

## REVIEW



*The Cormorant*: Bulletin of the Southern African Seabird Group, No. 1, November 1976. Address: C/o FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

This first issue promises well. It contains 20 pages (size approx. 15 x 21 cm.) of notes and information compactly printed in clear small type, ideal for the bookshelf (which the large heavy foolscap size bulletins of other Seabird Groups are not!). It is intended to cover all seabirds on the southern African list, and the oceanic islands of Prince Edward, Marion and Tristan de Cunha. Waders are not considered to be seabirds, with the exception of phalaropes, but inland-breeding gulls and terns are.

The population dynamics of the abundant Hartlaubs Gull (*Larus hartlaubii*), a city scavenger, are a continuing project. Already over 47,000 birds have been examined, of which 1680 had colour rings (a new colour for each year) and 1559 had steel (numbered) rings only. Vast numbers of northern hemisphere terns winter along the coast in the South African summer. E. L. Roberts has counted at least 100,000 resting on sandbanks at Kleinrivierslei (34°26'S, 19°18'E), "virtually all Common/Arctic terns *Sterna hirundo* and *S. macrura*, with a light sprinkling of Sandwich Terns *S. sandvicensis*." One hopes research by this seabird group may help to confirm the circumnavigation of the Antarctic continent, postulated by F. Salomonson (*Biol. Meddr. Dan. Viv. Selsk* 24: 1 (1967), by a proportion of Arctic terns.

There are many other interesting observations, such as the flocking of seabirds to fish stunned or killed by underwater explosions; and some results of studies of the two *Phoebastria* albatrosses which co-exist on Marion Island, nesting on similar sites and about the same time. As it is against the rules for allied (or any) species to co-exist except in ecological or geographical isolation, the author, A. Berruti, infers that the differences between the ecologies of the two lie in the pelagic stages.

As one who has watched the considerable migration of seabirds along South African coasts, and also witnessed the vast assemblies of pelicans, gannets and cormorants on the artificial (wooden) platforms planted in the surf-battered coasts of Namibia (for the collection of guano) I believe there is great scope for sea-bird research as well as conservation studies, and echo the sentiments of the editor, J. Cooper, who considers that "Research cannot be conducted without an object of study, and so we need to be *involved* in conservation."

R. M. L.