

PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE ADU



DECEMBER 2002–JUNE 2003



Research papers

- Calf K.M. & Underhill L.G. 2002.** Productivity of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquini* on Robben Island, South Africa, in the 2001–2002 breeding season. Wader Study Group Bulletin 99: 45–49.
- Calf K.M., Downs C.T. & Cherry M.I. 2003.** Territoriality of Cape Sugarbirds (*Promerops cafer*) and its role in mating and reproductive success. Emu 103: 29–35.
- Crawford R.J.M. & Underhill L.G. 2003.** Aspects of breeding, population trend, measurements and moult of Hartlaub's Gull (*Larus hartlaubii*) in Western Cape, South Africa. Waterbirds 26: 139–149.
- de Waal S.W.P., Branch G.M. & Navarro R. 2003.** Interpreting evidence of dispersal by *Haliotis midae* juveniles seeded in the wild. Aquaculture 221: 299–310.
- Fabricius C., Palmer A.R. & Burger M. 2002.** Landscape diversity in a conservation area and commercial and communal rangeland in Xeric Succulent Thicket, South Africa. Landscape Ecology 17: 531–537.
- Oschadleus D. & Underhill L.G. 2002.** Twenty five years of Wood Sandpiper ringing from southern Africa. Wader Study Group Bulletin 99: 19–20.
- Underhill L.G., Calf K.M., Crawford R.J.M., du Toit M., Waller L. & Whittington P.A. 2003.** Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* and White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* at Dyer Island, South Africa. Atlantic Seabirds 5: 1–3.
- Underhill L.G., Crawford R.J.M. & Camphuysen C.J. 2002.** Leach's Storm Petrels *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* off southern Africa: breeding and migratory status, and measurements and mass of the breeding population. Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa 57: 43–46.

Books

- Nel D.C. & Whittington P.A. (eds). 2003.** Rehabilitation of oiled African Penguins: a conservation success story. Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and the Avian Demography Unit. 31 p.
- Young D.J, Harrison J.A., Navarro R.A., Anderson M.D. & Colahan B.D.(eds). 2003.** Big Birds on Farms: Mazda CAR Report 1993–2001. Avian Demography Unit, Cape Town. 205 p.

Chapters in books

- Cooper J. 2003.** International Agreements/National approaches – Seabirds. In Second International Fishers Forum Executive Summary. Honolulu, Hawaii, November 19–22, 2002. pp. 44–45.
- Harrison J. 2003.** Big birds on farms – the message. In Young D.J, Harrison J.A., Navarro R.A., Anderson M.D. & Colahan B.D.(eds). Big Birds on Farms: Mazda CAR Report 1993–2001. Avian Demography Unit, Cape Town. pp. 15–24.
- Underhill L.G. 2003.** Are African Penguins tough enough? A perspective on the rehabilitation of oiled birds. In Nel D.C. & Whittington P.A. (eds). Rehabilitation of oiled African Penguins: a conservation success story. Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and Avian Demography Unit. pp. 30–31.
- Wolfaardt A.C. & Nel D.C. 2003.** Breeding productivity and annual cycle of rehabilitated African Penguins following oiling. In Nel D.C. & Whittington P.A. (eds). Rehabilitation of oiled African Penguins: a conservation success story. Cape Town, BirdLife South Africa and the Avian Demography Unit. pp. 18–25.
- Young, D. 2003.** Introduction, methods, and CAR's past and future. In Young D.J, Harrison J.A., Navarro R.A., Anderson M.D. & Colahan B.D.(eds). Big Birds on Farms: Mazda CAR Report 1993–2001. Avian Demography Unit, Cape Town. pp. 6–14.

Conference proceedings

- Calf K.M. & Underhill L.G. 2002.** Territoriality of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquini* on Robben Island. Abstract Wader Study Group Bulletin 99: 6–7.
- Matanyaire S.D., Calf K.M. & Underhill L.G. 2002.** Estimating the distribution of the start of incubation: the African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* as an example. Abstract. Wader Study Group Bulletin 99: 9.

Conference presentations

- Calf K.M. & Underhill L.G. 2002.** Territoriality of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquini* on Robben Island. International Wader Study Group Meeting, Poland.
- Harebottle D.M. 2002.** Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) and its potential contribution to wetland conservation in South Africa. 6th annual South African Wetlands Action Group meeting, Rondevlei Nature Reserve, Cape Town, 28–30 October 2002.
- Wolfaardt A.C., Martens C., Botha M. & Gerber G. 2002.** Partnerships and Incentives for conservation in priority areas of the Cape Floristic Region (CFR). Fynbos Forum Conference. Rawsonville, South Africa.

ADU Publications

- Calf K.M. & Underhill L.G. 2003.** Population dynamics and productivity of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquini* on Robben Island, South Africa in the 2002/03 breeding season. ADU Research Report No. 51. Report to the Robben Island Museum.
- de Villiers M.S. 2002.** Effects of a storm on breeding African Penguins *Spheniscus demersus* at Foxy Beach, Boulders Penguin Colony, Simon's Town. Bird Numbers 11(2): 7–9.
- Harebottle D.M. 2002.** Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) Newsletter 20, June 2002.
- Harebottle D.M. 2002.** Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) Newsletter 21, December 2002.
- Harrison J.A. 2003.** Report on proposed developments at Rooisands Nature Reserve, with special reference to birds and amphibians. ADU Research Report No. 48.
- Harrison J.A. & McDowell C.R. 2003.** A list of recommended indigenous plants for use in the gardens of greater Cape Town. ADU Research Report No. 49.
- Harrison J.A. 2003.** Scoping report on the birds and amphibians on land owned by the National Ports Authority, Sandanha Bay. ADU Research Report No. 50.
- Oschadleus D. & Harebottle D. 2002.** A survey of roadkills, with special emphasis on birds. Bird Numbers 11(2): 42–44.
- Oschadleus H.D. & Harebottle D.M. 2002.** Overlap in incubation and primary moult in Crowned Plovers. Afring News 30&31: 26.
- Shaw K.A. & Ward V.L. 2002.** Coastal breeding site of Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradiseus*. Bird Numbers 11(2): 44.
- Williams A.J. & Ward V.L. 2002.** Catastrophic cholera: coverage, causes, context, conservation and concern. Bird Numbers 11(2): 2–6.
- Young D.J. 2002.** Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts (CAR) Newsletter 13.
- Young D.J. 2002.** Ringing, recovery and release – an owl's success story. Bird Numbers 11(2): 31–32.
- Ward V.L. 2002.** Biometrics and moult of adult Streakyheaded Canaries *Serinus gularis* at Elandsbaai, South Africa. Afring News 31(1&2): 28–29.

Works of a popular nature

- Calf K.M. & Chalton D. 2002.** Multiple clutches in a single season – Dikkops ensuring breeding success in triplicate. *Promerops* 252: 13.
- Cooper J. 2003.** Saving Seabirds. *Africa – Birds & Birding* 8(2): 76.
- Cooper J., Underhill L. & Oschadleus D. 2002.** Ancient mariner. Safring's oldest ringed bird approaches its half century. *Africa – Birds & Birding* 7(2): 14.
- de Villiers M.S. 2002.** Islands of the Wild West. *Promerops* 252: 14–15.
- Harebottle D.M. 2002.** The Birds In Reserves Project (BIRP) – making your observations count. *Indaba/Inyoni – Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa* 5(4): 30–31.
- Harebottle D.M. & Oschadleus H.D. 2002.** ADU roadshow, 6–20 September 2002. *Indaba/Inyoni – Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa* 5(4): 32–33.
- Oschadleus H.D. & le Roux J. 2002.** Longevity and dispersal in Swift Terns. *Africa – Birds & Birding* 7(6): 19.
- Oschadleus D. 2003.** European Marsh Warbler. *Africa – Birds & Birding* 8(3): 13.
- [Oschadleus D.] 2002.** Serendipity on Dassen Island. *Monday Paper* 21(37): 3.
- Underhill L.G. 2003.** Breeding in the silly season. *Indaba/Inyoni: Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa* 6(1): 27–28.
- Underhill L.G. 2003.** War in Iraq: a birds eye view. *Indaba/Inyoni: Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa* 6(2): 15.
- Underhill L.G. 2003.** “We appreciate the ban on off-road vehicles from our beaches.” *Indaba/Inyoni – Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa* 6(2): 29.

Chirps from the past

Karen Dixon

Having been involved in bird ringing for the past year, I was interested to read *An early instance of bird-ringing* in BN11(2) describing herons bearing silver rings, recorded in a letter dated 21 June 1729. An even earlier example of bird banding came to light when I read David Lack's *Swifts in a Tower* although, as the author notes, 'one can scarcely believe the first reported recovery of a marked swallow in its winter home'. Recorded in his book *Dialogus Magnus Visionum et Miraculorum*, edited between 1219 and 1223, the then prior of Koenigswinter Cistercian Monastery, Caesarius von Heisterbach, wrote of an adult swallow taken from its nest and a parchment note affixed to its foot reading 'Oh, swallow, where do you live in winter?' The swallow duly returned the following spring bearing a note which read 'In Asia, in home of Petrus'!

During the 16th century, it was commonly believed that swallows wintered at the bottom of lakes and remained torpid in the mud, to resurface in the spring. Though an-

cient Greeks surmised they might seek warmer climes during winter, controversy regarding water hibernation persisted up to the 18th and early 19th centuries. However, one Johann Frisch was sceptical of the theory and set out to find a more plausible explanation for the disappearance of swallows in winter. In the mid-18th century, he carried out one of the earliest ringing experiments by tying red threads around the legs of swallows. He argued that if they really spent time under water, the dye should leach out of the threads. He concluded the birds did not submerge because when the swallows returned in the spring the threads were still red. It is thought that Frisch may be the first person to mark wild birds for a purely scientific study and, incidentally, Edward Jenner may have been the second, by marking swifts.

Dorst J. 1962. The migration of birds. Heinemann, London.

Lack D. 1956. Swifts in a tower. Methuen, London.

Turner A.K. 1994. The swallow. Hamlyn, London.

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... braved thunder,
lightning and rain ...



... withstood hail ...



... avoided birds
of prey ...



... dodged hunters ...

... and made soft
landings ...



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Birds in culture



'M.F.M.' – the Birdwatchers' Bard

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The appearance of the name 'M.F.M. Meiklejohn' in 'Chirps from the Past' (BN 11(2)) should not pass without comment. This is not only because of his connection with UCT – he was lecturer in Italian and Old French there from 1937–41. After the war, Maury Meiklejohn worked with the British Council in Teheran, then briefly at the University of Leeds before taking up the post of Professor of Italian at Glasgow University in 1949. He remained there until his death in 1974.

Apart from languages (he spoke Arabic, Portuguese, Persian, Romanian and Afrikaans as well as Italian), Maury Meiklejohn's great passion was birdwatching. This interest took him to many parts of the British Isles and overseas, but his favourite birding destination was the Isle of May off the east coast of Scotland. The island's Bird Observatory, housed in an old lighthouse, has maintained a log since it was established in 1936. In this the daily activities and observations of visiting birders are recorded. The island is famous for its falls of migrants and rarities in spring and autumn, and for its spectacular seabird colonies (there are 70 000 pairs of Puffins alone). The log books are full of fascinating accounts of these, but whenever the initials 'M.F.M.M.' appear at the bottom of an entry, it is invariably worth reading, even if it records the fact that nothing remotely interesting happened all day.

Maury wrote some wonderful stuff which, even after half a century of changing (and largely declining) tastes, is still funny, insightful and pertinent. Some of his

'extracts from the daily log' are reproduced in *The Isle of May* by W.J. Eggeling (Korien Press, 1985). These include the original account of the Hoodwink *Dissimulatrix spuria*, a species whose 'restricted type locality is the Angler's Bar, Leith Walk' (a less-than-salubrious district of the otherwise fine city of Edinburgh). Its 'soft parts (i.e. the hard parts) are pinkish horn shading to hornish pink', it only perches beyond the range of strong binoculars, and it has marked powers of mimicry ('but when mimicking one of two similar species will always choose the rarer . . .').

Some of M.F.M.M.'s Isle of May material also subsequently appeared, suitably polished, in the RSPB's *Bird Notes* (the precursor to the Society's *Birds* magazine). I felt that the subject matter of one of his poems from *Bird Notes* of Winter 1951 (25[1]: 13–15) might be of particular interest to readers of *Bird Numbers*.

The Naturalist's Early Morning Walk

When Phoebus rears his shining head
 and drowsy woodlice leave their bed;
 when milkmaids doff their flannel nighties;
 when *Troglodytes troglodytes*
troglodytes (L.) is heard,
 that tuneful and trinomial bird;
 when *Pica pica pica* (Linn.)
 scatters the rear of darkness thin;
 when homeward reels the moping owl;
 the ornithologist 'gins to prowl.
 He rises early, for he must
 count Corncrakes for the British Trust;
 or hear if *Cuculus canorus*

sings in the first auroral chorus;
or test the Red-backed Shrike's hygiene
with droppings made of plasticine.

For even after studious nights
at grips with ectoparasites,
with less than half-an-hour's rest
he prances from his downy nest
at five – and not a moment later –
lest he should miss essential data
to show that Lesser Whitethroats lay
one egg at seven every day –
or sometimes even 9.2;
this seems a curious thing to do,
did birds not know it were the norm,
when facts are shown in graphic form.
And lo! one day appears a screed
that takes a Chinaman to read,
comprising 20,000 words
in January's *British Birds*.

The ornithologist at work
presents a sight to fright a Turk,
with gumboots, telescope and glasses,
protective hat festooned with grasses,
little boxes filled with ants,
patent impermeable pants,
notebooks, aluminium rings,
traps, cameras, elastic slings –
with many other things as well
contrived to make birds' lives a hell,
as tuning forks and metronomes
and the Handbook, all five tomes.

The Modern Bird is always fleeing
before this Frankensteinish being.
No wonder under such conditions
he is a mass of inhibitions!
When trained observers of this sort
are there with notebooks to report
his every impulse, every action,
no wonder he displays distraction!
In an advanced neurotic state
the Dunnock twitters to his mate:
"That egg you laid today was blotched,
I think it comes of being watched."
The Heron murmurs pessimistically
"Can I, oh can I, be statistically
significant, or can I not?"
and th' unbridled Guillemot

bewildered by so many "ifs"
is seen to hurl himself from cliffs.

All birds would rather quit their perch
than be a subject for research.
When Fisher's out with fire and sword,
the wary Fulmar goes abroad;
When Fitter goes pursuing rails
the Spotted Crake retires to Wales;
the Crested Tit by moor and loch
is silent at th' approach of Koch;
the Greylag Goose would rather not
be painted blue by Peter Scott.

Obsessed by problems such as these,
our friend perambulates the leas,
Alas for him! The Modern Bird
is seldom seen and seldom heard.
So having little to observe,
his thoughts to tender subjects swerve,
viz: the Companion of his Life;
I mean (need I insist) his Wife:
and pensive by the river's brim,
he dreams how he, ♂ . . . imm,
and she a blooming ♀ . . . juv,
proclaimed their youthful vows of love.
His matrimonial display
was typical in every way,
and so was not reported on;
how different had he been a swan!

At last, obsessed by thoughts of tea
(that hub of man's ecology)
and ham and eggs, and towels and soap
he seeks his rural biotope.

Notes

Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes is the British mainland form of the Wren (or Winter Wren, as the BOU would call it nowadays in an attempt, largely vain, to make us Brits less frighteningly parochial). *Pica pica* is the Black-billed Magpie and *Cuculus canorus* the Common Cuckoo. Somewhat ironically, the **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis* has become one of the most well-watched birds in ornithology, being the first subject of studies of sperm competition. As far as I know, however, there is no evidence that over-exposure of Dunnocks to behavioural ecologists has

yet resulted in any abnormal egg markings. ‘**Th’ unbridled Guillemot**’ is *Uria aalge*, an auk which comes in unbridled and bridled forms. The latter has a white spectacle and becomes increasingly common in populations in the north of its range. M.F.M.M. would have had plenty of fun with modern taxonomy.

The **Handbook** is the five-volumed *Handbook of British Birds* by H.F. Witherby et al. First published in 1940, for many years it stood alone as the standard reference to British birds and was the precursor to the shelf-creaking *Birds of the Western Palaearctic* and other regional accounts of its kind.

James Fisher was a pioneering seabird biologist, arguably the best of his time. He wrote a number of books, notably *The Fulmar* (New Naturalist 1952) and *Sea-Birds* (with R.M. Lockley; New Naturalist 1954). Following his untimely death, the Orkney island of Copinsay, an important seabird site, was purchased and made into a nature reserve in his memory.

Richard Fitter was an outstanding all-round English naturalist. Best known in his later years for the results of his long-term study of the phenology of British wildflowers (he linked their increasingly early

spring blooming to global warming), his extensive publications include Collins’ field guides to birds and plants and *London’s Natural History* (New Naturalist 1945).

Ludwig Koch apparently made his first wildlife recording in 1889! His *Songs of Wild Birds* (Witherby 1937) are classics of their kind. If you think carting a shotgun microphone and mini-CD recorder in the field is tiresome, you should see the equipment Koch had to deal with. Bird sounds were recorded directly onto wax discs in a large truck (the ‘Parlophone travelling recording studio’) from microphones sited hundreds of yards away to reduce the noise of the electricity generators. When playing the songs he warns that ‘It cannot be too often repeated that the needle should be changed for each side of each record . . .’

Peter Scott was the son of the ill-fated polar explorer Robert Falcon Scott. A wildfowler turned conservationist, he was an Olympic medallist (for sailing), glider pilot, diver, traveller, artist and writer. Apart, perhaps, from his evocative paintings of ducks and geese, he is best remembered as founder of both WWF and of what is now the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust based at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire.

(continued
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. . . before completing his appointed round . . .



. . . and bringing the message to its proper destination, thus affecting the destiny of men and nations.