throated Twinspot <i>Hypargos niveoguttatus</i>	1725C1	24-26.9.21	Pair of adults seen and photographed at Kasane (P. Walker). Second accepted record for Botswana.
Red-throated Twinspot <i>Hypargos niveoguttatus</i>	1725C2	22.6.22	Pair of adults seen and photographed at Kasane (M. Weakley). Possibly the same birds as seen on 24-26.9.21
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	2123A4	13.4.22	One seen and photographed at Tau Pan (L. Rainier). Fifth accepted record for Botswana.

Records not accepted

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* at Kasane on 19 September 2019

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis* at Maun on 3 July 2021

Miombo Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis elisabeth* at Kasane on 11 June 2021

The following species have been removed from the Category B rarities list as their status has become clear and may have been found to be common or frequent in parts of the country: Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea intermedia*, White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachias leuconotus*, African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*, Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*, Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*, Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola* and Streaky-headed Seedeater *Crithagra gularis*

The following species has been added to the Category B rarities list: Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Chris A. Brewster, Records Sub-committee, BirdLife Botswana

Summary of Category B Records

Chris A. Brewster & Stephanie J. Tyler

Records are for the period from February 2021 to July 2022 with a few earlier records as shown.

CKGR = Central Kalahari Game Reserve; G.R. Game Reserve; S.P. Sewage Ponds.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*

Seen on Ngotwane River in 2425D4 on 8 Oct 2021, three birds at Nnywane Dam between Ramotswa and Lobatse on 7 Nov and a pair at Pitsane on 31 July 2022 (AH, CAB, IW).

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*

A pair of adults with one tiny duckling was at Bothlhapatlou on 8 May 2021 and one at Kotolaname, west of Molepolole, on 12 June. There were ca.12 at Sojwe Pan on 20 June 2021 and 10 there on 30 Dec; five at Gampudi Dam, Kanye on 23 Jan 2022 and four at Ramotswa S.P. on 8 Feb. There were 23 at Makgomakosi Dam near Thamaga, 31 at Sehatlane Dam near Kubung and six at Kubung Dam on 19 July 2022. In the Okwa Valley, south of Ghanzi and outside of the expected range of the species, there were three immatures on 4 Aug 2021, four on 9 Sept and one on 6 Dec (CAB, IW, HH).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A single bird was seen on pools in the Okwa Valley on 4 Aug 2021 and 9 Sept 2021. Single birds were seen at Nata Sanctuary on 11 Aug, at Sojwe Pan on 30 Dec, at Gampudi Dam, Kanye on 8 Jan 2022 and at Tswaiing Pans on 13 Mar (CAB, IW, SM).

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*

Five were at Gaborone G.R. on 25 May 2021 and 32 there on 6 June. There was an immature at Thagale Dam on 1 July, one at Bokaa Dam on 13 July, ca.70 at Phakalane S.P. on 30 July, ca.100 at Gaborone Dam on 23 Oct and ca.100 at Bokaa Dam on 24 Oct. Some 200 were seen flying by at Nata Sanctuary on 11 Aug (CAB). A single bird was at Phakalane S.P. on 27 Jan 2022 (CAB, IW).

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Two were at Thagale Dam on 1 July 2021; three fledged young were at a quarry at Otse Hill on 12 Sept (CAB) and a young bird was in a large pan in the Khwai area on 25 July (MM).

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia microscelis* (formerly *episcopus*)

The species was seen at Mombo in 1922B2 a few times in 2020/2021 summer with numbers up to around 40 (KMcQ). One was near Eretsha in 1822D3 on 18 Dec 2021 (RT).

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotos*

Two were seen at Shakawe, where the species is well known, on 30 April 2021 (MC). At least 4 to 6 pairs are resident between Shakawe and Xaro Lodge (GR). Two juveniles were at Kasane on 7 Sept and two were there on 22 April 2022 (GW, NP).

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Two were near Ditshipi in 1923D1 on 8 and 9 Aug 2021 and two at Khwai, in 1923B1 on 15 Feb 2022. In the south-east, three were noted at Gaborone Dam on 20 Jan 2022, one at Rakhuna on 12 June and one at Pitsane on 31 July (CAB, MGG, DG).

Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*

One was seen in 1923B1 on 14 Jul 2021 and there were six singles around Ditshipi (1923C2/1923D1) from 7 to 9 Aug. (Ian Pletzer, CAB). There were two at Linyanti from 11 to 14 Dec (CB). One was seen near Mapula Lodge in 1822D3 on 11 Feb 2022 and five at Khwai in 1923B1 from 13 to 15 Feb (MGG, DG). At Kasane there were three from 2 to 4 March 2022 and one on 22 April 2022 (CS, NP).

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

In the south-east one was present at Gaborone Dam from January 2021 to at least June 2022 and one was seen near Losilakgokong on 4 June 2022 (IW, CAB, SM). At Khutse G.R., one was seen on 30 April 2021 and a pair was seen on 16 Jan 2022 (KN, SM). At Mabuasehube, two from 20 to 22 April, two in 2421C2 on 24 April and an estimated 12 were present in early April 2022 (KN, IW). There was one at Poswane (2320D2) in February 2022 and one south of Lone Tree Wildlife Camp in 2324B3 on 19 March (MW, SH). There were 10, mainly in pairs, between Sunday Pan and Piper Pan, in northern CKGR, 20-21 May (RM-S). There was one near Mapula Lodge in 1822D3 in mid-February 2022 and two at Savuti on 2 March (MGG, DG, AW). Single bird or pairs regularly seen at Pandamatenga in October 2021 (see note on page 13). There was one at Nata Sanctuary on 11 August 2021 and one at Gulubane near Sebina on 4 June 2022 (CAB, SM).

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaeetus*

Single birds were seen in 1822D4 on 6 Mar 2020, near Kasane on 16 July 2021, at Gaborone Dam on 22 Aug and 7 Nov, at Linyanti 1823B4 on 12 Dec and at Khwai on 14 Feb 2022 (KMcQ, CS, IW, BLB, CB, MGG, DG).

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Singles were seen near Otse on 7 Oct 2021 and 9 January 2022, at Thagale Dam on 11 Jan and at Gaborone on 10 Mar (CAB, IW).

African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*

A pair of adults was seen in CT1 (1925C3) on 2 to 5 March 2022 (AR).

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*

Singles were seen at Tati River plots, Francistown on 6 Nov 2021, at Eretsha (1822D4) on 20 Dec, at Pandamatenga on 6 Jan 2022 and at Etsha 13 on 9 Feb (JH, RT, DH, SA).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

Most records were in the north and north-west of the country but there was also a notable record from Khutse G.R.

No. Birds	Date	Location	Obs.
7	13 Jul 2020	1823B4	KMcQ
6	24 Oct	Mombo (1922B2)	KMcQ
20	25 Nov	Mombo	KMcQ
5	23 Dec	Mombo	KMcQ
5	24 Feb 2021	Mombo	KMcQ
2	19 Mar	Chitabe (1923C2)	KMcQ
2	29 April	Khutse G.R.	KN
1	10 June	Kwara Camp in 1923A2	AdeB
1	3 July	Buffalo kill near Xakanaxa	JE
3	7 July	Xaxaba (1923C1)	CO
5	16 July	Near Kasane	CS
2	7 Aug	At dead buffalo near Ditshipi in 1923C2	CAB
c12	24 Aug	Elephant kill at Savuti	AW
2	29 Oct – 2 Nov	Four sightings of 2 – 4 birds near Kasane	LM
2	1 March 2022	Savuti	AW
3	10 March	Savuti	SH
4	28 April	Near Kasane	MC
1	14 May	Maun	PM
1	1 July	Khwai	CS

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

No. Birds	Date	Location	Obs.
7	3 Mar 2020	Mombo	KMcQ
20	28 Jun	Mombo	KMcQ
8	22 Jul	1823B3	KMcQ
25	24 Oct	Mombo	KMcQ
25	25 Nov	Mombo	KMcQ
170	7 Dec	Mombo	KMcQ
32	28 Dec	Mombo	KMcQ
30	4 Feb 2021	Mombo	KMcQ
2	21 Feb	Mahotswane (2424A3)	DL
40	24 Feb	Mombo	KMcQ
6	28 Feb	Mosu	MG
3	14 Mar	Along A1 at Tropic of Capricorn	CAB
3	19 Mar	Chitabe (1923C2)	KMcQ

No. Birds	Date	Location	Obs.
16	18 Mar	At carcass along A1 at Monametsana (2426A1)	CAB
2	24 March	East of Mochudi	CAB
1	20 April	Near Letshibitse in 2326D3	CAB
3	22 April	Mabuasehube	KN
1	24 April	Near Mabuasehube in 2421B3	KN
12	25 April	Kaa in 2420B3	KN
40	29 April	Khutse G.R.	KN
60	27 May	Near Moremi South Gate	RM-S
15	30 May	Segatse Pan in 2425A2	CAB
1	5 June	Savuti	AT
6	10 June	Kwara Camp in 1923A2	AdeB
2	12 June	West of Molepolole	CAB
10	25 June	Near Dovedale	AG
1	27 June	Near Medie in 2325D3	CAB
6	3 July	Buffalo kill near Xakanaxa	JE
30	7 July	Xaxaba (1923C1)	CO
22	11 July	Makgomakgosi Dam, Thamaga	CAB
7	16 July	Near Kasane	CS
2	18 July	Near Lotlhakane West, Moshupa	CAB
1	30 July	Phakalane Sewage Ponds	CAB
2	4 Aug	Between Jwaneng and Sekoma	CAB
1	5 Aug	West of Kuke in 2122A3	CAB
c40	5 Aug	Near Maun	CAB
c120	7 Aug	At dead buffalo near Ditshipi in 1923C2	CAB
1	11 Aug	At Kutamagore west of Sebina	CAB
21	13 Aug	Just south of Francistown	CAB
c150	24 Aug	Elephant kill at Savuti	AW
14	29 Aug	At dead sheep near Lentsweletau	CAB
30	18 Sept	At Omaweneno in 2522D3	CAB
2	29 Sept	Near Kopong	CAB
c30	4 Oct	Between Mopipi and Rakops	CH
4	14 Oct	Kubung Dam	CAB
1	24 Oct	Gaborone Dam	CAB
c20	29 Oct	Near Kasane	LM
6	3 Nov	Kubung	SM
30	28 Nov	Ramatlabama	CAB
6	30 Nov	Monametsana (2426A1)	CAB
2	4 Dec	East of Sekoma	CAB
3	5 Dec	North of Kang in 2322B3	CAB
135	9 Dec	At dead cow near Mabutsane in 2423B3	CAB
4	9 Dec	Between Sekoma and Jwaneng	CAB
2	9 Dec	Near Kasane	CB

No. Birds	Date	Location	Obs.
16	13 Dec	Kubung	SM
1	17 Dec	Bethel in 2525C3	CAB
2	20 Dec	Eretsha in 1822D3	RT
28	29 Dec	North of Mosolotshane in 2226C2	CAB
5	20 Jan 2022	At Gamoleele Dam	MGG, DG, HH
4	3 Feb	Goodhope	CAB
4	11 Feb	Mapula Lodge in 1822D3	MGG, DG
4	14 Feb	Khwai	MGG, DG
6	17 Feb	Monametsana (2426A1)	CAB
3	20 Feb	Mahotswane (2424A3)	DL
15	27 Feb	East of Sekoma	CAB
40	3 March	Near Kasane	CS, CM
2	3 March	Ghanzi in 2121B2	ET
50	3 March	Near Lerala	SH
20	22 March	Ramatlabama	SH
10	26 March	Lethakeng	BLB
2	5 May	Nata	GV
5	18 May	Khama Rhino Sanctuary	GV
2	7 June	Kubu Island, including one on a nest	HugoH
13	9 June	Khumaga	HugoH
1	23 June	Betesankwe, east of Jwaneng	CAB
4	1 July	Khwai	CS
30	2 July	At dead cow at Pitsane south of Lobatse	IW
2	10 July	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	CAB
10	17 July	Moselebe Valley in 2525A3	CAB
11	19 July	Sehatlane Dam, Kubung	SM, CAB
18	22 July	Kaa, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park	SH

Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*

One at Mogobane on 12 Sept 2021, two at Lobatse on 24 Oct, one at Ramatlabama on 29 Nov, one north of Mosolotshane in 2226C2 on 29 Dec, and 10 at Ramatlabama on 22 March 2022 and one photographed at Khumaga on 9 June (CAB, SH, HugoH).

White-headed Vulture *Aegypius occipitalis*

There are few records of this uncommon species.

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1	22 April 2021	Mabuasehube	KN
1	8 June	Nxai Pan	AdeB

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1	10 June	Kwara Camp in 1923A2	AdeB
2	7 July	Xaxaba (1923C1)	CO
5	24 Aug	Elephant kill at Savuti	AW
1	1 July 2022	Khwai	CS

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
2	28 Jun 2020	Mombo	KMcQ
2	10 Nov	Mombo	KMcQ
7	7 Dec	Mombo	KMcQ
2	1 Jan 2021	Mombo	KMcQ
2	26 Feb	Mombo	KMcQ
2	23 April	Near Ramotlabaki in 2326D4	CAB
1	24 April	Mabuasehube	KN
3	25 April	Kaa in 2420B3	KN
9	29 April	Khutse G.R.	KN
2	6 May	Gaborone Dam	IW
6	21 May	Northern CKGR	RM-S
2	30 May	Khutse G.R.	IW
1	5 June	Savuti	AT
1	25 June	Near Dovedale	AG
1	4 July	Moremi G.R.	JE
1	7 July	Xaxaba (1923C1)	CO
3	16 July	Near Kasane	CS
1	18 July	Near Lotlhakane West, Moshupa	CAB
4	7 Aug	At dead buffalo near Ditshipi (1923C2)	CAB
3	24 Aug	Elephant kill at Savuti	AW
1	29 Aug	At dead sheep near Lentsweletau	CAB
1	1 Nov	Near Kasane	LM
4	18 Nov	Kubung	SM
1	5 Dec	North of Kang in 2322D1	CAB
4	9 Dec	At dead cow near Mabutsane in 2423C3	CAB
1	9 Dec	Near Kasane	CB
3	13 Dec	Kubung	SM
1	16 Jan 2022	Moreswe Pan, Khutse G.R.	SM
2	20 Jan	Gamoleele Dan	MGG, DG, HH
2	26 Feb	Sekoma	CAB
3	3 March	Kasane	CS
3	1 April	Along Mabuasehube – Kokotsha cut-line	IW
1	17 April	Thamaga	CAB
1	29 April	Kubu Island	HK
2	18 May	Khama Rhino Sanctuary	GV
5	11 June	Nxai Pan	HugoH

1	2 July	Masama, north of Artesia	CAB
1	2 July	Pitsane, south of Lobatse	IW
1	17 July	Moselebe Valley in 2525A3	CAB

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1 ad female	20 Feb 2020	Mombo (1922B2)	KMcQ
1 imm	22 Feb	Chitabe (1923A4)	KMcQ
1 ad, 1 sub-ad, 1 imm	4 Mar	Mombo	KMcQ
2 ad, 1 imm	11 Mar	Mombo	KMcQ
1 ad female	16 May	Mombo	KMcQ
1 sub-ad	24 May	Mombo	KMcQ
3	24 June	Mombo	KMcQ
2 ad, 1 imm	22 Jul	1823B3	KMcQ
2 ad	24 Oct	Mombo	KMcQ
2 ad, 1 imm	21 Nov	Mombo	KMcQ
2	7 Dec	Mombo	KMcQ
1 ad female	13 Jan 2021	Mombo	KMcQ
1 imm	16 Jan	Mombo	KMcQ
2 ad	14 Feb	Mombo	KMcQ
1	9 March	Nantanga (1725C3)	BL
1 ad female	20 Mar	Chitabe	KMcQ
1 adult	22, 23 April	South of Ramotlabaki in 2326D4	CAB
6	22 April	Mabuasehube	KN
1 ad female	24 April	Near Mabuasehube in 2421B3	KN
2 singles	26 April	Between Kaa and Zutshwa	KN
1 ad female	30 April	Khutse G.R.	KN
3	30 May	Khutse G.R.	IW
1	5 June	Savuti	AT
1	3 Aug	Pandamatenga	JL
1	7 Aug	Ditshipi (1923C2)	CAB
1	10 Aug	South of Nxai Pan	CAB
1	22 Aug	Savuti	AW
Ad male and ad female	6-9 Sept	Near Kasane	GW
1	2 Oct	Bodungwane (2326C3)	CAB
1	6 Dec	Kacgae (2222C3)	CAB
4	11-14 Dec	Linyanti	CB
1	18 Dec	Eretsha (1822D3)	RT
1	12 Feb 2022	Etsha 13	JHa

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
3 singles	10-12 Feb	Mapula Lodge in 1822D3	MGG, DG
2 singles	13-15 Feb	Khwai in 1923B1	MGG, DG
c20 in total	1 to 5 March	In CT1 (1925A2/3/4/1925C1), Chobe District	AR
1	2 March	Near Kasane	CM
1	6 March	Khwai	SH
1	1 April	Along Mabuasehube – Kokotsha cut-line	IW
1	19 April	Linyanti in 1823B4	HugoH
1	28 April	Near Kasane	MC
2	30 June- 2 July	Khwai	CS
1	4 July	Gulubane in 2027C4	SM

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1	21 Feb 2021	Near Mahotshwane (2424A3)	DL
1	17 April	Between Sekoma and Jwaneng	KN
2 singles	20, 21 April	Mabuasehube	KN
4	25 April	Kaa in 2420B4	KN
1	28 April	Near Kang	KN
1	13 June	Gaborone Dam	IW
1	4 July	Moremi G.R.	JE
1	4 Aug	West of Mabutsane	CAB
2	5 Aug	East of Kuke	CAB
1	24 Aug	Savuti	AW
1	4 Oct	Pandamatenga	IW
1	21 Nov	Sibuyu FR	DH
5 singles	4 Dec	Between Mabutsane and Kang	CAB
2	5 Dec	North of Kang in 2322A4	CAB
1	7 Dec	Okwa Valley in 2221C4	CAB
2	9 Dec	Near Kacgae in 2222C3	CAB
6	9 Dec	Between Sekoma and Jwaneng	CAB
1	19 Dec	Palla Road	CAB
1	19 Dec	Near Foley Siding in 2127C2	CAB
1	19 Dec	Eretsha (1822D3)	RT
1	29 Dec	Boatlaname	CAB
2	16 Jan 2022	Moreswe Pan, Khutse G.R.	SM
1	12 Feb	Mmapula Lodge in 1822D3	MGG, DG
1	15 Feb	Khwai in 1923B1	MGG, DG
2	26 Feb	East of Sekoma	CAB
About 8	1 – 5 March	In CT1 (1925A2/3/4/1925C1), Chobe Dis.	AR
1	6 March	Khwai	SH
4	1 April	Along Kokotsha – Mabuasehube cut-line	IW
1	22 April	Pandamatenga	NP

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1	28 April	Ngoma	MC
1 or 2	Apr, May 2022	Regularly seen at Tloaneng, Gabane	SM
1	11 June	Nxai Pan	HugoH
2	28-29 June	Near Kasane	IG

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

No. Birds	Date	Location	Observer
2	2 Nov 2020	Mombo (1922B2)	KMcQ
1 ad	20 April 2021	Mabuasehube	KN
1 imm	21 April	Near Letshibitse in 2326D3	CAB
1 ad	28 April	Near Kang	KN
1 ad	4 Aug	At water west of Kokong turn-off in 2423A1	CAB
1	10 Aug	Baines's Baobabs	CAB
2 (ad, sub-ad)	24 Aug	Savuti	AW
1 imm	2 Sept	Kubung	SM
1 ad on nest	4 Oct	Near Elephant Sands, north of Nata	IW
1	26 Nov	Maun	MmM
1 adult	7 Dec	Okwa Valley in 2221B4	CAB
1 adult	9 Dec	Between Sekoma and Jwaneng	CAB
1 imm	23 Feb	Samedupi Pan near Maun	CV
1	24 Feb	Near Orapa	TG
1	1 March	Savuti	AW
2	1 – 5 March	CT1 (1925C1 / 1925A4)	AR
1	13 March	Boatlaname (2325D2)	CAB
1	26 March	Letlhakeng	BLB
2	8 July	Ntimbale Dam	SM

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

One was at Shakawe on 10 Feb 2022 and one near Francistown on 3 Mar 2022 (MC, SM).

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

Single birds were seen near Mapula Lodge (1822D3), near Francistown on 3 March 2022 and in CT1 (1925C1) on 3 March 2022 (MGG, DG, SM, AR).

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Singles were seen west of Tsabong in 2621B2 on 28 Feb 2021, at Khutse 1 Pan, Khutse G.R. on 27 Nov 2021, at Eretsha (1822D3) on 20 Dec, at Gaborone Dam on 8 Jan 2022, at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 19 Feb and at Boatlaname (2325D2) on 13 March (VG,

IW, RT, CAB). There were two at Shoshong on 30 Dec 2021 and at Tloaneng, Gabane, singles were seen on 31 March, 26 April and 9 May 2022 with at least two different birds involved (CAB, SM).

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

One was seen at Gulubane near Sebina on 5 July 2022 (SM).

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*

One was heard calling at Shakawe on 10 Feb 2022 (MC). An immature was seen along the Vukwi River near Gulubane in 2027C4 on 30 June and then an adult was seen there on 1 July (SM).

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucos*

Most records were from south-eastern Botswana. There were two at Otse on 23 July 2021, one at Bokaa Dam on 26 Sept, one at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 4 Nov. It was regularly seen at Tloaneng, Gabane in April and May 2022, there was one west of Boatile, carrying a Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*, on 28 April and there was one south of Boatile on 17 July (SM, IW, CAB). One was seen over the Chobe floodplain near Kasane on 27 April (MC).

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

Single birds were seen at Shakawe on 30 April 2021, near Ditshipi in 1923C2, near Kasane on 21 Sept and 2 Nov, at Shakawe on 10 Feb 2022, at Khwai on 14 Feb and near Kasane on 3 March (MC, CAB, TA, LM, MGG, DG, CS).

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

One was at Pandamatenga on 6 Jan 2022 and one was at Savuti on 1 March 2022 (DH, AW).

Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*

One was seen regularly at Otse from 26 July to August 2021, including carrying a Natal Spurfowl *Pternistis natalensis*, indicating that it was possibly breeding (SM).

Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami*

One was seen and photographed at Gaborone Dam on 3rd Jan 2022 (IW); this is the first record of this species for southern Botswana and is presumed to be the first record for Botswana of the subspecies *stanleyi* which mainly occurs in South Africa.

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*

In the east, two were seen near Moleteman in 2228A3 on 4 March 2021, two were seen at Mashatu in 2228B2 on 22 April 2022 and there were two at Khama Rhino Sanctuary on 18 May (AS, SaA, GV). In the south-east, one was seen near the Ngotwane River in 2326D3 on 21 April 2021, two were near Ramotlabaki in 2326D4 on 23 April, one near Medie in 2425B2 on 26 Sept and one at Ramotlabama on 9 Nov (CAB). There was a pair at Khutse G.R. on 16 Jan 2022 and one near Sekoma on 27 Feb (SM, CAB). At Mabuasehube about ten were seen on 18 and 19 July 2022 (SH). There seven near Xade, CKGR in late February 2021, one south of the Okwa Valley in 2221B3 on 4 Aug, one in the

Okwa Valley in 2221B4 on 6 Dec, one at Masetleng Pan in 2320D2 in Feb 2022 and one near Ghanzi on 8 Feb (ModB, CAB, MW). There were around 15 at Savuti from 1 to 3 March 2022 and two at Khwai on 6 March 2022 (AW, SH). There was one near Nantanga (1724C3), Chobe NP on 9 Mar 2021, single birds on the Chobe floodplain near Kasane on 31 Oct and 25 Dec and 5-6 birds there from 27 April 2022 to 1 May and one at Kasane Forest Reserve on 22 April (BL, LM, IG, MC, NP). There were three pairs in CT1 in 1925C1 and 1925A4 from 1 to 5 March (AR). There were single birds at Nata Sanctuary on 11 Aug 2021 and 4 May 2022 and at Kubu Island on 29 April 2022 (CAB, GV, HK).

Red-chested Flufftail *sarothrura rufa*

Heard calling near Kwara Camp in 1923A2 on 10 June 2021 (AdeB).

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*

One was seen at Kasane on 13 March 2022 (SH).

African Crake *Crecopsis egregia*

One was seen near Eretsha (1822D3) on 19 Dec 2021, one at Mapula Lodge (1822D3) on 12 Feb 2022 and one at Khwai on 14 Feb (RT, MGG, DG). One was seen at Gaborone G. R. on 22 Jan (IW).

Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*

One was seen at Mombo in 1922B2 on 15 Feb 2021 and there was one female in CT1 (1925C1) on 3 March 2022 (KMcQ, AR). See note by Brewster and White on page 8 for records in SE Botswana.

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

There were pairs at Sedudu Island, Kasane on 21 Aug 2021 and 11 Sept, four at Pandamatenga on 7 Jan 2022 and two there on 9 June (DH, CS).

Wattled Crane *Crus carunculatus*

The majority of records came from the Okavango Delta. At Mombo (1922B2), it was regularly reported, usually 1 to 4 birds, from Mar 2020 to Mar 2021, with a maximum of eight birds on 12 Feb 2021 (KMcQ). Four were seen at Chitabe (1923C2) on 23 Feb 2020 with two there on 19 Mar 2021, a pair was seen in 1923B1 on 14 Jul 2021, there was a pair near Ditshipi on 9 Aug, there were two in 1923A2 on 27 Aug, two near Mapula Lodge in 1822D3 on 11 Feb 2022 and two at Shinde (1923A1) on 25 March (KMcQ, Ian Pletzer, CAB, AW, MGG, DG). At Shakawe there was a remarkable total of 66 on 29 June 2022 (CS). At Linyanti, two were seen in 1823B3 on 15 and 23 Jul 2020, one in 1823D1 on 24 Jul 2020 and two in 1823B4 on 13 Dec 2021 (KMcQ, CB). There were six at Khumaga on the Boteti River on 9 June 2022 (HugoH).

Common Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One was seen at Gaborone Dam from 17 to 24 Oct 2021 and another bird was at Bokaa Dam on 24 Oct (CAB, IW).

White-crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*

Two were seen along Chobe River west of Kasane on 22 April 2022 and one was there on 28 May 2022 (NP, CB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

One was at Gaborone Dam on 25 Sept 2021 and 31 Oct 2021 and one was at Kubung on 22 Nov (IW, SM).

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*

One immature was at Rysana Pan on 21 June 2021, five were at Nata Sanctuary on 11 Aug, one was at Gaborone Dam on 22 Aug and one was at Khutse 1 Pan, Khutse G.R. on 27 Nov (IW, CAB). Two were along the Chobe River near Kasane, an unexpected locality for the species, on 28 May 2022 (CB).

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

There was one at Gaborone Dam on 17 Oct 2021 and then on 9 Nov a pair was seen there with two small chicks, the first record of breeding for south-eastern Botswana (IW, CAB). One was along the Chobe River near Kasane on 8 Dec and 28 May 2022, there were two at Gaborone Dam on 19 Feb 2022 and five at Savuti on 11 March (CB, IW, SH).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was seen at Mashatu G.R. on 9 Oct and one in Savuti on 12 Dec (per TH).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

One was seen at Gaborone Dam on 24 Oct 2021 (CAB, IW).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

There was a small influx into SE Botswana from September to November 2021. There was one at Gaborone Dam on 25 Sept, two there on 17 Oct and three there on 24 Oct; there was one at Phakalane S.P. on 9 Oct, one at Kubung Dam on 14 Oct and two at Bokaa Dam on 5 Nov (AH, IW, CAB, SM).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two at Phakalane S.P. on 27 Jan 2022 was the only record of this species during summer counts in south-eastern Botswana. There were four at Sojwe Pan on 13 March (CAB).

Three-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus*

Breeding was confirmed at Lesoma on 18 Aug 2021 and one was seen near Kasane on 31 Oct (LT, LM). Several were seen or heard at Gulubane, near Sebina, where common, on 29 and 30 June 2022 (SM)

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

In south-eastern Botswana, there were two at Bokaa Dam on 24 Oct 2021, c20 at Gaborone Dam on 31 Oct, one at Kubung Dam on 1 Nov and 12 there in mid-November, three at Bokaa Dam on 11 Jan 2022, one at Phakalane S.P. on 27 Jan, one at Sojwe Pan on 13 March and one at Tswaiing Pans on 13 March (CAB, IW, SM).

There were three near Sekoma on 27 Feb 2022 (CAB). In the north, there were circa 100+ at Chaixara Waterhole near Gweta on 8 Nov 2021, one at Linyanti in 1823B3 on 12 Dec, ten on the Chobe floodplain near Kasane on 25 Dec, a few hundred at Shinde (1923A1) on 26 Feb 2022, two juveniles in CT1 (1925A2) on 2 March and ten at Savuti, 11 March (Kemisetso Nkoeleng, CB, IG, AW, AR, SH).

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*

There were 6 or 7 at Kasane on 7 Sept 2021 and 13 there on 22 Sept (GW, TA).

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*

All records were from the Chobe River near Kasane. There were about five there on 12 June 2021, two on 16 July, 10-15, including at least one juvenile, on 8 Sept, an estimated four pairs from 29 Oct to 2 Nov and circa 70 on 28 May 2022 (AdeB, CS, GW, LM, CB).

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

There were two along Nata River at Nata on 13 March 2021, one at Kasane from 8 April to 10 June 2022 and one at Gaborone Dam from 16 May to 4 June (CAB, HK, NP, CS, IW).

Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi*

Two were seen at Kasane on 15 May 2022 (GW).

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

In the Okavango Delta it is regular in summer in seasons with good rain, though more scarce in drier years. Areas where they are reliably seen include Khwai, Bodumatau, Nxaraga Lediba, Vumbera and Duba (GR). Single birds were seen at Mombo (1922B2) on 6 and 9 Nov 2020, at Chitabe (1923C2) on 19 Mar 2021, in 1922B3 on 22 Nov 2021 and at Shinde (1923A1) on 24 to 27 March 2022 (KMcQ, CiS, AW); also seen on the Chobe floodplain near Kasane on 3 March 2022 (CS).

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

One was seen in CT1 (1925A3) on 3 March 2022 (AR).

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

One was seen at Gaborone Botanical Gardens on 4 June 2021 (CAB).

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

Six were at Tloaneng, Gabane on 19 April 2022 and there were ten there on 13 May (SM).

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

Recorded at Shakawe, where resident, on 9 and 10 Feb 2022 (MC).

Racket-tailed Roller *Coracias spatulatus*

A total of eight birds were seen between Kasane and Ngoma on 8 Sept 2021 (GW).

European Roller *Coracias garrulous*

In the east, there were seven birds at Majale (2228B2/2229A1) on 5-6 March 2021 and one bird at Topisi along the A1 on 20 Dec 2021 (AP, CAB). Along the Molepolole to Serowe road, three birds were noted from Moiyabana to Boatlaname on 29/30 Dec and seven were seen south from Boatlaname on 13 March 2022 (CAB). Singles were near Kaudwane 2324B3 on 26 Feb 2021 and at Letlhakeng on 26 March 2022 (AA, BLB). There was one at Chitabe (1923C2) on 20 Feb 2020, one near Eretsha (1822D3) on 20 Dec 2021, one at Qabo (2121B1) on 9 Feb 2022, four in CT1 in 1925C1 from 1 to 5 March and one near Kasane on 14 March (KMcQ, RT, ModB, AR, SH). There were five at Mosu on 28 Feb 2021, one near Nata on 14 March and one at Zoroga on 6 Feb 2022 (MG, CAB, KT).

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*

One was seen at Notwane on 15 Nov 2021, one at Shakawe on 10 Feb 2022 and one at Letlhakeng on 27 March (UF, MC, SM).

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata*

Recorded at Kasane on 12 June 2021, 7 Sept and 22 Sept and 22 April 2022 (RM-S, GW, TA, NP).

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

In the east of the country, one was seen near Lerala on 20 Sept 2021 and there were two near Gulubane, near Sebina on 30 June 2022 (TA, SM). In the Okavango Delta, one to three birds were regularly reported from Mombo from 20 Feb 2020 to 14 Nov 2020, two were seen in 1923D3 on 20 Aug 2020, three were seen in 1922B3 on 19 Feb 2021, a group of three was near Kwara Camp in 1923A2 on 10 June 2021, it was heard near Ditshipi in 1923C2 on 8 Aug and near Eretsha in 1822D3 from 17 to 20 Dec, and there were two at Khwai on 7 March 2022 (KMcQ, CiS, AdeB, CAB, RT, SH). There were four at Pandamatenga on 3 Aug (JL). Heard and seen at Savuti on 25 Aug (CAB, AW). There were two at Savuti on 2 March 2022, three at Kasane on 22 April, four at Ngoma on 28 April and two near Kasane on 29 April (AW, NP, MC). For sightings at Pandamatenga by Elsabe van der Westhuizen, see note on page 13.

Brown-backed Honeybird *Prodotisticus regulus*

Single birds were seen at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 17 Nov 2021 and 18 July 2022 and on Taung River floodplain in 2425D4 on 3 and 5 July 2022 (CAB).

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumannii*

There were two near Kaudwane (2324B3) on 26 Feb 2021, one near Botlhapatlou in 2425A2 on 23 May 2021, ten at Ramatlabama on 29 Nov, one at Kacgae (2222C3) on 6 Dec, one at Ramatlabama on 17 Dec, one at Bethel in 2525B3 on 17 Dec, four at Khutse 1 Pan, Khutse G.R. on 16 Jan 2022 and three near Kasane on 3 March (AA, CAB, SM, CS).

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Singles were at Kacgae (2222C3) on 6 Dec 2021 and at Ramatlabama on 17 Dec (CAB).

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*

In the south of the country, two were at Kubung Dam on 28 Nov 2021 and six there on 13 Dec, ca.60 at Khutse G.R. on 16 Jan 2022, one at Gaborone Dam on 6 Feb, one at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 8 Feb, one near Kaudwane on 13 Feb, two at Sekoma on 27 Feb and one at Boatlaname (2325D4) on 13 March (BLB, SM, CAB, IW, MGG, DGG). In the north, there was one at Etsha on 1 Dec 2021, one at Linyanti on 13 Dec, a flock of ten in CTI in 1925A2 on 2 March 2022 and five near Kasane on 3 March (KM, CB, AR, CS).

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subuteo*

One was seen at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 1 Dec 2021 (CAB)

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

There were three at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 1 April 2021 (MGG, DG), one at Gaborone G.R. on 25 May, one at Gaborone Dam on 13 June, 23 Oct and again on 10 July 2022, an immature at Tloaneng, Gabane on 10 April 2022, one found injured at Lobatse on 25 June and one in Gaborone CBD on 26 July (MGG, DG, IW, SM). One of migratory *calidus* race was seen at Mabuasehube on 29 March 2022 (MM).

Fairy Flycatcher *Stenostira scita*

One was seen at Kubung Dam on 11 July 2021 and one at Rakhuna on 12 June 2022 (SM, CAB).

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paudicola*

There was one at Khutse G.R. on 30 May 2021 (IW), six at Otse on 23 July, one at Bokaa Dam on 13 Aug 2021 (CAB), six at Kubung Dam on 26 Aug (SM), one at Gaborone Dam on 25 Sept (IW), one at Kubung Dam on 14 Oct and two there on 14 Nov (IW, SM, CAB). Three were seen at Phakalane S.P. and one at Broadhurst Ponds on 27 Jan 2022, there was one at Kasane on 22 April, several at Gaborone Dam on 15 May and several at Broadhurst Ponds on 21 May (CAB, NP, IW).

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*

There were two at Bokaa Dam on 13 Aug 2021, two at Omaweneno in 2522D3 on 18 Sept, five at Bokaa Dam on 24 Oct, one at Kasane on 31 Oct and 27 May 2022, seven at Mathangwane near Francistown on 2 March 2022 and one at Gaborone Dam on 15 May (CAB, IW, CB, LM, SM).

South African Cliff Swallow *Hirundo spilodera*

There were ca.10 at Gaborone Dam on 29 Aug 2021 and one there on 24, 25 Oct, and there were two along the Metsemotlhaba River near Kumukwane on 10 April 2022. The species was numerous at Ramatlabama on 29 Nov and 17 Dec 2021 (CAB, IW).

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

One was in song at Notwane on 19 March 2022 (AH).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

One was in CT1 (1925A4) on 5 March 2022 (AR).

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

Two to three are present at Island Safari Lodge at Maun every summer. This migrant is very common along the Chobe River front in summer where *Capparis tomentosa* is present. It has been recorded as far south as the Kalahari Plains in the CKGR (GR). Two were in CT1 (1925A4) on 2 March 2022 (AR).

Dusky Sunbird *Cinnyris fuscus*

One was seen west of Tsabong in 2621B2 on 28 Nov 2021 and there were two at Kacgae (2222C3) on 6 Dec (VG, CAB)

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava*

Small flocks were seen at Gaborone Dam on 29 Aug 2021, on the Chobe River floodplain in 1724D4 in early January 2022 and at Ntimbale Dam north of Francistown on 8 July (IW, CB, SM).

Cape Longclaw *Macronyx capensis*

A pair was seen at Pitsane on 31 July 2022 (IW, CAB).

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*

Single birds were seen at Gabane, 2 May 2021, at Otse on 26 July, at Gaborone Dam on 19 Feb 2022 and at Lobatse on 2 July (IW, KN, SM).

Bushveld Pipit *Anthus caffer*

A total of seven birds, probably 3 or 4 pairs, were near Lobatse on 21 Oct 2021 (CAB).

Streaky-headed Seedeater *Crithagra gularis*

This species was mainly recorded in south-eastern Botswana. It was seen at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 11 March 2021, at Gampudi Dam near Kanye on 1 April, at Manyana on 6 June, near Kopong on 4 July, near Lotlhakane West on 18 July, at Otse on 23 July and at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 21 July 2022. It was regularly recorded at Kubung in 2021 and 2022. In the north-east, there were several at Gulubane near Sebina, on 29 June 2022 (CAB, SM).

Interesting and Unusual Sightings

Compiled by Stephanie J. Tyler and Chris A. Brewster

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

One was seen in Okwa Valley in 2221C3 on 6 Dec 2021 (CAB).

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

A pair was at Broadhurst Ponds on 17 July 2022 (IW). This record is well outside of the known range of the species.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

One was seen at Kij Kij in Nossob Valley, 27 June 2022 (per TH).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

There were ca.140 Little Grebes in Okwa Valley in 2221C3 on 6 Dec 2021 (CAB).

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

About 150 flew overhead at Letlhakeng on 26 March 2022 (BLB); only small numbers of this species were seen in south-eastern Botswana in 2021-2022, so this record was notable.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

One was seen at dam south of Moiyabana on 29 Dec 2021 (CAB).

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*

This species is unexpected in the Kalahari so records of one in the Okwa Valley in 2221C3 on 6 Dec 2021, one at Kwang near Nossob Camp on 13 Jan 2022 and one at Molose Pan, Khutse G.R. on 16 Jan were notable (CAB, per TH, SM).

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

One was at Piper Pan, CKGR on 21 May 2021 (RM-S).

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*

One was at Sojwe Pan on 20 June 2021 (IW).

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*

Two, an adult and sub-adult, were seen along the Molopo River west of Werda (25.277 23.227) on 18 Dec 2021 (per TH). One was at Gaborone G. R. on 25 Jan 2022 (CAB).

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

A single bird was seen in the Okwa Valley in 2221C3 on 4 Aug 2021 and 6 Dec (CAB).

Lesser Moorhen *Paragallinula angulata*

One was in Okwa Valley in 2221C3 on 6 Dec 2021. There was an influx into south-eastern Botswana in December 2021 – January 2022 (CAB). One at Mabuasehube on 1 April 2022 (per TH).

Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*

There was an influx into south-eastern Botswana in January – February 2022 (CAB).

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Two were at Piper Pan, CKGR on 21 May 2021 and one in Okwa Valley in 2221B3 on 6 Dec (RM-S, CAB).

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

Two were in Okwa Valley in 2221B3 on 6 Dec 2021 and there was one at Morewe Pan, Khutse G.R. on 16 Jan 2022 (CAB, SM).

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

There were about five at Pitsane on 31 July 2022 (IW, CAB).

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*

Adult and immature were seen at Ntimbale Dam on 8 July 2022 (SM).

White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius*

The species was recorded north of Mosolotshane in 2226C2 on 29 Dec 2021, north of its expected range (CAB). It was numerous at Mabuasehube in late March and early April 2022 (MM); it has become more common there in recent years.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*

Three were at Orapa on 13 Feb 2022, outside of the expected range of the species (MN).

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

There was a small group at Kubung on 25 July 2022 (SM); records in winter of this species are very unusual; it is likely that these birds were from the population that breeds in South Africa and is an intra-African migrant.

Pirit Batis *Batis pirit*

Pair seen and heard at Kubung on 22 July 2022 (SM); this record is outside of the expected range of the species.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major*

One at Shakawe on 30 April 2021 (MC); this record is outside of the expected range of the species.

Southern Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus*

One was seen at Boatlaname (2325D2) on 13 March 2022, north of the expected range of the species (CAB).

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

One was near Selekolela on 29 Oct 2021; a very early arrival for this species (CAB).

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

One was seen at Tloaneng, near Gabane on 8 March 2022 (SM).

Eastern Clapper Lark *Mirafra fasciolata*

Recorded at Gulubane on 30 June 2022 (SM).

Monotonous Lark *Mirafra passerine*

Frequent in fallow land at Ramatlabama on 23 July 2022 (CAB).

Pink-billed Lark *Spizocorys conirostris*

Common in fallow lands at Ramatlabama in Nov/Dec 2021 and July 2022 (CAB, IW).

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

There were four or five at Nnywane Dam on 31 Oct 2021 (CAB).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Ca. 15 were at Broadhurst Ponds on 21 May 2022 (IW).

Greater Striped Swallow *Cercropis cucullata*

Two juveniles at Ntlhantlthe on 10 June 2022 (CAB); this species is generally unrecorded in mid-winter.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Six were recorded at Letlhakeng on 26 March 2022 (BLB).

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

Recorded at Ntimbale Dam, where unexpected, on 8 July 2022 (SM).

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava*

One was seen along Vukwi River near Gulubane on 30 June 2022 (SM).

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

One was at Khutse G.R. where unexpected, on 29 April 2021 (KN).

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens*

Several were seen at Ntimabale Dam on 8 July 2022 (SM).

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

Recorded at Kanye on 8 Jan 2022 and at Phakalane on 14 May (SM). This species is evidently extending its range into south-eastern Botswana.

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeate*

A male was seen at Sekoma on 27 Feb 2022, together with its host, Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonisticta senegala*, outside of expected range of both species.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Single birds were seen in the Kalahari near Kacgae in 2222C2 on 5 Dec 2021 and in the Okwa Valley in 2221B3 on 6 Dec (CAB). This species is unexpected in the Kalahari.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*

One was seen at Gaborone G.R. on 6 June 2021 (IW).

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

One was seen in the Chitabe Concession in 1923B2 on 19 March 2021 (KMqQ); this species is seldom recorded in the Okavango Delta. Three were seen at Mabuasehube on 23 April and one at Khutse G.R. on 29 April (KN).



Village Indigo Bird
Photo: Ian White

Contributors of records

AA	Alessandra Araldi	IW	Ian White
AdeB	Andrew de Bloq	JE	Johann Eksteen
AG	Anne Gollifer	JHa	Joseph Haikena
AH	Andrew Hester	JH	John Hepburn
AP	Annie Peating	JL	John Laing
AR	Adam Riley	KM	Kelebile Moyenga
AS	Actor Selomo	KMcQ	Kylie McQualter
AT	Alan Taylor	KN	Karin Nelson
AW	Alan Whyte	KT	K. Thapelo
BL	Babusi Latiwa	LM	Lydia McIntosh
BLB	BirdLife Botswana	LT	Lyn Taylor
BPM	Bird Population Monitoring	ModB	Modiegi Bakane
CAB	Chris Brewster	MBF	Maun Bird Forum
CB	Christien Boshoff	MC	Marc Cronje
CH	Carol Hohmeyer	MG	Mosetsana Gaodemelwe
CM	Christiane Maluche	MGG	Mike Goldsworthy
CO	Charles Oelile	MM	Mark Muller
CS	Curt Sagell	MmM	Mmusi Mmusi
CV	Cornelius Vanderpost	MN	Mompoloki Ngele
DG	Daphne Goldsworthy	MW	Mpho Willart
DH	Dean Hatty	NP	Niall Perrins
DL	David Lees	PM	Pat Molatsi
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks	RM-S	Rob McLennan-Smith
EdeW	Elsabe van der Westhuizen	RT	Robert Taylor
ET	Ezekiel Tuahuku	SaA	Sandra Aman
GR	Grant Reed	SA	Seyave Airwa
GV	Gerhard Vosloo	SM	Stone Muzila
GW	Gerda Welman	SH	Stephen Hardcastle
HH	Harold Hester	TA	Tania Anderson
HugoH	Hugo Hausman	TG	Tawana Gakesolofele
HK	Hartmut Kolb	TH	Trevor Hardaker
IG	Iain Guthrie	UF	Ulrike Franken
		VG	Valentin Gruener

Some breeding records from 2021 and 2022

Compiled by Stephanie J. Tyler & Chris A. Brewster

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs.
Common Ostrich <i>Struthio camelus</i>	4 Oct 2021	Gaborone Game Reserve	Adult with nine recently hatched young	Rentaro Shimizu
White-backed Duck <i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>	1 April 2021	Gampudi Dam near Kanye	Adult with one tiny duckling	CAB
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	1 Aug 2021	Thagale Dam	Adult incubating on nest in dead tree	CAB
Egyptian Goose	12 Sept	Mogobane Dam	Pair of adults with seven tiny young	CAB
Egyptian Goose	7 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Pair ad with six 3 – 4 week old young	CAB
Egyptian Goose	29 Dec 2021	South of Moiyabana	Pair adults with seven tiny young	CAB
Egyptian Goose	23 Jan 2022	Taueshele Dam, 2425C3	Pair adults with 6 tiny young, also adult incubating on nest in tree	CAB
Egyptian Goose	3 Feb 2022	Flooded depression at Goodhope	Pair adults with 17 ten day old young	CAB
South African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	18 July 2021	Small dam NW Lotlhakane West	Pair with one tiny young	CAB
South African Shelduck	1 Sept 2021	Kubung Dam	Pair ad with four 2 week old young	SM
Yellow-billed Duck <i>Anas undulata</i>	15 May 2021	Bothapatlou	Pair adults with eight young	IW
Red-billed Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	8 May 2021	Bothapatlou	Pair adults with one tiny young	CAB
Maccoa Duck <i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	8 May 2021	Bothapatlou	Pair adults with one tiny young	CAB
Helmeted Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	5 Jan 2022	Kubung	Nest with 12 eggs	SM
Crested Francolin <i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>	21 April 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with 2 three week old young	CAB
Natal Spurfowl <i>Pternistis natalensis</i>	14 Oct 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adult with two less than 1 week old young	MGG, DG
Natal Spurfowl	24 April 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with six tiny young	MGG, DG
Natal Spurfowl	14 June 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with three young, circa 3 weeks old	CAB
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	30 Jan 2022	Pan west of Mmathete	Pair adults with three 10 day old young	CAB
Little Grebe	1 July 2022	Broadhurst Ponds	Adult feeding two young	IW
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	19 July 2022	Makgamakosi Dam, Thamaga	Pair adults with two 2 week old young	CAB
Great Crested Grebe	19 July 2022	Sehatlane Dam, Kubung	Pair adults with four well grown young	CAB

Black Stork	12 Sept 2021	Otse Hill, above Mogobane	Three fledged young near nest in old quarry	CAB
African Spoonbill <i>Platalea alba</i>	13 July 2021	Bokaa Dam	Active breeding colony in reeds	CAB
Rufous-bellied Heron <i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>	8 Mar 2021	Nxaraga Lediba	Nest with two small young	GR
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	13 July 2021	Bokaa Dam	Active nests, in reeds	CAB
Black-headed Heron <i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	13 July 2021	Bokaa Dam	Active nests in reeds	CAB
Black-headed Heron	30 July 2021	Phakalane S.P.	Nests in reeds from which young heard	CAB
Black-headed Heron	13 Nov 2021	Bokaa Dam	Several nests with adults feeding young	IW
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	1 July 2021	Thagale Dam	Seven occupied nests mostly with young	CAB
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	18 July 2021	Taueshele Dam	Ten occupied nests, mostly with young	CAB
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	13 July 2021	Bokaa Dam	Seven occupied nests with most adults incubating	CAB
White-breasted Cormorant	2 July 2022	Thagale Dam	Eight active nests, four of which had young	CAB
Secretarybird <i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	1 April 2022	Mabuasehube	Active nest; adult incubating	IW
White-backed Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	7 June 2022	Kubu Island	Active nest	HugoH
White-backed Vulture	17 July 2022	Moselebe Valley in 2525A3	Two active nests with adults incubating	CAB
Martial Eagle <i>Polemaetus belicosus</i>	4 Oct 2021	North of Nata near Elephant Sands	Adult on nest	IW
African Swamphen <i>Porphyrio madagascarensis</i>	19 Feb 2021	1922B3	Adult with one young (heard calling)	CS
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	23 July 2022	Kumukwane	Adult feeding two 10 day old young	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	18 July 2021	Gampudi Dam near Kanye	Five pairs adults each with one or two tiny young; one pair with two young ca.10 days old	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	20 July 2021	Pan NW Lotlhakane West	Four pairs with two to four tiny young and many well-grown young	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	4 July 2021	Phakalane S.P.	Adult with one 2 week old young	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	4 Aug 2021	Okwa Valley	Pair with two tiny young	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	12 Sept	Mogobane Dam	Pair with three tiny young	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	31 July	Pitsane	One pair adults with three	CAB

	2022		young one week old and another pair of adults with two small young	
Spotted Thick-knee <i>Burhinus capensis</i>	7 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Nest with two eggs	IW
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	7 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Two nests, both with four eggs	DB, RS
Blacksmith Lapwing	31 July 2022	Pitsane	Pair adults with three 5 day old young	CAB
Kitlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	14 Oct 2021	Kubung Dam	Pair adults with one 5 day old young	CAB
Kitlitz's Plover	7 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Pair adults with one 1 week old young	CAB
Kitlitz's Plover	21 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Nest with two eggs, also pair adults with one 5 – 7 day old young	CAB
White-fronted Plover <i>Charadrius marginatus</i>	9 Nov 2021	Gaborone Dam	Pair adults with two small chicks	CAB
Collared Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	22 Nov 2021	1922B3	Many nestlings and fledglings	CS
Burchell's Sandgrouse	30 May 2021	Khutse G.R.	Adult with small chick	IW
Great Spotted Cuckoo <i>Clamator glandarius</i>	3 March 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Fledged young being fed by Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	CAB
Diederik Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	8 Jan 2022	Kubung	Cape Sparrow <i>Passer melanurus</i> feeding fledged Diederik Cuckoo	SM
Spotted Eagle-Owl	19 Nov 2021	Lobatse	Nest on ground with two young	DL
Verraux's Eagle-Owl <i>Bubo lacteus</i>	14 Oct 2021	Gaborone Game Reserve	Nest with one chick	IW
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>	19 Oct 2021	Ruretse	Nest with two eggs	IN-S
Freckled Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>	24 Oct 2021	Gaborone Dam	Adult with two recently hatched chicks on rocky outcrop	RS
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	29 Dec 2021	Gaborone	Pair adults feeding two juveniles	AG
Woodland Kingfisher <i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	8 Jan 2022	Gaborone Game Reserve	Adult feeding young in nest hole	IW
Southern Red-billed Hornbill <i>Tockus rufirostris</i>	23 Feb 2022	Tloaneng, near Gabane	Adult feeding young in nest	SM
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	1 April 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Juvenile just left nest	CAB
African Grey Hornbill <i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>	15 Dec 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	One just fledged young	CAB
African Grey Hornbill	10 Dec 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult female came out of nest box from which young heard calling on 24 Dec	MGG, DG
Common Scimitarbill <i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>	22 Nov 2021	Kubung	Nest with two eggs	SM

Black Cuckooshrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	27 April 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair of adults with one juvenile; juvenile being fed by adult female	CAB
Cape Penduline Tit <i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>	3 April 2022	Mabuasehube	Adult entering nest with food	IW
Sabota Lark <i>Calendulauda sabota</i>	10 Feb 2022	Tloaneng near Gabane	One just fledged young	SM
African Red-eyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotos nigricans</i>	4 Nov 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult incubating one egg; a Jacobin Cuckoo <i>Clamator jacobinus</i> unsuccessfully tried to lay an egg in the nest	CAB
Cape Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	25 Oct 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with two juveniles	MGG, DG
Kurrichane Thrush <i>Turdus libonyana</i>	16 Nov 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult with recently fledged juvenile	MGG, DG
Kalahari Scrub Robin <i>Cercotrichas paena</i>	15 Oct 2021	Tloaneng, near Gabane	Nest with three eggs	PD
Southern Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>	9 Jan 2022	Otse	Adult feeding one recently fledged young	CAB
White-throated Robin-Chat <i>Cossypha humeralis</i>	23 Nov 2021	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with one recently fledged young	CAB
Mocking Cliff Chat <i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>	16 Nov 2021	Gabane	Nest with two young	JD
Jameson's Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>	1 April 2022	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults with two recently fledged juveniles	CAB
Cape Wagtail <i>Motacilla capensis</i>	5 May 2022	Phakalane	Nest with young ,<1 metre above ground in ornamental palm	JD
African Pipit <i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	25 Nov 2021	Kubung Dam	Nest with two chicks	SM

Observers: BLB BirdLife Botswana; BR Brent Reed; CAB Chris Brewster; CS Cindy Swart, DB Declan Brewster, DG Daphne Goldsworthy; DL Dave Lees, GR Grant Reed; GH Geraldine Hester; HH Harold Hester; HugoH Hugo Haussman. IN-S Ian Nuttall-Smith, IW Ian White. JD John Dalziel; KO Ken Oake; LF Lyn Francey; LT Linda Taylor; MG Modiegi Bakane; MGG Mike Goldsworthy; MM Mark Muller; MBF Maun Bird Forum; PD Puso Dimapo; RS, Rentaro Shimizu; SM Stone Muzila.

If you find any evidence of breeding activity of any species in Botswana, then please do send details to BirdLife Botswana or direct to Chris Brewster (email cbandog@gmail.com) or Stephanie Tyler (email steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com). Many thanks.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO BIRDERS IN BOTSWANA

PIETERSEN, D.W., MCKECHNIE, A.E., JANSEN, R., LITTLE, I.T. & BASTOS, A.D.S. 2019. Multi-locus phylogeny of African pipits and longclaws (Aves: Motacillidae) highlights taxonomic inconsistencies. *Ibis* 161: 781–792

The globally distributed avian family Motacillidae consists of five to seven genera (*Anthus*, *Dendronanthus*, *Tmetothylacus*, *Macronyx* and *Motacilla*, and depending on the taxonomy followed, *Amaurocichla* and *Madanga*) and 66–68 recognized species, of which 32 species in four genera occur in sub-Saharan Africa.

The taxonomy of the Motacillidae has been contentious, with variable numbers of genera, species and subspecies proposed and some studies suggesting greater taxonomic diversity than currently recognized (five genera and 67 species). Using one nuclear (Mb) and two mitochondrial (cyt b and CO1) gene regions amplified from DNA extracted from contemporary and museum specimens, we investigated the taxonomic status of 56 of the currently recognized motacillid species and present the most taxonomically complete and expanded phylogeny of this family to date.

Our results suggest that the family comprises six clades broadly reflecting continental distributions: sub-Saharan Africa (two clades), the New World (one clade), Palaearctic (one clade), a widespread large-bodied *Anthus* clade, and a sixth widespread genus, *Motacilla*. Within the Afrotropical region, our phylogeny further supports recognition of Wood Pipit *Anthus nyassae* as a valid species, and the treatment of Long-tailed Pipit *Anthus longicaudatus* and Kimberley Pipit *Anthus pseudosimilis* as junior subjective synonyms of Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis* and African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*, respectively. As the disjunct populations of Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* in southern and East Africa are genetically distinct and geographically separated, we propose a specific status for the southern African population under the earliest available name, Nicholson's Pipit *Anthus nicholsoni*. Further, as our analyses indicate that Yellow-breasted Pipit *Anthus chloris* and Golden Pipit *Tmetothylacus tenellus* are both nested within the *Macronyx* longclaws, we propose transferring these species to the latter genus.

I.R.FRANCIS, G.BINO, V.INMAN, K.BRANDIS & R.T.KINGSFORD. 2021. The Okavango Delta's waterbirds – Trends and threatening processes. *Global Ecology and Conservation*: 30

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2021.e01763>

Abstract

The Okavango Delta is renowned as an extraordinary ecosystem of high biodiversity, listed as both a Ramsar and World Heritage Site, with part protected in the Moremi Game Reserve. This extensive floodplain ecosystem has 444 recorded bird species, with just under a quarter of these waterbirds, including at least 16 breeding and 4 threatened (1 endangered, 3 vulnerable) species. Despite the global importance of this ecosystem, and its transboundary nature, there are surprisingly few long-term assessments of status of the ecosystem or waterbird communities, a key indicator of ecosystem health, with threats

such as upstream water extraction, and climate change threatening its outstanding biodiversity.

We compiled a comprehensive 53-year dataset comprised of citizen science and other datasets (1970–2019), on 36 waterbird species (Anhingidae, Ardeidae, Ciconiidae, Gruidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, and Phoenicopteridae), including eight waterbird breeding colonies in the Okavango Delta. We investigated trends in waterbird biodiversity as well as responses to temperature, flow, flooding, and local rainfall.

Waterbird breeding colonies were associated with relatively high areas of riparian woodland, and experienced moderate flooding frequencies (> 1 in 5 years). Total abundance of all 36 waterbird species was positively related to river flows. Despite increased citizen science effort over time, total abundance within the Okavango Delta significantly declined with declining average inundation. Four species led these declines (African darter *Anhinga rufa*, Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*, Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*, Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*) and one, Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*, increasing (only sufficient data to analyse 15 species individually). Decreased inundation within the Delta and other internal factors (urbanisation, tourism, vegetation change) as well as external factors (habitat loss elsewhere) are likely driving these declines. Rigorous monitoring of waterbirds, including the eight breeding colonies across the Delta, is needed to explore these changes closely, providing baselines in the case of water resource developments on the rivers supplying the Okavango Delta. Long-term conservation of the magnificent Okavango Delta and its dependent biodiversity, including its waterbirds, is highly reliant on protection of river flows in three countries to ensure natural flooding regimes, alongside the conservation of neighbouring wetlands.

GRAEME S. CUMMING, DOUGLAS M. HAREBOTTLE, JOSEPHINE MUNDAVA, NICKSON OTIENO & STEPHANIE TYLER. 2016. Timing and location of reproduction in African waterfowl: an overview of >100 years of nest records
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.1853>

Abstract

The timing and location of reproduction are fundamental elements of reproductive success for all organisms. Understanding why animals choose to reproduce at particular times and in particular places is also important for our understanding of other aspects of organismal ecology, such as their habitat requirements, movement strategies, and biogeography. Although breeding patterns in waterfowl are relatively well documented, most studies are from northern temperate regions and the influences of location and time of year on breeding in Afrotropical ducks (Anatidae) are poorly understood.

We outline six alternative (but not mutually exclusive) hypotheses that might explain where and when Afrotropical ducks choose to breed. To explore these hypotheses, we assembled and analyzed a new database of c. 22,000 breeding records for 16 Afrotropical ducks and one introduced Palearctic species (the Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*). The full database is available on line as an appendix to this article.

We identified five distinct breeding strategies as well as two outliers. Peak breeding for 9 of 16 indigenous duck species occurs during the dry season. We found no evidence for spatial synchrony or spatial autocorrelation in breeding, suggesting a high level of flexibility in waterfowl responses to prevailing conditions in any given year. More intensive analyses of alternative hypotheses are needed, but our initial analysis suggests that the timing of breeding for the majority of Afrotropical ducks is driven by a combination of resource availability and predation risk.

R. J. FRANCIS, R. T. KINGSFORD, M. MURRAY-HUDSON & K. J. BRANDIS. 2021.

Urban waste no replacement for natural foods—Marabou storks in Botswana. *Journal of Urban Ecology*, 2021, 1–10. doi: 10.1093/jue/juab003

Abstract

We compared diets of marabou storks *Leptoptilos crumenifer* foraging from urban landfills and natural areas in northern Botswana using stable isotope analyses and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry on moulted feathers. There were significant differences in the diet of marabous foraging from natural areas compared to urban waste sites, reflected by lower $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and less enriched $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ concentrations in those feeding at landfills, suggesting a shift in trophic niche. Feathers from birds foraging at landfills also had significantly higher concentrations of chromium, lead, nickel, and zinc and lower levels of cadmium and potassium than feathers sampled from natural areas. We also analysed marabou regurgitant (42 kg, naturally expelled indigestible food resources) from the Kasane landfill site. More than half was plastic, with single regurgitants weighing up to 125 g. Urban waste stored in open air landfills is altering some marabou diets, affecting their natural trophic niche, resulting in the consumption (and regurgitation) of large amounts of plastic, and exposing marabou to potentially chronic levels of trace metals. Despite the marabou's apparent resilience to this behavioural shift, it could have long-term effects on the population of the marabou stork, particularly considering Botswana has some of the few regular marabou breeding colonies in southern Africa.

SZABALOCZ NAGY, FRANK T. BREINER, MIRA ANAND, STUART H. M. BUTCHART, MARTINA FLORKE, ETIENNE FLUET-CHOUINARD, ANTOINE GUISAN, LAMMERT HILARIDES, VICTORIA R. JONES, MIKHAIL KALYAKIN, BERNHARD LEHNER, JAMES W. PEARCE-HIGGINS and OLGA VOLTZIT. 2021. "Climate change exposure of waterbird species in the African-Eurasian flyways" is available in *Bird Conservation International* as an open access paper

Migratory waterbirds traverse thousands of kilometres annually between their breeding and non-breeding areas, and their conservation is the subject of numerous inter-governmental treaties. Studies based on monitoring of birds already show that waterbirds are changing their distribution in response to climate change

Five years ago, with the support of the International Climate Initiative (ICI) and the AEWA Secretariat, we set out to assess the exposure of the AEWA-listed waterbird species to climate change. We embarked on the first assessment covering an entire flyway, including 120 countries and 197 of the 255 AEWA species.

For this assessment, we wanted to capture that availability of waterbird habitats in the future will depend not only on changes in local climate but also on hydrological changes upstream in the catchment.

Therefore, we teamed up with the Universities of McGill (Canada), Wisconsin-Madison (USA) and Kassel (Germany), who modelled the change in the extent and duration of inundation between 2000 and 2050. The current and future habitat distribution were modelled based on remote sensing data and a global hydrological model based two climate models (HadGEM2-ES and IPSL-CM5A-LR), each using the same Representative Concentration Pathway RCP 6.0 as climate forcing. **The hydrological models project that the Mediterranean, Southwest Asia, West Africa and Southern Africa are likely to experience the greatest reduction in inundation.**

AMANDA R. BOURNE, SUSAN J. CUNNINGHAM, LISA J. NUPEN, ANDREW E. McKECHNIE & AMANADA R. RIDLEY. 2021. No sex-specific differences in the influence of high air temperatures during early development on nestling mass and fledgling survival in the Southern Pied Babbler (*Turdoides bicolor*)

First published: 24 June 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12990>

Abstract

Sex-biased mortality in response to environmental adversity during early development occurs in a number of bird species. The three most prominent theories proposed to explain sex-biased mortality in response to early-life adversity are that (1) the heterogametic sex (e.g. females in birds), (2) the larger sex (could be male or female depending on species) or (3) the sex with the more costly and complex endocrine system (e.g. males producing higher levels of testosterone) will suffer higher mortality compared with the other sex when exposed to challenging conditions (e.g. suboptimal weather during early development). We tested for sex-specific differences in the effects of very hot weather on nestling body mass and tarsus length, and survival of fledglings to nutritional independence in the Southern Pied Babbler *Turdoides bicolor*. The effect of exposure to high air temperatures did not differ by sex but had a consistently negative impact on nestling body mass, nestling tarsus length and fledgling survival, raising concerns about population replacement and the persistence of this species under rapidly advancing climate change.

Desert birds don't wait for rain

TSAONE GOIKANTSWEMANG, RICHARD P. READING, GLYN MAUDE, MOSES SELEBAYSO & PETE HANCOCK, WENDY F. BORELLO & REMIGIO M. BORELLO & JEREMY S. PERKINS. 2021. Breeding success of Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) at colonies in the Tswapong Hills, Botswana. *J. Raptor Res.* 55(3): 2-14

Abstract

The endangered Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*), a southern African endemic, breeds on precipitous cliffs in various habitats. Some colonies of this cliff-nesting species are found in the southeast (Mannyelanong Hill) and east (Tswapong Hills and adjacent complexes) of Botswana. Of six breeding sites studied in the Tswapong Hills complex from 1992 to 1999, only two large colonies near the villages of Goo-Moremi (Bonwalenong site) and Goo-Tau (Manong Yeng site) and one small colony near Lerala (Kukubye site) still hold breeding vultures. In 2017 and 2018 we used direct observations to estimate the breeding population and breeding success of Cape Vultures at the Bonwalenong and Manong Yeng colonies, and we compared our findings with data from the 1990s. We identified 261 nests in 2017 and 362 nests in 2018, and monitored them throughout the breeding season. Breeding success at the two sites differed significantly between the two years of our study (2017 and 2018). However, breeding success at Manong Yeng in 2017–2018 did not differ significantly from that documented in the earlier study (1992–1999). Our results also suggested relatively stable numbers of breeding pairs in the Tswapong Hills between 1992–1999 and 2017–2018. Cape Vultures in the Tswapong Hills require continued monitoring and research to better understand population dynamics and the key factors influencing breeding success and nestling survival.



White Backed Vulture
Photo: Ian White



Great Spotted Cuckoo
Photo: Ian White



African Wattled Lapwing
Photo: Ian White



Striped Crake
Photo: Ian White



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Journal of BirdLife Botswana



Little Bee-eater
Ian White

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