



CAPE BIRD CLUB

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This year the S.A.O.S. founded in 1930
celebrates its silver jubilee.

As the Jubilee Annula General Meeting will
be held in Cape Town it is hoped as many members as
possible will be able to attend not only the meeting,
but also the other functions to be held in connection
with it. Remember the dates - 22nd June to 25th June.
Further details will be published later.

The Ramcron Pigeon seems to be extending its range,
as flocks have been appearing in Mr. Cousin's garden 'Old
Mariedahl', Main Rd., Newlands. These birds were attracted
by the fruit of the Wild Peach of which there were several
trees in the garden. I counted at least eight myself in one
tree and there were probably more. As far as is known these
birds have not been seen there before.

Two interesting items of news come from Miss Johns.
On 10th of February she saw two Red-wing Starlings feeding out
on the rocks at St. James. One flew off with a small crab
in its bill (surely an unusual diet for a starling). She
also saw Little Egrets feeding out on the rocks.

Mr. Schmidt who has been watching a nest of the
White-throated Swallow reported the following incident. He
says, "There were two young and they had probably left the
nest on the 11th February because that day I watched the
parents trying to entice the young back into the nest, they
failed to do so and later left for the Vlei.

The young fell into the ditch several times, but
managed to clamber back to the bank; one young crossed the
ditch by swimming about three yards. I took them home for
the night and put them back in the nest very early next
morning, the parents then fed them again".

On the 27th February the club went to the Fish Hoek sewerage Farm. Here a flock of 14 Avocet swimming on the water and feeding like ducks was an interesting sight. Several Yellow-billed duck, Widgeon and Dabchick were also seen and no less than eight Night Heron were perching in the trees above the water.

Going/.....

Going on to the vlei at Imhoff's Gift , 36 Flamingo, both Greater and Lesser, were seen and several Malachite Sunbirds were singing in the gum trees or feeding on the flowers of the Leonotus leonorus which grew near the vlei.

A new visitor to our garden this month has been Burchell's Coucal or Vlei lourie. It was here for at least two days possibly longer, and was in a tree next to the house when first seen. Later gradually it worked its way to a small bushy patch some distance from the house. Previous to this we had often heard the bird in the distance but had never seen it here.

We have a wonderful bird chorus in our garden. Each year during March and April, Cape Canaries and a few other seed eaters are attracted by the Sunflowers which grow all over the garden. At first only a few birds arrive and throughout the day, especially towards evening there is a wonderful outburst of song, increasing in loudness each day as more and more birds arrive. This outpouring of song goes on for ten minutes or more at a time until it seems to reach a crescendo and then suddenly stops. Sometimes the birds are rivelled by a flock of Starlings whose chorus is to be heard only in the evening.

A book I have just read and recommend to members is "A Bewilderment of Birds" by J.K. Stanford. The author deals with birding on the Suffolk marshes during his boyhood, then out to Burma where he spent several years. Here not only did he meet many old friends but recorded several birds rare to the country. Then in North Africa and even on the sea he was able to pursue his hobby. Once, when 100 miles from land and ~~two days from Cape Town two flocks of Grey Phalarope were seen~~ resting on the water. Going back to Suffolk he gives a graphic account of how the Avocets' nests were guarded day and night until the young hatched. Finally he ends up in Sweden where he attended the 1950 Ornithological Conference and while there took part in several expeditions. All of which makes fascinating and interesting reading for the bird lover.

I apologise for the shortness of this letter but as you will see it is due to lack of material.

Editor.