

February 1958

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There have been three very interesting visitors during the last six weeks. In January a Spotted Flycatcher, a migrant from Europe, appeared in our garden at Abberton and stayed for a fortnight.

On 25th January Mr. Ferguson saw a Black Crested Cuckoo in the grounds of College House, Rosebank. He knows this bird well from the Eastern Province and says: "This particular one was so tame (not at all characteristic of the species) that I had quite a job to make it move its position."

On 26th January Professor Hall saw a Black-winged Pratincole at Jacobs Vlei, Philippi. Next day both he and Dr. Broekhuysen saw it; my sister and I saw it on 28th both in the air and walking in the dried-up vlei - it was remarkably tame; and on 1st February Miss v. Weber, Mr. Birnbaum and Mr. Schmidt with Professor

Hall saw it again. The last record of this bird at the Cape was in the last century when a single bird was recorded from the Eerste River.

The following is from Dr. Winterbottom on the birds seen on his voyage to England during November-December 1957:

We sailed on 22nd November and for the rest of the day coastal birds were numerous - both gulls, though Hartlaub's fell away after we left Robben Island; gannets, Cape cormorants, unidentified terns and more penguins than I have ever seen at sea before.

We picked up wandering albatrosses next day, up to a maximum of 4. Other birds seen were 2 gannets, 4 skuas, a Cape hen and a sooty shearwater. On the 24th no wandering albatrosses were seen, but 4 smaller ones, which paid no attention to the ship, were noted; also terns, sooty shearwater, white-bellied storm petrels and a skua. No more albatrosses were seen after about 8 o'clock, by which time we had reached the tropic.

On the 25th more sooty and a single Mediterranean shearwater, a storm petrel and a skua were seen. The 26th was a poor day - a single storm petrel was the only bird; but 8,

probably/....



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probably Madeiran storm-petrels, were seen next day, and 10 on the 28th, the day we crossed the equator.

On the 29th the forenoon was blank, but then we ran in- to big flocks of terns and a lot of Mediterranean shearwaters. We passed Cape Verde about 9 a.m. on the 30th, on which day we saw 13 skuas and 2 shearwaters.

1st December was a good day - lots of phalaropes and a good many gannets. Since then, the only birds seen have been close to Las Palmas - lesser black-backed and black-headed gulls - and yesterday (3rd December) was our first blank day.

On 27th December Mrs. Chaundy saw 200 Flamingo, several Avocet, a Giant Kingfisher and a Greenshank at the vlei at Kommetjie.

Mr. Morgan while doing a count at Riet Vlei on January 19th disturbed a Sea Eagle with its prey. The eagle carried off its meal, but left a large patch of feathers and some avian entrails on the spot. The feathers were shown to Dr. Broekhuysen, who considers they were from a young Coot. The normal diet of the Fish Eagle is confined to fish.

Dr. Winterbottom sends the following additions to the Check List:

61. African Spoonbill. Additional records from Riet Vlei (3 in October 1955), Ronde Vlei (8 in August 1955) and Berg R. (1956).
89. Mountain Buzzard. Delete - the Stellenbosch bird is an over-wintering example of No. 88.
128. Ringed Plover. Only the race tundrae occurs.
- ADD: 132a. Charadrius leschenaulti Less., Great Sandplover. Two (one collected) at Langebaan, 1956. One at Cape Town long ago.
- ADD: 154a. Cursorius r. rufus Gould, Burchell's Courser. One obtained from a party of 8 or 9, Olifants R. mouth, Nov. 1956.
155. Double-banded Courser. Also near Vredendal.
201. Speckled Coly, extends N. to Vanrhynsdorp.
213. Little Swift. Additional records from Somerset West and Blouberg (1956) and Faure and Darling (1957).
214. Clapper Lark. Four races - adendorffi (Rbts.) in N.; apiata, Mamre-Tulbagh; marjoriae Winterbottom, Cape Town-Agulhas; algoensis (Rbts.), River Sonder End and E.
216. Long-billed Lark. Three races - falcirostris Rchw. in Vanrhynsdorp, curvirostris, Saldanha B.-Agulhas; brevirostris (Rbts.), Agulhas. Note that last two overlap at Agulhas.
- ADD: 216a. Certhilauda albofasciata garrula Smith, Spike-heeled Lark. Common in the Karoo along the lower Olifants R.
217. Karoo Lark. Three races - albescens N. to Ysterfontein; saldanhae (Rbts.) thence to Lambert's B.; guttata Smith, Verloren Vlei-Olifants R. Note that last two races overlap, Verloren Vlei-Lambert's B., one on white sand, the other on red.
219. Red-capped Lark. Two races - witputzi at Kwartelfontein and Swellendam, cinerea elsewhere. Breeds Aug.-Dec., with at least two broods.

223. Correct Latin name: Anthus novaeseelandiae rufuloides
Rbts.
- 233a. Fairy Tit-Babbler. Additional records from Blouberg,
Melkbos, Ysterfontein and Leipoldtville. Replaces 233 in
the Strandveld and in wooded kloofs in dry mountains.
239. Olive Thrush. T.o.pondoensis Rehw. occurs on River Sonder
End Mts.
244. Familiar Chat. C.f.richardi Macd. is a synonym of
C.f.galtoni (Strickland).
- ADD: 245a. Cercomela p.pollux, Grey-rumped or Hartlaub's Chat.
Not uncommon in Vanrhynsdorp and between Bonnievale and
Storms Vlei. Unconfirmed sight record from Piquetberg.
247. Ant-eating Chat. Common in Vanrhynsdorp.
258. Crombec. Two races - diverga Clancey from Olifants R.,
rufescens from Milnerton S. and E.
- ADD: 258a. Eremomela icteropygialis saturator O.Grant, Yellow-
bellied Eremomela. One collected from a small party 6 m. S.
of Olifants R. mouth, November 1956.
265. Rufous-eared Warbler. Correct Latin name: Prinia
p.pectoralis (Smith) Priniops is not worth recognising and
hewitti is not a valid race.
- ADD: 266a. Prinia substriata (Smith), White-breasted or Namaqua
Prinia. Described from the Olifants R. and several noted
near Liebendal, on that river, November 1956.
- ADD: 280a. Lanius collurio L., Red-backed Shrike. A male, De
Hoop, 10th April 1957.
- ADD: 285a. Oriolus o.oriolus (L.), European Golden Oriole.
Three at Somerset West, January 1957; a juvenile, Malmes-
bury, 1877, in S.A.M.
289. European Starling. Extends down Olifants R. to Liebendal.
305. Quail Finch. Correct Latin name: Ortygospiza atricollis
pallida Rbts.
315. Black-head Canary. An example of A.a.leucolaema Sharpe,
Lambert's B., November 1956.

I am going overseas on 10th April for some months. During
my absence Mr. Schmidt, asst. editor, will be editing the News
Letter, so will you please send any news you may have direct to
him from 1st March.