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Editorial

2010 was the year of big floods in northern Botswana. It was exciting to learn from Pete Hancock that in November there was water flowing into Lake Xau. This lake, south of Mopipi in the Makgadikgadi system, has been dry since the 1970s. At the end of December Chris Brewster visited the site to do a count of waterbirds and his results are in this issue of Babbler. The lake should develop into an important site in future years. The Savuti Channel also now again has water and is attracting numerous waterbirds. The depth and extent of floodwater in the Okavango delta made access and travel somewhat difficult in the late winter. All good news for waterbirds!

Rarities including Pectoral and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Grey Wagtails and a Golden Pipit have been appearing in South Africa in late 2010; others as Long-crested Hawk Eagle and White-faced Ducks were seen well outside their usual range. Of interest to Botswana were a Tree Pipit and a Chestnut Weaver just outside our border at Nossob in the KTP in late November 2010 and early January 2011 respectively. Ian White found and photographed a Levaillant's Cisticola at Gaborone Game Reserve in early January 2011, only the second record in Botswana. What other exciting birds I wonder have we been missing with our sparse scatter of birdwatchers?

Vultures have been very much in the international news recently. We have our own problem in Botswana with poisoning but in Kenya recent studies have shown a 60% decline over three decades in White-backed, Ruppell's Griffon and Hooded Vultures in the Masai Mara in SW Kenya and a 70% decline in central Kenya. Deliberate poisoning of livestock carcasses with the pesticide Furadan to kill large predators such as Lions is blamed. In Swaziland, loss of and disturbance to nesting and foraging habitat as well as poaching of vultures for parts for traditional medicine are blamed for declines.

This issue is rather 'thin' but a second part of Peter Ginn's Makgadikgadi visits previously published in Wagtail in Zimbabwe, is reproduced here – Peter was in the Makgadikgadi system in a wet period in the 1970s. Pete Hancock provides some data on additional summering areas for Wattled Cranes and my apology to Chris Brewster for inadvertently omitting his River Warbler note from the last Babbler; the note is printed in this issue. I thank contributors of articles or records and photographers, especially Dian Derksen for some stunning photographs of a Temminck's Courser and chick, a Three-banded Plover chick and a Pririt Batis nest.

Stephanie J. Tyler, Editor

A record of River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* at Crocodile Pools, Southeastern Botswana

Chris Brewster

In mid-March 2010, regularly working in a vegetable garden on a small holding at Crocodile Pools, 15 km south of Gaborone, in the late afternoon, I realised that I was hearing unfamiliar birdcalls from an adjacent area of long grass. Being preoccupied with cultivating the vegetables, I did not give the unfamiliar calls too much thought, until I considered that they were probably those of a River Warbler. Then I immediately gave them my full attention.

The calls were only heard for a few minutes around sunset. They were always heard, within 50 cm of the ground, from a small area of rank vegetation and *Grewia* bushes with long grass up to 1 m high, in the under-storey of poorly developed *Acacia erubescens* woodland. The calls consisted of a few sharp, loud, 'phit' calls uttered intermittently from an unseen bird in the long grass. On two days the bird became excited and the calls were repeated rapidly for a couple of minutes. On one of these days the calls were also heard briefly, close to the ground, from an adjacent patch of sweet potatoes, no more than 15 cm high. On one occasion I pursued the calling bird into the long grass, disturbing the bird, causing it to fly to a branch of a *Grewia* bush about 1 m above the ground and I had a brief view of a River Warbler in poor light before it immediately flew back into the long grass. This was the only view I had of the bird.

The River Warbler was first noticed on 12 March 2010, though it was likely to have been present prior to that date. From then it was recorded daily until 20 March 2010. It was last recorded at sunset on 20 March and it presumably departed overnight. During the period that it was present it never appeared to move more than about 25 m. Even though each day I spent an hour or two in the garden in the late afternoon, the River Warbler's calls that were only heard for a couple of minutes around sunset were the only evidence of its presence, apart from my one brief view. River Warblers are most conspicuous at around sunrise and sunset (Urban et al. 1997), but it was not heard calling when I listened for it at around sunrise on two mornings; however, due to time constraints, I was not generally able to listen for the bird at sunrise, so I might have missed it at that time of day.

The River Warbler is a Palearctic migrant, breeding in central and eastern Europe, that winters mainly in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana, northern parts of South Africa and in adjacent areas of Mozambique (Urban et al. 1997). Its preferred habitat in southern Africa is shrubs and thickets that are mixed with long grass (Herremans

1997). There are 10 accepted records of River Warbler for Botswana. Three of these records are for the Kasane area, one of which is of a record of 21 birds in Kasane Forest Reserve (Herremans 1994). There is one record of two singing birds along the Thamalakane River at Maun, one record at Nata and there are three records along the Tati River at Francistown, two of which are of singing birds and one of which is of a bird that was trapped and ringed. There is one record of a bird that was trapped and ringed along the Limpopo River in the Tuli Block and there is another record of a bird singing, close to the Ngotwane River, south of Gaborone. Botswana records are from 27 December to 7 April.

Most records of River Warblers are either of birds in song, when they are relatively conspicuous, mainly in March and early April, prior to departure from southern Africa, or of birds that are trapped. When not in song, River Warblers are amazingly inconspicuous, as was the bird at Crocodile Pools. Considering that the River Warbler is generally highly inconspicuous and also that its preferred habitat, of long grass, bushes and thickets, is widespread, it is very likely that it is overlooked. It is likely that it is more common in its preferred habitat in southeastern, eastern and northern Botswana than the relatively small number of records indicate.

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Additional Areas used by Wattled Cranes *Grus carunculatus* during summer

Pete Hancock

The globally threatened Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus* breeds during the late winter months in the Okavango Delta and Linyanti Swamps in northern Botswana (Craig and Gibson 2001; Craig 2002; Motsumi et al. 2003; Muller and Hancock 2007) but uses other wetlands in Botswana and neighbouring countries during summer to meet its annual habitat requirements. Hancock and Maude (2006) compiled an inventory of those areas in northern Botswana and adjacent Namibia that are used by Wattled Cranes during summer, with the aim of documenting all important habitats for this species – in line with filling one of the information gaps highlighted by the Wattled Crane Action Plan (Motsumi et al. 2003).

Subsequent to 2006, a further two ephemeral wetlands used by Wattled Cranes during summer have been identified. These were probably overlooked previously due to lack of information and are unlikely to be newly colonised areas. The two areas are described below:

Nxaisini Pan (S20.08458 E25.37242°)

S. Sejankabo (pers comm.) reported seeing four Wattled Cranes at Nxaisini Pan during March 2010. At this time, the pan had water from recent local rains.

Mokubilo Pan (S21.25493 E26.41790°)

A flock of approximately 20 Wattled Cranes was seen at Mokubilo Pan during April 2010 by B. Dikgopololo who is resident in nearby Mokubilo Village. This observation also followed good local rains and the pan was full. Mokubilo Pan is well vegetated, even when dry, and provides suitable Wattled Crane habitat after good summer rains. It is close to Mea Pan, a regular location for Wattled Cranes.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The Okavango Delta has the largest, single population of Wattled Cranes remaining in Africa, but in order to adequately conserve this population, it will be necessary to identify and protect all outlying wetlands used by significant numbers of the birds. Thus it is important to add these two ‘new’ areas to the list of wetlands used. In addition, the return of higher flood levels in the Okavango Delta at present may influence the future distribution of Wattled Cranes, and without a baseline inventory of sites used, it will not be possible to determine these changes.

The flock of cranes seen at Mokubilo Pan were almost certainly 'floaters' – young, unpaired birds – and it is hypothesized that they use ephemeral outlying wetlands for social purposes as well as feeding. It is also suspected that the same birds regularly return to the same areas every summer, even during years when conditions may not be optimal, but further research will be needed to clarify this.

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Records of specimens collected on Peterhouse Kalahari Expeditions (1966-1970)

This is the second part of a paper by Peter Ginn on expeditions to the Boteti (Botetle) River and Makgadikgadi Pans that was published in a special number of Wagtail, the journal of Peterhouse School's Natural History Society in Zimbabwe in January 1971. The first part was re-published in Babbler 53. (The passerine section will be in a future issue of Babbler).

Birds collected and seen on Peterhouse Kalahari expeditions to the Makgadikgadi

M = male (MM=2+ males), F = female (FF=2+ females), U = Sex not determined; Scientific names after Clancey (1965)

218. *Ceryle maxima* Giant Kingfisher
Khumaga. F. A nest with four eggs found.
Sokwane. M: 403.7g. F: 338g. Quite common along river.
219. *Ceryle rudis* Pied Kingfisher
Nata. MM.
Khumaga. FF: 64g.
Sokwane. M: 70.7g. FF: 64.9g; 69.5g. Very common along river.
223. *Halcyon chelicuti* Striped Kingfisher
Mosu. F. Only one seen, in Mopane woodland.
229. *Merops pusillus* Little Bee-eater
Nata. M: 4 FF.
Khumaga. M: 16g. FF: 16g; 12g.
Mompswe. MM: 13g; 14g
Nthane/Mosu. MM: 14g; 15g. F: 15g.
Sokwane. 3 MM: 15.0g; 12g; 15.4g. F: 13g. Common near river.
231. *Merops hirundineus* Swallow-tailed Bee-eater
Nata. M: 4 FF.
Khumaga. F.
Mompswe. 3 MM: 18g; 18g; 20g. F: 16g. 1 u: 20g.
Nthane/Mosu. 4 MM: 20g; 22g; 26g; 21g. FF: 21g; 19g.
233. *Coracias caudata* Lilac-breasted Roller
Nata. M *
Khumaga. 3 MM: 98g; 100g; 101g. FF: 106g; 125g *
Mompswe. M: 91g. F: 104g *
Nthane/Mosu. 3 FF: 100g; 102g *
Sokwane. M: 96.7g. FF: 96g; 96.4g. Common;
*Favours open country with scattered trees.

234. *Coracias naevia* Mozambique Roller (Square-tailed Nightjar)
Nata. M: F.
Khumaga. M: 140g. F: 167g.
Mompswe. 3 MM: 164g; 180g; 165g;. F: 152g.
Nthane/Mosu. MM: 167g; 171g. FF: 180g; 187g. Found in well-wooded areas, but absent from Sokwane.
236. *Upupa epops africanus* African Hoopoe
Nata. Vis.
Mompswe. 1 u: 48g. F: 54g. Very common in bird parties.
Mosu. Vis. Rather rare.
237. *Phoeniculus purpureus* Red-billed Hoopoe (Green Wood-Hoopoe)
Nata. 4 MM: F. Common along the river.
Khumaga. MM: 84g; 55g.
Mompswe. F: 68g.
Nthane/Mosu. Vis.
Sokwane. 4 MM: 75g; 72.5g; 71g; 84.6g. Quite common in tall riparian woodland.
238. *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Scimitarbill Hoopoe (Common Scimitarbill)
Nata. MM.
Khumaga. MM: 34g; 36g. FF: 24g; 30g.
Mompswe. FF: 26g; 27g. Fairly common in bird parties.
Nthane/Mosu. F: 30g. Not uncommon.
Sokwane. M: 36g. F: 26g.
Fairly common, favouring more open areas with smaller trees than 237.
239. *Tockus nasutus* (African) Grey Hornbill
Nata. 3 MM: F.
Khumaga. M: 140g. F: 184g.
Mompswe. 5 MM: 139g; 175g; 194g; 195g; 200g. Common.
Nthane. MM: 180g; 168g. 3 FF: 130g; 152g; 157g. Very common especially around cultivated lands with brush fences.
Sokwane. Not common. Favoured areas with open scrub.
240. *Tockus erythrorhynchus* Red-billed Hornbill
Nata. F: 1 u.
Khumaga. MM: 138g; 170g.
Mompswe. M: 145g. F: 156g. 1 u: 180g. Common.
Nthane/Mosu. 4 MM: 182g; 185g; 170g; 168g. F: 138g. Fairly common. This record is the first for the area southeast of the Makgadikgadi.
Sokwane. 4 FF: 162g; 148.8g; 135g; 152g. Uncommon except near villages.
241. *Tockus flavirostris* (Southern) Yellow-billed Hornbill
Nata. 6 MM.
Khumaga. 3 FF: 215g; 160g; 185g. 1 u.

- Mompswe. 7 MM: X=234g; N=7; Obs. range 200-250g. FF: 168g; 160g.
Nthane/Mosu. 7 MM: X=250g; N=7, Obs. range 215-285g. FF: 175g; 285g.
Sokwane. 3 MM: 253.4g; 272g; 270g. FF: 196.5g; 190g. This species is very common throughout the areas visited.
242. *Tockus bradfieldi* Bradfield's Hornbill
Nata. M: F. Collected near Tsigara Pan.
Mompswe. 1 u: 200g. Fairly rare. Always in pairs, occasionally with other Hornbills. Only reported in the area between Mompswe and Tsigara Pan.
244. *Bucorvus leadbeateri* (Southern) Ground-Hornbill
Nata. Vis.
Mompswe. M: 2,329g. At least two parties (6, 7) north and south of Tsigara.
Nthane/Mosu. Vis. Two parties, one of 7 at Nthane and the other of 3 at Mosu.
246. *Lybius leucomelas* (Acacia) Pied Barbet
Nata. M: FF.
Khumaga. MM: 26g; 36g. 3 FF: 39g; 34g; 29g.
Mompswe. 8 MM: X=29.6g; N=8; Obs. range 26-31g. 3 FF: 25g; 28g; 29g. 1 u: 28g. Common in woodland. Usually in bird parties.
Nthane/Mosu. 4 MM: 36g; 22g; 34g; 20g. FF: 30g; 30g. Very common, especially in bird parties.
Sokwane. MM: 25g; 30g. FF: 31.4g; 30.3g. Fairly common in all wooded areas.
248. *Trachyphonus vaillantii* Crested Barbet
Nata. MM.
Mosu. M 75g. F 104g. Only found below escarpment. Rather scarce.
250. *Indicator minor* Lesser Honeyguide
Sokwane. F: 25g. Smithers (1964) only records this species from Chobe, this being a considerable extension of range in Botswana.
252. *Thripias namaquus* Bearded Woodpecker
Nata. 3 MM: 91g. F: 87g. 1 imm. F: 66g.
Khumaga. M: F.
Mompswe. M: 90g. F: 80g.
Nthane/Mosu. MM: 84g; 60g. F: 80g. Uncommon.
Sokwane. M: 95.0g. Fairly rare, confined to areas of large trees.
253. *Dendropicos fuscescens* Cardinal Woodpecker
Nata. M: 27g. F: 24g.
Khumaga. MM: 29g; 26g. FF: 27g; 29g.
Mompswe. M: 30g.
Nthane/Mosu. MM: 31g. FF: 32g; 32g. Not common.
Sokwane. M: 33g. 4 FF: 28g; 27g; 30g. Very common, open woodland.

254. *Campethera bennettii* Bennett's Woodpecker
Nata. M: 82g.
255. *Campethera abingoni* Golden-tailed Woodpecker
Khumaga. MM: 73g; 65g. F: 62g.
Nthane. M: 61g. FF: 76g; 67g. Uncommon.
Sokwane. 3 MM: 73g; 70.5g; 72g. F: 75g. Quite common even in scrub thorn veld.
256. *Mirafra passerine* Monotonous Lark
Nata. M.
258. *Mirafra africana* Rufous-naped Lark
Nata. 5 MM: 40g. F.
Nthane. F: 40g. (*M. a. griseescens*) Smithers (1964) states that this race is "confined to the northern parts of the northeast sector east of the Okavango". Thus this record south of the Makgadikgadi represents a considerable southward extension.
260. *Mirafra apiata* Clapper Lark
M. a. nata
Nata. 15 MM: 27g; 28g. 3 FF: 28g.
Mosu. MM: 30g; 30g. F: 30g.
Sokwane. MM: 27.9g; 24.9g. 6 FF: X=25.0g; N=6; Obs. range 24-25.8g. Common south of Tsoi airstrip. This subspecies is confined to the very short grass near the Makgadikgadi. No bushes.
M. a. kalaharica
Khumaga. 3 MM: 21g; 28g; 28g. F: 20g. 1 u.
Mompwe. 3 MM: 30g; 28g; 28g. F. This subspecies is found in longer grass, often with scattered bushes.
261. *Mirafra rufocinnamomea mamabiiensis* Flappet Lark
Mompwe. F: 28g. Collected in Mopane veld.
262. *Mirafra africanoides* Fawn-coloured Lark
Nata. 8 MM: 25g; 22g. FF.
Khumaga. 21 MM: X=25g; N=21; Obs. range 20-30g. 8 FF: X=24g; N=8; Obs. range 22-28g.
Mompwe. 3 MM: 25g; 25g; 24g. FF: 21g; 24g. Fairly common in short grass.
Nthane/Mosu. 3 MM: 24g; 24g; 30g. Particularly common south of Nthane in grassland with scattered bushes.
Sokwane. 8 MM: X=23.5g; N=7; Obs. range 18-26g. 5 FF: 26g; 23g; 24g; 24.5; 22g. 1 u: 27g. Common in grass and scrub areas; some present in short grassland.
263. *Mirafra sabota* Sabota Lark
Mompwe. F: 19g.
Nthane/Mosu. 11 MM: X=25.1g; N=11; Obs. range 7-39g. 3 FF: 28g; 41g; 31g. 1u:

- 24g. Very common in areas of open scrub.
Sokwane.M: 28g. Rarely seen.
265. *Certhilauda albofasciata salinicola* Spike-heeled Lark
Khumaga. MM: 28h; 18g.
Sokwane.MM: 20g; 24g. Not uncommon south of Tsoi airstrip.
266. *Calandrella cinerea* Red-capped Lark
Nata. 3 MM: 21g.
Mompmswe. 18 MM: X=23; N=17; Obs. range 18-30g. 13 FF: X=22.4g; N=9; Obs. range 18-29g. 2 u: 22g. Present in very large numbers in the short grass areas around Mompmswe Pan in association with *C. conirostris* and *Eremopterix verticalis*. Smaller numbers near other pans. At least four subspecies, *C. c. saturator*, *C. c. witputzi*, *C. c. andersoni*, *C. c. millardi* collected.
268. *Calandrella conirostris* Pink-billed Lark
Nata. M.
Khumaga. 3 MM: 10g; 12g; 13g. 5 FF: 12g; 14g; 14g; 17g; 13g. 1 u: 13g. Very common. See 266, *C. cinerea*.
Mosu.F: 13g.
Sokwane. MM: 15.2g; 13.7g. F: 14.8g. Common south of Tsoi airstrip. Parties of up to 30 birds.
269. *Eremopterix verticalis* Grey-backed Finch Lark
Nata. 7 MM: 18g; 12g. 9 FF: 12g; 12g.
Khumaga. M: 16g. F: 16g.
Mompmswe. 7 MM: X=14.9g; N=7; Obs. range 12-18g. 8 FF: X=15.75g; N=8; Obs. range 13-19g. Very common. See 266, *C. cinerea*.
Nthane/Mosu. M: 15g. 5 FF: 21g; 17g; 15g; 20g; 16g. Common on the short grass areas near the Makgadikgadi and old lands with little stubble still standing.
Sokwane.Small groups, mainly males, seen south of Tsoi airstrip.
270. *Eremopterix leucotis* Chestnut-backed Finch Lark
Nata. 8 MM: 16g; 18g. FF: 17g.
Mompmswe. MM: 17g; 17g. 4 FF: 17g; 18g; 16g; 18g. Locally common, rare elsewhere in area.
Nthane/Mosu. M: 20g. 4 FF: 20g; 22g; 17g; 17g. Very common in cultivated lands and in short grass areas.

TO BE CONTINUED

A visit to Lake Xau (Dow) in December 2010

Chris A. Brewster

Lake Xau is southwest of Mopipi and in the 1960s and 1970s was an important wetland for birds and game. Water flowing into Lake Xau was diverted into Mopipi Dam in the 1970s and then when the Boteti River ceased flowing during the 1980s the lake became dry. The Boteti River almost reached Rakops in 2009 and finally in November 2010 water flowed down the Boteti River all the way to Lake Xau.

At the end of December 2010 I visited the lake to carry out a waterbird count. The Boteti River was still flowing into the lake and water had retreated very little; the river flowed in some small rapids over a rocky sill, then meandered about 2 km southeast before turning and flowing about 5 km southwest in a quite narrow course across the lake bed; it then widened out a bit (200 - 300 m wide), flowing about another 4 km southwest. Most birds were in this wider section of the lake. The village of Kedia, at the SW extremity of the lake, was about 6 km further southwest.

Species	Dec 2010	Species	Dec 2010
Reed Cormorant	8	Southern Pochard	2
Grey Heron	25	Spur-winged Goose	1
Great Egret	6	Ringed Plover	3
Black Egret	1	Kittlitz's Plover	8
Intermediate Egret	2	Blacksmith Lapwing	20
Little Egret	90	Wood Sandpiper	220
Cattle Egret	300	Marsh Sandpiper	2
Squacco Heron	6	Greenshank	13
Black-cr. Night Heron	1	Common Sandpiper	1
Yellow-billed Stork	17	Curlew Sandpiper	50
Sacred Ibis	1	Little Stint	110
Glossy Ibis	390	Ruff	2,400
African Spoonbill	23	Black-winged Stilt	190
Greater Flamingo	18	Pied Avocet	20
Lesser Flamingo	9	Black-winged Pratincole	2
White-faced Duck	4	Collared Pratincole	3
Fulvous Duck	6	White-winged Tern	1
Cape Teal	14		
Hottentot Teal	2	TOTAL	4,218
Red-billed Teal	250	No. Species	38
Cape Shoveler	4		

Editor.

Lake Xau in the past has provided some interesting bird records. A visit there by Smithers (1960) in January 1959 revealed African Skimmers *Rynchops flavirostris* in flocks of up to 100 and two specimens were taken of Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*. Tim Liversedge reported Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus* breeding at the lake in the 1950s and 1960s; in June 1981 Warwick Tarboton saw 14 Grey Crowned Cranes *Balearica regulorum* there (Balden1982).

Hopefully future visits now that the lake holds water again will reveal more birds of interest.

REFERENCES

- BALDEN, J. 1982. Records of crane species in Botswana. *Babbler* 3: 23-25.
SMITHERS, R.H.N. 1960. Records of birds from the Lake Dow area of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. *Occasional Papers of the Natural History Museum of Southern Rhodesia* 24B: 516-534.



Barred Wren-warbler

Photo: Ian White

Correspondence

Croaking Cisticolas:

A letter from Michael Irwin to Richard Randall

Dear Mr Randall,

I was interested to read your account of the Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis* from the Botswana side of the Kazuma Depression in Babbler 2010 No. 54: 42. These birds are in fact quite regular on our side of the Depression and one of the few places where it might be regarded as common. In that context I refer to those birds referable to the race *holubi* which has as its type locality, Pandamatenga, but we have no idea which side of the border it might have come from.

Another interesting point here is that this population seems much more a bird of open grassland compared to these birds elsewhere which are usually associated with scattered bushes along the edges of vleis and similar ecotones than open grassland itself. In fact this is a distinctive form with seemingly a very limited range and not at all common anywhere and ecologically not typical of *natalensis* as we know it, so that it makes one wonder?

Also of course on the Zimbabwean side there are records of *Macronyx ameliae*, *Turnix nanus* and African Snipe of the race *angolensis* which to me is as likely as not, a species distinct from *nigripennis* and where the bill lengths are so markedly different and of course these differences tend to be further obscured by their highly cryptic plumage. And all must occur on the Botswana side too.

Yours sincerely,
M.P.S. Irwin (Zimbabwe)

Thick-billed Cuckoo in Botswana

Chris Lotz wrote that a Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* was doing its slow display flight over Lawdon's (a new lodge near Drotsky's) in the Okavango Panhandle, Botswana on 3 September 2010. He noted "It is one of the few cuckoos that seem to be around in winter and early spring in southern Africa. There seem to be numerous winter records for Mozambique and Zimbabwe, but in South Africa and Botswana non-summer data seems to be pretty lacking, although of course Errol de Beer's recent late winter sighting in Mpumalanga was very noteworthy. I also find it interesting that the Okavango bird was displaying so early – long before the rains are expected to fall. In Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia I have seen them displaying in December and March – not sure about other birders? Also of interest is the fact that the bird seems to be fairly rare in the Okavango/Botswana and was unrecorded there during SABAP 1, I believe – although Donovan does report that it occasionally visits Xaro Lodge downstream from Lawdon's.

Chris Brewster responded "There is a winter record of one in 2229A (Pont Drift square) on 23 May 1986. One was recorded in the same square on 15 March 1987 (1988: Report from the Records Subcommittee, Bushell and Bushell, Babbler 16: 30 - 31). A specimen was collected along the Khwai River (1923B) on 16 July 1969 (Penry 1994). Accordingly, there are winter records for Botswana

There are a total of 12 records for Botswana. All subsequent records (9 in total) are from woodland in the northern wetlands (Okavango River, Okavango Delta, Linyanti) from mainly in October and November, with one September record and one December record. The September record is of one at Shakawe on 18 September 1997 (ABC Bulletin: Vol 15, No 1, 2008). The small number of records indicates that is uncommon to rare in Botswana. Chris Lotz is not correct to state that it was not recorded in Botswana in SABAP 1.

Most records of calling birds are in early summer. When not calling Thick-billed Cuckoos are unobtrusive. It is probable that this cuckoo is overlooked in Botswana when it is not calling. Whether it is primarily a summer visitor or is primarily resident in Botswana is unclear. Vernon (1997 in *The Atlas of Southern African Birds*, Vol 1, p. 559) stated that it is not a long-distance migrant in southern Africa and this is likely to be the case for Botswana.

Cape Batis in 2327A?

An email from Anthony Cizek to the South African Birdnet

I am interested in the record of the Cape Batis shown in QDS (quarter degree square) 2327BA in SABAPI (Harrison et al. 1997): no mention is made of this record from along the Limpopo River either in this publication or in Roberts 7, yet it stands out in such a dry region. Closer inspection shows this QDS includes the eastern edge of the Tswapong Hills, where, interestingly, the Green-backed Honeyguide is known, so it is not impossible that there is a tiny isolated population of the Cape Batis in these hills too. (The Cape Batis is well-known from granite kopje landscapes in Zimbabwe, e.g. the Matobo Hills.) But Botswanan records during this atlas period were made in half-degree-squares which suggest that this record was made rather on the South Africa side of the QDS. I am writing to SABirdnet in the hope that someone might know who submitted this record and its details despite the appreciable time which has passed because it is a record which challenges the conventional wisdom (and is therefore “questionable”), but could push forward our collective understanding of this species’ ecology and distribution should it prove good.

Thanks for any help,
Anthony Cizek

On 26 September 2010 Chris Brewster replied:

Dear Anthony,

I can help. The record of Cape Batis in 2327B is of a pair seen twice by Perrin and Judith Greenwood-Penny in August 1988 in *Acacia nigricans* in Limpopo riverine woodland at Sunnyside Farm on the Botswana side of the river. The Greenwood-Pennys lived on Sunnyside Farm for many years and they only twice recorded this species. It seems very likely that the record refers to an altitudinal movement in winter from South Africa rather than to a small resident population. The record was published in Babbler 17 (June 1989) and in the Bird Atlas of Botswana by Huw Penry (1994). It is the only accepted record of Cape Batis for Botswana.

There is some well-developed woodland in kloofs and around perennial springs in the Tswapong Hills. It was from one of these kloofs that a Green-backed Honeybird was recorded in August 1990. There are no other Green-backed Honeybird records from eastern Botswana; all other records (of the species) for Botswana are from the woodlands of northern Botswana. There is no evidence that there is a resident population of Green-backed Honeybird in the Tswapong Hills.

There are only three Cape Robin Chat records for Botswana, in winter 1992 and 1994. Two of these records are from the vicinity of a perennial spring, close to the Tswapong Hills, in the Borotsi Hills (the third record is in Gaborone). The records of this species are also probably due to altitudinal movements in winter from South Africa.

Regards
Chris Brewster

Dear Chris,

Thanks very much for your email. In addition to it being shown in a QDS rather than an HDS, I had also ruled out the possibility of a record from the Botswana side because I did not see the Cape Batis in your co-authored list in Bull. ABC (2008): but on checking again now, I see I overlooked it - it is listed!

The question of movements - for both the honeybird and the batis is a very interesting one. The honeybird record is a very long way from the closest known population on the Zimbabwe plateau - >300km. It is possible that it has been overlooked in south-western Zimbabwe - there is canopy *Brachystegia torrei* woodland in the former Bubiana Conservancy (to about 2129D) where it could have been overlooked, but this is still a long way from the Tswapong Hills - >200km across hot, very dry landscapes. The only suitable vegetation would be riverine woodland, and what are the chances of an individual finding its way south-east along the Mzingwane R. to the Limpopo R., where it changes direction and heads west to the confluence with the Shashe R., which offers some nice riparian fringe, but it decides to continue south-west, and then turns sharply up a small riverine fringe to the Tswapong Hills - where it stays put? (And what are the chances that this exceptional individual is then seen by a birder?). If it is not resident in the Tswapong Hills, then it is definitely worth looking for it in the Soutpansberg, the western parts of which could offer a much closer source population/s. (This possibility is strengthened because it is less dependent on miombo than some of the other canopy insectivores, so could occur in "miombo-like" vegetation in the Soutpansberg.)

Movements by the Cape Batis over such distances are even more interesting - because of the well-marked morphological differences between regional populations. Carl Vernon found no evidence of movements (out of patches) by the birds in the tiny forest fragments at Great Zimbabwe (Honeyguide 93:34-39), and although Michael Irwin suggested some altitudinal movement in the Eastern Highlands, this would be within forest across an altitudinal gradient; i.e. movement from forest into riparian woodland (as for the bird recorded on Sunnyside Farm) must be exceptional. This appears to be

the only record from riverine woodland - presumably the *Faidherbia albida* woodland of Timberlake (1980. Vegetation Map of South East Botswana) along the Limpopo R. or anywhere? Although Johnson in the SABAP 1 Atlas suggested it is more catholic in its habitat requirements, at least in the Eastern Cape, one certainly wouldn't associate it with albida woodland. But I guess it might be exceptional birds like these which, through very infrequent movements, maintain gene flow between "isolated" populations and prevent speciation. If so, this draws attention to the importance of the riparian corridors.

Thanks again for the information,
Anthony



Great Spotted Cuckoo
Photo: Ian White

Summary of Category B Records

Compiled by Chris A. Brewster and Stephanie J. Tyler

All records refer to the period May 2010 to December 2010 unless otherwise stated. For species on the 'B' List, please see Babbler 40: 57-58 or visit BirdLife Botswana's website. The order of species given below follows the new Roberts' Birds of southern Africa.

FULVOUS DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor*

2008 and 2009: One was seen at Mashatu in the Tuli Block on 15 Dec 2008 and 25 Feb 2009 (DS, SS).

2010: Eight were seen at Bokaa Dam on 22 July and four there on 10 Oct and three at Mogobane Dam on 23 Oct (CAB).

WHITE-BACKED DUCK *Thalassornis leuconotus*

There were two at Mogobane Dam on 26 Sept (CAB).

AFRICAN BLACK DUCK *Anas sparsa*

Two were seen at Phakalane S.P. on 31 July and three at Gaborone G.R. on 1 Aug (IW, RB).

MACCOA DUCK *Oxyura maccoa*

There were two at Sojwe Pan on 13 June and seven on 21 Aug (CAB). In July a count of 45 came from Bokaa Dam on 22nd (CAB) with 13 at Gamoleele Dam on 16th and one at Jwaneng S.P. on 16th (MGG, DG, HH). At Mahalapye S.P. 18 were seen on 17 Aug (PD'A).

KORI BUSTARD *Ardeotis kori*

One was between Sojwe and Dithopo on 12 Jun (BLB). Two were at Khama Rhino Sanctuary on 27 June (CAB) and ca. 20 in a 2 km stretch at Nxai Pan on 20 July (DD). Two were seen on the eastern shore of Sowa Pan on 24 Aug, four at Xhorodomo Pan on 27 Aug, one at Dautsa Flats on 29 Aug (CAB) and one in Nata Sanctuary in 2026A3 on 8 Sept (PN, RS).

Eleven were seen in the Chobe floodplain in July between Kasane and Ihaha (PL et al.).

On 1 Nov a recently dead adult was seen beside the sand track between Zutshwa and Kaa gate, about 50km NE of Kaa (see photos); photographs were taken of an adult at

noon on 3 Nov ca. 40km SW of Kaa in KTP and of an adult on 10 Nov near Deception Pan, CKGR at about 16h00; on 12 Nov an adult was in full display in Passarge Valley, CKGR at 18h00 (SP). SP commented that although not all records were noted, he saw 20-25 on a trip in the following areas:- Probably six in the Transfrontier Park (around Sizatswe Pan, Swartpan and south of Kaa); another six to the west of Mabuasehube along the cutline roads towards Kokotsha; none in Khutse; probably 10-12 in the CKGR, but only north of Pipers Pan.

Singles were seen at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 in 1825C2 on 1 Dec and near Pandamatenga village in 1825D1 on 10 Dec; there were 12 on 20 Dec at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 (DH). Two were at Kazuma Pan on 26 Dec, three at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec and one at Serondella on 29 Dec (CAB, IN-S). One was north of Motopi in 2024A1 on 30 Dec (CAB). Four were flushed from grassland with scattered Acacia bushes on northern side of Lake Xau (Dow) on 31 Dec/1 Jan 2011 and CAB noted that Kori Bustards seemed fairly common around Kedia at the SW edge of the lake.



Dead Kori Bustard (see above)

Photo: Stephen Pringle

DENHAM'S BUSTARD *Neotis denhami*

One was seen at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 in 1825C2 on 14 Dec (DH)

GREY CROWNED CRANE *Balearica regulorum*

One was seen in July along the Chobe River west of Kasane (PL et al.). The only other records were of two at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 on 14 Dec and four on 20 Dec, then five on 21st at Pandamatenga Farm Q49 (both farms in 1825C2) (DH) and a pair at Dzibenana Pan (1926C4) on the Zimbabwe border on 25 Dec (CAB).

EUROPEAN ROLLER *Coracias garrulus*

One was seen east of Topisi on 23 Dec. Along the edge of the Mababe Depression were three on 29 Dec and near Mababe Gate, at a termite emergence was a flock of c20 hawking overhead. Two singles near Khumaga and another at Rakops on 31 Dec (CAB).

GREY-HEADED KINGFISHER *Halcyon leucocephala*

Singles were seen in Moremi G.R. on 2 Jan 2010 (AF), at Cassandra Farms at Kazungula on 11 Mar (Bernd), in Chobe N.P. on 18 and 22 Mar (HH, CV) and on Pandamatenga Farm Q50 on 14 Dec (DH). One was in mopane woodland in 1926C4 on 25 Dec and one near Khwai River east of Khwai Village on 29 Dec (CAB).

THICK-BILLED CUCKOO *Pachycoccyx audeberti*

One was seen at Lawdon's Lodge near Shakawe on 3 Sept (CL) – see note on page 14.

WHITE-FRONTED PLOVER *Charadrius marginatus*

Two were at Shashe Dam on 29 Aug (NB et al.); a regular location for the species. Three were seen at small pools at Kazuma Pan on 26 Dec (CAB).

CHESTNUT-BANDED PLOVER *Charadrius pallidus*

At Nata Sanctuary 287 were seen on 24 Aug (south of where vet fence crosses pan) 498 on 25 Aug west of vet fence, giving a total of 785 birds, including a pair with one young ca. 1 week old (CAB). This is the 2nd highest count from Sowa Pan.

WHITE-CROWNED LAPWING *Vanellus albicus*

Two were along Limpopo River at Coombe Farm on 1 Oct (BLB) and one at Stevensford (per Trevor Hardaker) at the same time. The Chobe River is the stronghold for this species.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

One was at Nata River close to the Nata Delta on 25 Aug (CAB).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

One was seen at Nata River on 25 Aug (CAB) and, probably the same bird, at Nata Sanctuary on 8 Sept (PN, RS).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

One was seen at Nata River alongside a Curlew on 25 Aug (CAB).

BLACK-WINGED PRATINCOLE *Glareola nordmanni*

About 100 (and ca.150 Collared Pratincoles) were at Kazuma Pan on 26 Dec, 400 were at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec, two at Lake Xau on 31 Dec and just north of Rakops 12 flew by on 31 Dec (CAB).

CASPIAN TERN *Hydroprogne caspia*

There were 29 at Nata Sanctuary on 25 Aug (CAB).

AFRICAN SKIMMER *Rynchops flavirostris*

One was seen on the Okavango River between Mohembo and the Namibian border on 17 July and five further downriver between Philipo Channel junctions 2 and 3 on 18 July (PH, RDR, JD, LD & MK). During the July count on the Chobe River 13 were seen between Kasane and Ihaha (PL et al.).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

An adult was seen and photographed at Phakalane S.P. on Oct 17 (KT, PC).

HOODED VULTURE *Necrosyrtes monachus*

One on 14 Sept between Xakanaxa and Third Bridge, one on 23 Sept between Kazungula town and ferry S17.48 E25.14 (PN, RS) and two in Kasane Forest Reserve extension on 26 Dec (CAB) were the only records received.

CAPE GRIFFON (VULTURE) *Gyps coprotheres*

Two were at Dithopo, roosting at a waterhole on 12 June (CAB) and three were seen at Coombe Farm on the Limpopo on 1 Oct, along with 21 White-backed Vulture (BLB). Four were seen flying over Mogagabe Hill on 29 July and one on 31 Oct and 28 Nov (MGG). Along Gaborone - Francistown main road, on 12 Nov, one, with 25 White-backed Vultures at Maope, on 14 Nov, one with 20 White-backed Vultures 10 km north of Palapye, and, also on 14 Nov, three with 25 White-backed Vultures near Radisele (CAB, MGG).

LAPPET-FACED VULTURE *Aegypius tracheliotos***2010 RECORDS:**

No. birds	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
2	12 June	Dithopo	Roosting at waterhole with other vultures	CAB
1	20 July	Nxai Pan		DD
1	24 July	Kubu Island	With 6 White-backed Vultures (W-bVs)	DD
1	11 Aug	South of Okwa Valley, along Gaborone road		AK

No. birds	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
1	14 Aug	Mogobane	At donkey carcase with 3 W-bVs and 1 Cape Griffon	CAB
1	22 Aug	Khama Rhino Sanctuary		CAB
9	24 Aug	Just outside Nata Sanctuary on eastern shore of Sowa Pan.	With ca. 20 W-bVs at carcase	CAB
3	25 Aug	Northern finger of Ntwetwe Pan, east of Gweta		CAB
1	26 Aug	Chapman's Baobab, south of Gweta		CAB
3	27 Aug	Rakops		CAB
4	29 Aug	Khutse 1, Khutse G.R.	With 4 W-bVs	PT
2	7 Sept	Botash Conservation Area S20.32 E26.07	With 27 W-bVs	PN, RS
1	9 Sept	Between Nata and Maun at S20.15 E24.47		PN, RS
2	9 Sept	Between Nata and Maun at S20.10 E23.49	At a carcase with 65 W-bVs and a Marabou	PN, RS
3	22 Sept	Chobe N.P. S17.50 E25.05		PN, RS
1	24 Sept	Kasane to Francistown at S18.03 E25.16	With 5 W-bVs	PN, RS
3	3 Oct	Molose waterhole, Kutse G.R.	Between 11h00 and 14h00 with ca 15 W-bVs	DD
3	2 Nov	Swart Pan waterhole in NW of KTP	Mature adults in company of ca. 25 W-bVs	SP
2	3 Nov	near Kaa Gate, KTP	Mature adults roosting in tree at 08h00	SP
3 ad., 1 juv. ?5 th yr	6 Nov	Molose waterhole in Khutse G.R.	In company of ca. 15 W-bVs between 11h00 and 13h00	SP
4	7 Nov	Molose waterhole	Between 08h00 and 11h00 with ca. 15 W-bVs	SP
2	13 Nov	Motopi Pan, northern CKGR 40km SE of Tsau	Mature adults at waterhole	SP
2	12 Nov	8 km south of Mahalapye	With 25 W-bVs	CAB MGG
1	12 Nov	Maope, between Palapye and Serule	With 18 W-bVs, 1 Cape Vulture	CAB MGG
1	14 Nov	10 km north of Palapye	At carcase with 20 W-bVs, 1 Cape Vulture	CAB MGG

No. birds	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
1	1 Dec	Pandamatenga Farm Q50	With two W-bVs	DH
1	26 Dec	Northern plains, Pandamatenga		CAB
2	27 Dec	Kasane Forest Reserve extension	At a lion kill with ca. 50 W-bVs	CAB
4	27 Dec	West of Ngoma, Chobe	At kudu carcass with ca. 35 W-bVs	CAB
1	30 Dec	East of new Mababe Gate in 1924A	Also 15 W-bVs	CAB

WHITE-HEADED VULTURE *Trigonoceps occipitalis*

Only three records were received. Has this vulture become so rare now or are records not being submitted?

No. Birds	Date	Location	Comments	Obs.
1	11 April	Chobe N.P.		CV, DJ
3	3 Oct	Molose waterhole, Kutse G.R.	From 11h00-14h00	DD
1	28 Dec	Savuti Marsh		CAB

MARTIAL EAGLE *Polemaetus bellicosus*

No. Birds	Date	Location	Obs.
1 Juvenile	15 Feb 2009	Mashatu, Tuli Block	DS, SS
1 subadult	27 June '10	Khama Rhino Sanctuary	CAB
1	16 July	Mahalapye in 2124C3	Per HH
1 immature	22 Aug	Khama Rhino Sanctuary	CAB
1 adult	26 Aug	Green's Baobab south of Gweta	CAB
1	12 Sept	Magwexhlana Pan, Moremi S19.15 E23.20	PN, RS
1	3 Oct	Khutse G.R.	DD
1 adult	1 Nov	Midway between Zutshwa and Kaa gate, to the north of the Kalagadi Transfrontier Park	SP

1 adult and 1 imm	28 Dec	Savuti Marsh	CAB
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BATELEUR *Terathopius ecaudatus*

All records of this species are of interest. Records should include number of birds seen.

No. Seen	Date	Location	Obs.
1	12 June	Dithopo	CAB
1 adult	26 June	Paje	CAB
1 imm.	22 Aug	Khama Rhino Sanctuary	CAB
1 imm.	25 Aug	Nata Sanctuary	CAB
1 imm	28 Aug	Lake Ngami	CAB
1 imm	29 Aug	South of Hanahai Valley in 22211B1	CAB
1 adult	29 Aug	At Bere turn-off, north of Lone Tree in 2222C3	CAB
1 adult	14 Sept	Near Xakanaxa	PN, RS
1	25 Sept	Chilwero Valley, Chobe N.P. in 1725C3	PL
1 adult	26 Sept	1 Bat Between Serule and Palapye near Topisi S 22S S22.17 E27.14	PN, RS
At least 6	2/3 Oct	Khutse G.R.	DD
Pair	3 Nov	At ca. 15h00 at Polentswa waterhole in KTP.	SP
1 adult and 1 juv.	6 Nov	At Molose waterhole in Khutse G.R. at 11h00	SP
3-4	9-13 Nov	Flying in northern CKGR	SP
1	21 Nov	Max Seigel 1923A3	PH
1	1 Dec	Pandamatenga Farm Q50 in 1825C2; up to five seen daily in the area	DH
2 ad, 2 imm	25 Dec	Dzibenana Pan (1926C4) on the Zim. Border	CAB
1 ad, 1 imm, 1 subadult	26 Dec	Kazuma Pan	CAB
2	26 Dec	Northern Plains, Pandamatenga	CAB
1 imm.	27 Dec	Kasane Forset Reserve extension	CAB

No. Seen	Date	Location	Obs.
1 female	28 Dec	Between Linyanti and Savuti	CAB
2 ad, 3 imm.	28 Dec	Savuti Marsh	CAB
1 ad, 1 imm.	29 Dec	Along edge of Mababe Depression	CAB
1 male	29 Dec	Near Mababe Gate	CAB
1 ad, 1 imm	30 Dec	Between Khwai village and Chobe N.P.	CAB
1 imm	30 Dec	In 1924A east of new Mababe Gate	CAB
3 adults	30 Dec	Between Mababe village and Buffalo fence	CAB
1 female	31 Dec	Tsoe near Rakops	CAB

LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE *Aquila pomarina*

Reported as very common from 25 to 28 Feb 2009 at Mashatu in the Tuli Block (DS, SS).

Five were at Savuti Marsh on 28-29 Dec 2010 and two near Mababe Gate on 29 Dec (CAB).

STEPPE EAGLE *Aquila nipalensis*

One was seen at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 on 1 Dec (DH) and two were east of Mababe Gate in 1924A on 30 Dec (CAB).

BOOTED EAGLE *Hieraetus pennatus*

One was seen at Otse on 31 July (RB).

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

A pale morph, sub-adult was seen soaring near Hatsalatladi, 30 km N of Molepolole on 21 Nov (CAB).

AFRICAN MARSH-HARRIER *Circus ranivorus*

One at Max Seigel (1923A3) on 21 Nov (PH) and one at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec (CAB).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Singles were seen in: Chobe N.P. on 11 April (CV, DJ), on the Chobe River near Kasane in July (PL et al.), at Nata Sanctuary on 8 Sept, Moremi G.R. along Khwai road out of Xakanaxa in 1923A2 on 13 Sept (PN, RS) and along the Thamalakane River in Maun on 12 Jan 2011 (MM).

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

Two were seen in Kasane Forest Reserve Extension on 26 Dec (CAB).

AMUR FALCON *Falco amurensis*

Circa 20, presumably on southward migration, at Mokolodi on 13 Dec, five were at Kazuma Pan on 26 Dec and two at a termite emergence near Mababe Gate on 29 Dec (CAB).

EURASIAN HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Singles were at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 in 1825C2 on 1 Dec and near Pandamatenga village in 1825D1 on 10 Dec (DH). One was seen between Linyanti and Savuti on 28 Dec (CAB).

LESSER KESTREL *Falco naumanni*

Five were seen flying over Tachila Nature Reserve 2127D2 near Francistown on 13 Nov (CAB, MGG). Several were seen at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 in 1825C2 on 1 Dec and near Pandamatenga village in 1825D1 on 10 Dec (DH). Two were seen on the northern plains at Pandamatenga on 26 Dec and two at Savuti Marsh on 29 Dec (CAB).

BLACK HERON *Egretta ardesiaca*

One was seen at Mashatu on 25 Feb 2009 (DS, SS).

YELLOW-BILLED EGRET *Egretta intermedia*

Singles were seen on 25 Feb 2009 at Mashatu (DS, SS) and at Nata Sanctuary on 8 Sept 2009 (PN, RS).

In 2010, one was seen at pan between Sojwe and Dithopo on 12 June, five were at Sojwe Pan on 13 June and one at Bokaa Dam on 22 July and on 10 Oct (CAB). One was seen on 13 Nov at Motopi Pan water-hole in the CKGR ca. 40 km SE of Tsau Gate (SP).

SLATY EGRET *Egretta vinaceigula*

One was at Lake Ngami on 28 Aug (CAB). Three were seen near Dobetsaa Pan in Moremi G.R. on 12 Sept, one at S19.15 E23.22 and two at S19.15 E23.23 and two between Third Bridge and Second Bridge on 13 Sept at S19.15 E23.21 (PN, RS). Two were by the Chobe River west of Ngoma on 27 Dec (CAB).

LESSER FLAMINGO *Phoeniconaias minor*

Of note were one at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 18 July, 18 at Bokaa Dam on 22 July, an estimated 40000 at Nata Sanctuary on 24 Aug, 35 at Bokaa Dam on 10 Oct and nine at Lake Xau on 31 Dec (CAB). About 70 were seen regularly at Phakalane S.P. in early Nov (DD)

BLACK STORK *Ciconia nigra*

One was seen at Mashatu, Tuli Block on 15 Dec 2008 and on 26 Feb 2009 (DS, SS).

In 2010 one was seen at Otse on 23 July (RB), one on 6 May and 8 Aug at Mashatu in Tuli Block (DS, SS); notably seven at Nata Sanctuary on 24/25 Aug (CAB) and one at Coombe Farm on the Limpopo on 1 Oct (BLB).

WOOLLY-NECKED STORK *Ciconia episcopus*

Few records – two at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 on 14 Dec, five there on 21 Dec and three on 8 Jan 2011 (DH), a flock of ca. 80 at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec and two at a small pan by Mopane woodland in 1924A east of the new Mababe Gate on 30 Dec (CAB)

SADDLE-BILLED STORK *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

One was on Kazuma Pan on 25 Dec and ten at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec (CAB).

BOKMAKERIE *Telephorus zeylonus*

A pair was duetting at the base of Baratani Hill, Otse on 23 Nov (CAB).

STARK'S LARK *Eremalauda starki*

One was seen at Dautsa Flats on 29 Aug, in association with large numbers of Grey-backed Sparrowlark *Eremopterix verticalis* (CAB).

THRUSH NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia luscinia*

2009: Heard at a pond at Mashatu in the Tuli Block on 22 Feb (DS, SS).

BROWN-THROATED MARTIN *Riparia paludicola*

One was at Mabule on 20 July (CAB) and ca.20 at Gaborone G.R. on 1 Aug (BLB).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

One was at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 9 Dec (CAB).

VILLAGE WEAVER *Ploceus cucullatus*

A small breeding colony of ca. 20 birds was found at Bokaa Dam on 10 Oct; the colony was probably there previously, but overlooked (CAB).

CUCKOO FINCH *Anomalospiza imberbis*

A male was seen at Kazuma Pan on 25 Dec (CAB).

LONG-BILLED PIPIT *Anthus similis*

One was seen on 31 Oct singing from a low perch in an open stony area in the Lokgokgotho Hills, near Lekgolobotlo in open grassland (CAB).

BUSHVELD PIPIT *Anthus caffer*

Three were seen in *Faurea saligna* tree savanna on Lokgokgotho Hills near Lekgolobotlo on 31 Oct (CAB).

STREAKY-HEADED SEED-EATER *Serinus mennelli*

Four were seen in tree savanna in the Lokgokgotho Hills, near Lekgolobotlo on 31 Oct (CAB).

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Interesting & 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 May to December 2010.

SOUTH AFRICAN SHELDUCK *Tadorna cana*

19 at Jwaneng S.P. on 16 July (MGG, DG, HH), 14 at Ramotswa S.P. on 18 July and 22 at Bokaa Dam on 22 July (CAB) with from two to six at eight other sites in SE Botswana (Total 80); also a pair at Jwana Game Park on 7 Aug (PH).

EUROPEAN SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

One seen on 30 July at Gaborone Game Reserve (IW, RB, HH) was a presumed escape from a waterfowl collection; it was still present on 21 Sept (LS).

SOUTHERN POCHARD *Netta erythrophalama*

A total of only 267 birds were seen in the July counts with the largest number – 120 – at Bokaa Dam on 22nd. On 26 Sept there was a high count of 300 at Mogobane Dam (CAB).

GREATER HONEYGUIDE *Indicator indicator*

Two calling within 200 m of each other on 15 Sept at Crocodile Pools, Notwane (CAB).

BROAD-BILLED ROLLER *Eurystomus glaucurus*

One was seen at Tachila Nature Reserve 2127D2 at Francistown on 13 Nov (MGG).

BENNETT'S WOODPECKER *Campethra bennettii*

A pair was on a camelthorn *Acacia erioloba* tree north of Hatsalatladi on 21 Nov (CAB).

GIANT KINGFISHER *Megaceryle maxima*

More records from the Okavango Delta in July came from away from the regular site at Shakawe Lodge in the Panhandle. Six were seen near Shakawe but a further 15 came from the Okavango River/Phillipo channel and Jao downriver of Palm Island and one on the lower Boro between the Buffalo Fence and the Thamalakane junction (PH et al.). On 13 Sept one was seen at Xakanaxa Lediba (PN, RS). Two were seen in July and again on 31 Dec on the Chobe River between Kasane and Chobe Safari Lodge (PL et al., Deano).

BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER *Merops persicus*

15 were at Dzibenana Pan on 25 Dec (CAB).

GREY GO-AWAY BIRD (LOURIE) *Corythaixoides concolor*

Present 20 km south of Ghanzi, near Ghanzi - Gaborone road, outside of expected range in Aug 2010 (AK).

FIERY-NECKED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus pectoralis*

Heard on 28 Sept, 31 Oct and 28 Nov at Mogagabe Hill in 2425D4 (MGG).

RED-KNOBBED COOT *Fulica cristata*

During the AfWC counts in July only one was seen in the Okavango system – on the Boteti River near Samedupi (PH). In the southeast 1,287 were seen, highest counts being 740 at Bokaa Dam, 140 at Mogobane Dam and 250 at Sojwe Pan (CAB, MGG). In August there were 340 at Sojwe Pan (CAB). On 10 Oct an African Fish Eagle was observed catching one at Bokaa Dam (CAB).

NAMAQUA SANDGROUSE *Pterocles namaqua*

About 20 at pan between Sojwe and Dithopo on 12 June and small numbers at Khama R.S. on 27 June; also ca.20 with larger numbers of Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles burchelli* at Thagale Dam on 11 July; there has possibly been an influx of this species this year (CAB).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

A total of 269 were seen in the southeast in July - 10 at Gamoleele Dam and eight at Moshupa Dam on 16 July (MGG, DG, HH), a very high count of 225 at Bokaa Dam on 22 July (CAB), six at Mogobane Dam on 30 July (MGG) and >20 on Gaborone Dam on 30 July (IW, RB).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A significant count of 500 was made at Ramotswa S.P. on 18 July (CAB).

WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

One was seen at Mashatu on 15 July 2009, on 6 May 2010 and 8 Aug 2010 (DS, SS) and one along Limpopo River at Coombe Farm on 1 to 2 Oct (BLB).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Some 2,400 were at Lake Xau on 31 Dec (CAB).

GREATER PAINTED-SNIPE *Rostratula benghalensis*

One was at Mashatu on 15 July 2009 (DS, SS); six at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec 2010 (CAB).

WATTLED LAPWING

Two were at Coombe Farm on Limpopo River on 1 Oct and one along the Chobe River in July (PL et al.).

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Three were at Lake Xau on 31 Dec.

KITTLITZ'S PLOVER *Charadrius pecuarius*

There were 115 at Thagale Dam on 11 July (CAB).

THREE-BANDED PLOVER *Charadrius tricollaris*

78 were at Thagale Dam on 11 July (CAB)

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybrida*

There were 42 on 10 Oct at Bokaa Dam (CAB).

WHITE-BACKED VULTURE *Gyps africanus*

2010 records are given in the table below:

No.	Date	Location	Obs.
35	12 June	Diphthopo, roosting with other vultures	CAB
3 nests	26 / 27 June	5 km north of Khama RS in sandveld on isolated Camelthorns (see breeding records)	CAB
8 5 nests	1 Aug	In 6 km of Lesoma valley south of Kazungula	PL
20	24 Aug	Eastern shore of Sowa Pan near Nata Sanctuary at a carcass	CAB
25	26 Aug	Lion kill near Green's Baobab, south of Gweta	CAB
70	27 Aug	At donkey carcass at Rakops	CAB
1	6 Sept	On AI from Gaborone at S24.06 E26.16	PN, RS
1	6 Sept	Masukobale River N. Serule S 21.52 E 27.20 – 3 nests on electricity pylons and one in a riparian tree	PN, RS
3	7 Sept	Between Francistown and Nata at S 20.47 E 27.00	PN, RS
27	7 Sept	Botsash Conservation Area S20.32 E26.07	PN, RS
ca. 8	9 Sept	Between Nata and Maun at S20.08 E25.41	PN, RS
28	9 Sept	At a roadkill carcass of ?Caracal at S20.11 E24.08	PN, RS
65	9 Sept	At a roadkill carcass S20.10 E23.49	PN, RS
5	12 Sept	Near Xakanaka, Moremi G.R. S 19.11 E 23.25	PN, RS
1	12 Sept	Near Magwexhlana Pools, Moremi S 19.15 E 23.22	PN, RS
1	13 Sept	Between Xakanaxa and Khwai	PN, RS

No.	Date	Location	Obs.
Ca. 15	14 Sept	Between 2 nd and 3 rd Bridges S19.15 E23.21	PN, RS
32	25 Sept	Elephant Hill, Chobe N.P. in 1725C3	PL
1?	25 Sept	Chon Chobe N.P. near old Park Gate in 1725C3	PL
3	26 Sept	26 Between Francistown & Gaborone; one at ture S21.30 E27.24; one at S21.40 E27.21 and one at S21.44 E27.21	PN, RS
3	26 Sept	Between Francistown and Gaborone; S22.08 E27.15	PN, RS
8	26 Sept	At Between Francistown and Gaborone; S22.53 E26.55	PN, RS
27	1 Oct	Coombe Farm on R. Limpopo	BLB
15	3 Oct	Molose waterhole, Kutse G.R. with other vultures	DD
2	13 Nov	In Tachila Nature Reserve near Francistown	MGG
ca. 50	26 Dec	Kasane Forest Reserve extension on carcass with other vultures	CAB
ca. 35	27 Dec	West of Ngoma near Chobe River at kudu carcass	CAB
ca. 15	30 Dec	East of Mababe Gate in 1924A	CAB
10	31 Dec	Lake Xau	CAB

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

One was seen at Pandamatenga Farm Q50 homestead on 12 Dec (DH), three males over grassland near Rakops on 31 Dec and three near Lake Xau also on 31 Dec (CAB).

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Five were seen at Phakalane S.P. on 31 July (IW, RB).

GREATER FLAMINGO *Phoenicopterus roseus (ruber)*

There were 110 at Bokaa Dam on 22 July and 880 on 10 Oct (CAB); elsewhere in SE Botswana five were at Sojwe Pan on 13 June, one at Mabule Dam on 20 July, 39 at Phakalane S.P. on 31 July and 23 in Gaborone G.R. on 1 Aug (CAB, IW, RB). In the east 12 were at Shashe Dam on 29 Aug (NB et al.), 2,000 on Sowa Pan on 24/25 Aug and 18 at Lake Xau on 31 Dec (CAB).

GREAT WHITE PELICAN *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

There were 169 along the Chobe River in July between Kasane and Ngoma (PL et al.). Only three were seen at Nata Delta on 25 Aug (CAB); 26 were at Shashe Dam on 29 Aug (NB et al.). In the Okavango Delta seven were on the Boteti River between the Thamalakane confluence and Samedupi, one in the Jao area and eight between Xigera and Jao (PH et al.). About 300 were seen in Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec (CAB).

PINK-BACKED PELICAN *Pelecanus rufescens*

Ten were along the Chobe River in July (PH et al.), three were at Ikoga S18.50 E22.13 on 17 Sept (PN, RS) and nine at Savuti Marsh on 28 Dec (CAB).

MARABOU STORK *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

A flock of 76 was counted on Pandamatenga Farm Q50 on 14 Dec (DH). At Savuti Marsh CAB noted ca. 300 on 28 Dec.

AFRICAN OPENBILL *Anastomus lamelligerus*

One was at Gaborone Dam on 6 June (IW) and one at Thagale Dam on 11 July (CAB). Some 1,073 were on the Chobe floodplain in July (PL) and 1,166 were seen in the Okavango system (PH et al.).

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Over-wintering: One at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 18 July (CAB).

DUSKY LARK *Pinarocorys nigricans*

One was seen at Mashatu on 6 May (DS, SS).

GREY-BACKED SPARROWLARK *Eremopterix verticalis*

One was seen on 11 July at Thagale Dam (CAB). This lark is rare in SE Botswana.

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Some Early Dates of Some Migrants

Rufous-cheeked Nightjar *Caprimulgus rufuigena*: 20 September at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*: 25 September at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*: 29 September at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: several on 30 September at Machaneng

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: two at Coombe Farm along the Limpopo River on 1 Oct; this was an early date. This species has arrived early in southern Africa this year.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*: 5 October at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*: 6 October at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane – a particularly early date

Diderick Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*: 7 October at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*: 15 October at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*: Two along Limpopo River at Coombe Farm on 2 Oct (BLB).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: 17 October at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

European Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: 10 October at Bokaa Dam

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: 11 Nov at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*: 11 Nov at Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane

All early records were submitted by

Chris Brewster except for the Black Cuckooshrike record by BirdLife Botswana.



White-headed Vulture

Photo: Dian Derksen

Contributors of Records

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It is good to see some new observers sending in records and contributing to Tickbird, among them Dian Derksen in Gaborone and Dean Hatty at Pandamatenga.



Comb Duck

Photo : Lyn Francey

Some Breeding Records in 2010

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	11 July	Thagale Dam	pair of adults with 5 young, <10 days old	CAB
Egyptian Goose	22 July	Bokaa Dam	pair with 7 young, ca. 10 days old	CAB
Egyptian Goose	13 Sept	Mahalapye S.P.	Pair with 11 goslings	PD'A
Egyptian Goose	14 Sept	Near Third Bridge, Moremi	Pair with 6 goslings	PN, RS
Yellow-billed Duck <i>Anas undulate</i>	20 July	Kgoro Pan	2 adults + 6 young, ca. one month old	CAB
Red-billed Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	13 June	Sojwe Pan	Adult with 7 ducklings < 5 days old	CAB
Cape Shoveler <i>Anas smithii</i>	21 Aug	Sojwe Pan	1 adult + 3 ducklings, circa 1 week old	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	13 June	Sojwe Pan	Adult with 2 tiny young < 5 days old	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	22 July	Bokaa Dam	>10 active nests, all with adults sitting on nest; no young seen	CAB
Red-knobbed Coot	26 Sept	Mogobane Dam	ca. 12 juveniles, all < 4 wks. with numerous adults,	CAB
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	12 June	Between Sojwe and Dithopo	pair adults with 4 young, c 5 days old at a pan	CAB
Blacksmith Lapwing	14 Sept	Near Third Bridge	Pair with 3 small chicks	PN, RS
Wattled Lapwing <i>V. senegallus</i>	20 July	Lobatse sewage ponds	one pair was very noisily dive-bombing the observer; young were presumably present nearby	CAB
Chestnut-banded Plover <i>Charadrius pallidus</i>	24/25 Aug	Nata Sanctuary	Pair with 1 young ca. 1 week old	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover <i>C. pecuarius</i>	26 Sept	Mogobane Dam	Two pairs both with two young less than a week old.	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover	28 Dec	Savuti Marsh	Adult with one chick ca. 1 week old	CAB

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs
Three-banded Plover <i>C. tricoloris</i>	30 Oct	Phakalane S.P.	Small chick present	DD
Double-banded Courser <i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	7 Sept	Botash Conservation Area, Sowa Pan	Pair with small juvenile	PN, RS
Temminck's Courser <i>Cursorius temminckii</i>	6 Nov	Ca. 20km from Modipane towards Mochudi	Adult and ca 2 week old chick	DD
White-backed Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	26/27 June	5 km north of Khama Rhino Sanctuary	3 nests in isolated Camel-thorns <i>Acacia erioloba</i> ; 2 had young (1 small young seen on one nest and another presumed to have a chick); at the third nest incubation of egg(s) probable	CAB
White-backed Vulture	20 July	Nr Mokgomane between Kgoro and Phitsane Molopo	Four active nests on top of Camelthorn <i>Acacia erioloba</i> trees; adults sitting on nests	CAB
White-backed Vulture	20 July	Near Sedibeng between Kgoro & Phitsane Molopo	Four nests as above	CAB
White-backed Vulture	6 and 26 Sept	Nr. Masukobale River north of Serule	Nest at S21.45 E27.21 on pylon; 2+ other nests on pylons nearby and one in a tree by the river	PN, RS
White-backed Vulture	23 Oct	Eastern side of Sowa Pan, near Kokonje	Two nests, with one imm. on each nest, on tops of baobab trees	CAB
Wahlberg's Eagle	7 Nov	Mogonye	Adult on nest, presumably incubating, on top of <i>Acacia burkei</i>	CAB
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	13 June	Sojwe Pan	Adult with one young < 5 days old (more heard in reeds)	CAB
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	22 July	Bokaa Dam	a pair with 3 young and another pair with two young – both broods ca. 2 weeks old	CAB

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	22 July	Bokaa Dam	25 active nests, many with young	CAB
Hamerkop <i>Scopus umbretta</i>	13 Sept	From Xakanaxa to Khwai S19.13 E23.36	Three birds came out of nest in tree	PN, RS
Black-backed Puffback <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	20 Dec	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult feeding immature	CAB
Crimson-breasted Shrike <i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	18 Oct	Moeding College, Otse	Adult incubating in nest c3m above ground in cup made of bark and plastic in fork of exotic tree.	CAB
Pirit Batis <i>Batis pirit</i>	2/3 Oct	Khutse G.R.	Adult on nest with 2 eggs; nest in fork 1.2m from ground between trunk and branch of an <i>Acacia erioloba</i> tree.	DD
Black Cuckooshrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	Dec	Pandamatenga	Male pursuing a female with much calling (cricket-like) over several weeks; pair still present in garden	DH
Spike-heeled Lark <i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	31 Oct	Sita Pan, near Gasita	Pair adult with two small young, < 1 week old	IW
Red-capped Lark <i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	11 July	Thagale Dam	1 imm. ca.2-3 weeks old, being fed by adult. Egg-laying presumably in June	CAB
Southern Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>	30 Oct	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult incubating on nest on side of <i>Aloe marlothii</i> , c1.8m above ground	CAB
White-browed Scrub-Robin <i>Cercotrichas quadrivirgata</i>	19 Dec	Crocodile Pools, Ngotwane	Nest with 3 young, ca.5-7 days, feathers in pin, in a cup of dry grass in a tuft of long dry grass c.5 cm above the ground; well-concealed by some more dry grass bent over the top of it. Egg-laying must have been in late Nov, during a dry period.	CAB
Red-winged Starling <i>Onychognathus morio</i>	5 Nov	Moeding College, Otse	One young, circa 10 days old, being fed by adult, in nest under overhang off roof.	CAB

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs
Marico Sunbird <i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>	18 Dec	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	2 imms. begging from adult	CAB

Observers: CAB Chris Brewster; DD Dian Derksen, DH Dean Hatty; PD'A Peter D'Arcy; PN Pat Nurse; MS Mike Soroczynski; RS Robert Smith; IW Ian White

Compiled by Stephanie J. Tyler and Chris Brewster



Three-banded Plover chick
Photos: Dian Derksen



Temminck's Courser and chick
Photo: Dian Derksen



Adult and nest of Pririt Batis in Khutse G.R.
Photos: Dian Derksen

Some Publications Of Interest

Bamford, A.J., Monadjem, A. & Hardy, I.C.W. 2009. Nesting habitat preferences of the African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* and the effects of anthropogenic disturbance. *Ibis* 152: 51-62.

The authors aimed to quantify the factors determining nest site selection. They commented that loss of suitable habitat for foraging and breeding are among the most important causes of population declines. They used nest site data collected during aerial and ground surveys in Swaziland and habitat data derived from GIS to develop statistical models to estimate the probability of nest presence in relation to habitat characteristics. They tested these models against an independent data set.

Models predicted that direct and indirect disturbance by humans limit the potential distribution. They stress that suitable habitat needs to be identified and receive adequate protection from poaching (for use of vulture parts in traditional medicine).

They discuss the tendency of White-backed Vultures to nest colonially and to select tall trees in riparian habitats for nesting.

Gerkmann, B. & B.-U. Meyburg 2009. Habitats used by Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila pomarina*) during migration and wintering as revealed by Satellite tracking and remote sensing. *Population Ecology of Raptors and Owls* 6: 87–102.

PDF of full paper: http://www.raptor-research.de/pdfs/a_sp100p/a_sp151_PGE-06-087-102-Gerkmann&Meyburg-Schreiadler.pdf

Few data have been collected to date on the ecological conditions in the passage and wintering areas of the Lesser Spotted Eagle. A new instrument for automatic identification of stopover and migration satellite tracking data was used to gather information on habitat use in Africa during migration, stopovers and wintering. Satellite telemetry data from a German pair of Lesser Spotted Eagles was combined with satellite-supported information on land vegetation cover and other features.

L. Spotted Eagles make stopovers of various durations during migration. The present study differentiates stopovers from migration periods by calculating the daily flight distance covered and the distances flown and actually covered for three consecutive fixes. Three main habitat types were frequented, i.e. croplands (29 %), deciduous woodland (27 %) and deciduous shrubland with sparse trees (25 %).

In addition to habitat use, a study was also made to discover whether regional vegetation conditions and their seasonal changes influence the choice of stopover area. For this, NDVI data from the NOAA-AVHRR satellite platform were used.

Lesser Spotted Eagles sought areas where it had rained shortly beforehand. The more lush vegetation probably offers the birds more dietary resources (insects, amphibians). Five of the nine important stopover areas were within or bordering nature reserves.

This study serves as a pilot project and is intended to encourage evaluation in this way of further satellite telemetry Doppler/Argos locations. New data based on GPS systems are of particular interest as the time-consuming validation of data is unnecessary and therefore the fixes can be incorporated without further review.

Meyburg, B.-U. & Meyburg, C. 2009. Annual cycle, timing and speed of migration of a pair of Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila pomarina*) – a study by means of satellite telemetry. *Population Ecology of Raptors and Owls* 6: 63-85.

PDF of full paper: http://www.raptor-research.de/pdfs/a_sp100p/a_sp150_PGE-06-063-085-Meyburg-Schreiadler.pdf

A breeding pair of Lesser Spotted Eagles *Aquila pomarina* in Germany was each fitted with satellite transmitters and the information obtained from 3,641 locations was analysed.

Four autumn and two spring migrations were recorded in their entirety and one further autumn migration in part only. A pair travelled separately, the male wintering in Zambia and the female in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique, approximately 9,350 and 11,350 km distant from their nesting territory. The annual cycles of the two birds differed considerably. In 1998 the female spent 48 % of the year on migration, 43 % at the nest site and only 9 % in her winter quarters. The male spent 44 % in the breeding territory, 35 % on migration and 21 % at his wintering grounds. The length of time spent on migration varied between 52 and 119 days (mean 81 days).

For both birds the autumn migration was longer (74-119 days) than the spring migration (52-64 days). The speed while migrating varied during a single journey and from year to year. The fastest flying speed was achieved while crossing the Sahara desert. On average, the female always travelled more slowly than the male. For both birds, the greatest daily distance flown on all migrations was 521 km over northern Sudan. Cross-country speed was ranging between 50 and 60 km/h were calculated to be reached on eight out of 33 determinations. On one occasion, the cross-country speed was as great as 66.8 km/h.

Delayed spring migration, which in recent years has frequently led to the failure of many pairs to breed, also occurred with this pair. This phenomenon warrants further research because of its obvious impact upon breeding.

Meyburg, B.-U. & C. Meyburg, C. 2009. GPS satellite tracking of an adult Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*): home range during the breeding season, migration and wintering.

Population Ecology of Raptors and Owls 6: 243–284.

PDF of complete paper:

http://www.raptor-research.de/pdfs/a_sp100p/a_sp152_PGE-06-243-284-Meyburg-Schwarzmilan.pdf

An adult male Black Kite was studied over a period of two years (June 2007 - June 2009) using GPS satellite telemetry. Over 4,000 reliable GPS fixes from this time-frame were evaluated.

Breeding successfully in 2008, the bird spent 4 ½ months (36.4 % of the year) in the breeding territory, 5 ½ months in winter quarters (46.2 % of the year) and about one month each on autumn and spring migration (8.5 % and 8.9 % of the year) respectively.

Its home range during the complete 2008 reproduction period with breeding success, calculated on the basis of 821 reliable GPS fixes, covered an area of 365 km² (MCP 100 %) or 60.9 km² (MCP 95 %). Using the Kernel method home ranges of 121.24 km² (95 % Kernel) or 11.79 km² (75 % Kernel) were calculated. In 2008 the bird was located at distances up to 20.7 km from its nest. The size of the home range differed greatly in the individual months. Foraging was conducted most frequently on a stretch of river some 10 km long (upper reaches of the River Havel in Brandenburg).

The time spent by the male foraging for food increased continually from 05.00 hrs daily, reaching its climax at about 13.00 hrs. Overall the bird was on the move for some 60 % of the time between 08.00 and 16.00 hrs to search for food. In 2007, when breeding was unsuccessful, the bird extended its home range considerably in the nine day period before it left the breeding area on migration (up to 38 km from the nest site). The bird left the nest site 2 ½ weeks earlier than in 2008 when the brood was successful. Immediately after the loss of its offspring due to human disturbance, the male moved to the area of the nest which was occupied in the following year and which was 900 m away from the old eyrie. A month after the brood was lost the bird left the breeding territory. The home range size in this unsuccessful year covered an area of 417 km² (MCP 95 %).

Departure on migration was hesitant in both years. On both occasions migration picked up speed only at the end of August when the bird was in the state of Thuringia to the south. In the period before this it diverged from its actual direct migration route, 'fuelling up' in areas with a rich food supply. In 2008 the bird spent exactly five months in Germany.

If the time spent resting in Central Germany after leaving the breeding territory is disregarded, the Black Kite covered the distance on autumn migration more rapidly (2007 234 km/day, 2008 256 km/day) than on return in spring (215 km/day in spring

2008 and 191 km/day in spring 2009) . In this respect the bird flew at least as fast in both directions as somewhat larger species (Short-toed and Lesser Spotted Eagles). On 30 March the male covered the longest recorded daily flight distance of 663 km. It began its migration flight before sunrise. Its average speed between 08.00 and 14.00 hrs was 86 km/h. The highest recorded average flight speed in the course of a single hour was 89 km/h over Morocco.

The bird reached its wintering area, which both 2007 and 2008 encompassed a rather large part of West Africa, on 15 September in both years. It divided up its wintering into three zones (A, B and C) which it visited consecutively and which were approximately 1,075 and 780 km apart respectively. The size of these zones was 54,430 - 88,403 km² (MCP 95%, zone A), 39,752 - 48,188 km² (B) and 7,955 - 16,339 km² (C). The male seldom used the same night roost on two consecutive nights. On average the distance between consecutive night roosts was 31 - 42 km. In 2007/2008 the Black Kite covered a distance of at least 14,000 km within its wintering area. The large size and temporal consistency of the three wintering areas is particularly striking. It is assumed that prevailing climatic conditions were responsible for movement between the three areas.

Meyburg, B.-U., Ziesemer, F., Martens, H.D. & Meyburg, C. 2010. On the biology of the Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) - Results of Satellite Tracking. 7th International Symposium "Population Ecology of Raptors and Owls", Halberstadt, Germany, 21.-24.10.2010: Poster with all figures: http://www.raptorresearch.de/pdfs/a_sp100p/a_sp148_Meyburg_2010_Honey_Buzzard.pdf

European Honey Buzzards are long distance migrants. Little is known about the migration of German breeding birds. Many questions can be answered with the help of satellite telemetry, using state-of-the-art GPS transmitters, which were available to us from 2009. These included questions on habitat use, home range size and flight height and speed etc.

In the time frame 2001 to 2010 we fitted nine adult German Honey Buzzards (six males and three females), primarily in Schleswig-Holstein, with solar cell powered satellite transmitters (PTTs), of various types and producers, weighing 18-22 g. Ten transmitters were used. In the last two years three male birds were fitted with GPS transmitters, in 2010 one of these birds with a 3-D transmitter, which also transmits data on flight height, speed and direction. The 2-D transmitters used in 2009 transmitted only GPS fixes but no other data. A female was caught again after three years and fitted with a new transmitter. A male was also retrapped after two years but the transmitter was not replaced as it was still in good working order.

Signal transmission lasted up to three years. With the exception of the last fitted transmitter with GPS location data was transmitted almost only during migration.

Outside migration periods the birds probably remained in vegetation that was too dense to allow the transmitters to be adequately recharged.

We were able to record up to six complete autumn and spring migration routes of individual birds. There is no previous description in the relevant literature of pre-nuptial migration of European Honey Buzzards fitted with satellite transmitters. For two of the years both members of a pair could be studied. They migrated separately and wintered far away from each other. All birds migrated to West Africa.

The second longest migration route was taken by a male with transmitter No. 57029 that flew 7,612 km as far as Gabon. It covered on average 167 km daily. With the exception of male No. 52033 it is the only Honey Buzzard to date that has crossed the Equator. Data on flight height and speed became available for the first time on autumn migration 2010 (for male No. 52033). It reached its highest flight altitude over the Sahara at 1,703 m ASL at a flight speed of 60 kph. The fastest flight speeds (72 und 76 kph) were also recorded here. Speeds of between 60 and 70 kph were recorded on seven occasions. The Honey Buzzard spent the night of 10/11 September at a height of 1750 m ASL in the Pyrenees.

Two birds perished on migration while crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean respectively.

In so far as the birds could be tracked as far as their wintering area, four Honey Buzzards spent the winter in Nigeria and one each in Gabon, Guinea, Cameroon, the Congo and Liberia. Male No. 52033 wintered furthest south (2°22'S/ 12°42') in Congo (Brazzaville). Of the birds that were tracked more than once as far as their winter quarters it was established that they returned to the same areas. The home range size in the wintering area was determined for the first time with the assistance of GPS telemetry.

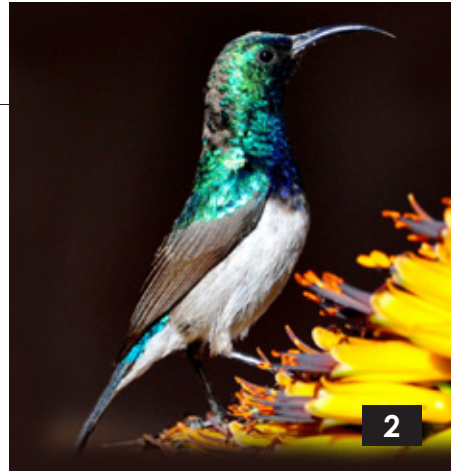
The main diet is the larvae of ground-dwelling wasps. They build their nests above all in woodland, but also in countryside border structures (hedges, woodland fringes, waysides etc.), and to a lesser extent in open areas. The GPS fixes were accurate enough to enable the dug-out wasps' nest to be found in some cases. The core area of foraging can change in the course of the breeding season. Male No. 95770 for instance daily sought out a piece of woodland 17 ha in size from 12 to 25 August 2009 but in the preceding period from 19 July to 11 August not at all. We found three exploited wasps' nests there.

The birds sometimes spent the night in their foraging areas in close proximity to the wasps' nests found, which had probably not yet been completely exploited. The home ranges of neighbouring pairs overlap to a great extent and aerial territorial conflicts are common. They help patient observers to determine the distribution of territories.



Southern Red Bishop
Photographer Joao Padhila





*Recent good pictures
from our Flickr website
depicting “Birds of
Botswana” <http://www.flickr.com/group/blb/pool>*

1. *African Wattled Lapwing*
2. *White - bellied Sunbird*
3. *African Pygmy - Goose*
4. *Diderick Cuckoo*
5. *Golden-tailed Woodpecker*

*Photographer:
Ian White*





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