

PROGRESS REPORT : BIRD RINGING.

By E. H. Ashton.

It is intended to issue an annual report on the progress of the bird ringing scheme organised by the Society. The first report should have been issued last year but for various reasons this was not done, and so this report covers the first two years of the scheme.

The annual season ends in May/June, i.e. at the end of the summer breeding and migrations and the beginning of winter breeding. Returns were called for from all those to whom rings had been issued for the period ending 31st May, 1950, but so many returns were late that the end of the season has been taken as 30th June. A few returns extended even further than this and have been included in the tables given below in order to make this report as up to date as possible and also because some of them are particularly interesting, notably the ringing in July of a young Martial Eagle by G. A. Ranger at Kei Road, and the magnificent achievements of Dr. Eggeling, at Entebbe, who by early August, had ringed 200 birds in six months. Returns are still outstanding from three members, but as it is unlikely that they have ringed more than a dozen birds between them, there is little point in waiting any longer. If only members realised what a lot of unnecessary trouble they cause by not replying promptly, surely they would not dilly-dally so.

10,270 rings have been issued to 21 people, including bodies such as Bird Clubs and Museums. As these bodies have kindly distributed rings to their members and others associated with them, rings have reached well over 30 people. Their geographical distribution has been wide and fairly even from the Cape to Uganda, not forgetting Mrs. Rowan away on Tristan da Cunha. The main gaps have been S.W.A., Northern Cape, Orange Free State, and Natal, but the latter has now been closed as the Natal Bird Club have just acquired 400 rings. After an encouraging start, the Transvaal remained quiescent: but there are signs of renewed activity. The best group or co-operative work has been done in the Cape, through the Cape Bird Club with the enthusiastic help and guidance of Dr. Broekhuysen and Richard Liversidge, and in S. Rhodesia, through the energy of R. Smithers, and the National Museum. The N. Rhodesian returns represent the single-handed efforts of Major Haydock, to whom appropriately belongs the honour of the first recovery. The palm goes to Dr. Eggeling, whose achievement is referred to above.

The first rings were used on the 1st of August, 1948. By the middle of August, 1950, returns had been received for 516. In the first year (ending 30th June, 1949) 148 were used, in the second 254, and in less than two months of the third year, 114. These results are encouraging. Details of rings used according to year and geographical area are given in Table "A".

The number of species ringed is 94. Details are given in Annexure "A". Most of these are worthwhile, but a few, such as the Moorhen,

Turtle and Laughing Doves and Cape Wagtail, are of dubious value—either they should be ringed in large quantities (as, with a little judicious trapping, could easily be done) or else left alone. Most of the species have had only one or two specimens ringed, but in a few cases, an appreciable number has been handled, namely Cape Vulture 31, Kittlitz Sandplover 54, Little Stint 41, Water Dikkop 23, Yellow-billed Kite 23, Pied Wagtail 61.

When one thinks of the vast size of Africa, the ignorance and sparseness of its inhabitants and the pitiful number of birds ringed, the chances of any recoveries seem infinitely remote. And yet there have already been eight. Four of these are tragic rather than informative, except in so far as they may indicate a high mortality among young owls and cormorants, but the other four are in a different category and give high promise of greater things to come. Details are given below, in Table "B".

Most ringing has been spasmodic. This is not decried as it is all that most people are in a position to do, but it does mean that the interesting results that come with continuous observation are not obtainable. Only Dr. Eggeling has ringed regularly over an appreciable period. He has thus been in a position to obtain a good deal of data about breeding habits, incubation periods, plumage changes and juvenilia, not to mention migration movements and population changes. It is to be hoped that he will write up his observations in due course. Meanwhile the following list of retrappings may be of interest as shewing some of the advantages of this method.

Kittlitz' Sandplover.

adult:	7.3.50	16.3.50				
juvenile:	11.5.50	2.8.50				
1 day chick:	4.6.50	2.7.50	7.7.50			
1 day chick:	4.6.50	21.6.50				
chick just flying:	4.6.50	30.7.50				
chick just flying:	4.6.50	9.6.50	7.7.50	16.8.50		
chick just flying:	4.6.50	9.6.50	3.8.50			
chick just flying:	4.6.50	17.7.50				
1 day chick:	17.6.50	4.7.50	7.7.50	15.7.50	17.7.50	18.7.50
adult:	17.6.50	4.7.50				
adult:	4.7.50	7.7.50				
juvenile:	7.7.50	15.7.50	4.8.50			
adult:	9.7.50	18.7.50				
1 day chick:	9.7.50	15.7.50	17.7.50	30.7.50		
1 day chick:	29.7.50	4.8.50	5.8.50			
adult:	19.6.50	6.9.50				

Water Dikkop.

adult:	11.5.50	7.7.50	7.8.50	adult:	18.7.50	9.8.50
adult:	11.5.50	3.8.50		juvenile:	2.8.50	6.9.50
juvenile almost flying:	4.6.50	1.8.50				
adult:	4.6.50	15.7.50	28.8.50			
adult:	4.6.50	11.7.50				
adult:	11.5.50	5.8.50				

Curlew.

18.7.50	29.7.50	6.8.50	(seen with shining ring on both occasions)
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African Pied Wagtail.

8.7.50	13.7.50
8.7.50	17.7.50
13.7.50	31.7.50
13.7.50	31.7.50
17.7.50	31.7.50
17.7.50	31.7.50
17.7.50	7.8.50

Common Sandpiper.

adult: 4.8.50 7.8.50

On the foregoing facts one may reasonably assert that the ringing scheme is fairly launched. We still have a very long way to go to emulate the example of England, where some 10,000 birds are ringed annually, or the U.S.A., where the figure is in the hundred thousands. But we have made a good start. It now remains for a few trapping stations to be set up and for all members to play their part. If each one ringed only two birds annually, our returns would soon leap into four figures. Let us risk the poet's scorn by "adding to golden numbers golden numbers" for in them is safety and significance.

NOTE: Since writing the above Dr. Eggeling has in a month completed another century. His total comprises the following:—

1. Kittlitz' Sandplover	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	14
2. Common Sandpiper	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	56
3. Water Dikkop	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	7
4. African Pied Wagtail	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	7
5. Whimbrel	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	5
6. Eastern Curlew	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
7. Curlew Sandpiper	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
8. Egyptian Goose	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
9. Little Stint	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	7
10. Siberian Ringed Plover	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
										100

1. Cormorant: Reed. *Phalacrocorax a. africanus*. 2—Cape—49.
2. Cormorant: Crowned. *Phalacrocorax a. coronatus*. 14—Langebaan, Cape—48.
3. Darter, S. African. *Anhinga r. rufa*. 3—Cape—49.
4. Heron: Grey. *Ardea c. cinerea*. 3—Cape—49; 1—Entebbe—50.
5. Heron: Black necked. *Ardea melanocephala*. 4—Cape—49.
6. Egret: Cattle. *Bubulcus i. ibis*. 9—Cape—49.
7. Heron: African Night. *Nycticorax n. nycticorax*. 3—Cape—49.
8. Heron: Whitebacked Night. *Nycticorax leuconotus*. 2—Entebbe—50.
9. Ibis: Wood. *Ibis ibis*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
10. Stork: Abdim's. *Sphenorynchus abdimii*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
11. Teal: Redbill. *Anas erythrorhyncha*. 1—Luanshya—48.
12. Goose: Knob-billed. *Sarkidiornis melanotos*. 1—Lupani, S.R.—48.

13. Goose: Spurwing. *Plectropterus gambensis*. 3—Lupani, S.R.—48.
14. Vulture: Cape. *Gyps coprotheres*. 31—Kranzberg, Tvl.—48.
15. Kite: Yellowbilled. *Milvus migrans parasitus*. 10—Berg Rv., Cape—48: 7—Berg Rv.—49: 5—Luanshya—48: 1—Luanshya—49.
16. Hawk: Anderson's Bat. *Machaerhamphus alcinus anderssoni*. 1—Nyazura, S.R.—49.
17. Eagle: Black. *Aquila verreauxi*. 2—Cape—49.
18. Hawk—Eagle: African. *Hieraaetus fasciatus spilogaster*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
19. Hawk—Eagle: Ayres. *Hieraaetus dubius*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
20. Eagle: Martial. *Polemaetus bellicosus*. 1—Kei, Rd, C.P.—50.
21. Harrier-Eagle: Black-breasted. *Circaetus pectoralis*. 1—Plumtree, S.R.—49.
22. Harrier: Marsh. *Circus aeruginosus ranivorus*. 2—Cape—48.
23. Francolin: Humboldts. *Pternistes afer swynnertoni*. 1—Melsetter, S.R.—49.
24. Quail: Harlequin. *Coturnix d. delegorguei*. 1—Bulawayo—49: 1—Salisbury—49.
25. Corncrake. *Crex crex*. 1—Luanshya—49.
26. Moorhen: African. *Gallinula chloropus meridionalis*. 1—Cape—49.
27. Plover: Siberian ringed. *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*. 9—Entebbe—49.
28. Sandplover: White-fronted. *Charadrius m. marginatus*. 3—Cape—48.
29. Sandplover: Kittlitz. *Charadrius pecuarius*. 12—Cape—48: 1—Cape—49: 19—Entebbe—49: 22—Entebbe—50.
30. Sandplover: Treble-banded. *Charadrius t. tricollaris*. 2—Johannesburg—49.
31. Plover: Little ringed. *Charadrius dubius coronicus*. 5—Entebbe—49.
32. Plover: Crowned. *Stephanibyx coronatus*. 2—Keurbooms Riv., C.P.—49.
33. Stilt: S.A. (Black-winged). *Himantopus himantopus meridionalis*. 4—Cape—49.
34. Sandpiper: Curlew. *Erolia testacea*. 2—Cape—48.
35. Stint: Little. *Erolia minuta*. 11—Cape—48: 4—Cape—49: 24—Entebbe—49: 2—Entebbe—50.
36. Ruff. *Philomachus pugnax*. 1—Cape—49.
37. Sandpiper: Common. *Actitis hypoleucos*. 5—Richards Bay, Natal—48: 4—Entebbe—49: 10—Entebbe—50.
38. Sandpiper: Wood. *Tringa glareola*. 1—Luanshya—48: 1—Entebbe—49.
39. Curlew. *Numenius arquata*—probably *N. a. suschkini*: possibly *N. a. arquata*. 1—Entebbe—50.
40. Courser: Temminck's. *Cursorius t. temminckii*. 2—Bulawayo—50.
41. Pratincole: Gaboon White-collared. *Galachrysis nuchalis marchei*. 1—Entebbe—50.
42. Dikkop: Water. *Burhinus v. vermiculatus*. 14—Entebbe—49: 9—Entebbe—50.
43. Gull: Scandinavian: Lesser Black-backed. *Larus f. fuscus*. 1—Entebbe—49: 1—Entebbe—50.

44. Gull: Hartlaub's. *Larus novae-hollandiae hartlaubi*. 1—Cape—49.
45. Tern: White-winged Black. *Chlidonias leucoptera*. 1—Entebbe—50.
46. Tern: Caspian. *Hydroprogne caspia*. 1—Langebaan, Cape—48.
47. Dove: Turtle. *Streptopelia capicola tropica*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
48. Dove: Laughing. *Streptopelia s. senegalensis*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
49. Dove: Namaqua. *Oena c. capensis*. 2—Luanshya—49.
50. Cuckoo: Jacobin crested. *Clamator jacobinus serratus*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
51. Cuckoo: Dideric. *Chrysococcyx caprius*. 1—Luanshya—48: 1—Boksburg, Tvl.—48: 2—Magaliesberg, Tvl.—49.
52. Roller: East African broad-billed. *Eurystomus glaucurus suahelicus*. 2—Luanshya—48.
53. Kingfisher: S.A. Greyhooded. *Halcyon leucocephala pallidiventris*. 3—Luanshya—48.
54. Kingfisher: East African Brownhooded. *Halcyon albiventris orientalis*. 2—Muliashi, N.R.—49.
55. Bee-eater: European. *Merops apiaster*. 5—Langebaan—48.
56. Hornbill: Yellowbilled. *Tockus flavirostris leucomelas*. 3—Dett, S.R.—49.
57. Hoopoe: S. African. *Upupa africana*. 5—Ysterfontein, Cape—49.
58. Owl: S.A. Barn. *Tyto alba affinis*. 1—Cape—49: 3—Bulawayo—48: 1—Bulawayo—49.
59. Owl: S.A. Wood. *Ciccaba woodfordii woodfordii*. 1—Muliashi, N.R.—49.
60. Owl: Spotted Eagle. *Bubo a. africanus*. 7—Cape—49.
61. Nightjar: European. *Caprimulgus e. europaeus*. 4—Muliashi, N.R.—49.
62. Nightjar: Fiery-necked. *Caprimulgus pectoralis fervidus*. 3—Muliashi, N.R.—49.
63. Swift: White rumped. *Apus c. caffer*. 5—Luanshya—48: 4—Cape—49: 1—Kingwilliamstown—49: 3—Springs—49.
64. Wagtail: African pied. *Motacilla aguimp vidua*. 61—Entebbe—50.
65. Wagtail: Cape. *Motacilla c. capensis*. 2—Cape—49: 1—Keurbooms Riv.—49.
66. Wagtail: Yellow. *Motacilla flava* sp. 6—Entebbe—49 (1 perhaps *B.f. feldegg*, 2 perhaps *B.f. flava*, 3 subsp. unidentified).
67. Pipit: Plainbacked. *Anthus l. leucophrys*. 2—Cape—49.
68. Babbler: Jardine's. *Turdoides j. jardinei*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
69. Flycatcher: Greythroated Paradise. *Terpsiphone viridis plumbeiceps*. 4—Bulawayo—49.
70. Thrush: Kurrichaine. *Turdus l. libonyanus*. 1—Plumtree, S.R.—49.
71. Chat: Natal Stone. *Saxicola torquata caffra*. 1—Luanshya—48.
72. Scrubrobin: Zambesi. *Erythropgia leucophrys makalaka*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
73. Swallow: European. *Hirundo r. rustica*. 2—Bulawayo—48.
74. Swallow: Whitethroated. *Hirundo a. albigularis*. 1—Port Elizabeth—49.

75. Swallow: Monteiro's Mosque. *Hirundo senegalensis monteiri*. 3—Luanshya—48.
76. Swallow: Redbreasted. *Hirundo s. semirufa*. 11—Bulawayo—49.
77. Swallow: Large striped. *Hirundo cucullata*. 2—Bulawayo—49: 3—Melsetter—49: 1—Bredasdorp, Cape—49: 2—Cape—49: 5—Kei Rd., C.P.—49.
78. Swallow: Smaller striped. *Hirundo abyssinica unitatis*. 5—Luanshya 48: 4—Luanshya—49: 2—Plumtree, S.R.—49. (Last two possibly *H. cucullata*.)
79. Swallow: Grey-rumped. *Hirundo g. griseopyga*. 1—Luanshya—48: 3—Luanshya—49.
80. Swallow: Uganda. *Hirundo angolensis arcticincta*. 6—Entebbe—49.
81. Rock-martin: Cape. *Ptyonoprogne fuligula pretoriae*. 1—Birchenough Br., S.R.—49.
82. Shrike: Souza's. *Lanius souzae burigi*. 2—Luanshya—49.
83. Shrike: Crimson-breasted. *Laniarius atrococcineus*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
84. Shrike: Longtailed. *Corvinella m. melanoleuca*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
85. Starling: Southern Violet-backed. *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster verreauxi*. 6—Luanshya—48.
86. Starling: Pied. *Spreo bicolor*. 1—Cape—49.
87. Starling: Glossy. *Lamprotornis mevesii*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
88. Starling: Redwing. *Onychognathus m. morio*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
89. Weaver: Jameson's. *Ploceus x. xanthops*. 1—Luanshya—48.
90. Quelea: Redbilled. *Q. quelea lathamii*. 1—Bulawayo—48: 2—Bulawayo—49.
91. Bishop-bird: Tropical. *Euplectes orix sundevalli*. 1—Bulawayo—49.
92. Finch: Cut-throat. *Amadina fasciata meridionalis*. 3—Dett, S.R.—49.
93. Widowbird: Shaft-tailed. *Vidua regia*. 1—Dett, S.R.—49.
94. Widowbird: Pintail. *Vidua macroura*. 2—Dett, S.R.—49.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RINGING.

"A"

Place or Area.	1948	1949	1950	Total
Cape	30	57	—	87
Cape environs (Berg River, Langebaan, Bredasdorp)	30	8	—	38
Eastern Province (Kei Road, Port Elizabeth, Kingwilliamstown, etc.)	—	15	1	16
Natal (Richards Bay)	5	—	—	5
Transvaal (Johannesburg, Boksburg, Springs, Kransberg, etc.)	32	7	—	39
Matabeleland (Bulawayo, Lupani, Plumtree, Dett)	10	48	2	60
Mashonaland (Salisbury, Inyazura, Melseiter, Birchenough Bridge)	—	7	—	7
Northern Rhodesia (Luanshya and Mulishi)	41	23	—	64
Uganda (Entebbe)	—	89	111	200
TOTAL	148	254	114	516

"B"

Recoveries.	Place	Date	Place	Date	Remarks.
Species.					
Red Cormorant	Juv.	21.12.49	recovered.		
Yellowbilled Kite	Juv.	13.10.48	Rondebosch, north of Bulawayo	17.1.50	
Little Stint	Adult	25. 2.50	Entebbe	2.7.50	Retrapped and released.
Little Stint	Adult	7. 3.50	Entebbe	30.8.50	
Spotted Eagle Owl	Juv.	12.10.49	Rondebosch	12.11.49	
Spotted Eagle Owl	Juv.	12.10.49	Rondebosch	4.11.49	Ring removed and bird released.
Spotted Eagle Owl	Juv.	3.12.49	Cape Town	15.12.49	
Cape Vulture	Juv.	1. 8.48	Kransberg, Tvl., S.E. of Bulawayo.	7.10.49	

Note.—Where not otherwise stated, the bird was found dead or killed.