

subflavus (50), Tawnyflanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* and Fantailed Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* and of course, large numbers of Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*, Whitewinged Widow *E. albonotatus* and Redbilled Quelea *Quelea quelea* coming to roost at dusk. More welcome than these have been the roosting European Swallows *Hirundo rustica*. Variety is provided by the odd Burchell's Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*, Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostris* or Bluecheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* and by 'bush' birds moving out into the reedmace and other vegetation in the flooded area. There is always plenty to see between net rounds – flamingoes to fish eagles, and coots and crakes as well as a large roost of Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*, Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* and Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*. Ringing in the winter months is relatively quiet without the Palearctic 'Acros' but to make up for their loss are the winter visitors such as Stonechats *Saxicola torquata* and Fiscal Flycatchers *Sigelus silens*. Other insect-eaters, Marico Flycatchers *Melaenornis mariquensis* and Drongos *Dicrurus adsimilis*, also seem to

make more use of the swamp area in the winter than in the summer.

We are gathering data on moult, biometrics and location of the net and position in the net where each bird is caught, to try to show differences in foraging niches between species. We intend to work the three sites systematically over the coming year but also to look at the birds in the fringes of vegetation at nearby Bokaa and Gaborone Dams to see if there is any interchange between these locations. We made two brief visits to Shashe Dam near Francistown, some 450 km north of Gaborone, in February and March 1997 and the first two birds we caught, an African Reed and a European Reed Warbler, were already ringed! These turned out to have been ringed the previous year at Shashe by Bennie van den Brink of the Dutch/Botswana Swallow Project. It would be excellent if other ringers at wetland sites were to generate some controls of our Phakalane summering African Reed Warblers at their wintering quarters, possibly in Namibia or even Malawi, or of our wintering birds, possibly in South Africa? We will try to control our birds too.

ANNOUNCEMENT

COMPUTERISED SCHEDULES

Dieter Oschadleus

I am busy setting up a database to capture all ringing data in electronic form. If ringers are putting their ringing data onto computer, please keep on doing so. Ringers should contact me, however, to discuss the exporting of the data into a SAFRING format.

Initially, the data required would be very similar to the Schedule I forms. Retraps and recoveries should be entered in the same database in the same format. Eventually ringers will be able to e-mail schedules or send them on stiffies. For the time being, however, schedules must be filled

out manually or printed out. Printout schedules from your computer should resemble Schedule I forms.

Those ringers who have computers but are waiting for a users' program, could enter their ringing data into a simple spreadsheet. Spreadsheets are universally available, and easy to use. The data can be entered in a Schedule I format and then printed out to send to SAFRING. Simply leave enough space to write in the schedule summary (very important) if you can't get the computer to do it.

Ringers who have not yet joined the computer age need not worry. SAFRING will always be happy to accept the usual handwritten schedules.