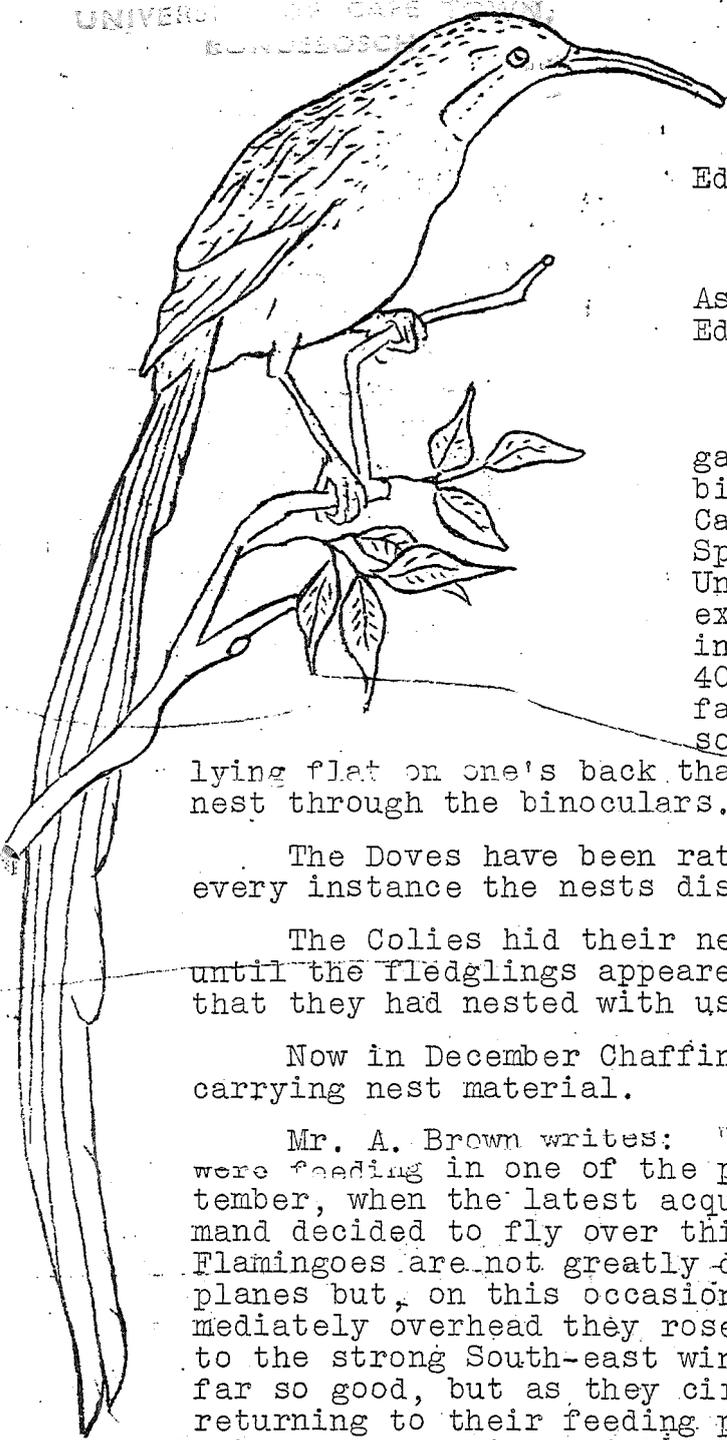


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Throughout November the garden has been full of young birds: Robins, White-eyes, Cape Canaries, Chaffinches, Sparrows all nested here. Unfortunately all the nests except the Robins were high up in the pine trees 20ft. to 40 ft. from the ground. In fact the Chaffinches nest was so high that it was only by

lying flat on one's back that one was able to see the nest through the binoculars.

The Doves have been rather unlucky as in almost every instance the nests discovered have come to grief.

The Colies hid their nest so well that it was not until the fledglings appeared in the garden did we realise that they had nested with us.

Now in December Chaffinches and White-eyes are again carrying nest material.

Mr. A. Brown writes: "A flock of about 25 Flamingo were feeding in one of the pans at Athlone on 11th September, when the latest acquisition to our Coastal Command decided to fly over this area. Normally these Flamingoes are not greatly disturbed by the roar of planes but, on this occasion, when the plane was immediately overhead they rose in a flurry and flew into the strong South-east wind blowing at the time. So far so good, but as they circled, apparently intent on returning to their feeding place, it appeared as if the whole flock was caught in a violent down current of air, causing 10 to be flung against the telephone wires.

Seven were momentarily stunned but soon recovered and joined the main flock. Nevertheless two birds were killed outright and a third had to be destroyed. The fatal injuries were as follows: No. 1 bird: Decapitated; head was found 20 ft. from the impact. Both wings badly lacerated. Bird No. 2: Neck partially severed just above the nape. Wings badly lacerated. Bird No. 3 (had to be destroyed): Lacerated breast. One wing badly cut and one leg broken."

This is certainly not a pretty picture, but I think it does illustrate how some birds come to grief.

On 2nd September Dr. Broekhuysen saw a Wattled Starling on the telephone wires just beyond the cement factory on the Cape Flats. This is I believe the nearest record for this species to Cape Town.

Have any other members records for nearer by?

Miss Clarke saw a solitary Turnstone at Strandfontein on 6th October.

In view of Dr. Broekhuysen's and her observation last year re disappearance/.....

re disappearance of the Piet-my-vrou from their areas, she would like to record that for the first time for two years she heard the bird calling in the Kenilworth/Wynberg area on 24th October and for several days following.

On 11th October while watching a party of Hartlaub's Gulls on a sand spit in the Liesbeek River Miss Etherston witnessed the following behaviour of Gulls and three Teal. She says:

"There was a North wind blowing and some Gulls, facing into the wind, were busy taking a bath as the water lapped on to the mud; others appeared to be digging for worms and there were always some taking off or landing, while others circled overhead, giving their noisy call.

Suddenly three Teal landed on the water nearby. After a time two of them flew off to the spit and appeared to be chasing the Gulls off with short, rapid dashes. A few Gulls taken by surprise rose up, but then five of them clubbed together and chased the Teal, flying just above and slightly behind them. The Teal swam off again making their rapid zig-zag dashes and one of them dived to avoid the Gull's attack.

Four of the Gulls lost interest, but one persisted in the chase. The Teal now flew away with this one Gull still flying close behind them, but even he left after a while, and the Teal once more landed on the water."

On 17th November the Cape Bird Club had an outing to Mr. Melck's farm, Kersefontein, on the Berg River.

The reason for this excursion was to check up on Peter Wilson's observation of breeding Spoonbills at Kersefontein.

Fifteen cars turned up, a very good response indeed to an excursion so far from Cape Town.

After some scouting around, Spoonbills were located feeding in a pan and perched on large trees among the reeds. Guided by Peter Wilson the heronry, consisting of thousands of Egrets' nests, was soon located in scattered reed-beds in rather deep water. Among these Egrets were several pairs of Night Herons, Sacred Ibises and Spoonbills.

The relatively few who braved the waist-deep water were rewarded by the rather unusual sight of Spoonbills standing on their nests. The birds were fairly tame and allowed the half submerged enthusiasts to come quite near before they flew off. In total six Spoonbill nests were inspected. They mostly contained eggs, but there were three small young as well. All eggs were measured.

Nests of Yellow-billed Kites in the large trees on the river banks were inspected and several young were ringed. A number of Darter nests in a solitary tree were discovered and one young was ringed. The young were big and climbed out of the nest when approached by the climber.

Mr. Macleod found a nest of the Marsh Warbler containing eggs, and Mrs. Morgan found a nest of the Red-capped Lark containing three eggs. Fish Eagles were seen but the nest was not found. On 27th November when a small party again visited the Spoonbills to photograph and film them, Mr. Macleod found the Fish Eagle's nest. It contained two practically fledged young.

Flamingo have appeared on Jacob's Vlei at Philippi. Mrs. Bird saw 15 on 25th October, and at a later date 18 were seen.

Mrs. Bird, who had a chat with Mr. Jacobs, was told by him that this was the first time Flamingo had come to the vlei.

Mr. Owen/.....

Mr. Owen of Somerset West has been watching a pair of Cape Batis which are nesting not far from his house. The female is so tame that she allows him to handle her on the nest.

If he takes her off the nest and covers the nest with his hand, she will fly on to his hand and peck it until he removes it from the nest. The male will not let himself be handled, but will allow Mr. Owen to approach within a few feet of him.

On 2nd September Mr. Clarke saw a White-backed Duck on the vlei at Noordhoek.

On 30th November 12 members went to the Yzerfontein-Geelbek area to try to catch European Bee-eaters with the three 'mist nets' of the Club. After some scouting around it was decided to concentrate on the breeding colonies along the road to Geelbek and Donkergat.

The nets were put up in the afternoon and left standing until the early morning of the next day. They were then put up in another breeding colony.

In total 27 birds were caught, and at least another 12 got out after having been temporarily caught. Of these 27 birds 12 were European Bee-eaters, 10 Sand Martins, 3 Banded Sand Martins, 1 Cape Bunting, and 1 Karoo Robin.

All birds were ringed and weighed, and measurements of quite a number were taken. The result was very satisfactory and much experience in handling and setting the nets was gained. Future similar expeditions will be undertaken.

Dr. Broekhuysen would like to have records of migratory species. All records up to the end of November are valuable.

This being the last of the year I would like to thank all members who have sent contributions to the News Letter, but I would like more contributions as it is owing to lack of news that your News Letter does not appear every month.

A very Happy Xmas to everyone and all Good Wishes for 1958.