

Our Hon. Secretary H. Miles unfortunately has had to relinquish the editing of this *Bulletin* owing to pressure of other duties. A committee consisting of Smithers, Ashton and Plowes has undertaken to carry it on.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Miles for the able manner in which he has performed this duty which has done so much to keep us informed of the activities of members and branches and weld our scattered society into a unit.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** for the year 1953 are due and should be paid to the Hon. Treasurer R.K. Brooke, P.O. Box 119, Gatooma. Annual sub 25/-; entrance fee new members 5/- extra.

### BRANCH NEWS. MASHONALAND

Mr and Mrs Attwell of Gatooma showed an excellent colour film of birds and later the meeting inspected the Nest Record Cards and discussed items of mutual interest. Newby-Varty submitted an interesting crane *Sarothrura lineata* [*lineata* is restricted to the eastern highlands, this specimen is probably referable to Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*] to the National Museum, collected at Marandellas [Marondera].

### SELUKWE

Smithers gave a talk on the 1952 Carp Expedition to Barotseland, illustrated by a colour film and skins of special interest. Plowes showed a colour film of birds which he later showed in Gwelo as well. Fischer has collected some 300 specimens and other members have submitted interesting visual records and recorded the breeding of several species: the Diderick Cuckoo feeding fully fledged young; immature Great Spotted Cuckoo and White-winged Whydah [White-winged Widowbird] (eggs March).

### MATABELELAND

On 5<sup>th</sup> December Mr. J. Wightman showed a colour film of Big Game and birds which, with one advertisement, filled the museum hall to capacity (200). As some 150 people were turned away Mr. Wightman kindly repeated this performance for those who were disappointed the first time. A silver collection raised approximately £15 for club funds. We take this opportunity of expressing our grateful thanks to Mr. Wightman and congratulate him on his outstanding photography. An excursion to the Umgusa Dam was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March. There was a disappointing turnout. Smithers spent three weeks in January collecting in Namaqualand and the Cape and gave a talk to the Cape Bird Club at the University of Cape Town. He joined Rankine on a visit to the Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary where they were shown around by Mr. E. Middlemiss. The Cape Divisional Council have spent some £20,000 on this sanctuary in throwing up mud islands, fencing, etc.

### RINGING

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Members can perform a useful service by keeping an eye on press records of ringed migrants recovered, obtaining full details and if possible the ring itself and notifying branch secretaries. Few members of the public realise the importance of these records. Several members are trapping and ringing birds and an extension of this activity is urged. An astonishing amount can be achieved with very simple equipment as instanced by Smithers and Ashton who have trapped and ringed several hundreds of birds between them in their back yards. This sort of ringing done daily, besides furthering our general migration knowledge, reveals unexpected seasonal movements and variation.

Interesting recoveries were:

Plowes Red-billed Quelea ringed 26.7.51 Nyamandhlovu, Bulawayo. Recovered at Monze, N.R. [Zambia] 22.9.52

Ringed 19.10.51 Gwanda. Recovered Tekerani, Cholo, Nyasaland [Malawi] 1.10.52

Ringed 31.10.52 Bulawayo, p.m. Recovered 1.11.52 a.m., Matopos

## **QUELEA INVESTIGATION**

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Information on breeding places of Red-billed Quelea are sought, advise D.C.H. Plowes, Pasture Research Station, P.O. Nyamandhlovu.

## **NEST RECORD CARDS**

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This activity deserves our fullest support. Cards are available from branch secretaries on application. During the first year of the scheme 510 cards have been submitted by 30 contributors. Several members have responded to the appeal for breeding data on birds of prey including Gosling, Fischer, Greenhow, Newby-Varty, Stevenson (note the preponderance of our active Selukwe members). If you have any data on the following questions advise our Hon. Secretary, Box 15, Causeway.

1. Do our birds of prey have a regular breeding season?
2. Can this be connected with their food requirements?

## **COUNCIL MEETING SAOS, 20.2.52**

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Among other matters discussed were the resignation of Mrs. Rowan, owing to pressures of other duties, as editor of *Bokmakierie*, being replaced by Mr. E. Middlemiss, the adoption of the constitution of the ROS, the election of new members (28% were now ROS members). Plowes was appointed to a committee to draw up a list of popular names and Ashton reappointed organiser of the Migration Section.

## **NATIONAL MUSEUM**

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Major E.L. Haydock of Luanshya presented the most comprehensive collection of birds ever made on St. Helena, together with his visual record notes and bird eggs; C.W. Benson, a collector of some 150 Nyasaland skins and 100 from the Fort Jameson district of N.R. [Zambia]. Recent visitors include Rankine and Irwin to work through the material collected by them in P.E.A. [Mozambique], Mr. D.W. Lamn [name unclear] of Lourenco Marques, Area Representative of the SAOS in P.E.A., Fletcher of Gatooma.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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Benson's *Checklist of the birds of Nyasaland* is in press and is eagerly awaited. Mackworth-Praed and Grant *African Handbook of birds, series one, The birds of E and NE Africa* Vol. 1 published by Longmans, is now available. Members will find this a useful handbook as reference is made to many birds that visit us. The illustrations do not do justice to the high quality of the original paintings and are smaller than one would have liked.

## **NEW SECRETARY MATABELELAND BRANCH**

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Mrs. C.W. Buchanan, c/o Minet & Co., 4 Mimosa House, 9th Avenue, Bulawayo. Mr. W.J. Merry remains as assistant secretary.

**Editorial Committee, P.O. Box 240, Bulawayo - 17.3.53**