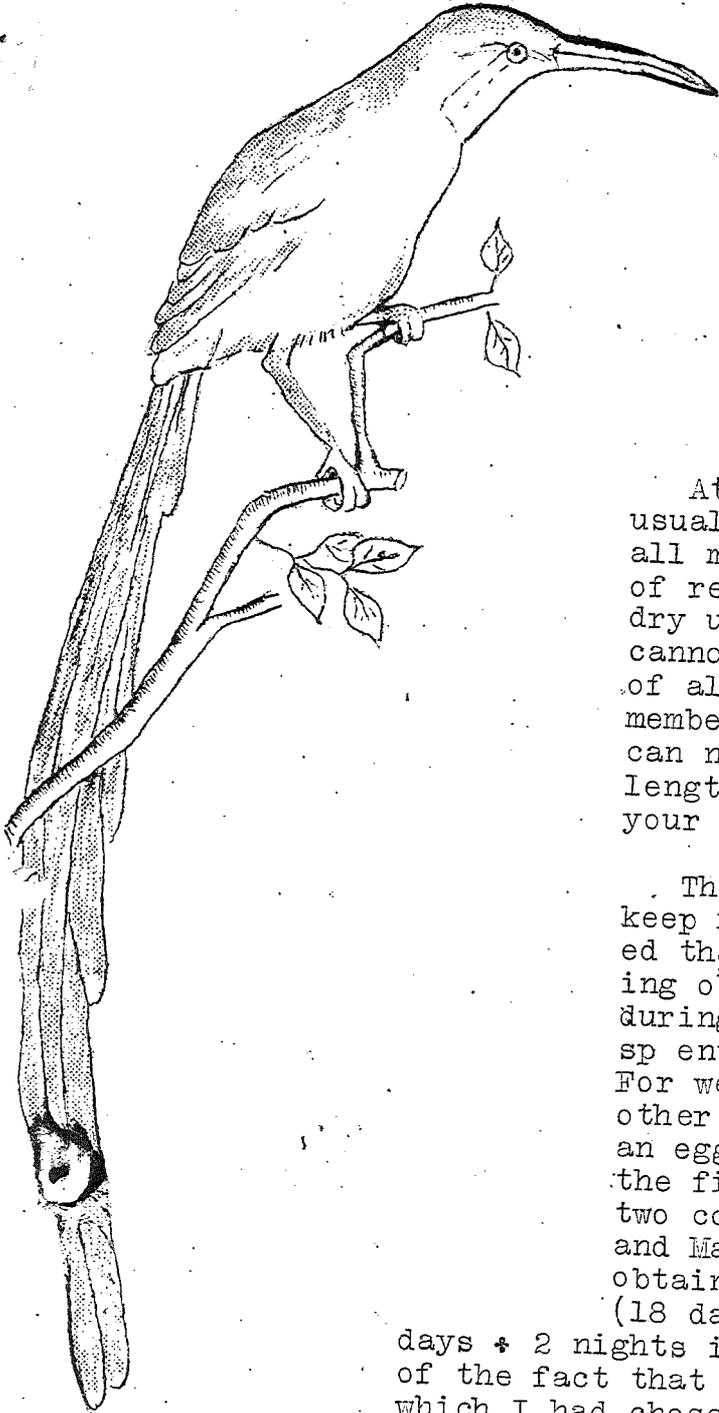


THE CAPE BIRD CLUB.

News Letter No. 56.

April 1960.

Editor: R.K.Schmidt,
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Plumstead.



At this time of the year bird news is usually scanty, but I wish to appeal to all members to see to it that the supply of reports for the News Letter does not dry up completely. The News Letter cannot thrive without the co-operation of all. I simply cannot believe that members have stopped watching birds (I can never resist the temptation for any length of time), so please send in your observations.

The Larger Striped Swallows still keep me busy. For a long period I feared that all the time I spent on building observation holes into three nests during the Christmas holidays, had been spent in vain. For weeks I checked the nests every other day without the thrill of seeing an egg. On February 1st at last I found the first egg in one of them, the other two contained eggs on February 23rd and March 1st respectively. Thus I obtained 3 incubation period records (18 days + 2 nights in 2 cases and 19 days + 2 nights in one case) this season, in spite of the fact that Swifts had robbed several nests which I had chosen for observation holes. The two young of the first nest unfortunately fell out while I was at Skrywershoek, but the other two broods should fly soon.

The weekend camp at Skrywershoek was favoured with the most beautiful autumn weather and plenty of birds. Some members had an excellent opportunity of watching about 2,000 waders of various species from very close quarters after having crawled to that vantage point in true Red Indian style. Others sitting leisurely on the grassy edge of the shore enjoyed a similar spectacle in comfort, when soon after high tide a sandbank emerged and was soon covered with birds. Apart from the more common waders there were Curlews, Whimbrels, Terek Sandpipers, Turnstones and Grey Plovers in partial breeding plumage.

Mrs. A.G. Hooper from Stellenbosch reports that, with the coming of somewhat cooler weather in March, a whole flock of Bokmakieries has come to her garden, delighting everybody with a real outpouring of song, half a dozen or more singing at the same time. She would like to know what may be the cause of all this singing as well as chasing around outside the breeding season.

Mrs. Hooper also asks for some information about the feeding and care of young birds which have fallen out of the nest, especially doves. In her garden Fiscal Shrikes have twice been seen dive-bombing

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bombing young doves, they either knock the young out of the nest or carry them off as food.

On January 27 Miss C. Robinson saw a Steppe Buzzard alight on a dove's nest. It flew off with at least one young and part of the nest and finished eating its prey on the branch of a pine, about 20 ft. up.

The following appeal has been received from Mr. Ernest Middlemiss, Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary, Prince George Drive, Retreat, Cape Province.

" I am anxious to receive information on the two species of flamingos. Particularly required are:

- 1) Records with localities, dates and, if available, numbers.
- 2) Records of immature birds, as above.
- 3) Notes on habitat preference.
- 4) Notes on feeding habits and methods, and
- 5) Any other information.

All material will be acknowledged."

Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Pottinger had excellent views of a Grey Plover at the top end of Lakeside on January 17, 1960. It was keeping to itself and was decidedly tame. It was Mr. Ferguson's first record in the Southern Peninsula.

Mr. Alwyne Parker, 110 Gloucester Road, London, S.W.7, would like to get in touch with a Junior Member (about 16 years old) in order to correspond on the ornithology of their respective countries.

Mr. A.J.A. Simpson, Chairman of Control of Alien Vegetation, c/o Botanical Society of South Africa, Kirstenbosch, Newlands, sent the Cape Bird Club a very interesting booklet "The Green Cancers in South Africa" (The Menace of Alien Vegetation). The book contains the same information in both official languages and gives a list of the main species of dangerous weeds (some of them are illustrated in black and white), it also describes the Areas of Infestation in the Cape Peninsula as well as in other parts of the Cape Province and suggests Methods of Eradication. The booklet is available at 6d each, postage paid.

Dr. Broekhuysen asks members to participate in an investigation of road casualties among birds. Motor traffic results in a considerable number of birds getting killed on our roads. It is obvious that the number of birds killed depends on many different circumstances such as (a) type of road; (b) time of year; (c) locality; (d) type of birds common in the area, etc.

Quite recently an investigation of the road casualties among birds in Britain was published. It would be extremely interesting if we could collect similar information on what happens on the South African roads. Such an investigation can only be carried out properly if many people help to collect data. An appeal is, therefore, made to all members of the Cape Bird Club to assist in this matter. The idea is, that while you travel along the road, either by car or any other type of vehicle, perhaps even using your legs, you pick up and note down particulars of any dead bird you encounter on the road. You must make a note about the total milage coverage during any of these occasions. When a dead bird is found the following particulars should be noted down:

- 1) The species, young or adult, female or male.
- 2) When the bird was killed (judging by the state the bird is in).
- 3) If you killed the bird, how did it behave before it was killed, e.g. feeding, taking evasive action, etc.?
- 4) Type of road and width of road.
- 5) Was there any cover along the road and if so how high?

- 6) Use of land beyond, e.g. type of crops, etc.
- 7) Were there any local hazards for birds, such as openings in cover, roundabouts, etc.
- 8) Date of observation and weather conditions at the time, and period of the day.
- 9) Kind of vehicle (large or small) and speed of vehicle which killed the bird.
- 10) Any information you may think worth noting down.

If you cannot identify the species collect the bird and send it with your notes to Dr. Broekhuysen, Department of Zoology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch.

In an investigation like this, negative results are also important. Therefore, if you cover a distance without finding a single dead bird on the road you covered, also note down the miles travelled and the type of road or roads you have been on. Mention the date, period of day, weather condition, etc. and send this in as well.

It has now been decided that no new species be officially admitted to the Check List of the Cape Bird Club unless they comply with the following conditions:-

- 1) A skin or specimen available.
- 2) A recognisable photograph available.
- 3) A live bird captured and identified before release by at least two independent members (i.e., not members of the same family), at least one of whom must be a member of the Records Sub-committee (see below).
- 4) A sight record based on the identification of at least three independent members, at least one of whom must be a member of the Records Sub-committee.
- 5) A sight record by two members of the Records Sub-committee.

The Club has established a Records Sub-committee consisting of the following members:- Dr. Winterbottom, Dr. Uys, Dr. Broekhuysen, Mr. Middlemiss, Col. Hallack, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Stanford, Mr. Martin, Mr. J. MacLeod, Mr. Brown, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Hofmeyr, Mr. Rand, Mr. Steyn, Mrs. Knüpe, Mrs. Rowan, Miss. C. Robinson, Miss. J. Robinson, Mrs. Taylor, Miss. Johns.