

July 1958.

Editor: Mr. R.K. Schmidt,  
Striegau, 54 Lympleigh  
Road, Plumstead.

Who has any further news about the Noordhoek Storks? They showed themselves to be very co-operative at the Club Outing on May 3rd, when we still saw 4 White and 3 Black Storks at the vlei. Mrs. Flint and Dr. Griffiths reported that the last large number of European Storks left the Noordhoek Vlei on

April 26th, 1958.

On May 17th there were, however, still 9 European Storks there, and Dr. Broekhuysen thought that there might be a chance of their wintering here.

Any record of this would be most interesting as an international census of White Storks will be organised in Europe during the summer of 1958. There has been a serious decline in the number of storks in certain parts of Europe and the census is being held to find out how serious it is and how the numbers compare with those of the last census, held in 1934. The South African representatives at the meeting of the International Committee for Bird Preservation, held in Bulawayo in July 1957, offered to try to obtain information on the numbers of these birds during our summer of 1958/59. Any member willing to help, is asked to report to Dr. J.M. Winterbottom, c/o South African Museum, Cape Town:

PERCY FITZPATRICK INSTITUTE  
OF AFRICAN ORNITHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN,  
RONDEBOSCH.

(i) All possible data on the actual numbers of Storks seen, in the following form -

Date. Place. Number of Storks (counted or estimated).

(ii) From those resident in areas where Storks normally occur, a statement as to whether, in their opinion, there were more or fewer Storks in 1958-59 than in 1957-58.

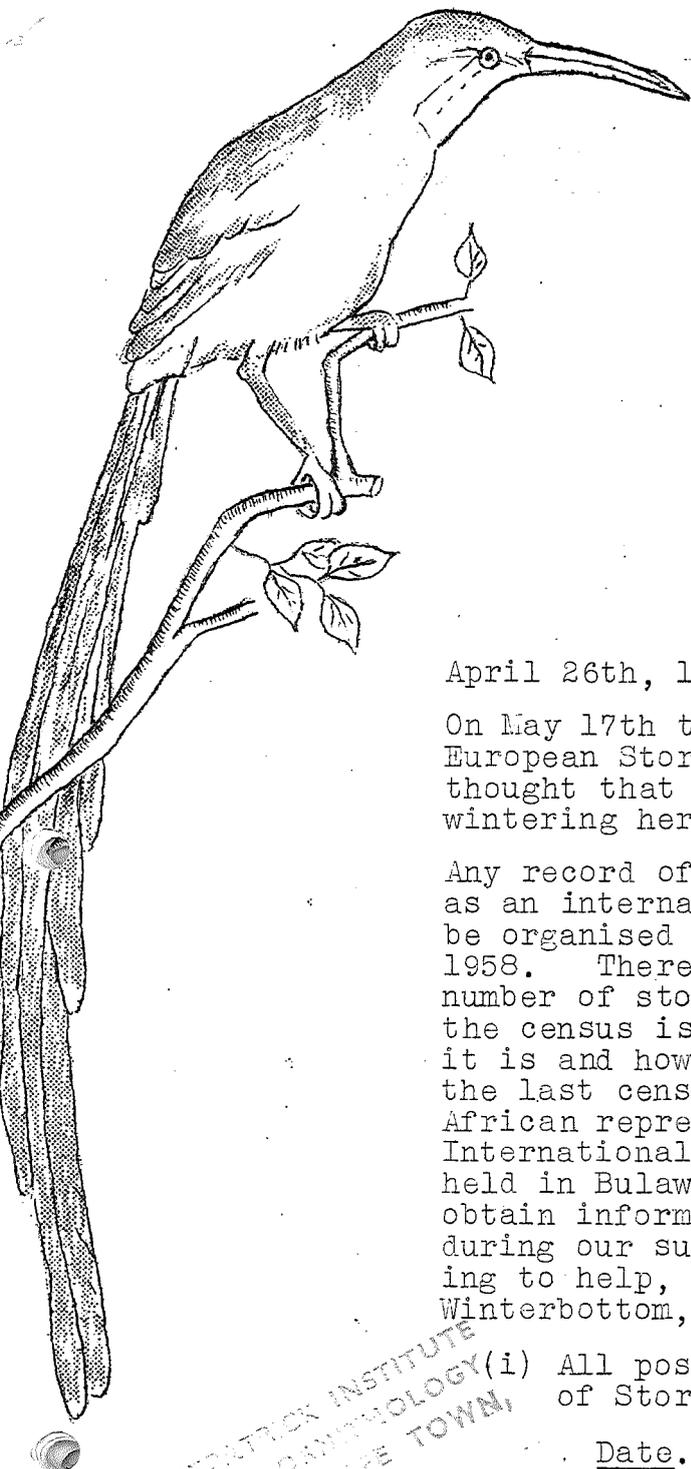
Mr. Morgan wants to plead for the birds of Noordhoek Vlei whose charms some members may have discovered for the first time during the Club outing. He writes:

The area is heavily populated. There are a great many children who will probably all destroy nests and eggs, and to many of them Coot, Duck and other eggs represent food. When the vlei is full only a small stretch of the shore is reasonably accessible, but it is the part most used for nesting because of the heavy vegetation. Nesting will start fairly soon.

To avoid attracting the attention of predatory humans it is wise to visit the vlei between sunrise and say 8 a.m. at the latest and to avoid it at other times.

During the usual count at Rietvlei on May 11th, Messrs. Morgan and P. Wheeler saw 4 Little Swifts and a pair of Secretary Birds on the Race-course shore of the vlei. They also heard a Tit-babbler calling in the bush fringing the vlei and main road.

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In connection with Vlei Counts Dr. Winterbottom urgently appeals for one or two more men workers to help with the counts once a month at Rietvlei. Anybody willing to help, please phone Dr. Winterbottom (2-1979 during day, 7-4578 in the evenings).

Another appeal for help comes from Mr. and Mrs. Rowan who have begun the preparation of a report on the Yellowbill Duck. They have prepared a questionnaire which is available to helpers. Negative information to the effect that the Yellowbill does not occur or does not breed in your area, is every bit as important as positive data and should be sent to A.N. Rowan and M.K. Rowan, 11 Bishops court Road, Claremont, Cape Town.

On 13th February 1958 the Cape Argus reported that a ringed sea-bird had been hooked at The Strand; the inscription on the ring read: Zool. Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, No. 705405. The Zool. Museum, Copenhagen, informed us that this bird was a Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) which had been ringed on 9th June 1957 at Nrd. Rønner (57°22'N 10°56'E) North-northwest of the isle Laeso in the sea Kattegat.

Mr. R. Rankine was at Cape L'Agulhas at the end of January and beginning of February and identified there a Terek Sandpiper. This bird is not included in the list of Agulhas birds published in a recent Ostrich by the Misses Robinson and Dr. Winterbottom; and though the Terek Sandpiper occurs regularly at Langebaan and at Port Elizabeth, it is rare in the extreme south-west.

From Mrs. M. Broekhuysen comes the following contribution:

While having lunch on June 8th, I happened to look out of the window and saw to my amazement a Hamerkop, sitting on my neighbour's chimney! We live near the Liesbeek, in Newlands, and we often see Hamerkops flying over, sometimes calling loudly, but to see one sitting placidly on a chimney-pot was rather unusual.

Miss D. Clark and Miss Van Deventer observed a Purple Gallinule in the reeds on the Fish Hoek vlei down in the sand dunes on June 22nd. Miss Clark also saw a Black Oystercatcher on the newly made road of the Strandfontein extension towards the Strand on April 20th 1958.

Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Alais watched 3 Purple Gallinules and many other birds on the waste land between Salt River and Observatory (Cape Flats side of the railway line).

Mrs. Taylor finds that the Hartlaub's Gulls appearing on the rooftops near High Level Road, Green Point, at the approach of winter, keep to a fairly regular time-table. According to her observations they appeared

in 1956:	Last week in April
1957:	4th May
1958:	26th April.

Mr. A. Eaton observed a White-winged Seed-eater near the Goudini Baths Hotel, the two white patches on the bird's body (the one on the chin, the other on the tips of the wing coverts) attracted his attention at once, although he noticed only one white line (instead of two) on the wing.

Mr. Martin's report about the outing is very interesting for the timing of future visits to Saldanha Bay:

Our week-end Club Outing to Schrywers Hoek on 12/13th April disclosed that most of the waders had already departed. Of the remaining birds the vast majority were Curlew Sandpiper, and there were still quite a number of Little Stints. Surprisingly, there were more Turnstone than usual, and we saw a few Terek Sandpipers - some of our members seeing these birds for the first time. Even

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with the yellow legs and upturned bills, these birds are difficult to distinguish from the mass of other waders, unless you have a really strong pair of binoculars and most of our younger members are handicapped in this respect.

Ringed Plover, Sanderlings, Grey Plover, Whimbrel, Curlew and Greenshank were also seen and across the lagoon a pink mass of Flamingoes lined the shore. A flock of Sacred Ibis flew across the water and later a single one was seen near our parked cars. A pair of Caspian Terns spent some time diving for fish and spent even longer time chasing each other away from the fishing spot.

While we were watching the waders a Black Harrier appeared above the sand hills to the seaward-side of the lagoon near us and flew above the ridge for a few seconds. By the time most of the members had their glasses trained in its direction, it had dipped behind the hills again and did not reappear. That it disappeared so soon was disappointing as this species is rarely seen in our area.

A report from Dr. Winterbottom arrived just in time for inclusion:

While making the monthly count of Riet Vlei with Messrs. Morgan and Wheeler on 13th July, I saw 2 African Spoonbills. Other birds of interest seen by one or more of us included at least 17 Curlew Sandpipers, one in full breeding plumage; at least 19 Little Stints; the remarkable totals of 93 Shelduck and 134 Wigeon, most of the latter in a single flock; and 8 pairs of Blacksmith Plovers.

#### CAPE BIRD CLUB.

##### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 12th 1957 - JUNE 19th 1958.

During the period under consideration the Committee has met ELEVEN times. As usual all meetings were well attended, which showed that all Committee Members were keenly interested.

During the first part of the year, Miss P. de Wet acted as Hon. Secretary and when it became impossible for her to continue the Secretaryship, Mrs. White was willing to take over.

Mr. Jack Macleod and Mr. John Martin again organised outings in a most efficient way. Miss Ethelston organised lifts for people who had no transport to get to the excursions and in addition she had a major share in providing teas during Evening Meetings, assisted by Miss de Wet, Mrs. White and the Misses Robinson.

Mr. John Martin continued to act as organiser of Nest Record returns and Dr. Broekhuysen as organiser of the issue of rings. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Schmidt organised mass ringing.

Dr. Broekhuysen again acted as Keeper of Migration Records and Miss Joan Robinson acted as Editor of the News Sheet assisted by Mr. Schmidt. Mr. Schmidt continued to act as Recorder of observations on Behaviour.

Of the different topics discussed at the different Committee Meetings the following were of special importance:

- (a) In connection with the proposed establishment of a salt-winning scheme at Langebaan, it was decided that the Chairman should interview Dr. Douglas Hey, Director of the Department of Nature Conservation in the Cape Province and discuss matters. During the interview it became clear that Dr. Hey was very willing to cooperate in proclaiming the Langebaan Lagoon a Nature Reserve and asked your Chairman to draft a memorandum and to obtain support from other interested bodies. The memorandum was drafted and was supported by the universities

Stellenbosch and Cape Town, the Cape Natural History Club, and of course the Cape Bird Club. The Western Province Branch of the Wild Life Protection Society also supported the memorandum, a copy of which is attached to this Chairman's Report.

- (b) The Club was asked to send a representative to a meeting held at Uitenhage in connection with the Sir Percy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund. Mr. John Martin was asked to attend but due to unforeseen circumstances was not able to do so. The Club was then represented by its Chairman. At this very important meeting the possibility of the establishment of an Institute for Ornithology as a memorial to the late Sir Percy Fitzpatrick was discussed by a large number of representatives of different bodies as Universities, Museums, Ornithological Society and others. As an outcome of this meeting, an Interim Committee has been appointed by the Trustees of the Sir Percy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund and five members of the Cape Bird Club are serving on this Committee.
- (c) The Committee decided to order three "mist" nets from America for use by members in the catching of migratory birds for ringing purposes.
- (d) The Committee decided to continue with the Club's yearly habit of giving a donation to the S.A.O.S. The Hon. Treasurer will report more fully on this matter.

#### EVENING MEETINGS.

During the past year NINE Evening Meetings were held. These meetings were very well attended.

At the first meeting Dr. Millard of the Department of Zoology talked on the Evolution of Birds.

At the second Dr. Broekhuysen and Mr. Stanford gave a short report on the Pan-African Ornithological Congress held in Livingstone and Dr. Broekhuysen showed a series of 35 mm colour slides taken during that occasion.

At the third Professor K. Voous from Amsterdam talked on the European and African Avifauna.

At the fourth meeting members screened colour slides and Dr. Broekhuysen played tape-recordings of bird calls.

At the fifth Mr. Ferguson gave a talk on "Bird Watching in the Eastern Cape".

At the sixth Mrs. Ingersoll of the U.S.A. gave a talk on birds in America, and showed slides; this was followed by the screening of slides taken by Cape Bird Club members.

At the seventh evening, Mr. Stanford talked on the Narina Trogon. This interesting talk was illustrated with unique colour slides.

At the eighth Professor Hall gave a most stimulating account of his work on the Blacksmith Plover and asked for cooperation by members, and at the ninth Dr. Broekhuysen talked on his work on the Cape Sugar Bird.

#### FIELD OUTINGS.

During the period under review NINE Field Outings were held, of which two were week-end camps. The areas visited were:

Sir Lowry's Pass, Eerste Rivier, Klaver Vlei, Kersefontein,  
Yserfontein, Rietvlei, Tomatie Vlei, Skryvershoek on  
the Langebaan Lagoon, and Noordhoek Vlei.  
The excursion to Yserfontein, which was a two day excursion, was especially organised to catch European Bee-eaters with the Club's new mist nets in order to ring them.

Most of the outings were very well attended and the number of members present was often a bit too big.

(To be continued in the next News Letter, which will also contain the Memorandum on the Langebaan Lagoon)