

N/L.

CAN.



CAPE BIRD CLUB – KAAPSE VOELWAARNEMERSKLUB
 P.O. BOX 5022 POB 5022
 CAPE TOWN KAAPSTAD
 8000 8000

NEWSLETTER

NUUSBRIEF

NO. 114 NR. 114.

JANUARY 1975 JANUARIE

COMMITTEE: Chairman: Prog. G.J. Broekhuysen
 Vice Chairman Mr. R.K. Schmidt
 Secretary Mr. A. Morris
 Treasurer Mr. H.K. Morgan
 Members Mr. S.W. Clarke
 Mrs. N. Davis
 Mr. L. R.Hicks
 Mr. A.P. Tongue
 Mr. G.H. Wilson
 Miss I. Zammit

All communications please to the Club's P.O. Box 5022, CAPE TOWN. 8000.

Subscriptions are now due. Rates, including the S.A.O.S. Conservation levy, which goes direct to the S.A.O.S. Conservation Fund, of 50c Ordinary & Institutional subscriptions are

Life Members	R 97.50 (includes R 7.50 levy)
Ordinary	6.50
Institutional	6.50
Junior	2.50

There is a supplement of 50c added to the Ordinary membership subscription, for Family Membership, making Family Membership R 7.00 from January 1 this year.

THE NEWSLETTER is edited by R.K. Schmidt and Philip Tongue.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THAT QUESTIONNAIRE

It seems a long time since members were asked to complete a questionnaire, but with your Committee busy with their jobs, it has taken some time to what is to-day called "process" (ghastly word!) it which really means to go through the replies and make an analysis.

About 80 members responded and the information supplied has been of the greatest value to us. Especially heartening was the number of people who offered time, labour, and money, and the best thanks of the Committee goes to you all. If you don't hear from us individually it is not because we do not appreciate your interest.

On the subject of jobs, Alan Morris,, who has been the Club's Hon. Secretary for four years, feels that he has been doing it for long enough, and would like to hand over to someone else.

This is a job that calls for a certain amount of dedication, because there is plenty of work to be done - and if the Club develops, as we hope it will, there should be still more. This would be admirable for anyone who is retired and who wants to involve himself in an absorbing and wholly worthwhile occupation.

Would anyone care to telephone Alan Morris at 72-4150 and offer his services?

VEHICLES ON BEACHES

The Cape Bird Club is delighted to learn that the Divisional Council of the Cape has banned the driving of vehicles on the beaches on the west side of the Peninsula under its control; these are from the northern end of Van Riebeeckstrand Township to the Southern end of Bloubergstrand village; Llandudno; Hout Bay; Noordhoek; Long Beach, Kommetjie, Witsands, and Schuster's Bay, Scarborough. Club members should, in the interests of bird conservation, inform the police of infringements at the Traffic section (Phone 77-8158 or 77-8067). They are in touch by radio with patrol cars. It will be interesting to find out whether the "strict enforcement" promised in the Divisional Council's announcement, really means what it says!

It may be added that the driving of vehicles on any beaches controlled by the Municipality of Cape Town, or in the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve is also prohibited.

Bird watchers, conservation-minded people and, not least those who like to see motor transport where it properly belongs on the roads will welcome this announcement.

MAILING THE NEWSLETTER

On the subject of jobs, we did ask for help for the folding and enveloping of the NEWSLETTER about a year ago. Alan Morris had some offers, but shortly thereafter, the whole job was taken on by a professional firm whose line it is. So, again, thank you, and if, one day, the task falls back on the Club, we shall call for help again.

SLIDE LIBRARY

This is now in the hands of Mr. Len Hicks, and members wishing to borrow slides, AND the Club's projector, should telephone him in the evenings, at 6-3470. And PLEASE try to return them in the same ORDER as you received them.

HOLIDAY

When PT joined the editorial department, he tried to encourage members to send us their experiences away from home, to be published under this general heading. It is a section that, for one example, the Surrey Bird Club, runs with great success.

Do none of our members ever see anything interesting when they travel?

NATAL BIRD CLUB

We have received a copy of this Branch's News Sheet No. 229 dated October/November 1974; a well set out and exceedingly interesting periodical. It is interesting to we Western Cape birders that our Rock Kestrel (123) and Namaqua Dove (318) are both unusual species in Natal. CBC members visiting Durban might do worse that contact the NBC's secretary Miss J. Hutt at P.O. Box 10001, Marine Parade if they want to get a sight of some of OUR rarities there.3.

(3)

CONSERVATION

LAMBERTS BAY

As most members will know by now from AFRICAN WILDLIFE the owners of the fish factory at Lambert's Bay have changed their system of off-loading the trawlers, so that a repetition of last years seabird kill should not occur again. This is good news and the Cape Bird Club congratulates the Conservation Committee of the SAOS on the success of its campaign. The writer well knows the great amount of behind-the-scenes work that went into this success story.

WETLANDS

The World Wildlife Society reports in the December issue of WILDLIFE (formerly "Animals") that a highly important international meeting concerned with wetlands and their flora and fauna and in particular, migratory ducks, geese and swans ... was to be held at Heiligenhafen, Germany, early last month. Wildfowl cannot survive without suitable areas of wetland habitat (marshes, swamps, estuaries and mud flats) and the last conference on this problem was held in Iran in 1971; it gave birth to the Convention on Wetlands which would provide for the establishment of large wetland nature reserves. This Convention comes into force when seven states have become party to it. At the last count, one, Australia had done so, while five others, including Britain had signed it (the stage before ratification). Others are expected to follow soon and last month's conference will, it is hoped, have marked further significant progress in the conservation of wetlands and thus of some of the world's most attractive birds that need them in order to survive.

Should anyone in governmental or any other position giving power to influence thinking in South Africa read this, it is earnestly hoped that he will ponder this question. South Africa is losing wetlands daily, yet they are vital, not only for its own wildfowl, but for those of the entire northern hemisphere, to whom we play host during our summer, and for which we have an international responsibility. This is a message that cannot be too often, or too persistently repeated.

THE DOLLARD ESTUARY

An appeal was made to members in NEWSLETTER 107 (December 1973) to write to the Netherlands to protest against the routing of a canal which would have destroyed the winter feeding grounds of the European Avocet population. Those who did so will be pleased to hear that world protests have resulted in the canal being re-routed.

How long shall we have to wait before our planners listen to authoritative requests from conservationists?

SIGHTINGS

FLAMINGOES

Two lesser (87) and one Greater (86) sighted at salt pans next to Berg River, Velddrif (32° 47' S. 18° 08' E) on December 2 and 6.

GLOSSY IBIS

(83) Six feeding, with 5 Sacred Ibis (81) in a small reedy pond at left of road just before the start of the bridge at the entrance to the town.

BITTERN

BITTERN

(71) observed at Rocher Pan, Velddrif (32' 36" S 18' 18" E) on December 1, 2, 3, 4. Second sighting was in the early morning, the remainder in the late afternoon. Yellow eye, prominent at each sighting ruled out immature night heron.

M.H. CURRIE. STELLENBOSCH.

(The Flamingo report has been forwarded to Dr. Broekhuysen for the enquiry. Editor.)

NAMAQUA DOVE

One male perched on a telegraph wire in the Cape of Good Hope reserve on December 6, at Km post 36. Although this bird has been recorded before in the reserve, it is not particularly common. Howard Langley's list (1973) says "Breeding summer visitor. Rare but increasing each year". Members reports will be valued.

P.T. CAPE TOWN.

WATTLED STARLING

(735) On September 14 a small colony was observed breeding in a small stand of blue gums not far from the Berg River, Hopefield District. Nesting activity had still to reach its peak and the nests still in a semi-completed state. It was estimated that each structure comprised three compartments, and all were about 10 to 25 feet above the ground. The surrounding area was widely covered with water from the recent rains, and the nearby vegetation extremely lush, with an abundance of insect life, although no locusts were seen in the immediate vicinity of the colony.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

(689) A single bird seen feeding along an exposed mud bank on the northern shore of the Stettynskloof Dam on Feb. 11 1973.

BROWN HOODED KINGFISHER

(402) A pair were resident for several weeks in a stand of mixed woodland adjoining the Holsloot River. Dist. Rawsonville in October, 1973.

FORK-TAILED DRONGO

(517) A single bird observed for several weeks in the same stand of woodland October 1973.

GYMNOGENE

(171) A solitary bird observed circling over the Ramskop Flower Garden, Clanwilliam, at no great height in September 1973.

P. CARDWELL. MEADOWRIDGE

BEHAVIOURROCK KESTREL (123) CHASING STEPPE BUZZARD (154)

On December, 6 I had parked the car on that road on the shore that ends just below the Cape of Good Hope, in the Reserve, when a Rock Kestrel came into view from the vicinity of Cape Point, pursuing a Steppe Buzzard in the direction of the Homestead. The Kestrel raced after it, at quite twice its speed, repeatedly swooped down towards it, but never came within striking distance, though the larger bird rolled to a level lower each time. The interesting feature of this pursuit was the persistence of the Kestrel, and the distance it chased5.

its victim; the last I saw of them was when they were well above the Homestead. When I passed the Homestead about an hour later, the Buzzard was circling in the area having I assume, learnt its lesson about trespass.

WHISKERED TERN (305)

On Sunday January 5, and again Tuesday January 7, I watched these handsome birds nesting at the dam at Meerlust; the one on the right of the Stellenbosch road. They are not a rare bird, but there are not many places in South Africa (says Roberts) where they breed. Here, building and incubating are in full swing, and many birds were dragging long string of a water plant to the nests. We counted thirty nests. There has always been a colony at Klaver Vlei but so far as I know this is the first time they have nested in this dam which is a short distance West of Klaver Vlei.

In addition to the Terns there are four pairs of Crested Grebe (4) and some Dabchick(6). A grandstand view is obtainable from the roadside, and members are urged to see them. As a vast site over the road is being bulldozed for a Copper Refinery, prospects for the future of this colony (to say nothing of the surrounding countryside) do not seem to be good.

P.T. CAPE TOWN.

NEW MEMBERS

September/December 1974.

Welcome to the following people who have joined the C.B.C. May you have many years of happy birding!

Mr. R.O. Bell (Milnerton), Mr. Brian Cochrane (Cape Town), Mr. D.H. Corbett (Vredenburg), Mr. M.H. Damp (Rondebosch), Mrs. J. Grieve & Mrs. V. Grieve (Durbanville), Mr. B. Hindley (Rondebosch), Mr. D.J.R. Knorr (Bellville), Mr. & Mrs. B.A. O'Shea (Fish Hoek), Mr. M.J. Perry (Claremont), Mr. M.J.L. Woodhead (Klapmuts).

and these Junior Members: Storm Durr (Somerset West), C. Tielman (Gardens) & Graham v.d. Minnen (Claremont).

I M P O R T A N T N O T I C E

VIGIANCE AT LANGEBAAN LAGOON REQUIRED

The Conservation Committee of the SAOS has been campaigning for months for the conservation of the Langebaan Lagoon, as this area is regarded as internationally important as a refuge for up to 80,000 waders. One of the possible threats to the Lagoon's survival is the dredging of material from the area to help build the breakwater to Marcus Island. The Committee has already laid a complaint against the dredgers working outside their allotted area, a complaint that was found to be justified by the Department of Industries, and the matter was taken up with ISCOR and the contractors SALCON. Salcon has recently strongly denied that it has any plans to dredge into the Lagoon, but the possibility nevertheless exists.

The Committee therefore asks that any Cape Bird Club Member visiting Langebaan, should keep an eye on the dredgers. If ANY dredgers are seen to move into the channel between Schaapen Island and Langebaan village, they should record the TIME, DATE AND ANY OTHER DETAILS and attempt to obtain photographic evidence. They should then contact the Committee's Chairman, Dr. Guy Currie at 69-4977 as soon as possible.

If anyone knows sympathetic people resident at Langebaan, who would be prepared to keep an eye on the dredgers, will they6.

please contact Mr. Philip Tongue at 77-0155 (one of the editors of this NEWSLETTER) who will take immediate steps to see that they are briefed on the job.

MANY MEMBERS HAVE ASKED THE CBC TO TAKE ACTION IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD LANGEBAAN LAGOON: HERE IS A TASK THAT ANY OF YOU CAN DO AND ONE OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE TO ITS FUTURE.

STORKS

Don't forget that Dr. J.M. Winterbottom is conducting the South African end of an international enquiry into the present status of the WHITE STORK (*Ciconia Ciconia*) and YOU can help him. Information about how and when from him c/o the South African Museum, P.O. Box 61, CAPE TOWN. 8000.

Please send

Contributions to the NEWSLETTER to P.O. Box 5022, CAPE TOWN. 8000

Flamingo reports (see NEWSLETTER No. 113) to Prof. G.J. Broekhuysen at P.O. Box 5022, CAPE TOWN. 8000.

Migration records (see NEWSLETTER NO 113) to Mr. G.H. Wilson, 5 Brentwood, Blaauwberg Road, TABLEVIEW. 7436.

News about Ruffs (see NEWSLETTER No. 108) to Mr. M. Waltner, 5 Montague Way, PINELANDS. 7405.

Nest Record Cards. Mr. G. Underhill, 12 Rosebery Road, MOWBRAY. 7700
7700.

Hartlaub's Gull Enquiry as Nest Record Cards (see N/L 112)

Shelduck Nature Conservation Division, P.O. Box 517, BLOEMFONTEIN.
9300.

marked "attention Mr. J.N. Geldenhuys (see N/L 112)

Jackass Penguins Mr. J. Cooper, Percy Fitzpatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, RONDEBOSCH. 7700. (see N/L 113)

This ought to provide enough occupation for members requiring a pleasant spare-time activity. How many of you will help?

INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS

Your Editor has asked me for a brief report on the XVI International Ornithological Congress held in Canberra in August. I have agreed to do my best but a summary of a congress lasting a week and at which two or three sessions were running simultaneously most of the time is bound to be incomplete and unsatisfactory.

Before the Congress proper, there were excursions - and here again I can only give a partial account because I couldn't be on more than one. We reluctantly passed up the excursions to Darwin and to Alice Springs and plumped for New Guinea, a land which has fascinated me ever since, as a boy, I read George Manville Fenn's "Nat the Naturalist". Besides, several of my earliest scientific papers were concerned with the birds of paradise, which are confined to New Guinea and the extreme north-east of Australia. We were quite a distinguished party who assembled in the hotel at Port Moresby - Dr. Etchecopar of France, Dr. Kai Curry-Lindahl of Sweden, Dr. Yapp of Britain, Mr. Donald Lamm of the United States (author of only good study of the Pied Crow.), besides a Canadian judge and several excellent younger ornithologists, British, French and American. Our excursion leader was Winston Filewood, professionally a marine biologist but a first-rate field ornithologist too.

After a day in Port Moresby, where we paid a profitable visit to the sewage works, we flew over the forested mountains to Mt. Hagen, not in itself a particularly good spot for birds but within range of several exciting areas of mountain forest. Of course, what we all wanted most to see were birds of paradise and we went out first to a special reserve that had been set aside for them. We were exceedingly lucky - not only did we see the Lesser Bird of Paradise but we saw a group of full-plumaged males in display on a tall dead tree in a clear view and were able to admire their golden plumes which shimmered over them like fountains. Later, we saw three other bird of paradise species, including Princess Stephanie's, a black bird with a tremendous tail.

But I am supposed to be writing about the Congress, not the excursions. We flew back to Sydney to find that, owing to a strike of oil workers, there was no plane to take us to Canberra. However, the Congress organisers had done a noble job and had laid on a bus. We left Sydney at 9.30 p.m. on a cold, wet night, and arrived at Canberra at 3 a.m. to find our hosts still alert and cheerful and we were shown our quarters in the hostels of the Australian National University - unheated, again because of the strike.

Canberra, as I expect most of you know, is a planned city and is beautifully laid out, with many fine modern buildings, an excellent botanical gardens - where pre-breakfast bird-watching was laid on - a lake, a fine library and so on.

I am not, nowadays, as conscientious as perhaps I should be about listening to papers at congresses of this sort and I enjoy them most as places to renew contacts with old friends and colleagues and meet new ones. Australia is so far from Europe and North America that many of our friends from the north were unable to come but we were delighted to see again Sir Landsborough Thomson, Professor Allen Keast, Dr. Ernst Mayr, Professor Charles Sibley, Major Traylor and, of course, the President, Jean Dorst, his predecessor Dr. Finn Salomonsen and his successor-to-be, Professor Donald Farner. Of new friends, Sir Robert and Lady Falla of New Zealand and Bob Dowsett of Zambia were among those we got to know. We were also very pleased to see an African from Tanzania there - the first black African I have ever seen at an ornithological congress and a very nice chap too. He is working on queleas.

Business started with a meeting of the "Committee of a Hundred" at which it was decided that the next Congress should be in Berlin in 1978; a strong resolution on the ethics of collecting was drawn up for submission to the International Council for Bird Preservation, which was meeting the following week; and the election to the Committee of, among others, Professor Siegfried and Dr. Liversegde.

The papers to which I listened were mostly competent and interesting (except, all too often, for the manner of delivery) rather than epoch-making. I was impressed by the papers of Gordon Maclean and Alan Kemp, whose delivery too was an example to others, clear, audible, confident.

There were a number of so-called Symposia, though in most cases this simply meant unconnected papers on a single theme. The best co-ordinated was the one on migration - and as this had been organised by our Mrs. Rowan, one was not surprised. The subject of co-operative breeding had attracted so many papers that the Symposium was, in effect, double in length.

On the Wednesday, there were two mid-Congress excursions to National Parks near Canberra. We went to Tidbinbilla, in a mountain valley to the south. The weather was vile until latish in the afternoon, but we did see a kaola bear and lots of kangaroos and, while lunching on the veranda of the Park Headquarters, had a view at the same time, crimson rosellas, blue wrens and flame robins. Before we left, we went to the feeding tables, where threre were more rosellas, easterns as well as crimsons, and satin bowerbirds, while a nearby tree held a big flock of sulphur-crested cockatoos. The prominence of species of the parrot family in the Australian avifauna is most exciting to those from other continents. Colourful as is a flock of Red Bishops at close quarters, the effect of a flock of galahs of similar numbers is even more spectacular for galahs are much bigger birds and can be seen from much further off.

Taking it all in all, the Congress was a great success and the way the organisers, especially the Secretary-General, Harry Frith, coped with situations created by their Australian strikers was quite heroic. But I think it will be a long time before another I.O.C. is held in the southern hemisphere. However, at informal meetings in Canberra, we discussed the next Pan-African Congress, which we hope will be held in Nairobi in 1976.

J.M. WINTERBOTTOM

IMPORTANT NOTICE: NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIELD EXCURSIONS

Owing to large numbers that now arrive for the Field Excursions, your Committee has decided that it will be in the best interest of all members, if a modicum of organisation is introduced.

Those who come to the excursions appear to fall into three categories ... the experts, who know exactly what they want to do and see, and are the happier for being left alone, those who come for the undoubted pleasure of spending a day away from the town and enjoying the peace and quiet usually to be found in the places we visit, and lastly, the considerable number who want to learn about the birds. It is to these that the following remarks are chiefly addressed.

As an experiment a LEADER will be named for each excursion. His name is given in the directions circulated in advance of each excursion. He will be responsible for seeing that those people who want to learn about birds are attached to a knowledgeable club member, who will then lead his group and give them, if not all the information they desire, at least as much as he is able to give. Where there is anything of particular interest, he will know where it is, and try to see that his group shares it.

In the event of a very large turn-out for any excursion, this system will enable the Leader to split the members into two or more groups, so as to keep each one of a reasonable size.

What all members are therefore asked to do is:

- (1) to report to the Leader on arrival, tell him who you are and what you want to do. (i.e. go off on your own, laze about, or join a group).
- (2) Having been incorporated in a group to stay with it. Leaders get discouraged when they turn to point out something of interest and find their group has dwindled to two. There will be plenty of time to wander about uninstructed during the day.

Before leaving it will be appreciated if any members who have kept a list of birds seen will contact the day's leader (not a group leader) so that a "Master List" may be compiled for the day. Such a list is not only of use to the SAOS but provides the editor of the NEWSLETTER with information with which to tantalize those who didn't come to the excursion.

STAN CLARKE
Organiser of Meetings

THE MARINA DA GAMA COUNT

The splendid total of 24 members turned up at the Visitor Centre at Marina Da Gama on Sunday December 8, for the first of a series of counts of the birds, with a view to ascertaining the effect of the development of Sand Vlei as a Marina, and the long-term results of their attempt to save part of the environment for the birds. In order to keep this NEWSLETTER of reasonable size, this account is brief; let it be said that the collective total was 1512 individual birds, of 62 species. Among the surprises were 4 Pied Kingfishers (394) and two Malachite Kingfishers (397). Several nests were found, including a pair of Crowned Plover (242) and Cape Dikkop (275). A fuller report will be included in a later NEWSLETTER.

MARINA DA GAMA: NEXT COUNT SUNDAY 9 AT 9 a.m.

P. T. O.

DETACH THIS PAGE AND KEEP IT. NO FURTHER NOTICE FOR
FEBRUARY/MARCH WILL BE CIRCULATED;

PROGRAMME FOR 1975.

At the time of sending this issue for roneoing, details of
excursions and meetings after April are not available.
They will be circulated in the NEXT NEWSLETTER. In the
meantime PUT THE FOLLOWING DATES in your diary.

EXCURSIONS: Feb. 23, March 22/23, April 27, May 25,
June 22, Aug 17, Aug. 30 to Sept. 1,
Oct. 5, Nov. 16,

EVENING MEETINGS: Feb. 14, Mar. 14, April 18, May 16,
June to be notified later, Annual General
Meeting. July 18, Aug. 22, Sept. 19
Oct. 17, Nov. 21.

- - - - -

And now for details of the first two field excursions

SUNDAY Feb 23. BOT RIVER LAGOON LEADER: Mr. Arthur Gregory.

Take the N2 over Sir Lowry's Pass and Houw Hoek
Pass and turn along the road to Hermanus. After
crossing the old iron bridge, go a further 5.6km
At a bend in the road, near a farm dam, look
out for the CBC notice board on the right hand
side. From here you will be directed along
a farm road to the lagoon; approx. 2km away.

For those who want it, there will be a walk of
about 5km along the water's edge.

about 2 hours travelling time by Sir Lowry's Pass
3 hours if you go via Betty's Bay.

STRICTLY NO FIRES... SMOKERS MUST PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
Meeting Time 10.15 a.m. 15 minutes grace to latecomers.

MARCH 22/23

Camping weekend at BOTTELARY. Leader Mr. Stan Clarke.

This is a camping weekend, though there is an hotel
at Langebaan village, not far away.

FIRES are only permitted at authorised places and all
refuse should be taken home. All drinking water
must be taken.

The farm is 45 km from Darling, along the new gravel
road to Langebaan, and 9km from that place. There
is a small name plate on the gate; we will fly the
CBC sign nearby.

- - - - -

EVENING MEETINGS

Feb. 14. THE GALAPAGOS Mr. T. Stafford Smith.

Last year Mr. Stafford Smith went on the Lindblad
Explorer to the Galapagos Islands. A professional
photographer with an unusually high standard of work,
he is so modest that when he claims, as he does this
time, to have taken some really good pictures, we
are sure there is something outstanding to be seen.

Mar. 14. A VOYAGE TO TRISTAN DA CUNHA & GOUGH ISLAND B. Rowlands

During 1973 we had an interesting account of his trip
to Mauritius and the Cargados Carajos Islands.
Mr. Rowlands is a young member of the CBC who has
and urge to visit remote areas. We admire the way
he gets around and are looking forward to hearing
an account of his latest trip.