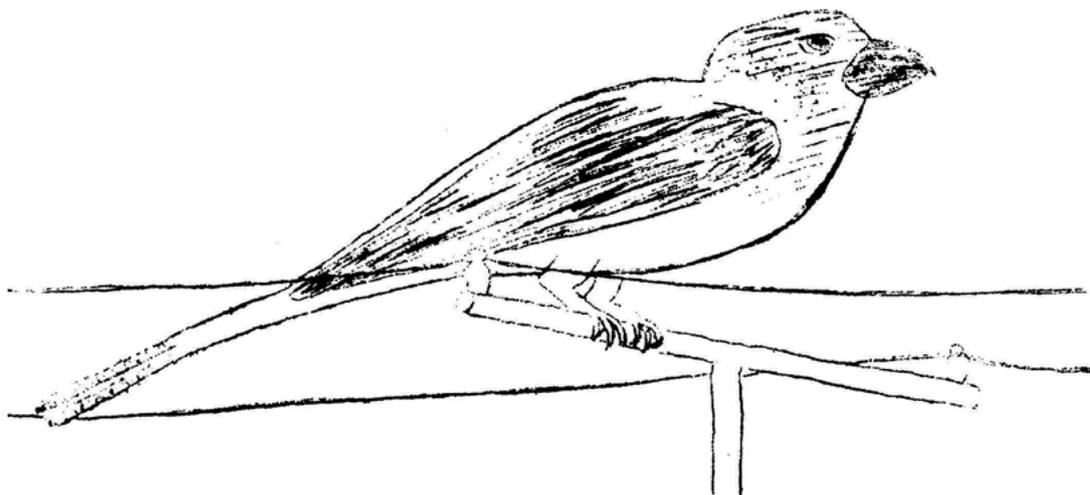


Rhodesian Ornithological Society Bulletin No. 13



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Editor: Dr. R.M. Harwin, City Health Dept., P.O. Box 1946 Bulawayo.

News from the sub-branches

The most active members in Salisbury at the moment are the photographers, who are out at week-ends, looking for the first nests of the season to photograph. From Gatooma R.K. Brooke has sent a list of the names and dates of migrants seen there on their departure northwards. We hope members will be on the look-out in the new season and report arrival dates. And more important than the dates of the "first arrivals" is the date the main body of migrants arrives. Two small expeditions are planned in the near future, but have to await the return of the National Museum's expedition to northern Bechuanaland.

Selukwe members continue to collect specimens locally for the National Museum. An interesting local observation has been of Penduline Tits roosting in deserted weaver nests. In June two members visited a colony of White-backed Vultures in the Que Que district. The White-backed Vulture is a tree nester, building a nest about the size of Wahlberg's Eagle's. Seven nests were visited.

The Matabeleland sub-branch arranged a most successful camp in the Shangani Reserve over the Rhodes and Founders' week-end. More than a hundred species were seen, including African Jacana and Lesser Jacana; numbers of Great White Herons [Great Egret], which made an impressive sight as they gathered to roost in the reedbeds, and a flock of Wattled Cranes, which duly obliged with a dancing display. According to the Native Commissioner, the Wattled Crane breeds there, and it will not be surprising if the Great White Heron also does so.

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FROM MY DIARY

Some winter records from the low country between Sinoia and Gatooma. It seems more than likely that many highveld species move into this area during the winter, and even the European Swallow [Barn Swallow] is recorded in May and August.

Tengwe—Sanyati junction; 8—16.5.54.

African Golden Oriole. One of the migrants which seems just able to winter here.

Natal Spurfowl. Very plentiful and noisy.

Yellow-bellied Bulbul in dense bush on river bank.

7 European Swallows

Gandorowe Falls; 17 – 20.5.54.

White-browed Sparrow-weaver. Mopani belt about 1 mile wide. This species crops up unfailingly in these mopani belts.

5 African Paradise -flycatchers)	
3 Cinnamon Rollers)	[Broad-billed Roller]
2 African Golden Orioles)	all migratory species.
8 European Swallows)	

Kasondi Drift, Umniati River; 9 – 13.8.54.

3 European Swallows.

South African Cliff-swallow. It was the short, square, brown tail that attracted attention. Back blue-green. Rump rufous. Underparts white. Wings appear brownish. The Cliff Swallow has not previously been recorded in this area.

Wire-tailed Swallow. A pair appeared to be building in a crevice in some big rocks.

Heard the first nightjar calling at night this year.

Kachera Vlei; 18 – 19.8.54.

Lesser Striped Swallow)

Fork-tailed Drongo) After insects when we burnt scrub for a camp site.

Cape Glossy Starling) Most amusing to see then dart almost into the flames after insects.

African Grey Hornbill)

Common Sandpiper. First time I have seen this little chap, and watched it sunning itself on a branch in some dense bush for over an hour.

(Mrs.) R. Collins.

NOTES ON THE WADERS

The waders are always the first migrants to arrive from Europe, about two months in advance of the rest. As a group they cause quite a lot of trouble in identification, most of which is unnecessary trouble.

In the first place, remember that, although about 20 are figured in *Roberts*, only eight are likely to be seen inland – that is, if the indigenous Kittlitz's Plover and Three-banded Plovers are excluded. These are the Common, Wood and Marsh Sandpipers, Ruff, Little Stint and Common Greenshank; plus an occasional Curlew Sandpiper and Common Ringed Plover. The remainder are only common on sea – shores and estuaries, or else mere stragglers.

These eight conveniently sort themselves into four with white rumps – Greenshank, Wood, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers – and four without – Ruff, Common Sandpiper, Little Stint and Ringed Plover.

The Greenshank is much the largest of the first four, very pale, with a long, slightly upturned bill, and long, greenish legs. Its liquid whistle is unmistakable. The Marsh Sandpiper looks much like a Greenshank, but is much smaller, with a very fine bill. The Wood Sandpiper is much darker, with a white eyebrow and spotted back, while the Curlew Sandpiper has the back unspotted, and is best recognised by its heavy bill, usually slightly down-curved.

Among those in the second group, the Ringed Plover is only likely to be confused with the local Three-banded Plover (it has a single, broad black chest band, while the Three-banded has two). The Common Sandpiper is more solitary than the others, with a dark chest and throat, a characteristic, low, "flicking" flight, with rather stiff wings, and a habit of "wagging its tail". The Ruff and Little Stint, the only gregarious species, are at once told apart by their size. The Ruff is as large as a Greenshank, but with shorter bill, legs, and neck, while the Little Stint is no larger than a sparrow.

S.A.O.S. NEST RECORD CARD SCHEME

In this, our third year, it is hoped that more members will send in records of the nests found by them. Please take careful notes; the minimum data are the date, the number of eggs or young, and be certain that you know the name of the owner of the nest. Perhaps you will be able to give other information, but if you have the foregoing information on any species whatsoever, you have a record which the Society needs.

The Organiser (P.O. Box 18 Causeway) will supply cards to those not in possession of them, but please advise him what nest you want a card for. Cards are issued free by the SAOS, but one must not waste them, and one can often put more than one record on a card, if only one visit is made to each nest. But if more than one visit can be made without giving away the position of the nest, please do so, as your record is so much more valuable.

If, at the same time, you are able to observe anything of general interest for our *Bulletin*, the editor will welcome your contribution. And please don't think it is only unusual nests we want recorded.

Fork-tailed Drongo. 16 cards, 29 clutches. September to November.

<i>xi</i>	x	xi	c/4	c/3	c/2
11	17	1	1	18	10

B.V. Neuby-Varty found the nest with 4 eggs, and he also found a clutch containing an African Cuckoo's egg.

African Paradise-flycatcher. 15 cards, 15 clutches. October to January

x	xi	xii	i	c/3	c/2
2	9	3	1	9	6

Four members worked out the incubation or fledging periods.

Tawny-flanked Prinia. 16 cards, 22 clutches. October to April

x	xi	xii	i	ii	iii	iv	c/4	c/3	c/2	c/1
1	1	3	8	6	2	1	3	11	8	2

H.B. Masterson has proved that the Prinia is double-brooded, and also recorded the incubation period as 12 days.

H.M. Miles.

Christmas cards

The Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa, P.O. Box 1398 Johannesburg, is this year producing Christmas Cards in the three following attractive designs:

1. 4-colour design of Scarlet-chested Sunbird by C.T. Astley Maberly, size 6" deep by 4½" wide, including envelopes. 1/ – each.
2. Black and white design of Gerenuk (Waller's Gazelle) by Ugo Mochi, size 4½" deep by 6" wide, including envelopes. 9d each
3. Black and white design of Leopard and cubs by C.T. Astley Maberly, size 4½" deep by 5½" wide, including envelopes. 6d each

The Wild Life Protection Society also has for sale three handsome photographic calendars – studies of Kudu, Nyala, and Waterbuck with Elephant in two sizes at 2/ – and 3/3 each.

Once again the Editor appeals to members of the ROS to help him by submitting accounts of their experiences for the *Bulletin*. After all it must be your efforts that keep the *Bulletin* going.