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# BIRDLIFE BOTSWANA

Harlequin Quail

*Photo: Mike Goldsworthy*



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Front Cover: African Wattled Lapwing, Photographer: Ian White



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Ian White.

## Editorial

Poisoning of vultures has been very much in the news recently. In Namibia there were three cases of poisoning in the Caprivi between June 2013 and August 2013. There is a report in this issue of *Babbler* by three vulture enthusiasts Dr McNutt, James Bradley and Pete Hancock on the dreadful incident in the Kwando concession where more than 300 vultures were killed at poisoned elephant carcasses. This is a huge concern, as poaching incidences particularly with poison at waterholes are on the increase in the area and our vulture populations are very much at risk. Dr Kabelo Senyatso has been drawing attention to this outrage in the media and in Government.

I was interested to see the BirdLife Kasane branch report sent in May to head office – so much is happening up in Kasane with the extension of the airport runway, new sewage ponds developments and new residential and commercial buildings. The Kasane branch drew attention to the disturbance and direct persecution of the African Openbill breeding colony at Seboba Rapids in 2011; subsequently birds did not breed there in 2012. There is now a fence around this area and the area is to be run by Botswana Tourist Board with BirdLife's involvement in this project. The branch also drew attention to the need for more permanent monitoring of the White-backed Vulture colony in Lesoma Valley and re-iterated their concern about poisoning of vultures. They also noted that the use of rat poison is still very common in southern Africa, with Aldicarb - up until recently - being able to be bought over the counter in Kasane. Rat poison in the U.K. and elsewhere is known to kill many Barn Owls, kites and other raptors through secondary poisoning; the same thing must be happening in Africa with owls particularly at risk.

In this issue of *Babbler* there are some varied and interesting articles from the overlap in range of African Red-eyed and Black-eyed Bulbuls and hybrid bulbuls by Dr Mark Bing to competition for nest sites at Crocodile Pools by Jim Dayton. Mike Soroczynski demonstrates that Lilac-breasted Rollers are indeed double-brooded contrary to what is said in the literature and Chris Brewster describes the avifauna of the Crocodile Pools over the nine years he has lived there. After a report by me on waterbirds, Marjorie Blair writes of the rewarding trip she and Gavin made to count birds in Chobe National Park at pans and at Savuti Marsh. There are also the usual reports from the Records Sub-committee on Rarities, Category B and other interesting records as well as breeding records.

**Stephanie Tyler** (Editor)

## Which Bulbul is it?

*Dr Mark Bing*

Over the majority of eastern and central Botswana, African Red-eyed Bulbuls *Pycnonotus nigricans* and Dark-capped or Black-eyed Bulbuls *P. tricolor* occur together, but are separated by habitat, and may come together when feeding resources are scarce, commonly being the flowering *Erythrina* or fruiting *Ficus* or *Rhus* in August to October annually.

During a study undertaken for a Bachelor of Science Degree at Rhodes University, in 2001, I studied the evening territorial calls of the Black-eyed Bulbul, comparing a population where no Red-eyed Bulbuls occurred (Harare, Zimbabwe), to a population where Red- and Black-eyed Bulbuls occurred together (Zeerust, R.S.A). It was discovered that Black-eyed Bulbuls modified their territorial calls when both species occurred together which would support the fact that they can hybridise, a fact well documented, and mentioned in the latest edition of Roberts Birds of Southern Africa. The modified calls of Black-eyed Bulbuls in Zeerust included the repertoire of Red-eyed Bulbuls.

On Moroekwe Farm, Lobatse, sometimes you see Red-eyed Bulbuls and sometimes you see Black-eyed Bulbuls, this pattern is similar in Palapye Village and on Ellington Farm on the Tuli Block, near Machaneng.

While photographing flowering *Erythrina* in a garden in Palapye Village, and in a garden in Gaborone during the first week of August 2012, it was obvious that there were orange-eyed hybrid birds, with an eye wattle intermediate between the Black- and Red-eyed Bulbuls, all of which were feeding in the same trees.

Jenette Armstrong has kindly given access to data from the Common Bird Monitoring Programme, which has been carried out by BirdLife Botswana over the last two years. From these data, it was possible to see those locations where the species overlapped. Tables below show these areas of overlap.



Bulbuls in flowering *Erythrina* tree

**Table 1. Total figures of counts for both bulbul species by season and district**

District	2010/2011 season		2011/2012 Season		2012/2013 season	
	Red-eyed Bulbul	Black-eyed Bulbul	Red-eyed Bulbul	Black-eyed Bulbul	Red-eyed Bulbul	Black-eyed Bulbul
Central	61	6	196	10	141	6
Chobe	2	39	2	85	1	44
Ghanzi	80	0	124	6	129	4
Kgalagadi	28	0	113	0	153	0
Kgatleng	4	0	6	0	9	0
Kweneng	54	6	78	2	98	0
Ngamiland	25	45	273	85	220	41
Northeast	28	3	32	6	18	15
South-east	157	13	182	6	238	4
Southern	65	0	87	2	56	0

**Table 2. All transects where both bulbul species have been seen in the same season**

Species	District	Site	Date	Count
Black-eyed B	Central	Khama Rhino Sanctuary 1	17/12/2010	4
Red-eyed B	Central	Khama Rhino Sanctuary 1	17/02/2011	5
Black-eyed B	Central	Makoba Vet fence	22/11/2011	3
Red-eyed B	Central	Makoba Vet fence 225B1	05/03/2012	3
Red-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	12/11/2011	2
Black-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	21/02/2012	9
Red-eyed B	Ghanzi	Moiyabana Firebreak	03/12/2012	4
Black-eyed B	Ghanzi	Moiyabana Firebreak	20/02/2013	4
Black-eyed B	Kweneng	Ntthantlhe West	30/11/2011	1
Red-eyed B	Kweneng	Ntthantlhe West	28/02/2012	1
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Xigera Camp Airstrip	21/11/2010	6
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Xigera Camp Airstrip	28/02/2011	2
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Moremi Game Reserve	14/11/2011	14
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Moremi Game Reserve	25/02/2012	7
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Xigera Camp Airstrip	30/11/2011	2
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Xigera Camp Airstrip	24/02/2012	4
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Hunda Island- Jao NG25	28/11/2012	2
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Hunda Island- Jao NG25	18/02/2013	5
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Nxaraga ORI Camp	16/11/2012	2
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Nxaraga ORI Camp	02/03/2013	4
Red-eyed B	Ngamiland	Samedupe, Maun	06/11/2012	4
Black-eyed B	Ngamiland	Samedupe, Maun	08/02/2013	1
Black-eyed B	Norttheast	Tachila Zebra Camp	13/11/2012	1
Red-eyed B	Northeast	Tachila Zebra Camp	26/02/2013	1
Red-eyed B	Southern	East of Pitseng	12/11/2011	6
Black-eyed B	Southern	East of Pitseng	18/02/2012	1
<b>Total count</b>				101



**Table 3. All Transects where both bulbul species have been seen within the same 2km range during the BPM count**

Species	District	Site	Date	Count
Red-eyed B	Central	Majwanen-2227D3	10/11/2011	1
Black-eyed B	Central	Majwanen-2227D3	10/11/2011	4
Red-eyed B	Central	Makoba Vet fence	22/11/2011	9
Black-eyed B	Central	Makoba Vet fence 225B1	22/11/2011	3
Red-eyed B	Central	Serowe-2226 B3	24/11/2011	4
Black-eyed B	Central	Serowe-2226 B3	24/11/2011	1
Red-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	12/11/2011	2
Black-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	12/11/2011	6
Red-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	14/11/2012	1
Black-eyed B	Chobe	Prison Mowana	14/11/2012	8
Red-eyed B	Kweneng	Ntlhantle West	30/11/2011	5
Black-eyed B	Kweneng	Ntlhantle West	30/11/2011	1
Red-eyed B	Northeast	Tachila Zebra Camp	13/11/2012	3
Black-eyed B	Northeast	Tachila Zebra Camp	13/11/2012	1
Red-eyed B	Southern	East of Pitseng	12/11/2011	6
Black-eyed B	Southern	East of Pitseng	12/11/2011	1
<b>Total count</b>				<b>56</b>

**Table 4 Breakdown of Sites from Table 3, each 11 Count Points compared**

			P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11
Majwanenen	10/11/11	Red-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
		Black-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Makoba Vet fence	22/11/11	Red-	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	4	-
		Black-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
Serowe	22/11/11	Red-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
		Black-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prison Mowana	12/11/11	Red-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
		Black-	1	1	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Prison Mowana	14/11/12	Red-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Black-	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1
Ntlhantle West	30/11/11	Red-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-
		Black-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tachila Zebra Ramp	13/11/12	Red-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
		Black-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East of Pitseng	12/11/11	Red-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
		Black-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



## **Discussion**

It is clear from Table 1 that both bulbul species occur in most districts except for the Kgalagadi and Kgatleng areas.

Table 2 gives a clear picture of the exact sites within a district where both species are resident within a season but may not be present at the same time.

Table 3 shows clearly where these bird species are close together within a 2 km strip during a BPM count for BirdLife Botswana

Although the numbers are not high and only one point has both birds together, there are still many areas where both species are within 200m of each other (Table 4).

Because eastern and central Botswana represents an interface between these two species, normally separated by habitat, with Black-eyed Bulbul more confined to deciduous woodland, and Red-eyed Bulbul to mixed *Acacia* savannah of lower rainfall areas, there is more chance of interbreeding between these species, especially in urban areas, where the habitat preference of gardens is maintained by both species, and resources such as deciduous fruit, and other flowering trees may bring them into closer contact.

It therefore follows that we all need to be careful before we tick that bird, and a possible place in the records for hybrid orange eyed birds may need to be considered.

## **Acknowledgements**

Figures for the bulbul species are taken from the Bird Population Monitoring data thanks to BirdLife Botswana.

***Dr Mark Bing***

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## Double-brooded Lilac-breasted Rollers

### Breeding Account September to December 2013

**Mike Soroczynski**

An artificial nest-log erected on to a stout branch of a tree in my garden was again accepted by a pair of Lilac-breasted Rollers *Coracias caudatus* for breeding in 2013.

In mid-July, the pair appeared in the garden to re-claim their territory. They spent much time fending off Crested Barbets *Trachyphonus leucomelas* which were breaking chunks of wood off the nesting log and also chasing Cape Glossy Starlings (Red-shouldered Glossy-starlings) *Lamprotornis nitens* away from the area. In mid-September, I witnessed the first mating attempt in a tree in the garden near the nest-log.

On 10 September, I had an operation in South Africa so I was away for three days. On my return on 13 September, I saw that three eggs had been laid during my absence. I used a mirror and small battery-operated torch bulb which was lowered into the nest cavity. Photographs of the chicks' progress were taken with a small compact camera after ensuring that both parent birds were away from the nest environs in order to keep intrusion to a minimum.

At least one parent bird was seen to lie up in the nest overnight as one was seen on a particularly warm evening at 21h30 with its head and neck hanging over the lip of the entrance hole. Prey brought in for the chicks comprised mainly lizards and small insects. Large centipedes were also brought on several occasions.



30 day old chick on the day of fledging



Adult with centipede for chicks

Both adults showed unusual behaviour in regularly drinking from the bird-bath at the other end of the garden. Having watching breeding rollers on more than eight occasions, this was the first time I had seen them take to the water so readily. As usual, the birds were extremely vocal around and some way away from the nest.

Summary of important milestones:

13 September 2013	3 eggs in nest
15 September 2013	4 eggs in nest
3 October 2013	3 eggs hatch - 1 egg intact
16 October 2013	1 poorly developed chick dies
3 November 2013	2 chicks leave the nest

By 6 November 2013 the pair of rollers was back cleaning out or inspecting the log, possibly for another clutch? This seemed so soon after the first clutch! On 17 November there was lots of activity at the Rollers' nest-log. The two fledged chicks were still flying around the garden and they roosted in the trees at night. The two adults had been in and out of the log for over a week. When I checked the nest on 17 November there was, as I suspected, a second clutch, of only two eggs but a third egg was laid the next day. Both adults shared the incubation as before. On 7 December two eggs had hatched and the third egg had hatched by midday on 8 December.

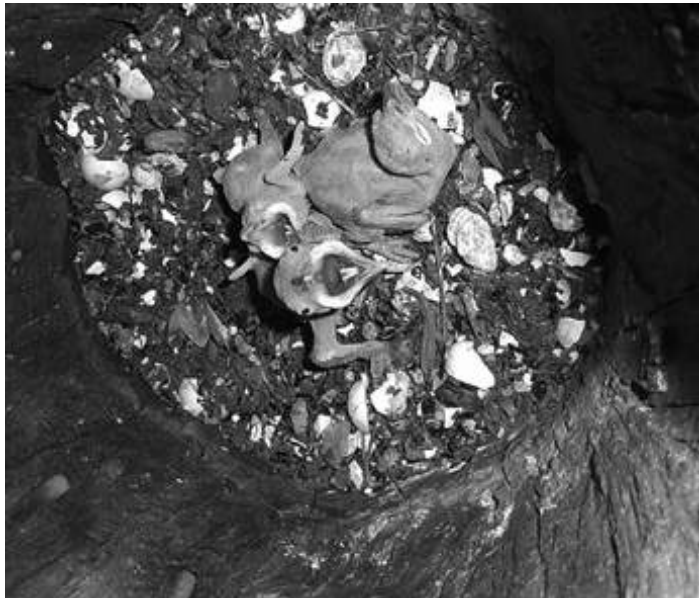
I feel that the common perception that Lilac-breasted Rollers are single-brooded can safely be put to bed. This belief is to be found in every source of reference and since I first reported second clutches while observing another garden nest in Jwaneng, it seems obvious that the rollers are certainly not single-brooded.

**Mike Soroczynski**

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*Lilac-breasted Roller chicks two days old*



*Lilac-breasted Roller chicks seven days old*



*Lilac-breasted Roller chicks sixteen days old*



*Lilac-breasted Roller chicks twenty six days old*

## Identification of shrikes in northern Botswana

### Records Sub-committee

On 1 June 2013 Tim Frayne saw a strange shrike near the entrance of the sewage ponds in Kasane. He went back the following morning when he was able to photograph it (see photographs below). Other similar sightings have come from the Chobe area over the last few years and Phil Zappala and colleagues saw a bird very like the one photographed, at the sewage ponds on 6 November 2011 when they were doing Common Bird Monitoring. In that earlier sighting Phil noted that the main differentiating features that they saw were:

- similar to Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* but less rufous on back with white stripe
- tail also very different to that of Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes
- smaller than Grey and Red backed Shrikes
- greyish belly rather than white

At first the birds seen in November 2011 and in June 2013 were tentatively identified as Souza's Shrike *Lanius souzae*, a very rare bird in Botswana but a species which has been found breeding further north along the Okavango River in Namibia by Mark Paxton. Then some members of the BirdLife Botswana Records Sub-committee including Andrew Hester felt that it could have been an immature Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris*. SJT contacted Mark Paxton and Andrew contacted two other ornithologists in the region with a first-hand knowledge of Souza's Shrike and sent them the photos.

On 7 June 2013 Mark Paxton replied to Stephanie Tyler:

- Sorry, it's a NO (to Souza's Shrike). It's a puzzle though with that white flash
- The bill of the bird is too thick for Souza's which has a rather finer beak and not so thickset
- The tail is too short - Souza's has a very long and thin tail
- The white flash on the wing (in the photo) is dull unlike Souza's which is bright but often not even seen depending on how the bird sits



- The brown colour of the wings is also dull unlike Souza's which is actually a rich chestnut colour.

If you look carefully at the flanks you will notice the remnants of some scalloping which makes me think it could be a Red-backed Shrike at the end of a moult into adult plumage even though it is a little bit late for that shrike to still be around.

Pete Leonard who spent many years in Zambia replied to Andrew Hester on 6 June and confirmed that it was an immature Fiscal Shrike. He noted that early plumages of this species are amazingly variable and differences due to feather wear can also be significant. He said "It is interesting how many similarities to Souza's you can see though and John Colebrook-Robjent always believed that Souza's was closer to the Fiscal group than the Red-backed complex. Anyway, points to help are as follows":

- all plumages of Souza's show a brown tail with obvious barring down its length
- the tail is heavily graduated, Souza's is less graduated
- the rump pattern is typical of young Fiscal - pale with barring and becoming browner on the lower portion
- Souza's, especially a juvenile, would be much richer rufous on upperparts.

Bob Dowsett then replied to Andrew Hester on 8 June and agreed with Pete Leonard's identification and he added that "people are misled by the fact that the standard guides and handbooks do a poor or non-existent job of illustrating immature plumages (of anything). He wrote that the race of Fiscal in (northern) Botswana is *subcoronatus*, which is one of those with a clear supercilium at all ages. Recent molecular studies by Fuchs *et al.* (2011) have shown that there are two species of Fiscal (*L. humeralis* being the West and East African species, including the race in Zambia and Malawi, *capelli*), and that *L. souzae* falls between the two in their analyses! We are likely to accept these results in the new Howard & Moore World List."

Finally Richard Randall wrote "When I first saw the photos of the shrike from Tim Frayne I did not accept it as a Souza's Shrike as I had seen a party of Souza's in the Caprivi last year and their features were fresh in my mind. Their general form is more graceful than the bird depicted in the photo. I had not seen a juvenile Common Fiscal with quite the colouration seen in the photos, but had, with Mark Muller in November 1999, seen a couple of Common Fiscals (subsp. *coronatus*) opposite Mowana Safari Lodge, on the Namibian side of the Chobe River, only a few hundred metres from the sewage works where the shrike in question was seen and

photographed. So, it is not really surprising that a Common Fiscal ventured a little further south into adjacent Botswana.

**Reference**

Fuchs J., Crowe T.M. & Bowie R.C.K. 2011. Phylogeography of the fiscal shrike (*Lanius collaris*): a novel pattern of genetic structure across the arid zones and savannas of Africa. *Journal of Biogeography* 38: 2210–2222.

**Records Sub-committee**



Young Shrikes  
*Photo: Tim Frayne*

## Competition for nest sites among Lesser Striped Swallows, White-rumped Swifts and Woodland Kingfishers

Jim Dayton

One of the joys of living where we do is the great birdlife that we are privileged to witness on a daily basis. We particularly enjoy welcoming the summer migrants back at various times, from August to November of each year.

We moved into our house in 4ha of bush at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane (south of Gaborone) 12 years ago and after a couple of years we were delighted to observe a pair of Lesser-striped Swallows *Cecropis (Hirundo) abyssinica* building their mud nest in a corner of one of our small veranda ceilings. The first nest did not evoke much interest from other birds because it was located in a dark inaccessible area. However, about four years ago another pair built a nest against the ceiling of our main veranda and this was soon discovered by inquisitive White-rumped Swifts *Apus caffer* and subsequently Woodland Kingfishers *Halcyon senegalensis*. As a result the original builder/owner swallows were forcibly deposed by a pair of White-rumped Swifts who appeared to have successfully established "squatter rights".

However, after occupying their property for the latter half of one summer and the first part of the next, along came the Woodland Kingfishers in about November of that year. We have noted that Woodland Kingfishers do not take long to seek out a nesting site and in this particular instance, they decided that the swallows nest occupied by the swifts was just what they were looking for. They soon moved in and took over. That year they raised two chicks but unfortunately only one survived as the nest all but collapsed just before the chicks were about to fledge and they both fell out. We provided temporary lodgings for the second in the form of a basket on the balcony for a couple of days and fortunately the parents located it, continued to feed it and after a few days it undertook its first successful flight and was fine.

Since that time, the Woodland Kingfishers (we suspect the same pair) have returned in about November of each year and taken over the repaired swallows nest. This year (2013/14) is the fourth year that this has happened.

The Lesser-striped Swallows are normally amongst the first migrants, (if not the first), to arrive back and have consistently repaired the home that they were so unceremoniously relieved of the previous year. Along come the big beaked, raucous bullies and "we are out on the streets, (or in the skies), again"!

My wife Anne is a keen and clever potter and following this continued abuse of the most basic of the avian rights of the poor old Lesser-striped Swallows, she decided to attempt to rectify the situation using human ingenuity. She decided that she would make a pottery swallow's nest that we would hang on one of our upper side balcony ceilings in the hope that when the Woodland Kingfishers returned they would see this as a viable alternative to eviction of the "less fortunate". The above was in addition to a number of alternative nesting logs placed in various garden trees, which should, according to the books, be the favoured nesting sites for the Woodland Kingfishers.

The artificial pottery swallows' nests, (two of them), were duly crafted and after some difficulty, secured in what we thought would be a suitable locale. The above was done in September of this year well ahead of the expected date of arrival of the kingfishers.

The result of our "human intervention" took a rather surprising turn in that not long after establishment of the alternative accommodation we witnessed a pair of Lesser Striped Swallows examining the artificial nest. This came as a surprise to us as we were aware that White-rumped Swifts and Woodland Kingfishers took over other's nesting sites, but were under the impression that Lesser-striped Swallows always constructed their own nests. We were wrong!

The series of photographs below depicts the events as they progressed: from the original un-modified human made pottery nest to the slightly modified (addition of mud entrance to restrict access of larger unwelcome intruders) final product.

The swallows have been in residence for some time now and three young fledglings have just emerged, (7 Dec 2013 - photograph included). The kingfishers arrived "home" on 10 November 2013 and true to form, have again taken over the recently repaired swallows nest and are sitting on eggs.

Conclusion Whilst we did not succeed in providing alternative accommodation for the kingfishers, we did for the swallows and we also learnt something we did not know before, - that Lesser-striped Swallows will consider renting as opposed to building!

We look forward to learning more about our fantastic, fascinating feathered friends in the future!

**Jim Dayton** [jdayton@bergstan.co.bw](mailto:jdayton@bergstan.co.bw)



*Baby Kingfisher in basket after falling out of nest.*



*Pottery nest with start of modifications*



*Modified pottery nest*



*Swallow entering nest*



1. *Adult swallow emerging from nest*
2. *Adult Kingfisher feeding youngsters before nest collapsed*
3. *Adult Kingfisher feeding surviving fledgling*

## Avifauna of mixed woodland at Crocodile Pools, south-east Botswana

Chris A. Brewster

### Introduction

From 2005 to 2013, for a period of nine years, regular bird observations were made at Crocodile Pools, south-east Botswana. The topography at Crocodile Pools is, for the most part, gently sloping stony and rocky hillsides and the vegetation is mixed woodland. This habitat is quite extensive in south-east Botswana, extending from south of Gaborone, south to Mogonye, Lekgolobotlo, Otse and Lobatse.

The checklist summarises the observations that were made over this period. The checklist includes all species that were considered to be utilising the study area. It does not include species that are in the area but are not utilising natural habitats, such as wetland and grassland birds. It does, however, include a few species that are associated with structures such as buildings. Thus the checklist is a representation of the avifauna of mixed woodland in south-east Botswana.

### Study area

The study area comprises about five square kilometres between the Gaborone to Lobatse main road and the Gaborone to Lobatse railway line, and lies about 15 km south of Gaborone. It includes Mogagabe Hill. Most of the area is freehold land, being section 8 of Farm Crocodile Pools though an area immediately south of the freehold land is also included in the study area. The freehold land is sub-divided into 4 hectare plots which are slowly being developed, mostly for residential purposes.

### Habitat

The natural habitat of the area is mixed woodland. The two most common trees of the woodland are *Combretum apiculatum* and *Acacia erubescens*. Other characteristic trees include *Acacia tortilis*, *Acacia mellifera*, *Acacia robusta*, *Aloe marlothii*, *Peltophorum africanum*, *Spirostachys africana*, *Croton gratissimus*, *Pappea capensis*, *Boscia foetida*, *Combretum hereroense*, *Combretum molle* and *Dombeya roduntifolia*. *Dichrostachys cinerea* forms dense thickets in places, particularly where woodland has been cleared. *Grewia flava*, *G. bicolor* and *G. flavescens* occur as understorey shrubs. Broadleaved trees tend to predominate on upper hill slopes, particularly where rocky, while *Acacia* species tend to be more common in flatter, more low-lying areas with better soils. One common flowering plant in winter is *Acacia grandidentata*; it is attractive to sunbirds. Most of the area is grazed heavily by cattle, depleting the grass cover. Where plots have been fenced and there is no grazing, long grass develops in the rains.

The cutting of trees for firewood, for fence poles, and for housing development, is likely to have had a negative impact on the status of some bird species.

**CRESTED FRANCOLIN *Dendropergix sephaena***

Very common resident.

**NATAL SPURFOWL *Pternistis natalensis***

Common resident, particularly on rocky hillsides.

**SWAINSON'S SPURFOWL *Pternistis swainsonii***

Common resident.

**HARLEQUIN QUAIL *Coturnix delegorguei***

Rare visitor, recorded in September, January and February.

**HELMETED GUINEAFOWL *Numida meleagris***

Common resident often encountered in small groups.

**KURRICHANE BUTTONQUAIL *Turnix sylvaticus***

Rare visitor recorded in March and from September to December, but no records after 2008.

**GREATER HONEYGUIDE *Indicator indicator***

Uncommon resident usually recorded either calling or coming to drink water.

**LESSER HONEYGUIDE *Indicator minor***

Uncommon resident often recorded coming to drink water.

**BROWN-BACKED HONEYBIRD *Prodotiscus regulus***

One record, in December 2013.

**GOLDEN-TAILED WOODPECKER *Campethera abingoni***

Uncommon resident, recorded irregularly.

**CARDINAL WOODPECKER *Dendropicofuscescens***

Fairly common resident.

**BEARDED WOODPECKER *Dendropicos namaquus***

Fairly common resident.

**YELLOW-FRONTED TINKERBIRD *Pogoniulus chrysoconus***

Though a fairly common resident in broad-leaved woodland on rocky hillsides in south-east Botswana, such as at Otse, Lekgolobotlo and Manyana, only recorded once at Crocodile Pools, in February 2011.



**ACACIA PIED BARBET *Tricholaema leucomelas***

Fairly common resident.

**CRESTED BARBET *Trachyphonus vaillantii***

Common resident.

**RED-BILLED HORNBILL *Tockus erythrorhynchus***

Fairly common resident, the most frequently recorded hornbill.

**SOUTHERN YELLOW-BILLED HORNBILL *Tockus leucomelas***

Fairly common resident.

**AFRICAN GREY HORNBILL *Tockus nasutus***

Fairly common resident. Most evident in winter when often recorded in flocks flying overhead.

**AFRICAN HOOPOE *Upupa Africana***

Common resident.

**GREEN WOOD-HOOPOE *Phoeniculus purpureus***

Fairly common resident.

**COMMON SCIMITARBILL *Rhinipomastus cyanomelas***

Fairly common resident.

**WOODLAND KINGFISHER *Halcyon senegalensis***

Common summer visitor; this species has increased in numbers during the study period.

**BROWN-HOODED KINGFISHER *Halcyon albiventris***

Fairly common resident.

**LITTLE BEE-EATER *Merops pusillus***

Rare visitor.

**BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER *Merops persicus***

Common summer visitor from November to April, often seen perched on overhead power lines.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster***

Fairly common summer visitor from September to April, most numerous in October and April when on passage.

**SOUTHERN CARMINE BEE-EATER *Merops nubicoides***

Rare summer visitor recorded in December and March.

**WHITE-BACKED MOUSEBIRD *Colius clius***

Rare visitor, probably a wanderer from agricultural land where it is common.

**SPECKLED MOUSEBIRD *Colius striatus***

Rare visitor, probably a wanderer from more moist habitats.

**RED-FACED MOUSEBIRD *Urocolius indicus***

Very common resident, though numbers vary and it appears to be subject to movement as less common in winter in dry years such as 2007 and 2013.

**JACOBIN CUCKOO *Clamator jacobinus***

Common summer visitor from October to April.

**LEVAILLANT'S CUCKOO *Clamator levillantii***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to May.

**GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO *Clamator glandarius***

One record in December 2013; this species is generally uncommon in south-east Botswana.

**RED-CHESTED CUCKOO *Cuculus solitarius***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to March.

**BLACK CUCKOO *Cuculus clamosus***

Common summer visitor from October to April.

**AFRICAN CUCKOO *Cuculus gularis***

Fairly common summer visitor recorded, when calling, from September to February.

**KLAAS'S CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx klaas***

Fairly common summer visitor from September to April.

**DIDERICK CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx caprius***

Common summer visitor from October to April.

**BURCHELL'S COUCAL *Centropus burchellii***

An uncommon and irregular visitor, probably wandering from more moist habitats,

**AFRICAN PALM-SWIFT *Cypsiurus parvus***

Uncommon and irregular visitor.

**COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus***

Fairly common summer visitor from November to February, usually seen in small groups or flocks after rain.

**LITTLE SWIFT *Apus affinis***

Uncommon visitor, though recorded commonly just outside the study area at the Metsemaswaane River bridge where it presumably breeds, along the main road from Gaborone to Botatle.

**WHITE-RUMPED SWIFT *Apus caffer***

Uncommon summer visitor recorded utilising a building for a nest site (Dayton 2014). Like the previous species, it is recorded commonly just outside the study area at the Metsemaswaane River bridge, where it presumably breeds.

**GREY GO-AWAY-BIRD *Corythaixoides concolor***

Common resident.

**BARN OWL *Tyto alba***

Uncommon resident, recorded sporadically. Generally recorded regularly in years of good rainfall but few records in dry years. Unrecorded since June 2010.

**SOUTHERN WHITE-FACED SCOPS-OWL *Ptilopus granti***

Four records of calling birds from January to March and one July record; it is possibly a rare resident.

**SPOTTED EAGLE-OWL *Bubo africanus***

One record at Crocodile Pools in November 2010, probably of a wanderer from rocky hills.

**PEARL-SPOTTED OWLET *Glaucidium perlatum***

Fairly common resident.

**FIERY-NECKED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus pectoralis***

Fairly common resident, recorded throughout the year.

**FRECKLED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus tristigma***

One record in January 2011 of a bird calling from a roof top, probably of a wanderer from rocky hills.

**RUFOUS-CHEEKED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus rufigena***

Uncommon summer visitor, only recorded when calling from September to December.

**SPECKLED PIGEON *Columba guinea***

Fairly common resident, generally in the vicinity of buildings or flying overhead..

**LAUGHING DOVE *Streptopelia senegalensis***

Common resident; appears to be more numerous in summer than in winter.

**CAPE TURTLE-DOVE *Streptopelia capicola***

Very common; more numerous in summer than in dry season.

**RED-EYED DOVE *Streptopelia semitorquata***

Uncommon resident; it has slowly increased in numbers during the study period.

**EMERALD-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE *Turtur chalcospilos***

Common resident.

**RED-CRESTED KORHAAN *Lophotis ruficrista***

Recorded in the vicinity of Crocodile Pools at the start of the study period but is no longer present there; it probably vacated the area due to increased disturbance. It is an uncommon resident in similar habitat elsewhere in south-east Botswana, such as at Mogonye.

**DOUBLE-BANDED SANDGROUSE *Pterocles bicinctus***

Uncommon resident, usually seen in pairs in late afternoon or at dusk.

**SPOTTED THICK-KNEE *Burhinus capensis***

Fairly common resident.

**BRONZE-WINGED COURSER *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus***

Rare summer visitor, recorded in September, October and February.

**YELLOW-BILLED KITE *Milvus aegyptius***

Though not recorded breeding at Crocodile Pools it is a fairly common summer visitor from September to March.

**WHITE-BACKED VULTURE *Gyps africanus***

Uncommon visitor, usually seen overhead. This species has declined in numbers during the study period and from 2010 to 2013 there have been only three records.

**CAPE VULTURE *Gyps coprotheres***

Two records, in August 2005 and December 2009.

**LAPPET-FACED VULTURE *Aegypius tracheliotus***

Two records, in June and October 2006.

**BLACK-CHESTED SNAKE-EAGLE *Circaetus pectoralis***

Uncommon resident; the frequency of records has slowly declined during the study period.

**BROWN SNAKE-EAGLE *Circaetus cinereus***

Three records, in January 2005, September 2007 and February 2009.

**AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK *Polyboroides typus***

Rare visitor.

**GABAR GOSHAWK *Meliearax gabar***

Uncommon resident, only irregularly recorded.

**SHIKRA *Accipter badius***

Rare visitor.

**LITTLE SPARROWHAWK *Accipter minullus***

Rare visitor.

**BLACK SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter melanoleucus***

Rare visitor.

**STEPPE BUZZARD *Buteo vulpinus***

Uncommon summer visitor from October to March.

**TAWNY EAGLE *Aquila rapax***

Four records, from 2005 to 2008.

**WAHLBERG'S EAGLE *Aquila wahlbergi***

Though only two records, in January 2006 and February 2007, this species is a regular breeder at Mogonye.

**MARTIAL EAGLE *Polemaetus bellicosus***

One record in October 2006.

**ROCK KESTREL *Falco rupicolides***

One record, of a bird perched on electricity pylons in September 2013.

**AMUR FALCON *Falco amurensis***

Uncommon summer visitor recorded in December and January.

**LANNER FALCON *Falco biarmicus***

Uncommon visitor, recorded regularly until 2008 but not subsequently.

**CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis***

Fairly common summer visitor usually recorded in the vicinity of cattle.

**HADEDA IBIS *Bostrychia hagedash***

Uncommon visitor, though also regularly recorded before dawn and after dusk flying to and from its roost site.

**EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus***

Rare summer visitor recorded from November to January.

**BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE *Oriolus larvatus***

Common resident.

**FORK-TAILED DRONGO *Dicrurus adsimilis***

Common resident.

**AFRICAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER *Terpsiphone viridis***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to April.

**BRUBRU *Nilaus afer***

Common resident.

**BLACK-BACKED PUFFBACK *Dryoscopus cubla***

Fairly common resident.

**BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA *Tchagra senegalus***

One record, of a singing bird, in January 2006, probably of a wanderer from open savanna and grassland on hills, such as at Otse, where it is fairly common. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be rare and of uncertain status.

**BROWN-CROWNED TCHAGRA *Tchagra australis***

Common resident.

**SOUTHERN BOUBOU *Laniarius ferrugineus***

Uncommon resident in denser thickets; there appeared to be a small influx of this species in winter 2013.

**CRIMSON-BREADED SHRIKE *Laniarius atrocinnereus***

Common resident.

**ORANGE-BREADED BUSH-SHRIKE *Telophorus sulfurepectus***

Fairly common resident. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be rare to uncommon.

**GREY-HEADED BUSH-SHRIKE *Malconotus blanchoti***

Fairly common resident. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be rare to uncommon.

**WHITE-CRESTED HELMET-SHRIKE *Prionops plumatus***

Until 2011 it was a rare visitor, mainly recorded in winter, but from 2012 it has been recorded regularly throughout the year, and now can be considered to be an uncommon resident; always recorded in small groups. Tyler & Borello (1998) and Tyler (1999) found it to be uncommon to rare with sporadic records, mainly from April to October.

**CHINSPOT BATIS *Batis molitor***

Very common resident.

**PIED CROW *Corvus albus***

Common resident; utilizes electricity pylons for breeding.

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio***

Common summer visitor from November to April. Generally more numerous in woodland where Acacias are predominant than in broad-leaved woodland.

**LESSER GREY SHRIKE *Lanius minor***

Uncommon passage migrant recorded mainly in November and April.

**SOUTHERN WHITE-CROWNED SHRIKE *Eurocephalus anguitemens***

Fairly common resident.

**BLACK CUCKOOSHRIKE *Campephaga flava***

Fairly common summer visitor from September to May. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be uncommon generally in the Gaborone area.

**CAPE PENDULINE-TIT *Anthoscopus minutes***

One record in July 2006, probably of a wanderer from *Acacia* savanna.

**SOUTHERN BLACK TIT *Parus niger***

Fairly common resident.

**ASHY TIT *Parus cinerascens***

One record in March 2007, probably of a wanderer from *Acacia* savanna.

**BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to April.

**LESSER STRIPED SWALLOW *Hirundo abyssinica***

Fairly common summer visitor from August to April, often in the vicinity of buildings where recorded breeding (Dayton 2014).

**RED-BREASTED SWALLOW *Hirundo semirufa***

A pair regularly nests in a culvert along the main road at Crocodile Pools.

**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN *Delichon urbicum***

Uncommon summer visitor.

**AFRICAN RED-EYED BULBUL *Pycnonotus nigricans***

Common resident; more numerous in winter when there appears to be an influx.

**FAIRY FLYCATCHER *Stenostira scita***

One record in June 2007.

**LONG-BILLED CROMBEC *Sylvietta rufescens***

Very common resident.

**YELLOW-BELLIED EREMOMELA *Eremomela icteropygialis***

Rare winter visitor from May to October, but mainly in June and July.

**BURNT-NECKED EREMOMELA *Eremomela usticollis***

Fairly common resident in acacia woodland.

**RIVER WARBLER *Locustella fluviatillus***

One record in March 2010 (Brewster 2011).

**MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris***

Uncommon summer visitor, recorded from December to March.

**ICTERINE WARBLER *Hipolais icterina***

Uncommon summer visitor recorded from December to March.

**WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to March. More numerous on passage in October – November and February – March.

**SOUTHERN PIED BABBLER *Turdoides bicolor***

Uncommon resident, irregular in occurrence.

**ARROW-MARKED BABBLER *Turdoides jardineii***

Very common resident.

**CHESTNUT-VENTED TIT-BABBLER *Parisoma subcaeruleum***

Fairly common resident.

**GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin***

Uncommon summer visitor from October to April. Unobtrusive and easily overlooked unless in song.

**COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis***

Rare summer visitor, from December to March, in *Grewia* bushes.

**CAPE WHITE-EYE *Zosterops capensis***

Fairly common, though irregular visitor, usually seen coming to drink water. Though recorded throughout the year, most records are between March and September.

**RATTLING CISTICOLA *Cisticola chiniana***

A generally common resident though numbers vary and it appears to be subject to some movement. Throughout winter 2007, when drought conditions prevailed, into the summer of 2007/2008 it was virtually unrecorded (Brewster, 2009).

**NEDDICKY *Cisticola fulvicapilla***

Fairly common resident; has a preference for un-grazed areas with long grass.

**BLACK-CHESTED PRINIA *Prinia flavicans***

Uncommon and of irregular occurrence; probably a wanderer from agricultural land where common.

**GREY-BACKED CARMAROPTERA *Camaroptera brevicaudata***

Fairly common resident in denser thickets.

**BARRED WREN-WARBLER *Calamonastes fasciolatus***

Fairly common resident in *Acacia* woodland.

**MONOTONOUS LARK *Mirafra passerine***

One record, of several birds calling, in February 2008.

**SABOTA LARK *Calendulauda africanoides***

Uncommon resident, only occurring in more open areas, such as along tracks.

**DUSKY LARK *Pinarocorys nigricans***

Uncommon summer visitor, from December to April, recorded from open areas such as along tracks.



**SHORT-TOED ROCK-THRUSH *Monticola brevipes***

One record, in December 2006, probably of a wanderer from rocky hills.

**GROUNDSCAPER THRUSH *Psophocichla litsipsirupa***

Fairly common resident.

**KURRICHANE THRUSH *Turdus libonyana***

Common resident.

**KAROO THRUSH *Turdus smithi***

A rare visitor, probably a wanderer from more moist habitats..

**PALE FLYCATCHER *Bradornis pallidus***

Rare resident; the frequency of records has declined during the study period. Not recorded by Tyler & Borello (1998) in the Gaborone area.

**MARICO FLYCATCHER *Bradornis mariquensis***

Localised and uncommon resident only occurring in savanna rather than woodland.

**SOUTHERN BLACK FLYCATCHER *Melaenornis pammelaina***

Fairly common resident. Tyler & Borello (1998) found to be rare to uncommon, but of uncertain status.

**FISCAL FLYCATCHER *Sigelus silens***

Rare visitor, mostly in winter, usually in more open areas.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata***

Common summer visitor from October to April; there may have been a decline in numbers during the study period.

**GREY TIT-FLYCATCHER *Myioparus plumbeus***

Status uncertain but probably a rare resident. Recorded at Crocodile Pools from September to November 2013; it is occasionally recorded at Mogonye.

**WHITE-THROATED ROBIN-CHAT *Cossypha humeralis***

Fairly common resident in denser thickets.

**WHITE-BROWED SCRUB-ROBIN *Cercotrichas leucophrys***

Very common resident; the most numerous species in woodland in the area.

**FAMILIAR CHAT *Cercomela familiaris***

Rare irregular visitor, usually in the vicinity of buildings.

**MOCKING CLIFF-CHAT *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris***

One record, in September 2013, probably of a wanderer from rocky hills.

**RED-WINGED STARLING *Onychognathus morio***

Rare visitor.

**CAPE GLOSSY STARLING *Lamprotornis nitens***

Common resident.

**VIOLET-BACKED STARLING *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster***

Fairly common summer visitor from October to April.

**COMMON MYNAH *Acridotheres tristis***

Uncommon visitor, mainly in the vicinity of buildings.

**RED-BILLED OXPECKER *Buphagus erythrorhynchus***

Common resident.

**AMETHYST SUNBIRD *Chalcomitra amethystina***

Fairly common visitor mainly recorded between July and December. Bred in September 2011. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be uncommon and nomadic.

**WHITE-BELLIED SUNBIRD *Cinnyris talatala***

Very common resident, most numerous from July to December; it is likely that movements occur. There was a noticeable influx from May to October 2007 (Brewster 2009).

**MARICO SUNBIRD *Cinnyris mariquensis***

Generally common resident, least numerous from January to March, when uncommon; it is likely that movements occur.

**RED-BILLED BUFFALO WEAVER *Bubalornis niger***

Rare visitor, singly or in pairs; all records in summer.

**WHITE-BROWED SPARROW-WEAVER *Plocepasser mahali***

Localised and uncommon resident, only present in savanna rather than woodland.

**SOUTHERN MASKED-WEAVER *Ploceus velatus***

Common resident, but less common in winter, particularly from May to July when largely absent. Some movements, therefore, do occur but they are probably only of a local nature.

**RED-HEADED WEAVER *Anaplectes malanops***

Fairly common resident, mostly recorded in summer when breeding, often utilising buildings as nest sites. In winter it disperses and is uncommon. Tyler & Borello (1998) found it to be rare generally in the Gaborone area and of uncertain status.

**RED-BILLED QUELEA *Quelea quelea***

Uncommon and sporadic visitor, usually in small groups in summer.

**RED-HEADED FINCH *Amadina erythrocephala***

A pair was seen investigating an old Red-headed Weaver nest in July 2006. In winter 2007 it was commonly seen coming to drink water; there was an influx on nearby agricultural land at that time (Brewster 2009).

**CUT-THROAT FINCH *Amadina fasciata***

One record, in January 2007.

**BLACK-FACED WAXBILL *Eristrilda erythronotos***

Uncommon and sporadic visitor.

**VIOLET-EARED WAXBILL *Granatina granatina***

Uncommon, mostly recorded in winter, though there are also records in summer, including a record of a pair with two recently fledged young in March 2010. The number of records has declined during the study period. Until 2010 it was recorded regularly but since 2010 there has been only one record, in June 2012; however, it continues to be recorded on agricultural land outside of the study area.

**BLUE WAXBILL *Uraeginthus angolensis***

Very common resident, though numbers decline in winter and spring until after the arrival of the rains, so it is clear movements occur. In drought years very few birds remain in late winter and spring.

**GREEN-WINGED PYTILIA *Pytilia melba***

Uncommon resident. It appears to have declined in numbers during the study period.

**RED-BILLED FIREFINCH *Lagonosticta senegala***

Uncommon and irregular visitor, usually in pairs, usually in summer. It is probably a wanderer from more moist habitats. Has bred.

**JAMESON'S FIREFINCH *Lagonosticta rhodopareia***

Fairly common resident, favouring areas with long grass, most numerous from February to June. Movements clearly occur as less common from winter into early summer and in some years, such as 2007 and 2011, unrecorded from September to January.

**LONG-TAILED PARADISE-WHYDAH *Vidua paradisaea***

Uncommon summer visitor, recorded from October to June. Numbers appeared to have declined during the study period.

**PURPLE INDIGOBIRD *Vidua purpurascens***

Rare summer visitor, recorded from December to March.

**HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus***

Uncommon resident in association with habitation.

**SOUTHERN GREY-HEADED SPARROW *Passer diffusus***

Fairly common resident.

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY *Crithagra mozambicus***

Common resident, though numbers decline in the dry season until the arrival of the rains. There was a noticeable influx in winter 2005 (Brewster 2009).

**BLACK-THROATED CANARY *Crithagra atrogularis***

Rare and sporadic visitor.

**LARK-LIKE BUNTING *Emberiza impetuani***

A rare, nomadic visitor, recorded in March, October and November 2007, and in March and December 2013. Both 2007 and 2013 were years in which drought conditions prevailed.

**CINNAMON-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza tahapisi***

Uncommon and irregular summer visitor, recorded from September to April.

**GOLDEN-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza flaviventris***

Fairly common resident. Less numerous in winter; in 2007 and 2013, both dry years, it was unrecorded in winter, indicating that it is subject to movements.

**Discussion**

The checklist, covering nine years of observations at Crocodile Pools, is a fairly comprehensive list of birds occurring in mixed woodland on the lower slopes of rocky hills in south-east Botswana. A few species, including Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui*, Streaky-headed Seed-eater *Crithagra gularis*, Bushveld Pipit *Anthus caffer* and Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*, that occur in mixed woodland in south-east Botswana but are all rare residents, were unrecorded at Crocodile Pools.

The lack of raptor records at Crocodile Pools is striking. The only raptor species recorded regularly are Yellow-billed Kite, though Black-chested Snake-Eagle, Steppe Buzzard, Gabar Goshawk and Amur Falcon also occur less commonly. Of these species, only Gabar Goshawk is resident: the rest are migrants. Records of large raptors, such as Tawny Eagle, Martial Eagle, Cape Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture and White-backed Vulture, are largely confined to the first half of the study period. The lack of records of raptors and the continued decline in the status of many raptors is a reflection of the deteriorating status of raptors in south-east Botswana in particular and in general outside of wildlife areas in Botswana.

There is an indication that status of several species may have changed during the study period. The number of records of vultures, particularly of

White-backed Vulture, has clearly declined during the study period. Other species that have declined in number during the study period include Red-crested Korhaan, Pale Flycatcher, Violet-eared Waxbill, Green-winged Pytilia and Long-tailed Paradise Whydah. The absence of Red-crested Korhaan from the area after the study period and the decline in records of Pale Flycatcher is likely to be due to increasing disturbance but the cause of the decline in numbers of the other three species is unclear. There is some indication that Spotted Flycatcher may have decreased in numbers during the study period, but if a decline is real, the reasons for the decline probably do not lie in the study area. In contrast the numbers of Red-backed Shrikes, the other common palaeartic migrant, appear unchanged, or have possibly increased, during the study period. Three species that appeared to have increased in numbers during the study period are Woodland Kingfisher, Red-eyed Dove and White-crested Helmet-shrike; the development of gardens on plots may have favoured Red-eyed Dove.

A few species, such as House Sparrow, Speckled Pigeon and Lesser Striped Swallow are in general recorded in association with buildings and have benefitted from housing development in the area. However, the development of plots and the cutting of trees for other reasons will inevitably result in a deterioration of the status of many species over time.

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## Waterbirds in Botswana July 2013 to January 2014

*Stephanie J. Tyler*

### July 2013 Dry Season Waterbird Counts in Botswana

The drought meant that many pans and dams were very low or dry. Key wetland areas in the Okavango Delta were unfortunately not surveyed.

In northern Botswana Phil Zappala and Mark Vandevale and five teams covered the Chobe River and floodplain between the old park entrance gate and Ngoma Bridge, and over 10,600 birds were noted.

The species that were most abundant along the Chobe River were Egyptian Geese (1,306 birds counted), African Open-billed Storks (1,140) and Glossy Ibis (1,013). Only one Slaty Egret and one Dwarf Bittern were recorded and only 682 White-faced Duck and 700 Red-billed Teal compared with over 3,000 of each species in July 2012. Gavin and Marjorie Blair again checked many pans in Chobe N.P. but they were all virtually dry. As in 2012 the only birds seen at the pans were Crowned and Blacksmith Lapwings. The Blairs then visited Savuti marsh and channel but the marsh was dry and the channel almost so. On the Linyanti River they did count just over 200 birds and along the Chobe across from Lake Liambezi some 600 waterbirds.

In the Makgadikgadi Pans Chris Brewster visited Nata Sanctuary but rather few waterbirds were present, the most numerous species being Lesser Flamingo (400 birds). Chris also surveyed Lake Xau near Mopipi where there were over 6,000 waterbirds including 1,800 White Pelicans, 66 Yellow-billed Storks, 132 African Spoonbills, almost 3,000 Red-billed Teal, a single Chestnut-banded Plover, a Whimbrel and a Black-headed Gull. Counts are awaited from staff of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) Serowe office for some dams in eastern Botswana and as yet no data have been submitted for the Okavango Delta. Pete Hancock reported that the water inflow into Lake Ngami was quite low so it was no longer easy to get a boat into the lake via the river. They did in August see 'hundreds' of White Pelicans at the sandbar where the water enters the lake, as well as lots of Marabou and Yellow-billed Storks, some Sacred Ibis, Pink-backed Pelicans, Saddle-billed Storks, Egyptian Geese, Spoonbills and various waders. Collared Pratincoles were just about to start breeding there in late August.

Table 1. Counts in Botswana in July 2013 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in parentheses)

<b>Northern Botswana</b>		<b>South-east Botswana 3,633 (40)</b>	
Chobe River	10,671 (43)	Bathoen Dam	270 (11)
Chobe N.P. pans	52 (2)	Bokaa Dam	475 (22)
Savuti marsh/channel	8 (4)	Gamoleele Dam	436 (16)
Linyanti	212 (19)	Jwaneng S.P.	150 (7)
Lake Liambezi	66 (22)	Lobatse S.P.	464 (21)
		Mahalapye S.P.	410 (23)
		Mogobane Dam	76 (13)
<b>Makgadikgadi Pans</b>	<b>7,147</b>	Moshupa Dam	31 (4)
Lake Xau	6,383 (45)	Ramotswa S.P.	746 (15)
Nata Sanctuary	764 (24)	Thagale Dam	575 (25)

In south-east Botswana there was as usual good cover of the various dams and sewage ponds by Mike & Daphne Goldsworthy, Harold Hester, Peter D'Arcy and Chris Brewster but water levels at most dams were very low after the poor summer rains. Numbers of birds were consequently extremely low. Only just over 3,000 birds were counted at three sewage ponds and six dams. Red-billed Teal (509) and Cape Teal (504) were the most numerous species. Four Great Crested Grebes were at Bokaa Dam and 66 Maccoa Duck at Mahalapye Sewage Ponds, the only Maccoa noted in July in south-east Botswana

### September 2013 Trans-Okavango mokoro trip

Steve Boyes, his brother and other colleagues completed a ca. 330 km journey by mokoros from the Okavango River in the north down to Maun between 8 and 24 September. They have made this journey in three previous years too, managing to avoid the dangers from hippos and crocodiles.

In 2013 they counted about 11,000 waterbirds along the route, from kingfishers to egrets. The most abundant species were Squacco Heron (1,323 birds), African Jacanas (1,261) and White-faced Duck (1,024). Others in the top 12 species were, in order of abundance, Blacksmith Lapwing, Egyptian Goose, Sacred Ibis, Great Egret, African Pygmy-goose, Spur-winged Goose, Reed Cormorant and both Little Egret and African Fish-eagle.

Their records of Wattled Cranes, Slaty Egrets and African Skimmers and some other species are given in the Category B records. They also located two 'new' heronries of Black-crowned Night Herons.

### **Summer January 2014 counts**

The Chobe River from the old park gate at Kasane to Ngoma Bridge was as usual, well-covered; six teams organised by Phil Zappala and Mark Vandevallie with the support of the Department of Wildlife & National Parks carried out the counts. Numbers in January are always low compared with those in July but a respectable 4,253 birds were logged. Cattle Egrets topped the list with 1,479 seen, followed by 710 Blacksmith Lapwings, 358 Egyptian Geese, 351 Comb Ducks and 293 African Jacanas.

Gavin and Marjorie Blair covered the various pans in Chobe N.P. as well as part of the Linyanti River and of Lake Liambezi and also Savuti Marsh and Savuti Channel. Highlights included two Allen's Gallinules and two Purple Swampheens along the Linyanti, five Dwarf Bitterns, 16 Woolly-necked Storks, three Lesser Moorhens, 21 Black-winged Pratincoles and a Greater Painted Snipe on the pans where the commonest species were Blacksmith Lapwing (235 birds), Ruff (224) and Egyptian Geese (186) and at Savuti Marsh and Channel a White Stork, 124 Woolly-necked Storks, four Lesser Jacanas, two Greater Painted Snipe, five African Marsh Harriers and an Osprey.

Please see on page 38 for an account in an email sent to me by Marjorie of how much she and Gavin enjoyed their waterbird counts and Bird Population Monitoring in Chobe National Park.

In south-east Botswana the four stalwart waterbird counters, Chris Brewster, Mike and Daphne Goldsworthy and Harold Hester covered eight sites – dams and sewage ponds – in January with counts at two other sites in November 2013 and at one in February 2014. Patrick and Linda Taylor did a count too at Ngotwane Dam. Water levels at dams were very low but Bathoen Dam held good numbers of waterfowl for its size with 240 Yellow-billed Ducks; Mogobane Dam had several White-fronted Plovers whilst Bokaa Dam held over 800 flamingos – both Lesser and Greater and at Thagale Dam were 140 Abdim's, 10 Yellow-billed and a White Stork. Jwaneng Sewage Ponds held 27 South African Shelduck, eight Maccoa Duck and 169 Black-winged Stilts whilst at Lobatse Sewage Ponds were about 500 waterfowl, 12 Wattled and 240 Blacksmith Lapwings. Tswaiing Pans in early February had filled with water from the late December heavy rains and consequently had rather few birds. Likewise Moshupa Dam was very full in late February, hence so few birds.

No count was carried out at Tsholofelo S.P. nor at Gaborone Game Reserve but Ian White reported that the pan in the game reserve on 16 Jan



was “very full and bustling with waterfowl” – African Spoonbills, Yellow-billed Storks, flamingos, Black-crowned Night-herons and others; a Dwarf Bittern was photographed and four Greater Painted-snipe seen.

Table 2. Counts in Botswana in January 2014 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in parentheses; \* = November 2013 count)

<b>Northern Botswana</b>	<b>6,771 (61)</b>	<b>South-east Botswana (cont)</b>	
Chobe River	4,253 (40)		
Chobe N.P. pans	1,191 (34)	Grand Palm*	24 (12)
Savuti marsh/channel	682 (41)	Jwaneng S.P.	688 (17)
Linyanti	125 (26)	Lobatse S.P.	1,255 (28)
Lake Liambezi	520 (15)	Mahalapye S.P.	No data yet
		Mogobane Dam	188 (17)
<b>South-east Botswana</b>	<b>6,191 (54)</b>	Moshupa Dam	22 (7)
Bathoen Dam	437 (12)	Notwane Dam	127 (16)
Bokaa Dam	1,757 (27)	Ramotswa S.P.	508 (25)
Gaborone Dam*part	98 (17)	Thagale Dam	632 (25)
Gamoleele Dam	288 (22)	Tswaiing Pans	167 (19)

My sincere thanks to all those people mentioned above as well as the Chobe River teams who have carried out waterbird counts over the last year.

**Stephanie J. Tyler**

Co-ordinator of waterbird counts in Botswana for Wetlands International



*Black-crowned Night Heron*



Black Heron  
*Photo: Ian White*

## A memorable birding trip in Chobe National Park

*Marjorie Blair, 17 February 2014*

Gavin and I returned just over a week ago from doing our waterbird and BPM counts - it was a fabulous birding trip (242 species) and one that we so wish we could have extended. We had some incredible raptor sightings, and at one point over Savuti Marsh we saw a good couple of hundred raptors in just one small area - neither of us had ever seen anything like it before – 63 Yellow-billed Kites, 85+ Steppe Buzzards, a mixed flock of Steppe Eagles (Gavin has some great photo of both immature as well as adults in flight) and Lesser Spotted Eagles flying overhead and possibly more roosting in the trees further away, a Lappet-faced Vulture, a Montagu's Harrier plus a Secretary Bird - all in one incredible raptor extravaganza on the Savuti Marsh.

During our waterfowl counts we found two immature Allen's Gallinule in Linyanti and spent a lot of time enjoying watching the birds picking their way along the top of the lily pads, turning them over with their bills and holding them down with their feet while checking to see what tasty morsel might be underneath. Also very exciting to watch was an immature African Harrier-hawk attempting to raid the nests of Red-billed Buffalo-weavers while being constantly dive-bombed by the buffalo-weavers, Red-billed Hornbills (who really attacked it!) and the Burchell's Starlings, whose chick it finally pulled out of a nest hole in the same tree (Gavin has a truly great set of photos of the entire sequence). As the Harrier-Hawk flew off with the chick it was immediately chased by a Booted Eagle in an impressive bit of acrobatic flight display. The eagle failed in its attempts then landed on a dead tree not far from us, enabling Gavin to take its photo too.

We also found what we are fairly certain must be a European Nightjar – after much study the only nightjar description in Roberts VII that fits really well against the photos Gavin took of the bird roosting on a tree branch was the European - and on our last morning while sitting listening to four Thrush Nightingales we were rewarded with a magnificent lifer for both of us - an Ayre's Hawk Eagle flying overhead. I could go on and on as we had some amazing sightings and enjoyed every minute of our trip ....then sadly we unfortunately had to pack away our binoculars, put the blinkers on and head for town after one of our best ever weeks of birding.

***Marjorie Blair***



European Nightjar  
*Photo: Gavin Blair*



African Crake  
*Photo: Gavin Blair*



Harrier Hawk and Starlings  
*Photo: Gavin Blair*



Harrier Hawk and Starlings  
*Photo: Gavin Blair*



Harrier Hawk and Starlings  
*Photo: Gavin Blair*

## Report on Kwando Vulture poisoning investigation 16 November 2013

**J.W. McNutt** (*Botswana Predator Conservation Trust*), **J. Bradley** (*Kalahari Research and Conservation*) and **P. Hancock** (*Raptors Botswana*)

### Introduction

A previous report dated 21 August 2013 described an aerial investigation conducted on 19 August of a poisoned elephant carcass with nearby dead vultures in the Kwando Concession (NG14). Coordinates of the poisoning were originally communicated by Kwando Safaris to Pete Hancock. Photographs taken on 19 August from the air showed evidence of what appeared to be dozens of dead vultures around some skeletal remains of an elephant.

The 21 August report of this cursory aerial investigation written by Dr James Bradley, of Kalahari Research and Conservation, and Dr J.W. McNutt, Botswana Predator Conservation Trust, was distributed to interested stakeholders. Due to the photographic evidence of large numbers of dead vultures, the report emphasized the importance of further investigation on the ground. Ground investigation options were discussed with the concession holders, but prior to mid-November, an investigation of the remote site had not been organized and no ground investigation had been conducted.

On 16 November, Dr McNutt organized the chartering of a helicopter from Maun directly to the site to investigate and attempt to quantify the number and species of dead birds before seasonal weather, vegetation, and age precluded any useful quantification. In attendance were Dr JW 'Tico' McNutt, Dr James Bradley, Pete Hancock, and Dale Jardine (pilot, Helicopter Horizons).

### Methods

The helicopter landed approximately 350m from the site and carcasses were easily within walking distance. Upon arrival at the poison site, two methods to estimate the number and species of dead birds were used:

1. An estimate was made by counting carcasses of birds based primarily on remains of wings (robust flight feathers) and other remains. This was made difficult owing to the age of the carcasses (at least 6 months old, perhaps older) and to the fact that in the

areas of highest concentration of dead birds the carcasses were layered on top of each other where they had died.

2. A precise minimum number of dead birds was derived by collecting and counting major skeletal structures. These included skull, sternum (breast keel), and synsacrum (the fused pelvic and posterior back bone typical of birds). These were then separated into type (each of which represents a single dead bird, as opposed to other robust skeletal structures that were also prevalent such as wing or leg bones). Due to the age and condition of the carcasses the decomposition and time constraints at the site, we are certain we did not manage to collect skeletal pieces to represent every dead bird.

### Results

Three elephant carcasses were located approximately 300m apart at wpts: 1) S18.21711 E23.19047, 2) S18.21698 E23.19336, and 3) S18.21864 E23.18891 (Map Datum WGS84).

1. Elephant Carcass 1: 286 dead vultures were estimated by counting, 228 individual pelvic structures were collected, and skulls used to identify species included 4 Lappet-faced and 2 Hooded Vultures (the remainder were presumed to be White-backed)
2. Carcass 2: 38 dead vultures were estimated by counting, 34 individual pelvic structures were collected, all were White-backed
3. Elephant Carcass 3: Two (2) White-backed Vultures were found

No tusks were present at any of these three remains. Two of the three skulls show evidence that tusks were chopped out probably by axe (see photo below). All three carcasses showed evidence of having been burned. All three were  $\leq$  150m from a nearby vehicle track

Samples of a pink splattered substance found on the feathers of dead vultures lying beneath the largest tree 20m from the elephant carcass were collected for possible analysis and identification.



Collected skeletal structures at Carcass 1; Synsacrum (fused pelvic back bone (top)), Sternum (breast keel bone (middle)), skulls (bottom). Synsacrum (top) proved to be the most easily found as most birds appeared to have died breast down, resulting in heads and breast bones being buried in debris, while the back pelvic bone was more exposed to weather making it easier to find. Minimum count of number of dead vultures was derived from the number of synsacrum bones counted.



As above, 228 synsacrum (pelvic-back) bones (in the forefront) were recovered more frequently than other skeletal remains.



Attempts to collect skulls were primarily to enable species identification. The vast majority of these 182 skulls were White-backed Vultures.



White-backed Vulture skulls.





Four (4) Lappet-faced and two (2) Hooded vultures were among the 182 skulls collected.

### Summary

At the main poison site (Elephant Carcass 1) we estimated 286 dead vultures by counting carcass remains. From among those remains 228 individual pelvic structures were collected. Skulls were used to identify species and included 4 Lappet-faced and 2 Hooded vultures (the remainder were presumed to be White-backed). At Elephant Carcass 2, 38 dead vultures were estimated by counting, and 34 individual pelvic bones were collected. All were White-backed vultures. Carcass 3, located 300m from Carcass 1, was within 15m of the nearby road (track) and only two White-backed Vulture remains were found. Although no tusks were present, we saw no evidence of chopping of the maxilla on this elephant skull.

It is possible that all three carcasses were poisoned, but the majority of the dead birds were found at Carcass 1. Another 38 vultures died at Carcass 2. Both these carcasses were further from the road (>100m) than the third carcass. The date of the poisoning is unknown, and we have no knowledge of who burned the carcasses, nor whether any vulture carcasses were also burned at the same time. It is noteworthy that no dead vultures were found within 2-3m of the burned elephant remains (see photo) at carcasses 1 and 2. Given the distribution of dead birds elsewhere in the vicinity, we consider it likely that an unknown and unrecoverable number of vulture carcasses were burned when the elephants were burned.

Therefore, our estimate is 326 dead vultures (collectively from all 3 elephant carcasses) represented by the remains of vulture carcasses still present on 16 November at least 6 months after they died is likely to be conservative. The absolute minimum number of 264 dead vultures is based on collected and counted individual synsacrum bones.

### **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to Jo & Inge Bathmann for their generous contribution to BPCT to help with funding for this investigation. The helicopter charter was additionally funded by BPCT, KRC, and Helicopter Horizons. We are particularly grateful to Helicopter Horizons for making the helicopter available for the several hours required to complete a ground investigation and especially to pilot Dale Jardine for his assistance in counting and collecting remains.



White-backed Vulture  
*Photo: Ian White*



Cape Vulture  
*Photo: Ian White*

## Report from the Records Sub-committee: Category A Records

Compiled by Chris A. Brewster

The following substantiated 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 votes or reports from referees. Observers did not vote on their own records.

Species	Square	Date	Comments
Schalow's Turaco <i>Tauraco corythaix</i>	1725C3	14.10.12	One at Kasane (E.Messery, R.Sutcliffe, E.Honey)
European Turtle-Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	1824A3	18.11.12	One at Savuti Marsh (E.Everaerd). <b>Second accepted record for Botswana</b>
Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>	1923A2	13.02.12	Two adults 2 km south of Third Bridge, Moremi Game Reserve (G.Reed)
Burchell's Courser <i>Cursorius rufus</i>	2426A3	14.07.12	Two adults at Bokaa Dam (C.A.Brewster, K.Mooketsa)
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	2123B4	20.02.13	One immature near Kalahari Plains Camp, CKGR (B.Harris)
African Goshawk <i>Accipiter tachiro</i>	1923C4	14.10.12- 14.11.12	One adult seen and heard calling in flight near Thamalakane River, Maun (J van Jaarsveld)
African Pitta <i>Pitta angolensis</i>	1923C4	27.12.12	Adult male displaying at Maun (A.Solomon, R.D.Randall, M.Muller). <b>First accepted record for Botswana</b>
Souza's Shrike <i>Lanius souzae</i>	1922B4	06.11.10	One at Nxabega (B.Coates). <b>Third accepted Record for Botswana</b>
Eastern Nicator <i>Nicator gularis</i>	1725C3	02.12.12 – 19.01.13	One seen and heard singing at Chobe Farms, Kasane (A.Birkenstock). <b>First accepted record for Botswana</b>
Orange River White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	2524A3	22.08.12	Circa 15-20 at Oxford Farm, Molopo Block (J.Armstrong). <b>First accepted record for Botswana</b>
Levaillant's Cisticola <i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	2525B1	08.07.12	Three at Lobatse Sewage Ponds (C.A.Brewster). <b>Third accepted record for Botswana</b>
Isabelline Wheatear	1725C3	01.01.13	One at Lesoma (S.de Meillon, T.de

<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>			Meillon). <b>First accepted record for Botswana</b>
Sickle-winged Chat <i>Cercomela sinuate</i>	2423A1	11.04.12	One 10 km south of Morwamosu (C.A.Brewster). <b>Second accepted record for Botswana</b>

**Records not accepted**

Souza'a Shrike *Lanius souzae* at Kasane, 6 November 2011 (see article on page 12 )

Wood Pipit *Anthus nyassae* near Gweta and at Kubu Island on 12 November 2012

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

Other A records currently being assessed include a Terek Sandpiper on 24 August at Lake Ngami and Black-headed Gulls at Lake Ngami and at Lake Xau on 28 August 2010 and July 2013 respectively. Two Mountain Pipits were seen and photographed at Gaborone Dam on 2 Nov by Ian White and Chris Brewster; the photos were sent to expert Faansie Peacock who agreed with the identification.



Black-headed Gull  
*Photo: P Hancock*

## Summary of Category B Records

**Compiled by Chris A. Brewster & Stephanie J. Tyler**

Most records are for the period July 2013 to December 2013 although a few earlier records are provided and some for Jan 2014. Other records will be extracted from the Common Bird Monitoring forms for the next issue of *Babbler*.

### **Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa***

During the July 2013 waterbird counts, the only site where this species was reported was Mahalapye Sewage Ponds where 66 birds, 33 males and 33 females, were counted on 27<sup>th</sup> (PD'A). In the January counts eight were seen at Jwaneneg S.P. on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan (MGG, DG, HH).

### **Southern Ground-Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri***

One was at Ngoma (at S17°55.874 E24°43.631) on 3 Aug, two in Savuti (S18°36.433 E24°03.986) on 14 Aug, four along the Chobe River in Chobe N.P. (at S17°51.103 E24°51.185) on 12 Oct, five ca 5km south of Pandamatenga on 30 Oct and four ca. 20 km north of Pandamatenga on the same date, two in Savuti (at S18°32.309 E24°06.466) on 20 Nov, two also in Savuti (at S18°38.203 E24°05.037) and another two at S18°40.214 E24°04.423 on 22 Nov and one heard in Savuti ca 1km from S18°34.035 E24°03.933 on 24 Nov (GB & MB).

On 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 three were along the Chobe River up from the Old Park Gate, Kasane, three between Kabulabula and Ihaha and four, including one on a nest, between Simwanza Valley and Ngoma Bridge (PZ, MV *et al.*). IW saw one 20km from Machaneng on the Sherwood road on 27 Jan.

### **Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala***

One was seen downstream from Mombo on 17 Sept (SB *et al.*), one near Maun on 15 Dec (GM) and two along the Chobe River down from Ngoma Gate on 25 Jan 2014 (PZ, MV *et al.*). On 3 Feb one was seen at Bushman Painting Hill in Chobe N.P., another on 4 Feb by the Linyanti and one on 6 Feb at the western end of Chobe River (GB, MB).

### **Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori***

One was at Rysana Pan on 28 June (HH), two in Savuti at S18° 33.720 E24° 04.051 on 5 Aug and at S18° 37.748 E24° 03.973 on 14 Aug, one near Katchikau S18° 08.568 E24° 29.268 on 15 Aug, also seen on the 11 Oct in Savuti and by the Chobe River in Chobe N.P. at S17° 48.784 E25° 07.806 on 12 Oct, singles in Savuti on 20 Oct, in Savuti at S18° 34.191 & E024° 04.520 on 21 Nov, one on 3

Nov at S24°18.167 E23°23.755, two in Savuti at S18°37.940 E24°03.528 and one 600m south of this co-ordinate on 22 Nov and one in Savuti at S18° 32.852 E24° 04.370 and another 1km further west on 23 Nov (GB & MB). One was in Jwana Game Park at S24° 33.875 E24° 44.852 on 3 Nov (GB & MB), three in Kutse Game Reserve on 8 Nov (MGG) and a displaying male at Nxai Pan on 15 Dec (KO).

In 2014 two were seen along the Chobe River between Serondella and Kabulubula on 25 Jan (PZ, MV *et al.*). On 31 Jan one was near Quarry Hill, Savuti and another in Savuti on the same date (GB, MB).

#### **Stanley's (Denham's) Bustard *Neotis denhami***

In Moremi Game Reserve one was seen close to Third Bridge campsite on 7 Sept (EE) and another at Bodumatau on 3 Dec (WS). Two were seen too from Pandamatenga area on 18 Dec (DH). A report also came for one seen near Hatab 7 in Moremi G.R. on 31 Jan **2009** (JB). These sightings bring the total number of birds reported in Botswana to 64.

#### **Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum***

This is a scarce bird in Botswana but a pair was seen regularly in December at Pandamatenga Farm 50 (DH).

#### **Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus***

Between 8 and 20 Sept on a trans-Okavango mokoro trip a total of 62 were seen between the start at S19.018 E22.345 and S19.3870 E22.9096; these included a flock of 13 and of 24, three singles, six pairs and a group of four and of six (SB *et al.*). On the Boro from above Tchau Island to Xaxaba another 16 – five pairs and two groups of three – were seen between 21 and 22 Sept (SB *et al.*). Few records were otherwise received apart from four in the Linyanti on 7 July (GB & MB)

#### **African Crake *Crecopsis egregia***

One was seen and photographed at Pump Pans, Savuti in Chobe N.P. on 31 Jan and four at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb (GB, MB).

#### **Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni***

At Bokaa Dam there were 24 on 26 Jan 2014 and a single at nearby Thagale Dam on the same date. Along the Chobe River 62 were counted on 25 Jan upriver from Ihaha (PZ, MV *et al.*) and 21 were at Poacher's Pan on 1 Feb (GB, MB).

#### **African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris***

There were 29 on the Chobe River on 20 July (PZ *et al.*), five adults and three chicks on Old Island opposite Chobe National Park gate on 16 Aug (GB & MB) and up to five including a nesting pair were seen daily along Watercart road in Chobe N.P. between 29 Sept and 7<sup>th</sup> Oct (RM). During a trans-Okavango mokoro trip by SB *et al.* three were noted on 16 Sept near

Mombo at S19.2157 E22.7536 and two, a single and another two on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept between there and S19.2289 E22.7705. On the uppermost Boro in the Xigera area where they breed a total of 30 were noted on 21 Sept – five singles, seven groups of two, one of three and one of eight (SB *et al.*).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

One was seen at Lake Xau in May and July 2013 (CAB).

**Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia***

One was at Lake Xau on 18 July (CAB).

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

Singles were seen at the western end of Watercart by the Chobe River in Chobe N.P. on 1 Aug 2013, in Savuti on 10 Oct and at the same place on 23 Nov (GB & MB); also in the Nossob Valley, KTP on 23/24 Nov (per TH) and then a female along the Savuti Channel on 3 Feb 2014 (GB, MB).

**Eurasian Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

One was in Chobe N.P. on 15 Mar 2013 and was photographed by CC; one flew east over the BDF camp in Maun on 23 Dec (EE).

**Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus***

One was seen on an evening river cruise on 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct on the Chobe River and one was perched on a dead tree at sunset in Sedudu Valley in Chobe N.P. on 5 Oct (RM).

**Cape Griffon *Gyps coprotheres***

On 3 Nov 103 were counted on the cliff at Mannyelanong Game Reserve at Otse but later 97 were seen in flight and a further 77 on the cliff – 174 in total – one had a yellow/orange tag (GB & MB) and on 1 Dec 191 were counted at (MGG).

**Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus***

On 1 Aug three were seen with 72 White-backed Vultures ca. 1km from Serondela picnic site in Chobe N.P., one or more were seen along the Chobe River between 9 and 11 Sept and on 11 Oct three were with 30+ White-backed Vultures feeding on an elephant carcass in Savuti (S18°37.930 E24°04.764), five with other vultures feeding on an elephant carcass on Pandamentanga to Kazungula Road (at S17°57.743 E25°14.194) and one with other vultures on another elephant carcass in Savuti on 20 Nov (GB & MB)



On 25 Jan 2014 five were seen along the Chobe River between Serondella and Kabulabula (PZ, MV *et al.*) and two in Savuti on 3 Feb (GB, MB).

**White-headed Vulture *Aegypius occipitalis***

One was seen on the Khwai floodplain west of North Gate on 1 July (HH). In Savuti, Chobe N.P. two were seen on 13 Sep (at S18°36.725 E24°04.505), three, an adult and two immatures, (at S18°38.650 E24°04.933) on 21 Nov and four with 24 White-backed and three Lappet-faced Vultures (S18°42.305 E24°05.784) on 22 Nov; on 3 Feb two were seen in Savuti with 38 White-backed and two Hooded Vultures (GB & MB).

**Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos***

Sightings in Chobe N.P. included one on 1 Aug seen 2km west of Serondella picnic site, five on 15 Aug 500 m on from Route 17 along the Chobe River (at S17°52.749 E24°47.452), two on 12 Oct with 62 White-backed Vultures by the Chobe River (at S17°53.969 E24°44.802) and a single in the same area on the same date with 19 White-backed Vultures (at S17°50.814 E24°52.093), one or more also seen on 20 Oct in Savuti, four in Savuti (at S18°33.354 E24°06.476) on an elephant carcass with 21 White-backed and one Hooded Vulture on 20 Nov, one on the Savuti to Zwei-Zwei road (at S18°38.202 E24°11.668) on 21 Nov, three in Savuti (at S18°42.305 E24°05.784) on 22 Nov with 24 White-backed and four White-headed Vultures and singles on 25 Nov along the Chobe River at the western end of the park 400 m north of S17°53.598 E24°48.149 and at S17°53.526 E24°45.410 (GB & MB).

On 3 Nov three were noted in Jwana Game Park, Jwaneng (S24°31.471 E24°43.791) and on 6 Nov two were at Khama Rhino Sanctuary (S22°12.242 E26°41.431) with 150+ White-backed Vultures (GB & MB).

Two were feeding on an elephant carcass on the Pandamatenga to Kazungula road (at S17°57.743 E25° 14.194) with 50 White-backed and five Hooded Vultures on 8 Nov (GB & MB).

On 31 Jan one was seen along the Chobe Forest Reserve cutline just before S18° 12.475 & E024° 24.566; on 2 Feb one in Savuti (at S18° 40.531 E24° 04.494) and another at Savuti Marsh; on 6 Feb one at S17° 53.598 E24° 48.149 – Route 17, Chobe N.P. (GB, MB).

**Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus***

No. Seen	Date	Place	Comments	Observer
2	30 June	Khwai floodplain West of North Gate		HH
1	1 July	Khwai floodplain West of North Gate		HH
1	3 Aug	1.5km from Savuti airstrip		GB & MB
1	3 Aug	Savuti airstrip		GB & MB
1	4 Aug	Savuti S18° 35.355 E24°04.793		GB & MB
2	4 Aug	Savuti S18°35.528 E24°04.756	Male and female	GB & MB
2	5 Aug	Savuti S18°35.190 E24°03.933	Male and immature	GB & MB
1	5 Aug	Savuti S18°33.976 E24°03.436	Immature	GB & MB
1	5 Aug	S18°36.868 E24°04.668		GB & MB
1	14 Aug	Savuti S18°37.112 E24°03.104		GB & MB
1	15 Aug	Savuti S18°35.365 E24°04.647		GB & MB
1+	9 Oct	Gunn's Camp, Moremi S19°31'34" E23°08'26"		GB
1	10 Oct	Camp Savuti		GB
1	8 Nov	Kutse G.R.		MGG
1	19 Nov	S18°13.871 E24°21.256 Cutline road from Kachikau to Savuti	Immature	GB & MB
1	20 Nov	Chobe N.P. S18°32.993 E24°01.222	Immature	GB & MB
2	20 Nov	At top of the sand ridge before reaching Savuti on the Linyanti Road	Male and Female	GB & MB
1	21 Nov	S18°41.682 E24° 20.816 Savuti to Zwei-Zwei Road	Immature	GB & MB
2	22 Nov	Savuti S18°41.208 E24°04.706	Female and Immature	GB & MB
1	23 Nov	Savuti S18°35.712 E24°04.663	Female	GB & MB
1	23 Nov	Savuti S18°35.466 E24°04.839	Immature	GB & MB
1	23 Nov	Savuti S18°35.607 E24°04.468	Immature	GB & MB

No. Seen	Date	Place	Comments	Observer
1	23 Nov	Savuti S18°34.622 E24°04.317	Male	GB & MB
1	24 Nov	Savuti S18°33.872 E24°04.858	Male	GB & MB
1	24 Nov	Kavimba S18°04.885 E24°34.641	Immature	GB & MB
1	25 Nov	Chobe River, west end of Chobe N.P. 600 m north of S17°52.749 E24°47.452	Immature	GB & MB
6	25 Jan 2014	Chobe River between Old Park Gate and Ngoma Bridge	Spread along the river edge	PZ, MV <i>et al.</i>
1	31 Jan	Chobe Forest Reserve Cutline S18°12.844 E24°24.004	Immature	GB, MB
1	31 Jan	Chobe Forest Reserve Cutline S18°15.056 E24°19.333	Female	GB, MB
1	31 Jan	Chobe Forest Reserve Cutline S18°23.271 E24°14.722		GB, MB
1	31 Jan	Savuti S18°31.847 E24°04.500	Immature	GB, MB
3	31 Jan	Savuti S18°32.929 E24°04.667	Immature and two adults	GB, MB
1	1 Feb	Road from Savuti to Zwei Zwei S18°35.509 E24°08.875	Female	GB, MB
2	1 Feb	Road from Savuti to Zwei Zwei S18°36.017 E24°09.586	Immature and female	GB, MB
3	1 Feb	Road from Savuti to Zwei Zwei S18°39.211 E24°12.783 & S18°40.701 E24°14.576 & S18°41.229 E24°15.595	Two single immature birds and then a female	GB, MB
4	2 Feb	Savuti S18°37.273 E24°03.424 S18°38.328 E24°03.752 S18°38.845 E24°03.878	Immature; female and two immature birds	GB, MB
3	2 Feb	Savuti S18°40.000 E24°05.000 S18°40.478 E24°04.610 S18°40.596 E24°04.839	Male; two separate immature birds	GB, MB
2	3 Feb	Bushman Painting Hill, Savuti S18°35.432 E24°04.810	Male and female – possibly nesting	GB, MB

No. Seen	Date	Place	Comments	Observer
2	4 Feb	Savuti to Linyanti S18°27.354 E23°58.333 S18°22.910 E23°56.658	One and then an immature	GB, MB
2	4 Feb	Linyanti S18°18.368 E23°53.941 S18°18.803 E23°53.367	Male and then an immature	GB, MB
1	5 Feb	Linyanti S18°16.684 E23°57.531	Female	GB, MB
2	5 Feb	Linyanti to Kachikau S18°19.289 E24°04.558 S18°08.142 E24°29.201	One and then an immature	GB, MB
1	5 Feb	Near Kachikau S18°07.610 E24°28.523		GB, MB
3	5 Feb	Chobe Forest Cutline S18°13.210 E24°22.778 S18°20.279 E24°13.215	Immature; female and immature	GB, MB
1	6 Feb	Western end Chobe River in Chobe N.P. S17° 52.982 E24° 46.684		GB, MB
2	6 Feb	Route 17, Chobe N.P. S17°52.860 E24°47.507 S17°53.427 E24°47.944	Male and a second bird flying far off in the distance	GB, MB

### **African Marsh-harrier *Circus ranivorus***

A count of 33 was made during a mokoro trip down through the Okavango between 8 and 24 Sept (SB *et al.*). Five were seen along the Chobe River between Kasane and Ngoma on 25 Jan (PZ, MV *et al.*) and five at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb with another unidentified distant harrier (GB, MB).

### **Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus***

One was noted between the Simwanza Valley and Ngoma by the Chobe River on 25 Jan (PZ, MV *et al.*).

### **Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis***

Two were seen on 7 Nov off the Pandamatenga to Kazungula road (at S18°40.157 E25°37.046) 1.5 hours before sunset coming down to roost on the ground; another was seen from the same road (at S18° 28.438 E25°34.672) an hour before sunset on the ground (GB & MB). DH reported two daily at Pandamatenga Farm 50 throughout December. A flock of adults and immature were seen at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb together with **Lesser Spotted Eagles *Aquila pomarina*** (GB, MB).

**Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata***

One was by Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 12 Jan (CAB) and one along the Chobe Forest Reserve Cutline at S18° 12.741 E24° 24.103 on 31 Jan, one on 1 Feb on the road from Savuti to Zwei Zwei near S18° 40.919 E24° 15.000 and another in Savuti at S18° 34'16" E24° 4'9" on 3 Feb (GB, MB).

**Ayres's Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii***

One was seen and photographed near Kavimba at S18° 03.984 E24° 35.323 on 6 Feb (GB, MB).

**Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus***

Two singles were seen on 25 Jan along the Chobe River on stretches from Kabulabula to Ihaha and Simwanza Valley to Ngoma (PZ, MV et al.).

**Lesser Kestrel**

A small flock of five or six was seen at Pandamatenga Farm 50 in early Jan (DH). Two singles were along the Chobe River between Kasane and Ngoma Bridge on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan (PZ, MV et al.). Two were seen at the bottom of Route 17 in Chobe N.P. (S17° 52.749 & E24° 47.452) and one at the western end of the Chobe River in Chobe N.P. on 6 Feb (GB, MB).

**Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis***

The only reports were of 15 along the Chobe River between Ngoma and Kabulabula (PZ, MV et al.) on 25 Jan, one at the western end of the Chobe River in Chobe N.P. on 6 Feb (GB, MB) and three 50km north of Gaborone on the Francistown road on 27 Jan (IW).

**Peregrine *Falco peregrinus***

One was photographed in Savuti on 3 Feb and another seen at the western end of Chobe River, Chobe N.P. on 6 Feb (GB, MB).

**Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula***

During a trans-Okavango trip by mokoro 76 were seen between S19.018 E22.345 and beyond Mombo at S19.3870 E22.9096 from 8-20 Sept; these were 47 singles, 13 groups of two and one of three (SB et al.). On the upper Boro from above Tchau Island down to Xaxaba a further 53 were counted – 15 singles, three groups of two, one of three, one of four and a large group of 25 from 21-22 Sept and on the Boro between Xaxaba and the buffalo fence a further five, three singles plus two (SB et al.).

One was seen on 4 Aug in Savuti Marsh at S18° 37.95 E24° 04.779, another there at S18° 38.311 E24° 04.995 on 23 Nov (GB & MB) and one was along the Chobe River between Simwanza Valley and Ngoma Bridge on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 (PZ, MV et al.).

**Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor***

There were 40 at Bokaa Dam on 27 July and on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 there were 640 at Bokaa Dam and 24 at Thagale Dam (CAB).

**Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus***

Up to four were at Pandamatenga Farm 50 in December, eating caterpillars exposed by sprayed and drying weeds and one along the Chobe River between Kasane and Ngoma Bridge on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan (PZ, MV *et al.*). On 1 Feb 2014 there were five at a pan along the road from Savuti to Zwei Zwei and seven at Harvey's Pan and then three at Peter's Pan, Savuti and two flocks – of 72 and of 52 – at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb and one at Rhino Vlei on 3 Feb (GB, MB).

**Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia***

On 3 Feb one was singing at Pump Pans, Savuti at S18° 33.568 E24° 04.228 from the dense cover of a Woolly Caper Bush *Capparis tomentosa* and on 6 Feb six were heard singing in dense *Acacia* scrub near Kavimba at S18° 03.984 E24° 35.323 (GB, MB).

**Collared Palm Thrush *Cichladusa arquata***

One was seen at Nata Lodge on 16 Nov (per TH). Richard Randall first reported this species at Nata village in November 2004. On 5 Feb 2014 one was seen just beyond Kachikau at S18° 9'1" & E024° 30'9" – seen here amongst the palm trees on a regular basis (GB, MB).

**Southern Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus***

Two were at Mannyelanong Game Reserve on 1 Dec (MGG).

Compiled by **Chris A. Brewster & Stephanie J. Tyler**

## Interesting and Unusual Sightings

**Compiled by Stephanie J. Tyler and Chris A. Brewster**

This section does not cover rarities but rather interesting observations of more common birds. It might report on a species seen out of its usual range or on notably large numbers of a species. Observations on breeding or feeding behaviour are also welcomed. Records are mainly from July to December 2013 with a few from January 2014.

### **Harlequin Quail**

A bird was seen in Khutse on 8 Nov (MMG) see photo inside front cover. This is an irruptive species and occasionally birds are killed at night flying into lighted buildings.

### **South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana***

Only 16 were reported during waterbird counts in July – four at Ramotswa S.P., five at Thagale Dam, one at Mogobane Dam, two at Gamoleele Dam and two at both Mahalapye and Jwaneng Sewage Ponds (S.P.) (CAB, HH, MGG & DG, PD'A). In Jan 2014 six were at Ramotswa S.P. on 12<sup>th</sup>, 27 at Jwaneng S.P. on 24<sup>th</sup> and two or three at Bathoen, Mogobane and Gamoleele Dams on 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and at Lobatse S.P. on 19<sup>th</sup> (CAB, MGG, DG, HH) – a total of 42.



Mountain Pipit  
*Photo: Ian White*

**Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata***

Bathoen Dam continues to be an excellent site for this species with 240 counted there on 26 Jan (MGG, DG & HH).

**Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima***

One was seen on 29 June on the Boteti River between Makalamabedi and Motopi (HH). One was by Savuti Channel at S18° 34.146 E24° 04.139 on 2 Feb and another by Bushman Painting Hill, Savuti at S18° 35'44" E24° 4'47" (GB, MB) .

**Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni***

A single bird was reported in mid Dec in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park by Shaun Overmeyer, well out of range.

**Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegalensis***

Although quite regularly seen at Lobatse Sewage Ponds, 12 on 19 Jan 2014 equalled the highest count there in 2013 (CAB).

**Temmick's Courser *Cursorius temminckii***

A count of 22 at Gaborone Dam on the dry lake bed was of note (HH, IW). Birds were reported as common at Pandamatenga Farm 50 (DH).

**Collared (Red-winged) Pratincole *Glareola glareola***

PH reported in July that birds were about to start breeding at Lake Ngami.

**Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis***

At least four were present at Gaborone G.R. on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan (IW) and one at Pump Pans in Chobe N.P. and two at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb (GB, MB).

**White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus***

Because of the deaths due to poisoning all records of this vulture are welcomed. Thanks to Gavin & Marjorie Blair who have provided most of the records below.

No.	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
72	1 Aug	1km from Serondela picnic site, Chobe N.P.	With three Hooded Vultures	GB & MB
1	4 Aug	Savuti S18°37.336 E24° 04.253		GB & MB
1	5 Aug	Savuti S18° 36.868 E24° 04.668		GB & MB
5	5 Aug	Savuti S18° 38.762 E24° 04.789		GB & MB



No.	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
7	15 Aug	Route 17, Chobe River in Chobe N.P. S17°52.749 E24°47.452		GB & MB
177	15 Aug	500 m from above coordinates on Route 17.	With five Lappet-faced Vultures	GB & MB
11	15 Aug	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 53.218 E24° 46.357	With a Hooded Vulture	GB & MB
20	15 Aug	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 50.270 E25° 03.065		GB & MB
1	15 Aug	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 50.606 E25° 03.966		GB & MB
62	15 Aug	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 49.747 E25° 06.935		GB & MB
1	15 Aug	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 49.222 E25° 08.420		GB & MB
23	15 Aug	Near Ihaha Camp site, Chobe N.P.		GB & MB
1+	13 Sep	Savuti		GB & MB
1+	9 Oct	Gunn's Camp. Moremi S19°31'34" E23°08'26"		GB & MB
2	10 Oct	Savuti S18° 37' 23" E24° 04' 19"		GB & MB
63	11 Oct	Savuti S18° 37.930 E24° 04.764	30 overhead and 33 on ground with 3 Hooded Vultures on an elephant carcass	GB & MB
62	12 Oct	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 53.969 E24° 44.802	With two Lappet-faced Vultures	GB & MB
19	12 Oct	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 50.814 E24°52.093	With one Lappet-faced Vulture	GB & MB
1+	20 Oct	Savuti		GB & MB
10	3 Nov	Jwana Game Park S24° 33.875 E24°44.852		GB & MB
154	6 Nov	Khama Rhino Sanctuary S22°12.242 E26°41.431	With two Lappet-faced Vultures	GB & MB
50	8 Nov	On the Pandamatenga to Kazungula road S17°57.743 E25°14.194	With 2 Lappet-faced and 5 Hooded Vs on an elephant carcass	GB & MB
21	20 Nov	Savuti S18°33.354 E24°06.476	With 4 Lappet-faced and one Hooded Vulture on an elephant carcass	GB & MB
4	21 Nov	Savuti to Zwei-Zwei road S18° 38.202 E24° 11.668	With a Lappet-faced Vulture and Steppe Eagle	GB & MB
1	22 Nov	Savuti S18°40.908E24° 04.591		GB & MB
24	22 Nov	Savuti S18° 42.305 E24° 05.784	With 3 Lappet-faced and 4 White-headed	GB & MB

No.	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
2	23 Nov	Savuti S18° 35.365 E24° 04.647		GB & MB
13	23 Nov	Savuti S18° 37.488 E24° 04.312	With a Lappet-faced Vulture	GB & MB
3	23 Nov	Savuti S18° 33.290 E24° 05.012		GB & MB
2	25 Nov	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 53.526 E24°45.410	With 1 Lappet-faced Vulture and 10 Marabou Storks	GB & MB
10	25 Nov	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 52.749 E24° 47.452	Two at this co-ordinate and 8 some 400 m south	GB & MB
2	25 Nov	Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17° 53.598 E24° 48.149	With a Lappet-faced Vulture	GB & MB
32	25 Jan	Chobe River from Kabulabula to Ngoma		PZ, MV <i>et al.</i>
2	31 Jan	Chobe Forest Reserve Cutline S18°13.480 E24°21.296 S18°15.581 E24°18.587	Singles at two places	GB, MB
1	2 Feb	Savuti S18°40.904 E24°04.582		GB, MB
38	3 Feb	Savuti S18°38.721 E24°06.004	With two White-headed and two Hooded Vultures	GB, MB
17	4 Feb	Savuti S18°33.324 E24°01.294		GB, MB
1	4 Feb	Road from Savuti to Linyanti S18°30.169 E24°59.400		GB, MB
3	6 Feb	Western end Chobe River, Chobe N.P. S17°53.811 E24°45.209		GB, MB

### Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

One was at Savuti Marsh on 2 Feb with many other raptors (GB, MB).

### Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

DH reported two or three birds regularly in December/January at Pandamatenga Farm 50 with up to 10 more nearer Pandamatenga. One was along the Chobe River up from Ihaha on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan (PZ, MV *et al.*). A male and a female or subadult were photographed in Savuti at S18° 39'9" E24° 4'3" on 2 Feb (GB, MB).

**Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

One was seen in Savuti at S18° 39'10" E24° 4'3" on 2 Feb (GB, MB).

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Only four were reported from wetlands in south-east Botswana in July; these were at Bokaa Dam on 27 July (CAB).

**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Breeding colonies were noted in the Okavango Delta at S19.7943 E22.7942 (50+ birds present on 17 Sept) and another near S19.3385 E22.8644 on 19 Sept (SB *et al.*). Of note in south-east Botswana were 56 at Gamoleele Dam on 26 Jan 2013 (MGG, DG); MGG also saw five at the Grand Palm hotel on 3 Nov.

**Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii***

One was photographed in Gaborone G.R. on 16 Jan (IW). Four were seen at Harveys Pan in Chobe N.P. on 2 Feb and one at Pump Pan in the park on 3 Feb (GB, MB).

**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus (ruber)***

There were 17 at Lake Xau on 18 July and 12 at Bokaa Dam on 27 July (CAB) and two at Mogobane Dam on 2 Aug (MGG). Fourteen were at Ramotswa S.P. on 11 Jan 2014; a flock flew over Ngotwane on the night of 22 Jan and 190 were at the drying Bokaa Dam on 26 Jan (CAB, HH).

**Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

A flock of 40 was in the Khwai floodplain west of North Gate on 1 July (HH). Some 270 were counted along the Chobe River between Ngoma and Kasane on 20 July (PZ *et al.*) and 14 on the Chobe by Lake Liambezi on 6 July (GB & MB). Hundreds were reported by PH & KO at the sandbar where the river water enters Lake Ngami in late winter, as well as lots of Marabou and Yellow-billed Storks, some Sacred Ibis, Pink-backed Pelicans, Saddle-billed Storks, Egyptian Geese and Spoonbills.

**Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens***

Eight were seen along the Chobe River on 20 July (PZ *et al.*) and one at Thagale Dam on 27 July (CAB) – also seen at Lake Ngami by PH & KO (see Great White Pelican above).

**Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis***

Two at both Moshupa Dam and Bathoen Dam on 16 Jan, one on 23 Jan at Notwane, four at Malotwane on 4 Apr, two on 7 Oct at Manyana and four at the Grand Palm in Gaborone on 3 Nov (MGG, HH). One was at Nata Lodge on 16 Nov (per TH).

**African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp***

Not a very common bird in south-east Botswana but two were seen on the Kolobeng River at Manyana on 6 Oct (HH, BLB) and two at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 12 Jan 2014 (CAB).

**Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Ca.100 birds near Kavimba (S18° 2'41" E24° 36'7") on 6 Feb (GB, MB).

**Larklike Bunting *Emberiza impetuani***

These buntings and Grey-backed Finch-larks were common at Gaborone Dam in Oct/Nov (IW).

Just across the border in the Nossob Valley in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on the South African side when seen, but no doubt also occurring on the east side of the valley in Botswana, were a Montagu's Harrier and a Hadedda on 23/24 Nov and also a Barred Wren-warbler way out of range (per TH & RB).

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## Early Dates for Migrants

**African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*** – in Maun on 20 Sept (MM).

**Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*** – in Maun 18 Oct (MM).

**Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamorosus*** arrived at Ngotwane on 20 Oct (CAB); noted in Maun by 25 Oct (GR)

**Levillants Cuckoo** – in Maun by 25<sup>th</sup> Oct (GR) so too **Didrik Cuckoo**

**European Swift *Apus apus*** – flock passing through Maun on 15 Sept (BR)

**Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans*** – GB & MB saw the first of the season, in Savuti at S18° 36.868 E024°04.668 on 5 Aug.

**African Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone senegalensis*** Disaneng, Maun (MR) 24 Sept but an apparently over-wintering bird was seen on Etsatsa Island near Seronga on 25 July (IC).

**Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*** in Maun on 13 Oct (MM) and at Ngotwane, south of Gaborone on 20 Oct (CAB)

**Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*** – at Tsanalcona East, Maun 18 Oct (DB) and in Thamalakane garden on 28 Oct (MM, AF).

**Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*** and **European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*** on 9 Oct at Kwapa Camp in S Okavango (GR)

## **Contributors of records**

AF	Ali Flatt
BR	Brent Reed
CAB	Chris Brewster
CC	Callan Cohen
DB	Doline Bridges
DH	Dean & Ellen Hatty
EE	Eddy Everaerd
GB	Gavin Blair
GR	Grant Reed
IC	Ian Clark
IW	Ian White
JB	Joyce Bestelink
LO	Lee Ouzman
MB	Marjorie Blair
MM	Mark Muller
PD'A	Peter D'Arcy
PZ	Phil Zappala
RB	Rob Bowie
SB	Steve Boyes
TH	Trevor Hardaker
VWF	Vincent W Flory
WS	Walter Smith

## Some Breeding Records in 2012/2013

Stephanie J. Tyler & Chris A. Brewster

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs.
Cape Teal <i>Anas capensis</i>	2 Aug	Jwaneng Sewage Ponds	Adult and one duckling	MGG, DG, HH
Double-banded Courser <i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	3 Nov	Mahurushele Pan, Khutse G.R.	Adult with half grown chick	MGG, DG
Temminck's Courser <i>Cursorius temminckii</i>	17 Oct	Gaborone Dam	Pair of adults and two well-grown chicks	IW
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristatus</i>	2 Aug	Bathoen Dam overflow pond	Pair with three young	MGG, DG, HH
Lilac-breasted Roller <i>Coracias caudatus</i>	Oct /Nov	Francistown	Adults reared young and then re-laid (see article on page 7)	MSC
African Hoopoe <i>Upupa Africana</i>	9 Dec	Maun garden	3 newly hatched chicks in nest in <i>Acacia</i> hollow; by 23 Dec 3 had fallen out of the nest and died (eyes open ca 12 days) and 2 survived	VWF
Fork-tailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	15 Dec	Maun	Adult with recently fledged chick	GM
Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	1 Dec	Boro River near Maun	Two fully feathered chicks exited nest when attacked by Boomslang	GM

Observers: AF Ali Flatt; CAB Chris Brewster; DG Daphne Goldsworthy; GM Gert Meyburgh, HH Harold Hester; MMG Mike Goldsworthy; MM Mark Muller; MS Mike Soroczynski; PZ Phil Zappala; IW Ian White' VWF Vincent W Flury



Double-banded Courser  
*Photo: Mike Goldsworthy*



Temminck's Courser  
*Photo: Ian White*



## Recent Publications of interest

**Spottiswoode, C.N.** 2013. A brood parasite selects for its own egg traits. *Biology Letters* Vol. 9 no. 5.

Many brood parasitic birds lay eggs that mimic their hosts' eggs in appearance. This typically arises from selection from discriminating hosts that reject eggs which differ from their own. However, selection on parasitic eggs may also arise from parasites themselves, because it should pay a laying parasitic female to detect and destroy another parasitic egg previously laid in the same host nest by a different female. In this study, I experimentally test the source of selection on greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*) egg size and shape, which is correlated with that of its several host species, all of which breed in dark holes. Its commonest host species did not discriminate against experimental eggs that differed from their own in size and shape, but laying female honeyguides preferentially punctured experimental eggs more than host or control eggs. This should improve offspring survival given that multiple parasitism by this species is common, and that honeyguide chicks kill all other nest occupants. Hence, selection on egg size in greater honeyguides parasitizing bee-eaters appears to be imposed not by host defences but by interference competition among parasites themselves.

**Stevens, M. Troscianko, J. & Spottiswoode, C.N.** 2013. Repeated targeting of the same hosts by a brood parasite compromises host egg rejection. *Nature Communications* 4: 2475

Cuckoo eggs famously mimic those of their foster parents to evade rejection from discriminating hosts. Here we test whether parasites benefit by repeatedly parasitizing the same host nest. This should make accurate rejection decisions harder, regardless of the mechanism that hosts use to identify foreign eggs. Here we find strong support for this prediction in the African tawny-flanked prinia (*Prinia subflava*), the most common host of the cuckoo finch (*Anomalospiza imberbis*). We show experimentally that hosts reject eggs that differ from an internal template, but crucially, as the proportion of foreign eggs increases, hosts are less likely to reject them and require greater differences in appearance to do so. Repeated parasitism by the same cuckoo finch female is common in host nests and likely to be an adaptation to increase the probability of host acceptance. Thus, repeated parasitism interacts with egg mimicry to exploit cognitive and sensory limitations in host defences.

The on-line journal **Ornithological Observations** continues to provide notes of interest. Volume 4 had a range of such notes. See <http://oo.adu.org.za/content.php?vol=4>

**Power, R.J.** 2013. Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* "spear-fishing" swifts. **Orn. Obs.** 4:4-5.

This is an account of Grey Herons standing on a bridge and catching in flight Little Swifts *Apus affinis* that were nesting under the bridge. Grey Herons usually catch small fish and amphibians unlike Black-headed Herons which are known to take a diversity of bird prey both in form and size from mousebirds to moorhens.

**Humphreys, G. & Saffarele, L.** 2013. Evidence of Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptiacus* fishing during the barbel run in the Okavango Panhandle, Botswana. **Orn. Obs.** 4: 27-30

There is an annual event that occurs in the northern Panhandle during a brief period when the floodwaters recede from the floodplains. Then schools of juvenile fish shelter under Papyrus and Reeds by the bank of the river. Barbel, Bream (Tilapia) and Tigerfish flush out the sheltering fish and so expose smaller fish to the open water surface. Many piscivorous birds seize the opportunity to catch fish and so too do Yellow-billed Kites; the authors observed these adaptable species swooping down to pick up fish near the surface, so making the kite a fishing raptor.

**Engelbrecht, D.** 2013. Cannibalism in the Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas*. **Orn. Obs.** 4: 104-106.

In a nest study the author noted that there was often an unexplained loss of usually (but not always) young or weak hornbill nestlings. A video camera on a nest where there were three chicks, one of them a weak one, showed that the weak nestling disappeared – it was not in the nest nor on the ground nearby. The conclusion was that the adult female had either eaten the weak nestling or possibly fed it to her stronger chicks (infanticide-cannibalism) or had eaten the chick after it had died or fed it to her other chicks (cannibalism).

**Branfield, A.** 2013. Variations on the calls of the Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*. **Orn. Obs.** 4: 123-126

The author describes known calls of this fishing owl and briefly describes two new vocalizations – a grunting call prior to the bird reaching its fishing perch and wailing calls given by adults.

**Cooper, M & Jordan, L.** 2013. Random time-activity budgets in captive Southern Ground Hornbills *Bucorvus leadbeateri* (Vigors 1825). **Orn. Obs.** 4:154-157.

A study looking at time-activity budgets for 12 behaviour types (from walking, flying, perching to preening and displaying) indicated random behaviour (no different from that expected by chance) except for vocalizations which were more frequent than expected; the females were more vocal than males. Preening, foraging and sitting were less frequent in captive birds than observed in wild birds.

**Witteveen, M., Parry, E., Norris-Rogers, M. & Brown, M.** 2013. Breeding Density of the Southern Ground Hornbill, *Bucorvus leadbeateri*, in the Communal Areas Surrounding the Matobo National Park, Zimbabwe. **African Zoology** 48(2): 274-278.

The Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as a 'Vulnerable' species with a decreasing population. Despite a myriad of threats, including loss of nesting sites, accidental poisoning and persecution, there has been no detailed study of the southern ground hornbill in Zimbabwe. The authors collected data on nest sites and usage for 42 nests over three breeding seasons in the communal areas surrounding the Matobo National Park. For the active nests in the breeding seasons of 2008/9 and 2009/10 the mean nearest neighbour distances were 4.41 km and 3.53 km, respectively. Most nests were found in granite crevices (67%) while others were found in five different tree species. Most nests (90%) were in areas of subsistence crop farming, the remainder (10%) found in forests and open savannas. The high breeding density of the Southern Ground Hornbill in the communal areas surrounding the Matobo National Park in Zimbabwe could be attributed in part to traditional Ndebele culture which, for the most part, protects this species. Food also appears to be relatively abundant under communal farming conditions.

**Davies, G.B.R.** 2011. A disputed Botswana specimen of Melodious Lark *Mirafra cheniana* (Aves: Alaudidae) revisited. **Annals of the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History** 1:171-179.

Melodious Larks are known in Botswana only from the Pitsane/Ramatlhabana area in the south-east from where there are five records.

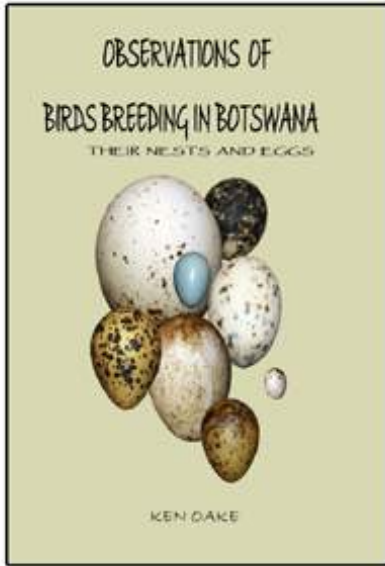
There is also a bird collected from the Patlana Flats 10km west of Lake Ngami in north-west Botswana which was believed to be a Melodious Lark. The specimen of this bird is in the Ditsong National Museum (formerly the Transvaal Museum) of Natural History in South Africa and for many years was accepted as a Melodious Lark. Then Kit Hustler looked at it again and rejected the identification; he believed it was a Monotonous Lark *Mirafra passerine*. The author re-assessed the specimen carefully comparing characteristics (such as bill and tarsus length, colour of under- and upper-wing coverts, tail length, length of primary feather 10 and belly colour) of both species and he concluded that the specimen was indeed that of a Melodious Lark, not a Monotonous Lark.

**Ndlovu, M., Cumming, G.S., Hockey, P.A.R., Nkosi, M.D. & Mutumi, G.L.** 2013. A Study of Moulting-Site Fidelity in Egyptian Geese, *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, in South Africa. ***African Zoology*** 48(2):240-249.

Little is known about moulting and moulting-site fidelity of African waterfowl. Satellite telemetry and uniquely engraved colour-rings were used to study moulting-site fidelity of Egyptian Geese marked at two sites in South Africa — Barberspan in the summer-rainfall region and Strandfontein in the winter-rainfall region. Twelve Egyptian geese were tagged with satellite GPS PTT transmitters while moulting at Barberspan and Strandfontein during 2008 and 2009, and a further 527 were colour-ringed between June 2007 and March 2009. Bi-monthly point counts of Egyptian Geese and scans for colour-ringed birds were made at each study site from July 2007 until June 2010, resulting in 139 individually colour-ringed geese being re-sighted during the study period. The authors explored Egyptian Geese dispersal distances away from the study sites and modelled moulting-site fidelity from colour-ring return rates corrected for survivorship, sampling period efficiency and colour-ring detectability estimates. There were 12% and 29.7% colour-ring return rates for geese ringed at Barberspan and Strandfontein, respectively. Four of five moulting birds tagged at Barberspan with satellite transmitters returned to Barberspan to moult the following year. Two of these same birds moulted at Barberspan in the third year while the other two moulted elsewhere. One out of seven Egyptian geese satellite-tagged at Strandfontein returned to the same site to moult the following year. One bird moulted at a nearby pan (5 km away), two

moulted at estuaries less than 30 km from Strandfontein and one bird moulted at a farm dam 56 km away. Two birds satellite-tagged at Strandfontein did not moult the following year and returned to moult at Strandfontein in the third year. The moult-site fidelity model suggested that a minimum of 16% of Barberspan birds and 51% of Strandfontein birds returned to the same wetland to moult the following year. The apparent low moult-site fidelity at Barberspan suggested by colour-ring resightings may reflect the small number of birds colour-ringed at the site.

The sincere thanks of all the members of BirdLife Botswana go to Remi and Wendy Borello who have once again generously supported the printing of this issue of the *Babbler*.



“OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS BREEDING IN BOTSWANA “ is a 408 , A4, page soft cover publication with breeding records of some 236 bird species presently breeding in Botswana backed up with over 600 stunning colour photographs showing nests, eggs, breeding plumages, chicks etc and in places sketches and drawings by the author, Ken Oake.

NAMAGWA RANDEBHEM (Francolinus namagwa)

Date	Sex	Age	Code	Nest	Eggs	Chicks	Comments
04.07.04	Male	Imm	202320C	Nest 10.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 20.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 30.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 40.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 50.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 60.0	0	0	
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 70.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 80.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 90.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 100.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 110.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 120.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 130.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 140.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 150.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 160.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 170.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 180.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 190.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 200.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 210.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 220.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 230.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 240.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 250.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 260.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 270.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 280.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 290.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 300.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 310.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 320.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 330.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 340.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 350.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 360.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 370.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
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04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 390.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 400.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 410.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 420.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
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04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 440.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 450.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 460.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 470.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 480.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 490.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 500.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 510.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 520.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 530.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 540.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 550.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 560.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 570.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 580.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 590.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 600.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 610.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 620.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 630.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 640.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 650.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 660.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 670.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 680.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 690.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 700.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 710.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 720.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 730.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 740.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 750.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 760.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 770.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 780.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 790.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 800.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 810.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 820.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 830.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 840.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 850.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 860.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 870.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 880.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 890.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 900.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 910.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 920.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 930.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 940.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 950.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 960.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 970.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 980.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 990.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller
04.07.04	Female	Imm	202320C	Nest 1000.0	0	0	Observation by M. Schiller

This species has been recorded breeding only during wet-season, the dry season, waterbirds should not be taken during winter despite this bird usually being the breeding season. The birds at Tala are the first found this far north in the species range.



Nest and chicks of the Goliath Heron

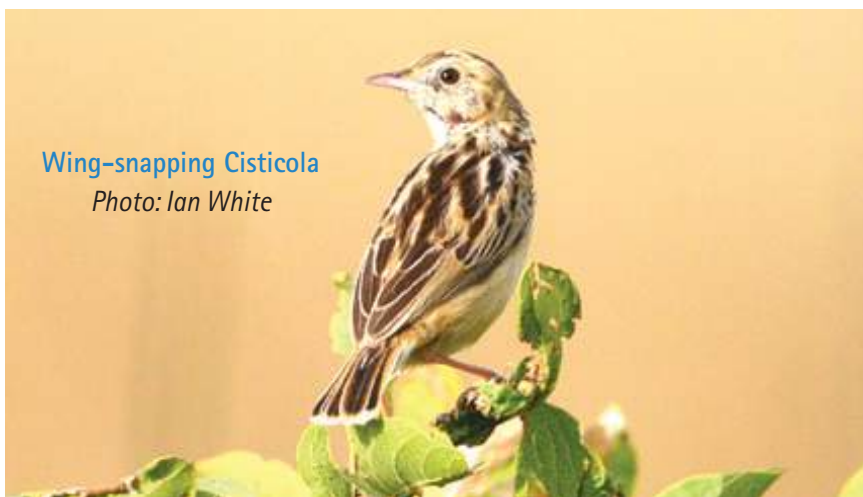
Recent good pictures from our Flickr website depicting  
"Birds of Botswana"  
<http://www.flickr.com/groups/blb/pool>



Little Bee-eater  
*Photo: Ian White*



Yellow Wagtail  
*Photo: Ian White*



Wing-snapping Cisticola  
*Photo: Ian White*



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