



CAPE BIRD CLUB : KAAPSE VOËLWAARNEMERSKLUB

NEWSLETTER - NUUSBRIEF

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Booted Eagles in our Area

Dr. Siegfried reports: On 27 Dec. '69 I had an excellent view of two Booted Eagles, both pale-phased birds, circling together over Stellenbosch. A second sighting was made on 4 Jan. '70, when only one bird was recorded. On 24 Jan. a third sighting was made. All these records stem from the same locality - about two miles from Stellenbosch at the foot of the Stellenbosch Mountain. In all I watched the birds for close on 70 minutes and am quite confident about the identification. All the birds belonged to the pale-phase variety and thus could hardly have been confused with anything else (dark-phased Booted Eagles are notoriously difficult to identify). Nevertheless, I was most pleased to hear from Carl Vernon that he too had recently seen pale-phased Booted Eagles while on a visit to the Cape. Carl's records are: one bird at Gouda on 21 Dec. '69 and a second at Prince Albert on 28 December.

The Cape Bird Club Check List says that "there are no recent records of this Palaearctic migrant in our area, but there are two specimens from Wynberg in the South African Museum; and Andrew Smith records it from Rondebosch in February 1828, and Layard from Clanwilliam.

Swallow Ringing at Somerset West

Aldermans Vlei was drying up fast already at the beginning of December and Mr. Jack MacLeod reported about the problems this was causing for his group. The birds, and there must be 10,000 this year, are concentrated in a very small area. Thus catching with torches is very difficult, you catch one and hundreds fly away.

Up to 5th December they had ringed 385 and they would try to reach a thousand. He was hoping for a good season at Bredasdorp where the water in De Hoop Vlei is so salty that the birds will be forced to drink at the farm dam where he can net them.

The recovery rate of European Swallows ringed at Aldermans Vlei by the Somerset West Ringing Group was checked recently and the figures for the period February 1964 to March 1964 show that 8.73 swallows per 1,000 were re-sighted. In these figures they have excluded the 77 birds recovered at place of ringing in the same year. The actual figures are:

EDITOR · R. K. SCHMIDT "STRIEGAU" LYMPLEIGH RD PLUMSTEAD CAP
REDAKTEUR · LYMPLEIGHWEG PLUMSTEAD KAAP

Total birds ringed		8019
Recovered		70
At place of ringing	35	
In Britain and Ireland	10	
In Russia	13	
In Africa (north of Limpopo)	4	
In Republic	3	
At Athlone	5	

We do not know how our figures compare with other ringing stations in the Republic, but in Belgium 94,000 swallows were ringed in a five year period (1961 - 65) and African recoveries totalled 17, so the "Ring-and-Fling Lads" are not doing so badly.

Cuckoo Records in our Area

Dr. Siegfried reports on 6 Dec. '69: A Black Cuckoo calling and seen regularly these past three weeks at Stellenbosch, entrance to Jonkershoek.

Professor Winterbottom heard a Diederik Cuckoo calling outside his house in Oranjezicht at 6 a.m. on 11th December '69. This is the first time he has recorded it from the city itself.

European Golden Oriole at Paardevlei

On 4th February '70, Mr. Lockhart, Somerset West, had several good viewings of a male European Golden Oriole, while he was walking around Paardevlei. This was his first record of the bird in this locality, in fact in the Hottentots Holland area (from where this bird was recorded several times during 1957 and 1963).

Another interesting observation he made on this outing, was a Spotted Flycatcher. This bird is longer and more slender than the squat Dusky Flycatcher. He particularly noticed the pointed wings and the rather forked tail in a close-up view.

In a little more than two hours his score was 48 different species, including the Purple Gallinule and the African Marsh Warbler which he only heard calling. Among the waders present were Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, a Greenshank, Stilts and an Ethiopian Snipe.

The African Darter breeding colony was in full swing and he recorded six nests with young which were keeping their parents extremely busy. The nests are in the branches of Weeping Willos which grow out of the vlei water.

Concerning the European House Martins nesting at Somerset West, Mr. Lockhart reports that one pair may have had chicks which unfortunately did not fledge.

On 12th October 1969 Miss E.M. Darling counted 24 Spoonbills at Milnerton Vlei. Most of them were feeding, some standing around on a small island, in association with 14 Little Egrets. There was also a Pelican which, however, soon took wing towards Rietvlei.

Newsletter 91/September 1969:

T A S K S with which every member
can help

To this appeal I received one reply, and this came from Dr. D.A. Dickie, Main Road, Hermanus. He reported a Red Bishop Colony near the Bot River bridge on the Hermanus road. I wish to thank him very much for this report and regret that it was not possible to organise counting or ringing outings to such colonies during last year's breeding season.

Dr. Dickie also reports several observations of a Grey-headed Gull at Hermanus during September/October '69. This bird was often in association with particular Hartlaub Gulls which showed what may be "a faint ring of lavender round the neck and throat" which is mentioned in Roberts.

During June/July 1969 Dr. Dickie recorded a pair of Black Eagles nesting in a high cave in a kloof just after mile 5 on the Gansbaai road. He occasionally still sees a Black Eagle there, so the nesting may be repeated in 1970, which he, however, will be unable to record owing to absence from Hermanus.

Grey-headed Gull as road scavenger

Dr. Siegfried reports: On 2nd October 1969 at 4 p.m. Dr. Kai Curry-Lindahl and I watched an adult Grey-headed Gull Larus cirrocephalus patrolling the national road three miles from Paarl. The gull's manner of flight left no doubt that it had learned to scavenge for scraps along roads. Grey-headed Gulls commonly scavenge along the national road near Britstown in the Karoo and, of course, in the Transvaal.

Burchell's Courser in Piketberg District

Prof. Winterbottom reports: On 7th January, '70, when some miles north of Porterville on the citrusdal road, I observed a party of two adults and two fledged young of Burchell's Courser. This is the first record for the Piketberg district and only the third for the Club Area.

It may be added that although "Roberts" refers to the fact that the young are mottled, it gives no warning that it is easy to mistake them in the field for adult Double-banded Coursers, a trap into which I have myself almost fallen twice.

The rewards of beachcombing

Messrs. C.E. Elliot and S. Pringle write: Beachcombing by the Pringle family has revealed three shearwaters cast up on the shore in the Cape Point Reserve. Two of these were Great Shearwaters Puffinus gravis, their measurements being as follows: Wing-length 328 and 324 mm; culmen 47 and 48 mm respectively. The former bird had only the slightest brown streaking on the belly

while the latter had a more definite brown patch.

The third bird was a Sooty Shearwater Puffinus griseus, identified by its being greyish white on the underwing coverts and having a slender black bill and blueish black legs.

While on the subject of Shearwaters, it can be reported that Elliot had his first recovery of a Great Shearwater ringed on Gough Island on 7th May 1968 and recovered about 5100 miles away near Newfoundland on 28th Aug. '69. This record fits in well with the northern limit of the supposed figure of eight migration route of the species.

Cape Sea - Pigeon near Stompneus

Mrs. E. Chaundy reports: On 12th October 1969 when scrambling along the rocks near Stompneus Point, we saw a Cape Sea-Pigeon swimming amidst the kelp some 100 yards from the shore. A camper who stated he had been there for some days, said he had observed it for some three days, having first seen it on 9th October after some squally weather.

On 21 September Mrs. Chaundy watched a flock of Wattled Starlings in breeding plumage beside the road to Ysterfontein where it rises from a vlei.

WHO wants to sell colour-slides?

The following letter was received from Mr. L. Shannon, P.O. Box 71, CHELTENHAM, Pa. USA:

I am interested in building a collection of 35mm color slides, both original and duplicate, of South African birds. Would you please have interested members please send me:

1) A listing (by scientific name) of 35 mm color original slides which are for sale.

2) A listing (by scientific name) of 35 mm color duplicate slides which are for sale.

Please notify your members of this information.

Sincerely,

L. Shannon.

Will interested members please write to him.

