

SIXTEENTH RINGING REPORT FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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SUMMARY

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A report of ringing activities in Southern Africa from 1 July 1970 to 30 June 1973 is presented. The newly founded South African National Unit for Bird-Ringing Administration now produces comprehensive computer print-outs of ringing and recovery information and as a result this published report is highly condensed. Details of the totals of palaeartic migrants ringed and recovered are given together with those from the major studies, past and present, on ethiopian species.

INTRODUCTION

This report covers the three ringing seasons from 1 July 1970 to 30 June 1973 and the ringing of 197 021 birds. During the period under review, the South African National Unit for Bird-Ringing Administration was established and a new policy on the production of published reports has been introduced. The Unit now produces a computer print-out report consisting of two sections. The Totals Section includes a breakdown of birds ringed with the Unit's rings, giving "previous totals", "total this season" and "grand total", separately for all birds ringed, recovered and retrapped. The Recovery Section consists of full details of all recoveries reported during the season including birds found dead by the public, by ringers or at ringing stations. This computerised report is circulated to all the provincial Nature Conservation Authorities and to Branch Ringing Organizers of the South African Ornithological Society. The Report is thus available to all ringers in the area. Photocopies of the complete report or of certain sections are available from the Unit at cost. It is also expected that all recoveries on the Unit's books will shortly be computerised. Details of all recoveries ever made of any species will then be available for research purposes, provided clearance for the use of the data has been obtained.

In addition to the above, the Unit produces a magazine "Safring News" three times a year in which ringing activities are described in detail. "Safring News" is circulated to all ringers in southern Africa, to ringing organisations abroad and to some *bona-fide* researchers.

In view of the availability of the above, it is intended only to publish the summary of ringing activities which follows, so that the major ringing efforts of ringers in southern Africa are known more widely.

PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the totals of 52 species of palaeartic migrants which were ringed during the period under review. Species previously ringed but which were not ringed during the three seasons have not been included. From the totals given, it can be seen that there has been a marked increase in the ringing of waders especially the Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Knot *C. canutus* and Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. Tern-ringing has greatly expanded as shown by the big total of Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*. Relatively large catches of Arctic Terns *S. macrura* and Whitewinged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucoptera* were made. The first ever Roseate Terns *S. dougallii* and Little Terns *S. albifrons* were ringed. Sylviid warbler ringing increased but less dramatically, with large numbers of Garden Warblers *Sylvia borin*, Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* and European Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* being recorded. The European Swallow *Hirundo rustica* remains the most frequently ringed palaeartic migrant in southern Africa.

Details of ten of the more spectacular recoveries of palaeartic migrants either from the movement or longevity point of view are given in Table 2. The data given follow that used in previous reports (Elliott & Jarvis 1973). Time elapsed is given to the nearest tenth of a month.

It is significant that two wader recoveries were made on the shores of the Caspian Sea. This tentatively suggests that the Caspian area may be an important stopping over place for migrants which have crossed the Arabian Desert from the African Rift Valley soda lakes.

TABLE 1

PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS RINGED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA DURING THE PERIOD 1 JULY 1970
TO 30 JUNE 1973

Species	Ringing Totals			Grand Total	Recoveries Grand Total
	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1948-73	1948-73
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2	0	14	29	3
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	0	0	16	39	1
Steppe Eagle <i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	1	0	0	1	0
Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i>	0	0	1	2	0
Steppe Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	4	11	23	410	22
Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>	1	0	0	7	0
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	6	16	13	47	0
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	19	8	7	248	4
Great Sandplover <i>Charadrius leschenaulti</i>	1	2	0	3	0
Caspian Plover <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	51	0	0	62	0
Grey Plover <i>Squatarola squatarola</i>	21	13	10	45	0
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1 309	2 047	2 832	8 377	52
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	1 048	408	1 656	10 112	35
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	20	192	312	525	0
Sanderling <i>Crocethia alba</i>	61	138	121	405	3
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	274	327	651	1 898	8
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	9	18	14	56	1
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	44	38	57	754	8
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	1	0	0	1	0
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	20	35	93	215	0
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	27	42	32	141	0
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	102	97	297	1 258	4
Bartailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	4	2	0	7	1
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	0	1	0	4	0
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	2	3	0	11	0
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	1	2 357	102	2 639	16
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	0	28	0	28	0
Arctic Tern <i>Sterna macrura</i>	0	38	0	45	2
Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	0	6	0	17	2
Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	7	2	0	9	0
Whitewinged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>	6	51	247	328	0
European Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	3	3	0	26	0
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	4	3	1	193	0
European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	5 993	8 609	5 329	130 076	617
House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	0	0	1	96	0
European Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	77	3	4	635	1
European Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	6	8	10	41	0
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	21	3	7	75	0
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	142	75	89	650	0
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	19	14	8	75	0
River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	5	0	2	7	0
Olivetree Warbler <i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	0	3	1	4	0
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	131	51	46	630	1
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	38	15	47	401	1
European Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	145	21	41	330	0
European Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	63	38	127	630	1
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	27	19	24	152	0
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	2	0	3	32	0
Redbacked Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	34	18	38	265	2
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i>	1	0	0	1	0
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias nigra</i>	0	2	2	5	0
European Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	3	1	0	8	0

TABLE 2
A SELECTION OF RECOVERIES OF PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS RINGED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Steppe Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>				
Darling, Cape 33.23 S 18.23 E				
657-03702 FG.	7.12.67	10.7.70	nr. Bol'Shaya, U.S.S.R. 56.54 N 93.06 E 12216 km NNE 31.1. No details	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>				
Paarden Eiland, Cape 33.55 S 18.28 E				
2-41939 FG.	27.12.70	6.6.72	nr. Kyusyur, Bulun Dist., U.S.S.R. 70.37 N 127.48 E 14241 km N 17.3 Shot	
Bottelary, Langebaan, Cape 33.08 S 18.07 E				
2-42447 FG.	10.4.71	22.9.71	Baia Farta, Angola 12.46 S, 13.11 E 2318 km NNW 5.4. Presumed Dead	
Longbeach, Kommetjie, Cape 34.09 S, 18.19 E				
2-49053 FG.	11.3.72	15.12.72	nr. Sari, Mazandaran, Iran 36.42 N 53.00 E 8654 km NNE 9.1. Caught in net and killed	
Langebaan, Cape. 33.05 S 18.02 E				
2-50364 FG.	13.2.72	00.5.72	Ilongo Koki, on Arwimi River, Zaire 1.46 N 23.05 E 3909 km N. 3. Killed	
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>				
Rondevlei, Retreat, Cape. 34.05 S 18.28 E				
A-86121 AD.	11.2.71	4.10.71	Durban, Natal 29.50 S 30.57 E 1264 km ENE 7.8. Found dead	
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>				
Langebaan, Cape 33.05 S 18.02 E				
2-46091 FG.	22.4.72	13.6.72	Dikson Island, U.S.S.R. 73.25 N 80.38 E 12714 km N 1.7. Shot	
Bartailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>				
Swartkops Estuary, Cape 33.52 S 25.36 E				
5-15058 1Y	23.3.71	28.11.72	Rudsar, Gilan, Iran 37.07 N 50.18 E 8293 km N 20.2 Shot	
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>				
Cape Recife, Cape 34.02 S 25.42 E				
2-55976 2Y	17.11.71	23.6.72	Hadsund, Jylland, Denmark 56.46 N 10.18 E 10195 km N 7.2. Found dead	
European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>				
Vriscgewaard, Pretoria, Transvaal 25.44 S 28.11 E				
662-18793 UN.	11.2.67	20.9.72	nr. Smolensk, U.S.S.R. 54.49 N 32.02 E 8960 km N 66.3. Found dead	

Apart from the European Swallow, not one palaeartic passerine was recovered other than locally during the three seasons despite a total of 1 427 having been ringed in this period. But this number of birds is still relatively small, if the recovery rates for migrant passerines ringed in Europe apply to Africa. These rates vary from 0.25% for the Willow Warbler to 0.7% for the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa Striata* for British birds at least (Spencer 1972). On the other hand, Rowan (1968) found that European Swallows ringed in South Africa had five times more chance of being recovered in Europe than their counterparts had in Africa. Although the sample size is small, this does not seem to apply to "other" passerines such as the above. It is suggested that the absence of recoveries is likely to be due to two factors. One is that the habitats in which these passerines live is largely not conducive to recoveries. The second is that the species are probably eastern European and Asiatic in origin. In these areas, very little ringing is carried out and there are few, if any, permanent ringing stations or bird observatories where retraps might be made. Almost all the other passerine recoveries of British birds have been made in West Africa. Only one, a Spotted Flycatcher, has ever been recovered south of the equator. The chances of recoveries are therefore even smaller than usual and are likely to remain so until ringers become more active in the Middle East and eastern Europe.

ETHIOPIAN SPECIES

Since the Unit came into operation, the emphasis has been strongly on the development of purposeful ringing. As a result a project system has been introduced and all new recruits are expected to be involved in a project study. About 90 projects have been registered and studies vary from single species investigations on "threatened" species in conservation terms such as Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* and Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*, to community studies on the avifauna of certain regions or habitat types. Table 3 gives a list of 29 resident or intra-African migrants for which either ringing grand totals exceed 5 000 or recoveries exceed 50 or both. The list covers all the major past or present ringing projects and therefore most of the important ringing studies which are or have been carried out in southern Africa. Some studies are not included in the list because they are comparatively new and numbers ringed have not yet reached these totals. For example interest in the birds of prey is on the increase as shown by the establishment of a Transvaal Raptor Group and a special study group on the Blackshouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*.

Details of eleven of the more interesting recoveries of Ethiopian species are given in Table 4.

TABLE 3

RINGING TOTALS FOR ETHIOPIAN SPECIES RINGED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WHERE OVER 5 000 BIRDS HAVE BEEN RINGED OR OVER 50 RECOVERED

Species	Grand Totals	
	Ringing	Recoveries
Jackass Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	7 853	100
Cape Gannet <i>Morus capensis</i>	22 052	276
Whitebreasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2 500	166
Cape Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	2 843	82
Blackheaded Heron <i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	2 066	55
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	43 311	364
Sacred ibis <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	12 643	188
Spurwing Goose <i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	2 189	139
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	5 585	327
South African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	7 903	280
Yellowbilled Duck <i>Anas undulata</i>	41 759	714
Redbilled Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	6 232	201
Cape Teal <i>Anas capensis</i>	1 948	182
Redeyed Pochard <i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	4 864	131
Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	2 699	83
Redknobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	20 766	469
Greyheaded Gull <i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	5 732	75
Hartlaub's Gull <i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	3 550	102
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	7 411	94
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	24 874	289
Cliff Swallow <i>Petrochelidon spilodera</i>	18 129	39
Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	5 839	21
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	7 386	67
Cape Sparrow <i>Passer melanurus</i>	23 323	114
Cape Weaver <i>Ploceus capensis</i>	7 067	100
Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	24 351	165
Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	73 470	171
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	18 275	66
Bronze Mannikin <i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	6 016	26

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The National Zoological Gardens, Pretoria, received and forwarded recovery reports to the Unit and are thanked for this vital service.

TABLE 4
A SELECTION OF RECOVERIES OF ETHIOPIAN SPECIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Jackass Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>			
Dassen Island, Cape. 33.26 S 18.05 E			
p-5485 Pul. 1.10.72	13.12.72	Swakopmund Beach, South West Africa 22.41. S 14.34 E	1243 km N 2.4 Died soon after being found
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>			
Barberspan Nature Reserve, W. Transvaal 26.33 S 25.36 E			
546-04920 UN. 0.6.60	0.7.71	Koffiefontein, Orange Free State 29.25 S 25.00 E	333 km SSW 133.5 Ring only found
Knobbilled Duck <i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>			
Mlezu School, Que Que, Rhod. 19.09 S 29.54 E			
657-00544 AD. ♂ 21.12.70	15.08.71	40 km N Fort-Lamy, Rep.du Tchad 12.32 N 15.03 E	3879 km N 7.8 Shot
Redbilled Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>			
Barberspan Nature Reserve, W. Tvl. 26.33 S 25.36 E			
6-10877 AD. ♂ 21.10.70	21.9.72	Mupa, Huila District, Angola 16.10 S 15.44 E	1539 km NE 23.0 Shot
Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i>			
Skeerpoort, Hartebeespoort Dam, Tvl. 25.45 S 27.45			
509-0041 Pul. 19.9.70	15.12.71	near Okahandja, South West Africa 21.38 S 16.34 E	1226 km WNW 14.9 Dead
Redknobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>			
Barberspan Nature Reserve, W. Tvl. 26.33 S 25.36 E			
BP-07198 AD. 19.9.69	5.12.70	Lake Chauli, Mocambique. 25.01 S 32.55 E	752 km ENE 17.8 Shot
Redeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>			
Windhoek, South West Africa 22.37 S 17.08 E			
2-38207 25.8.70	4.10.70	88.5 km W Windhoek, South West Africa 22.40 S 16.12E	96 km WSW 1.3 Died in captivity
Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>			
Parkview, Johannesburg, Tvl. 26.72 S 28.03 E			
601-50262 4.5.66	10.1.72	Parkview, Johannesburg, Tvl. 26.72 S 28.03 E	0 km 68.2 Dead
Cape Sparrow <i>Passer melanurus</i>			
Pinelands, Cape 33.56 S 18.30 E			
582-12762 13.9.64	16.10.72	Pinelands, Cape 33.56 S 18.30 E	0 km 97.1 No details
Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>			
Melrose Bird Sanctuary, Johannesburg, Tvl. 26.15 S 28.00 E			
622-08931 22.8.64	20.10.70	near Modderivier, Cape 29.02 S 24.38 E	467 km WSW 73.9 Killed
Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>			
Barberspan Nature Reserve, W. Tvl. 26.33 S 25.36 E			
A-89374 28.7.71	13.09.72	near Que Que, Rhodesia 18.54 S 29.56 E	959 km NNE 13.5 Shot

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ADDENDUM

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