

SOME LOCAL BIRD RINGING STATISTICS FOR 1979-1981

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Hitherto annual ringing statistics have been published in Ostrich in the form of a Ringing Report. Because of delays concomitant with data analysis and preparation of the report, together with the necessary waiting period for publication, an average lag of two years ensues between the end of the report period and the actual publication of the figures.

It is doubtful if this lag can be reduced to less than one year. However, certain figures which have, up until now, appeared in the Ringing Reports are really of interest only to South African ringers. As Ostrich is a journal of international circulation and repute, future Ringing Reports published therein will concentrate on data of general interest to researchers. Domestic details will be printed in SAFRING NEWS (without prejudice to the Ostrich article) and it will be possible to provide these sort of statistics within five months of the end of each ringing year. This means that ringers who want to see their annual efforts recorded in this way must ensure that their schedules are submitted promptly in July and August.

The present article will cover the two years from July 1979 to June 1981. This will bring us up-to-date and details for the current ringing year will appear in the next issue of SAFRING NEWS.

RINGING EFFORT

Totals of 21 917 and 20 457 birds were ringed in southern Africa in the 1979/80 and 1980/81 ringing years respectively. Over a quarter of each total was contributed by the Sea Fisheries Institute in a new project investigating the Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* and Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis* populations of the west coast. Put another way, this ringing programme boosted what would otherwise have been all-time lows in total birds ringed by 37 and 36 percent respectively.

Tables 1 & 2 give breakdowns of the totals by area and organization or group. Table 3 lists those ringers who banded over 100 individuals of one or more species. The only ringers to achieve four-figure totals of birds ringed in one or both years were Tony Tree of Zimbabwe (1 868 and 2 132) and Mrs. Dale

TABLE 1

RINGING TOTALS : JULY 1979 - JUNE 1980

ORGANIZATION/AREA	Number of Active Ringers	Number of Species Ringed	Number of Birds Ringed	% of Total Birds Ringed
CAPE PROVINCE				
Cape Bird Club	6	54	996	4,5
Eastern Cape	3	13	1 116	5,1
Percy FitzPatrick Inst.		10	84	0,4
Provincial Admin.		1	9	0,04
SANCCOB Foundation		3	432	2,0
S. A. Seabird Group		2	1 868	8,5
Sea Fisheries Inst.		2	5 954	27,2
NATAL				
Natal Bird Club	6	118	1 416	6,5
SOUTH WEST AFRICA/ NAMIBIA				
S.W.A. Administration		9	335	1,5
S.W.A. Scientific Soc.	2	21	67	0,3
TRANSVAAL				
N.Tvl. Ornitholog. Soc.	2	7	23	0,1
Provincial Admin.		8	950	4,3
Vulture Study Group *		2	368	1,7
Wits Bird Club	11	192	2 372	10,8
ZIMBABWE				
Ornithological Assoc. Of Zimbabwe	6	159	3 606	16,5
MALAWI				
S.A. Ornitholog. Soc.	1	104	1 537	7,0
SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS				
Percy FitzPatrick Inst.		13	784	3,6

* Includes birds ringed by Group in Zimbabwe,
Transvaal, Cape and Transkei

TABLE 2

RINGING TOTALS : JULY 1980- JUNE 1981

ORGANIZATION/AREA	Number of Active Ringers	Number of Species Ringed	Number of Birds Ringed	% of Total Birds Ringed
CAPE PROVINCE				
Cape Bird Club	9	74	1 957	9,6
Eastern Cape	4	24	729	3,6
Provincial Admin.		5	75	0,4
SANCCOB Foundation		2	109	0,5
African Seabird Group		3	839	4,1
Sea Fisheries Inst.		3	5 415	26,5
NATAL				
Natal Bird Club	8	86	911	4,5
SOUTH WEST AFRICA/ NAMIBIA				
S.W.A. Administration		2	52	0,3
S.W.A. Scientific Soc.	2	37	114	0,6
TRANSVAAL				
Department of Forestry		35	169	0,8
N.Tvl. Ornitholog. Soc.	2	3	45	0,2
Provincial Admin.		6	869	4,2
Vulture Study Group *		2	263	1,3
Wits Bird Club	11	156	2 497	12,2
ZIMBABWE				
Ornithological Assoc. Of Zimbabwe	7	168	3 331	16,3
MALAWI				
S.A. Ornitholog. Soc.	1	118	2 351	11,5
SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS				
Percy FitzPatrick Inst.		17	731	3,6

* Includes birds ringed by Group in Zimbabwe,
Transvaal, Cape and Transkei

TABLE 3

RINGER	REGION	SPECIES
Batchelor, A.	East. Cape	Cape Gannet
Bunning, L. J.	Transvaal	Cape White-eye Masked Weaver
Clinning, C.	S.W.A.	Swift Tern
Hanmer, D.	Malaŵi	Brownthroated Weaver Red Bishop Common Waxbill
Hewitt, A.	Transvaal	European Swallow Masked Weaver
Hockey, P.	West. Cape	Black Oystercatcher
Johnson, D.	Transvaal	Little Swift
Laycock, H.	Natal	Thickbilled Weaver
Manson, A. J.	Zimbabwe	Sand Martin Sedge Warbler
Milton, I. V.	Zimbabwe	European Swallow
Randall, R.	East. Cape	Jackass Penguin
Schultz, D.	Natal	Bronze Mannikin Redbacked Mannikin
Tree, A. J.	Zimbabwe	Kittlitz's Sandplover Threebanded Sandplover Little Stint Wood Sandpiper European Swallow Brownthroated Sand Martin Yellow Wagtail
Underhill, G.	West. Cape	Hartlaub's Gull
Waltner, M.	West. Cape	Curlew Sandpiper
Winterbottom, J.	Cape	Cape Weaver Masked Weaver

TABLE 3

SPECIES	NUMBER RINGED	
	1979/80	1980/81
<i>Morus capensis</i>	549	451
<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>		183
<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	148	
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	158	
<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	126	267
<i>Euplectes orix</i>		109
<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	102	167
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		241
<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>		450
<i>Haematopus moquini</i>	144	
<i>Apus affinis</i>		171
<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>	124	130
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	209	
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	166	
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	362	
<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	511	110
<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>	577	262
<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>	103	
<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	112	158
<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	235	190
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	203	191
<i>Tringa glareola</i>		106
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	434	659
<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	277	116
<i>Motacilla flava</i>		141
<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	147	656
<i>Calidris canutus</i>		141
<i>Ploceus capensis</i>		101
<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	125	244

Hanmer of Malaŵi (1 537 and 2 351). The most notable group-ringing effort was by John Cooper and the African Seabird Group who banded 1 696 Swift Terns *Sterna bergii*, each with a metal and colour ring, in one day.

NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF RECOVERY REPORTS

The number of recoveries (ringed birds found dead) reported and processed during 1979/80 and 1980/81 was 316 and 444. 43,4 % and 29,5 % of these totals were reported to the Zoo, Pretoria (the ringing address); 41,8 % and 61,9 % went direct to the Bird Ringing Unit in Cape Town. The remainder, not covered by the above percentages, were indirectly routed to Safring.

Recoveries from outside of southern Africa (foreign recoveries and birds recovered at sea) comprise approximately 10 % of each total, leaving 282 and 400 birds recovered in the Republic, South West Africa, Zimbabwe and neighbouring states in the two ringing years. Of the two reporting languages used in these local recoveries, Afrikaans reports accounted for 16,3 % and 14,8 % respectively. Reports received by telephone in English and Afrikaans made up 15,2 % and 12,8 % of the totals. Finders of ringed birds sometimes believed the ring number to be the Zoo telephone number and tried unsuccessfully to dial it. This was learned from several letters which would-be callers wrote after failing to make contact with the Zoo telephonically. The percentage of finders who do not report rings after unsuccessful telephonic attempts is, of course, not known.

The regional distribution of southern African recoveries for the two years is given in Table 4. Note that the figures refer to where the birds were found, not to the domicile of the finder. Regions with coastlines are subdivided into coastal and inland divisions to permit more reasonable comparison between non-coastal areas. The offshore islands of the Cape and South West Africa/Namibia are treated as a separate category since they are inaccessible to the general public but enjoy a high level of reporting due to the activities of professional research workers. In fact, the figures for 1980/1981 are generally lower than 1979/80 because almost 41 % of all recoveries were recorded on the offshore islands.

The figures in Table 4 reflect what one might expect in terms of both regional human population levels and the ringing effort devoted to marine birds both here and, in respect of terns, in Europe. Any inshore or pelagic seabird which dies close to a coastline is apt to get washed up on a beach, and beaches are popular recreational areas both for holidaymakers and local residents. Thus although only one sixth of the species ringed

are seabirds, they account for approximately half of the recoveries recorded. By contrast, passerines make up 10 per cent or less of the recoveries. As indications of current trends, these figures are food for thought. The 1981/82 recoveries are following a similar pattern which will be good news for marine bird researchers. Ringers studying passerine species will have to rely largely on retrap data and sightings of colour-ringed birds for worthwhile returns.

TABLE 4

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN RECOVERIES

REGION	PERCENTAGE RECOVERED	
	1979/80	1980/81
Cape coast (including Transkei coast)	28,0	25,25
Transvaal	14,9	9,5
Offshore Islands (Cape and S.W.A.)	13,5	40,75
Cape inland	8,2	5,75
Zimbabwe	8,2	4,5
South West Africa coastline	6,7	1,75
Natal coast	6,0	5,5
Natal inland	5,3	3,75
Orange Free State	4,6	1,5
Botswana, Lesotho, Malaŵi, Mocambique	2,5	1,5
South West Africa inland	2,1	0,25