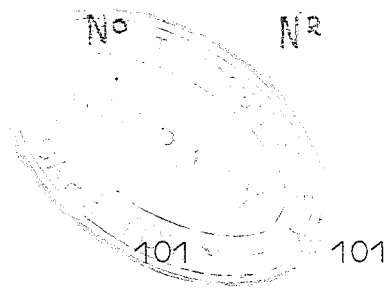




CAPE BIRD CLUB : KAAPSE VOELWAARNEMERSKLUB

NEWSLETTER - NUUSBRIEF



June 1972 Junie

From the report on the Nest Record Card Project in this issue it can be seen that the number of nests reported to the Organiser has dropped considerably. Only 707 cards were submitted for 1971, this is less than half the average number for the previous six years (1965 to '70), which was 1570 per year.

If you take into consideration that Mr. Underhill, the organiser of the project, himself contributed 204 cards of the total of 707, you can really see how much the Cape Bird Club Members have neglected this project during 1971. Luckily we are given a new chance every year. So pull up your socks (or better, discard them altogether if you want to check nests in a vlei) and send in record cards for every nest you find in 1972.

Cape Sugarbirds (only 13 nests reported in 1971) are breeding now; our three Sunbirds are also nesting already. Not one of these three species had even ten nests reported last year. Blacksmith Flowers are also winter-breeders. And please look out for Birds of Prey; only 42 cards for eight species were received during the past eight years.

Sabine's Gull near Cape Town.

Professor Winterbottom writes: The first definite record of Sabine's Gull in South African Waters was made by Messrs. H.K. Morgan and P. Wheeler (Ostrich, 29, 1958, p. 90) who identified it in Table Bay Docks on 29 December 1957. But as Mr. Morgan mentioned to me some time ago, the News Sheet No. 20, March 1954, has a description of a puzzling Gull seen by Drs. Ashton and Kettlewell and Messrs. Rand and Liversidge at Dassen Island, which, there is little doubt, was a Sabine's - and more were seen on the way home. This is an example of the value of a description, even when one cannot identify the bird oneself. (In this case the birds were misidentified as young Hartlaub's Gulls).

House Sparrows and Chaffinches

Mr. M.A. Connor, Somerset West, raises some interesting questions. He writes: "Something which has interested me has been the spread of House Sparrows in the Cape Peninsula. I have personally noted them near the Cape Town Station, in Salt River, Muizenberg, Fish Hoek, Lansdowne, and I am sure others have seen them elsewhere. It would be interesting to know how widespread the birds are now in the Peninsula. In connection with House Sparrows, I have very often observed them near 'palms' (although a botanist might call them something else) and wondered if these provide the House Sparrow with a particularly advantageous nest site. There is a large breeding colony of House Sparrows in the palms near the new Cape Town Station; in Muizenberg, Salt River and Lansdowne the birds were also near palm trees. Can other members offer any views on this?" (House Sparrows are breeding in the palms near Plumstead Station. On 27 June I saw 3 male House Sparrows on a house near the beach at Betty's Bay where there were no palms. Editor).

When I first arrived in Cape Town nearly ten years ago, Chaffinches were very common in the Newlands-Rondebosch area especially at the zoo. Numbers in this area have definitely decreased very greatly, although I have heard that Chaffinches are still found in a number of suburbs. I wondered if other members had also noted changes in their distribution. (I have not observed any at Wynberg during the last ten years where a pair bred in the Military Base in November 1955. Editor)

Some unusual observations in our area

Mrs. E. Coward saw a young Didric Cuckoo in her garden at Wynberg near Maynardville Park on 11th May, 1972. Its bill was still a bright coral colour.

Mrs. Bisset and Miss Allin saw a Half-collared Kingfisher in the grounds of the Sans Souci High School, Newlands on May the 1st.

Mr. John Perry reported seeing a Blue Jay at Mulders Vlei on 14 May; this must have been an escapee.

Miss N. Williams observed a pair of Painted Snipe along the Black River in January and February.

In the beginning of June Mrs. C.B. Weller observed a female Sugarbird feeding for more than an hour on the flowers of a large Protea neriifolia bush in her garden which is close to Rondebosch High School grounds.

Mr. Tongue saw three Hartlaub's Gulls mobbing a Buzzard over the Wynberg Park area on March 14th.

Concerning the Turnstone record at Strandfontein in Newsletter No. 100, Mr. Connor reports that he has two records of Turnstones at Strandfontein - on 26 Oct. '68 and 29 Nov. '70. He also saw a European Swallow at Strandfontein on 28 June '71. (I saw a European Swallow there on 20 June '72. Editor.)

At "De Plaat", the inland lagoon two miles east of Velddrift on 8 and 9 April '72, Mr. and Mrs. Trew saw an estimated number of 2000 Greater Flamingoes, among which were what appeared to be juveniles, and at least one Lesser Flamingo, a flock of 15 Curlews, 2 Chestnut-banded Sand-plovers, a Ringed Plover, 4 Caspian Terns behaving aggressively, and 3 Cape Teal with red markers attached to their shoulders. The teal, according to Mrs. Hutchins, are marked birds from a reserve farther north up the coast.

On 7 May, Mr. Lockhart, Somerset West, observed three albino Guinea Fowls in a flock of 50 feeding in vineyards at Helderberg Kloof; this is the most he has seen at one time. On 13 May in the Sir Lowry's Pass area he saw a male Sentinel Rock Thrush, a Rock Pipit identified by the pink, flesh-coloured legs, and 3 Protea Seed-eaters. Also seen were 3 Rock Kestrels which at one time appeared to be hunting together, and a Jackal Buzzard.

Chairman's Report.

1971/1972.

The Committee met nine times during the year. The attendance at the Committee Meetings was 84 %, compared to 86 % during the previous year.

The Committee did not co-opt an additional member.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

During the Committee Meetings a variety of topics were dealt with of which the following were the more important.

1. The Club was represented in Oudtshoorn by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Keith Morgan at the Nature Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting on September 1 and 2, 1971. Amongst other items, the Draft Ordinance consolidating existing Conservation and Vermin Ordinances and their amendments, was presented by the Province.
2. The Club made representations to the Department of Nature Conservation to purchase the Potberg and surrounding areas for inclusion in De Hoop. Unfortunately this purchase did not materialise, apparently due to lack of funds and other commitments.
3. The Committee followed up a letter which appeared in The Argus urging greater protection for the Bot River Lagoon, by writing to the Caledon Divisional Council. A reply was received, advising that the area had been proclaimed a nature conservation area in 1969.
4. After a large oil spillage in the Rietvlei area, the Club contacted Messrs. Caltex. The assurance was received that they were aware of the value of wild life and that they had done, and were doing everything possible to protect the environment.
5. As requested by the Co-ordinating Council for Nature Conservation the Committee proposed certain areas which they felt should be declared Reserves such as Verloren Vlei, Langebaan Lagoon, Potberg, Rietvlei and Strandfontein Reserve.

6. Representations were made to the City Engineer concerning destruction of dunes and natural vegetation by engineering works in the Strandfontein Sewage Farm. The Deputy City Engineer replied that the Department would try and rectify this.
7. The Club associated itself with the protest made by Professor Rycroft re the new proposed freeway past Kirstenbosch.
8. The Anderson Bequest Competition will this year be handled by the Club, for which the following Sub-Committee was appointed: Mrs. N. Davis, Miss N. Williams and Miss M. Johns.

EXCURSIONS AND OUTINGS

There have been eight Evening Meetings as detailed in the programme. The first two of 1972 drew record attendance. There were 11 outings, of which three were Camps.

MEMBERSHIP

The present membership is 357 as against 352 last year. Although quite a number of new members joined the club, this gain has been balanced by resignations and by members having been written off for not paying subscriptions.

SUB-COMMITTEE AND SCHEME ORGANISERS

Miss N. Williams and her helpers did as "tea-ladies" excellent work and I wish to thank them on behalf of all Club members. Miss N. Williams also did most of the typing of the stencils for the News Letter which has been a very great help.

Stan Clark arranged the programme for 1972 and obtained permission from the owners of the areas visited by the Club during the different outings. On behalf of all Members: Many thanks, Stan.

Rudolf Schmidt, as usual, compiled and edited the News Letter. This year was a special occasion, as during the past Club-year, the one Hundredth Edition of the News Letter appeared. The Letters were very interesting, and we like to thank you very much, Rudolf.

Dr. Jack Winterbottom again organised the Field Card Scheme, while George Underhill looked after the Nest Record Scheme. Professor Gerry Broekhuysen continued to act as the Recorder of movements of migratory species. Mr. Pfister acted as the Keeper of the Club's Slide Library.

Mrs. N. Davis very ably organised the Annual Dinner which we still have to enjoy. Mr. John Perry once again painted a number of beautiful menu-cards which will be given away during the Annual Dinner.

At the end of this Report, it is a pleasure to thank all members who during the year served in the Committee or in the different Schemes and Sub-Committees, for their co-operation and enthusiasm.

Special thanks are also due to Professor John Day for once again allowing us to use the Lecture Hall in the Zoology Department for our Evening Meetings and Professor Roy Siegfried for allowing us to have the tea after the meetings in the Library of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute.

Chairman.

REPORT ON NEST RECORD CARD PROJECT OF THE CAPE
BIRD CLUB FOR THE YEAR 1971.

The following 43 members submitted nest record cards during 1971: Prof. G.J. Broekhuysen 4, Mrs. M. Broekhuysen 5, Y. David 1, M. Cherry 3, Miss D. Clark 1, M.A. Connor 15, R. Cruickshank 8, C.C.H. Elliott 16, D. Farmer 1, Dr. H. Gottschalk 2, Cmdr. S.E. Jagger 6, Mrs. E.E. Jagger 1, R.G. Jeffery 2, E.R. Johannesson 9, T.D. Longrigg 58, Mrs. M. Knipe 10, Mrs. Gwen Lipp 1, P.S. Lockhart 53, Mrs. E. Martin 24, John Martin 74, R. Martin 14, Mrs. M. Moore 2, J.M. Moore 6, Nico Myburgh 1, H.P. Pfister 4, W. Pringle 1, Hamish Robertson 14, Mrs. M.K. Rowan 2, A.N. Rowan 1, B.W. Rowlands 6, Mrs. J. Sawkins 1, R.K. Schmidt 55, D. Solomon 1, P. Steyn 2, C.T. Stuart 3, H. Sturrock 1, G.D. Underhill 204, L.G. Underhill 2, Prof. C.J. Uys 1, F. v.d. Merwe 2, M. Waltner 1, Dr. J.M. Winterbottom 26, Mrs. M.G. Winterbottom 2, G.H. Wilson 1, B.C. v.d. Walt 3, M. Whiley 1.

The average number of cards filed yearly for the last six years (1965 - 1970) is 1570. For 1971 only 707 were submitted - less than half the usual number.

10 or more cards were received for the following species:

Yellow-billed Duck	10	Tawny Pipit	19
Cape Shoveller	44	Cape Robin	13
Red-knobbed Coot	101	Karoo Robin	13
Black-winged Stilt	16	Levaillant's Cisticola	14
White-fr. Sandplover	19	Karoo Prinia	21
Crowned Plover	14	Fiscal Shrike	10
Cape Turtle Dove	21	Cape Sugarbird	13
Laughing Dove	26	Cape Weaver	24
White-rumped Swift	12	Red Bishop	18
Cape Wagtail	19	Cape Sparrow	34

I am convinced that many more nests are found by members, but go unrecorded. The ideal of a card giving details of egg-laying, clutch size, nestling period etc. cannot often be attained but, even if a nest is checked only once, members should please complete a card; and, let me emphasise, do not neglect the common species.

Mr. Schmidt has found an excellent way of assembling useful breeding data. He has consistently ^{been} recording the nesting of White-rumped Swifts and Larger Striped Swallows, and, over a period of eight years, has submitted about 120 cards of the former and 75 of the latter. In the same period the organiser has recorded about 200 nests of the Tawny Pipit and more than 80 of the Fan-tail Cisticola.

A few notable records should be mentioned. I have notes of all cards submitted since 1964. Last year the first card for the Cinnamon Dove was received. Mr. Longrigg found the nest at Kirstenbosch. Similarly, Mr. O.T. Stuart reported nesting by a Wood Owl from Stellenbosch. Mrs. E. Martin reported nesting-behaviour by an Ant-eating Chat from Somerset West. Members should watch this bird. Perhaps it is extending its range into our area. Mr. Longrigg also saw a Black Saw-wing entering a nesting hole in Kirstenbosch. Nesting by this species has not been reported since 1967.

Many families were very poorly represented in the records of 1971. For example, there were only 2 cards for the whole of the Heron/Egret Group. The raptors appeared in one card for the Black-shouldered Kite. There were no records at all for Colies, Hamerkop, Water Dikkop, Purple Gallinule, Namaqua

Newsletter No. 101, - 6.

Dove, Hoopoe, Nightjar, Crows, Cape Bishop and Bully Seed-eater. Surely nests of at least some of these birds were found? With the assistance of every member the total of 2080 cards received in 1968 could easily be exceeded.

G.D. Underhill,
Project Organiser.

WIRE BIRD-FEEDERS

Spiral-shaped wire bird-feeders to hang in shrubs and trees, were formerly imported from England. Because of rising costs, especially in postage, this has been discontinued. Through Miss H. Day, Charlcombe, St. Joan's Rd. Plumstead, ph. 77 53 23 locally made bird feeders may be ordered. The cost will approximately be 40 c. each. Miss Day hopes to show them at the next Evening Meeting.
