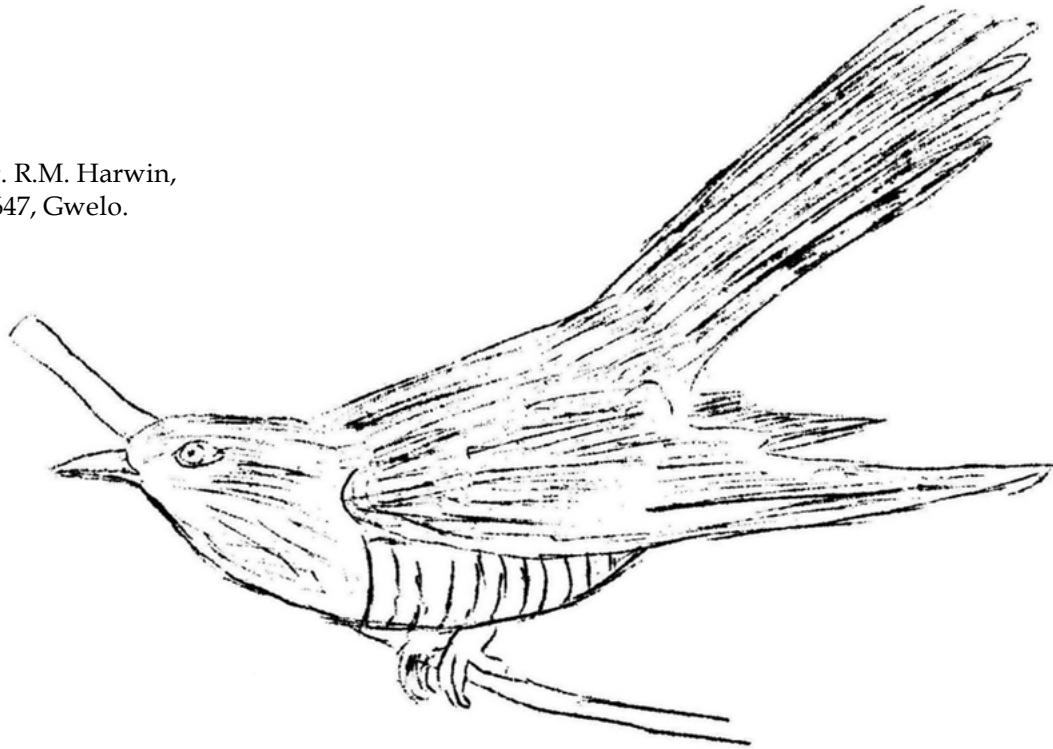


Rhodesian Ornithological Society Bulletin

No. 31

May 1960

Editor: Dr. R.M. Harwin,
P.O. Box 647, Gwelo.



CUCKOOS

Several contributions have been received, prompted by Mr. Hornby's note in the previous *Bulletin* that the African Cuckoo was less vocal during the past season of drought, than usual. In general they confirm his observations, but not entirely.

One of the most informative comes from a correspondent well-known by now to *Bulletin* readers, G.W. Parnell of Banket, who says "Regarding Mr. Hornby's notes on the Red-chested Cuckoo, he gives the usual time of arrival in his area as October 17th. I find from my notes that the time in this area varies from September 25th to October 10th, the first week in October being the mean. This last year it was October 5th.

I too, have noticed that they were much less vociferous this season and gave up calling at the beginning of this month (February). It would hardly appear to be due to the dry season as far as I am concerned here, as my rainfall is only an inch or so below normal for the time of year. However, both October and November were very dry, with falls well below normal."

From Mrs. Snell, Marandellas — A brief remark on the African Cuckoo (see H.E. Hornby's notes). It seems to arrive here about September 16th, and I heard it fairly frequently (and saw it) this last season. The African Hoopoe's call is similar, but its two notes are the same; the cuckoo says "Hoop, hoop" with the second "hoop" a semitone (or sometimes very nearly a semitone) higher than the first. This is invariable, and I won a bet with quite a well-known ornithologist on this score!

I have certainly noticed what I took to be some special results of drought conditions. A noticeable absence of cuckoos here during the last two years may be one of them. But I was also conscious of the presence of some birds which I had previously thought of as more Lowveld or thornveld types. This habitat, which I have studied for six years, consists of the 1300 acres of the school site, plus a small dam just over one boundary, and a rocky gorge just over another. It is just on the main Southern Rhodesian watershed, at 5,500 feet with a south-easterly aspect, and generally exposed. About 160 species have so far been observed, and to me the omissions have been an interesting feature, indicating in certain birds an intolerance of our exposed position. For example, at Springvale School,

a mile away, but on the other side of the main road, which here marks the crest of the watershed, and hence facing north, one may see the Broad-billed Roller (breeding), Yellow-bellied Sunbird [Variable Sunbird], Blue Waxbill and Bar-throated Apalis, to name four species not found here.

But this season we recorded for the first time, one individual Yellow-bellied Sunbird, and, to me, two very interesting additions to our list. The first is the Violet-eared Waxbill, seen two or three times and perhaps here to stay. The second is the Broad-tailed Paradise-whydah; the variety with rounded tail-feathers, *Vidua paradisea obtusa*, Roberts 853, and the cock was seen on more than one occasion, with a party of relations numbering 12 in all, of which at least one was a half-grown male.

Mr. P. Linton, from Beatrice, writes "I, too noticed the absence of Diderick Cuckoo calls. That is the only one that attracts my attention hereabouts."

Mrs. D. Searson is one who did not have the same experience as Mr. Hornby;

"I was staying at a farm at Karoi in late September where there were more African Cuckoos than I have seen in one place before, and they called continually all day; the same applies to Klaas's Cuckoos.

On February 6th, some children brought me a young Diderick Cuckoo which they had found a week before on the ground near a Southern Red Bishop Bird's nest. It was extremely tame and hopped about on our hands and a table, and ate quantities of grasshoppers produced from the children's pockets. They said it had eaten 75 grasshoppers in one day. The following day I saw a young Klaas's Cuckoo sitting on a telephone wire for some hours; it was curiously tame.

During Christmas week, a Narina Trogon was in the garden. I saw and heard it half a dozen times."

Before leaving the subject of Cuckoos, a continuation by Mrs. E. Watson, of her account of the "Interloper" in the previous issue.

First I must say that as the nestling had a brown or black bill, it must have been a Klaas's Cuckoo, and not a Diderick. The Diderick nestling has a red bill.

On the 15th March I once more went to Goromonzi, and occupied the same bedroom as before. The first thing I noticed was the old empty nest, the building of which I had watched with such interest in November. It now looked rather shapeless, and had slipped down to the end of the bar of the fanlight. I was glad that nobody in an excess of tidiness had removed it.

Then I saw my little sunbird coping with cobweb on the bar of the next fanlight. However, as before, she for some reason did not seem to like that fanlight for the next day she was back at my window and fixing cobweb on to the bar. From then on I watched the building of a second nest. I noticed the busy little creature several times taking material from the old nest and putting it in the new one. Building went on rapidly. Leaves and thin sticks were used but after several days no more material from the old nest was taken. The little hen worked busily all morning till about 11, and every time she arrived at the nest she gave her cheerful little chirp. She must have travelled several miles each day. Once, but only once, I saw the small Grenadier Guard flutter round as if inspecting the works. However, I was not able to watch all day, so perhaps he did actually take a more active part in the operations.

Unfortunately I had to leave Goromonzi after three weeks. Now I hear that the sunbirds are still there, but are just playing at nest-building. They even go back to the next fanlight, and fiddle about with cobweb there. Evidently they have no serious intention of hatching out little sunbirds now. But they are certainly missing their opportunity, as all the cuckoos are now away at their winter resorts.

Little Banded Goshawk feeding on termites

Mr. H.G. Bass writes that the afternoon and evening of Good Friday (15 April) were wet in Salisbury, bringing out the flying ants [termites]. Next morning, 16 April, there had been what might be described as a "wreck" of ants on his hard tennis court. The majority were dead, but some were still crawling about in a winged state. They were discovered by a Little Banded Goshawk (*Accipiter badius*), who spent some time in the court feeding on them. The bird's usual method of progression was a brisk walk; occasionally a hop, and a short run, or sometimes a slow walk. When disturbed, it twice flew up and perched on one of the surrounding posts. It came back at least once after an interval.

The only other birds to show an interest in the ants were Streaky-headed Seedeaters (*Serinus gularis*) of which there were at least four or five on the court (not however, simultaneously with the Shikra). On one occasion a Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* alighted on the court, but was not seen to eat any ants; it merely appeared to have been attracted by the Seedeaters.

Birds and mosquitoes. Mrs. Snell writes

At Inyanga Downs on Jan 13th, a warm, sunny day after rain, there was apparently a big hatch-out of mosquitoes. At least I could hear them buzzing in my ear, and no other insects were visible. The air became thick with hundreds upon hundreds of swallows and swifts. I watched the flock for nearly two hours, during which the main centre of excitement moved away a mile or two and then returned. There were two species of swift, presumed to be the African Black Swift (*Apus barbatus*) and the White-rumped Swift (*A. caffer*). Most numerous of all were Common House-martins. I saw only one (European) Barn Swallow; though they are numerous at the lower altitude of Rusape, etc., they occur only in small numbers at Inyanga Downs. Other swallows present were the Grey-rumped Swallow, White-throated Swallow, Pearl-breasted Swallow and Blue Swallow. The last-named did not appear to join in the general mass-movement of the large flock, but were present when it arrived, and appeared to be enjoying the feast locally. I was at the time observing a family of Blue Swallows, which I had had under observation for some time. The two youngsters left the nest that day (Jan 13th) at the height of all the excitement and did not return to the nest, but remained nearby, perching on low bushes. They were still in the area five days later."

Camouflage by a Secretarybird

Early in October 1959, Mr. F.O. McLean reports, he was walking through stubble in lands in a Native Reserve, when a Secretarybird flew past and landed about thirty yards away; it then started to walk away. He followed it up, keeping approximately the same distance; but it did not take flight as most Secretarybirds would have done, and on crossing a contour ridge, turned at right angles and walked swiftly away parallel to the ridge, with neck stretched out horizontally, so that from the other side of the ridge it was not easily seen. When Mr. McLean reached the top of the ridge, the bird saw him, lifted its head up, and walked off normally through some sparse and short stubble. He looked away for a moment, and says that when he turned to look at the Secretarybird again, it had vanished.

As it could not have flown off without attracting attention, he walked in the direction where he had last seen the bird, and saw what appeared to be a charred tree stump lying in the rapoko stubble about 30 yards off. In native lands, a charred log or tree stump is quite a common sight, and one often passes them without taking much notice; but when he got to within fifteen yards of this particular one, he realised that it was in fact the Secretarybird stretched out full length on the ground with legs doubled up beneath it.

After Mr. McLean had stood for a couple of minutes watching this almost perfect example of camouflage, the bird rose to its feet and walked off, still with outstretched neck, until it was about 100 yards away when it resumed its normal position. He reports that it appeared to be a very old specimen, with tattered and ruffled feathers and a very dirty and unkempt appearance.

Knob-nosed Duck Concerning Mr. Took's notes in the previous issue, Mr. G.W. Parnell writes "I have seen on my dam parties of [Comb Duck] drakes only and parties of ducks only; but never in such numbers as he quotes, from 3 to a dozen usually. I also saw them in small parties of each sex on the Zambezi last year. I think that the size of the comb varies with the age of the bird; likewise the size of the birds themselves. I have also, both here and on the Zambezi, seen mixed parties."

Red-faced Crimsonwing Mrs. Snell records a pair of these birds from Inyanga in the following note

On January 11th I sought for a bit of indigenous forest in order to look for forest birds. The spot I happened to choose was the edge of an old Pine plantation near a stream, where the pines themselves were 60 to 80 feet high and the indigenous growth had intruded in a thick tangle underneath. Here I saw a pair of Nyasa or Red-faced Crimsonwings (*Roberts* 828). This was exciting enough; they are beautiful little birds, crimson and green, and not previously recorded from the area. But in addition, I was able to watch them systematically extracting and eating the winged seeds from the cones of the

Pinus patula. The altitude here was about 6000 feet; a few days later I saw one other pair of Crimsonwings, at 4000 feet in riverine bush on the bank of the Gairezi River.

***Finally, a rather unpleasant account of an encounter with a cobra from
Mr. F.O. McLean***

A few weeks back, when walking down a stream bed, I noticed a freshly used kingfisher nest-hole in a six foot high sandy bank, and as it appeared to be rather late in the season for a kingfisher to be nesting, I decided to investigate.

For observing eggs or young of kingfishers without damaging the nest-hole, I usually carry a small piece of mirror for reflecting light into the hole, and if the light is good, one can usually see the eggs or birds clearly. (That is, if the nest hole runs straight).

This day it was overcast, and the light poor, and I had to put my eye as close as possible to the hole in order to see anything at all. About a foot away from my eye, I could dimly make out what looked like a tortoise's head, the mouth opening slightly and closing again, every few seconds, and the eyes blinking. Wondering how a tortoise could possibly have got into the hole, which was about five feet from the bottom of the bank, and a foot from the top, I climbed to the top of the bank, to find that some animal had put its foot through the roof of the hole, giving access from above.

The light had by now improved, and I went down to have another peep from below; I got a shock to find that what I had taken to be a tortoise was in fact a big cobra coiled up in the nest with its head facing the entrance. I got a large pointed stick and jabbed the snake several times, damaging it pretty badly before it suddenly shot out past my face like an arrow from a bow.

As I was standing on some very uneven rocks, not too securely balanced, I did not stop to argue with a now enraged cobra and took to my heels. The cobra tried to find a way up the bank where it was a bit lower, and I got to the top intending to finish it off as its head came over the top, but it just couldn't make it up the bank, and vanished into a hole in the rocks.

From now on, I do not put my hand into any nest hole unless I know what is inside that hole, and the best way to find out is by using a mirror. Failing a mirror, I have used the back of my stainless steel watch, which works quite well in good light.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Now Available!!! A Necessity for all Rhodesian and South African Ornithologists.

Additions and corrections to the Check List of the birds of Southern Rhodesia — number 1

By

Reay H.N. Smithers, M.P. Stuart Irwin and Mary L. Paterson.

Since the publication of the two editions of the *Check List of the Birds of Southern Rhodesia* in 1957 by the Rhodesian Ornithological Society, a considerable volume of new information has come to hand and a number of papers containing valuable information have appeared. This new material has been collated by the three authors of the Check List and has been published as an Occasional Paper of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia (No. 23B).

The authors need no introduction to Rhodesian Ornithologists, nor indeed, to those interested in African Ornithology in any way, and all who have a copy of the Check List will also want to have a copy of this new publication, which contains much valuable material.

Copies of the paper may be obtained from

R.C. Knight,
P.O. Box 1108,
SALI SBURY
at a cost of 2/ — per copy post free.

P.S. If you haven't got a copy of the Check List, you should have! Sally forth and buy one NOW and send for your copy of the "Additions and Corrections" at the same time.

The following appeal has been received from Mr. Ernest Middlemiss, Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary, Prince George Drive, Retreat, Cape Province;

I am anxious to receive information on the two species of flamingos. Particularly required are:

- 1). Records with localities, dates and, if available, numbers.
- 2). Records of immature birds, as above.
- 3). Notes on habitat preference.
- 4). Notes on feeding habits and methods, and
- 5). Any other information.

All material will be acknowledged.

OUTLINE OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE SOUTHERN RHODESIAN GAME DEPARTMENT FOR THE CONTROL OF QUELEAS: 1960

Basically the work falls into two categories, scouting and control.

1). Scouting. This is perhaps the most difficult aspect, due to Game Dept. staff being so few, and it is here that the public could be of vast assistance. Any person hearing of, or finding, a Red-billed Quelea roost or breeding site of any magnitude is requested to inform the Game Officer, P.O. Box 8365, Causeway, supplying at the same time, all the information available. Reports of large quelea concentrations, even if a roost has not actually been located, might prove very valuable.

Although the information possessed by any one individual may appear insignificant, a number of such reports when viewed collectively, may be most informative. So any assistance whatsoever from the public will be appreciated.

2). Control. Once quelea roosts or breeding sites are located, they will be treated by blasting or aerial spraying with poison, depending on safety requirements, and costs.

3). Research. Investigation of the movements of queleas is being done by ourselves and the Union of South Africa. In this connection large numbers of queleas have been ringed, and will continue to be marked. Any person finding a ringed quelea is requested to notify the Game Officer.

A. Savory, Quelea Control Officer

(See also Mr. Smithers' remarks at the Annual General Meeting, on page 8.)

Allusion to the "Ornithological Coffee Club" will also be found later on in this bulletin, but we wish to bring the existence of this club to the notice of members, particularly those not resident in Salisbury, who will be most welcome at the Park Restaurant, if they should happen to be in Salisbury on a Thursday.

RINGING

The Ringing Organiser will be on leave for a part of this year, and during the period April 25th to September 1st 1960, all ringing records should be sent to:

Mrs. M.L. Snell Peterhouse
MARANDELLAS.

Any requests for rings, advice on ringing, and other matters connected with ringing should also be sent to Mrs. Snell, who has kindly consented to act as Ringing Organiser during this period.

RHODESIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY HELD IN THE ARTS LECTURE THEATRE, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND, SALISBURY, ON SATURDAY 7TH MAY, 1960 AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Present were Mr. R.K. Brooke, Mr and Mrs R. Boulton, Miss G. Bourlay, Mr. N.A. Campbell, Mr. G.K. Donald, Mrs. M. Dryden, Mr. A.B. Fletcher (Hon. Treasurer) Mr. E. Fowles, Mr. C. Grabandt, Mr. R. Griffiths, Mr. J. Guy, Dr. and Mrs. R.M. Harwin, R.C. Knight, Esq., (Hon. Secretary), Mr. D. Linton, Mr. H.M. Miles, Mr. C.S. Mitchell, Mrs. D. Searson, Miss F. Stulpnagel, Mr. R.H.N. Smithers and Mr. J.M.E. Took.

Apologies were received from Capt. R.A. Bourlay, Mr. M.P.S. Irwin, Mrs. Ashworth, Mr. C.W. Benson, Mr. J.M. Paterson, Miss I. Rorke, Capt. R.H.R. Stevenson, Mr. T.C.L. Symmes, Mrs. Tendall and Mr A. Williams who were all unable to be present.

In the absence of the President, Capt. R.A. Bourlay, M.B.E., and the Vice-President Mr. M.P.S. Irwin, Mr. R.K. Brooke took the Chair and welcomed members to the meeting.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Ninth Annual General Meeting of Members held in Bulawayo on 18th April 1959, having been circulated, were taken as read and CONFIRMED.

2. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Chairman read the President's Report for the year ended 31st December 1959, which was unanimously adopted, the meeting expressing its warm appreciation of the work of the President during the past year.

3. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. A.B. Fletcher, presented his Report for the year ended 31st December 1959, and copies of the Revenue and Expenditure Account for that period were circulated. Mr. Griffiths suggested that the balance of the Society's Savings Account should be shown in the Accounts as part of the "Balance in Hand" rather than as expenditure and also made several other suggestions for improving the presentation of the Accounts, which were noted by the Hon. Treasurer. Mr. Knight proposed that the Account for the year as circulated be adopted, and that the Hon. Treasurer be requested to present future Accounts in accordance with the suggestions made by Mr. Griffiths. This proposal was seconded by Mr. Smithers and carried unanimously.

Mr. Knight also informed the meeting that during his recent visit to the Cape several members of the SAOS Council had expressed their high appreciation of the work done by Mr. Fletcher as Hon. Treasurer of the Society.

4. REPORT OF THE HON. RINGING ORGANISER

The Report of the Hon. Ringing Organiser (Mr. J.M. Paterson) was read by the Chairman and copies were circulated. The Report was received with great interest, members expressing their appreciation of the work done by Mr. Paterson.

5. REPORT OF THE HON. NEST RECORD CARD ORGANISER

The Hon. Nest Record Card Organiser, (Mr. Miles) presented his Report. Some discussion ensued, during which it was made clear that the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology would be calling for the Nest Record Cards in the possession of the Society within the next six months. Members emphasized the necessity of ensuring that the information at present recorded on the cards should not be removed from easy access by the Society and suggested that it was now time that the information which had accumulated since the publication of the Check List in 1957 was published. These matters were discussed, and it was decided that Mr. Miles, Mr. Brooke and other members co-opted by them should proceed, as a matter of urgency, with the preparation of a suitable paper, which Mr. Smithers said could be published by the National Museum as an Occasional Paper.

To prevent members of the Society losing easy access to the detailed information at present recorded on the cards, it was suggested that the cards should be microfilmed before being sent to Cape Town and a committee consisting of Mr. Smithers, Mr. Boulton and Mr. Knight was appointed to examine the economics of this proposal.

Members expressed their very sincere appreciation of the work being done by Mr. Miles in summarising the cards and in organising the Scheme.

Arising from this discussion, Mr. Smithers asked about sales of the Check List. It was stated that these were not as satisfactory as had been hoped, but the Committee was considering the matter. A proposal that the price should be reduced had been received from Kingstons Limited and this, together with other suggestions made at the meeting, would be discussed with the Book Department Manager for Kingstons in the near future.

The Nest Record Card Organisers Report was adopted.

6. REPORT OF THE HON. EDITOR

The Hon. Editor reported on the *Bulletin* during the year and then left the meeting. His Report was received by members with great interest and unanimously adopted. Members expressed their appreciation of the Hon. Editors services and stated that they always found the *Bulletin* most interesting and informative. The Hon. Secretary was instructed to convey these views to the Hon. Editor.

7. REPORT OF THE HON. MIGRATION RECORD ORGANISER

The Hon. Migration Record Organiser submitted his Report, which was received with interest and adopted.

8. REPORTS FROM THE SUB-BRANCHES

No Reports had been received from the Matabeleland or Selukwe Sub-branches, but it was stated that Capt. R.H.R. Stevenson of Selukwe had been seriously ill. The meeting expressed its deep regret at this news.

Mr. Brooke reported on the activities of the Mashonaland Sub-branch and his report was adopted.

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All the ex officio members of the Committee, who retired and were eligible for re-election, were unanimously re-elected en bloc on the proposal of Mr. Brooke. Mr. R. Boulton and Mr. R. Smithers were elected to the Committee in place of Mr. N.A. Campbell and Mr. R.W. Rankine who retired in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution and were not eligible for re-election.

The Committee for 1960 therefore is:

PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN	Capt. R.A. Bourlay, M.B.E.
VICE-PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN	Mr. M.P.S. Irwin
HON. SECRETARY	R.C. Knight, Esq.
HON. TREASURER	Mr. A.B. Fletcher
HON. EDITOR	Dr. R.M. Harwin
NEST RECORDER	Mr. H.M. Miles
RINGING ORGANISER	Mr. J.M. Paterson
ADDITIONAL MEMBERS	Mr. C.W. Benson
	Mr. R. Boulton
	Mr. R. Brooke
	Mrs. L.B. Ball
	Mr. R.H.N. Smithers
	Mr. J.M. Paterson

BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES	Mr. R.K. Brooke (Mashonaland)
	Mrs. A.M. Tendall (Matabeleland)
	Capt. R.H.R. Stevenson (Selukwe)

A member enquired whether ex officio members should also be elected members of the Committee. Divergent views were expressed and it was decided that the Committee should examine this matter and if necessary make recommendations to the next Annual General Meeting for suitable amendments to the Constitution.

10. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

It was proposed, seconded and carried unanimously that the next Annual General Meeting of members be held before the end of February, 1961 at a place to be decided by the Committee in the light of membership figures at the time.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Mr. Smithers stated that a Government Quelea Control Officer had recently been appointed and that members of the Society could assist this Officer by ringing Red-billed Quelea. The Hon. Editor would be requested to publish a Note (to be prepared by Mr. Brooke) on this in the *Bulletin*.

(b) It was announced that an Ornithological Coffee Club would meet every Thursday in the Park Restaurant in Salisbury at approximately 1 p.m. to enable members to discuss matters of interest. All members and their friends would be welcome and the first meeting would take place on Thursday 12th May, 1960. Visiting ornithologists would be welcomed and it was hoped that this would lead to a beneficial exchange of views and information.

(c) The Hon. Secretary announced that a Note concerning the new S.R. Wild Life Conservation Act would soon appear in the *Bulletin* and advised members that the question of permits for members was under active consideration by the Committee.

Mr Smithers stated that the Museum authorities wished to encourage persons to collect specimens and applications for permits for collecting such would be sympathetically considered.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 6.15 p.m. after thanking members for their attendance.

Addresses

The following addresses of Committee members are given for easy reference.

President: Capt. R.A. Bourlay, M.B.E., 272 Coghlan Road, Greendale.

Vice-President: Mr. M.P. Stuart Irwin, P.O. Box 240, Bulawayo.

Hon. Secretary: R.C. Knight, Esq., P.O. Box 1108, Salisbury.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. A.B. Fletcher, Private Bag 2, Gatooma.

Nest Record Card Organiser: Mr. H.M. Miles, P.O. Box 8156, Causeway.

Ringing Organiser: Mr. J.M. Paterson, Springvale School, Marandellas (after 1st September)

Acting Ringing Organiser: Mrs. Snell, Peterhouse, Marandellas (to 1st Sept)

Migration Record Organiser: Mr. R.K. Brooke, P.O. Box 8156, Causeway.

Hon. Editor: Dr. R.M. Harwin, P.O. Box 647, Gwelo.

Sub-branch Hon Secretaries:

Mashonaland: Miss G. Bourlay, 272 Coghlan Road, Greendale.

Matabeleland: Mrs. A.M. Tendall, P.O. Box 1454, Bulawayo.

Selukwe: Capt. R.H.R. Stevenson, P.O. Box 124, Selukwe.

WILL MEMBERS PLEASE ADVISE EITHER THEIR HON. TREASURER OR THE HON. SECRETARY OF ANY CHANGE IN THEIR ADDRESS? IT SAVES SO MUCH TIME AND TROUBLE TO ALL CONCERNED.

PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1959

With this, the Tenth Annual General Meeting, our Society enters its tenth year of existence. The inaugural meeting took place in November, 1951, when the Rhodesian Ornithological Society was formed with 35 members. Our present membership is 243, which represents a steady increase over the years and we can boast an increase of 34 members over last year's total.

Executive Committee

During 1959 your Executive Committee met on three occasions. These meetings were mainly concerned with routine administrative matters in addition to the following items:

(a) Arrangements have been made for a member of the Rhodesian Ornithological Society Executive Committee to attend meetings of the Council of the South African Ornithological Society in the event of these coinciding with a member's visit to Cape Town. Failing this the ROS will be represented by Mr. A.N. Rowan to whom we extend our thanks.

(b) In response to requests from the SAOS your Society has agreed to maintain migration records. Mr. R.K. Brooke has been appointed Migration Record Organiser and we are grateful to him for accepting this responsibility.

(c) A sub-committee was formed to examine the draft Wild Life Conservation Bill (Southern Rhodesia) and comment on the ornithological aspect of this legislation. The sub-committee was ably assisted by the Hon. Secretary of the Society in the legal interpretation of certain definitions and sections. At a meeting with the Southern Rhodesia Game Officer recommendations were made which involved amendments to the draft. These were accepted. Having regard to the stringent provisions of this legislation, the importance of ensuring that the Ringing and Nest Recording activities of members were not prejudiced was stressed. The value of these activities was acknowledged and a suggestion made by the Game Officer that this would best be achieved by issuing a block permit to the Society, which would then issue permits to approved members. The details of this arrangement will be finalised before the Bill is finally promulgated in January, 1961.

Members will recollect reference to the export or indigenous birds in my previous report. This is now controlled by the Federal Import and Export Regulations in addition to legislation contained in the Wild Life Conservation Act of Southern Rhodesia.

This Act is welcomed as a positive move to protect the country's bird and animal life and members will be informed of its provisions as affecting them by means of an article which will be published in the Society's *Bulletin*.

(d) The protection of the Southern Carmine Bee-Eater nesting colony was continued during the last breeding season thanks to the interest taken in this site by the Natural Resources Board and the Beatrice and Salisbury South Intensive Conservation Committees. It is interesting to note that the number of people who visited this site in 1959 was over 50 as compared with about a dozen in 1958. The ROS *Bulletin* continues to flourish, thanks to Dr. Harwin who will comment in more detail in his report.

The Nest Record Scheme has been well-supported during the year, though the results do not equal those of 1958. Mr. Miles, who provides more information on this branch of the Society's activities in his annual report, has been Nest Card Recorder since 1952 and is responsible for the impressive records we now have. As members probably know, it is intended that these records should be moved to Cape Town in due course to be housed in the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology. Mr. Miles has therefore been duplicating the most important cards and summarising all the records to ensure that this information will be readily available in Southern Rhodesia.

Ringing

Mr. Paterson, our Ringing Organiser, has succeeded in keeping this branch active though support is still confined to a limited number of members.

Exhibits

In addition to the Society's stand at the Royal Salisbury Agricultural Show, exhibits displaying the Society's activities were arranged by Dr. R.M. Harwin at the Gwelo Hobbies Fair on 4th/6th June, and by Mr and Mrs G. Attwell at the Gatooma Hobbies Fair on 4th July. These exhibits attracted interest and were well worth the effort involved.

Migration Records

This new branch of the Society's activities has not been in operation long enough to show any results of particular note.

The Society's thanks are due to all those members who have taken on specific duties and given up much of their leisure time. In addition to those members already mentioned I would particularly like to thank our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Fletcher, who has been on the Executive Committee since the inaugural meeting of the Society, the Chairmen and Secretaries of the sub-branches, and last, but by no means least, Mr. Knight, the Hon. Secretary, for their help and support during the year.

R.A. Bourlay.

President.

7.5.60.

REPORT OF THE HON. TREASURER FOR THE YEAR 1959

Again I have the pleasure of reporting substantial progress by the Society, both in membership and in financial strength.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT 31.12.59:

On this date, Membership was as under:

Life Members	3
Ordinary Members	202
Junior Members	30
Institutional Members	<u>8</u>
	<u>243</u>

In addition to the above there were 19 Family Members. This shows an increase of 34 plus two Family Members over the previous year.

During 1959 45 new members joined the Society, comprising 38 Ordinary, 5 Junior and 2 Institutional Members. There were also 4 new Family Members. In addition we have gained three members by transfer from other branches of the SAOS - two from the Cape and one from Natal.

There have been 5 resignations during the year and 10 members have been struck off strength by the SAOS, having failed to pay their subscriptions for two years.

At the close of 1959, 23 subscriptions for that year were still outstanding.

BOOK FUND:

During the year there has been a limited number of sales of the "Check List" and charges against the Fund have been small, resulting in a substantial increase of the balance in hand.

[Revenue and Expenditure table, page 11 is omitted herein. Page 12 follows]

The Fund's Balance Sheet is as follows:

By Balance in hand 1.1.59	43.18. 9.	To 1 copy of 2nd Edition "Check List" for Federal Archives	1.10. 0.
Sales	47. 0. 0.	Balance in Hand	
	<u>90.18. 9.</u>	31.12.59	<u>89. 8. 9.</u>
			<u>90.18. 9.</u>

SAVINGS ACCOUNT:

During the year it was decided to open a Savings Account with the Old Mutual Building Society of C.A. The sum of £120. 0. 0 was transferred to it from the Society's current account and interest accruing during the year has brought this up to a total of £123.14. 4.

It follows from this and from the figures shown in the Balance Sheet which I now present to you, that at the close of 1959 the Society's resources were as follows:

Savings Account	123.14. 4
Current Banking Account	41. 6. 5
Cash in Hand with the Hon. Treas.	<u>2. 4. 7</u>
	£167. 5. 4

Of this sum, £89. 8. 9 is earmarked for the Book Fund, leaving the balance of £77.16. 7 at the general disposal of the Society.

During the year Miss Mary Paterson, who has served the Society as its Hon. Secretary since its formation - and to whom we all owe an immense debt of gratitude - resigned her office to get married. She now appears on our list of members as Mrs. L.B. Ball. May I take this opportunity of wishing her every possible happiness.

We are most fortunate in that her duties have been taken over by Mr. R.C. Knight, whose keenness and enterprise have already made a considerable mark on the Society's activities, especially in Mashonaland.

To him and to my other colleagues in office, notably Mr. R.W. Heard, the Hon. Treasurer of the SAOS, my grateful thanks are due for their ready co-operation at all times.

I should also like to record the Society's thanks to Mr. H.A. Payne, who has once again acted as our Hon. Auditor.

A.B. Fletcher.
Hon. Treasurer.
17.2.60

REPORT OF THE HON RINGING ORGANISER

I am pleased to be able to report to you a substantial increase in the number of birds banded in the ROS area during 1959. The number of records submitted to me in this period was 1027. This great effort has been made very largely by Dr. R.M. Harwin, Brian Donnelly and the boys of Falcon College. Other workers include Mr. Davison, Chief Game Warden of Wankie Game Reserve, Mr. R.I.G. Attwell the National Museum, the members of the Springvale School Bird Club, and myself. To all these we owe our thanks for their work and I personally would thank especially the first three named for their careful and regular submission of records. There has been, as you know, criticism by the Council of the SAOS in respect of bird ringing not conforming to the published ringing Code and records poorly or infrequently sent in - or not sent in at all. I am glad to be able to report that Mrs. Niven, the President of the SAOS, assured me personally that these criticisms did not apply to work in the ROS area but that, on the contrary, SAOS Council were aware of the increased number and accuracy and regularity of our returns.

Species which have been ringed include:

Saddle-billed Stork	Grey-headed Sparrow
Shaft-tailed Whydah	African Yellow White-eye
Black Finch [Black Widowfinch]	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting
Cut-throat finch	White-throated Seedeater
Yellow-rumped Bishop [Yellow Bishop]	European Sandmartin [Sand Martin]
Golden Bishop [Yellow-crowned Bishop]	Cape Sand Martin [Brown-throated Martin]
Southern Red Bishop	Masked Weaver [Southern Masked-weaver]
Familiar Chat	Arrow-marked Babbler
Black-eyed Bulbul [Dark-capped Bulbul]	Malachite Kingfisher
Blue Waxbill	Larger Striped Swallow [Greater Striped Swallow]
Three Banded Sandplover [Three-banded Plover]	Lesser Striped Swallow
Scaly-feathered Finch	European Swallow [Barn Swallow]
Spotted Flycatcher	Wire-tailed Swallow
Ring-necked Dove [Cape Turtle-dove]	House Martin [Common House-martin]
Brown-headed Kingfisher [Brown-hooded Kingfisher]	Crimson-breasted Shrike
Green-tailed Woodpecker [Green-backed Woodpecker]	Yellow-breasted Bulbul [Yellow-bellied Greenbul]
Laughing Dove	Boubou [Tropical Boubou]
Emerald-spotted Wood-dove	Red-billed Quelea
Black-headed Oriole	Spotted Creeper
S. Double-collared Sunbird [Miombo Double-collared Sunbird]	White-rumped Swift
Bully Canary [Brimstone Canary]	Red-breasted Swallow
Streaky-headed Seedeater	Pin-tailed Whydah
Marico Flycatcher	Red-headed Weaver
Long-tailed Paradise-whydah	Red-backed Shrike
Acacia Pied Barbet	Horus Swift
Crested Barbet	Puffback Shrike [Black-backed Puffback]
Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler	White-fronted Bee-eater
Kurrichane Thrush	Violet-eared Waxbill
Wood Sandpiper	Hylia [Southern Hylia]
Redwing Starling [Red-winged Starling]	Crombec [Long-billed Crombec]
Marico Sunbird	Little Banded Goshawk [Shikra]
Black-cheeked Waxbill [Black-faced Waxbill]	Paradise Whydah [Long-tailed Paradise-whydah]
Melba Finch [Green-winged Pytilia]	Spotted-backed Weaver [Village Weaver]
Black-throated Canary	Fiscal Shrike [Common Fiscal]
Grey-backed Camaroptera	Golden-breasted Bunting
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	Pale Flycatcher
Yellow-throated Sparrow Yellow-throated Petronia]	Blue-eared Glossy Starling [Greater Blue-eared Starling]
Fork-tailed Drongo	Hottentot Teal
Groundscraper Thrush	African Skimmer
Giant Eagle Owl [Verreaux's Eagle-owl]	S.A. Pochard [Southern Pochard]
Spotted Eagle Owl [Spotted Eagle-owl]	Steel-blue Widowfinch
Red-billed Firefinch	Richards Pipit [African Pipit]
White-bellied Sunbird	Lazy Cisticola
African Paradise-flycatcher	Cape Widow Bird [Yellow Bishop]
Swainson's Flycatcher [?]	Black-collared Barbet
Cape Dikkop [Spotted Thick-knee]	White-faced Owl [Southern White-faced Scops-owl]
Gabar Goshawk	Black Goshawk [Black Sparrowhawk]

Recoveries during 1959:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Originally banded</u>	<u>Recovery</u>
White Stork	Bubolski S.S.R. Russia 23rd June 1958	Near Sinoia 17/4/59
Red-billed Firefinch	Hillside, Bulawayo 18/10/56	Hillside, Byo. 26/7/59
Red-billed Firefinch	Falcon College 23/8/59	Falcon College 14/9/59
Brown-throated Martin	Falcon College 17/3/59	Falcon College 19/3/59
White-faced Duck	Wankie Game Reserve 29/4/58	Gwaai River 15/1/59
Common Fiscal Shrike	Marandellas	same area 25/1/59

Red-headed Weaver	Marandellas 15/10/58	Same area 15/11/59
White-fronted Bee-eater	Falcon College 29/3/59	Same area 15/11/59
Red-billed Quelea	Gwelo 3 in June 1959	Same area 29 th June 1959
Acacia Pied Barbet	Hillside, Byo 25/4/59	Same area-dead 15/5/59
Grey-headed Sparrow	Gwelo 28/6/59	Retrapped 29/6/59
Steel-blue Widowfinch	Byo. 2/8/59	Byo. 28/12/59
Yellow Bishop	Falcon College 6/10/59	Same 9/10/59
Groundscraper Thrush	Falcon College 24/11/59	Same 30/11/59
Horus Swifts	Falcon College	Same
	8/3/59	22/11/59
	8/3/59	30/11/59
	15/3/59	22/11/59
	15/3/59	30/11/59
	21/3/59	22/11/59
	29/3/59	22/11/59
	29/3/59	22/11/59
	29/3/59	22/11/59

In conclusion, whilst we may feel pleased with the results achieved, we must also take note of our deficiencies. Of the total of 1027 birds ringed almost 1,000 were ringed in or around either Bulawayo or Essexvale or Gwelo; hardly any birds have been ringed in Mashonaland or Manicaland. It is greatly to be hoped that volunteers may be found to expand the work in these areas.

J.M. Paterson, B.Sc.
Hon. Ringing Organiser
 5.2.60

REPORT OF THE HON. NEST RECORD CARD ORGANISER

ROS members sent in 978 cards — a drop of 634 cards on 1958. I am sure members can contribute a greater number of cards in 1960 if more new contributors will join the scheme. The fact that we do send in more cards than the other branches is due to the efforts of the few.

In Matabeleland we have Mr. C.K. Cooke and Peter Cooke, and Dr A. Wragg and Bobbie Thomson all sending in mainly Plumtree and Khami record cards. In the Midlands the Society gets good support from Messrs' P. McLean and H.P. Meyer. Special mention must also be made of three Salisbury members, J.M.E. Took, R.K. Brooke, and C.J. Vernon. They are all making interesting studies of various groups of birds and also making use of other cards contributed by members.

In 1959 a great deal of progress was made in summarising the cards and duplicating the rarer ones so that we will not have to rely entirely on the new Institute in Cape Town where the main collection of cards will soon be housed. In spite of this I shall still be able to give from my summaries and duplicates nearly all the known S.R. data on any of our breeding species.

While I have been able to mention those members who have contributed the most nest record cards, there are also a few who have supported the SAOS scheme from the beginning of 1952. Their names and the number of cards they have sent in to 30.6.59 are: B.V. Neuby-Varty (456), E.A. Edwards (263), R.K. Brooke (231), G.K. Donald (48), Mrs. G.D. Attwell (47) and A.B. Fletcher (36). Their support each season is much appreciated. Also I must mention Miss I. Rorke, Mrs. D. Searson and I.C. Cannell, who also started contributing cards in 1952 and are still doing so today.

A highlight of 1959 was our first records from Kariba Lake and the first to send in records were Mrs. F. Snell and Mrs. L. Ball. Another notable event in the number of cards received was the passing of the two hundred mark in cards relating to the Southern Red Bishop.

In conclusion I would like to thank those members whose names I have not been able to mention above. We want many more contributors, always remembering that each nest we find should be recorded so that we can add to the quantitative data we are collecting on each of our breeding species, which in 1959 was only 409 species.

H.M. Miles.

Hon. Nest Record Card Organiser.

7.5.60

REPORT OF THE HON. EDITOR

Three issues of the *Bulletin* were produced in 1959 and one further issue has appeared to date in 1960.

It appears that the goal of a quarterly issue of the *Bulletin* is as far off as ever, but it is now appearing more or less regularly three times a year, and the number of pages per issue now averages four, while at the same time I feel that the actual quantity of reading matter is slowly increasing. For this I must thank all members who contributed, and particularly those whom I have come to look upon as more or less regular contributors. I wish to mention in particular Messrs' P. Linton, G.W. Parnell, H.E. Hornby, H.M. Miles, R.K. Brooke, J.M.E. Took, F.O. McLean, Mrs M.L. Snell and Mrs E.M. Watson.

The subject which has given rise to most discussion during the year is the effect of the recent drought season on bird life. It was raised by Mr. H.E. Hornby as early as September, 1959 and contributions are still being received, bringing forth some interesting observations.

R.M. Harwin.

Hon. Editor.

7.5.60

REPORT OF THE HON. MIGRATION RECORD ORGANISER

In September 1959 your Committee decided to appoint a Migration Record Organiser and I was selected. An appeal for migration records was inserted in our *Bulletin* and records from three members were sent in. In addition, Mr. Miles, who was recorder of the former Rhodesian Bird Club, has given me his file on migration dates.

It is proposed during the winter to draw up a list of all probable migrants to the Colony with the approximate times of arrival and departure. This will be circulated to all members as a guide to what to look for during each month. It is hoped that the effort to correct the inevitable deficiencies of such a list will bring many more migrant dates to light.

R.K. Brooke

Hon. Migration Record Organiser.

25.4.60

REPORTS FROM THE SUB-BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES

No reports were received for submission from the Matabeleland or Selukwe Sub-branches owing to administrative difficulties.

Mashonaland Sub-branch

The sub-branch had a most successful year in 1959. Eight field meetings were held and under the leadership of different members visited a selection of woodland habitats and dams. We also had five evening meetings – three were lectures on groups of birds supplemented by skins of the species

discussed. The groups were ducks, weavers and cuckoos. We also had two film shows. All the meetings were supported by a large proportion of our membership.

The membership has increased slightly during the year and I feel that this is in part due to the programme we devised to cater for varied interests and in part due to the hard work of our former Chairman, Mr .Took.

At the Agricultural Show the Society had a display in the Agricultural Hall. This was the centre of much interest which also helped to make the Society better known to people interested in natural history. Several members were recruited then and there and in addition other people who have since joined were first attracted by our exhibit. The Society's thanks are due to Capt. Bourlay and Mr. Mitchell for their considerable efforts in making the exhibit a success.

R.K. Brooke.
Chairman.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE ROS

It has been decided by the ROS Committee that the formation of an "Ornithological Coffee Club" would promote the spread of information. All members are therefore invited to roll up to the "Ornithological Coffee Club" (no charge for membership) which will meet every Thursday from approximately 1 to 2 p.m. at the restaurant in the Salisbury Park for informal chat and discussion on matters ornithological (and not so ornithological) over a cup of coffee, lunch or what-have-you.

This will be an entirely informal social gathering. All members, especially those visiting Salisbury, and their friends and visiting ornithologists are especially welcome. It is hoped that this institution will enable members and others to meet each other and discuss matters of common interest, arrange expeditions, and so on.

We hope to see lots of members there every week. If you are visiting Salisbury from out-of-town make sure that you include a Thursday in your stay in Salisbury and come to the "Ornithological Coffee Club"

R.C. Knight
Hon. Secretary

A CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

Surprisingly enough, there are still members of the Society who have not got their own copy of the "Check list". The importance of this book to anyone at all interested in the birds of our country cannot be too highly stressed and all members are urged to have a copy and to see that their friends have one too. The book is available from booksellers and if your bookseller hasn't one, make him get some!