

# EDITORIAL

## COMMUNICATION

Soon after assuming the "hot seat" at SAFRING one feature became clear - the communication gap between the amateur and professional ringers. This gap was most obvious between the amateurs, and ornithologists employed by the various nature conservancies. Furthermore each side appeared to consider that the other was responsible for the lack of contact - no bridge builders were evident.

Bridges don't just happen - they have to be built. Members of bird clubs should take the initiative and invite their local professional ornithologists to give talks on their respective projects. Where practicable club members should offer assistance to their local professional ornithologists who, in turn, should not hesitate to approach the amateurs for help especially in projects which would otherwise have to be restricted in scale.

All is not darkness, however, as there have been many instances of amateur-professional co-operation which have borne fruit and still continue to do so. This co-operation should not be confined to ringing activities but should be extended to all aspects of bird study.

Another large communication gap is that which exists between ringers in various parts of southern Africa. Geographical separation makes personal communication difficult but you have a forum in Safring News which is only as good as the ringers make it. Other ringers would like to know what you are doing and I'm sure that you are equally interested in their ideas, projects, methods and techniques.

Let SAFRING know what your problems are as and when they arise rather than brood on them alone. Many of the problems and contentious issues of the past (to me at least) appear to have been the result of a lack of communication. A pertinent (if rather corny) slogan for the coming year is "Let's communicate in '78". Finally, I (and I'm sure you will join me) pay tribute to the hard work my predecessors put into building up the Bird Ringing Unit. In particular I wish Carl Vernon every success and happiness in his new position as ornithologist at the East London Museum.