

N/L
CAPE BIRD CLUB

KAAPSE VOËLWAARNEMERSKLUB

P.O. BOX 5022,
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NEWSLETTER 112 NUUSBRIEF

SEPTEMBER 1974 SEPTEMBER

In spite of the wettest August in the Cape since 1841 (Observatory Mowbray recorded 229 mm of rain and Wynberg Park 468mm) and snow on Table Mountain on 1st September, the breeding of resident birds and the arrival of migrants has apparently been normal.

The Lesser Double-collared Sunbirds as well as the Grey-backed Cisticolas, which I have watched at Strandfontein since 1962, started building at the beginning of August. I saw a Pearl-breasted Swallow during the C.B.C. outing at Bonteberg on 11 August. The first White-rumped Swift was back in its nest at Plumstead on 29 August, and there were half a dozen Larger Striped Swallows at Ottery in the Cape Flats on 31 August. I am sure many members have arrival records of African or Palaearctic migrants which should be reported to Mr. G. Wilson whose report follows below. He is the official Migration Recorder of the C.B.C.

MIGRATION REPORT FOR 1973.

The following report was presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Cape Bird Club on 14th June 1973:

During 1973 only 741 migration records were noted, most of these were received direct from club members, but some were extracted from the club's newsletter. A total of 44 species were recorded but half of these were reported on only five occasions or less. The following members of the club contributed to the enquiry by submitting records:-

Mr. P.S. Lockhart	More than 500
Prof. G.J. Broekhuysen	More than 100
Prof. J.M. Winterbottom	36

All the following people each submitted between 1 and 15 reports.

Mr. K. Morgan, Mr. C.D. Underhill, Mr. P.G.H. Frost and Prof. W.R. Siegfried, Mr. G.H. Wilson, Miss N. Williams, Mr. R.A.D. Morris, Mr. B. van der Walt, Mr. M. Waltner, Mr. R.K. Schmidt, Mrs. White, Mr. J. Martin, Mr. H.P. Pfister, Mr. W. Pringle, Mr. R. Martin, Mr. N.J. Myburgh, Mr. S. Clark, Mr. P. Tongue, Mrs. Bissett and Mr. P.G.H. Frost

This was a disappointing year as only 24 of our members submitted records. If this enquiry is to yield any worthwhile information more records are needed at the important times of the year, that is arrival and departure dates (first and last records) and all overwintering records (ie. May-August). Please send your reports stating species, number, place, date and any2.

other relevant information to:-

Mr. G.H. Wilson,
5 Brentwood,
Blaauwberg Road,
TABLE VIEW.
7436.

At our evening meeting in July it was announced that the enquiry of the Hartlaub's Gull, which has been carried on by Messrs. G. and L. Underhill for several years, has been made a Club Project. Every member can contribute to it. Below you find an explanation of the aims of this scheme and how you can help.

HARTLAUB'S GULL ENQUIRY

Hartlaub's Gull, one of our commonest coastal residents, has a range which practically coincides with the Cape Bird Club area and presents itself as an ideal species for study as a Club project. It breeds in large colonies on the off-shore islands but little is known of its movements in the non-breeding season. How far do the adults and juveniles disperse? Does each island population confine itself to a certain portion of the mainland? What has occasioned its movement inland where it now frequents market places and rubbish dumps and even follows the plough in fields far from the sea? At present questions such as these have to remain unanswered.

Although some 2000 Gull chicks have been ringed on Robben Island during the period 1970-73 by C.B.C. ringing parties we find that information gleaned from recoveries alone comes in very slowly. (Note: a recovery refers to a ring taken from a bird found dead).

It is proposed, therefore, to colour ring one thousand chicks this year and then to call on the assistance of every member of the Club in reporting sightings of these marked birds. In addition we plan to recruit a small corps of observers to carry out checks of flocks of Gulls. The object would be to record the number of birds present, the number of birds ringed and the number bearing both metal and plastic colour rings.

Members who are prepared to assist should please give their names and addresses to G.D. Underhill, 12 Roseberry Road, MOWBRAY. 7700. Phone: 655698 evenings.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: SHELDUCK

Moulting South African Shelducks are fitted with coloured nasal discs at various localities in the Orange Free State as part of a study on the movement patterns of this duck. If any of these marked birds is sighted, it will be greatly appreciated if information including the locality, date, colour of marker and other relevant data are submitted to the Director (Attention Mr. Mr. J.N. Geldenhuys), Nature Conservation Division, P.O. Box 517, BLOEMFONTEIN. 9300.

CONSERVATION NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA.

There is a well-established Bird Club in Melbourne, the Bird Observers' Club, whose organisation and scale of activities has always been an inspiration to the joint editor (PT) of this newsletter. Now a letter has

arrived, appealing for funds to enable the club to acquire its own premises, from which I think CBC members would be interested in this quotation:

Our Club has reached that state in size and service where a headquarters is needed if the requirements of members are to be properly met. Our Club is small when compared with the National Audobon Society and with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, yet our role is similar and its voice on conservation matters is increasingly being heeded.

We have 2500 members and our numbers are growing more rapidly than ever and our most urgent need is to acquire central premises before organisational problems stifle progress.

I have quoted this because it shows that given time and enthusiasm, coupled with continuing and intelligent press coverage, the general public can be interested in the welfare of birds, and is willing, once a society has reached a certain point in its development, to join and to work for that most urgent need conservation of the avifauna.

Philip Tongue, the joint editor, reports from his holiday in Spain:

When we arrived here, in Mijas, Malaga, at the end of April, we were a week or so later than the Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*) which had been arriving for about that period of time. The last came over the sea whilst we were settling into the villa. They fly over in small parties of not more than eight, circle round, then make strongly into the hills. Whereas in South Africa I have always regarded them as social nesters, here I have never seen more than two pairs in any area. They chirrup with a deep and most attractive sound as they fly, and I am often drawn outside, just to see a small party of four or six, travelling rapidly along the foot of the Sierra at the back of my house. There, too, the Golden Orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*) call loudly every day, though I do not often get a sight of one.

Lastly a word about that pestiferous bird, the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)..... it will come as a surprise to many, to learn that here in Southern Europe, as well as along the whole southern coast of the Mediterranean, it is only a winter visitor, its place as a resident species being taken by the Spotless Starling (*Sturnus unicolor*) a bird that at a distance looks exactly the same, though, through binoculars, is indeed unicoloured. How it has managed to prevent the pushful, adaptable vulgaris from driving it away is a mystery, but it is a consolation to know that that bird can be stopped in its colonising drive.

RARE BIRDS IN OUR AREA

On July 3rd Prof. and Mrs. Broekhuysen saw two Glossy Ibis at the Strandfontein Sewage Works, they were with a Sacred Ibis on a marshy meadow. The last time they saw the species there was on 15 November 1967. The Glossy Ibis were then at practically the same spot and there were 14 of them. Is this going to be another attempt to settle in the Cape Town area? We better be on the look out for them this Spring.

On an island in a large pan near the coastal road they saw 12 Lesser Flamingoes and one young which was distinctly smaller than the others, smoky grey all over and its bill was black which makes it unmistakably a Lesser. If one could only find out where this bird hatched the previous spring. Quite possibly at the sewage works, as breeding attempts have occurred, although as far as we could find out without success. One or two successful attempts can, however, easily be overlooked.

On 5 August 1974 Mr. & Mrs. K. Zammit observed two White Storks along the link road between the National Road N2 and Eerste River at 9.30 a.m. As these two storks can hardly have been early arrivals from Europe where they only leave at the beginning of August, they may either be immature birds overwintering here or they may belong to the small breeding population in the Bredasdorp district.

May I remind members of the Stork Census in South Africa (cf. Newsletter 110) for which many helpers are required.

A HEARTY WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

who joined in July and August

Mr. Norman Larsen
Miss Jane Dowle
Mr. John Perry (rejoined)
Mr. P.A. Buirski
Mr. D.L. Cran
Mrs. Dorothy Daws
Mr. Nicholas W. Hofmeyr
Mrs. Imke Schmidt.

EXHIBITIONS OF BIRD PAINTINGS

Mr. John Perry extends an open invitation to all members for the opening of his exhibition at the Shell House on 1st October at 5.30 p.m.

C A P E B I R D C L U B

K A A P S E V O E L W A A R N E M E R S K L U B

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PROGRAMME FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER.

EVENING MEETING.

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 20
8.15p.m.

Prof. G.J. Broekhuysen will be giving his talk entitled "Are the European Stork settling in South Africa" instead of the scheduled evening by Mr. John Perry.

Prof. Broekhuysen has spent many hundreds of hours studying the European Stork. The information he has is fascinating and should be of interest to every member. A full house please!

OUTING

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 6
10.30 a.m.

BOTHA'S KLOOF - RIEBEECK KASTEEL

Take the N11 and turn into the town of Malmesbury. When in town drive carefully watching for the road signs marked "Riebeeck West, Riebeeck Kasteel and Paarl". Drive along this road for 6 km then take left road fork marked Riebeeck Kasteel. Drive up Botma's Kloof and park at picnic spot on right side of road on the far side of the pass.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Marina da Gama have recently appointed an ecologist - Mr. George Begg. Mr. Begg is keenly interested in the birdlife of this vlei and has been studying Dr. Winterbottom's paper on the vlei counts made between 1952 and 1958. Now he would like to know what effect the development have had on the birdlife and as the scheme settles down whether the birds will return.

Our Club has been asked to start regular vlei counts again to help Mr. Begg in this important aspect of his work. We therefore need about twelve members, who can identify the vlei birds and waders, and who are prepared to do a count one Sunday morning each month for the next two or three years. Any members who do not know all the birds but who would like to participate are welcome as recorders.

DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY THE LENGTH OF TIME - ITS ONLY ONE MORNING A MONTH.

Please send your names and telephone numbers to me so that we can organise the teams.

ALAN MORRIS,
P.O. BOX 5022,
CAPE TOWN.
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