

REVIEW

EUROPEAN SWALLOWS *HIRUNDO RUSTICA* IN BOTSWANA

Eds Bennie van den Brink, Rob G. Bijlsma & Tom van der Have. 1997.

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This report summarises the results of month-long expeditions to Botswana by Dutch ringers in three successive summers (1992/1993–1994/1995). The objective of the project was to study European Swallows *Hirundo rustica* in Botswana, a potential nonbreeding area for swallows from the Netherlands, where this formerly common species is showing worrying declines.

The project has been reported on five times in *Safring News* since 1972 (21: 73, 22: 27–29, 23: 20–21, 23: 40–42, 24: 81–82); the project leaders have made an exceptional effort to keep the local ringing fraternity informed of their progress.

A total of 17 439 swallows was handled over the three summers, of which nine had been ringed elsewhere. At the time of going to

press, there had been four recoveries from the birds ringed. Movements linked Botswana with Spain, France, England, Belgium, Sweden (2), Hungary, Estonia (3), Israel, Nigeria and far eastern Zaire; this represents a remarkably wide east-west scatter of recovery locations – ironically, none were in the Netherlands (a map in the report on page 71 also shows 13 recoveries, but has only one to Sweden, but adds one to Uganda.) The project undertook detailed studies of moult, mass, fat scores and other biometric measurements. The results of these studies are well-presented and discussed. The methods used could readily be replicated by swallow ringers resident in southern Africa, who have the advantage that their ringing effort can be spread out over the entire summer, and not concentrated into one month. Such comparisons would add a biogeographical perspective to the studies made in Botswana.

The report also contains details of all other species ringed, incidental avifaunistic observations, and waterbird counts at wetlands (Boteti River, Shashe Lake, and transect counts in the Moremi National Park and Shakawa Lodge).

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