

Females built the nests in both native and exotic trees, at heights from 1,25 m to 6 m. A most disconcerting observation was the number of failed nests due to damage by other birds stealing the material to build, or more probably to line their own nests. In some cases, before completion of the clutch, eggs went with the nest material. We saw three different species of bird thieves, two honeyeaters and another flycatcher, Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*. In the second nesting season, between September and

January, female Red built three nests; the first was damaged and the other two successful. Yellow built four nests, two successful and two damaged. Violet built nine nests and lost all but the last one.

Height above ground appeared to have no effect on success but the better record of Red was probably due to the selection of sites near the house, our presence deterring theft. It would be interesting to know if Bluemantled Flycatchers are similarly victimised.

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### **REPORTBACK ON COLOUR-MARKED WADERS**

In summer 1987/88, members of bird clubs were alerted through newsletters, *Birding in Southern Africa*, *Safring News* and *SABAP News* to watch out for colour-marked waders from Dubai in the Persian Gulf, on a potential migration route to southern Africa. Similarly, in 1991/92 they looked for waders marked in the Taimyr Peninsula, the breeding ground for many waders migrating to southern Africa. The brief comment is that no sightings were reported from our region.

However, there were other results. The Dubai expedition retrapped a Curlew Sandpiper that had been ringed by Paul Martin in the Swartkops estuary in the eastern Cape, and one of their colour-dyed Little Stints was subsequently seen on Crete, in the Mediterranean Sea. Pavel Tomkovich reports from Moscow that a Knot he ringed in the Taimyr last July has been recovered in Denmark, and that there have been sightings of colour-dyed Knots in the United Kingdom and Portugal, although details of these have not yet been confirmed. In addition, he retrapped a Curlew Sandpiper on a nest with an Australian ring at the same site in the Taimyr at which he had found a South African ring on a Sanderling one year

earlier - this bird had been ringed at Kommetjie on the Cape Peninsula. [See page 29, this volume].

We urge members of bird clubs to keep on the lookout for birds with plumage dyes and colour rings. Projects using these methods are being undertaken in a variety of places, involving not only migrants but also "resident" species. Besides the date and place, please report the colour and part of the plumage that was dyed. For colour rings (sometimes several rings may be used) carefully note the positions of rings; information should, for example, be in the form: "red over green on left leg, blue over metal on right", etc. Also, please check dead birds for rings, trying to note cause of death. The chances of finding a dead ringed bird are slender, but remember that on average 1,1 dead ringed bird is found (and reported to SAFRING) per day, and the African Seabird Group averages one ring recovery for every 186 dead seabirds found on beach walks!

Please send all reports to Mr T B Oatley, **SAFRING**, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7700 (Telephone 021-650-2421).

*Les Underhill*

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