transcends other considerations. Use of nestboxes facilitates the trapping of birds on their nests, but the technique is rarely used in southern Africa. Nevertheless, the risk of desertions following capture potentially applies to all hole nesters as well as to species building enclosed nests, such as, for example, the stripe-breasted swallows.

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BENNETT, G.F., EARLÉ, R.A., DU TOIT, H. & HUCHZERMEYER, F.W. 1992. A Host-parasite catalogue of the haematozoa of the sub-Saharan birds. *Onderstepoort J. Vet. Res.* 59: 1-73.

Beauty, it is said, is in the eye of the beholder. Anyone who has more than a nodding acquaintance with a parasitologist will know the truth of these words and perhaps only those who study blood parasites can become truly enthusiastic about them. This catalogue represents a monumental amount of labour. It is designed, in the authors' own words, "primarily for the parasitologist and non-ornithologist".

Bird hosts are arranged in alphabetic order of family, genus and finally species; 826 species of 73 families (including palearctic migrants to the Afrotropical zone) have been examined. Ornithologists will find some of the avian nomenclature rather quaint, but this does not detract from the value of the catalogue, which pulls together into one publication the disparate records of examinations of nearly 17 000 birds from throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The catalogue provides an informative and readable introduction, 2 pages of colour plates and 1½ pages of B & W plates and diagrams of blood parasites, a 5½ page reference section and an index to families and genera of avian hosts. The main body of the text provides lists, annotated lists and comprehensive tables that enable one to determine very quickly what birds are known to host any particular blood parasite or which blood parasites have been found in any particular species of bird of those so far examined.

There are some intriguing questions posed by the lists. Why, for example, should white-eyes (328 of 540 samples positive = 60%) show a higher prevalence of blood parasites than, say, sunbirds (187/477 = 39%) or bulbuls (276/1131 = 24%)? Perhaps these figures are artifacts of small samples; 17 000 birds examined might seem a large number but it is vanishingly small when measured against the unknowably vast number of potential host individuals alive in sub-Saharan Africa. In *Safring News* 20 the senior authors made a request for ringers to collect more African material. Dr Roy Earlé is himself a ringer of course, and it is good to read that at least three other ringers, Dawie de Swardt, Kotie Herholdt and Walter Neser have been collecting blood smears from birds and have their efforts duly acknowledged in this catalogue.

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