

Editorial

Well, here is another edition of Babbler. I thought I had relinquished the post of editor last year but it seems nobody has come forward to take over from me so I will keep going until they do.

It was heartening to read a report in July 2019 from Birdwatch Zambia on a survey of Slaty Egrets in the Barotse floodplain. When we held a workshop to produce a Slaty Egret Action Plan in Maun all those years ago I had naively thought that it would lead to further studies of the species throughout its range. Botswana holds the largest population but birds occur in good numbers in Zambia as well as in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Sadly lack of funding has meant that many of the actions we included in the plan have not come to fruition. So I give full marks to Chaona Phiri and Clara Nanja for their study in Zambia and for raising awareness about the species. They recorded 31 birds, mainly in floodplain grasslands along the Zambezi in the Liuwa National Park but found no evidence of breeding.

From afar I keep up with news from Botswana and am greatly saddened at the plight of vultures in the country but congratulate BirdLife Botswana on all it is doing to reverse the downward trend and to try to stop the horrific incidents of poisoning.

This issue includes several articles by Chris Brewster, a faithful contributor. One documents the low numbers of birds in the Artesia area in the dry conditions there whilst another describes the highlights of monitoring birds at Sita Pan. He has also produced a note on the status of Southern Fiscal in south-east Botswana. David Ewbank analyses his old records of birds at termite emergences in Zimbabwe. Such emergences attract many birds and provide a wonderful spectacle. Ian White writes on an extension in range of Short-clawed Larks and I have summarised results from waterbird counts over the last two years. These are biased towards south-east Botswana as coverage in the Okavango and Makgadikgadi is sadly, almost non-existent.

There are the usual Records Sections and also some summaries of papers of relevance to birds in Botswana. Harold Hester has written a review of Ken and Mel Oake's wonderful book and another book well worth acquiring is Pete Hancock's new publication on the Makgadikgadi Pans.

I thank Doreen McColaugh for editing this issue and Harold Hester for sorting photos and seeing it through publication.

Stephanie Tyler (Editor)

Low numbers of common bird species in dry conditions east of Artesia, south-eastern Botswana

Chris A. Brewster

On 11 August 2019 the Artesia area was visited to do some birding. The area visited was east of Artesia from Matlakhari Hill, at about 24° 3' S 26° 24' E, eastwards to a dry pan in a depression at about 24° 3' S 26° 31' E. The vegetation of the area is poorly developed mixed broad-leaved and acacia tree savanna, though around Matlakhari Hill, which rises some 200 metres above the plain, trees are more developed. The area close to the Ngotwane River, where water is available and where trees are also more developed, was not visited. There are several cattle posts, some with boreholes supplying water, in the area, but no cultivation. The area was overgrazed with very little or no ground cover; it appeared there had been little rainfall during the previous summer. Except for scattered *Boscia foetida* and *Boscia albitrunca*, which were in leaf and just coming into flower, the trees were bare of leaves and flowers. Reference is also made, where relevant, to two other visits on 8 and 15 September 2019 to similar areas of dry savanna and woodland, further east towards Olifant's Drift, in quarter degree squares 2426B1 and 2426B3.

About seven hours were spent birding in the area on 11 August and a total of another 11 hours were spent on 8 and 15 September, further east towards Olifant's Drift. Soon after arriving, it was apparent that bird numbers were low and also that there was low species variety. A total of 30 species were recorded in seven hours on 11 August, which was lower than expected, considering the time spent in the field. Some species, which typically occur fairly commonly in similar habitat in south-east Botswana, were either unrecorded or recorded in only small numbers.

Non-passerines

Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola*, Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* and Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* are all considered to be common species in the area (Penry 1994) but on 11 August only three Cape Turtle Doves *Streptopelia capicola* and three Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* were recorded, and no Namaqua Doves were recorded at all. The apparent absence of Namaqua Dove, and the lack of Cape Turtle Doves, was likely to be due a shortage of food, primarily seeds. The two species had presumably moved out of the area. Emerald-spotted Dove has a more localised distribution in Botswana than the other two species, being confined to the north and the east; it is likely to be more sedentary, but the lack of records on this visit, suggested that this species may possibly also have partially moved out of the area. No

Laughing Doves *Streptopelia senegalensis* were recorded, but this was not so unexpected, as it does not appear to occur so commonly in savanna as the other three species.

No mousebirds *Coliidae* were recorded on 11 August, though a couple of groups were recorded eastwards towards Olifant's Drift. Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* is considered to be common in the area (Penry 1994). Red-faced Mousebird feeds primarily on fruits and the relative lack of records from the area was probably due to the lack of its preferred food due to the dry conditions.

The only hornbills *Bucerotidae* seen on 11 August were a pair of Southern Red-billed Hornbills *Tockus rufirostris*, with African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus* and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas*, both of which Penry (1994) consider to be common in the area, unrecorded. The relative lack of hornbills was surprising but it suggests that hornbills may undertake some movements in response to dry conditions.

Passerines

Passerines numbers were low and there was relatively low species variety. Some passerine species, like Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*, Crimson-breasted Shrike *Laniarius atrococcineus*, Sabota Lark *Calendulauda sabota*, Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescans*, Barred Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes fasciolatus*, Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis*, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler *Sylvia subcaerulea*, White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* and Marico Flycatcher *Bradornis mariquensis*, were recorded in small numbers. The passerine species that were recorded are likely to be the more hardy species that are most likely to be sedentary.

No Fork-tailed Drongos *Dicrurus adsimilis*, a common species in south-eastern Botswana which is difficult to overlook, were recorded on 11 August. Fork-tailed Drongo is not a species known to undertake movements (Oatley 1997), but the lack of records indicates that it may do so, at least of a local nature. During subsequent visits in September to other areas of dry savanna and woodland, a bit further east towards Olifant's Drift, a few Fork-tailed Drongos were seen. It was noticeable that these few Fork-tailed Drongos were mainly seen at cattle posts, where, due to the presence of livestock, some insect prey was presumably available.

Cisticolas and allies *Cisticolidae* were not much in evidence. No Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* were recorded, despite being considered by Penry (1994) to be a common to very common resident in the east of the country. The apparent absence of Rattling Cisticola indicated that it may have vacated the area. Only one pair of Black-chested Prinia *Prinia flavicans* was recorded on 11 August. Black-chested Prinia is considered to be common and resident (Penry 1994) so the relative lack of records was surprising. No Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*, a species that appears

to undertake movements as it is more evident in winter, than in summer, in south-eastern Botswana, were recorded.

Sunbirds *Nectariniidae* were scarce, with only two Marico Sunbirds *Cinnyris mariquensis* and a single White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* seen on 11 August. Sunbirds are generally very mobile, moving in response to the availability of flowering plants. Apart from a single *Boscia albitrunca* which was seen in blossom, no other trees had started to blossom, so, as expected, few sunbirds were seen.

There was a very noticeable lack of seed-eating birds in the area. For the seed-eating passerines, sparrows *Passeriidae*, weavers and widowbirds *Ploceidae*, waxbills and allies *Estrildidae*, indigobirds and whydahs *Viduidae*, canaries *Fringillidae* and buntings *Embirizidae*, the only birds noted on 11 August were a single Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffuses*, two groups of Scaly-feathered Finch *Sporopipes squamifrons* and a pair of Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*. That there were no Southern Masked Weavers *Ploceus velatus*, a very widespread and common species in south-eastern Botswana, no waxbills and no canaries was particularly notable.

The absence of Southern Masked Weavers in the area to the east of Artesia and its absence too on subsequent visits to similar areas of savanna and woodland eastwards towards Olifant's Drift, clearly indicates that this species undertakes movements in dry conditions. Towards Olifant Drift a few Southern Grey-headed Sparrows were seen, but all were at cattle posts, which appeared to provide some feeding and water for this species.

Scaly-feathered Finch is a common to very common resident in eastern Botswana (Penry 1994). Only two groups of this species were seen east of Artesia and towards Olifant's Drift only one group was seen in a total of 11 hours birding. Most unexpectedly these latter birds were seen within a farmer's yard at a cattle post feeding on food put out for chickens. That so few were recorded, and that birds resorted to feeding in a farmer's yard, points to the lack of available food for this species when conditions are very dry, necessitating the species to vacate areas, at least partially.

Blue Waxbills *Uraeginthus angolensis* are common in south-eastern Botswana but numbers fluctuate greatly in response to prevailing conditions and when conditions become very dry the species can largely if not entirely vacate parts of south-eastern Botswana. It was, therefore, not surprising that none was recorded. Violet-eared Waxbill *Uraeginthis garanatinus* is a hardy species, not dependent on water, and much less susceptible to movement than Blue Waxbill. It was expected to be recorded in the area, particularly as it appeared to be more evident in south-eastern Botswana in the 2019 dry

season than at other times, so the lack of records was surprising and presumably due to the very dry conditions.

Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* and Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* are fairly common in the area in summer, when males in breeding plumage are noticeable. When in non-breeding plumage they are less noticeable but, nevertheless, can be usually be located when seen coming to drink at water. These two species of whydah fluctuate in numbers more noticeably than most other seed-eaters and appear to largely vacate south-eastern Botswana in the dry season in most years. The absence from the area on this visit was therefore not unexpected.

Both Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis* and, to a lesser extent, Yellow Canary *Crithagra flaviventris* were expected in the area. That they were unrecorded suggests that they undertake movements in response to dry conditions. Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* is considered by Penry (1994) to be common in south-eastern Botswana and was expected to occur in the habitats visited. None was recorded east of Artesia. Towards Olifant's Drift, however, the species was recorded once in broad-leaved woodland, but it was noticeable that at this locality, being several kilometres away from any cattle post, over-grazing was not so evident as elsewhere and there was some ground cover. That there was only one record of this species indicates that it may have largely vacated the area due to the dry, over-grazed conditions.

Conclusion

Botswana is a largely arid country in which rainfall fluctuates greatly from year to year. Particularly in the drier parts of the country, populations of many common species fluctuate greatly in response to the availability of food resulting from variations in rainfall.

Birds apparently become less numerous in savanna in southern Botswana in dry conditions, especially when there is overgrazing and the ground is bare. The relative lack of birds recorded east of Artesia and also towards Olifant's Drift on these visits is an example of the low numbers of birds present in southern Botswana in this habitat when dry and overgrazed. In such conditions there is presumably little to eat, particularly for seed-eating bird species, and the shortage of food apparently results in many species partially, or wholly, vacating areas of savanna.

The areas visited had no cultivation, but a number of cattle posts, generally with boreholes that provided water, were present. It was noticeable that these cattle posts were attractive to birds and that more birds were to be seen at these cattle posts than elsewhere in savanna and woodland. While the availability of water certainly did attract birds, it was clear that more feeding, due to the presence of livestock, was available at these cattle posts compared to in savanna and woodland. When conditions in savanna and woodland are better, due to lack of grazing pressure and more rainfall, it is clearly evident that many

more birds and a greater range of species come to drink water at cattle posts than were doing so in this area in August and September 2019.

These fluctuations in the numbers of common species are a source of interest when looking at birds. A lot can be learnt, both of fluctuations in bird numbers and of long-term trends, by monitoring bird the populations of our common bird species. Even when there are relatively few birds to be seen, as is the case in dry conditions, there can still be plenty of birding interest.

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

Bird Population Monitoring: Sita Pan

Chris A. Brewster

Introduction

Bird Population Monitoring has been organised by BirdLife Botswana and undertaken by a large number of participants since 2010. One locality, where bird population monitoring has been undertaken, is at Sita Pan in Southern District, 65 km south of Jwaneng. Monitoring has been undertaken there since November 2012. The data from this transect are presented and the results discussed.

Method

Bird monitoring is undertaken twice a year in November and in February. Birds are counted at 11 points, approximately 200 metres apart, along a transect which is around 2 km long. At each point all birds seen or heard during a period of five minutes are recorded. Waterbirds, if encountered, are not included in the count. Monitoring of the transect at Sita Pan was undertaken by on foot, walking from east to west. Monitoring commenced before 06h00 in November and before 06h30 in February in an effort to maximize the numbers of birds recorded. Birds are in general most active within two or three hours of sunrise, particularly in hot and dry conditions. November counts were generally undertaken in the second half of November in an effort to include in the count late arriving palaeartic migrants.

Habitat

The transect monitored was along a little used vehicle track through two habitats that are characteristic of the Kalahari. The first seven points of the transect were in Kalahari bush savanna east of Sita Pan with scattered patches of acacias, while from points 8 to 11 the transect passed along the edge of Sita Pan, with the short grassland of the pan on the left and the bush and shrub savanna of the apron of the pan on the right. Nearly 20 % of the transect, therefore, was short open grassland. There was substantial clump of *Acacia mellifera* at point 8 and a tall *Ziziphus mucronata* at point 11 of the transect. In Kalahari bush savanna, soils are sandy but Sita Pan is saline, with the centre of the pan, which was not part of the transect, devoid of vegetation. There are some cattle-posts not far from the pan, so cattle were generally much in evidence. The veld was generally overgrazed and this was always particularly evident in November. Small numbers of Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus*, Red Hartebeeste *Alcelaphus buselaphus* and Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* were often seen on or in the vicinity of Sita Pan in the early morning, especially when there was water at the pan.

Table showing numbers of birds of different species recorded on all transect counts

Species	Summer		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		Total
	Month	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F	N	F		
Common Ostrich <i>Struthio camelus</i>	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	3	2	3	5	5	2	-	25		
Helmeted Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	3	-	-	-	10	10	4	44		
Orange River Francolin <i>Scleroptila gutturalis</i>	3	-	-	1	2	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	10		
Crested Francolin <i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>	4	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	2	-	1	3	2	1	18		
Swainson's Spurfowl <i>Pternistes swainsonii</i>	2	3	1	2	3	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	1	2	18		
Red-crested Korhaan <i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>	6	6	3	4	9	2	1	4	4	2	1	3	2	3	50		
Northern Black Korhaan <i>Afrotis afraoides</i>	-	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	27		
Spotted Thick-knee <i>Burhinus capensis</i>	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	3	-	10		
Crowned Lapwing <i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	10	9	1	10	8	4	2	6	12	8	2	9	14	20	115		
Double-banded Courser <i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	2	1	2	-	1	5	1	4	2	1	3	1	3	2	28		
Burchell's Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles burchelli</i>	-	5	-	-	-	71	-	8	1	1	3	2	9	2	102		
Cape Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	18	12	18	16	20	8	13	19	16	25	5	27	31	41	269		
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	2	14	1	2	-	-	23		
Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>	4	-	-	2	1	56	11	31	23	17	2	-	2	2	151		
Grey Go-away-bird <i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	4		
Jacobin Cuckoo <i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	6		
Diederik Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1	-	-	4	2	-	-	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	15		
Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	3	30	-	2	-	8	-	53		
Red-faced Mousebird <i>Urocolius indicus</i>	3	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	20		
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	-	1	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	28		
Common Scimitarbill <i>Rhinipomastus cyanomelas</i>	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	7		
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill <i>Tockus leucomelas</i>	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	-	1	-	4	13		
Acacia Pied Barbet <i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	6		
Pirrit Batis <i>Batis pririt</i>	-	4	2	-	5	5	2	3	2	6	4	-	1	-	34		
Brown-crowned Tchagra <i>Tchagra australis</i>	2	2	1	2	6	2	1	1	1	4	4	2	1	2	31		
Crimson-breasted Shrike <i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>	1	1	3	-	5	4	2	4	7	1	9	7	6	3	53		
Brubru <i>Nilaa afer</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	5		

Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	8	9	-	19	17	17	1	24	32	29	5	6	1	5	173
Lesser Grey Shrike <i>Lanius minor</i>	-	3	-	3	2	3	1	11	2	9	1	6	-	3	44
Southern Fiscal <i>Lanius collaris</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Fork-tailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	1	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	10
Pied Crow <i>Corvus albus</i>	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	9
Ashy Tit <i>Parus cinerascens</i>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	8
Cape Penduline-tit <i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	4
Spike-heeled Lark <i>Chersomanes albobasiciata</i>	1	3	3	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	3	1	-	1	15
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark <i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	-	-	2	3	2	15
Sabota Lark <i>Calendulauda sabota</i>	4	7	8	9	16	4	5	10	12	6	9	1	5	4	100
Fawn-coloured Lark <i>Calendulauda africanoides</i>	13	10	-	9	6	5	2	15	10	10	5	12	5	2	104
Red-capped Lark <i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	4	2	2	2	2	6	-	4	1	1	3	1	3	1	32
African Red-eyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	9
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	7	1	6	1	8	7	4	4	-	-	4	1	9	7	59
Long-billed Crombec <i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	-	2	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	1	12
Olive-tree Warbler <i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	7
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Rattling Cisticola <i>Cisticola chiniana</i>	4	10	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	19
Desert Cisticola <i>Cisticola aridulus</i>	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	8
Black-chested Prinia <i>Prinia flavicans</i>	7	12	9	7	17	11	8	23	24	15	19	21	28	19	220
Barred Wren-Warbler <i>Calamanastes fasciolatus</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	4
Yellow-bellied Eremomela <i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	8
Southern Pied Babbler <i>Turdoides bicolor</i>	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	-	3	2	4	2	-	-	19
Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler <i>Sylvia subcaerulea</i>	9	3	3	6	6	3	3	8	11	8	14	10	11	12	107
Wattled Starling <i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	-	69	-	20	7	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	107
Cape Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	-	1	7
Red-billed Oxpecker <i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	-	-	-	-	1	3	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	11
Kalahari Scrub Robin <i>Cercotrichas paeana</i>	16	24	5	20	17	13	15	19	23	21	25	17	28	23	266
Marico Flycatcher <i>Bradornis mariquensis</i>	2	1	2	-	1	7	4	-	4	5	3	2	6	4	41
Ant-eating Chat <i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>	2	4	7	-	1	-	-	1	3	1	-	2	2	2	25

Capped Wheatear <i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	-	4	3	-	2	22
Marico Sunbird <i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	7
Scaly-feathered Finch <i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>	13	16	-	5	11	46	6	9	21	87	46	37	39	23	359
Southern Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	-	-	-	-	1	14
Red-billed Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	-	-	-	-	75	-	-	-	2	-	8	-	-	-	85
Red-headed Finch <i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	8
Violet-eared Waxbill <i>Uraeginthus granatinus</i>	2	2	3	1	6	2	2	-	4	4	5	1	2	1	35
Shaft-tailed Whydah <i>Vidua regia</i>	4	1	-	1	2	3	1	2	11	2	2	32	-	-	61
African Pipit <i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	1	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	12
Yellow Canary <i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	1	13	2	2	3	7	7	7	16	5	13	8	15	14	113
TOTAL OF ALL SPECIES	16	26	10	17	30	32	10	21	34	36	23	25	27	24	
	7	7	1	6	8	3	5	7	2	1	7	1	7	5	

Results

The results are presented in the table. However, in order that the table is not too lengthy, bird species which were recorded on only one or two dates are not included; these species are discussed separately. The numbers of birds recorded varied greatly on different dates. This variation was often a result of differing weather conditions. In dry or windy conditions, birds are less vocal, so fewer birds were recorded. Wet conditions typically result in an influx of birds and birds are more vocal, so numbers of birds recorded are higher. The counts in November 2015 and in February 2017 are examples of such variation. In November 2015, though rain had recently fallen, all bushes and trees were devoid of leaves and there was a cold southerly wind resulting in few birds recorded. In February 2017, following a period of above average rainfall, high numbers of birds were recorded with a noticeable influx of some species. The summer of 2016-2017 had well above average rainfall. On the other hand the summers of 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 had below average rainfall.

The numbers recorded of some species varied greatly between counts while for some other species numbers recorded did not vary greatly. Such variations, or lack of variation, are discussed. Difficulties in monitoring particular species are also discussed.

Very common species

The six most numerous species recorded on the transect, in order of number of birds recorded, were Scaly-feathered Finch, Cape Turtle Dove, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Black-chested Prinia, Red-backed Shrike and Namaqua Dove.

The most numerous species, Scaly-feathered Finch, calls frequently and is visible, so was not easily overlooked. Numbers of this species recorded varied greatly, with very few recorded in the 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 summers, but no less than 87 recorded in February 2016, in a summer with well above average rainfall. It is evident, from the variation in numbers recorded, that this species undertakes movements in response to prevailing conditions. According to Herremans (1997) substantial nomadism is indicated for this species.

Following Scaly-feathered Finch, the next most numerous species were Cape Turtle Dove and Kalahari Scrub Robin with very similar numbers of each species recorded. Kalahari Scrub Robin is often located when perched prominently in song, or is otherwise vocal, so when it is silent, it can be overlooked. Nevertheless numbers recorded of this species did not vary greatly, with the lowest number recorded being in November 2013 when it was probably not vocal, due to the cold and windy conditions. It was presumed that this species is sedentary.

Cape Turtle Doves call frequently and are visible, so were probably not overlooked. The numbers recorded showed noticeable variation, indicating that this species probably undertakes movements. It seems likely such movements are related to the availability of grass seeds on which it feeds. Large scale movements do certainly occur in southern Botswana, as the species has been noted (personal observation) to vacate areas almost entirely in dry conditions. Indeed, on this transect few were recorded in February 2015 and November 2017, when conditions were dry.

Black-chested Prinia is a diminutive species that is often recorded when it is heard calling. Due to its small size and habit of foraging low down, it can be overlooked when not calling. There was some variation in numbers recorded but it is probable that this variation is due to a variation in the proportion of birds present that were recorded.

Red-backed Shrike is a palaeartic migrant recorded in greatly varying numbers. When perching prominently, as males, in particular, tend to do so, it is not easily overlooked. However, when perched within vegetation it is not easily seen and the only indication of its presence is often a quiet 'chack' call from behind bushes or within vegetation. Some birds accordingly were probably overlooked. There was a large variation in the numbers recorded in November. This variation is likely to be related to the date of arrival of this species at Sita Pan. Red-backed Shrike does not generally arrive in Botswana until mid to late November (Herremans 1997) and it was evident that in 2013, 2015 and 2018, the November transect count was undertaken before the species had arrived. In 2018, in very dry conditions, the species did not arrive in southern Botswana until December. Conversely, in November 2016, when there was a high count of 32 birds, numbers were probably augmented by birds on passage. Counts in February were also variable, with low numbers being recorded in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 summers, indicating that

numbers at Sita Pan varied from year. While site fidelity in southern Africa has been shown (Herremans 1997), it appears, as numbers varied at Sita Pan, that this is not always the case. Its preferred habitat is medium dense thornveld, with males showing a preference for more open habitats, with fewer and smaller trees, while females prefer skulk in taller woodland (Herremans 1997). The habitat at Sita Pan is therefore not prime habitat for this species, particularly as a proportion of the transect is grassland, but, nevertheless, Red-backed Shrikes were often very common on the transect.

Though it calls only weakly and infrequently, Namaqua Dove is a visible species, so it was probably not overlooked. Numbers recorded varied greatly, probably varying more than any other species, with often very few or no birds recorded, but in February 2015, in February 2016 and in the 2016 – 2017 summer it was common. It clearly moved in and out of the area, and the reasons for these apparently large scale movements, though presumably related to rainfall and the availability of grass seed, are not wholly clear.

Common, or regularly recorded, species

Crowned Lapwing, Sabota Lark, Fawn-coloured Lark, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler and Yellow Canary were all regularly recorded and were apparently common residents. A few other species were recorded regularly, though in smaller numbers. These species included Pirit Batis, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Marico Flycatcher and Violet-eared Waxbill.

Crowned Lapwing is a noisy and conspicuous species and cannot be easily overlooked. It occurred mainly on the open grassland of Sita Pan, but also in open areas in Kalahari bush savanna. Numbers recorded did not vary greatly, so there was no evidence of this species undertaking movements.

Brown-crowned Tchagra and Pirit Batis were regularly recorded in small numbers. As these species are vocal and visible, they were not likely to be greatly overlooked. There was not a great variation in numbers and both species were presumed to be sedentary. Crimson-breasted Shrike was a bit more numerous than the previous two species and showed a greater variation in numbers recorded. This species was generally recorded in the vicinity of acacia thickets, where it could be inconspicuous and accordingly overlooked, if not heard calling. The variation in numbers is probably a function of the extent that it was overlooked and it was presumed to be resident.

Lesser Grey Shrike is a palaeartic migrant. As it perches conspicuously it is likely that few birds were overlooked. Noticeably less numerous than Red-backed Shrike, the numbers recorded were variable, with the greatest numbers recorded in the 2015-2016 summer, a wet year, with the lowest numbers recorded being in dry summers, indicating that numbers

of this species vary from year to year. It was generally more numerous in February than in November, when in some years it was unrecorded. The lack of records November 2012, 2013 and 2018 is presumed, as was also the case with Red-backed Shrike, to be due to its late arrival from its palaeartic breeding grounds.

The two common lark species, Fawn-coloured Lark and Sabota Lark, both ground dwelling species, both occurred in Kalahari bush savanna but not in the open grassland at Sita Pan. Fawn-coloured Lark was generally only recorded when it was in song perched on a bush, so if it was silent, as was often the case in dry periods, it was easily overlooked. Sabota Lark, however, was more visible, as even when not in song it had the tendency to fly to the top of a bush when disturbed. Nevertheless, some Sabota Larks were presumably overlooked. Though the numbers recorded of both species varied, it is likely that both species were resident.

Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler and Yellow Canary were both common and presumed to be resident, with no great variation in numbers. Both species are visible and vocal and it is likely that relatively few birds were overlooked. Marico Flycatcher, a species that perches prominently and unlikely to be overlooked, was recorded in smaller numbers than the first two species and was also presumed to be resident. The first indication of the presence of Violet-eared Waxbill, an inconspicuous species, is often its call. While probably easily overlooked, this species was regularly recorded in small numbers and was presumed to be resident.

Helmeted Guineafowl, francolins, spurfowl and korhaans

Helmeted Guineafowl was only recorded erratically. This species is difficult to monitor as, unless a group is flushed, the only indication of its presence is often the occasional sound of a bird calling. It can be present, but overlooked, if it is neither flushed or heard calling. The numbers recorded may not therefore be a true indication of the numbers of birds present.

Nearly all records of francolins and spurfowl were of birds calling. Crested Francolins and Swainson's Spurfowls call more readily in wet periods than in hot, dry periods. The variation in numbers is probably due to variation in numbers of birds calling. It is likely that both species were fairly common residents. These two species are both largely absent from the Kalahari (Penry 1994) but, nevertheless, do occur in the vicinity of Sita Pan at the edge of their distributional range. Orange River Francolin, a species that is widespread in the Kalahari, is a difficult species to see, as it does not easily flush, and also to hear calling, as it only calls infrequently, most usually on still or damp mornings, so this species is easily overlooked. All records of Orange River Francolin were of birds heard calling. The species was recorded irregularly and appeared to be uncommon. The records of Orange River Francolin have declined from 2012 to 2019 and, notably, there were no records in the wet 2016-2017 summer, when it was expected that it would be heard calling, so this

species has possibly declined in the area during the period that transect counts have been undertaken.

All Red-crested Korhaan records were of birds calling. Like Crested Francolin and Swainson's Spurfowl, this korhaan calls more readily in still, wet conditions than in hot, dry conditions, so it is likely that a greater proportion of birds are overlooked in these conditions. It was presumed to be a fairly common resident. Northern Black Korhaan occurs in both bush savanna and the open grassland of Sita Pan. Males call loudly and frequently so males are not easily overlooked, though females are secretive. It was a fairly common resident, with little variation in numbers. It appeared to be less numerous than Red-crested Korhaan.

Grassland species

Only a small proportion, less than 20%, of the area counted along the transect is open grassland. Several species regularly recorded were confined to open grassland. These species are Double-banded Courser, Spike-heeled Lark, Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark, Red-capped Lark, Ant-eating Chat, Capped Wheatear and African Pipit. None of these species is likely to be overlooked, if present, as all are easily visible in the short grassland. For most of these species, there was not a great variation in numbers. Double-banded Courser, Spike-heeled Lark, Red-capped Lark and Ant-eating Chat all appeared to be resident. Capped Wheatear is presumably a migrant and is likely that is absent from the area in the latter part of the dry season. Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark was only recorded in the latter part of the study period so it is possible that the species is a recent arrival at Sita Pan. African Pipit was only recorded irregularly. Nearly all records were in February rather than in November, indicating that it was probably a visitor.

Aerial species

Three species, Common Swift, Barn Swallow and European Bee-eater, all palaeartic migrants that feed on flying insects, were only recorded flying overhead. All records of Common Swift were in November with the exception of a record of three birds in February 2016. Common Swift is a highly mobile species and was generally recorded in periods after rain fronts had passed. Most birds generally start to migrate northwards in January from southern Botswana, which accounts for the lack of February records. Barn Swallow was recorded in small numbers during the large majority of transect counts, though, surprisingly, none were recorded in the wet 2016-2017 summer. European Bee-eater was only recorded irregularly. This species is common in the east of the country (Penry 1994), but is largely absent from the Kalahari.

Burchell's Sandgrouse

Nearly all records of Burchell's Sandgrouse were of birds seen flying overhead, calling. It was presumed that these birds were flying to and from drinking water, most probably at nearby cattle posts, though also to Sita Pan when there was water there. The numbers recorded were variable but it was probably a function of the availability and location of water. The species appeared to be a fairly common resident in the area.

Species recorded irregularly

As can be seen in the table, a wide range of species were recorded irregularly, and some of these species deserve comment.

Many of these species were presumed to be resident in the area, though occurring at lower densities than species already discussed so were not always recorded. Examples of such species that were presumed to be resident are Spotted Thick-knee, Common Scimitarbill, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Acacia Pied Barbet, Ashy Tit, Cape Penduline-tit, Long-billed Crombec, Barred Wren-Warbler, Yellow-billed Eremomela, Southern Pied Babbler and Cape Glossy Starling, all of which are widespread in the Kalahari.

A number of other species that were recorded irregularly did not appear to be resident.

Laughing Dove was only recorded on five transect counts, mainly on February counts, with the most birds being recorded in the wet 2015-2016 summer. It seems likely that it was only an irregular visitor to the area, mainly in wetter periods.

Cuckoos, with only Jacobin Cuckoo and Diederik Cuckoo being recorded regularly, were thin on the ground. There was no record at all of Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*, the host of which, Crimson-breasted Shrike, occurs in the area. There were no records of any cuckoo in the 2018-2019 summer and only a single record of one bird in the previous two summers.

Grey Go-away-bird was only recorded occasionally. This species is generally absent from the Kalahari (Penry 1994) and it is at the edge of its range at Sita Pan.

Red-faced Mousebird was only recorded irregularly. It seems likely that this species is locally nomadic as indicated by Dean (1997), moving in response to the availability of food

Fork-tailed Drongo, a widespread and common species in Botswana, with open bush and woodland its most favoured habitat (Oatley 1997), was only recorded irregularly. Its sporadic occurrence indicates that this species may possibly undertake some movements.

There were a small number of records of Olive-tree Warbler and Icterine Warbler, both palaeartic migrants. All records of these species were of birds heard singing in acacia

bushes; both these species are very difficult to locate when not in song. Both species appeared to uncommon summer visitors, more likely to be recorded in wetter summers than in dry years.

Rattling Cisticola was recorded fairly commonly in the 2012-2013 summer, but then numbers recorded dropped, with only a single record of one bird after the 2014-2015 summer. This species does not occur in the Kalahari (Penry 1994) so it is at the edge of its distributional range at Sita Pan. This species is considered to be resident (Berruti 1997), but the irregularity of records indicates that it possibly undertakes movements.

There were a few records of Desert Cisticola, all in bush savanna, with no records on the short grassland of Sita Pan. It was evident that this species undertakes movements, probably of a nomadic nature, in response to the availability of grass. It appears likely to occur in the area when grassland has been able to develop in the usually overgrazed bush savanna.

Wattled Starling was very erratic in occurrence. All records were of small flocks in flight. This species probably only occurs when it moves into the Kalahari in summer in response to rainfall. There was no evidence of breeding in the area.

Red-billed Oxpecker was recorded irregularly. It is largely absent from the Kalahari (Penry 1994) so Sita Pan lies at the edge of its expected range.

The only sunbird recorded was Marico Sunbird which was uncommon and irregular. The lack of records is probably related to a lack of flowering plants in the area at the time of the transect counts.

Shaft-tailed Whydah was recorded on the large majority of transect counts, though it was unrecorded in the 2018-2019 summer. It was generally recorded in small numbers (< 5), but notably 32 were recorded in February 2018. The record of 32 is an indication of movements undertaken by this species. It seems likely that it is partially nomadic and that it occurs in the area mainly in summer.

Species recorded on only one or two transect counts

As well as the 67 species that appear in the table, a further 28 species were recorded on either one or two transect counts. These species are listed:

Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*, Hadedda Ibis *Bostrychia hadedash*, Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*, Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*, Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*, Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator*

glandarius, Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus*, Little Swift *Apus affinis*, White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius*, European Roller *Coracias garrulus*, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*, Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*, Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*, Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra Africana*, Monotonous Lark *Mirafra passerina*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, Rufous-eared Warbler *Malcorus pectoralis*, Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis*, Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, Great Sparrow *Passer motitensis*, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus*, Cape Sparrow *Passer melanurus*, Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*, Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis*, Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis*, Lark-like Bunting *Emberiza impetuani* and Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventis*.

A few of these species deserve comment.

In February 2017 a total of 43 Monotonous Larks were heard calling and seen in display flight. Four Harlequin Quails and six Common Buttonquails were also heard calling. These three species were not recorded on any other transect count. It is clear that these species moved into the area in response to the heavy rainfall of January and February 2016.

Three Caspian Plovers, part of a loose flock of ten birds, were recorded in open grassland at Sita Pan in February 2019; this species was unrecorded on any other transect count. This species is rare in southern Botswana.

The lack of records of birds of prey is noticeable with only a single record of one Montagu's Harrier and two records of Greater Kestrel though some other birds of prey were observed on the timed transect counts.

There was a single record of Willow Warbler in November 2016 and a single record of Common Whitethroat in February 2014; these are the only records of these two palaeartic migrants. The record of Willow Warbler, a common migrant to Botswana, was probably of a bird on passage and lack of other records indicates that it does not usually occur, possibly because of the relative lack of trees. There is much suitable *Grewia flava* bush savanna habitat for Common Whitethroat along the transect but the lack of records indicates that it does not usually occur, probably because it is to the south of its normal range.

There was a single record of one Blue Waxbill. This species does not generally occur in the Kalahari and Sita Pan is outside of its expected distributional range. This record is presumably of a vagrant outside of its normal range. Similar records in the southern Kalahari are presumably also of vagrants, though care needs to be exercised as it can be confused with Violet-eared Waxbill.

Conclusion

The regular transect counts, over a period of seven summers, provided much information on the status of bird species in the vicinity of Sita Pan, situated at the edge of the Kalahari. The data from these counts showed the relative abundance of species that occurred there. The data also showed variations in the bird numbers recorded between transects. For many species these variations in numbers indicated probable movements undertaken by these species and also variations in numbers from year to year.

Sita Pan is on the periphery of the Kalahari and there are likely to be similar variations of the populations of bird species elsewhere in the southern Kalahari.

This transect was monitored as part of a BirdLife Botswana programme of bird population monitoring. The data in this programme, when analysed, will provide valuable data on year to year variations in bird species and also long term trends in bird populations. As well as providing much information on the status of bird species in the vicinity of Sita Pan, bird monitoring at Sita Pan was a pleasure and provided much enjoyable birding.

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

Birds at termite emergences in the Matobo area of Zimbabwe

David A. Ewbank

Termite alates emerge from their nests for a courtship flight from which few of them survive to form a new colony though the stimulus for their emergence is unknown. They are an occasional abundant food source in African savannahs. Very few animals specialize on termites but they include the Aardwolf *Proteles cristata* (Bothma & Nel 1980). Many vertebrates take advantage of the occasional opportunity for example a Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* was observed on Cyrene with its mouth over the emergence point allowing the termites to fly directly into its throat. Even amphibians take advantage of the resource (Poynton & Pritchard 1976). Some invertebrates take some as well e.g. on 28 December 1975 Dragonflies (Odonata) were observed catching them, eating the abdomen and then dropping the thoraxes which were snatched up by Masked Weaver, *Ploceus velatus*, Red-billed quelea *Quelea quelea* and White-browed Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser mahali*. The calorific value of termites has been discussed by Brooke *et al* 1977. However the importance of this resource is emphasised is the numbers of (large) raptors that migrate to Southern Africa and mainly eat termites (Jensen 1972).

Methods

Bird species recorded at 71 termite emergences mainly in the Matobo area were listed in the period 1971/76 with the addition of a few from 1949/51 (Plowes *pers. com.*). They were recorded in every month except October with half the records coming from November and December. Three genera of termites were recorded: *Hodotermes* (19 records with 57 bird species), *Macrohodotermes*, (2 records of 14 species) *Odonotermes* (2 records of 9 species), Totals do not add up because the genus was not recorded on every occasion but clearly *Hodotermes* was the most frequent genus. Brooke (1970) divided feeding methods into seven categories according how the prey was dealt with after capture but here it was just recorded whether they captured in the air, on the ground or at the hive (not recorded for all species).

Results

A total of 88 species were recorded taking termites. Thirty species were recorded feeding aerially. Twenty-three species were recorded feeding on the ground and five were recorded feeding on both the ground and in the air. The three most frequently recorded species were recorded feeding actually at the hive.

The mean and maximum number of species peaked in November and December, which is the period when most flights were recorded. The number of species at an emergence was typically low with a mean of 3.7 ± 9.7 species. Peak numbers of species were recorded on 8 November 1972 and 2 December 1975 with 17 species recorded. A total of 40 species were recorded at an emergence in Hwange National Park in December 1989: though some of the birds appear to be attracted by something other than the termites e.g. a Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* caught a bee-eater and departed (Bing 1993).

Table 1: Number of recorded emergences per month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	6	6	1	3	2	8	4	0	1	20	16

Table 2. Mean and maximum number of bird species per month present at termite emergences

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
mean no. species	2.7	2.5	2.8	3.0	1.5	1.0	1.3	2.0	0.0	1.0	4.4	7.0
max no. species	5	9	6	3	2	1	5	4	0	1	19	17

Table 3: Number of bird species recorded at termite emergences (Total 47)

No. records	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
No. species	24	14	3	5	7	5	3	2	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 4: Number of records (n=89) for individual bird species at termite emergences

No. species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. records	44	11	11	6	4	4	2	4	2	0	0	1

The number of raptor species peaked on 27 November 1973 at six. A total of seven raptor species was recorded at a swarm by Banfield (1993) in the Matobo. Hundreds of Black Kites *Milvus migrans* and Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis* have been recorded termiting on the Matopos Research Station (Brooke *et al.* 1977).

The most frequently recorded species was Eurasian Swallow *Hirundo rustica* at 12 emergences with Black-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* and Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* at nine emergences. The following species were recorded at five or more termite swarms: Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudata*, Black Kite, Steppe Buzzard *Buteo vulpinus*, Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*, Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*, Red-billed Quelea, Steppe Eagle, White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa*, Masked Weaver, Cape Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens*, Grey-headed

Sparrow *Passer griseus*, Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* and Yellow-eyed Canary *Serinus mozambicus*. 66 (71.4%) of species were recorded at three or less flights).

Species not listed as recorded taking termites by Grobler *et al.* (1977) include White Stork, Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus*, Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*, Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus flavirostris*, Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas*, African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*, House Martin *Delichon urbicum*, Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*, Cape Robin-chat *Cossypha caffra*, Acacia Grey Tit *Parus griseus*, Boulder Chat *Pinanornis plumata*, Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii*, Southern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus anguitemens*, Red-shouldered Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens*, Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata* Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* and Scaly-feathered Finch *Sporopipes squamipipes*,

Discussion

The overwhelming impression of these data is the highly opportunistic utilisation of this unpredictable resource but once it is available many species are willing to cash in. A number of migratory birds are highly nomadic in pursuit of these resources.

Most of the breeding species have chicks either in the nest or just left in November and December (Irwin 1981) so termites are a further useful food source for the chicks.

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D.A.Ewbank, Ely UK. email: rabewbank@hotmail.com

A full list of all the species seen at termite emergences is available from David or the Editor

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* in south-eastern Botswana

Chris A. Brewster

Introduction

From February 2016 to July 2019 Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* was recorded regularly in south-eastern Botswana and all records were entered in the Southern African Bird Atlas Project data base (SABAP2). These records are analysed. This period included a wet summer (2016-2017) and two dry summers.

Status in south-eastern Botswana

Southern Fiscal occurs in Botswana mainly in the south-east and south-west of the country, where it is a sparse to common resident (Penry 1994). It is most numerous in the south-west, mainly in the western Molopo Valley and Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, where it is very common (Penry 1994). Elsewhere in the country, away from the south-west and the south-east, it is very sparse and unpredictable, occurring mainly in winter (Penry 1994). In the northern part of the country it is rare, with few records.

In the Gaborone area, from Mochudi south to Otse, it was considered by Tyler and Borello (1998) to be an uncommon intra-African migrant, mainly from April to September, and an uncommon resident further south. Herremans (1994) considered it to be an uncommon resident in the far south-east (Barolong & Molopo) and elsewhere mainly a winter visitor from April to September.

Geographical range

South-eastern Botswana is considered here to be the part of the country that is south of 24° South and east of 25° East. Birding was undertaken throughout this area from February 2016 to July 2019. The most northerly record, for this period, of Southern Fiscal in south-eastern Botswana, was at Kumukwane, west of Gaborone. All other records were to the south of Gaborone as far south as Ramatlabama, in the Molopo Valley, on the border with South Africa. It was unrecorded anywhere to the north of Gaborone, despite much observer effort to the north of Gaborone. Penry (1994) too recorded it less frequently in quarter degrees to the north of Gaborone, than those from Gaborone southwards. While it was recorded at a wide range of localities southwards from Gaborone to Ramatlabama,

the Lobatse area had the largest number of records. There were seven records in the Barolong area, from Kgoro Pan southwards, where Herremans (1994) considered it to be resident.

Habitat

It was generally recorded in open areas, such as agricultural land and savanna, and on the edge of open areas, though there was one record in acacias in the industrial area in the centre of the village of Ramotswa.

Distribution of records by month

There were 30 records of Southern Fiscal from February 2016 to July 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1. Monthly distribution of records

Month	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
No. records	4	2	4	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	6

Observer effort was not equal for all months of the year. While for most months of the year there was a reasonable amount of time spent in the field, for the months of May and October, relatively little time was spent in the field. The greatest amount of time spent in the field was in summer from December to March and also in July.

There were a greater number of records in summer than at other times of year, though this could have been a result of greater observer effort in summer. Southern Fiscal was recorded for all months, with no evidence of an influx in winter, indicating that it is likely to be resident. In Herremans (1994), which included records for all of Botswana, 82% of the 107 records were for the period from April to September. The seasonal pattern of records in Herremans (1994) is clearly different from the seasonal pattern of records from February 2016 to July 2019.

One of the January records, in the centre of Ramotswa, was a breeding record of an adult incubating at a nest.

Sub-specific identification

The sub-species that occurs in Botswana is *L.c.subcoronatus*, which is identified by its white supercilium (Hancock and Weiersbye 2016). The sub-species was not identified for all records, but for those records where the sub-species was identified, the majority were of the race *L.c.subcoronatus*. There were, however, three records of the nominate race *L.c.collaris*, which lacks the white supercilium. These records were at Lobatse, in August 2018 and July 2019, and near Lotlhakane, along the Kanye to Lobatse road, in July 2018. In Lesotho the two sub-species *L.c.subcoronatus* and *L.c.collaris* occur together (Kopij 2013) as they do in parts of South Africa. It appears that the two sub-species also occur together in south-eastern Botswana, though *L.c.subcoronatus* clearly predominates. That the three records of *L.c.collaris* were all in winter raises the possibility that *L.c.collaris* is a winter visitor. Further records, however, are needed to clarify the status of *L.c.collaris* in south-eastern Botswana.

Conclusion

The distribution of records indicates that in south-eastern Botswana, Southern Fiscal is an uncommon resident. The available records indicate that it probably occurs mainly from Gaborone southwards. It does not appear that it is currently a winter visitor, as was previously considered to be the case in the 1990s (Tyler and Borello 1999, Herremans 1994).

It is evident that the nominate race of Southern Fiscal *L.c.collaris* occurs in south-eastern Botswana as well as the race *L.c.subcoronatus*. Any records, anywhere in Botswana, of Southern Fiscal that are not of the race *L.c.subcoronatus* are of interest. It is likely that the race *L.c.pyrrhostictus*, as well as *L.c.collaris* and *L.c.subcoronatus*, also occurs in Botswana. If this race does occur, then it is most likely to occur in the most northerly parts of the country, where the species is rare. It is just possible too that Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* might be recorded in northern Botswana.

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Record of Short-clawed Larks *Certhilauda chuana* south-west of Serowe

On 1 March 2019, three Short-clawed Larks were seen south of Moiyabana, to the south-west of Serowe, at 22°43.08'S 26°24.3'E. The three Short-clawed Larks were perched on three successive poles along the main road.

Short-clawed Lark occurs is a common resident on fallow land in south-east Botswana. Its core range extends northwards to about 24°00'S (Brewster *et al.* 2010). North of 24°00'S, there is only a handful of records. In 1992 it was recorded at three locations near Lephephe, though in 2008 it was not found when searched for at these locations. In 2008, it was, though, recorded at one location to the west of Lephephe, near Sojwe. It must only occur sparsely in the Lephephe / Sojwe area (Brewster *et al* 2010). There is one record in 1992 further north, to the east of Shoshong, at 23°15.01'S 26°34.85'E. This record, of Marc Herremans, was, prior to the record south of Moiyabana, the most northerly record in Botswana.

This record, therefore, represents a significant northward extension of the known range of this species in Botswana. The presence of three birds indicates that the species is resident.

REFERENCE

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Ian White, P.O.Box 26006, Gaborone

Highlights of the January and July 2018 Waterbird Counts

Stephanie J. Tyler

Wet season counts in January 2018

Table 1. Counts in Botswana in Jan 2018 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in shown too) N.C=no count

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
SE Botswana	14,976	74	Sojwe Pan		
Bathoen Dam	20	15	Shadishadi Pan	468	38
Bokaa Dam	7,315	52	Thagale Dam	737	30
Broadhurst S.P/ Gaborone GR	3,034	41			
Gaborone Dam			NE Botswana		
Gamoleele Dam	28	4	Savuti Channel	Dry	0
Jwaneng S.P.			Savuti Marsh	Dry	0
Lobatse S.P.	1,663	38	Linyanti River		
Mahalapye S.P.			Lake Liambezi		
Mogobane Dam	866	25	Chobe N.P. pans	Dry	0
Moshupa Dam	228	17	Chobe River	4449	46
Ngotwane Dam					
Phakalane S.P			Okavango Delta		
Ramotswa S.P.	599	25	Jao Flats	102	16

SOUTH-EAST BOTSWANA

Table 2. The Top 12 species (highest combined counts all sites) in SE Botswana in Jan 2018

White-faced Duck	2849	Little Grebe	732
White-winged Tern	1751	Ruff	635
Red-billed Teal	1413	Blacksmith Lapwing	534
Southern Pochard	1380	Black-winged Stilt	490
Red-knobbed Coot	1269	Spur-winged Goose	326
Egyptian Goose	852	Curlew Sandpiper	312

Until 24 January there had been little if any rain. Counts done before that date (e.g. Bokaa and Thagale Dam) had good concentrations of waterbirds. Later counts (e.g. Moshupa, Gamoleele and Bathoen Dams) after a week of rain were mostly low as dams were then full to overflowing and birds had dispersed

There was an outstanding count at Bokaa Dam of over 7,300 birds – the highest January count since counts began there in 1992 and 14 higher than the previous record in January 2012. Birds included a Black Heron, 12 Yellow-billed Storks, 300 Greater Flamingos, a Black Duck, five White-backed Ducks and three Fulvous Ducks, 970 Southern Pochard – a nationally significant number, 46 Black-winged Pratincoles, 26 Ringed Plovers, three Caspian Plovers, a White-fronted Plover and two African Skimmers. At Thagale Dam there were three White Pelicans, five Greater and three Lesser Flamingos and a single Black-winged Pratincole among commoner species.

Sewage ponds were also productive with a high count of over 3,000 birds at Broadhurst S.P. (formerly Tsholofelo) and the edge of Gaborone Game Reserve into which treated sewage flows. Of note were three Black Herons, a Lesser Flamingo, nine White-backed and one Fulvous Duck and 1,200 White-winged Terns. Lobatse S.P boasted over 1,600 birds too, with an African Rail, a Painted Snipe and two Ethiopian Snipe among the birds seen. Ramotswa S.P. produced 10 South African Shelduck and below the works on the Ngotwane River, a Green Sandpiper.

Mogobane Dam despite a visit on 31 January after good rains did produce 866 waterbirds of a good range of species. By contrast Gamoleele Dam boasted just four species and a total of only 25. A Great Crested Grebe at Moshupa Dam was the only bird of this species seen in the south-east in January 2018 and noteworthy at Mogobane Dam were a Goliath Heron and a Black Heron.

Shadishadi and Sojwe Pans were visited in mid-December rather than January but there were good numbers of Maccoa Duck (29) among the 37 other species at Shadishadi.

OKAVANGO DELTA

The only submitted count came from Martin Kays and Antony Mulligan at Jao Flats. This count was low but of note were three Slaty Egrets and 40 White-crowned Lapwings. No Wattled Cranes were seen but late in 2018 Martin Benadie counted about 250 Wattled Cranes on the Jao Flats.

NORTH-EAST BOTSWANA

Table 3. The Top 10 species (highest combined counts all sites) in NE Botswana in Jan 2018

White-faced Duck	1686	Squacco	209
Blacksmith Lapwing	487	Pratincole ? species	180
African Jacana	389	Fulvous Duck	120
Egyptian Goose	300	Little Egret	115
Cattle Egret	257	African Spurwing	88

Dry season counts in July 2018

Unfortunately, because of vehicle problems Gavin & Marjorie Blair were unable to carry out counts along the Linyanti, in Savute or by Lake Liambezi but they did manage to do the important Chobe River count from Kasane to Ngoma Bridge in late February. By then

water levels were higher than they would have been in January so the February count was lower than usual. A good diversity of species was seen though including three Goliath Herons, three Slaty Egrets and way out of range a single Maccoa Duck.

Table 4. Counts in Botswana in July 2018 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in shown too) NC = no count

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Sp.
Southeast Botswana	4042	51	Thagale Dam	122	11
Bathoen Dam	56	10	Tswaiing Pans	NC	
Bokaa Dam	1914	33	Taung floodplain	46	11
Broadhurst S.P/ Gabs GR	NC				
Gamoleele Dam	NC		Okavango system		
Jwaneng S.P.	NC		Jao & Kwetsani Flats	NC	
Kanye area five dams	462	20			
Kgoro Pan	NC				
Lobatse S.P.	575	18	Northeast Botswana		
Mahalapye S.P.	NC		Savuti Marsh and Channel Dry	0	0
Mogobane Dam	148	22	Channel Dry	0	0
Mochudi S.P.	21	8	Liambezi/Chobe R.	1,103	26
Moshupa Dam	151	15	Chobe NP pans in Savute	34	2
Phakalane S.P.	NC		Chobe River	10,661	45
Ramotswa S.P	547	20			

SOUTH-EAST BOTSWANA

Rather few sites were counted with several regular sites having no visit in July; these included Broadhurst S.P./Gaborone G.R, Jwaneng S.P., Phakalane S.P. and Gamoleele Dam. Consequently, overall numbers were low (see Table 5). A visit was made to a 'new' site - the Taung floodplain.

Two observers from DWNP also made counts at five dams near Kanye and west of Thamaga which have rarely been previously counted. They had a range of birds including a Black Stork, the only one seen in the winter counts of 2018, and 17 Maccoa Duck. The dams were at Taueshele, Zambia (Kubung), Sephatlhephatlhe, Gaampudi and

Mamokhasi. They also counted at Bathoen Dam (also known as Mmankgodumo) and Moshupa Dam but both of these sites are regularly counted by others.

Table 5. The Top 12 species (highest combined counts all sites) in SE Botswana in July 2018

White-faced Duck	544	Blacksmith Lapwing	142
Red-billed Teal	537	Yellow-billed Duck	125
Egyptian Goose	538	African Spoonbill	86
Little Grebe	461	Three-banded Plover	84
Red-knobbed Coot	448	White-breasted Cormorant	78
African Spurwing	266	Black-winged Stilt	60

Other highlights included 34 Great Crested Grebes, three Pink-backed Pelicans, three Goliath Herons, 30 Lesser Flamingos and 32 Fulvous Ducks. Only 45 South African Shelduck and 22 Maccoa Duck were recorded. A single pratincole at Mogobane Dam was probably a Collared Pratincole.

EASTERN BOTSWANA

No counts

OKAVANGO DELTA

No counts received.

NORTH-EAST BOTSWANA

Savute Marsh and Channel were dry and so too were most of the pans that are usually counted in Chobe National Park. Apart from several Egyptian Geese the only birds seen at the pans were Blacksmith Lapwings.

Unfortunately Gavin and Marjorie Blair were unable to count along the Linyanti but they did count on the Chobe River adjacent to Lake Liambezi and the regular section of the Chobe River between the old park entrance and Ngoma Bridge. The most frequently encountered birds are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The Top 12 species along the Chobe River in July 2018

White-faced Duck	3,990	Blacksmith Lapwing	312
Egyptian Goose	1,290	Yellow-billed Stork	256
African Reed Cormorant	1166	Whiskered Tern	217
African Spurwing (goose)	920	African Jacana	210
Red-billed Teal	511	Black-winged Stilt	200
Comb Duck (Knobbie)	471	Great Egret	162

Of note too were five Pink-backed Pelicans, 125 African Darters, 100 Grey Herons, three White-backed Herons, 157 African Spoonbills, 31 African Skimmers, 25 Fish-Eagles and two African Marsh Harriers. Excluded from the waterbird totals in Table 4 were 45 Pied Kingfishers.

January 2019

SOUTH-EAST BOTSWANA

The total of over 14,000 waterbirds must be treated with caution because some of the counts (sewage ponds at Lobatse, Phakalane and Broadhurst (Tsholofelo) and adjacent Gaborone Game Reserve) took place in February and conceivably some birds could have moved from sites counted in January. However, the 70 species recorded is noteworthy although four less than in January 2018.

The count of waterbirds at Bokaa Dam on 6 January 2019 was the third highest ever recorded from that site. Between 1992 and 2010 summer counts averaged 2,380 birds with the maximum count being 5,974 (Tyler 2011). From 2011 there were two counts exceeding 7,000 birds: these were 7,301 in January 2012 and 7,315 in January 2018. Of particular note in 2019 were 1,470 White-faced Duck, 750 Southern Pochard, 400 Black-winged Pratincoles, over 2,000 other waders including 237 Blacksmith Lapwings, 242 Kittlitz's Plovers, 751 Curlew Sandpipers, 255 Ruff and 473 Little Stint, and 500 White-winged Terns. Water levels were low with much exposed mud and it took the observer (CAB) almost eight hours to cover the site well.

DWNP staff again counted the dams near Kanye and Moshupa (Mosopa) that they had counted in July 2018. At Sephatlhepathe Dam they saw four Yellow-billed Storks and 15 Abdim's Storks, at Zambia Dam, Kubung four Maccoa Duck and at Gaampudi Dam 21 Maccoa Duck.

Table 7. Counts in Botswana in January and February 2019 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in shown too) N.C=no count

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Species
SE Botswana	14,321	70	Sojwe Pan	NC	
Bathoen Dam	313	16	Shadishadi Pan	NC	
Bokaa Dam	6,776	42	Thagale Dam	NC	
Broadhurst S.P/ Gaborone GR	905	33			
Gaborone Dam	1,528	38	NE Botswana		
Gamoleele Dam	339	25	Savuti Channel	NC	
Jwaneng S.P.	NC		Savuti Marsh	NC	
Lobatse S.P.	867	36	Linyanti River	NC	
Village dams near Kanye	738	32	Lake Liambezi	NC	
Logogwe Pan	46	11	Chobe River	5,788	53
Mahalapye S.P.	523	21	Chobe pans	NC	

Mogobane Dam	562	26			
Moshupa Dam	299	11			
Ngotwane Dam	NC				
Phakalane S.P	884	27	Okavango Delta		
Ramotswa S.P.	511	28	Jao Flats	429	30

Mogobane Dam had low water levels but the observers (MGG, DG, HH) were rewarded with a Black-necked Grebe and an Osprey among the waterfowl and waders. (Several weeks later seven Caspian Terns were reported from this dam). At Gamoleele Dam the same observers saw a Black Heron, three White Storks, four Yellow-billed Storks, eight Black-winged Pratincoles and three Maccoa Duck plus a range of other species. There were also three Yellow-billed Storks at Moshupa Dam. At Mahalapye sewage ponds Maccoa Duck numbers continued to be high with 35 males and 24 females seen.

Gaborone Dam which was only about 50% full was counted by CAB on two dates in late January; some 70% of the area was surveyed but the dam end was excluded. Of note at this site were a White Pelican and a Goliath Heron, 10 Yellow-billed Storks and 376 Marabou Storks, two Water Dikkops, a Caspian Tern and an Osprey.

A new site Logogwe Dam was counted and the highlight here for CAB was three African Snipe.

Unfortunately, Broadhurst and Phakalane Sewage Ponds are unsafe now and only parts of the sites were accessed, in late February. Writing on his visit to Phakalane CAB noted "Only the first bund between two top ponds is still drivable (the others are overgrown). There is a fenced area beside the top pond (which had few birds) along the new busy tarred road, so it looks like there will be some development here. If you can fight your way through the litter (fly-tipping) there is still access to the large lower pond which was full of birds, though the many birds on the opposite side are very distant. It would be great if you could walk round the ponds (I would record more birds / species) but I am very disinclined to do so due to security issues." At Broadhurst he wrote that the ponds "had birds but due to security issues I did a rushed job, missing birds. The bunds are becoming choked with vegetation or flooded, making it difficult to drive (walking is not feasible as unsafe)." At Broadhurst there were two Yellow-billed Egrets, a single White-backed Duck and 230 White-winged Terns among the 33 species.

Generally, very few fish-eating birds, especially cormorants, were seen at any site, although there were 82 African Darters at Gaborone Dam.

Of note at Lobatse Sewage Ponds were 256 Little Grebes, 14 White Storks, 13 Black-crowned Night Herons roosting around a reed-fringed pond below the sewage ponds and 15 African Wattled Lapwing roosting on a bund by one pond.

Table 8. The Top 12 species (highest combined counts all sites) in SE Botswana in January and February 2019

White-faced Duck	1,925	Red-billed Teal	766
White-winged Tern	1,663	Blacksmith Lapwing	793
Southern Pochard	995	Little Grebe	626
Red-knobbed Coot	965	Little Stint	610
Egyptian Goose	857	Ruff	469
Curlew Sandpiper	755	Black-winged Pratincole	408

An early March count at Mogobane Dam by BirdLife members turned up two Great Crested Grebes, a Black Heron, two Yellow-billed Storks and an African Snipe among the 180 birds seen of 38 species of large waterbird. A week earlier seven Caspian Terns were seen at this dam. An early March count was also made at Taueshela Dam, 25km west of Moshupa, where DWNP staff counted 278 birds of 22 species in mid January. CAB in March counted 527 waterbirds of 24 species including two Great Crested Grebes and four Maccoa Duck.

OKAVANGO DELTA

Only one count was received, from the Jao Flats. There conditions were very dry but 105 Wattled Cranes were of particular note.

NORTH-EAST BOTSWANA

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond their control Gavin and Marjorie Blair could not count most of their usual sites but they did manage to count waterbirds along the Chobe River between the old DWNP entrance and Ngoma Bridge. Along this long stretch they had a total of 5,788 waterbirds as well as a range of coucals, kingfishers, wagtails (including 14 Western Yellow Wagtails), three Rosy-throated Longclaws and other passerines.

There were many highlights but three Purple and 10 Goliath Herons, a Slaty Egret, 18 Lesser Moorhens, two Painted Snipe and seven African Snipe, a White-fronted Plover, 53 Black-winged Pratincoles, 35 African Fish Eagles, four African Marsh Harriers and an Osprey all made the count memorable. Generally more birds were counted than in January 2018 and many more species than in 2018.

Table 9. The Top 12 species along the Chobe River in January 2019

Blacksmith Lapwing	1,156	African Spurwing	201
Red-billed Teal	908	Comb Duck	191
African Jacana	600	White-faced Duck	189
Egyptian Goose	396	Squacco Heron	148
Cattle Egret	393	Ruff	132
African Openbill	332	African Darter	130

Table10. Counts in Botswana in July 2019 (Total number of waterbirds counted with number of species in shown too) NC = no count

	No. Birds	No. Species		No. Birds	No. Sp.
Southeast Botswana	3,966	45	Thagale Dam	47	6
Bathoen Dam	40	11	Sehatlhane Dam	132	10
Bokaa Dam	1,210	31	Taueshele Dam	153	16
Broadhurst S.P/ Gabs GR	NC				
Gamoleele Dam	37	8	Okavango system		
Jwaneng S.P.	NC		Jao & Kwetsani Flats		
Kgoro Pan	NC				
Lobatse S.P.	449	17	Northeast Botswana		
Mahalapye S.P.	NC		Savuti Marsh and Channel Dry		
Mogobane Dam	408	22	Channel Dry		
Mochudi S.P.			Liambezi/Chobe		
Moshupa Dam	63	8	Chobe NP pans in Savute		
Phakalane S.P.	NC		Chobe River		
Ramotswa S.P	561	11			

Table 11. The Top 10 species (highest combined counts all sites) in SE Botswana in July 2019

Egyptian Goose	801	African Spurwing	167
Red-billed Teal	699	Yellow-billed Duck	142
Little Grebe	491	Cattle Egret	133
Red-knobbed Coot	269	Reed Cormorant	100
Blacksmith Lapwing	268	Cape Shoveler	94

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to the few faithful volunteers: Chris Brewster (CAB), Daphne Goldsworthy (DG), Mike Goldsworthy (MGG), Harold Hester (HH) and Peter D'Arcy (PD'A) who did the counts in the south-east of the country and to Gavin and Marjorie Blair (GB, MB) for their huge efforts and commitment in the Chobe area where they count pans and long stretches of the Chobe and Linyanti Rivers. I thank too Martin Kay (MK) and Antony Mulligan (AM) who counted the Jao & Kwetsani Flats in January.

Toumelo Wise Lampehua and Kedissaletse Mongaditsane from DWNP counted dams in the Kanye area and west of Thamaga in July 2017 and Tumelo Wise Lempehu, Keamogetse Mosala, Gaokgala Mavis Lekgetho and Mphonyana Linda Tlhobogang surveyed the same sites in January 2019.

However, I do desperately need volunteers to count other wetlands which have been surveyed in the past. These include various transects in Moremi Game Reserve, the Okavango River from the border at Mohembo downriver for 10 km, Nata Delta, Shashe Dam, Letsibogo Dam and wetlands around Francistown. In the south-east observers are needed for Ngotwane and Gaborone Dams, Nnywane Dam and other smaller pans and dams. **Please** if you can count at any of these sites or another site of your choosing, then do contact me.

Stephanie Tyler – Co-ordinator of waterbird counts in Botswana for Wetlands International and BirdLife International

Email steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com

Table. 12. Totals of waterbirds in south-east Botswana in 2018 and 2019

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Jan 2019	July 2019
Great Crested Grebe	1	34	2	17
Little Grebe	732	461	626	491
Black-necked Grebe	5		1	
Pink-backed Pelican		3		
White Pelican	3		1	
White-br.Cormorant	11	78	12	55
Reed Cormorant	27	64	14	100
Darter	21	27	97	16
Grey Heron	22	22	94	19
Black-headed Heron	10	7	11	
Goliath Heron		3	1	
Great White Egret	5	12	5	1
Black Egret	6		2	1
Intermediate Egret	16		2	3
Little Egret	34	6	93	9
Squacco Heron	12		14	3
Cattle Egret	161	34	425	133
Green-backed Heron	3		4	
Black-crowned Night Heron	4		13	
Little Bittern	1			
Yellow-billed Stork	13	9	34	
White Stork		4	17	
Black Stork		1		
Abdim's Stork			15	
Marabou Stork	1		394	43
Hammerkop		1		3
Sacred Ibis	111	48	228	84
Hadada Ibis	40	19	17	10
Glossy Ibis	22		78	
Spoonbill	35	86	77	7

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Jan 2019	July 2019
Greater Flamingo	306	2	280	3
Lesser Flamingo	5	30	3	34
Fulvous Duck	4	32	4	
White-faced Duck	2849	544	1925	28
White-backed Duck	14		1	
African Spurwing	326	266	176	167
Knob-billed Duck	227	5	27	7
Egyptian Goose	852	533	857	801
SA Shelduck	42	45	20	52
Black Duck	1			3
Cape Teal	192	56	90	51
Red-billed Teal	1413	537	766	699
Hottentot Teal	46	3	9	
Yellow-billed Duck	89	125	114	142
Cape Shoveler	38	15	56	94
Southern Pochard	1380	69	995	56
Maccoa Duck	33	22	88	52
Black Crake	10	4	15	2
Moorhen	35	18	18	8
Purple Gallinule	1		1	
Red-knobbed Coot	1269	448	965	269
African Jacana	23	4	34	11
Painted Snipe	1			
Water Dikkop	1		2	
Black-winged Stilt	490	60	234	60
Pied Avocet	29	7	3	
Collared Pratincole		1		
Black-winged Pratincole	49		408	
Blacksmith Lapwing	534	142	793	268

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Jan 2019	July 2019
Three-banded Plover	52	84	54	58
Kittlitz's Plover	62	38	264	79
Ringed Plover	27		51	
White-fronted Plover	1		2	1
Caspian Plover	3			
Crowned Lapwing	5	4		
Wattled Lapwing	4	8	15	2
Wood Sandpiper	224	14	177	
Green sandpiper	1			
Marsh Sandpiper	54		17	
Greenshank	23	1	41	3
Common Sandpiper	30	2	19	
Curlew Sandpiper	312		755	10
Ruff	635	1	469	4
Little Stint	235		610	
Ethiopian Snipe	2		3	
Grey-headed Gull	3			
Caspian Tern			1	
Whiskered Tern	12		12	
White-winged Tern	1751		1663	
African Skimmer	2			
African Fish Eagle	3	3	5	7
Osprey			2	
TOTAL	14,976	4,042	14,321	3,966
NO.SPECIES	74	50	70	45

Table 13. Totals on the Chobe River between Kasane and Ngoma Bridge for each species from January 2018 to July 2019 (data supplied by Gavin & Marjorie Blair).

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Jan 2019	July 2019
Little Grebe			2	
Black-necked Grebe				
Pink-backed Pelican		5		
White Pelican	1	1		

White-br.Cormorant		4		
Reed Cormorant	23	1166	116	
Darter	19	125	130	
Grey Heron	6	100	29	
Black-headed Heron				
Purple Heron			3	
Goliath Heron	3	3	10	
Great White Egret	57	162	105	
Black Egret	28	1	8	
Slaty Egret	3		1	
Intermediate Egret	41		55	
Little Egret	115	89	92	
Squacco Heron	209	36	148	
Cattle Egret	257	36	393	
Green-backed Heron		1	3	
White-backed N Heron		3		
Black-crowned Night Heron				
Dwarf Bittern				
Little Bittern				
Yellow-billed Stork	4	256	4	
White Stork				
African Openbill	9	85	332	
Saddle-billed Stork		5	3	
Abdim's Stork			3	
Marabou Stork	9	29	17	
Hammerkop	4	2	3	
Sacred Ibis	30	6	47	
Hadada Ibis				
Glossy Ibis	34	14	50	
Spoonbill	2	157	4	

Greater Flamingo				
Lesser Flamingo				
Fulvous Duck	120	18		
White-faced Duck	1686	3990	189	
White-backed Duck				
African Spurwing	88	920	201	
Knob-billed Duck	41	471	191	
Egyptian Goose	300	1290	396	
Red-billed Teal	37	511	908	
Hottentot Teal	21		56	
Yellow-billed Duck				
Cape Shoveler				
Southern Pochard				
Maccoa Duck	1			
Pygmy Goose	2	5		
African Rail				
African Crake				
Black Crake	1			
Moorhen			1	
Lesser Moorhen			18	
Allen's Gallinule	6			
Purple Gallinule				
Red-knobbed Coot				
African Jacana	389	210	600	
Lesser Jacana				
Painted Snipe			2	
Water Dikkop	28	5	31	
Black-winged Stilt	12	200	38	
Pied Avocet				
Collared Pratincole		11	8	
Black-winged Pratincole			53	
Unid. pratincole	180			

Blacksmith Lapwing	487	312	1156	
Three-banded Plover			4	
Kittlitz's Plover		2		
Ringed Plover				
White-fronted Plover			1	
Caspian Plover				
Crowned Lapwing		23		
Grey Plover				
Long-toed Lapwing	11	34	24	
White-crowned Lapwing	3	4	7	
Wattled Lapwing				
Wood Sandpiper	12		60	
Green Sandpiper				
Marsh Sandpiper			1	
Greenshank	1	9	10	
Common Sandpiper	18	1	25	
Curlew Sandpiper				
Ruff	85		132	
Little Stint				
Ethiopian Snipe			7	
Grey-headed Gull	10	80		
Caspian Tern				
Whiskered Tern	26	217	59	
White-winged Tern			12	
African Skimmer		31		
African Marsh Harrier	1	2	4	
African Fish Eagle	27	29	35	
Osprey	2		1	
TOTAL	4,449	10,661	5,788	
NO.SPECIES	46	45	53	

Summary of Category B Records

Chris A. Brewster & Stephanie J. Tyler

Records are for the period from June 2018 to October 2019.
CKGR = Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*

One, Lobatse Sewage Ponds on 18 Jul 2019. Pair along Molopye River, near Mogobane, on 4 Sept (CAB).

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*

Four at Zambia Dam, Kubung (2425C2) and 13 at Taueshele Dam (2425C3) on 16 July 2018 (TWL, KM).

There were 35 males and 24 females at Mahalapye S.P. on 9 Jan 2019 (PD'A), four at Zambia Dam, Kubung on 19 Jan and 21 at Gaampudi Dam near Kanye (in 2425C4) on 29 Jan (TWL *et al*), three at Gamoleele Dam on 22 Jan 2019 (HH, DG, MGG), one at Broadhurst Ponds, Gaborone on 27 Feb and seven at Taueshele Dam on 9 Mar (CAB).

Six at Taueshele Dam on 3 July and 46 at Sehatlane Dam, near Thamaga, 2425C2 on 15 Jul (CAB).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

One was at Mogobane Dam on 22 Jan 2019 (HH, DG, MGG).

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*

Two at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan 2019, 34 at Gaborone Dam on 10 July and two there on 20 Sept (CAB).

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One was at Taueshele Dam (2425C3) on 16 July 2018 (TWL); two along Ngotwane River near Ramotswa on 22 Feb 2019 (CAB) and one along Motloutse River in Mashatu Game Reserve on 22 June (RH).

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

Approximately ten were seen in the Jao Concession between 16 and 21 Dec (MB).

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotos*

One was near Kasane on 22 Jul 2018 (GB, MBI), three at Shakawe on 15 Aug, about six on 12 Dec and two singles near Shakawe from 3 to 4 Sept 2019 (IS, JC, DR).

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia*

The majority of records were in the Okavango Panhandle and Delta. . At Shakawe, there was one on 16 Aug 2018 and ca.10 were in attendance at 'Barbel Runs' on 26-27 Sept, there were two singles from 8 to 10 July 2019 and there was one on 7 Sept 2019 (IS, PV, EL, MC, DR). In the Jao Concession (1922A4 / 1922B3) there were three singles from 26

to 29 Sept 2018, five singles from 16 to 21 Dec and one on 1 Sept 2019 (NP, MB). There was one along the Khwai River in 1923B2 on 7 Aug 2018, one near Maun on 19 June, one at Guma Lagoon in 1822C4 on 13 Aug 2019 and one along the Gomoti in 1923A4 on 5 Sept (RS, MP, WvS, MB).

Elsewhere in the north there was one along the Boteti River, near Motopi on 8 Oct 2018 and one at King's Pool, Linyanti on 2 Feb 2019 (TW, KMcQ per BPM).

In the south-east of the country, there was one at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 7 Sept 2018, two at Broadhurst Ponds on 27 Feb 2019, one at Mogobane Dam from 24 Feb to 3 Mar, one at Mosopa Dam (2425C4) on 6 Mar and one, in breeding plumage, at Dikokonyane Dam (2426A4) on 25 Aug (CAB).

Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*

The large majority of records were in the Okavango Panhandle and Delta. There was one at Shakawe on 16 Aug 2018 (IS). In the Jao Concession (1922A4 / 1922B3) there were four singles on 28-29 Sept, a total of circa 20, all noted singly, from 16 to 22 Dec and circa 10 in mid-May 2019 (NP, MB). There was one at Guma Lagoon in 1822C4 on 13 Aug 2019 (WvS). Along the Khwai River in 1923B2 there was one from 8 to 10 Aug 2018, one on 27 Sept and one on 17 Aug 2019 (IS, PH, TH). One along Khwai River in 1923B2, 8-10 Aug 2019 and one at Shakawe on 16 Aug (IS). There three near Third Bridge, Moremi Game Reserve, on 24 Sept 2018 and one in Chitabe Concession in 1923A4 on 5 Sept 2019 (PH, MB).

On the Chobe floodplain, between Ngoma and Kasane, there were two singles, on 26 and 27 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI).

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

Two were seen at Nxai Pan National Park from 29 Sept-3 Oct 2018 (JD) and one in Sibuyu Forest Reserve on 27 Feb 2019 (DH per BPM).

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

At Shakawe, there was one on 26 Sept 2018, two on 12 Dec and one on 20 Dec (EL, JC, MC) and near Kasane one on 5 Dec 2018 and 30 Jan (JC, GB, MBI). There were two at Dikgatlong Dam (on Shashe River) on 1 Jan 2019 (IW).

Singles at Mogobane Dam on 22 Jan 2019 and at Gaborone Dam on 25 and 26 Jan were probably the same bird (HH, DG, MGG, CAB, IW).

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

One was seen near Kgope in 2455A4 on 18 Dec 2018 and one was seen at Gaborone Dam on 27 Jan 2019 (CAB).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
3	23 Jun 2018	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
1	7 Aug	Along Khwai River in 1923B2	RS
5	15 Aug	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
3	27 Sept	Along Khwai River in 1923B2	PH
4	27 Sept	Jao Concession, in 1922A4	NP
1	28 Sept	Jao Concession, in 1922B3	NP
1	10 Oct	Lion kill at Piper Pan, CKGR	TW
3	18 Nov	Savute	GB, MBI
3	19 Nov	Kasane	GB, MBI
1	22 Nov	Kasane	GB, MBI
Approx 8	16-18 Dec	Jao Concession	MB
4	27 Jan 2019	Chobe floodplain near Ngoma	GB, MBI
4	2 Feb	King's Pool, Linyanti	KMcQ
5	Mid-May	Jao Concession	MB
2	20 July	Along Khwai River in 1923B2	CS
3	1 Sept	Jao Concession in 1922A4	MB
3	4 Sept	Chitabe Concession in 1923A4	MB
1	18 Sept	Ditsipe in 1923C2	WvS

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

Though this species is widespread across the country, it is evident that numbers have dropped, with the large majority of records being of small groups or single birds.

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
21	23 Jun 2018	East of Ngoma	GB, MBI
29	21 Jul	From Ngoma to Kasane	GB, MBI
6	22 Jul	Near Kasane	GB, MBI
58	15 Aug	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
3	5 Sept	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	CAB
Ad + young on nest	10 Sept	Near Kweneng (2325D4)	CAB
25	23 Sept	East Of Artesia in 2426B1	CAB
41	28 Sept	Jao Concession (in 1922A4)	NP
8	30 Sept	Savute	PH
2	29 Sept-3 Oct	Nxai Pan National Park	JD
Several	3-8 Oct	Khumaga	JD
3	10 Oct	At lion kill, Piper Pan, CKGR	TW
1	4 Nov	Sanitas, Gaborone	BLB
1 on nest	6 Nov	Near Tonota in 2127C2	AH

8	13 Nov	Kasane Forest Reserve Extension	BL per BPM
13	15 Nov	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
20	16 Nov	Linyanti, in 1823B4	GB, MBI
173	16 Nov	Savute	GB, MBI
49	18 Nov	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
32	19 Nov	Near Kasane	GB, MBI
2 on nest	19 Nov	Mokgomane (2525C2)	CAB
8	21 Nov	Near Mmathethe in 2525A1	DG, MGG
1	1 Dec	Near Kgope (2425B2)	CAB
50	9 Dec	At carcass near Dikgonnye in 2426A1	CAB
Circa 25	18, 19 Dec	Jao Concession	MB
14	23 Dec	At dead donkey south of Palapye in 2227C1	MB
50	27 Jan 2019	Gaborone Dam	CAB
96	27 Jan	Chobe floodplain, near Ngoma	GB, MBI
8	30 Jan	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	CAB
1	7 Feb	Matswere, CKGR	OT per BPM
1	8 Feb	Sheep Farm (2525C2)	CAB
2	26 Feb	Lobatse Sewage Ponds	CAB
2	3 Mar	Mogobane	BLB
12	6 Mar	Lotlhakane West (2425C4)	CAB
10	17 Mar	Near Segwagwa in 2525A1	CAB
4	Mid-May	Jao Concession	MB
14	20 Mar	Near Mogojogojo	CAB
40+	19 May	Trans-Kalahari Highway in 2221D2	IG
6 records of single birds	17-27 June	Mashatu Game Reserve	RH
10+	27 June	Mathangwane in 2127A2	CS
1	30 June	Metsemothaba River in 2425D2	CAB
1	3 July	Taueshele Dam in 2425C3	CAB
5	4 July	Near Pandamatenga	GH
9	20 Jul	Near Thamaga in 2425D1	CAB
8	31 July	Dikud Valley in 2425B1	CAB
9	4 Aug	Losilakgokgong in 2425B2	CAB
1	4 Aug	Between Jwaneng and	RB



		Sekoma	
1	11 Aug	East of Artesia in 2426A2	CAB
10	1 Sept	Jao Concession in 1922B3	MB
15	4 Sept	Chitabe Concession in 1923C2	MB
1	15 Sept	Near Olifants Drift in 2426B1	CAB
4	19 Sept	Ditsipe in 1923C2	WvS
1	5 Oct	Shakawe	SO

Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*

One was seen at Shakawe on 12 Dec (JC). One was near Lobatse on 2 Dec (RC), three at a dead donkey south of Palapye in 2227C1 on 23 Dec (MB), one at Segwagwa Pan (2525A1) on 17 Mar (CAB) and five at Gaborone Dam on 20 April (AH).

White-headed Vulture *Aegypius occipitalis*

The small number of records of this species is noticeable.

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs
1	11 Aug 2018	Savute	RS
Pair adults	13 Aug	Xakanaxa, Moremi Game Reserve	IS
1	28 Sept	Jao Concession (in 1922A4)	NP
1 adult	1 Oct	Nxai Pan National Park	JD
1 female	3 Sept 2019	Chitabe Concession in 1923A4	MB

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
5	23 Jun 2018	East of Ngoma	GB, MBI
1	7 Aug	Khwai River in 1923B2	RS
4	15 Aug	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
1	21 Sept	South of Palapye in 2227C1	JJ
1 imm	23 Sept	East of Artesia in 2426B1	CAB
3	28 Sept	Jao Concession (in 1922A4)	NP
1	29 Sept-3 Oct	Nxai Pan National Park	JD
1	3-8 Oct	Khumaga	JD
7	10 Oct	At lion kill, Piper Pan, CKGR	TW
1	18 Nov	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
1	19 Nov	Near Kasane	GB, MBI
3	9 Dec	At carcass near Dikgonnye in 2426A1	CAB
2	9 Dec	Near Kweneng in 2326C3	CAB
1	16 Dec	Jao Concession	MB
1	3 Feb	Etsha	KMo per BPM
2	17 Mar	Near Segwagwa in 2525A1	CAB

1	Mid-may	Jao Concession	MB
2	23 June	Near Mahalapye in 2326B2	GH
2	24 June	North of Nata in 1926C1	MP
1	27 June	Mashatu Game Reserve	RH
1	29 June	Moremi Game Reserve in 1923A4	GH
2 singles	3 July	Near Kasane	GH
3	22 July	Savute	CS
1 imm	4 Aug	Losilakgokgong in 2425B2	CAB
1	3 Sept	Chitabe Concession in 1923A4	MB

Bateleur Terathopius ecaudatus

Nearly all records were from wildlife areas. It is notable that there was only one record from Shakawe, despite many visits by birders there. There was only one record too from south-eastern Botswana despite a lot of birding effort there.

No. birds	Date	Location	Obs.
5, all singly	21 Jul 2018	East of Ngoma	GB, MBI
2 singles	23 Jul	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
7, all singly	24 Jul	Moremi Game Reserve	GB, MBI
1 imm	23 Sept	East of Artesia in 2426A2	CAB
1	27 Sept	Along Khwai River in 1923B2	PH
3	30 Sept	Jao Concession (in 1922B3)	NP
1	2 Oct	Nxai Pan National Park	JD
1	13 Nov	Kasane Forest Reserve Extension	BL per BPM
1	14 Nov	Shakawe	per BPM
1	15 Nov	South-west of Kachikau in 1824A2	GB, MBI
4, all singly	16 Nov	Linyanti, in 1823B4	GB, MBI
1	16 Nov	Nogatsaa, Chobe National Park	BL per BPM
3 singles	16-17 Nov	Savute	GB, MBI
1	18 Nov	East of Savute in 1824A4	GB, MBI
1	18 Nov	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
2 singles	19 Nov	Kasane	GB, MBI
1	20 Nov	King's Pool, Linyanti	KMcQ per BPM
1	27 Nov	Orapa	MN per BPM
1	28 Nov	Etsha 13	KMo per BPM



1	28 Nov	Sibuyu Forest Reserve	DH per BPM
A total of 4 (two ad + two imm)	16-21 Dec	Jao concession (1922A4/1922B3)	MB
2 singles	26 Jan 2019	Chobe floodplain near Ngoma	GB, MBI
Total of 4	29 Jan	Chobe floodplain near Ngoma	GB, MBI
4	8 Feb	King's Pool, Linyanti	BS per BPM
1 imm	27 Feb	Sibuyu Forest Reserve	DH per BPM
2 singles	7 May	Trans-Kalahari Highway in 2222C3	IG
1	20 June	Moremi Game Reserve in 1923B3	MP
4 singles	27 June	Moremi Game Reserve	GH
1	5 July	Near Pandamatenga	GH
1	17 Aug	Along Khwai River in 1923B2	TH
1 ad + 2 juv	19 Aug	Savute	TH
1	26 Aug	Chobe National Park, near Kasane	SJ
Circa 5	31 Aug-1 Sept	Jao Concession	MB
Circa 6	4 – 7 Sept	Chitabe Concession in 1923A4 / 1923C2	MB
1	18 Sept	Ditsipe in 1923C2	WvS

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*

One was seen along Khwai River, in 1923B2, on 5 Aug 2018, one was seen near Kasane on 30 Jan 2019 and one at Maun on 30 April (RS, GB, MBI, GR).

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

No. birds	Date	Location	Observer
1	28 Sept 2018	Jao Concession (in 1922A4)	NP
1	3-8 Oct	Khumaga	JD
1 ad + 1 imm	28 Sept	Nxai Pan National Park	JD
1	10 Oct	CKGR (in 2123C2)	TW
1 imm	3 Nov	Limpopo River Lodge (2228B4)	IW
1	16 Nov	Linyanti in 1823B4	GB, MBI
1	27 Jan 2019	Near Ngoma	GB, MBI
1 adult	mid-May	Jao Concession	MB
1 adult	19 June	Mashatu Game Reserve	RH
1	19 Aug	Savute	TH
1 adult	26 Aug	Chobe National Park, near Kasane	SJ

1	1 Sept	Jao Concession in 1922A4	MB
1 imm	7 Sept	One, Chitabe Concession in 1923C2	MB

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

Recorded west of Vumbera, in 1822D3, on 4 Aug 2018 (JvdM). One was seen along Khwai River in 1923B2 on 9 Aug 2018 and one near Seronga, in 1822C4 on 19 July 2019 (CS, IS, RS).

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

One was seen in the vicinity of Makgadikgadi Pans, south of Gweta, on 23 Nov 2018 (BV per BPM) and one at Pandamatenga on 4 Dec 2018 (RC). Ca.20 were near Sefophe, east of Selebi Phikwe, on 31 Dec 2018 and ca. 20, probably the same birds, near Mmadinare, north of Selebi Phikwe, on 1 Jan 2019 (IW).

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*

In the north, single birds were seen near Kasane on 19 Nov 2018 and near Ngoma on 29 Nov 2019 (GB, MBI). In the south-east singles were seen at Ramotswa on 7 Sept 2018, near Mokgomane, 2525C2, on 19 Nov, near Ramotswa on 21 Dec, near Ramankung, 2455B2, on 23 Dec, at Gaborone Dam on 29 Nov 2019 and at Mogobane on 24 Feb (CAB). There was one record in the Nossob Valley, 22 km north of Two Rivers on 12 June (per THa).

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nepalensis*

One was at Sibuyu Forest Reserve, 28 Nov 2018 and one near Kasane on 31 Mar 2019 (DH per BPM, ID).

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

This species is recorded regularly in the Kasane area. Elsewhere in the north of the country, there was one between Nata and Pandamatenga in 1925D2 on 4 Dec 2018, one at Shakawe on 2 May 2019, one adult at Hunda Island, Jao Concession, in 1922A4 on 10 May and one at Kazuma Forest Reserve on 6 July (RC, TT, MB, GH). In the east, there was one along Motloutse River in Mashatu Game Reserve on 23 June 2019 (RH).

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

One was seen on the Chobe floodplain near Ngoma on 27 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI) and one male near Kwetsani Camp, Jao Flats, on 2 July (per THa).

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

Near Shakawe there was one on 26 Sept 2018, one on 20 Dec and three singles from 3 to 7 Sept 2019 (EL, MC, DR). There was one near Sepopa on 16 Aug 2019 (TH). In the Jao Concession in 1922A4 / 1922B3 there was one on 26 and 27 Sept 2018, an adult and an immature on 16 and 22 Dec, an adult and an immature in mid-May 2019 and one on 2 Sept (NP, MB). There was one along Khwai River in 1923B2 on 7 Aug 2018, two singles in the Chitabe Concession in 1923A4 / 1923C2 from 3 to 5 Sept and one near Ditsipe in

1923C2 on 18 Sept (RS, MB, WvS). Single birds were seen near Maun on 21 Sept 2018 and 17 Nov (PH, JR).

On the Chobe floodplain, between Ngoma and Kasane there were two singletons on 21 July 2018 and four records of single birds from 26 to 29 Jan 2019. There was one at Linyanti in 1823B4 on 15 Nov 2018 (GB, MBI).

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

One was at Savute on 16 and 17 Nov 2018 (GB, MBI).

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*

A total of 10 were at Savute on 17 Nov 2018. On Chobe floodplain between Kasane and Ngoma there were two records of single birds on 27 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI). There were three records of single birds, one in Moremi Game Reserve on 27 June and two between Ngoma and Kasane on 3 July (GH). There were two in the Chitabe Concession in 1923C2 on 5 Sept (MB).

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

Heard calling at three locations near Guma Lagoon in 1822C4 on 8 Jul 2019 and from 12 to 14 Aug (WvS). One was heard in Chitabe Concession in 1923B2 on 3 Sept (MB).

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens*

One heard near Shakawe on 22 Sept 2018 (PV), one seen at Gaborone Game Reserve on 12 Jan 2019 (IW) and one heard calling at Guma Lagoon in 1822C4, 12-14 Aug (WvS).

African Crane *Creccopsis egregia*

One was at Gaborone Game Reserve on 8 and 21 Dec 2018 (IW), one at Shakawe on 12 Dec 2018 and one at Jao Concession, in 1922A4, on 7 Jan 2019 (JC, AM).

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

One was in Gaborone Game Reserve on 21 Dec 2018 and 12 Jan 2019, and two there on 19 Jan (IW).

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

Pair at Water Cart Loop, Chobe National Park, near Kasane, on 5 Dec 2018 (GR).

Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus*

In the Jao Concession, in 1922A4 / 1922B3, there were five on 28-30 Sept 2018, 250+ from 16 to 22 Dec, 105 on 7 Jan 2019, circa 300 in mid-May and a total of 11 from 30 Aug to 1 Sept (NP, MB, AM). Along the Khwai River there were two on 10 Aug 2018, four on 27 Sept and two on 17 Aug 2019. (PH, IS, RS, TH). There were four at Third Bridge, Moremi G.R. on 24 Sept 2018, one along Gomoti Channel in 1923A4 on 7 Sept 2019 and one at Ditsipe in 1923C2 on 17 Sept (PH, MB, WvS). There were four near Shakawe on 12 Dec 2018 (RC).

Elsewhere there were four at King's Pool, Linyanti, 19 Nov and three along the Chobe floodplain on 23 Feb near Serondella (RT per BPM, DWNP staff).

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*

At Gaborone Dam, there were ca.10 on 2 Dec 2018, ca.20 on 17 Mar 2019 and one on 20 Sept. At Bokaa Dam there were two on 9 Jan 2019 (AMo, CAB). Elsewhere there six along Shashe River in 2229A2 on 4 Sept 2018 and one on Chobe floodplain near Kasane on 29 Jan (EM, GB, MBI)

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Reported from Shakawe in mid-November 2018 (JB).

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*

There were ca.50 at Nata Sanctuary on 4 Dec (JC).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

At Bokaa Dam, the most important site for the species, there were 751 on 9 Jan 2019, nine on 5 July and 475 on 20 Sept. Elsewhere in south-eastern Botswana there were four at Gaborone Dam on 25 Jan 2019, one at Thagale Dam, on 1 July and one at Dikokonyane Dam in 2426A4 on 25 Aug (CAB). In the north there was one near Third Bridge, Moremi Game Reserve on 24 Sept 2018 and one along Gomoti Channel in 1923A4 on 4 Sept 2019 (PH, MB).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

One, Makgadikgadi Pans, south of Gweta, 21 Nov 2018 (BV per BPM). Singles at Gaborone Dam and Bokaa Dam on 20 Sept (CAB).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Three were seen near Shakawe on 4 Sept 2019 (DR).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was seen in Gaborone Game Reserve on 19 Jan 2019 (IW).

Three-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus*

There were two near Kasane on 26 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI). One was heard calling in Mashatu Game Reserve on 17 and 22 June (RH).

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

In the north, there were 53 on Chobe floodplain between Kasane and Ngoma on 30 Jan 2019 and ca.40 at Samedupi Pan, near Maun on 4 Feb (GB, MBI, CV per BPM). In the south-east, there were two at Thagale Dam on 1 Dec 2018, circa 400 at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan 2019 and eight at Mogobane Dam on 22 Jan (IW, CAB, DG, MMG, HH).

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*

Most records were from Shakawe. There were two near Shakawe on 15 Aug 2018, 12 there on 26 Sept, 13 on 12 Dec and 15+ there on 20 Dec (IS, EL, RC, MC). In 2019, there was a group of 25 and another group of 11 near Shakawe from 8 to 10 July 2019 (MC), 60 there on 3 Sept (DR) and 50+ breeding pairs on 5 and 6 Oct (MC, DR, SO).

On the Chobe floodplain near Kasane, there was one on 21 July 2018, 28 there on 22 July and two on 19 Nov (GB, MB).

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

There was one at Nata Sanctuary on 4 Dec 2018 and one at Xakanaxa, Moremi Game Reserve in June 2019 (RC, GR).

In the south-east there was one at Gaborone Dam on 27 Jan and 16 Feb 2019 and two there on 28 April. Notably there were seven at Mogobane Dam on 24 Feb (CAB, IW).

Scalow's Turaco *Turaco schalowi*

One was at Kasane on 26 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI).

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

One was heard on 25 Oct 2018 near Maun and one heard calling near Island Safari Lodge, Maun on 15-16 Nov and 1 Dec (FMH, JR).

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*

One adult male was seen during a boat trip near Shakawe on 19 Dec (MC).

Alpine Swift *Tachymarpis melba*

One at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 19 April 2019, one at Mashatu Game Reserve on 27 June and two at Gaborone Botanical Gardens on 28 July (AH, RH, IW).

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

One was near Francistown on 4 Dec 2018 and one at Gaborone Dam, 25 Jan 2019 (JC, CAB).

Horus Swift *Apus horus*

Small flock in Mashatu Game Reserve from 17 to 27 June 2019 (RH).

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

One heard calling along Khwai River in 1923B2, 26-28 Sept 2018 (PH), one calling at Shakawe on 12 Dec (JC) and an adult female, Jao Concession, 1922B3 on 17 Dec (PH, JC, MB).

Racket-tailed Roller *Coracias spatulatus*

Four, south of Sibuyu Forest Reserve, in 1925B2 on 31 March 2019 (ID).

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

One at Jao Concession in 1922B3 on 17 Dec 2018, one north of Malotwana in 2426A1 on 5 Feb 2019 and one north of Nata in 1926C1 on 30 March (MB, CAB, ID).

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*

One at Limpopo River Lodge, 2228B4, 2-3 Nov 2018 (IW).

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*

In the Okavango Delta, there were three in Jao Concession in mid-May 2019, two groups, of three and five respectively in Moremi Game Reserve on 27 June and three in Chitabe Concession, in 1923C2, on 7 Sept (MB, GH).

In the north, there was one east of Ngoma on 23 June 2018, two there on 21 July and one at Savute on 16 Nov. Between Kasane and Ngoma, there was one group of four birds, two groups of three birds and a pair from 26 to 29 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI). There was a group of three near Kasane on 1 July 2019, a group of three adults and two juveniles near Ngoma on 3 July and a group of four in 1825A4, north of Kazuma Forest Reserve, on 3 July (GH).

There were two near Francistown in 2127B3 on 12 Dec 2018 (EB).

Brown-backed Honeybird *Prodsticus regulus*

One was reported at Maun on 21 Sept 2018 and one, in Jao Concession in 1922B3 on 5 Sept 2019 (PH, MB).

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumannii*

There were three in Kasane Forest Reserve Extension on 13 Nov 2018, two at Savute on 17 Nov, one in Jao Concession in 1922B3 on 18 Dec, five on Chobe floodplain between Kasane and Ngoma on 26 Jan 2019, also two there on 26 and 29 Jan and one there on 30 Jan (BL per BPM, GB, MBI, MB).

In the CKGR, there were three at Matswere on 7 Feb 2019 and in the south-east, there were two at Sita Pan (2524B1) on 1 Feb (OT per BPM, CAB).

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*

There was one east of Savute in 1824A3 on 18 Nov 2018, circa 20 in Chobe National Park near Kasane on 5 Dec, one in Jao Concession, in 1922B3 on 17 Dec and one near Ngoma on 29 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI, JC, MB).

In the east and south-east, there was one near Dikgonnye in 2426A1 on 9 Dec, five near Sefophe on 31 Dec, six at Bokaa Dam on 13 Jan 2019 and one adult male at Mashatu G.R. on 26 Mar (CAB, IW, TR).

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subuteo*

Two were near Martin's Drift on 3 Dec (IW) and one near Kasane on 26 Jan (GB, MBI).

African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*

Reported from Shakawe in mid-November 2019 (JB).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

One near Kasane on 26 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI). One adult seen and photographed at Gaborone Dam on 26 Jan and 16 Feb (IW).

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paudicola*

At Shakawe, there were 10-15 on 27 Sept 2018, it was common there on 12-13 Dec and there were 20+ there on 2 May 2019 (EL, JC, TT). There were two at Third Bridge, Moremi G.R. on 24 Sept 2018 (PH), one in Jao Concession, in 1922B3 on 14 May 2019 and it was common at Guma Lagoon (1822C4) in July and August 2019 (PH, MB, WvS).

In the east and south-east, there was one near Ramotswa on 21 April 2019, about four along the Motloutse River in Mashatu Game Reserve on 17-22 June (RH), one at Bokaa Dam on 5 Jul and one at Sehatlane Dam, near Thamaga on 15 Jul (AH, RH, CAB)..

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*

Two, near Seronga, in 1822C4 on 19 July 2019 (CS).

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*

In the the north-west, at Shakawe there were 10-15 on 2 May 2019, about four on 8-10 July and one on 4 Sept (TT, MC, DR), there were two in Jao Concession on 26 Sept 2018 and ca.50 there in mid-May (MB, NP) and it was fairly common at Guma Lagoon in 1822C4 on 8-10 July 2019 and 12-14 Aug (WvS).

There were 20-30 at Sibuyu Forest Reserve on 27 Feb 2019 (DH per BPM).

There were a few records in the east and south-east: one at Otse on 21 April 2019, one at Ramotswa S.P. on 22 April, one at Mashatu Game Reserve on 27 June and four at Bokaa Dam on 5 July (CAB, AH, RH).

South African Cliff-Swallow *Hirundo spilodera*

On northbound passage, there were three records: five near Mogojogojo in 2525A4 on 25 March 2019, one at Otse on 21 April and one at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 22 April (CAB, AH). There were also three records on southbound passage: one at Sehatlane Dam near Thamaga on 20 Jul, five in Jao Concession in 1922A4 on 2 Sept and three near Shakawe on 7 Sept (CAB, MB, DR).

Collared Palm Thrush *Cichladusa arquata*

Away from Kasane area, where recorded regularly, there was one record, of a pair of adults, in Jao Concession in 1922B3 on 17 Dec 2018 (MB).

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

Five records of single birds near Kasane, 26-30 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI).

Cuckoo Finch *Anomalospiza imberbis*

Pair of adults, Jao Concession in 1922A4 on 20 Dec 2018 (MB).

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*

Three were at Kgale Hill, Gaborone on 20 April 2019 (AH).

Streaky-headed Seedeater *Crithagra gularis*

One was at Francistown Airport on 5 Nov 2018 (AH). All other records were in south-eastern Botswana. There were two at Taueshele Dam (2425C3) on 9 Mar 2019, one at Kanye on 15 Mar, four at Manyana on 5 May and two west of Mosopa in 2425C2 on 25 July (CAB, BLB).

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 for a species. Observations on breeding or feeding behaviour are also welcomed. Records are from June 2018 to October 2019.

Fulvous Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Two were at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan (CAB)

White-backed Duck *Thassalornis leuconotus*

One was at Broadhurst Sewage Ponds on 27 Feb (CAB).

South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana*

Summer 2019 counts in the south-east of 20 birds included three at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan, two at Bathoen Dam, Kanye and one at Moshupa Dam on 22 Jan (MGG, DG, HH), 12 at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 21 Feb and two at Lobatse Sewage Ponds on 26 Feb (CAB). On 3 March two were at Mogobane Dam (BLB).

Six were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Winter 2019 counts in the south-east totalled 52 birds in July – three at Thagale Dam on 1st, two at Bathoen Dam and four at Taueshela Dam on 3rd, 12 at Bokaa Dam on 5th, two at Gaborone Dam on 10th, six at Sehalthane Dam on 15th and two at Lobatse Sewage Ponds and 21 at Ramotswa Sewage Ponds on 18th (CAB, MGG, DG, HH). There were 50 at Bokaa Dam on 20 Sept (CAB).

Cape Teal *Anas capensis*

Four were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG) and two along Gomoti Channel in 1923A4 on 7 Sept (MB).

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

Ten were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophtalma*

There was a large count of 750 at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan 2019 (CAB).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Six were at Kang Pan on 18 April (IG).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The only records in the summer 2018/19 were two at both Mamokhasi dam near Kanye (TML *et al.*) on 19 Jan and at Mogobane Dam on 3 March (BLB) and Taueshela Dam on 6 March (CAB).

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus (ruber)*

There were 280 at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan (CAB).

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

Small numbers were seen at several sites in SE Botswana in 2019, including 10 at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan, four at Gamoleele Dam and three at Moshupa Dam on 22 Jan, 10 at Gaborone Dam on 25 Jan (DG, MGG, HH. CAB), four at Sephathepathe Dam on 19 Jan (TWL *et al.*), three at Phakalane Sewage Ponds on 27 Feb and two at Mogobane Dam on 3 March (BLB).

Marabou Stork *Laptoptilos crumenifer*

A group of 376 was at Gaborone Dam on 25 Jan 2019 (CAB).

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

One at Thune River, 2228B1, 2-3 Nov 2018 (IW)

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

One was at Maun on 18 June 2019, an unexpected date for the species (GR).

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 in Jan and Feb 2019, outside of expected range of species (LS).

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

One was at Gaborone Dam on 25 Jan 2019 (CAB).

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Recorded just north of the CKGR in 2022D4 on 15 Feb 2019, outside of the expected range of the species (LS).

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

One was at Gaborone Dam on 25 Jan 2019 (CAB).

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

One was at Gaborone Dam on 28 April 2019 (IW).

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 on 19 Jan 2019, outside of the expected range of the species (LS). Twenty were seen at Taueshela Dam west of Mosupa on 3 July, including seven active nests with either adults incubating or dependent young (CAB).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

One was seen along trans-Kalahari highway near Bere in 2222C3 on 7 May 2019 (IG); unexpected date for this species.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostris*

One was at Nata Sanctuary on 4 Dec 2018 (RC).

African Swampphen *Porphyrio madagascrarensis*

Juvenile at Gaborone Game Reserve on 2 Oct 2019 (IW).

Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*

One in pool in middle of graded road near Rasesa in 2426A3 on 9 Dec 2018 (CAB). Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 in Dec 2018 and Jan 2019 (LS); this locality, where the species occurs regularly in summer, extends the known range of this species. Some 18 were noted along the Chobe floodplain between Kasane and Ngoma Bridge on 29 and 30 Jan 2019 (GB, MBI).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Five were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Three were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*

One along Ngotwane River near Ramotswa on 21 Sept 2018 and 15 at Lobatse Sewage Ponds on 26 Sept 2019 (CAB).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

A count of 36 was made at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan 2019 and 14 at Gaborone Dam on 25 and 28 Jan and a single at Phakalane Sewage Ponds on 27 Feb (CAB),

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

One at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

Ten were at Sita Pan (2524B1) on 1 Feb 2019 (CAB).

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

One arrived as a juvenile, in December 2018 and remained up to at least October 2019 just north of CKGR in 2022D4 (LS). One immature at Mabuasehube on 25 March 2019 (per Trevor Ha). The Kalahari is outside of the expected range of this species.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 in Jan and Feb 2019 (LS).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Two at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

One along Thune River, in 2228B1, on 2-3 Nov 2018, outside of expected range of species (IW).

In south-eastern Botswana, away from Gaborone Game Reserve, where it is seen regularly, there were three at Logogwe Pan, northwest of Kanye in 2425C3, on 17 Jan 2019, one at Mogobane Dam on 3 Mar and one along the Ngotwane River below Oodi on 6 Oct (CAB, BLB).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

12 at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*

One at water hole at Elephant Sands Lodge north of Nata in 1926C1 on 24 Sept 2019 (SO).

White-winged Tern *Chidonias leucopterus*

One was near Kang on 26 Nov 2018 (per THa), unexpected in the Kalahari.

High counts included an estimated 500 at Bokaa Dam on 9 Jan 2019, 450 at Gaborone Dam on 28 Jan, 400 at Phakalane Sewage Ponds and 230 at Broadhurst Ponds on 27 Feb (CAB).

African Mourning Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*

One at Nata on 5 Oct 2018 and also recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 in Jan and Feb 2019 (PH, LS). These records are outside the known range of this species.

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*

One heard calling at Mokolodi Game Reserve, near Gaborone, on 22 June 2019 (GH). This species is rare in south-eastern Botswana.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus*

One at Gaborone Game Reserve on 12 Jan 2019 (IW). One at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 6 July (DG, MGG).

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristata*

One at Taueshele Dam, west of Mosopa, on 9 Mar 2019 (CAB). This species is rare in south-eastern Botswana.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 on 15 Feb 2019 (LS). This record is outside of the expected range of species.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*

One was at Bathoen (Mmakgodumo) Dam at Kanye on 3 Aug 2018 and one at Gaborone Dam at the Metsimaswaane River inflow on 2 Dec 2018 and 10 Jul 2019 (CAB, MGG, DG, HH, BLB). One was seen at Mogobane Dam on 22 Jan 2019 (MGG, DG, HH).

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii*

One at Engen One Stop at Kang on 7 Oct 2019 (SO). This record is well outside of the known range of this species and is the first record in the Kalahari.

Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii*

Male at Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 22 Nov 2018 (CAB). This species is rare in south-eastern Botswana.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*

Two females, Crocodile Pools, Notwane on 16 Aug 2019 (CAB). This species is unexpected in winter.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*

One at Sibuyu Forest Reserve on 27 Feb 2019 (DH per BPM). Pair calling along Limpopo River in 2326D4, north of Olifants Drift, on 21 Sept 2019 (JB). This latter record extends southwards the known range of the species in Botswana.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

One north of Dikgonnye in 2426A1 on 9 Dec (CAB). This record is well south of the normal range of the species.

Cape Penduline-tit *Anthoscopus minutus*

Small group of four to five at Shakawe on 4 Sept 2019 at northern edge of distributional range (DR).

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

One at Pandamatenga in 1825D1 on 4 July 2019 (GH). This record extends the known distribution of this species in Botswana.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

Two birds heard calling in reed-beds along Ngotwane River below Oodi in 2426A3 on 6 Sept 2019 (BLB). Previously only recorded in south-eastern Botswana from Gaborone.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*

Recorded at Nata Lodge on 6 Oct 2018, (TW) and at Kubu Island, in in 2025D4 on 23 July 2019 (GH). Both these records extend the known range of the species.

Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*

One was at Savute, 17 Nov 2018 (GB, MBI).

Short-toed Rock Thrush *Monticola brevipes*

One, seen and photographed, Jao Concession in 1922A4 on 1 Sept (MB). A remarkable record as out of usual habitat and well away from its known distribution in eastern Botswana and Namibia

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

One at Notwane Dam, south of Gaborone, on 23 Jan 2019 (HH). First record of this species in Botswana away from northern wetlands, though at the edge of its distribution in South Africa.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4 on 15 Feb 2019 (LS). This record is outside of the expected range of the species.

Blue Waxbill *Uraegunthus angolensis*

Recorded just north of CKGR, in 2022D4, in June 2018, at southern edge of distributional range (LS).

Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos*

5 at Kalahari Rest on 19 April 2019 (IG); this species is sparse in the Kalahari.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Recorded just north of CKGR in 2022D4, 2-7 Jan 2019 (LS).

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*

Two were at Kang Pan on 18 April 2019 (IG).

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*

One was west of Orapa on 23 Dec 2018 (MB), one near Dikgonnye in 2426A1 on 28 Dec and one near Thamaga in 2425D1 on 20 Jul 2019 (CAB).

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

Three were at Kalahari Rest, in 2322D1 on 7 May 2019 (IG); this record outside of the expected range of the species.

Correction to Babbler 64

A record of an early date of Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* at Moremi Gorge on 28 Oct 2017 should have read 28 Sept 2017.

Stephanie J. Tyler & Chris A. Brewster,
c/o BirdLife Botswana, P O Box 26691, Gaborone

Contributors of records

AH	Andrew Hester	JJ	Jerrie Jordan
AM	Anthony Mulligan	JR	John Randell
AMo	Andy Moore	JvdM	Jamie van der Merwe
BL	Babusi Latiwa	LS	Linda Style
BLB	BirdLife Botswana	KM	Kedisaletse Mongadibane
BPM	Bird Population Monitoring	KMo	Kelebogile Moyenga
BS	Baz Sanderbergh	KMcQ	Kylie McQualter
BV	Bart Vandepitte	MB	Martin Benadie
CAB	Chris Brewster	MBI	Marjorie Blair
CS	Curt Sagell	MC	Marc Cronje
CV	Cornelius Vanderpost	MGG	Mike Goldsworthy
DG	Daphne Goldsworthy	MN	Mompoloki Ngele
DH	Dean Hatty	MP	Morne Pretorius
DR	Dominic Rollinson	NP	Niall Perrins
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks	OT	Ontuetshe Tshwela
EB	Elton Bartlett	PH	Pieter Heslinga
EL	Enrico Liebenberg	PV	Pieter Verster
EM	Elaine Middleton	RB	Renier Balt
FMH	Frances Murray Hudson)	RC	Ralie Claassen
GB	Gavin Blair	RH	Ross Hawkins
GH	Gerry Horn	RS	Rainer Summers
GR	Grant Reed	RT	Robert Taylor
HH	Harold Hester	SO	Sue Oertli
ID	Ian Davidson	SJ	Sally Jobson
IG	Iain Guthrie	TH	Toni Hart
IW	Ian White	THa	Trevor Hardaker
IS	Ian Stewart	TR	Tom Riffel
JB	Jason Boyce	TW	Tony Woods
JC	Japie Claassen	TT	Terry Terreblanche
JD	Johan Drotzky	TWL	Tumelo Wise Lempehu
		WvS	Wouter van Spijker

Report from the Records Subcommittee: Category A Records

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

Species	Square	Date	Comments
Corn Crake <i>Crex crex</i>	1923D3	10.12.18	One seen and photographed at Maun (L. Cassidy)
Baillon's Crake <i>Porzana pusilla</i>	2228B1	2-3.11.18	One seen and photographed along Thune River (I. White)
Buff-breasted Sandpiper <i>Calidris subruficollis</i>	2024C4	2.3.19	One seen and photographed north of Rakops (I. White). First accepted record for Botswana.
Long-tailed Jaeger <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	1923A4	9.9.18	One adult seen and photographed at Bodumatau, Moremi Game Reserve (C. Dandridge). Second accepted record for Botswana.
Olive Woodpecker <i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>	1725C3	17.5.16	One male seen and photographed at Kasane (R. D. Randall). Third accepted record for Botswana.

The accepted record of Buff-breasted Sandpiper brings the total number of bird species recorded in Botswana to 600.

Record not accepted

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* at Shakawe, 12 December 2018.

Chris A. Brewster,
Records Subcommittee, BirdLife Botswana

Some breeding records in 2018/2019

Compiled by Stephanie J. Tyler & Chris A. Brewster

Species	Date	Location	Nest site; nest contents	Obs.
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	25 Jan 2019	Gaborone Dam	Pair adults + 6 tiny young	CAB
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	6 Oct 2019	Ngotwane River below Oodi	Pair adults + 5 young, circa one week old	CAB
South African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	4 Aug 2019	Sehatlane Dam 2425C2	Pair adult + 7 tiny ducklings	BLB
Natal Spurfowl <i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>	6 Jul 2019	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adult + 1 young, 10 days old	DG, MGG
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	18 Jul 2019	Ramotswa Sewage Ponds	Adult incubating on platform of thorns in water	CAB
Great Crested Grebe <i>Prodiiceps cristatus</i>	15 Jul 2019	Sehatlane Dam 2425C2	Adult incubating on nest on pile of vegetation in dam	CAB
White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	3 Jul 2019	Taueshele Dam 2425C3	7 active nests	CAB
White-backed Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	10 Sept 2018	Kweneng 2325D4	Adult on nest with one month old young	CAB
Wahlberg's Eagle <i>Hieraaetus wahlbergi</i>	25 Nov 2018	In 2426A1, north of Malotwana	Adult sitting tight on nest 5 m above ground under crown of <i>Acacia erioloba</i>	CAB
African Fish Eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	3 Nov 2018	Thune River 2228B1	Nest with recently fledged young	IW
African Fish Eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	2 Oct 2019	Gaborone Game Reserve	Pair adults with just fledged young	IW
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	22 Sept 2019	Gaborone Game Reserve	Pair adults with three chicks	IW
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	20 Sept 2019	Gaborone Dam	Two records, both of pair adults + 1 ten day old young	CAB
Blacksmith Lapwing <i>Vanellus armatus</i>	20 Sept 2019	Bokaa Dam	Two records: Pair adult + 2 tiny young, pair adults + 2 two week old young	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	9 Jan 2019	Bokaa Dam	Pair ad + 1 young, circa 10 days old	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	25 Jan 2019	Gaborone Dam	Pair ad + 2 one week old young	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	20 Sept 2019	Gaborone Dam	Two records: pair adults + 2 tiny young, pair adults + 1 tiny young	CAB
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	20 Sept 2019	Bokaa Dam	Two records: Pair adult + 2 chicks, pair adult + 1 chick	CAB

Cape Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	16 Nov 2018	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult incubating in nest, platform of sticks, circa 3 metres above ground	CAB
Red-faced Mousebird <i>Urocolius indicus</i>	26 Sept 2018	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Ad incubating in nest in <i>Boscia foetida</i> , 2.5 m above ground	CAB
Black-headed Oriole <i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	16 Nov 2018	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult incubation in nest, cup of grass in <i>Acacia caffra</i> , circa 2 m above ground	CAB
Arrow-marked Babbler <i>Turdoides jardineii</i>	7 Dec 2018	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult bringing food to nest, circa 4 m above ground in fork of tree	CAB
Cape Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	20 Jan 2019	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult feeding young in nest in hole in <i>Aloe marlothii</i>	CAB
Kurrichane Thrush <i>Turdus libonyana</i>	13 Dec 2018	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Adult incubating in nest 3.5 m above ground in fork of tree	CAB
Capped Wheatear <i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	23 Jan 2019	Gaborone Dam	Pair ad + 2 dependent young	IW
Familiar Chat <i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>	13 Sept 2018	Notwane	Pair ad + 3 dependent young	CAB
Amethyst Sunbird <i>Chalcomitra amethystine</i>	5 Oct 2019	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Active nest: adult incubating	DG, MGG
White-bellied Sunbird <i>Cinnyris talatala</i>	18 Sept 2019	Crocodile Pools, Notwane	Pair adults + 2 fledglings	DG, MGG
Red-headed Finch <i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	20 Jul 2019	Near Thamaga in 2425D1	2 begging young with adults	CAB

Observers: BLB; BirdLife Botswana; CAB Chris Brewster; DG Daphne Goldsworthy; MGG Mike Goldsworthy; IW Ian White.

If you find any evidence of breeding activity of any species in Botswana, then please do send details to BirdLife Botswana.



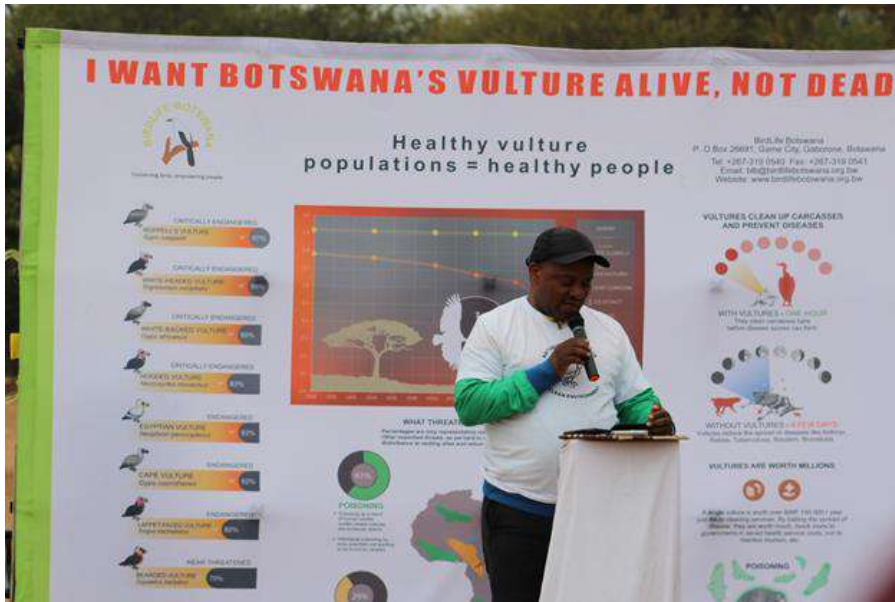
Botswana Conservation NGOs, government and business sector come together to celebrate the International Vulture Awareness Day

BirdLife Botswana in conjunction with other conservation organisations in Botswana celebrated the International Vulture Awareness Day (IVAD) on the 7th September at the capital city Gaborone. The event started with a march from the venue Gaborone Secondary School Grounds passing in front of the City Council and Museum, past the State House, returning through the Main Mall back to the venue. The International Vulture Awareness Day has been commemorated before in Botswana by different organisation, independently. However, this year, Non-governmental conservation organisations (such as BirdLife Botswana, Cheetah Conservation Botswana, Kalahari Conservation Society, Kalahari Research and Conservation, Mokolodi Nature Reserve, Raptors Botswana), the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, and the Department of Environmental Affairs, chose to jointly commemorate this day and lift a red flag on issues surrounding our vulture populations in Botswana. The IVAD is commemorated each year internationally on the first Saturday of September and is aimed at publicising the conservation of vultures to a wider audience and to highlight the importance of vulture conservation. Recently, (June 2019) a massive total of 537 vultures and two tawny eagles were found dead in northeast Botswana adding up to a devastating statistics of poisoned vultures report.



Morning march by the participants

The commemoration themed **Vultures: Nature's Solution for a Clean Environment** was attended by at least about 240 people. The event was graced by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) from the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism (MENT) Mr Felix Monggae, the permanent secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture who gave the keynote address and the closing remarks respectively. The DPS mentioned that the threats to vultures are both severe and challenging to address, and demand for a change in conservation action supported by all stakeholders, including many who have so far not recognised the importance of vultures. He further said that lessons learned and good practice can be applied more widely but new and creative solutions need to be found to address the clear and present danger that threatens to drive this spectacular group of birds to extinction. The DPS emphasised that many stakeholders concerned with vulture conservation must work together, and not rest until all vulture species are safe from their threat. He further reflected on the status of vultures in Botswana by mentioning that there are only five vulture species in Botswana and three are listed as critically endangered and two as endangered. Recent studies have reported a population declined of 79% for Hooded Vulture, 78% for White-Headed Vulture, 61% for Lappet-Faced Vulture and 33% of White-Backed Vulture between 1995 and 2016. An assessment of White-Backed Vulture nesting numbers between 2007 and 2017 in northern Botswana showed a decline of 53%. This is indeed a cause for concern! Now reflect on the recent record loss and what its influence is to these trends.



Deputy Permanent Secretary from MENT Mr Felix Monggae giving the keynote address

There were atleast 65 school children who were performing different entertainment acts such as drama, poems and marimba to the audience. Of noteworthy, the event pooled several donations from the business sector outside the conservation segment to provide various support. This effort has shown positive results in raising the profile for the need to conserve the vultures in Botswana. The donations were collected from Mr. Veg (fruits and vegetables retailer), Pie City, and Sefalana Cash and Carry who provided snacks, (pies, apples, peanuts, drinks and water) for the day. There was support from Boitekanelo Health Institute tertiary education and Botswana Red Cross Society with first aid ambulance. The Botswana Police service provided escort during the march. Five representative players from the Botswana National rugby team which is called the Vultures also attended the event wearing their team gear. There was a live White Backed Vulture brought for public viewing.



BirdLife Botswana member Mogoditshane Primary School children posing for the photo after the commemoration



Tertiary student performing drama for the audience



A live vulture brought for public view at the commemoration service

Vultures are an ecologically vital group of birds that face a range of threats in all areas they occur and populations of many species are under pressure and some species are facing extinction. Commemorating the day was one of our efforts to spread the message to conserve vulture. Vultures are perfectly adapted to keep the environment clean and healthy by efficiently locating and consuming carcasses, recycling energy through the food web and preventing the spread of diseases. It is an unpaid role hence saving them will save our finances. Therefore, everyone should take part in repaying vultures for their services, by giving them the protection they deserve. The success of the event was made possible by the organisations shown in the picture below whom we are very thankful to. For more information about vultures, IVAD, and BirdLife Botswana please contact Keddy Moleofi at 00267 3190540 or education@birdlifebotswana.org.bw or visit www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw.



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Article by
Keddy Moleofi
Bird Population Monitoring Programme Coordinator
BirdLife Botswana
www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON BIRDS OF RELEVANCE TO BOTSWANA

In Namibia Holger Kolberg has produced a series of papers on the waterbirds of that country. These are titled **Trends in Nambian Waterbird populations** and cover all waterbird groups and are based on waterbird counts in that country up to 2008. The series of papers are published in *Lanioturdus*, the journal of the Namibia Bird Club. Some date back to 2012.

Genetic Structure among *Charadrius* plovers on the African mainland and islands of Madagascar and St Helena by Natalie Dos Remedios, Clemens Küpper, Tamás Székely, Sama Zefania, Fiona Burns, Mark Bolton, Patricia L. M. Lee
First published: 12 November 2018 IBIS online;
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12694>

Abstract

Colonisation of islands by long-distance dispersers has great impact on genetic diversification among populations and may spearhead speciation events. We investigated intra- and interspecific divergence in *Charadrius* plovers with populations on mainland Africa, Madagascar and St Helena. We analysed microsatellite loci and sequence data from four nuclear and two mitochondrial gene regions. *Charadrius* plovers are shorebirds with high dispersal and mobility. Our results confirmed genetic differentiation between Madagascar and mainland populations of three plover species (White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*, Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* and, based on sequence data only, Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*) but highlight substantial variation in levels of intraspecific divergence among the three species. Namely, the Kittlitz's Plover, a dispersive habitat generalist with a polygamous mating system, exhibited lower island–mainland differentiation (0.05% *COI* sequence divergence) compared with the two monogamous species, the White-fronted Plover (0.6% *COI* divergence) and Three-banded Plover (1.6% *COI* divergence). In addition, past colonization of the islands of St Helena and Madagascar by ancestors of today's Kittlitz's Plover has led to the evolution of two endemic island species, the Madagascar Plover *Charadrius thoracicus* and the more closely-related St Helena Plover *Charadrius sanctaehelenae*. We discuss the factors driving species differences in island–mainland divergence and highlight the importance of conserving genetically unique island populations and island habitats to safeguard future evolutionary potential.

Multi-locus phylogeny of African pipits and longclaws (Aves: Motacillidae) highlights taxonomic inconsistencies

Darren W. Pietersen , Andrew E. McKechnie, Raymond Jansen, Ian T. Little, Armanda D.S. Bastos (First published: 11 October 2018)

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12683>

Abstract

The globally distributed avian family Motacillidae consists of five to seven genera (*Anthus*, *Dendronanthus*, *Tmetothylacus*, *Macronyx* and *Motacilla*, and depending on the taxonomy followed, *Amaurocichla* and *Madanga*) and 66–68 recognized species, of which 32 species in four genera occur in sub-Saharan Africa. The taxonomy of the Motacillidae has been contentious, with variable numbers of genera, species and subspecies proposed and some studies suggesting greater taxonomic diversity than currently recognized (five genera and 67 species). Using one nuclear (*Mb*) and two mitochondrial (*cyt b* and CO1) gene regions amplified from DNA extracted from contemporary and museum specimens, we investigated the taxonomic status of 56 of the currently recognized motacillid species and present the most taxonomically complete and expanded phylogeny of this family to date.

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

New Study predicts that Waterbirds in Africa will suffer from Climate Change

Modelled predictions of future suitable habitat for waterbirds has some stark warnings: species breeding in Africa and the Middle East will suffer major losses of suitable habitat across their ranges and high Arctic breeders will see their habitats disappear. European species will also be on the move, with the NE shift reported in many studies likely to continue as the climate warms. Mitigating these effects will take massive collaboration across the flyway and new approaches to conservation. Protecting critical sites will become increasingly dependent on holistic national policies that integrate landscape scale plans for land use and water management.

Wetlands International and **BirdLife International** launched results of a major climate impact study at the 7th Meeting of the Parties (MOP7) of the UNEP African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) in Durban, South Africa. This new study, which is a part of the **Climate Resilient Flyway** project, shows that many High Arctic breeding waders and African waterbirds are predicted to suffer more from the impacts of climate change than the European ones. Therefore, it is essential that their freshwater habitats are safeguarded and managed as climate buffer as much as possible.

The authors predicted the changes in monthly discharge and inundation of rivers till 2050, and changes in the distribution of suitable climatic conditions for 247 waterbird species in the African-Eurasian flyway. The researchers also investigated how sites that are currently internationally important for waterbirds, will be affected by climate change and how well the network of such sites will be able to facilitate the anticipated range shifts.

“Worryingly, species breeding in Africa and the Middle East will suffer major losses of suitable habitat across their ranges, while most species breeding in the temperate zone of Europe will be able to respond to climate change by shifting their distributions” says Frank Breiner, the modeller at Wetlands International.

Dr Stuart Butchart, Chief Scientist at BirdLife International and a collaborator on the study, echoes this concern: “Freshwater wetlands are among the most highly threatened ecosystems on the planet, and climate change will only exacerbate these threats. Concerted action is urgently needed to conserve them effectively, focusing on critical sites which are of international significance for waterbirds including Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas and taking into account the projected impacts of climate change for each species at each site.”

Such massive concern calls for a landscape-scale solution. While reflecting on a possible solution, Merijn van Leeuwen, manager of the **Climate Resilient Flyway** project of which the study is part, observes, “Climate change adaptation for waterbirds in Africa is not realistically possible without integrating the requirements of birds into ecosystem-based adaptation for humans. In practice, this means that we need to integrate our understanding

of ecological requirements into national policies and landscape scale plans for land use and water management.”

Blood and bone lead levels in South Africa's Gyps vultures: Risk to nest-bound chicks and comparison with other avian taxa

Linda van den Heever, Hanneline Smit-Robinson, Vinny Naidoo & Andrew E. McKechnie

Abstract

Poisoning, including secondary lead poisoning, is cited as the single most important cause of vulture mortalities in Africa. To evaluate the prevalence of lead poisoning among South Africa's *Gyps* vultures compared to other non-scavenging birds, we obtained blood and bone samples from Cape (*Gyps coprotheres*) and White-backed (*G. africanus*) vultures. We found that 66% of White-backed Vultures (n= 110, including 85 nest-bound chicks sampled at Dronfield Nature Reserve) and 80% of Cape Vultures (n = 15) had blood lead in excess of 10 µg/dL, the upper limit of background exposure. Average blood lead were 15.4 µg/dL and 29.7 µg/dL for White-backed and Cape vultures, respectively. Bone samples revealed that 12% of White-backed Vultures (n = 18) and 9% of Cape Vultures (n=75) suffered from subclinical to severe clinical lead poisoning upon their deaths. By contrast, none of the 40 blood, bone or liver samples obtained from non-scavenging bird species were found to exceed background exposure levels.

Our results suggest that, unlike non-scavenging birds, the scavenging lifestyle of *Gyps* vultures subjects them to lead poisoning on a regular basis. Had environmental sources of lead (e.g., dust) been the source of the lead poisoning at the White-backed Vulture breeding colony at Dronfield, all the chicks would have displayed similar blood lead concentrations. Instead the values ranged from barely detectable to very high, leading us to conclude that metallic lead fragments regurgitated by parents during feeding are responsible for the elevated lead levels in some of the chicks at this site. We conclude the likely source of these particles to be fragments of lead ammunition embedded in the carcasses of hunted animals. These results add to a growing body of evidence underscoring the threat posed by the use of lead ammunition and its potential role in the declines of vultures and other scavenging taxa.

Home-range size and movement patterns of Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus* in southern Africa

Richard P Reading, James Bradley, Peter Hancock, Rebecca Garbett, Moses Selebatso & Glyn Maude,

Ostrich, 90:1, 73-77, DOI: 10.2989/00306525.2018.1537314

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.2989/00306525.2018.1537314>

Abstract

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* populations have declined dramatically in recent years, but we know little about their ecology. We radio-tagged four vultures in northern Botswana to gather data on movement and home-range patterns. Hooded Vultures were primarily sedentary at night. Hooded Vultures moved similar distances and speeds during the wet and dry season, and travelled over similar home ranges as measured using minimum convex polygons (MCP), but used much smaller core areas during the dry (breeding) season. We found significant differences in mean distances and speeds moved among different birds, and when comparing day to night, but not between the wet (non-breeding) and dry (breeding) season or by year. All of the variables we tested, including individual vulture differences, season, year and number of fixes, significantly influenced 95% MCP and kernel density estimate (KDE) home-range sizes. Hooded Vultures used significantly smaller KDE home-range sizes during the dry (breeding season) than in the wet (non-breeding) season. Hooded Vultures travelled smaller daily distances over smaller home ranges than most other vulture species for which data exist.

Changes in nesting numbers and breeding success of African White-backed 1 Vultures (*Gyps africanus*) in the Okavango Delta, Botswana

Leungo B.L. Leepile, Glyn Maude, Pete Hancock, Brian Bridges, Robyn Hartley & Arjun Amar

Submitted to Conservation International

* Corresponding author: lpilleu001@myuct.ac.za, +27 788254476

Abstract

African White-backed Vultures have recently been uplisted to Critically Endangered by the IUCN due to declines across their range. Poisoning is widely accepted as the major reason for these declines. Botswana supports a high number of this species, but as yet no published information exists on their population trends or breeding success, however, mass poisonings within Botswana and neighbouring countries have killed hundreds of White-backed Vultures in recent years. We therefore expected that nesting numbers may have declined in this region, if these poisoning events are killing local breeding birds.

We used information from aerial surveys conducted between 2006 and 2017 in Khwai and Linyanti, two important breeding areas for this species in the Okavango Delta, to determine if there was any change in nesting numbers of White-backed Vultures, and also examine whether there had been any changes in breeding success. Results showed an overall 53.5% decline in nesting numbers; with a greater decline in Linyanti than in Khwai. In both areas breeding success was significantly lower in 2017 than it was ten years ago. Population viability analysis suggested that if the productivity levels detected in 2017 were a true indication of current productivity levels for this population, and if recent high poisoning rates continue, this population could go extinct in the area in the next 13 years.

Cross-breeding Blacksmith Lapwing and Spur-winged Lapwing – research by Samuel Lenard Chihana in Liwonde National Park

In October, 2011 Samuel Chichana was doing Boat Safaris and could see a Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* chasing all Spur-winged Lapwings *V. spinosus* around apart from one Spur-winged Lapwing which was always very close to this Blacksmith Lapwing. He suspected it was a pair.

On 15 November, 2011 he saw the Blacksmith Lapwing chasing other Spur-winged Lapwings and all the other birds around this area and later on I saw this Lapwing sitting on the nest. On 21 November he saw the eggs from the boat.

On 22 November, he asked for an Early Morning Guides' Walk at 5:00a.m instead of doing other tasks at the Camp and asked all the Safari Guides' to join him with the aim of showing them all the cross-breeding pair and to try to take photos of the eggs.

Only two managed to do this walk. Leonard's friend Frank joined him and they saw and took photo of the mixed pair's four eggs.



Eggs of Crossbreeding Blacksmith's & Spur-winged Lapwings at Skimmer bank South of Mvuu Camp-Liwonde National Park.

On 29 November, 2011 Leonard saw this three chicks in the nest, the third chick having just hatched and the female was still incubating the remaining

egg.it.



Cross-breeding pair Blacksmith and Spur-winged Lapwings with their newly hatched chick, one of the three chicks seen on 29 November 2011

The full account of this extraordinary pair and other hybrid pairs with many photos is available from the editor.

Birds tell Us: BirdLife Botswana taps into people's love of birds to protect them and their environment from climate change effect.

According to statistics from the Department of Meteorological Services the extreme heat wave with temperatures climbing above 40 Degrees Celsius which hit the country recently has broken several maximum temperature records. This is a real sign that climate change is happening. Climate change is an existential threat to birds, people and the environment, and addressing this threat requires sustained, targeted action across the country. BirdLife Botswana engages people to participate to accumulate the bird data that could guide or inform decisions on birds and biodiversity conservation through a Bird Population Monitoring Programme. The Bird Population Monitoring Programme is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird population trends. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as one hour in February and November annually from a 2km route.

As of now, there is bird data accumulated for seven years which informs decisions in bird conservation and huge gratitude is owed to the BPM participants across the country who volunteer their time to collect the bird information. It is noted that the last four years have experienced uneven climate variations; in some years there were extreme heat waves and in others it was wetter during both counting periods. However, November 2018 has been the worst of all counts because it had extreme heat waves and was very dry with little or no rainfall in some areas. A quick observation from the submitted November counts shows that 70% of the counters have recorded lower bird species numbers compared to other periods and many migrants arrived very late. The common migrants like Cuckoos and Red-back Shrikes were missing in many records. The number of doves recorded has declined compared to previous counts; for example, Cape Turtle-Doves show very low records in November 2018.



Common Migrant Red-backed Shrike, Photo credit: Ian White

The analysis of more than seven years' worth of data reveals the decline of some species, and the recovery and increase of others. This provides a deeper understanding of conservation measures that can help birds and the environment they live in. If Botswana continues to be part of this Programme in 20 years' time, the results will reveal the effects of climate change to the environment. If bird populations decline, the environment they live in is altered because they provide ecological benefits for the full functioning of the ecosystem. For instance, birds eat insects. Birds are a natural way to control pests in gardens, on farms, and other places. A group of birds gliding through the air can easily eat hundreds of insects each day. Plants are also dependent on birds for multiplication. Many fruit-eating birds help disperse seeds. After eating fruit, they carry the seeds in their intestines and deposit them in new places. Nectar-feeding birds are important pollinators, meaning they move the pollen from flower to flower to help fertilize the sex cells and create new plants. One can imagine the devastation which would take place were birds to completely disappear from an area.



Nectar and pollen-eating bird Marico Sunbird

Anyone can take part in monitoring from beginner bird watchers to experts, and one can participate from one's farm, field, village outskirts, or anywhere convenient in the country.

Please join the count in February 2020 by contacting Mrs Keddy Moleofi at BirdLife Botswana at education@birdlifebotswana.org.bw or 3190540/1. After a while with some practice, you'll have a good idea of how many birds are present at your local birding sites with just a quick glance.

Keddy Moleofi
BirdLife Botswana

A review:

Observations and experiences with birds breeding in Botswana

by Ken & Mel Oake

Two long-time residents of Maun and members of BLB, Ken and Mel Oake, have published a book on birds of Botswana. As Pete Hancock has written on the flyer, "This is no ordinary, run-of-the-mill bird-book - it is a lifetime's active and dedicated observation in some of Botswana's finest birding areas packed into one large volume. Ken Oake is a well-known birder in northern Botswana, and his special interest is in nesting birds. In this regard he has a unique and extraordinary talent for finding birds' nests, and the species accounts that feature most of Botswana's breeding birds form the basis for this book."

"Although amateur birders, the Oakes have kept meticulous records over a protracted period so that the book in its entirety is an accurate chronicle of Botswana's birdlife and contemporary bird conservation issues in the country. However it is not a scientific treatise – it is embellished with personal accounts of the trials and tribulations that go with pursuing any worthwhile dream, and this makes it eminently readable. The Oakes' passion for birds brings the pages to life.

The species accounts can be dipped into at random, but most people would probably read the book from cover to cover. This is because the Oakes have made so many interesting and original observations on the birds - they have not just seen, but have photographed hitherto unrecorded bird behaviour. This is one of the real strengths of the book. The comprehensive set of photographs that accompany the breeding records add colour and authenticity to the observations. The line drawings and colour illustrations bring an artistic touch to the book. This book is a major contribution to our knowledge of Botswana's avifauna. It is unlikely to be superseded and will certainly become a collector's item."

Ken and Mel are talented artists in their own right. The book, which has 496 pages and includes over 1100 colour photographs, will sell for P975. Examples of some of the pages are appended above. Publishing a niche book like this is no easy matter, so the authors are keen to receive pre-orders if possible. If you would indeed like to reserve a copy, please contact the authors at: P.O. Box 108, Maun, Botswana. Email. okavangoceramics@gmail.com. Any bibliophile who appreciates Botswana's birds, will want to secure a copy of this incredible book.

Details of the book: 496 pages, including over 1,100 colour photographs. Format, A4. Binding: Flexi cover, stitched. ISBN: 978-99968-0-804-3

Harold Hester

