BirdWatch ZAMBIA

The Wattled Crane

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Hello Birders,

Could someone please tell me what happened to June, I seem to have lost it. Here we are already reflecting on the Heroes and Unity holidays and I am sure many of you have been making the most of the long weekend. For Kevin and myself we spent this time with friends at the Nosbe Bush Camp and while most were content to watch the Eland, Sable, Zebra and so on from the comfort of the lounge I took the opportunity to get in some birding. I spent sometime trying to get close enough to what I think was a juvenile **Brown Hooded Kingfisher** to get a decent shot with my not very decent camera.

Upcoming Events

Sunday 20th July 2014 – Bird Count at Huntley. This is always a great morning out and there is always lots to see. We will meet att he BirdWatch office in Joseph Mwilwa Road at 8 or at the farm gates at 9.

26th July 2014 – Bird count at Nsobe. The was to have been done on 5th July but as it was the long weekend andpeople were away it has been changed to 26th July. Kevin will send out meeting point and time by email to all Copperbelt members.

The Zambian Barn Swallow Project - Bennie van den Brink (Foundation Hirundo)[a]

Introduction

In 2007 BirdLife Netherlands (Vogelbescherming Nederland; VBN) and SOVON Dutch Centre for Ornithology organized the "Year of the Barn Swallow" in the Netherlands. As part of this, the Zambian Barn Swallow Project was initiated as a joint project of the Zambian Ornithological Society (ZOS), VBN and Foundation Hirundo. The project was funded by VBN after a successful appeal to its members in 2006.

The Zambian Barn Swallow Project focused primarily on research as well as an educational programme in schools, where the project and ZOS used barn swallows to raise awareness for nature and (migratory) bird conservation.

This paper serves to give a concise overview of those results of most interest from a local Zambian perspective. Extensive detailed analysis of all project results will be made available in separate scientific articles and on the website www.boerenzwaluw.nl (under "Afrika" and elsewhere). A full list of all bird species trapped during the project is also available from this website.

The Zambian Barn Swallow Project: basic methods and results

The project was originally planned for only one year, from October 2007 till April 2008, but Stichting Hirundo succeeded to extend it for over 4 years. From October 2007 till February 2011 four seasons were covered doing research and ringing on Barn Swallows in their wintering grounds in Zambia. We used four roost sites to trap the Swallows, at 1) Bruce-Miller Farm/Nkanga River Conservation Area near Choma, 2) Huntley's Farm near Chisamba, 3) Mafundzalo Ranch near Kabwe and 4) the Musola-Kasanka Rivers confluence area in Kasanka National Park.

Between October 2007 and February 2014 a total number of 30,194 birds of 144 species were ringed. Of these, 25,046 (83%) were Barn Swallows.

Site fidelity on wintering grounds

Using the same ringing sites for four years we were able to re-trap not only Barn Swallows but also several other migratory birds ringed on the very same spot. During the four seasons a good number of ringed swallows was recaptured at the same roost within the same season. This is an indication that these birds used the same roost for a longer period, maybe for the whole wintering period. Another 68 swallows were recaptured after one to three seasons on the same roost site. These birds indicate multiple-year site fidelity to their once chosen wintering area and roost (Van den Brink *in prep.*).

Not only swallows were recaptured, we also had re-traps of other migratory bird species in successive years. These included Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin,* Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis,* Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* and European Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus.* Also these birds proved to revisit their once chosen wintering area.

Origin of European Barn Swallows in Zambia.

We caught 14 swallows with foreign rings and received 6 foreign recoveries, thus giving an indication of the origin of the Swallows wintering in Zambia. The main areas of origin are countries in the eastern part of Europe (figure 1). Also taking into account that ringing and recovery efforts are much larger in Western Europe, most of the Zambian birds will be part of the huge population of Eastern European, Russian and West-Asian birds which use the eastern flyway through the Middle East to enter Africa. Between 1970 and 1998 another 20,247 Barn Swallows were ringed at roosts in Zambia. The 76 (!) recoveries of these birds show a similar origin (Dowsett & Leonard 2001).

Other species of interest

Amongst the birds we trapped were several species that are not common in Zambia or with catches representing a local range extension.

The catch of a Palearctic Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropsis daurica*subspecies *rufula*on 27 January 2009 in Kabwe represented a new southerly limit for this race and a first record of the subspecies for Zambia (Van den Brink &Leonard 2010). In Kabwe we ringed a Black-faced Canary *Serinus capistratus* in 2010 and in 2014. This species typically has a more northern and eastern range and was so far unknown south of S14°.

In 2010 we ringed a Winchat *Saxicola rubetra* at Chisamba, which forms one of the most southern observations for the species. A European Wheatear was observed on a maize field in Kabwe. This species is scarce as a non-breeding visitor to Zambia.

Also the Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor*, Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* and Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops* (106 ringed) are interesting records for the area.

Acknowledgments.

I want to thank Dr. Lizanne Roxburgh (then chairperson of ZOS) and Mr. Daniel Mwizabi of ZAWA for their cooperation. Mr. Francis Grogan of Huntley Farm and Mr. George Woodley of Fringilla Lodge, Chisamba and Donald and Debbie Burton of Mafundzalo Ranch Kabwe are thanked for their great hospitality.

Frank Willems (Kasanka Trust) was a valuable help in the field and together with Pete Leonard helped to improve this paper.

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References

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Dowsett R.J., Aspinwall D.R. & Dowsett-Lemaire F. 2008. The Birds of Zambia. An atlas and handbook. Tauraco Press and Aves a.s.b.l., Liège.
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Figure 1: Ringing and recovery sites of international recoveries of Barn Swallows.

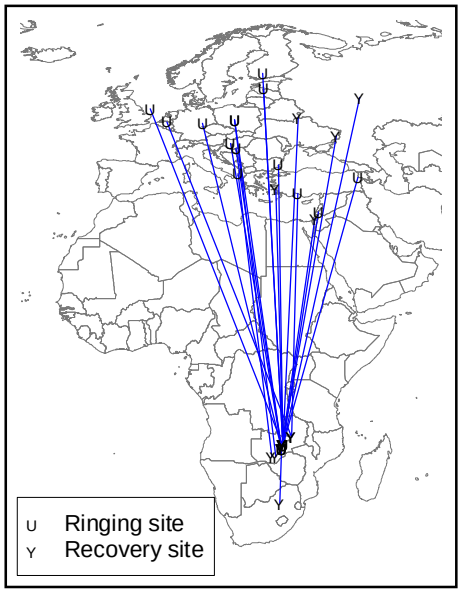

Figure2: Blackfaced Canary *Serinus capistratus*. Trapped at Mafundzalo Ranch, Kabwe, central Zambia, 19-1-2014. (B. van den Brink).

Figure 3: Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata.* Trapped at Mafundzalo Ranch, Kabwe, central Zambia, 20-1-2014. (B. van den Brink). (see below right)

Figure 4: Black-backed Barbet*Lybius minor.*Trapped at Mafundzalo Ranch, Kabwe, central Zambia, 20-1-2014. (B. van den Brink). (see below left)

Sightings June 2014 - By Frank Willems

Bastiaan Boon and Lloyd Weber had a rather fruitful 4-day canoe trip on the Lukulu River through Lavushi Manda NP (from Kapandalupili Falls downstream) and Bangweulu GMA (downstream to the "Makanga Road"), from 6th to 10th. **Black Stork** (single immature), **Glossy Ibis** and **Olive Woodpecker** were added to the list for Lavushi Manda NP. **Pel's Fishing-Owl** (birds at 4 sites), **African Finfoot** (single bird), **Long-tailed Wagtail** (1 pair) and **Black Duck** (1 pair) were all first records for Bangweulu GMA. Possibly most surprising is the observation of in total some 10 pairs of **Long-tailed Wagtail** within Lavushi Manda NP, apparently occupying most falls and larger rapids.

Shoebill was again recorded in Kasanka NP: single bird at Lake Kapabi on 30th (Bastiaan Boon a.o.). Probably the same bird has been present at least since April, with only single records in April, May and June, making it fascinating just how low the sighting probability apparently is.

Black Stork: again this May a single bird on the Mundi River in Liuwa Plains NP (Robin Pope, Jason Alfonsi a.o.).

Slaty Egret: after being reported by Egil Droge in good numbers ("tens") in Liuwa Plains, Jason Alfonsi and Robin Pope added that they saw two flocks of each some 30-50 on separate pools in May, making a total for Liuwa Plains of at least a hundred very likely. See a picture elsewhere in this newsletter.

Nests of **Secretary Bird** and **Lappet-faced Vulture** (2 and 1 egg respectively) were reported from Liuwa Plains by Robin Pope on the 11th.

White-backed Vulture: Robin Pope observed a bird with wing-tag (yellow with white inscription L421) on a Wildebeest carcass in Liuwa Plains on 25 May. This bird was ringed in Namibia, on the Klein Huis farm in Grootfontein district, on 26 September 2013, some 700 km from Liuwa Plains!

Bat Hawk: juvenile bird at Tafika Camp, Luangwa, on 29th (photo seen here right - Gareth Broekhuizen).

Bateleur: an adult female cream morph (neck and back pale coloured) at Wasa II in Kasanka NP on 29th (Frank Willems). Might well be a first for me. The Roberts Birds of Southern Africa states that some 6.5% of the birds in Kruger apparently are cream-backed. I'm pretty sure that in the Kasanka-Bangweulu region less than one percent is this morph. According to Stevenson & Fanshawe (Birds of East Africa) this morph is more common in arid areas.

A possible hybrid **Spur-winged** x **Blacksmith Lapwing** was photographed in Bangweulu on 10th (Grant Reed). A description and pictures of this bird will be published in next month's newsletter.

Red-capped Robin: again a singing male in Kasanka NP on the 15th, in the Bufumu mateshe thickets where it is suspected to breed (Frank Willems). Apart from the low-lying thickets in the Mweru area, Kasanka is the only site in the Zambian Congo system where the species is known to be present, with probably not more than a handful breeding pairs.

Miombo Pied Barbet: single bird seen at Mutinondo Wilderness on 11th (Grant Reed). This species was already on the list for Mutinondo but on base of one observation only.

Green-backed Honeybird: specimen with deformed bill in Mutinondo Wilderness on 11th (Grant Reed). (see photo right)

Black Crow: resident pair in Liuwa Plains between Lone Palm and Fig Tree both in 2013 as well as May 2014 (Jason Alfonsi). Suspected to breed somewhere.

Black-winged Bishop: one male still largely in breeding plumage as well as 2 females/juveniles (see picture) in Mutinondo Wilderness on 11th (Grant Reed). A first record for Mutinondo.

Bird Walk – Palabana Farm (Lusaka East) – 22nd June 2014 (Hans Peter Melby)

We arrived at the cross roads on the Palabana Road just after 08.30 and proceeded to the walk area stopping to watch a small group of **Meyers Parrots** feeding in Musekese trees. A large flock of **Guinea Fowl** was observed on the ground and in the trees.

We parked near a small catch dam and explored the area around about and observed many birds in some fruiting Musikili trees. The exciting find was a small flock of **Lillian Lovebirds** and acres of blackjacks

As the morning wore on it became overcast and windy so birding was not fantastic when we went to the big dam. It was decided to go our own ways.

Thanks to Andrew Howard for permission to walk on the farm and to all who attended on the overcast windy wintery day.

List - Hans Peter Melby

Barbet crested	Drongo, Fork-tailed	Snake-Eagle, Black-chested
Barbet, Black-collared	Firefinch, Jameson's	Spurfowl, Swainson's
Bee-Eater, Little	Fish-Eagle, African	Sunbird, Variable (Yellow-bellied)
Boubou, Tropical	Guineafowl, Helmeted	Tchagra, Brown-crowned
Bulbul, Dark-capped (Black-eyed)	Kingfisher, Brown-hooded	Tit, Southern Black
Bush-Shrike, Grey-headed	Lapwing, African Wattled	Turaco Schallow's
Canary, Yellow-fronted	Lizard Buzzard	Warbler African reed
Cormorant, Reed (Long-tailed)	Lovebird, Lilian's	Waxbill, Blue
Crake, Black	Parrot, Meyer's (Brown)	Weaver, Village
Dove, Cape Turtle	Quelea, Red-billed	Wood-Dove, Emerald-spotted
Dove, Laughing (Palm)	Robin chat white browed	Wood-Hoopoe, Green (Red-billed)
Dove, Red-eyed	Roller lilac breasted	

Cassin's Camp – Copperbelt Nest 23rd – 26th May 2014 by Glenys Shone

Following the visit by the Lusaka birders the Copperbelt Nest consisting of 3 couples and two children spent 3 nights at Cassin's Camp. Our bird sightings where not many and this could be perhaps because we are all quite inexperienced birders who don't know the calls so well but, irrespective of this, we all felt we would do the trip again if we had someone with a bit more experience with us.

I thought that the two young boys who were with us would be bored but, I am very happy to say that Frank turned out to be a really good spotter and also kept us all busy with games of charades around the camp fire each night. One afternoon I came across Stephen patiently standing with the camera trying to get a photo of **Bronze Manikin's** busy building a nest in a tree outside of his tent.

Our highlight was watching a pair of Shining Blue Kingfisher's flying in and out of their nest in the bank just in front of the camp. We spent a few hours watching them nicely relaxed on our chairs and Andrew spent at least another hour poised with Camera trying to get a decent picture but they were too quick for us.

Patiently waiting for the Shining Blue Kingfisher

Early Morning very distant shot

Tired of the Paparazzi

Bronze Manikin Nest

On Sunday Andrew, Kevin, Sue and Brian took a trip to the Source of the Zambezi leaving the rest of us to relax around the camp. After reading the report from the Lusaka trip they were a little bit sceptical about what they would find. However, they returned extremely happy that they had made the trip. The toilet facilities were clean, their guide very knowledgeable and they found the printed information and signs to be quite helpful and interesting. Had the rest of us not spent the

previous day driving around on the neighbouring farm we may well have joined them but the thought of a soft camp chair was more tempting at the time and the camp was such a lovely place to relax and try to see as many species as possible.

Bunting, Golden Breasted	Parrot, Meyers	Kingfisher, Malachite
Turaco, Ross's	Kingfisher, Grey Headed	Whydah, Broad Tailed Paradise
Bulbul, Dark Capped	Sunbird, Collared	Night Jar, Fiery necked
Courser, Bronze Winged	Sunbird, Violet Backed	Dove, Emerald Spotted
Stonechat, Common	Kingfisher, Shining-Blue	Dove, Red Eyed
Leaf-love, Yellow Throated	Flycatcher, Cassin's	Duck, African Black
Drongo, Fork Tailed	Mannikin, Bronze	

Biodiversity Assessment in the West Lunga NP and Lukwakwa GMA-Chaona Phiri

IBA number five is the focus of BirdWatch Zambia's Danida project. The project itself is mainly focused on livelihoods in the GMAs surrounding this IBA but it does have a small biodiversity monitoring component. This was undertaken in the first week of June. The park is located about 50km away from Mufumbwe town, with 40km being covered on the Mufumbwe-Kapombo road and only about 10km on a not so bad sandy track.

The ZAWA offices are at Jivundu about 300m off the banks of the Kapombo River, which we had to cross before we could get into the West Lunga national park. This park is wholly bordered by rivers and streams; the Kapombo River forms the southern and Eastern boundaries while the West Lunga River forms the Western border; in the north, 2 large streams draining the Kapombo and the West Lunga form the borders. In addition to that, the West Lunga River forms the boundary between the National Park and Lukwakwa GMA which forms the other half of the IBA.

After training IBA monitors it was time for the field exercises in the park, unfortunately there had been no 'road' visits into the park since the floods so the pontoon line was still in a 'state', with a lot of branches and reeds hanging on it. We finally managed to clean it up with some ZAWA scouts and got our vehicle onto the pontoon with no problems, these however came when it was time to get it off. The pontoon couldn't reach the pavement on the other end so the vehicle had to move on loose slippers, this was quite scary (nobody wants to bear the task of explaining, how a whole van sunk into the Kapombo river).

Once in the park, the bird sightings made struggle worth all the trouble at the pontoon; a large flock of Woolly-necked Storks were feeding in the pool just a few meters away from the Kapombo River. In the trees above the pool, a giant kingfisher had just caught its brunch while a pair of Bohm's Bee-eaters were perched just close, seemingly admiring the kingfisher. A pair of Ross's Turacos and Meyers Parrots escorted us for a good 10kms

through the thickets until we got into a vast plain on the north eastern bank of the Kapombo River. Other interesting sighting on this transect included; several juvenile raptors viz. Bateleur, Crowned Eagle and African Fish Eagle, the sunbirds were also present in their number and those correctly identified included the Purple-banded Sunbird (a lifer for both Chinga and I), Scarlet-chested Sunbird and White-bellied Sunbird, another interesting sighting was the Orange-breasted Bush Shrike.


After 50kms of driving in the park, we called it a day and moved on to the water transects for the next 3 days. These too were very exciting, with the team recording the highest number of kingfisher in terms of species and individuals during a single visit. Species included; Pied Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher, Malachite Kingfisher, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Half-collared Kingfisher, Woodland Kingfisher, Pygmy Kingfisher and the Shining-blue Kingfisher. The Pied Kingfishers topped the chart in terms of number of individuals, obviously.

Close to the confluence of the Kapombo and West Lunga Rivers, was a large tree full of Black-crowned Night-Heron (more juveniles than adults) and the Open-bill Storks. The banks of the Kapombo here are filled with holes in which both the Kingfishers and White-fronted Bee-eaters nested, with several hundreds of Bee-eaters being recorded in a stretch of barely 50m.


Off the banks of the West Lunga River, the team took a short walking transect in the Lukwakwa GMA on which we all seemed to be more concerned about checking where the crocodiles were. Most of the GMA is still quite flooded thus accessiblity was a problem. We are however looking forward to the dry season assessment, during which, we will certainly visit the famous Mayau plains.

Photos by Chinga Lufwino and Chaona Phiri

Chinyu Plot without the ringing - Feb to March and on....., 2014 - Fil Hide

For the last eight years I have reported our annual bird ringing event run by Lizanne and Klaus. Since they have now moved to South Africa it didn't happen this year. It seemed a pity not to keep up an annual report, at least, so I did some fairly intensive bird watching over a few days at the end of Feb and start of March to see what was present around the plot.

At the time I didn't realise our rainy season was coming to an end after only 3 months, although we got a bit tacked on later after a break. A few migrant birds disappeared around this time, though others hung on into April. The birds generally seemed a bit confused.

Early leavers included **Thrush Nightingales** which had been heard all day every day from all corners of the plot until 28th Feb, then they were gone, or certainly silent. The **Cardinal Queleas** had disappeared a couple of weeks before. **Broadbilled Rollers** were last seen, with their new offspring, on 9th March, and **African Paradise Flycatchers** were not seen after 11th March.

Migrant **kingfishers**, only occasional visitors to the plot during the rains, often come here at the end of the season, but there were very few sighting this year, except for one **Senegal (Woodland)** on and off from March until 18thApril and one **Chestnut-bellied** for a few days in the middle of May until the temperature suddenly dropped.

African Black Coucals were around and calling until 9th April, but, as usual, mostly at the far side of the floodplain so I never saw if there were any young ones. **Reed, Marsh** and **Great Reed Warblers, Willow Warblers** and **Spotted Flycatchers** stayed until the first week of April, as did **Eurasian Bee-eaters** and **Red-backed Shrikes.**

Resident birds also behaved differently. **Short-winged Cisticolas** went quiet at the end of March but chirped up again for a week at Easter. My **African Broadbill** shut up in early February, unusually, and has not been heard since.

Bishops kept their plumage until well into April, one or two into May, a bit later than **White-winged Whydahs (Widowbirds).**

We usually get a quick visit from a **Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting** around April but this year it called in on 23rd February, unusually early, or late. And we had one last special, a **Booted Eagle**, on 29th April, a first for the plot and for me, later than we would expect here.

CHUNYU PLOT LIST 26/2 – 3/3/2014

African Fish Eagle	Black-collared Barbet	Purple-banded Sunbird
Brown Snake Eagle	Cardinal Woodpecker	Eurasian Golden Oriole
Western Banded Snake Eagle	Wire-tailed Swallow	African Golden Oriole
Gymnogene	Black Cuckoo-shrike	Red-backed Shrike
Lizard Buzzard	Yellow-bellied Bulbul	Southern Puffback
Natal Francolin	Terrestrial Bulbul	Brown-headed Tchagra
Laughing Dove	Black-eyed Bulbul	Black-crowned Tchagra
Cape Turtle Dove	Thrush Nightingale	Tropical Boubou
Red-eyed Dove	Heuglin's Robin	Orange-breasted Bush Shrike
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	Collared Palm Thrush	Fork-tailed Drongo
Namaqua Dove	African Moustached Warbler	Greater Blue-eared Starling
Purple-crested Turaco	Eurasian/African Reed Warbler	Amethyst Starling

Jacobin Cuckoo	Marsh Warbler	Spectacled Weaver
Red-chested Cuckoo	Great Reed Warbler	African Masked Weaver
Klaas's Cuckoo	Long-billed Crombec	Black-winged Red Bishop
African Black Coucal	Willow Warbler	Red Bishop
Burchell's (White-browed) Coucal	Rattling Cisticola	White-winged Whydah (Widowbird)
Giant (Verreaux's) Eagle Owl	Short-winged Cisticola	Green-winged Pytilia
Wood Owl	Red-faced Cisticola	Red-throated Twinspot
Gaboon Nightjar	Tawny-flanked Prinia	Jameson's Firefinch
African Palm Swift	Yellow-breasted Apalis	Common Waxbill
Eurasian Swift	Bleating Bush Warbler	Blue Waxbill
Red-faced Mousebird	Spotted Flycatcher	Zebra Waxbill
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	Ashy Flycatcher	Village Indigobird
Little Bee-eater	African Paradise Flycatcher	Dusky Indigobird
Eurasian Bee-eater	Collared Sunbird	Pin-tailed Widow (Whydah)
Lilac-breasted Roller	Yellow-bellied Sunbird	Long-tailed Paradise Widow (Whydah)
Broad-billed Roller	White-bellied Sunbird	Yellow-fronted Canary

I received some very nice photographs from Robin Pope, via Frank Willems and will close this months edition with these, thank you once again for all the contributions.

Pictures Courtesy of Robin Pope

Confussion at the Mundi River

Good numbers of black egret on the Mundi

Large numbers of Red-winged Pratincole flying over the central plains Liuwa

Profusion on the Mundi

Masses of skimmers close to Kings pool, Liuwa Plains

31 Slaty Egrets at a single pool north of Matamanene, Liuwa Plains

Black stork sighted on the Mundi River Liuwa

FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

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Sightings of interest should be sent to Frank Willems frank@kasanka.com

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