

Summary of the 2005 ringing season in Namibia.

Holger Kolberg

The 2005 ringing season ended on 30 June 2006 and the following is a summary of data received by 31 July.

Namibian ringers once again excelled, trapping 16 650 birds of 298 species. Out of this total, 15 842 were newly ringed birds, making this the highest number of birds ringed in Namibia in one season, easily beating the record set last season. Ursula Franke was the top ringer with over 3 000 birds, followed by Tim Osborne and Dirk Heinrich, both of whom ringed well over 2 500 birds. Dirk was again the top ringer in terms of number of species, followed by Ursula and Steve Braine. Common Tern head the list of species ringed, followed by Red-billed Quelea and Lark-like Bunting. Not surprisingly, Pale Chanting Goshawk top the list of 405 raptors of 33 species ringed, but only two vulture species were caught. The list of wetland birds is headed by Common Tern, followed by White Pelican and Black Tern; in total 2 855 birds of 47 species were ringed in this category. Ten out of fifteen Namibian endemic species were ringed (183 birds in total). In terms of localities, Mile 4 just pips the Osborne and the Heinrich residences. Birds were ringed at 672 different localities.

Several species specific projects were continued. Mark Boorman's tern ringing at Mile 4 continues to yield interesting data and controls. Rod Braby continued the work on the Damara Terns and for the first time news of controls from outside Namibia (West Africa) were received. Dirk has continued the nest box work in Daan Viljoen with some very interesting results. The pelican ringing at Hardap is in its third season and has already resulted in four amazing recoveries. The vulture ringing in Etosha and Namib-Naukluft continued despite the lack of colour rings. Several ringers are collecting blood samples for DNA analysis for a global project on bird taxonomy.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this season is the number of trainee ringers currently being taught (eighteen). This can only bode well for the future of bird ringing in this country.

News Flash

Bagatelle Kalahari Game Ranch reports that in June 2006, it found one sick and two dead White-backed Vultures on their property. They contacted NARREC for advice, but despite their ministrations, the sick bird died. Two more birds of the same species were found dead on a neighbouring portion of the farm Bagatelle. From the symptoms, it appears that the birds were poisoned. Readers are asked to please report any incidents of poisoning or other unnatural deaths to Raptors Namibia.

Raptors ringed

Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk	126
Lappet-faced Vulture	65
White-backed Vulture	49
Pearl-spotted Owlet	34
Greater Kestrel	22
Gabar Goshawk	16
Shikra	15
Rock Kestrel.....	14
African Scops-Owl	6
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	6
Little Sparrowhawk	5
Pygmy Falcon	5
African Hawk Eagle	4
Augur Buzzard.....	4
Tawny Eagle	4
Barn Owl	3
Black-shouldered Kite	3
African Fish-Eagle	2
Brown Snake-Eagle.....	2
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	2
Lanner Falcon.....	2
Secretarybird	2
Southern White-faced Owl	2
Spotted Eagle-Owl	2
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	2
Dickinson's Kestrel.....	1
Jackal Buzzard	1
Lizard Buzzard.....	1
Martial Eagle	1
Steppe Buzzard	1
Verreaux's Eagle.....	1
Wahlberg's Eagle	1
Western Banded Snake-Eagle	1

Raptors Namibia Website can be found at

www.nnf.org.na/RAPTORS/index.htm

Have a look! It's well worth a visit and has something for everyone in the various sections.

There are still some things to be added, besides being regularly updated. Alice would welcome any suggestions for improvements and/or additions.

Any and all ideas or comments welcome...! Send them to

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"Poisons and Pesticides - A guide to safe use"

Liz Komen

Over the past few years, there has been an ongoing campaign in Namibia to increase general knowledge concerning predators, poisons, pesticides and the safety of people and wildlife when pesticides are used. Special attention has been given to the illegal use of pesticides to kill predators and to the negative effects on scavenging birds of prey. A new publication, "Poisons and Pesticides - a guide to safe use" aims to provide a basic understanding of pesticides and the effects on wildlife. The booklet covers much of the subject material of five workshops organized in response to the poor attitudes and knowledge displayed by sales personnel, specifically of agricultural pesticide products; solutions to livestock/predator conflicts, libel for misinformation, personal dangers of mishandling of products and negative effects on the environment and wildlife. The workshops were held in September 2005, the time of year when an increase in complaints/reactions to predators on farmlands is often noted.

The workshops and the publication were made possible through the collaborative support of the Namibia Nature Foundation / Swedish International Development Agency (NNF/Sida) micro-grant project, Vulture Group Namibia, NARREC, AGRA coop. Namibia Bird Club and Raptors Namibia.

With September 2006 just around the corner, "Poisons and Pesticides - A guide to safe use" is timely, as situations that arise highlight the ongoing need for information. Two examples of this have just been attended to. The first example is rather shocking, considering the amount of publicity that has been given to vultures; a Khomas region farmer simply killed (about) eight vultures, both Lappet-faced and White-backed, that he found disabled from poison on his farm. The second example is of another aspect of this issue; a Karas region farmer brought poison bait into Namibia with "full particulars" for purchasing further quantities of this product. The bait, filled with monofluoroacetate, is totally illegal in Namibia. The product was traced to an unsuccessful research project recently terminated in South Africa. However, the positive point from the two cases cited is: negative events do come to light as more and more Namibians are alerted to the poison/pesticide issues and willing to cooperate in order to halt abuse.

The booklet introduces the chemical classes used in pesticides, describes the meaning of the signs and symbols on the prescribed labels of pesticide packages, lists the symptoms of mild, moderate and severe poisoning and provides a guide to basic first-aid. The booklet ends with three tables that describe poisoning in animals including the chemical classes and specific active ingredients of pesticides implicated in most wildlife poisoning events, the

symptoms of a poisoned animal, the survival prognosis for primary and secondary poisoning, basic first-aid and professional veterinary treatment.

The audience for this booklet is fairly specific and only 1 000 copies have been printed. They will be distributed to MAWF - Directorates Veterinary and Technical Services, MET - Directorates Parks and Wildlife and Scientific Services, Nampol, private veterinary clinics, all agricultural products retailers and wholesalers and relevant NGOs.

Copies of this publication can be requested. Contact Liz Komen or Simon Witbeen at NARREC

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Vultures marked with patagial tags seen in Namibia

Peter Bridgeford

Three reports of White-backed Vultures marked with a blue patagial tag have been received. These vultures were tagged in the Kimberley area of South Africa.

The one report is by the Namibia Bird Club on an outing to the farm Monte Christo.

The next is from the vulture restaurant of the Rare and Endangered Species Trust near Otjiwarongo.

Riaan de Klerk from the farm Overschot, south of Gochas in the Kalahari, saw one tagged bird in a group of ten at the end of July.

There is no doubt that the patagial tags are highly visible and resightings are going to increase phenomenally.

Above is a photograph of an African White-backed Vulture marked with a tag.



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