



CAPE BIRD CLUB — KAAPSE VOELWAARNEMERSKLUB
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NEWSLETTER NO. 123 NR NUUSBRIEF
 JULY 1976 JULIE

Editors: Rudolf Schmidt and Philip Tongue
 assisted in this issue by David Steele

Please address all communications to the Club's P.O. Box number (see above)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Officers and Committee of the Club, as elected at the Annual General Meeting held on June 11 are as follows:

- Chairman : Mr. R.A.D. Morris
- Vice-Chairman : Mr. R.K. Schmidt
- Secretary : Mr. O.E. Somerset
- Treasurer : Mrs. S. White
- Mr. S.W. Clarke
- Mrs. N. Davis
- Mr. A.C. Gregory
- Mr. T.D. Longrigg
- Mr. J. Harvey
- Mr. D. Steele

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

EDITORIAL

There is, we hope, much of interest in this issue. Some copy has had to be held over until the September issue, including the Annual Reports on Ringing, Field Cards and the Hartlaub's Gull Enquiry.

This month we report on yet another activity in which club members can partake: The Southern African Seabird Group. This is a new venture which deserves support. Seabirds can be exciting—in February this year Mrs. C.M. Walters of Port Elizabeth found a dead seabird she could not identify and wisely handed it over to the P.E. Museum. Eventually the bird was identified as the (first valid South African record) White-capped Noddy. Mrs. Walters can be proud of her achievement of adding a new bird to the South African list.

One never knows what species will turn up next.

Editor Philip Tongue continues his travels overseas, but nevertheless has supplied us with comment on the Table Mountain Report—and we don't think this is the last you'll be hearing on this subject.

Finally two members clear up the White-backed Duck "controversy" and we publish "another man's" view on Kirstenbösch.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT1975 - 1976

During the year under review your Committee met 10 times and the attendance at these meetings was generally good. Two additional members were co-opted—Mr. David Steel and Dr. Leslie Underhill.

Many topics were discussed and the most important are as follows:

- a) At the last Annual General Meeting it was advised that a new Club brochure was in the course of preparation. This became available in July 1975 and a copy was immediately mailed to each member. A lot of thought went into its production and the result is a most attractive and useful introduction to the Club for prospective members.
- b) Following on the brochure the Committee decided on a limited and pilot mailing campaign. The campaign was limited to doctors and dentists listed in the telephone directory and also to structural engineers. The response was about one per cent and as a result the Committee will not embark on a more extensive campaign.
- c) Perhaps the most ambitious event ever organised by the Club was the slide show held last December at the B.P. Cinema. As you all know the support was tremendous. A lot of work went into the production of the show and I would particularly like to thank Club members for making their slides available. A net profit of R385 accrued to the Club's conservation fund.
- d) During the year plans were prepared for the lay-out of the proposed Raapenburg Bird Sanctuary with specialist advice being sought from Professor Schelpe and others. Our final draft was presented a few weeks ago to the Mayor of Cape Town and to the Director of Parks and Gardens. The Mayor appears to be taking a personal interest in this scheme. The latest development is a request from the Sewage Engineer for further details. Allowing for the present financial position the future of this sanctuary looks fairly bright.
- e) At the last A.G.M. the Committee was requested to organise special beginners' meetings. This was attempted and although they were well advertised the response was so poor that they were discontinued.
- f) Members will be pleased to know that the Division of Sea Fisheries donated R447 to the Club, being half the cost of the notice boards erected at Lamberts Bay. The Argus publicised the boards with a photograph and a story in December.
- g) Twice during the year the Club was called upon to help other bodies. The first request was from Kirstenbosch for help in preparing notes on the common birds of the Gardens for a new guide. The second request was from the City Council for criticism of the draft of a new bye-law relating to control of the vleis.
- h) The Club took a big step forward during the year in acquiring its own duplicator and typewriter. The production of the newsletter is now completely a Club affair. To date two copies have been produced the standard being very high.
- i) Marina Da Gama counts continue every month. A small but loyal group of members regularly turn up. A summary of the first year's counts has been produced and distributed to participants.

Broekhuysen Memorial

During the year a lot of time and thought was spent trying to decide upon a fitting memorial to Dr. Broekhuysen.

A number of schemes were discussed and for various reasons they were dropped. Then we were approached by Prof. Siegfried, Chairman of Wild Life, who had another idea. Basically it is that, as Dr. Broekhuysen was so interested in education and in helping budding ornithologists, the memorial should further these aims. This scheme will involve the building of a permanent hide at Rondevlei large enough to accommodate about twelve persons.

The hide will bear Dr. Broekhuysen's name and no doubt a suitable plaque will be incorporated, and it will be available to the public and particularly to parties of school children.

The Divisional Council approves the adea in principle and has now called upon its engineer to obtain more information on design and to do a costing. This memorial will be paid for jointly by our Club, the Wild Life Society and the Cape Tercentenary Foundation and will most probably be subsidised by the Divisional Council on a rand for rand basis.

Membership of the Club now stands at 461 compared to 424 last year. Unfortunately a fairly large number of members have still not paid their subscriptions for 1976 and unless they do so soon the Committee will be forced to adopt a hard line.

The Club is involved in a number of projects and I would like to thank the organisers who are not all Committee Members.

Stan Clarke once again undertook the unenviable task of arranging the evening meetings and excursions.

Dr. Winterbottom and Mr. G.D. Underhill continued as organisers of the Field Card and Nest Record schemes respectively. Geoff Wilson was the organiser of Migration Records while Dr. Les Underhill has become Ringing Organiser.

Len Hicks looked after our Slide Library and was also our representative on the S.A.O.S. Council. A. Gregory was Club representative on the S.A.O.S. Conservation Committee.

The Newsletter now boasts quite a staff. Mr. Schmidt, Philip Tongue, David Steele and Derek Longrigg all editorial, with the production team consisting of Mrs. Davis and a small group of ladies. The inner man was not forgotten and Mrs. Davis looked after the teas together with another group of ladies.

Apart from their respective tasks all Committee members have worked extremely hard in all Club undertakings. They have done the work because they are interested but also for the well being of the Club and its members. I would therefore ask all members to think about this and to respond with greater enthusiasm when called upon to get involved.

There are four members of the Committee who must be mentioned as for various reasons they have decided to retire. Mr. Morgan, our very able and conscientious secretary and treasurer of many years, and also Geoff. Wilson, Len Hicks and Les Underhill. The Club owes them a tremendous debt of gratitude and I hope it wont be long before they can be persuaded to return to harness. To Prof. Brown of the Zoology Department we would like to say thank you for allowing us the use of the lecture theatre and museum. In conclusion I would like to thank all members of the Committee, especially the office bearers, for the support that they have given me during the year and which was so very necessary for me following in the footsteps of that wonderful character - Dr. Broekhuysen.

NEST RECORD PROJECT : REPORT FOR 1975

695 cards, including 9 which referred to colonial nesting, were returned since my last report. 43 members contributed. 10 or more cards were submitted by G. Begg (17) A. Brown (28) C.B.C. (15) R. Donaldson (35) Dr. H. Gottschalk (42) R.G. Jeffery (29) C.H. Langley (92) T.D. Longrigg (56) P.S. Lockhart (77) E. Martin (50) J. Martin (56) R. Martin (19) E. Smuts (11) H. Robertson (45) R.K. Schmidt (23) G.D. Underhill (86) Prof. C.J. Uys (11) F. van der Merwe (29) Dr. J.M. Winterbottom (20) N. Williams (72).

The total of cards for the species which featured most prominently were as follows:

Dabchick	12	Cape Turtle Dove	20
Egyptian Goose	11	Laughing Dove	38
Yellowbill Duck	12	Cape Wagtail	11
Cape Shoveller	26	Karoo Robin	13
Moorhen	15	Grey-backed Cisticola	11
Coot	62	Karoo Prinia	23
Black Oystercatcher	26	Fiscal Shrike	16
Stilt	10	L. Double-collared Sunbird	14
W-fronted Sandplover	13	Sugarbird	17
Kittlitz's Sandplover	23	Cape Weaver	22
Crowned Plover	26	Cape Sparrow	13
Blacksmith Plover	15	Yellow Canary	20
Rock Pigeon	12		

With the exception of the Grey-backed Cisticola all these species appeared on last year's "ten cards or more" list. Several cards referred to species very seldom found nesting in our area. A Booted Eagle nest reported by the Martin family in the Clanwilliam district had two eggs in September and two young in December. Hans Pfister and Manfred Waltner found a Black Harrier's nest with four young during October/November at Langebaan. This is the first record for this species during the eleven years I have been keeping the records. The same two members also found a Black Cuckoo chick in the nest of a Dusky Flycatcher in December. R. Cruikshanks and J. Kinahan reported a Peregrine nest in the Potberg. There were 3 eggs in September and 1 chick in November. C.H. Langley's record of Klaas's Cuckoo is the third in the past eleven years. The host, in this instance, was a Bar-throated Apalis. The cuckoos are fairly common in our area and far more records could be expected. Frequently, it is only when the parasite leaves the nest that it attracts attention by its incessant demands for food. Members should record all these observations provided the foster-parents are identified without any doubt. Another notable contribution was 19 cards for the Black Oystercatcher from the L'Agulhas coast from R.G. Jeffery.

It would surely be reasonable to expect more cards each year as the Club membership increases but, on the contrary, the trend is in the reverse. For every year between 1965 and 1970 double the number of cards were submitted than the total for 1975. The nesting season is here again: duck and all the other water birds should be watched: also sunbirds and sugarbirds. For the benefit of new members I would like to mention that the Club's effort is part of the S.A.O.S. Project and this covers the whole of Southern Africa. Nests found anywhere in this region should be recorded and not just the C.B.C. area.

In closing I wish to record my thanks to all those who contributed to this project.

G.D. Underhill
Project Organiser

NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome the following new members to the Club. (The last list of new members was published in the March issue of the Newsletter).

A.L. Batchelor, Newlands; Beth Bayer, Worcester; I.D. Berens, Constantia; F.J. Brazier, Sea Point; Dr. H.J. Claassens, Oranjezicht; Mrs. F. Clark, Gardens;

NEW MEMBERS CONTD.

Dr. M.R. Funston, Diep River; P.E. Gebers, Rosebank; Dr. A. Gromelski, C.T.; Miss K.A. Haslam, Claremont; F.N. and C. Hermer, Clifton; M.S. Jowell, Newlands; C. and M. Kennedy, Somerset West; Dr. Elwyn Lloyd, Rondebosch; Miss Joan Lord, Mowbray; Mrs. J.R. Mamet, Claremont; Miss Anke Mans, Observatory; Mrs. Sally McCall, Observatory; Miss M. Möller, Bergvliet; T.P.S. Mulligan, Constantia; Dr. Charmian Paterson, Newlands; Dr. and Mrs. Rebstein, Newlands; Mrs. G. Russell, Fresnaye; Miss P. Sides, Pinelands; Dr. A.O. Smit, Parow Noord; Miss B.E. Turner, Wynberg; Anthony Venier, Bantry Bay; Mrs. W. Walker, Rondebosch; Stephan Weiner, Higgovale; Miss O. Worton, Cape Town.

LIFE MEMBER: Mrs. Ingrid Kuipers, Somerset West.

KIRSTENBOSCH

We reproduce the following copy out of the June issue of "Veld & Flora". It was printed under the heading ONE MAN'S MEAT and referred to an article in our January Newsletter, written by Prof. J.M. Winterbottom.

Our attention has been drawn to the account of a journey from Salisbury to Windhoek via Cape Town, which appeared in the January issue of the Cape Bird Club Newsletter and concluded with the following passage:

"The Strandfontein Sewage Works were a little, and Kirstenbosch a great, disappointment. The development of Kirstenbosch into a place of public recreation had reduced area where Gerry Broekhuyzen made his studies of sugarbirds and orange-breasted sunbirds to an ornithological desert: and the Cape Bird Club appears to have allowed the authorities to get away with this wrecking of the environment without protest. It has been far worse for the birds than the projected freeway would have been."

This is one view of the recent developments at the Gardens, we would have expressed ourselves somewhat differently on the matter. A lot of overgrown bush has been cleared in order to establish a scientifically arranged series of beds of leucadendron and ericas which the bird-minded writer probably did not even notice. Kirstenbosch is, after all, a botanic garden and not a bird sanctuary. During his visit to the Gardens the Cape Bird Club's correspondent probably passed by Erica jasminiflora, an Erica which is more or less extinct in the wild and is probably only to be seen at Kirstenbosch and nowhere else in the world. He also probably walked by E. vestita and E. ventricosa and numerous other species which Kirstenbosch is trying to preserve by cultivating them.

A botanist visiting a bird sanctuary might equally well complain at the horribly overgrown state of the fynbos and ask that the area be cleaned up so that people could see what was growing there!

R.G.-C.

WHITE-BACKED DUCK : TWO COMMENTS

White-Backed Duck (104): As an old member of the Cape Bird Club and one who has been interested in birds for most of his life I should like to discuss the status of the White-Backed Duck in the S.W. Cape. When the CBC Check List was compiled in 1963 this duck was then certainly uncommon and if one wanted to see this bird with any reasonable chance of success one would then have had to visit the lower reaches of the Olifant's River near Lutzville or visit a small roadside dam between Buffeljagts and Zuurbraak in the Swellendam District. Except for a pair with young on the Liesbeeck River near Valkenburg Hospital in the 1950's and an occasional wandering pair on Klayervlei or on the old Zeekoevlei at Firgrove, these birds were absent. However, over the last few years these birds have

become increasingly more evident and have been seen frequently at Klavervlei and occasionally at De Hoop, the stretch of water at Kleinmond, at the Sewage works at Strandfontein and at Rondevlei.

Like all Check Lists ours will have to be revised one day and no doubt the status of the White-backed Duck in our area will be brought up to date.

That Dr. Harry Gottschalk, a comparatively new member of a bird-watching fraternity, should find a breeding pair of these birds is no mean feather in his cap. I can think of few other members of the C.B. Club who have found this nest. That he should use his Club's Check List makes sense to me (even though it needs to be brought up to date) as both Roberts and The African Handbook are more general and less specific in their areas of distribution.

John Martin

With reference to Mr. Roberts's remarks on the White-backed Duck (Newsletter No. 122, p.5), the fact that the Faure birds have been there for months does not necessarily invalidate the statement in the "Check List", though it does justify the recordings of them by Dr. Gottschalk and Mr. Roberts himself. Mr. Roberts refers to the distribution given in Roberts "Birds of South Africa" and in Praed & Grant, both of whose maps show the bird as of "regular occurrence" throughout the Republic. It must be remembered, however, that the authors of these works were dealing with the whole sub-continent and therefore compelled to generalise. In the MS. revision of the C.B.C. List which I keep, I find that the White-backed Duck has been recorded from 7 Districts within the Club's area; and in the Western Cape Beyond, from only three more—Swellendam, Britstown and Carnarvon. In South West Africa, it has not been recorded south of Sandwich Harbour and Gross Barmen. In the Eastern Cape, it is recorded from only 6 of the 24 Districts covered by their "Check List". There are only four records from Botswana. I will not rub the matter in any further but have said enough to show that the idea that this duck is found all over South Africa is a misconception. Siegfried's statement in "Waterfowl of the Cape Province" that it is distinctly local and keeps to reedy waters gives a much better idea of its true status. Mr. Roberts will find that there are a good many cases where the maps in "Roberts" and "Praed & Grant" can be misleading when applied to local areas—consider the map in the former of the Yellow-billed Duck and compare it with the detailed distribution worked out by Mrs. Rowan. We are none of us infallible, not even McLachlan & Liversidge (as they would be the first to acknowledge).

J.M. Winterbottom

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Two outings have been held since publication of the last Newsletter. Unfortunately permission was not granted for us to visit Vergelegen on May 16 and we had to switch to the Helderberg Nature Reserve where breeding of Sugarbirds and Orange-breasted Sunbirds was in full swing, but only a few nests were found. Like the birds we all enjoyed the beautiful autumn day.

Rondevlei (June 5) suffered from bad weather, although the rain just held off. Members were given the run of the whole reserve and saw especially many Purple Gallinule which were feeding in thick grass away from the cover of reeds. A Purple Heron was spotted but no European migrants.

The Annual Dinner at St. James Hotel was well attended and everybody envied the lucky winners of the lovely Menu Card Drawings donated by Mr. John Perry. Our thanks are also due to Mrs. Davis for arranging this enjoyable social.

The AGM had a higher attendance than usual. The official part with reports etc. was short as no election was held, there being just the right number of nominations for the committee. The Chairman thanked

the retiring committee members, Messrs K. Morgan, G. Wilson and L. Hicks for their valuable work. After that those present were rewarded by seeing two excellent films: "The Private Life of the Albatross" and "The Living Savannah".

R.S.

Marina da Gama: Unfortunately the numbers of birds counted, compared to those made a year previously continues to decline. The April count this year produced 1762 birds of 66 species (April 1975 produced 4290 birds of 70 species). May produced 1698 birds of 61 species (May 1975 produced 3334 birds of 68 species) and June this year produced 1635 birds of 68 species (June 1975 produced 3298 birds of 75 species). One new species, the Crombec, was observed in June. Thus for the past four months the average count has been under half of that for the corresponding months in 1975. One wonders what the situation will be in 1977...

D.S.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN SEABIRD GROUP

A seabird group in Southern Africa has been started on lines similar to the successful British, Pacific and Australian Groups.

The group will in the first instance, restrict its interest to those seabirds (coastal and pelagic) on the Southern African list, as well as the islands, and surrounding seas, of the Prince Edward group, the Tristan da Cunha group and Gough Island, even though these islands are not accessible except to professional ornithologists. It is not intended to include waders.

The group will be primarily involved in co-ordination both within its region of interest and with other seabird groups and interested people. Four broad fields of work are envisaged:

1. Beached-bird censuses
2. Ocean observations
3. Breeding colony censuses
4. Awareness and contact

These four fields are, essentially, those covered by the three seabird groups already existing and standardisation of techniques between Southern African workers and these groups is a prime aim. In addition it is intended to produce a quarterly newsletter, initially of a modest character, to keep contact between members and to report on matters of interest.

Membership will be open to all interested people. Those interested in joining should contact: Mr. John Cooper, Convener, S.A. Seabird Group, C/o Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700.

REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS

SIGHTINGS:

White-browed Coucal (356-7). Reference to Roberts on the taxonomy of this species may give the impression that its two races are easily separable in the field. Race (a) (loandae) confined to areas north of the Zambesi River is described as possessing a white eyebrow, the inference being that this feature is not present in Race (b) (burchellii). The illustration (356) of Race (a) shows this, also other differences including a pale and heavily-streaked head and nape, and a pale buffish breast. Race (b) or Burchell's Coucal, occurring from the Southern Cape north-eastward to Tanzania, is not described but is depicted (357) with a lightly-streaked, blue-black head and nape, and a much paler—almost white—breast. This is, indeed, a good representation of the bird I have frequently seen in our region.

On 31.5.76, my wife and I, in company with Mr. and Mrs. J. Dales, saw a bird near Salmonsdam Nature Reserve, Stanford, which agreed very closely with Roberts' illustration of Race (a). We were able to study it from a stationary car at a range of no more than three metres for some ten minutes as it fed, mainly on small white slugs, at the roadside immediately opposite the car. We noted the pale, heavily-streaked head and nape, a distinct white eyebrow, a buff or pinkish tinge to the breast, and a rather broader barring of the upper tail coverts than is apparent in Roberts' illustration of Race (b). Our bird was, in fact, very closely similar to illustration 356.

The African Handbook proved more helpful in that the illustration does not attempt to show racial differences, and is a good approximation of what we saw. The text description, too, is much less misleading, stating that burchellii often possesses a buff superciliary stripe, white stripes on the nape and mantle, and a buff underside.

On the evidence of Roberts alone one might therefore have been tempted to assume that the bird we saw was a vagrant of loandae when, clearly, a cline exists wherein diagnostic features of this race at times appear in burchellii.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher (402). One seen at Hermanus Lagoon on 15.6.76. The bird was first seen on a stump near the water's edge and later flew off into the bush. Other recent sightings suggest that this species may occur regularly much further west than may be suspected. It is described in Roberts as occurring only eastwards from Swellendam.

E.L. ROBERTS, HERMANUS.

A pair of Eagle Owls seem to have permanent perch in a stone pine in front of the Metlife Building, Central Square, Pinelands. Probably Spotted Eagle Owls but bills are grey not black as described by Roberts at 367. Reported to have raised a clutch last season (20th March 1976).

A.C. LEARY

Secretary Bird: On the 27th March 1976 Les Underhill and I observed a Secretary Bird along the gravel road running adjacent to Langebaan Lagoon. It appeared to be a bit immature in age as it was rather mouse-coloured and also very tame. We observed it for a long time until some roadhog shot past in a cloud of dust and scared it away. As this is rather a rare bird in the South-western Cape I thought it would be of interest to report.

HAMISH ROBERTSON, DIEP RIVER

Chaffinch: I wonder if you could insert a small paragraph in your valuable Newsletter asking readers for any recent sightings of the Chaffinch. I have been back in Cape Town for 9 years now and have not seen one. There are certainly none in the Gardens and I frequently walk above Groote Schuur and Kirstenbosch and have not heard one. Is it extinct?

GEOFF McLACHLAN, S.A. MUSEUM,
CAPE TOWN.

BEHAVIOUR:

The following dietary items may be of interest to your readers:

i) During May a pair of Wire-tailed Swallows (H. smithii Roberts No. 496) were noticed feeding chicks in the Crocodile River Rest camp in the southern part of the Kruger National Park. During a visit to the nest one of the parents presented the young (three in number) with a small gecko lizard, approx. 6 cm long. The chicks were either unable to manage the offering or were not interested in it, for after repeatedly presenting it to them the parent flew off, and the ultimate fate of the lizard could not be determined. These lizards were fairly common under the eaves of the huts and it is assumed that the bird was sufficiently agile to swoop close enough to the wall to capture it.

ii) Roberts "Birds of South Africa" lists a formidable variety of prey items for the Fiscal Shrike (L. collaris R707). It was nevertheless surprising to be reliably informed that a fully fledged Laughing Dove was despatched by a Fiscal Shrike on Rondebosch Common in November this year. At the other end of the scale these shrikes have been seen taking bread crumbs during a Transvaal Highveld winter. Between these two extremes Fiscal Shrikes have been seen to take a small snake (Sir Lowry's Pass Village), full grown House Sparrows (Milnerton) while they are quick to attack mice in a balchatri trap. It would appear that theoretically at least this ferocious predator is capable of competing for food with birds ranging from the sparrows to falcons and snake-eagles.

iii) An African Marsh Harrier (C. *gavinatorus* R.167) was seen to take a male Masked Weaver from a colony of these birds. The prey was dropped to female harrier which was incubating. This observation was made in October on the Reef. On another occasion one of these birds was seen to "roll" into a reedbed and not reappear. When the spot was visited a short time later the remains of a freshly killed Black Crake were found, presumably the harrier's prey. In the same area (Rondebult Sewage Farm) these harriers have on a number of occasions been seen feinting at Hottentot Teal.

During the first week-end of September last year a young Cape Cormorant (P. *capensis* R48) was found dead at the top of the "wagon track" on Sir Lowry's Pass. The bird was apparently taking a short cut over the mountain and was overcome by fatigue as there was only minor injury to one wing. Furthermore as the bird had not been dead for more than a few days and as there had not been any severe storms in the previous week it was assumed that the bird was not a storm victim. It would be of interest to know whether readers of this Newsletter have noticed flocks of these birds taking this short cut or whether this was an isolated incident.

D.A. WHITELAW

THE TABLE MOUNTAIN REPORT

Its proper title is "The ecological status of Table Mountain" and it is to be bought for R4.50 from the Wildlife Society's office on the 12th floor of Regis House in Adderley Street. Any member of the CBC with an interest in his home town should read this account which summarises the continuing lack of regard by authorities both local and national for this, one of the world's greatest landfalls. It is twenty-five years since Dr. Luckhoff published his book on Table Mountain in which he pleaded for enlightened management to safeguard this symbol of South Africa and home of one of the richest floras in the world. With what result? What anyone who knows how affairs are managed here might have expected. Nothing.

Now, twenty-five years later another report, making the same points backed by ecological expertise, only twenty times more urgent. Is this to have the same effect on those who are elected to look after our country? Having the recent sell-out at Sandy Bay to encourage us the answer is probably. Yes.

But we of the Cape Bird Club have a vested interest in our own mountain; we are, should we choose to speak out, a section of public opinion and history shows that public opinion, if sufficiently motivated, does have an effect on authority. And Table Mountain is the biggest natural feature in Cape Town and is one that, had it not been ruined by the settlers ever since Jan van Riebeeck first arrived and been left to look after itself by the various landowners represented on it, might support a thriving community of forest and fynbos birds. That most of the mountain is but a poor habitat is mainly due to the destruction of its natural flora by many authorities among which the Public Works Department, the City Council and the Department of Forestry must all share the blame.

What is to be the effect of this report? Is it to join the row of earlier documents urging collective action to save a treasure, in its way equal to the Mona Lisa? Although it may seem an overstatement, it is up to you, part of the informed public, those of the inhabitants of this part of the world who care about such things. Badger your councillors. Write to the papers. Make yourself a nuisance to everyone... but DO something.

PHILIP TONGUE

The conservation of Table Mountain is full of problems, the main one which cannot be solved was pointed out by Dr. Douglas Hey, Director of Nature Conservation in the Cape, in an article in "Die Burger" of 24th May, 1976: "Verreweg die belangrikste is die mens self—sy getalle en sy gedrag. Tafelberg is een van die weinige natuurgebiede in die wereld wat feitlik binne 'n metropolitaanse gebied geleë is. Mense kan die berg in onbepaalde getalle van enige kant betree, tot nadeel van die natuur. Daar is perke aan die getalle mense was enige natuurgebied kan benut, sonder om dit te skend, hetsy deur blote vertrapping of deur besoedeling."

R.S.

PROGRAMME

August and September 1976 : Please diarise these items

EVENING MEETINGS

Friday, August 20 at 8.15 p.m.

MEMBERS EVENING: This is the occasion for the photographers to show some of their latest slides. If you can make a contribution—even half a dozen slides would be acceptable—please contact Stan Clarke (telephone 71-2745) or just bring them along.

Friday, September 24 at 8.15 p.m.

MR. NICO MYBURGH: FROM THE CAPE TO THE KALAHARI GEMSBOEK NATIONAL PARK. Nico is not only one of the Club's best photographers but one of the best in the country. This show is a must.

PLEASE NOTE: that the doors of the Zoology Department are locked at 4.30 p.m. and it is regretted that latecomers will not be able to get in.

THERE IS NO EVENING MEETING IN JULY.

FIELD EXCURSIONS

Sunday, August 15.

BURGHERSPOST FARM: Go along the N11, the main road to Malmesbury for approximately 36 km until you come to signposts pointing to Kalbaskraal on the right hand side and to Dassenburg on the left hand side. We meet just inside the Dassenburg road, but there will be a further 15 minutes of motoring to do before we reach the farm. Meet 9.00 a.m.—15 minutes allowed for latecomers. Leader: Mr. John Harvey.

Sunday, September 19.

DOORNRIVIER, VILLIERSDORP DISTRICT: Members can reach Villiersdorp via Stellenbosch and Franschoek, but perhaps the easier way is to go via Sir Lowry's Pass, Grabouw and the new Theewaterskloof Dam. Go through Villiersdorp and travel on the Worcester road for approximately 15 km until you come to the first road turnoff on the right hand side. We meet here but there will be a further 30 minutes of motoring to do before we reach the venue. Meet 9.00 a.m.—15 minutes allowed for latecomers. You should allow 20 minutes to reach the meeting place. Leader: Mr. Keith Morgan.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO FIELD EXCURSION IN JULY.

MARINA DA GAMA

Counts will be held on July 11, August 8 and September 12 (the second Sunday of each month).