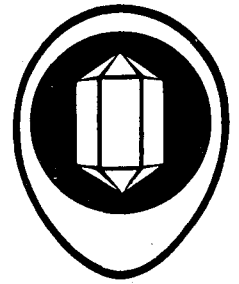


Lanioturdus torquatus
Drosselwürger

MITTEILUNGEN

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QUELEA-FORSCHUNG

(Aus einer Anfrage von Herrn R. Zurmaar, Hannover)

Fuer meine Arbeit waere es wichtig, zu folgenden Punkten aus Ihrem Land, soweit verfuegbar, naehere Angaben zu erhalten.

Zu welcher Jahreszeit tritt Quelea bei Ihnen auf? Wie gross sind die Schwaerme, in welcher Jahreszeit und in welchen Gegenden schreiten die Tiere zur Brut? -- Richten die Quelea-Schwaerme bei Ihnen grosse Schaeden an? Wenn ja, an welchen Getreidearten und in welchem Umfang? Treten die Verluste Jahr fuer Jahr auf oder sind sie von Faktoren wie z.B. Intensitaet der Regenzeit abhaengig? -- Wird Quelea in SWA bekaempft, in welchem Umfang, mit welchen Methoden und mit welchem Erfolg? Haben die Quelea-Kontrollen Auswirkungen auf Flora und Fauna des betreffenden Gebietes? -- Sind systematische Beringungen durchgefuehrt worden? Wenn ja, mit welchen Ergebnissen? Sind eventuelle Wanderwege bekannt oder gelten die Voegel in SWA als Stand- oder Strichvoegel?

Falls Sie mir helfen koennten, waere ich Ihnen sehr dankbar. Jede einzelne Angabe ueber Queleabestaende, die Lebensgewohnheiten der Voegel, sowie die von ihnen angerichteten Schaeden waeren fuer mich von grossem Wert.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NESTING HABITS AND PREDATORS

OF BREEDING COLONIES OF RED-BILLED QUELEAS

Quelea quelea lathami (A. Smith)

IN THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

By U. de V. Pienaar Ph.D., Biologist, Skukuza, Krueger National Park
(from: Supplement to Bokmakierie Vol. 21, No. 3, pages XI - XV)

The known range of distribution of the southern race of the Red-billed Quelea extends from about the Orange river in the south, to the northern borders of Nyasaland in the north, with the northern regions of the Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia, Southern Mocambique and Botswana as the areas which, during recent times, harboured the largest populations.

It is an established fact that this gregarious species breeds in large colonies within the boundaries of the Transvaal, and congregates in immense flocks in areas where ecological conditions favour feeding or breeding activity,

That these large swarms of seed-eating birds constitute a factor of considerable economic importance stands to reason, when it is consi-

dered that an estimated 500 000 bags of wheat, kaffircorn and millet have been lost in a single year, in white farming areas alone, due to the depredations of these birds (Naude, 1959). Damage to crops and losses in production of sorghum and millet species in the Bantu areas are of a chronic nature, and it has become necessary to curb the breeding activity of queleas, within the territorial limits of the Republic, by drastic control measures such as areal spraying of breeding or roosting colonies, with the contact poison Parathion.

It has been suggested that the boundless increase in the numbers of these destructive birds, during later years, may have been precipitated by a serious ecological disturbance, such as abnormal predator-prey relationships. Whereas the natural predators of queleas in most agricultural areas have been sadly depleted and even exterminated, it has been of interest to observe and determine the impact of predation in quelea colonies in a large protected area such as the Kruger National Park, where they can still move about undisturbed and breed under strictly natural conditions.

The observations which are presented here should not be interpreted as a treatise on quelea breeding behaviour, nor should they be regarded as a complete picture of predation on these birds. It has been the intention of the author merely to summarize the situation with regard to breeding colonies of queleas in the Kruger National Park during the period 1956 - 1960, and to catalogue all predators which have been observed to influence breeding activity and success.

As will be seen from Figure (i) quelea breeding colonies have been found at some stage or other throughout the length of the Park. It is evident however, that breeding rarely takes place in the region south of the Sabi river, and during the whole period under discussion only two colonies have been reported (March, 1968) near Mhlanganzwane-dam in the Crocodile bridge section, and (March 1969) at Mtjulul-mouth in the Malalane section. There is also a decided preference for nesting sites along the eastern half of the central and far northern district of the Park, where the preferred grasses, on which these birds feed grow in abundance on the fertile Lebombo flats.

Certain favourable nesting sites are repeatedly utilized by breeding colonies, and examples in question include the Lindanda area, where breeding colonies were found in 1956, 1959 and 1966, the Vogelstruis-bult area, north-west of Satara, where they nested in 1964, 1965 and 1967, the peninsula near the confluence of the Lebata and Olifants Rivers (1957, 1960 and 1966) and the Shingomene area, north-east of Shingwedzi (1957, 1958, 1960, 1963 and 1966).

Breeding activity in the Park as a whole is closely correlated with climatic conditions and the availability of food supplies. Over the years the number of breeding colonies reported varied significantly, depending on whether good rains had fallen during the breeding season (December - April) or not (See table 1)

Table 1

Breeding Colonies of queleas reported in the Kruger National Park during the period 1956-1969

Year	Breeding Colonies recorded	Year	Breeding Colonies recorded
1956	7	1963	10
1957	5	1964	6
1958	3	1965	16
1959	4	1966	13
1960	5	1967	3
1961	1	1968	8
1962	1	1969	9

Fortsetzung folgt