



CAPE BIRD CLUB : KAAPSE VOELWAARNEMERSKLUB

NEWSLETTER - NUUSBRIEF

No 107 NR

December 1973 Desember

The Committee of the Cape Bird Club wishes all members a Happy Christmas. A Happy New Year will be guaranteed by their paying their subscriptions and attending as many of the Club's functions as they can. Subscriptions by the way are due on January 1 and your hard-worked Hon. Treasurer's lot is greatly lightened if he has not to keep asking you to send them! P.O. Box 21, Sea Point... Full Members R6, Family Members R6,00, plus 50c for each additional member of the family, Junion Members R2,50.

This Newsletter is now jointly edited by RUDOLF SCHMIDT and PHILIP TONGUE. Perhaps it would be wise to mention that the views expressed in the NOTES and COMMENTS section do not necessarily represent those of the Committee.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

FRED and JANE SAWKINS

It was with great sadness that we heard of the tragic accident in which both Fred and Jane were killed.

Their car left the road in the afternoon of Sunday the 30th of September between Keetmanshoop and Grünau while they were on their way back home from the very enjoyable Symposium on "Adaptations in birds to arid conditions" which had been held at the Hardap Dam near Mariental. They had also attended the interesting excursion through the Namib Desert and had said to others how they had enjoyed it all.

They had recently come back from a several months stay in Britain where they had looked up relatives and old friends and they had enjoyed this so much that they were soon going to plan another visit. It was, therefore, in this frame of mind, the crest of a wave, that fate struck.

Fred was a South African but had spent in his younger days quite some time in Australia of which he was very fond. Jane was British and before she and Fred met she ran a taxi service in Rondebosch with a friend. A motor-car had no secrets for her.

They were a devoted couple always together and always full of consideration for others. They were both very interested in nature and they played an important role in societies like the South African Ornithological Society and the Botanical Society serving on the committees and they were keen members of several others.

Cape Bird Club meetings and excursions without Fred and Jane will be very strange and we shall miss them for a very long time.

Gerry Broekhuysen

HOW MUCH DO WE WANT OUR BIRDS ?

We in the Western Cape tend to be complacent about our birds. We take them for granted and possibly never seriously contemplate any massive reduction in numbers or the disappearance of any of the less frequently seen species. So far we have been fortunate. No disaster on a grand scale has, so far, struck them, apart from a little oiling, and so far as we know no species has shown any alarming decline in numbers.

EDITOR • R. K. SCHMIDT "STRIEGAS" LYMPLEIGH RD PLUMSTEAD CAPE
REDAKTEUR • LYMPLEIGHWEG PLUMSTEAD KAAP.

This state of affairs may be illusory. That deadly enemy of the environment and of wildlife, the bulldozer, works untiringly in the Peninsula "improving" it according to the tastes of developers and adding to such amenities as they feel we all need. Despite the ban on some of the more persistent pesticides the deadliest of poisons are still being poured onto the fields and crops, all finding their way to that great dustbin, the sea, there to remain to do what we have yet to learn, maybe to our personal discomfiture, for nobody has any certain knowledge of what their ultimate effect will be. Those who make them and sell them can't see much farther ahead than the next balance sheet; that of the human race may await the future. It was recently well said by one of the "doomsday men" that there is no "away" to throw things...a wise remark we should all ponder.

Perhaps we bird people are foolish and wrong-headed. Perhaps the millennium to which we are all heading whether we like it or not is a totally artificial world where bird song comes from loudspeakers in the plastic trees (this is not so fanciful as it sounds; the town of San Pedro, California, has just decided to pull up the \$55 000 worth of plastic trees and shrubs which line its roads and replace them with so-called natural greenery). But since we feel that, so far as we are concerned, birds are important, it is our job, as I see it, to work as hard as we can to ensure that plastic birds singing through loudspeakers do not come here if we can prevent it.

I mentioned above that so far we had suffered no major bird disaster, but disaster comes upon the natural world with terrifying suddenness. Consider what happened a few months ago to that triumph of conservation in Europe, the Coto Donana, where it is estimated that upwards of 50 000 birds have died from what has been traced to a poisonous spray used in overwhelming quantities... by whom? Again, take what is going on in Cyprus (mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter)...It is clear that we must be on our guard all the time.

The question then is this. Do we, the members of the Cape Bird Club, want it to jog along as a provider of 18 pleasant entertainments a year or do we feel that we should alter our way of life and join battle with those so busily occupied in spoiling the earth? Would we like to become stronger and more militant? To make ourselves heard clearly and loudly? And, at the same time, to take active steps in protection and preservation of birds ourselves?

Do we feel that we should set about converting others to our way of thinking? Do we feel that we should try to acquire our own bird sanctuaries? Should we work for at least one site where the public should be encouraged to go just to see birds? Should we raise funds, make a fuss when anywhere we value is threatened, publish leaflets about protection, and co-operate actively with other organisations devoted to the same objects? And, in order to do this, should we set about a massive fund-raising programme...having, of course, first determined what we are going to do?

It is interesting to consider the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds in England, which began in the smallest and most modest of ways, and now has over 150 000 members, plus 40 reserves, a surplus in the Bank, and a voice that governments and developers have to heed.

If we are to do these things we shall need more members and more money. Members can help by bullying their friends into joining the Club...even if they don't come to meetings, their R6 will be welcome...and as to more money, your committee has ideas, but should anyone who reads this feel inclined to send a cheque to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Keith Morgan at P.O. Box 21, Sea Point, please don't think twice.

A lead has been given by the SAOS which has formed a sub-committee to concern itself solely with conservation and which has already asked the Bird Clubs, of which there are six, to do something for themselves. This request has not been unheeded by your committee which is at present discussing ways and means of becoming more active. But this is YOUR Club and what members feel must influence its policy. Or so important a matter members views are more than welcome... they are vital.

Will you please write to the editor and say how YOU feel?

PT.

CYPRUS AND THE NETHERLANDS

Members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have been asked to send their support to an organisation in Cyprus that is campaigning to have the trade in songbirds which are trapped in millions each year, pickled and exported, at migration times. That they have survived many years in spite of this is no

/longer...

longer a valid argument as the added dangers from pesticides and habitat destruction could well turn the scale. A sample of 25 000 birds caught in ONE village and examined by the Smithsonian Institute showed 446 Rüppels warblers (a rare species), 357 Pied Wheatears and 119 Scops Owls. The Cyprus Ornithological Society estimates that five million birds of more than 100 species were caught with liced sticks in 1972.

In the Netherlands a new canal project, already begun, is to destroy the autumn feeding grounds of what is estimated at about three quarters of the entire Avocet population of North West Europe.

Your Committee feels that any protest against these acts is a matter for the SAOS as it is an international one, but if any individual member would like to write personally...and any letter from so far away must carry weight...here are the addresses to write to:

Mr. E.D. Michaelides, President of the Cyprus Ornithological Society,
5 Lambousa Street, Nicosia 111, Cyprus.

Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat, Plesmanweg, 1-6, The Hague,
Netherlands, and/or

Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk,
Steenvoordelaan 370, Rijswijk, Netherlands.

In the case of the Netherlands you are asked to stress the biological value of the Dollard Estuary and ask for alternative plans to be made.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

DOORN RIVIER - 7 October. After a miserably cold Saturday, Sunday the 7th was cloudy and cool when we left for Villiersdorp. However, once over Viljoen's Pass, things improved and when the 15 cars lined up in the main street the sun was shining and the temperature improving. The day had been planned by Nico Myburgh, who proceeded to lead us for what seemed a very long ride indeed by a gravel turnoff to the east of the Villiersdorp-Worcester tarred road. We stopped about 11 a.m. by an unfenced hillside. Already, at so comparatively short a distance from the fertile Cape we were in Karoo; stony and dry, though the valley bottom was not infertile.

Several nests had been marked for us to see, the most unusual being that of the Fairy Flycatcher (678), with chicks. This is a most attractive bird, one of the Batis group, with the diamond-shaped patch round the eye, but, unlike the Cape Batis (672) a bird in shades of grey with a pale apricot breast. A few of us climbed the hillside to see the nest and two chicks of a Mountain Chat (564) deeply hidden in a crevice in the rock face. Much higher, on the other side of the valley was the nest of a Jackal Buzzard (152). It was suggested that perhaps after lunch a party might like to go up and look at it from above, but only Hamish Robertson took the trouble to go and look and reported that it was empty. One of the less usual birds seen was the Ground Woodpecker (445) of which a group of three posed for a long time on the bough of a fallen tree and every now and then were seen, flaker, flying round. Lunch was taken by a clump of trees at the side of a not very active stream, which had a number of Bishops, both red (808) and yellow (810) and many nests of the Masked Weaver (803). By 4 p.m. most of us had left. A most enjoyable day, for which thanks, Mr. Myburgh.

INDOOR MEETING - 19 October. In place of a talk by Prof. Siegfried, advantage was taken of the presence in Cape Town of Tony Williams, a new research officer at the Percy Fitzpatrick, who has spent three years at Tromsø in the most northerly part of Norway, to speak of his Arctic experiences. His talk, devoted to the sea birds of the north Atlantic which breed on Bear Island and Spitzbergen was of the greatest interest being chiefly concerned with the Guillemots that breed in enormous numbers on the rock ledges on the cliffs. The Common Guillemot and Brunnich's Guillemot, only separable by minor differences in pattern and bill shape, in spite of nesting in just about as close proximity as possible, do not interbreed...for reasons apparently still to be discovered. As we are now accustomed to hearing, numbers are declining. The normal hazards of life, from predation, loss of fledglings, accident and harvesting by the islanders, however wastefully it was done, made no serious reduction in numbers, but now that pollution by chemical residues of various kinds has been added to the natural hazards, numbers have been reduced by about two-thirds. The more one hears about the appalling extermination of wild life the more helpful one feels at the face of the successful attempts which nature

Mr. Williams' talk was illustrated with splendid slides of a land- (and sea-) scape totally different with that we are accustomed to and one where the bitterly low temperature of winter could scarcely be imagined in the warmth of the October Cape.

It is regretted that for various reasons, some valid, some not, it has not been possible to report on the November events.

The following extremely interesting notes and records of less common species have been compiled by the staff of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute over the past two years. Observers, identified by initials, are:

GA	George Arkell	DFM	Frank McKinney
JC	John Cooper	WRS	Roy Siegfried
PGHF	Peter Frost	AJW	Tony Williams
PJ	Peter Johnson		

Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus R67: A female was seen at Klavervlei in early February 1972. Nico Myburgh informs me that this species has bred here (PGHF).

Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus R83: Three birds at Paarl Sewage Farm mid January 1972, where they roosted with Sacred Ibis and Cattle Egrets (PGHF). One bird flying with a flock of Sacred Ibis at Lynedoch early June 1972, and another individual was seen in a field near Veldrif where it was in the company of 93 Sacred Ibis, early August 1972. (PGHF, WRS)

Hottentot Teal Anas hottentota R99: An adult bird was seen and photographed at Paarl Sewage Farm on the 15th and 25th January 1972. It was also noted by M.H. Currie, Department of Nature Conservation, on the 21st January. The bird was first seen, after an influx of large numbers of Yellowbill and Pochard. The bird was unpinioned and in fine plumage. This is the first record of this species in the S.W. Cape since Sir Andrew Smith obtained one last century (PGHF).

White Backed Duck Thalassornis leuconotus R104: Two birds at Klavervlei early February 1972 (PGHF). One bird at Klavervlei mid April 1972 (PGHF). One bird at Vlottenburg, Stellenbosch, mid November 1973 (GA, DFM).

Cape Vulture Cypsoymeris coprotheres R106: One adult soaring over Stellenbosch early April 1973 (WRS).

Hobby Falco subbuteo R115: An adult male was seen hawking insects over the Jonkershoek Forest Reserve 6th April 1973. The bird was in the process of moulting its ninth primaries. This species was last recorded in the S.W. Cape in 1894 when a specimen was collected at Wynberg (PGHF, WRS, PJ).

Greater Kestrel Falco rupicoloides R122: An adult seen at Veldrif 31st March 1973 (PGHF, WRS).

Booted Eagle (Hieraaetus dubius R139: A number of records from the Cape Province in general and S.W. Cape in particular are worth noting.

- 1 dark phase bird, Albertinia, late December 1971 (WRS)
- 2 birds (1 dark phase, 1 light phase), Stellenbosch, early January 1972 (WRS, PGHF).
- 1 light phase bird, Stellenbosch, mid January 1972 (PGHF).
- 1 light phase bird near Klaarstroom, E. Karroo, mid October 1972, and
- 2 birds, both light phase, at the same locality mid January 1973 (PGHF).
- 1 light phase bird, Malmesbury, mid January 1973 (PGHF).
- 1 dark phase bird near Touws River, mid November 1973 (PGHF, WRS).
- 1 pale phase bird, near Laingsburg, late November 1973 (PGHF, WRS).
- 1 dark phase bird, Stellenbosch, late November 1973 (PGHF). This bird was moulting the outer primaries and inner tail feathers.

Black Sparrowhawk Accipiter melanoleucus R159: An immature (possibly female) has been seen twice on the farm Groote Zalze near Stellenbosch. It was first noted on 20th April 1973 making a half hearted pass at a Little Egret, and was subsequently seen in mid June 1973 (PGHF, WRS).

The species was once recorded in the S.W. Cape during the last century by Sir Andrew Smith.

Gymnogene Polyboroides typus. R171. An immature was seen for a week during late March 1973 and again in late August 1973 at Troughend, Stellenbosch. An adult was also seen at Groote Zalze, Stellenbosch in mid June (WRS, PGHF).

Baillons Crake Porzana pusilla R202. This elusive species was seen at Klavervlei, February 1972 (PGHF).

American Gallinule Porphyrio martinica R208X. An immature bird was recovered at Camps Bay on 22 May 1972. It weighed 160gms which is about 70% of the normal body weight. This is the 12th record from South Africa, and the 9th in recent years (WRS, PGHF).

Red necked Phalarope. Phalaropus lobatus R272. A single bird, in winter plumage, was seen at Rocher Pan Nature Reserve near Veldrif on 20th January 1973 (PGHF).

Black tailed Godwit Limosa limosa R265. This rare wader was seen at Veldrif 25 July 1973, together with a flock of 32 Bartailed Godwits. These birds were overwintering (PGHF, WRS).

Sabines Gull Xema Sabini R289X. Single birds seen in early March 1972 between Robben and Dassen Islands. A flock of 35 birds were also seen between Saldanha Bay and Dassen Island late November 1972 (PGHF).

Franklins Gull Larus pixicans. This bird, the first for Africa, was recorded at Langebaan on 15 April 1973. The bird, which was in full breeding plumage, was photographed and the record has been accepted by the S. African Records Committee (AJW, JG).

Red breasted Swallow Hirundo semirufa R501. A single bird was seen N of Laingsburg late March 1972. This is a considerable way out of the species normal range, which extends down to Strydenburg in the Northern Cape (PGHF).

Boubou Shrike Laniarius ferrugineus R709. An adult was trapped at Troughend Farm, Stellenbosch on 5 July 1973 bearing ring number 593-01001. This bird had been banded by Mrs. Gwen Lipp at Troughend on 5 July 1962, exactly 11 years previously. This longevity record has only been bettered by a Cliff Swallow amongst South African Passerines (PGHF).

MEMBERS' REPORTS:

(a) A Bateleur (151) at du Toit's Kloof.

"I would like to report an interesting sighting, made on Sunday 16th September, 1973 in du Toit's Kloof of an immature bateleur eagle. The first to see the bird was Mr. Doug Wood, curator of the Helderberg Nature Reserve, and the bird was first sighted shortly after we had crossed the Molenaar's River by the suspension bridge and we were at a height of approximately 1,500 ft. Presumably the same bird was later seen on several occasions during the day in the same vicinity and towards evening at the point where the National Road crosses the Elands River. Both Mr. Wood and myself felt that there was no question of the identity of the bird, due to its wing and tail outline and flight pattern. I state that it was an immature bird, because the general colouring was brownish and the white on the wings appeared in three windows and the legs did not protrude beyond the tail in flight."

R.D. Mew, P.O. Box 234, CAPE TOWN.

Great Spotted Cuckoo (346).

"On the morning of the 12th September, 1973, a long, hawk-like cuckoo was seen flying overhead and then alighted on a dead tree by the bridge near Redelinghuys, Verloren Vlei. The bird was observed for about three minutes through binoculars before flying off and was a Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius. The greyish crest, white markings on the back and long tail and size of the bird all helped to distinguish it from any other species. It appeared to be rather shy, and a pair of Giant Kingfishers, several Pied Starlings and a party of 5 Red-winged Starlings all in the vicinity, gave it a noisy send-off."

P.S. Lockhart, Somerset West.

Hartlaubs Gull (289) attacking a Rock Kestrel (123)

On 26 September about 1 p.m. at the Olifantsbosch picnic site, a solitary Hartlaub's Gull was seen swooping and diving in a very aggressive manner at a Rock Kestrel. The attack only lasted a few moments as the Rock Kestrel took the hint and made off hastily.

Piet my Vrou (343)

Nobody seems to have heard the Red Chested Cuckoo except the acting editor and two correspondents. Stan Clarke wrote: "You didn't give a date for hearing the Piet-my-Vrou in Wynberg Park. But perhaps I can improve on your date because I heard the bird calling at Jonkershoek on September 23rd."; which brought a blush to my cheek ... the date I heard it was 25 September. Lise Jakobsen wrote this letter: "I am a young member of the Cape Bird Club. I just received the October newsletter and I am delighted to tell you that I heard a Piet-my-Vrou before you did. The first one I heard was in the last week of last term (between 17th and 20th of September) during school. We were in the art room and a few of us ran over to the windows to see it, and see it we did! That was at the end of September. I wonder if any one else can beat that! I attend Sans Souci Girls High, Newlands." Lise ... you did better than I because you did give an approximate date, but if you had given an EXACT date your observation would have been a useful one. Thank you for writing and keep on being interested in birds and making notes (and send them in!).

Orange-throated Longclaws (703) and Black Eagles (133)

We have received a most interesting letter from Mr. C.H. Langley but it was another of those that didn't arrive owing to Mr. Schmidt's absence overseas, until Mid-October, though it was dated June 19. I hope Mr. Langley will understand why it was not mentioned in an earlier Newsletter. Mr. Langley's letter contained the following interesting information:

"In the last newsletter, Mr. Tongue mentions that there seem to be more Orange Throated Longclaws in the reserve than usual this season. I have always found this bird to be numerous in the area, for instance, during March 1972, I recorded 35 of them during one day, in the area stretching from the main road to Brightwaters.

"Mr. Tongue also mentions that he has not observed Black Eagles in the reserve although there are reports of them occurring in the area. These reports are quite valid, as during the past two years these birds have been sighted almost daily in the area. Last year they nested on the cliffs near Paulsberg, using an old nest which they re-lined and generally renovated. There are a further two old nests on the cliffs, showing that they have used this site fairly often in the past. Unfortunately, or should I say fortunately, the nests are inaccessible, so I was unable to see the results of this nesting. Although I kept a constant watch on the nesting area I never saw any sign of an immature bird in the area, and therefore presume that it was unsuccessful. They have recently been very active around the cliffs at Cape Point, and may possibly nest there this season."

He also enclosed a list of the birds he had recorded in the Reserve in the 4-year period 1969-1973. This conveniently takes over just at the date of Ernest Middlemiss' list of THE BIRDS OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE NATURE RESERVE, published in the South African Avifauna Series (available from the Percy Fitz Patrick Institute for 50c) in 1969.

Comparison of the two lists is instructive, and Mr. Langley's would be extremely useful to anyone spending a day at the reserve. It comprises 10 foolscap sheets and we expect to be able to supply the first ten applicants with a copy, early in the New Year; should demand exceed this number, it may be necessary to SELL photostat copies at cost, though 10 pages won't be too cheap. Please apply to the Hon. Secretary at 5 Vine Road, Bergvliet.

Injury-feigning in the Thick-billed Lark (463)

"Having found a Thick-billed Lark's nest, I was bending over it to inspect the young. Immediately one of the parents attacked me, and flapped and fluttered over the ground, away from the nest, then lying still with wings spread, about 2 m. away from the nest. The young were very large. Has similar behaviour been seen in the Thick-billed Lark before?"
Marianne Broekhuysen, Newlands.

It is a long way to Hardap. A fair number of fellow CBC members braved the journey and all will attest that the effort was well repaid.

The new rest camp at the Dam is well equipped, comfortable and worth a visit at any time.

The resident staff are friendly and helpful; the organisation for the symposium by all parties was thorough but never obtrusive.

The papers and films dealt with the adaptations of habit and physiology which enable birds to live in the dry environments which are typical of so much of our country. We hope the papers will appear in print in due course but money seems to be the problem.

The Dam is built on some pretty solid rock but in the river bed below there are large trees and a reasonable amount of greenery.

The commonest bird on the rocky plateau is the Lark Bunting. They are everywhere. Birds we do not see everyday included the Great Sparrow, Sparrow Weaver, Dusky Sunbird, Melba Finch and Red-headed Finch.

Rock Pigeons and a pair of Rock Kestrels live on the sluice gates. Along the river below the dam we found Grey Louries, the Red-billed Francolin, a Little Bittern, European Bee-eaters, a Black Crake, the Kalahari Scrub-Robin as well as many others well known to us. Nearer the National Road Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters and the Crimson-breasted Shrikes were seen.

A feature of the National Road is the large number of several types of predator on the telephone lines. Common were the Lanner and the Greater Kestrel. A pair of the latter were occupying a Black Crow nest on a telephone pole near the Orange River.

Hardap is quite popular with travellers as an overnight stop. It is well worth a few days of leisurely observation.

Keith Morgan.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE NEWSLETTER

Some extracts from 1951-52...with some comments by P.T.

The first issue of the Cape Bird Club's "house magazine" appeared in June 1950 under the title of "NEWS SHEET No. 1". It was mainly devoted to a short account of the origin of the Club. It did, however, write about "the weekly census taken at...Kirstenbosch, where there is a rich population of bush and scrub birds". It added, sensibly, that "This team work introduces members to systematic fieldwork and provides an excellent training programme". Later one reads that "the vleis of the Cape Flats are being watched with vigilance and a few members are doing census work on waders and waterfowl". "Meetings are usually organised once a month and these are either in the field or the lecture hall. The field meetings...have been well attended and members have found themselves richer in knowledge..."

The Committee "trusts that every member will take an even greater interest in the subject (of birds) and will devote more and more time to work in the field, for it is from the ranks of the present bird watchers that the ornithologists of the future must be drawn".

(Now, with many, many more members, it is STILL the hope of your Committee that members will devote more and more time to fieldwork. P.T.)

Then there was a gap until December 1951 when a NEWS SHEET again numbered No. 1 was circulated, this time under the editorship of Mrs M.K. Rowan, then living at Tokai. Her opening paragraph deserves quotation in full as it is as applicable to the Newsletter today as it was to the News Sheet 22 years ago.

"This is the first issue of a news sheet which the committee hopes to make a regular and useful feature of the activities of the Cape Bird Club. The object is to provide a monthly account of items of current interest to the

birdwatcher at the Cape. For instance the News Sheet will carry reports of the various projects undertaken by the Club as a whole, such as the Kirstenbosch survey. It will record interesting observations by individual members. It will also provide a medium for making requests for assistance, co-operation and advice. In short, the news sheet is intended to act as a sort of central exchange of local-more general-ornithological information."

Mrs. Rowan went on to say "the success or failure of the News Sheet will depend largely on the response and interest shown by members. Nobody should hesitate to send in a question for fear of being trivial...Moreover so little is known about South African birds that almost every observation has its value..."

No. 2 dated January reported the AGM, recording that the membership stood at 125. The Committee elected was Col. R. Hallack, Chairman, Vice Chairman Mr. W. Stanford, Hon. Sec. Richard Liversidge, Hon. Treasurer Mrs. Broekhuysen with a Committee of Mrs. Rowan, Mr. C. d'C. Murray, Mr. J.G.R. McLeod and Dr. Winterbottom.

This issue included a very interesting account of a trip up the west coast in a trawler, Nov. 27 - Dec. 2, with considerable detail of the number of birds seen...which included Damara Terns (200) off Cape Columbine, together with Greater Shearwaters (25) and Storm Petrels (30), all in fair numbers though the first were not really common. Cape Hens (23) were the most abundant birds there, and the writer (whose name was not given) said that there were never fewer than 300 about whilst trawling was in progress. The next most abundant bird was the Black-browed Albatross (8). Wandering Albatrosses were plentiful, numbering 50 to 60 at a time; about half the numbers of the Black-browed. In addition to these 4 Cape Gannets (44), 1 Cape Pigeon (14), a few Cape Parsons (16) and occasional Skuas (286). Off Dassen Island the Cape Hens were still the commonest birds. This observer too noted that whilst the Black-browed Albatross ate whole fish, the Cape Hens pecked at floating fish behind the gills and extracted the gut. Indeed, he noted that most of the birds were concentrating on the offal thrown overboard from the trawler and ignoring heads and bodies.

In No. 3, of February 1952, Mr. Feely identified and Dr. Broekhuysen confirmed the sighting of a White-browed Coucal (356) at Firgrove; The Newsletter commented "this is a very interesting record as the nearest place at which this species has been previously recorded is Swellendam", and prompted the enquiry "whether this was another bird that was extending its range, going on to say that the Red-eyed Dove (314) is a good example, which in 1940 Dr. Gill was to say was fairly common about Swellendam and seems to be spreading westwards, is now, (in 1952) common in many parts of the Peninsula."

The March issue was interested in the possibility of Flamingoes returning to the Cape: Mr. Pottinger wrote that on Feb. 6 he saw about 50 birds at Lakeside. The Newsletter said that there could be no doubt that they had returned to the Cape in great numbers that summer.

SLIDE LIBRARY

The Club now owns a PROJECTOR, for which it is greatly indebted to Dr. Guy Currie who has substantially underwritten the cost. Members using the slide library may borrow the projector for a charge of 50 cents. Conditions of hire are these: 1. It is only available to paid-up members. 2. Junior members may not borrow it. 3. The charge of 50 cents is for ONE WEEK'S use. 4. The borrower must collect and return it from/to Mr. Pfister, 92 Rotherfield Road South, Plumstead. 5. The borrower is responsible for its safety and for any damage, however caused.

Enquirers please telephone Mr. Pfister at 71-3176.

THE NEWSLETTER AT THE CENTRAL LIBRARY : WALE STREET.

Arrangements have been made for the NEWSLETTER to be available for consultation in the ART ROOM, on the ground floor at the Central Library. It is expected that by the New Year the NEWSLETTER of the Witwatersrand Bird Club will also be available there, and, possibly, that of the Eastern Cape Wild Bird Society. Members are recommended to keep an eye on these two interesting publications which will also be accompanied by their sponsor's programmes. Any CBC members in either of these two areas will be more than welcome to attend the functions there announced.