

NINETEENTH RINGING REPORT FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

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SUMMARY

VERNON, C. J. 1977. Nineteenth ringing report for southern Africa. *Ostrich* 48:106-109. A report on ringing activities for southern Africa from July 1975 to June 1976 is presented. A total of 36 016 birds of 419 species was ringed. The trends follow the general decline in ringing activities since a peak in 1970/71.

INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period July 1975 to June 1976, when 36 016 birds of 419 species were ringed. This is the lowest total since 1964/65 and is part of a general decline since 1970/71 when about 70 000 birds were ringed. The trend accords with the policy of the Unit to stimulate productive ringing of a few rather than many species.

DISTRIBUTION OF RINGING ACTIVITY

Ringing was done in all provinces of South Africa as well as Malawi and Rhodesia. Most birds were ringed in the Transvaal, the Cape Province and Rhodesia. These areas accounted for 59 of the 71 ringers and 83% of the birds ringed (Table 1). The Barberspan Ornithological Research Station, the Rhodesian Ornithological Society and the Cape Bird Club, were the principal ringing organizations. These three groups accounted for 62% of the birds ringed (Table 2). The Natal Bird Club was the only group which ringed more birds in 1975/76 than in 1974/75. The most active ringers were A. J. Manson (3 307 birds ringed), A. J. Tree (1 690), D. Hanmer (1 525) and A. Craig (1 505). There were nine others, individuals or organizations, who ringed over 500 birds in 1975/76.

TABLE 1
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF BIRD RINGING ACTIVITY DURING JULY 1975-JUNE 1976

	No. ringers	No. species ringed	No. birds ringed	Percentage total no. birds ringed
Cape Province	19	113	7 389	20,5
Malawi	1	110	1 526	4,2
Natal	6	129	3 012	8,4
Orange Free State	3	17	1 080	3,0
Rhodesia	17	233	6 235	17,3
South West Africa	2	73	685	1,9
Transvaal	23	242	16 089	44,7
Totals	71	419	36 016	100,0

BIRDS RINGED

The 20 most frequently ringed birds in 1975/76 accounted for 66% of the rings used. Two of these species were not among the 20 most frequently ringed birds of the past two years. Ten species on the 1975/76 list do not feature on the overall list of the 20 most frequently ringed species (Vernon 1976). Two species join the overall top 20 and displace the Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis* and the Cape Weaver *Ploceus capensis* (Table 3). These fluctuations are representative of changing patterns of ringing activity. Currently there is a decline in ringing of nestlings of some colonial breeding or roosting birds and a tendency to ring waterfowl, waders, vultures and weavers.

TABLE 2
RINGING ACTIVITY OF ORGANIZATIONS DURING JULY 1975-JUNE 1976

	Species ringed	Birds ringed	Percentage of total birds ringed
<i>Cape Province</i>			
Cape Bird Club	77	4 947	13,7
Cape Divisional Council Rondevlei	47	798	2,2
Cape Provincial Administration	17	694	1,9
Percy FitzPatrick Institute	20	936	2,6
Others	8	14	1
<i>Natal</i>			
Natal Bird Club	129	3 012	8,4
<i>Orange Free State</i>			
Orange Free State Administration	10	642	1,8
Ringers	7	31	0,1
<i>Rhodesia</i>			
Rhodesia Ornithological Society	230	6 204	17,2
Others	5	31	0,1
<i>South West Africa</i>			
South West Africa Administration	25	465	1,3
Ringers	52	220	0,6
<i>Transvaal</i>			
Transvaal Provincial Administration	127	11 062	30,7
N. Transvaal Ornithological Society	132	1 568	4,3
Witwatersrand Bird Club	141	3 459	4,2
<i>Malawi</i>			
	110	1 526	4,2
Totals	419	36 016	

BIRDS RECOVERED

1 391 recoveries were processed during 1975/76. The 20 most frequently recovered birds represent 74% of all recoveries in 1975/76 (Table 4). A list of all recoveries is available, but is not published for reasons outlined previously (Elliott 1974). Among the recoveries were several of passerines living for ten years.

RESEARCH

The Unit was consulted by three researchers during the year. These persons were conducting studies of the Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*, the Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* and Palearctic waders.

DISCUSSION

The decline in ringing activity may be part of a general shift in the interests of members of the South African Ornithological Society. This should not be viewed with alarm, but rather as a respite whereby systems can be organized so that future developments proceed along more productive lines. This is currently taking place within the Unit and with the production of a manual of bird ringing.

TABLE 3
THE TWENTY MOST FREQUENTLY RINGED SPECIES DURING JULY 1975–JUNE 1976

	No. birds ringed	Remarks		
Jackass Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	738			
South African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	481	A		
Yellowbilled Duck <i>Anas undulata</i>	2 690			
Redbill Teal <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	1 134	A		C
Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	377		B	
Crowned Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	353	A	B	
Redknobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	470			
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1 884			
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	637			
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	369		B	
Sanderling <i>Crocethia alba</i>	567	A	B	
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	420		B	
Hartlaub's Gull <i>Larus hartlaubi</i>	1 779			C
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	403			
Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	466		B	
Spottedbacked Weaver <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	458		B	
Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	2 519			
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	2 947			
Redshouldered Widow <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>	424	A	B	
Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	4 589			
Total	23 732			

A = Did not feature on same list for 1974/75

B = Does not feature amongst the overall top 20 species ringed

C = Now among the overall top 20

TABLE 4
THE TWENTY MOST FREQUENTLY RECOVERED SPECIES DURING JULY 1975-JUNE 1976

	No. recoveries reported by public	No. local recoveries and controls	No. foreign recoveries	Totals
Jackass Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	21	20		41
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	11	4		15
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>			58	58
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	26	4		30
South African Shelduck <i>Tadorna cana</i>	19	7		26
Cape Shoveller <i>Anas Smithii</i>	2	71		73
Yellow-billed Duck <i>Anas undulata</i>	40	107		147
Southern Pochard <i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	10	21		31
Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	10	2		12
Crowned Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	4	10		14
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>	13	65		78
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	27	6	1	34
Hartlaub's Gull <i>Larus hartlaubi</i>	21	6		27
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	10	51	12	73
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	30	30		60
European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	18	3	12	33
Cape Sparrow <i>Passer melanurus</i>	7	13		20
Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	20	22		42
Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	14	189		203
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	4	11		15
Others	188	123	46	357
Totals	495	765	129	1 389

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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