

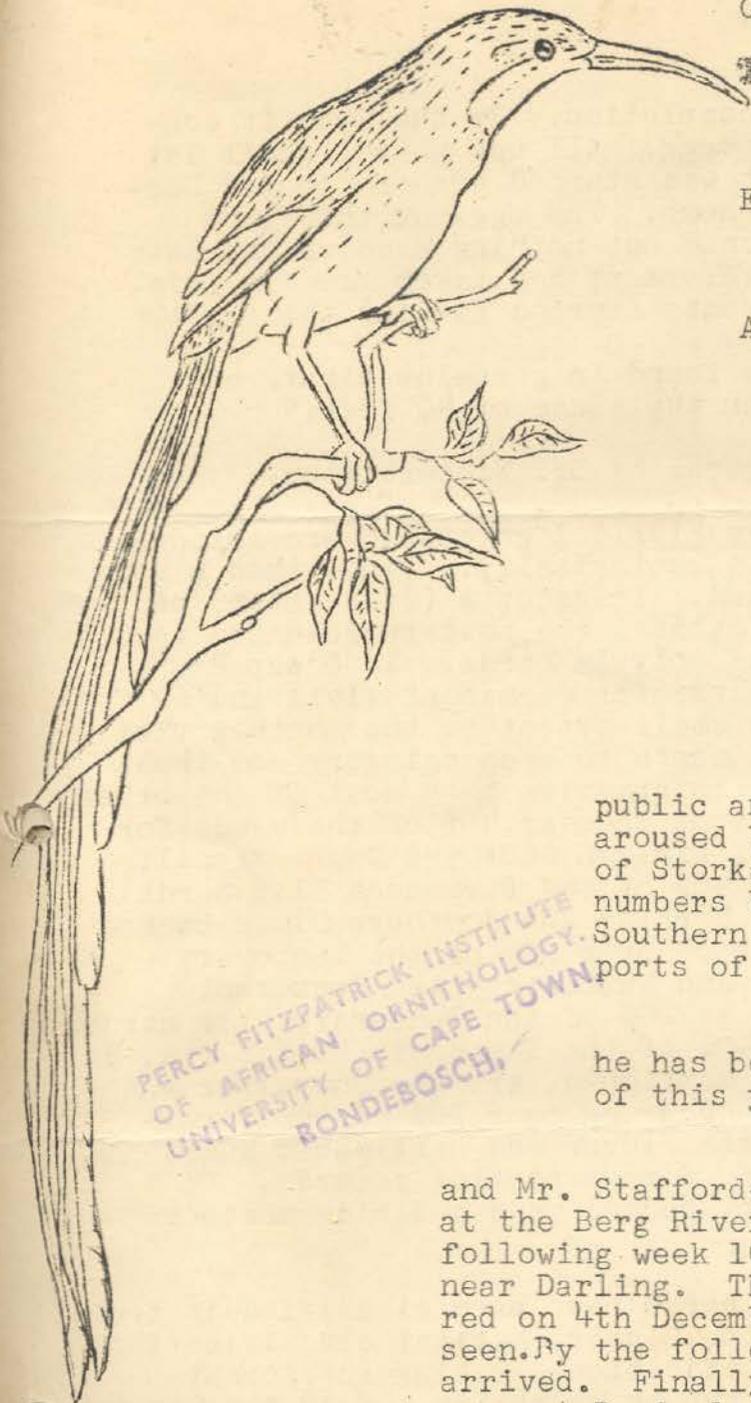
CAPE BIRD CLUB

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The interest of the general public and of the Bird Watcher has been aroused by the arrival of large numbers of Storks, which have been seen in numbers both in the Northern and Southern Cape. As yet we have no reports of their being in the Peninsula.

Mr. Liversidge writes that he has been an interested spectator of this year's arrival of Lake Terns.

On November 21st 1954 he and Mr. Stafford-Smith saw these birds first at the Berg River near Veldrift. During the following week 100 were seen on a small dam near Darling. The arrival at Riet Vlei occurred on 4th December when a solitary bird was seen. By the following week-end over 100 had arrived. Finally on the 15th December 35 were seen at Rondevlei. This gives a fair picture of the southward progress of these tern.

Since receiving the above notes I hear that about 2,000 of these birds have been seen at the Zeekoe Vlei outlet.

A report has come from Miss P. de Wet saying that the Indian Swift is now breeding at Robertson. As far as she knows this bird has not bred there before. Another bird she has twice seen near Robertson is the Fork Tail Drongo and a report has just come in from Mr. Liversidge saying he saw this bird on the 6th February at Kommetjie. These are two interesting observations and it looks very much as if we in the Cape Bird Club should be able to observe and record the westward spread of these two species into our area.

The following, which I am quoting in full, has come in from Mr. A. Brown of Bergvliet:

"On the 12th November, 1954, I found an abandoned Wagtail nest containing seven eggs, four of which were addled in the embryo stage; the other three eggs were not set.

On the same day I came across a second nest with six eggs, the following day it contained seven. This nest was in an exposed situation and by the 17th November was abandoned due to the severe battering by the wind.

On the 16th November I found yet another wagtail nest, this one  
under/.....

under construction, nearing completion. By the 24th it contained a full clutch of four eggs. All was normal until 1st December when a second clutch was started and on the 3rd December seven eggs were in the nest. The eggs of the first clutch were successfully hatched but nothing came of the last three, although embryonic development had taken place. This, no doubt, ceased when the parents started feeding the first hatched young.

All the above nests were found in gernalium plants at the Athlone Sewage Farm and in the space of 40 feet."

#### Analysis of field cards by Dr. Winterbottom.

In a recent number of The Bokmakierie I gave some provisional results of analysing the cards ecologically. Since then a good many more cards have been added. In group A (Salt water) of the Club's classification of habits, the nest represented is Sea Shore-sand, but even that has only 13 cards. In Group B (Fresh water), there are 70 cards for Permanent Vleis and 62 for Temporary Vleis, thanks to no small extent to the monthly vlei counts, which add two cards a month to each category and those containing much more detailed information than most of the other cards. Three species are present in over 40% of the cards for both habitats, the Grey Heron, African Coot and Cape Wagtail. Other species present on over 40% of the Permanent Vlei cards are the Reed Cormorant, Marsh Harrier and Southern Black-backed Gull, all of which are present on over 20% of the Temporary Vlei cards; and the Dabchick and White-breasted Cormorant, which do not occur on as many as 20% of the Temporary Vlei cards.

Species present on over 40% of the Temporary Vlei cards, in addition to the three already mentioned, are the Shoveller and the Yellowbill, both of which occur on over 20% of the Permanent Vlei cards; and Kittlitz's Plover and Hartlaub's Gull, which occur in under 20% of the Permanent Vlei records. We still need more cards, however, before we can decide whether these differences are real.

The Indigenous Bush cards have been classified in two different ways, according to the Club's habitat classification and according to Acock's classification. Taking the former first, we have 56 cards for Scrub on Mountains and 39 for Scrub on Flats. The latter gives us three species present on over 60% of the cards - the Karroo Prinia, the Cape Turtle Dove and the Cape Bulbul. Five more species occur on over 40% of the cards. The Cape Robin, Karroo Robin, Fiscal Shrike, Bokmakierie and Cape Weaver. Another 16 species are present on over 20% of the cards. By contrast, the Scrub on Mountains habitat provides no species present on 60% of the cards and only three - the Prinia, the Redwinged Starling and the Orange-breasted Sunbird, - as present on over 40%.

Another 4 species are present on over 20% - the Cape Robin, Cape Sugarbird, Cape Turtle Dove and Cape Bunting.

On the Acock's classification we have 52 cards for the Macchi and 39 for Coastal Macchi, besides 16 for coastal Rhenosterboschveld and 6 for Strandveld. The two Macchi types present much the same picture as the Scrub on Flats and Scrub on Mountains. All the species present on over 40% of the Scrub on Flats cards occur also on over 40% of the Coastal Macchi ones, but only the Prinia occurs on over 60%. There is one other species on over 40% of the Coastal Macchi cards, the Lesser Double-collared Sunbird (over 20% on the other classification). For Macchi, the same species occur in over 40% of the cards as Scrub on Mountains. The over 20% group has the Turtle Dove and Sugarbird in common with Scrub on Mountains and has also the Dancing Cisticola (Cape Wailing Warbler) and Malachite Sunbird. The Rhenosterboschveld, from the very inadequate figures available, is dominated by the Prinia and Bokmakierie, both on over 60% of the/.....

the cards, with no other species on as much as 40%.

Coming to woodlands of introduced trees, we have 34 cards for Wattles and 11 for pines. The Turtle Dove occurs on over 60% of the Wattle cards and six species - Prinia, Bulbul, Robin, Fiscal, Bokmakierie and White eye - on over 40%. Only one other species, the European Starling, occurs on over 20%.

In the final category, there are 26 cards for Pastures and 22 for Gardens. The only 40%+ bird is the Red-capped Lark; the Tawny Pipit, Bokmakierie, Crowned Plover Cape Wagtail, European Starling, Pied Starling and Cape Sparrow occurring on over 20%.

Gardens 22 cards! If half of you sent one card to show the common birds in your gardens we should have another 60! On the cards we have got, six species appear on over 40% - Cape Turtle Doves and Laughing Doves, Fiscal Shrike, Bokmakierie, European Starlings and Cape Sparrow. Another five occur on over 20% including the Robin and White-eye. I have a daily list extending over four years, of the birds in my garden, but haven't included in the above totals because it would obviously overbalance the whole list.

A visitor to the Cape and a member of the Society, Mr. W.T. Ferguson of Port Elizabeth, has been enjoying himself with our local birds and has sent in the following observations: At the Black River on 31st December he saw a pair of African Crested Grebe with three very small young, also a Yellowbilled Kite.

At Riet Vlei on the 6th January a party of 8 Blacksmith Plover and a pair of Spurwinged Geese were observed. These were not seen on a return visit on January 15th.

On our usual visit to L'Agulhas this year we were very disappointed to see so few migrants in the area. This, I am sure, is due to the fact that the Salt Pans and Vleis are so full. I have never seen so much water in them before.

At the Large Salt Pan where at this time of the year there are usually countless numbers of migrants we counted only 14 Flamingoes, a family of Dabchick and 8 Chestnut-banded Plover. Vogel Vlei yielded about 100 Ruff, 30 to 40 Spurwinged Geese and some Coot. At a small temporary Vlei near Vogel Vlei 150 Yellowbill were spotted but of migrants there were hardly any, a few Curlew Sandpiper, a small number of Stint, one Greenshank and one Ringed Plover were seen.

On the further shore of this vlei we watched a steppe Buzzard eating its prey. When it flew off we went to investigate and found it had caught a Yellowbill which, as far as we could make out, was an adult. Even at the coast the usual number of migrants were absent. One, possibly two Gray Plover were counted and two Common Sandpiper and 7 Turnstone. The Bontebok Park proved the most fruitful for, besides 300 Yellowbill, we saw 50 Avocet and over 70 Storks in the Park and on an adjoining farm.

Most outstanding this year were the great number of Kestrels, both Cape Rock and Lesser, also Steppe Buzzards seen along the road between Caledon and Bredasdorp.

Donations to the Club's Ringing Fund during November and December amounted to £2.10.0. One of our members had the very charming idea of sending 10/- to the Club's Ringing Fund as a Christmas present. This gesture is much appreciated. Members who would like to contribute to this deserving fund may send their gift to the Hon. Treasurer of the Cape Bird Club.

Dr./.....

Dr. Winterbottom's Report on Garden Birds Enquiry:

So far 14 returns have been received for the Garden Birds Enquiry, 13 from members and 1 from a non-member. Of these 12 relate to the Peninsula, 1 to Pinelands and 1 to Elgin (none from Somerset West!) The Peninsula returns are: Fresnaye 1; Mowbray 1; Rondebosch 2; Newlands 1; Kenilworth 2; Plumstead 1; Wynberg 1; Bergvliet 1; Fish Hoek 1; Glencairn 1.

At the present rate of progress it will be 8 or 9 months before enough material has been assembled to be worth analysing. So we say "Thank you" very heartily to those members who have sent in returns, and express the pious hope that their work will not have been wasted because other members have not supported the venture. I am sorry to say that very few of the Club's Committee and S.A.O. Council have responded yet. On the other hand, Junior members have contributed a disproportionately large share and to those of them who have not come across with their lists yet, I say "Come on Juniors, show the Seniors up".

Secretary.