FEATURE ARTICLES

Features on species studies, on ringing localities and major happenings at the Ringing Unit will be carried here.

KNOB-BILLED DUCK RINGING

By: Ken Cackett (R.O.S.)

Chiredzi,

RHODESIA.

Large numbers of Knob-billed Duck invade the south-eastern lowveld of Rhodesia during the summer months from October to April, attracted by natural lowveld from about 50 miles distant, from about 300 miles distant), Senanga in Zambia (+600 miles), and Lake Sibolu in Sudan (+2500 miles). The remaining five recoveries have all come from Mozambique, ranging from near Beira in the north to the Incomati River in the South.

Although there have been insufficient recoveries to indicate any seasonal or directional trends, it is hoped that the successes recorded from this small effort will stimulate a more active interest in this species. Recoveries are largely dependent on the activities and cooperation of hunters, and the fact that the knobbie male is a popular target for sportsmen should ensure a reasonably high recovery rate from any such ringing project.

Knob-billed Duck ringing is also carried out by Mr. H.F. Meyer at Mleza Agricultural School, Que Que. His ringing is strictly limited since it is important to show to the students how wildlife and agriculture can be integrated and so disturbance must be kept to an absolute minimum. Mr. Meyer writes "I catch the birds in a walk-in trap. I started ringing duck in 1964/65. Since then I have ringed 208 knob-billed Duck out of a total of 474 birds ringed. The following are the furthest recoveries I have had:-

27.6.66 Darfur, Sudan (12.00N, 24.55E), The finder reported knobbies breeding in the area.
14.9.69 Namwala District, Zambia (15.44S, 22.34E).
30.11.70 Shinyanga District, Tanzania (no co-ordinates).
15.8.71 Fort Lamy, Tchad (11.42N, 15.34E).

H. F. Meyer (R.O.S.)

QUE, QUE.

(These two articles show how tremendously interesting this species is. It is also clear that the capture technique is easy once the trap is built. It has been suggested that the knobbie may be a species that breeds at both ends of its migration route - more information needed - ED.)