

This article was downloaded by: [University of Arizona]
On: 29 May 2014, At: 00:28
Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number:
1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street,
London W1T 3JH, UK



Ostrich: Journal of African Ornithology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tost20>

SOME BIRDS SEEN ON BAZARUTO ISLAND

Mrs. M. L. van Eyssen^a

^a 19, de Mist Avenue, Stilfontein, Transvaal
Published online: 18 Oct 2010.

To cite this article: Mrs. M. L. van Eyssen (1958) SOME BIRDS SEEN ON BAZARUTO ISLAND, *Ostrich: Journal of African Ornithology*, 29:1, 14-18, DOI: [10.1080/00306525.1958.9639061](https://doi.org/10.1080/00306525.1958.9639061)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00306525.1958.9639061>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

SOME BIRDS SEEN ON BAZARUTO ISLAND

Mrs. M. L. van Eyssen

19, de Mist Avenue, Stilfontein, Transvaal

In June, 1950, three weeks were spent on Bazaruto Island situated in the Mozambique Channel at latitude 22° south, and longitude 35° east. As the crow flies, Bazaruto is about 15 miles from Vilanculos on the Portuguese East African coast, and is approximately 30 miles long with a maximum width of 8 miles. The island is somewhat sandy, and there is a ridge of dunes along the east side. There are occasional flat grassy plains, some with shallow reedy swamps, others covered with vines and creepers. There is a lighthouse at the northern tip of Bazaruto, and here numerous beefwood trees have been introduced. In the centre of the island are two lakes, bordered on one side by the sand dunes, and on the other by reedy swamps and park-like plains. The water in these lakes is brack and inhabited by numerous small fish and crocodiles.

Bazaruto has a wonderful and varied birdlife, the area being particularly attractive to waders. A large tidal rise and fall provides miles of mud flats on which all kinds of waders feed in hundreds.

The list submitted is incomplete, as the time spent on the island (22 days) allowed little time for detailed study.

The nomenclature follows Roberts (*Birds of South Africa*, 1946).

Cape Hen, or White-chinned Petrel. *Procellaria aequinoctialis*.

One seen while trolling about two miles off the ocean side of Bazaruto.

White-faced Storm Petrel. *Pelagodroma marina*.

Five seen one stormy afternoon two miles off the ocean side of the island. They fluttered around the boat for some hours, pattering on the water and apparently feeding on plankton.

Wilson's Storm Petrel. *Oceanites oceanicus*.

This petrel often followed the boat, fluttering and pattering on the waves, and was most attractive to watch. Not more than two were seen at a time.

Pinkbacked Pelican. *Neopelicanus rufescens*.

A few always to be seen with the flamingo.

White-fronted Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax lucidus*.

Only one seen along the coast.

Reed Cormorant. *Microcarbo africanus*.

Numerous around the brack-water lakes.

South African Darter. *Anhinga rufa*.

Numerous on the brack-water lakes.

Grey Heron. *Ardea cinerea.*

Three immature birds always to be seen in the vicinity of the native fish traps on the mud flat in front of the camp near the lighthouse.

Night Heron. *Nycticorax nycticorax.*

Purple Heron. *Pyrherodia purpurea.*

These two herons were very numerous on the lakes.

African Rail Heron. *Ardeiralla sturmi.*

Always appeared along the shore when the tide was out. Makes an untidy landing in a flurry of wings and legs and raises a fan of feathers like a small crest on the head, then immediately freezes into a crouching position with the beak and body parallel to the water, and the tail either in line with the body or high in the air. In this position the little heron is extremely difficult to see amongst the flat stones and dark green sea weed where it always chose to fish. The heron is very quick as it darts forward to catch its prey. While searching for food, it keeps its head retracted closely to the body, and continually flicks its short tail which just shows under the primaries. In the evenings the arrival of the heron was marked by a harsh chirring sound. It was not possible to discover where the heron rested during the day when the tide was high.

Little Egret. *Egretta garzetta.*

Numerous along the shore, and always to be seen fishing in the shallows, and particularly in the vicinity of the native fish traps.

Yellow-billed Egret. *Mesophoyx intermedia.*

Seen inland in large numbers.

Sacred Ibis. *Threskiornis aethiopica.*

In fair numbers at inland fresh water lakes.

Hadedda Ibis. *Hagedashia hagedash*

A pair of these birds roosted in some large trees near the camp. They were most punctual in their movements and on arrival at 6 p.m. called loudly, and left with as much noise again at 5 a.m. On rainy, cloudy days they arrived 15 minutes earlier and left 15 minutes later in the morning.

Spoonbill. *Platalea alba.*

One immature bird seen at the inland lakes.

Flamingo.

Thousands of these beautiful birds were to be seen on the sand spit in front of the camp. At sunrise they made a considerable amount of noise which can best be described as a mixture of the croaking of frogs and the honking of geese. The birds were very wild, and it was impossible to get close enough to identify them more accurately.

Osprey. *Pandion haliaetus.*

One was often seen fishing in the native fish traps in front of the camp.

Fish Eagle. *Cumcuma vocifer.*

One seen catching fish in the fresh water lakes.

Bush Korhaan. *Lophotis ruficrista.*

A female was seen in a patch of open bush near the camp.

European Oystercatcher. *Haematopus ostralegus.*

One adult, in non-breeding plumage, and one immature seen feeding singly in the bay at low tide. The birds were shy and difficult to approach. Their alarm note was a whistling "kleepie kleepie."

White-fronted Sand-plover. *Leucopoliis marginatus.*

Particularly numerous all along the shore-line.

Ringed Plover. *Charadrius hiaticula.*

A few seen along the shore.

Whimbrel. *Phaeopus phaeopus.*

In large flocks all along the shore, and feeding on the mud flats at low tide.

Water Dikkop. *Oedicnemus vermiculatus.*

Twelve were always to be seen around a small rocky outcrop, which was only partially covered at high tide.

Stilt. *Himantopus himantopus.*

Three seen feeding along the edges of the fresh water lakes.

Crab Plover. *Dromas ardeola.*

These quaint birds appeared to feed in fair numbers on the mud flats as soon as the tide was well out. Variations in plumage ranged from the birds possessing a very little brownish gray on the head, black diamond shape on the mantle and extending down the back, brownish grey secondaries, and black primaries which cover the greyish tail feathers, to the other extreme which is a bird with a crown, earcoverts, nape and breast streaked with brownish grey, and a white abdomen. These birds had the same diamond shaped black patch on the mantle extending down the back. The wing coverts and secondaries were all streaked with brownish grey, the primaries black. The legs of all the birds were an ashy white colour, with the feet slightly darker. Their eyes are large and black, and the black beak looks almost too heavy for their heads. They dart about stabbing into the wet sand after small crustacea, and run in a typical plover manner for short distances, picking their feet up high, and humping their wings. When they stopped running they stretched themselves up to their full height, and appeared to stand in an almost vertical line. Sometimes seen singly, and at others in small parties up to ten in number. They do not keep close together, but spread out and are very quarrelsome amongst themselves. While feeding they were heard to make a high-pitched staccato quack, and when alarmed they emit a not unpleasant long-drawn-out whistle.

Grey-headed Gull. *Hydrocoloeus cirrhocephalus.*

Five seen on the brack-water lakes. No other gulls were seen anywhere on Bazaruto or the mainland.

Roseate Tern. *Sterna dougallii.*

These lovely terns only appeared on the northern sand spit of the island during the last week of the writer's vacation, i.e., 14 to 21 June. All the terns used to rest towards the end of this long sandy spit which formed the northern tip of Bazaruto. At dawn the Roseate Terns would leave, and return about mid-afternoon. They have a most attractive habit on arrival or departure. They gather into small parties of from four to seven birds and hurtle through the air criss-crossing each other with a swinging motion, chattering and screeching, with their tail streamers fluttering gaily. One always knew on sailing past this sand pit if a party of Roseate Terns was approaching.

Lesser Crested Tern. *Thalasseus bengalensis.*

Hundreds rested during the day on the above mentioned sand spit. The writer saw no signs of nests, but on one occasion watched two adult birds feeding each other and displaying for some time.

Common Tern. *Sterna hirundo.*

Seen in fair numbers with the other terns on the sand spit.

Caspian Tern. *Hydroprogne caspia.*

A few were seen in summer plumage, at the brack-water lakes, but not anywhere along the shores or at sea.

Red-eyed Turtle Dove. *Streptopellia semitorquata*

A few observed inland.

Burchell's Coucal. *Centropus senegalensis.*

One of the commonest birds on the island. About five pairs in the vicinity of the camp.

Green Coucal. *Ceuthmochares aereus.*

This coucal is shy, and remarkably local in habitat. The writer was always certain of seeing two in a thick clump of about ten scrubby trees.

They creep about in the branches like large rats, and when they do fly it is a long unsteady glide with an untidy clumsy landing. They made two different calls, usually after 4 p.m., the one a long low plaintive whistle "Choo-whee, choo-wheee," louder and rising on the last syllable. The other call was a scolding "tchewey-tchewey" starting slowly and getting faster like ping-pong balls allowed to bounce until they stop.

Green-spotted Wood Dove. *Turtur chalcospilos.*

A few seen around the camp.

Delalandes Green Pigeon. *Vinago delalandii.*

Fairly common in the beefwood trees near the camp.

Mozambique Nightjar. *Crotema fossei*.

This species occurred commonly around the camp in the evenings, and during the day was often seen lying under the palm trees in not very thick cover, but where their colouring blended with the dead leaves and sand.

Red-faced Coly. *Urocolius indicus*.

A few seen in the very thick bush.

Pied Kingfisher. *Ceryle rudis*.

A pair were always to be seen along the shore in front of the camp.

Olive Green Bee-eater. *Blepharomerops superciliosus*.

Common around the camp. This bee-eater's habits rather resembled those of a fly catcher. They were seldom seen on the wing, and usually sat on a branch from which they darted out to snap up flying insects.

Lilac-breasted Roller. *Coraciura caudata*.

A few seen inland. They appeared to be fairly bold, and screeched noisily and would fly about doing aerobatics and angrily dive bombing, and chasing people still some distance from their territory.

Hoopoe. *Upupa africana*.

One seen inland.

Crowned Hornbill. *Protocus suahelicus*.

A noisy pair roosted near camp.

Cape Raven. *Corvultur albicollis*.

These birds were numerous all over the island although there were no cliffs or crags on which they usually prefer to roost. Their thieving habits made them a great nuisance around the camp.

Sombre Bulbul. *Andropadus importunus*.

One of the commonest birds on the island.

Great Grass Warbler. *Drymodyta natalensis*.

Numerous around the inland lakes.

Paradise Flycatcher. *Tchitrea plumbeiceps*.

Two pairs always to be seen, or heard around the camp.

Blackcrowned Redwing Shrike. *Orthotchagra senegala*.

Numerous all over the island.

Purple-banded Sunbird. *Maricornis bifasciatus*.

Fairly common all over the island.

Common Waxbill. *Estrilida astrild*.

Small flocks seen around the fresh water lakes. They were quite fearless and allowed the writer to approach very near to them.

Yellow-eye. *Serinus mozambicus*.

Very numerous in the beefwood trees. They appeared to be most partial to the seeds.