

The Cape Bird Club  
News Letter, No. 39  
October, November, 1956.

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You will be getting tired of hearing about my Robins, less than three weeks after the first brood left the nest I discovered the same pair back on the nest brooding their second clutch and nine days after this discovery the second brood was hatched and successfully raised.

Col. Hallack's Robins are more interesting; two years a pair built a nest and hatched two young which were taken by a Boubou Shrike. Last year they were not observed. This year they used the old nest built two years ago and reared both young, they then built a nest and reared at least one of the second clutch, and now they have built a third nest and are sitting on their third clutch; all this between mid August and mid November.

Miss Gordon-Hogg has sent the following interesting observations, she says "As I was leaving by car I noticed a bird flying with what I took to be nesting material, but on slowing down and coming to a standstill, the bird a Fiscal, took what he was carrying and impaled it on the barbed wire fence. On investigating I found it was a young snake about 7 inches long which the bird had killed.

The same afternoon when again driving on the farm road about two miles away, a similar occurrence took place. I stopped the car and the bird dropped what he was carrying, again a snake, which was still alive and tried to wriggle into the grass verge. However, as soon as I passed the bird attacked the snake, which tried to defend itself but without success. On this occasion the bird again picked up the bird and impaled it on the barbed wire fence. Two such happenings in one day may be somewhat unusual.

Dr. Broekhuysen's interesting observations I am giving in full. "ON 20th October 1956 Major Diggle showed me a nest of a Cape Bulbul in his garden. The nest containing two small young was in a plumtree. While trimming the near vicinity of the nest so that it would be suitable for photography, I noticed that one of the parents showed injury-feigning. The bird was flat on the ground keeping the tail and both wings spread out. The head and neck were stretched out and the bird shuffled fairly quickly over the ground giving the impression that it had been shot and could not fly".

Has injury feigning in the Cape Bulbul been observed by others ?.

On 21st October, in the morning I filmed an about 15 days old young of the African Nightjar at Beecroft the farm of Miss E. Robinson at Kraaifontein.



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When I got to the actual nesting spot I noticed that the two young which were there during my last visit were gone. While walking around the nesting spot I flushed the parent. This bird showed injury feigning. It shuffled from right to left with outstretched wings and tail spread out. It only did it for a few seconds and then moved off.

I then found the young which was fully feathered with two very prominent white spots on the edge of the tail. When I brought my finger near the young it erected the feathers on its head and with a quick dashing movement of the head and snapped at my finger. This behaviour was very similar to that shown by a young Piets-my-vrou (threat behaviour) and the young of the Hoop Cuckoo. This behaviour was then followed up by a more intense one in which the young opened its huge pink gape, spread its wings out and then dashed at my finger actually taking the tip of my finger in its gape but not trying to swallow it. When I held my finger above the bird, it actually jumped up with spread wings towards my finger.

I am inclined to think that this behaviour was a threat behaviour and not the attempt to get food. The quick movement of such a well camouflaged creature must have a frightening effect on any predator. The first phase in which the head feathers were raised and the head made a quick forward dash was somewhat similar to the striking movement of a snake.

It will be interesting to know whether this behaviour has also been observed by others.

Mr. Morgan's first record of Widgeon at Lakeside was on 25.9.54. His next record was nearly a year later when he saw several pairs in July and found one float of five young and later another float of nine young and a nest with six eggs. On 22nd October 1956, he says "It was easily the commonest duck present; within five minutes and fifty yards I found two nests each with eight eggs and a float of 14 young, these could be more than one clutch, but they were all together and all the same size.

He records two birds new to him in the Fish Hoek Valley, the Fan-tailed Warbler and the Grey Partridge.

Dr. Winterbottom recently paid a visit to the extreme North West corner of our area, that bit of the Van Rhyn'sdorp District enclosed by the loop of the Olifants River, is very imperfectly explored, only Mr. Liversedge has reported on it and that from the mouth of the river alone. While staying at Clanwilliam recently, he took the opportunity to pay it a flying visit, going up the Olifants to Vredendal, thence for ten miles along the road to Lamberts Bay, back down the other bank of the river for some twenty miles and then round again to Vredendal and back to Clanwilliam. New to the District, according to our Check List were, Black Eagle, Double-banded Courser, Cape Turtle Dove; Laughing Dove; Clapper Lark; Grey-backed Finch Lark, Cape Bulbul; Chat Flycatcher (though this bird has already found Mr. Liversedge to be common at the Olifants mouth) Fairy Flycatcher, Sickle-wing Chat, Hartlaub's Chat (not uncommon and the first definite record from our area) Ant-eating Chat (quite common) Fan-tailed Grass Warbler (in lucerne etc along the river) Grey Tit; Pied Crow; Malachite Sunbird, Cape Weaver; and Common Waxbill. The fact that the birds are marked with an exclamation mark had not previously been recorded is a fair indication of how little this part of our area is known.

The place on the Lamberts Bay road where he turned back was a particularly interesting one, a mixture of indigenous bush and corn. All our South West Cape Larks were identified there and also Chest-flycatchers, Ant-eating and Hartlaub's Chats and a courser. He wanted to collect a Clapper Lark, to see if it might not belong to the race adendorffi and a flycatcher, but the birds were shy and he never got a shot at either. He did however, pick up a dead red-capped Lark, it was quite fresh and the cause of its death remains a mystery, for there was no mark on it and none was revealed in the course of skinning either. There had been very rain the day before, so perhaps it had died of exposure.

Dr. Winterbottom further says, "In the News sheets No's 35 and 36, I gave a list of Warm Bokkeveld birds, and a pretty poor list it was too. This has stimulated Mr. J. Martin to send in a list for the same area, made 8-9th Aug., which includes the following 19 not in my list:

Black-headed Heron	Jackall Buzzard	Hoepoe.
Shoveller	Cape Francolin	Bokmakiri
Black Duck	Crowned Plover	Orange-breasted
Yellow-billed Duck	Avocet	Sunbird
Red-billed Teal	Red-eyed Dove	Common Waxbill
Black-shouldered Kite	Speckled Coly	Cape Canary
	Cape Coly	Cape Bunting.

This brings the total number of species up to 67. Among those still unrecorded are all the Cuckoos and Kingfishers, Curlew Sandpiper, all owls, larks, swifts, flycatchers and Cisticola and all the true Swallows except the European. So there is still lots for the rest of you to do.

And here is another list of birds from an area adjoining ours, the Touws River Section of the Worcester District, from the top of the Hex River pass to Constable and including Verkeerde Vlei. Note its another miserable list so turn up your own notes!



White-breasted Cormorant	Alpine Swift	White-throated-Swallow
Grey Heron	Thick-billed	Greater Striped Swal.
Cattle Egret	Lark	Rock Martin
Hammerkop	Karoo Lark	Fiscal
Wood Ibis	Grey-backed	Bokmakierie
African Shelduck	Finch Lark	Penduline Tit
Egyptian Goose	Red capped Lark	Pied Crow
Yellowbill Duck	Cape Wagtail	Black Crow
Chenting Goshawk	Cape Rock Thrush	Pale winged Starling
Black Harrier	Mountain Chat	Pied Starling
Rock Kestrel	Capped Wheatear	Malachite Sunbird
Black Khorraan	Familiar Chat	Cape Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Sickle-wing Chat	Yellow Canary
Cape Turtle Dove	Karoo Robin	Black Headed Canary
Laughing Dove	Dancing Cisticola	White Throated Seed-eater.
Namaqua Dove	Neddicky	Cape Bunting.
Ground Wood Pecker	Rufous-eared	
Karoo Prinia	Warbler	

The Black Harrier was recorded by Mr. Martin.

Early in October Mr. Martin when at Baden was attracted by fairly loud, quick, strongly-beating wings: Whirr-whirr pause whirr-whirr pause and so on, those double whirrs being about two seconds apart. He saw a bird flying in a circle of diameter approximately 100 yds, the flight being undulating and each undulation corresponding to a "whirr-whirr".

The bird settled on a wooden fence and excitedly called "whit-purr, whit-purr" a few times. Mr. Martin recognised it

it as a male Greater Honey-guide and shortly afterwards he saw a female of the same species close by.

Although the male did not appear to see the female while Mr. Martin was looking at him, he feels sure that the peculiar flight of the male had something to do with her presence, and he also feels that if this flight is common to the honey-guide, then it is almost as noteworthy as the drumming of the Ethiopian Snipe.

Mr. Martin also found the nest of a "Gymnogen" or Banded Harrier Hawk situated about 30-40 feet up on a ledge in a deep narrow gorge. The nest was partly obscured by a bush, but by climbing up the opposite side of the kloof and looking down into the nest there appeared to be two eggs, (there may have been three) As far as Mr. Martin can find in the literature he possesses this bird only nests in trees, so perhaps this is a new record?

On September 19 Mrs. Bird saw 14 Sacred Ibis at Jacobs Vlei, Phillippi, numbers seem to be increasing there.

Mr. Russell and John spent a most enjoyable day on 21st October on Major Diggle's farm near Hermon. Near Wellington on the Hermon side they saw a European Bee-eater. Arriving at the farm they spent the morning exploring the banks of the Berg River, which forms one of the farm's boundaries. They then visited the formans house and found that a Hoepoe had made its nest in the loft of the building. The roof of the house is thatched and has earth laid on the floor of the loft as a protection against fire. The door of the loft is about 15ft above the ground and is reached by means of a portable ladder. A small hole about 2" by 2" had at some time been broken in the door at the loft floor level and the Hoepoe had made its nest - just a slight round depression on the bare floor a few inches inside the loft and right opposite the hole. Four light blue eggs were in the nest and when they opened the door to inspect the nest, the hoepoe flew off into the semidarkness of the nest and did not try to escape through the open door.

During the day they were shown or found several other nests. A Karoo Prinia with three eggs, Cape Canary which had two young, but when they arrived the chicks had left the nest but two were found sitting in the grass. Another nest cup shaped and built low down in soft grass on a bank had two very dark grey chicks with bright yellow beaks. After a considerable wait the parents did not return remaining unidentified. Mr. Russell says "We poor amateurs should never go out without a tame ornithologist". In a low double culvert near Vogel Vlei they found a nest of a White-throated Swallow containing two nearly full grown chicks, who showed no fear and seemed most interested in their admiration. In the second apartment of this culvert was the nest of a Larger Stripebreasted Swallow.

Many birds such as Bulbul, Yellow Bishop, Prinia and Larks were seen, Mr. Russell remarks that he has never seen so many Namaqua Doves, at least fifty were counted.

Vogel Vlei itself was rather disappointing, on this occasion they did not see duck or waders, only large numbers of White-breasted Cormorant, and a fair number of Dikar disturbed the reflection of the surrounding mountains in the mirror-like surface of this beautiful sheet of water.