

LOCAL BIRD RINGING STATISTICS FOR THE 1982/1983 RINGING YEAR

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Once again this report is appearing 12 months after the end of the ringing year instead of only six months. This is because of late receipts of schedules. In fact, some ringers still have not submitted their 1982/1983 returns at the time of compilation of this report (May 1984) and hence some of the ringing totals are incomplete. Both the Natal and South West African ringing totals are affected in this way. Fortunately most registered ringers submitted their data promptly and many that were not active in 1982/1983 wrote and advised that they had no schedules to submit. Overall then, this report is reasonably comprehensive.

RINGING EFFORT

The provisional total of 27 382 birds ringed with SAFRING bands is 18,7% up on the total for the previous ringing year (Safring News 12: 27-32). The nearly 1 200 South African rings used by the British Denstone Expedition to Inaccessible Island in the Tristan da Cunha group contributed 5,1% of this increase. If this one-off usage is subtracted, then we have recorded a 13,6% increase in ringing tempo which maintains and slightly better the momentum shown in the previous year's ringing effort.

Table 1 (pp 19-20) gives a breakdown of ringing effort in descending order of total numbers ringed by region and by different organisations or clubs within regions, where applicable.

The 'Eastern Cape' (a regional conglomerate of amateur and professional ringers) heads the log this year due to a sterling effort by John Colclough and Dr. Graham Ross of the Port Elizabeth Museum who, along with other helpers, ringed 4 632 Cape Gannets *Morus capensis* on Bird Island in Algoa Bay. With the Sea Fisheries Research Institute also concentrating on gannets, this species made up 29,5% of all birds ringed. The next highest single species effort was directed at Swift Terns *Sterna bergii* by John Cooper and his African Seabird Group.

Traditionally there have been four main regional centres of amateur ringing effort. Of these the Ornithological Association of Zimbabwe currently has poll position, followed by the Natal Bird Club and the Cape Bird Club with the Witwatersrand Bird Club fourth despite a 55% increase over its previous year's total. The number of active ringers listed in

TABLE 1

RINGING EFFORT IN THE 1982/1983 RINGING YEAR

AREA ORGANISATION	No. of active ringers	No. of species ringed	No. of birds ringed	% of total birds ringed
<u>CAPE PROVINCE</u>				
Eastern Cape	6	30	5 043	18,4
Sea Fisheries Research Inst.		1	3 450	12,6
African Seabird Group		1	2 221	8,1
Cape Bird Club	8	81	1 846	6,7
Percy FitzPatrick Institute		16	572	2,1
SANCCOB Foundation		1	292	1,1
Provincial Administration		4	126	0,5
Department of Forestry		15	91	0,3
Regional subtotal			13 641	49,8
<u>TRANSVAAL</u>				
Witwatersrand Bird Club	12	129	1 599	5,8
Provincial Administration		8	1 352	4,9
Vulture Study Group		2	367	1,3
N. Tvl. Ornithol. Society	4	41	226	0,8
Postgraduates		2	15	<0,1
Regional Subtotal			3 559	13,0

(contd.)

TABLE 1 (CONTD.)

RINGING EFFORT IN THE 1982/1983 RINGING YEAR

AREA ORGANISATION	No. of active ringers	No. of species ringed	No. of birds ringed	% of total birds ringed
<u>ZIMBAWE:</u> O.A.Z.	11	165	2 155	7,9
<u>OCEANIC ISLANDS</u>				
Denstone Expedition		11	1 176	4,3
SASCAR		6	859	3,1
Regional Subtotal			2 035	7,4
<u>NATAL</u>				
Natal Bird Club	10	115	1 867	6,8
African Wildlife Society	1	35	153	0,6
Regional Subtotal			2 020	7,4
<u>ORANGE FREE STATE</u>				
S.A. Ornithological Society	1	71	1 639	6,0
Provincial Administration		3	265	1,0
Regional Subtotal			1 904	7,0
<u>MALAWI</u>				
	3	141	1 706	6,2
<u>S.W.A./NAMIBIA</u>				
	2	33	362	1,3

Table 1 for each club or society is based on the number of registered ringers who have submitted schedules. At the individual level two ringers achieved four-figure annual totals - Roy Earlé with 1 639 and Mrs. Dale Hanmer with 1 523 birds ringed. 6,0% and 5,6% respectively of the annual total.

Table 2 (overleaf) lists amateur ringers (those for whom bird ringing activities do not form part of their paid work) who have banded over 100 individuals of one or more species. Amateurs were collectively responsible for ringing 38,2% of this year's total and Conservation Department sponsors 6,4%.

NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF RECOVERY AND RECAPTURE REPORTS

During the 1982/1983 ringing year, 563 birds of 84 species were recovered dead or dying. This represents an increase of 45% over the total of 388 recoveries for the previous ringing year. The upswing in recoveries is attributable to a ten-fold increase in recoveries of Cape Gannets from 20 in 1982 to 198 in 1983, most of these between March and June along the coast from the Cape Peninsula in the west to Maputo in Mozambique. This apparently exceptional mortality of young gannets was probably related to what has been termed the Benguela 'warm event' and it was perhaps fortunate that it coincided with the use on gannets for the first time of rings bearing the new address 'Inform Safring University Cape Town'. The Bird Ringing Unit received reports at a mean rate in excess of three per day nonstop from mid-April to the end of May and it is perhaps as well that the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria did not have to cope with this spate of letters and telephone reports from finders of rings. In all, 414 (73%) of the total of 563 recoveries in 1982/1983 were reported direct to SAFRING.

Eight birds were reported from north of our area; five birds ringed in earlier years on Marion Island were recovered there and five birds were recovered on ships at sea in the South Atlantic. Of the remaining 545 reported from southern Africa, 61 reports (11,2%) were in Afrikaans and the balance in English. Telephonic reports totalled 107 (19,6%).

Ten ringers and four research teams supplied recapture data on Schedule 2 forms, whilst 26 reports were received from members of the general public of birds alive and well. Many of these involved young gannets which must have been in weak condition to allow handling and reading of ring numbers; nevertheless, they were not subsequently reported as dead. Two waders bearing South African rings were caught and released ('controlled') abroad, one by a Wader Study Group in West Germany and the other on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. The regional distribution of recoveries and recaptures in southern Africa and Malaŵi is given in descending order of totals per regional division in Table 3 on page 23.

TABLE 2

AMATEURS WHO HAVE RINGED 100 OR MORE BIRDS OF A SINGLE SPECIES
IN THE 1982/1983 RINGING YEAR

RINGER	REGION	SPECIES	NUMBER
L.J. Bunning	Witwatersrand	Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	207
		Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	205
C. Crawford	Zimbabwe	Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	326
T. Robertson	S.W.Cape	Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	206
P. Scogings	Natal	Bronze Mannikin <i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>	141
		Redbacked Mannikin <i>Spermestes bicolor</i>	112
A.J. Tree	Zimbabwe	Threebanded Sandplover <i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	139
		Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	118
M. Waltner	S.W.Cape	Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	149
D. Whitelaw	S.W.Cape	Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	129
J.M. Winterbottom	Karoo	Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	114

TABLE 3

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN RECOVERIES
AND RECAPTURES IN 1982/1983

REGION	RECOVERIES REPORTED BY		RECAPTURES REPORTED BY		TOTAL
	PUBLIC	RINGERS	PUBLIC	RINGERS	
Offshore Islands (Cape and S.W.A)	-	84	-	653	737
Malaŵi	4	12	-	269	285
Cape and Transkei coast	147	10	6	3	166
Transvaal - rural	19	80	-	3	102
Zimbabwe	25	2	-	56	83
Cape inland	25	10	5	28	68
Natal coast	57	-	8	-	65
Natal inland	18	-	4	33	55
Transvaal - Pretoria & Witwatersrand complex	19	3	3	5	30
Orange Free State	14	1	-	-	15
S.W.A. coastline	7	-	-	-	7
S.W.A. inland	4	-	-	2	6
Botswana & Mozambique	2	-	-	-	2
TOTALS	341	202	26	1 052	1 621

For this report I have subdivided the Transvaal into two subregions: urban - the PWV complex, and rural - effectively the rest of the Province. In view of the numbers of birds banded by ringers in Pretoria and on the Witwatersrand and the fact that this is the most densely peopled part of southern Africa, it is remarkable that only 22 ringed birds were found by the public in this area, or only 6% of all birds reported by the public in the 1982/1983 ringing year.

With the exception of the offshore islands and Malaŵi, the recapture figures are not a true reflection of the level of ringing activity in the various regions. The next report may present a very different picture if more ringers take the trouble to submit details of their reportable retraps.

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