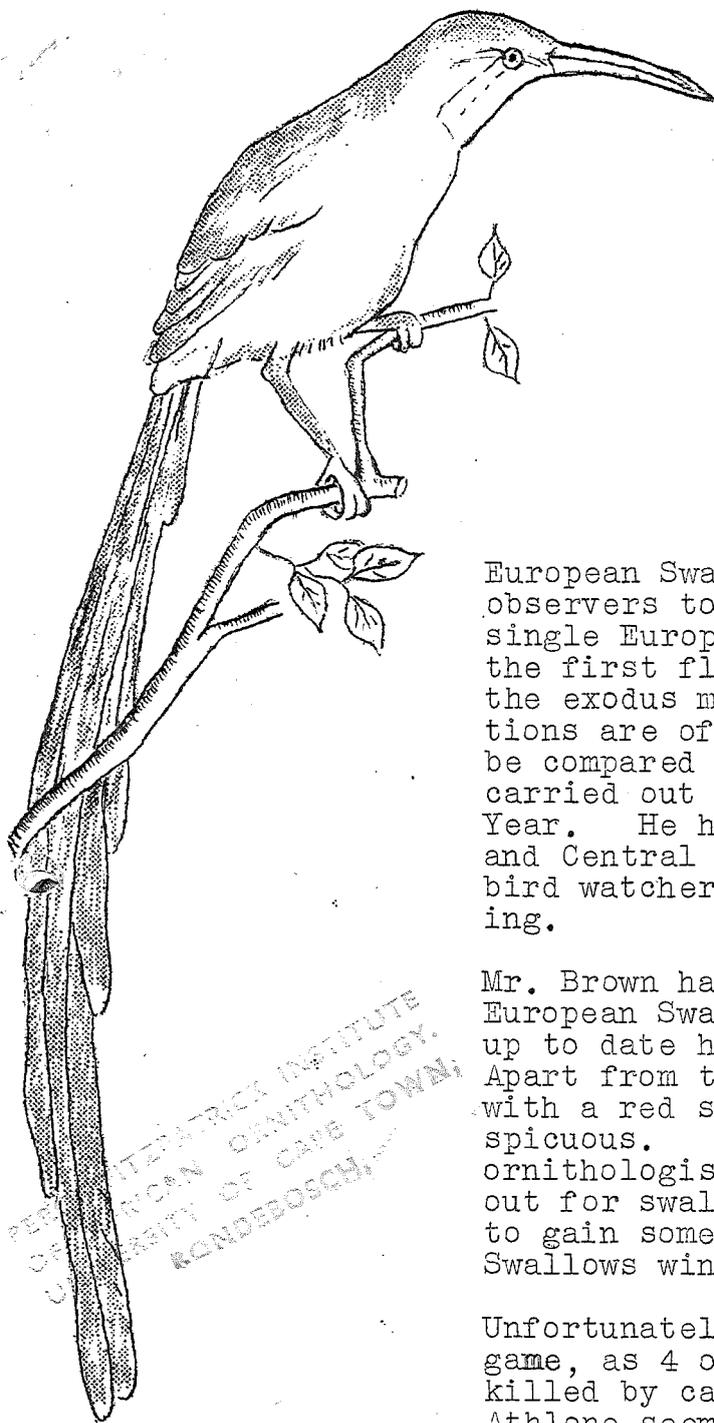


April 1958

Editor: Mr. R.K. Schmidt,  
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The European migrants are leaving, and Dr. Broekhuysen and Mr. Liversidge ask members to send in late records. Mr. Liversidge is interested in records of the European Swallow. Last year he appealed to observers to report the arrival of the first single European Swallow and the arrival of the first flock. Now he wants records of the exodus migration. This year's observations are of special importance as they will be compared with the weather observations carried out in connection with the Geophysical Year. He has received many reports from West and Central Africa, but the poor response from bird watchers in the Union has been disappointing.

Mr. Brown has been very successful in ringing European Swallows at Athlone Sewage Farm; up to date he has ringed about 90 birds. Apart from the rings these birds are marked with a red spot on the chest to make them conspicuous. Dr. Broekhuysen has informed ornithologists in Africa and Europe to look out for swallows thus marked, and it is hoped to gain some information about the European Swallows wintering at the Cape.

Unfortunately the cats are not playing the game, as 4 of the ringed swallows have been killed by cats here already. One cat at Athlone seems to specialise in hunting swallows.

Mr. Brown knows it to have caught 8 birds in a single day. Among its victims were 3 swallows that he had ringed. On or before 29th March a cat at Jacobs Vlei, Philippi, caught a bird, but most obligingly did not eat its leg with ring No. 54-08453. This was also a European Swallow ringed at Athlone on 13th March.

Mr. J. Macleod reports about Vergelegen, Somerset West:

The recent tragic fire that swept through Hottentots Holland destroyed the breeding areas of the Cape Sugar Birds at Longkloof. These birds are now dispersed in areas where previously they did not occur. There is even a pair in my garden in Pastorie Road. We had ringed about fifty young birds last year and were hoping to find out if the young birds would return to the same place to breed, but that also was a wash-out. Last Sunday (16/3/1958) we counted 26 species at Longkloof, including the White-winged Seed-eater which was the commonest species. Is this due to the protea seeds being now more readily accessible?

A very interesting record is the occurrence in the reed beds of a number of pairs of the Cape Rail. The reeds, which are growing in the swamp, have recovered and are now about waist high, and we have cut a narrow path through them so we could see anything moving across the cleared strip.

We/.....

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The albino Crowned Plover (cf. Mrs. Taylor's report in News Letter No. 42, April 1957) is still alive in the same locality, as it was seen by Mr. G.R. du Plessis on Green Point Common on 9th and 23rd March, 1958. According to Mr. du Plessis the plover's body and wings are white underneath as usual, but the upper parts of its body are white for about 2/3rds towards the head, the remaining 1/3rd, including the tail, being the ordinary grey.

Mrs. Alais and Mrs. Taylor saw 2 Black Oystercatchers at the Zeekoe Vlei outlet on 30th March. This seems to be a very elusive bird along the False Bay coast, as I only once saw 2 Black Oystercatchers at Strandfontein on 22nd April 1951.

An interesting observation from a Junior member, Christopher Lessing, St. James:

On December 20th, 1957, we observed 2 eggs in a Laughing Dove's nest. On the 30th of December 4 eggs were observed in the nest. The new arrivals are smaller than the first two and are a shiny white in colour, while the first two are pinkish and are nearly ready to hatch.