

## LOCAL NEWS

### IN MEMORIAM

It is with regret that the death of Archie Brown is recorded. He was one of the old guard of Cape ringers and one of the pioneers of European Swallow ringing. He developed a method of flip-netting the swallows, by which he caught many hundreds of birds and made a significant contribution to this study. He had only recently been forced by ill-health to give up ringing.

### PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

Having published a list of amateur projects (Safring 1(1):12-17) it seemed of interest to print one of all professional ringing projects. These are given below for each organisation.

#### Cape Provincial Administration

##### Species

##### Project

Various, mainly waterfowl To determine the movements, migration and requirements of waterfowl. Data collection on life span, age structure, mortality, weights and measurements, moult, parasites and diseases.

Anas capensis (R.98), A.undulata (R96) and A.smithii (R.94) Beweeging en mortaliteit van kunsmatig geteelde watervoëls by Rocherpan, W.Kaap.

Streptopelia capicola (R.316) and S.geneqalensis (R.317) Bevolkingsstudie van die tortelduif en die lag-duif in die Jonkershoek gebied.

Gyps coprotheres (R.106) The ecology of the Cape Vulture, ringing to provide data on dispersion, age and mortality.

#### Orange Free State Administration

Ibises, Threskiornithidae The distribution of ibises in the O.F.S. with special reference to the status of the Bald Ibis.

Iadorna cana (R.90) Die ekologie verspreiding en benuttings moontlikhede van I.cana in die O.V.S.

Waterfowl The status of waterfowl on dams in the O.F.S.

#### National Unit for Bird-Ringing Administration

Spheniscus demersus (R.2) A study of the success of attempted rehabilitation of oiled Jackass Penguins.

Columba guinea (R.311) Movement, mortality and recruitment in Rock Pigeon populations on campus roofs.

Calidris ferruginea (R.251) The migration system of the Curlew Sandpiper and its conservation at Langebaan Lagoon.

Passerines                      A study of longevity in S.A. passerines, compared to that of passerines in the northern hemisphere.

South West African Administration

Phalacrocorax capensis (R.48)              The physiological ecology of the Cape Cormorant, ringing to show mortality and dispersal.

Transvaal Provincial Administration

Yellow-billed Duck (R.96)              The ecology of the species; population structure, movements, longevity, mortality (both natural and hunting).

Southern Pochard (R.102)              As for R.96.

Red-billed Teal (R.97)                As for R.96.

Waterfowl                              A study of highveld waterfowl using data from 1955 to 1971/72.

Bald Ibis (R.82),  
Fish Eagle (R.149) &  
Black Sparrowhawk  
(R.150).                              Monitoring of important species by population studies and analysis of pesticidal residues.

Helmeted Guineafowl (R.192).              Populations studies in specific localities.

Swainson's Francolin (R.185)              As for R.192

ZAMBIAN NEWSLETTER

No.3, June 1974, gives further details of the success of duck-ringing at the Lochinvar National Park including, as presented, the following recoveries.

Red-billed Teal IG 0614 - 31.5.73 ; 20.4.74 Makarikani Pan, Botswana

Red-billed Teal IG 0810 - 14.6.73 ; 27.10.73 Essexvale, Rhodesia

Red-billed Teal IH 0359 - 20.7.73 ; 03.12.73 Otshiteyi, Namibia.

Hottentot Teal IG 0059 - 12.10.73 ; 16.1.74 Lake Ngami, Botswana

BLACK KITE MIGRATION

A useful background paper including moult details from museum specimens.

(Ref. Brooke, R.K. - Durban Mus. Novit 10(4):53-66)

COLOUR-RINGED WADERS

Two ringers are colour-ringing waders in Zambia. The rings are fitted above the tarso-metatarsal joint. Any sightings should record the colour, left/right leg, date, locality and species and be sent to J.Tucker, P.O.Box 8096, Lusaka.

(Ref. Z.O.S. Newsletter 4(1):2)

## RINGING ASIDES

Tony Tree claims a record for the largest bird caught by the hand-net and torch method, - a Saddlebill Stork.

Peter Mundy claims to have the most hazardous ringing project. Recently while returning from cannon-netting vultures on his motor-bike, he was chased by several lions. He escaped but, to quote, "I literally ruined myself". Donations for a new pair of trousers would be gratefully received.

## WITWATERSRAND ACTIVITIES

On 22 June 1974 a highly successful meeting of the W.B.C. amateur ringers was held in Johannesburg. The Ringing Officer, Dr. Elliott, attended the proceedings, and as was the case in 1973 (report in Safring News 2(2):2) the meeting took the form of progress reports by individual ringers on their activities over the season. Having to speak in public on ringing work really helps to establish exactly what one is trying to achieve, and the value of these meetings is so great that it is intended that similar occasions will be regular annual events in Johannesburg. In a report on the season's progress, the success of the fund-raising campaign was stressed. As a result of this, the W.B.C. has replenished its stocks of equipment used for club projects (like European Swallow and wader ringing), obtained a complete cannon-netting outfit and last but not least, has acquired four walkie-talkie radios to control vulture-ringing operations and wader-ringing at night.

The W.B.C. Ringing Award was passed on by the 73/74 holder, Des Hewitt, to Royce Reed. In making his presentation, Des mentioned among other things that Royce was one of the pioneers of bird-ringing in southern Africa, having started off in 1949. Since then many thousands of birds have passed through his able hands, and the meticulous records Royce has kept, including what must be the most comprehensive set of recapture data collected by anybody in Africa, are an inspiration to all amateur ringers. Royce also has an impressive list of recoveries to his credit, and these regularly keep rolling in, many years after the original ringing, like the oldest Sacred Ibis on record, ringed by Royce and John Hosken in 1953 and recovered 21 years and 1 month later (see Safring News 3(1):8). Royce Reed is still an active ringer after a quarter of a century at the game, and he has seen ringing in South Africa grow from hesitant beginnings to the vibrant and demanding undertaking of 1974. Des closed by wishing Royce many more years of ringing - we endorse that motion, and salute the pioneer bird-ringer of South Africa.

Report from: J.Ledger,  
Branch Ringing Organiser,  
Witwatersrand Bird Club.

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Ostrich 1948: p 178, "The cost of rings will be 7/6d. per 100. If any bird-ringer rings more than 100 birds per year, additional rings will be supplied free of charge".

It is worth noting in the same article that bird-ringing got off the ground, financially, through a donation of £250 from John Voelcker Bird Book Fund.

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF ZOO LETTERS

Here follow some snippets taken from letters reporting the recovery of ringed birds;-

.....I found the bird dead under a tree. There being no visible signs of injury I can only presume that it fell from a branch while sleeping ..... The bird could not walk, it is lame. I already tried massaging its legs with vinegar but all in vain. Please write and let me know what to do with the animal as it cannot fly as well ..... its eyes did not have that normal droopy, dying look ..... Here is a ring taken from a bird which died of lead poisoning after being hit by a pellet fired from a gun ..... regret to inform you that goose number 583-10454 was shot down while flying in active service. It was eaten with full migratory honours, may its soul rest in peaceful digestion ..... What are you ringing birds for hey?

## PULLUS AND FULL-GROWN TOTALS

A number of ringers have asked if it is really necessary to maintain separate totals for numbers of pulli and of full-grown ringed birds. Mr. Steven Piper has kindly commented as follows:-

In the analysis of recovery data, the following methods utilise a pullus total.

The techniques of Seber (1970b), Boyd (1956) require the total number of pulli ringed in a given year. (They estimate the time-specific survival rate and reporting rate.)

To estimate the age-specific survival rate the number of pulli ringed is also required. See Bellrose and Chase (1950), Paludan (1951) and Hickey (1952) and Imber and Williams (1968) also Westenskow (1963).

The numbers required are (i) the number of pulli ringed each 'calendar year' and (ii) the number of birds recovered each 'calendar year' that were initially ringed as pulli.

Boyd, H. J. Animal Ecol. 25 257-273 1956 (Pinkfooted Goose)

Bellrose, F.C. & Chase, E.B. Illinois Nat. Hist. Surver Biol. Notes, 22 1-27 (1950) Mallard, Black Duck and Blue-winged Teal.

Hickey, J.J. U.S. Fish & Wildl. Serv. Spec. Sci. Rept. Wildl. 15 1-177 (1952).

Imber, M.J. & Williams, G.R. J. Wildl. Manag. 32 256-267 (1968) Canada Goose.

Seber, G.A.F. (1973) 'The estimation of animal abundance and related parameters' Publ. Griffin, London

Westenskow J. Wildl. Manag. 27 239-245 (1963) Pheasants.

## VULTURE STUDY GROUP

All persons doing research on vultures in southern Africa are in contact through the medium of a Study Group they formed to co-ordinate their activities. A wide coverage has been achieved, and although each member of the study group is interested in a particular aspect of vulture biology, all are colour-ringing the birds they handle according to an overall scheme that gives every bird an individual colour combination, as well as an area code-colour to show where it comes from. The Vulture Study Group at present comprises Dr. V. de Vos (Kruger National Park), Dr. Mike Jarvis (Cape Provincial Administration), Dr. Rolf Jensen (Department of Nature

Conservation & Tourism, S.W.A.), Martin Johannsmeier (N.T.O.S.), John Ledger & Manfred Schmitt (W.B.C.) Peter Mundy (University of Rhodesia) and Heinz Stöck (S.W.A. Scientific Society). The first sighting of a colour-ringed vulture in South Africa (Peter Mundy has a number of sightings for Rhodesia) was recently reported. A Whitebacked Vulture Gyps africanus captured by De Vos, Ledger & Mundy near Skukuza, Kruger National Park on 6 March 1974 was sighted in the Umfolozi Game Reserve by Mr. Gordon Bailey, Senior Game Ranger on 19 May 1974. All readers of Safring News are requested to be on the lookout for colour-ringed vultures, and also to spread the word far and wide that vultures are being colour-ringed and the need to report sightings. Anyone contemplating any ringing of vultures is asked to contact the convener of the study group beforehand, so that colour-ringing can be arranged to fit in with the overall subcontinental scheme, and anybody who knows of a Cape Vulture colony and who would be in a position to report on its status is likewise asked to get in touch. The convener of the Vulture Study Group is John Ledger, P.O.Box 1038, Johannesburg 2000.

### AMATEUR ANALYSIS

The Eastern Bird-Banding Association has produced a special supplement to EBBA News - Supp.74, Vol.37 'An amateur attempts data analysis' by Hannah B. Suthers. In these days when amateurs are expected increasingly to handle their own data analysis, it seems that this booklet will be a great asset. It is written in simple language and from a point of view which is understandable to amateur ringers. The booklet covers the analysis of repeat and return data from the simplest level upwards. NUBRA intends obtaining a number of copies of the supplement. Interested ringers should book their copy now.

### RECENT RECOVERIES

The following recoveries are listed for ringers' interest. The listing does not constitute full publication and the data may not be used by anyone but the original ringer, without permission.

R.002 Jackass Penguin Spheniscus demersus P-3748 (Dr.C.Elliott)  
 Oiled: & 26.09.72 Robben Island, W.Cape 33.48 S; 18.23 E  
 released  
 Adult (3,5kg) 24.05.74 St.Croix Island, Algoa Bay, P.E. 33.48 S; 25.46 E

Remarks: Bird was caught and released.

R.047 White-breasted Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo 9-13551 (T.P.A.)  
 Pullus 18.07.73 Barberspan, W.Transvaal. 26.33 S; 25.36 E  
 30.12.73 Dwarskersbos, W.Cape coast 32.42 S; 18.15 E

Remarks: This is thought to be the first record of the species moving from fresh-water to marine environments.

R.049 Bank Cormorant Phalacrocorax neglectus SF-8662 (Sea Fish.)  
 Adult 06.12.56 Malagas Island, W.Cape. 33.02 S; 17.50 E  
 12.05.74 " " " " " "

Remarks: Bird controlled standing next to mate on the nest. 17 years and 5 months old.

- R.061 Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis 553-3890 (E.Middlemiss)  
 Pull. 11.11.57 Rondevlei, Cape. 33.04 S;18.30 E  
 22.01.74 Bizweni, Somerset West, Cape. 34.05 S;18.50 E  
 Remarks: Found dying from gunshot wound. 16years and 2 months old.
- R.061 Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis 6-29379 (Dr.Malherbe)  
 Pull. 16.12.71 Essenbosch, Vredefort, O.F.S. 27.08 S;27.25 E  
 end .72 Malinta Village, 9miles NE Magoye, Zambia 15.55 S;24.41 E
- R.083 Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus 7-10061 (H.C.Hunter)  
 Pull. 21.11.70 Westdene, Benoni, Tvl. 26.11 S;28.18 E  
 ca 00.08.73 Liliachi, Senanga, Zambia 15.39 S;23.03 E
- R.289 Hartlaubs Gull Larus hartlaubii 5-15441 (C.B.C. Group)  
 Pull. 16.05.70 Robben Island, W.Cape. 33.48 S;18.23 E  
 11.04.74 Goodwood Rugby Field, Cape. 33.54 S;18.33 E  
 Remarks: This record shows the increasing penetration of the gulls inland to the suburbs. In addition a breeding colony has recently been discovered on roofs in the docks. Another recovery gives a life span of ten years.
- R.296 Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis 3.148.34 (Denmark)  
 Pull. 25.06.72 Hornfiskron, N.Jylland, Denmark 57.13 N;11.00 E  
 02.04.74 Strandfontein, Cape. 34.05 S;18.31 E  
 Remarks: Killed by hitting overhead wires (A.Brown)
- R.319 Tambourine Dove Turtur tympanistria 4-05495 (W.Lawson)  
 1Y♂ 62,4g 29.12.72 Twinstreams, Mtunzini,Natal 28.58 S;31.43 E  
 20.05.74 Umzumbe, Natal 30.37 S;30.32 E  
 Remarks: Killed by flying into window.

#### RINGING SCHEDULE DITTO

A number of ringers have asked if it is permissible to use the boxes at the top of schedules i.e. above the column headings, if only one item is the same for all 25 birds. The answer is YES but only if more than two adjacent columns are involved. For example if all 25 birds are European Swallows although the date or place may change, it is quite O.K. to fill in 493 in the top box. If all 25 are swallows of Age Fullgrown and sex unknown, it is permissible to fill in 493/2/0 in the top boxes. But if swallows are mixed up with other species in the 25 series, and all are age 2, sex 0, it is not permissible to put 2/0 in the top boxes. (i.e. less than 3 columns adjacent). Details must be filled in right down the page. The reason for the difference is related to the practicalities of computer-punching the data. It is hoped that the above will reduce ringers' record-keeping efforts.