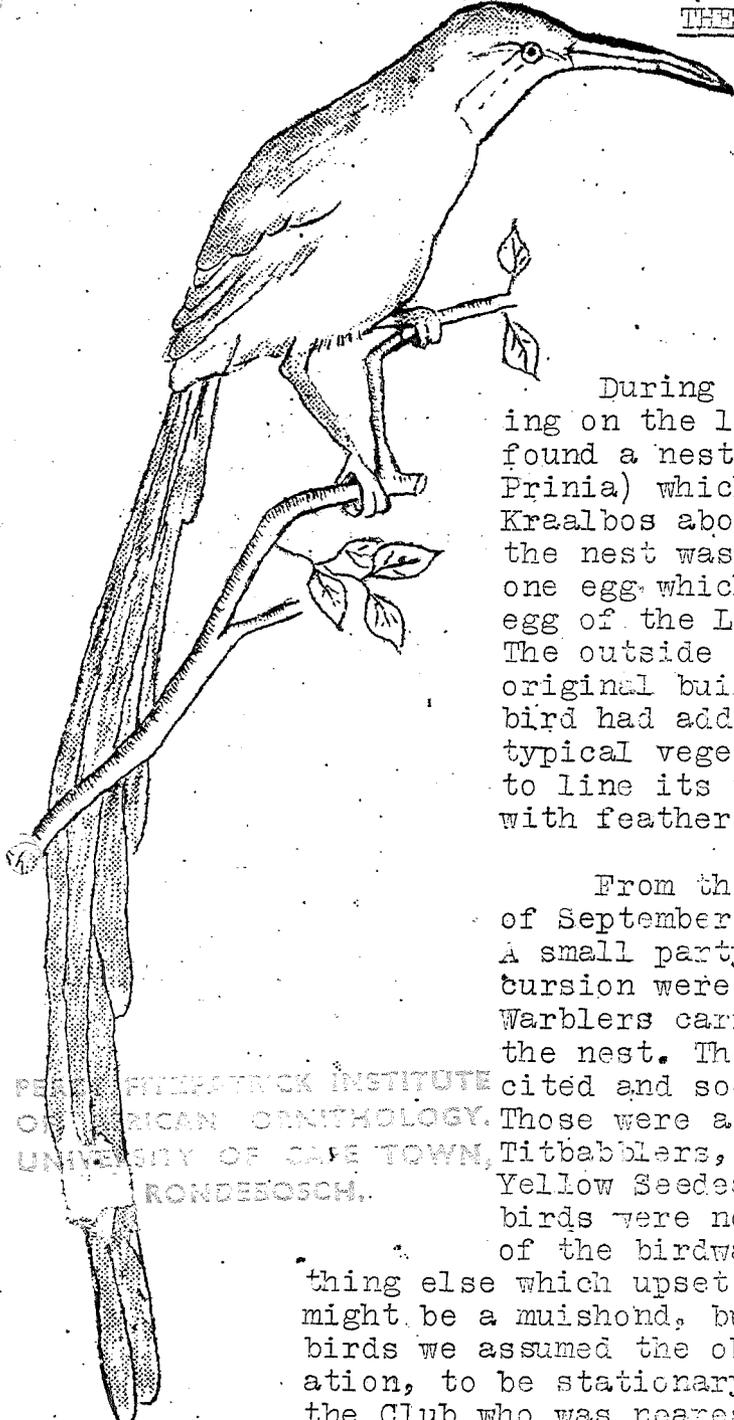


October 1960.

Editor: R.K.Schmidt,
Striegau,
54, Lympleigh Rd.,
Plumstead.



During the excursion to Goede Ontmoeting on the 11th of September Dr. Birnbaum found a nest of a Cape Wren Warbler (Karoo Prinia) which had been built in a clump of Kraalbos about 3 ft above the ground. When the nest was examined it was found to contain one egg which was not a Prinia egg, but the egg of the Lesser Double-collared Sunbird. The outside of the nest was left as the original builder had built it, but the Sunbird had added lining and instead of the typical vegetable fluff used by the Prinia to line its nest, it was now partly lined with feathers.

From the Bonteberg excursion on the 25th of September Dr. Broekhuysen reports:

A small party of the many attending the excursion were watching a pair of Cape Wren Warblers carrying, with the hope of finding the nest. The birds were, however, very excited and soon other species joined them.

Those were a pair of Cape Robins, a pair of Titbblers, White-throated Seedeaters and Yellow Seedeaters. It was obvious that these birds were not concerned about the presence

of the birdwatchers but that there was something else which upset them. We first thought that it might be a muishond, but from the behaviour of the birds we assumed the object which caused all the agitation, to be stationary. One of the junior members of the Club who was nearest to the bush then noticed a green snake which must have been a boomslang. This explained the excited behaviour of the small accumulation of bird species. We gave up trying to find the Cape Wren Warbler's nest and moved on.

Mr. Clarke writes: Looking through some of the recent News Letters, the thought strikes me that the poor club member with a conscience is so beset with demands for information to feed the appetite of those who are scientifically minded, that he feels perhaps, he should never stir out of doors without a pocket full of notebooks and pencils etc.

This is a preliminary to reminding members that our Behaviour Records are not growing in numbers. Anything you see (pertaining to birds) which you think is perhaps unusual, please report either to Mr. Clarke or to the editor of the News Letter.

From the 1st to the 4th of October I camped on the southern bank of the Breede River mouth near Cape Infanta. In the coastal bush there I found a nest of the Knysna Woodpecker in the stump of the flower shaft of a so-called sisal agave about 4 ft above ground. The two young in the nest were nearly full grown. Dr. Broekhuysen and Mr. Martin went to see the nest and took photos on the 9th of October.

The Knysna Woodpecker has not been recorded before for the Cape Bird Club area.

I saw another most unexpected bird at the Breede River mouth: the Scimitar-bill Hoopoe which according to Roberts is found mainly north of the Orange River only. I had quite a good view of it and later asked people who have got a bungalow there, whether they had ever seen the bird. I showed them the picture of this Hoopoe in Roberts, and they said the bird was often seen around their house during summer. May I ask any member going to this area to look out for this Hoopoe so that the record may be substantiated.

Dr. Winterbottom asks for volunteers to do counts of birds at Rietvlei and Noordhoek Vlei. Will members who are interested, please get in touch with Dr. Winterbottom at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute for African Ornithology, ph. 69-5955.

Dr. C.J. Uys writes: "During the last long weekend the Martin and Broekhuysen families and myself visited the farm Reimerskraal in the Bredasdorp district. This farm also lies on De Hoop Vlei but on the shore opposite to the Hoop Farm. We were struck by the numerous Greater Flamingo present and estimated their numbers as being between 1,500 and 2,000. On the afternoon of Friday, 7th, Dr. Broekhuysen and I witnessed an amazing feat by John Martin. We were working our way along the shore of one of the peninsulas so common at this vlei, with a roaring, gale force South-Easter at our backs. All the time groups of Flamingos were giving way on our approach, but one, with head tucked under wing, seemed quite oblivious of our presence. Obviously the roar of the wind had deadened all extraneous sound. Despite our doubts John Martin determined to catch this bird. He removed his shoes and stealthily waded out, and we watched with bated breath as he drew nearer. Finally, quite unhurried he took a very surprised flamingo by the neck, brought him ashore to our cries of mirth and delight. The bird, an adult in beautiful plumage some of whose covert feathers now adorn my hat, was ringed and released after we had photographed him and also determined that he was not sick or infirm in any way."

During the BONTEBERG excursion a pair of binoculars (Magnification 6) was picked up. The owner is asked to contact Dr. Broekhuysen.

At KLAVER VLEI, on Oct. 15th, the following nests were found: Cape Bulbul with 2 eggs; Paradise Flycatcher with 2 eggs; Cape Robin with 2 young; Bully Seedeater with 4 eggs; Yellow-bill Duck with 7 eggs; Mossie with 1 egg and with 5 eggs; Cape Bishop with 2 eggs and with 1 egg; Stonechat with 3 young; Levallant Warbler with 4 young; Reed Warbler with 3 eggs; Dusky Flycatcher Building; Moerhen with 2 eggs, Coot with 1 egg; and the Whiskered Terns were reported to start breeding by Mr. Martin. When the excursion started there was no sign of them, but soon a Tern appeared and settled down on a nest on the vlei.

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CAPE BIRD CLUB

RED BISHOP ENQUIRY.

BULLETIN NO. 1.

To those members who have written or sent in the first few completed questionnaires, we extend our sincere thanks coupled with the hope that they are the first of the hundreds that will follow.

Male birds are now in all stages of breeding plumage, from traces of red to full dress and have been reported from Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Klipheuwel, Adderley Road, Philadelphia and Vissershok. One of three nests near Philadelphia contained three eggs on the 24th July. This is a very early record. Another nest with two eggs was found at Klipheuwel on the 7th August. Nesting has also started at Somerset West.

Colonies will probably reach their maximum strength during October. At that stage the population will be at its most stable. Counts made during October should be the most useful for assessing the total population in our area. If, however, we do not have a series of counts for each colony, we cannot be sure that October is the peak month.

WHAT WE NEED NOW

1. To discover and record details of as many colonies as possible. Please send in your Forms A.
2. There are undoubtedly some parts of our official area where the Red Bishop does not appear but we would nevertheless like to be able to produce evidence. Forms B and C in large numbers will supply this evidence.

HISTORY

Layard found the Red Bishop in the Black River Marshes a hundred years ago. It could be found at Hout Bay thirty years ago. There may be more information in literature, but we have not found it yet. If any member can add to this meagre store from memory or personal records, we shall be most grateful.

YOUR ENQUIRY

This enquiry is a Club activity and, as is usual with our activities, it is not by any means limited to members. We really do want and need all the information anyone will send in.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Our letter of the 27th July with its questionnaire was sent to all non-Institutional Members living in the area. If you have not had one, please let us know. We will also send a copy to anyone who would like to help the Enquiry.

5, Arthur's Court,
High Level Road,
Sea Point.

H.K. Morgan
Hon. Organiser.

11th August 1960.