

# Editorial

## SEABIRD GROUPS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

In 1976 the Australian Seabird Group took New Zealand under its wing and became the Australasian Seabird Group. In 1980 the Southern African Seabird Group expanded its region of interest to the Afrotropical Region and became the African Seabird Group. Now the Pacific Seabird Group is considering a proposal to expand its area to include the northwest Atlantic.

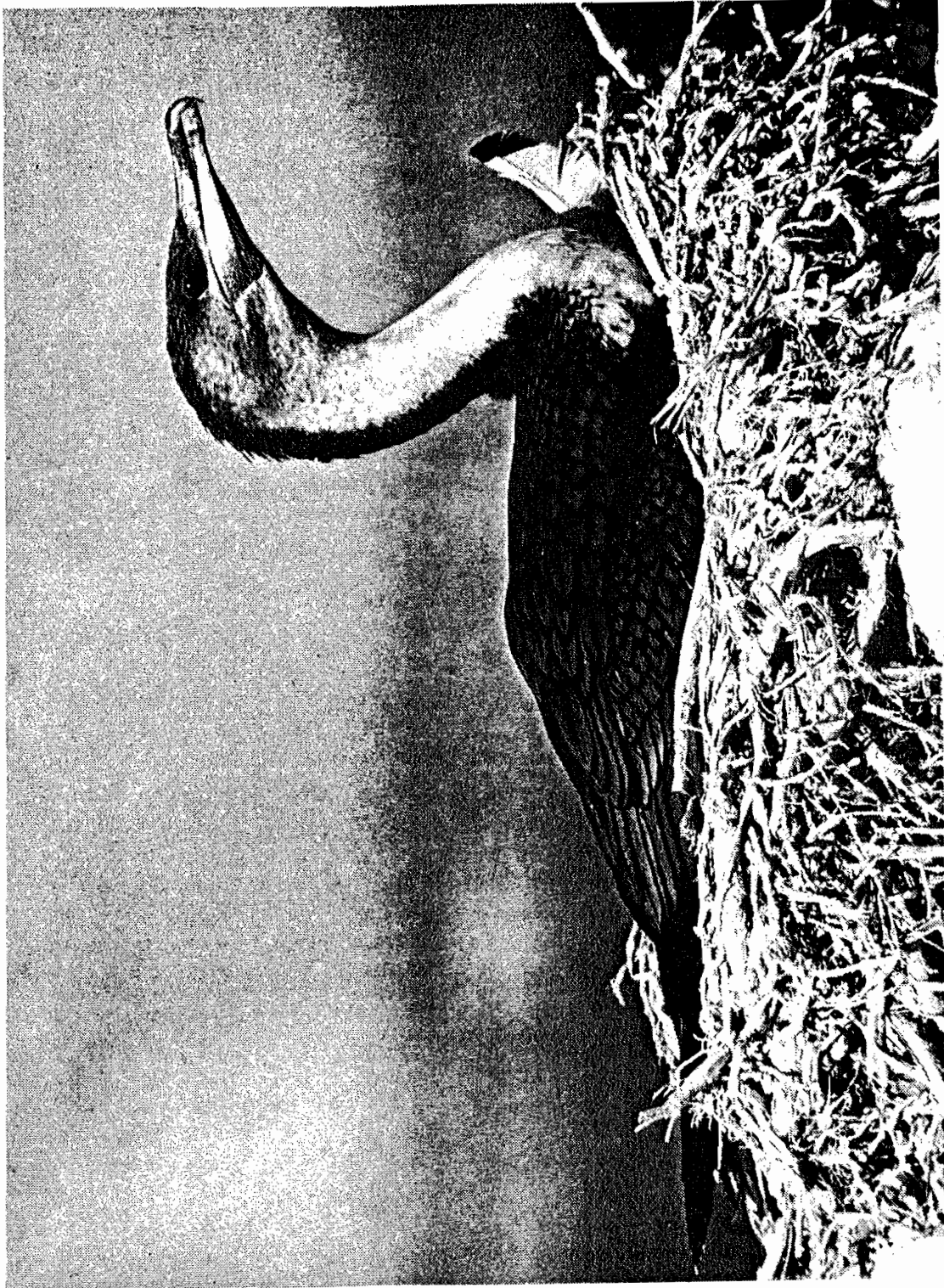
There are presently four seabird groups : the (British) Seabird Group, the Australasian Seabird Group, the African Seabird Group and the Pacific Seabird Group. Ideally, all regions of the world should be covered by an active Seabird group and there are obviously two ways to achieve this aim : expansion or creation. I'd like to suggest that the Pacific S.G. becomes the "American Seabird Group" covering the Nearctic (North American) and Neotropical (South American) regions, the (British) S.G. becomes the "European Seabird Group" covering the western Palaearctic, and the Australasian S.G. expands its region to include archipelagoes and islands in the southern Pacific and eastern Indian Oceans. The African Seabird Group, having already swallowed a continent, should stay much as it is. The obvious gap is Asia and I suggest the formation of an "Asian Seabird Group" probably centred on Japan to cover the northwestern seaboard of the Pacific Ocean.

With the world happily divided into five parts, I suggest that the seabird groups get together to form an umbrella organization: "The International Seabird Society". I see the "I.S.S." as primarily a way of increasing contact between the groups. To facilitate this, it should be based in one of the two main regions: North America or Europe. It should not need a large committee or secretariat and a small percentage of seabird group subscriptions could be paid into it to cover its costs. One of its roles should be to organize regular seabird meetings.

The Pacific and Australasian Seabird Groups meet together in Hawaii in December this year. This should give an excellent opportunity to lay the foundations for closer links between the seabird groups. In the last few years several attempts have been made to start an International seabird journal. Who better than the "International Seabird Society" to publish the "Journal of Marine Ornithology"?

John Cooper





Whitebreasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* breeding at Marcus Island,  
29 April 1978.

Photographed by C. J. This