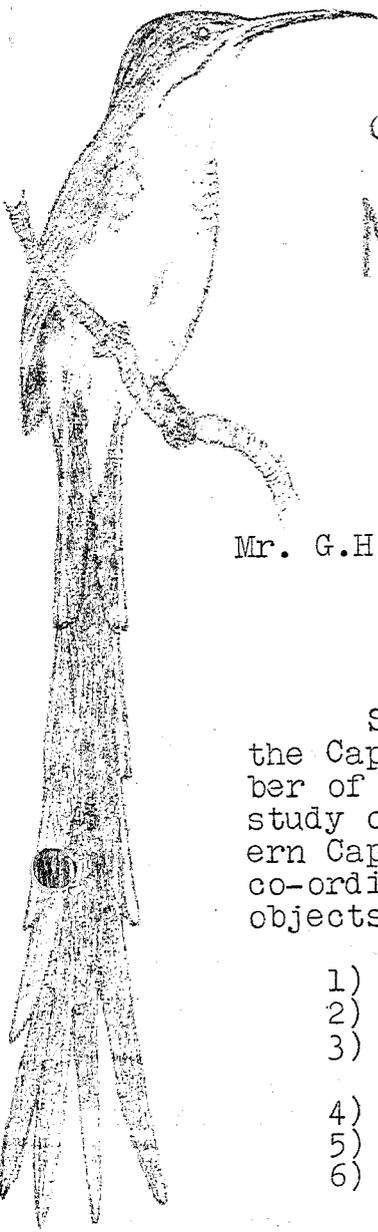


N/2

CAF



CAPE BIRD CLUB : KAAPSE VOELWAARNEMERSKLUB

NEWSLETTER - NUUSBRIEF.

No 102 N^o 2

October Oktober
1972

Mr. G.H. Wilson sent me the following interesting report:

Wader Ringing in the Cape Peninsula

Since 1970 the number of Palearctic waders ringed in the Cape Peninsula has increased dramatically. The number of ringers and people interested in the ringing and study of waders has also increased. This year The Western Cape Wader Study Group was formed with the object of co-ordinating the efforts of individual ringers. The objects of the Group are briefly as follows:

- 1) to trap and ring all species of waders
- 2) to do moult studies of waders
- 3) to determine sex difference by means of measurements and/or plumage differences
- 4) to determine age in 1st year, 2nd year or adult bird
- 5) to plot local movements
- 6) to plot long distance migration routes by means of ringing returns.

The founder members of the group are all qualified ringers with experience in the trapping and handling of waders, each has his own ringing equipment. The leader at present is Mr. M. Waltner, other members are Messrs. C.C.H. Elliot, H.P. Pfister, G.D. Underhill, L. Underhill and G.H. Wilson. Many other people have helped in the Group's work, it is hoped that some of these people will later become full members.

Mostly waders are caught at night in either single shelf or large three-shelf mist nets at a number of sites. Some birds have been caught while roosting on a beach at Langebaan Lagoon using the "torch and hand net method".

The following table shows the ringing totals for the past two seasons:

<u>Species</u>	<u>1970/71</u>	<u>1971/2</u>
Curlew Sandpiper	1425	1788
Knot	16	173
Marsh Sandpiper	1	15
Common Sandpiper	7	2
Greenshank	10	18
Whimbrel	2	3
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	2
Sanderling	56	122
Little Stint	168	193
Ruff	5	70
Turnstone	3	2
Wood Sandpiper	-	7
Ringed Plover	9	5

2/...

Species	1970/71	1971/2
Greater Sand Plover	-	2
Grey Plover	2	8
Terek Sandpiper	8	17
	<u>1712</u>	<u>2427</u>

In addition Blacksmith Plover, Crowned Plover, Black Oyster-catcher, Stilt, Cape Dikkop, Ethiopian Snipe and Painted Snipe have been ringed in small numbers. White-fronted Sandplover, Kittlitz Plover, and Treble-banded Sandplover are regularly caught and ringed.

Overseas recoveries to date are disappointingly few, but those in, so far, are very interesting:

Knot ringed 29/8/69 at Zeebrugge, Belgium
 caught and released 2/1/72 at Langebaan Lagoon.

Sanderling ringed 14/3/71 at Kommetjie, Cape
 caught and released 15/5/71 Wash, England.

Curlew Sandpiper ringed 7/5/70 at Klavervlei, Faure, Cape
 found dead 3/9/71, 13 miles north of Bulawayo,
 Rhodesia.

Curlew Sandpiper ringed 24/9/69 at Walvis Bay SWA.
 caught and released 30/9/71 at Paarden Eiland,
 Cape Town.

A large number of local controls have been recorded now.

During the 1972/3 season it is planned to colour-ring Curlew Sandpipers with a white colour ring. Only birds caught at Paarden Eiland and Rietvlei will be colour-ringed. The idea is to establish by visual observation the local movement of Curlew Sandpipers after Rietvlei dries up.

Appeal to all Members: Will anyone seeing a colour-ringed Curlew Sandpiper, please report date and place of such observation to any member of the WESTERN CAPE WADER STUDY GROUP.

N.B.

A Paradise for Birdwatchers

discovered, described and recommended by John Martin, Somerset West.

Members of the Cape Bird Club wanting to do a long week-end of bird-watching could do worse than spend it at Lutzville, about 24 km beyond Vredendal. This area falls under Vanrhynsdorp, for which district numerous species of birds are still to be added to the distribution list. A few miles this side of Klawer you have the first road bridge across the Olifants River where something unusual is always likely to be found. On entering Klawer from the National road - N 11- do not take the Vredendal road at the entrance to the town, but use the alternative route by continuing straight ahead, crossing the railway line in the town and stopping at the bridge on the outskirts of the town. Here I once saw the Jacana, and the Namaqua Prinia is common here.

Large areas of Klawer, Vredendal and Lutzville are irrigated by canalisation of water from the old Clanwilliam dam. These areas are the ones rather far from the river, while the farms nearer the river get all the water they need from the riverbed itself. Result - a green country-side for most of the year with its high incidence of bird-life all the year round. The road from Klawer to Vredendal passes through this type of country.

Between Vredendal and the third bridge over the river near Lutzville there are to be found Ant-eating and Layard's Chats, Chat-flycatcher and Karoo Lark. We made Lutzville Hotel our headquarters and found it excellent. Just south of Lutzville and almost in the town is a fourth bridge, rather low and becoming a causeway when the

river runs strongly. This is the most interesting of all the bridges and a good assortment of birds is to be found there. Small fish from the sea reach this spot, but unless the river is running strongly, they are unable to go farther as the water here drops two or three feet, the result is that many species of birds feed on the massed fish. Species noted feeding at this spot included Darter, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, Hartlaub's Gull, Caspian and Common Terns, White-winged and Whiskered Terns, three kinds of Kingfisher and possibly a fourth - the Half-collared - But not verified. On the north bank of the river at this spot is a large colony of Wattled Starling nests - not being used while we were there although these starlings were present, but they will probably be used again next year. These nests are down-stream and about 200 paces from the road.

The gravel road to Doringbaai passes through some arid patches, but the little kloof leading down from the road to the sea about 2 or 300 paces beyond the Strandfontein hotel is well worth the trip. On the opposite side of the road a track winds its way to a picnic spot which should be a very interesting place in the nesting season.

On the way home take the second route from Vredendal to Klawer. To get onto this road leave Vredendal by the Vanrhynsdorp road and about two miles out of town turn right for Klawer at the signpost. About half a mile along this road is another bridge which is a must for bird-watching. Pull up on the left before crossing and, with a bit of patience, you should see Moorhen, Cape Rail and Black Crake. This is the only place where I have seen Coot, Moorhen, Rail and Crake feeding out in the open at the same time. In all, we saw at least four Rail and six Black Crake.

On again to Klawer and you are back on your old track again.

Chaffinches and other records.

With reference to the note about Chaffinches in Newsletter 101, page 2, Dr. H. Gottschalk, Wynberg, sent me the following observation:

In spring 1971, I noted one in Olieboom Road, off Strandfontein Road, at Schaapskraal.

Dr. Gottschalk further reports that on 20th May 1972 he found a group of 8 European Swallows on the wires near the entrance to the Cape Point Reserve.

Some time ago Dr. Gottschalk sent me a list of 82 species which he together with the late Mr. Jack MacLeod observed on Treewaters-kloof Farm near Villiersdorp during 1968, 69 and 70. Presuming that this farm is in the Caledon district, I consulted the C.B.C. Check List 1963 and found that the following seem to be new records for Caledon: Stanley Bustard, Chanting Goshawk and Banded Harrier Hawk. Two other interesting records are the rare Cape Eagle Owl which has, however, been recorded before for Caledon and the House Sparrow seen on 17 September 1969.

Cape Robin attacking White-eye

Master Robert Donaldson, a junior member, reports: On 15 August at about 6 p.m., I noticed a Cape Robin enter some dense bush. When a Cape White-eye attempted to enter the same shrubbery it was attacked by the Robin and held by the neck feathers for a few moments. I later searched the bush and heard a fledgeling. It appears that the Robin was Protecting its young even against a much smaller bird.

Flamingoes along the Beach.

Mr. H.S. Edelson spent the week-end 7/8 October at Paternoster, a picturesque little fishing village on the West Coast 117 miles from Cape Town via Hopefield and Vredenburg. He reports:

During an afternoon stroll I came across a flock of about 20 Flamingoes standing on the beach with their feet covered by the gentle surf running at the time. They did not appear to be feeding. As I approached they flew away in a semicircle over the sea and landed a few hundred yard up the beach. On my way back, they again took to wing and landed where they had been before. Again they did not appear to be feeding.

I was rather surprised to see Flamingoes on a beach as this is not mentioned in "Roberts" or "Gill". If anybody has observed this strange behaviour, he could perhaps offer some explanation or reference. (Mrs. E. Coward told me that one of her acquaintances had observed Flamingoes in rather strong surf along the Namib Coast in SWA without being able to say what they were doing there. Editor).

Paternoster seems to be the place to see Black Oystercatchers, there were about 30 or more there.

Strange cause of nestling mortality

A Karoo Robin nest at Strandfontein Forest Reserve contained one chick and two eggs on 16 September. When I checked again on 23 Sept. the nest was completely covered by a heap of sand pushed up by the large Sand Mole (Afrikaans: Duinemol). A little bit of scratching revealed a dead chick whose primary quills had not opened yet, there was no trace of the eggs.

I mentioned this to Mr. Nico Myburgh and he told me that during the 1971 nesting season he found two nests which had come to grief by such action of moles, the one was a Pipit nest with three eggs, the other a nest of the Red-capped Lark which contained big young.

Interesting observations

On 16 September 1972 Miss D. Clark saw a Fork-tailed Drongo on the Worcester-Villiersdorp road between the bridge and the pass.

On 7 October Prof. Broekhuysen and Mr. N. Myburgh saw 22 European White Storks near Gordon's Bay. I saw 5 White Storks soaring leisurely above Plumstead on 10 October.

On 5 October Mrs. Jagger observed three pairs of Crested Grebes on Sandvlei.

Look out for colour-ringed Waders

In Germany Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and Ruff have been ringed with up to 5 coloured rings in addition to the steel ring. These colour rings are above the ankle (which is often popularly mistaken for a knee, the real knee being concealed in the plumage). If such a bird is seen, it is most important to record the exact combination of the colour rings together with the date and place.

Christmas Cards.

Members will have seen the lovely bird-picture cards in the September issue of the Bokmakierie. The Cape Bird Club has ordered 2500 cards which will be on sale to members and friends at evening meetings. Especially welcome will be bulk orders from business people.

Every card you buy helps your Society as well as Bokmakierie.
9c each including envelopes.