

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *ALOPOCHEN AEGYPTIACUS* BREEDING ON AN OFFSHORE WRECK IN
SOUTH AFRICA

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Several species of the Anatidae, including the Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, have been recorded at sea in southern African waters (Cooper 1977, Baron 1977, Hall & Every 1979, Ryan 1980, Liversidge & Le Gras 1981, Hockey 1981, Underhill 1989).

During a series of surveys at Cape Recife (34 02S, 25 42E), eastern Cape, South Africa, from 1981 to 1988 (Spearpoint *et al.* 1988), from one to three Egyptian Geese were recorded on 3% of 126 visits. In the mid-1970s and mid-1980s signs of breeding by Egyptian Geese were found on two separate rock outcrops c. 75 m apart opposite the lighthouse. Both nests were situated on the tops of the outcrops, which were c. 5 m and c. 8 m in height.

On a trip to the 30 000-tonne bulk carrier *Kapodistriais*, which ran aground on Thunderbolt Reef c. 2 km offshore of Cape Recife on 29 July 1985, MR, on 18 January 1987, found an Egyptian Goose nest containing six eggs on the vessel's bridge; the nest had been built among insulating materials from the vessel. On another visit to the wreck soon afterwards, the nest was found to be abandoned and the eggs addled.

The point of view of shipwrecks acting as ecological "islands" has been referred to by Cooper & Brooke (1986) but although there are five islands with bird faunas in Algoa Bay (of which Cape Recife is the most westerly point), breeding by Egyptian Geese has not been recorded on any of them (Randall *et al.* 1981). This is unlike the situation in the western Cape where breeding by Egyptian Geese has been

recorded on six of the offshore islands there (Brooke & Crowe 1982).

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