

NEWSLETTER

NUUSBRIEF

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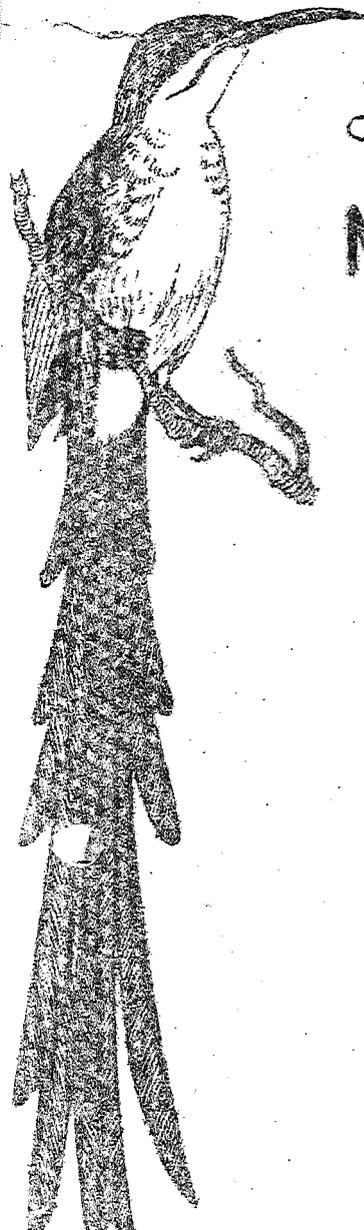
Over many years Professor Winterbottom has consistently asked members to submit more Field Cards as they are the basis for the Check List of our area (Blank cards may be obtained from the Percy FitzPatrick Institute). Our membership has increased, and many a new member who is keen to help with the ornithological exploration of the South-western Cape can make a valuable contribution to this scheme. A knowledge of only the most common birds is required for this, the following table shows that not even one bird (i.e. the Mossie, the Butcher Bird or the Wagtail) has been recorded every month in the Clanwilliam and van Rhynsdorp districts and only three species in Piquetberg and Tulbagh. So, dear member, here is your chance, plan your weekend trips according to the following suggestions made by Professor Winterbottom and don't forget to fill in a card!

BIRD SPECIES RECORDED IN S.W. CAPE DISTRICTS.

As is only to be expected, the various parts of our Club area have been unevenly worked; and this reflects, to a considerable extent, the distribution of our members. To give some idea of what is still required, I list here the numbers of Species recorded from each District and the numbers for which we have one or more records for every month of the year. I have omitted Ceres, because only a tiny fraction of that district comes within our limits.

<u>District</u>	<u>No. of Species</u>	<u>Recorded every month</u>
Bellville	167	17
Bredasdorp	248	67
Caledon	213	42
Clanwilliam	207	0
Hopefield	217	22
Hottentots Holland	247	82
Malmesbury	194	15
Paarl	160	10
Peninsula	258	109
Piquetberg	216	3
Robertson	168	6
Swellendam	179	26
Tulbagh	149	3
Van Rhynsdorp	142	0
Wellington	127	5
Worcester	156	7

This makes it clear, I think, that the Districts we need to concentrate on are Clanwilliam, Piquetberg, Tulbagh, Van Rhynsdorp and Wellington; which unfortunately include three of



those most distant of all from our main centres of membership. However, If you can't go to van Rhynsdorp, there is still plenty to be done in Bellville, which is within everybody's reach and includes, besides Malanshoogte, such spots as Melkbosch, Klipheuvcl, Philadelphia and the Tigerberg. Only 167 species and only 17 of them for every month, for an area on our doorstep is not good enough!

Then there is the ecological side. We have plus or minus 450 cards each for Macchia and Coastal Macchia; but only 130 for Coastal Renosterbosveld, the type of indigenous bush you get round Philadelphia, Mamre, Malmesbury and Moorreesburg and again, south of the National Road, from Caledon to Bredasdorp and Swellendam. Can't we have some cards for this?

Orchards - 11 cards only; surely we can do better there; and Sea Cliffs - 5 cards, what about them?

Some time ago I suggested some change and enlargement of our area (cf. Newsletter 77, April 1965) and the Committee thought we should wait until a new "Check List" was called for. Well and good; but let us cover our present area better in the meantime. That, in itself, will bring the need for a new "Check List" closer.

OCCURRENCE OF HARTLAUB'S GULLS

Mr. Siegfried writes: In response to an enquiry (Newsletter 63) about the distribution of Larus hartlaubi I can report that the incidence of this bird in the Stellenbosch district is on the increase. During the last ten years I first began to see singletons (always in the air) near Stellenbosch village about 7 years ago. These records were invariably made on dull, overcast or rainy days and, therefore, represent nothing really unusual. About five to four years ago the gull's frequency of occurrence and numbers would seem to have started increasing rapidly. Today the species regularly visits the local disposal works, garbage dumps, abattoir and even farm dams. The gulls have established themselves firmly in certain localities in the Kuilsriver area where they occur daily in fairly large numbers. One such place is the Spekenham Meat Factory whose roof is often studded with gulls. The many poultry farms in the area are visited by gulls which even enter the battery installations to scavenge food from the fowls. These gulls are suspect No. 1 as transmitters of the recent outbreak of Newcastle disease. Over the years I have had to travel, mostly by car, fairly regularly between Stellenbosch and Cape Town. I have kept records of the numbers of certain birds - including gulls - seen along the route together with notes about where they were seen and the weather. The spread of the new housing estates has been paralleled by a drop in the numbers and frequency of Black-shouldered Kites and an increase in Hartlaub's Gulls. I have also kept records of road-casualties and here too Gulls have figured more prominently of late. About seven years ago I noted gulls near the D.F. Malan Airport usually only on days of "bad" weather; today the birds are regularly common. The authorities should watch the situation carefully in view of the potential danger of these birds to aircraft; experiences in other parts of the world should be warning enough! The spread of gulls inland is mainly bound up with the availability of food. Development of the rural areas - more housing estates, factories etc. - results in the establishment of local authorities to service the expanding human population. In this way more locally concentrated disposal works for all sorts of waste products are created which serve as focal points for scavenging gulls. In addition, the City of Cape Town is itself obliged (with the present methods of waste disposal) to site its rubbish dumps farther afield.

INTERESTING RECORDS FROM STRANDFONTEIN SEWAGE FARM

Mr Ferguson and Mr. Pelteret as well as Miss Munro and Mr. and Mrs. Anderson made unusual observations at these vleis:

African Jacana: one seen on 25 July and two on 5 August

Black Stork: two on 17 July and one on 25 July

Lesser Flamingo: on 1 August, consorting with Greater Flamingo were 35 Lesser Flamingo including eleven very small, very grey youngsters; this surely implies recent nesting not so far away (Mr. Ferguson). Mrs. Anderson saw 12 juvenile (grey) Flamingoes and 200 adults there on 27 July.

Yellow Wagtail: one bright yellow bird with a grey head seen on 16 and 17 July by Miss Munro and Mrs. Anderson.

One Jacana was seen at Strandfontein by Master N. van Zyl and Mrs. Love on 13 June.

Groups of 4 and once 12 Spoonbills were seen at Black River, Mowbray, by Mr. Mackenzie on three consecutive days in early July. Mrs. Love and Mrs. van Zyl saw 23 Spoonbills there on 19/20 July. Mrs. N. Williams also saw 22 Spoonbills there on 20 July.

BIRDS OF THE INTERTIDAL ZONE

Mr. Tongue reports: As a small addition to D.M. Skead's account of Birds frequenting the intertidal zone of the Cape Peninsula (Ostrich March 1966), I saw a Cape Longclaw searching the shoreward limit of the sand at Olifants Bay on July 22, 1967. This is an additional habitat to the two mentioned in Mr. Skead's article, being (ii) Small sandy bays.

RINGING RECOVERY

On 24 May 1967 Mr. Newcombe of Buordene in Durban caught a Cattle Egret in the car grill and the bird died. It had been ringed as a nestling in the Rondevlei Heronry by Mr. E. Middlemiss on 12 November 1953 (ring A 2349).

KLAAS'S CUCKOO - WINTER RECORD

Mr. Peter Lor reports that he heard a "Meitjie" calling near Karindal on 12 July 1967. On the banks of the Eerste River he found first the male Klaas's Cuckoo and later the female. He watched both birds feeding on something they found on the lichen-covered bark of the oaks growing on the banks of the river.

Mrs. N. Williams heard and saw one at Pinelands on 20 July.

WHITE-WINGED SEEDEATER AT FRENCH HOEK PASS

On 24 September 1967 Misses Clark and Bayly identified a pair of White-winged Seedeaters at the long white bridge in the pass, about 10 miles from the town of Frach Hoek.

HOUSE SPARROWS IN THE PENINSULA

On 11 July Mr. Underhill saw a pair of House Sparrows on the Beach Road at Camps Bay opposite the Rotunda Hotel. The birds had a nest in a hole of a palm tree.

On 12 July he noticed several House Sparrows in the parking area on the seaward side of the new railway station in Cape Town. There too they had nests in palm trees, either in holes or on the stumps of sawn-off fronds.

He mentions that since the departure of the Misses Robinson we have had no news of the Chaffinch. He saw a male in a small garden in Walmer Estate, Woodstock, just below the Waal Drive on 7 July '67.

WINTERING EUROPEAN SWALLOWS

Mr. Peter Frost reports seeing two on 17 June and one on 24 June at Rondevlei. Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Pelteret saw one with long tail streamers at Tamatie Vlei on 25 July.

SANDPLOVER CHICK IN JUNE

Mr. Frost reports seeing a pair of Treble-banded Sandplover with a very young chick at Rondevlei on 25 June '67 which is a very early breeding record.

GREY-HEADED GULL AT PAARDE VLEI, SOMERSET WEST

Mr. Lockhart saw one flying around the vlei on 7 Sept.67.

FISH EAGLE ATTACKING EGYPTIAN GOOSE

Master Christopher Stuart, Plumstead, on 17 May at Strandfontein, saw a Fish Eagle pounce on an Egyptian Goose which was sitting in the grass and for some reason did not try to fly away at the eagle's approach. The eagle took off with the bird in its talons, but it struggled so much that the bird fell into a pool of water and the eagle flew to perch about 200 yds away. On investigation a large quantity of feathers was found, but the goose had gone.

This is a most extraordinary observation of a Junior member which was unfortunately not confirmed by another observer.

BREEDING COLONIES OF WATTLED STARLINGS

Miss D. Clarke recorded a breeding colony in a gum plantation where they have bred before, a few miles west of Darling at the end of September 1967;

another colony where hundreds of wattled starlings were attending to their nests, was found on the farm Groote Post also near Darling, on Sunday, 1st October '67, by the Broekhuysens, Miss M. Vane and Mr. K. Grabandt.

RINGING BY CAPE BIRD CLUB MEMBERS

During the period 1 July 1966 to 1 May 1967 a total of 3068 birds were ringed. 13 Members were responsible for these results and of these the following members ringed more than 20 birds:

J.R. MacLeod	1246
A. Brown	1068
N. Myburgh & J.R. MacLeod	354
N. Myburgh & J. Martin	139
R. Schmidt	116
D. Blaker	52

A total of 53 different species were ringed, but as during the previous year the main effort of ringing centred around the European Swallow. In comparison with the previous year more as twice as many Greater Striped Swallows were ringed this year. It is felt, however, that this relatively easy to catch African swallow should be ringed in hundreds.

Another highlight of this year's ringing are the 23 Steppe Buzzards ringed. These were all caught after January by using an originally American designed trap introduced by G.J. Broekhuysen when he came back from an overseas trip early December. It is planned to have an early start with this trap the coming season and there is a good chance that many more Steppe Buzzards will be caught and thus ringed.

Also worth special mention are the 7 Terek Sandpipers ringed by the Staff of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology with the cooperation of some Cape Bird Club members.
